Abstracts for the Pappas Patristic Institute's Graduate Student Conference on March 5-7, 2015

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<th>Presenter</th>
<th>Jeffrey Baynham</th>
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<td>Institution</td>
<td>Ave Maria University</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>The Undying Relevance of Patristic Exegesis: A Brief Comparison of Origen and Joseph Fitzmyer on Paul's Purpose in Romans</td>
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<td>Abstract</td>
<td>As advances in our textual and historical methods analyzing of scripture have advanced, an undercurrent of disapproval of patristic exegesis has gained ground. This is most clearly expressed by Raymond Brown in the Jerome Biblical Commentary, specifically the essay, Hermeneutics, contained therein. In this essay Origen’s extensive exegesis is dismissed as disregarding or underemphasizing the literal sense of scripture. Due to this, Brown, as well as Fitzmyer who contributed to the commentary, engage with patristic commentaries only minimally in comparison with far more effort put towards modern exegetes. It is with this understanding that Brown goes so far as to say that patristic exegesis “has little in common with the methods and results of modern Catholic exegesis.” My purpose in this paper is to show how when given a fair chance to speak, patristic exegesis can contribute to the modern exegetical discussion by a brief comparison of Joseph Fitzmyer’s commentary on Romans with Origen’s, specifically in their understanding of Paul’s own purpose for writing Romans. While there is some clear distinction in the method of the two men, though far more overlap than Brown has written of, their results are strikingly similar. Fitzmyer, through a study of exegetes going as far back as the reformation, historical documents he finds relevant, and the text of Romans itself is able to describe a plausible backdrop within which Paul would be writing. Origen derives and assumes much of this same backdrop merely from a close reading of the text itself in his commentary. Both find that Paul is writing because of an existing divide between Christians, those of Jewish heritage versus those of Gentile origin. In Origen’s words: “Paul, like an arbiter sitting between the Jews and the Greeks” attempts to resolve their differences.</td>
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<th>Stephen Beale</th>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Antidote to Death: The Typological Identification of the Eucharist with the Forbidden Fruit in the Thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa</td>
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Abstract

The paper examines the typological identification of the Eucharist with the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden in the thought of St. Gregory of Nyssa. The paper focuses on his conception of the Eucharist as the antidote to the corrupting effects the fruit has on human nature. Whereas the forbidden fruit is seen as causing corruption of the body and ultimately death, the Eucharist is viewed as reversing these effects, becoming a medicine of immortality.

The paper will apply a methodological framework developed by Ann Astell in Eating Beauty: The Eucharist and the Spiritual Arts of the Middle Ages (Cornell University Press, 2006). Astell argues that four major spiritualities of the Middle Ages—Cistercian, Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit—saw the Eucharist as instilling the virtue opposite to the particular vice represented by the eating of the forbidden fruit. For example, if the sin was interpreted as pride, reception of the Eucharist became an act of humility. This paper points to Gregory as evidence that the basic typological relationship between the forbidden fruit and the Eucharist was also operative in the patristic era. However, in the case of Gregory, the typological opposition takes the form of an effect-and-remedy rather than vice-and-virtue. Key texts that examined are: The Great Catechism, On the Making of Man, On the Soul and the Resurrection.

Presenter
Peter Bullerwell

Institution
McGill University

Title
Mediation and Embodiment in Augustine's De civitate Dei

Abstract

It is often suggested that two distinct Platonisms emerge in late antiquity: one (Plotinian), in which part of the soul remains above in nous, and another (Iambiliean/Proclean), in which the soul is more fully descended into the world of becoming. St. Augustine is generally associated with the former and thereby distinguished from (for example) the more Proclean Pseudo-Dionysius. The difference clearly emerges in the theme of mediation. Augustine's emphasis in De civitate Dei IX on Christ as sole mediator between man and God contrasts the Dionysian emphasis on theurgic acts involving ecclesiastical and angelic hierarchy. For Augustine, Christ's mediation bypasses the angelic ranks and joins the soul to God directly, bringing the soul to a state that is like that of the angels. This apparently non-hierarchical relation between men and angels, however, is complicated in the subsequent books. In book XI Augustine finds and treats an inequality and hierarchical structure in the cosmos. Moreover, Augustine strictly rejects the Origenist notion that the source of this inequality is sin; on the contrary the hierarchical ordering of unequal terms accomplished in creation is precisely what achieves the state of peace (pax), the very essence of the City of God. This paper intends 1) to expose and expound the strong sense of hierarchy and creaturely mediation in De civitatis Dei, and 2) to reconcile the latter with the apparently anti-
hierarchical tendency in Augustine's soteriology. This reconciliation is guided by an exegesis of Augustine's account of the fall of man and his theory of embodiment in the same work.

