

VOLOS ACADEMY FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

FIGURES OF CHRISTIAN  
NARRATIVE TEXTS  
THEOLOGICAL AND SECULAR APPROACHES

PROGRAM  
CV'S  
ABSTRACTS



VOLOS ACADEMY  
FOR THEOLOGICAL  
STUDIES



# PROGRAM

## Thursday May 9, 2019

18.00 Registrations

18.30 - 19.00 Welcome

### Session I

**Moderator: Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis**, Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies

19.00 - 19.30 **Dr. Christos Karakolis**, Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Athens;  
Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

*The “open” history of Nicodemus in the Gospel of John*

19.30 - 20.00 **Dr. Symeon Paschalidis**, President and Professor of the Department of  
Pastoral and Social Theology of the Theological School of the Aristotle University of  
Thessaloniki; Director of the Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies

*Christian faith as dialogue: Models - Functions- Transformations of the dialogical  
patristic and hagiological texts*

20.00 - 20.30 Discussion

20.30 Dinner

## Friday May 10, 2019

### Session II

**Moderator: Rev. Meletis Meletiadis**, Pastor of the Evangelical Church of Volos, Director  
of the Board of the Greek Biblical Society

9.30 - 10.00 **Dr. Myrto Theocharous**, Professor of the Greek Biblical College

*Biblical Laws as Concentrated Narratives: A Narrative Analysis in the Laws of  
Deuteronomy*

10.00 - 10.30 **Dr. John Fotopoulos**, Associate Professor, St. Mary’s College, Notre Dame,  
Indiana (U.S.A.)

*On the Betrayal of Judas: John Chrysostom and Narrative Analysis*

10.30 - 11.00 **Dr. Ekaterini Tsalampouni**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Thessaloniki; Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

*Judas, the slave and deceit: Narrative function, collective memory and the intake of his death*

11.00 - 11.45 Discussion

11.45 - 12.15 Coffee Break

### Session III

**Moderator: Dr. Gregory Stournaras**, Archeologist

12.15 - 12.45 **Dr. Dimitrios Moschos**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Athens; Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

*Contesting teachings on anthropology and history in narratives of the ascetic literature*

12.45-13.15 **Dr. Fotis Vassiliou**, Assistant Professor of the Department of History, Ionian University

*Women's heroism and holiness in the Byzantine popular stories*

13.15 - 13.45 Discussion

13.45 - 15.00 Lunch

### Session IV

**Moderator: Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis**, Deputy Director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Teaching at the Hellenic Open University

15.00-15.30 **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos**, Research Fellow at the Foundation for Religious Studies (Fscire, Bologna), Academic Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies

*The conversio regis as a narrative motive for the spread of Christianity during the Late Antiquity*

15.30-16.00 **Dr. Stavroula Konstantinou**, Associate Professor of the Department of History, University of Cyprus

*Characters and Narration in the Life of Saint Alexios, the Man of God*

16.00 - 16.30 Discussion

**Saturday May 11, 2019**

**Session V**

**Moderator: Dr. Nikos Kouremenos**, Research Fellow at the Foundation for Religious Studies (Fscire, Bologna), Academic Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies

9.30 - 10.00 **Dionysios Skliris**, PhD Sorbonne University

*Theology as performace: Making room for ambiguity in our theological narrative.*

10.00 - 10.30 **Marios-Kyparissis Moros**, PhD candidate, Faculty of Letters, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

*Cain's sign: a poetic conversation of Zoe Karelli and Melissanthi on Genesis*

10.30 - 11.00 Discussion

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee Break

**Session VI**

**Moderator: Fr. Nehme Saliba**, MA in Law, PhD Candidate on Islamic-Christian relations, Head member of the Committee for Ecumenical relations of the Movement of the Orthodox Youth (MJO) of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

11.30 - 12.00 **Rev. Evangelos Ganas**, Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, Parish Priest St. Meletios, Athens

*Gospel and Novel: The Limits of Narrative Theology*

12.00 - 12.30 **Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis**, Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies; Visiting Fellow, KU Leuven; Member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion

*Narrative theology and the quest for dialogue between theology and literature*

12.30 - 13.00 Discussion

13.00 - 14.30 Lunch

**Session VII**

**Moderator: Ioanna Georgiadou**, Social Clinic Psychologist MSc, Systemic Psychotherapist, PhD Candidate of the University of Thessaly

14.30 - 15.00 **Dr. Konstantinos Kornarakis**, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Theology, University of Athens

*Psychodynamic aspects of forgiveness in ascetic narratives*

15.00 - 15.30 **Eleni Karagianni**, M.D., C.G.P., E.C.P., Psychiatrist

*Face to face: genuine encounters between human and divine.*

15.30 - 16.00 **Dr. Dimitris Karagiannis**, Child Psychiatrist-Psychotherapist, Director of the Child Psychopathic Health Center

*The interaction - the therapeutic touch, the miracle*

16.00 - 16.45 Discussion

16.45 - 17.15 Coffee Break

### **Session VIII**

**Moderator: Dr. Christos Karakolis**, Professor of Theological School of Athens, Member of the Board of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, President of "Kairos", the Greek Theological Association for the Improvement of the Religious Education

17.15 - 17.45 **Dr. Marios Koukounaras-Liagkis**, Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Theology, University of Athens

*Narrative and storytelling in classroom: The role of Personhood and community*

17.45 -18.15 **Apostolos Barlos**, MTh, Adult Trainer, Member of the Training Team for Teachers of Religious Education of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

*The Narrative Biblical Texts and Their Teaching at School. An example of a teaching approach to a narrative text based on the Educational Drama technique*

