CALL FOR PAPERS

You are invited to submit a 250-word abstract proposal to a panel concerned with material culture, ethnicity, and race relations in Eastern Christianity for the Anthropology of Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion (November 23-26, 2013 in Baltimore, MD). With your submission, please include your name, preferred e-mail address, institution, rank/seniority, and your department and field of research. Notifications of acceptance will be made by February 22, 2013. Abstracts must be submitted electronically as an e-mail attachment to: Aaron Sokoll at ajsokoll@gmail.com or Sarah A. Riccardi at Sarah110487@live.missouristate.edu

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS
Deadline for abstract: February 19, 2013

PANEL ABSTRACT
National, racial, ethnic, and social identities have complex connections to and relationships with religion and spirituality, particularly through the material trappings and sensory cultures of churches and institutions. This panel explores how the sensory cultures of Eastern Christianity (Orthodox and Catholic) construct, enforce, reinforce, and fracture the cultural poetics of identity, calling attention to discourses on race, ethnicity, and nationalism occurring within and between the various groups, jurisdictions, and archdioceses that make up Eastern Christianity. In the vein of theoretical ethnography, the papers presented in this panel combine on-the-ground observations and one-on-one interviews with theories of race, ethnicity, and identity. While scholars of religion have begun attending to vernacular practices, sensory cultures, and discourses on race and ethnicity in a variety of Christian traditions, studies of race and ethnicity in Eastern Christianity have been overlooked in favor of institutional Church practices, histories, and accounts. Yet, archival research and ethnographic, on-the-ground conversations and interactions with the laity offer insights into the complexities of identity in the various constituencies of Eastern Christianity. This panel helps address a void in studies of race and ethnicity in Orthodoxy and Eastern Catholicism, while adding to the corpus of literature on material studies, conversion identity, and nationalism within contemporary Christianity. The questions raised in the papers should have larger implications in terms of global Christianities, ethnic immigration and assimilation, religious pluralism, conversion, and attitudes and discourses on race and ethnicity in relation to group culture and identity. Therefore, we invite paper proposals on issues of race, ethnicity, and identity in relation to material and sensory cultures within the context of the Eastern Christian experience. Studies involving ethnographic methods for a significant portion of the work are highly preferred.