

## *Abstracts: Graduate Students Patristic Studies 2010*

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**John Paul Abdelsayed, Notre Dame University**

### *"The Great High Priest:" An Examination of Saint Cyril of Alexandria's Threefold Theology of High Priest*

The teaching of Christ as High Priest is so doctrinally important for Cyril, it is the main subject of his third tome against Nestorius, his tenth anathema to Nestorius, his third and lengthy section of his *Oratio ad Augustas*, and a large portion of his commentary on Malachi. St. Cyril of Alexandria demonstrates a three-fold theology of Christ as High Priest, presented in three distinct Christological titles: 1) "High Priest of our confession" or "Apostle" (Heb. 3:1), which concerns the saving faith and fulfillment of the old law; 2) "the High Priest of our Souls" or "Mediator" through His earthly ministry from incarnation to sending of the Spirit; and 3) "High Priest over the house of God" (Heb. 10:21) by means of His sacramental and administrative ministry. Each of these titles reflect not only how Christ ministered "within and from outside of our humanity towards God the Father," but demonstrates the model by which each individual member of the Body of Christ, and the clergy must live and serve for the glory of the whole Body. This paper will demonstrate how these Christological truths play out "in and through" the life of each member, and the service of each priest.

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**Philip Abrahamson, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

### *Sexuality as 'Person'al Communion*

Nobody agrees exactly on a definition sexuality. This is the subject of much modern literature, academic work, and controversy. None can agree on what it is, but everyone seems to emphasize that it is important for understanding one's identity. Many modern movements are trying to widen the previously narrow assumptions of sex, gender and sexuality. Many people are excluded from traditional definitions, and thus from their society, culture, traditions, and even faiths.

Using Zizioulas' "Being as Communion" as a starting place from which to engage Patristic anthropology, I will challenge some of the long held beliefs as misconceptions of gender and sexuality. A valid Christian sexual theology must instead follow Trinitarian and Christological formulations and not precede them, ie. must not be assumed and taken for granted prior to Trinitarian and Christological significance. I will show that a theology of sexuality must rightly have Christ at the center and is essentially about 'person'al relationships between unique and unrepeatable persons, not merely bodies of the 'right' configuration.

Trinitarian theology assumes first the personhood of the Father, which will relationship in Trinity. The person of the Father of the Trinity is the basis for ethics of Trinitarian relationship and also the whole of human life. Likewise, human sexuality should follow Trinitarian theology as a communion first of persons, who will the relationship. Their personhood precedes their substance or body as far as a basis for an ethics of sexuality. Through this sexual theology we can see how, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

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**Liza Anderson, Harvard Divinity School**

### *The Vision of Hierarchy According to John of Dara*

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**Liza Anderson, Harvard Divinity School**

Hierarchy is one of the central themes in the writings of the ninth-century Syriac author John of Dara. John's writings on the nature of hierarchy present themselves as a commentary on the corpus of Pseudo-Dionysius. However, the understanding of hierarchy that is articulated in them has undergone subtle but significant shifts away from the perspective of the original Dionysian text. One of the more interesting examples of this is the way in which John describes all hierarchy as fundamentally ecclesiastical, from the angelic hierarchy down to the material elements of the legal hierarchy. John also places a much greater emphasis upon the role of the church as the mediator between the angelic and legal hierarchies, which leads him to a new understanding of the way in which the church should interpret Biblical and liturgical symbols. This paper will explore the nature of hierarchy as it is presented in a newly edited and translated homily of John of Dara, which was formerly misclassified as a homily on the priesthood, in order to see the ways in which John has received and transformed the Dionysian understanding of hierarchy.

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**Gavril Andreicut, Marquette University***A Text and Several Interpretations*

This paper shows that the early Christian Fathers mentioned in this paper interpreted Scripture according to the historical context and their personal interests. Particularly, this paper deals with the history of interpretation of Luke 14: 16-23. It is especially interested because Augustine used it to support the use of force against the Donatists. First, the paper shows how the passage was interpreted by the early Christian Fathers until Augustine. Second, since none of the Fathers before Augustine used it to support compulsion, we want to see Augustine's interpretation of the passage and the context in which Augustine was determined to use it. Particularly, this paper will show that the Parable of the Great Banquet was interpreted by the early Christian writers depending on the circumstances in which they found themselves. As one might expect, the Ante-Nicene writers found little use of the command "compel people to come in" in Luke 14:23 because before 311 Christians were the ones compelled to renounce their religion. Therefore, the references we find are rather to the Great Banquet generally than to Luke 14:23. We find references to the Great Banquet in Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, but none of these writers interpreted the passage as a way of supporting the use of force. After Nicea, we find references to the Great Banquet in Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Jerome. As before Nicea, none of these writers thought to see it as a support for the use of physical force against schismatics. This paper will show that the Parable of the Great Banquet was interpreted by the early Christian writers depending on the circumstances in which they found themselves and according to the interests they pursued.

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**Matthew Baker, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology***An Ambiguous Sacrifice: Christology, History and Hermeneutics in Origen's Homilies on Leviticus*

This paper investigates Origen's Homilies on Leviticus with an eye to the interconnected themes of Christology, time and materiality, considered in relationship to Origen's biblical hermeneutic. Arguably the high point of his entire commentary, Origen's homily 7 on Leviticus suggests a profound theology of time as the eschatological out-working of the atonement already achieved by the crucified and ascended high priest Jesus. Yet this theology of time struggles to articulate itself against Origen's more general tendency to undervalue history, evident throughout the Leviticus commentary. As will be observed, Origen's devaluation of the historical economy of Old Testament sacrifices in the Homilies on Leviticus ultimately undercuts the orthodoxy of his

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## **Matthew Baker, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

Christology, the hermeneutic of the "spiritual sense" compromising a fully Christocentric reading of the Levitical text in favor of a vision of Scripture and history which finally finds its telos in the "logos asarkos."

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## **Adriana Bara, Univesite de Montreal**

### *Byzantine Monastic Culture in Moldavia after the Fall of Constantinople*

In 1993 for the uniqueness of their exterior frescoes, five monasteries from northern Moldavia (Romania) have been classified as UNESCO patrimony. The exterior and interior frescoes represent a unique artistic phenomenon in post-Byzantine art, a masterpiece of mural painting. The monasteries have been erected during the reign of prince Petru Rares of Moldavia (1527-38 and 1541-46). Prince Rares promoted a new vision for Moldavian churches. He commissioned artists to cover the interiors and exteriors of the monastic churches' walls with elaborate frescoes, which are still visible today.

