

In Chapter 5, the author makes a similar point about tales of violence against Zoroastrians and desecration of Zoroastrian fire temples. Although they are often cited as evidence of the “lachrymose” view of Muslim–Zoroastrian history (see pp. 19–23), some of these accounts were likely exaggerated or even fabricated for various reasons: to bolster triumphal Islamic narratives of supersession, to overstate the history of Muslim–Zoroastrian hostility, or for other purposes entirely. In summary, Magnusson calls on scholars to “contextualise even the most credible claims, consider the writer’s intent and compare sources of information against each other” (p. 130). In these two chapters, especially, he has effectively demonstrated the advantages of such reading strategies.

In Chapter 6, Magnusson takes a somewhat broader view, considering how the label “Zoroastrian” was employed paradigmatically—mostly by Muslims outside of the Iranian heartland—to categorize different marginal groups such as North African Berbers, Khazars, Azerbaijanis, Syrian Shi‘a, Vikings, South Asian converts, and others. He describes how a range of “suspicious, threatening, or marginal groups” were compared to Zoroastrians in an “unflattering but rhetorical” manner that “demonstrates a simultaneous recognition of and discomfort with the exceptional place of Zoroastrians in early Islamic history” (pp. 152–53).


In his conclusion, Magnusson extends this point to contemporary dynamics, specifically with respect to the 2014 discourse surrounding Yazidi Kurds and the violence perpetrated against them by ISIS. An open letter from Muslim jurists admonishing Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declares that “From the legal perspective of Islamic law (sharī‘a) they are Zoroastrians,” and therefore properly to be protected as dhimmis—a modern illustration of accommodation and its limits, and the continued salience of these early Islamic discussions (pp. 160–62). Summarizing his overall argument, Magnusson correctly observes that neither the “dismal conceptions of Zoroastrian history” nor narratives of “blissful intercommunal harmony” do justice to the historical and legal complexities of the case: “Non-Muslims were legally subordinate to Muslims, and Zoroastrians occupied a rung in the theological and social hierarchy below Jews and Christians” (p. 165).

Magnusson’s monograph is an important, thoughtful, and nuanced contribution to the study of early Islamic history and the unique rhetorical role of Zoroastrians in these contexts. Although there is some introductory material, the book seems primarily intended for scholars with background in the relevant subject areas and a stake in the historiographical issues. It is avowedly *not* a study of Zoroastrian historical realities, but it is a cogent argument for why such a study may not be possible—and why past and present historiographies are equally if not more edifying to investigate.

doi:10.1017/S0020743824000850

Byzantium after the Nation: The Problem of Continuity in Balkan Historiographies

Dimitris Stamatopoulos (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2022). Pp. 410. \$85.00 cloth. ISBN: 9789633863077

Reviewed by Kutay Onayli , Princeton University, Princeton, NJ, USA (konayli@princeton.edu)

Does an empire ever die? Not if a nation is to emerge out of it, Dimitris Stamatopoulos argues in his *Byzantium after the Nation: The Problem of Continuity in Balkan Historiographies*. The recent



English translation of Stamatopoulos's influential 2009 study cuts across Greek, Bulgarian, and Albanian national historiographies, and what Stamatopoulos calls "their metatheoretical heritage" (p. 349) in post-Ottoman Turkey and Romania, to examine the variegated historiographical afterlives of the Byzantine Empire in the construction of modern Balkan nations. In each of these historiographical cases, all roads led to Second Rome for the thinkers seeking to craft a modern "nation." Perhaps paradoxically, as *Byzantium's* interconnected case studies reveal, there was no intellectual path to a sustainable Greek or Romanian or Turkish nationhood without first grappling with, say, Iconoclasm or Arianism. Integrating Byzantine history remained essential to the formulation of the intra- and post-imperial communal self, and Constantine's empire acquired a flurry of new meanings in the 19th-century Balkans precisely as the age of empires was ending.

