

CERÆ

An Australasian Journal of  
Medieval and Early Modern Studies



Volume 8  
2021



CERÆ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies

ISSN: 2204-146X

<https://ceraejournal.com/>

General Editor: Gwendolyne Knight

Deputy Editor: Matthew Cleary

Book Reviews Editor: Patrick Huang



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Any images contained within this article that are reproduced with permission are specifically excluded from the Creative Commons License. They may not be reproduced under any circumstances without the express written permission of the copyright holder.

# Table of Contents

Editor's Foreword.....	1
------------------------	---

## ARTICLES

Chrysovalantis Kyriacou The Empire Strikes Back: Multi-Faith Cyprus and Byzantine Orthodox Culture in Seventeenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean.....	3
Albrecht Classen The Topic of Persia in Medieval Literary Imagination, with a Focus on Middle High German Literature.....	35

## VARIA

Raissa R. Bombini A Brief Account of the Emerald and its Magico-Medical and Symbolic-Religious Qualities against the Black Death .....	66
Luiz Felipe Anchieta Guerra A Presentation of Grupo de Estudos em História Medieval .....	73

## BOOK REVIEWS

Stefka G. Eriksen, Karen Langsholt Holmqvist, and Bjørn Bandlien, eds., <i>Approaches to the Medieval Self: Representations and Conceptualisations of the Self in the Textual and Material Culture of Western Scandinavia, c. 800</i> (Minjie Su).....	76
Yaniv Fox and Erica Buchberger, eds., <i>Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediterranean Christianities, 400</i> (Meredith Cutrer) .....	81
Sinah Theres Kloß, ed., <i>Tattoo Histories: Transcultural Perspectives on the Narratives, Practices, and Representations of Tattooing</i> (Erica Steiner) .....	86
Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood, eds., <i>Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages (Veronica De Duonni)</i> .....	92
Emily Dolmans, <i>Writing Regional Identities in Medieval England: From the Gesta Herewardi to Richard Coer de Lyon</i> (Victoria Shirley) .....	96
Oisín Plumb, <i>Picts and Britons in the Early Medieval Irish Church: Travels West Over the Storm-Swelled Sea</i> (Erica Steiner).....	100



# Editor's Foreword



Belated but at last, I am excited to present Volume 8 of *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*! In this non-themed issue, our two articles consider different aspects of cross-cultural appropriation, awareness, and influence. In our first article, Chrysovalantis Kyriacou examines the ways in which the appropriation and re-interpretation of Byzantine culture in seventeenth-century Cyprus became a tool for inter-faith contacts and communications. In our second article, Albrecht Classen explores representations of Persia in Middle High German literature. Classen argues that, although most of the references are largely fictitious, they represent an interest and openness towards non-European cultures in the high and late Middle Ages. He concludes by considering the place of these representations in relation to the concept of a 'Global Middle Ages'.

Our *Varia* section continues to show just how varied it can be. Whereas last issue we had to the pleasure to welcome our first creative piece, in Volume 8 we are delighted to present two pieces of very different character. In her contribution, Raissa R. Bombini presents a re-evaluation of the use of gemstones within medieval medical recipes, using the emerald as a case study. In our second *Varia* piece, Luiz Guerra, a contributor to one of *Ceræ's* sessions at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds (UK), gives a presentation of the Brazilian research network and study group GEHM. *Ceræ* accepts non-themed articles (peer reviewed) and *Varia* pieces (not peer reviewed) throughout the year – if you are interested in contributing, we would love to hear from you!

In addition to our new issue, *Ceræ* is excited to have participated in the Australia and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies (ANZAMEMS) in June with three sessions, speaking to a variety of ways in which magic and witchcraft fit in to the conference's themes of embodiment and reception. In July, we are at the International Medieval Congress with two sessions that engage with the conference theme of borders by challenging conventional borders of time and space in medieval research.

I would, as ever, like to express my sincere gratitude towards the committee and editorial team of *Ceræ* for their hard work and dedication this past year. This is my final issue as Editor, and I am excited to leave the journal in the very capable hands of Matt Firth as incoming Editor, and Jenny Barnett and Zoe Enstone as Deputy Editors. They already have preparations for Volume 9 off to a rolling start, and I can't wait to see the future volumes they produce. My thanks as well to the committee of *Ceræ*, who keep the organization running, and keep us all on track as we continue in this new stage. Matthew Cleary has been an enormous help, and I am glad that he is remaining on the committee following the conclusion of his own tenure as Deputy Editor. Patrick Huang has done an excellent job in his first year as sole Book Reviews Editor. And of course, we are all very grateful to our contributors, peer reviewers, and publishers, without whom this journal would be impossible to produce. We are proud to support and promote early career researchers through our journal, organization, and conference presence, and to foster connections and networks that transcend regional and period borders. Being a part of the *Ceræ* team has been a rich and rewarding experience for me, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with all of the committee and editorial team members over the last two years.

