



## SEMINAR SERIES

Entangled Histories of  
Emotions in the  
Mediterranean World



SOCIETY FOR THE  
**HISTORY of  
EMOTIONS**



# Entangled Histories of Gender in the Medieval Mediterranean World

**DATE:** Saturday 5 May 2018

**VENUE:** Sir Llew Edwards Building (the Terrace Room)  
The University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus  
Brisbane, Queensland

**TIME:** 9am–5.30pm

**CONVENORS:** Megan Cassidy-Welch (UQ)  
Giovanni Tarantino (CHE/UWA)

**FREE EVENT BUT BOOKING ESSENTIAL**

<https://survey.its.uq.edu.au/checkbox/Entangled-Histories-of-Gender-in-the-Medieval-Mediterranean-World.aspx>

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This workshop will focus on gender as a product and driver of interactions in the medieval Mediterranean, especially France, Spain, Italy, North Africa and the Holy Land. Through a number of case studies, the workshop asks how gender and emotion both inform and are reflected in historical relationships between people, places and things. It will also broadly interrogate whether the well-worn idea of gender as a category of analysis can still serve as a fruitful framework/paradigm for the transcultural, multivalent and deeply relational histories – or entangled histories – of the medieval Mediterranean.

Image: Le recueil des histoires de Troyes, London, British Library, MS Royal 17 E II, f. 349 (Arrival of the Amazons), c.1475. Courtesy of the British Library.



5 MAY 2018

SIR LLEW EDWARDS BUILDING (THE TERRACE ROOM), THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND, ST LUCIA CAMPUS, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

9am	Arrival, coffee
9.30am	Welcome and opening remarks (Megan Cassidy-Welch, The University of Queensland)
<b>Session 1</b> (Chair: Megan Cassidy-Welch)	
10am	'Tears, Gender and the Communication of Piety in the Thirteenth Century' (Kimberley-Joy Knight, The University of Sydney/The University of Western Australia)
10.30am	' <i>Laborare est Orare</i> : Gender, Work and Devotion in Medieval Chartres' (Sarah Randles, The University of Melbourne/University of Tasmania)
11am	Morning tea
<b>Session 2</b> (Chair: Clare Monagle)	
11.30am	'Gender Trouble in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean' (Sahar Amer, The University of Sydney)
12pm	'Monstrosity, Masculinity, Humanity: Negotiating Otherness in the <i>Roman de Mélusine</i> ' (Tania Colwell, Australian National University)
12.30pm	Lunch
<b>Session 3</b> (Chair: Giovanni Tarantino)	
2pm	'Marco Polo's <i>Bochta</i> : Thinking About Gender and the Global Medieval Mediterranean' (Kim Phillips, The University of Auckland)
2.30pm	'Wearing the Word of God: Jacques de Vitry's Parchment Mitre and Male Authority in the Early Thirteenth Century' (Megan Cassidy-Welch, The University of Queensland)
<b>Roundtable/Closing discussion</b>	
3-4.30pm	(Facilitators: Clare Monagle (Macquarie University), Erin Sebo (Flinders University), Karin Sellberg (The University of Queensland))

## ABSTRACTS

### **Laborare est Orare: Gender, Work and Devotion in Medieval Chartres**

Sarah Randles (*The University of Melbourne/University of Tasmania*)

The medieval cathedral of Notre-Dame of Chartres is famous for the multiple depictions of craft and trade in its thirteenth-century stained-glass windows, although the precise meaning of these representations of labour has been the subject of considerable debate. For many years it was assumed that the workers shown in the lower registers of the windows represented their donors, but this belief has been refuted on the grounds that many such workers would have been unable to afford such substantial donations. Using gender as a lens through which to view these images of trade makes clear that the work depicted within the cathedral is overwhelmingly undertaken by men. In contrast, women's work, in the form of textile preparation, is depicted on the exterior of the cathedral, in a series of stone carvings on the northern portal, where physical labour is juxtaposed with the work of reading and prayerful contemplation. This paper will consider these depictions of work in the light of documentary evidence for the gendering of work in thirteenth-century France, and the ways that work and the material goods it produced, particularly cloth, were used for gendered devotional and emotional purposes.