During Rares' reign there was a perceived political threat to his country represented by the Ottoman attacks. Rares' political message against the Ottoman Turks found its place in the monastery frescoes. Thus, on the exterior walls there is depicted the fall of Constantinople 1453 but, contrary to historical truth, the victors are the Byzantines. The iconographers adapted the theme of the siege according to Rares' desire to be the liberator of Constantinople and of Byzantine heritage.

The practice of painting the outer walls of the churches lasted only approximately sixty years. Although this art was in favor only for a short period of time, it is the most beautiful and fascinating Byzantine art manifested in Moldavia.

My presentation is a PowerPoint presentation. If my presentation is accepted, I kindly ask for visual equipment.

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## **Matthew Bemis, Boston College**

### *Athanasius and Antony: The Correlation Between Belief and Existence*

Athanasius has often been accused of using Antony as a political tool to justify the merits of Nicene theology. As a result, Antony's life and the beliefs he held are often evaluated apart from one another. This paper will attempt to show the inextricable bond between Antony's beliefs and the way he lived. It will utilize several of Athanasius' seminal works (*Orationes contra Arianos*, *De decretis*, *Vita Antonii*) as well as the letters that have been accredited to Antony. The primary aim, within the context of these writings, will be to evaluate the traditional beliefs espoused by Antony in relation to the way he lived. This paper will explore the intimate link between these two things. It will argue that his beliefs and confessions are not a matter of semantics or something merely "notional." Rather, they are indicative of existential realities. In order to do this, this paper will look specifically at the issue of Arianism. It will examine Athanasius' strong language against the Arians as well as the classical depiction of Antony in relation to this controversy. It will also consider Antony's response to the controversy as recorded in the letters assigned to him. Specifically, the paper will look seriously at the anti-Arian comments Athanasius ascribes to Antony as well as those Antony makes in his letters. It will argue that these statements must be taken seriously in reference to the life Antony is said to have lived and cannot merely be dismissed on political grounds.

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## **John Carr, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

### *St. Athanasius on Holy Scripture and the Fathers*

In his defense of Nicea, St. Athanasius reveals how the phrases “of the essence” and “one in essence” protect the Orthodox understanding of the Word and Son of God. However, in defending these words, St. Athanasius also defends the use of non-Scriptural phrases in a creed otherwise saturated with Scripture. My contention is that, in this aspect of his defense, St. Athanasius formulates the church’s mindset concerning Holy Scripture and the nature of its authority. He also formulates the church’s mindset on the relation between Scripture and the patristic witness, as he is defending the Nicene Fathers’ interpretation of Scripture as it is manifested in the creed. While I plan to consult the larger corpus of St. Athanasius’ anti-Arian writings, I will focus on two short treatises, *De Decretis* and *De Synodis*. My interpretation of St. Athanasius will be informed by the scholarship of T.F. Torrance and Cardinal John Henry Newman, both of whom wrote extensively on this Father of the church. The timeliness of this topic is evinced by the recent explosion of interest in patristic exegesis of Scripture seen in a multiplicity of new publications. In order to profit from this revival of interest in the fathers, it is important to search out the grounding principles of their exegesis, so that our reading of them does not take on a purely ‘proof-texting’ character. I hope to contribute towards this end in my investigation of St. Athanasius on Holy Scripture and the Fathers.

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## **Nick Case, Columbia University**

### *Essence and Energies: The Hesychasm of Gregory Palamas and Thomistic Metaphysics*

Hesychasm had as its primary goal, as defined by Palamas, to place the Name of Jesus (since the Name of God is identical to the presence of God) onto the organ of the heart. As a monastic practice, hesychasm was condemned vigorously by Western philosophers and theologians in the medieval period. After all, Palamas’ most substantial work was a defense of hesychasm against the charges of the humanist Barlaam the Calabrian. Barlaam claimed forcefully that hesychasm was inextricably tied with the Messalian movement, thus purposely making a correlation between hesychasm and a rejection of sacramental and hierarchical structures. This was the foreground in which Palamas defended the philosophical and theological foundations of hesychasm. And it is because of this tension between Palamite theology and Thomistic metaphysics that a detailed comparative analysis becomes prudent. As such in this paper I will examine the philosophical and theological implications of Palamas’ defense of hesychasm and compare these implications against Thomistic metaphysics. To accomplish this task I will examine the philosophical implications of Palamite theology of hesychasm, derived from his most substantial defense in favor of it, namely *The Triads*. I will also examine the philosophical implications of Thomistic metaphysics in direct relation to the hesychasm controversy, derived from Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Contra Gentiles*. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Thomas argues in opposition to hesychast metaphysics, devoting an entire chapter to the belief that in God existence and essence are the same. Finally, I will make concluding remarks on the comparative analysis of the two competing paradigms.

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## **Andrew Chronister, University of Notre Dame**

### *The Dialogue with Trypho: A Model for Ecumenical/Inter-religious Dialogue*

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## **Andrew Chronister, University of Notre Dame**

The call to dialogue, so intimately connected to Christ's command to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19), is one that, in recent decades, has gained momentum and energy, paving the way for frank and fruitful discussions not only between the various Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities, but also between Christians and our non-Christian brothers and sisters. As more and more people have become involved in these inter-religious and ecumenical conversations, questions have arisen: what is the goal of inter-religious/ecumenical dialogue? what should the structure of this type of dialogue be? what makes dialogue successful?

In this paper, I will seek to answer these questions through a consideration of Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho. I will show that the Dialogue with Trypho, perhaps despite first appearances, exhibits a particularly sophisticated notion of dialogue - especially with regard to the tools Justin employs in the course of the dialogue, the dialogue's structure, and its prayerful conclusion. These three elements combine to give us what we might view as a working model of how to engage in dialogue today. In detailing the relevant aspects of Justin's work, I will also make use of Pope John Paul II's encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*. In particular, I will use this encyclical as a way to expand upon certain points Justin makes and to highlight certain methods he employs.

Inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue is a difficult and often painful task, but it is one that can also bear great fruit. It is my hope that this paper will help advance this important cause.

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## **Anthony Coleman, Boston College**

### *Lactantius and the Stoics: Common Ground on the Apologetics of Providence*

The most extensive commentaries which we possess in the Latin tongue on the reigns of Diocletian (r.284-305) and Constantine (r.306-337) come to us from the North African apologist Lactantius (c.250-c.325). As a professional rhetorician, Lactantius enjoyed imperial posts under both emperors and was present at Nicomedia when, in the winter of 302/3, Diocletian summoned a concilium to address the "problem of Christianity." The mockery and disdain which he heard from two critics in particular prompted him to write a grand Christian apology, the *Divinae Institutiones*, "to wipe out in one single attack all those people everywhere who are attacking justice or who have done so" (DI 5.4.1).

