

Klaus Belke: *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 13. Bithynien und Hellespont. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2020 (Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse 513). 1208 p., 325 reproductions on unpaginated plates, one map in the text section, two maps on plates, two enclosed folded, oversized maps. Two volumes, continuously paginated. € 390.00. ISBN: 978-3-7001-8329-7.

Much of today's serious research would be impossible without the groundwork laid by major academy projects. Just think about the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani*, to name only a few. Many of these enterprises are ongoing, all of them had and have to struggle for funds repeatedly (without help from a private foundation, the *Prosopographia Imperii Romani* would probably not have been completed). Therefore, it certainly makes sense to intermittently remind ourselves (and fund-providers) how crucial these projects are for what goes on in Classics. Work on the scale of such undertakings requires continuity and an assured funding for many decades, and while these financial expenses might seem enormous, the yield certainly makes them worth it.

Other forms of work organization have proved less effective. A case in point is the *Tabula Imperii Romani* (TIR): here, individual academies have undertaken (and continue to undertake) to produce the various sheets. The result is, to say the least, quite uneven. Some TIR publications are excellent, many others provide the rare barebones of what such a map-cum-gazetteer should deliver, some are by today's standards clearly insufficient. Although the first TIR sheets appeared in the interwar period, a completion of this project is far beyond the horizon, and the first sheets especially are already in dire need of an update.

Contrary to TIR, the *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* (TIB) uses a very different work approach: all volumes are created by a dedicated team based in Austria, according to a consistent, pre-defined scheme. Apart from the uniform appearance and structure, the other major difference is the scale, if this is the correct word: TIB volumes are not only physically much bigger than the vast majority of TIR volumes, they also cover a lot more ground: despite the self-declared limitation to the Byzantine world, they usually start at the beginning of recorded history and provide information up to the very end of the Byzantine Empire. Whereas some TIR volumes are hardly more than maps or, if

their gazetteer does include additional useful information, are limited to extant archeological remains, a TIB gazetteer can be thought of providing the best available treatises on the places included, detailing not only today's vestiges but also the history of the place as we know it from written sources. A full bibliography completes these surveys.

A downside of TIB used to be its prohibitive price tag. For example, the work under review here, consisting of two hefty volumes (weighing some 4.2 kilos together!) sells for EUR 390, which will keep not only private users but also many libraries from buying it. Fortunately, the Austrian agency FWF now requires funded projects to publish any supported research in an Open Access version, so TIB 13 can be downloaded for free in PDF format.¹ The same is true for the recent issues TIB 12 and 15, although their OA versions are subdivided into individual PDFs. Luckily, the publisher agreed to make the older out-of-print issues TIB 1–7 also available on the internet; but as they are not in the public domain, they can be consulted only in a reader application which does not offer any possibility to download a PDF version for off-line use. It is a boon for the academic community that the TIB team is also otherwise quite active in digital humanities: they have digitized the geographical indices of all published volumes, linking them to the publication as far as this is possible copyright-wise. A fancy application enables users to explore (for now only) the Byzantine Balkans: different types of structures (settlements etc.) can be switched on and off, the time-scale can be customized, and so on. This application also includes the maps of all published TIB volumes. Perhaps the most important of these digital endeavors is the retro-digitalization of the copious slide archives of TIB. More than 7,000 slides of three TIB issues are already scanned and accessible on the internet, although they are watermarked, and their download is prohibited, even for private or scholarly purposes. But at least they can be cited by stating their permalink, and the important thing for now is to have them in a digital version. One may hope that in the decades to come, the copyright issues will be sorted out.²

1 The download link to TIB 13 is <https://www.austriaca.at/9783700183297>.

2 Unfortunately, there are no convenient, short URLs for these sub-projects. At the end of this review, I have tried to provide a provisional portal page for some of the most important Dig-TIB offerings.

The volume on review here is *Tabula Imperii Byzantini* 13, “Bithynien und Hellespont,” in two large, DIN A4-sized parts. The layout is single-spaced and uses a rather smallish typeface; keeping that in mind and considering the page ranges I am going to quote, one may get a sense of the enormous amount of information contained: the frontmatter occupies 94 pages, of which the massive bibliography takes the lion’s share (21–94 in extra small print). The modestly named “Einleitung” covers 95–348 and should rather be considered as today’s standard monograph on all things Bithynian. The individual chapters are “Definition und Abgrenzung” (97–102), giving the exact scope of the book and defining the employed terms; “Geographischer Überblick” (103–110), on geological details including hydrography and climate; “Überblick über die geschichtliche und administrative Entwicklung” (111–224), detailing the region’s history from the Hittites to 1453; “Die Kirche” (225–262); “Die Verkehrsverbindungen” (263–304), covering both roads and shipping routes; “Die Wirtschaft” (305–348), with several important subchapters such as “Land- und Forstwirtschaft” (305–323), “Bodenschätze” (323–331), “Handwerk und Gewerbe” (331–338), and “Handel” (338–348).

