

# Maria Conterno Ph.D.

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## Research Interests

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Cultural and religious plurality of the Late Antique and Byzantine world (4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> cent.)  
Circulation of texts, literary formats and themes between the Greek and Syro-Arabic traditions, and exploitation of shared ‘cultural capitals’  
Christian identities in transformation in the Late Antique Near East  
Production and circulation of texts triggered by religious controversies

## Employment History

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2016 – 2017	Temporary Lecturer in Roman History, Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)
2015 – 2018	FWO Post-Doctoral Researcher, Ghent University – Department of History
2013 – 2015	Post-Doctoral Researcher in the ERC-project: “Memory of Empire: The Post-Imperial Historiography of Late Antiquity”, Ghent University - Department of History
2013	Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, Laboratoire d’excellence <i>Religions et sociétés dans le monde méditerranéen</i> , Paris (UMR 8167 – CNRS, Sorbonne, EPHE, Collège de France)
2011 – 2012	Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, Princeton University

## Qualifications

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2011	Diploma in Greek Palaeography	Vatican School of Palaeography, Diplomatics and Archives Administration
2011	Ph.D. in Byzantine Studies	Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane, Florence
2007	M.A. in Religious Studies	Università degli Studi di Padova
2004	B.A. in Classics	Università degli Studi di Padova

## PH.D. DISSERTATION

*Palestina, Siria, Costantinopoli. La “Cronografia” di Teofane Confessore e la mezzaluna fertile della storiografia nei ‘secoli bui’ di Bisanzio* [Palestine, Syria, Constantinople: Theophanes Confessor’s Chronography and the fertile crescent of historiography in the ‘Dark Ages’ of Byzantium]

Adviser: Prof. Glen W. Bowersock (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton)

Committee: Prof. Riccardo Contini (Università degli Studi di Napoli L’Orientale), Prof. Muriel Debié (EPHE, Paris, then IRHT), Prof. Robert Hoyland (NYU Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York City, then University of Oxford)

## M.A. THESIS

*La versione siriana del “Discorso sull’amicizia” di Temistio: rilettura di uno scritto pagano in contesto cristiano* [The Syriac version of Themistius’ “Oration on Friendship”: the reception of a Pagan text in Christian context]

Adviser: Prof. Paolo Bettolo (Università degli Studi di Padova)

## Other Training

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<i>Creativity, Pitching, Resilience</i>	3-day coaching (2016)
<i>Web writing</i>	1-day training (2016)
<i>Web editing</i> (CMS software: Plone)	1-day training (2017)
<i>Negotiation skills</i>	2-day coaching (2017)

## Visiting Fellowships

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February – July 2016	CEDRAC, Université Saint-Joseph, Beirut (Lebanon)
May 2010 – June 2010	School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ (USA)

## Scholarships

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- Fernand Braudel-IFER Fellowship, funded by the Fondation Maison Sciences de l’Homme and the European Commission (Programme Action Marie Curie – COFUND), 2013.
- Mary Seeger O’Boyle Fellowship, Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, Princeton University, 2011-2012.
- Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research, Ph.D. studentship 2007-2010.

## Projects

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- 2015-2018: FWO-funded project on Christian Arabic historiography (PI), 282.000 euros
- 2018-2022: FWO-funded project on Syriac fragmentary historiography (co-applicant), 261.000 euros
- EOS-funded project “Lived time in Religions of the Mediterranean (co-applicant), results pending

