

Hagiography Society Newsletter

Volume XXVII, no. 3, December 2017

Executive Committee Elections

The Hagiography Society will be holding elections for three executive committee positions this coming year. We are soliciting nominations for the positions of Communications Chair, Program Chair, and Nominations Chair. All three have terms of three years, beginning at the International Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo, MI in May of 2018. It should be noted that the holders of these offices are expected to attend the society's business and executive board meeting at that conference in each year of their term. If you are interested in these positions or wish to nominate someone, please email our current Nominations Chair, Nikolas Hoel, at n-hoel@neiu.edu by **1 February 2018**. Elections will be held in spring 2018.



The Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Award Recipients

Once again, the Hagiography Society executive committee received a number of outstanding applications for the Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Awards: a testimony to the vibrant state of the field and the great promise of the new generation of scholars. We're very happy to announce the award recipients:

Dorottya Uhrin (History, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), "The Earliest Cult of Saint Margaret of Antioch in Hungary"

Lydia Walker (History, UT-Knoxville), "The Formulation of Female Holiness and Masculine Integrity: An Examination of Lutgard of Aywières and Jacques de Vitry"

We look forward to hearing their papers at Kalamazoo in May!



Hagiography Society Book Prize 2017

The Hagiography Society is very pleased to announce the winner of its inaugural Book Prize, which is awarded every year to a first book. The Prize of 2017 has been awarded to Jeanne-Nicole Mellon Saint-Laurent for her monograph *Missionary Stories and the Formation of the Syriac Churches* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015). We congratulate Prof. Saint-Laurent warmly on her achievement. We also thank all scholars who sent their

books for consideration. This year's award committee consisted of Kathleen Ashley (University of Southern Maine), Mary Morse (Rider University) and Claudia Rapp (University of Vienna). We thank the members of the committee very much for taking on this service to scholarship. The Committee's comment on the prize-winning book:

Jeanne-Nicole Mellon Saint-Laurent, *Missionary Stories and the Formation of the Syriac Churches*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 55 (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015)

The book constitutes the first presentation of Syriac hagiographical material relating to Christian mission. It offers a reading of hagiographic writing in the Syriac tradition (300 to 800) about their founding holy men, each of whom functions as a "missionary" for their various communities. These stories mythologize the saint and idealize the history of the religious group they are trying to validate *vis a vis* competitor Christian groups and political authorities of the region.

The book makes a compelling case why missionary narratives should be regarded as crucial texts for understanding Syrian Christianity. It draws attention to a sub-genre of hagiography and a linguistic region of hagiographical production that has until now been open only to specialists.

It is an outstanding first book, written in a vivid style and highly conscious of methodological issues. Placing hagiographical narratives on the broader canvas of Christian mission east of the Roman Empire, it is of equal importance to the study of hagiography, the history of Christianity, and late antique and medieval history.



Hagiography Society Book Series Editors

The HS Book Series, "Sanctity in Global Perspective," welcomes Alison Frazier (University of Texas at Austin) and Richard McGregor (Vanderbilt University) to the editorial board, to join Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski (University of Pittsburgh). We also thank former editors, Jack Hawley (Barnard College) and Shahzad Bashir (Stanford University), for their work on the series during their three-year terms.



HS at the American Academy of Religion Meeting

On the day before the American Academy of Religion Annual Conference in November, a group of scholars met for a pre-conference workshop on comparative hagiology. The event was organized and lead by Massimo Rondolino of Carroll University. There were approximately 20 participants, including members of the Hagiography Society. The areas of interest of the members of the group spanned geographies, time-periods, and traditions. The day began when the participants broke up in to smaller groups to discuss the definition of hagiography/hagiology and how to develop a theoretical and methodological approach to the comparative study of the topic. After lunch all of the participants came back together in the larger group for a discussion of what transpired in the morning sessions and the issues at hand. In general, the workshop was a great success and we are looking to build on the discussions that took place at the next meeting of the AAR in Denver in November of 2018.



