**Abstracts**

Keynote 1: Bernard McGinn – Bernard of Clairvaux and Meister Eckhart Preach Mary

Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153) and Meister Eckhart (d. 1328) are two of the most famous preachers of the Middle Ages. Both men left many sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary. Bernard has twenty-one sermons on Mary, most relating to Marian Feasts (the Purification, the Annunciation, the Assumption with six sermons, the Nativity of the Virgin), but Bernard also preached three special sermons “In laudibus Virginis Matris,” and has two Marian pieces in his sermons “De diversis.” Eckhart leaves twelve sermons for the Marian Feasts of the year, including five for the Assumption. My paper will survey the major themes of their very different approaches to preaching on Mary. Briefly, Bernard emphasizes the special role of Mary in the economy of Redemption and thus stresses the distance between the believer and the Mother of the Redeemer. Eckhart, on the other hand, does not say much about Mary’s privileges, but uses her as an example of the Birth of the Word in the soul, something which is offered all believers. Hence, the “just person” (*justus;gerecht*) is meant to attain the same level as Mary.

Keynote 2: Carolyn Muessig – Challenging Boundaries: The Private and Public Discourse of Medieval and Early Modern Female Preachers

The place of women in the preaching history of medieval and early modern Europe is often assumed to have been negligible. Part of this assumption is based on arguments by well-known churchmen like Thomas Aquinas who posited that women were intellectually inferior to men and hence would be unfit theologians/preachers. Such arguments were often justified with reference to biblical passages that presented women as unfit teachers (e.g., 1 Cor. 14: 34–35; 1 Tim. 2:12). This lecture, however, will elucidate the significant but often overlooked role some women (e.g., Caterina Vigri, Juana de la Cruz) played in the history of pastoral education by focusing on and analysing examples of women’s preaching methods as well as their sermons.

Session 1: Windows onto Gendering Identities in Late Medieval Preaching

Our session aims to explore the topic of gendered representations in medieval preaching, with a

focus on current queer, trans and gender theories. The three papers of this session will approach

medieval sermons addressed to men and women as a tool of building socially and culturally

gendered identities. Historiographical theories and specific case-studies will be considered in order to verify the contribution of queer, trans and gender theories to today's medieval sermon studies.

Laura Gaffuri – Building Gendered Identity in Late Medieval Preaching: The Italian Historiographical Perspective

This paper’s aim is to explore the topic of representation of feminine identity in medieval preaching. Since historians’ attention to this topic has greatly changed in the last few decades, my analysis also takes into account some different historians’ perspectives on medieval women. Some cases will be examined against the background of the Italian approach to queer and gender theories in the most recent medieval sermon studies. Historiographical theories and specific case studies will be considered in a needfully interdisciplinary perspective, in order to monitor the contribution of queer and gender theories to the Italian medieval sermon studies of today.

Linda Gale Jones – Constructing Gender in a Mudejar Hortatory Sermon Addressed to Women

Medieval preachers foster a certain vision of ideal society and ideal human comportment in accordance with the beliefs and doctrines espoused by the homilist and his target community. Whether we believe that preaching directly reflects society or shapes the practices of a given society, there is no doubt that the preaching-and-society dialectic includes that society’s views regarding gender. As numerous scholars observe, masculinity and femininity are “constructed and configured differently in different societies and cultures.” Each society defines what constitutes ideal normative gender identities and roles and what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate relations between and within the genders, all of which will be shaped by the intersections with each individual’s other principal identity markers: religion, social status, age, ethnicity, genealogy, and sexual orientation. We also know that “there are multiple forms of masculinities and femininities” as well as trans and third genders “that must be understood in relation to each other” (Karras 2021). These gender relationships are construed primarily in terms of power differentials that can be complementary, interactional, hierarchical, oppositional, or egalitarian, depending upon the prevailing “topoi” or “conceptual frameworks that structure, mediate, and organize a society’s experience of the world,” and which necessarily includes its conceptions of masculinity and femininity and “the particular roles and functions males and females [should] embody/perform in order to either bring about or maintain its religiously ideal worldview and its corresponding socio-political, legal, and cultural systems” (Duderija *et al* 2020; Karras 2021). This paper will analyze the gender topoi in the sermons of Ahmad al-Musarimi, a 14th-century Muslim hortatory preacher from the Christian-ruled Iberian kingdom of Aragon. Al-Musarimi composed one sermon extolling “the female strivers of piety” and three sermons describing “pious men and male ascetics.” A comparative analysis of these sermons will illuminate how premodern Islamic preaching promotes a particular worldview of “gender oppositionality” while problematizing it through seemingly contradictory messages of gender egalitarianism.

