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Global Bones. Entangled Histories, Transfers and Translations in the Early Modern Age

Mercredi 16 novembre | 12h15-13h45
Uni Philosophes, salle PHIL 201

This seminar investigates the handling of Christian bodily relics on a global scale. It examines how bodily remains were spread throughout various parts of the world in the course of the European expansion and the Christian missionary project in what from a European perspective is usually called the Early Modern period (the late 15th to 17th centuries). In the course of the European expansion, Christian body relics experienced a mobility similar to other objects, such as trade goods. Missionaries and other actors transported the venerated bodies and body fragments in huge numbers across territorial borders and continents. At the same time, however, bones were already present everywhere. Human remains are objects that occur in all cultural contexts, but are valued and handled very differently. The differences in the way bones were dealt with quickly became apparent in interactions between the local populations and the colonizers. Often perceived by the different actors as an important part of their respective cultural and religious identity, human remains were pivotal objects of (trans-)cultural negotiations. I will present and discuss some reliquaries that we could understand as "nodal objects", since they tell us about the different negotiation processes that shaped them.



Anon. (silversmith), Reliquary containing the head relic of St. Geracina (1552).

Urte Krass est professeure ordinaire d'histoire de l'art moderne à l'Université de Berne. Ses recherches portent sur l'iconographie politique, la culture matérielle dans le Christianisme et les processus de négociation transculturels qui se matérialisent dans images et artefacts. Elle a publié *Nah zum Leichnam. Bilder neuer Heiliger im Quattrocento* (Berlin/Munich 2012) et a dirigé la publication *Visualizing Portuguese Power. The Political Use of Images in Portugal and Its Overseas Empire (16th to 18th Century)* (Zurich/Berlin 2017). Son livre *The Portuguese Restoration of 1640 and Its Global Imagery. Political Iconography and Transcultural Negotiation* est à paraître en 2022.