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Editorial

In this issue, our contributors provide you with discussions on a variety of perspectives on the Byzantine, Ottoman, and Modern Greek Studies.

Francisco Lopez-Santos Kornberger, reviewing *Striking Images, Iconoclasms Past and Present*, points out the relevance of Iconoclasm to histories of various periods and locations both in and beyond Byzantium. Joseph Parsonage evaluates *The Byzantine World*, and concludes that it is a concise yet comprehensive book for anyone with various levels of interest in Byzantium. Discussing ‘authorship’ in the Byzantine literature, Michael Strain finds *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Functions, and Identities* conducive to understanding a variety of perspectives on this intriguing phenomenon in a wider context. Georgia Tsatsani discusses the presence of the past in the present, reviewing *Re-imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, and points out its relevance for today’s discussion of current issues about Greece. Tomoo Uegaki reviews *ビザンツ 交流と共生の千年帝国* [*Byzantium: The Millennial Empire of Interactions and Coexistences*], pointing out how the scholars in Japan approach the Byzantine Studies. This review is also a good glance into the current stage of research in Japan in Byzantine Studies. Like Zhang finds *普羅科比的世界 — 六世紀的拜占庭帝國* [*Procopius’ world — Byzantine history during the 6th century*] helpful in disseminating knowledge about Byzantium in the sixth century among general readers in China.

In addition to the book reviews, Üzeyir Serdar Serdaroğlu describes, in a short contribution, his experiences at the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) Annual Meeting, and how it helped researchers like him in the Ottoman Studies.

Finally, the general editor would like to express gratitude for the expert assistance of the following editors: Yannis Stamos and Jeffrey Brubaker, without whom this issue would not have been produced.

Wei-sheng Lin
General Editor
Review


Iconoclasm has been generally avoided in art and cultural studies, and it’s often regarded from a negative point of view as ‘the destruction of images’. Except for particular cases such as the Byzantine studies on iconoclasm are quite recent. Dario Gamboni’s book *The destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution*¹ is considered one of the pioneers, together with conference publications such as *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm* (2005) or *Iconoclasm: Contested, Objects, Contested Terms* (2007)². However, the images and their power constitute one of the main topics for a better understanding of human societies and recent events demonstrate this, particularly in the killings in the French satirical weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo. This is one reason why this book, one of the most complete works on iconoclasm, is both so uncommon and relevant.

*Striking images* is especially remarkable because of the different geographical origins of their seventeen authors (coming from the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and the United States). Furthermore, their diverse fields of work are always related somewhat with iconoclasm but from different historical periods and disciplines. As is mentioned in the introduction, this book’s path is ‘beginning with an ancient sacred landscape and ending inside a museum conservation lab’³. The origin of this common project about iconoclasm, developed by a large group of researchers, is referred to both in the introduction and in the conclusions. From the bibliographical and conferences background to the Arts and Humanities Research Council project called ‘Iconoclasm Network’, a better understanding of the state of the issue and the motivations and methodologies of the research are presented.

The aim of this work is contributing to expanding studies in iconoclasm, being achieved from different approaches and from questioning the definition of ‘iconoclasm’ itself. Departing from a basic definition as ‘the act of consciously breaking images’, this work is systematically questioning and widening that meaning. Iconoclasm is thus studied in less known contexts as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment or the art collections in museums. In these contexts, the value and meaning of objects of study are revised, as well as their formal and contextual continuity. Iconoclasm discourse is thus applied to new kinds of objects and the term itself is used to define a conscious change in the object, altering its symbolic meaning but not necessarily destroying it. Iconoclasm is also interpreted as a power struggle. In that sense, Leslie Brubaker looks back to the Byzantine designation of the modern-named ‘iconoclasm’, which was ‘iconomachia’ (‘image struggle’), demonstrating that the term ‘iconoclast’ comes from modern times. There’s also a clear difference between the two concepts, being ‘iconomachy’ far less violent than ‘iconoclasm’.

The book is divided into thirteen chapters, ordered chronologically from chapters covering prehistoric iconoclasm to contemporary debates. The reader can thus examine situations from very distant cultures before facing actual debates, which might appeal more intensely to a personal subjective opinion.

After the introduction, Leslie Brubaker begins with a chapter dedicated to the Byzantine ‘iconomachia’. She depicts the new role of icons in the 7th century, and attempts to revise some topics framed by historians and Byzantinists about the conflict in the 8th and 9th centuries, primarily derived from the iconodules’ accounts. Henry Chapman and Benjamin Gearey move towards prehistoric times, firstly to underline the difficulties in detecting intentionality in the breaking of objects, but then pointing at two examples (deliberately broken swords and sacred forests) of iconoclasm in that age. Fabio Rambelli and Eric Reinders bring one Japanese case, a Buddha statue made in the seventh century but whose history will be developed until modern times, in order to consider cultural redefinition from the subsequent stages through which that image lived through. Megan E. O’Neil instead presents a case from the Classic Maya period, pointing out the reutilization and the maintenance

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services in images that had been defaced for reflecting the same travel of an image through various stages which don’t necessarily end in the iconoclast action.

Moving on to societies closer to the modern times, Anna M. Kim demystifies the Renaissance as a non-iconoclastic period, underlining the use of an ‘iconoclastic myth’ (in the sense of reminding the Catholic Church of the ancient destruction of pagan idols) as to dissuade new destructive attempts. A new, positive and ‘prophylactic’ sense is thus given to iconoclasm. Lauren Dudley moves to British early modern period and to ruins as a field requiring studies through the depiction of a ruinous landscape in the painting *Allegorical Tomb of Lord Somers*. This work of art is examined, bearing iconoclasm studies in mind, in its context of religious wars, the Glorious Revolution and the Enlightenment, finally giving to that broken architecture a new interpretation. Richard Clay’s chapter studies Saint Geneviève’s relics, the patron of the city of Paris, in the context of the French Revolution, observing how the meaning of the images surrounding the saint changed with political objectives, more than keeping a monolithic ideological message during the events. James Simpson’s essay on the Enlightenment Museum revises the role and precepts of these institutions to point at their role in ‘iconoclasm’s larger plot line’, showing that the Enlightenment attitude is both a result of an iconoclastic past (that of the wars of religion in Europe) and an iconoclasm movement itself, which is manifested in the iconoclast role of the museum institutions and in the running of the art market.

The last chapters are placed in contemporary situations and debates about iconoclasm. James Noyes’ reflections on 20th-century iconoclasm link concepts such as ‘total war’ or ‘totalitarian state’ with ‘total iconoclasm’ or ‘industrialized iconoclasm’, given the new massive industrial construction and destruction. Jamal J. Elias’ work on the 2001 Taliban attack over the Afghanistan Buddhas tries to contextualize that event by replacing simplistic explanations with a wider context of Islamic interpretations of religion and the local and global geopolitical strategies of the Taliban. Simon Baker focuses on examining the art works of contemporary artists, Jake and Dinos Chapman, who innovated Goya’s art pieces with modern additions, thus giving the chance to talk about collaborative art works and the resignification process of images. Simon Cane and Jonathan Ashley-Smith end the volume with an in-depth consideration of the role of conservation of art works, its critics and the consideration of preservation as an iconoclast act.
Striking Images represents a varied but usefully homogenous collection of works and reflections on a common topic: iconoclasm. From a wide variety of works, the common point of re-thinking definitions and limits for the concept “iconoclast” makes this work appear quite uniform at the end. Step by step, iconoclasm is claimed as something more than the mere action of physically destroying images, and some chapters have provided some controversial episodes not always defined as ‘iconoclasts’. However, because of that wide expansion of the concept of ‘iconoclasm’ in this work, it should be necessary to redefine the concept of ‘iconoclasm’ from the opposite point: what is not ‘iconoclasm’? Is it possible to come up with a classification of the different kinds of iconoclasm? New contexts can also be studied with the tools provided, but these suggestions may be addressed in other future publications: the ambitious goals of this book have been covered, based on a not much studied topic – iconoclasm – in a huge and diverse collaborative work which has set new goals and aids for future researchers.

