

## CSPS/ACÉP SPRING BULLETIN 2016

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Last year we survived the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies (CSPS/ACEP), when according to fact and legend, a group of Canadian scholars gathered together at Christ Church, Oxford, during the Seventh International Patristic Conference in August 1975, discussed the improbability, and then acted upon a regular Canadian version of this conference. Does this mean we have made it into the Promised Land? Whether or not, we continue this legacy with our annual meeting at the University of Calgary, May 29 – 31, in the midst of Congress 2016 of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Canada. Our purpose is simple, yet bold. We work together to promote and encourage Patristic studies in Canada, the exploration of the writings, lives and historical situations of the early church fathers and mothers. Our annual meeting is our occasion and venue to present and discuss current research in patristics across chronological, geographical, and linguistic boundaries. There's always Augustine, occasionally Cappadocians, often Athanasius and apocryphal works, and it has been known for Coptic and Syriac authors to make their presence felt. Canadian patristic scholars are a busy lot, so there is always at least one review of a book published by one of our members. In the first instance, CSPS/ACEP places great importance to the nurturing and encouragement of graduate students and junior scholars beginning their pilgrimage in the vast field of patristics. Each year a significant percentage of the papers are presented by graduate students, and the purpose is not only to give them feedback, but to initiate the collegial relationships essential for one's enrichment and enjoyment. No scholar is an island. For the third year in a row we are participating in a joint session with the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (CSBS) on the theme of Christian apocryphal writings, which personally I believe to be more of a patristic pursuit, the reception of the Bible, et al. A high point of every meeting is our banquet, held at a nearby restaurant, at which talk of patristics and its modern lore is permissible as long as we are able to share a meal together. Finally, you don't have to be Canadian to attend and participate in our society, and we do welcome many members from Europe, Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and the USA.

We enrich one another, so please join us in Cowtown at the end of May as we continue our journey, a post-Biblical 41st year. Come wander with us. Yours, Robert Kitchen, President Knox-Metropolitan United Church Regina, Saskatchewan

### NOUVELLES/NEWS

PUBLICATIONS: Paul Burns "Child Sacrifice: A Polyvalent Story in Early Eucharistic Piety," in Arbel, Daphna V., Burns, Paul C., Cousland, J. Robert C., Menkis Richard, Neufeld, Dietmar, Not Sparing the Child: Human Sacrifice in the Ancient World and Beyond: Studies in Honor of Paul G. Mosca (New York: Bloomsbury Press, T&T Clark Biblical Studies, 2015), 141-164.

Dragos Giulea "Simpliciores, Eruditi, and the Noetic Form of God: Pre-Nicene Christology Revisited." *Harvard Theological Review* 108:2 (2015): 263-288. "Divine Being's Modulations: Ousia in the Pro-Nicene Context of the Fourth Century." *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 59:3 (2015): 307-337.

Robert Kitchen "Introduction to Selections from the Ge'ez Filekseyus: Questions and Answers of the Egyptian Monks. Ethiopian Monastic Manuscript Library No. 1387 (ff. 1a-81b)" in *An Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar in the Seventh Century*, edit. Mario Kozah, Abdulrahim AbuHsayn, Saif Shaheen Al-Murikhi, Hay Al Thani (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2015) 189-252. "A Poetic Life: Metrical Vita of Jacob of Serug by Sa'īd bar Šabūnī" in *Syriac Encounters*, edit. Kyle Smith, Maria Doerfler, Emanuel Fiano (*Eastern Christian Studies* 20; Leuven: Peeters, 2015) 65-75. "Jacob of Serugh: The Mīmrō on Balaam and Balak," *Syriac Orthodox Patriarchal Journal* 53 (2015) 45-86.

Naoki Kamimura "La consulta de los libros sagrados y el mediador: las 'sortes' en Agustín," *Revista AVGVSTINVS* 60 (2015): 223-233. "Augustine's Scriptural Exegesis in *De sermone Domini in monte* and the Shaping of Christian Perfection," in G. D. Dunn and W. Mayer (eds.), *Christians Shaping Identity from the Roman*

*Empire to Byzantium: Studies inspired by Pauline Allen*, *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden: Brill, 2015) 225-247. Book Review: *St. Augustine's Interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent*. By Gerard McLarney, in *Theological Studies* 77 (2016): 216-218. Book Review: *What Are They Saying about Augustine?* By Joseph T. Kelley, in *Theological Studies* 76 (2015): 641-642.

