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## THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF BYZANTIUM'S POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY WITH THE WEST IN THE NINTH CENTURY

Sviatoslav Dmitriev

Relations between Byzantium and the West took a new turn in the ninth century, when a bitter correspondence exchange erupted between emperor Michael III and pope Nicholas I, and between Michael III's eventual successor Emperor Basil I and Louis II ("the Younger," the son of Lothair I), the king of Italy. Michael III's letter to the pope referred to the Latin language as "barbarian" and "Scythian."<sup>1</sup> Nicholas I retaliated by questioning the validity of the official title of Byzantine rulers as "Emperors of the Romans," because the language of the Byzantines was not that of the ancient Romans. Basil I's letter asserted the presence of only one Roman emperor, in Constantinople, and the inheritance of the Roman imperial title by descent so that it could not belong to a foreign "nation" (εθνος). In response, Louis II styled himself *imperator Augustus Romanorum* and addressed Basil I as *imperator novae Romae*, pointing out that Basil's subjects were "Greeks."<sup>2</sup>

This famous controversy has traditionally been elucidated with reference to the Photian schism and the growing papal authority, and, thus, presented as a ninth century phenomenon.<sup>3</sup> A more recent examination has pointed to the widening cultural gap between the Latin West and the Greek East and the rise of "Roman

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<sup>1</sup>Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453. I. Teil: Regesten von 565-1025, ed. F. DÖLGER, Munich—Berlin 1924, pp. 56-57, n° 464 ("ca. 865"). See T.C. LOUNGHIS, *Les ambassades byzantines en Occident depuis la fondation des états barbares jusqu' aux Croisades: 407-1096*, Athens 1980, p. 189; T. S. BROWN, *The Background of Byzantine Relations with Italy in the Ninth Century*, in *Byzantium and the West, c.850-c.1200*, ed. J. HOWARD-JOHNSTON, Amsterdam 1988, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>Nicholas I: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV*, ed. E. DÜMMLER and E. PERELS, Berlin 1925 (*MGH Epp. 6*), pp. 454-487, n° 88 (A.D. 865). Basil I: *Regesten I...*, cit., p. 59, n° 871 (A.D. 871). Louis II: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*, ed. G. LAEHR and E.L.E. CASPAR, Berlin 1928 (*MGH Epp. 7*), pp. 386-394 = *Chronicon Salernitanum*, ed. U. WESTERBERGH, Stockholm 1956, pp. 107-121 (for this title for Louis II, see n. 95 below).

<sup>3</sup>E.g., A. MICHEL, *Sprache und Schisma*, in *Festschrift Kardinal Faulhaber*, Munich 1949, p. 47; F. DVORNIK, *Le schisme de Photius*, Paris 1950, pp. 162-163; W. ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Relation of Clerical to Lay Power*, 3rd ed., London 1970, pp. 110-111, 216-219; W. BERSCHIN, *Griechisch-lateinisches Mittelalter. Von Hieronymus zu Nikolaus von Kues*, Bern—Munich 1980, p. 39; V. PERI, "Universalità" culturale cristiana dei due sacri imperi romani, in *Europa medievale e mondo Bizantino*, ed. G. ARNALDI and G. CAVALLO, Rome 1997, pp. 136-158.

antiquarianism” in Byzantium.<sup>4</sup> While such interpretations are legitimate, there seems to have been more behind this exchange of correspondence than modern studies have allowed: although the traditional approach is well justified, the seemingly sudden outburst of controversy between the named rulers, and the very nature of the arguments used by both sides, suggest a much wider historical and cultural context.

## 1.

Even a quick glance shows that this exchange of letters reflected a dichotomy between the concepts of “Greek” and “Roman,” which allows us to trace the roots of this argument several centuries into the past. The cultural division that separated Byzantium from both Roman antiquity and the contemporary, Latin-speaking, western Mediterranean most prominently revealed itself in the works of Byzantine authors in the sixth century. Among others, Agathias provided Greek translations and explanations of Latin terms, with references to why “the Romans” spoke this way, thus indicating that his “Romans” meant Latin-speakers.<sup>5</sup> Malalas used “Roman” to designate authors writing in Latin (including Vergil, Pliny the Elder, Livy, and the much more recent Eutropius), as did George the Syncellus, who also distinguished between texts written by the “Greeks” and the “Romans.”<sup>6</sup> Lydus offered Greek translations from Latin, much like other Byzantines did for other languages, and defined Latin as the “language of the Romans.”<sup>7</sup> His phrases like “until now the Romans say,” “the Romans still today call,” or “the Romans call,” pertained to the Latin-speaking population of Italy that was then oppressed by the Ostrogoths.<sup>8</sup> The need to offer Greek translations of Latin words and the contrast made between the “Roman speech” and “our” or “Greek speech” also revealed the Byzantines’ Greek cultural identity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>E.g., A. MARKOPOULOS, *Roman Antiquarianism. Aspects of the Roman Past in the Middle Byzantine period: 9th-11th c.*, in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London 21-26 August 2006), ed. E. JEFFREYS and F.K. HAARER, vol. 1, Aldershot 2006, p. 281.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., Agath. *Hist.* 5.3.10 and 1.19.4 with Lyd. *De mag.* 3.37.

<sup>6</sup>E.g., Ioannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, ed. H. THURN, Berlin 2000, pp. 162, 178, 215, and 209, respectively; Georgius Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*, ed. A.A. MOSSHAMMER, Leipzig 1984, p. 375, ll. 1-2, and p. 418, ll. 18-20.

<sup>7</sup>E.g., John Lydus, *De ostentis*, ed. C. WACHSMUTH, Leipzig 1863, 10 (Campestrius), 27 tit. (Figulus), 39 tit. (Fonteius), 42 tit. (Labeo), 54 (Vitellius), 59 tit. (Clodius Tuscus), and Lyd. *De mag.* 1.14 (Aurelius), 1.26 and 34 (Gaius), 1.50 (Paulus), and 3.12 and 20. Cf. Greek translations for Turkish and Egyptian words in Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 7.9.2 and 7.17.8, respectively.

<sup>8</sup>E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.7, 1.8, 1.12, 1.21, 1.24, 1.28, 1.29, 1.30, 2.4, 2.7, 3.7, 3.10, 4.1, 4.4 etc. Lyd. *De mag.* 1.8, 1.10, 1.16, 1.23, 1.32, 1.35, 1.42, 1.46, 2.2 etc.

<sup>9</sup>E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 4.30, 4.33, 4.34; *De mag.* 1.9 and 1.10, 1.12 and 1.21, and 2.12 (Ελλάδι φωνῇ and τῇ Ῥωμαίον φωνῇ). Cf. those “who write in both languages”: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 1.35 and juxtaposing of “Roman” words with those in other languages: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 1.21 and 22 (the Sabines).

Contemporary authors in the western Mediterranean shared the perception of separation between Greek-speaking culture and the one based on Latin, which they similarly called “Roman.” Boethius developed the idea of translating all the works of Plato, Aristotle and other Greek authors into Latin to make them accessible for the Romans (*ut Graecorum dogmata doctrinam faceris esse Romanam*), whereas Gregory of Tours spoke of the Byzantines as “the Greeks” and juxtaposed Latin as “our language” (*litterae nostrae*) to the “custom of the Greeks” (*sicut Graeci habent*).<sup>10</sup> While some might question the truthfulness of Gregory the Great’s lamentations on his ignorance of Greek, one can hardly doubt his occasional references that Greek letters he received had to be translated into Latin, and that those that he wrote in Latin for his Byzantine correspondents needed to be translated into Greek.<sup>11</sup> Jordanes set aside “Greek histories” from “Latin histories” and provided translations of Greek terms, just as Isidore of Seville distinguished between *Graeci et Latini*, by dividing texts on the basis of their language. Isidore’s *Graeci* were people who used the Greek language, or *sermo Graecus*, as opposed to Latin.<sup>12</sup>

Although language was the most visible reflection of cultural differences, it was far from the only one. In fact, linguistic explanations, such as those of Ioannes Lydus in the East and Isidore of Seville in the West, showed that the difference in language was only a tiny part of the overall cultural divide between “Romans” and “Greeks,” ranging from astronomical contemplations to religious beliefs and daily diet. For example, Lydus contrasted the opinions of Aristotle, Heraclites, and Pytheas from Massalia on the nature of tides and ebbs of the sea with those of “Roman philosophers,” and showed that the flooding of the Nile had been interpreted in different ways by “the Greeks” (Anaxagoras, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) and “the Romans” (adducing the opinion of Seneca as “the greatest of Roman philosophers”).<sup>13</sup> The “Romans” and “Greeks” also began their year at different times; celebrated different feast days; adhered to different diets and modes of behavior; offered different types of religious venerations at different times; and not only gave different names but also different forms to their deities: “the Greeks”

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<sup>10</sup>Boëthius: *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, ed. TH. MOMMSEN, Berlin 1894 (MGH Auct.Ant. 12), p. 40, ll. 7-8 and 11-14. “The Greeks”: *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis libri Historiarum X*, ed. B. KRUSCH and W. LEVISON, Hannover 1951 (MGH SS rer. Merov. 2 1/1), p. 310, l. 14 and p. 316, l. 5. Latin: *ivi*, p. 254, ll. 3-4.

<sup>11</sup>S. *Gregori Magni Registrum epistularum*, ed. D.L. NORBERG, Turnhout 1982 (CCSL, 140), n° 7, l. 29, and n° 11, l. 55, with A.J. EKONOMOU, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes. Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590-752*, Lanham 2007, pp. 14-15, 33-34. Translations: *ivi*, n° 10, l. 10 and n° 3, l. 63 respectively.

<sup>12</sup>*Iordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. TH. MOMMSEN, Berlin 1882 (MGH Auct.Ant. 5/1), pp. 54, 56, 88. E.g., Isid. *Etym.* 13.15.1, 13.19.6, 13.21.17, 14.3.15, 18.6.4, etc. The Greek language: e.g., 13.5.1, 13.18.6.

<sup>13</sup>Lyd. *De mag.* 1.47 and 63; Lyd. *De mens.* 4.64, 4.83, and 107.

uniquely presented Fate as a bull, and Hermes as a square.<sup>14</sup> In the West, Isidore distinguished between the customs and perceptions of “Romans” and “Greeks,” including their understanding of the philosophical concept of matter, and the origin of circus horse races. Western canonical works, like the *Penitential* by Theodore, the archbishop of Canterbury (668-690) and a Greek himself, divided between the religious habits of the “Greeks” and the “Romans,” or *secundum graecos* and *secundum romanos*, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

In cultural terms, therefore, the Byzantines were “Greeks,” as opposed to the Latin-speaking “Romans.” In political terms, however, the Byzantines were “Romans”: Agathias distinguished Byzantines as “Romans” versus the Goths, the Franks, or “barbarians”; Simocatta referred to Byzantines as “Romans” by juxtaposing them with the Persians, Armenians, Iberians, and others; Malalas contrasted the Byzantine “Romans” with the Huns and Persians; the so-called *Strategicon* (generally dated to the sixth century) set “Romans” against the Persians, Scythians, and other “foreigners”; and Lydus separated the Byzantine “Romans” from the Persians, Gauls, Franks, Vandals, Goths, Scythians, or simply “barbarians.”<sup>16</sup> The contrast between the Roman Empire and “nations” could only be political, because the population of the Byzantine Empire appears to have been ethnically diverse.<sup>17</sup> The same follows from its linguistic diversity, which is not surprising since there had been a similar situation in the ancient Roman Empire.<sup>18</sup> The dichotomy between the Roman political stance of the Byzantines and their Greek cultural identity is nicely illustrated by Evagrius and Simocatta (in the late 6th and early 7th century, respectively) in their narrations of the story about the restoration of a gem-studded golden cross by Chosroes II to the Byzantine Sergiopolis. Whereas this cross had been captured by the Persians during their attack on the “Roman state”

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<sup>14</sup>Calendar: Lyd. *De mens.* 3.7, 3.17, 4.1. Festal days: 3.10 (*neomenia*) and 3.13. The Roman celebration: 3.11, 3.13, 4.3, 4.80. The diet: 3.11, 3.13, 4.42, 4.80, 4.135, 4.158. Behavior: 4.57, 4.65, 4.67, 4.89, 4.106. Religious veneration: 4.10, 4.25, 4.29, 4.49, 4.72, 4.76, 4.82, 4.94. Names: 4.51, 4.64, 4.75 with 4.30. Forms: 4.46 and 4.76.

<sup>15</sup>Isid. *Etym.* 13.3.1 and 18.28.2. Theod. *Penit.* 3.8.

<sup>16</sup>The Goths: e.g., Agath. *Hist.* 1.5.3-4, 1.8.1. Franks: 1.15.5-9. “Barbarians”: 5.21.1. E.g., Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 3.12.9, 3.15.11, 3.17.2. The Huns: Ioannes Malalas, *Chronographia...*, cit., pp. 432, 437; the Persians: *ivi*, pp. 427, 431, 441. The Persians: *Strategikon*, 1.1; the Scythians: 7B.11; the “foreigners” (*ethnikoi*): 1.2, 7B.15. The Persians: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 3.33-34, 3.51, 3.55. Gauls and Franks: Lyd. *De ost.* 4; *De mag.* 1.50, 3.56. Vandals: Lyd. *De mag.* 2.2, 3.55. Goths: 3.55, 3.56. Scythians: 3.56. “Barbarians”: 1.8, 3.1, 3.43, 3.55.

<sup>17</sup>E.g., Procop. *Goth.* 1.9.27: Belisarius both referred to himself as a commander of Roman troops (ὑπ' ἐμοῦ Τρωμαίων στρατηγοῦντος), and noted that there was a multitude of barbarians in his army (βάρβαροι πολλοί μοι τὸ πλῆθος ἐν τῷ στρατοπέδῳ εἰστίν). The Isaurian Zeno and the Latin-speaking Justinian from Thrace were surrounded by people of diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Longinus, who was “a Roman general, an Isaurian by birth”: Procop. *Build.* 3.6.23, and many others (see below).

<sup>18</sup>Cf. C. RAPP, *Hellenic Identity, Romanitas, and Christianity in Byzantium*, in *Hellenism: culture, identity, and ethnicity from antiquity to modernity*, ed. K. ZACHARIA, Aldershot 2008, p. 135: “If we look at the map of the distribution of languages spoken at the time of the largest extent of Byzantium under Justinian, it comes as a surprise that Greek was the mother tongue in less than one-third of the empire.”

(*Romània*), when Justinian I held the “Roman sceptres,” Chosroes communicated with the Byzantines in Greek. Early in the eighth century, Bede referred to rulers in Constantinople as “Roman emperors,” while speaking of Latin as the “language of the Romans” and juxtaposing it to Greek. Later in that century, as the project of the marriage between Constantine VI and Charlemagne’s daughter Rotrud was under way, Constantine’s mother—the widowed empress Irene—sent the *notarius* Elissarius “to teach [Rotrud] the literature and language of the Greeks (τὰ τε τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλῶσσαν) and to educate her in the customs of the Roman Empire (τὰ ἥθη τῆς Ρωμαίων βασιλείας).” Still later, Leo VI mentioned how his father, Basil I, made Slavic nations “Greek” (γραικώσας) and used the “Roman model” to establish their organization (κατὰ τὸν Ρωμαϊκὸν τύπον ύποτάξας).<sup>19</sup>

Byzantium’s double identity, cultural (“Greek”) and political (“Roman”), posed a problem<sup>20</sup> to which the Byzantines responded by adjusting their cultural and political identities in several ways. One was to refer to their Latin-speaking contemporaries in the West as “Italians” (*Ιταλοί*), because although they spoke Latin, they were not Romans and had no right to the Roman political inheritance.<sup>21</sup> Hence, Lydus mentioned “Marcus Flavius” as an “Italian (grammatician),” just as Agathias called Asinius Quadratus “an Italian, who wrote an accurate account of German affairs” and also spoke of the affairs of “the Italians and the Franks.”<sup>22</sup> These references cannot be explained simply by the contemporaneous Ostrogothic domination of Italy, since in such cases ‘Italian’ meant Latin, irrespective of whether it was applied to the language used in the western or the eastern Mediterranean. For example, Lydus marked the words *regium* and *imperare* as those used by the “Italians” and noted “there was an ancient law that all matters being transacted in any way whatsoever by the prefects, and perhaps by the other magistracies as well, be expressed in the words of the Italians” (τοῖς Ιταλῶν ἐκφωνεῖσθαι ρήμασιν). At the same time, he observed that according to both this law and the ancient custom public officials in Byzantium used the “language of the Italians,” even though they were, for the most part, “Greeks.” His observation was perfectly correct: he himself was from Lydia; the pretorian prefects he mentioned were from Egypt (Cyrus), Lydia (Zoticus), and Cappadocia (Ioannes), whereas the main person behind Justinian’s legal code, Tribonian, was born in Pamphylia. Lydus’ contemporary, Procopius approached this

<sup>19</sup>Chosroes II: Evagr. *Hist.Eccl.* 6.21; Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 5.13.2-4, 5.14.1. Bede, *Hist.Eccl.* 2.16. Latin as opposed to Greek: 3.2; 4.1; 4.2; 4.13; 5.20; 5.23. On Byzantine emperors as rulers of the Roman empire, see n. 34 below. Irene: *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. DE BOOR, vol. 1, Leipzig 1883, p. 455, ll. 23-25. Leo, *Tact.* 18.95.

<sup>20</sup>E.g., C. RAPP, *Hellenic Identity...*, cit., p. 141.

<sup>21</sup>E.g., Lyd. *De mens.* 1.13, 1.32, 4.157, 4.174; *De ost.* 16; *De mag.* 1.3, 1.4, 1.11, 1.16, 1.30, 1.47, 1.50, 2.4, 2.7, 2.16, 2.20 (education), 2.27, 3.7, 3.11, 3.20, 3.49, 3.59, 3.68, 3.73.

<sup>22</sup>Lyd. *De mens.* 1.8 (cf. *De ost.* 3); Agath. *Hist.* 1.6.3 (= *FGrH* 97 F 21) and 2.14.11.

problem from a different perspective, noting that the Byzantines were “the Romans speaking Greek.”<sup>23</sup>

Another way the Byzantines chose to adjust their cultural identity was to emphasize the official use of Latin. This was not an easy task because Latin had become an antiquated language used by the legal and administrative élite of the Byzantine Empire,<sup>24</sup> and, at the same time, as we have just seen, Latin was both the “language of the Romans” and the “language of the Italians.” And yet Justinianic documents labeled Latin as the “paternal language” (ἡ πάτριος φωνή), while Lydus referred to “Roman speech” (or “as the Romans say”) using expressions “in the ancestral fashion” (πατρίως), “paternal language” (ἡ πάτριος φωνή), and in other similar ways.<sup>25</sup> The decline in the official use of Latin had not only cultural but also political significance, undermining the traditional foundations of state administration and, simultaneously, the status of Byzantium as the Roman Empire.<sup>26</sup>

The Byzantines of the sixth century also adjusted their political identity as the Romans. Lydus reflected the views of his contemporaries when he referred to “our state” when speaking about Rome of the past, and “our side” when talking about past military conflicts and diplomatic negotiations, and when he traced the origin of the Byzantine army to that of the Romans. It is certainly not accidental that the earliest literary references to Constantinople as the “new Rome” were also made at that time: first, in the reign of Justinian I, by Paul the Silentary, and, then, in the epic eulogy on Justin II, Justinian’s nephew and successor, by Corippus.<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly,

<sup>23</sup>Lyd. *De mag.* 1.3 and 4 (παρ’ Ἰταλοῖς λέγεται), 3.68 (incl. καίπερ Ἐλληνας ἐκ τοῦ πλείονος ὄντας, τῇ τῶν Ἰταλῶν φθέγγεσθαι φωνῆ). Procop. *Goth.* 3.1.28 (λογοθέτην τὴν τιμὴν ταύτην ἐλληνίζοντες καλοῦσι Τρωμαῖοι). Cf. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematibus*, ed. A. PERTUSI, Vatican 1952, p. 60, pr., ll. 24-25 (μάλιστα ἐλληνίζοντες καὶ τὴν πάτριον καὶ ῥωμαϊκὴν γλῶτταν ἀποβαλόντες).

<sup>24</sup>E.g., N. JORGA, *Der lateinische Westen und der byzantinische Osten in ihrer Wechselbeziehungen während des Mittelalters*, in *Studium Lipsiense. Ehrengabe für K. Lamprecht*, Berlin 1909, p. 93 (“das künstliche Lateinertum”); F. SCHNEIDER, *Rom und Romgedanke im Mittelalter*, Munich 1926, p. 124 (“sermo scholasticus”); G. DAGRON, *Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: langue de culture et langue d’État*, *Revue Historique*, 241-242/1969, pp. 23-56 = *idem*, *La romanité chrétienne en Orient*, London 1984, I; M. MAAS, *John Lydus and the Roman Past*, London—New York 1992, pp. 25, 32; F. MILLAR, *A Greek Roman Empire: Power and Belief under Theodosius II, 408-450*, Berkeley—Los Angeles 2006, pp. 19-20, 83-93. Pace AV. CAMERON, *Old and New Rome: Roman Studies in Sixth-Century Constantinople*, in *Transformations of late antiquity. Essays for Peter Brown*, ed. PH. ROUSSEAU and E. PAPOUTSAKIS, Burlington 2009, pp. 15-36.

<sup>25</sup>The “paternal language”: B. ROCETTE, *Le latin dans le monde grec*, Brussels 1997, p. 142 (with fnn. 352-353). E.g., ἡ Τρωμαίων φωνή: Lyd. *De mens.* 1.12, 4.47, 4.169; *De mag.* 3.29; πατρίως: *De mens.* 1.21, 1.30, 3.10, 3.22, 4.3, 4.64, 4.72, 4.76, 4.102, 4.106, 4.158; *De mag.* 1.20, 1.42, 1.46, 2.13, 2.14, 3.32; ἡ πάτριος φωνή: *De mens.* 4.112; *De mag.* 1.50 (τῇ πατρίῳ Τρωμαίων φωνῇ), 2.3; other ways: *De mens.* 1.30; *De mag.* 1.32, 2.12, 2.13, 2.30, 3.2, 3.7, 3.8.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. DAGRON, *Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine...*, cit., p. 44 (with fn. 7): on Latin as “la langue historique de l’Empire”; C. KELLY, *John Lydus and the eastern Pretorian prefecture*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 98/2005, p. 433: Ioannes argues “for the continued significance of ancient Roman practices and traditions.”

<sup>27</sup>“Our state”: e.g., Lyd. *De mag.* 1.2-3, 2.23. “Our side”: e.g., 3.52. Army: e.g., 1.12. *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius. Kunstbeschreibungen justinianischer Zeit*, ed. P. FRIEDLÄNDER, Leipzig 1912, p. 231, ll. 164-165. Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 1: 344, in *Corippi Africani grammatici libri qui supersunt*, ed. J. F. M. PARTSCH, Berlin 1879 (*MGH*

Byzantine authors presented the city of Rome as the “elder Rome” (as did Agathias and Simocatta), or as the “first” reigning city and the “mother of (our) state,” and the city of Constantinople as “our Rome” (as did Lydus).<sup>28</sup> According to the Byzantine theory of the *translatio imperii*, which is also thought to have emerged in the sixth century, Constantinople had replaced Rome as the seat of the Roman Empire.<sup>29</sup> The reign of Justinian witnessed the earliest references to a Byzantine ruler as the “Emperor of the Romans.”<sup>30</sup> It was in the sixth century—not merely in direct connection with Byzantine campaigns in the West, but also as a response to the challenges these campaigns posed to the Byzantines’ identity—that both the theory of the *translatio imperii* and the idea of Constantinople as the “new Rome” developed in Byzantium, as well as the urge to date all documents, both in the East and the West, after regnal years of emperors in Constantinople (*Nov.* 47.1 [A.D. 537]). In a similar fashion, the eventual switch to Greek as the official language of the Byzantine Empire during the reign of Heraclius<sup>31</sup> was counterbalanced by the introduction of the official title of the Byzantine emperors as “Emperors of the Romans” in the seventh century.<sup>32</sup>

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Auct. Ant. 3/2), p. 126; see also Corippus, *In laudem Iustini*, 3: 156 (p. 141), 3: 247 (p. 143), 4: 138-141 (p. 151), with F. DÖLGER, *Byzanz und die Europäische Staatenwelt*, Ettal 1953, p. 95; W. HAMMER, *The Concept of the New and Second Rome in the Middle Ages*, *Speculum* 19/1944, pp. 52-53.

<sup>28</sup>E.g., Agath. *Hist.* 5.6.5; Theoph. Simoc. *Hist.* 3.4.8, 8.11.9; Lyd. *De mag.* 2.20 (cf. 2.30) and 3.1, and 1.20, 2.30.

<sup>29</sup>E.g., Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, trans. R.J. JENKINS, Washington 1967, ch. 27, ll. 6-7 (τὸ ἀνελθεῖν τὸ βασιλεῖον ἐν Κωνσταντίνουπόλει); Michael Attaleiates, *History*, in Miguel Ataliates, *Historia*, ed. I. PÉREZ MARTÍN, Madrid 2002, 159 = *Michaelis Attaliotae Historia*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1853, 217-218; Anna Comnena, The *Alexiad* 1.13.4, in *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. D.R. REINSCH and A. KAMBYLIS, vol. 1, Berlin and New York 2001, 44; Ioannes Cinnamus, *Epitome rerum a Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. MEINEKE, Bonn 1836, p. 119, l. 20—p. 120, l. 1, and p. 219, ll. 11-13; Laonicus Chalcocandylas, *Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. E. DARKÓ, vol. 1, Budapest 1922, p. 4, ll. 12-13. This dating of the theory of the *translatio imperii*: DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 99 (with fn. 48), p. 292 (with fn. 11). L. BRÉHIER, *Les institutions de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris 1949, p. 12; D.M. NICOL, *The Byzantine View of Western Europe*, GRBS 8/1967, pp. 323-324; H. HUNGER, *Graeculus perfidus*, Ἰταλὸς ἵταμός. *Il senso dell' alterità nei rapporti greco-romani ed italo-bizantini*, Rome 1987, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup>L. BRÉHIER, *L'origine des titres impériaux à Byzance*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 15/1906, p. 170 (with fn. 2): βασιλεὺς Πρωπαίων.

<sup>31</sup>E.g., W. OHNSORGE, *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelalter*, Hildesheim 1947, p. 15 (“Das völlig gräzisierte Konstantinopel umfasste praktisch nicht mehr den gesamten römischen Erdkreis”); W. OHNSORGE, *Konstantinopel im politischen Denken der Ottonenzeit*, in *Polychronion. Festschrift Franz Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. P. WIRTH, Heidelberg 1966, p. 398; M. McCORMICK, *Byzantium and the West: 700-900*, in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, Cambridge 1995, p. 351.

<sup>32</sup>E.g., DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 297, 320 fn. 68; OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., pp. 11, 18; P. CLASSEN, *Romanum gubernans imperium. Zur Vorgeschichte der Kaisertitulatur Karls des Grossen*, Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters 9/1951, pp. 113-114 (coins) and 115 (texts); O. TREITINGER, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, Darmstadt 1956, 186; A. KALDELLIS, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 65-66. Other views: E. K. CHRYSOS, *The Title Βασιλεύς in Early Byzantine International Relations*, DOP 32/1978, pp. 29-34; G. RÖSCH, *Onoma basileias. Studien zum offiziellen Gebrauch der Kaisertitel in Spätantike und frühbyzantinischer Zeit*, Vienna 1978, pp. 112-113, 116.

## 2.

The danger concealed in the dichotomy between the evolving cultural identity of the Byzantines as “Greeks” and their claimed political identity as “Romans,” which revealed itself in the sixth century and provoked a variety of responses, remained merely a potential problem for some time. While contemporary Latin-speaking authors did not necessarily share all the views of the Byzantines, they too contemplated the meaning of “Roman” on the basis of connecting past and present: Cassiodorus and Gregory of Tours still saw the Roman Empire as one whole, identifying both ancient Romans and all their contemporaries who were distinct from the barbarians as “Romans.”<sup>33</sup> Authors in the West agreed that rulers in Constantinople were successors to the old Roman emperors. The popes, including Gregory the Great, Honorius, and Sergius, continued to date documents by the regnal years of emperors in Constantinople, as did Bede, who spoke of them as rulers of the “Roman Empire,” simultaneously placing them in the direct line of succession from Augustus and synchronizing his universal chronicle with their regnal years.<sup>34</sup> The proceedings of the Council of Paris (A.D. 825) and the biography of Charlemagne written by Einhard in c.826-827 similarly had no problems with concurrently qualifying the Byzantines as “Greeks” and the Byzantine rulers as “Emperors of the Romans.”<sup>35</sup>

However, Greek cultural identity turned into a major liability once Western Europe became politically consolidated.<sup>36</sup> As they were “Greeks” in cultural terms, the Byzantines could also be presented as “Greeks” politically and, therefore, disqualify themselves as the successors to Roman political identity. The earliest challenges of this kind emerged in the ninth century, in connection with the crowning of Charlemagne in 800. The problem of Charlemagne’s new title has been extensively debated for several reasons: Charlemagne saw his status differently from the papacy; the Byzantines saw his status differently from Charlemagne; and Western texts would ultimately reinterpret his status in retrospect. Charlemagne’s official documents

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<sup>33</sup>The entire *imperium Romanum*: *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae...*, cit., p. 88, l. 34. Ancient Romans: *ivi*, p. 103, l. 11, and p. 106, l. 11. Opposed to “barbarians”: e.g., *ivi*, p. 91, l. 14; p. 279, ll. 4 and 11; p. 286, ll. 6-7; p. 334, l. 16 etc., including Goths: e.g., *ivi*, p. 91, l. 24; p. 103, l. 15; p. 135, l. 21; p. 235, l. 6, and p. 257, l. 20. Ancient Romans: Gregor. *Hist.* 16.12, 28.1. As opposed to “barbarians”: e.g., *ivi*, 35.19, 53.1, 55.15, 58, 61.5 etc.

<sup>34</sup>Bede, *HE*, 1.22, 1.34, 2.18, 3.4, 5.7. The direct line of succession: e.g., *ivi*, 1.13, 1.23. Synchronization: e.g., *ivi*, 5.7. Cameron’s concept of the “level of ‘Romanness’” appears to mix the Byzantines’ political and cultural identities: CAMERON, *Old and New Rome...*, cit., p. 17 (“knowledge of Latin, consciousness of Roman tradition, and Roman self-identity”).

<sup>35</sup>*Concilia Aevi Karolini II*, ed. A. WERMINGHOFF, Hannover 1908 (*MGH Conc.* 2/2), p. 523, ll. 23-24: *summi Dei ecclesiae filii, Michahel et Theophile, gloriosi veriter et sublimiter a Deo exaltati imperatores Romanorum*. Cf. *ivi*, p. 525, ll. 5-6: *omnis senatus totius gentis seu imperii Francorum*, and Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. G.H. PERTZ and G. WAITZ, Hannover 1880 (*MGH SS rer. Germ.* 25), pp. 20, 28 (the Byzantines as “the Greeks”), and 32 (rulers in Constantinople as “Roman emperors”).

<sup>36</sup>E.g., M. McCORMICK, *Byzantium’s role in the formation of early Medieval civilization*, ICS 12/1987, p. 211.

presented him as *imperator Romanum gubernans imperium*, which was inferior to the “Emperor of the Romans,” while his coins bore the title *imp(erator) aug(ustus)*.<sup>37</sup> The latter could have been connected with Michael I’s alleged acknowledgement of Charlemagne as *Imperator* and *Augustus* in 812.<sup>38</sup> We we cannot trust, however, the biased, “quasi-official” (in Noble’s words), Frankish source on this important issue: in all probability, Michael I acknowledged Charlemagne as “king” (βόηξ), in line with the earlier Roman emperors’ conferral of royal titles on foreign dynasts.<sup>39</sup> The Franks were certainly willing to translate it as “Emperor,” but Charlemagne and his descendants were still “kings” to the Byzantines: Theophanes spoke of Charlemagne as the “king of the Franks,” while the co-emperors Michael II and Theophilus addressed Louis the Pious as “the glorious king of the Franks and Lombards, who is also called emperor by them.”<sup>40</sup> Likewise, rejecting the self-proclaimed imperial title of Louis II (“the Stammerer”), Nicetas David of Paphlagonia and Constantine VII called him the “king of France.”<sup>41</sup> It was even less likely that Charlemagne was recognized as “Emperor of the Romans,” regardless of whether he himself wished to have this title. Michael I pointedly added “of the Romans” to his title on Byzantine coins, which now carried the full title of the Byzantine emperor: *basileus ton*

<sup>37</sup> Documents: CLASSEN, *Romanum gubernans imperium...*, cit., pp. 103, 119 fn. 17; DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 300 fn. 22; W. OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz*, Darmstadt 1958, pp. 112, 119 (with fn. 32), 122, 124. Coins: OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., p. 29; E.L.E. CASPAR, *Das Papsttum unter fränkischer Herrschaft*, Darmstadt 1956, p. 145; P. GRIERSON, *The Carolingian Empire in the Eyes of Byzantium*, in *Nascita dell’ Europa ed Europa carolingia: un’ equazione da verificare*, Spoleto 1981, p. 911. Cf. *Epistolae Karolini Aevi II*, ed. E. DÜMMLER, Berlin 1895 (MGH Epp. 4), p. 556, ll. 1-2: *Karolus divina largiente gratia imperator et augustus idemque rex Francorum et Langobardorum* (A.D. 813).

<sup>38</sup> *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. F. KURZE and G.H. PERTZ, Hannover 1895 (MGH SS rer. Germ. 6), p. 136: *Aquisgrani, ubi ad imperatorem venerunt, scriptum pacti ab eo in ecclesia suscipientes more suo, id est Greca lingua, laudes ei dixerunt, imperatorem eum et basileum appellants* (A.D. 812). See DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 307 (with fn. 42); F.-L. GANSHOF, *Histoire des relations internationales*, I: *Le moyen âge*, Paris 1953, p. 46; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., p. 26; LOUNGHIS, *Les ambassades...*, cit., p. 144 (with fn. 1), 161 (with footnotes); R. FOLZ, *The Coronation of Charlemagne*, London 1974, pp. 173-174; T.F.X. NOBLE, *The Republic of St. Peter. The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825*, Philadelphia 1984, p. 297; P. CLASSEN, *Karl der Grosse, das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Begründung des Karolingischen Kaisertums*<sup>3</sup>, Sigmaringen 1985, pp. 94-95.

<sup>39</sup> DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 303-305, 307-308, 326-327; TREITINGER, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee...*, cit., p. 190; NOBLE, *The Republic of St. Peter...*, cit., p. 295.

<sup>40</sup> *Theophanis Chronographia...*, cit., p. 475, l. 12. *Concilia Aevi Karolini II...*, cit., p. 475, ll. 30-32: *Michahel et Theophilus, fideles in ipso Deo imperatores Romanorum, dilecto et honorabili fratro Hludowico, glorioso regi Francorum et Langobardorum et vocato eorum imperatori*. For this title of Louis, see Liudprand, *Legatio 7: Langobardorum seu Francorum imperator*.

<sup>41</sup> See references to him as ὁ βόηξ Φραγγίας in Nicetas David Paphlagon, *S. Ignatii Archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani vita*, in P.G. 105: 537B and Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio...*, cit., ch. 29, ll. 104-105, 117-118, 122, 151-152, 154, 162, 163-164, 165, 169. Cf., e.g., AM. GASQUET, *L’empire d’Orient et l’empire d’Occident. De l’emploi du mot βασιλεύς dans les actes de la Chancellerie Byzantine*, Revue Historique 26/1884, p. 294; DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 310 and, in general, OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., p. 27.

