

Report from the USNCBS to BSANA for the Business Lunch at the 2018 BSC  
Submitted by Derek Krueger, USNCBS President

The Intercongress Meeting of the Association Internationale des Études Byzantines took place September 21 to 23, 2018 in Athens Greece. In accord with the AIEB rules, representatives from each member country gathered to review plans for the 2021 International Congress for Byzantine Studies and to attend to other AIEB business. Derek Krueger, President of the US National Committee for Byzantine Studies attended on behalf all Byzantinists based in the US. (Geoffrey Greatrex represented those based in Canada.)

### **The Istanbul Congress**

Plans are well underway for the 2021 Congress, which will be held in Istanbul, August 23-28, 2021. The Turkish Historical Society is our host and the Koç Foundation the major sponsor. Nevra Necipoğlu presented the plans in progress on behalf of the Turkish Organizing Committee. Sessions will all be held just north of Taksim Square, with the opening, concluding, and morning plenary sessions in the great auditorium of the Lütüfi Kırdar Congress Center. Roundtable and Free Communications sessions will be held nearby in the historic building of the Istanbul Technical University Faculty of Architecture (Taşkışla Campus). That building is currently under restoration and renovation funded by the Koç Foundation and should have state-of-the-art technology. There will be elevators and chair lifts available. Rooms in the Faculty of Architecture, which will not have central air as part of the renovation, will be outfitted with mobile air conditioning units for the event. Shuttles will run from Taksim Square to both venues and between venues at appropriate times of the day. All three are within a 10-15 minute walk of each other. Registration fees will be comparatively low, with regular registration going from 120Euros (by December 2020) to 220Euros (within three months of the Congress); student registration will start at 50Euros and climb to 100Euros.

As at past congresses the days will be divided into 1) Plenary Sessions, organized around themes chosen by the Turkish Committee; 2) Roundtables that were proposed by the various national committees and selected by the Turkish Committee in relation to their chosen themes; and 3) Free Communications sessions with papers that can be proposed by any Byzantinists from any of the member organizations. In Athens last week, the plan for the Plenary Sessions and Roundtables were approved. The call for Free Communications will go out in April 2019 with a deadline for submissions of 15 July 2020. All submissions (including plenary papers, abstracts for roundtables, and all free communication proposals) will be submitted through the Congress website. This will go live by February 2019 at [www.byzcongress2021.org](http://www.byzcongress2021.org). The US National Committee will keep the BSANA membership informed of all of these details through the BSANA listserv. Participants other than those in plenary sessions will be limited to two activities on the program, including giving a paper, chairing a session, or convening a roundtable. All chairs will be adjured to keep strictly to time (to avoid problems such as those reported in Belgrade).

Plans for exhibitions in coordination with the Congress are underway. At the moment the following are confirmed:

- The Istanbul Archeological Museum will display recent findings from excavations at Yenikapı and from the Asian side.
- The Pera Museum will mount an exhibition entitled “Discovering Byzantium” dedicated to representations of Constantinople from 1800 to 1955.

Various other institutes and cultural centers are expected to announce additional exhibitions shortly.

Plans for excursions are underway led by colleagues based in Turkey, including thematic tours of Istanbul: Istanbul Underground; the Land and Sea Walls; and Churches and Monasteries within the Walls. Beyond the city, there will be trips to Cappadocia (led by Tolga Uyar!); Trebizond; Cilicia; Bursa and İznik; and Mardin.

### **The USNCBS and the Congress**

The Turkish organizing committee received 97 proposals for round tables and chose 58. It should be stressed that a major criterion for selection was how well proposals dovetailed with the plenary session themes. As a result, some field areas were necessarily less emphasized than others. (Reasonable concern was aired about this at the Intercongress Meeting.) The USNCBS submitted a total of 8 proposals, of which 4 were accepted. In addition, US-based Byzantinists are well represented in panels submitted through other national committees. Derek Krueger has informed all those who submitted to the USNCBS of the status of their proposals. Official word will come from the Turkish Committee in due course. All rejected proposals can (and should) be resubmitted as Thematic (i.e., pre-organized) Free Communications Sessions. (The Turkish Organizing Committee promises that this process will not be onerous.)

On behalf of US Byzantinists Derek proposed that in future the selection of Round Tables be decoupled from the themes of the plenaries so as to reflect a broad range of conversations across Byzantine Studies that might benefit from an international gathering and greater international exposure. This may prevail for 2026 and beyond.

### **Other AIEB topics**

The standing commission of the AIEB reported about the progress of the series *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*; about plans for a new series in Byzantine Epigraphy; about a forthcoming web portal to be called Chalke Gate, which will integrate resources for the study of Byzantine art and architecture; and about a new newsletter on historical geography. In addition, a new commission was approved to work on coordinating the field of sigilography; another (rather exciting)

commission, led by Athanasios Vionis of the University of Cyprus, will better network scholars working in Byzantine archaeology.

The most important development is the significant improvement in AIEB's efforts at communication. The AIEB website (<http://aiebnet.gr>) has been entirely revamped and is now online. It is the best portal for new information about the field throughout the world. Traffic to the website has been heavy, including especially from the US. From the site you can subscribe to the AIEB email newsletter, which now has 1700 subscribers, a large number from the US. It is now the best venue for communicating about events, exhibitions, and opportunities in our field throughout the world. (If you aren't already subscribed, you are encouraged to do so, and to send in anything in the field you would like to publicize internationally.) Two parts of the website are worth highlighting: a new database for editions in progress; and a new list of dissertations in progress, which will be available shortly. If you are a graduate student or are supervising a graduate student whose dissertation topic has been approved, please fill out the simple webform and get your work in progress announced. The BSANA listserv will be informed when this form is online.

Another positive development: the AIEB website will assist any national committees in creating a website and can offer some support for existing websites. While this service is not relevant for BSANA, it will help a number of countries not currently represented on the web.

The dues for each national committee were raised from 200Euros per year to 250. This reflects inflation (there had been not rise in dues since 1996) and the increased cost of electronic support and website design. Obviously this isn't much of a burden for wealthier and larger national committees. It is expected that there will be some accommodation for smaller and less wealthy national organizations.

### **The US National Committee and BSANA**

Although originally a separate organization, since the creation of BSANA in 2006, the US National Committee has been a standing committee of BSANA. Since that time the US National Committee has levied no separate dues and has been running down its funds by paying dues (about to be raised to 250Euros per year) and subvining the sending of a representative to the Intercongress Meeting (which occurs once every five years). The funds will be all but exhausted after paying the dues for 2019. According to the BSANA By-Laws "At such time as the USNCBS exhausts its assets, BSANA will assume all costs of the USNCBS, and its finances will be handled by the BSANA Treasurer with direct Governing Board oversight." BSANA should expect to take these expenses on in 2020. In preparation for this transition, the current officers of the USNCBS recommend that the USNCBS bank account be closed after the payment of dues in 2019 and any remaining assets be transferred to BSANA at that time. On average, the USNCBS annual expenses average \$850: approximately \$350 in AIEB dues and associated bank transfer fees every year; and approximately \$2,500 every five years to cover the USNCBS President's attendance at the Intercongress Meeting in Athens (the President's expenses can be reduced in

instances when their home institution is able and willing to contribute, as was the case this year, with thanks to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro).