

Session title: Religions as a means for/against communicating sciences: Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Reformation

**THE EARTHQUAKES IN BYZANTINE WRITERS
INTERPRETATIONS BETWEEN NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL.**

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Abstract

Earthquakes are for the medieval thought one of the less conceivable natural phenomena resisting to a global explanation, as pointed by G. Dagron in his classical study entitled “When the Earth shakes”.

Based on a selection of representative texts on this subject, we try to show how Byzantine authors described, understood and explained this phenomenon arousing the religious imaginary as an Apocalyptic sign but also requiring rational explanations.

First of all, we will insist on the identity of the authors (historians, chroniclers, scholars, theologians but also astrologers) in order to highlight the core of their ideas related to the context that gave them birth.

Secondly, we aim to investigate the concept of nature derived therefrom and the conceptual elements (religious and/or philosophical) they use for this purpose in the broader perspective of God’s relationship with Man and Nature.

In conclusion, we try to comprehend how these diverse explanations, fluctuating between Natural Causes and religious beliefs on Divine Economy, reflect the regressions, impulses and major conceptual tendencies that cross the history of ideas and sciences in Byzantium revealing the issues attached to them over the centuries.