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**BYZANTINE STUDIES  
CONFERENCE**

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**PAPER ABSTRACTS**

## **2017 BSC SESSIONS**

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Luis Sales, “The Agreement of Plato and Aristotle at the Twilight of the Roman Empire (1439–1473): Ancient Sources, New Perspectives, and the Intellectual Birth of Modernity.”

## **The Nature of Mauropous' Promotion - The Social Activity Displayed in a Letter Collection**

Jovana Andjelkovic (Simon Fraser University)

The question of exile is undoubtedly at the centre of any discussion of Mauropous' biography. This is mostly the case because of the strong emotional hue that marks all of the writings that describe his departure for Euchaita. Scholars have, therefore, been trying to interpret this author's rhetoric and irony by weighing the sense of his (often ambiguous) words and assessing their emotive import. Although I do not consider this approach to be barren and despite finding Mauropous' style and vocabulary choice quite important, in this paper I propose a different perspective.

The palpable change that one sees in Mauropous' letter collection is not only related to his emotional state. Studies of Euchaitan letters next to Constantinopolitan ones reveal certain notable formative and thematic differences. After Mauropous ordination, the author's agency as seen in the letters markedly declines, the subject rarely varies and the symbolic becomes repetitive. In the first half of the corpus, he writes to friends, students, high officials and judges, from a position of an active participant in their affairs. In Euchaitan letters, however, this is not the case. The most striking change comes with the complete avoidance of recommendation letters or any kind of mediatory initiative or advocacy. While in Constantinople, Mauropous had an active role and an obvious position of influence – a social trait we cannot read into the letters of the Euchaitan metropolitan.

This then brings us to the nature of Mauropous' ordination and "advancement". Mauropous corpus is perhaps not the best place to look at, if we seek to answer the question if appointment to a metropolitan see was socially advantageous for an ambitious Roman of the middle Byzantine period. We may, however, explore how Mauropous himself perceived his ordination (or his career in general) by using the Vat. Gr. 676 In this paper I outline a schematic review of the type and agency implicit in all 77 letters of Mauropous' collection. What starts as a statistical approach might therefore prove useful for recreating Mauropous professional activity and his social position. Moving on from statistical analysis I intent to outline the differences between clerical and secular letters and consider the effect of such differences on the shape and structure of the collection, always keeping Mauropous' work in a broader comparative context.



## Bodies and Columns: The Case of Stylite Portraiture

Tiffany M. Apostolou (Institute of Fine Arts, NYU)

During Late Antiquity, a singular ascetic practice grew out of the easternmost parts of the Empire, particularly Syria, causing considerable stir. Starting with Saint Simeon the Elder (†459 CE), a number of ascetic monks ascended and inhabited the tops of columns in the desert, far from organized cityscapes. Such saints were called stylites and their Late Antique portraits present a compelling case for research.

There are numerous different ways in which stylite saints are depicted in Late Antiquity. Stone relief portraits, in particular, cover a considerable portion of the surviving visual material. Stylites are carved and sculpted on *stelai*, icons as well as smaller pilgrim *eulogiai*. The iconography on the relief portraits follows certain typologies with columns gradually becoming more prominent in the visual narrative, informing the stylite saint's identity and influencing his portrayal both during and after his life. The column's growing importance is evident in the complicated relationship it develops when it becomes intertwined with the saint's human body. The visual emphasis on the pillar raises inquiries regarding stylite iconography, and the column's popularity as an object ever present in portraiture of the period. So far, scholarship has related the practice of stylitism to ancient pillar traditions, to hagiographic texts, and stylite imagery alongside the concept of an affinity between the holy portrait image and the living sanctified person (body and soul). It is from this latter research that I draw focus on the stylized portrait of the stylite saint, and the importance of the column as an object loaded with meaning.

In this paper, I approach the role of the column in shaping the visual identity of the stylite monk for his viewers through observations on relief portraits of stylite saints particularly *stelai* (stone relief icons) and smaller pilgrim art objects, from the Late Antique period. I observe the role of the column, not as simply an indicator of their unique practice, but as a visual signifier of their person and influence. Relief portraits, presenting a large body of abstract depictions, make for fertile grounds to discuss stylite portraiture in relation to the treatment of the body, the person, and the column in unison. For this purpose, observations on the use of the column in stylite relief portraiture alongside the use of columns in other types of Late Antique portraits assists in questioning values attached to the stylite's image. Finally, the paper addresses the degree in which portraits of stylite saints, where inscriptions and other indicators are vague or absent, were imprints of a specific person, the institution of stylitism overall, or both.

## **Intertwined hagiographical traditions: from Symeon the Younger to Symeon the Elder**

Dina Boero (The College of New Jersey)

Three hagiographies narrate the life of Symeon the Stylite the Elder (d. 459 CE): the chapter on Symeon in Theodoret's *History of the Monks of Syria* (written c. 440-444 CE), Simeon bar-Eupolemos and Bar-Ḥaṭar's Syriac *Life of Symeon* (written in 473 CE), and Antonius' *Life of Symeon*. The first two have received substantial attention from scholars, in part because they are firmly dated to Symeon's life and the decades immediately following his death, demonstrate a close relationship with the saint's pilgrimage site at Qal'at Sem'ān, and present a holy man enmeshed in the politics of his day. In contrast, Antonius gives an overtly moralistic view of the saint, which has made it difficult for scholars to situate the text in a particular historical context. Recently, however, Flusin (1993) pushed the potential date of the text into the sixth century, while Mayer and Allen (2012) and Lane Fox (1997) proposed that the text dates to the seventh century or sometime thereafter. In addition, Flusin, Mayer, and Allen all associated the text with Antioch. This newly proposed range of dates and place of composition urges that Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* be read not only in relationship with the two, earlier lives of Symeon as previous scholars have done (Lietzmann 1908, Delehay 1923, Peeters 1950, Festugière 1959, Harvey 1988, Doran 1992, and Flusin 1993), but also that it be studied in dialogue with later literary material and religious practices associated with Antioch.

This paper explores links between Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* and Symeon the Younger's cult. It identifies philological and thematic similarities between Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* and the early seventh-century *Life of Symeon the Younger*, arguing that these similarities are due to Antonius' familiarity with *Life of Symeon the Younger* or the process of scribal revision. In addition, this paper shows that Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* exhibits knowledge of traditions associated with the Wondrous Mountain over Qal'at Sem'ān. Previous studies have isolated the cults of Symeon the Elder and Symeon the Younger, asserting that Qal'at Sem'ān was anti-Chalcedonian in the sixth century while Symeon the Younger's cult site on the Wondrous Mountain was staunchly Chalcedonian (Beck 1959 and van den Ven 1962). Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* sheds light on an important point of connection between the two cults. Symeon the Younger's cult-keepers established him in continuity with previous precedents of sanctity but also took care to highlight independence from his predecessor. Symeon the Elder's cult-keepers in Antioch reshaped the saint and devotion to him in light of growing veneration to his successor. By examining these two cults from the perspective of conversation rather than competition, this paper contributes to broader discussions of the multifaceted symbolic world of devotion to saints.

## Syrian Immigrants in Ancient Odessos: The Monastery at Djanavara Hill on the Black Sea Coast

Zachary Boettcher (University of Minnesota)

The mosaics in the monastery at the Djanavara Hill archaeological site in present day Varna, Bulgaria, and mosaics found in early Christian churches in present day Syria, Israel, and Jordan have a shared cultural relationship. Their craftsmanship, materials, and imagery are among the traits that represent this connection. This paper explores the commonly accepted dating of the site and the potential link between the immigrant craftsmen of the Djanavara mosaics to Syrian communities in or beyond the Roman frontiers.

The monastery at Djanavara Hill is generally believed to be a 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> century early Christian church that contains unique mosaics and is of unusual construction. The uncommon floor plan of the church is made up of a single-nave edifice with four rectangular two-storied premises projecting north and south of it, a short narthex, a colonnaded atrium, and a semicircular apse, which is not projecting out of the church as is typical of all other churches on the Balkans. In addition to the peculiarity of the construction, the church contained a set of three reliquaries of marble, silver, and gold, which held the bones of an unknown saint, possibly the church's patron. The church also contained a *synthronon*, indicating it was a possible Episcopal seat in the region. The stunning mosaics at the site are made up of marble, limestone, gneiss, and terracotta: showing numerous designs and practices of *tesserae* involving different colors. According to Professor Aleksander Minchev of the Varna Regional Museum of History, "the mosaics were executed simultaneously by at least two masters or groups of artisans, which used different patterns when decorating the room floors." The mosaics depict geometric patterns with erudite borders made up of various *flora* and *fauna*, though the chalices depicted in one of the mosaics are rare. Minchev, who excavated the site in 1997 and 2007, believes that the mosaics should be dated to the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century there was a large Syrian religious community in ancient Odessos. This community was part of a pattern of emigrants from the region, and is confirmed through numerous grave inscriptions that mention rich merchants, ship-owners, and Christian priests of eastern origin. The impact of this immigrant community leaving Syria, possibly due to persecution, and injecting their skill into the material culture of ancient Odessos heightened the art of Bulgarian mosaics.

In addition to research in the written sources, the author's fieldwork and participation in the excavation of the monastery at Djanavara Hill in 2017 and creation of a virtual heritage site for the monastery is the basis of the exploration and analysis of the shared cultural relationships between the Syrian immigrants in Odessos and Syrian communities in and beyond the Roman frontiers. As more mosaics are ripped out of the ground and sold on the black market by Islamic State each day, the importance of studying these mosaics and their impact is critical.

## The Mystery of Beser/Bashir: New Evidence on the “Boon Companion” of Leo III and for the Transmission of Byzantine and Islamic Apocalyptic Thought

Christopher Bonura (University of California, Berkeley)

The ninth-century chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor mentions a man who lived in the middle of the eighth century called Beser (Βησήρ), a name that is perhaps a transliteration of the Arabic Bashir. Extremely tall and strong, as a child Beser had been captured by the Arabs, and had apostatized from Christianity before gaining freedom and returning home. According to Theophanes’ highly partisan account of the rise of iconoclasm, this “Saracen-minded” man helped convince Emperor Leo III to adopt iconoclasm, but was killed in the upheaval that followed his master’s death.

A little later Theophanes, echoed by Syriac chronicles that shared the same source for the event, mentions an imposter among the Arabs claiming to be the son of Emperor Justinian II, Tiberius, who had in fact been murdered as a child twenty-five years earlier. This imposter had been born in the Byzantine Empire but was captured as a child and converted to Islam. Theophanes does not mention his name, but the Syriac chroniclers do: Bashir. This Bashir turned false-Tiberius was used as a pawn of Caliph Hisham, paraded through the former-Byzantine provinces, before he outlived his usefulness and was put to death.

The confusion caused by these two Bashirs is compounded by a story from another source. The eleventh-century Arabic *Kitāb al’Uyūn* mentions that, while besieging Constantinople, the Arab general Maslama negotiated with a representative of Leo III, called Tessaracontapechys (“forty cubit”), whose name implies his great height. Not only do the physical attributes of Tessaracontapechys and his position under Leo III match Beser, but the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 name a Tessaracontapechys as a prominent iconoclast.

Scholars have long debated whether Beser the Companion of Leo, Bashir the false Tiberius, and Tessaracontapechys were the same person, or which combination of the three were the same person. My paper introduces a new piece into this puzzle. A *hadith* preserved in the ninth-century *Kitāb al-fitan* of Nua’ym ibn Hamma, first introduced by Michael Cook but never applied to the mystery of Bashir, recounts how, while besieging Constantinople, Maslama was approached by a man who claimed to be Tiberius, the son of Emperor Justinian II. Maslama’s advisers tell him not to trust the man, that he was a pretender. This encounter serves as a frame for a story about the real Tiberius who had not yet come, a version of the Last Emperor of Byzantine apocalyptic literature adapted to Islamic eschatology. Indeed, Tiberius appears as an apocalyptic Last Emperor in other *ahadith* and in accounts preserved in Arabic papyri from Egypt.

This paper explores the implications of this new evidence that connects the false Tiberius to Tessaracontapechys, and thus to Leo’s Beser. It gives context to such a man moving between Byzantium and the Caliphate, between Christianity and Islam. Moreover, it explores the implications for the spread of apocalyptic ideas by such liminal figures, suggesting that the Tiberius of Islamic eschatology was an import from Byzantine thought, perhaps introduced by Bashir himself to legitimate his imperial claims.

## Empresses Sponsoring Spas in the Sixth Century

Craig Caldwell (Appalachian State)

In many studies of φιλανθρωπία in the early Byzantine empire, a focus upon patronage within the city of Constantinople and of religious buildings has overlooked the imperial connection to extramural baths and healing spas. The empresses of the sixth century often followed the patterns of feminine benefaction established during the Theodosian dynasty, but they combined that precedent with the longstanding Greco-Roman fascination with the medicinal use of water. Both a continuity of customs and the unique dimension of imperial bathing are evident in two examples of empresses sponsoring spas in the sixth century.

Theodora's visit to the hot springs at Pythia (modern Yalova in Turkey) in 530 earns frequent mention in biographies for the size of her entourage and her significant donations to churches and monasteries along the route. The inclusion of large numbers of dignitaries among her traveling companions made the excursion into a kind of empress's *adventus*, which emulated a fifth-century precedent. Her significant contributions to the healing destination itself included a palace, a public bath supplied by the spring, an aqueduct carrying drinkable water from a distant source, and an expanded church and hospital. The historian Procopius interprets her patronage as a mirror of her husband Justinian's attention to fortifications and structures throughout the empire. Like earlier high-ranking Roman women in the baths, she provided for her exclusive enjoyment of the waters through the construction of special structures, but these improvements also constituted the φιλανθρωπία of a Christian empress.

Still farther from the imperial capital, the hot springs at Anchialus in Thrace received the empress Anastasia during the reign of her husband Tiberius II Constantine (r. 578–82). According to the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, Anastasia donated a purple imperial garment to a local church on the return journey from the baths. Compared with the considerable infrastructure that resulted from Theodora's stay at Pythia, Anastasia's gift appears modest, but it links these waters to the established role of the empress as churchgoer. The donation also hints at the possibility of imperial bathing attire, which appears in late antique historical fiction.

These two instances of empresses patronizing baths outside Constantinople add to our understanding of early Byzantine bathing culture. With the inclusion of Pythia and Anchialus, the five Constantinopolitan baths that bore the names of imperial women are not the sole evidence for empresses' engagement with the control of water, and the close association of empresses with healing is particularly apparent in their journeys beyond the social and architectural fabric of the capital.

## Basil's Basiliads and the Cappadocian Concept of the Deserving Poor Revisited

Daniel Caner (Indiana University)

Founded ca. 370 by Basil of Caesarea, the Basiliad is perhaps the most famous philanthropic institution of Early Byzantium. However, this institution—(part of?) which Basil himself twice (*ep.* 150, 176) called a *ptōchotropheion*—has not been properly understood. Nearly all modern historians (including Timothy Miller and John Nesbitt, in *Walking Corpses*, 2013) have assumed it was a hospital intended to serve the sick and poor more generally, without qualification. However, apart from Basil's reference in *ep.* 94 to a *katagōgion* that offered medical attention to “those afflicted by weakness of the body,” there is no evidence to support such a general claim. Instead, the local Cappadocian authors Gregory Nazianzus in the fourth century (*or.* 43.63) and Gregory of Caesarea in the seventh (*v.Greg.* 11) indicate that it was primarily—probably solely—intended to treat lepers. This interpretation is supported by descriptions of the institution provided by Sozomen (*HE* 6.34.9) and Theodoret (*HE* 4.16.13), and conforms to the definition of a *ptōchotropheion* provided in Epiphanius of Salamis's explanation of the institution founded by Eustathius of Sebaste (*Pan.* 75.1.7). Epiphanius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Theodoret and Gregory of Caesarea either refer directly to leprosy or use the word *lelōbomenoi* (the most common euphemism to describe people afflicted with elephantiasis in Early Byzantium) to describe inmates of the Basiliad; they envision no other form of sickness.

Thus the Basiliad was not a hospital but the most fully documented leprosarium known from antiquity. Furthermore, rather than being built in response to an outbreak of leprosy or some other sudden calamity, Gregory of Nyssa indicates in his commemoration of his brother Basil—a source never before used to illuminate the Basiliad—that this innovative monastic institution had an ideological motivation, being intended to “teach those who were *ptōchoi* in body to become *ptōchoi* in spirit” (*In laud. Bas.* 21).

This has important implications for altering not only the conventional history of the early Byzantine hospital but also our understanding of what the Cappadocian fathers meant by the terms *philanthrōpia* and *ptōchoi*. I argue that in Christian as well as Greco-Roman antiquity, *philanthrōpia* often meant not simply showing kindness to people, but doing so despite the fact that they did not seem to deserve it (e.g., Tit 3:4), while *ptōchoi* meant not simply destitute poor people, but people who had “fallen” into poverty from a formerly prosperous state (e.g., Ammon., *Diff.* 387, *Or., fr. in Ps.* 111.6, *Bas., r. brev.* 262). Because they represented dramatic symbols of *ptōchoi* whom contemporaries also considered accursed, lepers became ideologically important and hence prominent subjects of Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa's preaching on philanthropy (*or.* 14; *paup.* 2); like other people (such as monks) who were new to poverty, they took precedence as candidates for institutional Christian aid over people born into poverty (*or.* 14.7).

## **Muslims, ‘Heretics’, and Dogs: Eleventh Century Byzantine Rule over Religious Diversity in Syria and Armenia**

Thomas A. Carlson (Oklahoma State University)

Unlike the earlier wars with the Abbasid caliphate, the Byzantine Reconquest of Syria and Armenia in the tenth and eleventh centuries brought substantial numbers of Muslims and ‘heretical’ Christians under the rule of Constantinople. This is the first time Muslims came under Byzantine rule in substantial numbers. While medieval state ideologues (and some modern scholars) emphasized the centrality of Chalcedonian orthodoxy to the Byzantine state, the government found ways to deal with these new subjects with different religious views. This paper draws not only on Greek sources (such as the histories of Attaleiates and Skylitzes), but also on Arabic, Armenian, and Syriac sources for Byzantine rule in eastern Anatolia, northern Syria, and Armenia. Such sources include the Arabic geographies of Ibn Hawqal and al-Muqaddasī, the Arabic history of Yaḥyā of Antioch, the Armenian chronicles of Aristakes Lastivertc‘i and Matthew of Edessa, and the Syriac histories of Eliya of Nisibis and Michael the Syrian. The Byzantine state supported the religious supremacy of the Greek Orthodox Church, but ruled non-Orthodox subjects using techniques to which the Imperial Church objected. Some of these techniques were shared with other Middle Eastern powers. For example, Muslim geographers indicate that the Byzantine state levied a discriminatory tax upon Muslims, which the Arabic sources even term *jizya* after the tax which the Caliphate levied upon non-Muslims. Although some mosques were destroyed in sieges, there was no concerted effort to destroy or confiscate Muslim religious buildings, just as there had been no effort in the Muslim conquests of the area three centuries earlier to destroy churches. Greater pressure was brought to bear on ‘deviant’ members of the dominant religion (‘heretics’) than on members of other religions; thus Sunni Muslim princes invested greater effort in controlling Shi’ites (and vice versa) than non-Muslims, and the Byzantine state regulated Armenian and Syriac non-Chalcedonians more closely than Muslims. Yet even from ‘heretics’ religious conformity was required only haphazardly. In many of the areas newly under Byzantine rule, the state was content to work through Muslim vassal princes, such as the Hamdanids of Aleppo, and in many cases to appoint non-Chalcedonian Armenians as governors of the region, rather than sending Greeks from the capital to govern. Previous scholarship has typically viewed the Byzantine state as a European power in dialogue with the West, but the strategies Byzantines used to rule a religiously diverse subject population suggest that scholars may profitably explore Byzantium in the context of Middle Eastern and Islamic developments.

