

Editorial Comment

The debate around the post-modernist movement in contemporary art and literature has provided material for a great deal of critical discussion and cultural self-examination and, with some exceptions, the debate has been confined to predominantly 'western' cultures. In this issue, Greg Jusdanis looks at some of the taken-for-granted of this debate, more particularly the implication of the concept the 'West', for Greek literary self-awareness. The discussion is relevant to medievalists, too, of course, for it touches indirectly upon another debate of a more historiographical nature, namely, the problems of ethnocentrism in history-writing which have been evident throughout the evolution of modern Byzantine Studies. Notions of what counts as 'Greek', as 'western', or what counts as evidence of 'Slav' influence, and so on, have played a significant role; and while the assumptions upon which much of the debate was originally founded are now for the most part regarded as either outmoded or irrelevant, it is important to observe how these valences work themselves out through a different set of contemporary discourses.

This issue is the third volume to appear since the Centre for Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek at the University of Birmingham assumed responsibility for the publication of BMGS, and since the present editor was appointed. It is a pleasure to record that in the two years which have intervened the journal has almost doubled its circulation, and attracted a constantly widening variety of contributions, which seems to indicate a favourable response to the changed presentation. And while the disparate themes and periods represented in the pages of BMGS may not be easily reconciled — as a recent critic has pointed out¹ — it may be asked

1. Richard Clogg, in *Times Literary Supplement*, March 6, 1987 (p.251).

whether this is actually a 'problem'. Indeed, diversity of theme and problematic is usually a healthy feature of scholarly publications, as reference to any one of a number of comparable journals in the fields of history or language and literature will demonstrate. Refusing to confront problems of a theoretical nature by dismissing them out of hand, as either not relevant, or as involving too much intellectual effort; and refusing to take an interest in the work of scholars in other areas because it is not directly connected with one's own research, is no answer, and represents a path to Philistinism which BMGS will not follow. No journal can claim to satisfy every need or desire of its potential readers. What it can offer is an opportunity to suggest solutions to problems in its fields of interest, to question and to query accepted or usually unquestioned assumptions, and to provide a forum for debate. I hope that BMGS does all of these things.