

CALL FOR PAPERS

Boundaries of Holiness, Frontiers of Sanctity

International Medieval Congress, Leeds, July 6-9, 2020

Late-antique Christianity hails 'the rise of the holy man', to paraphrase the title of Peter Brown's seminal work. This new social and religious phenomenon implies the appearance of figures who are believed to be specially chosen by God. The holy men play a crucial role in the religious imagination of the people of those times. As the 'servants' or 'friends, of God', they occupy an intermediate position between Him and the ordinary man: this is what determines and defines their holiness. Yet, this liminal status renders them the 'arbiters of ambiguity', to refer again to Peter Brown: holy men and saints need to operate between the spiritual world and this world. The question thus arises how is their in-between holy position negotiated; what is it that distinguishes them from the material world on the one hand and from the divine realm on the other.

In keeping with the leading thematic strand of the IMC 2020, i.e. the borders, this session proposal will invite abstracts for papers which would address questions of the boundaries of holiness and sanctity as manifest in late-antique and Byzantine culture. Possible lines of inquiry would include the following:



- How do the saints and the holy persons transgress the boundaries of their humanity?
- Are these boundaries of holiness clear or blurred?
- Are the boundaries of holiness gendered?
- What are the markers of the holy and the unholy?
- Does their holiness have a spatial dimension as well?
- How can holiness be defined from the outside and from the inside?

We welcome proposals which explore these and other issues with various approaches, methods and disciplines. Should you be interested, please send an abstract (200 words maximum) including your e-mail address and affiliation by **no later than 15 September 2019** to Julia Doroszevska (j.doroszevska@uw.edu.pl). Please note that the organizers cannot cover the conference registration fee and travel and accommodation expenses.

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