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Book review: E. JUHASZ (Hsgb.), Byzanz und das Abendland V, Budapest 2018

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E. JUHÁSZ (Hrsg.), *Byzanz und das Abendland / Byzance et l'Occident V. Studia Byzantino-Occidentalia* [Antiquitas-Byzantium-Renascentia 32], Budapest 2018, pp. 196. ISBN 978-615-5371-91-2

The volume consists of a short prologue by Erika Juhász (pp. 11-12), in which the aims and progress of the series is explained, followed by twelve essays dealing with subjects ranging from the time of emperor Justinian (527-565) to the Ottoman conquest of Hungary.

Peter Schreiner's lengthy article "Der Koloman-Palast in Konstantinopel und die Árpáden" (pp. 13-38) is a discussion of a palace in Constantinople known as τοῦ Καλαμάνου, dedicated by the Botaneiates family to the pretender Boris, son of king Coloman (1095-1116). The author attempts to identify the fate of the building, of which a description survives and whose association with Hungarian royals is lost after the reign or death, of emperor Manuel I Comnenus (1143-1180). However, it is revealed as a gift to the Genoese, in whose quarters it was included, during the reign of Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282-1328). According to the data offered by the author, the palace appears to have been a typical aristocratic place of residence, with no exceptional characteristics. It is placed in the area known as τὰ τῶν Καλυβίων in the north of the city and close to the mouth of the Golden Horn. A detailed reference to dynastic relations between Byzantium and Hungary seems to be unnecessary for the present reviewer, while a reference might not have been completely out of place. Four appendices are included, dealing with various genealogical trees showing the interrelationship of royal families, and a final appendix describing the details of the palace, as found in the Italian translation of the imperial chrysobul to the Genoese.

It is rather unusual that Hermann Harrauer's contribution "Polizei und Papyri" (pp. 45-54) found its place in this volume, which deals mainly with Byzantium and the West. In his article, the author attempts to describe the various duties as well

as institutional developments in the role of those responsible with police duties, ever since the Ptolemaic period and up to the 4th century. His main conclusion is that changes were not substantial, however the duties of specific offices were expanded during the Roman period. Harrauer quotes extensively from documents pointing to a variety of different cases in which police activity was involved. For the present reviewer the place of this very interesting article should be at a more specialised papyrological journal, if not for other reasons, because a number of Greek documents and even Egyptian terms are quoted and it is common knowledge that terms which appear in the Greek papyri are sometimes highly technical or locally specific, and requires deeper understanding which is not the case with the average reader with a good grasp of Roman and Byzantine Greek.

Gerhard Thür's essay on "Justinian und Gaius: Gedanken zu ihren *Institutiones*, den elementa des Rechtsunterrichts" (pp. 55-66) treats the subject of the development in methodology from the *Institutions* of Gaius in the third century AD, to the *Institutions* of Justinian, in relation to elements of private law, quoting four specific cases. Unlike what might be expected, that is, an attempt to define how the jurists of the Justinianic era reworked the Gaian text, he points to the way in which antiquarian material was incorporated to the Justinianic institutions, so that students could have the whole substance without needing to refer to the original. In this way, he concludes that the emphasis on the importance given to the *Digest* to the detriment of the *Institutions*, should be revised, as the latter equipped young jurists and law students with the means of acquiring a concisely presented but complete knowledge of legal development of an element from classical to Justinianic times.

On the fourth essay, on "Dynastic Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the Middle Ages" (pp. 67-74), Zoltán Farkas attempts to tackle various qualitative values concerning those royal marriages, and especially questions related to their importance, the train of a bride and the gradual severity of canon law in Byzantium with relation to kinship. Essentially, the author looks at the Byzantine court as the receiving end, and makes no comments on the contraction of marriages involving Byzantine brides and Arpadian kings, such as Géza I (1074-77), which set a precedent for future marital relations. Someone would wish to see an expansion from Kerbl's conclusions after his monumental work on the subject "Byzantinische Prinzessinen in Ungarn", Vienna 1979, by expanding on his conclusions. However, it is to Farkas's credit that he updates extant literature, especially Hungarian which is little known to foreign scholars, to the present. There is however one thing that

needs to be corrected. the author is referring (p. 72) to Stephen IV as son of Géza II (1141-62), when in fact he was his brother, like Laszlo II who followed him in 1163-4.

Tamás Mészáros has contributed with a philological essay (pp. 75-83), comparing a fragment of the history of Laonikos Chalkokondyles found in Vat. Gr. 1408, (pp. 154v-155r) which deals with the battle of Kossovo of 1389 and in particular, different versions for the death of sultan Murad II (r. 1360-89). By indulging in minute philological observations and different traditions, the author concludes that the relevance of the fragment in Vat. Gr. 1408 is related to the text in two Parisini (Par. Gr. 1780 and 1781) all of which provide a more accurate text of Chalkokondyles. Thus emendations should be made as with Darko's authoritative edition of the text. The article, one of the most original in the volume, is not easy to follow, due to its minute philological comments, but its clear conclusions should be treated with the utmost care by will-be editors of Chalkokondyles.

Jan-Markus Kötter's article on "Interesse an Byzanz? Was abendländische Chronisten vom Osten wissen" (pp. 85-98), explores the interest and knowledge of western chroniclers for Byzantium. He tackles the very difficult time of the 5th century, when, thanks to the so-called barbarian invasions and the division of the empire into eastern and western portion, information in the West concerning the east became scanty and erratic. The author examines three major chroniclers, the anonymous author of the Gallic Chronicle of AD 452, that of Prosper of Aquitaine, and finally that of the Galician bishop Hydatius. He rightly points out that their goals were different, with the Gallic chronicle being interested primarily in Gallic affairs and ready to ignore not only eastern, but even Italian affairs, Prosper selecting his information with regard to his own ecclesiastical interests, and Hydatius who might be willing to pump more of whatever information he might possess, being restricted through geographical isolation. As the next century proceeded, interest for the East would dwindle but would not vanish completely until after the reign of Justinian (527-565). Kötter's article is of great interest for scholars working on Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, but, bearing in mind that later Western chronicles follow up on some major events of the East, even if with errors, the subject needs further research. After all, what can someone make of Italy, which fairs not much better than the East in this context? Perhaps a chronological indication (5th century?) might have been useful, as conditions appear to change in subsequent centuries. Thus, the question should be posed, following the author's very interesting contribution, whether this process continues or is reversed with the

more sophisticated machinery of government which resulted in a more stable form of communication among the *regna*?

In his article on “Wiehernde Pferde und westlicher Einfluss auf die Divination der Komnenen- und Palaiologenzeit“ (pp. 99-114), Salvatore Costanza turns to the supernatural and the importance of oracles, well known in antiquity, to deal with a phenomenon unknown before the age of the Comnenes, i.e, neighing of horses, a Western practice then introduced in Byzantine chresmology, which remained popular until the age of the Palaeologi. The author points out that this particular practice (gr. *χρημετισμός*), was introduced together with various other western practices, and was expected to transmit a sinister or unfavourable omen, such as defeat in battle. This became especially evident in the Norman expeditions to the Balkans against Alexios I Comnenos in the 1180s, but the author stresses two important examples, that of the neighing of horses to Baldwin II, Latin emperor of Constantinople in 1259, predicting the capture of the city by the Byzantines, and the same effect at the end of Andronikos II's reign in 1328, when the omen was supposedly that he would be succeeded by his grandson Andronikos III, with whom he had fought a lengthy civil war. The importance of the practice lays in the rejection of the assumption that magic practices came entirely from the East, and it becomes clear that this way of predicting the future was a typical Western form which found its way in Byzantium. Two mistakes have been spotted. On p. 103, Alexios III is twice wrongly referred to, instead of Andronikos III, while on the following page (p. 104) Alexios III Angelos is referred to as Alexios I.

Travelling to the Balkans at the time of the Ottoman expansion must have been a risky undertaking, albeit extremely interesting for modern historians and archaeologists. Fortunately this topic has been addressed in this volume by Boris Stojkovski in his essay on “Bertrandon de la Broquière on Byzantium and Serbia. Richness and Decline in the Age of the Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans” (pp. 115-132), who collected such information supplied by the Burgundian aristocrat and visitor Bertrandon de la Broquière (c. 1400-1459), who made a trip to the Middle East, partly as pilgrim, partly as spy in 1432-33. Stojkovski rightly offers an introduction and profile of the Burgundian knight which greatly assists the reader comprehend his mission and attitudes. Concentrating on De la Broquière's impressions of Constantinople and then Serbia, the paper stresses the contrast of negative comments towards the Byzantines, mostly attributed to religious reasons and the extant hatred of the Greeks towards the true Christians, i.e. the Roman Catholics, whereas this does not apply for the Serbians who, despite their

Orthodox creed, are positively portrayed. The same applies to the topography, with Constantinople being a once rich city now in a grave state, while Serbia is a rich, populous and self-sufficient country. Stojkovski rightly points out that since the Burgundian was not a member of an official delegation, access to the Byzantine palace and its daily conduct was restricted, whereas none of all this applied during his Serbian passage. Information on Serbia takes an even more significant momentum, since he is one of the few witnesses to describe despot Durad Brancovic as a personality. The paper is full of interesting information, but the English should have been looked more carefully, since there are passages where the meaning of what the author wants to say, is either altered, or not clearly expressed. Nonetheless, the account described renders this paper a very interesting testimony for the Balkans in the period of Ottoman expansion and fading Constantinople.

In her contribution on “Maiuma and Saint John’s Eve”, Anna Judit Tóth (pp. 133-150), tackles the interconnection and development of certain festivals in late antiquity and the Byzantine and post-Byzantine world, which are connected by one single element: the use of water. The author tackles the maiuma of Syrian provenance which developed from a purely rustic to a full-fledged urban festival in Constantinople and Antioch at least, performed in a specially built pool on stage, widely criticised by both Christian and pagan elites. It is followed by the Marzeah, a far less ambitious festival celebrated by Syrians and Jews, apparently of Phoenician origin, and celebrations involving water performed in various forms under the idea and pretext of Christian baptism, and especially on the date of the nativity of St. John (June 24th). This date coincided very well with the former celebrations of the solistice. Despite prohibitions in canon 62 of the Trullo council (692), similar practices continued to exist as they were discussed by the twelfth century legal commentator Theodore Balsamon, and the use of rituals involving water in specific festivals, were related to the practice of telling the future, as with the ritual known as *λεκανομαντεία*, and its posterior practice of the *κλήδονας*, according to which personal objects are placed into the vessel filled with water under ritually determined circumstances, the vessel is covered and left outdoors, the following day the objects are pulled from the water while the participants sing a song, and they interpret the line of the song during which their object was pulled out as a prophecy regarding their fate, for instance, they try to find out the identity of their future husband. It would be interesting, if she knows of it, for the author to comment on the ritual libation with holy water (*ἀγιασμός*) in schools and other establishments at the beginning of each academic year or during an inauguration ceremony which is

routinely practiced in Greece up to this day. The article is interesting and certainly provocative to further research. Like the previous paper, but to a far lesser extent, some corrections on the English text might be welcomed. I only quote one instance (p. 145) where “nativity of Saint John and June 24” should be on June 24. The word *auctor* is also used instead of *author*, and I can not see any reason this was done on purpose.

A palaeographical paper by Péter Ekler follows (pp. 151-160), in which he makes an attempt to compare a Latin version of Cardinal Bessarion’s *De ea parte evangelii* found in ms 438 of the Corvina collection, now in Budapest, with the editio princeps of 1532 by the Viennese scholar Johannes Alexander Brassicanus, and its rendering in *Patrologia Graeca* 161. The author tries, through a careful comparison of all three, to establish whether the Corvina text was the principal instrument in Brassicanus’s edition. By comparing all three plus Bessarion’s Greek text, he has discovered some 40 instances in which some serious, and some less serious, discrepancies occur. Though the evidence needs further investigation, he concludes that the Corvina manuscript is unlikely to have been used by Brassicanus, and it is only at that point that he specifies the existence of other manuscripts of the Latin rendering. For the present reviewer, an introductory comment of the work’s manuscript tradition earlier in the text, would have been useful in realizing the various possibilities present to the editors, not least to both Brassicanus and Migne. But the paper forms a very good and systematic starting point for further research of this question.

The volume’s chief editor, Erika Juhász, returns with a paper on “Herrscher in der Osterchronik” (pp. 161-174) to the chronology of rulers as presented by the anonymous author of the 7th-century chronicle, known as *Chronicon Paschale*. She indulges in complex forms of calculation of rulers’ dates, taking into account various forms of dating, and trying to make a coherent total of them. Even where there are discrepancies, she explains, the author is trying to reach chronological accuracy by amalgamating the dates for two or three rulers so that the relatively comprehensive chronology may result. Her conclusion is that by contemporary standards, the author of the chronicle is remarkably accurate, and that various inaccurate or falsified dates are the fault of copyists rather than that of the original compiler.

A second paper by Boris Stojkovski “Ottoman Conquest of Hungary through the Lens of the Byzantine Short Chronicles” (pp. 175-187), concludes this series of articles with a report on the conquest of Hungary, as viewed through the lens

of the Byzantine short chronicles. This is a fairly little discussed topic, since the short chronicles, due to their nature and date, have remained on the periphery of Byzantine literary sources. He tackles this subject from the end of the 14th until well into the 16th century. In reality, half of this article treats events in which Hungary was directly involved such as the battles of Nikopolis (1396), Varna (1444) and Kossovo II (1448) where no direct conquest of Hungary is to be spotted. This is a reality for the second half of the article, which is the place that justifies its title as presented. The author conducts a systematic research and makes the best out of the existing bibliography. However, as with his previous article, greater care should have been given to improve the English before the volume was printed. However, it is important to stress that this review was conducted from the camera ready pdf copy, and I must therefore keep some reservation on the event that a few mistakes have been corrected thereafter. The article itself provokes the conduct of further research, especially with regard to the analogy between the geographical location of a chronicler when known, and the knowledge he possesses on events taking place at a considerable distance.

Some typos have been also spotted: Schreiner, p. 14, n. 2 “live instead of life”. In p. 77, n. 126, Darko should be written instead of Darke. Chonist for Chronist (p. 167). Maginificent for magnificent (184) and Wirte instead of write (p. 185, n. 425), County instead of country (p. 187).

Despite its weaknesses, this is a pleasant volume to read, although it would be better if editors concentrated more on greater thematic conformity, which would render the volume more usable for appropriate research.

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