The Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research

Annual Report 2016-2017
Director’s Report

The Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research (OCBR) enjoyed another busy year, with the calendar packed with lectures, conferences and activities that were as varied as they were numerous. Highlights included an exhibition of photographs of Early Ethiopian and Other Eastern Illuminated Gospel Books that spent several months on show at the Ioannou Centre; study trips to Algeria and to Bulgaria; conferences on domestic ritual, and on the ‘long sixth century’ in Asia Minor; and preparations for the Empires of Faith show at the Ashmolean which opened in October 2017.

The community of scholars in Oxford continues to thrive, with many visiting scholars giving lectures during the year at the Late Antique and Byzantine Studies seminar, the Late Antique and Byzantine Archaeology and Art Seminar as well as in other series organised across the University. In the Michaelmas Term of 2016, we welcomed Professor Johannes Pahlitzsch from the University of Mainz as OCBR Visiting Professor. The Annual OCBR lecture for 2016-17 was delivered by Professor Warren Treadgold of St Louis University.

The strength of Late Antique and Byzantine Studies continues to attract the very best graduate students to Oxford for the taught masters courses and to do doctoral and post-doctoral research. The numbers and quality of those applying to the university are at an all-time high. During the course of the year, the OCBR was delighted to support the 19th Annual International Graduate Conference which saw 48 students from more than 30 institutions around the world (as far away as Japan) deliver papers on their research.

2016-17 also saw an expansion of the important and ambitious Manar al-Athar project to capture digital images of sites from Late Antiquity and beyond into a searchable database. The project has now expanded into Georgia and Eastern Turkey.

Inevitably, much thought has gone into some of the wider questions surrounding higher education, above in relation to funding of graduate and undergraduate courses; the short and long-term implications of political change across Europe; and also into how the OCBR can build on the work and successes of the last seven years since the Centre was established. This has led to the development of a plan as to how to secure and expand Late Antique, Byzantine and Post-Byzantine
Studies at Oxford, an initiative that has been endorsed and supported by the Humanities Division. It is hoped that this initiative may bear fruit in the coming years.

Due to the ongoing generosity of the A. G. Leventis Foundation, in March the Faculty of History and the Faculty of Theology and Religion were able to promote Dr Phil Booth from his post as A. G. Leventis Lecturer to that of A. G. Leventis Associate Professor in Eastern Christianity. Prof. Booth will continue to divide his duties between both departments, teaching the history of the medieval eastern Mediterranean, its Christian churches, and their theology to both undergraduates and postgraduates. In 2018 he will begin teaching an exciting new Oxford undergraduate course introduced as part of the revised syllabus in Theology and Religion, and enabled by the Foundation’s continued support: ‘Eastern Christianities from Constantinople to Baghdad, AD 450-1000.’ The new course emerges from and complements Prof. Booth’s ongoing research into two research monographs: first, a history of the Christian churches in Egypt during the period of transition from Roman to Islamic rule (Egypt at the Dawn of Islam, scheduled for publication by Princeton University Press in 2019); and, second, The Rise of Eastern Christendom (a larger history, the first of its kind, tracing the emergence and interaction of the various eastern churches in the early medieval period). The new post forms a fundamental part of OCBR’s continued expansion.

It also gives me great pleasure to thank the trustees of the A.G. Leventis Foundation, who have generously funded the OCBR in 2016-2017 as the final year of a new three-year grant. This has enabled the Centre to significantly expand its reach, and provides a vital platform to invite scholars to Oxford, to facilitate research and to attract young scholars to study here.

During the course of the year, the trustees of the A.G. Leventis Foundation announced their intention to award a further three year grant of funding to the OCBR, alongside the award of another PhD studentship for an outstanding young scholar to pursue doctoral research at Oxford. The Board of the OCBR was delighted to award this studentship to Adele Curness.

Late Antique & Byzantine Studies and related fields at Oxford are flourishing. I am very grateful to the Board of the OCBR, its members, subscribers and supporters for their continued support and look forward to an equally rewarding academic year in 2017-18.

Professor Peter Frankopan
Director, Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research
Governance of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research

The Committee of the OCBR in 2016-2017 was:

Prof Dame Averil Cameron (Chair), Professor of Byzantine History (Keble)
Prof Peter Frankopan (Director), Senior Research Fellow (Worcester)
Prof Marc Lauxtermann, Bywater and Sotheby’s Professor of Byzantine & Modern Greek Language & Literature (Exeter)
Prof Gregory Hutchinson, Regius Professor of Greek (Christ Church)
Professor Bryan Ward-Perkins, Director OCLA, Professor of Late Antique History (Trinity)
Profesor Philip Booth, AG Leventis Associate in Eastern Christianity (Trinity)
Professor Jás Elsner, Professor of Late Antique Art (Corpus Christi)
Professor Ine Jacobs, Associate Professor in Byzantine Archaeology & Material Culture (Univ)
Dr Marek Jankowiak (Wolfson)
Professor David Taylor, Associate Professor of Aramaic & Syrian (Wolfson)
Dr Ida Toth, Lecturer in Byzantine Epigraphy (Wolfson)
Professor Mark Whittow, Associate Professor in Byzantine Studies (Corpus Christi College)

The Committee is made up of *ex-officio* appointments and representatives of the faculties of History, Classics, Medieval & Modern Languages and Oriental Studies.

The Committee of OCBR met several times this year, and at least once each term. Its finances are administered by the History Faculty.

Dr Jankowiak was invited to join the OCBR’s committee in the Michaelmas Term of 2016 and to serve on the committee for one year.
**OCBR Awards and Prizes**

The OCBR awards a prize to the best performance in a paper relating to Byzantine Studies in Finals. In 2017, the Prize was jointly awarded to Callan Meynell and Benedict Scantlebury.

The OCBR awards a prize to the best performance of a graduate student in Master of Studies or Master of Philosophy examinations in Byzantine Studies. In 2017, the Prize was jointly awarded to Benjamin Kybett and Silvio Roggo.

**OCBR Graduate Research Awards**

The OCBR provides a limited number of research and travel grants for graduate students and senior members. In 2014-2015, five awards were made:

- **Edward Coghill** (Worcester) for travel to Algeria as part of a study visit in March 2017
- **Matthew Kinloch** (University) to take part in a conference in Oslo on ‘Narratology and historiography in Byzantine studies and Classics’ in September 2017
- **Stephanie Lenk** (Wolfson) for travel to Algeria as part of a study visit in March 2017
- **Nik Matheou** (Pembroke) to undertake a study visit to Georgia and Eastern Turkey over the Long Vac of 2017.
- **Efthymis Rizos** (Linacre) for a study trip to Greek Thrace: Komotini, Maximianopolis, Anastasiopolis, Maronea, Traianopolis, Didymoteicho in the Long Vac 2016.

Short reports from those awarded grants appear later in this report.

**OCBR Travel Grant for the Oxford University Byzantine Society**

The OCBR made a significant contribution towards the costs of an expedition of graduate students, led by Mirela Ivanova, to visit sites in Late Antique and Byzantine sites in Bulgaria in
April 2017. The group visited sites Philipopolis, Mesembria and Sozopolis, key settlements and re-settlements like Debelt and Nicopolis Ad-Istrum, late antique fortresses and the capitals of the first and second Bulgarian polities, Pliska, Preslav and Veliko Turnovo, as well as visiting historic sites and museums in Sofia. A report is included later in this report.

**OCBR Publication Grant**

The OCBR is occasionally able to assist with the publication of particularly significant scholarly works by its members. In 2014-15, it made several awards:

- **Priscilla Lang** for research assistance to enable **Professor Cyril Mango** to complete a major work on Late Antique and Medieval Constantinople. This seminal work will be published in 2018.

