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Byzantine Archaeology – selected problems¹

In the studies of archaeologists – mediaevalists specializing in Central and Northern Europe – one can come across unfavorable assessments of the state of research into Byzantine archaeology. Apart from a fairly mild assessment represented, for example, by M. Roslund², much stronger statements can be found, J. Staecker (1999, 67), for example, thinks that the state of publication of archaeological material (devotional objects) from the territory of the Byzantine Empire is “[...] katastrophal [...]”.

Such judgments arouse surprise in professionals specializing in Byzantium: it has to be admitted that there has been progress in the research into Byzantine archaeology, and the people who tend to criticize the achievement of the professionals who specialize in Byzantium do not deal with the Empire exclusively³.

It is difficult to present a complete description of the state of research into Byzantine archaeology; recently P. Schreiner (2001, 612) has said more on this topic. In this paper I have decided to expand the point

¹ This article does not aim at tackling all the issues connected with Byzantine Archaeology. It was written in connection with a PhD thesis, *Old-Russian and Byzantine Finds from Southern Poland, 10th–13th century* (supervisor: Prof. dr hab. Michał Parczewski); the thesis was defended in November 2003 (an abstract, see Wołoszyn in print). A further development of Byzantine Archaeology, a discussion about its chronological and geographical basis can be expected from the Byzantine Archaeology Group, which operates at the Centre for Byzantine, Ottoman and Modern Greek Studies (based in the Institute of Archaeology & Antiquity of the School of Historical Studies at the University of Birmingham), see <http://www.byzarch.bham.ac.uk/intro.htm>

² „Im Mittelmeergebiet sind archäologische Erkenntnisse über die byzantinische Zeit weniger weit gediehen als das Wissen über die klassisch-antike Gesellschaft. In der Byzantologie ist mehr Gewicht auf die Philologie, die Kunstgeschichte und die auf schriftliche Quellen gestützte Geschichte gelegt worden, während das an die Archäologie gebundene Studium des Alltags vernachlässigt wurde. [...]. Geblendet von den weissen Marmorsäulen hat er [an archaeologist – M.W.] sich schwer damit getan, ein politisch und stilhistorisch wenig zugängliches Mittelalter zu entdecken.“ (Roslund 1998, p. 325, 327).

³ J. Staecker (1999, p. 67), at the same time the author of an excellent publication, certainly exaggerates when he says that from the territory of Byzantium „[...] liegen [...] kaum Veröffentlichungen über die christlichen Anhänger seit dem Anfang dieses Jahrhunderts vor.“

that P. Schreiner made and present a few comments on the state of research into the material past of the Byzantine Empire⁴ (I), and also on the suggested terminology with regard to Byzantine archaeology, which is discussed in the literature of the subject (II).

I.

Although a thorough work of over 600 pages entitled *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* appeared already in 1911⁵, Byzantine archaeology was then only in its early stages as a field of science. In fact the work of O. M. Dalton deals more with the history of art; it could also be seen as alluding to the way of understanding the archaeology of the Mediterranean as the history of art (cf. Bianchi Bandinelli 1976).

Byzantine archaeology is a relatively new field of science because, among other factors, it was (in comparison with the research into Antiquity) distinguished relatively late as an independent field of history (Moravcsik 1976, 27–31; Mazal 1988, 13–22).

Strong connections between Byzantine archaeology and the history of art can be seen in the eminent studies by P. Orsi (1912; cf. Maurici 2000) dealing with Sicily. This is how archaeology was studied at the Russian Institute of Archaeology in Constantinople⁶, which was founded in 1895 by F. I. Uspenski. E. A. Effenberger (1997, column 874)⁷ has recently drawn our attention to the permanent character of the connections between Byzantine archaeology and the history of Byzantine art. The title of the journal launched in 1999 by J. G. Deckers and M. Restle is characteristic of the problem in question: *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte*.

⁴ I concentrate on the Middle Byzantine Period. For Archaeology of Early Byzantine Period see Mango (2006).

⁵ I used a reprint of this publication (Dalton 1961).

⁶ Although in the interwar period “ordinary” finds of material culture had already been described, one can point to a classical study of Byzantine pottery from Corinth (Morgan 1942).

⁷ Literally the author writes: „In der dt. wiss. Terminologie beginnt sich die Bezeichnung B. Arch. als Entsprechung zu klass. Arch. und anderen Archäologien erst allmählich durchzusetzen, da die Erforschung der byz. Denkmäler lange Zeit Gegenstand der allg. Kunstgesch. war, was die überwiegend kunstwiss. orientierte Betrachtungsweise erklärt. [...] Bislang fehlt eine systematische Einführung in Gegenstand und Methodik der B. Arch., deren Etablierung als eigenständiges Fach bestenfalls im Rahmen der Gesch. der byz. Studien berücksichtigt wurde.“

International Byzantine congresses have been organized since 1924; it is worth pointing it out here that for the first time a separate section for Byzantine archaeology has been established at the congress in Washington in 1986 (Zanini 1994, 30).

The archaeology of the Mediterranean developed primarily as the archaeology of classical Greece, Rome or of the Near East. It goes without saying that on particular sites there are finds not only from the for instance Sumerian period, but also earlier and later ones. It used to be a common practice for excavation teams to concentrate on the examination of the “important” layers, and to disregard the finds from other periods (in practical terms it often meant removing the finds to a slag heap). The victims of such activity were not only prehistoric layers connected, for example, with the neolithisation of the Near East, but also Byzantine layers, which are of most interesting to us. It would be useful to cite the opinion of those who deal with Byzantine archaeology professionally. J. Vroom (2000, 250) contends that “Digging through the Byz’ was and still is the general method of many archaeologists working in Greece. This expression means removing as quickly as possible with heavy machinery the layers on top of the Hellenistic vessels and Classical coins. Until quite recently, it was even standard procedure on some Greek excavations to simply throw away all undecorated medieval pottery which was in the way of the hunt for ant treasures.”

It is worth pointing it out here that in a book containing 377 pages, a collection of abstracts prepared for of the eighth annual meeting of EAA which took place in Greece (Thessaloniki; EAA Meeting 2002), you can find only one section which deals with Byzantine archaeology; altogether 9 papers were presented within this section⁸.

P. Lock and G.D.R. Sanders (1996, p. V), in the introduction to a work devoted to the archaeology of the Middle Ages in Greece, write that “Both as a concept and a practice, medieval archaeology has far to go in the Aegean world”, this field of science “[...] is still very much at the stage of discovery and record”.

It is also worth quoting here *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, where we find the information that “Byz. Archaeology does not really exist as a discipline of its own, and – although there are significant exceptions [...] – most Byz. sites are explored in connection with the investigation of classical monuments.” (Gregory, Kazhdan 1991, 152).

