



FAITH AND COMMUNITY AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN  
IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE MIDDLE AGES

MARCH 7-10, 2016  
PROGRAM

EVENT ORGANIZED WITHIN THE  
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THE SWEDISH FOUNDATION FOR  
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

BUCHAREST, NEW EUROPE COLLEGE, MARCH 7-8

### MONDAY, MARCH 7, CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 10.00** Greetings from Prof. Dr. Valentina SANDU-DEDIU, Rector of the New Europe College  
Greetings from Acad. Dan BERINDEI, Vice-president of the Romanian Academy  
Greetings from Dr. Petre GURAN, Researcher at the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy
- 10.30** Claudia RAPP, Professor of Byzantine Studies, University of Vienna, Austria  
*New Religion - New Communities? Christianity and Social Relations in Late Antiquity and Beyond*
- 11.15** Coffee Break
- 11.30** Uriel SIMONSOHN, Lecturer, Department for Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa, Israel  
*Kinship and Community: The Social Subversiveness of Religiously-Mixed Families in the Early Islamic Period*
- 12.00** Daniel LEMENI, Lecturer, Department of Theology, West University of Timișoara, Romania  
*Narrating the Holy Man in Late Antiquity: The Case of Shenoute of Atripe*
- 12.30** Thomas CARLSON, Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern History, Oklahoma State University, USA  
*Faith among the Faithless? Theology as Aid or Obstacle to Islamization in Late Medieval Mesopotamia*
- 13.00** Roundtable Discussion
- 13.30** Lunch
- 15.00** Philippa TOWNSEND, Chancellor's Fellow of New Testament and Christian Origins, University of Edinburgh, Scotland  
*Conflict and Community in the Book of Revelation*
- 15.30** Eduard IRICINSCHI, Visiting Fellow at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF), University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany  
*Religious Education and Spiritual Healing in the Egyptian Manichaean Community of Kellis (4th- cent CE)*
- 16.00** Dionisij SHLENOV, Head of Greek Christian Literature, Department of Christian Literature, Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary, Russia  
*The Image of the Emperor's Power in Ascetical Literature*
- 16.30** Peter BROWN, Professor of History Emeritus at Princeton University, USA  
*Faith and Community around the Mediterranean (Pre-recorded video remarks)*
- 17.00** Roundtable Discussion

## TUESDAY, MARCH 8, CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 10.00** Petre GURAN, Researcher at the Institute for South-East European Studies, Romanian Academy, Romania  
*Church or Christendom? Late Antique Juridical Terminology on Christian Religion.*
- 10.30** Nathan P. GIBSON, Postdoctoral Scholar in Syriac studies and digital humanities at Vanderbilt University, USA  
*Turning Friends into Enemies and Enemies into Friends: Al-Jahiz's Attempt to Redefine Religious Identity in Ninth-Century Iraq*
- 11.00** Coffee Break
- 11.30** Craig CALDWELL, Assistant Professor of Ancient History and director of the Program in Classical Civilizations, Appalachian State University, USA  
*From Galerius' Romanitas to the Danubian Open Frontier: Peter Brown and the Balkans in Late Antiquity*
- 12.00** Maja KOMINKO, Cultural Grants Manager at Arcadia Fund, UK  
*The Peutinger Table – The World-Map as a Palimpsest*
- 12.30** Roundtable Discussion
- 13.00** Lunch
- 14.30** Daniel BENGA, Professor for Church History, Orthodox Theological Faculty, University of Bucharest, Romania  
*Christian and Judaic Identities in Syriac Communities of the Third Century*
- 15.00** Daniel SCHWARTZ, Assistant Professor of History and Associate Director of the Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture, Texas A&M University, USA  
*The Social Context of Religious Change in Late Antique Syria*
- 15.30** Dragoş MÎRŞANU, independent researcher and journalist, Romania  
*Arian Solidarity in the Time of the Barbarian Kingdoms: Did It Exist?*
- 16.00** Roundtable Discussion

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## THURSDAY, MARCH 10, CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 10.00** Greetings from the Metropolitan of Moldavia  
Greetings from the Rector of the Iasi University and the Dean of the Theology Faculty
- 10.30** Mark SHERIDAN, Benedictine monk living in Abu Ghosh, Israel and professor emeritus in the Faculty of Theology of the Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo  
*The Development of the Concept of Poverty from Athanasius to Cassian*
- 11.15** Nelu ZUGRAVU, professor of Late Antique History and Civilization, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania  
*Christianity as a Factor of Dissolution and Aggregation in the Works of John Chrysostom*
- 11.45** Coffee break
- 12.00** Matthew MILLINER, associate professor of Art History at Wheaton College, USA  
*Rethinking the 'Afterlife of Icons'*
- 12.30** Bogdan MALEON, professor at the Faculty of History, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University and director of Mihai Eminescu Central University Library Iaşi, Romania  
*The Exile around the Mediterranean Sea during the Early Byzantine Period*
- 13.00** Roundtable Discussion
- 13.30** Lunch
- 15.00** Alexandru-Florin PLATON, professor at the Faculty of History, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania  
*'The Body of Christ' in Saint Paul's Epistles and the New Face of Christian Unity (1st Century AD)*
- 15.30** David MICHELSON, assistant professor of History of Christianity at Vanderbilt University, USA  
*From Periphery to Horizon: Peter R. L. Brown's Contribution to the Historiography of Christianity*
- 16.00** Peter BROWN, professor of History Emeritus at Princeton University, USA  
*Faith and Community around the Mediterranean (Pre-recorded video remarks)*
- 16.30** Concluding Discussion

