

BYZANTIUM: EMPIRE OF THE SEA

The 21st Conference & Biennial General Meeting of the Australasian Association for Byzantine Studies, University of Queensland, St Lucia Campus, Brisbane, June 2-5, 2023.

Potential Program (subject to adjustment):

June 2 – Opening Reception at Milns Museum & Empires of the Sea Exhibition Launch, 5 pm

June 3 – Fryer Library Presentations – Lady Diamantina Roma Bowen's Greek Archive

June 4 – AABS Papers & Keynote Lecture by Professor Georgia Frank (Colgate) & Dinner

June 5 – AABS BGM & AABS Papers

Call for Papers – Deadline for Submission April 1, 2023 – email for submission

conference@aabs.org.au. Abstracts of 150-200 words maximum for 20 minute papers.

Submissions should include name, institution or affiliation, and, if relevant, a short letter of application for a student bursary from AABS to attend the conference from Australia or New Zealand.

Byzantium was an empire on, and of, the ancient Mediterranean and Black Seas. The 'late' Romans inherited a political, military and cultural system centred on waterborne trade and interconnections. Constantine's new capital city swiftly replaced Rome as the Mediterranean entrepot of goods from east and west, building on the foundations of the connections and harbours of Byzantium, the ideal Greek emporium. We ask for papers to engage with the conference topic on any level of analysis, from history and hagiography, to letters, art, iconography or harbour architecture. Papers are welcome to consider the origins of Byzantium in the Roman empire, or as a Greek colony; to study some aspect of the functioning Roman empire centred on Constantinople from the 4th to 15th centuries; or to explore the legacy of Byzantium in the Black Sea, on the Aegean islands, in the Italian maritime republics, or along the rivers, bays and coasts of the north, west and south.

Possible paper topics might include:

Naval warfare, Greek fire, galleys, sieges of Constantinople

Harbours of Byzantium, trade goods, merchants, ship-building

Seafaring traditions, St Nicholas, the Panagia, fishermen, festivals

Metaphors in sermons, hymns etc. drawn from the sea

Venice, Genoa, Pisa, Italians, immigrants, explorers

Islands, e.g. Proconnesus for marble, Malta also for exiles

Relations with the Kievan Rus, the Varangian Guard, rivers of the north

Relations with Arabs, Jews, Egyptians, Church of the East, Slavs, etc.

Products of the sea: fish, shellfish, shells, dyes, seabirds

Positive and negative associations of the sea in Greek literature

Pirates, slaves, hostages, crusaders, military orders

Travel conditions, letter carriers, the 'Post' system, maps, cartography ...

Convenor: Dr Amelia R. Brown (UQ)

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