18.15 - 18.45 Discussion

19.00 Closing remarks

### **Sunday May 12, 2019**

7.30 - 10.30 Divine Liturgy at the Church of St. Constantine

## Dr. Christos Karakolis

Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Athens; Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

### The “open” history of Nicodemus in the Gospel of John



The purpose of this paper is to reinterpret the story of Nicodemus as narrated in the Gospel of John through the light of a specific category of implied readers related to the Pharisees. This reinterpretation aims at highlighting implicit aspects of the narrative character of Nicodemus, as well as elements of the Johannine narrative story, which have not been sufficiently investigated so far. In particular, from the examination of John 3: 1-21 it appears that Nicodemus, despite his superficial and inadequate faith, can be positively evaluated as he moves to Jesus, discusses with him and he hears his teaching beyond personal inhibitions and social barriers. In John 7:45-52, Nicodemus proves his faith in Jesus, since in a particularly clever and targeted manner he successfully defends and protects him from being arrested and condemned without trial. Finally, in John 19: 38-42, it becomes clear that Nicodemus' faith has increased, since from the amount of myrrh he offers for the burial of Jesus, it seems that he himself now recognizes him as the Messiah, though not yet as the incarnated Word. From the analysis of Nicodemus' story it follows that it is an "ambiguous" narrative character, which does not complete its path towards Christian faith within the evangelical narrative. Since, as narratively speaking, Nicodemus, as Pharisee represents the whole class of the Pharisees, it seems to act as a model for those readers who have a pharisaic background and can identify with it. Such readers can conclude that there are and may exist other Pharisees like Nicodemus, who narratively functions as a kind of bridge between Christianity and Judaism for the readers of the gospel at the time of its composition but also after it.

**Christos Karakolis** is professor of the New Testament at the Department of Theology of the University of Athens. He received his degree in Theology from the Department of Theology of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in 1990 and continued his studies at the Universities of Regensburg (1991-92) and Tübingen (1992-96). In 1996 he received his Ph.D. from the Department of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Since 1998 he has served as a faculty member at the Theological School of the University of Athens. He has also taught as a visiting professor at the Universities of Bern (2003), Munich (2007-09), Regensburg (2014 and 2016-18) and Zurich (2016), as well as at the Cambridge Institute of Orthodox Theological Studies (2010). He is a member of the advisory committee of the academic journal *Early Christianity* (Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen) and the publishing committee of the New Testament critical editions: *Novum Testamentum* and *UBS Greek New Testament*. He has also been a member of the academic journal *New Testament Studies* (Cambridge University Press). He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Bible Society, the Volos Academy for Theological Studies and the Society of Orthodox Biblical Studies, as well as president of the Panhellenic Theological Association "Kairos". His research interests are mainly focused on the Gospel of John, the Pauline Letters, the Critical edition of the Text and the Orthodox Hermeneutics of the New Testament.



## Dr. Symeon Paschalidis

President and Professor of the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Theological School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; Director of the Patriarchal Institute of Patristic Studies

### **Christian faith as dialogue: Models - Functions- Transformations of the dialogical patristic and hagiological texts**



The need for an in-depth Christian answer initially to the Jewish, and then pagan accusations against Jesus and his followers has led to the writing of various texts by Christian authors in the form of either extensive theological treatises or dialogues in which a number of real or imaginative persons oppose to each other in a basically biblical interpretative framework, representing thus different religious traditions.

The dialogues as a literary genre that flourished in both the Greek and Latin literature, were widely used in the early Christian centuries in the context of Christian apology against its pagan and Jewish accusers. As a brilliant example, we can refer to the earliest spokesman of this genre, the *Dialogue to Tryphonas* by the Christian philosopher and martyr Justin (150-160 AD). As their literary and morphological predecessors, one can recognize the Platonic dialogues, texts that have been widely disseminated in the Greek-speaking world of the Roman period, and have greatly influenced the writers of the later centuries. Either genuine or not, these texts succeeded in transmitting in a more direct and "theatrical" way the teaching of Christian faith in the case of theological works such as the *Symposium* of Methodius of Olympus and the *Dialogue on the Soul and Resurrection* of Gregory of Nyssa, as well as the positions and contradictions of the opposing representatives of the Jewish, pagan and Christian world at first, and of the great heretic groups and Islam subsequently. In a more general context, we can distinguish four categories of dialogues according to their content: a) the apologetic against the Jews and the pagans (and the Muslims later) that aimed at highlighting the Messianic message of the Bible and its connection with Christ, b) the theological, evolving on account of the various theological problems that have arisen in the Church; c) the philosophic, in whom the link of these texts with their philosophical models is more evident, and d) the biographies which communicate their hagiological models in a more vivid way, as is the case with the *Life of Chrysostom* by the Palladius of Elenopolis.

This paper will examine the secular standards, usages and transformations of this large set of Christian texts, morphologically characterized by their dialogical nature, and usually delivered as *Dialogues or Lectures*, with an indicative reference to representative texts from the dialogues between Christians and Jews, the Christian martyrs of the ancient Church, and the period of Ottoman domination, and their persecutors, the poetic transformations of ancient tragedy, such as *The Suffering Christ*, the dialogues against the heretics, the dialogues between Christians and Muslims, etc. Moreover, representative narrative elements of these texts will be examined in the context of the narratology, namely the examination of the narrative techniques that answer the following questions: who is the narrator, what is the content and the mode of the narration.

