

# The Sex Lives Of Saints The Sex Lives Of Saints

*Ancient Christian Ecopoetics* - Virginia Burrus 2018-09-14

In our age of ecological crisis, what insights—if any—can we expect to find by looking to our past? Perhaps, suggests Virginia Burrus, early Christianity might yield usable insights. Turning aside from the familiar specter of Christianity's human-centered theology of dominion, Burrus directs our attention to aspects of ancient Christian thought and practice that remain strange and alien. Drawn to excess and transgression, in search of transformation, early Christians creatively reimagined the universe and the human, cultivating relationships with a wide range of other beings—animal, vegetable, and mineral; angelic and demonic; divine and earthly; large and small. In *Ancient Christian Ecopoetics*, Burrus facilitates a provocative encounter between early Christian theology and contemporary ecological thought. In the first section, she explores how the mysterious figure of khora, drawn from Plato's *Timaeus*, haunts Christian and Jewish accounts of a creation envisioned as varyingly monstrous, unstable, and unknowable. In the second section, she explores how hagiographical literature queers notions of nature and places the very category of the human into question, in part by foregrounding the saint's animality, in part by writing the saint into the landscape. The third section considers material objects, as small as portable relics and icons, as large as church and monastery complexes. Ancient Christians considered all of these animate beings, simultaneously powerful and vulnerable, protective and in need of protection, lovable and loving. Viewed through the shifting lenses of an ancient ecopoetics, Burrus demonstrates how humans both loomed large and shrank to invisibility, absorbed in the rapture of a strange and animate ecology.

*The Language of Liturgy* - David Jasper 2018-01-31

How language works in the worship of the church has been vigorously debated during the period of liturgical revision in the twentieth century coming at the end of what is known as the Liturgical Movement. Focusing upon the Church of England and the Anglican tradition, this book traces the history of 'liturgical language' as it begins in the Early Church, but with particular emphasis upon the English Reformation liturgies, their background in the Medieval Church and literature and their long and varied life in the Church of England after 1662. Interdisciplinary in scope, yet rooted in a literary approach, the volume provides a rigorous study of the effect of liturgy upon the theological and devotional life of the Church.

*Gender Issues in Ancient and Reformation Translations of Genesis 1-4* - Helen Kraus 2011-10-20

Revision of author's thesis (Ph. D.)--University of Oxford, 2007.

*Plotting with Eros* - Ingela Nilsson 2009

This volume aims at providing both students and scholars with a series of discussions of the long tradition of reading and writing the erotic, seen from a number of different perspectives.

*Passionate Embrace* - Elisabeth Gerle 2018-01-01

Protestant ethics has often been associated with work and duty, excluding sensuality, sexuality and other pleasures. In an age of body worship as well as body loathing, Elisabeth Gerle explores new paths, embarking on a conversation with Martin Luther in dialogue with contemporary theologians on attitudes towards desire, ethics and politics. She draws on Eros theology to challenge traditional Lutheran stereotypes, such as the dichotomies between different forms of love, as well as between spirit and body. Gerle argues that Luther's spiritual breakthrough, where grace and gifts of creation became central, provides new meaning to sex and desire as well as to work, body and ordinary life. Women are seen in a new light - as companions, autonomous ethical agents, part of the priesthood of all. This had revolutionary consequences in Europe at the time, and it represents a challenge to contemporary theologies with a nostalgic appetite for austerity, asceticism and female submission. Luther's erotic and genderfluid language is a healthy challenge to oppressive political structures centred on greed, profit and competition. A revised Scandinavian creation theology and a deep sense of the incarnational mystery are resources for contemporary theology and ethics.

*Sex in the Middle Ages* - Joyce E. Salisbury 2019-01-17

Originally published in 1991. Covering courtship, disclosure, diversity, and public implications, the essays here discuss topics such as erotic

magic, nakedness, physicians' attitudes about sex, boy-love, saints and sex, and the politics of sodomy, as they were manifested in medieval Europe and the Middle East.

