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BYZANTINE STUDIES: THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS AND THE NEXT HUNDRED MONTHS*

My task this morning is to speak of Byzantine studies in the past and of the outlook for them in the future. A speech opening a congress, like the key-note address at a Republican or Democratic convention back in the United States, is supposed to exude optimism. Mine, too, will be optimistic in the end, but I shall open on a pessimistic note.

In the widest scheme of things, the outlook for our discipline is not splendid, owing to the marginalization of conventional elite culture in the advanced Western countries. To the extent to which Byzantine studies are a part of that conventional elite culture, they, too, are being marginalized, and our efforts to spread the Byzantine message among the wider public may be an unconscious defensive reaction to this process. In the narrower scheme of things, however, and barring some cataclysm, a marginalized elite culture still has a good chance of maintaining a comfortable niche for itself. Consequently, we Byzantinists, too, can feel good. Within the limits imposed by changes within the elite culture – and they have been rapid in the last forty years or so – the fate of our discipline still lies in our own hands.

Establishing anniversaries is often a matter of definition. If we define Byzantine studies as an independent scholarly discipline with a clearly delineated field of inquiry and well-thought-out subdivisions within that field; if we define it as object of study provided with agreed upon, if somewhat flexible, chronological limits, a discipline endowed with a regular scholarly outlet for its concerns, and a discipline possessed of at least one institutional center in which to pursue its goals, then our congress in Copenhagen is a perfect place to mark the first centenary of Byzantine studies. Within such a definition, Byzantine studies did not start with the first printing of the Suda Lexicon in 1499, nor with the sixteenth-century publications of Augsburg, nor with the seventeenth-century corpus of the *Parisina* of the Louvre, nor with the Bonn Corpus started in 1828, nor with modern historians of Byzantium, such as J.B. Bury, nor with the first manuals systematically covering broad aspects of the Byzantine past, such as Nikodim Pavlovič Kondakov's *Histoire de l'art byzantin* of 1876, or even the second edition of Krumbacher'*History of Byzantine Literature* of 1897. Using such a definition, modern Byzantine studies were either born 104 years ago, with the publication of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* in 1892, or 97 years ago, with the establishment of the seminar for medieval and modern Greek philology at Munich in 1899, both by Karl Krumbacher.

The long and the short of Krumbacher's programmatic message in the first fascicle of the *Zeitschrift* was that scholars should stop looking upon Byzantium as a quarry for something

* This is the text of the addresses pronounced at the opening and closing sessions of the XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies held at Copenhagen in August 1996. By now, taking stock of Byzantine Studies at a given moment has produced a fledgling literary genre. I shall mention only two representatives of that genre: the impassionate and subtle general essay by Hans-Georg Beck, *Byzantinistik heute* (Berlin; New York, 1977) and, for Greece, M. Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou's Οἱ βυζαντινὲς ἱστορικὲς σπουδὲς στὴν Ἑλλάδα. Ἀπὸ τὸν Σπυρίδωνα Ζαμπέλιο στόν Διονύσιο Ζακυθηνό // Σύμμεικτα. 1994, 9, 153–176.

else, and begin to view it as an independent field of study instead. That field was to encompass literature, language, philosophy, theology, history (external and internal), geography, ethnography, art with its auxiliary disciplines, law, medicine, and the sciences. If all this sounds familiar, it is because Krumbacher's overall conception has survived to the present day. True, we no longer, share Krumbacher's hesitation as to whether Byzantium, and for the matter the Greece of his day, did or did not belong to Europe, or whether Byzantium was a bridge between Europe and Asia. Since Europocentrism is a sin in our day, we western Byzantinists no longer formulate questions in these terms, even if the story may be different with some Greek Byzantinists and in the Post-Soviet intellectual world. Nor did *all* of Krumbacher's original conceptual subdivisions survive until today: one of the casualties, to give an example, was the *Byzantinische Frage* – the question as to the origins of Byzantine art, a rubric that now has been reformulated as "reciprocal relations between Byzantine and other arts". But on the whole Krumbacher's edifice was left essentially unaltered in subsequent decennia. This applies even to the chronological boundaries he set up for his Byzantinology, "from the end of Antiquity to the threshold of modern times". We still honor these boundaries, even if in subsequent years the end of antiquity was sometimes moved from the third or fourth to the sixth century, either for theoretical reasons or on account of the lack of bibliographical space, and the notion of the "threshold of modern times" in our studies was extended – in some geographical areas justifiably so – well beyond 1453 and into the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

