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PICTORIAL HAGIOGRAPHY : EAST AND WEST



Artistic representations of the deeds of the ‘very special dead’ are a hagiographical genre as old as written vitae, and enjoyed tremendous popularity throughout the Middle Ages. The visual vitae of the saints can be found on various media, from jewellery to monumental painting, and were an integral part of a cult whose forms varied from the intimacy of personal devotion to the public ceremonies of civic or royal cult. Saints have rarely been studied in a broad geographic and religious perspective in spite of many shared or parallel cults between the Latin West and the Byzantine East. Comparative approaches have also been rather limited.

This session aims to bring together art historians of the medieval West and Byzantium in order to create a cross-cultural dialogue concerning pictorial hagiography encompassing a variety of media. An art historical perspective will be used to explore the construction, messages and functions of these multifaceted visual narratives within the social and religious contexts of their time. The analysis of the visual language through which these stories are constituted will foster questions concerning the role of this material, long neglected in hagiographic

studies, in the construction of saintly identities and the place of saints in the memories and devotional practices of both individuals and communities.

The speakers in this session should seek to expose a wealth of outlooks on the visual lives of holy women and men. Paper topics may address (but are not restricted to) :

- The construction of hagiographic narratives in visual terms
- The interplay between relics, objects and the representation of saints' lives
- The formation and diversity of holy persons' identities in visual portrayals
- The changes in iconography and its meaning
- The relations between pictorial hagiography and liturgy
- The role of pictorial hagiography in its spatial and social environment
- The performance of sanctity

To submit a paper proposal, please email Nicolas Varaine (nicolas.varaine@inha.fr) and Elizabeth Zanghi (elizabethpalmazanghi@gmail.com) by September 8, 2019.

Your email should include the following:

- Full name, current affiliation, and email address
- Paper title (15-word maximum)
- Abstract (200–300-word maximum)
- Any audio/visual requirements