

Imagining Byzantium

Perception, Patterns, Problems
in Eastern and Southeastern
Europe (19th–20th Centuries)

Abstracts

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Byzantium, the Rus and the so-called »Family of rulers«

Günter Prinzing (Mainz)

The paper deals with the current debate about the historical validity of the concept of the "family of rulers in the Middle Ages". This concept (including its metaphorical ramifications) unfolded its impact in Byzantine and Mediaeval Studies over a long period. It was established by the renowned Munich Byzantinist Franz Dölger († 1968) in an article published in 1940, and, after a slight revision, reprinted in 1953 and 1964. In the 1970s, discussion began and finally in 2012 the Frankfurt Byzantinist Wolfram Brandes subjected Dölger's concept to a fundamental investigation in a paper given at the German *Historikertag* in Mainz: Brandes postulated that the concept lacked nearly any proof from historical sources and was therefore obsolete; moreover, he pointed out that its elaboration was strongly influenced by Dölger's known sympathy for Hitler's plans to rule the world. Although the core of Brandes' thesis is valid, there are some weak points which demand our meticulous attention and modification. This paper attempts to do this by addressing the specific case of the "baptism" of the Rus under prince Vladimir (988) and asking whether we can still assert that he became a member of the "family of rulers" by this act.

“Byzance après Byzance” – Nicolae Iorga’s Concept and its Aftermath

Hans-Christian Maner (Mainz)

The studies about Nicolae Iorga and the history of Byzantium, and especially his reception, can largely be explained by the fact that the title of his book “Byzance après Byzance” has become almost a figure of speech. The formula is used even today, detached from the underlying content and the argumentation developed by Iorga. The original work “Byzance après Byzance” will therefore be placed in the center of attention, analyzing and explaining its structure, before finally looking at some after-effects in the Romanian scientific context.

**George Ostrogorsky's Perception of History and Byzantium in Serbian "National"
Historiography: Between Otherness and Orthodoxy**

Milena Repajic (Belgrade)

Medieval and Byzantine studies in Serbia have been burdened with two issues which prevent a proper understanding of Byzantium and the medieval world in general: the national paradigm in studying Serbian medieval society, and utmost respect for scholarly authorities who are not to be critically examined. The highest place among those authorities, without doubt, belongs to George Ostrogorsky (1902-1976), professor of Byzantine studies at the University of Belgrade and the founder of the Institute for Byzantine studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA). In this paper, I will explicate the roots of these two interconnected issues by examining Ostrogorsky's and other Serbian byzantinists' and medievalists' work within their own discursive frameworks, as well as the mutual influence of Ostrogorsky's perception of history and Serbian medieval historiography. The persistence of these ideas and the misconceptions they lead to, particularly the insistence on Orthodoxy and autocracy as the main features of Byzantium (common in Byzantine studies worldwide) and notions such as »Serbian lands«, independence, sovereignty and the like will be critically examined. In the end, I will propose a shift in paradigm and question the very notion of "national history".

The Western Byzantium of Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos

Dimitrios Stamatopoulos (Thessaloniki)

Paparrigopoulos' interpretation of the Iconomachy as Reformation actually corresponds to a comprehensive reinterpretation of Byzantine history: his description of a reform is no more than the need to make Byzantium palatable to the West. But such a perspective would retroactively vindicate the Iconomachy — not only on the issue of the icons but with regard to the hegemonic role accorded to the clergy in Byzantine society after the Seventh Ecumenical Council — and wouldn't be acceptable to the Patriarchate. This is especially true given that what Paparrigopoulos dubs "reform" is a lot like what the Ottoman Empire tried to enforce during the Tanzimat in the 19th century. The article will deal with the westernized perspective of Byzantium proposed by Paparrigopoulos as well as with the reaction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's intellectuals on the re-interpretation of Iconomachy, such as Manouil Gedeon and Ioakeim Foropoulos.

Oriental as Byzantium. Some remarks on similarities between *byzantinism* and *orientalism*

Przemysław Marciniak (Katowice)

This paper follows the footsteps of scholars such as Averil Cameron who argue that *Orientalism* might be a useful approach to the studies on the reception of Byzantium. Therefore, it discusses the “oriental” nature of the imagery of Byzantium – especially in the nineteenth century - and to what extent it might be beneficial to study the reception of Byzantium as a form of what Said called *Orientalism*. It is argued that, contrary to what some scholars have claimed, *Byzantinism* can sometimes be construed as a rather complex issue with a clear political agenda. *Byzantinism* is thus understood here as a polyphonic term, which can simultaneously include various – very often contradictory – meanings. The paper shows that *Byzantinism* was used in certain cases to express the same ideas and prejudices as evoked by the term *Orientalism*.

