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Ivana Jevtić, Nikos D. Kontogiannis, and Nebojša Stanković, eds., *Religious Buildings Made in Byzantium: Old Monuments, New Interpretations*. New Approaches to Byzantine History and Culture. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024. 417 pages, with 91 black-and-white (print version) and color figures (e-book). ISBN: 9783031688683

The field of Byzantine architecture constitutes a well-articulated area of study dominated by ecclesiastical structures, for the material remains of this long-lived medieval state are primarily, though not exclusively, religious in character. The book under review here, coedited by Ivana Jevtić, Nikos D. Kontogiannis, and Nebojša Stanković, centers on the question of what sets religious buildings "made in Byzantium" apart, evoking the idea of a trademark. Above all, this is a question about identity as expressed in architecture. Considering the question's vast geographical and chronological scope, its answer is neither singular nor straightforward, yet each chapter in this volume provides its own response to the problem, piecing together a broader understanding of Byzantine religious architecture. In a field where the scholarship is often as dated as the monuments that are its subject, the authors of the present volume offer fruitful discussions, asking many unorthodox questions and satisfying the expectations raised by the volume's subtitle: *Old Monuments, New Interpretations*.

Following an insightful introductory chapter by the editors, the book proceeds with thirteen essays, grouped thematically into five sections. Each chapter deals with a different set of research questions concerning Byzantine religious architecture—some related to methodology, others to liturgical, historical, or historiographic discussions. As described in detail in the introduction, the initiative that eventually resulted in the publication of this book began as a workshop under the same name, originally planned to be held in Istanbul in October 2020. Because of the global outbreak of COVID-19, this eventually turned into a three-day-long online gathering held in May 2021. Robert Ousterhout, a towering figure in the study of Byzantine architecture who sadly passed away in April 2023, prepared the concluding remarks in the workshop and was initially slated to write the introduction. Although the latter plan could not be realized, numerous citations to his works and ideas on Byzantine architecture make his presence felt throughout the volume.

The articles in the volume's first section examine broader issues about the physical settings of churches, their exteriors, and carved and painted decorations. "A Medieval Eye," written by Bilge Ar, is a thought-provoking chapter and a perfect fit for a volume that heralds new interpretations. Ar criticizes the Eurocentric deductive approach common in the scholarship for failing to account for the intricate details of Byzantine architecture. Inspired by the design and construction processes in the medieval East, here signifying Byzantine, Turco-Islamic, and Armenian architectural traditions, she suggests an inductive interpretation, a method that starts from the human level and expands. This methodology is then applied to analyze church exteriors and how they were designed to communicate with the surrounding built environment. The adoption of an Eastern medieval eye rewrites the narrative and enables an appreciation of three-dimensional qualities in Byzantine architecture, instead of a search for monumentality and prominent façades, as in the West. The second chapter presents an intelligible overview of Byzantine architectural sculpture. Nicholas Melvani examines the formative role of carved decoration in the design and construction of Byzantine churches, often embedded in the fabric of the walls, becoming one with the buildings' structures. The last chapter of the first section undertakes the mission of reconciling painted decoration with the buildings themselves, as the former has usually been considered secondary by architectural historians and studied separately. Ivana Jevtić attempts to reinterpret middle and late Byzantine churches from the perspective of painters. The paintings are applied not only to the interiors but also to the exteriors of many Byzantine buildings as a final layer, protecting churches both physically and spiritually. The undulating surfaces of Byzantine churches become meeting points between painters and builders, an often-overlooked artistic collaboration integral to church making.

The second section of the book deals with two lesser-studied parts of Byzantine churches: entrance porticoes and chapels above sanctuaries. For the former, Maréva U adopts a spatial anthropological approach, using the concept of liminality. She focuses on human experience in her analysis of porticoes in monastic settings, whether open or semi-open, connecting the exterior to the church interiors. Reconstructing past human experiences in a space is a challenging task, as it depends on the individuals' or communities' background, expectations of, and familiarity with a particular space. Accordingly, U argues that porticoes of monastic churches were pre-liminal spaces, especially for the members of the monastic community, setting the stage for them to enter the liminal space of the narthex. In the next chapter, Marka Tomić examines the chapels above the sanctuary of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Ohrid, the southern one being the only middle Byzantine example of this sort with extant wall paintings. Based on art historical and architectural evidence that the monument offers, Tomić reconstructs the close connection between the new ecclesiastical institution of the autocephalous archbishopric in Ohrid and Constantinople.

The third section addresses the spatial reflection of the liturgy and the movement in and around religious buildings during specific rites or public ceremonies. Christina Maranci's article discusses the physical setting of the Armenian rite of reconsecration of a polluted church and its possible meanings for the participants, pushing the limits of related historical, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence.