*Romaion*, as applicable only to the emperors in Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> The Council of Paris (825) also allotted the title of “Emperor of the Romans” solely to Byzantine rulers.<sup>43</sup> Byzantium’s acknowledgment of Charlemagne’s new status probably came at the price of his abandoning any claims to “Roman titles”: this seems later to have been the case for Peter I of Bulgaria and Otto I of Germany.<sup>44</sup>

As already noted, the acknowledgment of Charlemagne as “king” was traditional for Byzantine sovereigns. By virtue of being Roman emperors, they not only ruled the Roman Empire, but also held control over individual “nations”<sup>45</sup> and acknowledged their rulers. This acknowledgment might clarify why, in the midst of Charlemagne’s fight against the Saxons, the Byzantine emperor surrendered the Saxons, together with all their possessions, to Charlemagne.<sup>46</sup> What Notker happily presented as a humorous display of the stupidity of the Byzantine emperor (*homo torpens otio nec utilis belli negotio*) was, in fact, a diplomatic step that joined the conferral of the title with the ceding of a territory. This over-arching superiority of the universal Roman emperor also gave the Byzantines their justification for regaining everything that once belonged to the Roman empire: various kingdoms that had emerged on Roman territory, such as those of the Vandals and the Goths, who could not qualify as “Roman” and, therefore, had no right to Roman territory. This is why, according to Lydus, when Byzantine forces defeated the Goths of Vittiges in Italy, Justinian had both saved that territory from the “chains and the power of the barbarians” and “restored what was Roman for Rome.” Agathias similarly presented Justinian’s (re-)conquest of Africa and Italy as an effort “of the rulers of Byzantium to be emperors of the Romans in fact as well as in name.” These views corresponded with the official attitude: Justinian’s laws similarly presented successful campaigns in Africa and Western Europe as a “liberation of subjects” from a “most severe captivity

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<sup>42</sup>E.g., BRÉHIER, *L'origine...*, cit., p. 176; DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 80 fn. 17; CLASSEN, *Romanum gubernans imperium...*, cit., pp. 116, 121; GRIERSON, *Empire...*, cit., pp. 910-911 and PH. GRIERSON, *Byzantine Coins*, London—Los Angeles 1982, p. 160 with Pl. 36 n° 665; TREITINGER, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee...*, cit., p. 188 (and fnn. 119 and 120 with bibliography); RÖSCH, *Onoma basileias...*, cit., pp. 113-114, 116.

<sup>43</sup>*Concilia Aevi Karolini II...*, cit., p. 523, ll. 23-24 (see n. 35 above).

<sup>44</sup>Peter I: *Constantini Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantini libri duo*, rec. J.J. REISKE, vol. 2, Bonn 1830, p. 690, ll. 13-16; *Theophanes Continuatus*, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838, p. 415, ll. 3-8; and Liudprand, *Legatio* 19, with S. RUNCIMAN, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire*, London 1930, pp. 301-303; OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., pp. 58-59; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., p. 373; R. BROWNING, *Byzantium and Bulgaria*, Berkeley—Los Angeles 1975, p. 69. Otto I: *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*, rec. H. Thurn, Berlin 1973, p. 245, ll. 19-20 with OHNSORGE, *Konstantinopel...*, cit., p. 409 and OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., p. 58.

<sup>45</sup>E.g., Institut., pr.: *Imperator Caesar Flavius Iustinianus Alamannicus Gothicus Francicus Germanicus Anticus Alanicus Vandalicus Africanus etc.*, with RÖSCH, *Onoma basileias...*, cit., pp. 53-61. Cf. Ioann. Antioch., fr. 196; Origen, *C.Cels.* 2.30; Jerome, *Comm. in Es.* 5.19.23; Aug. *De Civ. Dei* 4.4, 4.9 (*Roma tam magna facta est, ut tamdiu tot gentibus imperaret*), 5.12.2, 18.22, 18.27; Claudian, *De Cons. Stil.* 3.159-161.

<sup>46</sup>Notker, *Gesta* 2.5: *Habeas tu gentem illam cum omnibus ad eam pertinentibus.*

and barbarian yoke.”<sup>47</sup> Nicephorus II would, likewise, imply that barbarian nations controlled Rome as usurpers when, in return for a proposal to establish a marriage between the Byzantine imperial family and the Ottonians, he demanded Rome and Ravenna, urging Otto I to “allow Rome to be free” (*Romam liberam esse dominus tuus permittat*). Nicephorus’ reference to Liudprand, his royal masters, and their fellow-countrymen as “not Romans but Lombards” (*vos non Romani sed Langobardi estis!*) was more than a personal insult: it reflected the Roman political theory.<sup>48</sup> Constantine VII’s *De Administrando Imperii* not only asserted the superiority of the Byzantines as “Romans” over the barbarians, juxtaposing the universal “Roman Empire” to individual “nations” (*ethne*, or *gentes*), but also reinforced this idea by putting a special emphasis on safeguarding the imperial insignia of the emperors in Constantinople against claims by leaders of “nations.”<sup>49</sup> This old premise allowed Anna Comnena to present the Latins as individual “nations,” even if her use of such terms as “Franks,” “Normans,” and “Celts” was not always consistent.<sup>50</sup> Denying Charlemagne and his heirs the Roman title thus meant more than simply a rivalry over imperial intitulature: since Western rulers were not Roman emperors (and nothing more than barbarians from the Byzantines’ viewpoint), they had no right to the territory of the Roman Empire, which they only controlled as usurpers.

The reaction in the West was different: Charlemagne’s new status was associated with his rule over the city of Rome and protection of the Roman Church (*defensio ecclesiae*). Latin chronicles did not fail to stress the importance of the city of Rome as the *urbs regia*, as did, for example, the *Annales Laureshamenses* in the ninth century (*Carolum regem Francorum imperatorem nominare debuissent, qui ipsam Romam tenebat, ubi semper Caesares et imperatores sedere soliti erant*) and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* (in the tenth century). According to the latter, Charlemagne allegedly referred to himself as holding Rome, which was the “head of the world” (*tamen caput mundi Roma est, quam teneo*).<sup>51</sup> Charlemagne’s coins bore

<sup>47</sup> Lyd. *De mag.* 3.1, 3.55; Agath. *Hist.* proem. 30, 5.14.1. Nov. 78.4.1 (A.D. 539) and C.J. 1.27.1.8 (A.D. 534).

<sup>48</sup> Liudprand, *Legatio* 15 and 12, respectively.

<sup>49</sup> For this superiority, see esp. DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 285, 291-292; OHNSORGE, *Konstantinopel...*, cit., p. 400; NICOL, *Byzantine View...*, cit., p. 317. This emphasis: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio...*, cit., ch. 13, ll. 24-72, with P. MAGDALINO, *A History of Byzantine Literature for Historians*, in *Pour une “nouvelle histoire” de la littérature byzantine*, ed. P. ODORICO and P.A. AGAPITOS, Paris 2002, pp. 179-180.

<sup>50</sup> Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, 1.6.1, 5.5.7, 6.10.2, etc.

<sup>51</sup> The *defensio ecclesiae*: e.g., *The Life of Leo III*, in *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. DUCHESNE, vol. 2, Paris 1892, p. 7, ll. 23-24. *Annales et chronica Aevi Carolini*, ed. G.H. PERTZ, Hannover 1826 (MGH SS 1), p. 38 (A.D. 801); *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 36, ll. 28-29. See, e.g., H. TAVIANI-CAROZZI, *La vision impériale de l’Occident médiéval: un témoignage lombard du Xe siècle*, in *Histoire et société: Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby*, vol. 3, Paris 1992, pp. 181-182, 184-185. This idea will develop further in the twelfth century, when the commune of the city of Rome claimed to be the only entity with the right to give out “Roman titles”; see esp. R.L. BENSON, *Political Renovatio: Two Models from Roman Antiquity*, in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, ed. R.L. BENSON and G. CONSTABLE, Cambridge, MA 1982, pp. 339-386.

the phrase *Renovatio Roman(i) Imp(erii)* next to the word *Roma* on the same side, reflecting the connection between the claim to the *imperium Romanum* and the control over the city of Rome.<sup>52</sup> Responding to the increased political importance of Rome, Naso (Muadwinus), Charlemagne's poet laureate, and Angilbertus Homerus—if the attribution of *Carmen de Karolo Magno* is correct—were definitely reflecting their master's pretensions when they called his capital, Aix-la-Chapelle, “new Rome” and “second Rome,” thus dealing another blow to the position of the emperors in Constantinople.<sup>53</sup>

Charlemagne's coronation in Rome also gave a new significance to the meaning of the word “Roman.” The complex *Chronicle of Fredegar*, generally dated to the ninth century, applied “Roman” only to the Roman church but never to Byzantium or Byzantine emperors, whereas the *Annales Regni Francorum* and Agnellus of Ravenna, who compiled his history in the 830s-840s, made references to the Byzantine emperor as “Constantinopolitanus imperator.”<sup>54</sup> It was only a short step from here to calling Byzantine rulers “Emperors of the Greeks.” Later in the ninth century, Notker not only traditionally distinguished the language of the Byzantines from Latin, but specifically called them “Greeks.” He defined them as “a people which in earlier times had appeared awe-inspiring to the whole world,” implying that this was no longer the case.<sup>55</sup> Likewise, the *Annales* did not merely call Byzantines “Greeks” and their language “Greek,” but never applied the title of the “Emperors of the Romans” to rulers in Constantinople (either in the period before or after 800). The *Annales* gave this title only to Charlemagne: “Pope Leo placed the crown on his head, and he was acclaimed by all of the Roman people: ‘To his majesty Charles, the great and peace-making emperor crowned by God,—long life and victory!’” (*Leo papa coronam capiti eius imposuit, et a cuncto Romanorum populo*

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<sup>52</sup>See also CLASSEN, *Romanum gubernans imperium...*, cit., p. 119; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 124-128, 196-197; OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., pp. 12-13, 24, 27, 30; CASPAR, *Das Papsttum unter fränkischer Herrschaft...*, cit., p. 146. On *renovatio* and *Roma*, see esp. P.E. SCHRAMM, *Kaiser, Könige, und Päpste*, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1968, 274-284.

<sup>53</sup>Nasonis (Muadwini) *Ecloga*, in *Poetarum Latinorum Medii Aevi*, ed. E. DÜMMLER, Berlin 1881 (*MGH Poetae* 1), p. 390, l. 93; Angilberti (Homeri) *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa*, in *ivi*, p. 368, ll. 94-98. See C. ERDMANN, *Ottönische Studien*, ed. H. BEUMANN, Darmstadt 1968, p. 180; E. PFEIL, *Die fränkische und deutsche Romidee des frühen Mittelalters*, Munich 1929, pp. 119-158; HAMMER, *The Concept of the New and Second Rome...*, cit., p. 56 (with footnotes).

<sup>54</sup>“Roman”: e.g., *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its Continuations*, ed. and trans. J.M. WALLACE-HADRILL, London—New York 1960, pp. 105-106. Cf., e.g., no definitions for Byzantine emperors: *ivi*, pp. 15, 49, 51-52, 53, 67, and Byzantium: *ivi*, pp. 15, 58, 67, 69 (*imperium*), 49 (*munus publica*), 55 (*pars publica*), 105, 106 (*res publica*), and the use of definitions for “emperors of the Persians”: *ivi*, pp. 52, 53. E.g., *Annales Regni Francorum...*, cit., p. 155 (on the late Leo V; A.D. 821); Agnellus of Ravenna, in *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI-IX*, ed. G. WALTZ and O. HOLDER-EGGER, Hannover 1878 (*MGH SS rer. Lang.*), p. 329, ll. 15-16, p. 349, l. 35, p. 357, l. 6.

<sup>55</sup>Notker, *Gesta* 1.10 and 26: on Byzantines as “Greeks.” Cf. 2.6: *vanissima Hellade*, and 2.7: *in sua lingua Deo psallerent* and 2.8: *eius gentis, quae cuncto quondam esset orbi terribilis*.

*adclamatum est: ‘Carolo augusto, a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori Romanorum, vita et victoria!’*<sup>56</sup>

As some have already noted, certain Carolingian sources, including *The Life of Leo III*: “To Charles, his most pious majesty crowned by God, the great and peace-making emperor,—long life and victory!” (*Karolo piissimo augusto a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatore* [sic], *vita et victoria!*) or *Annales Fuldenses* (*Karolus rex a Romanis est appellatus augustus*), did not mention the Roman title when referring to Charlemagne.<sup>57</sup> The view of the Carolingian rulers as “Emperors of the Romans,” therefore, was established in retrospect, under the influence of Western clergy, who developed several basic assumptions that molded Western relations with Byzantium in the ninth century.<sup>58</sup> Pope Leo III put the crown on Charlemagne’s head with his own hands, thus establishing the status of the Frankish rulers for the future. His successor, Stephen IV, observed, according to Ermoldus, that Frankish rulers reigned over the Franks and the “mighty Rome,” and that Charlemagne’s successor, Louis (“the Pious”), received his duty from St. Peter through Rome, i.e. through the pope (*Roma tibi, Caesar, transmittit munera Petri*).<sup>59</sup> The Roman curia also produced the earliest reference to a Byzantine emperor as “Emperor of the Greeks”—in the *Life of Nicholas I*, which had been identified as the work of Anastasius Bibliothecarius (c.810-c.878),<sup>60</sup> who both actively propagated the use of Latin instead of Greek or, in his words, *peregrina lingua*, and denied the name of “Emperors of the Romans” to Byzantine rulers.<sup>61</sup> Writing in the 860s, the monk Ratramnus distinguished “Roman” from “Latin,” because the former specifically

<sup>56</sup>Cf. *Annales Regni Francorum*..., cit., pp. 24-25 (the council of 767 on images *inter Romanos et Grecos*), and p. 117 (A.D. 802) and p. 127 (A.D. 809): embassies on peace *inter Francos et Grecos*. Language: *ivi*, p. 136 (A.D. 812). Rulers: *ivi*, pp. 14, 15, 41, 75 (Constantine V: r.741-775); 83, 95, 104, 105 (Constantine VI: r.780-797); 136, 137, 139, 140 (Michael I: r.811-813); 139-141, 143, 145, 146, 155 (Leo V: r.813-820). Charlemagne: *ivi*, p. 112 (A.D. 801).

<sup>57</sup>*The Life of Leo III*..., cit., p. 7, l. 25; *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. G.H. PERTZ and F. KURZE, Hannover 1891 (*MGH SS rer. Germ.* 7), p. 138. E.g., SCHRAMM, *Kaiser, Könige, und Päpste*..., cit., p. 263 (with fn. 147); E. MÜLLER-MERTENS, *Römisches Reich im Besitz der Deutschen, der König an Stelle des Augustus*, Historische Zeitschrift 282/2006, p. 12.

<sup>58</sup>Charlemagne: e.g., *Annales Regni Francorum*..., cit., p. 112 (see n. 56 above); cf. *Theophanis Chronographia*..., cit., p. 473, l. 1. Louis the Pious: e.g., *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*..., cit., p. 387, l. 41 = *Chronicon Salernitanum*..., cit., p. 111, l. 1 (see below).

<sup>59</sup>Ermold le Noir, *Poème sur Louis le Pieux et épîtres au roi Pépin*, ed. E. FARAL, Paris 1932, p. 86, l. 1096, and p. 84, l. 1074, respectively.

<sup>60</sup>*The Life of Nicholas I* 19, in *Le Liber Pontificalis*..., cit., p. 155, l. 1 (*imperator Grecorum*), with OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz*..., cit., p. 223 fn. 171. Anastasius: DUCHESNE, in *Le Liber Pontificalis*..., cit., pp. vi-vii; OHNSORGE, *Konstantinopel*..., cit., p. 401; DVORNIK, *Le schisme*..., cit., pp. 118, 120.

<sup>61</sup>See, e.g., his introductory letters to his Latin translations of *The Life of the patriarch John of Alexandria*, in *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*..., cit., p. 397, ll. 2-4, 16-18, and p. 398, ll. 3-4; and *The Life of the hermit John Calybites*: *ivi*, p. 402, ll. 12-13. On his translations: e.g., C. LEONARDI, *Anastasio Bibliotecario e le traduzioni del greco nella Roma altomedievale*, in *The Sacred nectar of the Greeks. The Study of Greek in the West in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. M.W. HERREN and S.A. BROWN, London 1988, pp. 285-289. See *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V*..., cit., p. 411, ll. 35-36: *imperatores Romanorum, qui nunc Grecorum appellantur*.

defined the Roman Church and the community of the city of Rome. But Ratramnus also contrasted all Latin Christians to “Greeks,”<sup>62</sup> since the Roman Church embraced all Latin Churches both as their “mother” and on the basis of using Latin.<sup>63</sup> Byzantine emperors were not Roman emperors but “Emperors of the Greeks” because they spoke Greek, retained control of only a “tiny number of provinces in Europe and Asia, and a few islands,” and neither protected nor worshiped the city of Rome, the most venerable of all Roman cities. Hence, they were also the “new emperors,” who introduced *novitas* in the form of religious errors (*imperatores moderni, novi sectam erroris instituentes*), as opposed to former “Emperors of the Romans,” who acknowledged the authority of the Roman Church.<sup>64</sup> According to Aeneas, the bishop of Paris in 858-870, the Roman Church cared for all Latin-speaking Christians, distinguishing those who were under its “Roman authority” (*sub Romana dictione*) from the people living in “Grecia,” which was on the “borders of Europe” (*a finibus Europae*).<sup>65</sup> Latin chronicles of the ninth and tenth centuries both spoke of the Byzantines as “Greeks”—thus presenting them as just one of the “nations” and asserting that they could not claim the status of the Romans<sup>66</sup>—and extended the meaning of “Roman” to all Latin-speaking countries, thus acknowledging the universality and supremacy of the Roman church over all Latin-speaking churches. This served as common ground against the “Greeks,” when, for example, pope Nicholas I corresponded with emperors Michael III and Basil I, or when he engaged bishops in Germany in his religious disagreements with the Byzantines.<sup>67</sup>

Pope Gregory II’s letters (from 729) provide a vivid illustration of this type of papal activity: as his conflict with the emperor Leo III was escalating, the pope pointed that the “whole occident” (*πᾶσα ἡ δύσις*) was looking to the papacy, and that

<sup>62</sup>Ratramnus, *Contra graecorum opposita*, in P.L. 121: 320ABD, 322A, 331D, 332B. See *ivi*, 335C, 339B. The date: e.g., J.-P. BOUCHOT, *Ratramne de Corbie. Histoire littéraire et controverses doctrinales*, Paris 1976, pp. 61, 63. See *ivi*, 235B (*non igitur arguant Graecorum imperatores Latinos*), 245B, 317C, 321A, 331D.

<sup>63</sup>Ivi, 223A (*sanctam Romanam Ecclesiam, imo omnem Ecclesiam qua Latina utitur lingua*), 227A (*non solum Romanam, verum omnem Latinam Ecclesiam*), 243B (*Ecclesia Romana ... quod aliter Latina diceret Ecclesia*), 343D-344A.

<sup>64</sup>*Imperatores Graecorum*: *ivi*, 225D, 235B, 253B, 266C, 343D-344A; *Graecorum principes*: *ivi*, 274A, 317C. Language: *ivi*, 273B. Territory: *ivi*, 344A. The city of Rome: *ivi*, 339B and 343D-344A. “New emperors”: *ivi*, 266D, 343D-344A. *Novitas*: *ivi*, 272B. Former emperors: *ivi*, 330C, 343D-344A.

<sup>65</sup>Aeneas, *Liber adversus Graecos*, in P.L. 121: 686A (*Romanam Ecclesiam, imo et omnem gentem Latina lingua utentem consulere tentavit*) and 686C.

<sup>66</sup>E.g., *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. F. GRAT *et al.*, Paris 1964, p. 68 (A.D. 853); cf. on the Lombards: e.g., *Annales Regni Francorum...*, cit., pp. 34-35 (A.D. 773). See also *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 146, l. 20 (*Grecos et Neapolites seu omnes Capuanos*), p. 152, l. 5 (*Greci Beneventanique*), p. 171, ll. 11-12 (*Regnum Grecorum, Agarenorum, Francorum, Saxonumque*). Cf., e.g., *Annales Fuldenses...*, cit., p. 129: *pacem ergo Greci eodem anno cum Avaris, qui dicuntur Ungari, facientes*.

<sup>67</sup>*Annales de Saint-Bertin...*, cit., p. 139 (*sanctam Romanam ecclesiam, immo omnem ecclesiam quae latina utitur lingua*), pp. 138-139 (A.D. 867), p. 187: opposing Greek and Latin languages (A.D. 872), p. 205: on *Grecisco more vs. more Romano*; cf. p. 206: *more pagano* (A.D. 876). Germany: *Annales Fuldenses...*, cit., pp. 66-67 (A.D. 868).

it had great confidence in the pope. The pope then revealed his intention to “undertake a journey with God’s help into the innermost parts of the occident (τῆς ἐσωτέρας δύσεως) to give baptism to those who demand it.”<sup>68</sup> This journey never materialized, but the stance of the pope was reflective of the stance of the papacy as a whole. Claims for papal universality justified the papal control over the *nationes* (or *gentes*, or *regna*), thus replacing imperial control, and identified the Roman church with the Roman Empire.<sup>69</sup> The spread of Benedictine monasticism, the conversion of Britain, the promotion of Roman liturgy, and many other steps undertaken by the papacy provided both the foundation for papal universality and the ideological conflation of Romanness and Christianity for western *nationes*. The papal self-assertion of Roman universality naturally led the papacy to claim “Roman territories,” including not only those that had been lost to the “nationes,” such as the Lombards, but also those that continued to be formally controlled by the emperors in Constantinople, i.e. the “provinces” of Venetia and Istria.<sup>70</sup> For the same reason, the dating of documents by regnal years of emperors in Constantinople was substituted with dating by pontifical years during the papacy of Hadrian (772-795).<sup>71</sup> The papacy also asserted its Romanness by creating institutions similar to those of the Byzantine Empire in the East. Thus, the title of *patricius Romanorum*, which the papacy bestowed on king Pippin and his son, was a papal invention.<sup>72</sup> It not only proved to be empty of any sort of jurisdiction within the papal state, being limited to the obligation of protecting it, but also obviously mirrored the Byzantine imperial habit of conferring dignified titles on leaders of the “nationes.”<sup>73</sup> The same can be

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<sup>68</sup>E. CASPAR, *Papst Gregor II und der Bilderstreit*, Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 52/1933, p. 83, ll. 335-337, p. 84, ll. 352-355.

<sup>69</sup>Claims for papal universality: e.g., the Council of Paris (A.D. 825), in *Concilia Aevi Karolini II...*, cit., p. 522, ll. 12-14 (*universalis papa*); emperor Lothar’s letter to pope Leo IV (c.847-849), in *Epistolae Karolini Aevi III*, ed. E. DÜMMLER et al., Berlin 1899 (*MGH Epp.* 5), p. 609, n° 46, ll. 24-28; pope Benedict III’s confirmation of privileges for Corbie (A.D. 855), in *P.L.* 129: 1001-1002; Anastasius Bibliothecarius’ letter to pope Nicholas I (c.858-862), in *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 397, ll. 9-12. The papal control over “nations”: e.g., pope John VIII’s letters from 879: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 159, n° 198, ll. 18-19; p. 165, n° 205, ll. 23-24. The identification of the Roman church with the Roman empire: e.g., ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government...*, cit., p. 61; TAVIANI-CAROZZI, *La vision impériale de l’Occident medieval...*, cit., pp. 184-187; MÜLLER-MERTENS, *Römisches Reich im Besitz der Deutschen...*, cit., p. 13.

<sup>70</sup>E.g., the *Codex Carolinus*, in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi*, ed. E. DÜMMLER et al., Berlin 1892 (*MGH Epp.* 3), p. 489, n° 6, ll. 32-34 (A.D. 739). Venetia and Istria: Hadrian I, in *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. DUCHESNE, vol. 1, Paris 1886, p. 498, ll. 17-22. These claims: e.g., C. AZZARA, *The papacy, in Italy in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. LA ROCCA, Oxford—New York 2002, pp. 110-111.

<sup>71</sup>RÖSCH, *Onoma basileias...*, cit., p. 141. The historical context: NOBLE, *The Republic of St. Peter...*, cit., pp. 132-137, who characterized this period as the time of the “removal of the last of Rome’s major external enemies” (after the defeat of the Lombards) and spoke of the Byzantines as “totally powerless in central Italy.”

<sup>72</sup>See the *Clausula de unctione Pippini*, in A. J. STOCLET, La “*clausula de unctione Pippini Regis*”: mises au point et nouvelles hypothèses, *Francia* 8/1980, p. 3 (ll. 4 and 15), pp. 26-28 (with references to sources and bibliography).

<sup>73</sup>This characterization: ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government...*, cit., pp. 61-67; NOBLE, *The Republic of St. Peter...*, cit., pp. 278-280. Cf. the title of *patricius* of Gundobad (*PLRE*, 2, p. 525); the consulship and the title of *patricius*

said of the papal development of the concept of *Sancta Dei ecclesia reipublicae Romanorum*.<sup>74</sup> Charlemagne's proclamation as *imperator Romanorum* was also done on the initiative of the papacy.<sup>75</sup> Papal cooperation with Frankish leaders turns out to have been a display of the papacy's overall claim to Roman identity and universality, which gives little support to the idea that this cooperation was the "result of a specific contingency in which the popes had to make rapid decisions in response to the unfolding political scenario."<sup>76</sup> The Latin-speaking world's cultural affinity offered the basis for its religious consolidation by the Roman Catholic Church, which further strengthened its political unity, thus setting up the major conflict not between the bishops of Rome and Constantinople, but between the Roman pope and the Byzantine emperor.<sup>77</sup>

### 3.

Diplomatic exchanges between Byzantine emperors and Western rulers in the ninth century need to be examined within this cultural context of political claims. By qualifying Latin as "barbarian" and "Scythian," Michael III denied the status of "Romans"—and, consequently, the right to hold the territory of the Roman Empire—to Latin-speakers. From his point of view, they were usurpers, just as the Goths of Vitiges (for Lydus and Agathias) or Charlemagne (for Theophanes and his contemporaries), and, also, subjects of the emperor in Constantinople.<sup>78</sup> The idea of Rome being in the hands of barbarians was not, by itself, anything new: the Byzantine stance continued to be based on the old divide between Roman universality and individual barbarian "nations." However, while Roman identity still lay at the base of religious arguments, fights against papal claims now acquired a political dimension. Patriarch Photius (who is considered to have been the real author of Michael III's letter to the pope<sup>79</sup>) contested the primacy of the papacy with more than the aim of claiming the primacy of the bishop of Constantinople: he worked to undermine the Roman imperial pretensions advanced by those Western rulers who had been crowned by the popes on the basis of the papal claim to Roman universality.

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of Theodoric [the Great] (*PLRE*, 2, p. 1079); and the honorary (?) consulship of Clovis: Greg. *Hist* 2.38 with M. McCORMICK, *Clovis at Tours, Byzantine Public Ritual and the Origins of Medieval Ruler Symbolism*, in *Das Reich und die Barbaren*, ed. E.K. CHRYSOS and A. SCHWARCZ, Vienna 1989, pp. 155-180.

<sup>74</sup> See esp. ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government...*, cit., pp. 61-67.

<sup>75</sup> Further details: ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government...*, cit., pp. 97-98 (with footnotes).

<sup>76</sup> AZZARA, *The papacy...*, cit., p. 112.

<sup>77</sup> OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., pp. 9, 11-12; A. MICHEL, *Die Kaiser macht in der Ostkirche: 843-1204*, Darmstadt 1959, pp. 221-222 with F. DÖLGER's preface; PERI, "Universalità" culturale cristiana..., cit., pp. 142-143.

<sup>78</sup> Lyd. *De mag.* 3.1 and 55 and Agath. *Hist.* proem. 30 and 5.14.1; Theophanis *Chronographia...*, cit., p. 472, ll. 29-30; p. 473, l. 1; p. 475, l. 12.

<sup>79</sup> E.g., J. HERGENRÖTHER, *Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel*, vol. 1, Regensburg 1867, pp. 551-552, 554-555; I. DJURIC, *Romenski govor i jezik Konstantina VII Porfirogenita*, ZRVI 24-25/1986, pp. 127-128.

He also saw the papacy as offering a political platform for the unity of the Westerners, or “the Latins,” as he called them, by fostering the same cultural and religious affinity.<sup>80</sup> The Byzantines correctly perceived the papacy’s claim to Roman universality as a direct challenge to their status as “Romans” not only in cultural but also in political terms. Hence, they challenged the primacy and the Roman identity of the popes only in reaction to the papal dispensations of the title of “Emperor of the Romans” to Western rulers in the ninth century.<sup>81</sup>

The only way the Byzantines could deny the papal Roman universality was to contest the papal primacy. This idea was not new either: George of Cyprus and Theophanes the Confessor in the seventh and eighth centuries had rejected papal claims to religious primacy and Roman universality, on the grounds that the papacy ceased to be “Roman” once it passed to the control of the “nationes.”<sup>82</sup> Photius further developed this idea, by advocating—as we can see in Nicholas I’s letter to Hincmar, the archbishop of Reims, in 867—that the *translatio imperii* from Rome to Constantinople was accompanied by the transfer of the supreme religious authority.<sup>83</sup> Having caused a big commotion among western clerics, as follows also from a reference by Aeneas of Paris,<sup>84</sup> this challenge to the papal Roman universality became accepted in Byzantium. Among others, Constantine VII asserted that the affairs of the Romans began to dwindle once the city of Rome was captured by the Goths and that the papacy was a plaything of the “barbarians,” who repeatedly attacked Rome in order to wrestle it from each other. After seizing control of the papacy, these barbarian leaders had themselves crowned by the popes, as had Pippin, Lothair I, and Louis III (“the Blind,” king of Italy and the grandson of Louis II “the Stammerer”).<sup>85</sup> Nilus Doxopatres believed that the papacy was still usurped by the

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<sup>80</sup>E.g., Photius, *Opusculum contra Francos*, in J. HERGENRÖTHER, *Monumenta graeca ad Photium ejusque historiam pertinentia*, Ratisbonne 1869, pp. 62 and 63.

<sup>81</sup>E.g., OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., p. 16 (with further bibliography); H. WOLFRAM, *Lateinische Herrschertitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*, in *Intitulatio*, vol. 2: *Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. H. WOLFRAM, Vienna 1973, p. 81: “Der byzantinischen Theorie vom universalen römischen Kaisertum konnte daraus keine Konkurrenz erwachsen.”

<sup>82</sup>*Georgii Cyprii Descriptio orbis Romani*, ed. H. GELZER, Leipzig 1890, p. 27; *Theophanis Chronographia...*, cit., p. 472, ll. 29-30 and p. 473, l. 1.

<sup>83</sup>E.g., *Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV...*, cit., p. 605, ll. 19-24. For the *translatio imperii*, see n. 29 above.

<sup>84</sup>Aeneas, *Liber adversus Graecos...*, cit., 689C (*consequeruntur etiam de transmigratione principatus Romanae sedis, quam dicunt factam Constantinopoli, unde et eam cum patriarcha suo caput dignitatis appellant*) and 757D-758C. See DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 103-115, p. 315 fn. 60.

<sup>85</sup>Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio...*, cit., ch. 21, ll. 31-33, and ch. 26, ll. 41-43. See *ivi*, ch. 26, ll. 11-12 (Lothair I κατὰ Ῥώμης ἐκστρατεύσας, ἀπὸ πολέμου ταύτην ἐκράτησεν, καὶ ἐστέφθη παρὰ τοῦ τότε πάπα) and l. 18 (Louis III ἐκράτησεν τὴν Παπίαν), and ch. 28, ll. 17-18 (Πιπίνος ὁ βῆξ, δις ἥρχε τότε τῆς τε Παπίας καὶ ἑτέρων ῥηγμάτων).

barbarian peoples, and, for this reason, the Roman Church had lost its authority.<sup>86</sup> Ioannes Cinnamus argued against those who denied that the Byzantines were Romans or that their state was the Roman Empire (or, in other words, against those who said that they were “Greeks” and their rulers were “Emperors of the Greeks”), by stressing that once the power of Rome had become the possession of “barbarians and base slaves,” it had no religious or secular leadership. Cinnamus believed that the Roman Empire and the supreme religious authority had been transferred from Rome to Constantinople.<sup>87</sup> According to Anna Comnena, not only the “scepters” (i.e., the imperial power), the senate, and the entire state administration (ἄμα πάσης τῆς τάξεως), but also the supreme religious administration (καὶ ἡ τῶν θρόνων ἀρχιερατικὴ τάξις), which controlled all dioceses around the world (τὰς ἀνὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην διοικήσεις ἀπάσας ὑπὸ τοῦτον ἐτάξατο), moved from Rome to Constantinople.<sup>88</sup> At a later date, Patriarch Antony IV noted in his letter to Basil I of Moscow that the “imperium and the church exist in complete unity and communion, so that one is not able to separate them.” Therefore, said Antony, since there is only one universal ruler (ὁ καθολικὸς βασιλεὺς), “even if other Christian rulers call themselves by the name of the emperor, all this is against nature and law and should have happened rather as a result of usurpation and violence.”<sup>89</sup> Antony’s reference to rulers who “call themselves by the name of the emperor” is surely reminiscent of Michael II and Theophilus addressing Louis the Pious as “the glorious king of the Franks and Lombards, who is also called emperor by them.” Antony’s words about “usurpation and violence” continued the theme of Rome having been usurped by “barbarians” seen in earlier Byzantine works, thereby opposing individual “nationes” to the universal Roman Empire of the Byzantines and denying the Roman Church its claim of primacy, i.e. Roman universality, and, consequently, the right to confer imperial titles.<sup>90</sup> The Roman and imperial titles of Western rulers, therefore, bore no value, in the opinion of the Byzantines, because the “old Rome” no longer had either imperial or religious primacy.

<sup>86</sup>Nilus Doxapates, *Taxiz ton patriarkhikon Thronon*, in P.G. 132: 1100D-1101A = Nilus Doxapates, *Taxiz ton patriarkhikon Thronon* 200-201, in *Hieroclis Synecdemus et Notitiae Graecae Episcopatum. Accedunt Nili Doxopatrii Notitia Patriarchatum et Locorum Nomina Immutata*, ed. G. PARTHEY, Berlin 1866, pp. 289-290, with E.L.E. CASPAR, *Das Papsttum unter byzantinischer Herrschaft*, vol. 2, Tübingen 1933, p. 666 fn. 3; V. LAURENT, *L’oeuvre géographique du moine sicilien Nil Doxapatis*, Échos d’Orient 36/1937, pp. 20-22; and MICHEL, *Sprache...*, cit., p. 40 (with fn. 15).

<sup>87</sup>Ioannis Cinnamus, *Epitome...*, cit., p. 218, ll. 19-21, p. 219, ll. 8-13, 20-21, and p. 219, ll. 11-13, and p. 219, l. 20—p. 120, l. 1 (μὴ γὰρ τὸν ἐν Βυζαντίῳ τῆς βασιλείας θρόνον Ρώμης θρόνον εἶναι διομολογοῦντί σοι, πόθεν αὐτῷ σοι τὸ Πάπα κεκλήρωται ἀξιώμα; εἰς ἐστιν φῶ ταῦτα ἔδοξε Κωνσταντῖνος, ὁ πρῶτος ἐν βασιλεῦσι Χριστιανός).

<sup>88</sup>Anna Comnena, *Alexias*, 13.3.4.

<sup>89</sup>*Acta et Diplomata graeca Medii Aevi*, ed. F. MIKLOSICH and J. MÜLLER, vol. 2, Vienna 1862, pp. 191-192 (c. A.D. 1394-1397).

<sup>90</sup>*Concilia Aevi Karolini II...*, cit., p. 475, ll. 30-32 (see n. 40 above). Cf. a different interpretation of Antony’s words: KALDELLIS, *Hellenism in Byzantium...*, cit., pp. 104-105.

These statements, however, immediately display the weakness of the Byzantines' argument on cultural grounds. Not surprisingly, pope Nicholas I, who clearly perceived what was going on, quickly retaliated in 865. His letter, probably written or edited by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, while still referencing the official title of Byzantine rulers as "Emperors of the Romans," refuted its validity in cultural terms, because the language of the Byzantines was different from that of the ancient Romans: "if therefore you call the Latin language barbarian, since you do not understand it, think about how ridiculous it is for you to be called Roman emperors and yet not know the Roman language" (*si ideo linguam Latinam barbarem dicitis, quoniam illam non intellegitis, vos considerate, quia ridiculum est vos appellare Romanorum imperatores et tamen linguam non nosse Romanam*).<sup>91</sup> Hence, when Nicholas I plunged into an elaborate discussion on the religious differences between Constantinople and Rome, he again referred to their cultural separation, by mentioning *Latini Graecique doctores*.<sup>92</sup> His political and religious arguments were wrapped in cultural terms.

The next step in this contest took the form of an exchange of letters between Michael III's eventual successor the Byzantine emperor Basil I and king Louis II of Italy. As far as we can reconstruct his letter, Basil put forward several basic assumptions reflecting the Byzantine political theory, including (i) the presence of only one Roman emperor, in Constantinople, which was the *sedes imperii*; (ii) acknowledgment of him as the only Roman emperor by the Christian Church; and (iii) the inheritance of the Roman imperial title by descent, so that it could not belong to a foreign nation (*ethnos*).<sup>93</sup> In the context of Basil's letter, these old and interconnected ideas served to demonstrate that the primacy of emperors in Constantinople as Roman emperors, was passed down to them by descent and derived from the universal nature of the *imperium Romanum*, as opposed to individual "nationes." Basil challenged the habit of the papacy to confer "Roman titles" on

<sup>91</sup> *Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV...*, cit., p. 459, ll. 19-21. See also *ivi*, ll. 25-26: *Ecce enim in principio epistolae vestrae imperatorem vos nuncupasti Romanorum et tamen Romanam linguam barbarem appellare non veremini* and ll. 30-32 (*Romani quippe hac lingua, quam barbarem vos et Scythicam vocatis, utuntur*). For Anastasius as the author or editor of this letter: E. PERELS, *Papst Nikolaus I. und Anastasius Bibliothecarius*, Berlin 1920, pp. 248-250, p. 307; DVORNIK, *Le schisme...*, cit., pp. 162-163; ULLMANN, *The Growth of the Papal Government...*, cit., p. 216 (with fn. 1).

<sup>92</sup> *Epistolae Karolini Aevi IV...*, cit., p. 486, l. 24, and the same expression in Anastasius Bibliothecarius: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 433, l. 28.

<sup>93</sup> *Regesten I...*, cit., p. 59, n° 871 (871); cf. Notker, *Gesta* 2.11 (see n. 101 below). See (i) *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 386, ll. 37-38 (*neminem appellandum basilea nisi eum, quem in urbe Constantinopolitana imperii tenere gubernacula contigisset*) = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 109, ll. 4-5; (ii) *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 387, ll. 16-17 (*dicis autem, quod quatuor patriarchales sedes unum imperium inter sacra misteria memorari a deiferis apostolis usque nunc traditum habeant*) = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 109, l. 31—p. 110, l. 1; (iii) *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 388, ll. 20-22 (*Illud autem ridere libuit, quod de imperatorio nomine dixisti neque paternum esse neque genti convenire*) = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 111, l. 29—p. 112, l. 1. Reconstructions: J. HERGENRÖTHER, *Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel*, vol. 2, Regensburg 1869, pp. 169-173; GRIERSON, *Empire...*, cit., pp. 892-893, and esp. DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 318-319.

Western rulers, thereby undermining their claims to be Roman emperors and, accordingly, control the lands of the Roman Empire. P. Grierson was eager to connect Basil's letter with the failure of the project to marry his son Constantine with Louis' daughter Ermengarde. But this view does not explain the content of the two letters. Also, the failure of the marriage was not, in itself, a valid excuse for lashing out at Louis, with whom hitherto Basil had enjoyed good relations. In fact, Basil appears to have written this letter as a reaction to Louis' capture of Bari in 871 and to Louis' (unsuccessful) assault on Taranto –the territories which, according to the Byzantines, should belong to the Roman emperor in Constantinople.<sup>94</sup>

In his reply, Louis styled himself *imperator Augustus Romanorum* and addressed Basil I as *imperator novae Romae*.<sup>95</sup> Louis asserted that although being of Frankish origin, he was the emperor of the Romans, because the pope had given this title to his grandfather and because “the Greeks” had deserted the city of Rome, the Roman church, and the very language of the Romans.<sup>96</sup> Louis' put forward other arguments to claim not only the title of emperor, but also that of the “Emperor of the Romans,” including his control of the city of Rome and *defensio ecclesiae*,<sup>97</sup> and his inheritance of this title from his “grandfather” (*avus*) Louis the Pious.<sup>98</sup> The former argument had already been applied to Charlemagne, although he never called himself “Emperor of the Romans.” Diplomatic documents from that time used this title only for rulers of Constantinople, and neither Einhard nor Notker ever titled Charlemagne or later Frankish rulers “Emperors of the Romans.” Nor did Louis’ second argument, i.e. that he inherited this title from his “grandfather,” carry any value in the eyes of

<sup>94</sup>GRIERSON, *Empire...*, cit., pp. 913-914. This dating of the letter: e.g., R. POUPARDIN, *La lettre de Louis II à Basile le Macédonien*, Le Moyen âge 16/1903, p. 187. Cf. A. VOGT, *Basile I<sup>er</sup>, empereur de Byzance (867-886) et la civilisation byzantine à la fin du Xe siècle*, Paris 1908, pp. 321-322, who put Basil's letter before Louis' capture of Bari, and linked it to religious debates between the papacy and Constantinople.

<sup>95</sup>*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 386, ll. 6-8 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 107, ll. 29-32. Louis' claim to the title of the *emperor Romanorum* has been the main reason to question this letter's authenticity: see, e.g., POUPARDIN, *La lettre de Louis II...*, cit., pp. 185-202 (with bibliography), who acknowledged its genuinness and explained the use of this title by Anastasius Bibliotecarius' editorial work. WOLFRAM, *Lateinische Herrscheritel...*, cit., p. 90, who still faced the problem, ascribed the use of this title to the working of Louis' chancellery.

<sup>96</sup>*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 390, ll. 10-15 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 114, ll. 9-15; see also *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 390, l. 35—p. 391, l. 6 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 115, ll. 7-20. Discussions: DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 310-315, 336-339; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 219-226 and OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., pp. 40-45.

<sup>97</sup>See also *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 389, ll. 4-7 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 112, ll. 15-20: *A Romanis enim hoc nomen et dignitatem assumpsimus, apud quos profecto primum tamen culmen sublimitatis et appellacionis effulsit, quorumque gentem et urbem divinitus gubernandam et matrem omnium ecclesiarum Dei defendendam atque sublimandam suscepimus.*

<sup>98</sup>*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 387, l. 41 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 111, l. 1 (*quod iam ab avo nostro non usurpatum est*) and with DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 310-311 (with fn. 50), who saw this *avus* as Louis the Pious. Louis II referred to Charlemagne as *abavus*: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 389, l. 10 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 112, l. 24, and Notker, *Gesta* 2.9.

the Byzantines, who had never recognized Louis the Pious as “Emperor of the Romans.”<sup>99</sup> They had even refused to acknowledge him as “Emperor of the Franks and the Lombards,” as Louis II himself made clear in his letter to Basil I.<sup>100</sup>

Louis also expressed his pretensions in other ways. Notker surely reflected the official view of Louis’ court, when he praised Louis as “king or emperor of the entire Germania and of Raetiae and of ancient Francia and also of Saxonia, Thuringia, Noricum, Pannoniae, and of all northern nations (*atque omnium septentrionalium nationum*).” Although the word “Roman” was not used, ruling over “nationes” was, of course, characteristic of the status of “Roman emperors.”<sup>101</sup> Accordingly, displaying a great deal of political ingenuity, Louis’ letter placed the Byzantines (“the Greeks”) among the Persians, Indians, Bythinians, Partinians, and various “other nationes” (*aliarum gencium*), thus denying them the universal status of the Romans.<sup>102</sup> The Byzantines in their response were, seemingly, unimpressed. Nor did Louis succeed in his interpretation of the status of Constantinople as the “second” or “new” Rome as being inferior to the ancient capital of the Romans; he had purposefully left the title *imperator novae Romae* to Basil because of its insignificance. However, this did not make much sense to the Byzantines, who had long believed in the superiority of Constantinople, because of, among other things, the theory of the *translatio imperii*: the new capital emerged because the old one fell to the barbarian peoples.<sup>103</sup>

In political terms, therefore, Louis’ claim to the status of the “Emperor of the Romans” still needed a valid justification. In cultural terms, however, his point was well elaborated. Rome was the seat of Roman culture, the Roman Church, and the “Roman language.” Even the Byzantines considered the “language of the Romans” to be Latin—in the time of Justinian, as we have seen above, and later. Thus an anecdote by Ps.-Codinus (c.10th c.) narrates how, during the reign of Leo VI, “a certain Roman” (*Romaios tis*), i.e. a Byzantine, who wanted to pray in a sanctuary, discovered Latin characters (*Romaika grammata*) written on a column. Since he succeeded in comprehending these words (which was no easy task for a “Roman”) and reported their meaning to the “Emperor of the Romans,” the latter awarded him

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<sup>99</sup>Nor can we be certain that Louis the Pious ever officially assumed this title: e.g., MÜLLER-MERTENS, *Römisches Reich im Besitz der Deutschen...*, cit., p. 12 (with fn. 45).

<sup>100</sup>The title of Louis the Pious: *Concilia Aevi Karolini II...*, cit., p. 475, ll. 30-32 (see n. 40 above) with DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., p. 310, and *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 389, ll. 3-4 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 112, ll. 12-15.

<sup>101</sup>Notker, *Gesta* 2.11; cf. 2.17. See esp. M. LINTZEL, *Die Kaiserpolitik Ottos des Grossen*, Munich—Berlin 1943, p. 55. Cf. Notker, *Gesta* 1.14-15: on Charlemagne as *rector et imperator plurimarum nationum*.

<sup>102</sup>*Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 387, ll. 5-11 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 109, ll. 16-22.

<sup>103</sup>For the title *imperator novae Romae*, see OHNSORGE, *Konstantinopel...*, cit., p. 401. The Byzantine theory of the *translatio imperii*: see n. 29 above and Lyd. *De mag.* 2.30: “Our Rome eclipsed the power of the first (Rome).” The history of these expressions: DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 93-96 on the “new Rome” as superior to the old one.

the rank of *illustris* that came together with a monetary payment of thirty pounds of coined money.<sup>104</sup> Michael Psellus would write a compendium of Latin legal terms as “Roman” (*Romaika*) in the eleventh century;<sup>105</sup> and Latin words continued to be referred to as “Roman words” in Byzantine academic texts and legal commentaries in much later times.<sup>106</sup> King Louis’ reference to Byzantine culture as non-Roman constituted his most compelling argument: Basil was not the “Emperor of the Romans,” because his subjects were “Greeks” and because the Byzantine concept of *basileus* was inadequate on linguistic grounds as an innovation of the “Greeks” and a departure from the old Roman practice.<sup>107</sup> The best way for Louis to claim the title of emperor of the Romans for himself was to deny it to rulers in Constantinople, which was only possible by undermining their Roman identity. The most powerful counterargument the Byzantines could offer was the same idea developed in the sixth century: Constantine VII continued to claim Latin to be a “dialect of the Romans,” i.e. of the Byzantines, and Nicetas Choniates referred to Latin as the “Italian language,” mixing cultural and political pretensions.<sup>108</sup>

This exchange of letters shows that the Latins laid claim to Roman political inheritance on the basis of their common cultural, including religious, identity and undermined the political stance of the Byzantines by defining their cultural identity as being non-Roman. Both pope Nicholas I (in his response to Michael III) and Louis II (in his letter to Basil I) put differences in language together with those in religious practices and doctrines, in order to make political claims. The papacy also adopted

<sup>104</sup> *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanarum*, ed. TH. PREGER, vol. 2, Leipzig 1907), p. 225, l. 19—p. 226, l. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Psellus, *Synopsis legum*, in *Jus graecoromanum*, ed. P. ZEPOS and I. ZEPOS, vol. 7, Athens 1931, p. 379 (Πρωμαϊκὴ δ' ἡ κλῆσις, Πρωμαϊκῶς λεγόμενον).

<sup>106</sup> E.g., L. BURGMANN, Λέξεις ρωμαϊκαί: *Lateinische Wörter in Byzantinischen Rechtstexten*, in *Lexicographica byzantina*, ed. W. HÖRANDER and E. TRAPP, Vienna 1991, pp. 66, 75-76.

<sup>107</sup> The subjects: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 391, l. 8 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 115, l. 22. The concept of *basileus*: *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 387, ll. 5-6 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 109, ll. 16-18 (*ut de Latinis codicibus interim taceamus, si Grecos etiam noviter editos revolvas codices, invenies procul dubio plurimos tali nomine vocitatos*) and *Epistolae Karolini Aevi V...*, cit., p. 391, ll. 4-6 = *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 115, ll. 17-20 (*stude ex omnibus tam Latinis libris quam Grecis sive regis sive βασιλεύς nomen eradere. Nam nichil lingua Latina resonat, quam quod Greca dicitur βασιλεύς*) with GRIERSON, *Empire...*, cit., p. 895. This problem, too, was noted by Lydus at a much earlier date and, thus, lay dormant for several centuries: Lyd. *De mag.* 1.3-4; BRÉHIER, *L'origine...*, cit., p. 172. However, the Byzantines had already addressed this problem by distinguishing between βασιλεύς and βασιλεὺς αὐτοκράτωρ in legal terms before Louis II wrote his letter to Basil I: F. DÖLGER, *Byzantinische Diplomatik*, Ettal 1956, pp. 103-104, 113 (starting in the reign of Nicephorus I) and TREITINGER, *Die Oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee...*, cit., pp. 188-189 (at least since A.D. 641), even though the final establishment of this distinction has been dated to later times: e.g., DÖLGER, *ivi*, 148; G. OSTROGORSY, *Das Mitkaisertum im mittelalterlichen Byzanz*, in E. KORNEMANN, *Doppelprinzipat und Reichsteilung in Imperium Romanum*, Leipzig-Berlin 1930, pp. 171-173.

<sup>108</sup> “Dialect”: e.g., Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio...*, cit., ch. 27, ll. 69-70; ch. 29, ll. 79-80, 217-218, 263-264, 272; ch. 32, l. 12; ch. 36, l. 12; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Thematibus...*, cit., p. 71, ch. 6, l. 4. The “grammar of the Italians”: Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio...*, cit., ch. 23, ll. 23-24. For the origins of this view, see E. GABBA, *Il latino come dialetto greco*, in *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di Augusto Rostagni*, Turin 1963, pp. 188-194. Nicetas Choniates Historia, ed. J. L. VAN DIETEN, Berlin 1975, p. 300, l. 95.

the traditional Roman political theory: qualifying the Byzantines as “Greeks” relegated them to the position of one of many “nations” and, therefore, denied them the status of the universal Roman Empire.<sup>109</sup> A parallel development was the extension of the meaning of “Roman” from merely a designation of the people of the city of Rome and the Roman curia to all Latin-speakers who acknowledged the primacy of the Roman Church, thus creating the Roman universality of the papacy in response to the Roman universality of emperors in Constantinople. Acknowledging the primacy of the papacy meant that one’s control over the city of Rome and *defensio ecclesiae* entitled him to the status of “Emperor of the Romans.” The papacy claimed to be the only holder of Roman universality and, therefore, the only dispenser of “Roman titles.”<sup>110</sup>

### Conclusions

The correspondence between Byzantine and Western leaders in the ninth century turns out to have been only a small tip of the big iceberg of intellectual polemics that closely intertwined political and cultural claims on either side. This controversy was rooted in the old dichotomy of the status of the Byzantines as politically “Roman” and culturally “Greek,” which first revealed itself in the sixth century. The Byzantines’ claim to be “Romans” was based on the position of emperors in Constantinople as “Roman emperors” and on the idea of Roman universality that juxtaposed the Roman Empire to “individual” nations. In spite of this obvious dichotomy, the status of Byzantium as the “Roman Empire” continued to be acknowledged in the West into the ninth century. At that time, the political consolidation of Western Europe allowed the Papacy not only to assert its claim to religious primacy but also to claim to be the only holder of Roman identity and, therefore, Roman universality, thus challenging a similar claim of the emperors in Constantinople. As the holder of Roman identity and universality, the Roman Church conferred “Roman titles.”<sup>111</sup> The role of the papacy was much greater than simply bestowing titles and insignia:<sup>112</sup> once Western Europe consolidated itself politically under the Carolingians, the papacy gave it a cultural identity on the basis of Latin linguistics and Catholic beliefs. The Roman Empire could only be a Christian empire—including the empire of the Franks, which was *Romanorum Francorum*

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<sup>109</sup>E.g., *Le Liber Pontificalis*, vol. 2..., cit., p. 155, l. 1; *Chronicon Salernitanum...*, cit., p. 146, l. 20; p. 152, l. 5; p. 171, ll. 11-12.

<sup>110</sup>Liudprand, *Antapodosis* 1.5: *Romanae sedis summus et universalis papa habebatur*. This role of the papacy: e.g., OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., p. 53; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 22, 28 (in 800 and since 850), 197, 206, 218-219; ERDMANN, *Ottönische Studien...*, cit., pp. 3-5, 8-9.

<sup>111</sup>E.g., OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 22, 28.

<sup>112</sup>This view: e.g., PFEIL, *Die fränkische und deutsche Romidee...*, cit., p. 52; ERDMANN, *Ottönische Studien...*, cit., p. 182.

*imperium*, in the words of Sergius II in the mid-ninth century, or *imperium Romanorum christianorumque*, in the words of Adso, the abbot of Montier-en-Der, a century later.<sup>113</sup> The idea of identifying “Roman” with Christian was an old one,<sup>114</sup> but now it became political. It turns out, therefore, that Louis II did not simply ally himself with the papacy,<sup>115</sup> but that the papacy put secular rulers in a position where they had to uphold papal claims as part of securing titles of “Emperors of the Romans” for themselves. This point of view offers support to P. Grierson’s opinion that Louis II abandoned plans to marry his daughter to the son of the Byzantine emperor because of pressure from the papacy.<sup>116</sup> It is only natural that, as has generally been agreed, Louis’ letter to Basil was written (or edited) by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, an ardent defendant of papal interests against Byzantium.<sup>117</sup> Defining Roman cultural identity on the basis of Latin linguistics and the Catholic faith rejected the Byzantines’ claim to be Romans not only culturally but also politically. Both the Roman curia and western secular rulers were taking advantage (in different ways) of the old dichotomy of Byzantine political and cultural identities, and were developing their own idea of Roman universality—as opposed to the individual “nationes” which now included the Greeks of Byzantium.

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<sup>113</sup>*Epistolae Karolini Aevi III...*, cit., p. 583, l. 14 (A.D. 844); E. SACKUR, *Sibyllinische Texte und Forschungen*, Halle a.S. 1898, pp. 109-110.

<sup>114</sup>E.g., *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis libri octo miraculorum*, ed. B. KRUSCH, Hannover 1969 (*MGH SS rer. Merov.* 2/1/2), p. 502, l. 28: Theodegisilus, king of Portugal, called Christians “Romans,” with G. GREATREX, *Roman identity in the sixth century*, in *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*, ed. S. MITCHELL and G. GREATREX, London 2000, p. 278: “all Romans, it might henceforth be expected, would be Chalcedonian Christians.”

<sup>115</sup>Cf. OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 29-30.

<sup>116</sup>GRIERSON, *Empire...*, cit., p. 914.

<sup>117</sup>This view: e.g., POUPARDIN, *La lettre de Louis II...*, cit., pp. 185-202; DÖLGER, *Byzanz...*, cit., pp. 317-318 n. 65; OHNSORGE, *Zweikaiserproblem...*, cit., p. 42; OHNSORGE, *Abendland und Byzanz...*, cit., p. 220; PERELS, *Papst Nikolaus I. und Anastasius Bibliothecarius...*, cit., p. 155 fn. 2; G. ARNALDI, *Anastasio Bibliotecario*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 3, Rome 1961, p. 33; BROWN, *Background...*, cit., p. 38; TAVIANI-CAROZZI, *La vision impériale de l’Occident médiéval...*, cit., p. 181; C. WICKHAM, *Ninth-century Byzantium through western eyes*, in *Byzantium in the Ninth Century*, ed. L. BRUBAKER, Aldershot 1998, p. 253; S. SCHOLZ, *Politik-Selbstverständnis-Selbstdarstellung: die Päpste in karolingischer und ottonischer Zeit*, Stuttgart 2006, p. 222.

## PROMOTING THE NEWCOMER: MYTHS, STEREOTYPES, AND REALITY IN THE NORMAN EXPANSION IN ITALY DURING THE XI<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

*Georgios Theotokis*

This paper is primarily a comparative study and will attempt to give answers to a series of questions regarding the image of the Normans as elite warriors. My focus will be the Norman expansion in the south of Italy and I will compare the image of the Norman soldier in different parts of the European continent, namely Italy, Normandy, and England. What role did the Norman “warlike nature”, energy (*strenuitas*), courage (*corage*), boldness (*hardiesce*), and valour (*vaillantize*) play in shaping the identity of these newcomers in Italy? I will also compare this with the figure of the Normans on the other side of the Adriatic and I will examine the ways in which Byzantine authors tried to build a comprehensive image of the “Frankish” military tactics and of the “Frankish” soldier as an individual warrior. Was the “Norman invincibility” really a myth?

The Norman expansion in eleventh-century Europe was a movement of enormous historical importance that saw men and women from the duchy of Normandy settling in England, Apulia, Calabria, Sicily, and the principality of Antioch.<sup>1</sup> But was the “Norman achievement” made a reality by men that were predominantly influenced by the northern Frankish culture, or should we rather talk about a fusion of cultures and an *ethnogenesis* of a new people with a distinct identity?

The question of the *Normannitas* and the *gens Normannorum* has raised numerous debates in the last fifty years from scholars who have compared the portrayal of the *Normannitas* in the works of chroniclers such as Dudo of St-Quentin, William of Poitiérs, William of Jumièges, and Orderic Vitalis.<sup>2</sup>

By the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, as William of Jumièges explicitly wrote, the newcomers to Neustria had become *Normanni*, distinguishing themselves by becoming Christians (contrary to the pagan Vikings) and identifying themselves with the land of Normandy in a political move representing their independence from the Frankish king. This marked the *ethnogenesis* of a new people with a distinct identity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> R. BARTLETT, *The making of Europe, Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350*, London 1993, pp. 5-59.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. C. DAVIS, *The Normans and their Myth*, London 1997, pp. 49-102; G. LOUD, *The ‘Gens Normannorum’ – Myth or Reality?*, Anglo-Norman Studies, 4/1981, pp. 104-16.

<sup>3</sup> N. WEBBER, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911-1154*, Woodbridge 2005, pp. 18-39. In a different approach to this issue, D. Bates thinks in terms of fusion of cultures: D. BATES, *Normandy Before 1066*, London 1982, pp. 24-43.

But what did the word *gens* mean in the key phrase “*gens Normannorum*”?<sup>4</sup> *Γένος* is a subdivision of *ἔθνος*: race, stock, kin, a people and/or a number of persons. A people can be made up of several *gentes*, usually related to each other but, occasionally, separate and distinct. The meaning of ethnicity is endlessly debatable, but let me put down a number of factors that could affect the shaping of ethnicities. This can include a belief in a shared descent or a common ancestry, often going back to a mythical figure like Romulus and Remus or Clovis. It can also include a common language and/or religion – the *arianism* of the Vandals, the Goths, and the Burgundians. Further, shared social customs and legislation, habitation in a defined area with, usually, a historic association with a mythical ancestry also affecting the forging of ethnicities. However, none of these factors, either alone or combined with others, have been able to prevent violence between ethnic groups throughout humanity’s turbulent history.<sup>5</sup>

Ethnicity is, rather, a cognitive phenomenon: indeed, a state of mind. Ethnicity is also performative: the innate character of a people is handed down by descent and the recipients are raised to act and behave (and fight) in a specific manner. Thus we can encapsulate the two distinct components of ethnicity in the Middle Ages: one was the idea of a common descent; the other was that each people had its own distinct characteristics, both physical and mental.

Jordanes described people in terms of their descent:

“(28) This part of the Goths, which is said to have crossed the river and entered with Filimer into the country of Oium, came into possession of the desired land... (29) Some of the ancient writers also agree with the tale. Among these we may mention Josephus, a most reliable relator of annals, who everywhere follows the rule of truth and unravels from the beginning the origin of causes;--but why he has omitted the beginnings of the race of the Goths, of which I have spoken, I do not know. He barely mentions Magog of that stock, and says they were Scythians by race and were called so by name.”<sup>6</sup>

Both Jordanes and Isidore of Seville believed that physical appearance was transmitted by heredity. In fact, Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae* (early 7th century) was the standard medieval work of reference for the creation and sustenance of ideas relating to the character of races. They were used by Orderic Vitalis and Amatus of

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<sup>4</sup> There are innumerable monographs on the ethnicity and *ethnogenesis* in Europe in the first millennium AD. I found the following studies particularly useful: G. HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West*, 376-568, Cambridge 2007, chapter 2; T.H. ERIKSEN, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, London 1993; P. J. HEATHER, *State formation in the first millennium a.d.*, in *Scotland in Dark Age Europe*, ed. by B. Crawford, St. Andrews 1994, pp. 47–70; F. CURTA, *Frontier ethnogenesis in late antiquity: the Danube, the Tervingi, and the Slavs*, in *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. by F. Curta, Turnhout 2005, pp. 173–204.

<sup>5</sup> G. HALSALL, *Barbarian Migrations...*, cit., pp. 35-39.

<sup>6</sup> JORDANES, *Origin of the Goths*, 28 and 29.

Montecassino and, according to G. Loud,<sup>7</sup> it directly and significantly influenced the Norman writers:

“The Saxon people, situated on the shores of the Ocean in impassable marshes, are accomplished in strength and agility. Whence they were named (i.e. from *saxosus*, “stony”), because they are a hard and very powerful kind of people, standing out above the other piratical tribes.”<sup>8</sup>

The first military treatise that offers a view of foreign warriors was Vegetius’ *Epitoma Rei Militaris* (early 5<sup>th</sup> century). Vegetius’ division of recruits was geographical rather than sociological, following the same principle that developed by Hippocrates on the climatic theory of human nature,<sup>9</sup> he writes the following:

“Or with what success would their small size have been opposed to the prodigious stature of the Germans? The Spaniards surpassed us not only in numbers, but in physical strength. We were always inferior to the Africans in wealth and unequal to them in deception and stratagem. And the Greeks, indisputably, were far superior to us in skill in arts and all kinds of knowledge.”<sup>10</sup>

For Vegetius the world is divided into peoples that constitute recruits for the Roman army rather than neighbouring people that threaten the Empire. Two centuries later, the *Strategikon* attributed to Emperor Maurice (c. 600) would be the first to devote an entire book on the political, social, and military organisation of foreign peoples. What makes this chapter of the *Strategikon* so innovative and of such great value to modern historians is that, during these dangerous times of foreign invasions threatening the Empire from all fronts, it provides its reader with not just with a summary of the battle tactics of “foreign peoples” but also with a detailed analysis of the political, social, and military organisation of all the people that either bordered or threatened the Empire in the past – “the tactics and characteristics of each race which may cause trouble to our state.”<sup>11</sup>

The author of the *Strategikon* is very much concerned about *κράσις* – the physical strength and endurance of warriors in adverse conditions. He specifically stresses the fact that the Persians are “extremely skilful in concealing their injuries and coping bravely with adverse circumstances, even turning them to their own advantage”, and “since they have been brought up in a hot climate, they easily bear the hardships of heat, thirst, and lack of food.” When Leo VI (886-912) commissioned his *Taktika* around the year 900, the Empire was in a much different

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<sup>7</sup> G. LOUD, The *Gens Normannorum...*, cit., pp. 113-4

<sup>8</sup> *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by S. A. Barney, W. J. Lewis. J. A. Beach, and O. Berghof, Cambridge 2006, p. 197.

<sup>9</sup> Hippocrates, *On Airs, Waters and Places*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Vegetius: *Epitome of Military Science*, tr. by N.P. Milner, Liverpool 2001, I. 1, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Maurice’s *Strategikon: handbook of Byzantine military strategy*, tr. in English by G.T. Dennis, Philadelphia 1984 (latest edition: 2010) XI, pp. 113-5.

state of affairs in every aspect of its political, social, and economic life. Thus, the *Strategikon*'s geographical division is kept, but is adjusted to the geopolitical reality of the time.<sup>12</sup> The Scythian and the Turkish nations of the 6<sup>th</sup> century have now been replaced by the Magyars and the rest of the steppe people of the north Black Sea coast. But once again these sections of the *Taktika* are derived from the *Strategikon* with only some minor changes (for example: "These characteristics of the Turks are different from those of the Bulgarians only inasmuch as the latter have embraced the faith of the Christians and gradually taken the Roman characteristics"<sup>13</sup>).

Geoffrey Malaterra's depiction in the 11<sup>th</sup> century of the military expansion of the Vikings from Scandinavia into Normandy resembles more like a "conquest" of a woman than territorial aggrandizement – *Normannia* (Lat. female) is depicted as a beautiful and fertile woman who stood defenceless and ready to be grabbed by her powerful new masters: Rollo and his followers. Medieval authors of the Norman histories frequently resorted to this kind of imagery which runs parallel to the "barbarian" histories of the Germanic expansion of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries over Roman territories: legitimising their initial act of aggression against the Romans. The conquered land was a beautiful woman who freely bestowed her fruits to her new captor turning away from her effete Roman "husband".

"... The land of Normandy is in Gaul, but it was not always called Normandy [*Normannia* (fem.)]... Up to the time when a very brave leader called Rollo sailed boldly from Norway with his fleet to the Christian coast, accompanied by a strong force of soldiers. His great fleet sailed up this river into the more inland areas of Francia, and seeing how fertile this area was, more so than the other regions which they had crossed, he conceived a desire to seize it and take it for his own. For it is a land with rivers full of fish and woods full of wild animals, fertile and suitable for corn and other crops, with rich meadows to feed cattle, and thus very likely to excite the greedy."<sup>14</sup>

To complete this picture of sexual conquest the Norman historians described the Normans as the quintessential warriors – the definition of bravery and manliness dominating over the "effeminate" and "coward" Greeks and Lombards: "They talked of the fertility of Apulia and of the cowardice of those who lived there. They advised them to carry with them only what was necessary for the journey; for they promised that once there they would find a wise patron, under whose leadership

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<sup>12</sup> *The Taktika of Leo VI*, text, translation and commentary by G.T. Dennis, Washington DC 2010, XVIII. 40, 93-95, pp. 452, 470.

<sup>13</sup> *Taktika of Leo VI*..., cit, 59. p. 458.

<sup>14</sup> G. MALATERRA, *De Rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis et Roberti Guiscardi Ducis Fratris eius*, RIS, vol. 6, I. 1. The modern translation of the work is: *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, ed. and trans. K.B. Wolf, Ann Arbor: MI 2005.

they would gain an easy victory over the Greeks... All of them were greedy for gain.”<sup>15</sup>

But what epitomised the aggressiveness of the Normans was their natural inclination to dominate over other peoples and lands:

“For the natural and customary inclination [*mos incitus*] of the sons of Tancred was always to be greedy for domination [*avidas dominationis*], to the very utmost of their powers. They were unable to put up with anybody in their vicinity holding lands and possessions without being envious and immediately seizing these by force and rendering everything subject to their authority.”<sup>16</sup>

In his *avidas dominationis*, Malaterra was undoubtedly influenced by the idea of the *libidem dominandi* (or the “lust for domination) which Sallust associated with the tyrannical regimes of the Athenians and the Spartans in the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Sallust contrasted this lust for domination with the noble quest for fame and honour of the Roman leaders of the Republic, and Malaterra simply recast this as a portrait of eulogy for his Norman warriors and their masters, especially his patron Roger Hauteville. According to Ovidio Capitanni, Geoffrey Malaterra was undoubtedly the one who promoted the introduction of those clichés about the Norman prowess universally accepted not only today, but also by their contemporaries.<sup>17</sup> It was he and William of Apulia – both historians of the Norman expansion in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – who did their utmost to create an overall “heroic” picture of the Norman *Gesta* in Southern Italy.

The following section will attempt to describe the portrayal of this image by the Norman chroniclers of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries and to present the basic characteristics of the Norman warriors. Two examples from the Norman campaigns in Illyria between 1081 and 1083 portray the Norman clichés of valour and audacity, meaning the boldness and/or determination in facing great danger, especially in battle:

“His [Robert Guiscard] army did not consist of more than ten thousand troops, but he relied more on the valour than on the numbers of his soldiers to strike the enemy with terror, in his invasion of Greece renowned for its warlike character since the times of Adrastus and Agamemnon.”<sup>18</sup>

“For the duke [Robert Guiscard] was extraordinarily bold and determined in military matters, and this was abundantly clear to many of the army, even if all the rest kept it quiet. It could in particular undoubtedly be realised from this fact; that he dared to undertake a war with only a small force against so populous an empire and an

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<sup>15</sup> G. DE POUILLE, *La Gèste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. and trans. by M. Mathieu, Palermo 1961, I. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 38.

<sup>17</sup> O. CAPITANI, *Specific Motivations and Continuing Themes in the Norman Chronicles of Southern Italy in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, in *The Normans in Sicily and Southern Italy*, Lincey Lectures 1974 (Oxford, 1977), p. 6

<sup>18</sup> *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols., Oxford 1969-80, VII. 5.

emperor so well provided with troops, against so many thousands of enemies, and he expected to defeat them. (Those who were present during this affair have testified that he had with him no more than 1300 fully armed knights).”<sup>19</sup>

Equally significant and dominant in the portrayal of the Norman invaders was their resourcefulness, their ability to deal skilfully and promptly with new situations, difficulties, etc. Adaptation to the new geo-political environment in Italy was the key for their survival and expansion in the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Their story is one of a few hundred men who descended into Italy to make careers for themselves as mercenaries, literally matching the term “soldiers of fortune”. Thus, we read in William of Apulia’s *Gesta*:

“As wanderers, tramps, they went from place to place, possessing no fixed abode, until finally a dispute among their neighbours gave them the opportunity to stay. For they attached themselves to the Lombard whom they knew to be the most powerful, and they stayed faithfully in his service, that by supporting him they might be protected from others.”<sup>20</sup>

In relation to their resourcefulness, the Normans are very often also depicted as crafty and opportunistic, seeking the perfect opportunity to achieve their goals no matter the costs, forging alliances and agreements in a manner that was considered by the authors as un-chivalric and, even, immoral:

“But since human thoughts are inclined to greed and money always triumphs in the end, from time to time they abandoned him, always supporting the one who paid better, serving most willingly him from whom they gained the greatest advantage.”<sup>21</sup>

Writing about the Norman invasion of the island of Sicily in the early 1060s, Malaterra further notes that: “Seeing their enemies facing their army on the other shore and no prospect of doing anything, Count Roger resorted as was his custom to cunning proposals, as if he had read, ‘What is to be done? Success falls to the crafty weapons’.”<sup>22</sup>

What particularly distinguishes the Normans in the military “arena” of medieval European warfare is their *strenuitas* – energy in the field – which is a characteristically Norman quality in all periods. This was signalled out an inborn trait that in particular separates the Normans from their “effeminate” enemies like the Greeks and the Lombards:

“Then Count William, the eldest of the brothers, fell ill and died, and all the Normans were prostrated with grief since they doubted whether they would in future ever have a man of such wisdom and skill at arms [*armis strenuum*], and one who was so

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<sup>19</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 24.