Dr. Symeon A. Paschalides is Professor at the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Theological Faculty of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, where he teaches Patrology and Agiology. He is currently the President of the same Department and Director of the Patriarchal Foundation of Patristic Studies. He has also served as President of the Center for Byzantine Research of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He has coordinated and participated in dozens of research projects of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, or in collaboration with the National Hellenic Research Foundation and the Theological School of the University of Strasbourg. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee of the new critical edition of the writings of St. Neophytos the Egleistos of Cyprus, a work that has been awarded in 2010 by the Academy of Athens. He has participated in more than seventy conferences and lectures, workshops in Greece and abroad, and has authored eleven monographs, seventy articles and chapters in Greek journals, conference proceedings and collective works, as well as more than one hundred entries in Greek and foreign theological encyclopedias.

## Dr. Myrto Theocharous

Professor of the Greek Biblical College

### **Biblical Laws as Concentrated Narratives: A Narrative Analysis in the Laws of Deuteronomy**



Modern law is not identical to the biblical law, since the first one is dominated by a language that is neutral and free of historical evidence. On the contrary, biblical law, and especially the so-called casuistic law, acts as a condensed narrative where the author imagines an exemplary micro-story of a court case. In the casuistic law of the Bible, several scholars have pointed out a narrative character in which one can find elements such as sequence of events, motivation and vision conflict, and state a gesture of solving the tensions. The present paper will attempt a detailed analysis of the rape law found in the 22nd chapter of the Deuteronomy book.

**Theocharous** was born in Nicosia, Cyprus. In 2001, he moved to Athens where he began her theological studies at the Greek Biblical College in Pikermi, Attica. Along with her studies she dealt with social work towards victims of trafficking. In 2005 she left for the Wheaton College in the State of Illinois, USA where she began her postgraduate studies in the exegesis of the Bible, the Old and New Testament, with a scholarship from the Billy Graham Center. In 2011, she completed her doctoral study at Cambridge University in England in the Department of Jewish Studies, with a general direction in the Old Testament, namely the Septuagint translation of the Twelve Prophets. Her interests include the book of Prophet Amos and Deuteronomy. Since September 2010 he has been working as a Professor of Jewish and Old Testament Studies at the Greek Biblical College. Her dissertation has been published as *Lexical Dependence and Intertextual Allusion in the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets: Studies in Hosea, Amos and Micah* (The Bible of the Hebrew Bible 570; T and T Clark, 2012).



## **Dr. John Fotopoulos**

Associate Professor, St. Mary's College, Notre Dame,  
Indiana (U.S.A.)



### **On the Betrayal of Judas:**

#### **John Chrysostom and Narrative Analysis**

Since 1970, narrative analysis has influenced the way in which the four gospels are studied. This very approach and views on the gospels of modern narrative scholars reflect the approach and some views of St. John Chrysostom on the betrayal of Judas. Modern narrative analysis examines the discourse (the rhetoric, i.e. how a narrative is transmitted), the plot (i.e., what is transmitted into a narrative), and the characters (the meaning or lack of meaning of the characters in a narrative). Examining Matthew's account of Judas in the *Speech On the Betrayal of Judas 2* (PG 49.381-392), Chrysostom gives special attention to the rhetoric, the plot, and the characters, showing that he is aware of matters which modern scholars have discovered only in the last fifty years. For Chrysostom, however, Judas is not just a character that we should understand from a narrative. At the same time, every Christian should also avoid becoming a Judas in his everyday life.

**John Fotopoulos** is an Associate Professor at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, at the Department of Religious Studies, where he has been a member of the teaching staff since 2001. He received his Ph.D. in the New Testament and in the Primitive Christianity from Loyola University Chicago (in 2001) under the supervision of Prof. Dr. David E. Aune. He received his M.Div. in Theology as valedictorian from the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts (1992) and BA (BA) in Theology as valedictorian from Hellenic College in Brookline, Massachusetts (1989). Dr. Fotopoulos has as his research interests the interpretation of the New Testament, especially the interpretation of St. Paul's letters, using the social-rhetorical critique, and also the history of the New Testament times. In recent years, Fotopoulos explores the biblical interpretation of St. John Chrysostom, translating some of his speeches for the first time in English. Fotopoulos has published academic studies at Tübingen / Mohr Siebeck, Thessaloniki / Pournaras, Leiden / Brill, Brookline / Holy Cross Press, as well as numerous articles in scientific journals, collective volumes, and encyclopedias. He was honored as Archon Master of the Holy Gospel of the Order of St. Andrew of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Dr. Fotopoulos is married to Dr. Eleni Makri and has two children, Dimitrios and Evanthis.

## **Dr. Ekaterini Tsalampouni**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Thessaloniki; Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

### **Judas, the slave and deceit: Narrative function, collective memory and the intake of his death**



Undoubtedly, Judas the Iscariot, the student who betrayed Jesus according to the evangelical narrative, is that person from the close circle of his disciples who has provoked intensive theological debates since the time of the ancient Church. He was the example par excellence of the student who failed in a tragic way and thus became an example to be avoided in the patristic and liturgical texts of the Church. The folk imagination identified him as the primordial evil in non canonical narrations and customs that have been preserved to this day throughout the world. This paper focuses on one aspect of Judah's history, that of his death, by using the methodological tools of narrative and the theory of collective memory. In the first part of the paper we propose a methodological framework for reading the history of Judas, which is based on the narrative theory of characters and collective memory theories as formulated by M. Halbachs, P. Norá, J. Assmann and A. Erll. The methodological question that arises is how these theories of memory can be applied mainly to literary texts (but also to other works of human creativity) of the past. In the second part, Judah's death is used as a case study of the proposed methodology to investigate the literary means by which the memory of the student who betrayed Jesus has been formed and the role that this memory plays in the self-consciousness of the community that preserves and records it.

