

CSPS/ACÉP SPRING BULLETIN 2017

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I greet you as the incoming President of the *Canadian Society of Patristic Studies* (CSPS/ACEP). Since my nomination at the last annual meeting in Calgary in May 2016 I have been navigating a steep learning curve, but I am finally starting to feel like I am getting my legs underneath me. This would not have been possible, however, without the generous help and insight of the returning members of the executive board, namely Mona Tokarek LaFosse, Steven Muir, and Robert Kennedy, and our communications officer, Paul Smith. I also want to especially thank Robert Kitchen, the outgoing President, for all of his help during this transition process. He has made himself readily available to my many queries and has left the society in very good order. I am sure that I speak for all of us when I sincerely thank Robert for his diligent service guiding the society since 2012.

Our annual meeting last year in Calgary was by all accounts a success, and I want to thank Anne Moore of the University of Calgary for all of her work as the program chair and local representative. In addition to the typical sessions we also had a book review panel and a joint session with the *Canadian Society of Biblical Studies*. While our numbers were a little smaller than usual, we had a geographically diverse group with participants from all over Canada, as well as the United States, Europe, Australia, and Japan.

This year's meeting will be held May 28–30 at Ryerson University in Toronto. Our program chair Maria Dasios has done a splendid job organizing and assembling the program. In addition to the typical sessions, we will be having a book review session, a joint session with the *Canadian Society of Biblical Studies*, and a special session themed around Coptic Christianity. Additionally, we have renewed the student essay contest this year. The winner of this year's prize for most outstanding essay goes to Gerald Ens, a graduate student in the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University. The title of his winning essay is, "Loving to Know: Augustine's Epistemology in Book XV of *The Trinity*," and will be presented at the annual meeting.

During the annual meeting in May we will be holding our annual general meeting (AGM) in which we will be conducting various business matters regarding the Society. This meeting is open to all members and so I encourage all to attend. On this front I extend a special invitation to student members who are the future of the society: please come and give input!

On another note, the executive would like to remind you that our Society is registered as a charitable organization and therefore is able to accept tax deductible donations. I would like to encourage you to

consider donating to our Society when renewing your membership. You will thus be able to support Canadian scholarship in the field of Patristics.

Finally, during the annual meeting please be sure to come up and say hello/bonjour. As I don't know a number of you I would love to make your acquaintance. I look forward to seeing you all in Toronto!

Sincerely,

Lincoln H. Blumell, President

Department of Ancient Scripture

Brigham Young University

Provo, Utah

Chers/chères amis/amies et collègues,

Je vous salue en tant que nouveau président de la *Association Canadienne des Études Patristiques* (CSPS/ACEP). Depuis ma nomination à la dernière assemblée annuelle à Calgary en mai 2016, j'ai parcouru une courbe d'apprentissage abrupte, mais je commence à avoir l'impression de savoir ce que je fais. Cela n'aurait pas été possible sans l'aide généreuse des membres du conseil d'administration, à savoir Mona Tokarek LaFosse, Steven Muir, et Robert Kennedy, et notre agent de communication, Paul Smith. Je tiens tout particulièrement à remercier Robert Kitchen, le président sortant, pour toute son aide pendant ce processus de transition. Il s'est toujours mis à ma disposition pour répondre à mes nombreuses questions et a laissé l'association en très bon état. Je suis sûr que je parle pour nous tous quand je remercie sincèrement Robert pour son service diligent en tant que président de l'association depuis 2012.

Notre réunion annuelle l'année dernière à Calgary a été une réussite, et je dois remercier Anne Moore de l'Université de Calgary pour son travail en tant que présidente du programme et de représentante locale. En plus des sessions typiques, nous avons également un comité d'examen du livre et une session conjointe avec la *Société Canadienne d'Études Bibliques*. Bien que notre nombre fût un peu plus petit que d'habitude, nous avons un groupe géographiquement diversifié avec des participants de partout au Canada, ainsi qu'aux États-Unis, à l'Europe, à l'Australie et au Japon.

