

Subject: Byzantine Aesthetics

Course title: *"Byzantine Aesthetics and Iconology"*

Course description

The most salient characteristic of the Byzantine aesthetic is that it is abstract and not naturalistic. If classical art is marked by the attempt to create the most faithful representations of reality possible, Byzantine art seems to have abandoned this attempt in favor of a more symbolic approach. The nature and causes of this transformation, which took place mainly during late antiquity, will be also the object of the programme of the Summer School.

Two events are of fundamental importance in the development of early Byzantine art. First, the Edict of Milan by Emperors Constantine I and Licinius in 313, authorizing Christian worship, led to the development of monumental Christian art. Then, the consecration of Constantinople as "new Rome", in 330, created a new artistic center for the eastern half of the Empire and, what is more, a specifically Orthodox Christian center.

Within Byzantine Art erupted a profound philosophical debate on the question regarding the relations of imagery to truth: the iconoclastic crisis took place between the reigns of Leo III (717-741) and Theophilus (829-842). The destruction, sometimes violent, of images representing the divinity intervened in reaction to the great development of the cult of icons. The iconoclasm finally instituted firmly the art of the icon that was about to produce sumptuary artistic achievements.

Course syllabus

<i>Instructors:</i>	Georgios Arabatzis, Professor of Byzantine Philosophy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
<i>Language:</i>	English
<i>Level of students:</i>	Basic
<i>Teaching methods:</i>	lectures, power-point presentations and class discussions
<i>Assessment:</i>	One-hour written examination with a combination of closed ended questions, multiple-choice questions and open ended questions requiring brief answers.
<i>Duration</i>	Three 4-hour sessions: a) The Neo-platonic inheritance b) Iconoclasm c) Byzantine iconology and modernity

Recommended readings:

- Alexander, P. J, *The Patriarch Nicephorus of Constantinople: Ecclesiastical Policy and Image Worship in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958)
- Arabatzis, G., *Pensée byzantine et iconologie, L'actualité de la pensée byzantine*, *Byzantinische Forschungen*, XXXI, 2013, 63-93.
- - - - , *Theodore the Studite and Dionysius*, *The Oxford Handbook of Dionysius Areopagita*, M. Edwards-G. Steiris-D. Pallis eds., Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022, 256-268.
- Barber, Charles, 'From Transformation to Desire: Art and Worship after Byzantine Iconoclasm', *The Art Bulletin*, 75.1 (1993), 7-16
- ———, 'From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm', *Gesta*, 34.1 (1995)
- ———, 'Mimesis and Memory in the Narthex Mosaics at the Nea Moni, Chios', *Art History*, 24.3 (2001), 323-37
- ———, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002)
- Belting, Hans, 'An Image and Its Function in the Liturgy', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 34 (1980-1981), 1-16
- ———, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- ———, 'Image, Medium, Body: A New Approach to Iconology', *Critical Inquiry*, 31. Winter 2005 (2005), 302-19
- Brubaker, Leslie, 'Byzantine Art in the Ninth Century: Theory, Practice and Culture', *Byzantine and modern Greek studies*, XIII (1989), 23-93
- ———, 'Perception and Conception: Art, Theory and Practice in Ninth-Century Byzantium', *Word&image*, V (1989), 19-32
- Girard, R., *Violence and the Sacred* (London: The Athlone Press, 1988)
- Johannes von Damascos, 'Contra Imaginum Calumniatores Tres', in *Die Schriften Des Johannes Von Damaskos*, ed. by B. Kotter, 5 vols (Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1975), vol.3
- Mitchell, W. J. T., (ed), *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Byzantine Aesthetics: Instructor Information

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Short bio-note

Professor **George Arabatzis**, School of Philosophy, University of Athens, was born in Athens and studied philosophy in Paris, France. A Scholarship holder of the French Government, he obtained his Ph.D. with honors from the École de Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and he made a post-doctoral research in the University of Torino, Italy, with a grant from the Italian Government. From 1998 to 2012, he was a researcher at the Research Centre on Greek Philosophy of the Academy of Athens. He has been a Visiting Scholar-Research Fellow at Princeton University, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Helsinki, the University Charles in Prague, the University of Jassy, Romania, etc. His research is focused on Byzantine philosophy and aesthetics, its Ancient Sources and its modern perception.