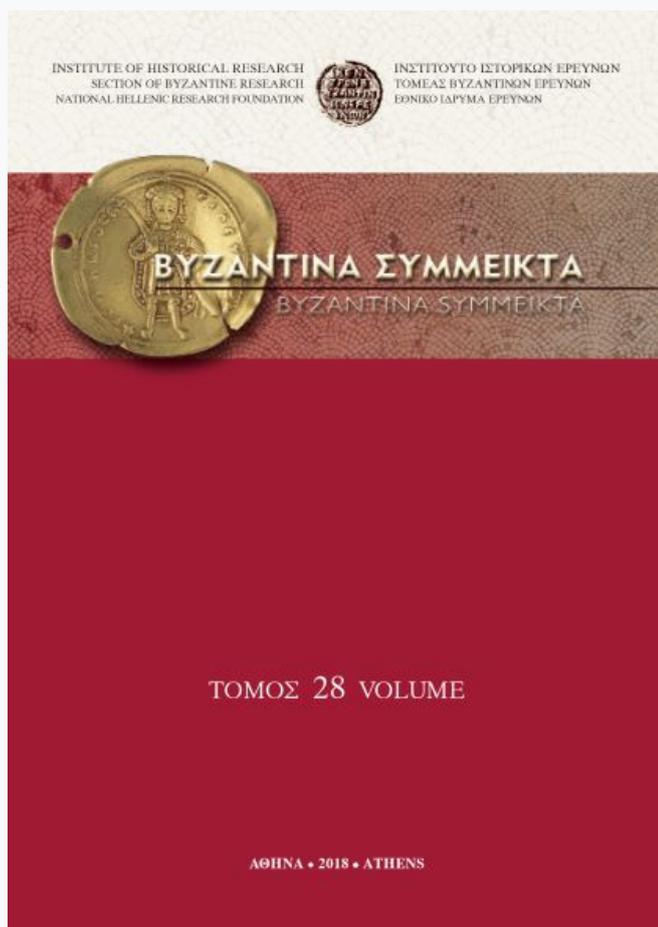


## Byzantina Symmeikta

Vol 28 (2018)

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 28



**Book Review: Tassos PAPACOSTAS - Maria PARANI (eds.), Discipuli dona ferentes. Glimpses of Byzantium in Honour of Marlia Mundell Mango [Byzantios. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization, 11], Turnhout 2017.**

*Maria LEONTSINI*

doi: [10.12681/byzsym.19048](https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.19048)

Copyright © 2018, Maria LEONTSINI



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

### To cite this article:

LEONTSINI, M. (2018). Book Review: Tassos PAPACOSTAS - Maria PARANI (eds.), Discipuli dona ferentes. Glimpses of Byzantium in Honour of Marlia Mundell Mango [Byzantios. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization, 11], Turnhout 2017. *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 28, 443–445. <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.19048>

TASSOS PAPANICOLAOU – MARIA PARANI (eds.), *Discipuli dona ferentes. Glimpses of Byzantium in Honour of Marlia Mundell Mango* [BYZANTIOS. Studies in Byzantine History and Civilization, 11], Turnhout 2017, pp. xxx+486. ISBN 978-2-503-57585-8

The volume includes twelve essays offered to Marlia Mundell Mango. It begins with the introduction, and acknowledgements by the editors Tassos Papanicolaou and Maria Parani, and the publications list of Marlia Mundell Mango, compiled by Valanto Constantinou (pp. vii-xxx). The contents are divided into three thematic sections with subject topics related to multiple areas of Byzantine archaeology and material culture. The first section entitled: “Of people, animals, goods and the networks that linked them” includes five studies; the first one by Alkiviadis Ginalis, “The Pelion Peninsula. Byzantine port networks along inhospitable coastlines” (pp. 3-35, 17 figs.) provides a full comment on the data obtained from on-site surveys of the coastal areas of Thessaly, which are examined together with spatial information and written material and elucidate the regional institutional framework. The next paper “A river runs through it. The role of the Tigris and Euphrates in transport and communication in Late Antiquity” by Marlena Whiting (pp. 37-67, 4 figs.), examines references on the types of craft circulated in the riverside limes zone of Mesopotamia in relation to the actual conditions prevailing in the region. The subsequent study of Tassos Papanicolaou, “Reconstructing the road network of the Byzantine periphery. Medieval Cyprus as paradigm” (pp. 69-97, 8 figs.), is based on information deriving from pilgrimage texts, hagiography, historical accounts and monastic documents and presents the traces of the Greek and Roman road system which partially survived in the middle Byzantine period. The next study by Michael Decker “Animal and zoonotic diseases in the Ancient and Late Antique Mediterranean. Three case studies” (pp. 99-118), looks into a series of incidents identified as anthrax and bubonic plague and recommends the need for further investigation of the epidemics alluded in the sources. The essay of J. Eric Cooper

“The possibility of sericulture in Byzantine Cappadocia” (pp. 119-147) deals with the geographical features of the district in relation to natural resources, while perceives and interprets sigillography and the local cultural *and logistic data as evidence for sericulture activities* in central Asia Minor.

The next section, bearing the title: “Of daily life and its paraphernalia” begins with the essay of Yvonne Petrina, “Late Antique diadems. The extant material” (pp. 151-179, 3 figs.), which discusses the typology, date and provenance of ornamental headbands and suggests that the extant pieces were probably used in marriages or other ceremonies. The next study by Maria Parani, on the “Medieval Byzantine furniture” (pp. 181-221, 6 figs.), exploits archaeological, written and visual evidence of household equipment that show the significance of the use of furniture in Byzantine daily life and the role of equipment in the official ceremonies. The study of Anthousa Papagiannaki, “Experiencing the exotic. Cheetahs in medieval Byzantium” (pp. 223-257, 2 tables, 9 figs.) explores the presence of this animal in a range of activities, mostly in entertaining events and hunting procedures, in the light of Byzantine and Muslim sources and its representations in manuscripts and everyday objects.

The essays of the last section titled: “Of art and identity” deal with religious and secular architectural constructions as well as the promotion of aesthetic concepts and artistic values in society. Elif Keser-Kayaalp, in her study “The monastery of Mor Barṣawmo in the Ṭur ‘Abdin. Artistic continuities and encounters” (pp. 261-290, 10 figs.), presents a rock-cut complex placed within the network of settlements on the North Mesopotamian plateau and examines the “architectural scenery”, the inscriptions and carved decoration and ornament influenced by local artistic traditions and Islamic architecture. The next essay “What’s in a name? Constantinople’s lost ‘Golden Gate’ reconsidered” (pp. 291-320, 5 figs), by Georges Kazan, investigates the first Golden Gate in the walls of the Byzantine capital suggesting convincingly that the gate founded by Constantine I was located on the triumphal route from the Hebdomon to the Great Palace. Simon Davies, in his essay entitled “The imperial image in Middle Byzantine sculpture. Some lesser-known marble relief fragments from Constantinople” (pp. 321-362, 4 figs.) suggests that the fragments found in the city’s quarter of Mangana correspond to a marble relief of an enthroned emperor; very plausible seems also the identification of the marble fragments recovered from the church of Saint Saviour in Chora monastery belonging to a sculpture representing the sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos, while another piece is tended to be recognized as a part of a work depicting a scene with an archangel.

A number of issues related to cross-cultural interactions are addressed in the essay: “Medieval Byzantium in the context of artistic interchange between East and West. The illuminating example of the inlaid brass door at Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome” (pp. 363-424, 18 figs., 2 tables) by Natalija Ristovska, which is followed by the publication and comments of “The historical inscriptions on the inlaid brass door at Saint Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome” in the Appendix by Marina Bazzani and Natalija Ristovska (pp. 425-445). The origin of the materials, the comparative search for geographical locations, where similar metal casting techniques were applied, and the analysis of the Latin, Greek and Muslim inscriptions bestowed evidence upon the identity of the founder of St. Paul’s door. It is correctly argued that this specialized craftsman could have a mixed West Syrian-Armenian origin and his skills were acquired in this region. The ordering of the piece in the Byzantine capital by distinguished patrons, who eventually transferred it to Italy, proved Constantinople as a major node of crafts and artistic production. The volume is completed with the abstracts, the list of contributors and an index by Marian Kyriakidou (pp. 459-486). The research papers presented in the volume address cutting-edge questions on spatial structures and the environment; launch also new approaches on the pathogenesis of populations and elucidate various aspects of art works within the boundaries of Byzantium and in areas adjacent to its border zones, thus putting forward a range of advanced interpretations on research issues that refer to Byzantine material life and the contacts forged with neighboring cultures in the West and the East.

MARIA LEONTSINI

Institute of Historical Research/NHRF  
Section of Byzantine Research