The Collection of Byzantine Canon Law ("Kniga pravil", 1839) as a Legal Basis for the Russian Orthodox Church in the 19th-20th Centuries: Paradoxes, Problems and Perspectives

Kirill Maximovich (Goethe-University of Frankfurt am Main / Academy of Sciences of Göttingen)

The "Book of the divine Canons of holy Apostles, holy ecumenical and local synods and holy fathers" (Russ. *Kniga pravil*) nowadays constitutes the Chief Code of Canon Law for the Russian Orthodox Church. It was first published by the Holy Synod in 1839 at the behest of the Metropolitan of Moscow Philaret to replace the former Chief Code of Canon Law – the so called "Printed Pilot Book" of 1653 (Russ. *Pečatnaya kormčaya*). Unlike the "Printed Pilot Book", the "Book of the Divine Canons" didn't contain either Byzantine civil regulations, or Church legislation of lower rank than the canons. Moreover, in the "Book of Canons", canonical texts of Russian origin were also omitted, so that the new codification of canons completely neglected the rich canonical tradition of the Russian Church of previous centuries. The goal of the article is to demonstrate Philaret's approach to the Byzantine Canon Law as being holy, eternal and unchangeable, so that canonical regulations from the first Christian centuries could allegedly also meet the needs of the Russian Church in the 19th century. Philaret's ecclesiological, theological and political arguments in favour of this approach are analysed to be finally rejected as untenable.

The Reception of “Byzantium” in the Russian Church Historiography at the Late Imperial Period

Alena Alshanskaya (Mainz)

In the last twenty years, the depiction of Russia as an authorized and direct successor of the Byzantine Empire and the Russian Orthodox Church as the genuine bearer of its religious culture has become a truism in Russian public discourses. Actual discussions refer to the situation at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, a time when Byzantium or the Byzantine heritage was also at the center of public interest. The article focuses on the use of the Byzantine argument in the most famous historiographical writings of the Russian Orthodox Church as well as in the more specialized research concerning Byzantium and Church history, closely examining the speculative constructions of Byzantium as a reference point and as an instrument in the process of the self-identification of the Russian Church in the 19th-20th centuries.

Approaching the Byzantine past in the historical work of Dositheos of Jerusalem and Meletios of Athens

Dimitrios Moschos (Athens)

The paper examines the accounts of Byzantium in the "History of the Patriarchs of Jerusalem" by Dositheos Patriarch of Jerusalem, edited posthumously in 1721 by his nephew, and the "Ecclesiastical history" written by the Metropolitan of Athens Meletios Mêtros. The latter was Dositheos' contemporary. His work was edited many years after his death, namely in 1784. Dositheos uses Byzantium as a solid and undifferentiated basin of source material for drawing arguments to combat the dogmatic, ecclesiological, canonical and even property claims of the Western Church against the Orthodox. Meletios uses his contemporary historical works and methods to suggest an insight into Byzantium through the eyes of the Enlightenment, which probably explains why his work was edited by circles promoting the so-called Modern Greek Enlightenment in Vienna.

Byzantium in Greek Church Historiography of the 19th century: Between German protestant influence and Greek Orthodox confession

Christina Hadjiafxenti (Mainz)

Both Anastasios Diomedes Kyriakos, professor of theology at the newly established University of Athens and Filaretos Vafeides, professor of theology in the School of Chalki, which belonged to the patriarchate of Constantinople, studied at German protestant universities in the 19th century. Their church historiographical work was influenced by German historians. In this paper I examine how the two theologians, under German influence, described the relationship between state and Church in the Byzantine period. I also analyse the way they interpret the relationship between state and Church in the newly formed Greek state of the 19th century by using the Byzantine paradigm. The way they reached their interpretations is placed into and explained by the specific historical circumstances both scholars faced.

Byzantium for Priests

Mihai D. Grigore (Mainz)

The paper approaches Romanian schoolbooks used for the instruction of future priests on high school and university level in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. The case study focuses on the image of Byzantium mediated in this kind of literature and aims to show how Byzantium is made fruitful for the national narrative of the modern Romanian state. The paper reveals the close discourse entanglement between scholarly research, mediation strategies, opinion formation, politics and power in Romanian society, where the Romanian Orthodox Church is one of the most influential institutions.

