



Theoretical Approaches to Byzantine Reception Studies

International Workshop 17–18 Nov 2016

Venue: Kungstenen, Aula Magna

Papers and lectures on ideological, medial and material approaches to the reception of Byzantium.

In cooperation with Literature as a Leading Research Area at Stockholm University, the Humboldt Byzantine Reception Research Network, Uppsala University, and the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Limited space. For further information and registration for participants without papers, please contact Helena Bodin.

Lectures

Elena Boeck
Director of Byzantine Studies, Dumbarton Oaks
Byzantium's Two Pasts and Two Paths

Przemyslaw Marciniak
dr hab. prof., University of Silesia in Katowice
Exotic and Oriental – the Reception of Byzantium and the Postcolonial Discourse

Above: *The Light of Byzantium* by courtesy of the artist Bo Alström, Sigtuna.

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THURSDAY, 18 November

- 13.00 Arrivals, registration, lunch sandwich for all participants in Kungstegen, Aula Magna
14.00–14.15 Welcome and introduction
Helena Bodin and Ingela Nilsson
14.15–15.30 Lecture and discussion (Chair: Bodin)
Elena Boeck, *Byzantium's Two Past and Two Paths*
15.30–15.50 Coffee and refreshments

SESSION I: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND IDEOLOGY (Chair: Bodin)

- 15.50–16.20 Sergey Ivanov, *Byzantium and Russia Between East and West*
16.20–16.50 Olof Heilo, *Waiting for the Barbarians: Conservative Visions of Byzantium*
(10 min. break)
17.00–17.30 Marie-France Auzépy, *The Reception of Byzantium in the French Kingdom during the XVIIth c.*
17.30–18.00 Matthew Kinloch, *What We Don't Notice from the Shoulders of Giants; or Reception in Byzantine Historiographies*
18.30 Reception and buffet for all participants at the Faculty Club, Frescati, SU campus

FRIDAY, 19 November

- 9.30–10.45 Lecture and discussion (Chair: Nilsson)
Przemyslaw Marciniak, *Exotic and Oriental – the Reception of Byzantium and the Postcolonial Discourse*
10.45–11.15 Coffee and refreshments

SESSION II: MANUSCRIPTS AND TEXTS (Chair: Nilsson)

- 11.15–11.45 Barbara Crostini, *Manuscripts as Reception: Two Case Studies*
11.45–12.15 AnnaLinden Weller, *Fragmentation-citation-assemblage: Aesthetic Recognition, Byzantine Encyclopaedism, and Transformative Works*
12.15–13.30 Lunch for all participants in Mezzaninen, Aula Magna

SESSION III: HERITAGE AND MEDIA (Chair: Crostini)

- 13.30–14.00 Isabelle Dépret, *Mount Athos Promoted in the UNESCO World Heritage: Competitive Collaboration between Religious Communities and the Greek State for the Control over Byzantine Heritage (late XXth Century – beginning of XXIst Century)*
14.00–14.30 Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, *Same but Different – Receiving and Transforming Word and Melody in Byzantine Music*
(10 min. break)
14.40–15.10 Tonje H. Sørensen, *The Fountain with the Golden Ceiling – Reflections on Neo-Byzantine Materiality and Transnational Exchanges*
15.10–15.50 Helena Bodin, *Modern Trans- and Remediations of the Encounter between Sigurd the Jerusalem-Farer and the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I*
15.50–16.10 Coffee and refreshments
16.10–16.20 *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (Vassilios Sabatakakis)
16.20–17.00 Concluding discussion
19.30 Dinner for speakers at Browallshof, Surbrunnsgatan 20, Stockholm