- **Professors Elizabeth and Michael Jeffreys** for assistance with publishing the work of ‘Manganeios Prodromos’, an artificial name for an anonymous twelfth-century poet. Among his many subjects is a war between Byzantium and Hungary, from its beginning around 1148 till a pause in the early 1150s. His allusive and rhetorical treatment, filling several long poems, is hard to reconcile with other Greek and Latin accounts. Recent discussion of the war was in Hungarian, intermittently available in western languages, but has now ceased, making it difficult for non-Hungarian speakers to refer to the scholarly literature with confidence. Fortunately, a young Hungarian expert has been located, and has found Hungarian money for air-fares for three visits to Oxford, two of which have now occurred. The OCBR has funded eight nights’ accommodation, food and transfers. The work is well under way.


- **Digitisation of the thesis of Dr Cynthia Stallman-Pacitti**, *The Life of S. Pancratius of Taormina*, supervised by Cyril Mango and submitted in 1986. *The Life of S. Pancratius* is a huge, largely unpublished hagiographical text (80,000 words), probably 10th century in date, though 8th is not out of the question. It provides the foundation legend for
Taormina and *inter alia* offers many insights into icon use. The thesis consists of an edition of the text (vol. 1) and a selective commentary (vol. 2). Cynthia was finalising the Greek text for publication, together with the translation she had completed, when she died, tragically young, in 1992. Nick Pacitti, Cynthia's widower, is now enthusiastic to grant ready access to the thesis – something that can be done via digitisation and allowing free online access.

- **Alexandra MacFarlane** to enable publication of two images from an Armenian manuscript held in the John Rylands Library in Manchester in a volume of proceedings drawn from the OUBS International Graduate Conference held in March 2017.

**OCBR Exhibition Grant**

- **Empires of Faith project**, for support to publish the catalogue to accompany the major exhibition at the Ashmolean opening in October 2017.

**OCBR Research Grants**

- The OCBR supports its sister research centre, *The Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity*, through a contribution to core funding. For further details of OCLA’s activities in 2016-17, please visit [www.ocla.ox.ac.uk](http://www.ocla.ox.ac.uk)

- Funding was given to a project led by **Professor Elizabeth Jeffreys**, emeritus Bywater & Sotheby Professor of Medieval and Modern Greek Language and Literature to create a descriptive online catalogue of the extraordinarily rich (and poorly exploited) **Greek manuscripts from Holkham Hall** that are now in the Bodleian Library. The 118 Greek manuscripts that were formerly in Holkham Hall have been in the Bodleian since the 1950s, but until now could be consulted only through the succinct hand-list published by Ruth Barbour in 1960. A grant from the Leventis Foundation in 2015-2017 has enabled Dr Dimitrios Skrekas to be employed for two days a week to prepare a catalogue that can be uploaded onto Bodley’s new suite of online manuscript catalogues. The OCBR has supported this project with a supplementary grant to cover the Bodleian’s expenses in extending their system to cover the Holkham Hall material. Entries are beginning to be
uploaded into an online catalogue and can be found at medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk, under Holkham. The project is continuing in 2017-2018 with a grant from the Yerolemou Trust to cover Dr Skrekas’ part-time salary.

- Funding was given to the Manar al-Athar project to add sites in Georgia and Eastern Turkey to its database of searchable images. A report appears below.

**OCBR Exchange programmes**

- Funds have been set aside in order to develop further an exchange programme with Vienna and Princeton – arguably the two strongest departments in Late Antique and Byzantine Studies in continental Europe and the US respectively.

- The OCBR provided funds to help establish the **Oxford-Birmingham Postgraduate Network**, as a first step towards creating a **British Byzantine Postgraduate Network**. The aim of the network is to enable graduate students to share ideas and resources and to collaborate on research projects in the future.

**OCBR Conferences, Colloquia & Workshop Grants**

In 2016-17, the OCBR made a number of grants to enable colloquia and conferences to take place in Oxford. These included:

- **International Workshop on the Corpus Dionysiacum** held from 18 July to 20 July 2016 at Pusey House, St Giles, Oxford. Dimitris Pallis reports: The workshop was organized by Prof. M. Edwards and Mr. D. Pallis, University of Oxford, in collaboration with Prof. G. Steiris, University of Athens. There were more than fifty delegates from the United Kingdom, Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The event was supported financially by many funding bodies, by the University of Oxford and the University of Athens and by the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research. This support enabled the organizers to cover travelling expenses of one from a guest speaker from North America. The conference committee brought together many leading scholars, with the result that the workshop presented different perspectives on important
aspects of the reception of this *Corpus* in the East and the West, as well as in modern thought. The purpose of the conference was to collect original contributions that will form the nucleus of a broader handbook about Dionysius the Areopagite, about his intellectual background and his writings, as well as their reception in ancient and modern thought.

- **Early Ethiopian and Other Eastern Illuminated Gospel Books: Text and Image Colloquium** took place on 5 November 2016. Dr Judith McKenzie reports: The colloquium, organised by Judith McKenzie, Miranda Williams, and Foteini Spingou, was held to mark the publication of ‘The Garima Gospels: Early Illuminated Gospel Books from Ethiopia’, by Judith McKenzie, Francis Watson et al., with photographs by Michael Gervers (Manar al-Athar, Oxford, 2016). It was accompanied by an exhibition of photographs of all the Garima illuminated pages. Sponsored by the Classics Faculty of the University of Oxford, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, and the European Research Council Advanced Project, ‘Monumental Art of the Christian and Early Islamic East’ (Principal Investigator Judith McKenzie).

James Howard-Johnston (The India Trade and the Coming of Christianity to Ethiopia) provided a brief historical introduction. Judith McKenzie (The Garima Illuminations: Architecture, Origins, and Meanings) presented her main results concerning the decoration on the Garima Gospels, covering their possible origins. She also argued that elements of uniquely Aksumite architecture depicted in both of the more ornate gospel books (Abba Garima I and III) indicated that they were painted in Ethiopia, as did some of the birds. She placed the decoration in a late antique context, showing the range of material related to them, across Christendom, demonstrating that they were part of this world, while also developing a distinctive Aksumite version of gospel illumination. Her interest in the Garima Gospels arose from the depiction of the circular pavilion in AG I, which goes back to Alexandria-related prototypes. Francis Watson (The Garima Canon Tables: Icons of Harmony) explained how canon tables work, using the Garima examples. His analysis of them also revealed that they have a high number of errors, indicating that their function was more to represent the agreement of the gospels, than as a tool to be used. He also noted that the Ge'ez version of the letter of Eusebius concentrates more on agreement, rather than mere harmony, of the gospels. Both
McKenzie and Watson considered that the evidence they examined for the decoration and the versions of the texts accorded with the carbon-14 dates for the parchment. Although the date span of the carbon-14 results for Abba Garima III parchment is ca. AD 330–650, this date span can be narrowed to ca. 480–650 based on the contents of the text, a point which could have been made more clearly in the book.

The first respondent to these papers was Jaš Elsner (Reflections on the Garima Gospels in Response to the New Monograph). He demonstrated how the Garima Gospels differ from surviving early illuminated biblical texts and gospel books in other traditions, because of their lack of narrative scenes. He also argued that the lack of portraits in Abba Garima I, unlike in AG III, related to the Byzantine iconoclastic controversy in 8th- and 9th-century Constantinople. He accepted the carbon-14 dates for the parchment, but argued, based on 9th- and 10th-century comparanda, such as the Armenian Etchmiadzin Gospels, that the Garima parchment was not written on or decorated until about two to four centuries after it had been made. Both of these suggestions aroused heated argument and much scepticism. The points Garth Fowden raised in his response to the Garima papers included the lack of evidence presented for artistic contact with India and Africa, which McKenzie agreed required further work. Michael Gervers (Old Rock-Hewn Churches with Manuscripts and New Ones Without) concluded the papers on Ethiopia with a presentation on rock-cut churches, providing an architectural context.

The final session moved further afield to introduce canon tables in other eastern gospel books. David Taylor (Syriac Canon Tables) and Nikoloz Aleksidze (Georgian Illuminated Gospels: 9th–14th Centuries) presented impressive arrays of photographs of canon tables in Syriac and Georgian manuscripts, which were not normally known. Emilio Bonfiglio (Texts on the Meaning of Armenian Canon Table Frames) discussed the Armenian sources interpreting the canon table illuminations.

