



First Research Day of the Department of Medieval Studies at CEU

8 September 2010, 13.30–18.00

CEU, 1051 Budapest, Nádor u. 9, Faculty Tower #409
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Research into society, religion, material and spiritual culture, and many other aspects of life, with the joint participation of faculty and students, has complemented teaching at the Department of Medieval Studies since its establishment some eighteen years ago. By now the number of projects has grown to the extent which warrants an overview to see how many and how varied projects are currently pursued. The need to provide opportunity for the new students and for the whole CEU community to get acquainted with the richness of this work has instigated organizing a departmental Research Day at the beginning of the new Academic Year. At this workshop-like arrangement many of the ongoing projects will be presented, profiling the Department of Medieval Studies within CEU as a research university.

13:30

Gerhard Jaritz

Conflicts, Control, and Concessions – The Central European Records of the Holy Apostolic Penitentiary

(CEU-funded group project)

In various social settings, powerful groups have always sought to handle conflicts and crimes through the force of legislation, but they have also been ready to grant exceptions and treat special cases in a more permissive way within the same administrative framework. Such an institution par excellence in medieval Latin Christianity was the Office of the Holy Apostolic Penitentiary (*Sacra Poenitentiaria Apostolica*), which resulted directly from the papacy reserving the right to exercise supremacy over all disciplinary matters from the second half of the twelfth century on. The task of the SPA was to adjudicate petitions of those who in any way transgressed religious canonic norms and eventually to pardon them. This project of the Department has documented, catalogued, and analyzed some of the Central European source material in the Penitential Registers of the Vatican Archives. It concentrates on the years between 1431 and 1455, i.e., the papacies of Eugene IV and Nicholas V.

13:55

József Laszlovszky

Medieval Monastic Regions in Central Europe. The Spiritual and Physical Landscape Setting of Monastic Orders and Religious Houses

(DAAD-funded group project in cooperation with the University of Göttingen and the Germania Sacra project)

Regional approaches to medieval monasticism, taking into account all monastic foundations from all monastic orders, have contributed to an understanding of the different historical-geographical regions of medieval Europe. Amongst the most frequently discussed issues are royal patronage and monasteries, mendicant orders in the context of royal power and urban development, female monasticism, regional, social and economic conditions, and monastic orders as vehicles, of intellectual spiritual and technical innovations. This common project of CEU Department of Medieval Studies and the University of Göttingen, consisting of four workshops (the fourth of them being organized in Budapest in October 2010) and of intensive

student exchange, aims at discussing these issues in a comparative way and thus understanding complex historical processes and characteristic regional features.

14:20

Gábor Klaniczay

Communicating Sainthood -- Constituting Regions and Nations in East-Central Europe

(OTKA-funded group project)

The project focuses on a range of different European regions using the cults of medieval saints and their modern appropriations as a vehicle for studying changing cultural values related to social cohesion and identity. Its main focal points are the interactions between centre and periphery, between the medieval Latin culture and regional interests, political and cultural agendas and their reflection in different media (images, music, liturgy, literature). The project is part of a collaborative research programme with other units in Denmark (Rituals Centre, Copenhagen), Austria (Institut für Realienkunde, Krems), Estonia (University of Tallinn) and Norway (Department of History and Classical Studies, Trondheim).

14:45-15:00 BREAK

15:00

Ottó Gecser

Plague Epidemics in the Late Middle Ages: Religious and Medical Responses

(OTKA-funded individual project)

The aim of the research project is to explore the interrelatedness of medical and religious discourse about pestilence in the period between the Black Death and the end of the Middle Ages. One group of sources to be examined is constituted by sermons and legends related to the cult of certain saints who were closely associated to protection against the plague, as well as by sermons about the plague as such. The other group consists of popular manuals of cures and preventive measures which circulated in a high number of exemplars already before the printing press.

15:25

Anna Somfai

Visual thinking and diagrammatic images in medieval manuscripts: cognitive science meets medieval studies

(NKTH-funded individual project)

The main question I ask in my research is in what way people think differently by means of images than through words or numbers. I explore visual thinking by a close study of medieval manuscripts, examining page layouts, diagrams, diagrammatic images and the visual language formed through the creation and transmission knowledge. I approach the material by taking into account the recent developments in cognitive science and the discoveries related to vision and cognition.

15:50

Judith Rasson

Researching the History of Transhumance in Macedonia

(CEU-funded individual project)

How long have shepherds been driving their flocks up to the mountains to graze in the summer and down to lower elevations to graze in the winter? Opinions vary among archaeologists and historians. Did this practice start some 6000 years ago during the Neolithic? 2000 years ago during the Bronze Age? or later, after the development of complex

state societies? A small start on an answer to this question took the form of an ethnoarchaeological landscape study of sheepfolds in two national parks in western Macedonia. Sheepfolds were mapped, their locations recorded and test excavations conducted in order to discover whether there is evidence for long-term use of these locations. Local shepherds were interviewed to find out how they view this occupation and what the functional requirements are for keeping sheep. The information collected will be combined with ethnographic studies from the Balkans and historical documents such as Ottoman censuses and legal cases in order to survey the practice of transhumance through time.

16:15-16:30 BREAK

16:30

Alice Choyke

The Medieval Animal Data-Network (MAD)

(CEU-funded group project)

MAD was conceived as a way of addressing the manifold ways humans related to and depended on animals for physical and spiritual existence in medieval Europe. A database is being compiled around a number of data categories including textual data, images, archaeological topographic data, artifacts, and archaeozoological evidence. Above all, the network is intended to create truly interdisciplinary tools for research. The time frame begins with the end of the Roman Empire in Europe and in some areas data input even extends to materials from the 17th or 18th century where clear continuity can be demonstrated. The project is connected with many other research initiatives and institutions.

16:55

Katalin Szende

The Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns: local variations on a European theme

(OTKA-funded group project)

The European Atlas of Historic Towns is one of the longest-running serial projects on history in Europe. Initiated in 1968 and taken up by 18 countries so far, it has produced atlases of more than 460 smaller or larger towns following a theoretically uniform plan. A new wave of interest in participating swept across East-Central Europe after 1989, the latest element of which was the joining of Hungary in 2004 and the publication of its first atlas (Sopron) in print in 2010. My presentation will, besides introducing the production and use of these atlases as research tools, also discuss the perspectives of this enterprise in the digital revolution of mapping.

17:20

Gerhard Jaritz

“Margins of the Medieval World”-network

(Department-based network)

With a leading role of the department, an international network of scholars has over the last years been focusing on matters related to the margins, peripheral areas and outer borders of the medieval world. The overarching perspective has been comprehensive in the sense that the idea of margin, periphery, liminality, borders and outskirts has been understood and treated in a wide sense. Thus, the network has included scholars and contributions dealing with these aspects under a wide range of angles – such as geography and mapping, fantasy and fiction, travelling, social life of somehow marginalised people, religion, time, and mind and body.

The network is publishing its results with CEU Press in the series of The Muhu Proceedings, named after the first venue of the group on the Estonian island of Muhu.