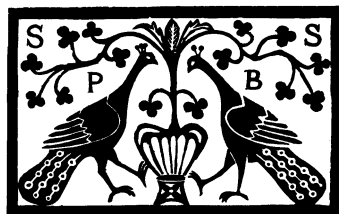

Society News

Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies



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21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies

London, 21-26 August 2006

The programme for the Congress is now nearing its final, exciting, shape. You are urged to consult the Congress web-site (www.byzantinecongress.org.uk) for information on themes, speakers and paper titles.

If you wish to offer a Communication, and have not already done so, please contact immediately the Administrator (Karen Wraith, 12 Mushroom Field, Kingston by Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3LE, UK; kwraith@wraithconf.f9.co.uk), or the Communications Manager (fiona.haarer@kcl.ac.uk). The dead-line has passed but you can still be squeezed in if you hurry. What is wanted now is a title, so that planning the sessions can proceed. The title and a 500-word abstract will be published in the Congress Proceedings, to be available at the Congress: the abstract is needed before April 2006 (sooner if possible). If you wish, a full version of your paper (up to 3,000 words) can be put up on the web-site. Each Communication is allotted a 15-minute slot.

On the web-site you will also find details about how to register, a vital stage in your participation, and indeed without your registration fee the Congress cannot function. Note that the registration fee rises from £150 to £175 on 15 January 2006 (there is a lower rate for students) – so register now!

The Congress will open at 11.00 a.m. on Monday 21 August, with suitable pomp and ceremony, to be followed by a grand lunch for all registered participants and will close on Saturday 26 August at midday with another lunch. Receptions are planned for most evenings in, for example, the Great Court of the British Museum, Lambeth Palace, and Somerset House. Exhibitions will range from Lear's watercolours of Greece to fabulous late antique silver via the Codex Sinaiticus in electronic format.

A.A.M. Bryer (Convenor) and E.M. Jeffreys (Deputy Convenor)

Congress (cont.)

Call for student assistants

The Congress Administrator, Karen Wraith, will need 20 'volunteers' to assist her during the week of the Congress. Duties will include helping at the reception desk and being on duty in the lecture rooms to ensure that everything goes without a hitch. The reward, apart from getting to hear papers and meet everyone, will be free registration, an honorarium of £100 and a Congress tee-shirt. If you are interested, please send your name, contact address (postal and e-mail) and place of study to:

Karen Wraith
12 Mushroom Field
Kingston by Lewes
East Sussex BN7 3LE, UK
kwraith@wraithconf.f9.co.uk

by **6 February 2006**.

Grants to attend the 2006 XXI International Congress of Byzantine Studies 21-26 Aug 2006

The Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies is offering a number of grants to support attendance at the **XXI International Congress of Byzantine Studies in London, 21-26 August 2006**. The awards will principally be made to those who would otherwise be unable to afford to attend the Congress, and who have exhausted all other funding opportunities.

Priority will be given to postgraduate students registered at UK universities, and then to the unwaged in the UK. Applicants based in other countries are encouraged to seek support from their own national committee of the AIEB.

As an approximate guide: successful applicants based away from London will receive about £200, those based within reach of the Symposium will receive the registration fee (£75 – you must register before 15 Jan 2006, when the price rises).

Those wishing to apply should fill in the form on the SPBS web site

(<http://www.byzantium.ac.uk>). (Forms are also available by sending an s.a.e. to the address below).

It is important that all applicants make clear how they will make the most of the opportunity to attend the Congress, and indicate which sessions and speakers will most benefit their own work.

Forms must be returned to:

**Antony Eastmond, Courtauld Institute of Art,
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN**

by **15 December, 2005**

Forms that are incomplete or late will be discarded.