FAITH AND COMMUNITY AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN  
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In the wake of Samuel Huntington's theory of the "Clash of Civilizations" there has been much scholarly discussion of the role of religion in creating conflict in contemporary society. In popular imagination, the three monotheistic traditions of the Mediterranean world—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—are even seen as irreducible root causes of social friction. And yet, nuanced attention to history reveals that such a view is itself a myopic product of modernity. Historians of ancient and medieval Mediterranean society have abundantly shown that religious identity was a source not only of conflict but also of community. In particular, the work of Peter R.L. Brown over the past half-century has revealed the centrality of religion in the creation of the Mediterranean cultures of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. There were no societies without religion, no regulation without religious sanction and no authority without some divine glimmer. As Brown has shown, religious identity facilitated the continuity of communal identities across time and through historical contingency. Identities forged around being salvation communities lead to survival as communities.

Although the late antique quest for the one, true God could at times promote a certain separation from society (as a salvation communities became exclusive cultic communities, monastic organizations, or social centers of religious dissent), often circumstances turned salvation communities into central actors of history. The movement transforming salvation communities into survival communities and vice-versa was not linear. Survival and salvation communities alternately emerged and departed making religion at the same time a source of peace and regulation and a source of turmoil and conflict. In the wake of these transformations, history records both epochs of religious diversity and tolerance and also religious unification and political exclusion of the dissenters. It is within this pattern of historical movement that the work of Brown has suggested that we must tell the story of faith and community around the Mediterranean: Christianity within Greco-Roman religions or Islam, Judaism within Christianity or Islam, various forms of all three monotheistic faiths competing within the same tradition or at the junction of several traditions.

The participants in this conference, many of them former students of Brown, have been invited to engage with Brown's work from a variety of humanities disciplines: anthropology, theology, religious studies, political & social history. Participants will collectively address: How did community creation work in the various traditions that dominated the Mediterranean (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)? Did their historical interaction bring up common historical patterns? What role did the interaction of these three traditions play in evolution of the Mediterranean world into the cultures of the Middle Ages and modernity?



## PETER BROWN

Peter Brown, the Philip and Beulah Rollins Professor of History, is credited with having created the field of study referred to as late antiquity (250-800 A.D.), the period during which Rome fell, the three major monotheistic religions took shape, and Christianity spread across Europe. A native of Ireland, Professor Brown earned his B.A. in history from Oxford University (1956), where he taught until 1975 as a Fellow of All Souls College. He joined the Princeton faculty in 1986 after teaching at the University of London and the University of California, Berkeley. Professor Brown's primary interests are the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages and the rise of Christianity, and he has pursued them through investigations into such diverse topics as Roman rhetoric, the cult of the saints, the body and sexuality, and wealth and poverty. He is the author of a dozen books, including *Augustine of Hippo* (1967, 2000), *The World of Late Antiquity* (1971), *The Cult of the Saints* (1982), *The Body and Society* (1988), *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (1992), *Authority and the Sacred: Aspects of the Christianization of the Roman World* (1995), *The Rise of Western Christendom* (1996, 2003), and *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (2002). Professor Brown has received honorary degrees from numerous universities, including the University of Chicago (1978), Trinity College, Dublin (1990), Wesleyan University (1993), Columbia University (2001), Harvard University (2002), and Kings College London (2008). He has been the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship (1982), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1989), and the Mellon Foundation's Distinguished Achievement Award (2001). In 2008, he won the Kluge Prize of the Library of Congress.

(Princeton University website:

<https://history.princeton.edu/people/peter-brown>)



## KUTLU AKALIN

### **Anastasius between East and West**

This paper will be a review of the literature on the intercommunal/international aspects of the emperor Anastasius' policies—ecclesiastical as well as political. Emphasis will also be made on the formation of the convention of “*damnatio memoriae*” after him.

### **Biographical notice**

Kutlu Akalin graduated from Bilkent University, Ankara, with a BA in International Relations and an MA in History. He lived in Athens, Greece, studying Byzantine and modern Greek and Byzantine History. He earned his PhD in History from Princeton University in 2011, with a thesis on John of Ephesus' testimony of life in Constantinople. He was a fellow at Westfälische Wilhelms University in Muenster, Germany, between 2007-2009. He is the co-author (with Volker Menze) of *John of Tella's Profession of Faith* (2009). He is now a faculty member of the Department of Syriac Language and Culture, of the Artuklu University, in Mardin, Turkey, where he teaches Classical Syriac and continues his research into the 5th and 6th centuries of the Eastern Roman Empire.



## DANIEL BENGA

### Christian and Judaic Identities in Syriac Communities of the Third Century

This paper analyses the delimitation process of Christians against Judeo-Christians who still preserved Jewish practices in their religious and daily life, inside a Christian Syrian Community of the 3rd century consisting of pagans and converted Jews, on the basis of the most important “Church Constitution” of this century, namely the *Didascalia Apostolorum*.

