

SNTS GENERAL MEETING 2026 – ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:

Prof. Adele Reinhartz, Professeure éminente/Distinguished University Professor, Université d'Ottawa / University of Ottawa

MAIN PAPERS

Dr James (Jim) Harrison

Paper Title: “Glory” in Paul’s Corinthian Epistles: Intersections with Honour Acquisition in the Greek Mainland and the Peloponnese.

Abstract:

The epigraphic occurrence of *doxa* and cognates in the Greek mainland and in the Peloponnese has been ignored as a semantic domain in considering Paul’s understanding of “glory” in the Corinthian Epistles. The Jewish background of the doxological language in the epistles has been insightfully researched, but the heated quest for ancestral and personal glory in the Latin West and in the Greek East has been overlooked as a crucial dynamic that shaped local social relations in the Roman colony of Corinth. It will be argued that Paul is interacting exegetically with the elite Corinthian version of the quest for glory. Thus the doxological epigraphic data base is not only important for a ‘reader-response’ criticism approach to the Corinthian epistles, but it is also invaluable for helping us to understand better Paul’s contextual engagement with a key component of Graeco-Roman culture.

Prof. John Granger Cook – LaGrange College, jgcook0@gmail.com

Paper Title: The Recently Found Victim of Crucifixion in Fenstanton and the Crucifixion of Jesus

Abstract: In 2017 during an archaeological dig in Fenstanton, Cambridgeshire a skeleton (4926) was discovered whose right calcaneum was pierced by a nail. Radiocarbon dating of the skeleton “places 4926 at AD 210–340 at 1 σ (68% probability) or 130–360 at 2 σ (95.4% probability).” The only other crucifixions in Britain that are known from the extant literature are those carried out by Boudicca’s forces against the Roman legionary prisoners in 61 AD at Verulamium and London. It is a curious detail that the other extant skeletal evidence for Roman crucifixion is also a pierced right calcaneum. We know that individual’s name, Jehoḥanan / ben Ḥagqol, because the skeleton was found in his sarcophagus in 1968 in east Jerusalem. When compared with the most ancient graffito of Roman crucifixion, that of Alkimilla, it is apparent that the calcanea of the Jerusalem and Fenstanton victims were fixed to either side of the vertical beam. In the image of Alkimilla’s crucifixion it also appears that her hands are attached to the *patibulum* (cross piece). This evidence along with a number of Roman texts support the details of Jesus’s crucifixion in John 20:25.

Prof. Dr. Christiane Zimmermann, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Germany
Paper Title: Korinthische „Theo-logien“ zur Zeit der paulinischen Gemeindegründung

Abstract (German):

Die paulinische Verkündigung vom einen Gott-Vater und vom einen Herrn Jesus Christus und ihren Beziehungen zu den Menschen (1Kor 8,6) gelingt vor dem Hintergrund pluraler Gott-Mensch-Beziehungen, die für die pagane korinthische Bevölkerung maßgeblich waren. Anhand archäologischer und literarischer Quellen wird das Ineinander paulinischer und paganer Gottesbilder in Korinth herausgearbeitet, um im Anschluss die Spezifika der paulinischen Verkündigung genauer konturieren zu können.

Abstract (English):

Paul proclaims the one God, the Father, and the one Lord, Jesus Christ, and defines their relationships to human beings (1 Cor 8:6) against the backdrop of plural configurations of divine–human relations that shaped the religious life of Corinth’s pagan population. Drawing on archaeological and literary evidence, the paper traces the interweaving of Pauline and pagan conceptions of the divine in Corinth in order to delineate more precisely the distinctive features of Paul’s proclamation.

Prof. Martin Karrer

Paper Title: Text, Paratexte und Theologie der Apk – Erkenntnisse nach der Editio Critica Maior.

Abstract:

Der Vortrag stellt wesentliche Aspekte der Editio Critica Maior der Apk vor, die 2024 erschien (Druck bei der DBG; online <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/ecm>; <https://elekpub.bib.uni-wuppertal.de/urn/urn:nbn:de:hbz:468-2-6475> sowie 468-2-6484, 468-2-6495 468-2-6500). Diese Edition führte zu umfangreichen Änderungen im Text der Apk. Von hoher Bedeutung sind die Korrekturen in 21,6 (γέγονα) und 22,21 (μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων). Auffällig verbessert sich die stilistische Qualität der Apk (Korrekturen z.B. in 4:4; 8:12; 12:5,13; 17:3; 19:20; 20:2). Die Orthographie und Interpunktion sind nach den griechischen Zeugen aktualisiert; z.B. verändern sich die Schreibung von ἀντίπας | ἀντεῖπας (2,13), von ἀλληλούϊα (19,1 etc.) und ἱεροσαλήμ (21,2). Semantisch relevant ist z.B. die neue Interpunktion von 22,16. Die Edition dokumentiert außerdem die Nomina abbreviata und Paratexte (genannt seien die subscriptio und der Seitentitel ἀποκαλυψεις aus 01).

The lecture presents key aspects of the Editio Critica Maior of Revelation, which was published by the German Bible Society in 2024 (online <https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/ecm>; <https://elekpub.bib.uni-wuppertal.de/urn/urn:nbn:de:hbz:468-2-6475> and 468-2-6484, 468-2-6495 468-2-6500). This edition performed extensive changes in the text of the Revelation: the corrections in 21:6 (γέγονα) and 22:21 (μετὰ πάντων τῶν ἁγίων) are of particular significance. The stylistic quality of Rev has been noticeably improved (corrections e.g. in 4:4; 8:12; 12:5,13; 17:3; 19:20; 20:2). The orthography and punctuation have been updated according to the Greek witnesses; see, for example, the new spelling ἀντίπας | ἀντεῖπας (2:13), ἀλληλούϊα (19:1 etc.) and ἱεροσαλήμ (21:2). An example for the new punctuation is 22:16. The edition also documents the nomina abbreviata and paratexts (e.g., the subscriptio and the running title ἀποκαλυψεις from 01).

Prof. Michal Beth Dinkler, Yale Divinity School, USA

“Nested Narratives: Intra-Diegetic Interpretation and the Form of New Testament Narrative”

Abstract:

New Testament scholarship has long organized itself along generic lines: a focus on the narrative structure of the Gospels and Acts, on one side, and on the rhetorical dimensions of the epistolary literature, on the other. This division obscures a fundamental question: how New Testament storytelling itself participates in the formation of hermeneutical practice. This paper argues that early Christian persuasion is not confined to explicit exegetical argument or formal rhetorical *techné*, but is structurally embedded within narrative form. Across New Testament narratives, hermeneutical acts are staged intra-diegetically: characters interpret Scripture, misread events, and retrospectively re-narrate earlier scenes and stories for new contexts. In such moments, interpretation is not merely explanatory commentary, but an essential aspect of the narrated action. I argue that attending to these formal embeddings broadens our understanding of early Christian persuasion, revealing it to be a practice cultivated not only through formal argumentation, but through the very dynamics of storytelling.

Prof. Simon Gathercole, Cambridge University

Celsus's Jewish Source in *Contra Celsum* 1-2: An 'Apocryphal Anti-Gospel'

Abstract:

Not yet available.

SEMINAR PROGRAMME:

SEMINAR 1: CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE HISTORIES OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

(Claire Rothschild and John Kloppenborg) – terminates in 2029

Session 1: Denise Kimber Buell (Williams College, USA), “Centering the Fragment and the Secret: Reapproaching Christian Origins via Racialization and Revelation”

Respondent: Judith Lieu (Cambridge)

Session 2: Julien Ogereau (Kiel, Germany), “Pauline Influence beyond Macedonia: Early Christianity in Epirus and Illyria”

Respondent: Laura Nasrallah (Yale Divinity School, USA)

Session 3: Benjamin Schliesser (University of Bern, Switzerland), “The Diffusion of Religious Innovation: Early Christianity as a Test Case”

Respondent: Teresa Morgan (Yale Divinity School, USA)

SEMINAR 2: THE HISTORICAL JESUS: METHODOLOGY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

(David du Toit, Helen Bond, and Sarah Rollens) – terminates in 2029

Session 1: Christine Jacobi, (LMU Munich, Germany) The “Remembered Jesus” from the Perspective of Paul’s Letters

Respondent: Samuel Byrskog (Lund University, Sweden)

Abstract: In my paper I aim to explore how Paul refers to Jesus traditions in his letters and what hermeneutical insights this provides for contemporary Jesus research. I critically engage with the historical dichotomy between “the words of Jesus” and their later interpretation—a distinction that has shaped scholarship since Reimarus, Strauss, and Bultmann. Instead of separating “fact” from “interpretation,” I emphasize, in the sense of Paul Ricoeur, the interpretive character of all historiography: memory is always already representation.

Through a close reading of Pauline texts (e.g., Rom 12:14–21; 14:14; 1 Cor 7:10–11; 9:14; 11:23–25), I would like to demonstrate that Paul neither cites Jesus as a historical teacher nor invokes him as an authoritative figure. Rather, he employs “the Kyrios Jesus” as a hermeneutical category within which faith, conviction, and ethical orientation are grounded. The expression “in the Lord” does not function as a historical reference but as a marker of a new perception of reality. Thus, ethical and halakhic themes—such as purity, love of enemies, and non-retaliation—are not traced back to preserved sayings of Jesus but are reinterpreted in light of the proclamation of Christ.

I compare Pauline traditions with Synoptic and extra-canonical parallels (e.g., Joseph and Aseneth, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs) and demonstrate that supposedly “Christian” ethical ideas emerge within a broader Jewish–Hellenistic context. The Synoptic Gospels’ attribution of such traditions to the authority of Jesus represents a specific literary strategy rather than the original form of transmission.