La réunion de cette année aura lieu du 28 au 30 mai à l'Université Ryerson à Toronto. Notre présidente du programme Maria Dasios a fait un excellent travail en organisant et en rassemblant le programme. En plus des sessions typiques, nous aurons une session d'examen du livre, une session conjointe avec la *Société Canadienne d'Études Bibliques*, et une session spéciale sur le christianisme copte. En plus, nous avons renouvelé le concours de rédaction d'étudiants cette année. Le gagnant du prix de cette année pour le plus

remarquable essai va à Gerald Ens, un étudiant diplômé du Département des études religieuses à l'Université McMaster. Le titre de son essai gagnant est «Loving to Know: Augustin's Epistemology in Book XV of *The Trinity*», et il sera présenté lors de la réunion annuelle.

Au cours de la réunion annuelle de mai, nous tiendrons notre assemblée générale annuelle (AGA) dans laquelle nous allons parler de diverses questions concernant les affaires de l'association. Cette réunion est ouverte à tous les membres et j'encourage donc tous à y assister. Sur ce front j'envoie une invitation spéciale aux étudiants qui sont l'avenir de l'association: s'il vous plait, venez et contribuez!

Sur une autre note, l'exécutif veut vous rappeler que notre association est enregistrée comme organisme de bienfaisance et peut donc accepter des dons déductibles d'impôt. Je voudrais vous encourager à faire un don à notre association lors du renouvellement de votre adhésion. Vous serez donc en mesure de soutenir la érudition canadienne dans le domaine de la patristique.

Enfin, lors de la réunion annuelle, n'oubliez pas de venir me dire bonjour/hello. Comme je ne connais pas beaucoup d'entre vous, j'aimerais faire votre connaissance. Au plaisir de vous voir à Toronto!

Cordialement,

Lincoln H. Blumell, président

Département des Ecritures Anciennes

Université Brigham Young

Provo, Utah

NOUVELLES/NEWS

PUBLICATIONS

Lincoln Blumell

“A New Coptic Epitaph from the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology,” *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 53 (2016): 189–198 (with Erik O. Yingling).

“Two Greek Letters from the Petrie and Harris Collections,” *Analecta Papyrologica* 27 (2016): 19–27.

“P.Birmingham inv. 317: An Addendum to the Fourth-Century Bishops of Oxyrhynchus,” *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 44 (2016): 75–83.

“A Christian Amulet Containing a Doxology with Sketches on the Back.” In T. Derda (et al., eds.), *Proceedings of the 27th International Congress of Papyrology, Warsaw, 29 July – 3 August 2013. Vol. II: Subliterary papyri. Documentary papyri. Scribal practices, linguistic matters* (Warsaw: The Raphael Taubenschlag Foundation, 2016), 745–754.

“The ‘Number of the Beast’: Early Christian Isopsephies and Revelation 13:18.” In Thomas J. Kraus and Michael Sommer (eds.), *Book of Seven Seals: The Peculiarity of Revelation, its Manuscripts, Attestation, and Transmission*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016, 119–135. (co-authored with Thomas A. Wayment) Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Ambrosiaster's Commentary on the Pauline Epistles: Romans, with an Introduction to the Commentary by Stephen A. Cooper, Theodore S. de Bruyn, and David G. Hunter, Writings from the Greco-Roman World (Atlanta: SBL Press).

Hans Boersma

Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017).

Theodore de Bruyn

Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

“A New Jewish Epitaph Commemorating Care for Orphans,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* 47 (2016): 310–329.

OTHER NEWS/AUTRE NOUVELLES:

Steven Muir has been granted a sabbatical year at Concordia University of Edmonton, starting July 2017. He intends to work on a book combining ritual studies with an analysis of some of Paul's theology.

