

Metamorphosis,
Transformation, and
Transmutation

CERÆ

An Australasian Journal of Medieval
and Early Modern Studies



Inaugural Online Conference

26–27 April 2024



Acknowledgements

Since the founding of Ceræ in 2013, each successive volume's committee has championed our journal as avenue for graduate and early career research within Medieval and Early Modern Studies, both in Australia, the region, and internationally. We have sponsored conference panels at Leeds IMC and Anzamems, and last year (during our 10-year anniversary) the committee decided that the time was right for the journal to organise its own conference, which we intend to have as an annual fixture.

We are therefore delighted to present a full two days worth of sessions presenting on various aspects relating to the Volume 11 theme – Metamorphosis, Transformation, and Transmutation. We have chosen to present the conference in a unique schedule of a continuous single stream over 28 hours to provide equitable access to the conference from across the whole world. We will also be recording the conference sessions and provide them for a limited time afterwards for viewing on the website. In this way we retain and reflect the spirit of the *ceræ*, the ubiquitous wax-tablets which were temporary medium of knowledge transfer and recording akin to our modern digital media.

Conference Committee

Britgitta Schvéd, Michele Seah, Erica Steiner,

and

Amanda Burrows-Petersen, Lindsay Church, Gavin Foster,

with the assistance of the

Volume 11 Ceræ Committee

Amanda Burrows-Petersen, Julian Calcagno, Ashley Castelino, Lindsay Church, James Cogbill, Lorenzo Curatella, Gavin Foster, Ayaka Nguyen, Essi Nuutinen, Brigitta Schvéd, Michele Seah, Dora Skënderi, Erica Steiner, Dain Swenson, Maria Gloria Tumminelli.



Acknowledgements

We would also like to thank Boydell & Brewer Publishers who have generously provided all conference delegates with access to an exclusive 50% off discount code for their Medieval and Early Modern Studies titles from 22 April – 31 May 2024.

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Conference Schedule

All **ORANGE** times occur on **Friday 26/4/24**, and all **BLUE** times occur on **Saturday 27/4** for that respective timezone.

AEST	AWST	IST	EEST	CEST	BST	ADT	EDT	CDT	MDT	MST	SESSION	PAPER TITLE	TITLE	PRESENTER NAME	AFFILIATION		
1730	1530	1300	1030	0930	0830	0430	0330	0230	0130	0030	OPEN	Conference Opening - 15 minutes prior to start of keynote.		Ashley	Castelino	University of Oxford	
1800	1600	1330	1100	1000	0900	0500	0400	0300	0200	0100	KEYNOTE 1	Chair: Ashley Castelino Chrysopoetic Hermeneutics in Byzantium and the Islamic World and Their Place in the History of Chemistry	A/Prof	Alexandre	Roberts	University of Southern California, Dornsife	
1830	1630	1400	1130	1030	0930	0530	0430	0330	0230	0130							
1930	1730	1500	1230	1130	1030	0630	0530	0430	0330	0230	SESSION 1: Gender Transformations	Chair: Maria Gloria Tumminelli Is it a bird, is it a deer, is it a metaphor for how women were both magically and linguistically transformed and dehumanised in English Bawdy ballads		Lydia	Coates	University of Hull	
2000	1800	1530	1300	1200	1100	0700	0600	0500	0400	0300			<i>Fetes de moi, feme, vallet</i> : Interpreting Sexual Metamorphoses in Ovide Moralisé and Ovidius Moralisatus		Akari	Kobayashi	University of Oxford
2030	1830	1600	1330	1230	1130	0730	0630	0530	0430	0330			Adorned Hands: the Relationship Between Masculinity and the Practice of Ring-Wearing in Fifteenth Century Italy		Melanie	Stephens	University of Sydney
2100	1900	1630	1400	1300	1200	0800	0700	0600	0500	0400	SESSION 2: Political Metamorphosis	Chair: Ashley Castelino Permanence During Peril: The Hungarian Administration of Justice After the Battle of Mohács		Dóra	Bachus	Eötvös Loránd University	
2200	2000	1730	1500	1400	1300	0900	0800	0700	0600	0500			The Metamorphosis of a Political Concept: the Balance of Power in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Political Thought		Brigitta	Schvéd	University of Pécs
2230	2030	1800	1530	1430	1330	0930	0830	0730	0630	0530			Flow of News from East to West: The appearance of Transylvania in the London newspapers during Rákóczi's War of Independence		Réka	Horváth	Eötvös Loránd University
2300	2100	1830	1600	1500	1400	1000	0900	0800	0700	0600							
2330	2130	1900	1630	1530	1430	1030	0930	0830	0730	0630							
0000	2200	1930	1700	1600	1500	1100	1000	0900	0800	0700							
0030	2230	2000	1730	1630	1530	1130	1030	0930	0830	0730							
0100	2300	2030	1800	1700	1600	1200	1100	1000	0900	0800	SESSION 3: Changes in Personhood and Mentality	Chair: Lindsay Church Icelandic afterlives: the monster within?		Irina	Manea	Independent Scholar	
0130	2330	2100	1830	1730	1630	1230	1130	1030	0930	0830			Rewriting Mental Disease in Late Medieval England		Amy	Conwell	University of Toronto, Canada
0200	0000	2130	1900	1800	1700	1300	1200	1100	1000	0900			Dedicatory portraits of Cyprus during the Frankish (1191-1489) and Venetian (1489-1570) periods	Dr	Katerina	Kiltzanidou	Democritus University of Thrace (Komotini)
0230	0030	2200	1930	1830	1730	1330	1230	1130	1030	0930							
0300	0100	2230	2000	1900	1800	1400	1300	1200	1100	1000	SESSION 4: The Body and Soul as Sites of Transformation	Chair: Brigitta Schvéd Metamorphosis and Transformation of the main character in <i>The Passion of Saint Queen Shushanik</i>		Sophia	Guliashvili	University of Georgia, Tbilisi	
0330	0130	2300	2030	1930	1830	1430	1330	1230	1130	1030			From Sin to Salvation: Vegetal Metamorphosis and Ekphrastic Reversion in Botticelli's <i>Primavera</i> (c. 1470-1480s)	Dr	Cassandra	Harrington	University of Kent
0400	0200	2330	2100	2000	1900	1500	1400	1300	1200	1100			<i>Buena muerte</i> and <i>Postrimerias</i> : How to explain in the 17th century the surviving of the individual soul after death.	Asst Prof	Emanuele	Lacca	University of South Bohemia
0430	0230	0000	2130	2030	1930	1530	1430	1330	1230	1130							
0500	0300	0030	2200	2100	2000	1600	1500	1400	1300	1200	SESSION 5: Theatrical Transformations	Chair: Lindsay Church False as Water: The Aesthetics of Love and Delusion in Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i>		Celine H.	Sleiman	University of Toronto	
0530	0330	0100	2230	2130	2030	1630	1530	1430	1330	1230			The transformation of obedience and allegiance in <i>Doctor Faustus</i>		Georgina	Crespi	University of Reading
0600	0400	0130	2300	2200	2100	1700	1600	1500	1400	1300			Transforming Pandosto: <i>The Winter's Tale</i> and/as Fanfiction	Asst Prof	Philip	Goldfarb Styr	St. Ambrose University
0630	0430	0200	2330	2230	2130	1730	1630	1530	1430	1330							
0700	0500	0230	0000	2300	2200	1800	1700	1600	1500	1400							
0730	0530	0300	0030	2330	2230	1830	1730	1630	1530	1430							
0800	0600	0330	0100	0000	2300	1900	1800	1700	1600	1500							