Clovis Maillet – Trans and Gender Issues in Jacobus de Voragine’s *Sermones Aurei* and *Chronica*

In the Golden Legend, four chapters are dedicated to saints that might be described as trans: Marina-Marinus, Marguerite-Pelagius, Theodora-Theodorus, Eugenia-Eugenius in the life of Prothus and Iacinthus. Natalia, Adrianus’s wife also passed as a man during Adrien’s martyrdom. The place of gender transition in the text is important, and the exempla from the Golden Legend were, as Giovanni Paolo Maggioni showed an important resource material for preaching used in the Sermones ad sanctos (which he described as “Golden Legend’s instruction for use”), and in the Sermones Quadragesimales.

The point of this paper is to understand how the important focus on gender issues in the hagiographic compilation by Jacobus could be used in sermones performed ad statum for women and gender non conforming persons of the time. This paper deals with queer and trans theory to understand better the place of gender issues in preaching practices.

Session 2: Franciscan Methods of Evangelization

Darleen Pryds – Preaching Without Notes: Franciscan Evangelization

This paper compares and contrasts the evidence for a male comb maker who preached through his presence in his business in Siena and brought into civic service as a mediator, with other somatic preachers--especially female preachers--who also expressed their faith in word, voice, and presence. This paper really looks at how the reputations of these somatic preachers were treated differently in the record-keeping of their public service and presence of preaching.

Helmut Flachenecker – From *Lectio Divina* to Preaching the Word of Christ: The Images of Femininity in the ‘Sunday Sermons’ of St. Bonaventure

Sermons thrive on stories and examples in order to bring the addressed content closer to the respective audience. Joan Young Gregg demonstrated this convincingly in her book about homiletic exempla and its importance to connect daily life experiences with religious remarks. The focus is on the ‘others’ who do not at all fit into the preacher's worldview and who are therefore fought by them: the devils, the women and the Jews. Such observations become interesting when sermons are addressed to a special audience, namely to the own members of a monastic order. Because here the daily life experiences are quite different, the discrepancies between scholarly and popular theological knowledge less noticeable. What are the spiritual needs of friars, which exempla do they need for their religious questions?

But sermons are also a part of an older monastic tradition, the *lectio divina*. Through the loud and repeatedly reading of a text the monk (or nun) should achieve a kind of spiritual meditation leading up to an intensive view of Christ in the Passion, the incarnate Word. From this perspective, reading and praying get pretty close. During this act of contemplating over a sermon God will speak to the monk (or nun). Therefore, for example, the Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 48, requires times for mediation and reading separated from the manual labor. The monk has to recognize the different levels of meaning of the Holy Scriptures, contemplative considerations over interpretations of the Gospels from influential exegetes are important for a *lectio divina*.

In this paper sermons for monks from Bernard of Clairvaux and Bonaventure should be examined in a comparative way. Whereas the topics are innumerable, the main-focus should be on female topics like the Bride in the Song of Songs, or the description of Mary, Mary Magdalene and others. Are there any specifics for monastic listeners and readers? Is the woman always equated with the devilish seductress, with Eve, and is the Holy Virgin always set as the incomparable counter-image? To what extent can monks do anything with female figures and their behavior in their monastic life at all? Do women even play a significant role in the monastic sermons of Bernard and Bonaventure?