**Presenter**  
Nick Calibey

**Institution**  
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

**Title**  
The Light of Christ Illumines All: Apophatic and Cataphatic Interplay in Dumitru Stănîloae and Maximus the Confessor

**Abstract**  
Apophatic theology has become a kind of trademark for Orthodox theological discourse, and can be found in both catechetical and academic writings. It often assumes a monolithic character in Orthodox literature, where there is a negation of cataphatic theology which leads to a mystical experience with God. This paper will present the more balanced view of Romanian theologian Dumitru Stănîloae with reference to St. Maximus the Confessor's tenth Ambiguum to show that there is an interplay between apophatic and cataphatic theology. Finally, it will provide some concluding thoughts on the importance of this interplay for the place of rationality in Orthodox theology.

**Presenter**  
Emily Chesley

**Institution**  
Princeton Theological Seminary

**Title**  
Divine Encounter Versus Divine Relationship: The Triads of Gregory of Palamas and Dionysian Theology

**Abstract**  
Gregory of Palamas (1296-1359) is most known for The Triads, his response to the accusations of Barlaam the Calabrian that the hesychasm of Mount Athos attempted an impossible encounter with the unknowable God. Distinguishing between God’s energies and essence, and asserting that hesychasts encounter the former but not the latter, Palamas argues for the orthodoxy of the experience within the Dionysian tradition of negative theology. Dupré and Wiseman claim that Palamas’s theology “supports a direct experience of God, translatable into language, while remaining within the confines of a strictly negative theology.” [Louis Dupré and James A. Wiseman, “Gregory Palamas (1296-1359),” in Light from Light: An Anthology of Christian Mysticism, 2nd ed., eds. Louis Dupré and James A. Wiseman (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2001), 210-11.] This paper investigates their claim, asking whether Palamas’s mysticism transcends pure Dionysian apophaticism to allow a concrete knowledge of God. This paper introduces Palamas’ historical context; summarizes the negative theology of Dionysius’ The Mystical Theology, especially as it regards knowledge of God; and explores Palamas’s Triads in depth, expounding his understanding of hesychastic prayer, his presentation of the mystical ascent, and his differentiation between divine energies and essence. It
concludes that Palamas echoes Dionysius in many regards, but considers the practice of negation preliminary to reaching union with God. He moves above negation to hesychasm, highlighting the Incarnation as evidence for the potentiality of a real meeting with the divine, yet ultimately accepts an unknowable God and remains in the apophatic tradition.

**Presenter**  Zach Domach  
**Institution**  Columbia University  
**Title**  *Plucking the Rose among the Thorns: Proverbs as a Bridge between Late Antique Christianity and Classical Culture*  
**Abstract**  The ancient world was fascinated with wisdom. In popular literature, wisdom regularly took the form of pithy and memorable aphorisms, whose brevity and moral content ensured application in a variety of oral and literary situations. This paper examines several proverbial metaphors – to “pluck the rose from among the thorns” and to “search for gold in a dungheap” – derived from apothegmatic traditions that are concerned with gathering the “good” out of the “bad.” While in the Classical period these proverbs carried a consolatory meaning, by Late Antiquity Christian figures such as the Cappadocian Fathers, Amphilochius, Theophilus, Pseudo-Hegisippus, Apponius, Jerome, Augustine, Peter Chrysologus, Sidonius, Dractontius, Cassiodorus, and Bede as well as many medieval authors were applying them in a variety of new settings. Some of these uses point to a proverbial community, wherein the proverb saw frequent and similar application by individuals all in correspondence with one another. These maxims were invoked to describe individuals and events, to make theological points, and, especially, to validate the reception of problematic literature. The rose and the dungheap maxims serve as excellent case studies of how Christians from Late Antiquity into the medieval period manipulated Classical proverbs: at first employed to justify the reading of “pagan” literature, these proverbs also came to serve a similar purpose for Jewish writings and heretical Christian texts, particularly the works of Origen. Having inherited these proverbs from the popular culture of antiquity, Christians transmogrified their original meaning of “the good is mixed with the bad.” Thus the Church Fathers appropriated tradition in order to talk about the appropriation of tradition: they convey their points about Classical literature using the very practice they are advocating.

**Presenter**  Jacob Drake  
**Institution**  Duke Divinity School  
**Title**  *An Examination of the Controversy Surrounding Nestorius*
Abstract

Nestorius ascended the bishopric of Constantinople in 428 C.E. as an eloquent leader to help eradicate lingering heresies in the capital city. Within the course of a few short years, the Council of Ephesus (431) condemned Nestorius for his meaningful, yet deficient Christology. He undoubtedly viewed his understanding of the relationship of the human and divine natures of Christ as orthodox and meaningful to his congregation. His appeal to the metaphor of marriage was likely understandable and appreciated by the laity. His pastorally sensitive theology sought to uphold the impassibility and immutability of the divine by protecting it from all hints of the mutability. In essence, Nestorius tried to protect Christ’s divinity. Hence, he attempted to overturn the traditional title of Mary as Theotokos, instead proposing Christotokos. His archrival Cyril of Alexandria led the charge to depose and condemn this committed teacher of the church. This paper will explore the pastoral concerns, exegetical strategies, and rhetorical arguments of Nestorius in his surviving sermons and letters paying particular attention to the context and rivalry with Cyril. Much contemporary research has sought to rehabilitate Nestorius from the Nestorian heresy. Nestorius may appear more orthodox than church tradition contends leading one to ponder the political, sociological, cultural, and geographical issues at stake in his condemnation and the eventual schism of the Nicene faithful into the Eastern Orthodox communion and the Church of the East.

Presenter
Sarah Jenks

Institution
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

Title
"What that Godly-Minded Teacher was Thinking": Exegetical Techniques in St Maximos’ Ambigua of St Gregory

Abstract
St. Maximos the Confessor filled two volumes of Ambigua with explanations of difficult passages in the works of St. Gregory the Theologian. Although the work supplies a comprehensive vision of Maximos’ theology, his exegetical approach reveals neither a single methodology nor a collection of disparate principles. Rather, St. Maximos’ interpretive techniques are based solidly in a personal and reverent relationship with the author of the difficult passages, a conviction that his reading of the texts is his reception of grace directly from the saint. His faith receives the text as very nearly inerrant, while his theological acumen provides a wealth of interpretation with which to clarify St. Gregory’s 'ambiguous' words.

Presenter
Kyle Johnson

Institution
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Title
The Epistle to the Hebrews in Athanasius’ De Incarnatione Verbi Dei
Abstract
The Epistle to the Hebrews is heavily cited throughout Athanasius’ De Incarnatione. It is a particularly important Biblical text in two key sections that are crucial to Athanasius’ argument. This paper will survey citations of the Epistle throughout the work and analyze secondary literature that has discussed its usage in DI. The paper will focus on his heaviest usage of the Epistle, especially his frequent citations from its second chapter at crucial developments in Athanasius’ overarching argument. The paper will conclude by suggesting a few implications for understanding Athanasian theology in light of his usage of the Epistle. Particularly, the paper will suggest that the Epistle is important for Athanasius because it shares with Athanasius a crucial assumption that is vital to his argument; that the death of Christ was a necessary consequence of His incarnation.

Presenter
Matthew Keil
Institution
Fordham University
Title
De Liturgia et Persecutione: A New Appraisal of Pliny 10.96-97

Abstract
The text of the younger Pliny's letter to Emperor Trajan regarding the Christians of Bithynia-Pontus has long been an object of study for students and scholars of early Christianity. However, the superabundance of secondary literature on this epistle, and the often abstruse debates surrounding it, have to a large extent obscured what are doubtlessly the two most essential questions which must be asked of this text: firstly, what can this letter tell us about the character of the early Christian liturgy, and, secondly, what can it tell us about the nature of the early Christian persecutions. Naturally, there has been much debate and controversy about both of these questions. Nevertheless, something resembling a consensus view has emerged in recent years regarding particular and discrete aspects of these issues (for example, the influence of Jewish worship on the early Christian liturgy, the character of the Christian community in Asia Minor, and the nature of second century Roman policy towards Christianity). What remains, however, is the need for a single, succinct monograph synthesizing these various issues in light of the most recent scholarship. The present paper attempts to address this need with an eye both to concision and comprehensiveness.

Presenter
Zachary Kostopoulos
Institution
St. Louis University
Title
Gregory’s Portrait of Origen in his Address of Thanksgiving: The Quality of Mediation and Semi-Divine Status

Abstract
The topic of my conference paper is the semi-divine figure of Origen as he was depicted in Gregory Thaumaturgus’ third-century Address of
Thanksgiving. The majority of scholars that analyze Gregory’s Address are interested in the question of Origen’s school curriculum and pedagogical method. Concerning the subject of Origen’s laudatory portrayal by his student, however, most balk at the idea that Gregory provides anything worth our attention. The hagiographic quality with which Gregory describes Origen has caused skepticism amongst many scholars. In this paper, however, I argue that there is a clear link between Origen’s own teachings and Gregory’s portrayal of his teacher in the Address. Specifically, I shall demonstrate that Gregory’s portrait of his teacher as a mediator of the divine life is derived from Origen’s thought on this same subject. Thus, from my paper, it is clear that Gregory reflects Origen’s language and teachings in the characteristics with which he imbues his teacher.

Contrary to most scholars’ opinion, then, it can be safely said that Gregory’s depiction of his teacher is founded in the reality of his experience with Origen. Furthermore, I would add that the reluctance to take seriously Gregory’s portrait of Origen has essentially ignored the interpretive framework of the ancient author’s world-view. This interpretive framework was, of course, primarily theological and derived from Christian revelation and exegesis of Scripture. Therefore, I intend to reassess Gregory’s portrait of Origen through a “theological” lens, that is, through a lens that Gregory would perceive and understand the world around him.