<sup>20</sup> *La Geste de Robert Guiscard...*, cit., I. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *La Geste de Robert Guiscard...*, cit., I. 5.

<sup>22</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 10.

generous, kindly and accommodating to them.. Let us sum him up by saying that he was a man praiseworthy in every way.”<sup>23</sup>

However, *strenuitas* is not the virtue of only those individuals portrayed in Malaterra’s history, as Malaterra highlights in his text:

“Meanwhile, news of the reputation for the *strenuitas* of Count Roger of the Sicilians came to the celebrated Count Raymond of Provence. Hearing of this, he sent envoys of a rank suitable for such an important matter to this great prince, asking that he might be joined in marriage to Matilda.”<sup>24</sup>

The importance of the notion of *strenuitas* for the Normans cannot be fully understood unless it is viewed in combination with the following “mystical” sense of *Fortune*. Fortune played a great part in Norman histories, but especially in the work of Malaterra. As O. Capitani, K. Wolf, and G. Loud have pointed out, the classical manner in which our Norman historians were exulting the character of the Norman expansion in Italy as a result of Fortune was based on Sallust and Caesar<sup>25</sup>, which texts William of Poitiers and, especially, Malaterra were definitely familiar with.<sup>26</sup>

But alongside Fortune, Malaterra acknowledged the power of Divine Providence which is, according to O. Capitani, inseparable from the theme of Fortune.<sup>27</sup> For Malaterra it was Divine Providence that led the Normans to seek their fortune in Italy. Describing the Norman expedition in Sicily in the early 1060s, Malaterra writes:

“He [Roger Hauteville] addressed them [Normans] in the following words: 'O you most brave men', let us remember your ancestors, and the courage [*strenuitas*] which our race once used to have and [indeed] for which it was renowned, and avoid the scorn of those in the future. Remember how many thousand enemies you defeated at Cerami with fewer men than there are here now. Fortune favoured you then; it will act in the same way here and now as it did formerly. Get back to your former valour - by acting bravely and [gaining] the victory after your flight your reputation will be restored.”<sup>28</sup>

The familiarity of the Byzantines with the Frankish soldiers is evidenced by the large number of individual Frankish mercenaries that are recorded in the Byzantine payrolls as early as 1047; including the names of famous officers Herve,

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<sup>23</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., I. 12.

<sup>24</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Fortune in: Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, I. 36; I. 40; I. 54; II. 16; III. 6; IV. 26; V. 35; V. 44; V. 55.

<sup>26</sup> O. CAPITANI, *Specific Motivations...*, cit., pp. 8-11, 23-4; G. LOUD, *The Gens Normannorum...*, cit., p. 114; Wolf, *Deeds of Count Roger...*, cit., pp. 15-19.

<sup>27</sup> O. CAPITANI, *Specific Motivations...*, cit., p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 35.

Robert Crispin, and Roussel of Bailleuil.<sup>29</sup> Another invaluable source of knowledge about the Empire's enemies are the above mentioned military manuals known as the *Taktika* or *Strategika* which were repositories of military knowledge used by the Byzantine military *intelligencia*.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the *Taktika* of emperor Leo VI (c. 900) served as a key manual for the entire military thinking of Byzantine high-ranking officers and it is the most detailed and most recent – regarding the Norman expansion in the Mediterranean and the First Crusade – examination of the Frankish military tactics.

Something that is clearly attested in the texts is the mention of the bravery of the Frankish soldiery, with special attention being paid to the chivalric nobility of the post-Carolingian era. However, this courage and stubbornness was to be the Franks' downfall with emperor Leo VI encouraging the Byzantine generals not to confront the Normans in a pitched battle, but rather to resort to guerrilla tactics and stratagems.<sup>31</sup> Leo VI also placed much attention on the Frankish battle-charges with specific mention of how undisciplined a Frankish attack is. Finally, another element of the Frankish warrior that was again used against them was their "greedy and easily corrupted nature" which would turn the soldiers against their officers, and the officers against their generals and kings. It is a motif that was played out some two and a half centuries later in one of the best works in Byzantine literature, the *Alexiad* of the Princess Anna Comnena, as she reports about the Latin soldiers that: "Now he [Alexius Comnenus] dreaded their [Crusaders] arrival for he knew their irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character and all the peculiar natural and concomitant characteristics which the Frank retains throughout."<sup>32</sup>

Anna Comnena offers two invaluable portraits of Norman aristocrats for the Middle Byzantine historiography, namely the overweening arrogance, greed, treachery, perjury, and the rest of the immoral values of the Duke of Apulia and Calabria, Robert Guiscard, and his son Bohemond of Taranto. In her text,<sup>33</sup> Anna is comparing Robert with Constantine (emperor Michael VII's son): the terms of his marriage contract and foreign alliance in general, his handsome appearance and stature, and his physical and moral qualities. Robert was a Norman by birth but of obscure origin – a point which is enhanced by Anna in an effort to contrast it with Constantine's noble origin, with an overbearing and a treacherous character; he was a

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<sup>29</sup> G. THEOTOKIS, *Rus, Varangian and Frankish mercenaries in the service of the Byzantine Emperors (9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> c.) – Numbers, Organisation and Battle Tactics in the operational theatres of Asia Minor and the Balkans*, *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 22/2012, pp. 126-156.

<sup>30</sup> G. THEOTOKIS, *From Ancient Greece to Byzantium: Strategic Innovation or Continuity of Military Thinking?*, in *Antiquitas Viva 4: studia classica*, eds. B. Kukjalko, O. Lāms, I. Rūmniece, Riga 2014, pp. 106-18; S. COSENTINO, *Writing about War in Byzantium*, *Revista de Historia das Ideias*, 30/2009, pp. 83-99

<sup>31</sup> *The Taktika of Leo VI...*, cit., XVIII. 76-92, pp. 464-8.

<sup>32</sup> Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad*, trans. by E.A.S. Dawes, Cambridge Ontario 2000, X. 11.

<sup>33</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., I. 10.

brave fighter, very cunning in his assaults on the wealth and power of great men; and absolutely inexorable in achieving his aims. In fact, Anna's emphatic use of την ψυχήν πανούργότατος [cunning soul] serves as a frequent reminder of the unstable and rapacious nature of the man. He was a man of immense stature, surpassing even the biggest men, with a ruddy complexion, fair hair, broad shoulders, eyes that "all but shot sparks of fire".<sup>34</sup> It is interesting to note this contradiction in terms of physical stature between the barbarians and the Byzantines, as the "barbarians" were warriors of unequal proportions due to the fact they lived in such northern latitude. However, Robert is an exception among his other compatriots because: "... in a well-built man one looks for breadth here and slimness there; in him all was admirably well-proportioned and elegant." The Norman Duke is portrayed as a graceful warrior with a strong character that helps him stay the servant of no man, owing obedience to no lord except himself, something that seems to astonish Anna since Robert was of such an obscure origin.

But the warrior that surpasses Robert Guiscard in greed, treachery, and dishonesty would be no other than his son, Bohemond, the *fons et origo malorum* of the Latin knights and Alexius Comennus' nemesis. He was not to be identified as the archenemy of the emperor until he took the Crusading vow in 1097, a campaign that presented Bohemond with a unique opportunity to escape the relentless pressure put on him by his half-brother Roger who was acting in his own interests as the legitimate heir of Robert Guiscard's possessions. After that, as G. Buckler vividly points out, "no colours were too dark for painting him."<sup>35</sup> His motives are contemptuous: a desire to improve his fortunes, some sort of irrational ambition to become Grand Domestic or even emperor himself. Anna even reports the existence of an "ancient grudge" against her father by Bohemond.<sup>36</sup> Thus, when Bohemond takes up his oath of allegiance to Alexius I Comnenus in the Constantinople and becomes a man of the emperor,<sup>37</sup> Anna – writing in retrospect – already knows that he will break his promises, because, like all the other Latins, he is unstable and πανούργότατος [most cunning], ready to "corrupt the minds" of the rest of the Crusader leaders.<sup>38</sup> But as it was the case with Anna's portrayal of his father, she is even-handed enough to deliver

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<sup>34</sup> The fair and strong complexity of the Germanic nations is stressed by Tacitus and it is worth comparing what the 1<sup>st</sup> century historian writes about them: "I myself accept the view of those who judge that the peoples of Germany have never been contaminated by intermarriage with other nations and that the race remains unique, pure, and unlike any other. As a result, their physical appearance too, if one may generalize about so large a population, is always the same: fierce blue eyes, red hair, and large bodies. Their bodies, however, are strong only for a violent outburst. These same large frames cannot last out for work and effort, and can scarcely tolerate thirst or heat, although their climate has made them accustomed to cold and their poor soil to hunger." TACITUS, *Agricola and Germany*, trans. by A.R. Birley, Oxford 1999, I. 4, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> G. BUCKLER, *Anna Comnena, a Study*, London 1929, pp. 469-77.

<sup>36</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., X. 5; XI. 12.

<sup>37</sup> J. SHEPARD, *When Greek meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097-98*, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 12/1988, pp. 185-277.

<sup>38</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., X. 7; X. 11.

a fair assessment of his good qualities: he was, indeed, brave and eager to win victories in the battlefield,<sup>39</sup> energetic,<sup>40</sup> a very capable tactician,<sup>41</sup> and “was skilled above all men in the art of sieges even surpassing the famous Demetrius Poliorcetes.”<sup>42</sup>

### Conclusions

As the military aristocracy of the 11<sup>th</sup> century expanded all over Europe and the Mediterranean, its members created not only new states but also representations of themselves and of their exploits and achievements. Images of conquerors and conquests, which have been enshrined in histories and charters and in the songs and stories, were composed to entertain the Norman nobility and to build moral and practical examples.

Thus, the conqueror was a man with special set of drives. It has been made perfectly clear that the image-makers (or propagandists?) of the early Norman expansion in Italy and Sicily ascribe the Norman success to a series of psychological characteristics: first of all their energy (*strenuitas*), which is a particularly prominent in the pages of Malaterra who portrays the protagonists of the expansion and their followers as the epitome of manliness, being energetic in arms and causing fear to their “effeminate” enemies – Greeks and Lombards. As well as being vigorous, the Normans were also courageous, always fighting bravely to gain their fame in the battlefield, often against high odds. But they were also resourceful, able to take command of the situation, and they were particularly distinguished for their craftiness and cunning spirit: “what is to be done? Success falls to the crafty weapons”<sup>43</sup>

Savagery was an important character aspect of these new players in the geo-political scene of the Mediterranean, with images of cruelty, bloodthirstiness, and destruction accompanying their advance in the South against their enemies. Why? “Because,” as William of Apulia puts it, “the ferocious Normans had a reputation” and this was exactly their main weapon – an image carefully and meticulously cultivated and promoted.

However, I would contend that the Normans do not exhibit any radical innovation in the battlefields of Normandy, England, Italy, Sicily, or in the Balkans. They relied on the charge of their heavy cavalry units and the shock impact this would have on their enemies, especially if the latter’s army consisted of infantry levies. And in many cases they chose relatively broken, hilly, or marshy terrain, which was also dominated by a river or a hill fort, to diminish the numerical

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<sup>39</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., XI. 3; XI. 4.

<sup>40</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., XIII. 4.

<sup>41</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., V. 4; V. 7.

<sup>42</sup> *The Alexiad...*, cit., XII. 9.

<sup>43</sup> *De Rebus gestis...*, cit., II. 10.

advantage of their enemies and the mobility of their cavalry. Heavy cavalry attacks, however, were common in Frankish warfare and the Normans simply implemented what they had experienced in France for decades. And the Byzantines were well experienced in the charge of the Frankish chivalry, judging by the writings of emperor Leo VI. In the south, bands of Normans were employed by every rival camp precisely because they were the best, counting on strong leadership and unified command, along with a combination of elite mounted warriors, acting in co-ordination with recruited foot-soldiers, all of which were supported, when necessary, by fleets.

**ΚΛΗΡΟΝΟΜΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΙΩΝΙΟΥ ΠΥΡΟΣ ΜΕΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΣΑΤΑΝΑ ?  
LA FORTUNE DE LUCIEN ENTRE SOURCES LITTERAIRES  
ET TRADITION MANUSCRITE<sup>1</sup>**

*Lorenzo M. Cioffi*

The relatively small corpus of codices which contain Lucian of Samosata's works, as well as a few explicit references to his work found in Greek texts written in the period from the late antiquity to the eleventh century, suggest that the reception of this author was dual: on the one hand, he was criticized and neglected because of his irreverent wit, but on the other hand, his texts were widely read and known. This paper explores the hidden allusions to Lucian and his works and takes into account the tremendous influence that he had on Byzantine authors, especially during the Komnenian and Palaeologan periods.

Without the intention to be exhaustive, it provides an initial assessment of explicit and hidden references to Lucian; it also aims to reopen the debate on a possible "implicit presence", which can help us understand better the cultural transmission and circulation dynamics in Byzantium.

**Keywords:** Greek literature, Greek paleography, Byzantine Studies, Classical philology, Lucian

Florissant polygraphe syrien, professeur errant à travers nombre de pays du bassin méditerranéen, Lucien est une figure centrale du mouvement culturel défini par les savants modernes comme Seconde Sophistique, le « maître du σπουδογέλοιον »<sup>2</sup>. L'intérêt continual pour ses écrits lui a conféré un prestige qui est

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<sup>1</sup> Présentées à l'occasion de la journée d'études « Circulation et transmission à Byzance » organisée à Aix-en-Provence (27 mars 2015) par B. Brun, M.-M. Carytsiotis et G. Meyer-Fernandez, ces réflexions sont le fruit d'une recherche menée à l'Université de Rome « Sapienza » sous la direction de D. Bianconi, à laquelle nous renvoyons pour tous renseignements supplémentaires – surtout pour ce qui concerne l'étude des manuscrits et de leur histoire. Avec notre ancien directeur, nous voulons ici remercier C. Messis, M. Panoryia et P. Odorico pour le support constant, et les précieux commentaires et critiques.

<sup>2</sup> J. BOMPAIRE, *La transmission des textes grecs antiques à l'Europe moderne par Byzance : le cas de Lucien*, dans *Byzance et l'Europe. Colloque à la Maison de l'Europe (Paris, 22 avril 1994)*, Paris 2001, pp. 95-107, en part. p. 96. Voir aussi W. A. JOHNSON, *Readers and reading culture in the high Roman Empire. A study of elite communities*, New York-Oxford 2010 (*Classical culture and society*), pp. 157-178, E. BOZIA, *Lucian and his Roman Voices. Cultural Exchanges and Conflicts in the Late Roman Empire*, New York-London 2014 (*Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies*) et maintenant C. MESSIS, *Lucian's fortune in Byzantium* (sous presse). « Seconde Sophistique » est la définition que Philostrate a premièrement donnée au modèle culturel contemporain, en l'opposant à la Sophistique « ancienne » : « ἡ μὲν δὴ σοφιστικὴ καὶ τὰ

resté presque intact de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance et, de là, s'est grandement amplifié jusqu'à nos jours.

Cependant, ce parcours à travers les siècles n'était pas toujours linéaire et sans imprévus. En particulier, dans les années suivant sa mort, il semble avoir été délibérément ignoré par les savants, comme s'il était « victime d'une sorte de *damnatio memoriae* »<sup>3</sup>. Toutefois, cette condition négative n'a pas duré longtemps et a laissé tôt la place à un intérêt manifeste ou à une critique directe, qui sont bien représentés par la précoce traduction en syriaque de *Calumnia* et par le remaniement des thèmes et l'utilisation du style de Lucien dans plusieurs autres ouvrages. Une éclatante faveur accompagne en continu la « redécouverte » de l'auteur de Samosate pendant toute l'époque byzantine – et surtout à partir de la soi-disant « renaissance paléologue » –, pour arriver à l'Humanisme italien.

À cette époque, Lucien vit une deuxième fois grâce à Manuel Chrysoloras qui, le premier, a introduit les opuscules en Occident pour servir à son enseignement auprès du *Studio* de Florence (activité qu'il géra du 2 février 1397 au 10 mars 1400). Le maître byzantin apporta avec lui un *codex* contenant l'ensemble du *corpus* de notre auteur, l'actuel Vat. gr. 87 et aussi – il est fort probable – un autre livre « de travail », contenant une sélection anthologique<sup>4</sup>. Le choix d'utiliser Lucien dans l'enseignement du grec en tant que langue étrangère fut conditionné au début par de simples raisons techniques mais, peu après, ce qui avait commencé comme une simple décision pragmatique, devint un phénomène de goût et d'esthétique, en prenant la forme d'« una vicenda [...] decisiva nella storia culturale dell'Europa »<sup>5</sup>. À la base de cette réalité se trouvaient les traductions en latin préparées par les humanistes italiens<sup>6</sup> qui, en se servant de la puissance de l'imprimerie, diffusèrent Lucien au-delà des Alpes, à travers tout le continent.

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φιλοσοφούμενα ὑποτιθεμένη διήσι αὐτὰ ἀποτάδην καὶ ἐς μῆκος, διελέγετο μὲν γὰρ περὶ ἀνδρείας, διελέγετο δὲ περὶ δικαιοτητος, ἥρωων τε περὶ καὶ θεῶν καὶ ὅπῃ ἀπεσχημάτισται ἡ ἴδεα τοῦ κόσμου. Ή δὲ μετ' ἐκείνην, ἣν οὐχὶ νέαν, ἀρχαία γάρ, δευτέραν δὲ μᾶλλον προσρητέον » (VS, 1 ; *Flavii Philostrati opera auctiora*, éd. par C. L. KAYSER, Lipsiae 1871, II p. 2 ll. 22-28). Un panorama sur ce sujet, avec nombreuses références bibliographiques, se trouve dans S. NICOSIA, *La Seconda Sofistica*, dans *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, éd. par G. CAMBIANO – L. CANFORA – D. LANZA, Roma 1994, I.3 pp. 85-116.

<sup>3</sup> J. BOMPAIRE, *Lucien, Oeuvres*, I, Paris 1993, p. XXXVI.

<sup>4</sup> Il est possible de comprendre quelles étaient les lectures lucianesques des étudiants italiens à travers l'analyse du manuscrit Vat. Urb. gr. 121, apographe du Vat. gr. 87, qui a été écrit par un des élèves de Chrysoloras : il s'agit en particulier du *Charon*, *Calumnia*, *Piscator*, *Icaromenippus* et *Timon*.

<sup>5</sup> E. BERTI, *Alla scuola di Manuele Crisolora. Lettura e commento di Luciano*, Rinascimento, 27/1987, pp. 3-73, en part. p. 3. Un bilan sur la première fortune occidentale de Lucien est dans D. MARSH, *Lucian and the Latins. Humor and humanism in the early Renaissance*, Ann Arbor 1998, pp. 1-41; voir aussi M. BAUMBACH, *Lukian in Deutschland. Eine forschungs- und rezeptionsgeschichtliche Analyse vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart*, München 2002 (*Beihefte zu Poetica*, 25).

<sup>6</sup> Ici on se limite à rappeler les travaux d'Athanase Chalkéopoulos, de Rinuccio di Arezzo, de Poggio Bracciolini et de Giovanni Aurispa.

Et ainsi, à partir de la fin du XV<sup>ème</sup> siècle, il est au centre de la scène culturelle européenne. Dans un moment aussi délicat et troublé que l'était le milieu du 1500, un mouvement éphémère qui puisait directement à l'auteur de Samosate, le *lucianisme*, vit le jour. La renommée extraordinaire de Lucien, alimentée en continu par les classicistes pendant les siècles suivants, inspira sans interruption tant les écrivains que les artistes. Plusieurs chefs-d'œuvre européens de l'âge moderne doivent beaucoup aux lectures des dialogues lucianesques, parmi lesquels l'*Éloge de la Folie* d'Érasme de Rotterdam (1467-1536), *Les voyages de Gulliver* de Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) jusqu'aux *Confessions du chevalier d'industrie Félix Krull* de Thomas Mann (1875-1955).

Afin de créer une prémissse valable pour enquêter sur la fortune byzantine et post-byzantine de Lucien, nous voulions ici parcourir les étapes de la circulation et de la transmission du *corpus* lucianesque, de l'Antiquité tardive jusqu'au l'XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle, et notamment à travers l'étude des références des sources littéraires et des données des témoins manuscrits. La raison qui a nous poussé à choisir cette limite chronologique est principalement dictée par la remarquable contraction de la production de manuscrits des classiques au XII<sup>ème</sup> siècle, dont on ne connaît pas encore les facteurs déterminants<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Cette réduction dans la production livresque a été emmené à l'attention des chercheurs par G. Cavallo à l'occasion du V<sup>ème</sup> Colloque international de paléographie grecque en 1998 : « all'avvento dei Comneni proprio la liquidazione di questa classe di intellettuali e dell'intensa attività scolastica che intorno ad essa si svolgeva – nel secolo XII, si sa, l'istruzione passerà sotto il controllo dell'Accademia Patriarcale – spiega forse il successivo contrarsi della produzione libraria » (G. CAVALLO, *Scritture informali, cambio grafico e pratiche librarie*, dans *I manoscritti greci tra riflessione e dibattito*. Atti del V Colloquio internazionale di paleografia greca [Cremona, 4-10 ottobre 1998], éd. par G. PRATO, Firenze 2000 [*Papyrologica Fiorentina*, 31], pp. 219-238, en part. p. 237 et n. 108). Une autre raison possible du phénomène pourrait être trouvée dans l'augmentation soudaine des prix des livres que nous remarquons au début de l'époque des Comnènes ; le chercheur italien souligna que le phénomène pourrait être plus consistente que ce qui avait été mis en évidence par les données de son étude, sans distinction entre Orient et Occident. Des recherches sur la transmission des auteurs classiques (en particulier Hérodote, Thucydide, Xénophon, Apollonios de Rhodes et Lucien), menées dans le cadre d'un séminaire organisé par G. Cavallo à l'Université de Rome « Sapienza », année académique 2008/2009, ont en effet confirmé sur une plus grande échelle cette hypothèse. Cette question mériterait un approfondissement étant donné qu'on constate une réduction de la production des manuscrits des classiques et non pas de l'éducation et de la culture. En effet, « it was an age of literacy » (R. BROWNING, *Byzantine scholarship*, Past and Present, 28/1964, pp. 3-22, en part. p 13) et l'importante école patriarcale dont « it is sufficient to mention that among those who taught there at this time were Niketas of Serrae, Gregory of Corinth, and Eustathios » sans doute « stands at the centre of Byzantine culture » (R. BROWNING, *The Patriarchal School at Constantinople in the Twelfth Century*, Byzantium, 32/1962 et 33/1963, pp. 167-201 et 11-40, en part. p. 168 ; sur cette institution voir aussi U. CRISCUOLO, *Chiesa ed insegnamento a Bisanzio nel XII secolo. Sul problema della cosiddetta Accademia patriarcale*, Siculorum Gymnasium, 28/1975, pp. 373-390 et P. MAGDALINO, *The empire of Manuel I Komnenos [1143-1180]*, Cambridge 1993, pp. 326-330). En particulier, à ces années fait référence le *Timarion*, clairement inspiré par la production de l'auteur de Samosate (voir N. G. WILSON, *Some observations on the fortunes of Lucian*, dans *Filologia, Papirologia, Storia dei testi. Giornate di studio in onore di Antonio Carlini* [Udine, 9-10 dicembre 2005], Pisa-Roma 2008 [*Biblioteca di studi antichi*, 90], pp. 53-61, en part. p. 57 : « what is odd about the tradition of Lucian is that on present evidence there appears to be no surviving copy from the twelfth century. The fact is curious for two reasons: this was not an age of declining book production, and the early decades of the century are the date universally assigned to the best of the Byzantine sketches written in imitation of our author, the *Timarion* »).

### Antiquité tardive.

Pour cette période l'enquête doit se fonder uniquement sur des témoignages fragmentaires et sur de vagues allusions mais, bien que les données en notre possession soient très limitées – en termes tant quantitatives que géographiques –, il est toutefois possible de définir, avec une bonne marge de précision, les caractéristiques générales du phénomène à cette époque.

Il s'agit des premiers témoins du II<sup>ème</sup> au IV<sup>ème</sup> siècle, qui sont sortis de sables de la *chora* égyptienne. Même si la place d'honneur devrait être réservée au fragment de *Halcyon* contenu dans le P. Oxy. 3683<sup>8</sup>, ce document doit être laissé à côté car la paternité de l'ouvrage en question est encore douteuse. Par contre, le cadre fourni par les trois fragments restants est assez homogène : la réputation exceptionnelle que Lucien avait eu et qui l'avait conduit à voyager d'une contrée à l'autre dans tout le bassin de la Méditerranée pour présenter des conférences<sup>9</sup>, fit que ses dialogues ont été préservés aussi dans les bibliothèques privées (au moins jusqu'à la crise économique et culturelle du IV<sup>ème</sup> siècle, comme le démontrent le PSI Laur. inv. 19662V<sup>10</sup> et le P. Lond. Lit. 19411), et connus au point que, par exemple, un extrait de Lucien fut copié sur le *verso* du *Bouclier d'Héraclès* d'Hésiode (comme c'est le cas du P. Oxy. 4738<sup>12</sup>). Un tel *statut* reflète bien l'hypothèse de G. Cavallo, selon laquelle « gli autori dell'antichità tarda furono trasmessi dai contemporanei e non da un pubblico diacronico per pura convenzione estranea al sistema letterario; furono legati più degli antichi a realtà eccentriche, e perciò la produzione letteraria finì talora con il riflettere tematiche locali e tradizioni orali e folkloriche »<sup>13</sup>. L'intérêt manifesté vers Lucien semble être enraciné dans les régions orientales et grécophones de l'Empire romain, où il s'était formé et avait vécu les moments les plus significatifs de sa vie<sup>14</sup>. Les auteurs, dont l'origine ou la culture font référence à ce territoire

<sup>8</sup> En étant écrit au cours de la seconde moitié du deuxième siècle de notre ère – datation sur base paléographique –, ce papyrus pourrait donc avoir été produit pendant la vie de Lucien ou dans les années suivant immédiatement sa mort. Voir *The Oxyrhynchus papyri, volume LII*, éd. par H. M. COCKLE et alii, London 1984, pp. 113-116.

<sup>9</sup> A. BILLAULT, *Lucien voyageur et les cultures de son temps*, dans *Médiateurs culturels et politiques dans l'Empire romain. Voyages, conflits identitaires*, éd. par A. GANGLOFF, Paris 2011, pp. 11-22.

<sup>10</sup> R. OTRANTO, *Antiche liste di libri su papiro*, Roma 2000 (*Sussidi eruditivi*, 49), pp. 89-95 et pl. XIII.

<sup>11</sup> J. LENNAERTS, *Fragment de parchemin du Lucius ou l'Ane: P. Lit. Lond. 194*, Chronique d'Égypte, 49/1974, pp. 115-120.

<sup>12</sup> *The Oxyrhynchus papyri, volume LXIX*, éd. par N. GONIS, D. OBBINK et alii, London 2005, pp. 173-175 et pl. XIV.

<sup>13</sup> G. CAVALLO, *Conservazione e perdita dei testi greci: fattori materiali, sociali, culturali*, dans *Tradizione dei classici, trasformazioni della cultura*, éd. par A. GIARDINA, Bari 1986, pp. 83-172, en part. pp. 142-143.

<sup>14</sup> La connexion entre l'auteur et son pays natal est si forte que, des siècles plus tard, Théodore Métochites indique Lucien et Libanios comme les modèles incontestés du style rhétorique syrien. On peut lire dans l'ouvrage Ότι πάντες ὅσοι ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἐπαιδεύθησαν τραχύτερον τῷ λέγειν χρῶνται : « ἀμφοτέρω Σύρω ἄνδρε καὶ ὄνομαστώ γ' ἐν ῥητορείᾳ καὶ γλώττῃ ἀσκήσει, καὶ πόλλ' ἔξενεκόντε βιβλία μετ' εὐστοῦμας θαυμάσια » (K. HULT, *Theodore Metochites on Ancient Authors and Philosophy. Semeioseis gnomikai 1-26 & 71*, Göteborg 2002 [*Studia graeca et latina Gothoburgensia*, 65], p. 162 ll. 18-22). Ce passage continue ainsi, dans la traduction de Wilson : « although they were extremely keen practitioners of Atticism,

particulier, ont donc laissé dans leur production le témoignage, parfois minimal, de lectures lucianesques.

Outre le fait que les suggestions repérables dans les épîtres d'Alciphron (II<sup>e</sup> siècle), dans le *corpus* des Ἐπιστολαὶ ἐρωτικαί d'Aristénète (V<sup>e</sup> ou VI<sup>e</sup> siècle) et, probablement, dans les ouvrages païens de l'empereur Julien l'Apostat (331-363), trois autres auteurs de la période mentionnent explicitement Lucien<sup>15</sup>. L'africain **Lactance** (environ 250-327) le nomme dans ses *Divinae institutiones*; l'apologiste écrit à l'occasion d'une discussion sur les véritables vertus humaines et sur la crédibilité des poètes : « quid tu, inquiet aliquis, poetisne credendum putas ? Quidni putem ? Non enim ista Lucilius narrat, aut Lucianus, qui diis et hominibus non pepercit »<sup>16</sup>. Quelques mots, une brève parenthèse suffisant pour étiqueter le caractère d'un personnage peu fiable et trop polémique. Un choix qui peut nous faire penser que l'auteur de Samosate fut généralement connu et représentait un cas notoire parmi les Chrétiens. Un tel blâme pour avoir raillé le transcendant ressort aussi d'une lettre d'**Isidore de Péluse** (environ 350-440) adressée au sophiste Harpocrate, dont le titre est Ὁτι ἀπὸ φιλαρχίας ἡ προλήψεων φύονται αἰρέσεις. En suivant le raisonnement d'ensemble de la missive, très critique envers l'ambition et les idées préconçues de certains hommes, Isidore reproche la morsure aveugle et violente que le polygraphe syrien utilisa toujours contre tout et tous : « παρὰ τῶν Κυνικῶν ὃν εἰς ἦν καὶ Λουκιανός, ὁ τοὺς διαλόγους κατὰ πάντων ὄμοῦ σχεδὸν τῶν τε εἰρημένων, τῶν τε παραλειμμένων συντάξας »<sup>17</sup>. Lié à sa ville natale et à Athènes, où il a probablement enseigné la rhétorique, le philosophe et historien païen **Eunape de Sardes** (347-après 414) décrit Lucien dans la partie finale de la préface de ses *Vies des Sophistes* : « Λουκιανὸς δὲ ὁ ἐκ Σαμοσάτων, ἀνὴρ σπουδαῖος ἐς τὸ γελασθῆναι, Δημώνακτος φιλοσόφου κατ' ἐκείνους τοὺς χρόνους βίον ἀνέγραψεν, ἐν ἐκείνῳ τε τῷ βιβλίῳ καὶ ἄλλοις ἐλαχίστοις δι' ὅλου σπουδάσας »<sup>18</sup>. Bien que il s'agit d'un commentaire superficiel, étant placé là où l'auteur met en contexte et en évidence les caractéristiques positives et/ou négatives de ceux qui l'ont précédé dans le même

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they welcomed and adopted the grace of that style and its conventions in just such a way to avoid and reject the features of Atticism which lead to deviation from the norm and offend the ear » (N. G. WILSON, *Some observations...*, cit., p. 56).

<sup>15</sup> Pour informations supplémentaires sur ces témoignages consulter B. BALDWIN, *Studies in Lucian*, Toronto 1973, pp. 97-118.

<sup>16</sup> *Divin. Inst.* (CPL 85) I,9 dans *PL*, VI pp. 159 : « eh quoi, dira-t-on, penses-tu qu'on doive faire confiance aux poètes ? – Pourquoi pas ? Car ce n'est pas Lucilius qui raconte cela, ni Lucien, qui n'a épargné ni les dieux ni les hommes».

<sup>17</sup> *Epist.* (CPG 5557) IV,53 dans *PG*, LXXVIII pp. 1105-1008 : par les cyniques, dont Lucien : ses dialogues à lui visaient presque tout le monde à la fois, ceux que j'ai cités plus haut et les autres.

<sup>18</sup> *Eunapii, Vitae sophistarum*, éd. par G. GIANGRANDE, Romae 1956, p. 4 ll. 5-8 : quant à Lucien de Samosate, un homme qui a mis tout son sérieux à faire rire, il a écrit une vie de Démonax, un philosophe de ce temps-là, ayant d'un bout à l'autre montré son sérieux dans ce livre et dans de très rares autres. Selon B. Baldwin « the inclusion of Lucian might be taken as an implied rebuke for his omission by the earlier biographer [c.ā.d. Philostrate et ses *Vies des sophistes*]. Eunapius was forthrightly anti-Christian, and his failure to adduce or defend Lucian in this context is perhaps significant » (B. BALDWIN, *Studies...*, cit., p. 99).

genre littéraire, cette suggestion semble hors de tout intention rhétorique, ou polémique, et nous permet d'imaginer une lecture attentive de l'ensemble des ouvrages de Lucien par les érudits du V<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Pendant l'Antiquité tardive, donc, c'est précisément aux membres des élites d'assurer la transmission du *corpus* de Lucien<sup>19</sup>. À partir de témoignages que nous venons de mentionner, il nous semble que le principal intérêt fut vers – et la plupart de fois contre – l'irrésistible veine polémique de l'auteur et l'incroyable variété des contenus ; mais, bien que pas expressément indiqué, il est nécessaire de supposer aussi un intérêt purement pratique concernant les caractéristiques linguistiques et formelles de ses écrits. En effet, choisis en tant que lectures personnelles, ils ont vraisemblablement servi comme modèle ou répertoire pour l'amélioration du style : « Lucian's elegant and fairly simple language, which at first sight is not easily distinguished from the products of the classical period, eventually made him a popular author »<sup>20</sup>.

