

THE 2023 STUDENT RELIGIOUS STUDIES CONFERENCE

Sponsored by
The Chicago Society of Biblical Research &
The Catholic Biblical Association of America

March 17, 2023
Saint Mary's College
Notre Dame, IN

Friday, March 17

10:45-11:45 a.m.	Registration	Spes Unica
12:00 a.m. -12:15 p.m.	Orientation	Spes Unica 135
12:30-2:00 p.m.	SESSION ONE	

Chair: Shane Gormley, Loyola University Chicago sgormley@luc.edu	Spes Unica 213
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Brennan Z. Weech, Olivet Nazarene University
Examining Šāra 'at in Leviticus 13:1–8 and Other Texts: A Grammatical, Syntactical, and Literary Analysis

Maria Sermersheim, University of Notre Dame
Nominal Significance in Philo of Alexandria: A Complicated Contribution to the Semantics of Biblical Names

Julie Whelan, Seton Hall University
Jeremiah 1:10, Origen and the Roots of the Spiritual Journey

Chair: Brian Yong Lee, Loyola University Chicago blee18@luc.edu	Spes Unica 240
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Drew Leman, Olivet Nazarene University
Postmodernism and Job 28

Noah W. Dale, Portland Seminary of George Fox University
"There is No Healing for You": The Coping Function of Jeremiah's Oracle against Egypt

Brandon Roberts, Knox University
Second-Class Scripture: The Letter of James and the Working Canon

2:00-2:30 p.m. BREAK Spes Unica

2:30-3:30 p.m. SEMINAR Spes Unica 135

3:45-4:45 p.m. SESSION TWO

Chair: Jonathan J. Hatter, Loyola University Chicago **Spes Unica 213**
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Silas Hasselbrook, Marquette University
The Liturgical Reality of Deification in St. Athanasius' Theology

Kacie Barrett, Loyola University Chicago
Colonizing & Converting: Nahua Ritual Practice and Catholic Sacraments in the Colonial Period

Chair: Lilly Davis, University of Notre Dame **Spes Unica 240**
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Roshe Riley, Andrews University
"He Exalts the Horn of His Messiah": The Culmination of God's Justice as Told by Hannah, David, Mary, and Zechariah

Kiheon Chung, Andrews University
Why 120 Years? – Study of Genesis 6:3

5:15 p.m. DINNER Spes Unica 135

ABSTRACTS

Kacie Barrett, Loyola University Chicago
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Colonizing & Converting: Nahua Ritual Practice and Catholic Sacraments in the Colonial Period

During the colonial period, preconceived notions regarding idolatry, witchcraft, demonology, and diabolism are brought over by colonizers alongside hopes of evangelization and expansion. These theologies, and the fear that comes with them, opens the door for Catholics in the post-contact period to respond to Nahua ritual practice with claims of idolatry and devil worship,

despite their resemblance to Catholic sacramental practice. As mass conversion fails, new strategies of conversion are taken up by the Catholic church. Indigenous language, space, and ritual become repurposed or replaced, creating instances of cultural cataloging in order to better recognize sin and efforts to end Nahua ritual practice.

Kiheon Chung, Andrews University

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Why 120 Years? – Study of Genesis 6:3

The biblical flood narrative, despite its popularity, is often met with criticism. Many people find it hard to accept that God, full of grace, would allow such massive destruction and destroy all the people. Through the study of Genesis 6, this paper will rediscover a loving God in the "120" years probationary time. With typological studies, the "120" years in the flood narrative is compared with the book of Revelation which suggests that the 120 years is not just an ordinary probationary period, but a time of total judgement against the whole world.

Noah W. Dale, Portland Seminary of George Fox University

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"There is No Healing for You": The Coping Function of Jeremiah's Oracle against Egypt

Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations (MT 46-51) have just begun to be analyzed for what they say can about the intentions, contexts, and traumas within the communities in which they were produced. Jeremiah's Oracle against Egypt (Jer 46), however, has yet to be brought into this discussion. The present paper looks at the communal function of Jeremiah's oracle against Egypt within an early Persian period context and suggests that the oracle once served as a means of coping with the inherited recollection of Judah's subjugation under Necho II. The oracle's fixation on Egypt's failure at the Battle of Carchemish (605 BCE) ultimately works to reframe Egypt's late 7th-century BCE political subjugation of Judah (2 Kings 23:29-35). The text represents an attempt to craft the returnee's historical memory into one that would strengthen their collective identity. Levantine archeology and theories over collective trauma are consulted in this study in order to understand some of the scribal intentions and strategies at work in Jeremiah's oracle against Egypt.

