

SSEC NEWS | It's August 2017.

Once again, we are using a new way to send out timely information about the Society. It is a wonderful new way of sending "SSEC NEWS". We believe that it will streamline getting information out to you, without delays and bureaucracy. There are five "buttons" or images to click on below.

Our top stories



From the President's Desk

NEW SSEC PRESIDENT | Chris Forbes. We trust that you like the new format for our newsletters.



SSEC Recent Events

RECENT SSEC EVENTS | We have had a number of successful events in recent months. Including our annual SSEC Conference. Read more.



Persons of Interest

INTRODUCING MEMBERS WHO TRAVEL | Travel grants and where this has taken our members overseas. Interesting happenings.



SSEC Article

CLASH OF THE APOSTLES: MANI VS THE HEIR OF PETER, LEO THE GREAT | By Bronwen Neil



SSEC Events Calendar

THIS IS A QUICK GUIDE TO UPCOMING SSEC EVENTS | We would love to have you along to one of our events. Perhaps you have thought about bringing a friend along. We will make them feel most welcome. Stay after the lecture, meet others over a coffee or tea.



From the President's Desk | CHRIS FORBES

Welcome to the **August SSEC NEWS**. We trust that you like the new format of our electronic newsletter. We have had some excellent events since our February 2017 newsletter.

During Feb/March 2017 six special free daytime workshops were held by **Dr Rosalinde Kearsley** on "An Introduction to life and society in early Roman Asia Minor through Inscriptions". Each of the sessions were based on a collection of Greek and Latin inscriptions with English translation. The workshops took students through the significant and practical aspects of the epigraphic work.

Also in February, an event co-hosted by SSEC and the ACRC (Ancient Cultures Research Centre), **Professor Derek Krueger** (Uni of North Carolina Greensboro, USA) spoke to members on "Mary Magdalen's Surprise and Joy: Romanos the Melodist at Easter?" Prof Krueger was brought to Australia by AABS (Australian Association for Byzantine Studies) and all our members were very pleased that he agreed to talk at Macquarie Uni.

On Wed 8 March, there was a SSEC Farewell seminar given by **A/Professor Stuart Piggin**, and a dinner following. A/Professor Stuart Piggin (Macquarie/ Director of CTE) spoke on the topic: "Jonathan Edwards and Terra Australis: His Perception of us and our Reception of Him". The talk and dinner was very well attended, and we wish Stuart every success in his retirement.

In April, Professor **Christophe Erismann** (Vienna, Austria), the Ancient Cultures Research Centre's Visiting Research Fellow in 2017, spoke on the topic: "Philosophy and Theology in Byzantium before 1204". This event was hosted by Dr Ken Parry.

In May, once again SSEC held an informative annual conference on the theme of "Apostles and the Churches they Founded: History, Tradition and Legend".

The SSEC conference & curtain raiser event had guest speaker: **Dr Geoffrey Dunn** (ACU) who was the SSEC visiting fellow for 2017.

His topics were:

- At the curtain raiser: "Peter in Rome: The Papal Reimagining of a Scriptural Tradition"
- At the day conference: "Peter in Rome in Early Christian Apocrypha: The Evidence of Acts of Peter"

We were also pleased, once again, to have our distinguished international speaker, **Professor Laurence Welborn** (Fordham NY & Macquarie), who spoke on "The Afterlife of the Church Paul founded in Corinth".

We wish to sincerely thank all the speakers for attending and making this event so worthwhile. Read more later in the newsletter.

We have some outstanding events lined up for SSEC in the second half of 2017. So may I refer you to the Calendar section of this SSEC NEWS for full details.

On Wednesday 27 September 2017, we are hearing from **Professor Darrell L. Bock**. Professor Bock is Dallas Theological Seminary Executive Director of Cultural Engagement and Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies. His topic will be: "What about those Other Gospels? Thinking through the "Missing" Gospels". He is brought to Australia courtesy of SCD (Sydney College of Divinity). SSEC Members are invited. This is a daytime event.

On Tuesday 24 October 2017, the SSEC Evening Lecture will be given by **Dr David Starling** (Morling College) Head of Bible and Theology, Lecturer in New Testament. His Topic will be : "Putting on the New Self: The Theatrical Background of a New Testament Metaphor"

Wednesday 8 Nov 2017, will be our evening SSEC Christmas Event. The speaker will be **Associate Professor Ian Young** (Sydney). Topic: "Into the Lion's Den: Daring to Be Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Greek"

We hope to see you at one of these great public events. Feel free to bring along a colleague, neighbour or friend. All of SSEC will make them feel very welcome.

Dr Chris Forbes
President SSEC

August 2017



RECENT SSEC EVENTS

SSEC Conference 2017

Once again, SSEC held an informative Annual Conference on **Saturday 6 May 2017** - with the theme of Apostles and the Churches they Founded: History, Tradition and Legend.

Speakers were as follows:

- **Dr Geoffrey Dunn** (ACU) SSEC visiting fellow for 2017, with topic "The Children of Constantius III and Galla Placidia"
- Distinguished International Speaker, **Professor Laurence Welborn** (Fordham NY & Macquarie), "The Afterlife of the Church Paul founded in Corinth"
- **Professor Bronwen Neil**, (Macquarie), "Clash of The Apostles: Mani and the Heir of Peter in Fifth-Century Rome"
- **Dr Rosalinde Kearsley** (Macquarie), "Why did Paul go to Pisidian Antioch and what did he find there?"
- **Dr Julien Ogereau** (LMU Munich/Macquarie), "Paul's legacy in Macedonia: Literary, Epigraphic, Archaeological Perspectives"
- **Dr Christopher Forbes** (Macquarie) "Apostles and the Churches they did (and didn't) found"
- **Marty Feltham** (PhD candidate Macquarie), "Paul, the Ephesians & the eclipse of hope? 1 Timothy 5:3-25 reconsidered".