CONGRESS OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 2017 CONGRÈS DES
SCIENCES HUMAINES 2017

Canadian Society of Patristic Studies Association canadienne des études patristiques

Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario

May 28-30, 2017

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

All CSPS sessions will take place in Victoria Building, Room 210

SUNDAY MAY 28, 2017	
11:30 - 1:00 PM	CSPS Executive Meeting/ACÉP Réunion du bureau
1:00 - 1:15 PM	Welcome/Mot de bienvenue Lincoln Blumell, Brigham Young University (CSPS President)
1:15 - 2:15 PM	Session 1, Book Review I Chair/Président: TBA P.-H. Poitier, A. Roman, T. Schmidt (eds), <i>Contre les manichéens (Titus de Bostra)</i> Reviewer: Olivier Dufault, Münchner Zentrum für Antike Welten
2:15 - 2:45 PM	Session 2, Student Essay Prize Chair/Président: Lincoln Blumell, Brigham Young University “Loving to Know: Augustine’s Epistemology in Book XV of <i>The Trinity</i>” Gerald Ens, McMaster University
2:45 - 3:00 PM	Break
3:00 - 4:00 PM	Session 3, <i>De Trinitate</i> revisited Chair/Président: Robert Kennedy, Saint Francis Xavier University “Divine Equality And The Embodied Image of Glory: The Ascension of Christ in Augustine’s <i>De Trinitate</i>” Zacharie Klassen, McMaster University “Predication according to Substance and Relation: The Argument in Augustine’s <i>De Trinitate</i> 6.1.1 - 7.2.3.” Wendy E. Helleman, University of Jos
4:00 - 5:45PM	Session 4, Tropes (and their afterlives) Chair/Président: Maria Dasios, University of Toronto “Sundials and Shadows: An Analysis of an Origenian Analogy” John Gavin, College of the Holy Cross
4:30 - 4:45 PM	Break “On the other Hand... A Re-evaluation of Irenaeus’ favourite Trinitarian Motif” Don Springer, McMaster Divinity College

SUNDAY MAY 28, 2017	
7:00 - 8:30 PM	<p>“Marriage of the Soul and Union in the Bridal Chamber: The Function of Nuptial Imagery in Coptic Valentinian Literature” Emily Laflèche, University of Ottawa</p> <p>Craigie Lecture: What was the Goal of Paul’s Religious Program? (Location TBA) Stanley Stowers, Brown University</p>

MONDAY MAY 29, 2017	
9:30 - 10:30 AM	<p><i>*CSBS Session on Christian Apocrypha runs from 8:30 - 11:45 AM (Room TBA); Attendees from CSPA encouraged to attend*</i></p> <p>Session 5, The long shadow of Rome? Consolation, Apologetics, and Polemics Chair/Président: TBA</p> <p>“Grief and Consolation in the writings of Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa” Danielle Baillargeon, University of Toronto</p> <p>“Quand Arnobe de Sicca lance son offensive contre les dieux de Rome: <i>Aduersus nationes</i>, IV” Zahia Amara, Université de Monastir</p>
10:30 - 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 - 11:45 AM	<p>Session 6, Patristic legacies: Adaptation and citation in and beyond the Patristic era Chair/Président: TBA</p> <p>“The Raising of Lazarus in Alexandrian and Antiochene Exegesis” Miriam DeCock, McMaster University</p> <p>“«Inspiré était le Syrien et éloquent, le Phénicien; mais le Cappadocien est les deux et plus que les deux»: l’admiration des Byzantins pour Grégoire de Nazianze” Gaëlle Rioual, Université Laval / Université de Fribourg</p> <p><i>*CCSR General Meeting runs from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM (Oakham Lounge, Room 223)*</i></p>
12:00 PM	Lunch
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM	CSPA Annual General Meeting/ACÉP Assemblée générale
3:30 - 3:45 PM	Break
3:45 - 4:45 PM	<p>Session 7, (Irresistible) Augustine Chair/Président: Wendy E. Helleman</p> <p>“Augustine’s Theology of Peace from Book XIX of <i>De Civitate Dei</i>: A Call for Love, Faith and Hope” Jimmy Chan, University of Toronto</p> <p>“Augustine on Irresistible Grace” Robert P. Kennedy, Saint Francis Xavier University</p>