Conference Schedule

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AEST	AWST	IST	EEST	CEST	BST	ADT	EDT	CDT	MDT	MST	SESSION	PAPER TITLE	TITLE	PRESENTER NAME		AFFILIATION	
0830	0630	0400	0130	0030	2330	1930	1830	1730	1630	1530	SESSION 6: Philosophical Aspects of Literary Transformations	Transformation of Chaos into Order: Creation in the <i>Cosmographia</i> of Bernardus Silvestris	Prof	June-Ann	Greeley	Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT	
0900	0700	0430	0200	0100	0000	2000	1900	1800	1700	1600		Chair: Amanda Burrows-Petersen	The Emergence of Rationality in Medieval Literature	Dist. Prof	Albrecht	Classen	University of Arizona
0930	0730	0500	0230	0130	0030	2030	1930	1830	1730	1630		Spiritual Translation: Mirror and Image in Golding's Calvin and Ovid		Jenny	Smith	Monash University	
1000	0800	0530	0300	0200	0100	2100	2000	1900	1800	1700							
1030	0830	0600	0330	0230	0130	2130	2030	1930	1830	1730	SESSION 7: The Boundaries of Human-Animal Transformations	"Suck Honey Out of the Rock": Wondrous Nature and Changes in the Land in Gerald of Wales's <i>Topographia Hibernica</i>		Nicole	Waters	Independent Scholar	
1100	0900	0630	0400	0300	0200	2200	2100	2000	1900	1800		Chair: Erica Steiner	Lycanthropy and Logic: Dominican Perspectives on Werewolves in the Middle Ages		Joseph	Wilbur	University of Pennsylvania
1130	0930	0700	0430	0330	0230	2230	2130	2030	1930	1830		More than Monsters: Examining unusual <i>transformatio</i> in non-lupine medieval wonder tales		Chris	White	University of Queensland	
1200	1000	0730	0500	0400	0300	2330	2200	2100	2000	1900							
1230	1030	0800	0530	0430	0330	2330	2230	2130	2030	1930	SESSION 8: Shifting Historiographies	'All the Britons paint their bodies with woad': Uncovering an historiographical 'blue' herring		Erica	Steiner	University of Sydney	
1300	1100	0830	0600	0500	0400	0000	2300	2200	2100	2000		Chair: Michele Seah	An Elephant, an Obelisk, and Marginalia: The <i>Hypnerotomachia</i> of Pope Alexander VII	Dr	James	Russell	Rio Salado College, AZ
1330	1130	0900	0630	0530	0430	0030	2330	2230	2130	2030		Debates, Dissolutions, and Revolutions: Early Modern Historiography and the Book Trade	Dr	Katrina	Cutcliffe	University of Southern Queensland	
1400	1200	0930	0700	0600	0500	0100	0000	2300	2200	2100							
1430	1230	1000	0730	0630	0530	0130	0030	2330	2230	2130							
1500	1300	1030	0800	0700	0600	0200	0100	0000	2300	2200							
1530	1330	1100	0830	0730	0630	0230	0130	0030	2330	2230							
1600	1400	1130	0900	0800	0700	0300	0200	0100	0000	2300	SESSION 9: Emerging Natural Sciences	The Zoomorphic Iconography and its Metamorphosis in the Early 8th Century AD of the Ixex Stucco Decorations Inside Umayyad Castles		Siyana	Georgieva	University of Tuscany	
1630	1430	1200	0930	0830	0730	0330	0230	0130	0030	2330		Chair: Essi Nuutinen	Catalyst to Colonialism: Metamorphosed Societal Patterns Through Western Medicine		Sumisha	Parangottu	University of Calicut
1700	1500	1230	1000	0900	0800	0400	0300	0200	0100	0000		Naturalist and/or traveler? Robert Townson's controversial career in the light of his botanical work		Máté	Szentkereszti	Eötvös Loránd University	
1730	1530	1300	1030	0930	0830	0430	0330	0230	0130	0030							
1800	1600	1330	1100	1000	0900	0500	0400	0300	0200	0100	SESSION 10: Royal Transformations	King Henry VII, Wales, and a Personal Transformation		Reilly	O'Hagan	University of Sydney	
1830	1630	1400	1130	1030	0930	0530	0430	0330	0230	0130		Chair: Michele Seah	Mary I's Royal Transformation 1536–1553: From Bastard to Queen		Emily	Chambers	Murdoch University
1900	1700	1430	1200	1100	1000	0600	0500	0400	0300	0200		Efforts to reorganise the Habsburgs' positions of power in the early 18th century: the Habsburg Monarchy as a new fortress		Dániel	Molnár	University of Debrecen	
1930	1730	1500	1230	1130	1030	0630	0530	0430	0330	0230							
2000	1800	1530	1300	1200	1100	0700	0600	0500	0400	0300	KEYNOTE 2	Grief, Illness and Punishment in Robert Henryson's <i>Testament of Cresseid</i>	Dist. Prof	Stephanie	Trigg	University of Melbourne	
2030	1830	1600	1330	1230	1130	0730	0630	0530	0430	0330		Chair: Erica Steiner					
2100	1900	1630	1400	1300	1200	0800	0700	0600	0500	0400	CLOSE	Conference Closing - 15 minutes after end of keynote.		Erica	Steiner	University of Sydney	



Keynote Speaker Abstracts

Associate Professor Alexandre M. Roberts (University of California Dornsife)

Chrysopoetic Hermeneutics in Byzantium and the Islamic World and Their Place in the History of Chemistry

What can medieval Greek and Arabic commentaries on recipes for the artificial production of gold tell us about how intellectuals in western Afro-Eurasia conceptualized the transformation of matter in times and places typically treated as marginal to the history of chemistry? A tremendous amount; indeed, the history of chemistry makes little sense without considering these crucial but neglected sources. After introducing a conceptual vocabulary that replaces the fraught term “alchemy” with more useful terminology, the present paper examines two chrysopoetic commentaries — one in Greek, by an early medieval author known as the Anonymous Philosopher, and the other in Arabic, by the fourteenth-century scholar Aydamir al-Jildaki — assessing their aims, self-presentation, and potential for changing how we tell the story of how human beings have thought rigorously about the transformation of matter.

Biography

Alexandre Roberts is a Byzantinist, Graeco-Arabist, and intellectual historian specializing in Byzantine and medieval Middle Eastern scholars and their engagement with ancient intellectual traditions. He received his PhD from UC Berkeley in 2015 and taught at Columbia University in the City of New York before moving to USC in 2018 where he was appointed Associate Professor in 2022. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *Chemistry and Its Consequences in Byzantium and the Islamic World* — a project that investigates technical treatises of the sort typically called alchemical, as well as philosophical, theological, and legal sources and the Greek and Arabic manuscripts that contain them. He is also the author of *Reason and Revelation in Byzantine Antioch: The Christian Translation Program of Abdallah ibn al-Fadl* (University of California Press, 2020), and his articles have appeared in various journals, including *Isis*, the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, and *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*.



Keynote Speaker Abstracts

**Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor of English Stephanie Trigg
(University of Melbourne)**

Grief, Illness and Punishment in Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*

Over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Middle English writers developed an elaborate poetics of facial emotion, drawing on humoral theory and practice, classical iconographic traditions, the discourses of courtly love and affective piety, and also of medical and dietary treatises. Many of these discourses are brought together in Robert Henryson's 'sequel' to Chaucer's love poem, *Troilus and Criseyde*. In Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (c. 1492), the heroine has a vision of Cupid and the seven planets. The faces of these deities all express their characteristic emotions, before they deliver their judgement on Cresseid for her faithlessness. She is to be stricken with leprosy; and the chief sign of this is to be her scabbed and ugly face. This paper will tease out the dynamics of illness, grief, and divine punishment in this poem, paying special attention to the discursive traditions of illness and facial expression and emotion in Middle English and Middle Scots literature. Cresseid is transformed twice in this poem: first in ethical/humoral terms; and second, through the divine punishment of illness.

