

Byzantina Symmeikta

Vol 30

BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 30



Review Article: Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th-15th C.), edited by Nikolaos G. Chryssis, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki and Angeliki Papageorgiou, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019

Nicolaos COUREAS

doi: [10.12681/byzsym.23165](https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.23165)

Copyright © 2020, Nicolaos Coureas



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

COUREAS, N. (2020). Review Article: Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th-15th C.), edited by Nikolaos G. Chryssis, Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki and Angeliki Papageorgiou, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019. *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 30, 343–356. <https://doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.23165>

Byzantium and the West: Perception and Reality (11th-15th C.), edited by N. G. CHRYSISS, A. KOLIA-DERMITZAKI and A. PAPAGEORGIOU, Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2019, pp. xiv + 330, ISBN: 978-1-138-05974-0 (hbk), ISBN: 978-1-315-16339-0 (ebk)

This book, consisting of 21 chapters, contains primarily the published papers given initially at the homonymous conference that took place at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens between 5-6 September 2014. As the editors point out, it was decided from the outset not to include papers regarding art, archaeology and material culture. Therefore, the papers published here cover historical, literary and religious topics and are subdivided into four parts: Part I, Setting the Scene; Part II, Byzantium and the West during the Early Crusades; Part III, Cross-Cultural Contacts in the Margins of East and West and Part IV, The Latins and Late Byzantium: Perception and Reality.

Part I begins with a paper by Anthony Kaldellis titled 'Keroularios in 1054: Nonconfrontational to the papal legates and loyal to the emperor' (pp. 9-24). Here he argues, unlike most modern scholars, that Michael Keroularios the patriarch of Constantinople deliberately avoided confrontation with the papal legate Cardinal Humbert over liturgical and theological matters. Far from controlling the supposedly ineffective emperor Constantine IX and trying to undermine his foreign policy regarding Italy, Keroularios was following his orders. Kaldellis argues on the basis of primary sources -such as the letters written by Archbishop Leo of Ochrid in 1053 criticising the use of unleavened communion bread, Pope Leo IX's polemical reply to it and two letters from the Byzantine emperor to the pope urging the maintenance of the anti-Norman alliance- that later perceptions of Keroularios as bellicose and domineering the emperor are mistaken. These derive from Cardinal Humbert's perception that Keroularios was behind Archbishop Leo's letter on unleavened communion bread, causing him to present the patriarch as a heretic in

conflict with the emperor when in fact both were working together to avoid conflict with the papacy.

Next comes Michel Balard's paper titled 'Colonisation and population movements in the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages' (pp. 25-37). He discusses Italian colonisation and population movements in the eastern Mediterranean in the consecutive frameworks of political, economic and cultural colonisation, with special reference to Venice and Genoa and their changing relationship with Byzantium. The twelfth century trading posts founded by Venice and Genoa in Constantinople and the cities of Syria and Palestine after the First Crusade became larger territorial entities after the Fourth Crusade of 1204, with both republics obtaining Greek islands and additional trading stations throughout the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Harder to follow is Western emigration from Italy and other lands to the East, although Genoese notarial deeds and financial records provide a degree of precision, especially concerning Chios. Emigration could be individual or collective, with the followers of military leaders settling in lands conquered by them, and included noble families like the Venetian Sanudo and Ghisi on Tenos in the Cyclades. Nevertheless, high taxes, plague and Turkish raids caused population shortages. Both the Venetians and the Genoese tried to remedy this through grants of citizenship to groups of the populations in their overseas territories associated with them. This policy had only limited success, and so both republics, unable to rally these populations, could not resist Ottoman expansion effectively.

Sandra Origone's paper, titled 'Genoa and Byzantium: Aspects of a long relationship' (pp. 38-55), examines how the initial Byzantine hostility towards Western crusaders came to encompass Western merchants as the initially unimportant Genoese presence in Byzantium grew in significance. The twelfth century Byzantine historians Anna Comnena, John Kinnamos and Archbishop Eustathios of Salonica describe Latins as greedy, parasitic and bloodthirsty and Nicetas Choniates was the first Byzantine historian to attribute the above characteristics to Italian merchants. Yet the Byzantines did not see the threat posed by the Latins as uniform. Whereas other Italian city-states presented a political or institutional danger, the Genoese threat was piratical. Similarly, the Pisans, Venetians and Genoese perceived their relations with Byzantium in different ways. The Venetians, traditionally seeing themselves as independent of Byzantine authority notwithstanding Byzantine claims to the contrary, were angered by the favour shown to the Pisans in the late twelfth century by Emperor Alexios III.

