

the australian  
early medieval  
association



**SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
**COURAGE AND COWARDICE**

Thursday 18 to Friday 19 November 2010  
The University of Western Australia

*PROGRAMME*

Thursday 18 November – The East

9:30	REGISTRATION
10:15	WELCOME AND OFFICIAL OPENING
10:30	SESSION 1
	John Melville-Jones (University of Western Australia) Rome and Constantinople: A Clash of Episcopal Egos
	Nigel Westbrook (University of Western Australia) An Emperor Covering Behind Protective Walls: The Destruction of Buildings in the Great Palace Precinct During the Nike Riots and Their Subsequent Rebuilding
	Amelia Brown (University of Queensland) Courage and Conversion to Christianity in Late Antique Greece
12:00	Lunch
1:00	PLENARY SESSION
	Stefano Carboni (Art Gallery of Western Australia) From Bahram Gur to Zahhak: A Visual Journey Through the Exploits of the Epic Heroes and Cowards in the <i>Shahnama</i>
2:00	SESSION 2
	John D'Alton (Monash University) The Courage of Hallaj
	Raichel Le Goff (Newcastle University) Heroes for Boys: Philostratus in Early Education

	Michael Champion (University of Western Australia) Courage and Cowardice in the Sixth-century Monasteries Near Gaza
3:30	Conference Reception and Book Launch
4.00	PRACTICAL SESSION
	Walk to a reconstruction of a Viking boat (sensible shoes!)
7.00	Conference Dinner
	A la carte conference dinner at Matsuri Japanese Restaurant

### Friday 19 November – The West and North

9:30	SESSION 1
	Darius von Güttner (University of Melbourne) Courage, Conviction and <i>imitatio Christi</i> : The Mission of Saint Adalbert of Prague to the Prussians (AD 997)
	Geoffrey Dunn (Australian Catholic University) Alert and Zealous: Innocent I During the Exile of John Chrysostom
	John Martyn (University of Melbourne) The Courage of Pope Gregory the Great
11:00	Morning Tea
11:30	PLENARY SESSION
	Andrew Lynch (University of Western Australia) Courage and Cowardice in the Literature of Early Medieval England
12:30	Lunch
1:30	SESSION 2
	Janko Andrijasevic (University of Montenegro) Implicit Courage in Anglo-Saxon Elegies
	Jane Hawkes (University of York) 'Hail the conquering hero': The <i>Adventus</i> of Christ at Ruthwell
	John Kennedy (Charles Sturt University) Translating <i>Beowulf</i> in the Twenty-first Century: Courageous or Foolhardy?
3.00	PRACTICAL SESSION
	Early Medieval food session – we make our own afternoon tea
4:00	SESSION 3
	Bernard Mees (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) The Names of the Vikings and the Goths
	Carol Williams (Monash University) The Ethical Power of Music and the Engendering of Courage and Cowardice

# SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE COURAGE AND COWARDICE

Thursday 18 to Friday 19 November 2010  
The University of Western Australia

## *ABSTRACTS*

JOHN D'ALTON

Monash University

### THE COURAGE OF HALLAJ

The martyrdom of Mansur al-Hallaj in Baghdad in 922CE was the culmination of a spiritual journey involving frequent courageous provocation of the Islamic state authority. Hallaj persistently demanded martyrdom, but was only killed when his presence became too destabilizing. In many ways Hallaj is a variant of Peter Brown's "holy man", occupying a unique space between the community and the divine, often at odds with official religion. He is also a pivotal figure in Islam for a number of reasons, including his extremely influential marginality which defines the limits of acceptable Sufism and his unusual death by crucifixion near the date of Easter, possibly due to his miracles and Christian sympathies. Hallaj's peculiar position exemplifies the quest for authentic individual spirituality in the face of growing institutionalisation. His courageous martyrdom provides a significant alternative exemplar to the current stereotypical violent martyr.