The best idea of how durable Krumbacher's edifice has remained is provided by the subsequent history of his division of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* into three parts or *Abteilungen*, Abt. I for articles, Abt. II for substantial reviews, and Abt. III for *Notizen und kürzere Mitteilungen.* When the first volume of the *Vizantijskij Vremennik* appeared in 1894, without a preface or a reference to the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, it was the latter's virtual clone in all respects, and it consisted of exactly the same subdivisions; N. Bees's *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* of 1920 was programmatically divided into the same three *Abteilungen*, and needless to say, today Peter Schreiner's *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* has the same three subdivisions, with the title of the third one virtually unchanged from Krumbacher's time.

Neither ideas, nor an uncanny sense for pinpointing *desiderata*, nor the ability to start things are enough to provide a discipline with a firm footing and assure its continuous development. Otherwise, Henri Grégoire would have been the greatest organizer of our studies. What it takes, is an institutional base, a library, a periodical, a group of followers; but above all, a leader possessed, in addition to the undisputed scholarly authority, of a sense of mission, a lower than average degree of self doubt, and *gravitas*; moreover, it takes what, in unconscious self-mockery, Franz Dölger described as *deutsche Gründlichkeit* in 1935; it also takes what the French call *esprit de suite*, skill in bureaucratic infighting, and luck in choosing one's successor. Accident and money help too, and explain in part the miracle of the Center of Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks.

Here again, things begin with Krumbacher. His seminar for medieval and modern Greek philology, founded in 1899, now an institute, has been the source of enlightenment and instruction for Byzantinists from Southeastern Europe and later from all over the world. Its specialized library was praised as the largest in the world in 1925; this is no longer true, for now the distinction belongs to Dumbarton Oaks; pound for pound, however, the Munich collection is still as good a tool.

The overwhelming majority of the now existing centers and institutes are either inspired by Krumbacher's creation or are typological parallels to it. Their leaders, Henri Grégoire, Franz Dölger, Hans-Georg Beck, George Ostrogorsky, Paul Lemerle, Denis Zakythinos, and Herbert Hunger – I refer by name only to those who, living or dead, belong to history, and merely salute the eminent directors of institutes in our audience – made our discipline what

it is today, and supporting their creations, should they need help, is our collective obligation.

Another way to measure the progress of our discipline is by international Byzantine congresses. The audience gathered in this cathedral may be interested to hear what happened at the very first of them, convened in Bucharest in 1924. All the participants were provided "dans la mesure du possible" with free lodgings by the organizing committee; they could travel on Rumanian railways for free for the duration of their stay in that country; no registration fees – *taxes d'inscription* – were collected; and all visa fees were waived.

There were only two sections at that congress: one for Byzantine history, another, for philology and Byzantine archeology (we would call it art history today; this number, incidentally, was increased to four in Sofia in 1935). The Bucharest sections met at civilized hours and took up less than one half of the congress's total time: the rest was devoted to cultural activities, receptions and scholarly excursions. The general program occupied less than one page of the congress's report, and contained two rules, again of interest in our time of crowded schedules: no paper was to last for more than forty-five minutes, and no single discussant was to speak for more than five.

Eleven nations were represented at the first congress. The number of participants amounted to a mere 64 names. But what names! There was Louis Bréhier; there was Sir William Ramsay of historical-geography fame; there was B. Filov, the old S. Kougeas, N.P. Kondakov in person, and A. Rubio i Lluch, the Catalan; finally, the young *lecteur* from Strasbourg, André Grabar, and the *lecteur's* mentor, P. Perdrizet. The leading personalities were the Rumanian host Nicolas Iorga, the august Charles Diehl, and Henri Grégoire, a young man overflowing with projects and ideas.

The acts of the first congress covered 96 pages – this brevity was possible because, wisely, only abstracts of the papers were provided, with references to the periodicals in which full texts were later published. Do I have to tell you how rapidly things have changed with seventeen subsequent congresses? The proceedings from the second congress, that of Belgrade, consisted of 399 pages; those of the fourth, that of Sofia, of 752; those of the seventh (Brussels, 1948), of 810; those of the eleventh (Munich, 1958), of 1,310. After the number of pages passed a thousand, they moved into megafigures: the fifteenth congress of Athens produced 3,352 pages of acts, the sixteenth of Vienna 5,489 pages, and the most recent congress of Moscow has yielded 2,423 pages to date, and the end is not yet in sight.

