

ABSTRACTS

Faith and Community around the Mediterranean. In Honor of Peter R. L. Brown.

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Petre Guran and David A. Michelson

Introduction: Dynamics of Faith and Community around the Mediterranean

Over the past century, the work of Peter R. L. Brown has repeatedly broken new ground as a model for understanding the centrality of religion in the Mediterranean cultures of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This article is the introduction to a special issue of *Études byzantines et post-byzantines* in honour of Peter Brown and summarizes the findings of essays by an international group of scholars whose work both refines and challenges Brown's legacy.

Peter R. L. Brown

Reflections on Faith and Community around the Mediterranean

This article was delivered as the closing address given by Peter Brown to the symposium "Faith and Community around the Mediterranean (300-1500)" organized in his honour by the Institute for Advanced Studies, New Europe College and held in Bucharest and Iași, Romania, March 7 – 10, 2016. The article describes the contribution of Romanian scholarship to the author's own study of Late Antiquity and Byzantium and calls—with renewed urgency—for a *pointilliste* approach to writing history, a level of nuance that allows us to see a far more humane and flexible side of late antique and Byzantine orthodoxies and a rejection of the vehement black and white stereotypes which circulate all too easily.

Claudia Rapp

New Religion—New Communities?

Christianity and Social Relations in Late Antiquity and Beyond

This article takes a fresh look at the oft-repeated claim that the novel character of Christianity caused major changes in Late Roman society. It follows current scholarship in emphasizing that change was gradual until a 'totally Christian society' (Peter Brown) was achieved by the early Middle Ages and draws attention to two social relationships that have no precedent in previous times: baptismal sponsorship and ritual brotherhood.

David A. Michelson

"Salutary Vertigo": Peter R. L. Brown's Impact on the Historiography of Christianity

This article examines the impact which Peter R. L. Brown's half century of scholarship has made on the historiography of Christianity. The author surveys five recurring motifs or theoretical approaches to Christianization which epitomize Brown's interpretive method as an historian of Christianity: Christianization as social change, Christianization as continuity, Christianization as revolution, Christianization as simultaneously diverse and universal, and Christianization as unfamiliar. Individually, these themes challenge monolithic interpretations of "Christianization" in Late Antiquity. Taken as a whole, these themes reflect Brown's emphasis on the paradoxical aspects of Christianity in Late Antiquity. As Brown himself has put it, his goal in constantly overturning scholarly assumptions about Christianization was to achieve "a sense of the salutary

vertigo” in which the historian encounters ancient Christianity with “the same combination of wonder and respect that makes for fruitful travel in a foreign land”.

Craig H. Caldwell III

Peter Brown and the Balkan World of 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 Brown’s conception of Late Antiquity has embraced the Balkan region and its people. This article explores the recognition and reinterpretation of south-eastern 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.

Philippa Townsend

“Towards the Sunrise of the World”: Universalism and Community in Early Manichaeism

This article focuses on the *Cologne Mani Codex* (CMC), a collection of stories about Mani’s early life, his break from the Baptist sect of his upbringing, and the beginning of his mission, to explore how Mani’s universalism shaped new conceptions of community formation. Ultimately, what emerges from the CMC is not just a description of why Manichaeism is better than other religions, but a reconceptualization of what a religious community should be.

Petre Guran

Church, Christendom, Orthodoxy:

Late Antique Juridical Terminology on the Christian Religion

The article is a terminological analysis of the legal literature produced in the Roman Empire from the fourth to the sixth centuries related to Christianity as the new religion of the Empire. From a legal point of view, conceptual theology (i.e., philosophically formulated doctrine) is reduced to an extremely simple outline, which merely points to the Trinity or refers to the Nicene creed. The terminology of the Theodosian and Justinianic codes are conservative, the Empire thinks of Christianity as a public cult. Thus we encounter terms like *religio divina*, as the religious organization of the Empire; *fides* as a reference to the Nicene Creed; the believer, *christianus catholicus*, as member of a *religio catholica*, where an imperial universality is also implied. In the first section of Justinian’s code, two terms deserve special attention: “catholic”, which appears 32 times, and “orthodox”, 45 times. The first term is used more frequently before the council of Chalcedon, the second term predominates after. Meanwhile, “*christianitas*” appears only twice. There is just one occurrence where “*ecclesia*” means the Church as institution of Christianity. It is not an institution which stands up in front of the Empire, but merely the Empire’s official cult. Only by the time of Justinian—after the long Acacian schism with Rome—does *sacerdotium* appear as object of special care of the emperor, his partner in the fulfilment of God’s will. This emerging distinction between a community whose preoccupation is its survival in time and another community concerned with the necessary conditions of individual salvation finds its fulfilment in medieval Christianity.