DR JANKO ANDRIJASEVIC

University of Montenegro

### IMPLICIT COURAGE IN ANGLO-SAXON ELEGIES

The six Anglo-Saxon elegies preserved in the Exeter Book testify about that side of life - human vulnerability - that was untypical of the Germanic tribes who invaded the British Isles in the early middle ages. This is not a surprising fact, since the tribes' very existence depended on bravery and since vulnerability almost invariably meant demise. However, unlike battlefield heroism, which was a non-disputed ideal of this age glorified in most of Anglo-Saxon literature, including some Christian poems, the six elegies expose descriptions of outer and particularly inner struggles. They depict weak emotional spots, illustrate suffering and recreate ordeals. Still, these poems are not about human powerlessness; they are as much about courage as most other poems, although in a largely different and much more implicit way. Based on contemporary psychological interpretations and classifications of the human strength of courage (derived largely from the book *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* by

Christopher Peterson and E P Seligman, 2004), this paper is an attempt at analysis of the old Anglo-Saxon elegies seen from the psychological perspective. Besides the obvious strength of bravery, courage in a wider sense also entails the qualities of persistence, industriousness, perseverance, integrity, authenticity, honesty, vitality, zest, enthusiasm, vigour - all of which are, in one way or another, present in at least some of the Anglo-Saxon elegies. Just like, at times, in the great heroic epics such as Beowulf a reader surprisingly encounters sugar-coated moral failures, unrecognizable at the first glance, a lot of courage, on the other hand, is, equally surreptitiously, contained in the Anglo-Saxon elegies. Beneath the heavy shroud of emotions which make a false but spontaneous association with the condition of human helplessness, the intention of this paper is to reveal the experience of courage these songs are based on.

**DR AMELIA BROWN**

University of Queensland

**COURAGE AND CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY IN LATE ANTIQUE GREECE**

The traditional account of Christianity in third- to sixth-century Greece is a transition from exemplary to everyday courage: from heroic martyrs resisting persecution to middle-class bishops attending church councils and building basilicas. Scholarship focuses on Christian triumph and then consolidation, with traditional Hellenic religion treated as defunct, or at least inevitably obsolete by the late fourth century. Recently, however, historians have begun to acknowledge the vitality of 'late paganism' and to restore agency - and even courage - to those polytheists who resisted conversion to Christianity. This paper contrasts Christian and polytheist perspectives on the courage of converting or resisting religious conversion. I juxtapose literary sources with the evidence of epigraphy, sculpture and church construction, particularly in the provincial capitals and archbishoprics of Corinth and Thessaloniki.

The display of courage was embraced by Christian historians and homily-writers alike, as emblematic of their religion, whether that courage lay in resisting Roman imperial oppression or converting 'Hellenes' to Christianity. A Christian ethic of courageous resistance to conversion thus became one of courageous conversion of the 'pagans'. Yet scholars are divided as to whether these 'pagans' were cowards - passive recipients of conversion - or active contestants of their religious and cultural heritage, with their own calls to courage. I conclude that both Late Antique rhetoric on courage and the material evidence for Christianization of Greek sculpture and cult spaces shows an active struggle over conversion to Christianity continuing into the sixth century in Greece.

**DR STEFANO CARBONI**

Art Gallery of Western Australia

**FROM BAHRAM GUR TO ZAHHAK: A VISUAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE EXPLOITS OF THE EPIC HEROES AND COWARDS IN THE *SHAHNAMA***

'Abu al-Qasim Firdausi's poem in verses *Shahnama* (*The Book of Kings*, or the great national epic of Iran) was composed in the first decade of the second millennium for the Samanid princes of Khorasan who encouraged a revival of Persian culture and customs. This splendid work of medieval literature, inspired by a long-established oral, written and visual tradition, immediately became a most cherished bestseller and was often lavishly illustrated with miniature paintings. Courage and cowardice, conquest and defeat, success and failure, idyllic love and resentful sorrow are all integral parts of the fabric of this epic work, which became a powerful vehicle for dynastic validation when the Mongols conquered Iran in the middle of the thirteenth century. The lecture will provide a visual journey through the feats and misdeeds of the most celebrated heroes and villains of the *Shahnama*, which offered Persian painters the opportunity to create some of the greatest masterpieces of medieval book illustration worldwide.

**MICHAEL CHAMPION**

University of Western Australia

**COURAGE AND COWARDICE IN THE SIXTH CENTURY MONASTERIES NEAR GAZA**

In the Correspondence of John and Barsanuphius, sixth-century anchorites and spiritual teachers in the monastery of Seridos at Tawatha near Gaza, we find an exchange between the Old Man and a former soldier, now a monk (*Letters* 492-502). I examine the correspondence to explore how the virtue of courage and the vice of cowardice are transposed from the military sphere into the monastery. The clash of arms becomes a spiritual struggle and courage tends towards humility, which crowns the virtues. I compare the exchange to contemporary writings on the virtues by Dorotheus of Gaza and identify tensions and congruencies between monastic, secular and classical conceptions of the virtues.

