

Call for Papers

Representations of body and gender ambiguity in Christian Latin poetry

03rd / 04th July 2026

Hybrid format: Bergische Universität Wuppertal (Germany) / online via *Zoom*

The conference aims to encourage the study of and exchange on representations of bodily and gender-specific characteristics in Christian poetic texts. For prose texts within the Christian tradition, a volume on this topic was published some years ago (FEICHTINGER/SENG 2004); however, an equivalent work addressing Christian poetry in a comprehensive manner is still lacking.

Christian poetry, situated as it is in the inherent tension between its pagan formal and stylistic models and its thematic orientation towards the *Veteres Latinae* and the *Vulgata*, appears to be a particularly promising field for exploring how Christian or pagan representations of body and gender are adapted, reframed, or destabilised. The conference focuses on strategies that produce transformation and gender ambiguity in the poetic retellings of biblical material. Such strategies lead to conceptions of body and gender that diverge from classical traditions and challenge established pagan role models (e.g. asceticism, celibacy, the role of women, or the association of virtues such as *uir-tus* with biological sex).

We will also examine how poets deal with the biblical text and its figures through literary reconfiguration. Christian poets frequently redefine or expand bodily and gendered dimensions in strikingly ambiguous ways – for example, the metaphorical depiction of Eve as a dove in Prud. tituli 1, the nuanced physical depiction of Jesus in Sedul. carm. pasch. 2,44.50–53 – or reinterpret traditional roles through an emphasis on particular narratives (e.g. Hept. Gen. 76, where Eve's sex, *femineo [...] sub pectore mollia corda*, is emphasized more clearly than in the Bible).

The conference language is English. We especially address early-career researchers and seek to encourage international dialogue; however, experienced scholars are of course equally welcome to participate! A keynote lecture will open the event. Please feel free to circulate this announcement among colleagues who may be interested.

A subsequent publication of the conference proceedings is planned in the form of a special issue of the journal *Nobis musica Christus*.

We offer the possibility of attending the conference either in person in Wuppertal or online via the web-conferencing application *Zoom*. Unfortunately, we are unable to cover travel or accommodation costs. For participants planning to join us in person (we are happy to assist with planning!), we would also like to draw attention to expected disruptions in railway services during the conference (<https://generalsanierung-nrw.deutschebahn.com/korridore/hagen-wuppertal-koeln.html>).

If you are interested in contributing a paper to the conference, please submit an abstract of up to 350 words to the two organizers, Luisa Verena Sproten (sproten@uni-wuppertal.de) and Philipp Buckl (buckl@unistra.fr), by **28th February 2026**. Presentations will be 40 minutes in total (25 minutes paper + 15 minutes discussion).

For any questions, the organizers will be happy to assist. Thank you very much for your interest, we look forward to receiving your abstracts!