The SSEC conference curtain raiser was held on the evening of **Thurs 4 May 2017**, with guest speaker: **Dr Geoffrey Dunn** (ACU), the SSEC visiting fellow for 2017. "Peter in Rome: The Papal Reimagining of a Scriptural Tradition"

We wish to sincerely thank all the speakers for making this day a huge success. Thanks also to our many SSEC volunteers and helpers on the day. Thanks to Karyn Young, conference Co-ordinator who again assisted in the morning with registrations, processing payments and liaison with Robert Menzies College.



St Peter Statue, Vatican City

CONFERENCE CAPTION COMPETITION | by Alice Baker

Winner: **John Davies**, "If only my infallibility included a remedy for beard lice".

Runner up: **Ben McKechnie**, "My position leads me between a rock and a hard place".

Honourable mentions:

1. **David Evans**, "How many times have I told you? We're not keeping the good news of Jesus under lock and key!"
2. **B. Neil**, "And another thing, Paul: Don't forget to put the spare key back under the mat!"
3. **Peter Donnelly**, "Now I've got the keys – just you try and lock me up again!"

AGM & SSEC COMMITTEE

Apologies: Don Barker, Peter Edwell, Karyn Young

Election of Society Officers & SSEC Committee Members

At the AGM on Sat 6 May 2017 **A/Prof Paul McKechnie** kindly acted as our chairman & returning officer for our annual election. All positions were vacated & nominations were received.

Note: There was a question raised by **Emeritus Professor Edwin Judge**, that the positions of **Treasurer and Secretary** should be held by staff members of Macquarie University in accordance with the Society's constitution. However, Professor Alanna Nobbs (previous President) explained that there was only one person nominated for each of these two positions, namely Karyn Young. Karyn is known to many SSEC members and works a few days each month in the SSEC Office, she is well liked and well known by many people at the University. Karyn Young has also been the appointed SSEC conference co-ordinator for two years, 2016 & 2017. Professor Nobbs indicated that she would support this nomination.

The returning officer then declared that all positions were duly filled, where written nominations had been received.

Our sincere thanks goes to **Dr Peter Edwell**, Treasurer for SSEC. Peter Edwell retired from his elected position in May. His hard work and dedication over many years is greatly appreciated by all Society members.

We extend our appreciation to **Angela Abberton**, who did not seek re-election this year, and who had served on the SSEC committee for three years. Also thanks to **Benjamin Overcash** who did not seek re-election to the committee for this year.

The SSEC Committee is now as follows:

Table 1: SSEC Management Committee 2017-2018

POSITION	NAME
	The following SSEC members have been elected to the Management Committee on 6 May 2017.
PRESIDENT	Dr Chris Forbes
VICE PRESIDENT	Professor Alanna Nobbs
HON. SECRETARY	Karyn Young
TREASURER	Karyn Young
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Elected: Alice Baker, Dr Don Barker, A/Prof Malcolm Choat, Peter Eyland, Dr Lloyd Graham, Lydia Gore-Jones, Leigh Hess, Dr Paul March, Sue Price, Gillian Spalding-Tracey, Dr Gareth Wearne



Image in Lego: **Professor Alanna Nobbs and Karyn Young**. Image supplied by Liam Jensen-Kohl

SECRETARY'S FINANCIAL REPORT AT AGM

This report is repeated here, for those you did not attend the AGM (held at lunchtime at the annual conference) on **Saturday 6 May 2017**.

Secretary's Report for 2016 by Don Barker

(Note: Don gave his apologies, so this report was read out on his behalf, at the AGM by **Alanna Nobbs**).

2016 was an excellent year for SSEC. The year provided a rich array of talks and seminars as well as funding students in their academic endeavours. The extent of SSEC's support of students who are involved in the history of early Christianity can be seen below, which includes: The Tyndale scholarship, the small travel grants, the various SSEC prizes and the Chris Dixon Medal.

As I stated in my report for 2015, SSEC has a very important role to play in investigating the history of early Christianity with its non-sectarian, historical approach, allowing a freedom to investigate this particular area of ancient history with academic rigour. SSEC has had and will continue to have a very important role in the life of this University. Many SSEC members who were and are pursuing research in to the history of Early Christianity and who have been supported by SSEC have won international recognition.

The overall organisation and running of the Society would not be possible without the energetic and enthusiastic efforts of our president, Professor Alanna Nobbs, to whom the Society is deeply indebted. On that note, it is with great sadness that I have to report that on her retirement from Macquarie University, Professor Alanna Nobbs, will not seek election as President for 2017/18. Alanna as President has been the driving force behind the society for the last 30 years. Her enthusiasm and scholarly ability has made SSEC what it is today. On behalf of SSEC I would like to thank Alanna for her tireless commitment to the Society; for her drive and enthusiasm of the core purposes of SSEC and managing SSEC's journey through the jungle of bureaucracy.

SSEC is indebted to Karyn Young, Lyn Kidson, Lloyd Graham and Lydia Gore-Jones who handle much of the day to day business of SSEC. A big thank you also is due to Peter Edwell, our Treasurer who keeps a keen eye on our finances, and a very great thank you to our volunteers who willingly do so many odd jobs for the Society. Also a huge thank you to BJ Eyland who has with great enthusiasm worked on the electronic side of SSEC, up-dating and up-loading all sorts of information and brochures onto our web-site and along with Alice Baker and Gillian Stracey manage the SSEC Facebook site.

Thanks, also, are due to our committee members who give up their time to attend meetings and help with the running of seminars and particularly this Conference. You have all made 2016 a very successful year for SSEC. Finally, a big thank you to all members of SSEC, you have enabled through your membership of the Society to make a valuable contribution to the study of early Christianity.

