

THE FOURTH CRUSADE: EVENT, AFTERMATH, AND PERCEPTIONS

papers from the sixth conference of
the society for the study of the
crusades and the latin east, istanbul,
turkey, 25–29 august 2004

CRUSADES – SUBSIDIA 2

EDITED BY
THOMAS F. MADDEN

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Papers from the Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the
Crusades and the Latin East, Istanbul, Turkey, 25–29 August 2004

Edited by

Thomas F. Madden
Saint Louis University, USA

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2008 by Ashgate Publishing

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East. Conference (6th : 2004 : Istanbul, Turkey)

The Fourth Crusade: event, aftermath, and perceptions: papers from the Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, Istanbul, Turkey, 25–29 August 2004. – (Crusades. Subsidia)

1. Crusades – Fourth, 1202–1204 – Congresses 2. Military history, Medieval – Congresses

I. Title II. Madden, Thomas F.
949.5'03.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East. Conference (6th : 2004 : Istanbul, Turkey)

The Fourth crusade : event, aftermath, and perceptions : papers from the Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, Istanbul, Turkey, 25–29 August 2004 / edited by Thomas F. Madden.

p. cm. – (Crusades subsidia)
Contributions in English, French, and Italian.

ISBN 978-0-7546-6319-5 (alk. paper)

1. Crusades – Fourth, 1202–1204 – Congresses. 2. Military history, Medieval – Congresses.

I. Madden, Thomas F. II. Title.

D164.S63 2004
949.5'03–dc22

2007016269

ISBN 9780754663195 (hbk)

ISBN 9781138249653 (pbk)

Typeset by N²productions

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Introduction¹

It is an irony that of the major “numbered” crusades the First and the Fourth have attracted significantly more scholarly attention than any others. Interest in the First Crusade is natural enough. It was the beginning of a movement that endured for centuries and fundamentally shaped Europe and its place in the Mediterranean world. But the Fourth Crusade cannot make that claim. Instead, it was an enterprise launched during the maturity of the movement that proceeded to go terribly wrong. Organized to restore Jerusalem to Christian control, the Fourth Crusade conquered and looted the greatest Christian city in the world. The story of how that came to be is a tangled web of conflicting agendas, passions, imperatives, and desires. It is the extraordinary outcome of the Fourth Crusade, which even contemporaries believed could only be an act of God, that draws curious investigators to attempt to unlock its secrets. Indeed, in that respect it is very like the First Crusade.²

Western scholars may approach the Fourth Crusade as a fascinating puzzle or an intriguing historical event, yet for others it remains an open wound. Steven Runciman famously wrote that “there was never a greater crime against humanity than the Fourth Crusade”³ and this view is still current today in parts of the world. For example, when the Greek government invited Pope John Paul II to Athens in 2001, large numbers of Orthodox monks, nuns, and priests protested the arrival of what some of them called “the two-horned monster of Rome.” When the pope landed on May 4, not a single member of the Orthodox clergy came to the airport to greet him. Thousands of them, however, took to the streets, wrapped in Greek flags, demanding that the 80-year-old pontiff be expelled. The pope then paid a “courtesy visit” to Archbishop Christodoulos of Athens. The archbishop cataloged a list of Orthodox grievances against Rome, including such things as the expansion of eastern Catholic churches and the Vatican’s attitude toward Cyprus. Pride of place, however, was given not to current events, but to the Fourth Crusade and its aftermath. In his “welcome” address to the pope, the archbishop said:

Understandably a large part of the Church of Greece opposes your presence here... These reactions express not only explicit censure of the unacceptable acts of violence perpetrated against concerned Orthodox peoples, but also the demand of Orthodox conscience for a formal condemnation of injustices committed against them by the Christian West... The Orthodox Greek people, more than other Orthodox peoples, sense more intensely in its religious consciousness and national memory the traumatic experiences, that remain as

¹ My thanks to David Parnell of Saint Louis University for his assistance with the editorial formatting of this volume.

² For discussions of recent Fourth Crusade historiography, see Norman Housley, *Contesting the Crusades* (Oxford, 2006), 64–68; Thomas F. Madden, “Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade,” *International History Review* 17 (1995): 726–43.

³ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1953–57), 3: 123, 130.

open wounds inflicted on its vigorous body, as is known to all, by the destructive mania of the Crusaders and the period of Latin rule...

There can be little doubt that memories and perceptions of the Fourth Crusade, accurate or not, remain powerful even today.

In late August 2004, only a few months after the 800th anniversary of the crusader conquest of Constantinople, the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East held its Sixth International Conference at Bogaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey. The theme, “Around the Fourth Crusade: Before and After,” brought scholars from all parts of the world to present their research. The conference began on 25 August with formal welcomes delivered by Nevra Necipoglu, Sabih Tansal, and Selim Deringil of Bogaziçi University followed by Michel Balard of the Sorbonne University’s Presidential Address. I then gave the opening lecture, entitled “1204 and Historical Memory.” The next three days were filled with a rich bounty of crusade scholarship. Nearly one hundred papers were delivered, approximately half of which were directly related to the Fourth Crusade. These included plenary lectures by Jonathan Riley-Smith (“An Alternative Approach to the Fourth Crusade”) and Benjamin Z. Kedar (“The Fourth Crusade’s Second Front”). The conference ended on 29th August with a plenary panel discussion on the past and future of Fourth Crusade historiography. The panel, chaired by Benjamin Z. Kedar, consisted of David Jacoby, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Michel Balard, Alfred J. Andrea, and myself.

The papers delivered in Istanbul made starkly clear that approaches to the Fourth Crusade have changed over the years. In the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, scholarship was preoccupied with the “Diversion Question.” At issue was whether the Fourth Crusade had diverted from its original destination as a result of a series of accidents, as Geoffrey de Villehardouin explains in his chronicle, or through the machinations of one or more actors, as authors such as Robert of Clari or Nicetas Choniates suggest. By the mid-twentieth century most historians, following Runciman and others, had settled on the Venetians and their doge, Enrico Dandolo, as the villains of this piece. The Venetians, it was said, had cynically joined the crusade as a means of placing Byzantium under their permanent control. The crusaders, blinded by chivalric piety, never suspected that they had been duped until it was too late.⁴ In 1977 Donald E. Queller published his book, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, in which he resurrected the theory of accidents, arguing that neither the Venetians nor any other parties had the ability to divert the crusade. Instead, he argued, the host was led step-by-step to Constantinople as a result of a series of events that no one could have foreseen. These arguments were subsequently expanded and refined by Queller, his students, and other scholars such that by the end of the century the idea of the intentional diversion of the Fourth

⁴ For a useful overview of older scholarship on the Fourth Crusade, see Donald E. Queller, ed., *The Latin Conquest of Constantinople* (New York, 1971).

Crusade was almost unknown in academic scholarship (although it was alive and well in popular works).⁵ It is telling that in almost fifty papers delivered on Fourth Crusade topics in Istanbul in 2004, none took up the Diversion Question. That, at least, appears to be settled.

Fourth Crusade studies presented in 2004 can be broadly divided into three categories: those that investigate aspects of the event itself, those that examine the repercussions and aftermath of the event, and those that trace the perceptions and memories of the event. This three-fold approach is evidenced by the essays in this volume. Because of the large number of papers presented, the decision was made to publish in this volume only a select group that is both representative and important. We begin with Vincent Ryan's study of the role of Richard Lionheart on the evolution of the Fourth Crusade. Although Ryan does not go so far as to claim that it was the crusade that Richard did not live long enough to lead, he does cast into sharp relief the ways in which the king and his memory formed the plan and execution of the enterprise. He reminds us that the Fourth Crusade did not begin only with the trumpets and pageantry of Ecry, but instead that its seeds were planted much earlier during the Third Crusade. Like Ryan, Pierre Racine focuses his attention on the early stages of the crusade. Racine sheds light on Venice's economic position at the time of the Fourth Crusade, not merely with regard to the Mediterranean, but more importantly in its own backyard. It was the charge of Venice to procure the tons of provisions necessary to feed a large army for many months and she did so through a web of suppliers and markets that stretched through the Po valley and beyond. Racine underscores the economic motivations that led Venice to look favorably upon an Egyptian destination for the crusade, thus continuing a line of scholarship that disproves old conspiracy theories of Venetian complicity in a plot to divert the crusade to Constantinople.⁶

From the distance of centuries, the gala departure of the fleet from Venice appears to signal the beginning of the event we today call the Fourth Crusade. However, Marco Meschini reminds us that the crusade was never a unified whole, but rather a collection of various, often competing, agendas that together led the warriors from Venice to Zara to Constantinople. Meschini examines four different groups – the pope and curia, the crusade leaders, the crusaders who did not accompany the main body, and the Byzantines. In each case, he evaluates their actions during the crusade and their ability to effect its direction and purpose. Throughout, Meschini stresses the mutability of events, thereby contradicting approaches that have characterized the outcome of the crusade as inevitable.

⁵ For examples of the latter, see W.B. Bartlett, *An Ungodly War: The Sack of Constantinople and the Fourth Crusade* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2000); John Godfrey, *1204: The Unholy Crusade* (Oxford, 1980). Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (New York, 2005) is the first popular market book to abandon the theory of intentional diversion.

⁶ See most recently, John H. Pryor, "The Venetian Fleet for the Fourth Crusade and the Diversion of the Crusade to Constantinople," in *The Experience of Crusading*, eds. M. Bull and N. Housley, (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 103–23.

The fall of Constantinople in 1204 shook the Mediterranean world. Among the ashes of Byzantium, many vied for power. At first the Latin Empire of Constantinople seemed to have the upper hand, yet very quickly internal divisions among the crusaders undercut their ability to impose order amid so much chaos. My essay takes up the matter of the first crack in this unity, the division between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders. The argument between these two rivals for the throne would ultimately lead to war, facing the crusaders with their greatest threat. The essay examines more closely the reasons behind the division and the means by which Doge Enrico Dandolo and other leaders were able to craft a workable solution.

Nowhere did the Fourth Crusade have a greater impact than in the city of Constantinople. When Michael VIII restored the capital to Byzantine rule in 1261 it was but a shadow of its pre-1204 majesty. Yet the image frequently conjured of a Latin Constantinople given over to the “destructive mania of the Crusaders” is not, David Jacoby explains, the whole story. Although many Greeks left the capital, many also stayed. Indeed, the city remained a predominantly Greek city throughout the reign of the Latin emperors. Jacoby’s essay evokes complex questions of accommodation and capitulation that have scarcely been examined by historians in this context. In a similar way, Robert D. Leonard, Jr. assesses the long-term effects of the fall of Constantinople on the gold coinage of Europe, concluding that western powers like Florence and Venice were forced to take on the role of minting high-value coins that was once held by Byzantium.

Nearly half of the essays in this volume examine the history of subsequent perceptions of the monumental events of 1204. This mirrors a similar historiographical trend among medievalists that tackles questions of memory, both real and constructed. The first two essays in this section focus attention on Venice. Although the Venetians constituted the majority of those participating in the Fourth Crusade, their voices have been largely silent, compared to the chorus of Frankish accounts. David Perry retrieves one otherwise neglected source, the *Translatio Symonensis*, which relates the fascinating story of seven Venetians who stole the body of St. Simon the Prophet, the patron saint of their parish back home, during the sack of Constantinople. Perry’s analysis teases out a harvest of new information with regard to the looting of the city and the Venetian response to the event. Similarly, Serban Marin undertakes a comprehensive survey of later Venetian chronicles in order to place the Fourth Crusade within the Venetians’ own understanding of themselves and their history. Marin discounts the idea that the Venetians attempted to obfuscate or justify their role in conquest of Constantinople. Quite the contrary, he contends that they reveled in the victory, which was a source of unceasing glory for them. Just as San Marco was bedecked with the war trophies of 1204, so the Venetian chroniclers adorned their histories with their great victory over the Greeks.

Giulio Cipollone examines the perception of the Fourth Crusade from the vantage spot of Rome. Cipollone sees the pope’s response to the sack of the city and his subsequent attitude toward the Greeks as a major contributor to the ongoing

development of a new culture of tolerance in the curia. The events of the Fourth Crusade forced Innocent III into a comparison of the Latins and Greeks, and he found his own people much the worse. It is this assessment that Cipollone sees as part of a larger evaluation among the popes that increasingly accepted that the “other,” whether Greek, Jew, or Muslim, was not only worthy of respect and some measure of toleration, but indeed could hold the moral high ground over the Latin Christians.

Perceptions of the Fourth Crusade were themselves subject to the same cultural juxtapositions that characterized the aftermath of the event. We can see this dynamic working itself out in intriguing ways in the last two essays of this volume. Cyril Aslanov demonstrates that the Old French chronicles of Geoffrey de Villehardouin and Robert de Clari are themselves affected by Byzantine styles of literature. As such they should be seen within a larger context of Franco-Byzantine culture of the post-1204 era. In the same way, William J. Hamblin uncovers an Arab source that, he convincingly argues, was itself derived from Byzantines who fled Constantinople. This Greek perspective, filtered through the Arab perspective, provides not only new details about the crusade, but also the role of Constantinople in contemporary Muslim thought.

The essays contained in this volume, as well as the dozens more that were delivered at Istanbul in 2004, make clear that scholarly interest in the Fourth Crusade and its effects remains vibrant. Given the implications that the crusade still holds for modern attitudes and trends, that interest can only be beneficial.

Thomas F. Madden
St Louis, Missouri

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List of Contributors

Cyril Aslanov is Associate Professor of French and Romance Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. His recent publications include *Le provençal des Juifs et l'hébreu en Provence: le dictionnaire Sharshot ha-Kesef de Joseph Caspi* (Leuven, 2002), *Evidence of Francophony in Mediaeval Levant: Decipherment and Interpretation* (Jerusalem, 2006), and *Le français au Levant jadis et naguère: à la recherche d'une langue perdue* (Paris, 2006).

Giulio Cipollone is Professor and Head of the Department of Medieval History at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana in Rome, Italy.

William J. Hamblin is Professor of History at Brigham Young University, USA. Most recently, he is the author of *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 B.C.: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History* (New York, 2006) and co-author of *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History* (London, 2007).

David Jacoby is Emeritus Professor of History at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. He has published extensively on Byzantium, the former territories of Byzantium after the Fourth Crusade, the crusader states of the Levant and Egypt, and on intercultural exchange between the West and the eastern Mediterranean in the 11th to 15th centuries. He is currently writing a book on medieval silk production and trade in the Mediterranean.

Robert D. Leonard Jr. is an independent scholar studying the gold coinage of the crusader states. He is a Fellow of the American Numismatic Society and of the Royal Numismatic Society.

Thomas F. Madden is Professor of History and Director of the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at Saint Louis University, USA. He is the author of numerous studies, including most recently *The New Concise History of the Crusades* (Lanham, 2005) and *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore, 2003).

Șerban Marin is in the final stage of preparing his Ph.D. thesis on “The Venetian Chronicles and the Political Mythology of *Serenissima*” at the University of Bucharest, Romania. He is a member (since 2000) of the Istituto Romeno di Cultura in Venice. His research covers Venetian historiography and the Fourth Crusade.

Marco Meschini, a historian at the Università Cattolica in Milan, Italy, recently a grantee of the EFR and MGH, works on the Second Crusade (*San Bernardo e la*

seconda crociate [Milan, 1998]), the Fourth Crusade (*1204: l'incompiuta* [Milan, 2004]), and the Albigensian Crusade ("Bibliografia delle crociate albigesi," *Reti Medievali* 2006 and *Innocenzo III e il "negotium pacis et fidei" in Linguadoca* [Rome, 2007]).

David M. Perry is Assistant Professor at Dominican University, Chicago, Illinois, USA. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in December of 2006, for a dissertation entitled, "Mirabilia in mari veniendo:" *Venice, Stolen Relics, and the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade*.

Pierre Racine is Professor Emeritus at Marc Bloch University in Strasbourg, Belgium. His recent works include *Les villes d'Italie: du milieu du XIIe au milieu du XIVe siècle* (Paris, 2004) and *Federico II di Svevia: un monarca medievale alle prese con la sorte* (Milan, 1998).

Vincent Ryan is a Ph.D. candidate in Medieval History at Saint Louis University, USA. He is currently working on his doctoral thesis entitled, "Mary Wills It: The Cult of the Virgin Mary and the Crusading Movement during the High Middle Ages."

The Sixth Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East

25–29 August 2004

Istanbul, Turkey

Wednesday, August 25, 2004

Bogaziçi University

16.00: Registration and distribution of dossiers

18.30: Plenary Session

Chair: Nevra Necipoglu (Bogaziçi University)

Welcome Addresses:

Prof. Dr. Sabih Tansal, rector (Bogaziçi University)

Prof. Dr. Selim Deringil, chair of the Department of History (Bogaziçi University)

Presidential Address: Michel Balard (Sorbonne)

Opening Lecture:

Thomas F. Madden (Saint Louis University), “1204 and Historical Memory”

20.00: Welcome Reception hosted by the Rector of Bogaziçi University

Thursday, August 26, 2004

9.30–11.00

[a] The Fourth Crusade

Chair: John France

Jaroslav Folda (North Carolina), “The Impact of 1204 and the Latin Empire on the Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land: Reconsiderations”

Aryeh Grabois (University of Haifa), “The Fourth Crusade and the Holy Land”

Lucie Kuhse (University of Hamburg), “The Conquest of Constantinople: A Question of Honour?”

[b] The Military Orders: The Templars**Chair: Malcolm Barber**

Elena Bellomo (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), “Barotius, Crusader and Templar Master of Lombardy and Italy”

Ignacio de la Torre (UNED), “The Templars as Papal Bankers”

Paul Crawford (Alma College), “Jacques de Thérines, the University of Paris, and the Trial of the Templars”

[c] Crusader Archeology**Chair: Benjamin Kedar**

Mathias Piana (University of Augsburg, Germany), “The Crusader Castle of Toron: First Results of its Investigation”

Adrian J. Boas (University of Haifa), “Crusader and Armenian Castles: Architectural Interchange and Adaptation”

Kate Raphael (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Arrows and Catapult Stones: Hard Evidence from the Siege of Arsuf (1265) and Acre (1291)”

11.30–13.00

[a] Different Perspectives of the Fourth Crusade**Chair: Susan Edgington**

S.I. Luchitskaya (Institute of General History, Moscow), “Russian Medieval Perceptions of the Fourth Crusade”

Christer Carlsson (University of Southern Denmark), “1204 – The Time of the Fourth Crusade from a Northern Perspective”

Aphrodite Papayianni (University of London), “The Echo of the Events of 1204 in Byzantine Documents and Historiography: 1204–1453”

[b] The Ideal of Knighthood and the Military Orders**Chair: Jonathan Riley Smith**

Malcolm Barber (University of Reading), “The Reputation of Gerard of Ridefort”

Sophia Menache (University of Haifa), “Don Alonso of Aragon, Master of Calatrava”

Zsolt Hunyadi (University of Szeged), “Hospitallers, Templars, and Teutonic Knights in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary”

[c] Military History**Chair: Matthew Bennett**

Reuven Amitai (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Slowly but Surely: Mamluk Siege Methods against the Franks”

Piers Mitchell (Imperial College, London), “Weapon Injuries Sustained by the Frankish Garrison during the Siege of Vadum Iacob Castle”

B. Vasiliki A. Simpson, “The Fires of the Fourth Crusade: A Memoir of the Architectural Loss”

14.30–16.00

[a] Economic Aspects of the Fourth Crusade

Chair: David Jacoby

Merav Mack (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Commercial Aspects of the Fourth Crusade”

Kelly Linardou (Birmingham University) and Titos Papanastorakis (Aegean University), “Politics of Looting and the Formation of Symbolic Identities: The Choice of Venetians and Franks and the Distribution of Constantinopolitan Booty after the Conquest of 1204”

Robert D. Leonard (NCIS), “The Effects of the Fourth Crusade on European Gold Coinage”

[b] The Second Crusade

Chair: Aryeh Grabois

William J. Purkis (Emmanuel College, Cambridge), “Bernard of Clairvaux and the Preaching of the Second Crusade”

G.A. Loud (University of Leeds), “The Failure of the Second Crusade: A Reconsideration”

Jonathan Phillips (Royal Holloway University of London), “Armenia and the Second Crusade”

[c] The Crusades, Before and After

Chair: Yvonne Friedman

Charles R. Bowlus (University of Arkansas), “The Origins of Byzantine–Latin Animosity in East-Central Europe”

Janus Möller Jensen (University of Southern Denmark), “The Forgotten Periphery and the Forgotten Crusades: Greenland and the Crusades, 1400–1536”

Claudine Delacroix-Besnier, “Le couvent des frères prêcheurs à Constantinople et Péra de 1228 à la fin du XIV^e siècle: Interface entre l’Eglise de Rome et les chrétiens d’Orient”

16.30–18.00

[a] The Conquest and Sack of Constantinople, 1204

Chair: Thomas F. Madden

John H. Pryor (University of Sydney), “The Chain of the Golden Horn”

David Perry (University of Minnesota), “The Translatio Symonensis and the Seven Thieves: A Venetian Fourth Crusade *furta sacra* Narrative and the Looting of Constantinople”

Michael Angold (University of Edinburgh), “The Debate over the Sack of Constantinople, 1204”

[b] The Papacy and the Crusades

Chair: Jonathan Phillips

Theresa M. Vann (Hill Monastic Manuscript Library), “Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Vocabulary of Holy War in the Mediterranean”

John France (University of Swansea), “The Papacy and Its Byzantine Strategy”

Ane Bysted (University of Southern Denmark), “Crusade Indulgences in Twelfth-Century Theology: The Spirit of the Spiritual Privilege”

[c] The Crusader Kingdoms

Chair: Michel Balard

Andrew Jotischky (University of Lancaster), “The Franciscans, The Holy Land, and the End of Crusading”

Ronnie Ellenblum (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Crusader History and Plate Tectonics: Vadum Iacob and the Earthquakes of 1202 and 1759”

Palma Librato, “The Crusaders Occupation of the Syrian Territory: the Castles of the Region of Tartous”

18.30: Plenary Session

Jonathan Riley Smith (Emmanuel College, Cambridge), “An Alternative Approach to the Fourth Crusade”

Benjamin Kedar (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “The Fourth’s Crusade Second Front”

Friday, August 27, 2004

9.30–11.00

[a] Innocent III and the Fourth Crusade

Chair: Brenda Bolton

Jonathan Harris (Royal Holloway University of London), “Collusion with the Infidel as a Pretext for Military Action against Byzantium”

Jennifer A. Price (University of Washington), “Legatine Power and the Crusade Vow: Innocent III, Peter Capuano, and the Conquest of Constantinople”

Giulio Cipollone (Pontifical Gregorian University), “In the Language of Innocent III: Christians are worse than Saracens, Jews and Pagans: The Case of the Venetians”

[b] Jihad, Military Orders, and Crusades in Spain**Chair: Theresa Vann**

Ana Echevarria (UNED, Madrid), “Muslim Vassals of the Military Orders and their Conversion”

Delfina Serrano (CSIC, Madrid), “Jihad in al-Andalus (12th and 13th centuries)”

José Manuel Rodríguez García (University of Salamanca), “1269–1271: The Spanish and St. Louis’ Second Crusade”

[c] The Latin East**Chair: Gilles Grivaud**

Jean Richard (Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres), “Les Etats Latins du Levant face à la conquête de Constantinople”

Yvonne Friedman (Bar Ilan University), “Christian-Muslim Peace Endeavors and Conflict Resolution”

Ronnie Ellenblum (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “‘Crusader Cities’, ‘Muslim Cities,’ and the Post-Colonial Debate”

Ioanna Christoforaki (Academy of Athens), “Circulating Images, Transmitting Ideas: The Cultural Economy of Crusader Cyprus”

11.30–13.00

[a] The Fourth Crusade: Different Perspectives**Chair: Jenny Horowitz**

Monique Zerner (University of Nice), “Ceux qui refusèrent le détournement de la croisade vers Constantinople”

Philippe Gardette (Trinity College, Cambridge), “Jews and the Capture of Constantinople in 1204 and in 1453: A Parallel”

Marco Meschini (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano), “Les quatre croisades de 1204”

[b] Crusade Historiography**Chair: David Perry**

Tivadar Palagyi (University of Budapest), “Images byzantines et persanes de Constantinople dans des textes épiques de Georges de Pisidie et de Firdousi”

Serban Marin (Istituto Romeno di cultura), “The Venetian Chronicles’ Viewpoint regarding the Fourth Crusade: Between Justification and Glory”

Konstantinos A. Zafeiris (University of St. Andrews), “The Synopsis Chronike and Its Selective Use of the Sources”

[c] The Art of War and the Conquest of Constantinople**Chair: Reuven Amitai**

Birsel Kücüksipahioglu (University of Istanbul), “The Western Plans to Capture Byzantium from the Beginnings of the Crusades to 1204”

Francesco dall'Aglio (Istituto Italiano per gli studi filosofici), "Brothers in Arms: The Art of War according to Balduin and Henry"

Matthew Bennett (Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst), "Why and how were the Fourth Crusaders able to capture Constantinople?"

14.30–16.00

[a] Latin Constantinople

Chair: John W. Barker

Thomas F. Madden (University of Saint Louis), "The Latin Empire's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders"

David Jacoby (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), "Demography and Society in Latin Constantinople, 1204–1261"

Jürgen Krüger (University of Karlsruhe), "Relics, Spoils, and Mosaics: St Marc in Venice and its Relation to the Churches of Constantinople and of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem"

[b] Frankish Greece and Anatolia after the Fourth Crusade

Chair: Jean Richard

Ebru Altan (University of Istanbul), "Anatolia after the Fourth Crusade"

Diana Gililand Wright (New School University), "The Parlement of Ravenika"

Gilles Grivaud (Université de Rouen, GRHIS), "La place du clergé mineur grec dans la société des Etats francs après 1204"

[c] The Kingdom of Lesser Armenia and the Crusades

Chair: Bernard Hamilton

Christopher MacEvitt (Dartmouth College), "Matthew of Edessa and the Problem of Tolerance in the Latin East"

Karl Borchardt (University of Würzburg), "'Good Heretics'?: Western Attitudes towards the Armenians in the Fourteenth Century"

Zara Pogossian (Central European University), "Crossing Cultures in the Text of the Letter of Love and Concord: an Armenian Apocryphal Source from the Period of the Fourth Crusade"

Ioanna Rapti, "Literacy and Image in the Kingdom of Cilicia: Armenian Manuscripts between the Crusader West and Byzantine Legacy"

16.30–18.00

[a] Niketas Choniates and the Crusades

Chair: Dean Sakel

Alicia J. Simpson (King's College, University of London), "Before and After 1204: The Versions of Niketas Choniates' *Historia* and the Collapse of Byzantium"

Jenny Horowitz (University of Haifa), “‘By overturning the Cross with the Cross they bore sewn on their backs, the Latins rejected Christ’: Niketas Choniates’ Testimony as a Reflection of the Byzantine Stance towards the Franks”

Michael Evans (University of Reading), “Penthesilea on the Second Crusade: Is Eleanor of Aquitaine the ‘Amazon Queen’ of Nicetas Choniates?”

[b] Commemorating the Crusades and Artistic Patronage

Chair: Nurith Kenaan Kedar

Christine Verzar (Ohio State University), “The Artistic Patronage of the Returning Crusader: The Arm of St. George and Ferrara Cathedral”

Montserrat Pages (Museu Nacional d’art, Catalunya), “Ripoll and Taull, Memory and Patronage after the Reconquista”

Nurith Kenaan-Kedar (University of Tel Aviv), “Returning Crusades and the Mural Cycle of Saint-Chef (Dauphine)”

Hanna Taragan (University of Tel Aviv), “Mamluk Patronage and Crusader Memories”

[c] Dynastic Politics and the Crusades

Chair: Adrian Boas

Torben K. Nielsen (University of Aalborg), “War and Marriage: Cultural Encounters in the Baltic Crusades”

John W. Barker (University of Wisconsin-Madison), “Crusading and Matrimony in the Dynastic Policies of Montferrat and Savoy”

Jochen G. Schenk (Emmanuel College, Cambridge), “Templar Support and the Crusading Tradition of Noble French Families”

Saturday, August 28, 2004

9.30–11.00

[a] Different Perspectives of the Fourth Crusade

Chair: Luis Garcia Guijarro

Dean Sakel (Bogaziçi University), “A Garbled Byzantine Account of 1204”

William J. Hamblin (Brigham Young University), “Arab Perspectives on the Fall of Constantinople to the Crusaders in 1204”

Angus Steward (University of St Andrews), “The Emperor Baldwin”

[b] The First Crusade

Chair: G.A. Loud

Johanna Maria Van Winter (University of Utrecht), “The Origins of the Priest Godschalk the Crusader”

Koray Durak (University of Harvard), “Byzantine Imperial Discourse on the Crusaders in Anna Komnena’s Alexiad as a Mechanism of Imperial Control”

Sini Kangas (University of Helsinki), “The Image of the Greeks in the Sources of the First Crusade”

[c] Rulers and Borders

Chair: Jonathan Harris

J.T. Roche (University of St Andrews), “Conrad III and the Second Crusade, 1147/8: Retreat from Dorylaeum?”

Peter S. Peleg (University of Haifa), “Frederick II and the Major Military Orders”

Yehoshua Frenkel (University of Haifa), “The Notion of Border in Mamluk Period Writings”

11.30–13.00

[a] The Fourth Crusade, the Latin Empire, and the Papacy

Chair: Sophia Menache

Alfred J. Andrea (University of Vermont), “‘What we have here is a Failure to Communicate’: Innocent III and Alexius III on the Eve of the Fourth Crusade”

Michael Lower (University of Minnesota), “Pope Gregory IX and the Latin Empire”

Susan B. Edgington (Queen Mary College, University of London), “A Female Physician on the Fourth Crusade? Laurette de Saint-Valery”

[b] Venice and the Crusades

Chair: Karl Borchardt

Pierre A. MacKay (University of Washington), “Walking the Streets of Negropont”

Ruthy Gertwagen (Oranim College, Israel), “Maritime Factors in the Formation of the so-called Venetian Maritime Empire and the Development of Its Ports System”

P. Racine (Université Marc Bloch, Strasbourg), “Venise et son arrière-pays continental à l’époque de la 4ème Croisade”

[c] Historiography of the Crusades

Chair: Ronnie Ellenblum

Cyril Aslanov (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), “Villehardouin and Robert de Clari on the Conquest of Constantinople: The Rise of a New Historiography?”

Luis Garcia Guijarro (University of Zaragoza) – Manuel Rojas (University of Extremadura), “Crusader Historiography and Reconquista: A Spanish View of Existing Clichés”

Taef el-Azhari (Helwan University, Cairo), “The Muslim Perspectives of the Middle East during the Fourth Crusade”

14.30–16.00: Plenary Session

Chair: Benjamin Kedar

New and Old in the Research of the Fourth Crusade

Panel: David Jacoby, Jonathan Riley-Smith, Michel Balard, Thomas F. Madden, Michael Angold, and Alfred J. Andrea.

20.00: Farewell Banquet

Sunday, August 29, 2004

9.00–17.00

Princes' Island and Bosphorus Highlights – guidance and supervision of Prof. Asnu-Bilban Yalcin (University of Istanbul)

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EVENT

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Richard I and the Early Evolution of the Fourth Crusade¹

Vincent Ryan

The sack of Constantinople in 1204 is one of the more well-known episodes in medieval history, generating an abundance of scholarship and controversy about the diversion of the Fourth Crusade.² The majority of scholarship, though, has focused on Venice's role in the diversion of the crusade, leaving the early evolution of the Fourth Crusade largely unconsidered. Yet fifteen months elapsed between Pope Innocent III's proclamation of a new crusade in mid-August 1198 and the first significant enlistment for the campaign in late-November 1199. Too little attention has been paid to what transpired during this intermediary period, as most treatments use the tournament at Ecry as a starting point for discussing the crusade.³

To fully appreciate the trajectory of the Fourth Crusade – a campaign with flaws rooted in delayed development – we must first consider the evolution of Innocent's initial crusading policy and the cause of this initial stagnation in recruitment. In examining these issues, it becomes clear that Innocent III was not opposed to royal participation, as is often claimed, and indeed was eager to secure Richard I of England's involvement in the forthcoming crusade – albeit under the right circumstances. More importantly, a closer examination of this early phase of the Fourth Crusade brings into relief the important influence that Richard the Lionheart had on the development of Innocent's crusading policy, the initial recruitment delays, the eventual enlistment, and the original strategy of the campaign.

Few figures are associated more closely with the crusading movement than Innocent III and Richard I. The election of Lothari de Segni to the papal throne in January 1198 was a momentous development in crusading history. The liberation of the Holy Land was Innocent's most pressing concern from the inception of his pontificate. One of his first acts as pope was to send a letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem announcing his election and making known his commitment to working for the deliverance of the holy city.⁴ On 15 August he issued his first crusading bull, *Post miserabile*, setting the wheels in motion for the Fourth Crusade. With

¹ I would like to thank Thomas F. Madden, Alfred Andrea, Charles H. Parker, and Patrick O'Banion for their comments and encouragement throughout the course of this research project.

² Thomas F. Madden, "Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade," *International History Review* 17 (1995), 726–43.

³ Those rare examinations of the crusade's initial phase mostly focus on the enlistment at Ecry. For example, see Edgar H. McNeal, "Fulk of Neuilly and the Tournament of Ecry," *Speculum* 28 (1953), pp. 371–75 or Eric John, "A Note on the Preliminaries of the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantion* 28 (1958), pp. 95–103. More typical is the approach of John Godfrey, *1204: The Unholy Crusade* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 36–37, 39–40, which devotes less than four pages to these fifteen months.

⁴ Innocent III, *Die Register Innocenz' III*, ed. Othmar Hageneder and Anton Haidacher (Graz-Cologne, 1964), 1:11, pp. 18–20. Hereafter cited as *Register*.

regards to the crusading legacy of Richard the Lionheart, Jonathan Riley-Smith echoes the opinions of many in describing the English monarch as possibly the greatest crusading commander.⁵ One of the English king's modern biographers has observed, "It was on crusade that Richard entered the world of legend."⁶ While the separate crusading legacies of these two individuals are commonly recognized, their intersection over crusading issues has largely been overlooked.⁷

The oversight is in part the product of a school of thought in Fourth Crusade scholarship that maintains that Innocent was against royal participation in this campaign. More than half a century ago Sir Steven Runciman proposed that the outcome of the Third Crusade had convinced Innocent that kings and emperors were not "wholly desirable on crusading expeditions."⁸ Hans Mayer has since argued that the emphasis on the failure of nationally organized crusades in the pope's crusading call, shows that Innocent "was not anxious to see kings taking part."⁹ Donald Queller believed that kings were not mentioned in the pontiff's call for the Fourth Crusade because Innocent wanted the crusade to be completely under papal control.¹⁰ John Godfrey offered a similar sentiment, suggesting that the absence of kings "probably suited Innocent's idea of a crusade."¹¹ More recently, Michael Angold has commented that Innocent believed that recent failures had shown that something was very wrong with the crusade as an enterprise, namely the princely role.¹² Part of the problem with these assessments is that they are rooted in the natural tendency to read back into historical events an interpretation that is influenced by a known outcome. We know that no kings ultimately participated in the Fourth Crusade; therefore, the pope was not interested in royal participation in this campaign. Moreover, Innocent's efforts throughout his pontificate to make royal power subservient to papal power would, at first glance, appear to reinforce this premise. However, a handful of historians have been slowly chipping away at this assertion over the past 25 years. More recent research has shown that Innocent was actively trying to involve both King Emeric of Hungary as well as the Byzantine Emperor Alexius III in his crusading plans.¹³ As with his efforts with Emeric and

⁵ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven, 1987), p. 113.

⁶ John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven, 1999), p. 3.

⁷ One likely reason for the oversight is that their time in power only briefly overlapped – as Richard died fifteen months into Innocent's pontificate.

⁸ Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1955), 3:91.

⁹ Hans Mayer, *The Crusades*, 2nd ed., trans. John Gillingham (Oxford, 1988), p. 197.

¹⁰ Donald Queller, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople 1201–4* (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 1.

¹¹ Godfrey, *1204: The Unholy Crusade*, p. 45. Expanding on this point, Godfrey argued that "rulers like Philip Augustus and Richard Lion-Heart could not have been easy men with whom an autocratic pope might cooperate."

¹² Michael Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Harlow, 2003), p. 78.

¹³ James R. Sweeney, "Hungary in the Crusades, 1169–1218," *International History Review* 4 (1981), pp. 475–76; James M. Powell, "Innocent III and Alexius III: A Crusade Plan That Failed," in *The Experience of Crusading*, vol. 1, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge, 2003) pp. 96–102.

Alexius, it appears that Innocent was also encouraging the participation of Richard – under the proper circumstances – before the English king’s untimely death in the spring of 1199.

Richard was a natural leader for the newly proposed crusade. He was one of the most accomplished military commanders of his era, his feats during the Third Crusade were already legendary, and he was well-acquainted with the difficulties involved in retaking Jerusalem. Moreover, Richard may have felt that he had never truly completed his crusading vow. After a truce was signed to end the Third Crusade, Saladin granted the crusaders safe-conduct so that they could visit Jerusalem and venerate the Holy Sepulcher. While most of the crusaders took advantage of this provision to fulfill their crusading vows, the English king refused to enter the city until it was under Christian control.¹⁴ One chronicler asserted that as Richard departed from Palestine in October 1192 he said, “O Holy Land, I commend you to God. In his loving grace may He grant me such length of life that I may give you help as He will. I certainly hope some time in the future to bring you the aid that I intend.”¹⁵

Richard’s imprisonment by Leopold of Austria, and then Henry VI, derailed any plans he may have had to promptly return to the Latin East, as he would spend the next fifteen months in captivity. What is striking, though, is that even in confinement he was still kept abreast of the situation in Palestine. According to Roger of Howden, Enrico Dandolo, the doge of Venice, who ironically would later play a central role in the Fourth Crusade, took it upon himself to write a letter to Richard, informing the imprisoned king of the death of Saladin and the subsequent turmoil among the Muslim population in the region.¹⁶ Dandolo’s dispatch suggests a general expectation in Christendom that Richard remained interested in developments in the Holy Land and, perhaps, might one day return. Dandolo’s discussion of the infighting among Saladin’s sons could be seen as an insinuation to the English monarch that the time to defeat the Muslims was at hand.

Upon his release from captivity, one of Richard’s first actions was to inform the Christians in Palestine that he intended to fulfill his promise. Roger of Howden records:

On the same day on which the king was set at liberty from the custody of the emperor, he sent one Salt de Bruil, his messenger to his nephew, Henry, Count of Champagne, in Syria and to the other Christian princes, informing them of the day of his liberation; and

¹⁴ Richard of Devizes, *Cronicon Richardi Divisensis de Tempore Regis Richardi Primi*, ed. John Appleby (New York, 1963), p. 84.

¹⁵ *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, trans. Helen Nicholson (Aldershot, 1997), p. 382. Perhaps to underscore the significance of Richard’s informal promise, the anonymous chronicler explains, “Many people heard him say this.”

¹⁶ Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols., Rolls Series 51 (London, 1868–71), iii, p. 213.

that, if God should grant him vengeance against his enemies, and peace, he would come by the time appointed to aid them against the infidels.¹⁷

The recovery of Jerusalem appears to have remained a significant concern for Richard, though he first needed to seek retribution against Philip and secure a lasting peace in his own kingdom before he could return to the Holy Land.

From the outset of his pontificate, Innocent cultivated a cordial relationship with the English monarch. Innocent may have been so well disposed toward Richard because of the king's celebrated involvement with the crusading movement.¹⁸ In a 29 May letter, the pontiff praised Richard's skills as a Christian leader and presented him with four gold rings as signs of affection and admiration.¹⁹ This type of gift-giving is indicative of his overall commitment to spiritual and pastoral concerns as well as "part of the diplomatic niceties of the time, features of significant ecclesiastical relationship, [and] special rewards for service carried out or supplication made."²⁰ The pope explained to Richard that the rings symbolized various virtues, concluding "so that from virtue you might ascend in virtue, until in Zion you see the God of gods."²¹ The use of Psalm 83 in the letter's conclusion is ambiguous. While "Zion" could be understood as the heavenly Jerusalem, it was also often used to refer to the Holy Land – something that figured prominently in crusade propaganda.²² Viewed in this light, the pope's reference could suggest Richard's planned return to Palestine to complete the Christian reconquest of the region, enabling him to venerate the Holy Sepulcher ("you see the God of gods"). In fact, Innocent would employ the "Zion" topos again a few months later in his call to crusade.²³

Whereas the first correspondence from Innocent III was primarily concerned with spiritual advice, in a lengthy letter written a few days later, the pope addressed the status of pressing political matters involving the English monarch.²⁴ In this dispatch, the pope explained that he would compel Sancho VII of Navarre to restore the castles of Rochabrun and St. John de Pedepoort along with the money that had

¹⁷ Ibid., iii, p. 233. "Eodem vero die, quo rex liberatus fuit de captione imperatoris, misit Salt de Bruil, in terram Suliae, ad Henricum comitem Campaniae nepotem suum, et ad alios Christianorum principes, mandans eis diem liberationis suae; et quod ipse, si Deus fecerit ei vindictam de inimicis suis, et pacem dederit, veniet ad terminum statutum ad succurrendum illis contra paganos."

¹⁸ James A. Brundage, *Richard Lion Heart* (New York, 1974), p. 230.

¹⁹ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:206.

²⁰ Brenda Bolton, "Qui fidelis est minimo: The Importance of Innocent III's Gift List," in *Pope Innocent III and his World*, ed. John C. Moore (Aldershot, 1999), p. 137.

²¹ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:206: "ut de virtute in virtutem ascendas, donec deum deorum videas in Syon."

²² Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, 1986), p. 22.

²³ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:336, p. 499. Alfred Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Boston, 2000), p. 11, n. 19, believes that the "Zion" image in *Post miserabile* refers specifically to the hill outside the gates of Jerusalem – symbolic of both the holy city and the entire region.

²⁴ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:230, pp. 324–29.

been promised to Richard for marrying Sancho's sister Berengaria. The letter also touched on issues relating to Richard's imprisonment. Innocent assured the English king that he would require the heirs of his former captors to restore the ransom money that their predecessors had extorted from Richard, which had violated the ecclesiastically guaranteed privileges of his crusader vow.

In the last part of the letter, Innocent addressed Richard's current dispute with Philip Augustus. The two monarchs had been quarrelling, ever since Richard's release from prison, over lands that Philip had seized from Richard while the latter was absent on crusade. These actions, Richard charged, had not only violated the protection guaranteed a crusader, but also had broken the promise that the French monarch had made to Richard when the former left the Third Crusade. Before departing Philip promised that he would not attack the English king's lands until 40 days after Richard had returned from crusading. Philip in turn claimed that he was not obliged to adhere to these promises because Richard had routinely broken agreements with him throughout the crusade – especially in refusing to wed Philip's sister and breaking his pledge to share all spoils. The various claims and counter-claims of each side made this dispute much more difficult to arbitrate than the previous two matters. In fact, the convoluted nature of this quarrel convinced Innocent that he needed to utilize a different approach to ensure an equitable resolution: “[W]e intend to visit your country so that by prudent deliberation we may proceed to deal with these and other matters we believe will benefit of all Christendom.”²⁵ The uniqueness of this proposal and the concluding phrase (the “benefit of all Christendom”) demonstrate the importance that Innocent placed upon resolving the disputes between the two kings. In fact, besides the liberation of the Holy Land, Christian unity was one of the most important issues for the pope.²⁶ Moreover, as he would later emphasize in his August crusade summons, peace among Christians was an essential prerequisite for a successful enterprise. Explaining how some obstacles might prevent him from visiting the region to make a final ruling, Innocent allowed for the possibility of sending one of his legates to arbitrate for him in these disputes – a tactic that the pope would later utilize in his initial recruitments efforts for the Fourth Crusade.

The swift and favorable decisions that the new pope had handed down in his 30 May letter must have been a hopeful sign to Richard. Moreover, Innocent indicated that resolving the current conflict between Richard and his French rival was of great importance to him. Here was a pope who seemed to be making the king's affairs his own priorities. This was certainly not the type of papal involvement to which Richard had grown accustomed, as he had had rather rocky relationships with past occupants of the papal throne. He loathed Clement III, refusing even to

²⁵ Ibid., p. 329. “intendimus visitare; ut super his et aliis, que toti Christianitati credimus profutura, deliberatione provida procedamus.”

²⁶ Jane Sayers, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe 1198–1216* (London, 1994), p. 166.

visit him during his stopover in Italy while en route to the Holy Land.²⁷ Celestine III was viewed more favorably than his predecessor, but Richard was exasperated by the pontiff's inability to enforce the penalties Philip had incurred for violating Richard's crusader privileges. Richard insinuated as much in his congratulatory letter to Innocent in 1198 upon the latter's accession to the papacy.²⁸ As James Brundage rightly observed, "[T]he chances seemed excellent that papal intervention might considerably improve Richard's chances of securing a favorable outcome in his other international problems."²⁹

Perhaps boosted by these decisions, Richard sent Innocent a letter in early August, which addressed their mutual support of the king's nephew, Otto of Brunswick, as the rightful holder of the German throne.³⁰ The pope, however, had more pressing concerns; for on 15 August 1198 he issued an encyclical calling for a new crusade. Penny Cole sees *Post miserabile* as differing significantly from previous crusade encyclicals, most notably *Quantam praedecessores* in 1144 and *Audita tremendi* in 1187.³¹ First, Innocent's proclamation was not in response to a specific setback in the East, such as the fall of Edessa or the loss of Jerusalem. Second, *Post miserabile* contains a great deal of organizational instructions, foreshadowing the administrative and bureaucratic contributions that Innocent would make to the crusading movement. Finally, this encyclical was unique in its extensive detail about crusade privileges. While Cole offered little explanation for this development, the pope's recent efforts to settle Richard's still unresolved complaint about the violation of his own crusader privileges surely influenced the inclusion and detailed discussion of this topic in the encyclical.

Richard's influence on *Post miserabile* was even more clearly manifest in other elements of the encyclical. After commencing with a description of the current plight of the Holy Land, *Post miserabile* called attention to the behavior of Europe's rulers. "And while they persecute each other in turn with inexorable hatred, while one strives to avenge his injuries against the other, none is moved by the injury to the Crucified One. They are not paying attention to how our enemies now insult us."³² Though not singled out by name, the pontiff was clearly referring to the current dispute between Richard and Philip. The letter continues to make allusions to the past crusading performance of these monarchs. This time, however, Innocent utilized the rhetorical device of reporting alleged Muslim taunts, which deride the Christians for their failure to undo recent Muslim victories:

²⁷ Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 130.

²⁸ For analysis of the letter containing Richard's congratulatory remarks see C.R. Cheney and W.H. Semple, eds., *Selected Letters of Pope Innocent III concerning England* (New York, 1953), p. 10. n. 4.

²⁹ Brundage, *Richard Lion Heart*, p. 232.

³⁰ *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris, 1844–55), ccxvi, 1001.

³¹ Penny Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1095–1270* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 81–3.

³² Innocent III, *Register*, 1:336, p. 500: "Et dum se invicem inexorabili odio persecuntur, dum unus in alium suas nititur iniurias vindicare, non est quem moveat iniuria Crucifixi, non attendentibus ipsis, quod iam insultant nobis inimici nostri dicentes."

Already we have weakened and shattered the spears of the French, we have crushed the efforts of the English... In fact your kings and princes, whom we drove out of the lands of the East a little while ago, they disguise their fear by acting boldly, returning to their hiding places, we will not say 'kingdoms', they prefer to fight each other in turn than to experience once more our might and power.³³

In the first part, the ineffective efforts of the knights of the Third Crusade are recalled. In the second, the "Muslims" specifically mock the leaders of the campaign – that is, Richard and Philip – not only for their unsuccessful crusade, but also for preferring to make war against each other because their foes in the Levant are too powerful for them. Innocent thus makes a second reference to the conflict between the two monarchs, underscoring how it is an obstacle to the new crusade.

Scholars sometimes point to Innocent's criticism of Europe's rulers in *Post miserabile* as further evidence of the pope's opposition to royal involvement in the crusade.³⁴ However, the mocking tone that Innocent employed – under the pretext of describing the purported jeers of the infidel – had a very specific purpose: that of shaming in order to provoke a desired response.³⁵ The Muslims in the letter clearly ridicule the failure of the Third Crusade, the campaign that Richard commanded. One would be remiss to interpret this as gratuitous humiliation of a secular rival, especially in light of the good relationship that Innocent had been cultivating with the English king. Rather, it is better understood as a reminder that Richard's crusading work remained unfinished – a view that the king himself appears to have held.

One might reasonably wonder why, if Innocent sought Richard's involvement, he did not issue a direct call or invitation to the king. The failure of the Third Crusade was rooted in the quarrelling of the leaders, with factionalism and jealousy often hindering the crusaders from fully capitalizing on their victories and launching large-scale joint operations.³⁶ With the new crusade coming only six years after the last major expedition, the problem of disunity was still fresh in the pope's mind. Jonathan Riley-Smith has suggested that, in not directly addressing the monarchs, Innocent "was not passing over kings, whom he wanted to participate... but he was implying that they would have no greater say in planning than any other crusader."³⁷ More importantly, such a move conflicted with the "hierarchical ideas [that] formed

³³ Ibid.: "Iam infirmavimus et confregimus astas Gallorum, Anglorum conatus elisimus... Reges enim et principes vestri, quos dudum de terra fugavimus Orientis, ut timorem suum audendo dissimulent, ad suas latebras, ne dicamus regna, reversi, malunt se invicem expugnare quam denuo vires nostras et potentiam experiri."

³⁴ Mayer, *The Crusades*, p. 197, "But in any case the pope was not anxious to see kings taking part because in his proclamation he emphasized the failure of the nationally organized crusades."

³⁵ Brenda Bolton, "'Serpent in the Dust: Sparrow on the Housetop: Attitudes to Jerusalem and the Holy Land in the Circle of Pope Innocent III,'" *Studies in Church History* 36 (2000), p. 159.

³⁶ For a discussion of the bickering among the leaders, see Michael Markowski, "Richard Lionheart: Bad King, Bad Crusader?," *Journal of Medieval History* 23 (1997), pp. 351–65.

³⁷ Riley-Smith, *The Crusades*, p. 121.

the basis of Innocent's attitude towards the conduct of a crusade.³⁸ As leader of Christendom, Innocent believed that this holy enterprize should be guided to some extent by him. Such an outlook did not eliminate the participation of kings; it just clearly defined the role which they could play.

Innocent intimated in *Post miserabile* what the role of kings would be in this new crusade, once again revisiting the subject of the struggle between the English and French monarchs. When describing his selection of cardinals Soffredo and Peter Capuano as his special assistants in mustering support for this crusade, Innocent explained that he was also dispatching the latter "to our most beloved sons in Christ, the illustrious kings of France and England, for the purpose of reestablishing peace or, at least, a five-year truce and for the purpose of exhorting the people to the service of the Crucified One."³⁹ Three different references in this crusading letter to the struggle between Richard and Philip underscore how critical this situation was to the pope, who was clearly linking its resolution with the success of the crusade. Moreover, by entrusting his legate Peter Capuano with the dual duty of preaching the crusade and reconciling the rival monarchs, Innocent was recalling a policy that he had initially proposed in his letter of May 30 to Richard.

The prospects for a successful reconciliation between Richard and Philip were poor. Since Richard's release from captivity in 1194, these two enemies had broken at least two treaties and exhausted several provisional truces without securing a durable peace agreement. Perhaps in anticipation of the papally mandated negotiations, Richard and Philip had already arranged before the arrival of the legate a temporary truce in November, which was to last until St. Hilary's Day (13 January 1199).⁴⁰ Thus when Capuano arrived in Normandy in late December, a long-term treaty was not as unattainable a goal as it might have seemed when Innocent first proclaimed the new crusade.⁴¹

In mid-January 1199, the legate met with both kings at a conference near the Seine to discuss peace terms.⁴² Citing his present military advantage, Richard explained that he was willing to make peace and forgo compensation for the injuries that Philip had inflicted, only if his French adversary would restore all the lands he had seized while Richard had been in the Holy Land and in captivity.⁴³ The cardinal purportedly tried to persuade Richard to be more flexible in his stance, reminding him, "What a sin and a shame is this great war between you two kings. The holy

³⁸ Sayers, *Innocent III: Leader of Europe 1198–1216*, p. 166.

³⁹ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:360, p. 502: "ad karissimorum in Christo filiorum nostrorum Francorum et Anglorum regum illustrium presentiam destinamus ad reformandam pacem vel treugas saltem usque ad quinquennium ordinandas et exhortandos populos ad obsequium Crucifixi."

⁴⁰ Howden, *Chronica*, iv, p. 68.

⁴¹ Rigord, *Gesta Philippi Augusti Francorum Regis in Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde, vol. 1 (Paris, 1882), pp. 143–44.

⁴² Howden, *Chronica*, iv, p. 80.

⁴³ *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*, ed. P. Meyer (Paris, 1891–1901), vol. 3, pp. 151–57. For the passages given in direct speech, like Gillingham, I have taken advantage of the translation of the old French in Jessie Crosland, *William the Marshal* (London, 1962), pp. 78–81.

war of Jerusalem will be lost if it goes on. For the sake of Our Lord, find some way to end it before Jerusalem is taken and Christendom lost.” Apparently the legate was not as skilled as Innocent was in the delicate technique of royal shaming, for Richard is said to have exploded, “If it had not been for [Philip’s] malice, forcing me to return, I would have been able to recover the whole of Outremer. Then, when I was in prison, he conspired to keep me there so he could steal my lands!”⁴⁴ To Richard it was preposterous to negotiate a peace settlement to facilitate the new crusade as long as Philip held land and castles that he had taken in violation of the former’s crusader privileges. Nevertheless, Richard ultimately consented to a five-year truce.⁴⁵

Why Richard agreed to the truce is unclear. He had the upper hand in this round of hostilities with Philip. Perhaps it was Innocent’s threat of putting both kingdoms under interdict if the two kings failed to make peace.⁴⁶ According to the *Gesta Innocentii* Richard was brought into line when Capuano reiterated the possibility of ecclesiastical penalties.⁴⁷ Maybe the legate successfully appealed to Richard’s interest in the welfare of the Holy Land. Roger of Wendover, writing more than thirty years after the fact, suggested that the truce was desirable because it would enable the two kings to fulfill their uncompleted crusade vows.⁴⁸ Perhaps most telling was the truce itself, which seems to have enabled Richard to regain nearly all of the disputed lands except for the castle of Gisors.⁴⁹

Several letters from the pope in the spring of 1199 indicate that he was quite pleased that this essential component in his preparations for the new crusade had been finally realized. In a letter dated 26 March to Philip Augustus, Innocent approved the five-year truce.⁵⁰ At the beginning of April the pope dispatched two letters to Capuano, reiterating his approval of the treaty and congratulating the legate for securing this crucial prerequisite for the new crusade.⁵¹

Whether Richard intended to participate in the new crusade, now that he had regained his former lands and established a five-year truce with his main rival, cannot be known. The king’s death due to a crossbow bolt wound on 6 April 1199 makes his intentions a mystery. More importantly, his untimely death threw the

⁴⁴ Crosland, pp. 79–80.

⁴⁵ Howden, *Chronica*, iv, p. 80.

⁴⁶ Innocent III, *Register*, 1:355, pp. 530–32. This warning was conveyed in a letter written in August 1198, sometime after the promulgation of *Post miserabile*. The pope sent a copy to both monarchs.

⁴⁷ *Gesta Innocentii* in *Patrologia Latina*, ccxiv, 47.

⁴⁸ Roger of Wendover, *Flowers of History*, trans. J.A. Giles (London, 1849), p. 176. The gap between the actual events and the writing of this chronicle has made some scholars extremely skeptical about the reliability of this source for the reign of Richard I. John Gillingham, “The Unromantic Death of Richard I,” *Speculum* 54 (1979), pp. 36–37, argues that his testimony on events relating to the last years of Richard’s reign should be taken more seriously, in part because of the close relationship between St. Albans and the English king during this period. Perhaps Wendover’s comment is mainly useful in showing how some contemporaries considered Richard’s crusading vow unfulfilled.

⁴⁹ Howden, *Chronica*, iv, pp. 80–81.

⁵⁰ Innocent III, *Register*, 2:24, pp. 33–34.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2:23, pp. 32–33; 2:25, p. 35. The second letter is dated 3 April 1199.

recruitment for the campaign into disarray. Innocent had originally designated March 1199 as the mustering date for the new crusade, but little headway had been made by then as the pope had only confirmed the truce between Richard and Philip at the end of that month. The crusade floundered for another eight months until 28 November 1199 when Count Thibaut of Champagne, Count Louis of Blois, and others at a tournament in Ecry committed themselves to the upcoming crusade.⁵² In December the pope issued a new encyclical, which called for a fortieth tax on all ecclesiastical property to help fund the crusade.⁵³ Here Innocent may have been imitating Richard and other rulers who enacted taxes to underwrite their crusades.⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that this tax – reminiscent of Richard’s Saladin tithe for the Third Crusade – was levied only when there was little likelihood that the rulers of Europe would be participating in the new crusade.

Even from the grave Richard continued to affect the forming crusade. Two of the first barons to take the cross at Ecry were Louis of Blois and Thibaut of Champagne – Richard’s nephews who had fought with him against Philip. Hugh of St. Pol and Geoffrey of Perche, who also had supported the English king, soon followed with their own crusading vows.⁵⁵ Baldwin of Flanders, who took the cross in February 1200, was probably Richard’s most important ally during his battles with Philip.⁵⁶ Referring to the affiliation that these prominent members of the Fourth Crusade had with the late king, Runciman wryly remarked, “Many of these barons were moved less by piety than by a wish to acquire new lands far away from the disciplinary activity of King Philip Augustus.”⁵⁷ The chronicler William the Breton perceived this connection as well, observing how “Count Baldwin of Flanders and the others who revolted from King Philip signed themselves with the cross.”⁵⁸ They may have been “eager to finish the work of Richard I in the East” but they were probably

⁵² Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and trans. E. Faral, *Les classiques de l’histoire de France au moyen âge* 18–19, 2 vols. (Paris, 1938–9), 1:4–6.

⁵³ Innocent III, *Register*, 2:258 (270); Mayer, *The Crusades*, pp. 197–98.

⁵⁴ James M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–1221* (Philadelphia, 1986), pp. 6–7.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 1:12–14; John Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (New York, 1978), pp. 270–71.

⁵⁶ Geoffrey of Villehardouin, 1:10–12. On the career of Baldwin of Flanders, see Robert Lee Wolff, “Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172–1225,” *Speculum* 27 (1952), 281–322.

⁵⁷ Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3:93.

⁵⁸ William the Breton, *Gesta Philippi Augusti in Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde, vol. 1 (Paris, 1882), p. 205: “Comes Flandrie et alii qui defecerant regi Philippo cruce se signant.” William later mentions the connection between certain French barons taking the cross in conjunction with the death of Richard, p. 211: “Interea Flandrensis, Blesensis, Perticensis, comites, et alii proceus qui Philippo regi domino suo defecerant, videntes se per mortem Richardi Regis auxilio et consilio destitutos, cruce assumpta.” For other contemporary chroniclers who note this connection, though not as strongly as William did, see Ernoul and Bernard le Trésorier, *Chronique*, ed. Louis de Mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), p. 337; Rigord, *Gesta Philippi Augusti Francorum Regis in Oeuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton*, ed. H.F. Delaborde, vol. 1 (Paris, 1882), p. 143.

also eager to escape the wrath of Philip Augustus after the death of their key ally.⁵⁹ Moreover, in choosing Egypt as the target of their forthcoming expedition, they were following in the footsteps of Richard who had championed this strategy during his crusade. Ironically, while Richard's death encouraged the participation of his former French vassals, it probably impeded any significant English involvement in the Fourth Crusade, since the nobles of that realm were preoccupied protecting their tenuous positions during the reign of his brother, John.⁶⁰

The claim that Innocent III did not want the participation of kings in the Fourth Crusade needs to be laid to rest. Clearly, the pope desired the involvement of royalty – especially that of the most famous crusader of the era – under the right circumstances and according to his hierarchical view of crusading. By March 1199, the conditions that Richard described on his release from captivity now existed for him to make his promised return to the East. His unexpected death ended that possibility. Yet even after his death, Richard continued to influence the development of the Fourth Crusade, as his continental allies in the fight against Philip were now the leaders of the campaign, and his crusading strategies served as a model for the war plans. The possibility of the Lionheart's involvement in the Fourth Crusade led the great Anglo-Norman historian Sir Maurice Powicke to muse, "The thought of Richard before Constantinople makes the heart leap."⁶¹ Had Richard lived, though, one wonders if the crusade would have been derailed to Constantinople in the first place. What is certain is that prior to the pivotal involvement of Venice (the 'Lion City') in the Fourth Crusade, it was Richard the Lionheart in both life and death who had a decisive impact upon the early evolution of that fateful campaign.

⁵⁹ Thomas F. Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore, 2003), p. 121; Donald Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 211–12, n. 47, do not believe that these French barons took the cross in order to escape punishment from Philip Augustus for supporting Richard. While they are certainly right to underscore the religious motivations of these nobles, the common agreement among the chroniclers on this point and the political realities of the period strongly suggest that their unfavorable position with the French king was also a significant factor in their going on crusade.

⁶⁰ For impediments to English participation in the Fourth Crusade, see Beatrice Siedschlag, *English Participation in the Crusades, 1150–1220* (Menasha, Wis., 1939), p. 75; Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095–1588* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 95–96.

⁶¹ F.M. Powicke, *The Loss of Normandy 1189–1204*, 2nd ed. (London, 1961), p. 105.

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Venise et son arrière-pays au temps de la Quatrième Croisade

Pierre Racine

Venise est pour l'heure la cité du monde la plus belle et la plus agréable, pleine de beauté et de tout bien; les marchandises accourent dans cette noble cité, comme l'eau des fontaines... De tout lieu arrivent marchandises et marchands qui achètent les marchandises qu'ils préfèrent et les font porter dans leur pays. On peut trouver en cette ville abondance de nourriture, pain et vin, volaille et oiseaux de rivière, viande fraîche et salée, les grands poissons de mer et de rivière; les marchands de tout pays y vendent et achètent, ... (s'y rencontrent) des changeurs et citoyens de tout métier, des nefes pour faire transport en tout lieu, des galées pour faire tort aux ennemis.¹

Cette description empruntée à Martin da Canal, dans les *Estoires de Venise*, écrite dans les années 1270, pouvait déjà s'appliquer à la Venise des années 1200, à la veille de la quatrième Croisade. Venise était dès le XIIe siècle un grand emporion, au fond de l'Adriatique, dont l'arrière pays s'était considérablement étendu entre le IXe et le XIIe siècle, parallèlement au bel essor urbain qui s'était manifesté dans le nord de la péninsule depuis le Xe siècle.² Quel rôle a pu jouer un arrière-pays, qu'il conviendra de dessiner, pour participer de la décision des Vénitiens de détourner la Croisade sur Constantinople, telle est la question que nous voudrions poser dans notre intervention.

