



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Nature and the Environment

The 53rd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies

27-29 March 2021

Online event programme

Nature and the Environment: the 53rd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies

27-29 March 2021

Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies

University of Birmingham

Nature and the environment underpinned Byzantine life but have been little studied. How the Byzantines responded to, interacted with and understood the landscape, however, enables crucial new insights into East Roman perceptions of the world. Modern interest in the environment and eco-history makes this theme pertinent and timely. Current research on climate change and how it affected the East Mediterranean creates new paradigms for our understanding of Byzantine interactions with the environment. The 53rd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies draws together Byzantine literary and visual responses to nature and the environment as well as showcasing the most recent scientific research on historical climate change and environmental management in Byzantium.

This symposium was planned by Dr Ruth Macrides (University of Birmingham) and will be dedicated to her memory.

Symposiarch: Dr Ruth Macrides

Symposium Organisers:

Prof. Leslie Brubaker: l.brubaker@bham.ac.uk

Dr Daniel Reynolds: d.k.reynolds@bham.ac.uk

The Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies

The **Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies** (SPBS) was established in 1983, with the object of furthering study and knowledge of the history and culture, language and literature of the Byzantine Empire and its neighbours. The Society is a registered charity, no. 289207.

The Society's membership is drawn from the interested public as well as practising academics across the world: no professional qualifications are required. The executive of the SPBS also serves as the UK National Committee of the Association Internationale des Études Byzantines (AIEB), founded in 1948 which, amongst its other functions, sponsors an International Congress every five years.

The Society is governed by its Constitution and run by its Executive Committee and Officers (elected by the membership or invited). There are four Sub-Committees (Bulletin, Development, Membership and Publications). Presidents, Chairs and Treasurers become Vice-Presidents of the Society once their term of office has expired.

Website: [SPBS – Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies \(byzantium.ac.uk\)](http://byzantium.ac.uk)

Joining the SPBS

By joining the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, you will become part of a dynamic group of people (both professional and lay) who actively support the field of Byzantine Studies both in the UK and abroad.

An annual Spring Symposium offers the chance to meet others and to exchange ideas, whilst various regional events provide further opportunities for social contact and scholarly exchange.

As a member of the Society, you will have a chance to inform others of your current research and publications in the *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies*, which is published annually in March. All members receive the Society's Autumn Newsletter and the Bulletin, as well as occasional email updates informing them of Society events and activities. Members also benefit from reduced registration fees for the Spring Symposium and from occasional third-party offers to members, such as discounted subscription to *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (BMGS).

The Society is a registered charity and relies upon members' subscriptions to fund its activities. These include the provision of a number of small grants and travel bursaries which are allocated to deserving students and other individuals engaged in Byzantine research. Society members are eligible to apply for these grants.

Membership is **open to all** who support the aims of the society and want to join our community of Byzantinists. No academic affiliation or enrolment is required.

You can join the Society either online or offline.

Joining the Online Sessions

Using Zoom

Nature and the Environment will be hosted on the University of Birmingham's Zoom platform. The link to the event is provided on the confirmation email you will receive after registering. Zoom sessions may be accessed via a desktop/laptop or smartphone device.

Details on how to join a Zoom meeting may be accessed [here](#)

Join Zoom Meeting

If you have not received the link (but have registered through Eventbrite), please contact one of the organisers and they will send the correct information to you.

Common issues with Zoom (attendees)

A quick guide to fixing common Zoom issues may be found [here](#)

Online etiquette (attendees)

- Please ensure that your cameras are switched off during the session.
- Please ensure that your microphones are muted during the session.
- Questions for speakers will be taken at the end of each session.
- If you have a question for one of the speakers, please inform the session chair in the chat box feature. Questions will be taken in the order that they are submitted to the chair.
- Please do not use the chat feature for anything other than questions for speakers.
- Attendees engaged in abusive or threatening behaviour will be permanently excluded from the event.

For any issues, please contact Dr Lauren Wainwright, l.wainwright936@gmail.com

Saturday 27 March 2021

1200: Opening of website

1215: Welcome: Elena **Theodorakopoulos**, Head of Department

Classics, Ancient History & Archaeology UoB

Introduction: Leslie **Brubaker** & Daniel **Reynolds**

1230-1300: Key Note address

Chair: Chris **Wickham**

Adam **Izdebski**, Byzantium, its environment, and environmental science

1300-1400: break

Session One

1400-1530: Perceptions of the natural world

Chair: Margaret **Mullett**

Thomas **Arentzen**, Trees with an attitude

Mary **Cunningham**, Bramble bush and shaded mountain: the place of the Theotokos in the natural world

Martin **Hintenberger**, Animals as part of the created world. Their role in literature on the Hexaemeron

1530-1600: break

1600-1700 Tributes to Ruth Juliana Macrides

Video recordings of tributes to Ruth and an opportunity for viewing written tributes to her memory.

Session Two

1700-1800: Thinking about nature

Chair: Judith **Herrin**

Jane **Baun**, Byzantine perceptions of the sources of weather phenomena

Adam **Goldwyn**, Some Byzantine Trees: An Ecocritical Approach to Medieval Greek Nature Writing

1800-1830: Key Note Address

Chair: Liz **James**

Sunday 28 March 2021

Please note that the clocks go forward by + 1 hour (Summer Time)

0900-1100 SPBS Executive Meeting

1045: Opening of website

Session Three

Chairs: Dr Rebecca Darley & Dr Daniel Reynolds

1100-1300: Communications (in 'break out' rooms on Zoom)

| Time (estimated) | Panel A Chair: Rebecca Darley | Panel B Chair: Dan Reynolds |
|---|---|---|
| 11.00 | Gang Wu – The Underexplored Silk Industry around Naupaktos: Products, Manufacturing Processes and Organisational Structure | Divna Manolova - Structuring Nature and Articulating the Universe: Wind Diagrams in Palaiologan Manuscripts |
| 11.10 | Archie Dunn - <i>Grands Projets?</i> Benign Neglect? Or something else: land-use in the changing Byzantine calculus | Steph Novasio - Nature or Nurture? Perceptions of Ageing in Byzantium |
| 11.20 | Laura Clark – Ancient Pollution and the Early Byzantine Burials of Phaeno, Jordan | Scott Kennedy - Build That Wall: Nature, Security, and Protonationalism in Fifteenth Century Byzantium |
| 11.30-11.45 5-minute comfort break | Break for questions | Break for questions |
| 11.50 | Chloé Agar – The Cult of Saints on the Banks of the Nile: How did Worship Function in this Extreme Environment? | Boris Shopov - Nature and Natural Disasters in the Histories of Evagrius Scholasticus and Theophylact Simocatta |
| 12.00 | Rachael Banes - Flora and Fora: Re-examining the Natural and Built Landscape of a Late Antique City | Florica Marian - Nature, Ornament and Environment. Approaches to the Saint Sava Church in the Monastery of Ćelije. |
| 12.10 | Dana Katz - The Lake Effect: An Environmental Case Study of Landscape Transformation at the Royal Parkland of La Favara in Medieval Sicily | Nicolyna Enriquez - Sailing Across the Wall: Ships and Ship Graffiti on Cretan Church Wall Paintings |
| 12.20-12.35 | Break for questions | Break for questions |

1300-1400: break

Session Four

1400-1600: Perceptions of Nature

Chair: Angeliki **Lymberopoulou**

Liz **James**, Nature into art the Byzantine way

Lee **Mordechai**, Pursuing Plague: The Justinianic Plague between History and Historiography

Foteini **Spingou**, Living in pleasure: *physis* and the literati (*New Voices*)

Myrto **Veikou**, Setting sail in Byzantium: riding the waves, riding the tide, or trimming one's sails?

1600-1630: break

Session Five

1630-1800: Management of Resources and Landscapes

Chair: Alex **Vukovich**

Anna **Kelley**, Cotton production and environmental adaptation in the first millennium: a chicken-or-egg argument (*New Voices*)

Henry **Maguire**, Mosaic-Making and Climate Change in the Holy Land

Tim **Newfield**, Local dimming or global blackout? Mysterious clouding and climate change in the sixth century: science, sources, and reconstructions

Monday 29 March 2021

Session Six

0900-1000: Natural disasters and cultural responses

Chair: Tim **Greenwood**

Jim **Crow**, 'Water, water, everywhere but not a drop to drink', Constantine's legacy and water management in medieval Constantinople

Sam **Turner**, Making the mountains fruitful: dating the boom in medieval terrace-building in the eastern Mediterranean

1000-1030: Annual General Meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies

1030-1100: break

Session Seven

1100-1230: Changing climates: reactions, responses and resilience

Chair: Chris **Budleigh**

Warren **Eastwood** & Hugh **Elton**, Olives in Anatolia: some case studies

John **Haldon** & Neil **Roberts**, The grain supply of the Byzantine empire revisited: history, archaeology, palynology

Jordan **Pickett** (co-authored by Matthew **Jacobson**), Water, climate and culture in early Byzantium

1230-1300: Concluding lecture:

Chair: John **Haldon**

Kristina **Sessa**, History, text and science: critical observations

1300-1330: Final remarks:

Chair: Daniel **Reynolds**

Giulio **Boccaletti**, Author; HRA, Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment, Oxford University

Rebecca **Darley**, Wolfson Fellow & Senior Lecturer, Birkbeck University.

1330: Announcement of the 54th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies

The **Climate Workshop** originally scheduled for Monday afternoon has been cancelled.

By its nature, a workshop needs to be hands-on to a large extent, and this one is intended for a relatively small group to get direct experience of some of the palaeo-science the team is doing; this is not possible in a virtual setting. After a year of Zoom and other virtual exchange, we also realise there is only so much online face-time that a person can absorb. In any case, questions of method and approach, data-managing etc can be discussed and raised in the Q & A after/during the papers that members of the Climate Change team will deliver during the symposium itself.

Book Fair Links

In place of our usual in-person book fair, we have liaised with publishers to provide lists of books, offers and discounts for all participants at the symposium.

These links and further information are available in the symposium handbook. Please contact Dr Lauren Wainwright, l.wainwright936@gmail.com, if you do not have access to a copy and have registered via Eventbrite.