*Saving Shame* - Virginia Burrus 2013-04-19

Virginia Burrus explores one of the strongest and most disturbing aspects of the Christian tradition, its excessive preoccupation with shame. While Christianity has frequently been implicated in the conversion of ancient Mediterranean cultures from shame- to guilt-based and, thus, in the emergence of the modern West's emphasis on guilt, Burrus seeks to recuperate the importance of shame for Christian culture. Focusing on late antiquity, she explores a range of fascinating phenomena, from the flamboyant performances of martyrs to the imagined abjection of Christ, from the self-humiliating disciplines of ascetics to the intimate disclosures of Augustine. Burrus argues that Christianity innovated less by replacing shame with guilt than by embracing shame. Indeed, the ancient Christians sacrificed honor but laid claim to their own shame with great energy, at once intensifying and transforming it. Public spectacles of martyrdom became the most visible means through which vulnerability to shame was converted into a defiant witness of identity; this was also where the sacrificial death of the self exemplified by Christ's crucifixion was most explicitly appropriated by his followers. Shame showed a more private face as well, as Burrus demonstrates. The ambivalent lure of fleshly corruptibility was explored in the theological imaginary of incarnational Christology. It was further embodied in the transgressive disciplines of saints who plumbed the depths of humiliation. Eventually, with the advent of literary and monastic confessional practices, the shame of sin's inexhaustibility made itself heard in the revelations of testimonial discourse. In conversation with an eclectic constellation of theorists, Burrus interweaves her historical argument with theological, psychological, and ethical reflections. She proposes, finally, that early Christian texts may have much to teach us about the secrets of shame that lie at the heart of our capacity for humility, courage, and transformative love.

*Failing Desire* - Karmen MacKendrick 2017-12-04

Draws on theology and queer theory to argue for the power of humiliating pleasures in a culture oriented very strongly to denying any enjoyment that is not about success. Luckily for human diversity, we are perfectly capable of desiring impossible things. *Failing Desire* explores a particular set of these impossibilities, those connected to humiliation. These include the failure of autonomy in submission, of inward privacy in confession, of visual modesty in exhibition, and of dignity in playing various roles. Historically, those who find pleasure in these failures range from ancient Cynics through early Christian monks to those now drawn by queer or perverse eroticism. As Judith Halberstam pointed out in *The Queer Art of Failure*, failure can actually be a mode of resistance to demands for what a culture defines as success. Karmen MacKendrick draws on this interest in queer refusals. To value, desire, or seek humiliation undercuts any striving for success, but it draws our attention particularly to the failures of knowledge as a form of power, whether that knowledge is of one body or of a population. How can we understand will that seeks not to govern itself, psychology that constructs inwardness by telling all, blushing shame that delights in exposure, or dignity that refuses its lofty position? *Failing Desire* suggests that the power of these desires and pleasures comes out of the very realization that this question can never quite be answered. Karmen MacKendrick is Professor of Philosophy at Le Moyne College. She is the author of several books, including *Counterpleasures* and *Immemorial Silence*, both also published by SUNY Press.

*Middle-aged Women in the Middle Ages* - Sue Niebrzydowski 2011

New research into medieval women from the Anglo-Saxon to the late medieval period demonstrates their energy, defiance and wit.

*Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity* - Thomas Sizgorich 2009

Thomas Sizgorich seeks to understand why and how violent expressions of religious devotion became central to the self-understandings of both Christian and Muslim communities between the fourth and ninth centuries. He identifies a common pool of late ancient narrative forms upon which both communities drew.

*Forgetful of Their Sex* - Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg 2018-06-29

In this remarkable study of over 2,200 female and male saints, Jane

Schulenburg explores women's status and experience in early medieval society and in the Church by examining factors such as family wealth and power, patronage, monasticism, virginity, and motherhood. The result is a unique depiction of the lives of these strong, creative, independent-minded women who achieved a visibility in their society that led to recognition of sanctity. "A tremendous piece of scholarship. . . . This journey through more than 2,000 saints is anything but dull. Along the way, Schulenburg informs our ideas regarding the role of saints in the medieval psyche, gender-specific identification, and the heroics of virginity." —Library Journal "[This book] will be a kind of 'roots' experience for some readers. They will hear the voices, haunted and haunting, of their distant ancestors and understand more about themselves." —Christian Science Monitor "This fascinating book reaches far beyond the history of Christianity to recreate the 'herstory' of a whole gender." —Kate Saunders, *The Independent*

*Sex Among the Saints* - Johnny Townsend 2009-11

Sex lives of Mormons. Two women vie for the sexual affections of the same missionary. A farmer marries his best friend's mistress. A former missionary becomes an escort. A woman fantasizes about her sex life as one of Jesus' wives.

**Hotel Imperium** - Rachel Loden 2008-02-01

Grounded in deep and thoughtful awareness, this complex collection of poems combines history, sexuality, pop culture, and political experience with edgy, wry, often absurd humor and an underlying penchant for the macabre. Rachel Loden employs both strict and innovative forms in poetry that explores the post-Cold War unease that follows a century of harrowing conflicts. These contradictory elements flower in poems drawn from the ethereal world of pop myths and fairy tales that simultaneously unfold a reality full of absence and mystery. Speaking as intimately of the fall of the Soviet Union as they do of the cinematic crimes and misdemeanors of Woody Allen or the redemptive passion of Little Richard, their tone ranges from the furious to the elegiac, with a comic edge that borrows as much from the gallows as it does from the Borscht Belt. As rich in rhyme, music, and literary allusion as it is in multifaceted meaning, *Hotel Imperium* presents a surprising blend of sophistication, playfulness, and haunting truths.

