



One of three reliquary busts of female companions to the virgin martyr Saint Ursula South Netherlandish Brabant possibly Brussels 1520-1530 CE Oak with paint and gilding by mharrsch. Licensed under CC BY 2.0, <https://search.creativecommons.org/photos/3b1b11ce-d279-47df-b0ec-766db3ca84c4>

SESSION 1 LIVING IMAGES

- 2.00 - 2.15: Connexion and welcome from the conveners
- 2.15 - 2.35: Miri Rubin (*Queen Mary University of London*),
'Experiencing *ecclesia* and *synagoga* in later medieval Europe'
- 2.35 - 2.55: Tara Hamling (*University of Birmingham*),
'Weighing the Word in an Image: The afterlives of a "superstitious" motif in post-Reformation England'
- 2.55 - 3.15: Discussion

SESSION 2 LIVING WORSHIP

- 3.30 - 3.50: Carl Lounsbury (*College of William and Mary*),
'Houses of Worship: The architectural expression of religious beliefs in early America'
- 3.50 - 4.10: Chloë Reddaway (*King's College London*),
'The Visual Commentary on Scripture: New conversations between art and Scripture'
- 4.10 - 4.30: Discussion

Conveners: Anne Dunan-Page (*Aix-Marseille University*),
Laurence Lux-Sterritt (*Aix-Marseille University*),
Tessa Whitehouse (*Queen Mary University of London*)

Lived Religion and the Visual Arts A virtual study day

Friday 4
December 2020
2.00 to 4.30 pm
GMT, via Zoom

The concept of 'lived religion' emerged within the French school of sociology in the 1930s when extensive enquiries were made into the state of French catholicism, and is still conceived today as belonging primarily to the province of social scientists, practical theologians and moral philosophers.

The Queen Mary Centre for Religion and Literature in English (Queen Mary University of London) has entered into a collaboration with the Research Centre for the Anglophone World of Aix-Marseille University (LERMA, UR 853) for a four-year project applying the concept to European literature and history, following the seminal work of David Hall and Robert Orsi for North America. With due regard to the sociological context in which such work began, the project explores historical, literary and material sources, seeking new ways to approach private and public devotions, religious practices and the every day religion of the laity. We hold a symposium every year, alternating between England and France: 'Documenting Lived Religion 1500 to the Present: Perspectives Across Borders' (2017), 'Lived Religion: Theory and Practice' (2018), 'Lived Religion and the Book' (2019), 'Lived Religion and the Visual Arts' (2020). A conference will end the cycle in October 2021 in London.

To register and receive the link to connect to the meeting, please send an email to anne.page@univ-amu.fr and laurence.sterritt@univ-amu.fr

SPEAKER ABSTRACTS and BIOGRAPHIES

Miri Rubin

Experiencing *ecclesia* and *synagoga* in later medieval Europe

Around 850, a new visual form entered Christian iconography, the pair *ecclesia* and *synagoga*. These were two female figures located either side of the Cross, and represented on liturgical books and objects of great value. After 1200 they were frequently represented in more public and outdoor setting, carved in cathedral facades. The pair became a subject of literary treatment too, in Latin and the vernaculars, and entered the repertoire of religious drama. This talk will assess the presence of this theme, which represented the affinities between Judaism and Christianity, and which foretold the conversion of *synagoga* in the apocalyptic future, in urban landscapes. It will explore how and where *ecclesia* and *synagoga* formed part of the lived experience of religion in later medieval Europe.

Tara Hamling

Weighing the Word in an Image:

The afterlives of a 'superstitious' motif in post-Reformation England

This talk focuses on the afterlives of the Weighing of Souls iconography in post-Reformation English visual culture. It explores how the 'weighing' motif became synonymous with the reformation through a particular incarnation showing the scales of justice weighing the Bible against the vanities of the Roman Catholic Church. It traces the migrations and mutations of this pictorial motif from the 1570s to the 1670s, examining the contexts in which it appeared and was viewed, including canonical Protestant texts, popular print, domestic decoration and the battlefields of the civil war. It shows how the imagery served practices of ideological and social cohesion as well as fuelling conflict and division. Its success as a motif encapsulates an understanding of the Reformation as both defining historical event and incremental process; while its imagery commemorated a single moment of judgement effecting schism, its persistence and longevity emphasised and facilitated the ongoing struggle for reform.

Carl Lounsbury

Houses of Worship:

The architectural expression of religious beliefs in early America

The material culture of religion in British America had its origins in the Reformation. Reformers rejected the subdivision of the medieval church with its long aisles for processional ceremonies and its many altars, which emphasized the sacrificial nature of the Catholic Mass. For New World Protestants, the centerpiece of communal worship was hearing a minister expound the word of God. Preaching became the principal focus for the service and the auditory experience of reformed worship required seating around a centrally placed pulpit. This talk examines how religious beliefs shaped the form and ornamentation of ecclesiastical buildings in early America. Their design responded to this reconceptualization of public worship, yet the diverse origins of the Reformation provided no uniformity of outlook among its many adherents. Some believed in the sanctity of spaces and chose to glorify God in the "beauty of holiness" with gilded ornaments and expensive textiles that draped pulpits and communion tables. Others had a profound aversion to ascribing numinous attributes to material objects or places. They believed in God's omnipresence, which meant that a place of worship was no more holy than a grove, barn, or dwelling. Since God was disassociated with a particular place, they called their gathering places meetinghouses in an effort to divert attention from the physical place to the spiritual activities that they considered the true core of church worship. With such contrasting perspectives, the houses of worship in early America can be read as a series of incremental gradations of embellishment between austerity at one end of the scale and ostentation at the other. Calvinists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Quakers worked within a sliding scale of elaboration to create structures consonant with the beliefs of those who filled their benches and pews.

Chloë Reddaway

The Visual Commentary on Scripture:

New conversations between art and Scripture

The Visual Commentary on Scripture (VCS) is a freely accessible online publication that provides theological commentary on the Bible in dialogue with works of art. Combining theology, art history, and biblical scholarship, it helps its users to (re)discover the Bible in new ways through the illuminating interaction of artworks, scriptural texts, and commissioned commentaries. In a time of Zoom worship and digital religion, the virtual exhibitions of the VCS facilitate new possibilities of seeing and reading, bringing the biblical text and the selected works of art alive in new and vivid ways. This talk introduces the VCS and reflects on the opportunities which technological advances and the expansion of online religion offer for theology, group worship, and private prayer.

Prof. Miri Rubin is Professor of Medieval and Early Modern History at Queen Mary University of London. Her research explores social relations with the medieval religious cultures, with a special interest in gender and Jewish-Christian relations.

Dr Tara Hamling is Reader in Early Modern Studies in the Department of History at the University of Birmingham. She has published widely on the relationship between the visual arts and Protestant culture in early modern England, with particular interest in domestic decoration.

Dr Carl Lounsbury is emeritus senior architectural historian at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and an adjunct associate professor of history at the College of William and Mary. His research focuses on the architecture of early modern Britain and British America.

Dr Chloë Reddaway is a Research Fellow based in the centre for Arts and the Sacred at King's College London and at Duke University, N.C. She is a former Ahmanson Fellow in Art and Religion at the National Gallery and her research in visual theology focuses on the recovery of historic images for contemporary theology.