Francisco Lopez-Santos Kornberger
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Review


This book serves as a general overview of some of the latest thinking in Byzantine Studies, containing contributions from around thirty current scholars of varying specialities in Byzantium, alongside Paul Stephenson himself, by whom the introduction to each section is penned, along with three of the thirty-five chapters.

The overall tone of *The Byzantine World* is one of comprehensiveness and freshness, aiming to throw the dust off some of the more neglected areas of the discipline whilst drawing attention to a number of recent scholarly discoveries, coupled with an emphasis on exploring and underlining Byzantium’s relevance to the modern age. Particularly Stephenson’s final words on the matter are intended to draw the reader’s attention to just that; the fact that this traditionally maligned and often misunderstood civilisation could serve as something of a ‘common heritage for a unified Europe’ ¹, especially considering the more recent inclusion of eastern Mediterranean nations into the EU.

Whether treated as a whole or else mined for specific chapters or sections, this text is intended for broad consumption by both specialists and non-specialists in the field of Byzantine Studies, and potentially others as well. Stephenson himself humorously notes:

Our target audience – for one must both have and specify such a thing to those creating a marketing strategy – is diverse, messy indeed, for it embraces advanced undergraduates, postgraduate and postdoctoral scholars in all fields of Byzantine and medieval studies, Barnes and Noble browsers and Amazon searchers, Wikipedians seeking more authoritative updates (or sources of information to plagiarize for their

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Clearly then, he is aiming for some of the most general readership available, alongside students of more specific academic interests. One might say that the only thing that marks this work above the casual popular histories is that it does not need to tempt readers with the same old stories from the narrative histories; instead it asks whether the audience desires more information, and provides this by offering a glimpse into some of the most recent work available.

In structure, the book is divided into four broad sections, each with six to ten chapters in a specific category. Part one, ‘The Byzantines in their World’ tackles a handful of specific historical issues, such as John Haldon’s chapter on Byzantine military logistics, one chapter on coins and the economy from Cécile Morrison, two on methodological problems in relation to the study of gender and family, one by Leonora Neville and another by Anthony Kaldellis, and a chapter by Günter Prinzing on an often neglected group, the slaves of Byzantium, to name just a few examples. Some of these contributors give the impression of just how little knowledge is available to us in some aspects of Byzantine history. The chapter on slavery by Günter Prinzing, and the one by Anthony Kaldellis on ‘The Study of Women and Children’, illustrate how wide a void there remains in this area, with particular focus on the complex methodological issues involved. Kaldellis, for instance, after proposing the point that a comprehensive study of Byzantine women and children has not yet been attempted, outlines the many literary and critical problems that such any such endeavour would have to address and overcome, and concludes that any approach to this area would have to be philological, and recommends that an overhaul of the history of Byzantine literature be made.

Section two, ‘The Written World’, looks at Byzantium through the scope of literature and writing, and features work by Catherine Holmes, Stratis Papaioannou, and Alice-Mary Talbot, to name just a few. Section three is on ‘Byzantine Art and Architecture’, which has a contribution from Bissera V. Pentcheva, in which she re-examines the varying types, uses and changing-nature of icons in Byzantine history, while Henry Maguire makes a study into secular and non-Orthodox visual culture.

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Nikolas Bakirtzis shows that very little work has been done specifically on empire-wide fortification, and aims to redress that balance as well as to give a sample of the work so far. This chapter pays particular attention to the walls of Thessaloniki, ignoring the obvious case-study of Constantinople, and attempts to answer questions on how the citizens of the city themselves would have interacted on a day-to-day basis with this grand defensive structure. The last section, ‘The World of Byzantine Studies’, is shorter in comparison with the others and addresses the historiography of this subject, examining some of the most well-known scholarly contributions made in past few centuries, whilst also looking into recent trends in the discipline.

The numerous chapters are varied and wide-ranging, but it does feel as if each contributor is limited to providing little more than a sample of the information currently available; but then, Stephenson outlines this as his intention. “In some cases”, he writes, “the principle findings are summarized...... In each case the author was asked also to present a brief overview of the ‘state of research.’” Each chapter is something almost like a journal article, but which has been edited with a non-specialist in mind.

Particularly, J. M. Featherstone’s chapter on ‘De Cerimoniis and the Great Palace’ is both eye-opening and informative, boiling down the complex and labyrinthine subject of 10th century court ceremonials and the structure of the Great Palace complex to make it clear and accessible to a non-specialist in this area. He focuses his chapter around the Chrysotriklinos, the octagonal Imperial throne-room, placing it as the hub of all activity in the Great Palace and offers a rough floor-plan of the hall, to provide a clear and presentable context as he describes the processions which took place there. Featherstone places particular emphasis on the dilapidated nature of much of the palace, and of its constantly changing character over the course of the Byzantine period – a fact which the Book of Ceremonies has to some extent obscured, presenting a mere snapshot of the Great Palace at one moment in time. Altogether this is a good introduction to this one subject, and will provide the reader with a good gateway through which to comprehend Featherstone’s work as well as the wider scholarly discourse on the subject of the Book of Ceremonies and the Great Palace.

As a second good example, Diether roderich Reinsch’s chapter on ‘The History of Editing Byzantine Historiographical Texts’ is filled with a good collection of background information on the history of Byzantine history – offering both a clear overview of the evolution of the corpus of Byzantine primary material, while also stressing the shortfalls and inadequacy of each attempt to make this material available to the wider scholarly community. He rounds off his chapter with a short critique of the Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae (CFHB), offering a set of very specific editorial suggestions on the preparation of these materials, aimed clearly for the people who are currently, or may eventually, prepare these texts.

In conclusion, The Byzantine World is a concise and varied work dealing with recent historiography in a number of diverse fields. It presents itself as a general aid to a wide range of interested parties, but seems mainly to want to bring everybody and anybody up to speed on the most up-to-date works in Byzantine studies. Each contributor brings their own views and personality to the table, which makes this book more than a mere general history of Byzantium – instead it makes the reader aware of a good selection of the overarching developments in the discipline. Some of this material is undoubtedly old rope to many specialists, but the sheer comprehensiveness of this book will mean that there is something fresh to read, something new to discover, while for a student of the discipline this is an invaluable aid for expanding one’s horizons.

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Review


Literary criticism in recent times has tended to historicise the ‘author’ of literary works by expanding the ground of interpretation to include the work’s formative conditions of composition. No longer an isolated ‘self’, the autonomous writer is now widely understood to inscribe in the text traces and influences of society at large. Like Rimbaud,¹ the author is a situated self and the literary work rooted in the author’s historical situation. These coordinates of literary production, author, self, and the historical and social conditions of formation differentiate and illuminate the essays collected here by Aglae Pizzone, in her presentation of recent critical work on authorship in Middle Byzantine literature. Her aim is to focus on ‘the textual dimension and the transindividual subject’,² dispersing and relocating the authorial subject in a contextualised, historically grounded, and performative rôle.