Two problematics underpin Stamatopoulos's analysis. The first is the issue of continuity and discontinuity in the creation of national histories. In Stamatopoulos's approach, his historian-protagonists turn to the Byzantine past because the Romantic notion of nationhood requires them to create a sense of valorous historical continuity. But realistically, the historical narrative of any imagined community is laden with discontinuities—the Byzantine period itself constituted a sizeable disruption in some of the nascent national historiographies Stamatopoulos treats. *Byzantium* deals with the problem of continuity by focusing on such points of narrative disruption, which often required historiographers of nascent nations to exercise creativity. Such moments of discontinuity are the nodes where divergent historiographical visions, ideological preferences, and political commitments become most transparent. As such, they constitute the most rewarding vantage points for examining any national origin story. Indeed, in each of his discrete but interconnected chapter-length case studies, Stamatopoulos first presents the "canonical" early formulations of a given national history, examining these canons for the tensions they contained. He then turns to those historiographical visions (often by hitherto-neglected late and post-Ottoman historians) that challenged the canon by offering new interventions at—and oftentimes altogether new ways to *bridge*—these points of discontinuity. As a result of such historiographical interventions, new and sometimes shaky historical continuities were formed, representing new conceptualizations of Greekness or Albanianness or Turkishness, formulated against the canonical grain.

Stamatopoulos's second central problematic is that his Balkan intellectuals were operating in a world of hegemonic Orientalist discourse, which had the discipline of history as one of its foci of discursive domination. The existence of a canonical "body of institutionalized Western knowledge of Byzantium that sought new ways to subordinate the East culturally" (p. 354) meant that virtually all of Stamatopoulos's protagonists inhabited the ever-uncertain positionality of the learned "native" in attempting to formulate usable histories of nation and empire. Even as they perpetrated differing aspects of such Orientalist thinking, these "native" thinkers were rarely at ease with the full historical and civilizational vision of any Western scholar. *Byzantium* brilliantly portrays intellectuals of Ottoman and post-Ottoman Balkans not as mere translators or "receivers" who parroted hallowed European historiographical orthodoxies (or, for that matter, as mere reactionaries). Instead, these figures emerge as original intellectuals in their own right. As *Byzantium* carefully contextualizes their polemics and traces their intellectual positions, the reader realizes that Namık Kemal holds his own against Ernest Renan, and that Manuel Gedeon boldly counteracts Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos (and, by extension, Joseph von Hammer). To be a "native" intellectual engaging with Western knowledge meant to be an expert but also sometimes a wily *negotiator*—deconstructing one pillar of Orientalist thinking from the shade of another. *Byzantium* is a remarkable account of the surprising turns such complex, uneasy intellectual negotiations could take, and should therefore interest not only intellectual historians but also scholars of reception studies: the book reveals conceptualizations

of Ancient Greece beyond the hallowed halls of European academies, and delineates the links between the reception of Ancient Greek “classical” legacy and the construction of other “classical” legacies from the Illyrian to the Abbasid.

Luckily for the reviewer, it is possible to summarize the spirit of Stamatopoulos’s *Byzantium* in a single sentence from the work itself: “One could claim that [Şemseddin] Sami’s stance could be linked to the corresponding ideological and political positions of [Manuel] Gedeon and [Gavril] Krâstevich” (p. 283). This is not the sort of statement one reads often, even if one is intimately interested in the intellectual history of the late Ottoman Empire or the Balkans. Stamatopoulos’s treatment of Ottoman thinkers as (seemingly) divergent as Sami Frasheri, Manuel Gedeon, Namık Kemal, and Gavril Krâstevich as figures that demand—and reward—comparison not only with the European thinkers they drew from but also with one another makes the case for a truly *imperial* conception of the late Ottoman intellectual world. Indeed, as Stamatopoulos moves from the Greek to Albanian to Bulgarian to Turkish cases, he always treats new historiographers with a comparative eye toward those already discussed. The result is that *Byzantium* emerges as a trans-communal study of late and post-Ottoman intellectualism and historiography—a truly rare unhyphenated *Ottoman* history. After all, even when their political commitments were at odds, the thinkers of *Byzantium* wrestled with similar questions and undertook often-convergent methodologies in producing their differing visions of empire, nation, history, self, and other. Of note, *Byzantium* also constitutes a rare study of “minor” literatures in the Deleuzian sense. Most of Stamatopoulos’s historians belong to various Ottoman minorities, and many write in “minor” languages; the self-reflexive anxiety of belonging to a cultural and political minority, and the very awareness that any nascent post-Ottoman “nation” begins as an imperial minority, is crucial to their historiographical agenda. Unsurprisingly, *Byzantium* locates a vein of “religious ecumenism that corresponds to the sanctity of a language” (p. 274) in how minority intellectuals from Gedeon to Krâstevich to Frasheri conceptualize “the nation” from within the Ottoman Empire.

