

## Einladung zum Gastvortrag

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### **Illness and Healing: The Ministry Cycle in the Chora Monastery and the Literary Work of Theodore Metochites**

Although research on the relationship between Theodore Metochites and the Chora Monastery has concentrated largely on the parekklesion, more recent studies tend to focus on seeking data that could justify Metochites' inspiration for the depiction of certain narrative scenes in the narthexes of the church. In the interpretation of the scenes a prevailing view is that these reflect Metochites' political office and his career as a statesman.

In the case of the Ministry Cycle, however, I would contend that the factors that influenced the iconography are not Metochites' office, but, rather, his spiritual world. Thus, I shall attempt here to interpret the Ministry Cycle in the narthexes, in accordance with Metochites' innermost beliefs and contemplations. Persistently recurrent in Metochites' oeuvre are his views on the bounty of knowledge and the insuperable superiority of the spiritual world, in contrast to the darkening of man's intellect, that results from the abandonment of the ideal life. Man continuously faces these two opposing conditions during his life, as the experience of the angelic and the daemonic, as a struggle between Good and Evil. This theoretical framework which is developed in Metochites' oeuvre, generates a series of questions that motivate my paper. What is the significance of knowledge and how does this fundamental notion influence the iconography and connect the scenes of the Ministry Cycle? How are the consequences of the demonic action of man's spiritual death illustrated? How does Metochites interpret healing and how is it linked with the wide cycle of cures? What is the effect of the philosophical thinking of Nicaea on the organization of the iconographic programme in the narthexes and the design of the architectural surfaces?

The answers to the above questions make up a new hermeneutic framework for the Ministry Cycle in Chora, on the basis of which several of the peculiarities of the cycle, which make it unique in Late Byzantine painting, can be explained.

Ort: Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik der Universität Wien

1010 Wien, Postgasse 7, 1. Stiege, 3. Stock

Zeit: Montag, 11. Juni 2018, 18:30 Uhr

Anschließend wird zu einem Glas Wein gebeten! Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!