### **Monstrosity, Masculinity, Humanity: Negotiating Otherness in the *Roman de Mélusine***

Tania Colwell (*Australian National University*)

Crusading was a dominant framework shaping intercultural relations across Europe in the later Middle Ages. It is also a central motif in the French prose *Roman de Mélusine* (c.1390), in which it enables the sons of the eponymous fairy-dragon to expand the Lusignan dynasty across the Eastern Mediterranean. Motivated by chivalric ideals and desires, the Lusignan crusaders exemplify norms of elite Christian masculinity, in part by virtue of their monstrous ancestral hybridity. The Saracens, also characterised in bestial terms, are portrayed more ambivalently, displaying both great prowess and unchivalric, because dishonourable, concern for self-preservation. However, if Lusignan and Saracen enactment of distinct martial behaviours ostensibly point to competing models of warrior masculinity predicated on religious difference, then consideration of individual warriors' emotional fields reveals that Christian and Muslim knights nonetheless share important chivalric values. In effect, masculine emotion in *Mélusine* elides spiritual and physiological difference to highlight the humanity shared by Christian and Saracen opponents, a development that reaches a climax in the treaty and friendship between Geoffroy la Grand Dent and the Sultan of Damascus.

My paper positions this crusade alliance within a particular moment of the romance's early reception history, specifically its inclusion alongside Jean le Long's *Fleurs des Histoires de l'Orient* in the early fifteenth-century manuscript, BL MS Cotton Otho D.II. It compares the portrait of amicable masculine bonding between Christian and non-Christian in *Mélusine* with evidence of emotional entanglement between ethnically and confessionally other males elsewhere in the *Fleurs* anthology, and offers some historical explanations for the compilation of these texts. While cultural prejudice inflected the (re)production of imagined and historical masculinities in this volume, gender nonetheless provided a lens through which Europeans envisaged forging collaborative transcultural relationships across the Mediterranean. Attending to the varied modes of masculinity informing such relationships will extend our understanding of how otherness was negotiated in the late medieval world.

### **Marco Polo's *Bochta*: Thinking About Gender and the Global Medieval Mediterranean**

Kim Phillips (*The University of Auckland*)

An inventory made in the wake of Marco Polo's death (1324) lists objects brought back from his Asian travels that he wished to leave to his daughters. These include the 'golden tablet of command' given to him by Khublai Khan, some Buddhist prayer beads and a Mongol warrior's silver belt. Among his possessions were, 'It bochta. j. doro con piere

& perle' ('Item one golden bochta with gemstones and pearls', Moule and Pelliot, vol. 1, p. 556). The 'bochta', elsewhere termed 'bocca', was a *boqtaq*, a Mongolian headdress reserved for elite women. Marco's souvenir was possibly a gift from Kököchin, the Mongol princess who Marco had escorted from Quanzhou to Persia in 1292–1293, an expedition that enabled the Polos' subsequent homeward journey to Venice. Mongol women's *boqtaqs* had already drawn the attention of earlier European travellers to Asia, receiving detailed description in John of Plano Carpini's *Historia Mongalorum* (whose comments were later more widely circulated in Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*), William of Rubruck's *Itinerarium* and Riccolodo da Montecroce's *Liber Peregrinacionis*. In more recent times, historians and bloggers alike have speculated about the possible influence of the Mongol *boqtaq* on the Burgundian hennin, the distinctive cone-shaped headdress that represented the height of fashion for wealthy ladies of the fifteenth century (c.1430–c.1500) and which is now *de rigueur* for any little girl's medieval princess costume. The question of whether the Mongol *boqtaq*, much less Marco Polo's own possession of one such item, actually gave rise to the fashion for hennins a century later in northwestern regions somewhat distant from Marco's home city, must probably remain moot – although I am sceptical. The purpose of this paper is not to attempt any definitive account of a relationship between the two forms of feminine headgear, but rather to use Marco's *boqtaq* as an opportunity to discuss aspects of gender as a driver of cultural interactions in the medieval Mediterranean, comprehending the region in a global medieval context as Western Eurasia. Historians are increasingly interested in re-imagining 'medieval Europe' in its wider global framework, yet the place of gender in these revised histories has not yet been fully explored. My paper will seek to explore some possible ways forward.

### **Gender Trouble in the Thirteenth-Century Mediterranean**

**Sahar Amer** (*The University of Sydney*)

The middle of the thirteenth century was a time of political upheaval around the Mediterranean, with the Muslim Empire coming under attack from both the West (Crusades) and the East (the Mongols). It is often considered one of the most destructive periods of Islamic history. What is perhaps lesser known is the active role played by some Muslim women of the period in the public sphere. My talk will uncover some of this forgotten history and will highlight the unusual political and sexual agency of a number of Muslim women in the literary and cultural production of the period.

I focus more specifically on the important role, as described by medieval Arabic

chronicles, played by Shajarrat al-Durr (d.1258) who became Sultan of Egypt, defeated the French King Saint Louis, ransomed him for one million bezants, and ended the Crusaders' presence in Egypt. Despite the extraordinary role that Shajarat al-Durr played in the course of the Seventh Crusade – in the defeat of the French, the ransoming and release of Saint Louis and literally changing the course of Mediterranean history – her name, political position and sovereignty have been almost entirely silenced by European chroniclers of the time as well as by contemporary European historians.