All her contributors draw fruitfully on a contemporary paradox in Byzantine studies, in which the foregrounding of the reader has reinvigorated scholarly interest in ‘the individuals behind the discourses’, ‘reflexive relations between self-presentation and self-disclosure’, the ‘historian in the History’, and the epigrammatist and anthologist in the text. Such interpretative issues are both more complex and more elusive than those implied in the editor’s introductory references to *Ego-trouble* and biographism. These essays contribute to the establishment of new interpretative perspectives. They dwell less on ‘death of the author’ debates, but examine and illuminate a range of 9th-12th century Byzantine texts, their focus on each author’s intentions and relations ³ to contemporary life and times, understood as ‘an

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undetermined, productive instance that is simultaneously dependent on a social and cultural structure. The collection is organised in three sections:

(1) Modes - addressing how a literary product is shaped and presented, in time, space and productive context, through authorial choices and solutions in respect of genre, style, format and execution, oriented to an intended audience or reader;

(2) Functions - explaining how a literary object’s defining structure and active components construct a mask, or persona for the author, in order to exert particular effects on audience and readers, i.e. how the literary product ‘worked’ in its originating time, place and context; this dimension is subtly and convincingly demonstrated, for example, in the editor’s discussion of the variability of authorial strategies identifiable in Basilakes’ Prolog;

(3) Identities - exemplifying how such a fleshed-out ‘personification’ or identity of the ‘author’, as agent or producer of the literary work, is identifiable through the traceable lineaments of style, genre, and their execution, in a particular historical and social context. A similar analytical framework is explained and illustrated by Floris Bernard in terms of style, register and discursive field. A number of contributors show in their chosen texts how, more noticeably in the 12th century, authorial identity seems more purposefully to intrude into and find expression in an author’s stylistic and performative use of language.

The range and wealth of literary ‘illuminations’ provided here are considerable. Papaioannou’s definition of authorship as ‘a complex field of lives and personal sensibilities, social networks and traditions, dominant ideologies, disorderly practices, and ultimately, cultural possibilities and material limitations’ establishes an invaluable point of reference. He goes on to identify traditions of Byzantine rhetoric

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4 Tziovas, The Other Self, 7.
5 Pizzone, “Anonymity, Dispossession and Reappropriation in the Prolog of Nikēphoros Basilakēs,” 225-244.
and manuscript practice, whereby Middle Byzantine authors drew both evocatively and submissively upon canonical authorities (such as Gregory Nazianzenos, ο θεολόγος) buttressing their own authorial image by placing their work behind manuscript collections of works by earlier prestigious authors. In this way, authorial identity was reinforced through what Papaioannou argues was ‘an authoritatively powerful mixture of rhetoric and anonymity’. A fascinating later example is the 12th century satire Timarion, placed at the end of an MS collection of much earlier Lucianic works. Location within an MS, as well as artistic imitation, could contribute to the creation and preservation of an authorial persona and image. Papaioannou reconstructs a cumulative historical process of individual literary interventions and writing strategies, adopted by authors for particular homiletic or rhetorical purposes, appropriating and adapting stylistic conventions and characteristics to form what subsequent readers might recognise centuries later as literary ‘tradition’ - not an ‘author-less’ tradition, but one in which authorship was cultivated, eponymously and anonymously, as a ‘protean but determined exchange of mask, signature and voice’.

Support for readers in search of a code with which to unlock such protean indeterminacy of authorial intention may be found in Marc Lauxtermann’s contribution. There we are shown how “appropriation and internalization of pre-existing texts, can equal authorship”, in two penitential (catanyctic) prayers in the Harvard Psalter, thus illustrating how “genre is really the key to understanding” devotional poetry. The same work could be a devotional prayer in one collection and an object of study in another. From these two examples Lauxtermann demonstrates authoritatively how Gregory the Monk is both the author, and ‘not the author’ of the same work. Gregory’s authorship of similar poems led to patrons and scholars subsequently to anthologise works that ‘encapsulate’ his spiritual wisdom. Thus, the poems are both “Gregory’s, even if they are not Gregory’s”!

Floris Bernard reveals a distinctive approach when he asserts: “I will

9 Anonymity was necessary also for the author of Timarion to protect the satirical writer in the Komnenian court climate, prone to monitoring the ever-widening repertoire of literary genres for their intellectual and religious orthodoxy.
11 Marc D. Lauxtermann, “His, and Not His: The Poems of the Late Gregory the Monk,” in The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature: Modes, Structures, and Identities, ed. Aglae Pizzone (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 77-86.
12 Lauxtermann, “His, and Not His,” 84.
investigate authorship as a social act, seeing how this act was ridden with moral tensions that authors attempted to resolve.\textsuperscript{14} Authorship, including author style and register (in the case of Mauropous, for example), was negotiated in a discursive ‘field’, here defined as a group of people bound together by the same activity (writing). In his lucidly framed critical manifesto, Bernard reveals his intellectual roots in the work of the Frankfurt School, positing the study and analysis of language in use as ‘inherently part of and influenced by social structure, and produced in social interaction’.\textsuperscript{15} For Bernard, statements in writing are always made ‘in opposition to others’,\textsuperscript{16} a position from which their writing adopts an ethical ‘position’ supporting the ‘interests’ being advanced by the author,\textsuperscript{17} his \textit{captatio benevolentiae}.\textsuperscript{18} The topos of modesty, if successfully treated, strengthens an author’s claim on the reader that he has succeeded in achieving the higher purpose of \textit{офелевия}.\textsuperscript{19} Thematic development of how eloquence can be effective as an ethical device assumed different forms according to an author’s prevailing context of performance or publication. Personal self-representation by an author was contrary to the Christian ideal of humility, so that, for Gregory of Nazianzenos, silence was ‘enshrined as one of the essential Christian virtues’. But for Kekaumenos,\textsuperscript{20} providing a wide range of advice for would-be military leaders, at a time when the eastern borders of the empire were widely understood to be threatened, the author disclaims any pretensions to polished prose, and presents himself as ‘\textit{αὐτομανίστω... λόγου}’, to ensure that what he has to say will be understood as important practical advice for soldiers and their generals, not a testimony of personal eloquence and sophistication. Bernard presents two case studies of contrasts and uniformities in the styles in use by Psellos, whose forensic ‘interests’ were understandably plain to see, and Mauropous, whose clerical status compellingly required the support of an image of ethical and stylistic uniformity. Byzantine texts,
he concludes, “contain a kind of polyphony about authorship that precludes sweeping generalisations and requires a careful analysis of the sociological context in which the author was working, and the corresponding ‘ethos’ that he or she wished to transmit through his or her texts”.

Acknowledging at the outset that “dealing with questions of authorship in Byzantine chronicles may seem a paradoxical thing to do”, Tocci takes on the challenge in Psellos’ *Historia Syntomos,* a brief chronicle, or history, from the birth of Romulus, founder of Rome, composed as a set of examples for the intellectual guidance of Michael VII Doukas in his imperial role. Chronicles were different form historiographical texts and were written more explicitly with an ideological purpose in view. Initially, this derived from ‘the necessity for an accurate chronology of the whole of human history’. Over time, this mission became modified to one of representing the ‘Byzantine world-view’; for this more sophisticated objective, Psellos used *apothegmata* to highlight and effect the didactic purpose of his text. Tocci shows, through three examples, how this revised purpose fulfilled a function similar to the traditional *prooimion,* providing the production context into which Psellos intrudes at times, didactically and authorially, and at other times absents himself, as required, from the chronicler’s generic condition of anonymity.

Ida Toth, marks out grounds for appreciating the virtues of multiple authorship. She looks for evidence of authorship ‘from within’, thus removing her authors from inspection under ‘the prism of contemporary literary criticism’. The Syntipas story, we are told, ‘defies precise contextualisation’, by which is meant determination of author, origins, and the work’s subsequent transmission, but the circumstances by which the story reached Byzantine audiences in the eleventh century is reconstructed from evidence found in a book epigram in a 14th century manuscript. The work’s multiple authorial processes are shown to ‘involve different degrees of authority, autonomy and creativity’. The plot reveals a ‘frame-story’, exemplifying

Michael Strain

Review

aspects of a transmission process through which this work emerged alongside other Eastern novels during the Middle Byzantine period. Toth explains the origins of this work in layers of varied ‘meta-authorial’ engagements with the ‘story’, a form of ‘distributive and disguised authorship’ in the course of which features of various genres emerge almost by accident as by-products of a cumulative, multi-authored process.

