XIII International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa

*Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timetable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Sessions</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Papers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Papers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD Seminar</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maps</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of participants</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timetable

Wednesday 17th

16:00 Registration
17:00 Welcome
17:30 Inaugural Lecture: Claudio Moreschini
   Struttura, funzione e genere letterario delle Omelie sul Cantico dei Cantici
18:15 Lecture: Matthieu Cassin
   D’Origène à David Höschel en passant par les chaînes exégétiques: sources et postérités des Homélies sur le Cantique de Grégoire de Nysse

19:00 Reception

Thursday 18th

8:30 Morning Prayer (Church of S. Agostino)
9:00 Lecture: Theo Kobush
   The Exegesis of the Song of Songs: A new Type of Metaphysiscs
9:45 Lecture: Manlio Simonetti
   Gregorio di Nissa interprete del Cantico

10:30 Coffee Break
11:00 Short Papers (Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato, A101, A105)
12:00 The project of Critical Edition of Basil of Caesarea’s Works

12:30 Lunch
14:30 Lecture: Martin Laird, O.S.A.
   Dew on the Locks of the Beloved: Faith and Knowledge in the In Canticum canticorum
15:15 Special Papers (Aula A. del Portillo)
R. Staats, J. Leemans, A. Silvas

16:15 Coffee Break

16:45 Lecture: Volker Drecoll
Trinitätstheologische Konzepte in der Auslegung des Hohelieds.
Ihre Bedeutung für die Auslegung des Bibeltextes und ihr systematischer Gehalt

17:30 Lecture: Miguel Brugarolas
The Incarnate Logos: Gregory of Nyssa’s
In Canticum canticorum christological core

Rome by Night

Friday 19th

8:30 Morning Prayer (Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi)

9:00 Lecture: Lenka Karfíková
The Metaphor of the Mirror in the Homilies on the Song of Songs
by Gregory of Nyssa, and in his Platonic predecessors

9:45 Lecture: Morwenna Ludlow
The Rhetoric of Landscape in Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies
On The Song of Songs: Logos, beauty and the ‘middle style’

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Lecture: Lewis Ayres
Activity and Manifestation in Image and Archetype:
Observations on Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum Canticorum

11:45 Workshop: Scot Douglass (Aula A. del Portillo)
The Song in 21st-century Scholarship

12:30 Lunch

14:30 Lecture: Ari Ojell
The Bride in Love with the True Virtue. The theological significance
of the idea of “Living according to Virtue” in Gregory of Nyssa’s
Homilies on the Song of Songs

15:15 Short Papers (Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato, A101, A105)

16:15 Coffee Break

16:45 Workshop: Ilaria Ramelli (Aula Senato)
Apokatastasis and Episktasis in Hom. in Cant: The Relation
between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen

17:30 Lecture: Johannes Zachhuber
From first fruits to the whole lump. Fall and redemption of human nature
in Gregory’s Commentary on the Song of Songs

Cultural Banquet (Vatican Museum by night)

Saturday 20th

8:30 Morning Prayer (Church of S. Apollinare)

9:00 Lecture: J. Warren Smith
Becoming Men, Not Stones: Epektasy in Gregory of Nyssa’s
Homilies on the Song of Songs

9:45 Lecture: Sarah Coakley
Gregory of Nyssa on Spiritual Ascent and Trinitarian Orthodoxy:
A Reconsideration of the Relation between Doctrine and Askesis

10:30 Coffee Break

11:00 Short Papers (Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato, A101, A105)

12:00 Final Session

12:45 Departure
Johan LEEMANS  KU Leuven (Belgium)

«Come, Let Us Glorify the Lord». The Liturgical Grammar in Gregory of Nyssa’s Homily on Pentecost

Gregory of Nyssa’s brief Homily on Pentecost is all in all an understudied text. It is often included in valuable studies on his pneumatology but as a festal sermon, as a “liturgical event” so to speak, it has, to the best of my knowledge, never been studied. In analysing the text, I will make an attempt to do exactly this. My basic question is: which elements contribute to making this such a successful festal sermon on Pentecost? Hence, less attention will go to links with other writings of Gregory but more to the text on itself as a part of a corpus of Greek patristic sermons on Pentecost, of which it is one of the earliest. My approach is inspired by R.L. Wilken’s Liturgy, Bible and Theology in the Easter Homilies… (in the Harl-volume), by the many studies on the use of rhetoric in patristic sermons and by insights from the preacher-audience analysis (e.g. Pauline Allen). Moreover, I will use the notion of “liturgical grammar” that has been developed in historical studies with regard to medieval sermons (e.g. H. Johnson, The Grammar of Good Friday, Turnhout, Brepols, 2012).
Anna M. SILVAS  University of New England (ME, USA)
Was Basil a mystic? Was he a mystical theologian?
This paper is a preliminary comparison of the ascetical and mystical theology of St. Basil the Great with that of his brother, Gregory of Nyssa. At this stage we can confirm a resounding “yes” to the first question of the title, and a tentative “no” to the second question. We will be looking at continuities, shifts and contrasts between the two brothers. One of the great continuities concerns Basil’s original development of the medical analogy for the cure of the soul, and that Gregory inherited up most of these themes from his brother. Does Basil’s concept of tonos or ‘tension’ as necessary for progress in the Christian life contain the seeds of Gregory’s epektasis? One clear difference was their attitude to eschatology. Basil rejected Origen’s concepts of apokatastasis, which lent a particular intensity to his treatment of the imperative of obedience. Gregory however, allowed some of Origen’s ideas, which opened on the possibility of continuing remediation of the soul beyond death. This resulted in differing nuances in his presentation of the spiritual progress of the soul.

Reinhart STAATS  Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel (Germany)
Makarios-Symeon und Gregor von Nyssa in der Vorgeschichte des byzantinischen Bilderstreites
The treatise De instituto christiano of Gregory of Nyssa depends on the Epistola magna of Makarios-Symeon. It is a literary metamorphosis in the orthodox sense of the cappadocian theology. Makarios-Symeon was a monk and pastor in Syria. His theology and in particular his pneumatology was banned about 400 A.D. as it was considered to be “messalian”. In all eastern churches the Messalians (“euchitai”) were regarded as enthusiasts and as spiritualists. Gregory’s positive but also critical relationship to early Messalianism can also be identified in other texts: De virginitate, Epistola 1 and 17; Gregory’s speech 381 on the council of Constantinople “In Gregori ordinacionem” (vulgo: “In suam ordinacionem”). Are there parallels also in Gregory’s In Canticum. This remains an open question.

Ilaria RAMELLI  Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano (Italy)
Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Hom. in Cant.: The Relation between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen
I shall begin with a reflection on the dedication of In Cant. to deaconess Olympia and its meaningfulness, also against the backdrop of the Origenian tradition. I shall then investigate the relation between Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Gregory’s exegesis of the Song of Songs, pointing out their Christological foundation, and examining the roots of these doctrines and of their connection in Origen. The infinitude of God—the Good, and therefore of virtue, against the finitude of evil, bears heavily on Gregory’s doctrines of Apokatastasis and Epektasis. This cluster of doctrines will also be taken over by Evagrius. In this connection, I shall suggest that, when Gregory posited God as ἄπειρον and evil as limited qua opposite of God, it is not to be ruled out that he was consciously ‘correcting’ Plotinus. I also plan to bring the eros-agape terminology in In Cant. to bear on my analysis, including its derivation from Origen (and possibly its aftermath in Ps-Dionysius). I shall finally offer some more general considerations about Gregory’s attitude to Origen’s ideas.

