Bojan Aleksov
University College London

From Byzantium to the West and Back: South Slavs on the Confessional Edge

South Slavs were gradually christianised into the Byzantine confessional sphere from 7th-10th centuries. In the high Middle Ages, the influence from Rome overcame that of Constantinople in the Western and Northern areas of the Balkans and spread throughout the peninsula. Yet, confessional boundaries were far from entrenched. Confessional borders and conflict only spread when foreign invaders took hold from 16th century onwards, although borders remained porous and conflict was interspersed with cooperation. It was only the Age of Nationalism that cemented the boundaries, while at the same time fusing national and confessional identities. Although clearly situational and contextual, this process set the framework for scholarly research of the past and influenced public and media perception of confessional history, an influence that remains unchallenged to this day.

Richard Engl
Ludwig-Maximilian University, Munich

"Discord" or "Dangerous Vicinity"? Christian-Muslim Exchange in Medieval Southern Italy (13th Century CE)

For a broader analysis of religious exchange in the Middle Ages, aside from the contacts between Latin and Greek Christianity, Christian-Muslim relations deserve attention. After all, Islam had emerged as the second state-building monotheism in the seventh century CE. Consequently, Christian-Muslim encounters have been relatively well researched for the Middle East and the Iberian Peninsula. Less attention, however, has been paid to Muslim life in Christian dominated Southern Italy in the 13th century. This holds true in spite of promising documentary conditions, which can provide valid insights into Christian-Muslim contacts in the Central Mediterranean: in the 13th century, a royal chancery registration of unique intensity within Latin Europe flourished on the Peninsula.

Drawing from these and further sources, the paper gives an overview of Christian-Muslim interactions in 13th century Southern Italy. Based on representative examples several interconnected issues are investigated: the inclusion and exclusion of Muslims in the medieval Christian realm, the significance of religion for political actions and for group formation, the hybridisation of lifestyles and the modes of communication between speakers of different languages adhering to different religions.

By doing so, the paper sheds new light on the agency of Muslims under Christian rule and on the long-term dynamics of Christian-Muslim contacts in Medieval Italy. By challenging older, more Eurocentric and teleological views, a picture of underestimated Muslim opportunities for exerting influence and of less determined historical outcomes emerges. Obviously, religious affiliation could be less important for group formation than political, social and economic interests. Whereas stable political conditions, frequent contacts and participation in respective – even nonverbal – modes of communication fostered peaceful interreligious coexistence, especially *intra*religious discord and the immigration of intransigent foreigners could fuel violent conflicts.

Sergey Ivanov
Higher School of Economics, Moscow

Fighting Byzantium, Savoring Byzantium

The role of the Oecumenical Patriarch in the recent scandal around the Church of Ukraine's claim for autocephaly has demonstrated, even to those in Russia who had no interest in ecclesiastical matters, that a modest parish in the Fanar district of Istanbul can square off with the huge Moscow Patriarchate. What makes the former so strong is that it impersonates the Byzantine Empire. Today, the task of handling the Byzantine heritage in Russia has spread from the domain of historiosophy into the vast expanses of politics and propaganda.

During the last ten years, mentions of Byzantium and its inheritance have become frequent in Russian media, and the discourse has been invariably that of Russian greatness, Russian isolationism and the Russian soul. Byzantium has been viewed as a basis of Russian uniqueness. This "Byzantine" discourse has been always defensive and anti-Western. Yet, the recent political crisis caused by the Oecumenical patriarch's pledge to grant autocephaly to the Ukrainian Church has shown that today's "Byzantium" is as hostile towards Russia as is the hated West, in fact, the two are closely entangled. This situation is inevitably pushing the ideologues of the Russian "Sonderweg" towards a more aggressive appropriation of the "real", "core" Byzantium by distancing themselves from the Greeks who allegedly betrayed the "Byzantine spirit".

Yet, the most intriguing and unpredictable part of the story is that, in spite of all propaganda, in the realm of commercial advertisement, the image of Byzantium is used exclusively as a symbol of luxury, sumptuosity and grandeur.

