

### Plenary III: Infrastructures: "News"

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A committee of young scholars from different countries and different disciplines has been commissioned by the organisers of the Congress to seek submissions for a newly constituted session in London. This is called "News", part of the "Infrastructures" section. The plenary session of the section is twofold: a lecture on the state of the discipline and its infrastructures given by Ihor Sevchenko, and "News". "News" consists of six projects related to Byzantine Studies which are intended to make a specialised area more widely accessible. They focus on progress since the last Congress and indicate directions for future research. Each project will be presented very briefly.

*Michael Grünbart (Vienna): Bibliography on Byzantine material culture and daily life*

The "Bibliography on Byzantine Material Culture and Daily Life", which is based at the University of Vienna (visit <http://www.univie.ac.at/byzantine>), covers the period from 300 AD to ca. 1500 AD. The terms "material culture" and "daily life" include both the entire inventory of products manufactured by the Byzantine society, irrespective of their utilitarian, aesthetic, or symbolic purpose and not manufactured products and techniques like mental representations, socio-economics structures, social relations, language and art. All secondary sources concerning objects of daily life and material culture of the Byzantine era are collected. Special attention is and will be paid to archaeological reports and exhibition catalogues, where remains of Byzantine daily life are often mentioned, described or even illustrated

The regularly updated bibliography is designed as an open access database. Due to its construction it allows easy online access for all medievalists from anywhere and any system (PC and Macintosh). It provides various search strategies (including Boolean operators) according to its types of fields: Free word-searching (author names, titles, sources, keywords) or index searching (publication date, place names, categories). In addition a system of categories has been developed for accompanying each entry with one or more of these.

At the moment (July 2006) it contains about 4500 entries.

*Michael Jeffreys (Oxford and London): Byzantine seals for 11th-12th century historians: an on-line database of 5,000 matrices*

This project begins to bridge a perceived gap between sigillographers and the historians and others who use their work. There is an explosion of sigillographical publications, often mentioning seals beyond those forming the centre of the edition. Corrections to previous work often appear in these references. As a result, it is dangerous to use an edition by Schlumberger or even Laurent without scanning all subsequent bibliography for updates. Devastating changes occur when a well-preserved seal is judged identical to a damaged seal in an old publication. The best attempts of distinguished earlier editors may need drastic surgery. Those using such an edition may find their hypotheses overturned. At present, the only way to avoid this danger is a careful reading of hundreds of books and articles. The best help available is informal consultation of expert sigillographers and the periodical *Studies in Byzantine Sigillography*, both of which are very useful, but for different reasons not full solutions.

The Prosopography of the Byzantine World began work on seals in 2001 with this problem in mind. Its seals section assumes that a user interested in a seal wishes to find its latest edition. From a reference to a collection or a publication, the user may quickly access a boulloterion page, containing a title (details of the owner), a simple statement of iconography, an original language edition of the seal's legend, its English translation, diameter, and three lists: of editions, of seals struck from the same matrices, and of find-spots of such seals, where information survives.

The site now includes 5,000 matrices and some 7,500 seals from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. When integrated into the whole prosopography (available in August 2006) they will have a wider range of uses. The site is not a solution to the problem described, but a useful beginning.

*Olga Karagiorgou (Athens and Munich): Byzantine themes and sigillography: I. The sigillographic corpora of the themes of Hellas, Opsikion and Armeniakon*

This research project aims to shed new light on aspects of the creation, structure, prosopography and social character of the Byzantine themes by using seals in a way that promises to be beneficial, not only to the fields of Byzantine state administration and prosopography, but also to Byzantine sigillography itself.

The project was conceived during the 20th International Congress of Byzantine Studies (Paris 2001) and since then work has mainly focused on issues of methodology (collection, presentation and analysis of the material), as well as on the compilation of the sigillographic *corpus* for the theme of Hellas. Since March 2006, the first stage of this project, entitled ‘The sigillographic *corpora* of the themes of Hellas, Opsikion and Armeniakon’, is being supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (Bonn). It is hoped that, upon completion of this first stage, work will continue on the compilation of the sigillographic *corpora* of the other Byzantine themes.

The project aims to bring together, *for the first time*, all the known published and unpublished sigillographic material belonging to officials posted in each theme. All relevant seals for a single theme are examined according to the standards set by modern sigillographic studies, in order to date them as accurately as possible and to establish how many officials they represent (since an individual may be attested by more than one surviving seal, often coming from different boulloteria). The officials attested in the sigillographic record of each theme are then arranged chronologically (by century) and according to the public sector in which each of them served (military, civil, financial, judicial or ecclesiastical). Such lists, showing the chronological succession of various officials in the same post within the same theme (e.g. lists of strategoi), offer Byzantine sigillographers a new tool in their effort to narrow the date of various seals down to decades. The strict arrangement of the officials according to the public sector they served also helps to illuminate the debated issues of the origins and development of the theme system, and offers a clearer insight into the administrative structure of each of the themes, especially when compared with each other.

The project also addresses questions of social power and mentalities by investigating which Byzantine families in a particular theme were traditionally associated with the administration of a particular sector, thus revealing trends of nepotism within the Byzantine society, as well as the particular interests that important Byzantine families had in certain regions of the Empire. Finally, study of the type of decoration that prevails on the seals of each theme (for example, a preference for the depiction of particular saints, religious scenes or other representations) reveals certain artistic preferences pertaining to one geographical region or the other.

