Abstracts, NWS II (February 25 – March 1, 2018)

- **R. Klamer, Distinguishing Dignity, Respect, and Recognition for Organizational Studies**

This paper will explore the attribution of value and worth of people in the context of organizational studies, and more specifically for its application in the critical evaluation of Human Resource Management. In order to do that it will it will first trace some of the history of thinking on human dignity. Then it will present the concept of respect and contrast this with different conceptions of dignity. Thirdly, it will present Axel Honneth's concept of recognition and discuss how it relates to human dignity. Through doing this the paper will argue that all three concepts provide different valuable aspects to consider in thinking about the worth of human beings working in organizations. Dignity provides the moral basis for the inherent and inalienable worth of each human being in an organisation. Respect provides a more practical terminology for putting that into everyday practise. While recognition, with its fundamentally intersubjective background, gives a great framework that integrates recognition in work for being basically human, one's differential contribution and one's specifically individual attributes. Especially this last aspect provides a resource for critically countering some of the excesses in modern work.

- **M. Fallica, Origen of Alexandria at the dawn of the reformations. Philology and hermeneutic of the Greek patristic tradition in some patristic anthologies of the xvi century**

The study aims to investigate the reception of Origen of Alexandria in the XVI century. For this purpose, it analyzes the patristic anthologies of theologians from different areas of the European Reformations in the years 1527-1573. The first step of the study is the philological analysis of the quotation from Origen, often deliberately misread for confessional reasons. Then, it follows the study of the historical reasons for the plea to authority of Origen made by the Reformed authors.

- **K. Felter, God's freedom**

This paper is an excerpt of the first part of my thesis. It concerns Anne Conway's understanding of God's freedom. In the first chapter of her treatise, Conway defines God as wisdom, goodness and will, in accordance with the other Cambridge Platonists. She links these attributes to the Trinity, and concludes that not only is her conception of the Trinity rational, it is universal. Because God is bound by his wisdom (logos, Christ) and his will (power, spirit), he is "both free and necessary". That is, God cannot but create. Conway thus places herself in opposition to Calvinist voluntarism – but is it at the expense of divine freedom? This paper is a work in progress; a continuous debate about Conway's Origenism will be incorporated.

- **A. Bianchi, Freedom as obedience to God: reflections on Jean Le Clerc's Origenism**

In this paper, I discuss the extent in which Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736) is to be considered an "Origenist". Departing from the dispute between Le Clerc and Bayle, that saw the two employ respectively Origenian and Manichean arguments in a debate on theodicy and the relationship

between reason and revelation, I proceed to an exploration of Le Clerc's philosophical and theological conception of freedom. References to Origen will be highlighted, as well as thematic convergences or discrepancies. Finally, I present a brief review of how Le Clerc relates to central Origenian concepts like the one of apocatastasis.

What will appear from the present analysis is that, notwithstanding various reasons that provide justified considerations of Le Clerc as an "Origenist", his relationship with the Alexandrine is more complex and does not allow for a simple labelling of the Arminian. On the one hand, an appreciation of Origen's arguments on the origin of evil and the case for human freedom as autonomy of the self and as obedience to God, as well as direct textual references to Origen, surely show a familiarity and even a sympathy (or tactical use) with Origen. On the other hand, however, there seems to be an epistemological gap, derived from Le Clerc's Cartesianism, that hinders a real deep adhesion of Origen's position.

Due to the synthetic nature of the paper however, my aim is to provide only a first overview of different research avenues and possible areas of inquiry and show how they could be possibly interconnected. I do not intend it to be in any way exhausting the full depth of arguments to be discussed, but I take it as an opportunity for an exploratory trip into the question.

- **K. Bunkenborg, Reception in the Early Modern period: Lessing's Use of The Ring Parable in Nathan the Wise**

The outset for the present paper is a reception theory reading of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's last play, *Nathan the Wise,* focusing on the central ring parable and its history. The main questions are of a historical and philosophical nature and through them I hope to make relevant the method for working with sources in the early modern period, but also to show how the historical material is often understood within categories, which might do them an injustice.

The methodological reflections are contextualized through a specific example of reception in *Nathan the Wise*: the incorporation of the parable of three rings. This parable has ancient roots and has been found in countless settings throughout history. The story goes that a wealthy man possesses a ring of great worth, and that this ring will mark his true heir. The man has three sons and each contends to become the owner of the ring and thus the true heir. Copies of the ring are produced and the question arises of who the true heir is.

The parable has often been interpreted as an allegorical representation of the three monotheistic religions, and it has been reused and reproduced within this framework. In the paper, I investigate a reading of *Nathan the Wise* by Iris Shagrir in her 1997 paper, *The Parable of the Three Rings: A Revision of its History.* Shagrir examines the central narrative from Lessing's Nathan the Wise as an example of religious tolerance, and she traces the journey of the parable from antique Arabic sources and on to the European scene in the middle ages. In doing so, she commits two errors in my opinion: firstly, the parable is considered an expression of religious tolerance, which is mainly a projection of later interpretations. Secondly, the historical analysis assumes a direct line of reception, that allows the researcher to trace the origin of the narrative.

