

## **ABSTRACTS**

*Legacies and Entanglements: Religious Identity, Cultural Tradition and Political Order in the Byzantine Sphere.* Edited by Nunzio Bianchi and Mircea Duluş. Heidelberg: Herlo Verlag, 2023, 315 p. *Études byzantines et post-byzantines*, n.s. V (XII)

### **György Geréby**

*One Sword or Two? The Theology of the Byzantine Solution*

The main issues in Byzantine political theology have a theological grounding. The vision of *Novel 6* of Justinian offered a lasting formula for the relationship between the Emperor and the Church, different from the Western foundational text, the Letter of Pope Gelasius to Emperor Anastasius. The persistence of the formula can be seen even at the end of the fourteenth century in the strange letter of Patriarch Anthony IV to the Grand Prince of Moscow, defending the office of the emperor. In opposition to a large part of the scholarly literature, this essay attempts to offer reasons why the Byzantine emperor did not have a sacerdotal character and why he was no absolute ruler of the Church's spiritual mission. Instead of the modern term "separation of powers", the Byzantine idea was based on the division of offices and their inseparable conjugated role, implying a principled cooperation and symphony with eschatological implications. Hence, the Western conflict about investiture and its central allegory of the "two swords" did not emerge in the Byzantine discourse, albeit the Western debate was known in imperial circles. The two offices remained conjoined in the East. Therefore, there could be only one "sword", as shown in the conflict between Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos and Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos. The role of Melchizedek cannot be used to justify the priestly role of the emperor.

### **Daniel Oltean**

*Greek Palestinian Networks in Rome:*

*Monks, Texts, and Customs on the Move after the Arab Conquest (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> cent.)*

The paper investigates the role of Palestinian monastic migration in shaping the religious identity in Rome between the seventh and ninth centuries. It discusses persons, writings, and customs of Palestinian origin travelling to the West and significantly influencing the religious life of the city. The paper argues that this movement created a mixed Latin-Greek religious identity, including anti-Monothelite and anti-Iconoclast arguments promoted by Palestinian monks, patristic and hagiographic texts from the East, and liturgical practices first used in Palestine.

### **Linda Safran**

*From Sinai to Southern Italy: The Symbolic Geography of Saint Catherine*

This paper evaluates the evidence for the cult of Saint Catherine of Alexandria/Sinai in Byzantine and post-Byzantine southern Italy as a way of interrogating Byzantium's symbolic geography. It considers the movement of people and books both eastward and westward; hagiotoponyms, onomastics, and literary evidence; Catherine's relics and frescoed *vita* cycles in Italy; and architectural analogies between one of the saint's cult sites in Italy and her basilica on Mount Sinai.

### **Mircea Duluş**

*Eugenios of Palermo's Theory of Kingship:  
Political Legitimacy, Hierarchy and the Order of Society*

This article explores Eugenios of Palermo's theory of kingship as enclosed in his *Poem XXI* (ed. M. Gigante). Eugenios presents a theoretical framework which refrains from speaking of the king's divine rights or his ministry through the will of God. Instead, he proposes a theory of elective kingship in which he suggests that the earthly rulers are "appointed from among ourselves to rule with our consent". The analysis argues that this theory is unlikely to have been propagated during the reign of William I or William II as hitherto presumed in scholarship. Instead, it suggests that the poem was a propaganda tract meant to establish the legitimacy of Tancred of Lecce's claims to the Norman throne. It may have been prepared for Tancred's coronation or his heirs, Roger III or William III.

### **Michele Trizio**

*The Boundaries of Scholarly and Philosophical Life in Byzantium: A Sociological Approach*

Taking a cue from a recent paper that dismisses Byzantine philosophers as mere scholars incapable of producing innovations, this paper suggests that Byzantine intellectuals from the eleventh to twelfth-century regarded scholarship as a spiritual endeavour that leads to a blessed lifestyle. An analysis of four significant figures in Byzantine intellectual life makes it clear that scholarship and paideia should not be disregarded as the token for a merely antiquarian interest in antiquity but rather as tools for achieving perfection in this life. This special status of perfection is often characterised as an intermediate between an upper and lower boundary, to be identified with philosophy and rhetoric. Finally, the paper locates the self-representation strategy of the Byzantine intellectuals within the broader picture of European intellectual life in the Middle Ages.

### **Nunzio Bianchi**

*Between Rhetorical and Practical Use in the Late Thirteenth-Century:  
Photios' Letter 11 in the Ms. Barocci 131*

In the Ms. Oxford Bodl. Libr. *Barocci* 131, dated to the second half of the thirteenth century and copied by many scribes, is transcribed Photios' letter 11, never collated so far. It is unclear why Photios' letter was copied in *Barocci* 131. Still, it can be argued that it has been collected in this manuscript for possible rhetorical interests and practical use by officials and secretaries, such as Nikephoros Alyates, active in the Empire of Nicaea and the early Palaeologan chancery.

### **Chiara D'Agostini**

*Reading the Ptolemaic Oikoumene in the Late Thirteenth-century Constantinople:  
between Science, Cultural Appropriation and Politics*

At the end of the thirteenth century, the Byzantine polymath Maximos Planudes claimed to have rediscovered the long-coveted text of Ptolemy's *Geography*, a second century geographical treatise meant to provide a scientific way to represent the world into maps. With the sponsorship of the emperor Andronikos II, Planudes supervised an edition of the work and celebrated it by penning five epigrams on the *Geography*. Beyond the substantial impact of this enterprise on the textual transmission of the work, Planudes' approach to the *Geography* encapsulated in his epigrams can tell us more about the social, cultural and political context in which this treatise was received and engaged with. This paper looks specifically at this reading and use of the *Geography* with the objective to gain new insight into the symbolic function assumed by the

Ptolemaic *oikoumene* in the early Palaiologan context. By underlining how this renewed attention to geography was not merely the result of erudite interest, I will look at geography as something functional to historically situated constructions of space and power. My analysis will offer the possibility of tracing a distinctive late Byzantine approach to geography by connecting the interest in spatiality to contemporary political concerns, leading to a fresher reading of the Palaiologan appropriation of the *Geography*.

### **Antonio Rigo**

*Mystical Intersections around 1300. Elijah's Posture on Mount Carmel*

The article deals with the body position used for prayer by Byzantine monks in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, as witnessed by Gregory of Sinai and Gregory Palamas, was well known and practised in that same period by Jewish pietists and Muslim Sufis in Alexandria with a common awareness of the precedent represented by the episode of Elijah on Mount Carmel. The parallel between these practices and their reinterpretations in the three religious milieus suggests that we are dealing with some form of interaction, rather than with a chance convergence. The direct relations between *ḥasidim* and Egyptian Sufis are well attested, while positive testimonies about the relations with the Byzantine monks seem to be lacking.

### **Florin Leonte**

*Addressing Power in Joseph Bryennios' Epistolography: Metaphors and Figurative Discourse*

Known as a prolific fifteenth-century Byzantine court preacher, Joseph Bryennios lived during a period of upheaval in Byzantium's political and ecclesiastical milieu. During his sojourn in Crete and shortly after his return to Constantinople in 1402, Bryennios used his rhetorical skills to become a close confidant to Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. This article investigates the metaphoric language in Bryennios' letters, by connecting it to differences in addressee status and changing social order. Evident in his epistolography is a transition from an exile seeking a higher social standing to a well-placed figure within Constantinople's scholarly circles. By examining his use of visual analogies, the study uncovers how Bryennios constructed relationships with high-ranking ecclesiastics and negotiated authority. These metaphors and rhetorical devices, embedded in his letters, not only signalled his evolving social standing but also reinforced shared representations of power and friendship with his audience, fostering deeper understanding and acceptance. Bryennios' letters thus offer an insight into the interplay of language, rhetoric, and power during late Byzantium.

### **Mihai Țipău**

*From Byzantium to Phanar. The Relics of Saint Theophano the Empress*

For more than a century and a half, it was assumed by Byzantine scholars that everything was well-established about the relics of Saint Theophano the Empress. From the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, then to the adjacent Church of the All Saints and the Monastery of Saint Constantine, it was thought that the relics were translated in post-Byzantine times to the Church of Pammakaristos and then to the subsequent patriarchal cathedrals and finally to the Saint George Church in Phanar where they lie today. However, thorough research involving a wide range of historical sources (Greek, Italian, French, Slavonic, and Arabic) – little known or neglected by previous studies, suggests otherwise. As most of the other relics kept in the Patriarchal Church of Saint George cannot be tracked down in Byzantine Constantinople (an exception is the Column of the Flagellation), it is possible that they were brought to the city after 1453. The study follows the evidence related to the relics of Saint Theophano in Byzantine and Post-Byzantine times, uncovering a far more complex history than hitherto suspected.

**Radu G. Păun**

*« Pour que le Seigneur les reçoive dans Son royaume ». La mémoire des donateurs valaques et moldaves au monastère athonite de Hilandar (ms. Hilandar 511)*

The memorial books of the Athonite monasteries were only rarely approached by scholars, who generally paid little or no attention at all to the liturgical commemoration of the ktetors by the Athonite communities. The present essay deals with a memorial book kept in the library of Hilandar monastery (ms. Hilandar 511, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries). The analysis of this valuable document sheds light on the relations between the “great Serbian lavra” and the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia and provides relevant clues for the study of the commemoration practices. The part under scrutiny (ff. 1<sup>r-v</sup>, 7<sup>r-v</sup>, 10<sup>v</sup>) is published in the Appendix (transcription and facsimile).