**DR GEOFFREY DUNN**

Centre for Early Christian Studies, Australian Catholic University

**ALERT AND ZEALOUS: INNOCENT I DURING THE EXILE OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

In 404 John Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, was sent into exile by imperial order at the connivance of Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, where he endured three years of harsh conditions before he died. His main supporter during this time was Innocent I, bishop of Rome, who worked for his recall and restoration. It would have been appropriate in the correspondence they exchanged during these years to see the language of courage used to exhort the exiled bishop to endure his mistreatment and to exhort Innocent to continue his efforts in the face of opposition. However, this is not found. Innocent urged John to patience (*Epistula* 12) and John praised Innocent's alertness and zeal in championing his cause (*Epistula* 11). This paper considers the Christian virtue of patience as exemplified in these letters and considers the extent

to which patience rather than courage was the ideal Christian virtue when one was faced with extreme challenges.

RAICHEL LE GOFF

Newcastle University

### HEROES FOR BOYS: PHILOSTRATUS IN EARLY EDUCATION

The eleventh-century scholar Michael Psellos wrote about the contradictory relationship between Philostratus and Byzantine thinking. Scholars admitted to being seduced by the charm of the Sophist but at the same time despised his works for the lack of 'gravitas'. However the *Imagines*, which describes 65 Hellenistic paintings, was written for a ten-year-old boy and this paper will treat the book as a pedagogic text aimed at a juvenile audience.

The *Imagines* of Philostratus was in continual use from the third to the thirteenth century as an example of rhetoric to follow for young scholars of Greek. A textbook for boys, it is also full of exciting accounts of courage and cowardice from the stories of Greek mythology. This paper looks at the reception of the *Imagines* in early education up to c.1000 and explores how its vivid battles, victories, defeats and acts of sacrifice feed the imagination and facilitate the process of learning. Dominating the *Imagines* is the idea that virtue and beauty are triumphant over violence and death.

Cowardice is less of a concern for Philostratus and is reserved for the enemy. The captains of Polyneices "are afraid" as they lay siege to Thebes but Philostratus does not easily admit cowardice in his champions. Theseus abandons Ariadne but is excused and Phaethon falls from Helios' chariot and is considered more daring than foolhardy. The prose of the Sophist evokes a *tableau vivant* where figures breathe, sweat and sing in joyful scenes, but also bleed and groan in the grip of death.

From the noble Menoeceus of Thebes to the brave Queen Rhodogoune of Parthia, characters illuminate the *ekphrasis* and construct strategies for representation. Heroes and heroines act as mnemonic devices for learning Greek myth and history as Philostratus brings them alive in 'speaking pictures'.

DARIUS VON GÜTTNER

University of Melbourne

### COURAGE, CONVICTION AND *IMITATIO CHRISTI*: THE MISSION OF SAINT ADALBERT OF PRAGUE TO THE PRUSSAINS (AD 997)

The mission of Adalbert of Prague to the Prussians in 997 was the first Christian incursion into the lands of the Prussians. It was undertaken by Adalbert apparently at the behest of Bolesław I

the Brave of Poland and resulted in Adalbert's martyrdom. This paper will discuss the life and death of Adalbert of Prague, focusing on the personal attributes of the Saint - his courage and conviction.

DR JANE HAWKES

Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York

'HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO': THE *ADVENTUS* OF CHRIST AT RUTHWELL

The eighth-century carved stone monument that stands within the church at Ruthwell, Dumfries (Scotland) has received a great deal of scholarly interest, not least because of its combined use of Latin and Old English inscriptions in Latin and runic letters, figural Christian imagery and non-figural carvings; as a result it has been of considerable interest to linguists, literary and liturgical scholars, art historians, archaeologists and historians of Anglo-Saxon England.

Despite this, the identity of some of the carved panels has yet to be resolved. As a contribution to this debate this paper will re-examine the scene known as the 'Flight to/from Egypt' which depicts the Christ Child and Virgin Mary seated on the back of an animal (generally identified as a donkey) processing towards a tree. Composed of these elements, however, the scene bears little resemblance to the iconography of the Flight (whether to or from Egypt), which was well established by the eighth century.

