



Colloquia Ceranea VIII

Programme and Abstracts

7-9 May 2026

venue: Institute of History,
27A Kaminskiego St.

online: ceraneum.uni.lodz.pl/
colloquia-ceranea

keynote speakers:

Chryssa Bourbou

Effie Photos-Jones



7 May 2026

Room 103

8:15 – Conference opening

8:30-9:30 Keynote Lecture: Chryssa Bourbou From *Aventicum* to the Anthropocene: Learning from the Past, Challenging the Future of the Human-Environment Dynamics

9:30-9:45 Coffee break

9:45-11:45 SESSION I

Room 103

Moderator: Chryssa Bourbou

Alfred Galik (online) Bioarchaeology in Byzantine Ephesos (5th–7th c. AD)

Andreas Heiss Why Roam Far Afield When the Good Is So Near? Regional Subsistence and Far-Distance Trade of Plant-Based Foods in Roman and Early Byzantine Ephesos

Michael Beer The Uses of Flavoured Wines in the Banquets of Elagabalus

Dimitra Makri (online) Wine-Tasting in Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt

9:45-11:45 SESSION Ia

Room 203

Moderator: Aleksandar Savić

Carl Dixon The Kosmopoiētis: Unravelling a Curious Term in Romano-Paulician Cosmological Discourse

Bojana Radovanović Paulician Influence on the Bogomils: Just a Trope?

Shtoni (Sava) Kokoudev Bogomils, Paulicians and Massalians: A Comparative View, Based on Zygabenus' *Panoplia Dogmatica*

11:45-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-13:30 SESSION II

Room 103

Moderator: Andreas Heiss

Sophia Germanidou (online) Sowing the Seeds of Nutrition. Landscape, Typology and Dating of Terraces in Mani, Southern Greece (Project Hydromedie MCIF)

Razieh Sadeghi Khoshdel Plant Mobility, Garden Landscapes, and Embodied Experience between Iran and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity and Byzantium

Federica Rotelli Biological Mobility and Knowledge Circulation in Byzantium: Ecology, Medicine, and Foodways in a Connected Mediterranean

12:00-13:30 SESSION IIa

Room 203

Moderator: Dženan Dautović

Martin Illert (online) Soteriological Perspectives on Anna Komnene's *Alexias* XV.8-10

Mirena Slavova Into the Fiery Furnace: The Execution of Basil the Physician in the Hippodrome (Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* XV.9–10)

Gioacchino Strano (online) Alexios Ier Comnène et les Arméniens entre théologie et raison d'État

13:30-14:30 Lunch break

14:30-16:00 SESSION III

Room 103

Moderator: Maria Leontsini

Zofia Sidwa From Sacred Lotus to Edible Root: The Semantic Shift of Colocasia in Late Antiquity

Patryk Grancow, Maciej Kokoszko Selected Therapeutic Usage of Cuttlebone in Ancient and Modern Medicine

Anastasia Nikolau (online) Diet, Health, and Everyday Medical Practice in the 17th cent.: The *Geoponikon* of Agapios Landos

14:30-16:00 SESSION IIIa

Room 203

Moderator: Bojana Radovanović

Martyna Kowalska Quodvultdeus of Carthage's Sermon *Against the Jews, Pagans and Arians* as an Example of the Defense of Orthodox Christian Religion

Marco Muresu (online) *Ligna et lapides*: Pagans and Paganism in Gregory the Great's *Registrum Epistularum*

Michail Theodosiadis (online) Relational Ontology and Ethical Power: An Eastern Orthodox Approach to International Relations

16:00-16:15 Coffee break

16:15-17:45 SESSION IV

Room 103

Moderator: Sean Coughlin

Jazz Demetriooff (online) Mea culpa! – Disease Origins: Who or What Is to Blame?

Hanna Morkowska (online) The Epicurean Spiritual Therapy in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*

Christos Tsatsoulis (online) Doctors on Lead: Medical Identity and Professional Status in Byzantium through Sigillographic Evidence

16:15-18:15 SESSION IVa

Room 203

Moderator: Carl Dixon

Maja Angelovska-Panova (online) The Power of the Story: How Anti-Heretical Propaganda Was Created

Dženan Dautović The Production of Knowledge Concerning Medieval Bosnia at the Roman Curia, 13th – 15th Centuries

Katalin Suba, Tomáš Hampejs, David Zbiral Beneath the Formula: Consolament Descriptions in the FFF Register of Carcassonne and the Limits of Inquisitorial Construction

Stanisław Banach, David Zbíral, Zoltán Brys, Robert L. J. Shaw, and Reima Välimäki

Heterodoxy without Ministers: Evidence on the Persistence of Waldensian Beliefs from the Fribourg Inquisition, 1430

18:30 Welcome Dinner

Room 204

8 May 2026

8:00-10:00 SESSION V

Room 103

Moderator: Michael Beer

Andrew Dalby The Best of Everything

Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann The Value of Seafood as Fasting Food

Maciej Helbig From Ferocious Beast to Feast: The Boar in Apicius's Culinary Zoo

Maria Leontsini Cooked Game in Byzantine Cuisine: Nutritional and Gastronomic Aspects

8:00-10:00 SESSION Va

Room 203

Moderator: Aleksandar Anđelović

Anna Jouravel Explaining, Specifying, Correcting: Reformulation Markers in Medieval Greek-Slavic Translations

Ivan P. Petrov The Slavonic Reception of Isaac the Syrian: New Perspectives on Textual Transmission

Ekaterina Dikova, Jürgen Fuchsbauer Structuring Knowledge on Byzantine Texts in Slavonic Translation: Textual Transmission, Translation Practices and Manuscript Contexts

10:00-10:15 Coffee break

10:15-11:15 Keynote Lecture: Effie Photos-Jones Philoctetes' Wound and the Earth of Lemnos: Can a Myth Form a Reliable Basis for Bio-Medical Research?

11:15-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:00 SESSION VI

Room 103

Moderator: Andrew Dalby

Sally Grainger (online) Modern Perceptions of Taste and Savor in Ancient Roman Cuisine

Ole G. Mouritsen Lessons for Future Sustainable Cooking from Ancient and Foreign Food Cultures

Mariana Kavroulaki (online) Cooking the Past: Alternative Approaches to Interpreting Recipes and Cuisine in Greek Antiquity

11:30-13:00 SESSION VIa

Room 203

Moderator: Aleksandar Anđelović

Ilia Afanasev, Ivan P. Petrov Exploring Textual Tradition Through LLMs: An Analysis of Parallel Old and Middle Bulgarian and Middle Greek Corpus

Aneta Dimitrova Three Slavonic Translations of John Chrysostom's "Ad finem ieiunii" (Homily 20 *On the Statues*): Linguistic Features and Manuscript Transmission

13:00-14:00 Lunch break

14:00-16:00 SESSION VII

Room 103

Moderator: Effie Photos-Jones

Manuela Marai The Importance of the Dosage Form: Density, Viscosity, and Adhesiveness in Galen's Compound Remedies for Wounds and Ulcers

Kalina Boseva Medieval Ethnopharmacology for Treatment of *Holy Fire* from the 1st Century BCE to the 11th Century CE

Richard Greenfield The Pharmacotherapeutic Properties of Earthworms Described in the *Kyranides* and Traditions of Byzantine Medicine: A Source Missing from Modern Studies

Gerasimos Merianos Making or Imitating Gold? Chrysopoeia as *Technē* in Byzantium

14:00-16:00 SESSION VIIa

Room 203

Moderator: Angeliki Delikari

Maksymilian Mikuła Imperial Accessions in the Late Byzantine Romance *Libistros and Rhodamne*

Magdalena Garnczarska (online) Between Imperial Majesty and Courtly Hierarchy: The Function of Pearls in Byzantine Ceremonial from *De ceremoniis* to Pseudo-Kodinos

Evelina Kachynska How Much of Constantinople Is There in Kyiv?

Paweł Nowik Between Kyiv and Constantinople: The Banishment of Rurikid Princes to Byzantium in the 11th and 12th Centuries

16:00-16:15 Coffee break

16:15-18:15 SESSION VIII

Room 103

Moderator: Elias Valiakos

Ekaterina Dikova, Fabio Maion, Irina Kuzidova-Karadzchinova The South-Slavonic Translation of Nicolaus Callicles' Dietary Epigrams: Representation in REGEST and Parallel Digital Edition

Colloquia Ceranea VIII
7–9 May 2026

Nell Sypniewska The Medical Skills and Practical Knowledge of Female Members of the Imperial Family at the Court of Komnenoi

Davide Mussi (online) Therapy for Gout in Demetrios Pepagomenos' *De podagra*

Edward Hoptioncann (online) How Byzantium Transformed the Study of Human Anatomy

16:15-18:15 SESSION VIIIa

Room 203

Moderator: Aneta Dimitrova

Andrew Wade The Unusual, Lengthy Midnight Office in Melkite Alexandria Witnessed in Sinai Arabic 232 (13th c.)

Angeliki Delikari The Significance of the Long Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid in Slavia Orthodoxa

Yanko Hristov (online) Negotiating Despair: Expressions of Suicidal Behaviour in the Thirteenth-Century Rural Balkans

Mihai Dragnea The Confusion Between Vlachs and Wallachians in Historiography

18:15 **Maciej Helbig:** Ancient buffet

9 May 2026

8:00-9:30 SESSION IX

Room 103

Moderator: Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann

Yvette Hunt (online) Roger Marchall's Composite *Phisice Plinii*: Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 222 and the Use of Digitised Manuscripts

Elias Valiakos Theophanes Chrysobalantes' *Synopsis on Remedies*. A First Approach

Alain Touwaide Managing the Ancient Legacy: From Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, to the So-Called *Herbal*

8:00-9:30 SESSION IXa

Room 203

Moderator: Kirił Marinow

Marcin Böhm (online) The Edge of the Byzantine World: Poles and French in the Army of Henry VI Hohenstaufen During His Second Expedition to Southern Italy in 1194

Łukasz Różycki *De militari scientia* and the Image of Arabs in Late Antique Military Treatises

Rafał Szewczyk Between Alliance and Rivalry: A Few Remarks on Byzantine Relations with the Mongol Empire and the Early Ilkhanate (c. 1240–1265)

9:30-9:45 Coffee break

9:45-11:15 SESSION X

Room 103

Moderator: Manuela Marai

ROUND TABLE: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Pharmacotherapeutics: Application of Past Results to the Present

Alice Capobianco (online), Barbara Huber Beyond Residues: Reconstructing Roman Perfume Industries through Biomolecular and Ethnoarchaeological Data

Sean Coughlin Smoke Through Oil: Replicating an Ancient Fumigation-Based Extraction from Aetius of Amida

Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann Fragrant Ointments in Hospital Context

9:45-11:45 SESSION Xa

Room 203

Moderator: Jan Mikołaj Wolski

Octavian-Adrian Negoită (online) John Kantakouzenos's Anti-Jewish Polemic

Luisa Andriollo (online) Gender, Sexual Morality, and Religious Polemic: Representations of Women in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Anti-Muslim Literature

Aleksandar Savić Between Sultan and Scaffold: Christian–Muslim Encounters in South Slavic Hagiography (13th–16th Centuries)

Artemy Streletsky (online) The Polemical Techniques in John of Damascus’s “On the Heresy of the Ishmaelites”

11:15-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-13:30 SESSION XI

Room 103

Moderator: John Wilkins (online)

Vincenzo Damiani Women’s Physiology and Health in Clement of Alexandria’s *Paedagogus*: Between Theological Symbology and Lebensführung

Maciej Kokoszko, Zofia Rzeźnicka Hymettian, Thasian, Attic, or Cycladic? Choosing the Best Type of Honey According to Galen

Salome Gviniashvili Between Ritual and Remedy: Vernacular Healing and Medical Manuscripts in Medieval Georgia

12:00-13:30 SESSION XIa

Room 203

Moderator: Łukasz Różycki

Adam Łukaszewicz (online) A Remark on a Passage of Nonnos

Boris Shopov (online) Serdica and Theophylact Simocatta: The Importance of a Blank Space

Maciej Dawczyk The Geography of Early Medieval Emilia-Romagna and Its Influence on the Development of Byzantine–Lombard Conflicts

13:30-14:30 Lunch break

14:30-15:30 SESSION XII

Room 103

Alain Touwaide, Emanuela Appetiti workshop: Greek Medical Manuscripts-MediManus

15:30-15:45 Coffee break

15:45-17:15 SESSION XIII

Room 103

Moderator: Alain Touwaide

Elke Krotz *Synonyma Rasis, Synonyma Serapionis, or Better: Synonyma Gerardi Cremonensis?*

Theodora Zampaki (online) Healing Properties and Therapeutic Testing in al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb*

Anya King (online) What Were *Murrī* Oils?

15:45-17:15 SESSION XIIIa

Room 203

Moderator: Mirena Slavova

Marina Bastero Acha, Marta Fernández Corral Workshop Practices and Epigraphic Production at Lara de los Infantes (Burgos, Spain)

Lorena Pérez Yarza Reading the Unnamed: Materiality and Technical Diversity in Roman Epigraphic Production

Martyna Świerk *Ex officina Felices*. Self-Presentation of Craftspeople and Workshops in Mosaics from the Mediterranean from the 3rd to the 5th Century AD

17:15-17:30 Coffee break

17:30-19:10 SESSION XIV

Room 103

Moderator: Manuela Marai

ROUND TABLE: AI for Unlocking Greek Medical Texts

James Zainaldin (online), Mark Schiefsky (online), Cameron Pattison (online), Jacob Wu (online) Can AI Read Galen? Machine Translation, Medical Greek, and the Limits of Large Language Models

17:30-19:30 SESSION XIVa

Room 203

Moderator: Marina Bastero Acha

Michał Dolecki The Equestrian Order of the Third Century AD: Continuation of Trends from the Previous Period or Revolution?

Mihajlo Džamtovski Considerations on the Provincial Affiliation of Naissus in the Late 3rd and Early 4th Centuries

Jakub Jastrząbek Felicio Augusto, melior... quo? – the Ideal of Imperial Power in the Late Roman Empire (4th–6th c.)

Viktor Humennyi (online) Imperial Administration and the Transforming Roman Limes in Syria (3rd–4th c. CE): The *Political Language* of the Inscriptions

ABSTRACTS

The abstracts are listed in alphabetical order by the first author's surname.

Ilia AFANASEV

University of Vienna

Ivan P. PETROV

University of Vienna

Exploring Textual Tradition Through LLMs: An Analysis of Parallel Old and Middle Bulgarian and Middle Greek Corpus

The talk explores a possibility of extracting cultural knowledge from historical lower-resource languages with the help of large language models (LLMs). The goal of the research is to show, how the models may hint at the key trends of cultural interaction in the past. The study implements a test case of bilingual extraction of culturally relevant fragments from manuscripts.

The material in question represents different stages of the translation culture among the South Slavs. *Codex Suprasliensis* is a collection of Old Bulgarian translations of lives of saints, homilies and prayers created in the 10th c. The *13 Discourses* by Gregorius Nazianzenus is a *codex unicus* pertaining to the literary production of the First Bulgarian Empire. Both monuments follow the typical for the earliest translations *ad sensum* approach in rendering the Greek originals, thus making the word-to-word or phrase-to-phrase bilingual collation a challenging task for automatisisation. Isaak the Syrian's *Ascetical Discourses* (version B) on the other hand, is a Middle Bulgarian translation accomplished not earlier than the mid-14th c., with the typical for the period *ad litteram* approach.

The talk outlines the experiments with different LLMs, both cloud-based ones (GPT-5, deepseek-reasoner) and locally deployed ones (LlaMa). The main task is to extract culturally relevant terminology, essentially generating keywords, from raw parallel Greek and Bulgarian texts. The study analyses the degree of cultural knowledge the models are able to grasp. The results showcase the usefulness of LLMs for studying Byzantine-Slavic relationships.

Luisa ANDRIOLLO

University of Pisa

Gender, Sexual Morality, and Religious Polemic: Representations of Women in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Anti-Muslim Literature

Alongside themes and arguments of a more strictly theological nature or concerning religious practices, Byzantine–Muslim polemical dialogues and treatises of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries also contain occasional references to prominent female figures in the Christian world and in Islam, and to the roles they played in each tradition. A central place is occupied by the *Theotokos* and, on the Muslim side, by women belonging to the family of the Prophet.

By examining a selection of texts produced in this period—most notably the *Confutatio Agareni* attributed to Bartholomew of Edessa—this paper explores how representations of women become a meaningful component of interreligious polemic. It argues that the portrayal, whether idealized or deliberately distorted, of gender roles and hierarchies and, more broadly, of the sexual morality attributed to each religious community is closely tied to the rhetorical strategies and polemical aims of the literary genre under consideration.