#### Biographical notice

Daniel Benga is professor for Church History at the Orthodox Theological Faculty, University of Bucharest. He wrote the PhD thesis on “The Great Lutheran Reformers and the Orthodox Church: Contributions to the Typology of 16th Century Lutheran-Orthodox Relations” (defended 2000). He was between 2003 and 2004 *Guest of the Rector* at New Europe College, Bucharest, with the research project: “Introduction into the Ethos and the Mentalities of Ancient Christianity.” Between 2011-2012 he held a postdoctoral research project at the Institute of History of Religions belonging to the Romanian Academy called: “Identity and Delimitation: Processes of Delimitation from Paganism and Judaic Practices in the Syrian Christianity of the 3rd Century.” He attended several international symposia, conferences and congresses on theological, historical and ecumenical topics in Germany, France, Spain, Netherlands, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Greece, Russia, Israel and Fiji Islands. He served as *Visiting professor* at the University of Munich (2014), University of Wien (2011), of the Kiel University (2011), and of the University of Belgrade (2006).



## CRAIG CALDWELL

### From Galerius’ Romanitas to the Danubian Open Frontier: Peter Brown and the Balkans in Late Antiquity

From the beginning of Peter Brown’s career, when he reviewed W. H. C. Frend’s portrait of the emperor Galerius, through the publication of *The Rise of Western Christendom*, where he explained Severinus of Noricum as a “saint of the open frontier” on the Danube, his conception of late antiquity has embraced the Balkan region and its people. This paper explores the recognition and reinterpretation of southeastern Europe in the work of Peter Brown, who has cherished both its distinct ferocity, particularly embodied by its bears, and its integration within the wider Mediterranean world, as exemplified by the service of Balkan natives in late Roman government.

#### Biographical notice

Craig H. Caldwell III is the assistant professor of ancient history and director of the program in Classical Civilizations at Appalachian State University. After earning a BA in history with a concentration in classical studies from Furman University, he attended Princeton University, where he received his PhD in history with a dissertation on late Roman Illyricum supervised by Peter R. L. Brown. His professional interests include the military history of the ancient Mediterranean, ancient and medieval numismatics, and Roman legal history. He authored a chapter on “The Balkans” in the *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* and contributed entries to the *Encyclopedia of the Roman Army* and the *Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. His most recent publication reconsiders the Persian capture of the Roman emperor Valerian. His current book manuscript is entitled “Society in a War Zone: Late Roman Civil Wars in Southeastern Europe in the Fourth Century AD.”



## THOMAS A. CARLSON

### Faith Among the Faithless? Theology as Aid or Obstacle to Islamization in Late Medieval Mesopotamia

Muslims as well as Christians in the late medieval Middle East described their own communities as “believers” (Arab. *muhminūn*, Syr. *mhaymnē*, Armen. *hawatac’ēalk’*) and people of other religions as “faithless” (Arab. *kuffār*, Syr. *hanpē*, Armen. *anhawatk’*). This implies a shared value on the exclusivity of faith to monotheistic religious communities, although under late medieval Islamic rule with the constant threat of loss of members to the dominant religion, Christians may have regarded faith as more definitive for the community than Muslims did at that time. Other parallels in specific beliefs (such as one all-powerful Creator or the prophethood, virgin birth, and miracles of Jesus) might have provided common platforms for conversion from one religion to another. Under Muslim rule in the fifteenth century, the direction of conversion was typically toward Islam, although at least one example is known of movement in the opposite direction. This paper argues that fifteenth-century Syriac and Armenian Christian clergy emphasized the doctrine of the Trinity (and with it, the deity of Christ) in order to mitigate other doctrinal commonalities with Muslims and reduce the attractiveness of conversion to Islam for their congregations.

#### Biographical notice

Thomas A. Carlson is Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern History at Oklahoma State University. He received his PhD from Princeton University in 2012, and continued there as a digital history postdoc, where he co-developed *The Syriac Gazetteer* (<http://syriaca.org/geo>) with David A. Michelson of Vanderbilt University. His research focuses on religious diversity and inter-religious interactions in the medieval Middle East. He is currently finishing his first book, which explores Muslim-Christian relations and Christian culture in the “Islamic society” of fifteenth-century Mesopotamia and Iraq.



## EDUARD IRICINSCHI

### Religious Education and Spiritual Healing in the Egyptian Manichaean Community of Kellis (4th-cent CE)

Peter R. L. Brown’s 1969 article on “The Diffusion of Manichaeism in the Roman Empire” (*The Journal of Roman Studies*) presented seminal insights into the development of the Manichaean religion; these positions metamorphosed into fundamental avenues of research on Manichaeism over the past five decades. To illustrate just one of them, this paper will analyze a cluster of fourth-century Manichaean families, residing in the Oasis of Dakhleh, the Egyptian Western Desert. The research will rely on the recently published Manichaean letters, written in Coptic and Greek, from the ancient town of Kellis (modern Ismant el-Kharab). The paper will first explore the role of education in Manichaean families, paying special attention to the intersections between Manichaean education, and family relations in the community of Kellis. Second, the paper will analyze the ways in which fourth-century Egyptian Roman citizens of Kellis regarded Manichaeism and its mobile network of religious propaganda as a vehicle for social advancement, for business opportunities, and ultimately, for dealing with family health issues.