The ‘Sunday Sermons’ (written 1267-1268) are an excellent indicator for the efforts of Bonaventure († 1274) at the level of pastoral care for his Franciscan friars. This proposed lecture tries on the one hand to deal intensively with the thoughts of Bonaventure in his ‘Sunday Sermons’, on the other hand it tries to shed light on the fundamentals of Franciscan thinking, in comparison with the Cistercian Bernard von Clairvaux, who was quoted several times by Bonaventure. Bernard has also written many sermons for different people's cycles. The most famous are his sermons for the initiation of a crusade, but he also wrote for his monks or for a lay audience sermon texts. One of his sermons, which he wrote especially for his Cistercian monks, was over the ‘Song of Songs’. For him, as for Bonaventure, the Bride personified the soul and the church, both were desperately eager to come to Christ. A comparison with the handling of the topic women in the sermons of Bernard and Bonaventure appears attractive.

Edward J. Sutcliffe – *Exemplo virtutis*: Preaching and Clerical Masculinity in Tommaso da Pavia’s *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum*

This paper examines the relationship between preaching and masculinity within the early Franciscan order, with a particular focus on *Dialogus de gestis sanctorum fratrum minorum*. Attributed to the chronicler friar Tommaso da Pavia and written in the 1240s, this text constitutes an early collection of details of the lives and miracles of the first generations of Franciscan *sancti* and *beati*. The work is derived from existing *vitae* and the records of canonisation inquiries, and a close reading of *Dialogus* alongside its sources reveals a series of important editorial decisions made by its compiler. The text, explicitly framing itself as a collection of templates for Franciscan life from which its readers could learn, curated an image of clerical sanctity built around the office of preaching and exemplified by men like Antonio di Padova. To maintain this image of Franciscan masculinity, the author occasionally departed from some of his source material, most notably adapting the evidence presented at canonisation hearings for Ambrogio da Massa (d. 1240), a secular priest turned friar. This paper considers the conflicting representations of Ambrogio that ensued, arguing that *Dialogus* subtly but significantly reframed his identity. When compared against the hagiography of other early Franciscan *beati*, the re-writing of Ambrogio’s sanctity sheds light on the crystallisation of a brand of mendicant masculinity underpinned by an emphasis on the vocation of preaching and articulated through a pronounced emphasis on bodily purity and wholeness, at the expense of personal suffering and illness, and visceral physical service.

Session 3: Vernacular Preaching for Women I

Beata Spieralska – Gendered Language and Translation: The Case of Maurice de Sully’s Sermons

In the Latin version of Maurice de Sully’s sermons women appear only in one of two functions. First, some individuals are mentioned, mostly the figures from the Gospel. Secondly, when they appear as a group, women are often objectified: they are an instrument of temptation and sin. Apart from these two cases, the world in the Latin sermons seems to be genderless or masculine – depending on the perspective we adopt.

Among other features differentiating the vernacular version from the Latin original is the approach towards the female half of the humanity. The interpreters of the sermons were, evidently, feeling need to acknowledge its existence. While the Latin preacher is addressing only brothers (*fratres*) and speaking only about men (*christiani*, *peccatores*), French translators are sometimes addressing gentlemen and ladies (*seigneurs et dames*) and speaking about men and women (*crestiens et crestienes*, *pecheors et pecheresses*, *homes et femes*).

This shift in the translation may indicate some differences in the context of communication or result from the linguistic reasons. I will explore this issue in my paper.

Hans-Jochen Schiewer – Male Virginity, Female Identity: The Discourse in Early Dominican Sermons for Nuns