Theodore Sabo *Christians and Platonists: The Ethos of Late Antiquity* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing) "All Eye: A Metaphor from Ezekiel in the Desert Fathers" (*Journal of Early Christian History*) "The Nous: A Globe of Faces" (*Journal for Late Antique Religion and Culture*) "The Politics of the One" (*Acta Classica*)

Andrius Valevicius *Money and Economics in the Homilies of Saint John Chrysostom: Wealth in the Service of Love*. Édition de la Transfiguration, Laval, Québec, in the Collection : *Real World and Charity*, 2015.

#### **OTHER NEWS/AUTRE NOUVELLES:**

This year's APECSS (Asia-Pacific Early Christian Studies Society) conference will be held in St Petersburg, Russia, from 9 to 11 September, 2016. You can access files—Registration form, Accommodation, and Visa advice—on the ACU Centre's website

<[http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/APECSS/APECSS2016Registration\\_Form\\_v2\\_distributed\\_0003.pdf](http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/APECSS/APECSS2016Registration_Form_v2_distributed_0003.pdf)> and  
<[http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/asiapacific\\_ecss.html](http://www.cecs.acu.edu.au/asiapacific_ecss.html)>.

Proposals (100-word abstract in English) may be sent to the organiser, no later than April, 30, 2016.  
Looking forward to meeting together many of you in the autumn in St Petersburg.

Steven Muir has the following books available for review. If you are interested, Steven can mail them to you, or if you will be at the annual Congress meeting give you the copy in person.

Reconceiving Fertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness. Candida Moss & Joel Baden. Princeton 2015

The Vision of Didymus the Blind: A Fourth-Century Virtue-Origenism. Grant D. Bayliss

## CONGRESS OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 2016 CONGRÈS DES SCIENCES HUMAINES 2016

Canadian Society of Patristic Studies Association canadienne des études patristiques

University of Calgary

### PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Please note that all the sessions will take place in MacKimmie Library Tower 118, except for the Monday morning joint session with CSBS, which will be held in the Professional Faculties building, Room 126

#### **SUNDAY MAY 29**

11:30 – 13:00 Executive Meeting/Réunion du bureau.

13:00-13:15 Welcome/Mot de bienvenue Robert Kitchen, President/Président

Session/Séance 1: Book Review Chair/Président: Anne Moore (University of Calgary) 13:15 – 15:00 Book Review of Lincoln Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment. *Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources (Second through Fourth Centuries)*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015. ([http://www.baylorpress.com/Book/439/Christian\\_Oxyrhynchus.html](http://www.baylorpress.com/Book/439/Christian_Oxyrhynchus.html)).

Blumell and Wayment present a thorough compendium of all published papyri, parchments and patristic sources that relate to Christianity at Oxyrhynchus before the fifth century CE. Christian Oxyrhynchus provides a new and expanded editions of Christian literary and documentary texts that include updated readings, English translations – some of which present the first English translation of a text - - and comprehensive notes. 2016 Winner of the Harvey B. and Susan Easton Black Outstanding Publication Award in Ancient Scripture.

13:15 – 13:20 Introduction 13:20 – 13:35 Tony Burke (York University) 13:35 – 13:50 Steven Muir (Concordia University) 13:50 – 14:00 Break 14:00 – 14:15 Lincoln Blumell (Brigham Young University) 14:15 – 14:30 Thomas Wayment (Brigham Young University) 14:30 – 15:00 Discussion

15:00 – 15:15 Break/Pause

Session/Séance 2: Holy Spirit, Scripture and the Spiritual Gospel Chair/Président: Anne Moore

15:15 – 15:45 Paul Hartog (Faith Baptist Theological Seminary) “The ‘Holy Spirit’ and ‘Holy Words’ in 1 Clement 13-14.”

15:45 – 16:15 Miriam DeCock (McMaster University) “The Preeminence of the Gospel of John in Greek Patristic Thought.

18:30 Banquet: Vero Bistro Moderne 209 – 10 Street N.W. (403) 283-8988.

