

# Sean Strong, BA, MA (Oxon)

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## Summary

A current PhD student at Cardiff University researching within the Late Antique and Byzantine world. My PhD project focusses on the reign of Maurice (582-602) with a further interest in the ideology of identity and the perception of rulership in Eastern Europe and the Near East. My research interests vary throughout the Late Antique and Byzantine world, spanning across military, political, and social history.

## Education

- 2019 - 2022      **PhD in Ancient History**, Cardiff University  
Supervised by Professor Shaun Tougher and Dr Eve MacDonald  
**Thesis Title:** Theophylact Simocatta: A Comparative Study in Eastern Leadership during Late Antiquity
- 2017 - 2018      **Mst in Medieval History**, University of Oxford  
Supervised by Professor James Howard-Johnston  
**Thesis Title:** Triumph and Treachery: A Comparative Study of Usurpation in the Late-Eleventh Century Byzantium - The 'Saviour', the 'Tragic Insurgent' and, the 'Wolf in Waiting'
- 2014 - 2017      **BA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History (First Class)**, University of Wales, Lampeter  
Supervised by Dr Harriett Webster  
**Dissertation Title:** The Role of Emperor Justinian in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire

## Research Interests

- Late Roman and Byzantine History (4<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD)
- Imperial Identities and Image
- Byzantine Usurpation
- Byzantium's Neighbours (Sasanian Persians, Avars, Khazars, and Pechenegs)
- Warfare, Frontiers, and their Landscapes

## Public Speaking

### CONFERENCES

- Forthcoming: University of Exeter – *Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient History* (Autumn 2020)
  - **Paper Title:** Panegyric and the Perception of Rulership in Early Byzantium
- University of Bristol – *Follow the Leader: Medieval Leaders and Leadership* (January 2020)
  - **Paper Title:** Rulership in Early Byzantium: The Inauguration Speech of Emperor Maurice
- Sapienza: Università di Roma - *Apprendistato dello Storico: Dialettiche del Potere- rivendicazione, usurpazione, giustificazione* (May 2019)
  - **Paper Title:** Nikephoros III Botaneiates and Nikephoros Bryennios: The Means and Ends to Usurp an Imperial Throne and the Precedent it set for Alexios I Komnenos in 1081 AD
- St Anne's College, Oxford – *'Lampeter Legacies'*, (November 2018) – Event in Honour of Professor Janet Burton
  - **Paper Title:** ὁ διπλωματία των Βυζαντινών: Religious Missionaries and their Role along the Northern Frontier (8th Century – 12th Century AD)
- Lancaster University - *HistFest* (June 2018)
  - **Paper Title:** Realism in Late Roman Warfare: A Military Arms Race between Rome and Sassanid Persia (The Concept of Development Over Time between the 4th and 6th Century AD)

- UWTSO Lampeter - *Undergraduate Humanities Conference* (May 2017)
  - **Paper Title:** The Role of Emperor Justinian in the Decline of the Byzantine Empire

## PRESENTATIONS

- The Sustainability of the Roman Empire's Eastern Frontier: The Client State of Armenia, From Crassus to 100 AD.
- How Important were Cavalry Divisions in the Conflicts of Belisarios in the East?
- Defence on the Eastern Frontier: The Importance of Fortresses, Rather than Armies, in the Defence of the Eastern Provinces
- Byzantium and Persia in Late Antiquity: Diplomacy of Ancient Enemies

## Publications

### Academic:

Strong, S, 'Reconstructing the Narrative: The Usurpation of Nikephoros Bryennios the Elder', in *SHARE (Studies in History, Archaeology, Religion and Conservation* 4.1 (2020), 1-27.

### Popular:

Strong, S, 'The Sword that Became Blunt: The Usurpation of Nikephoros Bryennios', in P. Konieczny (ed.). *Medieval Warfare Magazine*, 10, 2 (2020), 34-7.

## Extra-Curricular Courses

- Summer 2019: International Byzantine Summer School, Trinity College Dublin (Grade – 2:1)
- Oct-Dec 2018: Byzantium and its Neighbours, University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education
- The Great Courses (Audited): World of Byzantium, The Early Middle Ages, Alexander the Great, Rome and the Barbarians, The Persian Empire, Late Antiquity: Crisis and Transformation, The Barbarian Empires of the Steppes, The Era of the Crusades, and Emperors of Rome.

## Podcasts

- Guest Speaker: (March 2019) Antiquity in Question – Episode Six: The Byzantine Empire and Sassanid Persia – Were they Natural Rivals? (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVDOye0NUCE&t=1475s>)

## Languages

- English (Native Language)
- Byzantine Greek (Translation proficiency)
- German (Beginner)

## Professional Memberships

- Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies (SPBS).
- The British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS).
- Oxford University Byzantine Society (OUBS).

## Awards and Funding

- The Keith Hopwood Prize – Presented by Medwin Hughes at UWTSO Graduation 2017.
  - Awarded for the hard work and dedication as a student representative.
- UWTSO Lampeter Society of the Year Award – Musical Theatre (May 2017)
- Educational Grant UWTSO, Lampeter (Twice Awarded: 2015-16, 2016-17)
- Departmental Grant – UWTSO, Lampeter (2016-17)

## Academic Administrative Experience

- May 2020 – Present: **Committee Member of the South West and Wales Late Antique, Early Medieval, and Byzantine Network**

### Responsibilities

- Help organise activities and events throughout the academic year.
- Promote the network on social media.
- Communicate with fellow committee members, students from other institutions, and academics.
- Be a point of contact for inquiries regarding the network's events.

- April 2020 – Present: **IMC Leeds Panel Co-Organiser** (June 2021: Climate – Byzantium and Sasanian Persia)

### Responsibilities

- Organise the panel: abstract selection, panel sponsorship, proceeding publication of panel findings.
- Promote the panel on social media.
- Communicate with fellow co-organiser, IMC committee, and panel speakers.
- Be a point of contact for inquiries regarding the panel and all related activities.

- November 2017 – February 2018: **Member of the Organising Committee for the Annual International Byzantine Conference** – Oxford University Byzantine Society

### Responsibilities

- Selecting the successful conference abstracts.
- Help with the on-day activities, for the event to run smoothly and successfully.
- Be a point of reference for my specific college for accommodation.

- September 2015- July 2017: **Course Representative for the BA in Ancient and Medieval History** – UWTSO Lampeter

### Responsibilities

- Be an ambassador for the Ancient and Medieval course.
- Listening to the student voices on the Ancient and Medieval course.
- Give student feedback to the staff and university officials through committee meetings.
- To be approachable for any who wished to speak to me regarding the course or staff.
- Be an active student within the university, alongside extra-curricular activities for the course.