

ELISABETH JEFFREYS

Literature in twelfth-century Constantinople: changing directions?

The author sketches the intellectual landscape of twelfth-century Constantinople with the special reference to the trends in literature and variety of its genres.

The period, dominated by the Komnenos dynasty, with an increasing economic prosperity and all its cultural and social consequences, generated a demand for trained bureaucrats in secular and ecclesiastical spheres and, as far as writers and literary practitioners are concerned, provided new possibilities of imperial and aristocratic families' patronage. By the 1120s and 1130s a more regular provision of higher education was in existence in Constantinople to such an extent that supply had outstripped demand. It bore a great significance as the extent to which writers depended on the patronage as their sole means of support was a new feature of the era. John Tzetzes' career is quoted as an example of this process and his literary output, covering much that would be classed now not as a literature but e.g. scholarship, leads to a problem of an understanding of a literature itself.

The characteristic features of byzantine literature of the period are named, f.ex. the linguistic usages in fine writing, that followed those of the ancient grammarians and dictionaries and only on very rare occasions using the vernacular language that was in current use. The Byzantine literary production of the time, understood widely, conforms on the whole to the pattern, in which a deeply Christianized society focuses its most attention on composing and preserving material produced as aids to correct Christian thought and worship. In a consequence, secular material formed a very small proportion of the total writerly output and the existing literary forms aspired to conveyed material abhorrent to many of the literary practitioners.

There are, on the other hand, three particularly important divergences from what could be perceived as the standard Byzantine pattern. Writing in vernacular, colloquial Greek appears quite suddenly, usually in snippets, breaking the linguistic self-censorship that had been in place for centuries. Erotic fiction, created by Theodore Prodromos, Constantine Manasses. Niketas Eugenianos. Eumathios Makrembolites and the anonymous author of *Digenis Akritis*, reappeared in the form of novels created under the profound influence of the late antique authors. The third aspect is the copious production of verse for special occasions, a long Byzantine habit, deriving from the epideictic oratory of the Second Sophistic, and in the twelfth century widespread in the imperial and aristocratic households. The last part of the lecture focuses on Manganeios Prodromos, an author whose poetry of this genre survived, as well as on his social and literary connections (including a role of sevastokratorissa Eirene and Iakovos Monachos).

WITOLD FILIPCZAK

Sejmiks of the Płock Voivodeship 1780-1786

The article discusses the sejmiks of Płock Voivodeship, which assembled in Raciąż between 1780 and 1786. It depicts preparations for the particular sejmiks as well as their course and results. The author shows the nuances of political and personal influences. Płock Voivodeship was dominated by the royalist party, supervised by the brother of King Stanislaw August, Michał Poniatowski, the bishop of Płock (the Archbishop of Gniezno since 1784). The voivodeship of Płock was the scene of rivalry between the Sierakowski family (the most important person being Maksymilian, podkomorzy, who later became the Castellan of Płock), the Bohkowski family, and their opponents, i.e. the Zielinski family. The latter were led by Ludwik, łowczy of Płock, who eventually became the Castellan of Rypin. The author analyses the important injunctions included in the instructions for the Sejm deputies from Płock. He also focuses on the organisation and procedures of the sejmiks in Raciąż. Finally, he discusses the parliamentary elites of Płock, i.e. the persons who started the proceedings, marshals, assessors, the sejm deputies, the judges of Crown Tribunal and candidates for local judges elected by the szlachta.

WOJCIECH SZCZYGIELSKI

From the parliamentary discussion on the establishment of the Military Commission at the beginning of the debates of the Great Sejm

In October and at the beginning of November 1788 in the Sejm there was a debate on the abolition of the Military Department of the Permanent Council (dependent on Russia) and the establishment of the Military Commission. During the debate two visions of the Military Commission emerged. The dominating one was the concept promoted by the Puławy party and the independence-oriented deputies. According to this concept the Military Commission was an institution connected with the reformist roots of "The Family" from 1764. This vision of the Military Commission appealed to the gentry because it realised the concept of the democratic (civic) state referring to the emancipation and anti-magnate tendencies of the provincial gentry. The other concept of the Military Commission was formulated by the royal party in order to keep the Permanent Council and the Military Department. It was a vision of the Military Commission which was temporarily (in the years 1775-1776) dominated by hetman Franciszek Ksawery Branicki and which, as a result, was treated as an institution allegedly susceptible to hetman's influence. Finally, the concept of the Military Commission promoted by the Puławy party and the independence-oriented deputies won. The parliamentary debate ending in the abolition of the Military Department and the establishment of the Military Commission (during the session of 3rd November 1788) shows how close the Enlightenment breakthrough

initiated by “The Family” in 1764 was to the landed gentry (prevailing in the Sejm).

JACEK GOCLON

**The government of Jędrzej Moraczewski,
17 November 1918-16 January 1919
(structure, activities, decrees)**

Jędrzej Moraczewski's Cabinet was the first government to maintain control of such a significant part of Poland (the entire Kingdom of Poland together with western Galicia); however, from the very beginning it had to struggle with a truly dramatic economic situation in the Polish territory. In the middle of 1919 war damages were estimated to reach about 14 billion francs! The government began its activity in the times of growing social radicalism; yet, the process of the state structure formation proceeded efficiently, mainly due to the existing machinery of the former Regency Council. The cabinet successfully withstood the chaos, which had been spreading in the country in the first weeks of independence, as well as prevented Bolshevik revolution, for which Polish communists had been striving. This success resulted from a balanced policy of the government, which admitted to power neither the Right nor the communist Left, and which won the favour of the leftist electorate, i.e. working classes. At the same time the government assured social rights and thus provided bearable living conditions (other factors – the fact of regaining independence, resulting in social enthusiasm along with the external threat, significantly strengthening the bond between the government and the nation, were greatly important). But not everyone in the society could appreciate the significance of the government's social reforms. Without doubt, it was caused by incomprehension of such far-reaching reforms in many circles, as well as by political and ideological animosities between different parties. This process was additionally intensified by district particularism. Also unfavourable attitude towards new authorities demonstrated by the western countries could have exerted negative influence on the government's picture in the eyes of the Polish society. The great western powers still considered the Polish National Committee, residing in Paris, as the Polish “government in exile”. Nonetheless, by applying the accomplished-facts strategy, the Cabinet of Moraczewski managed to implement revolutionary changes and efficiently avoided disturbances in the society. In comparison to the situation from the times of partitions this was one of the greatest achievements of his government.