Closing remarks were made by Elizabeth Jeffreys, from the perspective of an expert on later Greek manuscripts.

- **The 19th International Graduate Conference** on ‘Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds’, was held on 24-25 February 2017 at the History Faculty. Mirela Ivanova writes: The Oxford University Byzantine Society celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. Over the past twenty years, the society has grown, its work and ambition expanded and so too has its reach outwards to other graduate scholars across
the UK, Europe and the World. The society is now a well-established institution at the heart of the Late Antique and Byzantine Communities at Oxford and in the UK more broadly. The 19th International graduate conference is perhaps the most pertinent example of this success. This year, the conference attracted over sixty abstracts of incredibly high quality from around the globe. With great difficulty and the help of the wider community of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research we selected 48 speakers from 30 institutions all the way from Tokyo, through Turkey and all across Europe and the UK. The theme is eager to explore the breadth and mobility of the worlds we study, and stretch the boundaries of ‘Byzantium’ beyond what we consider to be the borders of the East Roman Empire. Was there such a thing as a Byzantine Commonwealth, proposed by Dmitry Obolensky in his seminal monograph of 1971? How did interaction between Byzantium and beyond actually manifest itself?

The OUBS committee believes that such questions, seeking to destabilise the concepts of coherent ethno-political entities with distinct material and ideological cultures to be more pertinent than ever. As Europe, the States and the world more broadly move toward nationalistic divisions, as borders and walls go up, and accessibility and movement of people shrinks, it is worth remembering that much of our interest in the Late Antique and Byzantine worlds comes from their constant mobility – giving and receiving people, items, ideas and the like. The idea of a static, confined, homogenous medieval polity is as imagined and constructed for political ends, as that of a modern one.

The conference was a great success, proving two days of fascinating research concluding with a conference dinner. But the society’s conferences are no longer the important, but otherwise fleeting events they once were. This year also marked the publication of two volumes of proceedings from previous conferences: From Constantinople to the Frontier: the City and the Cities eds. N. Matheou, T. Kampianaki, L. Bondioli (Brill: Leiden, 2016) and Cross Cultural Exchange in the Byzantine World, c.300-1500 AD ed. K. Stewart, J. Wakeley (Peter Lang: Oxford, 2016). The publication launches for both volumes were held on the first evening of the conference, with a representative from the commissioning of Brill’s Medieval Studies series present to speak to the graduates. A volume from last year’s conference is in preparation (Trends and Turning Points: Constructing the Late Antique and Byzantine World eds. M. Kinloch, A. MacFarlane) and this year’s volume, Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds, is already on its way. Already, we have selected 14 papers and had them peer-reviewed by the community of scholars at the Oxford Centre for Byzantine research.
As with every year, the conference would not have been possible without the generous support of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, who is our main conference sponsor. This year, the money contributed to the provision of lunches and coffee for speakers, and meant that we could reduce the participant fee to £15. We hope this relationship of support continues into the future, as the society grows expands and so too do its conferences.

• **Workshop on Asia Minor in the Long Sixth Century** took place on the evening of 2 December and on 3 December 2016, in St. John's College, Oxford. Dr Ine Jacobs reports: The workshop *Asia Minor in the Long Sixth Century* brought together historians and archaeologists working on diverse aspects of Asia Minor in the sixth century, in order to produce a comprehensive impression of the quality of life during the last century or so before the end of Antiquity. The workshop. On the evening of 2 December, Andrew Wilson demonstrated the magnitude of the interventions to the cityscape of Aphrodisias in the early sixth century. Most of the data so far come from the new excavations and re-examinations of the South Agora, but there are plenty indications in older excavations to suggest that the city was renovating its other streets, squares and public buildings as well in the same period, presumably after an earthquake. On 3 December, Ine Jacobs continued the discussion on large-scale renovation campaigns and examined both the costs of such interventions as well as the identity of the people involved by means of two case-studies, Aphrodisias and Sagalassos. She suggested that well-off traders, merchants and also farmers had become involved in the maintenance of the cityscape, a role that traditionally is assigned to the local elite. Beate Böhlerendorf-Arslan presented a whole other type of settlement arising in the sixth century: Assos is rebuilt in the late fifth-early sixth century as a disorganised, unclassical yet still urban settlement, very different from the more traditional towns of Aphrodisias and Sagalassos. Yet, there can be no doubt that the inhabitants of Assos as well were well-off until the early seventh century. Inge Uytterhoeven then focussed on domestic architecture and the drastic changes affecting it in the sixth century. Elite houses were in this period subdivided with some parts turned to artisanal or commercial uses. She argued that the original owners were still living in the same residences, but had retreated to only parts of it and especially to the (now lost) upper floors.
In the afternoon, the focus shifted from the city to the countryside. Emanuele Intagliata presented the region of Tzanica, described in Procopius, and reconstructed what life would have looked like in this border region of Asia Minor and the Empire. Research so far has focussed only on forts and fortresses, without any consideration for other types of settlement. Efthymios Rizos compared two regions within Asia Minor, Galatia, located on the Anatolian Plateau but very well connected to the imperial capital, and Lycia, which overall gives the impression of being more isolated though its coasts must have been visited by international traders. He argued that the regions’ connectivity to the capital and the wider world in general was primordial in their development in the sixth century. Hugh Elton presented related archaeological evidence from the south coast of Asia Minor, stressing that, even though this may have been one of the most prosperous centuries for the region, living conditions were still very harsh and fragile. Adam Izdebski analysed pollen diagrams for the sixth century, pointing out changes in crops grown in the period and differences between regions close to the imperial capital and regions further away. Finally, Mark Whittow stressed the centrality of Asia Minor within the Byzantine Empire and the sixth-century world as a whole.

The workshop proved to be extremely coherent. In addition to presenting results and opinions, all speakers were very honest about limitations and oversights in their domain of research. Especially the focus on one particular century within the broader period of Late Antiquity was perceived as both a challenge and opportunity to explore the extent and detail of our current knowledge on the region. Consequently, the volume that will follow (proposal accepted by Oxbowbooks, final submission by June 2018) will take the form of a manifesto outlining the lines of research that we believe have the potential to augment our view on daily life in these final phases of classical antiquity.

- **Workshop on Putting Domestic Ritual in its Place: Placed deposits and religion between the 4th and 10th centuries AD**, held in Oxford on 17 and 18 March 2017 at the Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies. Dr Ine Jacobs reports: The aim of the workshop was to promote discourse among archaeologists and historians from across Europe who are studying ‘placed deposits’ in the Byzantine world and northern Europe in the period from c. AD 300 to the high medieval period. Placed deposition is a ritual (or ritualized) practice involving the intentional placement of material, e.g.
underneath door openings, walls and floors of residential or communal structures. The workshop was successful in its aim of stimulating discussion on the possible different meanings or purposes of placed deposits in order to arrive at a more accurate understanding of the mind-set of people in the past. The workshop featured ten distinguished speakers from a variety of countries (Germany, Poland, Finland, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom). A total of about fifty people attended. Eight speakers presented 30-minute talks on specialist topics under the overarching theme of placed deposits in secular and ecclesiastical contexts, including objects deliberately deposited in and between houses; burials of children in houses; the ritual drama and emotion accompanying the burial of animal remains in settlements; markers for relics (reputedly) deposited in the walls, pillars, and columns of churches; the documentary evidence for saints' relics in houses; questions of methodology in interpreting proto-historical placed deposits; and objects deposited in the walls and floors of medieval churches. The talks ranged geographically from Anatolia in the east to Britain in the west, and from Italy in the south to Sweden and Finland in the north. Energetic discussion took up the fifteen minutes reserved for it between papers. In addition, Prof. Julia Smith (Oxford, All Souls) and Prof. emeritus Richard Bradley (Reading) offered detailed responses at the end of each day, speaking from the perspective of an early medieval historian and a prehistoric archaeologist, respectively, about themes addressed, lines of inquiry not followed, and questions arising both in the papers and in the discussion. (The complete programme of the conference was included in the application.)

