Coming Back to Life
Performance, Memory, and Cognition in the Ancient Mediterranean

McGill University and Concordia University
8–11 May 2014
Memnon Pietà
Attic red-figure cup (Louvre G-115) depicting Eos with the body of Memnon
Signed by Douris (painter) and Kalliades (potter)
Santa Maria di Capua, Italy
490–480 BCE
COMING BACK TO LIFE
performance, memory, and cognition in the ancient mediterranean
McGill University and Concordia University • 8–11 May 2014
The lines between death and life were neither fixed nor finite to the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean. For most, death was a passageway into a new and uncertain existence. The dead were not so much extinguished as understood to be elsewhere, and many asserted the potential of the deceased’s ongoing agency among the living. Even for those more sceptical of an afterlife, notions of coming back to life provided a framework in which to conceptualise social, cultural, religious, and even political structures.

How might the dead come back to life? In what ways, and through what means, can the dead continue to exercise agency among the living? What does it mean for that which is past—an individual or institution—to linger in the present? This four-day research colloquium aims to develop a greater understanding of how answers to questions like these informed the lives and practices of the peoples of the ancient Mediterranean.

Our research efforts will be oriented around the fixed yet interrelated categories of performance, memory, and cognition. Antique ideas of coming back to life correlate with these categories in various ways—through funerary rites and incantations, memorial sites and civic festivals, narratives and afterlife ideals. Accordingly, antique ideas of coming back to life point toward a matrix in which both the living and the dead have certain performative, mnemonic, and/or cognitive abilities that, in various ways, enable revivification. With these categories firmly in view, this colloquium will explore how antique communities configured, tested, and actualised the boundaries between mortality and immortality.

Co-Organisers
Ellen B. Aitken, McGill University
Frederick S. Tappenden, McGill University
Carly Daniel-Hughes, Concordia University

With collaboration from
Amy Buckland, McGill University Library
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The Association of Ancient Historians
and Professor Michael P. Fronda

The Classical Association of Canada
and Professor Hans Beck
Schedule

Thursday, 8 May 2014
All sessions will be at McGill University, William and Henry Birks Building, 3520 University Street

10.00–10.30 Gathering and Registration
Birks Foyer

10.30–11.30 Welcome, Introductions, and General Information
Birks 111

11.30–12.30 Lunch
Birks Foyer

12.30–3.00 I: Overcoming Death through Memory, Mourning, and Metaphor
Birks 111

Jane Francis (Concordia University), Presiding

Valerie M. Hope (Open University)
Living with the Dead: Display and Denial in Roman Grief

Angela Standhartinger (Philipps-Universität Marburg)
Bringing Back to Life: Laments and the Origin of the So-Called Words of Institution

Jeffery A. Keiser (McGill University)
‘Death is swallowed up in victory’: Baptism, Resurrection, and Paul’s Prophetic Cento in 1 Corinthians 15:54–55

Lynn Kozak (McGill University)
Response

Discussion (45 minutes)

3.00–3.45 Refreshment Break
Birks Foyer
3.45–5.45  
**II: Narration, Knowledge, and Performance of Life after Death**  
Birks 111

Meredith Warren (University of Ottawa), Presiding

Frances Flannery (James Madison University)  
*Talitha Qum! : An Exploration of Early Jewish and Early Christian Appropriation of Imagery from the Asklepios Cult*

Katharina Waldner (Universität Erfurt)  
*Revivification of the Dead in Pagan Religion: Narratives as Hubris, Miracles, and Fictions*

Ian H. Henderson (McGill University)  
*Response*

Discussion (45 minutes)

6.45–9.00  
**Dinner**  
Restaurant Laloux, 250 Pine Avenue East

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**Friday, 9 May 2014**

All sessions will be at McGill University, William and Henry Birks Building, 3520 University Street

8.30–9.15  
**Gathering and Breakfast**  
Birks Foyer

9.15–11.45  
**III: Conceptualising the Living Dead**  
Birks 111

Cecily J. Hilsdale (McGill University), Presiding

Hugo Lundhaug (Universitetet i Oslo)  
*‘Tell me what shall arise’: Conflicting Notions of the Resurrection Body in Coptic Egypt*

Frederick S. Tappenden (McGill University)  
*Thinking of Paul Thinking of Resurrection: Early Christian Creativity in Cognitive Perspective*
Judith H. Newman (University of Toronto)  
*Overcoming Death through the Living Voice of the Teacher*

André Gagné (Concordia University)  
*Response*

Discussion (45 minutes)

11.45–12.45  
**Lunch**  
Birks Foyer

12.45–2.30  
**IV: Gender, Chastity, and the Permeability of the Immortal**  
Birks 111