Biography

An alumna of the the Department of English at the University of Melbourne, Stephanie Trigg has received awards for both research excellence and teaching excellence, been a visiting scholar at a number of prestigious international universities, and in 2006 was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She is currently President of the New Chaucer Society and a senior member of other scholarly associations. Stephanie was one of ten foundational Chief Investigators and one of four Program Leaders in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (UWA), 2011-18, and currently Chief Investigator of the Australian Research Council (ARC) funded Discovery Project based at the University of Melbourne and the University of Geneva [Literature and the Face: A Critical History](#). The author of over 100 scholarly works, her recent publications include *30 Great Myths about Chaucer* (John Wiley & Sons, 2020) and *Affective Medievalism: Love, Abjection and Discontent* (Manchester University Press, 2019).



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Dóra Bachusz (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

Permanence During Peril: The Hungarian Administration of Justice After the Battle of Mohács

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the second most basic need of humanity is security. Security provides stability and its absence is extremely disturbing. It leads to uncertainty, and this can affect individuals and society on many levels. In the autumn of 1526, after the Battle of Mohács, the winds of change began to blow. The king, Louis II, had died, there were two claims to the throne: those of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and Count János Szapolyai. Meanwhile, the victorious Ottomans had left the kingdom in ruins. Violence began to spread and numerous feuds were committed. In this uncertain time, everything changed except one thing: the administration of justice. Hungarian historians used to believe that new arrangements had been made on both sides, but it is now clear that this was not the case. The old jurists and the legal system meant certainty and ensured the continuity of law in those times. In this paper, I would like to present the prominent figures of the administration of justice and to describe all the efforts that were made to keep the tenure system of the shattered kingdom intact through Hungarian common law.

Biography

Dóra Bachusz is a PhD candidate at the Department of Auxiliary Sciences at Eötvös Loránd University with a dissertation on the history of the institution of the *propalatinus* in the early modern period, under Ferenc Révay. Prior to her doctoral studies, Dóra's research focused on the history of women's legal capacity during the Árpáadian-era, and in recent years she has also branched out into early modern Venetian-Hungarian diplomatic relations and peregrination. Dóra has spent seven months in Padova, Italy and another five months in Tbilisi, Georgia with Erasmus+ scholarships and is also a part of a Hungarian-Italian research group, which is interested in the Hungarian students of the University of Padova in the 16th century.

Emily Chambers (Murdoch University, Australia)

Mary I's Royal Transformation 1536–1553: From Bastard to Queen

Queen Mary I of England (1515–1558) was demoted from Princess and heiress presumptive by her father Henry VIII's annulment of his marriage to her mother, Katherine of Aragon, in 1533. Reduced to the Lady Mary Tudor, the king's illegitimate daughter, Mary's initial defiance at her father's dynastic and religious changes shifted in 1536 after the deaths of both her mother and Katherine's successor Anne Boleyn. Mary sought reconciliation with her father, and was welcomed back into the Tudor family fold. This paper examines the period between this reconciliation and Mary's own ascent to the throne in 1553, to outline the transformations in her status. It highlights her efforts to assert her



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royal status and membership of the royal family, initially at court as a favoured daughter of Henry VIII, and then as a religiously conservative princely successor to her brother Edward VI on her own estates. This paper argues that Mary's successful transformation into an accepted member of the Tudor family was an important factor in setting the stage for her to claim the throne on Edward's death in July 1553, when she mobilised her forces against Edward's successor the Lady Jane Grey.

Biography

Emily Chambers is an Associate Lecturer in the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Murdoch University, and she is currently completing a PhD in early modern history at the University of Nottingham (UK). Her research considers the influence of personal connections on the agency of elite aristocratic and royal women in mid-Tudor England.

Dist. Professor Albrecht Classen (University of Arizona, USA)

The Emergence of Rationality in Medieval Literature

No society is simply static; change and transformation are always and constantly at work. This also applies to the Middle Ages, contrary to many common assumptions. The emergence of rationality as a major intellectual factor serves exceedingly well to reflect upon this observation. In several previous studies, I have already examined this phenomenon in light of the Middle High German *Der Stricker's* verse narratives and also in Icelandic Sagas, two very different genres, both far apart from each other. We might debate the starting point of rational thought, whether in the twelfth century (Abelard) or later (Nicholas of Cusa), but medieval society certainly experienced a profound transformation in the course of time. This paper will at first revisit the issue with *Der Stricker*, then turn to the fables by the Swiss preacher poet Ulrich Bonerius, and wrap up the argument by pointing out the workings of rationality in the verse narratives by the South German poet Heinrich Kaufringer (ca. 1400).

Biography

Albrecht Classen has published 127 books and around 780 articles on medieval and early modern literature. As well as being the editor of three journals, *Mediaevistik*, *Humanities*, and *Current Research*, his most recent book, *Freedom, Slavery, and Imprisonment in the Middle Ages* (2021), received the first prize of the Literary Encyclopedia. He received a Fulbright Grant for Egypt in Fall of 2022.

Lydia Coates (University of Hull, United Kingdom)

Is it a bird, is it a deer, is it a metaphor for how women were both magically and linguistically transformed and dehumanised in English Bawdy ballads



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This paper explores how zoomorphic language was used for both men and women with differing results in early modern ballads. While women are typically referred to by the female form, often implying pejorative meanings, men receive more neutral terms. These zoomorphic transformations and dehumanisations of both genders give us insight into attitudes toward: gender roles, social norms and acceptable discourse in Stuart Era Britain. Firstly, this paper will be an examination of unexplained magical transformations of women into animals in ballads, as exemplified in *The Twa Magicians*. Secondly, to consider why animals are also in non-magical ballads to denigrate women through the portrayal of them as engaging in animal like behaviour and possessing animal like characteristics. Linked to this is the importance of considering how these ballads and their language left a social impact through the consistent use of these terms in the popular media of the time.

Biography

Lydia Coates holds an MRes from Hull in History, and her dissertation looked at the hard and soft power and the presentations of Queen Henrietta Maria and Elizabeth Cromwell. She is continuing her PhD studies at University of Hull who is focused on gender and social norms in bawdy ballads in the early modern English context. She has presented her part of her historical musicological work about the soft power in the music hall at the R-Existence international conference at Kaunas University in September 2023.

Amy Conwell (University of Toronto, Canada)

Rewriting Mental Disease in Late Medieval England

In this paper, I explore transformations in the language, understanding, and experience of mental disease in late medieval England (c. 1375–1500). During this period of heightened venularization, many Latin medical texts were translated into Middle English, creating a new and lasting English medical vocabulary. Words like infection, frenzy, and madness first came into English during this period, and were central to the definition and construction of mental disease. In these medical texts, other unresolved tensions play out. Is madness located in the heart or the brain? Is frenzy a bodily affliction or a punishment from God? I argue that this ambivalence in medical understandings played out in the lived experience of the sick, who were diagnosed with a natural infection but blamed for supposed moral failure. I explore these interconnections with reference to medical compendia translated at the period and first-person accounts of illness, including Hoccleve's *Complainte* and Kempe's Book.

Biography

Amy is a PhD Candidate and Lecturer at the University of Toronto. Her research explores the relationship between medical conceptions of mental disease and the lived experience of mental illness in late medieval England. She is moving to Western Australia in July!



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Georgina Crespi (University of Reading, United Kingdom)

The transformation of obedience and allegiance in *Doctor Faustus*.