Overall, I argue for understanding early Christian tradition as a multi-voiced process of memory in which the Kyrios functions as the interpretive center. Paul’s theology exemplifies that the diversity of early Christian representations of Jesus is not a deviation but a constitutive feature of the origins of Christianity.

Session 2: Logan Williams, (University of Aberdeen, UK) How Pharisaic was Jesus? An Appraisal of Jesus' Anti-Pharisaic Polemics
Respondent: Roland Deines, (Internationale Hochschule Liebenzell, Germany)

Abstract: This paper evaluates attempts to position the historical Jesus in relation to the Pharisees and other first-century Jewish sects. More specifically, it considers the significance of Jesus' criticisms of the Pharisees in the synoptics for this debate. Some propose that such criticisms indicate that Jesus himself stood entirely against Pharisaism, or even that he was (in some respects) ideologically Essene. Others suggest that Jesus was a Pharisee (or at least Pharisaic) while contending that his anti-Pharisaic polemics are ahistorical projections of later Christians. This paper proposes a *via media*. On the one hand, a closer look at popular criticisms of the Pharisees at the turn of the era tips the scales against the contention that Jesus' criticisms must stem from later Christian anti-Jewish polemics. On the other hand, many of Jesus' sayings suggest not only close familiarity with Pharisaic praxis and ideology but also implicit affirmations of key features of Pharisaism. But two factors problematise this portrait: his rejection of non-biblical Pharisaic traditions (Mark 7.1–23) and his anti-Pharisaic position on marriage (Mark 10.1–12). I offer a hypothesis for how this curious combination of Pharisaic and non-Pharisaic views may have emerged in the life of the historical Jesus.

Session 3: Mark Goodacre, (Duke University, USA) When John is Synoptic, how historical is Jesus?
Respondent: Robyn Faith Walsh, (University of Miami, USA)

Abstract: The revival of interest in the idea that John was familiar with the Synoptic Gospels raises the question of Johannine historicity in fresh ways. If John presupposed, knew, and transformed the Synoptic Gospels in composing his work, this limits the Fourth Gospel's value as an independent witness in historical Jesus research. Analysis of passages when John is Synoptic illustrates that the Fourth Gospel is secondary and derivative. The thesis that John knew the Synoptics thus limits the role that John can play in historical Jesus research, while nevertheless drawing attention to certain stubborn, non-Synoptic details in John that continue to give us pause.

SEMINAR 3: NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Conveners: Hugh Houghton, Christina M. Kreinecker, and Gregory S. Paulson

Session 1: Charles Quarles (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA), ΓΕΝΕΣΙΣ or ΓΕΝΝΗΣΙΣ: A Puzzling Variation in Matthew 1:18
Respondent: Thomas O'Loughlin (University of Nottingham, UK)

Abstract: Although critical editions of the Greek New Testament affirm the γένεσις reading in Matthew 1:18, the orthographic, phonetic, and semantic similarities between the variants γένεσις and γέννησις present a difficult challenge to the textual critic. The UBS6 wisely downgraded the level of confidence for the γένεσις reading from B to C since good arguments for either reading can be made. Surprisingly, a fresh evaluation of the evidence applying principles of reasoned eclecticism slightly supports the γέννησις reading. The reading is supported by several highly reliable texts (892 33) in addition to the vast majority of preserved texts. The reading is supported by a variety of texts that are not closely related including those formerly classified as Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine. Evidence from genealogical coherence also lends support. Early patristic literature almost unanimously favors γέννησις and predates the earliest continuous-text witnesses to the standard reading. The early wide geographical distribution of the γέννησις reading suggests that the reading dates to the mid-second century. Two early versions seem to support γέννησις as well. Scribes probably assimilated the reading

in Matthew 1:18 to the reading in the memorable incipit in Matthew 1:1 prompted by the similarities between γένεσις and γέννησις and the shared genitive modifier. The author would probably have used different terms in 1:1 and 1:18 to avoid confusing readers. The intentional distinction between γένεσις and γέννησις comports well with an important theological theme of Matthew's Gospel.

Session 2: Peter Montoro (USA/UK, guest), *The Biblical Text(s) of Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans: A Summary of Key Findings*

Respondent: Stephen Carlson (ACU, Australia)

Abstract: This paper will provide a summary of the key findings of my doctoral thesis, *Revision and Reference: The Transformations of the Biblical Text of Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans and Their Significance for the Transmission of the New Testament*, recently published by Brill as *Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans and the Textual History of the New Testament*. Grounded in a study of the manuscript tradition of the *Homilies on Romans*, this project offers both a reconstruction of the Romans text as initially cited in the homilies, and an analysis of the extensive revisions to these citations present in the subsequent manuscript tradition. The results of this study challenge current assumptions about the influence of the Byzantine text on patristic citations, demonstrate the use of the manuscripts of Chrysostom's homilies as a source of textual reference in the broader transmission history of Romans, and offer a new paradigm for the use of alternating-format commentary manuscripts in the textual criticism of the New Testament.

Session 3: Martina Vercesi (KU Leuven, Belgium), *Contaminatio Graeco-Latina: Bilingual Manuscripts and the Development of the So-Called "Western" Text*

Respondent: Annette Hüffmeier (INTF, Germany)

Abstract: The earliest bilingual Greek-Latin manuscripts of the Pauline Epistles (GA 06, GA 010, and GA 012) occupy a distinctive place in the textual history of the New Testament. These witnesses are traditionally associated with the so-called "Western" text, whose Greek strand often preserves readings rare or unique among Greek manuscripts but widely attested in the Latin tradition. A parallel phenomenon can also be observed for the Gospels in another bilingual witness, GA 05 (Codex Bezae). In the case of the Pauline Epistles, the consensus view has long attributed these shared Greco-Latin readings to a hypothetical bilingual archetype, conventionally referred to as Z. In contrast, for the Gospel of Mark in Codex Bezae, Lorenz has recently advanced the hypothesis of Latin influence on the Greek text. Yet the fundamental question remains open: what kind of interaction between Greek and Latin best explains the unique textual profile of the early bilinguals? Later bilingual manuscripts, including GA 629 and 79, where Latin clearly influenced the Greek text, revive this discussion. Indeed, in these manuscripts several Greek readings coincidentally agree with the Greek text of earlier bilinguals. By examining the interaction between Greek and Latin within these manuscripts, this paper asks whether what has been called "Western" readings might be the product of linguistic dynamics at an early stage of the transmission and before the production of the extant codices.

SEMINAR 4: AN ODD MIXTURE AND ITS RIDDLES: EXPLORING THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES

(Alicia Batten, Wolfgang Grünstäudl, and Daniel A. Smith) – terminates in 2028

Session 1: Nicholas Moore (Durham University, UK), "Early Latin Commentaries on Jude."

Respondent: Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr (Jena University, Germany).

Session 2: Judith Lieu (University of Cambridge, UK), 'On drawing conclusions from two postcards (M. Hengel): interpretation and reception in 2 and 3 John'.

Respondent: Sr. Fiva Savkovic (guest, Serbia) and Raimo Hakola (University of Helsinki, Finland)

[Joint session with seminar 15 The Johannine Writings]

Session 3: Margaret Aymer (guest, USA), “The Wisdom from on High: James 3:17 as Pharmakon in Frederick Douglass’s Abolitionist Speeches.”

Respondent: Oda Wischmeyer (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany)

SEMINAR 5: PAPYROLOGY, EPIGRAPHY, NUMISMATICS, AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

(Lincoln H. Blumell; Lyn Kidson, and Michael P. Theophilos) – terminates in 2028

Will not run in 2026.

SEMINAR 6: READING PAUL’S LETTERS IN CONTEXT: THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES

(William Campbell, and Judith Gundry) – terminates in 2028

Session 1: J. Brian Tucker, (Moody Theological Seminary, USA), “Embodied Affect and the Rhetoric of Shame in 1 Corinthians?”

Respondent: Kar Yong Lim, (Seminari Theoloji Malaysia, Malaysia)

Session 2: Judith Gundry (Yale Divinity School, USA), “‘He Who Did not Spare his Own Son’ (Rom. 8:32): The Tragedy of Being Bereft of an Only Son and Paul’s Interpretation of the Akedah.”

Respondent: William Campbell, (University of Basel, Switzerland)

Session 3: Timothy Brookins (University of St. Thomas, St. Mary’s Seminary, USA), “Peace and Security” (1 Thess 5:3) as a Religious Slogan: The Counter Gospel of a Heraclean Association.”

Respondent: Peter Oakes, (University of Manchester, UK)

SEMINAR 7: GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

(Athanasios Despotis, Hermut Löhr, Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, and George van Kooten) – terminates in 2027

Session 1

Prof. Dr. Matthias Becker, (Heidelberg University, Germany) *The Divine Identity of Christ in Paul and Roman Epicurean Views of Epicurus as Divine*

Respondent: Dr. Sharon Padilla (guest)

Session 2

Prof. Dr. Max Lee, (North Park Theological Seminary, USA), *The Moral Logic of Roman Stoics and the Apostle Paul: Progress and Perfection in Ethical Tension*

Respondent: Prof. Dr. Grant Macaskill (University of Durham, UK)
[Joint session with seminar 13 The Presence of Rome in Early Christian Texts]

Session 3

apl. Prof. Dr. Athanasios Despotis, (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, Germany), *Der religiös-philosophische Hintergrund von Joh 16 und seiner patristischen Interpretation*

Respondent: Prof. Dr. Margaret M. Mitchell, (University of Chicago, USA)

SEMINAR 8: PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA AND INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

(Nélida Naveros Córdova and Jean-Claude Loba Mkole) – terminates in 2027

Session 1

Prof. Jean-Claude Loba Mkole, *Philonic Intercultural Interpretation of God's Name* (United Bible Societies, Kenya).