On behalf of SSEC, I would like to thank all the speakers who so willingly present outstanding papers at our seminars and conferences on a completely voluntary basis.

SSEC 2016 Sessions

Tuesday 5 April 2016 7:05pm SSEC Lecture Speaker: **Dr Paul W. Barnett** (Honorary Fellow Macquarie) Topic: Paul in Rome: some questions.

SSEC annual Conference

Thursday 5 May 2016 7:05pm SSEC Annual Conference Curtain Raiser. Two Speakers as follows: **Dr Alan Cadwallader** (Australian Catholic University, SSEC Visiting Fellow 2016) with his topic: Parables, politics and place: who controls land and sea in Mark's Gospel?

and **Rosemary Canavan** (University of Divinity) with her topic: Jesus Clothed in Purple - or Scarlet.

Saturday 7 May 2016 Sessions 9:00am -4:45pm SSEC Annual Day Conference "Everyday Life in the Time of Jesus of Nazareth"

- **Professor Cilliers Breytenbach** (Humboldt University of Berlin) Distinguished International Speaker, The Making of Mark, e.g. Daemons and the Spirit in 3:20-35,
- **Dr Alan Cadwallader** (Australian Catholic University), SSEC Visiting Fellow 2016, Sometimes one word makes a world of difference: rethinking the origins of Mark's Gospel,
- **Dr Deslee Campbell** (an early Christian and Jewish Studies specialist), Synagogues Jesus Knew?
- **Dr John Dickson** (PhD Graduate and Honorary Associate Macquarie University), Remembering Stuff: Memory and Education in the Time of Jesus,
- **Dr Chris Forbes** (Macquarie University), Jesus and First-Century Ideas of Purity,
- **Dr Louise Gosbell** (PhD Ancient History, Macquarie University and Faculty, Mary Andrews College) The woman with the Flow of Blood (Mark 5:25-34): An Example of a 'Disabled' Woman in Antiquity,
- **Associate Prof Robert McIver** (Avondale Seminary) The Traditions about Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels: Folklore or Collective Memory?

Wednesday 24 August 2016 7:05pm A Coptic Evening Speaker: **Professor Heike Behlmer** (Goettingen University), Topic: The Copts in Modern Detective Fiction.

Friday 26 August 2016 Lunchtime 1:00pm to 2:30pm, SSEC Lunchtime Lecture, Speaker: **Professor Peter Arzt-Grabner** (Salzburg University, Austria and Faculty of Arts visiting Research Fellow), Topic: Birth, Marriage, and the Census in Early Christianity and the papyri.

Thursday 1 September 2016 7:05pm SSEC Lecture Speaker: **Dr John Shannahan** (PhD graduate Macquarie Uni), Topic: Coins and Society in the Holy Land under the Persians.

Thursday 29 September 2016 7:05pm SSEC Lecture Speaker: **Associate Professor Mark Reasoner** (Marian University, Indiana), Topic: 'Torn between Two Scholars': The New Testament and the History of Religions at Macquarie University and the University of Chicago. Brought to Australia by Sydney College of Divinity.

Wednesday 19 October 2016 7:05pm SSEC Lecture Speaker: **Dr Rachel Yuen-Collingridge**, (the new SSEC sponsored Postdoctoral Fellow in Early Christianity), Project Topic: Authority and Artefact: Magic, Scripture and Administration in papyrus manuscripts from Graeco-Roman Egypt

Thursday 10 November 2016 7:05pm SSEC End of Year/ Christmas Event Speaker: **Dr Mark Stephens** (Excelsia College), Topic: Jesus on Film.

2016 Committee Members

At the SSEC AGM, held 7 May 2016 the SSEC committee for 2016-2017 were elected as follows: President: Alanna Nobbs; Vice President: Chris Forbes; Secretary: Don Barker, Treasurer: Peter Edwell.

Committee Members: Leigh Hess, Lydia Gore-Jones, Peter Eyland, Malcolm Choat, Gillian Spalding-Stracey, Benjamin Overcash, Angela Abberton, Paul March, Alice Baker and Lloyd Graham.

Tyndale Fellowship

Each year, the Tyndale Travel Grant scholarship is provided by a donation by a SSEC member or members. These annual scholarships, enable students to travel to Cambridge UK, to visit Tyndale House in January each year, in conjunction with the ward of Tyndale house and via special arrangement with Professor Alanna Nobbs. These grants are very worthwhile for the individual students, for SSEC, and for fostering and supporting Macquarie University study and research into Early Christianity. Scholarships or travel grants cover the cost of airfare, transfers, accommodation, library costs, for a few weeks and we are seeking an amount of \$5,000 each student. The grants provide a worthwhile study environment and access to world class libraries, research facilities and/or archaeological sites for research. If you feel that you can assist with a special donation, either anonymously or perhaps in memory of someone, please contact Professor Alanna Nobbs on (02) 9850 8844, or by email to alanna.nobbs@mq.edu.au.

- **Lydia Gore-Jones** (PhD Candidate) was the recipient for January 2016.

SSEC Small Travel Grants

SSEC Postgraduate Travelling Grants. Each year SSEC offers up to 4 travelling grants to members who are also postgraduates enrolled in higher degree work in Ancient History at Macquarie. These are awarded competitively and are worth up to \$500. The

following were recipients of the grants:

- **Benjamin Overcash**: Attended the 28th International Congress of Papyrology.
- **Antonia St Demiana**: travelled to the United States as part of her PhD research.
- **Mark Kulikovskiy** PhD Candidate presented a paper, 'The Reception of 'Truth': A Comparative Study of the Johannine Epistles with Philodemus and Plutarch', at the 2016 international meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL IM), July 3rd -7th.

Patricia Geidans Prize for the best thesis in the Master of Research program in the broad area of Early Christian and Jewish Studies.