Nelu Zugravu

John Chrysostom on Christianity as a Factor in the Dissolution and Aggregation of Community in the Ancient World

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, religious) of 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 behaviours. The first part of article examines the domains whose existence was undermined by Christianity (state, communities, ethno-religious groups, juridical and political entities, socio-political and professional categories, family, kinship, civil law, customs, habits, traditional religion with its entire underlying structure) and the lexicon employed by John Chrysostom for underlining the subversive action of the new religion. The second part of this study concerns the opposite phenomenon: the ways by which Christianity—once officially established—reconstructed the unity and identity of communities around new values, practices and behaviours. The following rhetoric is found in the works of John Chrysostom: a constant emphasis on the Christian identity of Antioch; implementing a true peri-urban sacred topography through the celebration of feasts, particularly of martyrs, in the churches of the *khôra*; the constant instructing of the believers to avoid profane gatherings and areas, particularly the theatre and the hippodrome; incessant advice to the public to constantly attend church; the sustained study of the Scriptures, as a weapon “against pagans, and against Jews, and against many heretics”; finally, an exhortation to believers to embrace a conduct guided by the two fundamental values of Christianity: love and peace.

Mark Sheridan

The Development of the Concept of Poverty from Athanasius to Cassian

In a series of wide-ranging studies on poverty and wealth in the Early Church, Peter Brown describes the idea of the “working monk” as developed in Egyptian monastic literature: “Monks in Egypt were expected to create ... surplus and to give it to the poor. Briefly, they were to act as ideal Christian householders”. Brown also notes that: “papyrus evidence from the fourth century shows that monks often owned property. Despite the insistence of later theorists such as John Cassian (who wrote in the 420s in distant Marseilles), monks were not expected to divest themselves of private wealth in favour of their monastery. This did not happen until the age of Justinian”. This article proposes a clarification to Brown's work. John Cassian was bilingual and had lived for some time in Egypt, probably in the monastery of St. Macarius in the Wadi Natrun (Abu Makar). He had a first-hand knowledge of how the monks lived. This article engages traces the development of monastic concepts of poverty from Athanasius, to Pachomius, to John Cassian. Both the Pachomian cenobitic monks and the hermits like Antony as portrayed by Athanasius were committed to making their own living through work. They were actually charitable institutions and provided employment opportunities to many as they do today in many countries including Egypt. This article argues that Cassian's program of renunciation must be understood through his key idea of the “inner man”.

Kevin Kalish

The Language of Asceticism:

Figurative Language in St. John Climacus' Ladder of Divine Ascent

Sprinkled throughout the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* of St. John Climacus are striking and unexpected uses of figurative language, often in the form of similes and analogies. These frequently take the form of constructions along the lines of “x is like a man who” followed by an

absurd situation. This article considers the role of these literary devices in the text and how they function within the larger ascetic teaching of the Ladder.

Jack Tannous

Early Islam and Monotheism: An Interpretation

This article attempts an account the evolution of belief in One God among Muslims, from the earliest revelations of the Qur'an into the eighth century AD. It suggests that Islamic notions of monotheism received more precise definition as the Muslim community came into contact with other groups that also professed belief in One God. Particularly important for this development were Muslim interactions with Christians who held to a Trinitarian understanding of monotheism.

