



International Association
of Byzantine Studies



Colloquia Ceranea VII

Programme and Abstracts

8-10 May 2025

venue: Institute of History,
27A Kaminskiego St.

online: [ceraneum.uni.lodz.pl/
colloquia-ceranea](http://ceraneum.uni.lodz.pl/colloquia-ceranea)

keynote speakers:

Albrecht Berger, Barbara Huber,
Manuela Marai, Joanita Vroom



All times are CEST (UTC+2)

8 May

Room 103

8:15 – conference opening

8:30-9:30 Keynote Lecture: Joanita Vroom The Archaeology of Food and Consumption in Byzantium

9:30-9:45 Coffee break

9:45-11:45 SESSION I

Room 103

Moderator: Joanita Vroom

Evi Margaritis Botanical Offerings: Exploring the Ritual Use of Plants in Ancient Greek Sanctuaries

Paulina Komar, Mateusz Polakowski Feeding the Empire – Shifts in Amphora Trade During Late Antiquity

Jana Kopáčková Late Antique Urban Production of Wine and Olive Oil in the Eastern Adriatic Area

Andreas Heiss Burned to a Crisp: Two Fire Events in Early Byzantine Ephesos and Their Implications for the Reconstruction of Plant-Based Foods

9:45-11:45 SESSION IA

Room 202

Moderator: Mirosław Kruk

Magdalena Garnczarska “But the Most of Them Are White in Colour, Yet the White Is Not Plain, but Is Set Off with Wavy Lines of Blue Which Mingle with the White.” Procopius of Caesarea on Colours

Simeon Dekker Budny’s Ruthenian Catechism and Its Russian Church Slavonic Translation: Linguistic and Cultural-Historical Transfer Between Protestantism and Byzantinism

Evelina Kachynska From Wood to Brick: The Beginning of Masonry Architecture in Rus and Its Byzantine Origins

Onur Sadık Karakuş (online) Revisiting the Socio-Economic Interactions and Mobility Between Anatolia and the Danubian Provinces (2nd-6th centuries AD)

11:45-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-13:30 SESSION II

Room 103

Moderator: John Wilkins (online)

Sally Grainger *Laseric Radicem*: The Uses and Thus Culinary and Economic Value of Silphium Root in Roman Cooking

Patryk Grancow Cuttlefish in Ancient Greek and Roman Cuisine in the Light of Selected Literary Sources

Andrew Dalby Death and the Delphix: The Politics of Dining in the Sixth Century Mediterranean

12:00-13:30 SESSION IIA

Room 202

Moderator: Andrzej Kompa

Teodora Georgieva (online) Joy, Laughter, Humour: Political and Cultural Norms in the Expression of Emotions in Byzantine and Bulgarian Society (Based on Sources from the IX - XI Centuries)

Michał Bzinkowski (online) Gone Like Smoke or Mist - the Beauty and Wonders of Constantinople in Laments and Monodies on Its Fall in 1453

Maksymilian Mikuła Court Customs in the Late Byzantine Romances “Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe”, “Belthandros and Chrysantza” and “Libistros and Rhodamne”

13:30-14:30 Lunch break

14:30-16:00 SESSION III

Room 103

Moderator: Chryssa Bourbou

Aleksander Chrószcz (online) The Anatomical Distribution of Animal Remains from Theodosius Harbour – More Detailed Use of the Slaughter Animals

Alfred Galik 7th Century Food in Ephesos

Dimitra Mylona Fishers’ Knowledge from Antiquity to the Present through Byzantium

16:00-16:15 Coffee break

14:30-16:30 SESSION IIIA

Moderator: Jan Mikołaj Wolski

Room 202

Piotr Czarnecki (online) Non Dualist Paulicians – Another Revolutionary Paradigm?

Mirena Slavova (online) Magic, Demons, and Heretics: Three Puzzling Cases in The Letter of Euthymios of Akmonia

Dimitar Iliev The Twilight of the Gods: Palladas of Alexandria and the Destruction of Pagan Temples in 4th c. AD

Maciej Czyż Byzantium in Iftitāḥ al-Daʿwa (The Chronicle of the Early Fāṭimid Caliphate)

16:30-16:45 Coffee break

16:15-17:45 SESSION IV

Moderator: Andrew Dalby

Room 103

Maria Leontsini *Tharīd, Monokythron, Pastomageireia*: Culinary Adaptations and Appropriations in Twelfth-Century Byzantium

Sophio Guliashvili (online) Replicating the Past: Food, Healing, and Renunciation in 5th-Century Georgian Hagiography – The Martyrdom of Saint Queen Shushanik

Mirosław Kruk Diet of the Painters of King Władysław Jagiełło

17:45-18:00 Coffee break

16:45-18:45 SESSION IVA

Moderator: Maciej Czyż

Room 202

Rafał Kanas The Portrayal of Ladislaus I's Rights to the Crown of Croatia and Dalmatia in *Historia Salonitana*

Yanko Hristov (online) Insights from Three Documents in the *Ponemata Diaphora*: Some Thirteenth-Century Reflections of Byzantine Legal Tradition

Jacek Wiewiorowski Personifications of Balkan Territorial Units of the Early Byzantine Empire in the *Notitia Dignitatum*

Paweł Lachowicz (online) Rhetorical Methods of Proving Legitimacy of a New Dynasty. A Comparison of Basileios I, Alexios I and Michael VIII

18:00-19:30 SESSION V

Moderator: Dimitra Mylona

Room 103

Ryan Denson Subverting Nature: Monstrous Seals and the Environmental Aspects of Thecla's Ordeal in the Byzantine Imagination

Max Ritter The Sea Bows to the Relic's Power: An Ecocritical Approach to Seaborne Relic Importations into Byzantine Constantinople

Ayşenur Mulla-Topcan Locusts in Early Patristics and Byzantine Hagiography

19:30 BANQUET

9 May

Room 103

8:00-9:00 Keynote Lecture: Manuela Marai Pharmaceuticals from the Mineral and Animal Kingdoms: Considerations on Ancient and Modern Uses

9:00-10:00 Keynote Lecture: Albrecht Berger Constantinople – Home of Intellect and Intellectuals

10:00-10:15 Coffee break

10:15-11:45 SESSION VI

Room 103

Moderator: Gerasimos Merianos

Alice Capobianco Tracing the Archaeological Evidence of Raw Material Processing in Roman Medicine

Riccardo Bongiovanni Ingredients and Rituals in Iatromagical Papyri: Between Religious Beliefs and Social Differences

Martina Biamino (online) When the Raw Material is Lacking: Imitation and Counterfeiting

11:45-12:00 Coffee break

10:15-12:30 SESSION VIA

Room 202

Moderator: Dimitar Iliev

Ivayla Popova (online) Private Intellectual Circles (So-Called *Theatres*) in Late Byzantine Constantinople – a Form of Informal Education

Andrzej Kompa Theodosian constitutions (425): a foundation act for a university?

Pierre Mounier-Kuhn (online) The origins of higher education: a collective book project

Erica Hunter (online) Transmitting Greek texts into Syriac: Mm.6.29 and Gg.2.14 in the University Library, Cambridge

Lourdes Bonhome (online) Educational Systems in the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates: A Comparative Study of Structure, Purpose, and Cultural Influences

12:00-13:30 SESSION VII

Room 103

Moderator: Barbara Zipser

Irina Kuzidova-Karadzinova, Ekaterina Dikova (online) The South-Slavonic Translation of Nicholas Kallikles' Dietary Epigrams: Representation in REGEST and Preparation of a Parallel Edition

Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann The Medical Collection of the Codex Sofiensis gr. 148A (dat. 1626?; Diktyon 62252)

Alain Touwaide Diels in the 21st Century

13:30-14:30 Lunch break

14:30-16:30 SESSION VIII

Room 103

Moderator: Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann

Jane Draycott Prosthetics and Assistive Technology in Antiquity

Davide Mussi (online) "Fuel for Kidneys". The Treatment of Kidney Stones in Late Antiquity

Barbara Zipser The Disappearance of Mental Health Conditions in the Tradition from Paul of Aegina to Ioannes Achiatus

Anna Lasek How to Pretend Virginity? Ancient Remedies from the Textbook of Metrodora "On the Diseases and Cures of Women"

16:30-16:45 coffee break

16:45-17:45 SESSION IX

Room 103

Moderator: Alain Touwaide

Anya King (online) Worthy of the Hands of the Caliphs: The Cleansing Compounds of the Islamicate Table

Theodora Zampaki (online) Translating Knowledge: Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and the Integration of Greek Medicine into Islamic Thought

17:45-18:00 Coffee break

18:00-19:00 PERFUME WORKSHOP: SEAN COUGHLIN AND LAURA PRIETO PABON

10 May

Room 103

8:00-9:00 Keynote Lecture: Barbara Huber From Molecules to Memories: Reconstructing Aromatic and Medicinal Practices in Ancient Arabia Through Biomolecular Archaeology

9:00-9:15 Coffee break

9:15-10:45 SESSION X

Room 103

Moderator: Maria Leontsini

Francesco Botti (online) Preventing and Treating with Diet: Foods in the Hippocratic Glossaries of Erotian and Galen

Rafał Matuszewski (online) Soporific Foodstuffs: Ancient Recipes for Restful Sleep

Adam Morin 'After Bread, Maza Is Good Too': Negative Attitudes Towards Barley and Barley Bread in the Byzantine Empire

10:45-11:00 Coffee break

11:00-13:00 SESSION XI

Room 103

Moderator: Manuela Marai

Evy J. Håland (online) Water Sources and the Sacred in Modern and Ancient Greece

Effie Photos-Jones, Tina Kallithraka, George E. Christidis, Charles W. Knapp The Green and the White and the Yeast That 'Binds' Them: Oxos (Poor Wine) as a Reagent in Biotechnological Processes, 4th c. BCE

Maciej Kokoszko, Zofia Rzeźnicka, Małgorzata Drywień, Joanna Myszkowska-Rygiak, Boiling Milk in Ancient and Byzantine Medical Texts Versus Modern Nutritional Science

Chryssa Bourbou Breathing Life into Greek Byzantine Populations: What Would You Ask a Bioarchaeologist?

13:00-14:00 Lunch break

14:00-15:30 SESSION XII

Room 103

Moderator: Sean Coughlin

Gerasimos Merianos Replication and the Study of Greek Alchemy: Insights from Selected Examples

Hjalmar Fors Embodying the Experience of the Past: A Multisensory Approach to Historical Pharmacy

Jakub Węglorz, Danuta Raj, Katarzyna Pękacka, Maciej Włodarczyk Teriak. Retrieving the Ancient, Reconstructing the Early Modern

15:30-15:45 Coffe break

15:45-17:15 SESSION XIII

Room 103

Moderator: Barbara Huber

Sean Coughlin Styrax, Storax, and Stacte

Laura Prieto Pabon The Impossible Challenge of Reconstructing Ancient Perfumes

Katarzyna Gromek (online) Metrodora's Fragrance and Its Descendants

17:15-18:15 CULINARY WORKSHOP: SALLY GRAINGER

ABSTRACTS

Albrecht Berger

Constantinople – Home of Intellect and Intellectuals

After the inauguration of Constantinople in 330 a literary tradition had to be created in order to encourage the new inhabitants to identify with the city. However, as a result of Constantine the Great's ambiguous religious policy reports of the city's pagan beginnings were soon suppressed and did not reappear until the sixth century. Although Themistios had already propagated Constantinople's future role in the intellectual sphere in 357, there was still a long way to go before the city became a centre of education with the founding of the "university" in 425. In fact, Constantinople only attained supremacy in this field in the middle Byzantine period, when the older centres in the Roman East were lost and, some time later, the systematic transcription of ancient texts from papyrus to parchment took place here. Education in Constantinople now experienced a new rise: literary works were produced whose authors attempted to return to the form and language of antiquity, schools were founded and the study of ancient philosophy was resumed. And although the intellectual perception of ancient culture focused much more on literature and philosophy than on the visual arts, there was even a renaissance of antiquity in contemporary Byzantine art.

