The Concept of Decline (Birmingham, 24-25 Feb 17)

The University of Birmingham, Feb 24–25, 2017
Deadline: Sep 30, 2016

Maria Alessia Rossi

Call for Papers: Reconsidering the Concept of Decline and the Arts of the Palaiologan Era

One day and a half Symposium & Workshop

24 and 25 February 2017, held at the University of Birmingham

Organisers: Andrea Mattiello – University of Birmingham
Maria Alessia Rossi – The Courtauld Institute of Art

This one day and a half conference combines a symposium and a workshop. The aim is to examine and contextualise the artistic and cultural production of the geopolitical centres that were controlled by or in contact with the late Byzantine Empire, such as the Adriatic and Balkan regions, the major islands of Cyprus and Crete, and the regions surrounding the cities of Constantinople, Thessaloniki, and Mystras. This conference will explore the many intellectual implications that are encoded in the innovative artistic production of the Palaiologan Era often simplified by a rigid understanding of what is Byzantine and what is not.

In its last centuries, the political entity of the Empire of the Romaioi released cultural and artistic energies migrating towards new frontiers of intellectual achievements. The intent is to counter-balance the innovation of these works of art with the notion of decline and the narrative of decay frequently acknowledged for this period; and to promote an understanding of transformation where previous cultural heritages were integrated into new socio-political orders.

The Symposium – hosted on the afternoon of the 24 and the morning of the 25 February - will bring together established scholars, early-career scholars, and postgraduate students. Three keynotes will provide the methodological framework for the discussion; while the selected papers will focus solely on the visual expressions and cultural trajectories of the artworks produced during the late Palaiologan Era.

The Workshop, hosted on the afternoon of the 25 February, will offer the opportunity to further the discussion in a more informal setting and for a selected number of Master students to interact and offer brief presentations.

Postgraduate students and early-career scholars are invited to submit proposals for twenty-minute papers on art and architecture history, material culture, visual aspects of palaeography

and codicology, and gender studies.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Gift exchange in view of diplomatic missions or dynastic marriages both within the Empire and with its neighbours
- Visual evidence of the interaction between the Emperor and the Patriarch
- Innovations in the visual agenda of the Palaiologan dynasty
- Aspects of religious iconography and visual representations of theological controversies, i.e. Hesychasm
- Artistic patronage and manuscript production as the outcome of dynastic and institutional interactions
- Visual and material production as the outcome of political and social circumstances, i.e. the Zealot uprising or the Unionist policy
- Evidence of artistic exchanges in the depictions of women, men, and children during the Palaiologan Era

Titles of proposed papers, abstracts of 250 words, and a short CV should be sent to Maria Alessia Rossi - m.alessiarossi@icloud.com and Andrea Mattiello - axm570@bham.ac.uk by 30 September 2016.

Reference:

CFP: The Concept of Decline (Birmingham, 24-25 Feb 17). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 27, 2016 (accessed Nov 15, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/13355>.