#### Biographical notice

Eduard Iricinschi studied Philosophy at Bucharest University (B.A. & M.A.), Religious Studies at New York University (M.A. 2006) and earned his Ph.D. in Religion from Princeton University, New Jersey, in 2009. Eduard held the Polonsky Postdoctoral Fellow at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute (Jerusalem, Israel), and the Käthe Hamburger Kolleg postdoctoral fellowship at Ruhr University Bochum (Germany). Currently, he is a visiting fellow at the International Consortium for Research in the Humanities (IKGF) at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany). He is the co-editor, with Holger Zellentin, of *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen/Mohr Siebeck, 2008) and, with Lance Jenott, Nicola Lewis and Philippa Townsend, of *Beyond the Gnostic Gospels: Studies Building on the Work of Elaine Pagels*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013). His interests include ancient Christianity, Manichaeism, the Nag Hammadi literature, ancient heresiologies, and methods and theories in the study of religion.





## PETRE GURAN

### Church or Christendom? Late Antique Juridical Terminology on Christian Religion

Usually we take for granted when writing about late antiquity, that terms like Church, faith, religion, orthodoxy or heresy have a clear, intuitive, meaning, which conveys the same reality in the fourth and fifth centuries like in our own time. Sociological thought privileged the more neutral concepts of Christianity and Christendom. Peter Brown, to whose thought and historiographic production we acknowledge in this conference to be so much indebted, reshaped the understanding of the long transition from antiquity to Middle Age by uncovering and exalting the peculiarities and interest of an original Mediterranean civilization, which we now easily and proudly identify as late antiquity. In order to assess the role of the monotheistic religions in forming this civilization Peter Brown applied the tools of sociology, psychology, religious studies and economy, which combined amounted to the method called by French scholars “anthropologie” – religieuse, historique, culturelle, etc. – so resourceful in shading a new light on the dignity of man in any epoch. This fresh insight into the already well-studied societies of late antiquity discarded the judgmental layers of historical snobbery or of ecclesiastical self-consciousness and identity reflexes. How does it look when late antiquity is not any more “our” history, apologetically written by Church historians, or “their” history, critically conceived by free-thinkers, but the history of mankind in a particular historical instantiation? Peter Brown opened broadly the path to this new perspective. In our paper we will analyze the juridical terminology for describing the late antique forms of the worship of One/Trinitarian God. It amounts to understand what was legally the Christian community, how its doctrinal evolutions were reflected in law and finally the legacy of this juridical vocabulary in the definition of Christianity until nowadays.

### Biographical notice

Petre Guran is scientific researcher at the Institute for South-East European Studies of the Romanian Academy. His main research interest lies in the field of religious anthropology applied to Byzantine society and culture. More precisely, he studies the web of mutual influences that linked theological thought to the structures of society and political power in the Byzantine world. He has studied and taught in Romania (University of Bucharest, Univ. of Iași); France (Managing Director for the academic program “First College of European Citizenship: Monasteries and European Identity,” organized by the Council of Europe); and Germany (Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich). He defended his dissertation on *Royal Sanctity and Universal Power in the Orthodox Commonwealth* at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris (2003). During 2004-2006 he was teaching fellow in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University, and is a New Europe College Alumnus. He authored over forty studies on Byzantine and eastern European history, has contributed to the *Oxford History of Historical Writing* and the *Oxford History of Late Antiquity*, and directed several collective volumes; author of the educational project Scola de la Bunesti ([www.bunesti.ro](http://www.bunesti.ro)).



## MAJA KOMINKO

### The Peutinger Table – the Earth as a Palimpsest

The Peutinger table, the 13th century map of the oikoumene in an unusual format of a scroll is believed to be a copy or an adaptation of a lost late antique representation. It shows a network of roads spanning the whole Europe, stretching to the eastern confines of the known world, and incorporating cities which did not coexist at any one point of history. This paper will explore the question if this ahistorical approach to mapping could provide a key to understanding the context in which the original map was created.

### Biographical notice

Maja Kominko currently works for Arcadia Fund (UK), where she takes care of the foundation's projects working to protect endangered cultural heritage. Previously, she was a fellow of the Theology Faculty at the University of Oxford, a lecturer at Sabanci University in Turkey, and a post-doctoral researcher at Princeton, Uppsala and York Universities. Maja holds a DPhil from Oxford in Byzantine history. In addition to her 2013 Cambridge University Press monograph, *The World of Kosmas*, on the Christian Topography of Kosmas Indikopleustes she has published articles on illustrated Byzantine and Syriac manuscripts, history of cartography and intellectual history of late antiquity.



