

EAA 29th Annual Meeting, Belfast
1st September 2023
Session #113 - Byzantine Heritage in Peril

A session associated with the Commission of Byzantine Archaeology (CBA) of the International Association of Byzantine Studies (AIEB) and MERC

113 **BYZANTINE HERITAGE IN PERIL: THE SAFETY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (HERITAGE, CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION, NON-DESTRUCTIVE METHODOLOGIES)**

Room: Main Site Tower, room 2002

Time: 14:00 - 18:30

Theme: 3. Heritage Narratives and Representations

Format: Regular session

Organisers: Veikou, Myrto (University of Patras) - Vroom, Joanita (University of Leiden) - Tsvikis, Nikos (Institute of Mediterranean Studies - FORTH)



14:00 INTRODUCTION

14:15 PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MEDIEVAL SAI (SUDAN): A CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSING BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

Hafsaas, Henriette (Volda University College) - Tsakos, Alexandros (University of Bergen)

14:30 THE MANAGEMENT OF BYZANTINE HERITAGE IN A FORMER CONFLICT ZONE: THE CASE OF CYPRUS

Vionis, Athanasios (University of Cyprus)

14:45 DISCUSSION SLOT

15:15 BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ISTANBUL THROUGH A CULTURAL HERITAGE PERSPECTIVE: THE LAND WALLS, THE CHURCH OF ST. POLYEUKTOS, THE THEODOSIAN HARBOR

Altan, Baris (Brandenburg University of Technology) - Ercan Kydonakis, Ayşe (Independent Scholar)

15:30 STILL AN ANNOYING RELATIVE? BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN EXCAVATION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS OF 'CLASSICAL' SITES IN GREECE

Tsvikis, Nikos (Institute for Mediterranean Studies, FORTH)

15:45 DISCUSSION SLOT

16:00 COFFEE BREAK

16:30 COUNTERACTING DESTRUCTION BEFORE DOCUMENTATION: LOOTING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN THE HINTERLAND OF CHALKIDA (GREECE)

Vroom, Joanita - Kolvers, Ritchie (Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University - NL)

16:45 THE BYZANTINE PHASE OF THE SITE OF AMARYNTHOS (EUBOEA, GREECE) AND THE EXCAVATION OF THE SANCTUARY OF ARTEMIS AMARYSIA

Krapf, Tobias (Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece) - Greger, Daniela (University of Lausanne)

17:00 UNCONQUERED AND WELL-FORTIFIED? NOT ANYMORE: THE PELOPONNESIAN FORTIFIED SETTLEMENT OF GARDIKI IN AN ERA OF CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

Kalantzis-Papadopoulos, Dionysios (University of Leiden)

17:15 DISCUSSION SLOT

17:30 THE UNDERGROUND AS PLACE OF WORSHIP: BYZANTINE HERMIT CAVES AND UNDERGROUND CHURCHES IN CALABRIA THROUGH DIGITAL SURVEY

Stilo, Francesco (Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria)

17:45 CARIČIN GRAD (JUSTINIANA PRIMA): RESEARCH, RESTORATION AND PRESENTATION

Ivanisevic, Vujadin (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade) - Đukanović, Dubravka (Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Belgrade) - Bugarski, Ivan (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

18:00 PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE BYZANTINE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF UKRAINE

Skulbodenko, Artem (Treasury of the National Museum of History of Ukraine)

18:15 DISCUSSION SLOT

BYZANTINE HERITAGE IN PERIL: THE SAFETY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES (HERITAGE, CONSERVATION, PRESERVATION, NON-DESTRUCTIVE METHODOLOGIES)

Session theme: 3. Heritage Narratives and Representations

Session organisers: Veikou, Myrto (University of Patras) - Vroom, Joanita (University of Leiden) - Tsvikis, Nikos (Institute of Mediterranean Studies - FORTH)

Session format: Regular session

For the first time the International Association of Byzantine Studies (AIEB) and its newly created Commission for Byzantine Archaeology (CBA) propose a session for the EAA Meeting. In doing so, our intention is to disseminate recent archaeological work conducted in our field and to build a broader academic and collegial environment.

Byzantine archaeology, the archaeology of the millennial Eastern Roman empire, traditionally covers a huge geographic area incorporating the Eastern Mediterranean, Southeastern Europe and the Black Sea, extending in periods westwards all the way to cover Italy and much of Northern and Eastern Africa. Nowadays, areas governed by different climate regimes, populated by different people, and regulated under different authorities represent a broad spectrum of cultures where sites are treated in various ways. In these areas, since the 19th century, versions of Byzantine archaeologies have flourished at different paces and often with contrasting aims.

In this session we aim to address modern challenges of Byzantine archaeology as a wide-spanning international field. Sites can vary from long-standing excavations initiated in the conditions of late colonialism to state-of-the-art contemporary projects reflecting meta- technological breakthroughs. Nonetheless, everywhere archaeology, including Byzantine archaeology, is confronted by extreme social conditions, sometimes exponent local growth or sudden geometric recession of state or national economies, aggressive touristic and housing development, climatic challenges and extreme weather patterns, problems in archaeological finds' storage, resources and infrastructures for sites' management, or even just plain old ravages of war and conflict. We call upon a broad-spanning group of specialists, involved in the excavation, study and management of Byzantine archaeological sites across the Mediterranean, South-east Europe, the Black Sea and beyond to participate in our session and present key-aspects of these challenges and possible policies of counteracting them. The session besides will be also accepting poster presentations.

ABSTRACTS

1 PROTECTING AND PROMOTING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF MEDIEVAL SAI (SUDAN): A CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSING BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT

Abstract author(s): Hafsaas, Henriette (Volda University College) - Tsakos, Alexandros (University of Bergen)

Abstract format: Oral (Cancelled)

Christian Nubia is one of the three regions of northeast Africa that adopted Christianity as the state religion during the medieval centuries - roughly coinciding with the Byzantine millennium. The other two regions were Egypt and Ethiopia, but only Nubia and Ethiopia remained Christian states throughout the medieval era. Apart from Christianity, Nubia belongs to the Byzantine ecumene, as exemplified by the use of the Greek language for religious and administrative purposes, the titles of secular and religious authorities, and the religious iconography, to mention only the most relevant evidence.

The Christian past of the medieval Nubian kingdoms has left numerous archaeological sites of various sizes and importance. Their threats and salvage have followed the trajectory of the archaeological heritage of Egypt and Sudan in general (e.g., dam building, mechanized agriculture, and gold mining). Cultural heritage management in Sudan also faces challenges due to the gradual changes in the religious and linguistic landscape since the introduction of Islam and Arabic. Despite these challenges, significant investments have been made in Sudan archaeology through initiatives like the Merowe Dam Archaeological Salvage Project, the Qatar-Sudan Archaeology Project, and research grants through the European Research Council. The research approaches have evolved, with a stronger focus on community involvement. The recent political upheavals have also impacted the care for the country, its people and its past.

We will present our earlier efforts at cultural heritage management and community involvement on Sai Island in northern Sudan through our investigations of the medieval era on the island in 2009 and 2010. The proposed contribution aims at adding a Nubiological and Sudanological perspective to the discussions of the management of Byzantine and Byzantine-like archaeological heritage.

2 THE MANAGEMENT OF BYZANTINE HERITAGE IN A FORMER CONFLICT ZONE: THE CASE OF CYPRUS

Abstract author(s): Vionis, Athanasios (University of Cyprus)

Abstract format: Oral

This contribution discusses a success story of heritage management in Cyprus through the pilot study of a late medieval religious/sacred monument in the Larnaca district, carried out in the framework of the Unlocking the Sacred Landscapes of Cyprus project (EXCELLENCE/1216/0362), a collaboration between the University of Cyprus and the Department of Antiquities of the Republic of Cyprus. In an attempt to answer the basic question of “who owns the past”, this case study not only provides a paradigmatic and fascinating case in terms of heritage management but also in terms of the reception of the Byzantine/medieval sacred spaces and landscapes today. The aim is to examine how the state, local communities and visitors at the site make claims to, remember and experience religious and secular monuments of the Byzantine/medieval past and their surrounding landscapes, while also investigating how such claims are managed, negotiated and contested. The history and conservation of the monument discussed, the church of Panagia Astathiotissa, located on a previously conflict zone, unpacks the various discourses in contested areas, and opens the way for re-examining abandonment, conflict, and management practices by local communities and the state.

3 OBSERVATIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BYZANTINE RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS IN KONSTANTINIYYE AROUND 1450S AND THEIR CURRENT STATE OF PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION (Canceled)

Abstract author(s): Akture, Zeynep (Independent Scholar; Turkish National Commission for UNESCO's Tangible Heritage Expert Committee (Vice President))

Abstract format: Oral

Re-functioning of the Hagia Sophia Museum as the Grand Mosque of Ayasofya has been the most widely followed managerial decisions lately taken about a Byzantine heritage asset, partly due to the potential risk religious use outside of a controlled museum environment may cause for the preservation of the World Heritage monument in its integrity. Among arguments brought up by local conservation experts to ensure intact preservation of the monument's unique figural decorations during the re-functioning and their continued visual accessibility by visitors was the quasi-mythological narrative on the limitedness of physical change introduced during its first conversion into a mosque in the period of Mehmet II. Such narratives characteristically portray Mehmet II almost as a protector of Byzantine heritage who also had a private collection of relics from the pilgrimage churches of Constantinople.

This paper aims to contribute to a critical assessment of this portrayal by presenting research outcomes on the past and current state of preservation of the Byzantine religious monuments that are known to have been demolished or re-functioned in the period of Mehmet II on administratively and symbolically key sites for re-structuring the Ottoman Empire and its capital, under the following grouping:

- (mostly non-religious) domination symbols in and around imperial palaces
- imperial image-making religious monuments and complexes
- imperial institutions (mainly for education)
- religious spaces for the empire's multi-ethnic communities

Conclusions reveal urban design decisions by Mehmet II and renovations by non-Muslim communities other than the Orthodox Greek, making use of the rights brought by the 1856 Edict of Reform, among reasons for the gradual loss of the city's Byzantine religious heritage that has been reduced to comparatively minor and unhighlighted material traces on a thoroughly rewritten palimpsest.

4 BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ISTANBUL THROUGH A CULTURAL HERITAGE PERSPECTIVE: THE LAND WALLS, THE CHURCH OF ST. POLYEUKTOS, THE THEODOSIAN HARBOR

Abstract author(s): Altan, Baris (Brandenburg University of Technology) - Ercan Kydonakis, Ayşe (Independent Scholar)

Abstract format: Oral

The architectural heritage of Istanbul, with respect to its Byzantine past, has been ideologically instrumentalized, particularly over the span of the last two centuries. Archaeology which materializes the past, played a critical role in these endeavours, along with the architectural restoration and conservation projects that ‘museumize’ cultural heritage discourses. Stakeholders, governmental bodies, and institutions that are tasked to discover Byzantine Constantinople, and to protect its physical remains, have taken varying attitudes over the years, in parallel to their political inclinations, manipulating what heritage to bring to light, make visible, protect, or neglect and forget.

By providing an overview of watershed moments in the history of the Byzantine archaeology in Istanbul and a retrospective analysis of the processes of architectural conservation projects, this paper focuses on a number of Byzantine sites, which are under the directorship of different stakeholders such as Istanbul Archaeological Museums, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, and the Directorate of Pious Foundations. Three iconic archaeological sites, notably Theodosian Land Walls, the Church of St. Polyeuktos, and the Theodosian Harbor will be analyzed in detail with respect to their legal status and the conditions of archaeological fieldworks, the circumstances of the subsequent restoration initiatives, as well as the methods of communication with wider public with respect to the equilibrium between archaeological fieldwork and intangible heritage preservation. In doing so, this paper relates to a bigger picture that discusses various practices of urban archaeology in multi-layered historical cities like Istanbul in regard to varying approaches to Byzantine archaeology and cultural heritage policies towards Byzantine urban heritage, often resulting in controversial outcomes.