Presenter Matthew Kuhner
Institution Ave Maria University
Title Ignatius of Antioch’s Letter to the Ephesians 19:1 and the Hidden Mysteries: A Trajectory of Interpretation from Origen to Thomas Aquinas
Abstract Concerning the Apostolic Fathers as a whole, Michael W. Holmes writes: “very rarely are any of [the texts of the Apostolic Fathers] (primarily Ignatius) mentioned in the doctrinal controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. From about the fifth to the sixteenth centuries these documents were virtually unknown, especially in the West” (The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 16). While granting that Holmes’s well-corroborated claim is true, this paper explores a passage of Ignatius’s Letter to the Ephesians that in fact possessed a trajectory of interpretation that extended through the Fathers (Origen and Jerome) and continued deep into the Middle Ages of the West (Aquinas). I will argue that, given the general situation described above by Holmes, this passage is extremely significant; it serves as one particularly interesting instance of Ignatius’s theological influence upon later Christian thought. The paper will begin with a treatment of the passage’s immediate context within the wider Letter, as well as its more general context within Christian and Jewish thought. Older scholarship (Heinrich Schlier and Jean Daniélou) and more recent commentators (William Schoedel and Gregory Vall) will be consulted. The paper will then
outline the manner in which Origen, Jerome, and Aquinas each employ the passage in their own theological reflection. Finally, the paper will conclude with a summary assessment of the potential strengths and weaknesses of this interpretative tradition, arguing that contemporary scholarship should continue this trajectory of reflection with ever greater attention to Ignatius’s text.

**Presenter**

Joseph Lucas

**Institution**

VU Amsterdam

**Title**

Cyril of Alexandria’s Use of Temple Imagery as Polemic

**Abstract**

This paper examines the motivation and intent of Cyril of Alexandria in using biblical descriptions of the Jerusalem Temple and its worship. The concept of “templization,” a modern term coined to describe the appropriation of cultic imagery by early Rabbis to legitimize the synagogue in the wake of the fallen Temple, has also been applied to the early Christian endeavor to present the church as authentic claimant and heir to the Jewish covenant. Examples of such an approach are found in the New Testament—particularly in Hebrews—as well as early documents such as the Epistle of Barnabas. Cyril of Alexandria’s exegesis of the Torah, as found in his works De Adoratione and Glapyra, is laden with allegorical interpretations of Jewish cultic imagery. These interpretations serve a dual purpose: to defend the Christian appropriation of the Hebrew Scriptures; and to assert the superiority of the church over the contemporary synagogue. Of particular importance is Cyril’s examination of the priesthood and sacrifice. We will first establish Cyril’s reasons for focusing so intensely on Judaism, establishing his view that it was a valid theological opponent in the 5th century; and then unpack Cyril’s concept of this interrelated theme of priest and sacrifice, outlining how Cyril employs it as a polemic against Judaism.

**Presenter**

Yuliya Minets

**Institution**

Catholic University of America

**Title**

Multiplicity of Languages: The Unexpected Theological Parallel?

**Abstract**

The present study focuses on the theological significance of the world’s multilingualism, and on the interpretations that the early Christian authors developed to explain this fact. The study is a part of a bigger project, for which the ultimate questions I would like to raise are: to what extent the Christian elite groups in Late Antiquity objectified the language as a part of their specifically Christian identity, and how much they became sensitive to the world’s multilingualism in their aspirations to represent Christianity as the universal religion.
The main aim of the current investigation is to test the following hypothesis: the early Christian interpreters often connected the story about the confusion of tongues (Gen. 11:4-9, the Tower of Babel) with the gift of tongues (Acts 2:2-12) that the Apostles received on the day of Pentecost. For Gregory Nazianzen these two accounts illustrate the same paradigm – the division of tongues, that is of spoken languages, in the Genesis narration, and the fiery tongues of the Spirit in Acts 2:3. Cyril of Jerusalem emphasizes that apostles' speaking in tongues was a metaphorical reversion of the Babel confusion. Moreover, both events were to some extent regarded as parallel to the Salvation history that also contains two complementary parts – the Fall of the humanity and the Redemption by Jesus Christ. The Fall and the expulsion from Paradise were not a part of God's original project, as well as the multiplicity of languages; both resulted from the sinful actions of mankind. In both situations, the divine mercifulness to the human subjects did not completely undo "the problem," although through the miracles of Resurrection of Christ and speaking in tongues it showed the way to restore the status quo for genuine Christians.

**Presenter**  
Edward Moore  
Dean of Faculty

**Institution**  
St. Elias School of Orthodox Theology

**Title**  
*Please Don't Martyr Me! -- The Life and Times of Tatian the Assyrian*

**Abstract**  
It is a blessing to be able to dream one's way out of the world, if only for a few hours. And when one's life is an endless, pointless meandering from one foolish effort to another, it matters little whether the dream is that of the lover or of the madman; of course, a case -- a very strong case -- can be made that they are one. As Shakespeare has told us, "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact" (A Midsummer Night's Dream). When this compact person does the world a service by rendering his dreams in the form of unforgettable tales, instead of tedious chat, we are given a glimpse -- from the safety of our fully awake and rationally aware state -- into the darkened, doom-laden corridors of our own well-tended (or so we hope) psyche. Tatian's turn from orthodox upholder of nascent Christianity to a Gnostic who dared not eat cucumber was, I shall argue, not a cause for mockery, but rather an example of deep devotion -- however mistaken. Moreover, the fact that he left the so-called orthodox fold to enter into an ascetic environment that hastened his death begs the question of varieties of faith -- and how we view, and cling to, our own.

