Professor Leslie Brubaker

Professor of Byzantine Art
Director, Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies

Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (/research/activity/bomgs/index.aspx)

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About

I am Professor of Byzantine Art History, with particular interest in the cult of the Virgin, 'iconoclasm', the relationship between text and image, manuscripts, and gender. I am also Director of the **Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (/research/activity/bomgs/index.aspx)**, which is a unique research cluster with an international reputation, a thriving postgraduate community, and its own journal and two monograph series.

Qualifications

- BA
- MA (Pennsylvania)
- PhD (John Hopkins)

Biography

My research interest in **iconoclasms** has led to the publication of numerous articles and four books (one of which, ***Byzantium in the iconoclast era, a history*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/history/european-history-450-1000/byzantium-iconoclast-era-c-680850-history?format=HB)**, weighs in at 2 kilograms, and won the 2011 PROSE award for best publication in the Humanities and also in History). An international workshop on Iconoclasms which I was invited to organize in 2009 for Harvard led to the formation of a research group – the Iconoclasms Network, with 16 members from across America and Europe – for which I received three years of funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. We worked closely with Tate Britain on an exhibition on iconoclasm in Britain (Art Under Attack) that ran September 2013 until January 2014 and was accompanied by a **fifth book on Iconoclasm (http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781472413673)** co-edited with Dr Stacy Boldrick and Prof Richard Clay. The concise survey, ***Inventing Byzantine Iconoclasm*** **(http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/inventing-byzantine-iconoclasm-9781853997501/)**, will appear in Italian translation in winter 2015. My research on iconoclasms led to a related interest in cultural exchange, and several of my PhD students have worked or are working in this area.

My interest in **text and image** is longstanding, and was the subject of my first book (***Vision and meaning in Byzantium*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/literature/anglo-saxon-and-medieval-literature/vision-and-meaning-ninth-century-byzantium-image-exegesis-homilies-gregory-nazianzus)**) as well as a number of articles. This project has led me to a strong subsidiary interest in visual theory, visual literacy and visual semiotics – all of which tie into my third key area of interest, **gender in the Byzantine world**. I co-edited ***Gender in the Early Medieval World*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/history/european-history-450-1000/gender-early-medieval-world-east-and-west-300900)**, am on the editorial board of *Gender and History*, and have lectured widely on Gender in Byzantine. Many of my past and current PhD students (see below) work in areas related to these two interests.

All of these interests came together in the Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project on ***Icons, relics and the cult of the Virgin***, which I ran 2003 and 2006. This has resulted in ***The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium, texts and images*** **(http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754662662)** (Ashgate, 2011), which I co-edited with Mary Cunningham. Mary and I are also completing a book on *The Virgin Mary in the Byzantine world, 600-1000: relics, icons, words and the rituals of daily life.* We will both be at Dumbarton Oaks Centre for Byzantine Studies (Harvard) in 2016 to complete the manuscript.

Teaching

I teach undergraduate courses on Byzantium and the Transformation of the Roman World; Gender in Byzantium; and Byzantine Art and Architecture. My postgraduate seminars focus on Byzantine art and Byzantine gender studies.

Postgraduate supervision

My core areas of supervision are:

- Byzantine art history and cultural production
- Gender (women, men and eunuchs) in Byzantium.

I have supervised 14 PhD dissertations to completion, on topics as diverse as: Martyrs, cults and water in the early Christian world; The church of the Archangel Michael (Candia, Crete); Byzantine aristocratic women in the Palaiologan period; The 12th-century illustrated copies of the Sermons of James of Kokkinobaphos; Heavenly Jerusalem and the imperial palace: text and image; The post-resurrection appearances of Christ; the Cult of St Anne in Byzantium; the Byzantine life course; the Cult of St Helen in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine world; Monasteries and pilgrimage in post-conquest Palestine; Byzantine coinage and trade with India; Competitive sharing: a re-evaluation of the impact of Byzantine culture on the west; and The Byzantine architecture of the Black Sea region.

I have 10 current PhD students, working on: Byzantine textile production; the Monastic architecture in Thrace; imperial female imagery; gender legislation; and various historical topics, mostly focusing on textual representation (e.g. usurpers, gender and power).

Research

Late Antique, Byzantine and early medieval art, architecture and material culture, the relationship between word and image; the study of illuminated manuscripts; theories of perception and interpretation; the transmission of cultural capital, in particular the movement through trade, gift exchange or diplomatic gift of luxury products; gender.

Other activities

I am active in a number of societies, and am on the executive committee of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies. I sit on the editorial boards of the Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Studies series (Ashgate), and Cultural encounters in late antiquity and the middle ages (Brepols); and am a member of the editorial boards of the journals *Gender and History* and *Byzantinoslavica*. I have served on the Board for British Academy Sponsored Institutes and Societies (BASIS), with special responsibility for the British School at Rome and the British Institute at Ankara, and the International Engagement Committee of the British Academy. In 2010, I received the Distinguished Alumnae Award from the Pennsylvania State University.