*Caroline Macé and Peter Van Deun (Leuven): Archaeology of Byzantine encyclopedism in Leuven: editing and exploring Byzantine encyclopedias from the 10th, 12th and 14th centuries*

The "Byzantine Encyclopaedism" in the technical sense of the word, as Lemerle coined it, is viewed as a characterization of the culture of the Macedonian period. This expression can also be used in a sense which is narrower in terms of object and larger in terms of time, namely to designate a tendency of Byzantine culture (from the 9th c. onwards? or does it start earlier?) to produce "encyclopaedias" (in the modern sense of the word?)

A proper study of this phenomenon requires first to produce critical editions of the extant encyclopaedias. Indeed, in this area of Byzantine literature the lack of critical edition is particularly striking. The project to be carried on at the Catholic University of Leuven will consist primarily in the critical edition and analysis of three encyclopaedias from different periods:

- the two first books of the *Florilegium coislinianum* (9th cent., Constantinople),
- the *Summa* of Neilos Doxopatres (12th cent., Sicily),
- the *Synopsis* of Joseph Rhakendytes (14th cent., Thessaloniki).

We will attempt to answer a series of questions: what was the purpose of these compilations? to which audience were they intended? what was the method of work, the way of composition of these encyclopaedias? which were the sources and the antecedents? are they reflecting the concerns of their time or are there pure intellectual, "disembodied" pieces of work?

As a complementary goal, we will also take advantage of this research to experiment further on (relatively) "new" stemmatic methods, imported from phylogenetics (method of classification of living beings in systematic biology). This innovative and promising methods were initiated by scholars in modern and medieval philology, and we have already tested them on a Greek Patristic manuscript tradition as well as on an artificially created tradition.

*Gabriele Mietke (Berlin): The Contribution of architectural sculpture in Cilicia to early Byzantine history*

Die Byzantinische Bauornamentik Konstantinopels ist verhältnismäßig gut erforscht. Ihre Untersuchung trug zur Klärung von Fragen der Wirtschafts-, Reichs- und Sozialgeschichte sowie Chronologie bei. Dagegen stehen entsprechende Untersuchungen der Bauornamentik der byzantinischen Provinzen mit Ausnahme von Syrien bisher aus.

Das vorgestellte Forschungsvorhaben beinhaltet, die frühbyzantinische Bauornamentik der Provinzen Kilikia I und Isauria im Rauhen Kilikien in der Südtürkei möglichst vollständig zu

dokumentieren. Diese Region bietet sich aus zwei Gründen besonders an. Zum einen ist die materielle Basis ausreichend umfangreich. Zum anderen wurden mit kilikischer Kirchenarchitektur weitreichende historische Annahmen verbunden. Insbesondere wurde dem byzantinischen Kaiser Zenon, der aus Russumblada in Isaurien gebürtig ist, eine umfangreiche Förderung seiner Heimat unter anderem in Form von Kirchenstiftungen zugeschrieben. Sein Tod im Jahr 491 soll ein Versiegen dieser Geldmittel und damit einen wirtschaftlichen Niedergang der Region im 6. Jahrhundert zur Folge gehabt haben.

Ziel des Forschungsvorhabens ist es, diese Annahmen mit Hilfe der Bauornamentik dieser Kirchen zu prüfen. Da im Rauhen Kilikien durch Inschriften oder historische Quellen datierte Architektur fast völlig fehlt, bietet die stilistische Datierung von Bauornamentik außerdem ein Mittel, Bauwerke zeitlich einzuordnen. Schließlich soll Fragen der Werkstattorganisation, Produktionstechnik und des Verhältnisses zwischen lokalen Traditionen und Anregungen aus anderen Provinzen oder Konstantinopel nachgegangen werden.

*Alexander Musin (Saint-Petersburg): "The centre in and beyond the periphery": an age later. Material and religious culture in the middle and late Byzantine Empire and Old Russia in the light of mutual interpretation*

The present paper proposes some new possibilities for the investigation of the Middle and Late Byzantine World with help from archaeological data of Russian territory of the period from 750 to 1500 AD. The focus is especially on the North-Western Russian towns' cultural layers of Novgorod the Great, Russa, Ladoga and Pskov. The archeological evidence, consisting of combs, beads, glass bracelets and vessels, pottery, seals, some other minor objects and, especially, Christian objects of private devotion demonstrates an aspect of Byzantine material culture. The finds often have the precise chronology obtained by the dendrochronological method and are well associated with everyday life material remains. This circumstance helps to gain a more precise chronology. The archaeological context allows us to show how these objects via the social and cultural entered into local culture. The comparative investigation of the periphery's cultures objects, their usage, context, chronology and spatial distribution and that of Byzantine centers can help refine our understanding of this diffusion. In some cases, the archaeological evidence from the Byzantine periphery can keep the earliest and the most well preserved examples of objects of art and everyday life. This phenomenon can be regarded as a kind of historical regularity of accumulation and retention

of archaeological information. Forming a qualified international research group along these lines of inquiry for a long-term project can solve this task. This paper focuses on the most remarkable series of finds, especially of Christian antiquities, and tries to demonstrate the scientific importance and cognitive meaning of Russian materials for the understanding of Byzantine civilization.