

CSPS SPRING BULLETIN 2025/ACÉP BULLETIN PRINTEMPS 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/MESSAGE DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

Dear colleagues of CSPS,

Happy 50th Anniversary! In 1975, a group of Canadian Patristics scholars meeting at the Oxford Patristic Conference decided to go home to Canada and start their own Society. And here we are!

We will celebrate this milestone with Congress at George Brown College in Toronto, June 3-5. Thank you to all who are contributing to our programme this year! We have a full roster of papers, from the Congress theme of “Reframing Togetherness” to a tribute to the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea and much more!

Those attending in person need to register with Congress
(<https://fhss.swoogo.com/registration-2025-inscription>).

Those who will join us online need to register and pay on our website
(<https://cspspacep.ca/reunion-meeting/>).

As in previous years, if you cannot attend the conference but would like to join the annual general meeting (AGM) online, please email me for a zoom link.

A **huge thank you** to 50th anniversary committee members and to the Executive for all of their work this year (see below), with special thanks to Jennifer Otto for all of her work as Programme Chair, and Wendy Helleman for reaching out to past members!

If you have any photos, special memories or good wishes you wish to convey to the Society, please email them to: cspspacep2025@gmail.com.

We will celebrate the history and future of our Society this year in various ways:

- Ahead of our conference, on June 2 (1:00-4:30pm), we have a special interactive workshop planned: **“Patristics and Pedagogy in Canada (and beyond)”**, at Emmanuel College in Toronto (and online), organized by Jennifer Otto and me. All are welcome! Registration is free but required (<https://forms.gle/sR5667zstT6jZDG97>). We ask that you register by May 16.
- The **annual banquet** will include storytelling, memories and good food (payment options available at <https://cspspacep.ca/reunion-meeting/>) at Donatello Restaurant (37 Elm Street, Toronto) on June 3 at 7:00pm. You won’t want to miss this part of the celebration! We have created various payment options in hopes that all who are in Toronto in person can attend.

- We are very pleased to host the evening Joint Lecture on June 4 (7:00pm), featuring **Dr. Annette Yoshiko Reed** (Harvard Divinity), whose lectures is entitled, “Expanding Patristic Perspectives on the Ancient Past.” This is a Congress Open Programme event, generously sponsored by the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion (CCSR), the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies (CSBS) and the Federation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Open Programming Funding).
- We will host a **student pizza lunch** on June 4.

Congratulations to the following students, including two winners of the essay prize this year:

- **Changxu Hu** (University of Tokyo), 2025 student essay prize winner
- **Paul Robinson** (McMaster Divinity School), 2025 student essay prize winner, as well as recipient of the Congress Graduate Merit Award (awarded to a Canadian student of distinction)
- **Aaron Debusschere** (St. Paul’s Seminary, Ottawa), recipient of the Congress Graduate Merit Award, in recognition of his archival work resulting in a comprehensive list of past members of the Society. Thanks for your work, Aaron!

Thank you to those who have made **donations** to help with future CSPS initiatives, especially for our 50th anniversary in 2025! Our society is a registered charity, so we are able to provide tax receipts for your donations: <https://cpsacep.ca/inscription-membership/>.

The Bulletin provides a venue twice a year to celebrate our members’ achievements and publications. Thank you for sharing these with us! If you did not yet respond to Eric Crégheur’s call for submissions, please email him (Eric.Cregheur@ftsr.ulaval.ca) to include your news in our next Bulletin.

As our Society is a member of the Canadian Corporation for the Study of Religion (CCSR, the umbrella organization for religion societies in Canada; <https://ccsr.ca/en/>), as always, I encourage you to peruse and consider publishing in the journal *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* and/or one of the three book series supported by CCSR: *Matière à pensée*, *Advancing Studies in Religion*, and *Studies in Christianity and Judaism*.

CCSR recently posted the report that summarized discussions of the [Decolonization: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) group that I chaired (2020-24). Their work continues.

In the midst of our celebration, I wish to recognize the challenges many individuals and institutions are facing. On behalf of the CSPS Executive, I submitted a letter to York (March 11, 2025) in support of their Religious Studies programme. Some of our members may be unable or unwilling to travel in person. We hope that our efforts to host hybrid access will allow us to connect in the midst of the challenges.

If you are interested in getting more involved with our Society, please contact any Executive member. I hope to see you as we celebrate our 50th anniversary, either in person or remotely!

It has been my great honour to serve as President of CSPS. As my term concludes this year, I am excited to see energy and interest for the future of our Society. Here's to another 50 years!
With best wishes,

Mona Tokarek LaFosse, President
mona.lafosse@utoronto.ca

50th Anniversary committee members:

Steven Muir, Theo de Bruyn, John Solheid, John Abad and Mona Tokarek LaFosse

Special projects: Wendy Helleman, Aaron Debusschere, Nathan Scott

EXECUTIVE (2024-25)

President: Mona Tokarek LaFosse (2019-2025)

Vice-President: John Abad (2023-2025)

Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Steven Muir (2018-2026)

Secretary: Don Springer (2024-2026)

Communications Officer/Bulletin Editor: Eric Crégheur (2020-2025)

Webmaster and Social Media: Heather Barkman (2019-2025)

Student Representative: Austin Mccredie (2024-2025)

Programme Chair: Jennifer Otto (2025)

Programme Committee: Marc Bergermann (2025-2027), Jennifer Otto (2024-2026), Sean Hannan (2023-2025)

Nominations Committee (2024-25): Sean Hannan, Nathan Scott

Chères et chers collègues de l'ACÉP,

Joyeux 50^{ème} anniversaire! En 1975, un groupe de chercheurs canadiens en patristique réunis à la Conférence patristique d'Oxford ont décidé de rentrer au Canada et de fonder leur propre Association. Et nous voici!

Nous célébrerons cette étape avec le Congrès au George Brown College à Toronto, du 3 au 5 juin. Merci à toutes celles et tous ceux qui contribuent à notre programme cette année! Nous avons une liste complète de communications, allant du thème du congrès « Redessinons le vivre-ensemble » à un hommage au 1700^{ème} anniversaire du Concile de Nicée, et bien plus encore!

Les personnes qui assisteront en personne doivent s'inscrire auprès du Congrès
(<https://fhss.swoogo.com/registration-2025-inscription?lang=fr>).

Celles qui nous rejoindront en ligne doivent s'inscrire et payer sur notre site Web
(<https://cspspacep.ca/reunion-meeting/>).

Comme les années précédentes, si vous ne pouvez pas assister à la conférence mais que vous souhaitez participer à l'assemblée générale annuelle (AGA) en ligne, veuillez m'envoyer un courriel pour obtenir un lien zoom.

Un grand merci aux membres du comité du 50^{ème} anniversaire et à l'Exécutif pour tout le travail accompli cette année (voir ci-dessous), avec des remerciements particuliers à Jennifer Otto pour tout son travail en tant que responsable du programme, et à Wendy Helleman pour avoir contacté les anciens membres!

Si vous avez des photos, des souvenirs particuliers ou des vœux à transmettre à l'Association, veuillez les envoyer par courrier électronique à l'adresse suivante : cspspacep2025@gmail.com.

Cette année, nous célébrerons l'histoire et l'avenir de notre Association de diverses manières :

- Avant notre conférence, le 2 juin (de 13h00 à 16h30), nous avons prévu un atelier interactif spécial : « **Patristique et pédagogie au Canada (et au-delà)** », au Emmanuel College à Toronto (et en ligne), organisé par Jennifer Otto et moi-même. Tous les participants sont les bienvenus! L'inscription est gratuite mais obligatoire (<https://forms.gle/sR5667zstT6jZDG97>). Nous vous demandons de vous inscrire avant le 16 mai.
- Le **banquet annuel** comprendra des récits, des souvenirs et de la bonne nourriture (options de paiement disponibles sur <https://cspspacep.ca/reunion-meeting/>) au restaurant Donatello (37 Elm Street, Toronto) le 3 juin à 19 heures. Vous ne voudrez pas manquer cette partie de la célébration! Nous avons créé plusieurs options de paiement dans l'espoir que toutes celles et tous ceux qui sont à Toronto en personne puissent y assister.
- Nous sommes très heureux d'accueillir la Conférence conjointe du 4 juin (19h00), avec la **Dr. Annette Yoshiko Reed** (Harvard Divinity), dont la conférence s'intitule « Expanding Patristic Perspectives on the Ancient Past » (« Élargir les perspectives patristiques sur le passé ancien »). Il s'agit d'un événement du Programme ouvert du Congrès, généreusement commandités par la Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses (CCSR), la Société canadienne des études bibliques (SCÉB) et la Fédération pour les sciences humaines et sociales (financement du Programme ouvert).

