

Editorial

This first number of *Amaltea* is dedicated to the labyrinth's myth reception in the twentieth Century Western literature.

To find the original labyrinth we must go back to ancient Crete; built by Daedalus on Minos' orders to contain the Minotaur, this intricate maze spelled death to all those who entered, until Theseus, after slaying the monster, found his way out with help of Ariadne. With such a precedent, it is difficult to ignore the ritual and sacred connotations attached to this construction; its apparent etymology refers, significantly enough, to the double axe, a royal and religious symbol of Minoan Crete.

This mythic structure presents obvious spatiotemporal problems: its composition of pathways and passages – a complex and enigmatic route – involves the added difficulty of a lime limit, an implacable deadline for the finding of the magic object, or the way out to freedom. As a consequence, the labyrinth challenges the human being in that it confronts them with vital anxiety; the labyrinth is not limited to a physical or temporal problem: there are also mental labyrinths, allegories of life, or even death.

From the Middle Ages to the Romantic period, Western literature offers numerous examples of the labyrinth, which may be the sign of a doomed romance, a symbolic image of the world or a device when describing a mysterious castle.

The first issue of *Amaltea* aims to tackle the labyrinth's myth reception in the contemporary Western literature: the infernal city, the fantastic dwelling, the criminal investigation or the metaliterary pretext; the labyrinth contains, as does its very structure, the thousand different paths taken by anthropological research today.

We have received more than forty articles in six different languages from different cultures and approaches. That is why we would like to thank all the authors for their effort and their valuable input for their contributions. Due to the impossibility to allow all the contributions to be published, we have selected those that have kept to the subject, to the parameters established in the call for papers and the submission rules: proposed topic (the labyrinth); mythological approach; scientific methodology (critic and bibliographic devices) originality, content quality and phrasing clarity.

We can only hope that you enjoy the reading.

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