# York Centre for Medieval Studies Postgraduate Conference:
# New Voices in Medieval Studies

27th June 2019
King's Manor, University of York



*Woman teaching geometry (14th century), MS BL Burney 275, f.293*

# Conference Programme

**9:00-9:30 Arrival and Registration (K/G33)**

**9:30-9:45 Welcome and Introduction (K/133)**

## 9:45-11:00 Session 1a – Authority (K/133)
*Chair: Emma Nuding, PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*

### Authority I: Kingship, Power and Identity outside of the European Middle Ages
### Paper 1: Keeping up with the Konstantinopolitans: The Ceremony of Byzantine Diplomacy
*George Robert Luff: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
This paper seeks to evaluate the methods of the so-called 'palace diplomacy' of the Byzantine Empire during the 9th and 10th centuries, reconstructing its scale and grandiosity from a wide selection of primary sources of both Byzantine and non-Byzantine provenance. I shall argue that the Byzantine ceremony, which was often portrayed as ludicrously ostentatious in contemporary accounts, played a key part in both the internal and external politics of the Konstantinopolitan court. These exaggerated performances and decadent examples of hospitality, far from being an unworthy expense, were an essential part of Byzantine diplomacy, and key to the Byzantine survival.

### Paper 2: Performing Religion: King Khusro and his Fire Temple
*Amy Hopkins: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
In order to be an efficient ruler in the Middle Ages, regardless of where that ruler was, they had to be able to use religion to perform identity. This paper seeks to examine the ways in which King Khusro used the Zoroastrian Fire Temple of Ādur Gušnasp to perform his role as a divinely sanctified ruler in the Sasanian Empire. The ways in which Khusro manipulated his religious space is similar to that of other monotheistic divine rulers; this paper maintains that it is imperative that Western scholars seek to broaden their understanding of first-millennium religions. This paper will examine the royal fire sanctuary as a piece of monumental religious architecture, as art, and as a space for the development of secular power, to evaluate how the Sasanian King designed and utilised the space.

### Authority II: Constructing Authorial Authority in Late Medieval Texts
### Paper 1: Barclay and Skelton: Barclay's *Shyp of Folys*, Glosses, and Authority
*John Colley: incoming MSt in English (650-1550), Jesus College, University of Oxford (from September 2019)*
Barclay and Skelton hated each other, and regularly exchanged jibes and taunts in their verse. This paper, however, considers Barclay's Latin glosses to his *Shyp of Folys* (1509) to argue whether there are benefits in looking beyond their rivalry. Barclay's *Shyp* is a translation of Latin and French versions of Brant's popular satire *Das Narrenschiff* (1494) and features the glosses of previous translators alongside new glosses added by Barclay himself. Analysing Barclay's glosses in light of Skelton's glossing practices, I argue that these poetic rivals share similar interests in the appearance of their work in print and in the construction of their literary authority.

### Paper 2: Erasmus, Jerome, and the Storehouse of the Memory
*Bard Swallow: MA in Medieval Literature and Languages, University of York*
This paper deals with Erasmus' portrayal of Jerome in the *Life of Jerome* which prefaces his 1516 edition of Jerome's letters. It claims that Erasmus intentionally minimizes Jerome's ambivalence towards secular literature in order to make him the poster-child of Erasmus' own ideal of eloquence. Drawing on the work of Mary Carruthers on the *thesaurus memoriae*, a common metaphor for the memory, this paper argues that the ways in which Erasmus and Jerome use and develop this metaphor demonstrate significant differences between the Erasmian Jerome and the historical Jerome.

# 9:45-11:00 Session 1b – Textual Mentalities and Emotions (K/G33)

*Chair: Emmie Rose Price-Goodfellow, PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*

<u>Textual Mentalities and Emotions I: Authorial Mindsets</u>
## Paper 1: 'Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille': The Art of Reading the Reynardian World

*Chloë Reeves: MA in Medieval Literature and Languages, University of York*
The above quotation from *The Nun's Priest's Tale* presents the poem as a fable, a fictional narrative illustrating a moral truth. However, the tale also references tropes of romance, epic, fabliau, beast epic and bestiary, rendering it overtly intertextual. I will argue that intertextuality is crucial for the interpretation of literature about Reynard the fox, which frequently exploits verbal misinterpretation for comedy and has presented its core characters and narratives with such variety as to demonstrate authorial cunning, worthy of the arch-trickster Reynard himself.

