

Memory and Performance:

A Colloquium in Honor of Ellen Bradshaw Aitken

McGill University, April 30th, 2015

Birks Building

3520 University Street, Montreal, H3A 2A7

Program:

8:30–9:00: *Arrival and Coffee (Senior Common Room)*

9:00–9:30: Words of Welcome by Ian Henderson (Interim Dean, McGill University) & Suzanne Fortier (Principal and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University) (Chapel)

9:30–10:30: *Morning Session 1 (Chapel):*
Chair: Eliza Rosenberg (McGill University)

Keynote Lecture: Greg Nagy (Harvard University): “The Homeric legacy of Ellen Aitken: Meriones Rides Again”

10:30–11:00 *Coffee (Senior Common Room)*

11:00–12:30 *Morning Session 2 (Chapel)*
Chair: Eliza Rosenberg (McGill University)

John Fossey (McGill University): “An Unusual Hero Cult in East Central Greece”.

Jeff Keiser (McGill University): “Saint Paul’s Prescription for Hair-esy in Corinth (1 Cor 11:2–16): Nature’s Veil or Epic Fail?”.

Meredith Warren (University of Ottawa): “Memories of Scrolls Past: Revelation 10:8–10 in the Sensory Imagination”.

12:30–14:00: *Lunch (Senior Common Room)*

14:00–14:30 *Afternoon Session 1 (Chapel)*

Armando Salvatore (McGill University), “New Horizons in Research and Teaching: Transcendence, Globalization, and the Public Sphere”.

14:30–16:00: *Afternoon Session 2 (Chapel):*
Chair: Fred Tappenden (McGill University)

Cynthia Kitteridge (Seminary of the Southwest): “Taking, Making, and Remaking: Scripture and the Sacramental Imagination”.

Judith Newman (University of Toronto): “‘For we know that as you share in our sufferings’: Trauma theory, memory, and the Shaping of the Corinthian Body through 2 Cor 1: 3–11”.

Carly Daniel-Hughes (Concordia University): “‘Remembering and Remembered Women’: Funerary Practice and Social Memory in Christian North Africa”.

16:00–16:30: *Coffee (Senior Common Room)*

16:30–17:30: *Evening Session 1 (Chapel):*

Musical Program: Improvisations from the Renaissance and Baroque

Music: William Porter, Hank Knox, Rona Nadler, and Peter Schubert, with harpsichords and choir.

17:30–20:00: *Evening Session 2 (Lobby):*

17:30–20:00: *Reception*

ABSTRACTS

1. Greg Nagy, Jones Professor of Classical Greek Literature and Professor of Comparative Literature, Harvard University. Keynote: “The Homeric legacy of Ellen Aitken: Meriones Rides Again”

Abstract: First I would talk about the discoveries and discovery procedures of Ellen, concentrating on the figure of Meriones. Ten or fifteen minutes. Then I would be talking about a scene in the Iliad that is not about Meriones but illustrates the discoveries and discovery procedures of our dear Ellen. The scene centers on the hero Pandaros, who is a superstar archer, not a superstar charioteer. But he tries his hand at chariot-fighting, and... But I don't want to spoil the story just yet. I think I know just how to weave our dear Ellen's personality into what I would try to say.

2. John Fossey, Emeritus Professor of Classics, McGill University. “An Unusual Hero Cult in East Central Greece”

In my book *Epigraphica Boeotica II* I examined certain aspects of a cult of the horseman hero in Boiotia during Roman Times; this paper continues that study. The cult of the Horseman Hero is, of course, essentially a Thracian phenomenon and the occurrence of a small but concentrated group of its attestations in Eastern Boiotia is surprising. The connection is made clear by the consistency of the attestations, all in the form of tombstones depicting a horseman carved in relief within a sunken panel, above which is the text, always simply three words “to X the hero”. The range of iconography in the horseman representations is much more limited than that seen in Thrake (essentially Bulgaria and its periphery) and the names of the deceased commemorated on the tombstones make it clear that these are not Thracian immigrants for they bear regular Greek names, names that are basically well attested in Boiotia. What then is the connection? Boiotia and Thrake have another hero cult very much in common, that of Herakles and the distribution of Herakles cults in Boiotia corresponds closely to that of the Horseman Hero attestations. But there is more to it than just that. Herakles' own connections with Thrake, and specifically with horses there may be the key to this association but the mechanism by which the cult was introduced into such a restricted area in Roman imperial times is still puzzling. There is, however, a possible parallel for a cultic introduction from the North while the restricted distribution of this cult, obviously largely connected with funerary matters, may find yet another parallel with funerary sodalities in another part of Boiotia.

3. Meredith J.C. Warren, Postdoctoral Candidate, University of Ottawa: “*Memories of Scrolls Past: Revelation 10:8–10 in the Sensory Imagination*”

The consumption of the little scroll in Rev 10:8–10 is a key element of how John internalizes God's revelation and remembers it to others. Using a sensory analysis of the scene, I propose that the scroll's ingestion represents a shared understanding of how the consumption of otherworldly food in narrative grants access to the divine realm and thereby transmits divine knowledge. The

taste of something sweet evokes memories of other events involving the ingestion of heavenly items; Ezekiel 2:8–3:3 is most commonly read as a referent of Rev 10:8–10, but other texts, such as *4 Ezra* 14:38–41, *Joseph and Aseneth* 16, and *Perpetua and Felicitas* 4, shed more light on the sensory process in Revelation. I propose that Revelation 10:8–10 makes use of a common yet unrecognized literary trope I call hierophagy—the eating of otherworldly things—in which the eater undergoes a change as a result of the eating that renders him/her uniquely capable of understanding divine knowledge. The sense of taste allows John to experience God in the most intimate way, an intimacy he opens up to his community when he remembers his privileged information to them as text. The use of this trope in Revelation suggests that hierophagy represents a means of divine access shared among various communities in antiquity.