Martina Biamino

When the Raw Material is Lacking: Imitation and Counterfeiting

In the *Cesti* of Sextus Julius Africanus (Cestus VII, F12; ed. Wallraff et al. 2012), the entire paragraph nineteen is dedicated to a series of products that could be useful to an army on the march, among which a list of oils appears. One of the types mentioned is ἰστροικόν, though there are significant uncertainties regarding its designation, as the manuscripts consistently transmit εἰς τρίτον instead of the adjective (Wallraff et al. 2012, p. 96; Guignard 2009, pp. 225–226). This oil, produced not from olives but from an infusion of almond leaves, recalls the counterfeit production process later found in the *Geoponica* IX 27 in the tenth century. However, there are notable differences, the most immediately apparent being the significantly different number of ingredients. What is particularly interesting is the use of bitter almond leaves in the production of this oil, which appears to be almost unique in ancient medicine. This study, therefore, aims to examine the use of almonds and almond leaves in medical texts, investigating the product to which Sextus Julius Africanus refers, analyzing its origins, and assessing its subsequent transmission and reception in later traditions. It is interesting to observe how the absence of raw materials leads to original solutions and to analyze which aspects of a product are the focus of imitation and counterfeiting over the centuries.

Riccardo Bongiovanni

Ingredients and Rituals in Iatromagical Papyri: Between Religious Beliefs and Social Differences

The *Corpus of Iatromagical Papyri* is a distinct subset of the *Greek Magical Papyri*, in which magical practices focus on healing ailments, blending together elements of both ritual and medical prescription. Iatromagical papyri feature recipes that mirror medical formulations in structure and vocabulary, while often incorporating materials with religious significancesuch as myrrh, incense, or animal sacrifices—alongside pharmacological and botanic remedies.

A closer look at the *Greek Magical Papyri*, particularly healing texts and recipies, reveals a mix of rare and costly ingredients with ordinary substances like oil, wine, milk, and bread—staples of the life in the Egyptian *Chora*, where magicians operated. More exotic materials also appear, such as lizard eyes or hyena skin (perhaps parchment?), sometimes serving as coded names for less controversial elements.

This diversity is reflected in the many variations of spells, differing in ritual complexity and ingredient cost. While previous studies have explored the symbolic and religious significance of these elements, none have systematically analyzed them to uncover insights into the economic and social standing of magicians and their clientele. The presence of multiple spell versions suggests that magicians adapted their receipts to suit clients' financial means. This research examines how local production, imports, and material processing shaped these practices, offering new insights into the economy and society of the Chora. By exploring these aspects, this study will provide a unique perspective on the intersection of magic, economy, and social structure in the Roman Egypt.

Lourdes Bonhome

Educational Systems in the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates: A Comparative Study of Structure, Purpose, and Cultural Influences

This study examines educational institutions in East and West. We will explore the key differences between both educational system during the Umayyad (in the Iberian Peninsula) and Abbasid Caliphates (with Baghdad as capital) , focusing on their structure, purpose, and cultural influences. The Umayyad period was characterized by informal and mosque-based learning, primarily aimed at religious instruction and the preservation of Arabic language and Quranic teaching. In contrast, the Abbasid Caliphate marked a significant transformation in the scope of education. Influenced by Persian, Hellenistic, and Indian traditions, the Abbasids promoted a more formal and diverse educational system, including the establishment of institutions like the *Bayt al-Hikma* and the proliferation of *madrasas*. These developments facilitated the expansion of secular sciences, philosophy, and rational inquiry, positioning the Abbasid Caliphate as a center of intellectual flourishing. At the same time, Umayyads, in their idea of being the principal

cultural center of these times, trining to create a similar educational system in Cordoba adapting them to their historical and cultural context.

Francesco Botti

Preventing and Treating with Diet: Foods in the Hippocratic Glossaries of Erotian and Galen

The Hippocratic Glossary of Erotian, a physician or grammarian who likely lived in the 1st century AD, represents the earliest work of Hippocratic lexicography that has come down to us almost in its entirety. In this collection—whose critical edition of reference remains, as of current scholarship, that of E. Nachmanson (1918)—770 entries are analyzed, drawn from about forty writings that constitute what can be considered the original core of the present *Corpus Hippocraticum*. Following this, about a century later, comes Galen's Glossary, recently edited by L. Perilli (2017). Although structured with different aims and organization, it is clearly based on Erotian and earlier exegetical sources from the Hellenistic period.

In both glossaries, each mention of a Hippocratic lemma is followed by an *interpretatio* of varying length: some glosses include only a simple explanation (*interpretamentum*), while others incorporate interpretations from earlier Hippocratic lexicographers, and still others support their exegesis with citations from classical authors.

The present study aims to analyze specific glosses by Erotian and Galen concerning diet, alimentation and food-related terms used in Hippocratic medicine for the prevention and treatment of diseases. This systematic analysis will be conducted both synchronically—examining the methods employed by Erotian and Galen to explain these terms—and diachronically, investigating the sources they used and the reception of these terms in later lexicographic tradition.

A parallel and equally significant objective is to reaffirm how, even in ancient times, nutrition was considered fundamental to human health and overall psychophysical well-being.

Chryssa Bourbou

Breathing Life into Greek Byzantine Populations: What Would You Ask a Bioarchaeologist?

Bioarchaeology, a worldwide successful sub-discipline of archaeology and/or physical/biological anthropology, crosses the traditional humanities–science divide and understands the human skeleton as the ideal nexus between biology and culture. By deciphering these biological and social experiences of the human skeleton, bioarchaeology has offered for decades a unique line for investigating life in the past.

This presentation is about the new spirit and vitality that bioarchaeology has brought into Byzantine studies, shifting the focus from magnificent artworks and elaborated structures to the skeletal remains of the people who produced them. Drawing from a growing corpus of relevant studies, we will outline how research on the humble bones of Greek Byzantine populations has enriched our knowledge about the demographic makeup (especially of the non-adults), cultural and environmental influences, health and disease status, and dietary patterns. It will also discuss how the investigation of Byzantine populations benefits from cross-disciplinary studies and will address challenges emerging from the bioarchaeologist's obligation to communicate knowledge about Byzantine people beyond academic boundaries in a manner that reaches the wider public.

Michał Bzinkowski

Gone Like Smoke or Mist – the Beauty and Wonders of Constantinople in Laments and Monodies on its Fall in 1453

In my paper, I will focus on images of the past glory of Constantinople in literary texts written after the fall of the City in 1453, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. To show what images of Constantinople were rooted in the collective memory of the Greeks, I will primarily use anonymous vernacular laments, among others: *Ἀνακάλημα τῆς Κωνσταντινπόλης*, *Ἄλωσις Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, *Θρήνος τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*. For exemplification, I will also make use of monodies written in Classical Greek prose in a rhetorical style (e.g., Doukas, Kritovoulos, Andronikos Kallistos). The comparative analysis reveals common patterns of perception of the past glory of Constantinople in the Greek world after the fall of the City. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of vernacular texts, written in demotic Greek, and texts written in classical Greek shows the common ways in which Constantinople was conceptualised in the post-Byzantine period, when the City was already largely perceived in mythical terms.

Alice Capobianco

Tracing the Archaeological Evidence of Raw Material Processing in Roman Medicine

The preparation of medicinal ointments in antiquity involved complex processes of raw material treatment. While ancient authors such as Pliny and Dioscorides provide descriptions of ingredients and preparation methods, these accounts are often incomplete and detailed only for specific substances. At the same time, the material evidence of these activities remains elusive. Many tools involved—such as mortars, sieves, and heating vessels—were multifunctional, making it difficult to attribute them specifically to ointment production. Moreover, organic residues, when preserved, are typically found in consumption contexts rather than in production areas.

This study focuses on the early stages of medicinal ointment production, particularly the processing of aromatic plants, spices, and flowers. By integrating archaeological evidence,

literary and iconographic sources, ethnoarchaeology, and experimental archaeology, it aims to reconstruct the practical steps of preparation and identify possible material indicators. While the ephemeral nature of organic remains and the multifunctionality of tools pose challenges, case studies such as En Boqeq (Israel), where organic residues were found on processing equipment, offer valuable insights into these elusive activities. Moreover, the scarcity of both textual and archaeological sources can be addressed through ethnoarchaeological studies, by observing how similar substances are processed today, and experimental archaeology, by directly testing these treatments.

Through a systematic analysis of textual references and material culture, this research seeks to establish a methodology for recognizing traces of medicinal ointment production in the archaeological record. Furthermore, it explores whether specific treatment techniques corresponded to particular therapeutic properties. By bridging the gap between textual descriptions and archaeological evidence, this study contributes to a broader understanding of the technological and medical knowledge associated with ointment preparation in antiquity.

Aleksander Chrószcz, Vedat Onar, Dominik Poradowski

The Anatomical Distribution of Animal Remains from Theodosius Harbour – More Detailed Use of the Slaughter Animals

The archaeozoological analysis of the bone material from Theodosius Harbour were earlier presented. The part of these investigation was aimed on the anatomical distribution of the finds. The method allowed for the percentage of exact carcass parts estimation on the basis of skeletal remains. The partition to the head skeleton, axial skeleton, more and less attractive parts of the limbs is well known giving the basic knowledge about the post-slaughter animal use. Modern bovine, swine and small ruminants carcass partition to the basic elements of carcass and culinary assortment and their percentage in the carcass as a whole was estimated empirically. We tried to look closer to more attractive parts of the limbs and the exact parts of the axial skeleton, which survived as a remains of the most desirable meat source for the ancient community. Finally, we compared the achieved results to Wrocław, where the animal skeletal remains from 11th–19th century were studied, to find the differences and similarities in butcher activities in Constantinople and developing capital city of Silesia.

Sean Coughlin

Styrax, Storax, and Stacte

This paper examines the terminological confusion surrounding the words *stacte*, *styrax*, and *storax*. While the first two terms appear in ancient Greek and Latin sources—*styrax* referring to a solid resin, *stacte* a liquid oil pressed from fresh myrrh—the term “*storax*” emerged by the Middle Ages and its exact origin remains obscure. One of the few

researchers to investigate this confusion in depth was Daniel Hanbury, an English pharmacist who wrote extensively on the topic in the mid-nineteenth century. Hanbury observed that apothecaries often labeled a solid substance as “storax” and a liquid as “styrax,” though the terminology was not always consistent; he further proposed (probably correctly) that the two substances derived from different plants. However, he did not address how the liquid of a different tree—sometimes called “liquid storax” but usually just “styrax”—acquired the ancient name in the first place. It has since been investigated by Andrew Dalby and Suzanne Amigues (among others), but this puzzle remains to be solved. In this paper, I show that ancient texts mention a liquid form of styrax earlier than previously reported. I also reintroduce stacte—the oil of myrrh—into the discussion, since early modern translations of Dioscorides link stacte with liquid styrax and consider it a fraction of myrrh. By examining early modern identifications of stacte and styrax, and by investigating the properties of Commiphora myrrha resin through autopsy and comparing them to descriptions of how styrax was manipulated as an ingredient, I trace how styrax may have come to designate a liquid resin. These findings clarify the tangled history of the term and highlight how careful replication of historical materials and methods can shed new light on the transmission and transformation of ancient pharmacological terminology.