Around 1300 Dominicans in the southwest of Germany started to produce religious texts in the vernacular for the cura animarum of religious women. In 1286 the provincial Hermann von Minden committed explicitly his male fellow Dominicans to take care of the religious female houses incorporated into the Dominican Order or closely associated. The instruction of Hermann von Minden resulted in a very ambitious, highquality production of vernacular sermons and treatises. A Dominican, Eberhart von Sachs, even appears in the famous Manesse collection of medieval lyrics with a praise of the virgin Mary. This clearly indicates that leading Dominicans came from the noble and patrician families of the Southwest and took part in the production of literature which crossed borders between the religious and the secular audience. In those writings the adoration of the two Johns, the Evangelist and the Baptist became of crucial importance - not only their adoration but also their rivalry. As a result the so called ‚Libelli of the two Johns‘ came into existence containing a translation of the Apocalypse, legends, miracles and sermons. The authors of the sermons are partly known: Henry of Schaffhausen, Conrad of Liebenberg, Rudolf of Klingenberg (1279- 1291) and Huge of Konstanz (1279-1300 lecturer in Constanze, prior in Zürich, provincial of the Teutonia). They all were high ranking Dominicans and belonged to leading families in the southwest with relatives in leading positions in the secular sector. In my paper, I will focus on the role model of the male virgin John the Evangelist who was Christ’s most beloved disciple. He became the other sun of the virgin Mary and none of the disciples were closer to the trinity than he was. The virgin John is seen equal with the sponsa of the Songs of Songs. The Apocalypse is translated against the Latin source as a highly emotionalized narrative. John combines the role of the bride with a unique visionary capacity as author of the Apocalypse. The paper will close with a discussion what kind of education the male Dominican authors offered the religious women in presenting the male virgin John as next to the holy trinity. Finally, I will argue that this is mirroring the admiration Dominicans had for these religious women.

Beth Allison Barr – Preaching for Women? Applying Eliana Corbari’s *Vernacular Theology* to Middle English Sermons

In 2013, Eliana Corbari published *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy*. She showed how sermon manuscripts can be used to indicate women’s presence in sermon audiences as well as their participation in the dissemination of sermon texts, arguing that women were at the forefront of vernacular theology in late medieval Italy. Although middle English sermons do not provide a direct parallel to the sermon manuscripts examined by Corbari, I argue that the applicable portions of her methodology indicate similar patterns of female presence in fifteenth-century English sermons. For example, after examining two late medieval English sermon manuscripts (Holkham Misc. 40 and Longleat House 4) and one late medieval English sermon collection (John Mirk’s *Festial*), I have found patterns of gender inclusive language and female-centered narratives which Coribari found to correlate with female participation. This becomes even more significant in light of evidence suggesting female patronage. In short, while Katherine French has persuasively argued that women became more visible and active in the late medieval English parish, this paper suggests (thanks to the methodology of Eliana Corbari) that women might have been equally as visible and active in the creation and dissemination of late medieval English sermons.

Eliana Corbari, *Vernacular Theology: Dominican Sermons and Audience in Late Medieval Italy* (De Gruyter, 2013).

Katherine French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

Session 4: Vernacular Preaching for Women II

Merith Wüthrich – An Exhortatory Sermon for Observant Dominican Nuns: Geiler von Kaysersberg’s Sendtbrieff to the Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene at Freiburg im Breisgau

In my paper, I will discuss a 15th century vernacular sermon by Johannes Geiler von

Kaysersberg, doctor of theology and preacher at Strasbourg Cathedral, who also held and wrote sermons for observant nuns. His audience included, among others, the Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene at Freiburg im Breisgau, who were incorporated into the Dominican order between 1309 and 1316. In 1465, their convent was reformed by three sisters from the Dominican observant convent of Schönensteinbach. In the following decades, an increased number of vernacular sermon manuscripts was written by or for the Penitents of St. Mary Magdalene as well as in adjacent convents. These manuscripts were exchanged and distributed among this network of religious houses.

Of particular interest is the so called Sendtbrieff, an epistolary sermon that Geiler von

Kaysersberg sent to the Freiburg penitents in 1499 in order to thank them for a gift they had sent him. In the sermon, Geiler warns the sisters against hypocrisy and emphasizes that true and beneficial observance were a matter of the heart and not of outer behavior. He had originally held and written it down for the Penitents of Strasbourg at an earlier point of time and now asks his addressees to distribute it to other female Dominicans in Freiburg. Geiler emphasizes that his sermon is exclusively written for nuns and not intended for the laity. It thus astonishes that the Sendtbrieff, which is not preserved in its original, has passed down as a print produced by a printing house at protestant Bern in 1543.