The Homily Against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570) highlights how the late sixteenth century struggled with the question of obedience and allegiance, and Marlowe's work *Doctor Faustus* offers an insight into that struggle. The parade of the Seven Deadly Sins within *Doctor Faustus* is a pivotal moment within the play and showcases Faustus' transformation to a sinner. This pact between Lucifer, Mephistophilis, and Faustus is often spoken about in scholarship, but often the parade is either skipped over in this analysis or not dwelled on in a lot of detail, which fails to acknowledge that the parade of the Seven Deadly Sins also offers valuable insight into the workings of Lucifer and hell, the vision Marlowe wished to create, and how this vision is altered based on the version of *Doctor Faustus* the audience witnesses. In the A Text, Lucifer is a tyrant figure, while in the B text he works with Beelzebub. All of this links back to the concept of disobedience and Faustus, as well as the constant religious tensions and transformations that brewed in the sixteenth century.

Biography

Georgie Crespi is a PhD student at the University of Reading, who graduated from University College London with an MA in Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Her MA-level work focused predominately on how Christians used the figure of Satan and God as political tools. Her PhD continues this work by focusing specifically on drama.

Dr Katrina Cutcliffe (University of Southern Queensland, Australia)

Debates, Dissolutions, and Revolutions: Early Modern Historiography and the Book Trade

Did not present

Early modern historiography was transformed by three co-occurring paradigm shifts that, though typically addressed separately, operated collectively. F. Smith Fussner, in his much-interrogated text, *The Historical Revolution: English Historical Writing and Thought, 1580-1640* (1962), identifies a "revolution" in which early modern historiographers moved away from the approach of medieval chroniclers towards the quasi-modern methodology of antiquarians. Other scholars outline an early modern historiographical debate, sparked by Polydore Vergil's *Anglia Historia* (1534), which silently questioned the veracity of British pre-history and "worked outwards into popular consciousness" towards the end of the Elizabethan era (Gilchrist 1). Both of these paradigm shifts are commonly discussed and hotly debated, yet these discussions typically occur without reference to the early modern book trade; a trade which Daniel R Woolf in *Reading History in Early Modern England* (2000) suggests was dissolving the



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Chronicle history into new genres. In this paper, I explore these co-occurring paradigm shifts, demonstrating their collective transmutation of received history through their impact on the depictions of one historical king, King Lear.

Biography

After two decades teaching secondary Drama and English, and motivated by a life-long love of learning, Katrina began working at the University of Southern Queensland in 2017 and commenced a PhD in early modern literature. Since then, as an early career researcher, her research interests have bifurcated into topics related to early modern historiography as well as online learning.

Siyana Georgieva (University of Tuscany, Italy)

The Zoomorphic Iconography and its Metamorphosis in the Early 8th Century AD of the Ibex Stucco Decorations Inside Umayyad Castles

This paper focuses on the symbol of the ibex and its iconographic metamorphosis. The topic is whether the study of existing stucco sculptures from the ancient Near East to Umayyad sculptural embellishment demonstrates the early popularity of a specific animal, in this case the ibex. The depiction of this animal in the stuccoes from a large number of Near Eastern sites, covering a time span of a thousand years, paints a clear picture of its revered status and also provides a clue to the cosmology of ancient Near Eastern peoples. The study also notes that the turning point of ancient Islamic art in Umayyad castles is marked by a new technique that creates the three-dimensional figures of ibex heads, depicted in profile, and executed in high relief in stucco.

Biography

Siyana Georgieva is an art historical researcher with a focus on the artistic production and architecture of the Arabian Peninsula, Mesopotamia, Syria, Iran, Palestine and Spain during the Umayyad period. In addition, she specialises in the artistic connections between the Umayyad and Balkan heritage and Ottoman arts. Her area of specialisation is architectural decoration, particularly stucco in the stylistic origins of Umayyad sculpture and architectural decoration.

Asst Prof Philip Goldfarb Styr (St Ambrose University, Iowa, USA)

Transforming *Pandosto*: *The Winter's Tale* and/as Fanfiction

The connection between early modern drama and contemporary online fanfiction is frequently mentioned—on both sides—but rarely analyzed in detail. In particular, the rich analytical language developed by online fandom for issues of adaptation, transformation, and intertextuality has been understudied and underutilized by literary scholars. This paper uses the test case of William Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and its relationship to Robert Greene's *Pandosto*



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to show that this analytical language can help us understand better understand the relationship between play, source, and audience in ways that go beyond traditional source analysis.

The connections between *The Winter's Tale* and *Pandosto* have been extensively studied. What this paper contributes is not original research into how Shakespeare used Greene's play, but rather a new analytical approach that draws on the terminology and approaches of online fandom. In doing so, it demonstrates how we can better understand Shakespeare's adaptation of Greene through this lens: for example, how we can better understand the pacing of the play as a function of canon-divergence fanfiction, or how the play's reversal of Greene's Bohemia and Sicilia relates to alternate universe fanfiction.

Biography

Philip Goldfarb Styrts is an assistant professor of English at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, USA. His research primarily focuses on early modern drama and its various cultural contexts, both early modern and contemporary. He recently published two books: *Shakespeare's Political Imagination: The Historicism of Setting from Arden Shakespeare* and *Shakespeare in the Present: Political Lessons under Biden* from Routledge.

Prof June-Ann Greeley (Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT, USA)

Transformation of Chaos into Order: Creation in the *Cosmographia* of Bernardus Silvestris

Did not present

In the 12th century, the enigmatic Bernardus Silvestris composed *Cosmographia* ("Cosmography"), a treatise that explores in allegory the creation of the universe, both the 'megacosmos' and the 'microcosmos'. This paper will explore the first part of the work, the "Megacosmos", as a study in the primordial transformation of creation, the processes by which creation came into being, and how that process of transformation is good and persistent. The first section begins with a complaint by Nature to God ("Noys", the Divine Mind) that the universe (primordial matter, "Hyle") is in chaos and requires structure and order. The physical world came into its meaningful form through the agency of Divine Will/Mind; however, materiality existed prior to the Divine Will setting it in order. In fact, Nature argues that that primordial matter was not even 'of God' but was instead a "giddy contrivance of blind fortune, bereft of the protection of any higher power." (68) Hyle tends toward evil until Noys, implementing both reason and imagination, sets it in order and restricts it from excess and turmoil. Noys then shapes a structured creation, beginning with the four primary elements and generating the World Soul, the source of all goodness in the universe. My paper will consist of two sections, the first a close reading and



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analysis of the first section of Silvestris' text, and then an analysis of his proposition that dis/order and chaos is the essential condition of materiality that requires reason and imagination to order form and create meaning.

Biography

June-Ann Greeley is a Professor in the Dept. of Languages and Literatures and Dept. of Catholic Studies at Sacred Heart University (Fairfield CT USA). Areas of research/ publications are medieval spirituality (Western Europe, 8th-13th c.), more specifically prayer studies and gender studies; medieval angelology (Christian and Muslim); medieval literature with a focus on: 11th-13th c. Welsh literature (poetry and Arthurian tradition); monsters and the marvelous in medieval (Christian and Muslim) travel literature; visionary/ apocalyptic medieval (Latin) literature and realms of the fantastic in medieval (Latin) literature, and (my latest project) animal imagery in medieval spirituality/ spiritual texts.

Sophia Guliashvili (University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia)

Metamorphosis and Transformation of the main character in *The Passion of Saint Queen Shushanik*

Did not present

The Passion of Saint Queen Shushanik is considered to be the earliest Georgian literary work and is dated the second half of the 5th century. This is a story of noble woman whose husband being Christian from his early childhood became Zoroastrian. During his visit to the Shah's court, he changed his religious position and as a benefit expected great privileges from Persia. Saint Shushanik, his wife, was the only person who protested this decision, who decided that after such action it's not possible to live like she did before - it is time to separate and fight. After six years of imprisonment and torture, the Queen became a Saint. Georgian scholars declared that: a) she did not acquire her spiritual power gradually, through internal development; b) the author of the story does not give us the motive of a spiritual metamorphosis; c) she became sublime "at once", and a "miraculous" spiritual metamorphosis took place immediately upon hearing about her husband's betrayal. Contrary to this opinion, the aim of the current paper is to analyze some disputed passages of the plot to show the gradual transformation of the suffering seeker and the moments of her metamorphosis on the way towards the victory of the faith and sainthood.

