

## Hartmut Leppin

Professor of Ancient History  
at Goethe University Frankfurt

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize 2015



### DFG-RFH-Leibniz-Lecture

#### Antikes Christentum und Religiöse Gewalt

#### Античное христианство и религиозное насилие

The lecture will be held in German with Russian translation:

15 April 2016, 3.00 pm, White Hall, Scientific Library of Moscow State University (MGU)  
27 Lomonosovsky prospekt, Moscow

Born in 1963 in Helmstedt, Hartmut Leppin studied History, Latin, Greek and education sciences in Marburg, Heidelberg and Pavia. After gaining the initial qualification (first state examination) as a secondary teacher in History and Latin, in 1990 he obtained his doctorate with Karl Christ in Marburg, with a thesis on the social position of stage artists during the Roman Republic and the Principate. He habilitated in 1995 at FU Berlin. Since 2001, Leppin has been a professor at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main. He is also a principal investigator in the DFG Cluster of Excellence (EXC) "Normative Orders", funded through the Excellence Initiative, and since January 2015 he has been spokesperson for the new Collaborative Research Centre (CRC), "Discourses of Weakness and Resource Regimes". Leppin is co-editor of the journal *Historische Zeitschrift* and the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*.

Hartmut Leppin is one of Germany's most prominent ancient historians, particularly respected as a world expert in Late Antiquity and early Christianity. His studies reveal him to be an independent thinker who takes intellectual risks in order to explore new scholarly ground. His habilitation dissertation is an excellent example of this, in which he investigated the political ideas of three previously neglected church historians of Late Antiquity – Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret – with regard to a Christian empire. Here and in subsequent studies on other church fathers within the realm of the history of ideas, Leppin portrays an extremely complex picture of the relationships between Christianity and political power in Late Antiquity, in particular the role of Christianity in imperial self-representation. A key concept in this context is Leppin's concept of humility, which he traces back to interpretations of the Old Testament kingdom and transferred to the empire of Late Antiquity. Related studies on Theodosius the Great and Justinian reflected a wide-ranging relationship between monarchy and Christianity that would determine the course of European history for centuries from Late Antiquity onwards. Leppin offered new approaches to the interpretation of early Christianity in that he conceived Christianizations as a non-linear process and presented them for the first time in their temporal and spatial non-simultaneity.



The **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize** is the highest honor awarded in German research. Established in 1985, the prize provides an unparalleled degree of freedom to outstanding scientists and academics in which to pursue their research interests. Up to ten prizes are awarded annually with a maximum of €2.5 million per award. Prize recipients are awarded the prize solely on the basis of the scientific quality of their work. The Leibniz Prize honors the well-known scientist and humanist Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), who was a leading figure in the fields of philosophy, mathematics, physics and theology.

The **German Research Foundation (DFG)** is the central, self-governing organization funding science and basic research in Germany. Serving all branches of science and the humanities, its members comprise German research universities, non-university research institutions, scientific associations and the Academies of Science and the Humanities. The chief task of the DFG is to fund the best research projects by scientists and academics at universities and research institutions, which are selected on the basis of a multi-layered peer review process.

The DFG organizes **Leibniz Lectures** in different regions across the world in order to promote German science, especially at locations where it has its own foreign representations like in Brazil, Russia, India, China, Japan and the USA. Germany's scientific relations with Russia are part of a lively, centuries-old tradition. Russia is particularly significant for the German scientific system and is a priority country in the DFG's international activities. The DFG has maintained an intensive scientific dialogue with Russia for decades and, since 2003, has supported the development of bilateral cooperation through its own representative office in Moscow, the **DFG Office Russia/CIS** (<http://www.dfg.de/ru>). As well as being the DFG's liaison office, it functions as a local point of contact for Russian scientists, providing advice and mentoring in cooperation programmes.

In 2012 the DFG Office organized the first Leibniz Lecture in Moscow. Since then once a year the following lectures have been held in the Russian Federation:

- 2012: Matthias Kleiner (DFG-President), "Strategic Research in Engineering – Advanced Light Metal Extrusion for Low Energy Design", Moscow State University, Moscow;
- 2013: Günter Ziegler (Freie Universität Berlin), "Cannons at Sparrows: Cutting Polygons via Configuration Spaces", Library Hall, Hotel Balchug, Moscow;
- 2014: Günter Ziegler (Freie Universität Berlin), "Sugar Cubes, Soap Bubbles, a Revolution and a Star: Some Stellar Images between Mathematics and Physics", Steklov Institute of Mathematics, Saint Petersburg Branch;
- 2015: Hartmut Leppin (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/Main), "Demut und Macht: Die christlichen Kaiser der Spätantike (Смирение и власть: императоры-христиане позднего Рима)", Russian State University for Humanities.