

UDC 930.85(4-12)

ISSN 0350-7653  
eISSN 2406-0801

SERBIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS  
INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

# BALCANICA

## XLVII

ANNUAL OF THE INSTITUTE FOR BALKAN STUDIES

Editor-in-Chief

DUŠAN T. BATAKOVIĆ

Director of the Institute for Balkan Studies SASA

Editorial Board

JEAN-PAUL BLED (Paris), LJUBOMIR MAKSIMOVIĆ,  
ZORAN MILUTINOVIĆ (London), DANICA POPOVIĆ, DRAGAN BAKIĆ,  
SPYRIDON SFETAS (Thessaloniki), GABRIELLA SCHUBERT (Jena),  
NIKOLA TASIĆ, SVETLANA M. TOLSTAJA (Moscow)

BELGRADE  
2016



The chapter ends with a history of the region until 2005.

The concluding section of the book looks at the ghettoization of the Serbian population and the tragic fate of their cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija during the last two decades. If things stay as

they are, one can hardly expect any other outcome but the eventual disappearance of the Serbian population of Kosovo and Metohija. Under such circumstances, this book is a scholarly attempt in defence of the spiritual and physical survival of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija.

GEORGIA XANTHAKI-KARAMANOU, ED., *Ἡ ΠΡΟΣΛΗΨΗ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΟ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΟ, ΚΥΡΙΩΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΛΟΓΕΙΟΥΣ ΧΡΟΝΟΥΣ* [THE RECEPTION OF ANTIQUITY IN BYZANTIUM, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE PALAEOLOGAN ERA]. ATHENS: ΕΚΔΟΣΕΙΣ ΠΑΠΑΖΗΣΗ, 2014.

*Reviewed by* Bojana Pavlović\*

The book reviewed here, *Ἡ πρόσληψη τῆς ἀρχαιότητος στὸ Βυζάντιο, κυρίως κατὰ τοὺς παλαιολόγειους χρόνους*, is the proceedings of an international scholarly conference held in Sparta, 3–5 November 2012. The conference was hosted by the Research Institute of Byzantine Culture of the University of Peloponnese with the support of the Prefecture of Lakonia, Municipality of Sparta. The volume comprises fourteen articles which discuss the reception of antiquity in Byzantium from different disciplinary perspectives: history, philology, law, philosophy, archaeology, art history, architecture. The articles are grouped into four main sections according to the main topic – Byzantine history, philosophy and law, Byzantine philology and Byzantine archaeology, which reflects the aim of the Conference organizers to stress once again the extent and areas of influence of antiquity on Byzantine society in general. Every article has either a Greek or an English summary, and some are accompanied by high-quality illustrations.

The articles are preceded by the opening addresses of the editor of the volume, Dr Georgia Xanthaki-Karamanou, Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, and His Eminence Eustathios, Metropolitan of Monemvasia and Sparta.

The articles of the first thematic group discuss the influence of antiquity and the use by Byzantine authors of works of ancient writers and of literary genres established in antiquity. In his article *Ἡ ἱστορία ὡς ὄπλο προπαγάνδας στὸ Ὑστερο Βυζάντιο* [History Writing as Political Propaganda in Late Byzantium] Apostolos Karpozilos presents the historians of the Palaiologan period and discusses their views and criticisms of the political situation of their time. Written under different circumstances and by members of the educated elite, and not by professional historians (for there were none in Byzantium), these historical works reflected the problems the Byzantine Empire had to deal with in the last centuries of its existence and described the rise of a new empire which eventually replaced the Eastern Roman Empire. Historians, who played an active role in the events described, either justified or sharply criticized the imperial authority and government policies, which made their works mouthpieces for political ideas and attitudes they or a group of their supporters shared.

Kostas Konstantinidis's article *Ἡ τύχη τοῦ χειρογράφου τοῦ Πλάτωνος τοῦ Ἀρέθα:*

\* Institute for Byzantine Studies SASA

Oxonii Clarke 39 [The Adventures of the Plato Manuscript of Arethas: Oxonii, Clarke 39] deals with the fate of a manuscript now kept in the Bodleian Library in Oxford which contains twenty-four dialogues of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato and which was copied sometime between 888 and 932 in Constantinople for one of the greatest Byzantine bibliophiles, Arethas, Archbishop of Caesarea. The manuscript seems to have been kept in Constantinople until 1453 and it might have belonged to the very rich library owned by the fourteenth-century polymath Nikephoros Gregoras. Apart from providing precious photographs of the manuscript, Konstantinidis includes excerpts from the book *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, Part the Second, *Greece, Egypt and the Holy Land*, Section the Second (London 1814) written by the English traveller Edward Daniel Clarke who had found the manuscript in the island of Patmos on 11 October 1801. Clarke's *Travels* provide an insight into the problems the acquirers of the manuscript had to deal with and of the difficult circumstances of the Greek Patriarchate in the early nineteenth century.