In Part II, where functional issues may be expected to be more prominent, Derek Krueger explains25 how the first person voice of the author is fashioned to facilitate the singer’s subjectivising enactment of the rôle of Lenten penitent. Differences in treatments of the same parable by different canonists evoke different ‘authorial’ purposes and dramatic emphases, seen to be shaping the two works. Where, for example, Romanos the Melodist, in the sixth century, focuses on the Father’s bountiful forgiveness in laying on a banquet for the prodigal, it is the liturgy’s homiletic function that is prominent, dramatising the moral value of forgiveness available to all who repent. In the version of the 8th-century hymnographer Andrew of Crete, the functional focus of the poem is more prominently the transformative power of penitence than the gracious bounty of God’s forgiveness. In Romanos’ more biblically accurate version, the Son’s exclamation of repentance follows an effusion of forgiveness by the Father; in the later, fully Christianised orientation, the merciful bounty of the Father serves as a type for God’s mercy. The penitent in Andrew’s treatment relies on faith, ‘knowing [God’s] compassion’, enabling him to approach the Saviour and present his plea for forgiveness.

The 9th century was a time of restored ecclesiastical confidence after the iconodule triumph of orthodoxy in 843, and the 10th century saw increased influence exercised by socially conservative provincial, military families. Relations between poets and this new aristocracy, and their impact on literary production (since poets ‘on the whole preferred contemporary subjects’26), are examined by Luisa Andriollo.27 The poems of John Geometres, in which ‘historical reality’ is established at the outset

as the object of a critical reader’s pursuit, remain the only source of reliable
information about his life. Next in focus is his encomiastic portrayal of the virtues of
the new class and the court milieu, in which possibilities of ‘self-assertiveness’
detectable in John’s poems afford sharp shafts of illumination upon the courtly world
of Basil II, finely unpicked and lucidly presented. But instead of exposing the deeper,
structural considerations of the poems’ social and personal conditions of production,
focus is on their ‘historical content’, such as the ‘glossing over’ of John I Tzimiskes’
rôle in the murder of Nikephoros Phokas, where the poet, as aristocratic client, has
suppressed the details for reasons of personal security.

Foteini Spingou writes of anonymous poets, writing between 1040 and 1200,
whose works are included in the Anthologia Marciana, an anthology of long and short
poems from the 11th and 12th centuries that includes works by Theodore Prodromos
and Michael Psellos. Here works are presented anonymously so as to forefront the
donor’s and commissioner’s rôle at the expense of the author’s. In this society, the
donor was the arbiter and shaper of the final product; the ‘author’ might have been a
relatively impoverished but well educated ‘friend’; the scribe or anthologist may well
have enjoyed an even less privileged position. For, as we are reminded in the
subsequent discussion of collection and authorship: “The scribe/anthologist lived in a
society with many intellectuals and few positions for them...... The anthologist was
very aware of the importance of the donor...... The poet can simply remain
anonymous”. Ulrike Kenens examines the less glamorous literary production of scholiasts,
inviting readers to consider whether we should view the scholiast as drudge, transmitter or exegete. In her reassessment of possible relations between scholiast and inherited text, she examines the work of three authors from the 5th to 12th centuries: the anonymous author of the 2nd-century Platonic scholia vetera, the anonymous interpolator and editor of a 2nd-century collection of Greek proverbs by Zenobius, and Tzetzes’ commentary on Lykophron’s Alexandra, an abstruse poetic

28 Andriollo, “Aristocracy and Literary Production in the 10th Century,” 120.
30 Andriollo, “Aristocracy and Literary Production in the 10th Century,” 123.
version of Cassandra’s Trojan prophecy in 1,474-iambic trimeters. In her ‘close
reading’ of these ‘sub-literary’ writings, Kenens examines the content and
interpretations offered in the texts, comparing their methods of choosing excerpts and
introducing new interpretations with those of their predecessors in that rôle. These
critical comparisons are used to provide us with a glimpse of each author’s chosen
‘authorial’ purposes, undertaken for educational or instructional purposes, and of their
creativity as reader and commentator, compared with predecessors working in
functionally different, intellectual, social and ideological settings. The interpretive
task undertaken here by Kenens relies on critical appraisal of the content of the
chosen texts and comparison of their scholiastic performances. She shows how each
author reveals unique attitudes towards their authorial task, related to widely different
dcontextual factors, that contributed silently to their writing and unconsciously
influenced each author’s choice of scholarly focus and editorial selections and
emphases.

In the longest essay of the collection, Margaret Mullett proclaims a rebirth of
the author in contemporary literary studies, stating emphatically that the author is
‘again at center stage’, Barthes and Foucault having failed in their attempts at
inhumation. In support, she mentions the recently established journal, Authorship,
though without reference to its wide-ranging mission to explore “current
developments in authorship studies and…… theoretical and historical understandings
of the complex ideological, technological and social processes that transform ‘writers’
into ‘authors’”. By contrast, Mullett sees authorship as concerned with the product
of an ‘author in the text’, autonomous creator of work that, as in her examples, may

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34 Mullett, “In Search of the Monastic Author,” 171.
36 In the journal’s opening issue in 2011, the editors staked out their discursive territory as follows: “The Romantic concept of the solitary genius (if indeed such an entity ever existed) has for decades now been the subject of intense critical scrutiny and revision; as a result, what the general public might once have thought of as authorial agency is now submerged in an elaborate tissue of critical feedback, textual instability, editorial intervention, and accidents of publishing, branding, and spin. And yet the Author persists, as a nomenclature, as a catalogue entry, as a biographical entity, as a popular icon, and as an assumed agent of creativity and innovation. In analyzing cultural formations of ‘authoriality’ as they developed historically, over a long period of time and in a variety of geographical locations, in relation to cultural networks and social change, to transformations of the media, as well as to changing perceptions of gender and personhood, Authorship hopes to foster a more refined and precise theoretical and historical understanding of the complex ideological, technological and social processes that transform a writer into an author”. Gert Buelens, et al., “Introduction: Authorship,” Authorship 1, no. 1 (2011): 1.
contribute to our understanding of the literary culture of the ‘long 12th century’. She examines three monastic texts: a biography (‘The Life of Cyril Phileotes’), a complex set of nested narratives and letters, and a *typikon*, combination of will, biography and monastic injunctions to be observed by successors. Claims regarding the authors’ rôle and literary purposes are derived from historical *realia* - textual content and references taking precedence over considerations of style, register, language and authorial purpose. The concluding paragraph summarises claims demonstrating a new authorial self-awareness and self-confidence evidenced by an increased number of attributed rather than anonymous monastic works. The mode of writing in the chosen examples, we are told, shows ‘innovation’, and readiness to claim ‘authorship’ by name, though it is masked and at the same time reinforced by anonymity and self-effacement, as new ‘voices’ are heard and innovative rôles adopted in monastic communities that have discovered new motives and impetus to reinvent their function.  