## Teaching Experience

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### CLASSES

- 2017 – 2018 “Byzantine History” [4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> cent., module on 7th-11h cent.], Ghent University (4x3h, English)  
“Historical Texts – Ancient Greek” (BA), Ghent University (12x1h30, Dutch)  
“Historical Practice 3” (BA), Ghent University (6x2h, Dutch)
- 2016 – 2017 “Roman History”, Research Seminar (MA), Université Libre de Bruxelles (12x2h, French)  
“Roman History”, Research Seminar (BA), Université Libre de Bruxelles (18x2h, French)  
“Latin Reading for historians” (BA), Université Libre de Bruxelles (6x2h, French)  
“Philosophy of History” (BA), Université Libre de Bruxelles (12x2h, French)  
“Historical Practice 3” (BA), Ghent University (6x2h, Dutch)
- 2015 – 2016 “Historical Texts – Ancient Greek” (BA), Ghent University (12x1h30, Dutch)  
“Historical Practice 3” (BA), Ghent University (6x2h, Dutch)
- 2014 – 2015 “Historical Texts – Ancient Greek” (BA), Ghent University (12x1h30, Dutch)

### SUPERVISION

- 2017 – 2018 Laurens Van Damme, MA thesis, title: *Late Antique Apocalyptic Thought in Contemporary Islam: An Analysis of ISIS’ Dabiq and Rumiyah*
- 2016 – 2017 Matthias Van Hoey, MA thesis, title: *Tussen theorie en praktijk: 10de en 11de-eeuwse grenzen in Byzantium. Een studie naar het keizerlijke beleid ten opzichte van het Syrisch orthodoxe patriarchaat van Antiochië in Melitene*
- 2016 – 2020 Matteo Antoniazzi, PhD dissertation (co-supervision), title: *Le monastique face au politique. Émergence d’un nouveau modèle de pensée d’après les auteurs d’histoire ecclésiastique du Ve siècle*
- 2013 – 2017 Marianna Mazzola, PhD dissertation (co-supervision), title: *Barhebraeus’ Ecclesiastical History: Translation, Comment and Study of the Sources.*
- 2015 – 2018 Supervision of five BA papers

## ASSESSMENT

2017 – 2018 Evaluation of BA papers and MA theses

2016 – 2017 Evaluation of BA papers and MA theses

## Other Academic and Administrative Experience

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- Since 2017: member of the editorial committee of *The New Handbook of Syriac Literature* (Syriac.org), USA
- Since 2016: peer-reviewer for Gorgias Press
- 2016 – 2017: collaborator of the journal *LATOMUS – Revue et collection d'études latines*
- since 2016: UGent Postdoc Community, Website editor
- 2014 – 2016: UGent Post-doc Community, Officer of International Postdocs
- 2013 – 2017: Coordinator of the Database of Late Antique Historians (Byzantine, Syriac and Christian Arabic sections) within the ERC-project “Memory of Empire”
- 2014 – 2015: Responsible for internal meetings and seminars within the ERC-project “Memory of Empire”
- 2014: Member of PhD examining committee (9 May 2014, Ghent University)

## Membership of Professional Bodies

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- *Société Belge d'études byzantines*
- *Association pour l'Antiquité Tardive*
- *Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies* (Ghent)
- *Société de'études syriaques*
- *GRAC* (Gruppo di Ricerca Arabo-Cristiana)
- *BABEL* (Association belge pour l'étude des religions)
- *GIKS* (Gents Instituut voor Klassieke Studies/Ghent Institute for Classical Studies, Ghent University)
- *OIKOS* (National Research School in Classical Studies, The Netherlands)

## Organisation of Conferences

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International Workshop *Rhetoric and Historiography in Late Antiquity*  
Ghent, 18-19 September 2017 (with Lieve Van Hoof)

International Workshop *Intercultural Exchange in Late Antique Historiography*  
Ghent, 16-18 September 2015

## Language Skills

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	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Spoken Interaction</i>	<i>Spoken Production</i>	<i>Writing</i>
MODERN LANGUAGES:					
- Italian			Native speaker		
- English			C2		
- Dutch			C1 certificate		
- French			C1		
- German	A1	B1	A1	A1	A1

ANCIENT LANGUAGES: Latin, Greek, Syriac, Arabic

## IT Skills

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- Wordprocessing in Greek, Syriac, Arabic (Microsoft Word, Mellel)
- Database creation and management (Microsoft Access)
- Content Managing Systems, web editing
- VLE systems

## Publications

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### BOOKS

- 2014 *La “descrizione dei tempi” all'alba della conquista islamica. Un'indagine sulla storiografia greca, siriana e araba fra VII e VIII secolo*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin-Boston.
- 2014 *Temistio orientale*, introduzione, traduzione e commento a cura di M. Conterno, Paideia Editrice, Brescia.

### JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- 2018 Contribution to Van Hoof, L. – Van Nuffelen, P. (eds.), *The Fragmentary Greek Chronicles after Eusebius: Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Cambridge University Press (fragments of John Chrystom and Annianus).
- 2018 Contribution to Van Hoof, L. – Van Nuffelen, P. (eds.), *Clavis Historiarum Tardae Antiquitatis*, Brepols, Turnhout [section editor, author of ca. 140 entries]
- 2018 Contribution to U. Simonsohn – N. Hurvitz – C. Sahner – and L. Yarbrough (eds.), *A Sourcebook on Pre-modern Conversion to Islam*, University of California Press (“The conversion of the Turks”, “The tribulation of a converted man’s daughter”).

- 2018 “Shaping the good Christian king under Muslim rule: Constantine and the Torah in the Melkite Arabic chronicle of Agapius of Mabbug (10th cent.)”, in H. Leppin (ed.), *Images of the Good Christian Ruler*, De Gruyter, Boston – Berlin [accepted]
- 2018 “Procopius and the Christological controversies: a loud silence?”, in: G. Greatrex – S. Janniard (eds.), *The World of Procopius*, De Boccard, Paris [in press].
- 2017 “Historiography across the borders: the case of the Islamic material in Theophanes’ *Chronographia*”, to appear in H. Amirav – I. Perczel (eds.), *Christian Historiography between the Empires (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, Peeters (Late Antique History and Religion), Leuven [accepted].
- 2017 “La Syrie et le monothéisme”, *Connaissance des Pères de l’église* 145 [accepted]
- 2017 “Christian Arabic historiography at the crossroads between the Byzantine, the Syriac and the Islamic traditions” in A. Butts – R. Darling Young (eds.), *Syriac Christian Culture: Beginnings to Renaissance*, CUA Press, Washington [in press].
- 2016 “Byzance hors de Byzance : la controverse monothélite du côté syriaque”, in: F. Ruani (ed.), *Les controverses religieuses en syriaque* (Études syriaques 13), Geuthner, Paris, 157-179.
- 2015 ‘Intercultural Exchange in Late Antique Historiography. An International Workshop, Ghent University, 16-18 September 2015’, *Adamantius*, 21 (2015), 567-569.
- 2015 “Theophilos, ‘the more likely candidate’? Towards a reappraisal of the question of Theophanes’ Oriental source(s)”, in: F. Montinaro – M. Jankowiak (eds.), *Studies in Theophanes* (Travaux et Mémoires 19), Paris, 383-400.
- 2014 “‘Storytelling’ and ‘History writing’ in Seventh-Century Near East”, *Working Papers de la Fondation Maison Sciences de l’homme*, online: <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/FMSH-WP/halshs-01063730>
- 2013 “Three unpublished texts on Christ’s will and operation from the Syriac *florilegium* in the ms. London, British Library, Add. 14535”, *Millennium Jahrbuch* 10, 115-144.
- 2013 “Culto e memoria di Costantino nelle chiese sire. Agiografia costantiniana nella liturgia e nella storiografia siriana”, in: A. Melloni – P. Brown – J. Helmrath – E. Prinzivalli – S. Ronchey – N. Tanner (eds.), *Flavius Valerius Constantinus Maximus Augustus. Una enciclopedia internazionale sulla figura, il mito, la critica e la funzione dell’imperatore dell’ “editto” di Milano*, II, Treccani, Bologna-Roma, 425-439.
- 2011 “Processo ai testimoni: un’inchiesta storiografica sulle fonti per il VII secolo”, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 24, 897-912.
- 2010 “‘L’abominio della desolazione nel luogo santo’: l’ingresso di ‘Umar I a Gerusalemme nella *Cronografia* di Teofane Confessore e in tre cronache siriane”, in: *Luoghi del desiderio: Gerusalemme medievale* (Quaderni di Storia Religiosa 17), Padova, 9-24.
- 2010 “Retorica pagana e cristianesimo orientale: la traduzione siriana dell’orazione *Peri philiat* di Temistio”, *Annali di Scienze Religiose* 15, 161-188.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES

- 2018 Contribution to the CHTA Database [section editor, author of ca. 100 entries]  
<http://www.late-antique-historiography.ugent.be/database>

## REVIEWS

- 2017 R. Gibson – C. Whitton (eds.) *The Epistles of Pliny* (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies), Oxford 2016, in *Latomus* 77.
- 2015 G. Avni, *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine. An Archeological Approach*, Oxford 2014, in *Byzantion* 85, 583.
- 2010 M. Debié (ed.), *L'historiographie syriaque*, Paris 2009, in *Adamantius* 16, 509-511.

## IN PREPARATION

(ed.), *Intercultural Exchange in Late Antique Historiography*, submitted for peer review to Cambridge University Press.

“Found in translation: Agapius, the Septuagint, and the ‘falsified’ Torah of the Jews”, in M. Conterno (ed.), *Intercultural Exchange in Late Antique Historiography*, submitted for peer review to Cambridge University Press.

with L. Van Hoof (eds.), *Rhetoric and Historiography in Late Antiquity (AD 300-600)*, proposal favourably accepted by Cambridge University Press. Target date: June 2018.

“Rhetoric and history at the School of Nisibis”, in L. Van Hoof – M. Conterno (eds.), *Rhetoric and Historiography in Late Antiquity*, to be submitted by February 2018.

*Dionysius of Tellmahre, History*. Edition, translation and commentary of the fragments, with P. Van Nuffelen and M. Mazzola. Proposal favourably accepted by Cambridge University Press.

*A Byzantine Chronicle in the language of Islam: a study on Agapius of Hierapolis*. Monograph. Target publisher: Cambridge University Press; target date: December 2019.

## Presentations

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### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“Whose Dream Comes True? Negotiation of Primacy in the ‘Legend of Theodosius and Theophilus’”

*Narrating Power and Authority in Late Antique and Medieval Hagiographies from East to West*, Rome, 15-17 February 2018.

“History with and without Yarmuk: the double account of the 7<sup>th</sup> century in Agapius of Mabbug’s chronicle”

*The Battle of Yarmuk (636 CE). Rethinking the ‘conquest’ in the Late Antique Near East from Byzantium to Islam*, Tübingen, 16-17 June 2017.

“Shaping the Christian king under Muslim rule: Constantine and the Torah in the Melkite Arabic chronicle of Agapius of Mabbug (10th cent.)”

*Images of the Good Christian Ruler in the Mediterranean and the Near East (4th-10th Century)*, Frankfurt, 9-11 November 2016.

“Heroes of the Dark Age: two seventh-century ‘heroic tales’ in Theophanes’ *Chronographia*”

*To see, to report, to persuade: narrative and verisimilitude in Byzantium*, Uppsala, 27-29 October 2016.

“Greek, Arabic, and Syriac in Reconquered Syria (10th-11th cent.)”

*23rd International Conference of Byzantine Studies*, Belgrade, 22-27 August 2016.

“Monoénergisme et monothélisme: une controverse pas seulement byzantine”

*Les controverses religieuses en syriaque*, 13<sup>e</sup> Table Ronde de la Société d’études syriaques, 13 Novembre 2015, Paris.

“UGent Late Antique Historiography Project”

*Seventh North American Syriac Symposium*, 21-24 June 2015, Washington DC.

“Christian Arabic historiography at the crossroads between the Byzantine, the Syriac and the Islamic traditions”

*Seventh North American Syriac Symposium*, 21-24 June 2015, Washington DC.

