

2019 SPBS Spring Symposium

'Blood in Byzantium,' 30 March – 1 April 2019, Cambridge



All sessions will be held in the Wolfson Hall, Churchill College, Cambridge, unless otherwise indicated. Book displays are located in the Bevin Room and Seminar Room 1. Coffee and Tea will be served in the Buttery. Lunch will served in the Dining Hall. See appended maps.

Saturday 30th March

Registration from 8.45 a.m. (Wolfson Hall Foyer)

Welcome: Peter Sarris (Cambridge) (9.45 a.m.)

Opening Speaker: Claudia Rapp (Vienna) (10.00 a.m.)

Coffee (10.30-11.00 a.m.)

Session One: The Blood of Christ (sponsored by the A.G. Leventis Foundation)
(11.00 a.m. -1.00 p.m.)

Chair: Peter Sarris (Cambridge)

Jane Baun (Oxford) 'Blood in the Byzantine Religious Imagination'

Heather Hunter-Crawley (Independent) 'Blood and Materiality in the Early Byzantine Eucharist'

Phil Booth (Oxford) 'The Body and Blood of Christ: The Eucharist From Chalcedon to Iconoclasm'

Ioannis Papadogiannakis (KCL) 'The Byzantine Emperor, Pontius Pilate and the Blood of Christ: An Episode in Ritual-Symbolic Communication in 10th Century Byzantium'

Lunch (1.00 p.m.-2.00 p.m.) (Meeting of graduate students and early career academics with Leslie Brubaker, Chair of SPBS, in Seminar Room 5, opposite Dining Hall)

Session Two: The Blood and Milk of the Martyrs (sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research) (2.00 p.m.-3.30 p.m.)

Chair: Averil Cameron (Oxford)

Elena Draghici-Valilescu (Oxford) 'Nourished by the Manna or By the Word? Blood and Milk in the Writings of Clement of Alexandria.'
Anne Alwis (Kent) 'Earth, Milk and Fire: Analysing the Blood of the Martyrs'
Stavroula Constantinou (Cyprus) 'The Martyr's Body: Sanctification Through Blood and Milk'

Coffee (3.30 p.m.-3.45 p.m.)

Communications (i) (3.45 p.m.-6.00 p.m.) (SPBS Exec Meeting in Seminar Room 5)

Reception (6.00 p.m. in the Foyer) (Sponsored by Cambridge University Press to celebrate the publication of *The Cambridge Grammar of Medieval and Early Modern Greek* by D. Holton, G. Horrocks, N. Jannssen, T. Lendari, I. Manolesou and N. Toufexis, and *The Novels of the Emperor Justinian – A Complete Annotated English Translation* by D. Miller and P. Sarris)

Sunday 31 March

Please remember 'British Summer Time' begins today, so your watches need to go forward by ONE HOUR!

Session Three: Blood, Dynasty, and Kinship (i) (9.00 a.m.-10.30 a.m.)

Chair: Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge)

Andrew Marsham (Cambridge) 'Kinship and Dynasty in the First Century of Islam'

Philip Wood (Aga Khan University, London) 'The Politics of Marriage: Christians and Muslims in the Abbasid Jazira'

Nick Evans (Cambridge) 'Kinship Ideologies Between Byzantium and the Steppe'

Coffee (10.30 a.m.-11.00 a.m.)

Session Four: Blood, Dynasty and Kinship (ii) (11.00 a.m.-12.30 a.m.)

Chair: Michael Humphreys (Cambridge)

Alex Vukovich 'Dynasty and Bloody Conflict in Early Rus'

Peter Frankopan (Oxford) 'I will make your towns and provinces run with blood until I set my spear in Byzantium itself' – Blood, Dynasty and Kinship in Komnenian Byzantium'

Ruth Macrides (Birmingham) 'Blood or Election? The Imperial Office in the Thirteenth Century'

Lunch (12.30 p.m.-2.00 p.m.) (SPBS AGM 1.00 p.m. -2.00 p.m.)

Session Five: Bloodshed (sponsored by Mr Turlough Stone, Quadrant Chambers, London) (2.00 p.m.- 4.00 p.m.)

Chair: Holger Zellentin (Cambridge)

Yannis Souraitis (Edinburgh) 'Violence and Bloodshed in Byzantine Internal Strife'

Theodora Antonopolou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) 'Rewriting Bloodshed in Middle Byzantine Hagiographic Homilies and Hymns'

Maroula Perisanidi (Leeds) 'There Won't Be Blood: Comparative Views on Violence in Canon Law'

Michael Humphreys (Cambridge) 'Blood, Bloodshed and Bloody Penalties in Byzantine Law, c.600-900'

Tea (4.00 p.m.-4.15 p.m.)

Communications (ii) (4.00 p.m.-6.15 p.m.)

Conference Feast, Trinity College (drinks reception in the 'Old Combination Room' 7.00 p.m.-8.00 p.m. Dinner will be served in the 'Old Kitchens' at 8.00 p.m. Dress code: smart casual. Access via stairs to Hall).

Monday 1 April

Communications (iii) (9.00 a.m.-10.00 a.m)

Coffee (10.00 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.)

Session Six: Blood in Byzantine Medicine (10.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.)

Chair: Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe (Cambridge)

Rebecca Flemming (Cambridge) 'Blood and Generation in Late Antique Medicine'

Petros Bouras-Vallianatos (Edinburgh) 'The Role of Blood in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease in Byzantine Medical Literature'

Barbara Zipser (Royal Holloway University of London) 'Blood in Byzantine Therapeutic Texts'

Caroline Goodson (Cambridge) 'Ingredients For Medicine in Early Medieval Italy'

Concluding Remarks: Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe (12.30 p.m.) and announcement of next symposium by Ruth Macrides (12.45 p.m.)

Lunch (12.50 p.m.-2.00 p.m.)

Meeting of TTB Editorial Board (2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.) (Seminar Room 5)

From 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 pm there will be a display of Byzantine and Byzantine-related manuscripts in the Wren Library, Trinity College. The items displayed include the famous 'Freshfield Album' (see next page), which constitutes our most important visual record of Constantinople in the early Ottoman period. The Wren Library should be accessed via the back entrance to Trinity College ('The Avenue') off Queens' Road ('The Backs') or via Garret Hostel Lane.



Drawing of the Hippodrome of Constantinople dating from 1574 from the Freshfield Album. Copyright, The Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge.

‘Blood in Byzantium’ has been made possible by the generous support of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge, the Raymond and Beverley Sackler Conference Fund, the George Macaulay Trevelyan Fund, The Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, the A.G. Leventis Foundation, and Mr. Turlough Stone, Quadrant Chambers, London.