À partir de ce moment et jusqu'au IX<sup>ème</sup> siècle – c'est-à-dire au cours des « siècles obscurs » –, le silence le plus profond tombe également sur l'auteur de Samosate. Le cas unique de la traduction en syriaque du *Calumnia*, préparée au cours du VI<sup>ème</sup> siècle et conservé dans le seul manuscrit Syr. 1003 (Addit. 17209) de la British Library de Londres<sup>21</sup>, se situe dans le contexte de conservation, ou bien de

<sup>19</sup> Même si Wilson affirme que « a certain number of prose authors continued to be read, including some who had no obvious practical value or were not regularly incorporated into a school reading list. Among them were the Atticists of the Roman empire, regarded as the equals of the Attic masters whom they attempted to mimic » (N. G. WILSON, *Scholars of Byzantium*, Duckworth 1983, pp. 18 et 25). Pendant l'Antiquité tardive les modèles d'excellence rhétorique sont Homère, Euripide, Ménandre et Démosthène ; nous n'avons pas des données pour soutenir l'hypothèse que Lucien aussi figurait dans le canon scolaire (voir L. DEL CORSO, *Libri di scuola e sussidi didattici nel mondo antico*, dans *Libri di scuola e pratiche didattiche. Dall'antichità al Rinascimento* [Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Cassino, 7-10 maggio 2008], éd. par L. DEL CORSO – O. PECERE, Cassino 2010, pp. 71-110, en part. pp. 107-110). Selon certains chercheurs, une épreuve de ces lectures résiderait dans l'important quantité de *scholies* anciennes (une telle hypothèse est également soutenue par N. G. WILSON, *Some observations...*, cit., p. 57), mais les notes peuvent également trouver une justification dans les lectures érudites : en effet, la liaison entre la présence de notes marginales et l'utilisation scolaire du *codex*, soutenue par K. McNamee dans K. MCNAMEE, *Annotations in Greek and Latin texts from Egypt*, Chippenham 2007 (*American studies in papirology*, 45), a été rejetée par les conclusions du colloque sur le livre d'école que nous venons de citer. Pour les pratiques d'enseignement dans l'époque tardive voir G. CAVALLO, *Oralità scrittura libro lettura. Appunti su usi e contesti didattici tra antichità e Bisanzio*, dans *Libri di scuola...*, cit., pp. 11-36).

<sup>20</sup> N. G. WILSON, *Some observations...*, cit., p. 56, qui continue ainsi : « yet a some point he must have entered the canon of recognised authors ». Que l'excellence de Lucien résidait en particulier dans les choix lexicaux a été démontré par le fait que « he is one of a number of authors mentioned as authorities in the orthographical lexicon that follows the lexicon of St. Cyril in ms. Laur. 59.16 » (*ibidem*, p. 54). Dans l'ouvrage de Thomas Magister pour guider les débutants dans les choix lexicaux également, les formes utilisées par les auteurs de la seconde sophistique – Aristide, Lucien, Libanios et Sinèse – sont très populaires (N. G. WILSON, *Scholars...*, cit., p. 248 ; en tout cas, les auteurs préférés par Thomas Magister sont Thucydide et Aristophane). Sur l'utilisation du livre dans l'enseignement supérieur pendant l'Antiquité tardive voir R. CRIBIORE, *The use of Books in Late Antique Higher Education*, dans *Libri di scuola...*, cit., pp. 153-168.

<sup>21</sup> Par contre, le manuscrit peut être rattaché aux VIII<sup>ème</sup>-IX<sup>ème</sup> siècles. L'ouvrage en syriaque serait plutôt une paraphrase de l'opuscule de Lucien car, réalisé avec peu d'attention, à la correspondance lexicale et riche en ajouts et omissions délibérées, vise plutôt à en donner une exégèse (voir V. RYSSEL, *Über den textkritischen Werth der syrischen*

protection, d'un produit périphérique perçu comme véritable « patrimoine culturel » de sa terre natale<sup>22</sup>.

### IX<sup>ème</sup> siècle<sup>23</sup>.

Le nom de Lucien et les références à son ouvrage réapparaissent à la seconde moitié du IX<sup>ème</sup> siècle quand, une fois conclues les luttes autour des images, émergent avec force les fils du nouveau mouvement culturel, à plusieurs reprises engagés dans la récupération des textes anciens.

Quatre notations marginales aux opuscules *Symposium*, *Cataplus* et *Icaromenippus*<sup>24</sup>, contenues dans le seul manuscrit Vat. gr. 1322, du premier quart du XIV<sup>ème</sup> siècle<sup>25</sup>, sont attribuées à **Basile**, métropolite d'Adada en Pisidie<sup>26</sup>. Malheureusement, l'histoire de ce personnage est obscure et les informations en notre possession sont limitées à son activité épiscopale : il est connu pour avoir été assigné à l'église d'Adada avant le 28 février 870, poste que il a occupé au moins jusqu'au novembre 879<sup>27</sup>. Basile en sort avec l'image d'un lecteur attentif, objectif et modéré

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*Übersetzungen griechischer Klassiker*, Leipzig 1880-1881, p. 45 et M. ROTHSTEIN, *Quaestiones lucianaeae*, Berolini 1888, pp. 92-99). Le texte pris comme base pour la traduction devrait appartenir à la famille stemmatique β.

<sup>22</sup> G. Cavallo nota cette possibilité dans la transmission des textes : « si può ritenere che testi tardoantichi non restituiti dall'Egitto abbiano avuto una qualche circolazione soprattutto in quegli ambiti geografici, largamente intesi, ove erano sentiti come proprio patrimonio culturale » (G. CAVALLO, *Conservazione...*, cit., p. 143).

<sup>23</sup> Afin de mieux analyser les IX-XI<sup>èmes</sup> siècles, il faut bien une petite clarification inspirée encore une fois par la pensée de G. Cavallo. Bien que les pages suivantes donnent plus d'espace aux savants byzantins dont la réputation est bien connue au risque d'aplatiser le thème de la tradition textuelle dans ce seul et particulier niveau (« ma la loro [c.à.d. des érudits connus] sola attività non rende conto della più parte delle trascrizioni o “edizioni” di opere antiche nel mondo bizantino. Ed ancora, un cospicuo numero di manoscritti che sembrano essere cardini della tradizione di determinati testi non può essere posto in relazione con alcuna di queste grandi figure » dans G. CAVALLO, *I fondamenti culturali della trasmissione dei testi antichi a Bisanzio*, dans *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, éd. par G. CAMBIANO – L. CANFORA – D. LANZA, Roma 1995, II pp. 265-306, en part. p. 278), on ne doit pas oublier le rôle des personnages qui sont restés malheureusement anonymes : la quasi-totalité de la circulation et de la transmission des textes anciens – et Lucien est parmi eux – à Byzance fut assurée par le travail de translittération, de transcription, de révision et de commentaire de ces « shadowy figures » (cette heureuse définition a été introduite par R. BROWNING, *A Byzantine Scholar of the Early Fourteenth Century: Georgios Karbones*, dans *Gnomos. Neoplatonic and Byzantine Studies presented to Leendert G. Westerink at 75*, Buffalo-New York 1988, pp. 223-231, en part. p. 223), appartenant probablement à l'élite instruite de la société laïque et de celle ecclésiastique... le cas où ces deux ne étaient pas fusionnés en une seule réalité ou n'interagissent réciproquement !

<sup>24</sup> Il s'agit, en particulier, de *Symposium* 34 (*Scholia in Lucianum*, éd. par H. RABE, Lipsiae 1906, p. 34 ll. 4-7) ; *Cataplus* 14 (*ibidem*, p. 48 ll. 2-12) et 24 (*ibidem*, pp. 51-52 et respectivement ll. 22 et 2) ; *Icaromenippus* 4 (*ibidem*, p. 100 ll. 12-17). On ne peut pas savoir si Basile fut actif aussi ailleurs.

<sup>25</sup> La contribution des *marginalia* du manuscrit Vat. gr. 1322 est « très contaminée » (J. BOMPAIRE [éd.], *Lucien...*, cit., p. CLIII) ; selon l'éditeur H. Rabe ces scholies semblent plutôt « praecipue cum Photii lexico congruere verbo » (H. RABE [éd.], *Scholia...*, cit., p. VI).

<sup>26</sup> Ces quatre notes sont en fait introduites par les mots « σχόλιον Βασιλείου Αδάδων ».

<sup>27</sup> *Hierarchia ecclesiastica Orientalis. Series episcoporum Ecclesiarum Christianarum Orientalium*, éd. par G. FEDALTO, Padova 1988, I pp. 256-257 ; le *terminus post quem* est représenté par la souscription des actes du IV<sup>ème</sup> concile de Constantinople, « Basilius misericordia Dei episcopus Adadorum omnia quae in sancta et universalis synodo judicata sunt et definita libenter suscipiens subscripti manu propria » (G. D. MANSI, *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*,

dans ses propos ; son intérêt est dirigé principalement vers les thèmes de la spiritualité et du transcendant, et met en évidence les limites des assertions de Lucien, comme on peut le voir dans son commentaire à *Cataplus* 14 : « ἐνταῦθα αἰνίττεται τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς μετὰ τοῦ σώματος γενομένην συμφίλων καὶ τὸ δυσαπόσπαστον αὐτῆς καὶ ὀδυνηρὸν καὶ σχετικόν »<sup>28</sup>. Il semble de ne pas avoir de préjugés contre l'auteur de Samosate et n'utilise pas contre lui d'épithètes injurieux ou argumentations pleines de colère. Il est prêt, plutôt, à y reconnaître ses mérites<sup>29</sup>. L'attitude équilibrée de l'évêque d'Adada, si éloignée – comme nous le verrions – de celle de Aréthas et du compilateur anonyme de la *Souda*, peut bien être résumée par la note marginale à *Icaromenippus* 4 : « τὰ περὶτὸν βίον, ὡς Λουκιανέ, ὄρθως καὶ ἀληθῶς εἴρηκας στηλιτεύσας τὸ ἄστατον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνώμαλον, οὐ μὴν καὶ τὰ περὶ τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τούτου κατασκευῆς. Ἄθεος γάρ ὃν καλῶς ἀγνοεῖς τὸν πεποιηκότα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς παρεισάξεως αὐτοῦ »<sup>30</sup>.

Le témoignage de **Photius** est d'un niveau et d'une épaisseur entièrement différents. Une section de la *Bibliothèque* est entièrement consacrée à l'auteur de Samosate, le *codex* 128. Ici le patriarche reconnaît d'avoir lu tous les ouvrages de Lucien et mentionne spécifiquement les opuscules *Phalaris I*, *Dialogi Mortuorum* et *Dialogi meretricii*, en terminant avec « τὸ τῆς βίβλου ἐπίγραμμα »<sup>31</sup>. Ces indications ont conduit à croire qu'il avait entre ses mains un témoin manuscrit de la famille stemmatique γ, selon certains chercheurs le même Vat. gr. 90 : dans ce groupe, en fait, la sélection commence et se termine avec les mêmes ouvrages cités par Photius dans ce passage de la *Bibliothèque*<sup>32</sup>. Le savant exalte le style excellent de Lucien – « τὴν μέντοι φράσιν ἔστιν ἄριστος », ce concept est même répété deux fois<sup>33</sup> –, le

Florentiae-Venetiis 1758-1798, XVI col. 195) ; par contre, le *terminus ante quem* est représenté par l'inclusion de Basile parmi les participants à la pseudo-synode photienne, « Βασιλείου Ἀδάδων » (*ibidem*, XVIIa-XVIIIa coll. 377-378).

<sup>28</sup> H. RABE (éd.), *Scholia...*, cit., p. 48 ll. 2-4.

<sup>29</sup> La note à *Cataplus* 24 est totalement positive vers Lucien, ainsi qu'il ressort de ses premiers mots « ἄντικρυς, ὡς Λουκιανέ, τοῦτο ἀληθὲς εἴρηκας καὶ λίαν σοφώτατα » (H. RABE [éd.], *Scholia...*, cit., p. 51 ll. 22-23).

<sup>30</sup> H. RABE (éd.), *Scholia...*, cit., p. 100 ll. 13-17 : « ô Lucien, tu as parlé correctement et, selon la vérité sur ce qui concerne la vie, cela même dont tu as mis en évidence ce qui n'était pas stable et ce qui était irrégulier, et encore sur ce qui concerne l'univers et sa constitution. En étant athée, tu ignores le créateur et la cause de sa création ! »

<sup>31</sup> Le *codex* 128 est publié dans *Photius, Bibliothèque*, éd. par R. HENRY, Paris 1960, II pp. 102-103. L'*Epigramma* 1 a été considéré par plusieurs chercheurs comme un faux mais, en tout cas, la citation de Photius montre que son inclusion dans le *corpus* de Lucien a été au moins ancienne (J. BOMPAIRE, *Photius et la Seconde Sophistique, d'après la Bibliothèque*, dans *Travaux et Mémoires*, 8. *Hommage à Paul Lemerle*, Paris 1981, pp. 79-86, en part. p. 85).

<sup>32</sup> La datation sur base paléographique du Vat. gr. 90 va contre l'hypothèse d'une possession du manuscrit par le Patriarche. Les *Dialogi meretricii* fermaient sans aucun doute la collection des *Dialogues mineurs*, comme on peut le remarquer dans le Vat. gr. 73, qui dérive du premier. Photius démontre aussi sa connaissance des *Verae historiae*, en les citant parmi les ouvrages inspirées par *Les incroyables merveilles au-delà de Thulé* de Antoine Diogène (*codex* 166 dans R. HENRY [éd.], *Photius...*, cit., pp. 140-149, en part. p. 148 ll. 32-42).

<sup>33</sup> R. HENRY (éd.), *Photius...*, cit., p. 102 ll. 38-39 et 2-3. Malgré cette évaluation, le modèle absolu d'excellence est représenté par Libanios.

choix du lexique<sup>34</sup> et l'eurythmie de la composition, en soulignant que « δοκεῖν τὸν ἀναγινώσκοντα μὴ λόγους λέγειν, ἀλλὰ μέλος τι τερπνόν χωρὶς ἐμφανοῦς φόδης τοῖς ώστιν ἐναποστάζειν τῶν ἀκροατῶν »<sup>35</sup>. Au même temps, le savant byzantin semble laisser en arrière-plan la féroce critique religieuse contre le satiriste, étant convaincu que le comportement de l'auteur doit être considéré comme sceptique plutôt que antichrétien<sup>36</sup>. Dans un autre passage Photios se dédie à une réelle critique philologique concernant Lucien. En fait, dans le *codex* immédiatement suivant et dédié aux *Métamorphoses* de Lucius de Patras<sup>37</sup>, le patriarche se pose la question des relations entre ces deux auteurs sur la base de considérations stylistiques, bien que rapides. « Οἱ δέ γε πρῶτοι αὐτοῦ δύο λόγοι μόνον οὐ μετεγράφησαν Λουκίῳ ἐκ τοῦ Λουκιανοῦ λόγου ὃς ἐπιγέγραπται Λοῦκις ἡ Ὀνος ἡ ἐκ τῶν Λουκίου λόγων Λουκιανῷ » ; tout en ne prenant pas une position péremptoire, il conclut que « ἔσικε δὲ μᾶλλον ὁ Λουκιανὸς μεταγράφοντι, ὅσον εἰκάζειν »<sup>38</sup>. Cette considération, soit qu'elle fût d'origine « photienne », soit qu'elle eût déjà circulée parmi les intellectuels du IX<sup>ème</sup> siècle, trouve une correspondance précise avec la note de clôture de l'*Asinus* dans le Vat. gr. 90, « Λουκιανοῦ ἐπιτομῇ τοῦ Λουκίου Μεταμορφώσεων » (au f. 172v)<sup>39</sup>, et a ouvert entre les philologues modernes un débat qui ne s'est conclu que lors du siècle dernier<sup>40</sup>.

## X<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Bien qu'il soit né et ait été éduqué dans la seconde moitié du siècle précédent, la figure éminente d'**Aréthas de Césarée** et sa copie de Lucien, le *codex Harley 5694*,

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<sup>34</sup> Lucien était un véritable modèle pour tous ceux qui voulaient imiter la prose attique, comme le témoigne le dense apparat marginale et les commentaires du *Lexiphanes* ou du *Iudicium vocalium*. Sur l'atticisme de Lucien voir J. BOMPAIRE, *L'Atticisme de Lucien*, dans *Lucien de Samosate. Actes du colloque international de Lyon organisé au Centre d'Études Romaines et Gallo-romaines les 30 septembre – 1 octobre 1993*, éd. par A. BILLAULT – A. BUISSON, Lyon 1994, pp. 65-75.

<sup>35</sup> R. HENRY (éd.), *Photius...*, cit., p. 102 ll. 43-1 : le lecteur a l'impression non pas qu'il lit de la prose, mais qu'une mélodie pleine de charme, sans musique proprement dite, se distille dans les oreilles de ceux qui écoutent.

<sup>36</sup> « En fait, comme l'a bien montré Caster, Lucien attaque le paganisme en termes à peu près semblables à ceux de Clément d'Alexandrie et des apologistes du II<sup>ème</sup> siècle, et il est – pour une part et sans le vouloir – leur allié objectif » (J. BOMPAIRE, *Photius...*, cit., p. 85).

<sup>37</sup> Cet auteur est défini par le Patriarche comme un « ἄλλος [...] Λουκιανός » (R. HENRY [éd.], *Photius...*, cit., p. 103 ll. 16-17).

<sup>38</sup> Respectivement, R. HENRY (éd.), *Photius...*, cit., p. 103 ll. 17-20 et 20-21.

<sup>39</sup> Le titre de l'ouvrage Λούκιος ἡ ὄνος (au f. 161v) : comme l'avait déjà indiqué Macleod (il avait inséré « Λοῦκις ut videtur » dans son édition ; *Luciani opera*, éd. par M. D. MACLEOD, I-IV, Oxonii 1972-1987, II p. 276), il semble que l'*omicron* du premier mot soit dérivé de la fermeture d'un *sigma* lunaire tandis que le *sigma* final a été ajouté seulement plus tard, dans l'espace libre entre les deux mots. Bien que l'encre soit similaire, une autre confirmation vient de la dimension plus grande du *sigma* et de traits vacillantes, qui ne se trouvent jamais dans les autres titres du volume.

<sup>40</sup> Voir les positions de B. E. Perry et de H. Van Thiel dans J. BOMPAIRE, *Photius...*, cit., p. 85.

ouvrent cette section<sup>41</sup>. En feuilletant ses volumes plume à la main, l'archevêque avait l'habitude d'intervenir dans le texte ou de laisser dans les marges quelques notes personnelles. Certaines de ces interventions, entièrement improvisés et suscitées par des sympathies ou des réactions envers ce qu'il lisait, laissent l'image d'un savant qui « dialogue » avec empathie avec le texte, « l'interpella per manifestargli francamente il suo biasimo o il suo particolare piacere nel trovarsi d'accordo con lui »<sup>42</sup>. Les notes marginales dans son propre exemplaire de Lucien représentent l'un des commentaires les plus étendus parmi ceux qui ont été élaborés par le savant<sup>43</sup>, et ont un intérêt particulier car ils semblent confirmer une critique sévère du monde ecclésiastique byzantin contre cet auteur païen, amèrement blâmé pour certaines positions considérées comme hostiles au christianisme<sup>44</sup>. Toutefois, en considérant l'énorme coût d'un manuscrit et le remarquable effort d'Aréthas dans la lecture et l'annotation des dialogues lucianesques<sup>45</sup>, il nous semble plus correct de nuancer les accusations de l'archevêque et reconnaître un vrai intérêt pour le polygraphe syrien,

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<sup>41</sup> À l'archevêque « si deve se molta produzione letteraria dell'età degli Antonini largamente intesa, ma anche più tarda, fu rimessa, dopo secoli di silenzio o quasi, in circolazione » (G. CAVALLO, *Conservazione...*, cit., p. 146).

<sup>42</sup> G. CAVALLO, *Le pratiche di lettura*, dans *Lo spazio letterario del Medioevo*, éd par G. CAVALLO, Roma 2004, III.1 pp. 569-603, en part. p. 581 ; voir aussi J. BIDEZ, *Aréthas de Césarée éditeur et scholiaste*, Byzantion 9/1934, pp. 391-408, en part. pp. 396-399.

<sup>43</sup> Le codex Harley 5694 « witnesses to the deep interest of a prominent Byzantine churchman in classical antiquity, its pagan literature and Attic prose » (N. G. WILSON, *Some observations...*, cit., p. 53). L'opuscule Τοῦ ἀντοῦ πρὸς τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ δυσσεβοῦς Λουκιανοῦ λήρημα ὡς φθονερόν ἐστι τὸ θεῖον (*Arethae archiepiscopi Caesariensis scripta minora*, éd. par L. G. WESTERINK, Lipsiae 1968, I n. 54 pp. 333-336 : « hoc scholium ad Luciani Iov. Trag. 47-49 ab Aretha olim adscriptum in codicibus Luciani non exstat. Demonstrat haud deesse huic mundo ordinem et iustitiam, deceptum vero esse Lucianum eo quod bona externa pro veris habuerit. Deum non invidere bonis hominum, immovere invisurum fuisse si talia sola dedisset »), transmis par le Mosq. *Gosudarstvennyy Istoricheskiy Muzey* 231, montre une attitude semblable. L'archevêque de Césarée est explicitement mentionné dans les *marginalia* dans les cas suivants : H. RABE (éd.), *Scholia...*, cit., p. 58 l. 27 ; p. 71 l. 25 ; p. 76 l. 4 ; p. 78 l. 27 ; p. 159 l. 25 ; p. 218 l. 20. Pour la relation entre les notes d'Aréthas et le passage de la *Souda* voir D. CHRISTIDIS, *Tò ἄρθρο τῆς Σούδας γιὰ τὸν Λουκιανὸν καὶ ὁ Ἀρέθας*, *Ἐπιστημονικὴ ἐπετηρίς*, 16/1977, pp. 417-449. B. Baldwin a analysé quarante types d'insultes dirigées par les commentateurs, en particulier Aréthas, contre Lucien (B. BALDWIN, *The Scholiast's Lucian*, Helikon, 20-21/1980-1981, pp. 219-234 ; une liste simple se trouve aussi dans H. RABE [éd.], *Scholia...*, cit., p. 336).

<sup>44</sup> Même si l'hypothèse d'une contribution directe à ces notes de la part de Photius repose sur des bases évidentes – surtout en deux notations marginales –, G. Russo propose une solution plus économique, en postulant qu'Aréthas connaissait la *Bibliothèque* ou, au moins, les mêmes sources que le patriarche. Ce qui était soutenu par A. DILLER, *Photius's Bibliotheca in Byzantine literature*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 16/1962, pp. 389-396, en part. pp. 390-391 a été désormais dépassé par G. RUSSO, *Gli scolii di Arete a Luciano: questioni critiche*, Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Bari, 45/2002, pp. 137-161, en part. pp. 146-149. Les scholies en question sont la dernière partie de la note à *Lexiphanes* 2 (H. RABE [éd.], *Scholia...*, cit., p. 191 ll. 21-27), et l'entier commentaire à *Dialogi meretricii* V,4 (*ibidem*, p. 277 ll. 14-26).

<sup>45</sup> Sur la question du coût des manuscrits d'Aréthas, voir E. FOLLIERI, *Un codice di Arete troppo a buon mercato: il Vat. Urb. gr. 35*, Archeologia Classica, 25-26/1973-1974, pp. 262-279 ; une intéressante hypothèse sur l'origine des scholies d'Aréthas est proposée par M. J. LUZZATTO, *Codici tardoantichi di Platone ed i cosiddetti Scholia Arethae*, Medioevo greco, 10/2010, pp. 77-110.

de « contestazione e conservazione » comme G. Russo l'a bien montré dans son récent travail<sup>46</sup>.

Tout aussi compliquée est la question relative à la Συναγωγὴ λέξεων χρησίμων ἐκ τῶν τοῦ Λουκιανοῦ, un recueil lexicographique basé sur le *corpus* de Lucien et sur les commentaires à ses ouvrages, transmis aux ff. 178v (l. 23) – 186r (l. 26)<sup>47</sup> du manuscrit Paris. Coislin 345. P. Maas supposa premièrement qu'il y avait une dépendance étroite entre ce texte et les scholies d'Aréthas, tandis que S. Kougeas alla jusqu'à placer la confection du manuscrit dans le « scriptorium » de l'évêque<sup>48</sup>, en identifiant dans les pages la main du même Aréthas<sup>49</sup>. Analysant les différentes variantes textuelles avec plus de prudence, G. Russo a par contre mis en évidence les relations du lexique avec le texte du Lucien Marc. gr. 434, une collection complète retranscrite par un seul et même copiste à la fin du X<sup>ème</sup> siècle<sup>50</sup>.

Un autre lecteur dont nous connaissons le nom est **Alexandre**, nommé métropolite de Nicée par Nicolas le Mystique, et professeur de rhétorique par l'empereur Constantin VII. Il eut entre ses mains l'actuel *codex* Vat. gr. 90, l'annota et le corrigea avec son frère Jacques, métropolite de Larissa, son beau-frère Jean et encore le diacre Theodore, comme on peut le lire dans les suscriptions des *Verae Historiae I et II, Calumnia, Iudicium vocalium, Timon, Adversus indoctum, Somnium et Hermotimus*<sup>51</sup>. Ces notes témoignent d'un plus grand intérêt pour le texte d'auteur que pour la défense de la foi chrétienne, et sont la preuve d'un mode de lecture communautaire d'« ambito ecclesiastico-familiare dotto »<sup>52</sup> qui, assez répandu à Byzance, impliquait « a reading of the text by one of the pair while the other checked the text in a second copy »<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> G. RUSSO, *Contestazione e conservazione. Luciano nell'esegesi di Areta*, Berlin-Boston 2012 (*Beiträge zur Altertumskunde*, 297).

<sup>47</sup> Le reste de la page a été laissée intentionnellement vide.

<sup>48</sup> Il s'agit de la note au f. 50v « μικροῦ δεῖν με καὶ τοῦτο παρέδραμεν ακάτια (sic !) τοῦς ἀνθρώπους ὄνομάζεσθαι ὃ φίλων ἄριστε καὶ επεκεντά (sic !) φίλων Ταράστιε », au mot ἀκάτια de la *Praeparatio sophistica (Phrynicis sophistae Praeparatio sophistica)*, éd par J. DE BORRIES, Leipzig 1991, p. 31) ; voir aussi S. VALENTE, *Una miscellanea lessicografica del X secolo: il Par. Coisl. 345*, Segno e Testo, 6/2008, pp. 151-178, en part. pp. 174-175.

<sup>49</sup> S. KOUGEAS, *O Καισάρειας Αρέθας και το ἔργον αυτού. Συμβολή εις την ιστορίαν της πρώτης αναγεννήσεως των ελληνικών γραμμάτων εν Βυζαντίῳ*, Athénai 1913, pp. 64-72 et, en particulier, p. 69. Puisque dans la note attribuée à la plume d'Aréthas on peut lire une référence à un certain Taraise, le savant grec, en l'identifiant avec le frère de Photius, soupçonna d'avoir une certaine preuve du lien entre les deux personnages. Voir aussi P. LEMERLE, *Le premier humanisme byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au X<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris 1971 (*Bibliothèque byzantine. Études*, 6), pp. 228-229.

<sup>50</sup> G. RUSSO, *Gli scolii..., cit.*, pp. 144-145.

<sup>51</sup> Le nom d'Alexandre est mentionné explicitement dans les cas suivants: H. RABE (éd.), *Scholia..., cit.*, p. 21 l. 6 ; p. 25 l. 1 ; p. 28 l. 7 ; p. 29 l. 4 ; p. 119 l. 17 ; p. 154 l. 15 ; p. 155 r. 5 ; p. 247 l. 19.

<sup>52</sup> G. CAVALLO, *Le pratiche..., cit.*, p. 581. Même considérant l'enseignement d'Alexandre, « questo lavoro sul manoscritto non è un prodotto di scuola » (G. CAVALLO, *Oralità scrittura..., cit.*, p. 26).

<sup>53</sup> N. G. WILSON, *Scholars..., cit.*, p. 141.

Le compilateur de la *Souda* dédie à l'auteur de Samosate un court lemme où éclatent violemment tous les motifs accumulés contre lui par le monde ecclésiastique jusque-là<sup>54</sup>. *Ex abrupto*, Lucien est étiqueté comme « βλάσφημος », « δύσφημος », « ἄθεος », uniquement pour avoir ridiculisé dans ses écrits tout ce qui touchait à la sphère du transcendental. La raison de cette haine est indiqué dans le *De morte Peregrini*, où l'auteur « παμμίαρος » fait une satire sur Peregrinus, un chrétien récemment converti, et « καθάπτεται τοῦ Χριστιανισμοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸν βλασφημεῖ τὸν Χριστόν »<sup>55</sup>. Pas de pitié, enfin, dans les vœux pour une mort violente lors de laquelle le corps de Lucien devrait être déchiqueté par des chiens furieux<sup>56</sup>. En outre, à compléter ce destin mérité, Lucien « ἐπεὶ κατὰ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐλύτησεν [...] ἐν δὲ τῷ μέλλοντι κληρονόμος τοῦ αἰώνιου πυρὸς μετὰ τοῦ Σατανᾶ γενήσεται »<sup>57</sup>.

L'opuscule *Charidemus*<sup>58</sup>, clairement inspiré par Lucien mais dont nous ne connaissons encore l'auteur, ainsi que la collection contenue dans le manuscrit Laur. Conv. soppr. 77<sup>59</sup>, complètent le panorama sur le X<sup>ème</sup> siècle<sup>60</sup>.

### XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

À cette époque les indices ou les références explicites aux milieux de diffusion du *corpus* de Lucien sont presque inexistantes, malgré que les *codices* contenant ses ouvrages continuent à être copiés : c'est le cas des *corpora* dans les manuscrits Vindob. phil. gr. 123<sup>61</sup> et Laur. 57.51 (début XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle), Mut. gr. 193 (deuxième

<sup>54</sup> Pour « Λουκιανός » (λ 683) voir *Suidae Lexicon*, éd. par A. ADLER, Lipsiae 1933, III p. 283. On pourrait penser qu'un tel blâme, sévère et injustifié, soit plutôt un lieu commun contre l'auteur de Samosate car ses compositions continuent à être lues par les hommes d'Église. Malheureusement, en l'état actuel de la recherche, on ne peut pas se prononcer sur cette hypothèse.

<sup>55</sup> A. ADLER (éd.), *Suidae...*, cit., p. 283 ll. 8-10.

<sup>56</sup> Ce détail semble se référer directement à *De morte Peregrini* 2.

<sup>57</sup> A. ADLER (éd.), *Suidae...*, cit., p. 283 ll. 11-12 : « puisqu'il s'acharna contre la vérité [...] il sera destiné dans le futur au feu éternel en compagnie de Satan ».

<sup>58</sup> La dernière édition critique a été préparée par Macleod (M. D. MACLEOD [éd.], *Luciani opera...*, cit., IV pp. 390-404). Malheureusement, il n'y a aucune certitude sur la datation de ce texte. Cependant, nous préférions l'hypothèse de R. Anastasi, qui l'a rapporté généralement à la période de la soi-disant « renaissance macédonienne » (voir son édition critique R. ANASTASI, *Incerti auctoris Χαριδημος ἢ Περὶ κάλλους*, Bologna 1971 et les deux études préliminaires du même auteur *Appunti sul Charidemus*, Siculorum Gymnasium, 18/1965, pp. 259-283 et *Sul testo del Philopatris e del Charidemus*, Siculorum Gymnasium, 20/1967, pp. 111-119), à celle de C. Robinson, qui pense plutôt à la première période byzantine sans donner d'argumentation (C. ROBINSON, *Lucian and his influence in Europe*, London 1979, p. 241).

<sup>59</sup> Ce *codex*, écrit vers la fin du siècle, a été restauré fort probablement dans le milieu de Maxime Planude, et sera l'objet spécifique d'un article que nous préparons actuellement. Il faut également signaler qu'au f. 62 du manuscrit Vat. gr. 1834, un copiste Calabre de la fin du X<sup>ème</sup> siècle est responsable de différents fragments tirés de *Calumnia*.

<sup>60</sup> Au-delà des *corpora*, on a aussi une partie du *Zeuxis* sur la marge du f. 83v du *codex* Clarke 12 de la Bodleian Library d'Oxford ainsi que un recueil de scholies et un résumé du *Toxaris* dans les recueils lexicaux des manuscrits Coislin 345 et 347 de la *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*.

<sup>61</sup> Ce témoin est le plus antique et plus important représentant de la famille stemmatique β.

quart du XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle) et Vat. gr. 1324 (fin XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle)<sup>62</sup>. Comme les commanditaires, les copistes et les lecteurs de manuscrits, le compositeur de l'opuscule pseudo-lucianesque *Philopatris* aussi reste anonyme, tout en admettant que l'ouvrage soit attribuable à l'époque d'Isaac I<sup>er</sup> Comnène (1057-1059) comme l'avait proposé A. Anastasi<sup>63</sup>. Ce manque d'information est toutefois plus que compensé par leur qualité, parce que, pour la première fois après les mots positifs de Photius, on entrevoit la fortune concrète de Lucien.

**Michel Psello**s connaît parfaitement l'auteur de Samosate, ainsi que les élèves présents à ses cours, auxquels il indique simplement Lucien comme « ὁ δε καὶ μόνος σοφιστὴς ἔτερος »<sup>64</sup>. Très importante est la valeur de son court opuscule Περὶ χαρακτήρων συγγραμμάτων τινῶν<sup>65</sup>, dont, malheureusement, on ne connaît pas les raisons de composition. Ici le savant byzantin s'adresse aux aspirants écrivains et, en revenant à sa propre expérience, leur offre des conseils pour améliorer le style, car « καὶ ποικίλοντι χρῆμα ἡ τοῦ λόγου ἀκριβῆς μεταχειρίσις »<sup>66</sup>. À travers de l'utilisation de métaphores, il condamne fermement l'habitude de ceux qui, même débutant, se dédient à la lecture légère ou bien désengagée – comme pourrait être le cas des ouvrages d'Héliodore, d'Achille Tatius, de Philostrate ou du même Lucien – sans affronter d'abord les classiques. Il pensait cette pratique alogique<sup>67</sup> : seulement

<sup>62</sup> À ces collections complètes, il faut ajouter le petit morceau des *Dialogi mortuorum*, qu'une main de la seconde moitié du XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle a écrit au f. 182v du Laur. 59.9 (su ce codex voir L. M. CIOLFI, *Demostene nel X secolo. Il caso del Laur. 59.9*, dans *Demosthenica Libris Manu Scriptis Tradita. Studien zur Textüberlieferung des Corpus Demosthenicum*, éd. par J. GRUSKOVÁ – H. BANNERT, Wien 2014 [*Wiener Studien. Beiheft*, 36], pp. 239-262).

<sup>63</sup> La dernière édition critique a été préparée par Macleod (M. D. MACLEOD [éd.], *Luciani opera...*, cit., IV pp. 367-389). Le problème de la datation de ce livret est très complexe et discuté. L'hypothèse de R. Anastasi (R. ANASTASI, *Incerti auctoris Φιλόπατρις ἢ Διδασκόμενος*, Messina 1968 [*Biblioteca di Helikon*, 2] ; voir aussi R. ANASTASI, *Sul Philopatris*, *Siculorum Gymnasium*, 17/1964, pp. 127-144 et 286-291 et R. ANASTASI, *Sul testo...*, cit.) n'a pu convaincre pleinement C. Robinson (C. ROBINSON, *Lucian...*, cit., pp. 73-76.). En prenant le point de vue adopté par S. Reinach (S. REINACH, *La question du Philopatris*, *Revue Archéologique*, 93/1902, pp. 79-110), M. D. Macleod pensait plutôt à la seconde moitié du X<sup>ème</sup> siècle ; B. Baldwin a noté qu'il serait pertinent de se référer à l'âge de l'empereur Julien, sur la base de données historiques et linguistiques (B. BALDWIN, *The date and purpose of the Philopatris*, *Yale Classical Studies*, 27/1982, pp. 321-344).

<sup>64</sup> Michaelis Pselli oratoria minora, éd. par A. R. LITTLEWOOD, Lipsiae 1985, p. 90 l. 78. Le passage fait partie de l'oraison *Ad discipulos de philosophia et rhetorica*, publié dans *ibidem*, n. 25 pp. 88-93.

<sup>65</sup> Voir l'ancienne édition Michael Psellus *De operatione daemonum*, éd. par J. F. BOISSONADE, Norimbergae 1838, pp. 48-52. La contribution de l'ouvrage de Psello a également été analysée par N. G. WILSON, *Scholars...*, cit., pp. 172-174.

<sup>66</sup> J. F. BOISSONADE (éd.), *Michael Psellus...*, cit., p. 49.

<sup>67</sup> Les écrits de Lucien, par conséquent, représentent un entraînement idéal pour ceux qui sont déjà habitués à la rhétorique, et veulent améliorer leurs compétences. En ce qui concerne les auteurs profanes, Psello indique Démosthène, Isocrate, Aristide, Thucydide, Platon, Plutarque et Lysias comme les piliers de la première instruction en rhétorique et donne aux lecteurs ses propres motivations. Le ton et les métaphores utilisées par Psello sont très semblables à ceux utilisés dans le *Lexiphanes* de Lucien : « εἴπερ ἄρ' ἐθέλεις ώς ἀληθῶς ἐπαινεῖσθαι ἐπὶ λόγοις κανὸς τοῖς πλήθεσιν εὐδοκιμεῖν, τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα πάντα φεῦγε καὶ ἀποτρέπου, ἀρξάμενος δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν ἀρίστων πουητῶν καὶ ὑπὸ διδασκάλοις αὐτοὺς ἀναγνοῦς μέτιθι ἐπὶ τοὺς ἥτιορας, καὶ τῇ ἐκείνων φωνῇ συντραφεῖς ἐπὶ τὰ Θουκυδίδου καὶ Πλάτωνος ἐν καιρῷ μετίθι, πολλὰ καὶ τῇ καλῇ κωμῳδίᾳ καὶ τῇ σεμνῇ τραγῳδίᾳ ἐγγυμνασάμενος· παρὰ γὰρ τούτων ἀπαντά τὰ κάλλιστα ἀπανθισάμενος ἔσῃ τις ἐν λόγοις ὡς νῦν γε ἐλελήθεις σαντὸν τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν κοροπλάθων εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν πλαττομένοις ἐοικώς, κεχρωσμένος μὲν τῇ μίλτῳ καὶ τῷ κυανῷ,

« ἐπεὶ δὲ ίκανῶς τούτων τῶν ἀνδρῶν εῖχον, ἔδει δέ μοι τῷ μεγέθει τοῦ λόγου καὶ χάριτος, οὕτως ἥδη καὶ τὰ Χαρίκλεια καὶ τὰ Λευκίππεια, καὶ ὅπόσα τοιαῦτα τῶν βιβλίων ἔστιν, εἰς τὴν ὄλην συνηρανιζόμην παρασκευήν. Καὶ, εἴ γε δεῖ καὶ τούμὸν εἰπεῖν, τῆς μὲν ἐκάστων ἀπολέλειμμαι ἀρετῆς καὶ δυνάμεως, ποικύλλεται δέ μοι διὰ πάντων ὁ λόγος καὶ τὰ παρ' ἐκάστων εῖς »<sup>68</sup>. Comme l'ouverture, cette clôture est assez significative et nous amène vers une double conclusion. Formellement, les écrits de Lucien étaient destinés à l'achèvement du processus de l'enseignement supérieur mais, en réalité, il y avait des individus qui aimait la lecture de notre auteur, à la fois pour sa légèreté et la variété des sujets ou pour leur aspirations stylistique, même s'ils étaient encore à une étape inférieure de leur parcours éducatif.

Au tournant du XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle se situe le court opuscule gardé par le manuscrit Vat. gr. 883 (à partir du f. 217) et attribué à **Grégoire de Corinthe**. Dans une liste de recommandations et de propositions visant à améliorer le style et les compétences rhétoriques des savants, il suggère fortement la lecture de Lucien puisque ce dernier, considéré parmi les excellences, « παντοδαπὸν ἔχει τὸ καλόν »<sup>69</sup>. La plupart de conseils fournis ensuite, par contre, « εἰς παράδειγμα δὲ πάλιν τῆς μόνον ῥητορικῆς λογογραφίας κείσθω σοι ὁ Χρυσόστομος καὶ μᾶλλον ἐν τοῖς ἡθικοῖς αὐτοῦ, ὁ Μεταφραστής, ὁ Λιβάνιος, ὁ Ἀφθόνιος, ὁ Προκόπιος Γάζης, ὁ Χορίκιος, ὁ Ἰμέριος, ὁ Λουκιανός - ἄπτεται δὲ οὗτος ποτε καὶ φιλοσόφων ἐννοιῶν - ὁ Δημοσθένης, καὶ μᾶλλον εἰ ἐναγώνια γράφεις καὶ ῥητορικῶς ἐγκατάσκευα, ὁ Λυσίας, ὁ Ἰσοκράτης, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν νεωτέρων ὅσους ἀν συνειδῆς τούτοις ἀκολουθοῦντας »<sup>70</sup>, trouvent en outre une bonne correspondance avec les choix à la base de l'anthologie contemporaine écrite entre 1075 et 1085 et transmise par le Paris. suppl. gr. 690<sup>71</sup>.

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τὸ δ' ἔνδοθεν πήλινός τε καὶ εὐθρυπτος ὅν » (M. D. MACLEOD [éd.], *Luciani opera...*, cit., III pp. 67-68 respectivement ll. 16 et 1).

<sup>68</sup> J. F. BOISSONADE (éd.), *Michael Psellus...*, cit., pp. 51-52 : quand j'avais puisé dans ces écrivains, j'avais besoin d'y ajouter aussi du charme à la grandeur du discours. Seulement à ce stade, donc, pour un bagage complet, j'ai également recueilli des livres comme ceux de Chariclée et de Leucippe, ainsi que toute littérature similaire. Et, si je peux donner mon avis, je ne suis pas à la hauteur de tous ces auteurs quand on contemple leurs vertus et la puissance de leurs styles. Mon discours, par contre, est construit et enrichi par chacun d'eux et leurs contributions individuelles se fondent dans une seule et même forme.

<sup>69</sup> W. HÖRANDNER, *Pseudo-Gregorios Korinthios, Über die vier Teile der perfekten Rede*, Medioevo greco, 12/2012, pp. 87-131, en part. p. 105 l. 92.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 105 ll. 101-105 : «que soient pour toi des exemples du style purement rhétorique des auteurs comme Chrysostome – surtout dans ses discours moraux –, le Métaphraste, Libanios, Aphthonios, Procope de Gaza, Choricios, Imerios, Lucien (il s'occupe aussi parfois des pensées philosophiques), Démosthène – surtout si tu écris pour des querelles et exercices rhétoriques –, Lysias, Isocrate et tous ceux parmi les plus récents qui, selon ta connaissance, en sont les dignes successeurs».

<sup>71</sup> Pour une liste du contenu du manuscrit, où figurent aussi cinq *Dialogi mortuorum* (aux ff. 148v-151r) et un fragment du *Toxaris* (au f. 248v), voir G. ROCHEFORT, *Une anthologie grecque du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle: le Parisinus suppl. gr. 690*, Scriptorium, 4/1950, pp. 3-17, en part. pp. 6-17.

### Vers une conclusion.

Ce qui émerge de données analysées nous semble plutôt cohérent et explique le parcours historique du *corpus* de Lucien jusqu'au XI<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Toujours, l'auteur de Samosate a dû son succès à la pureté du style et aux choix du lexique qui faisaient référence au meilleur courant de l'atticisme et qu'il fut capable de maîtriser avec une parfaite aisance. Cependant, au moins jusqu'à la fin de la période considérée ici, Lucien est resté un auteur d'excellence mais lu, par exercice ou plaisir, seulement à la fin des études supérieures<sup>72</sup>.

À Byzance, où les méthodes d'enseignement et les modèles culturels ne subissent pas une rupture avec ceux de l'Antiquité tardive, l'auteur de Samosate a été reçu et utilisé dans les mêmes modalités. Les seuls lecteurs qui ont laissé une trace explicite de leur activité autour de Lucien sont tous les représentants de la plus haute élite byzantine en tant que commanditaires, copistes et lecteurs derrière les manuscrits anonymes<sup>73</sup>. Aucune trace ne semble suggérer sans équivoque des lectures scolaires de Lucien – en admettant toujours qu'un tel *curriculum* existait à Byzance<sup>74</sup>. Revenons un instant, par exemple, aux témoignages d'Alexandre de Nicée et de Psellos, même si différents par origine et fonction : le premier lit son propre Lucien dans l'intimité d'un cercle privé et limité à ses proches et amis, en commentant et corrigent le texte seulement par intérêt personnel ; le second donne simplement des suggestions de lecture, en revenant avec la mémoire à sa propre expérience personnelle, et place l'auteur de Samosate à la dernière étape de formation, en lui attribuant la même place et le même rôle qu'aux peintures et aux mosaïques dans le phase de construction d'une bâtiment. Sans éléments qui puissent contredire cette image, il est raisonnable de supposer une utilisation similaire de Lucien aussi pour le

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<sup>72</sup> A. Markopoulos soutient, cependant, que certains dialogues de Lucien avaient été inclus dans les « programmes » de l'éducation inférieure : « les spécialistes de l'enseignement à Byzance ont déjà souligné l'attachement étonnant du maître byzantin au programme des courses du *trivium*, qui avait fait ses preuves et s'était facilement imposé pendant la période gréco-romaine [...] parmi les textes de base qui sont enseignés figurent des dialogues de Lucien » (A. MARKOPOULOS, *De la structure de l'école byzantine. Le maître, les livres et le processus éducatif*, dans *Lire et écrire à Byzance*, éd. par B. MONDRAIN, Paris 2006 [Collège de France – CNRS. Monographies, 19], pp. 85-96, en part. pp. 88-89).

<sup>73</sup> Comme l'a noté G. Cavallo, « questa élite nel suo complesso gioca un ruolo fondamentale nella trasmissione dei testi classici a Bisanzio: una élite fatta di uomini di Stato, alto clero, funzionari diversi civili ed ecclesiastici, militari di rango, monaci eruditi pur se rari (o meglio, più spesso, eruditi fattisi monaci) [...]; una élite, insomma, formata non soltanto da figure-cardine, ma anche e soprattutto da “shadowy figures”, cui è legata per la più parte la produzione e la circolazione di quei libri-manoscritti che hanno assicurato la conservazione e la trasmissione dei testi antichi nel mondo bizantino » (G. CAVALLO, *I fondamenti...*, cit., p. 284).

<sup>74</sup> À comparer avec les considérations de D. Marsh, qui place le *corpus* de Lucien directement dans le *curriculum* scolaire du monde byzantin (D. MARSH, *Lucian...*, cit.), et le bilan de N. Wilson (N. G. WILSON, *Some observations...*, cit., pp. 56-57). Mais, dans le monde byzantin, les *curricula* et les programmes spécifiques pour l'éducation supérieure n'existaient pas (voir encore G. CAVALLO, *Le pratiche...*, cit., pp. 571-572). Cependant, N. Wilson détecte les mêmes témoins manuscrits et les mêmes sources identifiées ici mais, « if somewhat approximate », propose un cadre beaucoup plus positif, en se basant sur la comparaison avec la tradition manuscrite de Platon – qui a à peu près les mêmes chiffres. En concluant son article, il définit Lucien comme « an established favourite of schoolmasters » (*ibidem*, p. 60). Selon J. Bompaire, « Lucien fut à Byzance un auteur fort étudié dans l'enseignement, une sorte de classique » (J. BOMPAIRE, *La transmission...*, cit., p. 100).

IX<sup>ème</sup> et le X<sup>ème</sup> siècle. Notamment, le nombre de témoins manuscrits arrivés à nos jours, à partir de l'antiquité tardive jusqu'à l'époque macédonienne, ainsi que leur typologie, semblent confirmer cette hypothèse.

En tout cas, comment pourrions-nous distinguer les lectures d'hauts profils érudits, tels Alexandre de Nicée, de lectures scolaires, dans un monde où il suffisent « a teacher, a room, and a book » pour pouvoir parler d'école<sup>75</sup>? Où les cours étaient dispensés presque exclusivement en privé, parfois directement chez le savant-enseignant, comme c'est le cas pour Jean Mauropous<sup>76</sup>? Dans cette perspective, il faut peut-être émousser les hypothèses qui, vraisemblablement influencées pas l'exceptionnelle et bien documentée fortune que Lucien aura pendant la soi-disant Renaissance paléologue et l'humanisme italien<sup>77</sup>, considèrent notre auteur comme central et fondamental à tous les niveaux de l'éducation, et surtout dans les niveaux basiques, pendant la première époque byzantine.

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<sup>75</sup> R. BROWNING, *Literacy in the Byzantine World*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 4/1978, pp. 39-54, en part. p. 46, en continuant ainsi : « and it can probably dispense with the last ». Cette dernière partie de l'hypothèse de R. Browning a maintenant été confirmée par G. Cavallo, qui a démontré l'absence d'un vrai « manuel scolaire » à Byzance (G. CAVALLO, *Oralità scrittura....*, cit.).

<sup>76</sup> MAUR., *Carm.* 47,29-32 : « ἐν σοὶ συνῆξα γνῶσιν ἐκ μαθημάτων, / ἐν σοὶ δὲ ταύτην τοῖς θέλουσι σκορπίσας, / πολλοὺς σοφοὺς ἔδειξα προϊκα τῶν νεῶν. / Τούτοις ὅλον με, πατρική, θέλγεις, στέγη » (*Iohannis Euchaitorum metropolitae quae in codice Vaticano Graeco 676 supersunt*, éd. par J. BOLLIG – P. DE LAGARDE, Göttingen 1882, p. 25). « Nel secolo XI Giovanni Mauropode soleva riunire nella sua casa una cerchia di giovani che, senza alcun compenso, rendeva sοφοί, “dotti”, elargendo loro il suo sapere » (G. CAVALLO, *Oralità scrittura....*, cit., pp. 27-28). Les paroles de G. Cavallo définissent très efficacement les problèmes du rapport livre-école à Byzance : « con quale significato – o al di là delle maniere di insegnamento e di studio praticate – si può parlare di scuola o scuole a Bisanzio quando non si tratti dell'insegnamento superiore e dei libri che vi gravitano? In realtà, a parte un insegnamento superiore di Stato, peraltro assai vago, e la Scuola Patriarcale, insegnamento superiore e libri a Bisanzio si dimostrano “affare” di ridotte cerchie, convenziole, θέατρα σοφῶν, per dirla con Niceforo Gregora, talvolta magari salotti. Né vi erano – a parte certi ambiti civili o ecclesiastici istituzionalmente deputati, ma non sempre circoscrivibili con precisione di tempo in tempo – luoghi fissi di attività didattica o erudita: per lo più si trattava di case private, talora di una chiesa, di una sede vescovile o di un monastero. In questi sodalizi eruditi si scrivevano, si leggevano, si interpretavano, si discutevano libri, ma senza perdere di vista che dietro la maschera degli studi vi era il prestigio delle alte cariche » (*ibidem*, p. 35).

<sup>77</sup> Voir E. NUTI, Longa est via. *Forme e contenuti dello studio grammaticale dalla Bisanzio paleologa al tardo Rinascimento veneziano*, Alessandria 2014 (*Hellenica*, 51).

## L'IMAGO PIETATIS IN TERRA GRECA NEI SECOLI XV E XVI: PONTE CULTURALE TRA ORIENTE E OCCIDENTE

Bianchi Massimo Alessandro

The *Imago Pietatis*, or Man of Sorrows, is an excellent example of imagery used for liturgical purposes, the drafting of which iconography, comes from a Byzantine origin, dating back to the twelfth century. Its use is linked to the rites of the Passion and Holy Week, and specifically with processional uses. The new rites of Easter, that date back to the eleventh century, created new functions for the iconic images: the Man of Sorrows iconography was able to meet and satisfy all those tasks.

Additionally, as is well documented, we see from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, a change in attitudes aimed at experiencing the fusion of different iconographic schemes, revolving around the subjects of Lamentation, Deposition and Crucifixion. In the decades around the turn of the fall of Costantinople, those types, creating countless hybrid variants, often hinging on the figure of the *Pietà*, taken from the purely Nordic version of *Vesperbild* (image of vespers), also accepted in Venetian ambit by Paolo Veneziano and Giovanni Bellini.

The type of Man of Sorrows, as codified in Venetian Crete during the fifteenth century, was originally imported directly from the artistic centers active in the northern Adriatic, without the mediation of what was created in the Balkans. In turn, the reworking of the subject occurred in Venice, during the previous century, it was born from a fruitful cultural exchange, permeable in both directions, with the area of western Macedonia and Serbia, which were no longer under rule of the Byzantine emperor, where, during the twelfth century, there is evidence of the first plates depicting the *Imago Pietatis*, in the half-length version.

L'*Imago Pietatis*, o *Akra Tapeinosis*, rappresenta un ottimo esempio di immagine utilizzata per scopi liturgici, la cui elaborazione iconografica, di origine bizantina, risale quantomeno al XII secolo. Il suo uso si lega perlopiù ai riti della Passione e della Settimana Santa, in particolare ai connessi usi processionali, traendo ispirazione dal Libro del profeta Isaia (*Isaia* 52:13-53:12) nel quale si recita:

«Disprezzato e reietto dagli uomini, uomo dei dolori che ben conosce il patire, come uno davanti al quale ci si copre la faccia, era disprezzato e non ne avevamo alcuna stima (*Isaia* 53:3)»

Dopo la perdita di molte immagini di culto e di reliquie, dovuta alla presa di Costantinopoli da parte dei Crociati, l'iconografia liturgica subisce dei cambiamenti di un certo rilievo. In precedenza, il culto diretto degli oggetti sacri, materializzazione simbolica dei misteri della fede, aveva in un certo senso limitato il repertorio delle raffigurazioni devozionali a disposizione del clero e dei fedeli. In questo mutato contesto l'iconografia dell'*Akra Tapeinosis* reinterpreta il tema della Passione, assommando in sé più significati che coinvolgeranno, come vedremo più volte avanti, anche La rappresentazione della Vergine, vista anch'essa come Madre dei dolori<sup>1</sup>. Il ritratto del Cristo in Pietà fu concepito inizialmente come un complemento dell'icona di Maria, diventando destinatario per eccellenza, personalizzato, delle lamentazioni mariane<sup>2</sup>.

I nuovi riti della Pasqua, dei quali abbiamo notizia a partire dall'XI secolo, crearono quindi nuove funzioni per le immagini iconiche. La croce e la Crocifissione non potevano esaurire da sole i mutati contenuti della liturgia; si sentiva la necessità o di diverse icone, tra le quali la Deposizione ed il Compianto sulla tomba, o di un'icona di nuovo tipo, sufficientemente complessa nel contenuto, e polivalente nella forma, da potersi adattare a più uffizi: l'*Imago Pietatis* era in grado di soddisfare da sola queste condizioni. La croce alle spalle del Figlio, così come più tardi il sacello, metaforicamente interpretato dal sarcofago, sono dei motivi che collegano semanticamente la figura ai riti pasquali, senza per questo iscriverla in un contesto narrativo<sup>3</sup>.

Contemporaneamente è ben documentata, in particolar modo dall'XI al XV secolo, una nuova attitudine, volta a sperimentare la fusione di diversi schemi iconografici, che coinvolge principalmente i soggetti della Lamentazione, Deposizione e Crocifissione. Specialmente nei decenni a cavallo della caduta di Costantinopoli, questi tipi si fondono, dando vita ad innumerevoli varianti ibride, spesso incardinate sulla figura della Pietà, ripresa nella versione prettamente nordica della *Vesperbild* (immagine del vespro), accolta anche in ambito veneto da Paolo Veneziano e Giovanni Bellini<sup>4</sup>.

L'icona bilaterale proveniente da Kastoria risale al XII secolo e, insieme alla tavola leggermente più tarda, oggi presso la chiesa di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme di

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<sup>1</sup> Per un approfondimento sull'aspetto teologico e liturgico delle immagini sacre vedi H. BELTING, *An Image and Its Functions in the Liturgy: The Man of Sorrows in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 34/1980-35/1981, pp. 1-28; H. BELTING, *L'arte e il suo pubblico. Funzione e forme delle antiche immagini della passione*, Bologna, 1986.

<sup>2</sup> H. BELTING, *L'arte e il suo pubblico...*, cit. p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Ivi, p. 119.

<sup>4</sup> Κ.Φ. ΚΑΛΑΦΑΤΗ, *Εικονογραφικές ιδιομορφίες σε εικόνα με παράσταση του Επιτάφιου Θρήνου*, <<http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/1151/1076>>, 1995, pp. 139-150: p. 142 s.; T. DIALEKTOPOULOS, *Iconography as research source on religious affairs in greek lands under venetian rule*, Thessaloniki, 2012, pp. 126-127.

Roma, sembra essere il più antico lavoro sopravvissuto raffigurante questo soggetto (fig. 1)<sup>5</sup>. Qui, sul verso, è rappresentata una Vergine *Odeghetria* che, contrariamente alla raffigurazione canonica, si contraddistingue per avere una connotazione fortemente patetica, da ricollegarsi alla visione del Figlio morto, presente per l'appunto sul *recto* della stessa tavola (fig. 2)<sup>6</sup>. Entrambe le immagini sono da mettere in relazione con la rappresentazione del Compianto; in particolare è stato suggerito che l'*Imago Pietatis* derivi da una trasposizione in verticale del modello iconografico della Lamentazione, ipotesi avvalorata anche dalla presenza di tavole che raffigurano, questa volta al fianco del Cristo stesso, la Madre di Dio o san Giovanni Evangelista<sup>7</sup>. A questo riguarda è molto interessante tentare una ricostruzione diacronica della nascita di quest'ultimo particolare. In una miniatura del Vangelo Morgan 639, risalente alla seconda metà del XI secolo, e proveniente da Costantinopoli, si può osservare una nuova attenzione nella raffigurazione del Compianto, dove la Vergine inginocchiata alza dolcemente la testa del Cristo abbracciandolo, istituendo così un nuovo tipo iconografico dell'*Επιτάφιος Θρήνος*, che si cristallizzerà durante l'epoca dei Comneni (fig. 3)<sup>8</sup>. Abbiamo ulteriori esempi in due placche eburnee, la prima presso il Museo Rosgarten di Costanza, la seconda al Victoria and Albert Museum di Londra, inv. 5-1872 (fig. 4)<sup>9</sup>; Tutte queste raffigurazioni comprendono la presenza della porta della tomba, ricollegandosi pertanto ad una precedente composizione, dedicata alla sepoltura del Salvatore<sup>10</sup>. Il passo successivo, che prevarrà per tutto il periodo dei Comneni e dei Paleologhi, sarà quello cristallizzato nell'affresco del Monastero di San Giovanni Chrisostomo di Kutzovendi, in Cipro risalente alla fine del XI secolo o all'inizio del XII (fig. 5)<sup>11</sup>. Successivamente si assiste al fiorire, in special modo per quanto riguarda la pittura a fresco, di numerose raffigurazioni del Compianto, ma anche della Deposizione, di pari costruzione, come a San Panteleiom di Nerezi, San Giorgio di Kurbinovo e nella chiesa dei Santi Anarghiri in Kastoria, tutte risalenti al XII secolo (fig. 6)<sup>12</sup>. Qui la scena acquisisce una maggiore drammaticità, e il viso della Madre di Dio, fortemente contrito, scivola sulla guancia del Figlio, in un modo già identico a quello che si presenterà nell' *Imago Pietatis*.

<sup>5</sup>H. BELTING, *An Image and Its Functions...*, cit., p. 19, fig. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Ivi, p. 18, fig. 2.

<sup>7</sup>A. DRANDAKI, *The Deposition of Christ*, in *Greek Icons, 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century. The Rena Andreadis Collection*, Milano, 2002, pp. 20-23, figg. 9-10-11-12.

<sup>8</sup>M. ΣΩΤΗΡΙΟΥ, *Ἐνταφιασμός Θρήνος*, <<http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/29>>, 1974, p. 141 ss;

<sup>9</sup>Ibidem, figg. 48.2-5.

<sup>10</sup>Ivi, p. 141, figg. 47.1-2-3-4-5.

<sup>11</sup>Ivi, p. 142, fig. 48.3.

<sup>12</sup>Ivi, p. 144 s, fig. 49.1-3.4; S. KORUNOVSKI - E. DIMITROVA, *Macedonia. L'arte medievale*, Milano, 2006, pp. 64-81, figg. 49-50-51; M. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ - Σ. ΠΙΕΛΕΚΑΝΙΔΗΣ, Καστοριά. Βυζαντινή Τέχνη στην Ελλάδα, Θεσσαλονίκη, pp. 26-28, fig. 12.

Contemporaneamente, l'eliminazione di ogni contesto narrativo dalla scena, consente di concentrare il nuovo vigore semantico della raffigurazione sull'enfasi del dramma, mediante l'utilizzo di un sincretismo simbolico assai accentuato, che assomma elementi provenienti dai seguenti tipi: la croce dietro al Figlio rimanda alla Crocifissione, il sarcofago e le braccia incrociate alla Deposizione, la presenza della Madre afflitta dal dolore alla Lamentazione. Si tratterebbe quindi di un'icona funeraria, il cui utilizzo durante il Venerdì Santo sarebbe provato anche dalla presenza di questo specifico soggetto in un Vangelo greco del XII secolo, proveniente da Karahissar, oggi a San Pietroburgo (fig. 7)<sup>13</sup>. Ancora più interessante, ai fini della conferma di questa ipotesi, è il dittico presso il monastero della Trasfigurazione alle Meteore, raffigurante, separatamente sulle due valve, il Cristo in Pietà e la Madre di Dio, nella sua variante legata alla Lamentazione (fig.8)<sup>14</sup>. Sul retro è presente un'iscrizione, non coeva all'opera, riportante le istruzioni del fondatore del monastero, in cui si informa di esporre le tavole sull'*Epitaphios*, durante la ricorrenza del Sabato Santo, giorno in cui tradizionalmente si celebra il mistero della discesa agli inferi del Signore<sup>15</sup>. La raffigurazione frontale e accostata della Madre e del Figlio, piuttosto che la loro presenza su due lati della stessa tavola, sembra essere maggiormente legata ad un uso liturgico privato, a sua volta accostabile alla produzione di lavori dal piccolo formato<sup>16</sup>. La particolarità non deve sorprendere poiché la presenza di monasteri semi-privati, proprietà dei membri dell'aristocrazia, è attestata con frequenza in questo periodo storico<sup>17</sup>. A partire dal X-XI secolo, i conventi e i monasteri sembrano infatti aver introdotto un numero crescente di testi, riti o addirittura interi uffizi. Il carattere conservatore della Chiesa ufficiale si apre così, nelle realtà locali, principalmente all'influenza della regola palestinese, impedendo l'affermarsi di un modello unitario di osservanza religiosa<sup>18</sup>. Questa tipologia di icone veniva anche appoggiata sul corpo del defunto durante le funzioni funerarie, ed è a questo proposito plausibile pensare che raffigurazioni ancora più serrate, con i protagonisti rappresentati sul medesimo lato della tavola, in special modo la Vergine nell'atto di abbracciare teneramente il Figlio, si adattassero ancora meglio a questo tipo di esigenze liturgiche. L'espressione così intima e carica di patetismo della Madre di Dio deve molto alla retorica omelitica e all'innografia, in particolare alle omelie di Giorgio di Nicomedia e ai sermoni di Simeone Metafraste,

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<sup>13</sup>H. BELTING, *An Image and Its Functions...*, cit., p. 21, fig. 7.

<sup>14</sup>Ivi, p. 20, fig. 4.

<sup>15</sup>Ivi, p. 7 ss.

<sup>16</sup>Ivi, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup>H. BELTING, *L'arte e il suo pubblico...*, cit., p. 115.

la cui poetica si riflette nell'iconografia narrativa dell'*Ἐπιτάφιος Θρίνος*<sup>19</sup>. La così stretta relazione con il sacrificio sulla Croce, alla radice della commossa partecipazione della Vergine, è altresì ben esemplificata dall'icona della Madre di Dio di Vladimir dove, sul *verso* viene raffigurato il solo crocifisso con gli strumenti della Passione<sup>20</sup>. Ecco quindi come questo tipo finì col diventare, a partire dal XIII secolo, il depositario dei misteri del sacrificio e della salvezza, alla cui radice è presente una concezione soteriologica capace di trasformarlo in un prerequisito didascalico funzionale alla salvezza stessa<sup>21</sup>.

La diffusione di questo tipo riguarda anche l'Italia del XIII e XIV secolo, dove viene portata a maturazione un'importante riappropriazione iconografica del soggetto. Ancor più interesse riveste poi la sua rielaborazione stilistica nell'area della Macedonia occidentale nel corso del XV secolo. Qui si assiste all'assimilazione di diversi elementi di origine italiana che, in particolar modo nell'ultimo quarto del secolo, riguardano anche la pittura murale e la produzione di icone portatili nelle città di Kastoria, Salonicco e Veria. In quest'ultimo centro si svilupperà una scuola locale capace, grazie anche all'arrivo di molti artisti provenienti da Kastoria e dalle aree più occidentali della regione, di mantenere il suo carattere anticlassico, di schietta matrice artigianale, per tutto il XVI e XVII secolo<sup>22</sup>.

Un'interessante icona bilaterale, oggi presso il Museo Bizantino di Kastoria e datata al XV secolo, raffigurante sul *recto* una *Odeghetria* e sul *verso* un Cristo in Pietà, reca tracce di questa commistione culturale, in particolar modo nel nimbo, lavorato con dei motivi a raggiera a forma di gocce nella parte terminale, stilema che ritroviamo anche in altre tavole provenienti dai possedimenti veneziani di Creta e Cipro, databili fra il XV e il XVI secolo (fig. 9)<sup>23</sup>. Anche l'espressione contratta del volto e degli occhi, dalla forma triangolare e con le sopracciglia arcuate, rimanda a quanto prodotto in Italia a partire dalla seconda metà del XIII secolo, come possiamo apprezzare, a titolo di esempio, nei lavori Giunta Pisano, nel Cristo in Pietà presso il Museo Provinciale di Torcello, opera forse di un iconografo veneziano del XIV secolo – che traduce un'icona di importazione orientale in uno schema in seguito

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<sup>19</sup>H. BELTING, *An Image and Its Functions...*, cit., p. 3, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup>Ivi, 23, figg. 12-13.

<sup>21</sup>M. TOMIĆ DURIĆ, *The Man of Sorrows and the Lamenting Virgin: the example at Markov Manastir*, <<http://www.doiserbia.nb.rs/img/doi/0584-9888/2012/0584-98881249303T.pdf>>, 2012, p. 320.

<sup>22</sup>A. ΤΣΙΛΙΠΑΚΟΥ, *Η μεταβυζαντινή ζωγραφική στη Βέροια. Ζωγράφοι και εργαστήρια στο 17ο αιώνα*, <<http://deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/592>>, 2007, pp. 257-270.

<sup>23</sup>E.N. ΤΣΙΓΑΡΙΔΑΣ, *Φορητές εικόνες στη Μακεδονία και το Άγιον Όρος κατά το 13ο αιώνα*, <<http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/556/525>>, 2000, p. 155, fig. 41; E.N. ΤΣΙΓΑΡΙΔΑΣ, *Τοιχογραφίες της περιόδου των Παλαιολόγων σε ναούς της Μακεδονίας*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2008, p. 295 e n. XI.

assai noto nel nuovo ambito locale –, oppure nell'icona di pari soggetto oggi al Museo Horne di Firenze, inv. 70 (fig. 10)<sup>24</sup>.

Quest'ultima, considerata anch'essa opera di un pittore greco-veneziano della metà del XIV secolo, è alquanto importante per corroborare l'ipotesi che il soggetto iconografico dell'*Imago Pietatis* sia da considerare come l'espressione visiva di una funzione rituale, legata ai servizi della Settimana Santa, piuttosto che alla liturgia funeraria, proprio grazia alla presenza all'interno della stessa raffigurazione, della Madre di Dio. La tavola raffigura il corpo di Cristo stante, che fuoriesce da un avello alquanto schematico e miniaturizzato, la sua figura è decentrata per dare spazio alla Vergine che lo abbraccia, affiancandolo e stringendolo da dietro. Appoggia poi la sua guancia a quella del Figlio, mostrando nei suoi confronti un certo scarto proporzionale. Nella parte alta vi compare, in caratteri greci, il *titulus Crucis*, nella sua versione più antica e legata alla tradizione bizantina: *OBΣ / ΛΤΔΞ*, ovvero ὁ β(α)σ(ι)λ(εύς) τ(ῆς) δ(ό)ξ(ῆς), già decifrata da Panofsky nel 1927, tradotta in latino come *REX GLORIAE*. *Titulus* per la verità alquanto diffuso anche nei tipi della Crocifissione e della Deposizione<sup>25</sup>. De Marchi considera l'abbraccio della Madre di Dio come una clamorosa (*sic*) variante iconografica, trasposta dal registro narrativo a quello iconico, riflesso non immediato di idee che si stavano diffondendo nella pittura padana di quel periodo<sup>26</sup>. Con questa opera Erwin Panowsky (1927) dava avvio al suo saggio giovanile sull'*Imago Pietatis* e il ruolo di Maria come mediatrice, additandola come esempio paradigmatico dell'innesto della scena del Compianto sul tipo del Cristo in Pieta<sup>27</sup>.

Un'icona presente oggi ad Atene, nella collezione Rena Andreadis, mostra sostanzialmente lo stesso schema figurativo, con la differenza che qui non troviamo l'iscrizione del *titulus Crucis*, mentre la Vergine sfiora in modo compassionevole la

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<sup>24</sup> A. DE MARCHI, *Pittore greco-veneziano della metà del XIV secolo*, in *Giovanni Bellini. La nascita della pittura devozionale umanistica*, a cura di E. Daffra, Milano, 2014, p. 129, fig. 1, p. 157; H. BELTING, *L'arte e il suo pubblico...*, cit., p. 203.

<sup>25</sup> Gli esempi sono innumerevoli e provengono anche da diverse aree geografiche dell'Oriente cristiano, come Cipro, il Sinai o la Russia, per i secc. XIV, XV e XVI vedi A. PAPAGEORGHIOU, *Icons of Cyprus*, Nicosia, 1992, p. 72, fig. 49, p. 75, fig. 51a, p. 83, fig. 55f; K.P. KALAFATI, *Two-sided Icon with the Virgin Holding the Christ and the Crucifixion*, in *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, a cura di H.C. Evans, New York, 2004, p. 182 e n. 103; K.P. KALAFATI, *Riflessi di Bisanzio. Capolavori d'arte dal XV al XVIII secolo dal Museo Bizantino e Cristiano di Atene*, a cura di E. Calkia, Atene, 2003, p. 76 e n. 17; E.N. TSIGARIDAS, *Iconostasis cross*, in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, Thessaloniki, 1997, p. 121 e n. 2.54; X. ΜΠΙΑΛΤΟΓΙΑΝΝΗ, *Η Αποκαθήλωση και η Παναγία Οδηγήτρια in Εικόνες Ιησούς Χριστός*, Αθήνα, 2003, pp. 373-376 e n. 63, p. 381, fig. 131; A. KATSIOTI, *The Crucifixion*, in *The Hand of Angelos, an icon painter in Venetian Crete*, a cura di M. Vassilaki, Slovenia, 2010, p. 80 s. e n. 6; M. ΜΠΙΟΡΜΠΙΟΥΔΑΚΗΣ, *Σταύρωσις*, in *Εικόνες της Κέρκυρας*, Αθήνα, 1990, p. 505 s. e n. 150; K. ΜΑΝΑΦΗΣ, *Σινά. Οι θησαυροί της I. Μόνης Αγίας Αικατερίνης*, Αθήνα, 1990, p. 184, fig. 58; A. ΠΑΠΑΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ, *Βυζαντινές εικόνες της Κύπρου*, Αθήνα, 1976, p. 40 s. e n. 9; *Le icone, il viaggio da Bisanzio al '900*, a cura di T. Velmans, Milano, 2002, p. 143; K. BALABANOV, *Icons from Macedonia*, Beograd, 1969, figg. 4, 21.