## **MONDAY MAY 30**

Session/Séance 3: Christian Apocrypha (Joint Session with Canadian Society of Biblical Studies) Note This will be held in Professional Faculties Building, Rm 126

Chair/Président: Emily Lafleche (University of Ottawa)

9:00 – 11:00 Book Review of Tony Burke and Brent Landau, eds. *New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures* (Eerdmans, 2016) While collections of non-canonical Christian texts have been published in the past, these volumes are usually restricted to texts originating in the first few centuries

of the Christian Era. Unfortunately, this approach has tended to omit the large numbers of apocryphal writings from the late antique and early medieval periods, many of which have had a considerable influence on Christian piety. This new volume of translations, edited by Tony Burke (York University) and Brent Landau (University of Texas) will give scholars and interested readers access to a much larger array of ancient Christian material, many of them never before published. As such, this book panel will provide an initial appraisal of the volume and its potential implications for the study of noncanonical literature. Table of Contents, Introduction, and the first chapter can be found at:  
[http://www.tonyburke.ca/wp-content/uploads/Burke-Landau\\_New-TestamentApocrypha\\_Preview.pdf](http://www.tonyburke.ca/wp-content/uploads/Burke-Landau_New-TestamentApocrypha_Preview.pdf).

9:00 – 9:05 Introduction	9:05 – 9:20 Robert Kitchen (Knox-Metropolitan United Church, Regina)	9:20 – 9:35 Alicia Batten (University of Waterloo)	9:35 – 9:50 John Kloppenborg (University of Toronto)
		9:50 – 10:05 Timothy Pettipiece (University of Ottawa)	10:05 – 10:15 Break
	10:15 – 10:30 Tony Burke (York University) Response	10:30 – 11:00 Discussion	

11:00 – 12:00 Varia

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

Session/ Séance 4: Fourth Century Christianity Chair/Président: Robert P. Kennedy (Saint Francis Xavier University)

13:30 – 14:00 Rajiv Bholā (University of Ottawa) “The Emperor Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea’s History of Salvation.”

14:00 – 14:30 Ariane Magny (Thompson Rivers University) “Cyril Against Julian.”

14:30 – 15:00 Andrius Valevicius (Université de Sherbrooke) “De Opificio Dei of Lactantius: A Study of the Human Body as Proof for the Existence of God.”

15:00 – 15:15 Break/Pause

Session/ Séance 5: Syriac Christianity and Gaza Monasticism Chair/Président: Mona Lafosse (University of Toronto)

15:15 – 15:45 Robert A. Kitchen (Knox-Metropolitan United Church, Regina) “This is the Story Talking: Personification of the Literary Genre in Syriac Verse Homilies.”

15:45 – 16:15 Timothy Pettipiece (University of Ottawa) “Early Syriac Encounters with Islam.”

16:15-16:45 Daniel Lemini (West University of Timisoara, Romania) “The Monastic School of Gaza: A Revival of Spiritual Guidance in Early Byzantine Monasticism.”

## **TUESDAY MAY 31**

9:00 – 10:30 Annual General Meeting/Assemblée générale

10:30 – 11:00 Break/Pause

Session/ Séance 6: Around and Outside the Canon Chair/Président: Robert B. Kennedy (Saint Francis Xavier University)

11:00 – 11:30 Bronwen Neil (Australian Catholic University) “True Prophets and Visionary Christians: The Status of Ecstatic Visions in the Shepherd of Hermas.”

11:30 – 12:00 Chiaen Liu (McMaster Divinity College) “Similarity or Dissimilarity: A Register Analysis of the Beatitudes in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Thomas.”

12:00 – 13:30 Lunch

Session/ Séance 7: Augustine Chair/Président: Lincoln Blumell (Brigham Young University)

13:30 – 14:00 Michael Treschow (University of British Columbia) “Solitude, Friendship, and Healing in Augustine’s Soliloquies.”

14:00 – 14:30 Naoki Kamimura (Tokyo Gakugei University) “Augustine’s Friendship and the Shared Vision: Correspondence between Augustine, Flavius Marcellinus, and Volusianus.”

14:30 – 15:00 Robert Kennedy (Saint Francis Xavier University) “Plato and Augustine on Justice.”