Forthcoming Exhibitions

The Road to Byzantium. Luxury Arts of Antiquity

An exhibition at the Hermitage Rooms at Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN

30 March – 3 September 2006

In spring 2006 a major exhibition of Classical and Byzantine art opens in the Hermitage Rooms at Somerset House on the Strand in London. The exhibition traces the development and survival of classicism from its birth in Greece in the fifth century BC through to the middle Byzantine period. Using sumptuous luxury goods, mostly in gold and silver, but also ivory, cameos and gems, the exhibition presents some of the finest objects from the State Hermitage Museum – Scythian gold and Greek silver from burials in the Crimea, an extensive display of the magnificent collection of Late Antique silver, and recent middle Byzantine discoveries such showing the silver dish of Alexander the Great, only discovered in 1987.

The strength and nature of the Hermitage's collections allows a new view of the Byzantine world to emerge. Whereas the collections in the UK, Western Europe and the US, are mostly drawn from Greece, Italy and the West the Hermitage's collection of classical and Byzantine art comes mostly from Russian territories – the Crimea and settlements on the rivers that lead into the Black Sea. The Empire is seen as much from the east and the north as it is from the west. For whom were these objects made? How and

why were they carried so far up the Don and Dnieper to the places they were found? The objects themselves also give a different perspective on Byzantium and Byzantine art. They stress the production of art away from the religious sphere – this is the art of dining and celebration rather than that of the liturgy and contemplation.

The long time span covered by the exhibition will raise many interesting questions about how and why classicism – whether that be illusionistic naturalism or mythological iconography – survived over such a long time, and also the transformations that it underwent. Did the makers of the Veroli Casket, which will be on loan from the V&A, understand the mythological images it displays in the same way that the men and women who saw similar scenes a millennium earlier did? How did Christianity transform the stylistic and iconographic vocabulary of the Classical world?

The exhibition is curated by Antony Eastmond, Peter Stewart and Robin Cormack from the Courtauld, and Anna Trofimova and Vera Zalessakaia from the Hermitage.

Ivories at the British Museum

Next Summer it will also be possible to see the Hermitage Rooms exhibition in conjunction with a display at the British Museum of the Late Antique ivories from the National Museums on Merseyside, which will be loaned to the BM for a short period at around the time of the Congress. This will enable visitors to view such famous objects as the ivory diptych of Clementinus [513] and the panels of Asklepios and Hygeia alongside those already at the British Museum, and close to their related pieces at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Exhibitions to look out for next year

Soon we hope to have further information about other exhibitions related to Byzantium and the International Congress, including a display of icons at the British Library and of materials gathered by British visitors to Byzantine lands [location to be confirmed].

Dr Antony Eastmond

Sir Steven Runciman (1903-2000)

St Andrews University Library is pleased to announce that the project to catalogue the library of the late Sir Steven Runciman has been successfully completed. Sir Steven, historian of the Crusades and specialist in Byzantine history, died in 2000, and bequeathed his important collection of books relating to Near and Middle East art, architecture, history and travel to St Andrews University. About 4,000 volumes have now been put into stock, and catalogue records for them added to the Library's on-line catalogue, SAULCAT.

James Cochran Stevenson Runciman was born in Northumberland on 7 July 1903. His parents were both Liberal MPs, the first married couple to sit together in the Commons. His father later became the first Viscount Runciman of Doxford. He was educated at Eton, where he was a King's scholar, and won a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating with a first in history in 1924. He was also a gifted linguist, speaking French, Latin, Greek, Russian and Bulgarian. In 1924 he travelled to Istanbul in his grandfather's yacht, and after more travel became a fellow of Trinity in 1927. While at Trinity he published three books: *The Emperor Romanus Lecapenus and his reign* (Cambridge, 1929), *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* (London, 1930), and the seminal *Byzantine Civilization* (London, 1933). When he inherited a considerable fortune in 1938 he resigned the fellowship (although the College made him an honorary fellow in 1965).

During the war Runciman acted as press attaché to the British legation in Sofia, and after the German invasion of Bulgaria in 1941, organized news broadcasts in Balkan languages at the British embassy in Cairo. From 1942 to 1945 he held his only professorial appointment, as Professor of Byzantine history and art in the University of Istanbul. He was head of the British Council in Greece 1945-47. He spent the rest of his life as a private scholar of Byzantine and Hellenic studies, raising the profile of Byzantine history through his cogent writings and lectures.