- 2016 winner: **Penelope Carpentier**, for her thesis, "The Political Function of the Jerusalem Temple in the Seleucid Era (200-167 BC)". This prize is for \$200.

Chris Dixon Medal

The Chris Dixon Medal is awarded annually for 'the best thesis in early Christian thought and experience', a thesis bringing the light of the ancient world to the modern world. The medal honours the memory of Chris Dixon who received her doctorate posthumously in 2009. The Medal is awarded jointly by the Centre of the History of Christian Thought and Experience (CTE) and the Society of the Study of Early Christianity.

- This year's medal is awarded to **Irene Petrou** for her doctoral thesis entitled 'From North Africa to Byzantium and the New England: Augustine, Maximus and Jonathan Edwards on the meaning and shape of Christian Salvation'.

SSEC Newsletters

Two electronic Newsletters were published in **2016**, Newsletters 83, March 2016 and 84, August 2016. (also sent in a 'clever email' version).

Two articles were published:

- **Braden Marsden**, The end of time: a comparative study of eschatology in the ancient Mediterranean.
- **Don Barker**, Christianity in Egypt in the first three centuries, the beginning: Jews, Gnostics and St Mark.

TREASURER'S FINANCIAL REPORT AT AGM

Financial Report 2016

Note: the chairman of the AGM, **Paul McKecknie**, explained that **Peter Edwell** had given his apologies to the AGM meeting. The accounting/ financial details from the University and bank balances of accounts for the 2016 year will be forwarded to Karyn Young (incoming Secretary/ Treasurer) to prepare the Income/Expenses and the Balance Sheet (assets & liabilities) for 2016 year, in consultation with Peter Edwell. These will be made available for scrutiny of members and will be available at the SSEC office in due course.



PERSONS OF INTEREST & SSEC TRAVEL REPORTS

Report on Two Day Conference | KEN PARRY

Report, by Dr Ken Parry on the conference '**Eastern Christianity and Late Antique Philosophy**', held at Dunmore Lang College, Macquarie University, April 6 – 7, 2017.



Aristotle and Plato: 17th c. wall painting, Great Meteoron Monastery, Greece

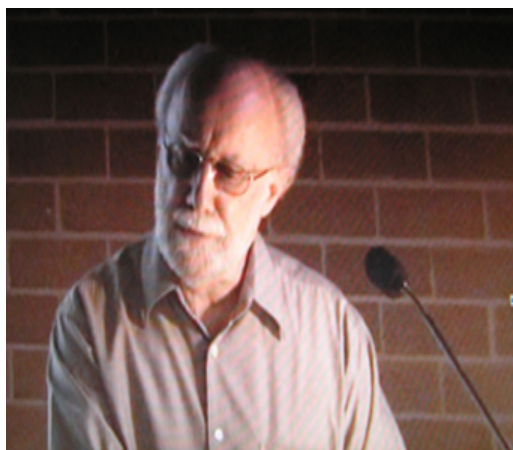
Thanks to funding support from SSEC, the ACRC, and Ancient History, it was possible to hold this free conference of inter-state and international speakers. A total of 35 delegates attended at Dunmore Lang College which provided excellent catering over the two days. It was organised during the visit to Macquarie of **Dr Christophe Erismann**, from the University of Vienna, who was the ACRC visiting research fellow for 2017. Dr Erismann was accompanied by **Dr Elvira Wakelnig** who also gave a conference paper. The purpose of the event was to showcase the current research of Australian scholars working in the field of intellectual

history in late antiquity. It was the first time that many of the speakers had met, so it provided an opportunity to discuss future collaboration and to exchange ideas, and this it did with great success. Several Australian academics have turned their attention in recent years to translating and interpreting Neoplatonic texts, while others have been exploring the interface between Eastern Christianity and Neoplatonism. Until recently the contribution of the Christian East to the engagement with Greek philosophy in late antiquity has not received the attention it deserves. This missing chapter in the history of philosophy is now being written.

The first day began with **Ken Parry** (Macquarie) giving an overview of late ancient philosophy and Eastern Christianity in the Greek and Syrian traditions from the sixth to ninth centuries, particularly in relation to the Neoplatonist Commentators on Aristotle. He was followed by **Christophe Erismann** (Vienna) who discussed the contribution of the sixth century author Theodore of Raithu on the logical concepts of essence and hypostasis. **Bronwen Neil** (Macquarie) then discussed the pagan and Christians traditions of dream interpretation with special reference to Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century. After lunch **Dirk Baltzly** (Tasmania) spoke on political virtues and the goal of likeness to God in Proclus' fifth century commentary on Plato's Republic. **Michael Champion** (ACU) turned his attention to godlikeness and the ordering of knowledge in early Christianity, with a focus on Dorotheus of Gaza from the sixth century. The day concluded with **Vassilis Adrahtas** (NSW) discussing the iconic conceptualisation of history vis-à-vis late Neoplatonic symbolism by John of Damascus in the eighth century.

The second day started with **Elvira Wakelnig** (Vienna) who spoke on the use of late antique philosophical prolegomena by Christian Arabic authors. Discussion of Christian authors writing in Arabic from the early Islamic period has become a notable development in Eastern Christian studies. **Meaghan McEvoy** (Macquarie) followed with a talk on Christian and pagan holy men at the imperial court in the fifth century, drawing attention to the role played by holy men from both sides in the politics of the time. **Raoul Mortley** (Bond) then spoke about the idea of hope in the Christian Neoplatonist Dionysius the Areopagite, that pseudonymous author of the late fifth/early sixth century whose identity remains a mystery. After lunch **Han Baltussen** (Adelaide) looked at Eunapius' lives of the philosophers from the fourth century, and discussed them in relation to the development of Christian hagiographic literature. Finally, **Graeme Miles** (Tasmania) gave an exposition of the Platonic education system as it relates to Proclus' interpretation of Plato's allegory of the cave from the Republic.

