

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.

András Németh is one of the two curators of Greek manuscripts at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. Previously, he was a research scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin and a research librarian at the National Széchényi Library, Budapest. He coordinates various activities concerning palimpsests at the Vatican Library and is preparing the catalogue of a select group of Greek manuscripts housed there. He is also studying the cultural history of the Middle Byzantine period and the reception of Greek manuscripts in Renaissance libraries in Europe and is preparing a monograph on the Greek manuscripts of the *Bibliotheca Corviniana*.

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ANDRÁS NÉMETH  
*Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*



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## *Contents*

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables and Maps</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>A Note on Text</i>	xiii
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
Introduction	
I Imperial Court and Knowledge Production	20
1.1 Macedonian Emperors and the Systematisation of Knowledge	23
1.2 Constantine VII	30
1.3 Basil Lecapenus and the Competing Clans	36
1.4 The Byzantine Court's Foreign Policy	46
2 Appropriation of the Past: Theory and Practice of Excerpting Historiography	54
2.1 Appropriation in Theory	54
2.2 The Proem and the Dedicatory Poem	60
2.3 Analysis of the Proem and the Poem	64
2.4 The Choice of Number Fifty-Three	71
2.5 Appropriation in Practice	77
3 Constructing a Research Engine of the Past	88
3.1 Collecting Historical Manuscripts	91
3.2 Time and Money Behind Textual Production	95
3.3 Teamwork from Loose Fascicules: Draft Copies	102
3.4 Assembling the Drafts: Deluxe Copies by Single Scribes	109
3.5 The Excerptor: A Case Study	115
4 Information Management in Constantine VII's Treatises	121
4.1 <i>De Thematibus</i>	124
4.2 <i>De Administrando Imperio</i>	130
4.3 <i>De Ceremoniis</i>	137

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
5	Renewal of Historiography under Constantine VII	145
5.1	The Shift from Chronicle to Biography	147
5.2	<i>Theophanes Continuatus</i>	151
5.3	Genesisius and Leo the Deacon	156
5.4	The Use of the <i>Excerpta</i> in the <i>Life of Basil</i>	161
6	Distortion and Expansion of the Past in the <i>Excerpta</i>	165
6.1	Preoccupations in the Selection	165
6.2	Favoured Periods	171
6.3	Preferred Historical Genres	178
7	Classification of the Past in the <i>Excerpta</i>	185
7.1	Imperial Biographies	187
7.2	Military Topics	189
7.3	Diplomatic Relations and Conflict Management	193
7.4	Moral and Leisure Reading	196
7.5	Historical Epigrams	199
7.6	Historical Letters and Speeches	204
7.7	Gnomic Statements	209
8	The Reading of the <i>Excerpta</i>	212
8.1	A Generalisation Tool	214
8.2	A Multivolume Book of History: Auxiliary Texts	219
8.2.1	Contents, Imperial Topic Titles and Position Numbers	220
8.2.2	Reference to Historians	224
8.2.3	References to Imperial Topics	226
8.2.4	Indices	228
8.3	Information Retrieval in the <i>Excerpta</i>	231
9	The <i>Suda</i> : The Lexicographer and the Excerptor	238
9.1	The Creation of <i>Suda</i> and the <i>Excerpta</i>	239
9.2	Lexical Headwords from the <i>Excerpta</i>	245
9.3	Biographical Headwords from the <i>Excerpta</i>	248
	Conclusions	256
	<i>Appendices</i>	266
	<i>A Edition of the Proem and the Poem</i>	266
	A.1 The Proem to ELr	267
	A.2 The Poem Praising Constantine for the <i>Excerpta</i>	268
	<i>B The Imperial Manuscripts of the Excerpta</i>	270
	B.1 <i>Excerpta de Virtutibus et Vitiis</i>	270
	B.2 <i>Excerpta de Sententiis</i>	271
	B.3 <i>Excerpta de Insidiis</i>	272
	B.4 <i>Excerpta de Legationibus</i>	273