Rather, portraying the Virgin and Child 'enthroned' on the back of the animal (perhaps better identified as a horse), with the Virgin in the pose of presenting the Child, who has his hand upraised in blessing, the image presents elements commonly featured in icons of the Virgin and Child that were circulating from the sixth century onwards, were current in Rome from the seventh century and were being reproduced in Anglo-Saxon contexts from the late seventh century onwards. It will be argued that, in keeping with these iconographic traditions and the tendency in Northumbrian sculpture of the eighth and early ninth centuries to adapt iconographic features according to the specific needs of those commissioning the monuments, this panel is perhaps best considered as a Christianised version of the late antique *adventus* image which illustrates the triumphal arrival/entry of the victorious ruler and, as such, relates coherently to the iconographic programme of this face of the monument.

DR JOHN KENNEDY

Charles Sturt University

TRANSLATING *BEOWULF* IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: COURAGEOUS OR FOOLHARDY?

At the end of the twentieth century approximately a hundred translations of the Old English poem *Beowulf* into modern English had appeared in print and many of them were still readily

available online, in libraries, or for purchase in traditional print format. This figure of a hundred excludes the very numerous retellings and paraphrases of the poem, but it encompasses a rich variety of versions in prose and a diverse range of verse forms. It might seem that there was little place for further translations of the poem, particularly as the end of the twentieth century saw the appearance of a much anticipated version by the Nobel Prize winner Seamus Heaney. But even in traditional print format fresh translations have continued to appear in the new century at an average rate in excess of one a year. This paper seeks to explore the reasons for this. Some translators clearly still feel that despite all that has gone before they can offer a version which better conveys to a contemporary audience the qualities of the Old English original or (what is not necessarily the same thing) that they can offer a version that does superior justice to its poetry. Others seek to make use of the new opportunities offered by the Internet. All are arguably performing an act of literary criticism. While one might have misgivings about the commercial viability of some of the new print format translations, from a literary standpoint there is room for as many translations of the Old English masterpiece as there are good poets or expert readers of Old English willing to offer their interpretations in the form of a translation.

PROFESSOR ANDREW LYNCH

University of Western Australia

#### COURAGE AND COWARDICE IN THE LITERATURE OF EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

The long-lasting view of an 'heroic age', together with the rise of gender studies in the later twentieth century, has meant that courage and cowardice in the Anglo-Saxon period have been mainly conceptualized within the discourse of ruling-class warrior masculinity. Since later medieval 'chivalry' is often seen as drawing in large part on the values of the Germanic war-band, courage and cowardice are often treated similarly in that context also. This paper will attempt to read the ideology and thematics of courage and cowardice in the literature of Anglo-Saxon and early post-conquest England within broader overlapping intellectual traditions that also shaped their representation and reception: virtues/vices, passions/emotions and sins, as understood in medieval theology, philosophy and science, drawing on both classical and Christian authorities. Read in these lights, notions of courage and cowardice are more problematical and contested and their literary performance can be seen to receive more complex determination and qualification.

Discussion will range over secular and religious texts from the Anglo-Saxon period up to Layamon's *Brut* (early thirteenth century) and over a variety of genres including elegy, epic narrative, saints lives and chronicles. The paper will ask what endured and what changed in the writing of courage and cowardice over this time-frame and whether literature of the later medieval period shows radical differences in these matters.

PROFESSOR JOHN R C MARTYN

University of Melbourne

THE COURAGE OF POPE GREGORY THE GREAT

Pope Gregory the Great showed extraordinary courage in three very significant ways: firstly, in personally resisting and taming the well-trained and merciless Lombard army; secondly, in completely reorganizing the domains and running of the Catholic Church, despite crippling illness courageously borne almost throughout his papacy; thirdly, in sending a letter full of flattery and irony to a military thug, Phocas, who had just murdered and usurped the throne of the Pope's close friend, Maurice, on its surface applauding the new emperor, but if a friend of Phocas had read Quintilian, or knew about irony (much employed by the Pope), the Pope would have been executed. Ironically, modern scholars seem to have no understanding of this irony either.