Workshops

Friday 19th  11:45  Aula A. del Portillo
Scot DOUGLASS  University of Colorado Boulder (CO, USA)
The Song in 21st-century Scholarship

Friday 19th  16:45  Aula Senato
Ilaria RAMELLI  Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano (Italy)
Apokatastasis and Epektasis in Hom. in Cant.: The Relation between Two Core Doctrines in Gregory and Roots in Origen
Short Papers

**Thursday 18th**  
11:00  Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato  
A101, A105

**Friday 19th**  
15:15  Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato  
A101, A105

**Saturday 20th**  
11:00  Aula A. del Portillo, Aula Senato  
A101, A105
Thursday 18th

**Aula A. del Portillo**

Mark J. HUNT, S.T.D. Holy Family University, Philadelphia (PA, USA)
Myrrh, Pomegranates and Spices: “Epektical” Signs of the Virtuous Life

Michael PETRIN University of Notre Dame (IN, USA)
The Eye and the Hand: Gregory of Nyssa on Theôria and Praxis

Joonas SALMINEN University of Helsinki (Finland)
«I sleep but my heart is awake». St. Gregory of Nyssa on sleeping and virtuous living

Eduardo TORRES Universidad de Navarra (Spain)
Comparación lexemática de “Vita Mosysis” e “In Canticum” sobre “areté”

**Aula Senato**

Marcello LA MATINA Università degli Studi di Macerata (Italy)
The Homily of homilies. Language and Incarnation in Gregory of Nyssa’s commentary In Canticum canticorum

Georgios D. PANAGOPOULOS University Ecclesiastical Academy of Iamnina
The Divine Names and their use in Gregory’s of Nyssa In Canticum Canticorum

Ilaria VIGORELLI Pontificia Università della Santa Croce (Italy)
Ontology and Existence: Schésis of the soul in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum

Martin WENZEL University of Göttingen (Germany)
Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies on the Song of Songs as an Educational Process

**Aula A101**

Constantine BOZINIS Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki (Greece)
Ἡ βασιλικὴ κλίνη The platonic reading of the “Song of Songs” by Gregory of Nyssa

Helena PANCZOVÁ Trnava University (Slovakia)
«The bridegroom descended to his garden and the garden blossomed again». Images of the Incarnation in the Homilies on the Song of Songs by Gregory of Nyssa

Luke STEVEN Cambridge University (UK)
Mixture, beauty, and the Incarnation in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum

**Aula A105**

Eirini ARTEMI National and Capodistrian University of Athens (Greece)
The understanding of the mystical knowledge and vision of God to Moses on the Song of Songs

Emily CAIN Fordham University (NY, USA)
In the Eyes of the Beholder: Optical Theory and Gregory of Nyssa’s Mystical Vision in In Canticum canticorum

Manuel MIRA Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma (Italy)
Struttura del Commento e tappe dell’ascesa spirituale
**Friday 19th**

**Aula A. del Portillo**

Roberta FRANCHI  University of Waterloo (ON, Canada)
«Quel divino e puro amore dello sposo invisibile»: Gregorio di Nissa, la Vita di Macrina e il Cantico dei Cantici

Andrew MELLAS  University of Sydney (Australia)
«Words Tinctured with Passion». St Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum Canticorum and the Emergence of Affective Mysticism in Byzantine Hymnography

Siiri TOIVIAINEN  St. John’s College, Durham University (UK)
What Makes Pleasure Spiritual? Gregory of Nyssa and the Notion of “Double Pleasure” in Hom. in Cant. 10

**Aula Senato**

This session is linked to Ilaria Ramelli’s Workshop on apokatastasis (same room at 16.45)

Magdalena BLAHOVA  Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic)
Gregory of Nyssa and ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων

Vito LIMONE  Università Vita-Salute S. Raffaele, Milano (Italy)
«I am black and beautiful» (Ct 1,5): pre-existence and apokatástasis in the exegesis of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa

Marta PRZYSZYCHOWSKA  Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw (Poland)
Is it possible that Gregory of Nyssa spoke simultaneously about apokatástasis and eternal hell?

**Aula A101**

Mattia C. CHIRIATTI  Universitat de Barcelona (Spain)
Le nozioni esegetiche di σκοπός e ἀκολουθία nel In Canticum Canticorum di Gregorio di Nissa

Johannes Aakjaer STEENBUCH  University of Copenhagen (Denmark)
Negative theology in Gregory of Nyssa’s reading of Rom 1:20 in Cant. Cant. 13

Françoise VINEL  Université de Strasbourg (France)
Passer par la mort: accents pauliniens dans les Homélies sur le Cantique des Cantiques

**Aula A105**

Andela D. GAVRIVOVIĆ  University of Belgrade (Serbia)
Cult of St. Gregory of Nyssa in Medieval Serbia

Thamar OTKHMEZURI & Nino MELIKISHVILI  National Center of Manuscripts, Tbilisi
Gregory of Nyssa’s In canticum canticorum in the Georgian Translation Tradition

Tatyana SOLOMONIK-PANKRASHOVA  Vilnius University (Lithuania)
Allegorical Mode of Canticum Canticorum in the Vernacular Translation: King Alfred’s Prose Psalter
Saturday 20th

**Aula A. del Portillo**

Giovanni Manabu AKIYAMA  University of Tsukuba (Japan)
*La caratteristica escatologica del Cantico dei cantici secondo Gregorio di Nissa*

John Panteleimon MANOUSSAKIS  College of Holy Cross, Worcester (MA, USA)
*Time, Memory, Identity: Explorations in St. Gregory of Nyssa’s Eschatology*

Paola MARONE  Università La Sapienza di Roma (Italy)
*Gregorio di Nissa e l’esegesi di Cant. 1,5-6. Alcune considerazioni sul tema dell’epéktasis*

**Aula Senato**

Matthias WEGLAGE  Berlin (Germany)
*Die Verdoppelung des Menschen: Philonisches in der Anthropologie des Gregor von Nyssa*

Charalampos APOSTOLOPOULOS  University of Ioannina (Greece)
*Sinn des Hohenliedes sei die Vergeistigung des Menschen*

Piet Hein HUPSCH  KU Leuven (Belgium)
*Die Zunahme der Parrhesie in der Auslegung von Hohelied 5,7 durch Gregor von Nyssa*

**Aula A101**

Theoni BOURA  Agii Anargiri (Greece)
*The Neptic-Erotic Terminology of St. Gregory of Nyssa*

Raphael A. CADENHEAD  Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge (UK)
*“Fluidity” or “Integration”?: The challenges posed by the diachronicity of gendered transformation in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum and De vita Moysis*

Frank DUBOIS, O.P.  Université Catholique de Lille (France)
*Le corps comme un syndrome. Une théorie de la matière chez Grégoire de Nysses*

**Aula A105**

Francisco BASITTTA HARRIET  Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina)
*La grandezza del uomo in el In Canticum canticorum y el De opificio hominis de Gregorio de Nisa y su recepción en el Quattrocento*

Theodoros ALEXOPOULOS  Universität Bern (Switzerland)
*Der Zugang zum Unzugänglichen bei Hl. Gregor von Nyssa mit vergleichender Bezugsbase auf den Neuplatonismus (Plotin-Proklos) und auf die Theologie der Väter (Dionysios Areopagita-Photios von Konstantinopel)*

Jonathan FARRUGIA  Institut Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma (Italy)
*Creation, fall and redemption in Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies on the Song of Songs*
Abstracts

