



***Memoria Saltationis: The Memory of Dance - 5 June 2020***

**Shakespeare on the wordless stage: in search of the text of lost ballets**

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How is it possible to compare a work of literature with the ballets it has inspired if their choreography is lost? In most cases, few traces remain of ballets created before the mid-twentieth century, but some important sources can nonetheless be consulted in archives and online databases, such as scores, reviews and other contemporary accounts, set and costume designs, and libretti. Ballet libretti, which are written before the choreography is created and describe the action on stage, are a particularly useful source for literary scholars studying the process of adaptation from literature into dance. They form a bridge between the literary text and the non-verbal performance, since in theory they only contain elements which can be made visible and audible on a ballet stage (although in reality they also contain 'untranslatable' elements). In this presentation, I will talk about the libretti of a number of Shakespeare-inspired ballets created in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. This will allow us to reflect on the characteristics of the genre of the ballet libretto and the process of adaptation from literature into dance.