Diane Shugart’s astute translation rarely falters in the difficult task of rendering Stamatopoulos’s dense volume—and the more unforgiving elements of academic Greek—into lucid English prose. There is one translation-related point on which Stamatopoulos and his editors seem too zealous: all quotations from primary sources are given only in English translation, and with such a minute intellectual history, the lack of original text can be frustrating. Occasionally, original terms are given, but the (often tricky and sometimes uncomfortable) Greek term *genos* is variously translated as *millet*, *nation*, and *race*, often without clear context as to why a given choice is made. As Stamatopoulos himself argues, his protagonists themselves often did not quite agree on the meaning of the word. A problematization of the word *genos*—and its often arguably racial connotations—as a fundamental building block of Ottoman and post-Ottoman Greek thought, and of Greek communal/national identity, is overdue. Such a confrontation would have deepened *Byzantium*’s remarkable insights on the elaboration of Greek selfhood and communality.


Byzantium after the Nation is perhaps best described as an intellectual *kintsugi* of late and post-Ottoman thought—it is the rifts, connections, and intellectual in-betweens it delineates that glimmer the brightest. Indeed, *Byzantium* is almost feverish in its eye toward continuity and rupture, and in its drawing of connections and comparisons: between the “Western” and the “Oriental,” between Turk and Albanian and Greek, and between (imperial) memory and (national) desire. It is a dense and voluminous work, no light reading even by the standards of intellectual history, but it carries the beauty of any serious attempt at a scholarly Gesamtkunstwerk. Some of Stamatopoulos’s more

polemical positions will find their opponents, but no scholar of Greek, Balkan, or late Ottoman thought can afford to ignore *Byzantium's* propositions about how empires survive and accumulate into nations.

doi:10.1017/S0020743824000461

Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology

William Carruthers (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022). Pp. 336. \$62.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781501766442

Reviewed by Yasmin Moll , Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA (ymoll@umich.edu)

On a recent trip within Egypt to my maternal family village in resettlement Nubia north of Aswan, we visited the Philae Temple's evening sound and light show. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Philae is a beneficiary of the organization's International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, which was launched at the request of Egypt and Sudan in 1960 on the eve of the Aswan High Dam's construction. The campaign raised funds for archaeological excavations in soon-to-be drowned Nubia as well as for "saving" spectacular monuments like Philae through relocation. Set against sonorous orchestral music, the show dramatically narrated this feat of modern salvage as we walked alongside dozens of other visitors through the artfully lit stone complex. The forty-five minute narration made no mention of the Nubians who had lived among these ancient remains, whose historic homeland was flooded by the dam waters. "In Nubia," as William Carruthers notes, "people seemed to be missing" (p. 40). Sensing the institutional disinterest in connecting the temple we were touring with the displaced relatives we had just visited, our group quickly lost personal interest in the show. As the Spanish tourists next to us paid careful attention to the recorded narration of what had become "world heritage," my mother browsed on her phone through the family photos we had taken, while my aunt played with one of the many cats living on the island complex.

Flooded Pasts: UNESCO, Nubia, and the Recolonization of Archaeology asks why an institution like UNESCO, founded in the period of widespread political decolonization across the Global South and shaped by the postwar ethos of liberal cosmopolitanism, did not take an interest in safeguarding Nubians, protecting only their monuments. For answers, Carruthers looks to the intersections of archaeology, the emergence of transnational heritage regimes, and the varied ambitions of both former colonial powers and nascent postcolonial states. He argues that understanding how the Nubian past came to be de-peopled, and how Nubians came to be a people so easily displaceable, necessitates attention to the ways in which archaeology's own colonial past continued to structure its quotidian practices even during the era of formal decolonization. This disciplinary coloniality, Carruthers maintains, is evidenced at various scales: from how field notes were recorded and photographs taken to the living arrangements on sites to which ancient remains were deemed worthy of study and preservation. More broadly, he shows how UNESCO's Nubia campaign, despite the budgetary shortfalls, bureaucratic gaffes, and power plays that bedeviled it, made possible the very category of "world heritage." Rich in detail and carefully argued, *Flooded Pasts'* multifaceted exploration of the Nubia campaign makes an important contribution to understanding the