**Ekaterini G. Tsalampouni** was born in Thessaloniki in 1967. She studied Theology at the Faculty of Theology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and continued with her post-graduate studies at the Faculty of Theology in Heidelberg. In 1999 she got her PhD at the School of Theology of the Faculty of Theology AUTH. She worked as a director of the Thessaloniki Department of the Greek Society of Protection and Rehabilitation of Disabled Children and as Director of the School for Autistic Children “ELPIDA” as well as a teacher at the secondary education. In years 2006-2009 she taught as an assistant lecturer at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Munich. She is now associate professor (Exegesis, Theology and Background of the New Testament) at the School of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Faculty of Theology AUTH. She is treasurer of Greek Society of Orthodox Biblical Scholars, vice-president of European Society of Women in Theological Research as well as member of the Society of Biblical Literature and of the Colloquium OecumenicumPaulinum. She is also member of the editorial board of the academic Journal “THEOLOGIA”. She has published various studies on exegetical issues of the New Testament, on the environment of the New Testament as well as on ecological hermeneutics of the New Testament.

## **Dr. Dimitrios Moschos**

Associate Professor, Faculty of Theology, University of Athens;  
Member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for  
Theological Studies

### **Contesting teachings on anthropology and history in narratives of the ascetic literature**



The ascetic literature is primarily of narrative character and addresses audiences and listeners from various social and educational environments in order to combine learning, information for distant places and people, stimulate faith, and imitation by forging a new identity. Within this set of functions and in seemingly simple, "popular" narratives, there are different and to varying degrees competing perceptions about the nature of man, the meaning of asceticism, or the history and the eschatological end of it, which affect differently the various audiences and reflect different quests per age. The theological program of Athanasius of Alexandria, the sociocentric eschatology in the great communities of Upper Egypt, the Origenic spiritual anthropology of the network of Evagrius of Pontus fellows and the like, appear clearly in the development of the narratives concerning the same persons and events through different versions, writers, but also in their translations from language to language.

**Dimitrios Moschos** is Associate Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Department of Theology of the University of Athens and Director of the Study Laboratory of Ancient Eastern Christianity of the same Department. He studied Theology at the University of Athens (1982-1986), then Evangelical Theology at the University of Erlangen (1988/89) and Byzantinology, Orthodox Theology and Philosophy at the University of Munich (1989-1992). He was awarded the MA of Byzantinology of the University of Munich (1993), Ph.D. of Theology of the University of Athens in Ecclesiastical History (1995) and Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Theological School of the University of Rostock Germany (2007), in which he also teaches as an extraordinary guest professor (Privatdozent). The theme of his habilitation was "Eschatology in Egyptian monasticism. The role of differentiated perceptions of Christian scholarship in the history of early Egyptian monasticism and its social function (4th - 5th c.)", published in 2010 by Mohr-Siebeck. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, the Pan-Hellenic Theological Association "*Kairos* for the Upgrading of Religious Education" and the editorial board of the theological journal *Synaxis*.



## Dr. Fotis Vassiliou

Assistant Professor of the Department of History, Ionian University

### Women's heroism and holiness in the Byzantine popular stories



The Byzantine literature of our early period has given us portraits of saintly women who question or redefine the traditional Greco-Roman values and perceptions about woman and her place and role in society.

The present paper will focus on a story beneficial for the soul from the Greek dossier of Daniel of Scetes, referring to an incident of extreme domestic violence. After commenting on the narrative and identifying similarities and differences with earlier literary texts (Life of Saints, Martyrdom, ancient novels), we will focus on the author's attempt to create a new model of female sanctity incorporating in his portrait certain “secular” virtues.

Born in 1975 in Ioannina, Prof. **Vassiliou** defended his Ph.D. thesis in 2012, under the supervision of Prof. Stefanos Efthimiades. He participated as a collaborating researcher in research projects at the National Research Foundation and the Open University of Cyprus. In 2014 he worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Laboratoire d' excellence "Religions et Sociétés dans le Monde Méditerranéen" (RESMED), Collège de France (Paris). He currently teaches Byzantine history at the Ionian University and the Hellenic Open University. He has taught at the Open University of Cyprus, at the Faculty of Historical Sciences of the National Technical University of Athens and at the University of Ioannina. In 2015 and 2016 he gave two lectures on the history of Byzantium at the V. and M. Theodorakis Foundation.

His articles have been published in collective volumes and prestigious international scientific journals. His monograph entitled, *Shepherd or Tyrant. The father in Christian literature of the Late Antiquity* was published in 2013 by Armos publications. His book *Byzantium: The Emergence of an Empire*, will be published soon by the Hestia Publishing House.

## Dr. Nikos Kouremenos

Research Fellow at the Foundation for Religious Studies (Fscire, Bologna),

Academic Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies

### **The *conversio regis* as a narrative motive for the spread of**

### **Christianity during the Late Antiquity**



The process of Christianizing and turning the Roman Empire into a Christian state is undoubtedly linked to the important event of the “conversion” to Christianity of the Roman emperor Constantine. The most important and closest to the events source related to this particular issue is the work of the ecclesiastical historian and biographer of Constantine, Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea of Palestine. Despite the question of the credibility of Eusebius’ descriptions and his attempt to sanctify the emperor, these narratives played a catalytic role in shaping the political theology of Christianity based on the idea of the “king as friend of Christ” and influenced both later Christian writers and the very process of Christianization within and beyond the limits of the Roman Empire.