MONDAY MAY 29, 2017	
5:00 PM	President's Reception (Held at Mattamy Athletic Centre, the historic Maple Leaf Gardens)
6:30 PM	CSPS Banquet/Banquet de l'ACÉP (Location TBA)

TUESDAY MAY 30, 2017	
9:00 - 10:30 AM	<p>Session 8, Coptic Studies I Chair/Président: Lincoln Blumell, Brigham Young University</p> <p>“An Amulet for Virginité in Marriage? A Coptic Witness to the Practice of ‘Spiritual Marriage’ from Late Antique Egypt” Lincoln H. Blumell, Brigham Young University</p> <p>“Early Coptic Monasticisms and Their Eco-Theologies” Bishoy Dawood, University of St. Michael's College</p> <p>“La version copte du sermon pseudo-éphrémien: <i>In pulcherrimum Iosephum</i>” Eric Crégheur, Université d'Ottawa</p>
10:30 - 10:45 AM	Break
10:45 AM - 12:15 PM	<p>Session 9, Coptic Studies II Chair/Président: Lincoln Blumell, Brigham Young University</p> <p>“I am the bride and the bridegroom:’ The Social Context of the Divine Feminine in Egyptian ‘Gnosticism’” Ihab Khalil, Independent Scholar</p> <p>“‘Sitting on Top of the World’: Thinking about the highest heavens in ascension apocalypses, gnostic and otherwise” Michael Kaler, University of Toronto - Mississauga</p> <p>“The Shepherd of the Exodus Chapel at El-Bagawat: An interpretation” Dr. Hind Salah El-Din Somida Awad, Cairo University</p>
12:15 PM	Lunch
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM	<p>Session 10, Book Review II Chair/Président: Steven Muir, Concordia University College of Alberta</p> <p>George Bevan, <i>The New Judas: The Case of Nestorius in Ecclesiastical Politics, 428-451 CE</i> Reviewer: Robert Kennedy, Saint Francis Xavier University</p>
3:00 PM - 3:15 PM	Break
3:15 PM - 4:15 PM	<p>Session 11, “The old made new:” Contemporary frames for ancient Christian contexts Chair/Président: TBA</p> <p>“When Religion and Psychology Collide: Examining the Donatist Controversy in</p>

TUESDAY MAY 30, 2017	
	<p>light of Disgust Psychology” Sid D. Sudiagal, McMaster Divinity College</p> <p>“Praxis of a Roman Matron: An Analysis of the <i>passio perpetuae et felicitatis</i> using the concept of <i>Habitus</i>” Danielle Baillargeon, University of Toronto</p>

~ ABSTRACTS ~

“Quand Arnobe de Sicca lance son offensive contre les dieux de Rome: *Aduersus nationes*, IV”

Zahia Amara, Université de Monastir

Pour réfuter le grief d’impiété couramment formulé par les païens à l’encontre des chrétiens, les apologistes latins cherchaient dans le paganisme une rétorsion de taille. Confrontés à l’idolâtrie ambiante, ils étaient amenés à s’interroger sur les dieux adorés par les païens. Sans doute, ils avaient prévenu le parti qu’ils pourraient tirer d’une étude approfondie de leurs origines ainsi que des conceptions hideuses que les idolâtres se faisaient à leur sujet. Ce n’est qu’après qu’ils pourraient révéler leur inconsistance et retourner contre les païens, coupables d’adorer de faux dieux, leur accusation d’impiété. Sur la trace de ses prédécesseurs, Arnobe de *Sicca* s’en prend aux idoles païennes et aux idolâtres. Il commence par les abstractions divinisées, ensuite les divinités fonctionnelles des *Indigitamenta* pour finir avec les dieux personnels des fables. Il s’évertue, au grand dam des païens, à renier toute transcendance divine aux idoles ignobles et se moque allégrement de la théologie païenne. En effet, sa stratégie consiste à démontrer l’immoralité et le caractère néfaste des dieux innombrables, et ceci faisant, justifier les chrétiens qui refusent d’adorer des vaines idoles. Dans notre communication, nous proposons d’étudier les conceptions qu’Arnobe se faisait des païens et du paganisme dans le cadre de sa mission apologetique chrétienne.

