

## **Abstracts for the International Conference:**

### ***Seasides of Byzantium: harbours and anchorages of a Mediterranean Empire***

**(in order of the presentations)**

**Anna Lambropoulou (Athens), *Η πρόσληψη της θάλασσας και της θαλάσσιας επικοινωνίας στην Μεσόγειο (4ος-12ος αι.): Η αγιολογική μαρτυρία*** (*The perception of the sea and of maritime communication in the Mediterranean, 4th-12th c.: the hagiographic evidence*)

The Mediterranean basin was the beating heart of Byzantium for over eleven centuries. In his administrative treatise *De Thematibus*, Constantine Porphyrogenitus defined the Byzantine naval supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea, which he perceived as a legacy of the Roman Empire. He epitomized this "mare nostrum" concept as extending from Constantinople to the Pillars of Hercules by saying that "All the seas, up to the Pillars of Hercules, are held by and fall under the hegemony of Constantinople". This concept of domination over the seas (θαλασσοκρατία) was fundamental for the Byzantine state forming an important basis upon which the state's maritime structure was developed.

During the Byzantine period under discussion a great variety of goods was transported along the maritime routes of the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas within a well organised administrative system. Trade was a motivation for connecting people, exchanging ideas and artefacts along a system of a maritime network, which consisted of well-equipped ports. Several high ranking officers, ecclesiastical officials, soldiers, travellers, pilgrims, monks and saints were travelling throughout the Byzantine maritime space. Their routes and the particular mark each of them left in the available sources can give us a clue about the medieval perception of the sea.

My presentation deals with the examination of the evidence from the hagiographic texts which constitute a mine of information on sea perceptions, ideas and images. Such mental representations are depicted in a unique way either metaphorically or in a literal manner.

**Johannes Preiser-Kapeller (Vienna-Mainz), *Ports, bones, pollen and pottery. Harbours of the Byzantine world as sources of environmental history and global connectivity***

Beyond their significance as remains of maritime infrastructure, recent developments of archaeology, archaeometry, palaeobotanics, palaeopathology, archaeozoology, geoarchaeology and environmental history allow us to use harbours and anchorages of the Byzantine world both as "archives of society" and as "archives of nature" (to speak with Christian Pfister, a pioneer of climate history) for various, hitherto rarely or unexplored aspects of the socioeconomic, cultural and natural history of Byzantium and

neighbouring civilisations. These methods enable us (among other things) to reconstruct the dynamics of landscapes in and around harbours, the changes of environmental conditions and the reactions of communities or the patterns of land use, animal husbandry and nutrition and shed fresh light on the extent and volume of maritime exchange in the hinterland and wider foreland of ports. The combination of these findings with tools of GIS, network theory and quantitative analysis produces new visual and analytical results, approaching the actual complexity of the interplay between Byzantine society and the maritime. Elements of this new synthesis are presented for selected examples across the Byzantine world, especially also beyond the Mediterranean, from Late Antiquity up to the late medieval period.

**Aikaterini Dellaporta (Athens), *Archaeological and iconographic evidence for maritime activities of the Byzantine era***

**Jean-Philippe Goiran (Lyon), *Sedimentary archives and ancient texts: Evaluating the contribution of the geological approach to the study of ancient harbours*** (with Salomon F., Carayon N., Pleuger E., Keay S., Arnaud P.)

The geo-archaeological study of an ancient harbour rests essentially on the stratigraphic analysis of the deposits that fill its basin. Most of the time, mechanically drilled bore holes can provide the sedimentary cores that make this possible; in other words a sequence of sediments that are studied in the laboratory from multidisciplinary perspectives. Such analysis of sedimentary archives provides us with seven main kinds of types of information that enable us to address major historical, archaeological and geographical questions: (i) the maximum depth of the basin, (ii) the foundation date of the harbour, (iii), the life span of the harbour, (iv) the abandonment date of the harbour, (v) the reasons for such an abandonment, (vi) the type of environment that existed prior to the harbour, and (vii) the dredging phases –if any.

