

1 Session at ICBS (Vienna, 24–29 Aug 26)

Vienna, Aug 24–29, 2026

Deadline: Apr 19, 2025

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XXV International Congress of Byzantine Studies: Byzantium beyond Byzantium

[1] Modern Byzantiums

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From: Francesco Lovino

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The nineteenth century marks a crucial phase in the institutionalization of Byzantine studies, with the establishment of the first academic journals and university chairs in Munich, Saint Petersburg, and Paris. At the same time, Byzantium became a powerful source of inspiration for artists, architects, musicians, writers, filmmakers, and dramatists, who idealized and reimagined the Byzantine world through multiple creative expressions.

From the Neo-Byzantine architectural projects in Western Europe and its colonies, to the revival of mosaic techniques—such as the Gesamtkirche of Potsdam—up to the short films *Les Torchés Humaines* by Georges Méliès and *L'agonie de Byzance* by Louis Feuillade, the Byzantine aesthetic was reinvented and integrated into modern visual and cultural discourses. This multifaceted Byzantine revival extended into literature, music, and the performing arts, shaping modern cultural consciousness and generating new interpretations of Byzantium across different media.

We seek contributions that explore how Byzantine imagery was appropriated, transformed, and reinterpreted in art, literature, music, and visual culture, and how these reinterpretations shaped cultural consciousness in terms of identity and differentiation.

Key topics include, but are not limited to:

- The role of Byzantine aesthetics in shaping national identities in Greece, Serbia, Italy, and beyond.
- The interplay between nationalism, colonialism, and the concept of Byzantium.
- The representation of Byzantium in popular culture: book covers, illustrations, posters, and visual media.
- The impact of Byzantine references in architecture, music, and performing arts, including the neo-Byzantine mosaics in Potsdam and the reinterpretation of Byzantine themes in early cinema.
- The construction of an exoticized and romanticized Byzantium in the Western imagination.
- The role of Byzantium in the European identity discourse and its connection to Orientalism.

The panel aims to contribute to the global debate on the decolonization of cultural heritage in Europe by reconsidering chronologies and taxonomies through a complex historical and cultural analysis of material

culture.

We invite proposals for presentations of 20 minutes on ongoing research by scholars working in art history, visual culture, history of architecture, literature, musicology, and cultural studies. We will look into the possibility of publishing the papers from the workshop.

Please send a title and short abstract (max. 300 words) of your proposed presentation to the conveners, together with five keywords and your affiliation, by April 19, 2025, to Francesco Lovino (francesco.lovinno@unife.it).

Reference:

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