Rites of Passage and Monastic Communities in the late-antique Mediterranean

Fact Sheet

Project Information

RITPASS
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Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)

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€ 0,00

EU contribution
€ 173 847,36

Coordinated by
FREIE UNIVERSITAET BERLIN
Germany

Objective

How did medieval monastic leaders assert control over their communities? This project proposes an innovative way to approach to this often-considered question: through the rites of passage into ascetic groups in Late Antiquity (fourth-seventh centuries CE). Late-antique sources emphasise five membership rituals as particularly significant: rigorous testing; ceremonial cleansing; the offering of stability pledges; the renunciation of possessions; and the donning of uniform attire. These rites were meant to bind novices to their new lives, efface their prior identities, and enforce obligation to their abbots and abbesses. Although the scholarship on medieval monasticism is extensive, the relationship between ascetic authority structures and the aforementioned five ceremonies has received little recent
substantial attention. This project proposes to investigate this relationship from the first appearance of monastic groups in the fourth century to their widespread multiplication across the Mediterranean by the seventh century. To do so, I will focus on laws, monastic rules, church canons, hagiographies, and provincial documents, five types of source which are not often brought together but represent contemporary attempts to assert control over ascetic rites of passage. My research will use a comparative, interdisciplinary framework of diachronic, transcultural and -regional, and socio-historical analysis to achieve the project’s three core goals: 1) to explore how and why these ceremonies changed; 2) to analyse how these rites supported or challenged late-antique discourses about monastic obligations and identities; and 3) to investigate how these rituals were related to other analogous rituals and processes. Furthermore, this project will contribute to the increasing scholarly interest in medieval monastic perspectives beyond the Benedictine and also pave the way for epistemological reconsiderations of authority, identity, and obligation, even into the modern day.

Fields of science

humanities → history and archaeology → history → ancient history
humanities → languages and literature → literature studies → literary genres
social sciences → law

Programme(s)

HORIZON.1.2 - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA)  MAIN PROGRAMME

Topic(s)

HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01-01 - MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships 2021

Call for proposal

HORIZON-MSCA-2021-PF-01

See other projects for this call

Funding Scheme
Coordinator

FREIE UNIVERSITAET BERLIN

Net EU contribution

€ 173,847,36

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Region

Berlin > Berlin > Berlin

Links

Contact the organisation Website Participation in EU R&I programmes HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding

€ 0,00

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