In order to achieve this goal, Lactantius conducted a dialogue with his non-Christian audience on their own terms; offering evidence and arguing from premises that both parties held in common. For Lactantius, the most fundamental belief uniting both Christian and Roman was the doctrine of providence - a doctrine which every person could perceive and affirm. A truly Christian apology must, therefore, begin with an examination of the doctrine of providence (DI 1.2.1). This proposed paper will explore Lactantius' appropriation of the Stoic concept of providence in furtherance of his apologetic theology. It will examine Lactantius' specific arguments for the existence of providence, trace the influence of Stoic thought contained in these passages, and argue that - in both content and method - the Stoics have provided Lactantius with a firm ecumenical foundation upon which to construct his Christian apology.

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## **Bishoy Dawood, University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto**

### *What About the Gay Genes? Reflections on St. Athanasius' Theological Anthropology and its Implications on the Gay Gene Discourse*

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## **Bishoy Dawood, University of St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto**

The questions that arise from the possible existence of “gay genes” that contemporary scientific research is trying to discover raises questions not only in the scientific understanding of the “naturalness” of the homosexual orientation, but also has theological implications in terms of Christian ethics and how the existence of such genes may be conceived within the Christian story of the doctrines of creation, the Fall, and salvation. Some modern Orthodox thinkers, like Fr. Thomas Hopko, interpreted the possible existence of gay genes as a condition of the Fall. [1] Yet as a condition of the Fall, there remains the questions of how the homosexual person is supposed to live and act given that the person has the promise of salvation through Christ as a Christian: is the gay gene discourse a condition of the Fall that is to be eliminated through salvation in Christ, and as such one must not live or act upon the homosexual orientation; or is it a natural condition that will be transfigured through Christ, and as such one could live and act upon the natural desires of the homosexual orientation in a manner that would glorify God?

In this paper, I will attempt to answer the questions raised above concerning the theological implications of the gay gene discourse by first challenging the teaching that upholds the gay gene discourse is a consequence and a condition of fallen humanity, which is the common interpretation of Fundamentalist Christian groups who view homosexual behaviour as a conscious choice to sin, and which is also shared by some Orthodox thinkers today, such as Fr. Thomas Hopko; secondly, I will argue for the case that the gay gene discourse is a natural condition that will be transfigured in Christ. I will do so by examining the theological anthropology of St. Athanasius of Alexandria, which is an anthropology that is strongly based on his understanding of soteriology. [2] I will then use St. Athanasius’ anthropology as a hermeneutic to understanding the place of the gay gene discourse in the Christian story of the nature of humanity, the Fall, and salvation, and suggest ways of living as a Christian homosexual based on the ethical implications of St. Athanasius’ understanding of the human person and salvation.

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## **Stefaan Deschrijver, Weston Jesuit/Boston College School of Theology**

### *St Augustine and St Basil on the Holy Spirit*

Saint Augustine and Saint Basil Speculatively Diverge on Trinitarian Schemas, but Seem to Converge on the Holy Spirit’s Operations.

With a graphical method we visualize conceptual schemas by St Augustine in *On the Trinity* and St Basil in *On the Holy Spirit*. The difference on the speculative level is immediately visible. St. Basil’s Trinitarian schema underscores Divine Personhood as otherness, and Godhead as sameness. He protects the ineffability of God’s οὐσία; God’s ἐνέργεια hold together the two levels of creation—spiritual and visible—by God’s continuously creating Word. Augustine elevates the transcendence of God’s nature. For him creation is made “from, through, in” the realm of a transcendent God; the personae of the Trinity are conceptual relations! The human body forms an oppositional pair with the God substantia.

On the existential level there are conceptual differences but operational similarities. For St. Basil, the Trinity immanently operates in the world, promoting theosis in continuous creation-salvation driven by the Spirit towards the encounter between humans and God. For Augustine, God is not persistently present in history prior to the incarnation-salvation. The “Word became flesh” expands human nature enabling transcendental reality to incur into human ontology.

To make the similitudo of the dynamics of discourse—comparable to the operations of the Capadocians—between Divine Trinity and triadic anthropology work, Augustine replaces his Word-Christology from above, with Spirit-Christology from below. Starting theology from the

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**Stefaan Deschrijver, Weston Jesuit/Boston College School of Theology**

Trinitarian operations leads Basil to the same conclusion. Hence, we see agreement in the end: the Holy Spirit existentially enables salvation.

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**Gregory Edwards, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki***The Charisma of Administration (1Cor 12:28): Leadership in the Pauline Communities and Its Interpretation*

The evidence in the Pauline literature for communal organization and leadership in the first Christian communities is notoriously ambiguous and, most argue, contradictory. The issue of leadership served as one of the central points of contention in the Catholic-Protestant debate, which shaped and affected so much of Western culture. And even today, after 500 years, these groups maintain radically different interpretations of Christian leadership, which constitutes a major impediment to the ecumenical dialogue.

In this paper, I will examine what we can know of St. Paul's attitude toward church organization and how these ideas were developed in the first three centuries. I maintain that St. Paul accepted leadership as it manifested itself in the local communities, and thus it was charismatic in the sense that leaders naturally developed and were accepted by the communities, but not in a purely "spiritual" sense. The acknowledgment by the community of the "charisma of administration" (1Cor 12:28), as St. Paul calls it, was culturally determined.

This paper will trace the development of the idea of leadership through the later Pauline literature and into the first three centuries. I will argue that, although significant changes occur, such as the introduction of the language of priesthood, they represent an extrapolation of Pauline thought, specifically along two lines – theologically, of Paul's Body of Christ imagery, and sociologically, of the natural process of institutionalization.

Finally, I will briefly compare my analysis with the work of Metropolitan John (Zizioulas) of Pergamon, particularly his doctoral dissertation, published in English as *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop During the First Three Centuries*.

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**Doug Finn, University of Notre Dame***Antithetical Art: Opposition and Providential Design in Augustine's City of God*

Building upon two rhetorical and artistic images used in Book 11 of the *City of God*, this essay explores Augustine's aesthetic rendering of divine providence in that work and how he thereby strives to make sense of the paradoxes of human life and history. I argue that Augustine's understanding of the incarnation, in particular the salutary inversion of death effected by Christ's passion and resurrection, lies at the root of this aesthetic interpretation of history and manifests for Augustine the hidden beauty of God's eternal plan of salvation.

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**Amy Fredrickson, Providence College***Apollinaris' Understanding of Christ's Body in the Eucharist*

Salvation was central to the development of Christian theology during the late antique period. The participants present at the ecumenical councils and those responsible for the subsequent production of creedal statements were bishops. As bishops, the salvation of their parishioners, and all Christians, was central to the development of their theology. Speaking to the importance

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## Amy Fredrickson, Providence College

of the issue, Ignatius of Antioch states, "These are the last times. Therefore let us be reverent, let us fear the patience of God, let it become a judgment against us." (To the Ephesians, 11.1)

This was no different for Apollinaris; as Bishop of Laodicea he was very much concerned with how his fellow Christians would receive salvation from a God who was just as much human as divine. This was most troubling for him in terms of the liturgical implications it presented when offering the Eucharist. The question raised was: if Christ was fully human and fully divine, during the Eucharist how could a communicant be assured he was consuming only the divine nature? In other words, he questioned whether the human nature at that point overpowered the divine nature since one was partaking of the body and blood of Christ. For Apollinaris, there is an intrinsic connection between salvation and the Eucharist.

Apollinaris argued that in order for Christ to have redeemed humanity from sin he could not have been both fully human and fully divine. He instead claimed that Christ was fully divine (the Logos incarnate) having merely taken on the 'likeness of human nature'.

By comparing Apollinaris' On the union of the body with the Godhead and the creedal statement put forward at the Council of Constantinople (381) I will argue that that creedal statement clarifies the two natures of Christ in response to Apollinaris' teaching. Without question, the Church would never have been "forced" to more explicitly define its doctrine on the two natures were it not for the popularity of Apollinaris' teachings and the threat of those teachings to the salvific message of Christianity.

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## Dean Gjorceski, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

### *Dwelling Place of Mind and Soul: The Role of the Heart in Pseudo-Macarian Homilies*

Pseudo-Macarius is probably one of the most influential spiritual authors in Christian spirituality. His spiritual Homilies have had a tremendous influence on key figures in the Christian tradition, including his near contemporaries Diadochus of Photiche and Mark the Monk, as well as later mystical writers like SS Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory Palamas, and even western Protestant authors such as Wesley, and through him, the later Pentecostal/Charismatic movements.

Although he was never officially condemned by a council, Pseudo-Macarius has tended to be posthumously condemned in recent centuries for espousing a (too) Messalian theology. In respect to the type of the spirituality, it was mistakenly labeled as "affective" (as opposed to Evagrius' "intellectual" spirituality) and disrespectful to sacraments and church authority.

The main goal of this paper is to deal with type of Macarian spirituality, generally focusing and referring to the most popular Collection II of Macarian homilies (although when necessary, quotations from the other collections will be used). More particularly, it will focus on the most frequently used language of the heart, soul, mind, as well as imagery of throne, enthronement, dwelling and transformation. By pointing out the richness and complexity of the spiritual struggle in Macarian homilies and the fascinating mixture of Hellenic and Syriac way of expressing Christianity theology, the paper will show that Macarian spirituality is particularly orthodox and contrary to popular opinion, it is also highly intellectual.

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## Scott Hodgman, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley

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## **Scott Hodgman, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley**

### *Gregory of Nyssa's "God for Us"*

In *God for Us*, Catherine LaCugna offers an important point for reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity: "Because the essence of God is permanently unknowable as it is in itself, every attempt to describe the immanent trinity pertains to the face of God turned toward us." Therefore Trinitarian theology must look to a God for us if it is to articulate something concrete and existentially meaningful. As she goes on to argue further, "The doctrine of the Trinity is not ultimately a teaching about 'God' but a teaching about God's life with us and our life with each other." Yet, in her estimation this is what contemporary Trinitarian theology has precisely missed as it evolved from its Pre-Nicene foundations. Her argument in *God for Us* seeks to remedy this problematic. In so doing, she begins naturally with the "Cappadocians" and their supposed disjoining of *oikonomia* and *theologia*. Because of this supposed disjunction, LaCugna sees the ground prepared for later theologians to separate the two entirely and thus the defeat of the doctrine of the Trinity in any practical sense. For LaCugna, this defeat is precisely the lack of meaning Trinitarian theology has in the lived experience of Christians. This essay however challenges the characterization of the "Cappadocians" offered by LaCugna; further, it challenges her contention that the Cappadocians are the root of this Christian existential crisis.

In effect, Gregory of Nyssa, if he is representative of "Cappadocian" theology, neither fits her characterization nor theologizes according to her "Cappadocian" paradigm—namely, arguing from a common *ousia* or an intradivine realm of God's tri-personal life. In fact, Gregory not only disproves her characterization of "Cappadocian" theology; he also offers a theological foundation in accordance with LaCugna's revitalization agenda. Gregory's theology of the triune God often starts from biblical premises, employs the Trinitarian economy of salvation as its references, and ultimately conceives from this a conceptual theology. This conceptual theology continually underscores the inseparability of biblical faith, sacramental life, and doxological praise—Christian integrity in short. These are precisely LaCugna's issue with contemporary Trinitarian theology where these elements are divorced from theological speculation on the triune God. This separation is a separation of the Trinitarian economy of salvation—actualized in biblical faith, sacramental life, and doxology—with a conceptual theology of God. In her opinion what is said about God does not fit the way humanity is co-operating with the triune God in the economy of salvation. However, Gregory is an eminent (Neo-)Nicene theologian who has not fallen into the problematic outlined by LaCugna. Given LaCugna's agenda, "Through doxology, through recounting the *magnalia dei*, we enter into God's saving act; we see and hear God's face and name proclaimed before us. Doxology, the habitual praise of God keeps together *theologia* and *oikonomia* in practice; we worship by worshipping God for us." Gregory of Nyssa not only breaks the caricature cast by LaCugna, but provides a meaningful possibility for actualizing precisely what LaCugna is after—namely, a revitalization of Trinitarian theology in accord with the lived experience of Christians.

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## **Zachary Kostopoulos, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

### *The Holy Spirit As Unction in the Theological Tradition of Orthodoxy*

The Church's theology concerning the Holy Spirit only began to truly develop after the first ecumenical council in 325. In 381, we read the following words from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified." This brief yet integral line presents great steps forward in Pneumatological thought. The careful wording of the creed came about from the Church's ability to look back at its tradition in the

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## **Zachary Kostopoulos, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology**

scriptures as well as its liturgical life, and through these elements it developed a theology centered on the Spirit's divinity.