COMMUNICATIONS

All ‘Communications’ are strictly limited to ten minutes.

Saturday 30th March (Communications i)

Boris Shopov ‘Imperial Blood, the Blood of Martyrs and Legitimacy under Maurice: Dynasty, Miracles and Miraculous Geography in Theophylact Simocata and Evagrius Scholasticus’

Late Roman dynastic politics under Maurice (arranged marriages, transfers of power, domain partitions, reliance on kinsfolk), covered in great detail by Theophylact and slightly less so by Evagrius, was, as is well established, one of the most important elements informing their descriptions of the history of Early Byzantium from their two diametrically opposed perspectives: the panegyrist of the Heraclian regime *contra* the beneficiary of the earlier emperor’s patronage. The topic of miracles in both works of history has also been the subject of scholarly scrutiny but no systematic comparative treatment of the two writers from that specific perspective has been done yet.

The following contribution is an attempt to examine the role of miracles as bestowers (together with imperial background) of dynastic legitimacy in the narratives of the abovementioned authors. Starting with the case of Maurice confronting the effusion

of St Euphemia's blood (purposefully inserted by Simocata at the end of his *opus*), an inquiry into all the encounters of this Early Byzantine ruler with the supernatural leads us to the conclusion that Theophylact has not only connected him exclusively to 'negative miracles' but has also deliberately neglected any 'positive' miraculous occurrences connected to any of the other great metropolises of the Later Roman Empire (Antioch, Alexandria and Rome).

The earlier account of Evagrius presents a rather different picture: in books V and VI he not only offers a series of supernatural events presaging Maurice's accession to power but also concentrates them exclusively in Antioch where they are associated to this emperor or to the prosecution of the Persian war – through the mediation of the Antiochene church and of its Chalcedonian patriarch. This trait, prevailing fully in *Ecclesiastical History's* final book, is accompanied by another peculiarity – the lack of any reference to emperor-related miracles in Constantinople or another city of its category.

These two depictions of miracles, combined with an exclusive fixation on Constantinople or Antioch respectively, give us the image of an Early Byzantium composed chiefly of either one city (Theophylact) or two cities (Evagrius) which, at least on the level of literary presentation, are quite disconnected from each other and linked mainly by a combination of dynastic politics pursued from the imperial court and supernatural props secured by the (always) local ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Curtis Lisle (Birmingham) 'Blood Boundaries: Investigating Tribal Politics in the Byzantine-Islamic frontier'

Narratives of civilization are often woven from a series of juxtapositions contrasting an enlightened 'self', with that of a barbarous 'other'. Nowhere has this been more effortlessly established than in the dichotomy between states and tribes. Existing scholarship, examining inter-tribal relationships across different periods, places and disciplines have positioned both tribes and states as opposing categories of supra-regional organisation. Blood politics, that is, the use of blood as a symbol, discourse and as means of establishing affiliation through the inheritance of genealogical lineages, has traditionally served as a convenient tool for distinguishing the two social orders in modernity. Unlike states, tribes offered a limited means of self-identification and agency for tribal members through this emphasis on descent and familial connection. That is, tribal affiliation and governance is singular, bounded, and finite in contrast to the open, expanding and multi-directional compass of pre-modern politics. This paper critically reappraises the role and function of tribes within the Byzantine-Islamic frontier. To properly assess the modes of interaction, it is important to understand the extent and effects of bloodline politics. Was descent and biological connection a discourse, more than a social determinacy? Were blood-ties immutable, or were they, in fact, fluid? Were tribes antithetical and alternative models of governmentality, or did they constitute parallel and intersecting spheres of local governance with state structures? If so, then how can we reconstruct these interactions? In emphasising the vitality, dynamics and fluid properties of tribal confederations we begin to open new pathways for their historical study. In challenging traditional interpretations of these marginalized groups we can begin to write a more balanced, local account of sociocultural development and external interaction within the frontier, and perhaps, beyond.

Miquel Galles Magri (Barcelona) ‘Some Additions to the Bloody Subject of the Ethiopian Kwer’ata Re’esu Icon’

There is no doubt that Ethiopia's Old Testament tradition is one of the oldest in Christianity. Nor is there in that existing in one of the geographical borders of it, the lands of Prester John, the influence of the Roman church of the West has been remarkable. Especially in the last five centuries.

As a result of all this, an iconographic theme stands out clearly: the Kwer'ata re'esu, the striking of His head.

Assuming the general principle of affective - sentimental "neutrality" of orthodox iconography, the subject stands out for its special crudeness.

We are going to consider it in the context of some unpublished images of a private collection in Barcelona, Spain.

Alessandro Carabia (Birmingham) ‘Bloody Frontier? The case of Byzantine Liguria against the Longobards ‘

Liguria today is probably most famous as a tourist destination with its beautiful landscapes and seashores or for the glorious past of the Genoese Republic. However, for almost a century, from 568CE to 643CE, it was on the front line of the struggle between the rising Longobard kingdom and the Byzantine empire, which resulted in much bloodshed on both sides.

From the beginning of the twentieth century a flourishing front of academic literature arose around the subject of the Byzantine/Longobard frontier in Liguria, with works from local scholars like Ubaldo Formentini (1889-1958) and Pietro Ferrari (1874-1945). If these works had the merit of focusing the attention on an historical period that had been neglected, they also created an historiographical myth emphasizing the role of the frontier and the scale of the involvement of the two main players, and this myth lives on in local histories and in some scholarship. Most of these studies were based on few problematic historical sources, like George of Cyprus or the ‘Unknown Ravennese’, on guesses made on the basis of toponymy, geographical assumptions and arbitrary attributions of ruins to Byzantine/Longobard fortified settlements. This generated the idea of sophisticated fortified *limes*, almost recalling a bloody “trench warfare”.

In the last decades an increasing body of research has been produced on the subject, including accurate archaeological excavations, surveys and analysis of the few textual sources. The evidence produced is aimed at producing a more plausible picture of the frontier during the Byzantine occupation.

My communication will evaluate the eastern part of Liguria, known as Lunigiana, analysing the relation between the main Byzantine centre, Luni, and its hinterland. I will consider how we define the level of involvement of the Byzantines in Lunigiana, how we identify Byzantines sites. Other questions I will consider include: How was the *limes* organized? What was the Longobard reaction? Was Liguria, after all, a bloody frontier?

Gang Wu (KCL) ‘An Under-explored Record of Theodore Balsamon on Twelfth-century Thebes’

When Theodore Balsamon comments on the Canon XVI of the Ecumenical Fourth Council held in Chalcedon, he mentions that his contemporary metropolitan Kaloktenes founded in Thebes a *parthenon* (παρθενών, acc. παρθενώνα) to settle the consecrated lay virgins, following the religious practice derived from the early Christian era. What makes things intriguing is Balsamon's implication that at that time *parthenon* had been extremely rare, if not obsolete, in the empire, a decline we can trace to sometime after the second half of the eighth century. How shall we interpret such a sudden reemergence of a *parthenon* in Thebes in the second half of the twelfth century? I will present in this paper an explanation from the economic point of view, arguing that it was a byproduct of the city's economic expansion. On the one hand, Kaloktenes' other recorded undertakings demonstrate that he was eager to cater to the social developments brought by the economic expansion in his diocese. On the other, in the probable case that the monastic manual labor in this *parthenon* focused on market-oriented textile production, the attested features of this foundation would satisfy well the need of the primary economic sector in the region, i.e. the silk industry.

Richard Magito Brun (Gothenburg) 'Anachronistic Aspects of Imperial Symbolism in Constantinople'

From a close empirical and theoretical study of the cityscape of Constantinople in the period from Theodosius I to the Latin conquest, that I started in the late 1980's and still work on, I have suggested that nearly all of the most important imperial monuments in the city were organized (located) according to a relatively simple geometric pattern (Brun: Uppsala 1989; Brun: University Park, Pa. 1989). This pattern seems to have been extended like a net over all of the city area when the new land walls were built during the reign of Theodosius II. Albrecht Berger has in his hypothetical reconstruction of Constantinople's medieval street grid tried to adopt and verify the existence of this pattern (Berger: Stockholm 1993; Berger: Istanbul 1997; Berger: Cambridge, Mass. 2000).

Following this line of thought I have recently carried out a comparative study involving both these Late Antique and Early Byzantine full scale free-standing memorial columns and rotundas at the one hand, and at the other some well-known mosaic pavements of the late mid-Byzantine period in Constantinople located at places traditionally intimately related to ceremonies of imperial coronation, from a perspective of general layout, dimensions and proportions.

This communication records and discusses new observations concerning the possible meaning or 'ideological message' of the two, at the visual surface, so completely different types of monuments in Constantinople. The great imperial columns of Late Antiquity are discussed in relation to mid-Byzantine square floor mosaics based on the geometric theme of *circle-in-square*, one preserved in the imperial cathedral Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, and one now destroyed close to the imperial summer palace at Hebdomon outside the city walls. The basic Roman imperial message seems present in both types, but becomes with time increasingly disguised and enigmatic. I think the similarities between these two very different-looking categories of monuments in *function* and *geometric structure* are best understood from the viewpoint of an anachronistic repeating of basically the same symbolic and cultic content, executed in other materials, techniques and artistic styles – in another time with more modest financial resources – and at a considerable temporal distance from the then still standing prototypes of full-blooded three-dimensionality. The new form

of ceremonial space can also be considered as a part of a more general trend of ascription and appropriation observed in the building history of the Great Palace in Constantinople.

Lauren Wainwright (Birmingham) ‘The Byzantine Period: Bodies, Blood and Menstruation’

To examine the lived experience of women in the ancient and medieval world is a difficult task for the historian; many elements of their lives are difficult to unpick, particularly those that might be considered more private or commonplace. One such element is menstruation; a natural process that a significant proportion of the populace of Byzantium experienced – limitations of age, diet, stresses, and specific circumstance notwithstanding – but which is rarely discussed in modern scholarship of the medieval era.

However, due to the constraints of source materials – particularly the lack of female authorship – rather than day-to-day realities, this paper seeks to look at the perceptions of menstruation and the female body in Byzantium. By its nature, menstruation is closely linked to sexual relations and childbirth, and thus commentators often brought these subjects together, reflecting broader attitudes to the female reproductive cycle. The main body of work that discusses these cycles are theological texts, such as the writings of the Early Church Fathers, which, at the least, reflect church views and draw on earlier Jewish traditions. Yet Graeco-Roman medical traditions held differing opinions concerning female-specific maladies and processes, seen through works of Hippocrates and Galen, for example. Incidental information, from written sources such as hagiographies and letters, will also be brought together to form a more comprehensive view of these attitudes.

Thus, this paper will examine the perception of the female reproductive cycle, specifically in terms of menstruation but not limited to it, and will bring together materials to help to broaden the understanding of the relationship between women and their bodies, and their experiences

Elie de Rosen (Birmingham) ‘Middle Byzantine Towns: Survival in Times of Agricultural Crisis’

The physical needs of Middle Byzantine town-dwellers were largely identical to ours. Perhaps the most important among them was regular sustenance. The procuring of water could usually be done locally, with the help of wells, cisterns, rivers, and precipitation. But where did urbanites obtain their food? We know that they imported many products from their hinterland. However, what percentage of their foodstuffs was intra-mural in origin? Was it large enough to allow the inhabitants to survive when they were cut off from rural imports? There is a widespread assumption that an urban community forced to rely solely on its own resources would, given enough time, have starved or been abandoned. In my presentation, I will endeavour to determine to what extent this concept is warranted. In the process, I hope to enhance our understanding of the differences between Middle Byzantine rural and urban settlements.

Rachael Banes (Birmingham) ‘You Can’t Write that Here! Mapping Secular and Religious Graffiti in the Cities of Asia Minor c. 300-700 CE’

Throughout the cities of Asia Minor in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, the phrase “the fortune of the Greens triumphs!” can be found scrawled across theatres, streets and agorai. This laudation of the green faction is just one example of the myriad of secular graffiti, which also includes game boards and figurative graffiti, which commemorates individuals, their careers and their communities. These graffiti represent the diverse groups, of different professions and social classes, who occupied the late antique city. The prominence of graffiti in public space reveals how communities felt about this space, viewing it as a blank canvas they could appropriate to express their own allegiances and opinions.

However, the same trends cannot be traced in the ecclesiastical institutions at these locations. Here, the graffiti is almost exclusively Christian in nature, invoking God, Christ or a local saint, and offering prayers for the authors and their families. Unlike the secular graffiti however, religious graffiti is not limited to its own sphere, but occurs just as regularly in the public spaces of the city. Analysis of the graffiti reveals a dichotomy: secular texts were limited to secular locations, but all locations could be religious.

This paper considers the evidence from three key sites, Ephesos, Sagalassos and Aphrodisias, to map the placement of both religious and secular graffiti in late antiquity. These distinctions can be vital to our understanding of how individuals and communities both envisaged and engaged with the city spaces in which they lived, in Byzantium.

Tülay Yesiltas (Birmingham) ‘Pilgrim Flasks: A typological suggestion for Late Antique clay vessels in Anatolia’

This paper concentrates on the pottery flasks which scholars call Pilgrim Flasks or Ampullae. These objects presumably carried holy water or oil associated with pilgrims and also holy shrines of venerated persons in the Holy Land and Anatolia from the Late Antique Period. Generally, these flasks are divided into two groups, the Asia Minor Type and the Egyptian Type, according to form and the iconography depicted on the surface. However, this classification does not build up a complete picture. For example, consider the lack of information resulting from scholars’ poor attention to another group of these vessels called Unguentaria, whose relation to holy water and oil can also be proved by the mark of official seals, the stamps, which appear mostly as monograms of individuals or places and, rarely, depictions of Saints. Although the variety of figures and emblems depicted on the Asia Minor Type make it difficult to determine a proper classification which is related to production and distribution centres for this group (Campbell 1988: 544, Anderson 2004: 80), stamps on Unguentaria bear clues for further evaluation, such as one depicted with the figure of the Philip the Apostle found at Tripolis ad Maeandrum and Kibyra in Pamphylia, making it possible to reconstruct the provinces of these pilgrim wares (Yeşiltas forthcoming).

A re-examination of all published Ampullae and a closer look at the great number of findings from excavations in Anatolia will help build a new typology of Unguentaria. This will strengthen the evaluation of all Pilgrim Flasks by bringing them under one roof. Furthermore, it may lead to an answer to the question of the production, distribution and consumption context of these vessels. The aim of this paper is to classify Pilgrim Flasks which are found in or originated in Anatolia by grouping them according to their typological features, and then sub-grouping them technically and iconographically based on ornamental attributions.

Stephanie Novasio (Birmingham) 'Blood, Bodies and Bonds: applying the Life Course in Late Byzantium'

Across historical time and space, blood ties recurrently represent one of the strongest and most durable forms of human relationship. As ever-present forces throughout life, our blood relations bring us into the world and oversee our exit from it, having accompanied us through our most momentous life transitions and events. Even after death, blood relatives typically ensure our posthumous existence in an altered, disembodied state through acts of commemoration and remembrance. In the case of Byzantium, blood relations have often been investigated in the context of dynasty and political ties, whilst more recent studies have examined portrayals of blood relations during specific stages of life, such as those between parents and children during childhood. Yet, despite the growth of Life Course scholarship amongst researchers of the Roman and western medieval worlds, there remains a lack of literature examining the role of blood ties in connection to age and the life cycle in Byzantium.

From a Life Course perspective, this communication investigates the interactions between blood ties and the social and physiological process of ageing in the late Byzantine period. Whilst the Byzantines viewed universal time from a highly theological perspective, as a process of deterioration following the Creation, the physical and mental growth and decay of the body configures day-to-day human chronologies. This analysis focuses particularly on cross-generational blood ties, including those between children and parents, which have previously been examined only in their capacity to illustrate parental affections towards children, or social attitudes towards childhood. Portrayals of blood relations in accounts of key life cycle events, such as births and deaths, illustrate their significance in structuring, and providing meaning to, the course of life. In a situation whereby age, the body, and time intersect, an infant's birth at a specific moment may be allotted new significance by a parent's interpretation of its timing. The specific age of a child at death might determine the nature of a parent's sense of lost hopes for their offspring, shape their mourning experience, and alter their own life path in the future. As such, blood relations are fundamental to the organisation and representation of the major events and transitions that make up the human experience of life.

By stressing the functions of age, gender and social status in determining life trajectories, a Life Course perspective may shed light upon the creation of familial, communal and wider social identities in Byzantium. This communication draws chiefly on the personal documents of late-Byzantine officials.

James Cogbill (Birmingham) 'Middle Byzantine Dynastic Survivors'

As is readily apparent when reading most Byzantine primary sources, the history of the imperial office may be viewed as the history of the struggle to establish and maintain a dynasty in the face of repeated internal opposition. Foreign observers noted the chronically unstable nature of the Byzantine political system, and the Byzantines themselves (notably Choniates) lamented the destabilising effect power struggles had upon the state as a whole. This frequent turnover of emperors and dynasties was especially significant during the Middle Byzantine period, often

considered a ‘time of troubles’ for the empire. One may therefore ask, ‘What happened to survivors of fallen dynasties?’

As recent studies have demonstrated, castration as a method of removing unwanted individuals from the political scene considerably declined following the accession of Michael II in 770. Similarly, although deposed emperors in the Middle Byzantine period were frequently forced into monastic retirement, many of their relatives – both close and extended – maintained prominent positions; even the deposed emperors themselves could achieve public roles, as seen by the former Michael VII Doukas’ appointment as Metropolitan of Ephesus. While the dynastic strategies of Middle Byzantine emperors have been heavily researched, little scholarship has been dedicated to the role of the family when that family is no longer in power. Does an increased role for imperial relatives in governance mean a consequently greater fall from grace? If so, why was the *kaisar* John Doukas, tonsured as a monk for rebelling against his nephew Michael VII, apparently able to leave his monastery with impunity and engage in secular politics throughout the reigns of Michael, Nikephoros III Botaneiates and Alexios I Komnenos?

This paper seeks to explore the careers of several men, prominent during the reigns of their kinsmen, following their dynasty’s fall. In doing so, I will seek to establish trends in the treatment of ‘dynastic survivors’ throughout the Middle Byzantine period. In particular, I will seek to contrast two different types of survivor: (1) those whose family has been assimilated by that of their usurper in the search for legitimacy, for example the Doukai during the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes, and (2) those whose family does not provide legitimacy for their usurper, for example Romanos’ sons under Alexios I. Neither the Doukai nor Romanos’ sons were actively persecuted during the reigns of their usurpers, yet – somewhat counter-intuitively – the Doukai appear to have been more marginalised by Romanos than were Romanos’ sons, who held significant governmental and military positions under Alexios I. Given that Romanos’ legitimacy was based entirely upon his marriage to Constantine X Doukas’ widow Eudokia Makrembolitissa, while Alexios owed nothing to Romanos, what does this consequently mean for how usurpers (both violent rebels and ‘gentle’ outsiders marrying into the family) presented themselves and justified their actions? Are these differences discernible across the Middle Byzantine period, or are they dependent on specific conditions at the time?

Maria Vincent (Valencia) “...Leaving him a Pledge and Memorial to His Blood” – Connection to the Divine Dedication and Patronage in Early Christian Buildings.’

Mid-fourth-century Antioch was the scene of the first translation of a saint’s relics to an urban church. Soon after, this became a tradition throughout the Near East, including Constantinople, before spreading to the rest of the Christian world. Behind this custom was a widely-held belief that saints’ intercessory power and proximity to God were preserved after death, for which reason the veneration of saints focused on the relics they left behind.

The main purpose of this paper is to answer the following questions: how did this practice of relic worship come to exist? Where can we see evidence of it? To examine these issues, I will draw on the example of a dedicatory inscription on an altar stone. The selected epigraphic document is number 307 of the series of monumental inscriptions published by José Vives in his book *Inscripciones de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona, 1969). It comes from the ancient city Acci (ancient name of

Guadix), located on the borders of Hispania Baetica. This dedicatory inscription was carved onto the three bare faces of a Roman altar stone, thus making it a Christian piece.

The inscription is divided into three, corresponding to three of the altar stone's four faces. The first part mentions the name of the church, the day of the consecration and the date in reference to the reigns of the two kings at the time, as well as the name of the Bishop of Acci, who would have officiated the consecration. Specific allusions to the years of reign of two Visigoth monarchs are visible: the eleventh year of King Chindasuinth and fourth of Recceswinth. It also includes a reference to the fifteenth year of the bishopric of Justus, Bishop of Acci, which is likely to have started in the year 637. The final part of this first segment indicates the specific day on which the church was consecrated: May 13.

The second and third parts consist of a detailed list of the relics involved in this consecration. It should be noted that two of the relics mentioned are *cruore* and *pane*, the blood and the body of the Lord, which further elucidates the link between the martyrs' sacrifice and the redemptive passion of Christ.

Through a case study approach, this paper focuses on the early Byzantine period to position the inscription within a broad cultural context as an important source for understanding one of the key aspects of society in late antiquity and the early medieval period. I will draw a feasible route through different events relating to relic worship, from the *adventus* ceremony—the triumphal arrival of relics into the city—to the *depositio* of the relics in the altar during the church consecration.

Niki Tsironi (Athens) 'Milk, Wine and the Blood of Christ'

In the present communication, I intend to draw attention on the use of milk instead of wine in early Christian contexts, as it is proved by the decree issued by Pope Julius I in the 4th century which banned the use of milk instead of wine in the Divine Liturgy. This ban demonstrates that certain early Christian communities, despite the very clearly attested use of wine for the first Eucharistic meal of the Last Supper, signifying the blood of Christ, found in milk a stronger symbol than wine and used it occasionally or consistently in their liturgical practices. The practice is associated with the Virgin Lactans, present in early Christian iconography, which attests to the importance of the virginal birth of Christ in the early Christological debates but also to the affinity of the cult of the Virgin with female deities of the eastern Mediterranean and especially Isis. The association of milk, wine and the blood of Christ reveal aspects of the cult of the Virgin and her importance in the understanding of the Incarnation with special emphasis to the birth and death of Christ.

Sunday 31st March (Communications ii)

Tassos Papacostas (KCL) 'Blood and Kinship After Byzantium: Cypriot Patrons of the Sixteenth Century'

This communication will explore the impact of kinship on artistic patronage in Cyprus during the period of Venetian domination. At a time of rapid social changes and increased anxiety in the face of the menacing presence, the island's tiny and heterogeneous but ambitious and influential elite closed further its ranks and sought to

bind its fortunes to the ruling power through dedicated service in the administration, prestigious patrician marriage alliances, and resolute alignment with the interests of the Republic.

This state of affairs is what the sources intimate. It is, moreover, detectable in visual culture and aspects of daily life too, and it is the latter that will form the focus of my investigation. The aim is to demonstrate how blood links determined familiarity with, desirability of, and accessibility to certain peculiar artistic forms and expressions of cultural affiliation. I will venture to probe these issues through the lens of unusual testimonies, including musical patronage and the use of portrait medals.

Jake Ransohoff (Dumbarton Oaks) ‘To See and Be Seen: Changing Views of Byzantine Bleeding’

Blinding is among the hardest perennials in the field of Byzantine punitive practices. Often described as a “uniquely Byzantine” form of punishment, it served as the standard penalty for imperial rivals and defeated rebels for over five centuries. Yet blinding’s long Byzantine history has obscured some important changes in the methods, frequency, and venues of this practice. This communication—drawn from the author’s dissertation research on mutilation and political exclusion in Byzantium—focuses on one such change in particular. It argues that a significant but unnoticed shift occurs in the venues of political mutilation across the eighth century. Before the eighth century, the mutilation of imperial rivals played out in large public arenas (the Hippodrome, the Kynegion), surrounded by elaborate spectacles of humiliation. By the ninth century, however, mutilation had largely moved out of the arena and into prisons or monasteries, hidden from public view.

The present communication will begin by tracking these trends across the watershed of the eighth century. It will then suggest that changes in venues of punishment correlate with changes in regimes of punishment: the rising frequency of blinding vis-à-vis other forms of mutilation (such as nose- and hand-amputation) emerges in tandem with the shift of mutilation from open to closed space. Finally, it will use these intertwined developments to draw several broader conclusions about punishment and imperial power in the wake of Iconoclasm.

Chris Budleigh (Birkbeck College, London) ‘The Komnenan Approach to Family Life’

As part of a PhD on the economics of the Komnenan period, I have been exploring how Alexios I managed to maintain his grip on power against threats from inside the empire, whilst at the same time accumulating sufficient resources to protect against external threats. This paper will examine how successful this approach was on both counts.

The quarter century before Alexios ascended the throne in 1081 had seen the imperial title had passed between a number of leading families – the Doukai, Komnenoi, Diogenoi and Botaniatoi, with others coming close. Emperors had been faced with almost continual revolt, with reigns lasting no more than a few years. In addition, Alexios had inherited a collapsing currency, an empty treasury and a Norman invasion. He was thus required to both maintain his power base and at the same time to bring short term stability to the economy.

One key strategy was the use of marriage to build alliances, with sisters, daughters and nieces married into most of the leading military clans capable of revolt. Politically, this policy was successful, with no revolts by generals capable of threatening the throne and minor revolts easily suppressed. A similar policy was followed by John II and Manuel I, although diluted by the need to build alliances with growing external powers and increasing use of *pronoia*. By Andronikos' reign, there was no Komnenoi family loyalty left and no new marriage alliances, contributing to his downfall.

A second element was the distribution of land and assignment of taxation rights to Komnenoi family members and supporters. Previously, loyalty had been maintained with the distribution of honours and the payment of *rhoga* to military and civil leaders. The chronic shortage of coinage meant that *rhoga* was scaled back and replaced with the right to collect and retain taxes from defined areas. As well as those documented in the Athonite archives, tax exemption is likely to have been extended to landowners with marriage alliances above, other key supporters and favoured monasteries.

