

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (Europe 1100-1800) presents:

# THE EMOTIONAL HISTORY OF MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE, 1758-94



Date: Friday 17 May 2013  
 Time: 1.00pm - 2.00pm  
 Venue: Ira Raymond Room, Barr Smith Library  
 University of Adelaide

Historians of emotions, such as William Reddy, have seen the French Revolution of 1789-94 as a key moment in western history. They have explained the discursive style of the Revolution - even the nature of the Revolution itself - as the result of the explosive encounter of the language of virtue in neo-classicism and the sentimentalism of the cult of nature. Rousseau's certainty that the virtuous legislator would know the general will lurking in the conscience of 'the people' would become deadly when combined with the cult of heroes of antiquity such as Brutus, combining civic sacrifice and denunciation of conspiracy, vice and corruption. This has been seen as epitomised by Robespierre, described as icily devoid of ordinary human emotions but capable of turgid outpourings of grief and patriotism. How satisfactory is such a reading of Robespierre and the nature of the Revolution more generally?



## Keynote Speaker

Professor Peter McPhee  
 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Peter McPhee was appointed to a Personal Chair in History at the University of Melbourne in 1993. He has published widely on the history of modern France, most recently *Living the French Revolution 1789-1799* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); *Robespierre: a Revolutionary Life* (Yale University Press, 2012); and (ed.) *A Companion to the French Revolution* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). He was appointed to the position of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at the University of Melbourne in October 2003 and was the University's first Provost in 2007-09, with particular responsibility for the design and implementation of the University's new curriculum structures. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities (1997) and the Academy of Social Sciences (2003). He was awarded a Centenary Medal for services to education in 2003 and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2012.

[www.historyofemotions.org.au](http://www.historyofemotions.org.au)

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