In my paper, I will explore how Geiler frames his arguments as the words of an

admonishing and loving teacher to address and reach out to the nuns. I will highlight his

strategies of using the literary genre of the epistolary sermon to construct a relationship to his female recipients, in which the performativity of oral preaching is substituted by writing. Furthermore, I will highlight how the nuns received and further spread Geiler’s words.

Constanze Albers – The Premonstratensians and the Virgins

My interdisciplinary research project deals with the most important Latin legend of the Middle Ages - the Legenda Aurea - and its handwritten traditio. The central role played by the Cistercian and Premonstratensian convents in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with regard to both traditio and mutatio of the text corpus will be investigated. It will be ́ examined to what extent networks within and outside the order, which are to be regarded as significant cultural carriers of the Middle Ages, were used to specifically disseminate this intellectual cultural property and to control its reception. With this question, my work is situated at an interface between literature, history and cultural studies as well as theology, in order to gain a deeper insight into the formative cultural power of legends in the European Middle Ages. From this point of view, this work will not only be part of the currently intensively discussed interdisciplinary research on legends, but will also contribute to further research on this genre relevant to cultural history and give further impulses to other disciplines. In this lecture I will present an aspect of my work that comes to the fore when one places various copies of the Latin Legenda Aurea next to each other, which can be proven to have been used in monasteries of the Premonstratensian Order between the 13th and 16th centuries. I am concerned here with different kinds of mutatio: Legends are added, omitted or, more tellingly, legends about female saints are mainly reworked in a very specific way. The nature of the mutatio of the legends, as well as the question of what it is all about, is something I would like to address and raise for discussion, combined with my observations, in the context of your conference on "Gender and Preaching". It is the perfect thematic framework.

Katherine Goodwin – Preaching Reform, Printing Continuity: Women and the Reformation in Early Modern Strasbourg

“No printing press, no Reformation,” goes the well-worn phrase. Another saying is just as true: no preaching, no Reformation. Scholars Anne Thayer and Arnold Hunt have demonstrated the centrality of preaching and the pulpit to the reform programs of early modern Italy and England, respectively. These studies conclude that sermons of male pastors were the primary mode of communication for transmitting the message of reform to their audiences. However, these conclusions are complicated when considering the writings of women as a source of Reformation preaching. Taking the published writings of Katharina Schütz Zell of Strasbourg as a test case, this paper will consider the continuity and transformation of women’s preaching from the late medieval to the early modern period. Circumventing the gendered space of the church pulpit—the authoritative lecterns of male preachers—women like Schütz Zell entered the rhetorical space of the printing press and preached the true Protestant faith to their readers. This seems to break with the performative preaching that scholars Carolyn Meussig, Beverly Kienzle and Pamela Walker argue are characteristic of late medieval women’s piety. However, Schütz Zell’s use of this informal location of religious instruction fits into the longer pattern of women using informal spaces to preach to the laity. Her writings invite us to reconsider both the role of sermons, the press, and women in effectively communicating the message of Protestant reform. Contributing to the fields of Reformation history, sermon studies, and the history of women’s preaching, this paper will consider Schütz Zell’s writings as a transitional moment as early modern women’s writings took the place of late medieval performative piety as a tool for lay religious instruction.

Anne Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation.* Routledge, 2017.

Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and Their Audiences, 1590-1640*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela Walker, *Women Preachers and Prophets Through Two Millenia.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Session 5: Preaching Biblical Women

Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby – Queen Esther and Judith in Italian Sermons, Drama and Art

This paper looks at the representations of Queen Esther and the biblical heroine Judith in the Italian tradition from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century by studying the art, the religious plays, and the sermons of the time. Preachers, authors, and artists introduced Esther and Judith and their narratives and offered multilayered interpretations of these biblical figures. It begins with a general discussion on the links between preaching, theater and the visual arts in Italy and then focuses on the representations of Queen Esther and Judith in sermons, plays and images. Specifically, it evaluates the links between preaching and performance, and the associations between works of art and religious drama. It explores the increasing frequency of allusions to Queen Esther and Judith in Italian culture and proposes the reasons for that interest. It suggests that Esther was seen as an ideal bride and role model for young girls; as a court lady living in luxury and holding extravagant feasts; as an oriental figure offering an opportunity for the authors and artists to convey the attraction of the East and a fascination with exotic dress; as a prototype of the Virgin Mary and as one among other female biblical figures such as Judith and Ruth; and as a Jewish maiden reflecting issues of the toleration and acceptance of the Jews in Italy.

