

# HELLENISM, EARLY JUDAISM AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

## Transmission and Transformation of Ideas

12–13 September 2019, Prague, Czech Republic

Conference venue: Vila Lanna, V Sadech 1, Prague 6

## Program

### Thursday 12 September 2019

8:45 Registration

9:00 Opening of the conference

#### Keynote speaker:

9:30 Prof. Anders Klostergaard Petersen, University of Aarhus

**Hellenism as a Socio-Cultural Precondition for Israelitic Religion and Early Christ-Religion. Evolutionary Reflections on the Topic**

Discussion

*Coffee break*

#### *Session 1*

10:50 Nina V. Braginskaya / Anna I. Shmaina-Velikanova, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow / Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow

**Eusebes logismos: Crossroad of Hellenistic, Jewish and Christian thought**

11:15 David Cielontko, Charles University, Prague

**Cosmology of the Parables of Enoch**

11:40 Barbara Crostini, Uppsala University

**Praying with the Jews: Hesychios of Jerusalem's glosses on the Ode of Manasseh**

Discussion

*Lunch*

#### *Session 2*

14:00 Ana Carolina Delgado, Argentinian Research Council

**Ist der pädagogische Mythos von Philon eine "edle Lüge"?**

14:25 Jiří Hoblík, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

**Power and Powers in Philo of Alexandria: Philo of Alexandria as a Philosophical Interpreter of the Bible**

14:50 Damian Mrugalski, OP, Pontifical University of John Paul II, Warsaw  
**The Notion of Divine Infinity and Unknowability: Philo, Clement and Origen of Alexandria in a Polemic with Greek Philosophy**

Discussion

*Coffee break*

*Session 3*

15:50 Juraj Franek, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague  
**Seal of Solomon in Greek Epigraphy**

16:15 Lili Toth, Central European University, Budapest  
**The Leading Role of Hellenization on the Creation of Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Iconography: The Creation of Man on a Painted Textile from the 4th Century Egypt**

Discussion

16:50 Haim Goldfus, Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva  
**Archaeology as an essential tool in defining early Judaism and Christianity as a Hellenistic phenomenon**

17:15 Alex Hon Ho, IP, Chinese University of Hong Kong  
**Hellenism as Economic informal institution to reduce transaction cost in the development stage of early Christianity in the light of New Institutional Economics**

Discussion

**Friday 13 September 2019**

**Keynote speaker:**

9:30 Ilaria L.E.Ramelli, University of Oxford  
**Origen's Philosophical Allegoresis of Scripture and Connections with Platonism**

Discussion

*Coffee break*

*Session 4*

10:50 Waldemar Linke, CP, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw  
**Jesus Christ, glory and knowledge. Eph 1, 15-23: Christian Judaic or Hellenistic text?**

11:15 Doru Constantin Doroftei, University of Hamburg / University of Tübingen  
**The Eucharist of the Early Church as a Jewish-Hellenistic Synthesis of the Jerusalem Temple Cult**

11:40 Jan M.Kozlowski, University of Warsaw  
**Resurrection in the Intertext. Pagan Sources of Paul's Areopagus Speech (Acts 17:22-31)**

Discussion

*Lunch*

*Session 5*

**Keynote speaker:**

14:00 Daniel Boyarin, University of California, Berkeley  
**A Surprising Confluence between Mark and Paul**

Discussion

15:00 Jan A. Dus, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague  
**Biblical Quotations in Pseudo-Ignatius' Letters**

15:25 Radka Fialová, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague  
**The Figure of Socrates and the True Philosophy in the Works of Justin Martyr**

Discussion

*Coffee break*

*Session 6*

16:20 Daniel Lemeni, West University of Timișoara, Romania  
**Philosophers, Monks, and the Spiritual Exercises in Late Antiquity**

16:45 Alison John, Ghent University  
**Church Schools of Late Antique Gaul: Traditions of Hellenistic, Roman, and Jewish Learning**

17:10 Manolis Spanakis, University of Cyprus  
**Interpretations of Gregory of Nyssa's Five Stages of the Spiritual Life in the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum* by Ps.-Apollinarius**

Discussion

*Conclusion*

## Abstracts

### Keynote speakers

#### **Prof. Ilaria L. E. Ramelli**

Professor of Theology and K. Britt Chair, Graduate School of Theology, SHMS (Angelicum University, US)