<sup>26</sup> A. DE MARCHI, *Pittore greco-veneziano...*, cit., p. 157.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

ferita sul costato del Figlio con la propria mano destra (fig. 11)<sup>28</sup>. Quest'ultima peculiarità la differenzia da quanto prodotto, a partire dal XVI secolo, da varî iconografi appartenenti alla scuola cretese dove, come nell'icona Horne, la mano destra di Maria si appoggia con delicatezza al braccio sinistro del Signore<sup>29</sup>. Nella tavola ateniese è patente la progenitura del modello, in quanto alla destra del nimbo di Gesù è presente la scritta: *H ΑΠΟΚΑΘΟΛΟCIC TOY XPICTOY*, la Deposizione di Cristo. La rappresentazione dell'*Akra Tapeinosis*, come reinterpretazione della Deposizione, ci riconduce, per alcuni precipui aspetti, a diversi lavori provenienti dalla penisola italiana, in particolare da Venezia – come possiamo notare nella pala del Museo Marciano attribuita a Paolo Veneziano –, dove frequentemente il Figlio viene affiancato dalla Vergine o dall'Evangelista. L'abbraccio di Maria, come presentato nell'icona in esame, si ricollega inoltre a quanto dipinto a fresco dal giottesco Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, sul finire del XIV secolo, sia nella chiesa di San Felice in Piazza a Firenze sia nella tavola oggi al Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. 8, oppure da Giusto de' Menabuoi nel polittico del Battistero del Duomo di Padova (fig. 12)<sup>30</sup>.

Quanto detto ci confermerebbe che l'*Imago Pietatis*, in questa sua specifica variante, fosse già stata rielaborata dalle botteghe italiane a partire dal XIV secolo, mentre in epoca postbizantina si hanno sicuramente molti meno esempi da riferire, al di fuori del già citato ambito cretese<sup>31</sup>. In Creta il Cristo viene dipinto per solito da solo e, come vedremo oltre, in particolari varianti riprese sostanzialmente da coevi esempi provenienti da Ovest. Tuttavia la medesima composizione è presente in alcuni affreschi serbi della scuola morava, datati tra il XIV e il XV secolo, come a Ramaća (1392-1393) e Jošanica (1400-1430)<sup>32</sup>. La tavola ateniese è caratterizzata altresì da diversi elementi che ci rimandano ai lavori delle botteghe macedoni risalenti al principio del XV secolo, dove il prototipo occiduo si mescola ai più consolidati stilemi della tradizione bizantina, declinata nella sua variante locale<sup>33</sup>. Il nostro iconografo è al corrente delle novità sperimentate nell'area veneziana, come ci dimostrano la presenza del sarcofago e la decorazione punzonata ad anse del nimbo. Da notare anche come il corpo in ostensione venga raffigurato fino alla vita, con le mani incrociate, per mostrare le ferite procurate dai chiodi. Molte immagini occidentali dell'*Imago Pietatis* infatti, a partire dal XV secolo, mostrano con

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<sup>28</sup>X. ΜΠΑΛΤΟΓΙΑΝΝΗ, *H Αποκαθήλωση*, in *Εικόνες Ιησούς Χριστός...*, cit., pp. 389-393 e n. 67, p. 398-399, fig. 139.

<sup>29</sup>Ivi, p. 390.

<sup>30</sup>A.A.V.V., *Padova, Battistero della Cattedrale. Affreschi di Giusto de' Menabuoi (Sec. XIV)*, a cura di G. Faffani, Padova, p. 62, fig. 2; M. BOSKOVITS, *Pittura fiorentina alla vigilia del Rinascimento 1370-1400*, Firenze, 1975.

<sup>31</sup>X. ΜΠΑΛΤΟΓΙΑΝΝΗ, *H Αποκαθήλωση*, in *Εικόνες Ιησούς Χριστός...*, cit., p. 390.

<sup>32</sup>E.N. DRANDAKI, *The Deposition of Christ*, cit. p. 22; K. BALABANOV, *Icons from Macedonia*, cit., fig. 33.

<sup>33</sup>E.N. DRANDAKI, *The Deposition of Christ*, cit. p. 22.

particolare enfasi i segni della Passione e, sempre a partire da questo periodo, si assiste all'introduzione nella composizione delle *arma Christi*, al fine di enfatizzarne la valenza emotiva<sup>34</sup>. L'autore conosce probabilmente anche il modello dell'affresco di pari soggetto sopra citato, opera di Giusto de' Menabuoi, vista la pedissequa riproposizione della postura della Vergine. D'altro canto, la ripresa dell'*Akra Tapeinosis*, nella sua versione più legata alla tradizione paleologa, così come conosciuta nell'entroterra macedone, si palesa nelle seguenti caratteristiche: la testa reclinata in modo accentuato sulla destra, l'ampio sterno, le robuste e larghe spalle, il collo muscoloso sul quale ricadono i riccioli dei capelli. Tali peculiarità ci indicano come la sua formazione artistica fosse basata sul sincretismo stilistico, contrassegno qualificante della cultura pittorica locale in quel periodo storico. Anche la resa stereometrica delle forme, ottenuta con l'utilizzo della luce e delle ombreggiature insistite, le mani dalle dita particolarmente lunghe, la mancata ricerca di eleganza nello stile, privo di ogni dettaglio esornativo, l'atmosfera misticheggiante nella sua anticlassica essenzialità, sono caratteristiche "vernacolari", tipiche delle coeve icone provenienti da Kastoria<sup>35</sup>.

Quanto detto ci autorizza a supporre che l'icona oggi al Museo Horne, con le sue analogie, possa appartenere alla medesima area geografica o quantomeno alla stessa temperie culturale, complice anche la particolare cromia della banda superiore dello sfondo, contenente il *titulus Crucis*, la cui tonalità vermiglia è attributo perspicuo dei lavori locali<sup>36</sup>. Il forte e drammatico contrasto tra il torso robusto e le braccia esili ed emaciate, l'enfasi data alla descrizione anatomica della cassa toracica, forse a voler suggerire il gonfiore della carne in decomposizione del cadavere, nonché la severa gamma cromatica, avvicinano entrambi i lavori ad un'icona di pari soggetto, datata al 1400, attribuita ad una bottega della Macedonia occidentale (fig. 13)<sup>37</sup>; oppure a quanto raffigurato sul *verso* di un'icona bilaterale, raffigurante sul *recto* san Nicola con scene della sua vita, datata alla prima metà del XV secolo, proveniente dalla chiesa di san Sabba in Veria (fig. 14)<sup>38</sup>. Altro esempio utile alla disamina è inoltre l'icona a mosaico presso il monastero di Tatarna, datata agli inizi del XIV secolo (fig.

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<sup>34</sup> L. TURNBULL, *The Man of Sorrows and the King of Glory in Italy, c. 1250-c. 1350*, <<http://emajartjournal.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/turnbull.pdf>>, 2012, p. 7 s.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem.*; Cfr. E.N. TSIGRAIDAS, *Two-sided Icon with the Virgin Paraythia and the Man of Sorrows*, in *Byzantium. Faith and Power*, cit., p. 177 e n. 98.

<sup>36</sup> Per un approfondimento sulla produzione locale dei secc. XIII-XV vedi T. PAPAZOTOS, *Byzantine Icons of Verroia*, Athens, 1995; A.A.V.V., *Saints de Byzance. Icônes Grecques de Veroia, XIIIe-XVIIe siècle*, a cura di J. Albani - A. Nikolaïdes, Athènes, 2004; K. BALABANOV, *Icons from Macedonia*, cit., fig. 57.

<sup>37</sup> M. CHATZIDACHIS, *The Akra Tapeinosis*, in *From Byzantium to El Greco: Greek frescoes an icons*, a cura di M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Athens, 1987, p. 163 e n. 27, p. 93, fig. 27.

<sup>38</sup> T. PAPAZOTOS, *Byzantine Icons of Verroia*, cit., p. 61, fig. 93, 94.

15)<sup>39</sup>. La diffusione di questo particolare tipo è testimoniata anche dalla presenza, presso il *Katholikon* del monastero di San Giovanni Lampadistis di Kalopanaghiotis a Cipro, di un dittico raffigurante diverse scene della Redenzione, tra cui compare una Pietà veramente simile, sebbene dal *ductus* pittorico più corsivo, all'icona Horne, dalla quale riprende anche la cromia dello sfondo (fig. 16)<sup>40</sup>. L'opera è attribuibile ad un artista anonimo vissuto a cavallo tra il XIV e il XV secolo, le cui caratteristiche stilistiche si avvicinano a quanto prodotto, nel corso del XIII secolo, al Sinai<sup>41</sup>. Anche in lavori seriori possiamo ritrovare la riproposizione di questa iconografia: in un affresco, probabilmente risalente al XVII secolo, presente nel monastero paleologo di Bellas, in Epiro, viene raffigurata l'*Αποκαθήλωση* mediante l'ostensione del Figlio abbracciato dalla Madre e affiancato dall'Evangelista<sup>42</sup>. Ritroviamo lo stesso identico tipo nella chiesa di San Giorgio in Vrosina, Epiro, opera dell'iconografo Michail, attivo nel terzo decennio del XVII secolo in Albania e nel circondario di Ioannina. Qui la mano destra della Vergine passa nuovamente sotto il braccio sinistro del Cristo, mentre l'iscrizione che corre a fianco delle teste dei protagonisti cita ancora l'*Αποκαθήλωση*<sup>43</sup>.

Probabilmente questo interesse per le novità provenienti dall'Italia che, come abbiamo visto caratterizza i lavori delle botteghe macedoni del XV secolo, non è ascrivibile alla dominazione latina, la quale fu un breve interludio per la Macedonia. Piuttosto è plausibile che questi contatti con i centri adriatici avvenissero, via Epiro, per il tramite dei possedimenti della Serenissima in Dalmazia e nelle isole Iонie<sup>44</sup>.

Anche in ambito cretese questa specifica iconografia viene riproposta in diverse opere, come nell'*Akra Tapeinosis*, oggi presso il monastero di Iviron, databile al XVI secolo (fig. 17)<sup>45</sup>; o in un trittico cretese del tardo XVII secolo, oggi presso il Museo Bizantino e Cristiano di Atene, dove il Cristo viene affiancato e abbracciato dalla Vergine e da san Giovanni, inv. T2851 (fig. 18)<sup>46</sup>. Nel ducato di Candia il soggetto viene introdotto e codificato probabilmente grazie all'attività dell'iconografo

<sup>39</sup> Ι. ΚΟΥΜΟΥΛΙΔΗΣ, *To Μοναστήρι της Τατάρνας και τα κειμηλία της*, Αθήνα, 1991, p. 48.

<sup>40</sup> S. SOPHOCLEUS, *Cyprus: the Holy Island. Icons through the Centuries 10th – 20th Centuries*, Nicosia, 2000, pp. 174-181.

<sup>41</sup> *Ivi*, p. 178.

<sup>42</sup> Δ. ΚΑΜΑΡΟΥΛΙΑΣ, *Tά μοναστήρια τής Ηπείρου*, T. 1, Αθήνα, 1996, p. 570, fig. 743.

<sup>43</sup> Μ. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ - Ε. ΔΡΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Ελληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση (1450-1830)* T 2, Αθήνα, 1987, p. 193, fig. 117.

<sup>44</sup> E.N. TSIGARIDAS, *Pietà*, in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, cit., p. 155.

<sup>45</sup> E.N. TSIGARIDAS, *Pietà*, in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, cit., p. 104 s. e n. 2.39.

<sup>46</sup> Γ. ΚΑΚΑΒΑΣ, *Θέματα πατμιακής εικονογραφίας σε κρητικά τρίπτυχα του Βυζαντινού και Χριστιανικού*, <<http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/viewFile/389/388>>, 2003, p. 301, fig. 6; X. ΜΠΑΛΤΟΓΙΑΝΗ, *H Άκρα Ταπείνωση, ο ἅγιος Ιωάννης ο Πρόδρομος και ο ἅγιος Ιερώνυμος*, in *Εικόνες Ιησούς Χριστός*, cit., p. 395 ss. e n. 70, p. 402 s., figg. 143,144.

Nikolaos Tzaforius, attivo con la sua bottega a Iraklion nella seconda metà del XV secolo: quando l'isola, già sotto il dominio veneto, vede incrementare notevolmente il propri scambi economici, culturali ed artistici con Venezia e gli altri centri lagunari<sup>47</sup>. Il prototipo di questa nuova variante del Cristo in Pietà si può ravvisare nella tavola oggi presso il Kunsthistorisches Museum di Vienna, risalente alla fine del XV secolo, dove l'esile fisionomia del Cristo condivide molti elementi appartenenti alla cultura gotica, la cui conoscenza si diffonde grazie anche alla diffusione di incisioni, provenienti spesso dal Nord Europa (fig. 19)<sup>48</sup>. Dal punto di vista tipologico e stilistico, l'anonimo autore dell'icona di Iviron adotta quanto codificato da Tzaforis e da diversi altri esponenti della scuola cretese, in particolar modo per quanto riguarda i tipi facciali, la cui origine affonda nella pittura tardo-paleologa. Nel particolare ritroviamo le ombre triangolari sotto gli occhi, precedentemente osservate nei lavori macedoni, nonché un uso della linea sicuramente più elegante ed esornativo rispetto alla secca resa dell'incarnato e della figura di origine macedone<sup>49</sup>. Ulteriore parallelo si riscontra con i dipinti di Teofane il Cretese, il cui stilema avrà, rispetto al soggetto dell'*Imago Pietatis*, grande influenza a partire dalla prima metà del XVI secolo (fig. 20)<sup>50</sup>. L'influenza dell'arte italiana si riflette anche in una serie di dettagli, come ad esempio nelle braccia, raffigurate distese – così come dipinto da Michele Giambono o da Giovanni del Biondo a partire dalla fine del XIV secolo –, oppure nel sarcofago, che acquista maggiore profondità mediante una più calcolata prospettiva<sup>51</sup>. Per il *titulus Crucis* si preferisce sempre più la versione occidentale con inscritto *INRI*, spesso riportata su d'un rotolo svolto, mentre il torso perde la propria monumentalità, acquisendo un fisionomia più affusolata, dove tonalità più morbide e un chiaroscuro più dolce diffondono una plasticità delle forme sicuramente più vicina a quanto prodotto nel Ponente, legandosi in particolar modo alla produzione italiana della seconda metà del XV secolo, dove lo stile di Giovanni Bellini si impone, anche nello sviluppo assiale in orizzontale delle composizioni, ora maggiormente gremite<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> B. ARBEL, *Riflessioni sul ruolo di Creta nel commercio mediterraneo del Cinquecento*, in *Venezia e Creta*, a cura di G. Ortalli, Venezia, 1998, pp. 245-259.

<sup>48</sup> A.A.V.V., *Le icone. Il viaggio da Bisanzio al '900*, a cura di T. Velmans, Milano, 2005, p. 39, fig. 11; X. ΜΠΑΛΤΟΓΙΑΝΝΗ, *Η Άκρα Ταπείνωση*, in *Εικόνες Ιησούς Χριστός*, cit., pp. 391-394 e nn. 68, 69, p. 400 s., figg. 141, 142; K.P. KALAFATI, *Riflessi di Bisanzio...*, cit., p. 58 s. e n. 9; A.A.V.V., *Oι θησαυροί της Μόνης Πάτμου*, a cura di A.Δ. Κομίνης, Αθήνα, 1988, p. 149, fig. 22.

<sup>49</sup> E.N. TSIGARIDAS, *Pietà*, in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, cit., p. 104 s.; A. ΒΟΚΟΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ, *Τέσσερις Ιταλοκρητικές εικόνες*, «<http://www.sciary.com/journal-scientific-deltion-issue-127153>», 1997, p. 89, fig. 6.

<sup>50</sup> M. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ – E. ΔΡΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Έλληνες ζωγράφοι μετά την Άλωση*, cit., p. 382, fig. 269; M. ΧΑΤΖΗΔΑΚΗΣ, *Ο Κρητικός ζωγράφος Θεοφάνης*, Αγιον Όρος, 2007, fig. 69.

<sup>51</sup> A. DE MARCHI, *Pittore greco-veneziano...*, cit., p. 131, fig. 3.

<sup>52</sup> S. FRIGERIO-ZENOU, *Gravures allemandes dans les ateliers de peintres crétois*, «[http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/vol45\\_35](http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/vol45_35)», 2006, p. 368 s., fig. 14; A. ΚΑΤΣΕΛΑΚΗ,

Quanto detto ci autorizza a pensare che il tipo dell'*Akra Tapeinosis*, così come codificato in Creta durante il XV secolo, sia stato originariamente importato direttamente dai centri artistici attivi nell'Adriatico settentrionale, senza la mediazione di quanto ideato nei Balcani. A propria volta, come abbiamo visto, la rielaborazione del soggetto avvenuta in ambito veneto, durante il secolo precedente, nasce da un proficuo interscambio culturale, permeabile in entrambi i sensi, con l'area della Macedonia occidentale, dove, nel corso del XII secolo, vi è testimonianza delle prime tavole raffiguranti l'*Imago Pietatis*, nella versione con il Cristo stante, raffigurato a mezzobusto.

Il successo riscosso da questa variante iconografica in terra greca, in particolar modo durante il XV e XVI secolo, segue pertanto due modelli figurativi, solo a prima vista indipendenti l'uno dall'altro. Sebbene questi ultimi abbiano, apparentemente, uno sviluppo a livello diacronico parallelo in aree geografiche diverse – la Macedonia e Creta –, in realtà non sarebbero altro che il risultato di un comune *humus* artistico, risalente, quantomeno per alcuni particolari, alla seconda metà del XI secolo, sempre partecipe delle novità provenienti da Occidente ed in grado di confermarci l'origine poligenetica di questa complessa e fortunata icona.

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Ιταλοκρητική εικόνα με την Άκρα Ταπείνωση και τους αγίους Ιωάννη τον Πρόδρομο και Γεράσιμο, <http://www.deltionchae.org/index.php/deltion/article/view/388>, 2003, pp. 281-292.



**Figura 1 Pittore macedone, *Akra Tapeinosis*, seconda metà del XII secolo, Museo Bizantino, Kastoria.**



**Figura 2 Pittore macedone, Vergine *Odeghetria*, seconda metà del XII secolo,  
Museo Bizantino, Kastoria.**



Figura 3 Anonimo, *Deposizione*, Lezionario Hamilton, m. 639 fol. 280r, fine del XI secolo, The Morgan Library & Museum, Londra.



**Figura 4 Anonimo, *Deposizione* (part.), fine del XI secolo, Victoria and Albert Museum, Londra.**



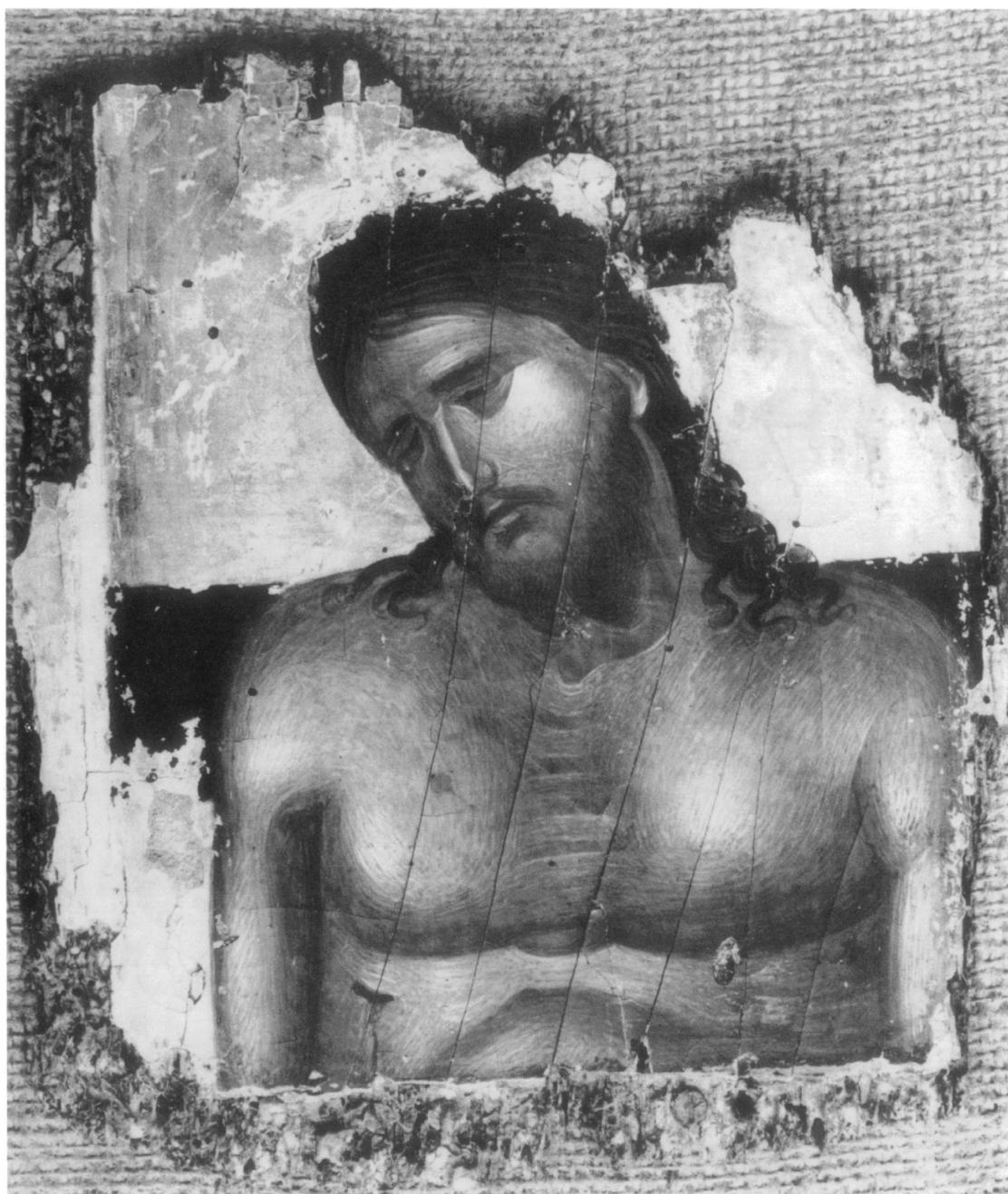
**Figura 5 Anonimo, *Deposizione*, 1110-1118, Monastero di San Giovanni  
Chrisostomo, Kutzovendi.**



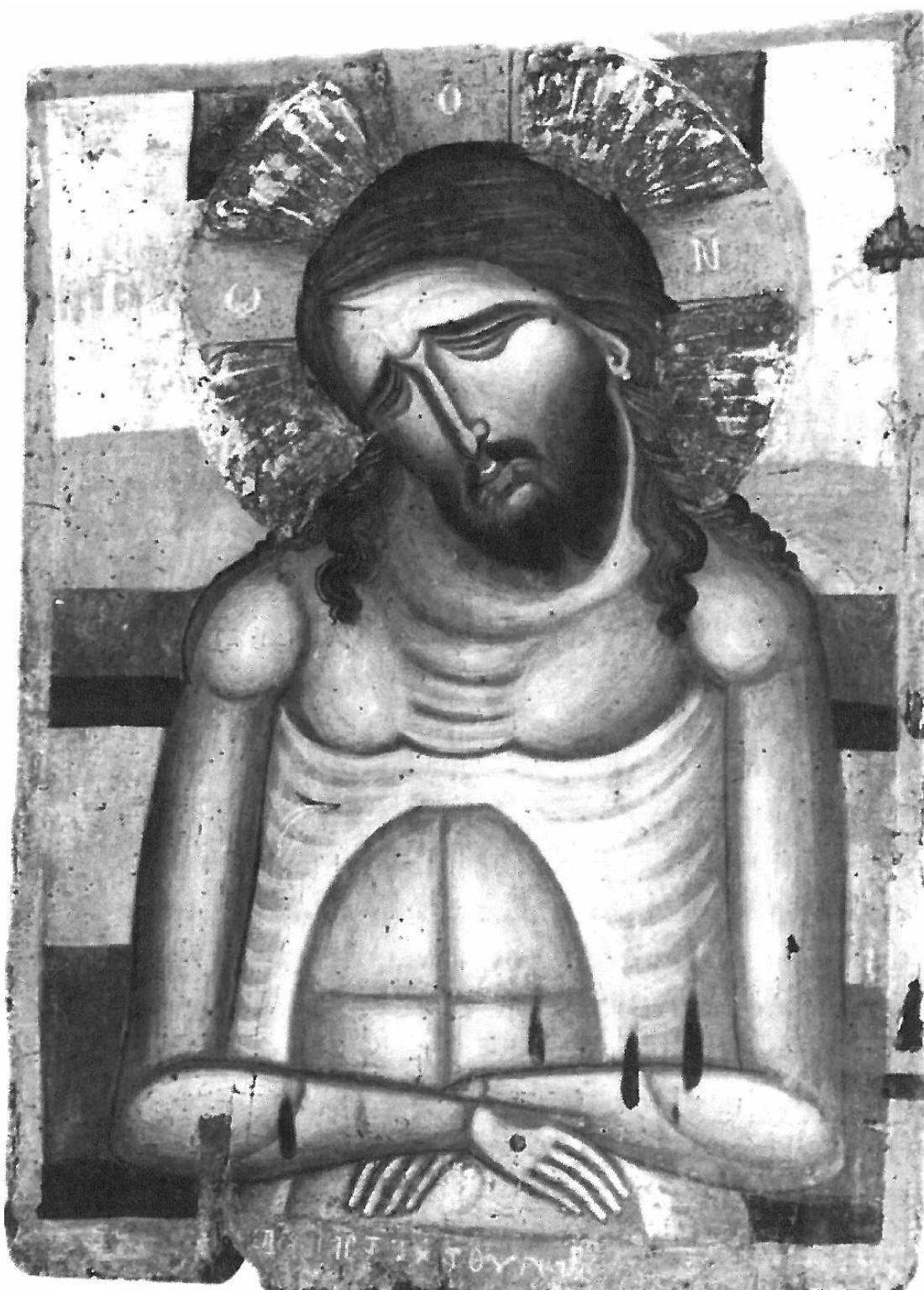
**Figura 6 Anonimo, *Deposizione*, fine del XI secolo-inizi del XII secolo, Santi Anarghiri, Kastoria.**



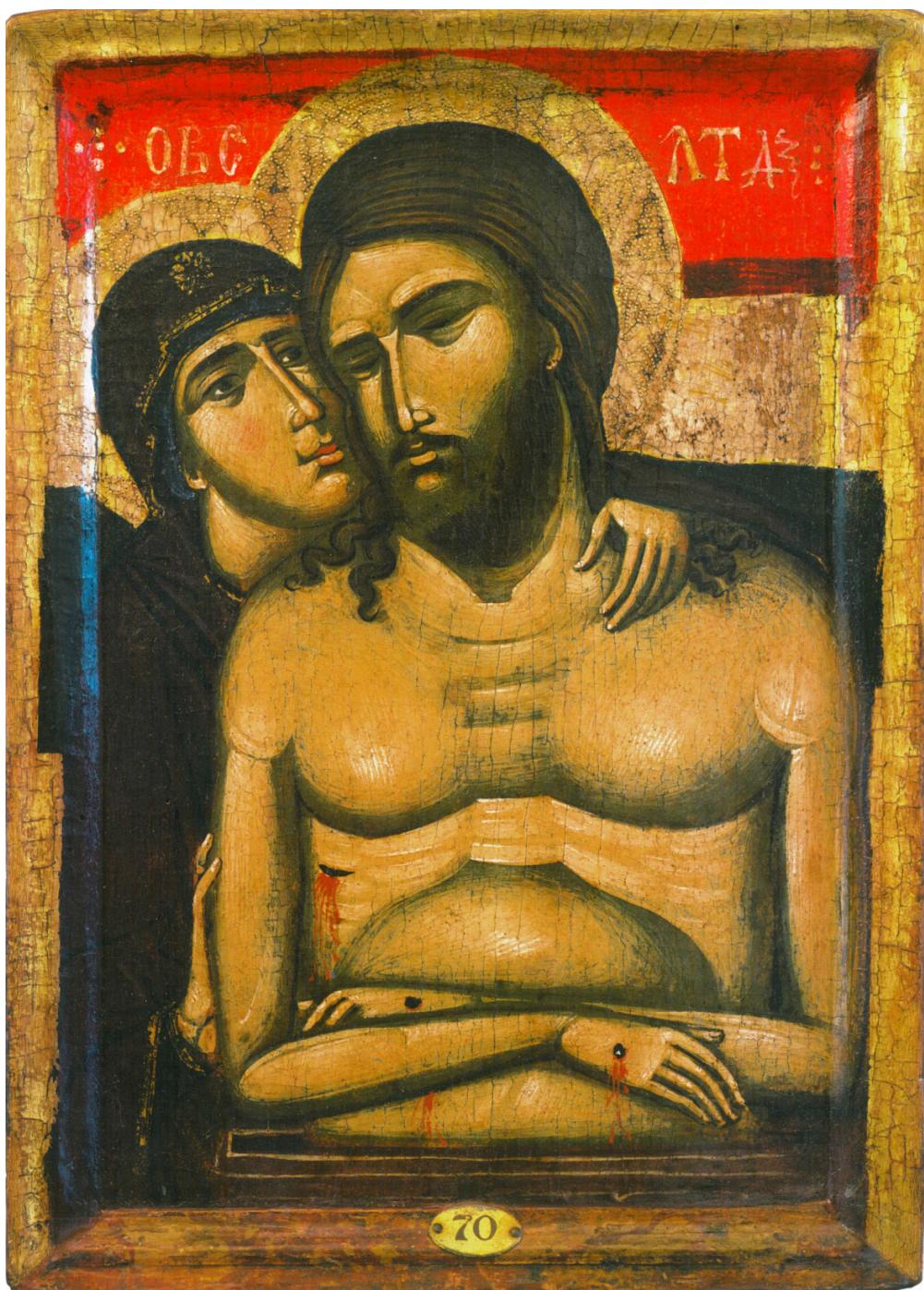
Figura 7 Anonimo, *Imago Pietatis*, Vangelo, gr. 105 fol. 65v, XII secolo, Libreria Pubblica, San Pietroburgo.



