

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)

Ghent University (UGent), Department of History

Ghent University (UGent), Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

The Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies

Lectio. Leuven Centre for the Study of the Transmission of Texts and Ideas in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance

Research Unit 'Religion and Society in the Early and Central Middle Ages' (UGent)

Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts

Organizing committee

Veerle Fraeters (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)
Micol Long (Universiteit Gent, BE)
Brigitte Meijns (KU Leuven, BE)
Mia Münster-Swendsen (Roskilde Universitet, DK)
Tjamke Snijders (Universiteit Gent, BE)
Steven Vanderputten (Universiteit Gent, BE)

Scientific committee

Enrico Artifoni (Università degli studi di Torino, IT)
Nicole Bériou (Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, FR)
Mette Birkedal Bruun (Københavns Universitet, DK).
John van Engen (University of Notre Dame, USA)
Veerle Fraeters (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)
Mary Garrison (University of York, UK)
Elisabeth van Houts (Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, UK)
Brigitte Meijns (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, BE)
Gert Melville (Research Centre for the Comparative History of Religious Orders, Dresden, DE)
Elisabeth Tyler (University of York, UK)
Steven Vanderputten (Universiteit Gent, BE)

Confirmed participants

Nicolangelo D'Acunto (Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano/Brescia IT)
Jay Diehl (Long Island University, USA)
Cédric Giraud (Université de Lorraine, FR)
Babette Hellemans (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, NE)
Stephen Jaeger (University of Illinois, USA)
Karl Patrick Kinsella (University of Oxford, UK)
Micol Long (Universiteit Gent, BE)
Marc Saurette (Carleton University, CA)
Neslihan Şenocak (Columbia University, USA)
Tjamke Snijders (Universiteit Gent, BE)
Steven Vanderputten (Universiteit Gent, BE)

Thursday, September 1st 2016

10.30 Welcome coffee

11.00 *Introduction*
Steven Vanderputten (Universiteit Gent, BE)

11.10 THEME 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS
chair: Jay Diehl (Long Island University, USA)

Tjamke Snijders (Universiteit Gent, BE)
Definitions of 'community' and their implications for a theory of communal learning

Micol Long (Universiteit Gent, BE)
"Condiscipuli sumus": the roots of horizontal learning in monastic culture

discussion

12.25 lunch break

14.00 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 (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, NL)
Heloise's Echo: Vocality in the Letter Correspondence with Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux and Peter the Venerable

discussion

15.15 coffee break

15.45 THEME 3: LEARNING THROUGH THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
chair: Brigitte Meijns (Katholieke Universiteit 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/University of York, UK)
Teaching through Architecture: Honorius Augustodunensis and the Medieval Church

discussion

Friday, September 2nd 2016

9.45 THEME 4: THE DYNAMICS OF LEARNING
 BETWEEN EQUALITY AND HIERARCHY
 chair: Veerle Fraeters (Universiteit Antwerpen, BE)

Nicolangelo D'Acunto (Università Cattolica, Milano/Brescia, IT)
Forms of Transmission of Knowledge at Saint Gall (IX-XI century)

Cédric Giraud (Université de Lorraine, FR)
Ut fiat aequalitas. Spiritual training of the inner man in the twelfth-century cloister

discussion

11.00 coffee break

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

videoconference Neslihan Şenocak (Columbia University, USA)
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: In the Classroom of Herman of Reichenau

12.30 *Conclusions*
 Micol Long and Tjamke Snijders (Universiteit Gent, BE)

Final discussion

13.15 lunch