Fowler Hamilton Fellow, Oxford University

Senior Research Fellow, Durham University

Humboldt-Forschungspreis Senior Fellow, Erfurt University, MWK

Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan

### **Origen's Philosophical Allegoresis of Scripture and Connections with Platonism**

I shall present the importance and of Origen's mind, learning, and oeuvre, and his attitude towards philosophy, both the whole of philosophy and especially Plato and Platonism. This will be framed against the backdrop of Origen's intellectual landscape, within which Christianity was negotiating itself as philosophy, and of the history of philosophy and theology, with some hints of political history. The main reasons will be pointed out why Origen was envied and misinterpreted, a victim of defamation, persecution, and gossip, but was also hugely admired, defended by apologists, and received philosophically, theologically, exegetically, and literarily—with more or less insight and visibility—not only in late antiquity, but even until now. Origenism is defined by István Perczel as 'a school of Christian philosophy, equal in its intellectual acumen to the Neoplatonist schools of philosophy, but dedicated to the Christian revelation'. Its initiator is Origen, who possessed 'professional competence in the field of philosophy', which was not 'pragmatist eclecticism'. I agree with Robert Somos in this respect. Indeed, Origen was no pragmatist eclectic, indeed, but aimed at the construction of an 'orthodox' Christian Platonism (against 'heresies', against non-Platonist, wrong philosophies, and against 'pagan' Platonism). Origen not only was in his lifetime 'the leading intellectual of the age', 'the greatest scholar and theologian of the ancient church', and the founder 'of philosophical theology', but no Christian thinker 'is so invisibly all-present as Origen' in later Christian thought and exegesis. We could add that Origen's footprint in Platonism, as well, is likely more remarkable than usually assumed, for example with respect to the notion of hypostasis as individual substance, first bodies, and apokatastasis. Thus, a reassessment of his thought enables a reassessment of almost all of patristic philosophical theology and exegesis, and even some reassessment of ancient philosophy.

Origen was 'the first professional Christian Scripture scholar we know of'. I will address Origen's polemics against some 'pagan' intellectuals about the allegoresis of Scripture and will argue for the role of Origen's allegoresis as a philosophical task.

## **Prof. Anders Klostergaard Petersen**

Department for the Study of Religion, University of Aarhus

Editor of Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift

Member of the editorial boards of: Ancient Philosophy and Religion; Journal for the Study of Judaism, Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement Series; Journal of Scientific Studies of Religion: Inquiry and Explanation; Journal of the Academic Study of Religion; Journal for Studies in Literature and Language

Series co-editor: Apocalypticism: Cross-Disciplinary Explorations

### **Hellenism as a Socio-Cultural Precondition for Israelitic Religion and Early Christ-Religion. Evolutionary Reflections on the Topic**

Looking back at previous scholarship's use of the Judaism-Hellenism binary, a pervasive feature has been to instantiate it in an ideological game the outcome of which was conducive to documenting the superiority of Protestant Christianity over all other cultures/religions. In a first move, Christianity was different and, thereby, superior to Judaism by its embracement of Hellenism. In a second move, Christianity was shown not to be identical with Hellenism which in the dominant form of thinking which the dualism took would have been similarly problematical. In the final move, Christianity's difference from Hellenism was saved by its adherence to the Jewish legacy. Yet, the question of Hellenism cannot be reduced to a question of ideology only. Perhaps we may rethink the Judaism-Hellenism debate by formulating it in terms of differences between Diaspora vs. Palestine, entrepreneurs vs. possessors of power, and situate the discussion in the wider context of bio-cultural evolution and niche construction. From such a perspective, the Judaism-Hellenism binary makes excellent sense as long as the two involved entities are not reified and fossilised into stable and atemporal entities.

**Prof. Daniel Boyarin**

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### **A Suprising Confluence between Mark and Paul**

A body of scholarship has burgeoned in the last decade or so reviving compellingly the thesis that the Gospel of Mark is very close to the Apostle Paul in many of its religious ideas. Earlier work by me showing that Mark 7 does not imply an abandonment of the rules of Kashrut has been suggested as being a challenged to that theory. I propose here that it is not, because Paul himself can be most plausibly read as not abandoning the Torah's kosher laws either but rather attacking Pharisaic extensions thereof. What had seemed a weakness in the theory of Pauline-Markan nexus turns out to be a surprising support for that hypothesis.

