



· Commemortis ·

What survives after death? Parish Communities and Death Commemoration Strategies in the Medieval City

International Conference

July 10-12, 2023

University of Coimbra



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Organizing committee

Maria Amélia Campos (CHSC, U. Coimbra)
Ana Isabel Ribeiro (CEIS20, U. Coimbra)
Ana Maria Correia (CHSC, U. Coimbra)
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UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA



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What survives after death?

Parish Communities and Death Commemoration Strategies in the Medieval City

July 10-12

Centre for the History of Society and Culture – University of Coimbra

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Call for papers:

At the end of the 20th century, Susan Reynolds cautioned against the temptation to look at the parish community as something that needs no explanation. The long-standing settlement of a population and its link to a particular church gave it an alleged cohesion, experienced in common submission to the spiritual, moral and financial demands of its clergy. Despite the markedly institutional approaches followed, and the apprehension of parishioners through the vertical relationship with the clergy presiding over them, the study of the urban parish propelled great progress in the history of medieval cities and territories, but many perspectives of social analysis remain open. Recent works have shown a more coherent understanding of parishioners by studying the dynamics of the institution of funeral ceremonies, since in them the parishioner (lay and ecclesiastical alike) assumes the role of decision maker.

It is, as a result, important to focus on the parish community taking particular regard of individuals' commemorative strategies. We seek, therefore, to look closely at funeral provisions and hope also to benefit from adopting a prosopographical and relational approach when dealing with those who commissioned and those who participated in these practices – using database techniques as appropriate. We particularly seek to treat participants as individuals – be they laymen and laywomen, or clergy – subjecting all to as much individual scrutiny as possible. So, rather than regarding the parish as an amorphous unit, our approach takes pains to look at the different individuals who made up the neighbourhood community, and to separately assess but then start to assemble and consider their strategies more holistically. It naturally attempts to do this relying on the close analysis of medieval sources, paying particular regard to those that relate to commemorative practice and the provision of bequests – using wills, material delineating post-obit donations, evidence on anniversaries, and bede rolls – cross-referencing these sources wherever possible.

For the International Conference *COMMEMORTis* we therefore invite the submission of proposals for communications that will scrutinise late medieval urban parishes and their parishioners, taking particular notice of the beliefs and behaviour predicated upon death. We would especially appreciate studies of longer-term practice, as well as analyses of the role played by women in the arrangement of burial and commemorative practices, and in the management of bequests. Research based on resources generated by Digital Humanities would also be very welcome.

We suggest the following research strands, which should be taken separately but rather as intersecting plans:

. Sources:

- a) Edition and research on wills and other sources related with death.
- b) Palaeographic, codicological and diplomatic approaches.
- c) Digital editions.

. Parish Communities:

- a) Lay and ecclesiastic communities and its relationship with the parish church and other religious institution.
- b) Confraternities and other assistance associations towards the death.
- c) Computational databases and digital networks.

. Death commemoration strategies:

- a) Bequest managements and funereal memory ceremonies foundation.
- b) Religious intercessors to the salvation of the souls.
- c) Lay intercessors to the salvation of the souls.

. Religious minorities in the Christian city:

- a) Jew and Islamic communities towards the death.
- b) Rituals and assistance strategies.
- c) Convergences and conflict with Christian communities.

. What survives after death?

- a) The widows and its role on bequest management.
- b) Orphans' protection.
- c) Communities' destruction and restructuring during the crisis's periods.
- d) Cemeteries and other burial places.

Communication proposal may be sent thru January 31 to commemortis@gmail.com and must present title; a 400 words abstract on main problems to explore during 30 minutes; 3/5 keywords; a 400 words curricular notice.

Conference languages: Portuguese, Castilian, French and English.

Conference dates:

- . Communication proposal submission – **January 31 2023.**
- . Communication proposal acceptance – **March 1 de 2023.**
- . Conference held in person in Coimbra – **July 10-12 2023.**
- . Final version submission for publishing – **September 1 2023.**

This international conference will be held in the frame of the exploratory research project *COMMÉMORTIS – What survives after death? Parish communities and death commemoration strategies in the medieval city* EXPL/HARHIS/0532/2021, funded by Portuguese funds (PIDDAC), through FCT (Portuguese national funding agency for science, research and technology) (I.P./MCTES), hosted in the Centre for History of Society and Culture (UIDB/00311/2020 e UIDP/00311/2020), coordinated by Maria Amélia Campos (DL57/2016/CP1370/CT0068).

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