We should certainly agree with the opinion of P. Schreiner (2001, 617) that “Gerade in den für die byzantinische Kultur relevanten Ge-

⁸ I realize, of course, that not all papers had been properly qualified, nonetheless the comparison of the figures is telling.

bieten bleibt Kleinmaterial vielfach den Magazinen der Museen vorbehalten oder ist, wenn überhaupt, chronologisch ungesichert geordnet.” We might perhaps be better able to familiarize ourselves with those finds if an electronic data base on Byzantine finds were created (cf. Drandaki, Parapadakis, Dionysiadou 1996)⁹.

In some research, which are more of an introduction to Byzantine studies, the word archaeology never occurs (this was pointed out in the context of the publication off O. Mazal [1988] by E. Zanini 1994, 30).

As I have previously mentioned, Byzantine archaeology is a discipline which is fairly close to the history of art, and similarly to the archaeology of Classical Greece, Rome or of the Near East; these connections will be obvious for a long time yet.

Part of the very critical opinions of the archaeologists of Central and Northern Europe about the state of recognition of Byzantine Archaeology is connected with the disappointment experienced by those who have looked at the books and journals about (judging by the titles) Byzantine archaeology. The archaeology of Central Europe looks for an analogy to the buckle, clasp, arrowhead that have been discovered, while the publications on Byzantine archaeology are dominated by works devoted to architecture, painting, the fittings of churches (lamps, etc); there are relatively few publications on “ordinary” archaeology. In our part of Europe, such topics are covered by art historians or archaeologists specialized in examining architecture, rather than by “ordinary” archaeologists.

As well as this, in the publication by E. Zanini, which is a kind of introduction to Byzantine archaeology and architecture predominates; in the chapter on material culture (Zanini 1994, 209–232) only ceramics was treated more extensively.

Many works dealing with chosen elements of material culture are based primarily upon the analysis of iconographic material and written texts. A good example would be studies of weaponry (Kolias 1988; 1994; Nicolle 1996; McGeer 1995; *Byzantium* 1997; Bartusis 1999; Haldon 2002; Dawson 2002; Babuin 2002)¹⁰ and clothing (Piltz 1989; Parani 2003).

Due to the small number of excavation works focussing particularly on the analysis of Byzantine layers, exhibitions play an important role in getting to know the material culture of this country. Presentations of “high” culture predominate in the exhibitions; one should thus also pay

⁹ Of course a certain brake on the development of a data base of this kind is the security of the collections.

¹⁰ Although especially in the case of the works collected in the volume published by D. Nicolle in 2002, one can notice certain progress.

special attention to the exhibitions which concentrate, at least partly, on everyday articles (Stiegemann ed., 2001).

It is difficult to use the material presented at the exhibitions and the that which is part of various collections, as the majority of the objects lack information on the place and the circumstances of their discovery; often this information is given in very general terms, for example, the eastern part of the basin of the Mediterranean (Evans, Wixom 1997, cf. eg. 202–203). This situation refers both to older (Segall 1938; Orlando 1963) and newer works (Rudolph, Rudolph 1973, 243; Deppert 1995; Wamser, Zahlhaas 1998; cf. also Williams, Ogden 1994; P. Schreiner has recently given this problem consideration; P. Schreiner 2001, 611, footnote 159).

A journal on Byzantine archaeology exclusively has not yet been published.

At this stage one should also underline the development of research into the so-called everyday life, material culture, customs including magic etc. (the so-called *Volkskunde*) based on written and iconographic sources. The starting point here is, of course, a six-volume work by Pg. Kukules Βυζαντινών βίος καὶ πολιτισμός, Athens 1948–1955. A systematic juxtaposition of works on this topic has been undertaken by *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, point 5Cg (*Volkskunde, Volksglauben, Magie*); it contains both an analysis of written sources (Oikonomides 1990; Karpozilos 1995, 78–80), as well as all kinds of paintings (cf. generally Schreiner 2001; see also Köpstein 1981). The last to present research into Byzantine archaeology in a synthetic way was P. Schreiner¹¹; he did this within the so-called *Volkskunde*.

A separate field of research is crusader archaeology; apart from synthetic studies (Boas 1999), one can point to detailed studies (Bintliff 1996; Ivinson 1992a; 1996). At this point one can mention a discipline,

¹¹ One should fully agree with the researcher's remark (Schreiner 2001, 575) that one should not transfer directly the observations that were made on the basis of ethnographic material to the period of the Middle Ages; undoubtedly in some of the works the authors try to highlight and underline antique, Byzantine roots of various phenomena. Of course many elements of material culture or customs have survived in the Balkans, however, they must have undergone serious transformations, for example, the antique myth about Charon (Alexiou 1978; cf. as well Constantelos 1978, unfortunately this work is in principle based exclusively on written sources), one should also expect phenomena which could be described as the Renaissance of certain practices or of the use of certain products, a good example could be the development of jewellery in the Balkans in the XVIII–XX c. which is very “medieval” in design (Vladič-Krstić 1995; Zdravev 1997, photograph 3).

the archaeology of the Ottoman Empire, which is developing now (Bar-am, Carroll ed., 2000).

In the studies of jewelry, one can point to the work of C. d' Angela (1989), A. Bosselmann from Bonn¹² is currently dealing with jewelry analysis from the Byzantine treasures from the 8–10 c.

It seems that P. Schreiner did not entirely appreciate progress in the research into ceramics (Schreiner 2001, 611, footnote 159, 614–615 and footnote 176). The statement that there are no ceramics analyses which show the differences in Diet customs is no longer valid (cf. Joyner 1997; among other works on Byzantine ceramics, cf. Déroche, Spieser ed. 1989; Spieser 1996; François 1995; 1997; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikioy, Bakirtzis 1999; Sanders 2000; Vroom 2000).

One can also point to the works on Byzantine glass (Philippe 1970; Shchapova 1996).

When talking about clothing and its parts, P. Schreiner in principle passed over the results of excavation works (Schreiner 2001, 613–614), and in this territory a lot was done, especially in the case of early Byzantium (Varsik 1992; Schulze-Dörlamm 2002).

One should also point to the studies of crosses both from the territory of the Empire (Sandin 1998; Pitarakis 1998; 2006; Albani 2004) as well as the Balkans (Dončeva-Petkova 1985; 1998; Petrović 1997).

Of course one of the most important problems in archaeology and other historical sciences is the dating of the objects that have been discovered, it refers to Byzantium¹³ as well.

In archaeology it is essential for proper dating to construct a system of relative chronology on the basis of the analysis of compact units of finds, particularly graves but also treasures, which enable us to distinguish groups of co-occurring finds. Due to the fact that we are able to date some of the finds we can construct a system of absolute chronology.

