

Processions: Urban Ritual in Byzantium and Neighboring Lands
Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposium
Music Room
April 12-13, 2019

Leslie Brubaker and Nancy Ševčenko, Symposiarchs

Military, civic, and religious processions were hallmarks of the ancient and medieval world; they continued into the Renaissance and, indeed, continue to this day. The Byzantine procession has not yet been subjected to any synthetic, historicizing, contextualizing, or comparative examination.

Understanding processions is critical for our appreciation of how urban space worked and was manipulated in the Middle Ages. For the 2019 Dumbarton Oaks Symposium, speakers will examine texts, artifacts, and images to develop a new understanding of medieval urban life across multiple social registers. For example, records of processions show us what kinds of public behavior were acceptable, and when, and where. Studying processions introduces us to new protagonists as well, for processions involve audiences as well as participants, and groups hitherto virtually invisible, such as the team of people who prepared for the event by decorating the streets, will be brought to light. The Byzantine commitment to processions is striking in terms of the resources and time allocated: there were as many as two processions a week in Constantinople, many involving the patriarch and the emperor. In the Latin West, the Crusader States, and in the Fatimid, Ottoman, and Muscovite worlds, by comparison, processions occurred far less frequently: the procession was significantly more important to the Byzantines than to their neighbors and successors. The comparative study of Byzantine processions to be offered by the speakers at the symposium will reveal how the Byzantines operated in a complex global network defined by local contexts, how the Byzantines positioned themselves within this network, and the nature of the Byzantine legacy to the Islamic, Catholic, and Orthodox inheritors of their culture.

Friday, April 12, 2019

8:30 Morning Registration and Coffee

9:00-9:15 Welcome: Jan Ziolkowski and Anna Stavrakopoulou, Dumbarton Oaks

Introduction

Chair: John Duffy

9:15-9:45 Nancy Ševčenko, Independent scholar

Processions and the Origins of Urban Ritual

Chair: Elizabeth Bolman

9:45-10:20 Georgia Frank, Colgate University
The Things They Carried: Religious Processions in Early Byzantium

10:25-10:55 Tea and Coffee

10:55-11:30 Nathanael Andrade, SUNY Binghamton
Controlling Material and Semiotic Landscapes: Processions in Late Antiquity

11:30-12:00 Discussion

12:00-2:00 Lunch

Processions and the Canonization of Urban Ritual

Chair: Ioli Kalavrezou

2:00-2:35 Leslie Brubaker, University of Birmingham
Bridging the Gap: Processions in Early Medieval Constantinople

2:40-3:15 Michael Featherstone, CNRS, Paris/University of Fribourg
Public Processions in Middle Byzantine Constantinople

3:20-3:50 Tea and Coffee

3:50-4:25 Christine Angelidi, National Hellenic Research Foundation
Sparkling Creations, Threads of Tradition: Marian Processions in Medieval Constantinople

4:30-5:05 Niels Gaul, University of Edinburgh
Processions in the Late Byzantine World

5:05-5:45 Discussion

5:45-7:30 Reception in the Orangery

Saturday, April 13, 2019

8:30 Morning Registration and Coffee

Processions in Comparative Perspective

Chair: Ruth Macrides

9:00-9:35 James Norrie, University of Oxford
Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Processions in Milan and Rome: Urban Conflict or Civic Integration?

9:40-10:15 Paula Sanders, Rice University
Negotiating Power in the Islamic Mediterranean: Urban Processions in Egypt, North Africa, and Iberia

10:20-10:50 Tea and Coffee

10:50-11:25 Sebastián Salvadó, Independent scholar
The Latin Processions in Jerusalem

11:25-11:55 Discussion

12:00-2:00 Lunch

Processions in Rus and after the Fall of Constantinople

Chair: Dimitar Angelov

2:00-2:35 Alexandra Vukovich, University of Oxford
Princely Processions and Peregrinations: Itinerant Rulership in Early Rus

2:40-3:15 Michael S. Flier, Harvard University
Changing Times, Divergent Destinies: Processional Imagery in the Age of the Tsar

3:20-3:50 Tea and Coffee

3:50-4:25 Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, Boğaziçi University
Guild Processions in Istanbul: Claiming Public Space in the Early Modern City

4:25-4:55 Discussion

Conclusion

Chair: Derek Krueger

5:00-5:30 Leslie Brubaker, University of Birmingham