- Nous organiserons **un diner pizza pour les étudiant(e)s** le 4 juin.

Félicitations aux étudiants suivants, dont deux lauréats du prix de rédaction de cette année :

- **Changxu Hu** (Université de Tokyo), lauréat 2025 du Prix pour le travail étudiant;
- **Paul Robinson** (McMaster Divinity School), lauréat 2025 du Prix pour le travail étudiant, ainsi que du Prix du mérite des cycles supérieurs du Congrès (décerné à un étudiant canadien qui s'est distingué);
- **Aaron Debusschere** (St. Paul's Seminary, Ottawa), récipiendaire du Prix du mérite des cycles supérieurs du Congrès, en reconnaissance de son travail d'archivage qui a permis de dresser une liste complète des anciens membres de l'Association. Merci pour ton travail, Aaron!

Merci à celles et ceux qui ont fait des **dons** pour contribuer aux futures initiatives de l'ACÉP, en particulier pour notre 50^{ème} anniversaire en 2025! Notre association est un organisme de bienfaisance enregistré, et nous sommes donc en mesure de fournir des reçus fiscaux pour vos dons : <https://cspacet.ca/inscription-membership/>.

Deux fois par an, le Bulletin est l'occasion de célébrer les réalisations et les publications de nos membres. Merci de les partager avec nous! Si vous n'avez pas encore répondu à l'appel d'Eric Crégheur, envoyez-lui un courriel (Eric.Cregheur@ftsr.ulaval.ca) pour qu'il inclue vos nouvelles dans notre prochain Bulletin.

Comme notre Association est membre de la Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses (CCSR, l'organisme qui chapeaute les sociétés religieuses au Canada; <https://ccsr.ca/fr/>), je vous encourage, comme toujours, à consulter et à envisager de publier dans la revue *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* et/ou dans l'une des trois séries de livres soutenues par la CCSR : *Matière à pensée*, *Advancing Studies in Religion* et *Studies in Christianity and Judaism*.

Le CCSR a récemment publié le rapport qui résume les discussions du groupe [Décolonisation : équité, diversité et inclusion](#) que j'ai présidé (2020-2024). Leur travail se poursuit.

Au milieu de notre célébration, je souhaite reconnaître les défis auxquels de nombreuses personnes et institutions sont confrontées. Au nom du comité exécutif de l'ACÉP, j'ai envoyé une lettre à York (11 mars 2025) pour soutenir son programme d'études religieuses. Certains de nos membres ne peuvent ou ne veulent pas se déplacer en personne. Nous espérons que nos efforts pour accueillir l'accès hybride nous permettront de connecter au milieu des défis.

Si vous souhaitez vous impliquer davantage dans notre Association, n'hésitez pas à contacter l'un des membres de l'Exécutif. J'espère vous voir lors de la célébration de notre 50^{ème} anniversaire, en personne ou à distance!

J'ai eu le grand honneur de présider l'ACÉP. Alors que mon mandat s'achève cette année, je me réjouis de voir l'énergie et l'intérêt que suscite l'avenir de notre Association. Aux prochaines 50 années!

Avec mes meilleurs vœux,

Mona Tokarek LaFosse, Présidente
mona.lafosse@utoronto.ca

Membres du comité du 50^{ème} anniversaire :

Steven Muir, Theo de Bruyn, John Solheid, John Abad et Mona Tokarek LaFosse

Projets spéciaux : Wendy Helleman, Aaron Debusschere, Nathan Scott

EXÉCUTIF (2024-25)

Présidente : Mona Tokarek LaFosse (2019-2025)

Vice-président : John Abad (2023-2025)

Trésorier et secrétaire aux adhésions : Steven Muir (2018-2026)

Secrétaire : Don Springer (2024-2026)

Agent de communication/Rédacteur du Bulletin : Eric Crégheur (2020-2025)

Webmestre et médias sociaux : Heather Barkman (2019-2025)

Représentant des étudiant(e)s : Austin Mccredie (2024-2025)

Responsable du programme : Jennifer Otto (2025)

Comité du programme : Marc Bergermann (2025-2027), Jennifer Otto (2024-2026), Sean Hannan (2023-2025)

Comité des nominations (2024-25) : Sean Hannan, Nathan Scott

NOUVELLES/NEWS

PUBLICATIONS

Kevin Clarke

“A Patristic Synthesis of the Word Enfleshed: The Christology of Maximus the Confessor,” *Religions* 2025, 16(5), 591. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16050591>.

“The Spiritual Senses and the ‘Complete Act’ of Scripture: Henri de Lubac’s Recovery of the Mystical in Serious Exegesis,” *Angelicum Journal* 101.2 (2024): 153–77.

“Patrology Beyond Suspicion: Hermeneutics, Holiness, and Hope,” *Patristic Theology* 1 (2024): 65–100.

“Abraham the Indiscriminate Almsgiver in John Chrysostom’s Exegesis of the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 27.3 (2024): 66–85. doi:10.1353/log.2024.a932881.

Theodore de Bruyn

“Exegetical Commentaries by Pelagius.” Pages 281–95 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Pelagian Controversy*. Edited by Anthony Dupont, Giulio Malavasi, and Brian Matz. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025.

“Pelagius.” Pages 847–49 in *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, Vol. 23. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024.

Miriam J. De Cock

“The Nature of the Homily in the Corpus of Origen: Insights from the Greek Homilies on the Psalms and Jeremiah,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 79.2 (2025): 117–49.

“Narrating ‘Home’ in Early Christian Biography: Athanasius’ *Life of Antony* and Its Literary Predecessors,” *Religions* 2024, 15(11), 1375. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15111375>.

Edwina Murphy

“Examples of Faith and Virtue: Cyprian’s Use of the Book of Daniel.” *Pro Ecclesia* 32 (2023): 356–76.

“Cyprian’s Reception of Paul.” Pages 219–32 in *The Apologists and Paul*. Edited by Todd D. Still and David E. Wilhite. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2024.

James R. Payton, Jr.

Senior Editor, *Patristic Theology: A Journal from the Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity*, Volume 1 (April, 2025).

John C. Solheid

Pedagogy of the Heart: Grammar, Philosophy, and the Christian Reader in Origen's Greek Homilies on the Psalms. Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 190. Leiden: Brill, 2025.

OTHER NEWS/AUTRE NOUVELLES:

The Centre for Patristics and Early Christianity (CPEC) at McMaster Divinity College has three announcements:

1. **Patristic Theology (PT), Volume 1, Now in Print.** The first issue of PT is now available for purchase. The volume includes essays from John McGuckin, Charles Hill, Tarmo Toom, Kevin Clarke, and Hosea Sheen. The essays will remain [online and open access](#). We are currently accepting submissions for Volumes two and three. To purchase volume 1, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/PTpurchase>.
2. **Book Review Video Interviews.** *Patristic Theology* does not publish book reviews, but we are recording video interviews with authors of recent publications. If you would be interested in promoting your work on our channel, email Don Springer at cpec@mcmaster.ca. Visit our YouTube channel to see the interviews recorded this past year:
 - Scott Moringiello on [Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4/5](#);
 - Paul Gavrilyuk & Andrew Hofer on [The Oxford Handbook of Deification](#);
 - Evangelos from Scriptorium Press on [Early Ethiopian Saints](#).
3. **October Nicaea Conference, October 3-4, Redeemer University.** CPEC is partnering with several other groups to host a conference commemorating the 1700th anniversary of Nicaea. We are proud that the three plenary speakers are three whom we consider “our own.” Stanley Porter is our president and teaches NT Canon & Papyrology with us, Stefana Laing is a CPEC fellow, and Megan Devore is on the review board for *Patristic Theology*. Each of them is a fabulous scholar and speaker, and you won’t want to miss this. If you are in the Hamilton region in October, join us! [More info here](#).

