

Past and present faces of time



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Worksheet SUMMER



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 (4th-6th 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 (6th - 7th cent.) they dated the years **according to the Year of the Accession of the current Emperor in Constantinople**. After the 8th 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 1st** (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?

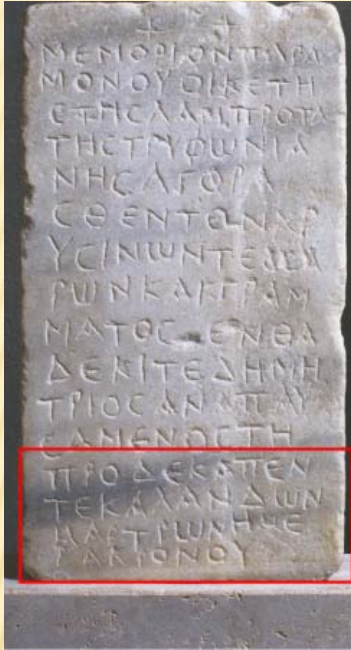
Can you count in the Latin numerical system?

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**.

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).



- ▶ 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?

**Do you know how the Summer months took their name?
Match each month to its origin**

Month		Original word
June	<	Julius (Caesar)
July	<	Augustus = roman title for the Emperor
August	<	Juno = Roman goddess

So, which was the month named after Juno, the 1st consul of Rome ? _____

In which month was J. Caesar born ? _____

And, which month was named after Octavian the first Roman Emperor ? _____

What are the names of the Summer months in your own language?

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

- ▶ Names of the Summer months in _____ (language)

- ▶ Affinity: YES or NO?

Go to the room 11 - *Discovering the Past*

Observe the mosaic floor which is dated to the 5th 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 pictures of July and August below. Can you tell who is who? It may not be all Greek to you after all. What does July hold and why? _____

▶ What does August carry in his right hand and why? _____

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



Part of the mosaic floor from the house next to the ancient theater of Argos 6th cent. AD