Anthony Luttrell's article "The Reception of Antiquity on Rhodes after 1306" takes the reader to yet another island in the Aegean. During the fourteenth century the Greek element on Rhodes became very scarce and, although local people did have some consciousness and knowledge of belonging to a Greek and Hellenistic cultural entity, information on ancient Rhodes and interest in its classical culture was quite fragmentary. The arrival of some Greek scholars and Latin humanists in the fourteenth and fifteenth century and their scholarly approach and effort to provide Latin translations of Greek texts, thus making classical Greek literature more available to the Rhodians, did not, however, bring about a deepening of the knowledge of the island's ancient history and its civilization.

Influence of antiquity is to be found in every Byzantine author who mentioned barbarous peoples that were either foes or allies of the Byzantine Empire. This influence is reflected in the usage by the Byzantines of ancient appellations for other peoples (e.g. Mysoi, Persians, Skythai...) when referring to their contacts with the Empire. Alexios Savvides, in his article *Οἱ ἀρχαιοπρεπεῖς ὀνομασίες τῶν μεσαιωνικῶν λαῶν ἀπὸ τοῦς Βυζαντινοῦς* [Antiquated Appellations of Medieval Peoples by the Byzantines], pays special attention to the Turkophone races, for whom the Byzantines used various terms.

The last article of the first thematic group, *Προσλήψεις τῆς ἀρχαιότητος στὸ ἔργο τοῦ Νικολάου Μεσαρίτη* [Receptions of Antiquity in Nikolaos Mesarites' Work] by Ilias Giarenis, deals with the usage of ancient forms, models and texts in Mesarites' literary work. Nikolaos Mesarites was a Byzantine intellectual who lived in the second half of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century, and held high ecclesiastical and civil positions in the Empire. As other Byzantine scholars, Mesarites also made use of ancient texts to describe contemporary works of art and architecture, and to depict the events and personages that marked his age. Apart from being regarded as mere *topoi* and as indicators of the learnedness and literacy of a Byzantine author, allusions drawn from ancient works were carefully chosen and employed by the author to express his own opinion about certain events and personages. Mesarites used quotations and parallels from Homer's *Iliad* and other ancient works to describe the conspiracy of Ioannes Komnenos Axouchos against the Emperor Alexios III. In another work he styled himself as a New Hercules, and depicted his late brother as a New Demosthenes.

The second thematic group, *Philosophy and Law*, comprises two articles. Konstantinos Boudouris's text *Οἱ οικονομικοκοινωνικοπολιτικὲς ἀντιλήψεις τοῦ Γεωργίου Πλήθωνος Γεμιστοῦ καὶ ἡ Ἑλλάς*

σήμερα [The Social, Economic and Political Views of Georgios Gemistos-Plethon with Regard to the State of Affairs of Hellas Today] raises the question of whether some views of the fifteenth-century Byzantine philosopher can be of use to modern society in overcoming the current crisis. Having arrived at a positive answer, the author analyzes social, political and economic aspects, and proposes some solutions to the problems of modern society of significance for the future of Modern Hellenism.

In her article *Θέματα Δικαίου τὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν Παλαιολόγων* [Matters of Law in the Palaeologan Era] Kalliopi Bourdara focuses primarily on the premarital law and dowries. The Palaiologan period did not witness much legislative activity due to constant political problems. The Empire of Trebizond ruled by the Great Komnenoi, on the other hand, saw some activity in this field, which may find corroboration in the emergence of a Novel issued most probably by John Grand Komnenos (1282–1297).

The third thematic section is devoted to philological issues. Christian Gastgeber's article "A New Methodical Approach to Classical Literature in Byzantium: Prosopographic Palaeography" offers a new avenue for exploring and analyzing Byzantine texts. Showing the importance of examining various aspects of the creation and circulation of a manuscript, it stresses the importance of treating a manuscript as the product of a sociocultural environment for the audience that needed and demanded it. This approach can therefore lead to numerous discoveries not only about the person of the author or the copyist but also about his social network and the society in and for which the manuscript was produced.

Georgia Xanthaki-Karamanou's article deals with *Χριστὸς Πάσχων: Πρόσληψη ἀπὸ «παθητικὴς» τραγωδίας τοῦ Εὐριπίδη* [Christus Patiens: Reception from Euripides' Tragedies of Passion]. Her thorough analysis reveals a strong influence of Euripides' tragedies (notably *Medea*, *Hippolytus* and

*Bacchae*) on the Byzantine play *Christus Patiens*. Their influence is observable not only in the narrative and dramatic techniques used by the author but also in the use of Euripidean motifs and concepts so transformed as to fit into Christian cultural context.

