

# Past and present faces of time



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM  
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
Worksheet **SPRING**



MUSEUM  
OF BYZANTINE  
CULTURE

**Before beginning your tour in the Museum, read the information in the coloured boxes.**

During the Byzantine period (330-1453 AD) there were many ways to number the years, and calculate the time between the events. At first (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> cent. AD) the Byzantines used the old **consular dating**, keeping the dates **according to the names of the two consuls** who took office every year in Constantinople. Later on (6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> cent.) they dated the years according to the **Year of the Accession** of the current Emperor in Constantinople. After the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Byzantines numbered the years starting from the **Year of the Creation of the World by God** (Anno Mundi), which allegedly took place **5508** years before Christ.

### Go to room 2 The Early Byzantine City and Dwelling

Find in the right part of the room the coin of the **Emperor Justinian 1<sup>st</sup>** (527 to 565 AD)



► What is the coin made of ?

\_\_\_\_\_

► In the reverse of the coin the value K (=20) is written. In the obverse a man is represented. Who could this man be?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Can you count in the Latin numerical system?**

I	___	IV	___	___	7	___	10	XIII	___
___	2	V	___	___	8	___	11	___	14
___	3	VI	___	IX	___	___	12	XV	___

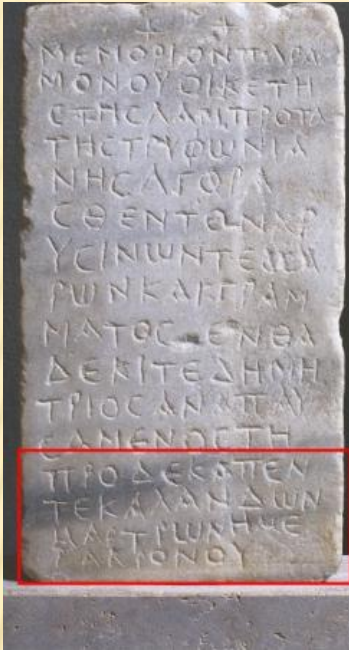
► On the reverse side of the coin it is written in Latin: ANNO XIII. What year (**anno**) is XIII?

\_\_\_\_\_

► When was this coin minted?

\_\_\_\_\_





**Go to the room 3**  
***From the Elysian Fields to the Christian Paradise***

Find the inscription of **Paramonos** and **Demetrios**.

- ▶ What is it made of ?

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ Where were these inscriptions usually placed?

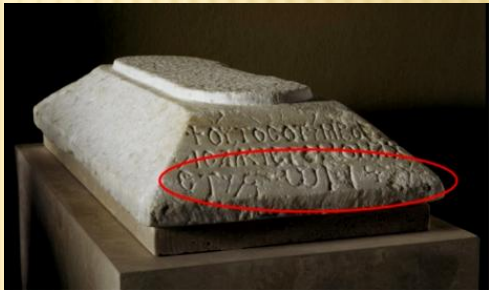
\_\_\_\_\_

In the last four verses we can read that Demetrios died  
 “15 days before the calendae of March on the day of Saturn”.

- ▶ Can you find the exact day \_\_\_\_\_  
 and the date of Demetrios’ death? \_\_\_\_\_

**Go to the room 7**  
***The Twilight of Byzantium (1204-1453)***

Find in the left part of the room the impost of a mullion used in the grave of the **monk Isaac**.



- ▶ What is it made of ?

\_\_\_\_\_

In the inscription we can read:  
 “This tomb belongs to Isaac the monk. Year 6856 from the Creation of the World”.

- ▶ Can you find the year of Isaac’s death?

\_\_\_\_\_

- ▶ The Byzantine Museum of Thessaloniki was founded in the year 7502 from the Creation of the World. Which year is this according to our dating system?

\_\_\_\_\_

The Early Byzantines numbered the days according to fixed days in the month, like the **calendae** (=1st day of the month), the **nonae** (8th day before the full moon) and the **ides** (the full moon day). In Late Roman Times the days could also be named either after gods (e.g. Saturn) or after planets and stars (e.g. Sun). That’s where the English words **Saturday** and **Sunday** come from. Finally, the Byzantine Greeks took the names of the days from the Jews. The Jews considered **Sabbath** (=Saturday) as the most important day of the week. It was that day when God rested after having created the World. For the Jews Sunday was the first day of the week, when the preparation for Sabbath began. For the Byzantine Greeks however, as well as the rest of the Christians, the most important day of the week is **Sunday** (=Kyriaki, in Greek), the day devoted to **Kyrios** (=Dominus, God).

**Do you know how the Spring months took their name?**

**Match each month to its origin**

Month	Original word
March	< aperire = open
April	< Maia = Graeco-Roman goddess of Fertility
May	< Mars = Roman god of War

So, which was the month of the festivals in honour of Juno, the mother of Mars ? \_\_\_\_\_

Which was the month when the flowers blossom ? \_\_\_\_\_

And, which month was devoted to the goddess of nature and fertility ? \_\_\_\_\_

**What are the names of the Spring months in your own language?**

**Do you notice any affinity with the month names in Latin?**

▶ Names of the Spring months in \_\_\_\_\_ (language)

▶ Affinity: YES or NO?

**Go to the room 11 - *Discovering the Past***

**Observe the mosaic floor which is dated to the 5<sup>th</sup> cent.**

▶ What is it made of? \_\_\_\_\_

▶ Find the personification of April.  
Notice what he has on his head.

▶ Find the personification of July.  
Notice what he holds in his hand.

▶ Why, do you think, is April represented this way?

▶ Why, do you think, is July represented this way?

▶ Notice the picture of March and April below. Can you tell who is who? It may not be all Greek to you after all. How is March dressed and why? What does April carry in his hands and why?

Part of the mosaic floor in an early Byzantine building. Thebes. 6th cent. AD

