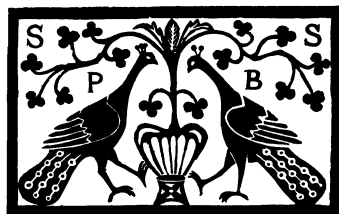

Society News

Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies



Issue 11

November 2004

Performing Byzantium

39th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies

The thirty-ninth spring symposium will take place in Belfast 2-4 April 2005. It will begin mid-morning on Saturday 2 April and will end at tea-time on Monday 4 April. Accommodation will be provided in new student en-suite rooms in the Elms Village, and lectures will be held in the Peter Froggatt Centre, where there will also be computing facilities. The subject is performance.

Byzantium has been characterized as a society without a drama. While it is not absolutely certain that this is true, further investigation reveals that performance and spectacle suffused Byzantine civilization. This symposium will investigate the case for Byzantine drama, in theatres, in theatra, in church festivals, in the use of dialogue but it will also explore other loci of drama in Byzantium: the theatre of the liturgy 'we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth', the role of ceremony, maintaining the empire 'in due proportion and order', and the spectacle of street, hippodrome and tzikanisterion. Polo games, grand speeches, public executions, arriving embassies, departing hunting parties, triumphs, even tournaments are all part of our concern.

We shall concentrate not only on the Great Church and the Great Palace: other parts of the empire and the great non-imperial houses are also important, and the nature of orality and performativity in Byzantium, whether it is seen in ideology, gender or in the performance of the self. We shall investigate a literature in its performance content, but show also how text combined with architecture and art and music and incense combined to create an effect which was multisensual as well as multimedia. How was it performed and how do we know are equally important questions and the answers, the performance indicators, will lead us not just to reconstitute the reception experience of Byzantine literature but to understand a defining aspect of Byzantium as a whole.

Performing Byzantium (cont.)

There will be lectures, communications, exhibitions, receptions, and performances: this first circular invites 12-minute communications, and announces a student competition for a short performance or reconstruction. Sessions will include performing the empire, performance in church, performance in the monastery, performance on the streets, performance at home, performance in the theatre, and speakers will include Margaret Alexiou, Massimo Bernabo, Bente Bjørnholt, Peter Hatlie, Derek Krueger, Alexander Lingas, Ruth Macrides, Rosemary Morris, Stratis Papaioannou, Bissera Pentcheva, Jonathan Shepard, Dion Smythe and Ruth Webb.

A further circular with costings and Easyjet timetable will be distributed before Christmas, and on-line booking will be possible soon on www.qub.ac.uk/ibs. Student reductions and SPBS grants will be available as usual.

For further information contact **Joanne Mitchell** at byz.studies@qub.ac.uk

Remember, it is easier and cheaper to fly to Belfast than to travel by land to many parts of Great Britain! We look forward very much to welcoming you in the home of the AHRB Centre for Byzantine Cultural History.

21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies (ByzCong 2006)

The Organising Committee for ByzCong 2006 met formally for the eighth time on 29 October 2006. The Academic Programme is now virtually complete, structured around the eight themes already announced and with panels associated with each theme. Invitations to the plenary speakers and panel leaders were sent out in July and speakers in each panel are in the process of being finalised. Information about the themes and panels, together with the names of the co-chairs for each theme, can be found on the Congress web-site (www.byzantium.ac.uk, and then follow the link to 2006 Congress); details of the plenary speakers and the panel-leaders will be posted there shortly. In the meantime, you are urged to consult the web-site for general information about the

Congress, and to continue to consult it as the intention is that it will be updated frequently. The next major phase of activity will come in spring 2005 when the First (and only) Circular will be distributed. This will contain registration forms and also the call for Communications and Posters (not to be confused with the poster mentioned below!). The First Circular will be sent out on paper and also electronically. Plans for Exhibitions continue to evolve (in parallel with the evolutions among the directors of the galleries and museums in London and Oxford) as do plans for excursions and a social programme.

AAMB (Convenor ByzCong 2006)
EMJ (Deputy Convenor)

COMPETITION

Calling all students in Byzantine Studies!

The Organizing Committee for ByzCong 2006 announces a competition to design a **Congress Poster**. If you are enrolled in a course dealing with any aspect of Byzantine Studies you are eligible to enter. The prize is free registration for the Congress.

The poster should be eye-catching, with reference to Byzantium and perhaps London, and effective in A4 and A3 format. It should include appropriate visual material, the congress title (21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies), date and location (London, 21-26 August 2006) and the web-address (www.byzantium.ac.uk (link to Congress 2006)).

Submissions, on paper or disk, must be sent to Professor A.A.M. Bryer, Convenor ByzCong 2006, Centre for Byzantine, Modern Greek and Ottoman Studies, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT by **15 December 2004**, with an attestation of your course enrolment.

Unities and disunities in the late medieval, eastern Mediterranean world

*University College, Oxford, March
22nd - 23rd, 2005*

The decline of Byzantium, the rise of the Ottomans, the expansion of Italian trade, and the persistence of crusading: such are the obvious narratives of the history of the late medieval, eastern Mediterranean. Now these grand themes are beginning to disintegrate. Closer scholarly scrutiny of surviving sources, a greater focus on localities, and increased curiosity about identities are all revealing a world of fragmentation and complexity.