The intention is to publish the papers augmented by invited contributors in the book series Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity published by Brill. Ken Parry is the founding editor of the series, with **Malcolm Choat** on the editorial board, so it is very much a Macquarie University initiative. The conference volume will be edited by **Meaghan McEvoy and Ken Parry**.



Ken Parry

TRAVEL REPORTS

Travel Grant Thank-you from **Natalie Mylonas** (HDR)

Earlier this year I was afforded the opportunity to travel to Wellington, NZ to represent Macquarie University and SSEC at the annual conference of the Australasian Society for Classical Studies (ASCS). In my paper I spoke about some gender issues at play in the Syriac Life of Pelagia - which tells the story of the prostitute Pelagia who converts to Christianity and lives the remainder of her life disguised as a eunuch. In particular, I examined the function of Pelagia's eunuch disguise in the narrative by drawing attention to how focalisation is used to characterise the heroine.

I would like to thank SSEC for their generous grant, without which I would not have been able to meet other experts in early Christianity and discuss my research abroad.

PRIZE WINNERS

The **Patricia Geidans Prize** is awarded annually for the best thesis in the Master of Research program in the broad area of Early Christian and Jewish Studies. **Natalie Mylonas** won the Patricia Geidans prize for this year, 2017. This was announced recently. Congratulations to Natalie.



Patricia Geidans, a long serving volunteer and member of SSEC.

TYNDALE TRAVELLING SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

It is with great pleasure that we announce that **Marty Feltham**, is recipient of the Tyndale travel scholarship for this year, for travel in January 2018. The title of his thesis is "A historical and literary analysis of the First Letter to Timothy".

We look forward to a short travel report, from Marty Feltham, after he has travelled next year. This will appear in a future SSEC NEWS.

We are also pleased to announce that SSEC has received a generous donation from a SSEC member, who wishes to remain anonymous. This will assist SSEC in providing this travel grant this year.

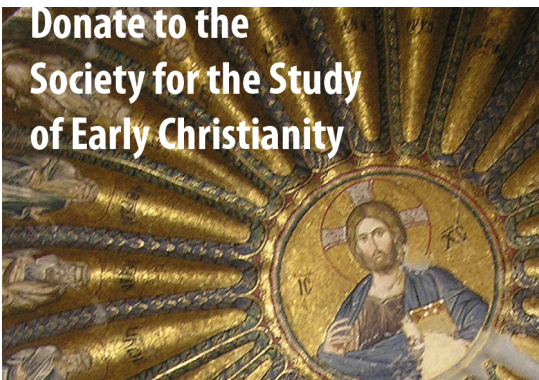


Marty Feltham, Tyndale scholarship. (Marty also gave a paper in May 2017 at the SSEC conference).

SEEKING DONATIONS

TYNDALE HOUSE TRAVEL GRANT FOR FUTURE YEARS

Each year, the Tyndale Travel Grant scholarship is provided by a donation by a SSEC member or members. We are once again seeking support for Tyndale House Travel Grants. These annual scholarships, enable students to travel to Cambridge UK, to visit Tyndale House in January each year, in conjunction with the warden of Tyndale House and via special arrangement with Professor Alanna Nobbs. These grants are very worthwhile for the individual students, for SSEC, and for fostering and supporting Macquarie University study and research into Early Christianity. Scholarships or travel grants cover the cost of airfare, transfers, accommodation, library costs, for a few weeks and we are seeking an amount of \$5,000 each student. The grants provide a worthwhile study environment and access to world class libraries, research facilities and/or archaeological sites for research. If you feel that you can assist with a special donation, either anonymously or perhaps in memory of someone, please contact **Professor Alanna Nobbs** on (02) 9850 8844, or by email to Alanna.Nobbs@mq.edu.au.



Click here for [On-line donations](#)

Macquarie Ancient History Scholarships

There are a number of scholarships in Ancient History, such as:

- The **Macquarie /Tyndale Travelling Scholarship**, which is funded by SSEC. The closing date will be - **March 2018**. Details will be on the Ancient history website in March 2018.
- The **Sir Asher Joel Foundation Scholarship**. For further information gil.davis@mq.edu.au

Further details on applying for these and other Ancient History scholarships is on the ancient history website.

- Which is [Link to Ancient History Scholarships](#)

Other Macquarie Uni Scholarship & Prizes for 2017

Note: the University is undergoing a review of the currently published Conditions of Award for all 2017 Scholarships in view of these changes. Conditions of Award will be updated as soon as possible on the website.

- Which is [Link to 2017 Scholarships & prizes](#)

Higher Degree Research Scholarships

Note: for recipients, if they are postgrad (HDR) students they must fill in an OSR (off site report) before they go and also need to consult one of the departmental administrators before they go. Further details on the website.

- Which is [Link to Higher Degree Research Scholarships](#)

Prizes include (among others):

- **Patricia Geidans Prize** for the best thesis in the Master of Research program in the broad area of Early Christian and Jewish Studies. Announced above. **Natalie Mylonas** is this year's recipient.
- **Society for the Study of Early Christianity Prize** for the highest achievement in a 200-level Early Christian and Jewish History unit.
- **Society for the Study of Early Christianity Prize for Coptic History** for proficiency in the unit AHPG855 The Art and Archaeology of Coptic Monasticism or AHPG856 Egypt in the First Millennium.

When we know the winners of these Early Christianity prizes, we will let you know in future newsletters.



Professor Bronwen Neil

SSEC ARTICLES

Disclaimer by the editors "The Society takes no position on the intellectual content of papers and articles."

Editors Note: this paper will be published shortly elsewhere. Professor Neil has graciously agreed that we can include it in this condensed version in our SSEC NEWS. It is normal practice for the editor to remove all foot notes in our Newsletters.