“The Shepherd of the Exodus Chapel at El-Bagawat: An interpretation”

Hind Salah El-Din Somida Awad, Cairo University

The Exodus Chapel at El-Bagawat Necropolis in Kharga Oasis is considered to be one of the most important examples for the early Christian art in Egypt. It is distinguished by its prominent number of narrative paintings that held a significant iconographical symbolism. Accordingly, the aim of this paper is to seek the symbolism of the Shepherd painting as a non-narrative artistic subject depicted among a specific gathered narrative paintings in the Chapel so as to interpret the role of the Shepherd by himself and then his relation with the other surrounding paintings that was depicted there.

“Grief and Consolation in the writings of Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa”

Danielle Baillargeon, University of Toronto

This paper will discuss the presentation of grief and consolation in the writings of patristic authors. I will draw on the consolatory writings of Jerome as well as Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina* to investigate representations of death, grief and mourning. I suggest that a new paradigm emerges in the writings that ascribes a consolatory function to the soon-to-be deceased; the author becomes a conduit for consolation, but not the originator. This new paradigm offers commemorated figures, in particular female figures, a consolatory role as part of an embodied phenomenological experience of grief and death commemorated through the writings of male authors.

“Praxis of a Roman Matron: An Analysis of the *passio perpetuae et felicitatis* using the concept of *Habitus*”

Danielle Baillargeon, University of Toronto

This paper uses place studies to develop a framework to analyze the *passio perpetuae et felicitatis*. Drawing heavily on the concept of *Habitus* from Bourdieu and situating the analysis on the essential structuring elements governing the 'places' which Perpetua occupies, the domus, the prison and the arena, I analyze the evolution of her habitus as she transitions from Roman matron to Christian martyr. As Perpetua converts to the Christian faith, she must internalize new Christian structuring elements, transforming her habitus and producing practices that render her "out-of-place," a Roman woman subject to a highly public death in the arena.

“An Amulet for Virginity in Marriage? A Coptic Witness to the Practice of ‘Spiritual Marriage’ from Late Antique Egypt”

Lincoln H. Blumell, Brigham Young University

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in San Jose (Calif.) owns a small but important collection of unpublished Coptic papyri and parchments. Over the course of the last year I have been working on some of the pieces in the collection preparing them for publication. One notable papyrus preserves an amulet that invokes Mary and seeks so secure her help in preserving purity and chastity in marriage. Though the specific context behind the amulet is not altogether clear, it appears that the amulet could be

seen in light of the practice of “spiritual marriage” in late antiquity whereby male and female monastics cohabited and entered into a marriage of sorts that was non-sexual. This paper will discuss this papyrus and attempt to situate it within the practice of “spiritual marriage” in late antiquity; though this practice is known from various patristic sources, this amulet could represent the only first-hand evidence for it.

“Augustine’s Theology of Peace from Book XIX of *De Civitate Dei*: A Call for Love, Faith and Hope”

Jimmy Chan, University of Toronto

The purpose of this current study is to demonstrate how Augustine’s theology of peace can be understood through a close reading of Book XIX of *De civitate Dei*. This study will use professional software in Augustinian studies to analyze the primary text of this masterpiece of Augustine and shows that his theology of peace can be effectively understood as through Book XIX of *De civitate Dei*: Peace is pursued by earthly people and the heavenly people sojourning on earth; it is a multi-layer concept, covering internal peace within the individual to external peace in family, social and political contexts. It will be further shown that peace of the body and soul and peace in the family are especially important for receiving other aspects of temporal peace as well as having assurance of eternal peace. There is a moral implication of this which will be discussed towards the end of this paper.

