

2017 Lovis Corinth Colloquium

Art History Department, Emory University
Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry

November 30-December 2, 2017
Woodruff Library Jones Room



Dirck Volckertszoon *Coornhert* after Maarten van Heemskerck, 'Faith Washes Hearts in the Blood of Christ', ca. 1560, engraving.

‘*Quid est sacramentum?*: On the Visual Representation of Sacred Mysteries in Early Modern Europe and the Americas, 1400-1700’

Co-organizers: Walter Melion (Emory University), Lee Palmer Wandel (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Elizabeth Carson Pastan (Emory University)

How and why were the mysteries of faith and, in particular, sacramental mysteries construed as amenable to processes of representation and figuration capable of engaging mortal eyes, minds, and hearts? Mysteries by their very nature appeal to the spirit, rather than to sense or reason, and operate beyond the scope of the human faculties, and yet the visual arts were seen as legitimate vehicles for the dissemination of these mysteries and for prompting reflection upon them. Much debated in the sixteenth century, the Latin term *sacramentum* (gospel revelation) appertains to God-given truths that transcend mere human intelligence. The primary source of such truths is scriptural, and as such, they may be approached exegetically, but only partially: conveyed by the Spirit, these *sacramenta*, to the extent they can be known, are discerned by faith and revealed rather than fully cognized. The same term, in an allied meaning, also refers to sacraments such as Baptism; in this sense, it denotes the sacred rites by which the faithful are made party to the mystery of salvation, efficient grace is vouchsafed, and the conferral of grace represented to spiritual eyes. The complementary term *mysterium* (divine mystery) was sometimes specifically applied to the celebration of the Eucharist, but more generally, it too signifies a divine truth revealed by the Spirit and ultimately discernible by faith.

For visual artists, these conceptions of *sacramentum* and *mysterium* posed questions as basic as they were pressing: how are gospel revelations and divine mysteries to be portrayed; more specifically, how is their transcendent character to be visualized, given the constraints of mimetic representation. It is surprising to discover that questions such as these were considered so significant that they regularly occur not just in art treatises but even at the level of catechetical instruction: the elementary *quaestio*, ‘What is a sacrament?’, was seen to raise issues and concerns about the nature of visual representation and interpretation.

Thursday, November 30

Opening Remarks: 9:00-9:15

Michael A. Elliott, Dean of the Emory College, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of English

Session 1, 9:15-11:15

Aden Kumler, University of Chicago
‘Keeping Up Appearances: the Figure of the Counterfeit Sacrament in the Middle Ages’

Wim François, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
“‘Mystery” or “Sacrament”: Translation Issues and the Sacramentality of Marriage in Ephesians 5:31-32’

Tanya Tiffany, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee
‘Painting as Sacrament: The Artist and Nun Estefanía de la Encarnación’

11:15-11:30 — Coffee Break

Session 2, 11:30-1:00

Anna Dlabačová, University of Leiden
‘Seeing beyond Signs: Allegorical Explanations of the Mass in Middle Dutch’

Koenraad Jonckheere, University of Ghent
‘Towards a Visual Question-syntax’

1:00-2:30 — Lunch

Session 3, 2:30-4:30

Geert Warnar, University of Leiden
‘Lady Scripture’s Sacred Commitments: Dialogic Teaching in Dutch Religious Literature around 1500’

Walter Melion, Emory University
‘Landscape and Parabolic Mystery in Hans Bol’s *Emblematia evangelica*’

Bronwen Wilson, University of California, Los Angeles
‘Lithic Conversions: Federico Barocci’s *Noli me tangere*’

Friday, December 1

Session 1, 9:00-10:30

Alexa Sand, Utah State University
‘The Fine Art of Dying: Envisioning Death in the *Somme le roi* Tradition’

Robert L. Kendrick, University of Chicago
‘Staging Sacramental Consolation: The Eucharist as Compensation for the Passion in Italian Oratorio’

10:30-10:45 — Coffee Break

Session 2, 10:45-12:15

David Areford, University of Massachusetts, Boston
‘Christ/Child/Creator’

AnnMarie Micikas Bridges, Harvard University
‘In the Flesh as a Mirror of Spiritual Blessings”: Calvin on the Efficacy of Eucharistic Representation’

12:15-1:45 — Lunch

Session 3, 1:45 -3:15

Lee Palmer Wandel, University of Wisconsin
‘Textiles of the Sacrament’

Mette Birkedal Bruun, University of Copenhagen
‘The Private Mystery: The Annunciation as a Figure Showing and Shrouding in Pierre de Bérulle, Antoine de Singlin and Ph. De Champagne’

3:15-3:30 — Coffee Break

Session 4, 3:30-5:00

Lars Cyril Nørgaard, University of Copenhagen
‘The Appearance of the Sacred between Word and Image’

James Clifton, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
‘The Limits of “Mute Theology”’: Charles Le Brun’s Lecture on Nicolas Poussin’s Ecstasy of St. Paul Revisited”

Saturday, December 2

Session 1, 9:00-10:30

Elizabeth Carson Pastan, Emory University
‘Representing Architecture in the Altarpiece: Fictions, Strategies, and Mysteries’

Donna Sadler, Agnes Scott College
‘Orchestrating the Polyphony at the Altar: Passion Altarpieces in Late Medieval France’

Session 2, 11:00-12:30

Sarah Joan Moran, Universit  t Utrecht
‘Opt Camerken daer den Aultaer staet: Domestic Altars and their Decoration in Seventeenth-Century Antwerp’

Noria Litaker, University of Pennsylvania
‘*Hoc est corpus meum*: Whole-Body Catacomb Saints and the Transubstantiated Eucharist in Baroque Bavaria’

12:30-12:45 — Concluding Remarks: Publication

12:45-1:45 — Lunch