## DANIEL LEMENI

### Narrating the Holy Man in Late Antiquity: The Case of Shenoute of Atripe

Generally, in this paper I explore the central role of the holy man in Late Antiquity, and especially the case of Shenoute of Atripe, an extraordinary Egyptian monk from the first half of the fifth century. By this time, monasticism in Egypt already had a long and vigorous tradition behind it. Even before the end of the fourth century, the monks of Egypt had acquired celebrity status in the Mediterranean world. Pilgrims from all over the Roman Empire now invaded Egypt in search of the Desert Fathers, supreme exemplars of Christian holiness. My premise major is that in the Christian communities of Late Antiquity, the saint (the holy man so well studied by Peter Brown) played a role comparable to that of the prophet: the axis of the community. In other words the charismatic holy man transformed his territory into a sacred space and created a new site for the interrelation between society and the sacred. And, indeed, all those blessed with charisma served as a focus of divine power and delineated a new territory of grace. This process can be described as a kind of “spatialization of charisma.” Briefly, every dwelling place of a holy man became a sacred site and a locus of personal salvation. For Shenoute, the body is the site of redemptive transformation. It is also the site for theological development, social control, and the construction of Christian identity. For the archimandrite Shenoute, ascetic discipline transforms the body, and in transforming the body, situates the Christian monk into a social and theological position subordinate and obedient to God, to Christian orthodoxy, and to the monastery’s leader. The stories of the holy men that abound in the Late Antiquity crystallized the image of the charismatic sainthood. In Peter Brown’s paradigmatic assessment, the late antique holy man is an “icon” who brought the charismatic holy into the world, a hinge person mediating between the human community and God. Therefore, our conclusion is that the holiness of this figure becomes a significant social factor in late antique Mediterranean world. The visibility of holiness – the fact that holy man is observed and narrated – plays a central role in understanding the cultural significance of this figure in a changing world.

### Biographical notice

Daniel Lemeni is Lecturer in the Department of Theology at the West University of Timișoara. His publications include *Tradiția paternității duhovnicești în spiritualitatea creștină răsăriteană*, Reîntregirea, Alba-Iulia, 2012, and *Duhul a suflat în pustie. Lumea duhovnicească a Părinților deșertului*, Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2014. He has published in *Studia Patristica*, *Studia Monastica*, and *Studii Teologice*. His research explores the spirituality of the Desert Fathers, and the relationship between spiritual authority and ecclesiastical (institutional) authority in early ascetic tradition. He is currently working on a book entitled *Saint Antony the Great and the Spirituality of the Desert*.



## BOGDAN-PETRU MALEON

### The Exile around the Mediterranean Sea during the Early Byzantine Period

After Christianity was officially adopted in the Roman Empire, executions were replaced by physical punishment, such as mutilation, and various forms of exclusion. The Byzantine legislation made the difference between two form of exile, called *Exor*, which was a temporary or permanent deportation and could be equated with the interdiction of being in the same locality as the sovereign, and *Periorismos*, a form of confinement in a space defined precisely. According to the Roman tradition, the exiled persons were sent faraway, in border areas. In Byzantium the exile spaces remained on the borders of the Empire, while the preference for some islands and inaccessible territories depended on how the fleet controlled the seaways. The present study aims to reconstruct the ideological foundation of the Byzantine exile, starting from recent research, which characterize it as a metis practice, based on the ancient procedure of *ostracism*, and overlapped by *excommunication*, once Christianity was adopted. Moreover, our goal is to reconstitute the topography of exile along the Mediterranean, and to establish a taxonomy of those sent into reclusion.

### Biographical notice

Bogdan-Petru Maleon, PhD, is university Professor at the Faculty of History of “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași and Director of “Mihai Eminescu” Central University Library Iași. He has conducted research in numerous prestigious university and research centers in Konstanz, Athens, Bari, Warsaw, Mainz, Budapest, and Vienna. He has published several volumes as single author and coordinator in his main fields of specialization: ideology, symbols and rituals of power within the Byzantine and post-Byzantine area; institutional dimension and the social statute of secular clergy in Orthodox world; the image of the other, referring to the way in which Catholic missionaries perceived the Orthodox confession in medieval Moldavia; history of higher education and academic institutions. He obtained several Academic Awards, such as “The most valuable Ph. D. dissertation in 2006 on History,” given by “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, 2007; “Justin Frățiman” for essential contributions to the field of ecclesiastical history, given by “Paul Gore” Society of Genealogy, Heraldry and Archive in Chișinău, 2008; “Alexandru D. Xenopol,” given by the Romanian Academy for the year 2007 (given in 2009).



## DAVID A. MICHELSON

### From Periphery to Horizon: Peter R.L. Brown's Contribution to the Historiography of Christianity

In the tenth-anniversary edition of his *Rise of Western Christendom* (2013), Peter Brown makes a startling assertion for a work focused on the history of Christianity in Europe: “What we now call distinctively ‘European’ Christianity was unthinkable in the year 500 A.D.” This bold recasting of the history of Christianity is not an offhanded claim. Rather it concisely reflects several of the enduring contributions which Brown’s half century of scholarship has made to the historiography of Christianity and to the study of late antiquity as a whole. Brown successfully flipped scholarly perceptions of periphery and horizon in the study of late antiquity. Indeed, most notably Brown successfully revealed that the epoch assumed to be the dwindling periphery of the classical age was actually the vibrant cultural synthesis of late antiquity whose horizons stretched further into Central Asia and Northern Europe. The religious dynamics, which had been assumed since Gibbon to be backwaters of decline, became, in Brown’s narrative, sources of creative flourishing. With regard to the history of Christianity specifically, Brown—especially in his later work—similarly flipped scholarly assumptions. In Brown’s scholarship, non-Mediterranean Europe is “a peripheral zone” and it is Asia which boasts “an entire Christian culture of remarkable wealth and diversity.” This paper assesses these contributions of Brown’s scholarship and imagines their impact for future generations of scholarship.