Gwendolyne Knight

Stockholm University and Rikkyo University

# The Empire Strikes Back: Multi-Faith Cyprus and Byzantine Orthodox Culture in Seventeenth-Century Eastern Mediterranean



Chrysovalantis Kyriacou  
Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation

*Abstract: The aim of this paper is to explore ways in which Byzantine symbols, ideas, and practices constituted a transcultural 'language' of communication for groups of Christians in Ottoman-ruled Cyprus in the seventeenth century. Aspects of this koine are sometimes visible in the contacts between Cypriot Christians and Western Europeans (mainly Catholics, but also Lutherans) outside Cyprus, and perhaps also in the interaction between Cypriot Christians and Muslims. The Byzantine koine indicates a process of interaction between Greek and non-Greek cultural agents, through which new and mutually understandable forms of Byzantine culture emerged. By concentrating on the micro-region of seventeenth-century Cyprus and its plurality of 'micro-Christendoms' (per Peter Brown) this paper wishes to shed light on little-known aspects of the appropriation of Byzantine culture (mainly church culture) and ideology in the post-Byzantine Eastern Mediterranean and early modern Europe in general, helping us to understand more comprehensively phenomena of identity formation, conflict, and co-existence in multi-faith societies.*

In 1629–30, nearly sixty years after the Ottomans had conquered Cyprus from the Venetians (1570–71),<sup>1</sup> the *Propaganda Fide* estimated the island's population as follows:

---

<sup>1</sup> On the War of Cyprus, see Gilles Grivaud, 'Η κατάκτηση της Κύπρου από τους Οθωμανούς', in *Ιστορία της Κύπρου*, VI, ed. Theodoros Papadopoulos (Nicosia: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, 2011), 1–82.

in a total of 56,350 people, 40,000 (70.98%) were *Greci* (followers of the Byzantine Orthodox rite and doctrines); 12,500 (22.18%) were Turks; 2,000 (3.55%) were Armenians; 1,500 (2.66%) were Maronites; 200 (0.35%) were Jews; 100 (0.18%) were Nestorians (i.e., Christians of the Church of the East); 50 (0.09%) were Roman Catholics from Western Europe (French, Venetians, and Observant Franciscans); and 8 (0.01%) were Flemish Lutherans.<sup>2</sup> The picture emerging from these estimations reflects the multi-faith dynamics of the insular society of Cyprus, following a long period of Byzantine (c. 330–1191), Frankish Crusader (1191–1489), and Venetian (1489–1571) rule, before the coming of the Ottomans (1571–1878).<sup>3</sup> It also stresses the numerical predominance (70.98%) of the followers of the Byzantine Orthodox liturgical and doctrinal tradition, who generally identified themselves as *Romaioi* ('Romans'), and were viewed by their pro-Catholic compatriots and Western Europeans as *Greci/Graikoi* ('Greeks').<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα εκ των Αρχείων του Βατικανού (1625–1667)*, ed. Zacharias N. Tsirpanlis (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1973), pp. 208–10. The key study on Cypriot historical demographic trends is Theodoros Papadopoulos, *Social and Historical Data on Population, 1570–1881* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1965).

<sup>3</sup> Selected bibliography (in English): (a) Byzantines: David M. Metcalf, *Byzantine Cyprus, 491–1191* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2009); (b) Franks: Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus, 1195–1312* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1997); Angel Nicolaou-Konnari and Christopher D. Schabel (eds.), *Cyprus: Society and Culture, 1191–1374* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2005); Chrysovalantis Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus under the Latins, 1191–1571: Society, Spirituality, and Identities* (New York–London: Lexington Books, 2018); (c) Venetians: Benjamin Arbel, *Cyprus, the Franks, and Venice, 13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Aldershot–Burlington, Ashgate, 2000); Arbel, *Studies on Venetian Cyprus* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2017); Kyriacou, *Christian Diversity in Late Venetian Cyprus. A Study and English Translation of Codex B-030 from the Collections of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation* (Lefkosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2020); (d) Ottomans: Ronald C. Jennings, *Christians and Muslims in Ottoman Cyprus and the Mediterranean World, 1571–1640* (New York–London: New York University Press, 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Tassos A. Kaplanis, 'Antique Names and Self-Identification: Hellenes, Graikoi, and Romaioi from Late Byzantium to the Greek Nation-State', in *Re-imagining the Past. Antiquity and Modern Greek Culture*, ed. Dimitris Tziouvas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 81–96; Kaplanis, 'Νεόφυτος Ροδινός – Ιωακείμ Κύπριος: Λογοτεχνικές αποτυπώσεις της Κύπρου και ταυτότητες στο 17<sup>ο</sup> αι.', *Επετηρίδα Κέντρον Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, 37 (2015), 283–310. Non-Romaioi Orthodox Christians: *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 22–23 (Frankish Cypriots convert to Orthodoxy); Christopher D. Schabel, 'Religion', in *Cyprus: Society and Culture*, ed. Nicolaou-Konnari and Schabel, pp. 164 (Georgians), pp. 168–70 (Syrian Melkites). Byzantine rite: Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992).

On the eve of the Ottoman invasion of 1570, the numerically weaker Latin Church of Cyprus struggled, through its leader, Archbishop Filippo Mocenigo of Nicosia (1560–86), to reaffirm its hegemony (going back to the thirteenth century but fading away due to episcopal absenteeism) over all other Christian communities. The underlying tension, provoked by Mocenigo's attempt to implement the Tridentine decrees in Cyprus in the 1560s, culminated in an open conflict (1567) with Neophytos Logaras, the Orthodox bishop of Solea (1543–68).<sup>5</sup> During the War of Cyprus (1570–71), it seems that the Venetians, who had protected their Orthodox subjects during the Mocenigo-Logaras episode, were largely supported by the Orthodox population.<sup>6</sup> Experiencing the sudden and violent end of Christian domination in Cyprus was a traumatic event, which must have been the main reason why Cypriot Christian church leaders (and, most of all, the Orthodox archbishops and bishops) sought to preserve and strengthen their links to Western Europe, even inviting Roman Catholic Venice, Spain, Savoy, and Tuscany to liberate their island.<sup>7</sup> As a result of this turn to the West, after 1629 and for nearly 35 years, the Holy See pursued a unionist policy through the re-establishment of the Latin/Roman Catholic bishopric of Paphos and the activities of Roman Catholic missionaries.<sup>8</sup> By that time, the Ottomans had partly restored the rights and privileges of the Orthodox Church, while the Roman Catholics were

---

<sup>5</sup> Evangelia Skoufari, 'L' Arcivescovo Filippo Mocenigo e l' applicazione della riforma tridentina a Cipro', in *Cyprus and the Renaissance (1450–1650)*, ed. Benjamin Arbel, Evelien Chayes and Harald Hendrix (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 205–30; Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus*, pp. 194–99.