Nominations

Mona Tokarek LaFosse was appointed Assistant Professor of New Testament and Sacred Literature Studies (teaching stream) at Victoria College and Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto, starting July 1, 2025.

Conferences/Colloques et communications

Steven Muir

- “Reflections... on Ted Lasso, the Apostle Paul, Visioning and Compassionate Coaching,” *Compassion: Mutual Care in Troubled Times*, Vancouver School of Theology, May 28th, 2025.

James R. Payton, Jr.

- “On Unity in the Faith: The Distance between Irenaeus of Lyons and Vincent of Lerins,” *Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society*, San Diego, California, November 22nd, 2024.
- “Progressing Now and Forever: Gregory of Nyssa on Humanity’s Calling,” *Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies*, Toronto, Ontario, May 28th, 2024.

Invited Talks/Conférences invitées

Miriam J. De Cock

- “Early Christian Receptions of ‘Home’ in the New Testament Gospels,” *The Oxford New Testament Seminar*, Oxford University, February 28th, 2025
- “Reflections on ‘Home’ in Greek Patristic Discourse: Early Christian Reception of the Return of the Prodigal Son,” *Center for the Study of Antiquity and Christianity, Early Christian Metaphors Seminar*, Aarhus University, November 19th, 2024.

In the News / Dans les médias

Jeffery Aubin is featured in an article written about the work his students do for his research project: <https://slc.qc.ca/news/2024-2025/meet-our-college-researchers-jeffery-aubin>.

Miriam J. De Cock, “Place, the restful human heart, and the Holy Spirit in Book XIII”: <https://augustineblog.com/place-the-restful-human-heart-and-the-holy-spirit-conf-book-13/>.

IN MEMORIAM

MARJORIE “ELEANOR” IRWIN (nee GRAY)
April 29, 1937 – January 9, 2025



A long-time member of CSPS/ACÉP (1981-2004), Eleanor’s study of botany and (medicinal) plants of the ancient world readily included both classical and early Christian authors. After undergraduate and graduate studies in Classics at the University of Toronto, Eleanor joined the faculty at Scarborough College of the University of Toronto as Professor in 1969, later serving there as Vice Principal and Associate Dean. Even after retirement in 2001, she continued serving on committees addressing academic integrity at the University of Toronto.

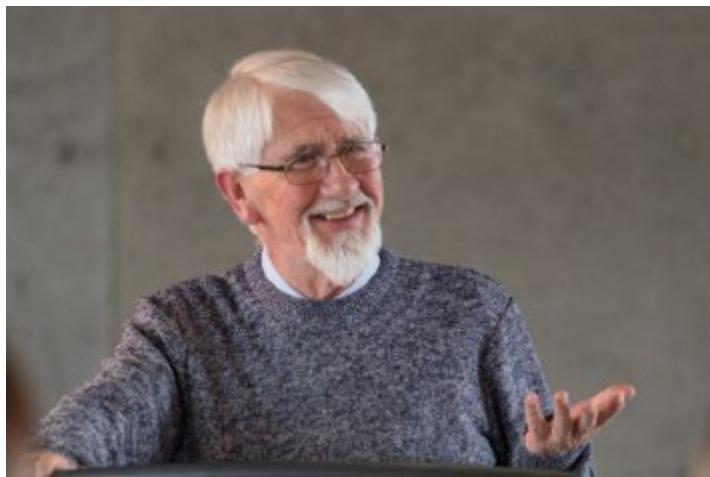
Eleanor’s scholarly interests focused on plant names and colour terms in ancient Greek poetry; in 1974 she published her signature work, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry*. Over the years she broadened her research to include mythological figures (especially virgin goddesses), as well as the contribution of women scholars in Classics, with a special interest in the British Kathleen Freeman, and noteworthy Canadians like Frances Norwood of University College, Toronto. She was known as an excellent teacher and received numerous awards for her contribution to the life of Scarborough College.

I became acquainted with Eleanor at the first “Christianity and the Classics” conference (sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, June 1984), and appreciated her as a friend and colleague in the Classics/Humanities Department at Scarborough College (1988-1993). During those years we enjoyed jointly attending conferences of the Classical Association of Canada as well as CSPS/ACEP, meeting at the “Learneds,” as “Congress” was designated at the time. One could always count on Eleanor to answer questions of language and research, or to give helpful directions on resources, if she did not have an answer at hand.

Eleanor also participated in the second “Christianity and the Classics” conference on the theme, “Hellenization Revisited (1991).” Her contribution, “Clement of Alexandria: Instructions on How Women should Live,” also published in the collection of essays from that event, *Hellenization Revisited* (1994), very much represented the kind of research in which she was engaged at the time.

Wendy E. Helleman, March 2025

PADRAIG MICHEAL O’CLEIRIGH
28 September, 1942 – 5 December, 2024



Padraig was one of the founding members of the CSPS/ACÉP (1978-), serving as treasurer and secretary in its early years, and later also as programme chair. He was a well-loved professor of Classics (Latin and Greek) at the University of Guelph in the school of Languages and Literature, known for his presence and helpfulness to students, as well as an infectious sense of humour.

I got to know and appreciate Padraig when he joined us for the “Christianity and the Classics: Hellenization Revisited” conference (sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto) in 1991; his paper, “Symbol and Science in Early Christian Gnosis,” focused on Clement of Alexandria and Origen, was published in the collection of essays from that event, *Hellenization Revisited* (1994).

Aside from publications on Origen, Padraig published research on Gregory of Nyssa and, in collaboration with Kevin Corrigan, on Neoplatonist studies, as well as an *Introduction to Greek Mythology*. Padraig was born in Ireland, and began studies there, with an M.A. from University College Galway; he pursued further studies for the doctorate at Cornell University in New York and Dalhousie University in Halifax.

Aside from being one of the founding members of CSPS/ACÉP, Padraig was also a founding member of the Society for the Promotion of Eriugenan Studies, devoted to study of the outstanding ninth century Irish Neoplatonist philosopher, poet and theologian, Eriugena.

Padraig had a long career as professor at the University of Guelph, remaining in the classroom until he was already 78 (2020). Aside from awards as an outstanding teaching, a sincere commitment to his students is also evident from the founding of the Padraig O’Cleirigh Scholarship to support undergraduate students in the Humanities.

Wendy E. Helleman, March 2025

PAUL-HUBERT POIRIER
2 mai 1948 – 15 mai 2024



Décédé subitement le 15 mai 2024, le professeur Paul-Hubert Poirier laisse dans le deuil toute la communauté des études patristiques, au Canada et à l’international. Paul-Hubert Poirier fut un des membres fondateurs de l’Association canadienne des études patristiques. Membre de l’Exécutif de l’Association de 1983 à 1989, il en fut le Vice-président de 1989 à 1991, puis le Président de 1991 à 1995. De 2010 à 2015, il agit comme représentant de l’Association au conseil d’administration de la Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses (CCSR).

Né à Saint-Siméon-de-Bonaventure, Québec, en 1948, Paul-Hubert Poirier avait complété un baccalauréat (1971) et une maîtrise (1972) en théologie à l’Université Laval, Québec, ainsi qu’un doctorant de troisième cycle en histoire des religions (1980) à l’Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg. Il était diplômé multiple de l’École des langues orientales anciennes, rattachée à l’Institut catholique de Paris : syriaque (1976), égyptien pharaonique (1976), copte (1977), éthiopien (guèze) (1978), arménien (1987) et géorgien (1987).

Amorçant une prolifique carrière de professeur de patristique et d’histoire de l’Église à la Faculté de théologie de l’Université Laval en 1979, Paul-Hubert Poirier a, dès 1981 et jusqu’à sa retraite en 2019, assuré un enseignement en histoire et littérature du christianisme ancien ainsi qu’en langues orientales anciennes (syriaque, éthiopien), contribuant ainsi à former plus d’une générations de chercheurs dans ces domaines. Généreux de son temps et de ses connaissances, Paul-Hubert Poirier se s’illustrait par ses qualités humaines ainsi que par son dévouement auprès

des étudiants, tous cycles confondus, et de ses collègues, qu'il faisait bénéficier de son savoir encyclopédique et de ses talents de polyglotte.

