

CALL FOR PAPERS: Workshop on Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Late Antiquity at the Oxford Patristics Conference, 19-24 August 2019

We call for papers that investigate modes of knowing and attempts at ordering/organizing knowledge in Christian communities in diverse linguistic and cultural traditions (including Latin, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopic) for the period 100-850 CE in relation to three themes: (i) contemporary theological, philosophical, medical and rhetorical discourses; (ii) institutional structures (of empire, education and catechesis, liturgy, church, holy experts); (iii) and the materiality and embodied social practices of early Christianity (relics, sacred texts, asceticism, pilgrimage, liturgies). We are also interested in papers that ask how this construction of late antique Christian epistemologies might inform modern theological reflection on Christian traditions engaging with modernity. The aim of this call for papers is to build upon and further the recent interest in outlining the lineaments of “late ancient knowing” from a variety of angles. Some of these are well established, such as the anthological and archival impulse evident in the way late ancient texts relate to older texts, but other aspects of this topic remain understudied, particularly those that involve material culture and embodied experience. Papers may be general or specific in scope and may employ any theoretical or methodological approach appropriate to the subject matter.

A team of researchers at Australian Catholic University is currently in the midst of a 5-year research program under the title “Modes of Knowing and the Ordering of Knowledge in Early Christianity” (2017-2021; Chief Investigators: Lewis Ayres, Michael Champion, Matthew Crawford, Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, Jane Heath), and at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society in May 2018, a separate initiative, led by Jeremiah Coogan and Philip Michael Forness, resulted in three sessions of papers on the theme “Organizing Knowledge in Late Antiquity.” We have decided to combine our efforts to sponsor one or more workshops at Oxford on this topic and are circulating a call for papers now in order to allow us time to vet the abstracts and submit the workshop(s) prior to the Oxford submission deadline of 31 December 2018. Depending on the size of the response we will consider putting together multiple workshops on various topics that would fit within this overarching theme. To make sure that we have sufficient lead time, we are asking for interested persons to send their abstracts to modesofknowingoxford2019@gmail.com by 31 August 2018. We will make a decision about which papers to include in the workshop(s) by 31 October 2018. Those persons whose papers we do not select would of course then be free to submit their proposals directly to the Oxford call for papers themselves and should have sufficient time to do so.