

**Session Title: Circulation And Communication Of The Chemical Knowledge In
The Greek-Speaking Communities From Antiquity To The 17th Century**

**NATURAL PHILOSOPHY AND ALCHEMY IN THE BYZANTINE
PERIOD: A CONTROVERSIAL RELATIONSHIP**

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Abstract

This paper addresses a significant void in the current historiography of science by surveying and mapping a previously unexplored area: the relationship between alchemy and natural philosophy in the Byzantine era. Our study is based on the examination of the life and works of the scholars who presented works on both natural philosophy and alchemy.

The main questions we examine in this paper are the following: How the ancient and Christian philosophical traditions were combined with the alchemical? In this new context, what was the artificial and what was the natural? What challenges did the artistic world offer to the category of the natural? Which was the main theoretical approach on the relation between knowing and doing? Which was the byzantine conception of matter and, based on this, did the alchemical techniques imitate nature or attempt to change it?

And finally, how the maker-craftsman attempted to change a nature which was created by the God-Creator.