The focus of this paper then is to trace one Patristic theological theme in dealing with the Spirit's divinity, which is the Spirit as unction. This paper sets out to examine and compare the Patristic writings of St. Athanasius and the Cappadocians. The essential thesis of the paper is that we see the Spirit as unction in two forms, unction for Christ and unction for humanity. Both of these forms point ultimately to the divinity of the Holy Spirit but in doing so reveal different tendencies. The Holy Spirit as unction of Christ leans towards the life of the imminent Trinity while the Spirit as the unction of humanity demonstrates more so the economic Trinity. In the end, what harmonizes these two seemingly different "lives" of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit, the same person that is unction for all. My paper also attempts in its entirety to move from a unique act of a person in the Trinity (Holy Spirit as unction) to the entire life of the Trinity (imminent, economic) through careful and critical readings of Patristic sources.

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## **Nick Marinides, Princeton University**

### *Miracle collections and Christian education in seventh-century Byzantium*

Historians of Christianity have often been puzzled by what to do with the genre of hagiography. Its often miraculous character is difficult to reconcile with modern historical methodology, but given that it constitutes a large part of the surviving texts, it cannot simply be ignored. In a survey of the hagiographical sub-genre of early Byzantine miracle collections (4th-7th centuries), the Bollandist scholar Hippolyte Delehaye lamented their allegedly incredible and unedifying character. More recent scholars have sidestepped the problem of incredulity by using accounts of the supernatural to better understand the Byzantine thought-world. In this paper I apply such an approach to miracle collections of the 7th century A.D. in order to also address Delehaye's view of them as unedifying.

The negative reading represented by Delehaye has already been extensively challenged. For example, Pierre Maraval has noted how the Miracles of Ss. Kyros and John, written by Sophronios of Jerusalem, was not merely an exercise in naïveté or propaganda for the saints' shrine, but an attempt to educate and benefit the audience with theological and moral teachings. I wish to take Maraval's approach further by comparing Sophronios's educational methods to those used in other roughly contemporary miracle collections such as those of Ss. Kosmas and Damianos, Artemios, and Demetrios.

The last-named is a masterful work of pastoral education by Archbishop John I of Thessalonike (+ ca. 620). Using the opportunity presented by the need for encomia of the beloved patron saint of the city, he weaves in all manner of apologetic and ascetic teachings. These include a narrative exposition of the monastic model of eight evil thoughts, a detailed critique of the use of magical amulets, and extended meditations on contemporary famines and barbarian sieges of Thessalonike as providential chastisement by God. John's work is thus important evidence for a project of Christian education in the difficult conditions of seventh-century Byzantium. The other miracle collections are far less developed than John's but they also offer important evidence of a similar kind. In them we see teachings that clerical elites were attempting to convey and some of their effects on the faithful and especially on laypeople.

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## **Sheila McCarthy, University of Notre Dame**

### *Mercy v. Empire: Augustine on True Worship in Book X of The City of God*

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## Sheila McCarthy, University of Notre Dame

Throughout *de Civitate Dei*, Augustine contrasts the city of God, built on humility, and the city of humanity (specifically the Roman Empire), built on superbia, pride. The city of God holds Christ as king, a king who requires worship. This worship is not for his benefit, but for our happiness. The worship Christ requires is *opera misericordiae*, the works of mercy, done for oneself and for others, for the sake of God. To be formed into the worship of Christ, into the works of mercy, is to be shaped by the liturgy. From this place of Eucharistia, thanksgiving, the Empire is exposed in its pride, in its lack of thanksgiving. Against the self-worship of Rome, which wishes to be worshipped in the place of God, Augustine puts forth his views on the true worship of God in Book X of *de Civitate Dei*.

Using Micah 6.6 and Hosea 6.6, which lay out the demands of God as practicing justice, loving mercy, doing good, and loving others, the African bishop explains that a sacrifice is not a giving up of something, but rather “every act which is designed to unite us to God in a holy fellowship,” (X.6). God’s grace and mercy, manifested in the supreme work of mercy of the Incarnation allows us, invites us to respond in gratitude, to be merciful to ourselves and others. True worship of God is to turn from the lust for domination, the pride that empire cultivates, and turn towards loving Christ in the members of Christ.

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## Gregorio Montejo, Marquette University

*“And They Become Conformed to the One in a Glorious Body, When They Are Transformed by the Renewal of Their Mind”*: Deuterotic Hermeneutics in Origen’s *Mystical Paideia*

In the Prologue to the Commentary on the Song of Songs (1.7) Origen enunciates a pedagogical principle of ordering doctrines according to the progress of the soul, evinced by the sequence of ethics, physics, epoptics, as a propaedeutic to deuteroseis – the program of instruction developed in early Judaism that focuses on the Genesis creation-account, Ezekiel’s Throne-theophany, and the epithalamial Song of Songs. This study examines how Origen’s pedagogy is elaborated in discourse with this esoteric Jewish tradition and outlines Origen’s correlative project of scriptural hermeneutics focusing on the creation of the eikonic/hylic Adam (Genesis), the anthropic manifestation of God’s glory (Ezekiel), and incorporation into the body of Christ (Song of Songs). Origen’s mystical paideia is shaped by a series of readings of this problematic ‘anthropomorphite’ corpus, where the body forms the basis of a deuterotic hermeneutic, at once both the contested locus of redemptive meaning and a vehicle of transcendence. Through this Christian deuteroseis there is an advancement in purification that brings about a gradual restoration of the protological eikon of the Logos in the believer, revealed when the heavens are opened, the senses purified, and the glorious form of the Son discerned with the internal spiritual faculties. Those who see the heavens, the very throne of God, do so because they bear the image of Christ, and have thus become heavenly and throne-like. The final stage of the soul’s progress is an entrance into an eschatological beatitude described as the wedding-feast of Christ the Bridegroom and the soul/Bride.

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## Marcos Ramos, University of St. Michael’s College

*The New Eve: The Virgin Mary in Irenaeus of Lyon’s Adversus haereses*

Irenaeus of Lyons presents many important insights about the Christian faith in his work *Adversus haereses*. In his arguments with heterodox groups, Irenaeus presents his interpretation of the Pauline theory of the recapitulation of history by Christ, Christ as the new Adam, and subsequently the recapitulation of Adam. It is at this moment in the discussion that the bishop of

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## **Marcos Ramos, University of St. Michael's College**

Lyons introduces the idea of Mary as someone who was able to cooperate in the salvation of humankind by her obedience. Mary as the new or second Eve parallels Christ as the new Adam, and reflects the theological considerations of the first centuries of Christianity regarding the role of Mary in the Incarnation and Redemption.