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Introduction

Ingela Nilsson, Uppsala University

ABSTRACTS

Lectures

Elena Boeck, Dumbarton Oaks / DePaul University

Byzantium's Two Pasts and Two Paths

This paper charts the discursive trajectories of two Byzantiums that emerged in the nineteenth century. While in western Europe scholars and savants imagined Byzantium as yet another Other, in the Russian empire Byzantium was embraced as a hallowed heritage. Byzantium was established as a key facet of Russia's imagined past with the rediscovery of mosaics and frescoes in St. Sophia of Kiev (ca. 1838). Garnering imperial patronage and public attention, the discursive re-imagining of this monument became a model for appropriating Byzantium into the Russian narratives of empire. The question of relations between imperial power and Orthodoxy definitively shaped academic constructs of Byzantium that were central contributions to the field. Nikodim Kondakov (1844-1925), whose monumental magnum opus *The Iconography of the Mother of God* (1911) is still unsurpassed, both acknowledged this imperial tradition and transcended it.

In western Europe epistemological categorizations and narrative emplotments of the Byzantine empire were more ambiguous, complex and bifurcated. They vacillated between Greek and Oriental, Roman and Christian, familiar and hybrid, but invariably the Other. We encounter these discursive dichotomies in the works of scholars as well as in the mass popularization of Byzantium in Victorien Sardou's spectacularly successful play *Theodora* (1884, 1902).

The two Byzantiums entered into dialogue with one another in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, when Russian emigre intellectuals advanced their imperial narratives in seminal publications in western European languages, such as Andre Grabar's *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin* and George Ostrogorsky's *History of the Byzantine State*. Nonetheless, the two nineteenth-century Byzantiums continue to exert their diverging gravitational pulls in unexpected ways. While Sardou's deconstruction of Procopius foreshadowed the post-modern assault on positivism, Kondakov's celebrated seminar in Prague pioneered eclectic approaches to Byzantium in a Eurasian context.

Przemysław Marciniak, University of Silesia, Katowice

Exotic and Oriental – the Reception of Byzantium and the Postcolonial Discourse

Averil Cameron drew our attention to the fact that the Saidian concept of orientalism (and more broadly the postcolonial discourse) can be applied the studies on the reception of Byzantium. Cameron's 2001 article is for me a starting point – in my paper I would like to analyse more

thoroughly if orientalism and the postcolonial methodology can be indeed used in the studies on the receptions of Byzantium.

Edward Said showed in his seminal study *Orientalism* how the occidental knowledge about Orient is constructed and how this knowledge ultimately results in creating the notion of occidental superiority over Orient. Orientalism, Said argues, was created in order to reinforce the idea of European superiority. Similarly, as Panagitis Agapitos remarked, ‘byzantinism’ was created to reinforce the Western European claim to Greco-Roman heritage without any intermediaries.

Said’s scientific orientalism is a philological phenomenon - Orient can be studied through books, therefore the physical experience of the studied subject is not required. The same, at least to some extent, applies to Byzantium – the famous Edward Gibbon had never seen places he wrote extensively about. Orientalism is understood as a ‘system of knowledge about Orient’. This knowledge presupposes a certain set of expectations about Orient: its inferiority, eroticism. Yet again the same can be said about byzantinism, which is a sum of stereotypes generated in Western culture.

Kathleen Biddick remarked that Said ‘leaves the question of history-writing’ virtually untouched in his work. Therefore, I would like to take into account mostly 19th century and early 20th century history books (histories of Greece, histories of crusades) written by non-Byzantinists for a wider audience. I will apply the methodology of postcolonial theory to investigate how ‘byzantinism’ is created and how the notion of Byzantium is constructed applying the postcolonial methodology.

Papers

Marie-France Auzépy, Professeur honoraire à l'Université Paris VIII

The Reception of Byzantium in the French Kingdom during the XVIIth c.

