

In the context of the SNSF Sinergia project *Capturing the Present in Northwestern Europe (1348–1648). A Cultural History of Present before the Age of Presentism*, the University of Neuchâtel is calling for a post of

## **SNSF doctoral student in history (15th – 16th century)**

### **Position information**

Start date: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

Contract duration: 4 years (non-renewable)

Workload: 100%

Location: University of Neuchâtel

### **Your responsibilities**

The doctoral student will be preparing a PhD thesis on the role of events in shaping personal timelines in ego-documents from the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of early modern times. This work will be carried out under the joint supervision of Professor Thalia Brero (University of Neuchâtel) and Aude-Marie Certin (University of Haute-Alsace).

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are a particularly fertile period for understanding people's intimate relationship with time. As the written word and its media became more accessible, dates began to be noted more often, for example in family record books. This thesis will attempt to define what the men and women of this era considered to be an event, and how these emanations of the present were transformed into milestones in their conception of time.

In autobiographical texts, memoirs and 'family books', personal events (births, weddings, deaths, the acquiring of property, etc.) are interwoven with memories of public events (coronations, battles, etc.) or events affecting entire communities (natural disasters, epidemics, etc.) to form a timeline specific to each individual. How do these micro- and macro-events tell a life story, together? Are they ordered to provide a gradation to the measurement of time? In what way are these significant instants told and immortalised in words and memories, which become temporal markers?

In order to determine this, the doctoral student will draw on a corpus of ego-documents (French, German, Dutch, or English) compiled from existing databases and her or his own research.

### **General information about the project**

Funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Sinergia project *Capturing the Present in Northwestern Europe (1348–1648). A Cultural History of Present before the Age of Presentism* examines how the concept of 'present' was perceived and experienced in Northwestern Europe from the Middle Ages to early modernity. This geographical area, which includes the Netherlands, the western German Empire, northern France, and southern



England, underwent significant changes during this period in politics, economics, religion, and the arts. Characterised by the coexistence of various political systems and languages, significant urban development, and rapidly evolving living conditions, this region offers a unique historical context that differs from the traditional depiction of the Renaissance.

The *Capturing the Present* project brings together around fifteen researchers from the universities of Neuchâtel, Lausanne, and Lille, including 6 PhD candidates and 3 postdoctoral researchers. The team is supported by an international network of experts in history, art and literary history, linguistics, media studies, anthropology, and political science. Its aim is to demonstrate how discourses and images shaped the perceptions that men and women of that time had of their own era; how contemporary events were represented and interpreted; and how new ideas, as well as environmental, political, and societal changes, were perceived.

### **Your profile**

Master's degree in history, specialising in medieval history or early modern history (or equivalent qualification).

Excellent command of French or English, as the thesis will be written in one of these two languages.

Ability to read Middle French and Middle High German. Fluency in Dutch would be a plus.

Ability to work as part of a team in an international and interdisciplinary environment.

### **Your benefits**

A pleasant working environment in a multicultural and diverse academic context.

A stimulating research environment in a team shared between three partner universities.

The doctoral student may benefit from doctoral training offered by the University Conference of Western Switzerland ([CUSO](#)).

### **Application Procedure**

Interested candidates are requested to submit their application in a pdf file containing:

- a cover letter
- a curriculum vitae
- copies of university diplomas
- their master's thesis (or equivalent scholarly work)

Applications are to be sent by e-mail until May 15<sup>th</sup> 2024 to: [thalia.brero@unine.ch](mailto:thalia.brero@unine.ch)

The thesis subject is partially predefined within the framework of the collective project. It will be discussed and refined by the proposals from the candidates selected for the interviews, which will take place in June 2024.

In order to promote diversity among its staff, the University of Neuchâtel is committed to offering non-discriminatory working conditions.

