

International Medieval Congress 2016

University of Leeds, 4-7 July 2016 - Special thematic strand: Food, Feast & Famine

International Medieval Sermon Studies Society

Call for papers for a series of linked panels on:

“Lenten sermons: Fasting of the body, banquet of the soul”

In 1494, preparing his sermon cycle for the Lenten period, a German Franciscan preacher compared his task with that of «a smart cook». He had to prepare Lenten sermons with the usual ingredients but in an unusual form, «so that the appetite returns to those whose stomachs were languishing». Without changing the contents of preaching, the way to present them could and, indeed, had to be new.

Lent offered to the faithful not only a period of strict fasting of the body, but also – at least in the intention of the Church – a rich banquet of spiritual and moral teachings that would instruct, reinvigorate, and refresh the soul. The **connection between preaching and the Lenten period** had a solid tradition that dates back to the early and high middle ages. Nevertheless, the spiritual banquet displayed by preachers’ words became more abundant with the late medieval practice of delivering sermons daily during the Lenten period. From the thirteenth-century onwards, a specific genre of model sermon collections was shaped and assumed a new role: the so-called *Sermones quadragesimales*. This type of sermon collections permitted to organise an intense period of preaching and offered preachers a unique opportunity for a well-structured catechetical instruction. How were these collections structured? How did they change over centuries? Which was their dissemination? How did preachers use them? How was Lenten preaching before the “invention” of Lenten model sermon collections? How did specific political, social and cultural contexts shape the contents of Lenten sermons?

In addressing these and similar questions, this series of linked sessions – promoted by the International Medieval Sermon Studies Society – seeks to investigate the theme of IMC 2016 (“Food, Feast & Famine”) through Lenten sermon collections by investigating them as a peculiar “spiritual banquet” intended to complement the concomitant fasting practice. The idea is to gather scholars who directly or indirectly are working with Lenten preaching, so to have the opportunity to examine in depth the characteristics of the *sermones quadragesimales* as a specific genre of sermons and – ideally – to start mapping this wide range of sources. Besides Lenten model sermon collections and their authors, the session is interested also in *reportationes* of Lenten preaching, sermons *de tempore* used during the Lenten period (such as those of the Lenten Sundays), other sermons used for specific days of Lent (such as the sermons for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, the Holy Thursday, the Passion, or also for a feast such as Annunciation, which usually was during Lent) and other forms of religious instruction specifically used during Lent.

Please, send the title of your proposed paper, a brief abstract of 250 maximum words, and a short biography by 20 September 2015 to the organisers of the sessions (see below the contact details).

In considering your participation in the IMC, please note that the organisers of the session are not able to provide financial support to session participants. The IMC offers bursaries that range in value from

£50 to £200 and may cover all or part of the Registration and Programming Fee, accommodation and meals. The IMC bursary applications should be submitted by 17 October 2015.

Information on the IMC is available on the website:

http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125137/international_medieval_congress

Please, do not hesitate to contact us in case you need any further clarification.

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Agnolo Erri, *A Dominican Preaching* (1470 c.), National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.