



'Parish Studies Today': 10th Warwick Symposium on Parish Research

25 –27 May 2012

Scarman House, University of Warwick

Workshop 3, Saturday 26 May, 2–4 pm:

'In the Books and On the Walls: Parish Life in Late Medieval Bolzano.'

Dr Joanne Anderson, Visiting Lecturer, History of Art Department, University of Warwick

Dr Hannes Obermair, Head of the Archivio Storico della Città di Bolzano

Located on a major transit route to the Alps, late medieval Bolzano (north-east Italy) was a thriving hub of exchange, industry and performance. Its parish communities were networked into this generative culture as testified by surviving documentation, church fabric and artistic representation. This workshop will showcase the exciting projects being undertaken by City Archivist and Warwick-based art historian that delve into the constituency and intentions of Bolzano's diverse communities. Through discussion of their professional association and case study presentations, Anderson and Obermair will explore the universal value of their research, the influence of the Warwick Network on their critical thinking and how knowledge transfer can extend beyond parish, linguistic and national boundaries.

Joanne Anderson researches the iconography of Mary Magdalen in cross-cultural Bolzano and the wider Alpine region, with a particular focus on artistic production and patronage. She will introduce workshop attendees to a highly localised conception of the saint through an examination of lively mural paintings, hidden church fabric and archived voices. Emphasising the role of local artistic workshop practices, commissioning parties and religious theatre she will suggest that the rural church resisted urban encroachment. More broadly, the parish Magdalen also opens a new window onto female participation in civic and religious life in this region.

Hannes Obermair is a specialist in premodern urban history in the Alpine region. He is currently investigating the peculiar documentary system which has been shaped within the medieval border region bridging the German and Italian-speaking areas. Focusing on the phenomena of literacy, he



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will discuss some contrasting examples of notarial deeds and documents with affixed seals. The local communities in the Bolzano area (straddling both urban and rural environments) were benefiting from an extensive use of writing from the 12th and 13th centuries onwards. A recently discovered account book from a local parish church demonstrates how the use of pragmatic literacy permeates even the minor aspects of the medieval parish life. The accounts also shed light on the complex relationship between economies and arts.

Saturday afternoon sessions (2–4 pm)

Session 10. *Communities of the Living and the Dead*

Chair: Hannes Obermair

- Revd Mark Bratton and Jill Tompkins Bailey
'Spirit of Berkswell Project'
- Jennie Hawks (Diocese of Norwich)
'The Churches Discovery Project'
- Harold Mytum (Centre for Manx Studies/School of Archaeology, Liverpool)
'Texts and More: Results of Graveyard Surveys in Britain and Ireland'