5 STILL AN ANNOYING RELATIVE? BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN EXCAVATION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS OF 'CLASSICAL' SITES IN GREECE

Abstract author(s): Tsivikis, Nikos (Institute for Mediterranean Studies, FORTH)

Abstract format: Oral

Archaeological work carried out by various institutions in numerous sites across Greece has been innovative in many ways and offering breakthroughs in our understanding of the past communities in both rural and urban contexts. Twenty-first century archaeological practice in Greece has moved away from the old distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' antiquities in terms of their periodization (e.g. Classical against Roman/Medieval/Byzantine/Ottoman) or their building qualities (e.g. Stone/Marble-built against Brick/Mudbrick/Wooden-built) amongst many such qualitative dipoles. Or has it not? Aim of this paper is to critically revisit the older hierarchical model and the current processes of prioritization amongst different date historical remains and the attitudes in preservation and restoration stemming from this process. Our case studies will come from current multi-period archaeological projects in Greece, usually cities and settlements with long historical life and multilayered stratigraphies covering the still 'desirable' remains of the Classical past. In these we will examine the fates and fortunes of post-classical remains, both in their physical qualities and their role in interpretative models.

6 COUNTERACTING DESTRUCTION BEFORE DOCUMENTATION: LOOTING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IN THE HINTERLAND OF CHALKIDA (GREECE)

Abstract author(s): Vroom, Joanita - Kolvers, Ritchie (Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University)

Abstract format: Oral

The first fieldwork-season of the 'Hinterland of Medieval Chalkida' Project (HMC-project) was undertaken in the summer of 2022. During this season, the team members quickly realized they were not the first to identify the value of heritage sites in the region under study. Of the three Byzantine/medieval sites which were surveyed intensively, all three showed signs of clandestine excavations, looting, and quite serious treasure hunting with the use of metal detectors. We decided that these traces of the wilful destruction of the stories of these sites and of cultural heritage in general should inspire archaeologists to make the best of the situation. Indeed, in the 2023 campaign of the HMC Project one of the looter pits was extended to form a properly executed trial trench.

In the longer term, archaeologists should draw conclusions about how to protect their archaeological sources in tune with the times. We suggest that since metal detectorists are plundering sites, survey teams should be allowed to bring their own metal detectors. During the 2022 fieldwork-season the HMC team uncovered nearly a dozen coins and several interesting metal finds without a metal detector – indicating that there is still enough left to be found. Hence, bringing a metal detector by archaeological teams will increase the number of relevant finds, and it will safeguard archaeological information that might otherwise be lost forever.

Also, we suggest that it is essential to cooperate with local communities and make them aware of the significance of their own cultural heritage. We experienced that if local communities were informed about our archaeological activities, there was a significant increase in the understanding of the scientific value of Byzantine/medieval sites in their region. We are convinced that armed with such an understanding, locals will be more inclined to help defend these sites against potential looters.

7 THE BYZANTINE PHASE OF THE SITE OF AMARYNTHOS (EUBOEA, GREECE) AND THE EXCAVATION OF THE SANCTUARY OF ARTEMIS AMARYSIA

Abstract author(s): Krapf, Tobias (Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece) - Greger, Daniela (University of Lausanne)

Abstract format: Oral

The site of Amarynthos in Central Euboea is mostly known for the remains of the ancient sanctuary of Artemis Amarysia. The discovery of one of the last great cult places known from literary sources has become such a sensation that it easily diverted the attention from the numerous later finds of the region: although the reuse of ancient blocks in Byzantine churches played a key role in the location of the sanctuary and the excavations conducted by the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea have revealed domestic and funerary structures from a Byzantine and Post-Byzantine settlement, these contexts have not received the same recognition. In an effort to protect and promote Byzantine heritage, this paper will present the medieval finds and highlight the difficulties linked to their excavation and preservation in the shadow of the Artemision.

Raising awareness about the Byzantine landscape of Amarynthos area is an important instrument to ensure its protection, especially since Medieval remains incur a disproportionately high risk of destruction. While some monuments have been transformed through continuous use, Byzantine archaeological layers are often located close to the surface and are thus particularly impacted by the heavy urbanisation of the region. The diachronic survey of the area around Amarynthos launched in 2021 has revealed a number of medieval sites which need to be protected. Especially when religious and socio-political interests are at odds with archaeological concerns, it is essential to share the importance of the Byzantine remains with the local population and visitors alike in order to gain a wider appreciation of the Byzantine heritage and the necessary support for its protection.

8 UNCONQUERED AND WELL-FORTIFIED? NOT ANYMORE: THE PELOPONNESIAN FORTIFIED SETTLEMENT OF GARDIKI IN AN ERA OF CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

Abstract author(s): Kalantzis-Papadopoulos, Dionysios (University of Leiden)

Abstract format: Oral

Located atop a precipitous rocky outcrop of the Arcadian Mt. Hellenitsa, the fortified settlement of Gardiki boasts a dominating position over the uplands of the Southwestern Peloponnese. In the past, its critical location provided the Byzantine Despotate of Morea with an excellent offensive base against the nearby Crusader lands in Messenia for almost two centuries (13th-15th c.). A typical example of a late medieval byzantine *kastropoliteia* (i.e. fortified town), the site and most of its structures developed over an inhospitable, steep uphill terrain, carefully chosen for its exceptional defensible capabilities. However, after the settlement's destruction by the Ottomans in 1460, Gardiki was left completely abandoned and essentially in limbo until its re-discovery in 1840/41 by J. A. C. Buchon. Ever since the site would only occasionally appear as short notice in various publications of scholars recording the diachronic cultural heritage of the Peloponnese. To this day, Gardiki remains a mostly neglected medieval site left to ruin atop its isolated ridge. The dangers against its remaining standing structures are always-present since its abandonment in the 15th c. A.D.: anthropogenic activities like systematic looting and goat-grazing wreaked havoc on Gardiki's remains for centuries, along with the naturally occurring process of erosion. Accompanied by the newly-arisen byproducts of climate change, such as summer wildfires and severe winter storms, these phenomena threaten not only Gardiki itself, but many similar fortified settlements located in the Peloponnese and beyond. All these challenges call for the urgent introduction of countermeasures by the local communities, authorities, and foremost, by the long-absent academia.

9 THE UNDERGROUND AS PLACE OF WORSHIP. BYZANTINE HERMIT CAVES AND UNDERGROUND CHURCHES IN CALABRIA THROUGH DIGITAL SURVEY

Abstract author(s): Stilo, Francesco (Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria)

Abstract format: Oral

The research deals with issues related to the theme of the underground as a place of worship, in a dialogue between architecture and archaeology. The use of the underground in Christianity refers both to the cultic purpose (hermit caves, rock churches, crypts) and to the sepulchral purpose. The rock phenomenon is widespread in the Mediterranean area, and in particular expresses, in southern Italy, the moment of maximum propagation between the tenth and eleventh centuries, in close relationship with the Italian-Greek monastic nuclei. For Calabria, rupestrian testimonies consist largely of natural caves and caverns adapted to the purpose or of excavations that are difficult to trace back to sub divo architectural experiences or to well-defined architectural models.

Through the investigation it was possible to ascertain that to date, for Calabria, the phenomenon is still very obscure, both due to the general absence of dating elements, and due to the chronic lack of written sources (except

for hagiographic sources), and, lastly, due to the almost total absence (with rare and commendable exceptions) of archaeological investigations. Among the elements that put the investigated archaeological sites at risk, in addition to those that typically threaten rocky contexts (mainly soil erosion and landslides), there are human factors generated by public inattention to the value of such sites.

