

CEU-UniWien Late Antique and Byzantine Student Colloquium (LABS)
Call for Papers
Receiving Byzantium, Byzantium Receiving
Vienna, May 16-17, 2025

May 16:

Central European University, Quellenstrasse 51, D001, 1100 Vienna.

May 17:

Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, University of Vienna, Postgasse 9, Lecture Hall, 1010 Vienna.

The theme of the conference, *Receiving Byzantium, Byzantium Receiving*, invites exploration of Byzantium's dual role as both a recipient and a transmitter of cultural influences. Byzantium both engaged with the classical traditions it inherited and interacted with its neighboring traditions. Recent scholarship as well as popular representations of Byzantium have expanded the discourse on these issues and opened fresh perspectives on the Byzantine Middle Ages.

Far from being mere custodians of ancient material, the Byzantines actively engaged with their inherited legacy: first, by copying, reinterpreting, and transmitting classical texts; second, by integrating these texts into their intellectual, educational, and cultural practices, where they were adapted to serve new theological, literary, and societal purposes. Additionally, the Byzantines repurposed and reimagined ancient architecture, artworks, and everyday objects in both public and private spaces. The reception of classical antiquity is central to understanding Byzantine culture, but equally important are the interactions of Byzantium with diverse cultures both within and beyond its borders.

This line of investigation is the result of recent scholarship that has significantly broadened the scope of Byzantine Studies by examining the diverse receptions of Byzantine history from the early modern period to today. These receptions are in dialogue with modern theoretical frameworks for the study of Late Antiquity and Byzantium. Furthermore, in the public sphere, the cultural representations of Byzantium frequently reflect evolving perceptions of its legacy. Perspectives from different scholarly and public contexts highlight contrasting narratives about the Byzantine Empire and Eastern Orthodoxy. Consequently, these scholarly and public interpretations compel the academic domain to engage critically with concepts such as Byzantinism, Philhellenism, and Orientalism. Lastly, intensified scholarly interest in the mobility and exchange of ideas, goods, and people has played a pivotal role in shaping these receptions, demonstrating how the influence of Byzantium transcends both geographical boundaries and historical periods. Together, these dynamics foster a vibrant dialogue among diverse cultures and intellectual traditions.

We invite papers that explore the theme of the conference from a variety of perspectives. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:

- Byzantine scholarly practices in the transmission and interpretation of ancient literature, including the use of commentaries, scholia, lexica, and collections of excerpts.
- The translation and adaptation of texts from classical antiquity and neighboring cultures, with a particular focus on their influence on Byzantine literary and religious traditions.
- The Byzantine reception of ancient material and artistic culture, as well as its reimagining within Byzantine society. This includes examining the role of manuscripts as cultural objects produced in specific socio-cultural contexts.
- The reception of religious literature, praxis, and liturgy across languages, genres, and confessional boundaries within and around Byzantium.
- The reception and influence of Byzantium in both the East and West during the Middle Ages and beyond.
- The mobility and circulation of ideas, goods, and people within the framework of reception theories, and their impact on processes of cultural exchange.
- The enduring influence of Byzantine culture in shaping the reception of classical heritage and Christianity, particularly in literature, art, and architecture.
- The role of modern art, literature, games, popular culture, and media in reshaping and reimagining Byzantine heritage.
- The impact of national ideologies, such as Philhellenism and Romanticism, on shaping modern perceptions of Byzantium.
- The reception of Byzantine architecture and art in modern public spaces, museum curation, and heritage preservation projects.

We invite applications from graduate students at MA and PhD level. Those wishing to have their 20-minute paper considered should send an email to ozdemir_osman@phd.ceu.edu, and alessandra.guido@univie.ac.at with a paper title, a 200-word abstract, and an academic affiliation by February 28, 2025. Applicants will be notified by March 10. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Keynote speakers:

Prof. Markéta Kulhánková (Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Institute of Slavonic Studies/Masaryk University, Center for Early Medieval Studies)

Prof. William M. Barton (Institut für Klassische Philologie und Neulateinische Studien, Universität Innsbruck)

Organizing committee:

Achraf Brahim, Luidmila Eramova, Alessandra Guido, Mustafa Ada Kök, Georgi Mitov, Alice Montalto, Osman Yüksel Özdemir, Marieke Verbiest, Olga Vlachou.

