

UCMS Lunch meetings 2017-18

The Utrecht Centre for Medieval Studies organises a lunch meeting each block, during which Utrecht medievalists present their research (either just published or work in progress) to colleagues and students in an informal setting. Lunch meetings take place on Mondays, 12.00-13.00. You are invited to bring your own lunch, while UCMS provides coffee, tea etc.

Monday 23 October 2017, 12.00-13.00

Janskerkhof 13, 0.06

Nike Stam, Celtic Studies

“Mixing it up: bilingual glosses in medieval Ireland”

In June 2017, the research project ‘Bilingualism in Medieval Ireland’ was officially concluded with the defence of two PhD theses. In this lunch lecture, I would like to briefly discuss the most important results of my investigation into the bilingual glosses on an Irish Saint’s Calendar. I will look at both the textual function of mixing both languages and the linguistic characteristics of code-switching.

Monday 18 December 2017, 12.00-13.00

A.W. de Grootkamer, Trans 10, 0.19

Martine Veldhuizen, Middle Dutch Literature

“Truth-tellers: The mentality behind subversive speech behaviour in narratives in the first printed books in Dutch (1450-1500)”

Although freedom of speech, ‘the right to express beliefs and ideas without unwarranted government restriction’, was not a fundamental right in the late Middle Ages, verbal expressions of critical opinions towards power were pervasive in the Low Countries and throughout Europe – an urban ‘culture of subversive speech’. My VENI research investigates truth-telling figures in narratives that appeared in the first printed books (1450-1500). Truth-tellers vocally criticize authorities, tell them ‘the’ truth and risk retribution (cf. Foucault). The narratives constituted a risk-free space for testing and considering ways of behaviour in urban late medieval society.

Monday 15 January 2018, 12.00-13.00

A.W. de Grootkamer, Trans 10, 0.19

Merlijn Hurx, Art History

“Architects and bureaucrats: the court and the origins of architectural planning in Northern Europe (1370-1540)”

Most studies that recognize the importance of administrative pre-conditions for architectural practice concern nineteenth- and twentieth-century developments. Although the growing impact of bureaucratic procedures on architectural planning

strikes us as typical modern, its origins go back to the late Middle Ages. To control the ever-increasing cost of building, the French and English courts introduced centralised governance in the late fourteenth century. Other princes, among whom the Dukes of Burgundy quickly followed them: the dukes introduced a centralised administration to effectively organise and control the many construction sites in their domains in the Low Countries. I will argue that this was not only a financial reform, however; it also represented an important step towards a more rationalised architectural planning. Often, the medieval planning process is considered a process of improvisation and continuous redesign that extended well into the building process. Architectural features of a planned building were frequently not fixed beforehand, but major design issues were to be decided upon as the construction advanced. The rediscovery of a vast part of the early sixteenth-century building administration of the Duchy of Brabant demonstrates that the new procedures introduced by the Burgundian dukes made it necessary to record decisions and agreements that were otherwise left implicit; it gave rise to a better documentation of the design and the construction process. The great number and wide range of documents that is preserved, which includes drawings, cost estimates, building specifications, contracts, bills of quantities, reports of the tendering process, allow to understand how meticulously well planned and monitored construction for the court was in the Low Countries. Moreover, the new bureaucracy not only led to increasing documentation, but also created a common administrative culture in which accounts and documents were fairly standardised.

Monday 28 May 2018, 12.00-13.00

A.W. de Grootkamer, Trans 10, 0.19

Mariken Teeuwen, Medieval Latin Text Transmission

“Art of Reasoning: Techniques of argumentation in manuscript margins”

It has been generally assumed that a new technique of scholarly argumentation arose in the context of the rise of medieval urban schools and the universities in the later 12th and 13th centuries. In a previous project, we explored practices of annotating texts in the Carolingian period, to deepen our understanding of how scholars in that period used their books, how they read and how they used them to create new texts. One of the main conclusions of that project was that many of the techniques that are considered essential innovations of the 12th century were, in fact, already in use in this earlier period. So, with this new project, we chose to focus on the *ars dialectica* and the *ars retorica*, the crucial disciplines for the art of argumentation: how are these texts that formed the basis for the art of reasoning annotated across the 12th-century divide, and which changes and continuities can be observed?