

# AUTHORITY REVISITED

## TOWARDS THOMAS MORE AND ERASMUS IN 1516



LECTIO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

30 NOV-3 DEC 2016

UNIVERSITY OF LEUVEN (BELGIUM)



## CALL FOR PAPERS

In the year 1516, two crucial texts for the cultural history of the West saw the light: Thomas More's *Utopia* and Desiderius Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum*. Both of these works dealt freely with authoritative sources of western civilization and opened new pathways of thought on the eve of invasive religious and political changes.

Lectio and the University of Leuven, in collaboration with its RefoRC-partners the Johannes a Lasco Library Emden and the Europäische Melanchthon Akademie Bretten as well as other partners, will mark the 500th birthday of both foundational texts by organizing a conference, from November 30 through December 2, 2016. The university city of Leuven is a most appropriate place to have this conference organized, since it was intimately involved in the genesis and the history of both works.

The conference will be devoted to studying not only the reception and influence of *Utopia* and the *Novum Instrumentum* in (early) modern times, but also their precursors in classical antiquity, the patristic period, and the middle ages. The conference will thus lead to a better understanding of how More and Erasmus used their sources, and it will address the more encompassing question of how these two authors, through their own ideas and their use of authoritative texts, have contributed to the rise of modern western thought.

The conference also explicitly aims at enhancing our understanding of iconographic, book-, and art-historical aspects of the transmission of the texts under consideration, both before and after the publication of the two works.

This multidisciplinary Lectio conference wants to bring together international scholars working in the field of theology, art history, philosophy, history of science and historical linguistics.



## THOMAS MORE: *UTOPIA* REVISITED

More's colorful description of the allegedly recently discovered island of *Utopia* was so influential as to lend its name to a literary genre. At the same time, although the name *Utopia* is a neologism invented in More's circle, the utopian tradition reaches back to antiquity.

**Papers are invited** on the following topics:

The best known examples from **classical antiquity** are Plato's descriptions of the ideal state. Yet there are other instances, such as the myth of the golden age, elaborated in many different ways by numerous ancient writers. In addition, More had a thorough knowledge of the works by Greek and Roman thinkers such as Plutarch, Lucian, Cicero, and Seneca. The conference aims to map these ancient representations of the ideal state and to study the way in which More was influenced by them.

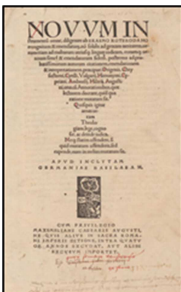
Equally influential is the **Christian tradition**, most prominently laid down in Augustine's *City of God*, a text of central importance that marks the transition from antiquity to the middle ages. Augustine's eschatological view of the perfect City may, for example, be the subject of contributions to the conference. By extension, the various forms of the mythical account of Cockaigne enter the picture as possible topics.

Also of direct impact on *Utopia* were **reports about the New World** (for example in the letters of Amerigo Vespucci, Christopher Columbus, or Peter Martyr of Anghiera) and the images of the New World in Europe. It would be an interesting contribution to the conference to study in which ways the discovery and description of an "unspoiled" world and its inhabitants inspired More's views.

**Renaissance humanists** also influenced More's *Utopia*. The most renowned example is, of course, Erasmus. But the views of other humanists, like Pico della Mirandola, also shaped More's thought. Similarly, the **scholastic tradition** deserves to be studied in at this juncture. Renaissance humanism and scholasticism were difficult to reconcile, according to More, and on more than one occasion he sets one over against the other.

The conference shall also pay due attention to **the reception of *Utopia* in early modern times**, both in the vernacular and in Latin. Authors such as Tommaso Campanella, Vasco de Quiroga, Francis Bacon, Johann Eberlin, Kaspar Stiblin, and Johann Valentin Andreae may be investigated in this regard, as well as the genre of the picaresque novel.

Of particular interest are **iconographic, book-, and art-historical aspects** of the transmission of *Utopia* as well as the works of More's predecessors.



## ERASMUS: THE NEW TESTAMENT REVISITED

Erasmus's revision of the New Testament text was groundbreaking. Obviously, however, Erasmus's foundational work cannot be properly understood apart from his predecessors' endeavors to translate the Bible and to comment on it, or to deal with the Bible from a text-critical perspective.