Respondent: Prof. François Batuafe

Session 2

Prof. Gerbern Oegema, *Philo in Intercultural Contexts of the Second Temple Judaism* (McGill University, Canada)

Respondent: Prof. Abenaezer Urga (Evangelical Theological College; Ethiopia)

Session 3

Prof. Michael Cover: *Philo of Alexandria and the Intercultural Framework of Democracy* (Marquette University, USA)

Respondent: Dr Nelida Naveros Cordova (Spring Hill College, USA).

SEMINAR 9: INTERPRETING THE BOOK OF ACTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: PROBLEMS AND METHODS

(Simon Buttica, Michal Beth Dinkler, and Torsten Jantsch) – terminates in 2027

Session 1

Prof. Eric Barreto, (Princeton Theological Seminary, USA), *Narrating Belonging: Challenges in Reading Race, Ethnicity, and Judaism in Acts*

Respondent: Prof. Brittany Wilson, (Duke Divinity School, USA)

Session 2

Prof. Jason Moraff, (The King's University, Southlake, USA), *"The Multitude Was Divided" (Acts 23:7): Competition and Conflict in Acts and Second Temple Judaism*

Respondent: Prof. Simon Buttica, (University de Lausanne, Switzerland)

Session 3

Prof. Christoph Stenschke, (University of Bonn, Germany) *Luke's narrative portrait of Judaism in the Acts of the Apostles*

Respondent: Prof. Joshua Smith (guest, USA)

SEMINAR 10: COGNITIVE DISCIPLINES AND NEW TESTAMENT NARRATIVE IN DIALOGUE

(Elizabeth Shively and Jan Rügge-meier) – terminates in 2027

Session 1

Prof. Peter Lampe, (University of Heidelberg, Germany), “Empathy, Agape, and Their Moral Boundary Zones”

Respondent: Caroline Teschmer (guest)

Abstract: The study examines how empathy and agape move into boundary zones where they can turn into either a deficiency or an excess that causes harm – to those in need of help or to the helpers themselves. The study draws on empirical psychological and neuroscientific research to distinguish cognitive empathy from emotional (over)empathy (“unmitigated communion”) and uses this heuristic framework to reread Pauline and Markan theologia-crucis/discipleship ethics by profiling their ambivalence that oscillates between radical self-abandonment and legitimate self-love.

Session 2

Prof. Angela Kim Harkins, (Boston College, USA) “What is Heaven Like?”

Respondent: Prof. Harry Maier, (Vancouver School of Theology, Canada)

Abstract: This applies insights from the cognitive science of vision and mental imaging to ancient writings that describe the heavenly realm. The texts examined include the book of Revelation and the ancient liturgical work known as the Songs of Sabbath Sacrifice (also called the Angelic Liturgy). Ten manuscripts of this work have survived: eight from Cave 4 (4Q400–407), one from Cave 11, and one copy was found at Masada. Drawing on cognitive literary approaches, the study explores how specific literary features generate a sense of presence in the heavenly realm, both in narratives mediated by a human seer, as in Revelation, and in texts that lack a human visionary, as in the Angelic Liturgy.

Session 3

Florian Graz (guest, Germany), “Constructing and Contesting the Biblical Storyworld: Canon, Apocrypha, and Their Ancient Readers.”

Respondent: Prof. Alan Kirk, (James Madison University, USA)

Abstract: Storyworlds are a concept from cognitive literary theory, designating the “worlds” that readers mentally simulate when engaging with narratives. Form and extent of the biblical storyworld have, at least since the 4th century, been defined by the canonical narratives of the Bible. However, even after the closure of the biblical canon, Christians continued to expand, alter, and redact their versions of this storyworld by writing new stories set within it: the so-called apocrypha. This paper focuses on the interplay between canonical and non-canonical narratives, exploring how the apocrypha enrich the biblical storyworld and how such attempts to expand the biblical storyworld were received by contemporary readers. This approach offers a new understanding of the apocrypha’s significance, moving beyond traditional views that define them as texts that simply did not make it into the canon. Instead, this paper proposes understanding apocrypha as texts that enable readers to reinterpret canonical narratives in new contexts of use, making them integral to a living tradition through which believers continuously reimagined the biblical storyworld.

SEMINAR 11: JEWISH LAW IN NT AND RELATED LITERATURE

(Bernadette Brooten and Lutz Doering) – terminates in 2027

Session 1: Dr Kimberley Czajkowski (guest, UK), “Claudius, the Law and the Jews.”

Respondent:

Session 2: Prof. Jan Willem van Henten (Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands), “Roman Legal Tropes in Josephus’ Antiquities and the Pauline Corpus.”

Respondent: Dr John Dik (Universität Münster, Germany)

Session 3: Prof. Katell Berthelot (CNRS, France), “Conversion as Adoption: How a Roman Legal Fiction and its Jewish Appropriations Shed Light on Paul’s Writings.”

Respondent: Prof. Yair Furstenberg (guest, Israel)

SEMINAR 12: THE WRITINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT BEYOND THE ‘PARTING OF THE WAYS’ MODEL

(Kathy Ehrensperger, Wolfgang Kraus, Amy-Jill Levine, and Jens Schröter) – terminates in 2027

Session 1: Ruben Bühner, (University of Zurich, Switzerland), “Prophetic Othering. Ethnically Generalizing Rhetoric in 1Thess 2:14–16 in light of Second Temple Judaism and Paul’s Role Therein”, University of Zurich

Respondent: Matthew Novenson, (Princeton Theological Seminary, USA)

Session 2: Nathanael Vette, (guest, UK) “The Gospel of Mark among Jewish Responses to 70 CE”,

Respondent: Helen Bond, (University of Edinburgh, UK)

Session 3: Hugo Mendez, (University of North Carolina, USA), “Should We Read Revelation ‘Within Judaism’?”

Respondent: Lynn Huber, (Elon University, USA)

SEMINAR 13: THE PRESENCE OF ROME IN EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

(Stefan Krauter and Maren Niehoff) – terminates in 2027

Session 1: Rebecca Langlands, (guest, UK) *Roman Exemplarity in Context*

Respondent:

Session 2: Max Lee, (North Park Theological Seminary, USA), *The Moral Logic of Roman Stoics and the Apostle Paul: Progress and Perfection in Ethical Tension*

Respondent: Respondent: Prof. Dr. Grant Macaskill (University of Durham, UK)

[Joint session with seminar 7 Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity]

Session 3: Maren Niehoff, (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel), *Traces of Roman Philosophy in Paul’s Letter to the Romans.*

Respondent:

SEMINAR 14: **NEUTESTAMENTLICHE THEOLOGIE ZWISCHEN RELIGIONSGESCHICHTE UND GEGENWARTSHERMENEUTIK**

(Florian Wilk, J. Ross Wagner, and Susanne Luther) – terminates in 2026

Session 1: Heidrun Mader, (Universität zu Köln, Germany), “Identification with Narrative Characters and Community Formation in the Gospel of Mark: Present-Day Lens and Historical Context”

Respondent: Markus Lau (University of Würzburg, Germany)

Session 2: Carolin Ziethe (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Germany): “Between Mission and Distress. The Matthean Community as the Light of the World”

Respondent: Meghan Henning (University of Dayton, USA)

Session 3: James Myers (guest, USA): “God, Israel, and the Messiah’s Community Rule: The Conception of Community in the Gospel of Luke”

Respondent: Loveday Alexander (University of Sheffield, UK)

SEMINAR 15: **THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS**

(Jörg Frey, Christina Hoegen-Rohls, and Catrin Williams) – terminates in 2026

Session 1: Sherri Brown (Creighton University, USA), *Relational Imagery in 1 John and the Role of the Johannine Letters in the New Testament Canon*

Respondent: Cosmin Pricop (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Session 2: Judith Lieu (University of Cambridge, UK), ‘On drawing conclusions from two postcards (M. Hengel): interpretation and reception in 2 and 3 John’.

Respondent: Sr. Fiva Savkovic (guest, Serbia) and Raimo Hakola (University of Helsinki, Finland)

[Joint session with seminar 4 Exploring the Catholic Epistles]

Session 3: Sung Uk Lim (Yonsei University, South Korea), *The Victory of Faith? (1 John 5:4–5): Revisiting Johannine Conquest Language in the Roman Imperial Context*

Respondent: Alicia Myers (Baylor University, USA)

SEMINAR 16: **GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

(Steve Walton and Christiane Zimmermann) – terminates in 2026

Session 1: Vicky Balabanski, (Flinders University, Australia), God as creator in Colossians and John

Respondent: David Horrell, (University of Exeter, UK)

Session 2: Michael Jost, Institut protestant de théologie, Paris, L'amour de Dieu dans les épîtres johanniques et dans Luc [The Love of God in the Johannine Letters and Luke; the paper will be en français with an English translation]

Respondent: Valérie Nicolet, (Umeå University, Sweden) [response in English]

Session 3: Paul Foster, (University of Edinburgh, UK) God as one who makes and keeps promises in Matthew and the Corinthian letters

Respondent: Prof. Dr Matthias Konradt, (Universität Heidelberg, Germany)

PROPOSALS FOR A SHORT PAPER SNTS 2026

Short Paper Session 1 – Wednesday

Paper 1, Title: *Reading Paul's Letters in Context: Theological and Social-Scientific Approaches*
A Frame Semantic Reading of Philemon 5-6 as Praise for a Faithful Co-worker

Prof. Joel White
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Abstract: Philemon 5-6 is a well-known and much discussed crux in a letter that otherwise presents few challenges on a lexical semantical and syntactic level. The dependent clause ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην καὶ τὴν πίστιν, ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους in V. 5 is especially challenging in terms of its syntax, and the majority approach has been to posit a chiasmus to avoid the awkward idea of “the faith which you have for the saints”. A frame semantic analysis of the text opens the possibility of a new interpretation, one that as far as I am aware has not been previously considered by New Testament scholars, according to which the terms ἀγάπη and πίστις evoke the frame of “praise for coworkers”. This makes sense when we remember that Paul addresses Philemon as a beloved brother and coworker in V. 1. If that is how the terms are to be understood, their use sheds new light on the much-discussed multivalent meaning of ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεως in this same vein. My paper would lay out the exegetical problems in a first step, introduce frame semantics in a second step, and finally posit the new avenue of interpretation of this text facilitated by frame semantic analysis and discuss its broader implications for our understanding of Philemon.

Paper 2, Title: Descents to the Underworld: *Katabaseis* in the Cult of Magna Mater, Judaism, and early Christianity in Anatolian Hierapolis

Dr Katie Marcar, University of Otago – Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka
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Abstract: What did ancient residents of Anatolian Hierapolis think of the foul-smelling, vaporous plutonium in their midst? The local Jews, Christians, and worshippers of Magna Mater and other deities would presumably have felt very differently about their local gateway to the underworld. This essay will examine several pieces of evidence from the material culture of Hierapolis in order to gain insight on this question. This presentation will first introduce the plutonium at Hierapolis before examining a local inscription erected in honour of an *archigallos*, a high priest of Cybele. The *galli* of Hierapolis were famous for their ability to descend into the poisonous plutonium and ascend alive and unharmed. In contrast, I will then briefly examine a subterranean Jewish inscription of the Song of Manassas, which may be a Jewish response to the plutonium. I will then conclude with some thoughts on early Christian beliefs about the underworld with attention both to Christ and the Apostle Peter.

Paper 3, Title: “The ‘Early Death’ That Never Was—An Embarrassment to Critical Scholarship?”

Prof. Paul N. Anderson, George Fox University, USA
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Abstract: From the second century CE to the late 19th century, biblical scholars were in pervasive agreement that John the Apostle was the Beloved Disciple, whose work was finalized and circulated around the turn of the first century (see J. B. Lightfoot's essays and commentary on John). The 1888 essay by Carl de Boor, however, claiming patristic evidence that John died early (James was killed by Herod in 44 CE; Acts 12:2) led critical scholars to exclude the apostolic origin of John from consideration, forcing alternative default inferences regarding the character and origin of the Johannine witness, ranging from form-critical inferences of alien sources (Bultmann, Fortna, et al), to John's theologized dependence on Mark and the Synoptics (Streeter, Barrett, et al), to the inference of a non-apostolic eyewitness such as Lazarus or John the Elder as the Johannine traditional source (Filson, Witherington, et al; Hengel, Bauckham, et al). While traditional views of John's authorship face a good number of problems, even worse and new problems with each of these alternative views abound, requiring a critical assessment of de Boor's original claims.

When the sources cited by de Boor are consulted in further detail, however, Philip Sidetes (5th century) and George Hamartolos (9th century), neither claimed explicitly that John the Apostle died early. First, they do not say or imply that the Zebedee brothers died on the same day; they simply claimed that James and John suffered martyrdom by the Jews—a reference to the martyrological prediction of Jesus in Mark 10:38-39 (or Matt 20:22-23). Second, their references do not imply chronological knowledge; they simply accord with the Syrian Martyrology's celebrating their death on the same day of the church calendar (December 28). Third, both Philip and George follow Eusebius in stating clearly that John the Apostle *died in Ephesus after the death of Domitian* (d. 96 CE). While this analysis does not shed light on who the Johannine evangelist might have been, it does kick the props out from under so-called critical views of who the Beloved Disciple cannot have been. Given the fact that none of the alternative views regarding Johannine authorship have won more than a plurality of critical assent, and given the fact that the Johannine Gospel appears to have been finalized by a different hand after the evangelist's death (John 21:20-24; cf. also 1 John 1:1-3), a fresh look at the complexities of Johannine authorship is required in the light of *second criticality*—critiquing traditional and critical views alike—especially in light of the so-called “the early death” that never was.

Paper 4, Title: “Women received their dead” (Hebrews 11:35): How Gender Informs Ancient Reasoning about Resurrection and Ascent

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Abstract: This paper surveys a number of early Jewish and Christian narratives of resurrection and/or heavenly ascent in order to identify and analyze a common form of gendered reasoning present in each. It demonstrates that 2 Macc 7, The Apocalypse of Moses (=Greek Life of Adam and Eve), The Testament of Job, John 20, and Hebrews 11 share a common understanding that resurrection and/or ascent is an experience which happens to favored men, while “their women” (mothers, wives, daughters, friends) are counted on to observe, witness, and/or “receive,” the men so exalted.

While acknowledging an obvious psycho-sexual component present in the simple framing of how these narratives work—“men rise, women receive”—the paper centers primarily on a comparative literary analysis of each of the ancient works mentioned here. Furthermore, it engages and builds on scholarship reconstructing women's historical roles in ancient rituals linked to lament and burial of the dead, in order to suggest how this gendered reasoning within literary narrative may yet be linked to historical practices concerning the dead and the hope for their resurrection.

Finally, though Paul himself does not employ this precise pattern of reasoning, the paper also demonstrates how similarly gendered patterns inform Paul's own thinking about resurrection and ascent.

Paper 5, Title: How Homer Solved Papias's Synoptic Problem

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Abstract: Papias has his own Synoptic Problem; he possessed three books about Jesus with incompatible sequences of logia: Mark and two Matthews, which he mistook as Greek translations of Matthew's Hebrew exposition, which never existed. He thought that Mark and Matthew's original work were entirely independent and historically valuable.

The proposed paper argues that recognition of Mark's frequent mimesis of the Homeric epics, can solve Papias's problem. To do so, I summarize the two basic forms of ancient Greek intertextuality: *paraphrasis* of a *prōtotypos* (source), and *mimēsis* of a *typos* (model). Mark imitated Homer and Matthew paraphrased Mark. This sequence, of course, merely reinforces Markan priority to Matthew, but Mark's Homeric *mimēsis* also provide clues with respect to Papias's lost Matthew, which almost certainly was Q. Embedded in Mark's mimesis are traces of logia that also appear in Matthew's *paraphrasis*, but Mark, of course, could not have seen them there. Matthew thus has several examples of **double paraphrasis**, i.e., 'doublets.' Matthew independently included logia used also by Mark and also duplicated them in his *paraphrasis* Mark's that contained the same logion. This repetitive phenomenon of Matthew's **double paraphrasis** strongly supports the possibility that Papias's alternative Matthew was the lost *prōtotypos* paraphrased by both Mark and Matthew.

No one earlier has proposed this justification for the existence of Q/Q+, largely because the most common criterion for reconstructing Q requires attention to the oscillating primitivity between Matthew and Luke when they are independent of Mark. The Q+/Papias Hypothesis, however, insists that the Markan evangelist, too, knew the lost Gospel and must be considered in the reconstruction of *The Logoi of Jesus*.

Paper 6, Title: The Delay of the Parousia and the Obsolescence of Oracles

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Abstract: The paper aims to situate the emergent Christian discourse about eschatology and Christ's Second Coming (Parousia) vis-à-vis Greek and Roman sources discussing mantic failure and decrease in oracular consultations from the first century BCE to the second century CE. I will argue that some Christian writers aimed to capitalise on this transformation, but have also faced challenges to their eschatological vision. The political instability of the late Roman Republic and the concomitant crisis of its religious institutions created space for serious doubt towards and even outright rejection of divination, most amply expressed in Book II of Cicero's *De diuinatione*. Later Greek examples of a similar sentiment come from the second-century Cynic philosopher Oenomaus of Gadara, the author of *Against the Oracles*, and Lucian of Samosata who presented Alexander of Abonoteichus as a false prophet. Quite apart from the concerns and disputes of the elite literati, the famous oracular sites were also experiencing decline, as attested by Plutarch in his Delphic dialogues.

The suggested decline of oracles and mantic experts coincided with the beginnings of Christian prophetic activity and eschatological speculation. That such speculation was challenged and disbelieved can be inferred from early second century sources, most notably 2 Peter. This rhetoric has been read in isolation from the broader intellectual interest in mantic knowledge and ignorance. However, my attempt at recontextualisation will show that Christians might have wanted to capture

the cultural space vacated by oracles, at the same time appropriating existing discourses about coming to terms with mantic failure.

Paper 7, Title: Deriving an Aristotelian Virtue Ethic from William Blake's Interpretation of *The Woman Taken in Adultery*

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Abstract: This paper uses the work of William Blake to explore John 7:53-8:11. In his watercolour, *The Woman Taken in Adultery*, Blake focuses attention on Jesus' finger as he writes on the ground. Blake drew parallels between Jesus' act of writing and the finger of God inscribing the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone, and he claimed that Jesus abolished the codified distinction between good and evil: because Jesus was 'all virtue', he acted from impulse and not from rules. The paper tests the exegetical basis for Blake's interpretation and proposes that the *pericope adulterae* invites us to see Jesus replacing the deontological ethic of the written law with an unwritten Aristotelian virtue ethic, grounded in of grace and truth, which carves a middle way between antinomianism and legalism. We are not supposed to know what Jesus wrote on the ground. The ephemeral nature of his writing points us towards the task of having to discern the virtuous course of action in each situation as it arises.

Paper 8, Title: Christology and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in the Gospel of John

Dr Eyal Regev (Bar-Ilan University)
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Abstract: Jesus' saying, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19), and John's reference to "the temple of his body" (2:21) raise several interpretive difficulties. I suggest that "destroy this temple" functions as a temporal clause that frames John's Christology. John's Jesus foresees the Temple's destruction and responds by presenting belief in Christ ("the temple of his body") as an alternative to the Temple, now lost. In this way, Jesus' body is presented as a restoration of the Temple, after its destruction.

Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman also addresses the legitimacy of the Jerusalem Temple (John 4:20–24). Both the woman and Jesus compare it with Mount Gerizim. The woman states, "our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus replies, "you worship (*proskunein*) what you do not know; we worship what we know." Yet, Jesus offers an alternative to both sites: worshiping the Father "in spirit and truth." Since the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 111 BCE, its juxtaposition with the Judaean Temple implies that the latter had likewise been destroyed by that time ("the hour is *coming*, and is *now* here"). Thus, worship "in spirit and truth" is implicitly connected to the fact that the Jerusalem Temple, like the Samaritan one, no longer exists.

I therefore propose interpreting the Johannine narrative in light of its implied historical context, thereby linking John 2 and 4. In both passages, John relates "the temple of his body" and worship "in spirit and truth" to circumstances in which the Jerusalem Temple already lies in ruins. This may suggest that John's Christology is articulated as a response to the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.

Paper 9, Title: “‘The Weak’ and ‘the Strong’ in 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14-15 Again: How and to What Extent Does the Latter Relate to the Former?”

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Abstract: In this simultaneous short paper, I will consider the perennial comparison made by Pauline scholars between 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14-15 regarding “the weak” and “the strong.” In particular, I will probe whether it may be possible and desirable to read Paul’s instructions in his Letter to the Romans as neither a general reappropriation of what he had written earlier to the Corinthians nor as a thoroughgoing attempt to address acute conflict between Roman Christ-followers at some remove. Attention will also be given in this paper to how Paul understands and presents his own message and mission in terms of “strength” and “weakness” in the Corinthian correspondence and Romans respectively.

Paper 10, Title: New Word Formation and Conceptual Function in Hebrews: *The Case of* αἱματεκχυσία (Heb 9:22)

Dr Silvia Castelli, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
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Abstract: Scholars and commentators have long noted the distinctive character of the language of *Hebrews*, evident in its numerous *hapax legomena* and new word formations. This paper examines αἱματεκχυσία in Heb 9:22 as a case study for exploring the function of newly coined compound words in Hebrews. Drawing on insights from cognitive linguistics, as well as parallels in Philo of Alexandria and Lucretius, it argues that αἱματεκχυσία in Heb 9:22 goes beyond mere stylistic function and contributes to the broader rhetorical and theological aims of the work. More broadly, the paper suggests that cognitive approaches offer promising tools for reassessing and reinterpreting the function of new word formations in Hebrews, with potential implications for the study of lexical innovation in other New Testament texts.

Paper 11, Title: Israel and the Church in Colossians

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Abstract:

Having recently completed a commentary on Colossians for Cambridge (release: April 2026), I came away from the project surprised at one theme. Of course, the usual topics of the so-called Colossian Problem and the centrality of Christology were important. But one theme has received little attention: Paul (or the “Paulinist”) here applies language ordinarily reserved for Israel and uses it generously for the church. There is little parsing of ethnic or religious categories as we see in, say, Galatians or Romans. In this later stage of development, the Pauline churches hold to an identity that presumes the language normally for Israel. For example, in Colossians 3:12, *eklektoi*, *hagioi*, and *agapemenoι* are each taken from the OT and applied to the Colossian church. In some respects, this finding echoes and expands the work of Jason Staples, *Paul and the Resurrection of Israel: Jews, Former Gentiles, Israelites* (Cambridge University Press, 2024). However, it finds the tensions of eschatological Israel

and the messianic community now resolved: *there is one covenantal community which now fully and completely incorporates Gentiles.*

This theme bears importance for how Pauline thinking has formed its ecclesiology within categories that belonged to Israel and is appropriating them for the church, without excluding Jews who have embraced Jesus as messiah.

Paper 12, Title: The meaning of Luke's "today": Tracing the concept of time in Luke-Acts

Manuel Nägele, University of Zurich
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Abstract: Within the last decades, research on Luke's concept of time has resulted in two opposing views.

While a broad consensus in the twentieth century holds that Luke had moved beyond early Christian apocalypticism, more recent studies have emphasized precisely the opposite. These two strands in Lukan research, however, share a common feature: although the historically and soteriologically significant "today" (σήμερον) in Luke is regularly acknowledged, even relevant studies on Luke's conception of time tend to underestimate the significance of the adverb.

The first part of my paper deals with the salvation-historical implications of the adverb in Luke's Gospel. Given that Luke orients himself in many respects toward the Septuagint, in which σήμερον is likewise employed in a deliberate manner, it seems appropriate to interpret Luke's use of the adverb against this background. The study then addresses the significant difference between Luke's two volumes: in Acts the term's denotation differs from the Gospel's theologically significant sense. It will be argued that Luke reserves σήμερον for his Gospel because with respect to Acts, he presupposes a different conception of time. This becomes clear when the beginnings of the public ministries of Jesus and the apostles are compared. Whereas the relevance of "today" is introduced by Jesus in his sermon at Nazareth in Luke 4:21 (cf. 2:11, where the significance of σήμερον is not yet fully apparent), the concept of time that shapes Acts is expressed in Peter's Pentecost sermon, which draws heavily on apocalyptic material. Through these two scenes and his restricted use of σήμερον, Luke ultimately indicates to his readers that his first account describes the penultimate stage of God's salvation history. Accordingly, Acts is to be understood as the final stage.

Short Paper Session 2 – Thursday

Paper 1, Title: Signs of Precedence or Rivalry between the Christian Communities in Ephesus and Smyrna from 95 to 200 CE.

Prof. Paul Trebilco, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand
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Abstract: There was intense rivalry between cities in Western Asia Minor in the first and second centuries, with the rivalry between Ephesus and Smyrna being a particularly notable example. This rivalry was demonstrated in the desire of cities to have neokorate temples of the Imperial cult, but also in the use of titles such as "first" and "metropolis". This raises the question of whether there was any similar rivalry, or search for precedence between the Christian communities in Ephesus and Smyrna. This will be examined by looking at Revelation, the Letters of Ignatius, the Acts of Paul, the Acts of John and what we know about Polycarp of Smyrna and Polycrates of Ephesus.

Paper 2, title: Fabricating the Fall of Satan: How Rev 12:7–9 Came to Depict Satan’s Origins in Late Antique Christianity

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Abstract: The traditional account of Satan’s origin portrays his downfall from heaven following a primordial heavenly war, precipitated by hubris and self-exaltation expressed in his desire to be like God. This conception is often regarded as a late development in Christian theology, popularized above all by John Milton’s *“Paradise Lost”*. Yet the only biblical text that explicitly describes a heavenly war is Rev 12:7–9. In early Christianity, however, this passage was not interpreted as referring to Satan’s primordial fall but rather as depicting the ethical struggles of the church. How, then, did the notion of a celestial war become associated with Satan’s origin? This paper traces the emergence of the reading of Rev 12:7–9 as an account of Satan’s rebellion and expulsion from heaven in Late Antique Greek exegesis. It argues that Oecumenius, the first Greek commentator on Revelation (sixth century CE), was instrumental in shaping this interpretation through an intertextual reading of Rev 12:7–9 alongside Ezek 28:11–19 and Isa 14:12–14—traditional loci for the doctrine of Satan’s fall in early Christianity. Oecumenius mapped the inherited narrative of Satan’s downfall onto Rev 12:7–9, transforming it dialogically by integrating the motif of heavenly warfare unique to that passage. The paper further contends that Andrew of Caesarea, the most influential Greek commentator on Revelation, transmitted this interpretation to subsequent tradition while simultaneously reading Rev 12:7–9 as referring to Satan’s defeat at the cross (cf. John 12:31; 16:11). In doing so, he generated a double reading of the passage that would shape its exegesis for centuries, extending into modern commentaries, articles, and monographs.

Paper 3, Title: The Incestuous Brother and a Case of Defamation: Reconsidering the Unity of 1 Cor 5–6

Prof. Adam White – Alphacrucias University College
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Abstract: Scholars almost always assume that 1 Corinthians 5 and 6 reflect two separate issues in the Corinthian church. On the one hand, a member of the church is engaged in a sexual relationship with his stepmother, while the rest of the church is complacent and fails to address the situation. On the other hand, a member of the church is taking another to court over a trivial legal case. A few, however, have proposed a connection between these chapters. The argument being that 1 Cor 5 and 6 reflect different aspects of the same issue. While these proposals are persuasive in that they connect the two chapters, their reconstructions of the situation do not fully explain certain aspects of the passage. In this paper, I propose a more cohesive reconstruction of 1 Cor 5–6 and offer a new reading on the situation in Corinth. It is my contention that one or several members of the church did in fact confront the incestuous brother. However, this public challenge has been met with offence, and the result was a defamation suit in the local court. 1 Cor 5–6 is thus Paul’s attempt to mediate the whole situation.

Paper 4, Title: Jesus and Ancient Meals

Prof. Dr. Angela Standhartinger (University of Marburg, Germany)
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Abstract: Jesus's stories in the Gospels are interwoven with tales of food and banqueting: the blessings for the poor and hungry, parables of sowing and harvesting, and the banquet as spaces for convening, teaching, and hope for a better future. This paper examines Jesus's table fellowship with tax collectors, sinners, Pharisees, and his disciples, as well as Jesus's diet and teaching on fasting, feasting, and food production. It will be argued that hunger, food production, and the hope of being invited to God's heavenly banquet are indeed prominent themes in the earliest layer of the Jesus tradition. However, the idea to represent Jesus at a formal banquet originated in a later time when the Jesus tradition was introduced into the space and culture of the city.