Maja ANGELOVSKA-PANOVA

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University

The Power of the Story: How Anti-Heretical Propaganda Was Created

Knowledge about heresies is generally based on anti-heretical sources, or more specifically on polemical treatises, inquisitorial records, and chronicles, which in fact represent a kind of narrative artefacts. What these sources with anti-heretical characteristics have in common are stereotypical secrecy, moral hypocrisy, and a tendency to create “typical heretics” rather than historical individuals—that is, to construct a historical discourse that did not always correspond to reality.

In this sense, the aim of the forthcoming article is to demonstrate how the “story,” as an institutional instrument, functioned in the process of shaping collective perceptions of heretics. Moreover, the very concept of the “heretic” in our own time is itself subject to debate. In reality, heretical movements did not represent merely a deviation from official theological dogmatism, but also a form of construction that would subsequently contribute to the emergence of anti-heretical propaganda. This propaganda had multiple functions: primarily, to portray heretics as a spiritual and social evil, but also—no less importantly—a didactic function aimed at instructing the clergy and consumers on how to recognize heresy, to distance themselves from it entirely, and to enable the competent authorities within the hierarchy to eliminate it through the application of various methods. Hence, the “power of the story” lies in its capacity to establish a clear distinction between historical construction and objectivity or reality.

Stanisław BANACH

Masaryk University

Zoltán BRYS

Masaryk University

Reima VÄLIMÄKI

University of Turku

David ZBÍRAL

Masaryk University

Robert L. J. SHAW

Masaryk University

Heterodoxy without Ministers: Evidence on the Persistence of Waldensian Beliefs from the Fribourg Inquisition, 1430

The proposed paper represents a computational study of Waldensian beliefs recorded in the register of the Fribourg Inquisition of 1430. The community of Waldensian adherents

in the town was unique in that, by 1430, it had not had regular contacts with Waldensian ministers for several decades, meaning that the surviving heterodox beliefs upheld by religious dissidents must have been perpetuated by common adherents. The register of interrogations conducted by the inquisitors—eleven of which subjected deponents to a standardised belief questionnaire—grants us insight into the variation in the beliefs of individual members of the Waldensian community as well as into interactions (belief spread, other communication, contact) among members of this network. Our study investigates (1) whether patterns in the belief composition of members of the Waldensian network in Fribourg correlate with their topological characteristics and, particularly of interest for this colloquium, (2) to what extent the recorded beliefs of the Fribourg Waldensians corresponded to “standard” Waldensian doctrines. To study the latter, we are comparing the expressed beliefs of Waldensians from the 1430 register with a taxonomy of normative articles of Waldensian faith constructed on the basis of the inquisitor Peter Zwicker’s somewhat polemical *Articuli Waldensium* and the treatise *De vita et conversacione* (1391–93), a more neutral overview of typical Waldensian beliefs. The comparison of the beliefs of Fribourg’s Waldensians with Zwicker’s *Articuli Waldensium* will reveal the extent to which the beliefs of a real community of Waldensians diverged from their portrayal in anti-heretical literature, while the comparison with *De vita et conversacione* will help us evaluate whether and in what ways this local dissident community began to diverge in its central doctrines from those that had been preached by Waldensian ministers in the fourteenth century.

Marina BASTERO ACHA

University of the Basque Country

University of Warsaw

Marta FERNÁNDEZ CORRAL

University of the Basque Country

Workshop Practices and Epigraphic Production at Lara de los Infantes (Burgos, Spain)

This paper presents a critical study of epigraphic ensemble of Lara de los Infantes, focusing on the production of inscriptions through the identification of styles, workshops, and individual carving hands. It addresses persistent gaps in understanding how these inscriptions were produced, by whom, and within which organisational frameworks. While the corpus of inscriptions has been catalogued, the material and technical dimensions of the texts remain underexplored.

The study examines inscriptions depicting banquet scenes characteristic of the Burgalese regional style, analysing the materiality of the support, decoration, carving techniques,

formulae, script analysis and paleography. Systematic recording of, iconographic, textual features and palaeography is combined with onomastic analysis to trace patterns of commissioning and social networks, shedding light on the interactions between patrons and artisans. Recurring technical features allow the identification of workshops, multi-phase production, and, in some cases, individual hands.

Attention to archaeological and urban context situates production within broader economic and social frameworks, revealing the organisation, specialisation, and local variation of epigraphic work. The study shows how artisans navigated material constraints, stylistic conventions, and client demands, while contributing to the visual and social identity of their communities.

By integrating both technical and social dimensions, this paper restores visibility to the makers behind the inscriptions of Lara de los Infantes. It demonstrates that Burgalese banquet scenes function not only as decorative or textual artefacts but as tangible records of craft, collaboration, and social life, providing a model for understanding the practical and cultural dynamics of regional Roman epigraphy.

Michael BEER

University of Exeter

The Open University

The Uses of Flavoured Wines in the Banquets of Elagabalus

In a chapter on the theatricality of Roman imperial banquets ('Sensory Deception and Manipulation in Ancient Aristocratic Banquets') in Sekhon Dhillon, Y.,K., Norman, J. (2025) *Luxury and the Senses: Past, Present, and Future* (Bloomsbury), I considered how much of the artificiality of the banquets of the Roman emperor Elagabalus could be framed in artistic *mise-en-scène* and the realm of practical jokes, with the use of colour themes and artificial food as somewhat analogous to the recipes devised by the Italian Futurist movement of the early 20th century. I also considered *rosatum*, a wine made from steeping in rose petals (mentioned by Apicius). Elagabalus refined it by adding crushed pinecones. I suggested that he may have served it at his banquets not for its taste but for its laxative properties (as mentioned by Apicius, although Pliny the Elder in book 22 of the *Historia Naturalis* noted that : 'Rose heads taken in drink check diarrhoea and haemorrhage') as part of a rather messy practical joke on his guests.

However, I subsequently wondered whether this drink was being served with a more sinister purpose: as an emetic to weaken the body and lead ultimately to death. The *Scriptores Historia Augustae* states that : 'He was also the first to concoct wine seasoned with mastich and with pennyroyal (*puleiatum*)' (*SHA* 18.4). Pennyroyal, according to Pliny, had a number of uses: an aid to digestion, an abortifacient, a way to counteract

poisons but also potentially toxic if ingested in large enough quantities. Was Elagabalus using the food served at his banquets not as a display of royal luxury or as a form of theatre but as both a weapon and a defence in the lethal arena of court politics?

Marcin BÖHM

University of Opole

The Edge of Byzantine World: Poles and French in the Army of Henry VI Hohenstaufen During His Second Expedition to Southern Italy in 1194

During the events of 1194 related to the military actions of Frederick I's son, Henry VI, towards the Altavilla dynasty, we find the issue that inspired the writing of this article. That topic concerns the armed forces of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, sent on this expedition to Italy, among which we will find reinforcements consisting of Polish and French troops, a cooperation unusual in the 12th century. The account of Peter of Eboli seems to confirm that the French king Philip Augustus and the English Richard I sent some military aid to the emperor Henry VI. And it was in the form of cattle, people, or weapons. In the absence of more credible source evidence, we can put forward a hypothesis here that we could also be dealing with a joint action of Mieszko Spindleshanks and Casimir II the Joust, who, perhaps in agreement with the Czech duke, Henry Brzetysław, planned to send soldiers to Emperor Henry VI. The presence of newcomers from Western Pomerania, Poland, subject to the Piasts, France, both the Capetians and the Plantagenets, or the Burgundians connected to the empire, must have contributed to some extent to the success of the emperor's plan to take over the legacy of his wife Constance, the Norman kingdom in the Mezzogiorno. This combined action of distant inhabitants of different parts of Europe was fueled by the money collected from the ransom for Richard the Lionheart, without which this military crossover would not have been possible.

Kalina BOSEVA

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Medieval Ethnopharmacology for Treatment of "Holy Fire" from the 1st Century BCE to the 11th Century CE

This presentation details the methodology developed for identifying and classifying the medicinal substances used to treat conditions grouped under the term 'holy fire' (ignis sacer) in sources from the 1st Century BCE to the 11th Century CE. In Latin scientific literature from Antiquity through to the Middle Ages, 'ignis sacer' was an umbrella term for various diseases characterised by skin manifestations, including erysipelas and anthrax. For my PhD research, I assembled a primary corpus of 225 Latin passages from 30 authors and two anonymous medical compilations referencing 'ignis sacer.' Using a

custom-built relational database, I mapped the transmission of practical medical knowledge in these sources. I compiled a supplementary corpus of 350 quotations relevant to identifying therapeutic substances. They contain phytophographic references, production methods and medicinal properties. Applying the established protocols resolved ambiguous plant identifications and confirmed hypotheses about the affiliation of ancient and medieval plant names to modern botanical taxa. This was achieved by analysing the descriptive passages, habitat information, manuscript illustrations, and other relevant data.

The study identified about 100 plant taxa across 467 medicinal uses, as well as 66 additional organic and inorganic substances categorised into 25 groups and attested in 265 uses. Analysis of the frequency and context of individual substances revealed that certain ingredients were widely and consistently prescribed across the sources. However, some of these ingredients appeared frequently in the same multi-component configurations. This suggests that the combinations in which the substances occur should also be taken into account, as these ingredient complexes may exhibit synergistic effects. This research sheds light on the sophistication of ancient and medieval pharmacology and demonstrates the potential of this methodology to inform ethnopharmacological studies and investigations into ancient biotics.

Chryssa BOURBOU

Ephorate of Antiquities of Chania and Hellenic Ministry of Culture

From *Aventicum* to the Anthropocene: Learning from the Past, Challenging the Future of the Human-Environment Dynamics

For decades, bioarchaeological—and especially paleopathological—research has illuminated the inextricable human-environment interaction, often focusing on periods when environmental changes compromised human health. This presentation examines health outcomes associated with life in marshy landscapes, where warm temperatures and periodic flooding lead to resource scarcity and infectious disease, like malaria, a significant challenge for Greco-Roman societies. Drawing on multiple scientific datasets, we highlight how anthropogenic, environmental, and biological factors converged to put human populations at significant risk of malaria infection in *Aventicum*, the *civitas capital* of Roman Switzerland during the first to third centuries AD.

This is the past. What of the here and now? Is bioarchaeology relevant to the environmental challenges we face today? Millennia later, contemporary human-environment interactions continue shaping disease epidemiology. The World Health Organization now identifies malaria as one of the most climate-sensitive infectious diseases, recognizing that multiple impacts of climate crisis—rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, extreme weather events such as floods and cyclones, and the geographic expansion of invasive mosquito species into previously unaffected regions—

intensify disease transmission and mortality while threatening global malaria control efforts. As malaria resurges in a warming world, the struggle of Roman populations with marshy fevers reminds us that advancing Sustainable Development Goal 3—good health and well-being—in our climate-altered world requires using lessons from the past to build climate-resilient systems for the future.

Alice CAPOBIANCO

University of Genoa

University of Cologne

Barbara HUBER

University of Tübingen

Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology

Beyond Residues: Reconstructing Roman Perfume Industries Through Biomolecular and Ethnoarchaeological Data

Roman perfumes and ointments were complex, multi-stage products that connected plant resources, technical knowledge, artisanal expertise and long-distance trade across the Mediterranean. While literary sources, iconography, and archaeological finds offer important insights into these industries, the practical processes behind ingredient selection, transformation, and blending remain only partially understood.

This paper presents an interdisciplinary framework that combines biomolecular archaeology and ethnoarchaeology to reconstruct the operational sequences of Roman perfume production. Analytical techniques such as gas and liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry and metabolomics allow the identification of ingredients and processing traces in organic residues, providing evidence for practices such as heating, fermentation, or distillation, and in some cases even indications of provenance. Ethnoarchaeological research, by contrast, documents artisanal knowledge and sensory practices preserved in living traditions of scent production, offering insight into decision-making processes that rarely leave archaeological traces.

By integrating these complementary datasets within archaeological and textual contexts, the proposed approach bridges chemical evidence and cultural interpretation. Molecular analyses anchor perfumes in their material composition, while ethnographic comparisons illuminate the technical logics and human choices that shaped their manufacture. Together, these perspectives make it possible to move beyond static artefacts and toward a more dynamic reconstruction of ancient olfactory industries, revealing the interplay of materials, skills, and sensory experience at the core of Roman perfume production.

Sean COUGHLIN

Czech Academy of Sciences

Smoke Through Oil: Replicating an Ancient Fumigation-Based Extraction from Aetius of Amida

The recipe for καπνιστὸν ἔλαιον (“smoked oil”) preserved in Aetius of Amida’s *Libri medicinales* (1.134) describes a sealed two-vessel apparatus in which aromatic resins—onycha, styrax, bdellium, and costus—are heated in an upper pot, and their smoke is driven downward through a moss filter into olive oil contained in a lower vessel buried in the ground. The procedure represents one of the earliest extant descriptions of what might be called perfumery in the most literal sense: scenting oil per fumum, through smoke, a technique whose Greek name (καπνιστὸν, from καπνός) captures exactly this principle.

This paper presents the results of an experimental replication of the Aetius procedure, carried out as part of the Alchemies of Scent project (GAČR 21-30494M). Our aim is to understand how the apparatus functions as a system for extracting and transferring volatile aromatic fractions to a carrier oil, and to assess its efficiency.

We situate this technique within a broader family of ancient methods for separating volatile compounds from raw aromatics. These range from direct maceration and hot infusion (the dominant methods described in Dioscorides and Theophrastus) to sublimation procedures associated with the alchemical *kerotakis*, to the descending fumigation method described here. Each technique exploits different physical properties (solubility, volatility, condensation) to achieve aromatic transfer, and each produces qualitatively different results. Notably, the fumigation method described by Aetius is not extinct: closely analogous preparations of onycha are still produced in India today, offering a living comparandum for the ancient technique.

By replicating the Aetius procedure under controlled conditions alongside traditional field methods, we aim to contribute to a broader understanding of how ancient practitioners conceptualised and manipulated the volatile properties of aromatic substances.

Andrew DALBY

Independent Researcher

The Best of Everything

At the end of his survey of ‘Transmarine’ wines Galen in *Therapeutic Method* gives a few words of general advice, aimed at the medical professional who is prescribing a diet. ‘Always try to get the best,’ he concludes. He assumes the client will pay for the best, and will demand it, for pleasure and for health.

Galen's lists of the best wines are part of a tradition that appears to have begun in Greece, where mountains and islands create microclimates in which animals, fish, vegetables and grapes flourish differentially. Such judgments are found in the very earliest literature. The idea of seeking and listing 'the best' passed from Greece to Rome. It survived in late antique and medieval literature. Byzantine and Late Latin lists of fine wines, fine oysters and other local specialities—impressive in their range and detail—are forerunners of the modern concept of 'terroir.'

Vincenzo DAMIANI

Università di Catania

Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg

Women's Physiology and Health in Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus*: Between Theological Symbology and Lebensführung

Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus* presents a complex intersection of theological anthropology and ancient medical theory regarding the nature and role of women. While Clement famously asserts a radical soteriological equality—declaring that men and women share the same nature, the same virtue, and the same capacity for salvation (Paed. 1.4.10.1–11.1)—his prescriptions for daily conduct (Lebensführung) rely heavily on a hierarchical physiological framework. This paper examines how Clement utilizes medical conceptions of female physiology both to regulate women's health, diet, and social behaviour and to articulate theological symbolism. It also analyses Clement's rhetorical strategies for constructing authorial authority, especially the ways in which he frames medical knowledge as a privileged idiom of Christian pedagogy.

Focusing on Clement's somatic reasoning, the study highlights how he naturalizes gendered roles. He adopts the medical view that breast milk is blood that has been concocted and whitened by πνεῦμα (Paed. 1.6.39.2–40.2) to construct a theology of the Logos as the "milk of the Father" (Paed. 1.6.43.2–4), while simultaneously defining conception as the coagulation of menstrual blood by the power of the male seed (Paed. 1.6.48.1–2). In these passages, medical explanation is not merely cited but rhetorically staged to authorise Clement's normative voice, aligning embodied "nature" with exegetical and moral claims.

Furthermore, the paper explores how these medical understandings of the female body dictate specific regimens in Books II and III, where physiology is mobilised as moral pedagogy. This includes the restriction of wine to prevent sexual intemperance and immodesty, as intoxication causes women to uncover themselves (Paed. 2.2.33.2–3). Additionally, Clement prescribes domestic labour—such as spinning, weaving, and grinding grain—as the female equivalent of the gymnasium, necessary for maintaining a "chaste health" (Paed. 3.10.49.2–4). Ultimately, this contribution demonstrates that while Clement advocates spiritual equality, he deploys the medical discourse of his time to

reinforce behavioural distinctiveness, framing the female body as a specific site where theological symbolism and moral discipline converge in the everyday governance of Christian bodies and in the authorisation of the teacher's voice.