	<i>Contents</i>	vii
<i>Bibliography</i>		278
Edited Sources		278
Secondary Literature		287
<i>Manuscripts Index</i>		322
<i>Names Index</i>		324
<i>Subject Index</i>		336

## *Illustrations*

- |     |  |                |
|-----|--|----------------|
| 1.1 | Family tree of the Macedonian dynasty in the tenth century, drawn by the author  | <i>page</i> 22 |
| 1.2 | Constantine VII is portrayed as Abgar, King of Edessa, holding the <i>Mandyllion</i> (the holy face of Christ impressed on a cloth). Detail from a Byzantine Panel from the mid-tenth century, depicting the Abgar legend, now conserved in Saint Catherine Monastery of Sinai (Egypt). Source: Getty Images: 142085006/De Agostini Picture Library  | 33             |
| 2.1 | Reconstruction of a Byzantine sundial mechanism ( <i>c.</i> 400–600 AD). The outer scale lists major geographical reference points starting from Constantinople. The gears and dials enable the user to synchronise time with the day of the week, with the months and with the moon cycles. Like this mechanism, the systematic articulation of the <i>Excerpta</i> reflects a circular concept of time and accommodates information retrieval to the actual reader's reference point. Source: Getty Images: 90738296/Science and Society Picture Library | 74             |
| 3.1 | School at the time of Constantine VII, an environment where students and masters probably participated in the production of the <i>Excerpta</i> . Miniature from the Madrid Scyltzes ( <i>Codex Matritensis gr. Vitr.</i> 26–2, f. 134r). Source: Getty Images: 486777255/Heritage Images  | 104            |
| 6.1 | Time concept: two clocks spiralling with vertigo effect. While widening the horizon of the past and creating distortions, the structure of the <i>Excerpta</i> highlights the cyclical movement of time that repeatedly produces similar events and helps in anticipating future ones. Source: Getty Images: 501203794/Maxiphoto   | 167            |

*List of Illustrations*

ix

- 7.1 Ambrosian Iliad (F 205 inf., Miniatures XX–XXI) 192  
 based on v. 765–81). The idea to depict two successive battles scenes in two consecutive miniatures resembles the *Excerpta*'s principle of dividing historical narratives (Constantinople, around 500 AD). Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Source: Getty Images: 113635587/Universal Images Group
- 8.1 *Turonensis* 980, f. 101r, displaying the visual hierarchy 221  
 of the auxiliary texts: (1) the topic title *On Virtues and Vices* (περὶ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας) and the position number 5 (ε') copied in epigraphic majuscule under a decorative band; (2) a reference to Diodorus of Sicily in the margin (ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας Διοδώρου Σικελιώτου); (3) a cross-reference to *On Political Affairs* (ζήτει ἐν τῷ περὶ πολιτικῶν διοικήσεως); and (4) an index word 'virtue' (ἀρετή). Tours, Municipal Library



## *Tables and Maps*

### Tables

1.1	The structure of Basil Lecapenus' military handbook ( <i>Ambrosianus</i> B 119 sup.)	page 43
2.1	Passages omitted from Procopius' <i>Persian Wars</i> (B.2) in the <i>Excerpta</i> (ELr)	80
3.1	Passages omitted from the excerpt on the siege of Tyre in <i>Parisinus suppl. gr.</i> 607, ff. 94v–7r	119
7.1	Oracles excerpted from Herodotus in the Palatine Anthology	203
7.2	Military speeches in <i>Ambrosianus</i> B 119 sup	208

### Maps

1.1	The diplomatic world of Byzantium in 963	47
2.1	Arab-Byzantine frontier in the tenth century with sieges of towns assembled in the <i>Excerpta</i>	85
4.1	Byzantine provinces under John I Tzimisces	127

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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. Boissevain (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