Indeed, early thirteenth century Pisan coinage bears the inscription *μήτηρ Θεοῦ* on coins depicting the Virgin. Good relations between Genoa and twelfth century Byzantium are illustrated by the annalist Ottobono Scriba recounting how news of the Emperor Manuel I's death came to Genoa by a ship loaded with grain, an indirect allusion to the economic benefits Genoa derived from Byzantium. From 1261 onwards relations fluctuated. The Byzantines refusing to grant the Genoese a quarter at Constantinople and sending them to Pera, while in 1349 the Genoese destroyed the newly-built Byzantine fleet. But both sides drew nearer in the face of the Ottoman threat, even if Byzantine hostility to Genoa persisted down to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Part II begins with Athina Kolia-Dermitzaki's paper, focusing on the Komneni's adoption of Crusader ideology during the First and Second Crusades (pp. 59-83). Beginning with the different Western and Byzantine conceptions of Christendom, she explains that initial Byzantine sympathy for the West turned to hostility following Norman attacks and privileges obtained by the Italian merchants. Jerusalem for the Byzantines was former imperial territory to be reclaimed by the emperor. Hence, they disagreed with the Western concept of its liberation through a papally authorized crusade, suspecting its real objective to be Constantinople itself. Nonetheless, Byzantine sources acknowledge the divine purpose of the Crusades, with Anna Comnena and Nicetas Choniates both exhibiting an understanding of its cardinal features in their works. Both Alexios I in his letter to Abbot Odensius of Monte Cassino and Manuel I in his letter to Pope Eugenius III were anxious to counteract Western accusations of not honouring their commitments, although the principal Byzantine aims in connection with the Crusades were to recover or at least enjoy suzerainty over Antioch and to ascribe to the emperor the role of defender and avenger of Christianity.

In his paper titled 'Some thoughts on the relations between Greeks and Latins at the time of the First and Fourth Crusades' (pp. 84-100) Jean-Claude Cheynet considers as over-simplifying the view that these events were 'the main markers of an ever-growing hostility between the two parts of Christendom'. He considers Byzantine eagerness to enlist Western help against the Seljuks in Anatolia as deriving from their own inability to fight them by themselves due to Balkan commitments, and because the Seljuk seizure of Antioch prevented them from recovering Anatolia by launching a pincer movement. Pope Urban II saw the Crusade as a way of cementing papal leadership of the movement to recover Jerusalem and as a means of achieving Church Union. The First Crusade's success was partial, for the Byzantine

failure to recover Antioch prevented the implementation of the pincer movement against the Seljuks and impeded the provision of Byzantine logistical support for the Latin states of Syria. Subsequent crusades aimed at protecting these states. The Byzantine defeat in 1176 at Myriokephalon, the Armenian conquest of Cilicia and Western assistance to the Latin Syria by sea to an increasing extent all reduced Asia Minor's importance to the crusading movement. Emperor Isaac Angelos's alliance with Saladin angered the West and set in train the events culminating in the Fourth Crusade of 1204. Even so, Byzantine-Western co-operation in the period 1054-1204 has been understated, for the Byzantine historians Anna Comnena and Nicetas Choniates had personal reasons to over-emphasize Western aggression.