Bourbouhakis, in Part III, starts by asking simply: “What can we learn about an author by reading his or her texts?” But the apparent straightforwardness of this approach is immediately belied in his next question: “How revealing of any author’s state of mind is any text, even when intended as such, given the deflecting screen of language?” Here the question of what can be meant by authorship in Byzantine texts is radically problematised, and in different ways. The authorial rôle, it is argued, is decentred by some recursive implications of Byzantine rhetorical practice, with its requirement for all accomplished writing to serve a higher end than can be encompassed by human motives and knowledge, and by the challenges inherent in being ‘intellectuals in a tough world’. The title of Michael Choniates’ discourse Πρὸς τοὺς αἰτιωμένους τὸ ὁρφελένδεικτον directs us explicitly to consider the interrelatedness of authorial function and rôle in Middle Byzantine elite society. Bourbouhakis parses the relation between ‘Identity and Intention’ as the proverbial distinction without sufficient difference. He claims that searching for ‘the author in

37 Mullett, “In Search of the Monastic Author,” 197-98.
39 ‘Translated by Bourbouhakis as ‘a reply to those who accuse him of spurning exhibition (ὡρφελένδεικτον)’.
the text’ in the world of letters is not much different from searching for the proverbial ‘needle in a haystack’. We know there is one, but their identity is no more significant for our understanding of the text than the discovery of the needle contributes to our understanding of the purposes of the haystack. He then shows how the author’s mask (prosopon/persona), assumed for literary purposes, is more important than individual identity, implying that for every writer the text is always to some degree ‘means to a social end’ - there need be no question of literature ‘for its own sake’. Only the continued influence of the Romantic movement’s preoccupation with ‘originality’, in all its Neo-Platonic essentialism, could induce us now to equate authorial identity with ‘authentic’ creativity. And is simulation not an equally worthwhile, creative goal? To try to locate an essence of authorial agency in the text involves what Bourbouhakis describes as a ‘house of mirrors’; better to accept the protean changeability of ‘performance’, the central goal and focus of much Byzantine composition, for which the ‘plasticity’ inherent in ἔποδειξις is perfectly suited. And the 12th century affords plentiful indication of audiences and readers accustomed to hearing authorial voices embody their subtle intentions, if not necessarily individual identities.

Self-presentation is prominent also in Aglae Pizzone’s essay, showing how the theological controversy that ultimately ruined the author is both present and absent in the work of Nikephoros Basliakes: absent in that explicit reference to doctrinal synods and their damning outcome is entirely missing, yet at the same time also present, implicitly, in the author’s adoption of anonymity, buttressed by extended use of hallowed biblical (Solomon in the Book of Ecclesiastes) and Hellenic (the philosophical dialogue) precedents, which reveal the author’s personal sense of vulnerability to reprisal for any perceived acts of literary or theological hubris. Prominent among such attainable infamies was any claim to be an auctor, a term whose implications of ‘authority’ were disclaimed by a writer no less prolific and highly placed than Anna Komnēnē. As Pizzone makes clear in her introduction, the ‘discourse of modesty’ and ‘poetics of anonymity’ functioned directly in support of such authorial strategies - to achieve honour humbly, for the sake of personal survival.

‘Authorial voice’ is also the subject of Leonora Neville’s paper on Anna

Komnēnē,⁴³ “the only female historian to write within the Greek historical tradition, before the modern era.”⁴⁴ Anna adopts in her writing a female version of the ‘Stranger’s Strategem’, presenting herself as ‘deeply humble’,⁴⁵ and her story as one of tragic woe, if not actually a ‘lament’. Alexiad, Thebaid, and Iliad - all connoted tragic, antecedent royal sagas, worthy subjects for lament. Audiences of 12th-century romance will have been familiar with such figurative equations of the hubristic ‘step too far’, in romantic, as in courtly, political settings. That “Ἔγω ταῦτα ὑν εἰδείην,” ἔφη, “τοσαύτας ὃβρεις ἔξ ἔρωτος παθὼν” (“So many, he said, have been the outrages I have suffered from love”), in the words used by Kleitophon, opens the framed account of a long romantic quest, in Achilles Tatius’ sophistic novel.⁴⁶ Yet Anna’s position as Byzantine author was quite unique in her time, surely, and one that Neville acknowledges to have been ‘particularly complex and difficult’.⁴⁷ The mask, or mode of lamentation, her form of self-presentation as a female mourner, leading her to ‘create a complex authorial persona and frame her history with a tale of woe’, though successful in her case, was extremely unusual then, and not readily accommodated in contemporary culture. Later readers should make allowances for her adoption of authorial constructions that were to a degree imposed by the social, religious and political circumstances of her time.

Alexander Riehle,⁴⁸ acknowledging his debt to Angeliki Laiou,⁴⁹ goes a little further in his exploration of relations between female identity and authorship in women’s writing, replacing Laiou’s ‘problematic’ and somewhat essentialist use of the word ‘mentality’ by the more functionally oriented ‘identity’. Women became prolific composers of liturgical poetry in the early 9th to late 12th centuries,⁵⁰ and Riehle reveals aspects of discursive relations in their work, showing how they used both the socially textured substance of their language and the narrative tenor and tone

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⁵⁰ Riehle, “Authorship and Gender (and) Identity,” 246.
in which their stories are enunciated, to create complex levels of identification and narration.\(^5^1\) Use of a third person, or heterodiegetic narrator, removes many of the explicitly gendered markings that would otherwise be found, and enables the female narrator to appear unheralded, yet vividly ‘present’, in the plain, participial \(\lambda\epsilon\gamma\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\) (‘saying’). This is just one example of what Riehle achieves in this essay, illustrating how, despite the ‘sinfulness’ and low status of womanhood in Byzantium, the gendered presentation of womanhood in women’s writing was ‘perennially negotiated’ through opportunities inherent in authorial conventions and practices of the time. His conclusion is widely pertinent to the topic and title of the collection as a whole: “Womanhood (like authorship)…… is not a stable category…… but is continuously constituted through discursive acts”.\(^5^2\)

Finally, in ‘A Perspective from the Far (Medieval) West on Byzantine Theories of Authorship’,\(^5^3\) Ian Johnson reviews the volume as a whole and looks beyond Byzantium to explore notable features of authorship at this time in both East and West. Scope for comparison is limited by the fact that much vernacular literature in the West, after 1200, consisted of translation. Yet the example of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* is ‘intriguing’, since Gower assumes in this vernacular work, by inclusion of marginal glosses, the *actoritas* normally accorded to works in Latin.\(^5^4\) Different versions of not dissimilar cultural and religious challenges confronted authors in both East and West. In both, ‘ostentatious deference to authority’ was a hallmark. Endorsing Papaioannou’s view that Byzantium had ‘no unified understanding of the word authorship’, or related terms such as ‘literature’ and ‘subjectivity’, Johnson draws some limited ‘comparisons and contrasts’ with aspects of agency raised in the body of the collection in relation to Byzantine authors. For one thing, we must be careful not to identify *actor* with the modern ‘author’, as implying autonomous literary agency.\(^5^5\) Examples of Byzantine ‘self-assertive self-autorising’ identified by Papaioannou (and Krueger) arose from unease around a suspicion of heresy inseparable from authorless hagiographical stories, which came to be rewritten

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\(^5^1\) Riehle, “Authorship and Gender (and) Identity,” 249.

\(^5^2\) Riehle, “Authorship and Gender (and) Identity,” 262.


\(^5^4\) Johnson, “A Perspective from the Far (Medieval) West on Byzantine Theories of Authorship,” 278.

\(^5^5\) In Johnson’s formulation: “social circumstances play a major rôle in shaping all instances of textual meaning and modes of authorship”. Johnson, “A Perspective from the Far (Medieval) West on Byzantine Theories of Authorship,” 277.
‘in the media of hymnography’. This feature of post-iconoclastic rhetoricising of an earlier hagiographical tradition should be read as conferring authority upon the text itself, rather than evoking a personal claim to ‘authorial’ identity. In a familiar Christian rendition, the Byzantine sacred author was expected to render unto God the things that are God’s ("Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ"); in secular writing, a work’s *auctoritas* often depended, as we have seen, on cultivated redeployment of classical, biblical and traditional motifs and *exempla* and, above all, on demonstration of modesty and capacity to win approval from political and clerical elites. Middle Byzantine writers became *auctores* by their admission to the educational syllabus and support of powerful groups in whom authority resided.