Esther and Judith were discussed by several preachers, including Giovanni Dominici, St. Antoninus Pierozzi, Girolamo Savonarola, St. Bernardino of Siena, St. John of Capistrano, Gabrielle Paleotti, and St. Carlo Borromeo. Religious plays about Esther and Judith were featured in fifteenth-century Florence, for example, the sacred narrative by Lucrezia Tornabuoni. The two figures were depicted on frescoes, panel paintings, stained glass windows, sculptures, and wedding chests (cassoni), as well as in illuminated manuscripts, drawings, and prints. Analyses of the visual sources coupled with a parallel exploration of literary and sermonic material provide a comprehensive picture of the ways in which Esther and Judith were perceived in Italy. Visual images inspired texts and images, which, in turn, reflected prevailing ideas and attitudes that the texts then shared, elaborated upon, or departed from. The paper analyzes the complexity of Esther’s and Judith’s many faces in Italian culture, and highlights the cultivation of biblical figures in images, sermons and dramatic literature.

Giuseppe Paternicò– ‘Lacrimis lavit maculas criminis’:Mary Magdalen, Gender and Indirect Preachingin the Sermons of Federico Visconti, Archbishop of Pisa (1253–1277)

In contrast to many bishops of the time, the preaching voice of Federico Visconti, archbishop of Pisa from 1253-1277, has been preserved with unusual fullness in a single manuscript, MS Laurenziana *Plut.* XXXIII sin.1. Yet, when the sermons are surveyed for the presence of the Magdalen, it would seem that Visconti did not reserve a prominent position within his homiletical *corpus* for this crucial figure. She appears neither in the title nor in the *themata* of his sermons. She does, however, appear in two sermons by name, numbers XXI and XXIV. A careful reading of these two cases suggests that Visconti pursued a kind of "indirect preaching" of the Magdalen, which enabled it to convince the faithful to repent of sin. Through a case study of Visconti’s sermonistic treatment of Mary Magdalen, this paper will develop the concept of “indirect preaching” and show how, although not the central focus of any one sermon, Visconti wove her into a strong catechical and theological message. Comparison with other sermonistic treatments of women within Visconti’s corpus will deepen the understanding of the role of gender in his preaching.

Olga Kalashnikova – A Chameleon Female Saint: Mary Magdalene’s Rhetorical *functionale* in Bohemian Good Friday Sermons from the Fourteenth Century

Since the Fourth Lateran Council (1204), a powerful devotion to Mary Magdalene was massively growing in Europe and its east-central regions. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, churches, monasteries, and penitential houses dedicated to the beata peccatrix appeared in the central quarters of Buda, Vienna, and Prague. Closely related to public life, the female saint attracted various strata of urban dwellers and became a well-known figure for medieval preachers and their audiences as a living example of ‘perfect penance’. However, her role in preaching was not limited solely to providing spiritual guidance for sinners. This paper will explore Mary Magdalene as a multi-faceted role model for the faithful by analyzing her rhetorical exemplum in late-medieval preaching. Focusing on Central-European (mainly Bohemian) sermons and placing them within a broader historical context, I aim to address the following questions: How and why could late-medieval preachers re-interpret and re-contextualize Magdalene’s specifically gendered example? How did they rhetorically communicate this example to their audience? Which roles did Magdalene serve, and for what types of audience? In order to answer these questions, I will look at selected Good Friday sermons of Peregrinus of Opole, Peter of Zittau, Milíč of Kroměříž, Henry of Wildenstein. These preachers paid special attention to Mary Magdalene in their sermon collections. The paper will allow us to explore how sermons about this female saint shaped a multi-leveled discourse on virtue, penitence, and exemplary preaching in terms of mystical and moral theology in fourteenth-century Bohemia.