Jonathan Phillips in his paper titled 'Crusader Perceptions of Byzantium c. 1095 to c. 1150' (pp. 102-118) argues that these were not uniformly negative but more multi-faceted. In seeking to explain the negative attitudes he observes that 'Byzantium' was associated with the emperor, Constantinople, Greek Orthodoxy or Greeks, with negative views on one of these aspects extending to others. Up to the First Crusade Western views were mixed, with the Schism of 1054 highlighting religious differences and the Byzantine defeat in 1071 at Manzikert projecting the urgency of helping the eastern Christians. The dispute between Byzantium and the Normans regarding control of Antioch that emerged during the First Crusade created negative views of Byzantium in pro-Norman accounts of the First Crusade. Yet some Western authors, such as Baldric of Bourgeuil and Bartolf of Nangis, had more nuanced views of the Greeks. Baldric, an abbot from Northern France, saw the First Crusade as a vehicle for promoting Church Unity, seeing the Eastern Church as a mother church that had produced the Gospels. Bartolf of Nangis, who admired cosmopolitan Constantinople, justified the Byzantine withdrawal of troops from the siege of Antioch as caused by Stephen of Blois deceitful claim that the Christians there had been destroyed, made in order to justify his own desertion. Political expediency also influenced Western perceptions one way or another. Bishop Anselm of Havelberg's cordial discussions with Archbishop of Nicetas of Nicomedia took place when Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire were allied against Norman Sicily, while French hostility to Byzantium during the Second Crusade was attributable to dynastic links between the French crown and the Norman princes of Antioch.

Angeliki Papageorgiou examines the other side of the coin in the following paper, titled 'The perception of Westerners in the court of John II Komnenos' (pp. 118-128). The emperor's court orators allude to Westerners frequently, although

omitting the Venetians, perhaps because the emperor was compelled to renew the trading privileges initially granted to them by his father. The historian John Kinnamos writing under Manuel I described the Venetians as insolent to the point of insanity. The orators except for writers Theodore Prodromos and Nikephoros Basilakes are also silent on Emperor John's success in thwarting the designs of the Norman king Roger II of Sicily over Antioch, perhaps because this was not a military triumph, but one achieved diplomatically through alliances with Venice, Pisa, Genoa and the Germans. In alluding to Emperor John's attempt to achieve suzerainty over Latin Syria, an attempt cut short by his untimely death, Kinnamos, Basilakes and Choniates describe the Latins as headstrong, arrogant but nonetheless ready to retreat before superior force, although also acknowledging commonality of faith. The emperor handles them like clay, putting them to flight and destroying them, for they are corrupt, cowardly and impious. This last adjective alludes to the Latins' refusal to acknowledge the emperor as the defender and avenger of Christianity, reflecting Byzantine and Western differences over who should lead the war against infidels.

Elizabeth Jeffreys discusses a more popular account of Byzantine perceptions of its western neighbours in her paper titled 'A Twelfth Century perspective of Byzantium's Western neighbours: The witness of Manganeios Prodromos' (pp. 128-141). This author, writing on commission for the Emperor Manuel I and various noble families, in three instances comments on these neighbours, either Latins outside the empire, non-Latin Hungarians and Serbs or else Latins within the empire or in Antioch. Manganeios does not allude to Westerners close to Manuel I as advisers or even as kinsmen, describing the Manuel's German wife Bertha as descended from the Caesars and omitting her German background. In his panegyric on how Manuel deftly handled the Latin armies of the Second Crusade passing through Byzantine territories in 1147 he extols the emperor's virtues while comparing the Latins and the Germans in particular to swine. In a second panegyric of 1149 describing Manuel's campaign against the Serbs, the emperor puts them to flight and their leader's name, Uros/Ouresis is compared to the like-sounding *οὔρησις*, Greek for urination. Manganeios's obscene associations may explain his lack of popularity at court compared to the contemporary writer Theodore Prodromos. In a third panegyric celebrating Manuel's campaigns of 1148 against Prince Thoros of Cilician Armenia and Renauld of Chatillon, the Latin prince of Antioch, he emphasizes the emperor's power and magnanimity towards the vanquished and grovelling Renauld. This contrast evokes the vigour of the New

Rome as opposed to the Old Rome claimed by the Latins, both Byzantines and Latins being rival claimants over 'Romanitas'. As a non-official writer, he could be unreservedly xenophobic. Elizabeth Jeffreys concludes that 'On the evidence of Manganeios Prodromos we must assume that the Byzantine man in the street was xenophobic and blinkered'.

Moving away from the capital, Catherine Holmes in her paper titled 'Decentring 12th-century Constantinople, Archbishop Eustathios and the Norman conquest of Thessalonica revisited' (pp. 141-156) discusses how Archbishop Eustathios of Thessalonica described this conquest. She observes that his view was Constantinopolitan in outlook and that by blaming Emperor Andronikos I and in particular David Komnenos he was anxious to distance himself from them, given his former closeness to David, possibly writing to please the new emperor Isaac Angelos and the people of Thessalonica. Arguing that the Thessalonian attitude towards the Latins was more nuanced, she stresses how the city had a quarter for the Latin burgesses, that Western merchants visited the fair of St Demetrios and that Venetian documents illustrate the city's prominent role in the export of grain from the Aegean area. Thessalonica was also important in religious interchanges between Byzantium and the West. The cult of St Demetrios was popular in Italy and the western provinces of Byzantium between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, with Venetian glass medallions of this saint probably following Byzantine iconographic models. Religious and mercantile contacts via Thessalonica extended to Norman Italy, with SS Theodore and Demetrius, the Byzantine military saints, figuring frequently in twelfth century monuments of Norman Sicily. She suggests that anti-Latinism was perhaps a reactionary Constantinopolitan attempt to reinforce its shaky authority in the provinces by invoking ethnic and religious hostility, and that the Norman interest in St Demetrius is an example of 'hostile appropriation' also found among the Bulgarians.

Michael Angold discusses changing Byzantine attitudes towards the crusades in his paper titled 'The fall of Jerusalem in 1187 and its impact on Byzantine public opinion' (pp. 158-169). Pointing out that Nicetas Choniates mentioned this event only briefly before the Fourth Crusade of 1204, when writing after it he contrasted Saladin's humanity towards the Latins in 1187 with Latin barbarity towards the Byzantines in 1204. Despite his hostility to Latins after the Norman sack of Thessalonica in 1185, Nicetas at that time still viewed the crusades positively, but negatively after 1204. Byzantines attitudes towards the Latins were changing even before 1204 under the Angeloi. Isaac II Angelos made pro-Western moves

by appointing an ethnic Venetian to the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem and marrying his sister to Conrad of Montferrat. But the loss of Cyprus to the rebel Isaac Komnenos in 1184 and the fall of Jerusalem in 1187 caused the anti-Latin faction to prevail. The Byzantine alliance with Saladin brought no benefits while provoking Western hostility, and Byzantine anti-Latinism clarified after 1204. John X Kamateros, the exiled patriarch of Constantinople, attributed previous Latin defeats at the hands of Saladin and recent ones at those of the Bulgarians to their sins in sacking Constantinople. After 1204 the Byzantines viewed the crusades themselves as well as the Latins negatively.

Part III of the book commences with Eleni Tounta's paper titled 'Admiral Eugenius of Sicily, court poetry and political propaganda in a cross-cultural environment' (pp. 171-184). She states that after the Norman conquest of South Italy and Sicily the Norman rulers adopted the symbolic imagery of Muslims and Greeks to create new forms of self-representation with respect to the papacy and the magnates of South Italy. Two court poems Eugenius of Sicily, a descendant of admirals who headed an office managing royal lands in South Italy, are examined in this context. Unlike other Italo-Greek writers, Eugenius, who created political discourses by exploiting concepts of political philosophy, wrote the two poems to secure his access to the royal court. In the first, an encomium to King William I (1154-1166) where he compares his kingdom to the empires of Persia, Macedonia, Rome and Constantinople he aims to convince the king's subjects, especially the magnates, to accept his authority, emphasizing the Byzantine motif of royal omnipotence over nature. The second poem, written perhaps on the accession to the throne of William II, is not simply a treatise on kingship. Addressed to the magnates, it projects monarchy and aristocracy as antidotes to social strife, echoing Platonic and Ciceronian concepts. Appealing to aristocratic sentiment by stating that kings are appointed from among the nobles, he nevertheless implicitly endorses royal power by comparing kings to shepherds and their subjects to flocks. In explaining why Eugenius wrote in Greek and not Latin, Eleni Tounta cites ritualistic reasons. Greek and Arabic were employed for ritual performance at court, thereby consolidating a new Sicilian political identity that transcended cultural differences.

Next comes the paper by Nikoletta Giantsi titled 'A detail of the Third Lateran Council (1179): The leper king of Jerusalem and papal policy in the East' (pp. 184-192). She cites references to leprosy in the early councils of the Western Church to show that this disease existed *a priori* and was not imported from the East, an erroneous idea founded on increasing references to leprosy in Western sources from

the eleventh century onwards, beginning from the time of the Crusades. The popes Alexander III (1159-1181) and Lucius III (1181-1185) regarded the coronation of the leper king Baldwin IV as king of Jerusalem in 1174 as the reason for the problems this kingdom faced in the late twelfth century. The Latin nobles of the kingdom did not share the papal viewpoint, that incidentally resembles Byzantine ideology that the emperor had to be able-bodied. Initially Alexander III, fortified by his political triumphs over Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany and King Henry II of England, responded positively to Emperor Manuel I of Byzantium's appeal for a crusade to liberate the Holy Land. But following Manuel's defeat in 1176 at Myriokephalon and his own reconciliation with Barbarossa in 1177, Alexander changed course and convened Lateran III in 1179, where lepers were set apart from the healthy for the first time. The author regards this and Alexander's belated letter of 1181 disapproving of Baldwin's coronation as an attempt to undermine him, to thereby deprive Manuel of his eastern allies and to take control of events in the Holy Land. She also mentions the existence of other claimants to the throne of Jerusalem, without stating, however, who they were. Also focusing on the late twelfth century is Alicia Simpson's paper titled 'Byzantium and Hungary in the late 12th century and on the eve of the Fourth Crusade' (pp. 193-205). Dealing with relations between the two states in the period 1180-1203, she observes that Byzantine historians are sketchy on this period and so recourse must be had to documentary evidence, the anonymous chronicle of the crusade of Frederick Barbarossa and a history written by Archdeacon Thomas of Split. She argues that King Bela III of Hungary, a protégé of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I, was loyal to him but following his death he annexed Dalmatia and Sirmium, lands that King Stephen of Hungary had ceded to Byzantium, and then made additional conquests. Emperor Isaac Angelos (1185-1195) concluded a treaty with King Bela and by marrying his daughter Margaret obtained the territories of Nic-Branicevo for Byzantium. Just before his overthrow Isaac was planning a campaign against the Vlachs and Bulgarians with Hungarian support, but following his deposition Bela's son and successor King Imre (1196-1204) recovered the territories granted. Contrary to traditional views, the author states that Byzantium and not Hungary was the 'active, initiating partner' in the intense diplomatic activity of the years 1185-1192 but that Byzantine involvement in the northern Balkans ceased with Isaac's deposition.

Moving to the thirteenth century, Ilias Giarenis in his paper titled 'Nicaea and the West (1204-1261): Aspects of reality and rhetoric' (pp. 206-220) charts political and ideological changes through examining diplomatic documents,

historical accounts, rhetorical works and correspondence of the period. He points out that the Latin capture of Constantinople in 1204 accelerated existing centrifugal tendencies in Byzantium, that the empire of Nicaea had to compete with the Greek state of Epirus and in the early thirteenth century was fighting a Latin Empire of Constantinople allied with the Seljuk Turks of Anatolia and the Greek empire of Trebizond. The Byzantine perception of the Latins as ‘dogs’ is found in correspondence of the Latin emperor Henry of Hainaut and in the work of Nicetas Choniates, while the deacon Nikolaos Mesarites likened them to wolves and wild boars. Following a Nicaean victory in 1211 over the Seljuks, its policy towards the Latin Empire became more conciliatory, something ridiculed by the rival Greek state of Epirus. From the 1220s onwards Nicaea adopted anti-Latin policies, its alliance with King John II of Bulgaria alarming the papacy. This was reflected in rhetoric, with Pope Gregory IX disparagingly calling Emperor John III Vatatzes *nobili viri Vatacio* and Vatatzes sending him an offensive reply. Byzantine self-perception also began to change under this emperor and his successors. The word *Ρωμαῖοι* continued to express Byzantine political identity but the words *Ἕλληνες* and *Γραικοὶ* now begin to appear as expressions of Byzantine cultural and religious identity. Fluid and multiple identities operating at different levels emerged, in response to the challenges posed by Epirus and the Latin Empire and to new intellectual attitudes towards the past.

