Call for Papers

Conference

„Byzantium at Early Modern Courts. Reception, Confrontation and Projects.“
Responsible: Jan Kusber, Klaus Pietschmann, Matthias Schnettger, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Organised by: Leibniz-WissenschaftsCampus Byzantium between Orient und Occident
Languages: German, English
Place: Mainz
Date: 10.-12.11. 2022
Type: Conference
Funded by: Leibniz-WissenschaftsCampus Byzanz zwischen Orient und Okzident
Target group: Students, alumni, postdocs, university lectures, public
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DESCRIPTION:
This conference wants to examine the different dimensions of the presence of Byzantium at early modern courts. It will therefore cover amongst other topics the treatment of artefacts of Byzantine provenience, the reception of Byzantium in the representation of power, and the knowledge on Byzantium which was available at court. This conference also wants to examine the competition for the Byzantine heritage and to which degree attempts were made to revive this heritage and make use of it.

Byzantium was present at early modern courts in different ways. Not only the classical Roman period, but also the late antiquity and early Byzantine period, i.e. the era of Christian emperors, offered multiple points of reference for the representation of early modern rulership. Women such as the saint Empress Helena offered points of reference to princesses, as can be seen in the foundation of the order of the Starry Cross by the then Dowager-Empress Eleonora Gonzaga-Nevers in 1668. Byzantine themes were also present at courts in the fine arts as well as the court opera.

An entirely different area of engagement with the Byzantine heritage was the confrontation with the Ottoman Empire, which saw itself as a successor to the Byzantine Empire. The sultans did not only reside in the capital Constantinople since 1453, they also laid claim to the imperial rank, which they, in turn, denied the Habsburgs until the 17th century. From the second half of the 17th century onwards the military balance of powers shifted significantly. The Ottoman Empire was now in a more defensive position and at times the renewal of the Byzantine Empire was envisaged, like with the „Greek project“ of Catharine II of Russia in the 1780s.

Without question, the orthodox church stood in the Byzantine tradition. Early modern rulers also found opportunities and necessities to confront and discuss the Byzantine heritage on this level. The most obvious examples are the Muscovite Tsars and their claim to a Third Rome based on the *translatio*

imperii from a Second to a Third Rome, but also Western European powers ruling over an orthodox population did this, like since the 13th century the Republic of Venice and especially since the 1680s the Habsburg Empire. The Patriarch of Constantinople's claim to be an „Ecumenical patriarch, " posed a bothersome limitation to the papal primacy of the Roman Curia, while Protestant rulers and their theologians might have perceived the patriarch as an potential ally against Rome.

This conference aims to examine these and other dimensions of engagement of early modern courts with Byzantium and its heritage up to the 18th century.
Possible fields of research might be:

- The various forms (fine arts, opera, literature etc.) of representation of rulership and propaganda
- Knowledge on Byzantium
- Influence of Byzantium-reception on politics

This call for paper invites established as well as young researchers working on the topics discussed above to submit their contributions. The conference will be held in German and English. Travel and accommodation expenses will be covered by the Leibniz-WissenschaftsCampus: Byzantium between Orient and Occident.
We invite you to send a proposal for a possible contribution in the form of a one page abstract and a short biography to schnettger@uni-mainz.de. Deadline is the **10.01.2022**.
A publication of the conference contributions is planned.