If, in the French kingdom during the 16th c, interest for Byzantium was a choice of humanist intellectuals, supported by the kings who wanted to be seen as enlightened sponsors, it became a political issue during the 17th c. and especially under Louis XIV’s reign. At the beginning of the 17th century, some great humanists as Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, a Provençal landlord and judge, continue the tradition of the “République des Lettres”, by their sharing of knowledge, their polyvalent curiosity and their intellectual generosity. But, under Louis XIV’s reign, the intellectuals are “au service du roi” and Charles du Cange, for instance, who wrote a still useful to-day Greek dictionary (*Glossarium mediæ et infimæ græcitatatis*), became a specialist of Byzantine history and literature to support the king’s imperial claims on the throne of Constantinople. Hence the great editorial undertaking, called the “Byzantine du Louvre”, a collection of edition and translation of Byzantine historians printed at the Court Library : its first volume, edited by du Cange and dedicated to Louis XIV, was the narrative of the Fourth Crusade by Guillaume de Villehardouin, which described the capture of Constantinople in 1204 and the establishment of the Latin empire of which Louis claimed to be the heir. The “Byzantine du Louvre” gave birth to a generation of French Byzantinists, mostly Jesuit.

Helena Bodin, Stockholm University / The Newman Institute, Uppsala

Modern Trans- and Remediations of the Encounter between Sigurd the Jerusalem-Farer and the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I

The story of the Norwegian Sigurd the Jerusalem-Farer (Sigurd the Crusader; King Sigurd I; Sigurd Jorsalfare, ca. 1090–1130) was first narrated by Snorri in *Heimskringla* (ca. 1230). The episode in which Sigurd during his crusade 1108–11 is received in Miklagard (Constantinople) by the Byzantine emperor is famous in Scandinavian culture but never mentioned in Byzantine records. The aim of this paper is to trace the many modern Scandinavian transmediations of this episode as well as of the character of King Sigurd, in order to discuss their ideological bases and possible impact with regard to medievalism and nationalism.

There are several examples: Bjørnson's play *Sigurd Jorsalfare* (1872) was set to music by Grieg (Op. 22 and 26), and Grieg's music has later on been re-arranged as modern jazz by Jormin (1984). Besides posters for didactic purposes and illustrations of the Norse sagas (1880-90's), there are the monumental tapestries designed by Munthe in 1900, representing King Sigurd's travel to Jorsal (Jerusalem) and Miklagard. King Sigurd is furthermore found in Norwegian, often unconventional historical novels by Øksendal (1970), Steen (1999), and Morten (2014). "Sigurd Jorsalfare" was lately the alias in cyberspace of Anders Behring Breivik, convicted for mass murder and terrorism in Norway 2012. Moreover, nowadays there are guided tours at the excavations of the medieval and recently rediscovered Kungahälla (north of Gothenburg, Sweden), where King Sigurd resided.

How are these transmediations interrelated to each other? Which sources are used and how do earlier transmediations affect later ones with respect to their multimodal traits? How do the transmediations reflect differing views on Byzantium? In what ways may the chosen media be ideologically imbued?

The study is pursued as a part of the Swedish research programme "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular Dynamics of World Literature" (RJ 2016-21), in which I participate with a subproject on literary representations of Constantinople. In this particular work I look forward to collaborating with art and media historian Tonje H. Sørensen, University of Bergen.

Barbara Crostini, Uppsala University / Stockholm University

Manuscripts as Reception: Two Case Studies

Although it is obvious that, through the transmission of a text in manuscripts, the reception of such text is made possible in time, successively, for the newer generations, this aspect usually receives more attention from the point of view of the text, rather than from the material viewpoint of the manuscript. In this paper, I would like to examine two manuscripts as case studies of how looking at manuscripts from the perspective of reception studies can enhance our interest in the codicological artefact and help us find a context for a work's being copied at different times. The first example will be a miscellany with palimpsest leaves, now in the Vatican Library as *Vat. gr. 495*, where an eleventh-century core was restored, augmented, and commented on in the fourteenth. The thematic coherence of the additions shows a conscious effort of appropriating the earlier codex for further use. The second example comes from eighteenth-century Sweden, where the bishop of Linköping, Enricus Benzelius, showed a special interest in the ascetic works of Abba Isaiah, and organized an expedition to Oxford to have the text copied for his philological work. The result is still extant in a Greek manuscript at Linköping Public Library with the shelfmark kl. f. 9.