Fred S. Tappenden (McGill University), Presiding

E. Meaghan Matheson (Concordia University)  
*Eve and Norea: The (Re)Generation of the Female Spiritual Principle in the Hypostasis of the Archons*

Carly Daniel-Hughes (Concordia University)  
*‘Monogamy Claims You for Itself’: Tertullian on Sexual Chastity and the Resurrection of the Flesh*

Gerbern Oegema (McGill University)  
*Response*

Discussion (30 minutes)

2.30–3.15  
**Refreshment Break**  
Birks Foyer

3.15–5.00  
**Guided Tour of the Mount Royal Cemetery**  
Off-site

5.00–7.00  
**Dinner**  
Thomson House, McGill University
7.00–9.00  V: Keynote Address
Birks Heritage Chapel

Ellen Aitken (McGill University), Presiding

Sarah Iles Johnston (Ohio State University)
Many (Un)Happy Returns: Ancient Greek Revenants and their Modern Counterparts

Reception

Saturday, 10 May 2014
All sessions will be at Concordia University, Samuel Bronfman Building, 1590 Dr. Penfield

8.45–9.30  Gathering and Breakfast
Bronfman Atrium

9.30–12.00  VI: Identifying with the Living Dead
Bronfman Atrium

Patricia G. Kirkpatrick (McGill University), Presiding

Stéphanie Machabée (McGill University)
Life and Death, Birth and Abortion: Confession and Denial in The Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne

David L. Eastman (Ohio Wesleyan University)
Death, Resurrection, and Legitimacy in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles

Eliza Rosenberg (McGill University)
Weddings and the Return to Life in the Book of Revelation

Lorenzo DiTommaso (Concordia University)
Response

Discussion (45 minutes)

12.00–1.00  Lunch
Bronfman Atrium
1.00–2.30  Guided Tour of the Mediterranean Archaeology Exhibit  
Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, 1380 Sherbrooke Street West

2.30–3.30  VII: Poster Session and Refreshments  
Bronfman Atrium

Reza Assasi (McGill University)  
*Mithraism Revisited*

Taylor Baruchel (Concordia University)  
*Remembering the Emperor: Augustus’ Res Gestae and the Roman Cityscape*

Nicola Hayward (McGill University)  
*The Use of Funerary Art for Commemorating Social Identity: The Case of the Via Latina’s Samaritan Woman*

Sandra Hlavenka (Concordia University)  
*The Ascension of the Soul in the Apocryphon of John and Origen of Alexandria*

Young-ho Jang (McGill University)  
*Living in God’s New House: Being “In Christ” and the Roman Villa Phenomenon*

Bradley N. Rice (McGill University)  
*The Jesus of Many Faces: Polymorphy as Resurrection in the Acts of Peter*

Aaron Ricker (McGill University)  
*Letters from Beyond: The Haunting Business of Epistolary Parousia*

3.30–6.00  VIII: Cultural Revenants in Story, Spectacle, and Dress  
Bronfman Atrium

Carly Daniel-Hughes (Concordia University), Presiding

Meredith Warren (University of Ottawa)  
*Equal to God: Jesus’ Crucifixion and Sacrificial Scheintod*

Marla MacDonald (McGill University)  
*Embodied Memory and Ancient Athletics: Theatricalizing the Dead in First Corinthians*

Kelly Olson (University of Western Ontario)  
*Resurrection And Rebirth: The Antonine Toga*
Melanie Racette-Campbell (Concordia University)

Response

Discussion (45 minutes)

6.00–8.30  Dinner
Various Restaurants (see sign-up sheets)

Sunday, 11 May 2014
All sessions will be at Concordia University, Samuel Bronfman Building, 1590 Dr. Penfield

8.45–9.30  Gathering and Breakfast
Bronfman Atrium

9.30–12.00  IX: The Matter of Life after Death
Bronfman Atrium

Jeffery A. Keiser (McGill University), Presiding

Roger Beck (University of Toronto)
If so, how? : Representing ‘Coming back to Life’ in the Mysteries of Mithras

Laura S. Nasrallah (Harvard University)
Anagkê and Material Transformation at Corinth

Michael Peppard (Fordham University)

Shayna Sheinfeld (McGill University)
Response

Discussion (45 minutes)

12.00–1.00  Lunch
Bronfman Atrium
1.00–2.30  
X: Round-Table Discussion and Concluding Remarks  
Bronfman Atrium  

Ellen B. Aitken (McGill University), Presiding  
Roger Beck (University of Toronto), Panellist  
Valerie Hope (Open University), Panellist  
Angela Standhartinger (Philipps-Universität Marburg), Panellist  
Frederick S. Tappenden (McGill University), Panellist  