<sup>6</sup> Grivaud, 'Η κατάκτηση', pp. 162–66.

<sup>7</sup> This subject is extensively discussed in Chrysovalantis Kyriacou, 'Πόλεμος της Κύπρου (1570–73) και χριστιανική ταυτότητα: Μια νέα αφετηρία ιδεολογικών μετασχηματισμών', in *Χριστιανική ετερότητα και συνύπαρξη πριν και μετά την Οθωμανική κατάκτηση: Η Κύπρος στο μεταίχμιο δύο κόσμων (16<sup>ος</sup>–17<sup>ος</sup> αι.)*, ed. Kyriacou (Lefkosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2021), pp. 36–67. On anti-Turkish plots and revolts, see Ioannis Hassiotis, 'Οι αντιτουρκικές κινήσεις στην Κύπρο και η στάση των Ευρωπαϊκών Δυνάμεων (από την οθωμανική κατάκτηση ως τις αρχές του 19<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα)', in *Κύπρος: Αγώνες Ελευθερίας στην Ελληνική Ιστορία*, ed. Andreas Voskos (Athens: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2010), 147–87.

<sup>8</sup> The sources have been collected and published, with commentary, in *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis.

deprived of their previous domination in Cypriot society and experienced the restriction of their religious liberties.<sup>9</sup>

## 1. BYZANTINE KOINEISATION

The aim of this paper is to explore ways in which Byzantine symbols, ideas, and practices constituted a ‘Byzantine koine’, namely a transcultural ‘language’ of communication for groups of Christians in seventeenth-century Cyprus. Aspects of this koine are sometimes visible in the contacts between Cypriot Christians and Western Europeans (mainly Catholics, but also Lutherans) outside Cyprus. The notion of ‘koinisation’ has been borrowed from socio-linguistic studies, describing the ‘contact-induced process through which new varieties of a language are brought about as a result of contact between speakers of understandable varieties’.<sup>10</sup> The Byzantine koine indicates a process of interaction between *Romaioi* and non-*Romaioi* cultural agents, through which new and mutually understandable forms of Byzantine culture emerged. By ‘new forms of Byzantine culture’, we mean Byzantine symbols, ideas and practices, which were employed, appropriated and re-defined outside their original cultural matrix, namely the political boundaries of the Byzantine Empire, but continued being associated with Byzantium.<sup>11</sup> We need to clarify that, although other forms of cultural koine were present on the island during the medieval and early

---

<sup>9</sup> On the Roman Catholics of Cyprus during the Ottoman period, see briefly Nicholas Coureas, ‘Stunted Growth: The Latin Clergy of Cyprus during the Ottoman Period’, in *The Minorities of Cyprus: Development Patterns and Identities of the Internal-Exclusion*, ed. Andrekos Varnava, Nicholas Coureas and Marina Elia (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 92–110. On the Orthodox: Michalis N. Michael, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου κατά την οθωμανική περίοδο (1571–1878). Η σταδιακή συγκρότησή της σε θεσμό πολιτικής εξουσίας* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Vit Bubenik, ‘North-West Doric Koina and the Issue of ‘Koinization’: Sociolinguistic Concerns’, in *Studies in Ancient Greek Dialects: From Central Greece to the Black Sea*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis, Emilio Crespo and Panagiotis Filos (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), p. 149.

<sup>11</sup> On the study of Byzantine concepts of innovation, see Apostolos Spanos, ‘“To Every Innovation, Anathema” (?). Some Preliminary Thoughts on the Study of Byzantine Innovation’, in *Mysterion, strategike og kainotomia*, ed. Harald Knudsen, Joyce Falkenberg, Kjell Grønhaug and Åge Garnes (Oslo: Novus, 2010), 51–59; Spanos, ‘Was innovation unwanted in Byzantium?’, in *Byzantium Wanted: The Desire for a Lost Empire*, ed. Ingela Nilsson and Paul Stephenson (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 2014), 43–56.

modern periods, the Byzantine cultural koine was one of the most visible, and, admittedly, the most enduring.<sup>12</sup>

To give an example of Byzantine koineisation in Cyprus, it is useful to turn to Michele Bacci's examination of the use of Late Byzantine religious painting in the cosmopolitan society of fourteenth-century Famagusta. Bacci notes 'the trans-confessional appreciation of Byzantine religious painting and [...] each community's interest in having their churches embellished in the best Greek manner'.<sup>13</sup> Another example concerns the extensive presentation and re-interpretation of Byzantine theological and liturgical texts by a Cypriot Franciscan, writing after the Council of Florence (1439), in support of the doctrinal correctness of Purgatory and the Beatific Vision, against an Orthodox Cypriot audience rejecting these doctrines.<sup>14</sup> A third example would be that of the two-headed eagle, the Palaiologan heraldic symbol, employed by the Cypriot branch of the Palaiologoi, serving Venice as mercenaries (*stradioti*) in the sixteenth century. The two-headed eagle was an emblem of social power, used not only by the Palaiologoi, but also by the noble (and largely Latinised) Podocataro family, who were related to them.<sup>15</sup> In all three examples presented here,

