

**Wittgenstein Award Project**  
**“Mobility, Microstructures and Personal Agency in Byzantium”**

**Forum Moving Byzantium XX**

**Transfiguration or Second Coming?**  
**Christ as the ‘Redeeming Light’ in the Age of the Image Controversy**

The Wittgenstein Project Team invites you to our twentieth group discussion meeting. “Forum Moving Byzantium XX” will take place on **Wednesday 08.01.2020**, from **16:00 to 17:30**, at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, IMAFO Library, Hollandstraße 11-13, third floor, 1020 Vienna.

The Forum Moving Byzantium XX will provide the unique opportunity to discuss with **Prof. Francesca Dell’Acqua Boyvadaoğlu (University of Salerno)** her current work on **“Transfiguration or Second Coming? Christ as the ‘Redeeming Light’ in the Age of the Image Controversy”**.

**Francesca Dell’Acqua** is Assistant Professor in History of Medieval Art at the University of Salerno and holds the Habilitation to Associate Professorship (ASN 2012). She is interested in how objects and the visual functioned as carrier of ideas and knowledge (as ‘time capsules’), and how visual, material, and intellectual aspects intersected and shaped cultures. She is affiliated with the ‘Moving Byzantium Project’ since 2017.

In this talk, she will concentrate on imagery which was intended to reveal the humanity and divinity perfectly combined in the Son of God, and in particular on the image of Christ as ‘Redeeming Light’, depicted in mosaics commissioned by popes in the first half of the ninth century.

After an introduction to the topic by Prof. Dell’Acqua, there will be time for discussion on the basis of the following preparatory readings (to be read in sequence):

1. Christe, Y., ‘Apocalypse et interprétation iconographique. Quelques remarques liminaires sur les images du Règne de Dieu et de l’Église à l’époque paléo-chrétienne,’ *BZ* 67 (1974): 92–100.
2. Spieser, J.-M., ‘The Representation of Christ in the Apse of Early Christian Churches,’ *Gesta* 37.1 (1998): 63–73.
3. Bergmeier, A.F., ‘The Crucifixion as Theophany: Divine Visions in a Sermon by Anastasius Sinaita and on the Apse Wall of Santa Maria Antiqua,’ *Journal of Late Antiquity* 7.1 (2014): 65–85.
4. Thunø, E., *The Apse Mosaic in Early Medieval Rome. Time, Network, and Repetition* (New York, 2015), 82–107.
5. Bergmeier, A.F., “Einleitung,” *Visionserwartung. Visualisierung und Präsenzerfahrung des Göttlichen in der Spätantike*, Spätantike–Frühes Christentum–Byzanz 43 (Wiesbaden, 2017), 11–22.

Some of the questions that will be put forward for discussion are:

1. Christ in the apse: this image was certainly rooted in an eminent textual and visual tradition of theophanies produced between the fourth and the seventh centuries meant as a response to the desire to experience the eternal vision of God. But did its meaning change or expanded in the period of the iconoclastic and adoptionist controversies between the eighth and the ninth centuries? Was the eschatological aspect of this image also (or more) meaningful?
2. Which was the role of preaching about the Transfiguration? Did Greek and Latin homilies on the Transfiguration disseminated a new interpretation of Christ in the clouds? And which was the role of recent commentaries on the Apocalypse?
3. In sum: should we see the apsidal mosaics depicting Christ promoted by (iconophile) popes in the first half of the ninth century as "timeless" or "timely"? or else?

If you are interested in attending the event, please contact Dr. Paraskevi Sykopetritou (Project Coordinator) in order to receive further information and the relevant reading material: [paraskevi.sykopetritou@univie.ac.at](mailto:paraskevi.sykopetritou@univie.ac.at)

For further information and updates on future events you may also consult our website: <http://rapp.univie.ac.at/>

We hope that you can join our Forum for fruitful discussions!