**Prof. Nina V. Braginskaya**

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**Dr. Anna I. Shmaina-Velikanova**

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***Eusebes logismos*: Crossroad of Hellenistic, Jewish and Christian thought**

The main concepts in 4 Maccabean book such as καρτερία (“endurance”) or ἐπικράτεια (“mastery”) are central for the Hellenistic philosophy. As for εὐσεβῆς λογισμός, “pious reason”, invented by the author of 4 Maccabean book, it exceeds the Hellenic philosopher’s reason for it has sovereignty over passions and/or sufferings, while ὑπομονή (“tenacity”) is congenial to the Early Church of martyrs. Being an “autokratōr” εὐσεβῆς λογισμός is nevertheless hierarchically subordinated to God. Our suggestion is that “pious reason” is a Greek version of the biblical *sapientia*, “wisdom”, Chochma and/or Torah. Combining theoretical reasoning of Hellenes with the conviction of biblical faith the book made an impact on Christian theology probably due to the long-lasting actuality of this internally antinomical combination.

**David Cielontko, MA**

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**“These are the Secrets of that Oath”: Cosmology in the Parables of Enoch**

The book of the Parables of Enoch (1 En 37-71) contains several passages on cosmology, mainly knowledge of astronomy, meteorology, and the creation: 41:3-8; 43; 44; 59; 60:11-22; 69:13-25. These cosmological passages share a distinctive set of common ideas and motifs, with the special role of the elusive cosmic mutual oath that binds the luminaries and through which the Lord of Spirits created the heaven and earth. In the proposed paper, I will focus on the internal logic of this cosmological passages, as well as on their possible influences within broader Hellenistic context.

**Dr. Barbara Crostini**

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**Praying with the Jews: Hesychios of Jerusalem’s glosses on the Ode of Manasseh**

Hesychios of Jerusalem’s *Commentary on the Odes* (CPG6555) preserved in the tenth-century manuscript, Oxford, Auct. D. 4.1, includes unpublished glosses on the *Ode of*

*Manasseh* that I propose to examine here. This prayer is a text-book case of Judeo-Christian entangled traditions, and distinguishing Jewish from Christian origins for it may not be the best way of approaching the issue of its composition and reception. Rather, I will argue that the continued use of this prayer and its regular appearance in Byzantine Psalter manuscripts is precisely due to its function of strengthening Hebrew connections and its appeal to traditions that echo not only Old Testament, but also Classical models of kingly punishment and repentance.

### **Dr. Ana Carolina Delgado**

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### **Ist der pädagogische Mythos von Philon eine "edle Lüge"?**

In dieser Präsentation wird versucht eine kontroverse Frage im Bereich der Studien über Philon von Alexandrien zu analysieren, d.h. ob Philon, im Gegensatz zu seiner üblichen Kritik am heidnischen Mythos, zugestanden hätte, dass in einigen Gelegenheiten die Heilige Schrift mythologische Teile enthält. Diesbezüglich ist es üblich auf die Abhandlung Philons über den Zorn Gottes hinzuweisen (Deus 20-70): ein "pädagogischer Mythos". In diesem konkreten Fall scheint der Alexandrine tatsächlich das Vorliegen eines Mythos zuzugestehen, und sogar dieses Vorliegen zu rechtfertigen. In dieser Präsentation wird versucht zu beweisen, dass Philon seine argumentative Strategie mit Hilfe der platonischen Idee der "edlen Lüge" (R. III 414) konstruiert hat.

### **Dr. Doru Constantin Doroftei**

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### **The Eucharist of the Early Church as a Jewish-Hellenistic Synthesis of the Jerusalem Temple Cult**

The paper answers the main questions of the conference on the basis of a new insight into the development of the eucharistic ritual of the Early Church. It shows how this ritual originated at the Jerusalem Temple, how the "sectarian" stage of Second Temple Palestine added to it the aspect of group piety and how the Hellenistic Judaism put it in a mystic-universalistic language, a process which enabled the Christian movement to set it at the core of its new ethos.