**Presenter**  
Todd Murphy

**Institution**  
Providence College and Sacred Journey Church

**Title**  
The Didache as Christian Torah: Some Social and Linguistic Considerations
The Didache has emerged in modern scholarship as a first century document. It has come to primarily be studied in its second temple period Jewish social context having much more in common with the Damascus Document (CD) and the Community Rule (1Qs) than with later patristic literature. In the Didache we encounter a growing but characteristically Jewish Christianity allied with an alternative Jewish tradition to that of Pharisaic Judaism. However this community is deeply engaged in winning converts from the gentile world. It bears what we might call a Jewish Torah-piety characteristic of the various Judaisms of the time. Yet it differentiates itself significantly, most notably in how Gentiles are to obey “the Gospel” and do not have to become Jews. I will demonstrate that the Didache inculcates a Jewish, but “Christian” torah type instruction that is distinct from Mosaic Torah (per Jonathan Draper) engendering a high moral and social ethic for gentile Christians without requiring them to become Jews who must observe the full details of Mosaic Torah. The Didache had significant influence on the trajectory of patristic thought and practice in light of its widespread acceptance and use by early catholic Christianity.

Polycarp’s dove (or what does an “eye witness account” mean)

Martyrdom of Polycarp 16.1 describes the execution of Polycarp by being stabbed with a dagger. At the moment of his death, a dove and a great flow of blood comes forth from the wound. The text at this point is quite awkward and the scholarly consensus has been that the dove is a fourth century addition to the text. However, I will argue that it is worth reexamining this question, suggesting that it is the blood rather than the dove might constitute the redaction. The release of the dove at the moment of death will be examined in light of the imagery of imperial apotheosis in the late first and early second century, suggesting that its presence makes more sense in a mid-second century context than a fourth century one. There are also narrative problems with the description of the great flow of blood which are usually overlooked. The primary intent of this paper is to use Mart. Pol. 16.1 as a case study for thinking about how scholars have historically made decisions concerning the possible redaction of ancient texts. I will focus on how our assumptions about the nature of the original text shape the decisions we make (e.g. how do miraculous elements fit into a supposedly “eye witness account”), assumptions that are often not entirely conscious. I will propose some alternate strategies for making these decisions, acknowledging that all narratives of an event involve interpretation and the need to explore these questions from the world view of the ancient authors/readers rather than our own.
The vita of Mar Awgin and its apologetic purpose: The intertextual connections of Mar Awgin’s walking on water and calming storms as an example of apologetic strategies in hagiographical documents

Abstract

The hagiography of Mar Awgin is often used as an evidence of the dependency of the rule-based Syri-an monasticism from Egypt and Mar Awgin himself is regarded as the “father of organised monasticism in East-Syria” (BK V 22: 284). The vita of Awgin tells namely, that he joined a Pachomian mon-astery in Egypt, which he left with 70 monks towards Syria, and found a monastery on mount Izlâ, from where he sent out 72 disciples to spread the rule-based monasticism throughout whole Mesopotamia.

Subsequently, the so far published literature about Awgin has faced exclusively the above mentioned dependency thesis. But looking into the still unedited manuscripts of his hagiography, it is interesting that the nativeness of Syriac monasticism takes up only little space. Mostly, Awgin’s hagiography appears as a series of healings, miracles, visions and prophecies. Are these stories for many historians of secondary importance, they contain a treasure trove for a theological approach, because they show with numerous intertextual connections the entire theological composition of Awgin’s hagiography as an apologetic document.

The present paper wants to highlight this apologetic dimension of Awgin’s hagiography by expounding his walking on water and calming storms. Therefore it focuses on the use of intertextual connections to biblical pericopes like Matthew 14:22-33 (par. Mark 6:45-52, John 6:16-21) or Matthew 8:23-27 (par. Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25) and illustrates how they shall underline three apologetic intentions: The demonstration of Mar Awgin’s holiness, the demonstration of God’s power/existence and the conviction of non-believers.
to the phenomenon of "conversion" points to a different conclusion. By employing some of these approaches while analyzing passages in several key texts, I argue that it is more accurate to describe Gregory's near shipwreck experience in terms of "religious development" rather than "conversion."