Tamar Rotman
Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv

Methods of identification in the hagiographical corpus of Gregory of Tours

Gregory of Tours, the sixth-century bishop, historian, and hagiographer, lived in a changing, post-Roman world and was affected by the identity crisis that followed the disintegration of the Roman Empire. His response to these changes is evident throughout his historiographical and hagiographical writings, and this paper aims to examine how Gregory used his hagiographical corpus in order to face this identity crisis and construct a Gallo-Christian identity for his Gallic audience. The paper focuses on three hagiographical works of Gregory of Tours – the *Glory of the Martyrs*, the *Glory of the Confessors* and the *Vita Patrum*. Scholars who try to reconstruct the history of sixth-century Gaul by using the writing of Gregory of Tours, tend to overlook these works. However, examination of these works is crucial, especially for the purpose of reaching a better understanding of the identity discourse of the period. As will be demonstrated in this paper, there is a certain geographical and chronological sequence that binds together Gregory's hagiographical collections in the form of an ecclesiastical history. This history, I shall argue, was meant to promote a specific Gallo-Christian identity. In order to do so, Gregory included miracle accounts of non-Gallic saints and martyrs in his hagiographical collections. Among them one can find accounts of incidents that took place or involved saints from Spain, Syria, Constantinople, Palestine, Armenia and several other places. These accounts helped Gregory to define "others" against which he set a Gallo-Christian identity that was simultaneously based on local, geographical markers as well as universal religious ones.

Savvas Neocleous
University of Cyprus, Nicosia

Unum in catholica fide: Latin Attitudes to the Greeks in the Long Twelfth Century

This paper will examine Greek attitudes to the Latins and vice versa in terms of religion. The investigation will be conducted through an examination of a range of Greek and Latin historiographical, theological and literary sources. Our survey will cover the period from the last quarter of the eleventh century, when Pope Gregory VII first conceived the idea of the union of Christendom under papal leadership for the liberation of Eastern Christians, to the decades that followed 1204, when the crusading enterprise went out of papal control and ended up destroying the very empire which it had initially set out to defend. During the long twelfth century, a combination of factors led Greeks and Latins into closer contact. In turn, this contact naturally led to increased knowledge between the two Christian denominations of medieval Europe. The present paper will explore how this contact and knowledge shaped perceptions and attitudes between the two groups and identify what these perceptions and attitudes really were.

Antje Steinert
Johannes Gutenberg-University, Mainz

Religious Exchange in Cretan Wall Paintings? An Exceptional Group of Churches with Decorations from the Beginning of the 14th Century

The Latin occupation of Crete (1211-1669) brought major changes to the Orthodox inhabitants. Waves of Venetian colonists ensured a larger presence of Latins on former Byzantine land. Administrative structures were adapted to the centralistic model of the Venetian Republic. The interaction of the Cretan people with the Venetian colonists can be detected in different aspects of their lives. One of these spheres was religion. The Orthodox bishops were banished and replaced, while Church property was confiscated. In contrast, newly installed mural paintings in over 800 small churches mostly in rural regions seem to undermine the assumption that the Cretans still identified themselves as Byzantine and Orthodox. Though the pictorial programme follows the Byzantine tradition, elements uncommon to Byzantine art prove a certain interest and exchange with the Latin occupants. A group of five churches in the Western part of the island attracts special attention, because they are said to be the work of Western artists. These churches show a style uncommon to 14th century Cretan wall paintings and yet they are clearly understandable, if sometimes peculiar in expression, to a beholder used to Byzantine iconography. It would seem that foreign painters tried to express Byzantine scenes in Byzantine iconography without being used to their exact formula. Their work resulted in very unusual paintings that prove the occupation of non-Byzantine individuals with the Byzantine pictorial programme. Whether this can be also understood as proof of intermingled identities or is due to the painter`s social background cannot be determined with certainty. Some elements within the paintings, such as the *maniple* – a liturgical clothing of the catholic church – that is shown in two churches, might be understood as religious exchange. But can the visual evidence be proof of a united liturgical service or is it merely a relic of the painter's mind? The paper aims to bring forward evidence that stresses the importance of the visual sources in addition to the written ones.