Piotr Czarnecki

Non Dualist Paulicians – Another Revolutionary Paradigm?

After a long period of silence we are facing the emergence of a completely new interpretation concerning one of the least popular (at least among the western scholars) medieval heretics—the Paulicians. This revolutionary interpretation was proposed by Carl Dixon in his book *The Paulicians: Heresy, Persecution and Warfare on the Byzantine Frontier, c.750–880*, published in 2022 and in the series of earlier articles, and works including his PhD thesis. As it was in the case of *The Paulician Heresy* published by Nina Garsoian in 1967, Dixon’s interpretation brings completely new and controversial image of Paulicians, according to which they were not dualists. Such an interpretation may have serious consequences not only for our understanding of Paulicianism, but also the whole medieval dualist tradition, comprising also the Bogomils and the Cathars. Combined with relatively low interest in Paulicianism among the Western scholars the revolutionary interpretation proposed by Dixon may contribute to the radical shift in academic perception of Paulicianism and medieval dualism in general. It reminds the current situation in the Cathar studies, where we are dealing with a serious debate concerning the character and even the existence of this heresy, where on one side we have the adherents of traditional (dualist) interpretation and on the other the promoters of the so-called „new paradigm” in which the Cathars did not exist.

The main aim of the article will be the analysis of the new radical interpretation proposed by Dixon, concerning the sources on which our knowledge about Paulicianism is built and the doctrinal character of this heresy. This interpretation will be analyzed in a broader context, not limited only to Byzantium, but encompassing also Bogomilism and Catharism.

The article will also try to answer the questions left open by Dixon; precisely—is it possible, that the Byzantine clergymen constructed Paulician dualism based on their knowledge about Manichaeism and if so, what are the consequences of such a conclusion, especially in the light of very similar interpretations concerning Catharism, that are proposed by some scholars. Finally Dixon's tactics and arguments will be compared with the interpretations put forward by the adherents of the deconstructionist interpretation of Catharism.

Maciej Czyż

Byzantium in *Iftitāḥ al-Da'wa* (The Chronicle of the Early Fāṭimid Caliphate)

Iftitāḥ al-Da'wa, written by the father of the Fāṭimid (Ismā'īlī) jurisprudence, judge Al-Nu'mān, is a 10th-century chronicle, depicting the rise of the Fāṭimid state in North Africa. It contains several mentions about the relations of Fāṭimids, and the dynasty that preceded them, the Aḡlabids, with Byzantium. The aim of the paper is to present them and their political and religious context, as well as to provide an English translation of the parts of the chronicle that are relevant to the topic.

Andrew Dalby

Death and the Delphix: The Politics of Dining in the Sixth Century Mediterranean

Contemporary Greek and Latin sources offer remarkable insight into the conduct of politics in the Byzantine Empire, Italy and North Africa, in Justinian's time. Texts of great variety offer compelling narratives, including first hand experiences in war, diplomacy and even, occasionally, peace. Much can be learned of the use and meaning of food in the rapidly changing Mediterranean world of the mid sixth century.

Simeon Dekker

Budny's Ruthenian Catechism and Its Russian Church Slavonic Translation: Linguistic and Cultural-Historical Transfer Between Protestantism and Byzantinism

This contribution investigates theological terminology between East and West from a linguistic perspective. Szymon Budny's Ruthenian Catechism of 1562 will be compared to a 17th century translation into Church Slavonic (of the Russian recension), which is preserved in one manuscript witness from the Russian State Library. The question will be asked how Protestant, or, more broadly, Western theological concepts are rendered in the translation by (probably) an Orthodox monk in Russia. Through this translation, the Protestant theology which flourished in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, represented by Budny, meets, and to some extent clashes with, the essentially Byzantine theology of the Russian Orthodox Church. In the margin of the translation, critical notes and reprimands were added from an Orthodox perspective.

The question will be looked at through a linguistic and philological lens. Special attention will be devoted to lexical word pairs. These have been identified in Budny's Ruthenian original, but their

reception in the Church Slavonic translation has never been investigated so far. Most of these word pairs contain a Ruthenian and a Church Slavonic synonym. They tend to serve a symbolical and identity-affirming purpose and mostly concern theological terms. In rare exceptions, they concern everyday concepts and serve real interpretative purposes. Although Budny wrote in Ruthenian, his language is heavily Church-Slavonicized so as to make his Catechism more palatable to the intended Orthodox audience. Yet, it will also be demonstrated that certain crucial theological terms were mistranslated. This concerns, for instance, concepts like досить учинение (satisfaction) and презрение (election). A further investigation of this text type will provide insights into cultural transfer phenomena in the transitional area between East and West that existed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Ryan Denson

Subverting Nature: Monstrous Seals and the Environmental Aspects of Thecla's Ordeal in the Byzantine Imagination

Among the myriad of hagiographic narratives concerning miraculous survivals of persecuted Christian saints, the ordeal of Thecla stands out for its peculiar characterization of seals as savage animals that are struck down by lightning in order to save her life. Although first extant in the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, the story of Thecla's survival in the arena flourished throughout the Byzantine world. Such an episode though has often puzzled modern readers with its negative characterization of seals, which are, in reality, docile and friendly animals, posing little actual danger to humans.

In this talk, I elucidate the significance of this seemingly aberrant conceptualization of seals by highlighting specific trends in the Greco-Roman conceptualization of seals as monstrous and apotropaic animals, features that carry over into the Byzantine period. As I argue, Thecla's encounter was not merely a generic tale of God's intervention to save one of her followers, as we see in other hagiographic texts and with other threats that Thecla herself faces in the arena. Rather, this encounter with seals can be read as responding to specific 'pagan' ideas about nature concerning the apotropaic capacities of seals to ward off lightning. Such a motif did not extinguish belief in these ideas, which were ingrained in the ancient and Byzantine concepts of amuletic magic and the use of natural animal parts for supernatural ends. Instead, Thecla's ordeal became part of a tension between these classical ideas about the natural world and the Christian God's ability to subvert such, which can be demonstrated as an underlying influence in the miraculous nature of the episode in its Byzantine reception.

Jane Draycott

The Commission, Design and Manufacture of Prosthetics and Assistive Technology in Antiquity

In this paper, I shall use ancient literary, documentary, archaeological, and bioarchaeological evidence, and explore the ways in which the ancient Greek and/or Roman body was reconstructed and repaired using prosthetics and assistive technology. The evidence attests that a variety of different types were utilised by Greeks and Romans to replace their missing body parts, but the ways that these were described, discussed, and conceptualised could be very different, with some being viewed with considerably more favour than others. I shall examine the discourses surrounding prostheses and assistive technology in classical antiquity in an attempt to determine the place that each type had in ancient culture and society, and the ways in which the type that an individual utilised could affect their life and lived experience, for better or for worse. I shall explore the extent to which an individual's age, gender, status, or other significant factors about them had an impact upon not only the type of appliance they elected to utilise, but also the ways that they and their appliances were viewed by their contemporaries. My research has revealed that there was a stark gender divide when it came to utilising them, with men generally described as using extremity prostheses after injury in warfare or industrial accidents and women generally described as using facial prostheses after illness or aging and due to vanity. I shall investigate this divide further and seek to explain it, and I shall propose that while prostheses were not necessarily commonplace in classical antiquity, there was something of a recognised classification of them.

Hjalmar Fors

Embodying the Experience of the Past: A Multisensory Approach to Historical Pharmacy

Historical medicaments had fragrance and taste. They contained exotic spice and medicinal plants such as cubeb pepper, dragon's blood and Chinese rhubarb root. They had imaginative names such as the 'Testament of Hiärne' and the 'drops of the Prince'. They were, in fact, a lost facet of a medical world view which is no more: today's ideal proscribes that medicines preferably should be neutral in colour, tasteless and devoid of any noticeable smell. In the present paper I discuss the importance and significance of sensory experience in European medicinal composition and medical practice prior to the nineteenth century. I discuss how reworking/reproduction of historical medical compositions, combined with sensory assessment of the products, can allow us to approach and understand aspects of the medicine of the past which are difficult or impossible to transmit textually, and thus largely invisibilized in textual sources. In particular, information accessed through experimental means greatly facilitates historical understanding of how the art of medicine making was integrated with and connected to a medical theory and practice which relied almost exclusively on diagnosis through direct sensory assessments of patients and their bodily fluids. Thus my argument, that the

fragrance and taste of medicaments constitute an important and understudied field in the history of medicine and that they can be accessed through experimental means.

Alfred Galik

7th Century Food in Ephesos

Ephesos is one of the most famous sites in Turkey and it has been investigated by the Austrian Archaeological Institute within the last 130 years. The settling place developed from the Neolithic onwards, over the Bronze Age to a Hellenistic city and finally to a Roman provincial capital. In late antiquity Ephesus became a centre for Christian pilgrimage before the town was slowly abandoned. However, ongoing archaeological research of a business quarter in Ephesus, which burned down in the early 7th century AD, provide an insight into dietary habits in Byzantine times. Rich inventories from a kitchen with an adjoining storage room is of particular bioarchaeological interest. Archaeological finds such as cooking tools or storage vessels have been preserved with its contents. It allows the reconstruction of food as well as the reconstruction of food preparation in the early 7th century. Numerous archaeozoological finds of fish, seafood and domesticates reveal the contemporary menu. The preliminary results contribute to a better understanding of everyday life and food habits in the Byzantine Ephesos.

Magdalena Garnczarska

“But the Most of Them Are White in Colour, Yet the White Is Not Plain, but Is Set Off with Wavy Lines of Blue Which Mingle with the White.” Procopius of Caesarea on Colours

The statement that ancient and Byzantine Greek speakers had different names for colours is quite general. It may even appear that this issue is insignificant, especially since modern translations of Greek texts often simplify these distinctions by using familiar terms like red, green, blue, and yellow. Perhaps this is the right strategy for translations. It is open to debate. However, the reality of Greek colour nomenclature is much more complex. Therefore, in this paper, I intend to explore this question by examining “On the Buildings” by Procopius of Caesarea. This work by the author of the Justinian era contains quite a few references to colours. Colours are sometimes named directly, such as *άλουργός*, *χλοάζον*, *φοινίκεος*, *λευκός* and *κυαναιγής*. However, Procopius is much more likely to remark on colours indirectly through references to the natural world, simply stating that something is golden, silver or bronze. Sometimes, he also likes to compare the colour of something to snow, fire, or purple, for example. Most often, however, he refers to stones in his descriptions—especially marbles, but also precious stones such as emeralds and sapphires. These comments about stones are very significant. On the one hand, they clearly demonstrate a good knowledge of marble among Byzantine literati. In fact, other texts also prove this. In the context of the discussion on the naming of colours, the references to stones clearly show what was crucial for the Byzantines regarding colours. So, it is not so

much the hue itself—which is key for us today—but the degree of brightness and brilliance above all. In this concept, colours are challenging to grasp, variable and mobile. For this reason, they are beautiful and eye-catching. Therefore, I find it worth looking at this issue through the lens of Procopius' text.