The periodization of Byzantine archaeology relates mainly to the patterns that we know from the studies done by historians and art historians.

E. Zanini (1994, 173–208) gave only a general statement and distinguished three periods: 1). VII–X c., 2). The Komnenos Period, 3). The late Byzantine Period.

J. Vroom (2000, 247–248) uses the following terms: 1). The Early Byzantine Period VII–IX c., 2). The Middle Byzantine Period X–

¹² Information sent by e-mail from the author (e-mail dated 21st April 2002).

¹³ J. Vroom (2000, pp. 252–253) draws our attention to the huge problems connected with dating Byzantine ceramics.

XII c., 3). The late Byzantine Period, (Frankish Period) – XIII–XV w., 4). Ottoman Period- XVI – early XIX c.

J. Bintliff (1996), who is doing research into the territory of Boeotia, suggests the following periodization 1). The Early Byzantine Period, The Dark Ages – VII–IX c.; 2). The Middle Byzantine Period – the second half of IX – 1204; 3). The period after 1204 to the end of XVI c.¹⁴; 4). The Early Turkish Period the second half of XV–XVI c.

The above-quoted divisions relate to the current patterns, which have been worked out by non-archaeologists. It seems that long-term it will be essential to work out a chronological pattern based upon the analysis of archaeological data.

A good example of a periodization that is strongly “dependent” on historical knowledge is a suggestion made by L. Joyner (1997, p. 82, drawing 1) which distinguishes the following periods in the history of Corinth: 1) The late Byzantine Period from XI c. to 1210; 2) Early Frankish Period 1210–1260; 3) Middle Frankish Period 1260–1312; 4) Late Frankish Period 1312–1350.

The necessity of archaeologists forming their own periodization is best confirmed by the research into Corinth, yet from a little earlier period.

In a classical study of Byzantine ceramics from Corinth by C. H. Morgan (1942), the starting point for dating was the history of Corinth written by J.H. Finley (1932). On the basis of historical data it was assumed that the city had been totally abandoned as a result of Slavic invasions in VI c., and it was settled again only in IX c. when the area round Corinth became part of the Empire. The conquest of the city by Roger of Sicily (1147) meant basically the decline and fall of the city. For this reason the ceramics that were believed to be younger than late antique were automatically dated as of IX–X c. The verification of these findings based on strata observation and numismatic material found in particular settlement layers began only recently, yet it has already allowed for the considerable revision of the findings of the second half of XX c. (Sanders 2000, 154, footnotes 4–6 where you can find examples of “redating” the findings of C. H. Morgan). We know now that the late antique city existed until around the second half of VII c., but also in the VIII c. there are clear traces of settlement. It turns out that Roger’s attack is not an important dividing line in the history of the city (Sanders 2000, 154).

¹⁴ J. Bintliff uses a few terms with regard to this period, in a later work of this author (Bintliff 2000, pp. 44–46), the period 1204 – the second half of XV c. is “[...] High Medieval/Frankish/late Byzantine period[...]”, the end of the XIV–XV c. is also called “[...] Final medieval [...]”.

A forecast of the formation of such an autonomous, archaeological division of the history of Byzantium can be seen in the remarks made by J. Bintliff. The Early Byzantine Period is the time of a clear depopulation; this observation corresponds with the results of the analyses of written sources. It is important that the researcher pays attention to the fact that in the territory of Boeotia a revival of settlement and economy can be noticed by the analysis of the ceramics of XI–XII c. whereas written sources would suggest the necessity of dating the Middle Byzantine Period from as early as the second half of IX c. One could add that the period 1204 – XVI c. has been distinguished on the basis of the features of the ceramics¹⁵. J. Vromm (2000, 248) has recently paid attention to the fact that it is necessary for archaeologists to form their own periodization; he underlines as well that the changes in the material culture and settlement do not have to occur to the rhythm of political events. One should entirely agree with the author's statement that the capture of Constantinople in 1204 does not have to mean that directly after this date one has to observe an increased inflow of "Latin" products (from Venetia and Genua)¹⁶.

As I have mentioned before, to create a relative chronology it is essential to have a bigger group of compact units; in practice it means the richly or relatively richly equipped grave finds, and those that appear within larger burial grounds.

¹⁵ This period is characterized by the presence of the Frankish ceramics, and then Frankish-Turkish ceramics. Frankish ceramics in technical terms can be described as late Byzantine.

¹⁶ The end of the Middle Byzantine Period is traditionally marked by the year 1204 when on the 13th April Constantinople was taken by the Fourth Crusade. The final defeat was accompanied by the devastation of the city by fire. Apart from the above-mentioned fire (12th–13th April) there had been other fires before in connection with the fights with the crusaders, that is on the 17th–18th July 1203 and on the 19th–20th August 1203. The destruction is described in written sources, especially by Nicetas Choniates. With the fire of August 1203 we can connect layers of ashes which had been discovered in the territory of the Hippodrome in 1927 (Madden 1991/1992, pp. 81–82). One should clearly underline the fact that the destruction cannot be compared to the devastation of Kiev in 1240 (Karger 1958, s. 488–518, ryc. 141). It does not seem that the traces of the destruction in Constantinople could have played a role of the same importance in the development of Byzantine archaeology as did the research in Kiev in the case of the archaeology of Kievan Rus' (Rybakov 1948, p. 5, 525–538; Boronin, Karger, Tichanova 1948, p. 5; Grabar 1968, p. 157–159; recently to archaeological evidence of Mongol invasion on Eastern Europe Artem'ev 2004).

The acceptance of Christianity that forbids equipping the dead causes the “disappearance” of the finds that help to date the burial grounds also in the areas where the custom of equipping the dead in a rich way prevailed. It is well seen in the territory of France, Germany where for the period V–VII c. we have extended chronology systems (Schutz 2001), the custom of equipping the dead that disappeared in VIII c. seriously hinders the dating of the later centuries. Thanks to the existence of the Avars of the 6–8th c. and the Magyars of the 10th c. alongside pagan beliefs, we can date precisely the finds of those times (Daim 2003; Mesterházy 1993; Révész 2002).

The territory of the Byzantine Empire had been Christianized since the close of Antiquity, and for this reason the burial grounds that are discovered there do not contain a large number of finds.

In the light of the few works that were available to the author, attention is paid to the fact that Byzantine burial grounds from the period V–VIII c. (Avni, Dahari 1990) and also from the developed phases of the Middle Ages (after 1000) contain quite a large number of finds; these are not only small crosses, but also pieces of vessels and oil lamps.