Russian Imperial Policy in the Orthodox East and Its Relation to Byzantine Studies

Lora Gerd (Saint Petersburg)

In the first half of the 19th century, in the period of rivalry penetration of the Great Powers into the Near East, Russia founded an Orthodox mission in Jerusalem with Porphyrij Uspensky at its head. His research in the history and archaeology of Eastern Christianity was the first serious research in Byzantine studies in Russia. The start of a school of secular Byzantine studies in Russia in the 1870-s and 1880-s coincided with the time of "Imperial Byzantinism" in Russian policy. The heritage of the Third Rome and messianic ideas was developed by part of the Russian scholars. The peak of this political romanticism was in 1915, with the plans of a "Russian Constantinople" and the restoration of the Byzantine Empire.

**The Perception of Byzantium in the Context of Modern Ukrainian Nation Building
(Second Half of the 18th to Early 20th Century):
from Hryhorii Skovoroda through Taras Shevchenko to Mykhailo Hrushevsky**

Andriy Domanovsky (Kharkiv)

This paper deals with the perception of Byzantium in the context of modern Ukrainian nation building in the second half of the 18th to the early 20th century. Hryhorii Skovoroda, Taras Shevchenko and Mykhailo Hrushevsky represent the three stages of the so-called long 19th century, the period between the end of the 18th and the beginning of 20th century. Hryhorii Skovoroda (1722-1794) belongs to the era of the outgoing 18th century, Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) represents the middle of the 19th century, and Mykhailo Hrushevsky (1866-1934) the end of the 19th and early 20th century.

Hryhorii Skovoroda felt Byzantium from the inside, Hrushevsky tried to understand Byzantium from the outside as a scientist, and Taras Shevchenko did not understand Byzantium, because instead of Byzantium he saw the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the black myth of Byzantium, created by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. It is the vision of Taras Shevchenko which has stuck in Ukrainian culture and identity, and continues to be dominant.

The Bad Byzantines: a historical narrative in the liberal conception of Vladimir Jovanović*

Andreas Gietzen (Mainz)

With the fall of the "Ustavobranitelj" in 1858, Serbia entered a new era of party politics. Several Western educated minds formed the first political party to promote the idea of liberalism. While unauthorized by the new prince Mihailo Obrenović, Serbian "liberals" relied on a specific narrative to convince their fellow countrymen that liberalism had always been an innate part of Serbian history. In this article I will analyse the construction of this narrative and its creator Vladimir Jovanović, who used the influence of the "Bad Byzantines" to explain why Serbia had not already adapted to liberalism in the past, although it had all the means and institutions to do so.

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**Byzantine "Slavery" as Postcolonial Imagination: "Foreign" Rulers of a "Pure" Bulgarian Nation
(1850-1930)**

Stefan Rohdewald (Gießen)

In the Bulgarian-Ottoman context since the 19th century, medieval religious *lieux de mémoire* such as Cyril and Methodius and others served to imagine a national past, present and future. Within this function, they also constituted platforms to refer to imaginations of Byzantium: In newspapers and other publications, Byzantium served as a negative "other" to consolidate a positive Bulgarian public image of "one's own" nation, tsardom and statehood. The national Bulgarian "rebirth" was to emancipate Bulgarians not only from the Ottoman »yoke«, but also from Byzantine or modern Greek/Phanariote domination, which were combined and depicted as a "double yoke".

**Negotiating National Prospects by Capturing the Medieval Past: Byzantium in Serbian
Architectural History at the Turn of the 20th Century**

Aleksandar Ignjatović, (Belgrade)

The truism that the birth of the discipline of architectural history in Serbia was entwined with national emancipation and the construction of an authentic national identity is questioned by the position of the Byzantine cultural heritage in the Serbian architectural past. The germ of “national architecture” – conveniently identified with that of the Middle Ages – was an image of Serbian culture as part of the Byzantine one, which problematized the very idea of an original, authentic Serbian identity. This paper will explore the question of Serbian national narrative, torn between a need for cultural authenticity and Imperial mission, and focus on the context in which this duality became a recognizable ideological agenda that justified Serbian political prospects in an era when the Kingdom of Serbia was on the cusp of national, cultural and territorial expansion.

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