### **Dr. Jan A. Dus**

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### **Biblical quotations in the Ignatius' and Pseudo-Ignatius' Letters**

The use of Biblical quotations in the Patristic literature reveals a lot about the personality and views of the relevant author. In case of Pseudo-Ignatius (4<sup>th</sup> cent.), whose literary production depends on the authentic Letters of Ignatius of Antioch (2<sup>nd</sup> cent.), the problem of transmission of the biblical texts becomes even more complex. After the consensus was reached about the authenticity of the so-called Middle Version of the seven Ignatius' Letters (M), the so-called Longer Version (i.e. the thirteen Pseudo-Ignatius' Letters: L) was too quickly refused as a fake, composed allegedly only with orthodox intentions. Nevertheless, thanks the scrupulous analysis of links among all three documents (the Bible, Ignatius, Pseudo-Ignatius) we hope to achieve to a more honest picture of the Pseudo-Ignatius: a thinker firmly rooted in Biblical as well as in Classic traditions.

### **Dr. Radka Fialová**

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### **The Figure of Socrates and the true philosophy in the works of Justin Martyr**

The key concept, by which the outstanding Christian apologist of the 2nd century, Justin Martyr, connects old Greek philosophy and Christianity, is the concept of *Logos spermatikos*. Each person has a share in it and bears the semen (*sperma*) of the Logos. An extraordinarily large share in the Logos, and hence the "gift of truth", had the Jewish prophets and the Greek philosophers Heraclitus and Socrates -- they were, in a sense, Christians before Christ. What is the role of Socrates and the notion of the "true philosophy" in the works of Justin Martyr?

### **Dr. Juraj Franek**

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### **Seal of Solomon in Greek Epigraphy**

Except for the variegated texts collected under the rubric of *Testamentum Salomonis*, there are precious few mentions of the famed 'Seal of Solomon' in Greek literary sources. In Greek epigraphic documents, however, we find numerous attestations for a performative use of the seal. My paper will therefore explore different types of Greek epigraphic sources (curse tablets, amulets, gems, magical papyri) containing mentions of the Seal of Solomon, compare the pragmatics of its use and relate these instances to the extant literary texts.

**Prof. Haim Goldfus**

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**Archaeology as an essential tool in defining early Judaism and Christianity as a Hellenistic phenomenon**

Archaeology is an important, many a time even a crucial arena to discuss, and demonstrate the interplay between the Hellenistic, Early Jewish and Christian worlds. In my presentation I intend to exemplify how Hellenistic ideas, concepts, and realia were transmitted and transformed numerous small objects, as well as large monuments, and even complete sites of early Judaism. At a later stage the similar process can be shown in the material culture world of early Christianity.

**Ass. Prof. Jiří Hoblík**

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**Power and Powers in Philo of Alexandria: Philo of Alexandria as a Philosophical Interpreter of the Bible**

The concept of the power in Philo of Alexandria is interesting not only for Philo's two-powers-theory and its connection to the philosophy, but especially for the complex application of the concept. Philo develops the cosmological and historical significance of the power. This brings a fundamental element of his interpretation of the Jewish Bible.

**Ass. Prof. Alex Hon Ho, IP**

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**Hellenism as Economic informal institution to reduce transaction cost in the development stage of early Christianity in the light of New Institutional Economics**

This paper argues, first, in what sense did Hellenism can be understood as informal institutions and how some significant aspects of Hellenism may help to reduce the transaction cost for the development of Christianity in the early Roman empire. In the second part, this paper will analyze how Hellenism in this economic perspective 'may help to facilitate the emergence of Christian and in what ways did they help to shape the development of Christianity in its early stage.

**Dr. Jan M. Kozlowski**

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**Resurrection in the Intertext. Pagan Sources of Paul's Areopagus Speech (Acts 17:22-31)**

It is widely recognized among scholars, that Paul's Areopagus Speech (Acts 17:22-31) is the climax of the Acts of the Apostles narrative. The context suggests that the subject of the speech is Jesus and the resurrection. However, it is only in the speech's final verse that we read about it explicitly. This (apparent) discrepancy has not escaped the scholarly attention. So far, however, no scholar, as it seems, has tried to explain or interpret it overall. Philological analysis shows that the author, through allusions to the pagan literary tradition (Eumenides of Aeschylus, Minos of Epimenides, tradition on Epimenides found in Diogenes Laertius) implicitly evokes the motif of resurrection in the earlier parts of the Areopagus Speech.

