

English project description (second book)

Anne Mariss' second book project »Dimensions of Material Devotion: The Rosary in the Age of Confessionalization« focusses on a specific class of object, the rosary, which is considered to be one of the most emblematic artefacts in Catholic devotion. Existing older studies about rosaries originate mainly from European Ethnic Studies, and, in part, tend to oversimplify this phenomenon of early modern material culture as a tool of popular piety. A glance at the diversity of rosaries kept in museum and collections today, however, shows that the objects themselves contain multilayered historial dimensions. They are not only material representations of the diversity and plurality of early modern cultures of devotion, but also hint at socioeconomic processes, cultural change, and even transcultural and global entanglements.

Focused on a certain group of devotional objects, the study aims to analyze religious materiality and lived religion in a historical perspective. For a long time, objects were neglected by historiography, or were merely regarded as a kind of stopgap when textual sources were lacking. The last two decades have seen the reappraisal of objects as sources in their own right providing insights into past lives. Theoretical debates in the wake of Latour's actor-network-theory as well as empirical studies have shown that objects are not only used by human actors, but have impact on human actions. Against this background, the project asks the question of how the rosary achieved significance in religious, social, economic, and transcultural contexts in the age of confessionalization, and how it contributed to the formation of confessional identities in Catholic and – *ex negativo* – in Protestant communities. Thus, it opens new perspectives on the changing material culture of religion in the course of the Reformation and the refashioning of Catholicism.