



Relics of St Valerius, Weyarn, Germany. ©Paul Koudounaris, *Heavenly Bodies: Cult Treasures and Spectacular Saints from the Catacombs* (London: Thames and Hudson) 2013.

The ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions (Europe 1100-1800) presents:

RELIQS AND EMOTIONS

Relics are the bodily remains of saints, or objects that came into contact with saints during their lives or after their death. Relics may be preserved bodies or bones, either whole, as fragments, or as detachable body parts such as hair, teeth and blood. In the case of the resurrected body of Christ and the assumed body of the Virgin, Christ's foreskin and the Virgin's breast milk were venerated as relics. Items of clothing worn by saints, or the cloths in which bodily relics were wrapped, were also considered to be relics; as were footprints, and earth and rocks collected from holy sites. Such objects are understood by believers to be tangible links between heaven and earth, capable of channelling God's power and performing miracles.

The Middle Ages saw the establishment of a cult of relics, in which the locations where prominent relics were held often became the focus of pilgrimage. Relics were sold, stolen and exchanged as gifts. Elaborate reliquaries were created to contain and display them, and these performed important roles in the collective rituals of communities. During the Reformation, relics were rejected as superstitious at best; but the Counter-Reformation church re-emphasised their importance, particularly by distributing new saintly relics from the Roman catacombs.

The study day will focus on the emotions involved in the veneration and rejection of relics, from the early Middle Ages to contemporary Australia. It will consider how relics function as objects of desire and derision, as instruments of power and sources of conflict, and as markers of personal, as well as local, regional or national identity. There will be a focus on the power of relics both to arouse and regulate emotions such as trust, hope or fear, and on the ways such emotions can be transformed by changing religious, social and political contexts. Papers will also explore how individual and collective emotional responses to relics have helped shape and strengthen, as well as divide and debilitate communities.

SPEAKERS:

(Keynote) Prof. Alexandra Walsham - The University of Cambridge, Felicity Harley-McGowan - The University of Melbourne, Helen Hickey - The University of Melbourne, Lisa Beaven - The University of Sydney, Matthew Martin - The National Gallery of Victoria, Claire Walker - The University of Adelaide, Charles Zika - The University of Melbourne, Constant Mews - Monash University and Sarah Randles - The University of Melbourne.

CONVENORS: Dr Sarah Randles and Prof. Charles Zika

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, 40 COLLEGE CRESCENT, PARKVILLE - THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
FRIDAY 21 MARCH 2014, 9AM - 5PM

Please register online at tinyurl.com/kxnpuu by Monday 17 March, 2014.

Registration is free but essential for catering purposes. If you register but are subsequently unable to attend, please advise Jessica Scott at jessica.scott@unimelb.edu.au More info: www.historyofemotions.org.au