## Representations of Migrancy in the Lexicographic and Commentary Tradition

Nikolaos Churik (University of Notre Dame)

Presentations of migrancy occur throughout Greek literature, beginning already in the *Iliad* when Achilles twice describes himself as some τίμητον μετανάστην, “a migrant without honor” because of his treatment at the hands of Agamemnon. The word “μετανάστης” proves to be quite uncommon and is thus a frequent locus for comment in lexicographical works. It is defined most frequently with μέτοιχος and φυγάς, as may be observed in the Lexicon of Hesychius, Pseudo-Zonaras, and the Suda, and in commentary works such as the scholia to Homer and the commentaries of Eustathius. Although the meanings of these words appear to be transparent (“one who wanders,” “one who changes homes,” and “one who flees”), the contexts and exempla given in the respective lexicographical works force the reader to re-evaluate what migrancy meant to the compilers and authors of these texts.

This paper examines citations and explanations provided in the various commentaries in order to establish a historical understanding of uses and causes of the movements of people. Mentions of movement are frequently employed as aetiologies for place names. For instance, Eustathius explains that Sicily is named Μεγάλη Ἑλλάς, “*Magna Graecia*,” because of the frequent movements of the Hellenes (συχνάς μετοικίας, *Commentarium in Dionysii periegetae orbis descriptionem*, 362.7). When Eustathius explores the causes of a movement itself, however, he notes that *metoikoi* have often left their own homes “on account of wickedness” (μέτοιχοι...διὰ μοχθηρίαν, *Comm. ad Il.*, 3.806.22). The paper goes on to explore how the writers contend with and negotiate the tension between a positive aetiology and its potentially negative causes. The texts generally refrain from offering value judgments on the movements.

The point of paper lies in explicating the historical, prescriptive understanding of the terms used for these events. Although the terms seem rather obvious, it is critical to appreciate how the movements of people, an evidently frequent occurrence, were presented by their grammarian commentators. Their descriptions influenced historical readings and continues to affect our current comprehension, so it is of the utmost importance to read according to the appropriate context.



## **Occupied Space: Colonial and Post-Colonial Theory in the Late Byzantine Period**

Benjamin Delee (SUNY Cortland)

It is widely recognized that after the Byzantine restoration in 1261 a new polity emerged that was fundamentally different than that before 1204. Recent research has focused on Latin-Byzantine coexistence and even cooperation. There has also been an interest in Byzantine identity, and its transformation to Greek identity. However, settler-colonial theory and post-colonial theory have not been widely applied to this period of decline and collapse of the Byzantine state, although they provide valuable insight into how this transformation of Byzantine society may be understood. Latins and Turks who settled in Byzantine territory at times sought to conform by becoming citizens. As the state weakened, however, they began to act more like colonial settlers, claiming sovereignty for themselves rather than submitting to the Byzantine government.

My presentation focuses heavily on the applicability of particular theories to this period in the Byzantine state. Still, it relies on both primary sources and recent research to demonstrate examples of how these theoretical frameworks are useful. Post-Colonial Theory and settler-colonial theory can help us understand how the Byzantine state changed, and how settlers played a major role in the weakening of the Byzantine state. Moreover, just as in the modern period, the colonial experience often inspired an awakening of ethnic and national identity in the colonized; in the late medieval and early modern period the experience of being colonized shaped Greek identity. This experience still has echoes to this day in modern Greek national consciousness.

## **Late 12<sup>th</sup> Century Imperial Decision-Making. The Case Of Isaac II Angelus**

Stefanos Dimitriadis (University of Münster)

Byzantium's domestic political developments in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century have been mostly studied as a key aspect for understanding the course of events which led to the Fourth Crusade and the fall of Constantinople to the Latins in 1204. But a study of this period for its own sake can also help us trace the ongoing transformation of the medieval Roman society at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Putting this in the context of imperial decision-making, as the culmination of political ferment, is the subject of my doctoral thesis, including the role of the supernatural element in this process.

In this paper, I focus on the pivotal reign of Isaac II Angelus (1185-1195) by examining his entourage, mentality and strategy. The totally unexpected rise of Isaac to the throne of Constantinople was undoubtedly a game-changing event in 12<sup>th</sup> century dynastic politics, in the sense that Isaac's rights to the throne were no better than those of many other members of the wider Comnenian clan. This had obvious implication related to the previously established Comnenian power system. Did Isaac apply any consistent strategy to overcome possible dangers or was he an arrogant absolute ruler, who believing that he was brought to the throne by divine providence disregarded the political reality on the ground, as the historian Nicetas Choniates seems to have suggested? Choniates' account, the only contemporary narrative source for Isaac's reign, is unfavorable, not to say biased, towards the emperor as he furthermore presents him as an incompetent ruler, who was heavily dependent on a few influential individuals as opposed to previous imperial examples of habitual collective consultation related to decision-making. Court rhetoric, on the other hand, with its praising character provides insights to the new regime's ideology and objectives in a time of difficulties generated by the Vlach-Bulgarian rebellion and the passage of the Third Crusade. Related to both Choniates' historical work and court rhetoric is the theme of apocalyptic prophesy, which seems to have been utilized by Isaac's entourage more firmly than in the past revealing the ideological framework into which his government functioned.

By taking into account the above aspects of Isaac's rule an attempt is made to get a glimpse into the emperor's decision-making practices and the ways he tried to consolidate his power and provide meaning to his reign, in a state that was struggling to overcome the dynastic crisis initiated by the power vacuum left by the death of Manuel I Comnenus in 1180 and regain its lost confidence and supremacy in the Christian universe.

## The Latin of John Lydus, and the language politics in sixth-century Constantinople

Sviatoslav Dmitriev (Ball State University)

One advantage that John Lydus, an erudite and state official in sixth-century Constantinople, held over his contemporaries was his knowledge of Latin. By his own words, that knowledge served to advance his administrative career; after retirement, Lydus taught Latin in the imperial palace (*Mag.* 3.20, 3.27- 29). Some have, therefore, held his knowledge of Latin to be excellent. On the other hand, Lydus offers numerous erroneous explanations for the meaning of Latin words. He traces *kalendae* to καλεῖν, Quirinus to κύριος, and *tiro* to τεῖρω (*Mens.* 3.10, *Mag.* 1.5.2, 1.47.3-4), and explains *nenia* as the name of a Roman funeral dirge by connecting it to the Greek name *nete* for the last chord on a cithara (*Mag.* 1.33.3). Such linguistic blunders have fueled doubts about whether he knew Latin well.

Lydus shared a popular view of Latin as having been derived from Greek (*Mag.* 1.5.3, 2.13.16 = Varro, fr. 296; Cato, *Orig.* 1.1, fr. 19; Liv. 1.7.8; Tac. *Ann.* 11.14.3-4). Asserting that Latin was a dialect of Greek (D.H. 1.33.4-5, 1.90.1) reinforced the idea that the Romans had the same ethnic origins and culture as the Greeks, thus allowing Dionysius to qualify the newly founded Rome as a Greek city (1.89.1-3). His contemporaries, Hypsicrates of Amisus (Gell. 16.12.6) and Philoxenus of Alexandria (fr. 311-329, Th.), evidently authored the theory of the Greek, or Aeolian, origins of Latin. As part of that theory, they offered many stretched Greek etymologies of Latin words, some of which were used by Lydus. This theory flattered the Romans' desire for cultural respectability, while consoling the Greeks as having been subdued by people of the same culture.

In the sixth century, Lydus' etymological constructs reflected a dichotomy between the Byzantines' claim to a Roman political heritage and their declining use of Latin. In political terms, Byzantium was a continuation of the Roman Empire (*Mag.* 2.20.1, 2.30.5, 3.1.2), but the use of Latin was diminishing. Lydus criticized the praetorian prefect Cyrus, who introduced Greek into official proceedings during the time of Theodosius II, and his contemporary, the praetorian prefect John, who replaced Latin with Greek in official documentation (*Mag.* 2.12.2, 3.68.3). A decisive moment was the publication of the last of Justinian's *Novels* in Latin in 541, during Lydus' lifetime.

Lydus' use of etymology shifted the emphasis from holding Latin as the "ancestral language" (*Mag.* 1.20.3, 2.13-14, 3.32.5; Iust. *Nov.* 7.1, 15.pr., 22.2) to presenting Latin as a dialect of Greek. This theory received new life in the sixth century: presenting Latin as a dialect of Greek offered a way to solve the problem of the growing dichotomy between the Byzantines' Roman political and Greek cultural affiliations. Contextualizing an old debate about the extent of Lydus' knowledge of Latin within a broader issue of the role of Latin in early Byzantium shows that, as a response to a political challenge, Lydus' etymological observations were irrelevant to his level of that knowledge.

## Veils, Altar Covers, and Other Textiles of Early Byzantine Christianity

Susanna Drake (Macalester College)

This paper considers late ancient and early Byzantine textual and material evidence for the use of veils, curtains, and other draperies in Christian ritual, including baptism, Eucharist, marriage, and the public veiling of virgins (*velatio*). Much of the scholarship on veiling in early Christianity treats textual prescriptions for women's veiling (Paul, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, among others). In this paper, I explore other uses for veils and textiles in the late ancient and early Byzantine worlds, considering evidence from Christian and non-Christian sources, in order to understand the multiple significations of veiling and the liturgical uses of textiles and other draperies in early Byzantine churches. As background, I consider the various ways in which women's veiling practices in the late ancient Mediterranean signified bodily selfcontrol (*sōphrosynē*), modesty/shame (*aidōs*), beauty, elite status, virtue, and ritual piety.

Visual images of the veil—such as the veiled hands of Moses in the mosaic program in San Vitale, Ravenna, and frescoes of veiled woman in Roman and Neapolitan catacombs—are examined alongside late ancient Christian interpretations of biblical veils (including Moses' veil in Exodus 34 and 2 Corinthians 3; the woman's veil in the Song of Songs; the temple veil in the passion narratives; the veils of female prophets in 1 Corinthians 11; and the veil of Christ's flesh in Hebrews 10). The art of Ravenna forms the focal point for much of the paper. In mosaic programs in Ravenna's churches and baptisteries, we encounter veiled women, the veiled hands of the Magi as they approach the infant Jesus, the draped hands of the *traditio legis*, textiles used in baptismal ceremonies, and strategically placed curtains on temples and other civic and religious buildings. I argue that the visual evidence for the use of textiles and the Church Fathers' interpretations of biblical veils are mutually illuminating, and I suggest that these visual and textual veils should also be understood in the context of late ancient and early Byzantine practices. Although not the focus of the paper, I turn in the end to an exploration of the gendered connotations of veiling and its long association with female virtue, modesty, and hiddenness in the Greek, Roman, and Byzantine worlds, and I ask how these gendered meanings inflected the ritual, visual, and textual uses of veils in early Byzantine Christianity. By exploring the ways in which late ancient Christian writers and artists “thought with” veils, we gain a richer understanding of the (gendered, sexualized) dynamics of covering and revelation—hiddenness and access—and the efforts, on the part of the spiritual elite, to “unveil” the divine.

## The Fictive Mosaics of Medieval Serbia

Ivan Drpić (University of Pennsylvania)

A series of Serbian churches dating from the thirteenth and early fourteenth century, all of them *katholika* of monasteries founded by members of the ruling Nemanjić dynasty, exhibited an unusual form of monumental decoration. Narrative scenes and isolated figures painted on the walls of these buildings featured backgrounds covered with gold leaf or gold-silver laminate and scored in imitation of mosaic tesserae. Perhaps introduced at Studenica in 1208/9, the practice of gilding murals was adopted in the decoration of the *katholika* at Žiča (1220–1221), Mileševa (shortly before 1227), Sopoćani (ca. 1265), Gradac (ca. 1280), and Banjska (ca. 1317–1321). The fictive mosaics of medieval Serbia, for which there are no extant parallels elsewhere in the wider Byzantine world, are difficult to appreciate today, since their gold has for the most part disappeared. Instead of gleaming precious-metal surfaces, what one now sees is the exposed layer of yellow-ocher underpainting mudded with dark smudges, traces of corroded silver and/or deteriorated organic adhesives.

Gold grounds in Byzantine art have been interpreted as signs of the sacred, embodiments of divine light, or visualizations of space, whether earthly or heavenly. While the Serbian gilded murals lend themselves to such interpretations, they also call attention to the sheer materiality of gold. The gilding of vast wall surfaces was not only technically challenging, but also extremely expensive, especially because gold leaves applied to wall paintings were considerably thicker than the ones used in paintings on panel or in glass mosaic tesserae. This kind of ostentation proclaimed in no ambiguous terms the status, wealth, and ambition of the royal founders. The few medieval sources that make reference to the gold-clad church interiors point to the parergonal, supplementary nature of the affixed metallic layer by describing it as a source providing additional illumination for the interior and by associating it, implicitly, with precious-metal revetments attached to icons. This latter connection is noteworthy, since it allows us to situate the practice of gilding murals within the context of the Byzantine preoccupation with *kosmos*, or adornment, most evident in the vogue for adorned icons from the twelfth century onward.

In the decades following the catastrophe of 1204, securing the necessary workforce and materials to execute extensive cycles of tessellated images in the central Balkans must have been quite difficult, which would explain the decision of Serbian patrons to evoke the prestigious ancient medium in their churches through gilding. In these churches, however, the evocation of mosaic through the medium of wall painting was not limited to metallic backgrounds with fictive tesserae. It also encompassed the figural style of monumental images. Several scholars have already noted that the paintings of Mileševa recall early Byzantine mosaics of Thessalonike, the city from which the leading painter of this ensemble probably hailed. The case of Mileševa invites us to revisit other Serbian churches with gilded murals and examine how the figural style of their decoration registered a dialogue between the two media.

## Ioannes Tzetzes' Loukia: A Less Christian Martyr

Hannah Ewing (Rollins College)

Ioannes Tzetzes' *hypomnema* on early Christian martyr Loukia of Syracuse (*BHG* 996), written around the 1150s, is an unusual text—both in its contents and in its authorship by a man whose self-centeredness and immersion in classical antiquarianism make him an unlikely candidate as a hagiographer. Indeed, the substance of the panegyric focuses more on the island of Sicily and a dramatic trial scene repeatedly referencing Archimedes as it does the traditional elements of Loukia's brief life.

Scholars have used literary and historical context to explain much of this unorthodox content: Paul Magdalino ("The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism," 1992) highlights clear connections to romances and sets up Loukia as a martyr to tyranny and ignorance, while Symeon Paschalidis ("The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," 2011) uses the text as an example of an increasingly more academic and rhetorical turn in the hagiography of the period. Moreover, Ottavio Garana ("Santa Lucia di Siracusa: Note agiografiche," 1955), Alexander Kazhdan ("Hagiographical Notes: Saint Lucia in Twelfth-Century Byzantium," 1983), and Magdalino have all noted the text's subtle allusions to Manuel I's wars with the Normans, providing some justification for the Sicilian setting. These interpretations provide invaluable context for understanding and unpacking the text—but the fact remains that Tzetzes was significantly more interested in Greco-Roman *paideia* than in Christianity (e.g., Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 2007). So, what then to make of Tzetzes' particular foray into hagiography and focus on a Christian martyr?

Turning away from antiquarianism and instead focusing especially on Tzetzes' scattered treatments of Christianity across his letters, *Histories*, and this *hypomnema*, this paper proposes that Tzetzes' take on Loukia-the-martyr is consistent with his approach to other forms of religious life (e.g., monasticism). In particular, in both cases he deemphasizes the inherent value of traditional religious practices in favor of strict integrity, reason, and intellectualism.

## St. Symeon Metaphrastes: A Historical Figure in the Literary Tradition

Elizabeth A. Fisher (George Washington University, Washington DC)

In the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century the Palamite monk, liturgical scholar, and conservative Orthodox theologian Mark Eugenikos compiled a substantial entry devoted to Symeon Metaphrastes for the Synaxarion of Constantinople (ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 1884), thus establishing him as an officially recognized saint of the Orthodox Church some 500 years after his death. Eugenikos' text, often mentioned by scholars but little discussed in specific detail, is available in only a few libraries, none of them in the U.S. The sources Eugenikos used for his text (i.e., Psellos' enkomion of Symeon and kanon for Symeon, an unidentified verse synaxarion, and an unidentified prose historical source evidently also known to Psellos) indicate continuing interest in the Metaphrast among literate Byzantines after his death. Scholars of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries kept his memory alive by referring to Metaphrastes and by copying Psellos' encomion and kanon for him. Juxtaposing Psellos' highly rhetorical and sometimes obscure compositions with Eugenikos' prosaic account suggests new dimensions of the biographical reality behind these literary reflections of Symeon Metaphrastes' career.

The subject of Symeon's role at the imperial court illustrates the complementary role these literary texts can play in expanding our understanding of Symeon's activities. In an elliptical passage, Eugenikos implies that Metaphrastes entered the imperial chancery as a young man and soon became "Grand Logothete" under Romanos II, a position he retained under Nikephoros II Phokas, John I Tzimiskes, and Basil II. Such a spectacular career trajectory for the young Metaphrastes is highly improbable. In contrast, after noting Symeon's youthful entry into the imperial chancery, Psellos alludes vaguely in his enkomion to the young Symeon's role among imperial advisors, perhaps a reference to the regency council headed by Joseph Bringas in 963. In typically vague rhetorical fashion, Psellos provides neither exact dates nor titles for Metaphrastes' administrative career. He describes Symeon fulfilling the official duties of the *Logothetes tou Dromou* and implies that he undertook unusual military assignments as well. An additional episode related to Metaphrastes' public career is mentioned by Eugenikos but does not appear in Psellos' enkomion. According to Eugenikos, Symeon successfully rebutted the challenge to Orthodox ecclesiastical practice mounted by a glib Persian envoy; his interaction with this obnoxious foreigner may lie behind an allusive and obscure passage in Psellos' kanon for Symeon that refers to his destruction of "one who boasted in vain with his coils of argument" (lines 208-212). For Psellos, this incident became a demonstration of Metaphrastes' role as defender of Orthodoxy; for Eugenikos, it illustrated Symeon's international reputation for learning. Their complementary interpretations suggest that the debate was an episode in a historical work recording events of Symeon's life that is now lost.

## **The Refutation and Confirmation of the Myth of Ganymede in John Doxapatres’ *Homiliae in Aphthonium***

Craig A. Gibson (University of Iowa)

John Doxapatres’ commentary on the popular progymnasmata manual of Aphthonius includes nine model exercises which Hock and O’Neil (2002) and Gibson (2009) have argued were not written by Doxapatres himself but were copied from a collection dating to the second half of the eleventh century. If the nine exercises did not come from a single collection, the two exercises discussed in this paper, a refutation and confirmation of the myth of Ganymede (Walz, *Rh.Gr.* II 349,21-353,5 and 366,16-369,4), could date from as early as the fifth century. Regardless of their date, this pair of rhetorical exercises stands virtually alone as an example of the postclassical reception of the myth of Ganymede in the Greek east. This scant tradition presents a stark contrast to the rich and creative reception of Ganymede in the literature and visual arts of the western Middle Ages and Renaissance.