---

<sup>12</sup> Examples of the Byzantine cultural koine in the medieval period are discussed in Chrysovalantis Kyriacou, 'The Late Byzantine Mediterranean – an oxymoron?', in *Unity in Diversity: Aspects of Centrality and Regionalism in the Byzantine World (Texts, Visual Culture, Ideology, Identity)*, ed. Vlada Stanković (New York–London: Lexington Books, forthcoming). On other forms of cultural koine (especially in painting and architecture), see, among many studies, the following: Annemarie Weyl Carr, 'Iconography and Identity: Syrian Elements in the Art of Crusader Cyprus', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 89 (2009), 127–51; Tassos Papacostas, 'Byzantine Rite in a Gothic Setting: Aspects of Cultural Appropriation in Late Medieval Cyprus', *Series Byzantina*, 8 (2010), 117–32; Papacostas, 'Echoes of the Renaissance in the eastern confines of the *stato da mar*: architectural evidence from Venetian Cyprus', *Acta Byzantina Fennica*, 3.3 (2010), 136–72; Denys Pringle, 'Gothic architecture in the Holy Land and Cyprus: from Acre to Famagusta', *Levant*, 47.3 (2015), 293–315; Nasso Chrysochou, 'Frankish-Venetian Cyprus: effects of the Renaissance on the ecclesiastical architecture of the island', *Journal of Sustainable Architecture and Civil Engineering*, 3.16 (2016), 97–107.

<sup>13</sup> Michele Bacci, 'Sharing the authority of Byzantine religious painting: Palaeologan art in Famagusta', in *Palaeologan reflections in the art of Cyprus (1261–1489)*, ed. Ioannis A. Eliades (Lefkosia: Archbishop Makarios III Foundation–Deputy Ministry of Tourism, 2019), p. 86.

<sup>14</sup> Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus*, pp. 157–59, 247–49.

<sup>15</sup> Andreas Stylianou and Judith Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus. Treasures of the Byzantine Art* (London: A. G. Leventis Foundation, 1985), pp. 438–39; Nasa Patapiou, 'Η κάθοδος των ελληνοαλβανών *stradioti* στην Κύπρο (ΙΣΤ' αι.)', *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, 24 (1998), pp. 180–81, 193–95, 204, 206, 208; Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus*, pp. xxii–iii (n.2: Palaiologoi and

cultural forms of expression associated with Byzantium (Late Byzantine art, Byzantine Orthodox theology, and a dynastic symbol of power) became the *medium* of transcultural communication on an island that had not been politically Byzantine since the twelfth century.

## 2. DEFINING 'BYZANTIUM'

As the late antique and medieval continuation of the Roman Empire in the East, Byzantium existed for over a millennium. The appropriation of Byzantine symbols, ideas, and practices in the Cypriot Byzantine koine of the seventeenth century did not encompass this long period as a whole; it was selective, focusing instead on specific elements mostly deriving from, or attributed to, Late Antiquity (c. 300–700). On the contrary, aspects of the relatively recent history of the Byzantine Empire, accepted by Orthodox believers as integral elements of their church tradition, were often attacked and rejected by Roman Catholics. This was the case, for example, with St Gregory Palamas (d. 1359), defender of hesychast (from *hesychia*, 'inner quietude') asceticism and the ability of purified human beings to experience, before death, visions of God.<sup>16</sup> A report on the religious errors, ceremonies, and customs of Cypriot Christian communities, contained in MS Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030 and composed in the 1560s by an anonymous proponent of the Counter-Reformation, noted that the *Greci* venerate St Gregory Palamas; the report also mentioned, incorrectly, that Palamas had been condemned by the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439.<sup>17</sup> In 1667, Salvatore da Giove, the leader of the Roman Catholic mission in

---

Podocatharoi). On the Podocataro, see also Rudt W. H. de Collenberg, 'Les premiers Podocataro. Recherches basées sur le testament de Hugues (1452)', *Θησαυρίσματα*, 23 (1993), 130–82, and Nasa Patapiou, 'Ιωάννης Ποδοκάθαρος: ένας άγνωστος λόγιος του 16<sup>ου</sup> αιώνα', *Στασίνοσ*, 13 (2011–12), 223–38.

<sup>16</sup> The classic study on Palamas is John Meyendorff, *St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, trans. by Adele Fiske (Crestwood, New York: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974). See also the recent treatment by Norman Russell, *Gregory Palamas and the Making of Palamism in the Modern Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>17</sup> *Κυπροβενετικά. Στοιχεία θρησκευτικής ανθρωπογεωγραφίας της βενετοκρατούμενης Κύπρου από τον κώδικα Β-030 του Πολιτιστικού Ιδρύματος Τράπεζας Κύπρου. Εισαγωγή, διπλωματική έκδοση*,

Cyprus, pointed out that Nikephoros, the pro-Catholic Orthodox archbishop (1640/41–74), tolerated Palamas' veneration by his flock.<sup>18</sup>

Returning now to the common ground between Orthodox Cypriots and Roman Catholics, we observe that the shared legacies of 'Ancient Christianity' (per Peter Brown), not yet succeeded by the 'New Christendoms' of c. 750–1000, provided models for the promotion of inter-confessional dialogue, self-definition and the construction of images of power.<sup>19</sup> Does the seventeenth-century emphasis in earlier, pre-schismatic Christian traditions mean that these legacies should not be associated with Byzantium?

Orthodox ecclesiastical sources suggest that a clear awareness of what is 'Byzantine' existed in seventeenth-century Cyprus in both semantic and cultural/chronological terms. The authors of these sources were Orthodox Cypriot ecclesiastics, mostly scholarly monks, whose views and perceptions of Byzantium were probably shared by most Orthodox believers in Cyprus. This is supported by the fact that the daily lives of Ottoman-ruled Orthodox Cypriots were largely regulated by their Orthodox Christian faith and ecclesiastical canon law,<sup>20</sup> as well as by their self-perception as *Romaioi*.