Dženan DAUTOVIĆ

The Regional Museum of Travnik

University of Tuzla

The Production of Knowledge Concerning Medieval Bosnia at the Roman Curia, 13th–15th Centuries

The exceptionally dynamic relationship between the Papal Curia and the medieval Bosnian state—ranging across a wide spectrum from hostility, accusations, and the severance of diplomatic relations to cooperation and the formation of collective resistance against Ottoman invaders—presents significant challenges for comprehensive study. The near-total loss of domestic documents, which would allow for an examination of the perspectives held by Bosnian rulers and nobility, inevitably leaves one side of this relationship obscured. Consequently, researchers are compelled to focus on the image of medieval Bosnia and its political and religious structures as constructed within the departments of the Curia of the head of Western Christianity. The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the various mechanisms of “sacred rhetoric” employed by the Curia when describing Bosnia, which served as a principal propaganda tool in achieving the Curia's ultimate goals on the eastern Adriatic coast. This study attempts to identify the foundations and historical templates upon which this rhetoric was formed, as well as the primary agents responsible for its dissemination on the ground. Furthermore, based on the content and evolution of the aforementioned rhetoric, the paper seeks to identify the fundamental political mechanisms of the Roman Curia toward the Bosnian court on one hand, and the court of the Hungarian Kingdom on the other. A comparison will also be offered regarding similar situations in other parts of Europe under papal jurisdiction, where intensive negative propaganda was conducted against specific rulers or populations. Although the analysis of anti-heretical discourse will predominate, the study will also encompass sources in which the Popes refer to Bosnian rulers and the country itself as allies in the struggle against Ottoman encroachment, thereby juxtaposing these two distinct discourses.

Maciej DAWCZYK

University of Łódź

The Geography of Early Medieval Emilia-Romagna and Its Influence on the Development of Byzantine-Lombard Conflicts

The area now known as Emilia-Romagna was both the center of Byzantine influence in Italy after the Lombard invasion and a key area of further struggle between these two political entities. Its central function already had a long tradition at that time, dating back to the beginning of the 5th century. The main reason for this was the excellent defensive conditions of the region, and in particular of Ravenna, which served as its capital. Emilia-Romagna is separated from the rest of Italy by the Po River and the Apennine Mountains. The defense of the region is also facilitated by numerous smaller watercourses. The capital itself had the best defensive conditions – it was surrounded by vast wetlands to the west, the Po delta to the north, and the Adriatic Sea to the west. At the same time, several important roads ran through the region, most notably the Via Aemilia and the Via Popilia, which, as can be inferred from preserved written sources, were the axes of military campaigns undertaken by both sides. When analyzing the influence of Emilia-Romagna's geography on the development of the Lombard-Byzantine conflicts, several key issues can be distinguished. The first of these is the importance of the Via Aemilia. Counteracting military actions directed along this route can be considered relatively simple. Defense was facilitated by numerous rivers crossing the route, but much also heavily depended on the condition of the fortifications. Another factor is the importance of smaller roads running through the Apennine passes and connecting the region with Tuscany. Another important issue is the differences between the early medieval and contemporary hydrography of the region. These are so significant that an analysis of defensive and communication values from the perspective of a contemporary physical map leads to completely erroneous conclusions and makes it impossible to explain the development of such an important center as Ferrara.

Angeliki DELIKARI

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

The significance of the Long Life of Saint Clement of Ohrid in Slavia Orthodoxa

The Long Life of Saint Clement, attributed to Theophylact of Ohrid, is one of the most important texts related to the ecclesiastical, political, and cultural history of the Slavs during the ninth and tenth centuries. It discusses in detail Byzantium's contribution to the creation and subsequent development of Slavic written culture, as well as the reception of the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy in Bulgaria, particularly in the region of Ohrid.

Even the Lives of Saints Cyril and Methodius as well as certain Slavic and Latin texts dealing with individual episodes of this Byzantine venture do not give us a complete picture of the cultural transformation that took place in Central Europe in the second half of the ninth century. Naturally the Long Life of Saint Clement often presents anachronisms -attributable either to Theophylact himself or, more rarely, to the author (or authors?) of a presumed Slavonic Life, and reflecting pressing issues of their own time (eg. rivalries and conflicts between the Eastern and Western Churches). However, this does not detract from the overall narrative; on the contrary, the text offers scholars the opportunity to delve into the impact of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission nearly two centuries following the dormition of Saint Clement.

Jazz DEMETRIOFF

University at Buffalo

Mea culpa! – Disease Origins: Who or What Is to Blame?

Modern science has determined that diseases derive from pathogens, but the ancients would claim cities, provinces, and environments as the genesis of disease. According to several authors, they believed Egypt (Procopius *Goth.* 2.22.6), Ethiopia, and the provinces in the East (Aelius Aristides 2.37; Pliny the Elder *HN.* 26.3-5, *HA* 8.1), among others were the cause. On the other hand, authors would defer the origins of disease to be extrinsic (e.g., seasonality) and intrinsic (e.g., the humors) factors. The question that continues to be investigated is why did these authors distinguish these mechanisms as the origins of disease?

This paper, an extension of my current doctoral research, investigates the role of perceived disease origins in the Roman world and why textual sources judge outside provinces as the cause of disease outbreaks. I explore the significance of the places mentioned in the textual sources and relevant archaeological and genomic data that supplements or challenges these remarks. This methodology is a broad analysis, based on the article “Virgin Soils Revisited” (2003) by David Jones. He says that theories of no immunity allowed scholars to fit epidemics into grand narratives of historical significance (2003, 711). From recent scientific investigations, however, these narratives become downgraded to facts. This not only demonstrates a differentiation between disease narrative and genomic studies, but also shows how diseases moved and shaped the ancient world. I offer two case studies to demonstrate the above: the Justinian Plague (pandemic) and malaria (endemic). This discussion, however, bears scepticism as social factors such as behaviour and exact routes taken can only be interpreted based on available textual and material sources. Moreover, I consider why the ancients suggested disease-producing cities and environments and the cause, and how their narratives continue to shape this history of disease.

Ekaterina DIKOVA

University of Innsbruck

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Jürgen FUCHSBAUER

University of Innsbruck

Structuring Knowledge on Byzantine Texts in Slavonic Translation: Textual Transmission, Translation Practices and Manuscript Contexts

Our talk, presented in the panel “Slavia Byzantina Translata: Aspects of Textual Dynamics between Byzantium and the Slavs,” will introduce REGEST, the digital reference tool for medieval Greek-Slavonic translations developed at the University of Innsbruck as part of the project *The Slavonic Metaphrasis of Byzantine Orthodoxy*. REGEST structures knowledge on authors, works, translations, and text collections into interconnected online entries. The platform combines philological expertise with digital functionality and offers searchable metadata, semantic annotation, cross-referencing, various visualisations of retrieved data, and a framework for collaborative research.

By transforming dispersed textual information into structured digital knowledge, REGEST provides new perspectives on textual transmission, translation practices, and manuscript contexts between Byzantium and the Slavs for the period from the 9th to the 14th centuries. The presentation focuses on the conceptual framework, data model, and methodological principles underlying the platform, highlighting its contribution to the philological study of Slavonic translations of Byzantine texts. It concludes with a brief demonstration of how parallel editions and manuscript evidence can be integrated into this environment to support detailed comparative, linguistic, and text-critical analysis.

Ekaterina DIKOVA

University of Innsbruck

*Bulgarian Academy of
Sciences*

Fabio MAION

University of Innsbruck

**Irina KUZIDOVA-
KARADZHINOVA**

*Bulgarian Academy of
Science*

The South-Slavonic Translation of Nicolaus Callicles’ Dietary Epigrams: Representation in REGEST and Parallel Digital Edition

Nicolaus Callicles (*Νικόλαος Καλλικληΐς*), a 12th-century Byzantine physician and poet, is known for his dietary epigrams (*Στίχοι εἰς τοὺς δώδεκα μῆνας*), which reflect the intersection of Byzantine medicine, dietetics, and literary culture. In our presentation, we will focus on the South-Slavonic versions of this poetic cycle, analysing its adaptation in the Slavonic context, with particular attention to its earlier recension, preserved in two manuscripts from the 15th and 16th centuries. This version is fuller and remains closer to both the protograph and its source text.

We will first demonstrate how we synthesized existing knowledge – about the author, his work, and its translation—into REGEST, the newly developed reference tool for medieval Greek-Slavonic translations. This digital resource is designed to provide structured, interlinked information on Byzantine texts, their Slavonic counterparts, and the processes of translation and transmission.

Furthermore, we will reveal how we prepared a parallel digital edition with both a glossary, a morphological annotation and alignment on word level of these epigrams, highlighting key challenges in aligning a South-Slavonic target texts with their Byzantine Greek original. We will further demonstrate the functionalities it proposes. By examining these aspects, our study contributes to a broader understanding of the reception and transformation of Byzantine medical and dietary knowledge in the Slavonic realm. Ultimately, our study underscores epigrammatic poetry as a medium for medical instruction and cultural exchange, emphasizing its role in both Byzantine and South-Slavonic intellectual traditions.

Aneta DIMITROVA

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Three Slavonic Translations of John Chrysostom’s “Ad finem ieiunii” (Homily 20 *On the Statues*): Linguistic Features and Manuscript Transmission

John Chrysostom’s twenty-one or twenty-two homilies *On the Statues* are usually copied and translated together in a fixed order. They were translated in their entirety into Old Church Slavonic for the first time in the tenth century in Preslav, the capital of the First Bulgarian Kingdom, and for the second time in the fourteenth century on Mount Athos. The first translation comprises twenty-one homilies, while the second one includes twenty-two. Homily no. 20 (known as “Ad finem ieiunii”) is sometimes absent from the main collection but is transmitted separately in other manuscripts. Dedicated to the end of Great Lent, it is included, both in the Greek and in the Slavonic tradition, in various collections intended for this important liturgical period.

In addition the Athonite translation of the collection *On the Statues*, two further independent Slavonic translations of Homily 20 have survived. This paper offers a comparative analysis and commentary on the three translations of the homily, one of which displays linguistic features characteristic of the Preslav literary school, while the other two are typical of the fourteenth century. Some of the differences between the translations can be explained by their Greek sources and by the manuscript contexts in which they were transmitted.

Carl DIXON

University of Nottingham

The Kosmopoiētis: Unravelling a Curious Term in Romano-Paulician Cosmological Discourse

Paulician dualism has long remained a locus of historiographical debate, yet strangely little attention has been devoted to the terminology associated with the two principles concerned. A close reading of the Greek sources suggests a careful and deliberate lexical choice on the part of their authors, however. In particular, Peter the Sicilian's *History of the Paulicians* and its associated first sermon use a rarely attested word, the *kosmopoiētis* (ὁ κοσμοποιητής), together with several related or periphrastic variants, to represent the evil principle. The rarity of this word, its absence from other heresiological and anti-Manichaean texts, and its dissimilarity from the terminology used in scriptural texts favoured by the Paulicians cannot reasonably suggest the imposition of a cosmological schema from a pre-existing tradition.

Instead, this paper argues, the term suggests a considered and constructive (albeit necessarily flawed) attempt by Roman and/or Paulician actors to render their respective understandings of Paulician cosmology mutually intelligible. The paper does so by examining prior uses of the term and its derivatives, as well as the complex means by which it interacts with the scriptural authorities the Paulicians used to characterise malign agency. Taken as a whole, these lines of inquiry contribute to a broader understanding of medieval heresiology by showing that textual understandings of this facet of Paulician cosmology are neither an arbitrary construct imposed from without nor an unfiltered description of Paulician ideas, but rather represent a more nuanced and contested space informed by the ambiguous lexis of the Pauline canon, broader politico-legal discourse about “Manichaean” actors, and, quite possibly, a long and difficult dialogue between orthodox and heterodox positionalities.

Michał DOLECKI

Jagiellonian University

The Equestrian Order of the Third Century AD: Continuation of Trends from the Previous Period or Revolution?

According to established opinion reign of Septimius Severus was particularly significant for members of the equestrian order. Many new equestrian offices were created, especially procuratorships. There was also a provisional practice of entrusting senatorial provinces to equestrian *agentes vice praesidis*, who de facto took over the administration of the provinces from the senators. After the fall of the Severan dynasty, the solutions introduced by Septimius Severus not only survived but intensified. For example, from the time of

Emperor Gallienus, provinces such as Arabia, Macedonia and Numidia were administered exclusively by *procuratores vice praesidis*. It was also Septimius Severus who handed over command of the newly formed Legio II Parthica to equestrian *praefecti*, which was a groundbreaking solution. Command of the vexillationes formed in that century was increasingly taken over by equestrian *duces* or *prepositi*. Under Galienus, the practice of replacing senatorial *tribuni militum* with equestrian *praefecti legionis* became widespread. Not only the role, but also the composition of the ordo equester changed significantly throughout the 3rd century. After 240, those who had contact with the military began to play a much more important role among the equites than so far the sophists and iurists. This had a direct impact on the course of the crisis of the third century. The question that arises when analysing the role of equites in the 3rd century Empire is to what extent their unique position was the result of individual actions taken by emperors of that period, such as Septimius Severus, and to what extent it was part of the broader evolution of this social class in the preceding two centuries of the Empire. This paper will be a comparison of phenomena present in the history of Roman equites in the 3rd century with trends that can be observed particularly since the beginning of the Flavian dynasty.

Mihai DRAGNEA

Balkan History Association, University of South-Eastern Norway

The Confusion Between Vlachs and Wallachians in Historiography

This presentation is about Vlachs and Wallachians in medieval and early modern times. It argues that equating the two terms, “Vlach” and “Wallachian,” without taking into account the way in which they evolved and the historical context that led to their differentiation might create confusion concerning Romanian identity. The exonym “Vlachs” went through changes following the emergence of Romanian statehood. Thus, the Romanians living north of the Danube were no longer called only Vlachs (*Blachi*, *Blaci*, *Vlachi* and other forms used in Latin texts). That is how the exonym “Wallachians” (*Valachi* and other similar forms) started to be widely used to describe the native inhabitants of the lands north of the Danube now within Romania. In the Kingdom of Hungary, *Valachus* acquired other meanings, not only ethnic but also social and confessional.

In some recent studies, Balkan Vlachs are not distinguished from Romanians, both being called Wallachians. Such ideas support the existence of what can be called a Wallachian family on both sides of the Danube. Groups within this supposed large family would have been in constant movement until the beginning of the 20th century, with a pastoral-transhumant economy and various Aromanian features. Although Romanians had common features with the Balkan Vlachs and maintained contacts with them until the modern times, they share different historical realities. Therefore, when it comes to the Romance-speaking population on the territory of the present-day Romania and the

Balkans before the emergence of Wallachia and Moldavia, the careful use of the general term “Vlach” is more appropriate.

Mihajlo N. DŽAMTOVSKI

University of Vienna

Considerations on the Provincial Affiliation of Naissus in the Late 3rd and Early 4th Centuries

Ancient Naissus (Niš, Serbia) is traditionally associated with the birthplace of Emperor Constantine I (306–337). Situated at an important strategic position where the Via Militaris/Diagonalis intersected with routes leading towards the Lower Danube, the Aegean, and the Adriatic, the city often hosted several late Roman emperors who stayed there or passed through. Roman rule in the region was established in 28 BCE. The province of Moesia was organised sometime between the late 1st century BCE and the early 1st century CE, and the territory around Naissus formed part of it. Following the administrative reforms of 86 CE, this area became part of Moesia Superior. A significant reorganisation followed Emperor Aurelian's (270–275) abandonment of the Dacian provinces north of the Danube. A new Dacia was created south of the river, but the timing of its later division and the exact extent of its territory remain debated. It is uncertain whether this new Dacia immediately included cities in Thrace, such as Serdica (Sofia, Bulgaria) and Pautalia (Kyustendil, Bulgaria), or whether its jurisdiction extended deeper into Moesia Superior to include Naissus. The situation is further complicated by some authors who assign Naissus of this period to the Late Antique province of Dardania. The aim of this presentation is to clarify the complex status quaestionis concerning the provincial affiliation of Naissus in the period before the Council of Serdica of 343 CE. At that council Naissus was recorded as belonging to the province of Dacia, specifically the future Dacia Mediterranea, distinct from Dacia Ripensis, together with Serdica. By examining historical sources and epigraphic evidence, the presentation seeks to provide a clearer understanding of Naissus' administrative position in this transitional period.

Alfred GALIK

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Bioarchaeology in Byzantine Ephesos (5th–7th c. AD)

The project explores on the basis of bio-archaeological sciences agricultural, economic and developments and potential social changes between the 5th and 7th ct. AD in Ephesos, which will be carried out parallel and complementary with the archaeological investigations. The Antique city of Ephesos is certainly one of the best researched centres

in the Eastern Mediterranean. It offers opportunities for case studies exploring urban transformations from the Late Roman to the Early Byzantine period.