In the Greek rhetorical curriculum, students took brief narratives of myths (especially those emphasizing *eros* and metamorphosis) and broke them down into their component claims in order to refute and confirm them. No other example of a narration, refutation, or confirmation exercise on Ganymede is extant or attested. In the story as our author relates it, Zeus falls in love with the young and handsome Trojan shepherd Ganymede, transforms himself into an eagle, and abducts the boy and carries him off to heaven. The narrative to which the two exercises responds is unique in only its final detail: when Ganymede is abducted, the sweat he releases in his terror is absorbed into the earth and produces the first violet (*ion*). No other myth of Ganymede or any abductee uses the abduction to explain the origin of the violet or any other flower. This aetiology is all the more puzzling in light of the fact that other writers of refutation and confirmation exercises use the most familiar versions of myths and do not seek out rare variants or invent details themselves. I propose that the author added the aetiology of the violet to his narrative in order to provide himself an opportunity to demonstrate how to use physical allegory to confirm a myth.

The author’s brief narrative also omits certain familiar and frequently cited aspects of the myth: Ganymede’s role as cupbearer to Zeus and his replacement of Hebe are not mentioned, nor are the divine horses given to the boy’s distraught parents in recompense for their loss. In addition, this narrative does not reflect the western medieval and Renaissance interpretation of Ganymede as a willing or even eager participant in his abduction by the Zeus-eagle, whereby he allegorically becomes the archetype of the human being divinely transported by his love of God. Instead, the pair of exercises depicts the relationship as one-sided—Zeus is in love, and the boy his object—and employs etymology, close analysis of the story’s narrative logic, and theological and moral allegory in order to examine whether the story is possible, credible, logical, and morally appropriate.



## **Towards an Ethical Turn in Byzantine Studies**

Adam J. Goldwyn (North Dakota State University)

Taking as its starting point Joanna Zylinska's argument in *The Ethics of Cultural Studies* that an "ethical sense of duty and responsibility has *always* constituted an inherent part of the cultural studies project" (ix), this paper seeks to answer three questions: first, what are Byzantine Studies' current – often unspoken – ethical commitments; second, what are the pros and cons of expanding these ethical commitments to explore positions beyond the traditional purview of Byzantine Studies; and, third, what practical steps can individual Byzantinists or Byzantine Studies as a discipline undertake to fulfill these ethical commitments? Inherent within such a discussion is the question of academic activism, which proposes a model of scholarship more deeply engaged with contemporary politics and culture.

Though Byzantine Studies may be characterized by its seeming disconnect from contemporary politics and a disciplinary aversion to political advocacy, the structural threats to the political, educational, financial, even climatological systems that support Byzantine Studies are already having undeniably negative effects on the discipline's core mission of creating and transmitting knowledge about the medieval Greek world. Increased restrictions on the free movement of peoples (including scholars and students), the re-appropriation of museums and cultural sites for national or religious purposes (as, for instance, the Hagia Sophia being turned back from a museum into a part-time mosque), the destruction of archaeological sites by anthropogenic climate change, and government cuts to funding for universities are all issues in which Byzantinists have both a pragmatic disciplinary interest and a humanistic values one. On the other side, a more activist framing of the kinds of research projects undertaken by individuals and funded by granting agencies might allow Byzantinists to bring their disciplinary expertise to bear on current events at intersections such as those of the Byzantine ivory trade and current debates about poaching and the preservation of endangered elephant and rhino populations, the current refugee crisis and demographic changes in the medieval Eastern Mediterranean, or resistance to white supremacist ideas of medieval racial purity and the Crusades as "clash of civilizations" myth. Indeed, many Byzantinists are already engaged in these and other forms of direct and indirect action through participation in professional organizations that have – unlike the major umbrella groups for Byzantinists – adopted advocacy as part of their mission (as, for instance, The American History Association's "Statements and Resolutions of Support and Protest"); other models can already be found in, for instance the Society for Classical Studies-affiliated Classics and Social Justice group or the Society for Medievalist Feminist Scholarship.

The goal of this paper, then, is to open a discussion about the boundaries of such activism and to theorize new models of engaged academics through which Byzantinists can preserve their core mission, find consensus on certain activist concerns without over-politicizing the discipline in a way that undermines principles or divides the discipline against itself, and to stand in solidarity with organizations with similar values and to resist those that oppose the discipline's ethical commitments.

## **Varieties of Middle Byzantine Plant Depiction in the Morgan Dioscorides (New York, Morgan Library, MS M 652)**

Andrew Griebler, University of California at Berkeley

In the Morgan Library in New York is an extensively illustrated herbal recently re-dated to the late ninth or early tenth century (New York, Morgan Library, MS M 652). The manuscript contains a reworking of Dioscorides' *De materia medica* that draws upon multiple sources and versions of the text. The illustrations of the codex were similarly compiled and collated from several sources. As a result, the Morgan manuscript can be seen as a repository of the various kinds of plant depiction available in Middle Byzantine Constantinople. Although the Morgan codex is an important witness to Middle Byzantine botanical inquiry and depiction, previous scholars have largely neglected its numerous illustrations of plants.

The aims of this study are threefold. First, it characterizes the main types of plant depiction found in the Morgan codex. In doing so, the paper foregrounds new ways of attending to Byzantine plant depiction. Pictures of plants are often vaguely described as being more or less naturalistic, schematic or descriptive, although these characterizations tend to lump together disparate forms of plant depiction. This study instead emphasizes elements such as specific pictorial conventions, modeling and aspect, as well as the kinds of morphological features shown.

Second, the study uses these characterizations to identify at least two broad, but distinct traditions of plant illustration in the Morgan Dioscorides. One of these traditions of plant depiction evident in the Morgan Dioscorides is related to illustrations of plants known from the Dioscorides manuscripts in Vienna (Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, med. gr. 1), and Naples (Naples, Biblioteca nazionale, gr. 1). The other tradition of botanical illustration more closely resembles plants in roughly contemporary works of art, although it is ultimately traceable to antique depictions of plants. Each of these traditions are further subdivided on the basis of specific conventions, rendering techniques, and probable sourcing. The study, moreover, analyzes superimpositions, and *mise-en-page* in order to determine the sequence by which these distinct groups of illustrations were copied into the codex.

Third, the study demonstrates that later users of the codex continued to add, update and correct the pictures, but only for plants within the first tradition of plant illustration. The continued addition and modification of the pictures within only one tradition of plant illustration suggests that contemporaries may have recognized the two main traditions of plant illustration as distinct, and ultimately to be used in different ways. These additions and modifications, moreover, demonstrate contemporaries' continuous use of the codex, and, more broadly, their sustained interest in the natural world and the depiction of it.

## **A Burial Setting for Martha and St. Symeon the Younger: The South Church at the Wondrous Mountain Reconsidered**

Ayşe Henry (*Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes, Istanbul*)

On top of the Wondrous Mountain, located to the south of Antioch-on-the-Orontes (Hatay/Turkey), rises a spectacular architectural complex built in the mid-sixth century for Symeon the Younger. The site remained active as a monastery at least until the fourteenth century. Although standing as a roofless ruin in the present day, the complex is exceptionally well preserved and presents abundant architectural remains. In addition, two hagiographic texts, the *Lives* of St. Symeon the Younger and his mother, Martha, provide valuable information for its architectural study. The texts offer a rare opportunity to examine the significance and phasing of the architectural complex. According to the *Lives* there were two distinct sixth-century architectural interventions: the first took place in the period *ca.* 540 CE, when the pilgrimage site was first founded, and the second occurred *ca.* 560 CE, characterized by the construction of the South Church of the complex.

The South Church is a basilica with a triconch sanctuary. It has been identified beyond doubt as the memorial church constructed in honor of Martha (Van den Ven, 1961). Nevertheless, previous studies on the structure rarely challenged the textual information through the use of archaeological evidence. Instead, they concentrated mainly on the debates stemming from the texts, such as the exact location of Martha's sarcophagus and the nature of the superstructure of the church. The archaeological evidence still preserved at the site, however, provides the possibility to go beyond what is narrated by the *Lives*. Architectural details indicate that the construction activities after Martha's death were more comprehensive than the addition of just one building. The whole southern section was refurbished with new architectural features and decorative elements.

The central aim of this paper is to contextualize the second phase of construction activities by attending to one remark from the *Life* of Martha that has received surprisingly little attention. The *Life* of Martha clearly states that Symeon the Younger insisted on being buried with his mother (ch. 46). Hence, whatever was built for her was simultaneously built for him. The fragment of the True Cross arrived from Jerusalem exactly one year after Martha's death according to the *Life* of Martha and was probably housed in the Tetraconch that was built simultaneously with the South Church. The acquired relic of the True Cross perhaps had symbolic significance for the cult of Martha as the author of the *Life* underlined, but it also possessed broader connotations for the stylite tradition. In sum, it is highly probable that the second phase of construction activities was carried out with the anticipation of the stylite's own death, providing the rather extravagant setting on the site appropriate for his remains.

**Projections from the Periphery:  
An exploration of Digenis Akritas and Maximou in the dado zone of the  
Panagia Chrysaphitissa**

Laura Horan (University of California, Los Angeles)

The epic of Digenis Akritas is one that captivates the audience's mind as the story of a frontiersman defending the borders of the Byzantine Empire is intertwined with romance and moral virtues. It is known to have been both a written tale and an oral poem that was spread for centuries throughout the empire. Within the confines of the Panagia Chrysaphitissa near modern day Chrysapha is the image of a battle between Digenis Akritas and his foe and lover, Maximou. The presence of a literary figure within the context of a small painted church in the rural Morea may at first appear uncomfortable and jarring. The viewer is left unsure what to make of such an intersection of secular folklore imagery and the religious context within which it resides. However, when considered in relationship to the moment in which it was likely created, the image begins to convey a story of interconnections with the greater world as political unease reshaped the region.

Set against a backdrop of turmoil, shifting geo-political boundaries and centers of power, and an overall sense of unease, it is almost logical that one of the greatest folk heroes of the period would be a frontiersman protecting the empire. In the direct area of this church, the nearby Mystras would serve as the capital of the Despotate within a century, the Byzantines and Frankish forces battled for power continually as Angevins also made their presence in the region known, and the Ottomans would invade soon after the church's initial construction. The scene of Digenis and Maximou represents the moment of a heroic Christian male overcoming his worldly foe in defense of the empire. Constructed originally in 1290 by a sebastos, who at the time would have been responsible for working with ethnic groups, we see here a depiction of a protector painted within a church set amidst a unsettled environment that was originally financed by another defender.

To my knowledge, this is the single labeled image of Digenis Akritas in existence. It is thus not only significant in relationship to the space in which it was constructed but in the realm of image making during the period overall as it can be used as a standard marker with which to identify other images of the subject.

The image exemplifies the elasticity of the dado zone as it extends beyond the boundaries of traditional church imagery while in many ways simultaneously continuing the interests of Christian morality. As has been seen at the Church of Agia Theodora in Arta and the Church of the Peribleptos at Mystras, both of which were painted within one hundred years of this church's dedication, the Late Byzantine dado zone was one of play and innovation as it subtly engaged the eye of the viewer. Though seemingly disparate and isolatingly secular, each presents a contemporary way of looking at Christian themes and values. It is though the religious imagery of the greater program is being "translated" into the worldly.

## Indo-European Epic Hyperbole in *Digenes Akrites*

Matthew Horrell (University of Iowa)

The typically heroic aspects of the Byzantine epic *Digenes Akrites* have gone largely unanalyzed, but as is the case with so many epics, both the Grottaferrata and Escorial versions of the work have their share of epic hyperbole. Characters roar like lions (*DAG* 1.174; *DAE* 33, 304, 352, 394, 663); become wholly covered by wounds (*DAG* 1.183); drench their clothing with tears (*DAG* 1.82–83) and weep hot tears (*DAG* 1.258, 2.237, 4.591, 8.143–44) and tears like showers (*DAG* 2.267, 5.43; *DAE* 420, 468); overtake deer (*DAG* 4.139–45, 8.20–27), horses (*DAG* 4.1054–62, 6.148–51), hares (*DAE* 674), and bears (*DAE* 763–64) on foot; have chests a fathom in width (*DAG* 4.199); defeat thousands of enemies (*DAG* 4.637–40, 6.207–12, 6.314–17, 6.489–93; *DAE* 1230–35, 1320–24); have voices which carry miles (*DAG* 6.112–14, 6.123–24); and can leap a mile-wide river (*DAE* 672–73) or forty horses (*DAE* 928–30).

This paper analyzes the epic hyperbole in *Digenes Akrites* from an Indo-European perspective. All the motifs mentioned above have a number of analogues across the spectrum of Indo-European epic. Comparison of the several Indo-European epic traditions shows that there are a number of shared motifs of epic hyperbole ranging from India to Ireland; some even involve phraseology that can be reconstructed to Proto-Indo-European. I argue that several passages in *DA* are best understood as Byzantine reflexes of much older inherited motifs of Indo-European epic hyperbole. Although *Digenes Akrites* exists at several removes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, for example, they can all be shown to draw from the same stock of motifs to describe the greatness of their heroes. This paper compares the hyperbole in *Digenes Akrites* to these epics as well as the *Iliad*, *Šāhnāme*, *David of Sassoun*, Old Norse sagas, and folk epics from Russia and the Balkans to show how the Byzantine author(s) employ ancient heroic descriptors. It also demonstrates the ways in which this hyperbole has been modified to suit the purposes of the Grottaferrata and Escorial versions. The paper concludes that *Digenes Akrites* employs a mixture of western Indo-European motifs (e.g., drenching tears, carrying voices), central ones (leaping over horses), eastern (roaring like a lion), and universal IE topoi (fantastic wounds and tears, running down animals, wide chests, defeating thousands of enemies, leaping bodies of water).

## **The Story of the Ascetic Priest: Framing the Image of Melchizedek from the Church of Saint John the Baptist, Chrysapha**

Franka Horvat (UCLA)

The small church of St. John the Baptist, dated by an inscription to 1367, is located adjacent to the well-known church of Panagia Chrysaphitissa in Chrysapha, Laconia. The church has been published only preliminarily, and little has been said so far about its interior decoration. Although the church contains a number of unusual representations, in this paper, I focus on one image in particular: Melchizedek. While this Old Testament priest is usually seen as a prefiguration of Christ, in the church of Saint John the Baptist he is portrayed as a hermit with overgrown, unkempt hair and unclipped fingernails.

The image of the wild Melchizedek comes from apocryphal writings and is seen in this church as a metaphor for ascetic monasticism. As Sharon Gerstel and Ludovic Bender have demonstrated, the region around the church was known for its isolated hermitages, which were often located in caves and in ravines. The textual tradition for Melchizedek's asceticism is quite rich and extends to works of Greek, Coptic, Syrian, Arabic, and Slavic origin. However, there are few visual examples of this idea. The representation from Chrysapha is to my knowledge the only preserved example from Byzantium.

Aside from his unusual appearance, Melchizedek is uniquely paired with another Old Testament priest — Aaron. The two stately figures flank a single window. Their connection is demonstrated by the position of Aaron's body, which is turned in Melchizedek's direction. Based on my analysis of the images, their textual sources, the context of this church and the religious climate in this region, I argue that at Chrysapha Melchizedek and Aaron act as archetypes of the ideal hermit and priest respectively, and that each of them represents an important aspect of monasticism.

## Introducing Constantine the Philosopher of Nicaea

David Jenkins (Princeton University)

Among the more than 40 still unedited works contained in ms. Escorial, B. Mon., Y.II.10 are two attributed to Constantine the Philosopher of Nicaea. Noted only in a scattering of bibliographic notices and descriptions of the manuscript itself, the content of these works has never been evaluated. The first, a consolatory oration addressed to a John Ducas μέγας ἐταιρειάρχης on the death of his wife, suggests that the work dates to the 1170s. The second is a shorter piece, on a philosophical theme of unique coinage, εὐμεταδοσία, which might be of special interest to the study of Byzantine philosophy given its date, the occupational title of its author and the general treatment of the theme itself. That Constantine betrays Neoplatonic influence, even in the consolatory oration, is hardly surprising given its almost atmospheric presence throughout the Byzantine period. What is more striking is his attempt to coin a term that speaks to the fundamental object of philosophy itself, “the best of all goods,” here understood as Nature’s underlying “reciprocal” structure. The general idea is found in both Plato and Aristotle, and even predates them, from the interaction of the elemental στοιχεῖα to the exchanges that order civil society, but its emphasis and abstract extension here (and the sensibility this reflects) is reminiscent of Psellos’ appropriation of Proklos and of the charges against John Italos and Eustratios of Nicaea, all suspected or condemned for limiting the divine within a scheme of logical necessity. This is all the more striking if we assume a date in the 1170s, a time subsequent to Nicholas of Methone’s refutation of Proclus (1150-60s), the condemnation of the allegedly Platonic Soterichos Panteugenos (1157) and the inaugural address as ὑπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων of Michael III Anchialos (1165-67), all instances of attempts to restrict pagan philosophical influence.

## Reading Changes in Justinian's Folles as Imperial Numismatic Propaganda

Alex Johnson (University of Northern Colorado)

The propaganda of Justinian's court has survived only in indirect forms for historians to examine. Though careful exegeses of Procopius, Malalas, and other sixth-century authors can reveal common threads and narratives that *may* have been generated from the Constantinopolitan inner sanctum, no historian has systematically studied the coinage of Justinian for its value as imperial propaganda addressed to the masses.

The lack of a study of the numismatic propaganda of this crucial ruler of late antiquity is detrimental to our understanding of the dissemination of information, iconography of power, and representations of sacred and state in this defining transitional period of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Although Averil Cameron and other scholars have studied the imagery of elite power in Constantinople in the late sixth century, this same treatment has not been applied to Justinian's coinage, which introduced many of the iconographic changes that predate Cameron's work.

While historians of the premodern world are wont to lament the paucity of primary sources for their disciplines, inquiry into numismatics as material history, as public art, and most importantly as propaganda can illuminate how Eastern Roman rulers communicated with the public. Treatments of numismatic history have long been applied to both Roman and Hellenic rulers, but such a systematic study of Eastern Roman coinage is lacking. Given the subtle yet important changes in Justinian's coinage and the excellent numismatic archives available through Dumbarton Oaks and the American Numismatic Association, my paper addresses an interesting and important gap in the historiography.

Anthony Kaldellis, in his 2015 monograph *The Byzantine Republic*, advocates a vision of Byzantium as essentially the monarchic phase of the Roman *res publica*. Applying this theoretical framework to Justinian, then, I argue the Christianizing and militarizing propaganda introduced on the *folles* in 538 or 539 should be read as an attempt to avoid unrest and secure the support of the *politeia*, and to present Justinian to the lower classes as a pious Christian ruler.

My works builds on the scholarship of Kaldellis, Cameron, Roger Scott, and Cécile Morrisson, and Michael Hendy, all of whom examined the ways in which power was exercised through the creation of imagery and imperial ceremony in antiquity. My paper seeks to uncover the complex series of relationships between the common people of Byzantium their rulers, and how the copper coinage of Justinian tried to advocate for a certain propagandist vision of the *basileia*. Moreover, my research speaks to the transitory and liminal period wherein the emperor embraced orthodoxy and Christianity more and more as a function of his office, leading to a new relationship between church and state.



## **John III Vatatzes's Italian Venture: Imperial Agency in the Time of Decline**

Aleksandar Jovanović (Simon Fraser University)

Three Greek letters by the Holy Roman emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen to the Eastern Roman emperor John III Vatatzes, dating from the year 1250, cast light on the Laskarid involvement in Italian politics outside of the Balkan Peninsula. In two of the letters, the Holy Roman Emperor informs his son-in-law and ally John III about the war he is waging against the papal forces in Italy; in the third, Frederick II openly appeals to his Byzantine counterpart not to engage in unionist negotiations with the Holy See.

Examining the content of these three letters, I suggest, helps us to redefine the role that the Laskarid polity played in the wider Mediterranean world of the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century. In this paper, I explore the evidence of imperial endeavours in Italy in order to illustrate that the Laskarid Roman Empire was an active political agent that sought to influence the politics of polities well outside its assumed political sphere of interest.

Recently, such scholars as Jean-Marie Martin and Nikolaos Chrissis have charted papal politics and Frederick II's diplomatic activities concerning the Byzantine Empire in the mid- and late 13<sup>th</sup> century in order to examine the struggle between the Holy See and the Holy Roman emperor. I engage with such scholarship in my own analysis of the three imperial letters by offering an interpretation that conceptualizes the diplomatic relations between the papacy, Frederick II, and John III as a Byzantine attempt to impact Italian politics. Looking at the Italian example enables me to argue that the Byzantine Empire of John III Vatatzes had enough vigor and resilience in the 1240s and 1250s to project an image of itself as a dominant power invested in determining international affairs throughout Christendom. By reading Frederick II's letters to John III vis-à-vis the papal records regarding the Byzantine Empire, as well as the epistolary output of Byzantine secular and ecclesiastic officials to such places as Italy and Cyprus, I further contextualize the relations between the two emperors in order to improve our understanding of Mediterranean diplomacy and the prominent position the Byzantine Empire maintained in this part of the world after 1204. Ultimately, focusing specifically on John III Vatatzes's venture in Italy allows us to recognize a continuity in Byzantine imperialist endeavours to shape the Apennine affairs from Manuel I Komnenos's Italian campaign of 1155–1156 until Michael VIII Palaiologos's endorsement of the Sicilian Vespers in 1282.

## The Persistence of the Amazon in *Digenis Akritis*

Shaima Khanam and Robert Romanchuk (University of Florida)

During the heyday of Henri Grégoire's influential, but now discredited text-critical arguments about *Digenis Akritis*—the great Belgian Byzantinist believed that the Old Slavic translation preserved a version of the text close to the protograph—and without the benefit of Erich Trapp's functioning 1971 stemma for *Digenis*, Alois Schmaus published "Philopappos~Maximo-Szene und Kaiserepisode im altrussischen [*sic*] *Digenis*." Had this 1951 study enjoyed a wider reception, many years of scholarly debate would have been saved. In a stroke, the Munich Slavist and Balkanist not only overturned Grégoire's stemmatics of the "romantic epic" as a whole (1935–1947) and Alexander Kazhdan's 1948 text-critical claims concerning interrelationships of episodes in the Slavic version; Schmaus also vitiated in advance a number of arguments that would be made over the following decades by Byzantinists and Slavists alike.

In what Schmaus calls the "Philopappous-Maximou scene" (which we call the Amazon episode after its most compelling character, Maximou), individual scenes do not correspond *at all* between the Greek and Slavic versions—unlike in other episodes where scenes *do* correspond, although the Slavic translator has altered them using oral-formulaic composition. For example, the girl who is the object of abduction in Greek versions of the Amazon episode has not yet been introduced in the Slavic, while in that version the guerrilla Philopappous plays matchmaker to Digenis. Scenes from the Greek Amazon episode that *are* present in the Slavic text are located in other episodes: for example, Digenis's battle with the serpent is found in the Slavic episode of Digenis's hunt and investiture. Further, there are close textual parallels between the Slavic Amazon episode and the Slavic episodes of Digenis's meeting with the emperor and his enravishment of the girl.

Working from Schmaus's findings, we hypothesize that the original Slavic Amazon episode, close to the Greek in its selection and ordering of scenes—e.g., with the girl as object of abduction by dragon, guerillas, and the Amazon Maximou—was mostly lost when the protograph was damaged. A later editor moved some surviving scenes (such as the encounter with the serpent) elsewhere. He also reconstructed the Amazon episode on the basis of the emperor and enravishment episodes—we map his adaptation of these sources with a *plectogram*, a holistic visualization of their interrelationships—as well as other remaining material from the original Amazon episode, and *non-Akritic material*. In an unexpected twist, we may salvage aspects of Ilias Anagnostakis's thesis that *Digenis* was "born" of the Ps.-Callisthenes *Alexander Romance*. Although this thesis has been debunked for the Greek texts by Ulrich Moennig, the Slavic Amazon episode shows the influence of the Slavic translation of the *Romance*, in particular the correspondence between Alexander and the Amazon queen (ironically, Anagnostakis relies on Grégoire's obsolete textual criticism to make his case). Questions remain: can we locate the ending of the original Slavic Amazon episode (cf. Andrew Dyck 1987)? Did the (re-)compiler make use of Akritic song to characterize Philopappous as matchmaker (Grégoire)? And whatever motivated the editor to reconstruct the Amazon episode?

## **An Iconic Odd Couple: Epiphanius and Chrysostom in the Church of Agios Nikolaos tis Stegis, Cyprus**

Young Richard Kim (Onassis Foundation USA)

Peppered throughout the Troodos range in Cyprus are dozens of churches that contain some of the finest examples of Byzantine iconographic painting. One of the most famous and well preserved of these churches is that of St. Nicholas of the Roof (*Εκκλησία Αγίου Νικολάου της Στέγης*), situated just a few kilometers southwest of the charming village of Kakopetria. The early eleventh-century church was once part of a monastery complex and in its original construction a cross-in-square design with a dome over the center. The interior is covered with paintings that range in date from its original construction through the fifteenth century, and the thematic content includes biblical scenes, images of manifold apostles, saints, martyrs, and prelates, and the Last Judgment, with each series reflecting trends characteristic of the century in which it was painted.

The particular image that is the focus of this paper is found in the apse, where one can find a series of eight prelates painted in medallions and below them another eight figures, depicted in two groups of four, facing the center of the apse. All of these images date to the middle of the fourteenth century. In the first tetrad, the depiction of Epiphanius and Chrysostom together, at least from a modern Orthodox point of view offers little of note, since both men (but especially the latter) are revered as preeminent saints and fathers of the church. However, the history between the two men is a complicated one, and they were involved in a notorious confrontation at the climax of the so-called Origenist Controversy (early fifth century), at the end of which both men essentially wished the other dead. Yet both bishops were ultimately regarded as orthodox holy men, and so in some sense they each had to be to “right.” This paper argues that in order to reach a point in which both saints could stand united together, a long process of hagiographical rehabilitation and selective forgetfulness began soon after the deaths of Epiphanius and Chrysostom.

**The Reading List**  
**Mar Behnam Monastery (MBM) 00364 – A Monastic Anthology**

Robert Kitchen (Sankt Ignatios Theological Academy)

The violent events in Iraq and Syria in recent years have had wide-spread impact upon many aspects of life there. The destruction by ISIS in March 2015 of much of the Monastery of Mar Behnam near Mosul, Iraq, not only destroyed a nearly seventeen-century residence for monks of the Syrian Catholic Church and a great deal of art, but its valuable library of Syriac, Arabic, and Garshuni manuscripts was initially missing. Fortunately, the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, Collegeville, Minnesota, had been able to photo digitize the 534-manuscript library of Mar Behnam during 2011-2013, and in December 2016 the manuscripts of the Library were found stored away in the monastery walls and were ‘liberated.’

The target manuscript in this library is Mar Behnam Monastery (MBM) 00364, an eclectic monastic anthology of ascetical homilies and sayings of the Desert Fathers, consisting of 191 folios, 17-19 lines per page, written in very legible Syriac *serto* script. This manuscript was transcribed in 1542 when Mar Behnam Monastery was an important center of the Syrian Orthodox Church, yet several mystical and spiritual authors of the Church of the East are included, demonstrating that the contents of this manuscript were received by all the Syrian church traditions. This inclusiveness of confessional traditions contributes to the attempt to reconstruct a theoretical canon of Syriac spirituality literature across theological boundaries.

MBM 00364 contains several longer texts – the Discourses of Mark the Monk or Solitary, the Letters of Mar Ammonius, two collections of Evagrius Ponticus’ writings, including the Eight Thoughts, Mar Abraham of Naphthar on the ways of monasticism and virtues, the teaching of Abba Macarius the Great the Egyptian, and the letter of Basil of Caesarea to his brother Gregory of Nyssa.

These longer works are followed by series of classical apophthegmatic stories, mostly anonymous episodes involving disciples of an elder or old man. The manuscript concludes with several short texts by and about Abba Pachomius.

Utilizing recent studies on the character and utilization of monastic anthologies, the different kinds of ascetical and monastic literature assembled are analyzed. The focus is upon how these texts were used in the education and spiritual development of monks of different traditions. While all the texts are written in Syriac, all but one are translations from Greek and Coptic sources. The purpose and function of this anthology is not in the first place to preserve historically viable texts, but to instill a Syriac traditional ethos of monastic ideals, conduct, and discipline which can be read and committed to memory and practice by both the novice and experienced monks.

## Exploring the Rhetoric of Reliquaries in Byzantium and Medieval Europe

Holger A. Klein (Columbia University)

Made from precious stone, ivory, silver, or gold, and often encrusted with gemstones, pearls, or fine enamels, Byzantine reliquaries feature prominently in many surviving accounts of Western travelers, church inventories, and legal documents that record the transfer of property rights between individuals or between individuals and religious institutions. Frequently, these reliquaries are attested to have arrived in Western Europe as diplomatic gifts, exchanged as part of the diplomatic process, or sent to Western courts by way of trusted messengers to serve as signs of imperial magnanimity and benevolence. In other cases, their mode of acquisition in the Eastern Mediterranean is shrouded in mystery and obscured by later narratives that try to justify illicit acts of ‘pious plunder’ and ‘sacred sacrilege’ as divinely inspired and heavenly sanctioned appropriation.

The ‘material turn’ in the humanities and humanistic social sciences and the rise of ‘thing theory’ as a distinct field of study, has, over the last two decades, not only led to a renewed interest in objects and object-based research, but has, as a welcome result and side-effect, also re-invigorated the study of relics and reliquaries, ‘things’ that consistently defy clear-cut categorizations and often oscillate between inanimate ‘objects’ and animate ‘subjects’. Building on a rich body of historical, art historical, and anthropological scholarship, this paper explores the ‘material rhetoric’ of a select number of Byzantine reliquaries that arrived in different parts of Western Europe, namely in modern-day France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, as a result of diplomatic exchanges, loot, or trade during the high Middle Ages. Its aim is to illuminate the role and function of these *prima facie* ‘foreign’ objects in those communities that received them and to investigate attempts that were made to make them ‘speak’ and thus communicate their often complex histories and treasured contents to local audiences unfamiliar with their origin and significance.

## ILLUMINATING GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN'S "UNREAD" ORATIONS (MS *Basiliensis* AN I 8)

Karin Krause (The University of Chicago)

Codex AN I 8, a little-known manuscript that is kept in the University Library of Basel, was copied and illuminated in Byzantium likely during the second half of the twelfth century. It contains parts of a rarely copied text, the commentary (ἐξήγησις) by Elias the Metropolitan of Crete on the orations of Gregory of Nazianzus, "the Theologian" (ca. 329-390). The codex comprises nineteen of these homilies, split up into lemmata, each followed by a section of the commentary. Among its many remarkable features are sixteen full-page miniatures, which constitute the focus of this talk: two author portraits and fourteen surviving illustrative frontispieces. They were added to the book's paper quires on parchment sheets.

The recent restoration of the manuscript conducted at the University Library of Basel occasioned its first thorough autopsy, and codicological observations indicate that the manufacture of this book was both complex and highly unusual. I argue that the frontispieces were originally intended for a different manuscript and inserted into the current volume as an afterthought, not too long after it was first bound. Although the precise circumstances of the production of what is now MS *Basil.* AN I 8 prove difficult to reconstruct, it seems beyond doubt that this exceptional book and its miniatures were commissioned for use by a theologically accomplished individual or group

Elias of Crete's commentary on Gregory's discourses survives in only a handful of Greek manuscripts and remains unedited. The Basel manuscript, the only codex equipped with miniatures, represents one of the earliest preserved testimonies of these expositions drawn up by a writer about whom hardly anything is known; even the date of the text's composition remains uncertain (around 1100?). Elias' commentaries are limited to Gregory's "unread" (μὴ ναγινωσκόμενοι) orations, so-called in Byzantium to indicate that they were not read during the liturgy on recurring feast days of the Church calendar. They were thus distinguished from a popular collection referred to by scholars as the "liturgical edition," comprised of another sixteen of Gregory's homilies. The latter were read on fixed feast days, hence copied more frequently, and often lavishly decorated with figural images.

Given that nothing in the iconography of the frontispieces in the Basel manuscript betrays the presence of Elias' commentary, these images bear witness primarily to the visual response to Gregory's "unread" orations, illustrated volumes of which were rare in Byzantium. The lengthy inscriptions added at different stages to each of these images reveal that their iconography was in need of explanation just like Gregory's discourses themselves. Not only do the frontispieces serve as additional—visual—commentaries, but, along with the two author portraits, they were designed to celebrate the Theologian as an outstanding religious leader of lasting authority whose teachings defined the parameters of Byzantine Orthodoxy.

## ***Andromania: Male Homosexuality and Opprobrium in Tenth-Century Hagiography, Revisited***

Derek Krueger, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Three tenth-century hagiographical texts composed in Constantinople exhibit an unusual and sustained interest in male homosexual activity and its condemnation: the *Life of Basil the Younger*, the *Life of Niphon*, and the *Life of Andrew the Fool*. Official church teaching condemned homosexual activity. Penitential manuals prescribed strict punishments for mutual masturbation, anal intercourse, and pedophilia. Why the sudden interest in homosexuality among a small circle of authors? Each of these saints' lives share an interest in apocalyptic visions and in the reward and punishment of souls in the life to come. While homosexuality was only one of the texts' concerns, these saints' lives reinforced the notion that those who acted on homosexual desires could not enter the kingdom of heaven if they did not repent.

Narrative elements and linguistic usage suggest a complicated range of assumptions and understandings regarding same-sex sexual activity and those drawn to it. They teach confession and repentance as remedies for those who have engaged in homosexual activity even as they depict unrepentant sexual sinners as villains or morally dangerous. An apocalyptic vision in the *Life of Basil* depicts the soul's interrogation after death at a series of tollbooths dedicated to exacting payment for particular sins, one of which is for νδρομανία, literally "man-craziness," and for παιδοφθορία, or "corruption of boys." Another vision, later in the text, depicts the gathering of the resurrected bodies of those guilty of male homosexual activity, the corruption of boys [οἱ ρσενοκοῖται καὶ παιδοφθόροι] and those who committed "unnatural intercourse, men [who] consort[ed] shamefully with men." The text uses nominal forms, suggesting that those who have engaged in homosexual activity or pedophilia constitute classes of people, even if neither term can be understood to describe a sexual orientation in the modern sense. Angels mete out justice by placing iron millstones around their necks and hurling them onto a sea of fire. The text stresses that the time for repentance is past, warning those who hear the text to repent of such sexual sins to escape punishment. Early in the narrative, Basil rebukes and publically shames a eunuch named Samonas, an official of the imperial court, who engaged in "the deeds of sodomites [τὰ τῶν σοδομῶν ἔργα]."

The authors' concern to encourage sodomites to repent becomes clearer when we compare other characters with homosexual desires. While Samonas offers a particularly negative example, the hero of *Life of Niphon* himself engaged frequently in homosexual activity as a young man. Even after he repents, he struggles as the devil tempts him to commit pedophilia. He confesses the sin of *andromania*. Eventually he becomes a holy man and receives a vision, thus modeling the reform and salvation of the repentant andromaniac and pedophile. Meanwhile, in the *Life of Andrew*, the saint has to warn the narrator about his closest friend who is a "fornicator, adulterer, and sodomite," suggesting that the author himself is object, and perhaps even the subject, of homosexual desires. Sustained attention to these narratives contributes to a revised history of sexuality in Byzantium.

## **We Cannot Praise the Fruit Without the Root: The Mother Figure in the Communities of Symeon the Younger and Alypius**

Charles Kuper, Haverford College

It is recounted in Antonius' *Life of Symeon the Elder* that after searching for her son for twenty years, the mother of Symeon Stylites the Elder was tragically denied entrance into his monastery, forced to remain outside where she died soon thereafter. So widespread was this tradition that even Gregory of Tours shows some awareness of it. This rejection of the maternal that is associated with Symeon the Elder, however, differs significantly from the extant evidence associated with two stylites of the sixth century, Symeon Stylites the Younger and Alypius the Stylite. In the *Life of Symeon* (BHG 1689), Symeon's mother Martha plays an important recurring role, leading the procession during Symeon's ascension of his final pillar and intervening on behalf of pilgrims rejected by her son, for example. What is more, Martha is also the subject of a separate vita (BHG 1174), wherein the construction of a church to house her remains and the subsequent acquisition of a relic of the True Cross from Jerusalem to celebrate the anniversary of her death are recorded in great detail. Throughout the *Life of Martha*, the author emphasizes an important fact: Martha's status in the community is not only complementary to but even independent from her son's status. Likewise, in the *Life of Alypius* (BHG 65) Alypius' mother serves as her son's confidant, encouraging him in his decision to embrace a life of asceticism. Later in his career, she even pitches a tent at the foot of her son's column and lives there, ministering to him, until she and her daughter Mary ultimately join the community of nuns living nearby.

This paper first explores the ubiquitous presence of the mother figure in these aforementioned hagiographies, texts that have been almost completely ignored in the scholarly literature since the initial publication of their Greek editions. After this background, I then trace how the authors of these texts activate and refashion Christian images traditionally associated with stylitism in order to articulate and justify the novel roles that these two women played in their respective communities. In short, I suggest that one of the aims of the hagiographers was to create a grammar for expressing what was particularly "stylitic" about the lives of these two mothers. To conclude, I situate this material within its wider context. In order to understand more completely these two monumental stylites and their impact on the early Byzantine world, I argue that we must take a step back and see the bigger picture, not just the saint towering above. The author of Alypius' vita, fond of arboreal and vegetative imagery, illustrates this very point when he compares the stylite's column to a tree. He writes, "Who would not praise the fruit (καρπός) of that holy and wondrous woman? Again, who would not consider the root (ῥίζα) of such wonderful fruit to be blessed?" (*Life of Alypius*, 15)



## **All the King's Horses: The Iconography of Emperors, Kings, and the Divine within the Amuletic Tradition of Early Byzantium**

Shandra Lamaute (University of Minnesota)

Christopher Walter's article "The Intaglio of Solomon in the Benaki Museum and the Origins of the Iconography of Warrior Saints," discusses the iconographical development of the holy rider within the context of Christian amulets. Walter aptly outlines the possible historical connections that the holy rider encapsulates, and he and several other scholars have underscored the rider's multi-cultural iconographic associations with antiquity. With that said, it is not surprising that the visual representation of the holy rider smiting a demon is understood as a ubiquitous motif within the genre of Christian amulets. However, when confronted with the concept of the rider's commonality, one cannot ignore the notions surrounding the relationship between kingship, the conflation of power from human to divine, and apotropaic efficacy. It may be argued that the Late Antique perceptions of kingship should be assessed in conjunction with the extant understandings regarding the significance of the rider.

There are amulets which identify the holy rider as Solomon or a warrior saint such as St. Sisinnius; however, in some instances, the holy rider is anonymous, bereft of textual or visual markers. The lack of identification creates an ambiguity that connotes either a tacit understanding of the rider's identity based on established lore, or allows those who encounter the amulet to attribute an identity to the anonymous figure. Whatever the reason behind the omission may be, it may be suggested that the rider's efficacious nature did not falter. With this in mind, the study will put forward a hypothesis that the rider's potency was derived from an understanding of the power associated with kingship. Besides the concrete associations of the rider with Solomon, or the visual markers that allude to the rider as king, the manner in which a king or emperor associated himself with the divine should be taken into consideration. The imposed perception of the king as divine presented an embodiment of power that was inaccessible to a person outwith the king's rank. Thus, the king resided in a liminal space where his potential could be realized as a god or a man.

The study methodologically focuses upon searching for aspects (social, religious, and political) that influenced the rider's development as a powerful image. Through an examination relegated to amulets from the fifth to seventh century Syria or Palestine, the study will interpret the manner in which late Roman emperors and the kings of the surrounding empires (e.g. the Sasanian) defined and visually represented themselves as divine as a means to suggest that the king or emperor created what became a historical precedent surrounding his agency as a deity or an intermediary. Furthermore, the perceptions regarding this precedent may be considered to be a driving force behind the perceived efficacy of the holy rider's image within the amuletic tradition of early Byzantium. In short, the study will argue that the translation of the power of kingship into an inscribed image of the rider upon an amulet helped define the amulet as efficacious.

## **Reassessing Early Byzantine Historiography: Sozomen, Philostorgius, and Olympiodorus on Empire**

Anna Lankina (University of Florida)

Sozomen, Philostorgius, and Olympiodorus rarely appear in the same sentence. This is surprising considering that all three were early Byzantine historians, writing out of Constantinople during the reign of Theodosius II in the fifth century. In part, this is due to the fact that scholars have tended to emphasize distinctions within late antique historiography, breaking it up into categories of ecclesiastical/pagan, east/west, Greek/Latin, narrative/chronicle, and others. Fifth-century historiography in particular is often characterized by the proliferation of ecclesiastical histories in opposition to the “classicizing” non-Christian historians of the period. Thus, Olympiodorus is usually analyzed in conjunction with other non-Christian historians, Sozomen is lumped together with the Nicene historians, while Philostorgius occupies the rather lonely category of “heretical” non-Nicene historiography.

Brian Croke among others has challenged these traditional distinctions between Christian and non-Christian history writing, suggesting that these categories overvalue difference and stressing instead the cultural unity of late antique historiography. Sozomen, Philostorgius, and Olympiodorus serve as a good starting point for placing these texts back into conversation with each other. Not only did they write during the same time period, but they covered many of the same events and evidence shows that they read each other. Exploring their views of imperial rule allows for a reexamination of these historians as contributing to the same elite culture. I demonstrate the commonalities of the historians’ representations of empire, while at the same time recognizing and giving voice to their claims of distinctiveness. While Christian historiography gradually came to dominate definitions of the past in Byzantium, the fifth century still constituted a time of contest over the nature of the past of the Roman Empire.

## **The Emperor, the Count, and the Virgin: Reassessing the Relationship between Raymond of Saint-Gilles and Alexius Komnenus**

Thomas Lecaque (SUNY Orange)

At the beginning of the 1950s, John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill wrote a short note on “The Convention of Alexius Komnenus and Raymond of Saint Gilles” in the *American Historical Review*, arguing that Count Raymond made an Occitan-style convention with the Emperor safeguarding Raymond’s rights and Alexius’ possessions. In John Hugh Hill’s other early article on the subject, “Raymond of Saint Gilles in Urban’s Plan of Greek and Latin Friendship,” he argued that Raymond’s poor reputation among crusade chroniclers was due to his faithful adherence to Urban’s plan for an alliance between the crusade and the Byzantines. These two articles, and John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill’s subsequent biography of Raymond, form the basis for modern historiographical understandings of the relationship between the Count and the Emperor: cordial, faithful, and according to plan. While this characterization seems correct according to all surviving sources, what remains problematic is the motivation: alone of all the First Crusade leaders, Raymond stuck to the papal plan. Why?

Ascribing motivation to an individual dead for over a millennium is a dangerous business, but the current model is insufficient to properly explain why Raymond of Saint-Gilles maintained his promises to Alexius Komnenus. It was not politically expedient, nor respected by his immediate peers; it did not gain him territory, nor titles, nor greater glory. Instead, to understand Raymond’s friendship and alliance with Alexius, we must look deep into his background. Raymond’s youthful surrounding in the heart of the Bas-Rhône and his life-long affiliation with Saint Gilles primed him to appreciate the Roman Emperor—the rich architectural legacy of Rome imprinted itself in the cities and landscape of the region, and his patron saint, whose name he bore all his life, was a Greek from Athens who came west in an act of monastic *translatio*. In his adulthood he rose from being the second son of a powerful family to become the uncrowned king of southern France, similar in some ways to Alexius’ rise. More important than his youth, which perhaps made him sympathetic to Alexius, was Raymond’s later devotion to the Virgin. One of his final acts before going on crusade was to have a candle lit in front of the majesty statue of the Virgin of Le Puy, to be kept burning perpetually. The agreement between Raymond and Alexius was made in the Blachernae Palace, famous as a site of Marian devotion. Throughout the Crusade, in all of the moments that made an impact on Raymond, the Virgin or Greek saints would appear. In an age where the reevaluation of the First Crusade on the basis of regional religious practice and broader devotional trends has become normative, reevaluating the Byzantine- Provençal alliance on similar lines is necessary.

## **East meets West in the curriculum of Byzantine Melitene (969-1014): a foundation for the ‘Syriac Renaissance’?**

Jonathan Loopstra (University of Northwestern, St. Paul)

The renewal of learning centered in Syriac-speaking Melitene throughout the early centuries of the second millennium is known as the ‘Syriac Renaissance’ (Baumstark 1922: 285, 290). In recent years, this ‘Renaissance’ has attracted welcome attention (Teule et al. 2010) because of the noteworthy achievements of twelfth- and thirteenth-century scholars and churchmen such as Patriarch Michael I (1126-99), Dionysius bar Šalībī (d.1177), and Gregory Bar ‘Ebroyo (d.1286). Yet, scholarship on this ‘Syriac Renaissance’ has, thus far, given less attention to the earlier, tenth-century developments that were formative for these renewed monasteries and schools of Melitene (modern Malatya) in the aftermath of the Byzantine reconquest of the region.

This paper suggests that it was, in part, the innovative educational curriculum developed by West-Syrian immigrants in these tenth-century monasteries that helped to set the stage for the achievements of the later writers in the ‘Syriac Renaissance.’ In addition, recent scholarship shows that this curriculum was both the result of a renewal of interest in things Byzantine and a product of the transmission of a type of Mesopotamian commentary, similar to the ancient Near Eastern texts recently studied by Assyriologist Eckart Frahm (2011). In other words, in Byzantine Melitene we find Eastern school traditions that were modified to meet the contemporary needs of West-Syrian immigrants, new to a region that was not always friendly to miaphysites. The result of this curious mixture of East and West was a school curriculum – preserved intact in nearly a dozen manuscripts – that was used and built upon by well-known writers of the ‘Syriac Renaissance’ such as Patriarch Michael I and Bar ‘Ebroyo.

The recent digitization of these manuscripts now makes it possible, for the first time, to study all known curricular handbooks written during the patriarchates of Yuḥanon VI d-Srīgteh (965-86), Athanasius Šalḥoyo (987-1103) and Yuḥanon bar ‘Abdon (1004-1031). Furthermore, this new technology allows us to trace the work of individual scribes as they developed and implemented this curriculum in local monasteries. Finally, by looking at how this educational programme developed, we are able to better understand the background for the earliest growth of the ‘Syriac Renaissance’, thereby providing a framework in which we can place other elements of this West-Syrian movement, such as a revival of calligraphy (Andrew Palmer 1986) and liturgy (Baby Varghese 2015).

## **English Bodies, Byzantine Silks: Networks, Collections, and Memory in the Thirteenth Century**

Amanda Luyster (College of the Holy Cross)

It is well known that Byzantine textiles circulated in western Europe. Material remains and inventories suggest that eastern silks were present in both English royal ceremony and religious ritual. Learning more about the specific ways that Byzantine textiles circulated in England is not easy, however, because it is often difficult to determine the precise origins of a particular textile described in an inventory, whether it is Byzantine or Islamic, Eastern Mediterranean or Spanish. Indeed, even when actual textiles are preserved in English treasuries, scholars are often unable to determine their provenience definitively. In this paper, I examine inventories and other documents from thirteenth-century England in order to identify textiles that are potentially Byzantine in origin, judging by their materials, manufacturing technique, and iconography. These medieval records describe the gifting, storage, and reuse of particular textiles in English royal and ecclesiastical contexts and therefore cast light on the use of Byzantine textiles in the West.

I follow these textile networks through dynamic events of gifting between elite individuals, but I also track other, less obvious events of documentation and storage, which actively worked to sustain these imported textiles' associations with donors and events. I attend closely to things and people who played vital roles in the functioning of English royal and ecclesiastical treasuries, including record-keepers, storage containers, inventories, gift lists, and object labels. I posit that these networks of people and things functioned to make the value of the gift "stick" – they worked to combat the tendency of all historical connections to be forgotten, the tendency of all things to fall apart. While at first glance, eastern silks held in English storage seem to be in a passive, dormant state, I argue that, in fact, these objects participated in acts of collection and recollection that actively preserved not only the textiles but also – and, more importantly – the associations that endowed them with value.

## **The Quotidian, in its Immensity** **The Affective Power of the Mosaic of the Cathedral of Otranto**

Guillaume Malle (Institute of Fine Arts, NYU)

The existing literature on the twelfth century mosaic pavement in the Cathedral of Otranto follows one of two models: the first takes an arial view of the immense mosaic and organizes its rich material in coherent blocks, while the other seeks a context for each of the mosaic's many images. This paper proposes instead to understand how the mosaic floor affects its visitor, following the definition proposed by Jonathan Hay in "Art without Aesthetics:" "By affective power I mean [the artwork's] capacity to disturb the body and the mind, whether pleasurably or not. We can see the artwork's acknowledgment of its capacity for disturbance wherever its ordered form makes us aware of a preexisting convention of formal harmony. The artwork may either honor or subvert this preexisting convention." (Hay, Jonathan, "Art without Aesthetics," *Appendix to Genealogies of (World) Art History*, 2013: 12) This paper argues that the affective power of the mosaic of Otranto stems from its ambition to engage its visitor deeply by challenging her relationship with the familiar.

As she steps onto the mosaic floor, the visitor encounters a bestiary familiar from contemporaneous depictions, mostly inside roundels or other geometric patterns, on textiles, portable objects and architecture. However, in Otranto these animals and phantasmagoric creatures are reinvigorated by being resized and displayed outside of their habitual frames. Walking amongst these fierce presences places the visitor in a situation of heightened awareness.

Midway through the nave, the visitor first encounters a series of large images forming a Noah narrative, then a Calendar of the Months' Occupations. In both segments, the visitor encounters life-size figures, who, with their tools and medieval garbs, exude spontaneity; yet are called to perform tasks of Biblical consequences. I explore how scale, colors, material and gazes concur to create an intensely personal bond between the visitor and this community of figures - both quotidian and immense.

The visitor, however, is unlikely to follow a linear path from the entrance to the choir. An exploration of the mosaic entails stopping at certain images, retracing one's steps to compare an image to one seen before but no longer visible from where one stands at that moment. It is by charting multiple pathways on the mosaic pavement that the visitor changes from feeling overwhelmed to being fully engaged. By maneuvering through space, it is the body that allows these seemingly disparate images to find their place. I build on Edwin Casey's phenomenological study of remembrance to understand how the mosaic inside the Cathedral of Otranto inscribes itself deeply in the memory of its visitors.

## The Silent Sound of the Icon: The Annunciation Panels in the Ohrid Icon Gallery

Marina Mandrikova (Temple University)

In the year 1900, the prominent Russian scholar Nikodim Kondakov discovered the now world-famous *Annunciation* panels during an expedition to Macedonia. Since that time, the panels and their silver revetments have been the subject of numerous studies in Balkan scholarship. However, their current dating still varies from the mid-eleventh century to the end of the thirteenth century. The most important attribution studies of the panels were conducted before 1975 by Balkan and Russian scholars who associated their production with Constantinople on the basis of the refined silverwork of their revetments. Surprisingly, very few scholars have tried to connect the painted part of the panels to a particular time or location. David and Maria Talbot Rice suggested that the images of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary could have been painted by a Slavic artist, but they did not elaborate on this idea or attempt to support it with any comparanda (David and Maria Talbot Rice. *Icons and their History*, 1974. 33, 45). No substantial analysis or re-assessment of their tentative dating and attribution has followed.

This paper reevaluates the existing attribution of the panels and analyzes their association with a Constantinopolitan workmanship. Integrated historical research and connoisseurship approaches, in combination with a close, on-site visual examination of the panels, have revealed that the possibility of local manufacture of the paintings should not be ruled out. Examples of comparable metalwork are also not restricted to Constantinople and come from various parts of Byzantium, Italy, Hungary, and Georgia, signifying that similar manufacturing techniques and designs had been used by artists in various parts of the Byzantine Empire and beyond.

To explore the possibility of the local origin of the *Annunciation* panels, this paper examines the cultural background of the city of Ohrid during the proposed time of their production. Historical evidence and surviving cultural heritage suggest the prominent position of medieval Ohrid as a center of Orthodox culture in the Balkans, but art historians have still refrained from attributing the earliest preserved Ohrid icons to local craftsmanship. Very recently, western Byzantinists have started to realize the exceptional relevance of archaeological, textual, and art historical evidence from the so-called peripheral centers of Byzantine culture (Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, *Worlds of Byzantium*, 2016) and emphasize the role of an extensive cultural exchange during the medieval period. There can be little doubt that the role of Balkan centers, such as the one at Ohrid, should also be reevaluated.

This paper seeks to create a basis for further discussion on the nature and level of artistic production in Ohrid and its place in Middle Byzantine art and culture. It argues that Ohrid had all of the necessary incentives and conditions for prolific local artistic activity and proposes that a significant number of highly skillful local painters had been working there starting at least from the end of the tenth century. These implications are significant for the two panels and beyond.

## **The Iconoclastic Legacy of the Emperor Theophilos and its Effects on Michael III's Policy**

Ivan Maric (University of Edinburgh)

The absolution of the emperor Theophilos was achieved by his widow Theodora, who bargained it in exchange for the restoration of orthodoxy, that is, for the termination of her husband's iconoclastic policy in 843. The absolution was a purely political move which, however, clearly needed a justification, suggesting it was not a straightforward affair. Even though the palace made significant efforts to secure a wide acceptance of the act, and the official church buttressed it, there remained voices which would not forget and 'forgive' Theophilos's iconoclastic policy, nor, more specifically, the persecutions and punishments executed, the most notorious among which was the case of the Graptoi brothers. Michael III himself, it seems, was occasionally reminded of his father's heresy—patriarch Photios probably alluded to it in one of his homilies delivered in Hagia Sophia with the emperor present. The limited contemporary evidence that sheds some light on what can be loosely termed as Michael's official display regarding the Triumph of Orthodoxy/Iconoclasm, such as the inscriptions in Hagia Sophia and Chrysotriklinos and hints gathered from the patriarch Photios's homilies, portrays Michael as pious, anti-iconoclast emperor, and restorer of orthodoxy, but it also reveals the influence of the patriarch Photios, for whom the threat of Iconoclasm's resurgence was real and which he was resolute to prevent. From later accounts, it is interesting to consider the case of the disinterment of the emperor Constantine V, the arch-iconoclast in iconodule propaganda, and the last iconoclast patriarch John Grammatikos, supposedly carried out at Michael III's orders, which seemingly goes along the same lines as the contemporary evidence.

In my paper, I trace the surviving evidence for the opposition to Theophilos's absolution and, moreover, inquire what kind of effects the memory of the last iconoclast emperor may have had on Michael's policy regarding Iconoclasm. I argue that Theophilos's iconoclastic legacy governed to a certain extent Michael's actions, in terms of proving his own orthodoxy and erasing the memory of his father's heresy, and I further emphasize the role of the patriarch Photios in directing Michael's ideology. It is commonly assumed that there was no threat of Iconoclasm's reinstatement in the period after 843; however, I argue that we will do well to consider that among the leading figures of the church, such as patriarch Photios as the most prominent but not the only one, the fear of yet another emperor reaching for Iconoclasm was a reality, and that it motivated their actions.



## John Moschos as Pilgrim and Wanderer: The Mobile Monk in the Sixth Century

Austin McCray (Louisiana State University)

John Moschos was a Greek-speaking monk from the monastery of Saint Theodosius in the Judean desert, just west of Bethlehem. Along with his pupil, Sophronios, he traveled throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, seeking holy and ascetic individuals in the late sixth and early seventh centuries. He compiled the tales and lessons that he collected into the *Spiritual Meadow* in Rome after 614 CE.

Recently Moschos' work has received greater attention, as several monographs have used the *Spiritual Meadow* to discuss late antique Christianity in the later sixth and early seventh centuries. However, there has yet to be a substantial study devoted to Moschos himself as a pilgrim and ascetic wanderer. Like many hagiographical authors before and after him, Moschos could have compiled his tales and composed his text without stressing travel. Yet physical movement is an integral aspect of the *Spiritual Meadow*. At the core of his narrative of diverse holy men and pilgrims, is the tale of Moschos and Sophronios themselves journeying for their own spiritual edification. Instead of reading the lives of holy men that would surely have been available at the monastery of Saint Theodosius, Moschos felt the call to seek out ascetic individuals and tales of them himself, to learn from and compile the noteworthy aspects of their lives.

This paper seeks to bring this element of John Moschos' life and work to light and through it reveal the continued viability of mobility as an ascetic practice within late antique Christian monasticism. Further examination of Moschos' *Spiritual Meadow* exposes why a monk would choose to detach themselves from the monastery and how this decision would be accepted by the wider monastic circles of the Eastern Mediterranean. Thus, the *Spiritual Meadow* provides a counterpoint to the multiple late antique Christian authors who continued to express disapproval of the mobile monk disengaged from a monastic hierarchy and manual labor. The network of monks and bishops that Moschos met and stayed with throughout Palestine and Egypt clearly show that everyone did not condemn this ascetic practice. It is from these ascetic and holy individuals that Moschos sought to learn how to attain a more perfected form of the ascetic life.

**“Not... by the solemnity of the names or by peculiarities of ceremonies and sacramental symbols, but by correctness of doctrine”: Gregory of Nyssa on the liturgy and sacraments**

Michael Motia (Harvard University)

By the seventh century, Phil Booth has argued, a “renegotiation of competing ascetical and liturgical narratives” would make “the eucharist as the central, aggregating icon of the Christian faith.” Aggregating the Christian faith before then, however, was hotly contested. This paper looks back to a moment of contestation around the role of the liturgies mediating access to the divine, namely Gregory of Nyssa’s negotiation between ascetical and liturgical narratives in his debate with his chief theological rival, Eunomius of Cyzicus.

If scholars do not simply dismiss Gregory of Nyssa’s rival as a hack, they often lump him in with the increasingly popular Neoplatonism of the mid fourth century. Eunomius’s claim that God is *aggenetos* holds up a kind of transcendence of distance, which Rowan Williams describes as “a divine hinterland.” This can sound a good deal like Plotinus, but it is, in fact, quite at odds with the Neoplatonism of his day. The emperor Julian’s adoption of Iamblichus popularized a different mode of philosophy. For Iamblichus, human souls had sunk too low to contemplate the divine, but the demiurge had provided sacred symbols and rituals that linked heaven and earth, and humans by participating in these rituals could be united to the gods.