Interestingly, the central, albeit neglected, political role that Shajarat al-Durr played in the thirteenth-century Mediterranean and in crusader history coincided with an important moment of textual production for gender and alternative sexual practices in the Arab world. It is as though the very moment of political volatility, unrest or transition was also one of great literary potential, a space in which the fictive expression of alternative political and sexual practices could surface. Texts such as *Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Tifashi's Nuzhat al-albab fima la yujad fi Kitab (Delight of Hearts Or What Cannot Be Found in Any Other Book)*, an encyclopedic compilation of everything known about sexualities in the Arab world, and the *Thousand and One Nights* (the earliest extant manuscript of this monumental work dates from approximately 1250) both offer an abundant repertoire of themes, tales and stories that echo the political agency of Muslim women leaders of the 1250s.

Whether historical or fictional, these thirteenth-century examples queer our historical understanding of the medieval Mediterranean and challenge commonly held views about Muslim women as passive objects of patriarchal structures. They serve to expand our notions about the proper role of women in Muslim societies, question the borders of propriety and open up new spaces for what is considered acceptable and normative.

### **Tears, Gender and the Communication of Piety in the Thirteenth Century**

**Kimberley Joy-Knight** (*The University of Sydney/ The University of Western Australia*)

Sweeping across Europe during the thirteenth century, the friars interacted with peoples speaking different languages from their own. Even beguines, who were not itinerant and followed a semi-cloistered religious life, interacted with the outside world and would receive visitors who might travel for days to seek their guidance. Outside the boundaries of the traditional cloister, both groups faced challenges in communication, although of contrasting types: the friars encountered people of different vernaculars while holy women were forbidden from preaching the word of God. To propagate their holy message, these pious men and women used non-verbal modes of communication to encourage others to follow their example. In this way, the emotionally

charged somatic piety of the mendicants and beguines became central to their interaction with others.

Many scholars have discussed the gender-inflected nature of devotional piety, most notably Caroline Walker Bynum who explored the use of the body in pursuit of religious goals and emphasised how religious women had a heightened awareness of the flesh. However, despite continuing scholarship on the medieval body and emotions, tears are often overlooked as a form of devotion and communication. Furthermore, the research often focuses on religious women, excluding the lachrymose behaviour of their male counterparts. In response to the themes of the workshop, this paper will ask three key questions: How did tears work as a method of communication? To what extent were tears, an emotional expression of piety and spiritual progression, inflected by gender? Is the well-worn idea of gender an appropriate framework for examining the lachrymose piety of the mendicants and the communication of their ideals? The paper will argue that tears were a quintessential element of both male and female devotion and that they were part of the language of piety for both sexes. Tears *could* be gendered but were more associated with piety than gender in thirteenth-century hagiographies. In light of these findings, the paper will close by questioning whether we should reconsider gender as a framework for somatic devotion and the communication of piety in the High Middle Ages.

### **Wearing the Word of God: Jacques de Vitry's Parchment Mitre and Male Authority in the Early Thirteenth Century**

**Megan Cassidy-Welch** (*The University of Queensland*)

Jacques de Vitry, bishop of Acre and one of the most famous preachers of the early thirteenth-century crusades, collected a number of objects during his time in the Middle East and Egypt during the Fifth Crusade. Some of these items – textiles, books, personal ornaments and relics – were sent back to the Low Countries to the spiritual community of Oignies, where Jacques had been a regular canon and where he had developed a profound spiritual friendship with Marie of Oignies, whose hagiography he had written before departing for the Fifth Crusade. Among the items to be sent to Oignies was an episcopal mitre made of parchment, probably commissioned by Jacques while in Acre. In this paper I will use this parchment mitre to explore questions about gender and authority in medieval material culture. In particular, I want to focus on the fleshly composition of the mitre as a way of understanding corporeal and emotional connections between men and women in the thirteenth century. In so doing I consider how male authority could be asserted, performed and displayed on the flesh, and with flesh, across the Mediterranean world.



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International Seminar Series  
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### 1 NAPLES, 26 June 2017 Società Nazionale di Scienze Lettere ed Arti **Cultures in Movement: New Visions, New Conceptual Paradigms**

The category of Orientalism, understood as a product of Western authors, artists and the like, has been superseded, and so too has a unitary vision of the vast and complex Eastern world of the Near East. However, a conception that is no longer static but the fruit of historic, spatiotemporal and emotional transformations has yet to be adequately placed at the centre of the 'Mediterranean world' in a culturally broad sense. Such a view requires the testing of new paradigms and investigative methodologies, and of new conceptual tools. In this seminar, the point of observation will be reciprocal legacies, the transfer and translation-appropriation of knowledge, objects and goods, and migrations of bodies, ideas, visions and emotions – all of which have made the Mediterranean not a barrier but a point of contact between different and plural cultures.

### 2 SPLIT, 25 September 2017 Centre for the Study of Emotions in Cross-Cultural Exchange **Portals: Spaces of Encounter, Entanglement and Exchange**

South East Europe is a key historical contact zone for the encounter of Continental, Mediterranean and Steppe cultures from the classical world, through the Middle Ages and early modern period. This history of cultural and emotional entanglement is inscribed in many of the region's geographical features: from the Adriatic to the Black Sea; the Danube – the main artery of the region – and connected inland waterways; the complex landscapes of mountains, coastal strips, islands, river mouths, ravines and fertile river plains. These distinctive landscapes have created natural and imaginary liminal zones: a series of fluid borderlines and cultural portals that criss-cross the South East. This seminar explores these sites of encounter, asking what role topography and landscape might play in the shaping of cultural portals of conflict and exchange. It considers the spaces and media through which these various cultures communicated with each other in South East Europe, in terms of cultural, commercial, artistic and emotional exchange; in periods of peace, and of confrontation. How is emotion used to calibrate cultural differences and exchanges between groups? And how might the historical geographies of encounter and exchange – and their attendant emotional entanglements – provide useful terms or models for the study of cultural experience and expression of emotion?

### 3 PERTH, 14 December 2017 The University of Western Australia **Entangled Histories of Things in the Mediterranean World**

This workshop will have a particular focus on the interactions of subject, material and emotional formations, applying a 'new materialities' analytical paradigm to examine the entangled trajectories, transmissions and transfers of people, ideas and objects across Mediterranean spaces. It thus advances research on the interconnected histories of people, places and things in circulation in the Mediterranean world over a long historical timeframe. The workshop seeks to apply new methodological lenses to the complex and entangled history of the geo-cultural space the Mediterranean World. These new analytical frameworks demand that we consider people, places and things as having entangled subjective, affective, emotional and material lives that are mutually constitutive. As such, these theories suggest that we cannot study individuals and societies outside of their interactions with material entities such as spaces and places and affective experiences, but only in relation to them – and likewise, spaces, objects and emotional experience as relational constructs produced through interactions with people. Thus, people, places and things are 'entangled'.

### 4 FLORENCE, 5 February 2018 European University Institute **Mediterranean Encounters: People in Motion**

This workshop will examine people on the move and contacts between different cultures in the Mediterranean world. On the one hand, travel accounts provide a rich source for exploring the emotions involved in intercultural encounters, but the contacts of various types of travellers (diplomats, merchants, as well as others travelling professionally or forced into exile) can also be explored through their private correspondence. The trajectories of individuals who changed both culture and religion, whether by force or choice, can also be fruitfully explored through the prism of emotions. The emotions involved in intercultural encounters are more varied than is often assumed in studies of 'Orientalism', and can thus help to shed new light on Mediterranean history. This workshop will provide an opportunity to reflect on how studying the great variety of Mediterranean encounters through the lens of emotions can enrich our understanding of them.

### 5 BRISBANE, 5 May 2018 The University of Queensland **Entangled Histories of Gender in the Medieval Mediterranean World**

This workshop will focus on gender as a product and driver of interactions in the medieval Mediterranean, especially France, Spain, Italy, north Africa and the Holy Land. Through a number of case studies, the workshop asks how gender and emotion both inform and are reflected in historical relationships between people, places and things. It will also broadly interrogate whether the well-worn idea of gender as a category of analysis can still serve as a fruitful framework/paradigm for the transcultural, multivalent and deeply relational histories – or entangled histories – of the medieval Mediterranean.

### 6 BUDAPEST, 18 June 2018 Central European University, Institute for Advanced Study **Religious Sentiments Across Central and Eastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean**

This workshop will look specifically at the relations between religion, religious sentiments and emotions across Central and Eastern Europe, Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Arab Mediterranean. The workshop will integrate two perspectives in terms of contact zones, by relating cross-imperial boundaries, contacts and transfers as well as religious boundaries within given multi-confessional societies. The central question will be what role religion played in shaping emotions and repertoires of emotion and perceptions thereof, including how to make sense of irrational emotions. How are similarities and differences of regimes of body language and emotional registers and economy explained in religious terms? How are religious traditions and formation in multi-confessional contexts inscribed in non-religious practices? When do such perceptions change and how do we as historians measure such change? To this end, the workshop will address issues of methodology and historical case studies, in which Islam will play a special, though not exclusive role. Methodologically, the focus will be on the tangibility or otherwise of religious sentiments in given materials and practices (Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, Catholic, and rejections thereof). As for empirical studies, the workshop will focus on case studies involving the complex relationship of body, religious practice and emotion, including sentiments disavowing the impact of religion on the economy of emotion and religious sentiments.