In some cases, ancient texts provide us with information relating to some of these questions, while in others, the stratigraphic sequences from geoarchaeological studies can confirm or raise issues with our interpretations of what it is that written sources tell us. In this paper we will address this issues with a review of the evidence from Alexandria, Piraeus, Ostia and Portus.

**Joanita Vroom (Leiden), *The Archaeology of Byzantine Harbours in Action: From their products to maritime trading networks***

This paper aims to discuss the archaeological evidence of industrial zones in some major Byzantine port towns in the Aegean. Apart from showing the manufacture of certain goods (such as ceramics, glass, metal) in harbour zones, it is the intention to present the regional distribution of such commodities to the hinterland as well as to draw attention to the medium-

and long-distance movements of these products on ships to various parts of the Mediterranean.

**Konstantinos Roussos (Rethymno, Crete), *Harbours, local production and maritime trade networks in the Cyclades during Late Antiquity (4th - 7th c.): the island of Paros***

This paper attempts to offer a fresh approach to the history and archaeology of the Cyclades in Late Antiquity under the light of current archaeological investigations, setting a new framework for the discussion and examination of the settled landscape and material culture dated between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the mid-7<sup>th</sup> c. It is an attempt to identify and interpret human-environmental interaction in order to “read” the relationship between islands, settlements, monuments, communication networks, cultural groups, landscapes and seascapes in the broader context of the diverse and highly interactive Eastern Mediterranean world. The period between the 4<sup>th</sup> and mid-7<sup>th</sup> centuries has been generally considered as a time of prosperity for most of the Aegean islands. However, important aspects of this situation have not been studied in detail whilst the crucial role of the Cycladic harbours and anchorages within the complex network of the Mediterranean trade system has not been fully understood. The island of Paros is used as case-study. It will be a challenging task to trace the complex settlement pattern which was developed in this island in order to support its role, as smaller links in the chain of Late Antiquity's unified economic system.

**Eleonora Kountoura-Galaki (Athens), *A light in the darkness: monastery “lighthouses” in the Aegean Sea and surrounding coastal regions***

The basic motivation for the selection of a location where a monastery was established was tranquillity and isolation, the predominant monastic rules associated with the appropriate spirituality of a monastery. Therefore, the choice of a monastic site normally served this spiritual perspective.

However, examining the specific areas on which some monasteries were built, one may discern further and sometimes clearly defined concerns for the selection of the specific place on which a monastery was founded.

Physical features of the environment constituted the key point determining the future function of a monastery. The topographical site marks the practical use of how could a monastery realistically function and interact within its spatial environment and beyond. In this framework the monastery as a well-organised establishment could support specific services regardless its usual spiritual orientation. Monasteries which were built on strategic insular or coastal sites could operate in a particular way, as real lighthouses, thus being implicated with harbours and medieval navigation.

Deriving information from narrative sources I'll present some characteristic cases of such monasteries from the Aegean Sea and surrounding coastal regions.

**Max Ritter (Mainz), *Naval bases, arsenals, aplekta: functional and operational segregations of Byzantine ports (6th-12th c.)***

Embedded within the DFG-SPP 1630 on European ports this study focuses on the utilization of Byzantine ports by the imperial navy. As a point of departure, previous statements by Ahrweiler, Guiland, and Cosentino will be reconsidered on the background of the written sources and the terms employed in them. Regarding the ports of Constantinople, the recent contributions by colleagues from Vienna have made pretty clear that those ports were segregated along the functions they fulfilled for the capital, be they commercial, military, or for the court. This study presumes that provincial ports evolved along similar lines. In order to identify the ports which provided facilities for the navy, variant sources have to be considered. Information stemming from connective data on actual naval operations in the investigated period, 10<sup>th</sup>-c. naval *tactica*, and the evidence on the maritime *themata* with their respective naval bases have to be assembled and may provide new insights on the naval infrastructure of the Byzantine empire.