This paper will examine the idea of Mary as new Eve as presented in *Adversus haereses* and its dependence upon the idea of the recapitulation of Christ. Secondly it will explore the Eve-Mary typology, and its parallel Adam-Christ typology, as reflective of the historical and cultural challenges of the Church of the second and third centuries. Lastly, this paper shall explore the insights of Irenaeus of Lyons regarding Mary still relevant today; specifically the recapitulation in Christ, and the typologies Adam-Christ and Eve-Mary, and their significance in constructing the role of Mary in salvation history: her active role for the advocacy of the human race and contemporary gender concerns in soteriological discussions.

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## **Teva Regule, Boston College**

### *Christian Formation in the Mystagogical Catecheses of Cyril of Jerusalem*

The Mystagogical Catecheses attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem [1] were the culmination of a series of lectures delivered by the bishop in the city during the Paschal season in the 4th century. These lessons included an introductory lecture at the beginning Lent to those catechumens in the final stage of preparation for baptism, followed by eighteen catechetical lectures explaining the doctrines of the Christian faith. The final five lectures – the mystagogical catecheses that explained the “mysteries” of the faith – were not delivered until after the candidates had been fully initiated. This paper will focus on the formative value of the rites of initiation presented by Cyril in the Mystagogical Catecheses. I will first put the sermons into their context in Jerusalem. I will then focus briefly on the power of ritual and symbol in the rites of initiation. Lastly, I will discuss how Cyril understands the process of becoming a Christian within the rites of initiation – baptism, chrismation, and eucharist. For Cyril, by imitating Christ and participating in His life, both personally and communally, the initiate learns what it means to follow Christ – to become a Christian.

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## **Daniel Robinson, Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute Graduate Theological Union-Berkeley**

### *The Justice of Suffering in John Chrysostom*

John Chrysostom gave a series of sermons in 388 or 389 to his congregation in Antioch concerning the parable of Lazarus and the rich man found in Luke 16:19-31. Throughout these sermons, Chrysostom employed very harsh terminology regarding the necessity of suffering. At points Chrysostom seems to imply a sinister divine requirement for the suffering of every individual. These sermons are related to the larger theological nebula concerning the role of divine justice in post-mortem retribution. They also present much insight into the economic stratification of Chrysostom's audience, as rich and poor were vulnerable to quite disproportionate magnitudes of suffering.

□A consideration of the sociological information contained in Libanius' and Chrysostom's writings through the research of J. Liebeschuetz, J. Huskinson, J. Maxwell, I Sandwell, and F Trombley will provide a sense of the general prevalence of suffering in Chrysostom's Antioch. A balance between the social and theological motivations of these sermons will be proposed.

It was the ubiquitousness of suffering and its imbalanced infliction on the lower classes that provided Chrysostom's sermons with their bite. They were not a blanket call for the suffering of

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**Daniel Robinson, Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute  
Graduate Theological Union-Berkeley**

all in his congregation, but the simultaneous condemnation of the opulent and consolation for the destitute.

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**Scott Rushing, Baylor University**

*In Defense of Theodoret: Nicaea in the Historia Ecclesiastica*

In recent decades, scholars of Late Antiquity, e.g. R.P.C. Hanson, Richard Vaggione, and Lewis Ayres, have written extensively on the role of Nicaea in the years 325-381 CE. Several of the ancient texts, including the ecclesiastical histories of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, have been subjected to scrutiny and criticism for inaccurately portraying the Council of Nicaea (325) as the pre-eminent standard of theological orthodoxy by which all bishops and “parties” were judged. These fifth century historians have themselves been judged by modern scholars for following Athanasius’ lead in uncritically accepting his historical assessment that the “orthodox” church faithfully taught the doctrines of Nicaea in the decades immediately following 325.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that the function of Nicaea as an “ecumenical” council evolved in the years following 325. The ecclesiastical histories of Socrates and Sozomen contributed to the misperception that Nicaea and its Christological doctrine of homoousios were immediately hailed as the ecumenical standard of orthodoxy.

In this paper, I will argue that Theodoret did not follow the course of Socrates and Sozomen in assigning such a standard to Nicaea in those years when its status continued to evolve. Socrates and Sozomen often spoke of the need for “catholic” bishops to defend Nicaea during the years of 325-350. However, Theodoret chose a more nuanced course in delineating the role of Nicaea in those turbulent years. Unlike Socrates and Sozomen, Theodoret did not judge the creeds written at Antioch (341) or Serdica (343) by the standard of Nicaea.

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**Joshua Sales, Wheaton**

*Free Will in Origen's Writings*

In this essay I undertake a brief exploration of the philosophical milieu in which Origen is writing, from the receding Middle-Platonic philosophy to the up and coming Neo-Platonic period which by his time was beginning to dominate.

At the core of the essay is the attempt to show a distinction that Origen made and elevated in this debate. For most Greek Philosophers there had until then been a pseudo-materialist phrasing of the question, especially regarding the concept of *heimarmene*. I attempt to show that even in the inclusion of the foreknowledge debate of the gods, the Greek philosophers are really quite on different terms and thinking in a very different way than Origen is. Origen had studied and even engaged with these philosophers, but he also shows a heightened level of Biblical awareness and a distinct adaptation of some of the arguments which philosophers like Alexandros of Aphrodisias and others had leveled against Determinists and especially Epictetus.

For Origen's section I will most likely be highlighting two of his basic tenets relating to the issue - the first being the distinction between the being moved, being moved of oneself and being moved out of oneself. The other is the idea that where there is blameworthiness there must also be necessitated praiseworthiness. I will also engage with his exposition of God's foreknowledge and the ordering of the world based off humanity's future actions, foreknown by God so that God can both remain fully sovereign and man fully free. For the exploration of Origen I will mainly be

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**Joshua Sales, Wheaton**

looking at Philokalia 21 - 27 and de Oratione 6 1,2.

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**John Sehorn, University of Notre Dame***Exile, Exegesis, and Liturgy in Origen's Homily 1 on Ezekiel*

This paper explores Origen's first homily on Ezekiel as a window into his exegetical practices, in particular with a view to how they relate to the Church's sacraments and liturgy. Origen's overarching concern in this homily is to counter both Marcionites and Gnostics, and so he focuses initially on God's hidden mercy in administering punishments, the unity of the Testaments, and the reality of Christ's incarnation. His execution, however, provides some purchase on Origen's thinking about deeper issues pertaining to scripture, sacraments, and liturgy within the divine economy of our healing. Origen's exegesis of Ezekiel 1 remains firmly anchored to the literal sense, but it is essential for him that we learn to see ourselves mysteriously addressed in the Old Testament. Israel's exile from Jerusalem parallels our own estrangement through sin from Christ. By attending to the details of the biblical text, Origen typologically ties Ezekiel's vision to the baptism of Jesus. Because of Christians' sacramental participation in Christ, Jesus' baptism then becomes a nexus of meaning through which Christians encounter themselves in the text of the Old Testament. By virtue of Christians' baptismal illumination, the liturgical proclamation and exposition of scripture become an occasion for the faithful to participate in the vision witnessed by the prophet Ezekiel. While the paper focuses on a single homily, I also refer to other works of Origen, as well as relevant secondary literature.

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**Andrew Selby, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology***"A New Way to be Human": Origen on the Holy Spirit in the Baptism of Christ*

The baptism of Jesus Christ is one of the foremost mysteries of the Christian religion, a fact not lost on the churches of the second through fourth centuries. While this scene was often depicted in early Christian images and the earliest known feast, except for Easter, was celebrated in honor of the event, early theologians found it difficult to explain. Why did a perfect and sinless man need to be baptized by John, who baptized for repentance? Did the Father's affirmation of Jesus as his beloved Son imply an adoptionistic theology? What is the significance of the first explicit appearance of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together in the biblical narrative? From the fount of Jesus' baptism flow the central doctrines of the Trinity and baptism.

As one might expect, Origen attempted to wrestle through these topics, charting new areas of Christian theology and setting the course for future reflection on this event. This paper will argue that Origen, following Paul in Rom. 6:4, viewed the baptism of Christ as opening up to human beings a new mode of existence. In particular, because humanity could now receive the Holy Spirit in a stable and abiding way, believers in Christ could receive newfound life and knowledge of God. Focusing on the relation of the Holy Spirit to humanity, this paper will investigate key texts on this issue from the Commentary on John and the Homilies on Luke.

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**Meredith Stoops, Benedictine College***The filioque and the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*

Even a cursory review of the history of Christianity reveals tensions rising between the East and

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## **Meredith Stoops, Benedictine College**

West from very early on in the Church. The mere barrier of language created a plethora of miscommunications. Estrangement simmered until boiling over when Photius condemned the use and theology of the filioque as a break in Tradition and even as heresy. In his work *On the Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, he vehemently opposes the filioque and supports procession from the Father alone. He argues that the filioque ultimately results in semi-Sabellianism and that it excludes the Holy Spirit from the fullness of the divine nature.

□In this paper, I will argue that the filioque is both in continuity with patristic Tradition – both Eastern and Western – and that it is orthodox theology. The goal of this paper is not to challenge the Eastern position on the procession of the Holy Spirit. Rather, the goal is to address accusations made in Photius’ *Mystagogy* in the hopes of clarifying any misunderstandings that may persist between the members of the Orthodox and Catholic Church on the subject. In this paper, after providing a context for the filioque controversy, I will examine Photius’ argument against it. Next, I will offer a reply to his argument. This will be done by drawing out his conclusions, which reveals surprising, though certainly unintended inconsistencies and by considering later writings by Thomas Aquinas on the procession of the Holy Spirit. Finally, I will present support for the filioque found in earlier patristic writings. I hope this paper will foster fruitful ecumenical dialogue on the subject.

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## **George Tadros, University of Wales Lampeter**

### *The Johannine Theology in the Writings of Dionysius Areopagite*

The writings of Dionysius the Areopagite are challenging to many in the field of Patristics. Despite being anonymous, he introduces many key theological themes including the hierarchies, sacramental theology, cataphatic and apophatic theology. Research has traced Dionysius’ extensive use of neo-platonic language, yet many defend him as a mainstream Christian who is just using philosophical language that was common to his era. On the contrary, few articles have discussed the influence of Biblical scripture on Dionysius.

This article will focus on defining and outlining the influence of the Johannine theology and text on Dionysius’ theology in the following specific themes; first, his description of the visible and invisible realms and the symbolism within to define man’s perception and reception of the Divine gifts and his invocation to be uplifted through the visible signs and sacraments as a conversion of what is taken from the realm of senses to the service of the divine. Second, his definition of theology not so much as “the knowledge about God, but knowledge of God through communion with Him and contemplation of Him” where the ultimate knowledge of God is achieved through purification, illumination and perfection manifested in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy as an institution and in Mystical Theology as an individual. The final theme is his introduction of the hierarchies as the theophany of God and outpouring of His love as an institution of sacred order and mechanism of return for creation to its ultimate beauty and restoration in God.

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## **Tenny Thomas, Union Theological Seminary**

### *The Mysteries of the Eucharist in the Thought of Ephrem the Syrian*

Ephrem the Syrian is one of the most important poet and theologian of Eastern Christian Tradition; unfortunately he is limited to the Syriac Christian tradition. His numerous hymns, homilies, and commentaries were highly influential and continue to be broadly used in various theological contexts.

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## Tenny Thomas, Union Theological Seminary

Ephrem the Syrian was born into a Christian family in Nisibis in about 306 A.D. He was Christianity's most important Syriac speaking representative and uniquely succeeded in reconciling the vocations of theologian and poet. He was educated and grew up beside James, Bishop of Nisibis (303-338), and with him founded the theological school in his city. He was ordained a deacon and was intensely active in local Christian community life until 363, the year when Nisibis fell into Persian hands. Ephrem then emigrated to Edessa, where he continued his activity as a preacher. He died in Edessa in 373.

In this paper, I will analyze the most important madrashe (hymn) "The Mysteries of the Eucharist" where Ephrem considers the Eucharistic Mysteries. To speak of the Eucharist, Ephrem used various images, chief among them being: medicine of life, embers or burning coal and the pearl.

The burning coal theme was taken from the Prophet Isaiah (cf. 6: 6). It is the image of one of the seraphim who picks up a burning coal with tongs and simply touches the lips of the Prophet with it in order to purify them; the Christian, on the other hand, touches and consumes the Burning Coal which is Christ himself:

"In your bread hides the Spirit who cannot be consumed; in your wine is the fire that cannot be swallowed. The Spirit in your bread, fire in your wine: behold a wonder heard from our lips."

"The seraph could not bring himself to touch the glowing coal with his fingers, it was Isaiah's mouth alone that it touched; neither did the fingers grasp it nor the mouth swallow it; but the Lord has granted us to do both these things." "The fire came down with anger to destroy sinners, but the fire of grace descends on the bread and settles in it. Instead of the fire that destroyed man, we have consumed the fire in the bread and have been invigorated."  
(Hymn De Fide 10: 8-10).

