



VOL. XXXI ISSUE 2

HAGIOGRAPHY SOCIETY

AUGUST 2020

Amending the Society's Constitution

COMING SOON!

The Hagiography Society constitution turned ten years old this year! In that decade, a lot of how we function has changed. Some of those changes are hopefully very temporary, but some are clearly permanent. In order to help the Society function as effectively as possible, the Executive Committee will be proposing changes to some of its positions and general wording of our governing document. Members in good standing will be able to comment on the changes in late October and early November, and then see the final proposal with relevant member comments for a vote in early December.

Upcoming Hagiography Society Elections

In early 2021, the Society will hold elections for three of its five Executive Committee Positions. We'll be posting the position descriptions as soon as the constitution revisions are decided, but we already encourage everyone to think about running! If the revisions are approved, one of the positions open will be an Outreach Chair. Formerly known as the Nominations Chair (a name that won't be used in future), this position will combine nominations duties with some social media responsibilities from the Communications Chair (also up for election). The Programming Chair, who oversees Hagiography Society panels at various conferences, is the third position up for election.

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The Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Award for Hagiographical Studies

Named in honor of the beloved founder and long-time leader of the Society, the Sherry L. Reames Graduate Student Travel Award for Hagiographical Studies now provides \$500 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.



Deadline: November 1st

Faculty, please encourage graduate students to apply!

Graduate students, please apply!





Embedded Hagiography: Teaching the vita of Guibert de Nogent's Mother

PROF. KAREN WINSTEAD
WINSTEAD.2@OSU.EDU, THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

One of the many fascinating features of Guibert de Nogent's *Monodies* is the remarkably detailed portrait Guibert paints of his mother, whom he represents in distinctly hagiographical terms. I have twice now incorporated the *Monodies* into an upper-level course in medieval women in the English Department at The Ohio State University. When we arrive at the *Monodies*, my students have already read some saints' lives, including Hrotsvitha's *Dulcitus* and *Abraham*. Their assignment reads as follows:

Circa 1115, when he was about fifty years old, Guibert, abbot of the monastery of Nogent-sous-Coucy in northern France, wrote his memoirs (*Monodies*). This remarkable book is considered the earliest medieval autobiography, but it relates not only Guibert's life story but also his mother's. Your assignment has two parts. First, from the bits of information Guibert supplies in his *Monodies*, tell story of his mother. Second, analyze the portrait of Guibert's mother that emerges from his *Monodies*. What can you deduce about Guibert's emotions towards and relationship with her from what he does, and doesn't, say? Be prepared to discuss your findings in class.

This assignment has been tremendously successful in teaching students close-reading skills and in prompting them to think deeply about holiness, relationships (parental, heterosexual, heterospiritual), and the complexity of medieval women's experiences. It hooks students by asking them to be detectives. Close reading, they learn, is not a boring academic exercise but rather the discovery and interpretation of clues.

On the day the assignment is due, I run the class as a roundtable. Or rather, I don't run it. One of the students presides and scribes as everybody shares their findings. Together, they reconstruct the mother's biography and consider Guibert's strategies of representation. Questions that have arisen during the roundtable include: Why, if Guibert values his mother so highly, does he omit to name her? Can we detect resentment and jealousy as well as admiration in Guibert's portrait? How does a Freudian lens impoverish this text? How does Guibert's anger towards his tutor affect his attitude towards his mother? Must we speculate that his mother and tutor are lovers—can't they just be good friends? How do the mother's behaviors defy the son's attempt to sanctify her? I do not weigh in until the very end, when I share my thoughts on their thoughts and praise what I learned from them.

This assignment reinforces the idea that hagiography is not indiscriminate praise. It teaches students how much can be learned by pondering what authors do not say and by contrasting what they say with what they show. It gives them practice with an essential feminist tool, namely, deducing the experience of medieval women from texts that are not explicitly about them. Students come to appreciate hagiography as a complex and nuanced literary form and to understand its value to cultural historians.

"Close reading, they learn, is not a boring academic exercise but rather the discovery and interpretation of clues."



Interested in contributing a guest column on your own experiences teaching the saints?

Contact:
Lydia M. Walker at
lydia.walker@utoronto.ca

Saints of Color

A SOCIAL MEDIA QUERY

In July we posed a question on social media: Which primary or secondary sources would you recommend for scholars who want to learn more about saints of color? Here is a sample of the responses we received. If you have suggestions for this ongoing topical list, please email Lydia Walker (lydia.walker@utoronto.ca) or Amy Ogden (avo2n@virginia.edu).

Online Resources

- Princeton Ethiopian Miracles of Mary Project (የፕሪንስተን የኢትዮጵያ ተዓምራት ማርያም ፕሮጀክት), principle investigator: Wendy Laura Belcher. <https://pemm.princeton.edu/>
- Black Central European Studies Network (BCESN): <https://blackcentraleurope.com/>
- Phoebe Farag Mikhail, "The Blackness of St. Moses the Strong," <http://copticvoiceus.com/the-blackness-of-st-moses-the-black/>
- *Historias* Podcast: Episode 14, *Black Saints in the Early Modern Hispanic World*, featuring an interview with Erin Rowe. <https://historiaspodcast.org/>

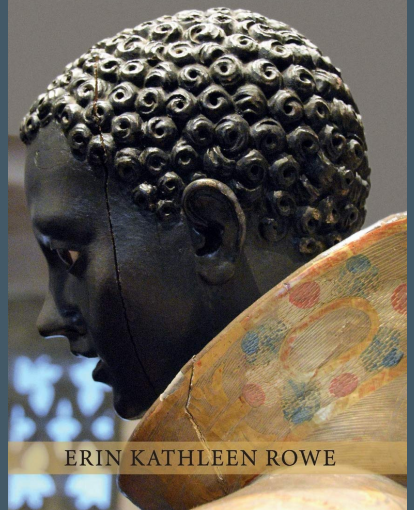
Articles

- Laura Ingallinella, "Il "miracolo della gamba nera" dei santi Cosma e Damiano: fonti e rimaneggiamenti nell'agiografia latina, greca e romanza," in "Que ben devetz conoisser la plus fina." Per Margherita Spampinato, a cura di Mario Pagano, Avellino, Edizioni Sinestesie, pp. 345–367.
- Shokoofeh Rajabzadeh, "Alisaundre Becket: Thomas Becket's Resilient, Muslim, Arab Mother in the South English Legendary," *Postmedieval*, vol. 10, pp. 293–303 (2019).

