

2012-2013 Regional Grant Application
Southeast Region

Late Antiquity Made New: A Celebration of the Career of Elizabeth A. Clark
April 11-13, 2013

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Late Antiquity Made New will bring together approximately seventy-five nationally and internationally recognized scholars of Late Ancient Studies, Early Christianity, and related disciplines. The conference will focus, on the one hand, on documenting the emergence of “Late Antiquity” as a discipline within and beyond the Study of Religion during the past four decades, and, on the other, on exploring directions for contemporary and future research within this field.

The occasion for the conference is the retirement of Elizabeth A. Clark, the John Carlisle Kilgo Professor of the History of Christianity at Duke University and former President of the American Academy of Religion. As a scholar and mentor, Professor Clark has been instrumental in the development of Early Christian and Late Ancient Studies, and has contributed both directly and indirectly to enriching discourses surrounding religious scholarship in the Southeast Region for nearly fifty years, first at Mary Washington College (now: Mary Washington University), and since 1983 at Duke.

In acknowledgment of Professor Clark’s profound impact as a mentor and educator, the conference brings together several generations of academics who have been taught by her or have been otherwise inspired by her work. Presenters will include internationally recognized senior scholars, mid-career and junior faculty, current graduate students, as well as members of the public interested in the study of Late Ancient religion. This inter-generational conversation is central to the vision of the conference as a “forward-looking retrospective,” as it places the emerging horizons of scholarship into dialectical engagement with the history of the field.

The conference also contributes to developing the Southeastern Region of the American Academy of Religion in several ways. Thanks in large part to the efforts of Professor Clark, the Southeast, especially the Triangle region of North Carolina, has become and remains a crucible for innovative scholarship on early Christianity and late ancient studies. This conference, which will garner national and international attendance, will showcase the Southeast as one of the most important centers for the study of religion and religions in Late Antiquity. It will further provide a unique opportunity for faculty and graduate students from this region to interact with scholars from disciplines as diverse as New Testament, Rabbinics, Religion and Theory, and American Religions as they explore their fields' intersection with the study of Late Antiquity.

On addition to three plenary lectures, the conference will feature five sessions of four papers each followed by a response. The sessions will focus on five themes of enduring interest for the Study of Religion:

1. "In Theory:" Theory and Method in Late Ancient Studies
2. "A Troubled/Troubling Tradition:" Late Antiquity and its Reception.
3. "Engendering Late Antiquity:" Reassessing Gender and Sexuality in Religious Discourse.
4. "Literary Texts/Ascetic Contexts:" Writing, Reading, and Interpretation in Late Ancient Christianity.
5. "Melania:" The History of Christianity as told through the life of a Late Ancient Family.

While Duke University is funding much of the overhead costs for the conference, and providing some travel funding for plenary speakers, a Regional Grant would be of great help in defraying the travel and accommodation costs of presenters attending the event from within the Southeast Region.

Four presenters will be travelling from institutions within the Southeast Region (one each from The University of Tennessee-Knoxville and The University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and two from The University of Kentucky). Travel funding for these scholars from their home institutions is extremely limited and/or entirely unavailable.

The costs per participant are as follows:

Accommodation (special conference rate at local hotel) and board:	\$--
Travel:	\$--
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Total:	
	$\$--/\text{person} \times 4 = \$--$

Thus, we ask for the AAR Southeast Region's support in facilitating the attendance of this important event for its members with a grant of \$--, to be disbursed to cover travel and accommodation.