In her paper titled ‘The image of the Greek and the reality of Greco-Latin interaction in Romania, according to 13th and 14th century Latin sources’ (pp. 220-230) Maria Dourou-Eliopoulou firstly examines how Latin sources from the Latin states of the Aegean area depicted Greeks and secondly Greco-Latin interaction in the economy, society and culture of these Latin states. Despite the negative images of Greeks found in thirteenth century Latin chronicles and the Chronicle of the Morea, written in Greek but from a Latin standpoint, Latins and Greeks interacted on various levels. In Achaia the Latin rulers ennobled the Greek archons, albeit on the lowest rung, and both archons and peasants kept their lands and religious practices. The chronicles of Marino Sanudo Torsello and Ramon Muntaner present an idealised picture of feudal society with Latins and Greeks co-existing in harmony. The Aragonese version of the *Chronicle of the Morea* refers to the Latin barons of Carytaina raising sons of Greek archons according to feudal custom. But notarial deeds also attest to the symbiosis of both groups in the field of commerce, and by the fourteenth century the exclusion of Greeks from administrative offices in the Latin states had broken down partly. Some Latins at least learnt Greek,

collecting Greek books and commissioning translations of Greek works, while by the mid-fourteenth century some Greeks had converted to Roman Catholicism. Such symbiotic attitudes accelerated in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the face of the common Ottoman threat.

The last paper in Part III by Nikiphoros I. Tsougarakis, titled ‘Perceptions of the Greek clergy and rite in late medieval pilgrimage accounts to the Holy Land’ (pp. 230-242) examines why the perceptions of Greeks held by Western pilgrims to the Holy Land and Mt Sinai in the 14th and 15th centuries worsened over time. He observes that Western perceptions were not invariably based on personal observation, but on thirteenth century texts providing a standard ethnographic list, especially Jacques de Vitry’s *Historia Orientalis*. Such texts were available to pilgrims at the Franciscan friary of Mt Sion and in Venice, often the starting point for pilgrimages to the East. During such journeys the pilgrims encountered Greeks at stop-overs in the Latin states of Greece and on Cyprus, but contact was limited. The fourteenth century account of the Anonymous Englishman mentioning that the popes regarded Greeks as schismatics nonetheless refers to them sympathetically as ‘leaning on their own prudence’. Following Saladin’s reconquest of Jerusalem in 1187 Greek clergy gained a privileged position in the Holy Places but Latin clergy continued to describe them positively until the mid-fifteenth century. From then onwards the Latin clergy in the Holy Land and on Mt Sinai showed increasing enmity towards their Greek counterparts. This was possibly attributable to Greek hostility towards the Unionist Council of Florence of 1432, condemned by the Greek patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria in a synod of 1443, and because the Mamluks, angered after 1453 by Greek overtures to the Ottoman sultan, began favouring Latin over Greek clergy at these sacred sites.

The first paper of Part IV by Theodora Papadopoulou is titled ‘The ἐσπέγια γένη in Byzantine literature before and after the first capture of Constantinople’ (pp. 245-256). Here she examines the writings of the historians John Kinnamos, Nicetas Choniates and George Akropolites in relation to Western-Byzantine relations during the Second Crusade, the Fourth Crusade and the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople. Kinnamos, secretary to Emperor Manuel I, praises the Christian modesty of his German wife Berta, defends Manuel’s handling of the German army’s passage through Byzantine lands in the Second Crusade by deprecating their arrogance and perjury towards Manuel, although acknowledging the bravery of the Germans and the French in battle. In general terms Choniates likewise acknowledges Western martial spirit, while accusing them of cruelty, arrogance,

inability to appreciate beauty and possessed by destructive urges. Regarding the Venetians, he states that despite common descent with the Byzantines from the Romans they were ungrateful, turning against Byzantium despite the wealth and culture it had given them. Perhaps this indicates his awareness and resentment of the empire's commercial exploitation by Venice. He also relates Westerners' physical and facial features to their supposed arrogance, lack of compassion, immaturity and lack of culture. George Akropolites, an imperial official and supporter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos, portrays the recapture of Constantinople as a redemption following the Byzantines' contrition for their sins, which had caused its capture in the first place. Westerners are not pilloried given the emperor's need for papal support against Charles of Anjou. Byzantine weakness in relation to a rising West forced them to adapt their anti-Western rhetoric accordingly, but their hetero-stereotypes of the Westerners enabled them to set the boundary markers of their own identity, constantly linked to imperial Rome.

Nikolaos Chryssis in his paper titled 'Worlds apart? Reconsidering late Byzantine identity through the image of the West' (pp. 257-274) a paper that with the conference forms the basis of the present book, aims to map Byzantine views of the Latin from 1204 to the fifteenth century so as to decode Byzantine perceptions of self and other. Arguing that identity is fluid, a social construct and that it focuses on boundary marking with those 'outside', he states that by consensus Byzantine identity hinged on three foci, the Roman, the Christian and the Hellenic. Since the Latins shared the first two foci, theirs was arguably a 'peer culture'. He also highlights a contradiction in late Byzantine perceptions of the Latins, viewed as enemies due to the Fourth Crusade and the imposition of Latin rule but also as allies in the face of the Ottoman threat. This contradiction forced the Byzantines to re-negotiate the boundaries between 'self' and 'other' through two media, orations and correspondence, the first illustrating public and the second private discourse. Both these media are elitist, not illustrating popular perceptions. Chryssis also examines the extent to which identity determined or influenced the political allegiance of individuals. Thirteenth century orations are hostile to Latins, although private correspondence is more nuanced. Fourteenth century orations and histories written in the shadow of the Ottoman threat present the Latins more positively and even evoked a common 'Roman' heritage. While 'Romanitas' remained the primary marker of Byzantine self-identification, Hellenism after 1204 was invoked more often, especially in private as opposed to official discourse, and the same author could use the same term in different contexts.

In her paper titled ‘In the face of a historical puzzle, Western adventurers, friars and nobility in the service of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-1282)’, (pp. 275-285) Sophia Mergiali-Sahas argues that the Latins Emperor Michael recruited into his service were mainly diplomats and corsairs, not mercenaries, who could not be trusted to fight their fellow-Latins in Greece. Among the adventurers, friars and nobles recruited bilingual-Latins, particularly Genoese, were prominent in the imperial chancery, where Latin became the primary language of diplomatic correspondence. Genoese and Florentines were used in diplomatic missions and following the treaty of Nymphaion between Byzantium and Genoa the Genoese coming to Byzantium to trade obtained important concessions to exploit alum at Phocaea, kept until the Ottoman conquest of 1453. The Venetian historian Marino Sanudo Torcello records that Emperor Michael VIII also made overtures to the Venetians, although less successfully. Genoese and other Latins were used for intelligence gathering, like spying on Venetian warships in the Aegean, while discontented Italo-Greeks were employed to provide intelligence on Charles of Anjou. George Pachymeres, the principal Byzantine historian of the period, records that Michael VIII used diplomacy to compensate for his military weakness in relation to Charles of Anjou, hence the frequent diplomatic overtures to the papacy in which he used bilingual Franciscan and Dominican friars committed to Church Union. Michael VIII also attempted to forge dynastic marriage alliances with the Frankish princes of Achaia and hired Genoese privateers to combat the Venetians and the Angevins in the Eastern Mediterranean, a multi-faceted use of Westerners that enabled him to stop Charles of Anjou from taking Constantinople.

Interaction between Westerners and Byzantines in Late Byzantium is also discussed in Triantafyllitsa Maniati-Kokkini’s paper titled ‘Μιξοβάρβαροι and λίκτιοι: Theory and practice regarding the integration of Westerners in Late Byzantine economic and social reality’ (pp. 286-306). She points out that the Byzantines, familiar with the term ‘λίκτιος’ deriving from Western feudal vocabulary translated it variously as *δοῦλος ἐθελόδουλος*, *οικέτης* and *ὑποχείριον*, terms denoting voluntary obligations of service, especially the first one. These westerners, named Italians, Franks or Normans, were incorporated into the Byzantine social reality as *λίκτιοι* when loyal to the emperor and as *βάρβαροι* when untrustworthy. In some instances, like that of Bohemond son of Robert Guiscard, the terms of vassalage combined Byzantine and Western customs. From the thirteenth century onwards the term *λίκτιος καβαλλάριος* also appears, a reflection of the knightly social status of Westerners in Byzantine imperial service. The Byzantine writers Anna