Session 6: Problematic Sexuality

W. Fiona Chen – Subversion of Gendered Language and *Meliora Spectacula*in Augustine's Sermons on the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas

*The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, despite being one of the most popular and influential early Christian martyr texts, has not received due attention regarding its reception and exegesis in the sermons (*Sermons* 280-282) of Augustine of Hippo, who is known for his preaching. Additionally, the manuscript which contains a sermon by Augustine on the *Passio* was only discovered in the summer of 2007, making the studies on these sermons a relatively nascent endeavor.

Augustine’s sermons on the martyrs are exceptional and distinct in the sense that, while early Christian writers such as Prudentius and Ambrose describe female martyrs in an explicitly sexual manner, female martyrs in Augustine’s writings receive considerable censoring. By doing so, he challenges well-established norms In Greco-Roman literature: the use of a heroine’s fear and vulnerability as a standard technique for enhancing apposition to her heroism and discrediting her opponent. The retaliation for mistreatment of a woman was also oftentimes used for raising an army, which, in early Christian martyr texts, would be the crowds at the sites of persecution.

Additionally, Augustine also tends to erase the words of the martyrs and abstract the martyrs’ personal names. Using these observations, together with the facts that he withholds his concubine’s name in the *Confession* and that he employs martyrdom language when talking about his separation from her, I argue that Augustine belittles the merit of the female martyrs and that his sermons are male-centric: for he believes that the mental image of the sexualized martyrs and the erotic and violent imageries would threaten the chastity of men, not so much because these motifs would dishonor the memory of the martyrs.

Alexander Marx – Adultery and Crusade Preaching in the Shadow of 1187: A Case Study of Martin of León

As especially Jessalynn Bird has demonstrated, crusading and the moral reform of Christian society were closely intertwined, in particular in the circle of Peter the Chanter: Contemporary writers understood failure in the Holy Land as God’s punishment for sins committed in Europe. Preachers thus turned to the moral defaults within Christian society – which were a manifold and broad field allowing also a certain creativity on behalf of the preacher in identifying sin. Among these we find definitely adultery and fornication; some even understood the events of 1187, the loss of the True Cross and the fall of Jerusalem, as an act of adultery: Neglect of the Holy Land represented an adulterous state that threatened the covenant with God. This paper shall examine the case study of the crusade preacher and Augustinian canon Martin of León, who has not yet got any attention in this regard despite his rich writings. The paper shall discuss which ideas of adultery and fornication Martin develops in relation to crusading, considering also a comparative perspective to his (especially Parisian) colleagues as well as Martin’s specific vantage point from Northern Spain. Martin’s notions of adultery, embedded in the larger reform movement, also shed light on his views of women, canalized in the motif of the whore of Babylon, the mulier adultera, but also on his anti-Jewish attitudes, since he associates the mulier adultera with the synagoga. This paper is thus very much concerned with anchoring sermons in their historical context and with how historical events influence the contents and goals of sermons.

Zuzana Čermáková Lukšová – Mates of Priests in the Archdiocese of Prague at the Turn of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries in Narrative and Administrative Sources

Legally, the mandatory celibacy of priests was decreed by the second Lateran council (1139), however, priests and clerics accepted this demand very slowly in Bohemian lands. During the 13th century, the reformist efforts of the Prague bishops led to the situation when marriage of the clergy was no longer seen as a social norm but the reality of the priests did not change fundamentally. During the 14th and early 15th centuries, we still find evidence many priests of sharing a household with their mates, which was frowned upon by their ecclesiastical superiors. In this paper, I will focus on these women and their position in the Prague archdiocese at the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, using a variety of sources. The problem of priests’ concubinage commonly appears in both the synodal sermons and the official records, i.e. as synodal statutes and acts of corrector cleri who served among the diocese clergy as a criminal judge.