The case studies will highlight the value of looking at manuscripts from the point of view of reception, and discuss the interest in doing so and raise questions on the methodology required in the field of Byzantine studies.

Isabelle Dépret, University of Marmara / University of Brussels

Mount Athos promoted in the UNESCO World Heritage: Competitive Collaboration between Religious Communities and the Greek State for the Control over Byzantine Heritage (late XXth Century- beginning of XXIst Century).

Major remnant of Byzantine Legacy in contemporary Greece, Mount Athos is still inhabited by christian orthodox male communities. By the late XXth Century, the peninsula is being promoted as a living Monument, as evidenced by its registration in UNESCO World Heritage (1988) following an Hellenic Ministry of Culture's proposal.

This process - which seems to confirm the distinctive place of Byzantium within historiography, archaeology and national representations in Greece – also highlights complex relationships between religious communities and the State. Two examples – the recent promotion of the « natural heritage » thematic and cases of Axion Esti icon's transfers outside the peninsula – will show how the athonite heritage can be invested with new meanings and mobilized within the framework of contemporary issues.

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, Uppsala University

Same but Different – Receiving and Transforming Word and Melody in Byzantine Music

This paper examines different strategies of translating and adapting hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church into modern day English as cases of reception and transformation. The Greek Orthodox (neo-Byzantine) church music is almost exclusively vocal and monophonic chant. In contradistinction to the hymns of the protestant Churches, the hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church, many of which date back more than a thousand years, are not metric; that is, rather than following a strict metre in each verse of a stanza, the stanza is closer to rhythmic prose, where most verses of a stanza have a different pattern of accented and un-accented syllables. Furthermore, the relationship between the words of a hymn and its melody is very intricate. The accentuation and number of syllables in a phrase determines the melodic shape and result in different "formulae" of common melodic phrases.

This raises a problem when the text of a hymn is translated into another language, for instance English, where words and phrases have different accentuation and number of syllables. In the early adaptations of the 20th century in America, the melody and rhythm of the of the original Byzantine hymn would be kept unchanged and the English translation made to "fit" the original melody with an at times quite procrustean result. In the most recent adaptations by for instance J.M. Boyer from Cappella Romana and the monks of St Anthony's Monastery in Arizona, the melody is recomposed to fit the rhythmical patterns of the English translation. By paying careful attention to the melodic formulae of the enormous treasure of Byzantine hymns (entailing many thousand melodies), melodies are constructed that adhere closely to the tradition of the original hymn and at the same time are completely new.

Olof Heilo, The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

Waiting for the Barbarians: Conservative Visions of Byzantium

The historical continuity that the Byzantine Empire is perceived to have represented in a changing and volatile world has undoubtedly contributed to the negative notion of its rigidity and lack of innovativeness, but also earned it a positive aura of stability and legitimacy against barbarism. Particularly its resistance to the expansion of Islam from the seventh century until the final fall of Constantinople in 1453 seems to have rendered it the likeness of a European bulwark against Asia and the Orient. But while the similar narrative of the ancient Greeks withstanding the Persians has become a popular symbol of liberal resistance against tyranny, Byzantium has been exploited by more conservative elements in Europe as a historical role model, particularly Russia. This paper strives to examine whether this falls back on an underlying East-West- dichotomy or rather derives from hierarchic and anti-liberal notions of society.

Sergey Ivanov, St Petersburg / Moscow

Byzantium and Russia Between East and West

In recent years, Russian official rhetoric and “patriotic” mass media have commonly cited Byzantium as a historical lesson for Russia. Although the rise of militant Islam in today’s world and its threat for Russia could perfectly fit into a historical parable about the Orthodox Empire crashed by the Muslim fanatics, – such pictures are never drawn. The current conflict between Russia and Turkey may evoke memories of, and analogies with the glorious Russian-Turkish wars, but Byzantium does not play any role in this context.