Comnena, Theophylact of Ochrid and Eustathios of Thessalonica all employed the term *βάρβαροι* for Franks, Normans and Latin in general at war with Byzantium. Nicetas Choniates also uses this term in a territorial sense, referring to Byzantine lands the Latins conquered as having been barbarized. Such writers, however, also employed the term *μιξοβάρβαροι* when referring to Latin mercenaries or more particularly to persons of Latin Greek ancestry, as also the terms *μιξέλλην* and *ἡμιγραφικός*. The author maintains that when using the term *λίξιος* the Byzantines did not adopt the Western mentality of feudal loyalty associated with this word, that slowly fell into desuetude after the thirteenth century. When calling Westerners *βάρβαροι*, the hostility felt by Byzantines was founded on the Western attitudes towards the Byzantines rather than on their customs and differences, given that the Westerners were neither pagans like the Avars nor infidels like the Turks.

The final paper in Part IV is that of Christos G. Makrypoulias titled “‘Our Engines are better than yours’: perception and reality of Late Byzantine military technology’ (pp. 306-317). In the only paper comparing Byzantine and Latin systems of warfare directly, the author reappraises the received wisdom that the mechanical military skills of Byzantium and Islam lagged behind those of the West by the late eleventh century. Byzantine heavy cavalry was often at a disadvantage when fighting Latin heavy cavalry but could overcome this by luring the Latins onto broken ground and ambushing them with mounted archers. He next discusses conflicting views over the crossbow’s origin, acknowledging, however, that both Anna Comnena writing in the eleventh century and Emperor John Kantakouzenos writing in the fourteenth called it ‘the Latin bow’, its effectiveness being such that the Third Lateran Council prohibited its use against fellow Roman Catholics, only against infidels and heretics. Regarding missile hurling weapons, Byzantium stayed ahead until the tenth to eleventh centuries with the arrow-shooting ballista, while at sea it continued to deploy war galleys equipped with arrow-shooting engines ‘almost to the bitter end’. After the eleventh century, however, the crossbow replaced these engines. Even the Byzantines adopted crossbows, cheaper and easier to make than the complicated engines they had been using up until then. Concerning siege-warfare, the Byzantines had never forgotten the art of fashioning siege-towers, used in a Byzantine campaign to recover Crete in 949. Stone-throwing engines, invented in China in the third century BC, were also introduced to Arabs and Westerners via Byzantium, but Westerners invented the counterweight trebuchet, the Byzantine word for it, *πρόκουλα* originating from the Italian *bricola*. The author concludes that there is no straightforward answer to the question raised in his title, but

acknowledges that the technological advantages Byzantium had once enjoyed were 'ancient history' when it fell in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks.

The four centuries covered by the 21 papers in this book, from the eleventh to the fifteenth, span a period during which Byzantium contracted from a powerful empire to a city state while the West expanded territorially and economically to the point where it was on the threshold of colonizing the American continent. The papers cover various aspects of how each side perceived the other, religious, political, cultural, societal, economic and military, and the extent to which the perceptions corresponded to the realities on the ground. The overriding general impression acquired from reading these papers is that although Byzantium and Western Christendom were indeed 'peer cultures' as one of the book's editors and a contributor to the volume has pointed out, there was no real fusion between the two. What prevented fusion was the diachronic conflict over 'Romanitas'. The Byzantines considered themselves heirs of the Roman imperium right down to the end, resenting the harm Westerners had caused them despite the perceived common heritage. The Westerners in general, despite more nuanced views held by some, regarded the Byzantines as Greek schismatics outside the 'res publica christiana' that acknowledged papal primacy and the spiritual leadership of the Roman Catholic Church. Both sides drew closer together before the emerging Ottoman threat, but they remained nevertheless 'so near but yet so far'.

NICHOLAS COUREAS
Cyprus Research Centre