The aim of this inter-disciplinary conference is to ask whether amid fragmentations and complexities new unities can be found. Speakers will search for new unities by taking the local, the complex, and the fragmented as their point of departure. They will be putting their own specialist knowledge in wider regional and comparative contexts. Papers will be grouped together into broad themes so that questions that Byzantinists, Ottomanists and scholars of the medieval West hold in common can be explored. How do political regimes legitimize themselves? Who or what exactly is expanding in this period, and at the expense of whom? How does the relationship between religion and identity work? Do charismatic centres of power remain? Is Constantinople at all important? Is this an island world? Is it a Balkan world?

Speakers include:-

David Jacoby, Robert Irwin, Colin Imber, David Abulafia, Jonathan Shepard, Dimiter Angelov, Eurydice Georganteli, Teresa Shawcross, Chris Wright, Julian Chrysostomides, Aphrodite Papayianni, Judith Gilliland, Kate Fleet, Jonathan Harris, Catherine Holmes

Graduate bursaries: A few bursaries are available to meet the travel expenses and/or cost of up to 2 nights' accommodation in Oxford.

Contact Catherine Holmes for details:
catherine.holmes@univ.ox.ac.uk

Registration: Registration is free, but spaces are limited. To register please email:
catherine.holmes@univ.ox.ac.uk

[Accommodation will *not* be available except for speakers and graduate bursary-holders]

S.P.B.S. Chair

Robin Cormack's term of office as chairman of the Society will be coming to an end in 2005 and the Executive Committee would like to invite nominations for his successor. These should be sent to the Honorary Secretary, Jim Crow, at the Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, or by e-mail: J.G.Crow@ncl.ac.uk.

From the Treasurer...

Please could members remember that annual subscription to the Society is due by 31st January, 2005 (£20 /\$40 /40 euros /or £10/ \$20/ 20 euros for students).



Birmingham Archaeology Group

<http://www.byzarch.bham.ac.uk/>

While the archaeology of the Early Byzantine world, broadly defined, is increasingly well served by dedicated or relevant meetings under a variety of headings (e.g., Roman Archaeology, Christian or Early Christian Archaeology, Late Antiquity, and sometimes “Early Medieval” for relevant parts of the post-Roman West), no such forum, either meeting or periodical, exists to facilitate the development of the archaeology of Byzantine world “after Antiquity”. Inspired by the example of the still continuing series of international colloquia *Late Antique Archaeology*, which take place twice yearly, the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (based in the Institute of Archaeology & Antiquity of the School of Historical Studies at the University of Birmingham) (CBO&MGS) seeks to create the first forum dedicated entirely to the advancement of Byzantine archaeology from the seventh century onwards

The aim is to build upon the numerous excellent initiatives of Byzantinists and medievalists in many countries, without which this new step would still not be practical. It is the progress represented by these initiatives (conferences, workshops, projects, and publications) that leads us to believe that a dedicated colloquium series would be fruitful. To reflect the work that is under way in so many fields, part of the justification of this colloquium series must be its interdisciplinarity.

Middle and Late Byzantine, and East Mediterranean Frankish, Archaeology: an international colloquium series

With these aims in mind, the CBO&MGS proposes to organise, in collaboration at different stages with various international partners, a series of colloquia focused upon the archaeology of the Byzantine world from the Dark Age (7th - 9th cc.) onwards. The Byzantine world is understood to be wider than the regions that were at any given time under the direct political control of the Byzantine empire or, in the late period, of its successor states. This wider, and of course fluctuating and tapering, zone of cultural, economic, and political interaction cannot be rigidly demarcated, but should include the Balkans, the Black Sea littoral, parts of Italy, and, to varying degrees, the Crusader states.

In general terms the purposes of this series will be to stimulate a more inclusive and wider-ranging dialogue between specialists than the structures and fora of Byzantine Studies traditionally allow, and to project this dialogue to an increasingly engaged audience of historians. The details of the whole series’ agenda are not pre-cast since committed participants must be able to help in shaping the dialogue that is sought. But it is proposed, in the belief that all will find this useful, that as the series unfolds we use our projects to explore and reflect critically upon the following broad issues:

- a) what the different forms of survey (19th - 21st-c.) and excavation have so far contributed to the analysis of the Dark Age, Middle Byzantine, and Late Byzantine (Byzantino-Frankish) periods;
- b) the distinct and growing contributions of the archaeological and environmental sciences;
- c) the evolving dialogue between archaeological enquiry and historical enquiry (cultural, economic, politico-administrative) within our discipline, and the value, or otherwise, of applying a “pure” or “generic” archaeological agenda;
- d) the role of Dark-Age and Middle-to-Late Byzantine and East Mediterranean Frankish archaeology in 19th-20th-century cultural politics.

Meetings will therefore seek constantly to situate archaeological research in various ways, but this aim includes, and will not be at the expense of, much-needed reflections on the ways in which particular kinds of evidence (from numismatic to palynological for example) are interpreted.

It is planned to hold the first meeting in April 2006.

For further information contact:

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