• **Photo Exhibition: The Hidden Gospels of Abba Garima: Treasures of the Ethiopian Highlands** was held at the Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies, Oxford, 3 November 2016 to 28 July 2017. Report by Dr Judith McKenzie: This exhibition was curated by Judith McKenzie, Miranda Williams, and Foteini Spingou. Sponsored by the Classics Faculty of the University of Oxford, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, and the ERC Project, ‘Monumental Art of the Christian and Early Islamic East’ (PI Judith McKenzie).

The exhibition included photographs of all of the Garima illuminated pages (printed on the departmental photocopier), displayed around the room in A3 frames. As the photographs were taken by Michael Gervers before the repairs and re-ordering of the
folios sponsored by the Ethiopian Heritage Fund, this approach meant that it was possible to display them in their original sequence. Being able to view a number of illuminated pages all at once had an advantage over seeing only a single opening when actual manuscripts are exhibited. It was notable that viewers were not put off by the fact that they were photographs and not the real codices displayed. Photographs also have the advantage that there is no issue of security (the room was also used for classes), and no concern about how long the material could be exhibited to avoid fading. Background information was provided in a series of A1 posters, which also included examples of decorated canon tables from other traditions (Greek, Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Syriac, and Coptic-Arabic).

The exhibition generated a great deal of interest from the public, most of whom had not heard of such material. Although there was teaching in the room for part of each day, an average of 10 people per day visited, and a total of over 1,000 individuals. The exhibition achieved its aim of introducing the Garima Gospels to a wider audience, both the public and scholars beyond the field of Ge’ez manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea, with the book selling out in 7 months and having to be reprinted.

A private viewing for members of the London-based Anglo-Ethiopian Society and Ethiopian Heritage Fund was held, combined with presentations by Francis Watson and Judith McKenzie. To coincide with this, Rahel Fronda, Curator of Hebraica, Judaica, and Semitic Manuscripts in Oxford University’s Bodleian Library, organised a weekend display ‘Bodleian Treasures: Early Ethiopian Bible Illumination’, consisting of two illuminated manuscripts from the major collection bequeathed to the Bodleian by Bent Juel-Jensen.

This event led to an approach by members of the UK Ethiopian and Eritrean communities for more involvement with the Bodleian, resulting in a workshop with them, in which they examined a selection of the Bodleian’s manuscripts. Those attending included Yemane Asfedai, Dereje Debelea, Girma Getahun, and Mai Musié. Further collaboration with the Bodleian and events are being planned, including an exhibition.

Another result of these activities was the production of a short illustrated book, ‘The Ethiopian Legend of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba’, by Hanna Kim, Sarah Norodom, and Andres Reyes, with translations by Meseret Oldjira (Manar al-Athar and Groton School Press, 2017, in press), publishing all the panels from two 20th-century paintings done by Janbaru Wandemu, with translations of the painted captions and an explanatory introduction to the legend. One painting, with 25 scenes, is on a parchment
goatskin given to Groton School, Groton, Mass., USA, and the other, on cloth with 56 scenes, is in a UK private collection. This short book, hopefully, will be useful for teaching and a good way to introduce related topics, such the oral tradition and paintings on other media.

OCBR Special Lectures

There were two OCBR Special Lectures in 2016-2017:

- On 19th October, Professor Johannes Pahlitzsch, OCBR Visiting Professor of Byzantine History delivered an OCBR Special Lecture a talk on ‘Andronikos II and an-Nāṣir Muhammad: Byzantine–Mamluk relations and the situation of Orthodox Christians under Mamluk rule at the beginning of the 14th century.’ The event was followed by a drinks reception.

- On 18th January, Dr. Dionysios Stathakopoulos of King’s College, London gave an OCBR Special Lecture on ‘How to spend it? Wealth, Charity and Remembrance in the late Byzantine period. The event was followed by a drinks reception and a dinner.

OCBR Annual Lecture 2017

The OCBR Annual Lecture was delivered by thee distinguished medieval scholar Prof. Warren Treadgold, National Endowment of the Humanities Professor of Byzantine History at St Louis University, USA on 13 June. His talk on ‘the Lost Books of Ammianus Marcellinus in Byzantine Historiography’. This well-attended talk was followed by the OCBR Annual drinks and dinner reception.

OCBR Visiting Professorship 2016-17

The OCBR was delighted to welcome Johannes Pahlitzsch of the University of Mainz as OCBR Visiting Professor in Byzantine History. Professor Pahlitzsch, a specialists on relations between Byzantium and the Islamic world, was in Oxford in Michaelmas Term 2016.
The AG Leventis Foundation Graduate Scholarship

Thanks to the generosity of the A.G. Leventis Foundation, OCBR administers a graduate scholarship for an outstanding student pursuing doctoral research at Oxford. In 2016-17, the Scholarship was held by Edward Coghill (Worcester), who is working on ‘From Conquest to History: shaping the past in post-Roman Egypt.’ His report is available separately.

The Harrison Fellowship

The Harrison Fellowship was established in honour of the late Professor Martin Harrison to enable a young archaeologist from Turkey to conduct research at Oxford. The OCBR did not make an award in 2016-2017.

Teaching of Turkish at Oxford

OCBR continued its commitment to make a contribution to Turkish language teaching, to enable students to gain familiarity with a language where more scholarly work focusing on Byzantium and the surrounding region is being written. No call was made on these funds in 2016-17.
DRAFT BUDGET 2016-17

Budget 2016-2017

The Committee oversaw a budget of £30,000 for the year, generously funded by the AG Leventis Foundation

Expenditure

Funds were spent on a range of activities

OCBR awards and prizes £200

OCBR Graduate Research Awards £1,713
  Edward Coghill £500
  Matthew Kinloch £213
  Stephanie Lenk £500
  Nik Marthou £250
  Efthymis Rizos £250

OCBR Travel Grant for the Oxford University Byzantine Society £2,000

OCBR Publication grants £3,375
  Cyril Mango Books £2,160
  ‘Manganeios Prodromos’ £660
  Being Byzantine book £225
  Stallman-Pacitti thesis £250
  Armenian images £80

OCBR Exhibition grant £5,000

OCBR Research grants £3,427.20
  OCLA £2,000
  Holkham Hall Manuscripts £5,000
  Manar al-Athar £3,427.20

OCBR Conferences, colloquia and workshops £2,996.10
  Corpus Dionysiacum £500
  Early Ethiopian & Illuminated Gospel Books £996.10
  19th International Graduate Conference £500
  Asia Minor in the Long Sixth Century £500
  Putting Domestic Ritual in its Place: £500

OCBR Visiting Professorship £1,500

OCBR Special Lectures reception £307

OCBR Annual Lecture Event £370.75
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<td>Late Antique and Byzantine Studies/OCBR End of Year Drinks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
<td><strong>£28,641.89</strong></td>
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Research projects at Oxford

Oxford is currently home to three major projects in Byzantine Studies.

Empires of Faith

Oxford University is collaborating with the British Museum are on a major research project entitled ‘Empires of Faith’. Funded by the Leverhulme Trust, the project is led by Jás Elsner and has brought three post-doctoral fellows and five doctoral students to Oxford in the study of late antique art and archaeology. The wonderful range of resources fostered by OCLA and OCBR have, in part, led to Oxford being so attractive in these fields that both the Trust and the Museum decided to agree an unprecedented collaboration with Oxford.

The project aims to investigate how images and objects were used to construct and disseminate the rise of religious iconographies out of the confrontation of the traditions of Greco-Roman image-making with those of a series of other cultures in late antiquity (circa 200-800 AD). The geographic scope is extremely wide; from Britain and Spain in the west to the South Asia and Central Asia in the east. Among the religions whose imagery will be explored are not only those that have survived (Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and the polytheisms of India) but also many lost religions from the cults of the Roman Empire to Manichaeism.