Giovanni Manabu AKIYAMA University of Tsukuba (Japan)
La caratteristica escatologica del Cantico dei cantici secondo Gregorio di Nissa
Ct 1,3 secondo la LXX dice: "μύρον ἐκκενωθὲν ὄνομά σου", ma il testo ebraico ha «šemen tûraq šᵉmekā». Probabilmente il vocabolo šᵉmekā («il tuo nome») è messo in apposizione a un “tu” soggetto. Potremmo interpretare meglio il testo originale, seguendo la teologia del Nisseno, che sviluppa la sua esegesi sulla base del Quarto Vangelo. Anche quanto a Ct 1,4, mentre il testo ebraico dice: «Attrimami dietro a te», la LXX invece legge «εἵλκυσάν σε ». Gregorio usa spesso nelle Omelie i verbi che significano “attirare” per esprimere l’altezza spirituale della sposa portata dalla grazia di Dio. La dimensione escatologica del Vangelo è espressa nella parola di Gesù che disse: «Quando sarò innalzato da terra, attirerò a me tutti gli uomini» (Gv 12,32). L’immagine di Gesù crocifisso infatti manifesta non soltanto la passione e la morte, ma anche la risurrezione e la discesa dello Spirito Santo (Gv 19,34). Quindi la croce, superando ogni temporaneità, indica l’eternità, cioè la Trinità. L’innalzamento di Cristo significa così che il luogo escatologico dell’incontro dell’umanità con Dio si trova sulla croce. Quando leggiamo i testi del Cantico interpretati dal Nisseno, troviamo che è già scritto nel Cantico anche il nome di questo luogo dell’incontro: è il “tu” del “Cristo” crocifisso (Ct 1,3).

Theodoros ALEXOPOULOS Universität Bern (Switzerland)
«εξ ἰχνῶν τινων καὶ ἐναυσμάτων ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν τοῦ ἀδήλου καταστοχάζεται … » (Cant Hom. I, GNO VI, 37,1). Der Zugang zum Unzugänglichen und die radikale Begrenztheit eines Analogieschlusses von der Oikonomia auf die Theologia bei Hl. Gregor von Nyssa mit vergleichender Bezugsnahme auf den Neuplatonismus (Plotin-Proklos) und auf die Theologie der Väter (Dionysios Areopagita-Photios von Konstantinopel)

Charalampos APOSTOLOPOULOS University of Ioannina (Greece)
Sinn des Hohenliedes sei die Vergeistigung des Menschen
El cuidado de sí mismo, se aparta, sin embargo, de su exégesis principalmente. Gregorio sigue la perspectiva hermenéutica de Orígenes acerca del conocimiento. Las mujeres...», en la segunda de sus homilías. Niseno, cuando comenta la versión griega de elementos propios de la imagen divina en el hombre. Es interesante que todas estas temáticas, muy presentes en sus textos, reaparezcan también en la etapa tardía del antropológica integral. Entre los temas de los primeros capítulos se destacan la dignidad de la naturaleza humana, su puesto privilegiado en la creación y los principales del primer tratado exegético de Gregorio de Nisa, el De opificio hominis de Gregorio de Nisa y su recepción en el Quattrocento. Francisco BASTITTA HARRIET Universidad de Buenos Aires (Argentina) La grandeza del hombre en el In Canticum canticorum y el De opificio hominis de Gregorio de Nisa y su recepción en el Quattrocento Explicar el carácter excepcional de la creación del hombre es uno de los objetivos principales del primer tratado exégético de Gregorio de Nisa, el De opificio hominis. En el prólogo el autor se propone exponer sistemáticamente una verdadera teoría antropológica integral. Entre los temas de los primeros capítulos se destacan la dignidad de la naturaleza humana, su puesto privilegiado en la creación y los elementos propios de la imagen divina en el hombre. Es interesante que todas estas temáticas, muy presentes en sus textos, reaparezcan también en la etapa tardía del Niseno, cuando comenta la versión griega de Ct. 1, 8: «Si no te conoces, bella entre las mujeres...», en la segunda de sus homilías In Canticum canticorum. Si bien Gregorio sigue la perspectiva hermenéutica de Orígenes acerca del conocimiento y el cuidado de sí mismo, se aparta, sin embargo, de su exégesis principalmente psicológica y moral al entonar un verdadero himno al ser humano y a las maravillas de la obra divina en su creación y su redención. En este trabajo se analizará la notable continuidad acerca de esta cuestión en las obras gregorianas y su recepción en algunos filósofos y humanistas del siglo XV en Italia, quienes entran en contacto con los manuscritos griegos del Niseno y sus traducciones medievales.

Magdalena BLAHOVA Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic) Gregory of Nyssa and ἀποκατάστασις τῶν πάντων Gregory of Nyssa, influenced by Origen, holds the idea of the universal salvation and of a pedagogical character of both the divine punishment and the purifying fire after one’s death which cannot be eternal. In Gregory’s writings the term ἀποκατάστασις usually means the restoration of all. Everything will be restored to the original state and evil will be destroyed. But who are all, oi πάντες, or what is everything, τὰ πάντα, that shall be restored?

Theoni BOURA Ἁγίη Αναργίρι (Greece) The neptic-erotic terminology of St. Gregory of Nyssa The language, as a way of thinking and expression, is indicative of the way that lives the person who use it. We are going to discuss about the way of life of St. Gregory of Nyssa and we will give extra attention to the terms that he uses. St. Gregory’s language is theological and is divided into two categories, the dogmatic and the sacramental. Especially his neptic-erotic terminology reveals a lot about his relationship with the God. He uses terms which are referred to the relationship between husband and wife, such as “God’s cohabitation” (συνοίκηση Θεοῦ), “occupancy” (ἐνοίκηση), “hubby” (σύζυγος), “communion” (κοινωνία), “participation” (μετοχή), “transubstantiation” (μετοποιία), “anakrasi” (ἀνακρασία) and συνανακρασία. “Hubby”: St. Gregory refers to the relationship between the angels and the Christ when he is talking about hubby. The same relationship may also have the Christ and the prophets or the saints or every soul which is adhered to him. “God’s cohabitation”: The God cohabitates into the heart of the people. God’s cohabitation is a result of real faith and love. “Communion”: For St. Gregory communion means real union between man’s soul and God not as a substance but as energy. “Participation-Transubstantiation”: The phrase God’s participation means the participation of the person to the properties of God. The transubstantiation comes after the participation and is something wider than that. The transubstantiation follows the acquisition of God’s properties while the participation is related with them. “Anakrasi”: The soul’s desire for the invisible beauty is what leads the person to the anakrasi with the God. This
is possible to happen under the condition that the person is purified from the earthly and his heart is released from anything visible and anything which is constructed. The result of all those is the perfect illumination of real light.

Constantine BOZINIS Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

The platonic reading of the “Song of Songs” by Gregory of Nyssa

In the sixth homily of his commentary on the Song of Songs Gregory of Nyssa interprets the verses 3,7-8 of this Old Testament poem, where the “the bed of Salomon” is described. Its splendor increases the desire of the bride for the bridegroom, according to the Church father. Taking as point of departure the above mentioned interpretation of the “royal bed” of Salomon, we try in our presentation to sketch out the motif of thēios eros in Gregory and bring forward its platonic background. The mystic theology of the Cappadocian is compared with the ideas that Plato expresses about love in his philosophical dialogues. Special emphasis is laid on the Diotima’s speech in Symposium and the Socrates’ palinode in Phaedros while the analysis of the threefold structure of the human soul in the fourth chapter of Politeia is taken also into account.

Raphael A. CADENHEAD Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge (UK)

“Fluidity” or “Integration”? The challenges posed by the diachronicity of gendered transformation in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum and De vita Moysis

The In Canticum canticorum has attracted considerable academic interest in the latter part of the twentieth century for its treatment of the spiritual evocations of “gender” at the heights of spiritual ascent. Whilst these studies have revealed the reversals and switches of male and female characteristics that accompany the soul’s advances in spiritual growth, they have tended to interpose contemporary presumptions onto Gregory’s thought – seeking rapprochement with post-modern theories of gender “fluidity”, on the one hand, or Jungian conceptions of “integration”, on the other. But they do so arguably to distorting effect. In this paper, I shall show that the In Canticum canticorum (addressed to those of a mature spiritual stature) needs to be read alongside the De vita Moysis (addressed to those still immature in their faith) in order to reveal the truly diachronic nature of these gendered transformations. Through this contrapuntal examination of Gregory’s final two works, I shall underscore his truly unique notion of spiritual maturation which finds as yet no exact analogue in contemporary theorisations on gender.

Emily CAIN Fordham University (NY, USA)

In the Eyes of the Beholder: Optical Theory and Gregory of Nyssa’s Mystical Vision in In Canticum canticorum

One of the most significant mystical questions that Gregory of Nyssa contends with in his exegetical treatise, In Canticum canticorum, is how one’s physical life and spiritual life are related. Gregory addresses this question by employing an analogy common in his day: spiritual senses as counterparts to physical senses. Throughout this treatise, Gregory emphasizes visual perception as the “noblest” of senses, making this the spiritual sense he utilizes most frequently as a description for the mystical vision of God. I argue that it is precisely by understanding the mechanics of Gregory’s optics (and catoptrics) of physical vision that we can begin to have a more nuanced understanding of his spiritual vision as well. Though Gregory frequently describes vision with the passive language similar to the atomists (often ascribed to Lucretius and Democritus), Gregory uniquely combines this with the active theory of correct judgment by the hegemonikon espoused by Galen and the Stoics. I conclude that Gregory balances these seemingly contradictory theories to create a unified understanding of visual perception in such a way that illuminates his understanding of the mystical ascent to and the spiritual vision of God.

Mattia C. CHIRIATTI Universitat de Barcelona (Spain)

Le nozioni esegetiche di σκοπός e ἀκολουθία nel In Canticum Canticorum di Gregory di Nissa

The exegetical criteria of σκοπός and ἀκολουθία are closely tied to the Gregory of Nyssa interpretation of the sacred texts: the bishop argues that the exegesis of a Scriptures book is in relation to the determined purpose. The lemma σκοπός has had a considerable semantic development in classical Greek, Hellenistic and Christian tradition; from classic meaning of “forward observer”, and “target”, the term evolved in the Judeo-Hellenistic authors writings, where he was flanked or, to some extent, replaced by τέλος. Filtered by the new semantic value inherited from the New Testament tradition, the post-classical and Christian Greek translated semantically the lemma σκοπός in the religious language, indicating the ascetic goal. The term took on a more precise connotation, namely the religious aim that is the Christian must strive for, while τέλος represented the eschatological aspect. ἀκολουθία, on the other hand, expresses all its completeness and its value precisely in terms of the principle of the unique σκοπός, which has the task of organizing, in turn, the structure of a dialog according to a consistent order. In fact, tracing back the principle of the τέλος, applied by Iamblichus both Porfirius
to the Platonics’ opera exegesis, especially those representing the necessary enclainement which leads to the σκοπός, the bliss, the end of the virtuous life. Therefore, in his Homilies on the Song of Songs, the relationship between these two concepts becomes indissoluble, revealing in this way, the aim of Gregory of Nyssa’s exegesis: to reach the μετουσία θεοῦ, the communion with God.

Frank DUBOIS, O.P.  Université Catholique de Lille (France)

Le corps comme un syndrome. Une théorie de la matière chez Grégoire de Nyssse.


Jonathan FARRUGIA  Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma (Italy)

Creation, fall and redemption in Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies on the Song of Songs

Many of the studies on the Homilies on the Song of Songs focus on how the bishop of Nyssa interprets this biblical text in order to show how the soul can strive for an ever-greater longing for God. Rightly so these homilies are considered one of Gregory’s most significant mystical opera. Here I am interpreting these homilies from a different point of view. Rather than focusing on the soul’s mystical journey towards intimacy with God, I am sketching Gregory’s line of thought regarding man’s creation, fall and redemption as found in these homilies. This is a theme generally associated with other opera by Gregory, namely treatises addressed to the Christian élite. Here I will try to show how this same teaching is passed through to common, uneducated people, using simple language and vivid images. Since this is not the usual analysis done of these homilies, I have limited myself to the text itself, without making unnecessary references to other studies. Due to the indications given by the Board, it has not been possible to illustrate in depth all the sections related to this theme. I have therefore tried to give a very general picture, referring to the text wherever possible.

Everett FERGUSON  Abilene Christian University (TX, USA)

Theology of the Baptism in the In Canticum of Gregory of Nyssse

Gregory of Nyssa in his homilies on Canticles makes few explicit references to “baptism,” but there are many allusions. He cites phrases from the baptismal texts Galatians 3:27; Titus 3:5; Romans 6:4; John 3:3, 5; and refers to the account of baptism in Acts 10:47-48. Blessings associated with baptism include washing clean from sin, illumination of the soul, putting on a new self, regeneration and new birth, death and resurrection, and healing. Theological motifs include the working of the Holy Spirit, human free will, divine grace, and mystery. One Old Testament type of baptism is Israel’s crossing the Red Sea. There may be allusions to the baptismal ritual in the words about a teacher speaking the word, a candidate’s confession of faith, repentance, removal of clothing, immersion, an anointing with myrrh, reclothing, and the giving of a kiss. There is a strong emphasis on the resulting new manner of life, a continual progress in perfection.

Roberta FRANCHI  University of Waterloo (ON, Canada)

«Quel divino e puro amore dello sposo invisibile»: Gregorio di Nissa, la Vita di Macrina e il Cantico dei Cantici

Scopo della presente relazione è cercare di leggere la Vita di Macrina alla luce del Cantico dei Cantici Gregorio di Nissa. Qui nell’impegno ascetico che mira al ripristino della condizione originaria e nella lotta per riplasmare la passionallità, il cristiano non conosce soltanto il “fuoco” dell’eros ma anche il calore di quella fiamma che il Signore ha portato dal cielo sulla terra, tanto che—come ha osservato Daniélou—l’eros nella concezione nissena appare come amore nella forma più intensa, come l’ardore della carità. Per conoscere l’incomprensibile, bisogna seguirlo proponendosi l’obbedienza al suo volere, perché il mistero divino si rende accessibile nella fede (Omelia 6). Chi ha raggiunto attraverso un cammino mistico questa possibilità è uomo e non lo è più, giacché la perfezione adesso è Cristo che prende forma nell’anima umana «contemplando la luce della verità nella sua vita splendente e senza macchia» (Omelia 3). Quale è stato il cammino di Macrina? Una liberazione progressiva dal sensibile in vista della contemplazione delle realtà superiori, che si identificano in Cristo. Vita angelica, celeste, immateriale, tutti aggettivi che nella Vita di Macrina vogliono esprimere la perfetta liberazione dalla
realities sensibile, dal saeculum e allo stesso tempo l'accesso alla contemplazione delle realità superiori. Macrina è al confine fra la natura umana e quella incorporea: al confine perché ella vive, sebbene libera dalle passioni, nella carne, ma anche al di là di quest'ultima, perché non è più attratta dal saeculum e dai problemi della carne. Macrina arriva così all'incontro con Cristo: l'asse filosofico conduce ad un'ascesi mistica. È nella descrizione della sua morte che appare questo aspetto, allorché ella manifesta «questo divino e puro amore dello sposo invisibile, che ella nutre dal più profondo di se stessa, il desiderio che anima il suo cuore». È allora che l'ascesi filosofica si concretizza in un volto: il volto di colui che è amato dalla vergine. Cristo è lo sposo, Macrina la sposa, secondo la riutilizzazione ormai consueta del Cántico dei Cantici.

Andela D. GAVRİLOVIĆ University of Belgrade (Serbia)  
Cult of St. Gregory of Nyssa in Medieval Serbia

The following paper investigates the cult of St. Gregory of Nyssa in medieval Serbia on the basis of hagiographical and iconographical sources. It reveals that the name of St. Gregory of Nyssa is regularly present in different hagiographical records: in preserved menaia for January, in full calendars, in prologoi and other writings. His vitae from the analyzed prologoi are rather extensive, spacing taking up half or a whole page, or even more. They especially emphasize the bishop of Nyssa as a great zealot of orthodox faith, its defender against heresy and participant of the Second ecumenical council held in Constantinople in 381. Their last sentence usually describes the physical appearance of St. Gregory. Regarding St. Gregory’s portraits, they are present in a great number of Serbian medieval churches. We distinguish between two main types in the portrayal of this bishop: the first one, dominant, representing him as a mature man, with apparent physical resemblance to his brother St. Basil the Great and the second one, portraying him as an elder with white hair and beard falling over his chest. The present paper also discusses the liturgical texts written on the scrolls which St. Gregory usually holds in his hands.

Mark J. HUNT, STD Holy Family University, Philadelphia (PA, USA)  
Myrrh, Pomegranates and Spices: “Epektasis” Signs of the Virtuous Life

Seeking to provide «some direction … to more fleshly folk for the sake of the spiritual and immaterial welfare of their souls» (Prologue), Gregory, the saintly fourth-century bishop of Nyssa, pens In Canticum canticorum, a literary and exegetical work of 15 homilies on the Song of Songs. In each of the Homilies, Gregory ponders the allegoric and anagogic sense of the biblical text to reveal a path for living the virtuous life; a life that essentially is a gratuitous and unified participation in the Triune life of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. As this Colloquium explores «one of the most distinguished characteristics of Gregory’s thought, i.e. the deep interconnection between thought and spiritual life», this paper will consider the relationship of “voluntary death” (via the allegoric image of myrrh) and “works” (via the allegoric images of pomegranates, fruits and spices) that Gregory presents in Homily 12. Key to this relationship will be the analysis of various Pauline texts, especially Philippian 3:13 that grounds epktasis, a primary theological experience for Gregory. It is this unquenched desire to “strain-forward” that the «veil of hopelessness is lifted and she (the Bride) sees the infinite and unlimited beauty of her Beloved, a beauty that for all the eternity of the ages is ever and again discovered to be greater, she is pulled by a yet more intense yearning, and through the daughters of Jerusalem, she discloses the state of her heart to her Beloved» (Homily 12).

Piet Hein HUPSCH KU Leuven (Belgium)  
Die Zunahme der Parrhesie in der Auslegung von Hohelied 5,7 durch Gregor von Nyssa

Marcello LA MATINA Università degli Studi di Macerata (Italy)
The Homily of homilies. Language and Incarnation in Gregory of Nyssa’s commentary In Canticum canticorum

[1.] Among the scholars concerned with some Text-theoretical approaches to language is usual to distinguish between: [1.1] primary religious texts and [1.2] secondary religious texts. The former are the true basic collections of writings generally accepted as canonical texts by some communities. The latter are, in many cases, single authored talks or papers written – or collected – prevalently as commentaries. The dividing line is not easy to be traced, for both historical and theoretical reasons. [2.] A special role among religious texts is played by the type termed with a Greek term “homily” (ὁμιλία). Since the early Christian times, each single homily consisted of a short talk containing several remarks about the liturgical readings of the day. As for Hebrew targumim, homilies did belong to the cultural action, even if they were used or composed not infrequently in view of some literary or, at least, non-liturgical events and occasions. [3.] Fourth century’s Greek homilies were very polite pieces of literature, for they showed the sort of manners that were considered typical of a διάλεξις, i.e. a “lecture” held in a church as it was the way with professional philosophers in a lecture-hall [cfr. J. Bernardi, La prédication des Pères Cappadoeciens. Le prédicateur et son auditoire, PUR, Paris 1968; H.-I. Marrou, Histoire de l’éducation dans l’Antiquité, Seuil, Paris 1948; La Matina, «L’omelia come conferenza spirituale», Pan 18-19 (2001): 265-85]. It is not so striking that Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies In Canticum canticorum offer considerable variations across the conventional homiletic range. Some are highly attractive for the philosopher of language: namely, the variety of ways of the literary reference [see G. D’Ippolito, Basilio di Cesarea e la poesia greca, I. Gallo (ed), Basilio di Cesarea: la sua età e il Basilianesimo in Sicilia, Messina 1983: 309-79], the oral/written dialectics or the rhetorical organization of topics. [4.] In my paper I would deal with the crucial point of Gregory’s Commentary: the relations between primary and secondary religious texts. Since they are several ways of balancing a homily and the sacred text(s) it refers to, I will concern myself with the following problems: [4.1.] the systemic differences between homophonic and non-homophonic citation / retrieval of the canonical expressions to be referred to in the homily; [4.2.] the relation between literal and non-literary meaning; [4.3.] the counterposition between, on the one side, the intentional meaning of words and, on the other side, the standard meaning of them; [4.4.] the relationship between meaning and truth, or—in St. Augustine’s words—the distinction between questions of truth (de veritate rerum) and author’s intention (de ipsius qui enuntiat voluntate).

Vito LIMONE Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milano (Italy)
I am black and beautiful (Cant 1,5): pre-existence and apokatástasis in the exegesis of Origen and Gregory of Nyssa

A comparison between the exegesis of C 1,5 (=I am black and beautiful) of Origen (CCI 2,1ff; HCT 1,6) and of Gregory of Nyssa (HCT 2,1ff) lets the lector to briefly, but clearly reconstruct not only the main hermeneutical similarity of both, but also their main theological differences. As far as their exegetical approach to the Holy Scripture is concerned, Origen and Gregory agree that the contradictions of literal meaning—for instance, the contradiction among the blackness and the beauty of the bride—may be solved only by the allegorical meaning. On the one hand, Origen intends the bride mainly as the Church of Heathens. According to him, the blackness of the bride, i.e. the sinfulness of the Church, means not only the pureness and the holiness which the Church can receive after the conversion from her sinfulness, i.e. her blackness, but it means the pureness which the Church, or the all souls, originally is. In fact Origen distinguishes a prima creatio, which is the intelligible creation of the soul, and a secunda creatio, which is the sensible creation of the soul by the Son-Wisdom. For Origen the beauty of the bride means the pureness of the soul, originally created at image of the divine Son, so that his exegesis of C 1,5 implies the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul. On the other hand, Gregory refuses Origen’s idea of the pre-existence of the soul, but the soul is mediator of divinity and extra-divinity. According to Gregory, the blackness of the bride, i.e. the individual soul, means the sinfulness of the soul, whereas her beauty means the pureness coming from her conversion. However, both Origen and Gregory agree the doctrine of the apokatástasis: Origen grounds this concept on the idea of the pre-existence of the soul; Gregory grounds it not on the origenian pre-existence of the soul, but both on the christological mystery of the kenosis and on the doctrine of the non-existence of the evil. The exegesis of C 1,5 of Origen and Gregory is characterized by the implication of the doctrine of the apokatástasis: in fact, Origen mentions five quotations whose meaning is clearly eschatological, in order to explain the verse of C 1,5; Gregory insists at least twice on the idea of the non-existence of the evil, in order to explain the blackness of the bride, which means the sinfulness of the soul, i.e. the absence of the Good-Being, or of God.

John Panteleimon MANOUSSAKIS College of Holy Cross, Worcester (MA, USA)
Time, Memory, Identity: Explorations in St. Gregory of Nyssa’s Eschatology

In the last few years a great deal of scholarship has been published on Nyssa’s understanding of time, especially with reference to his concept of diastema.
Similarly, Nyssa’s eschatology, in particular his views on apokatastasis, has received ample scholarly attention. My proposal in this paper is to explore St. Gregory’s eschatology with attention to the question of the eschatological status of human memory as constitutive of one’s own identity. I raise this question as a way to navigate between two understanding of the human person: one that is strictly theological and could potential dispense with memory altogether at the eschaton; the other is informed by philosophy (and in particular phenomenology) and understands memory, and therefore some form of temporality, as indispensable to the human condition, eschatological or otherwise. Is there a way of synthesizing the two? And does the bishop of Nyssa, as the most philosophically inclined of the Cappadocians, offer an answer to these conundrums?

Paola MARONE Università La Sapienza di Roma (Italy)
Gregorio di Nissa e l’esegesi di Cant. 1,5-6. Alcune considerazioni sul tema dell’epéktasis
Come giustamente ha rilevato Moreschini (Gregorio di Nissa, Omelie sul Cantico dei Cantici, a cura di C. Moreschini, Roma 1996, Intr. p. 9), tutto il complesso delle Homiliae in Canticum Canticorum di Gregorio «è costruito sullo schema dell’epéktasis» e non è esagerato affermare che «esse vogliono rappresentare una serie di esperienze successive dell’anima la quale, dopo avere avuto un contatto, sia pure parziale, con lo sposo divino, approfondisce sempre di più il suo rapporto spirituale con lui». Ma soprattutto a proposito di Cant. 1, 5-6 (Sono nera e bella, o figlie di Gerusalemme, come le tende di Kedar, come le pelli di Salomone. Non guardatemi perché sono di ampio respiro e assume un significato compiuto in una prospettiva soteriologica. Dunque, con il nostro intervento, si vuole portare l’attenzione specificatamente sulle Homiliae 2 e 4 che sono dedicate all’interpretazione di Cant. 1, 5-6 e si vogliono mettere a fuoco le varie argomentazioni con le quali il Nisseno, ormai alla fine della vita, attribuisce il progresso spirituale dell’anima all’azione salvifica di Dio, in linea con quanto aveva sostenuto molti anni prima nel De virginitate («non è opera nostra… divenire simili alla Divinità, ma è il risultato della munificenza di Dio, che fin dalla sua prima origine ha fatto grazia della somiglianza con Lui alla nostra natura»: Greg. Nyss., Virg. 12,2, GNO VIII/1, p. 300).

Andrew MELLAS University of Sydney (Australia)
«Words Tinctured with Passion». St Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum Canticorum and the Emergence of Affective Mysticism in Byzantine Hymnography
St. Gregory of Nyssa’s allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs Christianised the Stoic ideal of apatheia and spiritualised the erotic textuality of the canticle. Nevertheless, far from eschewing all emotion, Nyssen’s hermeneutics paved the way for a transfiguration of the passions as a concept and the emergence of an affective mysticism in Byzantine hymnography. Unlocking the text’s spiritual sense, Gregory analogously read the lovers’ impassioned utterances as embodying a passion transcending earthly corporeality and touching divine eros. As allegory delves into the spiritual meaning of the Shulammite and her lover, human passion is analogically immersed in divine passion and the mystical knowledge of the eschaton. The textualisation of human passion in the canticle dramatises an ever-intensifying desire for the Divine, which can be felt when the yearning soul approaches and traverses the dazzling darkness of the great mystery. This paper investigates the significance of Gregory’s In Canticum Canticorum – and the notion of impassible passion therein – for the history of emotions in Byzantium by examining its affinity with hymnography. It will particularly explore the nuptial metaphor in the Akathist Hymn and the kanon accompanying it in the Triodion, and the transformation of passion in an epektasis of desire in St. Romanos the Melodist’s kontakion on the harlot.

Manuel MIRA Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma (Italy)
Struttura del Commento e tappe dell’ascesa spirituale
Lungo il commento nisseno sul Cantico dei cantici sono numerosi i brani che affermano in modo esplicito che l’anima del cristiano esperimenta un progresso e che cercano di spiegarne la logica. Si è tentato di cercare una struttura dell’opera che metta in rilievo questo progresso dell’anima. Uno di questi testi è In Canticum 4 (GNO 6, 115, 1-16), dove, riprendendo immagini spiegate lungo i capitoli precedenti, Gregorio scandisce il progresso dell’anima in tre tappe, nelle quali l’anima è trattegiata come cavalla, amica e figlia. La domanda che si pone al testo è se questa triade determina pure la struttura dei primi quattro capitoli del commento o meno, e di conseguenza se possiamo prendere le affermazione programmatiche del Cappadoce sul progresso dell’anima lungo il commento come una indicazione sulla struttura stessa dell’opera.

Thamar OTKHMEZURI & Nino MELIKISHVILI National Center of Manuscripts, Tbilisi
Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum in the Georgian Translation Tradition
Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum is translated into Georgian by the eleventh century Georgian Church Father and theologian George the Athonite. The translation is preserved in four 11th-13th cc. manuscripts. One of these manuscripts is George’s autograph (Ath. Geo. 49) which is kept in Iviron Monastery on Mt. Athos. The beginning of the 11th century was the starting point of an orientation of Georgian...
The Divine Names and their use in Gregory’s of Nyssa In Canticum Canticorum

This short communication is focused on Gregory’s of Nyssa concept about the “name of God” and the other divine names as well as their function in his theological reasoning by taking as starting point of our research the main statement Gregory made in his In Cant. Cant. III (Jaeger, GNO VI, 85-87). Our purpose is to shed light on this question by advancing a non metaphysical, basically pastoral-mystical approach of the role which Gregory really accords to the divine names functionality, despite the full recognition of the opulent philosophical background of his thought. Last but not least, we’ll be undertaking the attempt to prove that such a concept of the divine names underlies Gregory’s thought not only in In Cant. – a work that could be considered as «a diary of the inner live of the soul» (G. Florovsky) and hence would be provide the par excellence opportunity of such a functionality, despite the full recognition of the opulent philosophical background.

There is no doubt that Gregory of Nyssa did believe in apokatastasis; however, it presence of the images of the Incarnation observed in the pastoral and erotic motives, as well as in the scenes of the book’s natural setting. They focus on different aspects of the relationship between God and humanity. (1) Images of God’s descent express his compassionate love towards wounded humanity – the shepherd who came to look for the lost sheep, the Good Samaritan who descended to the injured man. This relationship bridges the inequality between the two parts, but the gap between them is still obvious. (2) On the other hand, erotic images of loving union of God with humanity speak of irreversible uniting of the two parts. (3) In natural images the focus is on humanity. God’s garden and vineyard represent human nature created on the image of God. The damage caused by the First Fall is presented as an incursion of wild beasts into cultivated land and its subsequent devastation. The Incarnation is the return to the original cultivation. It is expressed as the Bridegroom’s coming to his garden, as implantation of an apple-tree to the wild wood, and as the True Vine in the vineyard. These steps result in full flourish of the garden or vineyard, i.e. human nature.