## Paper 2: Finding Clarity in the "clutter of medieval authorial mindset": The Supernatural in Guibert of Nogent's Autobiography

*Rebecca Bleaden: MA in Medieval History, University of York*
This paper will demonstrate the twelfth-century concerns and ideals that influenced Guibert's interpretation of the supernatural in his *Monodies*. In doing so, it will be established why historians should avoid placing modern models and frameworks, such as psychoanalysis, on to the text, especially when there are clear contemporary models being used instead. Tales of the supernatural dominate the autobiography because they challenged Guibert's thinking, spiritually, exegetically and psychologically. Therefore, the acknowledgement of the impact of Gregorian reform, ideas of the self and Guibert's model of the mind on his portrayal of the supernatural, adds unequivocal clarity to *Monodies*.

<u>Textual Mentalities and Emotions I: Emotions and Anxieties</u>
## Paper 1: "Schew me þine herte": Revealing the Penitent's Secrets

*Isobel Staton, PhD in Medieval History, University of York (from September 2019)*
Most laypeople in fifteenth-century England confessed during Lent. As penitents queued to confess, they witnessed their fellows being reconciled to God and their community as each was confessed and absolved. Contemporary sources and historiography have emphasised the sacrament's focus on social reconciliation and dispute resolution. However, this paper will suggest that confession was an imperfect, and potentially disruptive, tool. Using priests' manuals and sermon collections, this paper will examine the emotional model for confession, and the suspicion which tainted the painful intimacy of revelation and the absolution bestowed. Disputing parishioners could disregard such uncertain absolution, damaging confession as a tool of reconciliation.

## Paper 2: Penance and Apocalypse in Late Anglo-Saxon England (950–1050)

*Eleanor Cox: MA in History, University of Nottingham*
My paper will seek to examine the role of penance and apocalypse in the religious lives of those living in the years 950-1050. In particular, it will examine how these themes were understood concurrently in a cultural and religious context by contemporaries. Mainly, I will use two anonymous collections of homilies from the period, the Blickling Homilies and the Vercelli Codex, as these give a glimpse into how penance and apocalypse were understood by ordinary people in Anglo-Saxon England. Ultimately, I will argue that the Anglo-Saxon homilies reflected societal fears about the soul, salvation and the nature of repentance.

# 11:00-11:15 Break

# 11:15-12:45 Session 2a (K/G33)
*Chair: Rebecca Drake, PhD in English and Related Literature, University of York*

## Texts and Artefacts from the North Sea Archipelago
### Paper 1: The Function of Early Runic Inscriptions in East Anglia, c.400–800
*Jasmin Higgs: MA in Viking & Anglo-Saxon Studies, University of Nottingham*
The project will explore the function of runic inscriptions in find spots in England, dated between 400-800AD. These runic inscriptions are primarily from the East of England and are on a diverse range of objects, ranging from combs, cremation urns, and weaponry. The project explores the function of the early runic inscriptions in England over time, and explores 'function' in different ways, including the relationship between inscribed object and inscription, the inscriptions as communication, and inscriptions as identity markers.

### Paper 2: Hogbacks – A Question of Difference
*Harriet Heaton: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
My paper will address this little-discussed class of Viking-Age sculpture, using an art historical approach to question whether all hogback stones are indeed 'hogbacks.' This paper will take the sites of Gosforth (Cumbria) and Brompton (North Yorkshire) examining different 'types' of hogback across the two sites. The sites have similarities in that all their sculpture is dated to the 10th century, as well as both being connected to wider networks. This paper will specifically look at the form of Hogbacks, raising questions of connectivity and transmission as well as difference.