Paper 5, Title: The Present Salvation in Luke's Gospel

Prof. Bernardo Estrada (Universidad de la Sabana, Columbia)
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Abstract: The Gospel of Luke is well known for its historical interest, placing the life and mission of Jesus within the socio-cultural context of its time. This emphasis has led some scholars (e.g., Käsemann) to argue that Luke transforms eschatology into salvation history. However, a closer reading of the Gospel reveals that Luke's historical perspective is itself charged with eschatological significance. In fact, Luke is the only evangelist who frequently employs the adverb *sēmeron* ("today") to mark decisive moments in the salvific mission of Jesus Christ. This paper examines several passages in which the expression "today" appears in the Gospel in order to highlight revelatory moments of the salvation brought by the Messiah. Beginning with the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the study proceeds to Jesus' programmatic discourse in the synagogue of Nazareth. Two additional passages are also considered: the healing of the paralytic and the encounter with Zacchaeus at the entrance to Jericho. Together, these passages illustrate how salvation is made present in the life and mission of Jesus and express his desire to bring salvation to humanity.

Paper 6, Title: When Enough is Enough: Evaluating Evidence for Direct Copying in New Testament Manuscripts

Dr Andrew J. Patton, KU Leuven
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Abstract: Determining whether two manuscripts stand in a direct copying relationship (*Abschriften*) is one of the genealogical judgments textual scholars can make when sufficient evidence is available. Criteria for identifying such relationships have been clarified in recent work, especially by Farnes (2019), who emphasises high levels of textual agreement and shared distinctive readings alongside corroborating palaeographical and codicological evidence. At the same time, applications of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method and phylogenetic analysis demonstrate both the value and the limits of computational approaches for identifying closely related manuscripts (Strutwolf 2020; Houghton and Myshrall 2023). Paratextual features—especially commentaries—have also proven to be an important means of identifying candidate pairs (Patton 2023). These approaches yield crucial evidence for identifying exemplar-copy relationships but also bring to light discrepancies which may complicate such reconstructions.

This paper argues that current practice in identifying potential direct copies relies on an implicit weighing of evidence that tends to privilege cases of near certainty while leaving less clear cases undetermined. By using two manuscripts of Theophylact's commentary on 1 Corinthians, GA 1985 and GA 2102, I address concretely the challenges of balancing compelling evidence for a direct relationship with disagreements which complicate a straightforward identification of them as *Abschriften*. From this, the paper will articulate a framework for assessing conflicting evidence and clarify how to determine when the cumulative evidence justifies preferring a direct copying relationship over an alternative relationship.

Paper 7, Title: Jesus and the Kingdom of God: Reinterpreting His Message within the Political Horizon of Second Temple Judaism.

Prof. Layang Seng Ja, Kachin Theological College and Seminary, Myanmar
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Abstract: Christian theology often interprets the Kingdom of God as a purely spiritual matter or as a hope regarding the unknown end of history. However, Jesus embraced a theology of resistance that was in direct opposition to the imperial ideology and dominance imposed on the Jewish people. For his teachings and movement were closely aligned with the apocalyptic worldview prevalent among first-century Jews—a perspective that was not merely spiritual but also profoundly political. Jesus ensured that it was not Caesar who provides for the lilies in the field and the birds of the air but rather the God of Israel. Indeed, he redirected his people's trust and loyalty to God alone. In this context, he calls on his people to live a life centred on theocentric law rather than the anthropocentric laws of Rome.

Thus, the first section of this paper discusses the contention that, in the current global context, it is imperative to reconsider the story of Jesus in light of his Jewish heritage and to situating his central proclamation of the Kingdom of God within the political context of the First Century, particularly during the Second Temple period. Next, the reception of Jesus' kingdom message is examined within the entanglement of religion and politics in crisis, particularly in the context of post-military coup Myanmar.

Paper 8, Title: "Wie verstehst du, was du liest? Empirische Untersuchungen zur bibelhermeneutischen Entwicklung Studierender"

Prof. Dr. Karin Lehmeier, Hochschule Hannover, Hannover, Germany
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Abstract: An der Hochschule Hannover wurde in den Jahren 2016-2022 ein empirisches Forschungsprojekt durchgeführt. Ziel war es, die Entwicklung des bibelhermeneutischen Denkens in der exegetischen Professionalisierung zu beobachten und kriteriengeleitet zu beschreiben. Ein Team aus zwei Exegetinnen der Bereiche Altes Testament (Gerlinde Baumann), Neues Testament (Karin Lehmeier) und einer Sozialwissenschaftlerin (Rebecca Hassan) hat in einer Panel-Studie zwei Studierendenkohorten an der Hochschule Hannover befragt. Die Studierenden des Studiengangs Religionspädagogik und Soziale Arbeit an einer Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaften (University of Applied Sciences) sind als Zielgruppe für eine Panel-Studie besonders interessant. Sie gehen gemeinsam durch das Studium und bleiben so für eine Untersuchung greifbar. Die Panel-Studie wurde durch qualitative Untersuchungselemente im Sinne des Mixed-Methods-Ansatzes ergänzt. Für

die Operationalisierung der Forschungsfrage wurde ein innovatives Modell des Bibelverstehens entwickelt. Die Studie begründet ein neues Forschungsfeld der empirischen Hermeneutik.

Die Gesamtergebnisse der Untersuchung wurden 2025 veröffentlicht. Im Vortrag sollen die wichtigsten Ergebnisse der Studie und der gewählte methodische Zugang vorgestellt werden. Entwicklungstendenzen und Schwerpunktsetzungen der Studierenden hinsichtlich ihrer eigenen Bibelhermeneutik werden präsentiert. Die Ergebnisse sind besonders für kurze theologische Studiengänge oder kombinierte Studiengänge mit einer knappen exegetisch-hermeneutischen Studienzeit interessant. Welche Lernergebnisse und welche Reflexionsniveaus sind erreichbar? Wie können Exegese und Hermeneutik für die besonderen Lernbedingungen kurzer Studienzeiten neu ins Verhältnis gesetzt werden? Aus den Ergebnissen der Studie leiten sich Konsequenzen für die bibelwissenschaftliche Hochschullehre und die exegetische Wissenschaftskommunikation insgesamt ab. Die qualitativen Aussagen der Befragten und die Items der Panel-Studie sind vom methodischen Zugang her nicht übersetzbar. Daher wird der Vortrag in deutscher Sprache gehalten.

Paper 9, Title: Tasting Death in Mark: Reception and Interpretation

Prof Benjamin Edsall, Australian Catholic University,
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Abstract: Mark 9:1 – “Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not at all taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come with power” – has been called “one of the most troubling verses in the NT” (Joel Marcus). Part of the difficulty stems from the apparent plain sense of Jesus’s claim here and its apparent falsification by the subsequent course of history: the apostles have died and the kingdom has not yet come in power. Not unrelated to this anxiety are the ongoing debates about how Mark 9:1 relates to its immediate context. For example, should it be read primarily in relation to the eschatological statement in 8:38 or the subsequent transfiguration scene? Compounding these issues is the phrase “taste death.” The majority of scholars simply treat the term as a circumlocution for “die.” The present paper questions this conventional understanding on four grounds: (1) the meaning of “death” in the immediate Markan context; (2) the interpretation of metaphors; (3) the ancient use of “taste death” outside the New Testament; and (4) the reception of the passage. Rather than referring straightforwardly to physical death, the present paper argues that it is best understood as a figure of speech that refers to the negative experience of death.

Paper 10, Title: Israel’s divine high priest and the origins of a divine Christology: observations, questions and some proposals

Dr Crispin Fletcher-Louis, University of Gloucestershire
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Abstract: In recent Hebrew Bible/Old Testament scholarship, there has been an increased focus on the high priest and the key passages in the Pentateuch regarding his office (e.g. Exod 28–29). Inter alia, several of us have seen reasons to think that the high priest (in his office) is functionally equivalent to the kind of divine cult statue one ordinarily encountered in an ancient pagan temple (e.g. C. Fletcher-Louis, “Iconic Messianic Monotheism: Genesis 1, Exodus 28, and Ben Sira 50,” in *Reconceptualising Monotheism: Concepts and Contexts of the One God in Antiquity* (eds. J. Schaper and H. Clifford; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, forthcoming). If that is one of his roles in Israel’s scriptures, it would help explain why in some later Second Temple texts the high priest is described as a divine figure to whom there are directed worshipful gestures. In this paper, I consider the possible

implications of this understanding of the high priest for the origins of a divine Christology. On the one hand, the high priest as a divine cult statue offers a conceptual framework within which it was possible, very early on, to make sense of a belief in Jesus' divinity, even as Yhwh's living presence. On the other hand, the high priest's divine identity problematises a divine Christology and invites us to reframe the critical historical and theological questions that guide the quest to understand its origins.

Paper 11, Title: "Luke" is No Abolitionist: Poverty, Justice, and Enslavement in Luke's Gospel in Conversation with Cicero

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Abstract:

Modern abolitionists seek to abolish human and sex-trafficking, policing, the school to prison pipeline, government-run public education, poverty, and so on. Luke's Jesus's advocacy for the poor and his mission to set the war captives free inspires Christian abolitionists. Yet, Luke's Jesus is more complex. What is justice for the impoverished, the wealthy, and enslaved? Are the enslaved included among Luke's poor? What is justice for the poor and the enslaved in this life? This paper explores these questions and complexities in conversation with the Roman orator, lawyer, senator, and philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero's views on justice, enslavement, and wealth as expressed in his writings. While Cicero, the humanist, viewed the enslaved as humans and argued that slave masters should not harm their enslaved persons, he was not anti-slavery. Also, Cicero believed that wealthy persons like himself should cultivate the virtue of justice in relation to the poor. But it is not clear that Cicero understood the enslaved to be among the impoverished. Similarly, examination of Luke's birth narrative, parables of enslavement, stories of wealthy men, and teachings or rhetoric about the poor or poverty, demonstrate that Luke (and Luke's Jesus) is ambivalent toward enslavement, does not consider the enslaved among the poor, and does not regard enslavement an obstacle to justice. Neither Luke nor the Lukan Jesus can imagine a world in which the wealthy do not own enslaved persons; they do envision one where impoverishment is mitigated, if not eliminated.