4. *Armando Salvatore, Keenan Chair in Interfaith Studies, McGill University. “New Horizons in Research and Teaching: Transcendence, Globalization, and the Public Sphere”*

The last five years of Ellen Aitken’s life and career have been significantly characterized by an opening to the theme of ‘religion and globalization.’ This move has promoted a renewal of the interdisciplinary synergies within Religious Studies, intended as an academic discipline consisting of a variety of components originating from within the Social Sciences and the Humanities. The talk will propose an interpretation of the interconnections between Ellen’s own work on Late Antiquity, her teaching in the emerging field of religion and globalization, and the approach I suggested for the Keenan Chair. A concluding word will be spent on how this thread delineates a way for Religious Studies to be better positioned to engage some of the public debates over the role of religion in contemporary societies and in a variety of geo-cultural and geo-political spheres, with regard to such areas of interest like multiple modernities, postcolonialism, new media, human rights, and the shifting of the axis of the global religious field towards Asia.

5. *Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Dean and President, Seminary of the Southwest. “Taking, Making, and Remaking: Scripture and the Sacramental Imagination”*

Ellen Aitken’s perspectives on memory and performance were shaped by her communal experience of liturgy and her identity as a priest. She did not make this autobiographical connection explicitly in her work, but as I have known Ellen as a professional colleague and a good friend, it is those places where biblical texts are engaged by presiders, preachers, and poets that have occupied my own scholarly and pastoral attention. In this paper I will explore the categories of taking, making, and remaking in feminist biblical interpretation and in ministerial practice.

6. *Judith H. Newman, Associate Professor of Religion, University of Toronto. “‘For we know that as you share in our sufferings’: Trauma theory, memory, and the Shaping of the Corinthian Body through 2 Cor 1: 3–11”*

Ellen Aitken has argued that the re-enactment of the death of the cult hero Jesus served as a foundational memory to communal formation of early Christian communities. This paper uses neurocognitive studies of traumatic memory to assess the way in which Paul's recounting of his own near-death trauma in its linkage to the death of Jesus, shapes not only his own "autobiographical self" but serves community formation through reciprocal prayer practice.

7. *Carly Daniel-Hughes, Associate Professor of Religion, Concordia University. "Remembering and Remembered Women': Funerary Practice and Social Memory in Christian North Africa"*

In her work in the "Meals in the Greco-Roman World" Seminar of the Society of Biblical Literature, Ellen Aitken foregrounded women in Christ-believing house churches as bearers tradition about Jesus' death in the context of ancient meal practice. Using social memory theory (Connerton's *How Societies Remember*) together with Ellen's insights about women and performance at meals, I look to funerary practices in late antique Christian North Africa. The paper considers examples from literature and archaeology of women as remembered dead and as participants in remembering them. Here we find interesting tensions about the ways ancient Christians continued and re-defined long existing Roman funerary practices—signifying them with Christian theological categories and symbolism. Such redefinitions, however, were sources of tensions between clerics and their communities. At stake in such debates was how best to remember? What is being remembered? I draw out what Christian women's commemorative performances (those which took place at gravesides and in tombs) suggest in answer to those questions. In particular, I consider how did their embodied performances help to constitute and sustain a shared past for their communities in the face of loss?

8. *Jeffrey Keiser, Course Lecturer in New Testament, McGill University. "Saint Paul's Prescription for Hair-esy in Corinth (1 Cor 11:2–16): Nature's Veil or Epic Fail?"*

While many scholars would agree that Paul presents his theory of gender and sexual difference more or less explicitly in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, they disagree over what this theory actually entails. Various construed, it haunts a spectral ground zero in contemporary culture wars over everything from "the horror of homosexuality" to the prospect of "lesbian men." Veterans of these conflicts draw sharp distinctions between Paul's theory and the Corinthians' practice, often with the presumption that this practice reflects a partially obscured alternative to Paul's theory. In some cases, especially under the heady influence of Galatians 3:28, the Corinthians emerge looking more authentically Pauline than Paul himself, who is found struggling to moderate the unintended consequences of a rhetoric that outstripped the practical limits of (hetero)sexed bodies. In other cases, Paul emerges as the defender of God's created human order—male and female—and thence as a staunch opponent of practices that transgress this order. Contrary to these schools of thought, I argue that Paul and the Corinthians agreed in theory but disagreed over how to instantiate this theory in the performative context of liturgy and worship. My case is based partly on a fresh reading of Paul's argument from nature (1 Cor 11:13–16). Although his claim that a woman's long hair is given to her as or instead of a covering is widely thought to

contradict his insistence that she cover her head while praying, his challenge to the Corinthians to “judge for yourselves” suggests that he considered this argument especially persuasive.

The Colloquium was organized by Carly Daniel-Hughes (Concordia University) and Gerbern S. Oegema (McGill University) on behalf of the Faculty of Religious Studies