



Letters and Authority: The Epistolary Communication of Rulers and Religious Leaders in Antiquity and the Middle Ages

International Conference
University of Cyprus
Department of Classics and Philosophy
29-30 May 2026

Venue: Main Campus, Learning Resource Centre (Library “Stelios Ioannou”)
Amphitheatre LRC 014

Day 1 (May 29th)

10.00-10.15: Welcome and Introduction

10.15-11.15: **Keynote lecture** (Chair: Spyridon Tzounakas)

Roy Gibson (Durham University)

“The Epistolary Communication of Rulers and Religious Leaders Preserved in Letter Collections 400 BCE-400 CE”

11.15-11.45 Coffee break

Session 1: Alexander and Caesar (Chair: Roy Gibson)

11.45-12.15:

Chiara Di Serio (University of Cyprus)

“Representing Royal Authority in the Letters of Alexander the Great to Kings and Rulers”

12.15-12.45:

Adalberto Magnavacca (University of Cyprus)

“Embedding Letters within His Own Narrative: The Case of Caesar’s Letters in the *Commentarii*”

12.45-13.00: Discussion

13.00-14.30 Lunch

Session 2: Plutarch (Chair: Gavin Kelly)

14.30-15.00:

Eran Almagor (Jerusalem)

“A Man of Letters and Letters of Men: Plutarch and the Use of Epistles”

15.00-15.15: Discussion

15.15-15.45 Coffee break

Session 3: The Letters of Late Antique Emperors (Chair: Étienne Wolff)

15.45-16.15:

Jan Stenger (University of Würzburg)

“Conversing as Philosophers: Friendship and Authority in Julian’s Letters”

16.15-16.45:

Philip Bosman (Stellenbosch University)

“Julian’s Public Letters as Despatched Authority”

16.45-17.15:

Gavin Kelly (University of Edinburgh)

“*Theodosius Augustus Ausonio parenti suo salutem*: A Private Letter of Theodosius I”

17.15-17.45: Discussion

19.30 Dinner

Day 2 (May 30th)

Session 4: Administration and Fiscality in Late Antiquity (Chair: Nikitas Hatzimihail)

10.00-10.30:

Mar Marcos (University of Cantabria)

“Imperial Letters in Late Antique Canonical Collections”

10.30-11.00:

Sven Günther (Northeast Normal University)

“Let’s Talk about Taxes! – But How? Christian Authorities and their Letter Communication on Imperial Fiscality”

11.00-11.15: Discussion

11:15-11.45 Coffee break

Session 5: Episcopal Letters (Chair: Jan Stenger)

11.45-12.15:

Rafał Toczko (Nicolaus Copernicus University)

“The Art of Praise, Blame, and Self-Fashioning: Augustine’s Epistolary Ethos in Correspondence with Roman Officials”

12.15-12.45:

Étienne Wolff (Paris Nanterre University)

“A Bishop Writes to Bishops: the Episcopal Letters of Sidonius Apollinaris”

12.45-13.15:

Przemysław Piwowarczyk (University of Silesia)

“Building Authority in Documentary Episcopal Letters from Seventh-Century Western Thebes”

13.15-13.30: Discussion

13.30-14.30 Lunch

Session 6: Byzantine Letters (Chair: Martin Hinterberger)

14.30-15.00:

Sabira Hajdarević (University of Zadar)

“Friends (with Benefits?): A Case Study of an Emperor’s Correspondence”

15.00-15.30:

Liu Jianchang (Northeast Normal University)

“Letters of Faith and Authority: Exploring Hidden Epistles in Ninth-Century Byzantine Hagiography” (online)

15.30-15.45: Discussion

15.45-16.00: Final Remarks

19.30 Dinner

Organisers:

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