**Figura 8 Anonimo, *Imago Pietatis*, XII secolo, Monastero della Trasfigurazione, Meteora.**



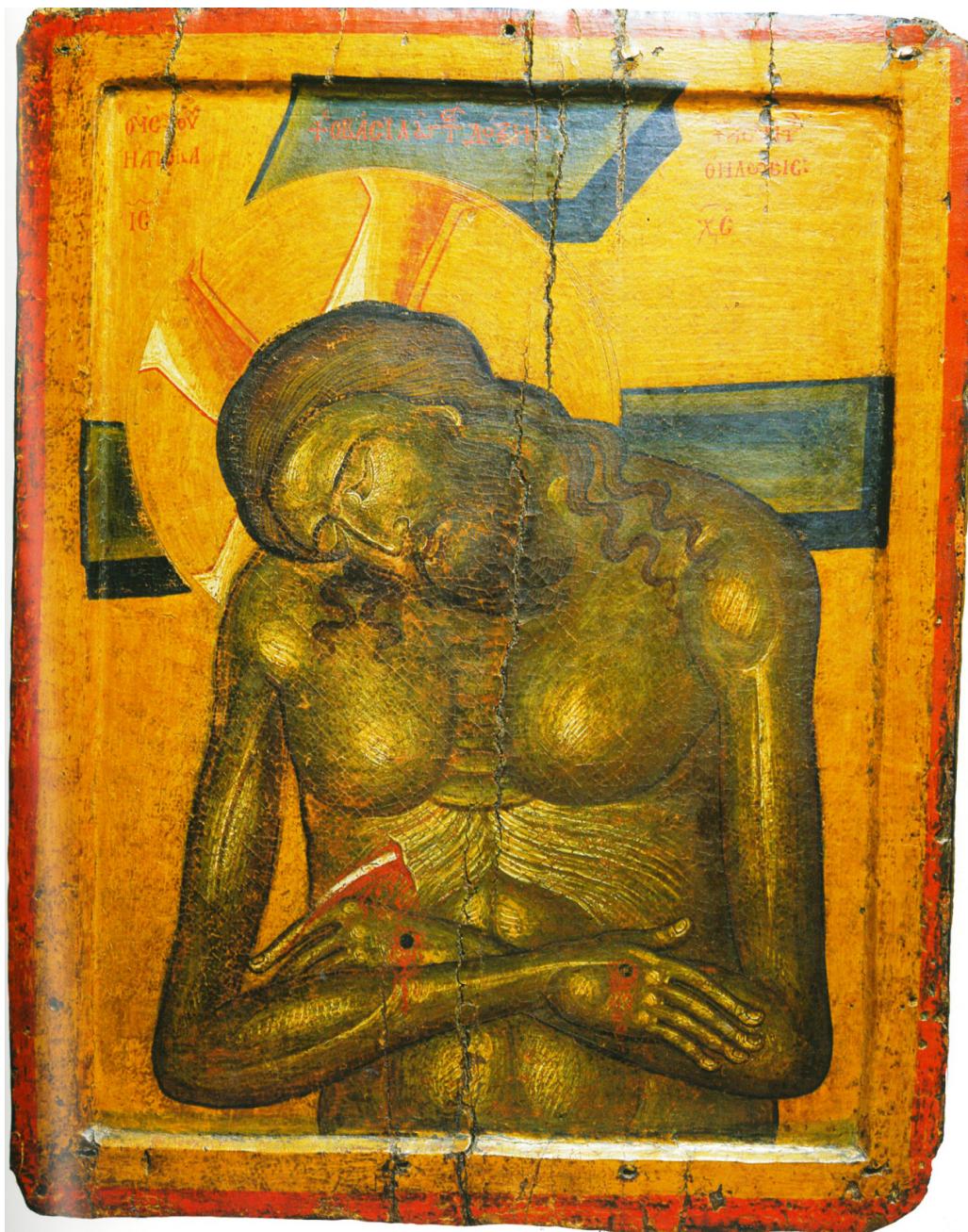
**Figura 9 Anonimo, *Cristo in Pietà*, XV secolo, Museo Bizantino, Kastoria.**



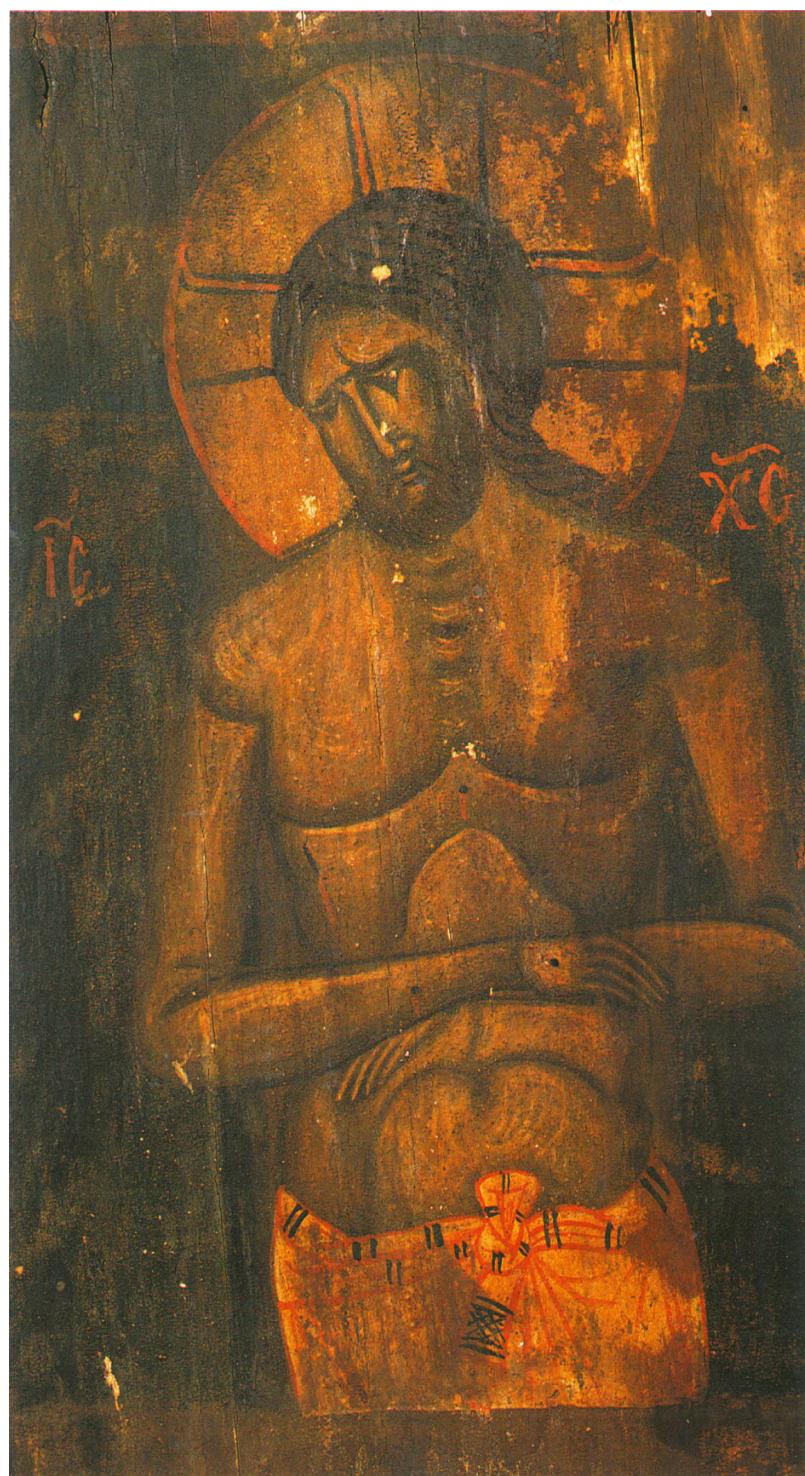
**Figura 10 Pittore greco-veneziano (?), *Cristo morto con la Vergine dolente*, metà del XIV secolo, Museo Horne, Firenze.**



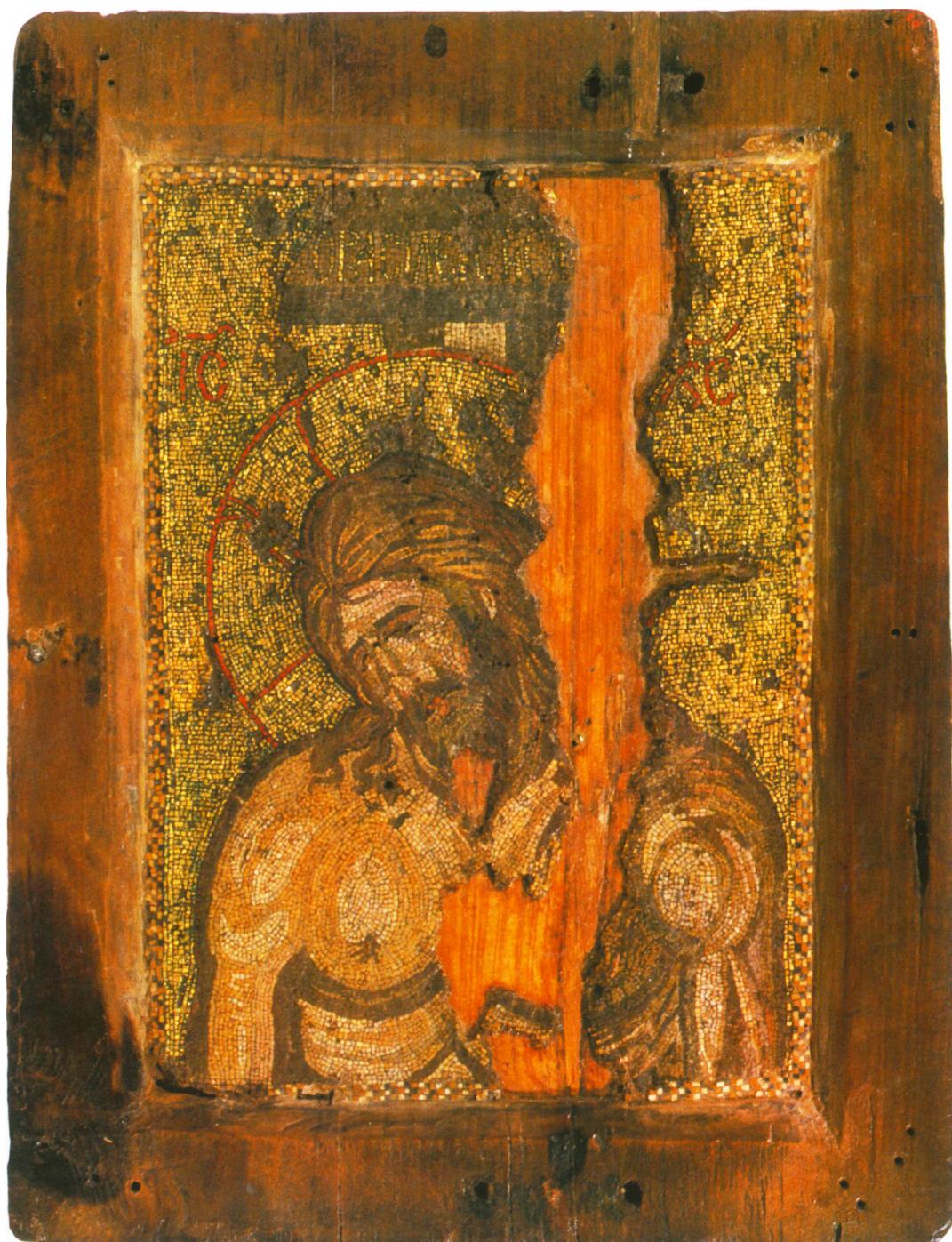
**Figura 12 Giusto di Menabuoi, *Uomo dei dolori*, 1375-1378, Battistero di Padova.**



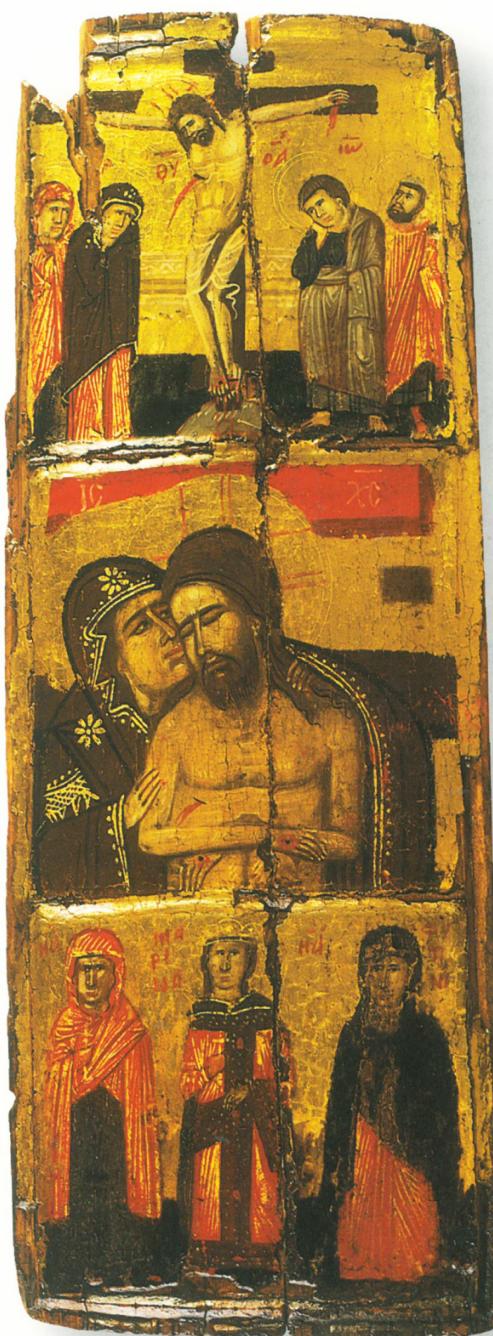
**Figura 13 Pittore macedone, *Akra Tapeinosis*, c. 1400, collezione privata, Atene.**



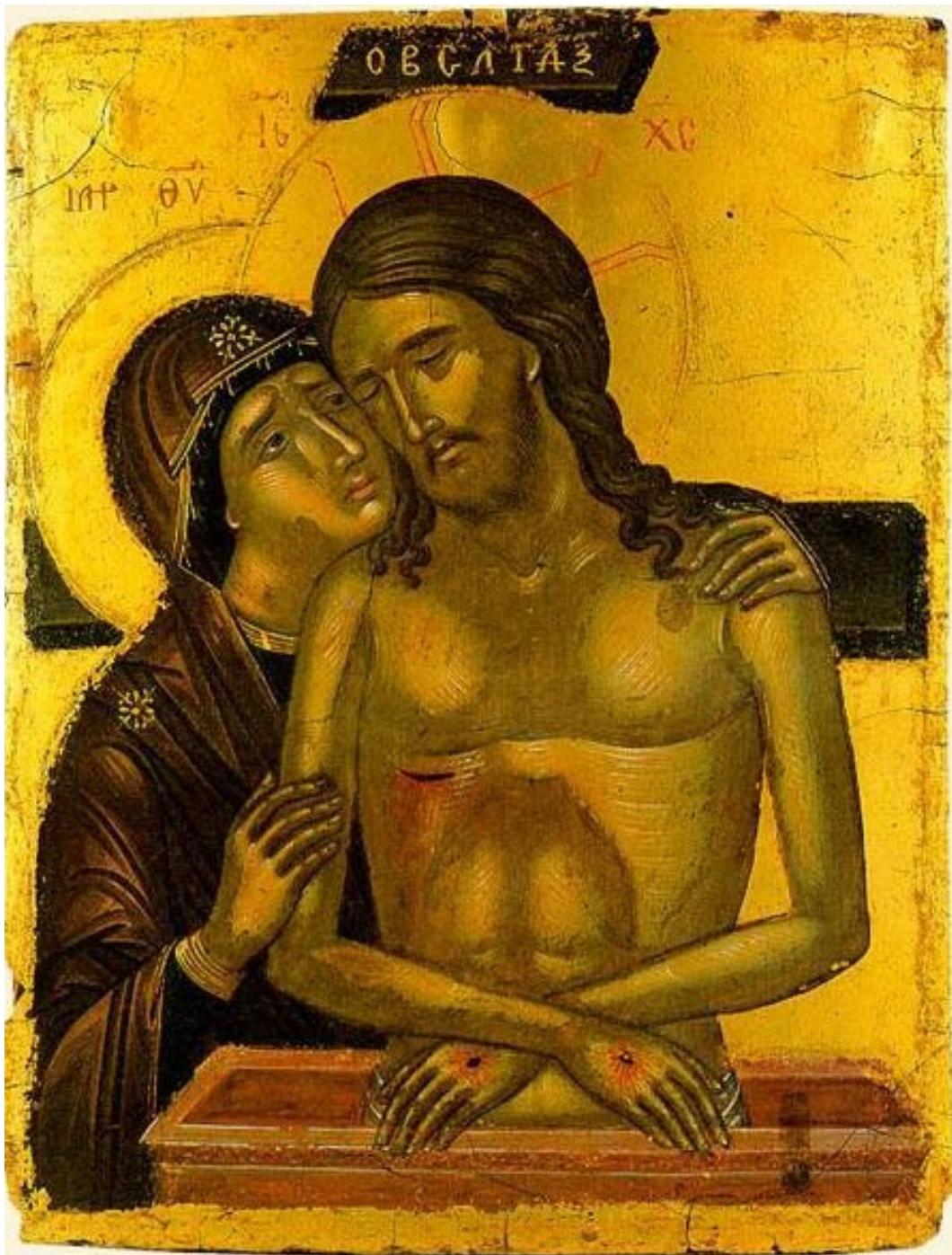
**Figura 14 Anonimo, *Cristo in Pietà*, prima metà del XV secolo, Chiesa di San Sabba, Veria.**



**Figura 15 Anonimo, Cristo in Pietà, inizi del XIV secolo, Monastero di Tatarna, Grecia.**



**Figura 16 Anonimo, Akra Tapeinosis (part. pannello di destra), seconda metà del XIV secolo, Monastero di San Giovanni Lampadistis, Kalopanaghiotis.**



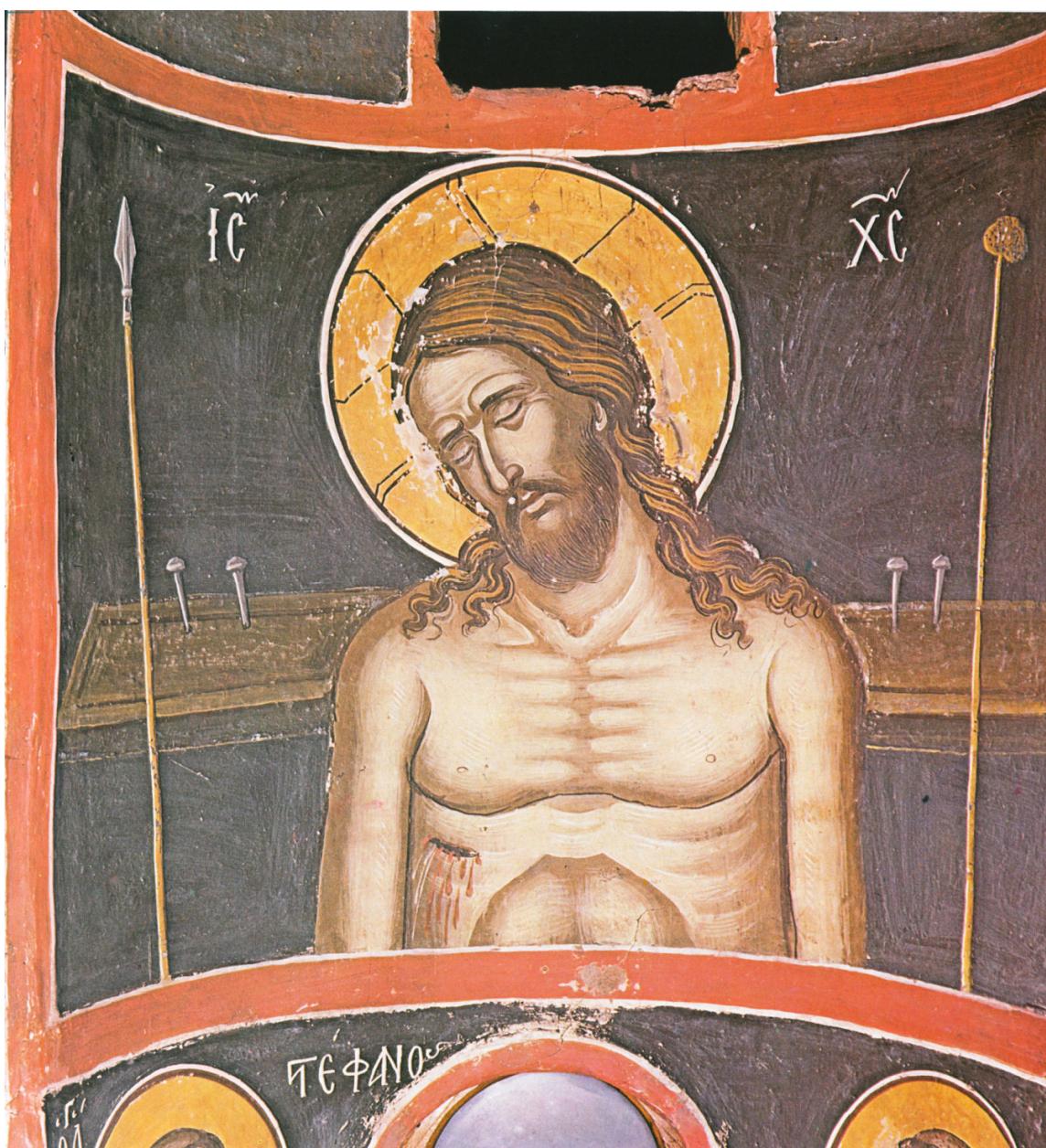
**Figura 17 Anonimo, *Cristo in Pietà*, prima metà del XVI secolo, Monastero di Iviron, Monte Athos.**



**Figura 18 Pittore cretese, *Imago Pietatis* e santi, c. 1600, Museo Cristiano e Bizantino, Atene.**



**Figura 19** Nikolaos Tzafouris, *Uomo dei dolori con Maria e san Giovanni*, fine del XV secolo, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



**Figura 20 Teofane il Cretese, *Imago Pietatis*, prima metà del XVI secolo,  
Monastero di Stavronikita, Monte Athos.**

**S. MORETTI, *Roma bizantina. Opere d'arte dell'impero di Costantinopoli nelle collezioni romane*, Campisano, Roma 2014  
(Milion. Studi e ricerche sull'arte bizantina, 10), pp. 387 + 114 ill.,  
25,00 €, ISBN 978-88-98229-19-2**

*Giorgio Vespignani*

L’opera in questione non può non catturare l’attenzione di chi, come lo scrivente, insegna Storia bizantina in corsi nell’ambito della Conservazione dei Beni Culturali: si tratta, infatti, di uno studio attorno alla genesi ed allo sviluppo in Italia delle raccolte di oggetti rientranti sotto la – seppur generica – definizione di romano-orientali, a partire dall’epoca immediatamente successiva alla caduta di Costantinopoli (1453) ed alla definitiva disgregazione territoriale della *Basileia* dei Romani (1461-1465), per giungere fino ai decenni successivi all’unità d’Italia ed al Novecento. Studiare collezioni e collezionismo permette al bizantinista di indagare, pur se da una prospettiva differente, ma tutt’altro che secondaria, sulle vicende degli esuli Romei in Italia nella seconda metà del Quattrocento e nei primi del Cinquecento, sull’interesse (tardivo) che destò in talune *élites* la cultura greca, nella stessa epoca come nel Sei- e nel Settecento, ed infine sulla ricezione della Storia e della cultura romano-orientale nel neo-nato Regno italiano, cioè nell’epoca, a cavallo tra Otto e Novecento, della formazione della nostra cultura contemporanea, quando si ritenne di dover obliterare in gran parte, ad esempio, l’apporto grecanico dell’Italia meridionale ed insulare allo scopo di cementare la base, già fornita dal Regno piemontese, di una cultura considerata più “europea” e “moderna”, dunque, in ultima analisi, civile (si legga in proposito l’*Epilogo* de A. CARILE, *Immagine e realtà del mondo bizantino*, Bologna 2000, pp. 207 ss.). Va detto, dietro precisa scelta, esplicitata, dell’autrice, che dallo studio sono escluse le collezioni vaticane ed i fondi librari: gli uni e gli altri avrebbero dato vita a capitoli a sé stanti e sproporzionati rispetto alla materia trattata.

Parte Prima, *Roma e Bisanzio: erudizione, curiosità, collezionismo tra XV e XIX secolo* (pp. 17-174). La volontà di raccogliere oggetti e testimonianze della civiltà romano-orientale nella seconda metà del secolo XV è dominata da tre figure, essenzialmente, tre cardinali della Chiesa romana: il niceno Bessarione (pp. 18-29), il veneziano Pietro Barbo, dal 1464 alla morte – avvenuta nel 1471 – papa Paolo II (pp. 29-35), ed il mantovano Francesco Gonzaga, stretto collaboratore, a Roma, del Barbo (pp. 35-36). Siamo ancora in clima da *Byzance après Byzance*, meglio, negli anni tra la Dieta di Mantova (1459) e la morte di papa Pio II (1464), che tanto si spese per promuovere la organizzazione della Crociata che avrebbe dovuto strappare ai Turchi

la *Romània* e riconsegnarla alla *Christiana Respublica*, ivi compresa una missione dello stesso Bessarione a Venezia (1463-1464) allo scopo di coinvolgerla maggiormente nella operazione. Costoro furono cioè direttamente implicati nelle vicende degli esuli Romei in Italia e tennero i contatti tra essi, le corti potenti e facoltosi committenti, tanto che non desta meraviglia come riuscirono a raccogliere oggetti d'arte, a cominciare dalle icone («non solo libri», appunto). Le magistrali *Indagini su Piero* del Ginzburg (1981 e 1994) fanno emergere la figura del Bessarione, ad esempio, come il tramite tra la cerchia dei Romei in Italia ed il commerciante e “faccendiere” aretino Bacci, la cui collaborazione diede vita alla committenza del Ciclo detto della *Vera Croce* dipinto da Piero della Francesca in San Francesco di Arezzo (cfr. C. GINZBURG, *Indagini su Piero. Il Battesimo, Il Ciclo di Arezzo, la Flagellazione*, Torino 1981, pp. 35 ss., e la nuova edizione aggiornata dell’opera, con quattro Appendici aggiunte [Torino 1994], pp. 115 ss.). Non vanno dimenticate raccolte quali quelle degli oligarchi fiorentini, a cominciare dai Medici: è stato aggiornato nel 2013, a cura di M. Spallanzani, l’inventario delle icone bizantine originali appartenute a Lorenzo di Piero (in appendice a R. DUTS, *Byzantine Icons in the Medici Collection*, in *Byzantine Art and Renaissance Europe*, edited by A. LYMBEROPOLOU and R. DUTS, Funham 2013, pp. 157-188), colui che acquistò parte della collezione appartenuta al cardinal Gonzaga dopo la sua scomparsa. Nel Cinquecento, il secolo del collezionismo legato alla «riscoperta dell’antichità» e, tra l’altro, ad una delle varie ondate di «egittomania», spicca la figura di Fulvio Orsini (1529-1600; pp. 57-58); nel Seicento, quando gli oggetti propriamente romano-orientali vanno riconosciuti ed estratti tra quelli medievali, sopra tutti i motivi di importanza, perché legati alla storia della Chiesa, spiccano le figure di collezionisti dei Barberini – il cardinale Maffeo Vincenzo, a partire dal 1623 fino alla morte avvenuta nel 1644, papa Urbano VIII, ed i nipoti cardinali Antonio (1607-1671) e Francesco (1597-1679) –, già proprietari, ad esempio, di alcuni celebri avori, a cominciare da quello rappresentante un imperatore a cavallo (Giustiniano?), oggi conservato al Louvre, e del trittico oggi conservato presso il Museo di Palazzo Venezia (pp. 62-74), dei Giustiniani (pp. 75-76), del cavaliere Cassiano dal Pozzo († 1657), proprietario di una collezione di disegni su carta (pp. 76-81); nel Settecento (pp. 99-109), il secolo delle grandi collezioni di edizioni delle fonti medievali, le figure del marchese Alessandro Gregorio Capponi (1683-1746), nominato da papa Clemente XII (1730-1740) conservatore del Museo Capitolino, e di orientalisti quali Giuseppe Simone Assemanni (1687-1768), Agostino Mariotti (1724-1806), Francesco Saverio de Zelada (1717-1801) e Stefano Borgia (1731-1804); nell’Ottocento, che nella seconda metà vide la fine del dominio temporale dei papi e la nascita del Regno d’Italia con Roma capitale, si assiste alla proliferazione di studiosi, collezionisti, antiquari (pp. 124-134): spiccano le collezioni dei russi, coloro che si consideravano gli eredi diretti della tradizione romano-orientale (pp. 134-152), sopra tutti Grigorij

Sergeevič Stroganoff († 1910) e Aleksandr Ivanovič Nelidov, ambasciatore a Roma a partire dal 1897, già a Istanbul, dove collaborò con lo storico Th. I. Uspenskij.

Nella Parte Seconda, *La riscoperta di Bisanzio nella cultura europea del secondo Ottocento*, si indagano il contesto internazionale e la situazione italiana (pp. 175-190).

La Parte Terza, *Itinerario museografico romano: le opere bizantine*, consiste nel vero e proprio Catalogo dei pezzi bizantini appartenenti alla collezioni delle istituzioni museali romane (pp. 191-261). Si tratta di 22 schede divise per Musei Archeologici (Musei Capitolini, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Museo Nazionale dell'Alto Medioevo, Museo Nazionale Romano) e Musei d'Arte Medievale e Moderna (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica – Palazzo Barberini, Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Museo di Roma – Palazzo Braschi).

Come apparato, una sezione di *Documenti* (pp. 265-275), tra i quali l'Inventario dei pezzi posseduti da Pietro Barbo (manoscritto cartaceo, Archivio di Stato di Roma, Camerale I, Appendice n. 24, databile nel 1457, 1460 ecc.), quello dei beni del Bessarione ereditati dal Vaticano (da un inventario del 1623) e delle opere entrate nel Museo di Castel Sant'Angelo e successivamente trasferiti a Palazzo di Venezia (anno 1907 e successivi).

Storia della cultura e della storiografia, storia della storia dell'arte e della museografia, sviluppo e consolidamento della bizantinistica e della storia dell'arte bizantina (quando un oggetto è da considerarsi proprio dell'arte paleocristiana, tardoantica, medievale o bizantina?), storie personali di studiosi, collezionisti antiquari e mercanti d'arte, storia delle istituzioni museali: lo studio della Moretti è tutto questo, prezioso contributo da compulsare e consultare per anni a venire e che non poteva non essere arricchito da una vastissima *Bibliografia* (pp. 277-366), vero e proprio contributo dentro il contributo.

**F. FIORI, *Epigrafi greche dell'Italia bizantina (VII-XI secolo)*,  
CLUEB,  
Bologna 2008 (Alma-DL Saggi), pp. 316, 24,00 €, ISBN 978-88-491-  
3120-8  
Stefania Tadiello**

Nel passaggio dalla Tarda Antichità al Medioevo, la produzione epigrafica greca e latina in Italia subì significativi cambiamenti in relazione alla crisi politica, economica e sociale originatisi già nel II-III sec. La situazione di evergetismo dei ceti dirigenti nell'ambito della *renovatio* edilizia del IV sec., la “strumentalizzazione di massa” delle scritture esposte ed il sostanziale mantenimento di tecniche e formulari di matrice pagana subirono importanti cambiamenti a partire dal secolo successivo. Dal VI sec. alcuni fattori relativi a questi manufatti, come il marcato abbassamento di qualità nella loro realizzazione, il drastico calo delle committenze, i mutamenti nello spazio pubblico destinato ad accogliere scritture esposte e l'affermazione definitiva di termini e simboli cristiani appaiono ormai consolidati. Nel suo libro, Francesca Fiori riflette sul valore politico del linguaggio usato nelle epigrafi commissionate dall’élite bizantina, detentrice d’incarichi amministrativi e militari in alcune aree della penisola italica e nelle isole tra il VII e l’XI secolo.

Formule, lessico, simbologia e lingua della corte imperiale sono ancora riconducibili a modelli in continuità col passato; tuttavia, l’originalità degli oggetti epigrafici è rivelata da particolari strettamente legati all’identità dei committenti. Ciascuna epigrafe rappresenta quindi un esempio emblematico e poliedrico delle diverse fasi di governo bizantino in Italia.

Nell’introduzione sono riassunti gli elementi fondamentali dell’iscrizione epigrafica come fonte storica: sono descritte caratteristiche e tipologie, e si tratteggiano le tappe fondamentali dell’evoluzione dell’epigrafia greca e latina dall’antichità all’epoca dell’imperatore Giustino I.

La prima parte è dedicata all’esposizione dei criteri di analisi epigrafica e all’aiuto fornito dalle tecnologie digitali per lo studio della paleografia.

Seguono poi alcune tavole, dove sono riportati i criteri di edizione del testo e l’elenco dei segni diacritici. Accanto ai normali parametri dell’analisi del supporto (materiale, forma, misure, luogo di rinvenimento e di esposizione, stato di conservazione e datazione), della scrittura (allineamento ed inclinazione dell’asse, andamento in sequenza di gruppi di lettere, dimensioni, calcolo del modulo o rapporto base/altezza, impaginazione, tecnica di esecuzione, indagine paleografica, *ductus*, osservazioni sulla committenza e sull’ambito di produzione) e del testo

(genere, trascrizione, interpretazione, traduzione, apparato critico e note d’ideologia politica) compare l’elaborazione grafica digitale applicata allo studio delle epigrafi. Questo programma si rivela un valido strumento per il calcolo delle proporzioni delle lettere in uno studio comparativo di diversi oggetti epigrafici, contribuendo notevolmente a rendere più precisi anche i confronti tra i testi in alfabeto greco e quelli in latino.

La seconda parte è dedicata all’applicazione del metodo e degli strumenti ad alcune testimonianze epigrafiche scelte, commissionate da membri dei ceti dirigenti romano-orientali dell’esarcato e del catepanato d’Italia durante il periodo preso in esame.

In generale, l’analisi dei manufatti è estremamente accurata e precisa, ricca di riferimenti alle edizioni precedenti e al commento storico (si veda, ad esempio, la ricostruzione dell’identità armena dell’esarca Isacio e di suo nipote nelle celebri iscrizioni ravennati). Appare dunque chiaro l’intreccio fra culture orientali, contenuti politici delle scritture e dislocazione territoriale, che rimanda al sistema amministrativo nei territori italici dominati dai Bizantini. Non sono pochi i legami dell’*élite* bizantina occidentale con gli imperatori stessi, spesso imparentati o provenienti da famiglie importanti dell’area caucasica ed armena. Questo elemento, inoltre, getta nuova luce sul rapporto tra le iscrizioni, l’identità nazionale dei committenti ed il tessuto sociale cittadino delle comunità occidentali. Inoltre, è interessante la presenza di materiale di spoglio di provenienza orientale reimpiegato in altra sede: è il caso dell’iscrizione funeraria di Giovanni, coppiere imperiale di origine ibera (georgiana), datata al X secolo e collocata nella chiesa dei SS. Felice e Fortunato a Vicenza.

Le iscrizioni di Basilio *Mesardonites*, catepano di Puglia (1011-1017), e di Teodoro, *hypatos* e duca di Napoli (719-729), mostrano invece le connessioni tra la costruzione e manutenzione degli edifici pubblici e la sfera religiosa. Nel primo caso, Basilio finanzia anche l’edificazione di una chiesa dedicata a san Demetrio, santo militare tra i più venerati d’Oriente. Il catepano di stirpe imperiale ne invoca la protezione offrendogli l’edificio spinto da pura devozione (*pothos*). L’assimilazione della Chiesa ad un faro, con riferimento al santo in particolare, raffigura la gloria e la luce perpetua che guida alla vittoria del potere imperiale. Lo stesso concetto è presente in un epigrafe di *Turris Libisonis*: in questo caso, il linguaggio del mondo pagano ed ellenico si carica di un rinnovato significato politico in chiave cristiana, sullo sfondo della dominazione bizantina della Sardegna nel IX secolo.

Con l’epitaffio di Teodoro di Napoli si apre il tema della gestione dell’assistenza ai poveri e ai malati, con il passaggio dall’*euerghesìa* urbana al “dono caritatevole” verso gli indigenti ed i pellegrini, costituito dalle *diaconie*. Se la chiesa dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo, cui è riferita l’iscrizione, viene ricostruita dalle fondamenta, non accade la stessa cosa con l’annessa diaconia: Teodoro, infatti, ne sovvenziona il

recupero e l'attività, senza ricostruirla *ex novo*. Inoltre non ne assume la gestione, poiché essa è assegnata a membri del clero fin dal VII secolo. Il fatto di sottolineare le qualità morali del committente è dunque obbligatorio nell'epitaffio, ma al tempo stesso appaiono chiari i limiti del suo ruolo, pur essendo le *élites* bizantine ormai sufficientemente ricche ed autorevoli da trattare anche con la Chiesa di Roma.

Infine, l'iscrizione bilingue di Terracina mostra la celebrazione dell'arrivo dell'imperatore Costante II «*vincitore, fortunato e ortodosso*», che sbarcò il 29 giugno 663 in Sicilia durante il suo viaggio verso Roma (nel testo greco), e la commemorazione dei lavori di abbellimento del foro, resi possibili grazie all'evergete Giorgio, presumibilmente il *consul et dux* preposto all'amministrazione di Roma (nel testo latino).

In quasi tutte le pubblicazioni che trattano di epigrafia bizantina e medievale occidentale affiora puntualmente la critica alla mancanza di studi specifici ed approfonditi dedicati esclusivamente a questa disciplina. A volte sono state avanzate soltanto delle proposte; in altri casi, invece, ci si è limitati a rendere noto il percorso degli studi effettuati fino a quel momento.

Eminent studiosi come Cyril Mango e Paul Lemerle sostengono che l'epigrafia bizantina non esista come disciplina a sé stante e che non si avvera il bisogno di una branca di studi particolare per le iscrizioni di ambito bizantino.

Complice il tardivo sviluppo d'interesse per l'impero romano d'Oriente, l'adozione di criteri di analisi ed edizione sviluppati in seno all'epigrafia antica e medievale si è rivelata una scelta obbligata. D'altra parte, lo stesso impero bizantino è estremamente variegato, pur vantando un patrimonio religioso, artistico, giuridico e politico condiviso, mai del tutto tramontato anche dopo la caduta di Costantinopoli nel 1453.

Il lavoro di Francesca Fiori è in linea con le scelte metodologiche accolte a partire dagli anni '60-'70 nel panorama degli studi epigrafici, ovvero l'abbandono definitivo dell'idea di *corpora* d'iscrizioni su modello dell'epigrafia greca e romana a favore di un più realistico approccio ai manufatti per singole aree e località. Al tempo stesso, però, abbraccia le direttive di ricerca più recenti, che da un lato valorizzano sempre più l'approccio antropologico e sociologico alle fonti e ai fenomeni storici, dall'altro incoraggiano l'utilizzo di software e tecnologie digitali per lo studio dei materiali (non solo epigrafici).

Il florilegio d'iscrizioni qui presente è adatto a fornire un quadro sintetico e funzionale agli obiettivi della ricerca. L'analisi storico-politica è effettuata senza tralasciare un attento lavoro di edizione ed analisi del testo. La limitazione all'area italica non preclude tuttavia una visione storica più generale: anche se lontano, il governo di Costantinopoli appare attivo e vigile sulle vicende peninsulari ed insulari, nonostante il progressivo distacco dei suoi rappresentanti (soprattutto nei secoli IX e

X: si vedano i casi di Ravenna, Napoli e la Sardegna) e la ridefinizione dei principi identificativi della funzione sociale di ciascuno di loro.

È molto interessante osservare il valore politico della sovrapposizione tra l'identità “particolare” di alcuni committenti, spesso di origine caucasica ed armena, ed il patrimonio culturale ufficiale romeo-bizantino. Peraltro, questo fattore appare emblematico durante tutta la storia dell'impero d'Oriente e ha rappresentato una grande opportunità per dare vita a studi impernati al centro di una ricchissima rete di riferimenti multidisciplinari. Dunque, *Epigrafi greche dell'Italia bizantina* non è un recupero antiquario né soltanto una raccolta di dati validi per la produzione epigrafica in un territorio specifico: è invece un esempio di approccio critico a fonti che, agli occhi degli studiosi occidentali, non sono mai state classificabili in modo univoco.