A good example can be the results of the research into the burial grounds in Corinth (Ivinson 1992) and also in Egypt, in the south-east part of the Fajum oasis; the graveyard is dated XII–XIX/XX c., and is the only mediaeval (and modern) Christian graveyard in Egypt that has been researched into (Žurek 2000). The equipping of the dead was discovered also in a few graves in Abdera, which are dated as of the Middle Byzantine Period; according to the authors, however, the equipment of the dead had originally been richer, parts of it were stolen (Agelarakis, Agelarakis 1989, p. 10). In the burial ground from the territory of antique Troy, dated as of XII/XIII c., two golden earrings were discovered, in another a small brown cross was discovered (Rose 2002, 113, cf. drawing 10)¹⁷.

¹⁷ In this context it is worth quoting a very interesting observation made by P. Schreiner (2001, p. 611, footnote 159), who writes that “Die zypriotische Keramik ist [...] (nach mündlichen Hinweisen von Marie – Luise von Wartburg) auf Friedhöfen gefunden worden und war also Grabbeigabe, die noch bis in das vergangene Jahrhundert üblich war. Die besonders schöne Platte mit der Hochzeitsszene (unsere Abb. 14) kann also durchaus ein Hochzeitsgeschenk gewesen sein, das beim Tod ins Grab gelegt wurde.“ (Schreiner 2001, p. 611, footnote 159). From the caption under drawing 14 one can deduce that the find should be dated as of the reign of the Lusignan Dynasty (1191–1489) on Cyprus. From the text written by P. Schreiner one cannot unambiguously deduce that this particular vessel was discovered in the grave; anyway the observation of the German specialist in Byzantium refers to the period of developed Middle Ages.

It is difficult to assess the scale of the phenomenon of the equipping of the dead in Byzantium¹⁸, E. A. Iverson (1992, 119) when describing the burial grounds from Corinth from X–XIV c. contends that “Personal jewelry is a regular find throughout the centuries [...]” It would be useful to obtain more detailed information on this subject. In an article by E. A. Iverson (1996) which describes the Latin burial grounds in the Levant there is no mention of the equipment, there is no mention of the equipment of Latin graves in a study by J. Boas (1999, 276), one should stress it here that one knows mainly church burial grounds, E. Iverson (1996, 96) underlines the fact that the examination of “ordinary” burial mounds is to be done in the future. It would be very interesting to find out if there were any differences in the number of objects put into graves between the Franks and the people living in Byzantium.

Although we do not lack works on Byzantine eschatology¹⁹, unfortunately in those studies there is no information that would be important to an archaeologist (recent studies or byzantine grave- finds, Makropoulou 2006; internet).

Valuable equipment of the dead has been certified in the case of the Balkans also for XIX–XX c. (Djaković 1988; Risteski 1998); it seems that it refers more to the Orthodox areas than those that were under the influence of the Latin Church²⁰.

¹⁸ It is interesting that when talking about the problem of the dating of Byzantine finds, J. Vroom (2000, pp. 252–253) does not refer to the grave finds.

¹⁹ In 1999 in Washington there was a separate conference devoted to this topic: *Byzantine Eschatology: Views on Death and the Last Things, 8th to 15th Centuries*, the results of the meeting were published in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 [2001]).

²⁰ It is interesting to note that the border between the Western and Eastern Slav lands, which is invisible in the light of the analysis of the mounds from the tribal period, becomes clear when dealing with the burial grounds from XI–XIII c. The feature of Russian burial mounds is the existence of various relics of paganism: the burning of the dead, the building of mounds, and finally a richer equipment of the dead with burial gifts, which survived in that territory much longer than in Poland and the Czech Republic. The difference that can be seen from X/XI c. is not one that would prove Western and Eastern Slavs to be different; it shows the differences between the two centres of Christianisation: Rome and Constantinople. The latter was characterised by a certain “tolerance” towards pagan tradition – the results of the studies of the burial rituals in Kievan Rus’ illustrate the phenomenon known from written sources as “a double faith” very well. It is worth remembering it here that the differences that were observed on the borderland of the Western and Eastern

It is more difficult to assess the ability to date Byzantine finds on the basis of settlement layers. In the case of Pergamon J. M. Spieser (1996, IX) contends that although we know the yearly dates of the two earthquakes which destroyed Pergamon in XIII c., so far we have been unable to use the fact to build the periodization pattern of the material culture of Pergamon. Undoubtedly, one can build up hopes with regard to the analysis of settlement layers, which is supported by the studies of G. D. R. Sanders (2000, 154, footnotes 4–6; general deliberations on Byzantine settlement layers, mainly in the context of the examination of Cherson cf. Romančuk, Ščeglov 1998; recently Romančuk 2005).

In absolute dating one can still point to a few problems. A classic way of dating in archaeology is the determination of the age of the find via its co-occurrence with other objects whose chronology is known to us. In this case we should raise our hopes high with regard to the analysis of Byzantine finds known to us from the territory of Avar Kaganat, and old-Magyars finds. A relatively small distance between the territory of the Carpathian Basin and the area of the Empire, intensive contact between the two spheres, allow us to assume a relatively precise dating of Byzantine finds on the basis of the data obtained in the territory of the Basin of the Middle Danube.

It seems that in the case of the Balkan Peninsula, Anatolia and the Near East dendrochronology, the *wunder Waffe* of the early mediaeval archeology of Central Europe (cf. Poláček, Dvorská ed. 1999) can not play such a role, though of course progress in the use of this method is huge (cf. Kuniholm 1996, see especially drawing 1; an example of dating by the means of the dendrochronological method in the case of the Late Byzantine Period, cf. Lev-Yadun 1992). We can not have much hope with regard to dendrochronology for dating Byzantine finds because there is much less wood in the whole sphere of the *Mediterraneum* in comparison with Eastern or Central and Northern Europe (Koder 1984, 57–59). It led of course to a less frequent use of wood, replacement by other material, e.g. mud bricks as well as a bigger participation of stone in building (Rheidt 1990; 1991).

Slavs have an analogy in Finland (Purhonen 1997, 386), where the burial mounds of the area which was Christianised by the Russian Church show features similar to those found in the Ukraine, Belarusia and Russia. In order to explain this phenomenon, it will be essential to familiarise oneself more extensively with the grave finds from the territory of the Byzantine Empire, so that on the basis of such studies one will be able to recognize the strategy of the Orthodox Church in the field of Christianization.

Perhaps an exception is wood used to shore up wells. The dating of early Slavonic settlements on the basis of wood analyses from wells is already a common practice (cf. Biermann, Dalitz, Heussner 1999).

It is known that the wood dated as of X–XIII c., used to build (war) ships, was imported from Italy to the territory of Syria, Palestine and Egypt. The Pope would ban, e.g. Venetian merchants in 971, from exporting wood to Islamic territory (cf. Lilie 1994, 32). This fact confirms not only the lack of wood in the Byzantine territory, but it makes one more cautious when building the dendrochronological scale; part of the wood from the territory of Greece or Turkey can really come from, for example, Italy. Written sources confirm import of wood from Italy, one can assume that the Empire could import wood also from Kievan Rus’.