Marta PRZYSZYCHOWSKA  Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw (Poland)
Is it possible that Gregory of Nyssa spoke simultaneously about apokatastasis and eternal hell?
There is no doubt that Gregory of Nyssa did believe in apokatastasis; however, it
is very difficult to combine it with his conviction about human free will and a possibility of eternal damnation as a result of man’s free choice. In order to defend the coherence of Gregory’s thought scholars usually do one of two things: they say that apokatastasis means hope for restoration of all things (not a certainty), or they somehow try to explain his statements about free will and eternal hell so as to harmonize them with the theory of apokatastasis. I am sure that both solutions distort Gregory’s thought. Apokatastasis is, in my opinion, based on his belief in the unity of human nature and as such it is a certain and necessary result of the history of creation and salvation: human nature as an indivisible monad was produced in the first creation, fell in Adam, was taken by God’s Son in the Incarnation, and will be undoubtedly restored to the original state in the resurrection. On the other hand, Gregory treats extremely seriously human free will to such an extent that he admits existence of eternal hell as a result of man’s choice. It seems to me really possible that Gregory, being mentally healthy and not schizophrenic, professed both (apparently) contradictory ideas. I think that when talking about apokatastasis Gregory speaks about entire human nature understood as an indivisible monad. We should remember that he does believe that life with God is something natural and appropriate for men, and sin, which separates us from God, separates us at the same time from our own nature. This statement can explain how it is possible that entire human nature will be saved, while some people will be punished for eternity – sinners are not strictly human beings as they do separate themselves from human nature.

Joona SALMINEN University of Helsinki (Finland)
«I sleep but my heart is awake». St. Gregory of Nyssa on sleeping and virtuous living
St. Gregory’s In Canticum contains many paradoxes such as “sober drunkenness” and “bright darkness”. In my paper I will elaborate on these kinds of mystical expressions focusing especially on the theme of being awake when sleeping in the tenth homily. Sleeping was an essential issue in early Christian ascetic literature and St. Gregory’s account provides an illuminating example of early Christian ascetic teaching that was aimed at cultivating “the more fleshly folk” as he says in the preface. Special attention will be paid to the concept of senses. St. Gregory applies elements from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy when explaining his theory of sleeping awake. It seems, then, that sleeping in this context does not refer to actual sleeping but to a state where the bodily senses do not distract the mind (anaisthesia). This way it comes close to impassibility of the soul (apatheia) providing a basis for a virtuous Christian way of life.

Tatyana SOLOMONIK-PANKRASHOVA Vilnius University (Lithuania)
Allegorical Mode of Canticum Canticorum in the Vernacular Translation: King Alfred’s Prose Psalter
There is normally a gradual increase of comprehension in unraveling allegory. Inasmuch as Scripture reveals an intricate allegorical surface, which embraces distinct layers of reality, it has to be interpreted according to gaudeo angit “spiritual understanding”. In this paper I reflect upon the obscure allegorical images of Canticum Canticorum embedded in King Alfred’s Prose Psalter. One of the hidden allegorical images is that of darkness, wherein the Bride and the Bridegroom lose themselves. Moreover, the Bride purified in virtue becomes a spotless mirror, which not only produces the reflection of the object of love, i.e. the Ineffable Beauty of Jacobs Godes “the face of the God of Jacob”. The reflection of the face of God in the uplifted eyes of Soul is becoming more and more luminous, whereas the Bride is undergoing spiritual metamorphosis; after her disgrace has been removed, she is endowed with His Beauty thus, becoming dispassionate, i.e. impartial to the sensuous world.

Johannes Aakjaer STEENBUCH University of Copenhagen (Denmark)
Negative theology in Gregory of Nyssa’s reading of Rom 1:20 in Cant. Cant. 13
Paul’s words in Romans 1:20 (“τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται...”) are often taken as an instance of natural theology. In Gregory’s interpretation, God’s “invisible things” (τὰ ἀόρατα) and “power and Godhead” (δύναμις καὶ θειότης) are not his incomprehensible nature or being, but the economy of salvation (GNO VI, 384-385). God’s invisible things are the new heaven and earth. These are revealed not in nature, but in the cosmos (κόσμος) understood as the Church. Through the Church contraries are knitted together (GNO VI, 255-256). This theme of contraries can be related to the fact that both trees in Genesis 2:9 stand in the midst of the garden (GNO VI, 349). The trees are interdependent: The way to the tree of life goes through a negation of the knowledge from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gregory’s approach reflects the negative theology developed during his controversies with Neo-Arianism. God’s being can only be defined in opposition to what is not God. There is no positive knowledge of God without revelation. Knowledge of God’s mysteries presupposes negative theology.

Luke STEVEN Cambridge University (UK)
Mixture, beauty, and the Incarnation in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticum
“Mixture” is one of Gregory’s favourite metaphors for describing the incarnation. For a long time, viewed through the lens of Chalcedon, this language roused little more than suspicion amongst scholars. But some commentators have begun to understand and appreciate “mixture” language afresh by excavating the meanings that clung to it in Gregory’s philosophical context and in the context of his own writings. In an attempt to further this line of research, my paper will claim that Gregory considers “mixture” an aesthetic category, a phenomenon that produces beauty or, when the ingredients involved are mutually inimical, ugliness. This point is illustrated particularly clearly in the ekphrastic passages of In Canticum canticorum, upon which I will focus. I will also give some brief examples of how mixture featured in aesthetic debates and theory of Gregory’s day, which account, to an extent, for his deployment of this language. The thrust of my paper, however, will be to suggest that Gregory so happily and unapologetically employs “mixture” to describe the incarnation in particular because, for him, this language expresses the beauty and fittingness displayed therein.

Siiri TOIVIAINEN    St. John’s College, Durham University (UK)
What Makes Pleasure Spiritual? Gregory of Nyssa and the Notion of 'Double Pleasure' in Hom. in Cant. 10
While the concept of desire in Gregory of Nyssa has received a lot of attention in recent scholarly literature, much less has been said about its fulfilment: pleasure. An important exception comes in Homily 10 on the Song of Songs, where Gregory mentions a «double pleasure», one that is in the soul and is activated by impassibility and another that is occasioned in the body by passion. In my paper, I will analyse the notion of “double pleasure” within Gregory’s general theory of passions, asking what features set spiritual pleasure apart from its bodily counterpart. I will argue that spiritual pleasure is characterised by its radically different relationship to desire, and its alignment with that which is truly good.

Eduardo TORRES    Universidad de Navarra (Spain)
Comparación lexemática de “Vita Moysis” e “In Canticum” sobre “areté”
Un estudio analítico del término “areté” en la Vita Moysis ha revelado la riqueza de matices de una expresión tan intraducible como necesaria en la propuesta de la vida cristiana. La comparación de los resultados obtenidos con el comentario In Canticum nos permite, por una parte, comprobar la coherencia del pensamiento niseno en su madurez, y por otra, la validez de un método analítico aplicado al estudio de los términos nisenos en el que se trata de dejar hablar a los contextos inmediatos. “Areté” vertebraba ambos libros nisenos, con una estructura aparentemente diversa, como un quicio léxico unitario, y desplaza sus acepciones: santidad moral, perfección humana, nobleza de alma, integridad u honestidad, bondad o buen obrar, valor o valía, mérito o gloria, excelencia moral. En plural, llama la atención lo escaso de su uso, lo que aleja el término de su traducción habitual por “virtud”, que debe ser, por ello, evitada.