She envisions this ritual as being performed in the seventh-century church of Mren following two centuries of Islamic control. This form of "informed speculation," as Maranci describes it, may offer scholars an effective means to hypothesize about historical phenomena that are not readily accessible via the sources as traditionally used. The next chapter examines the expansion of symbolic meanings attached to church interiors outside the physical building shell. Konstantinos Raptis demonstrates how the dome of the Church of Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki functioned as an ambo for the city's chanters and readers to gather and perform around during an annual nocturnal ceremony, the Order of the Proclamation in the Dome, while the streets and public space around the cathedral became an unbounded nave for the faithful. The ninth-century reconstruction of the dome, with built-in staircases allowing access to its outer rim, is interpreted within the context of this open-air ritual. Two other major ecclesiastical monuments in Thessaloniki are also included in the discussion, namely, the Acheiropoietos Basilica and the Rotunda, as they similarly feature arrangements leading to elevated platforms overlooking public spaces.

The book's fourth section is a collection of three essays discussing how broader socio-economic ties and social affiliations of individuals, communities, and institutions may have affected church architecture in Byzantium. The first chapter, co-authored by Justin Mann and Fotini Kondyli, employs the term "architecture of affiliations" to examine the deliberate architectural choices of middle Byzantine monasteries in Central Greece. Monastic communities either fostered a shared architectural language to anchor themselves in their regional setting and the broader monastic network they belonged to or else cultivated a distinctive appearance to highlight their independence and compete for resources. The next chapter, written by Nikos Kontogiannis, is a study of rural communities on the island of Andros through the religious monuments of the Byzantine, Frankish, and Ottoman periods. In conjunction with discussions of local conditions and the broader historical setting, Kontogiannis demonstrates how church architecture reflects the political and socio-economic changes in the history of the island through material choices, workshop practices, landscape relations, and patronage patterns. In the third essay, Anastasios Tantsis examines the gallery spaces in Byzantine churches and their association with courtly and, more specifically, imperial presence. Highlighting once again the often-cited yet frequently overlooked contribution of written sources to the study of Byzantine architecture, he offers a textual analysis of the use of church galleries in Constantinople by the emperors, the imperial court, and noble women. Providing a privileged space in the vertical hierarchy, church galleries in the new administrative centers of the late Byzantine period signified social affiliation with the imperial family.

The fifth section deals with the long lives of religious buildings, whether through historiographical discussions and the shifting meanings they acquired over long traditions of scholarship, or within their changing historical contexts through repairs, functional transformations, or abandonment. Ayşe Ercan Kydonakis's article falls into the former category. The phantom of the Mangana Complex, neither standing nor easily accessible, continues to haunt scholars of Byzantine architecture. The French occupation army hastily excavated the site, which later became a restricted military area, between 1921 and 1923. Employing new evidence from the museum's rescue excavations and her own field observations, Ercan Kydonakis shows that the earlier functional and chronological identifications by Robert Demangel and Ernest Mamboury, taken as fact by generations of architectural historians, were, to a large degree, fabricated based on scant archaeological evidence and an imaginative use of texts. Accordingly, the structure known as the Church of St. George, which has occupied a central place in the perennial debate about Eastern influence on middle Byzantine architecture, may not even be an ecclesiastical building. The next chapter turns to Lascarid architecture, a subject that has been little studied. Suna Çağaptay discusses how the bifold identity of the Lascarids was reflected in their church constructions, which, on the one hand, featured elements of twelfth-century Constantinopolitan architecture and, on the other hand, borrowed stylistic elements from neighboring states, including the Seljuks, Armenians, Serbians, and Bulgarians. She reclaims the term "stylistic eclecticism" to situate Lascarid architecture more accurately within the building traditions of thirteenth-century Anatolia and the Balkans. In the last chapter, Elif Keser-Kayaalp offers a diachronic study of a single monument in Tur 'Abdin: the Church of Mor Addai in Beth Ishoq (now Başakköy). Tracing the building's history beyond its original context, she reconstructs a remarkable sequence of transformations. The Syriac church not only displays features characteristic of the region but also notable affinities with Byzantine village churches, even though not literally "made in Byzantium."

