

Session at ICMS 2017 (Kalamazoo, 14 – 17 May 17)

ICMS (International Congress on Medieval Studies), Kalamazoo, MI, May 14–17, 2017

Deadline: Sep 15, 2016

Amanda Luyster, College of the Holy Cross

The Virgin as Bridge. Cultural Exchange and Connection through Images of the Virgin Mary.

Organizers: Diliانا Angelova (University of California, Berkeley) and Amanda Luyster (College of the Holy Cross)

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Across the medieval Mediterranean and beyond, people of many faiths and backgrounds sought the succor of the miraculous virgin and mother, Mary. Christians venerated Mary as the holiest figure of Christianity after Christ, the one thanks to whom the divine mystery of the Incarnation was fulfilled. The Koran also hailed her as chosen by Allah. Converts to Christianity from paganism or Islam were often said to be motivated by their great love of the Virgin. Byzantine churches were incomplete without her image in the holiest of holies, the apse of the sanctuary. In the West, the grandest Gothic cathedrals rose in her honor. Objects such as the thirteenth-century Freer canteen, as well as shared shrines, suggest that Marian images could be appreciated by audiences professing different faiths. Images of the Virgin acted as a shared touchpoint between people of many different backgrounds, socio-economic strata, and faiths.

This panel invites 15-20 minute papers that focus on the capacity of the Virgin to act as a bridge or cultural mediator: between regions, between genders, between political factions and cities, and between belief systems. Panel participants could focus on representations of the Virgin as well as references to religious practices associated with images of the Virgin. Icons, cult centers, personal objects such as jewelry, metalwork more broadly, manuscripts, monumental sculpture, wall-painting, architecture, as well as practices associated with all of these, might be considered.

*The deadline for paper proposals is September 15, 2016.

**Please send the abstract of your proposed paper (300 words maximum), CV with current contact information, and completed Participant Information Form, available at <https://wmich.edu/medievalcongress/submissions> to the organizers, Diliانا Angelova and Amanda Luyster, at angelova@berkeley.edu and aluyster@holycross.edu

***All abstracts not accepted for the session will be forwarded to Congress administrators for consideration in general sessions.

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