Byzantine Orthodox liturgy offered a ritual and theological context for developing such an awareness, not only in Cyprus but throughout the post-Byzantine world. Robert F. Taft defines the Byzantine rite as 'the liturgical system that developed in the Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople and was gradually adopted, in the Middle Ages, by the other Chalcedonian Orthodox Patriarchates of Alexandria,

---

μετάφραση και σχόλια, ed. Chrysovalantis Kyriacou (Nicosia: Holy Monastery of Kykkos Museum, 2019), pp. 29, 52, 84, 117–18; Kyriacou, *Christian Diversity*, pp. 13, 52.

<sup>18</sup> Tsirpanlis, *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, pp. 189–90.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom. Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 10th edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), parts II and III.

<sup>20</sup> Menelaos Christodoulou, 'Κυπριακά κανονικά διατάξεις', *Επετηρίδα Κέντρου Επιστημονικών Ερευνών*, 12 (1983), 329–490; Theodoros Papadopoulos, 'Κυπριακά Νόμιμα', *Μελέται και Υπομνήματα*, 1 (1984), 1–142; Benedict Englezakis, *Είκοσι μελέται διά την Εκκλησίαν Κύπρου, 4<sup>ος</sup> έως 20<sup>ος</sup> αιών* (Athens: A. G. Leventis Foundation–National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 1996), pp. 335–63.

Antioch, and Jerusalem'.<sup>21</sup> Although Taft's definition should not be taken as implying the existence of complete liturgical uniformity throughout the Orthodox populations of the Eastern Mediterranean, it does suggest unity in faith and liturgical praxis. This unity was rooted in the centuries-old self-understanding of the Byzantines/*Romaioi* as 'the Holy Nation, the New Israel, defined by religious praxis, political and ecclesiastical loyalty, spoken and liturgical language, geographical territory centering around a holy city and not the least — an ethos: the ethos that God would never forsake them'.<sup>22</sup> In this vision, Constantinople was 'the common homeland of the Christian-Romans', or the 'archetypal *patria communis* of the *Rhomaioi*'.<sup>23</sup>

Being Orthodox Cypriot was largely interwoven with the idea of belonging to a broader community of *Romaioi*, with Constantinople as a common spiritual centre.<sup>24</sup> For example, when Orthodox Cypriot bishops were ordained under the Latins, they professed the faith of Constantinople, using contemporary Byzantine synodal statements (perhaps with a covert anti-Latin tone) and standing over an image of the imperial eagle.<sup>25</sup> This pro-Constantinopolitan orientation could also explain the insistence of Orthodox Cypriots in the seventeenth century to venerate St Gregory Palamas, despite the hostility of Roman Catholic missionaries.

---

<sup>21</sup> Taft, *The Byzantine Rite*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> Shay Eshel, *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2018), p. 202. On *Romaic* identity/ies and liturgical 'Byzantinisation', see also Daniel Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), *passim*, esp. at pp. 352–54.

<sup>23</sup> Yannis Stouraitis, 'Reinventing Roman Ethnicity in High and Late Medieval Byzantium', *Medieval Worlds*, 5 (2017), p. 78 (quotation); Evangelos Chrysos, 'Το Βυζάντιο: η Αυτοκρατορία της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως', *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί*, 78–79 (2016–17), 1005–22; Panagiotis Theodoropoulos, 'Did the Byzantines call themselves Byzantines? Elements of Eastern Roman identity in the imperial discourse of the seventh century', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 45.1 (2021), p. 40.

<sup>24</sup> For Late Byzantine notions of the *genos*, see Tonia Kiousopoulou, *Βασιλεύς ή οικονομός. Πολιτική εξουσία και ιδεολογία πριν την άλωση* (Athens: Polis, 2007), pp. 217–25. On Ottoman perceptions of the *Rum* community in relation to the broader Orthodox community, see Paraskevas Konortas, 'From Tâ'ife to Millet: Ottoman terms for the Ottoman Greek Orthodox Community', in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin, 1999), 169–79. On the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the passing from *genos* to nation, see Archimandrite Andreas Nanakis, *Το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο στην Υστερη Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία: από το Γένος και την Εθναρχία στο Έθνος* (Thessalonica: Barbounakis, 2013).

<sup>25</sup> Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus*, pp. 147–49.

Seventeenth-century Orthodox Cypriots did not use the terms 'Byzantine' and 'Byzantium' employed today by scholars, but largely perceived themselves as *Romaioi*, namely as the same people once inhabiting Byzantium or *Romania*.<sup>26</sup> The term *Greci/Graikoi* was also employed, but 'was restricted in certain periods to small groups of people related in one way or another to the West'.<sup>27</sup> Writing in the 1600s, Logizos Skevophylax from Leukara, an Orthodox chronicler, saw the coming of St Helen (mother of St Constantine I, 306–37) in Cyprus as the beginning of a new Christian Roman ('Byzantine') era for the island's history. Describing the supposed colonisation of Cyprus under Helen, Logizos states that 'in those times, *Romaioi* were everywhere [in the East], and for this reason the multitude of Cypriots stayed [in Cyprus] and are *Romaioi*'.<sup>28</sup> Although Logizos' account is essentially a revised translation of Steffano Lusignano's *Chorograffia* (Bologna, 1573), he replaces Lusignan's *Greci* with *Romaioi*, employing the same term that the Byzantines used to define themselves.<sup>29</sup> Logizos also mentions to have consulted earlier *Romaic* sources on St Helen's Cypriot journey, probably referring to the local Byzantine Orthodox hagiographical tradition; the use of the term *Romaic* indicates his perception of continuity in the island's Orthodox church culture.<sup>30</sup>

Ioakeim the Cypriot (*d. a.* 1669), a scholarly clergyman of the seventeenth century, uses *Kyprios* to speak of the local Cypriot identity, and *Romaios* with reference

---

<sup>26</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Romanland. Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2019). On the use of the term 'Byzantine' in seventh-century Byzantium to describe 'Eastern Romaness', even 'a Palestinian monk who prayed in Syriac in Rome' (p. 41), see Theodoropoulos, 'Did the Byzantines', 25–41.