Books and Article Collections

- Molly H. Bassett and Vincent W. Lloyd, eds. *Sainthood and Race: Marked Flesh, Holy Flesh* (Routledge, 2015).
- Paul H.D. Kaplan, *The Rise of the Black Magus in Western Art* (UMI Research Press, 1985).
- Erin Rowe, *Black Saints in Early Modern Global Catholicism* (Cambridge, 2020).

BLACK SAINTS IN EARLY MODERN GLOBAL CATHOLICISM





Call for Papers

Saints and the Natural World, IMC Leeds, 2021. The Norse Hagiography Network seeks proposals for a panel/panels at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, 2021. Hagiography is rife with stories of saints interacting with the natural world. These stories represent more than just face-value interactions; they are integral parts of wider themes within Christian literature: for example, the medieval perception of the natural world and the belief of humans' place therein. At the same time, individual hagiographical accounts reveal variations of these beliefs while also executing unique narrative functions within the text. The NHN seeks papers exploring these themes and more. Potential topics include (but are not limited to):

- Saints and holy springs
- Saints and the forests
- Interactions between saints and animals and/or nature beings
- Asceticism & the theme of saints longing for the wilderness.

Please send an abstract of no more than 250 words to Tiffany White (tiffany.white@berkeley.edu) by September 28th, 2020.

Ecclesiastical History Society, The Church in Sickness and in Health. Following the postponement of its 2020 summer conference due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Ecclesiastical History Society invites articles for a peer-reviewed volume of “Studies in Church History” on the theme Church in Sickness and in Health. Papers are invited that consider how the Church has responded to – and defined – sickness and health from the Early Church to the present day. Submit proposals by 15 October 2020, using the form at: <https://ecclesiasticalhistorysociety.com/churchinsicknessandinhealth/>

February 5-6, 2021, Marco Manuscript Workshop: “Immaterial Culture”, Remotely from the Marco Institute for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This year’s workshop will consider some of the recent challenges that researchers have faced with the suspension of travel, the closing of libraries and universities, and the quarantine restrictions that have kept so many of us in our homes. How can our field, which has always emphasized the importance of physical place and tactile artifacts, work successfully in isolation and at a distance? What does it mean for us when our work takes place in an incorporeal world of light and numbers rather than ink and flesh, in matrices of data rather than dusty rooms? We propose to explore the advantages and disadvantages of this “immaterial culture,” and to think about how our work is shaped by access or lack of access to manuscripts, texts, catalogues, and objects. We welcome presentations on any aspect of this topic, broadly imagined. Presenters will receive a \$500 honorarium for their participation. The deadline for applications is October 9, 2020. Applicants are asked to submit a current CV and a two-page abstract of their project to Roy M. Liuzza, preferably via email to rliuzza@utk.edu.

May 15, 2021, Saint Angelus, Carmelite: History, Hagiography and iconography on the Eighth Centenary of His Martyrdom". The deadline for proposal submission is 30th November 2020. More information on <https://ottavocentenariosantangelo.org/2020/07/07/call-for-papers/>.

Upcoming Conferences

November 5-6, 2020, Biblioteca Agustiniana de Buenos Aires
III Coloquio de Hagiografía «El culto a los santos fundadores (siglos XII-XVII)». For details please see: <https://www.bibcisao.com/coloquio-hagiografia>.

November 16-17, 2020, École française de Rome
The project SCISMA together with École française de Rome and the Finnish Institute in Rome organizes a workshop discussing the ways in which the religious communities in Rome reacted to the peculiar circumstances created by the Schism. It is the intention of this conference to bring together academics working on different religious communities in Rome, to increase dialogue and exchange, in order to help better understand the effects of the Schism in the city. For further information, email: Kirsi Salonen, kilesa@utu.fi or Pierre Savy, dirma@efrome.it.

New Books

Gerat, I. *Iconology of Charity: Medieval Legends of Saint Elizabeth in Central Europe*. Peeters, 2020.

Kuuliala, Jenni. *Saints, Infirmary, and Community in the Late Middle Ages*. Amsterdam University Press, 2020.

MacEvitt, Christopher. *The Martyrdom of the Franciscans Islam, the Papacy, and an Order in Conflict*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

Monastic Experience in Twelfth-Century Germany: The Chronicle of Petershausen in translation, trans. Alison I. Beach, Shannon M.T. Li and Samuel S. Sutherland. Manchester University Press, April/May 2020.

Papasidero, Marco. *Translatio Sanctitatis: I furti di reliquie nell'Italia medievale*. Firenze University Press, 2019.

Suykerbuyk, Ruben. *The Matter of Piety: Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard and Religious Material Culture in the Low Countries (c. 1450-1620)*. Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History, 16. Brill, 2020.

Trembinski, Donna. *Illness and Authority: Disability in the Life and Lives of Francis of Assisi*. University of Toronto Press, 2020.