15:00 – 15:15 Break/Pause

15:15 – 15:45 Pablo Irizar (Patristic Institute Augustinianum, Leuven) “Can the imago Dei be destroyed?” Augustine’s Exegesis of the image Dei and his Silence over Gen. 5:9.”

## **ABSTRACTS**

Bhola, Rajiv K. University of Ottawa (r\_bhola@rogers.com) “The Emperor Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea’s History of Salvation.”

For Eusebius of Caesarea, the emperor Constantine occupies a privileged place within the ‘history of salvation’ as it is during his reign that the kingdom of God is realized. In the *Historia ecclesiastica* Eusebius’ theology of salvation history is readily apparent, owing largely to the framework of the text, but it is observable also in his representation of Constantine in the *De vita Constantini*. This paper examines some of the ways that Eusebius attempts to align Constantine with the Christian past in *Vita*, so as to offer fresh insights into the bishop’s eschatology in the aftermath of the emperor’s death.

Miriam DeCock, McMaster University (decockmj@mcmaster.ca) “The Preeminence of the Gospel of John in Greek Patristic Thought.”

Early on, the Church Fathers saw the fourth Gospel in a different light from the Synoptic Gospels. The view of Clement of Alexandria (d. 215 C.E.), that John wrote a “spiritual Gospel” to be distinguished from the “corporeal” Synoptic Gospels, which focused more on the historical facts about Jesus’ life, became commonplace in the patristic tradition. In

this paper, I will explore how the Greek church fathers in particular developed the tradition they received about the preeminence of John's Gospel. Specifically, I will examine Origen's articulation of this position in his Commentary on the Gospel of John and its influence on the subsequent exegetical tradition in Alexandria (e.g. Cyril) and in Antioch (e.g. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia). We will see that the tradition was both heeded and challenged in light of the simultaneous development of a robust doctrine of the inspiration of scripture.

Paul Hartog Faith Baptist Theological Seminary (hartog.paul@gmail.com) "The Holy Spirit and 'Holy Words' in 1 Clement 13-14."

1 Clement repeatedly associates the Spirit with the "scriptures," which are true and holy, since they are given through the Holy Spirit (13.4; 45.2; 56.3). Nevertheless, in 1 Clement, the Spirit's confluence with sacred texts is more variegated than simply the divine origination of the Hebrew Scriptures. First, the Spirit's association extends beyond the point of writing, since he continues to speak and work through "that which is written" (13.1; 22.1; 42.3). Second, the Spirit's ministry is also associated with texts beyond the Hebrew Scriptures, as similar language and formulae are used of 1 Corinthians, unknown texts, and 1 Clement itself (47.1-3; 59.1; 63.2; cf. 42.4-5). Third, the Spirit's ministry is associated with "nascent" trinitarian language that contextually leads into an elevation of "the words of our Lord Jesus" (46.6-8; 58.2; cf. 22.1). The proper responses to the words of God include diligent study, remembrance, and obedience (13.1; 19.1; 45.2; 46.7; 53.1; 62.3). These relevant data provide a new framework for gleaning exegetical and theological insights from 1 Clement 13.1-14.1, which merges together "this commandment" from the Hebrew Scriptures with "these precepts" remembered from the Lord Jesus, describing them all as "holy words" to be followed in "obedience to God." This functional equivalence is important for investigations of early Christian theology, and particularly for understanding the trajectories toward canonical development.

Pablo Irizar, Patristic Institute Augustinianum, Leuven (pablo.irizar.carrillo@gmail.com) "Can the imago Dei be Destroyed?: Augustine's Exegesis of the imago Dei and his Silence over Gen. 5:9."

Although the imago Dei is employed over 800 times in a plurality of theological contexts throughout Augustine's corpus, it is mostly in relation to Genesis 1:26 and never in relation to Genesis 9:6. Does Augustine's silence over Genesis 9:6 reveal something about his understanding of the imago Dei? Through a comparative thematic analysis of Augustine's killing/murder distinction, present in Augustine's corpus and in Genesis 9:6, it is argued that Augustine may have intentionally avoided Genesis 9:6 because he could not explain how the imago Dei can be destroyed while maintaining that the imago Dei is immaterial.