Ilaria VIGORELLI    Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma (Italy)
Ontology and Existence: Schésis of the soul in Gregory of Nyssa’s In Canticum canticorum
The description of schésis in the soul in Gregory of Nyssa’s homiletic commentary on the Song of Songs reflects a discussion of particular anthropological value when confronted with intra-Trinitarian schésis (Eun I, 159, 3–5: GNO I, 75, 3–5 and Eun I, 236, 1–4: GNO I, 95, 25–96, 2). Indeed, in the divine ontology in light of his claim of the reciprocal schésis of the Father and the Son, Gregory (and in the wake of Basil) identifies a relational immanence, both eternal and infinite, in the divine nature. In elaborating on the revealed names, Gregory of Nyssa stands at the forefront of a revisitation of the philosophical category of relation (schésis). Enlightened by the revelation that the Son is in the Father, relation can in fact distinguish without excluding one from the other and offer a configuration without issuing uniformity among the two. In the homilies In Canticum, one meets an impressive display of the reflection of schésis in created nature. Undertaking an analysis of the appearances of schésis facilitates the notion that the disposition of the soul – characteristic of physis – is distinct from any individual and unrepeable relation that an existing soul establishes with God through it choice to accept the gift of the Beloved. In this way, the polar tensions between nature and grace, nature and history, immanence and transcendence, are accounted for in Gregory’s theology by relation as existing condition, a reality distinct and overflowing with respect to the disposition of the soul. This overflow of Trinitarian ontology revealed by the names is thereby reflected as an overflow of relation existing in history, which will in turn become a name for God.

Françoise VINEL    Université de Strasbourg (France)
Passer par la mort: accents pauliniens dans les Homélies sur le Cantique des Cantiques.
La mort n’est mentionnée que dans la finale du Cantique des Cantiques (Ct 8, 6), un
verset que Grégoire de Nysse ne cite jamais. Pourtant, des thèmes majeurs de ses Homélies sur le Cantique (métaphores et concepts – parfums, saisons, progression de l’âme, union de l’Époux et de l’Épouse) donnent une place décisive à l’affirmation que le chemin vers Dieu passe par la mort – une interprétation paradoxalement paulinienne du Cantique des Cantiques.

Matthias WEGLAGE    Göttingen (Germany)
Die Verdoppelung des Menschen: Philonisches in der Anthropologie des Gregor von Nyssa


Martin WENZEL    University of Göttingen (Germany)
Gregory of Nyssa’s Homilies on the Song of Songs as an Educational Process
In his Homilies on the Song of Songs, Gregory of Nyssa seeks to introduce Christians into the mysteries of the Christian faith, dealing with the relation of the individual to God as well as with the church and ethics. This paper explores the process of education represented in the Homilies. It inquires into Gregory’s presentation of theological ideas and examines the communication strategies by which the bishop wants to acquaint Christians with his integrated vision of Christian faith and life. In doing so, my study contrasts the mystagogical education of the Homilies on the Song of Songs with the educational process of Gregory’s catechetical works, in particular the Catechetical Oration, and looks for similarities and differences between mystagogical and catechetical education. A special focus is put on the notion of the sacraments and the connection between ecclesiastical life and ethics.
PhD Seminar

Domus Internationalis Paulus VI
Via della Scrofa, 70 – Sala San Pietro, First floor

Saturday 20th

14:30  First Session
16:00  Coffee break
16:30  Second Session
18:30  Departure

First Session

Students
Joona SALMINEN
Siiri TOIVIAinen
Mattia C. CHIRIATTI
Emily CAIN

Scholar
Sarah COAKLEY
J. Warren SMITH
Matthieu CASSIN
Volker DRECOLL

Second Session

Students
Francisco BASTITTA HARRIET
Markéta BENDOVÁ
Magdalena BLAHOVA
Jonathan FARRUGIA

Scholar
Theo KOBUSH
Theo KOBUSH
Johannes ZACHHUBER
Johannes ZACHHUBER
Maps

- **Pontifical University of the Holy Cross**
  Palazzo dell’Apollinare – P.zza S. Apollinare 49

- **Church of S. Agostino**
  Piazza di Sant’Agostino

- **4 Colonne Restaurant**
  Via della Posta Vecchia, 2

- **Church of S. Luigi dei Francesi**
  Piazza San Luigi dei Francesi

- **Domus Internationalis Paulus VI**
  Via della Scrofa, 70 – Sala San Pietro, First floor
Cultural Banquet
(Vatican Museum by night)

Pontifical University of the Holy Cross
Palazzo dell’Apollinare – Piazza S. Apollinare 49

Vatican Museum
Viale Vaticano
List of participants

Giovanni Manabu AKIYAMA, University of Tsukuba
Maria García Kanako AKIYAMA, University of Tsukuba
Theodoros ALEXOPOULOS, Universität Bern
Charalampos APOSTOLOPOULOS, University of Ioannina
Eirini ARTEMII, National and Capodistrian University of Athens
Lewis AYRES, Durham University
Francisco BASTITTA HARRIET, Universidad de Buenos Aires
Markéta BENDOVÁ, Charles University in Prague
Magdalena BLAHOVA, Charles University in Prague
Theoni BOURA, Agii Anargiri
Constantine BOZINIS, Aristoteles University of Thessaloniki
Miguel BRUGAROLAS, Universidade de Navarra
Raphael A. CADENHEAD, Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge
Emily CAIN, Fordham University
Matthieu CASSIN, Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes CNRS, Paris
Mattia C. CHIRIA TTI, Universitat de Barcelona
Sarah COAKLEY, University of Cambridge
Chiara CURZEL, Trento
Maria Laura Di PAOLO, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano
Scot DOUGLASS, University of Colorado Boulder
Volker DRECOLL, Tübingen University
Franck DUBOIS, O.P., Université Catholique de Lille
Jonathan FARRUGIA, Institut Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma
Everett FERGUSON, Ablone Christian University
Roberta FRANCHI, University of Waterloo
Andela D. GAVRILOVIĆ, University of Belgrade
Giorgio GROPPO, Sommariva Bosco
Mark J. HUNT, STD, Holy Family University, Philadelphia
Piet Hein HUPSCH, KU Leuven
Russell JEFFORD, Oxfordshire

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Morwenna LUDLOW, University of Exeter
John Panetelemion MANOUSSAKIS, College of Holy Cross, Worcester
Paola MARONE, Università La Sapienza di Roma
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Nino MELIKSHVILI, National Center of Manuscripts, Tbilisi
Andrew MELLAS, University of Sydney
Manuel MIRA, Pontificia Università della Santa Croce, Roma
Claudio MORESCHINI, Pisa
Ari OJELL, University of Helsinki
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Niko-Pekka OVASKAINEN, National Center of Manuscripts, Tbilisi
Georgios D. PANAGOPoulos, University Ecclesiastical Academy of Iannina
Helena PANZOVÁ, Trnava University
Michael PETRIN, University of Notre Dame
Noémié PIACENTINO, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris
Marta PRZYBYLCHOWSKA, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw
Ilaria RAMELLI, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano
Joona SALMINEN, University of Helsinki
Anna SILVAS, University of New England
Manlio SIMONETTI
J. Warren SMITH, Duke Divinity School, Durham
Tatyana SOLOMONIK-PANKRASHOVA, Vilnius University
Reinhard STAATS, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel
Johannes Aakjaer STEENBÜCH, University of Copenhagen

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