At about the same time, however, and except the case of Constantine, various other conversions of kings or local rulers to Christianity are also recorded in written sources, which are connected with the spread of new faith in certain regions or even with the Christianization of entire people. As typical examples of the pre-Constantinian period, one can mention the conversion of Edessa king of Mesopotamia, Abgar V as well as the case of the baptism of the ruler of Armenia Tiridates by Gregory the Enlightener. Contemporary to Constantine examples are the examples of the ruler of Ezana I of Axum, and the King Mirian III of Iberia, whose conversion resulted in the beginning of the Christianization of the respective kingdoms. From the post-Constantinian period, the most prominent example of the narrative of a ruler's conversion, is the case of the Frankish ruler, Clovis, is included in the *Historia Francorum* of Gregorius the Bishop of Tours.

Through the study of specific examples, the present paper will study the narratives related to the conversion of rulers to Christianity, in order to show how much they can be considered as reliable testimony of a top-down Christian missionary pattern, or if they are attempts at imperial or royal propaganda in the context of the instrumentalization of religion for political or diplomatic purposes.

**Nikos Kouremenos** has studied theology at the Department of Theology of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Athens and has received a Master or Arts in Church history from the Historical Department of the same Faculty. He then completed his Ph.D. studies at the Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies in Rome (PIO), where he specialized in Ancient Oriental Languages and specifically in Coptic Language and Literature. He has also been a postdoctoral researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) and the Research Center for Humanities in Athens (KEAE) and has taught at the Theological School of the University of Athens.

His research interests focuses on the historical course of Christianity in Egypt and the Near East, with particular emphasis on Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages. He has participated in many conferences both in Greece and abroad, while his studies have been published in various international volumes and journals. He speaks English, French, Italian and German and knows Coptic and Syrian. He is an Academic associate of the Academy of Theological Studies of Volos and since October 2018 he works as a research fellow at the Fondazione per le Scienze Religiose Giovanni XXIII in Bologna, Italy.

## Dr. Stavroula Konstantinou

Associate Professor of the Department of History,

University of Cyprus

### **Characters and Narration in the Life of Saint Alexios, the Man of God**



Typically, the character of the monastic saint is composed narratively through the depravity of the saint for the family and other various secular ties, which allows him to devote himself totally to God. But there are several Lives of Saints in which the family acquires an important role. Such a text is also the anonymous Life of Alexios, the Man of God (probably written in the 7th century), who narrates the story of a prominent young man who leaves his wife on the wedding night but returns seventeen years later and spends his life as a beggar in his father's house without being recognized however, by his own people until his death. In Alexius' *Life*, the family is not only a central issue, but also the core around which the plot unfolds through the action of the characters. In the context of this paper, the family will be analyzed as a means of determining the narrative's character, the character of the heroes (the members of the family of Alexios and the saint himself), as well as the theology of the text.

**Stavroula Konstantinou** is Associate Professor of Byzantine Studies at the University of Cyprus (Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies), Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the same university and member of the European Cultural Parliament. She has been also a scholar of the German foundation Alexander von Humboldt at the Free University of Berlin during the years 2010-11. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on Byzantine feelings, social gender, ritual, theatricality, body, and (hagiological) literature (for example, brief and more extensive narrations, the critical history of the sub-species of the Life of female sanctity, narrative structure and narrative techniques, writing and reception issues). She has published a monograph (*Female Corporeal Performances: Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women*, Uppsala University Press 2005), has edited some volumes and has written a series of articles on these topics. Her most recent publications include the co-editing of a volume on *Emotions and Gender in Byzantine Culture* Palgrave 2019 and several articles on late Byzantine erotic novels. At the present stage, she coordinates a program on the critical history of maternity and breastfeeding from the Hellenistic period to the early Byzantine, which is funded by the Cyprus Research and Innovation Foundation, while preparing a monograph on the Byzantine Miracles Collection.



## Dionysios Skliris

PhD Sorbonne University

### Theology as performance:

#### Leaving room for ambiguity in theological narratives.



In this presentation I will try to show the relation between contemporary Performance Studies and Narrative Theology and the importance of both for a fertile theological reflection. I will start by some preliminary conceptual clarifications linked to the history of Performance Studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an emphasis on the performativity of narration. We will observe how in his work *How to do things with words* (1962) J.L. Austin has distinguished between descriptive and performative utterances, the latter meaning those utterances which do not only describe external reality but also perform a change in it by provoking concrete results. Austin's deeper intuition was that all utterances possess a performative character, being *speechacts*. We will then examine the evolution of the concepts of *performance* and *performativity* in the thought of John Searle, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser and Judith Butler. The term *performativity* focuses on the possibility of language and narration to perform changes and to provoke social, political and other results instead of simply describing. I will allude to the fact that from its very beginning Judeo-Christian theology was in some sense conscious of the performativity of language through the biblical notion of the *Word* of God. I will focus on the Patristic development of the biblical notion of the *word* (*logos*) in the thought of ps.-Dionysius Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas (with reference to Philo of Alexandria). The emphasis will lay on the connection of the concepts of *logos* and *activity* (*ἐνέργεια*) in the thought of the aforementioned authors and their priority over the Neoplatonist notion of *idea* (*ιδέα*). This priority could be termed, -perhaps paradoxically-, as a "performative ontology of narration". We will see what is the anti-essentialist force of this way of doing theology and how it leaves room for ambiguity. We will observe two concrete examples concerning on the one hand the narrative performance of identities, such as the one of gender, and, on the other, the ambivalent relation between justice and love.

**Dionysios Skliris** holds a Phd from the University of Paris IV- Sorbonne with the title "The term tropos (mode) in the thought of Maximus the Confessor". He also holds a Master in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies from the University of London, his dissertation concerning "The theory of evil in Proclus: Proclus' Theodicy as a completion of Plotinus monism" and a Master II on Byzantine Literature from the University of Paris IV- Sorbonne, a BA in Classics and a BA in Theology from the University of Athens. He is currently a Teaching Fellow at the Theological Department of the Theological Faculty of the University of Athens and at the Greek Open University.