Paper 12, Title: *'Into Your Hands I Commit My Πνεῦμα': Πνεῦμα-Committal in Funerary Inscriptions, Poetic Literature and Luke's Gospel*

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Abstract: This proposed paper explores the connection between committing one's πνεῦμα at death in the funerary inscriptions and the Lukan Jesus' πνεῦμα-committal at his death (Luke 23:46). This practice of committing one's πνεῦμα to another at death is metaphorical in some funerary inscriptions (IG XII, 8:93; Polemōn 2 (1934-40) 22:2). However, πνεῦμα-committal can also be understood as a literal inbreathing in other funerary epitaphs, as the πνεῦμα a dying person resides in their surviving partner (Knidos, 82). This concept of inbreathing the last breath of a person is also found in the poetic literature from the 1st century BCE onwards (e.g., Bion, *Lament for Adonis*, 40–50; Ovid, *Art of Love*, 3.745; *Metamorphoses*, 7.859–61). This literal inbreathing of the final breath, possibly influenced by the philosophical concept of metempsychosis, usually signifies the continuing union of the partnership separated by death. Reading the Lukan Jesus' πνεῦμα-committal scene in Luke 23:46 through the lens of the

funerary inscriptions and the poetic literature then brings new implications to Jesus' final words.

Short Paper Session 3 – Friday

Paper 1, Title: λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες (Philippians 2:16), an Elaborate Expression for 'Having Life': Greek Idiom and Early Greek Exegesis

Prof. Peter Oakes (University of Manchester, UK)
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Abstract: Angela Standhartinger comments that, for usage of ἐπέχω in both of the common readings, 'holding fast' and 'holding forth' 'the word of life', Leider fehlen ... überzeugende Belege (189). She offers no supporting examples at all, providing instead two clear examples of λόγον ἐπέχω as bedeuten or eine Rolle spielen, as argued by Wettstein, F.W. Field and myself. However, Standhartinger then asserts, Das Idiom hilft jedoch wenig. Chrysostom would disagree: Τί ἐστι, "λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες;" Τουτέστι, μέλλοντες ζήσεσθαι, τῶν σωζομένων ὄντες (Homily 9); as would Theodore of Mopsuestia. The paper shows how early Greek exegesis mainly further strengthens the argument made for this idiomatic reading in Oakes, 'Quelle devrait être l'influence des échos intertextuels...' (in Intertextualités ed. Marguerat/Curtis, 2000, 251–287). Greek patristic writers show ways in which the idiomatic reading can indeed 'help' provide a coherent reading of 2:16 in its context. The paper presents a reading that relates 'life' in 2:16 to themes of σωτηρία, life and death in 2:12-18 and the letter more broadly. The paper also considers responses between 2000 and current preparation of the Philippians Greek Testament Commentary (ex NIGTC, Eerdmans). In particular, the paper shows that the evidence for λόγον+genitive+ἐπέχω as a stylistic variant of the frequent positioning idiom, λόγον+genitive+ἔχω, is much wider than the impression given by the 'écho à des textes astronomiques?' heading under which the 2000 article considers this.

Paper 2, Title: "Servants and Sufferers? Kings and Priests? Messiahs in Deutero-Isaiah and the New Testament"

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Abstract: All discussions of 'messiah(s)' in the New Testament depend upon Scriptural interpretation. NT texts contain distinct intersections of imagery taken from Jewish texts; however, these NT interpretations often become collapsed into a single amalgamated messianic idea. This paper will untangle interpretations of 'servant' traditions found in Deutero-Isaiah from other strands of messianism (esp. royal and cultic) by illustrating the distinct images found in various base texts and the varied ways they are represented within different NT texts (esp. the Gospels and Hebrews). The resulting portrait is complex, demonstrating ways that the NT reflects its Jewish contemporaries and precursors far more than previously acknowledged.

Paper 3, Title: Looking at Character Formation in Paul's Letter to the Philippians through an Aristotelian Lens

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Abstract: Scholarship has only recently begun to explore the idea of εὐδαιμονία or human flourishing in the Pauline corpus from the perspective of Graeco-Roman virtue ethics. This paper will use an Aristotelian lens heuristically to examine Paul's strategy for character formation in his letter to the Philippians. Within the context of human flourishing, the paper will outline the *process* of character formation and explore *how* Paul envisages the Philippians to achieve human flourishing. The argument is that Paul's eudemonistic goal for the Christ-believers in Philippi is their moral maturity or 'blamelessness' at the Parousia, which he seeks to achieve by promoting a community project of character formation that centres on the mechanism of personal example and imitation. There are good reasons for looking at Paul's approach to character formation in Philippians through an Aristotelian lens. First, without denying that Paul was indebted to various Jewish traditions, he and his audience would also have been aware of Graeco-Roman thought, and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was the most influential treatise on virtue ethics in Graeco-Roman antiquity. Second, we will see that there are remarkable parallels in the mechanics of character formation found in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Paul's letter to the Philippians.

Paper 4, Title: Body Matters – Bodies Matter: Enslaved People and the Body of Christ: Reading 1 Cor 7.17-23 in Light of 1 Cor 12.22-27

Prof. Kathy Ehrensperger, University of Basel
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Abstract: The term σῶμα /body permeates 1 Corinthians as in no other letter. It appears to be a Leitmotiv – linking the different parts and topics together and thus providing a coherent trajectory throughout the letter. The issues addressed concern predominantly the embodiment of the Christ message by the non-Jewish Christ-followers in Corinth. It is thus no coincidence that Paul prominently links their embodiment with the image of the σῶμα/body of Christ in chapter 12. Although the addressees are most likely of diverse status, with some of higher status and some economic means (chapter 11) there certainly were also slaves among them, including female slaves. Given that slaves as σῶμα were not only working tools, but also had to be sexually available to their masters, including working as prostitutes, they had no authority over their own bodies. They could not preserve the integrity and dignity of their own bodies, but were in a sense involved in what Paul calls πορνεία. How could slaves, male and female then consider themselves to be a temple of the holy spirit (1 Cor 6.18-19), and be part of the σῶμα/ body of Christ (12) ? Paul can hardly have been unaware of what enslavement encompassed and was considered normal practice in Greek and Roman societies. Did he not see the problems some of his words would raise for slaves among his addressees? Did he ignore this? Are there trajectories in his way of arguing that slaves could hear between the lines, so they could be included in the embodiment of the Christ message despite their inability to preserve their bodily/somatic integrity? In this short paper I will explore the tensions in Paul's words especially for slaves and potential trajectories at overcoming these in 1 Corinthians.

Paper 5, Title: Pitiable prizes and Perishable Wreaths: Contested valuations in IG X,2 1 541, Congr. 159.4, and 1 Cor 9:25

Dr David Starling (Morling College - Australian University of Theology)
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Abstract: A marble sarcophagus from Thessalonica (2nd–3rd century CE) , is inscribed with a poignant, partially legible message in honour of an athlete, Ammonius. The last three lines, put into the mouth of Ammonius, read:

θρέψε με καὶ θάψεν Σκαμμάτις οὐκ ἄδακρυς
πρὶν δ' ἀρετὴν ψυχῆς δεῖξαι καὶ κάρτεα χειρῶν
τέρματ' ἔχω ζωῆς οἰκτρὰ βραβεῖα πόνων.

In a brief discussion of this inscription (*First Urban Churches* 7, p. 30), James Harrison provides a translation of the last three lines, before commenting that “while our inscription underscores the virtue and strength of Ammonius as an athlete, the result of this grueling process at death is Ammonius’s possession of ‘pitiable prizes’ (οἰκτρὰ βραβεῖα).” This sentiment, Harrison suggests, implies a surprising “dismissal of the athletic prizes as not worthy of esteem,” but has “resonances ... with Paul’s assessment that earthly athletes strive with great discipline for a ‘fading’ crown (1 Cor 9:25b: φθαρτὸν στέφανον).”

In this paper I offer an alternative translation, reading the inscription as a response to a death that had occurred *before* Ammonius had received opportunity (fully) to display “virtue of soul and strength of hands.” On this reading (similar, though not identical, to the understanding of the inscription implied by Edson’s brief comments in IG X,2 1) the final line functions not as a “dismissal” of the prizes won by athletes, but as an expression of a more conventional lament over how pitifully *few* or *small* Ammonius’s prizes were.

In the remainder of the paper, I compare the values informing that sentiment with the different valuations of honour implied (respectively) by Philo’s use of the same expression, οἰκτρὰ βραβεῖα, in *Congr.* 159.4, and Paul’s reference in 1 Cor 9:25 to the φθαρτὸν στέφανον (“perishable wreath”) for which athletes compete.

Paper 6, Title: Could Satan Be Saved?

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to demonstrate, using two early Christian “hymns” preserved within the Pauline letters—the Colossian “hymn” (Col 1:15-20) and Philippian “hymn” (Phil 2:6-11)—that the concept of Christian universalism is not an invention of Origen, but has biblical antecedents. I will argue that certain Pauline texts lean in the direction of universalism; and this makes the theology of Christian universalism advocated by some patristic authors a plausible interpretation of the biblical witness on eschatology. While the majority of New Testament texts provide an eschatological vision of eternal punishment and alienation from God for unrepentant sinners, these “hymns” articulate a cosmic eschatological vision in which all things—on earth, in heaven, under the earth, visible and invisible—ultimately worship Christ as Lord and are reconciled to God in Christ. These passages need to be placed alongside the texts that speak of eternal condemnation of sinners in discussions on possible eschatological outcomes.

