Horizontal Learning
within High Medieval Religious Communities

Brussels, September 1st and 2nd, 2016

This colloquium will center on the medieval practices of learning within a community, understood as a body of people who practice communal living and share an understanding of what binds them together, even though this understanding is constantly being renegotiated. Our aim is to focus on the ways in which co-habiting peers learned from one another. This “horizontal learning” has received much less attention than the vertical master/student approach, and yet it emerges as an important part of the learning experience, especially as we are interested in “learning” in a broad sense: not only acquiring factual knowledge or skills, but also developing ideas and beliefs and adapting to behavioral patterns. In short, everything that could make a monk a better and more efficient member of the community.

Whereas other projects thematize the institutional history of learning, the transmission of propositional knowledge in formalized educational contexts, or the importance of networks of learning, this project distinguishes itself through its focus on day-to-day interactions by community members.

Our starting point is the investigation of communal learning in the practices of high medieval religious communities. Progressing beyond the old view that they were closed, homogeneous, and fairly stable social groups, we intend to approach these communities as the product of a continuous process of education and integration of new members. Contributions will investigate the way in which inter-personal exchanges of knowledge between peers concretely functioned, and what this teaches us about medieval learning within the context of a community.

Sponsors

FWO Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO)
The Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies
Ghent University (UGent), Department of History
Ghent University (UGent), Faculty of Arts and Philosophy
Research Unit 'Religion and Society in the Early and Central Middle Ages' (UGent)
Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts
Lectio. Leuven Centre for the Study of the Transmission of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
Organizing committee
Veerle Fraeters (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)
Micol Long (UGent, BE)
Brigitte Meijns (KU Leuven, BE)
Mia Münster-Swendsen (Roskilde Universitet, DK)
Tjamke Snijders (UGent, BE)
Steven Vanderputten (UGent, BE)

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Brigitte Meijns (KU Leuven, BE)
Gert Melville (Research Centre for the Comparative History of Religious Orders, Dresden, DE)
Elisabeth Tyler (University of York, UK)
Steven Vanderputten (UGent, BE)

Confirmed participants
Nicolangelo D’Acunto (Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore, IT)
Jay Diehl (Long Island University, USA)
Cédric Giraud (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, FR)
Babette Hellemans (University of Groningen, NE)
Stephen Jaeger (University of Illinois, USA)
Karl Patrick Kinsella (University of Oxford, UK)
Micol Long (UGent, BE)
Marc Saurette (Carleton University, CA)
Neslihan Şenocak (Columbia University, USA)
Tjamke Snijders (UGent, BE)
Steven Vanderputten (UGent, BE)
September 1st 2016

11.00 Introduction
Steven Vanderputten (UGent, BE)

11.15 THEME 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS
chair: Veerle Fraeters (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)

Tjamke Snijders (UGent, BE)
Definitions of ‘community’ and their implications for a theory of communal learning

Micol Long (UGent, BE)
“Condiscipuli sumus”: the roots of horizontal learning in monastic culture
discussion

12.30 lunch break

14.15 THEME 2: LEARNING THROUGH ORAL EXCHANGES
chair: Patricia Stoop (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)

Jay Diehl (Long Island University, USA)
Truth as Teaching: Lies, Deceit and the Ethics of Learning in Twelfth-Century Monastic Culture

Babette Hellemans (University of Groningen, NL)
Heloise's Echo: Vocality in the Letter Correspondence with Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable
discussion

15.30 coffee break

16.00 THEME 3: LEARNING THROUGH THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
chair: Brigitte Meijns (KU Leuven, BE)

Marc Saurette (Carleton University, CA)
‘Spaces of Learning’ at Cluny under the Abbacy of Peter the Venerable
Karl Patrick Kinsella (University of Oxford, UK)
*Teaching through Architecture: Honorius Augustodunensis and the Medieval Church*

Friday September 2nd 2016

9.45   THEME 4: THE DYNAMICS OF LEARNING BETWEEN EQUALITY AND HIERARCHY
       chair: Steven Vanderputten (UGent)

Nicolangelo D’Acunto (Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore, IT)
*Forms of Transmission of Knowledge at Saint Gall (IX-XI century)*

Cédric Giraud (Université de Lorraine, FR)
"Ut fiat aequalitas". *Spiritual Pedagogy and Education of the Inner-Men in XII Century Cloisters*

11.00  coffee break

11.30  THEME 5: COMPARATIVES PERSPECTIVES
       chair: Micol Long (UGent, BE)

Neslihan Senoçak (Columbia University, USA via skype)
*Training of Canons in the Collegiate Churches as an Example of Horizontal Learning*

Keynote
Stephen Jaeger (University of Illinois, USA)
*Men and Women in the Life of the Schools, 10th to 12th Century*

12.25  Conclusion and final discussion
       Micol Long and Tjamke Snijders (UGent, BE)

13.00  lunch