

# **ABSTRACTS – SSEC 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Held at Macquarie University

## **THURSDAY CONFERENCE CURTAIN RAISER**

**BENJAMIN SCHLIESSER (VIA ZOOM)**

### **The Social Pattern of the Christ Group at Philippi. Fresh Perspectives on an Old Question**

Ever since the publication of Edwin Judge's essay *The Social Pattern of the Christian Groups in the First Century* more than 60 years ago, scholars have been intrigued by the questions surrounding early Christian community formation. Did they form a philosophical school, a mystery cult, a missionary "business", a voluntary association? How were they rooted in the complex urban ecology? What was distinctive, attractive, repulsive about Christ groups? This paper presents old and new avenues in the vibrant fields of social history and urban studies, focusing on the earliest Christian communities in Philippi.

## **SATURDAY CONFERENCE**

**DON BARKER**

### **An examination of one of the Earliest Surviving Copies of Paul's Letter to the Philippians**

The paper will examine the letter to the Philippians in the context of the Chester Beatty Codex II (P46) which is a nearly a complete codex containing most of Paul's letters. The paper will include the nature of the codex, its date as well as features that include the formality of the script; punctuation; the way numbers were written as well as a forensic observation as to its use within the early church in Egypt.

## **PAUL BARNETT**

### **Philippi and the Romans**

Paul preached in and established churches in prominent Romanised cities (Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus). Why is his Letter to the Church in Philippi so intensely 'Roman'?

## **CEDRIC BRELAZ (ZOOM)**

### **From Philip of Macedon to Paul the Martyr: Competing Memories in the Roman Colony of Philippi (1st–6th cent. CE)**

At the time of Paul's visit in the late 40s, Philippi was a multicultural town. Founded in Western Thrace on the site of a previous Thasian settlement by king Philip II of Macedon in the mid-fourth century BCE, the Greek city of Philippi had been turned into a Roman, predominantly Latin-speaking colony a century earlier. When the first Christian ekklesia emerged, its members had to cope with this multilayered background and to struggle to build their own identity. This lecture will look at how the narratives about the origins of the city of Philippi were constantly reshaped throughout its history, from the Late Hellenistic period until Late Antiquity. In particular, it will focus on how collective identities were renegotiated over time according to the agenda of each community (Thasians, Macedonians, Romans, Christians) and will examine the strategies—both in the discourse and in the cityscape—used by the Christian group to assert its specificities. It will be argued that from the beginning of the fourth century onwards Christians directly engaged with pagans in a competition about the origin and the memory of the city, eventually claiming Paul was the true founder of Philippi.

## **AMELIA BROWN**

### **Roman & Late Roman Philippi between Thessalonica, Byzantium & Samothrace**

Today the ancient city of Philippi is a marshy ruin, famous for its battle between Caesar's partisans and assassins, and from the New Testament's *Acts* and *Letters to the Philippians*. Both before and long after St Paul's visit, however, Philippi was a thriving crossroads metropolis, lying on both the east-west *Via Egnatia* and the north-south route from the sea ports of the north Aegean up into the Balkans. It also became one of the earliest cities of Macedonia, and indeed the entire Eastern Roman Empire, to put the Christian religion at the very centre of its downtown civic space. This presentation contrasts Philippi's forum at the time of Paul's first-century mission with the monumental octagonal martyrion and numerous churches constructed there in Late Antiquity. It concludes with the material legacy of Philippi at its one-time port of Kavala (Neapolis), today both the urban centre and seat of the local bishop.

## **CHRIS FORBES**

### **What changed for Paul and the Pauline Mission in Philippi?**

## **JIM HARRISON**

### **Citizenship in Roman Philippi: Interpreting Philippians 1:27 and 3:20 in Their First-Century Context**

The paper investigates two recent proposals regarding the background of Paul's references to the citizenship (*politeuma*) of believers in the Roman colony of Philippi (Phil 3:20; cf. 1:27). It has been suggested by scholars that the *politeuma* language used elsewhere of the local associations forms the conceptual background for Philippians 3:20. Alternatively, the *politeuma* of the Jews of Ptolemaic Herakleopolis, known to us from 20 papyri dated to 144/3–133/2 BC, has also been considered relevant to Paul's choice of language in Philippians. It is argued that each of these scholarly proposals fall short evidentially as far as their persuasiveness. We will reconsider the evidence relating to the development of Roman citizenship under Augustus and Claudius, background

which has been unexpectedly overlooked by New Testament scholars in discussions of the issue. How might auditors in the Roman colony of Philippi, a “mini Rome” transported to Macedonia, have perceived Paul’s construction of citizenship in comparison to its Julio-Claudian counterpart?

**LYN KIDSON**

**Business women, family networks, and Lydia of Thyatira**

**JULIEN OGEREAU (USB)**

**Philippi after Paul: What on Earth Happened to Paul’s Beloved Church?**

This paper explores what became of Paul’s beloved church in subsequent centuries in light of the extant literary sources (e.g., Polycarp’s letter) and the local epigraphic evidence.