“*Notitiae Urbis Romae* in Syriac and Christian Arabic sources”

*Historiography and Space in Late Antiquity*, 15-17 January 2015, Ghent.

“Conspicuously absent: ‘Miaphysites’ and ‘Nestorians’ in (Procopius’ portrait) of sixth-century Byzantine society”

*Late Mediterranean Society according to Procopius of Caesarea*, 11-13 December 2014, Mainz.

“Historiography across the borders: the case of the Islamic material in Theophanes’ *Chronographia*”

*Christian Historiography between the Empires (4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, 24-25 October 2014, Central European University, Budapest.

“Our festivals will come to an end”: the dialectic defeat of Paganism and Judaism in two Syriac poems on the Finding of the True Cross.

*Poetry and religion in the Mediterranean area in pre-modern times. A centuries-long relationship between superposition, competition, alliance and division of tasks*, 4 April 2014, Ghent.

“Il florilegio siriano nel ms. BL Add. 14535: sviluppi germogliati dalla crisi monotelita”

*La teologia dal V all’VIII secolo fra sviluppo e crisi*, XLI Incontro di studiosi dell’antichità cristiana, 9-11 May 2013, Rome.



“Theophilos, ‘the more likely candidate’? Towards a reappraisal of the question of Theophanes’ Oriental source(s)”

*The Chronicle of Theophanes: Sources, Composition and Transmission. An International Workshop*, 14-15 September 2012, Paris.

#### SEMINAR PAPERS

“*Clavis Historicorum Tardae Antiquitatis*. The database of the ERC project *Memory of Empire*”, *Digital Tools for Ancient Historians*, Ghent University, 8 December 2017.

“Between Greek past and Arabic present: Constantine and the Septuagint in the Melkite Arabic chronicle of Agapius of Mabbug (10<sup>th</sup> cent.)”, *Quo vadis, Patrologia? Colloquium Christian Antiquity*, KU Leuven, 28 September 2017.

“Rhetoric and history at the School of Nisibis”, *Rhetoric and Historiography in Late Antiquity*, Ghent University, 18-19 September 2017.

“Constantine and the Finding of the True Torah: Questions on the Context of Agapius’ Chronicle”, Workshop *Text and Context in Late Antiquity*, Center for the Study of Christianity - The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Zichron Ya’akov (Israel), 14-15 February 2016.

“L’ethno-géographie morale d’Agapius de Mabbug (X<sup>e</sup> siècle)”, Journée d’étude *Histoire et géographie chez les historiens chrétiens* dans le cadre du Projet transversal « L’écriture de l’histoire à l’époque impériale » (UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée), Paris, 7 December 2015.

Member of the panel “Cross-cultural Research” during the Study day “Medieval Studies as Academic Discipline”, Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies, Ghent, 28 May 2015.

“Het schrijven van Christelijke geschiedenis in de taal van de Islam: het begin van de Christelijke historiografie in het Arabisch in het kader van de middeleeuwse geschiedschrijving (midden 9e-begin van de 11e eeuw)”, Ledendag van de Vlaamse Werkgroep Mediëvistiek, Antwerp, 26 April 2015.

“Les grands absents. Les ‘monophysites’ et les ‘nestoriens’ chez Procope”, *Textes et représentations de l’Antiquité Tardive*, Séminaire Lille-Gand, Lille, 22 November 2014,.

“Constantin dans la tradition syriaque: un mythe revisité”, Composante Mondes sémitiques, CNRS Paris A (UMR 8167), 22 March 2013.

“Striking a Match on Byzantium’s ‘Dark Ages’: Historiographical Production, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Centuries” Seeger Center for Hellenic Studies, Princeton University, 15 November 2011.

## REFEREES

Prof. Peter Van Nuffelen,  
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Institute for Advanced Study,  
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Princeton, New Jersey  
08540 USA  
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Prof. Roger D. Scott,  
School of Historical and Philosophical Studies  
Faculty of Arts The University of Melbourne  
Parkville  
VIC 3010, Australia  
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