### Paper 3: Archery in the Viking Age
*Samuel Day: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
The use of archery in Viking age and Medieval Icelandic literature is often deliberate and unique. The ubiquitous use of the bow is not mentioned, and when archery is recorded it is given greater significance. Old Norse literature forefronts the use of the sword as the pinnacle of heroic combat, but it is unclear whether archery is therefore seen as being a second-class form of combat. This paper will explore what may be learnt about the practice of archery from both literary and archaeological material.

## Modern Craft, Medieval Practice
### Paper 1: 'Freyja's Point of View' – Selection and Analysis of Self-Written Poetry on Freyja, Giving Her a Voice.
*Rhiannon A Evans: MRes in English, University of Hull*
Through an analysis of a collection of self-written poetry on Freyja, I aim to give her a new voice by building a persona based on culture crucial to Norse society, namely oral traditions, patriarchy and depictions of women in Norse society.

### Paper 2: Lost and Found: A Morris & Co. Stained-Glass Window in Leeds
*Stephen Huws: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
This paper will look the Gothic Revival church of St Peter's, Bramley, and the damage done to it during a rebuilding project in 1980. This church contained beautiful windows by Morris & Co. designed by Edward Burne-Jones which were partially lost during the rebuild. Forty years later, no one outside the church knew that some more glass survived in storage on site. This paper will look at this window in its original context and reconstruct the it from the surviving panels. The window is an example of nineteenth-century Medievalism and can be compared with a medieval York window for greater illumination.

# 11:15-12:30 Session 2b – Cistercians: Voices and Communities (K/133)

*Chair: Emma Nuding, PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*

### Paper 1: "Following in the Footprints of the Ancient Fathers": Uses of the Past in Cistercian *Exempla* Collections

*Emmie Rose Price-Goodfellow: PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*

In this paper, I will talk about Cistercian *exempla* collections as examples of twelfth and thirteenth-century moral education. I argue for the need to include these sources in broader scholarly conversations about preaching, moral theology and didactic literature in this period. I will then present a case study from my research, on the differing ways that views of the past and ideas about history writing affected the writing of Conrad of Eberbach's *Exordium Magnum* and Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus Miraculorum*.

### Paper 2: Whose Body? Exploring the Textual Heritage of the Saint's Body in *The Life of Waltheof of Melrose* by Jocelin of Furness

*Molly Hoffman: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*

Jocelin explicitly states that the purpose of *The Life of St Waltheof* is imitation. However, the work is also strongly representative of the literary context in which it was produced. This is manifested in the treatment of Waltheof's body in the narrative. The text paints an intricate portrait of the significance of the saint's body as a vehicle for the intentions of the cult's promoters. This paper will explore how the complex layers of allusion, which perforate the account, leave multiple parties with claims over the body of the saint.

### Paper 3: 'Made in the Image and Likeness of God': Affectivity and Cosmological Allegory in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Texts on the Soul

*Jack Ford: PhD in History, University College London*

For Cistercian monks, 'affectivity,' or the choices of the rational soul between habits of virtue and vice are set out in texts called *On the Soul* (*De anima*). Through an examination of two under-utilised Cistercian *De anima* this paper will argue that these works are profoundly anthropological: man, made in the image of God, can either restrain his senses and desires to return to God, or embrace sensuality and the desire to corrupt his divine divine image through sin. As such, these texts reveal the all-important intersection between man, morality and the cosmos in the twelfth century.

# 12:45-13:45 Lunch

If you want to bring lunch, or buy something, you can eat it in the Museum Gardens, or bring it to K/G84 which we have booked all day.

There are lots of great cafes in York, come and ask us if you need a recommendation.