<sup>27</sup> Kaplanis, 'Antique Names', p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> Λογίζου Σκευοφύλακος, *Κρόνικα ἤγουν χρονογραφία τοῦ νησιῦ τῆς Κύπρου*, I, ed. Stylianos K. Perdakis (Nicosia: Holy Monastery of Kykkos Museum, 2004), p. 58: εἰς ἐκεῖνους τοὺς καιροὺς εἰς ὅλους τοὺς τόπους ἦτον Ῥωμαῖοι· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὅλον τὸ πλῆθος τοὺς Κυπραίους ἔμειναν καὶ εἶναι Ῥωμαῖοι. On Logizos, see Christos G. Pantelidis, 'Κυπριακὸν Χειρόγραφον', in *Estienne de Lusignan, Chorograffia*, ed. by Theodoros Papadopoulos, Gilles Grivaud, and Gregorios Ioannides (Bologna: Alessandro Benaccio, 1573; 2nd edn: Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2004), 281–316; Paschalis M. Kitromilides, *Κυπριακὴ Λογιοσύνη, 1571–1878. Προσωπογραφικὴ Θεώρηση* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2002), pp. 188–89.

<sup>29</sup> *Estienne de Lusignan, Chorograffia*, f. 29<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Λογίζου Σκευοφύλακος, *Κρόνικα*, p. 58.

to the broader *Romaic* community, as well as to the Byzantine Empire.<sup>31</sup> Contrary to Logizos and Ioakeim, the pro-Catholic Neophytos Rodinos (*d.* 1659) employs the inclusive term *Kypriotis/Kyprios* for both Orthodox and Latin Cypriots, but describes the vernacular Greek language as *romaika*, ‘language of the *Romaioi*’.<sup>32</sup> The anonymous folk song on the fall of the dragoman Markoullis (1668–74) refers to the *Romioi* of Cyprus, and could be considered as closer to the way most Orthodox Cypriots saw themselves.<sup>33</sup> The same source refers to the Ottoman sultan as *basilias*, the title designated for the Byzantine emperor (*basileus*), which implicitly reflects the rather widespread view of *translatio imperii* from the Byzantines to the Ottomans.<sup>34</sup>

Seventeenth-century *Romaioi/Graikoi/Greci* from Cyprus perceived Byzantium primarily through the lens of their religious culture, defined by the Byzantine Orthodox rite and faith and associated with the spiritual (and once political) centre of Constantinople. They more or less understood that the shift from pre-Christian to Christian Roman/Byzantine rule took place in the fourth century, under Constantine I, the first Christian Roman emperor. This rule ended in 1453, when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople (note that the fifteenth-century *Lament for Constantinople* might have been composed in Cyprus).<sup>35</sup> Lastly, they defined themselves as *Romaioi*, which highlights the continuous existence of this community even without their empire. For seventeenth-century *Romaioi* from Cyprus, ‘Late Antiquity’ (a modern

---

<sup>31</sup> Kaplanis, ‘Νεόφυτος Ροδινός – Ιωακείμ Κύπριος’, pp. 301–10.

<sup>32</sup> Kaplanis, ‘Νεόφυτος Ροδινός – Ιωακείμ Κύπριος’, pp. 283–301. On this identity, see Gilles Grivaud, ‘Éveil de la nation chypriote (XII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)’, *Sources Travaux Historiques*, 43–44 (1995), 105–16; Angel Nicolaou-Konnari, ‘Ethnic names and the construction of group identity in medieval and early modern Cyprus: the case of Κυπριώτης’, *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί*, 64–65 (2000–1), 259–75.

<sup>33</sup> Theodoros Papadopoulos, ‘Το άσμα των διερχομένων’, *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί*, 45 (1981), pp. 99 (l. 461), 114 (l. 773); Antonis Hadjikyriacou, ‘The Ottomanisation of Cyprus: towards a spatial imagination beyond the centre-province binary’, *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 25.2 (2016), 85–86.

<sup>34</sup> Papadopoulos, ‘Το άσμα των διερχομένων’, pp. 106 (l. 618), 107 (l. 629, 632); Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), *passim*, esp. at p. 119.

<sup>35</sup> *Ανακάλημα της Κωνσταντινόπολης*, ed. Emmanuel Kriaras and comm. Giorgos Kechagioglou (Thessalonica: Institute of Modern Greek Studies, 2012).

periodisation term) did not exist as a category; their Christian past was inseparable from their historical past under Byzantium.