**Efi Ragia (Athens), *Administrative changes in the seas of Byzantium, 7th-8th centuries. A historical-geographical approach***

The Late Roman provincial organization of the Mediterranean space completely ignored the particularities of the seas and the necessity of serving particular and diverse needs through its seaways, because essentially the Roman territory was unified under the Roman political administration. This situation changed in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century on account of the complexity of the political and military developments, which affected also the economic administrative sector. The changes that are therefore imposed on the administration of the seas testify to the targeted intervention of Byzantine governments towards confronting the new reality by fully exploiting the marine potential of the empire. The network of islands and ports and the seaways that served the needs of the empire are traced in the rich sigillographic material supported by the precedence lists, lay and ecclesiastical, and by sporadic references in the narrative sources mostly of geographic-administrative interest, thus confirming the flexibility and effectiveness of the byzantine administrative system. The present communication will attempt to interpret the evidence and to sketch the transition of the Byzantine Empire from the Late Roman provincial organization to the thematic organization of the middle byzantine period by emphasizing on marine administration and exploitation of particular harbors.

**Maria Gerolymatou (Athens), *Ἐμπορεῖον μετὰ πλοίων καὶ φούνδακος. The role of the aristocracy in building harbours (10th-12th century)***

Ports are usually associated with urban populations, and commercial activity or craft industry of some kind. However, apart from major ports, which served the needs of transit trade and through which large quantities of merchandise were transported, it is certain that smaller ports also existed, built to accommodate the needs of local landowners. Based on monasterial records, it is known that certain individuals, most often members of the aristocracy, owned *ἐμπορεῖα* ('market places') with their own port facilities and private ships, intended to facilitate the exportation and circulation of their products. Such minor ports may also have been built in areas of western Greece, in which members of the Church, or relatives of the Imperial family, held properties, so that agricultural production would circulate. In all likelihood, the factors leading to their creation were not exclusively geographical, but included also the desire to avoid the long and time consuming inspections and bureaucratic procedures involved when ships pulled into or sailed out of major ports. It is certain that similar facilities existed scattered across the Empire.

The purpose of this paper is to shed some light on the role of the higher social strata in the operation of these ports, which supplemented the operation of major ports, supplying the needs of the local population and ensuring the circulation of their own produce.

**Aikaterini Dellaporta (Athens) and Flora Karagianni (Thessalonike), *Depictions of the Byzantine harbours of Constantinople in early maps and engravings***

Maps and engravings consist a very important visual source for the study of the topography of Byzantine Constantinople, which, together with the references in historical texts, provide us with valuable information for its urban form and development through ages. Since 1420s, when Cristoforo Buondelmonti visited Constantinople and created the first map of the city, many other visitors - cartographers such as Hartmann Schedel (1453) and Giovanni Andrea Vavassore (1520), gradually produced maps, portolans and engravings which depicted in bigger or smaller scale, the image of the byzantine capital. As it is known, the oldest surviving map of the city before the Turkish conquest of 1453 is the map made by the Florentinian monk Christoforo Buondelmonti, which is included in his book "*Liber Insularum Archipelagi*". That map became a prototype for a series of several ones, which were widely spread in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Between 1420-1490 more than 60 copies of the original map of Buondelmonti were produced. In these maps, one can take various information on the harbours of Constantinople, some of which had dramatically by that time changed their form and the surface they covered. The paper is an effort to record all the elements that are presented in the early maps and engravings and to combine them with the information given in the written sources.

### **Sophia Akrivopoulou (Thessalonike), *The Hellenistic Harbour of Thessaloniki and the Ekklesiastikē Skala***

This paper proposes as the location of the Hellenistic harbour of Thessaloniki a natural cove east of the later Roman city, subsequently identified as the Early Byzantine Ekklesiastikē Skala.

Monuments, excavation finds and 19th century maps show that at the southeastern part of Thessaloniki the urban axes are directed towards the coast, diverging from the axes of the rest of city. This section is commonly interpreted as the oldest residential core of the city. Proposing the opposite, we will ascertain that Cassander's Thessaloniki was limited to the northeastern part of the later Roman city, as it was defined by the 3rd century fortification. Thus, the Hellenistic city was not coastal and the harbour was situated out of its walls.