#### Biographical notice

David A. Michelson is assistant professor of the History of Christianity at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, USA). He earned his Ph.D. in History under Peter Brown from Princeton in 2007. He has also studied at universities in Europe including Wolfson College, University of Oxford; Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca; and L’Université des Sciences Humaines de Strasbourg. He is the author of *The Practical Christology of Philoxenos of Mabbug* (2014), the co-editor (with Thomas Carlson) of *The Syriac Gazetteer* (2014, <http://syriaca.org/geo>), and is the general editor of *Syriaca.org*, a digital reference work for the study of Syriac history and culture.



## MATTHEW MILLINER

### Rethinking the “Afterlife of Icons”

The discourse of Byzantine art history is filled with discussion of “the afterlife of icons” (e.g. *Byzantine Images and their Afterlives: Essays in Honor of Annemarie Weyl Carr*). Following the *Byzance après Byzance* tradition, the phrase is intended to counter the assumption that the influence of Byzantine icons ended in 1453. But the term “afterlife” nevertheless implies death, conveying an impression ill fit to evidence of visual culture from the fifteenth century to the present. This paper returns to the Virgin of the Passion icon as a sign of Byzantium’s decline, but also explores its present ubiquity in popular culture and contemporary art. Instead of “afterlife,” an alternate biological metaphor emerges: Byzantium as a womb for the embryonic development icons, leading to the violent birth pangs of 1453, after which the life of its icons begins. Or as T.S. Eliot put it in *Burnt Norton*, “The end precedes the beginning.”

#### Biographical notice

Matthew J. Milliner holds a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and an M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from Princeton University. He is associate professor of art history at Wheaton College where he has taught since 2011. He recently organized a scholarly symposium at the Art Institute of Chicago entitled “Envisioning the Eucharist,” which explored how art functions as visual theology and his paper on Visual Ecumenism was hosted by the Duke University department of art history and Divinity School. His current book project is entitled *A Madonna of the Future: Origin and Insight of a Global Icon*, and he is a two-time appointee to the Curatorial Advisory Board of the United States Senate.



## DRAGOȘ MÎRȘANU

### **Arian Solidarity in the Time of the Barbarian Kingdoms: Did It Exist?**

It is commonly agreed that keeping a distinct religion—the Arian form of Christianity—from that of the Romans among which they lived strengthened the ethnic cohesion of the “Germanic Barbarians,” indeed it may well have been the strongest component of their ethnic identity. We ask whether and to what degree this Germanic Arianism, as a (deliberate) element of identity and of distinctiveness from the Roman and Catholic “other” was also used as currency to build diplomatic relations between the various Barbarian courts of the Vandals, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians etc., primarily in order to oppose the Catholic Empire.

#### **Biographical notice**

Dragoș Mîrșanu is the author of several articles on aspects of religion in Late Antiquity and works particularly on the religion of the Barbarians in the post-Roman world. An independent researcher finishing a doctoral thesis entitled “The Politics of Otherness: Arianism of Barbarians in Late Antiquity,” he is also committed to the editing of new Romanian versions of the church historians (Lactantius, 2011; Philostorgius, 2012; Evagrius Scholasticus, 2016; Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor, 2016).



## ALEXANDRU-FLORIN PLATON

### **“The Body of Christ” in Saint Paul's *Epistles* and the New Face of Christian Unity (1st Century AD)**

The phrase “The Body of Christ,” in regards to, on one hand, the physical body of the Savior, to the Eucharist, and on the other hand to “the Church body,” as used by Saint Paul in his Epistles, gave birth to a new representation of unity. It did not concern space as such, but it was rather both spiritual and mystical. The purpose of this paper is to emphasize the peculiarities and the legacy of this representation.

#### **Biographical notice**

Alexandru-Florin Platon is professor at the Faculty of History, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iasi (since 1986), currently teaching European Medieval History, Historical Anthropology and Social History. He was visiting Professor at the University of Montpellier (2006–2016), Bourgogne at Dijon (2005), and Angers (1998, 2001). He was awarded the order of *Chevalier de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques de la République Française* (2002). He is the author of *Le corps et ses hypostases en Europe et dans la société roumaine du Moyen Âge à l'époque contemporaine*, Bucharest, New Europe College, 2010 (with Cristina Ghitulescu); *A History of Europe in the Middle Ages (Vth-XVth c.)*, Iași, Polirom, 2010 (with Laurentiu Radvan and Bogdan-Petru Maleon) and *Fernand Braudel, la „nouvelle histoire” et les „Annales” en Roumanie. Interférences historiographiques franco-roumaines*, Cluj-Napoca, Accent, 2009 (with Toader Nicoara).



## CLAUDIA RAPP

### **New Religion – New Communities? Christianity and Social Relations in Late Antiquity and Beyond**

This paper will address the impact of Christianity on social relations within Late Roman and Byzantine society. Some relations, such as those between husband and wife or father and son, were “Christianized” in conceptualization, ritual enactment and legal status. Other relations, such as godparenthood or ritual brotherhood, were innovations within the new Christian framework. The aim of this presentation is to investigate the innovative potential of Christianity to give new shape to existing societal structures.