### 3. BYZANTINE RELIGIOUS CULTURE AND CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

The spirit of Christian humanism was a strong driving force behind the re-discovery and acknowledgment of a pre-schismatic past and tradition that brought Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians closer. Writing on the printing history and reception of Greek patristic texts in the West, Natasha Constantinidou observes that these editions were 'primarily intended for members of the Catholic orders as a way of achieving internal conformity and discipline and as a tool to challenge Reformed scholarship'.<sup>36</sup>

The *editio princeps* of St Epiphanius of Cyprus' (367–403) *Opera omnia*, published by the Jesuit scholar Denis Pétau (Paris, 1622), is one among many examples of Christian humanist exchanges in this period, involving Byzantine religious culture. The Epiphanius edition was decorated with a frontispiece portrait of the saint; as we read in the inscription under the engraving, the image was the work of John Adolos of Nicosia (*Ioannes Adolus Leucosiensis*), who was 'by no means a careless painter' (*haud indiligens pictor*). This (otherwise unknown) Cypriot painter, who must have been active after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, is mentioned to have copied the image from the monastery of Sula in Constantinople (perhaps a reference to an eleventh-century fresco at the monastery of Peribleptos),<sup>37</sup> thus bringing it to the attention of Western humanist circles. The earliest appearance of Adolos' image of Epiphanius is to be found in Ponce de Leon's edition of the *Physiologus* (Antwerp, 1588), and it was

---

<sup>36</sup> Natasha Constantinidou, 'Aspects of the Printing History and Reception of John Chrysostom and Other Greek Church Fathers, c. 1450–1600', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, (2019), p. 17 doi.org/10.1007/s12138-019-00545-z

<sup>37</sup> Claudia Rapp, 'Epiphanius of Salamis: The Church Father as Saint', in *The Sweet Land of Cyprus*, ed. Anthony A. M. Bryer and George S. Georgallides (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1993), p. 186.

later used in the *Opera omnia* edition by Pétau.<sup>38</sup> Several questions concerning Adolos remain to be answered by future research. Was he a monk (*adolos* = ‘guileless’) or a lay hagiographer? Was he familiar with the Western art of engraving? Did he visit Constantinople himself, or was his painting the copy of a copy? Was he one of the 13,719 prisoners of war taken by the Ottomans after the sack of Nicosia (September 1570), many of whom ended up in Constantinople?<sup>39</sup> What is important for our examination, is that Adolos’ frontispiece accompanied the published writings of a fourth-century Father who had been bishop in Cyprus, and whose work was greatly valued by Pétau and other Roman Catholic scholars in their struggle against the Reformers.<sup>40</sup>

Christian humanism sparked the interest of Western Europeans in the island’s Byzantine Orthodox culture. ‘Digging’ Cypriot monastic libraries for Byzantine manuscripts to be collected, and sometimes published in the West, was a common endeavour for European *literati* and their agents during the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>41</sup> The Neoplatonic scholar Francesco Patrizi (1529–97), initially at the service of Count Giorgio Contarini of Jaffa and later Archbishop Filippo Mocenigo of Nicosia, assembled a number of philosophical, theological, mathematical, astrological, geographical, musical, historical, rhetorical, poetical, and medical texts from Byzantine manuscripts he had either purchased or copied (through

---

<sup>38</sup> Τοῦ ἐν ἀγίοις πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἐπιφανίου ἐπισκόπου Κωνσταντείας τῆς Κύπρου, Ἐπαντα τὰ σωζόμενα. *Sancti Patris Nostri Epiphani Constantiae, sive Salaminis in Cypro, Episcopi, Opera omnia*, I (Parisii: Sumptibus Michaelis Sonni, Claudii Morelli et Sebastiani Cramoisy, 1622) [Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, B-198], with description in Leonora Navari, *Manuscripts and Rare Books, 15<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> Century. From the Collections of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation* (Nicosia: Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, 2010), pp. 232–33; Ingo Herklotz, ‘Alfonso Chacón e le gallerie dei ritratti nell’età della Controriforma’, in *Arte e committenza nel Lazio nell’età di Cesare Baronio*, ed. Patrizia Tosini (Roma: Gangemi Editore, 2009), 111–42 (esp. at pp. 132–33); University of Victoria, *Saint Epiphanius on the Physiologus (Facsimile and Commentary)*, <<http://spscoll.library.uvic.ca/Digit/physiologum/index.html>> [accessed 22 October 2020].

<sup>39</sup> Vera Costantini, *Il Sultano e l’isola contesa. Cipro tra eredità veneziana e potere ottomano* (Milan: UTET Libreria, 2009), p. 66.

<sup>40</sup> Rapp, ‘Epiphanius’, pp. 186–87.

<sup>41</sup> For some fifteenth-century precedents, see Costas N. Constantinides and Robert Browning, *Dated Greek Manuscripts from Cyprus to the Year 1570* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection; Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1993), pp. 19–21.

*Romaioi* scribes) in the 1560s.<sup>42</sup> In 1564/65, Filippo Mocenigo is known to have sponsored the copying of a luxury volume (MS Ottobonianus graecus 25) containing the works of St Neilos, Epiktetos and Evagrios of Pontos; the scribe was Philotheos, Orthodox abbot of the Virgin of Hierax (Arakas) monastery in the Troodos mountain range. Philotheos praised Mocenigo in a long dedicatory poem, mentioning that the manuscript was intended to be used as a master print, presumably in Italy. Mocenigo's and Philotheos' collaboration in this project shows how Christian humanism and local patriotism could place Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians side-by-side, despite their differences in faith and practice.<sup>43</sup> The anonymous report in MS Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030, probably composed by one of Mocenigo's close associates, points out the existence of unpublished Byzantine manuscripts in Orthodox monastic libraries. These manuscripts are described as 'very useful and necessary for our times' (*utilissimi et necessariissimi a tempi nostri*), referring to their potential employment against the Reformers.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the case of the Mocenigo-Philotheos joint project, however, Orthodox Cypriot monks did not let the Roman Catholics see these manuscripts.