On the outskirts of the Hellenistic city two regional roads ran through: the Pella - Cassandreia one which was later incorporated in the Roman city and constituted the decumanus maximus, and the Lēte one which led to the east of Macedonia. In Roman times the Lēte road reached the Lētaia Gate, at the western walls of Thessaloniki, but its initial destination is still untraced. It is very likely that once it reached the city's Hellenistic harbour, following a southeastern route directly to the sea.

At the end of this road, at the coastal edge of the eastern Roman walls, the Roma Gate was constructed. This gate led to the Hellenistic harbour which continued to be situated outside the city. The gate is depicted on a 19th century map, while the position of the harbour and related facilities were detected by excavation. Finally, a description of a Slavic raid that Thessaloniki suffered from the sea in the beginning of the 7th century was crucial. In fact, it helped to propose the identification of the Hellenistic harbour with the Ekklesiastikē Skala.

### **Thomas Schmidts (Mainz), *Ainos and beyond – Harbour cities in southern Thrace in early Byzantine times***

The ancient and Byzantine harbour city Ainos (modern Enez, province of Edirne, Turkey) is today located at the estuary of the river Hebros (Meriç / Evros), approx. four kilometres distant from the Aegean Sea. Due to a siltation process the landscape changed totally. Ainos had been a harbour city located at a bay of the Aegean Sea and played a major role in the seaborne commerce which is known especially for the Archaic and Classical times. The city was a hub between the open sea and the river Hebros with its tributaries which were navigable for a long distance.

A multidisciplinary research project, integrated in the special programme of the German Research Foundation, investigates the development of the environment and the city with a focus on the Roman imperial and the Byzantine era. The works include geoarchaeology, geophysics,

archaeological surveys and the documentation of building remains. Major goals of the project are:

- the localisation and dating of the ancient and Byzantine harbour installations,
- the determination of the silting-up process which endangered the existence of the harbour town,
- the analysis of the development of the settlement,
- the investigating the connections of Ainos with the interregional transport network.

The paper intends to give an overview of the results of the project with a focus on the early Byzantine era. The importance of Ainos seems to increase in Late Antiquity. This is e.g. indicated by the building activities of Justinian I. in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. which are conveyed by Procopius. Also the development of other harbour cities in Southern Thrace should be considered. Especially the role of Anastasioupolis will be discussed. The city which was founded by Anastasius I. and its harbour was fortified by Justinian, according again to Procopius.

### **Horacio González Cesteros – Sabine Ladstätter (Vienna–Athens), *Harbours and Commerce in Byzantine Ephesus***

Research in the city of Ephesos over the course of the last several years has contributed to a better understanding of the commercial relations of the city during the Byzantine period. Excavations in the west necropolis along the harbour channel, in the late antique/medieval residential quarter south of the Church of Mary, and the recent discovery of the tavern on the Curetes Street have revealed large quantities of pottery, above all amphorae. This evidence tells of the intense commercial network of Ephesos in late antiquity and a continued commercial significance of the settlement from the mid-7<sup>th</sup> to its last period of occupation at least in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition to the excavations, interdisciplinary research in the plains of Ephesos has gathered new information on the structure of the harbour landscape in the Byzantine period. It is likely that the city had a succession of harbours of varying size and function, channels, and navigable rivers as well as harbour-related infrastructure at its disposal.

Thanks to this harbour landscape Ephesos continued to be a commercially important city in a similar way as it had been in previous centuries. From the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 7<sup>th</sup> century a wide range of agricultural and artisan products were shipped out of the Ephesian ports. In the archaeological reports of some of the most important settlements of the entire Mediterranean several Ephesian pottery are to be found. The political, religious, and economical changes that took place in the Mediterranean from the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century affected the commercial and economic trade network of Ephesos. As a result the city progressively moved its distribution markets to the Aegean and

Anatolian territories with sporadic exchanges with other eastern Mediterranean areas.