#### **Biographical notice**

Claudia Rapp is Professor of Byzantine Studies at the University of Vienna and Director of the Division of Byzantine Research in the Institute for Medieval Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, as well as Scholarly Director of the Sinai Palimpsests Project. Her research has centered on social and cultural history, hagiography and the cult of saints. *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity* was published in 2005, *Ritual Brotherhood in Byzantium: Monks, Laymen, and Christian Ritual* will be published in March 2016.



## DANIEL L. SCHWARTZ

### **The Social Context of Religious Change in Late Antique Syria**

The unprecedented scale allowed by recent developments in digital prosopography make possible for the first time the integration of a broad set of data on elite and subaltern actors. Syriaca.org’s SPEAR project (Syriac Persons, Events, and Relations) provides an important tool for analyzing the social context of historical change that extends beyond merely the elite actors who appear most frequently in our narrative histories. This paper will introduce SPEAR and use data from the letters of Severus of Antioch to demonstrate the utility of the project for understanding religious developments in Late Antiquity.

#### **Biographical notice**

Daniel L. Schwartz is Assistant Professor of History and Associate Director of the Initiative for Digital Humanities, Media, and Culture at Texas A&M University. He is also the director of Syriaca.org and the editor of Syriaca.org’s SPEAR project (Syriac Persons, Events, and Relations), an online prosopographical research tool. He is the author of *Paideia and Cult: Christian Initiation in Theodore of Mopsuestia* and the editor, with Arietta Papaconstantinou and Neil McLynn, of *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond*. His work has also appeared in *The Journal of Early Christian Studies*.



## MARK SHERIDAN

### The Development of the Concept of Poverty from Athanasius to Cassian

Athanasius portrays Antony explaining that there are two reasons for the monk to work: to support himself and to have enough to give to the poor. The attitude toward poverty will also be examined in the Pachomian cenobitic (koinonitic?) structure. For Evagrius it is a question of struggling against philargyria, as it is for Cassian who inherited the notion of the eight principal thoughts (*logismoi*) from Evagrius. However, Cassian introduces a new idea, that of “the inner man.” External poverty is not the real goal, but rather the elimination of the inner desire for superfluous possessions. Cassian also inherits and uses the Athanasian/Antonian work ethic. These themes will also be examined in the light of Peter Brown’s “making the camel pass through the eye of the needle.”

Mark Sheridan is a Benedictine monk living in Abu Ghosh in the Holy Land and professor emeritus in the Faculty of Theology of the Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, Rome, where he served as dean of the Faculty of Theology (1998-2005) and Rector Magnificus (2005-2009) of the Athenaeum. Among his publications there are Genesis 12-50 in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series, *Rufus of Shotep: Homilies on the Gospels of Matthew and Luke*, and *From the Nile to the Rhone and Beyond: Studies in Early Monastic Literature and Scriptural Interpretation*. He is a specialist in Coptic language and literature. Since 2004 he has been a member of the Joint International Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches



## DIONISIJ SHLENOV

### The Image of the Emperor’s Power in Ascetical Literature

The images of the emperor’s power are self-evident in historical or political texts. But in ascetical literature they do not appear often. In my paper, I will take into consideration those images of imperial power used for the sake of spiritual perfection. One of the paradigms, penthos kat’hekastin, is found in Symeon New Theologian.

### Biographical notice

The hegumenos Dionisij Shlenov graduated in 1998 from Moscow Theological Academy at Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra. He was tonsured and ordained a priest in the same year. Since 1999 he has been one of the initiators of the revival of interest in the study of classical languages and of contemporary Greek at the Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary. Since March 2010 he has been director of the Academy’s library and since 2012 head of Greek Christian Literature in the department of Christian Literature. He is author of more than 100 scientific and poetical publications, including: “Poetical Pages of Byzantine History”, in *Theologia: Encounter of Orient and Occident*, Moscow, 2014; and “The Moscow Theological Academy and Trinity Saint-Sergius Lavra in Poetry,” in *The Lyrical Journal Dedicated to 700 Years Jubilee of the Birth of Sergius of Radonezh and 200 Years Jubilee of the Academy*, Sankt-Petersburg, 2014.



## URIEL SIMONSOHN

### **Kinship and Community: The Social Subversiveness of Religiously-Mixed Families in the Early Islamic Period**

A community of faith, a social arrangement designed to govern the lives of believers, has been presented by scholars of Late Antiquity as a hallmark of a period that saw the convergence of religious and social sentiments. Rather than citizenship, social estates, ethnicity, and tribal membership, the late antique heritage of the rabbinic *qahal*, Christian ecclesia, and Islamic *umma* signify the dominance of a new type of communal life that evolved around God and cult. Accordingly, believers were called upon to prioritize their God upon their parents and children (Mat. 10:37; Q 58:22) and detach themselves from their kinfolk who adhered to a different faith. Yet despite clerical endeavors, numerous and diverse types of evidence strongly suggest that family bonds were not easily suppressed and that kinship loyalties remained intact despite religious differences. In my talk I shall seek to highlight this tension between the notion of communities of faith and kinship sentiments as it shows up in the early Islamic period.