2.30  Departure
Abstracts

Reza Assasi (McGill University)

*Mithraism Revisited*

The modern term ‘Mithraism’ replaced the terms ‘the mysteries of Mithras’ or ‘the mysteries of Persians’ in antiquity. ‘Mithras’ is the name of the Indo-Iranian god ‘Mithra’, adopted into Greek. Because of the secret nature of this cult in Roman antiquity, almost no considerable written narratives or theology from the religion survive, but fortunately hundreds of materials related to Mithraism have been preserved. The majority of the research on Roman Mithraism focuses on interpreting the physical evidence, while the definition of Roman Mithraism remains problematic and controversial. Despite the fact that the Romans believed in an Iranian origin for this cult, finding its origins has been one of the controversies among 20th century scholars. In this paper the author suggests how a particular symbol in some Mithraic artifacts is related to a group of stars visible in the northern hemisphere close to the north ecliptic pole. The author suggests the constellation formed by this group relate to Mithraic iconography. The result suggests that a series of symbols can reveal a code for better understanding Iranian, and Roman Mithraic myths and their early connections. The author also demonstrates the footprint of the early Christian art and symbolism in the Roman Mithraic iconography. This research is an original contribution to the field that represents a step towards revising former theories on Mithraism.

Taylor Baruchel (Concordia University)

*Remembering the Emperor: Augustus’ Res Gestae and the Roman Cityscape*

Coming to power during a time of immense civil discord, the Emperor Augustus fashioned an empire out of the shambles of the Republic. In so doing he redefined political norms to justify the consolidation of power into his hands so that Rome could flourish. To this end Augustus implemented a program of cultural renewal that focused on the revitalization of the religion, customs and honour of the Roman people. Viewed as the culmination of this program, the Res Gestae Divi Augusti (Achievements of the Divine Augustus)—originally inscribed on bronze pillars outside of the Emperor Augustus’ mausoleum on the Campus Martius—provides a self-portrait of Rome’s first emperor as he wished his achievements to be remembered. This paper examines how literature and material culture converge in this monument and how the emperor’s self-fashioning led to his legacy being enshrined in the collective memory of the Roman people.
Roger Beck (University of Toronto)

If so, how? : Representing ‘Coming back to Life’ in the Mysteries of Mithras

There is good evidence, both literary (Porphyry’s essay, On the Cave of the Nymphs) and archaeological (the design and furnishing of excavated mithraea) that the concept of the “descent and return of souls” figured prominently in the Mysteries of Mithras. My paper will explore how this concept was understood and represented, particularly in ritual action. Some caveats: (1) The concept was not necessarily an article of faith to Mithraists throughout the empire (universally binding doctrine being alien to the mystery cults, as to all forms of ancient paganism). (2) Although Mithraic belief in, and ritual re-enactment of, the “descent and return of souls” can be readily demonstrated, the idea of repeated cycles of this soul journey is not a necessary concomitant and would have to be established separately.

Carly Daniel-Hughes (Concordia University)

“Monogamy Claims You for Itself”: Tertullian on Sexual Chastity and the Resurrection of the Flesh

Tertullian’s three writings on marriage have long perplexed his modern readers, for in them he turns out not to applaud marital monogamy at all, but to suggest that sexual intercourse and childbearing are ungodly, potentially damning enterprises. This paper reads Tertullian’s three treatises on marriage in light of his soteriology, as registering tensions that emerge in his claim that the fleshly body and soul will endure in the resurrection. My approach follows recent studies of Tertullian that consider how his single-minded focus on the flesh “in all its sexually differentiated messiness and variety” is a consistent theme in his thought. The paper traces Tertullian’s view of salvation of the flesh, and illustrates how his persistent coding of the flesh as feminine contributes to his promotion of “monogamy,” and not as we might expect, virginity, as the figure of the resurrected life. As such, the paper is a modest attempt to draw out how early Christian debates over the nature of the resurrection informed their varying conceptions of social life and religious practice, including sexuality.