## 13:45-14:30 Session 3– Cultures in Contact: Crossing Spaces and Trading Places (K/133)

*Chair: Emmie Rose Price-Goodfellow, PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*

**Paper 1: "They Make Great Rumours from Nothing": Emptiness and Nestorian Christians in William of Rubruck's** *Itinerarium*
*Chris Rouse: AHRC funded PhD candidate in the Department of History, University of Birmingham*
In this paper, I draw on the spatial turn to explore the formative and ideological value of emptiness in William of Rubruck's thirteenth-century travel text, the *Itinerarium*. Examining how William used emptiness to construct the Asian steppe as morally and physically empty, I apply Edward Soja's 'thirding' to posit Nestorian Christians as liminal agents who dwelt in, were influenced by and contributed to this emptiness. They challenge a simple 'Christian us' versus 'Asian them' dichotomy, and hence in this paper they demonstrate the role of emptiness in investing space with meaning, and how space contributes to complex identities and representations.

**Paper 2: Mapping Movement in the Medieval Mediterranean: Using Network Theory and Travel Literature to Explore Movement and Connections in the Mediterranean in the Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries**
*Annabel Hancock: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
In recent years, network theory has proved to be an innovative tool for studying the past. Using similar techniques to those used by Sindbaek (2007, 2012) I will explore their possibilities to better understand movement and connections in the Mediterranean. A graph created from itinerary maps drawn by Matthew Paris and the travel writings of Ibn Battuta, Ibn Jubayr, and Benjamin of Tudela, will be compared with a review of current historiographical perspectives to either challenge or substantiate current thought. This paper will consider the benefits and challenges of using network analysis to study a region which has not been explored in this way before.

## 14:30-14:45 Break

## 14:45-15:45 Session 4 – Literary Texts: Places of Power, People of Power (K/133)

*Chair: Annabel Dukes, PhD in English and Related Literature, University of York*

**Paper 1: Fenland Pilgrimage: a Journey to St Guthlac**
*Emma Nuding: PhD in Medieval Studies, University of York*
Emma's talk examines pilgrimage in the fenlands, with a focus on the Anglo-Saxon Saint, Guthlac of Crowland. The changing landscape of the fens radically alters the nature of pilgrimage through it, whether the journeys are to Guthlac's island hermitage, the later monastery on the same site, or to the present parish church. Pilgrimage can also be seen as a journey of the soul as well as of the body: texts about the fenland give readers the opportunity to experience Guthlac's environment virtually. Emma will be offering a close reading of three Guthlac texts: an eight-century Latin prose *vita*, an Old English poem called *Guthlac B*, and the critically acclaimed 1983/1992 novel, *Waterland*, by Graham Swift.

**Paper 2: Prophetic Vision and the Forest in Geoffrey of Monmouth's** *Vita Merlini*
*Poppy Tester: MA in Medieval Studies, University of York*
Merlin, driven by grief, retreats into the forest after battle. His self-imposed exile from court is often read as a rejection of human society and its inherent violence. Despite this, Geoffrey's forest is a fertile ground for political prophecy, inspiring visions in both Merlin and his sister, Ganieda. This paper explores the impact of the forest on the prophetic vision of the characters. Particular emphasis is placed on the liminal nature of the forest, which reflects Merlin's position as mediator between the mundane world and spiritual realm.

**Paper 3: Picturing India in the Old English** *Orosius*
*Wenzhuo Shi: MA in Medieval Literature and Languages, University of York*
As part of my dissertation focusing on the Anglo-Saxon understanding of India in Early Middle Ages, this paper will investigate on the description of India in the Old English *Orosius*along with the Latin text written by Paulus Orosius. While English people (more specifically, West Saxons in this case) in medieval time inherited general knowledge of India from Late Antique writers, the Anglo-Saxon image of the land shows differences in compared to the Late Antique one, both in geographical and cultural/political perspectives. This paper will include close reading on both OE and Latin texts and argue that the image of India in the Old English *Orosius* becomes geographically more abstract but culturally more concrete.

## 15:45-16:15 Break

## 16:15-17:15 Keynote Lecture (K/133)

## Gendering the Built Environment: A Medievalist's Perspective
**Rachel Delman, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow, University of York**
*Chair: Sarah Rees Jones, Director of the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York*

**Please join us afterwards for the annual CMS garden party**