Naoki Kamimure, Tokyo Gakugei University (kmmrnk@nifty.com) "Augustine's Friendship and Shared Vision: Correspondence Between Augustine, Flavius Marcellinus and Volsuianus."



In the corpus of his epistolary texts, some letters between Augustine and his correspondents contain responses to queries and questions posted to him. These letters were the means of writing commentary to questions (*quaestiones et responsiones*). Presumably from 411 or 412 in different contexts, Augustine started to communicate with both the distinguished pagan Volusianus and Flavius Marcellius who adjudicated the Conference of Carthage in 411, to whom Augustine dedicated his treatises, *The Spirit and the Letter* and the first three books of *City of God*, in 411-413. They corresponded between themselves and sent several letters to Augustine respectively. In Letter 137, for instance, Augustine answered Volusianus with explanations about difficult questions regarding Christian teachings. From a sociological perspective of friendship and the communication, what do we learn from these letters? What did Augustine consider to be the source of “friendship” that united them in mutual exchange? In this paper, I shall focus on his letters with the pagan and Christian intellectuals in North African society, thereby arguing the basis for their shared vision.

Robert Kennedy, Saint Francis Xavier University ([rkennedy@stfx.ca](mailto:rkennedy@stfx.ca)) “Plato and Augustine on Justice.”

Plato defines justice as, in part, a kind of *technē*, a craft or art or skill. Drawing mainly on Augustine’s later thought, this paper will first examine the ways in which Augustine’s notion of justice aligns with and differs from Plato’s. Specifically, I will explore the extent to which Augustine’s theology modifies the Platonic definition of justice as *technē*. Finally, I will argue that Augustine’s notion of ordered love can supply a corrective to Plato’s thought on justice.

Robert A. Kitchen, Knox-Metropolitan United Church, Regina SK ([robertardellekitch@gmail.com](mailto:robertardellekitch@gmail.com)) “This is the Story Talking: Personification of Literary Genre in Syriac Verse Homilies.”

Sermons in the early Syriac church were frequently verse homilies treating a variety of Biblical, ascetical and liturgical topics, and seldom were short. Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) is the most prolific of these poet preachers who reputedly wrote over 700 homilies, all in his signature 12-syllable meter. The employment of dramatic dialogue between animate and inanimate characters is a characteristic of many homilies. A unique aspect is the interposition of the personified literary genre – the *mēmṛā* or discourse – as an independent actor performing in its own play. The *Mēmṛā* enters initially to provide a divine pause in the action, sometimes to demonstrate the unchangeable direction of the narrative, and other times to indicate that the *Mēmṛā* itself has the power and will to redirect the narrative. This paper will illustrate the usage and patterns of this convention, and examine the purposes for its employment.

Daniel Lemeni, West University of Timisoara, Romania ([dlemen@yahoo.com](mailto:dlemen@yahoo.com)) “The Monastic School of Gaza”: A Revival of Spiritual Guidance in Early Byzantine Monasticism.”

The purpose of this paper is to examine the issue of spiritual guidance in the early Byzantine monasticism. Its point of departure is the proposition that “the holy” is a useful category of analysis for our understanding of Byzantine society and religion during from this period. The modern reader will be tempted to sort their concerns into categories: familial, social, physical, and spiritual problems. For the lay Christians of the early Byzantine Empire there could be no such distinctions. They recognized that all of life was infused with the sacred. Even ordinary activities could have theological ramifications. From this perspective, one of the most striking chapters in the history of early Byzantine culture is provided by the monastic legacy of Gaza. Gaza monasticism reached its apogee in the sixth century, at the time of Barsanuphius (the Great Old Man) and John (“the Second Old Man”). The Old Men served as spiritual guides not only for monks and clergy but also for the laity of Gaza and surrounding region. Spiritual guidance was a cooperative endeavor, with both fathers and disciples actively involved as participants in a dynamic process. Therefore, the leaders of Gazan monasticism worked together closely to provide a network of spiritual authority that was very flexible in the early Byzantine world. Like the monastic life itself, spiritual guidance did not exist in isolation from secular society and was, indeed, closely intertwined it. Both monks and laymen were deemed to need spiritual guides. The breadth of the audience gives a multidimensional portrayal of spiritual guidance in Barsanuphius’ circle. The perspective of lay disciples, in particular, expands on the traditional understanding of spiritual guidance as an activity between monks. Individuals from all walks of life addressed the Great Old Man as „Abba” and trusted that he would provide guidance in the midst of their problems. This model of spiritual guidance can be understood as a „school of Christianity”, one in which Barsanuphius and John are dealing with disciples (monks and laymen) and engaging them in a lengthy and demanding program. The spiritual heritage of Gaza penetrated the heart of the late Byzantine monastic tradition and constituted in fact a spiritual foundation for Orthodox monasticism in Byzantium and for Slavic monasticism. Gaza monasticism has long since vanished, yet in a “school of Christianity” of this kind there is, I think, still a great deal worth learning even today.