Teodora Georgieva

Joy, Laughter, Humour: Political and Cultural Norms in the Expression of Emotions in Byzantine and Bulgarian Society (Based on Sources from the IX–XI Centuries)

The study aims to present the attitudes, concepts of medieval society to the expression of emotions, in particular—towards joy and laughter. The notions of emotions in Byzantine society (and Bulgarian society after Christianization) were mainly conditioned by Christian doctrine. Emotions were often categorized in theological terms. The expression of emotions involves political and social norms and is characterized by determinism. The demands on the ruler are particularly strict. Therefore, the point of departure in this study will be the Letter of Photios Patriarch of Constantinople to Michael Archon of Bulgaria (written around 864–866 AD). The text contains religious and political precepts, practical politico-didactic instruction on the ruler's behavior and emotional expression. Norms for the expression of joy, laughter and a propensity for joke and levity are found in the text. With the conversion to Christianity and the gradual integration into the Byzantine world, the Bulgarian rulers adopted the Byzantine doctrine of the art of ruling. And emotions (or more precisely, controlling them) were also part of the ruler's legitimation (repentance, humility, moderation in laughter).

After the middle of the IXth century, changes also occurred in the everyday life, the worldview of the common people. Therefore, the problem of the emotional perception of different social groups in the society (what emotions a good layman should exhibit) will be touched upon in this topic. Included here will be information from Byzantine chronicles, hagiography, instructions for religious feasts, and fresco images.

The focus of the study will be the politico-didactic instructions for the ruler's behavior and emotional expression (evidence for this is also found in the correspondence between the Bulgarian ruler Simeon and the Byzantine patriarch Nicholas the Mystic, as well as in the Chronography of Michael Psel, etc.). But the problem of joy, laughter and humour in other social groups of medieval society will also be touched upon.

Sally Grainger

***Laseris Radicem*: The Uses and Thus Culinary and Economic Value of Silphium Root in Roman Cooking**

In this paper I will continue to report on my ongoing research into the plant materials derived from various species of *ferula* that were collectively known as *silphion* and *laser*.

The original plant from Cyreniaca was designated *silphion* in Greek and the resin was *opos silphion*. From Latin didactic sources we learn that the original resin, and the substitute, understood to be asafoetida, were called *laser* and this resin was derived from both the root and the stalk. The root, *rhiza* in Greek was a separate commodity to the resin and was later known as *laseris radicem* in the Roman period where it was far more common in Roman culinary recipes. I am interested in the various ways in which these commodities were used through analysis of recipes and remedies. The research seeks to understand the culinary and economic value of these commodities to the Romans. Silphium *qua* silphium, the resin derived from the species of *ferula* from Cyrenaica was rare and desirable and always relatively expensive and consequently it was likely the original resin was not very widely consumed. It may even have been more important in medicine than food. We must assume that access to Cyrenaic *laser* was economically restricted to those with disposable income or a desire for commodities beyond their income. As has been reported in a previous paper, long before the Cyrenaic form of the plant had become extinct, the alternative silphium resin—asafoetida—was traded side by side with the original. It is conjectured that asafoetida resin and root were traded extensively, readily available and consequently far less expensive than the original plant material. *Laseris radicem* was used in Apicius in foods that we might deem lower status: pulses and vegetables and it is conjectured that the root imparted a less intense sulphur flavour more reminiscent of onion and garlic which was more desirable in foods consumed in the wider community. The author has obtained asafoetida root and will report on experiments conducted to test these theories.

Patryk Grancow

Cuttlefish in Ancient Greek and Roman Cuisine in the Light of Selected Literary Sources

Seafood was an integral component of the ancient Mediterranean diet, with cephalopods playing a significant role in its gastronomy. This paper aims to analyze the importance of cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis* and *Sepiola rondeleti*) in ancient Greek and Roman cuisine. It will discuss the preparation techniques of cuttlefish and the ingredients used for its cooking. Additionally, the role of cuttlefish in the consumption patterns of Greeks and Romans will be analyzed. The opinions of ancient authors on the taste and dietary values of cuttlefish meat will also be characterized. This analysis will be based primarily on works like “Δειπνοσοφισταί” by Athenaeus of Naukratis and “De re coquinaria.”

Ancient authors generally esteemed cuttlefish, particularly smaller specimens, as sources indicate. However, physicians like Galen and Oribasius presented a contrasting view, considering this cephalopod's meat difficult to digest and potentially detrimental to health. Nonetheless, cuttlefish were widely appreciated in ancient cuisine.

In antiquity, all edible parts of the cuttlefish were consumed: the mantle, arms, and head fragments. Analysis of the sources revealed a wide variety of dishes prepared with cuttlefish. The meat was boiled, stewed, fried, or baked. Cuttlefish was also stuffed and

used to prepare *isicia*. These prepared dishes were often served with various sauces, for which plant and animal ingredients were used (e.g., *liquamen*, wine, pepper, lovage). Although detailed data on the market value of cuttlefish have not been preserved, analysis of literary sources suggests that larger specimens of *Sepia officinalis* were more expensive and consumed mainly by wealthier citizens. Smaller specimens, both *Sepiola rondeleti* and young *Sepia officinalis*, were probably cheaper and more accessible to poorer social strata.

Isabel Grimm-Stadelmann

The Medical Collection of the Codex Sofiensis gr. 148A (dat. 1626[?]; Diktyon 62252)

The manuscript 148A hosted by the National Library of Sofia, Bulgaria, is a significant example of post-Byzantine medical culture containing numerous references to Arabic, Ottoman and Italian sources but being firmly based in the traditional ancient (Corpus Hippocraticum and works of Galen) and Byzantine (Paulos Aiginetes, *Epitome Iatrike*) medical literature. A special feature is one 'alchemical herbal' included in the medical collection, which is quite a remarkable genre of botanical literature that is less genuinely Greek but has its place much more in the North Italian, but also Hebrew tradition. The entire collection was copied by one anonymous scribe and is based on a template attributed to the medical-therapeutical compilation of a late Byzantine physician named Pyropoulos. According to some annotations in the margin, it was 'translated' during the copying process into simple Greek (*Aploellenike*) being intended for everyday's practical use. In the context of the late Byzantine hospital of the Kral (*Kral-Xenon*) in Constantinople and among the students of John Argyropoulos (c. 1415-1487) the brothers Antonios and Manuel Pyropoulos are mentioned, both physicians, which traces the template of the Codex Sofiensis to the Constantinopolitan Kral Xenon and its therapeutic environment. Another trace leads to Mount Athos, where, according to a legend, the manuscript was kept for some time and used for miraculous therapies. This paper discusses the placement of the manuscript within the late and post-Byzantine medical culture, which was characterised by a wide range of transcultural cooperations.

Katarzyna Gromek

Metrodora's Fragrance and Its Descendants

The aim of my work is to present the process of reconstruction of early Byzantine fragrances and obtain insights into their evolution by comparing with recipes from earlier and later medical texts from the Mediterranean region.

Early medical texts are the best sources we have for fragrance recipes. The text on the women's disease attributed to Metrodora, described as early Byzantine physician, contains three recipes for fragrant products. We have two incense blends and a perfume for the body which is an early form of deodorant. Since dating of the actual text varies between

scholar, I made my reconstructions considering availability of ingredients as early as in the sixth century or as late as tenth century.

The deodorant recipe may be a derivative of the Pedanius Dioscorides' recipe for rhodides or fragrant pastilles but with a twist on their use. We can find similar prescription in later (thirteenth century) medical text of John the Physician.

Two compound incense blends are quite complex when compared to other fumigations used to treat women's diseases. We do not know if these incense blends were made as medicinal concoctions or as more practical products for fumigation of the interiors. The binders used in their processing included wine and balsam. Since the original balsam (most likely the processed resin of *Commiphora giladensis*) is no longer available commercially, I used wine in reconstruction of both blends. I compared the olfactory impression with fumigations from work of Aëtius of Amida and Paulus Aegineta, and even concurrent incense from territory of modern India. Aromatics from this region were traded in the west and it is possible that ready incense blends were available in limited quantities and influenced the local incense compounding.

Sophio Guliashvili

Replicating the Past: Food, Healing, and Renunciation in 5th-Century Georgian Hagiography – *The Martyrdom of Saint Queen Shushanik*

The Martyrdom of Saint Queen Shushanik (5th century), the earliest known original work of Georgian hagiographic literature, provides valuable insights into the role of food, fasting, and ascetic practices in early medieval Georgia. The text vividly portrays the imprisoned queen's extreme renunciation—initially refusing to eat altogether at the beginning of imprisonment and later abstaining even from bread during the fasting period.

A particularly striking episode occurs at the beginning of the narrative when a dinner is held at the palace, attended by Shushanik, her husband Varsken (the initiator of the gathering), his brother Jojik, and Jojik's wife. During the dinner, Jojik's wife offers Shushanik a glass of wine, insisting that she drink. In response, Shushanik indignantly exclaims, "Whenever has it been heard that men and women dine together?" She then stretched out her hand, threw the glass in the guest's face, and the wine spilled. This episode has drawn scholarly attention from various perspectives, yet in the context of this study, particular significance is given to the queen's words. Was the prohibition of men and women dining together a uniquely Georgian tradition, or did similar restrictions exist within the broader Christian world? This study seeks to explore such questions by examining fasting, renunciation, and the symbolic role of food—particularly bread and wine—in shaping religious and social practices. By analyzing the theological, literary, and linguistic aspects of the text, the research situates *The Martyrdom of Saint Queen Shushanik* within the broader Christian martyrdom tradition.

Moreover, this paper explores how references to food and food-related restrictions in the text contribute to the reconstruction of historical feeding practices, investigates how literary sources can serve as a foundation for re-enactment and replication of historical alimentary traditions, and provides a framework for reconstructing both everyday and ritualistic aspects of food consumption in early Christian societies.

Evy J. Håland

Water Sources and the Sacred in Modern and Ancient Greece

Focusing on springs within caves, this paper considers contemporary Greek water rituals and their relation to ancient pre-Christian traditions and sites. Formerly springs represented water nymphs, and today springs are dedicated to the *Panagia* (“the All-Holy One” from *Pan*: all and *Agia*: holy) who is the Virgin Mary in her identity as *Zōodochos Pēgē* (that is, the Life-giving Spring). The water is thought to be particularly healing and purifying during festivals dedicated to the *Panagia*, such as the contemporary celebration of the “Life-giving Spring” on the first Friday after Easter Sunday. During this celebration Athenians come to the *Panagia*’s chapel inside an ancient circular spring house that was hewn in the rock on the southern slope of the Akropolis to fetch “life-giving water.” The sacred spring is situated inside a cave over which a church was constructed. Comparing the modern practices with ancient evidence, this paper argues for a continual association of water sources with the sacred in Greece.