As this succinct reflection on each chapter makes clear, this book is not another survey of Byzantine religious architecture but addresses buildings, methodological questions, and historical phenomena often overlooked and left out of the survey books. Engaging with the earlier literature, the contributions in this volume push the field's disciplinary limits and explore possible future directions for the study of Byzantine architecture. Readers of the *YILLIK* may question its relevance to Istanbul. Among the thirteen articles, only one, by Ayşe Ercan Kydonakis, speaks specifically about a Constantinopolitan monument; however, in almost all, the authors relate their study material to the imperial city. The Byzantine capital is almost nowhere to be found in the volume, yet it remains ever present. It is already in the name: the trademark "made in Byzantium" cannot exclude Byzantium or "the ghost of Constantinople," as the editors put it. For example, more than half of the essays touch upon the century-old discussion of regional schools and challenge or add nuances to the idea that Constantinople was the sole artistic center of the empire, from which plan types and architectural ideas were exported

to the provinces. The Constantinopolitan influence is undeniable, yet noncritical engagement with center–periphery discussions runs the risk of sentencing Byzantine architecture outside the capital to a merely passive role. Though some essays follow a more traditional track, the volume as a whole, following in the footsteps of Slobodan Ćurčić and Robert Ousterhout, demonstrates that Byzantine architecture evolved simultaneously and independently, yet not in isolation, in both the capital and the provinces. Related to this discussion, the article by Justin Mann and Fotini Kondyli deserves special mention, for it introduces an alternative interpretative approach, the architecture of affiliations, which privileges meaning over the type of such relationship.

Lastly, the volume's unapologetic use of the term "Byzantine" should not go unremarked, considering the current trend away from it. This is obviously a disciplinary difference rather than an ideological one, in line with the general reluctance for such relabeling in the fields of archaeology and history of art and architecture. The reason for continuing to employ the term is not simply about avoiding possible confusion with the Ancient Romans but also a matter of identity and a deliberate choice to distinguish the civilization and its material culture at the heart of this volume. This need cannot be entirely avoided by the proponents of novel terminology either, as becomes evident in their use of various qualifiers together with the term "Roman" ("New," "East," "Eastern," etc.). From the perspective of material studies, the substitution of the term "Byzantine" with "Eastern Roman"—a term which, as may come as a surprise, also carries negative connotations outside Western academia—would not add much to the discussion of cultural continuity, nor would it offer a new interpretative outlook toward old monuments. Besides, "Made in the Eastern Roman Empire" would not resonate in the same way as "Made in Byzantium" does.

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Emily Neumeier and Benjamin Anderson, eds., *Hagia Sophia in the Long Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024. 312 pages, with 41 color and 54 black-and-white illustrations. ISBN: 9781474461009

> St. Sophia, early as it is in the history of the art, … is most vigorously alive. [I]t is not bound by the past, but it has garnered all that there was in it which was fit to live and produce fresh life; it is the living child and the fruitful mother of art, past and future.[1]

This is how William Morris, artist, designer, poet, thinker, social activist, and founding member of the British arts and crafts movement, summarized the impact of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. The church that was founded by Constantine I and restored by Justinian I is not just a monument, is not even *the* monument. The "crown of all great buildings in the world" is an archetypical example of a building redolent with centuries of meaning and significance in the historical, cultural, religious, social, and political spheres, and even in the popular imagination. Through its many restorations, transformations, re-consecrations, and rehabilitations, the building has remained still "vigorously alive," and its past, modern, and post-modern re-imaginings not only shaped the identity and image of Byzantium, the Holy Empire of the Romans that gave birth to it, and the Muslim Ottoman Empire that inherited its legacy, but seem to resonate still as far as the other end of the Atlantic.

The present volume, edited by Emily Neumeier and Benjamin Anderson, is exceptionally pluralistic. In addition to a comprehensive introduction by the editors that sets the framework and provides a detailed biography of Hagia Sophia, it contains nine studies in diverse fields (history, archaeology, art history, literature, folklore, and religious studies) and a variety of methodological approaches that unravel fascinating aspects of the monument's life in the "long nineteenth century," more specifically between 1739 and 1934.

Hagia Sophia has been regarded primarily as an architectural marvel, and the Ottoman period represents one of the most intriguing phases in the monument's architecture and appeal. In the volume's first chapter, Ünver Rüstem discusses the conversion of the imperial mosque of Hagia Sophia into a lavish charitable mosque complex on the initiative of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730–54). Besides the artistic value of the endeavor, which legitimatized Ottoman baroque and introduced Istanbul to the international baroque scene, the ambitious project established the use of the monument for political purposes in the modern era and strengthened the image of Mahmud as a man ahead of his time and great sponsor of the arts.

Art and politics were certainly behind the numerous reproductions of Hagia Sophia's architecture and specific architectural elements, primarily the legendary dome. In chapter 6, Robert Nelson examines one of the most radical such reproductions, one that attests to the monument's universality and its impact as a global signifier. The author discusses, based on a case study of the Tifereth Israel Synagogue (founded 1924) in Cleveland, Ohio, by the architect Charles R. Greco, the emergence of the so-called Byzantine synagogue style, which had Hagia Sophia as its prototype. The architect of the project was Catholic, the building expresses the religious spirit of the Jewish faith, yet, at the same time, it