**Radical Love** - Patrick S. Cheng 2011-03

An introduction to an important, developing area of Christian theology.

*Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* - Robert Mills 2015-02-27

Challenging the view that ideas about sexual and gender dissidence were too confused to congeal into a coherent form in the Middle Ages, the author demonstrates that sodomy had a rich, multimedia presence in the period - and that a flexible approach to questions of terminology sheds new light on the many forms this presence took.

**The Sex of the Angels, the Saints in Their Heaven** - Raoul Schrott 2018

Breviaries, books of standard religious readings for particular denominations, are a familiar genre with a long pedigree. But you've definitely never seen a breviary like this one. *The Sex of the Angels* is a playful, often ironic take on the breviary in the form of a collection of letters that begins by taking up early Christian cosmology and follows the Biblical mutations of the angel from Babylon to the present day. As it goes along, Raoul Schrott also weaves in a history which ranges from ancient Greek legends of the origin of light to the medieval darkness of the eclipse. But there is more going on here than meets the eye: the letters are addressed to an unnamed "other" and chart the course of an

elusive affair. They are, we come to realize, a declaration of love--or, more accurately, of yearning--but also a far-reaching poetic essay which moves between etymological history, anthropological anecdote, philosophy, and disquisition on the nature of art. The text is supplemented by sumptuous illustrations by Arnold Mario Dall'O that chart the stories of the saints, and the result is a unique dialogue between literature and art: an extraordinary and rare book about love.

*Promiscuous Grace* - Sonia Velázquez 2023-06-02

"Theologians, poets, artists, and laypeople alike have been fascinated by Saint Mary of Egypt's legend since it was first recorded in the seventh century. Mary's prominence is religious and symbolic, encompassing sin and sanctity, the excesses of nymphomania and asceticism, the charms of nubile youth and the wrinkles of old age. In *Promiscuous Grace*, scholar of religion Sonia Velázquez thinks with Saint Mary of Egypt about what beauty has to do with holiness. With an archive spanning medieval Spanish poetry, Baroque paintings, a seventeenth-century hagiographic drama, and Balzac's treatment of Saint Mary in *Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*, Velázquez argues for the relevance of the appeal to the senses and the importance of the surface in religious texts. She draws on insights from philosophy, literary history and theory, and religious, visual and gender studies, and pays close attention to the texture of the words and images that make the legend of Saint Mary of Egypt come alive and remain relevant today"--

*Late Ancient Christianity* - Virginia Burrus 2010-03-01

The particular excitement of this volume lies in its focus on the everyday realities of Christians' lives in the era of Christian ascendancy and Roman decline. Popular fiction, childrearing and toys, rituals of inclusion, the beginning of veneration of saints and shunning of heretics, the ascetic impulse, food practices—all these and more lend color and texture to the story of a "people's" Christianity in this formative stage.

**Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature** - Simon Gaunt 1995-05-11

Wide-ranging study of gender and the underlying ideologies of Old French and Occitan literature.

*The Sex Lives of Saints* - Virginia Burrus 2010-08-03

Has a repressive morality been the primary contribution of Christianity to the history of sexuality? The ascetic concerns that pervade ancient Christian texts would seem to support such a common assumption. Focusing on hagiographical literature, Virginia Burrus pursues a fresh path of interpretation, arguing that the early accounts of the lives of saints are not antierotic but rather convey a sublimely transgressive "countereroticism" that resists the marital, procreative ethic of sexuality found in other strands of Christian tradition. Without reducing the erotics of ancient hagiography to a single formula, *The Sex Lives of Saints* frames the broad historical, theological, and theoretical issues at stake in such a revisionist interpretation of ascetic eroticism, with particular reference to the work of Michel Foucault and Georges Bataille, David Halperin and Geoffrey Harpham, Leo Bersani and Jean Baudrillard. Burrus subsequently proceeds through close, performative readings of the earliest Lives of Saints, mostly dating to the late fourth and early fifth centuries—Jerome's Lives of Paul, Malchus, Hilarion, and Paula; Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina; Augustine's portrait of Monica; Sulpicius Severus's Life of Martin; and the slightly later Lives of so-called harlot saints. Queer, s/m, and postcolonial theories are among the contemporary discourses that prove intriguingly resonant with an ancient art of "saintly" loving that remains, in Burrus's reading, promisingly mobile, diverse, and open-ended.

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