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Holy Helpers and the Transformation of Patronage at the End of the Middle Ages

Live stream session

Access: <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/central-european-university>

Introduction by Gábor Klaniczay

17:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 27, 2016
CEU–Monument Building 201
Budapest, V. Nádor u. 9.

Reception to follow!

Saints in the Middle Ages and beyond were assumed to pay special attention to specific groups of believers, including residents of cities and towns, members of religious orders, aristocratic clans and ethnic groups, as well as practitioners of various trades and professions. Saints were also credited with specializations, with being helpful, above all, against particular calamities, diseases or problems of everyday life like finding lost objects. Such specializations, the distinguishing feature of holy helpers, can be seen as the endpoint of a development that led from generalized saintly patronage believed to be available to anyone with regard to any trouble in a given territorial unit towards specialized patronage attached to specific social groups and/or pertaining to specific problems. The aim of the lecture is to trace (within the limits of the genre) this development in Western Christianity, as well as to explore its social preconditions and possible causes.

Ottó Gecser is senior lecturer (*docens*) at the Department of Sociology, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest; recently he was research fellow in the Department of Medieval Studies at the CEU and member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. His latest publications include: “Predicazione, formazione scolastica e modelli culturali nell’Osservanza francescana ungherese alla fine del medioevo” (2014); “Understanding Pestilence in the Times of King Matthias: The Plague Tract in the Manuscript of János Gellértfi of Aranyas” (2013); and “Miracles of the Leper and the Roses: Charity, Chastity and Female Independence in St. Elizabeth of Hungary” (2013).



Josse Lieferinxe: *Saint Sebastian Interceding for the Plague Stricken* (1497-99),
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore MD (CC)