



Call for Papers

On **27-29 May 2020**, the research units *History of Church and Theology* and *Literary Studies: Latin Literature* of KU Leuven will organize, in collaboration with the C1-project *Magnum opus et arduum: Towards a History of the Reception of Augustine's De civitate Dei* and the ERC-project *Patristic Sermons in the Middle Ages: The Dissemination, Manipulation, and Interpretation of Late-Antique Sermons in the medieval Latin West*, based at Radboud University Nijmegen, the fourth edition of:

MINISTERIUM SERMONIS
AN INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON ST. AUGUSTINE'S SERMONS
Leuven, 27-29 May 2020

This conference will bring together scholars who have recently made important contributions to the study of Augustine's sermons. It is a sequel to the series of *Ministerium Sermonis*-conferences organised in Leuven-Turnhout (May 30-31, 2008), Rome (September 15-17, 2011) and Malta (April 08-10, 2015), the proceedings of which have been published in the series *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 53, 65 & 75 (Turnhout: Brepols 2009, 2012, 2017). The following survey offers some **possible topics**, but does not intend to exclude alternative issues or approaches:

(1) The transmission and reception of Augustine's sermons

Over the past three decades, the discovery of new *sermones ad populum* as well as the preparation of new critical editions of the sermons have increased our insight into the transmission of Augustine's preaching. Augustine's homiletic oeuvre likewise has had a prominent part in recent scholarship on the history of texts and ideas, medieval and early modern techniques of appropriation and reception, and medieval manuscript studies. Projects such as the ERC-funded *Patristic Sermons in the Middle Ages* aim to bridge the gap between patristic and medieval sermon studies, demonstrating the relevance of Augustine's homiletic oeuvre for medieval religious history. Speakers may propose a critical evaluation of recent scholarship, but may likewise offer an original contribution to the ongoing exploration of the transmission and reception of the Augustinian sermons (*sermones, tractatus, enarrationes*). The concept 'transmission' is to be understood in its broadest sense and may include the quotation of sermons in the work of later authors, in medieval anthologies, sermon collections, etc.

(2) Augustine's argumentation (doctrine, exegesis and rhetoric)

Augustine's sermons do not deal only with Christian life and practice, but also with philosophical and theological issues which present-day readers associate mainly with his doctrinal writings (the doctrine of the Trinity, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, soteriology, eschatology, etc.). It is an urgent *desideratum* to relate Augustine's ideas as developed in other works to similar issues in his sermons. Possible topics include:

- How does Augustine handle specific exegetical themes in his sermons? How does this treatment relate to his approach in other writings?
- Which role do Scripture and exegesis play in Augustine's arguments? How does Augustine's use of Scripture in the sermons relate to his exegesis in other writings?

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- Which are the sermons' intended audiences and how have they left their mark on them? What is the importance of the (historical) context in which the sermons are delivered?
- In what way have some of his arguments been influenced by the polemical contexts from whence they originated (against paganism, Manichaeism, Donatism, Pelagianism)?
- What rhetorical strategies are applied? Does Augustine conform to the precepts of classical rhetoric and/or to his own reflections on rhetoric and exegesis *De doctrina christiana*, IV?

(3) Political doctrine(s) and praxis in Latin Patristic sermons

The conference is linked with a Leuven-based research project on Augustine's *De ciuitate Dei*. Augustine's political theory in *De ciuitate Dei* can only be properly understood if situated within his own political praxis. As a bishop in fourth- and fifth-century Roman North Africa, Augustine did not just hold a religious office. He was also a local political leader and entertained dynamic contacts with the secular and Church leaders of his time. His sermons are privileged source material to reconstruct Augustine's political activity. The double question which can inspire a conference paper is: What information do Augustine's sermons reveal about his political praxis, and how does their study compliment the political theory he developed in *De ciuitate Dei*? The same question could be posed for other preachers, such as Ambrose of Milan or a Donatist homilist.

Committed keynote speakers and respondents include: Isabelle Bochet, Johannes Brachtendorf, James Patout Burns, Gillian Clarke, Jérémy Delmulle, Max Diesenberger, François Dolbeau, Marie Pauliat, Els Rose, Clemens Weidmann.

If you would like to deliver a lecture during this conference, please send the provisional title, abstract (max. 500 words) and a concise CV (max. 500 words) before **31 May 2019**, to Shari Boodts at s.boodts@let.ru.nl.

We will let you know whether your paper is included by 1 July 2019. All participants are kindly invited to announce the **definitive title of their lecture and a short abstract before 31 December 2019**. Lectures should be approx. **20 minutes** long, followed by a general discussion of 10 minutes. The organizing committee has the intention of publishing the contributions to the conference as quickly as possible in the international series *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia*, published by Brepols Publishers.

The colloquium will take place in Leuven at the historical location of the Dutch College (Hollands College), where Cornelius Jansenius served as first president, and the historical Park Abbey, where Erasmus discovered Lorenzo Valla's *New Testament Notes*. More practical information will follow when your abstract is accepted.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Gert Partoens, Anthony Dupont, Shari Boodts

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