Like Eunomius’s *aggenetos*, Iamblichus’s symbols are not representations in the sense that they provide a descriptive image of that which they symbolize. They are not convenient names, arrived at in community, to refer to an object. For Eunomius, *aggenetos* is quite literally the divine essence. It is how both God and humans know God. But for Eunomius, rituals do not deliver an encounter with this essence. Eunomius delivers what Charles Stang has called “apophaticism without mysticism,” a clearing of the mind without an intensity of presence. Iamblichus by contrast offers a kind of mysticism without apophaticism, where rituals fully link theurgists into the divine presence. Iamblichus and Eunomius, that is, both suggest a rather high view of what language can deliver, but they take contrasting views on the role of ritual in delivering those names.

This paper situates Gregory’s stance on sacramental symbols between these two modes of transcendence. While some scholars see Gregory offering something quite similar to the Neoplatonism of his time, in teasing apart Eunomius from the philosophical schools, we can see Gregory walking a path between the two camps. For Gregory, names are not the divine essence and rituals do not wake open a dormant part of the soul. But the interworking of language and ritual can put Christians in the presence of the divine whom they cannot comprehend. What we see then are three different approaches to language, liturgy, and ascesis, each of which would remain live options well into Byzantium.

## Gender, Emotion, and Authorial Self-Presentation

Leonora Neville, University of Wisconsin at Madison

Recent studies of Byzantine gender have posited that masculinity was enacted through maintaining control over one's impulses and emotions, as well as physical control over one's self and others. Women were considered naturally subject to *pathos* and liable to unrestraint, although through extraordinary training and character, they could achieve manly levels of selfcontrol. In this cultural system, the control and display of emotion was tightly linked with gender, and could become a means of performing gender. This paper tests these propositions with respect to two texts that display extreme emotions: Ioannes Kaminiates's *Capture of Thessaloniki* and Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*.

Kaminiates creates a rhetorical self in the text that is more a witness to tragedy than a sufferer. The 'Kaminiates' in the text describes the suffering of others, but scrupulously avoids first-person expressions of grief. His method is first to describe the anguish of others, and only after some narrative separation, to admit that he and his family experienced the same horrors he has just described. The affecting description of enslaved children, sickened by thirst and hunger during the voyage from Thessaloniki to Crete, being flung out of the ships to writhe upon the waters until drowning is separated by many pages from spare note that his wife had lost a child en route. 'Kaminiates' is as utterly dispassionate at this moment and calls no pity down on himself, in contrast to the many moments when he prods the audience to pity those whose sufferings he witnesses. In part this is rhetorical *emphasis* in that the audience needs to put the pieces together, but it also constructs 'Kaminiates' as a man of self-control who was able to restrain his emotions even in the face of extreme tragedy. Although the circumstance of being captured, taken from his home, and having his wife and children sold into slavery, was profoundly emasculating, in the text 'Kaminiates' is a man of great personal strength and power because of his emotional control. The presentation of 'Kaminiates' as dispassionate can be seen as the author's attempt to salvage his masculinity.

While Kaminiates depicted himself as unaffected by suffering—in the midst of undeniably tragic circumstances—Anna Komnene presented herself in the *Alexiad* as the subject to great misery even though it is unclear whether she suffered any significant misfortune. At the beginning, end, and other key moments of the *Alexiad*, 'Anna' bewails a horrible (unspecified) fate that causes her ceaseless intense suffering. The only concrete complaint she makes is that her father, husband, and mother have died, but she wrote decades after they had died of natural causes. Generations of readers have wondered what was wrong with her. The interplay between gender and emotion in Byzantine culture however suggests that in these passages Anna was performing femininity. Here she speaks in a voice her culture considered female, in contrast to the masculine voice of an historian she used throughout the text in describing battles and politics. The link between gender and emotion certainly seems worth exploring.

## Senatus Imperatorque Constantinopolitanus: The Form and Function of the Senate in Justinian's Constantinople

Robert Olsen, Saint Louis University

In his *Anekdotia*, the sixth-century historian Procopius describes the Byzantine senate as follows: “For the Senate sat as in a picture, having no control over its vote and no influence for good, but only assembled as a matter of form and in obedience to an ancient law...” (*Anekdotia* 14.8). His point throughout the work, a supplement to his monumental *Wars*, is to demonstrate the villainy of both his employer, Belisarius, and his emperor. Justinian and Theodora are depicted as monsters, *anthropodaimones*, who not only spurned the mores of the Roman *politeia*, but actively sought to disrupt and dismantle its very foundations. The senate is one such realm where Procopius sees this disruption of the *politeia* played out.

As Anthony Kaldellis argued in his 2015 *The Byzantine Republic*, the *politeia* had at its root an understanding that power ultimately rested in the *demos* itself. The emperor was vested with his authority by the will of the people, and the people could revoke it at will – as attested by the many civil disruptions in the capital throughout Byzantine history. Though Kaldellis does not take his work to this conclusion, it seems the senate and its members may have served as spokesmen for the people in the imperial administration. Procopius, it seems, was particularly railing against what he perceived as a diminishing of this role during Justinian's reign.

Despite Procopius' raging, however, this was not the case. In fact, Procopius' historical works show that Justinian continued to work with the senate and its members throughout the emperor's reign, and the institution continued long after him. Certainly the senate did not reflect its Republican roots during the reign of Justinian – but it had not done so for centuries. In the cases of diplomacy, legal proceedings, and the making of emperors, however, the senate remained particularly active. Procopius' own writings clearly show senators and the senate serving as judges in court cases, acting as embassies and ratifying treaties, and taking a key role in the making and unmaking of emperors. Regardless of Procopius' protestations, the senate's existence had not been reduced to a mere Roman trapping on an increasingly autocratic administration. In Justinian's day, it remained what it had been for centuries: an important part of the functioning of the Byzantine state.

## **‘Behold, I Speak Mysteries to You’: The Sermon Collection of Symeon the Younger and the Self-Presentation of a Stylite**

Lucy Parker (University of Oxford)

The collection of thirty sermons attributed to Symeon Stylites the Younger provides a rare opportunity to investigate a stylite through his own words. Recent scholarship has shown that texts written by holy men often provide an image of the saint that is strikingly different from that preserved in their hagiographies, as in the cases of Shenoute of Atripe and Antony the Great. Despite this, Symeon’s sermons have received very little scholarly attention and have never been translated into a modern language. They are very unusual within the corpus of late antique homiletic literature, as they combine aspects of genres often regarded as distinct: the ascetic discourses of monks such as Evagrius of Pontus and Isaiah of Scetis, and the sermons of ecclesiastical preachers such as John Chrysostom. Thus the principle themes of the collection include not only the monk and his battles with the demons but also the sinfulness and brutality of the rich and the punishment which awaits them. This reflects the social position, and ambition, of this influential holy man: his audience is not limited to his own monastic disciples but seems to include sections of secular lay society.

This paper introduces and analyses the sermon collection to examine how the holy man constructed his spiritual authority. Whereas Symeon’s hagiographer presents his healing miracles as the basis of his popularity, the sermons reveal the power of his rhetoric and teaching. Although the style of the sermons has been criticised, with some validity, for its clumsiness, the speaker constructs his relationship with his audience in sophisticated ways. His self-presentation is equally complex. At times he speaks as hegumen to his monks; at others as the voice of the oppressed poor of Antiochene society. He depicts himself as a model of humility, but claims to be an experienced combatant with the demons. Throughout, he draws on his own experiences of visions, dramatizing his message with vivid accounts of divine revelations. He eschews the compromises adopted by many ecclesiastical preachers in view of their pastoral duties, instead focusing on the polarised opposition of demon and monk, rich and poor, and heaven and hell. His often aggressive rhetoric raises questions about the status of the stylite within society. The sermons themselves contain no references to their reception nor to Symeon’s relations with local elites. A comparison, however, with the hagiographic *Life of Symeon Stylites the Younger* suggests that Symeon was a controversial and divisive figure who attracted significant opposition in Antioch and its surroundings. The paper thus concludes by reflecting on the holy man’s role in late antique society.

## Justinian The Merciful

David Alan Parnell (Indiana University Northwest)

Modern depictions of the emperor Justinian I (r. 527-565) do not typically portray him as particularly merciful or compassionate. We are instead conditioned to think of a Justinian who was jealous of the fame of others and insecure about his hold on the throne. This view has its origins in Procopius of Caesarea's scathing character assassination of the emperor in the *Secret History* (8.22-33). Some historians have only been too happy to agree with those passages. Charles Diehl's damning portrait of Justinian, for example, gave him a "weak will, childish vanity, jealous disposition and fussy activity" ("Justinian: The Imperial Restoration in the West," in *The Cambridge Medieval History* [1913], 2:1-24). Even when modern historians avoid passing judgment on the emperor's character traits, they tend to emphasize the brutal aspects of his rule, including wars, persecutions, and massacres.

This focus tends to obscure some positive aspects of the emperor's personality and reign. For instance, there is reason to believe that Justinian was both more generous and forgiving than is usually imagined. This paper presents evidence to support an intentionally provocative claim that Justinian might in some ways deserve the sobriquet "the merciful." The major focus is on Justinian's relationship with his generals, with whom he was surprisingly lenient. Generals who had plotted against him found themselves forgiven and returned to power. For instance, in 550, Justinian dismissed all charges against Artabanes, who had plotted against him, and appointed him General of Thrace (*Wars* 7.31.2-32.51, 7.39.8). The better-known example is Belisarius, who was restored to imperial favor after 18 months of disgrace and given a new command in 544 (*Wars* 7.9.23, *Secret History* 4.38-39). These two instances are only the most dramatic evidence of Justinian's forgiveness.

Whether Justinian was merciful because it was in his nature or because it suited his policy is open to debate. It is possible that he only granted forgiveness out of a desire to keep around generals that he knew and with whom he had some level of comfort. Perhaps he forgave because he preferred to employ veterans, even those who had formerly betrayed him, rather than promoting less experienced men. We also know relatively little about what might have been said to him by men seeking his forgiveness, but it is likely that this was an important part of the emperor's decision. However, by comparing those Justinian pardoned with those he did not pardon, it is possible to see some method to his mercy.

## Kariye Muzesi's Limitless Prism: An Experiment in Digital Humanities

Glenn Peers (University of Texas at Austin)

In *Minutentexte* (2006), Michael Baute and Volker Pantenberger gathered 93 colleagues (film makers, editors, academics, writers of all kinds) to contribute a short piece of writing on any given minute of the film *The Night of the Hunter* (dir. Charles Laughton; 1955). This project proposes to perform similar honor and interrogation of one of the most famous monuments of Byzantine art history: the Church of the Chora in Constantinople. The subject of this project is this multi-faceted, richly prised monument, and it aims to go in directions previous scholarly and non-scholarly treatments have neglected and ignored. Through examination and interrogation of its complex facets, this project intends to reveal an even more complex and intriguing monument than has been possible with existing literature. That literature has largely fallen into conventions of academic writing, which has in turn affected deeply the non-specialist treatments that travellers and interested lay people rely on. It has so often produced a closed and *explained* monument, when it should open up new experience and provisional understanding that make the building engaging, puzzling, generative of unexpected thought and emotion. The *Blue Guide* model asserts authority: "To view the mosaics as they are intended to be viewed, you need to follow this order" (6<sup>th</sup> ed., 2011). This authorial voice and direction is mis-leading, in fact, because the experience of the mosaics and frescoes without this determining and determined companion is richly vertiginous, overwhelming almost. The *Blue Guide* allows one an inoculated encounter, when the monument could so easily lend itself to enjoyment and celebration of its richness.

This project wants to work against these easy certainties—not easily gained, since they come from hard work of research and thought, but easily habituated— and open up new vistas on this very old monument. Kariye Muzesi is not the only monument that can benefit from more subversive or interrogative description, but it can lead as an important first step toward a new genre of historical writing. This genre is provisional, partial, generous, playful, relational; it denies strength to authority, certainty, even meaning as such. It wants to celebrate the multiple and diverse, and it wants to resist narrowing and defining. It enlivens from a distance and up close, and so it works on imagination and memory, experience and perception, equally actively.

Unlike *Minutentexte*, this project works away from the unity of 'book' to the multiplicity of another medium: *placenotes*, an app for phones, pads or tablets. This project should have attraction to a number of people and in a number of contexts through this app: on site most obviously, at home for the vicarious experience, in the classroom or seminar. The monument is comparable to that film in its pedigree, complexity, familiarity, but it is differently spatial, material and visual, and this project seeks to embrace the qualities that make Kariye Muzesi so remarkable, while liberating them from the constricting voices that have till now attempted its capture.

## The Letters of Julian Caesar: Private Persona and Public Relations

Alex Petkas (UC San Diego)

In this paper I propose the extant letters of Julian before he became sole emperor can be used as a key to illuminate literary and political aspects of his later correspondence. The Byzantine compilers of Julian's epistolary corpus took as a starting point the character of the philosopher found in many of the letters (Elm 2017), but it is worth asking who exactly is responsible for this received image. Looking at his earliest datable correspondence, from his time as Caesar in Gaul, I argue that the future emperor was already hard at work crafting his public image as philosopher-king in these letters.

Letters 1-3 (Wright) suggest that Julian viewed the literary ambitions of his own epistolary praxis as an aspect of "philosophy" (cf also Luchner 2008). Letter 1, to Priscus, playfully figures that philosopher's possible upcoming visit to Gaul as a journey undertaken for the sake of literary production: to ἰστορῆσαι the Ocean, in the from of a classicizing geographer. In Letter 3 Julian urges his former school friends Eumenius and Pharianus to press on in their studies of Plato and Aristotle, expressing fears that he "has been barbarized" by spending too much time in Gaul. Executing one's correspondence well was an important mark of a Hellene gentleman in late antiquity, and comparative evidence from later in his corpus as well as from other epistolary corpora (Trapp 2012, Elm 2017) suggest that these bookish displays may have been intended for rereading before or circulation to wider audiences.

Letter 4 (Wright) to Oribasius relates an episode in which Julian confronted an unnamed magistrate remotely (possibly via epistles). Julian relates this episode in the terms of a face-to-face confrontation, and brings the epistle's audience into the extended circle of witnesses of the showdown. In such a way the letter can be seen as a technology for shaping the reception and broadening the impact of contests of status and manliness familiar from sophistic and philosophical *agones* in the earlier empire (e.g. Gleason 1995). These letters can thus illustrate one of Julian's carefully thought out strategies for winning the hearts and minds of Eastern elites.

These early letters, I argue, show Julian an adept manipulator of the epistolary genre and its conventions already before becoming Emperor. Recent work has shown the importance of more open philosophical letters (such as those of Iamblichus, or Julian's *To the Athenians* and *To Themistius*) in contemporary debates about the relationship of politics and philosophy (Swain 2013). But these more personal letters, beyond simply being "private" communiqués between friends, can be seen as a channel of public image management. Thus they are an alternative, with related goals, to better studied genres which are also interested in the character of public figures, such as panegyric (Tougher 2012, Ross 2017 have recently studied Julian's use of the genre). Epistles, however, held a more widely acknowledged claim to reveal the true character of their subject; thus they were a genre which this ambitious future Augustus knew better than to neglect.



## Asia Minor ampullae: A class of their own?

Jessica Plant (Cornell University)

The so-called Asia Minor ampullae take their name from the region of Smyrna, where antiquarian Paul Gaudin first discovered an assemblage in the late nineteenth century. These ampullae are small lentoid terracotta vessels, often adorned with impressed images. They exhibit a distinct morphology, with bodies that taper into narrow necks with slightly flaring rims, and two pierced holes on their shoulders that provide handles for suspension. Scholarship on these late antique (sixth to seventh century) miniature flasks consistently represents them as static emblems of pilgrimage, overlooking their materiality, and their significant presence in domestic and devotional contexts in western Anatolia.

Two entrenched assumptions currently distort the study of Asia Minor ampullae: one conflates the Asia Minor ampullae with the St. Menas flasks; the second applies an undifferentiated model of “pilgrimage art” to the ampullae. This paper confronts these interpretive issues and explores new solutions, employing a relational approach to assemblages and material culture. By combining the visual and contextual analysis of ampullae, I disassociate the Asia Minor corpus from that of Menas. I additionally deconstruct the predominant *locus sanctus* model, which relies on localized notions of the sacred to interpret the production, distribution, and social meaning of these objects.

By freeing the Asia Minor ampullae from the absolute locative conditions of the *locus sanctus* model, and by focusing on their material presence and reception, I propose an alternative conceptualization of them as intimate objects with fluid and active properties. Thus reframed, the typological category of “Asia Minor ampullae” illuminates the relationships between place, mobility, and wider historical narratives. This allows us to understand ampullae as objects with multiple and more varied uses than those that have been suggested by narrow symbolic interpretations.

## Change and Continuity in Byzantine Blinding

Jake Ransohoff (Harvard University)

Byzantine rulers are infamous for blinding their rivals—with hot irons and with boiling liquid, before cheering crowds in heart of Constantinople and in the isolation of remote monasteries. For nearly seven centuries, blinding functioned as a standard penalty in the Byzantine empire for crimes of rebellion and *lèse-majesté*. This paper examines the origins of punitive blinding in Byzantium, and evaluates the longevity of this practice against changes in its venues, its meanings, and its victims.

Punitive blinding was rare in Late Antiquity. During the eighth century, however, blinding emerged as the Byzantine punishment *par excellence* for rebels and traitors, supplanting other penalties such as nasal, lingual, and manual mutilation. Scholars tend to connect this rise of blinding to the emergence of new and enduring cultural notions—such as the belief that only physically unblemished men could rule as emperor, or that Christian *philanthropia* forbade the killing of opponents. In such interpretations, no individual blinding can be understood without attention to the practice's roots in the soil of persisting Byzantine *mentalités*. Yet to examine individual cases of punitive blinding and their reception by contemporaries is to be struck not by stabilities of meaning, but by profound volatility. Blindings could misfire; they were subject to conflicting interpretations. Indeed, while emperors and their propagandists might claim blinding as a merciful alternative to death, the most famous blindings in early Byzantium were ones that undermined imperial authority: Justinian II's blinding of the patriarch Kallinikos (705); Irene's blinding of her son (797).

The present paper does not deny the deeper cultural undertones of blinding, but it argues that an important layer of meaning has been overlooked in its analysis. It first reevaluates the earliest known examples of Byzantine political blinding in the eighth century. It then charts the variety of contemporary reactions to punitive blinding in tandem with its growing frequency. Finally, it examines the shifting venues of blinding in the ninth century—from large public spaces to islands, prisons, and monasteries—to show how emperors developed new strategies to control the performance and subsequent interpretation of this “dangerous ritual.” This paper argues that Byzantine blinding emerged at the intersection of enduring cultural and changing political circumstances.

## The Idea of Purple: The Practical and Ideological Value of Purple Dyes

Danielle Reed (Cornell University)

The production of purple-dyed textiles carried both practical and ideological implications. Although materials from late antique and early Byzantine contexts provide most of the evidence examined here, discussion of the production and use of “royal” purple also encompasses both ancient and modern scholarship. Taking Pliny’s description of shellfish dye manufacture as a starting point, most previous scholars have attempted to prove or disprove his description or used that description as a control on their assessments of archaeological evidence. This reduces analysis of Pliny to a question of truth or fiction, and treats material evidence as subordinate to textual evidence, rather than an independent source. Nevertheless, scholars attempting to reproduce Pliny’s method have generated a number of interesting results. As it turns out there are numerous ways to render a textile purple—both using shellfish excretions and with other substances. Although dyes involving extracts from the various murex species are more colorfast than dyes produced without murex it is often impossible to distinguish between murex and non-murex purple without sophisticated testing methods.