Despite these changes, the material culture of the middle and late Byzantine period is marked by considerable dynamics that are not least expressed in the maintenance of the "old" harbour. The accessibility of the pilgrim destinations was certainly a reason for keeping up the Ephesian infrastructure, however, the most recent research indicates that the settlement continued on until the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Marina Papadimitriou (Athens), *The harbour of Piraeus in Late Antiquity. New archaeological evidence***

The paper deals with archaeological remains, recently excavated at the cove of the Kantharos harbour at the NE side of the Piraeus peninsula. The surviving architectural remains, rooted in natural soil, are oriented towards the sea. The remains, combined with a large number of movable metal, ceramic and glass, objects, indicate an intensive phase of use of the site during the early byzantine period.

On the basis of the archaeological evidence, Kantharos provides a usable harbour with access from the Saronic Gulf into the hinterland from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### **Alkiviadis Ginalis (Bremen), *Reassessing the harbour of Anthedon***

Central Greece and in particular the Euboean Gulf formed one of the cradles of seafaring and consequently constituted a major platform for communication and maritime trade in the Mediterranean as early as the Bronze Age. Due to its strategic geographical position and rich hinterlands, Central Greece played a decisive role as a junction of the N-S and E-W axis within the Aegean maritime network.

Based on a mainly coastal orientated navigation, it was indispensable for shipping lanes and trading routes to pass particularly through the Euboean gulf. Consequently, both in Classical Antiquity as well as during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the region around the Euboean gulf constituted one of the most important and wealthiest agricultural and industrial areas. As such, also during the Byzantine era the numerous harbours along the Phthiotic and inner Euboean coast provided various kinds of merchandise.

One of the best-known and most discussed harbours forms the famous harbour of Anthedon, which was subject of intensive archaeological investigation since the 1960's. As one of the earliest harbour studies for the Byzantine period, the excellent work by Blackman and Schläger laid the cornerstone for the understanding of Byzantine coastal activities. Even though the results of their archaeological and historical investigation in many ways still provides ground-breaking information especially on harbour architecture, a reinvestigation of the site in 2016 allowed further insight. Hence, a new

perception of Anthedon's history and its role within the Euboean maritime network can be drawn.

### **Konstantia Kephala (Rhodes), *Haven Waiting. Patmos Before the Blessed Christodoulos***

Patmos, the northernmost island of the Dodecanese, in close connection with the coast of Asia Minor, is widely known as the place of exile where, around the year 95, saint John the Theologian wrote the holy text of Revelation. Historical references remain almost silent until as far as the end of the 11th century, when the Blessed Christodoulos, founder of the monastery of Saint John, arrived at the deserted, then, island. But what have happened in between?

Contrary to the picture presented by later written sources, Patmos, during the Roman and Early Christian times, seems to be far from an empty island. Its port was active and open to commercial and cultural exchanges, an important link in the complex byzantine communication network. In this paper I will attempt to trace the archaeological evidence concerning the picture of Patmos until the arrival of the Blessed Christodoulos. Since no extensive survey or systematic excavation has ever been carried out in the island, information is provided only by the scarce existing remains.

An Early Christian basilica dedicated to saint John as early as possibly the 5th century is betrayed by the church's *enkainion*, a stone slab bearing an inscription commemorating the inauguration of the sacred altar under the holy service of the bishop Epithymetos.

Another very important inscription probably dated to the 6th century describes the misfortune of Paul, a tribune who, after his salvation from a shipwreck, assumed the expense of paving a basilica to express his gratitude. The plethora of Proto-byzantine architectural members that are either exhibited in the Monastery Museum, incorporated in various parts of the monastery of Saint John or dispersed all over the island imply that there were more than one churches and settlements on Patmos.

### **Katerina Manoussou-Della (Rhodes), *Byzantine Rhodes. The evolution of a fortified harbour-city in the Eastern Mediterranean, 4th-12th c.***

Rhodes belongs to the category of ancient cities that preserved their ancient name and location, through a series of urban transformations. Its existence was tied to the configuration of the landscape, as it occupied the hilly promontory projecting into the sea at the northern tip of the island, boasting five harbours whose openings faced the major points of the compass. The harbour-city was set up as a naval base and trading post across the sea-lanes of the Eastern Mediterranean, and throughout its history was strongly influenced by trade, new ideas and cultural permutations.