The programme seeks to address the following questions through detailed case studies and a comparative approach: Why did new religious imagery and iconographies emerge in different religious traditions across parts of Europe and Asia in the period AD 200-800? To what extent were these independent or interdependent developments, and how did they enable the rise of new forms of political and religious authority? What were the particular properties of images and objects – and text as image – in this period that made them especially significant in constructing, embodying, and mediating new forms of political and religious authority?

The aim will be to put the best of new and current research on late antique religious history and archaeology in the university side by side with the unparalleled scholarly and material resources of the Museum, in an experiment in intellectual collaboration between the two institutions in the United Kingdom with the greatest strengths in the material culture of late antiquity. The intention will be both to forge a method for doing a global comparative art history of religions, within the specific temporal and geographical limitations of the project, and to produce a series of fundamental studies on key themes of religious change, self-assertion and identity through visual means. Few research projects have ever before attempted to take such a panoptic view of this subject, region, and period. Only by looking at this area as an interconnected whole, and by bringing together perspectives from a wide range of academic specialisms and disciplines, will these vital features of this pivotal period, and their continuing legacy, be able to be properly understood.

The Manar al-Athar web project ([http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk](http://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk)) provides high resolution, searchable images for teaching, research, and publication. The geographic coverage of the images of archaeological sites, with buildings and art, is Syro-Palestine/Levant and Egypt, from Alexander the Great to the emergence of Islam (c.300 BC-c.700). This resource, which is free to use, provides the only record of some locations, objects and art works that have been destroyed in the turbulence of recent years across this region.
**Dirhams for Slaves**

This project aims to explore the implications of a neglected trade system that connected Northern Europe and the Islamic world in the 9th and 10th centuries AD. The hundreds of thousands of Islamic dirhams found in hoards strewn across Northern Europe, from England through Scandinavia to Russia, are probably a residue of a large-scale trade system. But how exactly did it operate? What commodities were traded? This project explores the hypothesis of a massive trade in Slavic slaves, which has so far received little scholarly attention. The study of various aspects of this trade system will lead us to ask questions of fundamental importance for the study of the Middle Ages. To what extent did the unprecedented accumulation of wealth derived from the long-distance trade trigger epochal social, economic, and political change, which in turn resulted in the emergence of states in non-Carolingian Europe in the 10th century? Was slavery a central feature of some early medieval societies, the reality of which has been overshadowed by the prevalent narrative of the emergence of feudalism? Answers to these questions are of paramount importance for any study of the medieval world, and are likely to pave the way for a new vision of the emergence of Medieval Europe and of the early contacts between Europe and the Islamic World. The project is led by Dr Marek Jankowiak and Dr Luke Treadwell.
The final year of my A. G. Leventis Foundation Scholarship was also the final year of my D. Phil. research. As such, it was a year mainly devoted to the last elements of doctoral research and writing it up into a thesis. I was fortunate, however, to have various other commitments and opportunities which leavened the ascetic diet of research and writing.

Over the summer of 2016 my A. G. Leventis Foundation funding allowed me to spend two months in Egypt doing archival research at the National Library (dār al-kutub) in Cairo, taking Arabic language classes at the International Language Institute, Cairo, and accessing manuscripts at various monasteries in Egypt. This latter project focused on completing an edition and translation of a late antique hagiographical text, *The First Encomium on John of Heraclea*, originally written by Constantine of Assyut c. 600 AD. This work was part of a body of religious writings produced in Egypt at this time by individuals who were instituting a parallel ‘anti-Chalcedonian’ ecclesiastical hierarchy. As such it is an important witness to the cultural production which accompanied the divisions within the church in the Byzantine period. The original Coptic text does not survive, rather the *Encomium* is extant only in Arabic translation, in manuscripts which had never been edited or translated. I began work on the *Encomium* on the basis of manuscripts held in London and Paris, but defects and lacunae in these copies required consultation of manuscripts in Egypt. As such I made contact with the Institute for Coptic Studies and gained permission to access the manuscript libraries at the monasteries of St Mina, St Macarius, and St Anthony. The holdings at these monasteries, along with a manuscript held by the Coptic Museum in Cairo, enabled me to finish the edition and translation. I presented the findings of this research at the Cult of Saints project seminar in Oxford in October, along with Dr Phil Booth, who had directed me towards this important text and worked with me to find the manuscripts and do the research which allowed us to place the text in its historical context. I intend to publish the edition and translation in the near future.

Back in Oxford, I was fortunate enough to have various opportunities to gain teaching experience. I was asked to provide some of the tutorial teaching for the Oriental Institute’s ‘Islamic History 600-1100’ course, in which I taught first-year undergraduates for their core history paper. I was also asked to teach half of the Late Antique and Byzantine Studies Arabic language classes for master’s students. This involved bringing a group of four complete beginners to reading proficiency in Arabic over the course of the year. It was immensely satisfying to help them progress from the first steps of learning the alphabet to being examined on unseen classical Arabic texts (with a dictionary) by the end of the year. All four of these students had already achieved proficiency in Greek and Latin. Part of the great strength of the Oxford Late Antique and Byzantine Studies course is its ability to offer prospective Byzantinists training
in a wide range of technical and linguistic skills beyond the usual package of Byzantine studies, which will enable truly groundbreaking and interdisciplinary research in the future. I have benefitted greatly from this myself, having taken the very same Arabic course in 2010-11. It seemed fitting to spend my last year as a graduate student in Oxford teaching the course which I took in my first year as a graduate student in Oxford.

Aside from my formal teaching, I continued to convene and lead an informal weekly Arabic reading group regularly attended by Dr James Howard-Johnston, Dr Miranda Williams, as well as various graduate students and an undergraduate, who will now write an undergraduate dissertation from Arabic sources, in part inspired by readings we looked at in our class. I also benefitted from the rich gamut of research seminars, conferences, and lectures available in Oxford. As part of this I presented a paper on the memory of Alexander the Great in the Islamic Arabic tradition at the Oxford University Byzantine Society’s annual graduate conference in February.

In March I was part of a research trip to Algeria, enabled by additional funding from the A. G. Leventis Foundation. Please find a separate report on this trip attached.

Aside from all this, the bulk of my efforts this year were spent completing my doctoral dissertation, which I handed in on 14 August 2017. It was titled ‘Conquests of Egypt: Making history in Abbasid Egypt’. Professor Julia Bray (Oxford) and Professor Michael Cook (Princeton) examined this thesis on 1 October 2017 and passed it with minor corrections, which have now been completed. As such, I am pleased to report that the research project which I outlined in my application for the A. G. Leventis Scholarship has now been completed.

I am also happy to report that the Scholarship has been the springboard for my further progression within the world of academia. While in Egypt last summer I applied for a job as a post-doctoral researcher on a project in the Classics department of Cambridge University. Funded by the European Research Council, the project is titled ‘The Impact of the Ancient City’, and traces the ways in which Greco-Roman models of urbanism persisted western Europe, the Byzantine empire, and the Arabic successor-states to the Roman empire in the southern and eastern Mediterranean. I was interviewed for the position in October 2017 and offered the job, which I started on 1 October 2018. As such, I am happy to continue my research into pre-modern histories which trace the interconnectedness of the late antique, Byzantine, and Islamic worlds, for which my time as a graduate student in Oxford has made me uniquely well-equipped. I also applied for a Junior Research Fellowship at Christ’s College Cambridge, for which I was accepted. I offer my sincere thanks for the Foundation’s role in facilitating my research, without which I would not have been able to undertake it. I would happily welcome and host any
representatives of the A. G. Leventis Foundation who would like to visit Christ’s and discuss further my work as a Leventis Scholar or my current project.

**Stefanie Lenk (Wolfson) – Algeria trip**

Thanks to the generous support of OCBR, I was able to take part in a research trip to Algeria (20th-31st of March 2017), organized by James Howard-Johnston. The 12-day long tour brought 10 researchers, most of them affiliated to the University of Oxford, to the most important Roman and early Islamic sites of Algeria. I am working on the decorations of baptisteries in the 5th and 6th century Western Mediterranean, and the largest part of my source material is to be found in the region of today’s Algeria and Tunisia. While Tunisia is a long-standing tourist destination, Algeria has suffered from the wide absence of tourism since the civil war in the 1990’s. I had ruled out travelling to Algeria by myself, assuming that security issues and travel costs would make it too challenging a trip, and was delighted to get a chance to study Algerian art when in the context of the research trip.

View from the Casbah of Algiers over the city

The tour led us to many of the Roman sites in the North East of the country including St. Augustine’s Hippo Regius, Djémila, Tiddis, and Timgad as well as to the most spectacular museum collections with a conceivable climax at Sétif, before we passed through the stunning Aurès Mountains into the desert.
Here we visited the early Islamic site of Sidi Okba which shows a long history of exchange with the Great Mosque of Kairouan, headed northwards again to the 11th century Hammadid capital Beni Hammad and immersed ourselves in more Roman sites in the beautiful cities of Cherchell (ancient Caesarea) and Tipasa west of Algiers.

Much excitement in front of an 8th century tombstone and an 11th century wooden door in the mosque of Sidi Okba

We visited the stunning number of nine antique baptisteries during our tour. They are quite monumental structures, often detached from the church, with large fonts dug into the ground and usually possess a drainage system. In terms of academic interest, the baptisteries of Algeria have lived in the shadow for decades. It was very helpful to see the fonts and the attached complexes myself, as the available image resources and plans are often imprecise and fragmentary.
The early 5th century Donatist baptistery of Timgad

One of my DPhil chapters is dedicated to the early 5th century baptistery of Djémila. This is the prime North African example of a baptistery that is lacking Christian symbolism and is instead using Roman looking decoration. It is thus of major interest to my research which looks at the survival of Roman imagery in baptismal contexts. The baptistery has received almost no scholarly attention since its excavation in 1922, which is certainly at least in part due to geopolitical bias. During our visit to Djémila, I was able to study the baptistery in situ and verify a number of assumptions that I had made before on the basis of old black and white photography.
Thanks to a travel grant from OUCBR, I was able to revisit several late antique and Byzantine sites in Greek Thrace in August 2016, which was of great importance for my book project concerning late antique urbanism in the Balkans. My visit focused on the west and central part of the territory of the late Roman/early Byzantine province of Rhodope, which nowadays is known Western Thrace. This is one of the least well investigated parts of the ancient world in the way of archaeology, but it is an area of major interest for the study late antique and Byzantine urbanism.

Its history is framed by a series of significant events:

1) The decline and probably abandonment of Abdera in the aftermath of the third-century crisis. The causes of the event are unknown, but the demise of a city as significant as Abdera is a spectacular event. It is known that the invading Goths of the 260s roamed the area, even though their precise activity in Rhodope is not recorded in the texts. The abandonment of cities in the third-century Balkans is not common, and seems to gravitate in regions badly affected by the crisis. Another region where we have a number of abandonments in the area of today's Republic of Macedonia, which seems to have been badly affected both by the Goths and by earthquakes. Once a very extensive town of c. 200 hectares, Abdera, which I visited during my trip in 2016, was revived in Middle Byzantine times as Polystylon, a fortified stronghold of about 10 hectares. The site has been investigated by the Greek archaeological services in recent decades, and is presented in an exemplary manner at the local museum.
2) The decline of Abdera seems to be directly related to the foundation of Maximianopolis, a new city founded under the Tetrarchs on the site of a station of the Egnatian Way. It is one of several new cities founded by the Tetrarchs in the Balkans, all in strategic areas which had been afflicted by the third-century warfare. Significantly, it is one of the largest Tetrarchic cities (c. 32 ha) and seems to have been designed as the main administrative centre within the former territory of Abdera. Maximianopolis, known as Mosynopolis in Middle and Late Byzantine Times, became the main administrative and ecclesiastical centre of western Thrace in Byzantine Times, flourishing down to its abandonment in c. 1200. It has received very limited excavation which produced spectacular remains of the city’s main Middle Byzantine church, a highly ornate and architecturally distinctive hexagonal building.

3) Less than 10 km east of Maximianopolis, there is the modern town of Komotini, which grew in the late Medieval and early Ottoman times, practically by the relocation of the community of Mosynopolis to the site of a small early Byzantine fortress, which is thought to have been built under Theodosius. Its foundation may signify the increase of military presence in Rhodopa. In the same period, the Notitia
Dignitatum mentions a military position in the province called Ulucitra. Could this be the well preserved fortress Komotini?

3. Fortress of Komotini

3) Imperial interest in the region is consistently expressed down to the sixth century, with the foundation of yet another new town under Anastasius, in c. 500. Anastasiopolis, built on the shores of the lagoon of Bistonis, very probably absorbed the west part of the former territory of Abdera, and later Maximianopolis. It clearly had a role in controlling a stretch of the Egnatian Way traversing a narrow part of the plain. Procopius reports that Justinian added an aqueduct to the city and fortified its port. This aqueduct survives and allows us to know that it partly functioned as a transverse fortification crossing the plain from the sea to the foothills of Mount Rhodope. The site of Anastasiopolis has received almost no archaeological investigation. The main remains now visible on the site are the Palaeologan fortifications – the city was refortified in the 14th century, when it was known as Peritheorion.

4. Tower of the aqueduct/wall of Anastasiopolis

4) Throughout this period, the ancient city of Maronea on the east coast of the bay of Abdera seems to have been enjoyed stability and a relative flourishing, with no signs for disruption. It is a desideratum to have a decent dating for its late Roman fortification (c. 20 ha one), but it could very well belong to the
period after the 3rd-century crisis (much like the walls of Thessalonike, Dion, and perhaps Philippou). The site has produced a highly significant find of two late Roman horrea which, I believe, are associated with annonary exports in the fourth century. The role of Maronea in the life of the region during Late Antiquity is an intriguing riddle: its Christian basilicas suggest that the city enjoyed relative prosperity. I find it significant, though, that Maronea is not mentioned by Procopius. We have clear signs for a consistently intense imperial interest in the central and western part of that area. Did Maronea fall outside its scope?

5) In the very middle of this network of settlements, lies the headland of Molyvoti, which hosted the ancient (pre-Roman) city of Stryme. As a natural harbour and headland, it attracted interest especially in the 5th and 6th c., and seems to have flourished as local emporium, which is currently being intensively studied by a Princeton-led archaeological project. The ceramic material littering the site and collected by the American team betrays a high prosperity in the 5th and 6th centuries. Molyvoti is likely to have served as a port-town of Maximianopolis or Anastasiopolis. The early 6th-century flourishing of the site could be related to that.