Here again is an example of St Ephrem's hymns, where he speaks of the pearl as a symbol of the riches and beauty of faith: "I placed (the pearl), my brothers, on the palm of my hand, to be able to examine it. I began to look at it from one side and from the other: it looked the same from all sides. (Thus) is the search for the Son inscrutable, because it is all light. In its clarity I saw the Clear One who does not grow opaque; and in his purity, the great symbol of the Body of Our Lord, which is pure. In his indivisibility I saw the truth which is indivisible."  
(Hymn On the Pearl 1: 2-3).

I will briefly compare Ephrem's description of the Eucharist with the description of the Eucharist in the Byzantine tradition as well.

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## Alexis Torrance, Oxford University

*Patristic precedents for the contemporary Orthodox concept of personhood:  
clear or tenuous?*

Among the most pre-eminent Orthodox theologians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (including Lossky, Zizioulas, Yannaras, and others) has been a noted tendency to espouse a "personalist" theology, heavily informed by their respective readings of the Fathers. This tendency, however, has come under fire from both Orthodox and non-Orthodox as an inauthentic and misleading appropriation of the Fathers in the modern world. This paper aims to clearly set out the parameters for the debate, first bringing out the main ideological positions at stake, before

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## Alexis Torrance, Oxford University

addressing vital questions surrounding the whole issue of personalism in patristic thought which deserve further study. Broadly, these questions fall into two categories: first those pertaining to patristic thought itself, especially regarding the way in which patristic anthropology and trinitarian theology are read and studied; and second those pertaining to the interaction between personalist thought in Orthodox theology and the development of personalism in the West, something that has received very little scholarly attention. Having laid this groundwork, it will be suggested that a more thorough, balanced, and wide-ranging study of the theological, philosophical, and historical issues related to the concept of personhood (as expressed by many Orthodox writers) is much needed.

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## Petros Toulis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

### *Theophanes of Nicea: Five Orations on the Light of Tabor. Palamite or Thomistic influence on his Theology?*

Theophanes II, metropolitan of Nicea (died c. 1381) was one of those numerous Palamite Theologians of the Paleologan era, whose spiritual and intellectual legacy is still not fully understood. Now when his major theological work "Five orations on the Light of Tabor" is published, he appears before us not only as a polemicist against both first and second generations of Anti-Palamites, but also as an exponent and in a sense, a creator of the traditionally grounded Dogmatic and Mystical Hesychast theology crowned with the detailed teaching on the Divine Light and Grace as an apex of the salvation and divinisation of the righteous.

In this paper we will try to present an outline of his Five Orations on the Light of Tabor and we will stand into the basic theological teachings such as the energetic basis of our deification, the tripartite division of deification, the meaning of symbol and Icon, and finally we will try to understand whether Theophanes followed exactly St Gregory Palamas or he inspired by Thomas Aquinas.

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## Sergey Trostyanskiy, Union Theological Seminary

### *The Property of Simplicity in Affirmative and Negative Theological Approaches*

The distinction between negative and affirmative approaches to theology has been on the surface of scholarship for many centuries. Both approaches have their distinctive properties which do not normally overlap. The concept of simplicity, however, shows up in both approaches. It seems reasonable that affirmative approach poses simplicity of the Divine being as His/Its essential property and that negative approach accepts such property as a symbolic manifestation of the Divine, but through the process of abstraction finally brushes it away as an intrinsic element of referential language which is not epistemologically valid for theology. Thus, affirmative branch affirms and negative branch negates, as 'simple' as that. The question that I pose in this article is whether these affirmations and negations are free of inner contradictions and thus coherent.

In order to unfold this subject I analyze Plato's Parmenides where the concept of a simple entity is exposed in a great depth. I also review the Aristotelian concept of a simple being as it can be found in Metaphysics. Based on this investigation I distinguish two senses of simplicity, namely, an absolute and relative. I propose that in its absolute sense simplicity does not allow for both inherence and predication, meaning that simplicity in this case might be interpreted as something undifferentiated, something which subject cannot be defined and does not allow for predication, and which cannot have any physical or metaphysical parts inherent in subject as well. The loose version of simplicity denies parts but allows for identity and predication. Both meanings of

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## **Sergey Trostyanskiy, Union Theological Seminary**

simplicity, however, are not free of inner contradictions. Thus the strong version loses the subject to which simplicity can be predicated. Moreover, if simplicity is affirmed it is affirmed here only symbolically, targeting imagination rather than reason as the latter one cannot apprehend the whole without parts and vice versa. In a loose version what is affirmed to be simple can be considered as such only with certain classifications, but ultimately makes theological discourse incoherent. I pose the following question: if simplicity is considered as not well-defined concept why the property of simplicity is so widespread in theology and used by both theological approaches? I attribute such use to philosophical tradition used by theology for the reason of persuasion.

I analyze the use of the property of simplicity in negative approach to theology (mainly referring to Plotinus and Dionysius) and propose that the rejection of this property is inconsistent as it perfectly fits into the Plotinus' concept of *aporia apophasis* as it fuses contradictories within the same subject. I also analyze the use of simplicity in affirmative approach (mainly referring to Origen of Alexandria) and conclude that ultimately the notion of simplicity here is aporetic and nonsensical.

I finally conclude the article by suggesting that the source of incoherence might be connected with multiple semantic shifts (that had happened over centuries) in development of the concept of simplicity.

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## **Xueying Wang, University of Notre Dame**

### *Domestic Asceticism and Social Charisma: a Reading of the Life of St. Macrina by Gregory of Nyssa*

Compared to its contemporary ascetic literature, Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Macrina* seems to represent a moderate style of ascetic life. Macrina was not engaged in spectacular ascetic practices such as isolation from human society, extremely stringent fasting, bearing weight, or fighting with the demons. On the contrary, she spent her whole lifetime in her ancestral household as a devoted daughter, sister, and manager. Unlike the ascetics who withdrew from the society, Macrina blessed her household with unflinching presence.

Because the location of her ascetic activities was restricted to her family estate, Elizabeth Clark argues that Macrina did not have the social charisma that male monastic leaders possessed by standing outside the society. It is the aim of this essay to illustrate that although Macrina accepted various social roles, she changed the traditional implications of them, and essentially transformed and transcended them. Thus the household in which Macrina plays different roles constituted an advantageous medium through which she lived out her philosophy. Through her complete identification with Christ in her domestic life, Macrina represented an important aspect of Christian asceticism: the pursuit of religious ideals may not be so much in external, institutional characteristics of ascetic practices as in the qualitative changes a life focused on Christ brought about in the way a person lived, regarded others and interacted with the world. Therefore, Macrina had an influence, as a Christian model and leader, on people outside the household, in a way analogous to the holy men of her time.