In 1951 Runciman published the first volume of his authoritative *History of the Crusades* (3 volumes, Cambridge, 1951-54). Illuminated by

thorough research into the Islamic sources, this lucid narrative refuted Gibbon's portrayal of chivalrous crusaders defeated by barbarians. To Runciman, "the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God"¹, and the crusaders were guilty of destroying the centre of medieval civilization in Constantinople.

Runciman's public life involved lecturing to international audiences, serving on councils or boards of many bodies ranging from the National Trusts for Scotland and Greece to the Victoria and Albert Museum; he was honorary president of the International Committee of Byzantine Studies and president of the Friends of Mount Athos. He was elected Member of the British Academy in 1957 and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1964; he was knighted in 1958 and made a Companion of Honour in 1984; and he received numerous other honours including the Greek Order of the Phoenix, the Bulgarian order of the Madara Horseman, and was an honorary whirling dervish. He continued to write on Byzantine history, but also published a history of Sarawak in *The White Rajahs* (Cambridge, 1960) and the autobiographical *A Traveller's Alphabet* (London, 1991). He died on 1 November 2000.

The collection reflects the diversity of Runciman's research interests. The main subject areas are the Byzantine Empire (history, literature and art), Balkan history and art, and the Crusades. There is an interesting collection of early travel literature relating to the Middle East and the Balkans. Other subjects include the Greek Orthodox Church, medieval art and architecture, and magic. As an art collector he also had a large selection of modern exhibition catalogues. Friends and colleagues presented him with books and copies of articles on a wide range of subjects not always related to his research, such as Frisian poetry and Elizabethan martyrs.

The collection also reflects Runciman's wide linguistic abilities: only around half is written in English, with French, Greek, Bulgarian, Latin and German being the main other source languages, and there are materials in a wide variety of other languages from Italian and Romanian to Armenian and Arabic. Also included are a number of Runciman's own works in translation, and some periodicals relating to Byzantine and

Balkan studies. While about 85% of the collection was published in the twentieth century there are a number of important early works, the earliest, the *Epistolae magni Turci*, printed in Rome by Stephan Planck, being dated 1483. This is purportedly a translation of letters of Mehmet II, Sultan of Turkey, but is actually written by Laudivio de Vezzano. The collection also includes the sumptuously illustrated *Aya Sofia, Constantinople, as recently restored by order of H.M. the Sultan Abdul-Medjid*, from the original drawings by Chevalier Gaspard Fossati; lithographed by Louis Haghe (London, 1852) and Sir David Wilkie's *Sketches in Turkey, Syria & Egypt; 1840 & 1841 drawn on stone by Joseph Nash* (London, 1843).

The collection has been catalogued to a high standard, with subject headings and provenance information as appropriate. The pre 1800 titles have index information about printers and publishers, and place of printing, and all records have an entry for Sir Steven himself, as former owner, allowing researchers to identify immediately all the books in the collection which belonged to him. The Library is grateful to the Pilgrim Trust for their support in carrying out this work.

A search on <http://138.251.116.3/search/a?SEARCH=Runciman%2C+Steven%2C+Sir%2C+1903-2000%2C+owner> will take you straight into the entry in St Andrews University Library catalogue for Sir Steven Runciman's books. More information about the Library, and general access to the catalogue, can be found through its web site at: <http://www-library.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.html>, or e-mail the Library secretary at: lis.library@st-and.ac.uk.

Christine Gascoigne
Acting Librarian
May 2005

From the Treasurer...

Please could members remember that annual subscription to the Society is due by 31st January, 2006 (£20 / \$40 / 40 euros / or £10 / \$20 / 20 euros for students).

¹ Steven Runciman: *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 3, p. 480, (Cambridge, 1954).