### **Biographical notice**

Uriel Simonsohn is a lecturer in the department for Middle Eastern History at the University of Haifa. Simonsohn's research focuses on the shared social and cultural histories of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the early Islamic period. He is the author of *A Common Justice: The Legal Allegiances of Christians and Jews under Early Islam* (Penn UP, 2011) and has published several articles on topics such as extra-confessional litigation, conversion to Islam, intermarriage, and legal and historiographic adaptations in the context of interreligious encounters.



## PHILIPPA TOWNSEND

### **Conflict and Community in the Book of Revelation**

Traditional readings of the New Testament book of Revelation have often claimed that its author and first readers were alienated from the mainstream Jewish community, and that the text envisions the Christian Church instead as the new and true Israel. This paper examines anew the relationship of Revelation to Judaism and explores the view that, far from fomenting conflict with Jews, this text may have drawn its first readers more deeply into a connection with Jewish history and traditions, but also with the fate and the sufferings of the earthly Jerusalem, its people, and its temple in the aftermath of the Jewish War with Rome.

### **Biographical notice**

Philippa Townsend received her PhD from Princeton University and is now Chancellor's Fellow of New Testament and Christian Origins at the University of Edinburgh. While her primary interest is in early Christianity, she has published on a variety of topics in ancient Mediterranean religion, including Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism. She is currently working on a book entitled *Blood and Seed: Sacrifice, Kinship, and the Emergence of Christianity*.



## NELU ZUGRAVU

### Christianity as a Factor of Dissolution and Aggregation in the Works of John Chrysostom

In a polemical and engaged manner, John Chrysostom often evoked in his homilies and exegeses two of Christianity's multiple facets: on the one hand, its role in undermining and breaking down the traditional values (social, family, moral, cultural) of late antique communities, and, on the other hand, its constructive ability to transform and bring together these communities around new values, to create new identities, to shape new behaviors.

### Biographical notice

Professor Nelu Zugravu teaches late antique history and civilization at the "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, where he leads the Centre for Classical and Christian Studies, and directs doctoral research. He was a visiting Professor through the LLP-Erasmus program at the Università di Bari Aldo Moro, Dipartimento di Studi Classici e Cristiani; the Centro di Studi Micaelici e Garganici (Monte Sant'Angelo); Centro di Spiritualità Sanguis Christi (Trani); Università di Bari Aldo Moro; and at the Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici, Università degli Studi di Torino. He has been a fellow of the KAAD (Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst in Bonn, 2002–2003), of the Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät der Universität Würzburg, Lehrstuhl für Ost-kirchen-geschichte und Ökumenische Theologie, Bayerische Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg, of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Rom (DAI) and of the École Française d'Athènes. He is the author of *Geneza creștinismului popular al românilor* (București, 1997), *Erezii și schisme la Dunărea Mijlocie și de Jos în mileniul I* (Iași, 1999), *Roma. Politică și aculturație. Introducere la problema romanizării* (Iași, 1999), "«Orientaux» dans la Dobroudja romaine. Une approche onomastique," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium Ethnic Contacts and Cultural Exchanges North and West of the Black Sea from the Greek Colonization to the Ottoman Conquest*, Iași, 2005 (with Roxana Curcă) and "De nouveau sur les provinciales. À partir d'une idée de Demetrio S. Marin," in *Classica et Christiana*.



## SLOBODAN ĆURČIĆ

Among Peter Brown's friends and highly valued invited participants to the conference *Faith and Community around the Mediterranean* was professor Slobodan Ćurčić. We profoundly regret that an unexpected circumstance prevented him from coming to Bucharest. Nevertheless his place is in this booklet, to honor his very important contribution to understanding religion and human creativity in the Byzantine empire, and as a token of friendship.

He was professor Emeritus of Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture and Monumental Decoration at Princeton University, Slobodan Ćurčić gave architecture in this historical time and space the status of a major field of study. His contribution was determinant in understanding the symbolic, technical and cultural aspects of the architectural domain of creativity.

Studies like "The Church as a Symbol of Cosmos in Byzantine Architecture and Art," (2013); "Divine Light: Symbolic and Material Aspects of Byzantine Architecture (2012); "Aesthetic Shifts in Late Antique Art: Abstraction, Dematerialization, and Two-Dimensionality," (2011); "Relevance and Irrelevance of Space in Byzantine Ecclesiastical Architecture," (2011); "Living Icons' in Byzantine Churches: Image and Practice in Eastern Christianity," (2011) are groundbreaking for describing the connections conceived and operated by the Byzantine man between the metaphysical and the physical worlds. The research of Slobodan Ćurčić is thus a major contribution to historical and religious anthropology.

Slobodan Ćurčić is also the author of the first exhaustive synthesis of the history of architecture in the Balkans throughout more than one millennium, extending from the pre-Christian Roman empire to the post-Christian Islamic empire of the Ottomans: *Architecture in the Balkans from Diocletian to Süleyman the Magnificent* (Yale University Press, 2010).

Originating in the Balkans, with connections in almost all the countries of the region, Slobodan Ćurčić became through his intellectual and professional journey in US universities an intellectual and spiritual bridge between Eastern and Western European civilizations.



## PARTENERI:



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