



**COMMISSION FOR BYZANTINE ARCHAEOLOGY
ACTIVITIES REPORT (September 2018 – July 2022)**

1	ESTABLISHMENT
1.1	Following the invitation of the Bureau of the International Association of Byzantine Studies, the coordinator of the <i>Commission for Byzantine Archaeology</i> was invited at the Athens 'Intercongress' of September 22nd, 2018, where he presented the aims of the new Commission and its 15 proposed members. The participating members (National Committees) of the Intercongress approved the establishment of the Commission.
1.2	The Commission includes the following approved members, in alphabetical order: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Effie Athanassopoulos (USA)2. Marica Cassis (Canada)3. Jim Crow (UK)4. Owen Doonan (USA)5. Sharon Gerstel (USA)6. Fotini Kondyli (USA)7. Sabine Ladstätter (Austria)8. Platon Petridis (Greece)9. Jean-Michel Spieser (France)10. Christina Tsigonaki (Greece)11. Nikos Tsivikis (Greece)12. Myrto Veikou (Sweden)13. Athanasios Vionis – coordinator (Cyprus)14. Joanita Vroom (Netherlands)15. Enrico Zanini (Italy)
2	FUNDING FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS
2.1	One of the strategic goals of the Commission since its establishment has been the investigation of potential sources to fund cutting-edge postdoctoral research, fostering collaboration between colleagues (to act as mentors) from different academic institutions. The plan is to support young scientists to attain important skills for advancing their professional journeys through the postdoctoral study and promotion of 'pre-modern culture' and topics such as Byzantine/medieval landscapes, environment, material culture, technology, economy, networks and cultural heritage management. Comprehensively, we are seeking €110,000 in funding on a biennial basis (to support 1 postdoctoral scientist every 2 years). Initiated by the coordinator, four different international companies (from Israel, Italy, France and the USA) have been approached and it is anticipated that feedback on the progress of this quest will be available at the Commission's scheduled meeting in Venice on August 24th.
2.2	Upon its meeting in Venice, the Commission will also investigate and discuss ways to raise funding to support doctoral candidates in Byzantine Archaeology.
3	DIALOGUE WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS
3.1	The Commission seeks to promote the dialogue with other fields of archaeology that address the medieval Mediterranean, European and Near Eastern world, opening the channels for wider interregional studies. The first venture to promote the work of the Commission and present active research in Byzantine Archaeology will be <i>RURALIA</i> , an international association for the archaeology of medieval and post-medieval settlement and rural life. <i>RURALIA</i> "provides a conference of current research questions in rural archaeology from most participating European countries to strengthen the exchange of knowledge in, and the development of, archaeologically comparable studies, and to make archaeological results available to other disciplines." The next <i>RURALIA</i> annual meeting will be held in Fredrikstad (Norway) in September 2023, in which the Commission will be represented.

3.2	Upon its meeting in Venice, the Commission will also discuss its initial proposal for potential participation (through the organisation of relevant Sessions and/or through participation in their committees) at other large <i>fora</i> , such as the Annual Leeds <i>International Medieval Congress</i> , the Annual Meeting of the <i>European Association of Archaeologists</i> , etc.
4	DIGITAL COMMUNICATION PLATFORM
4.1	The creation of a digital communication platform for announcing activities and opportunities related to Byzantine Archaeology has also been one of the Commission's primary aims. A database with the names and email addresses of 300 specialists in Byzantine Archaeology has been created. Colleagues from several countries undertaking research on Byzantine/medieval landscapes, material culture, theory and applied sciences are included in this list, which, although currently not exhaustive, it will be updated continuously by adding, for example, the contact details also of young researchers, such as postdoctoral fellows and doctoral candidates.
4.2	Upon its meeting in Venice, the Commission will investigate and discuss (a) ways to reach this research community across the world (e.g. via email or through the Newsletter of the AIEB) and (b) the possibility of creating a separate website, where relevant announcements will be uploaded.
5	PUBLIC AWARENESS & DISSEMINATION
5.1	Raising public awareness and disseminating scientific/scholarly results to local communities are of utmost importance in promoting the archaeological study of Byzantium and protecting Byzantine cultural heritage at both national and international levels. The Commission participated in the local, national and international efforts for the protection of the antiquities at the Venizelos Station of the Thessaloniki Metro (e.g. through the letter addressed to the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, signed by the Commission coordinator and the President of the AIEB). Members of the Commission also rose their voices, as individuals/Byzantinists, against acts that insulted Byzantine cultural heritage over the past few years.
5.2	Upon its meeting in Venice, the Commission (a) will discuss and decide the nomination of a Vice Head and Secretary (from among the members of the Commission) to assist with the effective conduct in informing the general public, and (b) will explore the possibility of getting more actively involved in engaging with the local communities and the general public by providing specialist advice to stakeholders and research teams. One such example is the finalisation of the Unlocking Sacred Landscapes project, the website and smart-phone app of which could function under the auspices of the Commission.
6	INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF BYZANTINE STUDIES – SPECIAL CBA SESSION
6.1	Although no 'special session' was organised (as initially suggested) by the Commission in the forthcoming 24th International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Venice and Padua, already 2/3 of its members will be presenting and discussing important facets of contemporary research in the field of Byzantine Archaeology at several events, either as invited scholars in 'Plenary Sessions' and/or as convenors of 'Round Tables' and 'Free-Communication Sessions' in Venice and Padua.
6.2	Upon its meeting in Venice, the Commission will discuss the potential organisation of a special Round-Table Session on 'Byzantine Archaeology' in the next International Congress, within which invited speakers and/or volunteers/applicants will present the major advances of our discipline in the new millennium across the different strands of research.