Internationalement reconnu pour ses travaux dans les domaines du christianisme ancien, du gnosticisme et du manichéisme, ainsi que pour sa maîtrise des langues anciennes, Paul-Hubert Poirier a dirigé (1981-1998) puis codirigé (1998-2024) à l'Université Laval, le grand projet d'édition et de traduction française des textes de Nag Hammadi. Paul-Hubert Poirier s'est aussi distingué, en recherche, par de nombreux travaux dans lesquels il réussissait à faire dialoguer de manière magistrale les Pères de l'Église et les expressions dites marginales du christianisme (littérature apocryphe, gnosticisme, manichéisme).

Au fil des années, sans rien perdre de sa modestie, Paul-Hubert Poirier s'est aussi distingué à l'échelle nationale et internationale, se méritant honneurs et reconnaissances : récipiendaire de la prestigieuse bourse Killam du *Conseil des arts du Canada* en 1988, du Prix André-Laurendeau de l'*Association canadienne française pour l'avancement de la science* en 1990, et de la Médaille Pierre-Chauveau de la *Société royale du Canada* en 2002, en reconnaissance de sa contribution exceptionnelle aux sciences humaines. Nommé Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Québec en 2006, il fut, la même année, d'abord élu Correspondant étranger, puis Associé étranger de l'Institut de France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) en 2015, devenant ainsi le premier Canadien à se mériter cet honneur. En 2021, la Corporation canadienne pour l'étude de la religion a créé une conférence annuelle en son honneur. Au printemps 2024, tout juste avant son décès, l'Université Laval le faisait lauréat du prix Grand diplômé de l'Université Laval.

Retraité de l'enseignement en 2019, professeur émérite en 2020, Paul-Hubert Poirier n'avait pas mis fin à ses engagements académiques, continuant à mener de nombreux travaux, pour lesquels il avait plusieurs publications sous presse, qui paraîtront à titre posthume. Ce départ aussi soudain qu'inattendu laissera un vide important dans la vie des études patristiques au Canada, et à l'international.

Eric Crégher, Université Laval

PAUL-HUBERT POIRIER
May 2nd 1948 – May 15th 2024



On May 15th, 2024, Professor Paul-Hubert Poirier suddenly passed away, leaving the Patristic studies community in Canada and around the world in mourning. Paul-Hubert Poirier was a founding member of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies. Part of the Executive from 1983 to 1989, he was Vice-President from 1989 to 1991, then President of the Society from 1991 to 1995. From 2010 to 2015, he was the Society's representative on the Board of the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion (CCSR).

Born in Saint-Siméon-de-Bonaventure, Québec, in 1948, Paul-Hubert Poirier completed a bachelor's degree (1971) and a master's degree (1972) in theology at Université Laval, Québec, as well as a doctorate in the history of religions (1980) at the Université des sciences humaines de Strasbourg. He held multiple degrees from the École des Langues Orientales Anciennes, attached to the Institut Catholique de Paris: Syriac (1976), Pharaonic Egyptian (1976), Coptic (1977), Ethiopian (Geze) (1978), Armenian (1987) and Georgian (1987).

Paul-Hubert Poirier began a prolific career as a professor of patristics and church history at Université Laval's Faculty of Theology in 1979. From 1981 until his retirement in 2019, he taught early Christian history and literature, as well as oriental languages (Syriac, Ethiopian), contributing to train more than a generation of scholars in these fields. Generous with his time and knowledge, Paul-Hubert Poirier distinguished himself by his human qualities and his dedication to students of all levels and colleagues, who benefited from his encyclopedic knowledge and polyglot talents.

Internationally renowned for his work in the fields of early Christianity, Gnosticism and Manichaeism, as well as for his mastery of ancient languages, Paul-Hubert Poirier directed (1981-1998) and then co-directed (1998-2024), at Université Laval, the major project of the edition and translation of the Nag Hammadi texts into French. Paul-Hubert Poirier was also known for his numerous works that masterfully build bridges between the Church Fathers and the so-called marginal expressions of Christianity (apocryphal literature, Gnosticism, Manichaeism).

Over the years, without losing any of his modesty, Paul-Hubert Poirier also distinguished himself nationally and internationally, earning honours and recognition: he was awarded the prestigious

Killam Fellowship from the Canada Council for the Arts in 1988, the Prix André-Laurendeau from the Association canadienne française pour l'avancement de la science in 1990, and the Pierre Chauveau Medal from the Royal Society of Canada in 2002, in recognition of his exceptional contribution to the humanities. Named Knight of the National Order of Québec in 2006, he was elected Foreign Correspondent the same year, and then Foreign Associate of the Institut de France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres) in 2015, becoming the first Canadian to be awarded this honour. In 2021, the Canadian Corporation for the Studies of Religion established an annual conference in his honour. In the spring of 2024, just before his death, the Université Laval made him the recipient of the Grand diplômé award.

Retired from teaching in 2019, professor emeritus in 2020, Paul-Hubert Poirier had not put an end to his academic commitments, continuing to carry out numerous works, for which he had several publications in press. This sudden and unexpected departure will leave a significant void in the field of Patristic studies in Canada, and internationally.

Eric Crégheur, Université Laval

Pedagogy and Patristics in Canada and Beyond

1:00–4:30pm, June 2, 2025

Emmanuel College of Victoria University, at the University of Toronto
and online via Zoom

The aim of this workshop is to provide intentional space to share teaching approaches to, and methodologies within, Patristic Studies. We will:

- discuss how and why Patristics is introduced and fostered in a variety of settings and programmes
- highlight effective pedagogical strategies and challenges when teaching Patristic material
- develop a picture of the range of approaches to Patristic studies in higher education in Canada in 2025
- discuss challenges Patristic Studies is facing in other countries—and what strategies are being developed

Registration: This workshop is free and open to all, including non-members of the Canadian Society of Patristic Studies, but **registration is required**. Please register by May 16. To register, follow this link: <https://forms.gle/sR5667zstT6jZDG97>.

Schedule

1:00–1:30: Introductions:

- Describe your educational context: degree programs offered, student body, public or private, secular or confessional, etc.

1:30–2:30: Session I: Why (do you) teach Patristic Studies?

In breakout groups

- How were you introduced to Patristic Studies?
- What are your intended learning outcomes? How do you use patristic material to achieve those outcomes?
- What challenges do you face in relation to teaching patristic materials in your context?

2:30–2:45: Break

2:45–4:00: Session II: Effective Pedagogical Strategies

In breakout groups

- Each participant introduces one effective assignment/lesson that has been successful in your teaching (please bring digital and/or hard copies of any handouts/teaching materials to distribute)
- discuss ways that this assignment could be modified for different teaching contexts

4:00–4:30 Wrap-Up

- How can we foster a community of practice in Canada for patristics educators?
- Is there interest in co-producing teaching materials/a textbook?
- Is there interest in working on a special issue of a Journal addressing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in relation to Patristic/Early Christian Studies?

**ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PATRISTIC STUDIES /
RENCONTRE ANNUELLE DE
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ÉTUDES PATRISTIQUES**

**June 3–5, 2025
George Brown College, St. James Campus
Toronto, ON**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, June 3

Location: St. James A, Room 550E

Time	Session	Presenters
8:45–9:00	Welcome and President's Address	Mona Tokarek LaFosse
9:00–11:00	Session 1: Reframing Togetherness	<p>“Politics and Theology through the Peace-making of Irenaeus of Lyons” <i>Don Springer</i></p> <p>“Together Forever: Resilient Family Relationships in Lives of Gender-Ambiguous Saints” <i>Julia Kelto Lillis</i></p> <p>“Keeping Together in a Monastic Way of Life: The Counsels of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza” <i>Theodore de Bruyn</i></p> <p>“The Grammar of Being Together: Basil’s Reframing of Ecclesial Communion in <i>On The Holy Spirit</i>” <i>Alice Candy</i></p>
11:00–11:15	Break	
11:15–12:15	Session 2: Digital Humanities and Patristic Studies	<p>“Past and Future Challenges and Chances of Producing Critical Editions” <i>Marc Bergemann</i></p> <p>“Prompting Augustine: Exploring the Benefits and Limits of Digital Patristics through Chat GPT in Understanding the <i>Confessions</i>” <i>Jimmy Chan</i></p>
12:15–1:30	Lunch	