David L. Eastman (Ohio Wesleyan University)

Death, Resurrection, and Legitimacy in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles

In Paul’s Areopagus sermon from Acts 17, he asserts that the resurrection of Jesus proved that the man from Nazareth had been appointed by God and would one day judge the world. Unlike many Christian martyrs, whose authority was established by their suffering and deaths, Jesus was believed to be powerful because he had conquered death by coming back to life. Accounts of resurrection also play a key role in establishing legitimacy in several of the early apocryphal acts. This paper will explore how being raised and raising others from the dead function in these texts as a marker of distinction between competing claims to authority among such figures as Peter, Paul, and Simon Magus.
Frances Flannery (James Madison University)

Talitha Qum: An Exploration of Early Jewish and Early Christian Appropriation of Imagery from the Asklepios Cult

Like a few other early Jewish texts, Fourth Ezra employs a motif in which the visionary or dreamer swoons as if to die, receives a healing touch from an angel, and then “stands up” in the dream or at its end, having been strengthened and transformed by the angelic touch. This early Jewish “swoon-touch-stand” formula is exceptional in dreams and visions of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, which only employ the verb “to stand” or “arise” to the action of gods in dreams and visions, and not to those of dreamers or visionaries. This paper argues that the Jewish portrait of the healing angel who strengthens a visionary or dreamer by touch is a selective appropriation and transformation of iconographic and epigraphic depictions of Asklepios, the healing god who appears in dreams to incubants at his temples and who was known for his curative touch as *apiocheir* (“of soothing hand”). As some have maintained, the motif may also have influenced early Christian understandings of Jesus as healer. I explore this suggestion further by using social memory theory to argue that Asklepios imagery contributes to the Markan portrait of Jesus healing a dead child by taking her by the hand and saying “Talitha qum!” or “Little girl, arise / stand up!,” maintaining that she was only sleeping (Mark 5:41).

Nicola Hayward (McGill University)

The Use of Funerary Art for Commemorating Social Identity: The Case of the Via Latina’s Samaritan Woman

The primary objective of my research is to examine the fresco of the Samaritan woman found in the Via Latina catacomb in Rome and its relationship to the tondo ‘portrait’ of a woman painted immediately above it on the arch, in order to understand better early Christian women’s activities, their perceptions of themselves and their relation to their community. How these two frescoes interact with one another must also be considered in light of John 4.1–42, as it is likely the patron knew of the Samaritan woman only from the gospel account. This project argues for the strong plausibility that patron consciously chose the image of the SW and its tondo portrait for her burial chamber and in doing so defined her own social identity and communal memory. The patron’s relationship to the Samaritan woman is expressed through the tondo portrait, which evokes the ancestor masks used by elite Roman families. By appropriating the use of these masks in the form of a tondo, the patron situates herself directly in dialogue with the Samaritan woman through the tondo’s gaze.

Sandra Hlavenka (Concordia University)

The Ascension of the Soul in the Apocryphon of John and Origen of Alexandria

Life after physical death in the Gnostic worldview is portrayed as a return to a divine realm called the Pleroma. The moment of death is viewed as a release from this material world and a reunification with the divine. To achieve this reunification of the soul with its original realm, the
Apocryphon of John depicts a passageway whereby the soul of the deceased escapes evil in part due to an earthly endeavour to gain knowledge of who they are. Knowing one’s self is the key to a continued existence after life but it is by no means the only element. Although this understanding of life after death may seem to be at odds with early Christianity, it echoes similarities found within Origen of Alexandria’s writings on the issues of the soul and its subsequent ascension. Therefore, the Gnostic and Orthodox understanding of the soul and its ascension after death need not be polar opposites but variations of an Ancient Mediterranean concept.

Valerie M. Hope (Open University)
Living with the Dead: Display and Denial in Roman Grief

Devastated by the death of his daughter Tullia, Cicero struggled to assuage his grief. Cicero did all that was expected of an elite man—seeking comfort from friends and philosophy, from reading and writing, from remembering and commemorating—yet to the dismay of his friends he was still unmanly in his grief. This paper will look at the strategies used and available both to express and control grief in the Roman world. How did the bereaved negotiate a new role both for themselves and for the dead? How did they both display and conceal their grief? Grief was both a public performance and a private journey, and, as Cicero discovered, for the bereaved the tensions between public and private could be an emotional and practical minefield. Focusing on evidence from the late Republic and first century CE the paper will explore how individuals, after the public performance of the funeral, lived with their grief. It will investigate ideals and counter ideals (including gender stereotypes) for the behaviour of the bereaved, and how bereavements were rationalised and consoled through various mechanisms such as support networks, rituals, beliefs (religious and philosophical), public monuments, personal mementos, art and literature. The dead could not be brought back to life, but for those left behind the dead were often a potent presence which could have a negative or positive impact on the future of the bereaved.

