

Community Study Day 29th September 2023

East Meets West: Medieval and Renaissance Encounters Faculty of Arts Building (FAB) 2.31

10-10.50 Session One: 'Committing Sacrilege in a Holy Cause': The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople' (Aysu Dincer)

Pope Innocent III called for the Fourth Crusade in 1198. If his plans had been followed through, this crusade would have been the first campaign directed against Ayyubid Egypt. However, due to a series of 'unfortunate events' (or 'major conspiracies', depending on your point of view!) the crusaders ended up attacking first the Christian town of Zara (in modern day Croatia), and then the capital of Byzantium, Constantinople. The reasons behind these diversions have been debated since the crusade took place, and they are still being debated by historians. The second attack on Constantinople resulted in the city being sacked by the crusader army. This session will focus on the religious artefacts that were looted from the city in 1204: these artefacts included saints' relics, which were venerated by both Latin and Orthodox Christians. We will explore the concept of 'sacred theft' (*furtum sacrum*), also considering the long-term effects of this eventful crusade on the political, religious and cultural relations between Latin Christendom and Byzantium.

11-11.50 Session Two: 'Unusual Orthodox Icons: From Dog-Headed St Christopher to Jesus as a Soccer Player' (Sergei Zotov)

Sometimes Orthodox tradition has portrayed saints with surprising features such as animal heads or goat horns. Some icons depict the Virgin Mary with three arms, capable of holding the infant Christ with one arm while swimming with the other two. The depictions of the Holy Trinity often show three faces and six hands, merging sacred images with the monstrous. These unusual sacred images can be found in Orthodox churches and may surprise modern viewers. In an upcoming lecture, Sergei Zotov will take us on a colourful journey through these unexpected images where folklore meets Orthodox mysticism. These images were created by intellectual icon-painters with great knowledge of theology, and they often represent visual riddles that require interpretation to understand. Sergei will also highlight how these traditions continue to thrive in modern icons, which can be just as puzzling as their historical counterparts. For example, some icons depict Lenin shooting Christ, while others show Jesus as a soccer player. Join us for this fascinating exploration into the world of Orthodox iconography.

12-1.00pm: Lunch break (provided) in Faculty of Arts Building, second floor, 2.47

1-1.50pm: Session Three: 'Gain and Godliness": Religion, Commerce, and Empire in the Early Modern World (Protestant and Catholic Missionaries)' (Floris Verhaart)

This session focuses on the differences and similarities between Protestant and Catholic missiology on the basis of the works of Johannes Hoornbeeck (a Reformed professor) and José de Acosta (a Jesuit missionary). This will serve as a starting point for a deeper discussion on differences in the ways in which Protestants and Catholics thought about building up a colonial empire. We will also think about the reasons why Spanish is a world language, but Dutch is not.

2-2.50pm: Session Four: 'Scientific Instruments and Jesuit Missionaries in Early Modern Eurasia' (Xiaona Wang)

During the early modern era, the emergence of expansive knowledge networks relied heavily on the circulation of scientific instruments. In Europe, the exchange of information among scholars was made possible through the advent of the printing press. Portable astronomical instruments became the key factor that prompted projects of observation in navigation, while mural instruments were the sign of royal and national scientific investment. Beyond Europe, the collaboration between sailors, merchants, missionaries, and imperial administrators connected the continent to Asia. These intricate networks facilitated the transportation of astronomical instruments and scientific ideas, as well as the movement of individuals. Consequently, profound transformations took place in the fields of geography, cartography, astronomy, and physics on a Eurasian scale. In this session, we will look at Jesuit Missionaries and the scientific instruments they carried with them during their Far East Missions in the 17th and 18th centuries as case studies. We will study the religious and political backgrounds, technical details, and cultural role these instruments played. This session, as a whole, aims to delve deeper into the importance of material culture in the early modern networks of knowledge exchange.

3-3.50 Session Five: 'Where is East on the Seventeenth Century Stage?' (Teresa Grant)

A session looking at how some seventeenth-century playwrights used the idea of 'East'. We'll look at the popularity of 'Turk' plays across the century, take a detour via the first English opera, Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*, and end up discussing Dryden's heroic drama *The Conquest of Granada*, which stages the reclamation by Christian forces of Muslim Spain. We will see how playwrights used 'East' to comment on home affairs, using the two *Mustapha* plays of Fulke Greville (written between 1594 and 1609) and Roger Boyle, 1st Earl of Orrery (1665) which dramatise Suliman the Magnificent's murder of his own son, Mustapha. We'll find out about Mustapha and Suliman in life as well as in the Renaissance imagination and art, and see how their story was used for political and religious commentary in the febrile atmosphere of seventeenth-century England.

3.50-4.00pm: Conclusions and discussion (attended by some of the tutors)