

JESSICA VARSALLONA

Ph.D., Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies
University of Birmingham (UK)

RESEARCH STATEMENT

My research focuses on Byzantine Art History and Architecture, with particular interest in Palaiologan Constantinople (1261-1453). My main theme of research is the urban evolution and topography of Constantinople, which I use as springboard from which to discuss broader patterns of architecture consumption and its ideological implications. I address these themes using a multidisciplinary approach, harnessing my expertise in Art History and Archaeology, combined with my familiarity with the traditions of Byzantine historical texts. In addition to my main research path, I have developed further interests, publications, and collaboration on the cultural interaction between Byzantium and the Latin West, especially Lombard, Norman, and early Renaissance Italy; I am particularly interested in the social and economic implications of the circulation of objects, customs, cults, and people.

EDUCATION

- **2016 – 2021: Ph.D. Researcher, Byzantine Studies**, Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham. Thesis title: ‘Palaiologan Constantinople (1261-1453): architecture, ideology, and patronage’. Supervisors: Prof Leslie Brubaker and Dr Ruth Macrides. Examiners: Prof Niels Gaul and Prof Robert Ousterhout.
- **2012 – 2015: Specialisation School, Historic-Artistic Heritage (70/70 cum laude)**, Università degli Studi di Milano. Thesis title: Manastir Mescidi in Istanbul: Architecture and Topography. Supervisors: Prof Paolo Piva, Prof Mauro della Valle, and Prof Francesco Tissoni.
- **2009 – 2012: Laurea Magistrale (M.A.) in History and Criticism of Art (110/110 cum laude)**, Università degli Studi di Milano. Thesis title: Vefa Kilise Camii in Istanbul. Supervisors: Prof Mauro della Valle, Prof Gianfranco Fiaccadori.
- **2005 – 2009: Laurea Triennale (B.A.) in Cultural Heritage (110/110 cum laude)**, Università degli Studi di Milano. Thesis title: The Oratory of the Forty Martyrs in Syracuse. Supervisor: Prof Mauro della Valle.
- **2000 – 2005: Liceo Linguistico (88/100)**, ITT Artemisia Gentileschi, Milano.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and co-edited volumes:

- 2022 (accepted): ‘The Palaiologan Restoration of the Myrelaion and the development of the southern shore of Constantinople: Materials from C.L. Striker and D. Talbot Rice Archives’, in *Contested Heritage: Adaptation, Restoration and Innovation in the Late Antique and Byzantine World* – Proceedings of The Oxford University Byzantine Society’s XXI International Graduate Conference, pagination TBC.
- 2022 (accepted): ‘*The Poor Shall Eat and Be Satisfied*: The Ideal of Christian Poverty in the Refectories of Constantinople’, in L. Brubaker, A. Kelley, and F. Vanni (eds), *Skint: Peasants and Poverty in Byzantium*, pagination TBC.
- 2021 (accepted): Reinventing the Capital: The Ideological Use of Monumental Architecture in the Constantinople of Michael VIII (1261-1282), in J. Varsallona, A. Taddei, and M. Vrij (eds), *Eurasian Studies – ‘Εἰς τὴν πόλιν: Strolling through the unbeaten paths of Constantinople*, XIX.1, pagination TBC.
- 2019: ‘Stranieri nella Costantinopoli dei Paleologi: i rifacimenti di Santa Sofia e il ruolo di Giovanni Peralta’, *Bizantinistica* XX, 263-285.
- 2018: ‘Un’inedita scultura di Vefa Kilise Camii a Istanbul. Considerazioni sulle lastre dell’esonartece paleologo’, *Minima Mediaevalia - Atti Accademia Roveretana degli Agiati*, IX, VIII A, 85-96.
- 2018: ‘The Date and the Function of the Northern Annex of Vefa Kilise Camii at Istanbul’, in *Bisanzio e l'Occidente*, I, 29-42.
- 2017: ‘Some Remarks on the Iconography of the Vault of the Oratory of the Forty Martyrs at Syracuse’, in M.B. Panov (ed.), *The Byzantine Missionary Activity and its Legacy in Europe* – Proceedings of the 4th International Symposium ‘Days of Justinian I’, Skopje, 11-12 November, 2016, Skopje, 157-167.
- 2017: ‘Le fasi costruttive d’età bizantina della Vefa Kilise Camii di Istanbul. Ipotesi e considerazioni’, in F. Conca, C. Castelli (eds), *Bisanzio tra tradizione e modernità. Ricordando Gianfranco Fiaccadori*, Milan, 209-232.
- 2016: ‘*The very horizon shook with the noise*. Bells and Belfries from the West to Palaiologan Constantinople’, in M.B. Panov (ed.), *Byzantium and The Heritage of Europe: Connecting the Cultures* - Proceedings of the 3rd International Symposium ‘Days of Justinian I’, Skopje, 30-31 October 2015, Skopje, 177-183.
- 2014: [with G. Petriglieri] ‘Barlassina - San Giulio’, in G. Agosti, J. Stoppa, R. Sacchi (eds), *Bernardino Luini e i suoi figli. Itinerari*, Milan, 24-27.

PRIZES, RESEARCH AND FUNDING AWARDS

- 2020: **Vasari Project grant – Università di Salerno**. Five-month project aimed at mapping, record, and index of the iconographic and documentary evidence relating to the women of Medieval Salerno (€6000).
- 2020: **Andreas Pittas prize – Byzantinist Society of Cyprus**. Best graduate paper in the field of Art History of the 3rd International CBMS - Byzantinist Society of Cyprus (€500).
- 2017 – 2020: **PG Research Support Fund – University of Birmingham**. College of Arts and Law Graduate School. Payment of conferences fees and related travel expenses (£1436).
- 2019: **Summer Fellowship – Dumbarton Oaks**. Centre for Byzantine Studies, Harvard University, Washington D.C, living expenses and maintenance allowance for two months (\$2400).
- 2019: **British Institute at Ankara Research Grant [with Prof L. Brubaker]**. Grant awarded for a thermographic survey on the Palaiologan (1261-1453) buildings of Constantinople (£4000).
- 2016 – 2019: **BRIHC doctoral award – University of Birmingham**. Payment of fees and full stipend (£14777 per annum) awarded for doctoral research (36 months).
- 2018: **Conference organisation and travel fund – University of Birmingham**. Funding awarded by the College of Art and Law to organise the 20th CBOMGS Postgraduate Colloquium, June 2019 (amount awarded: £1430) and three academic terms events and PG activities for GEM – Gate to the Eastern Mediterranean, the PG society of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (amount awarded: £600), and to cover the travel expenses of the students involved in the panel ‘Fame: Patrons and Memory in Byzantium’ (I-IV panels) at Leeds IMC 2018, University of Leeds, 2nd-5th July 2018 (amount awarded: £1228).
- 2018: **Cappadocia in Context – Koç University – ANAMED**. BNY Mellon scholarship for Summer school full fees and living expenses.
- 2013 – 2015: **Specialisation School award – Università degli Studi di Milano**. Payment of fees and full stipend (€10.000 per annum) awarded for Specialisation School research and training (24 months).
- 2014: **6th Summer School in Thessaloniki – Centre d’études byzantines, Néo-helléniques et Sud-est européennes de l’EHESS, Paris**. Payment of full fees and living expenses.
- 2012: **Yunus Emre Scholarship – TÖMER, Ankara Üniversitesi, Bursa, Turkey**. Payment of full fees and living expenses (3 months).

EMPLOYMENT

Teaching Experience

Undergraduate/Postgraduate Teaching – Università degli Studi di Salerno (Italy):

I am currently assessing (through oral and written examination) students of the MA courses of Medieval Art History and Illuminated Manuscripts (Prof Francesca Dell’Acqua) and tutoring those students who aim to write their MA dissertation on a topic related to my research and area of expertise.

- 2021: **‘Medieval Art History’ – tutoring and marking**, DISPAC (Dipartimento di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale)
- 2021: **‘Illuminated Manuscripts’ – tutoring and marking**, DISPAC (Dipartimento di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale)

Undergraduate Teaching – University of Birmingham (UK):

My role consisted of planning, delivering, and assessing semi-independently designed seminars across a range of topics relating to Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and Middle Ages. Seminars addressed group of 15-20 students. One of these seminars was entirely based on the Medieval and Early Renaissance collections of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts (University of Birmingham), where the students were introduced to its major pieces.

