

Dear Colleagues and Students,

You are kindly invited to the workshop entitled 'Materialising the Edges of Empire?' organized by the Department of History, in collaboration with Koç University, ANAMED, and University of Birmingham.

**Date:** 24 February 2026, Tuesday

**Avenue:** C Block Amphi

**Title:** Materialising the Edges of Empire?

**Speakers:** Rebecca Darley (ANAMED/Krea University), Fermüde Gulsevinç (ANAMED), Turaç Hakalmaz (Başkent University), Ivana Jevtić (Koç University), Pelin Yoncanci (METU), Daniel Reynolds (University of Birmingham), Irakli Tezelashvili (ANAMED/The Courtauld Institute of Art), Luca Zavagno (Bilkent University), Owen Miller (Bilkent University)

**Workshop's Program:**

- **9:30** Welcome and Coffee
- **10:00** Opening remarks
- **10:30** Panel One (paired discussion + open discussion): Fermüde Gulsevinç, Ivana Jevtić
- **11:30** Coffee break
- **12:00** Panel Two: Luca Zavagno and Owen Miller
- **13:00** Lunch
- **14:00** Panel Three: Rebecca Darley, Pelin Yoncanci, Turaç Hakalmaz
- **15:30** Coffee break
- **15:45** Panel Four: Dan Reynolds, and Irakli Tezelashvili
- **16:45** Plenary discussion / roundtable
- **17:30 (approx.)** Closing remarks
- **Evening** Dinner

**Abstract:**

Over the last decades, Byzantine studies have expressed a tension in the field that directly reflects the traces the empire itself has left us. Was Constantinople the beating heart and exclusive source of Byzantine identity, innovation, and, indeed, existence? Or was the empire shaped, sustained, and defined by its diverse and dynamic territorial expanse? On the one hand, it isn't difficult to find Byzantine intellectuals bemoaning distance from the capital (as like unto death itself!) or heaping praise on the metropole as the source of all that is good. On the other hand, material sources, especially, testify to vibrant cultural production all across the empire and along its borders, which combined local and metropolitan currents in distinctive ways. In scholarship, this dichotomy is variously expressed. Art historical attributions regularly reinforce a metropolitan focus by insisting that 'lower quality' work must inevitably have been 'provincial' (rather than simply 'less good') and, conversely, that anything of the highest quality must have come from Constantinople. Scholarly traditions rooted in the erstwhile imperial 'peripheries', conversely, can perpetuate parochial assertions of uniqueness that overlook or obscure transregional inspiration drawn from empire-wide phenomena. In this one-day workshop, we seek to explore the materialisation of empire at its geographical edges, using specific objects and our various specialisms in Byzantium beyond Constantinople to interrogate existing paradigms and potentially suggest new ones for relationships, in the historical past and the scholarly present, rooted in the local and the global, the material and the intellectual, and in the knowingly and implicitly colonial.