Hagiography Society Session at the RSA

Session: **The Economics of Sanctity**
Sat, March 24, 4:00 to 5:30pm, Hilton Riverside Complex, Chart Room B

Organizers: Sara Ritchey (University of Tennessee-Knoxville); Alison Frazier (University of Texas at Austin)
Chair: Corine Schleif (Arizona State University)

“Big Altarpieces in Small Villages: Sculptural Competition in the Swiss Alps” - Joan Holladay (University of Texas at Austin)

“‘Embroidered Heads’: Saint Ursula's Skulls and the Cologne Textile Trade, ca. 1500” - Andrew Sears (University of California, Berkeley)

“Devotional Ivories, Chinese Carvers, and the Economics of Catholicism: Reconsidering Hispano-Filipino Ivory Sculpture” - Jessie J. Park (Harvard Art Museums)

Respondent: Rangsook Yoon, Art and History Museums, Maitland



Other Calls for Papers

Reading, UK, 23rd March 2018. The Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Reading will hold a conference on “The Maladies, Miracles and Medicine of the Middle Ages, II. Places, Spaces and Objects.” The conference welcomes papers on all aspects of this theme whether your interests lie in archaeology, art, literature, medicine and science, or miracles and theology (or a little bit of everything). Particular themes to consider are:

- Pilgrims as ‘patients’ and miraculous medicine
- Hospitals, hospices and infirmaries as places of cure and places of piety
- Objects of healing and/or objects of faith
- Landscapes and locations of religion and remedy
- The written word as place, space, or object of cure or of faith
- Personal devotion and home-based healthcare

Proposals for twenty-minute papers fitting broadly into one of the above themes are welcomed from all post-graduate and early-career researchers before the deadline, **5 January 2018**. Proposals of no more than 200 words, and further enquiries are to be sent to the organisers, Dr Ruth Salter and Frances Cook, via: gcms.reading@gmail.com.

Ronse, Belgium, 24-26 May 2018. The conference “Walking with saints: protection, devotion and civic identity,” focuses on the origin and evolution of procession rites with a strong link with the landscape. This conference, therefore, aims at studying the religious landscape, be it a specific spot or a larger territory, not as the mere spatial background for spiritual activities, but as an active agent in the shaping, transmission and transformation of the spiritual activity of human beings throughout time. Hence, we invite also reflections on developments in the 19th and 20th centuries when a rediscovering of the past, both within and outside the Christian churches, was en vogue and when new ways of looking at the natural landscape were moulded in the aftermath of the industrialisation of the economy. Though the starting point is an activity that is typical for Europe, we are interested in broadening the perspective to non-Christian and non-Western traditions that have an important connection with the landscape in which they are performed. Papers are invited that deal with the following themes of the conference:

- Sacralisation of the landscape: alteration, destruction and resistance
- Immaterial heritage: religion and landscape
- Perennial aspect of immaterial heritage
- Immaterial heritage and community building: identity, assimilation, integration
- Healing saints in their territorial context
- The influence of processions on the landscape and on the drawing of parochial and city boundaries
- Processions, pilgrimages and the senses

Healing saints, magic and assimilation

For further information, please contact Anne-Françoise Morel at papers@wvs2018.com by the CFP deadline of **10 January 2018** or visit the conference website at <https://www.walkingwithsaints2018.com/>



Other Upcoming Conferences

Nicosia, Cyprus, 12-14 January 2018. The **Byzantinist Society of Cyprus (BEK)** announces the Second Conference of Byzantine and Medieval Studies. The languages of the conference will be Greek, English, French and German. The Scientific and Organizing Committee is Nikolas Bakirtzis (Chair), Andreas Foulis, Maria Parani, Stavros Georgiou, Ourania Perdiki, Doria Nicolaou, Christina Kakkoura, Andriani Georgiou, Efthymia Priki, Rania Michail, Thomas Costi, Despina Papacharalampous, Maria Skordi. The conference website is <http://byzantinistsociety.org.cy/cbms2018/>

Saint Louis, Missouri, 18-20 June 2018. The Sixth Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies will take place at St. Louis University. The goal of the Symposium is to promote serious scholarly investigation into all topics and in all disciplines of medieval and early modern studies. The plenary speakers for this year will be Geoffrey Parker of The Ohio State University, and Carole Hillenbrand of the University of St Andrews. While attending the Symposium participants are free to use the Vatican Film Library, the Rare Book and Manuscripts Collection, and the general collection at Saint Louis University's Pius XII Memorial Library. For more information online go to: <http://smrs.slu.edu>

Paris, France, 28-30 June 2018. This year's IMS-Paris Symposium will be on "Truth and Fiction." The keynote speakers are Patrick Boucheron, professor at the collège de France and Maureen Boulton, professor emerita at Notre Dame. The IMS conference seeks to take a new look at the notion of Truth, its articulations, and its relationship with Fiction in the medieval world. The IMS-Paris is an interdisciplinary, bilingual (French/English) organization that fosters exchanges between French and foreign scholars. For more than a decade, the IMS has served as a center for medievalists who travel to France to conduct research, work or study. For more information about the IMS-Paris and for past symposium programs, please visit our websites: www.ims-paris.org and <https://imsparis.hypotheses.org>.

Bristol, UK, 15-20 July 2018. The 21st Biennial Symposium of the International Sermon Studies Society will be held at the University of Bristol, organized by Carolyn Muessig. The theme is "Medieval Monks, Nuns, and Monastic Life." Information can be found at <https://imsss.net/symposium-2018>

Tampere, Finland, 23-25 August 2018. The University of Tampere will host "Neighbours or Strangers? Conflict, Negotiation, and Collaboration in Multicultural Communities." The conference, part of "Passages from Antiquity to the Middle Ages VII," aims at concentrating on social and cultural interaction within and between multi-ethnic and multilingual communities, groups and individuals, minority (minorities) and majority. Cooperation, toleration, and coexistence was an everyday necessity in Ancient and medieval societies. On occasion, however, these would turn into the opposite: suspicion, conflict, and violence, enhanced by power struggles and prejudices. All these had a central influence on social dynamics, negotiations of collective or individual identity, definitions of ethnicity, and shaping of legal rules. For further information, please visit <http://www.uta.fi/trivium/passages/> or contact the organizers by sending an e-mail to passages@uta.fi. The registration opens in March 2018.



Book (and Other) Announcements

Ann Buckley, ed., *Music, Liturgy, and the Veneration of Saints of the Medieval Irish Church in a European Context* (Brepols, 2017):
http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503534701-1

Margaret Coombe, Anne E. Mouron, and Christiania Whitehead, eds., *Saints of North-East England 600-1500* (Brepols, 2017)
http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503567150-1

E.M.G. Krajewski, *Archetypal Narratives. Pattern and Parable in the Lives of Three Saints* (Brepols, 2018):
http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503577111-1

Sarah McNamer, *Meditations on the Life of Christ: The Short Italian Text* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2018):
<http://undpress.nd.edu/books/P03340>

Ashley M. Purpura, *God, Hierarchy, and Power: Orthodox Theologies of Authority from Byzantium* (Fordham University Press, 2017):

<https://www.fordhampress.com/9780823278374/god-hierarchy-and-power/>

Kirsi Salonen and Sari Katajala-Peltomaa, eds., *Church and Belief in the Middle Ages: Popes, Saints, and Crusaders* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016):

<http://en.aup.nl/books/9789089647764-church-and-belief-in-the-middle-ages.html>

There is a major new project, based at the University of British Columbia, called the Database of Religious History (DRH; religiondatabase.org).

The DRH aims to serve as a massive, open quantitative and qualitative on-line database of religious data, as well as a clearinghouse for digital information about the history of religion. We've started by recording answers to a long poll of questions about religious groups across time and space (mostly focusing on pre-modern), and will soon be moving towards gathering information on supernatural beings, texts, and places as other lenses for inquiry. All of the answers to questions are initially coded in Yes/No format, with comment boxes for qualitative comments, references, etc. This allows the data to be analyzed and visualized with a number of tools, helpful not only for analysis but to get an instant overview of scholarly opinion in an age of information overload. We also aim to record qualitative data related to these answers, including images and text where relevant.

Entries will have DOIs for convenient citation and be archived by the UBC Library, and we are working toward getting listed on one of the major citation indexes, such as the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AHCI). While our grant funding lasts, we also provide honoraria for completed, published entries; currently we are able to provide \$500 (CAD) for entries published before June 1, 2018.

The director, Edward Slingerland (UBC), did an interview with the American Academy of Religion's "Religious Studies News" about the project which you can find here: <http://rsn.aarweb.org/articles/making-religious-history-digitally-native>. We also invite you to browse the database or survey our recent press on our Facebook Page <https://www.facebook.com/religiondatabase/> or twitter feed (@ReligionHistory).



Hagiography Society Dues

A hearty thank you to all those who have paid their 2017 dues. Paying dues is easy through Paypal on our website,

https://www.hagiographysociety.org/?page_id=112.

You now have the ability to contribute to either our graduate student travel Reames fund, the book subvention fund, the first book prize award fund, or the general fund. Your generosity will ensure the HS's ability to continue these important initiatives in support of young scholars and all scholarship on hagiography. Thank you!



For Fun: Hagiography in the News

Earlier this year, Kirsten Valdes Quade published a story in *The New Yorker* about Christina "the Astonishing," the thirteenth-century medieval holy woman, from the perspective of her sister, "Mara." Follow this link to read an interview with the author:

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/this-week-in-fiction/fiction-this-week-kirstin-valdez-quade-2017-07-31>.

In late December PBS aired the 2016 docu-drama, *The Sultan and the Saint*, about St. Francis of Assisi meeting Malek al-Kamir. The full video is now available and streaming live on PBS: <http://www.pbs.org/sultan-and-saint/home/>