The numbers of participants grew at a corresponding rate, making the original number of 64 a curiosity. The attendance at some recent international gatherings in our discipline has oscillated around 700, so that the present congress, with its some 370 participants, is among the cozier ones.

What goes for congresses goes for some national committees. In Bucharest in 1924, there was one North American participant. I do not know the size of the American delegation to the present Congress – fortythree people registered, but I counted 168 full-fledged members of the United States National Committee of Byzantine Studies in the excellent *Directory of American Byzantinists* just issued by Professor John Barker. The total number of scholars said to be interested in Byzantium in the Americas is about 275. The European source of this demographic explosion becomes apparent in the list of twenty-seven deceased American Byzantinists in Professor Barker's *Directory*: slightly more than one half of them were foreign-born – as for quality, their names include Dvorník, Jenkins, Krautheimer, Vasiliev, and Weitzmann.

One message recurs in the utterances of leaders throughout the early and even the middle years of modern Byzantine studies: the international character of the effort to be undertaken and the international support on which it counted. Welcoming multilingualism in periodicals was a logical consequence of this. This trend underwent some fluctuations across time, however. Krumbacher admitted two languages without discussion and three more with less enthusiasm; Bees was ready to publish in six languages; and Grégoire in four, but

offered to translate from others (meaning mostly Russian). In 1929, the opening statement in the first issue of *Byzantinoslavica* offered two languages, with an unspecified number of "Slavic languages" in addition. Today the international character of our enterprise in our global village is taken for granted, even though we can observe certain national predilections for and achievements in individual fields, such as philology in Italy, art history in the United States, and editions of documents in France. Things are less clear when it comes to multilingualism in publications, especially in those produced by the two largest members of our association, the United States and Russia, apparently still self-sufficient worlds. The growing global preponderance of English may simplify the problem in the future.

The other message sent by the leaders of modern Byzantine studies from the discipline's beginnings into the thirties was the importance of and respect and sympathy for Russian scholarship. The only foreign expression in Krumbacher's manifesto of 1892 was "Grekoslavjanskij mir". Grégoire's first issue of *Byzantion* of 1924 opened with a portrait and a biographical sketch of N.P. Kondakov, and closed with eleven pages of information on the work of Russian Byzantinists at the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad. One of the major reports at the opening plenary session of the fourth congress in Sofia was devoted to "the three founders of Russian Byzantinology". That report was by A.A. Vasiliev. Russian Byzantinology fell upon difficult times after the mid-twenties, and our present-day Russian colleagues do not sweep this period under the rug. It is gratifying to see that the Russian group in Copenhagen is the largest single delegation at the congress, and I am sure that they are aware of our sympathy.

Looking back at the earlier international congresses, we are astonished by the degree to which they were openly politicized. Not only were they attended by royalty, addressed by presidents of republics and organized by politicians, but the very first of them meted out political punishment. The Bucharest congress officially restricted its membership to scholars coming from nations victorious in World War I – it was off limits to the Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and Bulgarians. In 1948, however, Grégoire saw to it that Germans were present at the Brussels congress. Combining Byzantinology with politics made a dangerous mixture. Spyridon Lampros, Greece's greatest technical Byzantinist at the turn of this century, and for a short while prime minister of Greece, was deposed in 1916 and ended his life in exile. Nicolas Iorga, the president of the organizing committee of the first congress in Bucharest was murdered by right-wing thugs in 1940 – professor Fledelius, the president of the organizing committee of our congress, should take notice – and B. Filov, a scholar, a prime minister, and president of the fourth congress in Sofia, was executed by the victorious side in 1944.

Today things have changed – in my view for the better. For the last nine years at least there has been no voting by blocks in our *Association Internationale* and no quotas. We no longer imagine ourselves as a miniature United Nations Assembly – the needs of the discipline have transcended perceived national prerogatives and claims.