Young-ho Jang (McGill University)
Living in God’s New House: Being “In Christ” and the Roman Villa Phenomenon

This paper seeks to understand Paul’s term “in Christ” in light of ancient spatial practices and the Roman villa phenomenon. Paul, one of the most influential figures in developing beliefs about Jesus’ coming back to life, tries to define early Christians as those living “in Christ.” By identifying so-called Jesus followers as those living “in Christ,” Paul tries to understand the resurrected Jesus in a spatial sense. This spatial description of Christ becomes outstanding in Paul’s interchangeable usage of the two phrases “clothing with Christ” and “clothing with heavenly dwellings” (Rom. 13:14; 2 Cor. 5:2). In light of his usage of the two phrases, it seems reasonable to think that Paul equates “Christ” with a “heavenly dwelling.” What motivates Paul to describe “Christ” in this way? If it is usual for ancient writers to substitute a personal title like Christ for the name of a space, what is the nature of that new space for Christians? With the help of ancient practice of geography and ethnography, I first will clarify the term “in Christ” as
having something to do with Paul’s construction of early Christian identity, and furthermore show that Paul’s notion of the nature of a new Christian space called “in Christ” is intertwined with the ancient Roman villa phenomenon.

Sarah Iles Johnston (Ohio State University)

*Many (Un)Happy Returns: Ancient Greek Revenants and their Modern Counterparts*

Greek myths liked to meditate on why death came to particular people at particular times, on what happened to souls after death, and on the question of whether those souls could sometimes return to the world of the living. Interestingly however, with the notable exception of Alcestis (and perhaps not even always in her case), the Greeks did not imagine the return to life to be a happy thing. Myths such as those of Orpheus and of Protesilaus’ wife suggest that such returns brought tragedy for the living; myths such as that of Sisyphus suggest that the revenant himself was likely to regret his return. After analyzing the reasons that the ancient Greeks could not even begin to imagine a happy return from death, I will turn to some examples of stories about the revenants from European cultures of the 18th through 20th centuries and explore the very different ways in which they manage to send the same message—namely, that humans are better off leaving death alone, as a final decision.

Jeffery A. Keiser (McGill University)

*‘Death is swallowed up in victory’: Baptism, Resurrection, and Paul’s Prophetic Cento in 1 Corinthians 15:54–55*

In 1 Cor 15:54–55, Paul taunts the figure of Death with the words of the prophets, freely adapted from Isaiah and Hosea. This ‘prophetic cento’ furnishes an undeniably dramatic conclusion to Paul’s discussion of bodily resurrection, yet interpreters have struggled to understand his metaphors. Drawing on ancient representations of chariot driving and the recent discovery of a Roman circus in Corinth, my paper will argue that Paul chose his texts and imagery carefully in order to depict the climactic defeat of Death in a spectacular chariot crash, popularly called a ‘shipwreck’. In turn, I will explore how this image of Death as a ‘drowning’ charioteer may impact Paul’s views on ‘dying’ in baptism and coming back to life through resurrection.

Hugo Lundhaug (Universitetet i Oslo)

*‘Tell me what shall arise’: Conflicting Notions of the Resurrection Body in Coptic Egypt*

What is the nature of the resurrection body? In what sense will the new life represent a continuation or a break with the present one? How are key Scriptural passages, such as 1 Cor 15 to be understood? What is the role of the rituals of baptism and Eucharist? In the turmoil around the turn of the fifth century, controversy over the legacy of Origen took center stage, and questions regarding the nature of the resurrection were among the main points of contention. The focus of this paper will be on how this issue is treated in certain texts from the Nag
Hammadi Codices, produced and used around this time. The concepts, metaphors, and intertexts used to describe resurrection and the resurrection body will be examined and compared with the writings of some of the key players of the Origenist controversy as well as with contemporary monastic texts, such as those of the powerful Upper Egyptian abbot Shenoute of Atripe.

Marla MacDonald (McGill University)

Embodied Memory and Ancient Athletics: Theatricalizing the Dead in First Corinthians

This paper examines recent work on Greco-Roman athletics and death ritual and argues that athletic imagery in First Corinthians “theatricalizes” the dead through highly embodied gesture and performance (Erasmoo, 2008). Paul describes his apostleship and the goal of resurrection as running a race in the Greek stadium (9:24–27) and as an enslaved gladiator “condemned to death” in the Roman area (4:9). Like the noble athlete, gladiators could attain glory and status by displaying skill and endurance in competitions that originated as performances honouring the dead (Kyle, 1998). I argue that Paul utilizes Greco-Roman philosophical discourse which compares the Philosophers pursuit of virtue, in life and death, to endurance and suffering in athletic competition. Paul adapts athletic motifs to his rhetoric of body participation and the end goal of resurrection, allowing the living body of the community to be an instrument of memorializing Jesus’ death though gesture and performance (Kyle 1998, Edwards, 2007, 2002, Graham, 2011).