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Review


On the first floor of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, at the left side, there is a separate section with eight paintings, entitled ‘Imagining the Past’. These artworks by different artists of the nineteenth century depict myths and scenes, which mainly derive their themes from Greek and Roman antiquity, while there is also a painting inspired by the ancient Egyptian history. The most interesting one, regarding the Greek past is set in the middle. This is an oversize painting by Sir William Blake Richmond, created in 1884. What makes this painting special is its theme: the setting is an ancient theatre during the performance of the play Agamemnon, the first out of the three plays of the only surviving trilogy of the classical repertory the Oresteia (Agamemnon, Libation Bearers, and Eumenides) by Aeschylus, set in Athens (Acropolis in the background leaves no doubt). This is a memorable example, because a modern painter makes the audience of a tragic performance, men and women, his main subject. The originality therefore is that the audience of Aeschylus’ Agamemnon turns to the modern viewer en face. What does this particular audience really watch? Is it just a drama performance or more than that? In fact, could the modern world be considered as a stage for the past?

The volume Re-imagining the Past: Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture is a selection of papers from the conference held in 2011 by the University of Birmingham, where the ancient, medieval and modern Greece has always been studied within an interdisciplinary approach for almost a century now. The eighteen chapters of the book are structured in five parts and they are enriched by thirty-two illustrations which come to add to the context or to sustain the content. The extended introduction written by the editor set the chronological boundaries of the collection (from the twelfth century to the present day), raising also the research questions and clarifying the general goal of this high-standard edition. The Greek past is re-imagined under a dual scheme, on the one hand is continuity and on the other hand is hybridity, while the aim is to search deeper, even transcending the predominant ‘continuity syndrome’, searching for new approaches, with which the modern reader perceives the common
past as well as what the role of antiquity is in the present, its functions and multifarious aspects.

Part One, ‘Antiquity, Greece, and Europe’, comprises three chapters, all exploring how antiquity remains at stake during the medieval and modern Greece.

More specifically, Anastasia Stouraiti reveals the active engagement of indigenous antiquaries from the Venetian empire in the making of the archaeological past of Crete. Roderick Beaton discusses the new national Greek identity, as proposed by Shelley in his lyrical drama Hellas (1821-1822), a “new Hellas” embedding all its memories and potentials. Finally, Alexandra Lianeri studies the European translations and performances of Antigone during the nineteenth century and the modern translation of Antigone by Alexandros Rizos Rangavis (1857).

Part Two, “Hellenisms, Institutions, and Politics”, comprises four chapters, focusing on the political aspect of Greekness and its connotations during the medieval period, the period of Greek Enlightenment as well as the twentieth century.

Tassos Kaplanis defines the Greek identity via self-naming (Hellenes, Graikoi, Romaioi) and self-identification to conclude that the pre-national term Romaioi/Romioi, used to describe the identity of the Greek-speaking Orthodox Balkan people, was gradually transformed to the national term Hellenes after the formation of the modern Greek state. Since language is a category interwoven with national identity, Peter Mackridge sheds light on the classicist approach of Neofytos Doukas towards the Greek language, making the astonishing parallelism between Greek and Hebrew: vernacular Greek resembles Yiddish and Ancient Attic Greek resembles the revived Hebrew. The Greek revivalists, such as Doukas, ignored the spoken Greek of their era, as Mackridge concludes, in contrast to what the Jewish revivalists of Hebrew did, thus modernizing their hieratic language. Taking into consideration the theme of the painting by David Roberts The Departure of the Israelites (1829), from the relevant section of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, this revival was definitely a good start for Hebrew, a début which never happened for the Greek case. Vangelis Karamanolakis examines next the role of the University of Athens in the emphasis given to Greek antiquity in modern Greece. The University of Athens – since its inauguration in 1837 – has created within its curriculum, also depicted via the statues, paintings and of course architecture, a specific traditional image of Greek antiquity; this idealized construction has been carried through until nowadays. Last but not least, Alexander Kazamias underlines the national discourse of ethnikofrosyni, emerging

during the cold war period, a term which (ab)used the classical Greek past in order to serve the political right-wing propaganda.

Part Three, ‘Material Culture and Performances of the Past’, comprises four chapters, too. The epicentre has moved to the material aspect of the Greek past and how this is performed on the axis of literature, film, photography and theatre.

Dimitris Plantzos brings together the notion of xenomania, with the weakness of the particular aspects of Greek identity, based on Andreas Karkavitsas’ The Archaeologist and Theo Angelopoulos’ filmography, especially Ulysses’ Gaze, Days of ’36, The Hunters, and The Travelling Players. In the following chapter, Eleanna Yalouri provides a philosophical account of antiquity. Her aim is to reconnect the past with the Greek present. Using modern examples, she tries to answer the rather rhetorical, but always opportune question, that is who possesses the spirit of antiquity. Katerina Zacharia discusses the (ab)use of photography by Metaxas’ regime to promote an ideal image of the Greek past for touristic purposes. The national discourse, as expressed then, for instance in Le Voyage en Grèce (1936), constitutes an ekphrasis of the notorious continuity syndrome, which is expressed via the eternality of the Greek landscape, forming the New Greek Age. Eleni Papazoglou then discusses the revival of ancient dramas, such as Oresteia and Antigone in Europe and in modern Greece. The revival of ancient drama, often being an adaptation, however emphasizes the Orthodoxy continuity of these ‘preserved’ texts.

Part Four, “Literary Receptions of Antiquity”, focuses on the ways in which classical literature, poetry and prose, is perceived by the medieval and Modern Greek scholarship and comprises six chapters.

Gonda van Steen examines ‘The Lament of Athens’, a 69-verse poem of the fifteen century (resembling Byzantine hymnography, according to David Holton): Athens as a woman and a mother laments for the fall of the city to Ottoman Turks in 1456; the poem serves as a historical platform to the real events, combining the dimension of culture and the political significance of the historical events. David Ricks traces the common patterns between Lucretius and three Modern Greek artists: Kostis Palamas, Konstantinos Theotokis, and Costas Karyotakis – those fruitful “Lucretian Moments” reveal the impact of De Rerum Natura until today. Marinos Pourgouris examines the art of Yannis Ritsos, under the prism of Marxist discourse, focusing on The Fourth Dimension (1972); Ritsos’ re-imagines the past in transition towards a future, even though an uncertain one. Dimitris Tziovas gives a
chronological account of Philoctetes’ ‘travelling’ across Europe, expressing the view that the use of Philoctetes by Yannis Ritsos stands as a landmark in cultural and periodical setting. Rowena Fowler, finally, reads George Seferis’ *On Aspalathoi* through its influences from Plato and Heaney; this fact makes his poetry as redress with an emphasis on place and time, use of classical sources and faith to poetic speech, reaching the conclusion that this poem is an example when antiquity dresses its authority to inform the present.

Part Five, ‘Greek Culture and Classical Reception’, consists of one chapter by Lorna Hardwick. Actually, this chapter, as the conclusion of the book, remarks the crossings of classical reception research and Modern Greek Studies, also posing new research questions. Hardwick selects four main arguments about continuity and disruption between now and then, opting to focus her interest on the latest two: genealogy, diaspora, language, and place. Nonetheless, the ingeniously-made term ‘classitude’ signals indeed the interactive history of cultural poetics and its impact on modernity. However, one of her basic achievements is the introduction of the parameter of *trauma*, a substantial category of historical analysis, inherited by the classics to Hellenic/Modern Greek Studies with regard to the past.