Nobody can predict the future. All we can prudently do in order to establish likely trends is to extrapolate from the past. When we apply this exercise to Byzantine studies we are entitled to optimism, at least in one vast area: completion of long range projects. Over seventy years ago three vague proposals were submitted to the first international congress – all of them by the ebullient Henri Grégoire, but blessed by the level-headed Charles Diehl: the creation of an International Committee of Byzantinists; the compilation of "un Onomasticon byzantin"; and above all the publication of "une Encyclopédie des choses byzantines". Today all of these proposals are either reality or on the way to completion. Our *Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines* in thriving and is poised to admit three new national committees; the exemplary project on prosopography of the Palaeologan period recently came to its conclusion in Vienna, and work on the prosopography for the years between 602 and 1261 is progressing with solid institutional backing. Grégoire's *Encyclopédie des choses byzantines,* which Paul Lemerle, too, had championed with concrete

suggestions at the Chios meeting of our association some twenty-five years ago, saw the light of day in 1991. Today, the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* edited by Professor Kazhdan is greatly acclaimed and avidly used, even by its detractors.

One more of Grégoire's early brain chuldren is on the way to being delivered in our days. At the 1935 Sofia congress he called "un Atlas" one of the principal desiderata of Byzantinology and had Ernst Honigmann in mind to do it. Today we have six ready and five more forthcoming volumes of the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*. Grégoire's *Corpus Bruxellense Historiae Byzantinae* belongs to the same category, even if it was not quite successful. It produced four or five volumes at best, while the modern *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* has 35 volumes to its credit in the thirty years of its existence.

I am coming now to the sixth of the old dreams almost come true. About the year of the first Byzantine congress, Russian Byzantinists of the Academy of Sciences, harboring small hopes to see their work published under the adverse circumstances of the time, turned to a long-range project called "The New Byzantine Ducange". The project was announced in the last fascicle of the old *Vizantijskij Vremennik* and welcomed in the brand new *Byzantion* launched by Grégoire. Nothing came of it, given the Soviet policy of the time. Today, between the *Lexica* of Lampe, the project run by the Bonn–Vienna team headed by Professor Erich Trapp for the period ending in 1100 and the far advanced *Lexicon* by Kriaras, we are within grasp – that is, within about twenty-five years – of covering most, if not all, of the lexicographic material dating from between the fourth and the seventeenth centuries.

On the debit side, reasonable proposals formulated by the previous generations of Byzantinists remain *pia desideria* even today. Some of them, such as the resolution of the 1935 Sofia congress that vast excavations be undertaken on the territory of the city of Istanbul in cooperation with the Turkish government, missed their opportunity – there hardly could be any large excavations there under today's changed demographic and urban circumstances. But why do we still not have, to mention only *two vota* of the 1935 congress, a historical grammar of medieval Greek, and more strange still, a critical edition of the *Vitae* of Constantine and Methodius, two Byzantines standing at the threshold of the cultural history of the Orthodox Slavs? We hope that the committee appointed in Thessalonica earlier this year, or Professor Giorgio Ziffer of Udine through individual effort, will do the job.

In theory, the application of computers to Byzantine studies could have been advocated three congresses ago, but it was not. The invention has spread like a prairie fire all over the world in the last twenty years. Byzantinists have quickly adjusted, however, and the new tool is for them today what a typewriter was for Krumbacher and a telephone for Charles Diehl. It is most useful in lexicography and in what can be derived from it, including the detection of allusions and quotations and producing lists of concepts. Among the chief desiderata of our time is the systematic expansion of the existing database so as ultimately to cover all the texts of the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods. There are no technical obstacles to this, except lack of money and of a person commanding sufficient authority to act as the centralizing mover and shaker. Some modest beginnings towards including Byzantium into the already existing data banks were made in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* at Irvine, California, and are continuing in Athens. For further details I refer you to the fifth plenary session, devoted to the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, to the new lexicon headed by Professor Trapp, and to the latest news on computer use.

One casualty of the computer revolution will be remembered with sympathy for a number of years, at least in some circles: As the personal messenger disappeared from large European cities about 1900, pushed into oblivion by the telephone and pneumatic mail, so the scholars who could spot an allusion or quotation in a Byzantine text, owing to their vast earlier readings in the classics and later authors have been made technologically obsolete by the new thesauri that can be more efficiently operated by anyone.

So much for fulfilling dreams. What about registering substantive changes? In times when the revier of history is flowing slowly, change is perceived as continuation and possibly as betterment of things as they were. Thus we all understood that Beck's and Hunger's literary *summae* were linear improvements over the analogous works by Erhard and Krumbacher, and we accepted Hunger's new principle of dividing his subject matter by genre rather than by chronology as something innovative, to be sure, but still methodologically within the rules prevailing in normal science. Similarly, we perceive Cyril Mango's urban studies of Constantinople, for all their modern refinements, as a linear continuation of the first article that he published at the age of sixteen.

