

## **Mentoring Report: Presenting at the XIX. International Conference on Patristic Studies**

### **i. The Event**

The International Conference on Patristic Studies is the largest English-speaking conference in the field of Patristics, taking place every four years at Oxford University, England. Thousands of participants gather at this event, which lasts around five days, to present and learn about new scholarship and to meet and exchange ideas with an international group of patristics experts. This year, the conference took place from August 5-9, 2024 at Oxford University's Examination Schools.

### **ii. The Panel Paratext to the Gospels in Greek**

Thanks to the generosity of the LMU's Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät Mentoring Program, I was able to travel from Munich to Oxford on August 7 to present a paper at a panel which took place on August 8. The panel's focus was on paratexts to the Gospels in Greek and this event, presided over by Professor Martin Wallraff. The panel reunited the former members of *ParaTexBib*, an ERC project which ran from 2017 to 2021 at the LMU and was led by Professor Walraff and PD Dr. Patrick Andrist. Martin Wallraff gave an introduction to and overview of the nature and important characteristics of Greek Gospel paratexts. Patrick Andrist presented the new research he has been doing in using project data to compile statistics about the occurrences and frequencies of different Gospel paratexts from ca. 500-1500. I presented on chapter divisions (*kephalaia*) in the Greek Gospels and how text divisions shape our understanding of the biblical text. Agnès Lorrain shared some of her research on the prologues of the Gospels in the Greek tradition. Emmanuel Van Elverdinghe gave an account of the structure and composition of Gospel subscriptions and Marie-Eve Geiger reported on the research she has been doing over the last few years on liturgical tables. The panel was well attended and included lively discussions in the middle and at the end of the event.

### **iii. Experiences and Perspectives**

The opportunity to participate in this panel came at a felicitous time for me as I am in the process of finishing a monograph on the Greek *kephalaia* which will be published in the *Manuscripta Biblica* series at De Gruyter some time next year. The presentation was a valuable opportunity to inform scholars with similar interests about the impending publication of my book and also to give a preview of some of the key themes which I address in my work. After the panel, I had the chance to meet new colleagues who work on the text divisions of the Gospels in Latin and other languages and we were able to exchange ideas about the different approaches taken to dividing the Scriptures in our respective cultural areas. The panel also offered a great opportunity for us to showcase some of the research that was undertaken at the LMU as part of the *ParaTexBib* project and the number of attendees at the panel suggested that there was a good deal of scholarly interest in the subject of New Testament paratexts.

I would like to thank the Evangelisch-Theologischen Fakultät's Mentoring Program for giving me the means to attend this conference, share my research, strengthen my academic network and represent the LMU with its strong tradition of relevant and innovative research.

Saskia Dirkse  
Munich, October 21st, 2024