DR BERNARD MEES

Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

THE NAMES OF THE VIKINGS AND THE GOTHES

This paper presents a critique of recent attempts to link the name of the Vikings with primordial Norse rowing shifts, laying out the formal semantic principles which should apply in structural etymology. A survey of attempts to etymologise the name of the Goths is also presented which suggests that the connection with semen presented in most handbook entries represents a similarly unprincipled (and prestructuralist) project. Rather than meanings which are not attested for the Germanic roots *\*weik-* and *\*gut-*, the names of the Vikings and the Goths are instead proposed to be related to the English descriptions *weak* and *guts* respectively.

PROFESSOR JOHN MELVILLE-JONES

University of Western Australia

ROME AND CONSTANTINOPLE: A CLASH OF EPISCOPAL EGOS

After the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, it could no longer be the centre of Christianity. In addition, since male gentiles had been allowed to embrace this splinter of Judaism without undergoing circumcision, Antioch, Alexandria and Rome now had the largest Christian groups.

When Constantine the Great founded the city that took his name, the dynamics of the situation changed. Although Constantinople was not officially (as some would have it) named 'New Rome', it was favoured over the original capital of the Roman world and much of the action was now in the east rather than the west. As its Christian population grew after Christianity was decriminalised, it acquired a bishop and hosted an ecumenical council of churches in AD 381.

At the end of the following century, when the western Roman empire collapsed, the church of Rome became more politically important, filling a vacuum. On the other hand, as time went on some eastern churches became less important. Antioch and Alexandria passed under the control of non-Christians. The church of Constantinople, on the other hand, reigned supreme in the East Roman world, although it was less politically important and its patriarchs did not control armies.

As Europe prospered, so did the church of Rome (whose bishops now, following the patriarch of Alexandria, distinguished themselves by using the title 'pope'). A long struggle culminated in the excommunication by the papal legate Cardinal Humbert of the patriarch Michael Cerularius in 1054 and the reverse excommunication of the cardinal and the pope (who was in fact dead by that time). The struggle was notionally over matters of doctrine and ritual, but this cloaked a desire on one side for control over all Christians and a determination on the other side to resist this.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR NIGEL WESTBROOK

University of Western Australia

AN EMPEROR COWERING BEHIND PROTECTIVE WALLS: THE DESTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS IN THE GREAT PALACE PRECINCT DURING THE NIKE RIOTS AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT REBUILDING

The Nike riots of 532 are one of the best-known historical events of the Late Antique period, not least because of the appalling death toll imposed on the rioting city factions. The riots began on the occasion of horse races within the Hippodrome, adjacent to the Great Palace and spread to surrounding areas. Rioters set fire to the offices of the city prefect, the praetorium, the Senate House and the great churches of old St Irene and St Sophia and their dependencies and the arcades and adjacent buildings from the gate of the Great Palace to the Forum of Constantine. The core of the palace, however, appears to have held out the rioters, implying that little of this area suffered damage. The emperor, Justinian I, was depicted in contemporary chronicles to have hidden in fear behind the protective walls of the palace and to have planned his escape by sea, before the empress Theodora put steel into his resolve, leading to the fight-back by troops under the command of Mundus and Belisarius and the ensuing massacres. These contemporary accounts of the riots are also an important set of evidence for the topography of this area of the city of Constantinople. In this paper, I will reconstruct the topography of the Great Palace before the riots, relate it to the described events and suggest the limits of the destruction. Finally, I will describe how the palace complex was transformed after the riots into a form that is still partially recalled in the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* of the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus.

DR CAROL WILLIAMS

Monash University

## THE ETHICAL POWER OF MUSIC AND THE ENGENDERING OF COURAGE AND COWARDICE

The tradition that music has inherent expressive properties and extramusical associations was explained by medieval theorists as an essential part of the organisational modal system. That the modes directed the ethical power of music was, for the most part, accepted in medieval theory without question and, like many other elements of medieval musical theory, this notion of ethos was borrowed from classical antiquity. Greek ethos theory is founded on the belief that music can convey, foster and even generate ethical states. There was little agreement on exactly how this worked, but fundamental was the belief that music provided a paradigm for the order of the soul and the universe and was thus an analogue for higher philosophical truths manifesting certain basic proportions, orders and characters, mimetic of higher universals. As a result, because the motions of music and the motions of the soul were so similar, the soul developed the qualities of the music to which it was exposed. Some theorists posited that habituation to the Dorian mode developed the affect of courage in the auditor and its absence promoted the affect of cowardice, the obverse of courage.