When the flow of history is rapid, however, changes are perceived as breaks with the past. The last thirty years or so of Byzantine studies are a case in point. The changes that have occurred in some areas of our discipline in these years have less to do with Byzantium and more, either in subtle or in explicit ways, with the *Zeitgeist*. Of the three examples that will follow, one is concerned with the abandonment of an approach; two others with the birth of new ones. Abandoned has been a type of intellectual history centered on the transference of concepts from one culture and epoch to another, especially in the study of the relationship between the divinity and the ruler – an approach exemplified by the works of André Grabar and Ernst Kantorowicz. Unless I am mistaken, this way of doing things in the Byzantine field found its last manifestation in Kantorowicz's famous article entitled *Oriens Augusti* and published in 1963; after that date it largely disappeared from Byzantine studies. A silence ensued, interrupted only a few years ago by an isolated attack on both Kantorowicz and Grabar, and this year by Gilbert Dagron's important *Empereur et prêtre*, where Kantorowicz is mentioned rarely, if reverently. A number of explanations may be proffered for this state of affairs. Perhaps Kantorowicz's combination of technical equipment, competence in a number of fields, and broad culture is not readily encountered among today's practitioners of our trade. In addition, the rules of the scholarly game have changed, so that bold leaps of imagination from one set of well established facts to another are no longer rewarded with applause. The high beam of historical research has been shifted by a later generation to different aspects of the past – a generation that prefers to listen to, read, and be read by its coevals and to look up to authorities outside its own field rather than to the older masters inside it.

What about revisionism, vigorously and ubiquitously pursued today by maverick and upwardly mobile historians outside our field? Interestingly enough, the golden age of revisionism in our studies belongs to the thirties and forties, and its keep was the revue *Byzantion*. Today, one rereads with nostalgia and pleasure Henri Grégoire's challenges: Constantine's edict of Milan was in fact Galerius's edict of Sofia of 311; Eusebius did not write the *Life of Constantine* in its present form; Michael III was a great ruler rather than a pusillanimous drunkard; the diversion of the Fourth Crusade was not a matter of serendipity, but had been planned from the very beginning. The merit of this revisionism was not that its tenets were right – many of them were subsequently shown to have been false – but that it woke up the somnolent scholarly community. Moreover, this revisionism was daring without being irresponsible, as it was supported by disprovable statements of fact. Today's revisionism in Byzantine studies, such as it is, relies rather on speculation and theory.

The perceived breaks with the past ways of doing things have occurred mainly in art history and above all in the art history practiced in the United States, a country where art historians make up the bulk of Byzantinists, and in England. Similar perceived breaks with the past, however, can be also observed in the study of hagiography and of literature. The rule of the game is interpretation rather than discovery and the questions asked are about the use and function or, better yet, "meaning" of art objects and about their social context, that is, about patrons, producers, and consumers. When it comes to the tools used by the new

wave of art historians, I am pleased to report that the knowledge of Greek is more widespread than it was before and the insistence on combining text and image is now universal. Codicology is put to heavy use, so is technical analysis of the production of some classes of objects. All this leaves Kurt Weitzmann far behind (so far, that one younger scholar even *defended* him on a minor point three years ago). I view this trend as marking the victory of common sense, rather than, as the practitioners of the new approach occasionally state, as an application of "critical theory", a somewhat illdefined label imported from outside.

Another theoretical stance coming from outside and adopted this time by some Byzantine historians is to speak of "constructing" the past, where the old folks spoke of "reconstructing" it. I am afraid there is little new in that new approach. The observation that in attempting to reconstruct the past, we tend to construct in under the influence of our present, sometimes to the advantage of the task at hand, was repeatedly made in both the past century and the present one, notably by Marc Bloch in the nineteen-forties and by Hans-Georg Beck in the nineteen-seventies. The problem is not that such a tendency exists – it does – but what to do with it – to be aware of it, control, and constructively channel it? or to read into it a license to relax the historian's self-discipline?