**Presenter** Daniel Robinson  
**Institution** Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute  
**Title** *Divine Puppetry from Philo of Alexandria to Clement of Alexandria*  
**Abstract** In the second book of his Stromateis, Clement of Alexandria condemned the idea that humans are the mere puppets of God.1 Interestingly, Clement’s Alexandrian forbear Philo, upon whom he relied heavily, took the exact opposite position, affirming that God in fact “sets the puppets in motion and pulls their strings.”2 How then was this image of cosmic puppetry demoted from Philo’s approval to Clement’s rejection? The idea of God as the cosmic puppeteer is strongly associated with the cosmological argument for God’s existence, as evidenced in Simplicius’ similar use of the divine puppetry motif to win over Aristotle to the creationist camp in his commentary on the Physics.3 God must be pulling the strings of the universe for it to be so marvelously arranged. On the other hand, as Marcus Aurelius noted, if one is not one’s own puppet master then one is a slave and supremely unhappy.4 As useful as a divine puppeteer might be for the explanation of cosmology, even so disastrous it seems to be for the purposes of ethics. This paper will consider the relationship between ethics and physics in the intellectual contexts of Philo and Clement. I hope to explain why the same image of the divine puppeteer plays such a positive role in Philo’s thought and such a negative one in Clement’s.

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**Presenter** Joshua Sales  
**Institution** Fordham University  
**Title** *Origen, Aristotelian Psychology, and the Plausibility of the Resurrection*  
**Abstract** The common view that Aristotelian philosophy, especially psychology, had little appreciable impact on early Patristic theology—and for the purposes of this paper, on Origen of Alexandria—has more frequently than not received tacit acceptance rather than sustained demonstration. In its most prevalent form, this presupposition can only be detected not by the explicit rejection but by the glaring omission in scholarly work of Aristotelian philosophy as a formative factor in Patristic discourse. When the Peripatetic is, however, considered, the verdict tends to be rapidly dismissive. In this vein, scholars like Crouzel, Denis, Bardy, and Tzamalikos simply deny any significant Aristotelian presence in Origen’s texts. De Faye and Koch have
been the only major proponents that Aristotle had at least some “indirect influence” on Origen.
The foregoing neglect is unwarranted and adversely affects contemporary engagement with the cogency of some of Origen’s arguments, particularly with respect to his defense of the resurrection in his Treatise against Kelsos. This study seeks to supplement this deficiency by applying an Aristotelian dimension to the most relevant parts of the Treatise against Kelsos written in defense of the resurrection. On that basis, I argue in this paper that a satisfactory answer to the question “How did Origen defend the doctrine of the resurrection to a non-Christian philosophical audience in against Kelsos?” must include as necessary, if perhaps not sufficient, an account of his use of Aristotelian psychology.

**Presenter**  
Peter Secor

**Institution**  
The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church

**Title**  
Ascetical Practice in Rule of Law

**Abstract**  
Discipline and law are essential elements for the ascetical practice of Christianity. Without a formal structure to aid the devotion of the Tradition, the dutiful and proper practice of Christianity is deeply lacking in its fullness. Lewis Patsavos, an orthodox canonist and theologian, posits that in order for Orthodox Christians to live out the fullness of the tradition, both clergy and laity should practice and follow the Holy Canons as a spiritual discipline, and not merely a punitive, disciplinary function. Yet by the very nature of a system of jurisprudence, there is an intrinsic need for right punishment when one strays from the prescriptive norm. One would think that if a true Christian is following all canons and statutes to their fullest, there would be no need for a system of discipline. The apparent paradox can clearly be seen in the various codes of canon law in the major Western denominations, including the Roman/Latin Rite, and various Churches of the Anglican Communion. However, law is a necessary attribute for keeping order and unity. To that end, there must be an ascetic means to live into the practice of law, that fulfills the spirit of the law, that is not burdensome upon the members bound by its statutes. Monastic communities discovered this mode of operating within the confines of the law which allows for expression and freedom. I propose that in order to live out a fully Christian life, one is to live out an ascetic practice of the law as a spiritual discipline. Using the Orthodox model for following the Holy Canons, combined with the monastic practice of discipline and the ascetical practices of Nicodemus the Hagiorite, our interpretation and adherence to this Rule would be of aid to our broader discipline and practice of Canon Law.

**Presenter**  
Jane Sloan
Theandric Energy and Deification in Maximos the Confessor

In Ambiguum to John 33 Maximos the Confessor suggests that the Logos “becomes thick (παχύνεται)”, that is, discernible to the senses, in three ways: by the Word’s Incarnation, in the logoi of beings, and in Scripture (Amb 33). Maximos also uses Incarnational language to describe the process of deification. The Logos "takes shape" (μορφώο) in the lives of the saints (5.27).