## Marios-Kyparissis Moros

PhD candidate, Faculty of Letters, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

### **Cain's sign: a poetic conversation of Zoe Karelli and Melissanthi on Genesis**



The fourth chapter of *Genesis* includes Cain's famous story; more specifically, in the first book of the Old Testament the story of Cain's fratricide and his subsequent fate, takes twenty-six verses (4: 1-26). This same story, however, stimulates the creative imagination of the writers for a creative reception of the biblical narrative. Taking as pre-text material (subtext) the narrative of *Genesis* a series of works is composed in which Cain starred: from Lord Byron to the José Saramago, along with Conrad, Unamuno, Steinbeck, and others, Abel's brother becomes a "modernist form" that creates around him a circle of works with a common denominator. In this paper we will focus on Greek literature and more specifically on poetry, seeking for Cain as a trans-text in the poetry of Zoe Karellis and Melissanthi, where the religious element strongly informs their poetry. Some of the questions that we will attempt to answer are the following: How does the biblical narrative function as a subtext? Is Cain released from the biblical verses or not? How does his myth function as a symbol? What are the existential extinctions of the biblical narrative in the verses of the two poets? How, finally, a trans-textual conversation is founded on a biblical substrate?

**Marios-Kyparissis Moros** was born in Athens in 1993, while he grew up in Kozani. He is a graduate of the Department of Philology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In the same department he completed his postgraduate studies while he is currently working on a PhD on the presence of the religious element in Greek post-war poetry (1945-1974), as a fellow of the State Scholarship Foundation. He has published literature studies in literary and scientific journals in Greece and Cyprus, some of which have been previously presented as announcements in Greek and international conferences. Since 2017 he is a student at the Department of Theology of University of Thessaloniki. His book entitled *Beyond the Sick Cows. Studies on the poetry of Dinos Christianopoulos* has been published by Ianos Publications in 2018.

## Rev. Evangelos Ganas

Electrical and Mechanical Engineer, Parish Priest St. Meletios, Athens

### Gospel and Novel: The Limits of Narrative Theology



In the present paper, an attempt will be made to highlight three aspects of the topic: First, to recall developments in the field of philosophy, historiography, ethics and literary criticism that brought the narrative into the forefront and have made it a central concept for theology for fifty years. At the same time, to remind ourselves that the narrative did not wait for the post-modern age to assist theology, since it was from the beginning a central literary category for both the composition and the reception of the biblical canon. Secondly: I will support the thesis that the novel, as a literary genre of New Years par excellence, not only does not inherently contradict the spirit of the Gospel, but on the contrary the Gospel can be read as a quasi-novel narrative. Thirdly, we may point out some objections to the use or perhaps abuse of the narrative in modern theology, objections that have been made largely by protagonists of so-called narrative theology.

**Fr. Evangelos Ganas** was born in Athens in 1965. He is a graduate of the Department of Electrical Engineering of the University of Athens and of the Theological Faculty of the same University. He serves the Archdiocese of Athens as a priest in the parish of Saint Meletios of Sepolia (Attica). He has published the books: *The need of witness*, (Hestia Publications, Athens, 2012), *The Paradox King*, (Artos Zoes, Athens, 2016), *The lamp on the lamp. The Church as an alternative city*, (Polis Publications, Athens, 2017). He has translated: Stanley Hauerwas, *The Policy of the Gospel*, (Artos Zoes, Athens, 2017). He has published articles in journals (Nea Hestia, Synaxis, Theologia, Indictos, New Eythini, Cogito, Neo Planodio, Bulletin of Biblical Studies) and in collective volumes. He is married to Eleni Ziazopoulou and has six children.



## Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies;

Visiting Fellow, KU Leuven; Member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion



### Narrative Theology and the Quest for Dialogue Between Theology and Literature

During its “golden age,” especially in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, theology was characterized by openness and boldness in dialogue, as well by its ability to confront and to receive at the same time elements of the surrounding world initially foreign to its spirit. Its privileged interlocutor during that time was the, dominant then, Greek philosophy, especially in its ontological version, as it represented a claim and a discourse about catholicity. Philosophy, in its various versions, managed to sum up all the wisdom and knowledge of the world, the study of the first principles and causes, the search for meaning and truth.

Nowadays, the role of life’s and world’s representation, the summation of the secular search and knowledge of the truth and the expression of a catholic vision, seems to have been taken over by literature. Therefore, there can be no serious dialogue between the Church and the world or theology and the academia, without the acquaintance, the dialogue and the critical reception of elements of modern literature, which emerges as a secularized theology, anthropology and cosmology, as a soteriology *analogous but different to theology*. At the same time, however, literature embraces a non-theological discourse referring to catholicity. It is a discourse that, by going beyond the fragmentary ontological language of philosophy, attempts to give, through poetry, narration and the use of the literary myth, various suggestive and more catholic responses to the great quests of the world and humanity.

The above observations are of particular importance, given the fixation of Orthodox theology to past schemes and the almost exclusive usage of the ontological philosophical language. The challenge of a narrative theology and a theology of “events,” as well as the shift from a theology of God’s “being” to a theology of God’s “acts,” are of great importance for both the dialogue between the Church and the world, and between theology and literature.

**Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis** studied Theology in Thessaloniki, and Philosophy in Paris, Sorbonne. He has published many books and over 100 papers in sixteen languages in the areas of the eschatological dimension of Christianity, the dialogue between Orthodoxy and modernity, theology and literature, religious nationalism, issues of renewal and reformation in Eastern Orthodoxy, contemporary Eastern and Western theology, political theology, ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, and post-modern hermeneutics of Patristics. He is serving as the editor of the series “Doxa & Praxis: Exploring Orthodox Theology” (WCC Publications). He has been a Research Fellow at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Boston), Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University (New Jersey), DePaul University (Chicago), and KU Leuven (Belgium), while he is a member of the Scientific Board of the *Review of Ecumenical Studies* (Sibiu, Romania), of the Orthodox journal *The Wheel* (USA), and the *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* (John Hopkins University Press). For the last nineteen years he has been the Director of the Volos Academy, a research center linked to the local Church of Demetrias in Volos and dealing with contemporary issues for Orthodoxy. He taught Systematic Theology at the Hellenic Open University, and at St Sergius Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris (as Visiting Professor). Dr. Kalaitzidis is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion (EuARe, Bologna), and in addition to his membership to the International Association of Orthodox Dogmatic Theologians (IAODT), he is also Chair (with Prof. Papanikolaou) of the Political Theology group of the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA), as well as member of the American Academy of Religion (AAR), and the Society of Christian Ethics (SCE).

## **Dr. Konstantinos Kornarakis**

Associate Professor of the Faculty of Theology,  
University of Athens

### **Psychodynamic aspects of forgiveness in ascetic narratives**



Based on the related narratives from the “Saying of the Fathers”, the present paper seeks a deepening in forgiveness as a process that involves varied psychodynamic functions. It is mainly pointed out that in the ascetic literature the possibility of forgiveness is linked to the quality and the degree of self-knowledge that one achieves in relation to one’s self. In this sense, the problem of relationship with the other has a two-way dynamics and is translated as a problem of dealing with one’s own self by focusing on the management of the problem of guilt.

**Konstantinos Kornarakis** is Associate Professor of the Department of Theology of the Theological School of the University of Athens. He has studied Theology (Department of Theology, University of Athens, 1987), Patristic Theology at the University of Durham (MA-1991) and Psychology at the Philosophical School of the University of Athens (Department of Philosophy, Pedagogy and Psychology, 1994) . In the context of his teaching work he deals with issues of moral theology, bioethics, as well as other contemporary ethical and anthropological issues. He has authored monographs and articles on topics related to his research interests. He is a regular member of various ecclesiastical and scientific committees such as: the Synodical Committee on Bioethics of the Church of Greece, the Pontificia Academia Pro Vita (Vatican), the Bioethics Committee of the Council of European Churches (CEC), the National Ethics Committee, the Bioethics Committee of the Greek Pasteur Institute, the Executive Committee of the Greek Stage of the Bioethics Center of UNESCO (Haifa), the Bioethics and Ethics Committee of the University of Athens, etc.

## **Eleni Karagianni,**

M.D., C.G.P., E.C.P., Psychiatrist

**Face to face:**

**genuine encounters between human and divine**



We live in a narcissistic era which is characterized by the dominant role of the image and an enormous emphasis on the individual's autonomy. The element of narcissistic self-sufficiency, the uninterrupted knowledge, which is learned in a vacuum and not in the co-existence with the other, occupies a central place in our lives. It is a bet for every human being, to move from the entrapment to himself, to the true encounter with the other, that is, from narcissism to love. We seek the pattern of relationship in the authentic encounters between human beings and God. Christ recognizes the uniqueness of every human person and he does not require its compliance and undermining. He approaches each one uniquely, he seeks with him for creating a common place of the encounter, He becomes as crystal clear water so that the human being to reflect him/herself in his/her weakness, uniqueness and greatness. At the same time, he is present when a human person views the truth about him/herself and with tender rigor, leads him/her from trauma and guilt, to repentance, redemption and personal development.

**Eleni Angelopoulou-Karagianni** is a Child Psychiatrist, Existential Couple and Group Psychotherapist, Trainer and Supervisor of Psychotherapists. She is the Director of the Therapeutic and Educational Foundation "Antistixis", of a Systemic Existential perspective, where healing is provided to individuals, couples, families and groups, as well as psychotherapy training to Mental Health specialists. She has worked as Chief A of the Child Psychiatric Section of the Community Mental Health Center at the Evangelismos Hospital, where besides the provision of clinical work, she participated in the awareness of the Community in Mental Health, in seminars of parents and teachers, as well as in Medical Student Education. She educates and supervises mental health practitioners in Existential Systemic Psychotherapy and Systemic Family and Group Therapy. She has published articles in scientific journals and in 2015 she published her book entitled "Little Breathes", where psychology meets literature.

## **Dr. Dimitris Karagiannis**

Child Psychiatrist-Psychotherapist, Director of the Child  
Psychopathic Health Center



### **The interaction - the therapeutic touch, the miracle**

The appeal to the miracle often corresponds to the waiving of personal responsibility for the course of things. The miracle for many people corresponds to a magical act, where things happen on their own, without the participation of the benefactor, that is, the miracle is regarded as a passive gain of grace. People are freed from their problems not when they complain and blame their fate but when they manage to change the way they see them. This becomes feasible when they receive a genuine interest that is both inspiring and respectful. Then, overcoming the problem is both the method and the completion of the treatment. Christ incarnated for the salvation of the people. He does so not only by teaching them love but by making the people participants of a genuine love. Therefore, the omnipotent therapist desires the healing power of the relationship and therefore seeks for the desire of the other. He respects the free will even if the latter leads to the disease, even if it prevents the healer's ability from acting. How remote is the appeal to and demand of the miracle as a structural element of religiosity in relation to the experience of the miracle as a natural consequence of the positive corruption of the believer!