A sociologist of scholarship might connect the recourse to theory in our studies with such factors as the increase in the number of researchers, the practically stationary number of "canonical" objects of study, and the decline in conventional, especially linguistic, research skills. Faced with the choice between, on the one hand, remaining within the canon and interpreting it anew in the light of theories developed in other disciplines and, on the other hand, striking out into less researched areas, such as unpublished texts, the post-Byzantine world, history of the reception of Byzantium, or material and popular religious culture, intelligent young scholars are tempted to take the first course. They may take it because it is easier and quicker to acquire the tenets of new theories than to turn to the time-consuming task of mastering the hitherto untreated material by conventional means.

The study of Byzantium's women as agents of historical and cultural change – whether as Latin princesses marrying into Byzantine ruling families or female commissioners of Greek manuscripts – rather than as silent objects of man-made history is one of the most visible new trends in our discipline. It is so much in the center of our awareness that I shall merely mention it here. Again, the subject is not new – without insisting on Charles Diehl's *Figures byzantines*, I shall mention Spyridon Lampros's still older "Greek Women Scribes and Women Manuscript Owners in the Middle Ages and During Turkocracy", a work dating from 1902–1903. But the ideological difference is substantial: what was an antiquarian or *cherchez la femme* motivation in the past is now a work of recovering aspects of that past of which, it is asserted, the historical establishment has hitherto been oblivious.

Not all products of our *Zeitgeist* or taking other or new disciplines into account should be viewed with suspicion. Twenty years ago, Hans-Georg Beck told us that Byzantinists could profit from understanding economic theory and the theory of constitutional law. Codicology as a distinct discipline was formulated in the late forties, and its Byzantine branch has grown spectacularly in the last fifty years. One example will suffice: in 1958, the second edition of Marcel Richard's *Repertory of Libraries and Catalogues of Greek Manuscripts* had 884 entries; its third edition, revised in 1995 by Jean-Marie Olivier, has 2,507.

The engine that is pulling the innovative train of critical theory and women's studies and to a somewhat lesser degree of normal science, at least in the United States, is a closely knit generation of scholars of both sexes aged from forty-five to sixty. I hope that now that they have made their point they will turn their attention to the generation under forty-five. After all, André Grabar and Ernst Kantorowicz, the two great Byzantinists of the past whom one sexagenarian Young Turk attacked the other day, achieved fame through books written when they were in their late twenties and middle thirties.

If I had to draw the attention of young Byzantinists to one field popular today in scholarship at large, I would quote the *Rezeptionsgeschichte*, the subject of our fourth plenary session. The old name for the same thing was *Nachleben*. The history of various receptions fits the study of Byzantium as a well-made glove fits the hand; moreover, it calls for the exploration of uncharted waters lying beyond Nicolae Iorga's horizons of 1935, such as – to give one example – the role Byzantium's image played in the culture of seventeenth-century Muscovy.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am almost done with my task. Primarily, it was to look backward and to bring the story of our studies down to today in Copenhagen. The tack of making wishes for the success of Byzantine studies in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, also assigned to me, properly belongs to the president of the next congress. I shall usurp my successor's rights, however, to the extent of formulating my wishes right now – who knows where I will be in the year 2001, even if my reader's card in the Bodleian Library does not expire until 2004.

I shall start with wishes that deal with people, thus with wishes that are difficult. May the very young among us agree that reinventing the wheel, even it is great fun, does not move our discipline forward, while improving our Greek, codicology and all such stuff, does. May the innovative generation, now comfortably enjoying middle age, show indulgence towards its predecessors and grant that theory is not yet an indispensable lifeline for Byzantinists, because enough remains to be discovered by conventional means for several congresses to come. May the old among us read and support the young; may they themselves continue to write, if they must, but may they abstain from irresponsible writing, the more harmful, the greater the reputation they still enjoy. Finally, may all of us keep in mind the two hypotheses: that the past really did exist and that in most of Byzantine literature, there is only one correct understanding of a text. The rule that science may begin with imagination, but that it rests on factual documentation rather than on conjecture, however brilliant, still retains its validity for our field as it does for any other.

Now I come to wishes that deal with things, thus to the easier ones. They are becoming reality before our very eyes, and will most likely be reality by the first twenty-five years of the next century. May Byzantine and post-Byzantine texts of all times be entered into one huge database; may all the existing Greek manuscripts be digitized; may all the works of art of interest to us – picture, description, bibliography – be made available on the Internet; but may we, while pursuing all these goals so excellent for pedagogy, not lose pure research from sight.

Finally, may the organizers of the twentieth congress, wherever it will be held, follow the example of the first congress of Bucharest and provide each *congressiste* with a free round trip on some *train de grande vitesse*.