The burden of this paper is to demonstrate that Maximos' Christology in the Ambigua is foundational for his understanding of deification. In deification, the Word "becomes thick" in the saint, and enables the saint to act as a symbol of divine love through his or her virtue, summed up in loving God and neighbor. Particularly, the depiction of Christ's theandric energy in Ambiguum 5 suggests that Christ's activity enables saintly virtue. Christ's theandric energy is an entirely new mode of action for the human person. The life the Lord lives is new, not simply because it is strange, unprecedented and astounding, but because it constitutes a new form of energy, newly lived out by Christ (Amb 5.24). Maximos' development of theandric energy in Ambiguum 5 helps unfurl his theology of deification, bringing a new level of meaning to the patristic phrase “God became man that man could become God.” First, the Christ's theandric activity enables new unity between God and human persons. Christ's theandric activity also enables the saint to work wonders, cultivate virtue, and witness the Gospel message to others. In short, Maximos' theology of theandric energy is crucial for understanding how exactly the Word "becomes thick," or "takes shape" in the lives of the saints.
Word and Spirit as his two instruments. Rather, Irenaeus begins to formulate a more nuanced, less subordinationist understanding of the Divine relations. This triune emphasis is situated within a context whose primary purpose is to reveal God’s plan for his people; a plan predicated upon and ultimately defined by the unique, direct intervention of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is a three-fold intervention that sees the Triune God inviting his people into a life with himself: the life of communion and transformation.

**Presenter**  
Sid Sudiacal

**Institution**  
McMaster Divinity College

**Title**  
Christian vs. “Christian” violence: The Role of Disgust Psychology in the Donatist Controversy

**Abstract**  
Persecution and violence are not foreign concepts in Christianity. Anyone who studies church history is reminded of the startling fact that the oppression suffered by the church does not always come from the outside; sometimes it comes from the inside. The brutal nature of intra-Christian conflict is no different from that which they suffered from the hands of foreign invaders. During the Donatist Controversy, grievous acts of oppression were used and condoned by both sides against one another. My paper examines the violent acts committed by Roman Catholics and Donatists against each other in the light of Disgust Psychology. Disgust is a universal human feature that has been found to play a role in socio-moral attitudes and actions. Disgust Psychology provides a way to interpret the motivation and rationalization behind the physical and verbal violence that both parties engaged in. It also addresses the issue of how Disgust Psychology can affect the way we think and act as Christians.

**Presenter**  
Quang Tran

**Institution**  
Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley

**Title**  
The relational aspects of Gregory of Nyssa’s doctrine of epektasis in the Life of Moses

**Abstract**  
In this paper, employing The Life of Moses as the main text, I will focus on the relational aspects of Gregory of Nyssa’s doctrine of epektasis, which he formulated from a creative retrieval of epekteinomenos in Philippians 3:13. Gregory’s teaching on an eternal striving in God after death has stark resemblances to the doctrine of purgatory, though I have not come across any work that makes the explicit connection between epektasis and purgatory. Keeping in mind that purgatory as a process of healing and penance after death can help bring out the relational aspects of epektasis as eternal progress in heaven. Gregory’s notion of eternal progress is characteristic of his philosophy, but what this progress means in the
afterlife and the implications such a meaning would have for those in this life requires further speculation. Often, discussions regarding epektasis emphasize personal progress, and discussions regarding purgatory emphasize personal penance and healing, but relationships and encounter, that is the communal aspects of becoming, often remain in the periphery, though not entirely absent. Nevertheless, the doctrine of purgatory gives a better sense than epektasis that what was continues to matter, and epektasis takes movement and transformation beyond purgation.

The result of this investigation is a sketch of a heavenly state in which the heaven-bound deceased continues to take their pre-mortem experiences and relationships into an eternal striving and becoming within the depths of God’s infinite mystery.

**Presenter**  Evan Underbrink  
**Institution**  Duke Divinity School  
**Title**  Mystagogy and Aesthetics  
**Abstract**  Within the field of Patristics, there are no writings richer in image, both in the context of typological rhetoric and liturgical praxis, than mystagogy. However, as of yet there has been no scholarly analysis as to the theological aesthetics of this homiletic style and its relationship to contemporary theories of vision, image, and beauty. This paper will attempt, from the viewpoint of an admirer of this homiletic style, to dictate some of the contours found within the history, theology, and praxis of the early church fathers, specifically Cyril of Alexandria, Ambrose of Milan, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, before the baptismal font and the Eucharist. I have found, and this paper reflects, that the power of the mystagogic style is its ability to create an enveloping typological narrative, through which the sacraments become the location of a micro-cosmos that reflects the image of Christ, which in turn creates a requisite response of participation from the audience. To arrive at that conclusion, this paper is divided into three sections: first, a historical overview of what mystagogy is, including its origins, a suggested endpoint and a brief overview of its structure and natural practice. Next, I will analyze the merits and qualities of mystagogy as a catechistic structure, as it was originally intended. Finally, from these catechetical observations I will draw some of the theological, aesthetic, and philosophical underpinnings of mystagogy, assisted by the perspectives of various thinkers, poets, and members of the clergy. I will do this in order to contextualize mystagogy within the contemporary conversations on image, aesthetics, liturgy, and Christian education.

