

Hagiography Society Newsletter

Volume XXIX, no. 2, August 2018

Executive Committee Elections

Elections for two executive committee positions will be held this coming year. We are soliciting nominations for the positions of: **President and Secretary/Treasurer**. The terms are three years. Please see the constitution, posted on the hagiographysociety.org website, for further details about the positions.

If you are interested in these positions, or wish to nominate someone, please email our current Nominations Chair, Nikolas Hoel, at n-hoel@neu.edu by **December 1**. Short bios of those interested will appear in the December/January edition of the newsletter. Elections will take place this spring before the Society's Business Meeting at Kalamazoo 2019.



The Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Award

The Hagiography Society is pleased to solicit entries for the Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Award for Hagiographical Studies. Now in its sixth year, the award is named in honor of the beloved founder and long-time leader of the Society. The award provides \$300 to be used toward travel to present at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, held annually at the University of Western Michigan in Kalamazoo, MI.

Eligibility: Students enrolled in a graduate program (anywhere in the world) whose paper, on a topic involving hagiography, has been accepted for inclusion in the program of the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI, are eligible to apply.

Application: Please submit the following documents, combined in a single PDF file, by **November 1** to the Secretary / Treasurer of the Hagiography Society (Amy Ogden, avo2n@virginia.edu):

- a current curriculum vitae
- the abstract for the accepted paper, identifying the panel on which it will be presented
- a cover letter, addressing the following questions:
 - How does this paper fit into your scholarly trajectory?
 - Have you presented at a scholarly conference before?
 - Have you received other funding for travel (this paper or others)?

Successful applicants will be informed of the results by December 15.



Hagiography Society Sessions at Kalamazoo: CFPs

Witnessing the Canonization Process

Scholars regularly plumb vitae about holy people for insights into medieval religion and culture. Fewer, however, focus on the processes of canonization itself. This panel will focus on those processes. Topics may include: the specific role of the canonization commissioners and notaries involved in leading and recording an inquest; how witnesses are chosen; the extent to which canonization inquests conform to or depart from the evolving rules of canonization; how and why information provided by witnesses is sometimes adapted, omitted, or contradicted in subsequent vitae or other documents; patterns across multiple canonization inquests; and how briefer canonization dossiers based on witness testimonies are assembled and forwarded to the curia for further review. While these questions may draw on saints' vitae, each paper should illuminate aspects of the canonization inquest itself.

Contact: Catherine M. Mooney, mooneyca@bc.edu by Sept 15, 2018.

Race and Racism in Hagiography

Racial differentiation in the Middle Ages has in recently received more attention, with scholars willing to question the oft-recited truism that while ethnic prejudices may have existed, race is strictly a modern concept. Yet, time and again race, as tied to black skin color, appears in hagiographic texts as a marker of morality or character. Early medieval hagiographies of Egyptian ascetic have the devil or demons appear as black boys, most famously in Athanasius' Life of Antony. This even extends to saintly figures identified as black: Abba Moses, a black ascetic from the community of Scetis, tells the archbishop "your skin is as black as ashes. You are not a man so why should you be allowed to meet men?" Hagiography shows the different uses of racial and ethnic differentiation to construct religious and political identity, and even the ways in which the lives of holy figures aided in race-making.

Contact: Felege-Selam Yirga, yirga.5@buckeyemail.osu.edu by Sept 15, 2018

Holy Authorship: Saints Writing about Saints

The authors of medieval hagiography vary greatly. In many cases the author of a particular vita is later canonized; for example, St. Athanasius wrote the life of St. Antony and Gregory the Great composed that of Benedict. The phenomenon is particularly interesting for hagiography composed to promote religious behavior or to elevate the status of the saint being commemorated. This panel will study saints writing about other saints. Through examination of these authors we can better understand the nature of what these particularly virtuous authors believed sanctity to be. Postmodern theories (such the death of the author) further complicate this discussion. The proposed panel examines questions of saintly authorship in the Middle Ages, the purposes for such writing, and why this is worthy of scholarly attention. Contact: Nikolas Hoel, n-hoel@neu.edu by Sept 15, 2018.

