

Foreword

For most of the members of the editorial board of *Post Augustum*, Dimitris Kyrtatas is the inspirational teacher who opened paths of knowledge and thought for us. He was, during our studies, and continues to be, by our side with his erudition, sharpness, rigor, accuracy, originality of bold thinking and his special sense of humor. The same is true for the thousands of students who attended his classes in Rethymno and Volos, during all the years of his university teaching.

We organized the following tribute as a small gift from the heart to celebrate his retirement from the University, where he offered a lot, and which is also the beginning of a new and, as already evident, very fruitful phase of his scientific activity.

From his very rich biography (long-term teaching in Greek and foreign universities, articles and books, participation in conferences, collaborations with major research centers, etc.) and his scientific contribution to the study and understanding of ancient history, we would like to dwell on two main points.

The historical period we call Late Antiquity was for many years in our country almost a terra incognita for scholars of ancient history, who stopped their research at the end of the Hellenistic years. On the contrary, philologists were the first to make bold approaches to writers of the first Christian centuries and to currents of thought that the science of history traditionally despised. The first Christian centuries had remained mostly in the research jurisdiction of theologians. Kyrtatas emerged in Greece and turned this historical period into a fascinating object of research.

He allowed us to see the theological text as a historical source, as no historian in Greece had dared to do until then, and took from it important information about the daily life and mentality, the political life, and the tensions of religious phenomena. It made us rediscover the value of "little things" that suddenly shed so much light on aspects of the ancient world that we thought we were done with or we had nothing new to say about them.

Kyrtatas deeply honors the social role of the scientist. Along with his presence abroad, he consistently and generously addresses the Greek public by regularly sharing the findings of his research on the ancient past and dissolving the ideological obsessions with which the ethnocentric conception of history burdens modern Greek society, while shedding light on sensitive issues.

His articles in newspapers and magazines have the same quality of speech and thought as his papers in international scientific fora, but at the same time, he wants always to ensure that his calm and substantial speech is understood by a wide audience which needs to learn and think critically, away from demagogic constructions and ancestral worship.

We wish to warmly thank all the authors and contributors of this volume who responded eagerly to our call and provided us with remarkable texts without delay. We also wish to express our deepest gratitude to the distinguished painter Tomas Watson who accepted on a non-profit basis to create and provide us with the portrait

of Dimitris J. Kyrtatas which adorns the cover of the present issue. Last but not least, we sincerely thank Professor Nanno Marinatos for supporting tirelessly and enthusiastically our effort with ideas and initiatives right from the start.

The members of the editorial board of Post Augustum