The last article in this section, Stella Chrysochoou's *Ἡ Πτολεμαϊκὴ Γεωγραφία στὸ Βυζάντιο* [Ptolemaic Geography in Byzantium], discusses the reception of Ptolemy's *Geographike Hyphegesis* in Palaiologan Byzantium. The author also deals with the cartographical development of Ptolemy's work and raises the question of whether Byzantine intellectuals were able to draw Ptolemaic maps without provided exemplars and based only on reading and combining the ancient geographers Ptolemy and Strabo.

The last thematic section of the book, titled *Byzantine Archaeology*, consists of four articles, including those from the area of art history and architecture. In her article *Μὴ θρησκευτικὲς παραστάσεις σὲ βυζαντινὲς μολύβδινες σφραγίδες (1005 αἰώνας): Καταβολὲς καὶ ἐρμηνευτικὲς προσεγγίσεις* [Non-Religious Images on Byzantine Lead Seals (10th C.): Origins and Approaches to Interpretation] Vassiliki Pena discusses quite frequent representations of animals and birds, as well as human figures or male portraits, on the seals dated to the Middle Byzantine period. These non-religious motifs that were common in Greco-Roman art testify to a growing reception of ancient culture in tenth-century Byzantium, the age referred to as the "Macedonian Renaissance".

Ioanna Spiliopoulou's article *Ἡ πρόσληψη τῆς ἀρχαιότητας κατὰ τὴν περίοδο τῆς Μακεδονικῆς Δυναστείας: Πυξίδες ἀπὸ ἐλεφαντοστοῦν μὲ ἀρχαία εἰκονογραφικὰ μοτίβα* [Reception of Antiquity during the Macedonian Dynasty: Ivory Caskets with Secular Decoration] reveals some of the finest examples of richly decorated ivory caskets carved with popular mythological scenes. The author argues that the artists

used ancient manuscript illuminations as a source for the scenes decorating these secular objects intended most probably for the emperor, imperial family members or high court officials.

Ancient motifs and models in Byzantine art are further analyzed by Melita Emmanouil in her article *Ἡ ἀρχαιότητα στήν ζωγραφική τῶν Παλαιολόγων: Εἰκαστικοὶ τρόποι, μοτίβα καὶ εἰκονογραφικὰ θέματα* [The Influence of Antiquity in Palaeologan Painting: Artistic Ways, Motifs and Iconography]. The paper focuses in particular on the stylistic manners of Palaeologan painters and on the adaptation of ancient motifs to fit the Byzantine aesthetic. The author argues that Greek motifs were also used to strengthen Greek consciousness among the population in the period of decline.

The last article in the volume, *Ἐπανάχρηση ἀρχιτεκτονικῶν μελῶν τῆς ἀρχαιότητος σὲ ἐκκλησιαστικὰ καὶ κοσμικὰ κτήρια τοῦ Μυστρᾶ* [Reused Architectural

Elements of the Antiquity in Ecclesiastical and Secular Buildings at Mystras] by Stavros Arvanitopoulos, offers an insight into an ongoing research project in one of the most prominent Byzantine cities of the Peloponnese, Mystras. The author does not propose any definitive conclusions on the reemployment of architectural elements but rather suggests some explanations regarding their original use.

The variety of topics addressed in this volume testifies to the diversity and, consequently, to the significance of the influence of antiquity on Byzantine civilization. It highlights the extent of convergence between the two cultures – Christian and non-Christian – and shows once again how a Christian society looked back to antiquity for motifs and themes, modifying them in such a way as to make them respond to the aesthetical, social, political and philosophical demands of their new users.

PÁL FODOR, *THE UNBEARABLE WEIGHT OF EMPIRE. THE OTTOMANS IN CENTRAL EUROPE – A FAILED ATTEMPT AT UNIVERSAL MONARCHY (1390–1566)*.

BUDAPEST: RESEARCH CENTRE FOR THE HUMANITIES,

HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, 2015, 175 p.

*Reviewed by Ognjen Krešić\**

Pál Fodor is a prominent Hungarian turkologist and historian who devoted most of his research attention to the history of Ottoman-Hungarian (and later Habsburg) relations and Ottoman rule over territories of the medieval Hungarian kingdom. He is director of the Institute of History of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

*The Unbearable Weight of Empire. The Ottomans in Central Europe – A Failed Attempt at Universal Monarchy (1390–1566)* is an attempt by the author to reconsider his own previous research, to analyze and reassess trends in the study of the Ottoman

Empire over the last twenty years, and to present to a broader public the results of the Hungarian specialists on Ottoman history. The book consists of an introduction (pp. 7–24) and two chapters (pp. 25–133), and is supplied with a list of references (pp. 135–160) and a combined index of persons, places and terms (pp. 161–175).

The end of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century is one of the most discussed periods in the field of Ottoman studies, but nevertheless it still represents an inspiring

\* Institute for Balkan Studies SASA