Marked Bodies, Divine Remnants

In many vitae, the saint's marked flesh serves as proof of God's privilege. The divine remnants imprinted upon a saint's body could take many forms, such as scars, stigmata, suffering, and even healing. After death, saints continued their embodied demarcation as relics, material remnants capable of channeling the divine through division, enshrinement, veneration, and circulation. This panel explores how hagiography represents the divine upon saints' bodies. Questions include: What is the relationship between sainthood and physicality? How does a saint's divinely marked body juxtapose the sacred and the secular? What is the role of disability, gender, and/or race? What role does performance, spectacle, and/or audience play? What limits, transgressions, or paradoxes does a marked body illuminate?

Contact: Stephanie Grace-Petinos, stephanie.grace.petinos@gmail.com by Sept 15, 2018.



Other Calls for Papers

Lausanne, Switzerland, 28-30 March 2019. "Northern Lights: Late Medieval Devotion to Saints from the North of England," will take place at the University of Lausanne. Plenary speakers are Julian Luxford (University of St Andrews), Catherine Sanok (University of Michigan), and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Fordham University). The conference will examine the ways in which Bede's lauded northern saints (Cuthbert, Hilda, Aebbe, Ninian, Aidan, Oswald, John of Beverley, and others), and early post-conquest saints in the same northern tradition (Godric of Finchale, Robert of Knaresborough, Aelred of Rievaulx, William of York, etc.), were remembered and venerated between 1300 and 1500. Pursuing an interdisciplinary approach, it will take account of new textual, architectural, artistic and liturgical productions, pilgrimage cultures and shrine economies, the relations of these saints to their monastic custodians and local communities, and their utilisation to serve regional and national agendas. For further info., please see the conference

webpage: <http://wp.unil.ch/regionandnation/northernlights2019/>. For the Call for Papers, please see <http://wp.unil.ch/regionandnation/call-for-papers/>. The deadline is **15 September**.

Kalamazoo, Michigan, 9-12 May 2019. Special Session at the 54th International Congress on Medieval Studies, "Hagiography and Historiography," invites proposals that interrogate the place of hagiography within historiography. How has hagiography been deployed within scholarly narratives about the medieval past? Saints' lives were composed in many languages, artistic media, and geographical regions throughout the medieval world, and today they are cited within literary studies as well as religious studies, theology, art history, history, and musicology. How does hagiography feature within the historiography of various scholarly fields of study? Are certain types of hagiographic narratives privileged or neglected in scholarship? Secondly, participants might evaluate hagiography and historiography in relation to the boundaries between medieval "genres" and modern academic disciplines. Should hagiography be considered a form of historiography, of history writing? While the primary focus of the session will be on the place of saints' lives within modern academic historiography, participants might also consider how medieval history writers utilized saints' stories within narratives about local, regional, world, or biblical history. Session organizer: Jenny C. Bledsoe, Agnes Scott College & Emory University Contact: jcbleds@emory.edu by Sept. 10, 2018.

Disability and the Medieval Cults of Saints:

Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches Editors: Stephanie Grace-Petinos, Leah Pope Parker, and Alicia Spencer-Hall. We invite abstract submissions for 7,500-word essays to be included in an edited volume on the topic of Disability and the Medieval Cults of Saints. Because saints' cults in the Middle Ages centralized the body—those of the saints themselves, those of devotees, and the idea of the body on earth and in the afterlife—scholars of medieval disability frequently find that our best sources are those that also deal with saints and sanctity. This volume therefore seeks to foster and assemble a wide range of approaches to disability in the context of medieval saints' cults. We seek contributions spanning a variety of fields, including history, literature, art history, archaeology, material culture, histories of science and medicine, religious history, etc. We especially encourage contributions that extend beyond Roman Christianity (including non-Christian concepts of sanctity) and that extend beyond Europe/the West. For the purposes of this volume, we define "disability" as broadly including physical impairment, diversity of bodily forms, chronic illness, neurodiversity (mental illness, cognitive impairment, etc), sensory impairment, and any other variation in bodily form or ability that affected medieval individuals' role and treatment in their communities. We are open to topics spanning the medieval period both temporally and geographically, but also inclusive of late antiquity and the early modern era. The editors envision essays falling into three units: saints with disabilities; saints interacting with disability; and theorizing

sanctity/disability. We welcome proposals on topics including, but not limited to:

- Phenomenology of saints' cults with respect to disability, e.g. pilgrimage, feast days, liturgy, etc;
- Materiality of sanctity involved in reliquaries, shrines, and relics;
- Doctrinal approaches to disability in relation to sanctity and holiness;
- Sanctity and bodies in the archaeological record;
- Intersections of disability and race/gender/sexuality/etc in hagiography, art, and material culture;
- Healing miracles and disabling miraculous punishments;
- Cross-cultural approaches to sanctity and disability;
- Saints who wrote about disability;
- Specific saints with connections to concepts of disability, e.g. Margaret of Antioch, Cosmas and Damian, Francis of Assisi, Dymphna, etc;
- Theorizing sanctity in relation to disability; and
- Sainly figures in non-hagiographic genres.

Please submit **abstracts** of 300–400 words, along with a **short author bio** and a **description of any images** you anticipate wanting to include in your essay, to the editors at DisabilitySanctity@gmail.com by **Monday, October 1, 2018**.



Other Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Denver CO, Friday 16 November 2018, 1-5pm.

“Comparative Hagiology: Issues in Theory and Method”

This workshop is foundational to the development of a collaborative approach to the (re)definition of a theory and method for the study of hagiographical sources from comparative and cross-cultural perspectives. At one level, it develops insights gained at the 2017 AAR meeting during the pre-conference “Comparative Hagiology workshop”, and the panel “Recentering Hagiography.” At another level, the workshop also aims to create the necessary environment to implement a thoroughly collaborative approach to the definition of theoretical and methodological foundations for further studies on religious life writings in a global perspective. To this end, and as a first collaborative development of the work conducted at AAR 2017, the workshop will center on the discussion of, and response to 5 pre-circulated papers on these issues. In the registration form, after completing your personal details, you will be offered to join one of the pre-conference workshops. Choose “Comparative Hagiology Workshop”, Friday 1:00-5:00pm, registration fee \$35.00 – this will include afternoon coffee break with some light snack. Please note that the workshop is capped at 30 participants! For any questions, please contact Massimo Rondolino at mrondoli@carrollu.edu.

Ghent, Belgium, 22-24 November 2018. “Novel Saints. Novel, Hagiography and Romance from the 4th to the 12th Century,” aims to examine the persistence of ancient novelistic material in hagiography and instances of continuity of novelistic and/or hagiographical strands in medieval romances in the West, Byzantium and Persia. The early history of the novel has not been written yet. The oldest representatives of this genre (also called ‘ancient romances’ in scholarship) were written in Latin and Greek in the first few centuries of the Common Era. Often, scholars have observed an interim period between the fourth and twelfth centuries from which no novels are said to have been preserved and identify a so-called ‘re-emergence’ of the genre in Byzantium. Building on recent research that studies hagiography as *literature*, this conference of the ERC project *Novel Saints* (Ghent University) aims to challenge this view by studying hagiography as a continuation of novelistic literature during the so-called ‘dark age’ of the novel. For further queries, please contact flavia.ruani@ugent.be or tine.scheijnen@ugent.be

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/>



Book Announcements

Capra, Raymond L., Murzaku, Ines Angeli, and Milewski, Douglas J. *The Life of Saint Neilos of Rossano*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library ; 47. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 2018. ISBN : 9780674977044

O'Hara, Alexander. *Jonas of Bobbio and the Legacy of Columbanus : Sanctity and Community in the Seventh Century*. Oxford Studies in Late Antiquity. New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2018. ISBN : 9780190858001

Sanok, Catherine. *New Legends of England : Forms of Community in Late Medieval Saints' Lives*. Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press 2018. ISBN : 9780812249828

Spencer-Hall, Alicia. *Medieval Saints and Modern Screens: Divine Visions as Cinematic Experience*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press, 2018. ISBN : 9789462982277