The major aim of the project are investigations on stratified- and sealed archaeological contexts, which certainly mirror social, ecological and economic developments of continuity or discontinuity, resilience and adaptations in urban foodways and life in relation to the long-term transformations. Catastrophic events certainly triggered changes in the urban zones, where people lived and worked within and outside the city walls, what must also be seen in the light of upcoming importance of early Christian Pilgrimage and the finally fading cults in the Temple of the Artemis. Bioarchaeological- and archaeological remains are sensitive for the reconstruction of nutrition, preparation of food, everyday life and ecological as well as economic, social and ritual differentiation in interdisciplinary investigations. The project reconstructs and models the change of foodways and agriculture connected with adaptations in urban societies in Ephesos's Late Antiquity.

The archaeological finds extraordinary in quantity and quality stemming from modern high standard excavations offer the unique potential for integrated und interdisciplinary examinations and indicate the innovative possibility to create new data for results and insights in Antiquity. The project indicates persistence as well as changes Ephesos underwent in its economy, ecology and agriculture. And show that the city certainly adapted to the economically important and significant early Christian pilgrimage focus. The models created will yield data sets that are applicable and comparable for the Late Antique Mediterranean urban regions.

Magdalena GARNCZARSKA

Jagiellonian University

Majesty and Courtly Hierarchy: The Function of Pearls in Byzantine Ceremonial from *De ceremoniis* to Pseudo-Kodinos

Pearls were among the most symbolically charged materials in Byzantine imperial culture, and in this paper I analyse the function of pearls in Byzantine ceremonial—consistently associated with imperial splendor—by comparing a compilation of source texts collected in *De ceremoniis* by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos with the 14th-century work *De officiis* by Pseudo-Kodinos, which describes and comments on practices at the court of the Palaiologos dynasty.

In *De ceremoniis*, pearls appear primarily as decorations for regalia and imperial attire, visually reinforcing the unique position of the ruler and his spouse, as well as the setting of the imperial spectacle; they do not yet serve to articulate fine gradations of rank beyond the person of the emperor. At the same time, the compilatory nature of the work—incorporating older material on court practice—must be taken into account; nonetheless,

its “language of pearls” centres on the emperor and his insignia rather than on the precise differentiation of officials.

In Pseudo-Kodinos’s treatise, pearls become a precise instrument of hierarchisation: their quantity and placement on the skaranikon, skiadion, and selected insignia allow for distinctions among the despotes, sebastokrator, caesar, and megas domestikos, while access to them is regulated by sumptuary rules and the established order of precedence. This shift corresponds to the more strongly codified and historicising ceremonial culture of the Palaiologan court.

Thus, I argue that while pearls in Byzantium retained their fundamental significance as costly and striking exotic ornaments, their ceremonial role changed: from marking the exceptional status of the imperial couple, they evolved into a means of organising and differentiating ranks within the Palaiologan court.

Sophia GERMANIDOU

Hellenic Ministry of Culture

Sowing the Seeds of Nutrition. Landscape, Typology and Dating of Terraces in Mani, Southern Greece (Project Hydromedie MCIF)

While significant progress has been made in documenting the culinary and dietary aspects of Byzantine culture through historical research, the practical methods by which staple goods were produced and procured by common people remain a marginal topic. The field of “Archaeology of Food” traces material evidence of consumption, such as ceramics, and incorporates findings from palynology, archaeo-botany, and archaeo-zoology. However, what about the structures that facilitated the cultivation of these nutritional items? Terraces, as basic as they may seem and sound as archaeological sites, hold a fundamental and universal role in the history of food, the organization of settlements, and the evolution of agriculture and water management: Not only did they provide essential sustenance for communities, but they also shaped local dietary customs, transformed regional landscapes, boosted economies, and even influenced gender roles.

This presentation will address these issues, beginning with an overview of the history, typology, and topography of terraces, and will be based on the preliminary results of a Marie Curie Research Fellowship implemented at Newcastle and St. Andrews Universities. The primary aim is to introduce an innovative method for dating terraces by taking samples from three sites in the Mani Peninsula, located in the Peloponnese region of southern Greece. These sites have been intentionally selected for their diverse landscapes and hydraulic capacities; all are heavily terraced and have been confirmed to date back to the Byzantine era.

Sally GRAINGER

Independent Researcher

Modern Perceptions of Taste and Savor in Ancient Roman Cuisine

Roman food has always suffered from a poor reputation for many reasons, not least because of the confusion about garum. The cuisine that emerges from elite literature has often seemed strange and even bizarre to modern tastes. Modern academic sensibilities rejected fermented fish offal and conceived Roman cuisine as rotten and acrid. These beliefs are still current in source material used in food history studies at university level. Until fairly recently the very idea of umami and the various techniques for generating flavour, such as fermenting fish or vegetables was completely unknown within archaeology and historiography of the Roman period. Roman food as a topic has always provided more sustenance to feed the study of imbedded social hierarchies and differential access to high status foods regardless as to whether we recognised their value as high status and desirable foods today or more importantly whether we manage to allocate them to the correct social groups in terms of access. The food associated with the poor was equally condemned for being dull and monotonous reinforcing the concept of the oppressed masses eating their porridge and rotten bony fish paste. Yet the cuisine that emerges from much of Apicius and the other sources of recipes reflect a cuisine that is neither acrid or putrid – of course not – and in fact delicious precisely because of the umami generating techniques that the Ancient Greeks and Romans developed.

Patryk GRANCOW

University of Łódź

Maciej KOKOSZKO

University of Łódź

Selected Therapeutic Usage of Cuttlebone in Ancient and Modern Medicine

Ancient physicians listed numerous marine-derived substances within the *materia medica* of animal origin that were believed to possess therapeutic potential. Among these, particular importance was attributed to cuttlebone (*os sepiae*), a by-product obtained from the cuttlefish (*Sepiidae* family), which was described in the ancient medical treatises as a remedy for a wide range of conditions (mostly external). The aim of this presentation is to discuss selected therapeutic applications of *os sepiae* in ancient medicine. This analysis primarily draws on classical and early Byzantine medical texts, especially Dioscorides (*De materia medica*), Galen (*De compositione medicamentorum secundum locos*, *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*, *De simplicium medicamentorum per genera*), and Oribasius (*Collectiones medicae*, *Synopsis ad Eustathium filium*), etc. These sources reveal the properties ancient authors attributed to cuttlebone, the specific pathological conditions amenable to treatment with *os sepiae*, as well as the methods of its transformation into a medicament and subsequently the remedy's application. The findings will be compared with current research on its

biomedical potential of cuttlebone and its derivatives in order to assess the extent to which the views of ancient physicians are corroborated by contemporary medical knowledge.

Isabel GRIMM-STADELMANN

Ludwig Maximilians University Munich

Fragrant Ointments in Hospital Context

Parisinus gr. 2194, fol. 447r contains two recipes of fragrant ointments including a lot of aromatic ingredients and essential oils. Both recipes are part of the collection of "Xenonika" from the so-called Mauraganos-xenon and they are attributed to a "Aktuarios Michael," obviously the senior doctor at this hospital. One of these recipes is dedicated to a "foreign" (?) lady and the other is labelled most interestingly as a fragrant ointment "which the Baghdad (perfumer) devised," which clearly indicates a relation to a not-Byzantine, maybe Persian, tradition. Furthermore, the question arises as to whether these recipes are purely cosmetic or also have some medical value, which would explain their inclusion in a hospital's professional therapeutic collection. The idea of this paper is to put up these recipes and their ingredients for discussion and to contextualise them with the key questions and aim of the RT.

Isabel GRIMM-STADELMANN

Ludwig Maximilians University Munich

The Value of Seafood as Fasting Food

The manuscript tradition of the twofold treatise 'On Psychic Pneuma' by the late Byzantine *Aktouarios* Johannes Zacharias (c. 1275–1330) preserves not only the main text but also some detailed scholia and annotations that can be classified as para- or peritextual structures and interact with the main text. They illustrate not only the intensive scholarly examination of its contents, but also the general dynamics of Byzantine medical literature. The second part of Johannes' treatise, which is devoted to various *regimina* and dietetic concepts, is particularly rich in such forms of metatextuality. My paper focuses on the statements about seafood and molluscs and their significance for Johannes Zacharias' dietetic concept for combating psychosomatic complaints. Some manuscripts supplement and differentiate the main text's statements against the background of monastic dietary rules, whereby this metatextuality not only adds interesting aspects based on additional zoological information, but also very clearly illustrates the intertwining of both textual levels.

Richard GREENFIELD

Queen's University, Kingston

The Pharmacotherapeutic Properties of Earthworms Described in the *Kyranides* and Traditions of Byzantine Medicine: A Source Missing from Modern Studies

Recent biomedical research has shown that extracts from earthworms, such as proteins and coelomic fluid, possess significant therapeutic potential as anti-inflammatories, antioxidants, and anti-microbials, as well as for fighting tumors and healing wounds (summarised in, e.g., Reynolds and Reynolds, 2025ab). Many of these studies have been inspired by the use of earthworms in Chinese, Indian, and Perso-Arabic traditional medicine (Reynolds and Reynolds, 2025b; Afreen and Shaikh, 2020; Cooper et al., 2012). While the direct relationship of the latter, Unani, traditions to ancient Greek medicine is acknowledged, the literature appears to be entirely unaware of the Greek tradition itself and what it had to say about the use of earthworms.

While preparing (with Alexander Alexakis) a new translation and edition of the *Kyranides*, I was somewhat surprised to find that the section in Book II (Animals) on earthworms (γῆς ἔντερα – 2.8) is one of the longest of the book, running to almost two full pages in the new edition. Further investigation has shown that the majority of the *Kyranides* entry is in fact drawn from Aetios of Amida's *Libri medicinales* 2.168 and that Aetios himself is indebted to a (somewhat narrower) range of traditions found in Dioscorides, Galen, and Oribasios, one which also continues into later Byzantine medical authors. The use of Aetios is of considerable interest in dating the *Kyranides*, or at least the version of this much older fluid composition which forms the basis of the current edition (Kaimakis, 1976). But of greater interest in the present context is the fact that the primary uses of earthworms known to the Greek tradition (for reducing inflammation, as analgesics, for wound healing, and for urinary issues) mostly conform with the Asian traditions and thus have now been shown by recent molecular and pharmacological investigations to be potentially effective in doing what they claim (e.g., Wang et al., 2021).

Salome GVINIASHVILI

Tusheti Protected Landscape

Between Ritual and Remedy: Vernacular Healing and Medical Manuscripts in Medieval Georgia

Georgian folk healing traditions represent a complex medical culture situated at the intersection of empirical knowledge, ritual practice, and religious belief. Drawing on classical, medieval, and ethnographic sources, this article examines the coexistence and interaction of written medical culture and orally transmitted healing practices in Georgia

from antiquity through the medieval period. Particular attention is given to the karabadini—medieval Georgian medical manuscripts that codified pharmacological, diagnostic, and therapeutic knowledge within a broader transregional medical tradition shaped by Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Persian-Arabic influences.

Alongside this written tradition, the article explores non-written healing practices preserved through oral transmission, especially among women. Healing incantations (shelotsvebi), prayers, and ritual actions functioned within a parallel epistemological framework in which illness was understood as both a bodily and metaphysical condition. While largely absent from manuscript culture, these practices constituted an integrated system combining herbal medicine, spoken formulas, and symbolic gestures.

The study brings these two domains into dialogue through a micro-historical case study based on healing incantations preserved within the author's family. Treated as an ethnographic archive rather than anecdotal material, these orally transmitted texts demonstrate how syncretic healing knowledge survived beyond written tradition. Close analysis of incantations against the evil eye and migraine reveals layered symbolic structures in which Christian figures such as the Virgin Mary and Saint George resemanticize earlier cosmological and apotropaic motifs.

The article argues that the absence of incantations from the karabadini corpus reflects not their marginality but a historically contingent division of literacy and authority within Georgian healing culture. Oral healing traditions should therefore be understood as a complementary and autonomous system of medical knowledge, preserving therapeutic logic through memory, performance, and ritual rather than through textual codification.

Andreas G. HEISS

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Why Roam Far Afield, When the Good Is So Near? Regional Subsistence and Far-Distance Trade of Plant-Based Foods in Roman and Early Byzantine Ephesos

During the Roman and Early Byzantine periods, Ephesos had a well-developed food economy, balancing robust local production with extensive long-distance trade. Recent archaeobotanical and ceramic analyses of key sites, including Terrace House 2, the Vedius Gymnasium and Domitian's Square, reveal a complex dietary landscape. The fertile Cayster valley hinterland provided a variety of staple crops, such as free-threshing wheat, emmer, barley and millet, as well as legumes like chickpeas and lentils. Local horticulture also flourished, producing olives, figs, grapes, pomegranates and nuts. This regional abundance supported a substantial wine industry, with local vintages distributed across the Mediterranean in distinctive 'One Handle Jars' and, later, Late Roman Amphora 3 vessels.

Despite this self-sufficiency and capacity for exports, the Ephesian elites imported agricultural goods to demonstrate their status and satisfy their cosmopolitan tastes. Evidence from the ceramics found in wealthy domestic contexts confirms that local staples were supplemented by prestigious wines from Chios, Campania, Kos, Rhodes and Crete. Furthermore, high-quality olive oil was shipped from distant provinces such as Tripolitania and Baetica, while Iberian fish sauces demonstrate the demand for exotic foreign flavours.

While the hinterland provided a rich nutritional baseline, the continuous import of luxury goods demonstrates the city's integration into the wider Mediterranean food trade network, driven by an upper class whose wealth demanded products far beyond the capacity of domestic agriculture. Ultimately, the Ephesian food economy could probably be defined by a duality of local self-sufficiency and elite consumerism. This presentation aims at investigating this seeming dichotomy between local and imported goods, with a focus on plant-based foods.

Maciej HELBIG

Independent Researcher

From Ferocious Beast to Feast: The Boar in Apicius's Culinary Zoo

This paper examines the culinary and cultural metamorphosis of the boar (*aper/sus scrofa*) as presented in the late Roman cookbook *De re coquinaria* attributed to Apicius. Moving beyond its symbolic role in myth and hunt as a creature of untamed ferocity, the analysis focuses on the text's systematic methodology for its gastronomic domestication. It argues that Apicius's recipes function as a form of culinary curation, transforming a potent symbol of wilderness into a controlled, status-laden delicacy for the elite Roman table.

The investigation centres on the specific techniques—elaborate boiling, sweet-sour sauces (*oxyporum, caroenum*), and aggressive spicing with cumin, rue, and laser—that effectively 'tame' the boar's perceived wildness. These processes are interpreted not merely as practical instructions but as a cultural performance, asserting human dominion over nature through kitchen alchemy. The paper further explores the conceptual framework of Apicius's text as a 'culinary zoo', a curated collection where fauna is safely displayed and consumed in a palatable, socially codified form.

Ultimately, this paper posits that the prepared boar dish embodies a central tension in Imperial Roman gourmet culture: a nostalgic desire for the rustic and the heroic, meticulously repackaged through the hyper-refined, cosmopolitan sensibilities of the late antique kitchen. The boar's journey from beast to feast thus reveals a sophisticated gastronomic ideology where control, transformation, and display were paramount.

Edward HOPTIONCANN

University of British Columbia

How Byzantium Transformed the Study of Human Anatomy

For centuries, peering inside the human body to examine its inner workings remained little more than a fantasy. Apart from the fleeting glimpses afforded by deep wounds or rotting corpses, physicians could only infer human anatomy from animal dissections. It is widely held that this situation changed only twice before human dissection became widespread in sixteenth-century Europe: first, with the anatomical investigations of the Greek physicians Herophilus and Erasistratus in Ptolemaic Alexandria; and second, over a millennium later, with the autopsies of medieval Western Europe—initially for legal purposes, but in time for anatomical study as well. But new evidence, gathered from a variety of medical and non-medical sources, has overturned this view.

It was in Byzantium, not Renaissance Europe, that human dissection first became a normalised medical practice. As early as the sixth century, Byzantine physicians across the empire were studying human anatomy—not solely through inferences from animals as Galen had—but directly: examining human skeletons, dissecting healthy bodies to understand the “ideal” constitution, and conducting autopsies to investigate how pathologies altered this “ideal” anatomy. By the ninth century, medical students of the empire were encouraged to learn anatomy by dissecting animals themselves, or if not, to observe more experienced prosectors anatomise animals or humans. So widespread was anatomical interest that by the twelfth century, dissection had even become a past time amongst the educated elite.

This flourishing in the practice of anatomy within the Byzantine Empire led not only to a greater familiarity with the anatomical knowledge known to the physicians of Greece or Rome, but also to the discovery of new anatomical structures, and the development of increasingly intrepid surgical operations, pushing the boundaries of medicine. Far from a transmitter of ancient medical knowledge, Byzantium should be regarded as instrumental in transforming the study of anatomy.