Session 7: Author, Preacher, and Mystic: The Varied Roles of Women in Late Medieval Preaching

These three papers address the wide-ranging interaction of women in the history of late medieval preaching. Sometimes women’s interaction with sermons and preaching reflected the rich spiritual exchange female mystic had with her preacher. In other cases, the mystic/visionary could be a preacher herself. Sometimes, the interface between the male preacher and the female created a sermon shaped by the dynamic force of the needs of enclosed religious communities.

Patricia Stoop – Women’s Authorial Roles in Sermon Writing in the Late Medieval Low Countries

Some 50 handwritten collections of convent sermons—i.e. sermons preached by confessors and visiting priests in convents and written down by their inhabitants—are extant from female religious institutions in the Low Countries. These collections, written in the vernacular, show the marked creative involvement of women. Both the quantity and the quality of these premodern materials are unique in broader European contexts, not least because many collections offer detailed accounts of the nuns’ contribution to the writing and editing of the sermons and the composition of the codices and of their motivations to take up their pens. Moreover, previous research has shown that women made substantial contributions to the texts. Therefore, research on Dutch sermons can offer compelling insights into the way in which women in enclosed religious communities dealt with the spiritual inheritance of their confessors and how they engaged in the intellectual culture of their day. In my contribution to this conference I will shed light on the diverse ways in which women religious shaped their authorial roles in the sermon collections. Additionally, I will pay attention to the scope of knowledge the women were able to display via their role in sermon writing.

Debra L. Stoudt – The Impact of Preaching – and Lack Thereof – on the Writings of Medieval German Women Mystics

The relationship between male religious and their spiritual daughters is well known and well documented within the medieval mystical tradition, especially among members of the Dominican order in Germany. Although female mystics reference the influence of male mentors in their works, it is usually with regard to private conversations or ritual acts performed by the men, especially the administering of communion. Nevertheless, sermons play a role as well, directly and indirectly. This paper discusses the impact of preaching on the lives of medieval women mystics by examining selected themes that resonate in the writings by and about these women. Two key themes are homiletic guidance regarding acts of suffering undertaken as part of the imitatio Christi and homiletic teaching concerning practices of contemplation that encourage looking inward (detachment) as part of the journey toward union with the Divine. The focus is fourteenth-century Germany, with the sermons of Eckhart, Tauler, and Seuse vis-à-vis the revelations and Sister-Books (Schwesternbücher) produced by the women in their spiritual care. A consideration of why sermons appear to have a limited effect on women mystics is included as well.

Pablo Garcia Acosta – The Order of the Visionary Sermon: The Liturgical Preaching of the Abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481–1534)

Around 1508, the Franciscan abbess Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534) started to preach *in raptu* in the Convent of Santa María de la Cruz in Cubas de la Sagra (Toledo, Crown of Castile). Thirteen years later, more than seventy of her visionary sermons were compiled by her fellow nuns in the massive *Libro del conhorte* (*The Book of Consolation*). This collaborative work included the construction of a macrostructure based on the liturgical cycle, a main textual device used to frame and order this unique visionary sermon collection. In this paper, I discuss both the origin and the function of this organization system inside the walls of the Convent of Santa María de la Cruz. Regarding its origin, I analyze a possible “genealogy” of this organization by examining the importance of the diachronic liturgical environment from a gender perspective. I will focus on the comparison with the visionary books by Elisabeth von Schönau (as a probable foundation stone of this tradition), and with the influence that Mechthild von Hackeborn’s *Liber spiritualis (specialis) gratiae* (printed in Toledo in 1505 by Cardinal Cisneros, a powerful supporter of charismatic women of Castile) had on Juana’s textual community. From a comparative perspective, Mechthild’s *Liber* seems to be the main model not only for organizing the sermons following the feasts of the year, but also for shaping the performance of Juana’s prophetic preaching. This fact would include Juana’s *Book* as a link in the chain of the European tradition of conventual visionary preachers at various levels: performative, compositional, and collectively functional.