Chiaen Liu, McMaster Divinity College (liuchiaen@gmail.com) “Similarity or Dissimilarity: A Register Analysis of the Beatitudes in the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and Thomas.”

This paper will employ Hallidayan register theory from systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to argue that the beatitudes in the Gospel of Thomas and in the Synoptics belong to different social settings. The framework of SFL focuses on choices selected through different types of processes and the variety of semantic domains so that the language may serve specific functions determined, in part, by the social context. Register refers to the relationship between language and social context such as the different vocabularies and syntax used by a certain participant in a specific context of situation. This relationship may be analyzed through field, tenor and mode. Field focuses on the social action

indicated through the language. Tenor, through the study of mood, person and number, concentrates on the relationship between participants. Mode is centered on the internal organization and communicative nature of the text. Regarding the Gospel of Thomas and the Synoptics, the selection of different types of verbs, lexical items, distinct conjunctions, and indicated social action, show the dissimilarity in terms of contexts of situation by registers. This dissimilarity in terms of registers indicates that the beatitudes belong to different social contexts.

Ariane Magny, University of Ottawa (amagny@uottawa.ca) "Cyril against Julian."

Julian's *Against the Galileans* has survived in fragments and in a polemical context. It was written in the winter 362/363 in three books, of which only book 1 (and it is not complete) survives. *Against the Galileans* received a few, informal responses; from Gregory Nazianzen, not long after the emperor's death, and from Theodorus of Mopsuestia and Philip Sideta in the 5th c. Unfortunately, they are lost. The only formal refutation of Julian's anti-Christian writings was written by Cyril of Alexandria in the 430s, decades after Julian's reign. According to Cyril, if there were no formal refutations of *Against the Galileans*, it is because Julian had simply left his opponents speechless. Whether this is true or not, we must rely on Cyril's *Against Julian* for knowledge of *Against the Galileans*. But Cyril answered Julian, possibly in 30 books and the majority are lost. He also did not himself finish his work. Fragments of the two other books are preserved in authors quoting Cyril's lost books, but they are not substantial. Cyril has admittedly re-ordered the work of Julian when composing his answer. It has been argued that Cyril's re-ordering of *Against the Galileans* has not had any major impact on the meaning of the fragments. I would like to suggest otherwise, in light of the work that I have done on Porphyry's *Against the Christians* (Porphyry in *Fragments: Reception of an Anti-Christian Work in Late Antiquity*. Ashgate, 2014).

Bronwen Neil, Australian Catholic University (Bronwen.Neil@acu.edu.au) "True Prophets and Visionary Christians: The Status of Ecstatic Visions in the Shepherd of Hermas."

*Shepherd of Hermas* (CPG 1052) had a mixed reception in the early Christian church, with Clement of Alexandria praising it "a gnostic unfolding of the Scriptures, when faith has already reached an advanced state," (Strom. 6), while others rejected it as unacceptable reading for Christians. This condemnation ultimately prevailed, and the text was finally excluded from the Greek New Testament canon (Markschies et al. 2012). Still others, such as Tertullian, were ambivalent. The North African took a neutral stance in *On Prayer* (De orat. 16.1), but he later condemned the work as the "the apocryphal Shepherd of adulterers" (De pudicitia 20.2). The appearance of a Latin version in the fifth century, however, attests to its continued popularity (ed. Tornau and Cecconi 2014), and explains why Pope Gelasius saw the need to condemn it at the end of that century (Ep.42.4.7).

