

Living Byzantine Liturgy – Workshop at the University of Vienna brought together Orthodox and Catholic experts

From 24th to 26th In January 2024, scientists from various Orthodox and Catholic churches at the University of Vienna devoted themselves to the topic of lived Byzantine liturgy. The international workshop [“Lived Byzantine Liturgy between Local Context and Standardized Tradition”](#) was organized by the [Department of Theology and History of the Christian East](#).

In addition to Thomas Németh and David Heith-Stade (Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna), Daniel Galadza (PIO, Rome), Alexandru Ioniță, (Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu) and Maria Takala-Roszczenko, (University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio) participated in the conception, in organizational terms Daniela Wiedl and Olha Uhryn.

The intention of the event was to explore the tension between lived worship practice and standardized liturgical traditions and their reflection in liturgical books. 21 speakers from 12 countries, including an Orthodox bishop and an Athos monk, highlighted different thematic aspects in 4 panels, which were discussed with other invited experts.

Questions about liturgy in the “diaspora” and in new contexts were presented by Daniel Benga, Ioan Moga, Vassa Larin and Ivan Birr. In the [first public keynote speech](#), Metropolitan Job Getcha argued for the need for a liturgical theology that provides orientation, especially in view of the complex diaspora experiences.

Thomas Pott, Aleksandr Andreev, Andriy Dudchenko, Vasyl Rudeyko and Mihail K. Quaramah took part in the panel on liturgical renewal. Chrysostomos Nassis, Vitaliy Permiakov, Daniel Galadza, András Dobos and Thomas Németh were dedicated to publishing liturgical books. Issues of liturgical translation and music were presented by Damaskinos Olkinuora, Gregory Tucker, Olga Lossky-Laham, Elias Haslwanter and Alexandru Ioniță. In the [second public lecture](#), Silviu Bunta pointed out liturgical challenges in the face of ambiguity of language. Both keynote presentations will remain online on our websites.

The workshop lectures addressed numerous current topics. Dealing with the diversity of liturgical traditions was also discussed, as was the question of the use of digital technologies in prayer. Editions and translations have been perceived as a major challenge in various traditions. The search for a criterion became apparent when exchanging experimental experiences. Good role models are important for liturgical culture, and liturgical reforms require sound scientific support. Dealing with biblical and philosophical references and sensitive questions such as dealing with anti-Jewish tendencies in liturgical texts were also discussed. Overall, it became clear that there is a wide field for reflection on the topics discussed and that the newly established and in-depth contacts can promote closer cooperation.

The final discussion showed that despite different church affiliations, there are numerous similar challenges, but also different approaches. The workshop proved to be a place of fruitful academic exchange, as the topic of liturgy unites Byzantine Christians of different denominations. The results of this rich and inspiring exchange of ideas will be published in a conference proceeding.

Thomas Németh and Olha Uhryn