L'arrière-pays du port de Venise répond à la fin du XIIe siècle à un double critère: d'une part, satisfaire les besoins d'une ville sur l'eau (Venise *surgit de la mer*, dit Martin da Canal); d'autre part, disposer de marchandises d'échange pour trafiquer en Méditerranée orientale, soit à Constantinople, soit à Alexandrie et par ailleurs dans les ports de Terre Sainte. L'auteur des *Honorancie civitatis Papie* pouvait dire au Xe siècle que *cette nation ni ne laboure, ni ne sème, ni ne vendange*,³ et c'était pour lui un grand étonnement. Il était donc indispensable pour les Vénitiens de se procurer les denrées alimentaires dans un arrière-pays où elles

¹ Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise*, *Civiltà veneriana*. Fonti e studi XII, ed. A. Limentani (Florence, 1972), p. 4: "Venise, qui est orendroit la plus belle et la plus plaisant dou siecle, plaine de beauté et de tos biens; les marchandises i corent par cele noble cité, come fait l'eive des fontaines... De tos lieus vient marchandies et marcheans, qui achatent les marchandies de quel maniere que il veulent et les font condurre en lor país. L'en treuve dedens cele ville la vitaille en grant planté, le pain et le vin, les gelines et oisaus de rivere et la char fresche et salee et le grant poisson de mer et de funs; les marchans de tos país qui vendent et achatent... Li chanjor des meshailles et citains de tos metiers... Les nes por conduire en tos leus et les galies por domager lor enemis."

² R. Fossier, *Enfance de l'Europe* (Paris, 1982), pp. 987-98.

³ C. Bruhl and C. Violante, *Die Honorancie civitatis Papie* (Cologne-Vienna, 1983), p. 18.

étaient échangées contre une denrée vitale dont ils disposaient, le sel.⁴ La plaine du Pô, jusqu'à Pavie, où s'est affirmée à partir du VIII^e siècle une reprise économique fondée sur l'agriculture, a constitué le premier arrière-pays indispensable à la survie des Vénitiens.⁵ Blé et vin voire huile du lac de Garde et de la plaine (l'olivier y subsiste jusqu'en 1230) ont afflué à Venise depuis Milan et Pavie, grâce notamment à la voie fluviale, sur laquelle ces produits circulaient commodément malgré les péages seigneuriaux qui en grevaient le coût.⁶ Les Vénitiens ont eu tôt besoin que ne puisse être entravée la circulation sur le fleuve, en concluant par exemple des accords avec les Communes, et dans le cas de l'Adige avec celle de Vérone.⁷ Le passage clé de la navigation padane à Ferrare pour le contrôle des marchandises en direction de Venise ne pouvait manquer d'attirer l'attention des Vénitiens.⁸ Il en est résulté pour les Vénitiens une politique d'équilibre parfois difficile à tenir avec les Communes lombardes, notamment au temps de Frédéric Barberousse.⁹ Ils étaient assurément désireux d'assurer leur ravitaillement dans l'arrière-pays padan, mais ils entendaient aussi ne pas heurter l'empereur, étant donné leurs relations avec les pays germaniques.¹⁰ Ce sont eux qui au lendemain de la défaite de Frédéric Barberousse à Legnano ont ainsi facilité l'entente entre le pape et l'empereur.¹¹

⁴ J.C. Hocquet, *Le sel et la fortune de Venise*, vol. 1, *Production et monopole* (Lille, 1978); M. Mollat, "Aux origines de la précocité économique et sociale de Venise: l'exploitation du sel," *La Venezia del Mille* (Florence, 1965), pp. 183–203.

⁵ L.M. Hartmann, *Zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Italiens im Frühmittelalter Analekten* (Gotha, 1904); G. Cherubini, *Le campagne italiane dall'XI al XV secolo* (Bari, 1996), chapter 1.

⁶ P. Racine, "Poteri medievali e percorso fluviale nell'Italia padana," *Quaderni storici (Vie di comunicazione e potere)*, 61 (1986), pp. 9–32.

⁷ Le premier traité de réciprocité entre Vérone et Venise date de 1107: le texte en a été publié par C. Cipolla, "Note di storia veronese," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, 15 (1898), pp. 294–99; pour le texte vénitien et du même auteur *Scritti*, t. 2, Vérone, 2 vol. (Verona, 1978), t. 2, pp. 569–74 pour le texte véronais. A. Schaub, *Handelsgeschichte der romanischen Völker des Mittelmeergebiets bis zum Ende der Kreuzzüge* (Munich, 1906) souligne p. 696, n. 4 les imperfections de l'édition. Le texte du traité d'assistance judiciaire de 1175 entre les deux villes a été publié par C. Cipolla, dans *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, 10 (1895), p. 481. Un nouvel accord a été signé en 1193 qui a fait l'objet d'un commentaire de C. Cipolla, "Intorno alla carta del 1193 che regolava le relazioni di carattere privato tra Venezia e Veronesi," *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 40 (1907), pp. 349–54. Sur ces traités voir G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich* (Tubingen, 1982), pp. 115–17.

⁸ En 1177, Ferrare s'engage à assurer la liberté de transit par le Pô pour tous les marchands en renonçant au droit de repréailler: A.S. Minotto, *Acta et diplomata e R. tabulario Veneto chronologico ordine ac principum rerum ratione inde a recessione tempore usque ad medium saeculum XIV summatim regesta*, 4 vols. (Venice, 1870), t. 3/1, p. 5.

⁹ Les Vénitiens ont adhéré en 1167 à la Ligue lombarde, mais ils n'ont jamais délégué de représentants aux réunions des recteurs de la Ligue. Comptait pour eux le fait de conjurer le péril que pouvait représenter Frédéric Barberousse pour la cité, mais aussi la menace que faisait peser Manuel Comnène qui en 1171 s'en prend aux marchands vénitiens et qui pousse Ancône contre Venise: cf. P. Classen, "La politica di Manuele Comneno tra Federico Barbarossa e le città italiane," in *Popolo e stato in Italia nell'età di Federico Barbarossa* (Alexandria, 1970), pp. 263–79.

¹⁰ G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich*, p. 22.

¹¹ P. Brezzi, "La pace di Venezia del 1177 e le relazioni tra la repubblica, il papato e l'imperatore," in *Venezia dalla prima Crociata alla conquista di Costantinopolo del 1204*, Storia della civiltà veneziana, 3 (Florence, 1966), pp. 51–70.

L'essor urbain de l'arrière-pays lombard, entendu au sens de l'ensemble de la plaine du Pô, a pu cependant continuer à livrer toutes les denrées alimentaires requises par la population vénitienne, mais au fur et à mesure qu'avance le siècle diminuent les fournitures.¹² Les gouvernements communaux ont pris en main une politique de bonification ou de conquête de terres nouvelles pour répondre aux besoins de leur propre population. Ce fut le cas notamment de Vérone,¹³ mais dans tout l'arrière-pays un vaste mouvement de défrichement s'est poursuivi afin de pourvoir les nouvelles populations urbaines, qui affluaient du contado. Les surplus dont disposait l'arrière-pays se sont restreints de telle sorte que le gouvernement vénitien a été contraint de s'adresser à d'autres régions pour assurer le ravitaillement de la ville. Il s'est alors tourné vers l'Italie méridionale, la Pouille particulièrement, en concluant des accords avec les souverains normands de Sicile, élargissant du même coup son arrière-pays jusqu'au sud de l'Adriatique,¹⁴ mer dont par ailleurs il entend qu'elle soit dégagée de tout obstacle pour la circulation de ses navires en direction de la Méditerranée orientale. Les contrats de *colleganza* ou de prêt maritime pour la Pouille et Messine en attestent dans les années 1180 et 1190.¹⁵

Se nourrir était l'une des bases essentielle sur laquelle s'était ainsi fondé le trafic vénitien tant vers la Lombardie que vers le royaume sicilien, base plus lointaine mais non moins indispensable pour la ville. Le sel a été longtemps du côté vénitien le produit de base de cette activité.¹⁶ Si longtemps les villes éloignées de Milan et de Pavie ont figuré parmi les clientes de Venise, à la fin du XIIe siècle la concurrence gênoise a amené dans la Lombardie le sel des salines ligures.¹⁷ Par ailleurs Parme et Plaisance se sont disputé le sel des salines de Salsomaggiore, proches des deux villes, souvent en conflit à ce sujet.¹⁸ Le monopole vénitien du sel n'est donc plus aussi évident à la fin du XIIe siècle, d'autant que les Vénitiens doivent subir la

¹² G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich*, pp. 145–52.

¹³ A. Castagnetti, "Primi aspetti di politica annonaria nell'Italia comunale: la bonifica della *palus communis Verone* (1194–99)," *Studi Medievali* (1974), pp. 363–481. A. Castagnetti, "La conquista del suolo e la regolamentazione delle acque," in *Verona e l'Adige*, ed. G. Boreli (Verona, 1977), pp. 71–88.

¹⁴ Un premier traité a été signé entre la république de Venise et le souverain normand sicilien en 1154: Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* (Venice, 1854), t. 1, n. LVI, p. 135. Un nouveau traité est passé pour vingt ans en 1175: *Ibid.*, n. LXIV, p. 171 et n. LXVI, p. 174 pour préciser les droits des Vénitiens dans le royaume. Ces traités ont assurément un aspect politique important dans le cadre des relations de Venise et dans celui concernant leur position dans l'Adriatique, mais ils leur assurent des positions commerciales non négligeables.

¹⁵ R. Morozzo Della Rocca and A. Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XII e XIII*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1940), t. 1, n. 337 (colleganza pour Messine en 1183), n. 377 (colleganza pour Messine en 1190), n. 391 (trafic en Pouille en 1190), n. 397 (trafic en Pouille en 1190), n. 409 (colleganza en 1192), n. 437 (colleganza pour la Pouille et la Grèce en 1195), n. 441 (colleganza pour Aquilée et la Pouille en 1198).

¹⁶ See footnote 4.

¹⁷ Du sel gênois et ligure arrive à Milan à la fin du XIIe siècle, comme du sel d'Hyères: Y. Malartic, "Le commerce du sel d'Hyères en Ligurie du XIIIe au XVe siècle," in *1er Congrès Provence-Ligurie* (Vintimille-Bordighera, 1964).

¹⁸ P. Racine, "Le sel des plaines du Pô: Salsomaggiore entre les communes de Parme et Plaisance (XIIe–XIIIe siècle)," in *Le sel et son histoire* (Nancy, 1981), pp. 51–65.

concurrence des salines de Ravenne et de Cervia.¹⁹ Mais si le sel ne joue plus le rôle essentiel de produit d'échange, d'autres produits sont alors requis dans l'arrière-pays lombard, liés à l'industrialisation accélérée des milieux urbains.

La date d'apparition de l'industrie cotonnière au sein de la chaîne de villes qui s'étend de l'embouchure du fleuve à Pavie n'est pas connue. Dès la première moitié du XIIe siècle, elle est attestée dans une ville comme Plaisance.²⁰ Or là encore, comme pour le sel, s'est esquissée une concurrence entre les deux ports fournisseurs de matière première. Les Gênois ont ravitaillé la zone occidentale de la plaine, Plaisance, Milan et Pavie, voire même à l'occasion Crémone. En fait cette dernière ville était celle où se rencontrait l'influence des deux grands ports.²¹ De Venise à Crémone s'exerçait ainsi la prépondérance vénitienne pour la fourniture des ateliers textiles de villes comme Padoue et Vérone ou Vicence en coton. Avec le coton, base de production des étoffes dites futaines, objets d'exportation en direction de l'Orient méditerranéen, il était nécessaire de disposer de produits colorants, importés des pays orientaux, et surtout d'alun pour la fixation des couleurs.²² Il est bien connu que les gens du Moyen Age étaient friands de tissus colorés.²³ Alun et coton, comme les produits colorants, que Pagolotti introduit au XIVe siècle dans sa *Pratica di Mercatura* parmi les épices.²⁴ provenaient de Constantinople ou d'Alexandrie. C'est ainsi tout un commerce de transit qui s'est organisé autour de Venise, avec l'importation d'Orient de la matière première industrielle et l'exportation de produits fabriqués. Les denrées alimentaires, comme le sel, gardaient certes leur importance pour les relations avec l'arrière-pays "Lombard", mais leur place avait notablement reculé dans l'activité commerciale du port devant celle prise par les produits liés à l'activité industrielle en plein essor des milieux urbains de l'Italie septentrionale.

Si le coton était devenu au cours du XIIe siècle la matière première principale de l'activité industrielle du nord de l'Italie, il était mêlé au lin pour les futaines de grande qualité et au lin et au chanvre pour celles de moindre importance. Des tissus de laine passaient aussi par le port de Venise, mais en provenance des pays

¹⁹ G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich*, pp. 133–35.

²⁰ En fait foi la première partie des *Statuta antiqua mercatorum Placentiae*, ed. P. Racine and P. Castignoli (Milan, 1967) et surtout l'acte par lequel la commune de Gênes rembourse en 1154 un prêt de la commune de Plaisance de 1147 où figurent dans le texte de l'acte des marchandises pour la somme de 8510 livres 10 deniers coton, alun, indigo, bois de brésil et encens: C. Imperiale of Sant' Angelo, *Codice diplomatico di Genova*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1936–40), t. 1, n. 257, p. 307.

²¹ F. Borlandi, "Futainiers et futaines dans l'Italie du Moyen Age," *Eventail de l'histoire vivante. Hommage à L. Febvre*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1953), t. 2, pp. 133–40. P. Racine, "A propos de l'hinterland de Venise au XIIIe siècle," *Byzantinische Forschungen (Hommage à F. Thiriet)*, Band XII (1987), pp. 539–56.

²² M. Fennel Mazzaoui, *The Italian Cotton Industry in the later Middle Ages, 1100–1600* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), donne les informations les plus sûres sur les étoffes à base de coton.

²³ M. Pastoureau, *Jésus chez le teinturier. Couleurs et teintures dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1998).

²⁴ F.B. Pegolotti, *Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 293–300.

du Nord, sans que nous puissions en chiffrer l'importance.²⁵ Or, c'est par Ferrare que les draps flamands parvenaient particulièrement à Venise, là encore pour un trafic de transit.²⁶ Des foires bisannuelles se tenaient à Ferrare, où affluaient des marchandises apportées par des marchands venus des foires de Champagne.²⁷ Sur ces foires, qui sont entrées en concurrence avec celles de Pavie qui avaient connu leur heure de gloire au Xe siècle, comme le révèle le fameux texte des *Honorancie civitatis Papie*, les Vénitiens vendaient les soieries qu'ils s'étaient procuré en Orient, notamment à Constantinople ou dans les ports syriens.²⁸ La situation de Ferrare, à l'endroit où le fleuve se divise en plusieurs bras, était d'une importance primordiale pour le commerce fluvial et Venise pouvait craindre que la ville ne devienne une concurrente dangereuse pour son trafic de transit, par le contrôle qu'elle était appelée à jouer sur la zone aval de la vallée fluviale. Ce n'est d'ailleurs pas sans raison qu'une ville comme Plaisance conclut en 1181, au lendemain de la paix de Venise, un accord commercial avec Ferrare.²⁹ De son côté, Crémone obtient l'exemption complète des droits de douane à Ferrare pour les marchandises se dirigeant vers Venise, comme le révèle un règlement douanier de 1228, mais remontant à une date antérieure que nous ne connaissons pas, qui devrait se situer vraisemblablement à la fin du XIIe siècle.³⁰ Il importait au gouvernement vénitien d'imposer son contrôle sur un port fluvial de transbordement qui risquait d'entraver ses relations avec un arrière-pays, client et fournisseur de produits d'exportation.

Sur les foires de Ferrare affluent par ailleurs à la fin du XIIe siècle des marchands allemands venus de la région du lac de Constance et de la Suisse alémanique, qui livrent des toiles relativement grossières, mais qui donnent lieu à un certain trafic tant vers la Lombardie que vers Venise.³¹ Ces marchands, d'autre part, qui passaient par des routes encore mal individualisées, étaient par ailleurs liés à un double trafic qui approvisionnait les marchands vénitiens en produits dont ils se servaient pour leur trafic en Orient: bois et métaux, plus particulièrement fer et argent. Pour le bois, Venise, qui en faisait grande consommation pour la fabrication des vaisseaux, pouvait compter sur les trains de bois qui descendaient par l'Adige ou les fleuves côtiers, Piave et Brenta, des forêts alpines. Ainsi était approvisionné l'Arsenal, concurrentement avec le bois venu de Dalmatie. L'arrière-pays en était venu à s'étendre sur la vallée de l'Adige jusqu'au col du Brenner, comme aussi

²⁵ Des marchands de Venise fréquentaient les foires de Champagne et sur les foires de Ferrare arrivaient grâce à des marchands lombards des draps flamands: cf. footnote 27 below.

²⁶ Les foires de Ferrare n'ont malheureusement jusqu'à ce jour pas fait l'objet d'une étude systématique.

²⁷ G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich*, pp. 130–31.

²⁸ Un traité de 1191 avait été conclu entre Venise et Ferrare, réglant notamment les problèmes juridiques concernant les marchands vénitiens: B. Ghetti, *I patti tra Venezia e Ferrara dal 1191 al 1313* (Rome, 1906), p. 91.

²⁹ *Il Registrum Magnum del Comune di Piacenza*, ed. E. Falconi and R. Peveri, 5 vols. (Milan, 1984–97), t. 1, n. 215.

³⁰ L.A. Muratori, *Antiquitates Italiae Medii Aevi*, 6 vols. (Milan, 1738–42; repr. Bologne, 1965), t. 2, p. 29.

³¹ G. Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich*, p. 121.

sur les routes qui par le Frioul gagnaient la Styrie et l'Istrie.³² La côte dalmate et l'Istrie demeuraient des zones qu'entendaient contrôler les Vénitiens, car, outre le bois, malgré les interdictions pontificales, ces zones continuaient à approvisionner un certain commerce d'esclaves, certes en déclin, mais qui n'en gardait pas moins son intérêt pour eux à la fin du XIIe siècle.³³

Les routes frioulanes comme celles balkaniques débouchant sur l'Adriatique étaient pour les Vénitiens d'une grande importance pour le trafic des métaux, ressource essentielle pour les Vénitiens dans leurs échanges vers l'Orient méditerranéen.³⁴ De nouvelles mines d'argent avaient été découvertes en Allemagne au XIIe siècle et leur exploitation en fut notablement améliorée grâce à des procédés d'exploitation nouveaux, comme aussi dans les pays balkaniques.³⁵ L'argent était un métal dont se servaient largement les Vénitiens pour solder leurs achats en Méditerranée orientale, encore convenait-il que sa livraison en fut facilitée. Les Musulmans en étaient demandeurs et le métal entraînait largement dans les échanges entre Venise et Alexandrie, où en contre-partie les Vénitiens trouvaient un autre métal dont manquait cruellement l'Occident, le cuivre.³⁶ L'arrière-pays était appelé à devenir notablement plus large que le simple hinterland péninsulaire pour s'étendre sur les côtes dalmates, en complément de celui proprement italien, là où débouchaient les routes balkaniques, à Zara, Raguse, sans compter l'Istrie. Là encore se retrouve la part capitale jouée par l'Adriatique, dont les Vénitiens entendaient être maîtres. Aussi ne pouvaient-ils tolérer la concurrence d'Ancone, que l'empereur tenta un temps de dresser contre Venise, et surtout il leur était difficile d'admettre qu'Anconen ne vienne à s'entremettre dans le trafic du coton.³⁷

Si Ancone demeurait pour Venise une rivale dangereuse à la fin du XIIe siècle, l'Adriatique demeurait pour la Sérénissime une mer faisant partie sinon dans son intégralité du moins dans sa majeure partie du moins le complément naturel et indispensable de son arrière-pays continental.³⁸ Sel, denrées alimentaires, bois, métaux, contribuent à donner au port de Venise des produits essentiels à son trafic.

³² Ibid., pp. 31–46. Venise a eu soin de conclure des accords avec les empereurs et les représentants de l'Empire dans ces régions.

³³ G. Luzzatto, "Capitale e lavoro nel commercio veneziano dei secoli XI e XII," in Luzzatto, *Studi di storia economica veneziana* (Padua, 1954), pp. 95–105.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 92–93.

³⁵ G. Fourquin, *Histoire économique de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1973), p. 140.

³⁶ G. Rösch, "Lo sviluppo mercantile," in *Storia di Venezia* (Venice, 1995), t. 2, p. 146.

³⁷ Sur le siège d'Ancone en 1173, voir le texte de Boncompagni, *Liber de obsidione Ancone*, ed. G.C. Zimolo (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores VI/3*) et les études de A. Carile, "Federico Barbarossa, i Veneziani e l'assedio di Ancona nel 1173," *Studi veneziani*, XVI (1974), pp. 3–31 et de P. Schreiner, "Der Dux von Dalmatien und die Belagerung Anconas im Jahre 1173. "Zur Italien und Balkanpolitik Manuels I," *Byzantion*, XLI (1971), pp. 285–311. Sur l'histoire de la ville et ses relations avec Venise, cf. R. Cessi, *La repubblica di Venezia e il problema adriatico* (Naples, 1953) et J.F. Leonard, *Die Seestadt Ancona im Spätmittelalter*, Bibliothek des deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 55 (Tübingen, 1983), pp. 72–85.

³⁸ *Voirs est que la mer Adrians est de le duchet de Venise*: Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise*, p. 332. Al Idrîsi appelle l'Adriatique *le golfe de Venise*: Idrîsi, *La première géographie de l'Occident*, présentation par H. Bresc and A. Nef (Paris, 1999), pp. 6, 344, 371, 384.

De l'Istrie à la région des Marches, toute la côte est sous contrôle vénitien, comme la Dalmatie et la Pouille font désormais partie d'un arrière-pays où la circulation maritime autant que le trafic commercial entrent dans le désir des Vénitiens de protéger leurs intérêts. Un port comme Zara livrait à Venise des produits alimentaires et Raguse était le point d'arrivée des routes balkaniques par où arrivaient argent et métaux des Balkans ainsi que des peaux et de la cire.³⁹ Les Vénitiens ne voulaient pas tant que ces deux ports puissent trafiquer hors de l'Adriatique que de soumettre leur trafic vers la Lombardie et vers l'Istrie à passer par Venise, autrement dit que leurs marchandises soient débarquées et embarquées sur les quais vénitiens et par là soumises à leur contrôle. Quant à la Pouille, les Vénitiens y trouvaient de gros avantages pour s'y fournir de blé, de vin, d'huile, de fromage, de viande salée et de laine, donnant par là du même coup un essor certain à l'agriculture apulienne. En contre-partie, ils y livraient des tissus, du cuivre et même du sel.⁴⁰ C'était encore là une partie essentielle de l'arrière-pays vénitien.

Depuis le Xe siècle, l'arrière-pays vénitien s'était ainsi notablement étendu, depuis les Alpes jusqu'à la région apulienne, et l'Adriatique apparaissait bien comme un golfe vénitien, même si certaines parties y échappaient autour d'Ancone ou des ports dalmates. Ce vaste arrière-pays répondait aux efforts des Vénitiens de s'affirmer autant comme des pourvoyeurs de l'Occident en matières premières: épices, alun, coton, produits colorants, soie que comme les intermédiaires entre l'Orient autant chrétien que musulman et l'Occident. Aussi bien ce rôle éclate au moment de la quatrième Croisade. Les Vénitiens, grâce à leurs relations avec Constantinople, malgré les avatars de 1171–72 où ils avaient été expulsés de l'Empire byzantin, avec Alexandrie et les ports de Terre Sainte, étaient en état de ravitailler les ateliers lombards alors en plein essor, tandis que de leur arrière-pays ils disposaient de bois, de métaux, d'objets métalliques venus des ateliers milanais ou brescians. Une complémentarité s'était ainsi organisée, qui faisait véritablement de Venise l'étape indispensable où se rencontraient produits orientaux et produits occidentaux. La redistribution des produits orientaux, où il faut insérer la soie pour les ateliers lucquois qui détenaient alors le monopole du travail de cette matière première en Occident,⁴¹ s'opérait depuis les quais de la ville où accostaient les vaisseaux de retour d'Orient. Il convient de remarquer d'ailleurs que la Terre Sainte tenait une place de second rang dans ces trafics, les Vénitiens étant implantés à Tyr et Acre.⁴² A partir des documents publiés par R. Morozzo della Rocca et A. Lombardo pour la période antérieure à 1171, C. Cahen a pu calculer que l'Orient latin n'apparât

³⁹ G. Luzzatto, "I più antichi trattati tra Venezia e le città marchigiane," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, n.s. 11 (1906), pp. 5–91 retrace les accords conclus par les Vénitiens avec les cités des Marches, notamment Fano. Quant à Raguse, voir le document transcrit par Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, t. 1, p. 106.

⁴⁰ J.M. Martin, *La Pouille du Vie au XIIIe siècle* (Rome, 1993), pp. 436–41.

⁴¹ F.E. de Roover, *Le sete lucchesi* (Lucca, 1993). Sur la soie dans l'empire byzantin, cf. D. Jacoby, "Silk in western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LXXXIV–V (1991–92), pp. 452–501.

⁴² A l'image de leurs concurrents génois et pisans, les Vénitiens avaient obtenu eux aussi des privilèges pour s'implanter dans les ports de Terre Sainte au sein du royaume latin de Jérusalem.

que 54 fois contre 200 pour Constantinople et 71 pour l’Égypte.⁴³ Pour la période successive, Alexandrie ne supplante Constantinople que partiellement jusqu’à ce que les relations soient rétablies entre les Vénitiens et l’empereur byzantin en 1184. Entre cette date et la quatrième Croisade, la situation évolue peu, si ce n’est que la Terre Sainte est un peu plus représentée, soit 14 contrats concernant Constantinople et la Grèce, 8 pour Alexandrie et 9 pour Acre ou Tyr.⁴⁴ C’est donc l’Orient byzantin et musulman qui appelle le plus clair des trafics des Vénitiens en Méditerranée orientale, en liaison avec les besoins de l’arrière-pays qu’a dessiné Venise au cours du XIIIe siècle.

Le poids de l’arrière-pays dans le trafic vénitien avec les terres orientales ne saurait être négligé. Reste à savoir dans quelle mesure il a pu peser dans les décisions prises par le gouvernement vénitien de détourner la Croisade vers Constantinople. Il faut ici reprendre partiellement l’historique de la Croisade pour mesurer l’impact des choix pontificaux d’une part, de ceux du gouvernement vénitien d’autre part. C’est au début d’août 1198 que le pape Innocent III adresse aux archevêques, évêques et abbés une lettre pour leur annoncer sa résolution d’organiser une nouvelle croisade, après l’échec de celle entreprise par Philippe Auguste, Richard Cœur de Lion et surtout l’empereur Frédéric Barberousse en 1190.⁴⁵ Le pape n’omet pas de rappeler les interdictions formulées quant au trafic avec le monde musulman, vente de bois, de métaux et d’armes à ceux qualifiés d’Infidèles, déjà prises lors du concile du Latran en 1179.⁴⁶ Or, les Vénitiens réagissent vigoureusement, envoyant deux ambassadeurs auprès du pape, arguant la nécessité pour eux quant à la survie de leur trafic commercial de conserver leurs relations avec Alexandrie. Le 3 décembre 1198, le pape, après avoir entendu les arguments des Vénitiens, ayant besoin de la flotte vénitienne pour le transport des Croisés, reconnaît la validité des protestations vénitiennes, tout en leur rappelant les engagements pour ne pas vendre aux Musulmans les produits interdits.⁴⁷ Or ce que les Vénitiens vont chercher surtout à Alexandrie, accessoirement à Damiette, est surtout représenté par l’alun, le coton, les matières colorantes et le cuivre. Comment solder ces achats destinés à leur arrière-pays? Les futaines étaient-elles suffisantes? Ce dernier produit était assurément de grande qualité, mais sans doute ne pouvaient-ils couvrir leurs achats de matières premières et le coût des épices avec cet unique produit. Il apparaît qu’en

⁴³ C. Cahen, *Orient et Occident au temps des Croisades* (Paris, 1983), p. 133. Il convient de compléter les comptes de cet auteur avec ceux de L.B. Robbert, “Venice and the Crusades,” in H.K. Stenton, *History of the Crusades* (Philadelphia, 1995), t. V, pp. 397–98: pour la période 1184–1205, elle compte pour 92 destinations 42 en direction de Constantinople (46 per cent), 13 pour l’empire byzantin (19 per cent), 22 pour les Etats latins (24 per cent) et 9 pour Alexandrie (10 per cent). Les Vénitiens devançant largement les Génois dans l’empire byzantin. Notons que si Alexandrie est si peu nommée, il faut tenir compte qu’à partir de 1184 les Vénitiens ont pu regagner Constantinople.

⁴⁴ Nous nous sommes appuyé sur les actes publiés par R. Morozzo della Rocca et A. Lombardo pour les chiffres que nous avançons.

⁴⁵ J. Richard, *Histoire des Croisades* (Paris, 1996), pp. 253–54.

⁴⁶ R. Foreville, *Latran I, II, III et Latran IV* (Paris, 1965), § 24, p. 223.

⁴⁷ Innocent III, *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, ed. O. Hagenander and A. Haidacher (Graz–Cologne, 1964), t. 1, n. 536, pp. 775–76.

échange les produits dont avaient besoin les Musulmans, esclaves, mais surtout bois, objets métalliques, métaux précieux devaient continuer d'affluer à Alexandrie à travers un commerce interlope.⁴⁸

Constantinople, mais aussi l'ensemble de l'empire byzantin, tel était le second but fondamental du trafic vénitien en Méditerranée orientale.⁴⁹ Il s'agit là de marchés où les Vénitiens acquéraient alun, coton, produits colorants, épices, soie et soieries. Régler un trafic qui était vraisemblablement déficitaire nécessitait pour eux de financer leurs achats par la livraison de métaux précieux, or et sans doute argent que fournissaient désormais les nouvelles mines allemandes et balkaniques, car les futaines, les draps et les peaux, voire les esclaves ne suffisaient sans doute pas à équilibrer les comptes. Or coton, alun et produits colorants, voire la soie pour Lucques étaient surtout destinés à l'alimentation des ateliers "lombards", et de ce point de vue Constantinople et Alexandrie se complétaient. Il est remarquable que dès la paix signée en 1184 et les indemnités décidées pour couvrir les pertes subies à la suite de la décision de Manuel Comnène d'expulser les Vénitiens de Constantinople et de l'empire byzantin en confisquant leurs biens, les marchands vénitiens, notamment Romano Mairano, se sont acharnés à revenir sur les anciens marchés.⁵⁰ Romano Mairano de son côté n'a pas hésité à se tourner un temps vers les ports d'Afrique du Nord, Bougie et Ceuta pour s'y procurer vraisemblablement les métaux précieux indispensables pour le déroulement de ses affaires en Méditerranée orientale.⁵¹ Les Vénitiens avaient assurément retrouvé leurs positions commerciales à Constantinople après 1184, ce que laisse entrevoir l'accord entre Venise et l'empereur byzantin en 1198,⁵² mais la xénophobie de la population de Constantinople à leur égard était loin d'être éteinte.⁵³ Pour contrecarrer leur trop

⁴⁸ Le problème de l'équilibre des échanges entre Orient et Occident est difficile à établir pour l'époque du XII^e siècle et ne peut être qu'objet d'hypothèses dans les conditions actuelles de la documentation: cf. R.S. Lopez, "Il problema della bilancia dei pagamenti nel commercio di Levante," in *Venezia e il Levante*, ed. A. Pertusi, 2 vols. (Venice, 1976), t. 1, parte 1, pp. 438–42.

⁴⁹ Dans le décompte de L.B. Robbert, cité à la note 43, Constantinople apparaît bien comme le but essentiel du trafic vénitien en Méditerranée orientale.

⁵⁰ Le montre bien S. Borsari, *Venezia e Bisanzio nel XII secolo. I rapporti economici* (Venice, 1988), pp. 99–104.

⁵¹ Voir notamment les documents n. 284, 285, 293, 294, 296, 297, des années 1177–79 publiés par R. Morozza Della Rocca and A. Lombardo. Sur la figure de Romano Mairano, cf. Y. Renouard, *Les hommes d'affaires du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1949), pp. 56–59 et S. Borsari, *Venezia e Bisanzio*, pp. 117–28.

⁵² Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, t. 1, pp. 246–78, mais la date est erronée à novembre 1199. Comparer le texte latin avec le texte grec publié par F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reichs, 565–1453* (Munich puis Berlin, 1924–65), n. 1647.

⁵³ Le chroniqueur Nicétas Choniates, qui a été témoin du sac de Constantinople par les Croisés, sans nourrir de sentiments particulièrement hostiles à l'égard des Latins, écrivait à propos des relations entre Grecs et Latins que "la haine extrême à laquelle ils (les Latins) en étaient arrivés contre nous et le dissentiment aigü qui nous animait contre eux ne permettaient à aucune des parties de nourrir envers l'autre le moindre sentiment d'humanité," cité par A. Ducellier, "Le sac de Constantinople et sa postérité," in *Les Croisades. L'Orient et l'Occident d'Urbain II à Saint Louis, 1096–1270*, ed. M. Rey Delquie (Milan, 1977), p. 368.

forte domination commerciale, l'empereur favorise leurs concurrents génois et pisans, ce que supporte mal le gouvernement vénitien.⁵⁴

Reste que le but retenu par le pape Innocent III pour la Croisade après entente avec les barons croisés était l'Égypte, la terre du sultan mameluck, maître de Jérusalem.⁵⁵ Atteindre le maître du Saint Sépulcre au cœur de sa puissance paraissait le meilleur moyen de reconquérir Jérusalem. Quel aurait été alors le rôle des Vénitiens à qui les barons croisés s'étaient décidés de remettre leur sort pour leur transfert en Orient? S'en prendre à Alexandrie ne pouvait mécontenter les Vénitiens qui ne jouissaient en Égypte d'aucun avantage douanier, à la différence de leur situation à Constantinople, surveillés qu'ils étaient par les autorités égyptiennes dans le fondouk qui leur était assigné. Dans leur désir d'approvisionner leur arrière-pays «lombard», où s'était épanouie l'industrie cotonnière, les Vénitiens ne pouvaient qu'y trouver un avantage certain pour leur trafic en cas de victoire.⁵⁶ Et pourtant ils ont accepté de se rendre à Constantinople, mais en utilisant l'armée croisée pour satisfaire leurs intérêts particuliers dans leur conflit avec la ville de Zara, soutenue par le roi de Hongrie. Il est vrai que c'était pour eux un moyen de renforcer leur position dans l'Adriatique, leur golfe, arrière-pays maritime complémentaire de leur hinterland continental.

L'arrière-pays commandait aux Vénitiens de pouvoir disposer des deux grands emporia orientaux. Or si à Constantinople ils avaient retrouvé leurs exemptions douanières après l'accord passé avec l'empereur en 1184 leur assurant une position commerciale de premier ordre dans la capitale byzantine, il est assuré que disposer des mêmes facilités à Alexandrie ne pouvait qu'aviver leur désir d'accéder aux recommandations pontificales et aux décisions des barons croisés. Dans le cadre des négociations avec les chefs de la quatrième Croisade, si l'on en croit Villehardouin, le doge a été plus ou moins mis au pied du mur lors de sa réunion avec les chefs croisés qui ont décidé de soutenir les prétentions d'Alexis au trône byzantin, et dès lors il n'a pu qu'accepter de mener la Croisade à Constantinople.⁵⁷ Or Enrico

⁵⁴ Le texte du chrysobulle obtenu par les Génois en 1201 à la suite de l'ambassade d'Ottobono della Croce est perdu. Subsiste le *protagma* d'octobre 1201 qui leur accordait l'élargissement de leur quartier: F. Dölger, *Regesten*, n. 1663. En 1199, les Pisans ont reçu de l'empereur un texte leur accordant des avantages commerciaux: Ibid., n. 1651 en date du 30 juin. Sur la position génoise à Constantinople à la fin du XIII^e siècle, cf. M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise (XIIIe-début XVe siècle)*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1979), t. 1, pp. 37, 180-81.

⁵⁵ La décision d'aller en Égypte a été prise secrètement par les chefs croisés et a été acceptée par le pape: cf. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. E. Faral (Paris, 1938), II, 30 et *Gesta Innocentii III*, Patrologie Latine, t. 214, col. CXXXVIII, lxxxv: "Termino igitur constituto, cruce signatorum exercitus ad partes Venetiarum accessit tam multus et portus, devitus et timoratus, ut absque dubio crederetur quod cum Dominus antiqua miracula innivaret, nec solummodo recuperetur Hierosolymitana provincia, verum etiam regnum Babylonicum caperetur." Voir à ce sujet F. Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitienne* (Paris, 1975), pp. 60-61 à partir du texte de Villehardouin.

⁵⁶ D.E. Queller, "Some Further Arguments in defense of the Venetians on the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantion*, 62 (1992), pp. 444-50.

⁵⁷ Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, III, 92-100 montre que le doge n'a tenu qu'un rôle secondaire dans les négociations avec Alexis, dont il a été pratiquement écarté.

Dandolo était conscient que l'expédition à Constantinople ne pouvait qu'être brève, le temps d'installer Alexis sur le trône, avant de mettre le cap vers l'Égypte.⁵⁸ Les événements devaient en décider autrement...

Martin da Canal évoque les marchandises que les Vénitiens donnent aux Français et aux Allemands, aux Lombards et aux Toscans, aux gens des Marches et de la Romagne et à toutes les nations qui les achètent en payant.⁵⁹ La situation des années 1270 ne fait que répéter celle de la fin du XIIe siècle. Venise dispose d'un vaste arrière-pays qu'il faut ravitailler en produits de toute sorte, venus surtout d'Orient, en échange de quelques produits de luxe occidentaux. Toute la vie commerciale du port repose sur ce trafic de transit, comme l'enrichissement des grandes familles vénitiennes qui s'y sont engagées. Sans cet arrière-pays capable d'absorber le flot de marchandises venues d'Orient par Constantinople, Alexandrie et les ports de Terre Sainte, la ville n'aurait pu connaître l'histoire glorieuse qui fut sienne. Son destin commercial était étroitement lié à un arrière-pays désireux de recevoir les produits orientaux arrivant sur les quais du port: alun, coton, produits colorants, soie et soieries, cuivre. La plus grande partie s'en est dessinée tout au long du XIIe siècle. Malheureusement pour les Vénitiens, la Croisade a été détournée vers Constantinople au détriment des choix des Vénitiens et du pape prioritairement intéressés par la conquête de l'Égypte.

⁵⁸ Enrico Dandolo n'était pas sans connaître l'atmosphère qui régnait à Constantinople, défavorable aux Occidentaux, et ce d'autant plus que la population greccque était persuadée qu'Alexis entendait subordonner sur le plan religieux Constantinople à Rome: cf. la chronique d'Arnold de Lubeck, "Cronica Slavorum libri sex," *MGH, SS*, t. 21, pp. 224–25. Le récit de Villehardouin n'en fait aucunement mention: cf. D. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice. A study upon Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 136. La personnalité d'Enrico Dandolo est loin de faire l'unanimité chez les historiens: D.E. Queller, *The Fourth Crusade. The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 9 le dépeint comme un homme d'action d'une énergie remarquable, qui malgré son âge avancé avait gardé son acuité mentale et qui savait tirer parti de son expérience. Il suit de ce pint de vue le jugement de Geoffroy de Villehardouin qui le dépeint constamment comme un vieillard aveugle, plein de sagesse et preux: "qui viels homme ere et gote ne veoit, mais mult ere sages et preuz et vigueros," écrit-il (VIII, 364). G. Cracco, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1986), t. 32, pp. 454–58 le voit comme une figure complexe, difficile à déchiffrer, qui n'a été tout au plus dans la quatrième Croisade qu'un intermédiaire et un porte-parole des représentants des institutions vénitiennes dans les négociations avec les Croisés, dont il suivait les desseins de conquête pour recouvrer les sommes dues au gouvernement vénétien.

⁵⁹ Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires*, p. 226.

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The “Four Crusades” of 1204¹

Marco Meschini

In the first years of the thirteenth century, the Mediterranean was furrowed by diverse crusading campaigns. One is able to count at least four of them which, although all sailing eastward, followed different routes: the fleet of count Baldwin IX of Flanders and Hainault, captained by John of Nesle, which departed from Flemish ports to cross through Gibraltar, pass the winter in Marseille, miss the rendezvous with its lord in Modon and reach the Holy Land in 1203; a fleet of crusaders from the kingdom of France, assembled in Marseille; other ships departing from the ports of southern Italy, Brindisi in particular; and lastly, the imposing fleet mustered by the Venetians who, on 1 October 1202, directed their bows toward Zara and – though it was a horizon destined to grow ever more clouded – Jerusalem, by means of Egypt or Greece.²

These various fleets were transporting men (and women) enlivened by motivations and intentions not always coinciding for political, cultural, spiritual, economic and personal reasons. All of them, or almost all, were united by the vow of the crusade, which they swore freely. Moreover, they were not the only ones interested in that which this *prelium Domini* would have yielded. Gazing out across the waves from the shore were those such as mothers, wives and children who had remained at home on account of physical shortcomings or because they were unfit for military service. There were those who hoped to receive aid from the crusaders and others who dreaded their arrival, such as the Muslims and, for different reasons, the Byzantine emperor. Finally, there was the pope, Innocent III, who had vigorously desired this crusade and whose angst was destined to increase month by month.

In this essay I will attempt to relate the events of these years from the particular perspectives of four groups of men who, in dissimilar manners, were involved throughout. The fact that they experienced “different” crusades – though in

¹ I thank Derek N. Gromadzki of Saint Louis University for the translation of this article into English.

² It ought to be remembered that the fleet readied by the Venetians did not leave in its entirety that day. Some ships were run aground; others attended to the diseased and some latecomers, like Boniface of Monferrato himself. In every way, these ships were part of the aforementioned fourth fleet. To the crusaders leaving from Italy, on the other hand, must be added the men of Simone of Montfort and those who, like him, left the principal armada after Zara. On the Fourth Crusade, see Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade. The Conquest of Constantinople*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1997); Wayne Bartlett, *An Ungodly War: The Sack of Constantinople and the Fourth Crusade* (Stroud, 2000); Michael Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (Harlow, 2003); Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2003); Thomas F. Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore, 2003); Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzanz und die Kreuzzüge* (Stuttgart, 2004); Marco Meschini, *1204 – l’incompiuta: La quarta crociata e le conquiste di Costantinopoli* (Milan, 2005), hereafter cited as *L’incompiuta*; and Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (London, 2004).

chronological, and in other cases geographical concomitance of material and spiritual acts – will, I contend, shed new light upon the crucial points of those years.

The Attitude of Innocent III and the Roman Curia

On the responsibilities of the pope in the *affaire* of the “Fourth Crusade”, there are varying historiographic positions. On the one hand, there are those who would hold him responsible (or at least partially responsible) for the deviation of the crusade to Constantinople. On the other hand, there are others who profess the “innocence” of the pope – those for whom Innocent III was an impotent spectator before rapidly changing events. Lastly, there are those who, like Alfred J. Andrea, propose a nuanced interpretation in which the pope’s position becomes more complex as it is marked by “questionable sophistry” that reveals itself throughout the latter half of 1203. This trend in turn reinforced itself, growing stronger in 1204 following the dazzling second conquest of Constantinople.³ Before proposing my own approach to this question, a few remarks are in order.

Innocent III advertised the idea of the crusade in 1198, only to advance it again in 1199 when the first foreseen departure date expired. Why was the second call necessary? The letters of August 1198 contain precise ideas and directions relative to the conception and organization of the crusade. Yet this detailed document also contains a good dose of distancing from reality. Foremost, concerning the political direction of the enterprise, others have made clear that Innocent never intended to exclude *a priori* the European rulers from participation in the crusade.⁴ However, his appeal to the barons and to the cities of the West was largely in vain until a group of powerful laymen decided to take part. In a word, by building himself up as the theoretical craftsman of the crusade, Innocent necessarily subordinated himself to the will of others. The same may be said regarding his subsequent attempts to take the political wheel of the expedition by means of his envoys, whose influence on the events of the crusade was very limited. This indicates either a limited capacity to choose effective agents or – as seems to me most probable – a wider managerial incapacity, aggravated by the lack of certain political interlocutors on the secular “front.”

Innocent’s second disconnection from reality is related to the acquisition and management of the requisite funds for the enterprise. The crusade had certainly

³ Alfred J. Andrea and John C. Moore, “A Question of Character: Two Views on Innocent III and the Fourth Crusade,” in *Innocent III: Urbis et orbis. Atti del Convegno storico internazionale in occasione dell’VIII centenario dell’elezione di Innocenzo III (Roma, 9–15 settembre 1998)*, ed. Andrea Sommerlechner (Rome, 2003), p. 585.

⁴ See Ryan, “Richard I and the Fourth Crusade,” in this volume; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Breve storia delle crociate* (Milan, 1994), p. 171. Moreover, the Pope was not at all loath to propose a collaboration to Alexius III, the Byzantine Emperor: Innocent III, *Die Register Innocenz’ III.*, ed. Othmar Hageneder and Anton Haidacher (Graz-Cologne, 1964), 1:353. Hereafter cited as *Register*.

placed into circulation a notable quantity of money, but the hopes and anticipations of the pontiff remained largely unfulfilled. As a prime example, one can note the harsh tug of war that set him against the Cistercian order until 1201, when the general chapter of the order reached an agreement with the pope to pay 2000 marks *pro subsidio Terre sancte*, a sum markedly inferior to the amount actually desired by Innocent. If a powerful monastic order, theoretically among the first that was required to contribute to the enterprise of the pope and Christianity as a whole, set itself against the *desiderata* of Innocent, it suggests that the crusade envisioned by the pope and the curia was not *in rebus*, but in this case *contra res*. After all, the papal invitation must have looked like an order, which contradicted the inner spirit of the crusade – an undertaking marked by the action of the papacy, but nonetheless free and voluntary.⁵

The third level of a papal distancing from reality regards the time needed for the realization of the enterprise. All of the deadlines Innocent fixed came and went without much that was anticipated actually occurring.

However, there was an underlying and perhaps more serious source of this distancing. In his letters of August 1198, Innocent expressed fear of a Muslim attack against Christianity, almost as if it were imminent. This necessitated a kind of preemptive action on the part of Christianity. In reality, no such danger existed – though in an ambit that conceded much to the rhetorical and eschatological aspects of the discourse – the words of Innocent were dictated by a paucity of knowledge of the real situation on the ground.⁶ Perhaps the pope lacked adequate information, but the cause of the papal error seems most profound; in other words just as unrealistic.

Consider the grave reprimand delivered to Peter Capuano in 1205 after he had granted the commutation of the crusade vows for those who remained in the East to support the new and teetering Latin Empire of Constantinople. It was the most biting letter written by Innocent to one of his cardinals, in which he accused him of having wasted the efforts made for aiding the Holy Land. In reality, things were rather different. For those crusaders at Constantinople, the crusade had culminated long before. The legate simply confirmed it. Innocent’s view was manifoldly occluded: there was the desire, certainly intense, to re-conquer Jerusalem; the political option – flanked by a sort of “passive volition” – to “keep the armada together”; the evident result of the expedition, which thwarted his expectations; and in the end, the unrealistic idea that the conquest of Constantinople would benefit the Holy Land.⁷

⁵ Cf. Riley-Smith, *Breve storia delle crociate*, p. 172. The cases in which the departure on crusade could be received as penance must also be remembered.

⁶ On the thinking concerning the crusade by Innocent III, see Marco Meschini, “*Pro negotio cruce signatorum: Innocenzo III e il sostegno della guerra santa*” in *Cruce de miradas sobre la guerra santa: Guerra, religión e ideología en el espacio mediterráneo latino (siglos XI–XIII)*, ed. Daniel Baloup and Philippe Josserand (Madrid, 2006), currently in publication.

⁷ Cf. Meschini, *L’incompiuta*, pp. 188–95.

If these observations are correct, one must ask where this pervasive separation from reality originates. Innocent had a static conception of the aims of the crusade, offset by a certain elasticity as to the means to achieve them. Among those means may be counted three important milestones. The first stands in the redefining of the time period of the vow in the Holy Land necessary to attain the indulgence of the crusade, a period which, in the letter of 1199, changed from two years to one. This was a clear concession to prospective participants determined by the scarcity of recruits up to that point.⁸ The second indication is found in the famous *consilium sine bulla* sent by the pope to the armada around the middle of 1203, containing a dispensation of sorts allowing the crusaders to remain with the Venetians despite their excommunication. In the very same letter, one can also find the third indicator of that behavior, when the pope permitted the crusaders to outfit themselves at the expense of the Greeks, using force if necessary.⁹ In all three cases, Innocent lowered his own standards in an attempt to control the conditions unfolding on the ground and direct the will of the principal crusaders. Such political choices, generated precisely by the aforementioned elasticity, were perceived nevertheless by the commanders of the crusade and by the Venetian commanders as signs of weakness, with the consequence that the crusade became ever less “Innocent’s” and thereby remarkably less “innocent.”

This indecisive pendulum, swinging between an immutable predetermined goal and the more or less contorted routes needed to arrive there, produced that “sophistry” of which Andrea has spoken. To this can be added the “dazzling blunder” of the conquest of 1204. The robust, theological framework proposed by Innocent to explain the conquest in his letters of 1204¹⁰ yield more than one perplexity, and at least one question: why, if he did not want the result, did he support it so passionately? I would suggest that the reason is twofold. On the level of pure ideology, Innocent was defeated by the crusade. The will of God – because surely the victory at Constantinople could be nothing less – had revealed itself to be in direct variance with the desires of the *vicarius Christi*. April 1204 posed for Innocent a crisis not only in his own understanding of the divine plan but at a political level with the management of the new situation arising on the Bosphorus. Innocent, probably together with the Curia, decided to assimilate these three problems into one, attributing to himself as well as to God the success of the crusade. Two passages in the letter to Emperor Baldwin reveal this ponderous and maladroit effort: ...*Deo autem et nobis totum ascribis, ut exaltet humilitas, quem superbia non extollit...* [...] ...*Grecorum ecclesiam et Constantinopolitanum imperium, quod ad*

⁸ Note that it was this second regulation that remained impressed upon the memories of contemporaries: Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Edmond Faral, 1–2 (Paris, 1938–39), § 2.

⁹ Innocent III, *Register*, 6:102.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7:153–54.

*invocationem apostolice sedis gratia tibi divina subiecit...*¹¹ These words stand in clear contrast with the pope's desires during the unfolding of the crusade and also – something more significant – with Innocent's theory of the crusade itself. In the letters of 1198, the Pope had invoked Psalm 115 saying that: *...non nobis aut vobis sed nomini suo dans gloriam...*¹² He had preemptively placed, solely in the hands of God, the glory of the future success of the expedition. A simple inconsistency? It is rather an indicator of greater inconsistency that produced clear anxiety in the face of a situation that occurred despite his explicit prohibitions.

Even if Innocent did not want the conquest of Constantinople, was it nonetheless truly unavoidable? He knew at least from the beginning of 1202 that the crusade was in danger of diverting to Greece. Not only had the claimant of the Byzantine throne, Alexius the Younger, appeared before him, but he had discussed the matter with Boniface of Monferrat, the nominal commander of the crusade. Deluding himself that a simple verbal prohibition would be sufficient to allow the fleet to sail according to its own *desiderata* presents an imbalance of sorts: why not attempt to acquire stricter control of the crusade through his legates? The sole, truly effective consequence of the excommunication of the crusaders and Venetians after Zara was in fact the final removal of Peter Capuano from the fleet – the paradoxical result of which, instead of remedial, worsened matters. The alliance between the commanders of the crusade and the Venetians was indeed bolstered precisely after Zara while the voice of the Pontiff grew ever feebler.

But, there remains an underlying interpretive possibility. Could it be that the second conquest of the Byzantine capital corresponded with an *invocatio* of the pope? According to Gunther of Pairis, Innocent in fact wanted the Greeks to end up under the Latin yoke, although he believed that it was impossible because of the superiority of the Byzantine fleet (and one notes that this is yet another case of his separation from reality). Gunther's source was his abbot, Martin, who was present in Rome between the end of 1202 and the beginning of 1203 on a mission to obtain apostolic pardon for the crusaders after the conquest of Zara. Gunther can be interpreted to suggest that although Innocent desired the reunion of the two churches, intended as the submission of the Greek to the Latin (as evidenced by the Pope's behavior after 1204), his conscious politico-ecclesiastical position led him to opt for cooperation with the Byzantine Empire against the common Muslim threat. Both of these positions were "true," although they differed and must have generated that ideological and practical short circuit that followed the conquest of 1204.

¹¹ Ibid., 153, p. 263, rr. 2–3 and rr. 30–32. The term *invocatio* occurs seven other times in the *Register* of Innocent: PL 217, coll. 102D, 419B, 692B (where the expression *ad invocationem* is found, but in a different sense: "Mirabilis facta est scientia tua, Domine, contra me, et non potero ad eam. Claudis os meum et obstruis rationibus tuis, ut ad invocationem tuam prosilire non audeam verbis orationis praefatae," 780B, 825C, 882B).

¹² Innocent III, *Register*, 1:336, p. 504, rr. 23–24.

Innocent's responses to the conquest reveal both his anxiety at facing that which he had not politically wanted, and the joy for an unexpected and desired goal, parallel at any rate to the precise goals of the *negotium Christi*.¹³ This crusade resolved itself therefore in a bipartite failure. The expedition to reclaim Jerusalem remained unfinished and that which conquered Constantinople, catching him off his guard, was led astray along its path by someone who, after all, did not stray too far from his own, other desires. The "fourth" was in short a deviated crusade for many reasons, considering also that it was indeed the pope who first diverted crusaders away from the Holy Land.¹⁴

The Commanders of the Principal Expedition and the Venetians

The second group of men was itself composed of two distinct groups, whose interests were intertwined for a long time, to the point of being somewhat indivisible: the politico-military leaders of the principal campaign (Boniface of Monferrato, Baldwin of Flanders, Louis of Blois, Hugh of Saint-Pol, together with the Marshall of Champagne and a few others) and the Venetians, meaning the Venetian command, composed of the doge and his inner circle.¹⁵

The "Magnates" of the Crusade

For these men their crusade began at Écry, specifically during a mundane and secular occasion. The reply to the pontifical call, amplified in France by the legate Peter Capuano and the preaching of Fulk of Neuilly, arrived during one of those *nundine vel ferie*, which the Lateran canons condemned. The event, certainly not lacking in religious and spiritual respects, was characterized by a predominance of chivalric and feudal accents coupled with a spirit of adventure that permeated the group of nobles concentrated about Thibaut of Champagne.

The intentions of these men were by no means irreconcilable with that of the pope, as is shown by their decision to dispatch enoys to Venice. Taking nothing

¹³ The following passages seem to confirm this reading: *Register*, 8:64 (63), p. 109, rr. 3–5; 134 (133), p. 247, rr. 20–33 and PL 215, coll. 1372–75 (XLVII); cf. Andrea and Moore, "A Question of Character," pp. 580–81. If this is true, it serves to reinforce the judgment of "lack of touch with reality" expressed above concerning several of Innocent's thoughts: how was it that one could have hoped that the armed conquest of the Byzantine capital could have arrived *sine sanguine*? And it was therefore acceptable for the Greeks?

¹⁴ I am referring to Walter of Brienne (and to his men), on whom see the view penned by Norbert Kamp in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 15 (Roma, 1972), pp. 233–36.

¹⁵ The only emergence in the sources of a sort of "autonomy" on the part of the other Venetians is found in the aforementioned armed conflict, which saw some of them pitted against other crusaders (Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, fols. 88–90; Alfred J. Andrea, "The Devastatio Constantinopolitana, a special perspective on the Fourth Crusade: an analysis, new edition, and translation," *Historical Reflections* 19 (1993), 107–49 at p. 133); but it is indeed not enough to enable one to read more deeply into the Venetian participation in the expedition.

from the autonomy of these men, their choice fit perfectly with the wishes of the pope, who had already sent a legate to Venice to enlist support for the crusade. What was the fundamental criterion underlying the choices of these men? Some sources emphasize a thirst for Constantinopolitan gold (but in doing so they forget the antecedent matter of Zara)¹⁶ and also certain motivations of a personal and private nature.¹⁷ These elements existed, but they do not quite get at the core of the issue, which was a grave defect in leadership among the commanders of the expedition.

The leaders had contracted with Venice for the transport of an imposing number of men, but they did not know how to check the actual status of recruitment, nor did they know how to guarantee the coordination of those joined. Nevertheless, they had supplied themselves with an instrument to manage this crucial aspect of the enterprise: the contract with Venice provided four intermediate deadlines for the payment of the contract, all preceding the date of departure.¹⁸ The commanders, instead of respecting this clause, preferred to defer the payments, thus landing into the clutches of the other clause that mandated payment whatever the number of armed men gathered in Venice.

The commanders were not even able to control the crusaders who, after Piacenza, deviated toward southern Italy. Even Louis of Blois, who was among the signers of the pact with Venice, delayed in Pavia. The leaders were also incapable of offering an acceptable counterproposal to the Venetian motion to temporarily deviate toward Zara. They might, for example, have asked for the nullification or a large reduction of their debt upon conquest of the Dalmatian city, rather than simply a postponement of payment. By this failure they became the agents of the Venetians, presenting the diversion to Zara to the host as the only means to preserve the crusade. The truth was different, for if the crusaders assembled in Venice had left the city *en masse* – as some had begun to do – Boniface, Baldwin, Hugh and Louis would have found that they alone were indebted to Venice, for only they were bound to the contract. The only "contract" to which all the crusaders were bound was their vow of crusade, which preceded the stipulation of the agreement of 1201.

Moreover – and the matter must have had a specific, remarkable gravity – they would have undergone clamorous humiliation before all Christendom. The "official" record of the expedition, provided for us by Geoffrey of Villehardouin, rests upon an indisputable, ideological presupposition: the crusade guided by the commanders had done *mirabilia*. In light of the extraordinary success of the expedition, Geoffrey was able to present the choices handled by the commanders, in all of the crucial

¹⁶ Cf. Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, ed. Peter Orth (Hildesheim, Zürich, 1994), p. 145; Jared Gordon, "The Novgorod Account of the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantion* 43 (1973), pp. 297–311 at p. 307; *Gesta episcoporum Halberstadensium*, ed. Ludwig Weiland, MGH, SS, 23, pp. 73–123 at p. 118; see also the work of Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Jan-Louis van Dieten, 1–2, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*, 11 (Berlin, 1972), which I cite from the German translation: *Die Kreuzfahrer erobern Konstantinopel*, ed. Franz Grabler (Graz, 1958), p. 125.

¹⁷ Jared Gordon, "The Novgorod Account of the Fourth Crusade," pp. 310–11.

¹⁸ *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. Gottlieb L.F. Tafel and Georg M. Thomas, 1 (Wien, 1856), pp. 366, 371.

passages, as the best possible, systematically imposed by the force of the “event” or in line with the mysteries of divine providence.¹⁹ This simplistic reading, though, is unacceptable. The commanders methodically subordinated the interests of the crusade to their own, more immediate and tangible problems. This does not mean that they lacked the intention and perhaps also the pious desire to devote themselves to the cause of the crusade in the Holy Land. But it does indicate a disposition toward the postponement of the principal aim for other immediate benefits always thought of and presented as provisional, but in reality capable of substantially affecting the primary objective(s) of the crusade.²⁰

Thus, the conquest of Zara came to be portrayed as an unpleasant but necessary offering to be laid upon the altar of the unity of the crusade and of the preservation of the commitments assumed (by them) with Venice. When the offer of young Alexius brought the extraordinary possibility of dissolving their debts and enriching themselves in one fell swoop, the leaders seized it at once, although they presented the delay in Constantinople as merely a staging point in the larger scope of the crusade to the East.²¹

Does this then suggest that the commanders knew in advance that the detour to Constantinople would not constitute a short delay? I think not. When they aligned themselves with Alexius the Younger at the outset of 1203, they had no secret plan of conquering the Byzantine capital. If such a plan had existed, one would expect that they would have drafted a contract, such as the one signed in March 1204. They did not because they had not yet considered such a possibility. In addition, when the gates of Constantinople were opened to them in 1203, they did not reach out to take the city *sic et simpliciter*. They had the power to do it: the imperial command was in a state of chaos, the crusaders moved freely in the city and a section of wall had been brought down. Yet they continued to view themselves as simple creditors, however intimidatingly armed, in expectance of the settlement due to them, in order to then – but only then – leave for the Holy Land. When, with Alexius V, their assets vanished, they deferred once more the fulfillment of their duty as crusaders, this time putting forth manufactured excuses, linked to the “treachery” of the Greeks, to a suspicious “mandate” of the Pope, and to the “duty” to bring justice to a land of iniquity.²²

¹⁹ The best passage for this interpretation is found in Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, fol. 231.

²⁰ Geoffrey expresses repeatedly the importance of the intermediate level. See for example *ibid.*, fol. 78.

²¹ It must be emphasized that the agreement with Alexius the Younger was supported by the commanders of the crusade, the explicit prohibition of the Pontiff notwithstanding. Innocent had rejected his assent on at least two occasions: in the meetings with the claimant and Boniface of Monferrat before the departure and following the Roman mission of the legate Peter Capuano in 1202.

²² Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, fols. 224–25. For the famous sentence of Geoffrey of Villehardouin, “And so began the war” (fol. 216) and the relevant interpretations cf. Meschini, *L'incompiuta*, pp. 173–75.

But all of these options – the attack on Zara and the twofold Constantinopolitan conquest – had as a counterpart to a hypothetical advantage an immediate and certain level of risk. Three times the crusade was exposed to the danger of an irremediable split and, even more relevant, of a military defeat that would have nullified any hypothetical advantages. The risks were not small. We must remember that the first conquest of Constantinople in July 1203 was due to the disorder that reigned in the city rather than to the military prowess of the crusaders (although the successes of the Venetians must be remembered). And we must bear in mind that the final conquest of April 1204 was preceded by a strong defeat, which hurled the entire armada into a state of distress.

Consider also the well-known spectacle enacted at sea before the capital. From a galley, escorted by all the other ships of the fleet, the doge and the commanders displayed to the citizens of Constantinople the young Alexius, the “legitimate” claimant to the throne.²³ Those who emphasize this point maintain that the crusaders were convinced of the existence of a “party” favorable to the young man and that only the bitter disappointment of the failure of this Byzantine faction to act compelled them to resort to arms.²⁴ However, there is no trace of any activity of that hypothetical “party”, and it is above all clear that armed conflict had been planned from the very beginning. Let us try to place ourselves in the place of the commanders. If the city had not swung wide its doors at the mere appearance of the young claimant, would they have renounced the enterprise? Perhaps Venice would have been content with a refusal on the part of Byzantium? It is unthinkable. When the doge and his men sealed that deal with Alexius (and the commanders of the crusade) they knew well that they were risking their relationship, already stressed, with the Empire.

Reinforcing this reading is the fact that the crusaders prepared themselves for an armed conflict from their first appearance before the city walls.²⁵ This dynamic emerges also from the contents of the agreement reached with the rest of the host in Corfu. Why demand, as the other crusaders did, that the expedition not remain at Constantinople for more than a month if they were convinced of expedient success? The hypothesis of an armed conflict was imbedded in the nature of the agreement from the start of 1203. The purpose of that accord was the establishment of a pro-crusader power upon the throne of Byzantium, with the abundant advantages deriving from it, both immediate and intermediate. But the calculation contained too many variables, all undervalued.

Do these reflections lead us again to concluding that the crusade suffered from a lack of effective leadership? One could argue to the contrary that the commanders succeeded at bending the entire crusade to their will, thus demonstrating a notable political capacity, though an unclear one. But this is sustainable only by

²³ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, fols. 145–46.

²⁴ Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, pp. 64, 83, 108 (with the relevant cross referencing of the sources). Cf. Meschini, *L'incompiuta*, pp. 210–11.

²⁵ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, fols. 128–32.

hypothesizing about such control, something that still fails to correspond with the extant sources. Was it not to keep control of the army, as he himself admits, that Boniface of Monferrat decided to conceal the excommunication of the Venetians at the start of 1203? This was a weak grip on power in the host. It was only by means of a humiliating scene, imploring the help of the other crusaders, that the “leaders” were able to bring their negotiations with Alexius to fruition.

Clearly, then, there was a deficiency rather than of abundance of effective leadership. The commanders took the crusade hostage in Venice, tested its strength in Zara, spiritually blackmailed it between Zara and Corfu, and then led it off course toward Constantinople to fill in the lacunae of their own leadership.²⁶

Lastly, it must be added that if these men acted in cooperation throughout the duration of the expedition, it must be remembered that they were neither of a single heart nor a single mind as would be shown by the divisions and conflicts between them after the second conquest of Constantinople. Their crusade was subordinated to immediate and myopic interests generated by their own failings. The rising of a new empire on the Bosphorus, prestigious in name but lacking in substance, fit this profile well.

The Doge and His Men

Doge Enrico Dandolo and his circle of collaborators also subordinated without hesitation the greater goals of the crusade to their own immediate interests. This behavior, exposed under the walls of Zara, had in reality an antecedent in their assumption of the cross. Although petitioned by the pope since 1198 to join the crusade, they did so only when the conditions suited them. It is often forgotten that the Venetians did take the cross before September 1202. Until then they were only partners in a commercial enterprise, which certainly touched them closely but only in so far as the economic destiny of the Republic was concerned. Whether the crusade had a positive effect in Egypt or not did not pertain to them as crusaders. For them only the logistic aspect, which they took care of extremely well, was important. The Venetians took up the cross only *after* the proposition to attack Zara had been accepted by the commanders of the crusade. The vow of the crusade was for them a pious veil behind which they hid diverse interests, enjoying all the while the advantages of their new status.

But these events had another consequence as well. The crusade became in a sense more “Venetian” both in terms of numbers and the effect that the men of Venice would have on its future. It ought not to be forgotten that the Venetians, by joining the crusade, provided military support far beyond that stipulated in the contract of

²⁶ The commanders knew well that, with the conquest of Zara, they were on their way to excommunication, so much so that they sent before the Roman curia a message intended to obtain a pardon. When this was granted to them, however, they were able to derive the indirect conclusion that the pope was losing control of “his” crusade, and that it was becoming instead “theirs” (cf. *L'incompiuta*, pp. 202–12).

1201.²⁷ The question of Zara assumes then the character of a litmus test for the real crusading passion of the Venetians. It is not a matter first and foremost of judging their religious motivations (which were not very vivid, in any case) but rather of noting how the demands of religion (that is, respecting a Christian city subject to a crusader king) were placidly subordinated to the goals of the Republic.²⁸

As has been noted, during the attack on Constantinople in the middle of 1203 the Venetians were jeopardizing their profitable relationship with Byzantium. Enrico Dandolo and his associates exhibited time and again a brash autonomy including a clear contempt toward the pope's wishes and the consequences that they generated. In this they were differentiated from their companions, for the Venetian command knew what leadership was and how to manage it.

The Other Crusaders

Among those unconcerned with immediate advantages were the so-called "neglected majority" of whom Queller, Compton and Cambell have spoken. It is difficult to discern whether these constituted a true majority as lamented at various times by the Marshall of Champagne or simply a significant minority. Nevertheless, hundreds of knights together with thousands of sergeants and infantrymen did not come to Venice to begin their crusade, preferring other ports of embarkation. Although Geoffrey of Villehardouin blamed them for the deviations suffered by the main body of the crusade (an interesting indication of how much Geoffrey and company understood the peculiarity of their route), let us try to evaluate without prejudice the conduct of those men.

First, we must consider the case of the Flemish who, under the direction of John of Nesle, missed their appointment with their count in Modon and went on their own to the Holy Land. Villehardouin did not miss the opportunity to bemoan this blatant breach of fidelity, without allowing room for other explanations. Perhaps John knew of the possible Constantinopolitan deviation, foreseen since the beginning of that year (when messages were exchanged between him and his master) and decided not to follow them. Or perhaps he knew nothing about it at all and, without precise instructions, went to the natural destination of a crusade, the Holy Land. After all, Marie of Flanders, the wife of Baldwin, who remained behind because she was pregnant, did much the same thing. In both cases, a praiseworthy loyalty to the prime and immediate sense of the vow of the crusade was demonstrated: the giving of oneself over to the cause of the Holy Land.

²⁷ The Venetians did not only provide logistic and technical support, they were often among the combatants on the front lines as well (cf. Meschini, *L'incompiuta*, pp. 155–56).

²⁸ A theoretical and indissoluble unity within the Venetian world, which would have split anyway following the expedition, is not here implied. See Giorgio Cracco, *Società e stato nel medioevo veneziano. Secoli XII–XIV* (Firenze, 1967), pp. 56–59.

The same could be said for the crusaders who departed directly from Marseille or for those who, once gathered in Italy, set sail for the East from southern ports. One finds a subsequent confirmation in the events of the Montforts, Boves and others with them, who were opposed to the deviations of the principal expedition. Their conception of the crusade and of the related lawful means of prosecuting it was exceptionally resilient. Before the positions assumed by their companions in the main crusade, they neither bent nor broke.

The Byzantines

While the principal fleet was sailing toward Constantinople, which crusade were the Byzantines prepared to receive? Observing their dearth of activity, one may venture to think that no attack was feared. However, something was in fact brewing in the bustling and cosmopolitan capital. We have already seen how a supposed “party” favorable to Alexius the Younger (and thus also to the crusaders) is not discernable in the sources. On the contrary, one finds instead another “party,” namely that which brought Mourtzouphlus to power in 1203. These appear to have been men accustomed to lying as a political instrument (which is nothing out of the ordinary), and who were able to exploit the situation arising from the arrival of the crusaders in order to climb the imperial ranks. Though these men demonstrated a certain ability, even they wound up defeated because the explosion of sectarianism within the capital did nothing but assist the crusaders. The Byzantines simply lacked the ability to manage the crisis, well represented by the disjointed results of the command experiences of the last emperors.²⁹ Alexius III remained nearly idle during the unfolding of events, blindly trusting in diplomacy and in the tradition of invincibility which the walls of the capital had earned over centuries. It seems that he experienced the defeat as a punishment inflicted by heaven for his own sins. Isaac II and his son Alexius IV did no better. The latter, already stumbling in his desire to recover the power of his father, fell into the trap prepared for him by the party that had once supported Alexius III while Isaac sank into a delirium. Alexius V finally proved to be a robust successor but only to fumble the crown that he himself had placed upon his own head.

In the face of this political, cultural and moral mess that unsettled the axis of power, the rest of society and the Byzantine empire reacted in a disorderly manner. The populace hoped to change course with the acclamation of Nicholas Canabus, but such hopes were ephemeral. The military nobility tried at least in part to provide for the shortcomings of the supreme command but it missed the best occasions to bring about such a change of course. The rest of the empire was indifferent to events

²⁹ Cf. now also Paolo Cesaretti, *L'Impero perduto. Vita di Anna di Bisanzio, una sovrana tra Oriente e Occidente* (Milano, 2006).

in the capital, revealing how extensive the divide was, separating Constantinople from the rest of its empire.

The position of Nicetas Choniates and the senatorial class he represented remains to be examined. I have argued elsewhere that Nicetas is the source of the modern “conspiracy theories” that have been proposed at length concerning the Fourth Crusade. For Nicetas, the origin of the catastrophe brought on Byzantium lay in the relationships – by this time spoiled – between Byzantines and Venetians. The latter were commanded by the sinister scoundrel, Enrico Dandolo, whose sole purpose was revenge against the “Romans” and subsequently gaining enormous amounts of wealth.³⁰ The relations between Venice and the Greek capital were certainly difficult, but seeing in these reasons internal to Byzantine ecumene the causes of the deviations of the crusade is to assume a Byzanto-centric perspective that necessarily can not account for the internal dynamics of the crusade. This is clear enough when we consider that Nicetas reports as a certainty that the deviation of the crusade was of Venetian origin and preceded the appearance of Alexius the Younger in the West. Thus in the reconstruction of the Byzantine historian, the plan for the conquest of Constantinople would already have been formulated three years before the departure, in 1199, when the aforementioned “most noble knights” had still not decided to depart on crusade...³¹ Nicetas reveals himself incapable of understanding the divisions and the tensions that animated the crusade. His attention was dominated entirely by the terrible outcome of the expedition, a conclusion that must have had conspiratorial, anti-Byzantine motivations.

That this way of thinking was not limited to Nicetas seems to be confirmed by a letter inserted in the *Register* of Innocent. It is a reply sent in November 1202 by the pope to Alexius III who had earlier written to Innocent concerning a possible attack on “his” empire.³² Alexius claimed that the crusading force was considering an invasion of the empire. It is not clear whether the emperor feared a direct attack on the capital or against other regions of his domain. The former seems more probable, however, as immediately afterward he reminded the pope that Alexius the Younger was not born to the purple and that his claims were therefore not valid. He also noted that Alexius was supported by their mutual enemy, Philip of Swabia.

In sum, Alexius III – and it ought to be presumed that at least part of the imperial court with him – feared an anti-Byzantine use (or at least a use antithetical to his own interests) of the crusade in connection with the escape of the young Alexius. The emperor attempted therefore to bring the pope to his side without,

³⁰ Nicetas Choniates, *Die Kreuzfahrer erobern Konstantinopel*, ed. Franz Grabler, pp. 112–14; cf. Meschini, *L'incompiuta*, pp. 196–98.

³¹ Or, if they had scarcely wanted it done, surely they had not yet entered into contact with Venice. It escapes no one that here the problem is not as much chronological (the three years indicated by Nicetas, which could have merely been a formal error) as it is logical.

³² Innocent III, *Register*, 5:121 (122). It is clear that, as the passages cited are taken indirectly, that is to say out of direct context from among the quoted passages in the response of the Pontiff, one has to have a certain prudence concerning the exact content of the letter of Alexander III (for the original of which cf. *ibid.*, p. 240, footnote 2).

however, promising anything that would have interested Innocent, who did not fail to point out in his response that the Byzantine promises had been long unmet. This notwithstanding, the pope decided that the crusade should not interfere in the Byzantine mess but follow its own objective, namely the liberation of Jerusalem.

What are we able to deduce from the combination of this letter with the work of Nicetas? Two major differences are readily apparent. The first concerns the role played by Venice, and Enrico Dandolo in particular, who are not mentioned by Alexius III at all. Perhaps their involvement was implicit, given that they were providing the crusader fleet. The second difference concerns the figure of the pope. If in the imperial letter of 1202 Innocent III did not appear yet among the “conspirators,” in Nicetas’ history Innocent had ceased to be associated with those “pirates” whose sole intent was to find the best way to conquer Constantinople. Perhaps the pope’s response is the root of this shift. His words, textually elusive, even if clear in terms of essential discourse,³³ might have been received by the Greeks as the mark of a collective “western” and Latin will, anti-Byzantine and anti-Greek in nature.

If the connection here presented is correct, one can say that the hypothesis of a Venetian, Frankish, Swabian and later pontifical conspiracy became predominant at the imperial court of Byzantium around 1202, and that the testimony of Nicetas is nothing but a comprehensive, qualified, literary and most able transposition of that political reading. After all, the indignation that runs through the pages written by the Byzantine senator regarding the “barbaric” crusaders may reflect the nobly superior and disdainful look that must have appeared on the faces of the imperial court while discussing these hypotheses.³⁴ The Latin world was an indistinct mass condemned as an enemy of the true religion of the true empire. It was a remarkable shift destined to leave a trail of conflicts, hatred and grudges, which in part have still not been resolved. In reality it was a profusely padded dress which covered, if only in part, the error and fault of certain crusaders and the Venetians without succeeding, however, to cover the disgraces of the Byzantines, at this point incapable of firmly taking command.

If the imperial court and Nicetas represent that part of the Byzantine world that sought to set itself against the inertia of the crusade, in the end it must not be forgotten that there was also a constituency of Greeks that cooperated with the newcomers, as the thick crowd of Constantinopolitans present at the coronation of Baldwin confirms.³⁵ The tiny gap opening itself shortly after the second conquest

³³ The most delicate sentence is the following: “Cumque nos eidem dedissemus responsum iuxta quod vidimus expedire...” (ibid., p. 241, rr. 11–12).

³⁴ This would be comparable to the indignant and amazed looks the day after the challenge cast directly from within the Blachernae palace by the crusaders to the Byzantines in 1203 (Villehardouin, fols. 215–16).

³⁵ Robert de Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer (Paris, 1924), c. XCVII; Alfred J. Andrea and Paul I. Rachlin, “Holy war, Holy Relics, Holy Theft: The Anonymous of Soissons’s *De terra Iherosolimitana*: An Analysis, Edition, and Translation,” *Historical Reflections* 18 (1992), pp. 157–75 at pp. 160–61. Cf. Cesaretti, *L’Impero perduto*, pp. 300–13.

closed itself quickly, however, prompted above all by the leadership errors of the victors.³⁶

Conclusions

We have seen in this essay four different and contemporaneous "crusades" at work. By this sort of restructuring, the angles from which we could reread the events could be multiplied at will. For example, all of the western sources that treated the crusade only superficially could be combed,³⁷ or the perceptions of the Latins of the Holy Land could be examined, or those of the Russians, or even the Saracens themselves.³⁸ The four groups considered here, however, were decisive to the outcome of the crusade itself.

Between 1198 and 1204, there coexisted on the "western" front at least two different ideas of the crusade: on the one hand, Innocent's original one, aimed at the re-conquest of Jerusalem; on the other hand, that of the commanders of the principal expedition who were more flexible in the selection of their destinations. Those who remained solidly anchored to the original idea demonstrated that one was able to serve the cause of the crusade while also fighting against negative events. In this sense, the incidents of the Montforts, the Boves and others like them are models, even exemplary ones. Pressed hard by events, they risked their lives in order to honor their vow. At the opposite extreme are the commanders in charge of the principal expedition and with them the Venetian command. None among them ever officially denied that the ultimate aim of their actions was to rescue the Holy Land, yet this would have to be achieved only after pursuing their immediate and often myopic interests. Thus their course became fragmented, spread across too many ports and other stops. The Holy Land was closer in terms of distance but became increasingly farther away, lost among the clouds of an uncertain future.³⁹ An excessive flexibility modified the profile of the enterprise, which was once plain and simple but grew more complex and confused up to the point of mixing into a single wicked brew the spirit of the crusade and other, contemptible interests. Their choices were dictated more by fidelity to the contracts signed than by an obligation to the vow of the crusade, which they had assumed just as freely.

A middle road between these extremes is represented by the position of the pope. He, who was the champion of the first conception of the crusade, sought on several occasions to pander to the brash positions assumed by the commanders of the

³⁶ Cf. Mario Gallina, *Potere e società a Bisanzio. Dalla fondazione di Costantinopoli al 1204* (Torino, 1995), pp. 322–23.

³⁷ As done by Kay Wagner for the crusade of Albi, *Debattere Albigenses: Darstellung und Deutung des Albigenserkreuzzuges in der europäischen Geschichtsschreibung von 1209 bis 1328*, *Politik im Mittelalter*, 4 (Neuried, 2000).

³⁸ See Hamblin, "Arab Perceptions", below.

³⁹ After all, already with Walter of Brienne, this desire to "complete the crusade" had revealed itself, but only after the appropriate, immediate interests were served.

crusade and the Venetians. Doing so, however, he crossed the dividing line that kept him from betraying his own project. When later he realized that he had been almost irremediably overcome by the events, he reacted maladroitly, making theoretical and practical concessions, which were understood as the subsidence of the original plan. His attempt to stretch the limits of justice in order to make the crusade he created fare as propitiously as possible created the groundwork for disaster. Thus, he lost twice, although he could imagine that he had won, thanks to the inscrutable strength of the Almighty.

AFTERMATH

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The Latin Empire of Constantinople's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders

Thomas F. Madden

On 13 April 1204 Constantinople surrendered to the Latin soldiers of the Fourth Crusade and the Latin Empire was born. Shortly before their attack on Constantinople, the crusading barons and Doge Enrico Dandolo of Venice agreed to rules that would govern the election of a new emperor and the division of the Byzantine Empire, should the great city fall to them. According to this treaty, commonly called the “March Pact”, six Venetians and six Franks (or non-Venetians) would be chosen to elect the emperor. The new emperor would receive one-quarter of the empire, while the remaining three-quarters would be divided equally between the Franks and Venetians. A commission of twelve Venetians and twelve Franks would later be elected to assign the lands given to each of the greater crusaders.¹

Shortly after the crusaders captured Constantinople, it was clear that there were two contenders for the imperial throne: Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders. Partisans of both sides were deadlocked over the choice of imperial electors, each attempting to seat those favorable to their candidate. In an attempt to grease the wheels, it was decided that whoever lost the election would instantly receive, before the division of any property, all of Asia Minor and the Morea. When the election was finally held, Baldwin of Flanders received a majority of the votes, largely because of Venetian support, and he was crowned emperor on 17 May.² Shortly after the coronation, Boniface of Montferrat appeared before Emperor Baldwin to receive Asia Minor and the Morea, which the latter willingly gave over. Yet Boniface was not really interested in Asia. Instead, he dreamed of claiming the crown of Thessalonica, which had been promised to his brother Renier by Manuel I Comnenus.³ Now Boniface offered to trade all of Asia Minor for Thessalonica and its surrounding lands. According to Geoffrey de Villehardouin, the best informed source for the Fourth Crusade, Baldwin considered Boniface's proposal carefully and, after listening to the advice of his council of barons, agreed to it. Boniface then did homage to the emperor for the kingdom of Thessalonica.⁴

¹ *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, ed. G.L. Fr. Tafel and G.M. Thomas (Vienna, 1856–57), I:444–52, hereafter cited as TTh.; Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 175–76.

² Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, pp. 200–2.

³ Robert Lee Wolff, “Greeks and Latins before and after 1204,” *Ricerche di storia religiosa* 1 (1957), p. 324; Paolo Lamma, *Comneni e Staufer: Ricerche sui rapporti fra Bisanzio e l'Occidente nel secolo XII* (Rome, 1955–57), I:302.

⁴ Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1938–39), sec. 264, II:70.

Villehardouin is a sober and informed source who is known for his honesty even when the truth is embarrassing. His narration of this event has therefore been universally accepted. The evidence suggests, however, that in this particular instance the chronicler is either intentionally or unintentionally not telling the whole truth. To begin with, there are several problems with Villehardouin's testimony. According to the March Pact, all lands in the empire were to be divided by a commission of twelve Venetians and twelve Franks. Until that commission finished its work of assessing land values, no one had direct ownership of anything. No one, that is, except the loser of the imperial election, who, according to the agreed amendment to the March Pact, should receive Asia Minor. The emperor, like the other barons, had no lands to call his own in May.⁵ Therefore, Boniface's request that Baldwin trade Thessalonica for Asia Minor was a non-starter. Thessalonica did not belong to Baldwin, nor to anyone yet. If Baldwin were to forget this, his council of barons would be quick to remind him that he had no right to give away lands that some of them may have hoped to acquire. Robert of Clari, a lowly knight who had no such hopes, records Baldwin's response to Boniface differently:

And the emperor answered him that [Thessalonica] was not his to give, for the barons of the host and the Venetians had the larger part of it. As far as it rested with him he would give it him very gladly and with great good will, but the part belonging to the barons of the host and to the Venetians he could not give him.⁶

This response, unlike that recorded by Villehardouin, is in basic agreement with the crusaders' existing covenants.

There are other reasons to doubt Villehardouin's narrative on this point. If the emperor granted Thessalonica to Boniface, why did he not leave immediately to claim it? Subsequent events would prove that the marquis had friends in the area and could expect to take the city with little or no fight.⁷ Why did he wait two months in Constantinople if his kingdom was waiting for him? During that two month period, Boniface's friend and court troubadour, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, wrote a poem about Baldwin that sheds much light on the feelings about the emperor in Boniface's court. It is not a friendly poem.

I offer a *counsel* to the Emperor, since he conducts all his affairs by *council*, and would do no more nor less than his *councilors* would have him say and do. And I *counsel* him, if he aims at excellence, to give henceforth without *counsel*; and, without *consulting* the

⁵ The emperor had overlord authority over the entire empire, yet his "crown lands" were not yet apportioned, and his vassals not yet named. Lands that would go to Venice were not subject to imperial command.

⁶ Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer (Paris, 1924), sec. 99, p. 97; Edgar Holmes McNeal, trans., *The Conquest of Constantinople* (New York, 1936), p. 118.

⁷ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 276, II:84.

barons' *council*. Let him hearken to the *counsel* of the worthiest man, for such is a *counsel* befitting an Emperor.⁸

Clearly Raimbaut has something against the emperor's council. Raimbaut goes on to blame Conon of Béthune and other unnamed barons for counseling Baldwin to be ungenerous.⁹ It is clear from this, our only immediately contemporary source, that Boniface and his men were angry with the emperor for relying on a council that did not give them what they wanted. All Baldwin wanted was Thessalonica.

Clari, then, is surely closer to the mark on Baldwin's response to Boniface. After consulting with the other barons, the emperor probably told the marquis that it was beyond his power to grant his request, although he would gladly do so if he could. He may also have assured Boniface that if he received Thessalonica in the division he would then make the proposed trade. Boniface's only course of action, then, was to await the division, which he did.

But the work of the commission was slow, and Emperor Baldwin was eager to expand Latin control beyond the walls of Constantinople. He also hoped to capture his predecessors, Alexius III and Alexius V, both of whom were known to be in Mosynopolis. Baldwin left the capital in early July with a sizeable force and, although he missed his rivals, he nevertheless received the allegiance of many cities, including Adrianople, which he garrisoned. Boniface accompanied Baldwin, but only from a distance. The marquis had recently married Maria, the widow of Isaac II, and along with his German troops, he brought her and her two sons along for the trip. Maria's presence, Boniface contended, was slowing his progress, so his forces trailed those of the emperor.¹⁰ It is clear, though, that Boniface's rate of travel cannot be blamed on his wife, as when speed was later necessary she was quite capable of it. Instead, Boniface was purposefully hovering behind the emperor to make certain that he did not enter into what Boniface continued to believe was his by right: Thessalonica. The presence of Maria and her sons was meant to act as a subtle threat, warning Baldwin off from any action that might anger the marquis.

This subtlety may have been lost on Baldwin. After acquiring Mosynopolis, the emperor proceeded south towards Thessalonica. Immediately, Boniface sent messengers to the emperor saying that the people of Thessalonica were willing to receive the marquis of Montferrat as their lord. He, Boniface, had sufficient troops to garrison the city himself without the emperor's help and he therefore asked that Baldwin not enter the kingdom. If he did, the marquis continued, he would no longer call the emperor friend and would do everything in his power against him. According to Villehardouin, Baldwin consulted with his advisors and responded to Boniface that he would enter Thessalonica anyway. Enraged, Boniface led his

⁸ Emphasis added. Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, *The Poems of the Troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras*, ed. Joseph Linskill (The Hague, 1964), p. 225.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, secs. 272–74, II:80–82; Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 99, pp. 96–97.

forces swiftly north.¹¹ Villehardouin blames all of the ensuing trouble on Baldwin's unnamed advisors, yet it was clearly the emperor's decision. Villehardouin was in a difficult position, attempting to divert blame from both Baldwin and Boniface. Yet it is the chronicler's own insistence that Baldwin granted Boniface Thessalonica in May that puts the emperor in a position of dishonoring his word. Unlike Villehardouin, who heard of these events in Constantinople, Robert of Clari was one of those marching with Baldwin.¹² Although he was not privy to the discussions of the emperor, he knew what was told to the men, and he heard the stories that inevitably leaked out. According to Clari, Baldwin and his advisors were enraged that Boniface would present the emperor with an ultimatum. Thessalonica, they insisted, did not belong to Boniface and, therefore, he had no right to make such arrogant threats and demands.¹³

Boniface marched swiftly on the town of Demotica, which surrendered without a fight. There, the marquis began his open rebellion. To the citizens of Demotica and the countryside he presented Manuel, the eldest son of Maria and Isaac II, proclaiming him emperor of the Romans. The people dutifully cheered the restoration of the Angeli, and Boniface recruited what soldiers he could among the Greeks. He then marched to Adrianople and lay siege to the city. The crusader garrison in Adrianople sent messengers to Constantinople to report the situation. As he had done at Demotica, the marquis professed to the Greek citizens that he had abandoned his Latin allies and was now fighting for the restoration of the Angelan dynasty. The citizens of Adrianople, however, were in no position to oust their Latin garrison, and they doubted Boniface's conversion in any event. They replied that they would not accept Manuel Angelus until he had been crowned in Constantinople.¹⁴

It did not take long for Baldwin to hear of Boniface's treachery. Shortly after he had captured Thessalonica and secured the region, messengers arrived with news of the marquis's conquest of Demotica and siege of Adrianople. Robert of Clari records how incensed the emperor and his men were at Boniface's betrayal. They swore that they would crush his rebellious forces and "cut him to pieces."¹⁵ Immediately, Baldwin ordered his troops to march to Adrianople, which they did with enthusiasm.

¹¹ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, secs. 276–79, II:84–88.

¹² Robert does not specifically record that he was present, but he rarely does. He does however record that Peter of Amiens, Robert's feudal lord, accompanied Baldwin and died on the return march. Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 103, p. 99. Throughout the crusade, Robert and Peter remained together. Indeed, these two, along with Robert's brother, Aleumes of Clari, played a crucial role in the capture of Constantinople. See Queller and Madden, *The Fourth Crusade*, pp. 182–84.

¹³ Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 99, pp. 97–98.

¹⁴ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, secs. 279–82, II:86–90; Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 101, pp. 98–99; Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Jan-Louis van Dieten (*Corpus Fountium Historiae Byzantinae*, XI/1) (Berlin and New York, 1975), p. 599.

¹⁵ Robert of Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 104, pp. 99–100.

When the barons in Constantinople heard of Boniface's rebellion, they immediately dispatched Villehardouin to Adrianople. The marshal of Champagne, a constant defender of unity in the crusading host, was also on good terms with the marquis. Nevertheless, when he met Boniface, Villehardouin had harsh words for him. In the end, Boniface agreed to put the argument between himself and the emperor before a council of barons in Constantinople consisting of Count Louis of Blois, Conon of Béthune, Doge Enrico Dandolo, and Geoffrey de Villehardouin himself. It was not clear that Emperor Baldwin would be willing to accept such an arbitration, but Villehardouin promised that the barons would do everything in their power to convince him.¹⁶

The decision to put the quarrel before the council in Constantinople was not an easy one for Boniface. As we have seen, the council in general and Conon of Béthune in particular were not well liked by Boniface or his court. It had been the council, after all, that had kept him from claiming Thessalonica two months earlier. It was Conon who had counseled Baldwin to be ungenerous with Boniface. As for Dandolo and the Venetian electors, they had deprived Boniface of the imperial crown. What could he expect now from these men? Why would they now support his claims after he had openly rebelled against them and the emperor? Oddly enough, what convinced Boniface to agree to the arbitration was a seemingly unconnected event: the sale of Crete – although not as it has been commonly understood.

When Villehardouin traveled to Adrianople, two Venetian ambassadors also came along, one of whom was Marco Sanudo, the nephew of the doge.¹⁷ They had a proposal for Boniface. It is common to read that the Venetians agreed to pay to Boniface 1000 silver marks for the title to the island of Crete. Like Donald Nicol, many have seen this as a means by which Dandolo took advantage of Boniface's difficult position.¹⁸ Although the marquis would have preferred to sell to his Genoese friends, the Venetians had cash on hand, which he sorely needed if he were to prosecute a war. It has even been suggested that Dandolo hoped that the money would cause Boniface to renege on his promise to Villehardouin and put his trust in his arms, thus keeping the Franks in disarray while Venice prospered.¹⁹ Fortunately, the treaty of the sale survives in both its Venetian and Montferrat copies.²⁰ When one reads the document and places it into the context of its surrounding events, it is clear that the sale of Crete was in fact only a small part of Dandolo's plan.

Dandolo and Boniface agreed to much more than a simple real estate sale. According to the treaty, Boniface gave to Venice the island of Crete, a 100,000

¹⁶ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, secs. 283–86, II:92–94.

¹⁷ The ambassadors are named in the treaty dated 12 August 1204. TTh. no. 123, pp. 512–15.

¹⁸ Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 149. Cf. also Jean Longnon, *L'Empire latin de Constantinople et la principauté de Morée* (Paris, 1949); John Godfrey, *1204: The Unholy Crusade* (Oxford, 1980), p. 136.

¹⁹ Ernst Gerland, *Geschichte des Lateinischen Kaiserreiches von Konstantinopel* (Homburg vor der Höhe, 1905), p. 26.

²⁰ TTh. no. 123, pp. 512–15; G.B. Cervellini, "Come i veneziani acquistarono Creta," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* n.s. 16 (1908), pp. 274–75.

gold hyperper debt owed to him by Alexius IV, a fief that Manuel I had given to Boniface's father, the city of Thessalonica and its surrounding areas, and all lands that he had or would have in the Byzantine Empire both east and west of the Bosphorus. In return, Dandolo gave to Boniface 1000 silver marks, plus a promise of unspecified lands in the western part of the empire with an annual income of 10,000 gold hyperpers, to be assessed by a friend of Boniface and a friend of Venice after the partition of the empire. Boniface would hold these lands through the doge, but he would also have complete control over them and the right of inheritance.²¹ Service for the lands would be due to the emperor, not the doge. In addition, the Venetians and Boniface agreed to defend each other's lands in the Latin Empire. If at any time Boniface were to break the treaty, he would be required to return the lands and the 1000 silver marks to the doge.²²

Crete, therefore, was not sold for 1000 marks. It was part of a much larger deal. This is made doubly clear by the provision that Boniface must return the 1000 marks if he breaks the covenant, while the Venetians need not return Crete for any reason. In this treaty Boniface gave to Venice everything he had in Byzantium, and many things he did not have. He gave a piece of paper saying that he owned Crete; a bad debt note valuable only by virtue of its gold seal; a fief that did not belong to him; an assignment of lands in Asia Minor that he did not want; the Morea, which he probably did want but was in no position to acquire; and a highly dubious claim to Thessalonica. In effect, Baldwin gave away everything because he had nothing. In return he received some ready cash, but more importantly a guarantee from Venice that one way or the other he would receive either Thessalonica or lands of equal value in Greece.²³

From Boniface's point of view there were only a few possible outcomes of his decision to put the quarrel before the council – and all of them were provided for

²¹ Antonio Carile argues that by virtue of this treaty Boniface becomes a "vassal" of Venice, because he holds his Byzantine lands through the Republic. The dispute between Boniface and Baldwin, therefore, becomes one between Dandolo and Baldwin. "Partitio Terrarum Imperii Romanie," *Studi Veneziani* 7 (1965), pp. 147–49, 168; idem, *Per una Storia dell'Impero Latino di Costantinopoli (1204–1261)* (Bologna, 1978), pp. 197–99. Yet "vassal" is Carile's term; it does not appear in the treaty, nor is it implied. Although the lands were to be held through Venice, all service was due to the emperor. If Boniface were the vassal of the doge, then he would owe service to the doge, who, according to the March Pact, would owe no service to the emperor. The formulation used in the treaty has nothing to do with vassalage, and everything to do with security. Boniface's good behavior toward Venice in the future is enforced by the penalty of losing tenure of his Greek lands. Surely the threat foremost in Dandolo's mind was Boniface's Genoese friends. See the cogent arguments by J.N. Fotheringham, *Marco Sanudo: Conqueror of the Archipelago* (Oxford, 1915), p. 34.

²² TTh. no. 123, pp. 512–15.

²³ The best account of the treaty and its ramification is by Fotheringham. However, on this point, I disagree with him a little. He argues that by this treaty Dandolo was guaranteeing to Boniface that he would receive Thessalonica, because the doge would put sufficient force to bear on the emperor to make him relinquish it. *Marco Sanudo*, p. 35. If this were so, why then did the treaty not simply say that Venice would render to Boniface Thessalonica? While Dandolo would certainly prefer that the emperor give over Thessalonica, the text of the treaty makes it clear that the doge was not certain that he would do so. It is Venice that was now taking that risk by guaranteeing the value of Thessalonica to Boniface.

by his agreement with Dandolo. If the council met and ruled in favor of Boniface, then Thessalonica would, by virtue of the treaty, go directly to the Venetians. The doge could then render it as the promised lands. If the council met and ruled against Boniface, then he would have nothing. Yet once the division of lands was complete, Dandolo would render the promised territory to Boniface. If the Venetians received Thessalonica in the partition, then so much the better. If not, lands of comparable worth would go to the marquis. If the council met and ruled in favor of Boniface, but Baldwin refused to accept it, or the council never met because Baldwin refused to put the dispute before it, then the result would be the same. In all cases, whatever the council decided, Boniface would receive his Greek lands from the doge, not from the partition of the empire.²⁴

It would be instructive to know more about the subsequent negotiations with Baldwin. Villehardouin records that messengers were sent to the emperor warning him with a thinly veiled threat against attacking Boniface at Adrianople.²⁵ Baldwin returned to Constantinople, but for four days refused to put the quarrel before the council.²⁶ Villehardouin steadfastly refuses to provide the reasons for Baldwin's reluctance, nor the arguments that finally swayed him. They are, however, not hard to guess. It could not have escaped the emperor's notice that the council was willing to buy peace with Boniface. Baldwin was never very concerned about the land, but it surely galled him that Boniface would be rewarded for his treason and treachery.²⁷ Here the treaty between Venice and Boniface may also have played a role in bringing the emperor to arbitration. When the Flemish knight stood staunchly on his chivalric principles that treason deserved death, not a kingdom, Dandolo, who was greatly admired by Baldwin, could point out that Boniface had already given his rights to all Byzantine lands to the doge and his people. To agree to the council's arbitration, therefore, was merely to allow Thessalonica to be handed over to the emperor's Venetian allies. Of course, the Venetians would instantly give those lands to Boniface, but that would not be the emperor's doing. In effect, the treaty may have acted as a small fig leaf for Baldwin, allowing him to hold on to his principles while letting go of Thessalonica.

The treaty between Dandolo and Boniface is now commonly remembered only for the sale of Crete because, in the end, that is all the Venetians came away with. However, in August 1204 Crete was a lesser consideration. More important at the time, the treaty was the means by which Dandolo brokered peace among the crusaders by making the Venetians liable for any penalties enforced on Boniface of Montferrat. It also cleared away the underbrush of the Montferrat clan's claims

²⁴ Freddy Thiriet mistakenly assumes that the doge was guaranteeing that Boniface would receive these lands as part of the partition. *La Romanie vénitienne au moyen âge. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénétie* (Paris, 1959), pp. 75–76. If Boniface were declared an outlaw in Constantinople, he would certainly not be eligible for a portion of the spoils. He was ineligible anyway, as his share had already been distributed in the lands of Asia Minor.

²⁵ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, sec. 293, II:100–2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, sec. 296, II:104.

²⁷ These sentiments are expressed throughout Clari's account.

on previous emperors – claims that could poison future relations between the marquis and the emperor. In one short document, without ever openly proclaiming its purpose, the treaty wiped away all tangible reasons for disputes and quarrels between the two leaders. That it did all this while gaining Crete for Venice is further evidence of Enrico Dandolo's political acumen.

The Greeks of Constantinople under Latin Rule 1204–1261

David Jacoby

Constantinople experienced in the years 1203 and 1204 a catastrophe that surpassed any disaster it had endured in the past, except for the great plague of 541–544 in terms of demographic losses. Three fires destroyed large sections of the city comprising densely populated areas and centers of economic activity.¹ Their rapid spreading, enhanced by the existence of numerous wooden structures, the attacks of the city's mob on a Latin quarter, the Latin assault on the city, and three days of violence and looting following the conquest of 12 April 1204 inflicted heavy damage upon dwellings, workshops, shops, markets, other economic premises, and goods.

These events also deeply affected Constantinople's population, both in the short term and throughout the Latin period. They resulted in heavy loss of life, yet in the absence of reliable quantitative data all calculations in that respect remain purely speculative. They also generated a high degree of mobility within the city itself and between the latter and other localities. The political and territorial partition of the city between the Latin emperor Baldwin I and Venice, implemented shortly after the conquest, was also an important factor in that respect, as it created different political, economic and social conditions in each of the two urban sections.²

The Jews were the first inhabitants of Constantinople among those compelled to move. Before 1203 their residence in the city proper was prohibited by imperial order and they were established in the suburb of Galata/Pera, situated to the north of the Golden Horn. Most, if not all, of those who survived the destruction by fire of their neighborhood early in July 1203 sought shelter in Constantinople. The presence of Jews in the city is first recorded between November 1205 and January 1207, thus shortly after the Latin conquest, yet without any indication about their location. There is no evidence of them in the Venetian quarter during the Latin period. On the other hand, in the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1258–82) they appear along the city wall in the neighborhood of Vlanga, to the north of the harbour of Kontoskalion opening onto the Propontis.³ It is unclear whether the

¹ Thomas F. Madden, "The Fires of the Fourth Crusade in Constantinople, 1203–1204: A Damage Assessment," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 84/85 (1991/1992), 72–85, yet see my reservations regarding the Venetian quarter below, p. 67, footnote 84.

² New dating of that partition by D. Jacoby, "The Venetian Government and Administration in Latin Constantinople, 1204–1261: A State within a State," in G. Ortalli, G. Ravegnani, P. Schreiner, eds., *Quarta Crociata. Venezia – Bisanzio – Impero latino* (Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti) (Venice, 2006), pp. 38–41.

³ D. Jacoby, "The Jewish Community of Constantinople from the Komnenian to the Palaiologan Period," *Vizantijskij Vremennik*, 55/2 (80) (1998), 31, 36–40, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 2001), no. V.

Jews of Galata/Pera resettled in that urban area, spared by the fires of 1203–1204, shortly after the loss of their own neighborhood in 1203 or whether they established themselves there later.⁴ Although the sources emphasize the destruction of Jewish houses in Galata/Pera, there is good reason to believe that some structures of their Greek neighbors were also gutted and that their inhabitants similarly resettled in Constantinople itself. Most former residents of the suburb did apparently not return there later. By 1267, it remained sparsely populated and had acquired a semi-rural character.⁵

The next episode of mobility involved both Latins and Greeks. Some time before 17 July 1203, the urban mob destroyed Latin premises located between the Golden Horn and the northern city wall, primarily the Pisan quarter in which the Amalfitans resided. The Pisans and Amalfitans supported Emperor Alexios III, yet after the latter's flight from Constantinople his successor, Isaac II, allied himself with the Venetians. As a result, the Pisans and Amalfitans left the city and joined the crusaders camping at Galata.⁶ On 19 August 1203, some Latins crossed the Golden Horn and while retreating set fire to several buildings. For two days and two nights the blaze spread through the most populous regions of Constantinople.⁷ Geoffroy of Villehardouin reports that many were killed and claims that afterwards all the Latins who were settled in Constantinople, fearful of Greek animosity, left the city and crossed over to Galata with wives, children and all the belongings they could carry. He estimates their number at some 15,000, yet this figure is clearly inflated and unreliable, like several others he mentions.⁸ According to Gunther of Pairis, Venetian, Italian, French, German and other settlers were expelled from the city because the citizens suspected them of treason.⁹

⁴ On the extension of the fire in that region, see Madden, "The Fires," p. 83, and map on p. 93. G.P. Majeska, *Russian Travellers to Constantinople in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, XIX) (Washington, D.C., 1984), pp. 268–69, folio 19, and Map II at the end of the volume, identifies the Jewish Gate in that area with Yeni kapi, yet mistakenly locates that gate west instead of north of the port.

⁵ D. Jacoby, "The Urban Evolution of Latin Constantinople (1204–1261)," in N. Necipoglu, ed., *Byzantine Constantinople: Monuments, Topography and Everyday Life* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 282, 295.

⁶ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. J.A. van Dieten (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, XI/1) (Berlin–New York, 1975), I, 552.77–90. New dating of the sequence of events by O. Kresten, "Diplomatische und historische Beobachtungen zu den in den Kanzleiregistern Papst Innocenz' III überlieferten Auslandsschreiben byzantinischer Kaiser," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 37 (1995), pp. 68–69, n. 102. The Amalfitans did not have a quarter of their own, as generally stated: see the convincing arguments to that effect in P. Magdalino, *Constantinople médiévale. Etudes sur l'évolution des structures urbaines* (Travaux et mémoires du Centre de recherche d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, Collège de France Monographies 9) (Paris, 1996), pp. 85–88.

⁷ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 554.38–555.64.

⁸ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, folios 203–205, 2nd ed., ed. E. Faral (Paris, 1961), I, pp. 206–10. The figure of 400,000 or more for the city's population (II, p. 54, par. 251) is simply excluded.

⁹ Gunther von Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana. Untersuchungen und kritische Ausgabe*, ed. P. Orth (Spolia Berolinensia, 5) (Hildesheim und Zurich, 1994), p. 156.

The statements of these western chroniclers are partly contradicted by the more trustworthy testimony of Niketas Choniates, who reports that some Venetians remained in the city throughout the final Latin siege. Soon after the Latin conquest of 12 April 1204, he gave shelter to a Venetian friend by the name of Domenico, a wine merchant, who joined him with his family and goods in a house situated close to the church of Hagia Sophia. All of them afterwards moved to a house inhabited by other Venetians with whom he was acquainted. However, that house had to be evacuated because it was located in an area allotted to the French knights and would thus be seized by them.¹⁰ It follows that, after the conquest, these Venetian settlers who had remained in Constantinople had to relocate within the enlarged Venetian quarter. Some if not most of them had presumably wedded Greek women and, therefore, had been reluctant to leave the city.¹¹

The destruction of lay and ecclesiastical property and the large-scale confiscations that followed the conquest left numerous people homeless or deprived of means of subsistence and compelled them to seek new premises and resources within the city or elsewhere. For the long-term demographic evolution of Latin Constantinople the exodus from the city was far more important than the local population movement. The first to leave were those whose political fortunes had been overturned, with no prospects of recovering their social status in the foreseeable future, yet having enough movable wealth to sustain their flight. These included the emperors, some close relatives, officers in the imperial household, as well as members of the social, administrative, military and ecclesiastical elites and some of their dependents. Emperor Alexios III Angelos fled with his wife, some other relatives and attendants on the night of 17 July 1203 to Philippopolis.¹² Emperor Alexios V Mourtzouphlos fled to Mosynopolis following the penetration of the Latin forces into Constantinople on 12 April 1204.¹³

On the eve and on the day of the conquest many inhabitants concealed their precious belongings, either to save them from confiscation or in anticipation of their own departure, with the hope of retrieving them upon their return to the city.¹⁴ Both the Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates and the French knight Robert of Clari report that those who wished to leave were allowed to go. A large number of

¹⁰ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 587.96–589.37. The identity of the first Venetian appears, *ibid.*, I, 588.13–16, version LO.

¹¹ On Venetians married to Greek women living outside the Venetian quarter, see D. Jacoby, “The Byzantine Outsider in Trade (c. 900–c. 1350),” in D.C. Smythe, ed., *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 135–36. On the territorial aspect and the enlargement of the quarter, see D. Jacoby, “The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261: Topographical Considerations,” in C. Sode and S. Takács, eds., *Novum Millennium* (Aldershot, 2000), p. 160, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy* (Aldershot, 2005), no. III.

¹² Choniates, *Historia*, I, 546–47; *Georgii Acropolitae opera*, chaps. 2–3, 5, ed. A. Heisenberg (Leipzig, 1903), I, pp. 6, 8. Hereafter cited as Akropolites.

¹³ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 571.47–54; Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, folio 266, ed. Faral, II, p. 74. Akropolites, chap. 5, ed. Heisenberg, I, pp. 8–9.

¹⁴ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 571.43–46, and 586.79–82.

people indeed left the city unhindered on the day of the city's fall to the Latins. On the morning following the conquest, the Latins learned that many Greeks had fled. The population outflow continued in the subsequent days and involved all ranks of society, contrary to the assertion of Robert of Clari. Choniates himself departed on the fifth day after the conquest and sought refuge in the city of Selymbria in Thrace, where he and other individuals of high social standing were badly received by the local population.¹⁵

The Greek exodus was motivated by several factors. The city's fall to the Latins, after almost nine centuries during which it had been considered invincible, shattered the self-confidence of its Greek inhabitants. There was fear of the Latin conquerors after the three days of brutality and looting that followed the conquest. It resurfaced before 25 March 1205, when Frankish troops leaving Constantinople to quell a Greek rebellion in Thrace took revenge on the Greek population and again indulged in violence and pillage.¹⁶ The morale of the Greek population was also affected by the Latin destruction of sculptures and monuments, many of which were revered. The massive Latin seizure of relics, the expropriation of Greek ecclesiastical institutions, and the attempts to enforce the submission of the Greek Church to the papacy presumably alienated the majority of the Greek inhabitants of Constantinople and induced some laymen to leave.¹⁷ However, these measures mainly affected the Greek clergy. In the Venetian section of the city the Greek monasteries were taken over by Venetian religious institutions.¹⁸ One of the monasteries, the Pantokrator, became Venice's center of government and administration in Constantinople and its monks were replaced by Latin ecclesiastics.¹⁹ It should be noted, however, that the concession of monasteries to Latin institutions, in some cases for fiscal purposes only, did not necessarily entail the abolition of Greek monastic life within their walls.²⁰ The emigration of the Greek clergy serving in churches and monasteries remaining in Orthodox hands was also prompted by the loss of their resources, both in Constantinople and in the provinces, which undercut the economic standing

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 589–95; Robert de Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, folio LXXX, ed. Ph. Lauer (Paris, 1956), pp. 79–80.

¹⁶ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 617.77–83.

¹⁷ Incomplete list of churches and monasteries seized by the Latin clergy in R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*. Première partie: *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, III: *Les églises et les monastères* (Paris, 1969), pp. 579–80. See also below.

¹⁸ Jacoby, "The Venetian Government and Administration," pp. 43–46.

¹⁹ On the Pantokrator, see *ibid.*, nn. 90–97. Niccolò, deacon of the Pantokrator, is attested in the years 1223–25: R. Morozzo della Rocca and A. Lombardo, eds., *Documenti del commercio veneziano nei secoli XI–XIII* (Torino, 1940), II, pp. 147–48, no. 608; Venice, Archivio di Stato, *Mensa Patriarcale* (hereafter cited as ASV, *MP*; these are unpublished documents), b. 9, nos. 24 and 25, of which summaries and short extracts appear in Ch. Maltezos, "Il quartiere veneziano di Costantinopoli (Scali marittimi)," *Thesaurismata*, 15 (1978), pp. 52–53, nos. 37 and 38, yet without Niccolò's name.

²⁰ J. Richard, "The Establishment of the Latin Church in the Empire of Constantinople (1204–1227)," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 4 (1989), 53–54, repr. in B. Arbel, B. Hamilton and D. Jacoby, eds., *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989) with identical pagination.

of these institutions.²¹ As early as 7 December 1204, Pope Innocent III addressed the issue of religious services in the churches of Constantinople abandoned by the Greek clergy.²² There was also a reluctance to live under Latin rule, expressed by Niketas Choniates.²³ In sum, it is clear that the conjunction of material destruction, loss of life and the Latin conquest had a traumatic effect upon all ranks and sectors of the city's Greek population, both collectively and individually.

Contemporary authors focused their attention upon the members of the lay and ecclesiastical elites who left Constantinople. Some of them fled to Byzantine provinces still under Byzantine rule, namely Thessaly, Thrace, Epirus, Paphlagonia in the newly established Greek state of Trebizond, or even to Turkish territories. The Patriarch of Constantinople, John X Kamateros, took up residence in the provincial city of Didymotheichon.²⁴ However, many if not most great Constantinopolitan families headed toward western Asia Minor and rallied around Theodore I Laskaris, who established a Greek state that ensured the continuity of Byzantium, the so-called Empire of Nicaea.²⁵ On the other hand, some Greek residents of the capital reached provinces occupied by the Latins, such as Corfu and Euboea. The deacon Euthymios Tornikes probably left Constantinople for Euboea after his brother Constantine, a high-ranking official in the Latin administration of Emperor Baldwin I, defected to the Bulgars in the spring of 1205. There were also other intellectuals who left Constantinople to join their families in Euboea.²⁶

²¹ On the widely spread property of Constantinople's ecclesiastical institutions in the provinces before 1204, see P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 160–71; on its loss in the Peloponnesus, see D. Jacoby, "Changing Economic Patterns in Latin Romania: The Impact of the West," in A.E. Laiou and R.P. Mottahedeh, eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, D.C., 2001), p. 198, repr. in Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange*, no. IX.

²² *Patrologia latina*, CCXV, coll. 471–72, lib. VII, ep. 164.

²³ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 634.67–635.5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 593–94; D.M. Nicol, "Refugees, Mixed Population and Local Patriotism in Epiros and Western Macedonia after the Fourth Crusade," *XVe Congrès international d'études byzantines (Athènes, 1976), Rapports et co-rapports*, I/ 2, (Athens, 1976), pp. 11–14, 17. In 1206, Orthodox monks stated that they could have found refuge with Theodore Laskaris, in Paphlagonia or with the Turks, which hints at the direction taken by those who had fled earlier: M. Angold, "Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 4 (1989), p. 67, reprinted in Arbel, Hamilton and Jacoby, *Latins and Greeks*. On Kamateros, see M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Komneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 515.

²⁵ Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, folio 266, ed. Lauer, II, p. 74; M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204–1261)* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 10–11, 62–63. On individual families in the Empire of Nicaea, see H. Ahrweiler, "L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081–1317), particulièrement au XIIIe siècle," *Travaux et Mémoires*, 1 (1965), pp. 24–25 and 167–78, *passim*.

²⁶ On Corfu, see Nicol, "Refugees," pp. 13–14. On Constantine Tornikes, see below, p. 59. Euthymios moved between Euboea and Athens and in Attika, yet left for Naupaktos around 1219: see J. Darrouzès, "Notes sur Euthyme Tornikès, Euthyme Malakès et Georges Tornikès," *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 23 (1965), 152–54; F. Kolovou, "Euthymios Tornikes als Briefschreiber. Vier unedierte Briefe des Euthymios Tornikes an Michael Choniates im Codex Buc. Gr. 508," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 45 (1995), 55–57.

After the large-scale outflow of panic-stricken population soon after the conquest and in the following days, individual emigration continued in the following two or three years, though presumably on a much smaller scale than before. In addition to the factors mentioned above, it was also generated by economic considerations. The events of 1203–04 seriously crippled the industrial and commercial infrastructure of the city, and the material damage was compounded by several developments. One of them was the departure of the Byzantine imperial court and many members of the social elite, whose economic role had been crucial, whether as consumers of luxury products, employers, or entrepreneurs financing imperial or private manufacture. This is illustrated by the production of silk textiles. The Byzantine emperors had subsidized production in their own workshops, while the growing demand for various grades of silk fabrics from the wealthy local elite and a clientele belonging to lower strata of society had stimulated production in private workshops from the eleventh century up to 1203. The impoverished Latin emperors did not have the means to reactivate the imperial workshops nor to finance their continuous operation. The Latin elite around their court did not have resources comparable to those of their Byzantine predecessors, nor any inclination to revive the private production of silk cloth. The decline in Constantinople's population further restricted the demand for cheaper grades of silks. The Venetians were the only ones capable of injecting capital into the city's economy in the first years after the conquest, yet they were more interested in trade than in local manufacture. This was especially the case with respect to high-grade silk production, which shortly after 1204 was being developed in their home city. In these circumstances, many local inhabitants belonging to the middle and lower ranks of society were deprived of their occupations and compelled to emigrate. Such was the case of craftsmen in various industrial branches, especially in the luxury industries. It would seem that many Greek and Jewish silk workers left Constantinople some time after the Latin conquest and headed toward the Byzantine territories in western Asia Minor in order to resume the exercise of their crafts. The substantial contraction of the urban economy and the return of Latin merchants enjoying favored conditions also induced local merchants to emigrate.²⁷ Some of them who had previously traded with the region of the Lower Danube may have found refuge there.²⁸

²⁷ On economic conditions in Constantinople in the first years after the Latin conquest, see D. Jacoby, "The Economy of Latin Constantinople, 1204–1261," in A.E. Laiou, ed., *Urbs capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences. La IV Croisade et ses conséquences* (Réalités Byzantines, 10) (Paris, 2005), pp. 195–99. On developments with respect to silk manufacture, see D. Jacoby, "Silk in Western Byzantium before the Fourth Crusade," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 84/85 (1991/1992), pp. 452–500, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Trade, Commodities and Shipping in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 1997), no. VII; D. Jacoby, "The Jews and the Silk Industry of Constantinople," in D. Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean*, no. XI, pp. 17–20; D. Jacoby, "Dalla materia prima ai drappi tra Bisanzio, il Levante e Venezia: la prima fase dell'industria serica veneziana," in L. Molà, R.C. Mueller, C. Zanier, eds., *La seta in Italia dal Medioevo al Seicento. Dal baco al drappo* (Venezia, 2000), pp. 271–77, repr. in Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange*, no. X.

²⁸ I. Barnea, "Le Danube, voie de communication byzantine," in N.G. Moschonas, *Ἡ ἐπικοινωνία στὸ Βυζάντιο* (Athens, 1993), pp. 592–93, states that a section of the aristocracy and important merchants

It is likely that lay emigration slowed down during the reign of Emperor Henry of Hainaut, which lasted from 20 August 1206 to 11 June 1216. His conciliatory attitude toward the Greeks and their clergy was highly praised by the Greeks.²⁹ Yet departures continued throughout the Latin period. On the other hand, there were obviously Greeks who for various reasons returned to Constantinople after some time and others who settled in the city. Still others may have acted like Niketas Choniates, who arrived in Constantinople in the second half of 1206 yet, dissatisfied with the situation, left again after six months, this time for Nicaea.³⁰

Except for the imperial family and the magnates, large numbers of Greek laymen reflecting the entire social spectrum and a fairly large occupational range remained in the city. Surprisingly, the well-informed Choniates claims that Emperor Baldwin I dismissed all the Greeks from imperial service.³¹ This assertion is clearly incorrect and contradicted by the same author.³² Constantine Tornikes, Byzantine *logothetes tou dromou* from 1201 or 1202 onward,³³ served afterwards in the Latin administration in an unknown function. After the Latin defeat at the battle of Adrianople in April 1205 he defected to the Bulgar ruler Kalojan, who ordered his execution.³⁴ He is the only former high-ranking Byzantine official known by name for the brief reign of Baldwin I, yet others are indirectly attested. The use of Byzantine imperial ceremonial and insignia at the coronation of Baldwin I on 16 May 1204 implies the cooperation of Greek officials familiar with the proceedings. Indeed, several of them were in the palace of Boukoleon together with Baldwin I after the ceremony.³⁵ The presence of Greek officials in the Latin administration also accounts for the Byzantine imprint in the bureaucracy of the Latin court, in the latter's use of office titles, as well as in the documents it issued.³⁶

from Constantinople settled in that region. There is no direct evidence in that respect and, in any event, it is likely that only merchants would have been attracted there.

²⁹ J. Longnon, *L'Empire latin de Constantinople et la principauté de Morée* (Paris, 1949), pp. 143–46. See also below, p. 64.

³⁰ For the dating, see J.L. van Dielen, "Die drei Fassungen der Historia des Niketas Choniates über die Eroberung von Konstantinopel und die Ereignisse danach," in I. Vassil, G.S. Henrich, D.R. Reinsch, *Lesearten. Festschrift für Athanasios Kambylis zum 70. Geburtstag dargebracht von Schülern, Kollegen und Freunden* (Berlin–New York, 1998), pp. 155–57.

³¹ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 597.79–598.85.

³² I deal here only with Greeks residing in Constantinople.

³³ C.M. Brand, *Byzantium confronts the West, 1180–1204* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), pp. 142–43, 153; R. Guilland, "Les logothètes. Études sur l'histoire administrative de l'Empire byzantin," *Revue des Études Byzantines*, 29 (1971), pp. 66–67. On that function, partly related to foreign affairs, see *ibid.*, pp. 33–35; *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A.P. Kazhdan et al. (New York–Oxford, 1991), II, pp. 1247–48, s.v., hereafter cited as *ODB*; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 256–57.

³⁴ Choniates, *Historia*, I, 643.1–10, claims that he served unwillingly.

³⁵ Robert de Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, folio XCVII, ed. Lauer, p. 95.

³⁶ D. Jacoby, "The Venetian Presence in the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204–1261): the Challenge of Feudalism and the Byzantine Inheritance," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 43 (1993), 143, repr. in Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean*, no. VI. See also P. Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204–1500* (London and New York, 1995), pp. 167–69, 189–91.

According to the Byzantine historian George Akropolites, Emperor Henry of Hainaut appointed many Greeks to high-ranking administrative and military offices and was well viewed by the Greeks of Constantinople.³⁷ One may wonder whether Eumathius Philokales, *megas doux* or ‘commander of the imperial fleet’, was among them. In 1214, he reported from Constantinople to Nicaea about the pressure exerted upon the Greek clergy.³⁸ It is unfortunately impossible to ascertain whether he is identical with the official bearing that name who had served under Isaac II and Alexios III as eparch or prefect of Constantinople.³⁹ In any event, by 1214 a Venetian, Filocalo Navigaioso, was *megas doux* of the Latin empire, a title bestowed upon him by Emperor Henry of Hainaut.⁴⁰ The case of the deacon Demetrios Pyrros also remains unclear. In 1240 he appears as *epi ton deeseon* or “receiver of petitions,” as stated in the will he drafted in Thessalonica for another Greek, Matthaïos Perdikaes.⁴¹ In the Byzantine imperial administration the function involved the examination of judicial requests addressed to the emperor. Opinions are divided as to whether, in addition, there was a similar function for charitable purposes in the administration of the patriarch of Constantinople. The survival of the former or of both in the Latin period may be assumed, as Orthodox Greeks constituted the vast majority among Constantinople’s population subject to the authority of the Latin emperors and of the Latin patriarchs.⁴² It is impossible to determine whether in 1240 Demetrios Pyrros served in the imperial or patriarchal administration of the Latin empire.

³⁷ Akropolites, chap. 16, ed. Heisenberg, I, pp. 28–29.

³⁸ His letter is mentioned in the encyclical addressed by Patriarch Theodore II Eirenikos of Nicaea to the Greeks of Constantinople: V. Laurent, *Les registres des actes du patriarcat de Constantinople, I: Les actes des patriarches*, pt. 4, *Les registres de 1208 à 1309* (Paris, 1971), pp. 24–26, no. 1219, with dating between October 1214 and November 1215. Angold, “Greeks and Latins,” p. 69, ascribes it to the autumn of 1214.

³⁹ See Brand, *Byzantium confronts the West*, pp. 100, 142; *ODB*, III, p. 1656, s.v. Philokales. On the function, created by Emperor Alexios I, see R. Guilland, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines* (Amsterdam, 1967), I, p. 540.

⁴⁰ Reference in a document of 1210: Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano*, II, pp. 58–60, no. 519. On Filocalo Navigaioso, see G. Saint-Guillain, “Deux îles grecques au temps de l’Empire latin. Andros et Lemnos au XIII^e siècle,” *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 113 (2001), pp. 603–9.

⁴¹ Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, p. 488, folio 6, followed by V. Kidonopoulos, *Bauten in Konstantinopel 1204–1328* (Mainzer Veröffentlichungen zur Byzantinistik, hrg. von Günter Prinzing, I) (Wiesbaden, 1994), pp. 95–96, have mistakenly assumed that the will of the Greek Matthaïos Perdikaes, drafted in 1240, referred to Constantinople. However, the latter’s eight houses were located in Thessalonica: see the will and commentary in P. Lemerle, A. Guillou, N. Svoronos, D. Papachryssanthou, eds., *Actes de Lavra*, II. De 1204 à 1328 (Archives de l’Athos, VII) (Paris, 1977), pp. 1–4, esp. 2–3.

⁴² On the function in the imperial administration, see N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles* (Paris, 1972), p. 322. According to Angold, *Church and Society*, p. 189, John Kamateros, the future patriarch of Constantinople, served in that function in the imperial administration from around 1176, when Eusthatios became archbishop of Thessalonica. J. Darrouzès, *Recherches sur les ΟΦΙΚΙΑ de l’église byzantine* (Paris, 1970), pp. 378–79, believes that the office existed in both administrations.

Greek interpreters were indispensable for the operation of the imperial administration, both within the Latin empire itself and for its diplomatic relations with neighboring Greek states. An interpreter by the name of Emmanuel, active in the reign of Henry of Hainaut, received several houses from him between 1206 and 1209. It is unclear why he sought confirmation of his possessions from Pope Innocent III, who sent him a letter to that effect in 1209.⁴³ In 1253, a Greek interpreter or another official in the chancery of Baldwin II composed the Greek version of a letter by which the emperor requested Scacatai, a Mongol commander, to grant a safe-conduct to the Franciscan missionary William of Rubruck and his party, who were on their way to the court of Sartaq, son of Batu who was the ruler of the Golden Horde.⁴⁴

The presence of Greeks in high-ranking positions in the Latin imperial court continued after Henry's reign, and we find several of them in the service of Baldwin II. In 1243, Blanche of Castile, mother of King Louis IX of France, blamed the emperor for having two Greeks as his principal advisers. The emperor denied the claim, stating that the two Greeks were not members of the imperial council composed of Frankish noblemen, and asserted that he listened only to the latter's advice.⁴⁵ His account is not convincing. Nikephoritzes and Aloubardes were two high-ranking secretaries with the title of *hypogrammateus* in the chancery of Baldwin II.⁴⁶ One may wonder whether they were the Greeks to whom Blanche of Castile alluded, in which case they may have been in the service of the Latin empire for 18 years at least, in any event from 1243 to 1261. Nikephoritzes may be identical to the envoy of Baldwin II who sometime before 1261 obtained a loan of 5,000 hyperpera from Othon of Cicon, Latin lord of Karystos in Euboea.⁴⁷ After the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261 both Nikephoritzes and Aloubardes entered the service of Michael VIII Palaiologos. The emperor sent them on a mission to Pope Urban IV, presumably because they were fluent in Latin and western languages and familiar with diplomatic negotiations. The Latins accused them of treason, and Nikephoritzes was killed in Rome.⁴⁸ According to his title, John Phylax served under Baldwin II in

⁴³ *Patrologia latina*, CCXVI, col. 227, lib. XIII, ep. 35.

⁴⁴ Fr. Guillemus de Rubruc, "Itinerarium," IX, 2 and X, 4, in A. van den Wyngaert, ed., *Sinica franciscana*, I, *Itinera et relationes Fratrum Minorum saeculi XIII et XIV* (Quaracchi (Firenze), 1929), pp. 188 and 190–91 respectively.

⁴⁵ A. Teulet, ed., *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, II (Paris, 1866), pp. 518–19, no. 3123. The queen's letter was brought by Villain of Aulnay, marshal of the Latin empire, who in 1249 had been sent on a mission to France: Longnon, *L'empire latin*, p. 218.

⁴⁶ Niketas Choniates had served in that function early in his administrative career: *Historia*, I, 397.87–88. The term was apparently equivalent to *grammatikos*: On this function, see V. Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin*, II. *L'administration centrale* (Paris, 1981), pp. 663–67, nos. 1183–92, and *ODB*, II, p. 866, s. v. Grammatikos.

⁴⁷ P. Riant, ed., *Exuviae sacrae Constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1877–78), II, pp. 144–45, no. XCIII.

⁴⁸ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, 2:27, ed. A. Failler (CFHB, XXIV) (Paris, 1984), I, p. 201. There is no reason to consider Aloubardes a *gasmoulos*, the offspring of mixed Latin–Greek parentage, as suggested by D.J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West, 1258–1282*.

a department of the emperor's treasury in charge of precious objects.⁴⁹ He was the one who advised Alexios Strategopoulos, commander of the Byzantine forces that had recovered the city, to set fire to various places along the Golden Horn in order to prevent the landing of Latin forces returning from an expedition in the Black Sea.⁵⁰ By contrast to the Latin imperial court, Venice abstained from employing high-ranking Greek officials in the administration it established in Constantinople. It did not require the ceremonial and trappings of that court, although the Venetian podestà used some regalian elements,⁵¹ and it may have distrusted the Greeks, as it did with respect to the Greek *archontes* of Crete after 1209.⁵²

Most importantly, the employment of former Byzantine officials at lower ranks of the imperial bureaucracy enabled both the crusaders, Baldwin I and Venice to take advantage of Byzantine cadasters and other documents found in Constantinople when they divided the city and other territories between themselves.⁵³ The familiarity of these officials with fiscal registers, terminology and practices and with the operation of the administrative apparatus also ensured the large-scale continuity of the Byzantine fiscal system and the collection of taxes and rents, both in the imperial and Venetian portions of Constantinople and in the provinces of the Latin empire.⁵⁴ This is duly illustrated in 1219 by the participation of a Greek official in the fiscal survey of Lampsakos, a locality on the eastern shore of the Dardanelles granted by Venice to three of its citizens in 1214 in exchange of a yearly payment.⁵⁵ Shortly before the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261, there were also some Greeks who served in the lower ranks of the Venetian administration in an unknown capacity, which prompted them to leave the city for Venice.⁵⁶

Not all Greeks formerly belonging to the higher or middle ranks of the Byzantine bureaucracy were integrated within the imperial or Venetian administrations. Some refused to serve under the Latins, like Niketas Choniates who under Emperor Isaac II

A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), p. 132, n. 65. Some time after 1263, Michael VIII sent him on a second mission to Pope Urban IV in 1262. He was Greek, judging by his name Maximos, mentioned in a letter of the pope: see *ibid.*, 140–41.

⁴⁹ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, 2:36, ed. Failler, p. 227, 11–25. This was an autonomous department in the Byzantine administration since 1044 at the latest: see Laurent, *Le corpus des sceaux*, II, p. 346.

⁵⁰ Georges Pachymères, *Relations historiques*, 2:27, ed. Failler, I, p. 201.

⁵¹ Jacoby, "The Venetian Presence," pp. 147–49, 194–96.

⁵² On the Venetian policy toward them, see D. Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and Change," *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 4 (1989), pp. 6–10; also published with identical pagination in Arbel, Hamilton and Jacoby, *Latins and Greeks*, and in Jacoby, *Byzantium*, no. VIII.

⁵³ N. Oikonomides, "La décomposition de l'Empire byzantin à la veille de 1204 et les origines de l'Empire de Nicée: à propos de la 'Partitio Romaniae'," *XVe Congrès international d'études byzantines (Athènes, 1976), Rapports et co-rapports*, I/1 (Athens, 1976), pp. 11–12, 22. See also above, p. 53.

⁵⁴ Jacoby, "The Venetian Presence," pp. 151–52, 164–82.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 169–71.

⁵⁶ On these Greeks, see below, p. 72.

had been *logothetes ton sekreton* or head of the civil administration.⁵⁷ The Byzantine author sent a version of his historical work to an unknown Greek friend remaining in Constantinople, who must have belonged to the same social milieu, yet does not refer to him as holding a function in the imperial or Venetian administration.⁵⁸ Other Greeks were simply not recruited to serve in these bodies. The father of the historian George Akropolites, who lived for some thirty years under Latin rule, offers a case in point. Some of his ancestors had apparently served as fiscal officers in Constantinople before the Fourth Crusade. It seems excluded, however, that he had any official function in the Latin period, because he complained about the heavy taxes and bribes he was compelled to pay. He must nevertheless have been a man of some social and economic standing. He had connections to the Byzantine imperial court at Nicaea, to which he sent his son George in 1233. He was wealthy, had a large house, apparently located in the imperial section of Constantinople, and many male and female servants.⁵⁹ Neither his occupation nor the source of his wealth are known, and it is impossible to determine whether the latter had been acquired before the Latin conquest or under Latin rule. The elder Akropolites was wary of Latin rule and planned to leave Constantinople for Nicaea, yet died in 1235 from severe illness before fulfilling his wish.⁶⁰

Philippos Vistariti was yet another affluent Greek living in Constantinople. He was most likely a merchant who loaned money to the Venetian authorities in Constantinople. This would explain why, in 1254, this subject of the Latin emperor was granted Venetian citizenship, though limited to Romania, that is, Byzantine and former Byzantine territories.⁶¹ A Greek woman called Theodora, wife of B., *civis constantinopolitanus*, must have also been wealthy. In 1232 she appealed to Pope Gregorius IX to obtain means of subsistence from her husband, who prevented her by force from following the rites of the Roman Church. Since she felt threatened by him and lived on her own, she demanded half the possessions acquired during their marriage, which according to local custom were common property.⁶² The appeal to the pope and the costly procedure leading to his intervention suggests that the case involved many assets.

For obvious reasons, medieval authors paid more attention to the fate of rich and powerful people than to the poor. Robert of Clari asserts that, after the first night of occupation, the Latins were told that only paupers remained in the city.⁶³ The cases mentioned above clearly contradict that statement. Indeed, they reveal that

⁵⁷ *ODB*, I, p. 428, s.v. Choniates, Niketas; II, p. 1247, s.v. Logothetes.

⁵⁸ Van Dieten, "Die drei Fassungen der Historia," pp. 139–42.

⁵⁹ On the family: *ODB*, I, pp. 48–49, s. v. Akropolites. There is no evidence that he was in Latin service, as claimed by Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, p. 96, n. 16.

⁶⁰ Akropolites, chap. 29, ed. Heisenberg, I, pp. 46–47.

⁶¹ Jacoby, "The Byzantine Outsider in Trade," pp. 144–45.

⁶² A.L. Tăutu, *Acta Honorii III (1216–1227) et Gregorii IX (1227–1241)* (Pontificia commissio ad redigendum Codicem Iuris Canonici Orientalis, Fontes, Series 3, III) (Vatican City, 1950), pp. 254–55, no. 182.

⁶³ Robert de Clari, *La conquête de Constantinople*, § LXXX, ed. Lauer, pp. 79–80.

some Greeks living in Latin Constantinople were prosperous and owned substantial real estate, despite the large-scale expropriations of houses and land carried out by the Latins shortly after the conquest. It is noteworthy that occasionally prominent Greeks acted collectively as leaders of their community, as in 1213 when they intervened with Emperor Henry of Hainaut on behalf of the Orthodox clergy, persecuted by Cardinal Pelagius.⁶⁴

As noted earlier, that members of the Byzantine clergy left Constantinople in the first months after the Latin conquest.⁶⁵ The absence of the Greek patriarch from Constantinople and his inaction while at Didymotheichon clearly had a demoralizing effect.⁶⁶ Two trends developed among the members of the Greek clergy remaining in Constantinople. Some of them were ready to compromise with Latin rule and a smaller number among them was even willing to acknowledge papal supremacy. It is likely that the emigration of the clergy slowed down after the accession of Henry of Hainaut to the imperial throne in 1206, in any event until 1213.⁶⁷ The emperor was known for his leniency toward the Greeks and their Church.⁶⁸ After the death of Patriarch John X Kamateros in 1206 he supported the request of the Greeks of Constantinople to elect an Orthodox patriarch of the city.⁶⁹

Other members of the clergy resisted the continuous pressure exerted upon them by the Roman Church. It was they who must have persuaded Theodore I Laskaris to have an Orthodox patriarch elected in Nicaea. Their stand was strengthened by the election of Michael Autoreianos and his crowning of Theodore I as emperor in 1208. As center of Orthodoxy Nicaea became a rallying point for the Greek clergy of Constantinople. The latter's continuous relations with the Orthodox patriarchs undoubtedly contributed to the emigration of Greek monks and priests from Constantinople. Meanwhile, in the absence of a local ecclesiastical leadership in the city, the monks had become the main opponents to Latin rule and to the Roman Church and conducted debates with Latin theologians.⁷⁰ The pressure upon the Greek clergy reached its climax in 1213 when the papal legate, cardinal Pelagius, resorted to force. He closed churches, expelled monks from their monasteries and initiated the imprisonment of those who refused to vow obedience to the pope. As noted above, prominent Greeks of the city intervened on their behalf with Emperor Henry of Hainaut. They proclaimed their obedience to him in worldly matters and their willingness to support his rule, yet requested freedom of faith and threatened to emigrate if the emperor were to reject their plea. The damage done was nevertheless irreversible. When the emperor released the imprisoned clergy, many of them left for the Empire of Nicaea.⁷¹

⁶⁴ See below.

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 56–57.

⁶⁶ Angold, *Church and Society*, p. 515.

⁶⁷ For the events of that year, see below.

⁶⁸ See above, pp. 59, 64.

⁶⁹ Angold, "Greeks and Latins," p. 67.

⁷⁰ Angold, "Greeks and Latins," p. 67; Angold, *Church and Society*, pp. 516, 519–20.

⁷¹ Akropolites, chap. 17, ed. Heisenberg, I, pp. 29–30.

It is no coincidence that Patriarch Theodore II Eirenikos of Nicaea considered it necessary in the autumn of 1214 to send an encyclical to the Greeks of Constantinople to strengthen them in the face of the pressure exerted by Cardinal Pelagius. He exhorted them to remain true to their faith and threatened those submitting to the Latin Church with excommunication.⁷² Similarly, after his election in 1223, Patriarch Germanos II praised those who had persevered in their devotion to the Orthodox Church, yet excommunicated others who had submitted to papal authority.⁷³ The imprisonment of Greek priests ordered by Latin patriarchs apparently continued later on. In the summer of 1234, Patriarch Germanos II requested the newly elected Latin patriarch of Constantinople, Nicholas of San Arquato, to intervene in order to obtain their release.⁷⁴

Though weakened in numbers and under constant pressure, the Greek clergy remained active in and close to Constantinople throughout the Latin period. This is well illustrated by the fate of the monastery of the Mother of God Evergetes, situated at some three kilometers outside the city and apparently facing the Pege Gate.⁷⁵ In 1206, during his stay in Constantinople, Benedict Cardinal of Santa Susanna, legate of Pope Innocent III, granted the monastery to the Benedictines of Monte Cassino, yet stated that the donation did not compel the Greek monks to leave.⁷⁶ Sava, youngest son of King Stefan Nemanja of Serbia, had resided in 1197 at the Evergetes when he came to Constantinople in connection with the establishment of a Serbian monastery on Mount Athos. He stayed once more in Constantinople in 1235, on his way back from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, yet this time at the *metochion* or daughter house of the monastery dedicated to St. Andrew, situated in the city.⁷⁷ His sojourn there and other evidence attest to the vitality of the institution during the Latin period.⁷⁸

The continuous operation of Orthodox churches and monasteries in Constantinople must have clearly generated some building and artistic activity within the Greek community during the Latin period, though on a much smaller scale than before 1204. Work was at least partly commissioned and financed by affluent Greeks residing in the city, such as those noted above. The dealings of Sava of Serbia with local artists and craftsmen are of particular interest in that context. Presumably in 1220, he recruited painters from Constantinople to decorate the monastery of Zica

⁷² See above, footnote 38; also Angold, "Greeks and Latins," p. 69.

⁷³ Laurent, *Les registres des actes du patriarchat*, I/4, pp. 42–43 and 83–85, nos. 1233 and 1277 respectively. See also Angold, "Greeks and Latins," pp. 69–70.

⁷⁴ Laurent, *Les registres des actes du patriarchat*, I/4, pp. 83–85, no. 1277.

⁷⁵ Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I/3, pp. 181–83. See also above, p. 56 and footnote 20.

⁷⁶ Tăutu, *Acta Honorii III*, pp. 30–32, nos. 13–13c. For the dating of his stay in Constantinople, see Jacoby, "The Jewish Community of Constantinople," p. 37.

⁷⁷ D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 128–29, 168; Majeska, *Russian Travellers*, pp. 315–16, § 37.

⁷⁸ See J. Thomas and A.C. Hero, eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 25) (Washington, D.C., 2000), II, pp. 456–57.

that he had founded with his brother, the grand *zupan* Stefan. During his brief stay in Constantinople in 1235 Sava had some unspecified business with “imperial [that is, Byzantine] masters,” who may have been architects and marble workers like those “from the Greek land” he had enlisted earlier for the building of Zica.⁷⁹ There is no reason to assume that painters’ or builders’ workshops were rather scarce in Constantinople because the city was under Latin rule.⁸⁰ The sustained demand for icons, painted panels and other votive objects among the Greek population must have ensured the continuity of artistic production and training among the Greeks of Constantinople. Moreover, we may safely assume that Latin customers contributed their share to those activities, because the devotion of Christian worshipers in the city must have cut across religious denominations, as in contemporary Frankish Acre and Cyprus.⁸¹

This is confirmed by the building of a church dedicated to St. George, commissioned by Emperor Baldwin II between 1258 and 1261. After having visions of the warrior saint on horseback at the Charisios Gate, situated along the western flank of the city, the Latin emperor decided to erect a church in his honor in the hope that St. George would protect Constantinople from the forces of Michael VIII Palaiologos. He entrusted a Greek priest by the name of Demetrios with the construction, which implies that the church was built and decorated in Byzantine style. The church, the second one dedicated to the saint close to the gate, was very small, yet covered with marble and pretty.⁸² Although preserved in a late manuscript, the story appears credible, especially as its Greek author indirectly praises the Latin emperor for the building. It is not excluded that Baldwin II hoped to enlist the support of the Greek population by erecting a Byzantine church.

Despite Latin immigration, the Greeks remained an overwhelming majority among Constantinople’s inhabitants in the Latin period. They also fulfilled a leading role in the ongoing provisioning of the city in foodstuffs, raw materials and manufactured goods, whether produced in the city itself or in its hinterland. In addition, they were the main providers of small-scale and short-distance land and sea transportation in and around Constantinople. The operation of a fairly large number of Greek craftsmen may be taken for granted, except in the manufacturing of luxury products. The reactivation of Constantinople’s economy began shortly after 1204. Despite its partial reconversion and the ensuing growth, especially in the

⁷⁹ Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, p. 137 and n. 89.

⁸⁰ As suggested by Obolensky, *ibid.*, p. 137, n. 89.

⁸¹ On Latin demand in Acre, see D. Jacoby, “Society, Culture and the Arts in Crusader Acre,” in D.H. Weiss and L. Mahoney, eds., *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades* (Baltimore, 2004), pp. 101, 106–11.

⁸² C. Matzukis, ed. and tr., *Ἡ ἄλωσις τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως, Τετάρτη σταυροφορία. The Fall of Constantinople, Fourth Crusade. A critical edition with translation and historical commentary of the Codex 408 Marcianus Graecus (ff. 1–13v) in the Library of St. Mark* (Venice, Athens, 2004), pp. 123–27. The appearance of St. George at the Charisios Gate and the existence of a church bearing his name are recorded in Byzantine texts preceding the reign of Baldwin II: R. Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), p. 281.

last two decades of Latin rule, it did not reach the level attained before the Fourth Crusade.⁸³ These developments may nevertheless have induced some Greeks who had fled to return to the city and, in any event, prompted others to settle there.

The evidence bearing upon the Venetian quarter in the Latin period lends support to these suggestions. The quarter existing at the time of the Fourth Crusade was spared from destruction in 1203–04. The fire of August 1203 spread east of this quarter, and the fire of 12–13 April 1204 stopped at the Droungarios, located at its western edge.⁸⁴ The preservation of the quarter is confirmed by the continuous residence of some of its inhabitants on the same plots of land and in the same houses both before and after the Latin conquest, as illustrated below. Venice exercised full sovereignty over its enlarged quarter, which as a result enjoyed a privileged status.⁸⁵ After 1204, the quarter's section bordering the Golden Horn became the hub of commercial life and economic activity in the city. The construction of a *fondaco* or caravanserai behind the urban wall, carried out around 1220, was clearly related to a growth in long-distance maritime trade.⁸⁶ Not surprisingly, both Latins and Greeks resided or settled in the quarter in order to take advantage of its favored conditions.⁸⁷

Greeks resided in the Venetian quarter since its establishment, as attested by the chrysobull issued by Alexios I Comnenus in 1082 to Venice.⁸⁸ They are attested there in the last decades before the Latin conquest. Theodoros de Calo Thecaristo in 1188 and after him Johannes de la Cretiky in 1195 rented the same house in the eastern part of the quarter from the Venetian monastery of S. Giorgio Maggiore, respectively for ten and thirteen years.⁸⁹ In 1193, a Latin leased a house adjacent

⁸³ Jacoby, "The Economy of Latin Constantinople," pp. 195–214, esp. pp. 209–10 for the last twenty years of Latin rule.

⁸⁴ Not at the Droungarios Gate, as indicated by Madden, "The Fires," p. 85. This gate was situated *within* the Venetian quarter. See Jacoby, "The Urban Evolution," p. 280 and n. 9.

⁸⁵ Jacoby, "The Venetian Government and Administration," pp. 41–58, 62, 64.

⁸⁶ Jacoby, "The Economy of Latin Constantinople," p. 207.

⁸⁷ I shall deal elsewhere with Latin settlers. For the time being, see D. Jacoby, "Venetian Settlers in Latin Constantinople (1204–1261): Rich or Poor?," in Ch. A. Maltezos, ed., *Πλούσιοι και φτωχοί στην κοινωνία της ελληνολατινικής Ανατολής* [*Ricchi e poveri nella società dell'Oriente grecolatino*] (Biblioteca dell'Istituto ellenico di Studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia, no. 19) (Venice, 1998), pp. 181–204, repr. in Jacoby, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean*, no. VII.

⁸⁸ G.L. Fr. Tafel and G.M. Thomas, eds., *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig* (Wien, 1856–1857), I, p. 52; new ed. M. Pozza and G. Ravegnani, *I trattati con Bisanzio, 992–1198, Pacta veneta 4* (Venice, 1993), p. 39, par. 5. Latest studies supporting the date of 1082: Thomas F. Madden, "The Chrysobull of Alexius I Comnenus to the Venetians: the date and the debate," *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), 23–41, and D. Jacoby, "The Chrysobull of Alexius I Comnenus to the Venetians: the Date and the Debate," *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), pp. 199–204. P. Frankopan, "Byzantine Trade Privileges to Venice in the Eleventh Century: the Chrysobull of 1092," *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), 135–60, revives the dating of 1092, yet his main arguments fail to convince.

⁸⁹ L. Lanfranchi, ed., *S. Giorgio Maggiore* (Fonti per la Storia di Venezia, Sez. II: Archivi ecclesiastici) (Venice, 1967–74), III, pp. 294–96, 399–401, nos. 500, 581. The contract of 1195 states that there were still three years left until the end of the period stipulated in the previous contract. The location of the area is based on the reference to the *Ebreaky* or former Jewish neighborhood.

to another inhabited by Greeks.⁹⁰ Other Greeks resided throughout the years 1203–1204 at the same locations in the quarter. In 1207 Alexios and Theodoros of Durazzo renewed for twenty-nine years the lease of a piece of land on which they had some houses, which implies that they already held that plot and possibly also built the houses before 1204.⁹¹ The land was adjacent to the house of Enrico Allemano and the church of St. Eirene and thus situated at the eastern edge of the Venetian quarter, between the waterfront of the Golden Horn and the city wall.⁹² The Latin Enrico Allemano had a Greek wife, whose sister Herini had also married a Latin, Armanno Ferbitore. The latter had leased a plot of land contiguous to that of his brother-in-law and built wooden houses upon it. In 1206 Herini, by then a widow, obtained a 29-year lease, clearly a renewal of the previous one. Some wooden houses had been built earlier on the plot. Incidentally, one of the witnesses to the lease contract was a Greek, Johannes Durachynus.⁹³

Several lease contracts concluded after the Latin conquest, one each in 1207, 1219, 1225 and two in 1234, mention Greeks holding plots of land situated between the city wall and the Golden Horn in the Droungarios area.⁹⁴ Each of the two documents of 1234 refers to three Greeks obtaining contiguous pieces of land. Five among the six appear as leaseholders in the same urban area in the cadaster of the patriarchate of Grado, compiled between 30 April 1240 and January 1242. Surprisingly, the sixth Greek, Basilius Sulimanus, is registered in that document in the area of Perama along the shore of the Golden Horn.⁹⁵ This Greek was presumably a relative of Nicola Sulimanus, attested in the same document, and Demetrius Sulimanus Monovasioti, who in 1255 leased land along the *scala maior* or state wharf, the most eastern one in the old Venetian quarter until 1189.⁹⁶ Giorgios Monovassiotis appears in a contract of 1240 and in the cadaster.⁹⁷ This document also refers to the Greeks Alexios Chyotis, Isachios Kerula, Giorgios Potamissi,

⁹⁰ Ibid., III, pp. 384–85, no. 569: *firmit in mansione Grecorum*.

⁹¹ Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, pp. 52–54. The renewal of the contract is implied by the earlier building of the houses.

⁹² On the location of St. Eirene, see Jacoby, “The Venetian Quarter,” p. 159.

⁹³ ASV, *MP*, b. 9, no. 11; summary and short extract in Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” p. 47, no. 19. On the location, see Jacoby, “Venetian Settlers,” p. 189.

⁹⁴ Respectively Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, pp. 59–61; ASV, *MP*, b. 9, nos. 22, 25, 26; Morozzo della Rocca and Lombardo, *Documenti del commercio veneziano*, II, pp. 225–26, no. 691. Summaries and short extracts from the cited documents in ASV by Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” pp. 52–53, nos. 35, 38, 39. An inscription in Greek stating the name of the leaseholder appears on the reverse of the last document: see *ibid.*, p. 40 and n. 57.

⁹⁵ Incomplete edition of the cadaster, marred by errors, in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, pp. 8–11, to which I refer below without further citing page numbers. For its dating, see Jacoby, “Venetian Settlers,” pp. 189–95.

⁹⁶ Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, pp. 492–95. On that wharf, see Jacoby, “Venetian Settlers,” p. 156.

⁹⁷ ASV, *MP*, b. 9, no. 30; summary in Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” p. 55, no. 43, and see above, footnote 95, on the cadaster.

Theodoros Pigati, all of them living in the area extending along the Perama wharf.⁹⁸ In 1219, Giorgios Potamissi had resided in the Droungarios area.⁹⁹ According to the cadaster, in 1240–41 Michali Salonikeo and Symeon de Antiochya both held land in the area between the Droungarios and Perama Gates.¹⁰⁰ It is unclear whether the deceased Michael of Halmyros was also Greek, as the name of his widow, Cecilia, is western. According to the cadaster, the land she leased was also in the same urban area.

The evidence adduced above regarding Greeks living in the Venetian quarter reveals that some of them resided continuously at the same place in the years of transition from Byzantine to Venetian rule. The two contracts of 1234 each naming three Greeks seemingly suggest a concentration of Greeks in a specific area, yet other documents clearly illustrate that cohabitation with Latins was the rule. It is impossible to determine whether the Greeks attested only after 1204 were the descendants of settlers and thus natives of Constantinople, or new immigrants. Still, some of those documented after 1230, a generation after the conquest, may have established themselves in Constantinople during the Latin period. Geographic surnames do not offer any conclusive evidence or any chronological clue in that respect, as they were transmitted from one generation to the other. It is nevertheless noteworthy that some Greek residents of the Venetian quarter or their forefathers originated in Dyrrachion (presently Durazzo), Monemvasia in the southern Peloponnesus, Thessalonica and the island of Chios, all of which were under Greek rule. Some immigrants possibly came from Halmyros, as well as from Antioch, which though under Latin rule still had an overwhelmingly Greek-speaking population in the thirteenth century. The immigration from Byzantine Monemvasia is of particular interest, since it is generally believed that it only began in the reign of Michael VIII.¹⁰¹

The leaseholders of Venetian lay or ecclesiastical property were allowed to build at their own expense on the land they rented. The constructions became the property of the landowner when the lease expired. Building was nevertheless a profitable long-term business investment, especially under contracts extending over 29 years, as the agreements were generally renewed. The leaseholders used the buildings or rented them out against payment.¹⁰² Most Greeks mentioned above

⁹⁸ The first among these Greeks has been mistakenly omitted in the edition of the cadaster by Tafel and Thomas (see above, footnote 95). For the location of the area, see Jacoby, "Venetian Settlers," pp. 189–90.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 68, on this area.

¹⁰⁰ On its location, see Jacoby, "Venetian Settlers," p. 190.

¹⁰¹ Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, p. 126; Kl.–P. Matschke, "Personengeschichte, Familiengeschichte, Sozialgeschichte: die Notaras im späten Byzanz," in L. Balletto, ed., *Oriente e Occidente tra medioevo ed età moderna. Studi in onore di Geo Pitarino* (Università degli Studi di Genova, Sede di Acqui Terme, Collana di Fonti e Studi, 1.1) (Geneva, 1997), p. 793. See also below, p. 70 and footnote 107.

¹⁰² Ch. A. Maltezou, "Les Italiens propriétaires 'terrarium et casarum' à Byzance," *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 22 (1966), pp. 182–84, 189. D. Jacoby, "Houses and Urban Layout in the Venetian Quarter of Constantinople: Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in K. Belke, E. Kislinger, A. Kuelzer,

settled in the section of the Venetian quarter extending between the urban wall and the shore of the Golden Horn. This narrow strip of land, close to the waterfront, was an area of intense economic activity. It was increasingly covered with dwellings, shops, workshops, warehouses, taverns and the offices or tables of merchants, moneychangers and notaries.¹⁰³ This is illustrated by one of the contracts of 1234, which allowed the construction of dwellings, other unspecified buildings, as well as shops or workshops (*mansiones, hediſicia, hergasteria*).¹⁰⁴ In 1252, the Greek tailor Kanaki bought a structure on the roof of a building adjacent to the church of S. Maria de Carpiani (Θεοτόκος τὰ Καρπιανοῦ), on the Droungarios wharf. A *capsellarius* or chest-maker resided in a contiguous building.¹⁰⁵ There may have been a concentration of craftsmen in that area. Unfortunately, there is no information about the occupations of the other Greeks, yet we may safely assume that most of them were either craftsmen or merchants.

Some Greeks resided in the Pisan quarter before the Latin conquest. Ioannes or Kaloianne Pilotti appears there both in 1192 and 1199.¹⁰⁶ Several others, among them one from Monemvasia, are recorded there in 1199 and 1200.¹⁰⁷ Strangely, despite being Greek, two members of the Pilotti family testified in 1200 about the exercise of ecclesiastical rights by the Pisan prior.¹⁰⁸ It is clear that the Greek residents of the quarter were affected by the fire of August 1203, like their Latin neighbors.¹⁰⁹ The resulting heavy damage, which restricted economic activity, must have deterred Greeks from settling in that area in the following years. There is unfortunately no evidence about the inhabitants of the Pisan quarter in the Latin period. This is also the case with respect to other areas in the imperial section of Constantinople. However, as non-Venetian Latin merchants settled in that section,¹¹⁰ we may safely assume that some Greeks acted likewise. The Latin emperors and the baillifs governing in their absence were clearly interested in the promotion of commercial activity by their own subjects, including Greeks, residing in their own section of

M.A. Stassinopoulou, eds., *Byzantina Mediterranea. Festschrift für Johannes Koder zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 2007), pp. 269–82.

¹⁰³ See Jacoby, “The Venetian Quarter,” pp. 155, 157 nn. 20 and 25, 158. On this strip of land, see Jacoby, “Houses and Urban Layout,” pp. 272–740.

¹⁰⁴ ASV, *MP*, b. 9, no. 26. Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” p. 53, no. 39, omits the reference to the buildings.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, *MP*, b. 9, no. 33: *in solario*, omitted by Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” p. 56, no. 47. For the location of the church in the north-eastern corner of the Venetian quarter, see Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, II, p. 5. A tower of S. Maria de Carpiani was on the *scala de Droungario*: ASV, *MP*, b. 9, no. 18; extract in Maltezoú, “Il quartiere veneziano,” p. 56, no. 29. See also Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique*, I/3, p. 187, § 51.

¹⁰⁶ G. Müller, ed., *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll’Oriente cristiano e coi Turchi fino all’anno MDXXXI* (Firenze, 1879), pp. 48 (Greek version), 57 (Latin), no. XXXIV, p. 74, no. XLVI, and p. 76, no. XLVII.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 74–76, nos. XLVI–XLVII.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81, no. LI.

¹⁰⁹ Madden, “The Fires,” pp. 74–76, 93 (map); Jacoby, “The Urban Evolution,” p. 283.

¹¹⁰ On non-Venetian settlers, see, for the time being, Jacoby, “Venetian Settlers,” pp. 198–201, and Jacoby, “The Economy of Latin Constantinople,” pp. 205–6.

Constantinople. In 1228, Narjot of Toucy, bailiff of the Latin empire, concluded a one-year truce with Theodore Komnenos Doukas, ruler of Epiros and emperor of Thessalonica, which ensured free trading to the subjects of both parties.¹¹¹

As in all long-distance, voluntary and individual migration, the unfavorable sex ratio among Latin settlers led to mixed marriages or mixed extra-marital unions with local women in Constantinople. The Venetians who remained in the city until the Latin conquest of 12 April 1204 had apparently Greek wives.¹¹² Some Genoese and Pisans are also known to have wedded Greek women before the Fourth Crusade.¹¹³ Such was also the case of other Latins not belonging to these groups, namely Armano Ferbitore and his brother-in-law Enrico Allemanno.¹¹⁴

In view of the larger number of Latin settlers, traveling merchants and sailors present in Constantinople or visiting the city in the Latin period, mixed marriages and extra-marital unions must have been more numerous than before 1204. The overwhelming majority of them must have involved Latin men and Greek women. The offspring of mixed parentage were called *gasmouloi* or *basmouloi* in Greek. Some of them were born to Venetian fathers, others to subjects of the Latin emperors. The descendants generally adopted their father's surname in order to promote their own social status and, therefore, it is almost impossible to detect them.¹¹⁵ Still, a few individual cases of mixed marriages or unions can be identified. Marco Venier, whose father Giovanni had settled in Constantinople sometime before 1232, thus during the Latin period, resided by 1250 in the area of Petron, annexed by Venice after the Latin conquest.¹¹⁶ He had three children by his Greek wife Zoe, who is mentioned in his will drafted in 1263 in Crete. The family had established itself in the island after fleeing from Constantinople two years earlier.¹¹⁷ Mixed marriages or unions are also attested among residents of the imperial section of Constantinople, both among the Latin nobility and commoners. For instance, Geoffroy of Méry, grandson of the marshal Geoffroy of Villehardouin, had a Greek wife.¹¹⁸ The *gasmouloi* born to commoners who remained in Constantinople were

¹¹¹ R. Cessi, ed., *Deliberazioni del Maggiore Consiglio di Venezia* (Bologna, 1931–50), I, p. 209, no. 140; dating by B. Hendrickx, “Regestes des empereurs latins de Constantinople (1204–1261/1272),” *Byzantina*, 14 (1988), 111–12, no. 164.

¹¹² See above, p. 55.

¹¹³ Jacoby, “The Byzantine Outsider in Trade,” pp. 135–37.

¹¹⁴ See above, p. 68.

¹¹⁵ D. Jacoby, “Les Vénitiens naturalisés dans l’Empire byzantin: un aspect de l’expansion de Venise en Roumanie du XIII^e au milieu du XV^e siècle,” *Travaux et mémoires*, 8 (1981) [*Hommage à M. Paul Lemerle*], p. 221, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion* (Northampton, 1989), no. IX; Jacoby, “The Byzantine Outsider in Trade,” p. 143 and n. 68.

¹¹⁶ Jacoby, “Venetian Settlers,” pp. 186–87.

¹¹⁷ D. Jacoby, “Migrations familiales et stratégies commerciales vénitiennes aux XII^e et XIII^e siècles,” in M. Balard and A. Ducellier, eds., *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes (Xe–XVI^e siècles)* (Byzantina Sorbonensia, 19) (Paris, 2002), p. 368 and n. 90.

¹¹⁸ J. Longnon, *Recherches sur la vie de Geoffroy de Villehardouin, suivies du catalogue des actes des Villehardouin* (Paris, 1939), pp. 118–20.

included after 1261 among the Byzantine emperor's subjects.¹¹⁹ Incidentally, one of the envoys sent by Emperor John III Vatatzes of Nicaea to Pope Innocent IV in 1249 was a *gasmoulos*, most likely from Constantinople, who had become a Franciscan monk. He knew Latin, Greek and a western spoken language, either French or Italian, well.¹²⁰ The negotiations had been initiated by the pope and conducted on his behalf by John of Parma, minister-general of the Franciscans, which explains why Emperor John III chose a Franciscan as his representative.¹²¹ Only a few Latin women appear to have married Greeks in Constantinople. One of them, a Venetian, wedded Philippos Vistariti after he had obtained limited Venetian citizenship in 1254.¹²²

The Byzantine recovery of Constantinople on 25 July 1261 prompted the flight of a large section of the Latin population, mainly Venetians.¹²³ Yet there were also other residents who left in haste. Philippos Vistariti and his Venetian wife were among them. In 1264, three years after his resettlement in Venice, he was granted full Venetian citizenship.¹²⁴ It is likely that additional Greeks married to Venetian or other Latin women, as well as individuals from mixed Venetian-Greek parentage also fled. On the other hand, a number of Venetian and imperial *gasmouloi* remained in Constantinople. In 1277, Venice asserted that the *gasmouloi* subjected to its authority before 1261 were Venetians. Michael VIII was compelled to recognize the claim and Venice extended its protection over them.¹²⁵ Finally, some Greeks who had fulfilled a function in the Venetian administration during the Latin period, possibly of a military nature, were transferred to Venice in 1261 at the state's expense together with their families, obviously as a reward for their services. They either so strongly identified with Venice that they chose to leave Constantinople with the Venetians, or else feared for their safety under the renewed Byzantine rule over the city. In Venice, the state continued to pay them a salary. However, most of them failed to integrate within Venetian society and to adapt to Venetian conditions. In 1271, they requested permission to emigrate and presumably resettled within some Greek-speaking and Orthodox community overseas, possibly in Crete.¹²⁶

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¹¹⁹ See above, footnote 115.

¹²⁰ Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. G. Scalia (Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis, CXXV) (Turnolti, 1998–99), I, p. 489.

¹²¹ On the negotiations, see K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, I, *The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 70.

¹²² See above, p. 63.

¹²³ Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, pp. 113–14; Jacoby, "Venetian Settlers," pp. 188–89, 202.

¹²⁴ See above, p. 63.

¹²⁵ Jacoby, "Les Vénitiens naturalisés," p. 221.

¹²⁶ D. Jacoby, "I Greci ed altre comunità tra Venezia e oltremare," in M.F. Tiepolo and E. Tonetti, eds., *I Greci a Venezia* (Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studio, Venezia, 5–7 novembre 1998) (Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti) (Venice, 2002), pp. 45–46.

The sources reflecting the life of the Greek population of Constantinople in the 57 years of Latin rule over Constantinople are scarce. They nevertheless yield precious information pointing to a varied evolution, quite different from the uniform dark picture of decline painted by Byzantine authors and modern scholars.¹²⁷ Many Greek laymen were ready to compromise with Latin rule, once the wave of expropriations immediately following the conquest had come to an end. They integrated within the new political, social and economic structures and adapted to the new conditions created by the Latins. The nature and degree of that process differed in each of the two urban quarters of the city, the imperial and the Venetian one, as well as in the various strata of the Greek population. Convincing evidence in that respect is offered in several ways. Greeks served at various levels of the imperial administration and, apparently to a lesser extent, in the Venetian bureaucracy. In specific circumstances, some fairly wealthy Greeks acted collectively as representatives of the city's Greek and Orthodox population. Another aspect of integration took place in the Venetian quarter. It is illustrated by the renewal of Greek leases, continuous Greek residence, and the establishment of Greek settlers in that urban area. All these factors imply that some Greeks both contributed to the growth of economic activity in Latin Constantinople and enjoyed its fruits. This is not to say that all Greeks were as fortunate, or that the processes of social and economic integration blurred individual or collective Greek and Orthodox identities. We have noted that some high-ranking Greek officials in the service of Baldwin II joined the camp of Michael VIII immediately after the Byzantine recovery of Constantinople in 1261.¹²⁸ Their attitudes and moves may be considered opportunistic, yet seem to have reflected more than individual choices. There is good reason to believe that the vast majority of the Greek population of Constantinople welcomed the renewal of Byzantine rule over the city.

¹²⁷ On evidence contradicting their biased statements, see also Jacoby, "The Urban Evolution," pp. 277–97.

¹²⁸ See above, p. 61.

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The Effects of the Fourth Crusade on European Gold Coinage

Robert D. Leonard Jr.

The Fourth Crusade triggered a permanent change in the gold coinage of Europe. The minting of gold at Constantinople, which had been nearly continuous since 329,¹ was interrupted for decades, and when it resumed, it was a debased shadow of its former standard. Within a century, it was gone – replaced by pure gold coins of the Italian cities and their imitations.

In 312, Constantine the Great introduced a new gold coin, the *solidus*, struck at 72 pieces to the pound of gold, thus giving it a weight of about 4.5 grams. When he founded Constantinople in 326, bronze coinage was minted at once with gold following a few years later. These coins were intended to be 24 carats fine, and – beginning about 368 – began to be marked OB, “refined gold.” In fact, they seem to have been coined at about 98 per cent purity, or 23½ carats fine.² The Greek name for the *solidus* was *nomisma*; Western Europeans called it the *bezant*.

In time, minting of *solidi* was concentrated at Constantinople. *Solidi* of the same purity and weight (except for specially marked lightweight issues and a very slight lessening in both weight and fineness beginning in the 680s) were coined there nearly continuously through the reign of Romanus III, 1028–34, though beginning in the 960s they became larger, thinner, and eventually cup-shaped. Cosmas Indicopleustes, a contemporary of Justinian I, boasted that with this gold coin “all the nations carry on trade from one extremity of the earth to the other. [It] is regarded with admiration by all men to whatever kingdom they belong, since there is no other country in which the like of it exists.”³ While Byzantium’s monopoly was later challenged by Islamic *dinars*, the *solidus* retained its dominance throughout the Empire and its dependencies and most of Christian Europe.

Nicephorus II, 963–69, introduced a second denomination, the *tetarteron*, weighing a mere two carats less than the *nomisma*, the name apparently meaning a quarter (of a third) less than a full *nomisma* of 24 carats. After this, the original *solidus* became known as a *histamenon nomisma*, the standard gold coin. The *tetarteron* was discontinued by Alexius I.

¹ The first certain gold coinage began 328–29; Patrick M. Bruun, *The Roman imperial coinage*, vol. VII: *Constantine and Licinius (A.D. 313–337)*, series eds. C.H.V. Sutherland and R.A.G. Carson (London, 1966), pp. 569–74.

² Cécile Morrisson, “Byzantine Money: Its Production and Circulation,” in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 39)* (2002), p. 928.

³ Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, Book 2*, trans. from the Greek and ed. J.W. McCrindle (London, 1897); Robert Sabatino Lopez, “The Dollar of the Middle Ages,” *The Journal of Economic History* 11, No. 3, Part 1 (1951), 209.

However, circa 1040, the fineness of the gold was debased, first to 20 carats, then 18 under Constantine IX, 1042–55. In about 1070, there was a further reduction to 16 carats. Michael VII plunged the fineness to 12 carats and below, and Nicephorus III carried it down to 35.8 per cent, a little over 8 carats. Even these pale electrum coins, poor as they were, suffered further debasement under Alexius I to 10.6 per cent (2½ carats)⁴ at the start of his reign, giving them the appearance of silver.

In 1092 Alexius reformed this unsatisfactory coinage, replacing the white *histamenon nomisma* with a new coin called a *hyperpyron*, retaining the old weight of nearly 4.5 grams and restoring the fineness to 20½ carats (85.4 per cent), about where it had been in the 1040s; the Western European vernacular name for this coin was *perperum* or variants. Though claiming to be minted of gold passed “above fire” or “refined,” in fact the standard was slightly less than that of Senegalese gold dust, which was plentiful then. Two other denominations, an electrum third *hyperpyron* and a billon *trachy (stamena)*, worth 1/48th of a *hyperpyron*, completed the system, except for a pair of small copper coins.

The *hyperpyron* maintained its purity until the reign of Andronicus I, when its fineness began to slip, though it did not fall below 19 carats.⁵ (Its subsidiary coins did become somewhat debased over time.) As such, it reclaimed the place held by the *histamenon nomisma*. It was accepted throughout the Empire, and appears in Venetian commercial documents as *perperi auri boni veteres pensantes* [“*hyperpyra* of good gold, weighing as of old,” that is, not clipped] or *bisantiōs auri perperos bonos veteres* [“good gold *hyperpyra bezants*, old {standard}”]. The Pisan notaries recorded it as *yperpera auri bene ponderata ad rectas pensas de Constantinopoli* [“*hyperpyra* of gold, correctly weighed, according to the established standards of Constantinople”].⁶

Then came the Fourth Crusade. When the Crusaders attacked Constantinople in 1203, Emperor Alexius III fled, taking with him 1,000 pounds of gold and the crown jewels. Isaac II was restored, with his son Alexius IV as co-emperor. But they owed 200,000 marks, and had to supply the army of the Fourth Crusade. With much of the treasury gone, coinage of anything but small change of copper was impossible; in fact, payment of their debt was impossible. For the first time in nearly nine centuries, gold coinage in Constantinople ceased.

Both emperors died following an uprising early in 1204, to be replaced by another Crusader candidate, Alexius V. He reigned for two months and seven days before fleeing for his life; no coins of him are known. The next day later, the Crusaders entered the city, founding the Latin Empire.

After the sack of Constantinople and the loss of territory to Byzantine rebels, the Latin emperors had even fewer resources than Alexius V. While they minted

⁴ Morriſson, “Byzantine Money,” p. 931.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 933.

⁶ Alan M. Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire of Constantinople,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), p. 198; Michael J. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081–1261* (Washington, 1969), pp. 36–37.

copies of Byzantine billon coins of low value, in billon and copper, they were reduced to melting bronze statues to obtain the metal: Niketas Choniates wrote, in *De Signis Constantinopolis*, “that which cost immense treasures [bronze statues] were changed by the Latins, upon their arrival, into pieces of money of little value.” Choniates’ polemic returns to the melting of priceless statues for small change three times, though it apparently occurred in late 1204 or 1205, when he was absent from the city.⁷ Enough types exist, however, to suggest that they were minted for some decades after 1204, presumably from other supplies. None include the name of the Latin emperor.

What of gold? The analysis of Stahl⁸ showed that Venetian documents from about 1129 on regularly specify payment in “old” *perperos*, and this requirement appears in most documents up until 1204. Within a year after the capture of Constantinople, however, it disappears, last occurring in April 1205. After that, until 1234 in commercial contracts and 1241 in official documents, *hyperpyra* are often still required to be “heavy,” but never “old.” The clear implication is that “old” was superfluous, as no “new” *hyperpyra* were being coined.

However, there is an indication that the Venetians may have imitated Byzantine gold coins. In 1219, the Venetian podestà Giacomo Tiepolo signed a treaty with Theodore I, Lascaris, Emperor of Nicaea. One clause stated: “Conventum est inter hoc, quod nec Imperium meum, neque tuus dispotatus habeat licentium formare yperperos, vel manuelatos, aut stamena equalis forme alterius partis.” Thus, Theodore agreed not to copy Venetian *hyperpyra*, *manuelati* [electrum or silver *aspron trachea*], or *stamena* [billon or copper *trachea*] of Constantinople, and the Venetians agreed not to copy his.

Why was this clause inserted? Grierson assumed that it was simply the work of a diplomatic lawyer anxious to cover all possible contingencies,⁹ as no gold, electrum, or silver coins are known that could possibly have been made by the Venetians at Constantinople by 1219. Like the Latin emperors, Theodore I also lacked the resources to mint gold on any significant scale; only a single *hyperpyron* of him is known.¹⁰ He issued pale electrum or silver, and billon, *trachea* from two mints in Asia Minor, perhaps as early as 1205. These denominations must correspond to the *manuelati* and *stamena* of the 1219 treaty. There was no reason for Theodore to copy the Latin *stamena* imitations, because he had been striking coinage in his own name.

Copies of Theodore’s *manuelati* are unknown, but light imitations of his pre-1219 *stamena* do exist, though from a mint in Thessalonica, not Constantinople.¹¹

⁷ Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire,” p. 199.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 198–99.

⁹ Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (London, 1982), p. 269.

¹⁰ Ivan Jordanov, “Mise au jour d’un monnayage hyperpère byzantin de la première moitié du XIII^e S.,” *Etudes Balkaniques* 30, 4, 107–9 (by error, the illustration was transposed with the following paper and appears on p. 110 – ignore Fig. 1 on p. 107) [thanks to William Metcalf for recognizing this when providing a copy of this paper to me]; Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, p. 246.

¹¹ Henny, *Coinage and Money*, p. 199.



Fig. 1 John III Vatatzès hyperpyron, Phase 1

He may have been concerned about these, or in any case the continuing imitations of old Byzantine *stamena*, and wished to stop the Venetians, at least, from making any more. Theodore's *stamena* circulated together with those of the Latin Empire, as we know from a large number of hoards, so he was right to be concerned about Nicaea being flooded with Latin imitations.¹²

Aside from the small issue of Theodore I, no gold was coined in any of the Byzantine splinter empires until John III Vatatzès of Nicaea (1221 or 1222–54) resumed minting *hyperpyra* in substantial quantities at Magnesia in Western Anatolia, but at a further reduced standard. (See Fig. 1.) This must have occurred early in his reign, by the mid-1220s, because he sent an embassy to the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II in November 1229, at which time “*innumeris aureis nummis*” were brought, and by the same year these coins seem to have become the preferred currency of Venetian Crete.¹³ His coins are extremely common and a large number of secret marks are known, indicating many issues – yet their output probably decreased prior to 1254, because gold coins of his successor, Theodore II, are quite scarce.

Because these coins closely imitate the Thessalonican issues of Emperor John II, 1118–43, not omitting the title *porphyrogenetos* – to which John III Vatatzès was not entitled – there has been confusion and disagreement over which coins should be attributed to John III. While the 1999 *Dumbarton Oaks* catalog assigns two main and two transitional types to John III, in a 2003 paper Eleni Lianta questioned whether John III really did imitate two of the same types as John II, and in the same

¹² Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire,” p. 203.

¹³ Philip Grierson and Lucia Travaini, *Medieval European Coinage 14, Italy (III) (South Italy, Sicily, Sardinia)* (Cambridge, Eng., 1998), pp. 174–75, hereafter cited as *MEC* 14; Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire,” p. 204.

emission order; she considered that only a single type, the commonest, was actually minted by him.¹⁴

John III apparently enjoyed very plentiful gold supplies for a quarter of a century, though their source is unknown. He instituted more efficient (and rigorous) tax collection; when he discovered that the two officials responsible for receiving taxes into the treasury were neglecting their duties, he had one of them beaten so severely that he died, and the other fled to Trebizond.¹⁵ Likewise, John III discouraged the import of expensive luxury items, compelling his subjects to wear home-produced cloth.¹⁶ Finally, by recoinng the purer *hyperpyra* of his predecessors at a lower fineness he would have been able to stretch his resources somewhat.

Still, these factors seem insufficient to explain his vast mintages. D.M. Metcalf suggested two other possibilities: (1) hoards of Seljuk gold coins acquired through trade or (2) “from a rich but quickly worked-out mine.”¹⁷ Certainly John Vatatzès improved agriculture and made Nicaea prosperous and largely self-supporting, exporting foodstuffs to the Suljuks of Rum, who paid high prices in gold and goods.¹⁸ But this source was not significant prior to the Mongol invasion of Asia Minor in 1243, by which time John III had been minting for about two decades.¹⁹ As for Metcalf’s second suggestion, perhaps there was a final exploitation of Mt. Tmolus (upstream from his mint of Magnesia on the Hermus river, near where it is joined by the stream Pactolus), which was the source of the riches of King Croesus.²⁰ The native gold of Pactolus ranged from 74 to 86 per cent fine with 17–24 per cent silver (two samples excavated from ancient Sardis plus a sample panned from the Pactolus riverbed in 1968);²¹ adding, for example, 10 per cent copper by weight would result in an alloy of approximately 72.7 per cent gold, 18.1 per cent silver, and 9.0 per cent copper – very close to the average alloy of the earliest issue of John III’s *hyperpyra*, 72.6 per cent gold, 17.2 per cent silver, and 8.5 per cent copper.²² If this was in fact a source, it would appear that there was

¹⁴ Eleni Lianta, “John II or John III? Distinguishing the hyperpyra of John II from those of John III” (paper presented at XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática, Madrid, 16 September 2003).

¹⁵ Michael Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea (1204–1261)* (Oxford, 1975), p. 205.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 116–17.

¹⁷ D.M. Metcalf, *Coinage in South-Eastern Europe 820–1396* (London, 1979), p. 131.

¹⁸ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1969), p. 443.

¹⁹ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, p. 116.

²⁰ Herodotus, *The History* V, 101; Virgil, *Georgics* II, 137; Virgil, *Aeneid* X, 142; Silius Italicus, *Punica* I, 157; Claudius Claudianus, *De Raptu Proserpinae* II, 67; Horace, *Epodon liber* XV, 19; William Smith, *A Classical Dictionary of Biography, Mythology, and Geography* (London, 1873), p. 197, 510; Sidney M. Goldstein, “Goldworking Installations and Techniques: Lydian Gold Industry at Sardis,” in *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times, Results of the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis 1958–1975*, George M.A. Hanfmann asst. by William E. Mierse (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), pp. 37–38.

²¹ S.M. Goldstein, “The Examination of the Gold Samples from Pactolus North,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 199, pp. 26–8.

²² Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu, “Les Hyperpères de type Jean III Vatatzès – Classification, Chronologie et Évolution du Titre (à la Lumière du Trésor d’Uzun Bair, Dép. De Tulcea),” *Istro-Pontica – Muzeul tulcean la a 50-a aniversare* (2000), p. 512. My warmest thanks to Eleni Lianta for supplying

no state-sponsored mining *per se*, but rather that the increased population in the Sardis area at this time supplemented their income from agriculture by panning for gold.

Cécile Morriison, J.N. Barrandon, and Simon Bendall studied the alloy of all *hyperpyra* attributed to John III, and found an average fineness of 73.3 per cent, about 10 points less than formerly, or 17.6 carats, with a range of 15.6 to 19.05 carats.²³ Based on a large Romanian hoard, Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu later made a detailed study of the secret marks found on these coins, comparing them to the notes in the manual of the 14th century Florentine merchant Francesco Balducci Pegolotti about supposed differences in fineness between various issues.²⁴ He found that the standard declined in three phases: the first phase had an average fineness of 72.6 per cent (weighted average of all specimens) or 17½ carats, probably corresponding to the “*perperi* of yellowish gold,” which Pegolotti rated at 18 carats. What Oberländer-Târnoveanu identified as the second phase ranged from over 17¾ carats to less than 16, with a weighted average of 16¼ carats (67.6 per cent); his third phase was fairly consistent at just about 16 carats (66.5 per cent) [weighted average – 66.9 per cent average of issues], with some deviation higher and lower. These findings support the 14th century Byzantine historian George Pachymeres’ statement that the *hyperpyra* of John III were only 16 carats fine. There are more secret marks than are mentioned by Pegolotti (whose descriptions and arithmetic are uncertain), so while it was possible to determine that John III later reduced the fineness of his *hyperpyra* to Pegolotti’s values ranging from about 16⅓ to 16¾ carats, agreement with Pegolotti’s specific descriptions could not be confirmed.

Though debased in fineness, this flood of gold circulated throughout the Empire of Nicaea, the Latin Empire (including the Principality of Achaëa), and the Kingdom of Bulgaria. It was a familiar sight to Florentine merchants like Pegolotti, and as mentioned was used by the Venetians in Crete by 1229, in preference to Venetian coins themselves.²⁵ A Venetian merchant loaned Latin emperor Baldwin II 13,134 *hyperpyra* in 1238 on the security of the Crown of Thorns. In 1250, the French treasury purchased 3½ marks of *hyperpyra* (about 230 coins) to send to Alphonse of Poitiers, then captive in Egypt, at a price indicating that they were issues of John III.²⁶

me with an annotated copy. Since Dr. Oberländer-Târnoveanu calculated the fineness for each phase secret mark by secret mark, regardless of whether the number of specimens available for analysis for each secret mark was one or a dozen, I have recalculated the phase compositions using a weighted average.

²³ C. Morriison, J.N. Barrandon, and S. Bendall, “Proton Activation and XRF Analysis: An Application to the Study of the Alloy of Nicaean and Palaeologan Hyperpyra Issues,” in *Metallurgy in Numismatics 2* (London, 1988), pp. 23–39, hereafter cited as *MIN 2*.

²⁴ Oberländer-Târnoveanu, “Les Hyperpères,” pp. 499–562.

²⁵ Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire,” p. 204.

²⁶ Peter Spufford, *Money and its use in medieval Europe* (Cambridge, Eng., 1988), p. 180; Stahl, “Coinage and Money in the Latin Empire,” p. 200.



Fig. 2 “Latin” imitation of John III Vatatzès hyperpyron

In fact, it seems that the Latins could not get enough of them, for they minted imitations.²⁷ Pegolotti included these in his list of *hyperpyra* as *Perperi latini d’oro* – Latin gold *hyperpyra* – remarking that they are only 16½ carats fine, rather worse than originals, and described how they could be identified.²⁸ This passage has puzzled numismatists for decades, but a consensus has now been reached on a solution, thanks to the work of Oberländer-Târnoveanu.²⁹ He identified the coins on which the nimbus of Christ is linear instead of beaded and has within it a cross pattée, rather than a parallel-armed Greek cross, as the “Latin” imitations. (See Fig 2.) (Imitations are also known with the nimbus half-beaded, half-linear [due to striking the cup-shaped coin with two half dies – thus imitations with beaded nimbus only must exist] and with nimbus both beaded and linear.)³⁰ This insight allowed the secret marks mentioned by Pegolotti to be correlated perfectly, as some of them appear also on the originals. However, the analysis did not support Pegolotti exactly, as Oberländer-Târnoveanu found that the fineness drifted downward with every change of secret mark, but the weighted average was 68.9 per cent [average of issues 68.6 per cent], or 16½ carats – complete agreement.

²⁷ Cécile Morrisson, “L’Ouverture des Marchés après 1204: un Aspect Positif de la IVe Croisade?”, *Réalités byzantines*, “Proceedings of Athens Fourth Crusade Conference, 9–12 March 2004,” forthcoming.

²⁸ Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, pp. 250–56; Lucia Travaini, *Moneta Mercanti e Matematica* (Rome, 2003), pp. 86, 125, 289, also 148–49 (epitome of Pegolotti’s description by Lippo di Fedi, ca. 1314).

²⁹ Oberländer-Târnoveanu, “Les Hyperpères,” pp. 506–8; Cécile Morrisson, “Byzance,” in *A Survey of Numismatic Research 1996–2001*, ed. Carmen Alfaro and Andrew Burnett (Madrid, 2003), pp. 350–51, 370, hereafter cited as *SNR 1996–2001*; D.M. Metcalf, “The Latin East,” in *SNR 1996–2001*, p. 391.

³⁰ eBay auction 3929018991 (12 September 2004), offered by Old Glory Coins LLC, Concord, Massachusetts, ex Spink & Son auction 1311, 11 July 2002 (did not sell); eBay auction 3943975284 (7 December 2004), offered by coinkingdom, Lebanon, New Hampshire.

Table 1 Emperors and Princes, 1204–1261

Latin Empire	Achaea	Empire of Nicaea
Henry I, 1206–16	William of Champlitte, 1205–09	Theodore I Lascaris, 1205–22
Peter of Courtenay, 1217	Geoffrey I of Villehardouin, 1209–c. 1229	John III Vatatzès, 1221/2–54
Yolanda, 1217–19	Geoffrey II, c. 1229–46	Theodore II, 1254–58
Robert of Courtenay, 1221–28	William II, 1246–59	John IV, 1258–61
Baldwin II, 1228–61	Anna, 1259–61	Michael VIII Palaeologus, 1259–61
(John of Brienne, 1231–37)	William II, 1261–78	

Who issued the “Latin” imitations? It is inconceivable that the Latin Empire proper could have been responsible for so extensive a gold coinage. Baldwin II, 1228–61, was increasingly desperate for money throughout his entire reign, menaced as he was by the aggression of John III Vatatzès and Michael VIII, and was finally forced to pawn his own son to raise funds. While Venetian merchants, or even Venice itself, had the wherewithal to do it, there are reasons to doubt their involvement: Pegolotti was a rival of the Venetians, yet he calls the imitations “Latin” and not “Venetian,” and Venetian silver *grossi* of the time use the same parallel-armed Greek cross in a beaded nimbus as original *hyperpyra*, unlike those of the “Latin” imitations. Indeed their style is far too crude for the Venetian mint, even if the nimbus details are overlooked. Oberländer-Târnoveanu suggested that the Genoese might have made them after they gained access to Black Sea commerce by the treaty of Nymphaion, 13 March 1261. But toward the end of the reign of John III Vatatzès, in 1252, Genoa had already introduced its own gold coinage, so it had no need to make *hyperpyra* copies by this time. And prior to 1261, the Genoese had no trading connections with Nicaea, because John III was an ally of their great enemy, Frederick II Hohenstaufen.³¹

Until now, the term “Latin” has been considered to refer to the Latin Empire proper. But it also covered the territory now generally known as Frankish Greece, including Achaea. (See Table 1.) About 1229, Geoffrey II of Villehardouin became prince of Achaea. The economy of Achaea was flourishing, and Geoffrey II flaunted his wealth by maintaining 80 knights with golden spurs. In 1236, he came to the relief of Constantinople, then besieged by John III Vatatzès. As part of his support, he offered Baldwin II an annual subsidy of 22,000 *hyperpyra*. Again in 1238, 1239, and 1243, Geoffrey II furnished ships and troops to the Latin Empire.³²

³¹ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, p. 115.

³² William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant, A History of Frankish Greece (1204–1566)* (Cambridge, Eng., 1908), pp. 86–90; Jean Longnon, “The Frankish States in Greece, 1204–1311,” in *A History of the Crusades* 2, 2nd ed., ed. Robert Lee Wolff and Harry W. Hazard (Madison, Wis. 1969), pp. 242–43.

When he began collecting the 22,000 *hyperpyra* for the 1236 subsidy, however, he probably found that not enough *hyperpyra* of John III Vatatzès could be obtained, and so made imitations (of *tari* gold from Sicily, with added copper?) to complete the payment. Additional pieces may have been minted for local use. The number of secret marks suggests that coinage continued for several years, as needed for the subsidy, until circa 1243, when Geoffrey last assisted Baldwin II. But it must have stopped some years prior to 1249, when his successor William I requested permission from Louis IX of France to coin billon *deniers tournois*. The most likely place of minting is Glarentza, where the *deniers tournois* were struck, though Corinth is an alternative. Thus, the “Latin” imitations of *hyperpyra* of John III Vatatzès should be attributed to the principality of Achaea, issued by Geoffrey II of Villehardouin circa 1236–43.

An exception to the dominance of the *hyperpyron* was Norman Italy and Sicily, which was economically closer to the Islamic world than the Christian.³³ Its currency was the *tari*, derived from the Islamic gold quarter *dinar* or *rubai’i*. Introduced in 878, it was continued by the Normans and their successors until 1278 and was copied in south Italy for a time. Of variable weight, the *tari* was coined at a fineness of approximately $16\frac{1}{3}$ to $16\frac{2}{3}$ carats (68.1–69.4 per cent gold) very consistently from the time of Robert Guiscard through 1278, though copper began to replace silver in the alloy from the time of Tancred, 1189.³⁴

The *bezants* of the Kingdom of Jerusalem were also reduced to a $16\frac{1}{3}$ carat *tari* standard in Phase Three, circa 1187 to 1250 (not so stated, but Bompaire, Barrandon, and Morrison (*MIN* 4) show an average of 68.05 per cent for eight coins, BY 27e through BY 32, and Gordus and Metcalf (*MIN* 1), combined with Bompaire, Barrandon, and Morrison’s results gives 67.8 per cent = 16.27 carats for an average of 32 coins.³⁵

In November 1190 Richard I of England received 40,000 ounces of gold from king Tancred of Sicily, apparently in the form of 1,200,000 *taris*, which he carried to Acre and divided equally with King Philip of France there;³⁶ probably they were hastily coined into *bezants* without refining and with a few per cent of copper added; thus, the introduction of the Phase Three standard for the *bezant* should most likely be dated to 1191 instead of 1187. The reduced alloy was perhaps intended to be a temporary expedient for the duration of the Crusade, but the previous fineness of 80 per cent was never restored. The three *Agnus Dei* coins tested (and retested) have

³³ Archibald R. Lewis, *Nomads and Crusaders A.D. 1000–1368* (Bloomington, 1988), p. 121.

³⁴ Lucia Travaini, “The Fineness of Sicilian Taris, and of those of Amalfi and Salerno (11th to 13th Centuries),” in *Metallurgy in Numismatics* 4 (London, 1998), pp. 504–17, hereafter cited as *MIN* 4.

³⁵ Marc Bompaire, Jean-Noël Barrandon, and Cécile Morrison, “Crusader Gold and the Process of its Debasement,” in *MIN* 4, pp. 35–51; A.A. Gordus and D.M. Metcalf, “Neutron Activation Analysis of the Gold Coinages of the Crusader States,” in *Metallurgy in Numismatics* 1 (London, 1980), pp. 119–50, hereafter cited as *MIN* 1.

³⁶ Lucia Travaini, “The Normans between Byzantium and the Islamic World,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), p. 190; Helen J. Nicholson, *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 168, 203–4.

Table 2 Tari Standard Gold Coins

Coin	Gold	% of Silver	Copper
Tari, 1072–1250 (Travaini, <i>MIN</i> 4, pp. 504–17)	68–72	19–27	3–8
Phase 3 Acre Bezants (Gordus, Metcalf, <i>MIN</i> 1; Bompaire et al, <i>MIN</i> 4)	67.8	22.6	10.0
Agnus Dei Bezants (Gordus, Metcalf, <i>MIN</i> 1; Bompaire et al, <i>MIN</i> 4)	68.1	21.4	10.5
John III Hyperpyra, Phase 3 (Oberländer-Târnoveanu, p. 513, weighted average)	66.5	18.3	15.2
Latin Imitation Hyperpyra (Oberländer-Târnoveanu, p. 517, corrected weighted average)	68.9	17.5	13.6

an average of exactly 68.1 per cent, suggesting that they should be considered the first Christian *bezants*, minted 1250 or 1251).³⁷

Consequently, from about 1235–1250, the *tari* standard was used from Palermo to Acre and throughout the Nicaean and Latin Empires and nearby Bulgaria. (See Table 2.)³⁸

This system began to change with the introduction of the gold *augustalis* of 20½ carats by Frederick II in 1231, minted perhaps as late as 1250. Though very impressive, it was never as successful as Frederick II's *tari*, which continued to be struck in large numbers.³⁹

In 1252, after the *augustalis* was discontinued, two Italian cities, Genoa and Florence – within a short time of each other – introduced coinage of pure gold minted to a new weight standard. This date is laconically recorded in the Genoese Annals, and the introduction of the *florin* is given by the Florentine historian Giovanni Villani as occurring in November 1252.⁴⁰ Genoa actually introduced three denominations, the *genoin* and its quarter (*quartarola*) and eighth (*soldo*). However, the earliest Genoese reference speaks of a single coin, not a whole series, and this can only be the quarter-*genoin*, as it is exactly one-thirtieth of the Genoese ounce.⁴¹ The most common of the three, it seems to have been the true unit, and the only denomination struck for a time. When the others were added is uncertain: a

³⁷ Bompaire, Barrandon, and Morrison, "Crusader Gold;" Gordus and Metcalf, "Neutron Activation Analysis."

³⁸ HENDY, *Coinage and Money*, pp. 325–404; Metcalf, *Coinage in South-Eastern Europe*, pp. 130–31; Oberländer-Târnoveanu, "Les Hyperpères," p. 501.

³⁹ Philip Grierson, *Coins of Medieval Europe* (London, 1991), pp. 111–12; Travaini, "The Normans," pp. 192–93; *MEC* 14, pp. 172–78.

⁴⁰ Robert S. Lopez, "Back to Gold, 1252," *Economic History Review*, 2nd Series 9, 221–23, repr. in *The Shape of Medieval Monetary History* (London, 1986), VIII, pp. 221–23.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 221, 225.

document of 25 November 1253 mentions “*denarius grossus aureus ianuinus*;⁴²” if the “*grossus*” is significant, it may be there to distinguish the *quartarola* from the *soldo*, or to define the *genoin*. The weight standard of the *genoin* was 3.53 grams (g) and that of the *florin* 3.54 g,⁴³ suggesting that one was influenced by the other.

On 15 August 1261, Latin emperor Michael VIII returned to Constantinople, restoring the Byzantine Empire. The minting of gold coins there was finally resumed, and a new obverse type for the *hyperpyron* was soon introduced to commemorate the restoration, a figure of the Virgin within the walls of Constantinople. This coin, though, had been further debased and was now only 15½ karats fine (64.6 per cent).⁴⁴ The step-by-step debasement of the *hyperpyron* continued, with further reductions from 1282 through 1341, finally arriving at a miserable 11 carats – only 45.8 per cent actual gold.⁴⁵

By then, both the *genoin* and the *florin* had met with far greater success than the less pure *augustalis*, gradually circulating outside their respective territories and later prompting the introduction of gold coinages in England and France. They were joined by the *ducat* in 1285, when Venice began to mint its own gold coin “at least as good as the *florin*,” that is, essentially pure.⁴⁶ Its nominal weight was set slightly higher, however, at 3.545 g.

Early in the fourteenth century, the *florin* and *ducat* began to be imitated all over Europe, from France and Spain to Hungary to the Levant, including Achaea; the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at Rhodes and later Malta; the Greek isles of Chios and Mytilene; and Phocaea and Pera on the mainland of Asia Minor. By 1353, the last debased Byzantine gold coin was minted. But the Venetian *ducat* that ultimately replaced it remained essentially unchanged in weight and purity until 1797. The triumph of Western over Eastern gold coinage was complete.

⁴² Robert S. Lopez, “Settecento anni fa: Il ritorno all’oro nell’Occidente duecentesco,” *Quaderni della Rivista Storica Italiana* 4 (Naples, 1955), p. 24 (*Rivista Storica Italiana* 65 [1953], p. 38), repr. in *The Shape of Medieval Monetary History* (London, 1986), VII, p. 24.

⁴³ Spufford, *Money and its use*, p. 177.

⁴⁴ Morrisson, Barrandon, and Bendall, “Proton Activation,” p. 31.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Hendy, *Coinage and Money*, pp. 250–52.

⁴⁶ Herbert E. Ives, *The Venetian Gold Ducat and its Imitations* (New York, 1954), p. 5; Philip Grierson, “The Fineness of the Venetian Ducat and its Imitations,” in *MIN* 2, pp. 95–102.

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PERCEPTIONS

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The *Translatio Symonensis* and the Seven Thieves: A Venetian Fourth Crusade *Furta Sacra* Narrative and the Looting of Constantinople

David M. Perry

On Palm Sunday of 1204, twelve Venetian crusaders ventured out from their ship into the chaotic city of Constantinople.¹ They planned to steal relics. All twelve came from the parish of St. Simon the Prophet in Venice, and their intention was to take home the relics of their parish's patron saint from the Church of St. Mary Chalkoprateia, located close to Hagia Sophia on the Golden Horn. The men had reconnoitered the premises a few days earlier, because one of the Venetians, Pietro Steno, had seen the relics while in the city on business in 1201, but needed to retrace his steps to find them again. With this accomplished, the conspirators made their plans, and on Palm Sunday had put them into motion. But the best laid plans of Venetian crusaders often went awry.

So begins the *Translatio Symonensis*, a relatively recently discovered source for the Fourth Crusade.² This narrative describes the "translation" (the term used when one moves relics from one place to another) of the relics of St. Simon the Prophet from Constantinople to Venice. It covers the follies and successes of these crusaders as they find the relics and smuggle them out of the church, eventually sending the sacred items back to Venice. Drawing from chronicle sources and an inscription on the tomb in Venice (where the relics eventually were deposited), scholars knew that Venetians took St. Simon from Constantinople after the Fourth Crusade, but lacked the details of the theft. This *translatio* provides them. Thanks to the research of Paolo Chiesa, the full story of the theft of St. Simon is now available for scholars of the Fourth Crusade.³

This article will consider two groups of questions about the text and the story it relates. First, the text: What does it say? Where does it come from? Who wrote it? Is the narrative historically accurate? Second: Who were these Venetian relic thieves

¹ This article represents an expanded and revised version of a paper read at the Sixth Conference of the Society of the Crusades and the Latin East, held at Bosphorus University, Istanbul, Turkey, in August of 2004. I wish to thank my colleagues who have commented on various versions of this paper, particularly Paolo Chiesa for his assistance with various issues pertaining to the manuscript and the timing of its production, Thomas Madden for his guidance in the Archivio di Stato in Venice, and Christopher Nappa for his assistance with the translation. Research in the Venetian archives was made possible through a grant from the Delmas Foundation. All errors are my own.

² The source was discovered and published by P. Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie a Costantinopoli durante la quarta crociata: La traslazione a Venezia del corpo di Simeone profeta," *Studi Medievali*, v. 36, n. 1 (1995), pp. 431–59. Chiesa's article includes an edition of the *translatio*, which is from Biblioteca Nazionale Braidese di Milano (BNBM), MS Gerli 26, fol. 71r–74v. I have provided an English translation of the manuscript in the appendix.

³ Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie," p. 431, found the source in a larger codex of Venetian hagiographic material.

and what is the significance of their decision to steal the relics of their patron saint from Constantinople and bring them home to Venice?

The Story

What does the text say? This is a good story with many moments of humor. The characters seem real, with both flaws and virtues. Certainly, boiler-plate elements found within most *furta sacra* tales also occur in this narrative, but these elements exist side by side with amusing idiosyncrasies that add an air of verisimilitude.⁴

The first few sections of the text set the scene. The events of the Fourth Crusade, summarized in just a few lines, follow a description of Venice and the pious parishioners of St. Simon. The Greeks receive the blame for the conflict that led to the crusade. According to the text, Doge Enrico Dandolo of Venice, the Count of Flanders, and other counts took up the cross and went to Constantinople to prosecute a just war on behalf of Alexius Angelos, the deposed Greek prince. The narrative describes the Greek enemies as impious rulers and iniquitous actors.⁵ The text suggests that the purpose of the entire campaign was to see justice done in Constantinople, and does not mention the crusade's original destination of Egypt, or its goal of recapturing Jerusalem. A few lines describe the Venetian ships drawing close to the walls and men from the vessels storming them. Close fighting follows, and in the course of the battle, fires flare up around the walls. The crusaders emerge victorious and take both the city and the kingdom. The army then begins to loot.

At this point, the narrative turns to the protagonists. The Holy Spirit moves seven men from the parish of St. Simon to desire only sacred items, thus differentiating themselves from the other crusaders, who are moved by the lust for gold and silver. After a brief homily on the virtues that the Holy Spirit can inspire, the main action of the story begins. During the days after the fall, Andrea Balduino and Pietro Steno speak together on their ship. Andrea claims that he has heard that the body of their patron, Simon, is in the city. Pietro responds that this is true, for he has seen it. Two years earlier, Pietro had been in Constantinople with his uncle, Matteo Steno, a most religious man. Together, they had gone to venerate at the tomb of St. Simon,

⁴ While P. Geary, *Furta Sacrae: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ, 1978) remains the standard source for the practice of relic-stealing in the Middle Ages, the *translatio* narratives of the Fourth Crusade stand out as a very particular sub-branch of that genre, and one which Geary does not address. M. Angold, in *The Fourth Crusade* (New York, 2003), especially pp. 219–67, has provided an excellent overview of the looting of relics out of Constantinople post-1204. A. Andrea has, in multiple works, translated and commented on various narratives chronicling the looting and translating of relics from Constantinople to the West. See especially Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade* (Boston, 2000) and “The *Historia Constantinopolitana*: An Early Thirteenth-century Cistercian looks at Byzantium,” *Analecta Cisterciensia* 36 (1980), pp. 267–302. *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae*, v. 1–2, ed. P. Riant (Geneva, 1877) remains the unparalleled collection of the many sources discussing relics from the Latin Empire.

⁵ The text does not distinguish between Alexius III who actually deposed Isaac and Alexius Angelos and Alexius Mourtzophlous, the ultimate foe of the crusaders in April of 1204.

which was located somewhere near the church of St. Sophia. Steno and Andrea decide to steal the relic, gather together ten other co-conspirators, and form their plans. The first step is to find it, and Steno leads Andrea, one Marino Calbo, and “certain others” into the neighborhood of St. Sophia. They explore, find the right church, locate the tomb within the church, and creep back to their ship to make plans for the heist. They decide to do the deed on Palm Sunday, when the people of the city would be distracted.

The narrative relates a series of mishaps after the preamble and the plotting. In order to avoid attracting attention as they make their way through the streets, the twelve men split into two groups, one of five, the other of seven. The group of five gets lost on the way, and never arrives at the church. Andrea Balduino urges the seven to hurry, and they split up again into groups of four and three. The three go inside to retrieve the relics, and the four stay behind to guard the door and alert the three if anyone comes. The three, Balduino, Steno, and another man, approach the stone crypt of St. Simon, but find themselves too afraid to act. They then argue over which of them should break open the crypt, each deferring to the others, suggesting that the saint’s preference would be for another to do the deed. Time passes.

The men at the door become impatient and call inside, asking what could possibly be taking so long. Those inside, hearing some muffled shouts and sure that someone is coming, panic and dash back to their comrades. The seven stand at the door, staring at each other. The four guardians at the door wonder, reasonably, where the saint’s relics might be. They reproach the three would-be-thieves. “Where is your courage?” they ask. “Are you men?” They order the thieves to “Go, in the name of God and complete this task.” They suggest that the Venetians would be better off dead than to leave the theft undone. Chastened, the three head back to the crypt. Balduino finds his courage and breaks open the stone with one mighty blow of the hammer, but inside the sarcophagus is a lead ark. So they break open the ark and find a box with iron bands that have rusted and broken open. Pietro Steno now reveals that he had dreamt of this moment the previous night and that it had been revealed to him that he would be the one to lift out the relics from this last container. He does, and is rewarded with that familiar sweet smell of success for the would-be relic thief – a sweet aroma that miraculously fills the chamber. All breathe easy, knowing that God and the Saint have approved of their venture.

Even here the men’s trials are not done. They make it back to their ship and hide the relics away, for now they have begun to glow with holy light. Before they can leave for home, however, the Doge of Venice, for reasons not expressed in the text, orders all the *uxeria* – ships used to transport horses – to be beached.⁶ No one could depart. A great “murmur” then arises amongst the Greek people over the loss of St. Simon. The Doge and “other princes of war” hear the hue and cry and decide to help.

⁶ *Uxeria*, at least in theory, were designed to be beached on the shore. Knights could then ride their horses directly off the ships and onto dry land, right into combat if necessary. J. Pryor, “Transportation of Horses by Sea during the Era of the Crusades: Eighth Century to 1285 A.D. Part I: To c. 1225,” *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 68 (1982), 21–23.

For the safe return of the relics of St. Simon, the Doge offers those relics' weight in gold. The Venetian thieves quickly take the relics off the ship and hide them in a little local chapel connected to an abandoned palace on the Bosphorus. They pay an old, pious Greek woman to care for the chapel, though they keep her ignorant of what is inside. "God be praised," none of the conspirators become tempted to turn in their comrades, or the relics, for the bounty. Finally, after six months, one of the thieves receives permission (by lottery) to head back to Venice. Andrea Drusiaco (presumably one of the door guards) takes the relics and a letter describing the events from his comrades, and journeys home without incident. Back in Venice, he gives everything to Leonardo, rector of their parish church. Shortly thereafter, with great pomp and ceremony, this priest installs the relics in the local church. Venice's two highest-ranking clerics, the Bishop of Castello and the Patriarch of Grado, both assist Leonardo in the celebration and interment of the relics.

The Source

Paolo Chiesa, an Italian scholar, published an edition and commentary on the manuscript in 1995. He found it in Milan in a large, bound, fourteenth-century collection of Venetian hagiographical tracts. Although the manuscript that holds this story is from the fourteenth century, it is fairly clear that the narrative is actually older. The core source for the *translatio* is the actual account of the theft by the Venetian crusaders, followed by a contemporary shaping of that account into the traditional hagiographic genre. The text contains many realistic depictions, including the story about the men who get lost in the confusing streets of Constantinople and never arrive at the church, and the necessity for Steno, who had seen the relic in 1202, to retrace his steps from St. Sophia. The stashing of the relics in an abandoned Greek palace chapel on the banks of the Bosphoros is a credible solution to their problem. The hesitation on the part of the Venetian leaders to let the crusaders return to Venice is consistent with other sources about the crusade.⁷ The church of St. Mary Chalkoprateia was near St. Sophia, as described.⁸ In short, the text provides a largely trustworthy account of the crusaders' story.

If we trust the text, then we should be able to trust that the identities of the Venetians involved in the theft are accurate. Their names are Andrea Balduino, Pietro Steno, Leonardo Steno, Marino Calvo, Angelo Drusario, Nicola Feretro, and

⁷ The participants in the crusade had, in fact, sworn an oath to keep their forces in Constantinople for one year, until March 1205. This oath was one provision of the "March Pact," the agreement made by the crusaders before the conquest of the city that governed how loot would be divided. The leadership feared that whichever faction of the crusade did not gain the imperial throne would abandon the enterprise, and constructed this oath to prevent disintegration of the army. A. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade*, pp. 140–45, provides a discussion and translation of the pact.

⁸ R. Janin, "Les Sanctuaires de Byzance sous la Domination Latine (1204–1261)," *Revue des études Byzantines* 2 (1944), pp. 159–60.

Leonardo Mauro. The text also mentions Matteo Steno, Pietro Steno's uncle. We lack the names of the five who got lost, if indeed they ever existed.

Only a few of the published and unpublished Venetian sources from around the year 1200 mention the names listed in the *Translatio Symonensis*, and none of these documents provides indisputable identification.⁹ Most of these names are not unusual for Venice, so it is difficult to know if a "Pietro Steno" who owned land in Torcello in 1192, for example, is the same Pietro who was in Constantinople in 1204.¹⁰ Matching the names of the relic thieves to the names in these documents with any degree of certainty is thus impossible, especially as none of the post-1204 documents refer to these men in any way as crusaders, although further research on the post-crusade archives is warranted. Still, the documentary evidence uncovered to this point suggests that these men were, in fact, parishioners of St. Simon the Prophet and the neighboring parish dedicated to the two saints Simon and Jude.

I believe I have identified Matteo Steno, the uncle with whom Pietro first saw the relics in 1202, in several unpublished documents. In 1195, someone named Matteo Steno owned a vacant lot in the parish of St. Simon the Prophet that served as a landmark in two transactions involving a neighbor's property.¹¹ A similar document mentions another property belonging to Steno, again used a boundary-marker, located in the neighboring parish of Sts. Simon and Jude.¹² Finally, Matteo Steno's name joins the name of Nicola Faletro in two other documents that are both well-known to Venetian scholars. The first lists a number of individuals who loaned money to the state in 1196 for a fleet. The second contains a long list of people being repaid by the state for a different loan in 1207. Both men appear in both documents.¹³ The presence of these names on the rolls implies that both had considerable means, although the extent of their wealth is unknowable. The language of the *translatio* imputes a slightly higher status to both Matteo and Nicola. Matteo Steno seems to have been Pietro's superior (and elder, of course) in the trading voyage to Constantinople in 1202, and as such would have been at least reasonably wealthy. Feretro seems to be either the captain or owner, or both, of the thieves' ship. It is reasonable to believe that a wealthy ship-owner

⁹ Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie," pp. 442–43, discusses the published sources. I have added my findings in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia.

¹⁰ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASV) Cancelleria Inferiore (CI), B.8. April, Ind I, 1192, Torcello. Ss. Felice e Fortunato di Ammiana.

¹¹ ASV CI, B.I, *Notai più antichi diversi*, 1195, 29–31 Luglio, ind. XIII, Rialto and ASV CI, B.106, folder 6 (*Notai*). Neither document reveals anything else about Steno. These transactions involve the land of Pietro Marco, a man of considerable means who appears in many other land and property transactions in this collection of documents. Matteo Steno was merely one of the names listed as owning property bordering a house that belonged to Pietro Marco. The use of neighboring properties to identify a site is typical of Venetian legal and real-estate documentation.

¹² ASV CI, B.106, folder 6 (*Notai*).

¹³ The Venetian surname Feretro and Faletro are the same name in Venetian usage. S. Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, II (Venice, 1854), 418 and 429. See also Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie," p. 443. Chiesa has done a thorough job of searching for these men in the published sources for late twelfth- and thirteenth-century Venice.

and merchant captain would then captain a military vessel. As an *uxeria*, this was a ship explicitly constructed for the crusade – to carry the horses of Frankish knights.¹⁴ Very little is known about how the Venetians effected the transition from merchant-marine to crusader navy when they built their massive fleet. Late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Venice featured myriad, small shipyards, not the later, more famous, proto-industrial Arsenale.¹⁵ Thus, that the *Translatio Symonensis* suggests a parish-based organization for the crewing and captaining of new vessels is intriguing for medieval maritime scholars and crusade-historians alike. Because the author depicted both Nicola and Matteo as men of means, it stands to reason that the men who loaned money in 1196 could also be the men referenced in the *translatio*. Absolute certainty in any of these matters is impossible, but when one also considers the references to Matteo in the property transactions, I believe that we have found at least this one man. With the exception of the aforementioned document from Torcello, Pietro Steno himself remains a mystery.¹⁶

Andrea Balduino, the other leading protagonist in the text, does not appear in any extant archival documents from the period. Balduino, however, was an uncommon surname in medieval Venice.¹⁷ In 1188, someone named Marino Balduino, a parishioner of St. Simon the Prophet, transferred land to one Pietro Marco of the parish of Sts. Simon and Jude.¹⁸ Based on this sole mention and the rarity of the name, one can speculate about a Balduino family connection to the parish of St. Simon the Prophet. I have found no evidence to prove whether or not Marino and Andrea might have been related.

A few other tidbits of information exist. Leonardo Steno, another thief, may or may not have been related to Pietro and Matteo. Regardless, his connection to Constantinople may not have ended after the Fourth Crusade. In 1206, someone named Leonardo Steno owned land in Constantinople.¹⁹ Many Venetians remained in

¹⁴ J. Pryor, “The Venetian fleet for the Fourth Crusade,” *The Experience of Crusading: Volume 1 – The Western Experience* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 115–19.

¹⁵ T. Madden, *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Baltimore, 2003), pp. 1–2.

¹⁶ ASV CI., B.8. April, Ind I, 1192, Torcello. Ss. Felice e Fortunato di Ammiana. This document, as with the ones mentioning Matteo Steno’s land is a sale between two men from the Lido of Venice (but dealing with land on the island of Torcello). Pietro Steno’s land borders the one being sold, and is used as a boundary reference. The contents or value of Steno’s property is not remarked upon.

¹⁷ This according to correspondence with Thomas Madden, who has made an extremely close study of twelfth-century Venetian families in researching his book on Enrico Dandolo. Surnames for the merchants of Venice, that large middle class, seem to have stabilized somewhat earlier than in other comparable sites. No published study of naming conventions in Venice has been published for the early medieval period, so it is difficult to develop a precise Venetian chronology of naming conventions. For Genoa and general commentary on the development of the medieval urban surname, see R. Lopez, “Concerning Surnames and Places of Origin,” *Medievalia et humanistica* 8 (1954), pp. 6–16.

¹⁸ 5 January 1188 – ASV, CI, B.1. *Notai più antichi diversi* and 15 April 1188 – ASV, CI, B.30 *Notai*. Both documents reference the same sale. Presumably this Pietro Marco is the same man as in the transactions cited above in footnotes 11 and 12.

¹⁹ Chiesa, “Ladri di reliquie,” p. 443. See also *Diplomatarium veneto-Levanticum; sive, Acta et diplomata res venetas, Graecae atque Levantis illustrantia*, eds. George Martin Thomas and R. Predell (1966), and eds. Gattlieb Lukas and Friedrich Tafel (1854) (New York, 1966), pp. 4–8. The Venetians

the expanded Venetian quarter and took advantage of the opportunities for Venetian commerce in the Latin Empire.²⁰ Marino Calbo's name appears as a witness in a document from the ducal court in 1192. This Marino Calbo was of Caneleclo, north of the parish of St. Simon the Prophet.²¹

Taken together, the archival evidence is thin and unreliable. The records for Matteo Steno seem to be best, and this should not be surprising, as he seems to have been the highest-status individual mentioned in the *translatio*. As a wealthy and older man, he also stayed in Venice. The frustratingly indefinite nature of the archival data that might have provided corroborating evidence for the *Translatio Symonensis* is typical of Venetian source material for the period. Other than the Doge himself, scholars have identified only one Venetian crusader by name with certainty. A man named Walframe of Gemona filled out a will shortly before he left on crusade, and that document survives.²² Out of the thousands of men who served as crew for the Venetian navy, the greatest Latin naval force built up to that point, scholars have named only two – Dandolo and Walframe. This uncertainty bespeaks the challenge of researching in Venice during the period of the Fourth Crusade. Although the evidence for these seven men is not quite as ironclad as Walframe's will, it seems reasonable to add the names of these seven men to the list of crusaders.

The fourteenth-century chronicle of Andrea Dandolo (c.1307–54) mentions the translation of St. Simon among his larger list of relics taken from Constantinople to Venice after 1204. Dandolo also set down what he knew about the men who stole them. He describes the relic thieves as, "Plebey ecciam veneti, nomine Andreas Balduino et Angelus Drusiaco."²³ The word "*plebey*," or commoners, reflects the changes in Venetian society that had occurred by Andrea Dandolo's day. By then, Venetian society had crystallized and social strata had become more defined, a process seen most clearly by the closing of the Great Council, or the *Serrata*, in 1297.²⁴ By the fourteenth century, therefore, perhaps these men from the parish

maintained a lively quarter in Constantinople and presumably some Venetian crusaders remained in the captured city.

²⁰ D. Jacoby, "The Venetian Quarter of Constantinople from 1082 to 1261: Topographical Considerations," in *Novum Millenium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture dedicated to Paul Speck*, ed. C. Sode and S. Takács (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 160–64.

²¹ ASV, S. Cipriano di Murano in Mensa Patriarcale, no. 386. *Codice Diplomatico Veneziano*, n. 4284 (4144) – 1192, 22–30 novembre, ind.XII, Rialto. The document confirms the transfer of property to the church of S. Cipriano, based on a gift. Marino was merely the witness and played no part in the transaction.

²² Madden, *Enrico Dandolo*, p. 140.

²³ Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta*, ed. E. Pastorello (Bologna, 1942); *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, XII, 1, 280; Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie," pp. 431–32, argues that Dandolo probably had a copy of the *Translatio Symonensis* in some form. I find Dandolo's brief statement (missing five of the names) to be a sign that whatever text he had, it must have been highly abbreviated or he would have added the other names, so it must not have been the full version of the *Translatio Symonensis*.

²⁴ For the *Serrata*, most recently one can see G. Rösch, "The *Serrata* of the Great Council and Venetian Society, 1286–1323," in *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297–1797*, ed. J. Martin and D. Romano (Baltimore, 2000), pp. 67–88. For a more general survey

of St. Simon would have been considered “*plebey*,” but matters around 1200 in Venice were considerably different.²⁵ Pietro Steno’s uncle, Matteo Steno, was a man of means. Matteo Steno was no Dandolo or Ziani in terms of wealth or political power in Venice, but he was a member of Venice’s merchant elite, and thus his nephew would have been of somewhat similar status. It is harder to judge Nicola Feretro, based solely on the loan document of 1196 and the repayment document of 1207. Still, the *translatio* itself seems to ascribe to Feretro a slightly higher status than the other men. In an early passage, the author lists him as just one among the seven thieves. Later, however, the thieves place the relics in his care, and the author describes him as a “*fidelissimi viri*” (most faithful of men).²⁶ Other than Nicola, only Dandolo himself receives superlative descriptors in the text (“*vir eloquentissimus, prudentissimus in opera et sermone, in consilio sapientissimus*”).²⁷ He seems to have captained the *uxeria* on which all the men served, and stood above the others. The main actors were Andrea and Pietro, as their fellows assisted them and seemed to follow their lead, but neither of these men had the same status as Nicola. The evidence indicates, nonetheless, that none of these men were necessarily the commoners that Dandolo (and Chiesa) suggest.²⁸ They were a group of men from the same parish who knew each other long before they set out on crusade. Their precise level of wealth might have varied from member to member, but none seems to have been of low status. Rather, they came from the large Venetian merchant-class, some of whom were more successful than others, but all of whom took part in the international trade that brought Venice its wealth.

They were also highly devout in their own way. Perhaps the men did not stop to pray every few moments, as depicted in the text, but their actions indicate that piety played a potent motivating force for these crusaders. At considerable risk to themselves, in defiance of their leaders, the Venetians sought to capture the relics of their patron saint. That they took such a risk displays the experiential nature of medieval Venetian piety, for which one had to demonstrate one’s faith via deeds. At their core, the heist pulled off by these seven Venetians was an audacious act of devotion.

of these changes, see G. Cracco, *Società e stato nel medioevo veneziano (secoli XII–XIV)* (Florence, 1967).

²⁵ Marino Sanudo uses the term “popolari” to describe the two relic thieves, and otherwise lifts his text from Dandolo. M. Sanudo, *Vite de duchi di Venezia*, ed. L.A. Muratori (Milan, 1733); *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, XXII, col 533–34.

²⁶ BNBM, MS Gerli 26, fol. 74r.

²⁷ BNBM, MS Gerli 26, fol 71v. Matteo Steno, by contrast, is merely a “*viro religioso*” when mentioned in the text (fol. 72r).

²⁸ Chiesa, “Ladri di reliquie,” p. 443. “Mercanti dunque, uomini di mare, *plebey*.” While they were merchants and men of the sea, the emphasis is too heavily placed on the “common” aspect of the crusaders. Feretro and Steno were higher status, and there is no definite evidence extant with which one could assess the precise status of the others. It is important not to ascribe fourteenth-century norms to the thirteenth-century, especially given the transformations of Venetian society during the intervening decades.

If the identities of the men are now more clear, if not ever completely knowable, the question of the source's authorship remains. Again, some conjectures are possible. The sacred interpolations in the text indicate that a cleric reshaped the primary story of the actual events in Constantinople. The writer cast the narrative in such a mold as to fit alongside other Venetian *furta sacra* tales, a detail discussed more fully in the following chapter. The miracles of incorruption (the scent) and purity (the light) are traditional *furta sacra* miracles. On the other hand, one traditional *topos* in the Venetian *furta sacra* tradition, a miraculous journey home by ship, is missing.²⁹ One familiar with Venetian tales of relic theft would expect Angelo Drusiaco to encounter some form of danger on his way home to Venice, and to be rescued by the saint from that danger. In the *Translatio Symonensis*, however, all the action in the narrative takes place in Constantinople. Drusiaco simply arrives in Venice safely without any noted incidents. The genre guided the author as he reshaped the core story, but the results are not simply boilerplate.

Along with the miracles, one can locate other hagiographical and religious elements in the narrative. The perspectives revealed by these elements, the functions they play within the larger narrative framework, and the concurrent stylistic differences among such sacred interpolations in the story suggest that at least two authors, writing in different periods, had a hand in the composition of the extant *translatio*.³⁰ In three places, the introduction, the excursus on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the description of St. Simon's tomb, the narrator uses the first-person plural. The style of these three passages diverges so greatly from the language in the rest of the text that one must suspect that they mark the presence of a later author. Moreover, long, religious digressions that do not advance the main narrative precede two digressions of first-person plural passages. I contend that each marks a point where a later author concluded his interjection and returned to the previously existing text.

At the end of the introduction, for example, the author writes, "Now, however, with a quick stylus, discussion, and speech, and in a straight path and in order we will come to how this all occurred."³¹ But the path was not straight at all, because a long exegesis on the seven "gifts of the Holy Spirit" appears between the storming of the walls and the first foray of the relic-thieves into the city.³² In this section, the author alternates between lines of scripture and explanatory sentences, a structure

²⁹ Venice has its own tradition of *furta sacra*, starting with the theft of St. Mark in 826 C.E. and continuing with the thefts of St. Nicolas of Myra and St. Stephen the Protomartyr in the early twelfth century. As one might expect, sea voyages play a significant part in Venetian *furta sacra* narratives both before and after the fourth crusade. See Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 88–103 and G. Cracco, "I testi agiografici: religione e politica nella Venezia del Mille," in *Storia di Venezia, I: Origini-Età ducale* (Rome, 1992), pp. 923–61.

³⁰ Chiesa, "Ladri di reliquie," pp. 439–42, agrees that there must have been several phases of redaction and rewriting.

³¹ *Ibid.* ["Nunc autem quomodo deductum sit brevi stillo aloquar et locutione, et sic per ordinem recto tramite vaniamus."]

³² The seven gifts stem from Isaiah 11.2.

not used elsewhere to this extent in the *Translatio Symonensis*. The author concludes the discussion by stating that, because of their seven holy virtues, the seven were as one, and “Because they shared one spirit and one faith they discovered the body of the blessed Simon, prophet of the Lord.”³³ This line then guides the author and the reader back towards the story itself. He names the men and concludes the section with an extremely incongruous sentence. He writes, in a sentence reminiscent of the line quoted above, “Now let us turn our stylus to their deeds and actions from which came the translation of the body of St. Simon the Prophet.”³⁴ “Vertamur,” or “let us turn,” links the author to the reader via the first-person plural. Although throughout the narrative the crusaders frequently referred to each other as “we” or “us” in their speeches, only two other lines of narration contain first-person plural verbs. The grammatical shift is jarring.

It is possible that the purpose of these interjections was to root the story more firmly in the hagiographical traditions of the parish of St. Simon. The third insertion describes the tomb of St. Simon, noting the presence of the corpses of St. Jacob and the prophet Zachary, an icon of Simon behind his tomb, and an odd description of a scared well. The text reads:

Before the altar there was a deep well, not of stagnant but of living water. By virtue of the holy relics, the well had such grace that a glowing sphere (as if made of burning wax) appeared in it by day, and those who were perjured were not able to see it. Oh wondrous things which show the greatness of sanctity! Those who were not perjured could see it, and those who were perjured were not able to see it. In this way, most dear ones, we are able to consider how heavy a fault is perjury. Therefore, we must, most beloved ones, be wary of perjury and all sins, so that we might be worthy to see his glowing sphere.³⁵

Although the initial section at least provided a setting for the dénouement that was to come, the second part of the description plays no further role in the *translatio*. Perjury is not an issue in the text. The thieves never mention the well, the miracle of the glowing orb, or any other description of the tomb during the theft itself. However, Pietro Steno’s account of his trip with Matteo shows that Venetians from the parish of St. Simon had visited the tomb of the prophet in Constantinople before the Fourth Crusade. Such visitations would have included hearing sermons and stories about St. Simon’s life, including Simon’s Biblical role at the circumcision of Jesus, as portrayed in the painting, and the miracles that followed his death. Furthermore, although I have found no other Greek or Venetian descriptions of this well or the miracle of the glowing sphere, medieval travelers’ accounts do

³³ BNBM, MS Gerli 26, fol. 72r.

³⁴ Ibid. [“Sed ad ea que gesta sunt vel facta ab illis de translatione corporis sancti Simeonis prophete vertamur stillum.”]

³⁵ Ibid. 72v–73r. The final sentences read, “In hoc enim, karissimi, considerare possumus quam grave delictum est periurum. Caveamus ergo nos, dilectissimi, a periurio et ab omni peccato, ut digni simus videre speram claritatis eius.”

attest to the presence a martyrium in the Chalkoprateia.³⁶ Such accounts cite the relics of St. Zacharias and other objects relating to Christ's infancy, including the circumcision.³⁷ One might reasonably speculate that parishioners of St. Simon the Prophet, when visiting the matyrium, would have focused their attentions most heavily on their patron saint's relics and his stories. Other pilgrims and visitors, including those whose accounts survive, paid more attention to St. Zacharias, the nominal focal point of the crypt.³⁸ Thus, the Venetian parishioners who had been to the crypt would have promulgated the description and miracle-story upon returning to their home. The description would then reflect local, Venetian, hagiographical traditions about the tomb of St. Simon.

As opposed to the florid prose in the above insertions, the other religious moments in the text contain the same voice as the main narrative action. When the thieves pray, they use the same language to address God and the saint as they do when speaking to each other. The prayers do serve a separate purpose in the narrative by invoking the principles of *furta sacra*. After Pietro offered to show the location of St. Mary's to Andrea, Andrea opined that it would take more than two men, requiring the assistance of "comrades and neighbors."³⁹ He then prayed, invoking a passage from John 15:5,⁴⁰ "Lord Jesus Christ, you who said to your disciples, 'You can do nothing without me,' through your holy mercy be with us and give us the strength to fulfill our desired task."⁴¹ This brief prayer has three purposes. First, the passage links the thieves to the disciples, and probably explains why there were twelve thieves initially. Second, it demonstrates Andrea's piety. Third, because nothing can be done without divine help, the passage reinforces the core premise of *furta sacra* that whatever success the thieves achieve must be attributed to divine will.

Numerological correlations are not limited to the disciples. A few lines later, after Pietro and Andrea have recruited their comrades, all twelve pray in supplication. They ask:

Lord God, father of all, by the miracle of the new star, you showed the way to the Nativity of your only begotten son in Bethlehem to the three Magi (who brought gold, frankincense and myrrh), when, through your mystical offices, you brought your one begotten son, our Lord, into this world. May you now mercifully bend your ears to our prayers, so that proceeding with your grace, we might arrive at the resting place of the most blessed Simon.⁴²

³⁶ C. Mango, "Notes on Byzantine Monuments: Frescoes in the Octagon of St. Mary Chalkoprateia," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23–24 (1969–70), pp. 369–72.

³⁷ T. Matthews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey* (University Park, 1976), pp. 319–20. C. Mango, "Notes on Byzantine Monuments," pp. 369–72.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ MS Gerli 26, fol. 72r. "Socios nostros et convicinos nostris."

⁴⁰ John 15.5: "Quia sine me nihil potestis facere."

⁴¹ BNBM, MS Gerli 26, fol. 72v.

⁴² *Ibid.* For the veneration of the Magi in the Middle Ages, see R. Trexler, *The Journey of the Magi: Meanings in History of a Christian Story* (Princeton, NJ, 1997), passim and pp. 44–76 especially.

Thus, the thieves audaciously link their quest for Simon to the quest of the three Magi for the holy manger; eventually, three men take Simon from the marble ark.

Pietro utters the only other lengthy prayer just before he touches the relics for the first time. He says:

Oh most sacred Simon the Prophet, who deserved to hold our lord and savior Jesus Christ, the true light, revelation, and glory of the tribes and people of Israel, in your arms, do not turn your attention to my sins. Through your mercy make us worthy to lift up and hold your precious limbs in our hands, in order that, illuminated, we might succeed in transferring you to our lands. Thus we and our people, with great gratitude, could honor you properly and bless the Lord of lords.⁴³

The prayer first recounts Simon's biblical significance, then turns to the crux of relic-thievery. The crusaders were admittedly sinners, but Pietro asks the saint to overlook their flaws and to think of the greater honor awaiting his relics in Venice. Because they succeed, the thieves could argue that this prayer had met with a favorable response. The saint had, indeed, made the Venetians "worthy." Again, a prayer reinforces the spiritual messages of the *furta sacra* narrative.

The religious material above makes the clerical influence over the composition of this story clear, but the thieves may have played a role in its construction as well. The *Translatio Symonensis* references a letter sent back with Angelo Drusiaco (along with the relics) that recorded all the details of the theft. Drusiaco and this letter would have offered the first writer two sources from which to draw – an oral account and a written one. It is impossible to know how many layers of transmission exist between the story as told by the crusaders and the ultimate author of the text that survives.

Precise identification of the authors is difficult. Many of the comments in the text, however, seem calculated in their praise of the local parishioners of Simon, and their priest, Leonardo. The glorious acquisition of Simon did not enhance merely the glory of Venice (and the saint, who would be worshipped better in the "*civitas Rivalti*"), but the specific parish, as well. The people of the parish, along with the Doge, are the ones whom the author takes time to praise. The august Bishop of Castello and Patriarch of Grado both visit the parish in order to help Leonardo install the prophet's bones, and thus enhance the local glory, not steal it for themselves. The best guess as to the original author's provenance is the parish of St. Simon the Prophet.

When he wrote is harder to tell, but one can conjecture that the first written version of the narrative dates to the immediate aftermath of the installation of St. Simon in Venice. This time period would make it a contemporary of other *furta sacra* texts composed throughout Europe as the victors distributed the sacred loot

⁴³ Ibid., fol. 73v.

of Constantinople in the West.⁴⁴ The story could certainly have been redacted many times. If that happened, the newer versions did not add any anachronistic details, even those that might seem relevant to the story of Simon. For example, the text does not mention (in order to refute), the claims made by the church of Zara in 1278–80 to be the true possessor of Simon’s relics.⁴⁵ The text describes the initial installation of 1204, but it does not describe the re-dedication in 1318. The author displays some actual knowledge of the crusade, and uses the standard contemporary Venetian line about the perfidy of the Greeks leading to the conflict and the fires. A late thirteenth- or fourteenth-century composition might have celebrated the fall of the Greeks as a sign that Venice had inherited the mantle of the Romans, and thus assisted in the imperial aspirations or myth-making of the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Most significantly, the *Translatio Symonensis* describes the placement of the relics as under the altar (“*retro altar*”).⁴⁶ In 1318, the relics were moved to a side chapel and placed into a special sarcophagus, a process overseen by the Bishop of Castello and parish priest, as recorded by an inscription on the coffin itself and on the new chapel wall.⁴⁷ This miniature translation of the relics would have been occasioned by great celebration and might have been the catalyst for the fourteenth-century reproduction of the *translatio*, but the text simply ends with the 1204–5 installation. Had the author newly composed the story entirely in the fourteenth century, he probably would have added a note to “*retro altar*” about the relics’ ultimate resting place.

Andrea Dandolo provides further evidence that the *Translatio Symonensis* existed prior to the production of his chronicle. Dandolo only lists the names of two thieves: Andrea Balduino, who seems to be the initiator, and Angelo Drusiaco, who carried the relics home. Dandolo must have had a more definite source than the

⁴⁴ *Exuviae Sacrae Constantinopolitanae*. This collection of texts remains an unrivaled source for the bulk of the relic-thefts from 1204 and after. It includes not only the lengthier tracts (some of which have been produced in generally better editions since, such as those found in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources*), but also many brief letters, liturgies, and inscriptions that mention relics taken out of the Latin Empire.

⁴⁵ Chiesa, “Ladri di reliquie,” p. 438; C. Seymour, “The Tomb of Saint Simeon the Prophet, in San Simeone Grande, Venice,” *Gesta, International Center of Medieval Art*, 15 (1976), p. 199. Seymour believes Zara’s claims, but he was not familiar with this *translatio*. There seems to be little evidence to support Zara’s claims. Seymour’s argument can be reduced to the idea that Zara would not have claimed St. Simon if they lacked the relic to back it up.

⁴⁶ MS Gerli 26, fol. 74v.

⁴⁷ Seymour, “The Tomb of Saint Simeon,” pp. 196–99. Much of the scholarship on the tomb has focused on an autograph by the artist Romanus. The tomb today features the inscription on the wall and a sculpture of a prone man on top of the sarcophagus, and scholars have debated about the origins of the sarcophagus. The site itself is in a side-chapel to the left of the altar in the church of San Simeone Grande. It consists of a marvelous effigy lying on the sarcophagus, with a plaque above bearing a recounting of provenance and the celebration for the saint in 1318. Seymour argues persuasively that while there may have been an effigy present during the fourteenth century, the current sculpture should be dated between 1409–20. One can easily separate the extant sarcophagus and inscription from the sculpture visually. For the inscription, see also: G. Boni, “Il supolcro del beato Simeone profeta,” *Archivio Veneto*, V. 18, t. 36, 1 (1888), pp. 99–107 and C. Cipolla, “L’iscrizione di S. Simeone Profeta,” *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, 18, t. 36, 2 (1888), pp. 369–75.

inscription carved in the church of San Simeone Grande (to commemorate the 1318 re-dedication), in particular because he mentions that the translation took “some effort” to effect.⁴⁸ He knew something of the story, but it was not the *Translatio Symonensis* as preserved in the Braidense. Dandolo abridged stories frequently, but would not have dropped the other names from the narrative had he known them. The inscription in San Simeone does mention texts (“*scripturis autentis*”)⁴⁹ that were interred along with the relics in a new sarcophagus. What might these buried texts have said?⁵⁰ Were these Dandolo’s source? The interred manuscript perhaps contained an intermediary narrative between the full story of the *Translatio Symonensis* and the brief record preserved by Andrea Dandolo.

In the absence of other evidence, it is likely that the core of the text dates to the years just following the installation of the relics in San Simeone Grande, sometime after 1205. This core includes the main body of the story, the description of the Fourth Crusade, the trappings of *furta sacra*, and the prayers. The sections beginning *after* a first-person plural sentence are from the earlier era, because the later author used those sentences to return from his observations to the core narrative. The preamble is more difficult to assess, especially as it contains language reminiscent of the *Translatio Marci*, Venice’s founding myth. Regardless of how many people rewrote, re-copied and lightly edited the *Translatio Symonensis* over the years, the core of the narrative reflects the early thirteenth-century perspective on the relic-theft.

The theft took place on Palm Sunday, 18 April 1204, after the conquest.⁵¹ The author, however, casts this tale as one in which Venetians stole a relic from the Greeks. Chiesa accepts this claim.⁵² According to the text, it was the Greek sinners who caused the war and started the fires. The Venetians had to sneak through the Greek city lest the “*populi*” see them, not “*militēs*” or “*peregrini*” or some other term that would indicate the Latins. When the thieves hid the bones after being ordered to beach their ship, it was local, unspecified Greeks who convinced the Doge and the barons to search for the relics and put out a bounty for their safe return. This all seems highly unlikely. On Palm Sunday of 1204, the Greeks of Constantinople were concerned about survival, not the fate of Simon’s relics. In the immediate aftermath of the crusade, as the victors divided the spoils of war, Greeks

⁴⁸ Andrea Dandolo, L. X. cap IV, nos 39–41.

⁴⁹ Seymour, “The Tomb of Saint Simeon,” p. 196. Seymour, despite problems with his argument, has produced an excellent and accurate transcription of the inscription.

⁵⁰ Geary, “Sacred Commodities,” pp. 203–4 mentions that *authenticae* were documents sometimes placed in the tomb or a reliquary to verify that a given body-part was the “real” relic.

⁵¹ There has been some dispute about the year of translation. Both the manuscript and the inscription in Venice suggest 1203, but Chiesa, pp. 446–47 explains that this is due to the conventions of medieval Venetian dating. The modern date was 1204. Furthermore, given the situation between Venice and Constantinople during April 1203, a date after the crusaders had agreed to try and put the exiled Byzantine prince Alexius Angelos onto the throne but before the crusaders had actually sailed east, we can state with certainty that no Venetians were in Constantinople on Palm Sunday of 1203. 1204 is the only credible date.

⁵² Chiesa, *passim*.

played no part except as external enemies. Only later did some become allies who sought lands and riches of their own. No Greek remaining in Constantinople during the initial conquest had any say over who controlled relics or any other loot.

In fact, the men of St. Simon's parish wanted to hide their furtive activity not from Greeks, but from other crusaders. The consequences of being caught with hoarded loot ranged from confiscation of property to execution.⁵³ Stealing relics violated the crusaders' oath to leave churches alone, on pain of death and damnation.⁵⁴ The actions of the thieves brought danger upon them from their own leaders, not the locals.

Hence, the Venetians chose Palm Sunday, split up to avoid attracting attention, and set their guard at the door. Villehardouin relates that the crusader army paused in its sack of the city and the division of the loot in order to celebrate Holy Week. They gave thanks for the conquest of four hundred thousand people by a force of a mere twenty thousand.⁵⁵ The thieves took full advantage. Palm Sunday, the *Translatio Symonensis* relates, was a perfect day for the heist because "the people would be intent on celebrating their festival day," and thus it would be both "easier and safer" to accomplish the theft.⁵⁶ The text never states that the Venetians needed security from their own forces, but no other option makes sense. Even had a local seen the thieves, that local could have done nothing to stop them.

Why then this focus on the Greeks in the narrative? The answer requires examining the brief, though significant, description of the Fourth Crusade. Although blaming the Greeks for the fighting is typical of all the Latin sources for the crusade,⁵⁷ the Venetian source takes the concept a step further. According to the *Translatio Symonensis*, the entire purpose of the crusade from the outset was to see justice done in Constantinople. Instead of arguing that the conquest of Constantinople would lead to the salvation of Jerusalem, a claim propagated by other contemporary crusaders and their apologists, the Venetian authors stated that God created the crusade in order to bring divine justice to Constantinople. By 1205, all of the Greek usurpers had been defeated.⁵⁸ Constantinople was under Latin rule. Mission accomplished. And if one needed further proof of God's satisfaction with the results in Constantinople, one needed only to read on in the *Translatio Symonensis* to see how many times the brave Venetians evaded Greek threats. As

⁵³ Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Edmond Faral, 2 vols (Paris: Société d'édition "les Belles lettres", 1938–39), II:60, sec. 251.

⁵⁴ Robert de Clari, 69, sec. LXVIII.

⁵⁵ Villehardouin, II:54, sec. 251.

⁵⁶ MS. Gerli 26, fol. 73r. ["Populi essent intenti ad diem festum celebrandum, facilius et securius possent perficere desiderium suum."]

⁵⁷ Every Latin source lays at least some of the blame for the fighting on the Greeks, although many also include others as culpable (see, for example, Andrea, "Cistercian Accounts," *passim*).

⁵⁸ Alexius III had fled from Constantinople in 1203 and attempted to resist the Latins in Thrace. He was joined by Alexius V, but betrayed him to the Latins who flung him off a column in the heart of Constantinople. Alexius III was captured by Boniface of Montferrat in Thessaly and sent to Genoa in 1205 for "safe-keeping." He was ransomed by Theodore I Laskaris, whom he tried to betray by allying with the Seljuks, but was captured and executed. See Angold, *Fourth Crusade*, pp. 142–43.

Pietro Steno had sought in his prayer, any Venetian reader could see that God had overlooked the crusaders' sins and found them worthy.

Furthermore, the matter of the Doge's bounty had nothing to do with any Greeks, but was precisely the means by which the secular elite could acquire relics. High-ranking bishops and papal legates, the other main translators of relics from Constantinople to the West, possessed natural authority over sacred matters. Many kinds of sources, especially letters, attest to the non-clerical leadership's role in dispersing relics.⁵⁹ Before we knew about the *Translatio Symonensis*, scholars lacked a clear sense of the mechanism employed by the leaders to gain their relics. Some nobles, such as Count Baldwin of Flanders (the first Latin Emperor) and Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, seized relics from their respective palace churches. But how did Doge Dandolo acquire the relics that he sent back to Venice, particularly to the church of San Marco and the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore? One cannot imagine the Doge rooting through churches to find them. He had no legal claim to relics in churches not directly under Venetian control, so he could not have openly sent men to rummage through church treasuries. The *Translatio Symonensis* offers a glimpse of a method of acquisition that the doge could have employed. He never needed to send men into churches because he could bribe church-robbers into turning on each other.

The parishioners of Saint Simon did not hide their patron's relics from the Greeks, but from their own Doge. On Palm Sunday, the city was in too much chaos for the theft of St. Simon to be noticed. The thieves' plan worked. Eventually, however, the leaders heard that someone had stolen the relics, perhaps from a Greek, or perhaps from the Franks who took control of the Chalkoprateia after the election of Baldwin. Once the theft was known, the Doge offered a reward for their "return." Had he gotten the body, Dandolo would probably not have returned them to St. Mary's, a church outside the Venetian quarter. More than likely, they too would have headed to Venice, perhaps even to the same Venetian parish church that was already dedicated to the Prophet. After all, one can see that Leonardo, the local parish priest, had good relations with both Grado and Castello. The only difference is that they would have joined so many other relics as ducal gifts, rather than being the sacred plunder of more common Venetians, and we might never have known about the seven thieves. It is reasonable to believe that the Doge, and indeed other members of the crusade leadership, tried to acquire relics through rewards and confiscation.

The Significance of the Narrative

The final question to address is the significance of this text to scholars of the Fourth Crusade. If the core of Simon's story is an early thirteenth-century *translatio*, then

⁵⁹ Riant, *ESC* II, *passim*.

the mere fact of its existence is fairly exciting. We have few comparable texts, and none from the first few years after 1204.⁶⁰ This *translatio* provides an extant text to aid in both imagining and understanding the larger lost corpus of Venetian Fourth Crusade *furta sacra* narratives.

Venice received many relics after 1204, and the recipients of those relics probably produced *translatio* narratives in some form, but they have since been lost. Many such narratives from other places around Europe do survive, providing non-Venetian points of comparison. Whether furtive or official, new recipients of relics during the Middle Ages almost always produced some form of *translatio* narrative to record the arrival, and Venetian churches followed this practice. Venetians particularly commemorated the thefts of “stolen” relics, such as those of both of the city’s patron saints, St. Mark and allegedly St. Nicholas.⁶¹ The Venetian thefts are excellent examples of the practice of *furta sacra* in the Middle Ages, and the early *translatio* narratives survive.⁶² Scholars have found only a few contemporary sources, however, from the great haul of relics and sacred items that Venice received after 1204. Such sources, now lost, must have attested to the *translatio* of Santa Lucia, the arm of St. George, a piece of the head of the Baptist, and other relics which became so important to later Venetian iconography. The *Translatio Symonensis*, also thought to be lost, now provides one surviving text to which we can compare the fragmentary Venetian record. The difference between the *Translatio Symonensis* and the lost texts is that in this case the relics arrived in Venice in the hands of secular Venetians who had no particularly exalted rank, instead of through the direction of the Doge or the Abbot of San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice’s central monastery.

On the other hand, once the relics had safely returned to Venice, the formal interment completed the process of the sacred theft. Relic stealing was unquestionably a dodgy business, but the miracles let the thieves know that the saint approved of the process. The public rituals of installation, accompanied by the production of a *translatio*, removed the furtive action from the dark morally-questionable regions and moved it out into the light of day. Besides, all of the Venetian crusaders must have known the relevant portion of their city’s sacred history. In 1204, as today, the gold and precious stone mosaics of San Marco honored two common Venetian merchants who, in defiance of their Doge, stole Venice’s patron saint out of a Greek Church.⁶³ Once back in Venice, they found only exoneration, praise, and even immortality in their home city. Could these men who set out to steal the relics of their patron saint, St. Simon the Prophet, expect anything less if they succeeded?

⁶⁰ A *translatio* narrative from 1222 is the only comparable source. See G. Cracco, “Chiesa e istituzioni civili nel secolo della quarta crociata,” *La Chiesa di Venezia nei secoli XI–XIII* (Venice, 1988), pp. 17–18 and n. 27.

⁶¹ Cracco, “I testi,” *passim*.

⁶² Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 88–103.

⁶³ Otto Demus, *The Mosaics of San Marco in Venice – The Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, Vol I: Text* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 65–72.

The unearthing of this manuscript has brought the men of St. Simon, if not immortality, at least a place in historical memory. The *Translatio Symonensis* is an imperfect text. It has certainly been distorted, amended, and altered. But the preponderance of evidence suggests that these men were real, that they made it their mission to capture the relics of their local patron saint for their parish, and that they were willing to risk the hazards of the chaotic city and the anger of their commanders to do so. The clerical author of the *translatio* then took their story and shaped it into a proper *furta sacra* narrative. The seven thieves may not have been immortalized in gold mosaic, but we can now remember their names: Andrea Balduino, Pietro and Leonardo Steno, Marino Calvo, Angelo Drusario, Nicola Feretro, and Leonardo Mauro.

Appendix

The translation of the body of the blessed Simon the Prophet from Constantinople to Venice in the year 1203 [*sic*]

1. In the memory of the most blessed Simon the prophet, I will tell in what way and by what means his body was translated from the city of Constantinople and taken through the Adriatic Sea to the city called Venice (which is situated on islands in the part of Italy between Grado and Marchia). In the aforementioned city, there was a church consecrated to the honor of the blessed Simon the prophet, who was worshiped by the parishioners there with great affection and eagerness. They were most Christian people, filled with the Catholic faith, and most eager to serve the army of Christianity. They were born of a noble race, but indeed had a faith even more noble. They were worshippers of God, and it was necessary so that God would hear and give delight and joy to the people seeking him, as is said to those seeking the God of Jacob,¹ “Love God, all you his saints, because God requires truth and abundantly rewards all those who search for him in truth.”² Now, however, with a quick stylus, discussion, and speech, and in a straight path and in order we will come to how this all occurred.

2. Because our Lord and God, the king of kings and lord of lords, punishes the iniquities of fathers unto sons, He thus hated the kingdom of the Greeks on account of their iniquities. God, therefore, incited the Doge of Venice and the Count of Flanders to go against them in war, so that He might put down their arrogance and lift up their humility, and so that He might destroy the malignant and bring peace to the benign. The duke of Venice, Enrico Dandolo by name, a most eloquent and prudent man in deed and word, most wise in counsel (because his advice came not only from him, but also through the grace of the Holy Spirit), took up the cross along with his comrades, the count of Flanders and other counts. They did this willingly in order to bring about justice by returning the son of the emperor to the throne of his father, from which he had been wickedly and impiously removed and expelled. They then prosecuted a just war against the impious prince with swiftness and ferocity in battle. When the Venetian ships came close to the walls, they manfully stormed the walls of the city with great effectiveness. They climbed over the walls and entered the city, and fires that they had kindled consumed it. Having come together in battle, the victors gathered to give thanks to the Holy Spirit, and thus captured both the city and the kingdom.

3. With the city captured, those who did not die began to plunder certain fortifications, palaces, and buildings that were filled with gold and silver. In the army, there were seven citizens of the Rialto. These seven were better men, because of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. By these gifts they were driven to hunger and to thirst for justice, as The Lord says in the gospel: “Blessed are those that hunger

¹ “Seeking...Jacob” – Psalms 23.6.

² Psalms 30.24.

and thirst after justice, since they etc. [*sic*].”³ For, as said above, the men had a spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and fortitude, of knowledge and piety, and a spirit that feared God.⁴ They had a spirit of wisdom, as they proposed to do this deed out of wisdom. They had a spirit of understanding, as they were disposed to do this deed through a good understanding, as is written, “A good understanding to all that do it.”⁵ They had a spirit of counsel, as they undertook this deed out of such a counsel that neither dispersed them nor reproved them, but confirmed them and approved of them, as is written, “The counsel of the Lord stands forever.”⁶ They had a spirit of fortitude, which has an effect so strong that they feared neither sword, nor danger, nor even death. They were mindful of the precepts of the Lord as the Gospel says, “Do not fear them that kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.”⁷ They had the spirit of knowledge, as by acting with the knowledge of God they decided to serve God (as without any doubt they did serve). They had the spirit of piety, as through piety they implemented this plan with one heart and one mind with God listening. They had a spirit that feared God, and through this fear they did not have any doubts about reaching for such a precious treasure, as the most wise Solomon said, “He who fears God will do good,”⁸ and as the Psalm says, “In fearing God, nothing is lacking.”⁹ Indeed, nothing was lacking, for although they might have numbered seven, nevertheless they were as one, because they shared one spirit and one faith they discovered the body of the blessed Simon prophet of the Lord. The names of these seven honest men are as follows: The first was called Andrea Balduino, the second Pietro Steno, the third Marino Calbo, the fourth Leonardo Steno, the fifth Angelo Durazo, the sixth was named Nicola Feretro, and the seventh was named Leonardo Mauro. Now let us turn our stylus to their deeds and actions from which came the translation of the body of St. Simon the Prophet.

4. One day, when a few of these seven men were in their ship, one of them, called Andrea Balduino, said to Pietro Steno, “O lord Pietro, I have heard many times that the body of the blessed Simon lies in this city, but I do not know the location of his tomb. If God has predestined that we could find him, great would be our gratitude.” Pietro responded, speaking with great joy, “You have remembered well, thanks be to God. For when I was in this city two years ago with lord Matteo Steno, a religious man, we went to the church of St. Simon in order to pray. He showed me the location of his tomb. I do not know, however, how to go through the streets to get to that church, but if you will lead me to the church of St. Sophia, I might be able to find it from there. Just we two alone will not be enough people to do this splendid task, we will need to add our comrades and neighbors.” After he

³ Matthew 5.6.

⁴ Isaiah 11.2.

⁵ Psalms 110.10.

⁶ Psalms 32.11.

⁷ Matthew 10.20.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 15.1.

⁹ Psalms 33.10.

said this, he said to God, “Lord Jesus Christ, you who said to your disciples, ‘You can do nothing without me,’¹⁰ through your holy mercy be with us and give us the strength to fulfill our desired task.” And Andrea responded tearfully, “Amen.”

5. Then Andrea Balduino, inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit, along with his comrade Pietro Steno, called his neighbors and his comrades and however many others he could find from the parish of the blessed Simon on the Rialto, and he found twelve. He, along with Pietro Steno, revealed the plan to these honest and good men. When they heard it they were glad and greatly rejoiced and all lifted up their hands as supplicants to heaven and said in worship, “Lord God, father of all, by the miracle of the new star, you showed the way to the Nativity of your only begotten son in Bethlehem to the three Magi (who brought gold, frankincense and myrrh), when, through your mystical offices, you brought your one begotten son, our Lord, into this world. May you now mercifully bend your ears to our prayers, so that proceeding with your grace we might arrive at the resting place of the most blessed Simon, and there adore his most saintly body with the honors due him. And then we might, with great joy and praise, be able to translate his body without impediment to our lands, in order that the city of the Rialto might be filled with much celebration, and would praise and glory in the blessings of your name forever. Amen.”

6. Completing this honest prayer, Andrea Balduino, Pietro Steno, Marino Calbo, and certain others went to the location of St. Mary near St. Sophia. Exploring, they went through the whole temple, and came upon a confessional where the precious body rested in a marble ark. In the right part of the confessional there was another ark, in which lay the most blessed body of St. Jacob the Just. In the left part a similar ark contained the body of Zachary, prophet of God. In the wall above the ark in which Simon lay, there was an image that displayed his miraculous work. It showed a likeness of the boy Jesus being put into Simon’s arms by Jesus’ most sainted mother during the presentation at the temple. Before the altar there was a deep well, not of stagnant but of living water. By virtue of the holy relics, the well had such grace that a glowing sphere (as if made of burning wax) appeared in it by day, and those who were perjured were not able to see it. Oh wondrous things that show the greatness of sanctity! Those who were not perjured could see it, and those who were perjured were not able to see it. In this way, most dear ones, we are able to consider how heavy a fault is perjury. Therefore, we must, most beloved ones, be wary of perjury and all sins, so that we might be worthy to see his glowing sphere.

7. The men explored everything that they were able to explore, and then returned to the stern of their ship. There, they made matters safe by swearing an oath that no one would share this secret with anyone. They were close to Easter, and decided that they would take the desired treasure on the day of Palm Sunday. All the people would be intent on celebrating their festival day, and thus they would be able to complete their desired task more easily and safely. It was a good decision

¹⁰ John 15.5.

to agree to do the deed on that day, invoking the grace of the Holy Spirit, as the scripture says, “Every good and perfect gift descends from above, descending by the light of our father.”¹¹

8. When the day of Palm Sunday had not yet ended, Andrea Balduino said to his comrades, “See, soldiers of Christ, rouse yourself in a manly way, tighten your belts, and trust in God. Do not fear death nor the dangers of money. With faith in God we can be audacious, with the same type of audacity as with which we secured these walls.” Responding as if with one voice, all said, “He who fears may die, because fear comes with a punishment. As the scripture says, he who fears is not perfected in charity.”¹² With all 12 made confident, they began their blessed journey. In order to move more secretly and safely, they divided as follows: one group of five went by one street, and seven by another. O Lord, how incomprehensible is your judgment! For your blessedness you are praised, Lord. As they were going, the five made a mistake and were not able to find the church. The seven (named above), going by the true path, thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit came to their destination with joy.

9. Then Andrea Balduino and Pietro Steno said to their comrades, “Oh brothers and comrades, we must do what we are about to do quickly, because all good things are done with quick work. Some of you stay here before the door, and look about here and there intelligently, because he who goes intelligently goes boldly, and if by chance anyone comes, give to us a sign.” All responded, “What you have said is good and we will do it willingly. May the Lord confirm our good desires.” And thus they placed themselves as it was planned – four decided to be door guards and the other three entered into the confessional and came to the ark.

10. The three, fearful and doubtful, each began to exhort the others that it might be better if they broke open the stone tomb. Because of their fear, no one dared to do it. Because of this delay, the comrades who were at the door called in to them. The timid doubters left the confessional, and they went back to the guards, afraid that someone might be coming. The guards asked if the men inside had done the deed. They responded in the negative. The men at the door reproached the others, speaking truly, “Where is your courage? Are you men? Go, in the name of God, and complete your work knowing that God is with you. It would be better if you were dead than to leave empty-handed and without the precious treasure.” This bolstered the spirits of the three, and they turned around and went back to the ark. Then Andrea Balduino, without delay, took up a hammer and struck the stone which surrounded the ark. In one blow he broke it into two parts. In one part of the stone the sepulcher then became visible. Now open, they found another great ark made of lead. Without delay, they broke it open. They knew that the object that they wanted with such great desire was inside, but now they saw another box of lead, this one surrounded with iron bands broken from within by rust. Seeing this,

¹¹ Jacob 1.17.

¹² 1 John 4.18.

they were greatly gladdened and raised their hands to the sky, saying, “Thanks be to you, Lord God, who graced our undertaking with your mercy, and showed us the precious treasure of our desire.”

11. Then Andrea Balduino said, “I have completed my part by opening the box. One of you others should now lift the relics out.” One of the comrades, Pietro Steno, responded and said, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, although I am unworthy, I will be faithful to him nevertheless. For I trust that it is through God and through the blessed Simon the prophet that this duty comes to me. It was revealed to me in a vision last night – I imagined that I was with Lord Leonardo, the rector of the church of St. Simon on the Rialto. He was celebrating mass, and there was no one to attend to him except for me alone.” His comrades each responded, saying, “We wish for you to see here what you saw in your vision. You should open and lift out the sacred relics in the name of Christ.” Then Pietro placed his knees on the floor and lifted his hands to heaven and said, “Oh most sacred Simon the Prophet, who deserved to hold our lord and savior Jesus Christ, the true light, revelation, and glory of the tribes and people of Israel, in your arms, do not turn your attention to my sins. Through your mercy make us worthy to lift up and hold your precious limbs in our hands, in order that, illuminated, we might succeed in transferring you to our lands. Thus we and our people, with great gratitude, could honor you properly and bless the Lord of lords, who lives and rules the entire world.” When all had responded and said, “Amen,” he reached into the ark and lifted up the sacred relics and held them out to his comrades, then wrapped them in a pristine purple cloth.

12. And with this done and while touching the most sacred bones, a sweet aroma arose as if coming from balsam wood. It filled the whole church, and thus the comrades guarding the door smelled it. With a mixture of joy and fear, lest someone by chance come upon them, they exclaimed, “Act more quickly and confidently, because God is with us.” When the relics of St. Simon were gathered, they also found small ampoules of marble in the casket. When opened, they discovered some teeth of St. Simon and a ring that was broken in the middle in one of them, and in the other they found the most precious milk of the most holy virgin Mary, which all recognized. Taking up the relics quickly, they made their way to their ship with haste and they placed everything into a wooden box with aromatic herbs. They commended themselves unto the protection of Nicola Feretro, that most faithful of men. Nicola, with all diligence and reverence, protected them diligently. But because the city was positioned on top of hills, the box (which had begun to glow) was not able to be hidden, nor could the light of the relics hide in comparison to the light of candles, because God wished to reveal the sacred items by means of miracles. Even at night when most people were sleeping on the ship, the relics glowed fully and splendidly, and most of the people awake wondered at its brightness.

13. In those days, Lord Enrico Dandolo, the doge of Venice, and other princes of the army, decreed that all the horse-transporters should be beached, and that all the armed men should remain in these foreign regions. The aforementioned men (the

relic-stealers) were saddened by this edict. Necessity compelled them to take the casket with all of the relics and place them in a certain palace, which had belonged to powerful Greeks. It had a small chapel, and the men respectfully deposited the aforementioned items near the altar. There was a certain old, very pious Greek woman who cared for the chapel – lighting it and offering incense. The men hoped and prayed that she would be both good and honest, and told her that they would pay the expenses to light and burn incense in the aforementioned church. They did this, and with the woman being ignorant, hid the sacred relics there. Thus they served the relics for six months.

14. The question of the body of the blessed Simon created a great murmur among the Greeks, and thus the issue came to the ears of the Doge and other princes of war. The Doge and other barons made a decree that if anyone brought them the aforementioned relics, they would give them their weight in gold. But the Lord strengthened the hearts of the aforesaid men, and none of them were seduced by the love of money, but firmly persisted in their good plan. One of them, who was called Angel Drusario, by lot received his freedom to return home. The comrades gave the box with all the relics to him, asking him to be faithful and honorable in spirit and take them to Lord Leonardo, the rector of St. Simon, and to all the clerics and parishioners of that church. They also sent a letter with him that contained the sequence of how they found the sacred relics. With the help of God, all this was fulfilled favorably in a brief time.

15. The amount of rejoicing and praise that filled the city of Venice, and the number of sea-borne miracles that had god judged them worthy to be shown, not one man in any tongue has the ability to describe. The Lord Leonardo, rector, and other clerics and parishioners all took up the relics, and they asked Lord Benedetto Faletro, then the Patriarch of Grado, and Lord Marco Nicola, Bishop of Castello, that they might come and recognize the precious gifts. Coming solemnly with crosses and a multitude of people, and filled with great joy, with precious aromatics, the aforementioned honored and devout people interred the relics, and placed them in a marble ark beneath the altar in the church of St. Simon on the Rialto; and the orations flourished there on that same day. The most sacred corpse of the blessed Simon the prophet of our Lord with other relics was translated from Constantinople to Venice in the year of the lord 1203, seventh indiction. Our lord Jesus Christ is king, to whom is given all honor and glory in the world. Amen.

Between Justification and Glory: The Venetian Chronicles' View of the Fourth Crusade

Serban Marin

Venetian historical writing emerged in the first quarter of the eleventh century with the work of Giovanni Diacono. The moment, considered as “the infancy of Venetian history” remained however an almost isolated case, since the greatest number of chronicles were written later, in the fruitful period between the fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Unfortunately, the huge number of these chronicles – around 1,000, according to Antonio Carile¹ – has been regarded in modern historiography as unimportant for two main reasons: 1) their characteristic of having been copied or compiled from previous chronicles and 2) their tendency towards propaganda.

In connection with their feature of having been copied, although it is indeed obvious, it does not require their complete rejection. Their continuous use demonstrates that compilations were still in fashion and thus, that they were read over the centuries, so that the Venetian audience (generalizing, the Venetian society) of the – let’s say – sixteenth century still recognized itself in the works written in the fourteenth century.

With regard to the reason of propaganda for the almost unanimous rejection of the Venetian chronicles, it should on the contrary support the mission of the historian to reconstruct the past, to know as much information as possible about events from all sources. In the case of Venice, Freddy Thiriet, for example, took into consideration exclusively those chronicles contemporary with the events that directed his research into the Venetians in România. At the same time, he frequently referred to various manuscripts of Venetian chronicles in the Marciana National Library with expressions like “*sans aucun intérêt*”.²

While they do not present any interest for his particular area of research, it does not also mean that they present no interest at all. The reconstruction of events and research in contemporary sources are indeed necessary. However, historians should not stop here just because the events of the Fourth Crusade are well known (Villehardouin, Robert of Clari, Nicetas Choniates, and so on). Historians also need to discover the background of those who wrote about the various events of the Crusade, that is, they have to answer to the question “Why did they present the

¹ Antonio Carile, “Note di cronachistica veneziana: Piero Giustinian e Nicolò Trevisan,” *Studi Veneziani* 9 (1967), pp. 103–25 (104: “Nessuno ha calcolato il numero dei codici... ma non sarà arrischiato fissare attorno a 1000 la consistenza dei codici di cronache, anonime o d’autore.”).

² Freddy Thiriet, “Les chroniques vénitienes de la Marcienne et leur importance pour l’histoire de la Roumanie gréco-vénitienne,” excerpt from *Mélanges d’Archéologie et d’Histoire* (1954), pp. 241–92. Some examples: chronicle M 89: “Des parties intéressantes de 1340 à 1410, le rest sans intérêt,” 257; chronicle M 550: “Elle mérite peu de confiance,” 258; chronicle M 798: “Les 69 premiers [pages] contiennent une courte chronique vénitienne, d’Attila à 1428, sans aucun intérêt,” 258–59; chronicle M 1577: “L’information est très inégales et l’ensemble est mediocre,” 259.

events in this way or that?" Written many centuries after the events of the Fourth Crusade, these Venetian histories do not permit reconstruction, because the first chronicle written after the events (the anonymous *Historia Ducum Veneticorum*) was written only after the death of Doge Pietro Ziani (1205–29), Enrico Dandolo's immediate successor and the thirteenth century saw two other chronicles, by Martino da Canale and a certain Marco. But these chronicles, alongside with the others written in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and even seventeenth centuries, offer the historian opportunity to analyze the manner in which the Fourth Crusade was regarded over time.

Thus, I am going to venture into political mythology and investigate how it relates to the Venetian view of the Fourth Crusade. Meanwhile, I propose here a more general approach, that is, to deal with the general Venetian chronicles, leaving aside those chronicles that focus exclusively the Fourth Crusade.³

It has been claimed that the tradition of Venetian chronicles intended to *justify* the events of the Fourth Crusades, and I refer here to *La cronachistica veneziana*, Antonio Carile's masterpiece.⁴ Indeed, this viewpoint could be illustrated by different elements, such as the Greek schism, the well-known *perfidia Graecorum*, and that they had come to consider the Greeks "the Other," so that the West did not make an ultimate distinction between the Byzantines and the "Infidels" anymore. Thus, the West may have had perceptions such as "the Greeks are even worse than the Turks," or "the Greeks are Christians, but not Christians."

Nevertheless, this view of the Fourth Crusade should be revised, at least from the Venetian standpoint. None of the elements above can be detected in the Venetian chronicles. The specifically Venetian case brings into discussion an additional reason to hate the Byzantines, referring to recent events, that is, the policy of Emperor Manuel I against the Venetians and especially the measures taken by him in 1171 and subsequently, the unsuccessful campaign promoted by Doge Vitale Michiel in 1171–72. In connection with this, the Venetians could indeed regard the Fourth Crusade and its results as an act of revenge, and the Venetian chroniclers do not hesitate to make an appeal to prophecy. They invoke the Sybil's prophecies or refer to the so-called *Vasilographos*, the book of prophecies consulted by Manuel

³ I refer here to the chronicles of Paolo Ramusio, Andrea Morosini and the anonymous manuscript It. XI. 152 [= 6253]: 1–203 (in miscellanea) from the Marciana National Library, entitled *Storia della Conquista di Costantinopoli fatta da' Venetiani, e da' Francesi*. See Șerban Marin, "A Humanist Vision regarding the Fourth Crusade and the State of the Assenides. The Chronicle of Paul Ramusio (Paulus Rhamnusius)," *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica di Venezia* 2 (2000), pp. 51–120 [= http://www.geocities.com/serban_marin/ramusioindex.html] (pp. 79–80 for Andrea Morosini and It. XI. 152).

⁴ A. Carile, *La cronachistica veneziana (secoli XIII–XVI) di fronte alla spartizione della Romania nel 1204* (Florence, 1969).

and later by Andronicus I, which said that the Venetians would be responsible for the fall of Constantinople and of the empire.⁵

This possible justification is noticed with satisfaction, as an act of justice and revenge against those considered as perfidious and treacherous. In addition, in order to emphasize this feature, the Venetian chroniclers introduced some legendary and prophetic elements connected to Manuel's lower-class origins.⁶

Carile's argument also excludes a particular component of the Venetian chronicles, that is, the glorification of the Venetian past, one of the most important features in the Venetian political mythology. Venetian authors did not necessarily justify their ancestors' enterprises, but did feel the necessity to eulogize them, in order to follow their pattern of outstanding deeds. Under these circumstances, the Fourth Crusade provided an important topic for Venetian chroniclers through the centuries to exercise their tendency to emphasize the "golden age."

As for the idea of justification as put by the followers of "the treasonist theory," it supposes preliminary guilt, and such guilt can by no means be detected in the Venetian chronicles. On the contrary, the Venetian chronicles rather deal with another kind of element when narrating the Fourth Crusade's events. They speak particularly about "*trionfo*," "*Gloria*," "*onor*," "*magnificenza*," and so on.

The description of the Fourth Crusade by the Venetian chronicles could very well be included in some of the clichés of Venetian history, including:

- the intervention in favour of those legitimated to rule (in this case, for Alexius IV), introducing the image of Venice as the defender of legitimacy;
- the obedience for the fight in the name of Christendom (see the episode of the taking of the Cross by the Doge and the entire ritual of the participation of the Patriarch of Grado; a similar ritual is also depicted before the second siege of Constantinople) (in addition, some of the chronicles surprisingly insert the episode of the campaign to the Holy Land right between the two sieges of the Byzantine capital);
- Venice as *arbiter mundi* at the international level (see the position of the Doge among the most important political factors of the time [the Papacy, the Western Roman emperor, the crusaders and, naturally, the Byzantine Empire]);

⁵ See for instance: Marco: 77b and 78a–79b; Monacis: 141–42; M 2592: 30b–31a; M 2541: 147a; Barbo: 43a–43b; M 67: 174a; Veniera 2580: 130b–132a. Summarized versions, in A. Dandolo-estensa: 279, P. Dolfín: 327b, Veniera 791: 68a, Donà: 29a. For comments, see Ş. Marin, "Venice and *translatio imperii*. The Relevance of the 1171 Event in the Venetian Chronicles' Tradition," *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica di Venezia* 3 (2001), 45–103 (73–75) [= http://www.geocities.com/serban_marin/marin2001.html].

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 75–84 and 86 for the texts (M 2592: 25a–25b, M 2543: 33b–34b, M 1586: 24a–24b, M 1577: 177–82, M 798: xvj b–xvij a, M 2560: 59b–60a, M 550: 67a–67b, M 2563: 8a, Zancaruolo: clxx a–clxx b, Donà: 29a, Erizzo: 38b–39b, Veniera 2580: 121a–121b, Veniera 791: 68a, Sabellico: 155–156), 84–88 for comments.

Indirectly, one could also include the Venetian desire for peace, giving the idea of Venice as the power acting only for noble causes and only when provoked.

All the above elements are naturally destined to exalt Dogal power. In the case of this particular crusade, it is often Enrico Dandolo around whom the entire enterprise gravitates.

Doge Dandolo made all the important decisions during the Fourth Crusade. There is only one exception, connected with the beginnings of the crusade, when the non-Venetian crusaders, if not Pope Innocent III, are presented as initiating the endeavor by sending their legates to Venice. Even in this episode, it is the Doge who takes the destiny of the crusade into his own hands, and since the non-Venetian crusaders were unable to fulfill their responsibilities, the Doge acquires the ascendancy over them, this being explained by the Venetian chronicles as compassion.

Other than this initial incident, all the other episodes seem to have taken place exclusively at Dandolo's decision, especially those that were ultimately responsible for the evolution of events:

- Enrico Dandolo provided the solution of attacking Zara and thus solved an embarrassing situation for the non-Venetians.
- The most serene Doge was the one with whom the young Alexius negotiated.
- The old Doge was the one who proposed that the army go to Constantinople.
- He was the one who presented Alexius III with the ultimatum to abdicate in favour of his nephew.
- Dandolo was the one who decisively contributed to the removal of Alexius III.
- He was the one who negotiated with the newly crowned Alexius IV to repay the financial debt.
- He was the one who negotiated with Alexius V Murtzuphlos.
- Finally, during the second siege, the Doge again was the one who advised the non-Venetians whether to attack or not.⁷

In connection with the latter, the single initiative of the non-Venetians to act independently "naturally" failed – they were rejected by Murtzuphlos, and – once again – only Dandolo's intervention brought the enterprise to the desired end. Of course, who was more appropriate to encourage the non-Venetians after the first failed assault if not the Doge? Further, some Venetian authors suggest the idea that the consequence of this state of affairs was that Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders were to recognize the supremacy of the Doge, and name him "our head." All the other participants always deferred to him any time there was an important decision to be taken, any time they needed advice. All the above episodes are almost always repeated from one Venetian chronicle to another, demonstrating a consistency in the Venetian chronicles.

⁷ Some of these decisive decisions taken by the Doge of Venice are found in contemporary sources, but for the most part they are innovations of later Venetian authors.

Further, the Doge is in general the only participant in the events with a personality. All the others are referred to with some vague expression, so that there are “the Doge and the Barons,” “the Doge and the Frenchmen,” “the Doge and the noblemen,” and so on,⁸ who participate in various actions. Sometimes, this tendency is taken even further, so that the Doge becomes the single character in the story.

In comparison with the Doge, the non-Venetian participants seem to act as simple placeholders. From the viewpoint of the position of the Doge before the others, one could very well consider that the Venetian chronicles are comparable to Choniates, who on some occasions underlined that it was the Doge beyond the entire enterprise.⁹

All other characters, Venetians and non-Venetians alike, are clearly put into the shade by the Doge. The case is taken to the extreme in some Venetian examples,¹⁰ which imply that it was the Doge exclusively who made all the decisions of the whole enterprise, while no allies were present at the events at all.

Indeed, this position of the Doge among the crusaders is also found in the contemporary sources, but these seem rather to place him behind events, as a kind of backstage character, a Richelieu *avant-la-lettre*.¹¹ However, the Venetian authors regarded him at the center of events, as if the whole affair were a “Venetian crusade”.

Moreover, the Venetian chronicles clearly demonstrate a preference for the elements that proved Venetian superiority, not only during events between the beginnings of the crusade and the second capture of Constantinople, but also later, during the epilogue of the conquest of Constantinople: the title of *Dominus quartae partis et dimidiae totius Imperii Romaniae*,¹² the Venetian Patriarchate

⁸ For the terms applied by the Venetian chronicles to the non-Venetian crusaders, see Ş. Marin, “Venetian and non-Venetian Crusaders in the Fourth Crusade, according to the Venetian Chronicles’ Tradition,” *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica di Venezia* 4 (2002), pp. 111–71 (120–22 and the appendix, 162–71) [= http://www.geocities.com/serban_marin/marin2002.html].

⁹ For the non-Venetian crusaders mentioned in the Venetian chronicles, see Ş. Marin, “Venetian and non-Venetian Crusaders,” pp. 136–38, 146–49; for the non-Venetian ambassadors to Venice, see *ibid.*, pp. 139–41; for Pope Innocent III, see *ibid.*, pp. 141–42; for the Venetian participants other than the Doge, see *ibid.*, pp. 149–50.

¹⁰ Tiepolo: 78b–79a; Agostini: 26a–27a; M 77: 58–59.

¹¹ See for instance the description offered by Gunther of Pairis: “There was, however, a certain, especially prudent man there, namely the doge of Venice... In the case of matters that were unclear, the others always took every care to seek his advice, and they usually followed his lead in public affairs,” *The Capture of Constantinople. The Hystoria Constantinopolitana of Gunther of Pairis*, ed. and trans. Alfred J. Andrea (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 97.

¹² See Ş. Marin, “*Dominus quartae partis et dimidiae totius Imperii Romaniae*. The Fourth Crusade and the Dogal Title in the Venetian Chronicles’ Representation,” *Quaderni della Casa Romena* 3 (2004), pp. 119–50.

in Constantinople,¹³ the Venetian *podestà* in the city,¹⁴ the assumption of Enrico Dandolo's candidacy for emperor, and so on.¹⁵ All these elements are distinguished in the Venetian chronicles more often than the real, palpable achievements, such as the commercial privileges, the territorial acquisitions, and so on, so often underlined by modern historians. In the Venetian chronicles the central position of the Doge culminates when the election of a new emperor in Constantinople is described.¹⁶

For the Venetians, the entire episode of the Fourth Crusade could only have one meaning: the achievement of glory, and this meaning is sometimes underlined in different contexts of the crusade: when narrating the acquisition of the new title of *Dominus quartae partis*;¹⁷ when describing a pre-supposed return of the Doge to

¹³ See Ş. Marin, "The First Venetian on the Patriarchal Throne of Constantinople. The Representation of Tommaso Morosini in the Venetian Chronicles," *Quaderni della Casa Romana di Venezia* 2 (2002): *Occidente-Oriente. Contatti, influenze, l'immagine de l'autre*, pp. 49–90 [= http://www.geocities.com/serban_marin/marin2.html].

¹⁴ For the title of *podestà* of Constantinople, see especially Robert Lee Wolff, "A New Document from the Period of the Latin Empire of Constantinople: The Oath of the Venetian Podestà," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientale et Slave* 12 [= *Mélanges Grégoire*], 4 (1953), 539–73 [= *Idem, Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople* (London, 1976)].

¹⁵ See Ş. Marin, "The Venetian 'Empire'. The Imperial Elections in Constantinople on 1204 in the Representation of the Venetian Chronicles," *Annuario. Istituto Romeno di cultura e ricerca umanistica* 5 (2003), pp. 185–245 *passim* [= http://www.geocities.com/marin_serban/marin2004.html].

¹⁶ See *ibid.* For the supposed speech of Pantaleone Barbo in order to determine Enrico Dandolo to renounce, see it edited in Ş. Marin, "The Venetian Community – between *civitas* and *imperium*. A Project of the Capital's Transfer from Venice to Constantinople, According to the Chronicle of Daniele Barbaro," *European Review of History* 10 (2003), 1:81–102 (93–96).

¹⁷ See for instance M 2581: 93a ("Lo qual Dose molto augmenta lo honor e stado de Venesia per le bele vittorie chel fese con li suoi Venetianj; et per lo aquistar delo Imperio, lo fe questa adicion al titolo del so Dogado, chorando 1204 del mese de Marzo: DOMINUS QUARTE PARTIS ET DIMIDIE TOCIUS IMPERII ROMANIE [emphasis in the manuscript], zoe Signor della quarta parte et mezza de tutto lo Imperio de Romania"); A. Dandolo–extensa: 279 ("Venecie dux, ut tanti triumphus memoria recolatur, et posteris prodeat ad exemplum, procerum assistencium consilio, ducali titulo addidit: Quarte parte et dimidio tocius imperii Romanie dominator") and in P. Dolfin's version: 328a ("El Duce de Venexia, azioche la memoria de posteris s'arrecordo de tanto inclito triumpho e sia proficuo à successori et à exemplo, per consiglio di Signori, li li prexenti agiese al titolo del Duce: Signor della quarta parte et mezza di tutto l'Imperio di Romania"); Trevisan: 40a, col. 1 ("La cita de Venexia fo molto exaltada de onor e fama, conziosfosse che i dominasse lo Imperio de Romania anni 54. mese con di 13" in the same context); Abbiosi: 20a ("E da quello vene che fo zonto al titolo quartae partis et dimidia totius Imperij Romani. E per questo fo molto esaltado l'honor Venetiana. E dal' hora in qua fù ditto Duchal Signoria."); M 44: 32b ("E per questa magnifica ovra cum honor al suo titolo Dominus, Dominus quartae partis dimidia è totius Imperij Romanie. Onde per questo titolo e operation facta per l'Doxe antedicto molto el stado delli Venetinj fu argumentado [= augmentado] e cresudo in ben."); Erizzo: 111a ("Nota che per questa magnifica uovra dell'acquistar fexe Venetiani della cittadde de Constantinopoli e l'Imperio de Romania, con honor el si zonseno al so titolo dogal Dux quartae partis & dimidia totius Imperij Romaniae. Onde, per questo titolo et operation fatto per lo Doxe sopraditto, molto fo cressudo el stado de Venetiani").

Venice;¹⁸ when referring to the death of Enrico Dandolo, these are often regarded as the summit of Venice's glorious history.¹⁹

It is only our opinion that justification for the Venetian view is seen as necessary not to mention justification of all the other political actors regarded as "guilty" of the events of 1204 (Boniface of Montferrat, Philip of Swabia, Innocent III, and so on). Indeed, we approve when the present-day Pope asks forgiveness for an event occurring 800 years ago. Still, as historians, we must look back in time and ask: in 1204, was there really any intention among the participants of the crusade to justify themselves?

Abbreviations of various Venetian chronicles from Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana [BNM], Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini Stampalia di Venezia [BFQS] that have been used in the present article:

- A. Dandolo-extensa *Andreae Danduli, Duci Veneticorum Chronica per extensium descripta aa. 46–1280 d. C.*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 12 (new ed. by Ester Pastorello) (Bologna, 1923) 5–327.
- Abbiosi Camilo Abbiosi detto il Seniore di Ravenna, *Cronaca di Venezia dall'origine della città fino all'anno 1443*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2052 [= 8981].
- Agostini Agostino Agostini, *Storia veneziana di Agostino Agostini dal principio della fondazione di Venezia (421) fino all'anno 1570*, BFQS, mss. IV. 16 [= 770].
- Barbo *Cronaca veneta detta Barba dal principio della città fino al 1545*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 66 [= 7766].
- Donà Antonio Donà, *Cronaca veneta dall'anno 687 al 1479*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 89 [= 8391].
- E. Dandolo Enrico Dandolo, *Cronaca veneta dall'origine della città fino al 1373*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 102, microfilm Pos. Marc. 127 [= 8142].
- Erizzo *Cronaca veneta attribuita a Marcantonio Erizzo, fino all'anno 1495*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 56 [= 8636].

¹⁸ See for instance E. Dandolo: 42b and Morosini: 12 ("Et con quella [arma] venne à Veniexia con gran trionfo et con quella reverentia et letitia fò degno, fò rezeuuto con tutta l'armada, et per questo muodo la città de Veniexia fò molto exaltada de honor et fama et gran valor. Conzosia che i dominasse l'Imperio de Romania [adăugire pe marginea textului: An. 54 m. 9], el qual anni in quanta quattro mexi noue, mandando continuo in quello Capitano, e Podestà sotto l'Imperador detto, benche della parte de Viniziani de niente l'Imperador se impazava, se non tanto quanto piaxeua à messer lo Doxe et Veniziani. Compledo el ditto tempo, come peradredo trattaremo, fù prexo Constantinopoli cortesemente per Ongari infideli."); the same "*grandisimo trionfo*" is also mentioned in Tiepolo: 79a, Agostini: 26b, M 77: 58.

¹⁹ See for instance M 1999: 30b–31a ("Venne pur anche à morte doppo 97 anni di vita e 13 di principato Henrico Dandolo, felice per la gloria di tante imprese, e per il merito di sì ampio dominio guadagnato co' suoi pericoli alla patria, ristando trà suoi trionfi nella Chiesa di Santa Sofia sepolto.")

- M 44 *Cronaca veneziana dal principio della città fino al 1433*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 44 [= 7865].
- M 67 *Cronaca veneta dal principio della città fino all'anno 1549*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 67 [= 9132].
- M 77 *Cronaca veneziana dall'anno 421 fino al 1379*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 77 [= 7420].
- M 89 *Cronaca veneta dal principio della città fino al 1410*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 89 [= 8391].
- M 550 *Cronaca dall'origine di Venezia sino all'anno 1442*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 550 [= 8496].
- M 798 *Cronaca veneta dall'origine della città sino all'anno 1478*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 798 [= 7486].
- M 1577 *Cronaca della città di Venezia dalla sua fondazione fino all'anno 1400*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 1577 [= 7973].
- M 1586 *Cronaca veneta dal principio della città fino al 1450*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 1586 [= 9611].
- M 1999 *Epitome della Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 1999 [= 7918].
- M 2541 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1310*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2541 [= 12433].
- M 2543 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1356*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2543 [= 12435].
- M 2560 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1432*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2560 [= 12452].
- M 2563 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1441*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2563 [= 12455].
- M 2581 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1570*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2581 [= 12473].
- M 2592 *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1247*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2592 [= 12484].
- Marco *Marci Chronica universalis*, BNM, mss. It. XI. 124 [= 6802].
- Monacis Laurentii de Monacis, *Cretae Cancellari Chronica de rebus Venetis ab U. C. ad Annum MCCCCLIV, sive ad conjurationem ducis Faletro*, ed. Flaminio Cornaro (Venice, 1758).
- Morosini *The Morosini Codex*, ed. Michele Pietro Ghezzi, John R. Melville-Jones and Andrea Rizzi, I (Padua, 1999).
- P. Dolfin Pietro Dolfin, *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1422*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2557 [= 12449].
- Sabellico M. Antonii Sabellici, "rerum Venetarum ab urbe condita, ad Marcum Barbadicum, Sereniss. Venetiarum Principem & Senatum, Decadis Primae," in *Degl'Istorici delle Cose*

- Venetiane, i quali hanno scritto per Pubblico Decreto* (Venice, 1718), [1487].
- Tiepolo Giovanni Tiepolo Patriarca di Venezia, *Cronaca veneta ad esso attribuita dall'anno 421 al 1524*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 129 [= 8323].
- Trevisan Nicolò Trevisan, *Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1444*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2567 [= 12459].
- Veniera 791 *Cronaca Veniera*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 791 [= 7589].
- Veniera 2580 *Veniera, Cronaca di Venezia fino al 1556*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 2580 [= 12472].
- Zancaruolo *Cronaca veneta supposta di Gasparo Zancaruolo, dall'origine della città fino al 1446*, BNM, mss. It. VII. 1274 [= 9274].

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Per Innocenzo III i Cristiani Latini “peggiori degli altri.” l’anno 1204. Un sintomo di nuova cultura

Giulio Cipollone

Da tempo dedichiamo la nostra ricerca alla figura del papa Innocenzo III e alla sua epoca, in modo particolare al suo rapporto con il mondo degli ebrei e dei saraceni, sottolineando i vari e mutevoli atteggiamenti che il papa, di volta in volta, riserva ai suoi interlocutori non cristiani o ai cristiani non latini.¹

Nella nostra ricerca più recente ci andiamo dedicando all’indagine e alla riflessione sulla retrospettiva culturale della tolleranza che si ricava dalla corrispondenza epistolare dei papi² con i principi musulmani, al tempo straordinariamente indicativo delle estenuanti guerre sante: crociate e gihad. La ricerca per il suo ambito e per il suo impianto si presenta con una sua originalità, e come provocazione anche per le relazioni internazionali nel mondo contemporaneo. Questa indagine è ancora in corso e, in dipendenza da circa 40.000 regesti dei papi da Gregorio VII a Bonifacio VIII, tenderà di produrre un lavoro di sintesi sulla retrospettiva della tolleranza nel rapporto dei papi con i musulmani nel medioevo circoscritto al periodo cruciale di crociate e di gihad. Questo lavoro sarà edito in coedizione dalla Pontificia Università Gregoriana di Roma e dall’Università di Al-Azhar de Il Cairo.

Nel solco di questa ricerca abbiamo già avuto modo di sottolineare l’importanza determinante del fatto culturale religioso; l’impianto precostituito del “noi e gli altri, dentro e fuori, dentro o fuori;” gli atteggiamenti differenziati dei papi verso l’Islam, manifestati attraverso rifiuto, collaborazione e persino benevolenza; l’autocritica del proprio gruppo religioso e il confronto con “gli altri” che fa ammirare le virtù che pure esistono fuori del proprio gruppo religioso; ciò che è evidente nel linguaggio di Innocenzo III, e l’anno 1204 gli ha offerto una occasione straordinaria in questo senso. Anticipando quindi in qualche modo i dati del futuro volume di sintesi, ci siamo soffermati sulle aree della Sicilia e a Venezia, dove in modo particolarmente incisivo i cristiani sono stati considerati dai papi come peggiori dei saraceni. A Zara addirittura i cristiani si comportano come *Sathane satellites*, e, come vedremo, “con merito sono aborriti più dei cani” dopo i fattacci di Costantinopoli dell’aprile 1204.

¹ Giulio Cipollone, *Cristianità – Islam: Cattività e liberazione in nome di Dio. Il tempo di Innocenzo III dopo ‘il 1187’* (Miscellanea Historiae Pontificiae 60) (Rome, 2003), pp. xxx+553; Idem, “Innocenzo III e i saraceni. Atteggiamenti differenziati (1198–1199),” *Acta historica et archeologica mediaevalia* 9 (1988), 167–87; Idem, “Innocent III and the Saracens: Between Rejection and Collaboration,” in J.C. Moore, ed., *Pope Innocent III and his World* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 361–76; Idem, “Europa e Islam. Il confronto sui valori,” *Rivista di Studi Politici Internazionali* 278 (2003), pp. 188–91.

² I riferimenti alle fonti dipendono dalla ricerca condotta prevalentemente presso l’Archivio Segreto Vaticano.

Questo contributo è da collocare nel quadro di questa ricerca e come ulteriore esplicitazione di questo atteggiamento culturale che si va affermando, forse pure “malvolentieri”, ma imposto dalla evidenza schiacciante della malvagità degli appartenenti al proprio gruppo religioso di cristiani Latini: nel nostro caso i Veneziani. Intenzione di questo intervento è quella di mostrare la ubiquità della latitudine del buono e del cattivo che si andava percependo nel nostro periodo, come sintomo di nuova cultura; la legittimità della visione di una retrospettiva culturale di tolleranza già e pure in contesto di crociate e di gihad; come il periodo delle “guerre sante,” e specialmente della “quarta guerra santa” illumini in modo efficace alcune realtà: i cristiani sono peggiori dei saraceni, o più in genere, dei non cristiani; e, a livello confessionale, i cristiani Greci, hanno ragione nel considerare i cristiani Latini abominevoli più dei cani; tra coloro che sono fuori del mondo dei cristiani si trovano persone giuste ed esemplari per gli stessi cristiani; lo stesso papa, che pesa le parole, riesce con crudezza e verismo a valutare così duramente i cristiani, tanto da capovolgere la consolidata cultura aprioristica secondo cui i cristiani sono buoni a priori e i non cristiani o cristiani Greci sono empii; anzi, e addirittura, in certo senso, i Latini “romani” sono peggiori persino dei Greci.

Crediamo che questa riflessione possa contribuire a dare risposta alla domanda di fondo che fa da impianto a tutta la *sixth conference* della SSCLE che ha scelto opportunamente per tema “*1204: A Turning Point in Relations between Eastern and Western Christendom?*,” tema poi risolto nel titolo definitivo del Congresso “*Around the Fourth Crusade, Before and After.*”

La presa di Costantinopoli da parte dei Veneziani ha suscitato molte e varie reazioni presso i Latini e presso i Greci.

Il papa Innocenzo III si trova profondamente implicato e in prima persona nell’avventura, tanto da dover manifestare pubblicamente una sua visione e valutazione della deviazione veneziana della crociata. È evidente che il papa adotta un linguaggio adatto alle circostanze, avendo di mira i futuri sviluppi politici delle sue intenzioni di recupero della Terrasanta. Ciò nonostante, Innocenzo III ha una particolare occasione per definire i cristiani come criminali e aborriti giustamente dalla Chiesa dei Greci ‘più dei cani’: “*iam merito illos abhorreat plus quam canes,*” dopo i fatti ignominiosi compiuti a Costantinopoli nell’aprile del 1204.

La rilettura storica o “nuova storia”: le fonti latine e greche

Oggi le varie storiografie si misurano sempre più con le esigenze dell’attuale metodologia scientifica e con la nuova ‘visione’ del mondo che è altro dal ‘proprio mondo’; il proprio mondo che era invece ‘tutto il mondo’ nel tempo preso in esame. Più facilmente antiche visioni di storiografie tradizionali, dal tono apologetico e mitologico comune nei libri di storia islamica, bizantina e cristiana, cominciano pure ad essere sottoposte ad una rilettura o lettura nuova che porta ad una ‘nuova storia’. Noi riteniamo che sia importante la specularità nella lettura della storia;

sentire l'altra campana; leggere in modo sinottico, così da 'ri-leggere insieme' per riscrivere insieme la nuova storia.

In merito ai celebri fatti dell'aprile 1204 si conoscono varie fonti. Metterle a confronto senza preconcetti e con la libertà di storici "aconfessionali" e non di parte, aiuta, secondo noi, a dare risposta alla domanda che soggiace a questa *conference*. La bibliografia è vasta e arriva a comprendere varie centinaia di voci.³

Quando si mettono a confronto le varie narrazioni sui fatti dell'aprile 1204: quelle di Goffredo di Villehardouin, Roberto di Clari, di Guntero di Parigi, di Sicardo di Cremona, di Giorgio Acropolito, di Niceta Choniata, insieme alle opere di anonimi, come *Annali*, *Cronache* ed altri scritti, si nota come ognuno tira l'acqua al proprio mulino o al mulino del proprio padrone. C'è comunque da notare come un impianto, preconstituito ai fatti della narrazione stessa, accomuni queste fonti narrative.

La presa di Costantinopoli è letta rispettivamente da Latini e da Greci come: segno di benevolenza di Dio e segno di punizione di Dio; opera meritoria e persino di carità e opera diabolica; restaurazione dell'impero e usurpazione dell'impero. Combattere contro i Greci non è assolutamente peccato: anzi è una vera e propria opera di carità, secondo quanto era inteso dai vescovi e riferito da Roberto di Clari;⁴ similmente i Greci pensano della lotta contro i Latini.

Inoltre, e fatto questo sintomatico, si va affacciando la categoria del "peggiore e del migliore" che si possono trovare indifferentemente dentro e fuori del proprio gruppo di correligionari. Valga come esempio la considerazione dei Greci peggiori dei Giudei, sempre secondo Roberto di Clari, che riporta le voci dei vescovi di Soissons, di Troyes e di Halbertstadt.⁵

Le fonti che comunque rappresentano prova più affidabile sono quelle epistolari. Le lettere degli Imperatori Greci o Latini, dei Dogi o dei Patriarchi di Gerusalemme, dei Legati pontifici o dei Papi, rappresentano una insostituibile fonte per rispondere alla domanda nodale di questo Congresso. Particolarmente importanti sono le lettere attorno ai nostri fatti che hanno avuto pronte e dirette risposte, come ad esempio quella a Innocenzo III di Baldovino, già imperatore di Costantinopoli, datata 16 maggio 1204,⁶ ad un mese dal saccheggio della città, e la risposta di Innocenzo,

³ La bibliografia sulla storia di Bisanzio nella sua relazione con Roma e con la Cristianità latina occidentale è molto vasta: basterà riferirsi a titolo di esempio a Giorgio Ravegnani, *La storia di Bisanzio. Il timone bibliografico* 3 (Rome, 2004), p. 191. Tra altri riferimenti, cf. John C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III (1160/61–1216): To Root Up and to Plant* (Leiden, 2003), pp. 102–34; *Cristianità d'Occidente e Cristianità d'Oriente (secoli VI–XI)* (Spoleto, 2004), per comprendere la distanza progressiva tra Oriente e Occidente. Inoltre c'è da avere presente il grande contributo all'indagine sul tema che è venuto dai vari Congressi sul tema di Bisanzio e la quarta crociata, e ancora in via di pubblicazione, come il nostro tenuto a Istanbul dal 25 al 29 agosto 2004. Per non appesantire l'apparato critico, le note sono evidentemente molto ridotte.

⁴ Roberto di Clari, *La conquista di Costantinopoli*, trans. Anna maria Nada Patrone (Genoa: n.p., 1972), cap. 72.

⁵ *Ibid.*, cap. 73.

⁶ Othmar Hageneder and Andrea Sommerlechner, et alii, eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII (7. Pontifikatsjahr, 1204/1205) (Wien, 1997), pp. 253–62, n. 152.

senza apparente fretta, del 7 novembre dello stesso anno,⁷ a sei mesi circa dalla lettera di Baldovino. Non sarà di poco conto osservare le lettere del papa che non hanno avuto pronta risposta o addirittura mai hanno avuto riposte.⁸

Per ora ci basti annotare che la corrispondenza la più significativa è considerata quella del papa Innocenzo III, e che le tematiche più ricorrenti sono: il rapporto Costantinopoli e Roma; il rapporto Greci e Latini; il rapporto Costantinopoli e recupero di Gerusalemme; il fatto “colonizzatore” latino dopo la presa di Gerusalemme; il fatto degli incentivi fino alle indulgenze plenarie per quanti volessero andare a Costantinopoli anziché a Gerusalemme; l'imposizione di costumi, usi, riti e lingua latina in contesto di colonizzazione. Ciò che comunque interessa per il nostro tema e per la lettura del fatto della retrospettiva culturale della tolleranza, è come Innocenzo III proponga una lettura ambivalente e complessa, per certo senso contraddittoria e ambigua sulla interpretazione dei fattacci dell'aprile 1204.

Innocenzo III crede, anzi è assolutamente convinto di essere *arbiter mundi*; ma sempre più frequentemente si trova gente tra i cristiani, persino quelli Latini, che o non lo credono o non sono interessati a ciò che il papa crede, vede e pianifica secondo le sue visioni di *arbiter mundi*. Un arbitro del mondo sempre più solo e arbitro di sempre meno cristiani.

La lettura “religiosa” sorregge l'interpretazione del saccheggio di Costantinopoli; lo stesso Dio è l'arbitro: dà la vittoria per sua bontà; dà la sconfitta per i peccati. Dio lo ha deciso; i Greci lo hanno meritato; i fatti gravi si possono leggere come provvidenza per il giusto insindacabile giudizio di Dio. Ma la gente cominciava a leggere il fatto anche ben oltre il filtro del fattore religioso, ricollegandolo alla sola sfera mondana. Il linguaggio che prevede che i Latini siano peggiori degli altri, introduce in modo mirabile il superamento dell'angusta visione religiosa che tutto spiega; giacché i peggiori sono proprio quei Latini “benedetti” da Dio. I Cristiani sono peggiori degli altri: è in questa ammissione di fondo e capitale che si impianta una nuova visione del mondo.

Già in Innocenzo III si scorge come traballi, seppur con movimento lento e indeciso, la certezza che i buoni si trovino “solo” tra i Latini, quando egli ammette “giacché presso tutte le genti, chi fa opere di giustizia è accetto a Dio”.⁹

Il 1204: anno cruciale. La frattura

L'anno 1204, secondo i dati della recente e più critica storiografia, sempre più viene considerato l'anno che “compie e stabilisce” la frattura tra Roma e Bisanzio, tra l'Occidente e l'Oriente cristiano.

⁷ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 262–63, n. 153.

⁸ Cf. *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 36–39, n. 18.

⁹ Othmar Hageneder and Andrea Sommerlechner, et alii, eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII (8. Pontifikatsjahr, 1205/1206) (Wien, 2001), p. 108, n. 63.

A tutti è nota la determinante differenza culturale tra i due mondi cristiani, insieme al peso del tempo dei Padri e dei primi concili ecumenici; altro fatto, quello della pentarchia e della collegialità, così vivacemente reclamato dai Greci; finalmente una visione della chiesa all'interno dello Stato e diretta in modo sommo dall'Imperatore garante dell'ortodossia, rispetto al mondo romano-latino dove il Papa è l'arbitro sommo della chiesa e quindi, all'interno di essa, dello stato o del complesso delle nazioni cristiane che poi formano la cristianità. Similmente va tenuto presente il peso storico e le erosioni nel rapporto dovute all'espandersi di Bisanzio al tempo degli Eraclio e la contemporanea grave debolezza di Roma, desolata città; la fiammata delle due iconoclastie come movimenti di riforma e di ulteriore spazio per la distanza e la differenziazione da Roma; le lotte dottrinali: realtà feroci di attaccamento ad una definizione di teologie oppure pretesti di “definizioni confessionali;” infine i rimproveri ed insulti reciproci su differenti *habitus* di tradizione religiosa, celibato, pane azzimo ed altri ancora; finalmente le scomuniche dell'anno 1054.

Nel frattempo si vanno elaborando nuove alleanze, crescono e mutano le mire e le ambizioni politiche. Si pensi ai legami amichevoli e minacciosi della sede apostolica con Bisanzio, la Bulgaria, la Serbia, l'Ungheria, l'Armenia, proprio nel contesto di riportare all'obbedienza i Greci e di convogliare una allargata Cristianità dai Balcani all'Oriente verso il sogno “proibito” della liberazione dei Gerusalemme e della terra santa ad Oriente.¹⁰

La cristianità: occhi avidi su Bisanzio. Innocenzo III e la politica orientale

Innocenzo III aveva annunciato le sue preoccupazioni “più importanti e primarie” già nel suo primo anno di pontificato (15 agosto 1198), relative alla riforma della Chiesa e al recupero di Gerusalemme e della Terrasanta *quasi precipuam inter alias sollicitudines reputamus*.¹¹ Malgrado la inaspettata presa, *inopinata captio*, di Costantinopoli,¹² si farà sempre più complicato il recupero di Gerusalemme per le disastrose divisioni tra i cristiani Latini; Innocenzo III è al corrente che Sayf al-Din, fratello di Saladino, signore di Damasco, della Siria e dell'Egitto, insieme ai saraceni, dopo la notizia della presa di Costantinopoli da parte dei Latini, sono rimasti molto male ed avrebbero preferito piuttosto che i cristiani avessero preso Gerusalemme anziché Costantinopoli.¹³

Ciò che accade nel 1204, preparato e introdotto con i fatti di Zara del novembre 1202, e con il primo assedio di Bisanzio del luglio 1203, rappresenta il “punto

¹⁰ Tra altri possibili riferimenti: Cf. *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 3–6, n. 1; pp. 6–8, n. 2.

¹¹ Othmar Hageneder and Andrea Sommerlechner, eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III*, I (1. Pontifikatsjahr, 1198/1199) (Graz–Cologne, 1964), p. 502, n. 336; p. 662, n. 438; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, pp. 227, 229, n. 126.

¹² *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 227, n. 126.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 228, n. 126.

del non ritorno” tra i due mondi, ovvero la definizione della distanza e della non assimilazione culturale tra Roma e Bisanzio. I fatti sono noti.

Alla base c'è la visione di Roma su Bisanzio e la corrispettiva “altra visione” di Bisanzio su Roma. Nel papa Innocenzo III c'è per così dire il vertice della consapevolezza della forza romana, dell'urgenza dell'azione, della necessità del pronto intervento. Costantinopoli è concupita dal papa per due ragioni: quella funzionale per il recupero di Gerusalemme e quella finale di ricondurre Bisanzio all'obbedienza di Roma con la restaurazione dell'Impero latino in Oriente.

Dalle lettere del papa sono evidenti calcolo politico, linguaggio diplomatico, valutazione morale; comunque si nota una certa abilità diplomatica che sconfina nell'ambiguità e in una certa approvazione funzionale degli eventi dell'aprile del 1204. Almeno come interpretazione e giustificazione a posteriori.

Più evidente ancora è la “soddisfazione” del papa per il “ritorno all'” obbedienza e sottomissione della chiesa greca “che una volta era Bizantina, ora invece si dice Costantinopolitana,”¹⁴ secondo l'espressione contenuta nella lettera inviata a Tommaso Morosini, patriarca di Costantinopoli, datata 30 marzo 1205.

Il 1204: il fattaccio. Mani violente di cristiani su Bisanzio

I fatti sono là pesanti come macigni. La trasgressione di norme non solo evangeliche, ma addirittura di etica “gentile” o pagana è palese e si è realizzata in modo disgustoso. Ignominioso.

Ciò nonostante, le interpretazioni a posteriori dei fattacci dei tre giorni di saccheggio consentono di vedere: comprensione, aggancio al giudizio e alla provvidenza di Dio; addirittura un evento compiuto e realizzato “con il favore di Dio;” una giusta punizione per l'arroganza e la disobbedienza dei Greci. Gli spazi su cui si muove Innocenzo III per capire, spiegare e persino divulgare il fatto come piccolo male rispetto al grande successo finale, e insomma un fatto voluto da Dio e provvidenziale, fanno leggere il 1204 attraverso alcune valutazioni particolari e di insieme, che poi significano, tutto sommato, una valutazione non scandalosa degli eventi, che piuttosto apre alla comprensione dei fatti e ad una sorta di giustificazione a posteriori. Gli ambiti che consentono di trarre conclusioni “provvidenziali” sull'aprile del 1204 si rifanno a vari piani trasversali, ma comunque unitari, in un grande disegno organico del papa che vedeva nel riportare Bisanzio all'obbedienza di Roma, una espansione verso Oriente che significava, nella sua ottica, un tale potenziamento delle forze cristiane “unitarie” pan-cristiane in grado di “garantire” sulla certezza del successo della liberazione di Gerusalemme e dell'umiliazione definitiva dei saraceni.

Con il 1204 Bisanzio ridiventa Costantinopoli, una seconda Roma che rimette nelle mani della prima Roma, in accordo ad una biblica competenza e teologale

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 32, n. 19.

elaborazione, la fine del suo ruolo temporaneo e a servizio immutabile, seppur sotteso, alla prima Roma.

Il linguaggio d’Innocenzo III come conseguenza dell’aprile 1204 si esprime particolarmente attorno alle seguenti valutazioni o bilancio *post factum*.

Bisanzio è riconsegnata nelle mani dei Latini: torna all’obbedienza della sua madre, e ridiventa Costantinopoli; Dio ha voluto questo ritorno; tutto si è svolto per giudizio misterioso e insindacabile di Dio; secondo le “previsioni” della Scrittura, l’evento compie ciò che era stato profetizzato; Costantinopoli e la Chiesa dei Greci tornano all’obbedienza della chiesa madre di Roma: si tratta di ri-traslazione dell’impero alla sua prima naturale sede.

Su questo impianto teologico spirituale, Innocenzo III fonda un progetto operativo:

- – è convinto che la presa di Costantinopoli rappresenta l’ottima occasione data da Dio per liberare e riprendere anche Gerusalemme, infatti è lui che ha fatto tutto;
- offre incentivi, sino all’indulgenza plenaria concessa a coloro che partono *crucesignati* per il *sanctum viagium* a Gerusalemme: insomma c’è la commutazione o sovrapposizione di Gerusalemme con altre mete di viaggi: come la crociata contro gli eretici o altre imprese missionarie o semplicemente in spedizioni difensive convogliate a favore di principi cristiani o per le mire di protezione o espansione dello stato pontificio;
- offre agevolazioni promozionali, compresa quella delle indulgenze, e benefici a laici e chierici che volessero andare a Costantinopoli a reimpiantare gli antichi riti, gesti e costumi Latini; in certo senso si può parlare di volontà di ripopolamento latino sulle terre dominate anticamente dai Greci e sottratte a Roma, e ora finalmente ritornate all’obbedienza;
- secondo il Papa, chi si presta ad andare a Costantinopoli fruirà della remissione dei peccati;
- c’è la volontà di impiantare una giurisdizione ecclesiastica latina con patriarca, vescovi e diocesi ed altre circoscrizioni affidate al clero latino;
- la *christiana religio*;¹⁵ secondo il rito romano, la unica vera e ortodossa e cattolica, finalmente porterà verso una nuova *christiana cultura* con l’espansione di una *Christianitas* unita e tanto forte da soggiogare definitivamente i saraceni;
- i Veneziani, secondo il papa, che fa propri gli apprezzamenti dei Greci sui Veneziani, sono “da aborrire più dei cani,” ma vanno capiti. I Veneziani hanno sbagliato, ma se questo sbaglio viene immesso nei piani politici della Sede apostolica, oltre la comprensione ci sarà il perdono e addirittura il titolo di merito come Veneziani che sono fedeli, robusti, eroici soldati di Cristo, pronti ad assumere la croce per la liberazione della Terrasanta. Ciò che è capitato per

¹⁵ Ibid., VIII, p. 130, n. 71.

“debolezza” si dovrà leggere come volontà di Dio manifestata attraverso la sua potenza provvidente. A questa volontà, i Veneziani che si sarebbero trovati, volenti o non volenti, strumenti di un antico e precostituito piano di Dio, non potevano esimersi, anche volendo.

Ciò è quanto emerge dalle lettere d’Innocenzo III, che, come dicevamo, rappresentano la fonte più accreditata per leggere i fatti del 1204, giacché si tratta di documentazione piena di forza giuridica, di intenti direzionali fino alle sanzioni, e di evidenti diplomi che manifestano in modo inequivocabile le intenzioni politiche della Sede apostolica e l’adattabilità politica delle stesse volontà.

L’assedio e il saccheggio di Bisanzio nell’aprile 1204, nella settimana che precede la Pasqua, rappresenta un evento che certamente racchiude un complesso di crimini e di violenza, che oggi diremmo da dover portare dinanzi ad una corte marziale o ad una Corte internazionale che giudichi crimini di guerra. Ma questo fatto, come accennato, è il risultato di un insieme di altri fatti che ne fanno un evento da leggere in base alle sue premesse politiche, alle mutevoli strategie belliche, agli interesse economici, ad un remoto e pure onnipresente canovaccio di “fatto religioso” gestito attraverso pregiudizi, pretesti e ragioni dei Latini, da inquadrare nell’apertura verso l’Oriente e verso Gerusalemme. E poi da inquadrare nel fatto “mediatico” del duttile linguaggio diplomatico, nelle schermaglie temporeggiatrici o interventiste dei principi cristiani.

Tra tanta vasta materia ci vogliamo soffermare sulle reazioni “somme” avute, comunicate e proposte dal papa “arbitro del mondo.” Queste valutazioni, come vedremo sono varie: severe, accomodanti, liberatorie della coscienza e, tutto sommato, avvolgono con il segno positivo della provvidenza i fattacci dell’aprile 1204. Tra queste valutazioni se ne scorge una evidentemente dal sapore etico-morale; ed è in questo ambito che il papa arriva con forza straordinaria ad indicare i cristiani Latini peggiori degli altri. Il vocabolario che è contundente, diventerà sempre più espressivo, più comune ed impiegato sempre più frequentemente: ciò che ci fa cogliere un cambio culturale di non poca importanza che diventerà sempre più patrimonio culturale nel secolo XIII e più evidentemente nei secoli futuri.

Ci sembra di cogliere nell’assedio e saccheggio di Zara (novembre 1202) una sorta di preparazione e prova generale che anticipa l’assedio e saccheggio di Bisanzio nell’aprile 1204, tanto da poter accomunare gli stati d’animo e le reazioni di Innocenzo III attorno ai due eventi, così intimamente legati, e che si illuminano reciprocamente, consentendo una più puntuale visione e lettura per cogliere il cambio di cultura di cui andiamo parlando.

Le angolature della riflessione che sembrano irrinunciabili per cogliere la storia degli eventi e la sua interpretazione unitaria, come dicevamo, risiedono in modo singolare nel modo di fare di Innocenzo III. Innanzitutto la sua reazione psicologica ed emotiva agli eventi; come egli interpreta questi “fattacci” e se si tratta di interpretazione lineare; infine come Innocenzo III tenti di “recuperare reinterpretando” i due assedi e saccheggi contro i *fratres cohuterini* cristiani a Zara

e a Bisanzio, inquadrando gli eventi nel contesto di “farne Tesoro” e di leggerli come eventi, tutto sommato, provvidenziali.

Non possiamo soffermarci per l’approfondimento, data la finalità dello studio, e, come annunciato, questa ampia materia correlata ai dati che provengono dalla lettura della documentazione di corrispondenza internazionale da Gregorio VII a Bonifacio VIII, sarà impiegata per lo studio monografico già detto. Qui ci basti solo qualche riferimento alle parole di Innocenzo III impiegate con valore epistolare diplomatico per introdurre la realtà della sua bassa stima dei Latini, divulgata con nuovo linguaggio che apre alla considerazione sulla nuova cultura che si andava delineando in modo sempre più evidente e corposo.

Innocenzo III manifesta una reazione psicologica ed emotiva.

Una lettera del Papa, databile tra il 15 e il 31 dicembre 1202, inviata ai conti, ai baroni e a tutti i crociati, senza saluto *sine salutatione*: clausola che mostra la sua evidente irritazione, è relativa al recente saccheggio di Zara del mese di novembre precedente. Il papa scrive di sentirsi “addolorato non poco, e molto triste;”¹⁶ un’altra lettera inviata agli stessi destinatari, ugualmente senza saluto, nel marzo 1203, è introdotta con un *incipit* utilizzato solamente da Innocenzo III undici volte e da Onorio III due volte: “*Tacti sumus dolore cordis intrinsecus,*” e manifesta il turbamento del papa.¹⁷

Scrivendo al cardinale Pietro, legato apostolico, in data 12 luglio 1205, Innocenzo III riferisce sui fattacci del saccheggio di Costantinopoli “con tristezza e con rossore.”¹⁸

- non si doveva andare a prendere Costantinopoli, ma Gerusalemme;¹⁹
- si è versato sangue fraterno;²⁰
- i crociati assumono la croce per Cristo, ma ne fanno un’arma contro Cristo;²¹
- i cristiani saccheggiano i fratelli cristiani;²²
- i cristiani Latini si abbandonano allo stupor;²³
- i cristiani Latini arrivano a insozzare l’Eucarestia, i vasi sacri, a profanare le reliquie.²⁴ La testimonianza della violazione dell’Eucarestia ci è stata tramandata da Niceta Choniata nella sua *Historia*: “Ciò che è orrendo al solo udire, è stato

¹⁶ Othmar Hageneder, ed., *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, V (5. Pontifikatsjahr, 1202/1203) (Wien, 1993), p. 315, n. 160.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 318, n. 161.

¹⁸ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, VIII, p. 231, n. 127.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, V, pp. 315–16, n. 160.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 316, n. 160; p. 318, n. 161.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, VIII, p. 232, n. 127; pp. 246–47, n. 134.

²⁴ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, V, p. 317, n. 160; p. 318, n. 161; *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, VIII, p. 232, n. 127, pp. 246–47, n. 134.

vedere come il sangue divino e il corpo di Cristo è stato sparso e gettato in terra;²⁵

- il papa condanna i fatti criminali commessi dai cristiani latini;²⁶
- esige ed impone penitenza, espiatione e restituzione;²⁷
- si dice predisposto al perdono e all'assoluzione;²⁸
- esige la promessa che i cristiani latini non di non invadano più i territori di altri cristiani;²⁹
- il papa minaccia di scomunica e di anathema;³⁰
- egli manifesta grande gioia *gavisi sumus in Domino* per la traslazione dell'impero;³¹
- Innocenzo III accetta doni da parte di Baldovino presi dai beni saccheggianti a Costantinopoli;³²
- Innocenzo III è irritato per i ritardi, le inadempienze, la disobbedienza palese, e le provocazioni contro di lui;³³
- il papa vuole punire la "superbia dei Veneti."³⁴

Innocenzo III interpreta in vario modo il modo di fare dei cristiani latini a Costantinopoli:

- è Dio che agisce, compie, permette;³⁵
- Dio ha giudicato i Greci e li ha puniti giustamente;³⁶
- Dio consegna il bottino ai Latini;³⁷
- c'è stata una forza maggiore e quasi la incapacità di fare altro e di agire diversamente,³⁸ "ma quasi costretti da una necessità,"³⁹
- esiste una volontà provvidenziale di Dio cui non ci si può sottrarre (Egli fa tutto);⁴⁰
- c'è il mistero della volontà nascosta di Dio;⁴¹

²⁵ *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 139, col. 955.

²⁶ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, pp. 315–16, n. 160; pp. 318–19, n. 161.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 318, n. 161; p. 319, n. 161; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, p. 38, n. 18.

²⁸ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, p. 319, n. 161.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, p. 317, n. 160.

³¹ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 262–63, n. 153.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 234–36, n. 147.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–38, n. 18; pp. 234–36, n. 147; pp. 349–50, n. 200; pp. 364–65, n. 206; pp. 366–68, n. 208.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, n. 127.

³⁵ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 109, n. 64; pp. 127–28, n. 70; pp. 246, n. 134.

³⁶ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 262–63, n. 153; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 127, n. 70; p. 238, n. 131; pp. 247–48, n. 134.

³⁷ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 247, n. 134.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 246, n. 134.

³⁹ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, p. 319, n. 161.

⁴⁰ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 127, n. 70.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 247–48, n. 134.

- Dio ha trasferito l'impero;⁴²
- i Greci hanno manifestato innata malizia, superbia e la perfidia consueta;⁴³
- la presa di Zara è stata un irreparabile danno per la chiesa romana;⁴⁴
- i fatti vanno interpretati alla luce della Bibbia;⁴⁵
- Innocenzo III allude al “controesodo”: invece di scappare dall'Egitto per andare;
- verso Gerusalemme e la terra promessa, i cristiani;⁴⁶
- c'è da ripristinare il vero senso dell'esodo, ovvero la traslazione dell'impero ai Latini.⁴⁷

Innocenzo III legge in chiave positiva i fatti dell'aprile 1204 come necessaria recupero del territorio, ora in certo modo liberato e da “rendere latino.”

- si tratta di riattualizzare la storia biblica,⁴⁸ di un nuovo episodio nella realizzazione dell'alleanza con Dio;
- la Chiesa di Costantinopoli è tornata all'obbedienza di Roma per la grazia e la volontà di Dio;⁴⁹
- la traslazione dell'impero è un evento mirabile;⁵⁰
- per i Latini c'è da fare tesoro della “provvidenza,”⁵¹
- come fatto strategico c'è la necessità dilatinizzare i Greci,⁵² e di colonizzare il territorio: riti e costumi latini;⁵³
- a chi si reca a Costantinopoli si concede la medesima indulgenza concessa “agli altri crociati,”⁵⁴
- il “ritorno” dei Greci all'obbedienza è un fatto di straordinaria utilità per la liberazione di Gerusalemme.⁵⁵

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 240, n. 132; p. 246, n. 134.

⁴⁴ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, p. 207, n. 127.

⁴⁵ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, pp. 315–16, n. 160; pp. 318–19, n. 161; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 109, n. 64; pp. 126–27, n. 70.

⁴⁶ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, pp. 315–16, n. 160; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 96, n. 56; p. 238, n. 131.

⁴⁷ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 97, n. 56; p. 127, n. 70.

⁴⁸ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, V, pp. 315–16, n. 160; pp. 318–19, n. 161; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 268–69 n. 154; pp. 354–59, n. 203; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, pp. 96–97, n. 56; pp. 127–28, n. 70.

⁴⁹ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 32, n. 19; p. 37, n. 24; p. 128, n. 70.

⁵⁰ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 354–59, n. 203; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, 109, n. 64; pp. 127–28, n. 70.

⁵¹ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 97, n. 56; pp. 247–48, n. 134; p. 270, n. 154.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 32–33, n. 19; p. 97, n. 56; pp. 98–99, n. 57; p. 249, n. 13.

⁵³ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 264–70, n. 154; pp. 290–91, n. 164; *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, pp. 32–33, n. 19; p. 38, n. 24; pp. 127–28, n. 70; p. 130, n. 71.

⁵⁴ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, p. 128, n. 70; p. 229, n. 126.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 109, n. 64; p. 128, n. 70; pp. 227–29, n. 126; p. 233, n. 127; p. 238, n. 131.

C'è da sottolineare come anche Baldovino e gli altri “fedeli” o particolarmente fedeli al papa e del papa condividano la visione degli eventi che ha il papa, e facciano proprie le sue valutazioni e reazioni. Ci basti accennare al tono celebrativo del saccheggio della lettera dell'imperatore Baldovino del 16 maggio 1204, dove anche l'imperatore parla di opere mirabili compiute da Dio in favore dei Latini. Baldovino attribuisce a Dio il merito della vittoria sui Greci, scrive di innata malizia e di perfidia dei Greci, l'opera della vittoria non fu opera degli uomini ma di Dio, come le opere dei Greci non furono opere di uomini ma di demoni; infine l'imperatore latino dice che i riti dei Greci sono nefandi.⁵⁶ Risulta interessante nel contesto, la lettera di Dandolo, doge di Venezia, al papa, della seconda metà del 1204.⁵⁷

Ammissione capitale: “i cristiani peggiori di,” sintomo di cambio culturale

La tesi presentata da Antonio Oliver nella Pontificia Università Gregoriana, e diretta da Friedrich Kempf, ha il merito di aver sottolineato l'importanza dello studio della filologia innocenziana, prendendo in esame proprio la propaganda e i motivi letterari di Innocenzo III quando deve far fronte agli eretici. Ma Innocenzo III comincia ad avere più frequentemente e più diffusamente l'esperienza di cristiani che sempre più e sempre con meno timore e riverenza obbediscono ai suoi voleri o “consigli” o “opzioni graziose” della sede apostolica.

Le parole attorno ai cristiani si colorano di aggettivazioni bibliche, una volta riservati ai pagani o saraceni o giudei “fuori del mondo dei cristiani. Si cominciano ad applicare ai cristiani i concetti di perfidia, empietà, *paganitas* (miscredenza) e addirittura Anticristo.”⁵⁸ I cristiani sempre più frequentemente vengono descritti come peggiori dei giudei e dei pagani⁵⁹ e peggiori degli stessi saraceni.⁶⁰

Scrivendo a Filippo re dei Franchi (1204, S. Pietro, *VII idus Februarii, anno septimo*) definisce gli eretici: figli di Belial, lupi rapaci; peggiori della soldataglia di Pilato. Una lettera inviata a tutto il popolo di Viterbo circa il 4 giugno 1205,⁶¹ definisce i Viterbesi: più perfidi dei giudei e più crudeli dei pagani. I giudei infatti hanno crocifisso il Signore una sola volta, ma voi, lo crocifiggete ancora nelle sue membra, lo lacerate con obbrobri e con insulti, e, mentre loro credono, pur con la cecità del peccato che Dio Padre ha creato tutto ciò che è visibile e invisibile, molti di voi credono che le cose visibili sono state create da lucifero. I pagani fremevano di distruggere e di uccidere il corpo dei cristiani, ma voi cercate di uccidere l'uomo tutto intero. In verità, né questi né quelli hanno conosciuto Cristo Signore, e pertanto

⁵⁶ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VII, pp. 253–62, n. 152.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 352–54, n. 202.

⁵⁸ *Patrolgoia Latina* (PL) 215, coll.1545–46.

⁵⁹ PL 215, coll. 527, 654, 998, 1147.

⁶⁰ PL 215, col. 1359; PL 216, col. 154.

⁶¹ *Die Register Innocenz' III*, VIII, pp. 156–60, n. 86.

avranno una qualche scusa per i loro peccati, ma voi [...] che abbandonate la fede [...]”

Innocenzo III insiste su una dialettica storica e contemporanea secondo linguaggio biblico: Cristo – Belial, luce – tenebre, fedele – apostata.

Con lettera datata 7 ottobre 1206, il papa si dirige ai piacentini Potestà, Consoli e popolo di Piacenza scrivendo: “magari l’esempio dei gentili vi inducesse alla mansuetudine... Infatti quando il faraone, re d’Egitto, aveva ridotto in schiavitù (il popolo di Israele), non solo conservò i sacerdoti nella precedente libertà insieme alle loro possessioni, ma li dotò del denaro della pubblica elemosina [...] Voi se non per Dio, dovrete almeno arrossire per gli uomini.”⁶²

Da una attenta lettura delle migliaia di lettere dei papi che precedono il pontificato di Innocenzo III si nota che abbiamo sì alcune testimonianze sulla valutazione negativa o dispregiativa a carico dei cristiani Latini, ma è nel periodo di Innocenzo III che si nota un vistoso cambio di tendenza.

La caduta di Gerusalemme nelle mani dei saraceni (1187) era un fatto “tremendo” e minaccioso che pesava come un macigno sull’occidente cristiano, o almeno sulle spalle del papa.⁶³ La divisione dei principi cristiani e il disinteresse per la Terrasanta e per la visione politica del mondo che aveva Innocenzo III, le mire particolaristiche dei singoli stati cristiani, le disobbedienze palesi degli stessi che arrivano a “sfidare” il papa non dando importanza alle scomuniche; il fenomeno vasto ed endemico degli eretici che pullulavano in modo irrefrenabile anche per l’appoggio di principi cristiani, sono tutte ragioni che “innervosiscono” il giovane papa, pieno di energia e di fede nelle proprie certezze di arbitro del mondo e gli impongono l’esperienza dell’impotenza. Vari mezzi per tenere a bada e sotto obbedienza i cristiani si dimostrano scarsi di efficacia; aumenta la frustrazione; si arriva al questo *turning point* del pontificato, evidenziato dal 1204, dove il papa comincia con una certa frequenza e con parole pesanti a qualificare i cristiani Latini, considerandoli a più riprese sempre con maggiore frequenza, con parole sempre più pesanti, come “peggiori” di pagani, saraceni, ebrei, Greci scismatici. Inoltre, il papa ha l’occasione corrispettiva di presentare “gli altri” come esemplari, ne riconosce le virtù, li crede più affidabili dei cristiani, arriva a manifestare apertura fino ad allearsi con non cristiani per ridurre i cristiani all’obbedienza della Sede apostolica, fa proprio il giudizio pesante di non cristiani o di cristiani Greci sui cristiani Latini.

Ciò che preme sottolineare è che con Innocenzo III queste valutazioni diventano ulteriormente pesanti, si manifestano con linguaggio nuovo, diventano sempre più frequenti, e saranno sempre più adottate a partire da questo pontificato. Ciò che mostra un evidente distanziamento dal papa da parte del popolo dei cristiani,

⁶² Cf. PL 215, coll. 995–1001.

⁶³ Giulio Cipollone, *Cristianità – Islam: Cattività e liberazione in nome di Dio. Il tempo di Innocenzo III dopo ‘il 1187’*, pp. 87–89; fra le lettere di Innocenzo III si potrà utilmente ritenere quella datata Rieti 15 agosto 1198, indirizzata all’arcivescovo di Narbonne, ai prelati, ai principi e a tutto il popolo della città: *Ibid.*, pp. 493–97, n. 20.

e quella organizzazione mondiale fatta dai cristiani che criticano e prescindono sempre più dalle volontà manifestate dalla Sede apostolica.

Quelle di Innocenzo III sono parole pesanti, senza metafora, contro i cristiani Latini.

Non vi è dubbio che Innocenzo III mai e poi mai avrebbe voluto ammettere che i Romani / Latini fossero in realtà peggiori degli altri: pagani, saraceni, ebrei e “persino” dei cristiani Greci. Eppure evidenze accecanti lo obbligano a farlo.

Non possiamo soffermarci, ma in altro luogo abbiamo fatto la differenza attorno ai papi che qualificano in modo dispregiativo i cristiani Latini; chi siano questi cristiani; quali le aggettivazioni impiegate; quali i termini di paragoni dell’empietà; quali sono le ragioni per simili valutazioni peggiorative. In pratica si può dire che i papi dai lunghi pontificati, che hanno avuto modo di vedere adesioni e rifiuti alla propria politica o visione del mondo, abbiano avuto comunemente la possibilità di scorgere tra i cristiani, alcuni da ritenere peggiori di saraceni o pagani.

I cristiani individuati come peggiori dei saraceni o, più in generale, dei non cristiani, sono o gruppi o singole persone. Tra i gruppi evidentemente vi sono gli “eretici” per motivi di atteggiamento contrario alla Sede apostolica o al singolo papa per ragioni disciplinari o dogmatiche; vi sono cittadini di una città come i Veneziani, oppure abitanti di province come alcuni cristiani sparsi per l’Italia o in Sicilia. Tra le singole persone si possono ritenere fra altri, Marcoaldo di Anweiler, Federico II, Ladislao d’Ungheria, Ezzelino ed altri ancora. Insomma imperatori, re, principi o gente di comando, sono più facilmente additati come peggiori dei non cristiani.

Le aggettivazioni vanno da quelle generiche come: empìi, infedeli, ingrati, perfidi, a quelle di connotazione biblica: figli di Belial, ministri di satana, o, addirittura, con richiamo escatologico: anticristo. I termini di paragone dell’empietà sono tratti dal contesto dell’inimicizia religiosa, e dalla presunzione dell’empietà da applicare su gente non battezzata e quindi sottomessa e preda del diavolo.

Le ragioni per cui i papi arrivano a definire e descrivere i cristiani come peggiori di altri “religionari” e degli stessi pagani, sono varie ma si possono ridurre essenzialmente ad una. Questi cristiani non accettano le direttive del papa o della Sede apostolica nei campi più svariati, come quelli della politica, del servizio militare in favore della crociata nelle sue varie direzioni, delle alleanze non gradite, o ritenute inopportune in quel momento dai papi, del diniego palese a partecipare alla crociata per la Terrasanta. In qualche caso c’è il fatto dello scontro diretto, sino alla beffa, tra in cristiano e il “vicario di Cristo” come nel caso di Marcoaldo di Anweiler. Nel caso più “scandaloso,” che è quello dell’imperatore Federico II, c’è addirittura lo scontro con un cristiano assolutamente coriaceo rispetto alle ripetute scomuniche di cui è stato fatto oggetto da vari papi.

Come abbiamo detto, i papi qualificano i “Cristiani peggiori di:” questo apprezzamento entra sempre più frequentemente nel linguaggio dei papi proprio con Innocenzo III. Con Innocenzo III gli aggettivi diventano più crudi e pesanti. Il papa aveva una fretta che i principi cristiani non avevano; il tempo passava, si

allontanava sempre più all’orizzonte la possibilità della liberazione di Gerusalemme, la frustrazione diventava insostenibile, la mancanza di rispetto dei principi cristiani riservata al papa toccava punte di temerarietà e di palese affronto.

“Cristiani Latini peggiori di” è linguaggio che dunque si va diffondendo, non solo presso i non cristiani ma presso i cristiani Greci e addirittura presso i cristiani Latini. È di peso straordinario questo apprezzamento dei romani Latini in bocca al papa, che fa suo da altre valutazioni, come quelle dei Greci sui Latini, o addirittura spontanee, per riflessione e sintesi personale.

Particolarmente sottile è il vocabolario impiegato per i Veneziani laddove l’atteggiamento “peggiore” è legato a due intenzioni politiche: ridurre i Greci all’obbedienza e convogliare tutti i cristiani, nell’impresa di liberazione di Gerusalemme.

I risultati dell’indagine, invitano a riflettere su questo vocabolario che, pur agganciato alla cultura predominante: l’infedele è chi non è cristiano e chi non è fedele al papa, manifesta novità nelle qualifiche e nella frequenza delle attribuzioni e nella varietà dei cristiani designati come peggiori. Quindi a riflettere sul fatto delle qualifiche ed aggettivazioni dispregiative dei papi addosso ai cristiani Latini: i propri cristiani “i più fedeli,” da leggere in vario modo per sensibilità ed evidenze che, a nostro parere, coesistono e supportano questo “nuovo” vocabolario, per certo verso scandaloso.

Le domande attorno alle molteplici provocazioni spirituali e di temperamento del giovane papa sono varie: convinzione profonda; aggancio ad una visione di etica e stima universale per ‘l’uomo giusto e virtuoso in sé; messa in guardia robusta con intenzioni didattiche e pedagogiche per educare e recuperare i Latini recalcitranti ai piani della sede apostolica; ammonizione e minaccia con linguaggio volutamente eccessivo; linguaggio “verista” e persino edulcorato rispetto ai crimini commessi; funzionalità per una immediata urgenza politica che annunziasse il rischio di alleanze con “altri” e non con i Latini, sino al punto di ritorcersi contro i Latini stessi.

Il vocabolario di Innocenzo III rimane un fatto “nuovo in sé,” e ulteriormente emblematico per essere Innocenzo III un papa nel pieno delle sue forze fisiche e in età giovanile; per essere un papa al tempo stesso, sia teologo, sia giurista; un papa che si adopera e raggiunge una stimata e riconosciuta ‘equilibratura’ tra il sacerdozio e il regno; un papa che aveva così vasta e profonda autocoscienza del suo ruolo sommo, da fare di questa autocoscienza un programma tanto robusto quanto fragile; così da sentirsi, secondo le sue parole, costretto a portare un peso “importabile.” E fare la coscienza di essere la più grande autorità sulla terra e fare l’esperienza che se ne fa a meno, deve essere stata un’esperienza mortalmente frustratoria. Da qui è facile comprendere come i Latini vengano stimati sempre più frequentemente peggiori degli altri: “Familiari – nemici, prossimi – estranei, fedeli – infedeli; insomma: anticristo, sgherri e complici di satana, da aborrire più dei cani; peggiori dei non cristiani e dei cristiani Greci.” Ammissioni capitali per il cambio di una cultura che vedeva i buoni solo dentro il proprio gruppo religioso.

Vicino alle valutazioni negative del papa sui cristiani Latini, non vanno dimenticate le valutazioni altrettanto negative dei Greci sugli stessi Latini; allo scopo si potranno ritenere le valutazioni di Niceta Choniata, secondo cui i cristiani Latini sono “più crudeli degli stessi barbari; cristiani di nome ma barbari di fatto; uomini barbari; cristiani che hanno agito come neanche gli Ismaeliti hanno mai fatto.”⁶⁴

Da quanto detto crediamo che si possano trarre alcune conclusioni che legittimano la visione di un nuovo sintomo culturale, proprio avendo presente quest’anno 1204 o ancora più completamente tutto il pontificato di Innocenzo III come un *turning point*, laddove si riscontra un distacco così progressivo e diffuso dei cristiani in merito alle volontà o alle indicazioni della Sede apostolica; tanto che il papa indurisce il linguaggio, comincia ad “offendere” i cristiani Latini; insomma comincia un po’ a perdere la pazienza e dimostra un certo nervosismo, peraltro poco efficace per “recuperare” adesioni o obbedienze.

Per Innocenzo III i Veneziani, cristiani Latini, sono “complici/sgherri di Satana,” e “con ragione da aborrire più dei cani”

Innocenzo III con tristezza e rossore deve ammettere i crimini compiuti dai Veneziani, cristiani Latini, contro i fratelli cristiani Greci. Al di là delle intricate ragioni politiche, una remota e grata fede nella provvidenza di Dio che tutto può per i suoi arcani disegni, come quello di riportare finalmente i Greci all’obbedienza; insieme al fatto dell’ambiguità e dell’attendismo politico e diplomatico in favore delle mire della sede apostolica sullo scacchiere greco-balcanico, anche in vista dell’altro fondamentale progetto del recupero di Gerusalemme e dell’intera Terrasanta; avendo anche presente un’abilità diplomatica non immune dal doppio peso e doppio misura e dal voler giocare a più giochi simultaneamente in corso, anche se “incompatibili,” il papa usa un linguaggio durissimo contro i cristiani Latini veneziani, e in certo senso fa suo il giudizio pesantissimo dei Greci sui cristiani occidentali.

La prima occasione perché Innocenzo III qualificasse con parole pesanti i Veneziani, gli è venuta dal saccheggio di Zara, compiuto dai crociati Latini nel novembre 1202. Il papa scrive ai conti, baroni e a tutti i crociati *sine salutatione*, due lettere datate: ca. 15–31 dicembre 1202⁶⁵ e febbraio 1203,⁶⁶ appunto dopo breve tempo dal saccheggio di Zara. Nelle due lettere il papa insiste sul fatto che i Latini si sono mostrati assetati di sangue fraterno e che hanno immolato questo sangue ai demoni, e divulga il fatto che i Veneziani non hanno avuto alcuna pietà, né hanno fatto caso alle immagini sacre che gli abitanti di Zara avevano portato sulle mura della città, ma dinanzi agli occhi appunto dei destinatari delle lettere, hanno infranto

⁶⁴ Patrologia Graeca (PG) 139, coll. 910–1037.

⁶⁵ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, V, pp. 315–17, n. 160.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 318–20, n. 161.

le mura della città, hanno spogliato le chiese, hanno distrutto gli edifici, e con conti e baroni si sono diviso il bottino. Nella lettera datata febbraio 1203⁶⁷ arriva a dire ai conti, ai baroni e agli crociati che sono diventati da soldati di Cristo, piuttosto accompagnati a satana “*potius Sathane satellites.*”

Scrivendo al cardinale Pietro, legato apostolico, in data 12 luglio 1205, Innocenzo III con l’occasione di riferire sui fattacci del saccheggio di Costantinopoli, introducendo con l’interrogativa “come,” *quomodo*, la bontà del ritorno all’obbedienza della Chiesa dei Greci,⁶⁸ pure è tenuto a manifestare una ammissione di capitale importanza nel contesto della lettura del nuovo sintomo culturale di cui andiamo scrivendo. Ammissione questa straordinaria anche perché il papa fa sue le valutazioni dei Greci sui Veneziani, ribadisce il fatto che non valutazioni date con ragione e giuste, quindi non solo non si discosta o prende cautela e distanze di possibile giudizio “emotivo” dei Greci, ma lo fa suo letteralmente e ne sottolinea “merito.” Innocenzo III si chiede:

Come la chiesa dei Greci, con tutte le persecuzioni (dei cristiani Latini) che l’affliggono tornerebbe all’unità ecclesiastica e alla devozione della sede apostolica, chiesa questa che non ha visto altro nei Latini che esempio di perdizione ed opere di tenebre, di modo che giustamente *merito* li aborrisca più dei cani? Infatti i Latini che credevano di cercare non i propri interessi ma quelli di Gesù Cristo, hanno insanguinato col sangue dei cristiani le spade che avrebbero dovuto sguainare contro i pagani, non hanno risparmiato né lo stato religioso, né l’età, né il sesso, commettendo incesti, adulteri e fornicazioni dinanzi agli occhi di tutti e consegnando sia le madri di famiglia che le vergini consacrate a Dio alla sporcizia libidinosa della soldataglia mercenaria. Né è stato sufficiente per i Latini svuotare le ricchezze dell’impero e saccheggiare i beni di principi e di gente comune, ma hanno voluto mettere le mani sui tesori delle chiese e, ciò che è ancora più grave, si sono impossessati delle possedimenti delle chiese, hanno rapito pale d’argento dagli altari e, spartendosele, le hanno fatte a pezzi, violando tabernacoli e asportando croci e reliquie.

Innocenzo III si serve quasi delle stesse parole nella lettera databile tra il 15 agosto e il 10 settembre 1205,⁶⁹ indirizzata a Bonifacio, marchese di Monferrato, re di Tessalonica dal 1204 al 1207, anno della sua morte. Il papa pur ribadendo la innata *Grecoꝝ malitia*, e ammettendo le “ragioni” dei crociati: le imboscate dei Greci, il fuoco, il veleno, l’inganno che più di una volta hanno impedito il passaggio attraverso Costantinopoli per potere arrivare a Gerusalemme, pure ha l’occasione per rinfacciare ai crociati i crimini commessi in occasione dei giorni di saccheggio a Costantinopoli nell’aprile 1204.⁷⁰

Infatti secondo il vostro impegno di liberare la Terrasanta dalle mani dei pagani, come ossequio al Crocifisso, e sotto minaccia di scomunica vi fu proibito di invadere o di danneggiare le terre dei cristiani, se non nel caso in cui vi avessero impedito il passaggio

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 318, n. 161.

⁶⁸ *Die Register Innocenz’ III*, VIII, p. 232, n. 128.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 246–47, n. 134.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 246, n. 134.

in modo iniquo, o per altra giusta e necessaria causa all'occorrenza, secondo cui si sarebbe dovuto agire altrimenti per consiglio del nostro legato, voi non avendo alcuna giurisdizione o potestà sui Greci, in modo temerario sembrate aver deviato dalla purezza del vostro voto, allorché avete mosso le armi non contro i Saraceni ma contro i Cristiani, con l'intenzione non di liberare Gerusalemme ma di occupare Costantinopoli, preferendo beni terreni anziché le ricchezze celesti. Ciò che è considerato ancora più grave, che alcuni non hanno risparmiato né lo stato religioso, né l'età, né il sesso, commettendo incesti, adulteri e fornicazioni dinanzi agli occhi di tutti e consegnando non solo le maritate e le vedove, ma anche le madri di famiglia e le vergini consacrate a Dio alla sporcizia libidinosa della soldataglia mercenaria. Né è stato sufficiente per i Latini svuotare le ricchezze dell'impero e saccheggiare i beni di principi e di gente comune, ma hanno voluto mettere le mani sui tesori delle chiese e, ciò che è ancora più grave si sono impossessati delle possedimenti delle chiese, hanno rapito pale d'argento dagli altari e, spartendosele, le hanno fatte a pezzi, violando tabernacoli e asportando croci, icone e reliquie, cosicché la chiesa dei Greci, anche se vessata dalle persecuzioni, rifiuta di tornare all'obbedienza della sede apostolica, la quale chiesa dei Greci, che non ha visto altro nei Latini che esempio di perdizione ed opere di tenebre, già e giustamente aborrisca i Latini più dei cani.

Conclusion

Al di là del “nervosismo politico” che nasce al vedere forti opposizioni alla propria politica, nel nostro caso del Vicario di Cristo, è un fatto interessante che ci sia un'autocritica all'interno del proprio gruppo religioso. Non sono conosciute valutazioni similari, né per frequenza, né per tono, formulate dai vertici di altro potere religioso e politico. La constatazione poi che, specie nel secolo XIII, più papi e con una certa frequenza ribadiscano che i cristiani sono peggiori di saraceni, giudei, pagani, che scoprono o riscoprono buone qualità presso gente fuori del proprio gruppo religioso, sta a significare evidentemente il sintomo di altra cultura che andava prendendo spazio nelle coscienze del singolo e presso le istituzioni.

Per i dati già acquisiti e per la ricerca in corso, è legittimo scrivere di “retrospettiva culturale della tolleranza” nel medioevo; addirittura in tempo di crociata e *gihad*. In ogni caso va ritenuto l'anno 1204 l'anno della frattura del non-ritorno per alcune ragioni proprie. Innanzitutto il fatto assolutamente “concreto” carico di effetti concreti, della guerra e del saccheggio, frutto di deviazione di un “altro viaggio” previsto contro nemici comuni “non cristiani.” Le divisioni tra cristiani, le intemperanze dei Veneziani contro il Papa che arrivano a non tener conto delle scomuniche, di fatto abbasseranno ulteriormente la stima verso i Latini agli occhi dei Greci, aumenterà la sfiducia, rimarrà nell'anima la ferita non rimarginata, forse non rimarginabile della violenza e stupri subiti, così da accantonare per sempre l'idea di fratellanza tra cristiani. Da quest'anno in poi sempre più i saraceni diventeranno più affidabili dei Greci per i Latini e dei Latini per i Greci. Germi questi di cultura, che pur nella sua profonda ‘teologica distorsione’ aprirà ad una nuova cultura: i criminali sono anche all'interno del proprio gruppo religioso, mentre fuori di esso

si trova gente affidabile con cui imbastire alleanze. Persino contro gente del proprio gruppo cultural religioso. E per il nostro medioevo, da questa evidenza che si cristallizzerà in “fatto culturale” questa non è conquista da poco, laddove si riesce a far barcollare il principio secondo cui “gli altri” sono a priori peggiori dei propri correligionari e che i buoni stanno nel recinto del proprio gruppo e i cattivi fuori dello stesso.

C’è materia per parlare di cambio ‘epocale’, laddove, pur nella ferrea delimitazione dei gruppi religiosi e dell’inossidabile dentro e fuori culturale, gli altri cominciano, sempre più frequentemente, ad essere considerati migliori della gente del proprio gruppo, gente con delle qualità, affidabile, addirittura additati come esemplari; mentre i propri correligionari vengono detti: anticristo, empîi, peggiori degli empîi, satelliti di satana, gente stimata giustamente da aborrire più dei cani.

Prima del pontificato di Innocenzo III le valutazioni dispregiative dei papi in merito ai cristiani Latini, tanto da definirli ‘peggiori’ dei non cristiani o dei cristiani Greci, sono veramente di numero esiguo. Con il papa Innocenzo III si inaugura, per così dire, un nuovo linguaggio che esprime nuovo sintomo culturale; si può scrivere di nuova cultura che sarà sempre più partecipata lungo il secolo XIII e nei secoli a venire. Si tratta a nostro avviso, di una conquista che illumina il pontificato di questo giovane papa, teologo e giurista, anche per il determinante contributo dei fatti del 1204, come *turning point*. Infatti si passa dalla assoluta certezza che i cristiani romani/latini fossero i “migliori del mondo,” alla nuova certezza che sono come e peggiori degli altri: pagani, giudei, saraceni, e cristiani Greci. Ammissione fatta sempre più frequentemente dai papi; ammissione controversa, ma comunque segno di autocritica e testimonianza di un cambio culturale.

Il papato stava diventando minoranza come forza politica e direttiva del mondo cristiano. La forza del papato che “faceva paura,” comincia a diventare un ricordo. La potenza mondana del papato faceva la sua prima globale esperienza di debolezza agli occhi degli stessi cristiani. Comunque il fatto dell’autocritica sul proprio gruppo, rimane modernissima intelligente provocazione, anche perché il giudizio impietoso sui cristiani da parte dei papi si riferiva non al passato, ma al presente.

Rimane un fatto interessante e straordinario l’apprezzamento fortemente negativo di Innocenzo III sui Veneziani, cristiani latini, dopo i fatti di Costantinopoli dell’aprile 1204. Questo fatto va evidentemente inquadrato nello scenario delle varie mire politiche e religiose di Innocenzo III; ciò non di meno lo storico si trova ad osservare un linguaggio di autocritica, così determinato e di così alta valenza politica e spirituale, che consente di scorgere sintomi di nuova cultura. Ci sono delle evidenze, in un possibile discorso comparativo, per credere in questo movimento di novità che apre ad una cultura di tolleranza, visto che i propri correligionari sono considerati “peggiori degli altri.”

Forse ancora oggi all’inizio del terzo millennio del calendario dei cristiani, questa “nuova cultura” rimane ancora da assimilare sino a diventare provocazione in favore della tolleranza sostanziale, rispetto all’esercizio ipocrita della tolleranza formale-diplomatica e alla cultura idiota, nel suo senso etimologico, dell’intolleranza.

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Aux sources de la chronique en prose française: entre déculturation et acculturation

Cyril Aslanov

Les chroniques de Geoffroy de Villehardouin¹ et de Robert de Clari² marquent l'émergence d'un nouveau genre littéraire français, celui de la chronique en prose en langue vernaculaire.³ Ces textes dont la valeur documentaire a fait le bonheur des historiens méritent également d'être considérés pour eux-mêmes,⁴ car ils constituent un tournant majeur dans l'histoire de la langue et de la littérature françaises. Auparavant le discours historique, tout comme le discours littéraire en général, était écrit soit en prose latine, soit en vers français (chronique rimée). L'innovation consiste à avoir tracé une troisième voie, celle de la chronique en prose française. En ce début du XIII^e siècle, la prose française en était à ses premiers balbutiements,⁵ de sorte qu'on peut à bon droit considérer les chroniques de Villehardouin et de Robert de Clari comme figurant parmi les premières œuvres en prose de quelque ampleur qui aient été écrites en français, à l'exception notable des traductions de la Bible dont certaines remontent au début du XII^e siècle et des chartes et cartulaires qui ne ressortissent pas précisément à la littérature.

Pour bien saisir l'enjeu de ce passage de la prose latine à la prose française ou des vers français à la prose française, il importe de prendre en compte les précédents remarquables que constituent les anciennes versions de la Bible. Qui sait si le statut littéraire des premières traductions de la Bible en vernaculaire ne peut nous éclairer sur les motivations qui ont poussé ces deux croisés à prendre la plume pour raconter leurs expériences levantines? Ce rapprochement entre les tous premiers monuments de la prose française et les premières chroniques en langue vernaculaire permettra peut-être de percevoir les enjeux pragmatiques de ce discours historique.

Mais des circonstances objectives permettent également d'en rendre compte: Villehardouin non plus que Robert de Clari n'étaient des clercs susceptibles de

¹ Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 2nd ed., ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1961).

² Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Philippe Lauer (Paris, 1924).

³ Même si elles rapportent des témoignages vécus de faits antérieurs à la IV^e Croisade, les continuations en prose française de la chronique de Guillaume de Tyr ne sauraient être considérées comme antérieures aux textes-pionniers de Villehardouin et de Robert de Clari. Voir M.R. Morgan, *The Chronicle of Ernoul and the Continuation of William of Tyre* (Oxford, 1973); J.H. Pryor, "The *Eracles* and William of Tyre: An Interim Report," in Benjamin Z. Kedar, ed., *The Horns of Hattin* (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 288–89. Une traduction française de la chronique latine du Pseudo-Turpin a été produite au XII^e siècle, mais elle représente un cas particulier du fait même qu'elle ne constitue pas une œuvre originale.

⁴ Sur l'œuvre de ces deux chroniqueurs, voir l'étude de Jean Dufournet, *Les Écrivains de la IV^eème Croisade: Villehardouin et Clari* (Paris, 1973).

⁵ Sur les implications linguistiques et stylistiques de ce passage du vers à la prose, voir Bernard Cerquiglini, *La Parole médiévale* (Paris, 1981).

tenir une chronique en latin ni des poètes capables de rimaiter, de sorte qu'ils ne pouvaient composer ni en prose latine ni en vers français. Mais cette constatation factuelle de l'inculture relative de nos deux chroniqueurs ne saurait épuiser cette question des causes et des implications du passage de la chronique rimée à la prose et du latin au vernaculaire. Une fois admis ce phénomène de vulgarisation de la chronique dû au manque de culture cléricale ou poétique de leur auteur, il importe de situer ces textes dans l'horizon littéraire de l'époque. Dans cette perspective la confrontation du statut pragmatique des anciennes traductions de la Bible peut s'avérer riche d'enseignements.

Outre la comparaison du statut pragmatique des premières chroniques en prose française avec les premiers monuments de la prose française, nous voudrions envisager d'autres pistes susceptibles de rendre compte de la nouveauté que représentait pour l'époque la composition d'une chronique non rimée en vernaculaire. Est-il fortuit que les premières chroniques en prose française ont été produites à la suite du contact avec la civilisation grecque byzantine où la chronique historique en prose était un genre très cultivé? Or même si ces chroniques byzantines ne sont pas précisément en grec vernaculaire, il n'en reste pas moins que le rapport entre grec ecclésiastique ou littéraire et grec vernaculaire diffère beaucoup de la relation qui unit le latin au français. Autant le français et le latin constituent deux langues différentes possédant chacune leurs propres moyens d'expression littéraire, autant les frontières entre la koinè littéraire byzantine plus ou moins marquée d'atticisme et le grec vernaculaire n'ont rien d'infranchissable. Dans le cas de la France on peut parler de bilinguisme, tandis que dans le cas de Byzance il s'agit bien plutôt d'une diglossie et d'une coexistence de registres stylistiques.⁶ Il importe donc de vérifier si le choc culturel de la confrontation avec la civilisation byzantine n'a pas pu remettre en question certaines habitudes littéraires et linguistiques des conquérants francs.

Certes il ne faut pas surestimer l'impact de cette confrontation entre la culture occidentale franque et la culture grecque byzantine. À la lecture de maint passage de l'histoire de Robert de Clari, il apparaît avec évidence que ce chroniqueur n'a eu qu'une perception superficielle et faussée de la civilisation des vaincus. Mais comme il arrive souvent lorsque les vainqueurs sont moins civilisés que les vaincus, le contexte byzantin a certainement exercé une influence aussi mineure fût-elle sur les représentations et les pratiques des Francs.

Du reste les contacts entre Francs et Grecs remontent à bien avant la IV^e Croisade. L'empreinte que l'avatar byzantin du roman hellénistique a laissée dans la littérature française avant même la conquête de Constantinople a déjà été constatée, notamment

⁶ Sur la diglossie byzantine, voir Robert Browning, "Literacy in the Byzantine World," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (Essays presented to Sir Steven Runciman) (Oxford, 1978), p. 53; "The Language of Byzantine Literature," in *The Past in Medieval and Modern Greek Culture*, ed. Spiros Vryonis Jr., *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina*, 1 (Malibu, Calif., 1978); "Greek Diglossia Yesterday and Today," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 35 (1982). Articles repris dans Browning, *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Northampton, 1989), VII 53; XV; XVI.

à propos du *Cligès* de Chrestien de Troyes et du roman *Floire et Blancheflore*. Ces influences tiennent sans doute au fait qu'avant la prise de la capitale de l'Empire byzantin, les Croisés implantés en Orient et leurs voisins byzantins entretenirent toutes sortes de relations, tantôt pacifiques, tantôt hostiles.⁷ Or la conquête pure et simple de l'Empire byzantin, la fondation de principautés latines en Grèce et la coexistence qui s'ensuivit n'a pu que diversifier ces canaux d'influence. En sorte que la chronique en prose française pourrait bien être le fruit de cette acculturation partielle entre Francs et Grecs, de la même façon qu'inversement, la *Chronique de Morée*, traduction grecque d'une chronique rimée française ou poème grec imité d'une telle chronique, est l'indice d'une influence de la culture française sur la civilisation byzantine tardive.

Nous essaierons donc de mesurer l'ampleur de cette acculturation réciproque telle qu'elle se manifeste dans la pratique de la chronique historique. Mais au préalable nous prendrons soin d'évaluer le statut pragmatique d'un discours nouveau dans l'horizon culturel français. L'analyse pragmatique et la recherche des influences ne sont d'ailleurs pas des options exclusives l'une de l'autre puisque chacun de ces deux axes heuristiques correspond à un aspect différent de cette innovation majeure que constitue le recours à la prose vernaculaire pour narrer l'histoire. Du point de vue objectif et structurel le contact entre une civilisation bilingue et une civilisation marquée par la diglossie a sans doute eu pour effet de remettre en question le fonctionnement de ce bilinguisme et de faire apparaître qu'outre la chronique rimée en vers français, le vers latin et la prose française, il existait une quatrième possibilité, une case manquante en quelque sorte. Et une fois que les Francs eurent pris conscience de cette quatrième possibilité, ils l'exploitèrent en mettant à profit les modèles littéraires de français prosaïque qu'ils avaient à leur disposition.

I Implications stratégiques du recours à la prose française

Pour bien apprécier les enjeux de l'innovation que constitue le recours à la prose française, il n'est peut-être pas inutile d'insister sur le rapport que ces chroniques historiques entretiennent avec leur propre vérité. Qui sait si le passage de la langue savante à la langue vernaculaire et de la poésie à la prose ne marque pas la volonté de se dégager du soupçon de "littérature"? Pour étayer cette hypothèse il est important de bien saisir les stratégies par lesquelles Villehardouin et dans une moindre mesure Robert de Clari ont cherché à capter la confiance de leurs lecteurs. Une fois que nous aurons mis en évidence ce souci de crédibilité, il sera loisible de vérifier si le recours à la prose constitue un moyen de rendre le récit plus digne de foi.

⁷ Voir Ralph-Johannes Lilie, *Byzanz und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1988).

a) *L'obsession de la véridicité*

À lire *La Conquête de Constantinople* de Villehardouin, on est frappé par l'insistance qu'il met à présenter sa chronique comme la relation véridique d'une chose vue et comme un témoignage direct et de première main: "Et bien témoigne Joffrois li mareschais de Champagne, qui cete oeuvre dita, que ainc n'i menti de mot a son escient, si com cil qui a toz conseils fu, que onc si bele chose ne fu veüe."⁸

Bien loin d'atténuer l'effet escompté, l'emploi de la troisième personne du singulier ne fait que renforcer la confiance qu'un lecteur potentiel peut vouer à ce témoignage. À l'instar de César dans ses *Commentaires*, Villehardouin s'efface en tant que narrateur subjectif et situe sa parole dans la perspective absolue où l'acteur historique et le narrateur en personne sont présentés au même niveau que les autres personnages de la chronique. Ajoutons en outre que ce déploiement de procédés visant à capter la confiance du public débouche sur une affirmation dont le contenu sémantique est pratiquement nul: *onc si belle chose ne fu veüe*. Même si le maréchal de Champagne a pu ressentir une certaine exaltation à la vue de la flotte cinglant à la faveur d'un vent "doux et suave," il semble que ce jugement de valeur aussi dithyrambique que lapidaire serve surtout d'assiette à tout le développement qui précède et qui est d'autant plus important du point de vue stratégique que c'est la première fois dans cette chronique que Villehardouin se réfère réflexivement et explicitement à la validité de son propre témoignage historique.

Avec moins d'insistance et de solennité, Robert de Clari recourt au même procédé d'objectivation qui consiste à se présenter à la troisième personne: "Si avoit illuec un chevalier, un sien frere, Robers de Clari avoit a non, qui li desfendi..."⁹

Pour bien apprécier l'importance de ces proclamations de véridicité et d'objectivité, il importe de comparer ces deux passages avec une proclamation mensongère faite quelques années plus tôt par le remanieur latin de *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*¹⁰ d'Ambroise. À une époque où la chronique historique ne pouvait être écrite qu'en vers français ou en prose latine, un prosateur latin transpose les vers français en un latin boursoufflé et pompeux. Et voici ce qu'il affirme dans son épître dédicatoire:¹¹

Quod si Phrygio Dareti de Pergamorum eversione ideo potius creditur quia quod alii retulere auditum ille praesens conspexit, nobis etiam historiam Jerosolimitanam tractantibus non indigne fides debetur, qui quod vidimus testatur, et res gestas adhuc calente memoria stilo duximus designandas.¹²

⁸ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, § 120, I, p. 122 de l'édition citée. Cf. aussi § 218, II p. 17-18 et § 250, II p. 52 des formulations presque identique. Cf. aussi § 231 où c'est le livre lui-même qui témoigne à la place de son auteur.

⁹ Robert de Clari, *Conquête*, § LXXVI, p. 76 de l'édition citée.

¹⁰ Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la guerre sainte* (henceforth *Guerre*), ed. Gaston Paris (Paris, 1897).

¹¹ Voir op. cit., intr., LXI.

¹² "Que si le récit que Darès le Phrygien fit de la ruine de Pergame est d'autant plus crédible qu'il a vu en personne ce que d'autres auteurs ont rapporté par ouïe dire, il est juste qu'on nous fasse également

Avec une impudence qui indigna jadis Gaston Paris, il continue par cette double contre-vérité, puisqu'il n'a sans doute pas pris part aux opérations et qu'en outre son style sent l'huile plutôt que la poussière des combats: "At si cultiorem dicendi formam deliciosus exposcit auditor, noverit nos in castris fuisse cum scripsimus, et bellicos strepitus tranquillae meditationis otium non admisisse."¹³

La deuxième de ces phrases est une pure forfanterie, aussi ne mérite-t-elle autant d'attention que la première où l'on voit employé le verbe *testamur*, lequel peut être rapproché du verbe *testimoigne* employé à la troisième personne du singulier par Villehardouin.

Bien que dans la chronique latine, l'emploi du verbe *testamur* soit une imposture, il suffit à lui seul à conférer à ce texte de seconde main l'apparence d'un témoignage de première main. C'est dire à quel point les auteurs de ces chroniques tenaient à être considérés comme des témoins véridiques par leurs lecteurs.

Ce souci de crédibilité, qui est une des constantes du genre de la chronique médiévale, apparaît aussi dans *l'Estoire de la guerre des Ibelins contre les Impériaux*¹⁴ de Philippe de Novare. Dès le début de son récit, le gentilhomme lombard insiste à la fois sur le caractère direct et exhaustif de son témoignage et sur son goût de la vérité:

Phelipe de Nevaire, quy fu a tous les fais et conseils, et qui mainte fois a esté amés des bons pour le voire dire et haïs des malvais, vous en dira la vérité, aucy come en touchant les homes et les grans fais.¹⁵

Comme dans le texte de Villehardouin cité ci-dessus, l'emploi de la troisième personne du singulier semble fonctionner comme une garantie d'objectivité, contrairement au pompeux nous de majesté de la chronique latine due au clerc Richard.

Ainsi donc les menteurs et les hommes de bonne foi se présentent tous comme de dignes rapporteurs de ce qu'ils ont vu de leurs propres yeux. Quel est alors le label qui permet à un chroniqueur de se démarquer des compilateurs qui ne sont pas des témoins directs et qui ne peuvent donc exprimer une vérité de première main?

Les formules mensongères de *captatio benevolentiae* employées par le clerc Richard peuvent nous fournir un élément de réponse à cette question. Même si les affirmations de ce paraphraste sont proclamées sur le mode du paradoxe, de la provocation ou de la fausse modestie, il convient de prendre au sérieux ne serait-ce

crédit quand nous racontons l'histoire de Jérusalem puisque nous témoignons de ce que nous avons vu et que nous consignons par écrit des faits dont le souvenir est encore très vif."

¹³ Mais si le lecteur délicat exige un style plus châtié, qu'il sache que nous étions en campagne au moment où nous écrivâmes et que le fracas des armes est incompatible avec le loisir d'une application sereine.

¹⁴ Philippe de Novare, *Mémoires 1218-1243*, ed. Charles Koehler (Paris, 1913). Sur le statut pragmatique du discours historique de Philippe de Novare, voir mon article "Récit historique et discours poétique dans *l'Estoire de la guerre des Ibelins contre les Impériaux* de Philippe de Novare," *Le Moyen Age* (1997), pp. 67-81.

¹⁵ Guerre, I [97].

que le présupposé de son raisonnement. Or il affirme que le beau style ne saurait faire bon ménage avec le vacarme des camps. On peut en déduire que le style d'un chroniqueur racontant immédiatement une expérience vécue se doit d'être fruste et naïf, sans sophistications susceptibles de troubler la transparence du message. Et de fait l'une des premières chroniques latines de la Croisade, les *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum*,¹⁶ se signale par son style particulièrement sobre, cette sobriété étant en quelque sorte l'indice externe de son authenticité.

Cette corrélation entre le dépouillement stylistique et la validité du témoignage historique est proclamée explicitement au dernier paragraphe de la *Conquête* de Robert de Clari:

Ore avés oï le verité, confaitement Coustantinoble fu conquise, et confaitement li cuens de Flandres Bauduins en fu empereres, et mesires Henris ses freres après, que chis qui i fu et qui le vit et qui l'oï le tesmongne, ROBERS DE CLARI, li chevaliers, et a fait metre en escrit le verité, si come ele fu conquise; et ja soit chou que il ne l'ait si belement contee la conqueste, come maint boin diteur l'eussent contee, si en a il toutes eures le droite verité contee, et assés de verités en a teutes qu'il ne peut mie toutes ramembrer.¹⁷

Il semble donc que cette simplicité et cette sobriété, qui font défaut dans les chroniques latines plus tardives, aient trouvé un terrain d'élection dans le genre nouveau que constituait à l'époque la chronique en langue vernaculaire. À l'époque de la IV^e Croisade, il existait au moins deux modèles d'écriture prosaïque en vernaculaire français: d'une part les chartes et cartulaires et d'autre part les traductions de la Bible.¹⁸ Il semble que de ces deux pistes, la première ne doive pas être privilégiée outre mesure, car elle correspond à une pratique d'écriture infra-littéraire. Le récit historique est en outre caractérisé par son dynamisme et sa progression dramatique, tandis que le document juridique enregistre statiquement le moment précis de l'acte de vente ou de cession. Néanmoins une influence restreinte exercée par ce genre de textes documentaires n'est pas à exclure, dès lors que l'historien cite les termes d'un traité ou énumère des sommes d'argent. C'est par ce biais que le style des chartes et cartulaires avec leurs clauses détaillées et leurs précautions oratoires se fraie un passage dans la *Conquête de Constantinople* de Villehardouin. À titre d'échantillon nous citerons une phrase qui appartient manifestement au registre juridique et qui mentionne en outre nommément le genre littéraire en question:

Sor ces .vi. si mistrent lor affaire entierement, en tel maniere que il lor bailleroient bones cartres pendanz, que il tendroient ferm ce que cil .vi. feroient, par toz les porz de mer, en quel que leu que il haillassent, de totes convenances que il feroient.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Histoire anonyme de la première croisade*, ed. Louis Bréhier (Paris, 1924). Voir notamment intr. XIX–XXI.

¹⁷ Robert de Clari, *Conquête*, § CXX, p. 109 de l'édition citée.

¹⁸ Sur ces textes-pionniers, voir Samuel Berger, *La Bible française au moyen âge, étude sur les plus anciennes versions de la Bible écrites en prose de langue d'oïl* (Paris, 1884; repr. Geneva, 1967).

¹⁹ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, § 13, p. 16)

Il semble en outre que l'emploi fréquent du verbe savoir à l'impératif (*sachiez que* §§ 1, 2, 3, 31, 76, 165, 181, 202, 254, 255) ou à l'infinitif avec un verbe auxiliaire (*or poez savoir que* §§ 104, 128, 192, 255) constitue lui aussi un affleurement du style juridique ou épistolaire. La valeur en apparaît bien chez Villehardouin (§§ 254–255) dans un paragraphe qui jouit presque du statut d'un procès verbal ou d'une charte, puisqu'il y est question de la répartition du butin après le sac de Constantinople. Le retour récurrent de *sachez* indique à quel point l'historien est soucieux d'être pris au sérieux sur ce point sensible, source de tant de litiges potentiels:

Assemblez fu li avoires et li gaains; et **sachiez que** il ne fu mie toz apotez avant: quar asse en i ot de ceus qui en retinrent, seur l'escomeniement de l'apostole. Ce qui aus moustiers fu apotez assemblez fu et departiz des Franz et des Venisiens par moitié, si com la compaignie ere jurée. Et **sachiez que**, quant il orent parti, que il paierent de la lor partie .L. mil mars d'argent as Venitiens; et bien en departirent .CM. entr'als ensemble par lor gent. Et sachiez comment: .II. serjanz a pié contre un a cheval, et .II. serjanz a cheval contre un chevalier. Et **sachiez que** onques on ne out plus por altesce ne por proesce que il eüst, se ensi non com il fu devisez et fais, se emblez ne fu.

Et de l'emblem cel qui en fu revoiz, **sachiez que** il fu fait grant justice (...) Bien **poez savoir que** granz fu li avoires: que, sanz celui qu fu emblez, et sanz la partie des Venitiens, en vint bien avant .CCC. .M. mars d'argent, et bien .X.M. chevaucheüres, que unes que autres.

Mais en dehors de ces passages aisément délimitables, les sources de cette prose pionnière ne sauraient être identifiées avec les documents juridiques. C'est donc du côté des traductions de la Bible qu'il faut orienter notre recherche des éventuelles modèles littéraires de Villehardouin et de Robert de Clari.

b) Les points de contact entre les premières chroniques françaises et les traductions de la Bible en langue d'oïl

Parmi tous les styles, les genres et les dialectes représentés dans le corpus étudié par Berger, c'est la Bible du XIII^e siècle, première traduction complète et homogène de la Bible,²⁰ qui offre le plus de points de contact stylistiques avec les textes de Villehardouin et de Robert de Clari. Comparons par exemple un épisode de ce dernier historien avec un extrait du livre de l'Exode (2:1–6):²¹

Après ce issi uns hom de la mesniée Levi et prist feme de sa ligniée, qui conçut, et ot I fill. Et quant ele vit qu'il fu molt beaus, ele le repost par III mois. Et quant ele ne le pot pus celer, ele prit une huchette de jonc, et l'apareilla o ciment et o poiz, et mist l'enfant dedenz et le mit en la rive del fueve. Une seue suer s'estoit en loing por veoir la fin de la chose, si come la fille Pharaon descendoit [a la rive] por laver soi en l'eve, et ses puceles aloient par la rive. Et quant ele vit la huchette en la jonchiere, ele la fist apoter par une

²⁰ Voir Berger, *La Bible française au moyen âge*, pp. 109–10.

²¹ Cité in *ibid.*, pp. 124–25.

de ses chamberieres, et l'ovri, et vit dedenz l'enfant qui se movoit, si en ot pitié, et dist: Ce est I des enfanz as Ebreus.

À titre de comparaison, citons un paragraphe pris au hasard dans le récit de Robert de Clari (§ VIII):

Quant li message vinrent en Franche, si fisent savoir qu'il estoient venu. Puis si manda on tous les barons croisiés qu'il venissent tot a Corbie. Et quant il y furent venu tout ensanle, si disent le mesage chou qu'il avoient trouvé. Quant li baron l'oïrent, si en furent molt lié, et molt loerent chou qu'il avoient fait, et fisent molt honneur as messages le duc de Venice, et si leur bailla on des deniers le conte de Champaingne et des deniers que maîtres Foukes avoit pourchassiés, et si i mist li quens de Flandres de ses deniers tant qu'il en i en eut .XXV.M. mars. Si les bailla on au message le duc de Venice, et si bailla on boin conduit a aler avec lui dusques en sen pais.²²

Dans l'extrait de la Bible du XIII^e siècle et dans ce paragraphe de Robert de Clari, il apparaît que la tournure employée de préférence à toute autre pour exprimer l'enchaînement des événements est la combinaison de la proposition subordonnée temporelle introduite par *quant* avec une principale exprimant le résultat de l'action exprimé par ladite subordonnée. Chez Robert de Clari, on remarque en outre la présence du corrélatif *si* au début de la principale, comme pour accentuer le lien entre les deux parties. D'autre part, *si* est employé en tant que conjonction de coordination dans les deux textes, dès lors que la construction hypotactique avec *quant* est délaissée en faveur d'une structure paratactique.

De ce rapprochement entre les deux textes il apparaît que la syntaxe de Robert de Clari présente un point de contact frappant avec la syntaxe de la traduction de la Bible datant du XIII^e siècle. Mentionnons que dans ce dernier texte, l'emploi de la structure hypotactique avec *quant* est la transposition en termes de syntaxe française de la proposition temporelle latine *cum* + subjonctif imparfait utilisée dans la Vulgate (v. 3: *cumque jam celare non posset = et quant ele ne le pot plus celer*; v. 5: *quae cum vidisset fiscellam = et quant ele vit la huchete en la jonchiere*) ou bien du participe apposé employé en concurrence avec la construction propositionnelle (v. 2: *et videns eum elegantem = et quant ele vit qu'il fu molt beaus*). Ce tour semble être devenu une des caractéristiques les plus typiques du style historique puisqu'on le retrouve non seulement chez Villehardouin, mais aussi dans d'autres chroniques plus tardives comme par exemple la *Chronique de Rains*.²³

Pour en revenir à l'influence du style biblique sur Robert de Clari, mentionnons en outre le biblisme qui consiste à employer *en ichel tans*, transposition du complément *in illo tempore* de la Vulgate; ou bien l'usage si fréquent qui est fait de l'adverbe *après* à rapprocher de *après ce*, transposition de *post haec* dans les Bibles

²² Robert de Clari, *Conquête*, § VIII.

²³ Publiée sous le titre de *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims du XIII^e siècle*, ed. Natalis De Wailly (Paris, 1876).

françaises; ou encore l'emploi de *il avint*, transposition fréquente du latin *factum est ut* dans les traductions françaises de la Bible.

On pourrait également attribuer à l'influence du style biblique une phrase comme celle-ci:

Des autres Grius, des haus, des bas, de povres, de riches, de le grandeur de le vile, des palais, des autres meruelles qui i sont vous lairons nous ester a dire.²⁴

Cette aposiopèse totalisante par laquelle le chroniqueur suggère tout ce qu'il aurait pu encore raconter est très vraisemblablement de la formule récurrente des livres des Chroniques qui sert de transition entre les règnes:

reliqua vero operum Salomonis priorum et novissimorum scripta sunt in verbis Nathan prophetae (II Paralipomènes 9:29)

Le parallélisme est d'autant plus frappant que les deux formules commencent par l'adjectif *autres* (*reliqua*), suivi d'une énumération de termes extrêmes (*haus / bas; povres / riches* comme *priorum / novissimorum*).

Ainsi donc cette affinité qui unit le style de la chronique de Robert de Clari au style de la traduction de la Bible au XIII^e siècle se manifeste à travers toute une somme de tournures syntaxiques et d'idiomatismes caractéristiques. Et comme il n'y a pas d'apparence que ce soit la chronique qui ait influencé le traducteur de la Bible, force est d'admettre que ce dernier a puisé dans le modèle d'écriture en prose que fournissait en son temps la traduction de la Bible certains procédés stylistiques convenant particulièrement bien à la narration de faits successifs. Le fait que la Bible du XIII^e siècle ait été composée postérieurement à la chronique de Robert de Clari ne doit pas infirmer la validité de ce rapprochement. En effet la traduction effectuée à Paris sous le règne de saint Louis (avant 1250) est un travail de grande ampleur qui a dû intégrer en son sein des éléments préexistants, lesquels faisaient partie de l'horizon littéraire des deux croisés.

Cette dette probable de la chronique en prose vernaculaire à l'égard des traductions de la Bible apparaît également dans le texte de Villehardouin, mais chez cet auteur on discerne parallèlement des influences concurrentes. Comme son texte est plus élaboré du point de vue littéraire, il intègre certaines habitudes diégétiques hérités des romans en vers. La chose a déjà été constatée à propos de l'emploi tendancieux qu'il fait du mot *aventure* (§§ 70, 109 par exemple) comme pour insister sur l'enchaînement inattendu des événements reflétant l'action fatale d'une providence dépassant les hommes.²⁵ On pourrait aussi mentionner le verbe *oir* employé à l'impératif (§ 70 par exemple: *or oiez une des plus grant merveiles et des greignor aventures*; § 175 *or oiez estrange miracle*; § 182 *Or oiez les miracles de Nostre Seignor*; § 308 *or oiez une grande merveille* ou bien à l'infinitif après un

²⁴ Robert de Clari, *Conquête*, § XCIII, p. 90 de l'éd. citée.

²⁵ Voir Villehardouin, ed. Faral, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, XXVIII–XXIX.

verbe modal (§ 173 *or porrez oïr estrange proesce*). Cet emploi du verbe *oïr* pour annoncer les faits saillants du récit semble imiter les procédés des chansons de geste et des romans du XII^e siècle. Dans son *Tristan* par exemple, Bérout l'emploie pas moins de treize fois²⁶ sur les 4485 vers conservés de son roman.

À titre de comparaison, Robert de Clari n'utilise presque pas le verbe *oiez*. L'une des rares fois où il emploie ce verbe (§ CXX cité ci-dessus), il veut avant tout insister sur la modalité de la transmission du témoin des événements aux lecteurs. Il ne s'agit pas de l'impératif *oiez*, ornement ostentatoire de la narration littéraire, mais d'un passé composé (*avés oï*) et d'un passé simple (*qui l'oï*).

Enfin terminons ce passage en revue des irruptions du style littéraire emprunté à la poésie narrative en signalant que Villehardouin n'hésite pas à insérer dans son texte des exclamations pathétiques comme au § 278 où il s'écrie :

Ha ! las, cum malvais conseil orent et li uns et li autres, et cum firent grant pechié cil qui ceste melee firent ! Quar, se Dieux n'en preïst pitié, com aüssent perdue tote la conquete que il avoient faite et la crestienté mise en aventure de perir!²⁷

Cette présence de patrons stylistiques empruntés au discours littéraire en vers révèle à quel point tout scripteur est l'otage de la littérature de son temps. Nous avons vu que Robert de Clari et Villehardouin avaient très vraisemblablement imité le modèle de récit en prose que constituaient en leur temps les traductions de la Bible. Mais le maréchal de Champagne manifesta imperceptiblement une tendance à glisser de temps à autre vers le style de la poésie narrative. Quand on songe que ce "haut homme" vécut à peu près dans la même région que Chrestien de Troyes et qu'il fréquenta sans doute les mêmes milieux aristocratiques que le poète, il n'y a pas lieu de s'étonner de trouver chez lui des affleurements de la phraséologie poétique.

En dépit de cette tentation qui le pousse à s'exprimer de temps à autre à la manière d'un poète, Villehardouin est lui aussi tributaire du style biblique français dont il reprend certains procédés. Mais ceux-ci diffèrent souvent de ceux que met en œuvre Robert de Clari. Certes il fait lui aussi un usage assez fréquent de la proposition temporelle introduite par *quant* reprise par *si*. Mais ce tour n'a pas chez lui le caractère lancinant qu'il a chez Robert de Clari, car il en alterne l'usage avec d'autres procédés diégétiques qui ont pu lui être inspirés par le style biblique. C'est ainsi que le maréchal de Champagne manifeste une certaine prédilection pour la conjonction de coordination *et* employée en tête de phrase. Cette structure syntaxique rappelle le style de certains des livres de la Vulgate qui, à la différence de ce que l'on peut constater dans la version latine du Pentateuque, reflètent plus fidèlement les constructions paratactiques de l'original hébreu et qui réinterprètent en outre le *vav* conversif comme un *et* de coordination. De fait, les Bibles françaises ne constituent pas un modèle stylistiquement homogène non plus que la Vulgate du

²⁶ 4, 320, 643, 1351, 1431, 1437, 1440, 1835, 2063, 2134, 2317, 3028, 4351.

²⁷ Voir aussi Villehardouin, §§ 253, 278, 288, 500.

reste où la diversité du style s'explique par les conditions dans lesquelles Jérôme effectua sa recension: malgré sa fidélité de principe à l'égard de l'*Hebraica veritas*, le patron des traducteurs n'a pas, tant s'en faut, écarté le modèle que constituaient les anciennes traductions latines ou la traduction des Septante dont ces dernières sont tributaires. Or la traduction des Septante fait apparaître une grande hétérogénéité stylistique de livre à livre: si le Pentateuque est traduit de façon assez soignée, d'autres livres manifestent une tendance à un littéralisme souvent très rude. Il semble donc que la prédilection pour les tours hypotactiques qui se manifeste chez Robert de Clari soit imputable au fait qu'il prend pour modèle les livres du Pentateuque, lesquels reposent en dernier recours sur la traduction alexandrine de la Loi. En revanche ce qu'il y a de biblique dans le style de Villehardouin pourrait également être dû à la pression exercée par le modèle qu'offrait alors la traduction des *Quatre Livres des Rois*, laquelle s'insère dans une filière beaucoup plus marquée par le littéralisme, soit dans la Vulgate soit dans la Septante elle-même. Rien d'étonnant donc si les tournures paratactiques y abondent. Quoi qu'il en soit Robert de Clari et Villehardouin adaptent chacun à sa façon et selon ses goûts le modèle somme toute assez hétérogène que représente la traduction de la Bible en langue d'oïl, laquelle est elle-même tributaire d'un corpus éminemment hétérogène du fait des recensions multiples dont il a été l'objet tout au long de l'histoire de sa transmission.

Bien qu'à l'époque où Villehardouin et Robert de Clari composèrent leurs chroniques, les traductions de la Bible en langue d'oïl constituassent l'un des rares modèles d'écriture prosaïque, il convient de percer les motivations objectives qui ont pu pousser ces deux auteurs à utiliser des tournures et des expressions caractéristiques de la traduction des livres saints.

c) *Enjeux pragmatiques du recours au style biblique*

Dans le contexte de la culture médiévale, les Écritures constituaient un corpus dont l'authenticité et la sacralité n'étaient pas mis en doute. En outre ces textes étaient souvent traduits dans un style simple, voire fruste, comme par exemple dans le cas des livres des Vaudois.²⁸ Sans aller chercher jusque là, il apparaît que même lorsqu'un souci d'élégance se manifeste dans les traductions de la Bible en langue d'oïl, l'idéal de simplicité stylistique reflète l'équation qui fait correspondre la transparence du verbe divin avec sa vérité et son authenticité. Cette conception remonte aux tout premiers siècles du christianisme et elle a été déterminante dans la méthode de traduction de Jérôme.

C'est sans doute à la lumière de cette dichotomie entre la vérité dépouillée de l'Écriture et la sophistication mensongère des belles lettres qu'il faut interpréter la propension des deux chroniqueurs de la IV^e Croisade à user d'un verbe situé aux antipodes des excès de la chronique latine pompeuse dont la traduction du clerc Richard nous a fourni un exemple si caricatural. Villehardouin et à plus forte raison

²⁸ Voir Berger, *La Bible française au moyen âge*, pp. 35–50.

Robert de Clari ont pris le parti de relater les faits dont ils ont été témoins dans un style dont la simplicité est censée refléter formellement la véridicité. Tout se passe comme si cet alignement sur les procédés mis en œuvre dans les traductions sobres des livres saints visait à conférer à la narration des faits parfois douteux de la IV^e Croisade la crédibilité du récit biblique.

Un autre enjeu se laisse également deviner derrière cet alignement du style de la chronique sur celui de la Bible en langue d'oïl. Non seulement cette influence stylistique confère une certaine crédibilité à la narration, mais en plus elle permet de légitimer les faits puisqu'elle les revêt en quelque sorte d'une aura de sainteté. Les protagonistes et les seconds rôles de cette équipée discutable acquièrent ainsi la stature des patriarches de la Bible ou des rois d'Israël, d'autant que parmi tous les souverains évoqués dans ce récit on compte un "roi de Jérusalem."

Ainsi donc le recours à une prose visiblement empruntée aux traductions de la Bible en langue d'oïl est le fruit de plusieurs facteurs conjugués. D'abord il n'existait pas tellement d'autres modèles stylistiques de prose vernaculaire dans l'horizon culturel des premières années du XIII^e siècle. Loin de constituer des précédents, les continuations de Guillaume de Tyr et la *Chronique d'Ernoul* doivent plutôt être considérées comme des événements littéraires situés dans la foulée de l'œuvre pionnière de Villehardouin et Robert de Clari.²⁹

Ensuite la simplicité transparente de cette écriture constituait en elle-même une garantie d'authenticité et de sincérité. Enfin les acteurs de cette équipée douteuse qu'on a appelée la Quatrième Croisade étaient hissés de cette façon sur le même plan que les personnages de l'histoire sainte.

Toutefois les trois facteurs que nous venons d'énumérer ne permettent pas d'expliquer pourquoi c'est précisément la Quatrième Croisade qui vit apparaître des chroniques en vernaculaire français et non la III^e Croisade par exemple. Car enfin celle-ci n'a suscité que des chroniques rimées en vernaculaire ou des chroniques en prose latine. Et les continuations en prose vernaculaire de ces dernières ne remontent guère au-delà des années 30 du XIII^e siècle, lors même qu'elles narrent des faits ayant eu lieu à la fin du XII^e siècle.

L'hypothèse que nous voudrions proposer comme une simple piste de travail consiste à voir dans cette évolution du genre de la chronique un effet du contact avec la civilisation byzantine. On pourrait certes objecter que cette hypothèse tend à contredire notre interprétation de l'influence du style biblique sur la chronique française. Car enfin les chronographies byzantines se caractérisent le plus souvent par un raffinement et une élégance qui perpétuent à Constantinople les enseignements artificiels de la Seconde Sophistique, alors que les chroniques françaises constituent précisément une rupture par rapport à la culture latine, équivalent occidental du legs de l'hellénisme. Cette contradiction peut se résoudre si l'on tient compte du facteur déjà évoqué ci-dessus, à savoir que le monde occidental était marqué par le bilinguisme, tandis que de son côté, le monde oriental se caractérisait par

²⁹ Voir ci-dessus n. 3.

la diglossie. Qui sait si cette assymétrie entre diglossie et bilinguisme ne peut justement rendre compte de la rupture de l'équilibre qui prévalait jusqu'alors entre la chronique rimée vernaculaire et la chronique en prose latine? Pour répondre à cette question il importe de trouver dans la chronique française des traces tangibles d'une influence byzantine.

II L'exemple stimulant de la chronographie byzantine et l'influence en retour de la chronique rimée

Au tout début du XIII^e siècle, le rapport qui unissait les lettres françaises aux lettres latines était marqué par une assymétrie voire même un déséquilibre. En effet celles-ci étaient illustrées à la fois par des œuvres en prose et des œuvres en vers et même par des œuvres combinant prose et vers, alors que les lettres françaises étaient prisonnières du cadre formel que constituait le vers. Et c'est précisément les œuvres latines combinant vers et prose qui ont pu faire sentir aux Français la nécessité de fournir au vers français une contrepartie en prose. Si l'on considère par exemple une chronique latine comme la *Historia Constantinopolitana* de Gunther de Pairis qui raconte lui aussi la conquête de Constantinople, il apparaît que les parties en vers constituent une paraphrase moralisante et tendancieuse de la narration en prose, comme si le discours poétique venait épauler le récit historique en prose.³⁰ Ce genre d'écrits hybrides a pu par contrecoup faire ressentir aux Français que le vers était entaché du soupçon de littérature et d'affabulation et qu'il ne convenait pas à la narration objective et véridique de faits. Cette motivation négative n'aurait peut-être pas suffi à elle seule à donner le jour à la chronique en prose française, si des considérations positives n'étaient venues s'y ajouter au terme du contact entre Francs et Grecs.

a) *Mise en perspective et rétrospective*

À première vue l'acculturation franco-byzantine, telle qu'elle se manifeste à travers l'historiographie, fait apparaître une certaine disproportion puisqu'elle est bien attestée en ce qui concerne l'influence française sur les lettres grecques, mais reste à démontrer dans le sens inverse. De fait la *Chronique de Morée*,³¹ à laquelle il a été fait allusion ci-dessus, est un indice tangible de cette influence que le genre littéraire de la chronique rimée française a pu exercer sur les lettres helléniques, quelle que soit l'hypothèse retenue sur l'histoire de ce texte.³² Quand bien même

³⁰ Voir Erwin Assmann in Gunther von Pairis, *Die Geschichte der Eroberung von Konstantinopel* (Cologne–Graz, 1956), p. 17.

³¹ *The Chronicle of Morea*, ed. John Schmitt (London, 1904).

³² Sur la question de savoir si cette chronique rimée est traduite du français, voir *ibid.*, xxx–xxxiii de l'Introduction. Aujourd'hui encore l'unanimité est loin d'être établie sur ce point: voir à ce propos, Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204–1500* (London–New York, 1995), pp. 21–24.

on maintiendrait l'opinion que cette chronique est une traduction du français, elle porte la marque d'un effort de synthèse culturelle qui va au-delà du simple transfert de langue à langue. Qu'il s'agisse d'une ballade en vers politiques mise au service d'un dessein historiographique franc ou au contraire, d'une chronique rimée française revêtue d'un vernis d'hellénisme au terme du processus de traduction, l'impact occidental dépasse l'engagement idéologique de l'auteur et informe en profondeur la texture même de la chronique. Certes la langue et la versification de cette œuvre plongent leurs racines dans la poésie populaire grecque et montre de nombreuses affinités linguistiques et formelles avec une épopée comme le *Digenis Akritas*. Mais il s'agit de la mise à contribution d'une forme existante – celle du vers politique utilisé dans les épopées – au service d'un dessein historiographique qu'on s'attendrait voir emprunter le truchement de la prose, comme c'est le cas pour les chroniques des Lusignan de Chypre. On se trouve donc dans une situation symétriquement inverse de celle qui a conduit à mettre à profit la prose de la Bible en langue d'oïl pour raconter la Croisade en langue vernaculaire. Ici c'est la forme préexistante du vers politique de l'épopée grecque populaire qui a permis d'adapter en grec le genre français de la chronique rimée.

Néanmoins certains indices discrets apparaissant çà et là dans les chroniques de Robert de Clari et Villehardouin constituent des preuves de la réciprocité des influences et de la symétrie du processus d'acculturation. L'un d'eux est le souci de situer les événements dans une temporalité cosmique et absolue, comme le faisaient les chronographes byzantins. Chez Robert de Clari, on trouve des expressions très caractéristiques de cette perspective. C'est ainsi que décrivant le départ de la flotte évoqué ci-dessus dans le passage de Villehardouin cité ci-dessus, le chevalier affirme solennellement: "Et tout li haut homme, et clerc et lai et petit et grant, demenerent si grant goie a l'esmovoir que onques encore si faite goie ni se fais estoires ne fus veux ne oï[s]." ³³

Ou de façon plus explicite encore: "ch'estoit le plus bele cose a eswarder qui fust tres le commencement du monde." ³⁴

Ou encore à propos des richesses de Constantinople: "mais puis que chis siecle fu estorés, si grans avoires, ne si nobles, ne si rikes, ne fu veus, ne conquis, ne au tans Alixandre, ne au tans Charlemaigne, ne devant ne après." ³⁵

Ici la perspective cosmique se combine avec la mention de deux temporalités littéraires, celle du roman antique représentée par Alexandre et celle de la chanson de geste dont Charlemagne est la figure centrale. Il semble que l'on assiste ici au dépassement de ces perspectives purement historiques (l'Antiquité grecque et le Haut Moyen Age carolingien) au profit d'une temporalité absolue. L'adoption de ce point de repère pourrait bien être le fruit d'une influence ne fût-ce qu'indirecte de la chronique byzantine sur le chroniqueur français.

³³ Villehardouin, *Conquête*, § XIII, p. 12.

³⁴ *ibid.*, § XIII, p. 13.

³⁵ *ibid.*, § LXXXI, p. 80-81

Chez Villehardouin aussi on trouve ce souci de situer l'exceptionnel dans la perspective absolue de la temporalité cosmique: "Et bien tesmoigne Joffrois de Vilehardoin li mareschus de Champagne, a son escient par verté, que, puis que li siecles fu estorez, ne fu tant gaainié en une ville."³⁶

Bien entendu, ni Robert de Clari ni Villehardouin n'ont renoncé au comput des années à partir de l'an de l'incarnation. L'adoption du point de repère constitué par la création du monde ne fait que s'ajouter au balisage chronologique traditionnel. Cette temporalité cosmique constitue selon nous la marque de l'impact exercé par l'historiographie byzantine sur les premiers chroniqueurs en prose française.

La supputation des années à partir de la création du monde est une habitude tellement caractéristique de la chronographie byzantine qu'elle se perpétue même sous la plume d'un Latin d'expression hellénique comme l'auteur, le traducteur ou le remanieur de la *Chronique de Morée*. De fait, on trouve aux vers 3–5 et aux vers 124–26 de ladite chronique des repères chronologiques qui occupent pas moins de trois vers:

Ὅταν τὸ ἔτος ἦτονε, ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου,
ἑξάκις χιλιάδες δὲ κ' ἑξάκις ἑκατοντάδες
καὶ δώδεκα ἑνιαυτούς, τόσον καὶ οὐχὶ πλέον...
τὸ ἔτος τότε ἔτρεχεν ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου
ἕξι χιλιάδες, λέγω σε, κ' ἑφτά ἑκατοντάδες,
καὶ δέκα ἕξ ἑνιαυτούς, τόσον καὶ οὐχὶ πλέον.³⁷

Même lorsqu'elle omet le compte exact des années écoulées et ne retient plus que le point de départ de la supputation, cette mise en perspective est riche d'incidences sur le découpage du récit puisqu'elle pousse le chroniqueur à dépasser son optique de témoin de ce qu'il a vu et à procéder à des rétrospectives historiques concernant des événements auxquels il n'a pu assister. Ainsi, les paragraphes XVIII à XXIX sont consacrés à un historique des querelles de palais qui ensanglantèrent Byzance avant l'arrivée des Croisés, cependant que les paragraphes XXXIII à XXXVIII relatent des événements antérieurs à la III^e Croisade susceptibles de faire comprendre la situation prévalant au seuil de la IV^e Croisade.

Cette liberté que prend le chroniqueur d'embrasser dans son récit la narration de faits auxquels il n'a pu attester et la description de lieux ou de situations qu'il connaît seulement de seconde main est une constante de la chronique byzantine. Racontant un siècle d'histoire (976–1077), Michel Psellos mentionne explicitement le point de rupture entre l'histoire de seconde main et la chronique des événements dont il a été le contemporain:

Ἡ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν τῆς ἱστορίας γραφῆ ἀκριβεστέρα τῆς προλαβούσης γενήσεται· ὁ μὲν γὰρ βασιλεὺς βασιλείου ἐπὶ νηπίῳ μοι τετελεύτηκεν, ὁ δὲ γε Κωνσταντῖνός ἄρτι τὰ πρῶτα

³⁶ Villehardouin, *Conquête* § 250, II p. 52 de l'édition citée.

³⁷ "Lorsqu'on fut très exactement en l'an six mille six cent douze depuis la création du monde. L'année en cours était alors très exactement l'an six mille sept cent seize depuis la création du monde."

τελουμένω μαθήματα· οὔτε γοῦν παρεγενόμην αὐτοῖς, οὔτε ἡκροσάμην λαλούντων, εἰ δὲ καὶ ἑωράκειν οὐκ οἶδα, οὐπω μοι τῆς ἡλικίας ἐς κατοχὴν μνήμης διωργανωμένης· τὸν δὲ γε Ρωμανὸν καὶ θεάσασθαι, καὶ ἅπασι ποτὲ προσωμίλισα· ὄθεν περὶ ἐκείνων μὲν ἐξ ἑτέρων τὰς ἀφορμὰς εἰληφῶς εἴρηκα, τοῦτον δὲ αὐτὸς ὑπογράψω, οὐ παρ' ἑτέρω μεμαθηκῶς.³⁸

Et au siècle suivant, Nicéas Choniates couvre près de cent ans d'histoire byzantine, de 1118 à 1205. Ce compromis entre la chronique des événements vécus et l'histoire du passé immémorial est le fruit d'une synthèse typiquement byzantine entre une tradition historiographique hellénique héritée de Thucydide et de Xénophon et une autre tradition qui n'est autre que celle des livres historiques de la Bible dont le chronographe Jean Malalas a donné une si volumineuse continuation. La mise en perspective à l'échelle cosmique se rattache à celle-ci, tandis que le rappel d'événements contemporains ou presque s'insère dans le dessein rationaliste de celle-là.

Certes les historiens français des Croisades avaient à leur disposition le modèle des chroniques en prose latine que l'on peut rattacher en définitive à la tradition historiographique romaine, laquelle est elle-même l'héritière de l'historiographie grecque. Mais dans les premières chroniques des Croisades, la mise en perspective et le rappel du passé obéissent généralement à une tout autre logique que dans l'historiographie gréco-latine héritée de l'Antiquité par le biais des Byzantins: la mention de Pierre l'Ermitte, de Godefroy de Bouillon ou de Raymond de Toulouse par laquelle commencent tant de chroniques latines en prose ou de chroniques rimées en français fonctionne comme une sorte d'invocation qui justifie l'idée même de croisade. En ce sens la *Chronique de Morée* s'insère indiscutablement dans la tradition de la chronique rimée française quand bien même elle aurait été composée en grec dans l'original. Ce rappel historique visant à exalter les personnages du passé s'intègre dans un dessein purement littéraire d'amplification épique. Il occupe les 121 vers au début de l'œuvre et laisse brusquement la place aux événements beaucoup plus contestables de la Quatrième Croisade.

Chez Robert de Clari en revanche la violation du principe de la chronique qui veut qu'on ne raconte que ce dont on a été témoin se justifie de façon beaucoup plus pragmatique puisqu'elle sert à expliquer au lecteur la cause des événements directement narrés: les intrigues de la cour byzantine seraient incompréhensibles sans le retour en arrière des §§ XXIII–XXIX et l'évocation du rapport de force entre les Croisés et les Sarrasins (§§ XXXIII–XXXVIII) apporte un éclairage essentiel

³⁸ Michel Psellos, *Chronographie*, ed. Émile Renauld (Paris, 1926), I, 32 [III.1]. Et voici la traduction de ce passage: "À partir d'ici, notre histoire sera plus exacte que la précédente. En effet, l'empereur Basile est mort quand j'étais encore un petit enfant, et Constantin, quand j'étais initié aux premiers éléments des lettres et sciences: ainsi donc, je ne me suis pas trouvé en leur présence; je ne les ais pas entendus parler; si même je les ai vus, je ne le sais pas, parce que mon âge n'était pas encore capable de retenir un souvenir; mais pour Romain, je l'ai vu; une fois même, je lui ai parlé; ce que donc j'ai dit sur les deux premiers, c'est sur des renseignements venus d'autrui, tandis que le dernier, je le peindrai de moi-même, sans avoir appris d'un autre" (trad. Renauld).

sur les mobiles qui ont pu pousser les chefs de la IV^e Croisade à renoncer au but initial de leur expédition. Il est donc tentant de supposer que cette combinaison de la chose vue et de l'histoire rapportée reflète une conception historiographique dont la chronique byzantine fournissait un précédent remarquable.

Ainsi donc la rétrospective à l'échelle cosmique et la combinaison d'une dimension vécue avec une mise en perspective d'événements connus par ouïe-dire constitueraient deux indices en faveur de l'interprétation qui consiste à créditer la chronique byzantine d'une certaine influence, aussi indirecte et médiatisée qu'elle ait pu être, sur les débuts de la chronique française. Il est révélateur que cette influence s'est effectuée dans les deux sens, comme le montrent les affleurements de la conception byzantine du temps dans la chronique française et inversement, l'adoption de la mise en perspective épique de la *Chronique de Morée*. Dans un cas, le recours à la conception du temps et aux procédures du discours historique ayant cours dans le monde byzantin confèrent au récit une valeur d'authenticité au même titre que les procédés stylistiques empruntés aux Bibles françaises. Dans le second cas au contraire, le récit historique accède à la dimension purement littéraire de l'épopée.

b) Entre mimétisme et réinterprétation: calques et jeux de mots translinguistiques entre le français et le grec

Un autre indice de cette influence byzantine sur la chronique en prose française concerne la terminologie, notamment la titulature. Par une sorte de mimétisme, Robert de Clari pare l'empereur de Byzance du titre de *saint* (§§ XXIV et XCIX), transposition pure et simple de ἅγιος. Cette irruption de la titulature byzantine dans un texte français évoquant les pompes de la cour de Constantinople n'est pas seulement imputable à un désir de couleur locale: on pourrait aussi y voir un indice supplémentaire en faveur de l'existence de ponts de communication entre la chronique byzantine et la chronique française. Des études sur les échanges linguistiques entre le grec des Byzantins et les diverses langues des conquérants latins ont déjà été faites,³⁹ mais elles portent surtout sur la dimension lexicographique de l'emprunt et se rattachent par conséquent à la dimension collective de la langue. En outre elles ne concernent pas spécialement la période cruciale du XIII^e siècle. La perspective adoptée ici pour étudier l'acculturation et le contact linguistique entre Francs et Byzantins est celle de la parole individuelle telle qu'elle se manifeste dans les textes littéraires que constituent les chroniques françaises et la *Chronique de Morée*, laquelle nous reporte il est vrai à la fin du XIII^e siècle et même au début du XIV^e siècle.

Considérés dans leur contexte littéraire, les échanges interlinguistiques entre Byzantins et Francs font apparaître que la tendance au mimétisme ou à l'emprunt pur

³⁹ Henry and Renée Kahane, "Byzantium's Impact On the West: the Linguistic Evidence," *Illinois Classical Studies*, 6 (1981), pp. 389-415; "The Western Impact on Byzantium: the Linguistic Evidence," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 36 (1982), pp. 127-53.

et simple est contrebalancée par un phénomène inverse qui consiste à réinterpréter les termes grecs à travers le prisme du français ou inversement les mots français à travers le miroir déformant du grec. Ce processus d'adaptation réciproque déjà à l'œuvre lors des Croisades précédentes qui mirent les Francs en contact avec les Arabes, les Turcs et les Arméniens, se manifesta tout naturellement à l'occasion des contacts entre les Latins et les Byzantins.

À première vue on pourrait croire que ces réinterprétations relèvent de l'erreur et de l'ignorance. Et il est vrai que tel est parfois le cas, comme par exemple lorsque Robert de Clari affirme de but en blanc que "Sainte Souphie en griu ch'est Sainte Trinités en franchois" (§ LXXXV). Cette bourde tient sans doute à une confusion entre les noms Ἀγία Σοφία et Ἀγία Τριάς. Ignorant qu'il était du grec, le chevalier picard a dû s'imaginer que dans le microsntagme nominal Ἀγία Τριάς, c'est ἄγία qui signifiait "Trinité" et non Τριάς. Et il a étendu indûment cette acception au microsntagme Ἀγία Σοφία.

Mais à côté de ces malentendus flagrants, il apparaît que les réinterprétations déformantes de la toponymie grecque en termes français sont souvent dues à une intention humoristique. On trouve déjà des traces de ce genre de calembours dans les chroniques latines des Croisades où par exemple Zengi est appelé Sanguinus ou Sanguinius ou encore Sanguineus.⁴⁰ Le jeu de mot est si évident qu'il révèle davantage la connaissance de la langue de départ, fût-elle une connaissance indirecte ou imparfaite, que son ignorance totale. Le fait même que des noms propres grecs aient pu être réinterprétés de façon fantaisiste en français et qu'inversement des noms français aient été acclimatés au réseau de significations et d'associations du grec est l'indice d'un contact linguistique suffisamment profond et prolongé entre le français et le grec. Au tout début du XIII^e siècle, ce contact devait être encore assez indirect et partiel, mais il s'approfondit et s'intensifia à partir du moment où l'expédition militaire se transforma en une occupation durable. En témoigne une œuvre comme la *Chronique de Morée*, véritable monument de cette synthèse entre une forme hellénique et un contenu tout ce qu'il y a de plus latin, quelle que soit l'hypothèse retenue sur son statut.

Pour illustrer cette tendance des chroniqueurs français à réinterpréter plaisamment le grec en termes français, on pourrait citer l'exemple du toponyme Βουκολέων⁴¹ qui subit une série de métamorphoses, sans doute à partir de l'homonymie partielle qui unit cette forme à la forme picarde *Boukelion* (Villehardouin § 243) / *Bokelion* (ibid. § 268) / *Bokelyon* (ibid. § 263). Et du fait du polymorphisme qui préside à la composition littéraire et à la transmission manuscrite, ce quasi homonyme a pu subir toutes sortes d'avatars selon deux axes différents:

⁴⁰ Voir par exemple, Guillaume de Tyr, *Chronique*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnholt, 1986), voir index, 1156 s.v.

⁴¹ Sur la réalité que recouvre ce toponyme, voir Cyril Mango, "The Palace of the Boukoleon," *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 45 (1997), pp. 41–50.

- a) la transformation de la structure synthétique en structure analytique: *Bouke de Lion* (Robert de Clari § LXXX).
- b) le passage à une forme moins picarde (chez Villehardouin) et de ce fait encore plus détachée de la ressemblance superficielle avec l'original grec Βουκολέων: *Bochelion* (§§ 234 et 458). Signalons que du point de vue de la phonétique historique, le mot de l'ancienne langue pour "bouche" était susceptible de variations très diverses: oscillation entre *boke* (picard) et *boche / bouche* (autres dialectes), tendance, dès le XII^e siècle,⁴² à la fermeture du /o/ tonique entravé en /u/. La graphie *boche* pourrait bien être étymologique et recouvrir en fait une prononciation /u/, tandis que la graphie *boke* du picard semble plutôt phonétique, comme l'atteste le maintien du timbre /o/ dans le parler "chtimi" (*boque*).
- c) la combinaison de a et b (toujours chez Villehardouin): *Bochedelion* (§ 249).

Enfin signalons que dans une retraduction en latin de la *Chronique d'Ernoul* effectuée en Italie par le dominicain bolognais Francesco Pipino,⁴³ *Bouke de Lion* est transposé par *Bucca Leonis*, comme si la dérive du signifiant avait été définitivement entérinée au terme de cette version de la langue vulgaire à la langue savante. L'extraordinaire désinvolture avec laquelle les chroniqueurs français procèdent à ce désamarrage du signifiant grec relève davantage du jeu de mot conscient et délibéré que d'une ignorance naïve.

Peut-être faut-il voir un jeu de mot délibéré dans la forme que le toponyme Χαλκίδων revêt chez Robert de Clari. De fait on trouve au § XL de sa chronique la forme Mauchidone qui pourrait être considérée comme une réinterprétation plaisante du signifiant grec en un syntagme picard: *mau chi done*, c'est-à-dire *mal ici donne*.

De la même façon, le scribe Stéphane Hagiochristoforités (Ἁγιοχριστοφορίτης) devient dans la *Chronique d'Ernoul*⁴⁴ Lagousses ou Langousses ou Lagouset, déformations du premier élément Ἁγιο- augmenté d'un article français. Cette francisation plaisante donne lieu à de vagues paronomases avec *gousse* ou bien avec *gousset* dont le sens premier est le creux de l'aisselle ou la mauvaise odeur qui en provient. Et ce même nom relatinisé dans la traduction de Pipino devient *Angustiosus* au terme d'une remotivation du signe qui achève d'isoler ce patronyme de son arrière-plan hellénique.

Terminons ce passage en revue des jeux de mots mis en œuvre dans les chroniques françaises par la mention d'une paronomase interne au français. Elle concerne le nom même des Grecs au cas régime singulier et aux cas du pluriel: *Grifon / Griffons* ou *Griffon / Griffons*. Cette forme est caractéristique de l'*Estoire de la Guerre Sainte* et de la *Chronique d'Ernoul*. L'emploi de cette forme de la

⁴² Voir François de la Chaussée, *Initiation à la phonétique historique de l'ancien français*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1982), pp. 109 and 202.

⁴³ Sur cette version voir *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. M.L. de mas Latrie (Paris, 1871), intr. II–XIV, XLII–XLIV and p. 93.

⁴⁴ Voir op. cit., p. 90, n. 1.

déclinaison imparisyllabique au lieu des forme *Greu / Greus; Grieu / Grieus; Griu / Grius* ou *Grijois*, lesquelles sont le propre de Villehardouin et de Robert de Clari, fait écho avec la racine de *gris / grif* “griffe” et le verbe *grifer* ou bien avec le mot *griffon* “vautour,” quoique ce dernier ne soit attesté qu’à partir du XIV^e siècle. Néanmoins la reduplication graphique que l’on trouve en concurrence avec la graphie en f simple semble corroborer cette dernière piste.

De façon très caractéristique, la *Chronique de Morée* nous fournit des parallèles de ce genre d’errance translinguistique, mais cette fois en sens inverse. En outre la date plus tardive de la composition de cette chronique reflète un état plus avancé d’intégration linguistique des Francs à l’environnement hellénophone.⁴⁵

L’un des jeux de mots que nous voudrions étudier porte sur le toponyme “Flandre” qui subit toutes sortes de métamorphoses: à partir de Φλάντρα qui est la transposition approximative du latin *Flandria*, il est souvent élargi en Φιλάντρα ou en Φιλάντρια. Ces oscillations sont du reste indépendantes de la traduction manuscrite, car les deux principaux représentants de ce texte, le manuscrit de Copenhague (Havniensis 57, 4, Chart. foll. 237) et celui de Paris (Parisinus gr. 2898) font apparaître l’un comme l’autre ces variations.

Il importe de noter que l’insertion d’une voyelle d’anaptyxe ι (Φλάντρα > Φιλάντρα) ou la suffixation en -ια (Φιλάντρα > Φιλάντρια) ne sont pas forcément motivés par des considérations métriques. Bien au contraire ces voyelles parasites sont surnuméraires et portent souvent le nombre de syllabes de 15 (comme il est normal dans le πολιτικός στίχος) à 17 ou 18, comme il apparaît à travers l’exemple du vers 234:

P: ὁ κόντος Φλάντρας πρότερον, δεύτερον τῆς Τουλούζας⁴⁶

H: τὸν κόντον τῆς Φιλάντριας εἶπε ὀμπρός, δεύτερον τῆς Τουλούζας⁴⁷

La version du manuscrit H se signale par l’emploi de la forme développée Φιλάντριας à la place de la forme compacte Φλάντρας. En outre l’insertion de l’article τῆς et l’emploi du verbe εἶπε portent le nombre total de syllabes à 18, compte tenu de l’emploi du disyllabe ὀμπρός à la place de πρότερον. Ce n’est donc pas pour compenser un manque à gagner dans le compte des syllabes du vers que Φλάντρα a subi une telle amplification, d’autant plus que les vers hypermétriques de la *Chronique de Morée* peuvent être réduits à quinze pieds pour peu qu’on adopte la prononciation syncopée des dialectes du Nord de la Grèce.⁴⁸ Dans cette dernière hypothèse, le jeu de mots pourrait bien être avant tout se limiter à la dimension graphique et visuelle.

⁴⁵ Sur les modalités du contact linguistique entre Francs et Grecs, voir le point de vue historique de Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean*, pp. 295–301.

⁴⁶ “Le comte de Flandre en premier, en second celui de Toulouse.”

⁴⁷ “Il mentionna d’abord le comte de Flandre, en second celui de Toulouse.”

⁴⁸ Voir Schmitt, *The Chronicle of Morea*, intr., XXXIV–XXXV.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la variation orthographique Φλάντρα / Φιλάντρα / Φιλάντρια correspond bien plutôt à un jeu de mot translinguistique faisant intervenir l'adjectif Φίλανδρος et le substantif Φιλανδρία qui en est dérivé. En grec classique, Φίλανδρος sert à désigner une épouse aimante ou jalouse et le substantif Φιλανδρία est employé pour désigner l'amour ou la jalousie d'une épouse pour son mari. Secondairement, ces deux termes ont été détournés de leur sens et appliqués aux sentiments des invertis. Étant donné que l'auteur de la *Chronique de Morée* n'a aucune raison apparente de brocarder les Flamands, il est plus vraisemblable qu'il prêtait une autre signification à φίλανδρος, sans doute celui de "terre qui aime les hommes <qui l'habitent>"⁴⁹ ou peut-être "terre dont les hommes sont aimables," si l'on voit dans ce composé un exocentrique de type bahuvrihi.

Certes divers critères formels pourraient s'opposer à une telle interprétation: l'emploi du digramme -ντ- au lieu de -νδ-; le fait que l'adjectif φίλανδρος soit épïcène, ce qui ne s'accorde pas avec la forme Φιλάντρα; et enfin l'accentuation de Φιλάντρια qui diffère de celle de φιλανδρία. Mais comme dans l'exemple des avatars français de Βουκολέων ou de Χαλκηδών, il semble que nous soyons ici dans le domaine de la réinterprétation approximative. En se livrant à ces retouches sur la configuration phonétique et morphologique du mot, les auteurs de la *Chronique de Morée* ont probablement tenu à remotiver le signifiant *Flandre / Flandria* dans l'horizon linguistique hellénophone, tout comme les premiers chroniqueurs français ont enraciné les toponymes dans le système associatif de leur parler picard ou champenois.

La même *Chronique de Morée* fait apparaître un autre jeu de mot translinguistique qui reflète la symbiose culturelle franco-grecque au XIII^e-XIV^e siècle (v. 103/4-106):

H: τὸν κόντε φρόν ντὲ πούληα ἐγλέξαν διὰ ῥήγα,
 διατὶ ἦτον φρονιμώτερος, ἐναρετος εἰς ὄλους...
 Ἐκεῖνος γάρ, ὡς φρόνιμος, τὴν ἀφεντίαν ἐδέχτη⁵⁰

P: τὸν Κοτευφρῶνεν ντὲ Μπουλιοῦ ἐγλέξαν διὰ ῥήγαν,
 δι' οὗ ἦτον φρονιμώτερος, ἐναρετος εἰς ὄλους...
 Ἐκεῖνος γάρ, ὡς πρόνιμος, τὴν ἀφεντίαν ἐδέχτη

Les deux versions font apparaître un jeu de mot entre le nom de Godefroy de Bouillon et l'adjectif φρόνιμος, répété à deux reprises avec une gradation du positif au comparatif. Et pour conférer plus de poids à cette étymologie cratyliste, le nom du premier roi de Jérusalem est soumis à deux séries d'avatars relevant de ce phénomène de désamarrage du signifiant d'une langue à l'autre.

⁴⁹ Ce sens est attesté chez Eschyle, *Sept contre Thèbes*, 902: πέδον φίλανδρον "territoire qui aime ses hommes."

⁵⁰ "Ils choisirent Godefroy de Bouillon pour roi, car il était plus sage, valeureux entre tous... Et lui, en sage qu'il était, accepta la souveraineté."

Dans la version H le nom de Godefroy est décomposé de sorte que la première partie en est réinterprétée comme un titre τὸν κόντε c'est-à-dire /ton gonde/ ou même /to gode/. Quant au second élément du prénom il devient φρόν qui fait écho à φρόνιμος.

Dans la version P, le jeu de mot translinguistique emprunte non plus le truchement de la décomposition du mot, mais celui de la réinterprétation en un signifiant qui fait sens en grec: en effet Κοτευφρῶνεν semble comporter l'adjectif εὐφρων. Il est possible du reste que l'usage de cet élément εὐ- constitue une traduction en grec de l'élément germanique *god* – de Godefroy. De fait il était prononcé /god/ prononcé dans le texte grec en raison de la présence de la nasale finale de τόν.

Quels enseignements peut-on tirer d'une telle jonglerie verbale faisant intervenir deux ou même trois langues si l'on tient compte de l'élément God – de Godefroy? Tout d'abord, cela conforte la thèse qui voit dans la *Chronique de Morée* une œuvre originale. En outre on voit affleurer ici les modalités de l'acculturation et du contact linguistique entre Francs et Grecs: la capacité de se jouer des différences linguistiques en les réinterprétant de façon plaisante reflète la connaissance des langues en contact plutôt que l'incommunicabilité entre elles. Et si l'on applique ce raisonnement aux jeux de mots que nous avons décelés dans les chroniques de Villehardouin, de Robert de Clari et d'Ernoul, il apparaît que sans forcément connaître le grec, ces deux auteurs se sont fait l'écho de certains calembours qui avaient cours dans leur entourage immédiat de Grecs francophones ou d'Italiens plus ou moins hellénophones.

Pour Conclure

Ces jeux de mots entre le français et le grec révèlent l'existence d'un contact linguistique entre Francs et Byzantins dès l'époque des chroniqueurs Villehardouin et Robert de Clari. Aussi rudimentaire qu'il ait pu être, il a sans doute été suffisant pour que les conquérants prennent conscience de l'existence d'une pratique d'écriture en prose chez les vaincus. Peut-être leur a-t-on dit – à moins qu'ils ne l'aient compris par eux-mêmes – que les chroniques byzantines étaient écrites dans une langue qui ne différait pas sensiblement de la Bible grecque et des écrits de l'Antiquité classique. Forts de cette information, ils ont pu être encouragés à prendre la plume et à raconter en prose vernaculaire leurs expériences constantinopolitaines.

Ainsi donc, l'acculturation franco-byzantine aurait permis de surmonter le blocage constitué par le manque de culture cléricale ou poétique des deux guerriers. Au contact du modèle unitaire de la civilisation byzantine où les divers genres littéraires ne recouraient pas à deux langues distinctes, mais tout au plus à divers états de langue, la diglossie franco-latine qui réservait le français à la poésie et le latin à la prose a été transgressée. Et de même que la prose byzantine n'est pas fondamentalement coupée du modèle constitué par la Bible des Septante ou les Évangiles en dépit des raffinements atticistes qui la caractérisent, les pionniers de la

prose française se sont tout naturellement tournés vers la matrice que constituaient pour eux les premières traductions de la Bible en langue d'oïl. Ce saut qualitatif n'est d'ailleurs pas seulement la résultante de ces facteurs objectifs de la déculturation et de l'acculturation. On peut y voir en outre le reflet d'une intention subjective de véridicité et de bonne foi de la part d'historiens probablement très conscients des enjeux politiques de leur narration.

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Arab Perspectives on the Fourth Crusade

William J. Hamblin

Two hundred and fifty years after the Fourth Crusade, when another hostile army besieged Constantinople, a prophetic *hadith* – a traditional saying of the Prophet Muhammad – was in widespread circulation among the Turkish soldiers preparing for the final assault on the city’s massive walls.

The Prophet said: “Have you heard of a city with land on one side and sea on the other two sides?” They replied: “Yes, O Messenger of God.” He spoke:

The last hour [of the Day of Judgment] will not dawn before it is taken by 70,000 sons of Isaac. When they reach it, they will not do battle with arms and catapults but with the words ‘There is not god but Allah, and Allah is great (*Allāhu Akbar*)!’ [When they first shout this] the first sea wall will collapse, and the second time [they shout these words] the second sea wall [will collapse], and the third time the wall on the land side will collapse. And, rejoicing, ... they will conquer Constantinople. Hail to the prince and the army to whom that good fortune will be given.¹

Although this particular *hadith* is generally considered to be of late origin,² it nonetheless reflects a common Muslim perception of the eschatological role of Constantinople. From the earliest years of the Arab expansion some Muslims believed the conquest of Constantinople was an apocalyptic event associated with the end of days.

Constantinople in Muslim Apocalyptic Thought

As background to the Arab reaction to the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204, we need to first emphasize the aura that surrounded the city in Arab culture.³ The foundation of this aura dates back to the apocalyptic fervor of the first century of Islam,⁴ centering around the two great Arab sieges of Constantinople: the first

¹ Cited in Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (Princeton, 1978), p. 85; see also Louis Massignon, “Textes premonitoires et commentaries mystiques relatifs a la prise de Constantinople par les Turcs en 1453 (= 858 heg.),” *Oriens*, 6 (1953), 10–17.

² Earlier variations on this hadith are discussed in David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton, 2002), pp. 59–60, hereafter cited as *SMA*.

³ Nadia Maria el Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), discusses this issue in several sections of her book; see her index.

⁴ These apocalyptic themes are discussed in *SMA*; see also David Cook, “Muslim Apocalyptic and Jihad,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, 20 (1996), 66–104; Sulaiman Bashear, “Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars: A Review of Arabic Sources,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd Series, 1 (1992), 173–207; and, more generally, Said Amir Arjomand, “Islamic Apocalypticism in the Classical Period,” in Bernard McGinn, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, Vol. 2: *Apocalypticism in Western History and Culture* (New York, 1999), pp. 238–83.

under the Umayyad caliph Mu'āwīya from 673–78, and the second under the caliph Sulaymān ibn 'Abd al-Malik from 717–18.⁵

The rise of Islam in the seventh century brought a period of intense eschatological speculation among Jews, Syriac Christians, and Muslims, with a great deal of cross-fertilization of apocalyptic ideas between these three groups. Jerusalem naturally played a crucial role in all different versions of apocalyptic dramas. For the Jews, the great temple at Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Millennial expectations of the rebuilding of the Temple appeared among some Jews after the Sasanid Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614, but were dashed by Heraclius' victory in 628; the city fell to the Arabs a decade later in 638.⁶

In certain seventh-century Muslim eschatological circles, the Dome of the Rock, built by the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik around 691, was perceived as a millennial rebuilding of the Temple. 'Abd al-Malik's son Sulaymān – the Arabic form of the name Solomon – temporarily moved his capital to Jerusalem. Based in part on the belief that he fulfilled a prophetic *hadith* that Constantinople would fall to a king who bore the name of a prophet, Sulaymān undertook a siege of Constantinople from 717–18.⁷ In Sulaymān's day, it was even rumored in some circles that the Caliph was promised Mahdī, or "rightly guided one,"⁸ in whose reign the eschatological promises would be fulfilled on the hundredth anniversary of the Hijra of Muhammad in 718–19.⁹ Of course, all of these expectations failed. Sulaymān died in 717 after a reign of only two years; Jerusalem did not become the Umayyad capital; his siege of Constantinople failed; and the apocalypse did not occur. The point is that the prophesied conquest of Constantinople was an important ingredient in Muslim apocalyptic thought, and this apocalyptic speculation was a factor in encouraging Sulaymān to attack Constantinople.

Why was there so much emphasis on the conquest of Constantinople, and what does all this have to do with the siege of the city by the crusaders in 1204? That is a rather convoluted tale. The Romans had destroyed the Jewish temple in A.D. 70, and, according to both historical records and numerous Jewish legends, they had plundered the temple treasures. From the perspective of many apocalyptic Muslims, as well as the later crusaders for that matter, the Dome of the Rock was the restored

⁵ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 60–71; J.H. Mordtmann, "(al-) Kustantīniyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 11 vols. (Leiden, 1960–2003), 5:532, hereafter cited as *EI*; M. Hinds, "Mu'āwīya," *EI*, 7:263; R. Eisener, "Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik," *EI*, 9:821.

⁶ M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews of Palestine: A Political History from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquests*, (Oxford, 1976), pp. 266–67, on the Jewish restoration of sacrifices on the Temple Mount from 614–17, based on the apocalyptic *Book of Zerubbabel* (on which see R. Werblowsky and G. Wigoder, eds., *Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* [Oxford, 1997], p. 139); *SMA*, p. 5; Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 51–6.

⁷ As it turned out, Constantinople did fall to a king bearing the name of a prophet: Mehmet, the name of Ottoman conqueror of Constantinople, is the Turkish version of Muhammad.

⁸ W. Madelung, "Mahdi," *EI*, 5:1230.

⁹ R. Eisener, "Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik," *EI*, 9:821.

Temple of Solomon. Part of the Temple mystique included the promised return of these lost temple relics that had been plundered by the Romans.

The empire we call Byzantium, was of course called the “Roman Empire” throughout its history.¹⁰ Continuing this nomenclature, medieval Arabs simply called them Romans – in Arabic, *al-Rūm*.¹¹ The Byzantine emperor was thus *malik al-rūm*, or the “king of the Romans,” a linguistically precise translation of the Greek *basileos rhomaion*. Thus, by this strange linguistic transformation, pre-Islamic eschatological legends or traditions originally associated with the fall of Rome in Jewish and Syriac Christian sources became conflated in the minds of Arab apocalypticists with Constantinople. The conquest of Constantinople became “the foremost goal of [seventh century] Muslim Syrian apocalyptic.”¹² Constantinople was transformed into “the whore” of Babylon,¹³ where the people indulge in polytheistic worship of idols – the Muslim perception of Trinitarian veneration of icons.¹⁴ According to Muslim legends, temple relics kept at Constantinople included the *al-tābūt al-sakīna*, the Ark of the Covenant, which was in the “Church of Gold,” or Hagia Sophia. Likewise the Rod of Moses, the garment of Adam, the priestly robes of Aaron and the *ghifāra* or head covering of Jesus – presumably the *sudarium* – among other relics, were all at “Rome.”¹⁵

But was the location of these relics in Rome in Italy or Constantinople, the new Rome? In Arab apocalyptic, Constantinople became, or rather simply *was* Rome. According to these traditions, Arab armies would cross the Bosphorus on dry land like the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. The walls of Constantinople would collapse at the shout of *Allahu Akbar*, just as the walls of Jericho fell.¹⁶ The fall of Constantinople to Muslim armies would presage the coming of the *Dajjāl*, the Muslim version of the anti-Christ.¹⁷ The precious Temple relics, stolen and profanely kept at Constantinople, would be returned to the Third Temple, the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem, preliminary to the advent of the last days.¹⁸

To the dismay of seventh- and eighth- century Muslim apocalypticists, all of these prophecies failed. Constantinople did not fall to the Arabs in the first century of Islam. Arab expansionistic fervor dissipated, the conquests came to an end, Constantinople remained in Byzantine hands, and the Islamic empire fragmented into a dozen different feuding states. By the time of the Fourth Crusade, these apocalyptic traditions about Constantinople had faded, but were not completely

¹⁰ Alexander P. Kazhdan, et al., eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1991), 1:344; hereafter cited as *ODB*.

¹¹ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 22–28.

¹² *SMA*, p. 54.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 56–58.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60, 167–68, 364, 370, 372.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103; A. Abel, “Dadjdjal,” *EI*, 2:75.

¹⁸ *SMA*, p. 167.

forgotten. They had become ultimate apocalyptic events, rather than immanent, as they had been in the seventh century. They had lost their immediacy, being relegated to fulfillment in a far distant future; and indeed they would be revived by the Ottomans during their successful conquest of the city in 1453, as noted earlier. But in 1204, Constantinople remained a symbol to the Arabs of unconquerable power – only the Mahdi, the promised ideal messianic ruler would be able to capture it. It was also a city of eschatological fulfillment, that is, its conquest by Muslim armies would usher in the end of days. In the late twelfth century, Constantinople was viewed a city of power, wealth, tyranny and impiety. In the words of al-Qādī al-Fādīl, the great minister of Saladin, “the Tyrant of Constantinople is the most ancient and wealthiest of the Christian kings;”¹⁹ he is also “the most tyrannical and impious of the infidels.”²⁰

Now I must emphasize that there was no current belief in the immanent fulfillment of these eschatological expectations among the Arabs of the thirteenth century; nevertheless, the vague idea persisted. The problem was, of course, that the crusader conquest did not fit this idealized outline of what should happen in history. Constantinople was supposed to fall to Muslim armies, not Frankish armies.

The Fall of Constantinople according to Syrian and Egyptian Chroniclers

In one sense it is simple to describe the Arab reaction to the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders: they basically ignored it.²¹ The Frankish conquest goes completely unnoticed by several quite reputable and informed Arab historians, such as Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī.²² Most medieval Arab historians who mention the crusader conquest – such as Ibn Wāsil, Abū al-Fidāʾ, Maqrīzī and Ibn Taghrībirdī – give it mere passing notice. Ibn al-Furāt’s report is not untypical: “In Shābān of this year [April 1204], the Franks – may God damn those of them who have departed and forsake those that remain – took control of Constantinople, which had belonged to the Byzantines.”²³

On the other hand, nearly all these Arab historians devote several paragraphs to two other crusader-related events in 1204: skirmishes near Acre between the

¹⁹ Letter of al-Qādī al Fādīl, minister of Saladin, cited in Ibn Wāsil, *Muraffij al-Kurūb fī Akhbār Bani Ayyūb*, ed. J. Shayyal (Cairo, 1961), 3:111 and al-Qalqashandī, *Subh al-Aʾshā fī Sināat al-Inshā* (Cairo, 1915), 6:516.

²⁰ Al-Qādī al Fādīl, cited by Ibn Wāsil, *Muraffij*, 3:295.

²¹ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, pp. 201–3.

²² Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Mirʾāt al-Zamān fī Taʾrīkh al-Ayān* (Hyderabad, 1951), 8:516; C. Cahen, “Ibn al-Djawzī,” *EI*, 3:752.

²³ Ibn al-Furāt, *Taʾrīkh al-Duwal waʾl-Mulūk*, H. al-Shamāʾ, ed. (Basrah, 1970), 5/1:12; see also Abu al-Fidāʾ, *Kitāb al-Mukhtasar fī Akhbār al-Bashar* (Beirut, 1956–61), 5:136; H.A.R. Gibb, “Abuʾl-Fidāʾ,” *EI*, 1:118.

crusaders and the forces of the Sultan al-ʿĀdil from Damascus,²⁴ and the crusader naval raid on the town of Fūwa on Rashid branch of the Nile in Egypt.²⁵

There are a number of contributing factors to this relative indifference to affairs in Constantinople. First, Arab historians tend to discuss what they have personally seen, have read, or have heard from reliable witnesses. That is not to say, of course, that a great deal of hearsay does not get into Arab chroniclers. But the scholastic conventions associated with the oral transmission of tradition gave them a bias in favor of direct chains of testimony. If they didn't have any reliable witnesses to details about the siege of Constantinople, they would record only minimal information about it. Many Arab historians in the thirteenth century also tended to be increasingly provincial in their overall historical outlook. Whereas earlier Arab historians in the days of the imperial caliphate such as al-Tabarī were quite universalistic in their perspectives, by the time of the Fourth Crusade, many chroniclers were narrowly focused on affairs in their own provinces and cities. In some ways this is rather typical of Arab society as a whole in the latter Middle Ages. Whereas Europeans were increasingly turning outward, many Muslim scholars were increasingly turned inward. Now this is not universally true, of course. Historians like Rashīd al-Dīn, who was associated with the court of the more universalistic Mongol Ilkhanids, tended toward a broader historical perspective.²⁶ Arab historians also tended to belong to a particular social class, the ulema, or religious scholars, and their histories often reflect the rather narrow concerns of this group. One reads a great deal about obituaries of great scholars or Sufis, but often little about international matters that do not impinge directly on local affairs. A major exception to these tendencies is Ibn al-Athīr to whom I will now turn.

Ibn al-Athīr's Account of the Fourth Crusade²⁷

By far the most detailed and accurate Arabic account of the fall of Constantinople was written by the great historian Ibn al-Athīr, who lived from 1160–1233, mainly

²⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rikh*, C. Tornberg, ed. (Leiden, 1853; repr. Beirut, 1966), 12:194–95; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta'rikh al-Duwal wa'l-Mulūk*, 5/1:13; Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifa Duwal al-Mulūk* (Cairo, 1957), 1/1:162–63.

²⁵ Ibn Wāsil, *Muraffij*, 3:159–61; Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma'rifa Duwal al-Mulūk*, 1/1:163–64; Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-Ta'rikh*, 12:198; for Frankish sources, see S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1951), 3:102–3.

²⁶ Rashīd al-Dīn, *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jami'u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, trans. W.M. Thackston, *Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures 45: Central Asian Sources 4*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1998–99); D. Morgan, "Rashīd al-Dīn," *EI*, 8:443.

²⁷ The following translation is taken from Ibn al-Athīr, 12:190–92. The account of Ibn al-Athīr is quoted or paraphrased by a number of subsequent writers. The Syriac Christian polymath Bar Hebraeus (J. Segal, "Ibn al-Ibrī," *EI*, 3:804), writing in the 1250s and 1260s, quoted much of Ibn al-Athīr's account almost word for word, although he drops a number of passages, adds a few of his own, garbling part of it; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, trans. E. Budge (Oxford, 1932), pp. 357–59; throughout my translation I have underlined the passages in Ibn al-Athīr that have no parallel in Bar Hebraeus' text.

in Mosul in modern northern Iraq, in the service of the Zangid dynasty.²⁸ He traveled extensively through Iraq and Syria, and was with the armies of Saladin during his 1188 campaign. In 1204, he was in Mosul and probably had connections through the Zangid court with ambassadors or scholars from the Seljuqs of Rum in Anatolia.

Ibn al-Athīr begins his account of the Fourth Crusade with the background of the dynastic succession crisis at Constantinople.²⁹

In this year [A.H. 600 = 10 September 1203 to 18 August 1204], in [the month of] Sha'bān [= April 1204], the Franks took possession of the city of Constantinople from the Byzantines [*al-Rūm*], and put an end to Byzantine rule. The reason for this was that the Byzantine emperor (*malik al-Rūm*) [Isaac II] had married the sister of the king of France – who is the greatest king of the Franks – and they had a son [Alexius IV].

Here is the first point of confusion of Ibn al-Athīr, for the second wife of Isaac II was Margaret of Hungary, not a princess of France.³⁰ As we shall see, it is not uncommon for Arabic sources to be confused concerning the complex dynastic relationships of European noble families.

Then a brother of the [Byzantine] emperor [Alexius III] rebelled against him [Isaac II], arrested him, seized the country from him, gouged out his eyes, and imprisoned him. His [Isaac II's] son [Alexius IV] fled and went to his maternal uncle and asked for assistance from him against his paternal uncle [Alexius III]. So he [the maternal uncle] agreed to this.

For Ibn al-Athīr this “maternal uncle” is the aforementioned “king of France;” this is probably a garbled account of Alexios IV's visit to Philip of Swabia, who was married to Irene, daughter of Isaac II, and sister of Alexius IV.³¹ But despite this garbling, Ibn al-Athīr has the basic outline of the story correct. Alexius IV went to Europe seeking help from Frankish nobility to regain his throne.

Ibn al-Athīr continues:

Now there had already assembled many Franks preparing to go to the Syria to conquer Jerusalem from the Muslims. So the [crusaders] took [Alexius IV] the son of the [former] Emperor with them, and they set their course for Constantinople, to resolve the situation

Ibn al-Athīr's account is also paraphrased by Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ibar* (Beirut, 1979), 2:486–88 (see M. Talbi, “Ibn Khaldūn,” *EI*, 3:825–31), and, less fully, by al-Qalqashandī, 5:401–2 (see C. Bosworth, “Kalkashandī,” *EI*, 4:509). On the Fourth Crusade, see Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1997), hereafter cited as *Fourth Crusade*; Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (New York, 2004); Michael Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (London, 2003).

²⁸ F. Rosenthal, “Ibn al-Athīr,” *EI*, 3:723.

²⁹ Ibn al-Athīr gives the name of only one Byzantine ruler. He otherwise describes the Byzantines and the Franks by their titles, positions or relationships. Throughout my translation I will parenthetically insert the names of the people to whom I believe Ibn al-Athīr is referring.

³⁰ *Fourth Crusade*, p. 33; *ODB*, 1:65–66, 97–98.

³¹ *Fourth Crusade*, pp. 33–34.

between [the nephew, Alexius IV] and his paternal uncle [Alexius III]; he had no purpose other than this.

There is a grammatical ambiguity here as to who had no ulterior motive for going to Constantinople: Alexius IV or the crusaders. But in either case, Ibn al-Athīr's informants appear to have understood that the original intent of coming to Constantinople was not to conquer the city but to resolve a succession dispute.

Ibn al-Athīr proceeds with an account of the first siege:

But when the [crusaders] arrived [at Constantinople], the paternal uncle [Alexius III] marched forth with the armies of the Byzantines to do battle against them. There was a battle between them in [the month of] Rajab in the year 599 [A.H. = May 1203]. The Byzantines were put to flight; they retreated into the city and the Franks entered it with them. The Byzantine Emperor [Alexius III] fled to the outer regions of his land. But it is said that the Byzantine Emperor did not fight the [crusaders] in the suburbs of the city, but that they besieged him within it.

Ibn al-Athīr's story, though vague on the details, is again broadly accurate. The Byzantines did fight the crusaders outside the city, and the crusaders also assaulted the city. Alexius III did flee to the outskirts of the empire where he continued to claim the throne.³² Ibn al-Athīr here uses the phrase "it is said that" (*wa-qīlu inna*). This phrase is typically used by Arab historians when offering alternative accounts of an event, the veracity of which they are unable to determine. It appears that Ibn al-Athīr either had two sources on the siege of Constantinople, or had one source who gave conflicting accounts. In either event he could not decide between the two, so included them both. This points to the probable existence of multiple sources used by Ibn al-Athīr for his account, as will be discussed further below.

This next passage continues the narrative of the first siege with a conflation of the stories of the great fires started during the first siege with that which occurred during the second.³³ As we will see, Ibn al-Athīr knew of two fires, but is again somewhat confused about the details. He continues:

Now there were Byzantines in Constantinople who were supporters of the young man [Alexius IV], and they set fire to the city; and the people [of Constantinople] became preoccupied with that [fire], and the [Franks] captured one of the gates of the city, and entered it, and the Emperor [Alexius III] fled.

He next recounts the installation of Alexius IV on the throne, and the rapacious oppression of the Franks.

³² *Fourth Crusade*, pp. 129–30.

³³ On the fires, see *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 145–46, 185–86.

Thus the Franks established the youth [Alexius IV] as king.³⁴ But he had no authority (*hukm*) at all. They [the Franks] released his father [Isaac II] from prison, but the Franks were the [real] rulers (*hukkām*) in the city. Their oppression was grievous to the people [of Constantinople], for [the Franks] demanded from [the people] more wealth than they were capable of providing. So the [Franks] took the wealth by crime and extortion, even stripping wealth from crosses and icons of the Messiah – peace upon him – and [from icons] of the Apostles (*hawārīyin*), and from the [bindings of] gospels and so forth.

This passage provides a possible indication that one of Ibn al-Athīr's sources was a Christian. While a good Muslim would certainly call for a blessing of peace upon Jesus, as he would for any prophet, Muslims would generally be little concerned with the desecration of what they viewed as idolatrous icons, which this account emphasizes. On the other hand, it ignores the burning of the Mintaton mosque,³⁵ which would have outraged contemporary Muslims. Thus, the selection of which atrocity to emphasize may point to a Christian bias of one of Ibn al-Athīr's original sources.

Ibn al-Athīr next turns to the coup against Alexius IV, and beginning of the second siege.

This [the desecration of the icons] was very distressful to the Byzantines, who became infuriated. So they came to the young king [Alexius IV] and killed him,³⁶ and expelled the Franks from the city and locked the gates. This occurred in Jumādī al-Awlā in the year six hundred [A.H.] [= Jan 2004].³⁷ The Franks then camped near the city, besieging the Byzantines, and [the Byzantines] fought them, persevering in combat both day and night.

Ibn al-Athīr then makes this important statement:

But the Byzantines became weak, so they wrote to the Sultan Rukn al-Dīn Sulaymān bin Qilij Arslān, the master of Iconium [Qūniya] and other cities, appealing for help, but he did not have the capacity to help them.

We know that in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, several Byzantine princes made various arrangements with Seljuq Turkish rulers in Anatolia.³⁸ As far as I am aware, however, this is the only reference to the Byzantines asking assistance of the Seljuqs *during* the second siege. The Seljuq Sultan Rukn al-Dīn

³⁴ It is interesting to note that Ibn al-Athīr here (12:190) calls Alexius a "youth" = *sabīy*: E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863; repr. Cambridge, 1984), p. 1650b; Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (London, 1971), p. 502. Alexius is likewise "consistently referred to as a youth in the [Western] sources," *Fourth Crusade*, p. 33.

³⁵ *Fourth Crusade*, p. 145.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 169–70.

³⁷ Ibn al-Athīr, 12:191 begins here.

³⁸ Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, trans. J. Jones-Williams (New York, 1968), pp. 114–20.

died on 26 June 1204, so this cannot be a reference to a later diplomatic exchange; and there is no reason for Ibn al-Athīr to have invented this particular incident.

This passage raises two questions: First, is the report accurate? Second, if it is, which Byzantine ruler requested Seljuq military assistance – Alexius III in exile, Alexius IV as he was breaking with the crusaders, or Alexius V Mourtzoupholos during the later part of the second siege? Unfortunately, the text is vague on this point. It does, however, state that the request for aid came *after* the second siege of Constantinople began, when Byzantine resistance was weakening. To me this strongly points to Mourtzoupholos, who ruled from February to mid-April 1204.³⁹ Unfortunately for the Byzantines, the Seljuq sultan Rukn al-Dīn was himself engaged in an ongoing struggle for power with his brother, which made it impossible for him to send assistance to Constantinople.⁴⁰

Ibn al-Athīr then recounts the sack of Constantinople by the Franks:

Now there were many Franks in residence in the city, nearly thirty thousand ... They came to an agreement with the Franks that were outside [besieging] the city ... and set fire a second time, and about a fourth of the city was burned, and they [the Franks inside] opened the gates and [the Franks outside] entered it and put it to the sword for three days. And they assualted the Byzantines, killing and plundering until all of the Byzantines were either dead or impoverished, possessing nothing.

He also adds a story of a massacre at Hagia Sophia:

Now a group of the Byzantines notables entered the great church called Sūfiyā [Hagia Sophia], and the Franks came to it, and a group of priests and bishops and monks, holding the gospels and crosses, came imploring the Franks [for mercy] and abasing themselves before them. [The Franks] would not listen to them them, but killed them all and plundered the church.

The emphasis on the blasphemy of killing priests and monks and plundering a church again points to a probable Christian source for at least part of Ibn al-Athīr's account.

The final section recounts the division of the spoils among the three leaders of the crusade. None of the three are named, but each is given his proper title, transliterated into Arabic:

There were three rulers [leading the crusade]: The Duke of Venice (*Dūqas al-Banādiqa*) was the leader of the ocean fleet, in whose ships [the crusaders] sailed to Constantinople. He was old and blind so that his horse had to be led.

This is, of course Enrico Dandolo, the Doge of Venice.

³⁹ *ODB*, 1:66.

⁴⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, 12:195–96; Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, pp. 115–20.

The next was called *al-Markās* [the Marquis], and he was the leader of the French.

This is obviously Boniface of Montferrat, though transformed from an Italian into a Frenchman.

The third was called the *Kund Afland*, and he had the greatest number [of men].

Kund Afland is simply an Arabic transliteration of the Count of Flanders (Comte de Flandre), who is obviously Baldwin.⁴¹

The election of Baldwin as Latin Emperor is given an interesting twist by Ibn al-Athīr:

When [the Franks] had taken possession of Constantinople they cast lots, (*iqṭarāʾū*) for kingship, and the lot fell in favor of the Count of Flanders; and they repeated the lots a second and third time, and it favored him, and so they made him king. For God grants kingship to whom he will, and wrests it away from whom he will.

The fundamental meaning of the Arabic verb *iqṭarāʾa* is to cast lots or practice sortilege, and, by extension, to vote.⁴² It would appear here that Ibn al-Athīr's source described the selection of Baldwin in a way that Ibn al-Athīr understood as "casting lots." He ends this passage with a pious statement of God's sovereignty over the kingdoms of the world, perhaps in allusion to the Qurʾān 2.251.

Ibn al-Athīr concludes his narrative with a discussion of the division of the empire:

So, when the lot had fallen upon him [Baldwin], they made him king over Constantinople and the surrounding area. The Duke of Venice was given the islands of the sea, such as the island of Crete (*Iqrīṭash*) and the island of Rhodes (*Rūdus*) and others besides them. Now the Marquis [Boniface]⁴³ of the French was given the land to the east of the straits such as Nicaea (*Azniq*) and Laodicea (*Lādhiq*). But the [crusaders] had not yet taken anything except Constantinople, for none of the other Byzantines had surrendered. As for the lands of Nicaea and Laodicea, east of the straits, belonging to the emperor of Constantinople, adjacent to the lands of Rukn al-Dīn Sulaymān bin Qilij Arslān – one of the great lords of the Byzantines named *Lashkarī* [Theodore Lascaris]⁴⁴ gained mastery over it, and it is in his hands until today [the 1220s].

This passage provides another indication of a probable Seljuq diplomatic source for Ibn al-Athīr, as it focuses on affairs on the boundary of the Seljuq state, and their immediate Byzantine neighbors. It also implies an early date for Ibn al-Athīr's

⁴¹ Bar Hebraeus has garbled this into *Gōndōfrī* (p. 358), probably derived from trying to translate the unvoiced Arabic *KND AFLND* name into Syriac, without knowing the pronunciation of the original name.

⁴² Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 2987; Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, p. 758a.

⁴³ Ibn al-Athīr 12:192 begins here.

⁴⁴ *ODB*, 3:2039–40.

source, as it mentions Rukn al-Dīn, who died in June 1204, as being the ruler of the Seljuqs, and it refers to Boniface being given north-western Anatolia as his portion of the empire, which was a realistic issue only in early 1204, as thereafter Boniface became ruler of Thessalonike. Both of these elements of Ibn al-Athīr's account point to sources who initially reported their information shortly after the fall of Constantinople.

Ibn al-Athīr's remarkable account leaves us with a question concerning his sources of information. Through his association with the Zangid court of Mosul, Ibn al-Athīr would have had access to merchants, scholars or diplomats coming to the city from Seljuq Anatolia. My tentative conclusion is that behind Ibn al-Athīr's report we have two separate sources. The first was a Christian – either Byzantine or Syriac – who relayed the stories about the sacrilege against Byzantine icons, the massacre at Hagia Sophia, and Frankish affairs. The other is probably a diplomatic source from the Seljuq court, who was informing the Zangid rulers at Mosul about the shifting situation in Constantinople. He was the source for, among other things, the information about Byzantine overtures to the Seljuq prince Rukn al-Dīn for military assistance, and the rise to power of Theodore Laskaris in western Anatolia after the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders. Ibn al-Athīr's account thus seems to contain two independent, contemporary primary sources for the Fourth Crusade.

Later Arab Historians

As time progressed, the fall of Constantinople to the Franks faded rapidly from the historical memory of the Arabs. The Frankish empire was relatively short-lived, after which the Byzantines returned to power and the old order was at least in theory restored. This is reflected in the account of the great chronicler of the Ayyubid dynasty, Ibn Wāsil, writing in the mid-1260s, shortly after the restoration of Byzantine power:⁴⁵

The land of the Byzantines remained in Byzantine hands from ancient times until this year [= 1204]. In this year the Franks set out from their lands in a great multitude, and besieged [Constantinople] and snatched it from the Byzantines. It remained in Frankish hands until the year 660 [1261], when the Byzantines attacked and captured it from the Franks; it has remained in Byzantine control until today [in the mid-1260s].⁴⁶

The great fourteenth century historian Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) includes a paraphrase of Ibn al-Athīr's account of the Fourth Crusade,⁴⁷ adding to it information about the recovery of Constantinople by the Byzantines and a brief summary

⁴⁵ Gamal el-Din el-Shayyal, "Ibn Wāsil," *EI*, 3:967.

⁴⁶ Ibn Wāsil, 3:160.

⁴⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, 2:486–88.

of subsequent events bringing the story up to his own time.⁴⁸ Among fifteenth century historians, however, the Frankish empire at Constantinople essentially disappears. Maqrīzī (1364–1442), one of the greatest Arab historians of Egypt, writing in 1430s,⁴⁹ had only this to say: “In this year the Franks took possession of Constantinople from the Byzantines.”⁵⁰ Maqrīzī was not uninterested in the wars between the crusaders and the Muslims, as in the same year he has several paragraphs describing skirmishing with the crusaders near Acre and the Frankish raid on the Nile. Ibn Taghrībirdī (1409–70), a splendid historian of fifteenth-century Mamluk Egypt writing in the 1450s,⁵¹ has no mention of the fall of Constantinople to the Franks at all.⁵²

The odd thing is that both of these historians had access to Ibn al-Athīr, who provided this detailed and broadly accurate account. They thus could have at least copied Ibn al-Athīr’s account of the 1204 Crusade, but chose not to include it in their histories. For the Arabs it had become irrelevant. If the Christians squabbled among themselves for control of Constantinople, this was ultimately irrelevant to the true meaning of history, which played itself out *within* the Islamic world, not on the Christian fringes. It was only in 1453, when the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror finally fulfilled the earlier apocalyptic expectations and captured Constantinople from the Byzantines that a new age dawned. For most Arabs, the events of 1204 were merely a rather uninteresting prologue.

⁴⁸ Ibn Khaldūn, 2:488.

⁴⁹ F. Rosenthal, “Makrizi,” *EI*, 6:193.

⁵⁰ Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Ma’rifat Duwal al-Mulūk*, 1/2:163.

⁵¹ W. Popper, “Abu’l-Mahāsīn ibn Taghrībirdī,” *EI*, 1:138.

⁵² Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhira fī Mulūk Misr w’-al-Qāhira* (Cairo, 1936), 6:184–86.

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