Its dubious place in the canon is due to its alternative Christology and to the prophetic content, the prophecies being received from an angelic young man and from 'the Church' in the guise of an old woman. When the Shepherd says, "I went to sleep," he refers to the sleep of ecstasy, a state usually associated in the mid-second century (when the text was probably composed [Rüpke 2014: 60]) with pagan mystery cults and oracles. In this paper I seek to locate the mystical and prophetic visions of this apocryphal text in the context of the ongoing controversy over prophecy as a gift of the Spirit. How did a Christian discern between true and false prophets? This is a question that the Shepherd of Hermas sought to answer by providing examples of each. The controversy over ecstatic visions extended to those described by Perpetua in her martyr acts, another apocryphal text. Several scholars, including

Barnes (1971), Trevett (2002), Tabbernee (2005 and 2009), and Butler (2006), have linked Perpetua with the New Prophecy movement, also known as Montanism. I will demonstrate what the Shepherd reveals about the status of ecstatic prophets in second-century Rome, and its possible links with the New Prophecy movement. This context may help to explain the ambivalence of Tertullian's reaction to The Shepherd.

Timothy Pettipiece, University of Ottawa (tpettipi@gmail.com) "Early Syriac Encounters with Islam." Syriac speaking Christians were on the frontline, culturally and linguistically, of the encounter with the emerging Islamic tradition in the 7th century CE. Some, such as Isho'yahb III, bishop of Nineveh-Mosul (in what remains of modern Iraq), believed that they were religious allies, while others expressed apocalyptic alarm. This paper will examine some of the earliest testimonies of Syriac encounters with Islam in an effort to contextualize the broader question of Christian-Muslim relations.

Michael Treschow, University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus (michael.treschow@uba.ca) "Solitude, Friendship and Healing in Augustine's Soliloquies."

In the period of his early dialogues, Augustine wrote an extended soliloquy, a form of internal dialogue that he continued to use and adapt in later writings. Brian Stock describes Augustine's soliloquies as spiritual exercises, designed to assist the formation, or reformation, of the self. However, Stock scarcely takes into account the social context and outward orientation of these writings, nor does he reflect on their curative value. In that first soliloquy, the Soliloquies proper, where Augustine actually coins the term soliloquia, he explains that this internal dialogue is a solitary task aimed at personal recuperation, but requiring the necessary support of friendship. He wrote the Soliloquies during his otium (respite) with a group of friends and family at Cassiciacum where he sought to restore his health after he had withdrawn from an ambitious and debilitating way of life in Milan. Michael Foley argues that the Soliloquies is a theatrical dialogue, composed as though a performance with an outward looking and social orientation. He notes in passing the "spiritual therapy" that this dialogue promotes, but he does not pursue this line of thought. In this paper I shall argue that the Soliloquies records

Augustine's solitary inquiry into the divine ground of his own selfhood, not merely for his own healing but for a recuperative questing after the divine life together with a community of friends.

Andrius Valevicius, Université de Sherbrooke (andrius.valevicius@hotmail.com) "De Opificio Dei of Lactantius. A Study of the Human Body as Proof for the Existence of God."

This paper will look at Lactantius' text *De Opificio Dei* (On the Workmanship of God). This text is extraordinary in that it is a kind of meditation on the beauty and meaning of the human body. This is very rare for the time period, especially in a Christian context. Normally the body is presented in a pejorative way all across Christian literature. When Jesus says "Noli me tangere" (do not touch me), the tone seems to be set for a denial of the value of the body. In New Testament texts there were clear distinctions between the body and faith and how the body somehow 'stops' faith, does not promote faith. St. Augustine and other Fathers of the Church continue to fuel to the fire. As a result, a negative view of the body and the repression of sexuality lasted for centuries. That is why this text of *De Opificio Dei* is so interesting. Lactantius explains the proportions of the body, their symbolic meaning, the working of the limbs, the intelligence of the engineering behind their design, the mystery of the organs in sustaining life, the way of sexual reproduction bringing to light masculine and feminine forces, the mind to which the channels of our body flow and finally, the soul, the seat of inexplicable wisdom. All of this comes to serve as a kind of proof of the existence of God. From an initial investigation, this text seems to have received very little attention from scholars, despite it being so original for its time.

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