

zu revidieren oder es muss angenommen werden, dass vom Kopisten ein wesentlich älteres Papier verwendet wurde (selten).<sup>59</sup> Mon. gr. 276 (S. 102–116, Abb. 19–29): Herkunft Zypern (aufgrund des Duktus). Die Hand A (Ergänzungshand; Abb. 19) wird im Katalog nicht datiert, stammt aber aufgrund des Duktus und der Wasserzeichen aus dem ausgehenden 15. Jh. Sie gehört einem geübten Schreiber und ist für die Lokalisierung des Codex nicht weiter hilfreich. Alle übrigen (älteren, etwa Anfang 14. Jh.) Hände sind provinzieller Herkunft mit zahlreichen spezifisch zypriotischen Zügen. Am deutlichsten sind Einflüsse der *chypriote bouclée* auf Abb. 21 und 28 zu sehen, ohne dass sie alle charakteristischen Züge des Schriftstils aufweisen. Vgl. etwa das Beta und Ny. Mon. gr. 318 (288–301, Abb. 107–109): spätere Ergänzungshand (Abb. 109) möglicherweise zypriotisch. Mon. gr. 336 (409–412): spitze Klammern bei der Identifizierung des Kopisten sind zu streichen (Codex subskribiert).

Mit dem vorliegenden Katalogband haben die Autorinnen einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Erforschung der byzantinischen Buchkultur und zur Erschließung des wichtigsten Bestands an griechischen Handschriften in Deutschland geleistet.

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András NÉMETH, *The Excerpta Constantiniana and the Byzantine appropriation of the past*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2018. xiv, 338 p. ISBN 978-1-108-42363-2.

The *Excerpta Constantiniana* (EC) are probably the most representative bequest from the X c. because they embrace a wide array of texts that reveals a new, original attitude towards the ancient world. Not surprisingly, a remarkable number of publications concerning this topic has come out over the last few years, witnessing a revival of the interdisciplinary questions it raises. Among the studies which mostly contributed to a crucial and fast progress in the international research on this field we should especially consider the book published by András NÉMETH, who dares to tackle from a complex and multifaceted perspective the many historical, cultural, literary and palaeographic issues that challenge

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<sup>59</sup> Parallelbeispiel: Athon. Vatop. 685 (Synesios), vgl. R.S. STEFEC, Mitteilungen aus Athos-Handschriften. *Wiener Studien* 127 (2014) 121–150, hier 137–140.

every scholar wishing to take on the task of deepening our understanding of this tangled Byzantine teamwork.

Since the progressive retrieval of the extant copies of *EC* – 16<sup>th</sup> c. for those surviving only in humanistic manuscripts, *Excerpta de Legationibus* (*EL*) and *de Insidiis* (*EI*), 17<sup>th</sup> c. for the *Excerpta de Virtutibus et Vitiis* (*EV*), 19<sup>th</sup> c. for the *Excerpta de Sententiis* (*ES*) – a single critical edition of the whole *corpus* was published (1903–1910) whereas, increasingly from the second half of the last century, scholars have directed their most significant efforts to historical-cultural phenomenon, partly by examining each time the encyclopaedic (*DAIN*, *LEMERLE*) or anthological aspects (many will bear in mind *ODORICO*'s ‘cultura della syllogé’), partly by preferring a philological-textual approach, but so often aimed at reconstructing the text of the ancient Greek historian. Even though *NÉMETH* himself explicitly states his will to go beyond all these perspectives (*cf.* p. 12–14), a quick glance at the contents may suffice to discern the broad scope of this book: the cohesion between politics and culture, peaking in the emblematic figure of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (d. 959) and given literary shape around twenty years after his death (*Chapter* 1); the emergence of a new insight (or, more properly said, “the basic theoretical principles”, p. 54) that anticipated and envisaged the production of *EC* (*Chapters* 2, 6, 7); the inclusion in the debate – which is a crucial point – of other literary and compilatory works produced by the same editorial backstage (especially Constantine VII's treaties), in which new plans of action were displayed, *in nuce* or fully developed, in many respects similar to the most demanding project (*Chapter* 4); the importance given to an in-depth study on apparently marginal features – the paratext, the relationship with other Lexica, especially *Suda* –, which nevertheless show to what extent the research on *EC* deserves to be carried on and why it would lack completeness if one overlooked the contribution of the auxiliary texts (*Chapters* 8, 9). This quick overview proves that the author did not limit himself to just re-elaborate the volume of the studies published so far developing one of those hermeneutic tendencies but, through his complete command of the literary production over the period known as *Macedonian Renaissance*, he explains purpose and dynamics from which *EC* originated doing it in light of those unique circumstances.

