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## **Memory of Dynasty in Byzantium – An Interdisciplinary Approach**

***Joseph Parsonage***

We can easily conclude that dynasty is an essential part of the scholarly furniture, used as a shorthand for understanding periods, but how much is it tangible in the mind-sets of the inhabitants of the medieval empire of Byzantium, or even any pre-modern polity?

For scholars of English history, there is a compelling argument, first posited by Cliff Davies in 2008, about the absence of a Tudor dynasty. This is that no sixteenth-century monarch or individual would ever have considered themselves a 'Tudor'. The Tudor name and identity have, to some extent, been retroactively applied to both the period and the ruling family. Such a hypothesis has opened a new avenue of reassessment for other areas of history, including Byzantine studies.

For the millennia-long history of Byzantium, the empire was ruled by a number of so-called 'dynasties.' Scholars have tended to think in terms of neat periodisation and categorisation, basing their research around concepts such as 'the Macedonian Renaissance' or 'the Komnenian System'. Yet to some extent, this may have obscured the reality perceived by the Byzantines themselves. Can we actually talk about a Herakleian dynasty, a Macedonian dynasty or a Komnenian dynasty, and do these suppositions have any basis in historical reality?

To investigate such a hypothesis, this paper will compare several different types of primary evidence, including historical narratives, numismatics and art history, to build up a picture of how various Byzantines understood their rulers, their ruling families, and their own place in history.