
Rosetta

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Reviewed by Jacopo Marcon.

Krueger and Nelson's book is a collection of thirteen papers presented at the annual symposium of the Byzantine Center at Dumbarton Oaks in the spring of 2013. The essays cover a wide range of topics related to the Greek New Testament in the Byzantine era and the Middle Ages, and explore its impact upon contemporary culture. The first half of the volume is more closely related to the codicological and philological aspects of the Byzantine Greek New Testament, with a special focus on the different typologies of holy books and on the production of New Testament manuscripts. The second offers a thorough examination of the interpretation of the Greek New Testament in Byzantine literature, textual criticism and history of art.

The first chapter, 'New Testament of Byzantium: Seen, Heard, Written, Excerpted, Interpreted', by Derek Krueger and Robert S. Nelson, contextualizes the contributions of the volume and summarizes the different contexts of the use of the Greek New Testament in Byzantium. Starting from the assumption that 45% of all Byzantine New Testament manuscripts are lectionaries, rearranged in the order of the liturgical year, they emphasize the importance of viewing the New Testament in connection with the Old Testament, as a 'single source of religious authority and instruction' (p. 20).

'New Testament Textual Traditions in Byzantium', by David Parker, is probably the most philologically-oriented chapter within the work. Parker revises the classical definition of the Byzantine text-type, or *textus receptus*, which is basically the text produced by Erasmus in his 1516 edition of the New Testament, assuming that this text is not Byzantine at all. Rejecting the traditional approach to the creation of the Byzantine text-type, Parker proposes a more innovative understanding of the survival of ancient and unusual variants in Byzantine manuscripts. By means of concrete examples, he demonstrates that this approach might be useful either to verify the ancient variant readings 'surviving in only a very few Byzantine manuscripts or even in a single one' (p. 24) or to identify late Byzantine copies as witnesses of early forms of the text.

In 'The Textual Affiliation of Deluxe Byzantine Gospel Books', Kathleen Maxwell uses cluster tools to investigate the relationship between scribes and illustrators in

Byzantine manuscripts. In the appendix with the data of the cluster examination, the case of Theodore Hagiopetrites, Byzantine scribe and illuminator, is particularly intriguing. He seems to be involved in the production and decoration of deluxe and ordinary gospel books at the same time. After analysing manuscripts from the sixth to the thirteenth centuries, Maxwell concludes that scribes of deluxe and ordinary codices, for an aristocratic commission and a monastic use respectively, must have had access to a common repository of manuscripts in Constantinople (maybe the Patriarchal Library).

Chapter four, 'Patriarchal Lectionaries of Constantinople: History, Attributions and Prospects', by Robert S. Nelson, and chapter five, 'Producing New Testament Manuscripts in Byzantium: Scribes, Scriptoria, and Patrons', by Nadezhda Kavrus-Hoffmann, are two interesting contributions on manuscript production in Byzantium. Nelson's essay focusses on the patriarchal lectionaries, luxurious manuscripts designed for the internal use of the patriarchal library of Constantinople. Aiming to identify more patriarchal lectionaries on the basis of some common codicological and textual features, he provides several examples of manuscripts that seem to perfectly fit into that category, but that, unfortunately, do not share all the required hallmarks.

On the other hand, Kavrus-Hoffmann's main purpose is to demonstrate the existence of three different types of scriptoria in Byzantium: monastic ones, for the internal production of the monastery, independent ones, for commercial use, and finally the *ergasteria* that 'produced manuscripts both to enlarge their monastic library and sell to outside buyers' (p. 139). Finally, Hoffmann hypothesizes interconnections between the manuscripts from independent workshops and those of the monastery of Studios. Due to the palaeographical and codicological similarities among manuscripts from different workshops (the manuscripts from Studios and those from the so-called independent *ergasteria*), Hoffman suggests the possibility of an influence of the Stoudite manuscripts over the others. Another possibility is that both the Stoudite and the independent production could share the same models, in terms of writing, decoration, ruling pattern and codicological features (maybe from the Patriarchal Library in Constantinople).

The chapter 'The Reception of Paul and of Pauline Theology in the Byzantine Period' by Fr Maximos Constas aims to reflect on the exegetical interpretation of the Pauline

letters in Byzantium. Starting from literal interpretations of Origen and John Chrystotom, the 'archetype of the biblical exegesis' (p. 151), he passes through the commentaries of the Middle Byzantine Period (Euthymius Zigabenus and Theophylact of Ohrid) and the *Catena*e, collections of biblical exegesis, on Paul. Finally, he analyses some test passages from the *Triads* by Gregory Palamas, in order to stress the influence of Pauline theology in the Hesychast controversy.

The next three chapters deal with different aspects of the New Testament in the Byzantine literature. The first one ('The Hagiographer's Bible: Intertextuality and Scriptural Culture in the Late Sixth and the First Half of the Seventh Century', by Derek Krueger), is an analysis of the biblical quotations in some of the most famous Byzantine hagiographic works. This implies a useful consideration on the level of familiarity of the audience with the text of the New Testament and, as a consequence, on the creation of different literary subgenres according to the social and cultural background of the readers. The second one ('The Interpretation of the New Testament in Byzantine Preaching: Mediating an Encounter with the Word', by Mary B. Cunningham) investigates how the interpretation of the New Testament in preaching changes from the patristic to the Byzantine era. Cunningham mostly focusses on four rhetorical aspects (literal, moral, allegorical and typological interpretation), differently used according to the days and the feasts of the liturgical year. The last one ('Bearing Witness: New Testament Women in Early Byzantine Hymnography', by Susan Ashbrook Harvey) is a thorough examination of two opposite ways of describing women in the Byzantine Hymnography: as positive models within the disorder of the Orthodoxian community of the IVth century (Ephrem) and, more subjectively, as the embodiment of the Christian's aspiration towards perfection (Romanos the Melodist).

Chapters Ten ('Contemplating the Life of Christ in the Icons of the Twelve Feasts of Our Lord', by Charles Barber) and eleven ('Narrating the Sacred Story: New Testament Cycles in the Middle and Late Byzantine Church Decoration', by Nektarios Zarras) offer interesting perspectives on the interpretation of the New Testament in Byzantine art. Aiming to demonstrate the increasing interest in the second half of the eleventh century in the depiction of Christ's life, Charles Barber considers the interrelations between the representation of the Twelve Feasts of Christ in a commentary on the divine liturgy by Nicholas of Andida and the innovations in the decoration of the templon beams. Similarly to Barber's contribution, Zarras discusses

how in the mosaic cycles of selected monasteries of the Middle Byzantine Period, the juxtaposition of the biblical scenes (Baptism and Resurrection in particular) is deeply inspired by the Byzantine literature: according to John of Damascus, they represent the burial of original sin and the possibility of redemption for those who are baptised respectively.

In the chapter 'Conservation and Conversation: New Testament Catenae in Byzantium', William Lamb offers a detailed overview of the Byzantine Catenae of the New Testament. Aiming to consider Catenae as open books that gather citations from patristic sources, Lamb provides a detailed survey of the Catenae of the New Testament, with analysis of the different types and a summary of previous scholarship. Lamb stresses the importance of the literary and theological value of the New Testament Catenae, and, in doing so, he invites the reader to study a catena 'for what it is, and not simply for what it might yield' (p. 299).

The final contribution of the volume ('The Afterlife of the Apocalypse of John in Byzantium', by Stephen J. Shoemaker), summarizes the troubled history of the Apocalypse of John within the biblical canon of Eastern Christendom. Due to the ambiguous judgment of Eusebius and its political implications, manuscripts started to be copied from the eleventh century onwards, with a special increase after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The second half of the chapter makes a comparison between the commentaries of Oecumenius and Arethas of Caesarea on Revelation.

Generally speaking, this volume offers a comprehensive panorama regarding the use and interpretation of the Greek New Testament in Byzantium throughout the centuries. It includes contributions from different fields, and is helpful for anyone who wants to approach biblical studies (not) for very the first time, especially the New Testament. Whilst including all aspects of Eastern Byzantine biblical culture is an inspiring idea, the interdisciplinary approach is not always fully fleshed out and the contributions, as detailed as they are, could be better related to one other. Moreover, the topics of Catenae and the Uspenskij Gospel are repeated twice in the volume. Nonetheless, this book is an optimal resource for scholars on the New Testament, Greek Palaeography, Byzantine Philology, and Art History.