Mihai Grigore
Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz

Politics of Monks. Political Hesychasm in Wallachia and Moldavia at the junction of Byzantium and Slavs (14th to 16th centuries)

The collapse of the Byzantine Empire, after 1204, and again, after 1453, signified for the Eastern Christianity from Moscow to the Near East the disappearance of its cultural, spiritual, and political guide. In this connection, Wallachia and Moldavia played a special role as Orthodox autonomous political entities not conquered by the Turks. They became advocates and sponsors of the 'Orthodox commonwealth' from Bulgaria to Syria, bearing the standard of Byzantine tradition in political, cultural, and spiritual life.

One main implication of the irreversible shrinking of the Byzantine State was of religious nature. In this fragile context there was the need of an alternative power capable to unify all the Orthodox Christians from Rus' to Constantinople: This was the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The traditional roles inversed, the emperor (who always led directly or indirectly the Church) lost his pre-eminence, while the Patriarch became the regional leader. Upon religious unification in the name of the common Orthodox faith the Patriarchs tried to ensure the cohesion of their flock. To reach this goal the Ecumenical Patriarchs needed to promote an own Orthodox identity in delimitation to Latin Church, which aimed for many centuries at Eastern Christianity's subjection to Papal jurisdiction.

In my paper I ask after the dynamics, which led to this interwoven 'Orthodox Commonwealth'. I argue that the politization of the mystical spirituality of Hesychasm, the transformation of a spiritual theology and practice into an ideological fundament for a new order, was the main way to create and vitalize this 'Orthodox Commonwealth'. That is why I speak of 'Political Hesychasm'. The Ecumenical Patriarchate tried to shape an own confessional identity grounding on dogmatic and practical hesychastic specificity, institutional infrastructure, economic autonomy. In this line of macro-politics, the Danube Principalities Wallachia and Moldavia took a central position.

Nikos Tsivikis
Leibniz-ScienceCampus Mainz "Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident"

Slavic presence or Byzantine absence: the materiality of Christianization in Early Medieval Western Peloponnese (7th-10th century)

Traditional views regarding the history of the Peloponnese after the Sixth century entail that after the gradual migration of Slavic and Avar to the south large parts of the mountainous inlands were left to the rule of these "barbaric" newcomers. It has been further suggested that Slavic presence in the area translated to the withdrawal of Byzantine administration, military and civic, and of the organized Byzantine church. Historical accounts for this period remain extremely fragmented and our understanding of Early Medieval Peloponnese and the co-existence or antagonism of Roman, Post-Roman and Non-Roman populations in the area falls entirely to archaeology. Based on recent finds from Western Peloponnese and the systematic excavation of the site of Messene the paper will discuss the possibilities of further elucidating the process of re-establishing authority and reorganizing the ecclesiastical landscape by the Byzantine State in the western unruly frontier of the Empire.

Susanne Rühling
Leibniz-ScienceCampus Mainz "Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident"

Audible events and musical culture between politics, religion and entertainment. Commons and differences of musical sources from Orient and Occident in the ancient and medival period

Throughout all eras "audible events" were used in communication, ritualization, presentation and finally, within the creation of identity. The ancient as well as the medieval exercise of rule were based on an acoustic component significantly. Music practice and musical instruments played an important role in diplomacy, self-expression, legitimacy, and the changing of identities. This resulted in mutual effects on music theory, playing practice and instrument making, as well as an adaptation of foreign ideas to a new socio-cultural function or a different context of use. In Byzantium, for example, organs were used in the Hippodrome or for acclamation and within the court ceremonial. This tradition was partially exported to the Carolingian Empire and formed there the basis for a new organ tradition, which was later integrated into western Christian liturgy.
This lecture will present a selection of written, pictoral and archaeological "musical sources". Thus, comparisons between different constructions of musical instruments and musical traditions, will shed new light on similarities, differences and developments in the practice of music. In addition, a short insight into the practices of of our project content to a broad public is granted, for example within the exhibition „Byzanz & der Westen. 1.000 vergessene Jahre" at the Schallaburg (AU) in 2018.

Rob Meens
University of Utrecht

Converting Frisians. The evidence of the Paenitentiale Oxoniense II

This paper will discuss the evidence of an early 8th century handbook for priests on how to deal with sinners. Such books were developed in the Insular world from the sixth century onwards. The 'Paenitentiale Oxoniense II' was composed on the Continent and demonstrates connections with Frisian customs, suggesting that it was used in the early days of the Frisian mission. The text provides unique evidence for the processes of conversion which will be discussed in this contribution.