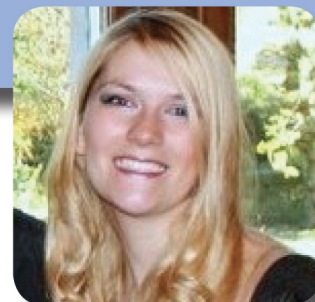


Funded Project Update

Kimberley-Joy Knight



In June, funding from the Society enabled me to attend a postgraduate and early career workshop on the Textometry of the historical sources organised by the École française de Rome and the Centre



of Comparative Studies “I Deug-Su” of the University of Siena, in collaboration with the Laboratoire de Médiévisique Occidentale de Paris (CNRS-Université Paris 1). The 4-day workshop focussed on the application of computing tools for textual analysis in historical and philological research. The workshop was both theoretical and practical. Each morning, leading specialists from a number of European institutions demonstrated the latest software for textual analysis (PALM, Hyperbase, TXM, Stylometry and Lexicon). In the afternoons, as junior research fellows, we had the opportunity to present our research in the form of a case study and to road test the different tools with the support of the software designers, historians and philologists.

Having recently successfully defended my doctoral thesis at St Andrews, on the Gift of Tears in thirteenth-century hagiographies, this workshop was highly valuable in formulating the approach for my postdoctoral research plans. My new project, which I will pursue at the University of Sydney with the Centre for the History of Emotions,

will explore the relationship between love, desire, sexuality and marriage in Medieval Norway and Iceland (c.1100-1500). The focus of this research will be to analyse how love, sexuality and desire were understood, expressed, and enacted during the high-late medieval period and to assess in what ways they were conditioned by new Christian doc-



trines. Comparative textual analysis of Latin and Old Norse texts will form part of my research and it is in this area that software such as TXM (presented by Serge Heiden, École Normale Supérieure, Lyon), Lexicon (Francesco Stella, Università di Siena) and Stylometry (Mike Kestemont, Universiteit Antwerp) will help to identify word patterns and develop thematic statistics. As many authors of Old Norse texts are unknown, it is often uncertain in which geographic locations they produced their works. Using specialist software may allow me to further my synchronic analysis of the language and draw important conclusions about the location of compilation. At the workshop I presented a case study that compared the Latin and Old Norse versions of the Life of Marie d’Oignies, a thirteenth-century Beguine from the Low Countries. Having had the opportunity to apply the different tools to my test case, I am convinced that some of the software available could be used for the study of vernacular rewrites

and greatly enhance our research findings. Understanding new quantitative measures for the analysis of medieval textual sources may allow us to extract data in new ways and expand our toolkit as historians.

In addition to the generous funding from the Society, I was awarded a junior research fellowship by the École Française de Rome. I am grateful to both bodies for

their support and to Jean-Philippe Genet, Francesco Stella, Stéphane Gioanni and Monique Goulet for organising such a stimulating and valuable workshop.

Kimberley-Joy Knight

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday 12 November 2014 6pm

The Colin Matthew Memorial Lecture for the Public Understanding of History
in co-operation with Gresham College, London

Professor Tim Hitchcock, University of Sussex
and

Professor Robert Shoemaker, University of Sheffield

“Making History Online”
Venue: Museum of London

This lecture will assess how recent innovations in making historical resources available online, and in the crowdsourcing and co-creation of research materials, have effectively reconfigured the relationship between the academy and the public. We can all be historians now. Despite limitations, and online dialogue between academic history and the public is not only inevitable, but also desirable.

Monday 17 November, 2014 2pm-5pm

RHS Gender Equality Seminar

Venue: Centre for Gender History, University of Glasgow

Speakers include Lynn Abrams, Nicola Miller, Peter Mandler and Bronach Kane. The seminar will be an opportunity for further consultation to contribute to the Society’s report on Gender Equality and Historians in UK Higher Education, with workshops on work/life balance, effective mentoring, invisible bias and promotion/career opportunities. The findings of our gender equality survey and consultation seminars will be published in the report later this year.

For an interactive and up-to-date calendar of upcoming events, go online at: <http://royalhistsoc.org>