“La version copte du sermon pseudo-éphrémien: *In pulcherrimum Iosephum*”

Eric Crégheur, Université d’Ottawa

Cette communication a pour objet le projet d’édition et de traduction en cours de la version copte d’un sermon attribué à Éphrem sur Joseph le patriarche. Après avoir présenté les traditions et littératures juive et chrétienne anciennes relatives à Joseph le patriarche, nous nous pencherons sur le sermon proprement dit, à savoir le plan et la nature de sa version grecque originale, de même que sur les nombreuses traductions qui en ont été faites : latine, arménienne, géorgienne, arabe, slave et copte, la version qui nous occupe. Nous dirons enfin quelques mots sur les témoins manuscrits et les principales caractéristiques de cette version copte du sermon, et de l’état de notre projet.

“Early Coptic Monasticisms and Their Eco-Theologies”

Bishoy Dawood, University of St. Michael’s College

This paper surveys a variety of literature from early Coptic Monasticisms, mainly from the 4th to the 6th centuries, as they relate to the question of their respective eco-theologies. I will argue that in Egypt a variety of forms of monasticism existed side-by-side, and had a variety of relations with or against the institutional church, differing or supporting the theologies of the institutional church. The literature from this period vary in genre as well, such as sayings of Desert Fathers, Gnostic Gospels and Apocalypses, letters, monastic rules, as well as poems and hymns. As such, the literature consists of a variety of competing theologies in the spiritually engaged field of Coptic monasteries and hermitages. Such theologies influenced the way the monastics viewed themselves in relation to the cosmos and the environment around them, and because of the authoritative tradition of monasticism in contemporary theology, the same literature can still influence and inform contemporary eco-theology, both in the Coptic Church and churches across Canada and the world, as they all use Coptic monastic literature to develop contemporary theological responses to the ecological crisis.

“The Raising of Lazarus in Alexandrian and Antiochene Exegesis”

Miriam DeCock, McMaster University

In this paper I will examine the treatment of the Raising of Lazarus (John 11) in the commentaries and homilies of four authors, Origen and Cyril from Alexandria, and John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia, of the so-called school of Antioch. I will compare their treatments in order to make some observations about the question of whether it is fruitful to speak of two exegetical schools in Alexandria and Antioch. We will see that the traditional model of the two schools does in fact hold, though it requires a more nuanced articulation. Though Cyril has different theological concerns from Origen by the time he writes his fifth-century Commentary on John, the basic shape of his spiritual reading resembles that of Origen quite closely. Chrysostom and Theodore have some of the same theological concerns as Cyril as they approach this passage, given that they too are writing after the events of Nicaea, but they part ways with Cyril (and Origen) in their refusal to provide the passage with a spiritual interpretation. All four authors apply John 11 to their contemporary church settings, but the manner in which they do so provides another distinction between the two exegetical traditions.

“Loving to Know: Augustine’s Epistemology in Book XV of *The Trinity*”

Gerald Ens, McMaster University

This paper argues that Augustine’s *The Trinity* presents the concrete practice of love of neighbour and love of God as an essential component of the method of coming to know the triune God. I will demonstrate this primarily through a close reading of Book XV, which is generally best known for its demolishing of any human attempt to know God. Thus, this paper will also emphasize the constructive epistemological argument of Book XV and will make a case for the important role Book XV plays in the structure and content of *The Trinity*. I begin by making the case that my reading of Book XV is consistent with other themes we can find in the rest of *The Trinity*. I then turn to an extended examination of Book XV and look in particular at the way Augustine’s treatments of the Holy Spirit suggest that love is a method for knowing God. Finally, I point towards some of the ways that finding love presented as an epistemological method in Book XV might impact how we read *The Trinity* as a whole.

“Sundials and Shadows: An Analysis of an Origenian Analogy”

John Gavin, College of the Holy Cross

Origen of Alexandria, in his *De oratione*, uses the image of light to convey various themes. *De or.* 17 contains a particularly complex analogy in which Origen relates a) the action of sunlight upon a sundial and b) the production of a shadow to a) humanity's reception of spiritual gifts and b') the production of ephemeral material goods. This paper examines how Origen reworked platonic themes and created an original set of images to respond to a fundamental problem in Christian prayer: God's apparently arbitrary and even unjust manner in responding to petitions.

“Predication according to Substance and Relation: The Argument in Augustine's *De Trinitate* 6.1.1 - 7.2.3.”

Wendy E. Helleman, University of Jos

The present essay returns to Augustine's argument for predicating wisdom as an attribute of God “according to substance” in books 5-7 of his *De Trinitate*. In recent years Michel Barnes and Lewis Ayres have done significant work on the identity of anti-Nicene opponents as well as the pro-Nicenes specified in 6.1.1. In his *Augustine and the Trinity* (2010), Ayres recognized that Augustinian scholarship has “oddly neglected” detailed examination of the argument (227). In that context Ayres reflects puzzlement over the complexity and convoluted nature of this lengthy argument. He suggests, “Augustine is still in the midst of development, still thinking through the character of the divine life itself” (224). The present treatment will focus on Augustine's pro- Nicene discussion partners for further clues on the passages that appear to reflect unresolved questions.

“‘Sitting on Top of the World’: Thinking about the highest heavens in ascension apocalypses, gnostic and otherwise”

Michael Kaler, University of Toronto - Mississauga

Apocalyptic literature served—and still serves—many purposes: it is an authoritative way to expose the organization of the universe, the progress of history, and the legitimacy of human groups and social structures. Ultimately, apocalyptic literature presents a holistic overview of the universe, typically set in levels, with the upper level being the guarantor of—or, as the case may be, authoritative counter-argument to—the structures exposed below. Ultimate reality, in this hierarchical view, resides in the highest heavens, and this ultimate reality tends to be presented as divinity. In this presentation, I will discuss the ramifications of these generic expectations for the *Apocalypse of Paul*, a gnostic ascension apocalypse from Nag Hammadi codex V, which, uniquely for a work of its genre, has no vision of or reference to deity in its uppermost heaven: it speaks only of a gathering of Paul's “fellow spirits.” Neither the strangeness of this ending, its contrast with apocalyptic tradition, nor its significance for the work's readers, have been adequately addressed in previous scholarship: in my discussion, I will fill this gap and bring it into conversation with the presentations of the upper realms in other apocalyptic works, gnostic and otherwise.

“Augustine on Irresistible Grace”

Robert P. Kennedy, Saint Francis Xavier University

The focus of this paper will be the implications of Augustine's later doctrine of grace for the understanding of human freedom. This question is, to say the least, well-worn. However, new translations of Augustine's anti-Pelagian works, the phenomenological appropriation of Augustine's thought (especially by Jean-Luc Marion), and other recent developments offer the possibility of new insights into these problems. Rather than attempting to assess the influence of these new readings of Augustine, this paper will borrow from them in an exegesis and interpretation of relevant texts from the final ten years of Augustine's life.

“‘I am the bride and the bridegroom:’ The Social Context of the Divine Feminine in Egyptian ‘Gnosticism’”

Ihab Khalil, Independent Scholar

The religious movement(s) in the ancient world known today as “Gnosticism” flourished in the first few centuries of the Common Era. Often considered a rival of the emerging Christian faith, many Church Fathers wrote against this “heresy,” and it is mainly through Christian writers that scholars were aware of Gnostic beliefs. That all changed in the 1940s with the discovery of the Coptic Nag Hammadi manuscripts, which outline the significantly diverse belief systems and myths of the Gnostics. This paper will examine the social context of these myths in their relation to Roman Egypt, with particular attention to women's roles in Egyptian society and the divine feminine found in both the Gnostic (particularly Valentinian) and ancient Egyptian myths. Several sources will inform this paper including mythological/literary texts, documentary papyri, and the demotic instructions. Through this exploration, we may better understand the Gnostics in their Egyptian setting.

