

# Pirenne Lecture

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Opening lecture of the 21<sup>st</sup> Mediëvistendag  
30 October 2015, Ghent

This year, the Annual Pirenne Lecture of the Vlaamse Werkgroep Mediëvistiek will be the opening lecture of the 21<sup>st</sup> Mediëvistendag. The topic of this day is *Civitas*, a theme uniting a wide range of medievalists interested in urban development, communities in religious and secular context, literature, political and artistic representation, etc. The day will conclude with the annual opening reception of the VWM.

## Julia Smith - Multiculturalism in the early Middle Ages? Material Religion in 8th-century Rome



This paper tells a story of wealth, love, jealousy, and revenge in early eighth-century Rome. It uses an eyewitness account of these events to explore how Christians of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds expressed their beliefs in material form, notably through amulets, curses, relics and icons. By examining responses to this Christian multiculturalism, the second half of the paper traces the emergence of a normative set of expectations, first in Constantinople and then in Rome. In so doing, it probes the tension between Rome as a city of lived religion and 'Rome' as an idealised reference point of correct Christianity. It closes by reflecting on how this affects characterisations of 'early medieval Christianity' as distinct from 'late antique Christianity'.

**Julia M H Smith** is Edwards Professor of Medieval History at the University of Glasgow. She is currently preparing a book *Christianity in Fragments*, in which she approaches saints' relics as the intersection of material culture and the cultural history of medieval Christianity.

The Pirenne Lecture will take place at 11.00. The annual opening reception of the VWM will conclude the day around 17.10. The full program of the Mediëvistendag and more information is available via the link below. We ask all participants to **register before October 9<sup>th</sup>**.

More information & registration:  
[www.ugent.be/civitas](http://www.ugent.be/civitas)

Vlaamse werkgroep  
mediëvistiek — 