Considering the most significant achievements of the present book, I would like to probe two of them, those that more than others drew my attention and made the author aware of their originality. The first one is the detailed study of the concept of *appropriation*, programmatically inserted in the book title

and drawn from the Proem to *EC*, laid as introduction to each of the 53 subjects of the collection: “it is not a summary (σύνοψις) but, to speak more properly, an *appropriation* (οἰκειώσις)”.<sup>60</sup> According to ΝΕΜΕΤΗ, not only does the keyword *appropriation* refer to the method that enabled the Byzantine excerptors to carry out the ambitious task of selecting and assigning a huge volume of texts, but it leads to a more correct interpretation of their purposes and above all of the question regarding the meanings of classical heritage (especially historical) in tenth-century Constantinople. The scholar carries his investigation along a double track: on one hand he conducts an accurate analysis of the Proem deepening the nuances of some weight-carrying terms (such as ἐπιστήμη, ἐκλογή, ὑπόθεσις, ἢ τοῦ λόγου ἀκολουθία), on the other he explains how the *appropriation* was put into practice by displaying the meaningful instance of some excerpts from the collection *ELr* drawn from Book 2 of Procopius’ *Persian Wars* and also citing some secondary evidence from other passages.

An appropriate reading of the innovative statements in the *Proemium*, perhaps welcomed by ΝΕΜΕΤΗ with excessive confidence as strict guidelines for the scribes, was essential for the men in charge as much as it is for the modern scholar. With this in mind, the section dealing with this theme is thorough and provides good food for thoughts. As a flowery meadow is made up of a great variety of plants and nevertheless its beauty emerges from the overall balance, so *EC* as a whole results from the wise display of its single parts, namely the imperial topics and each excerpt. Anyway, ΝΕΜΕΤΗ goes beyond the metaphoric level and seeks to define in detail which practical steps and technical practices have been followed: not surprisingly a layered work arises, which required the learned men to balance precision in allocating every passage to the most appropriate imperial collection, and at the same time, skills of competence in Greek and resourcefulness, both necessary to the abstract performance of transferring texts not conceived according to these criteria. The author correctly remarks that such a procedure has brought about a significant number of cross-references, repetitions, textual leaps and sometimes even abridgments and mistakes, and for this reason he provides exemplifications such as that from the section of Procopius (*cf.* p. 77–87), or considers an epitome involving texts from sections of John of Antioch and Cassius Dio in *EV*. Whoever is fond of *EC* could argue that only a large quantity of sample texts may give a reliable hint of the complexity of this matter; however, this is not the purpose of the book, the stress of

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60 From his translation of the Proem at p. 61–2. The Greek version is displayed in *Appendix A*, ‘Edition of the Proem and the Poem’ (p. 266–9): ἐκάστη ὑπόθεσις προσαρμοζομένης τῆς τηλικαύτης οὐ συνόψεως, ἀληθέστερον δ’ εἰπεῖν οἰκειώσεως.

which is instead on constituting a necessary foundation, especially when it explains the innovation in the method of preserving texts in their original shape (except from the beginning and the end of many *excerpta*) compared to the most common fashion comprising abridgment and adaptation.

Of the entire book, *Chapter 3* represents perhaps its greatest breakthrough, which “will also challenge the scholarly consensus on this matter” (p. 88). Here the so-called three-stage model is described in detail, which surpasses every theory developed thus far concerning production methods implemented by the imperial *scriptorium*. It has been theorised that the transfer from whole historical works to *excerpta* collected into topics should have gone through a coherent process so that a learned man was entrusted with identifying in each codex, or whole work, the sections suitable for the 53 Constantinian subjects; afterwards another scribe assembled, in a new manuscript, all the fragments pertaining to the same collection.<sup>61</sup> Although it has the advantage of being understandable and clearer from an abstract point of view, NÉMETH discombobulates this scheme and introduces, roughly between the first and the second stage, a third one by which some draft copies would be made, still liable to further adjustments; in the following step, the drafts would originate the final copies, the only extant exemplars of which are the *codex Peirescianus* (*EV*) and *Vaticanus* (*ES*). In fact, introducing one more phase goes far beyond a mere technical debate: so far nobody has paused to ponder on the constitution process with the same depth, which includes partition of tasks, finding of the historical manuscripts and new parchment, not to mention costs and time investment involved. NÉMETH undertakes this endeavour and, although, with regards to *EC*, an often-patchy frame, draws convincing and almost undisputable conclusions. Yet the three-stage model proves itself to be not mere conjecture and has immediate effects on the constitution of the critical text of the extant copies too, as it is well attested by the *Peirescianus*. The reference edition of *EV* (1906–1910) was accomplished with the belief that the manuscript comes from the tenth century, but more recent palaeographic achievements – especially beginning with J. IRIGOIN in the middle of the last century – backdate it to a period that makes it plausible to be one of the final deluxe copies of *EC*. As a consequence, the link between *EV* and *Suda*, ‘*alter fons*’ of many excerpts from historians such as Johannes Malala, John of Antioch and Polybius, needs re-evaluation because the *Lexicon* ceases to be automatically a better source if it no longer predates the