Yanko HRISTOV

South-West University “Neofit Rilski”

Negotiating Despair: Expressions of Suicidal Behaviour in the Thirteenth-Century Rural Balkans

While the romantic view towards the medieval period has long given way to a far more critical and in-depth approach, often involving areas of particular expertise, efforts to broaden and deepen modern knowledge of its various aspects of remain challenging. Nevertheless, the impressive spectrum of opportunities for scholarly research which provided by the multitude of primary sources cannot be overlooked. In this regard, the

voluminous collection of documents from the tenure of Archbishop Demetrios Chomatenos (1216–1236) of Ohrid, known as the *Ponemata diaphora*, is impressive in many respects. Amid many other texts with high-values information, this collection also contains a fascinating group of documents that sheds light on particular examples of rural social and family life. They share a highly specific characteristic, regarding a context in which suicide was seen as the only response to an unbearable way of life. This makes them worthy of a separate study, placing them at the centre of a narrowly focused academic interest.

Viktor HUMENNYI

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

Imperial Administration and the Transforming Roman Limes in Syria (3rd–4th c. CE): The *Political Language* of the Inscriptions

This paper investigates the transformation of Roman military border system in Syria through the prism of the *political language* embedded in frontier inscriptions. Focusing on material from the former provinces of Syria Coele and Syria Phoenice and from new administrative division established during the Dominate period, it examines how epigraphic texts articulated imperial authority during a period of administrative reorganization and intensified military pressure along the eastern frontier facing the late Parthian and early Sasanian Kingdoms.

Rather than treating inscriptions as neutral administrative records, the study approaches them as performative statements that constructed and communicated power. Particular attention is devoted to imperial titulature under Diocletian and Constantine, analyzing how formulae of victory, restoration (*restitutio*), shaped the representation of frontier governance. The evolving terminology of office (*dux*, *comes*, *praeses*) is interpreted as a marker of structural reform, while building inscriptions and milestones are read as spatial claims that inscribed imperial presence onto the landscape.

Yvette HUNT

The University of Queensland

Roger Marchall's Composite *Phisice Plinii*: Cambridge, Peterhouse MS 222 and the Use of Digitised Manuscripts

In 1472 Roger Marchal, royal physician to King Edward IV of England, gave a composite volume of codices written between the 12th and 15th centuries to his *alma mater*, Peterhouse College at Cambridge University. I have just completed a full bibliographical analysis of this manuscript for publication via the digitised copy made available online

through *Curious Cures in Cambridge Libraries Project* (2022–24). This volume includes an astounding array of differing medical texts, mostly written in Latin, drawing upon classical and Arabic medical traditions. Some highlights I have uncovered include what appears to be the circulation of medical recipes among members of the English royal court in the early 13th century; copies of texts thus far unidentified; and how looking at manuscripts as wholes instead of single texts might change how we philologically review manuscript traditions. This paper will conclude with a discussion of my experience of using digitised manuscripts to conduct these kinds of analyses and address the benefits and shortcomings of using digitised manuscripts.

Martin ILLERT

Martin-Luther Universität Halle

Soteriological Perspectives on Anna Komnene's *Alexias* XV,8–10

Our contribution suggests to read the section on the Bogomils in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* (Book XV, Chapters VIII–X) in the light of Eastern Orthodox soteriology. According to the classical outline of eastern Christian Soteriology designed by Gregory of Nyssa (*Catechetical Orations*, chapter 24) and expanded by John of Damascus (*On the Orthodox Faith* 3, 27), Christ deceived death by using his humanity as a “bait” on the top of the “hook” of his divinity, so that death, “the deceiver,” was himself “deceived” and had to “spit out” humanity, which he had previously swallowed. According to Anna Komnene, emperor Alexius “deceived” the “deceiver” Basil in a strikingly similar way: The emperor used as a “bait” his pretended desire to become a Bogomil himself, while the “hook” was the trial against the Bogomils, which Alexius had arranged in advance. And like death, who in the soteriological narrative could not swallow the body of Christ because of the hidden divinity, Basil “spit out,” what Alexios had desired. Thus, Anna's report does neither simply imitate Theodoret's story about the *pia fraus* of Bishop Flavian of Antioch against the Messalians (Theodoret, *Church history* IV, 11), nor does Anna simply want to portray Alexius as a Christlike figure as previous researched have claimed, but our passage rather more specifically interprets the encounter of Orthodoxy and heresy as a mimesis of Christ's deception of Satan. Having once recognized the soteriological background, we can easily recognize, that the motif we find in Anna's description of the trial not only recurs in Euthymios Zigabenos and in the *Synodikon* of Boril as well, but also in Euthymios of Periblepton's dealings with the Bogomils. We claim that this underlines the importance of the soteriological dimension of the story in the eyes of the byzantine writers on Bogomilism.

Jakub JASTRZĄBEK

University of Łódź

Felicio Augusto, melior... quo? – the Ideal of Imperial Power in the Late Roman Empire (4th–6th c.)

The paper aims to analyse the attributes and behaviour of a perfect ruler as promoted by ancient authors. Firstly, texts of such character will be presented, including: chosen speeches of Themistius, delivered to 4th-century emperors (i.a. Constantius II, Valens, Theodosius), *Res gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, *De obitu Valentianiani* and *De obitu Theodosii* by Ambrose of Milan, Synesius of Cyrene's *De regno* (delivered to emperor Arcadius), the works of Procopius of Caesarea (*De bellis*, *De aedificiis*) and *In laudem Iustini minoris* by Corippus. The number of discussed primary sources may rise, dependent on the author's findings of relevant material. After the analysis of each individual text, the emphasis will be put on the factors and past events that could have influenced the authors' perspective of rule and their pleas. Finally, the contents of sources will be compared and conclusions will be drawn. The analysis may bolster the Late Antiquity studies in such areas as the changes in perception of a perfect Roman ruler or the reception and imitation of these ideals by barbarian monarchs.

Anna JOURAVEL

University of Freiburg

Explaining, Specifying, Correcting: Reformulation Markers in Medieval Greek-Slavic Translations

Reformulation markers such as *рекъше*, *сиречь*, and *ѡже ѡсть* constitute a recurrent but understudied feature of medieval Slavic translation texts from Greek. They typically introduce a second segment that reformulates, specifies, or corrects a preceding literal translation, while lacking a direct counterpart in the Greek source. Against the background of the well-known medieval Slavic word-for-word translation usus of biblical, patristic or hagiographic texts, these constructions represent marked and deliberate interventions by translators or scribes.

Building on a discourse-linguistic account of reformulation as a metalinguistic strategy, this paper argues that such markers signal different types of semantic and pragmatic relations between two co-referential segments, including explication, compression, correction, and specification. It shows that these functions cannot be reduced to a single invariant meaning and that individual markers display functional polysemy depending on context.

The study is based on a collected dataset of reformulation constructions without Greek equivalents, which provide evidence for secondary interpretative activity in the Slavic

tradition. It examines the distribution of reformulation markers, their syntactic realization (notably appositive structures), and their functional classification.

Evelina KACHYNSKA

Polish Academy of Sciences

How Much of Constantinople is There in Kyiv?

In the decades following the Christianization of Rus' (988), Kyiv rapidly developed into a major political and ecclesiastical center within Eastern Europe. On the basis of written sources and the evidence of material culture, it can be argued that the Byzantine Empire exerted a significant influence on Rus', the manifestations of which can be observed in many spheres of its religious, artistic, and political life. While formal similarities in architecture and art (and, to some extent, in liturgical practice) are relatively easy to identify and describe, the symbolic layer remains less tangible yet equally important—often determining how Kyiv positioned itself in relation to Constantinople and vice versa.

The paper proposes to examine Rus'–Byzantine relations through the prism of the symbolic “Constantinopolitan” strategies employed in the spatial organization and political culture of Rus'. Particular attention will be paid to toponymic symbolism (the deliberate adoption of names and references associated with the most important places and dominants in the imperial capital), architectural symbolism (monumental forms and their ideological programs), as well as ceremonial symbolism (practices and scripts of representing power and the sacred). This perspective will be complemented by examples of individual symbolism, visible in rulers' self-fashioning, including in the case of Yaroslav the Wise and Volodymyr II Monomakh.

The aim of the paper is to address the question posed in the title not by offering a simple “measure of influence,” but by analyzing what kind of Constantinople Kyiv needed: whether it invoked the contemporary political and religious center, or rather an imagined model of imperial prestige, legitimacy, and orthodoxy. From this perspective, “Constantinople in Kyiv” emerges as a set of selectively adapted references which, rather than merely copying Byzantium, constructed a language of continuity, aspiration, and claims to a place within the Christian *oikoumene*.

Mariana KAVROULAKI

Independent Researcher

Cooking the Past: Alternative Approaches to Interpreting Recipes and Cuisine in Greek Antiquity

Attempts to interpret and reconstruct ancient Greek cuisines and recipes reveal cooking as a materially grounded practice shaped by environment, technology, and social context. Archaeobotanical remains, zooarchaeological evidence, ceramic typology, and residue analysis establish the ecological and technological parameters of food preparation, while literary sources provide only partial descriptions of ingredients, techniques, and culinary ideals. In the absence of precise recipes—and given that cooking cannot be understood as mere culinary replication but rather as a complex system of knowledge, emotion, and cultural meaning—reconstruction requires consideration of multiple possibilities and interpretive choices. For this reason, sensory and experimental archaeology offer particularly valuable approaches to the interpretation of ancient cuisines.

Within this framework, the kitchen emerges as a laboratory of practice as well as of senses and feelings, where bodily action, gender roles, taste, memory, and ritual significance converge. Preparing and tasting reconstructed dishes generates embodied knowledge, enabling contemporary audiences not only to interpret the past intellectually but also to engage with it sensorially through smell, texture, and emotional response. Interpretation and reconstruction thus become acts of historical empathy that restore not only flavours but also relationships—between intellectual and manual labour, material and spiritual life, and the textual record and lived experience.

The central question nevertheless remains: can ancient recipes and cuisines be recreated? Although exact replication is rarely possible, alternative approaches make it possible to recover practices, sensory worlds, and cultural meanings, revealing cooking as a powerful expression of human creativity, ingenuity, and adaptation.

Anya KING

University of Southern Indiana

What Were *Murrī* Oils?

The 10th century *Tīb al-‘arūs* of Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Tamīmī, not completely extant, was a comprehensive work on perfumery in classical Islamic times. Four puzzling formulas in the surviving portion of the *Tīb al-‘arūs* are for something called *murrī* oil. These *murrī* oil formulas were not written by al-Tamīmī, but were taken from earlier works. Two of them are explicitly ascribed to Yūhannā b. Māsawayh, a 9th century Christian physician who worked for the ‘Abbāsīd caliphs. *Murrī* might mean a myrrh-based oil (< Arabic *murr*) but no myrrh appears in the formulas. The other frequent

meaning of *murrī* is fermented sauce (analogous to *garum*), which hardly fits. Furthermore, the four *murrī* oil formulas have some unusual ingredients that are connected to Byzantium. In this paper, these four formulas and the possible meanings of *murrī* will be considered.

Martyna KOWALSKA

University of Łódź

Quodvultdeus of Carthage's Sermon *Against the Jews, Pagans and Arians* as an Example of the Defense of Orthodox Christian Religion

The presentation will address one of the several sermons by Quodvultdeus of Carthage, a 5th-century Christian author and bishop. In this sermon, Quodvultdeus most likely spoke to catechumens preparing for baptism, emphasizing the necessity of adhering to the principles of orthodox Christian faith while speaking against Jews, Pagans, and Arians. The talk will focus primarily on the arguments put forward by the author, the polemical language he employs, and the purpose behind the composition of such works.

In addition, the presentation will explore the broader theological and socio-political context that shaped Quodvultdeus's rhetoric, including the intense doctrinal conflicts of late antiquity and the pastoral challenges faced by bishops in North Africa. Particular attention will be given to his strategic selection of "enemies" of orthodox Christianity, which reflects both traditional Christian polemical patterns and the immediate pressures of his era – most notably the Vandal conquest of the region and the imposition of Arian rule. By situating the sermon within these circumstances, the analysis will highlight how Quodvultdeus crafted his message to strengthen communal identity and defend Nicene orthodoxy in a time of crisis.

Maciej KOKOSZKO

University of Łódź

Zofia RZEŹNICKA

University of Łódź

Hymettian, Thasian, Attic, or Cycladic? Choosing the Best Type of Honey According to Galen

Our presentation examines the criteria that defined high-quality honey in ancient and Byzantine medical thought. As the most detailed treatment of this subject is found in the works of Galen, the analysis is primarily grounded in his writings, especially *De antidotis*, *De alimentorum facultatibus*, and *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*. To verify his observations, we draw upon a range of medical authors (Oribasius, Aetius of Amida, Alexander of Tralles, Paul of Aegina, and Symeon Seth), as

well as non-medical writers (Athenaeus of Naucratis, Synesius of Cyrene, Hesychius, Cassianus Bassus, and Joannes Tzetzes).

We consider three principal indicators of honey's quality: its place of origin, the plant varieties with which its properties were associated, and its organoleptic characteristics.

Our analysis shows that honey was generally designated according to its place of origin, with "Attic honey" enjoying the longest-standing reputation. This designation appears to have encompassed honey from the Cyclades as well. Thasian honey, while known in antiquity, seems to have fallen out of favour after Galen's lifetime.

Literary evidence indicates that the longevity of the "Hymettian honey" label can be traced back at least to the 3rd century BC and persisted into Galen's era. Its renown outlasted its practical use, as the name continued to circulate among the Byzantine intellectual elite as a literary emblem of exceptional quality.

The finest honey was typically associated with wild thyme from mountainous regions or with botanically similar plants.

Its organoleptic characteristics were systematically described and were believed to reflect its therapeutic properties; they were its liquidity, pale yellow hue, sweetness, sharpness, and occasional bitterness.

Shtoni Sava KOKOUDEV

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Bogomils, Paulicians and Massalians – A Comparative View, Based on Zygabenus' *Panoplia Dogmatica*

The paper will present an attempt at a systematic approach to the study of medieval dualistic heresies in the Balkans in search of the identity and specific characteristics of Bogomil doctrine. The challenges associated with this research endeavor pertain to the construction of a homogeneous and consistent methodological framework for examining the diverse—and often polemical—sources regarding the doctrinal identity of the dualistic heresies in the Balkans. The model selected for analysis in this study is dogmatic in nature and is based on a limited corpus of data contained within the works of a single author, Euthymius Zigavin, and his *Panoplia Dogmatica*. In this comparative study, an attempt will be made to offer an overall picture and specific details—important themes or doctrinal cores—in the study of the three dualistic teachings. It is hoped that discussion and academic exchange on this issue will lead to progress in the difficult task of establishing robust interpretive criteria and a valid comparative methodological framework that adequately "translates" non-dogmatic fragments and elements into dogmatic structures and descriptions suitable for comparative analysis.

Elke KROTZ

University of Vienna

Synonyma Rasis, Synonyma Serapionis, or Better: Synonyma Gerardi Cremonensis?

The *Synonyma Rasis* (*Liber Rasis ad Almansorem*, Venice 1497, fol. 103va-106vc) and *Synonyma Serapionis* (*Practica Io. Serapionis dicta breviarium* etc., Venice 1497, fol. 86vb-90rc), also preserved in manuscripts since the 13th century, are considered examples of a glossary genre that primarily provides Latin transliterations of Arabic terms with Latin explanations. The majority of the glosses concern simple drugs and dietary dishes, thus presenting ancient dietetics through an Arabic lens.

A closer comparison reveals that both glossaries are essentially the same, only the entries appear in differently distorted forms. But to which works by which author do they belong? In the manuscripts, they accompany both copies of the works of Rasis (Ibn Zakariyā' al-Rāzī) and those attributed to an author named Serapion. They are even transmitted without a title together with Avicenna's *Canon* and with works of Serapion, here as *Sinonima Mesue*. In one manuscript with works of Rasis they are called *Sinonima Avicennae, Almansoris et Serapionis*—all three authors were translated by Gerard of Cremona in Toledo in the 12th century. Since some glosses contain the specification *in hispania* and one even *dicitur in cremona ita*, it seems likely that the glossary served as a vocabulary list for the translator. The paper will discuss questions of authorship and provide an overview of the transmission history, with a special focus on the dietetic glosses some of which lead again to Gerard of Cremona, whose *additiones interlineares* on the *Book of Maṣūn on Medicine* (*Liber Almansoris*), printed in the *Opera parua* 1510/11, have parallels in the *Synonyma*, e.g. *Adesia citrina cibus est qui fit de lentibus coctis cum aqua quibus additur acetum parum et zafarani* (*Synonyma*) and the *Additio: Adezia citrina est cibus qui fit de lentibus coctis cum aqua quibus additur acetum et parum saffrani*.

Maria LEONTSINI

National Hellenic Research Foundation

Cooked Game in Byzantine Cuisine: Nutritional and Gastronomic Aspects

Nutritional and medical treatises, together with Byzantine literary and historiographical sources, indicate that hunted wild animals were valued not only as nutritional resources but also as therapeutic agents. Their consumption was closely tied to the rhythms of agricultural production and the accessibility of wildlife in natural environments, reflecting a nuanced interplay between diet, health, and environment. References to animals, such as the hare and the deer, on which this paper focuses, were sometimes intended to evoke

exotic or wild landscapes, more often to emphasize elite hunting and the role of game in luxurious dining, and more rarely to indicate their contribution to the daily diet. Zooarchaeological finds from settlements in mainland Greece, however, indicate that species such as hare and deer were a familiar part of the diet, as their remains appear together with other animal bones in excavations. These data indicate that the expansion of agricultural activities into previously uncultivated areas adjacent to forests gradually created conditions that facilitated the incorporation of hunted animals into the diet. Overall, the written and archaeological evidence suggests that the contribution of wildlife to the diet of both elites and rural populations during the Middle and Late Byzantine periods was somewhat more extensive than we have assumed so far.

Adam ŁUKASZEWICZ

University of Warsaw

A Remark on a Passage of Nonnos

The matter to be briefly discussed in this paper is a passage of the Greek poem *Dionysiaca* of Nonnos. Nonnos was a poet of the fifth century from Panopolis in Egypt, who was also active in Alexandria. In a story showing characters of Greek mythology, their meal and a dancing party, the poet deals with a mysterious device. That instrument is described in context of ancient astrology.

The speaker intends also to point to the importance of Panopolis in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine period and to presumable contacts of Nonnos with the intellectual milieu of Alexandria.

Dimitra MAKRI

University of Ioannina

Wine-Tasting in Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt

Wine tasting was an established practice in Antiquity that influenced consumer choice and shaped both the value and commercial viability of wine. Professional tasters were likely distinguished from ordinary consumers by their extensive experience and their capacity to evaluate wine with greater accuracy and methodological rigor. They were expected to employ their sensory faculties to identify a wine's distinctive characteristics and to render informed judgments regarding its overall quality. This paper investigates the role of wine tasting in Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Egypt, drawing primarily on evidence from Greek papyri and ostraca. It examines the terminology used to designate wine tasting, the significance of evaluation practices within the Egyptian economy, the methods employed by professional tasters, and the categorization of wines according to criteria such as taste,

aroma, and age. Given the fragmentary nature of the documentary record, ancient Greek and Latin literary sources are also consulted to clarify and contextualize issues that remain uncertain.

Manuela MARAI

Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University

The Importance of the Dosage Form: Density, Viscosity, and Adhesiveness in Galen's Compound Remedies for Wounds and Ulcers

Galen's treatises *On Compound Remedies* are far more than compilations of recipes. They offer sustained explanations of ingredients—their physical, chemical, and pharmacological properties—as well as guidance on preservation, processing, combination, and administration. Such discussion was essential to ancient medical students and physicians for learning how remedies could be formulated from single substances and provides a valuable window onto ancient pharmaceutical technology. Galen repeatedly insists, moreover, that these practical instructions should be read alongside his *On the Therapeutic Method* and *On Simple Remedies* in order to reconstruct the full rationale of therapy: the physics and chemistry of substances, their interactions with the body, and the pathological and clinical contexts in which they are deployed.

Building on this integrated approach, this paper examines the significance Galen assigns to dosage form and route of administration, focusing on properties such as density, viscosity, and adhesiveness. It asks what these properties mean within Galen's framework, how they could be modified and how they shape application and performance—especially administration, distribution, absorption, and ultimately the efficacy of remedies for wounds and ulcers.

Gerasimos MERIANOS

National Hellenic Research Foundation

Making or Imitating Gold? Chrysopoeia as *Technē* in Byzantium

In Byzantine sources, there appears to be a constant oscillation between the theoretical possibility of creating gold and the practical reality of imitating it. This paper examines how chrysopoeia (“gold-making”) was understood in Byzantine contexts by exploring the relationship between alchemical discourse and technical practices involving precious metals. In particular, the definition of *chēmeia* in the *Souda* lexicon as the *kataskueē* of silver and gold suggests a strong technical orientation and points to the manipulation of metals. Evidence from alchemical texts, numismatic history, and metallurgical practices demonstrates the close connections between alchemy, artisanal practices, and minting.

Even when concerned with imitation, chrysopoeia seems to project the idea that the artificial could be as effective as the natural for human purposes.

Maksymilian MIKUŁA

University of Łódź

Imperial Accessions in the Late Byzantine Romance *Libistros and Rhodamne*

This paper examines the depictions of imperial accessions in the late Byzantine romance *Libistros and Rhodamne*, dated between the mid-thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century. Through a comparative analysis of two accession ceremonies depicted in the work and historical sources concerning the accessions of Byzantine rulers from the same period, the study aims to demonstrate that the author incorporated practices inspired by Byzantine court ceremonial, as well as social conceptions characteristic of Byzantium. A significant part of the paper is also devoted to a study of the milieu in which *Libistros and Rhodamne* was composed. Analysis of the passages describing the accessions provides additional evidence that the work originated in a courtly environment. Moreover, the analysis details the findings about this environment that can be derived from these literary descriptions.

Hanna MORKOWSKA

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

The Epicurean Spiritual Therapy in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*

Lucretius was the first Roman poet to write about epicurean philosophy. In his passionate retelling of Epicurus' doctrine in *De rerum natura* he does not only speak highly of its teachings, but even more so of the teacher himself. For in the poet's eyes, Epicurus is the master to whom humanity owes the illumination of the darkness that overwhelms souls and minds by unveiling the secrets of nature and discovering truth.

This paper aims to analyse Lucretius' account of epicureanism in terms of spiritual therapy, as the pursuit of the good life is recognised as the main ethical goal. The poet's ambition is to introduce his contemporaries to a philosophy capable of healing the anxieties that plagued humanity, and thus present them the way to achieve true happiness. The role of epicurean atomism and understanding the forces that govern the natural world in devoting oneself to the therapy of the soul will be emphasized. By exploring the poem's recount of the doctrine on gods the paper will present an interpretation of the philosophy of the Garden as a secular religion. The relation between adulation of Epicurus in *De rerum natura* and Lucretius' motivation to familiarize the Roman reader with the

atomistic view of nature will be explored in order to demonstrate the cultic turn that epicureanism underwent in the time after the philosopher's death.

Ole G. MOURITSEN

University of Copenhagen

Lessons for Future Sustainable Cooking from Ancient and Foreign Food Cultures

When meeting major challenges in modern society, solutions are seldom based on a completely new idea or invention developed from scratch. Most often, full or partial solutions are found by evolution and gradual development of earlier ideas, refinement of techniques, or modification of existing practices or products. Sometimes solutions can be inspired by learning from history or from foreign cultures, and their implementation often typically needs a multidisciplinary approach.

A current global challenge is how to stimulate food cultures and dietary habits that are not only healthy and nutritious but also sustainable, i.e., how is it possible to establish a green transition at scale?

Based on fundamental arguments from plant biology on the one hand and human evolution of the other hand, I will argue that the main reason why most people have difficulties transitioning to a more plant-rich diet is related to the basic taste umami.

In my talk I will describe how insights from ancient Roman cuisine using garum and botargo and from traditional Japanese cuisine using dashi, shōyū, and furikake can be used to umamify plant-rich dishes. Some recent results are mentioned regarding the effect on umami perception of a resin from a putative silphium plant.

Marco MURESU

University of Cagliari

Ligna et lapides: Pagans and Paganism in Gregory the Great's Registrum Epistularum

The paper examines the ways in which Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 CE) addressed paganism and pagan beliefs in his writings, with emphasis on the *Registrum Epistularum*. Gregory's correspondence represents a source of exceptional value for the study of everyday religious life in the late 6th and early 7th centuries, offering direct insight into the persistence of pagan practices within formally Christianised societies. From Britannia to Sardinia, the epistles document a wide spectrum of responses, ranging from firm condemnation to more flexible and adaptive approaches. Through selected case studies,

this contribution seeks to clarify Gregory's perception of paganism as a complex social and cultural phenomenon, and to explore how pagan rituals, cults, and beliefs remained embedded in popular practices despite the institutional consolidation of Christianity.

Davide MUSSI

University Complutense of Madrid

University of Naples 'L'Orientale'

Therapy for Gout in Demetrios Pepagomenos' *De podagra*

The treatise *De podagra* attributed to Demetrios Pepagomenos, a court physician and a controversial figure in the service of either Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) or, more probably, Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425), represents a significant example of medical writing produced in the final decades of the Byzantine Empire. This work—whose standard edition remains, to this day, the non-critical one published by Kousis (1909)—consists of forty-six chapters organized according to a clearly defined structure. Following the *proemium*, in which the physician employs a *captatio benevolentiae* to praise the emperor, the text proceeds to a discussion of diagnosis (chs. 1–9), prophylaxis (chs. 10–21), and therapy (chs. 22–45), concluding with a final *peroratio* in which the author takes leave of his readers by invoking divine assistance.

After a brief introduction to the figure of Demetrios Pepagomenos, this study aims to analyse selected chapters devoted to the therapy of gout. Through a few examples, the analysis will be conducted from two complementary perspectives: a synchronic one, focusing on the methods of composition of a late Byzantine medical text, and a diachronic one, examining the indirect tradition underlying the work. A preliminary investigation has shown that the treatise is largely constructed through extensive recourse to a broad medical and scientific tradition, including Aristotle, Nicander, Arrian, Paul of Aegina, Psellos, and Johannes Actuarius. Within this tradition, however, only Hippocrates, Galen, and Alexander of Tralles are explicitly cited; moreover, these references are for the most part heavily reworked, altered, or even crafted *ad hoc* by the author himself.

Octavian-Adrian NEGOIȚĂ

Romanian Academy

John Kantakouzenos's Anti-Jewish Polemic

This paper examines the anti-Jewish polemical stance of the fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor and historian John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1347–1354), situating his arguments within the broader framework of late Byzantine theological controversy and imperial

ideology. While Kantakouzenos is primarily known for his political career and his historical writings, his theological works—particularly those directed against Jews—reveal a deliberate engagement with traditional Christian anti-Jewish polemics that had circulated in Byzantine intellectual culture for centuries. I analyze Kantakouzenos’s anti-Jewish treatise as both a theological and rhetorical project. Drawing on patristic authorities, scriptural exegesis, and established polemical tropes, Kantakouzenos constructs a systematic critique of Judaism aimed at demonstrating the obsolescence of Jewish law and the theological legitimacy of Christianity as its fulfillment. His arguments rely heavily on typological readings of the Hebrew Scriptures, Christological interpretations of prophecy, and accusations that Jews persist in spiritual blindness through their rejection of Christ. Beyond its theological content, the treatise also reflects the political and social realities of the late Byzantine world. Written in a period marked by internal instability, theological disputes, and increasing interaction with both Latin Christians and non-Christian communities, Kantakouzenos’s polemic participates in a broader effort to reaffirm Orthodox doctrinal identity. By presenting Judaism as a theological adversary, the emperor contributes to the consolidation of Christian imperial ideology and reinforces the boundaries of religious orthodoxy within Byzantine society. I will further explore the intellectual sources of Kantakouzenos’s arguments and compares them with earlier Byzantine anti-Jewish literature, highlighting both continuity and adaptation in the polemical tradition. Particular attention is given to the relationship between imperial authority and theological authorship, as Kantakouzenos occupies the unusual position of both ruler and polemicist. I argue that his anti-Jewish writings should be understood not merely as inherited theological discourse but as a strategic intervention in the religious and ideological debates of the fourteenth-century Byzantine world.

Anastasia NIKOLAOU

Democritus University of Thrace

Diet, Health, and Everyday Medical Practice in the 17th cent.: The *Geponikon* of Agapios Landos

This paper aims to present the work of *Geponikon* by the Greek monk, Agapios Landos. The author was one of the most prolific scholars of the 17th century. He originated from the island of Crete and although it is unknown where and what he studied, it seems that he received a good education in Venetian-occupied Crete. He practiced the profession of a folk doctor and dentist according to the ethos of the time throughout Greece, with a focus on the Aegean islands. He was the author of 17 works, the vast majority of which were of homiletic and hagiological content. In order to print his books, he undertook 3 journeys to Venice facing considerable difficulties.

Geponikon is among his earliest works, was first published in Venice in 1643 and in a more vernacular language than his other works. In this work Landos considers bodily

health to be the most important of material goods and, just as he sought to promote the spiritual well-being of his readers through religious texts, he likewise aimed to contribute to their physical health. In composing *Geoponikon*, he drew upon his own experience, translations and adaptations of Italian works, material copied from manuscripts, as well as translations of texts from literate Greek into the vernacular.

The *Geoponikon* forms part of a long-standing Mediterranean tradition of pharmacological and dietetic manuals extending from antiquity to the early modern time such as those of Theophrastus (4th–3rd cent. BC), Dioscorides (1st cent. AD), Symeon Seth (11th cent.), and Neophytus Prodromenos (14th cent.). The work went through successive editions and continues to exert influence to this day, as elements of its content are incorporated into later collections of empirical (traditional) medicine.

Paweł NOWIK

University of Białystok

Between Kyiv and Constantinople: The Banishment of Rurikid Princes to Byzantium in the 11th and 12th Centuries

This study examines the phenomenon of the political banishment of Rurikid princes from Kyivan Rus' to the Byzantine Empire during the 11th and 12th centuries. The study seeks to show how inter-dynastic ties between the Rurikids and the Byzantine ruling houses (the Monomachoi and the Komnenoi) served as a tool for the removal of political rivals.

The research employs the historical-critical method and a case-study approach, analyzing three instances of banishment: the exile of Oleg Svyatoslavich (1076), the expulsion of the Polotsk Rurikids (1130), and the banishment of Andrey Iurievich's (d. 1174) stepmother and half-brothers (1161). The source material includes Rus' chronicles and Byzantine historiography.

The findings indicate that the presence of Rurikid princesses at the Byzantine court—such as the daughter of Mstislav the Great, provided the necessary framework for the safe *internment* of unwanted relatives. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the duration of the exile was frequently contingent upon these dynastic connections

The primary findings also highlight the instrumentalization of the exiles by the Byzantines. Case studies show that the emperors tried to use the exiled Rurikids to their advantage. Ultimately, the study argues that in the 11th and 12th centuries, banishment to Byzantium functioned as an informal arrangement between the descendants of Vsevolod Iaroslavich (1030–1093) and the Byzantine emperors.

Lorena PÉREZ YARZA

University of Warsaw

Reading the Unnamed: Materiality and Technical Diversity in Roman Epigraphic Production

This presentation examines Roman epigraphic production through the material traces left by anonymous craftsmen, shifting attention away from named individuals towards the technical realities of inscription-making. While direct evidence for the organisation of epigraphic workshops and the professional identities of stonecutters remains scarce and largely dependent on occasional epigraphic references, the material fabric of inscriptions themselves preserves abundant partial evidence for reconstructing their processes of manufacture. Drawing on epigraphic autopsies conducted in Bordeaux and across Germania on imperial inscriptions, this study analyses the successive stages involved in the preparation and execution of inscribed texts in their supports. Particular attention is given to ductus, the use and placement of guidelines, the relationship between ordinatio and carving execution, and the engraved groove of letters. These features reveal significant variation in technical practice, even where the resulting letterforms appear visually similar. Comparable graphic outcomes could be achieved through different sequences of execution, varying hierarchies in the tracing and carving of letterforms, differing levels of competence in layout and incision, or distinct procedures in the application of guidelines in relation to plastering and painting.

Many of these material features are neither rare nor exceptional; rather, they have often gone unrecorded in epigraphic corpora and publications, where attention has traditionally focused on textual content rather than production. By foregrounding these material and technical dimensions, this paper argues for a reassessment of Roman epigraphic production not as a uniform or standardised craft that corresponds to the few legal regulations, but as a diverse and technically rich field shaped by the practices of unnamed artisans. Through the careful study of these anonymous hands, it becomes possible to recover a more nuanced understanding of the organisation, variability, and material technology of epigraphic workshops in the imperial period.

Ivan P. PETROV

University of Vienna

The Slavonic Reception of Isaac the Syrian: New Perspectives on Textual Transmission

The *Ascetical Discourses* (Λόγοι ἀσκητικοί/Слова постъничьска) of Isaac of Nineveh entered the Slavonic literary tradition through their Greek translation and circulated in at least two distinct versions among the South Slavs before later being transmitted to the East Slavic milieu, where they achieved wider dissemination. Despite the importance of

this corpus for medieval Slavic monastic culture, the textual relations between these Slavonic versions, as well as their connections to the Greek tradition, have not yet been examined in a systematic manner.