Clash of the Apostles: "Mani vs the Heir of Peter, Leo the Great" Bronwen Neil, (Macquarie University)

The followers of Mani, self-proclaimed apostle and incarnation of the Paraclete, were first discovered in Rome in the time of Pope Anastasius (399-401/2). Manichees posed a particular threat to the Christian community in Rome because they challenged it from within, by claiming to be Christians and participating in mainstream worship. Their ascetic regime differed from mainstream Roman Christian practices, with fasting on Sundays and abstinence from the Eucharistic sacrament of the cup enjoined upon its followers. They abstained from meat and wine at all times, and most significantly, perhaps, they rejected procreation. Pope Leo I's investigation into Manicheism in Rome is a good example of a bishop's use of the rhetoric of social exclusion – backed by a successful appeal to imperial authority – to deal with a religious dispute, that caused by the influx of Manichees to the city of Rome. It is argued here that the letter form was crucial for circulating this rhetoric, not just to recipients of the original letters but later to the whole western church, which Leo sought to govern as heir of the apostle Peter.

We will examine and compare two of Leo's letters: Letter 7 on the Manichees, and Letter 15 on the Priscillianists, whom he likened to the Manichees.

Manichees in Rome in the 420s-440s

Leo, elected to the papal throne in 440, cut his teeth as a scourge of heretics on the controversy caused by the return of Pelagian clergy to Italy in the 430s. The language and ideas that he deployed to vilify them, to ostracise them from other Christians, and to isolate their leaders, were to prove equally applicable in the next decade to Manichees. In his response to the Manichees, as in his response to Pelagian theology, Leo was strongly influenced by Augustine. Indeed, many Manichees from North Africa sought refuge in Rome in the years following the Vandal occupation of their homeland. In 443, Leo launched a campaign against the Manichees in Rome which lasted for eighteen months. In a climate of social instability the violent suppression of dissenters or heretics served the important social functions of group delineation and reinforcement of the leader's authority, helping 'to reaffirm and reinforce the commitment of group members to the ideals of the community', as Maier notes in his social-anthropological study of the Manichaean investigation at Rome. Rome in the 440s was certainly in a state of social flux, with external threats to urban stability pressing on all sides. The North African settlement of the Vandals was uncomfortably close, allowing Gaiseric to continue his attacks on Sicily, and Attila and his forces were drawing near to Rome from the north.

In late 443, Leo convoked a commission over which he presided, in the presence of bishops, members of the Senate and other aristocracy, using state laws that had been instituted to deal with the threat in 425 during the pontificate of Celestine. In that year an imperial edict expelled 'Manichaean heretics or schismatics or astrologers and every sect opposed to the Catholics' from the city of Rome. Almost 20 years later, Leo sought to bring to trial several members of the highest echelon in the sect, the 'Elect' or 'Chosen Ones' (serm. 16.4). On the basis of the findings of these trials, he portrays the Manichees as insidious perverts preying on the young and unwary with his allusion to the confession of several of the Elect concerning a religious ritual involving sex with a minor (serm. 16.4). Given that such 'confessions' may well have been extracted under torture as they were later in the episcopacy of Pope Hormisdas (514-23), it is impossible to assess the truth of this allegation. Such an act would certainly have

been at odds with the Manichees' alleged distaste for the body and the act of procreation. Allegations of sexual immorality were also made against Manichees in North Africa where a similar trial was staged under the tribune Ursus between 421 and 428. Augustine, however, admitted that he witnessed no such thing as a Hearer of the sect.

In spite of devoting 18 months to the persecution of Manicheism in Rome, Leo wrote only one letter on the subject, Letter 7 to the bishops of Italy, sent on 30 January 444. In this letter he proudly announced that the sect had been extinguished in Rome and restrained by his authority and judgement, and warned the bishops to be vigilant lest its shady roots be seeded among them. Leo too encouraged the laity and clergy in Rome and all of Italy to search out and denounce suspected Manichees. Lay people were encouraged to do so by relaxation of the normal penalties for false denunciations, meaning that no contrary law suit could be brought against the accusers with stiff penalties if their accusation was found to be false. Christians were instructed to inform the authorities of places where Manichees held private meetings, and to avoid all contact with them. They were especially advised to avoid allowing them into their houses, where unsuspecting Christian women had fallen prey to their fanciful stories. Some opportunities were given for penance and repentance, but Leo's emphasis was on punishment rather than reconciliation. Prosper claims that Leo's investigation in Rome had salutary effects for the whole world since the Manichees made confessions naming the members of other urban networks of teachers, bishops and priests. Leo's zeal was said to have inspired many eastern clerics, among them probably Theodoret of Cyrrhus who wrote to Leo to congratulate him on his success in Rome.

Leo's efforts were backed by the emperors Valentinian III and Theodosius, who issued a constitution on 19 June 445, declaring Manicheism a public crime with severe penalties. Its adherents were to be exiled and their books burnt. Those identified as Manichees were forbidden to enrol for military service, to live in cities, to receive or leave inheritances. These were the same penalties applied to others found guilty of sacrilege: 'For nothing seems to be too severe to be decreed against those persons whose incestuous perversity in the name of religion commits deeds that are unknown and shameful even in brothels.'

Other letters of the heirs of St Peter

Leo's idea of the bishop of Rome's responsibility as the heir of St Peter has been widely recognised as greater than his predecessor's but in the same trajectory as certain fourth- and fifth-century bishops of Rome, especially Damasus and Innocent, who issued letters of instruction on matters of clerical discipline which were later taken up as having universal application and became known as decretals.