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<sup>61</sup> So, for instance, TH. BÜTTNER-WOBST, Die Anlage der historischen Encyclopädie des Konstantinos Porphyrogennetos. *BZ* 15 (1906), 99–100: “... die Redaktionsgeschäfte bei dem Sammelwerke Konstantins in doppelter Weise verteilt waren.”

manuscript.<sup>62</sup> From a comparative approach to some of these excerpts, which the author carries on for two extended Suda entries (α 2452, Ἀντίβας, and α 200, Αἰμίλιος), emerges that not every change brought by the lexicographers should be attributed to the peculiar literary genre, but many just depend on the manuscripts they had at their disposal, undoubtedly codices where the textual segments were still not in the final version: this is namely a philological confirmation of the existence of working copies.

The rich annotation system with which the *folia* of the codices are equipped is one more apparent hint pointing towards the existence of multiple drafts, and this is best demonstrated in the *Peirescianus*. NÉMETH has been a pioneer regarding this matter as he had already cast light on it in his doctoral thesis (2010), in which the whole paratext of *EV* is collected and organized in the appendix. In his most recent book, he devotes a whole chapter to this topic, suggesting the idea that the features constituting the auxiliary text may convey supplementary information, beginning with their position in the page, that responds to a fixed hierarchy. It is now a unanimous assumption that (the few) prospective readers were not the primary recipient of such supplements, but many of them played a role as an authentic internal code for the excerptors, namely the main way of giving practical instructions and how they exchanged information like the loss of papers in a manuscript or the logical progression of an excerpt in a different collection. Unfortunately, just little evidence of this setup survives because the scribes copied only a limited number in the third stage, and it is not always clear what steered the last copyist's choice. Among these signs a prominent position is that of the marginal entries, annotations put next to the text they refer to pointing out a proper name or, more rarely, common nouns that the excerptors found particularly interesting for some reason or also a passage suitable to the topic. Here, too, NÉMETH proves his perspicacity stressing the importance the *marginalia* had for a quick recognition of the topic and main figures of every excerpt, without ruling out their importance for a reader to retrieve essential information from the text. But the greatest contribution of the marginal annotations lies in their role as guidelines for the compilers of *Suda*, who exploited them to extract quotations for the Lexicon: this part, probably a bit too technical but not less important in its outcomes, remains in the book just touched on, although

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62 The question is complex and goes far beyond the purpose of this review. Be it enough that the critical edition of *EV* states in the Preface: *patet Suidam excerptorum perī ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας codicem vetustiore adhibuisse Peiresciano* (I, p. XXIX, 1906), an assumption that can no longer be considered correct.

the author himself was the first in 2010 to recognise a correspondence which deserves more detailed studies.

As a person who has dealt with *EC* for a couple of years, it is not flattery when I say that the present book is the most innovative and thorough contribution that came out in the last years. Undoubtedly NÉMETH has rolled out a new method, although the book revamps some of his past conclusions: in addition to his doctoral thesis, one should recall an article published in 2017 focussing on the three-stage model as well as his reflections on the dichotomy *appropriation* vs epitomizing and excerpts vs fragments (2013 and 2016). It is undeniable, though, that he has expanded and assimilated them in the book, so that the reader can enjoy a holistic vision on the matter. Moreover, it is also evident that the author has left aside some technical remarks documented in his previous works, and therefore some aspects, which represent an appealing investigation subject from a purely philological perspective, turn out to have been wittingly cut back: one could object, for instance, that the book lacks a methodical description of the manuscripts (some more information is given in the appendices), but it should be conceded that palaeographical and textual references abound in every chapter. As I said, everyone wishing to grapple with this research field can no longer ignore this publication and should strongly consider most of its conclusions, or at the very least employ it as a valuable introduction to the topic.

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Gaga SHURGAIA, Vaxt'ang I Gorgasali re di Kartli. Alle origini dell'autocefalia della Chiesa ortodossa di Georgia. *OCA*, 303. Roma, Pontificio Istituto Orientale 2018. 706 S. ISBN 978-88-7210-397-5.

Dieser gewichtige Band von Gaga SHURGAIA, Professor für georgische Sprache und Literatur an der Universität Neapel, widmet sich dem Wirken von Vaxt'ang I Gorgasali († 502), König von Kartli in der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jh.s, der die Geschichte des südlichen Kaukasus wesentlich mitgeprägt hat.

Es handelt sich hier um einen der wenigen Herrscher des frühen Georgiens, von dem wir ein zeitgenössisches Porträt besitzen: sein nach rechts gewendetes Profil, ähnlich dem er Sassanidenkönige, findet sich auf einer Gemme (inv. 119712) im British Museum mit der Inschrift „wl[t]’nky“. Jedenfalls vermutet das Šalva AMIRANAŠVILI, К вопросу об определении портретного изображения на