Andreas G. Heiss

Burned to a Crisp: Two Fire Events in Early Byzantine Ephesos and Their Implications for the Reconstruction of Plant-Based Foods

Between 2011 and 2018, an *insula* measuring around 2,000 m² was excavated in the centre of late antique Ephesos. It comprises a representative residential building, several rooms used for trade, workshops, and probably large-scale food processing operations (such as for grapes, cereals, and olives). In the middle of the 7th century AD, the building complex was destroyed by fire. Although the area continued to be used until the 12th century, a large part of the fire debris remained on site as a “snapshot” of the fire event and today serves as a valuable knowledge resource for research into the way of life in Ephesos. The archaeobotanical analyses that began in 2014 are based on the high-resolution sampling of the area and have not yet been fully completed. Between 2018 and 2024, excavations of another, slightly older building ensemble were added: parts of a commercial district were archaeologically excavated on Domitian's Square. However, no subsequent use was found here after it was destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 7th century. The extraordinarily rich inventory of finds makes this excavation site a sensational find: hundreds of pilgrimage flasks, lamps, cooking and eating utensils were found on the 170 m² excavated. Archaeobotanical work has so far concentrated primarily on the food supplies and their *sur*

place processing. The lecture will present highlights of the current state of research and their implications for the knowledge of local agriculture and cuisine.

Yanko Hristov

Insights from Three Documents in the *Ponemata Diaphora*: Some Thirteenth-Century Reflections of Byzantine Legal Tradition

Studying the actual impact of laws in force on everyday life in medieval societies reveals numerous and varied challenges. The difficulties in such research, as noted repeatedly, are mainly due to the limitations of the available primary sources. However, it is essential to emphasize that some of these restrictions are not always applicable when examining certain aspects of family ties, inheritance shares, sales, purchases, and personal relationships among different segments of the society. At least, this is the case concerning the diocese of the Archbishopric of Ohrid in the first half of the thirteenth century. The reason lies in the well-preserved collection of documents known as *Ponemata diaphora*, which is related to Archbishop Demetrios Chomatenos (1216 – after 1236). Even a cursory glance at the texts reveals that, in the field of family law issues, the archbishop skillfully took advantage of the rich and well-established Byzantine legislative tradition at that time.

Erica Hunter

Transmitting Greek texts into Syriac: Mm.6.29 and Gg.2.14 in the University Library, Cambridge

In 1632 the University Library, Cambridge acquired the collection of oriental manuscripts of the late Thomas van Erpe of Leiden who had died in 1624. Included amongst the collection were eight Syriac manuscripts most of which were biblical. However, two manuscripts (Mm.6.29 and Gg.2.14) that deal with philosophical and alchemical topics were translations from Greek into Syriac. Both manuscripts lack colophons but on palaeographical criteria appear to date from the fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries. The paper proposes that the translation of the original (but now lost) Greek texts of Mm.6.29 and Gg.2.14 into Syriac probably took place during the fifth and sixth centuries in one of the monasteries located on the 'latitude of translation' that stretched from Antioch to northern Mesopotamia. These were key centres for the transmission of the legacy of the Classical world, which then passed into the repertoire of the Arab world.

Dimitar Iliev

The Twilight of the Gods: Palladas of Alexandria and the Destruction of Pagan Temples in 4th c. AD

The epigrammatist Palladas of Alexandria lived at the end of the 4. c. AD and probably witnessed the series of clashes between pagans and Christians in the city that culminated with the siege of the Serapaeum in 391. Among his many works, there is a series dedicated to the overturning of pagan statues and the desecration of pagan temples and sanctuaries in Alexandria. The present paper examines these epigrams that express the curious mix of emotions that the rapid shift of cultural and religious climate of the times provoked in the traditionally inclined grammarian (probably already in an advanced age by the time of these events).

Evelina Kachynska

From Wood to Brick: The Beginning of Masonry Architecture in Rus and Its Byzantine Origins

The transition from wooden to masonry architecture in Rus marks a significant moment in the region's architectural history, shaped by both local and foreign influences. This paper explores the early stages of masonry architecture in Rus, with a focus on its origins and the crucial role of Byzantine architectural traditions in shaping this development. The Christianization of Rus in the late 10th century introduced new building types, particularly Christian religious structures, which were constructed using brick—a novel material for the region. This shift to masonry building techniques is understood as part of a broader process of cultural and architectural transformation influenced by Byzantine practices. The paper examines key architectural examples, such as the Church of the Tithes in Kyiv, Transfiguration Cathedral in Chernihiv, and some others dating from the late 10th—the beginning of the 11th century, and analyzes how these structures were formed by Byzantine models, both in their formal characteristics and symbolic meanings. In addition, the study considers the cultural exchanges that occurred through Kyiv's strategic position as a crossroads of Eastern European and Byzantine influences. By exploring the roots of masonry architecture in Rus, this research seeks to shed light on the complex interaction of local traditions and external influences that shaped the early architectural landscape of the region.

Rafał Kanas

The Portrayal of Ladislaus I's Rights to the Crown of Croatia and Dalmatia in Historia Salonitana

In my presentation, I will analyze Historia Salonitana by Thomas the Archdeacon, which covers Dalmatian history from antiquity to 1266. My main objective is to demonstrate that

the chronicler portrayed Ladislaus I's claims to the Croatian crown as at least legitimate. My approach will be discursive, combining analysis and argumentation.

Several arguments support this thesis: Thomas depicted the kingdom's instability, presenting Ladislaus as a stabilizing force; he was invited to the throne by magnates concerned for the realm's welfare (without mentioning Zvonimir's wife, Helena); no other claimants were explicitly recorded, reinforcing by this Ladislaus's position; and Hungarian king was described as a righteous, legitimizing his as ruler.

However, counterarguments must be considered: Thomas's narrative was driven more by antipathy toward the Slavs than sympathy for the Árpáds (with whom he had conflicts), which explains his indirect references to Zvonimir's successors; divisions among Croats suggest resistance to Ladislaus's claims; and the late-12th-century canonization of the Hungarian king may have influenced Thomas's tone.

Despite these objections, Thomas's narrative ultimately supports Ladislaus's right to the throne. His bias against the Slavs explains his motivations but does not weaken the impact of his account. The absence of Zvonimir's successors remains a key point, possibly even against the chronicler's intent. Likewise, Ladislaus's canonization does not undermine Thomas's portrayal but rather reinforces it. The argument concerning Croat divisions is valid, as it can be interpreted in two ways. However, the depiction of political chaos only marginally strengthens the case for the Árpáds.

Onur Sadık Karakuş

Revisiting the Socio-Economic Interactions and Mobility Between Anatolia and the Danubian Provinces (2nd–6th Centuries AD)

According to the letters of Pliny, during the reign of Trajan a collaboration between the governors of Bithynia et Pontus and Moesia Inferior was encouraged in various aspects. This relationship did not only exist among the administrators, but with the conquest of Dacia, Moesia Inferior underwent a new urbanisation process, and a population movement began, especially from the cities of Bithynia and Pontus, followed by Galatia, Phrygia and various other regions of Anatolia, in order to integrate the region into the Roman Empire. In the words of Eutropius, with the conquest of Dacia, Roman populations were brought to the region for both urban and agricultural needs. At this point, the Oration 16 of Themistius, an important figure of the 4th century, provides valuable information. He sarcastically suggested whether the settlement of the region with Bithynians and Phrygians was an option for the Balkan lands, which were busy with the Goth problem at that time. This population mobility, which can be traced through epigraphic documents, reached its peak in the second half of the 2nd century AD and continued intermittently until the 6th century. The western Black Sea coast constituted the first stage in terms of settlement, followed by the inland and northern settlements of Moesia Inferior and Thrace, which became attractive places for settlement and trade in the second stage. In the final stage, with the conquest of Dacia, Anatolian peoples began to arrive in Dacian cities, working and trading

in the region. In Late Antiquity, mobility continued largely in the coastal regions, especially in Odessus. This study examines inter-regional interaction through the economic and social mobility between the regions in the historical process.

Anya King

Worthy of the Hands of the Caliphs: The Cleansing Compounds of the Islamicate Table

Dining etiquette in the early medieval Middle East included the use of pastes for cleansing the hands. Originally based on the ashes of saltwort plants, these compounds saponified grease and imparted a pleasant scent. A cleansing compound of this sort was called an *ushnān* after the Arabic name of the saltwort, while the ashes of the saltwort themselves were *qily*, origin of the terms “alkali” and “alkaline”. These compounds were powerful and thus harsh on the skin. In collections of perfume formulas, several varieties of *ushnān* are described. In the formularies, while many *ushnān* compounds contained actual saltwort, there is a tendency to dispense with it. Other ingredients that would have had limited cleansing capacity, such as beans, mahlab, and rice, were used for bases. All varieties of *ushnān* compounds in the perfume formulas naturally included a range of aromatic ingredients, and often colorants. This indicates that aesthetic experience, rather than successful grease-fighting cleansing, was often desired. Since *ushnān* was used during communal dining, its qualities were one way that the host showed his refinement.

Maciej Kokoszko, Zofia Rzeźnicka, Małgorzata Drywień, Joanna Myszkowska-Ryciak

Boiling Milk in Ancient and Byzantine Medical Texts Versus Modern Nutritional Science

The presentation will focus on ancient and Byzantine technologies of milk boiling for therapeutic purposes.

The primary sources for this study will be medical treatises from the respective periods, mainly Dioscorides' *De materia medica*, Galen's *De alimentorum facultatibus* and *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus*, Oribasius' *Collectiones medicae*, Aetius of Amida's *Libri medicinales*, Anthimus' *De observatione ciborum*, etc.

The information contained within these texts will subsequently be compared with findings of modern nutritional science, allowing us to assess whether, and to what extent, the views held by ancient *ars medica* align with the current scientific understanding of the issue.

The choice of topic is motivated by two main premises. First, milk of good quality, termed in ancient and Byzantine medicine as characteristic of a harmonious humoral balance, was regarded as one of the most beneficial foods. It still holds strong as a foodstuff in modern diet. Second, thermal processing of milk represented the only available method for prolonging its salutary action in Antiquity and early Middle Ages. The technology, though modified, is still used as an important means of prolonging milk's shelf life and produce milk-based foodstuffs.

Paulina Komar, Mateusz Polakowski

Feeding the Empire – Shifts in Amphora Trade During Late Antiquity

Thanks to ancient literature and years of scholarship, we know that the late antique period was marked by significant transformations in political power, religious, and administrative structures across the Roman Empire and the Mediterranean world. These changes must have had an impact on trade networks and local economies both within and beyond the Empire. Amphorae, as key vessels for transporting foodstuffs such as wine, olive oil, and grain, played a central role in the exchange of ancient goods, and as such, they are likely to reflect the changing dynamics of the empire's food economy.

This presentation explores the patterns of amphora distribution in Italy and other Mediterranean regions (Gallia Narbonensis, Ephesus, and Cyprus) during Late Antiquity, focusing on the ways in which production, distribution, and consumption evolved in response to political, social, and economic transformations.

In addition to an analysis of amphora statistics, this study employs regression analyses to identify trends and factors driving shifts in the trade of these essential goods. By examining data from key archaeological sites across the Mediterranean, the presentation will highlight regional variations and changes in trade volumes, assessing the impact of political instability, urban decline, the rise of new trade centers, and the development of new religious practices on food trading patterns.

The findings will demonstrate how the amphora trade provides crucial insights into the broader economic shifts of Late Antiquity, offering a new perspective on how food systems adapted to the challenges of a transforming empire. This study contributes to our understanding of material culture as a lens for examining economic transitions and emphasizes the importance of statistical and quantitative methods in reconstructing the ancient economy.

Andrzej Kompa

Theodosian constitutions (425): a foundation act for a university?