This whole section is densely annotated and not only refers the reader to the most significant publications on a given subject, but also provides, if need be, a critical assessment of them (cf. 111, n. 1, “Die Bemerkungen bei Goetze, Kleinasien, 178–180, sind nicht aufschlußreich”). Despite the immense text mass, the overview is really condensed. For example, a full list of the member cities of the Delian League from the later territory of Bithynia and Hellespont is squeezed into a footnote (113 n. 14); the thorny question of the Bithynian capital during the Roman Empire is raised, it is clearly stated that the issue remains without a definite answer (although the evidence rather points to Nikaia), but for the rest, the reader is referred to the exhaustive discussion in the standard publication on the subject; this is surely the most sensible way to proceed. While Belke saves on space when it makes sense, he never compromises whenever precision, rigor or service to the reader requires an additional line or two. A few examples: in the just mentioned question of the “capital” of Bithynia, the word “capital” is immediately defined as the governor’s preferred residence (instead of simply employing this word and evoking all kinds of modern associations); when discussing the mineral resources of Bithynia and Hellespont, Belke devotes not more than one page or so on potash alum (325–362); still, he starts by explaining why

people in by-gone ages were interested in extracting alum at all, detailing its ancient uses.

The *pièce de résistance* of this work, however, is its gargantuan gazetteer, ranging from 351 to 1085. Entries are divided into four parts: a very short geographical classification of the location in question, presentations of its recorded history and its extant monuments, and the bibliography. In the majority of entries, either the history or the monument section remains empty, as many locations are only known through written sources (like Polisma, only appearing in Strabo [929]; or Macricampo, exclusively attested in a Venetian charter of 1219 [746]) or, conversely, only ruins of an ancient or medieval settlement remain with which no historical name can be associated (for example, Veletler or Üyük [both 1072]). While we have on the one hand numerous such rather brief entries, there are, on the other hand, entries which reach impressive extents. The main such cases are Nikaia (802–830) and Nikomedeia (833–856), but other cities also receive a generous discussion, e.g. Abydos (352–361), Kyzikos (705–720), or Prusa (949–957). As it is customary with TIB, several research trips helped prepare this volume, too. If a given location was visited, this is pointed out with an asterisk in the gazetteer, as are any observations made during this voyage for which there is no further documentation in the bibliography (cf. e.g., 876: Palaia was visited in 1997: a slope nearby is covered with material evidence pointing to a major settlement, but this observation is mentioned nowhere in published material on the site).

After the gazetteer, copious indices (1087–1208) and the numerous plates presenting 325 color photos (taken during the research trips) follow. The importance of these photos can hardly be exaggerated, as most of them do not depict safely protected monuments, but rather material which is exposed to weathering and human-induced degradation. Clearly, such monuments do not receive much interest otherwise, and it is obvious that in the course of subsequent generations, fewer and fewer of them will be extant. Documenting them and making this documentation accessible is therefore imperative.

At the very end of these two ponderous volumes, we get to the maps. These also constitute a major difference from TIR cartography: while TIR volumes might include numerous special maps, we have here just four maps. There is the “real” TIB 13, a folded DIN A1 sheet with a plethora of indicated place names; and there are three further maps, for the Bosphorus (a folded DIN A3 sheet), the Troad and the eastern coast of the Sea of Marmara (these

two maps are physically part of the plates section, i.e., they are printed on DIN A4 pages). Understanding them without reading the introduction is impossible. For example, epochs are color-coded, e.g. Late Antiquity is yellow, while 7th–10th century is red; a place attested in both periods is therefore orange; if it is also attested in 10th–13th century (color-code: blue), it's olive green. If you know your color palette, you can instantly say in which periods a place printed in green or purple was attested (otherwise, check the introduction, 13–14). Eighteen different icons represent various types of structures (e.g., settlement with walls, settlement with citadel although without walls, unprotected settlement, main monastery, simple monastery, harbor, bridge ...), not all of them intuitively recognizable.

If any readers deem my assessment of this masterpiece exaggeratedly enthusiastic, I would advise them to download the Golden Open Access version of TIB-13, read into it and see whether they can find fault with this splendid publication. Personally, I was deeply impressed by the immense amount of material brought together and presented in an invariably lucid and intelligent way. For any question related to the subjects covered by TIB-13, it would be unwise not to start with its exhaustive entries and introduction sections.

Appendix

At the time of writing (September 2020), it was far from straightforward to actually find some of the magnificent offerings of Dig-TIB. Despite my dogged trying, I would have failed in some cases without the kind help of Mihailo Popovic from TIB. Although I am convinced that Dig-TIB will have a better arranged portal page pretty soon, the following list might be helpful in the meantime.

The **online versions** of OA and out-of-print volumes can be found here:

TIB 1: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib1.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 2: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib2.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 3: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib3.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 4: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib4.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 5: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib5.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 6: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib6.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 7: <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/reader/TIB/tib7.html> [just reader, no download]

TIB 12: <https://austriaca.at/3945-4inhalt> [PDFs for individual chapters]

TIB 13: <https://www.austriaca.at/9783700183297> [full PDF]

TIB 15: <https://austriaca.at/7090-7inhalt> [PDFs for individual chapters]

The **maps** of all TIB volumes can be found here: At <https://data1.geo.uni-vie.ac.at/projects/tibapp>, click the “layer” icon at the upper right corner; a radio-button list of TIB maps appears in which the map of interest can be selected. This is also the URL for the Balkans application.

The digitized **slides** are available at <https://catalogue.tib.oeaw.ac.at>. Remember, they are not in the public domain (i.e., you cannot download and re-use them), but they have permalinks and can be cited in publications according to these.

The **registers** of all volumes can be accessed at <https://tib.oeaw.ac.at/index.php?seite=published>. Just click the “-->” icon to the right of the entries of the individual TIB volumes.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

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