**Dr. Alison John**

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**Church Schools of Late Antique Gaul: Traditions of Hellenistic, Roman, and Jewish Learning**

By the fifth century, there was no clear divide between Christianity and classical literary culture. In this context of fluid definitions of Christian and 'classical' identities, Church schools emerged in Gaul, influenced by intellectual and ascetic movements from the eastern empire. Focusing on late antique Church schools of Cassian in Marseilles and Caesarius in Arles, this paper examines the origins of late antique and early medieval Church schools, considering the cultural and religious nexus in which they were born. It examines the influence of Roman and Hellenistic communities, but also the early formation of Christian thought and practice and connections between Christian learning communities and the Jewish educational tradition.

**Dr. Daniel Lemeni**

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**Philosophers, Monks, and the Spiritual Exercises in Late Antiquity**

This paper examines the fundamental role played by Hellenistic philosophy in preserving, transforming, and transmitting spiritual exercises in the early monasticism. Our major premise is that ancient technologies of the self-practiced across philosophical schools were absorbed, transformed and integrated into the mental framework of early Christian

monasticism. Thus, the asceticism represents a "new" type of Christian philosophy, and the monk represents a new "philosopher" in Late Antiquity.

**Waldemar Linke, CP, Dr. hab.**

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**Jesus Christ, glory and knowledge. Eph 1, 15-23: Christian Judaic or Hellenistic text?**

The opposition between Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism and existence of the border between them is a view that has been overcome quite a long time ago. It also reads information about the origins of Christianity. Eph 1: 15-23 is an example of a mixture of two theological languages, but also the entering of the religious culture category of Hellenism into the fundamental structures of early Christian discourse. This is particularly evident in the subject of knowledge that is very widely present in this passage of the biblical text. Understanding the cognitive process and the role of knowledge in salvation is in fact one of the essential markers of Hellenistic culture. From this perspective, in the new light, we can see the question of the form of the text (shorter or longer) in Eph 1: 15.

**Dr. Damian Mrugalski, OP**

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**The Notion of Divine Infinity and Unknowability: Philo, Clement and Origen of Alexandria in a Polemic with Greek Philosophy**

Plotinus is considered the inventor of the notion of divine infinity and unknowability. In fact, however, these themes already appear in Philo, Clement and Origen of Alexandria. The aim of this intervention is to show how philosophical reflection on the Bible led to the emergence of a new philosophical concept, which was then later developed by the founder of Neoplatonism.

**Dr. Manolis Spanakis**

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**Interpretations of Gregory of Nyssa's Five Stages of the Spiritual Life in the *Metaphrasis Psalmorum* by Ps.-Apollinarius**

Current biblical and classical scholarship support the notion that the Hebrew Bible harks back to the Persian and Hellenistic eras and a number of scholars began to observe that the influence of Greek literature on the composition of the Hebrew Bible becomes increasingly

clear. My paper aims to examine the so-called “Homeric Psalter”, a hexametric *Metaphrasis* of the Psalms that conveys some typical elements of late antique Christian poetry. Especially, it would be interesting to thoroughly investigate how Gregory’s five stages of the spiritual life correspond to the five divisions of the Homeric Psalter with allusions to its classical Greek and biblical intertexts (the *Vorlage*). I suggest that, also in the paraphrase, a continual progress in the movement of the soul towards God is found, turning from the first level (evil to good, *Met. Ps.* 1) to the final stage (*Met. Ps.* 105, the restoration of the self to a pre-fallen, angelic condition).

### **Lili Toth**

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### **The Leading Role of Hellenization on the Creation of Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Iconography: The Creation of Man on a Painted Textile from the 4th Century Egypt**

While a flourishing Jewish art appeared, at the end of the second century early Christianity created a great and complex iconographic language adopting elements of Hellenistic and Jewish culture. Since Classical mythological and historical scenes were adopted to represent biblical narratives in the newborn Jewish and Christian art, it is not always evident which religious community created the artwork from this period. This entanglement is well visible in a fourth century painted textile representing Old Testament scenes. The paper’s aim is to trace back the origin of the textile while analysing the aspects of how Hellenistic culture influenced the evolution of both Jewish and early Christian iconography.