

# Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies

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**VOLUME III**

**ABSTRACTS OF  
COMMUNICATIONS**



# Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies London, 21–26 August, 2006



## Volume III

## ABSTRACTS OF COMMUNICATIONS

ASHGATE

Edited by F.K. Haarer and Elizabeth Jeffreys, with the assistance of Judith Gilliland

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## Foreword

The Communications offered by participants in the quinquennial International Congresses are perhaps the most significant of the three elements that have come to make up the modern congress of Byzantine Studies. The Plenary Papers, and more recently the 'Panels' (or 'Tables Rondes'), are largely devised by the organising committee, though with due attention to comments and expressions of interest made by the Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines and the National Committees for Byzantine Studies. The Communications, however, represent the individual and personal interests of the participating scholars, ranging from the newly-fledged to the veteran. The breadth of topics covered offers exciting opportunities for the exchange of views and the furthering of research in all areas of Byzantine Studies to a greater extent than can be achieved by the Plenary and Panel papers. The Communications have been arranged in this volume into thematic groupings following the division of subject areas as arranged in the Panels, with papers in alphabetical order by author. The fit is not always neat – not all panel topics have elicited communications that can be put under their heading, and so the contents page of this volume does not have a tidy numerical sequence. Equally the number of communications to be associated with any one panel-title varies. Please be aware that communications, still in these thematic groupings, are further sub-divided in the Congress Programme into groups of six or eight in order to fit into the timetable. The Congress Programme is distributed to all participants in the Congress at Registration.

The Communications have been submitted in a variety of languages (and fonts) and, more insidiously, in a variety of national formatting conventions: they have been lightly edited to achieve a modicum of uniformity, but many inconsistencies have been allowed to stand, particularly in the transliteration of proper names.

This volume, finalised in the first week of May, contains, in addition to the abstracts for the Communications, abstracts for Posters and for contributions to Panels which reached the editor after the relevant volume had gone to press.

The editors, and the Organising Committee for the Congress, would like to acknowledge the generosity of the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Costopoulos Foundation, and the continuing patience of John Smedley of Ashgate Publishing, all of which have enabled the appearance of this volume.

*F.K. Haarer, London  
Elizabeth Jeffreys, Oxford*

Theme VII  
BYZANTIUM AS DISPLAY

The second example is an encolpion, found on the territory of present day Slovakia, with three faces engraved on it. It has been dated by the author of the present article back to the period before the sixth century. The three faces are supposed to represent the Holy Trinity, but stressing the Crucified Christ, which relates to the idea of the sixth-century heresy of theopaschism. The promoters of this idea (mostly Syrians) understood the Trishagion as being dedicated not to the Trinity (as do the Orthodox) but to Christ. Theopaschism was probably spread mainly by Syrian missionaries and traders travelling on the international Danube trade route. The encolpion cross testifies that the theological disputes which troubled Constantinople reached even beyond the outskirts of the empire.

The last example is an amulet – a pendant cross – from Sady, Moravia, with the inscriptions ICXC (Christogram) and NIKA (victory) at the end of the arms, and FOS (light) and ZOE (life) in the central part of the cross. The reverse of the cross has not only the significance of the obvious symbol depicted on it – the Crucified Christ – but also the meaning of Christ's Baptism. In the light of this interpretation, Christ's garment, colobion, appears to be more a baptismal chiton. The interpretation of the word NIKA suggested here relates more to baptismal illumination FOS, when, through baptism, the adept – according Christian literature – found new life, ZOE. Another method of reading the above-mentioned inscriptions is the old technique of gematria, the result of which confirms the Christian continuation of the Hellenistic tradition of divine participation in all created things. This cross was meant to represent Byzantine missionary policy. However, there is a spelling mistake, which was common in non-Greek speaking provinces, suggesting that it is there that we must look for the origins of our cross.

The above examples of metalwork prove the variety of religious ideas coexisting in the milieu of the Byzantine cultural sphere. The present study attempts to recover their original meaning, which need not have been well understood even by their contemporaries.

Andjela GAVRILOVIĆ

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*Vuk Branković and his fresco portrait in the church of the Mother of the God Peribleptos in Ochrid*

Vuk Branković was a Serbian historical figure who lived in the transitional, and tumultuous second half of the fourteenth century; he was a member of last ruling Serbian dynasty that ruled Serbia until it fell into the hands of the Ottoman empire. His fresco portrait, although partly damaged, is preserved on the western façade of the northern chapel of the church of Virgin Peribleptos in Orchid.

Judging by the appearance of Vuk's portrait from the Virgin Peribleptos, he was born around the year 1345, at the time of the reign of king, and later, tsar Dušan Nemanjić (1331–1355). Around 1365 after the execution of the frescos on the western façade of the northern chapel dedicated to Saint Gregory the Theologian, and probably because Mrnjavcevici had seized Orchid, Vuk left for Drenica. Around 1371 he married Mara, the eldest daughter of prince Lazar, improving his image. At the time of his greatest prosperity his territory included Kosovo and Metochia, part of Lim river valley and part of Pestern



plateau. The city of Pristina was his capital. At the battle of Kosovo, he led the right flank of the Serbian army. He survived the battle and recognised the supreme power of the Turkish sultan Bayezid I (1389–1403). But Vuk was not a loyal vassal to the sultan and was sent to prison, where he died on October 6, 1397.

The portrait on the western façade of the Chapel of Saint Gregory the Theologian, presents him as a young man, without a beard. He is shown in a frontal posture, with a halo around his head. His face is rather damaged. His red hair falls around his shoulders in curls. He is dressed in a ceremonial robe. The lower part of the figure is completely destroyed. Vuk is presented in gesture of prayer, addressing Saint Gregory who is depicted above the entrance of chapel. At Vuk's left, there is an inscription, in Serbian: 'Sir Vuk, son of sebastokrator Branko'.

Vuk Branković was an active historical figure of his time, though in the shadow of his father-in-law, prince Lazar. Lazar had the support of the Serbian church, which enabled him to become the most powerful among other Serbian lords. Vuk did not have this support. And while prince Lazar died heroically at the battle of Kosovo, Vuk survived it: the Serbian people accused him of being a traitor, without historical evidence, and cursed him. The first historical source that tells us that Vuk was the traitor is *Il regno degli Slavi*, from 1601, by Maurus Orbini. Historical sources from the period of Vuk Branković, and the later ones, until 1601, do not mention the name of traitor, but only that there was treachery.

Galit NOGA-BANAI

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*The brass cross in Munich: innovative display of local tradition*

The brass cross in a private collection in Munich is the earliest known figurative decorated liturgical cross. Its decoration represents among others Christ's bust in a medallion at the intersection of the arms, surrounded by busts of the twelve apostles on one side, four angels carrying a medallion in a cross composition on the other. Describing the Munich cross's innovative design may give some indication of the thoughts and intentions underlying the decoration of this medium at the beginning of the sixth century. Here it is suggested that in addition to the general eschatological meaning of the motifs composing the decoration, a combination of historical events, holy topography and local liturgy specific to Jerusalem are at the heart of the decoration program. With the help of a brief observation on local Jerusalemite traditions and a fresh look at some Palestinian eulogia I will argue that the Munich cross may well be the earliest, but not the only, visual evidence for traditions other than the Ascension concerning the Mount of Olives.