Indeed, our sources reflect an anxiety about obtaining the real thing. Papyrus letters indicate some of the dynamics of purchasing both ‘true purple’ and ‘half-purple’ textiles. Alchemical treatises purport to provide the true method—presumably to assist consumers in spotting ‘fakes.’ Here the experiments mentioned above are especially instructive. We can’t know for sure what our sources meant by ‘true purple.’ Even if they *thought* they meant dye produced exclusively from shellfish, experimental archaeology and the many extant examples of textiles dyed with a combination of shellfish and plant dyes suggest that a mix of substances produced the richest, most colorfast results. Then as now, the prestige of the most expensive means of producing shades of purple overwhelmed the technical practicalities of dyeworks. The very ambiguity of the product once ‘purpled’ clearly created anxiety over authenticity, contributing to the prestige of shellfish dyed products.

Such anxieties over authenticity and access also explain attempts at imperial control over purple-dyed products. The reach of late Roman authority and the structure of the legal system were both such that we ought to be suspicious of any claims to genuine imperial exclusivity. Sumptuary law reflects an ideological need to lay claim to the color, rather than effective control over its production. Nor should it surprise us that shades of purple are among the most common dyes found on late antique textiles! While garments dyed entirely with purple are practically unknown, purple is a very common color in decorative tapestry work on Egyptian tunics from late antiquity. Clearly, anyone who could, obtained it in whatever amount and of whatever quality they could afford. The law, only activated when someone lodged a complaint, had seemingly no effect on this market and little to no control over the habits of the rich within their own homes. It is this rich and diverse trade in various purples which set the value of the rarest dye.

## Byzantine “chosenness” in the preaching of Leo VI

Meredith Riedel (Duke University)

Of the three Byzantine emperors who wrote homilies, Leo VI (r. 886-912) is unique for the number as well as the content of his 42 extant sermons. Most of his homilies were written to be delivered on major feast days, and they articulate a distinctively Byzantine imperial political ideology: the concept of “chosenness”, adapted from the Hebrew scriptures for a Christian empire. In particular, they tie religious observance to civil obedience, and draw on Old Testament exegesis to justify these exhortations.

Unsurprisingly, Leo’s homilies reinforce classic roles for Byzantine rulers: those of father, pilot, and shepherd. Yet this man was subjected to three years of imprisonment under suspicion of treason, and narrowly escaped being blinded by his own father, whose rage was tempered only by the counsel of the patriarch Photios and the palace official Stylianos Zaoutzes. Because Leo was a second son, never intended for leadership, but rather educated to be a scholar, it seems clear that he would seek to justify his elevation to sole rule in undeniable terms. His reign was somewhat unexpected, even accidental; it only came about because of the early deaths of his elder brother and his father. Apart from the ‘last man standing’ quality of his accession to the throne, what did Leo have to offer as a worthy successor to Basil I?

Homilies all have two things in common: they are intended to be delivered orally (although many were later compiled into literary collections), and their target audience is usually Christians in the context of worship. No other emperor writes homilies with such regularity; in fact, before Leo, only Constantine I wrote a homily, and after Leo, only Manuel II Palaeologos wrote one. Hence, Leo VI is extraordinary in his decision to create and deliver homilies. This is not noteworthy merely for being odd. His homilies are interesting for what they reveal about the interests and methods of this unusual emperor. A key aspect of his image management lay in the way he appropriated Byzantine religious belief and practice, especially in his homiletic addresses. Although not a classic imperial military hero like Basil I, Leo nonetheless sought to downplay his total lack of military experience and portray himself as remarkably worthy emperor. To this end, he emphasized spiritual qualifications that demonstrated his ability to guide the ship of state safely through the hazards of contemporary political challenges. He was divinely chosen, not accidental, a claim that can be discerned in many of his writings. This paper examines his homily delivered on July 20, the feast of Elijah, which commemorates Leo’s release from three years of house arrest in the summer of 886, and reveals Leo’s perspective on his own “chosenness” by means of his patron saint, Elijah.

## **A Cartographic Experiment to Locate the Disappeared Byzantine Churches of Galata Mentioned in the Treaty of May 1303 Signed with the Republic of Genoa**

H. Sercan Saglam (Politecnico di Milano)

The study focuses on the disappeared Byzantine churches of Galata mentioned in the agreement of May 1303 signed between the Byzantine Empire and the Republic of Genoa. With respect to the metric data given for defining borders of the quarter granted to the Genoese, it is possible to detect approximate locations of the aforementioned churches in Galata and match with later period buildings. As the majority of those Byzantine shrines have remained unknown due to being demolished, making them a part of the urban palimpsest by former location was aimed.

Although *Sykai* (Galata) was a part of Constantinople, little is known about the built environment of its Byzantine period. Churches listed inside the treaty as reference points for the borderline were *Hagios Ioannes*, *Lipsos*, *Hagios Theodoros*, *Hagia Irene*, *Hagios Georgios*, *Hagioi Anargyroi* and *Hagios Nikolaos*, respectively. Existing studies have located two of them and matched with later period churches in the same places but the rest were shown symbolically on brief mapping attempts. However, when considered the urban layout of Galata with multiple historical layers and approximate positions of the unknown churches, some significant overlaps can be seen. Therefore, the same procedure can also be applied to remaining buildings.

*Hagia Irene* and *Hagia Thekla* were mentioned in some sources from earlier periods and the 5th century *Notitia Urbis Constantinopolitanae* provides a brief outline of Galata as the 13<sup>th</sup> region of Constantinople. The agreement of 1303 shows the situation in the prelude of the Genoese period, which then became Galata's most significant identity. Nevertheless, its importance has continued also during the Ottoman period. In this case, analyzing the Byzantine, Genoese and Ottoman periods of Galata with respect to available documents are crucial steps for comparisons and detecting buildings inside the urban pattern.

Applying the given metric data in the treaty of 1303 from *Archivio di Stato di Genova* to the topography of Galata according to existing reference points sets a basis to the research. Some 17<sup>th</sup> century documents from *Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide* (Rome) display exact locations of three former Genoese churches in Galata that two of them display an overlapping with the definelocations of two Byzantine churches in the act. Yet, those Genoese churches were then demolished for mosque construction and therefore they were often bafflingly represented with the completely different form of the latter, which was also demolished. Moreover, given locations of several disappeared mosques of Galata in an 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman inventory coincide with remaining churches appeared in the treaty that elaborate Byzantine spolia discovered in Galata might have remained from those churches.

Urban continuity is a common phenomenon for worship places in historical cities despite many handovers through centuries and the disappeared Byzantine churches of Galata can be located and interpreted as a part of this continuity in terms of position, function and ownership status.

## **The Agreement of Plato and Aristotle at the Twilight of the Roman Empire (1439–1473): Ancient Sources, New Perspectives, and the Intellectual Birth of Modernity**

Luis Sales (Fordham University)

As the political, military, and economic structures of the Roman Empire collapsed under internal inadequacies and external geopolitical machinations, one of the most surprisingly sophisticated and lively philosophical debates in its long history broke out. In 1439 Georgios Gemisthos Plethon published a treatise concerning the differences between Plato and Aristotle. His work sparked a controversy that would involve numerous intellectuals over the next few decades, including Gennadios Scholarios, Michael Apostoles, Georgios Trapezountios, Matthaïos Kamariotes, Theodoros Gazes, Basilios Bessarion, and others. This debate was largely driven by two main questions: 1) Who was the greatest of the philosophers, Plato or Aristotle? and 2) Which of the two philosophies they represented came closest to the Christian philosophy? What is striking about most arguments in the debate is that they seem to have assumed, perhaps for the first time in over a millennium, that there was indeed a difference of sufficient substance to separate the two philosophers in this way. Of those engaged, it was primarily Bessarion and Scholarios who challenged this assumption.

This presentation argues that this debate, and especially the sources used by those who advocated the supremacy of Plato, suggests that there was both little precedent for radically separating Plato and Aristotle in antiquity and the Greek middle ages, as well as for outlining their differences in detail. I will show that the few texts that do make any such division are rhetorically driven by polemic, but do not stand up to scrutiny, particularly the scrutiny that several of those engaged in this debate applied to them. In other words, I aim to demonstrate that the common view today, that is, that Plato and Aristotle were representatives of two radically opposed and mutually exclusive philosophical systems, stands on surprisingly thin evidence. For example, I show through comparative textual data analysis that both Plethon's and Apostoles' arguments can be traced directly back to but a single—and rather tendentious—source: Eusebios of Kaisareia's *On the Apostolic Preaching*. In other words, nearly two millennia after the death of the two philosophers, one of the few resources one could resort to for this position was a fourth century anti-Hellenic propagandistic text.

This presentation thus suggests that the *sine qua non* of modernity, that Plato and Aristotle are irreconcilable and diametrically opposed, a separation that has undergirded a vast number of modern philosophical projects, is fundamentally a modern belief that can only look to limited—and polemical, at that—ancient and medieval precedent. These findings may modify the way we conceive of the history of philosophy and call into question some of the most foundational philosophical assumptions of the modern era.

## Looking at Late Byzantine Monosandaloi

Rossitza Schroeder (Pacific School of Religion, Graduate Theological Union)

This paper discusses late Byzantine *monosandaloi* whose one shoe is either about to slip off or is already on the ground revealing the wearer's foot in its entirety. It is as much about the figures losing a shoe as it is about positive and negative attitudes to footwear and its symbolism.

The peculiar state of one-shoe-ness is not well studied in Byzantine art history. The few scholars who have discussed the phenomenon have speculated that in the early Palaeologan period, when the *monosandaloi* emerge, it was the revived interest in the ancient Greek literary and visual heritage that inspired their appearance and informed their interpretation. I elaborate on this notion and examine the multiple ways in which these peculiar figures were perceived by their Byzantine audiences. I argue that the images of the *monosandaloi* are caught mid-action in an unfinished narrative moment, exhibiting a form of prepared unpreparedness, intended to implicate the viewer in their story and involving him or her into an affective relationship.

I consider in greater detail the monumental contexts and portraits of the evangelists Luke and Mark in the Protaton, a *monosandalos* monk falling off of the painted *Heavenly Ladder* in the Vatopedi, and four military saints—St Nestor in the Peribleptos church in Ohrid, St George in the chapel of St Euthymios in Thessaloniki and an unknown sainted soldier and St Theodore in the Chora *parekklesion*. The paper concludes with the image of Christ *monosandalos* in the Cretan icons of the Virgin of the Passion. I argue that while in the late thirteenth and fourteenth century the undone shoe was utilized in order to represent an indeterminate state to be interpreted by the viewer, by the fifteenth it had become a vehicle for the agency of the artist.

My study demonstrates that the untied shoe is a site of interpretative encounters revealing playful imagination and demanding careful and attentive looking within a larger context. It disrupts the conventional and challenges the viewer's expectations; it does not clarify, but rather complicates and continuously re-focuses the meaning of the whole.

## Theotokos as Intercessor in the Age of Justinian: The Early Deësis

Lily F. Scott (Temple University)

Most scholarship suggests that the changing idea of the Mother of G-d's role as intercessor to Christ in early Byzantium began with the written word and was only represented iconographically centuries later in deësis compositions, in which she is paired with John the Baptist, flanking Christ. Mary Cunningham has written extensively about the textual evidence that traces the emergence of the belief in the Virgin's intercessory capacity, including the *kontakia*, or hymns, of Romanos the Melodist from the age of Justinian I (527-565 CE) in Constantinople. Cunningham identifies Romanos as the first liturgical writer to showcase the Virgin's human sympathy, as well as her *parresia*, or 'freedom of speech', with Christ, a fundamental aspect of her intercessory role. However, many scholars attribute the earliest intercessory visual representation—the deësis—to the eighth or ninth century, two or three centuries after the first writings that indicate a belief in the Virgin's *parresia* and human sympathy. This study makes an alternate suggestion, where the images do not lag behind the text but, rather, develop and disseminate simultaneously.

Justinian is known to have been particularly devoted to the Mother of G-d, and built many churches in her honor throughout the Byzantine empire. Evidence also suggests that Justinian and Romanos had a close working relationship. Collaborating with Romanos, Justinian, like many imperial leaders before him, shaped the hymns of his time to include themes of both contemporary theological and political issues, and imbued them with his own biases, including his reverence for the Virgin's intercessory capabilities. The Romanos hymns that are of particular interest to this study, *Kontakion* 42, 77, and 47, demonstrate the Virgin's sympathy to human struggles and pain, her *parresia* with Christ, the intimate physical and spiritual connection she shared with Christ, and Christ's acknowledgment that he should observe his mother's wishes and suggestions.

This study suggests that a very early deësis iconographic type emerged in the sixth century in tandem with these hymns. I use two pieces of primary visual evidence—with greater emphasis on the Marian than the Johannine factors—for this study, both from Saint Katherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai: the roundel-contained figures of John the Baptist, the Lamb of G-d, and the Virgin Mary on the mosaic triumphal arch, dating from 548-565 CE, and a Saint Peter icon panel, also dating from the mid-sixth century, with emphasis on the roundels above Saint Peter's head containing images of John, Christ, and the Virgin. In previous scholarship, both the mosaics and the panel have been directly linked to Justinian, although the deësis elements have not received in-depth analysis. This visual evidence thus suggests an intended intercessory iconography: the emergence of the deësis, in which John and the Virgin flank Christ and serve as intercessors in Heaven on behalf of humankind, the Virgin having access to the figurative and literal ears of Christ. Therefore, textual and visual models simultaneously shaped the evolving narrative about the Virgin as a sympathetic intercessor who had *parresia* with Christ during the sixth century.



## Possible Byzantine Influence on the Development of Penitentials in the West: the Role and Treatment of Shame in the *Didascalía Patrum* and the *Corrector* of Burchard of Worms

Rebekah Sheldon (Saint Louis University)

In the past few decades, there has been a dramatic increase in secondary scholarship on the penitential tradition of Western Christendom. The standard narrative has emphasized the singularity of the Irish penitential tradition, which developed there in the sixth century and later spread to England and finally the Continent via Anglo-Saxon reforming missionaries. However, the penitential tradition may have roots in places besides Ireland. Robert Meens and Thomas Charles-Edwards have called attention to the figure of Bishop Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek cleric whom Pope Vitalian sent to England in the seventh century as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. According to the Venerable Bede, Theodore energetically reformed the English Church with an extensive educational program, bringing many books, Greek as well as Latin. Charles-Edwards has studied the penitentials associated with Theodore and his disciples, in order to discern a potential Greek influence.

Recent scholarship has also revised the dating of two Byzantine penitentials. Frans van de Paverd has recently re-edited the two extant texts: the *Kanonarion*, mistakenly attributed to Patriarch John the Faster, and the *Didascalía Patrum*, a later reworking of the original *Kanonarion*. Paverd has re-dated the *Kanonarion* to an original core in the late sixth or early seventh century, with additions through the ninth or at the latest, tenth century, and the *Didascalía Patrum* to the eighth to tenth century. This time frame puts the Byzantine penitentials as likely influences upon the Western penitentials, which developed throughout the sixth to eleventh century, before later being codified into canon law in Gratian's famous *Decretum*.

Intriguing similarities exist between the Byzantine penitentials and various peculiarities of the Western penitentials, which have not been explored to their full extent. Both texts focus on a highly detailed classification of a wide variety of sexual misbehaviors. Other similarities exist as well. For example, both the Byzantine *Didascalía Patrum* and the western "Corrector" from the *Decretum* of Burchard of Worms, are marked by a concern for the fragile mental state of the penitent sinner, an emphasis on the medicinal nature of penance, extremely detailed lists of sexual sins, and the role of (and attitude towards) the shame of the penitent. My paper examines these correlations and compares Byzantine and Western approaches to inculcating a sexual ethic in their flocks.

## Aesthetics of Technology and the Power of Artifice in Byzantine Cloisonné Enamel

Shannon Steiner (Bryn Mawr College)

Cloisonné enameling is an artistic technique distinctive to the Byzantine Empire, second perhaps only to mosaic. Byzantine enamellers were matchless in their ability to fuse vividly colored glass to golden plaques divided into cells by delicate strips of hammered wire. In 1912, O.M. Dalton asserted that “from one enameled medallion we might almost infer the bias of the Byzantine genius, were every monument of its greater art destroyed.” Such a bold claim makes for a compelling point of departure in an analysis of Byzantine enamel. Although Dalton relegated the medium to the second-class status of a minor art, he conceded that enamel possessed a singular capacity to convey Byzantine understanding of the world in ways that other media could not.

This paper locates Byzantine enamel’s unique ability to bear meaning in the rarified knowledge required to produce cloisonné and the skill evident in its execution. Byzantine enamel contained an unprecedented range of colorants and opacifiers for tinting glass and varying its translucency from one *cloison* to the next. The wire in Byzantine enamel was thinned to a minute width that allowed for pictorial compositions rendered in unparalleled detail. Artisans accented their work with natural and fabricated gems and pearls. “Artifice,” defined as the clever application of skill, was intrinsic to the appeal of enamel in Byzantium. Each innovation required not only familiarity with natural resources, but also proficiency in manipulating nature for the purpose of artistic novelty and displays of ingenuity. Contrary to modern descriptions, enamel was not a *material* in its own right, but rather an artistic *process* that gave visual form to skill and knowledge. In other words, enamel was technology – *technē* and *logos* – aestheticized.

The blending of knowledge and technique manifests in the vocabulary used for enamel in Byzantine literature: χειμευτόν or ἔργα χειμευτά. The words come from the verb χέω, and can be translated literally as “melted things” or “melted work.” However, the stem χειμευ- links χειμευτόν to χειμεία and χείμευσις, the medieval Greek words for alchemy. An alternate translation of Byzantine enamel vocabulary might be “things made by *cheimeusis*,” or more simply, “alchemical things” and “alchemical work.” Crucial to the documentation of this material history is a collection of texts known as the Greek alchemical corpus, writings on alchemy produced in Byzantium over several centuries. These texts contain “recipes” for enamel accompanied by theoretical digressions into how skill in enameling demonstrated the ability to artificially reproduce visual phenomena observed in nature, including the hues and luminosity of gemstones and the phosphorescence of sea creatures. Bringing key surviving examples of Byzantine cloisonné into dialogue with the alchemical corpus, I explore how enameling embodied a broad system of esoteric learning, as well as how the expert handling of metal, glass, minerals and heat could exhibit Byzantine knowledge of nature and stand in for Byzantine control over the natural world itself.

## **Sailing Along: Crescent Moons in Manichean Mythology and Art**

Anthony Thomas (University of Minnesota)

One of the essential aspects of Manicheans cosmology and soteriology is the role of the moon and sun as light-ships that purify and transport the purified particles of light from the earth to the Realm of Light. This function of the moon and sun is remarked upon by Late Antique authors like Augustine of Hippo, Ephrem the Syrian, and Alexander of Lycopolis. Manichean sources also discuss this element of their cosmology. The image of the light-ships appears in various Manichean works of art and their presence has been noted by Zsuzanna Gulácsi (*Mani's Pictures*, 2015) among others. What has until now received less attention is the possible origins of the image of the light-ship in Iranian art. Accordingly, this paper attempts to show correspondences between Iranian artistic images from the Achaemenid to the Sassanian period with the Manichean use of the horizontally-oriented crescent to represent the moon as light-ship in artistic images, especially those Manichean pieces of art involving soteriological elements.

This paper, then, begins with a consideration of polemical texts criticizing the place of the sun and moon in the Manichean cosmology. It then proceeds to a consideration of Manichean texts from Iranian and Chinese milieus that discuss the place of the sun and moon as light-ships in the Manichean system. This paper considers images of the moon in Manichean art and argues that the most common image of the moon as a horizontally oriented crescent with a head or person in it is intended to suggest the light-ship. The paper finishes by considering various Iranian images of the moon in an attempt to find instances of a horizontally oriented crescent. The widespread depiction of a horizontal crescent in Sassanian crowns and Nishan are be considered. Particular attention, however, is given to those instances where such a crescent contains a head or a person. Ultimately, it is suggested that the closest connection to this depiction of the moon is found in Achaemenid era seals that may have some connection to an Achaemenid moon god and the Klimova Plate, which similarly depicts the Sassanian moon god Mah.