For more than 150 years, doubt has reigned concerning the academic status (and place in the history of European universities) of the Constantinopolitan school created – or transformed – by Emperor Theodosius II through two constitutions from February and March 425. In many overviews of the history of higher education, they are still omitted or just mentioned in passing. Such hesitations were also shared by some Byzantinists. Today, 16 centuries after the promulgation of the constitutions and with the results of several dozen decades of research being available, certain new assessments seem more than appropriate. Although nobody would claim a direct continuity between Constantinople and Bologna, Paris, etc., and although an obvious spatial and chronological hiatus remains, a reconsideration of the foundation acts of 425 may help in answering some more universal questions. Both legal acts are precise and laconic; they reveal a more

general vision than presented in the text itself. Can they be compared to the western European foundation acts of the much later medieval universities? Are they merely another piece in a stream of imperial decisions on education and teachers, or do they add new quality? Were they of any consequence that would be perceptible from our perspective? And finally, is the idea of the Byzantine *pandidakterion* artificial?

Jana Kopáčková

Late Antique Urban Production of Wine and Olive Oil in the Eastern Adriatic Area

In the last decade, research of wine and olive oil production across the Mediterranean brought us a great number of newly excavated sites, large monographs were published and our knowledge about different aspects of wine and olive oil, indispensable parts of everyday life of Ancient Mediterranean cultures, is exponentially growing.

The eastern Adriatic coast lined with hundreds of islands was and still is very suitable for both grapevine and olive tree cultivation. In current research, altogether 241 sites were directly connected with production of wine and olive oil dated from the end of the 1st c. BC till the 11th c. AD. Among this numerous group, pressing devices established in cities stand out. In the eastern Adriatic, agricultural production was present within *villae rusticae* in the *ager* of cities, not inside of the urban context. This drastic change can be linked with unstable political situation when barbarian raids turned the prosperous countryside into dangerous zone. Production of wine and olive oil was very important for local economy and therefore it is not surprising that pressing devices were moved into the relative safety of the city walls. This phenomenon is called *rustification* or *re-ruralisation of urban context* and can be traced all-over the Mediterranean.

This paper will present all known pressing devices found in urban context in the territory of Histria and Dalmatia dated to late antique period (5th–11th c. AD). Interestingly, many of those urban pressing devices have clear connection to the early Christian Church, some of them were established within an Episcopal quarter. Also, the technology used to operate those pressing devices is rather different from the earlier and show us another aspect of deep changes that occurred in this time period.

Mirosław Kruk

Diet of the Painters of King Władysław Jagiełło

The ingredients in the diet of the orthodox painters working for Władysław Jagiełło King of Poland are listed in detail in the sources. As it seems, they have so far not been the subject of special analysis, in contrast to the significant achievements of the painters. This is all the more strange as these exotic ingredients attracted more attention from the royal treasurer than the painting materials he had to provide them with. The nature of the painters' dishes should, after all, have been considered when the issue of their origin is so important.

Pierre Mounier-Kuhn

The origins of higher education: a collective book project

How did the category “Higher education” emerge in ancient civilizations and outside of Europe, before and beside the creation of medieval universities? With a few exceptions, each limited to one country or cultural area, the institutional/socio-professional history of early higher education is only mentioned in the footnotes or in a few paragraphs scattered in the histories of science. For three years I have been planning a collective book to fill this gap, in a global, comparative approach. The project was presented in 2022 at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Poznań, with a programmatic essay online which gives more explanations and references:

https://www.academia.edu/85256035/Forms_of_Higher_Education_in_Ancient_Civilizations_and_beyond_Europe

https://www.academia.edu/50809275/Les_formes_d_enseignements_sup%C3%A9rieurs_dans_les_civilisations_anciennes_ou_hors_d_Europe (updated version).

The book will include my exploratory text and specialized chapters on ancient forms of higher education in major cultural areas. The authors are leading academic experts in each of these areas, from four continents. 7/10 chapters are already written.

Irina Kuzidova-Karadžinova, Ekaterina Dikova

The South-Slavonic Translation of Nicholas Kallikles’ Dietary Epigrams: Representation in REGEST and Preparation of a Parallel Edition

Nicholas Kallikles (*Νικόλαος Καλλικλῆς*), 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 translation 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 prepare a parallel edition of these epigrams, highlighting key challenges in aligning a South-Slavonic target text with its Byzantine Greek original. 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.

Paweł Lachowicz

Rhetorical Methods of Proving Legitimacy of a New Dynasty. A Comparison of Basileios I, Alexios I and Michael VIII

Basileios I, Alexios I and Michael VIII—the founders of the new dynasties had to face the daunting task of building the foundations of their legitimacy in the turbulent political system of the Byzantine Empire. The evidence of this process remains in the form of literary sources written down by their immediate family circle or attributed to the emperor himself. All of these texts share common characteristics of apologetic biography and seek to legitimise the assumption of power by the new dynasty through specific literary endeavours. A comparison of *Vita Basilii*, the work of Nikephoros Bryennios, Anna Komnena and so-called *de Vita Sua* of Michael VIII Palaiologos, reveals the immutability of *topoi* present in the literary culture of the empire over the centuries, which were used to build up the authority of the ruler.

In my paper, I would like to pay particular attention to the narrative elements appearing in those stories up to the moment of reaching the throne. Their comparison shows the special importance that the Byzantines invariably attached to good birth (*εὐγένεια*), courage (*ἀνδρεία*), God's grace (*χάρις*) and the close relationship of the new emperor's family with at least one previous ruler who enjoyed exceptional reputation. In addition, I would like to compare the methods of portraying the deposed emperor as the antagonist in the biography used by the authors to justify the coup.

Anna Maria Lasek

How to Pretend Virginity? Ancient Remedies from the Textbook of Metrodora "On the Diseases and Cures of Women"

The ancient Greek medical textbook written by a physician Metrodora (c. 200–400 CE?) (Μητροδώρα): *Περὶ τῶν Γυναικείων παθῶν τῆς μήτρας* ("On the Diseases and Cures of Women") is notable for being the sole publication on ancient gynaecology authored by a female scholar. In her treatise, the author, physician or midwife, describes the various ailments afflicting women and then provides treatment options, usually several for one ailment.

The remedies she recommends are a variety of concoctions made from plants, eggs, animal fats and minerals, among others. The paper will focus on selected recipes aimed at assisting women with a history of sexual experience in feigning virginity. The remedies advocated by Metrodora and addressed in this paper are plant- and mineral-based. The efficacy of these remedies will be evaluated from the perspective of contemporary medical knowledge.

Maria Leontsini

Tharīd, Monokythron, Pastomageireia: Culinary Adaptations and Appropriations in Twelfth-Century Byzantium

The highly regarded Arabic dish, *tharīd*, consisting of boiled meat and crumbled or torn bread, became known to the populations of the Eastern Mediterranean after the Islamic conquests in the 7th century. In the 10th century, Arabic nutritional and culinary manuals systematically documented its preparation methods, often with expensive and luxurious items. Meat consumption was increasing in the Eastern Mediterranean and Byzantium during this period. A preparation similar to *tharīd*, called *monokythron*, appeared in 12th-century Byzantine literary texts. Its main ingredients were meat or fish with pieces of bread cooked in a pot (*chytra*); it was usually referred to together with *pastomageireia*, a meal prepared with salty meat or fish. These complex preparations represent the prevailing trend of mixing various ingredients to create a satiating meal that left the sense of pleasure. The paper suggests that *tharīd* was known, due to continuous exchanges and contacts in the East, but its origin became more recognizable during the Byzantine reconquest operations. In this context, *monokythron* was showcased as a literary exaggeration to glorify gastronomy as a symbol of wealth and luxury that Byzantium claimed for itself in the 12th century.

Manuela Marai

Pharmaceuticals from the Mineral and Animal Kingdoms: Considerations on Ancient and Modern Uses

Galen of Pergamon (129–216 AD), in his treatise *On Simple Medicines*, dedicated three out of six books of his pharmacopoeia to the medicinal properties of substances derived from mineral and animal sources. The same is true for the 6th-century Byzantine compiler, Aetius of Amida. Pharmaceuticals from minerals and animals are indeed commonly present in the formulations collected by Galen in his works *On Compound Remedies*.

These substances are generally overlooked by scholarship or examined with greater scepticism and curiosity than botanicals by both humanists and scientists, due to their potential high toxicity, dubious efficacy and reliability, questionable origins, and unpleasant and disgusting odours and textures (*Dreckapotheke*). Nonetheless, ethnopharmacological studies focus on some of these substances because traditional medicines still use them worldwide.

This paper aims to offer a new perspective on the study of the therapeutic use of substances of mineral and animal origin. Could our current knowledge of the properties of natural substances improve our understanding of their ancient applications? Could the combination of specific substances along with their processing and preparation shed some light on the rationale for their use? This paper will provide some suggestions to decipher the oddness and the unseen complexity of ancient pharmacology.

Evi Margaritis

Botanical Offerings: Exploring the Ritual Use of Plants in Ancient Greek Sanctuaries

Archaeobotanical studies focusing on historical periods in Greece have been disproportionately fewer compared to those concentrating on prehistoric eras. In recent decades, research on historical sites has shifted the research agenda towards understanding culinary practices, agricultural systems, and farming regimes, particularly within the domestic sphere. However, a significant gap remains in the study of ritual contexts and the role of plants and food within these settings during the 1st millennium BCE. This proposed study aims to address this gap by employing targeted research questions and conducting detailed sampling across various ritual contexts in Greece, shedding light on the overlooked aspects of ancient ritual practices.

While recent scholarship has concentrated on animal sacrifice, proposing theoretical models to explain the methods and reasons behind the killing, butchering, burning, and consumption of sacrificial victims, there is an important bias in the available data: it predominantly considers material culture and zooarchaeological remains. The lack of systematic recovery techniques has led to the loss of plant remains and other offerings—elements present in abundance in ritual contexts. This exclusion has resulted in an incomplete interpretation and reconstruction of ritual and funerary practices in ancient Greece.

This paper presents the archaeobotanical evidence from three significant sanctuaries: the sanctuary of Hera at Samos, the sanctuary of Zeus at Mt Lykaion, and the sanctuary of Poseidon at Nikoleika (Achaia). It demonstrates that the ritual use and deposition of plant materials were more widespread and diverse than previously recognized. This study marks the first comprehensive examination of this research question on a broader scale, providing a novel approach to understanding the ritual ecosystem of Greece during the first millennium BCE

Rafał Matuszewski

Soporific Foodstuffs: Ancient Recipes for Restful Sleep

In an age of restless nights and modern sleep aids, it is easy to forget that the pursuit of peaceful slumber has long been intertwined with food and drinks. This paper explores the ancient Greek and Roman traditions of utilizing specific foodstuffs, drinks and ingredients believed to promote relaxation, induce sleep and improve sleep quality. Drawing from a wide array of historical texts and archaeological findings, this talk will try to give a systematic understanding of what plants were thought to be of soporific value and were used as sleep-inducing tranquilizing substances and what—and how—sleep disorders were treated with botanical drugs in classical Antiquity. By analyzing the elucidations of ancient authors on soothing beverages, calming meals, and potent herbs that were incorporated

into nightly routines by Greek and Romans, this talk aims at providing some insight into the origins of these natural remedies, their (believed) medicinal properties, and how some of these ancient practices may still hold relevance in our modern quest for restful sleep.

Gerasimos Merianos

Replication and the Study of Greek Alchemy: Insights from Selected Examples

The replication of recipes from the Greek alchemical tradition—both its Graeco-Egyptian and Byzantine branches—offers valuable insights into a field whose technical texts were long regarded as either nonsensical or chimerical. By assessing the feasibility of historical techniques, experimental reconstructions enable scholars to better understand alchemical practices and clarify obscure terminology or problematic textual passages. Interdisciplinary research teams and individual scholars have demonstrated that such replications bridge the gap between textual sources and practical applications, shedding light on technical knowledge, material culture, luxury production, and cost-saving techniques. Equally important, they contribute to addressing complex issues of textual transmission. At the same time, they reveal an often-overlooked aspect of alchemical technical texts: their verbal representation of the visual dimension of alchemical processes. This paper presents selected examples of how replication enhances our understanding of Greek alchemical recipes. It also highlights how collaboration between historians, philologists, and experts from various fields (such as chemists, archaeometallurgists, goldsmiths, and art historians) advances the interpretation of Greek alchemical technical texts.

Maksymilian Mikuła

Court Customs in the Late Byzantine Romances “Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe”, “Belthandros and Chrysantza” and “Libistros and Rhodamne”

From the 13th to the 15th century a number of romances collectively known as "late Byzantine" or "Palaiologan" were written in Byzantium. Despite the growing interest of scholars in these works in recent years, there are still many issues to be explored.

The main goal of the speaker is to show that Palaiologan romances do not contain only literary fiction, nor are they a simple imitation of their western or ancient counterparts, but they also contain information about the realities of the era in which they were written. To that end, the referent will present the court customs presented in the romances, including the elements of court ceremonial, the imperial audiences, and other aspects. Then, these references will be compared with other sources from the era.

Due to the large chronological spread and the plenty of works classified as Late Byzantine romances, the speaker will limit the analysis to only three works: "Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe", "Belthandros and Chrysantza" and "Libistros and Rhodamne". This decision results from several issues. They were written about the same time, from the mid-13th

century to the beginning of the 14th century - that is, during the reign of the last rulers from the Laskaris dynasty and first from the Palaiologos dynasty. They were not only an adaptation of Western romances but also, they were written in Byzantine circles. In addition, they share the most common features of all late Byzantine romances. Therefore, the analysis of the information provided by the above-mentioned texts will be the most reliable to present Byzantine court customs from the 13th and early 14th centuries.

Adam Morin

'After Bread, *Maza* Is Good Too': Negative Attitudes Towards Barley and Barley Bread in the Byzantine Empire

This paper/presentation, focusing on an aspect of Byzantine food culture, will examine the extremely negative cultural attitudes expressed towards barley and especially barley bread in the Byzantine Empire. Influenced by a viewpoint which associated coarser, whole-grain and barley breads with peasant or low-born populations, the eating of such breads could evoke disgust both to the palate and to the Byzantine sense of self, a cultural impression which had deep historical roots. This impression was also reinforced by Byzantine medical authors, who—quite the opposite of today—viewed barley and whole-grain breads as having modest nutritional value at best. Despite the importance of barley to Byzantine diets, eating barley bread was not simply a value-neutral individual choice, but was rather imbued with judgements of class, health, and even sanctity.

Ayşenur Mulla-Topcan

Locusts in Early Patristics and Byzantine Hagiography

This paper argues that insects in Byzantine thought should be understood as multivalent symbols beyond creatures that possessed negative associations alone. Through a case study of locusts and their various symbolic meanings in Byzantine patristic texts, I demonstrate the multi-dimensional connotations of locusts through categorizing two main functions of locusts in such texts. First, locust invasions were depicted as threats to society and indicators of God's divine justice. Locusts are often considered destructive; they can cause famine by decimating crops and infesting environments. Consequently, a swarm of locusts would be predominantly perceived as a bad omen or a sign of God's wrath, exemplified by John Chrysostom's interpretation of the locust attack in Exodus as an indication of divine judgment. Another instance is John of Damascus's emphasis on locusts not harming crops without divine command.

The second function of locusts in Byzantine patristics is their association with holy men, exploring the symbolic implications. This portion of the paper explores the relationship between saints and locusts, such as the Cappadocian bishop Gregory of Nazianzus's reference to Matthew 3:4, and emphasis on John the Baptist's diet of wild honey and locusts. Beyond merely serving as sustenance for holy men and ascetics, the interaction

between saints and locusts proves significant, carrying over into later periods. For instance, in the tenth-century *vita of Constantine the Jew*, a locust infestation strikes Constantinople. The protagonist is depicted as miraculously dispelling the swarm with a small amount of holy water, resulting in a more fertile harvest. This paper will, therefore, demonstrate the multi-dimensional nature of locusts in these and other patristic texts from Late Antiquity and the Byzantine era.

Davide Mussi

“Fuel for Kidneys”. The Treatment of Kidney Stones in Late Antiquity

Among the pseudogalenic texts included in the nineteenth volume of Karl Gottlob Kühn’s edition of Galenic corpus (1830), we find an anonymous nephrological treatise titled *De renum affectionibus*. This work, which is transmitted by two manuscripts, both of fifteenth century CE (*Marcianus Graecus* Z 282 and *Parisinus Supplementum Graecum* 35) and can be dated to the 6th–7th century AD, aligns with the tendencies of the commentators from the iatrosophic school of Alexandria and represents a clear example of the compilatory work of late antiquity. The anonymous author, in an attempt to create a useful manual for the treatment of kidney stones, draws on both contemporary and earlier medical sources, primarily Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms*, several Galenic treatises (for example, *Commentary on Hippocrates’ Epidemics* VI, *Hygiene*, *On the Properties of Foodstuffs*), Rufus of Ephesus’ *On Diseases of the Bladder and Kidneys*, Aëtius of Amida’s *Books on Medicine* XI and XV. Among the main topics addressed in the eight chapters that make up the treatise (renal anatomy and physiology, pathology, diagnosis, therapy and prophylaxis), significant attention is given to the treatment of kidney stones, both in terms of curing the disease when it appears and in preventive measures to avoid its recurrence.

The paper aims, after a brief introduction to the main features of the text, to focus on the analysis of the remedies used for the treatment of lithiasis, whether of animal, plant, or other origin (such as physical exercises, steam baths, or the use of heated cupping therapy), in an attempt to determine the degree of dependence on sources and the originality of the anonymous physician.

Dimitra Mylona

Fishers’ Knowledge from Antiquity to the Present through Byzantium

Research on past fisheries has focused on the physical remains of fish and marine invertebrates (such as fish bones and shells), durable fishing tools (like fish hooks and lead sinkers), artistic and literary representations, and more recently, the chemical and genetic traces of marine foods. The economic and dietary/culinary significance of fish and seafood have received the most scholarly attention, while the technological aspects have been less well understood. Most studies in this area focus on the typology and functionality of fishing equipment. However, this paper adopts an alternative approach by examining ancient

fishing technology through the lens of the knowledge and skills involved in its use. This shift in perspective highlights the importance of the knowledge possessed by fishers themselves. By focusing on this aspect of fishing technology, we bring attention to the fishers and their communities, areas of the past that have often been overlooked.

This approach is grounded in the understanding that, in traditional fisheries, the transmission of knowledge and skills has historically occurred through participation, apprenticeship, and immersion in the professional, social, and ideological life of fishing communities. Tracing the knowledge of fishers through the archaeological and historical record offers an opportunity to better understand these communities and their relationship with the aquatic environment and its resources. Fishing ethnography plays a central role in this research. However, ethnographic studies on small-scale coastal fisheries—particularly those in the East Mediterranean—are underdeveloped, and much valuable information has already been lost. To address this gap, it is proposed to use written sources spanning centuries, from antiquity to the Byzantine and early modern periods, approached from an ethnographic perspective. Similarities in fishing methods, target species, and techniques are evident across art and literature throughout these historical periods, making it worthwhile to investigate how knowledge was transmitted across generations for millennia starting from the recent past and moving backwards.

Effie Photos-Jones, Tina Kallithraka, George E. Christidis, Charles W. Knapp

The Green and the White and the Yeast that ‘Binds’ Them: Oxos (Poor Wine) as a Reagent in Bio-Technological Processes, 4th c BCE

This paper explores the nature of *oxos* (Grk: *poor wine* rather than vinegar) but also *tryx* (wine lees) and *stemphyla* (grape pomace) in the manufacture of two pigments/medicines in the 4th c BCE, namely *psimythion*/cerussa (white lead carbonate) and *ios xystos*/verdigris (blue-green copper acetates). Both synthetic minerals have been manufactured over the centuries under different recipes but their use in *emplastra* (plasters) is less known. In both cases, relatively little attention has been paid to the key reagents *oxos* and *tryx* underpinning their manufacture. We present here a series of field-based experiments based on the relevant recipes by Theophrastus (*On Stones*). The aim is to monitor, via X-ray diffraction analysis, the nature of the abiotic component (mineral) *vis a vis* that of the biotic component (bacteria and

yeasts) (via DNA sequencing). We suggest that *oxos* far from being synonymous to vinegar, the end product of acetification, was instead an intermediate product of extreme versatility manufactured in its own right and according to a variety of recipes; its uses ranged from a chemical reagent in mineral synthesis and fermentation processes, to a drink to quench thirst. Understanding better the nature of *oxos* opens the door to further investigation of a group of therapeutics referred to by Galen as *pharmaka metallica* featuring extensively in Greco-Roman pharmacological manuals.

Ivayla Popova

Private Intellectual Circles (So-Called *Theatres*) in Late Byzantine Constantinople – a Form of Informal Education

Private intellectual circles in Constantinople in the 14th century are a specific phenomenon in the history of Late Byzantium. An important role in scholarly pursuits was then played by self-education, which was commonly known as *autodidascalia*. The exchange of books and discussions among various scholars largely contributed to the development of this system of self-education. A peculiar form of intellectual communication among well-educated persons, which became widespread in the Palaeologan period, were the informal literary and philosophical societies, the so-called *theatres*. By *theatre* in this period is meant the specific auditorium, its participants, and the room in which a literary or philological assembly is held. The letters of late Byzantine intellectuals make it clear that in such *theatres* their works on philosophical, literary, historical, and other subjects, their rhetorical harangues, and their arguments on various topics were discussed. Such *theatres* are known to have existed around the intellectuals Nikephoros Choumnos (c. 1250–1327), Theodore Metochitis (1270–1332), Nikephoros Grigoras (c. 1295–1359), Michael Gabras (c. 1290– after 1350), Demetrius Kydones (1324–1398) and others, as well as around the emperors Andronicus II (1282–1328) and Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425).

The purpose of the paper is to examine several letters of late Byzantine intellectuals and, based on them, to give the reader a consistent idea about the informal education in Byzantium, i.e. about the role of the *theatres* in the intellectual and scholarly life of the Byzantine Empire from the late 13th to the 15th centuries.

Laura Juliana Prieto Pabon

The Impossible Challenge of Reconstructing Ancient Perfumes

The interpretation and translation of ancient recipes for perfume making remains a challenge today, due to critical details of the process remaining uncertain or hidden. In such cases, interpreters often fall back on *a priori* assumptions, either, on the one hand, concerning the processes, tools and concepts that would have been well established or, on the other, concerning what interpreters assume must have contributed to obtaining a result without the ancient practitioner knowing it. Those assumptions should be established by the modern practitioner, based on expertise or even previous interpretation. However, those assumptions cannot be taken for granted but must be subject to meticulous corroboration.