In the case of prehistoric archaeology in the territory of the Near East, it is very common to use radio-carbon dating (Warren 1996). It seems that in the case of the Middle Ages this method will not be often used, although recently researchers have been trying to improve it, so that its dating accuracy would also be satisfactory for the researchers who specialize in the Middle Ages (cf. Scull, Bayliss 1999).

We can nurse strong hopes when it comes to the development of underwater archaeology, especially with the examination of the ships that have sunk, which are a special kind of compact units. In the case of the Byzantine territory, the discovery of coins is almost certain, even larger series of coins, or coin weights, or seals among the remains of the ships, which will allow us to date the whole unit. Quite frequently the remains of the ship are big enough to conduct dendrochronological analyses. A good example could be excavation works on the southern coast of Anatolia where a merchant ship had been discovered, and which was later called the *Glass Wreck* due to the number of glass vessels that it contained. The ship sank most certainly in the third decade of 11th century, perhaps its voyage could be connected with the peace made between the Empire and Fatimids in 1027. Among small finds our attention is drawn to a huge number of glass vessels, products that could be described as openwork, golden earrings, pieces of weaponry, arrowheads, battleaxes, as well as scissors (Bass internet, cf. photographs no GW-2248, GW-2255, GW-2262, GW-2368, GW-2720, GW-2417; on the results of the examination of the ship dated as of VII c., cf. Bass, Doorninck van internet).

II.

The term Byzantium, a name that describes the East Roman State in the Middle Ages, does not correspond to the terminology known to its inhabitants. The term was introduced by Hieronymus Wolf (1516–80) in XVI c.; Hieronymus Wolf published a few texts on Byzantium between 1557–1562. The whole series that he planned to publish was to be called *Corpus Historiae Byzantinae*.

Byzantium used to be a Megaran colony, which was established around 660 BC. Its mythical founder was Byzas. Constantine the Great chose this city as his seat; at that time the city was also given a new name (Κωνσταντινούπολις the city of Constantine). A ceremonial consecration took place on 11th May 330; from this time on the city became the capital of the Empire.

As we know, the inhabitants of the Empire did not call themselves Byzantines²¹, Helens²² or Greeks²³, but being convinced of the existence of *Imerium Romanum*, they called their state βασιλεία τῶν Ῥωμαίων, their ruler βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων, and themselves Romans. Ῥωμαῖοι. This phenomenon survived the fall of the Empire in the second half of XV c., even in XIX c. the Greeks still called themselves ρωμέοι.

Recently P. Lock and G. D. R. Sanders (1996, V) have suggested that we should give up the term the archaeology of Byzantium, Byzantine, and, they suggest, the term *medieval archaeology in Greece* (or the archaeology of Medieval Greece, as can be deduced from the titles of their works), since “Ironically today, in Greek lands the medieval period is dubbed ‘Byzantine’ a cultural label taken from seventeenth-century French scholars and applied somewhat haphazardly to political, religious, and cultural processes.” The introduction of the term medieval “[...] would have the effect of removing the inverted snobbery implicit in the adjectives Byzantine, Frankish and Venetian when applied to periods of time and greatly ease the task of historians and archaeologists concerned with the acculturation and symbiosis taking place in the eastern Mediterranean in the high medieval period.”

²¹ The term “Byzantium”, which was sometimes used, meant the capital of the Empire and had an archaizing character (Salamon 1975, p. 124).

²² The term “Helens”, ‘Ἕλληνες meant pagans (Rochow 1991), only in XIV-XVc. the term was used to mean the inhabitants of the Empire (cf. Koder 1990, pp. 104–106; cf. Dąbrowska 1991).

²³ The term “the Greeks” Γραικοί occurred very rarely; in the Early Byzantine Period it had an ironic character (Moravcsik 1976, p. 56; Koder 1990, p. 104).

The archaeology of the Middle Ages, as understood by the above-quoted authors, should cover the period from 1100 to 1500 (*ibidem*).

The legitimacy of using the term Byzantium has often been denied, we can point especially to J. B. Bury (1923, VII–VIII), who in the case of political history used the term *The Eastern Roman Empire*.

To some degree the suggestion of the British researchers (P. Lock and G. D. R. Sanders) has been accepted – the section which was devoted to Byzantine archaeology in Greece, the 8th meeting of EAA, was called *Pathways into medieval and post-medieval Greece* (cf. EAA Meeting 2002, point IV.2., 184–187, the session organizers were T. Vionis, L. Sigalos).

Also in the titles of some articles one uses the term *medieval*, however, in the text itself one uses terms such as *middle-byzantine* (Doukatakis-Demertzis 2002). J. L. Bintliff (2002, 185) calls subsequent periods “[...] the Byzantine, Frankish, Ottoman and Early Modern eras [...]”.

The suggestion of the British authors has been welcomed in some studies devoted to Scandinavia (Roslund 1998, 325, 327; Staecker 1999, 67, footnote 45). M. Roslund (1998, 327) contends even that “Die retrospektive Anknüpfung an die klassisch-antike Vergangenheit, die der Begriff ’byzantinische Zeit’ beinhaltet, stellt eine der Ursachen dar, die die Integration von Mittelalterstudien im östlichen Mittelmeerraum und nordeuropäischer Mittelalterarchäologie erschweren.”

J. Vroom polemicizes with the suggestion of using the term “medieval”, she (2000, 247) underlines the fact that “[...] medieval is a term defined in the West in the perspective of the Renaissance and Reformation and has no meaning in the Greek Orthodox world.”

J. Koder also (1991/92, 413) objects to using the term “the Middle Ages” with regard to Byzantium, and he contends that “Von einem byzantinischen Mittelalter zu sprechen, erscheint dennoch problematisch, da der Begriff insgesamt, wie auch seine Untergliederungsansätze, von westlichen Vorstellungen bestimmt ist.”

A separate problem is the use of the term “Frankish” with regard to Byzantine Archaeology of XI–XV c.²⁴ J. Vroom (2000, 247–250) polemicizes appropriately with the use of this term. She underlines the fact that the term “Frankish” is not precise. It is difficult to say whether the term “frankisch ware” should be understood as goods produced/used by “the Franks” in XIII–XV c., or as all the goods known from the Greece of XIII–XV c. She also brings our attention to the fact that the use and transfer of the terms known from political history can

²⁴ Examples of the use of this term have been collected below. See the suggestions of the periodization of Byzantine Archaeology.

be misleading, as the changes in the material culture do not have to happen exactly in tune with the rhythm of political history. Finally, she underlines appropriately the fact that for “ordinary” European archaeologists the term “Frankish” is associated mainly with France, West Germany in the Merovingian/Karolingian period.