On the other hand, the pernicious role played by the Catholic West in the Byzantine demise is emphasized more and more. The Union signed by the Emperor in Florence is equated with Gorbachev’s “capitulation”, and the Westernization efforts of the late 80s and 90s – with the betrayal of “national values” by figures such as Dimitri Kidonis or Barlaam of Calabria.

The slogan of the day is: Islam enslaved only bodies of the Orthodox Christians, whereas the Catholics sought to defile their souls. Paradoxically, this is tacit recognition of the fact that the West is appealing and seductive.

Matthew Kinloch, University of Oxford / Uppsala University

What we Don’t Notice from the Shoulders of Giants; or Reception in Byzantine Historiographies

Modern students, even of Byzantine history, are now inundated with scholarly studies on their topics of study. There has, obviously, never been so much stuff to read. Scholars tend to characterise previous methods of writing history as old and outdated. Furthermore, in modern academia, we are incentivised to move forward, past, and beyond these methods. We snigger as we stroll past the feeble attempts of the classical historians to formulate their object of study, sigh as we gloss over the contradictions in the *prooimia* of Byzantine authors, laugh smugly as we pass the historicists, and frown as we skirt uncomfortably around the postmodernists, before finally arriving at our own work, the latest fad of the moment. Although we have constructed and systematised multiple tedious methods of referencing the work that underpins our own, we are not always as scrupulous as we could be in tracing the genealogies of the stories and ‘facts’ that we take for granted, before moving on. In this paper I will use examples from late Byzantine historiography to consider how the reception of historical narratives first from Byzantine to modern, and then between modern historians, has impacted on how modern historical narratives describe and explain the Byzantine past.

Tonje H. Sørensen, University of Bergen

The Fountain with the Golden Ceiling – Reflections on Neo-Byzantine Materiality and Transnational Exchanges.

The German fountain of Emperor Wilhelm II was constructed on Sultanahmet Square in 1900. Held in a Neo-Byzantine style with a golden mosaic in its domed ceiling, the fountain was to commemorate the German emperor's visit to Istanbul and the various political, military and cultural exchanges between Imperial Germany and late Ottoman Turkey. In both style and location the fountain seemed to emphasise the historical importance of Constantinople and its byzantine heritage. However, the fountain had been designed and developed in Germany. In fact, the marble, stone, gems and mosaics that made up the fountain had all been pre-made in Germany, and subsequently shipped to Turkey where it was merely assembled. As such the fountain was a template whose origin and production was to be found in late 19th Century Germany, and gave material shape to the ideas and conceptualisations of Byzantinism in the fin-de-siecle,

Still, the shape, form and location of the fountain echo its surroundings, and so the Neo-byzantine creation blends with its historical location. Using the fountain as a starting point it will be reflected on the remediating and transformative role of historicism, and how historical monuments can make us aware and re-evaluate history while at the same time being ahistorical.

AnnaLinden Weller, Uppsala University

Fragmentation-Citation-Assemblage: Aesthetic Recognition, Byzantine Encyclopaedism, and Transformative Works

This paper uses the Byzantine practice of encyclopaedic assemblage, along with concepts of *fragmentation* and *citation practice*, to interrogate concepts of originality as a necessary component of 'good literature' – both Byzantine and modern. I will compare Byzantine practices of citation and 'aesthetic recognition' – the pleasures of recognizing the familiar and being able to participate in a shared connotative world – to contemporary practices of 'transformative work', i.e. video remixes, fan fiction, and 'remakes', in order to discuss how Byzantine methods of recognizing 'good' or 'skilled' construction of texts can provide useful methodological analysis of 'unoriginal'/transformative work being produced now.

Publishing?

Vassilios Sabatakakis, Lund University

Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies