

**Vienna Dialogues**  
**Mobility and Migration: the Perspective of Written Culture**  
**17-18 June 2016**

**Mobility and Rhetoric of Friendship in the Byzantine-Italian Scholarly Communities of the Fifteenth Century**

LEONTE, Florin  
Villa I Tatti, Harvard University  
[vizavi21@gmail.com](mailto:vizavi21@gmail.com)

Abstract:

Along with social practices, objects, and manuscripts, letters show evidence about complex networks which often engendered new social and political territories. Letters can also explain how individuals like the scholars connected across distant territories and how they extended their influence or manipulated social capital. In late medieval eastern Mediterranean, letters seemingly acquired an enhanced role not only in the inter-individual communication but also for insuring the mobility of individuals or knowledge within major intellectual communities. This was the case of the Byzantine and the humanist scholars active at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. This presentation will explore the relation between on the one hand, the various usages of rhetoric in Byzantium and humanist Italy, and, on the other hand, the cultural and political framing of cross-national networks. In addition, I will look into evidence that suggests how the increased mobility of scholars began to reflect the configuration of a new vision of cross-cultural friendship.