As I have mentioned before, the term “Byzantium” is really artificial; it does not refer to the term used by the inhabitants of the Empire, but only to a certain scientific tradition.

The author of this paper feels that the suggestion of P. Lock and G. D. R. Sanders with regard to the use of the term “the archaeology of Medieval Greece” can not be accepted; in a similar way he feels we should be skeptical about the use of the term “the Frankish period”.

The arguments presented by J. Vroom could be completed by pointing to other works that prove the diversity of the material culture of Late Byzantium (François 1997a). The use of the term “Frankish” to describe Byzantine goods that are discovered in Poland or Scandinavia would be totally misleading; it would suggest that we mean West European goods. It is also worth paying attention to the fact that the term “Romania”, which means the territory of Byzantium in Italian sources, refers to the territory that has been distinguished by J. Koder (1984, 18) as *Kerngebiet*; at the same time it is worth stressing that this term was used to describe Byzantium also “[...] wenn sie zum Zeitpunkt der Quellenaussage nicht dem byzantinischen Staat angehören [...]”.

We cannot accept the chronological framework given to the Period of the Middle Ages in Greece by the British authors; this period was to cover 1100–1500. Firstly, the Crusades and the “Franks” that started to appear with them, although undoubtedly an important event both in the political and cultural development of the Empire, they did not, however, lead to an entire change of the material culture. They certainly influenced “high culture”, but it is difficult to assess to what extent they changed the attire, the customs of “ordinary” inhabitants, for example, of Peloponesia, Attica. It should be stressed as well that the “Franks”, when coming to the territory of the Near East or Greece, were influenced by the local culture; they were not exclusively “Frankish” any more²⁵.

²⁵ If the beginning of the Middle Ages in Greece is 1100, what will we call the period that comes before it? It will be difficult to accept the burial ground from the beginning of the reign of Alexios Komnenos to be a late antique find, or an early medieval one. It will be difficult as well to regard the ecclipsis that was created during the reign of the Macedonian dynasty as a product of the Dark Ages.

It will be difficult as well to “forget” about the dividing line in 1453. Of course that year “only” Constantinople fell, the fate of the Empire had earlier been determined; nonetheless we can not overrate the role of Constantinople in the history of the Empire (Koder 1984, 14, 18, 114–118; 1989).

A separate problem is the scope of geographical interest of the British authors; it seems to be confined to the territory of Greece in today's borders. Undoubtedly, political borders very often outline the area that is taken into account in the catalogues of particular archaeological studies, it is only a “technical” solution, and nobody tries, for example, to identify the archaeology of Kiev Russ with the borders of today's Ukraine (cf. Toločko ed. 2000, 8).

Right from the beginning, the Byzantine Empire was not a creation that would be ethnically homogenous; the Franks who appeared at the close of XI c. were not such a big *novum* (cf. Koder 1984, 135–150, more literature on the subject can be found there). It should be stressed that the inhabitants of the Empire were aware of the multi-ethnicity of their state; a Byzantine “nation” never existed (cf. Mango 1980, 10, 15–32). When making a bold attempt to allude to the feelings (sense of identity) of the inhabitants of the Empire, we should rather talk about romean archaeology, this is, however, not really possible. If we decided to call the phenomenon of Byzantine civilization²⁶ Byzantium, it would be difficult now to find the reasons to waive the rule in the case of archaeology.

We should agree with C. Mango (1980, 6) when he talks about the term “Byzantine”: “[...] its use has often been questioned. Nonetheless, with better or worse results, this term has survived in the literature of the subject, and it would be excessive pedantry to reject it, if we can not replace it with anything more appropriate”.

The Byzantine Empire is a term that refers to political history, which is reconstructed on the basis of written sources, for this reason it is fairly difficult to formulate an archaeological definition of Byzantine finds (finds of Byzantine origin). It is, however, a general problem of the archaeology of European Middle Ages, for which we no longer mark off archaeological cultures, but we talk about old-Polish, Rus', Czech or Vikings finds.

It is obvious as well that Byzantium was not an ethnic monolith. It should be stressed that the ethnic diversity of the people of the

²⁶ Even J. B. Bury, who objected to using the term “Byzantine” in political history, regarded the name “Byzantine civilization” as “[...] an appropriate and happy name.” (Bury 1923, pp. VIII–IX).

Empire does not confine itself only to the social elite or the army. A characteristic feature of the Empire was the resettlement of the population conducted on a large scale, which led to an ethnic blend also among “ordinary” inhabitants of the Empire. The resettlement of the population refers both to the Slavs, who were settled in the territory of Anatolia (658, 763), Bulgarians who were resettled to the territory of Armenia (beginning of XI c.) as well as the inhabitants of Cilicia, Syria, who were resettled to the territory of Tharce (778; Koder 1984, 145–147). This phenomenon does not confine itself to the Early Byzantine Period, we know, for example, that Jan Komnen II (1118–1143) settled Slavic prisoners of war in Bithynia (Mango 1980, 30).

P. Schreiner (2001, 575), when thinking about the area of Byzantine research in *Volkskunde*, contends that “Zunächst aber und in erster Linie soll Byzanz als abgegrenzter Bereich untersucht werden, zeitlich auf das 6.–15. Jhd., und inhaltlich auf jene Bevölkerung beschränkt, der die griechische Sprache zugänglich war.” The researcher contends that mixed cultures, similar to Slavic-Greek, should be examined separately. However, he himself takes into account the description of Easter by Nicefor Gregoras (XIV c.) in the area of Strumica, in the Greek-Bulgarian-Serbian borderland, and contends that he does so because “[...] da wir uns, wenn nicht im byzantinischen Staat, so doch im orthodoxen Bereich befinden.” (Schreiner 2001, 630).

Thus, in practice the author uses here two criteria, i.e. a linguistic and a religious one. In the case of archaeology, these two criteria can be used only with chosen categories of finds (especially coins, seals, cross-pendants and icons); there is, however, the whole area of material culture that can not be described by means of such tools.

Written sources prove that the objects that were produced in the borderland areas of the Empire or even outside its official boundaries must not always contain provincial features, which would condition their Byzantine character. In the second half of XI c. the Salona bishop sent one of his craftsmen to Antioch, so that he would learn decorative art there. On his return to the Balkans this man did a number of works in accordance with the sculpting rules of the Antioch school (Thomas, 47–48). It does not matter to us now whether the Antioch school was then exclusively Byzantine, or whether it was strongly influenced by Arabic art. This example lets one imagine the fact that this Salona craftsman could also train in Thessalonica or even Constantinople.