The paper proceeds in several stages. First, it will offer an exegesis of the “hymn” of Christ in Colossians, paying particular attention to the language of reconciliation of all things. Second, highlighting the “hymn’s” language of the reconciliation of the principalities and powers, the paper will offer a brief history of Satan, demonstrating how his development in early Judaism and early Christianity coheres with the “hymn’s” proclamation of the rupture of a prior harmonious relation with the Creator. The paper will then show how patristic teachings on Satan’s salvation turns on this broader narrative of an initially good creation that has strayed from its Creator and needing to be reconciled to the Creator. Finally, the paper draws on the cosmic worship of Jesus as Lord in the Philippian “hymn” as a complementary witness to early Christian hopes for a cosmic reconciliation of all things with God. While the paper does not argue that universalism was the dominant

eschatological position of the New Testament, it aims to show that some Pauline texts lean in the direction of universalism. Thus, early Christian theologians who advocated for universalism were seriously engaging with a cosmic vision that can be deduced from the language of scripture.

Paper 7, Title: Female-Friendly Readings in Codex Bezae: A Critical Reflexion on the Alleged Anti-Women Tendency in GA 05.

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Abstract: Since W. M. Ramsay and Adolf von Harnack addressed the marginalization of women in Codex Bezae's text at the end of the 19th century, discussions about an anti-feminist tendency (Ropes 1926) have continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. There have been various proponents (e.g., Schüssler Fiorenza 1983; Ben Witherington 1984) and opponents (e.g., Childers & Niccum 1993; Holmes 2003). As far as I know, however, what has been completely overlooked until now are analyses of variants that can have a female-friendly effect. These include, for example, the insertion of Jesus's sisters in Mark 3:32, who, according to the initial text of the ECM, were not originally mentioned there. Another example is Luke 10:38, where the explicit insertion of "her house" elevates Martha as the owner of the house. Such and other examples will help to provide a more complete picture of gender-related readings in one of the oldest codices.

Paper 8, Title: "Curse and Crisis: Galatians 1:8-9 in Light of SEG 9.3 and IG XII 2, 526"

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Abstract: This paper offers a fresh interpretation of Galatians 1:8–9 by situating Paul's ἀνάθεμα declaration within the framework of ancient conditional curse formulae attested in epigraphic sources, particularly SEG 9.3 (Cyrene) and IG XII 2, 526 (Eresos). Rather than reading Paul's language as a binding spell (defixio) or as a purely future-eschatological curse, this study argues that it functions as a conditional and preventative sanction designed to stabilize communal identity and regulate behavior in a context of crisis. Recent scholarship has emphasized the cultural background of ancient cursing practices, often drawing parallels with magical texts or defixiones. However, Paul's use of ἀνάθεμα is better understood as a performative invocation of divine judgment that brings the offender under God's judicial authority already in the present. Building on this insight, this paper proposes that Galatians 1:8–9 reflects not an act of magical coercion nor a future-eschatological pronouncement, but a conditional warning embedded in a recognizable Mediterranean conditional oath structure. The curse formulae in SEG 9.3 and IG XII 2, 526 provide illuminating parallels. In both inscriptions, curses are attached to promissory or juridical contexts in order to enforce loyalty, deter deviation, and define communal boundaries. These curses are not primarily retrospective punishments but prospective sanctions: they anticipate potential transgression and function prophylactically to preserve communal cohesion. Similarly, Paul's repeated ἀνάθεμα ἔστω in Galatians 1:8–9 is directed not only against actual opponents but also against any potential deviation from the gospel previously received. In this reading, the conditional clauses ("even if we or an angel..." "if anyone proclaims...") are crucial. They signal that the curse is not a fixed denunciation of specific individuals alone, but a generalized, conditional sanction applicable to any agent who violates the normative gospel. The force of the utterance lies in its capacity to preempt deviation and to reinforce communal allegiance by invoking divine judgment as an immediate and socially consequential reality.

Thus, Paul's ἀνάθεμα is best understood as a legal-rhetorical instrument that combines theological and social dimensions: it places potential transgressors under divine judgment while simultaneously marking the boundaries of the community and safeguarding its integrity. By reading Galatians 1:8–9 in light of epigraphic curse traditions, this paper reframes Paul's rhetoric as a strategy of communal stabilization rather than as an instance of magical practice or purely future-eschatological threat.

Paper 9, Title: The Death of a Hero: The Lukan Passion Narrative as Cultural Mediation

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Abstract: This short paper presents a book project on Lk 22–23. It gives an overview of the project and presents its main thesis considering a few striking examples. In this book I expound the thesis that the leading concern in Luke's reshaping of the passion narrative is to illustrate Jesus' death according to Graeco-Roman expectations of a noble heroic death.

Since Socrates—as portrayed particularly in Plato's *Phaedo*—was a formative figure in shaping these expectations, he also serves as a role model for specific aspects of the portrayal of Jesus in Lk 22–23 (e.g., the ongoing dialogue, the acceptance of death). Furthermore, Luke diminishes aspects of suffering. Reshaping the passion narrative that way, he appears to react to the problem which Jesus' death on the cross and thus a central part of the Christian kerygma poses for pagan readers by mediating Jesus' death with elements of their cultural memory. While sometimes scholars point to some of these similarities between the Lukan passion narrative and ideas of a “noble death” or a “*mors philosophi*” (e.g., Kloppenborg, Sterling), this aspect is mostly viewed as one among many and therefore often neglected in its importance for the exegesis of the text. Against this, I argue that recognizing where and how ancient expectations are manifested is central for understanding Luke's passion narrative.

Paper 10, Title: Regeneration and Inheritance: An Apocalyptic Saying De-apocalypticized (Titus 3:5-7)

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Abstract: This paper explores the relationship between Matthew 19:28–30 and Titus 3:5–7, with particular attention to the transformation of apocalyptic language in a second-century context. The study focuses on the rare term παλιγγενεσία, which occurs only in these two passages in the New Testament. My analysis further highlights the unusual proximity of κληρονόμος / κληρονομεῖν and ζωὴ αἰώνιος in both passages, a combination that is otherwise infrequent in the New Testament.

As it appears, the author of Titus was likely familiar with, and made use of, the Gospel of Matthew, a proposal supported by additional thematic and lexical parallels between the epistle and the Gospel. I will suggest that Titus 3:5–7 echoes Matt 19:28–30. In Matthew, the reference to regeneration and inheritance is firmly embedded in an apocalyptic and eschatological framework, referring to the renewal of the cosmos and the restoration of the twelve tribes at the enthronement of the Son of Man. In Titus, by contrast, the term is recontextualized within a soteriological and pneumatological discourse, closely associated with salvation, justification, and renewal through the Holy Spirit.

Paper 11, Title: John 17 – A Prayer That Teaches Eternal Life

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Abstract:

Abstract: John 17 has drawn a range of proposals about its purpose and structure. This paper applies two lenses to enable new insights into the interconnected questions of structure and purpose in John 17. The first is embedded genre, highlighting that as a prayer, the genre of John 17 is distinct from the surrounding narrative. At the same time, by embedding a prayer within a narrative, it is taken out of its usual social context, which may affect the function of the genre. In contrast to a prayer's typical function as communication with the divine, examining John 17 alongside other narrated prayers in John indicates a didactic function, both within the narrative world and for the audience.

The second lens is discourse anal which considers the pragmatic function of features in the text and their effect on how an audience processes information. Changes from third-person to first-person, discourse markers, and the use of the vocative all shape the way an audience will process this text, marking transitions as well as drawing attention to certain segments. Significantly, these features highlight the statement that describes eternal life in 17:3, indicating that teaching about the nature of eternal life is a central focus. The discourse features draw attention to the keeping of the disciples, the contrasts of righteous/unrighteous and knowing/not knowing, as well as drawing attention to the unity of Father and Son. The prayer therefore functions to teach that eternal life is a relational unity with both the Father and the Son.

Paper 12, Title: Should Palestinian Christians be Allowed to Call Jesus a Palestinian Jew?
Analysis of "Palestinian" and "Jew" as Applied to the First Century, CE

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Abstract: Increasingly, some argue that Palestinians distort history and stir up hatred of Jews by calling Jesus a Palestinian/Palestinian Jew, thereby refusing to recognize Jesus' Jewishness and casting Israelis as oppressors comparable to the Romans. Both "Palestinian" and "Jew" reflect contemporary religious and political concerns. Scholars can: (1) ascertain the various ancient names applied to the region and its peoples; (2) examine Roman appellations (1st C. BCE–2nd C. CE); and (3) articulate the ethics of naming. Among other pre-Bar Kochba (132–136) names, "Palestine" occurs in Egyptian and Neo-Assyrian sources, in Aristotle, Pomponius Mela, Strabo, Philo, and Josephus, but not in the NT. For Eusebios, the savior's birth in Palestine is important. The Samaritan woman and Pilate call Jesus *loudaios*, but "man from Nazareth" occurs more frequently. Bethlehem, likely scriptural rather than historical, does not require the designation *loudaios*. Jesus juxtaposes the *tekna*, i.e., his people, ("children of Israel"?) with the "dogs" (Canaanites/Syro-Phoenicians). Jesus could have been known as child/son of Israel, Hebrew, Nazarene, Galilean, *loudaios*, and, theoretically, Palestinian. Calling Jesus "Jewish," after centuries of Christian persecution of Jews, is central to Christian post-Holocaust refusal ever again to view him as Aryan and to Christian and Jewish desires to highlight such commonalities as Jesus' respect for the Torah. Palestinian Christians, treated in their land as resident aliens (*gerim*), denied their indigeneity, and suffering under extensive war crimes and discriminatory

laws, claim their place in “our land” (Arabic: *biladna*; Eusebios, Syriac: *arʿan*) in which Jesus was born and lived.