I have organised two Byzantine Spring Symposia at Birmingham, was a member of the organising committee for the Congress of Byzantine Studies in London in 2006, and am an international consultant for the forMuse-Projekt (*Papurusmuseum – Museum der Kultur in Agypten. Neue Aspekte in einem Museum mit besonderem Potential*) run by the University of Vienna and the Österreichische Nationalmuseum.

Publications

I have authored or edited 8 books; of these the 5 most significant are:

- ***Vision and meaning in ninth-century Byzantium: Image as exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/literature/anglo-saxon-and-medieval-literature/vision-and-meaning-ninth-century-byzantium-image-exegesis-homilies-gregory-nazianzus)** (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Pp 489. Reprinted 2001. Re-issued in paperback edition 2008.
- *Byzantium in the iconoclast era (ca 680 - ca 850): the sources* (Aldershot, 2001), with JF Haldon. Pp 307.
- ***Byzantium in the iconoclast era ca 680 – ca 850: A History*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/history/european-history-450-1000/byzantium-iconoclast-era-c-680850-history?format=HB)** (Cambridge University Press, 2011), with JF Haldon. Pp xxiv + 917.
- *Gender in Society, 300-900* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), with J Smith. Pp 333.
- ***The Cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium, texts and images*** **(http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754662662)** (Ashgate, 2011), with M Cunningham. Pp 306.

Of the nearly two dozen articles on **manuscripts** and the **relationship of text and image** that I have published, the 5 most significant are:

- 'The Tabernacle Miniatures of the Middle Byzantine Octateuchs', *Actes du XVe Congrès International d'Etudes Byzantines* II (Athens, 1981), 73–92.
- 'Politics, Patronage and Art in Ninth–Century Byzantium: The Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus in Paris', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985), 1–13.
- 'The Introduction of Painted Initials in Byzantium', *Scriptorium* 45 (1991), 22-46.
- 'Greek manuscript decoration in the ninth century: rethinking centre and periphery', in G Prato, ed., *I manoscritti greci tra riflessione e dibattito*, Atti del V Colloquio internazionale di paleografia greca 2 (Florence, 2000), 513-33.
- 'The Vatican *Christian Topography*', in E Jeffreys, ed., *Byzantine style, religion and civilisation: in honour of Sir Steven Runciman* (Cambridge, 2006), 3-24.

Of the dozen articles on **iconoclasms** and **cultural exchange** that I have published, the 5 most significant are:

- 'Byzantine Art in the Ninth Century: Theory, Practice, and Culture', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 13 (1989), 23–93.
- 'Icons before Iconoclasm?', *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* XLV (1998), 1215-54.
- 'The Chalke Gate, the construction of the past, and the Trier ivory', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999), 258-85.
- 'Beyond the elephant: the exchange of luxury goods across the Mediterranean in the eighth and ninth centuries', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59 (2005), 175-95.
- 'Gifts and prayers. The visualisation of gift giving in Byzantium and the mosaics of Hagia Sophia', in W Davies and P Fouracre, eds, *Languages of gift* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010), 33-61.

On **gender**, the 5 most significant articles I have published are:

- 'The gender of money: Byzantine empresses on coins (324-802)', with H Tobler, *Gender and history* 12 (2000), 572-94.
- 'Memories of Helena: patterns in imperial female matronage in the fourth and fifth centuries', in L James, ed., *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (London, 1997), 52-75.
- 'Sex, lies and textuality: the *Secret History* of Prokopios and the rhetoric of gender in sixth-century Byzantium' in L Brubaker and J Smith, ***Gender in the early medieval world, east and west, 300-900*** **(http://www.cambridge.org/gb/academic/subjects/history/european-history-450-1000/gender-early-medieval-world-east-and-west-300900)** (Cambridge, 2004), 83-101.
- 'Elites and patronage in early Byzantium: the case of Hagios Demetrios, Thessalonike', in J Haldon, ed., *Elites old and new in the Byzantine and early Islamic Near East*, Studies in late antiquity and early Islam 6 (Princeton, 2004), 63-90.
- 'Gender and society', in M Maas, ed., *The age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), 427-47.

On **visual theory**, the most important articles I have published are:

- 'Pictures are good to think with: looking at, with, and through Byzantium', in P Odorico et al., eds, *L'ecriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie* (Paris, 2006), 221-40.
- 'Every cliché in the book: the linguistic turn and the text-image discourse in Byzantine manuscripts', in L James, ed., *Art and text in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2007), 58-82.
- 'Critical approaches to art history', in E Jeffreys *et al.*, ed., *Oxford handbook of Byzantine Studies* (Oxford, 2008), 59-66. ISBN 978-0-19-925246-6

On other topics, the most important articles I have published are:

- 'Topography and the creation of public space in early medieval Constantinople', in M de Jong, ed., *Topographies of power in the early middle ages* (Leiden, 2001), 31-43.
- 'The conquest of space', in R Macrides, ed., *Travel in Byzantium* (Aldershot, 2002), 235-57.
- 'Byzantine visions of the end', in P Clarke and T Claydon, eds, *The church, the afterlife and the fate of the soul*, Studies in Church History 45 (Woodbridge, 2009), 97-119. ISBN 978-0-95468-095-4
- 'Gesture in Byzantium', for M Braddick, ed., *The politics of gesture: historical perspectives* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 36-56.

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