T. Koliaš (1994, 255–256) underlines the difficulties in defining the Byzantine character in the case of weaponry. He draws our attention, among other things, to the fact that in the Byzantine army a lot of foreign people served. It refers mainly to the Early Byzantine Period,

but also to the Middle Byzantine Period, among other things, due to the importance of Varangians, he even contends “[...] dass es sich bei der Bewaffnung um ein gemeinsames Kulturgut handelt, dessen Ursprung nicht leicht zu eruieren ist, das aber die verschiedenen Gegenden und Völker, die es verwendeten, in gewisser Weise kulturell näher brachte.“

Written sources prove the influence of the Empire’s neighbours on various customs, for example, from XII c., tournaments became more common as the result of the West European influence (Kretzenbacher 1963; Kolias 1994, 269). For an archaeologist it is particularly important that in XII c. weapons were brought to Byzantium from Italy (Kolias 1994, 259).

An unambiguous definition of the “Byzantine character” is also difficult when it comes to ornaments. We know that the Arabs would adopt certain Byzantine patterns (examples of 10 century finds, cf. Wamser, Zahlhaas 1998, 2–245, drawing 166–167, 421–422; C. d’Angela publishes a form to produce fairly similar earrings, 1989, 47). P. W. Schienerl (1982, 346, 348) underlines the huge role Byzantium played in forming Arabic jewellery.

At this point we should remind ourselves that the authority of the Empire led in the West of Europe to a conscious, faithful imitation of particular Byzantine products (Koennen 2000), which, of course, additionally, makes it more difficult to classify objects of this kind properly, especially when they are discovered in Scandinavia.

A separate problem is the differences in the material culture within Byzantium. Research in the territory of Istanbul (Saraçhane) proves that ceramics known from VII–XI c. from Constantinople are very rarely found outside its boundaries (Vroom 2000, 250, cf. footnote 15, the author refers to the results of research conducted by H. Patterson).

Apart from geographical differences, one can point to the differences that result from the diversity in the position of wealth within the Byzantine society. The jewellery or, in broader terms, the attire of the social elite must have looked different than that of the “ordinary” inhabitants of the Empire²⁷.

When trying to define the scope of interest of Byzantine Archaeology, the nearest analogy could be the archaeology of *Imperium Romanum*. The material culture of the Empire in I–IV c. AD, which had a strong influence on the peoples of Central Europe then, was not a monolith. The differences are obvious between the culture of Italy and the provinces situated along the river Danube, nonetheless the noric-

²⁷ P. Váczy (1982, p. 139) draws our attention to the necessity of getting to know “folk” jewellery.

pannonian imports (clasps, belt ferrules) are described by the general term, Roman imports.

It seems that E. Zanini (1994, 15) is right; he recognizes that the subject of research into Byzantine archaeology should be the whole cultural legacy of the eastern part of the Mediterranean Basin in the period from IV to XV c.

It means that the subject of research into Byzantine archaeology is also the Slavic burial mound in Olympia from VII–VIII c., or Frankish ceramics from XII–XIII c.

In archaeology, to assign a find to a concrete people, professional group, social group is one of the most important and complicated research tasks, not a starting point for a discussion. Only the recognition of the whole material culture of a particular area in a particular period ensures reliable statements with regard to the ethnic, cultural affiliation of particular objects. The categories of finds that are defined exclusively *a priori* and which belong to the area of interest of Byzantine archaeology (e.g. hand-moulded ceramics, no doubt Slavic) will lead in the end to a poorer cognition of strictly Byzantine finds, that is, Greek and Orthodox ones.

In the light of the above comments, it is essential to define the geographical framework of the area from which the finds that we agree to call “Byzantine” come. The changeability of the boundaries of the Empire (Koder 1984, 76–102) does not make the decision any easier²⁸.

J. Koder (1984, 16–19) has distinguished three categories of the boundaries within the area of the Empire (cf. Fig. 1). The first group is political boundaries, which were changing constantly, sometimes very rapidly. The second group is the boundaries of the areas that are of prime importance to the existence of Byzantium. Three regions have been distinguished here: 1). eastern (starting from Sicily) part of the Mediterranean Basin and the Black Sea, including the whole system of islands; 2). Asia Minor, including a part of Armenia, the Doab, and Levant; 3). The Balkan Peninsula, the northern border is marked by the bottom part of the Danube, upwards till the mouth of the Sava.

Within these regions one can distinguish areas of primary importance for the Empire (*Kerngebiet*). To have them was a *sine qua non* for the existence of the Empire. These primary areas are: 1). The Aegean and the area round the Marmara Sea; 2). Western Anatolia together

²⁸ In my deliberations I confine myself to the Middle Byzantine Period; the Early Byzantine Period and in that particularly the problem of “the Byzantine character” of the finds from the territory of Spain (cf. López 1998) and Italy (cf. Riemer 2000) I leave unresolved.