1:30–3:00	Session 3: The early Augustine	<p>“Revisiting Augustine’s <i>Psalmus contra partem Donati</i>” <i>Aaron P. Debusschere</i> “Augustine’s Adaptation of Time in his Early Works: From a Private Teacher to Committed Man of the Church” <i>Zinan Zhang</i> “Veritas et veritas: Augustine against the appropriation of truth” <i>Tomoki Ishikawa</i></p>
3:00–3:10	Break	
3:10–4:30	Canadian Society of Patristic Studies Annual General Meeting	
5:30–8:30	Toronto School of Theology Congress Reception	<p>Toronto School of Theology Building 47 Queen’s Park Cres. E Subway: Museum, Queen’s Park or Wellesley stations</p>
7:00	Banquet	<p>Donatello Restaurant 37 Elm Street, Toronto Subway: Dundas Station</p>

Wednesday, June 4

Location: St. James A, Room 539E

9:00–10:00	Session 4: Book Review <i>Exploring the Literary Contexts of Patristic Biblical Exegesis</i> , edited by Miriam De Cock and Elizabeth Klein	Reviewed by Austin McCredie and Wendy Helleman
10:00–10:15	Break	
10:15–12:15	Session 5: 1700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea	<p>“Also on the Agenda: The Quartodeciman Controversies and the Council of Nicaea” <i>Paul Hartog</i> “Marius Victorinus on Divine Substance and Nature”</p>

		<p><i>Wendy Helleman</i> “Metaphysics and Monasticism: The Relationship between Nicene Theology and Monastic Identity in the Thought of St Athanasius of Alexandria”</p> <p><i>Richard Mason</i> “Christ in Chronicles: The Christology of Late Antiquity’s East-Syriac Church of the East in its Later Medieval Historiography”</p> <p><i>Ashoor Yousif</i></p>
12:15–1:15	Lunch	Students are invited for a complimentary pizza lunch with the CSPS Executive
1:15–3:15	Session 6: Patristic Exegesis and Philosophy	<p>“Jean, dans le secret. Larrière-plan théologique et philosophique de la recension longue du Livre des secrets de Jean (NH II, 1; IV, 1)”</p> <p><i>Philippe Therrien</i> “Light/Bodies: Sophianic Light in Origen’s <i>De Principiis</i>”</p> <p><i>Brett Potter</i> “Soyez comme les changeurs de monnaie”: l’examen rationnel des Ecritures au IIe siècle”</p> <p><i>Jeffrey Aubin</i> “Observations, Problems, and Insights from a New Translation of Origen’s <i>On Prayer</i>”</p> <p><i>John Solheid</i></p>
3:15–3:30	Break	
3:30–5:00	Session 7: Attentiveness and the Body in Late Antiquity	<p>“The Resurrection and the Postmortal: Perspectives on Death and Memorial Practices in Jacob of Serugh’s Homilies”</p> <p><i>Austin McCredie</i> “Watch and we will embrace what is good: <i>Poēic</i> in Besa’s Letter ‘On Vigilance’”</p> <p><i>Karim Guirguis</i> “Embodied Holiness: Gendered Representations of Dying Holy Women in Late Antique Literature”</p> <p><i>Danielle Baillargeon</i></p>
7:00–9:00	Joint Lecture (Reception to Follow)	<p>“Expanding Patristic Perspectives on the Ancient Past”</p> <p>Annette Yoshiko Reed, Harvard Divinity School Location: St. James A, Room 315A</p>

Thursday, June 5

Location: St. James A, Room 542 E

9:00–11:00	Session 8: Crisis, Trauma, and Therapeia in Patristic Literature	<p>“The Limits of medical crisis management in the ‘Plague of Cyprian’ in third-century North Africa” <i>Naoki Kamamura</i> “Fruamur bono nostro et recti sententiam temperemus (38.7): Crises and the therapy of Rhetoric in the <i>Octavius</i> of Minucius Felix” <i>John Abad</i> “Noetic Purification in response to Psychological Crises in the Greek Ascetic Corpus of Evagrius Ponticus” <i>Kenneth Risk</i> “Saint John Chrysostom on Repentance and Almsgiving as Forms of <i>Therapeia</i>” <i>Andrius Valevicius</i></p>
11:00–11:15	Break	
11:15–12:15	Session 9: Student Essay Prize	<p>“Innocentius of Maronia’s <i>Letter to Thomas the Priest</i> on the <i>Collatio cum Severianis</i> (532): A Historiographical Study” <i>Changxu Hu</i> “‘Christ Encompassing all things’: Inspired Images in the <i>Peri Pascha</i> Attributed to Melito of Sardis” <i>Paul Robinson</i></p>
12:15–1:15	Lunch	
1:15–2:45	Session 10: Clement of Alexandria & Augustine: Reception and Controversies	<p>“Clement of Alexandria and the Education of Women” <i>Jennifer Kiervin</i> “Augustine’s Interpretation of the <i>Passio of Perpetua and Felicitas</i>” <i>Robert Kennedy</i> “Augustine’s Golden Farmer: Lucretian Echoes in Augustine’s Explanation of Human Perfection and Fall” <i>Nathan Scott</i></p>
3:00	Farewell and Safe Travels!	

Abstracts

John Abad, St. Augustine's Seminary (University of Toronto)

Fruamur bono nostro et recti sententiam temperemus (38.7): Crises and the therapy of Rhetoric in the Octavius of Minucius Felix

The Octavius of Minucius Felix, written at the dawn of the third century, bears witness to a period of anxiety and social upheaval in the Roman empire. Its literary worldview is shaped by the Severan dynasty, which ushered the rise of North African elites and the impact of a bloody civil war. The result was not civic order but tension among social classes. Many Christians lost their lives during this period, Leonides, the father of Origen, Irenaeus of Lyon, Perpetua and Felicity to name a few. Its literary setting in the holiday resort of Ostia reminiscent of Theocritean locus amoenus (Ostiam petere, amoenissimam civitatem)¹, and the philosophical discussion among three friends echoing Cicero's philosophical dialogues belie the tension and trauma both of the characters in the dialogue and the author.

There are several crises, social and personal, lying underneath the dialogue. The most apparent is the grief of the author recalling the death of his dear friend in the opening lines of the work. In the dialogue, biases are hurled against Christians with the intent of alienating them from the public sphere. It is also taken for granted that all the interlocutors are North African discussing civic matters and religious practices in Rome. None of them represent the optimates, but they act and think as if they are one. Finally, the author, Minucius Felix, narrated his emotions to legitimize Christianity before his readers.

This paper will focus on two points. First, it will examine how the narrator/author utilizes his grief in the passing of Octavius as an effective *captatio benevolentiae* to introduce Christianity to his readers. The alienated Christians and the readers become part of an “imagined community.” Biases are destabilized through the rhetoric of identity, where identity is negotiated. Second, Minucius Felix asserts that Octavius is “vir bonus et sanctus.”² In the same vein, Quintillian, quoting Cato, states that an ideal citizen is “vir bonus dicendi peritus.”³ In the person of Octavius, Minucius Felix articulates and rationalizes his grief, but above all, the “othering of Christians.” Yet, paradoxically, Octavius becomes an example of virtuous living and a potent element of persuasion to a moral life.

Jeffrey Aubin, CEGEP St. Lawrence

« Soyez comme les changeurs de monnaie » : l'examen rationnel des Écritures au IIe siècle

Certains penseurs du IIe siècle ont recouru à une approche exégétique de type rationaliste. C'est le cas notamment de Marcion et d'Apelle. Celle-ci n'est pas unique et se trouve même bien attestée chez Celse. Certains ont soulevé la question de la dépendance de Celse par rapport à Marcion, sans pour autant offrir de véritable comparaison. Ces trois penseurs, Apelle, Marcion, et Celse, rejettent tous, à leur manière, des passages tant du Nouveau que de l'Ancien Testament. Cette communication tentera de dégager les divers traits de cette approche rationaliste en confrontant directement les versets critiqués par ces auteurs.