**Dimitris Karagiannis** MD, PhD, is a Child Psychiatrist, Existential Psychotherapist of Couples, Groups and Families and Supervisor of Psychotherapists. Associate Professor at the University of Frederick, Nicosia, Cyprus, teaching Family Therapy he holds a from the Democritus University of Alexandroupolis. He is the scientific director of the Psychotherapeutic and Educational Institute "ANTISTIXI", where psychiatrists are trained in psychotherapy. He is also director of the Center for Child Psychopsychic Health (1986 - present), which is a modern pediatric psychiatric unit with a full interdisciplinary team organized on the basis of systemic vision. He was the Scientific Director (1989-1995) of the Medical Unit in Fthiotida and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hellenic Federation of Associations for Systemic Therapy and Family Therapy. Member of the European Family Therapy Association (EFTA). He has also authored important psychological essays like "Rifts and Thrusts" (10th Edition), "Injustice hurts" (25th edition), "Love or Nothing" (17th edition), and "Does Man change?" (7th edition).



## **Dr. Marios Koukounaras - Liagkis**

Assistant Professor of the Faculty of Theology, University of Athens

### **Narrative and storytelling in classroom:**

#### **The role of Personhood and community**



The narrative has provided teaching with methods of analyzing the structure of a narrative as well as of the act of narrative itself by formulating a theory of narrative, used for every verbal, written or multimodal text. Narrative is an object and means of teaching in all subjects and levels of education, because it helps the psychosocial development and the empirical conceptualization of the world. For Egan it is "a universal gift that everyone has in common with everyone else, and for this it has a great pedagogical value as a means of teaching and cognitive effectiveness in the critical multiculturalism that Education needs to be aimed at. Experiential learning offers the framework to develop cognitive processes and learn through narrative. In the constructivist approach of knowledge and learning storytelling, children's voice in the classroom telling a story or their own personal narrative, acquire invaluable educational value because children learn from narratives while sharing with other personal experience and integrate their ideas into the collective knowledge of a community. At the same time, the narratives ensure the creation of a community in which each voice values. Research has shown that choosing texts that ask for answers to questions or questions that require answers, creates the teaching framework that generates new narratives, the pupils themselves who appropriate new knowledge and display their knowledge and awareness. In Religious Education, children's voices are a structural component for reflection, re-reflection and action. Gnostic information is of no value in this context. Religious knowledge is a personal empirical approach of each and every one individually and all together. The reproduction of knowledge has a low learning value, because the value of a personal contribution to the collective conceptualization of reality is lost. On the contrary, storytelling deepens the perception of truth and its empirical approach, each and every one is able to hear and to be heard, and at the same time builds the collective knowledge and the dynamics of the community.

**Marios Koukounaras Liagkis** is a theologian (BA, MA PhD) and a philologist (BA). He teaches, as Assistant Professor at the Department of Theology of the University of Athens, courses in Pedagogy and Special Education. He taught for 10 years in Secondary Education while he has also worked in the press and radio. He cooperates with the UCL Institute of Education, the University of Birmingham, and the University of the Aegean. His research interests are the Didactic Methodology of Religious Education, Social Pedagogy, Curricula, the Constructivist Learning Approach and Intercultural Education. He has published five books and has published numerous articles in international and Greek journals.

## **Apostolos Barlos**

MTh, Adult Trainer, Member of the Training Team for Teachers of Religious Education of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies

### **The Narrative Biblical Texts and Their Teaching at School. An example of a teaching approach to a narrative text based on the Educational Drama technique**



How can a theologian approach a biblical narrative text in order to gain a personal meaning for his/her students? In this paper we will present a teaching proposal that relates to the narrative text of the New Testament based on the Educational Drama (ED). ED is a pedagogical method based on experiential learning and utilizes various theatrical forms for knowledge. In essence, it seeks to combine emotional engagement with cognitive processing. According to ED, the teacher changes role and works not as a means of knowledge but as an animator, mentor, counselor and partner in learning along with the student. In order to design a narrative biblical narrative we first need to define the subject, the basic question to be explored and the goals we seek. Subsequently we share the roles that emerge from the text, performed by the students as well as the roles that the teacher will perform. Then we divide the narrative into episodes in which our story unfolds so that students can better follow the plot and its development. Finally, we decide which experiential ED techniques we will use so that the students can both live a significant experience on the subject we have chosen and reflect on it. We will use as an example of a biblical narrative the story of the meeting of Jesus with Zacchaeus (*Lk 19: 1-10*).

**Apostolos Barlos** studied theology and did postgraduate studies at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He was trained by the Athenian Center for the Study of Human Beings in matters of Systemic Psychology with particular subjects: a) group dynamics, b) group coordination and leadership, c) class as a group. He taught in Secondary Schools, served as Director at the 1st Second Chance School of Larissa and as a pedagogical advisor of Second Chance Schools in Thessaly. He participated in writing textbooks for the religious lesson. He participated in the Material Envelope writing group for the Religious lesson of the 1st Grade, according to the New Curriculum. He participated as an adult trainer in Training Programs of the Educational Policy Institute, of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning, of the Association of Adult Education and of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies for the teaching of religious lessons and especially for the “Educational Drama as a learning tool” and “Education through Art”. He is a member of the Training team for Teachers of Religious education of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies.



[acadimia.org](http://acadimia.org)

*With courteous support*



[imd.gr](http://imd.gr)



[makrinitsamuseum.gr/index.php/en/](http://makrinitsamuseum.gr/index.php/en/)