I go against this reading of Lessing and the parable of the three rings through an argument that departs from a brief definition of reception theory and goes on to examine three examples of the

ring parable in Gesta Romanorum, in Boccaccio's Decameron and finally in Lessing's Nathan the Wise. I attempt to highlight the uncertainties we face when tracing the history of thoughts across the centuries. The purpose of presenting this methodological piece at the seminary, is to purvey some of my own reflections on method and its applicability to the early modern material.

- **E. Zocchi, Why this Origen? Critical Goals behind Balthasar's Interpretation of Origen**

Hans Urs von Balthasar's interpretation of Origen has been the object of much criticism; especially his anthology of Origen's text is often considered too "subjective" to present the real face of Origen. The aim of this paper is not to assess how accurate Balthasar's reading of Origen was, but to analyze what lies behind his interpretation: why did Balthasar read Origen the way he did? What was his goal, whom was he trying to provoke when suggesting this reading? Balthasar in fact looks back at past thinkers is not merely historical curiosity, but rather expressive of a desire to find what they have to say to our time. Reading the Fathers, Balthasar faces two alternative approaches given to him by his formative years: the Neo-Scholastic approach and the idealistic neo-Platonism, both dominant in the 1930s France from which Balthasar's reading of the Fathers (partially) comes from. These two possibilities represent Balthasar's polemical addressee when reading Origen too. While facing the latter, Neo-Scholasticism, Balthasar shapes his reading of Origen as an author that presents a sacramental ontology. I will therefore present the situation of school theology and of the Church in the 30s, to understand which aspect of the Fathers was so important for Balthasar. The former polemical addressee, idealistic neo-Platonism, helps us to understand what Balthasar means with sacramental ontology. I will present a few elements of Balthasar's education that lead him to be so critical of the idealistic shift of French philosophy. Finally, I will shortly hint to Balthasar's "third way" between these two.

- **G. Tortoriello, Human reason and divine wisdom: a journey through the labyrinths of freedom**

The relationship between Renaissance philosophy and the Reformation movement is a controversial matter. It divides scholars and presents several exegetical and hermeneutical problems. In this paper I investigate the link between Renaissance Platonism and the Wittenberg movement through the lens of a specific question, namely the relationship between philosophy and theology. After having briefly introduced how Marsilio Ficino, the leading exponent of Renaissance Platonism, developed his idea of compatibility between philosophy and theology, I show how and why these ideas were rejected by two of the leading features of the Wittenberg movement, namely Martin Luther and Philipp Melanchthon. Finally, after having analyzed Melanchthon's reposition on key philosophical and theological problems like predestination, freedom of the will and justification by faith alone, I will argue that Melanchthon made full use of Ficino's philosophy in his anthropological treatise *Liber de Anima*. For this reason, I will conclude rejecting monolithic approaches to the Reformation history arguing that it, just like every other cultural phenomenon, can be fully understood only taking into consideration its complexity and contradictions.

- **E. Bellucci, The doctrine of the apokatastasis according to Johann Wilhelm and Johanna Eleonora Petersen**

Through my presentation I aim to give an overview of the different issues and problems that I am facing in my work. At the same time, I am going to sketch a draft of the final work, dividing it into a presentation and three chapters.

The central issue of my work is the doctrine of the apokatastasis according to the couple of German Radical Pietists Johann Wilhelm and Johanna Eleonora Petersen. Since they developed a common reflection on this theme, my research seeks to include both and not to focus just on one of them. In the first part I want to introduce the biography of the couple, putting particular attention to their relationship with the so called "Pietism" and to the relationship that these had with heterodox and controversial authors, as well as introduce the theme of the apokatastasis in that context. The central part of my work is on the doctrine of the apokatastasis, the main theme they wrote on. I want to develop this issue by facing three questions: 1. What does apokatastasis mean according to Petersen and how do they discover it? This chapter gives a description of this doctrine and shows its relationship to the discussion on Millenium 2. What are the sources used by Petersens to speak about this doctrine? In this chapter I particularly focus on the use of Origen and the Kabbalah. 3. What is the meaning of this doctrine in that context? According to Petersens, the doctrine of the apokatastasis is a necessary point in order to find an agreement between the three main confessions: Lutheranism, Calvinism and Catholicism.

The former three questions should correspond to three different chapters. I am going to conclude with a chapter on the concept of "freedom" and "human dignity" according to Petersens. I will show how these ideas are strictly linked to a theological discourse and particularly to their eschatological perspective. I am going to put particular attention to the similarities/differences with Lutheran anthropology of their time.