Danielle Baillargeon, University of Calgary

Embodied Holiness: Gendered Representations of Dying Holy Women in Late Antique Literature

This paper will discuss the meaning attributed to the dying bodies of holy women in the writings of the church fathers from the 4th and 5th centuries CE. Using a methodology drawn from semiotics to parse the layers of meanings coded upon the body, this paper suggests that the church father's descriptions of holy women's dying bodies constructed women's idealized holiness through the physicality and agency of the impoverished body, reinforcing patriarchal ideals of piety and sanctity. Using Gregory of Nyssa's description of his sister Macrina's dying body and Jerome's description of the death of Paula, I will suggest the dying bodies of holy women were didactic tools, essential for church fathers navigating ascetic discourses that juxtapose elite women's realities of wealth and agency with idealizations of poverty, humility and dependence upon God.

Marc Bergemann, Washington, DC and Berlin, Germany

Past and Future Challenges and Chances of Producing Critical Editions: Exemplary Observations on Volume 1 of Eusebius's Works in the Traditional Edition Series "Die Griechisch Christlichen Schriftsteller" from Ivar Heikel's 1902 Printed Edition to a Hybrid Edition.

"Die Griechisch Christlichen Schriftsteller" (GCS) is one of the most traditional editions in German-language patristics. Since its founding in 1891 by Adolf von Harnack and Theodor Mommsen, it has undergone significant changes, like numerous other international editorial projects, from changing editorial principles to the transition from printed editions to today's hybrid editions. It is telling that even the massive advances of recent years – such as digitized manuscripts freely available via the internet – have not accelerated the production of editions, which raises the question of the advantages but also disadvantages of hybrid editions and other tools of computational theology. Marc Bergemann elaborates on this based on his observations and own experiences in revising the GCS volume 1.2 of the works of Eusebius.

Alice Candy, St. Paul University

The Grammar of Being Together: Basil's Reframing of Ecclesial Communion in On The Holy Spirit

In *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil of Caesarea demonstrates how different formulations of the trinitarian doxology can be understood to express the communion between the Persons of the Trinity and ecclesial communion. While I focus on Basil's arguments that directly address the appropriate uses of 'with' and 'in' in doxological expressions, I also engage with the wider ecclesiological project of Basil's treatise. I suggest that Basil sees both trinitarian communion and ecclesial communion as 'being-for' one another in love, with his conception of the communion of the Trinity informing his perception of the baptised as members of ecclesial communion.

Jimmy Chan, Alliance Biblical Seminary

Prompting Augustine: Exploring the Benefits and Limits of Digital Patristics through ChatGPT in Understanding the Confessions

In the age of digital humanities, artificial generative intelligence tools like ChatGPT offer new ways to engage with Augustine's corpus. However, their validity is influenced by user prompts, raising critical questions such as: "What extent does AI hallucinate Augustine's ideas?" This

paper examines how different prompting strategies affect ChatGPT-4o's accuracy in generating responses on Augustine's *Confessions*. By testing structured, open-ended, and leading prompts across key theological themes such as grace, time, the Trinity, I analyze whether AI retrieves valid information or hallucinates content. Comparing AI-generated responses with patristic scholarship, I assess patterns of reliability, misattribution, and anachronism. This study contributes to digital patristics by critically evaluating ChatGPT's role in Augustine studies, exploring its potential as a research tool aid while exposing the risks of AI-generated misinformation.

Aaron Debusschere, St Paul University

Revisiting Augustine's Psalmus contra partem Donati

Augustine's earliest extant work against the Donatists is both his most unique work and one of his most neglected. The *Psalmus contra partem Donati* was written, perhaps while Augustine was yet a presbyter, as a sung sermon in imitation of the popular polemical hymns composed by the Donatists. While it was presented as a means of teaching Augustine's parishioners the history of the Donatist schism and the doctrinal issues at stake, scholars have neglected its theological content for the rhetorical structure and poetic features of the *psalmus*. This paper argues that by looking instead to its contents, scholars can gain a better understanding of Augustine's early ecclesiology.

Theodore de Bruyn, University of Ottawa

Keeping Together in a Monastic Way of Life: The Counsels of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza

The need to belong is considered a fundamental human motivation in psychosocial theory today. Life in a monastic community in antiquity was obviously a form of belonging, but it could also be difficult. The demands of ascetic practice, the obligation to obey superiors, and the irritations of communal living all frayed the sense of connection an individual might have toward the community and its way of life, leading to questions and, at times, departure. The present paper examines how Barsanuphius and John of Gaza, spiritual elders and counselors in the monastic community at Tabatha in the sixth century, cultivated a sense of belonging among their disciples, on two interrelated planes: between them and their monk-disciples, and between their disciples and other monks.

Karim Guirgis, University of Toronto

“Watch and we will embrace what is good”: “Poeic” in Besa’s Letter “On Vigilance”

“Watchfulness” (Gr. νήψις; Cpt. *poeic*) often features throughout the ascetic corpus. The Greek term has been a cause for much more attention in regard to its nuances and its different uses than its Coptic counterpart. Besa’s letter, often titled “On Vigilance,” focuses on the “watchfulness” of monks, predominantly using the image of guarding “earthly goods.” Besa uses this image consistently to evoke all the different ways that, even, in the material sense someone might “guard” and be “watchful” of material possessions, and how this can help unveil the complexities of spiritual watchfulness. This paper aims to study how Besa, in his letter, approaches this question of spiritual watchfulness.

Paul Hartog, Faith Baptist Theological Seminary*Also on the Agenda: The Quartodeciman Controversies and the Council of Nicaea*

In summaries of church history, the Council of Nicaea is set in opposition to Arianism. The Life of Constantine, however, mentions a secondary focus upon Easter (“Quartodeciman”) controversies. My presentation will trace the complexities of these disputes, including the roles of immigration, local tensions, inter-ecclesial dialogue, shifting attitudes toward Jews, and conflicting apostolic claims. The paper will also place the anti-Quartodeciman Canons of Antioch in c. 328 (rather than 341), thus illustrating how quickly the conversation moved from claims of a peaceful resolution to threats of ecclesial ex-communication and clerical removal. The tenor ironically reflects the durable strength of rival Easter traditions—which had formerly claimed the support of venerable leaders, including Polycarp, Melito, and Polycrates. The paper will end with an investigation of the anti-Quartodeciman response of the Synod of Serdica in 343.

Wendy Helleman, University of Jos/University of Toronto*Marius Victorinus on Divine Substance and Nature*

Victorinus' succinct statement on divine unity and trinity, *ἐκ μιᾶς οὐσίας τρεῖς εἶναι τὰς ὑποστάσεις* (*Adversus Arium* III 4.32-39) points ahead to the “Cappadocian settlement” that would pave the way for restatement of the Nicene creed at the Council of Constantinople in 381. But arguments of the Cappadocians from common activities, indicating shared power (δύναμις), and pointing in turn to a single divine nature (φύσις), evaded the contentious terminology of the Nicene agreement of 325. Victorinus's relentless defense of the ὁμοούσιον did not circumvent the troublesome term *οὐσία*, which he translated as (one) *substantia*, correlated with (three) *subsistentiae* (*substantia unum, subsistentia tria*). Which raises the question of the relationship between divine nature and substance. While there is clearly a potential overlap in the meaning of the two terms, and some scholars (Mary Clark) have affirmed an equivalence between *substantia* and *φύσις*, this is rejected by others (Christopher Dowson) who find that for Victorinus *natura* is conceptually closer to *existentia*, or *subsistentia*, terms for the divine three. This paper will explore Victorinus' use of the term *natura*, and reasons for his consistent use of the term *substantia* for divine unity.

Changxu Hu, University of Tokyo (Student Essay Prize winner)*Innocentius of Maronia's Letter to Thomas the Priest on the Collatio cum Severianis (532): A Historiographical Study*

This study examines the *Letter to Thomas the Priest* by Innocentius of Maronia, a critical source for the *collatio cum Severianis* held in 532 in Constantinople. Composed in a protocol-like style yet framed as a personal correspondence, the *Letter* offers valuable insight into sixth-century documentary habits amid theological controversy and ecclesiastico-political conflict. Drawing also on Syriac sources, this paper argues that Innocentius's *Letter* exemplifies a hybrid form crafted for propagandistic purposes: it adopts the rhetorical neutrality of conciliar acts to assert Chalcedonian orthodoxy while exercising epistolary flexibility to omit or reframe contentious material.