**Presenter**  Marian Ureutz  
**Institution**  University of Graz
Title: Egeria’s Pilgrimage and Monasticism

Abstract: Egeria, a southwesteuropean nun travels during the years 381-384 across the Roman Empire in the Middle East to participate lively and personally the Liturgy of the whole ecclesiastical year in Jerusalem, as she describes in the second part of her itinerary, to bequeath her sisters, she calls them “dominae sorores”, an authentic and written part of history. A woman at the end of the fourth century, that writes for women, and especially for her sisters in Spain. Unfortunately, about her personality, we have scanty and just indirect evidences, which may be reconstructed by the way of how she is describing and the account of certain occurrences. Though her simple, latin writing style points definitely her “pilgrimage in spirit” out. Although the whole travel description has only come down in fragmentary form, it remains the oldest and most important source about the fourth-century liturgy in Jerusalem. The whole Theology of this Itinerary reflects itself in the concept of Mimesis locally at each liturgical and dramatic action, in which imitation becomes the formal principle and shall make salvation history present. The travel guide herself is on the one hand the biblical description that refers to the holy places in Jerusalem, and on the hand, God himself in his instruction and the local clergy. Within my paper I want to focus especially on the description of ascetics. While Egeria gives details about the liturgy in Jerusalem, she mentions from time to time monks deep in prayer, remaining even after the “official” liturgy with the bishop, such as during Epiphany in Bethlehem. Those were mostly mentioned in connection with the liturgy, which they prolong and intensify with their prayers and recitation of hymns and psalms. We get to know a few further notices in context of Lent: Those ascetics, who were mentioned as “apotactiti” by Egeria, live in Jerusalem and eat, for instance, just once a day. If Egeria is talking about assembling, she points out those “monachi”, “apotactiti” or “mazontes”. Within my paper I am looking after their identity, their social position in (christian) society of Jerusalem, their duties and how they fulfill them as well as how Egeria mentions them.

Presenter: Carl Vennerstrom

Institution: Villanova University

Title: Silence and Redemption and Ephrem the Syrian

Abstract: In this paper I investigate first the role of silence in Syriac works on prayer and then, to explain and contextualize the setting of prayer, I flesh out the particular role of silence as an expression and facet of the self-emptying Incarnation of the Son. In his Hymns on the Nativity, Ephrem frequently refers to three specific moments, three “signing posts” in Christ’s work of redemption: Mary’s virginal womb, Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan, and the tomb where he rests for three days. In each step, a development of imagery
takes place, so that from the perspective of Jesus’ accomplished work of
death and resurrection Ephrem can look back and see in Mary’s womb the
image of baptism and the image of the tomb, and indeed not only their
images, but also their realities, or perhaps, because of their images also their
realities. Why, then, consider silence? Simply put, because in each of these
moments Christ empties himself of his divine attributes, and chief of among
these attributes is his speech-making—thunder becomes silent in the womb
of Mary in the same way that he who contains all and is uncontainable
becomes contained, yet without out being limited. Returning to prayer, one
discovers that in silence before God, one most fully assumes the
paradoxical and kenotic act of the Incarnation. Here, one participates in and
reflects the divine mode of being human.

**Presenter**  Ivan Vuksanovic

**Institution**  Graduate Theological Union

**Title**  Theosis and the Holy Spirit: Doctrine of theosis as one of the arguments for the
Spirit’s divinity in Early Christian Pneumatologies

**Abstract**  In the history of the development of the Christian doctrine the idea of
deification or theosis is usually associated with the Incarnation of Jesus
Christ. Nevertheless, scrutinized reading of the Early Christian
Pneumatologies shows that in fact our life in God, or our growth “unto the
measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13), actually begins
in the Spirit. This leads us to conclude that deification is also a
Pneumatologically loaded image of salvation. Furthermore, focus on
deification helped the early fathers finally reach the common agreement of
the full deity of the Spirit. As it is well known, it took a considerable
amount of time for the Early Church to find a proper language to express its
belief in the full divinity of the Spirit, as the deity of Christ was the primary
focus of the early Christian controversies. It was the task of the
Cappadocians and some of the writers from the previous centuries to help
convince the Church that the Spirit also belongs, not merely as energy of
God or some ministering spirit, but hypostatically and ontologically to the
Holy Trinity. For Athanasius the Great, the Trinitarian baptismal formula
showed that the Spirit shares the same divinity as the Father and the Son,
precisely because our deification requires it. In his Letters to Serapion,
Athanasius argues that if the Spirit is not consubstantial with the Father
and the Son, the Spirit cannot make us conform to the Son and therefore
cannot save us. Through careful reading of Irenaeus of Lyon, Athanasius of
Alexandria and Basil the Great I would like to talk about doctrine of
deification but as carried out by the person and work of the Holy Spirit. I
believe that the idea of our ultimate deification cannot be expressed on
Christological bases alone, but that it requires a Pneumatological
development of doctrine as well. This topic would be the main theological
concern and contribution of this paper to the Conference in particular and
theological research in general.