Innocent, like Leo, sought also to regulate lay behaviour in some areas which had previously been matters of civil law, such as the right to remarry when one's spouse was taken in captivity by barbarians. Leo issued several letters of similar ilk, recommending pastoral flexibility to other bishops in times of increasing uncertainty, caused by the invasions of Vandals and other Gothic leaders into previously Roman territory. An example is his Letter 167 to Bishop Rusticus of Narbonne, which advised giving people the benefit of the doubt on questions of baptism due to the displacement caused by war. When it was impossible to know whether a candidate for baptism had been previously baptised, whether into the Homoian faith or the Catholic faith or neither, Leo recommended that Catholic baptism be accorded to those who sought it. The implementation of Leo's expansive concept of the law would not have been possible without the wide circulation of his written replies to bishops who sought his advice. In this sense the letter form enabled the development of canon law beyond the canons of local synods, Roman synods or ecumenical councils. While Leo's letter on the Manichees did not obtain the status of decretal, his letter to Turibius of Astorga on the related problem of the Priscillianists did.



Leo's campaign against Manichaeism was not the only occasion when he sought to influence household religious practices, as we see in relation to Leo's condemnation of Priscillianists in Spain. Named after its founder, Priscillian, bishop of Avila (381CE), the sect originated in Spain during the 380s. The new emperor and zealous defender of the faith, Magnus Maximus, had Priscillian executed, together with several of his followers, on charges of sorcery. Even orthodox bishops censured the emperor's radical action at the time. Priscillianism refused to be put down, however, and the cult of its 'martyrs' added to its growing appeal in Spain. Orosius of Braga addressed Augustine of Hippo on the matter in the early fifth century in his work *Commonitorium*. In the 440s Priscillianism resurfaced in the Iberian peninsula, causing the bishop of Astorga to consult Leo for advice.

In 447 Turibius of Astorga wrote to Leo, describing and condemning Priscillianism. Turibius's dossier included an account of the heresy's major deviations in sixteen points, a tract and a personal letter. The documents were delivered to Leo by Turibius's deacon for endorsement. Followers of Priscillian continued to flourish especially in Galicia in the 390s until the condemnation of their practices at the Synod of Toledo in 400. However they seem to have survived underground until the 440s when they appear again in their former stronghold of Galicia, having been allowed to flourish free from imperial persecution due to the Suevi and Vandal domination of the region. The remote and mountainous province of Galicia had fallen under the control of the Suevi after the Vandals and Alans had passed through Spain on their way to settlement in North Africa. Our main source for these events is the *Chronicle of Bishop Hydatius*, whom Leo recommends as eager to summon a Galician council to condemn the heresy.

Leo's response to Turibius, dated 21 July 447, is a commentary upon the sixteen points of Priscillianist error raised in Turibius's tract. Leo rejected their Trinitarian beliefs, their Christology, their fasting regime, their beliefs about the relationship between the human soul and the material order and God, and their belief in the devil having substance, that is, an independent existence. Leo again levelled accusations of sexual deviance against them, claiming that they aimed to dissolve the marriage bond by rejecting procreation. In the context of the recent criminal persecution of the Manichees, the severity of Leo's response is not surprising. Priscillianism had already been proscribed by Emperor Honorius in 407, just as Valentinian later outlawed Manicheism in 445. Indeed, Leo likened the Priscillianists to Manichees on several occasions in this letter. They shared with the Manichees their belief in the consubstantiality of the human and divine — namely that the human soul is made of divine substance —, their belief in the independent existence of evil, and their negative disposition toward human physicality and sexuality. His portrait of their theological and sacramental commonalities stretches the facts: however, Leo's Letter 15 was not aimed at giving an accurate précis of their beliefs, but at terminating their existence as a group.

Conclusions

While Leo certainly exaggerated the similarities between Priscillianism and Manicheism, the Priscillianists shared with Manichees certain doctrines and rituals that were unorthodox, such as the Sunday fast, and a rejection of marriage and procreation. In spite of these similarities, Schipper and van Oort rightly conclude that Priscillianism was not a true heresy, but rather 'a dissident movement within the Catholic Church, marked by a strong preference for asceticism and esotericism.' Priscillian himself was keen to disavow the 'pseudo-bishops and the Manichees'. This made no impression on Leo the Great, however. The slightest trace of Manicheism was enough for him to label a marginal group like the Priscillianists as heterodox and therefore illegal. Leo managed to have his strictures enforced by imperial law, but his policy of exclusion of Manichees was not irreversible: they could redeem themselves if they informed on their leaders and co-religionists. The rhetoric of vilification in Leo's letters was, it seems, quite persuasive, when combined with religious, social and legal proscriptions. Both letters laid the ground for the inquisitions of the Middle Ages.

SSEC CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2017			
DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	COST
<p>WED 27 SEPT 2017 DAYTIME: VARIOUS BETWEEN 11:00AM TO SAY 3:00PM</p>	<p>Daytime Lecture Speaker: Professor Darrell L. Bock (Dallas) Topic: <i>What about those Other Gospels? Thinking through the "Missing" Gospels</i></p>  <p>Professor Bock is Dallas Theological Seminary Executive Director of Cultural Engagement and Senior Research Professor of New Testament Studies. He is brought to Australia courtesy of SCD (Sydney College of Divinity) SSEC Members are invited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ coffee 11:00am (gold coin donation) ■ talk and questions 11:30am -12:45pm ■ lunch at Staff Cafe 1:00pm -2:00pm please RSVP ■ Postgraduates especially welcome <p>RSVP to SSEC@mq.edu.au</p>	<p>Various venues Possibly Seminar Room (XB5) level 3, room 321 for Coffee before talk, then talk & questions. Possibly Staff Cafe for Lunch. (Post grads esp welcome, but RSVP is required.)</p>	<p>Various costs - gold coin donation for Coffee at 11:00am, - free public talk & questions. - Lunch at own cost. Postgrads esp welcome but RSVP is required to SSEC@mq.edu.au</p>
<p>TUES 24 OCT 2017 7:05PM</p>	<p>SSEC Evening Lecture Speaker: Dr David Starling (Morling College) Head of Bible and Theology, Lecturer in New Testament BA, DipEd, MA, BTh, BMin, PhD Topic: <i>Putting on the New Self: The Theatrical Background of a New Testament Metaphor</i></p> 	<p>Museum of Ancient Cultures Seminar Room (XB5) level 3, room 321</p>	<p>members \$5 alumni \$7 non members \$8</p>
<p>WED 8 NOVEMBER 2017 7:05PM</p>	<p>SSEC Christmas Event & Book Launch Speaker: Associate Professor Ian Young. PhD (Sydney), BA (Sydney), Chair of Department, Sydney University, Topic: <i>Into the Lion's Den: Daring to Be Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Old Greek</i></p>	<p>Museum of Ancient Cultures Seminar Room (XB5) level 3, room 321</p>	<p>members \$5 alumni \$8 non members \$10</p>