First, I argue that, although Justinian and his court declined to authorize official documentation of the dialogue, both parties recognized the strategic value such records could offer in advancing their respective positions. Then, through a case study of the dispute over the restoration of Ibās

of Edessa at Chalcedon, I show how Innocentius manipulates the content of Ibas's *Letter to Mari* by providing only a selective summary. This tactic strategically obscures Ibas's attribution of peace-making initiative to the Antiochenes, as well as his problematic praise of Theodore of Mopsuestia and criticism of Cyril of Alexandria and Rabbula of Edessa—figures held as orthodox heroes not only by Miaphysites but also by Chalcedonians. This analysis demonstrates how documentation was mobilized to construct legitimacy and project authority in a contested ecclesiastical landscape. As such, the *Letter* offers a revealing case study of how unofficial documents appropriated the authoritative style of conciliar records in the sixth century.

Tomoki Ishikawa, University of Tokyo

“Veritas et ueritas”: Augustine Against the Appropriation of Truth

It is generally accepted that Augustine's anti-Manichean debate centred on the problem of evil and that Augustine criticised their moral dualism. However, a close reading of Augustine's first encounter with the Manichees in *Confessions* 3.6.10 reveals that the text is framed around the problem of truth. This paper begins by analysing Manichee's first utterance, “*Veritas et ueritas*”, and suggests that what should be called an “appropriation of truth” is observable in the Manichean narrative of truth. It also explores how Augustine tackled this “crisis of truth” by focusing on the question of “*ubi ueritas*” rather than “*quid ueritas*” in his early and middle writings. This line of reading will ultimately highlight Augustine's insistence on the public aspect of truth, which sharply contrasts with Manichee's “appropriation of truth”.

Naoki Kamamura, Tokyo Gakugei University of Tokyo

The Limits of Medical Crisis Management in the ‘Plague of Cyprian’ in the Third-century North Africa

The plague in the mid-third century (c. AD 249-270) has been named after Cyprian of Carthage. This designation arises from the scant evidence of the terrible outbreak of the plague, with Cyprian's treatises, particularly *De mortitate* and *Ad Demetrianum*, serving as principal sources. These works provide vivid accounts of the ‘Plague of Cyprian’. Another contemporary account of the pandemic is *De laude martirii*, which is included in the corpus of Cyprian's writings. Although the author remains anonymous, recent research has indicated that it was produced by an African Christian who experienced the plague. This proposal centres on the spread of infectious diseases within the framework of various crises, including natural disasters, climate change, population movements, disparities of wealth and poverty, religious conflicts, social injustices, and excessive legal systems that ancient societies faced. This proposal demonstrates how interest in human health and healing grew during the devastating epidemic. I will argue the role of medical and religious concepts in addressing threats to human life and highlight the limitations of medical crisis management.

Robert Kennedy, St. Francis Xavier University

Augustine's Interpretation of the Passio of Perpetua and Felicitas

Martyrdom was a popular theme for sermons in the North Africa of Augustine's time and none was more celebrated than the martyrdoms of Perpetua and Felicitas. These martyrdoms occurred in or near Carthage in 203 CE. One account, called the *Passio*, is almost contemporaneous with the event, and the other, the *Acta*, dates to the early fourth century. Augustine gave at least three sermons on the martyrdom, all based on the earlier *Passio*. Recent scholarship has noted Augustine virtually ignores the violence inflicted on the martyrs, emphasizes courage as a male

virtue, and introduces anti-Donatist polemic into his interpretation of this text. My paper will review this literature but will focus on Augustine's analysis of the sources of violence ("spectacle" and the emotions of the crowds) and how he sought to defuse the potentially violent effects of the *Passio* on his hearers. I will conclude with a brief comparison of the sermons with the *Acta* to highlight the distinctiveness of Augustine's interpretation.

Julia Kelto Lillis, Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York

Together Forever: Resilient Family Relationships in Lives of Gender-Ambiguous Saints

Many late ancient *Lives* commemorate saints who grow up as women, then live as male monks. Recent scholarship offers divergent readings of these figures' gender, drawing especially from feminist, queer, and trans theory to argue whether each is ultimately portrayed as a woman, man, or neither. Criteria include forsaken or persisting familial roles: By the end of the story, do the saint's ties to a parent, sibling, or spouse evoke their old identity? This paper argues that some figures aspire to a genderless state where sexual difference fades while relationships continue. The *Lives* of Eugenia/Eugenios, Mary/Marinos, and Athanasia/Athanasios describe tenacious ties that bind families but undergo transformation, allowing a saint to transcend gendered life and exemplify a higher, angelic state.

Jennifer Kiervin, St. Augustine's Seminary

Clement of Alexandria and the Education of Women

Well-educated in philosophy, Clement of Alexandria called all Christians to seek knowledge, pursue the life of virtue and philosophize. Unlike some of his contemporaries, he included both women and men in this call. However, rather than encouraging women to enter public life or leadership, he still understood the place of women to be in the home. One way to view this dichotomy is to see it as a middle way which navigates both the high expectations of Clement's "true gnostic" and the historical reality of the Church and society in which he was teaching and writing.

Richard Mason, Trinity College (University of Toronto)

Metaphysics and Monasticism: The Relationship Between Nicene Theology and Monastic Identity in the Thought of St. Athanasius of Alexandria.

While metaphysical reasoning and spiritual practice are often seen as somewhat disconnected from one another, Athanasius of Alexandria saw them as intrinsically interlinked. Athanasius's contribution to Nicene theology can be convincingly read as being rooted in a desire to banish all false intermediaries and imagined metaphysical "distance" between God and the world. This same desire, though as it concerns experience and the spiritual life, also drives the picture of monastic identity painted in *The Life of Antony*.

Identifying these parallels between Athanasius's undisputed works and *The Life of Antony* can serve as an argument for the Athanasian authorship of *The Life*. It also has possible implications for how Christians ought to understand the relationship between reason and experience today.

Austin McCredie, University of Pennsylvania

The Resurrection and the Postmortal: Perspectives on Death and Memorial Practices in Jacob of Serugh's Homilies

Jacob of Serugh's extensive collection of homilies contains several that are focused on the moment of death or the dead themselves. However, these meditations upon death and the dead are by no means consistent nor do they form a coherent worldview. On the one hand, Jacob portrays death as an unconscious, peaceful existence, awaiting the Resurrection; on the other, death is a postmortal, active space, where the dead still linger and are connected to "this world." These almost-paradoxical portrayals of death – beyond their obvious theologizing – also convey institutional concerns that helped to center the space of the church in Late Antique funerary and mourning practices, through the assurances of the resurrection in the first instance, and the possibility of intervening on behalf of the dead in the second.

Brett Potter, Huron University (University of Western Ontario)

Light/Bodies: Sophianic Light in Origen's De Principiis

In Book I of *De Principiis*, Origen carefully distinguishes between corporeal light, which is perceptible through its aspects of form, colour, and magnitude, and the endless light of God which surpasses all earthly comparison. For Origen, divine light "surpasses the nature of bodies," and as such cannot be perceived by the untransformed senses. Christ, as the "word and wisdom" of God, mediates this divine "brightness" in creation.

Interestingly, however, Origen's meditation on the nature of christic light – in whose light "we see light" (Ps. 36) – takes its primary reference point a passage about the female figure of Sophia in *Wisdom of Solomon* 7:26-30. As recent studies have noted, Origen's christology is thus implicitly feminine. This study aims to elucidate Origen's understanding of the (female) sophianic light manifested in Christ as a way of better understanding the relationship between divine and corporeal light in Christian, Islamic (e.g. al-Ghazali), and contemporary theological vocabularies.

Kenneth Risk, St. Augustine's Seminary (University of Toronto)

Noetic Purification in response to Psychological Crises in the Greek Ascetic Corpus of Evagrius Ponticus

This paper aims to answer the question "How ought we to think and pray in times of crisis according to Evagrius?" in his Greek Ascetic Corpus. The Greek Ascetic Corpus of Evagrius includes various works such as Monastic Foundations, Exhortations, Chapters on Prayer, Chapters on Thoughts, and Eulogios. This paper passes through three stages. First, I define what Evagrius considers crises and how this applies to contemporary contexts. Second, I define what Evagrius means when he discusses the Nous and pure prayer. I define how pure prayer is psychologically purifying during times of crises, offering various conclusions which include but are not limited to tears of compunction, contemplative prayer, and impassibility. For Evagrius, these latter two states are only achieved by the entire purification of the soul from its passions and the same of the mind from its images. In conclusion, Evagrius proposes that we ought to aim at and achieve an imageless, formless, rational, contemplative, and angelic state of prayer amidst times of crises. I will offer a defense of Evagrius' proposal for contemplative prayer in times of crises rather than action and reaction in an attempt to fix any particular crisis.

