

The Voice of Prophecy: Women, Men, and Political Theology in Early Modern Reformations

International Conference

The Norwegian Institute in Rome is happy to host the international conference “The Voice of Prophecy”, organized by Eleonora Cappuccilli (University of Oslo).

Time and place: Oct. 15, 2026 12:00 PM–Oct. 16, 2026 1:00 PM, [The Norwegian Institute in Rome](#)

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Antonio del Ceraio, Santa Caterina da Siena e santi (ca. 1515–1520), Santa Trinità, Florence. Photo: Sailko, 2013. Licensed under CC BY 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons. Supported by Wikimedia CH.

This conference explores how prophetic charisma offered early modern Catholic and Protestant women a rare avenue to question religious orthodoxy and expand their scope for initiative and action. Building on traditions associated with figures such as Birgitta of Sweden, Catherine of Siena, and Girolamo Savonarola, prophecy served as a powerful mode of authority, a political and theological tool, and a means of shaping history and key concepts such as power, community, and prudence.

Bringing together international scholars, the conference examines female prophecy as a “creative force of history” that involved both women and men and elevated unexpected actors. It addresses theological and political debates over prophetic status, the role of prophecy in times of crisis, and new approaches to sources and texts, with particular attention to understudied prophets, global and transnational perspectives, and fresh theoretical frameworks for understanding women prophets, their supporters, and their opponents.

Program

Thursday 15 October (14:00–19:00)

Welcome and Introduction

14:00–14:30

Han Lamers (DNIR) & Eleonora Cappuccilli

Session 1: Defining the prophetic self

14:30–16:00

Maria H. Oen (Lund University), *Printing the Prophet: The Rhetoric of Authority in Sixteenth-Century Images of Birgitta of Sweden*Yixin Alfred Wang (Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte Mainz), *Matrons and Beatas Contested: Vision and Prophecy in Mendicant and Jesuit-led Communities in Seventeenth-Century China*Clara Stella (University of Padova), *The Fabric of Prophecy: Textile Metaphors in Early Modern Women's Writing*

16:00 Break

Session 2: The power of the margins

16:15–17:45

Julia Lewandowska (University of Warsaw), *Staging the Visionary: Performative Sanctity and Gendered Theology in the Case of Josefa de San Luis Beltrán (1620–1655)*Claudia Marsulli (Sapienza University of Rome), *Competing with the Bible. Prophetic Authority and Embodied Knowledge in Maria Domitilla Galluzzi*Alexander Van der Haven (University of Bergen), *Prophetesses of the Seventeenth-Century Jewish Sabbatian Movement*

17:45 Break

Keynote Lecture

18:00–19:00

Adelisa Malena (University of Venice Ca' Foscari), *Early Modern Women Prophets in Trans-confessional Perspective*Further information and registration are available [here](#).

Friday 16 October September (09:30–13:00)

Session 3: Engaging otherness

09:30–11:00

Elena Filippi (Kueser Akademie für Europäische Geistesgeschichte), *Speaking with Authority: Female Prophecy, Conscience and Reform in the Age of Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo Buonarroti*Eleonora Carinci (Independent Scholar), *Anna Maria Villa's Prophecy on the Battle of Vienna (1689): Female Authority, the Virgin Mary and the Sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie alle Fornaci in Rome*Haruko Nawata Ward (Columbia Theological Seminary), *Luzia the Japanese Kirishitan Prophet in Spanish Manila (1615–1656) and the Apparitions of her Father and Marcello Masterilli*

11:00 Break

Session 4: Foreseeing the end-time

11:15–12:45

Isabella Gagliardi (University of Florence), *Divination, Prophecy, and Power in Renaissance Courts*

Cora Presezzi (Sapienza University of Rome), Apocalypse Embodied: The Case of St. Gallen's Prophetesses within the Context of Early Reformation Apocalyptic Prophetism

Frances C. Kneupper (University of Mississippi), Women Predicting Deaths

Concluding remarks

12:45–13:00

Questions?

For more information, please contact Dr [Eleonora Cappuccilli](#).

Organiser

[Eleonora Cappuccilli](#)

Tags: [History of ideas](#), [Idéhistorie](#)

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