

Call for Posters

Narrating Relationships in Holy Lives from the first millennium AD

Department of Classics & Ancient History
University of Exeter via Zoom, 12th July 2021

We are excited to announce an afternoon workshop on ‘Narrating Relationships in Holy Lives’. Communities wrote about holy figures for many reasons. Our speakers consider the characterisation of various holy figures or ‘the very special dead’ in texts from multiple religious (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Manichaean) and linguistic (Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew) communities. The workshop will explore the construction of holy and unholy characters, their relationships, and the role of narrative order in texts about holy figures. We are especially interested in how these features change as texts and figures are translated, transmitted, epitomised or received in different contexts across the late-ancient and early-medieval Mediterranean.

Keynotes: Christian Sahrer (Oxford) “*How to construct a holy life in the early Islamic period*”
& Christa Gray (Reading) TBC

Speakers: Nic Baker-Brian (Cardiff) “*Is there a Narrator Here? The Role of Narrative and Narration in Manichaean Kephalaia*”; Stavroula Constantinou (Cyprus) “*Narrating Friendship in Byzantine Hagiography*”; Edmund Hayes (Leiden) TBC; Jillian Stinchcomb (Brandeis) “*Narrating the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon’s Court in Late Antique Sources*”; Chontel Syfox (Wisconsin-Madison) “*Rewriting Leah: The Feminine Ideal in the Book of Jubilees*”

The workshop will be held in English and will comprise a short opening and closing keynote, brief panels, and discussion. This will culminate in a roundtable discussion. **General registration will be opened in late May.**

Applications are now open for pre-circulated posters. We invite contributions that consider:

- Order in which characters and relationships are introduced or developed
- Choice of narrator(s) and narrative perspectives
- Types of relationship (e.g. confrontational, supportive, ambiguous) as narrative devices
- Relationship formation, breakdown and misunderstanding as narrative progression
- Relationships as constructors of inclusion, exclusion & difference (e.g. status, gender etc.)
- Reconfiguration of relationships in transmission, translation, paraphrase and epitome
- Receptions and reinterpretations of characters from other narratives
- Relationships beyond the human (e.g. supernatural, environmental, non-human)
- Characters in context: narratives and audience, performance, relics

Posters will be shared with registered attendees, who will be invited to pose questions to individual poster presenters via email. General themes and questions arising from the posters will also be raised at the roundtable discussion.

We will accept posters in English, French, German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish and Modern Standard Arabic. To facilitate wide comprehension, presenters are asked to provide **an English synopsis** if the poster is not in English; if this is a barrier then please contact us. We are especially keen to encourage submissions from postgraduates, ECRs and independent scholars who may not have a departmental profile.

Please send one-page poster submissions in PowerPoint or PDF format to narratingholylives@gmail.com by **1st July 2021**, along with affiliation, year of study and synopsis if applicable. Submissions will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Enquiries about poster topics and format are also welcomed (we recommend A1 format, 26pt font minimum) and we can provide a poster guidance sheet.

Alice van den Bosch (Exeter) & (Reading/Exeter)