Paul Robinson, McMaster Divinity School (Student Essay Prize winner)*“Christ Encompassing all things”: Inspired Images in the *Peri Pascha* Attributed to Melito of Sardis*

The *Peri Pascha* (PP) attributed to Melito of Sardis remains one of our most unique and enigmatic extant early Christian texts. This paper argues that Melito’s exegetical and homiletical method—for the two must be understood as one—is rooted in his interpretation and use of inspired images. The *Peri Pascha* represents a form of figural exegesis and figural homiletics, in which images are employed as expansive metaphors not as a means to a theological or ideological end, but as a creative representation of that end—that is, Christ, the reality (ἀλήθεια) and true image. Melito presents the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ as the image which fulfills all other images and in whom all other images coalesce. Throughout the *Peri Pascha* the scriptural images are presented to Melito’s hearers not as something to learn about, or even to look upon, but as overlapping scenes in which the parishioners themselves become participants. By way of conclusion, I draw upon Austin Farrer’s doctrine of inspired images and urge a renewal of Melito’s figural methodology at the most basic level—reading the Bible.

Nathan Scott, Wycliffe College (University of Toronto)*Augustine’s Golden Farmer: Lucretian Echoes in Augustine’s Explanation of Human Perfection and Fall*

Augustine’s agricultural imagery in his *De Genesi ad Litteram*, where he described Edenic humanity, has many similarities with Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura*. Augustine also made a nod to Lucretius’s poem when highlighting that this agricultural humanity was conversant *cum Rerum Natura* (*Gen. Lit.* 8.8.16). This paper, from a chapter of my Dissertation, will argue that Augustine’s discussion in book 8 of his *De Genesi ad Litteram* contains echoes of Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura* that shaped his explanation of human perfection and fall. This paper will thus seek to explain the implications of these Lucretian echoes in Augustine’s theological anthropology.

John Solheid*Observations, Problems, and Insights from a New Translation of Origen’s *On Prayer**

Origen’s *On Prayer* is one of the few texts from the Alexandrian that has survived intact in its original Greek. It survives in one 14th century Byzantine manuscript currently held at Trinity College, Cambridge University, *Cod. Cantabrig. Coll. S. Trinitatis B.8.10*. Throughout this treatise, Origen lays the intellectual, or theological, framework for the proper practice of prayer, regarding both the inner disposition of the one praying as well as the bodily aspects of prayer, such as standing in the *orans* position, facing east, and the proper spaces and times of day for prayer. Additionally, Origen’s discourse on the interplay between prayer and ethics is one of the central insights of this treatise. He spends a great deal of time elaborating on how one’s conduct in life (sexual practices, interpersonal relationships, and the Christian duty to care for others in need) is integral to developing a proper disposition for prayer. Thus, in *On Prayer*, we have an important window into the relationship between Christianity and its Hellenistic environment, the concrete practices of early Christianity and the theology underpinning them. However, translating this text poses some challenges. There are several lacunae as well as passages that appear inconsistent with ideas central to Origen’s thought. In this presentation, I will address these issues as well reflect on the insights into Origen’s thought gained through a close reading of Origen in his original Greek.

Don Springer, McMaster Divinity School

Politics and Theology through the Peace-making of Irenaeus of Lyons.

The second century was a time of unrest for religious movements within the Roman empire. This was particularly true for Christianity, fraught as it was with conflict both within and without. The internal, doctrinal battles over heresy and orthodoxy were particularly contentious, creating much angst and vitriol. Irenaeus of Lyons was a leader central to the theological debates of this era. Though a contested figure, this paper will argue that Irenaeus distinguished himself as a man of peace in an age of conflict. The evidence for this position will be argued through an analysis of his politics and theology. Concerning the former, Irenaeus demonstrated his concern for peace in the way he interacted with Bishop Victor of Rome over the Quartodeciman affair, in his engagement with Valentinian leaders, and through his role in communicating the fate of the martyrs of Vienne and Lyon at the hands of imperial prosecutors. There is also a strong thread of peace that runs through much of Irenaeus' theology. His cosmology, anthropology, and soteriology are all uniquely expressed in such a way as to promote themes of peace. As such, this essay demonstrates not only that this second-century bishop earned his namesake, but that he did so in distinction to the general ethos of his day.

Philippe Therrien, Université Laval

Jean, dans le secret. L'arrière-plan théologique et philosophique de la recension longue du Livre des secrets de Jean (NH II, 1 ; IV, 1)

Cette présentation vise à exposer l'arrière-plan théologique et philosophique de la recension longue du Livre des secrets de Jean de Nag Hammadi (NH II, 1; IV, 1). Ce traité de doctrine gnostique contient de nombreuses allusions aux Écritures juives et au Nouveau Testament, en particulier à l'Évangile selon Jean. La philosophie médio-platonicienne doit également être prise en compte pour comprendre la logique et la structure du traité. Une analyse de ces influences et des procédés herméneutiques employés donneront donc un éclairage sur la visée du texte et sa position dans son contexte intellectuel et religieux antique. Une comparaison avec la recension brève permettra en outre de préciser les spécificités de la recension longue.

Andrius Valevicius, Université Sherbrooke

Saint John Chrysostom on Repentance and Almsgiving as Forms of Therapeia

This paper will focus on the ten homilies on *Repentance and Almsgiving*, delivered in the winter of 387 AD, and on the *Letters to Theodore (Ad Theodorum lapsum)* as well. In popular literature of today, many books have been written about the psychological benefits of forgiving. St. John Chrysostom delves even further into the human psyche and offers repentance as a way to liberate the soul. Even if one has not committed and grave sins, it is good to repent. This makes one think of F. Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* wherein a major theme is that we should take the sins of the world upon ourselves. Repentance, in today's language, could be seen as a method to free oneself from depression and despair, two powerful emotions which can lead to recklessness and result in great personal loss or damage.

These homilies are brilliant, fully readable today, and offer a novel understanding of human psychology. Repentance also implies some sort of restoration and this is where almsgiving comes in. Together, these two acts of repentance and almsgiving constitute a kind of Late Antiquity course in Home Economics. They teach Christian families how to live and how to set aside provisions for the poor, each according to their means. Through repentance and

almsgiving the Christian home becomes a church with a sacred treasury, much more secure than if protected by armed guards and the demons which haunt us are kept at bay.

Ashoor Yousif, Tyndale University

Christ in Chronicles: The Christology of Late Antiquity's East-Syriac Church of the East in its Later Medieval Historiography

East-Syriac medieval chronicles document the involvements of ecclesiastics of the Church of the East in diplomatic embassies between the Persian and Roman empires during Late Antiquity (5th-7th centuries). The chroniclers highlight that theology was a major theme of these encounters between the East-Syriac ecclesiastics of the Church of the East and the Greek-Byzantine emperors and ecclesiastics during these encounters because of the Arian and Nestorian controversies and their associated Nicaean and Chalcedonian councils. In their accounts, the medieval historians preserve several East-Syriac Christological confessional statements attributed to the Late Antiquity ecclesiastic, claiming they were presented to the Byzantines to affirm the orthodoxy of the Church of the East's theology. This paper examines these confessional statements, arguing their value in shedding light on East-Syriac Christology in Late Antiquity, at least as the later medieval sources presented it.

Zinan Zhang, KU Leuven

Augustine's Adaptation of Time in His Early Works: From a Private Teacher to Committed Man of the Church

In early works such as *De Ordine* and *De Musica*, Augustine explored the concept of time, laying the foundation for his later investigations in *Confessiones*. These writings were often composed in the form of dialogues, serving as a tool for intellectual communication among his close companions. After becoming a priest, he adapted these ideas for broader audiences in his sermons and pastoral writings. My work examines how Augustine's use of time was influenced by his engagement with different audiences, highlighting shifts in his perspectives, theological priorities, and practical applications. By tracing the developments and evolutions in his journey from intellectual life among a small group of companions to public service in the Church, this study illuminates the evolving role of time in Augustine's thought and ministry.