- Spring 2019: **‘Living the Middle Ages’ (seminars) – teaching and marking**, SHaC (School of History and Cultures).
- Autumn 2018: **‘Archaeology in Istanbul Today’ (seminars)**, for Dr R. Macrides’ Project ‘Constantinople’, CAHA (Department of Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology).
- Autumn 2018: **‘Barbarians and Transformation of the Roman World’ (seminars) – teaching and marking**, CAHA.
- Autumn 2018: **‘Discovering the Middle Ages’ (seminars) – teaching and marking**, SHaC.
- Spring 2018: **‘Byzantium and transformation of the Roman World’ (seminars) – teaching and marking**, CAHA.
- Autumn 2017: **‘Barbarians and transformation of the Roman World’ (seminars) – teaching and marking**, CAHA.

Postgraduate Teaching – Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy):

Two-hour lectures with extensive visual coverage, most of which addressed ca. 50-150 students with a background in Medieval Art History. Lectures focussed on the architecture of some of the most significant monuments of Byzantium and the Medieval world.

May 4th and 5th, 2016: Lecture for the course 'Byzantine Culture' (Prof M. della Valle) – '**Constantinople during the Komnenian and the Palaiologan Era**'.
June 27th, 2014: Lecture for the course 'Museology and Art Criticism' (Prof F. Tissoni) – '**Paul the Silentiary's Description of Hagia Sophia**'.
May 10th, 2014: Lecture for 'Special Qualifying Courses: Information Technology for Teachers' – '**Web Resources for Iconography and History of Art**'.
October 30th and 31st, 2013: Lecture for the course 'History of Medieval Art' (Prof M. della Valle) – '**Saint Marc in Venice**'.

Archaeological work and research projects

- **August – September 2018: Archivist**, Küçüyalı Arkeopark, Istanbul, Turkey.
- **July – August 2018: Site Manager and PA of the Director**, British Academy-funded project 'At the Crossroads of Empires': the Longobard Church of Sant' Ambrogio at Montecorvino Rovella (Salerno), Italy, University of Birmingham/ The Ironbridge Institute (Birmingham)/ Università degli Studi – Salerno.
- **June - August 2017: Archaeologist and supervisor of the documentation**, Küçüyalı Arkeopark, Istanbul, Turkey.
- **March - June 2017: Volunteer and cataloguer**, The Barber Institute of Fine Arts (Coin collection – Byzantine section), Birmingham.
- **February 2014: Art Historian**, Università degli Studi di Milano - Infrared thermography measurement campaign carried on the church of San Giulio masonry structures in Barlassina, Monza e Brianza, Italy.
- **June - December 2013: Intern archaeologist**, Superintendence of Archaeological Heritage for Lombardy: fieldwork in the archaeological site of Pieve of San Bartolomeo in Bornato (Cazzago San Martino, Brescia, Italy).

Editing/Other

- **June 2021 – December 2021: External Referee** for the periodical Italian research assessment exercise (VQR 2015-2019) – The Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institute (ANVUR).
- **June 2021: Contributor** (with one case study: The Monastery of St John of Petra, Istanbul) to the project *Mapping Eastern Europe – North of Byzantium* (Princeton University), <https://mappingeasterneurope.princeton.edu/item/the-monastery-of-st-john-of-petra-istanbul.html>
- **September 2018 – September 2019: General Co-Editor**, *Diogenes*, the open-access and peer-review online journal edited by the postgraduate students at the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies, University of Birmingham.
- **October 2018 – June 2019: Digital Communication Administrator**, CeSMA (Centre for the Study of the Middle Ages), University of Birmingham.
- **2017: Anonymous reviewer**, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies of the University of Birmingham.
- **June – July 2016: Translator**, from French to Italian of Henri Stierlin 'Grecia e Persia. Il dialogo delle culture antiche: Samo, Persepoli, Atene', Editoriale Jaca Book, Milan, Italy.