Great socioeconomic changes at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century AD led to the drastic reduction of its size and the breakup of urban institutions in Late Antiquity. Modern scholarship has raised important questions concerning the mechanisms of the gradual transformation of the centre and the periphery of the particularly extensive Hellenistic metropolis in a period dominated by the *Pax Romana*. In the following centuries (AD 4th-7th c.), the vital space of the unfortified settlement consisted of islands of habitation, mostly attached to the ancient harbours and the centre of trade, scattered across the sea of ruins left by the decline of the formerly celebrated city. Arab historians mention that at year 60 of the Hegira, that is c. AD 682, Junada ibn Umayya «conquered Rhodes and built the town». Clearly, what is meant by this is the fortification of the already existing settlement. This is the first mention of a castle of Rhodes in the Early Byzantine period, probably in the form of a fortified acropolis, where the population could seek refuge at need. This was the fortress raised on a key site, between the commercial and military harbours. This area became the nucleus of the later development of the walled town, always directly linked to the dominant function of an important harbour-node controlling the eastern access to the Aegean Archipelago, between Crete and the coastline of Anatolia.

### **Dominik Heher (Mainz-Vienna), *Dyrrhachion / Durrës – an Adriatic Sea Gateway between East and West***

Today, Dyrrhachion/Durrës is the most frequented port of modern Albania. The city's importance in terms of maritime traffic and trade is not a recent phenomenon. Ever since the foundation of the town in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD, Epidamnos-Dyrrhachion has played a vital part in sea communication, especially in Roman and Byzantine times when it was a major gateway to the Balkan peninsula and an important hub at the crossing of routes along and across the Adriatic sea.

Despite its undeniable continuity as a central place, Dyrrhachion has gone through many transformations (both in terms of geomorphology and urban infrastructure) and even though the town's history has always been linked so closely to its harbour, we do not know very much about it, not even its exact location. In my paper, I will therefore attempt to outline the town's medieval history up to 1204 from a pronouncedly maritime perspective and try to reconstruct the possible harbour landscape of the city on the basis of written and archaeological sources.

### **Dimitar Dimitrov (Plovdiv), *Sozopol Harbour in the Middle Ages***

Nestled on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast, Sozopol (Σωζόπολις) boasts more than 3,000 years of history and culture. The progress of the town throughout the ages was greatly facilitated by its busy harbour. During the Middle Ages Sozopol was first incorporated into the Byzantine maritime network, and from the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> c. the town was integrated into the global

Mediterranean Weltwirtschaft run by Venice and Genoa. At that time Sozopol raised as an important centre of commerce and navigation in the Black Sea contact zone of the Mediterranean area. The present paper aims at analysing the functional capacity of Sozopol harbour in order to estimate its contribution to the prosperity of the town. Meanwhile by placing the research into a broader context, the paper will attempt to evaluate the extent to which Sozopol harbour with its structures was ready to participate in the international sea trade, thus revealing its role and significance in Byzantium's as well as Bulgaria's maritime contacts with the Mediterranean world-economy.

Particularly important with a view to the study of the functional capacity of Sozopol harbour are multifarious data on: the geographic location and microclimatic conditions, navigational potential of the seaport aquatory - size, depth, extent of protection, specifications of the sea floor; typology as well as exact parameters of the mooring vessels; road links, land and maritime communications; infrastructure and supply routes within the hinterland. Dealing with different primary sources the paper will apply an interdisciplinary approach while trying to systemize and interpret the written, archaeological, cartographical, and geomorphological evidence.