One of the most detailed ancient perfume recipes is Susinum (a lily-based perfume), recorded by Dioscorides. A key step in the process is known as *stypsis*, a term that has historically been assumed by interpreters to be a method for “thickening” the oil.

In this talk, I will illustrate the different assumptions concerning this method that we started with while trying to corroborate our first hypothesis. Next, I will discuss the design

of an experiment to determine whether *stypsis* should in fact be interpreted as a method of “thickening the oil by adding compounds from various raw materials.” An alternative hypothesis suggested that the process served to deodorize the oil using porous materials. However, as I will show, preliminary results suggest there is no change in the oil’s rheological properties after the process, nor is increasing in certain compounds that might have been added to protect the oil from heat-induced oxidation. On the contrary, the oil became odorized, which suggest a new interpretations of the word “stypsis” should be considered.

These results highlight the importance of testing assumptions rigorously but remain the challenge of assessing accuracy without a benchmark.

Max Ritter

The Sea Bows to the Relic’s Power: An Ecocritical Approach to Seaborne Relic Importations into Byzantine Constantinople

Immersing into the waters around Constantinople, this paper examines a key ingredient in the Byzantines conceptualization of the sea. By focusing on scenes of seaborne relic importation in Byzantine literature, particularly hagiographical accounts and homilies, this talk explores how the Byzantines conceived of the sea as a liminal space possessing quasi-agency.

I will demonstrate that these scenes emerged in the ninth century and peaked in the tenth century, coinciding with a period of extensive transfers of relics from the East across the Bosporos to Constantinople. Such scenes feature recurring literary motifs, most notably the calming of turbulent waters upon the relic’s placement aboard a ship. In several accounts, the sea and its creatures even transcend natural laws, providing further demonstration of the relic’s power. These miraculous responses of the sea serve to highlight the relic’s authenticity. Therefore, this talk argues that the primary narratological function of the scene is to validate the relic’s genuineness, whereas previous scholarship has largely concentrated on how the emperor’s involvement in relic translations served to demonstrate his divine appointment. The sea’s role in these importation scenes manifests religious symbolism while asserting imperial superiority, with the Bosporos portrayed as a conduit through which divine power and imperial prestige are communicated.

Extending this analysis through an ecocritical lens, this talk aims to highlight that the Byzantines never conceived the natural environment separate from the divine. Rather, the inextricability of the natural world and God in Byzantine thought compels us to include the divine in our ecocritical reading of Byzantine texts.

Mirena Slavova

Magic, Demons, and Heretics: Three Puzzling Cases in *The Letter* of Euthymios of Akmonia

The paper explores the theme of magic and demons in the anti-heretical *Letter* written by Euthymios, an 11th-century monk from the Monastery of Theotokos Perivleptos in Constantinople. *The Letter* was intended for his fellow compatriots from Akmonia and primarily targeted the Phundagiagites, also known as the Bogomils, as well as the Armenians. Given the significant role of the demonic nature of heresies in his accusations, it is crucial to examine the Christian Church's perception of how heretics are believed to communicate with demons.

The paper argues that Euthymios utilised accusatory arguments about demons in two main ways: first, through a general characterisation of heresies, and second, by recounting several fictional stories involving possession, levitation, lycanthropy, lecanomancy, and teleportation. It aims to provide an interpretation of three of them that have been previously misunderstood or overlooked in research: the possession of a priest in a newly constructed church at Hieron, the lecanomancy involving teleportation performed by a magus for the heretic Lycopetros, and the unsuccessful attempt at teleportation by Terevinthos.

By analysing these cases, the author hopes to enhance the understanding of heresies associated with magical practices, offering insights into the broader narrative of medieval Christianity and Byzantine culture.

Alain Touwaide

Diels in the 21st Century

In the early 20th century, the Greek manuscripts that contain medical texts were systematically compiled by authors and works in the catalogue referred to as Diels. Since its publication, Diels has been an essential resource for any academic research on the tradition of Greek medical literature. While several publications in the 20th century have corrected and complemented this foundational work, no comprehensive revision has been undertaken. As an initial step towards this objective, a revised edition was released in 2021, which featured updated typography and a clearer layout. This edition also reconstructed the content of the manuscripts based on Diels, including the Hippocratic and Galenic texts, as well as all other authors according to Diels' classification. Additionally, in 2016, the data from Diels were systematically compiled, analyzed, and revised as necessary. This communication will summarize the progress of research from Diels' time to the present day.

Joanita Vroom

The Archaeology of Food and Consumption in Byzantium

True knowledge is achieved when the deepest scholarly ideas converge with the shallowest clichés. One clear example is the observation 'you are what you eat'. This insight sheds light on our dietary behaviour, but also generated stimulating research by sociologists and anthropologists. Unfortunately, archaeologists of the Mediterranean Middle Ages have often neglected evidence related to foodways, leaving a gap in our knowledge of daily life in that period. This lecture sets out to improve this situation by presenting case studies from the Byzantine world. By combining written sources (including recipes), pictorial evidence, and archaeological data, it aims to deepen our understanding of gastronomic and consumption patterns in the Medieval Mediterranean. Furthermore, it shows possibilities for experimental archaeology by the reconstruction (or re-enactment/replication) of historical recipes by the 'Leiden Food Labs'.

Jakub Węglorz, Danuta Raj, Katarzyna Pękacka, Maciej Włodarczyk

Teriak. Retrieving the Ancient, Reconstructing the Early Modern

Theriac is a very special complex medicinal preparation with the longest documented tradition of use in pharmacy. Its traditions date back to antiquity, but its period of great popularity falls in the modern era. The recipe we studied and reconstructed comes from Toruń in 1630, but it largely drew from its ancient prototype. Although one cannot speak of the constancy of the recipe, which underwent numerous modifications, it was certainly a desire characteristic for the modern era to demonstrate ancient provenance of the proclaimed ideas. The recursiveness of Renaissance and Baroque culture in relation to antiquity was also manifested in attempts to recover the 'original' theriac recipe. Early modern physicians and pharmacists discussed this topic, but their goal was not to 'reconstruct' an identical creation, but to create an equivalent with the same (assumed) characteristics and effectiveness. Hence, early modern studies on the theriac recipe are more a 'retrieving' than 'reconstructing' process. Our research today is focused on recreating the modern recipe while maintaining the accuracy of both 'reenactment' of procedures and 'reconstruction' of the final effect. Importantly, early modern pharmacy aimed at achieving the desired therapeutic effect attributed to theriac. Therefore, the procedure and ingredients were important as long as they were believed to lead to the intended goal. If it could be achieved in another way, substitutes with the same (assumed) action were readily used. The protocols of equivalence and the lists of *quis pro quod* described in early modern literature are a testament to this way of thinking. In our actions, we also strive to proceed in full compliance with the early modern *modus operandi*. If necessary, when using a substitute in the method or ingredient, we proceed in accordance with the methodology developed in the early modern era, not necessarily in accordance with current phytochemical or pharmaceutical knowledge. In this context, our research efforts aim to 'reconstruct' early modern theriac. That theriac draws from the

tradition of antiquity, but in reference to it is rather 'retrieving' the old recipe. The final stage of our research is the pharmaceutical analysis of the composition and potential effectiveness of the obtained preparation. Maintaining accuracy in 'reconstruction' as well as 'reenactment' of manufacturing methods is particularly important here, as the goal is to analyze and evaluate a preparation closely resembling that one obtained in the early modern era.

Jacek Wiewiorowski

Personifications of Balkan Territorial Units of the Early Byzantine Empire in the *Notitia Dignitatum*

The *Notitia Dignitatum* preserves a listing of the senior government offices in the Roman Empire from around 400 CE. All surviving versions of the register are copies of the *Codex Spirensis*, an illuminated Carolingian copy of the late antique original, or the copies derived from them. In most, information concerning particular dignitaries is preceded with sheets depicting their insignia, while the respective lists of offices in the Eastern and Western Empire are divided by the illustrations showing the *armaria* (cupboards). Three of those illustrations contain the personifications of Balkan territorial units of the Early Byzantine Empire: the dioceses of *Macedonia* and *Dacia* in the emblem of the praetorian prefect of Illyricum, the province of *Achaia* in the emblem of its governor (*proconsul Achaiae*), as well as provinces of *Europa*, *Thracia*, *Haemimontus*, *Rhodopa*, *Moesia secunda* and *Scythia* in the insigne of the vicar of Thrace. The author discusses the significance of the details in the depicted territorial units and concludes that they symbolize part of the competences of their supervisors, as well as the status of each district at the turn of the fourth century. The author examines all versions of the illustrations indicated above and preserved in the primary copies of the *Spirensis*, made between 1426/7–1550/51, as well as some of the copies derived from the primary ones. However, preference is given to the two most important primary copies of the *Notitia Dignitatum* in terms of miniatures (i.e. Oxford, Bodleian library, western ms. 19854 – Canonici ms. misc. lat. 378 from 1436 and Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, ms. Clm. 10291: codex 2, made in 1550/1551).

Theodora Zampaki

Translating Knowledge: Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and the Integration of Greek Medicine into Islamic Thought

This paper aims at presenting some aspects of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq's (d. 260/873) work entitled *al-Masā'il fī al-tibb lil-Mutāllimīn* (Questions on Medicine for Students). In this book, presented as a series of questions and answers, Ḥunayn addresses critical medical issues. His work represents an important addition to the ethical aspects of medicine, combining scientific inquiry with moral considerations. This comprehensive perspective on health, encompassing both the physical and ethical welfare of the patient, was important for

Islamic medical practice and vital for subsequent Islamic physicians like al-Rāzī and Ibn Sīnā. The study primarily sheds light on the book's structure, Ḥunayn's sources - especially the works of Galen and Hippocrates - along with his systematic methodology, highlighting his intellectual rigor and accurate transmission of Greek medical thought. Additionally, it briefly looks into Ḥunayn's approach of translating Greek texts into Arabic. By translating Greek medical knowledge, Ḥunayn played an important role in preserving and expanding upon this knowledge. His translations would later influence figures like Ibn Sīnā and the broader European Renaissance.

Barbara Zipser

The Disappearance of Mental Health Conditions in the Tradition from Paul of Aegina to Ioannes Achiatus

Mental health conditions are frequently described in ancient and medieval Greek medical writings. In medical handbooks that are arranged in a *capite ad calcem*, or tip to toe, sequence, they are commonly found towards the start of the book amongst diseases of the head. Evidently, the place of manifestation was believed to have been the brain, whereas these texts often mention that the origins of these diseases may actually have been located in the abdomen.

This paper will examine a medical tradition that starts with Paul of Aegina in the 7th century AD and ends with Ioannes archiatus in the late 13th century AD, with respect to the representation of mental health conditions within their medical handbooks. It will show that they all but disappeared in the final stage of the tradition, which also marks a step from a learned manual to a craft oriented compilation.

My paper will examine to what extent or whether at all these illnesses are mentioned, how they are being described and how they are meant to be treated. Special attention will be paid to recent biomedical hypotheses that bipolar disorder could in fact be connected to digestive problems. Here, it will be examined whether any of these sources describe an illness that fits our description of bipolar disorder and whether any mental health conditions within our primary sources were perceived to be connected to digestion.