Stéphanie Machabée (McGill University)

Life and Death, Birth and Abortion: Confession and Denial in The Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne

The Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne (Lyons) is a second-century Christian martyrology which projects a heightened awareness of and dissuasion against those who have denied or lapsed in their confessions as Christians. This paper will explore how and why the language of birth and death, particularly with regards to the Virgin Mother, is used to communicate the text’s rhetoric concerning denial. Paradoxically, Lyons describes the figure of the Virgin Mother as miscarrying or aborting Christian deniers who later return to her, alive, once they find the strength to confess. Therefore, the author equates confession with life and denial with death. This paper will also discuss the biblical allusions of such imagery in order to situate Lyons in its biblical intertextuality.

E. Meaghan Matheson (Concordia University)

Eve and Norea: The (Re)Generation of the Female Spiritual Principle in the Hypostasis of the Archons

In the Hypostasis of the Archons, the Female Spiritual Principle engages with the material world through the life of Eve, and later returns through Eve's daughter, Norea. Both women are
manifestations of the Spirit in the material world, and vessels through which the Spirit interacts with humanity. As such, Eve and Norea become a bridge between the two realities. What is especially interesting about this text is that this link between the heavenly realm and the material world is drawn along gendered lines. The text uses gender to articulate a reoccurring spiritual presence in the material world. Through these women, the Spirit returns to influence the material world. This paper looks to explore further the implications of the use of gender in defining the Spirit’s relationship with the material world, as well as, why this relationship is expressed through two generations of women.

Laura S. Nasrallah (Harvard University)

Anagkê and Material Transformation at Corinth

This paper addresses the question: What are the ways in which those in Christ at Corinth may have thought about coming back to life? I explain the range of theological options available as demonstrated in the archaeological record and literary texts, focusing especially on the cults of the Acrocorinth and on theologies-cosmologies of Sophia and Isis. Jewish and “Greco-Roman” thought and practices indicate the multiple possible understandings of flesh, death, destruction, and necessity that provided a context in which the Corinthians who received Paul’s letter could interpret and adjudicate its contents.

Judith H. Newman (University of Toronto)

Overcoming Death through the Living Voice of the Teacher

This paper assesses the role of the living voice of the teacher in two quite different early Jewish textual collections from the first century CE: 1QH and 2 Corinthians. The memory of overcoming death or near-death experiences was a crucible common to the founding figures of both the Qumran Yahad and the Pauline congregations. A common thread is the way in which the textual collections memorialize the deathly experiences through the ongoing performance of blessing and thanksgiving. The expanded textual collection of the Hodayot and the Pauline and pseudo-Pauline texts can be understood as enacted extensions of the living voice of the teacher.

Kelly Olson (University of Western Ontario)

Resurrection And Rebirth: The Antonine Toga

Arguably the most important item of dress in Roman antiquity for citizen males was the toga, a garment which enjoyed a long lifespan and numerous changes in size and draping. Under the emperor Augustus, the toga became more voluminous, and differed in manner of draping: the sinus (overfold) appeared, and the umbo (knot); an additional characteristic of this toga was an excess of material which could be drawn over the head in a religious sacrifice. The Augustan toga represented the peace, prosperity, abundance, and spiritual recovery that Augustus was so anxious to have associated with his reign, by the very method of its construction. The plentiful material
needed for this toga meant that it was costly, as fabric was expensive in antiquity—and thus symbolized the increased wealth and prosperity supposedly enjoyed under Augustus (the late Republican toga had been skimpy by contrast). Over the next century or so, the toga became shorter, and its method of draping different; a move away from the abundant Augustan toga.

But the Antonine emperors (138–192 CE) revived this voluminous early imperial toga in an attempt to legitimate their reign through a resurrection of Augustan cultural and political ideologies. A fashion archaism that was a gesture toward the renaissance of Augustan peace and prosperity, this toga brought back to life particular resonances of the past. The style of the Augustan toga had physically remained in evidence in the intervening century through statuary and reliefs which could still be seen around the city of Rome: the resurgent fashion thus alluded directly to material evidence of the Augustan-era toga. Alluding to such memento mori—the death of the Golden Age of Augustan peace and prosperity—through “living” draperies on contemporary people is a kind of resurrection, a literalized rebirth of Augustan values and meanings.

