

THE *EXCERPTA CONSTANTINIANA*
AND THE BYZANTINE APPROPRIATION
OF THE PAST

The *Excerpta* project instigated by the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII turned the enormously rich experience offered by Greek historiography into a body of excerpts distributed across fifty-three distinct thematic collections. In this, the first sustained analysis, András Németh moves from viewing the *Excerpta* only as a collection of textual fragments to focusing on its dependence from and impact on the surrounding Byzantine culture in the tenth century. He introduces the concept of appropriation and also uses it to study some other key texts created under the *Excerpta's* influence (*De thematibus*, *De administrando imperio* and *De ceremoniis*). Unlike world chronicles, the *Excerpta* ignored the chronological dimension of history and fostered the biographical turn in Byzantine historiography. By exploring theoretical questions, such as classification and retrieval of historical information and the relationship between knowledge and political power, this book provides powerful new ways for exploring the *Excerpta* in Byzantine studies and beyond.

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ANDRÁS NÉMETH

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana



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Vatican City,
30 September 2017

A Note on Text

For the sake of consistency and smooth reading, in this volume I use Latin spelling or the established English equivalent for Greek proper names. The respective spelling norms applied to the Greek names of classical and Byzantine periods would turn half of the proper names of my book into a spelling different from the other half. Only Greek names of the Byzantine provinces are transliterated to be distinguished from homonym geographical names bearing different established meanings. In the tenth century, for example, Sikelia Theme meant part of Calabria and did not include Sicily. I hope the reduced number of transliterated Greek texts will make my work more accessible to non-Byzantinists while my curious readers will profit from the passages and the key words cited in Greek next to their English translations.

Abbreviations

Abbreviated titles and authors follow standard abbreviations from the *Greek–English Lexicon* (Liddel, Scott and Jones 1996 (LSJ)) and *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (Kazhdan (ed.) 1991a). Full bibliographic references of all sources appear in the *Edited Sources* section of the Bibliography.

<i>Ambrosianus</i>	Milan, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana
CFHB	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i> (Series Washingtoniensis, Washington DC, 1967–); (Series Berolinensis, Berlin/New York, 1967–); (Series Vindobonensis, Vienna, 1975); (Series Italica, Rome, 1975–); (Series Bruxellensis, Brussels, 1975–)
CPL	<i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> , ed. E. Dekkers (3rd edn Turnhout, 1995)
EI	<i>Excerpta de insidiis</i> , ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1905)
ELg	<i>Excerpta de legationibus gentium ad Romanos</i> , ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1903)
ELr	<i>Excerpta de legationibus Romanorum ad gentes</i> , ed. C. de Boor (Berlin, 1903)
ES	<i>Excerpta de sententiis</i> , ed. U. Ph. Boissvain (Berlin, 1906)
EVV I–II	<i>Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis</i> , part 1, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst, part 2, ed. Th. Büttner-Wobst and A. G. Roos (Berlin, 1906 and 1910).
RGK I–III	Gamillscheg and Harlfinger 1981–97
<i>Scorialensis</i>	San Lorenzo de El Escorial