Biography

Sophia is a PhD student in the Faculty of Humanities of Tbilisi State University (Georgia, Tbilisi), and a researcher in the department of Georgian Language and Literature at the Institute of Georgian Studies in the University of Georgia. Main fields of my interest are ancient Georgian literature in the contexts of Byzantine/Medieval Studies, problems of translation of ancient Georgian literature to foreign languages, Rustaveli studies, and related areas of research.



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Dr Cassandra Harrington (University of Kent, United Kingdom)

From Sin to Salvation: Vegetal Metamorphosis and Ekphrastic Reversion in Botticelli's *Primavera* (c. 1470–1480s)

The *Primavera*, created in tempera by the Italian painter Sandro Botticelli (c. 1445–1510), embodies multifaceted modes of metamorphosis. Widely considered to be one of the first Early Renaissance counter-paintings to Christian iconography, it marks a pivotal point in iconographic development and thematic change. Adapted from the lexicon of Greco-Roman mythology, Botticelli's *Primavera* interweaves several transformative and non-transformative tales, including a lost poem by Poliziano, Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, and Ovid's *Fasti*. Despite its notoriety, the painting remains somewhat of an enigma to scholars who, due to the complex interplay between the painting's figures and the texts that they denote, continue to dispute its significance. In classical literary canon, the act of vegetal metamorphosis often offered its characters a means of liberation, or life after death. As such stories were rewritten and retold throughout the Middle Ages and beyond, we find antique themes adapted to contemporary demands, and rebirthed with a new significance. This paper will explore three types of metamorphosis in Botticelli's *Primavera*: the material, the pictorial, and the allegorical. It will also consider potential pathways through which texts were transmuted from literary to visual mode, re-emerging as an amalgam of pictorial narratives: a syncretism imbued with new meaning.

Biography

Cassandra Harrington is an art historian specialising in medieval sculpture and illumination. She has a particular interest in the transmission and reception of ideas, and the dialogue between visual and textual modes in Gothic Europe. In 2023 she completed a CHASE-funded PhD at the Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Studies, University of Kent. Her research has recently been featured in *UnHerd* and *Perspective* magazine, and she is currently working on her first monograph entitled *Foliate Heads and Masks in Gothic Art: A Reappraisal of 'Green Man' Iconography c. 1200–1350*, in addition to a series of articles.

Réka Horváth (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

Flow of News from East to West: The appearance of Transylvania in the London newspapers during Rákóczi's War of Independence

Simultaneously with the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) and the Great Northern War (1700–1721), Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703–1711) commenced in Hungary. The events of these turbulent years generated an unprecedented flow of information, in conjunction with the exponentially growing demand for foreign news. Consequently, the flourishing of English periodicals became possible, beginning after the lapse of the censorship law in



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1695. One of the sources of the current presentation is the first daily paper in England, the *Daily Courant*, while the other source is the first functioning English newspaper, the *London Gazette*, the government's official newspaper. The English periodical press followed thoroughly the occurrences of Rákóczi's War of Independence, largely due to the participation of English and Dutch mediators in the peace negotiations of the war. A considerable quantity of the reports came from Transylvania. In the second half of the 17th century, the Princes of Transylvania, predecessors to Ferenc Rákóczi II, upheld an active international network of relationships, in which England was involved, hence the attention of the English press regarding the Transylvanian region. In my presentation I will introduce how Transylvania appeared in the two divergent London papers, with a primary focus on the papers' distinctive representations of the characteristics and remnants of Transylvania's political, diplomatic, economic and military life.

Biography

Réka Horváth is a second year PhD student in Early Modern Hungarian History at Eötvös Loránd University. Her PhD research focuses on the representation of Rákóczi's War of Independence in the newspapers written in English, taking a broader perspective of the English and Irish political culture and their connections to East/Central Europe, mainly within the Kingdom of Hungary, in the late 17th and early 18th century. Her current presentation demonstrates how Transylvania was depicted in the London periodical press during the early years of the 18th century via the analysis of the first newspaper and first daily paper of London.

Dr Katerina Kiltzanidou (Democritus University of Thrace Komotini, Greece)

Dedicatory portraits of Cyprus during the Frankish (1191-1489) and Venetian (1489-1570) periods

Between May 1191 and May 1192, Cyprus was captured by the English, sold to the Knights Templar, and passed to Guy Luzignan, setting the stage for the establishment of the Frankish regime. The Cypriot ruler, Isaac Komnenos, was imprisoned along with his family, and the Cypriots revolted against their new overlords. During the years of French rule, the island of Cyprus encountered various adversities such as constant wars, plague pandemics, and economic instability. These challenges eventually led to the transfer of power to the Venetians through Catherine Cornaro in 1489. However, the Venetian period was not without its challenges. The Ottomans, who had already conquered much of the Balkans, were eyeing Cyprus as a valuable addition to their empire. In 1570, the Ottomans launched a massive invasion of the island, which culminated in the fall of the capital, Nicosia.

During this time, religious men and women, with their families or alone, made donations to churches and had their portraits commissioned. In this paper, I will present a detailed analysis and contextualisation of these portraits, highlighting



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the dedicatory inscriptions as well as the aesthetic choices, to provide a deeper understanding of the individual lives of these donors as well as the broader historical and cultural context in which the portraits were created.

Biography

Trained in history and archaeology, Katerina completed her doctoral dissertation at the Department of History and Ethnology at the Democritus University of Thrace in Komotini in 2023. Katerina has written articles in Greek and has actively participated in both Greek and international scientific meetings, conferences, and workshops. She has also recently contributed to the Oxford blog. Katerina's research interests are diverse and include studies of late Byzantine and early Post-Byzantine art, dedicatory portraits and inscriptions, female studies, and gender studies.

Akari Kobayashi (University of Oxford, United Kingdom)

Fetes de moi, feme, vallet: Interpreting Sexual Metamorphoses in Ovide Moralisé and Ovidius Moralizatus

Did not present

This paper will offer a comparative reading of the two Ovidian myths about sexual transformations—the myths of Hermaphroditus and Caenis/Caeneus—retold and interpreted in two fourteenth-century moralised translations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *Ovide Moralisé* and *Ovidius Moralizatus*. The two episodes, seemingly unrelated and rarely read comparatively in critical contexts, resonate with each other through a number of common narrative and thematic threads upon closer inspection: both tales centre on a protagonist who undergoes a sexual metamorphosis, Caenis/Caeneus from a woman to a man, Hermaphroditus from a man to an intersexed being, which occurs as a direct response to the sexual violence they experience and through divine intervention. Moreover, in the medieval moralised Ovids, their sexual transformations are specifically interpreted in relation to the Incarnation of Christ, in whose body divinity and humanity marry, as do masculinity and femininity. In this paper, I will argue that the two myths, when read together, speak eloquently about the fascinating interplay between stasis and metamorphosis, as well as between convention and subversion of gender categories in both medieval and classical literature.

Biography

Akari (she/her) is a first-year DPhil student at the University of Oxford. She holds a Master's degree in medieval English literature from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor's degree in English literature from Keio University in Japan. Her primary research interests are in the medieval reception of Ovid, and her doctoral project studies the representation of metamorphic fluidity of human gender, sex, and sexuality in *Ovide Moralisé* and *Ovidius Moralizatus*. Her latest publication on the reception of Christine de Pizan in late medieval England will appear in *Medieval Feminist Forum* early this year.



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Asst Prof Emanuele Lacca (University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic)

Buena muerte and *Postrimerías*. How to explain in the 17th century the surviving of the individual soul after death

The concepts of *buena muerte* and *postrimerías*, developed by Spanish Jesuits in 16th and 17th centuries, designate respectively the soul disposition that an individual needs to reconcile himself with God and the afterlife scenario that the individual will find at the end of his earthly life (death, judgement, hell, glory). One of the main aspects of this thesis deals with the continuity of soul existence between life and afterlife and 'die well' becomes the most important prerogative for a dying person, as afterlife is completely determined by how earthly life has been lived. The goal of my paper is to investigate theological and philosophical elements that originated this theory, especially in the works of Luis de la Puente, Roberto Bellarmino, Juan Eusebio Nieremberg and Juan de Loyola, in which the authors, with advice directed to a 'good death' and afterlife descriptions, helps to believe in the reality of the 'otherworld'.

Biography

Emanuele Lacca is a post-doc researcher and assistant professor of Renaissance and Modern Philosophy and Social Ethics at the University of South Bohemia (Czech Republic). Among his publications are 'Conoscenza e azione', *Editorial Sinderesis*, 2018, 'Alcune considerazioni sulla guerra nel De Legibus di Francisco Suarez', *Cuadernos Salmantinos de Filosofía* 47/2020 and 'Quod vitae sectabor iter? Salamanca between city paths and humanity in the path', *Labyrinth* 22/2020. Lacca has participated in more than fifty conferences across Europe and overseas.

Irina Manea (Independent Scholar & Public Educator)

Icelandic afterlives: the monster within?

In Icelandic sagas, the acts and behaviour of the *aptrgangr* (undead 'after-goer') can illuminate relationships between identity, monstrosity and society, as well as problematize the idea of monster as resident outside of humanity. I argue that while one's social status, origin and behaviour in the human life – *ójafnaðrmaðr*, dishonourable person – does effect the change with a transfer of aggressiveness, it can further be complicated by kinship liaisons, aspirations to power or even preservation of honour. The haunting undead (unlike mound-dwellers, *haugbui*) often have a background of violating social rules resulting in monstrosity. Nevertheless, in *Eyrbyggja saga* Arnkell's reaction suffices in the short run to prevent his undead father Thorolf from causing destruction. Furthermore, Thorolf's unacceptable behaviour before and augmented after death can be linked to his desire for status symbols he lacked. Klaufi from *Svarfdæla saga* sets on a vengeance spree to recover his honour after being killed by his wife. Glamr from *Grettis saga* still sees himself as a thrall after the transformation, implying



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questions about the boundaries between human and non-human categories. The status is further complicated by the blurred distinctions to other 'paranormal' categories e.g. trolls (cf. Jakobsson). Ultimately, can they be considered monstrous even before transfiguration due to their liminality.

Biography

Irina is an independent scholar and public historian, lecturing online on Viking history and Norse mythology with the Save Ancient Studies Alliance and World History Encyclopaedia, as well as being a history teacher based in Hesse, Germany. Her main interests are Norse religion, magic and the supernatural, legendary and Icelandic sagas, and Norse revenants. Irina has both a public educational channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@irinaskuld>) and researcher profile (<https://unibuc.academia.edu/VerdandiSkuld>).

Dániel Molnár (University of Debrecen, Hungary)

Efforts to reorganise the Habsburgs' positions of power in the early 18th century: the Habsburg Monarchy as a new fortress

One of the most important components of the early modern history of Central and East-Central Europe is the change in the centre of power of the Habsburg dynasty. The concept of the Habsburg Monarchy underwent a radical change during the 17th century. From its beginnings in 1526 onwards, the Habsburgs handled it as a kind of instrument. Until the 1680s, the Monarchy functioned as a 'hinterland', offering the Habsburgs financial resources, military and political support in the pursuit of their superpower ambitions, which were oriented towards Western and Central Europe. However, the end of the century marked a turning point. Whereas the Monarchy had existed until the last decades of the 17th century as a heterogeneous community of states, essentially based on personal union, whose rulers paid little attention to their own states, by the end of the century it was recognised in Viennese court circles that a diffuse conglomerate of states, fragmented politically, legally etc. would be unable to compete with other European powers without a unified central government. This recognition motivated the Habsburgs to establish a new, more unified and more powerful state, which would be able to compete with the other European powers.

Biography

Dániel is a third year law student researching the constitutional history, art, and music history of the Habsburg Monarchy in the 18th century. His research includes the baroque castles, palaces and residences in Vienna and the vicinity of the "Kaiserstadt", in addition to the representation of Habsburg power in art during the reigns of Leopold I., Charles VI. and Maria Theresa.

Reilly O'Hagan (University of Sydney, Australia)

King Henry VII, Wales, and a Personal Transformation



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King Henry VII's (r.1485-1509) unlikely accession to the throne of England following his defeat of King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth marked the beginning of a significant transformation of his identity. In this paper, I will show that Henry underwent a personal transformation in two key ways: the first was his transformation from exiled rival claimant to king of England; the second is a perhaps more subtle transformation from Welshman to Englishman. Through an examination of the material artifacts surviving from Henry's reign, such as his coins and evidence of his representative emblems, and some of the choices he made as king such as the name given to his oldest son, we can observe the ways his identity shifted and transformed during his kingship. Upon acceding to the throne, Henry's world transformed in more ways than one. Not only did he now find himself at the very centre of England's elite, he was also the king of a country which had a long history of invasion and conquest into his homeland.

Biography

Reilly is a Master of Arts (Research) candidate in the School of History at the University of Sydney, and their research examines the life and character of King Henry VII of England (b.1457 – d.1509), with particular focus on his relationship with his birthplace of Wales, and the ways in which Wales features in his self-representation as king.

Sumisha Parangottu (University of Calicut, India)

Convolute Connections: Commodity Exchange as Catalyst to Imperial Medicine

The exchange of commodities has profoundly impacted global cultural diversity and the process of globalization. The merchandising of spices, such as pepper, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, and cinnamon, revolutionized the world and crafted definite identities. The Portuguese arrival in India in the last quarter of 15th century marked the beginning of methodical trade and commerce. The climatic sensitivities of the Europeans necessitated physician scholars like Garcia De Orta to document the local practices and customs. This documentation facilitated an abrupt diffusion of medicinal and botanical knowledge of the east, which consequently fuelled imperialistic exertions. Further, the acquisition and dissemination of ideas led to advancements in medical practices and this exemplified how commerce influenced medicine and the spread of knowledge. Harold J. Cook mentions in his work, people throughout the world, relying on local knowledge, contributed to the growth of science or medicine, which can be through mutually beneficial interactions, by appropriation or coercion. Hitherto, exchanges furthered a role in scattering of medicine and knowledge with Europeans observing traditional medicinal practices of the east and situating it 'inferior' before the world or trivializing indicates the penetration of European medicine in the eastern country's deepest routes.



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Biography

Sumisha Parangottu is a JRF awarded research scholar, currently affiliated to University of Calicut, Malappuram, Kerala, India, has an open mind to observe their environment and is seeking enthusiastic encounters in the field of research. Her primary interest is in modern Indian history, focusing on western medicine being a transformant for Indian society, and she hope to change the lens through which people see their world.

Dr James Russell (Rio Salado College, Arizona, USA)

An Elephant, an Obelisk, and Marginalia: The *Hypnerotomachia* of Pope Alexander VII

The 1499 Aldine incunable *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (HP), a romance crossed with an encyclopedia and written in a constructed language, has been framed as an uncategorizable artifact of early print. Scholars have historically paid more attention to the HP's woodcut architectural diagrams than its supposedly-unreadable written content. Yet marginalia in surviving copies indicates that readers did indeed engage with the text, at times assiduously. One of those dedicated readers was Pope Alexander VII (Fabio Chigi, 1599-1667), whose extensively annotated copy is extant in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV Inc.Stam.Chig.II.610). This paper, the first study of Chigi's marginalia to the HP, argues that the Pope framed his reading journey through the architectural dreamscape of the HP by analogy with his own papal progresses amongst the monuments of Rome. Furthermore, the paper makes the case that Chigi's primary interest in the HP's text was rhetorical, as his pen highlighted the text's felicitous turns of phrase in the margins. This presentation will conclude by discussing the evidence Pope Alexander's reading record offers for the Trinitarian significance of the Pulcino della Minerva. This famous elephant-and-obelisk statue outside Santa Maria sopra Minerva, derived from a woodcut in the HP, was Chigi's final commission to Bernini.

Biography

James Russell is a book historian based in Mesa, Arizona. He studies the experiences of Early Modern readers who engaged with printed contemplative and alchemical texts, as evidenced by their marginalia. James completed his doctorate at the Institute of Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Durham University. His current research centers on the reader reception of the Aldine *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, a text whose distinctive properties as a dreamscape generated novel responses among a variety of readers. He is an Adjunct Instructor at Rio Salado College.

Brigitta Schvéd (University of Pécs, Hungary)

The Metamorphosis of a Political Concept: the Balance of Power in Late Medieval and Early Modern English Political Thought



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Balance of power was developed as a political model based on ancient, as well as on Italian Renaissance examples by the sixteenth century, and from then on it gradually gained ground in Europe in the period after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), when the idea of a political equilibrium became an increasingly important guiding principle in European, especially English, political thought. After Westphalia, England increasingly interpreted its position as an external leader of the states of the European continent, and English pamphleteers continuously saw Albion as the hand that keeps the balance in Europe. As a result, the balance-of-power principle played a significant role in early modern English politics, where the concept became commonplace in parliamentary debates, pamphlet literature and even in political journalism, especially from the second half of the seventeenth century. In my lecture, I aim to illustrate the metamorphosis of this political concept in the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries through a wide range of political media products, while I intend to focus explicitly on the genre of political pamphlets, presenting recent findings from my doctoral research regarding English pamphleteers.

Biography

Brigitta Schvéd obtained her BA degree in History and Art History at the Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Budapest, Hungary) in 2014, and continued her studies with a focus on medieval and early modern European history at the same institute, completing her MA degree with honours in 2018. She is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Pécs (Hungary) and a doctoral research fellow at the Leibniz Institute of European History (Mainz, Germany). As a researcher, she is particularly interested in the comparative conceptual as well as visual analysis of early modern English and Central European political media.

Celine H. Sleiman (University of Toronto, Canada)

False as Water: The Aesthetics of Love and Delusion in Shakespeare's Othello

Though Shakespeare's more mature works do not pour out classical allusions with the same intensity as his earlier plays, their presence in his imagination was no less prominent. *Othello* is a play framed by imitative schemes between the hero and the villain, between man and wife, between friend and rival. But it also imitates certain patterns developed by Shakespeare's most beloved Latin poet: Ovid. While Shakespeare scholars have long-debated the credibility of vaguer allusions to *The Metamorphoses*, I argue that there are distinctly Ovidian patterns in the workings of Othello's mind as he succumbs to deceit and delusion. Shakespeare's *Ovid*, Arthur Golding's translation, begins "of shapes transformed to bodies strange,/ I purpose to intreat" (fol.1r). Though the transformations in the epic are certainly metaphysical, they are also psychological, concerned with the irrationalities of love, and the fluidity of the human condition. It in its obsession with surface and artifice, with perception and delusion, that Othello



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echoes the thematic preoccupations of *The Metamorphoses*. One motif that confirms the metamorphic patterns in *Othello* is the aesthetic of water. Time and time again, from different characters and at critical junctions, Shakespeare invokes the imagery of liquids: fountains, cisterns, floods, gulfs, streams, and the sea. It emerges as a fascinating source of tension, as the reflective quality of the water contradicts its Ovidian character—changeable, deceptive, inconstant. Tracing Shakespeare’s invocations of water and liquids in *Othello*, I argue that he manipulates this aesthetic to identify where there are discrepancies in perception, and to comment on the human mind’s susceptibility to deceit and delusion.

Biography

Celine Sleiman is a fourth year undergraduate student at the University of Toronto, finishing her degree as an English specialist. She’s currently an undergraduate fellow with the Jackman Humanities Institute where she’s researching Egyptian surrealist literature. She intends to continue her studies in graduate school, focusing on poetics and aesthetic traditions in Early Modern literature.

Jenny Smith (Monash University, Australia)

Spiritual Translation: Mirror and Image in Golding's Calvin and Ovid

For both Calvin and Ovid, the mirror was a symbol of human fallibility and at the same time a path to self-knowledge. In Ovid’s story, the beautiful Narcissus rejects the love of others, becomes fascinated by his own image in a pool and unable to look up, pines away and dies. One of Calvin’s best known metaphors is that of Christ as the ‘mirror of election’, a perfect representation of humankind in which people could also see their true human state. These two concepts informed and complicated the notion of man as the *imago Dei*, the image of God. In this paper I compare mirror and image metaphors in two translations of Calvin’s *Offences* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, done at the same time by Arthur Golding in the 1560s, when the Elizabethan succession and the Council of Trent sparked public concerns about idolatry and the spiritual function of images. Golding used the shared metaphors of mirror and image to address both Catholic and Reformed readers in an attempt to avoid the development of ‘sectes and Scismes’ (to quote his dedication to the *Offences*). However ultimately unsuccessful the attempt, Golding’s translations exemplify a common spiritual position at a time of religious metamorphosis.

Biography

Jenny Smith is a PhD student at Monash interested in the history of ideas and how ideas have shaped and been shaped by language. Her MA studied irony in England from the 1470s to the 1530s, and she has written and presented on eloquence and wisdom in the letters of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Ermolao Barbaro, birds and dissimulation in John Skelton’s *Speak*,



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Parrot, lunacy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and early modern and modern theories of metaphor (published in *Cerae* in 2017). Her PhD is a history of the mirror as a metaphor in sixteenth-century England.

Erica Steiner (University of Sydney, Australia)

'All the Britons paint their bodies with woad': Uncovering an historiographical 'blue' herring

One of the most indelible factoids within both popular culture and academia about the ancient Britons has been that Caesar in the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* famously described them as being 'painted' with 'woad'. However, this assumption is rooted in a mistranslation of the Latin '*omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt*' which dates back to the early modern period. In actual fact, the ancient Insular Celtic peoples practiced tattooing, and this passage, when correctly translated, is one of the earliest sources for the custom. In this paper, I will discuss the context of this passage within contemporary sources as well as its problematic reception from the early modern period to the present, which has fuelled the misconception that the Britons painted their bodies with woad for centuries.

Biography

Erica is a PhD candidate in Celtic Studies at the University of Sydney and her research explores the history and historiography of ancient and medieval Insular tattooing. Her previous degrees include a BA (Hons) in Medieval Studies and a BSc in Marine Geophysics. Her other research interests broadly incorporate the early medieval history of northern and central Europe, the emerging field of geomorphology, intersections between the sciences and the humanities, and medievalism more broadly.

Melanie Stephens (University of Sydney, Australia)

Adorned Hands: the Relationship Between Masculinity and the Practice of Ring-Wearing in Fifteenth Century Italy

Once relegated to the sidelines of "real" academia, fashion history has become an increasingly prolific area of research that coincides with the material turn in recent decades. Historians such as Evelyn Welch and Timothy McCall have pioneered the historicising of men and women's fashion in the early modern period, using bibliographical and material evidence to draw economic, political, and cultural conclusions about the lived experience of those in the past. Seeking to contribute to this scholarly discourse, my thesis focuses on the male hand and how it was adorned in fifteenth century Italy. Whilst seemingly a linear narrative between bodily adornment and power through wealth; the historical, cultural, and economic context around the practice problematises this simplistic assumption. My research posits that the male hand was transformed through



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adornment to a public space for displaying and projecting a variety of masculine identities. In this presentation I will consider how, along with the face, the hands form the most public part of the body. They act as the conduit through which humans interact with their physical environment through touch and, unlike the face, have the unique ability to breach the private space of others concurrently with public spaces. Therefore, the choice to adorn the hand is highly deliberate as there is an awareness of audience and possibility of others physically interacting with items that adorn the hand. Further, the transmutation of rings beyond the physical into public spaces of ritual and family iconography reinforces the duality of the ring. Accordingly, the practice of ring-wearing is culturally coded with gendered meaning beyond conspicuous consumption or mere trinketry.

Biography

A historian interested in the fifteenth century cultural manifestations and shaping of gender, particularly masculinity, Melanie's work looks at the physical embodying of male identity in northern Italy during the fifteenth century, specifically the prominence and adornment of the hand. As such, her research spans interdisciplinary areas of gender studies, sociology, psychology, material culture studies, and fashion studies. Melanie is currently completing a research Masters at the University of Sydney on the practice of ring-wearing in Italy as ritualistic and culturally coded objects of gender identity.

Máté Szentkereszti (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)

Naturalist and/or traveler? Robert Townson's controversial career in the light of his botanical work

This paper will discuss the controversial scientific career of Robert Townson (1762–1827). Was he a naturalist or a traveler? In the light of his botanical activity and his best-known work, *Travels in Hungary*, published in 1797, there emerges a picture of an educated man between the two groups during the lecture. After an overview of his career path, his network of contacts in the University of Göttingen and his relationship with Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, a famous teacher of experimental physics, will be presented. We will also discuss his paper on plant perception, which fits into the discourse around the categorisation of mutant, animal-like species. The presentation will explore both the scientific and the educational edge of his travelogue. The former will be presented in the light of his expedition to the High Tatras, still part of the Kingdom of Hungary at the time, focusing on the methodology and tools of observation. In the latter, we will focus on the techniques of adaptation and awareness-raising inherent in the vocabulary of nature and plants. Finally, we will reflect on Townson's role in botany and in the European promotion of Hungary and the High Tatras, based



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on the criticism of his work, beginning his career as a scientist in Edinburgh and ending it as a farmer in Sydney.

Biography

With a bachelor's degree in History and Scandinavian Studies, and a master's degree in Early Modern Hungarian History, Máté Szentkereszti is a first-year PhD student at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). Their doctoral thesis examines the dissemination of taxonomic botanical knowledge in Hungary in the light of the theory, practice and social use of botany during the period of the scientific paradigm shift (1770-1830). Máté is also active within the digital humanities, developing a digital database for the Department of Early Modern Hungarian History at the ELTE, and full-time at the National Széchényi Library (OSZK), working on digital text editions transcribed using HTR technology and annotated via XML editor software.

Nicole Waters (Independent Scholar, USA)

*"Suck Honey Out of the Rock": Wondrous Nature and Changes in the Land in Gerald of Wales's *Topographia Hibernica**

Did not present

Much attention has been paid to the human/animal hybrids in Gerald of Wales's *Topographia Hibernica*; their presence in his ethnography has been primarily theorized as an allegorical device or trope to defend colonization. This paper, though, will focus on the transformative properties of the land that Gerald describes. Not only does Gerald connect Ireland's land with salubrity, but he also describes its wondrous properties. More specifically, the land can change its human inhabitants, ranging from the removal of death, the female gender, to decay. It is not the typical relationship of humans enacting their wishes on the land; Ireland's human/nature relationship is turned on its head. These supernatural, transformative elements point to Gerald's concerns of the barbarism in Ireland. Using the uncontrollable land as evidence, the English colonial efforts enacted their own transformation of the land – moving Ireland from a pastoral society to an agricultural one. These transformative acts of violence on the land cannot be erased; Ireland's historical landscape can be traced back to England's need to remove the wondrous and make Irish dirt act civilized.

Biography

Nicole Waters graduated in 2014 from the University of Alabama with her Masters in Early Modern English Literature. For the past 10 years, she has worked in secondary English education and is currently a school librarian. Her research interests include late Medieval romances, ecocritical and ecofeminist theories, material cultural studies, and the history of women's work in the textile industry. One of her ongoing projects is looking at the figure of a female hunter and female-female bonds in Chaucer's "Parliament of Fowls."



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Chris White (University of Queensland, Australia)

More than Monsters: Examining unusual *transformatio* in non-lupine medieval wonder tales

Stories of human-animal transformation have a long history. Thought to have descended from stories of Proto-Indo-European speaking warriors in the Late Neolithic period, the *kóryos*, who donned the skins of wolves to raid their enemies, the werewolf is particularly well-known and remembered as a creature of violence and destruction. Human-beast transformation became a popular literary motif, and werewolves in particular can be found in stories from Herodotus (c. 484 BCE – c. 425 BCE) to films like *Werewolves from Outer Space* (2017). This paper begins by discussing werewolves in the works of Gerald of Wales and Gervase of Tilbury, in order to show how the symbolic language attached to animals in medieval cultures could be used and subverted by medieval writers. I then turn to some less well-known examples of *transformatio* – the Latin term for such metamorphoses – found in the texts of these writers, and discuss such fearsome creatures as the werecat and the wererabbit. By examining the symbolic meanings of the creatures that people turned into in these stories, I argue, we can decipher the underlying messages that medieval writers sought to share, and better understand their texts and audiences.

Biography

Chris White is a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland, Australia. His thesis, *Using the Unusual, Normalising the Non-Mundane*, focuses on the didactic uses of the non-mundane in medieval literature, ranging from ghost stories to stories of transformation. His interests in the medieval period include social networks, symbolic language, and the transmission of wonder tales throughout the Latin West.

Joseph Wilbur (University of Pennsylvania, USA)

Lycanthropy and Logic: Dominican Perspectives on Werewolves in the Middle Ages

Venturing into the shadowy crossroads of medieval theology and mythology, my study illuminates the Dominican order's grappling with the enigmatic phenomenon of werewolves, prominently featuring Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, and Nicholas Trevet. Aquinas, navigating the murky waters of demonic transformations, particularly werewolf lore, integrates these myths into a broader theological discourse. His systematic approach, drawing significantly from Augustine's 'City of God,' reinterprets werewolf legends as part of a divine-moral narrative. Albert the Great, conversely, embarks on a broader exploration of supernatural transformations and metamorphoses, indicating a wider Dominican intrigue with mystical occurrences. In this context, Nicholas Trevet's



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specific reception of Augustine's work is crucial, highlighting the medieval Dominican tradition's diverse engagement with pagan myths and supernatural transformations. My paper argues that the Dominican intellectual pursuit, deeply influenced by Augustine, forged a unique theological space where discussing werewolves and miraculous transformations was essential for a comprehensive understanding of Christian doctrine. This exploration at the intersection of theology, folklore, and demonology invites a re-evaluation of medieval scholasticism's approach to the supernatural, challenging our modern perceptions of medieval theological discourse.

Biography

Joseph Wilbur is an undergraduate senior at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in Classical Studies and Religious Studies with a minor in Medieval Studies. His research, predominantly on Thomas Aquinas and animals, has been featured at multiple national and international conferences. Joseph has made significant contributions to a forthcoming book from Reaktion Press on 'Animals in Medieval Literature and Culture' and was instrumental in establishing Penn's first graduate course on 'premodern animals.' His presentations have spanned diverse themes, from an exploration of animal transformations within multiple religious traditions to a deep dive into Aquinas' intricate weaving of political philosophy with ecotheology. Joseph is next set to present at the 2024 International Congress on Medieval Studies, exploring the medieval Dominican identity in Thomistic animal ethics.