Based on a representative selection of texts drawn from almost all extant manuscript witnesses, this paper examines patterns of variation and affiliation between the two South Slavonic versions. The analysis draws attention to a differentiated history of transmission within the Slavonic tradition, marked by processes of selection, reworking, and internal circulation.

The paper aims to present preliminary outlines toward a more systematic account of the Slavonic transmission of Isaac of Nineveh's works, with particular attention to inter-Slavic textual relations and their correlation with the Greek source tradition. By focusing on concrete textual evidence, it contributes to a more precise understanding of translation and textual transfer within medieval Slavia Byzantina.

Effie PHOTOS-JONES

University of Glasgow

Philoctetes' Wound and the Earth of Lemnos: Can a Myth Form a Reliable Basis for Bio-Medical Research?

The myth of the Trojan war hero Philoctetes and his wound that would not heal, arising from a snake bite, has been extensively discussed in both the philological and medical literature, from classical antiquity to today. The springboard for this discussion has been the play by Sophocles, 'Philoctetes', first performed in Athens, in 409 BCE. Themes of physical pain, isolation and bitter resentment against his fellow Greeks, who left him behind on a remote island for 10 years, but also redemption and eternal glory achieved by him at Troy, have been revisited by numerous authors in the intervening 2500 years. Sophocles' vivid portrayal of the protagonist's painful symptoms has also allowed medical doctors and historians of medicine to offer several retrospective diagnoses to include mycetoma (Madura foot), gout, chronic osteomyelitis, to mention a few. In all cases the diagnosis was achieved based on the symptoms presented rather than a cure proposed. Sophocles merely mentions 'a plant' to sooth the pain. Yet, by the 2nd c CE, a connecting link had already been firmly established between Lemnian Earth (LE), a natural clay of Lemnos Island, in the N Aegean, the place of Philoctetes 10-year exile, and the cure for his wound. LE, the natural clay, was extracted from a particular location in the north of the island, processed in the nearby temple and in a manner recorded in detail by Galen (2nd c CE) and stamped prior to circulation as *terra sigillata* or *Lemnian sphragis* (LS). It continued to be marketed, under different stamps, and particularly in the Ottoman period, as an effective antidote to '*poison injected or ingested*' (see samples above, dated 16th – 18th c). In the late 19th c, the first chemical analyses were undertaken of the natural clay from the known locality of its extraction, but with inconclusive results. It was deemed to

be ‘just, a clay.’ By the early 20th c, interest in LE, the medicinal earth, had waned substantially. Our team has undertaken research on the geological setting and the nature of clay sediments at the location of extraction of LE, on Lemnos. In 2017, following a small funding from the Wellcome Trust, we sampled and analysed terra sigillatas from Basel University’s Museum of Pharmacy. We focused not simply on the abiotic component i.e. the clay-based and other minerals within, but also on the biotic (bacterial/fungal) load. We tested the bioactivity (as antibacterials, against common pathogens) of both the natural clays, and the Basel stamped earths. We proceeded in making our own experimental LS, and subsequently, in giving it to healthy lab mice. The results took us by surprise: the mice developed gut biodiversity and their gut started producing small molecules, SCFAs (small chain fatty acids), important for the gut and brain health of the host.

The present talk is divided in two parts: first, a description of the preparation of experimental LS based on Galen’s text and as deduced by our analyses of the historical Basel LSs; second, an account of the effect of our experimental preparation on the mouse biome. The aim is to establish a bio-medical link, beyond the existing philological one, between ‘Philoctetes’ disease’ and its purported cure.

Bojana RADOVANOVIĆ

University of Graz

Paulician Influence on the Bogomils: Just a Trope?

Armenia is often referred to in Byzantine literature as a *cradle of heresies* due to the emergence of several heretical movements on its soil. Often considered the most significant “heresy” emerging from Armenia, Paulicianism was viewed by Byzantine theologians as a form of dualism. In the 8th century, Constantine V transferred Paulician groups to Thrace. After the military campaign in Syria, he transferred the Monophysite populations to Thrace as well. Under Leo IV, the emperor’s son, a similar destiny fell upon the Syriac Jacobites and Armenians. The Paulicians were also transferred to Thrace sometime later, during the 10th century, under the Emperor John I Tzimiskes. In the 11th/12th centuries, during Alexios I Komnenos, their community was already thriving and they were integrated as a landowning and taxpaying subject population which often gave auxiliary troops to serve in military operations.

This paper will re-assess the important, but still debated question of the influence the medieval Paulicians have had upon the Bogomils, who appeared on historical scene as a dualist heresy in the 10th century, as well as the role of migration histories *lato sensu*, and more particularly, on the development and spread of Bogomilism. Hence, the wider picture of Armenia as the “cradle of heresy” imposes itself indeed, and especially given the fact that other sectarian groups—together with Messalians and some Gnostics—would have spread from Armenia as well.

Federica ROTELLI

University of Verona

Biological Mobility and Knowledge Circulation in Byzantium: Ecology, Medicine, and Foodways in a Connected Mediterranean

Situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Byzantium did not merely constitute a geopolitical threshold between East and West, but functioned as a privileged laboratory of ecological, cultural, and economic interaction in the medieval Mediterranean. The mobility of non-native botanical species, the circulation of agronomic and medico-pharmacological texts, and the structuring of commercial networks tied to exotic spices delineated a system of exchange in which foodways, medicine, and ecology were deeply intertwined. Within the broader process through which new crops from Asia and the Islamic world spread across the Mediterranean (7th–12th centuries), the Byzantine context did not operate as a passive recipient. Rather, it emerged as a dynamic environment of ecological adaptation and agronomic experimentation, capable of reshaping cultivation practices and productive structures in response to shifting climatic, economic, and cultural conditions. Archaeobotanical evidence allows the reconstruction not only of the diversity of cultivated species—both imported and local—but also of methods of processing, preservation, and distribution, illuminating the interactions between landscape, dietary habits, and technical knowledge. At the same time, the agronomic tradition reveals processes of continuity and reworking of the Greco-Roman heritage in light of intensified contacts with Arabic and eastern knowledge systems. The circulation of medical and pharmacological texts likewise contributed to redefining therapeutic repertoires, encouraging the introduction of Arabic and Persian materia medica into local dietetic practices and fostering the expansion of medical knowledge. Commercial and fiscal sources highlight the emergence of an interconnected economic system linking the Indian Ocean, the Levant, and the western Mediterranean, within which Constantinople operated as a strategic hub of redistribution and cultural translation. From this perspective, the Byzantine Empire emerges not as a passive frontier between civilizations, but as a relational arena where biological mobility and intellectual circulation converged in shaping new alimentary, therapeutic, and environmental balances.

Łukasz RÓŻYCKI

Adam Mickiewicz University

***De militari scientia* and the Image of Arabs in Late Antique Military Treatises**

De militari scientia remains a relatively infrequently cited military treatise. This does not, however, imply that it has been neglected altogether, due in large measure to the sustained

scholarly efforts of Prof. Eramo. Since the publication of the first modern edition, a broad scholarly consensus has emerged dating the text to the seventh century, in the aftermath of the Arab invasions.

The principal argument supporting this chronology is the presence of references to Arabs—references that are absent from earlier military treatises, most notably the *Strategikon*. In my presentation, I propose to reassess the evidentiary weight assigned to these references. I will argue that their significance for dating the text has been overstated and offer an alternative interpretation. In doing so, I seek to challenge the prevailing chronology, which, in my view, rests on insufficiently critical assumptions and reflects a degree of circular reasoning in the use of internal evidence.

Razieh SADEGHI KHOSHDEL

Centre for Advanced Studies in Arts and Natural Science

Plant Mobility, Garden Landscapes, and Embodied Experience between Iran and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity and Byzantium

This paper examines the circulation of plants between Iran and the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity and the Byzantine period as an environmental and cultural process that reshaped garden landscapes and embodied experience. Rather than approaching botanical movement as a simple transfer of species, it considers plant mobility as part of broader ecological adaptations and spatial reconfigurations within cultivated environments.

Embedded within networks of trade and cross-cultural exchange linking Iran, the Levant, and the Byzantine world, circulating plants participated in the transformation of Mediterranean gardens. Their integration into new climatic and ecological contexts generated distinct horticultural practices and landscape forms. Within this framework, the garden emerges as a lived environment in which soil, water, seasonality, vegetal qualities, and cultivation practices structured sensory and bodily experience.

Drawing on material traces of cultivation, garden configurations, visual representations of vegetal motifs, and environmental conditions, this paper explores how botanical circulation intersected with changing perceptions of space, seasonal rhythms, and everyday interaction with nature. Iranian-origin plants, including saffron and pomegranate, are briefly considered as illustrative examples of how vegetal mobility contributed to shifting relationships between body and environment.

In this context, Mediterranean gardens appear not as mere recipients of imported flora, but as dynamic ecological settings where plants were reworked and incorporated into new cultural and environmental equilibria. Tracing these vegetal movements offers insight into

processes of landscape formation and embodied engagement with nature in the interconnected late antique Mediterranean world.

Aleksandar SAVIĆ

University of Belgrade

Between Sultan and Scaffold: Christian–Muslim Encounters in South Slavic Hagiography (13th–16th Centuries)

The paper offers a diachronic overview of the discursive strategies employed to represent Islam and Muslims in late medieval hagiography from the Orthodox Slavic milieu of Southeast Europe. The discussion focuses on three of the most representative Christian–Muslim encounters attested in the relevant material: (1) St Sava of Serbia’s audience with the Egyptian sultan, described in the two vitae authored by the monks Domentian and Theodosius around the mid- and late 13th century, respectively; (2) the Serbian–Ottoman clash at Kosovo in 1389, thematised in a corpus of cult writings produced between the late 14th and the early decades of the 15th century; and (3) the martyrdom of St George the New, recorded shortly after his execution by the Muslims of Sofia in 1515 following his refusal to apostatise and embrace Islam. Each of these cases reflects a distinct socio-political environment and treats religious alterity in ways that correspond both to the aims of the work(s) in question and to the expectations of their intended audiences. The mesmerising effect Sava is said to have had on the sultan and his entourage served primarily to underscore his sanctity and to affirm the truth of the (Orthodox) Christian faith. In the aftermath of the Battle of Kosovo, the Ottoman “Other” became a central element in a political-theological programme designed to legitimise the rule of Stefan Lazarević, the son and heir of the fallen Prince Lazar, and to inspire resistance against the invaders. By the first half of the 16th century, however, the conquered population had to confront the reality of living under Muslim rule. In this context, the emphasis on the (false) teachings of Islam in George’s hagiography functioned as a means of conveying the importance of steadfastness in one’s faith.

Zofia SIDWA

Jagiellonian University

From Sacred Lotus to Edible Root: The Semantic Shift of Colocasia in Late Antiquity

Interpreting ancient and Byzantine sources on food and medicine faces a fundamental challenge—the ambiguity of botanical nomenclature. This study analyses the evolution of terminology related to plants classified as lotus and colocasia in the Mediterranean basin, demonstrating how environmental and cultural changes influenced the nomenclature and

dietetics of Late Antiquity. Based on an analysis of sources, this study systematizes the botanical identity of three main plant groups hidden in antiquity under the name lotus: (1) the arboreal lotus (*Ziziphus lotus*), (2) herbaceous (fodder) lotuses; and (3) aquatic lotuses. Particular attention is paid to distinguishing between native Egyptian water lilies (*Nymphaea lotus*, *N. caerulea*) and the introduced Sacred Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*).

The main focus of the analysis is the semantic change that took place between the 3rd and 5th centuries AD. In the classical period, the term colocasia referred exclusively to the edible rhizome of the sacred lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*). However, with the gradual disappearance of this plant in Egypt, the name colocasia was transferred to taro (*Colocasia esculenta*)—a tuberous plant, previously known probably as aron.

The presentation shows that this adoption of vocabulary is crucial to the history of medicine and culinary arts. It allows for a reinterpretation of late antique recipes (e.g. in *De Re Coquinaria* attributed to Apicius) and dietary recommendations of early Byzantine physicians (Aetius of Amida, Paul of Aegina). This indicates that the colocasia described in Byzantine sources was a different plant—a starchy tuber with soothing properties for the digestive tract, which became an important part of the diet in times of food shortages. This research highlights the need for an interdisciplinary approach, combining philology, botany and the history of medicine, in order to correctly reconstruct ancient medical science and diet.

Boris SHOPOV

Independent Researcher

Serdica and Theophylact Simocatta: The Importance of a Blank Space

Serdica is completely missing from the text of Theophylact Simocatta's *Universal History*. The focus of this writer is firmly on Constantinople, with main themes warfare against the Avars and the Persians and the domestic troubles of the East Roman and Sasanian monarchies. What could then justify discussing the place in Theophylact's work of a city not mentioned even once in it? Interestingly, Serdica appears in two other sources during the time of Justinian's successors: the letters of the Roman bishop Gregory the Great to its bishop, and a building inscription dating from the reign of Tiberius II. This fact will serve as the starting point of our inquiry. When we examine *Universal History's* text, we immediately notice its religious dimension as well—and it is, completely on purpose, concentrated on Constantinople and on lesser cities which, however, have one common trait – not a single one of them is among the New Rome's ecclesiastical peers from the Pentarchy. Reading Simocatta in parallel with the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* and the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, and combining it with Theophylact's accounts of Maurice as a patron of church building against the background of epigraphic evidence from Serdica and Rome, we can conclude that, at least on the level of public display, the Eastern Roman monarchy of the late 6th and early 7th centuries can be seen as an institution trying to assert

itself amid the similar legitimacy claims of the major churches in the Mediterranean. On a smaller scale, Serdica, with its building inscription, may be seen as a manifestation of the same need to prop up imperial prestige. In conclusion—the blank space it is in our writer’s work demonstrates that Theophylact’s image of empire is only the negative of the whole picture—which needs further examination.

Mirena SLAVOVA

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Into the Fiery Furnace: The Execution of Basil the Physician in the Hippodrome (Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* XV.9–10)

Anna Comnena’s explicit statement that the Bogomil leader Basil the Physician was burned in a furnace (κάμινος) rather than at the stake has been systematically mistranslated and misunderstood in scholarship. This often-overlooked distinction offers a fresh perspective on the episode and prompts broader questions about punishment and spectacle in Byzantium.

The paper first reviews misleading translations of the execution narrative (*Alexiad* XV.9–10) in major European languages, then clarifies the significance of Anna’s terminology and situates it within the broader legal, theological, and historical context of Byzantine heresy trials. It examines fire as a judicial penalty in Roman and Byzantine law and the Biblical allusion to the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3), which frames Anna’s narrative within a broader theological and political program: the furnace evokes the Daniel 3 typology, positioning Basil’s punishment as both a test of faith and divine judgment, while the Hippodrome setting amplifies the execution as a religious-political spectacle under Alexios I Comnenos.

Gioacchino STRANO

University of Catania

Alexios Ier Comnène et les Arméniens entre théologie et raison d’État (paper in French)

The Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (XI–XII century) defended orthodoxy and virulently attacked heretics: Paulicians, Bogomils, and also Armenians. I will examine above all the theme of the Byzantine anti-Armenian polemic, following the testimonies of Anna Komnena (daughter of the emperor and author of *Alexiad*) and of a theological work composed by Alexios himself.

I will take into consideration both the religious content and the political and cultural motivations of the controversy. Armenians were a very large social component in the Byzantine Empire and beyond its borders (especially in Cilicia). Alexios did not renounce using their military forces or surrounding himself with Armenian collaborators, but he wanted to convey the image of his uncompromising religious conduct concerning orthodoxy, which, in that period of political and military crisis and uncertainty on many fronts, could constitute a factor of political and social cohesion.

Artemy STRELETSKY

Independent Researcher

The Polemical Techniques in John of Damascus’s “On the Heresy of the Ishmaelites”

In recent decades, there has been renewed scholarly interest in John of Damascus and his polemical treatises against Muslims. Recent studies have shown that John of Damascus was deeply rooted in the Syriac milieu of the seventh-eighth century and demonstrated first-hand acquaintance with emerging Islamic doctrine. Yet the rhetorical dimension of his writings has rarely attracted the scholars’ attention.

The present paper focuses on the polemical techniques used by John of Damascus in his treatise “On the Heresy of the Ishmaelites.” In the paper, I intend to address the following questions:

- What kinds of polemical techniques does John of Damascus employ in the treatise?
- Which audience—Muslim or Christian—was primarily addressed?
- How does John of Damascus’s polemics correspond to the Islamic doctrine of the time?

I also discuss the reception of “On the Heresy of the Ishmaelites” among later generations of Christian polemicists and considers its role in shaping Christian anti-Islamic discourse.

Katalin SUBA

Masaryk University

Tomáš HAMPEJS

Masaryk University

David ZBÍRAL

Masaryk University

Beneath the Formula: Consolament Descriptions in the FFF Register of Carcassonne and the Limits of Inquisitorial Construction

The study of inquisitorial registers as evidence for medieval religious dissidence has long been caught between two competing impulses: the richness of their testimony about dissident belief and practice, and the recognition that this testimony was produced through hostile, institutionally structured interrogation. This tension also concerns

descriptions of rituals in inquisitorial records, where the question of how much they reflect witness memory of real-life events and how much they reflect inquisitorial construction remains fundamentally open.

This paper addresses that question through a systematic analysis of consolament descriptions preserved in the so-called FFF Register (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fonds Doat, vol. 22, 107r–296v; vol. 23, 1r–346v; vol. 24, 1r–238r) of the inquisition in Carcassonne, which contains interrogations conducted by the inquisitor Friar Ferrier between 1243–1244. At first glance, the twenty-eight consolament accounts appear highly formulaic, suggesting the imposition of a standardized inquisitorial framework, yet closer examination reveals subtle but meaningful divergences across the corpus, concerning not only minor details but also the presence, absence, and ordering of the ritual descriptions' basic structural elements.

By subjecting the full corpus to computational sequence analysis, the paper moves beyond qualitative observation to provide a systematic assessment of the degree and distribution of this variation. It asks whether the diversity observable across accounts exceeds what scribal inconsistency or minor template modification would produce, and whether patterns of similarity and difference correlate with identifiable contextual information such as notarial hand, geographic context, or temporal factors.

Nell SYPNIEWSKA

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

The Medical Skills and Practical Knowledge of Female Members of the Imperial Family at the Court of Komnenoi

The paper addresses the issue of medical knowledge and its practical application by women of the Komnenoi. It focuses on representatives of the first three generations of the dynasty: empress Irene Doukaina; her daughters, Anna, Maria, Eudokia, and Theodora; and their sister-in-law, Irene of Hungary.

Although these women constituted the core of 11th and 12th century court politics, they also played a significant role in shaping a phenomenon that may be described as the emergence of public healthcare. The best-known example of such activity is Irene Piroška, who co-founded the hospital operating within the monastery dedicated to Christ Pantokrator. However, she was not the initiator of this activity, since years before Irene's arrival in Constantinople a similar initiative had been undertaken by Anna Komnene. Although Anna did not establish her own monastery, she was appointed by her father to the position of administrator of a palace hospital. She even participated in a medical council concerning the further medical treatment of Alexios Komnenos; although she supported Nicholas Kallikles, whose diagnosis appeared closest to the truth, her opinion did not prove decisive in determining the course of the treatment. The only course of

action available to her in this situation was to join her sisters and mother in caring for the terminally ill emperor.

Beyond institutional activity centered on state hospitals, contemporary sources attest that each of the women possessed knowledge enabling them to perform certain medical procedures. The imperial daughters received this part of the education in childhood – although in later years these skills were either expanded or neglected at the discretion of the princesses themselves. The aim of the paper is to identify specific examples of medical procedures undertaken by the first three generations of women of the Komnenian family and the medical knowledge required to carry them out.

Rafał SZEWCZYK

University of Łódź

Between Alliance and Rivalry: A Few Remarks on Byzantine Relations with the Mongol Empire and the Early Ilkhanate (c. 1240–1265)

My speech will be devoted to examining the diplomatic relations between the Byzantine Empire (Empire of Nicaea) and the Mongol Empire from approximately 1240 to 1265, with particular emphasis on the evolving dynamic with the emerging Ilkhanate. I will set my analysis against the broader geopolitical backdrop of the 13th-century Near East, characterized by the fragmentation of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, the crusader states, and the rise of new Mongol khanates following the dissolution of the unified empire. By contextualizing Byzantine-Mongol interactions within this complex political landscape, my aim is to provide a deeper understanding of the strategic calculus and diplomatic manoeuvres employed by both powers.

In my presentation, I will primarily focus on the period following the Battle of Köse Dağ (1243), which transformed the Seljuk Sultanate into a Mongol client state and removed a crucial buffer for the Empire of Nicaea. I will trace the initial Byzantine awareness of the Mongol threat, the reactive policies of Emperors John III Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris, and the more proactive, multi-vector diplomacy initiated by Michael VIII Palaiologos after the reconquest of Constantinople (1261) from the Latins. Special attention will be paid to Michael VIII's strategic alliance with the Ilkhanate, formalized through the marriage of his daughter Maria to Ilkhan Abaqa, which served as a counterbalance to the rival Golden Horde and the Mamluk Sultanate.

The argument I will present is based on comparative analysis of Byzantine historical sources (George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nicephorus Gregoras) and key Mongol-era chronicles (Ata-Malik Juvayni, Rashid al-Din, and Yuán Shǐ). Through this synthesis, I will argue that Byzantine diplomacy towards the Mongols shifted from peripheral caution to a central, pragmatic pillar of imperial foreign policy, driven by the necessity to navigate the new regional order established by the Mongol conquests.

Martyna ŚWIERK

University of Warsaw

Ex officina Felices. Self-Presentation of Craftspeople and Workshops in Mosaics from the Mediterranean from the 3rd to the 5th Century AD

The paper proposes a prosopographical analysis of the available source material concerning craftspeople and workshops of mosaic production in Late Antiquity. The primary evidence for this study consists of the mosaics themselves, particularly those bearing signatures left by their makers. These inscriptions provide not only basic textual information about individual artisans, but also invite reflection on the visual dimension of the monuments and their spatial context. The function of mosaicists' signatures was primarily that of self-promotion, serving to advertise both the craftsman and the workshop. As such, they were carefully adapted to the architectural and spatial settings in which they appeared and designed to remain clearly visible to potential patrons and viewers. The diversity of the material and its wide geographical distribution make it possible to identify characteristic features of artisans' self-representation in different contexts and to consider whether distinct regional trends can be observed among mosaicists. The material analysed in this study originates from various parts of the

Mediterranean basin, with particularly rich evidence from North Africa, the Iberian provinces, and the Near East.

By combining epigraphic, visual, and spatial analysis, this study interprets mosaicists' signatures not as mere documentary additions, but as deliberate strategies of self-representation and social positioning within Late Antique communities. The proposed prosopographical approach not only reconstructs the profiles of individual artisans known through their works, but also reframes their activity within the wider economic, social, and cultural dynamics of the Mediterranean.

Michail THEODOSIADIS

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Relational Ontology and Ethical Power: An Eastern Orthodox Approach to International Relations

This paper develops an Eastern Orthodox approach to International Relations (IR). Drawing on Gregory of Nyssa's ontology and Eastern Christian anthropology (emphasising the work of Christos Yannaras and John Zizioulas), it advances a personalist account of political ethics. The human being is understood not as an isolated individual but as *prosopon*: it is a relational being constituted through openness to the Other, as Zizioulas claimed. Nyssa's notion of *epektasis* is also employed. In

particular, *epektasis* (implying expansion) functions as a symbolic representation of movement towards the divine. This movement implies the humbling of egocentric desires. At the same time, *epektasis* has a horizontal dimension; it spreads the message of love and compassion to the society, encouraging an approach in which each *prosopon* is regarded as a mirror of the Other. The study will move on to operationalise this theory in IR; I will, thus, examine how Orthodox perspectives can reshape understandings of global politics, with the aim to minimise the potential for conflict. More specifically, this prosopic approach will inform a new model of diplomacy, whose ultimate objective is to prolong conditions of peace, or at least the intermediate state of crisis between peace and conflict. When all efforts fail and war appears inevitable, this prosopic and relational ethic may ensure that the use of force remains strictly limited and does not collapse into destructive or dehumanising power. By developing and applying an Eastern Orthodox to global politics, grounded in relational ontology, the study advances a normative framework of how political power could be exercised in a more ethical way. To this end, it offers novel and underexplored philosophical lens for rethinking transnational politics.

Alain TOUWAIDE

Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University

Managing the Ancient Legacy: From Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, to the So-Called *Herbal*

In the history of Dioscorides, *De materia medica*, and, more broadly, of Early-Byzantine medicine, the so-called Herbal derived from *De materia medica* is well-known, particularly due to its oldest preserved copy, the beautifully illustrated manuscript of Vienna (Vindobonensis), which possibly dates back to the early 6th century. Whereas numerous studies have focused on the manuscript itself or its illustrations, research examining the constitution of its content, that is, the Herbal, has been scarce. This presentation will explore the Herbal from pharmacotherapeutic perspective, seeking to enhance our understanding of its creation. In so doing, it will bring to light dynamic processes at play in the management of ancient knowledge that may have previously gone unnoticed or inadequately identified thus far.

Alain TOUWAIDE

Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University

Emanuela APPETITI

Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University

Greek Medical Manuscripts-MediManus

Greek manuscripts with medical contents have been inventoried in the early 20th century in the so-called Diels. Since then, a revised edition of the Diels was published in 2020 and

a renewed inventory was compiled in 2016. Many such manuscripts are now available in digital format online. The MediManus program allows for consultation of all these manuscripts in a unique site and provides abundant metadata for a better knowledge of the manuscripts and their texts, together with material for the study of their illustrations and their content, especially medicinal plants and pharmacotherapeutics. The presentation will navigate the site, illustrate its content, and answer questions.

Christos TSATSOULIS

University of Ioannina

Doctors on Lead: Medical Identity and Professional Status in Byzantium through Sigillographic Evidence

The study of Byzantine seals provides unique insights into the social, administrative, and religious structures of the Byzantine Empire. Preserving personal names, official titles, and symbolic imagery, these small artifacts provide rich evidence for historians and archaeologists. This paper examines the profession and social position of *iatroi* (physicians, doctors, medical practitioners) through a carefully selected small corpus of seals explicitly associated with medical practitioners. The seals are analyzed in terms of inscriptions, iconography, and the presence or absence of religious invocations, and are contextualized through comparison with epigraphic material, allowing a diachronic perspective on medical identity from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Byzantine period.

The study explores how *iatroi* presented themselves in sigillographic contexts, including the use of professional titles, formulaic language, religious references, and visual motifs. It considers the relationship between personal piety, professional self-definition, and social visibility, highlighting changes in medical authority and status across a transforming administrative and social landscape.

This research focuses, for the first time, on a previously understudied subset of Byzantine sigillography, revealing how *iatroi* negotiated identity, authority, and social networks through material culture. By integrating epigraphic, iconographic, and textual evidence, the paper provides new insights into the social history of Byzantine medicine and its intersections with religion and public representation. It demonstrates that even small, seemingly peripheral artifacts can illuminate significant aspects of professional life that remain invisible in literary sources. By emphasizing this neglected corpus, the study contributes a new perspective on the ways medical practitioners asserted authority and navigated visibility within Byzantine society.

Elias VALIAKOS

University of Thessaly

Theophanes Chrysobalantes' *Synopsis on Remedies*. A First Approach

The *Synopsis on Remedies* (Σύννοψις ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ περὶ τῶν βοηθημάτων), attributed to Theophanes Chrysobalantes, is a Byzantine medical work associated with the court medicine of imperial Constantinople in the tenth century. Theophanes himself was a court physician active during the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.

The *Synopsis on Remedies* is a practical pharmaceutical compilation, designed to provide physicians and practitioners with a concise collection of therapeutic prescriptions. Rather than presenting theoretical medicine, it focuses on ready-to-use remedies—antidotes, ointments, plasters, oils, powders, and other compound medicines—often accompanied by brief instructions for preparation and dosage. In this respect, it functions as a formulary, a genre that was particularly valuable in everyday medical practice.

The text owes much to earlier authorities of late antique Greek medicine. Theophanes' contribution lies not in the originality of his teaching, but in the careful selection, condensation, and organization of material, which made authoritative knowledge more accessible to practitioners. This method of compilation is characteristic of Byzantine medicine, which emphasized the preservation, systematization, and practical usability of classical knowledge.

The work survives in a large and varied manuscript tradition, with more than thirty-five known witnesses. Its frequent anonymity in the manuscripts has complicated attribution, but stylistic and thematic parallels with other works by Theophanes—especially his *Epitome on the Treatment of Diseases* (Ἐπιτομαὶ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἰατρικῶν θεωρημάτων συναγωγῆς) and his treatise *On Foods* (Περὶ διαίτης)—strongly support his authorship.

Despite its wide circulation during the medieval period, the *Synopsis on Remedies* has not yet received a modern critical edition, a task with which we are currently engaged.

The importance of the *Synopsis* lies in its role as a bridge between ancient Greek medicine and later Byzantine pharmacological practice, serving as a representative example of Byzantine medicine while preserving the knowledge of antiquity.

Andrew WADE

Independent Researcher

The Unusual, Lengthy Midnight Office in Melkite Alexandria Witnessed in Sinai Arabic 232 (13th c.)

The manuscript Sinai Arabic 232 is a 13th century paper codex containing several sections including the Psalter, a complete Horologion (Book of Hours) and other lectionary and hymnographic material. I have already published an English translation and commentary of all the offices in the Horologion except for the Midnight Office, which I present here. The rite represented in this manuscript is a Melkite (Chalcedonian) Book of Hours originally from Alexandria in Egypt, showing extensive influence from Jerusalem and Constantinople, but also from Egyptian traditions. Some of the prayers it contains are found in today's Coptic Orthodox Book of Hours, the Agpeya.

There has been practically no study of the Arabic Book of Hours to date, and none of the corresponding Egyptian Melkite tradition. The presentation of this unique Book of Hours, and of the Midnight Office in particular, breaks entirely new ground in this field of liturgical studies.

At the conference, I shall not read the entire office, which will be given in English translation in the paper, but I shall introduce the manuscript and analyse the office, which presents many unusual features, comparing it with today's Midnight Office in the Orthodox Church and identifying many elements. I shall show evidence of the Alexandrine origin of the office, highlighting the parts that are not found in today's office and others that are found today in the offices of Matins or Great Compline.

James ZAINALDIN

Vanderbilt University

Mark SCHIEFSKY

Harvard University

Cameron PATTISON

Vanderbilt University

Jacob WU

Del Norte High School

Can AI Read Galen? Machine Translation, Medical Greek, and the Limits of Large Language Models

Large language models such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini are already being used by scholars to draft translations of ancient texts, yet their reliability for technical medical and philosophical Greek remains largely unevaluated by disciplinary standards. This round table presents findings from a multi-method study assessing LLM translation of Galen of Pergamum (129–216 CE), whose vast, varied, and partially untranslated corpus offers an ideal testing ground. Our team developed an adapted Multidimensional Quality Metrics

(MQM) framework for Ancient Greek, conducted expert annotation of thirty machine-generated translations across ten Galenic passages, administered a blinded preference survey to domain specialists, and benchmarked automated evaluation metrics against human judgment. We find that terminological difficulty—the density of rare medical and philosophical vocabulary in a given passage—is a strong predictor of translation failure, and that widely used automated metrics differ sharply in their ability to detect semantically catastrophic errors masked by superficial fluency. The round table will open with a brief overview of methods and key findings, then turn to structured discussion with the audience on questions of direct relevance to scholars of ancient medicine: Under what conditions can LLM translations serve as useful aids for accessing untranslated Galenic and other medical texts? What kinds of errors are most dangerous for historians of ancient science? And how should the field develop standards for responsible use of AI tools in philological research?

Theodora ZAMPAKI

Hellenic Open University

Healing Properties and Therapeutic Testing in al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb*

This paper looks into the question whether medical substances described in medieval Arabic treatises possessed genuine healing properties through a focused analysis of al-Rāzī's medical encyclopedia, *The Comprehensive Book on Medicine* (*Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb*). The study concentrates on al-Rāzī's therapeutic practice as documented in chapters on dermatology, wound treatment, gastrointestinal disorders, and infectious diseases, asking whether the substances he prescribed produced measurable physiological effects beyond theoretical or humoral expectations.

The study focuses on a selected corpus of remedies involving substances such as copper sulfate, aloe, myrrh, vinegar-based compounds, and opium derivatives. These materials are presented in relation to their stated indications, preparation methods, dosage recommendations, and reported clinical outcomes. Particular attention is paid to al-Rāzī's methodological reflections on therapeutic testing (*tajriba*), including his use of repeated trials, patient comparison, and systematic evaluation of unsuccessful treatments. The paper also analyzes instances in which al-Rāzī challenges Galenic authority when experiential evidence conflicts with inherited doctrine.

The findings indicate that a significant proportion of substances recommended in *Kitāb al-Ḥāwī fī al-ṭibb* possess verifiable bioactive effects. At the same time, the study identifies remedies whose efficacy relied primarily on humoral balancing or symbolic reasoning, highlighting the coexistence of experimental and theoretical epistemologies within al-Rāzī's medical system.

By situating al-Rāzī's materia medica within both its intellectual and clinical contexts, this paper argues that ninth-century Islamic pharmacology incorporated systematic empirical validation alongside classical theory and contributes to current debates on the scientific status of pre-modern medicine.