

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

Prof. Gert Melville (Dresden): gert.melville@t-online.de
Dr. James Mixson (Alabama): jmixson@ua.edu

The Department of History

202 Ten Hoor Hall
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
(205) 348-7100
www.history.ua.edu
history@ua.edu

The University of Alabama College of Arts & Sciences

100 Clark Hall
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487
(205) 348-7007

The Hotel Capstone

www.hotelcapstone.com
320 Paul Bryant Drive
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
(800) 477-2262
info@hotelcapstone.com

In and Around Tuscaloosa

visittuscaloosa.com
visitbirmingham.com
tourwestalabama.com

Holy Spirit Dispatched to Earth and Man Fishing, The Hours of Catherine of Cleves, ca. 1440. New York, The Morgan Library, MS M.917, fol. 85r



CONFERENCE THEME AND GOALS

At the heart of medieval Christian culture lay the paradox of a transcendent God who was made flesh, a God who was beyond creation and yet ever present in the Eucharist and other sacraments. Medieval people believed in a world of the soul and the spirit that was anchored in a world beyond, and the ultimate goal of their existence. Yet that world was subject, in this life, to endless theological reflection, and at the center of a legal, institutional, and political framework that laid claim to all of society. Medieval people also lived in a material world that was itself wondrously alive, a world of speaking statues and powerful relics, of stone and wood and metal charged with divine energy. That energy might be contained and harnessed in various ways, but it was always threatening to break beyond its own material boundaries.

This two-and-a-half-day conference seeks to explore this paradox more deeply through the lens of three specific perspectives. Through the perspective of "Access," it will explore how women and men in the premodern era sought to approach and to encounter transcendent power, or sought to prevent others from doing so. Through the perspective of "Use," it will explore how they sought to control, to deploy, or otherwise manipulate transcendent power in the pursuit of what were often all-too worldly interests of power, politics, family, and money. And through the perspective of "Embodiment," it will explore how the transcendent, paradoxically, took root in this world, in sacred objects, spaces, and so on, and yet also pointed to the world beyond.



Schedelsche Weltchronik (1493)

SPONSORS

This conference has been made possible through the generous support of several institutions and partners in both Europe and the United States. Our American partners include The University of Alabama's Office for Academic Affairs, the Graduate School, the Capstone International Center, the College of Arts and Sciences and many of its departments and programs (History; Modern Languages and Classics; English; Art History, University Museums; Medieval and Early Modern European Studies; the Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies; and the Summersell Center and the Summersell Chair of Southern History).

As an international collaboration, this conference has also been made possible by the very generous support of many European partners, including the Union of German Academies of Sciences and Humanities, the Saxon Academy of Sciences, the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences, and the Research Centre for the Comparative History of Religious Orders (FOVOG) of the University of Dresden.

We are also grateful for the support of The City of Tuscaloosa and The Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, as well as several private donors.

Hieronymus Bosch, Ascension of the Blessed (c. 1505)

THE DIVINE BETWEEN HEAVEN & EARTH

ACCESS, USE, & EMBODIMENT OF THE TRANSCENDENT IN PREMODERN EUROPEAN CULTURE

An International Conference Hosted by The University of Alabama, in Partnership with the University of Dresden

OCTOBER 2-5, 2024

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA
TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2

5:30 - 6:30 PM | REGISTRATION AND RECEPTION | UNIVERSITY CLUB

Note: All conference panels on Thursday and Friday will be held in the Governor's Room of the Hotel Capstone on the UA Campus. All conference meals are free and open to registered conference participants and guests.

6:30 - 7:00 PM | WELCOME

Chad Tindol (Chief Administrative Officer, University of Alabama)

Welcoming Remarks

James Mixson (Tuscaloosa)

The Divine Between Heaven and Earth: Conference Overview and Themes

Gert Melville (Dresden)

"An Introductory Reflection: Transcendence as Fake"

7:00-8:30 PM | DINNER | UNIVERSITY CLUB

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Note: All conference panels will be held in the Governor's Room of the Hotel Capstone on the UA Campus.

9:00 - 11:00 AM | SACRED SPACE

Bernd Schneidmüller (Heidelberg)

"Mapping Holy Space: Minsters and Cities as Patterns of Heaven in the Central Middle Ages"

C.J. Jones (South Bend)

"En-Acting Resurrection in Stift Gernrode: Gender and Sacred Space in a Late Medieval Easter Play"

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM | LUNCH | GORGAS HOUSE LAWN

12:30 - 2:00 PM | TOUR OF GORGAS HOUSE AND PRESIDENT'S MANSION

2:30 - 5:30 PM | MONASTIC LIFE AND CULTURE

Nathalie Schmidt (Dresden)

"Thaumaturgy and Transcendence. The Antonite Order and Saint Anthony's Fire"

Guido Cariboni (Milan)

"The Presence of the Living and the Dead. Memorial Practices and Institutional Mechanisms in Medieval Monasticism"

Jörg Sonntag (Dresden)

"Interaction by Imitation. Access and Embodiment of the Transcendent in Religious Games"

6:00 - 8:00 PM | RECEPTION & DINNER | SMITH HALL

8:00 PM | PLENARY ADDRESS

Volker Leppin (New Haven)

"Transparent for the Transcendent. Objects in Late Medieval Religious Life"

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

8:30-11:30 AM | MATERIALITY AND NATURE

Christine Caldwell (Columbia)

"Spiritual Terroir: Wine, the Divine, and Earth in the European Middle Ages"

Gregory Bryda (New York)

"The Entrenched Savior. Christian Materiality, Miraculous Wood, and Devotion"

Laura Smoller (Rochester)

"Embodying God's Plan in the Stars: Astrology as Natural Theology in the Later Middle Ages"

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM | LUNCH | HOTEL CAPSTONE

1:00 - 3:00 PM | ORDER AND HIERARCHY

Nicolangelo D'Acunto (Milan)

"Between Heaven and Earth: Hierarchy and Freedom"

Rudolf Weigand (Eichstätt)

"Interference in the Divine Order of Creation: Punishment of Sin and Healing through Holiness"

3:30 - 5:30 PM | FAITH, DOUBT, AND DISCERNMENT

Cornelia Linde (Greifswald)

"Turning the Page to the Divine: Books as Vessels of the Transcendent"

Michael D. Bailey (Ames)

"Accessing the Demonic in Late Medieval Witchcraft"

6:30 - 8:00 PM | DINNER | DREAMLAND, NORTHPORT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

9:00-10:00 AM | BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Gert Melville (Dresden) and Jennifer Feltman (Tuscaloosa)

"Rebuilding Transcendences. Restoration in Practice, and its Overarching Meaning, for the Damaged Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris"

10:00 - 11:00 AM | CONCLUDING DISCUSSION AND BRUNCH