Closing Remarks

Excellencies, Mr. Marshal of the Royal Court, Your Magnificence, Fellow Byzantinists, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I shall start by thanking Sir Dimitri for his superb summary of our proceedings and for the kind words about myself that he pronounced towards the end. Such kind words are more ofter than not undeserved, but are always a pleasure to hear. In my valedictory speech, I shall make one more departure from the required topos of modesty.

You made me president when the *Perestrojka* was one year old, that is, in the threshold of momentous changes occurring in the vast territories of Eastern and South-eastern Europe where Byzantium left an important legacy. The task that arose for us at that time was to assist various Byzantine institutions of the area, especially at the times of congresses, and to

support the move from a more controlled approach to the Byzantine field to the view that Byzantine studies are one and idivisible and that the pursuit of our discipline is our only goal.

The last ten years have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the number of qualified Byzantinists in North America. Considering this, you and history may have put the right man at the right place and at the right time – what with my biography and genealogy spanning the area from Kiev to Warsaw to Cambridge, Massachusetts, not to speak of Berkeley, California, Washington, D.C., and Belgium in between.

Times have changed, however, since 1986, and with that change comes the need for a change at the helm of our association to tackle the different tasks ahead. I cannot wait to announce the new team that will with your approval lead us from now on, but I must keep you in suspense for just a while longer.

We all stand on the shoulders of giants. The two living giants of our studies are H.-G. Beck and Herbert Hunger. They are not with us today, but would no doubt like us to tell them how aware we are of our lasting debt to them. I propose that a telegram, or the modern equivalent thereof, be sent from the whole assembly to H.-G. Beck and H. Hunger and trust you all agree to this proposal.

Next I wish to express my personal thanks to our secretary-general Professor Ioannis Karayannopoulos and to our treasurer Professor Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou for their long years of support and, on occasion, guidance.

Finally, I will act as a spokesman for the whole assembly. The Danish team was greatly undermanned to begin with, and was further weakened by the death of Professor Raasted. Yet our Danish hosts pulled off the miracle of Copenhagen. The miracle workers were Karsten Fledelius and his right-hand Annamette Gravgaard, but the organization of the congress was truly a family affair: Karsten was assisted by his three children, daughters Philippa and Andrea-Dorothea and son Jakob. The wider family has to be mentioned, too – all those young people that sat in the Main Hall of the University and told us what to do and where to go – without ever telling us where to get off. Karsten managed even to organize a first-rate Byzantine exhibit at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek with objects coming from four Scandinavian countries. Our collective thanks and grateful remembrance are due to all of them.

Now I can come to the report on the decisions of the two meetings that the International Bureau of the *Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines* held during our congress:

1. The first decision was the admission of three new national committees: those of Albania, the People's Republic of China, and Ukraine.

2. The second decision has to do with the site of our next congress. The French National Committee has graciously agreed to be the host for the congress in 2001, a decision that had already been tentatively adopted in Moscow in 1991. I hope you will join me in thanking our French colleagues for their hospitality. Now all of us have five years to improve our French or our Franglais, and the better-to-do among us can start studying the *Guide Michelin gastronomique*.

3. The third decision has to do with the composition of the new *bureau international* of our association. First comes the cosmetic part: on the level of honorary presidents, two new names were added: that of Sir Dimitri Obolensky and that of Ihor Ševčenko.

On the level of honorary vice-presidents, the name of Professor Ioannis Karayannopoulos was added, in recognition of his services during the past ten years.

On the level of regular vice-presidents, the name of Professor Maria Nystazopoulou-Pelekidou was added, in recognition of her services during the past ten years; of Professor Karsten Fledelius for organizing the present congress for all of us; and of Professor Ljubomir Maksimovič; of Belgrade.

Now I come to the new team to whom, in the unanimous opinion of the bureau, the

guidance of the *Association Internationale des Etudes Byzantines* should be entrusted for the next five years. The names the bureau has proposed are as follows:

President: Professor Gilbert Dagron, Collège de France
Secretary General: Professor Nikos Oikonomides, University of Athens
Treasurer: Professor Peter Schreiner, University of Cologne, and editor of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*

I now ask the assembly to approve all the votes of the *bureau international* [Acclamation]. It remains for me to thank you all for the trust you put in me in the last ten years and to yield the floor to our new president, Professor Gilbert Dagron.