This collection expands the discussion of classical reception further in the Modern Greek world, not narrowing the argument to literature, but enriching the research fields, including history, arts, and humanities in general. It has been almost fifteen years, when as a second-year student at the University of Crete, I had the chance to attend the international conference *The Reception of Antiquity in the Byzantine and Modern Greek Novel*, organized by the Department of Philology in November 2001 at Rethymno. The present volume definitely moves many steps ahead, embedding cultural studies in the contemporary discourse.

In fact, it is always surprising to realize how the Greek past, sometimes even as parody, uncovers layers of the Greek identities. Recently, the new left-wing Prime Minister of Greece has been the issue of the press at an international level, which shows a certain fancy for blurring the boundaries between current identification and Greek mythology and folklore. The magazine *The Week* had on its cover, Alexis Tsipras, half-dressed with the Greek flag, and re-imagined as the rebellious semi-god Prometheus, bound to the rock of Eurozone, while trying to break the chains of the imposed Euro-restrictions (US edition: 6 February 2015). Two weeks later, after a cycle of crucial negotiations held by the Eurogroup, Alexis Tsipras, and Angela
Merkel, in the advertising poster of the radio *La Première* in Bruxelles, are depicted dancing together *syrtaki* and wearing the traditional Greek costume, the *foustanella* – the annotation just states the impossible: “Si ça se passé, c’est la première qui vous le dira” (if that ever happens, it is the radio *La Première* that will inform you).\(^1\)

In conclusion, it is interesting to underline the persistent (ab)use of leitmotifs deriving from the Greek past, either ancient or recent, not only for re-imagining the national past, but mainly for analyzing the present. As in the case of the drama audience during the performance of *Agamemnon*, from the painting of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, in front of their eyes are mirrored aspects of an actual tragic reality. Perhaps, it is not only a matter of perspective or changing lenses towards the political performance and current approach to the commitments in the family of Eurozone. Beyond that, the imperative for Modern Greece from now on absolutely lies on the visualization of its common European future, certainly using the past as an analytical and methodological tool.

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\(^1\) [http://www.rtbf.be/lapremiere/article_si-ca-se-passe-c-est-la-premiere-qui-vous-le-dira?id=8915426].
Review


“Why Byzantium could exist for over a millennium?” This question is of course for general interest in history, but seems to have attracted and motivated many scholars studying the structure and system of this polity situated in the geopolitically important area susceptible to foreign invasions. This book addresses this question from a perspective of how the existence of the Byzantine Empire was supported by the modes of interactions and coexistences of various ethnic groups, religions and cultures in its ‘peripheries’ or ‘border areas’.

In Japan, historical study of Byzantium began in the 1950s within, as was the case with other fields of history, the prevailing paradigm derived from the idea of societal materialistic development towards modern one. Not a few published articles and books were mainly relevant to the so-called ‘socio-economic’ structure seen in landholding systems ¹ or dynamics of political strife ² in Byzantium, in which Byzantinists were inclined to detect some ‘feudal’ traits. In parallel, the issue of the longevity of the empire has also been treated. A scholar maintained that its main factor was constitutional consistency of Byzantium in legitimising political power despite its later feudalistic development,³ while for another it was the flexibility of the empire to change its political and administrative systems in response to many internal and external crises.⁴ These studies, due to the difficulty in seeing situation in its peripheral areas through written sources, focused on the government in Constantinople and its policy. However, recent diversification of the Byzantine studies which opened a new approach to the imperial power from the cultural aspect⁵

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¹ For example, Kinichi Watanabe, Study on Socio-economic History of Byzantium (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1968).
² For example, Koichi Inoue, Byzantine Empire (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1982).
⁵ A good example of this trend is: Yukio Nezu, Byzantium: the Universal Empire in illusion (Tokyo: Kodan-sha, 1999).
and developments in study on local cities and countryside with the aid of such disciplines as archaeology and sigillography enabled us to have a clearer vision of the imperial system which, different from that of a modern nation state, could incorporate many heterogeneous regions particularly evident in the border areas.

This book consists of an introduction and eight chapters which eight Japanese Byzantine historians wrote on the following peripheries or ethnic group: I. Isaurians in the late antiquity (written by Hiroaki Adachi); II. North Africa in the seventh century (Isao Kobayashi); III. Cherson in the middle Byzantine period (Koji Nakatani); IV. South Italy under the Byzantine rule (Ryusho Takebe); V. The Doukaton of Antioch around 1000 CE (Akiyoshi Oda); VI. Paristrion in the latter half of the eleventh century (Yukio Nezu); VII. Greece invaded by the Normans in the 1080s (Koichi Inoue); VIII. Crete after 1204 (Ryota Takada). A salient trait of these articles is that they focus on certain groups (local elites or particular ethnic groups, for example) in the respective border areas and investigate their interactions and negotiations with the Byzantine central government or foreign powers. They were the very actors adjusting the degree of their subjection to both Constantinople and ‘barbarians’ in accordance with the political situations in which they were involved (Chapters III, IV, VII). The imperial government, on the other hand, had the flexibility to give up direct or territorial rule of certain border areas (V, VI). In addition, it attempted to keep peripheries integrated into the imperial system by utilising its cultural influence as soft power (V) and even sought to reorganise links with Greeks living in the area which slipped out of the imperial domination to maintain a kind of Greek commonwealth (VIII). The border areas formed in such a manner were, so to speak, neither inside nor outside the empire, and there we can see cultural interactions triggered by inflow of dominant culture stemming from the imperial capital (V) and the tendency of assimilation of an ethnic group to it (I). It should also be added that these areas had functions of collecting and processing information on foreign countries, which was transmitted to the imperial government for decision making of diplomacy (III). Such border areas which enabled flexible interactions and coexistences between various groups, as the abovementioned articles conclude, contributed to stabilisation of the imperial system for more than a thousand years.

This book is well indicative of the present trends and interests which the Byzantine Studies in Japan has and the extent to which it has reacted to the international developments of the Byzantine Studies for decades. Further study would
certainly be desired to obtain a clearer concept of the imperial system in Byzantium. Still, the image of the Byzantine Empire presented by this book is quite intriguing, and seems to have a potential for putting the study on the structure of the Byzantine Empire into a more comparative framework in the studies on empires.

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Review


Procopius' world — Byzantine history during the sixth century is written by Yanhong Cui, a young Byzantine scholar whose doctoral thesis examines Procopius of Caesarea’s The Wars of Justinian. As the title of the book suggests, the Cui mainly intends to present Byzantine history during the sixth century to the general public of China based on the works by Procopius: The Wars of Justinian, Secret History, and The Buildings of Justinian.

This book is from the World History Easily Read series, which includes The Stories of Akhnaton Pharaoh, The Stories of Roman Legions, Sumerian Culture, The Caliphate, Procopius’ World, and so on. And some works about modern history will also be published.¹ The purpose of the series is to spread historical knowledge among the general public in China. Chengdan Qian, editor of the series and a famous Chinese scholar, says in the preface of the series:

It is important that the Chinese should learn more knowledge of world history so that they will take another step toward becoming a part of the living world. The problem is, however, that world history knowledge is still lacking for many Chinese people, in this regard there is much work required."²

This series is an important part of that work, as Qian says, “It will encourage more people to know more world history”,³ which was written in plain language and based on primary historical sources.

¹ It includes Tokyo Trials, Blue Helmets, American Constitution, The Automobiles and Modern Society, and so on.
² Chengdan Qian, preface to Procopius’ world — Byzantine history during the 6th century, by Yanhong Cui (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013), 1.
³ Qian, preface, 3.
Procopius’ World is a part of this series, thus the writing style of the book is a little different from most academic works. For example, there are various pictures in each chapter, which make the book more graphic. Some of the pictures are about the places of historic interest, some are about the antiques, and some are about computerized images of Byzantine soldiers and weapons. In the preface to the book, Cui briefly introduces Byzantine history: the origin of its name, its dynasties, its geography, its capital, changes of its territory, and its religion. Also, Cui describes the situation in China in the sixth century in order to give Chinese readers a point of reference.

