The Libraries in the Byzantine Empire (330-1453)

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Summary/Abstract: This paper has as objective presenting main types of libraries who existed during the Byzantine Empire. The five types of existent libraries – imperial, patriarchal, monastic, private and universitary, had a complex evolution during the history of Byzance. The beginning of those libraries is represented by the inauguration of the new imperial capital, by emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) in 330. The new imperial capital, Constantinople city, had several buildings which were inaugurated by Emperor Constantine including two libraries: the imperial one and the patriarchal one. Subsequently, have appeared over the centuries, and other libraries such as
monastic, private or academic. Although there is no historical evidences proving the existence of a university library in the Byzantine Empire, however this it is not excluded. Over time all of these types of libraries have suffered changes and have experienced periods of flowering and decay, until their abolition final, once with the fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Ottomans in 1453. Since the study is not intended to be exhaustive I will deal this issue only from the historical point of view to make an overview of the Byzantine libraries and their role in the cultural evolution of Byzantium. An interesting thing is that the scientists and the byzantine scholars frequented the libraries in the Byzantine Empire, moreover some of them, such as Patriarch Photios the Great, had possessed impressive libraries, enviable even by the Byzantine emperors.

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