

Call for Papers

**Towards the Prehistory of the Byzantine Liturgical Year
Festal Homilies and Festal Liturgies in Late Antique Constantinople**

Interdisciplinary Conference, Regensburg, 4–7 July 2018

Although the Byzantine Rite stands among the most important liturgical traditions, its formative phase is particularly obscure. Liturgical sources, in the strict sense of books written for and used in worship, emerge only in the middle ages; so the reconstruction of earlier developments mostly relies on hints in patristic literature. Festal homilies are thus the primary source for what can be called the “prehistory” of the Byzantine liturgical year. Their investigation, however, is complicated by the fact that almost all homiletic corpora from late antique Constantinople (except for that of Gregory of Nazianzus) pose serious problems of literary and historical identity: the assignation of many of John Chrysostom’s sermons is notoriously ambiguous; Severian of Gabala has gained clearer contours only in the last decades; the attribution of homilies to Proclus remains contested in many cases; the transmission of Nestorius’s homilies is obfuscated by his condemnation; Leontius is only known from his homilies and his identity blurred by homonymous authors in other places; and a number of other preachers, beginning with Atticus, largely remain to be explored. Manifold detailed studies are necessary before a synthesis may be attempted.

The envisaged international conference will focus the various perspectives of patristic, liturgical and Byzantine scholars on the development of the Byzantine liturgical year in the mirror of late antique homilies, and foster interdisciplinary dialogue, wherefore ample room will be provided for discussion.

Speakers are invited to reflect on (1) the literary and historical identity of late antique Constantinopolitan preachers and on the criteria which can be used to establish their homiletic corpora, as well as on historical and intellectual influences; (2) the contribution of these homilies to the history of the liturgical year and its celebrations (feasts, stations, readings, etc.) and the relation of that evidence to other regions and to the later liturgical tradition of Byzantium; and/or (3) the theology of the various feasts and the liturgical year as such. Papers may focus on single homilies, on particular authors or on several sermons about a given feast or festal cycle. Hymnography may be included insofar it can be localised with confidence in pre-iconoclast Constantinople.

The conference is organised by the Chair of Liturgical Studies of Regensburg University in cooperation with the Research Training Group on “Metropolität in der Vormoderne” at the same university. Invited speakers include John F. Baldovin, S.J., Matthieu Cassin, Mary Cunningham, Derek Krueger, Alexander Lingas, Wendy Mayer, Stefano Parenti, Nathalie Rambault, Elena Velkovska, and Sever J. Voicu, among others.

Proposals for papers in German, English, French or Italian with a brief abstract (max. 250 words) may be sent to harald.buchinger@theologie.uni-regensburg.de by August 25th, 2017; decision will be made by September 30th by an international and interdisciplinary advisory board. We shall apply for funding in order to cover expenses, including travel within reasonable limits, of all speakers. It is supposed that the contributions will be original and subsequently be published in the conference volume.

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