The main body of the book consists of three parts, the first part introduces the famous persons of Byzantium in the sixth century, including four chapters on Procopius, Justinian, Belisarius, and Theodora. The second part deals with the events and contains two chapters named The Rebellion of Nika and The Plague. The third part moves further into the wars occurring in the sixth century, consisting of three chapters. They are about the wars against the Persians, Vandals, and Goths.

Considering the purpose of the book, Cui writes the first part mainly based on Secret History. As we know the very style of the book is loved by the masses, and was believed to be true. Cui, therefore, quotes it often and explains these references with light-hearted humor. As in the first part, when she introduces the marriage of Justinian, she says Theodora is not a noble, “She is just a lap dancer in the red-light districts of Constantinople, sometimes even performing pornographic shows, a little like an AV idol in modern time”.4 That is one important character of Cui’s book, the author introduces the individuals, the events and the wars in plain words, as most Chinese readers will not know who Theodora was or about her humble origin. But all of them know what red-light districts and AV ids are, so they could easily understand how unusual the empress was and why Procopius despised her marriage with Justinian in his Secret History.

Next, Cui introduces the great military achievements of Belisarius, and then she shows his unhappy family situation. As we know, the topic of family is more appealing to the general public; in the chapter covering the Nika revolt, she says the Blue and Green parties were ‘the Gangs of the capital’. Most words reveal the easy

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style and will be loved by its readers. At the same time, the book is based on a primary source.

Also, there is an academic-styled chapter in the book: chapter six, *The Plague.* Cui summarizes some ancient and modern scholars’ achievements in this chapter in order to find out the origin of the Plague, what kind of disease it might have been, and its effects. In *What kind of disease was it*, Cui describes the symptoms conveyed by the historical records, and then compares them with modern records of some symptoms, drawing the conclusion that “to be exact, it was Lenticulae”. The work of this chapter is heavy. For getting the exact conclusion, Cui not only needs to check the records about the Plague at different times, but also to investigate the symptoms from a medical standpoint, therefore it is an academic-styled chapter. At the end of the chapter, Cui says, “the Plague damaged some Byzantine progress in the sixth century: the golden age of Justinian was gone forever”, to sum up the influence of the Plague. In her opinion, it was one reason for the decline of Byzantium in the sixth century.

On the whole, this book introduces an important Byzantine time to the Chinese readers. It seems to be a popular literature, and also can be seen as a composition. As a part of the series, the book stands out as the efforts of a Chinese scholar who will devote herself to the spread of world history knowledge among the masses, and to solve the problem Chengdan Qian mentioned in the preface to the series.

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6 Cui, *Procopius’ world*, 130.
7 Cui, *Procopius’ world*, 136.
Supplementum

Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA)
Annual Meeting for Ottoman Studies

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Introduction

Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) is one of the most important organizations in the world. MESA as a non-profit and non-political private organization was founded in 1996 with fifty founding members. In this context, MESA’s goals can be summarized as threefold: to advance learning, to give an opportunity of communication between scholars, and to arrange an annual leading international forum for academicians and researchers around the world.

MESA now has more than 2,700 members. It serves as an umbrella organization for more than sixty institutional members and thirty-nine affiliated organizations. It must be known that Institute of Turkish Studies (ITS), American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT) and Turkish Studies Association (TSA) are included in MESA. MESA also gives out Graduate Student Paper prizes to Middle East studies graduate students for outstanding papers on any aspect of post-600 AD Middle Eastern history.

Apart from this, MESA’s significant contributions in Middle East Studies undoubtedly include a quarterly journal published by the Cambridge University Press, International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES), and an electronic journal The Review of Middle East Studies (RoMES).¹ IJMES publishes original research on politics, society, economic history, and culture in the Middle East from the seventh century to the present day. There are many papers in Ottoman studies published in

¹ <http://mesana.org/>.
almost every issue. The journal also welcomes papers related to Spain, south-eastern Europe, and parts of Africa, South Asia, and the former Soviet Union.

**MESA’s Annual Meetings**

The first MESA’s meeting was held in 1966. The meeting featured panels and special sessions on a variety of topics related to Middle East studies. It was complemented by meetings of MESA’s affiliated groups, an exciting 4-day film festival, a comprehensive book exhibit featuring the latest books and software in the field, and other informal events.\(^2\) It was arranged as an annual meeting and regarded as the most systematically organized meeting in the world. We now know MESA’s future annual meetings’ venues, dates and some details for the next five years. According to the official website of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, Annual Conferences will be held in Denver, Boston, Washington, DC, San Antonio and New Orleans in the years following 2015.

**Ottoman and Turkish History at MESA 2014**

Every three years, MESA arranges an annual meeting at USA’s capital. Last year the meeting took place in Washington, DC.\(^3\) In this review, it is divided into three main titles. First, *sessions* and *panels* are for discussions in general. A program of 277 sessions, squeezed into 12 panel time slots, began on Saturday, November 22 at 5:30 p.m. and ended on Tuesday, November 25 at 3:30 p.m. Out of these sessions, there were 60 sessions related to the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Many sessions on the Ottoman studies had interesting topics such as ‘Merchants in Ottoman Empire’, ‘Commerce’, ‘Transformation of Ottoman Literature’, ‘The end of the Ottoman Empire’, ‘Ottoman Smyrna’, ‘Patronage in Ottoman System’, ‘Ottoman Military power in the seventeenth century’, ‘Intellectual exchange between the Ottoman Empire and South Asia’, and ‘Religion in the late Ottoman Empire’.

Apart from these subjects, there were many papers presented in fields of history, economic history, legal history, politics, international relations, contemporary issues, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, art, and literature. Also there were many

\(^2\) [http://mesana.org/annual-meeting/upcoming.html]

\(^3\) [http://mesana.org/annual-meeting/previous/program.html]
Ottomanists present, including Gabor Agoston, Virginia Aksan, Ariel Salzmann, Suraiya Faroqhi, Carter Findley, Judith Tucker, Linda Darling, Fariba Zarinebaf, Sherry Vatter, Baki Tezcan, Mustafa Aksakal, Elena Syrett Frangakis, and Resat Kasaba. That is why, last year, a great number of participants attended and participated in the MESA annual meeting.

Second, thematic conversations and roundtables are two other major parts of meetings. The Middle East Studies Association introduced a new category of participation called ‘thematic conversations and roundtables’ in 1998. Thematic conversations are, by MESA rules, to continue over two but no more than three consecutive MESA meetings. For Ottoman studies, most of participants are members of the Turkish Studies Association as well as MESA, and have experimented with a thematic conversation format. Thematic conversation called ‘Ottoman and Turkish Studies: What’s Happening?’ organized by Virginia Aksan was surely efficient in order to see ‘What is new?’ for young researchers in November last year.

Finally, it can be argued that the special reception was one of the distinctive features of MESA’s annual meeting. On the first day of the annual meeting, the Association of Ottoman and Turkish Studies organized a reception open to all participants.

Conclusion

The MESA Annual Meeting provides participants with a chance for sharing and getting information as well as access to famous Ottomanists and PhD students focusing in fields of Ottoman Studies and Modern Turkey. Another point worth mentioning is that young scholars can be encouraged by the Ottoman specialists and discussants. Participants’ feedback and comments show that presenting a paper at one of these conferences or meetings has a big influence on personal academic improvement. My participation in MESA has very beneficial effects on my study and view.