“Divine Equality And The Embodied Image of Glory: The Ascension of Christ in Augustine's *De Trinitate*”

Zacharie Klassen, McMaster University

While summary works treating Augustine's views on the ascension have demonstrated their importance to his work as a whole, less sustained attention has been given to Augustine's treatment of the ascension in particular works. In this paper, I argue that in his major work on the Trinity, the ascension helps Augustine establish the absolute equality of the Son with the Father as well as show how in Christ's bodily ascension he both establishes and traverses the road by which the human's journey toward God meets its end-point. After demonstrating this, I offer brief reflections on how this analysis provides needed nuance to Douglas Farrow's claim that Augustine undervalues the place of Christ's humanity in the ascension.

“Marriage of the Soul and Union in the Bridal Chamber: The Function of Nuptial Imagery in Coptic Valentinian Literature”

Emily Laflèche, University of Ottawa

Tripartite Tractate (Tri. Trac. 122. 12-32) and Exegesis of the Soul (Exeg. Soul 131. 13 - 132. 27) present interesting descriptions of how the soul is reunified with the divine: this union is like that found in the bridal chamber. The inseparability of a bride and bridegroom when in the bridal chamber is emulated in these texts by the relationship described between human and divine. These texts utilize nuptial imagery to describe this union, similar descriptions of union utilizing nuptial imagery can be found in the Gospel of Philip (*Gos. Phil.* 65. 1-26). This paper aims to explore how nuptial imagery functions within Valentinian literature, in particular how the descriptions of nuptial imagery in Tripartite Tractate and Exegesis of the Soul compare to those found in the Gospel of Philip, in order to situate how nuptial imagery used in the Gospel of Philip compares to that used in other Valentinian literature.

«Inspiré était le Syrien et éloquent, le Phénicien; mais le Cappadocien est les deux et plus que les deux»: l'admiration des Byzantins pour Grégoire de Nazianze»

Gaëlle Rioual, Université Laval / Université de Fribourg

La figure et l'œuvre de Grégoire de Nazianze connurent une fortune formidable dans la culture byzantine. Appelé simplement le Théologien par les orthodoxes, le Nazianzène fit en effet l'objet d'une vénération difficile à mesurer du côté occidental de la chrétienté. Cette communication se propose de passer en revue les marques de respect et d'admiration des écrivains byzantins envers le saint homme, afin de voir comment cette dévotion a évolué et s'est enrichie tout au long de l'époque byzantine, particulièrement au Xe siècle.

“On the other Hand... A Re-evaluation of Irenaeus' favourite Trinitarian Motif”

Don Springer, McMaster Divinity College

Irenaeus of Lyons' understanding of the Trinity has long been an area of interest to scholars. In several studies, his use of the 'hands of God' motif occupies a place of central importance. Indeed, Jackson Lashier recently noted that “every scholar who has described the status of the Trinity in Irenaeus has addressed . . . [the] motif and more often than not has deemed it the central Trinitarian image.” This essay argues the importance of the 'hands' has been overstated, a fact which has had important theological implications. An over-emphasis on the motif has resulted in the dominating association of Irenaeus' view of the Trinity with protological concerns; the bulk of his writings, however, place as much, if not more emphasis on the correlation between the Trinity and soteriology. This paper seeks to redress that balance.

“When Religion and Psychology Collide: Examining the Donatist Controversy in light of Disgust Psychology”

Sid D. Sudiagal, McMaster Divinity College

The Donatist Controversy has been a historical event that is often seen through a theological lens. It is not surprising that the Donatists were often viewed as heretics, schismatics, or violent and stubborn dissenters of the Catholic Church. The goal of this paper is to examine the psychological factors that played a role in the Donatist Controversy. In particular, it uses Disgust Psychology as a tool to examine and further explore the religious division that ultimately led to the use of verbal and physical violence by both groups.

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