**Byzantium and Europe: a complex relationship**

The subject of this research is not the fate of the idea of Europe in Byzantine literature, since the concept of a European cultural unity as such comes from Modernity. In the world of the Middle Ages, characterised by a rigid hierarchy and accustomed to looking at things *sub specie aeternitatis*, the concept of Europe corresponded rather to the one expressed by the Latin *Christianitas*. Byzantines, in fact, were mostly Christian and up to 1054 they shared the faith with the see of Rome: the idea of a political or cultural unity not based on religion was completely extraneous to their worldview. Aside from religion, the only factors that fuelled the cultural conscience of Eastern intellectuals were the primacy of Greece and the legal and administrative tradition of the Roman Empire, of which Byzantium considered itself the age-old successor. The *fil rouge* that binds the following reflections, however, is different, and is an attempt to grasp the Medieval and Byzantine origins of current issues posed by European integration: the ancient and problematic relationship between Europe and Turkey, the role of Slavic peoples, and the relationship between religion and politics; the latter being also attributable, to a certain extent, to the different concept of time between Byzantines and Westerners.