

Leverhulme Lecture Series

Premodern Interiorities

Professor Paul Strohm
Leverhulme Visiting Professor



Coloured Drawing Of Humility Beheading
Pride, In Prudentius's 'Conflict Of The Soul'
© British Library Library Board 13-09-2008

31 January, 7 February and 14 February 2011 at 6.30pm

David Sizer Lecture Theatre, Francis Bancroft Building Mile End Campus

A series of three lectures exploring late antique, medieval, and early modern representations of the interior self. Principal emphasis will fall upon narrative fictionalizations of the self; literary narratives will be augmented with legal, historical, and theological instances. Among other conclusions, these lectures will suggest that pre- and post-modern conceptions of the self share many assumptions about the inevitability of interior conflict, mixed boundaries between the self and the world, and the reflexivity of self-understanding.

Click here to
**BOOK
NOW**

6.30pm, 31 January 2012:
Psychomachia and the Medieval Self

David Sizer Lecture Theatre,
Francis Bancroft Building

Supercilious litterateurs never tire of ridiculing him, but Prudentius's late fourth century allegory of warfare between vices and virtues established a genre that endured for a thousand years, and that offered sophisticated new insights into the interior and outward constitution of the self. This agonistic self, founded in images of division and struggle which resonate with Freudian psychology and other more contemporary theories of mind, will be pursued in writings by Philo of Alexandria, Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, and both versions of the *Roman de la Rose*.

revolution by establishing intention as an inescapable evaluative norm. Decoupling sin from deeds or actions, Abelard argued that sin did not occur without inward consent, rendering self-examination of motive an essential element of the ethical life. Examples of medieval thinking on this matter will be drawn from Procula's intentions in dissuading her husband Pilate from condemning Christ, legal narratives taken from the Plea and Memoranda and Coram Rege Rolls, and Chaucer's 'Friar's Tale' and 'Prologue' to the *Legend of Good Women*.

Click here to
**BOOK
NOW**

6.30pm, 14 February 2012:
Confession, Conscience and the Pauline 'Inner Man'

David Sizer Lecture Theatre,
Francis Bancroft Building

This lecture addresses Christianity's two central technologies of the self—technologies which occasionally intersected but normally competed in their aspiration to probe motivations and actions. Each system suspects the other: the sacrament of penance tries to delimit conscience, which it

regards as a dangerous free-lancer; conscience would act independently but proves liable to err when it stands on its own. Laid bare in this lecture are some of the tensions which culminate in the sixteenth-century Reformation. Texts to be considered include *Piers Plowman*, *Jacob's Well* and Calvin's *Institution of the Christian Religion*.

Paul Strohm is Leverhulme Visiting Professor at Queen Mary, University of London, for Winter-Spring 2012. He was previously Anna Garbedian Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University and J.R.R. Tolkien Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Oxford. He is author of a half-dozen books on medieval literature, history, and culture including *Social Chaucer* (Harvard, 1989), *England's Empty Throne* (Yale, 1998), *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minnesota, 2002) and, most recently, *Conscience: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford 2011).

Ticket Information

This event is free to attend, but you must book tickets online in advance if you wish to attend. Please click the button on the right and follow the instructions to make a booking. You will then be emailed an e-ticket and you should bring this with you on the day.

Map and Directions

This event takes place at our Mile End Campus. Please click on the icon below for the map and directions:



Mile End Campus



The nearest tube stations are Stepney Green and Mile End

David Sizer Lecture Theatre, Francis Bancroft Building
Queen Mary, University of London
Mile End Road
London E1 4NS

Further Information

If you have any questions regarding this event please contact the Events Office via events@qmul.ac.uk or telephone 020 7882 5895.

Click here to
**BOOK
NOW**

6.30pm, 7 February 2012: Inventing Intention

David Sizer Lecture Theatre,
Francis Bancroft Building

Earlier concepts of intention were floating around, but Abelard (together with Heloise and twelfth century contemporaries) fostered an ethical