### **Grigori Simeonov (Mainz-Vienna), *The Region of the Danube Delta in the 7th–10th Centuries and the case of the so called Lykostomion Maritime Province***

The paper aims at presenting the history of the Danube Delta from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century up to the year 971. The Avar and Slavic incursions beginning in the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the following foundation of the Bulgarian state north of the Balkan mountains caused a serious disruption in Byzantine administration in the West. Since Helene Ahrweiler's book *Byzance et la mer* was published some 50 years ago, there has been a scientific debate about the organization of a Byzantine maritime province (*thema*) in the area of the Danube Delta in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. This paper bases on the analysis of different groups of sources. Starting with the information from Greek and Latin texts such as historiographical works, manuals on military tactics, domestic and foreign policy, a brief account on Byzantine military operations in the region of the Delta during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century will be presented. However, all available accounts speak about sea vessels sent away from Constantinople and do not attest the existence of a Byzantine naval base in Danube Delta before 971. According to the so called *Lists of Presence* dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century all imperial provinces in the eastern part of the Balkans were situated south of the Balkan mountains. Thus the silence of the written sources and the lack of any sigillographical evidence about the existence of a Byzantine maritime base at the Lower Danube before the reconquest by John Tzimiskes cast a serious doubt on the hypothesis about the alleged *thema* of Lykostomion.

**Ilias Anagnostakis (Athens), Ένα σημαντικό ορμητήριο χωρίς λιμάνι: Αναζητώντας στις πηγές το βυζαντινό λιμάνι στη Μεθώνη της Πελοποννήσου**  
(*Methoni in Peloponnesos: a naval base without harbour? In search of the Byzantine port in historical sources*)

We have little information available on the Byzantine port of Methoni. The remains that lie to the east of the castle belong to the ancient harbour and small-scale Byzantine interventions can be observed on the jetties, whilst structures mainly from the period of Venetian rule are located there. The sources, in addition, do not provide detailed descriptions or other data and refer generally to ports or speak simply of anchorage, naval station or moorings for vessels, from the commercial or naval fleet, most likely not in a port but in the Bay of Methoni. The paper will make use of accounts from medieval sources up to the 12<sup>th</sup> century in order to determine (based also on the marine morphology of the area with its bays and havens) the nature of mooring in Byzantine Methoni, as well as in the SW Peloponnesos in general.

**Dimitrios Athanasoulis (Athens), The Churches of the Leonides' Basilica. An Evidence of the Diachronic Operation of the Lechaion Harbour (Corinth) from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantine Era**

The Basilica of Leonides, a structure of massive proportions, was built in the village of Lechaion, in Corinth, in the early Byzantine period. Its size and craftsmanship link it directly to Constantinople; it is the biggest basilica ever built in Corinth, seat of the governor of the province of Achaia and the Metropolitan of Greece. The fact that the landmark of southern Greece's major city was erected not in its center, but at its western harbour, at Lechaion, is indicative of the importance the port of the Gulf of Corinth had for the Greek capital, and of the significance of Lechaion in the Empire's port network.

Following the Basilica's collapse, four other churches were built consecutively in its place. The construction of these churches, following the abandonment of the Basilica, confirms that the site continued to be used, which in its turn is a strong indication that the port, too, continued to operate, right up to the Late Byzantine period.

**Maria Leontsini, Eleni Manolessou and Angeliki Panopoulou (Athens), Harbours and anchorages in Corinthia and Argolis (Northeastern Peloponnese) from the Early to the Middle Byzantine period**

The paper examines the function of harbours, anchorages and staging posts along the coastline of Corinthia and Argolis and on the off-shore islands of the Saronic Gulf and the western fringes of Myrtoon Sea. Roads departing from the coastline provided access to inland urban centers and other settlements in the interior of the Peloponnese and facilitated regional or long-distance exchanges. Based on information deriving from written sources and archaeological data our research aims to trace the circumstances that led to

the development of coastal settlements and harbour facilities in these regions. Defensive strategies, storage needs or population movements are suggested as factors which dictated the creation of variegated settlements and infrastructures of different kind and quality (both in terms in type and duration) on the coastal areas and the islands. The densification of the population in periods of upheavals, naval campaigns and raids seems to have been more pronounced in the islands already from the Late Antiquity. These coastal and island facilities met primary navigational, directional and ship supply needs, but also served as places of refuge for ships and seafarers as well as local inhabitants.