Uriel Simonsohn

Family Does Matter:

Muslim–Non-Muslim Kinship Ties in the Late Antique and Medieval Islamic Periods

Instances of confessionally-mixed family ties from the early and middle Islamic periods, specifically of ties that endured the conversion of a family member to another confession or the choice of individuals to marry outside the confessional fold, tend to remain at the margins of modern historiography. A common anticipation is that conversion to Islam and exogamous marriages resulted in the severance of family and communal ties with former confessional peers. The notion finds support in the ideals and legal principles that dominate Christian, Islamic, and Jewish legal and narrative texts. Yet it was a notion which had first and foremost evolved in the minds of confessional leaders who sought to sustain communal demarcation vis-à-vis inter-confessional integration. Its origins are to be traced in Late Antiquity, a period that saw the convergence of social and spiritual sentiments within the meaning of communal membership. Rather than citizenship, ethnicity, or tribal affiliation, the late antique legacy of the rabbinic *qahal*, Christian *ecclesia*, and Islamic *umma* signify the dominance of a new type of communal life that evolved around faith and cult. Accordingly, believers were called upon to prioritize God upon parents, siblings, and children (Mat. 10:37; Q 58:22), and offer undivided loyalty to their confessional community. Yet despite clerical endeavours, threats and dangers of various kinds, there is much to suggest that kinship was not easily suppressed and that family ties remained intact despite confessional differences. This article highlights this tension between the notion of communities of faith and kinship sentiments as it shows up in the early and middle Islamic periods.

Thomas A. Carlson

Faith Among the Faithless?

Theology as Aid or Obstacle to Islamization in Late Medieval Mesopotamia

“Faith” was an important component of medieval group identity, but its social dynamic remains obscure. While Muslims and Christians both called themselves “believers,” the term seemed more important to Christian minorities than to dominant Muslims in the fifteenth century CE. Yet beliefs were shared with different scopes, and Christians in fifteenth-century Mesopotamia emphasized the Trinity and Incarnation over sectarian difference, perhaps to hinder Islamization.

Maria Mavroudi

Faith and Community: Their Deployment in the Modern Study of Byzantino-Arabica

The article outlines scholarly developments of the last thirty years in the study of Byzantium and the Arabs and places them within the political, social, and economic considerations of this period. It explains why Byzantium is important in order to avoid crude oppositions between an Islamic “East” and a Christian “West”. Further, it asks how present concerns may safely guide investigations of the past and uses the scholarship of Peter Brown to propose an answer.

Dionysius Shlenov

Images of Royal Power in Byzantine Ascetic Literature:

“King” and “Penthos” in the Works and Background of St. Symeon the New Theologian

This article offers insights into royal power and its inner spiritual as seen by hermit monks and Christian writers in the middle Byzantine period. This article is the first study to offer a comparative analysis of the connection between *penthos* (“lamentation”) and “the king” in the *Catechetical Discourses* of the Venerable Symeon the New Theologian. The article also examines historical descriptions of Byzantine imperial imagery including the king’s white robe as a sign of mourning, the tradition of the king’s lament for his family, and the people’s lament for the king. These descriptions offer a vivid background for the study of lament as a key virtue of Christian asceticism. As historical background to the works of St. Symeon, the article examines how the rule of Basil II, the Bulgar Slayer, could have inspired the royal imagery in the *Catechetical Discourses*. Similarly, the posthumous fate of the remains of Emperor Basil during the destruction of Constantinople by the crusaders in the thirteenth century offers a postscript which illustrates the main subject of the article.

Matthew J. Milliner

Emblems of the End: Byzantium’s Dark Angels

While scholarly discourse describes the behaviour of icons after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 as their “afterlife”, this article argues that the truth is closer to reincarnation. Icons do not die so much as they are reborn, retaining their original meaning and force. This paper traces the Virgin of the Passion icon as it reappears in the Renaissance, Rome, and Romania, a timely companion to varying epochs of suffering and collapse.

Peter R. L. Brown and Petre Guran

In Search of the Génie du christianisme: An Interview with Peter Brown.

This article is an interview with Peter R. L. Brown about teaching and research which was conducted by Petre Guran in Princeton, USA in 2006. The interview is an intellectual snapshot of a formative era for the study of Late Antiquity and Byzantium at Princeton University under a circle of faculty which included Brown, Averil Cameron, Michael Cook, Slobodan Ćurčić, Maria Mavroudi, Manolis Papoutsakis, and Brent Shaw among others. The interview offers insight into the origins of Brown’s own vision of Late Antiquity including his training as a medievalist, his own religious experiences, and changes in his thought and scholarship over time.