Silas Hasselbrook, Marquette University

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The Liturgical Reality of Deification in St. Athanasius' Theology

Athanasius makes frequent use of the deification motif in order to defend the divinity of Christ and, as an auxiliary argument, to demarcate Christian deification as it was practiced within the liturgical context of the communion of saints. To speak of the Incarnation is to already speak of the divinity of Christ, His sacrifice on the cross, salvation, and the divinization of the Christian. Within each of these subjects, the other realities are already latent. Athanasius' explanation of certain Scripture passages, and their a purview of their hermeneutical history, enable one to better appreciate the integral role of deification within Christian spirituality.

Drew Leman, Olivet Nazarene University
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Postmodernism and Job 28

This paper will examine Job 28 from a postmodern perspective, gauging the compatibility of Job 28 with a select few broad tenets of postmodern thought, specifically those regarding knowledge, meaningfulness, and metanarratives. It will analyze Job 28 specifically in how it functions within the greater narrative trajectory of the book of Job. The postmodern significance of Job 28, thus, will be identified in how Job 28 contributes to an interpretation of the Joban material both preceding and succeeding it. The limitations of identifying postmodern thought in Job, however, will also be discussed.

Roshe Riley, Andrews University
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“He Exalts the Horn of His Messiah”: The Culmination of God’s Justice as Told by Hannah, David, Mary, and Zechariah

Through a verse-by-verse literary study of the text, this paper claims that Hannah's Song (1 Samuel 2:1-10) shows that Hannah's praise to God for His justice goes through three successive phases: what the Lord does for her personally, for the people of Israel collectively, and universally through His Messianic King. This paper also justifies the literary, grammatical, and thematic connections between Hannah's song, David's song (2 Samuel 22), Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55), and Zechariah's song (Luke 1:67-79) and shows how these four songs link the king and Messiah in 1 Samuel 2:10 to David partially, but ultimately to Jesus Christ.

Brandon Roberts, Knox University
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Second-Class Scripture: The Letter of James and the Working Canon

The Letter of James provides an interesting opportunity to interrogate the “working canon” of the New Testament: James remains wholly canonical, but I will argue its status in this working canon is disputed. As a result, the Letter remains peripheral: either an unwelcome dissenter or a recapitulation of old news. I will instead approach James as a foundational New Testament text — first, by considering how scholars have reconciled James’s controversies, then, by reconstructing the Letter’s narrative voice, and lastly, by analyzing how that voice has gone unheard across the working canon.

Maria Sermersheim, University of Notre Dame
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Nominal Significance in Philo of Alexandria: A Complicated Contribution to the Semantics of Biblical Names

Philo of Alexandria’s famous allegorical exegesis relies on a substratum of etymologies of proper names. Whence come these etymologies? Do they accord with the LXX upon which Philo relied? Are they philologically accurate? Philo provided far more etymologies than the LXX does, and though they are philologically reasonable, they are not precisely accurate. Is this

fodder for the etymological fallacy? On the basis of Ancient Near Eastern philosophy of language which seeped into Philo's world and Philo's particular confidence in Moses, it seems that biblical Hebrew names are somewhat exempt from the etymological fallacy in exegesis.

Brennan Z. Weech, Olivet Nazarene University

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Examining Šara'at in Leviticus 13:1–8 and Other Texts: A Grammatical, Syntactical, and Literary Analysis

The laws of the book of Leviticus are the major literary center of the Pentateuchal Priestly source, and they help to establish the ethical and religious foundation for ancient Israelite society. One of the ideas presented within the book of Leviticus that has captured the minds of commentators is that of unclean skin disease (šāra'at), more commonly known as leprosy. Through a literary analysis of Leviticus 13:1-8 and other relevant texts, this paper seeks to determine the meaning and causes of šāra'at both in Priestly and non-Priestly Texts.

Julie Whelan, Seton Hall University

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Jeremiah 1:10, Origen and the Roots of the Spiritual Journey

This study aims to identify resonances of Jeremiah 1:10 with the stages of purgation, illumination and union as defined by the Carmelites such as John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. In Jeremiah's call narrative, the prophet's purpose at Jer 1:10 includes three pairs of "task verbs": to uproot (נחש) and to tear down (נחץ); to destroy (אבד) and to demolish (הרס); to build (בנה) and to plant (נטע)." The reception of Jer 1:10 by the influential theologian and early church father, Origen, in his Homilies on Jeremiah, will be reviewed to demonstrate his understanding of the task verb pairs as three phases in a spiritual journey. Building on Paul's spiritualized use of the 1:10 task verbs, Origen aligns the task verbs with two stages of progressive purification, and in turn, an ability to grow in ("build") holiness. Origen's interpretation dates to about 240 AD, significantly earlier than the commonly credited source of the purgation/illumination/union terminology, Pseudo-Dionysius, who wrote in the late fourth or early fifth century. This study will propose that Origen's exposition in the third century means that the nascency of the spiritual journey may be linked to the Hebrew Scriptures, including the Hebrew MT and the Greek LXX.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Lauren O'Connell, Loyola University Chicago, SRSC Coordinator