Nik Matheou (Pembroke) – Georgia study visit

Thanks to the generous support of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research I was able to spend three weeks of the summer of 2017 in Georgia and eastern Turkey, for the dual purpose of gaining Old Georgian language skills as well as visiting a number of sites relevant to my current doctoral and future postdoctoral research projects. For the language classes I spent two weeks in Tbilisi having private tuition with a member of the National Institute for Manuscripts, four hours a day for twelve days. Over these classes we covered all the essential grammar, developing my knowledge of modern Georgian into a working ability to read Old Georgian texts, including hagiography, historiography, and colophons, as well as learning the late antique and medieval Georgian alphabets, Asomtavruli and Nuskhuri. These language skills will be essential to my prospective postdoctoral project, *New Rome & Caucasia 861-1071: Counterpower & Hegemony in a Critical Global Perspective*, allowing me to combine research into Greek, Armenian and Georgian texts in the first ever social history of Caucasia in the period of rising East Roman hegemony between the end of Caliphal dominance and the Seljuq invasions. During my time in Tbilisi I was also able to take the opportunity to see late antique and medieval sites in and around the city, visit the ancient and medieval collections at the Museum of Georgian History and National Museum of Art, and meet local scholars with relevant research interests. After these two weeks I travelled with colleagues from the Oxford-based Manar al-Athar project across Georgia and into north-eastern Turkey, staying in Gori, Kutaisi, and Akhaltsikhe in Georgia, then Yusufeli and Artvin in Turkey, before travelling to Erzurum and flying back from there. In this week we saw around 30 late antique and medieval sites, including
secular structures such as palaces and large fortifications like Khertvisi, as well as high and low ecclesiastical complexes, such as the large cathedrals of Kutaisi and Gelati monastery, and the rock-carved monastic complex of Uplistsikhe. These sites alongside material culture more generally will be crucial to developing a fully rounded view of Caucasia’s social history, helping to situate historical actors within their lived conditions. In Turkey we saw several sites in the Artvin region, medieval Armenian Tayk and Georgian Tao, all built in the tenth century by the rulers of the polity known as the curopalatate for the rulers’ regular receipt of that imperial title, annexed as the Roman theme of Iberia in the early eleventh century. This region, which will remain central to my prospective postdoctoral project, is of key importance to my current doctoral research, as it is the home to the Armenian historian Aristakes of Lastiver, the spine of my project, and forms his History’s central landscape. This broad area includes the regional urban centre at Erzurum, the city to which Aristakes retreated after the 1048 sack of his home in the nearby township of Arcn – a movement that helps to explain the modern city’s name, ‘Arcn al-Rum’. Overall these three weeks were an unforgettable, in-depth tour of both Old Georgian and the material remains of the region that will prove indispensable to my current and future research projects, and I am enormously grateful to the OCBR for providing essential funds that enabled it to happen.

Matthew Kinloch (Univ) – Oslo workshop

Thanks to the generous support of OCBR, I was able to take part in a research trip to Algeria (20th–31st of March 2017), organized OCBR Funding, for attendance of Narratology and Historiography in Classics and Byzantine Studies (13th October 2017, Oslo) - Matthew Kinloch

One of the fields in which narratological analysis is still considered problematic is that of ancient and Byzantine historiography. In spite of the ‘narratological turn’ provoked by the work of Hayden White and others, the adherence to historiographical texts as representing the ‘truth’ still prevails among many scholars. At the same time, collaboration between narratologists and linguists has increased over the last few years, resulting in not only interdisciplinary perspectives but also more refined methodological tools. On Friday 13th October numerous scholars and students gathered in Oslo to consider these question with a point of departure in some current MA and PhD projects. Irene de Jong acted as a respondent and Ingela Nilsson moderated the seminar. I presented my work under the title of Rethinking Thirteenth-Century Byzantine Historiography. I was able to receive useful feedback on the work I presented as well as my future project and writing up process.

I would like to thank the OCBR for funding my participation.
OUBS – Bulgaria trip

Report by Mirela Ivanova, President of the Oxford University Byzantine Society 2016-17.

As well as inviting scholars from abroad, the society has also tried to actively reach out. This is nowhere clearer than in our on-going tradition of organising international research trips for scholars to parts of the Byzantine world, defined in the broadest terms.

After the first successful dive into travel to Thessaloniki in 2014, the society and its members visited Serbia and Kosovo in 2015, and a lucky 28 of them spent 10 exciting days in Armenia in 2016, traversing across its lands – from border to border – and even coming dangerously close to the resurgence of violence from the otherwise frozen Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (two hours away!). This year is no exception, as the society delivered for its fourth international research trip in April 2017.

Twenty-two scholars and graduate students travelled to Bulgaria, as Jonathan Shepard called it, ‘the Other Balkan Empire’. We travelled 2060km in total, over nine days and visited 35 standalone sights, many of which were full cities rather than individual churches or monasteries. The sites we visited spanned over 6000 years of history, including key ancient cities like Philipopolis, Mesembria and Sozopolis, key Roman settlements and re-settlements like Debelt and Nicopolis Ad-Istrum, late antique fortresses and the capitals of the first and second Bulgarian polities, Pliska, Preslav and Veliko Turnovo. In most instances, all these historical phases overlapped with each site carrying complex layers to be stratified.

The sites themselves, of course, did not freeze at the end of their historic occupation, but remain as living objects each of which tells a story of how contemporary society in Bulgaria has valued them, and respectively chosen to reconstruct them, rebuild them, or at times invent them altogether. Some have become the center of pilgrimage, others of leisurely tourism, others lay largely unbothered, of little interest beyond a small academic sphere. These conditions are inseparable from the way historians today engage with these sites, and therefore worth interrogating on an equal footing with the sites themselves.

In addition to visiting the sites, each trip participant had to prepare a presentation on one or more places, offering the rest of us a historical introduction to what was before us. The materials from all these presentations were collated in a 40-page information booklet which we had bound and distributed at the start of the trip.
We were not just roaming the Bulgarian lands on our own however, and our trip simply could not have been successful without the assistance of our colleagues from Bulgaria – scholars from Veliko Turnovo, Sofia and Ruse took us around the sites of Preslav, Pliska, Madara, Tsarevets, Cherven and the Churches of Ivanovo. And our colleague, Emmanuel Moutafov, head of the Bulgarian Academy of Arts, secured an emergency opening of the Varna Archaeological Museum, otherwise shut on a Monday, so that we could see the oldest gold treasure in the world!

The trip, much like our conference, is only possible with the funding of the OCBR which we were able to distribute to the graduate students (ca. £120 per person, weighted depending on whether each student had additional funding from their College). This covered almost all transport expenses, making the trip extremely affordable for graduates. Once again, we express our gratitude to the OCBR for their continuing support of our society’s trips and conferences, and hope we continue to work together in future!
Manar al-Athar in Georgia and Eastern Turkey

In the summer of 2017 (23 July to 7 August), Miranda Williams and Olga Grinchenko travelled to Georgia and eastern Turkey to photograph churches, monasteries, and archaeological sites on behalf of the Manar al-Athar digital photo-archive project. Given that Manar al-Athar has not previously included Georgia within its geographical remit, it was essential to have two photographers to acquire a sufficient quantity of photographs for the preliminary phase of this expansion. It was also vital, in a country in which English was not widely spoken, that, in the absence of any knowledge of Georgian, at least one of those travelling could converse in Russian.

A driver and 4WD vehicle were hired for the duration of the trip, with the driver recommended by Dr Nikoloz Aleksidze (Oxford). It was essential to have a driver familiar with the sites we intended to visit, both in Georgia and in Turkey, and the road conditions, given the remote locations of many of the sites to be visited. For the first week, Miranda and Olga were based in Tbilisi, travelling out to sites within a day’s travel, as this was more cost efficient, since it was not necessary to provide accommodation for the driver during this period. In the second week, they travelled into western Georgia and eastern Turkey.

The trip was also timed to overlap with the travel of graduate student, Nicholas Matheou, who was otherwise intending to travel in Georgia and Eastern Turkey, to visit sites pertaining to his doctoral research, following the completion of a Georgian language course in Tbilisi in July 2017. By ensuring that the two trips overlapped, Nicholas was able to take advantage of the vehicle and driver, which were a fixed cost regardless of the number of passengers, and was thus able to visit sites which would otherwise have been difficult for him to reach.

The itinerary was devised in consultation with two Georgian specialists based in Oxford – Dr Nikoloz Aleksidze and Dr Irene Giviashvili. The focus was primarily on ecclesiastical sites - churches and monasteries - but also including some other key medieval sites, such as the 12th-century palace complex at Geguti, an important example of secular Georgian architecture for the medieval period. The sites covered a broad chronological range. While a number of the churches and monasteries visited are believed to have been founded in late antiquity (6th or 7th century), the surviving structures most commonly dated from the 11th through 13th centuries, a period commonly held to be the “golden age” of medieval Georgia. However, given the more limited quantity of late antique remains, a particular effort was made to document early constructions, such as the 7th-century Bana Cathedral in Turkey.

In Georgia, sites visited included: Shuamta, Old Shuamta, Iqalto Monastery, Alaverdi Monastery, Gremi, Sighnaghi, Davit-Gareji Complex, Armaztisikhe-Bagineti, Svetitskhoveli Cathedral, Samtavro, Shiomghvime, Zedazeni, Bolnisi, Tsughrughasheni Church, Akauta, Akvaneba, Manglisi, Jvari, Ananuri,
Gergeti, Samtavisi, Urbnisi Monastery, Ruisi Cathedral, Ateni Sioni, Uplistsikhe, Geguti, Bagrati Cathedral, Gelati Monastery, Motsameta Monastery, Sapara Monastery, Khertvisi, and Vardzia.

While there are undoubtedly broader interests in eastern Turkey, the specific purpose of this trip was to photograph churches in the historical Tao-Klarjeti region, which now falls within the state of Turkey, but whose churches are architecturally and artistically part of the corpus of material for Armenia and Georgia. The sites visited in Turkey included: Bana Cathedral, Ishkhani, Dort Kilise, Oshki, Dolishane Kilise, Khantsta, and Artanuji.

Given that we were flying back to the UK from Trabzon, we also took the opportunity to take a detailed photographic record of the accessible frescoes of the 13th-century Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia in Trabzon, which was converted into a functioning mosque in 2013.

The trip resulted in the acquisition of 5,165 photographs of sites in Georgia and 1,325 photographs of sites in Turkey. This material will provide an important complement Manar al-Athar’s existing coverage of sites in Armenia, the fieldwork for which was itself supported by the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research in 2016. As a result of the travel in Georgia and eastern Turkey undertaken in the summer of 2017, Manar al-Athar has consolidated its coverage of ecclesiastical architecture in the Caucasus, and has greatly increased its coverage of frescoes from the region. This material should be of broad interest not only to those focussing on the art and architecture of the Caucasus, but also as comparanda for those working on Byzantine art and architecture.

The Georgian material is currently being edited and labelled by Olga Grinchenko – it is most efficient if this process is undertaken by someone who has visited the relevant sites. It is anticipated that this material will be made available on the Manar al-Athar website in the summer of 2018.
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WEDNESDAY 19TH OCTOBER 2016

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UNIVERSITY OF MAINZ

ANDRONIKOS II AND AN-NĀṢIR MUḤAMMAD: BYZANTINE-MAMLUK RELATIONS AND THE SITUATION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS UNDER MAMLUK RULE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 14TH CENTURY

AUDITORIUM – IOANNOU CENTRE, OXFORD

WEDS 19TH OCTOBER – 5PM
THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR
BYZANTINE RESEARCH

IS DELIGHTED TO PRESENT AN OCBR SPECIAL LECTURE
WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY 2017

DR DIONYSIOS STATHAKOPOULOS
KING’S COLLEGE, LONDON

HOW TO SPEND IT? WEALTH, CHARITY AND
REMEMBRANCE IN THE LATE BYZANTINE PERIOD

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WEDS 18TH JANUARY – 5PM
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TUESDAY 13 JUNE, 5PM

PROFESSOR WARREN TREADGOLD

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
PROFESSOR OF BYZANTINE HISTORY
SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

THE LOST BOOKS OF AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS IN BYZANTINE HISTORIOGRAPHY

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Mark Edwards (Professor of Early Christian Studies, University of Oxford)
Georgios Steiris (Assistant Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, University of Athens)
Dimitrios Pallis (DPhil Cand. of Byzantine Philosophy, University of Oxford; Vis. Res. and Teach. Fellow, University of Athens)

Participants:

Michael Allen (Professor, University of California) Georgios Arabatzis (Assistant Professor, University of Athens) Deirdre Carroll (Professor, Virtual University of Uganda) Maximos Constant (Senior Research Scholar, Holy Cross Orthodox College) Mark Edwards (Professor, University of Oxford) Emiliano Fiori (Post-doctoral Researcher, Humboldt University of Berlin) Wayne Hankey (Professor, Dalhousie University) Theo Koloeck (Professor, University of Born) Julia Konstantinov (Post-doctoral Researcher, University of Oxford) Andrew Louth (Professor Emeritus, University of Durham) Dimitrios Pallis (Visiting Research and Teaching Fellow, University of Athens) Ilaria Ranelli (Professor, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart) Paul Roemer (Professor, Princeton Theological Seminary) Georgios Steiris (Assistant Professor, University of Athens) Torstein Tollefsen (Professor, University of Oslo)
Asia Minor
in the Long Sixth Century
2-3 December 2016
St. John’s College Oxford

FRIDAY 2 DECEMBER, 6PM, AUDITORIUM
Andrew Wilson (Oxford)
Destruction and renewal in sixth-century Aphrodisias

Followed by a drinks reception
Transmitting and Circulating the Late Antique and Byzantine Worlds

24-25th February, History Faculty, Oxford
Putting Domestic Ritual in its Place
‘Placed deposits’ and religion between the 4th and 10th centuries AD

Ines Beilke-Voigt · Richard Bradley · Roberta Gilchrist · Sonja Hukantaival · John Jungkvist · James Morris · John Mitchell · Julia Smith · Natalia Teteriatnikov · Robert Wisniewski

17–18 March 2017
Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies
University of Oxford

Attendance is free. For further information and to register, please visit http://tinyurl.com/domestic-ritual-oxford or email Ine.Jacobs@classics.ox.ac.uk or Clifford.Sofield@arch.ox.ac.uk.

With funding from the Craven Committee, the Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, and University College, Oxford.

Image courtesy of Oxford Archaeology.
THE GARIMA GOSPELS
EARLY ILLUMINATED GOSPEL BOOKS
FROM ETHIOPIA

Judith S. McKenzie and Francis Watson

with Preface and Photographs by Michael Gervers
and contributions by
Matthew R. Crawford, Linda R. Macaulay, Sarah S. Norodom,
Andres T. Reyes, and Miranda E. Williams
COLLOQUIUM

Early Ethiopian and Other Eastern Illuminated Gospel Books: Text and Image

Saturday 5 November 2016

Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies, 66 St Giles’, Oxford OX1 3LU

Introducing the Garima Gospels

CHAIR: Bryan Ward-Perkins (Oxford)

10.00 Opening Remarks: Judith McKenzie (Oxford)

10.10 James Howard-Johnston (Oxford), The India Trade and the Coming of Christianity to Ethiopia


11.30–11.50: Morning tea

CHAIR: Elizabeth Key Fowden (Cambridge)

11.50 Francis Watson (Durham), The Garima Canon Tables: Icons of Harmony

12.40–2.00: Lunch

Responses

CHAIR: Ida Toth (Oxford)

2.00 Jas Elsner (Oxford), Reflections on the Garima Gospels in Response to the New Monograph

2.40 Michael Gervers (Toronto), Old Rock-Hewn Churches with Manuscripts and New Ones Without

3.10 Garth Fowden (Cambridge), Response and Discussion

3.30–3.50: Afternoon tea

Canon Tables in Other Eastern Gospel Books

CHAIR: Theo van Lint (Oxford)

3.50 David Taylor (Oxford), Syriac Canon Tables

4.20 Nikoloz Aleksidze (Oxford), Georgian Illuminated Gospels: 9th–14th Centuries

4.50 Emilio Bonfiglio (Vienna), Texts on the Meaning of Armenian Canon Table Frames

5.20 Closing remarks: Elizabeth Jeffrey (Oxford)

5.30: Refreshments

Organised by Judith McKenzie, Miranda Williams, and Foteini Spingou (foteini.spingou@classics.ox.ac.uk). Sponsored by the Classics Faculty, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, and the ERC Advanced Project, Monumental Art of the Christian and Early Islamic East, directed by Judith McKenzie. The colloquium to mark the publication of The Garima Gospels: Early Illuminated Gospel Books from Ethiopia, by Judith McKenzie, Francis Watson et al., with photographs by Michael Gervers, will be accompanied by an exhibition of all of the Garima illuminated pages in the Outreach Room (Ioannou Centre, 66 St Giles’, Oxford OX1 3LU), to run until 18 December. Hours: Monday–Friday 9–5 (on weekdays please phone 01865-288391 to check hours, due to teaching); Saturday and Sunday 11am to 3pm.
IMAGINING THE DIVINE
Art and the Rise of World Religions