## **Body, Soul, and Land: Conversion as Rebirth in Agathangelos' *History of Armenia***

K.A. Tuley (University of Minnesota)

Claiming to be written in the fourth century, but more likely in the fifth, Agathangelos' *History of Armenia* is predominantly a hagiography of St. Gregory the Illuminator, key figure in Armenia's conversion to the Christianity of its Eastern Roman neighbors. While the narrative has been mined for representations of Persian-Zoroastrian culture and its erasure, the relationship between the Armenians and their landscape, and how that relationship contributed to the rapid conversion of the self-proclaimed "first Christian realm" has yet to be discussed. This conversion is depicted not as a gradual infiltration, but as a complete rebirth, with smaller echoes of the motif reinforcing the image of Christian renewal throughout the text, in landscape as well as individuals and their bodies, finally in the population as a whole through mass baptism.

Gregory's own is the first rebirth, from a prison pit back to the world, in order to heal the king Trdat. As divine punishment for the martyrdom of the christian virgin Rhipsime and her companions, Trdat has been transformed into a boar, a Persian-Zoroastrian symbol of royalty, running wild; Gregory is able to return the king to human reason simply with prayer, but he remains in boar form. So that he might participate in building shrines for the new saints, he begs Gregory to pray for human hands and feet for him; Trdat's physical landscape, as it were, is itself transformed through the transformation and Christianization of Armenia's landscape. It is only complete after multiple pagan temples have been destroyed and renewed as sites of miraculous Christian healing, when the king stands among his people in the first, newly-finished church, finally reborn, and even described as like a newborn infant. Once Armenia's landscape is made wholly Christian, so is Trdat's bodily landscape, both freed from pagan deformity.

Similarly, the Armenians present at each of the holy sites have their bodies healed of afflictions just as the land is healed of Zoroastrianism, through Gregory's strength and prayer. During the same process, Gregory replaces cultic festivals with saints' days, and rededicates temple priests and servants to churches, and Trdat orders their children educated in literacy Christian teachers, rewriting the priestly caste as educated Christians. Even the Armenian social landscape specifically, its Zoroastrian aspects — is restructured during the conversion process. Thus, Gregory's role is shown to be facilitating the rebirth of Armenia itself, people and place, shedding (literally, in Trdat's rather dramatic case) the Persian-Zoroastrian to be reborn as a Christian realm. It is this rebirth that allows for total conversion within months; Armenia is not gradually reformed but entirely remade all at once, and the fractal repetition of the motif on multiple scales and various elements of Armenian life serves to emphasize the grandest iteration of the pattern: The complete conversion of Armenia itself.

## Image as Matter/Matter as Image: The Wood of the True Cross and Iconoclasm

Laura Veneskey (Wake Forest University)

Perhaps more any other object, the True Cross occupied a privileged position in Byzantine religious and political life. The wood of the cross was unique among relics: sanctified through intense contact with the incarnate body during the Crucifixion, it was in some ways more akin to an *achieropoetas* like the Mandyllion than it was to other relics. Yet if it resembled a miraculous image, it also exceeded that category; suffused with Christ's blood, it had absorbed not the imprint of the body, but the body itself. As both the relic of Christ par excellence and the symbol of salvation and victory over death, the cross developed early and close associations with the office of the emperor, becoming at once an object of religious veneration, a military palladium, and a cornerstone of imperial power. Due to its dual status as both symbol and substance, however, the True Cross was necessarily implicated in the longstanding anxieties over representation and materiality that were exacerbated by the Iconoclastic Controversy. Nevertheless, the cross's deeply entrenched cultural significance allowed it to remain an unassailable touchstone, invoked by both sides of the conflict, even as iconoclastic rhetoric cast doubt on the role of terrestrial materials in religious practice.

This paper examines the relationship between the cross as image and the True Cross as a material object, drawing on both textual and material evidence from the period around Iconoclasm. While scholars like Holger Klein, Charles Barber, and John Wortley have written separately on cross reliquaries, the cross as an Iconoclast symbol, and the treatment of relics under Iconoclasm, much less has been said about the status of the relic itself in the reformulation of the sacred image that took place during this period. The paper begins by assessing the role of the cross as matter in iconoclast and iconophile thought, and suggests that its physicality became an implicit locus of conflict between the two camps, destabilizing the relationship of the wood to its own cruciform image. During the second phase of Iconoclasm, however, when defenders of images drew on more formal, artifact-driven arguments, the cross's materiality became an advantage that could be leveraged to upend iconoclast rhetoric. The paper then turns to a group of reliquaries produced just after the Triumph of Orthodoxy, analyzing them in light of the discourse on the holy wood and its image that had taken place during the controversy. It is ultimately argued that objects like the Fieschi-Morgan Staurotheke and the Pliska enkolpion adopted conspicuously tactile and interactive formats as a means of reinvesting in the shared materiality of the relic and its accompanying images. Such reliquaries display a conscious reimagining of older reliquary designs that brought them in line with the tenets of later iconophile thought.

## The Erotic Eye in Byzantium

Alicia Walker (Bryn Mawr College)

In the early Byzantine era, many objects and monuments associated with women depicted images of Aphrodite, the pagan deity of beauty and erotic love. These works of art and architecture often constructed direct comparisons between the Greco-Roman goddess and actual Byzantine women, either by juxtaposing Aphrodite's portrait with that of a historical woman or by placing an image of Aphrodite in intimate association with a real woman's body (for example, by depicting Aphrodite on a piece of jewelry). While similar pagan iconography is not found in middle Byzantine imagery directly affiliated with women's bodies, medieval women were still compared to Aphrodite in middle Byzantine texts. This paper asks how sexualized images of a pagan female goddess were understood to operate in Christian Byzantium and why their use changed overtime.

Rather than approaching images of Aphrodite through the conventional dichotomy of the Christian icon versus the pagan idol, I propose that the power of these sexualized images operated according to a different logic of pre-modern representation, that of mimesis. Whether through processes of extramission or intromission, Byzantine objects and images were understood to contact the eye physically by means of ray- or particle-like emissions that impressed themselves on the viewer's mind and soul. The notion that works of art could influence the viewer through the impressive, formative power of vision had a long history in Greco-Roman science and literature. The concept also deeply informed attitudes toward pagan art among Early Christian Church Fathers, who believed that looking at lascivious paintings or statues corrupted Christian viewers by inspiring them to engage in similar acts. Commentators like Tatian and Clement of Alexandria advised their followers to avoid looking at pagan works of art, especially those that were sexual in theme.

In the pre-Iconoclastic era, objects and monuments that visually juxtaposed actual women with Aphrodite projected the goddess' qualities of sexual allure and persuasion onto them. Yet, in the same period, similar strategies of imitation and empowerment began to inform Christian practices of mimetic devotion. For instance, early Byzantine monks in Egypt emulated holy people by focusing their prayers on the saints' or Christ's images and conforming themselves to these models in dress, action, and posture (Bolman 1998; Thomas 2012; also see Krueger 2014). I argue that over time, as mimetic viewing became an increasingly Christianized practice, it was considered inappropriate to portray pagan characters like Aphrodite in terms that encouraged emulation of her. Indeed, from the Council in Trullo in the seventh century to the commentaries of Theodore Balsamon in the twelfth century, canon law expressed concern over the power of pagan, erotic imagery to induce sinful behavior in those who viewed it. This vulnerability was due to the susceptibility of the eyes, which offered direct access to the mind and soul, opening the way to corruption. For these reasons, salacious *imagery* of Greco-Roman origin was especially prone to spur emulation, and therefore was more dangerous for Christian audiences than *texts* containing similar subject matter.

## An Arresting Grace: The Poetics of Divine Encounter

Erin Walsh (Duke University)

In the eastern Byzantine Empire, liturgical poetry played an active role in forming religious subjects. Poets inculcated in their audiences patterns of theological and moral reasoning while engaging in a distinctive mode of biblical interpretation. Poetic genres arose among Jews, Samaritans and Christians within the world of Late Antiquity across multiple linguistically defined communities. Comparative approaches to this body of literature have explored the shared formal, thematic, and stylistic features. While the textual or oral means and directions of influence remain allusive, such study responds to the growing awareness of multilingualism and cultural and religious exchange in the region.

The *kontakia* of Romanos Melodos has been the subject of scrutiny for traces of Syriac literary culture in light of his place of birth. His imaginative re-tellings of biblical texts resonate with Syriac *madrashe* and *memre*, relying heavily on expanded speech and dramatic action to attribute psychological depth to his characters. While the interpretative traditions around the Virgin Mary and the Sinful Woman have received scholarly attention, other unnamed women from the New Testament have been understudied. The encounters of the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42) and the Hemorrhaging Woman with Jesus, attracted the attention of later commentators for the ambiguities of the biblical text and multiple interpretative issues their stories raised. The *kontakia* dedicated to these women remain unexamined, and potential links to Syriac literature and traditions of biblical interpretation have not been widely studied.

Prose commentators and homilists such as John Chrysostom understood Jesus' dealings with these women through a pedagogical lens. Jesus' actions and speech test their powers of discernment and lead them through a gradual process of revelation. While this line of interpretation informs Syriac and Greek poetry about these women, Romanos shares with his Syriac counterparts, Ephrem, Jacob of Serugh, and Narsai the imagery of mutual theft and divine entrapment. Playful employment of the vocabulary of stealing and hunting stirs the listener to move beyond conventional categories of morality. By narrowing my scope to Romanos and Jacob of Serugh, I argue that common thematic links in their sustained expositions of these New Testament women echo the interpretative traditions found in the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* often attributed to Ephrem and his school.

Beyond establishing shared traditions of biblical exegesis, this study bears on the theology and function of liturgical poetry in the Byzantine east. The biblical narratives of unnamed New Testament women depicted encounters between marginalized individuals and Jesus that tested and defied normative gender and social distinctions. These poets explore the potential of these narrative features and craft these women into religious exempla for men and women alike to imitate. These meetings of frail humanity with divine majesty are related through a poetics of exchange and mutual theft that vacillates between ascribing agency and passivity to both Jesus and these women. Through a complex and agile reading of Scripture, these examples of verse exegesis become theological reflections on revelation and theophany.

## Philaretos Brachamios as a Narrative Figure in Byzantine and Armenian Sources

Annalinden Weller (Uppsala University)

This paper explores the figure of Philaretos Brachamios, an Armenian *naxarar* magnate and Byzantine imperial official who amassed power in the vacuum after the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert in 1071 CE, using Greek and Armenian-language sources, in order to think about the narrative function of model persons in historiographic and apocalyptic texts during the period of the Seljuk conquests. I examine Philaretos as a narrative figure in the *Alexiad*, Atteliates, and Skylitzes – paying particular attention to his portrayal as ‘ambitious and greedy’ and how he is constructed in the tropic mold of usurper-generals in Byzantine historiography. I will then compare this narrative function to the function of Philaretos in Matthew of Edessa, where Philaretos’s description and deeds are linked closely to an Armenian apocalyptic prophecy (attributed to a ‘Kozern’) which describes wicked and corrupt princes who will appear during the ‘sixty years of desolation by sword and captivity’ which Matthew uses to characterize the Seljuk conquest. In Matthew of Edessa, Philaretos’ real/proximal deeds are rendered meaningful in the sequential reference frame of the Kozern prophecy; he is *made sense of* via the narrative sequencing which belongs to apocalyptic, rather than that which belongs to historiographic, texts.

Furthermore, I will suggest that tropic events and standard character types have a tendency to traverse linguistic boundaries: the highly *narrative* account of an event easily jumps from a Greek-language history to an Armenian-language one, or vice versa. Narrativized descriptions of history flex easily: a trope or model, sans detail, is more easily imported from one culture-complex to another than a fully-detailed account reliant on local context. I will present a narratological model, using the concept of the ‘storyworld’ as developed by Herman, which accounts for the usefulness of tropic characters in Byzantine historiographical work, and then suggest how that model also can show an influence between Byzantine and non-Byzantine historiographies which is both more subtle and more pervasive than strict intertextuality, and can account for the differing narrative functions of Philaretos in Byzantine and Armenian texts.



## Literature in Liturgy: Reading Jacob of Sarug's Hagiographical Poems in Context

Jeffrey Wickes (Saint Louis University)

The sixth century saw the Byzantine world fracture into three separate Christian bodies—the Chalcedonian, Miaphysite, and East Syriac churches. The controversies that gave rise to these distinct communities emerged slowly, and took a different shape in different places. On each side of the controversy, religious leaders sought to influence a malleable religious landscape through literary works—hagiographies, homilies, poems, letters, prayers and hymns. Against the backdrop of this religiously fluid and literarily fertile period, Jacob of Sarug (d. 521) loomed as a subtle and creative voice. Jacob was, first and foremost, a prolific author. He was also staunchly anti-Chalcedonian, but he articulated this stance in a notably irenic tone.

While Jacob wrote letters and prose hagiographies, the bulk of his corpus took the form of poems delivered within the context of the liturgy. These liturgical poems addressed a number of topics—liturgical practice, biblical characters, the end times—but roughly twenty were devoted to the lives of saints. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Syriac texts of the hagiographical poems ascribed to Jacob appeared in two different volumes (P. Bedjan, *Acta Martyrum et sanctorum* [Paris, 1890-1897] and, *ibid.*, *Homiliae selectae Mar-Jacobi Sarugensis* [Paris, 1905-1910]). Although these collections did not critically edit these poems, they nevertheless exposed Western readers, for the first time, to the poetry of Jacob of Sarug, and, more specifically, to the existence of a series of specifically hagiographical poems. They also made available, in a printed form, some of the oldest manuscripts containing Jacob's poetry. These works thus still provide the basic starting point for a study of Jacob's hagiographical poetry.

My paper aims to situate these hagiographical poems within the dual context of sixth-century Syriac liturgy, and the sixth-century Syriac cult of the saints, both set against the backdrop of the burgeoning miaphysite movement. These poems, almost all of which treated saints venerated by both miaphysite and non-miaphysite communities, provide historians with a window into the way literature and liturgy came together to shape communal identity in sixth-century Mesopotamia. As such, the paper argues that the poems occupy a distinct place within Jacob's own corpus, but must also be also read within the context of sixth-century Syriac liturgy, and against the backdrop of the sixth-century debates over Christian identity.

## The Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Nativity: Visual Cross-References

Warren Woodfin (Queens College, The City University of New York)

The recent cleaning and consolidation of the wall mosaics in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem has clarified issues that have long dogged the interpretation of the program. A particular problem for scholarship has been the archaizing representations of the church councils on the walls of the nave—their texts framed by architectural vignettes and separated by jeweled, candelabra-like plant forms. The strong resemblance of these vegetal motifs to the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock was among the factors that led Henri Stern to date the council images on the north wall to c. 700 CE, in the decades immediately following the construction of the Umayyad monument in Jerusalem. The mosaics of the ecumenical councils on the south wall would thus be twelfth century imitations modeled on the remains of this earlier program. This differentiation between the council mosaics dated c. 700 and those dated by the dedicatory inscription to 1169 is no longer tenable. While the results of the restoration campaign await their final publication by Michele Bacci and his associates, the newly visible technical details the cleaning has revealed show a consistency of materials and technique between both sets of council mosaics.

If the visual similarities of the council mosaics to the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock are not to be explained by a date in the Umayyad period, what could the rationale be for including such striking visual cross-references to an Islamic monument? The twelfth-century context provides a possible answer. Jaroslav Folda has called attention to the prominent placement on the east wall of the transept of four mosaics—the Appearance of Christ to Thomas, the Ascension, the Transfiguration, and the Entry into Jerusalem—highlighting links between Bethlehem and other pilgrimage sites around Jerusalem and the Galilee. Similarly, the much-discussed bilingual dedicatory inscription can be read as an expression of the desire for agreement and cooperation between the Orthodox Christians and the Crusaders who controlled the major holy sites.

At the period of the execution of the mosaics, the Dome of the Rock had become a spot of Christian pilgrimage. In the possession of Augustinian canons as the *Templum Domini*, it was closely associated with the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the *Hypapantē* of the Orthodox calendar, the feast that closes the forty-day long Christmas celebration. Prior to the First Crusade, Jerusalem's primary liturgical commemoration of this feast took place at the Holy Sepulcher, as first attested in the fourth-century itinerary of Egeria. The Crusader invention of a shrine of the Presentation in the Umayyad building gave the feast its own architectural shrine. By incorporating the immediately recognizable jeweled plant motifs of the Dome of the Rock among the church council mosaics, the twelfth-century mosaicists created a cross-reference linking the Nativity with the Presentation, the hill of Bethlehem with the Temple Mount, and Orthodox Christians with Crusaders.

## **Apatheia and Asceticism: Babai the Great's Commentary on the *Kephalaia Gnostika* and the Formation of East Syrian Ascetic Theology**

John Zaleski (Harvard University)

This paper examines the treatment of asceticism in Babai the Great's (d. 628) Syriac commentary on the *Kephalaia Gnostika* of Evagrius of Pontus, as well as in the commentary on the *Kephalaia Gnostika* contained in Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library MS Mingana Syriac 601. Babai was the third abbot of the "Great Monastery" on Mount Izla, which lay within Sasanian Mesopotamia just a few miles from the Byzantine border. Babai and his monks were East Syrian ("Nestorian") hardliners, vehemently opposed to the Miaphysite and Chalcedonian communities with whom they competed for converts and patronage. Like their rivals, Babai's monks studied a range of Greek and early Byzantine religious texts that were translated into Syriac, including the writings of Evagrius of Pontus, which had been condemned and substantially destroyed within the Byzantine Empire after 553. Babai's commentary on the *Kephalaia Gnostika* is thus an important source for the Syriac reception of Greek monastic literature, as well as the development of a self-consciously East Syrian monastic tradition.

The specifically ascetic and monastic dimensions of Babai's commentary have received little attention from scholarship. Ever since the pioneering work of Antoine Guillaumont (1962), scholars have focused on Babai's anti-Origenist reading of Evagrius. Recently, however, Till Engelmann (2013) has urged that the positive dimensions of Babai's theology have been obscured by the focus on his anti-Origenist polemic. This paper contributes to the reappraisal of Babai's commentary by arguing that Babai transformed the *Kephalaia Gnostika* into a text focused on ascetic practice and designed to reinvigorate East Syrian monasticism. As this paper demonstrates, Babai directed his monks' attention to ascetic concepts that were only implicit in Evagrius's abstruse and coded language, such as the reordering of the soul's passions through bodily labor, or the necessity of fasting, vigils, and celibacy. In addition, Babai stressed that freedom from the passions – the Evagrian *apatheia* – was only available in the world to come and that ascetic labor was thus a necessary and defining aspect of monastic life throughout the life of the monk.

The final section of this paper shows that the little-studied commentary on the *Kephalaia Gnostika* preserved in Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library MS Mingana Syriac 601 takes an approach to *apatheia* and asceticism closely in line with that of Babai's commentary. Taken together, these two commentaries demonstrate the continued vitality of a broader Syriac tradition of interpretation that valued the practical over the speculative and contemplative dimensions of the Evagrian corpus (a tradition exemplified earlier, as David Michelson has shown, in the works of Philoxenos of Mabbug). An examination of the two commentaries thus contributes to growing research on the transformation of religious and textual traditions across the political, linguistic, and confessional boundaries of the eastern Mediterranean world.