Michael Peppard (Fordham University)

Does Rebirth Require Death?: Syrian Ritual Texts, the Gospel of Philip, and the Incarnation

Early Christian sources depict conversion and initiation through diverse motifs: the most prominent are pregnancy, birth, anointing, adoption, marriage, military enlistment, death, resurrection, and return to paradise. Over the centuries, the idea of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (e.g., Romans 6) gained preeminence. However, very few sources during the first three centuries of Christianity appeal to such “death mysticism.” The “birth mysticism” of initiation, usually associated with Johannine soteriology (e.g., John 3), was better attested. This paper will survey the reception of such “born again” teachings in liturgical sources and material culture of the first few centuries, focusing on those that avoid imagery of death. Descriptions of and prescriptions for initiatory rituals from Syria and elsewhere often unite the birth and baptism of Christians with that of Christ, while de-emphasizing participation in Christ’s death. Finally, the paper will attempt to determine the understanding of rebirth in certain sources, such as the Gospel of Philip, that perform the motif in both a ritual and sapiential key.

Bradley N. Rice (McGill University)

The Jesus of Many Faces: Polymorphy as Resurrection in the Acts of Peter

In a curious tradition commonly found in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, Jesus is said to be “polymorphic.” That is, Jesus appears to someone in a form different from the one recognized during his earthly ministry, such as an old man or a child, an angel or even an apostle. Jesus’ polymorphy is a relatively neglected aspect of early Christian theology and practice, and many of Jesus’ polymorphic appearances are frequently dismissed in scholarship as docetic or gnostic. The present paper will bring to the fore an overlooked aspect of Jesus’ polymorphy, behind which lies an interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection as something not fixed in the past, but accessible to
believers in the present. Using the *Acts of Peter* as a test case, I will explore this distinctive understanding of Jesus’ resurrection and consider how it might have functioned within the context of early Christian initiation rituals.

**Aaron Ricker (McGill University)**  
*Letters from Beyond: The Haunting Business of Epistolary Parousia*

Ancient Greco–Roman letters (official and/or personal) were routinely expected to provide a real “presence” that mitigated physical absence. In Paul’s letters, this literary presence has been called his “epistolary parousia” (Robert Funk; Hans-Josef Klauck). In their letters, writers were understood as meaningfully present. What happened, though, when writers were understood as meaningfully dead? In such cases, some texts (the Pastorals, the Socratic Cynic Epistles, Polycarp, Revelation, etc.) functioned as letters from beyond, promising/embodying parousia in a strategic and creative imaginative economy that served the complex needs of ancient communities and that resonates in surprising ways with modern ideas about the Death of the Author. In 1961, Wilfred Bion argued that most communities long above all either to enjoy being silent under a leader, or else to enjoy their leader’s death. I argue that in letters from beyond, some ancient communities found a way to have their cake and eat it too.

**Eliza Rosenberg (McGill University)**  
*Weddings and the Return to Life in the Book of Revelation*

The wedding celebration that concludes the book of Revelation incorporates ideas of resurrection in its presentation of the bridegroom (“the Lamb that was slain”), the wedding guests (whose number includes martyrs), and the bride herself (the new, heavenly Jerusalem, replacing the earthly one that had been destroyed). The familiar event of a wedding serves as a foundation for articulating a vision of a future that is posited as both long promised and radically unfamiliar. The book’s nuptial imagery uses the conventional associations of weddings with renewal and happy endings, but by juxtaposing it with the destruction of Babylon also evokes tropes of weddings gone tragically awry. These multiple valences, which are established in the book’s web of images, allow the final vision to unify themes of identity, community, and witness with those of resurrection, transformation, and re-creation.

**Angela Standhartinger (Philipps-Universität Marburg)**  
*Bringing Back to Life: Laments and the Origin of the So-Called Words of Institution*

Recent research into the origins of early Christian meals focuses on the social form of the Graeco-Roman banquets and symposium. What remains to be seen, however, is how the so-called “words of institution” transmitted by Paul to the community at Corinth functioned at some of those meals. In this paper I show that the tradition cited in 1 Cor 11:23–25 describes most likely a funerary banquet. Here food might be shared between the living and the dead while
laments and dirges not only present the context of that meal—a passion story—but also enable an imagined reunion with the deceased so as to raise her or his voice and speak in her or his name. The paper will show how performance of (funerary) meals might have functioned to those who believed in resurrection.

Frederick S. Tappenden (McGill University)
Thinking of Paul Thinking of Resurrection: Early Christian Creativity in Cognitive Perspective

Few figures in the early Christian movement were so variously understood and vigorously interpreted as the apostle Paul. An issue that was of particular importance to early Pauline interpreters was the so-called “proper” understanding of resurrection. The Epistle to the Colossians, for instance, portrays a pseudonymous Paul who describes resurrection as something that has already happened. This stands in contrast to the Pastoral Epistles, where another pseudonymous Paul insists that those who believe in a present resurrection have upset the faith and swerved from the truth. Building upon the author’s prior work on resurrection metaphors in the undisputed Pauline letters, this paper explores how early Pauline interpreters make sense of the apostle’s varied and at times divergent understandings of resurrection. Focusing on the embodied foundations of human imagination, and also exploring commemorative dynamics that concern the memory of Paul, this paper will employ theories of cognitive linguistics so as to illuminate the many ways that Paul (re-)emerges among his early interpreters.

Katharina Waldner (Universität Erfurt)
Revivification of the Dead in Pagan Religion: Narratives as Hubris, Miracles, and Fictions

In the polytheistic cultures of ancient Greece and Rome the borderline between the living and the dead seems to have been, on first sight, rather impermeable. This holds especially true when we think of the basic conceptual difference between men as mortal and gods as immortal beings. Although there existed a fear of “haunting ghosts”—the psychai of unhappy ancestors (especially victims or offenders in cases of violent felony) who came back to the world of their still living relatives to afflict them with madness—it seems to have counted as hubris when somebody really came back to life. The most ancient mythological narratives (from the 6th cent B.C.E.) on this subject were told about the healer Asclepios, who was punished by Apollo for awakening a yet dead patient to life, and of Sisyphos, who suffered his famous punishment for having tried to come back to life after his death by cunning intelligence (forbidding his wife to bury him properly). On the other side, we can observe that narratives of the dead coming back to life were nevertheless told. The most famous cases in classical Greek mythology were those of the Pamphylian Er (Plato, Republic) and of Alcestis (Euripides). Whereas these kinds of narratives are quite rare in classical and Hellenistic times, they gain more popularity during the first to the third century C.E.; one can also observe that the subject emerges now in new genres of storytelling: in novels and “lives” (as the famous Life of Apollonios of Tyana).

This paper will explore the forms, functions and genres of such stories by choosing a performative approach. I demonstrate that “coming back to life” can be defined as a certain type of story by which a given society deals with the fundamental question: what kinds of knowledge
about life and death are possible and legitimate? In ancient polytheistic religions, this meant at the same time to ask about the difference between gods and men. The main questions of this paper will be: how were these stories staged in different cultural situations and narratological genres (6th cent. B.C.E.–3rd cent. C.E.), and how did they contributed in a specific way to the ongoing production of knowledge about the difference and relationship between the living and the dead, as well as between the human and the divine.

**Meredith Warren (University of Ottawa)**

*Equal to God: Jesus’ Crucifixion and Sacrificial Scheintod*

John’s gospel depicts Jesus as simultaneously fleshly and divine. Nowhere is this more clear than in the moment of his crucifixion, which is ultimately the will of God. I argue that his crucifixion—and notably, his survival—establishes firmly Jesus’ divinity. In comparing Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross to the sacrificial *Scheintoten* (‘apparent deaths’) of the Greek romances, I propose that Jesus’ death and his escape from it work within the gospel to establish his divinity. The trials of literary heroines, put in motion by antagonistic deities, include their human sacrifice—vividly recounted and narrowly escaped. *Scheintoten* point to the divinity of the heroines, since “gods might die and be reborn, but not mortals of flesh and blood” (Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 102). Reading Jesus’ survival of his sacrifice within the literary framework of *Scheintod* presents Jesus’ divinity—and John’s christology—as participating in the idea-world of the ancient Mediterranean, an approach which illuminates the function of Jesus’ sacrificial death in John.
General Information

Hotel:
Residence Carrefour Sherbrooke
475 Sherbrooke Street West
Montreal, QC
Metro: McGill
Front desk: (514) 398-2299

McGill Venue (8–9 May):
Birks Building
3520 University Street
Montreal, QC
Metro: McGill

To reach the Birks Building from the hotel (approx. 5 min walk):
- From the front door of the hotel, turn right and walk down Sherbrooke Street
- At University Street, turn right and walk 2+ blocks
- The Birks Building will be on your left, just past Milton.

Concordia Venue (10–11 May):
Samuel Bronfman Building
1590 Dr. Penfield (corner Cotes-des-Neiges)
Montreal, QC
Metro: Guy-Concordia

To reach the Bronfman Building from the hotel (approx. 25 min walk):
- From the front door of the hotel, turn right and walk down Sherbrooke Street
- At Chemin de la Côtes-des-Neiges, turn right and walk 1 block
- The Bronfman Building will be on your right, at the corner of Dr. Penfield Avenue
From Hotel to Birks (McGill) * Metro Station McGill
back cover

Sarcophagus of Marcus Claudianus
Depicting Jesus raising Lazarus from the tomb and other biblical scenes
Rome, from the Via della Lungara, San Giacomo in Settimiana
330–335 CE