



Internationale Gesellschaft für Theologische Mediävistik e.V.
International Society for the Study of Medieval Theology



Theologische Universiteit Kampen | Utrecht



**Annual conference of the
International Society for the Study of Medieval Theology (IGTM)**
26 June – 28 June 2024, Theologische Universiteit Kampen|Utrecht,
Franciscan Study Center, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Utrecht &
Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University

The End: Finiteness, Death, and Completion in Medieval Theology



Master Arnt of Kalkar, Kalkar, ca. 1480 –
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum inv.nr. BK-1956-31

Call for Papers

Theme

In 2024, it is 800 years ago that Francis of Assisi started to write his Canticum of the Creatures, which includes the famous lines on “Sister Death.” Christian theology usually considers the end of life in this world in the perspective of the life after this life, the life that goes on forever. From the viewpoint of **medieval faith and morality**, the final phase of earthly life remains only a transitional one. Nevertheless, at some definitive point, earthly lives really approach their end. Cases of sudden death excepted, people now find themselves in a period of letting-go, of near-death, of a real completion of earthly existence. Whereas the **realization of one’s own finiteness** has usually been interiorized to a greater or lesser degree from an early age (rites of passage, memento mori, dance of death, etc.), the prospect of the future life drawing near can bring with it intensified feelings of hope and fear. These are given specific translation according to religion, gender, and ethnicity. The confusing confrontation with the painful process of **transitioning from the old to the new life** calls for prayer, perseverance, and trust in God. Likewise, in (organized) communities, situations of insecurity, confrontations with great loss, times of danger and adversity, or the ending of an established way of life may confront the members with the shocking realities of finiteness. Here, as in the context of the individual soul, **conceptions of heaven and hell, and/or “the end of days”** may be heavily reinforced as (un)certainities of survival and/or salvation come to the fore. When, why, and how is the subject of this conference.

Themes to be addressed may include, but are not limited to:

- * Eschatological and theological aspects of finiteness, death, and completion in medieval theology, including the four “last things” of death, judgement, heaven, and hell
- * Ethical and moral aspects of finiteness, death, and completion in medieval theology
- * Psychological and spiritual aspects of finiteness, death, and completion in medieval theology, including dimensions of dying, grieving, and loss
- * Earthly life and the afterlife of the soul
- * The social, organizational, gender-related, and ethnic context of conceptions of finiteness and infinity
- * The ritualization, commemoration, and documentation of death
- * The relevance of medieval theologies of death for modern-day concerns

Practical Matters

The organizers welcome paper proposals submitted in English. Abstracts should be kept as close to 100 words as possible. Each paper should last 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion. Papers will be published in our *Archa Verbi* special issue or *Archa Verbi – Subsidia* conference volume.

Paper proposals must be submitted by 20 December 2023 to

Dr. Dr. K. Pansters: K.Pansters@tilburguniversity.edu

Dr. J.C. Klok: jcklok@tukampen.nl

Fr. D.B. Couturier OFMCap dcouturi@sbu.edu

Please note: the conference will take place in person. Travel and accommodation of speakers will not be covered. A small budget for travel grants for young scholars is available.