This would have had both political and economic consequences. Politically, it would have resulted in a realignment of wealth and power. Most of the economic effects are likely to have been positive; although impossible to quantify, these are likely to have included:

- Reductions in *rhoga*, so less demand on the fisc for coinage - largely offset by a loss of tax income. So more tax pressure on smaller landowners and independent peasantry.
- Improved monetary circulation – taxes were previously collected in September and *rhoga* distributed at Easter, so cash idle for half the year could now circulate and support economic activity.
- Landowners incentivised to make their assets work to generate income. Minimisation of unproductive *klasmatic* lands and to maximisation of productive *paroikoi*.
- Coinage would have remained in the countryside rather than being accumulated in Constantinople – possibly increasing monetisation in the countryside. And unlike the fisc, landowners may not have demanded payment in gold, removing one more burden on *paroikoi*.

Nathan Leidholm (Bilkent) 'Exploring the Meaning of Consanguinity in Byzantium: Discussions of Shared, Mixed, and Pure Blood in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'

Despite the fact that Byzantium never developed a legal definition of nobility, the growing influence of aristocratic kin groups (*gene*) and their emphasis on illustrious genealogies from the tenth century onward seems to have contributed to an increased interest in the meaning of consanguinity in roughly the same period. Intensive debates concerning the expansion of marriage impediments throughout much of the eleventh century, for example, reflect this trend, not only in their goal of redefining the limits of marriageable kin, but also in the methods used by those engaged in such debates. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this interest in and discussions of the nature and meaning of shared or mixed blood extended far beyond legal circles and, in fact, appeared in a wide variety of contexts.

The same factors seem to have led to several appearances of the concepts of pure and/or mixed blood and its consequences in this period. While not necessarily a new phenomenon, such appearances, otherwise rather anomalous in a Byzantine context, appear with increased frequency or, at least, visibility alongside the coalescence of the concept of the aristocratic *genos*. While the concept of mixed blood could carry a variety of meanings, from notions of impurity and incest to a short-hand for kinship itself, a few mentions of pure blood and its antithesis, polluted blood, suggest that the eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed a greater emphasis on the meaning of blood itself, especially as it concerned aristocratic lineages and their increasingly insistent claims to 'nobility.' There is even some evidence that the precise meaning of blood was a topic of some controversy completely outside of intellectual circles. This paper explores some of the ways in which blood was imagined and discussed as the biological and theoretical basis for understanding of kinship in eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantium. Beginning with Marshall Sahlins' call for researchers to inquire into culturally specific notions of the reproductive process, the paper draws upon the work of those like Steven Epstein and Joan Cadden, who have demonstrated the widespread influence philosophies of nature and medicine could have on seemingly unrelated branches of pre-modern thought. In doing so, the paper suggests that contemporary understandings of human reproduction and other medical knowledge played a surprisingly influential role in discussions of the nature and meaning of consanguineous kinship, both in debates about marriage impediments and in other contexts. Such knowledge played a vital role in determining the culturally specific value placed on the concept of shared blood and the means by which it was reproduced, particularly gender-specific contributions. Finally, it argues that an approach based upon such knowledge and sources might offer a fruitful point of entry for future studies of kinship and other fields in which blood played a central role, whether metaphorical or (seemingly) biological.

Christodoulos Papavarnavas (Vienna) 'Conceptions of Space and the Body of the Martyr: Reading Scenes of Blood in Greek Hagiographical Passions'

Martyrs' Passions constitute an extensive corpus of Byzantine literature and at the same time an area of studies in which much work remains to be done. In order to illustrate the concept of holiness, hagiographical narratives concerning the cruel torture, interrogation and imprisonment of Christian martyrs focus on aspects of pain and blood. These aspects have scarcely received the critical attention of modern scholarship. Through a close reading of early and middle Byzantine martyrdom accounts, this paper aims to investigate the literary depiction of the tortured body of martyrs in relation to the spaces in which their martyrdom takes place. During their public trial and suffering, the holy martyrs show and declare absence of sensibility, but when alone in prison and in communication with God, they admit their physical and emotional weakness arose from the pain, loss of blood and open wounds on their body. Inspired by the sociological theory by Erving Goffman that compares human social interaction with theatrical roles performed before an audience, I will argue that during their martyrdom in an open and public space before numerous bystanders, the martyrs demonstrate a 'hard body', which contrasts with the 'soft body' they reveal in the enclosed space of prison where they are usually alone with God. The study of narrative scenes of blood and pain in Byzantine Passions will enable a more nuanced understanding of the concepts of martyrdom, space and holiness.

R.H. Jordan and Rosemary Morris (York) ‘Blood and Suffering in the *Lives* of Theodore of Stoudios’

Episodes describing the beatings and suffering experienced by the monastic leader Theodore of Stoudios (759-826) during his imprisonment during the iconoclast era play an extremely important part in the oldest of the *Lives* of the saint, the so-called *Vita B* (BHG 1754) written by Monk the Monk after 868. Details of Theodore's physical suffering are emphasised; the saint's bodily as well as spiritual experiences are portrayed in great, indeed gory, detail. How were these descriptions constructed? Can we draw any conclusions from their details? How were they used in the later versions of Theodore's *Life*, the so-called *Vita A* (BHG 1755), written in the 10th c. possibly by Theodore Daphnopates and the so-called *Vita C* (BHG 1755d) probably inspired by it? This communication will also discuss why, as Peter Hatlie has emphasised, the concepts of physical suffering and, indeed, martyrdom were so important to Theodore himself and to subsequent Stoudite tradition.

Kyriakos Fragkoulis (Birmingham) ‘Late Roman or Early Byzantine? The pottery of the 4th to 7th centuries AD and the issue of periodisation’

The remarkable progress that has been achieved since the 1970s in the study of the pottery dating between the 4th and the 7th centuries AD has contributed significantly to the extension of our knowledge of Early Byzantium, particularly as regards the fields of urban life, economy and trade. However, there is something of a paradox in this case: Although most of the other facets of material culture of the same period bear the epithet “Early Byzantine” (especially after the considerable hiatus in the use of the term “Early Christian”), the corresponding pottery is most usually characterised — at least in the English-speaking literature — as “Late Roman”. This general archaeological practice is based on the reasoning that it reflects the continuity in ceramics with the earlier Roman periods. Although this link is clearly true, it would be worth considering whether the above term is the best or only option for the chronological definition of the pottery under question.

As we are all aware, historical periodisation is artificial and therefore the outcome of compromise. Transitional periods in particular, such as the one we are dealing with, which find themselves “caught” between two major epochs (here Antiquity and the Middle Ages), pose further challenges. Consequently, the selected terminology often results from the weighting given by each school of thought to the association of such a period with the one that precedes or follows. In the present paper, we glean the epistemological reasons for the establishment of the use of the term “Late Roman” to describe the pottery of the 4th to 7th c. AD and we discuss the barriers this presents to Byzantinists. As an alternative, we propose the wider use of the term “Early Byzantine”, which can restore the existing discrepancy in Byzantine Studies without necessarily causing a new rupture, this time with the preceding Roman era. We additionally consider the historical and geographical parameters of this approach, reaching the conclusion that it is ideally applied in the case of material recovered from the southern Balkans and Asia Minor, two regions that served diachronically as the territorial and cultural nucleus of the empire. Furthermore, we review a number of cases of unsuitable use of the term “Early Byzantine”, which are causing extra confusion either because the term is used together with that of “Late Roman” or because it describes ceramics dating beyond any of the chronological limits that have

been proposed by historical research for this period. Finally, the whole issue is also examined in light of the dynamic emergence of Late Antique Archaeology in the past decades, assessing its contribution to the study of the 4th to 7th c. ceramics while also addressing the question of whether Late Antique Studies should — as they have already achieved to an extent — monopolise the research regarding these centuries.

Mary Cunningham (Nottingham) ‘The Blood in Mary’s Womb: Symbol of Purity or Impurity?’

The conception and birth of Christ, the Word of God, from Mary’s virginal womb involved blood – a source of life imparted by the mother, according to Byzantine science, but potentially also a source of impurity, according to both Jewish and Christian traditions. Some Byzantine preachers, including (ps-) John of Damascus, celebrated the blood that Jesus Christ shared with Mary in her womb; this revealed the human nature in which he fully participated. Although this birth was miraculous, Byzantine theologians emphasised its human qualities, which – since Christ lacked a human father – came entirely from the maternal blood. This topic could also feature, however, in polemical exchanges especially with the Jews. The ninth-century Jewish text that is known as *Qiṣṣa*, or Nestor the Priest, asks how God could possibly demean himself by inhabiting the womb of a woman with all its ‘filth of menstrual blood and dark confinement’. That Christian theologians were aware of such accusations (which circulated well before the *Qiṣṣa* was written) is revealed in polemical texts such as Leontios of Neapolis’s *Apology against the Jews*. Leontios offered two solutions to the problem: first, since creation is good and not an object of shame for God, the Creator, he could become human without contamination; second, such sanctity as God, as well as his saints, possess is pure and holy enough to transform everything that it touches. Blood, as one of the most potent sources of impurity in Christian, as well as Jewish, tradition, thus encapsulated the paradox of Christ’s incarnation: this was a substance which, in ordinary circumstances, was capable of polluting both people or spaces. However, it also revealed the extent of God’s self-emptying in becoming human. In his case, blood was a holy substance which, along with his body, offered Christians new life in its incarnate and resurrected form.

Nick Holmes ‘The Byzantine World War’

My book *The Byzantine World War* will be published in May. The book is mostly a narrative history of the period from 1068 to 1099, following the reign of Romanus Diogenes to the First Crusade. The emphasis is mainly on Romanus’ reign which has always seemed under-researched to me. The book also attempts a re-evaluation of the causes of Byzantine decline in the eleventh century with the key conclusions being: i) it is under-appreciated how serious was the harm done by Basil II to the army, through his suppression of the Cappadocian military aristocracy, ii) also not fully recognised is how pernicious to the army (and the whole Byzantine state) was the heavy reliance on mercenaries that resulted from Basil’s actions and iii) Romanus’ efforts to reverse both of these have been seriously underestimated – I think that what evidence we have suggests his attempts were surprisingly successful and that the Battle of Manzikert was much closer to being a Byzantine victory than most people give it credit for.

Katherine Kelaidis (Loyola) “ A Bloodless Sacrifice” -Liturgical Prohibitions Concerning Menstruation in the Middle Byzantine Period’

This paper will explore the shifting terrain of liturgical prohibitions related to menstruation during the Middle Byzantine Period and attempt to situate them within the larger context of changing norms and boundaries, both secular and religious, during the period. As Valerie Karras has noted, with the exception of a few highly restrictive local church customs in Syria and at Alexandria, there is no indication of widespread liturgical restrictions on menstruating women in the Byzantine Church until the 9th century. The creation and promulgation of these restrictions began in the late 7th century outside Constantinople and did not arrive in the capital (nor become the normative practice of the Church) until after the resolution of the Iconoclast. This shift has been connected to post-Iconoclast ideas about purity, the growing entrenchment of the divide between clergy and laity, and the decline of the female diaconate. However, outside of these religious and liturgical changes, the role of contemporary ideas in secular medicine surrounding blood, menstruation, and the female body should not be dismissed.

Vicky Hioureas (Princeton) ‘Vernaculars of Violence: Understanding the Spectacle in Byzantium’

In the introduction to his collection of articles, Alexander Kazhdan poses a question that gets to the root of this paper’s purpose: “Is Byzantine literature merely a collage of traditional stereotypes and borrowed situations, or did Byzantine authors use their imagery to serve their own particular purposes?” While the answer to this question should be a resounding response in favor of the latter, it is surprising how often the presence of violence is explained away by declaring it a classical trope, something that Byzantine writers included in their works only to show their erudition. This paper looks at the historical accounts of Niketas Choniates and Nicholas Mesarites during the long twelfth century to analyze the use of violence as a marker for broader issues of conflict, power, and political order. Violence in texts can be understood as a tool of cultural and social manipulation, which the authors employ to provoke concern and distrust in the actions of emperors, the political elite, and the common people. It would be simplistic to search for violence in the historical record solely to quantify acts of public aggression or calculate the statistics of violence in Byzantine society. By taking a closer look at the rhetorical use of violence, or the way specific events and actions are described, we can see how different classes of Byzantines used violence and how they interpreted and reacted to its use.

In literature, war, violence, aggression, and political upheaval are depicted in forceful terms, and it is this pronounced language that expresses the authors’ political and historical lessons. The use of graphic violence commands the audience’s attention, and through this, the authors articulate their philosophies on the proper conduct and relationship between rulers and the ruled. These representations of violence are calculated ways of controlling and interpreting the destructive and chaotic violence that occurred in time. The specific accounts that I will address highlight the indignities of imprudence and aggression: once-powerful leaders are suddenly attacked, their bodies torn apart and mutilated beyond recognition. The overthrow of a political entity is marked by attention to the complete humiliation and destruction of someone’s physical form, and through this, their political memory. This close attention to physical images explains the importance of creating a lasting public

memory through written accounts. Presenting a strong public image is essential to convincing the population that the emperor sits at the top of the power structure. It stands to reason that when someone wants to overpower another person or group of people, the latter's image must be made subject to force. In the case of written text, the writer can mar the memory and legitimacy of a person or a group through the use of violence, and in this way, engage in political and social movements.

Agnes Kriza (Cologne) 'The Zeon Rite and the Azymes Controversy'

A unique element of the Byzantine liturgy is the so-called Zeon rite when the priest adds hot water to the consecrated wine before the communion. The earliest evidence of this rite is from the eleventh century: during his debate with the Latins, Niketas Stethatos argues that the blood of Christ which flowed from his side after his death on the cross was hot. Interestingly, Stethatos's mentioning of the Zeon rite constitutes part of his polemics against the Latin unleavened Eucharistic bread which preceded the mutual excommunication of the Latins and the Greeks in 1054. However, his reference to the Zeon rite and the dead Christ's warm blood threw oil on the fire: the Latins called him "vicious dog" and heretic who denies Christ's human sufferings on the cross and his real death. In this short communication I analyse Stethatos's anti-Latin argument in which he links the Byzantine use of leavened bread and the Zeon rite. By exploring the theological background of his argument and its impact on subsequent literature, this paper asserts that the debate over the symbols of rite brought to the surface some fundamental disagreements between the Latin West and the Byzantine East about the Eucharist. Finally, an example of Marian iconography will demonstrate the influence of Stethatos's anti-Latin reasoning on Byzantine art.

Monday 1st April (Communications iii)

Stephanie Forrest (Cambridge) 'Shifting Alliances: Arab-Byzantine Warfare and Diplomacy in Armenia, 685-705'

Throughout the seventh century, Armenia was a point of contention between Byzantium and the Umayyad Caliphate. This presentation focuses on circa 685-705, when Justinian II (r. 685-695, 705-711), Tiberius Apsimaros (r. 698-705), and Muhammad b. Marwan (f. 691-710) were active in the region; this was a period of instability which concluded with Muhammad b. Marwan's exceptionally violent conquest of Armenia. As part of a larger project on Byzantine-Umayyad relations, this presentation will raise questions about the significance of Armenia in Arab-Byzantine warfare, the nature of Byzantine involvement, and the role of Armenian elites.

Matthew Hassall (Cambridge) 'John Lydus and Political Debate in Sixth-Century Constantinople'

Current approaches to John Lydus are often concerned with establishing Lydus' political perspective, especially in relation to his support or otherwise for Justinian. This short paper moves away from the internal logic of Lydus' texts, which display a

sincerely ambiguous attitude towards the regime. It instead situates Lydus in the political culture of Justinian's Constantinople via a detailed intertextuality with, among other contemporary texts, Justinian's *Novels* and Procopius' writings. This approach suggests that Lydus' writings reveal a culture of more vigorous and open political debate than current scholarship appreciates, and briefly highlights some processes by which this debate took place.

Silvio Roggo (Cambridge) 'Patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople as Presented in John of Ephesus' *Church History*'

For an assessment of the deposition of patriarch Eutychius of Constantinople, scholarship has hitherto mainly used the Life of Eutychius by Eustratius and Evagrius' Ecclesiastical History. However, the Church History of John of Ephesus has not yet been exploited for this. This is unsurprising, since the preserved third part of John's History only records events after 570 and hence does not treat the time of Eutychius deposition in 565. Nevertheless, there are a few passages from which information about the circumstances of his deposition can be inferred; furthermore, the lost second part of John of Ephesus' History was used by Pseudo-Dionysius for his chronicle which also includes a short notice about Eutychius' downfall. My communication aims to take the testimony of these understudied passages into account for a re-assessment of Eutychius' deposition.

Sam Jelley (Cambridge) 'Literary Depictions of Nomads in Late Antiquity'

The focus of my dissertation is East Roman military, diplomatic, and economic relations with the nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppe from the late fourth to the early seventh centuries. I shall be exploring the ways in which our late Roman and early Byzantine literary sources shape and distort our understanding of these engagements. In particular, the role of the classicising historical tradition and its Herodotean ethnographic tropes in conditioning the accounts of Ammianus, Procopius, Theophylact, and others will be examined, as will the influence of biblical and apocalyptic ideas. I shall then explore whether these literary representations can enable us to reconstruct a coherent pattern of Roman engagement with the steppe, and how this sits with wider historical and anthropological understandings of relations between sedentary and nomadic civilisations.

Jack Hanson (Cambridge) 'Numismatic Evidence for the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia'

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia is frequently side-lined in major crusader historiography due to the scarcity of traditional written sources. Numismatic evidence can give a small insight into Cilician Armenian. In particular, the coinage of three significant Armenian monarchs from the late eleventh and early twelfth century, Roupen I, Toros I and Leon I. These are extremely rare and very few of these coins exist within museums. The John Slocum collection catalogue, auctioned off in 1997, demonstrates that a number of coins, thought lost, still exist. These demonstrate a number of significant links to the Byzantine Empire and the newly formed Crusader States. Comparing this with the sole written source, the Chronicle of Vahram, which

constructed in the Thirteenth Century, gives an insight into this period in Armenian history.

Douglas Whalin (Cambridge) “It Devoured Many People and Made Bitter Havoc among Men”: Stories of Violence in the Late Antique Wilderness’

This communication will explore predatory dangers for travel through, or even just living in, ‘wilderness,’ particularly how it is depicted in late antique hagiographic literature. Hagiography provides particularly fertile ground on account of its spiritual-realist setting, necessitating the blending of literary expectations with lived experiences. A lengthy Syriac *Life of St. Simeon Stylites* likely dates to shortly after the saint’s death in AD 459. The text situates Simeon’s life, miracles, and death in a detailed spiritual-realist reflection of fifth-century northern Syria, in and around the site of Qal’at Sim’ān. Among its miracle stories, two vignettes stand out not just for their violence but the nature of it: a lion on Black Mountain who devours people, and a pack of unspecified creatures who ravaged Mount Lebanon. Both passages revel in the bloody, gory details of predators rampaging through men and livestock until the saint’s intervention reverses fortunes and allows men to slay these tormentors. These passages raise several questions: is this principally a literary construct or a case where art closely reflects lived experience? How far removed were authors and audiences from these dangers? Where do depictions of the violent dangers of the wilderness fit into contemporary tropes about the relationship between man and nature? Is there a fundamental tension between anxiety over the threat which predators pose to people and livestock, and the triumphant assertion of order when men slay them? Is the blood and violence more than exciting dressing for a parable about the triumph of divine order over natural chaos?

Starting with hagiographic literature, this paper will explore negative tropes about wilderness which resonate elsewhere in contemporary literature and art. It will concentrate on the potentially violent perils which people faced when they encountered the wild. By focusing on stories about the bloody interaction between humans and wild predators, we gain insight into the real and imagined anxieties which late antique people felt about the wild and their relationship with it.