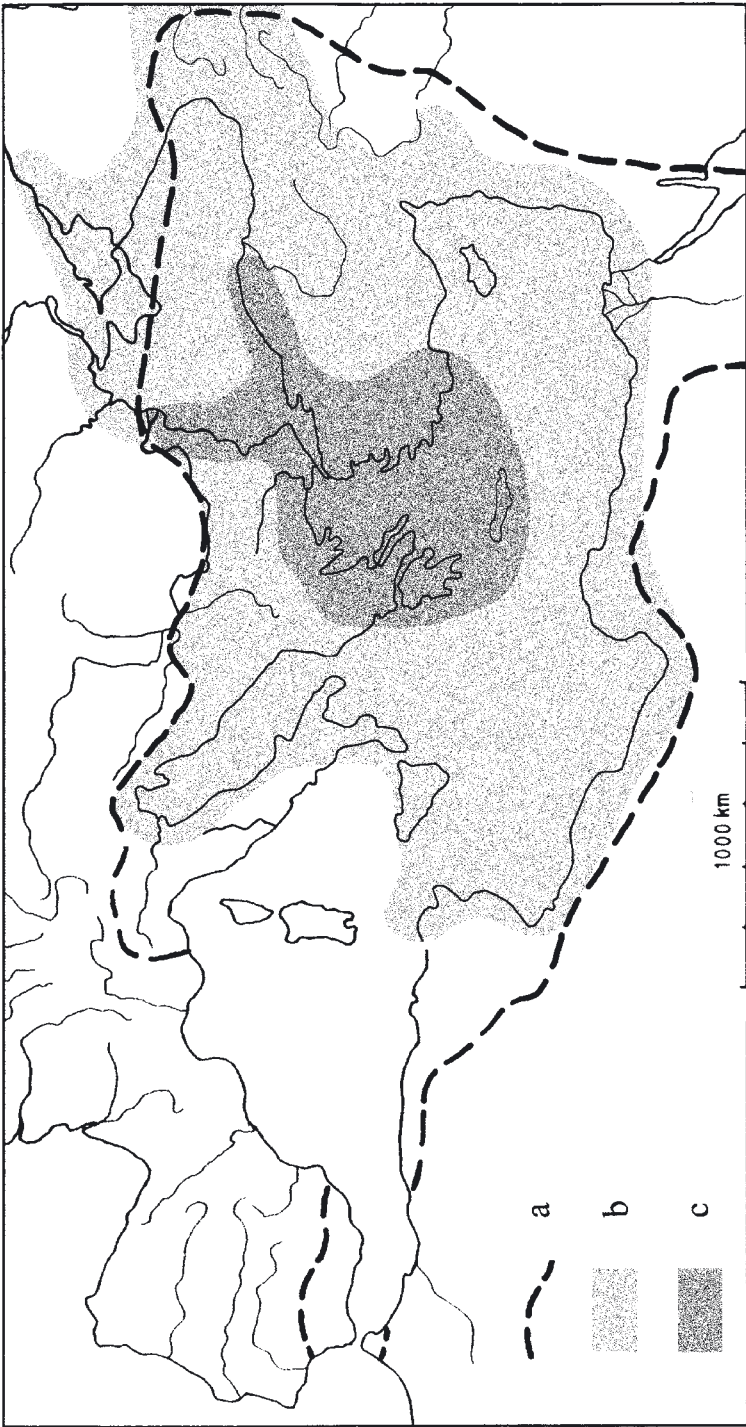


Fig. 1. The boundaries of the Byzantine Empire according to J. Koder (1984): a – external boundaries; b – the territory of the proper Empire together with the sphere of its direct influence; c – the territory of prime importance for the existence of the Byzantine Empire (so called Kerngebiet) – drawn by J. Jordan

with the adjacent northern and southern coasts of Anatolia; 3). Thrace, Peloponnesia, the area of clenched land adjacent to the Aegean Sea.

Among these three areas, the first is of most importance, that is, the islands and the coasts of the Aegean Sea and the Marmara Sea. The inhabitants of Byzantium themselves knew how important these areas were (Koder 1984, 16). Finally, J. Koder (1984, 17) recognizes that the area of Byzantium in its classical form covers the areas of the following states/regions: Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Dalmatia with the islands, Albania, Bulgaria, Dobruja, Crimea, Turkey, Greece and Cyprus.

It seems that for the Byzantine finds (Middle Byzantine) we should accept the objects that are encountered in the territory of the eastern part of the Mediterranean Basin, in Asia Minor, on the Balkan Peninsula (Byzantium within the boundaries type 2 according to J. Koder), if it can not be proved that these are either: 1). Avar; 2). old-Magyars; 3). old- (proto-) Bulgarian; 4). generally Slavic; 5). Arabic objects.

The basic research method in archaeology is to look for analogies to a particular find.

It would seem worthwhile to use the suggestions of J. Koder in archaeology: the discovery of archaeological finds in the second and particularly in the third of the areas that have been enumerated should be recognized as determining the Byzantine character of the find.

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Abbreviations

ÖAdW Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse.

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Archeologia bizantyńska – wybrane problemy

Streszczenie

W artykule zdecydowano się zaprezentować uwagi na temat stanu zaawansowania badań nad materialną przeszłością Bizancjum (I), a także nad dyskutowanymi w literaturze przedmiotu propozycjami terminologicznymi odnośnie archeologii bizantyńskiej (II).

Choć obszerna, licząca ponad 600 stron praca zatytułowana *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* ukazała się już w 1911 r. dziedzinę nauki jaką jest archeologia bizantyńska uznać należy za dopiero początkującą. Praca O. M. Daltona nawiązuje do sposobu rozumienia archeologii terenów śródziemnomorskich jako historii sztuki.

Periodyzacja, którą posługują się archeolodzy – bizantyniści nawiązuje na ogół do schematów znanych z opracowań historyków, historyków sztuki. Niezbędnym dla stworzenia chronologii względnej, a z kolei bezwzględnej jest w archeologii posiadanie większej grupy zespołów zwartych, w praktyce chodzi o bogato, stosunkowo bogato wyposażone pochówki, odkrywane na większych cmentarzyskach. Zwraca uwagę, iż pochówki bizantyńskie zarówno z okresu wczesno- jak i średniobizantyńskiego zawierają dość sporo elementów inwentarza grobowego, są to nie tylko dewocjalia, lampki oliwne ale i ozdoby. Analiza materiałów sepulchralnych z obszaru Cesarstwa winna stać się najpilniejszym zadaniem archeologii bizantyńskiej.

Określenie Bizancjum jako nazwa wschodniorzymskiego państwa w średniowieczu nie odpowiada terminologii znanej jego mieszkańcom, została ona zaproponowana w XVI w. Ostatnio P. Lock i G. D. R. Sanders zaproponowali rezygnację ze stosowania tego terminu i proponują określenie *medieval archaeology in Greece*. W odczuciu autora niniejszej pracy propozycja ta nie może zostać zaakceptowana. Od samego początku Cesarstwo nie było tworem jednolitym etnicznie, mieszkańcy imperium zdawali sobie sprawę z multietniczności swego państwa, nigdy nie istniał „naród” bizantyński. Podejmując (karkołomną) próbę nawiązania do samoświadomości mieszkańców Imperium należałoby mówić o archeologii romejskiej, jest to jednak niemożliwe. Skoro przyjęliśmy fenomen jakim była cywilizacja Bizancjum określać właśnie tym mianem, trudno wskazać powody by odstępować od tej reguły w wypadku archeologii.

Bizancjum jest określeniem nawiązującym do historii politycznej, rekonstruowanej na podstawie źródeł pisanych, z tego powodu

dość trudno ustalić archeologiczną definicję zabytków bizantyńskich. Jest to jednak ogólny problem archeologii europejskiego średniowiecza, dla którego nie wydziela się już kultur archeologicznych. Wydaje się, że rację ma E. Zanini, który uznaje, iż przedmiotem badań archeologii bizantyńskiej powinno być całe dziedzictwo kulturowe wschodniej części basenu M. Śródziemnego w okresie od IV do XV w. Wydaje się, iż za zabytki bizantyńskie (środkowobizantyńskie), uznać należy przedmioty spotykane na terenie wschodniej części basenu M. Śródziemnego, w Azji Mniejszej, Półwyspie Bałkańskim (Bizancjum w granicach typu 2 wg J. Kodera) jeżeli nie da się udowodnić, iż są to przedmioty: 1). awarskie; 2). staromadziarskie; 3). staro- (proto-) bułgarskie; 4). ogólnosłowiańskie; 5). arabskie.

