



Lighting in Byzantium

4th International ILA Round-Table

10-15 October 2011

Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki,
Greece

First Circular and Call for Papers

The International Lychnological Association (ILA) in cooperation with the Archaeological Institute of Macedonian and Thracian Studies, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the [Museum of Byzantine Culture](#) is organizing a Round Table to discuss lighting devices in Byzantium. The Round Table will take place in Thessaloniki, the largest city of Northern Greece, from Monday morning, October 10th through Friday afternoon, October 15th 2011 at the Museum of Byzantine Culture.

The 4th International ILA Round-Table in Thessaloniki, with its main topic “*Lighting in Byzantium*”, is part of the series of colloquia promoted by the ILA that allow specialists to develop a specific theme (chronological, geographical, typological, etc.) during an exclusive meeting, with more time available for exchange than during the large open triennial congresses.

While the symbolic, political and religious importance of artificial light increased dramatically during Late Antiquity and in the Byzantine era, the research on lighting in Byzantium has been astonishingly neglected in the scientific literature, at least in comparison to lighting research for the preceding historical periods. Nevertheless, the major economic, geopolitical and social changes during the Byzantine period implicated a radical modification of lighting devices, and the investigation of these relationships deserves great interest.

Lighting devices in Byzantium had multiple roles far beyond utilitarian purposes. They provided illumination for everyday activities, at their work, homes, public spaces, and places of worship. Lighting devices were an important element of the significant rituals of Byzantine private, sacred and social lives and, at the end, were an accompaniment to their final resting place. Valuable information may be derived from artifacts found in excavations or exhibited in museums and private collections. The written sources and depictions of lighting devices on mosaics, frescos, icons, textiles and manuscripts help scientists to complete their notions about Lighting in Byzantium.

Round Table goals will focus on Byzantine lighting devices, including:

- Their typology and chronology
- Their production and workshops
- Terminology
- The symbolic role of light and lighting devices in Byzantium
- The use of lighting devices in everyday and ecclesiastical life

The Round Table in Thessaloniki will comprise oral and poster presentations. The languages of the conference will be Greek and English.

During the conference Round Table participants will have the opportunity to visit several archaeological sites and museums. Supplemental activities are planned, offering the delegates an opportunity to become further acquainted with lighting devices in Byzantium.

Round Table participants will also be able to visit “Artificial Lighting from the *Byzantine Era to the 20th century*”, a special exhibition held in the Folk Life and Ethnological Museum of Macedonia-Thrace. This exhibition is part of the Greek Ministry of Culture & Tourism program called “*Thessaloniki: Crossroads of Civilizations*”. The exhibition will be held in October 2011 at the Museum, and will focus on Thessaloniki, a city whose privileged geographical location at an intersection of land and sea routes made it a place where different cultures met, a wide variety of cults and religions co-existed, and where technological innovations appeared, were assimilated and disseminated. These influences helped give Thessaloniki’s urban physiognomy its unique cosmopolitan and eclectic character.

REGISTRATION

Archaeologists, historians and other scholars who are interested in Lighting in Byzantium are invited to participate in this Round Table. Candidates are requested to fill out the registration form (attached) with the suggested title of their paper and register **before 15 July 2011** by e-mail to the following addresses: vmisailidou@culture.gr and motsianos@gmail.com.

The registration fee for the Lighting in Byzantium Round Table is 70 Euros for ILA members and 100 Euros for nonmembers, which covers all conference materials, costs of organization, as well as refreshments during the Round Table. The reduced price for students and scholars from Eastern Europe, Near East and Africa is 30 Euros for ILA members, 50 Euros for non-members.

Participants must arrange for their own accommodations in Thessaloniki. Most activities will take place at the Museum of Byzantine Culture, which is located at 2 Stratou Avenue, Thessaloniki 546 40, Greece.