The synthesis of a campaign of digital photogrammetric surveys is presented, aimed at documenting the selected case studies, and at the production of itineraries for the knowledge of the Byzantine hermit caves and the underground as a place of worship in Calabria. From this point of view, the production of digital surveys has allowed the creation of a database consisting not only of photographs and graphics but also of three-dimensional point clouds, meshes and textured elements (digital replicas of cavities and details) useful for preserving this Cultural Heritage.

10 CARIČIN GRAD (JUSTINIANA PRIMA): RESEARCH, RESTORATION AND PRESENTATION

Abstract author(s): Ivanisevic, Vujadin (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade) - Đukanović, Dubravka (Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia) - Bugarski, Ivan (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

Abstract format: Oral

Caričin Grad is one of best preserved early Byzantine cities, revealing several fortification lines around the urban core, suburbs, workshop areas, a water supply system which included the aqueduct and dam, and a fairly untouched landscape. This all makes the site unique and gives its researchers the opportunity to study the issues of its establishment, short life and monuments in a most comprehensive way. Its remains provide a possibility for truthful presentation of this unique heritage.

The long-lasting excavations, ongoing from 1912, were performed primarily within the city limits. Owing to the use of modern technologies - geoelectrical and geomagnetic surveys are being carried out since 1980, GPR surveys since 2015, and LiDAR scanning since 2011 - the outer defences were documented, as well as numerous buildings, which has had a huge impact on our understanding of the city's size and its urban planning. This knowledge has been deepened by traditional field surveys, which all led to the obtaining of accurate ground plans of the forts in the vicinity and the reconstruction of the 21km-long aqueduct route.

This broad approach also dictated a significant enlargement of the protected area of Caričin Grad as an immovable cultural property, from some 0.9 km² to 10 km², now encircling the entire aqueduct line, while the area of the site is already included into the Nature Park Radan, which is crucial for the preservation of landscape and biological diversity.

Moreover, a special investment programme has been launched by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, aiming at preservation and presentation of Caričin Grad, the cultural-historical centre of southern Serbia. Restoration should not be overwhelming and go beyond the reliable presentation of architectural remains. The study of the site's monuments, especially its numerous churches, has already been facilitated with the creation of detailed 3D models.

11 PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE BYZANTINE COLLECTION OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF UKRAINE

Abstract author(s): Skulbodenko, Artem (Treasury of the National Museum of History of Ukraine)

Abstract format: Oral

Since the first archaeological activities in the 19th century, many pieces of byzantine culture had been found throughout Ukraine. Ukrainian Pontic steppes, the Crimean Peninsula and territories related to them saw a huge population migration of different ethnic groups throughout the 4th – 8th centuries. They actively relied on trade and diplomatic relations with Byzantine Empire. Moreover, Kyivan Rus' was the main cultural and trade ally of the Byzantine Empire in Eastern Europe in the 10th – 12th centuries.

The rise of the interest in history among Ukrainian intellectuals of 19th – early 20th century provoked the creation of massive private collections. The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Collection of Western and Eastern art was the biggest of them all. After the passing of the owners, it contributed greatly to newly created Ukrainian museums in Kyiv. Artifacts of Byzantine provenance were among the most precious of the collection's pieces.

Since 2014, when the Russian-Ukrainian war began with the occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, many Ukrainian museums were damaged or robbed. Ukrainian historians and archaeologists had been rethinking the context of Ukrainian archaeological and museum heritage. Safety and preservation became as important as implementing new approaches for scientific research and popularizing Ukrainian history and museum culture.

This paper explores the roots, history of accumulation, current state, and future challenges of the Byzantine collection of The National Museum of History of Ukraine. In the wake of the Russian aggression, its entire existence needs to be revised with a comprehensive approach.