RESEARCH PAPERS DELIVERED

- 2021: 'The Importance of Being Bisantia: Names and Authority in Medieval Salerno', **Female Moral-Doctrinal Authority in the Middle Ages**, Università degli Studi – Salerno, 14 May 2021.
- 2021: 'New Voices: The Imperial Geography of Palaiologan Constantinople (1261-1453)', **CAHA/CBOMGS/BRIHC Research Seminar 2020-21**, University of Birmingham, 18th March 2021.
- 2020: 'Reinventing the Capital: The Ideological Use of Monumental Architecture in Palaiologan Constantinople (1261-1453)', **3rd International CBMS – Byzantinist Society of Cyprus**, Nicosia, 17th-19th January 2020.
- 2019: 'Contextualising Palaiologan architecture in Constantinople: Benefits from a multidisciplinary approach', **BRIHC Summer Seminar Series**, 21st May 2019.
- 2019: 'The Palaiologan Restoration of the Myrelaion', **The Oxford University Byzantine Society's XXI International Graduate Conference**, 22nd -23rd February 2019.
- 2018: 'Stranieri nella Costantinopoli dei Paleologi: l'architetto Latino di Santa Sofia' - Interazioni fra Turchi, Greci e Latini in età bizantina e postbizantina, **I convegno SISMED della medievistica italiana**, Bertinoro, 14th-18th June 2018.
- 2018: 'What is it for? Annex buildings in Byzantine architecture', **CAHA Colloquium**, 2nd May 2018, UoB.
- 2018: 'Saint Demetrios of the Palaiologoi: the Building and the Saint' - The Post-1204 Byzantine World: New Approaches and Novel Directions, **51st Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies**, Edinburgh, 13th-15th April 2018.
- 2017: 'A Picture is worth a thousand words: the legitimacy of John V', poster for the **Coin Collection Study Day: Past, Present and Future**, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, 18th November 2017.
- 2017: 'The Poor Shall Eat and Be Satisfied: The Ideal of Christian Poverty in the Refectories of Constantinople', *Skint: Peasants and Poverty in Byzantium (III)*, **Leeds IMC 2017**, University of Leeds, Wednesday 5th July 2017.
- 2017: 'Palaiologan renovation of Hagia Sophia: multicultural interaction in Late Constantinople' - Multiculturalism from Late Antiquity to Modernity: **18th Annual Postgraduate Colloquium**, CBOMGS, UoB, 3rd June 2017.
- 2017: 'Mandylion or Sacro Volto - San Bartolomeo degli Armeni – Genoa', **Reconsidering the Concept of Decline and the Arts of the Palaiologan Era**, 24th-25th February 2017, UoB.

- 2016: 'Alcune considerazioni sull'annesso nord di Vefa Kilise Camii (İstanbul)', **Prima giornata di studi del Centro di Ricerca Coordinato Bisanzio e l'Occidente** - Milano, 16th November 2016.
- 2016: 'The Oratory of Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in Syracuse: Byzantine Sicily between East and West', 4th International Scientific Symposium '**Days Of Justinian I**', Skopje, 11th-12th November 2016.
- 2016: 'Notes on the History and Architecture of the Manastır Mescidi in Istanbul', **23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies** - Belgrade, 22th-27th August 2016.
- 2015: '*The very horizon shook with the noise*. Bells and Belfries from the West to Palaiologan Constantinople', '**Days Of Justinian I**', Skopje, 30-31 October 2015.
- 2015: 'Istanbul bizantina: architettura e contesti urbanistici', **Nuove Voci 2015**, Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, Milan.
- 2013: 'Vefa Kilise Camii ieri e oggi', *Bisanzio tra tradizione e modernità*, **XII giornata di Studi Bizantini dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Bizantini**, Milan, Università degli Studi, 11th -12th December 2013.

EVENTS ORGANISED:

- 2022: [with M.A. Rossi] organisation of the panel 'Bridging Courts: Women in Late Byzantium', **24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies** (Venice – Padua, 22-27 August 2022).
- 2020: Panel '*Ἐἰς τὴν πόλιν*: Strolling through unbeaten paths of Constantinople' for the **3rd International CBMS** of the Byzantinist Society of Cyprus, Nicosia, 17th January 2020.
- 2018: [with F. Lopez-Santos Kornberger] Organisation of I-IV panels 'Fame: Patrons and Memory in Byzantium', **Leeds IMC 2018**, University of Leeds, 2nd July 2018
- 2017 – 2018: President of GEM – **Gate to the Eastern Mediterranean**, the PG society of the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies. Events and PG activities organisation, supervision and chairing for three academic terms.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies
- Bisanzio e l'Occidente

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Languages

Italian – Native speaker. **English** – Understanding: excellent; speaking: excellent; writing: excellent. **French** – U: good; S: good; W: good. **German** – U: elementary; S: elementary; W: elementary. **Turkish** – U: elementary; S: elementary; W: elementary. **Modern Greek** – U: elementary; S: elementary; W: elementary. **Byzantine Greek**: excellent reading competence. **Latin**: excellent reading competence.