Book launch for the third (and final) volume in a series edited by Mark Harding and Alanna Nobbs. Its called 'Into All the World' and has contributions by our new President, Chris Forbes among many other SSEC friends and supporters.

Parking : Macquarie University enforces **parking charges up to 8:00pm daily**. Parking charges are \$10 for 1 hour, \$15 for 3 hours, **\$40 all day** (or for more than 4 hours). **Confirmed rates for 2017**. As seminars start at 7:05pm, attendees need only pay for one hour. We suggest public transport, buses or train to Macquarie University train station.

TBA: To Be Advised. When we hear more, we will let you know. This information will be loaded onto the SSEC events website. Short link is www.mq.edu.au/ssec/events (all in lower case).

FOR YOUR DIARIES 2018

Table 2: SSEC Calendar of Events for Future Year 2018

SSEC CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2018			
DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	COST
THURS 3 MAY 2018 7:05PM	<p>Conference Curtain Raiser</p> <p>Theme: Jesus' Inner Circle: Peter, James and John</p> <p>Speakers: Professor Troy W. Martin (St Xaviers Chicago) plus one other speaker (TBA)</p>	<p>Possibly Museum of Ancient Cultures Seminar Room (XB5) level 3</p>	<p>members \$5 alumni \$7 non members \$8</p>
SAT 5 MAY 2018 DAY TIME	<p>SSEC Annual Day Conference</p> <p>Theme: Jesus' Inner Circle: Peter, James and John</p> <p>Speakers: Professor Troy W. Martin (St Xaviers Chicago). Professor Martin is the 2018 SSEC visiting fellow.</p> <p>We usually have seven great international speakers. At this stage, we are still planning this great event.</p>	TBA	TBA

SSEC ANNUAL DAY CONFERENCE 2018

THEME | Jesus' Inner Circle: Peter, James and John

Dates for your diary:

- Thursday 3 May 2018 - Conference Curtain Raiser
- Sat 5 May 2018 - Annual SSEC Day Conference

Keynote Speaker: **Professor Troy W. Martin** (St Xaviers Chicago). Professor Martin is the **2018 SSEC visiting fellow**.



Professor Troy W. Martin (St Xaviers Chicago)

See details above for dates for Day Conference and Conference Curtain Raiser. We usually have seven great international speakers. At this stage, we are still planning this great event.

CALL FOR PAPERS | by 1 November 2017

Papers are normally given by staff at Macquarie University or comparable institutions, or senior postgraduates.

If you wish to speak at our annual event, and you have a paper on the theme, Jesus' Inner Circle: Peter, James and John, then please supply **your name, bio, photo and an abstract** to the SSEC conference Sub-committee for their consideration.

This should be sent to SSEC@mq.edu.au, by Wednesday 1 November 2017. The committee will let you know shortly afterward.

Note: The SSEC website has a number of past details on previous topics and speakers. Photos, abstracts and Bios are also listed between 2011 to 2017 (inclusive). **"The unique emphasis of our Society is one of history, the study of Early Christianity in its Jewish and Graeco-Roman setting."**

Notice of SSEC Committee meeting:

The next **SSEC committee meeting** will held on **Tuesday 24 October 2017 at 3:30pm**, agenda and venue will be advised in due course. Further details contact: SSEC@mq.edu.au

Notice for SSEC membership Renewals:

Membership renewals are in February/March each year. If you have overlooked your payment, then please print out a membership renewal form and return to the address on the form. Membership rates have not increased. Download a form. [SSEC Renewal Membership Form](#). Note: The university Cashier insists on a paper form, but we are happy to print it for you if you send a signed copy to us via email: SSEC@mq.edu.au

NON-SSEC EVENTS: Events in ancient history of interest to members

Department of Ancient History Seminars - Session 2

The convener these session for Session 2 is **Dr Gil Davis**, please refer the ACRC (Australian Cultures Research Centre) website for further details. These seminars are also listed on the MAHA website. See below.

MAHA : Macquarie Ancient History Association

Short Link: <http://www.maha.ancienthistory.com.au/>

MALS : Macquarie Ancient Language School 2018

Summer Week 2018: 8–12 January

Winter Week 2018: 9–13 July

Notice MALS **new website** at URL at <http://mals.org.au/>

The Australian Centre for Egyptology (ACE)

Short Link: www.egyptology.mq.edu.au

or email enquiries to :egypt@mq.edu.au

FINAL NOTICES:

SSEC NEWS: is a digital newsletter sent by email to SSEC members, donors, supporters, university colleagues. It is a major marketing tool to the general public and to the wider community, who are encouraged to attend our public lectures and events.

Editor: **Peter Eyland**,
Newsletter layout, copy & Website: **BJ Eyland**,
(For suggestions or content email BJ on bjeyland@optusnet.com.au)

SSEC Conference coordinator: **Karyn Young**.

For further information about the Society for the Study of Early Christianity, to update your contact details or to subscribe to the "SSEC NEWS" email" contact: SSEC@mq.edu.au

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