



Middle Earth



Exchange, Influence, Memory & Legacy

300-2012

A Postgraduate colloquium

CALL FOR PAPERS

26th May 2012

University of Birmingham

REGISTRATION FREE

Papers are invited for the 13th Annual Postgraduate Colloquium of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek studies, University of Birmingham, which will convene on 26th May 2012.

Byzantium and the subsequent Ottoman Empire are often perceived as a doorway between the ideological constructs of 'East' and 'West.' They are, therefore, often approached in distinctly isolationist terms: neither fully belonging to the idealised concept of the medieval or early modern 'Christian west' nor the monolithic perception of an 'Islamic' Middle East. This colloquium endeavours to challenge this approach; to place the Eastern Mediterranean at the heart of a global Middle Ages, which straddles outmoded concepts of Occident and Orient. Mutual dialogue and methodological exchange between postgraduates of the entire Mediterranean and its surroundings also offer opportunities for growth and creativity.

Μεσόγειος – 'Middle Earth' – provides a useful geographical context through which to explore the fluidity of East-West constructs. As a physical space, the Mediterranean Sea functioned as a terminal of cultural, intellectual and economic transfer in the medieval and early modern world which linked the communities of the British Isles to those of the Levant and Arabia. Yet, simultaneously, the geographical space of the Mediterranean offers a useful framework through which to observe the concurrent emergence of new political and cultural systems and fluctuations in the ongoing 'centre' – 'periphery' dialogue between the 4th and 21st century.

The colloquium also aims to explore the idea of the Mediterranean, and the concept of 'shared past', as a symbolic resource for the construction of communal (and later national) identity. It could serve as a mechanism for cultural expression through the recognition of mutual ideals, beliefs, institutions and cultural exchanges (real or perceived) with the societies of the East Mediterranean or through the explicit rejection of these conventions. We also welcome contributions aimed at exploring the legacy of these constructs: how were these relationships perceived, utilised or reworked by their contemporaries or successors, and in turn, how does this influence our own interpretations of these contacts in the 21st century?

We encourage contributions in the form of a 250-word abstract for a 20-minute paper from postgraduate speakers of all disciplines with research interests in the Byzantine, Early Islamic, Ottoman or Modern East Mediterranean on any of the following topics:

- Economies: exchange and trade
- Diplomacy (political and ecclesiastical)
- Objects and visual representation
- Intellectual transaction
- Conflict
- Travel and Travel writing
- Conflict
- Heritage: continuity or discontinuity?
- Appropriation of cultural modes
- Minority communities
- Cultural exchanges
- Religion: contact and confrontation
- Literature and literary production
- Tradition and National Memory

Successful applicants will also be encouraged to offer a 5-6000 word article based on their paper to be published in a forthcoming edited volume of the colloquium's proceedings.

Papers should be **20 minutes** in length. Please send proposals of approximately **250 words** to Daniel Reynolds dkr893@bham.ac.uk by the 26th March 2012.