**Papers are invited** on the following topics:

Papers studying biblical exegesis in **Christian antiquity** and its reception in the works by Erasmus. More in particular, paper topics may include Jerome's Vulgata, Origen's Hexapla, and relevant commentaries on Scripture, such as those of Chrysostom and others. Erasmus's recourse to **classical language and culture** in the *Annotations* to his New Testament may also be the subject of paper proposals.

**Medieval biblical exegesis:** Even though self-declared pioneers like Erasmus and the Renaissance humanists were not keen to be associated with medieval biblical exegesis, this

aspect of possible influences and sources cannot be neglected. The conference invites contributions on the biblical Renaissance of the twelfth century and later (among others, the *Glossa ordinaria*, Hugh of St. Victor and the Parisian Victorines, Peter Comestor, Peter Cantor and Stephen Langton, Hugh of St. Cher and Nicholas of Lyra). In sum, the conference aims to explore the extent to which Erasmus and his fellow humanists integrated the progress made by medieval biblical exegesis.

The link between Erasmus and **Renaissance humanism**, both in northern Europe (Agricola, Cornelius Gerardi Aurelius) and in Italy (Lorenzo Valla, Gianozzo Manetti). The main question is here how Erasmus's Christian humanism did relate to the broader cultural historical current of renewed textual criticism.

The reception of Erasmus's text-critical and exegetical work in the **early modern era** will be explored through the establishment of (new) authoritative version(s) of the New Testament and the debates that accompanied the process (*Novum Instrumentum*, *Vulgata*, *Textus Receptus*) as well as the elaboration of **humanist, Protestant, and Catholic exegesis**, from Luther and Melancthon through Beza, from Dorpius, Franciscus Lucas Brugensis and Jansenius Gandavensis, via Estienne, Arias Montanus, through Maldonatus, etc. We further look forward to receiving papers on how Erasmus' New Testament was used in the development of early modern vernacular versions, on all sides of the confessional spectrum.

Of particular interest are **iconographic, book-, and art-historical aspects** of the transmission of the texts, both of Erasmus's predecessors and of Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum*.

**Papers** may be given in English or French and the presentation should take 20 minutes.

To **submit** a proposal, please send an abstract of approximately 300 words (along with your name, academic affiliation and contact information) to [lectio@kuleuven.be](mailto:lectio@kuleuven.be) by January 15, 2016. Notification of acceptance will be given by the end of March 2016.

The **publication** of selected papers is planned in a volume to be included in the peer-reviewed LECTIO Series (Brepols Publishers).

#### **Invited speakers**

Gillian Clark (University of Bristol), Henk Jan De Jonge (Leiden University), Günter Frank (Europäische Melancthon Akademie), Brad Gregory (University of Notre Dame), Quentin Skinner (Queen Mary University of London)

#### **Venue of the Conference**

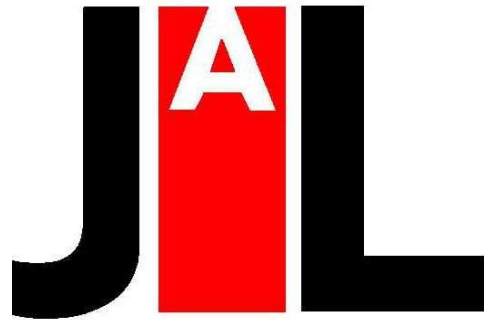
The Leuven Institute for Ireland in Europe, Janseniusstraat 1, 3000 Leuven

#### **Organizing committee**

Erik De Bom, Anthony Dupont, Wim François, Jan Papy, Marleen Reynders, Andrea Robiglio, Violet Soen, Gerd Van Riel

#### **Scientific committee**

Rita Beyers (U Antwerpen), Erik De Bom (KU Leuven), Anthony Dupont (KU Leuven), Wim François (KU Leuven), Günter Frank (Europäische Melancthon Akademie, Bretten), Jan Papy (KU Leuven), Andrea Robiglio (KU Leuven), Herman Selderhuis (Johannes a Lasco Bibliothek, Emden), Violet Soen (KU Leuven), Gerd Van Riel (KU Leuven), Wim Verbaal (U Gent)



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