

LUDWIG-MAXIMILIANS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNCHEN
INSTITUT FÜR BYZANTINISTIK, SPÄTANTIKE UND BYZANTINISCHE
KUNSTGESCHICHTE UND NEOGRÄZISTIK

WORKSHOP

MAY 19–20, 2022



BEYOND THE VEIL

REVEALING THE MYSTERY OF CURTAINS

LMU

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Across cultures and epochs, humans have always surrounded themselves with curtains. For Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Middle Ages, explanatory approaches have found that curtains functioned as a means of staging esteemed persons or venerated objects and of defining transitions between different spheres such as life and death, ruler and ruled or human and divine. Curtains also hide; they activate the viewer's imagination and evoke the unattainable desire to look behind the veil.

Pliny the Elder exemplified this fascination inherent to curtains through his narrative on a famous competition between two artists. The painter Zeuxis tries to open the painted curtain of his competitor Parhassios. In this anecdote, the deception is not only achieved through the realistic painted imitation of the textile, but it also lies in the longing to open it and to see what could possibly be hidden behind it. The mere sight and perception of the curtain is thus connected with the need to reveal the unknown, and the fascination with the hidden.

The purpose of this workshop is to examine curtains as well as veils and their staging functions from a wide variety of perspectives in an interdisciplinary manner, spanning epochs and cultural areas. Through the combination of iconographic evidence, written sources, and archaeological remains, light can be shed on the respective cultural-historical backgrounds in connection with curtains. Therefore, the various sessions will explore how curtains function in profane, sepulchral, imperial, and religious contexts. Scholars from various disciplines will try to get a glimpse behind the curtain and try to reveal some of these textiles' secrets.

We invite PhD candidates and early career researchers to submit abstracts or concept papers in German or English of not more than 250 words, together with a CV, by email to C.Mairhanser@campus.lmu.de. The deadline for submitting proposals is January 31, 2022; we will announce our decision by mid-February.

The workshop will take place in Munich (with an option to join online) from May 19–20, 2022. Papers should not exceed 25 minutes in length and will be followed by 15 minutes of discussion.