

Preface

The Priority Program (SPP) 1630 »Harbours from the Roman Period to the Middle Ages« of the German Research Foundation (DFG) started in 2012. Ports and landing places were central »bottlenecks« in trade and traffic, through which people and goods transported by ship had to pass to reach their destinations. Therefore, within the SPP 1630 various individual projects on the North Atlantic, on the North and Baltic Seas, inland rivers and canals, and on the Mediterranean were designed to explore and analyse the different developments in the construction and organisation of harbours.

One of these projects, »Harbours and landing places on the Balkan coasts of the Byzantine Empire (4th to 12th centuries)«, was based at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz and closely linked to the Leibniz Science Campus »Byzantium between Orient and Occident«, run by the RGZM and the Gutenberg University Mainz. Of fundamental importance for the project was the collaboration with the Department for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Vienna and the Division of Byzantine Research at the Institute for Medieval Research of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. Prof. Ewald Kislinger (University of Vienna) and Prof. Andreas Külzer (Austrian Academy of Sciences) are to be thanked for their essential contributions to the joint project. The systematic surveys for the project were undertaken by Dominik Heher, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller and Grigori Simeonov, joined in the second project phase by Alkiviadis Ginalis.

The conference »Seasides of Byzantium. Harbours and Anchorages of a Mediterranean Empire«, from which the papers collected in the present volume emerged, was one among many cooperations which the collaborators for the project »Harbours and landing places on the Balkan coasts of the Byzantine Empire (4th to 12th centuries)« were lucky to establish. Without the support and goodwill of many colleagues in Croatia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Romania, it would have been impossible to achieve the aims of the project, which identified more than 600 anchorages for the period between 300 and 1200 AD and produced an impressive number of publications (see the list at the end of the present volume).

Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, one of the editors of the present volume, was able to spend several months at the National Hellenic Research Foundation in Athens in 2014 due to generous support of the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation and on invitation of the then director of the Institute for Historical Research, Prof. Taxiarchis G. Koliass. He profited enormously from the expertise and friendship of the scholars of the Institute's section on the »Historical Geography of the Helladic Region« under the directorship of Anna Lambropoulou. She together with Prof. Koliass and Ilias Anagnostakis, Maria Leontsini, Anastasia Yangaki, Eleonora Kountoura Galaki and especially Angeliki Panopoulou also cooperated with the Mainz-Vienna team for the preparation and organisation of the 2017 Seasides-conference.

The conference »Seasides of Byzantium. Harbours and Anchorages of a Mediterranean Empire«, which took place in Athens from 29 May to 1 June 2017, became a highlight of the entire research project and also a visible sign of the bond between our research venues in Mainz and Vienna and the Institute of Historical Research of the National Hellenic Research Foundation. My warmest thanks go to Prof. Taxiarchis G. Koliass for the opportunity to hold the meeting at his institute and to Johannes Preiser-Kapeller for organising the conference and carefully editing the present volume. I am also grateful to Claudia Nickel and Stefan Albrecht for their steady and competent guidance in the process of the book production.

The great success of the conference, which found its wonderful conclusion in an excursion to several archaeological sites around Corinth, and the publication of the present volume would not have been possible without the teamwork of so many scholars across disciplinary and national borders. This may also serve as testimonial for the even larger necessity of such cooperations in the scholarship of Byzantium's maritime history once the end of the current pandemic allows for international travel and encounters again.

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Prof. Falko Daim
Project leader of »Harbours and
landing places on the Balkan
coasts of the Byzantine Empire«*