A Workshop on Byzantine Epigraphy
April 26-28

by:
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The workshop will offer an introduction to the field of Byzantine epigraphy as well as an overview of Greek inscriptions from Late Antiquity to the fifteenth century. We will begin with the vital question “What is a Byzantine inscription?” and proceed to answer it by surveying the material contexts in which inscriptions from early Byzantium until the fifteenth century are found, including: stone, frescos, icons, metalwork, wood, ivories, textiles etc., as well as the social and cultural imperatives which enabled their production. Specific focus will be given to middle and late Byzantium in light of the numerous epigrams (metrical inscriptions) which flourished in this period, since the decision to use metre instead of prose has prompted important questions about patronage and self-fashioning. We will also examine the phenomenon of bilingual inscriptions, rather neglected in scholarship but with the potential to offer unique insights into inter-cultural contact. Finally, we will ask, who was able to decipher and read Byzantine inscriptions? Did a largely illiterate population have any opportunity to interact with inscriptions? Participants will be introduced to the technical tools (databases, etc.) as well as the distinct palaeographical methodology of working with medieval Greek inscriptions.

The workshop will be divided into three hour and a half-long sessions (see programme below) over the course of three days, Tuesday April 26, Wednesday April 27, Thursday April 28, 4:30-6:00pm, in East Pyne 161. Background material will be distributed in advance to registered participants. Interested graduate students and faculty are asked to RSVP by writing to: ebourbou@princeton.edu

Day 1:
What is a Byzantine inscription?
A short history of Byzantine epigraphy
Categories
Bibliography and technical tools
Inscriptions of the early Byzantine period

Day 2:
Inscriptions of the middle and late Byzantine period (dedicatory inscriptions, tomb inscriptions etc.)
Metrical inscriptions

Day 3:
Bilingual inscriptions
The palaeography of Byzantine inscriptions: interaction of manuscripts and inscriptions
Byzantine inscriptions and their beholders: the perception of Byzantine inscriptions

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