The phenomenon of harvesting Byzantine manuscripts from Orthodox Cypriot monasteries culminated after the establishment of Ottoman rule. In the seventeenth century, the French kings presented themselves as legitimate successors of the Byzantine emperors, and the idea of a Crusade against the Ottomans 'was revived by Mazarin and Louis XIII and their entourage'; indeed, the study of Byzantium was so highly appreciated that the Louvre sponsored the *Byzantine du Louvre* collection of

---

<sup>42</sup> Gilles Grivaud, 'Une liste de manuscrits grecs trouvés à Chypre par Francesco Patrizi', in *Cyprus and the Renaissance*, ed. Arbel, Chayes and Hendrix, 125–56; Angel Nicolaou-Konnari, 'Francesco Patrizi's Cypriot Connections and Giason and Pietro de Nores', in *Cyprus and the Renaissance*, ed. Arbel, Chayes and Hendrix, 157–203.

<sup>43</sup> Costas N. Constantinides, 'Ο βιβλιογράφος Φιλόθεος, ηγούμενος της μονής του Ιέρρακος της Κύπρου (16<sup>ος</sup> αι.)', *Δωδώνη*, 14 (1985), 75–83; Constantinides and Browning, *Dated Greek Manuscripts*, pp. 16, 22, 350–54.

<sup>44</sup> *Κυπροβενετικά*, ed. Kyriacou, pp. 63, 93, 128–29; for the translation, Kyriacou, *Christian Diversity*, p. 61.

Byzantine works of historiography.<sup>45</sup> In 1627, the French consul in Cyprus sent three manuscripts to Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), including a liturgical *menaion* and an ethical treatise *On Vices and Virtues* by Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913–59). In c. 1643, Athanasios the Rhetor (1571–1663), a Greek Catholic priest from Cyprus and an agent of Chancellor Pierre Séguier (1635–72), collected forty-six manuscripts for his patron. In 1671, the Dominican Johan-Michael Wansleben gathered forty-seven volumes for the French king, including Arabic, Syriac and Coptic manuscripts. Between 1669 and 1691, the French consul Balthasar Sauvan collected for Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the well-known statesman of Louis XIV (1643–1715), more than two hundred manuscripts. Costas N. Constantinides and Robert Browning estimate that ‘as a result of these well-organised French missions, some three hundred of the best manuscripts existing in the island were transferred to Paris in the seventeenth century’.<sup>46</sup> *Ex Oriente lux*: the image of French absolutism in the age of *le Roi Soleil*, perceived as a continuation of the Byzantine *basileia*,<sup>47</sup> was partly built on the cultural looting of Cyprus, a former Byzantine province that had long preserved, even under Frankish Crusader domination, the very heritage recently discovered by the French elites.

The reasons why Orthodox Cypriot monks sold or permitted the taking of Byzantine manuscripts from their monasteries seem to vary: poverty, negligence, lack of appreciation caused by ignorance, and perhaps also inability to protect what was theirs in the challenging conditions after 1570/71. The pre-conquest testimony that Roman Catholics had been prevented from reading Byzantine manuscripts in monastic libraries, together with the negative legacy of Athanasios the Rhetor among

---

<sup>45</sup> Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *Orientalism in Early Modern France. Eurasian Trade Exoticism and the Ancient Regime* (Oxford–New York: Berg, 2008), p. 140.

<sup>46</sup> Constantinides and Browning, *Dated Greek Manuscripts*, pp. 23–27 (quotation at p. 27).

<sup>47</sup> Gilbert Dagron, ‘La France au miroir de Byzance. Quelques remarques sur l’historiographie française du Moyen Âge au XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.’, *Rossijskaja Akademia Nauk, Sankt-Peterburgskoe Otdelenie, Vspomogatel’nye istoričeskie discipliny*, 30 (2007), p. 268; Paschalis M. Kitromilides, ‘The Byzantine Legacy in Early Modern Political Thought’, in *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*, ed. Anthony Kaldellis and Niketas Siniosoglou (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 666–68.

Orthodox Christians in the East,<sup>48</sup> may suggest that the dispersal of Byzantine manuscripts outside Cyprus was largely due to the force exercised on Orthodox monastic communities by the harsh realities following the War of Cyprus.<sup>49</sup> But these realities were far more complex than it may seem: sometimes the taking of manuscripts might have been allowed as an act of ecclesiastical diplomacy. Given that Athanasios the Rhetor's infiltration in Orthodox monasteries had been sanctioned by the permission granted to him by Archbishop Nikephoros in 1643 to celebrate the liturgy and preach throughout the island, it is likely that the removal of Byzantine manuscripts from their monastic libraries had been occasionally facilitated by the Orthodox archbishops' policy of rapprochement with Roman Catholic Europe.<sup>50</sup>

Greek printed books containing Byzantine materials were offered, from time to time, as gifts by Orthodox Cypriot monks travelling (and wishing to study) in Western Europe. This was the case with the copies of Orthodox liturgical books presented by Leontios Eustratios (d. 1601) to Martinus Crusius (1526–1607) in Tübingen in 1590.<sup>51</sup> The Cypriot monk's gift to the Lutheran classicist should be seen within the broader picture of Lutheran humanist re-discovery of Classical Antiquity, Byzantium and the history of the Christian Church, the origins of which Lutherans 'believed to be reviving in their own day'.<sup>52</sup> Although Crusius seems to have thought that Eustratios was sympathetic to Lutheranism, the confessional openness of his Cypriot guest was probably due to his expectation of receiving a scholarship by the duke of Württemberg and his irenic approach to both Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism. This attitude was shared by Eustratios' mentor, Bishop Maximos Margounios of Kythera (d. 1602).

---

<sup>48</sup> Constantinides and Browning, *Dated Greek Manuscripts*, p. 24 (n. 35).

<sup>49</sup> Ioannis P. Theocharides, 'Στοιχεία από την ιστορία της Κύπρου (μέσα του 17<sup>ου</sup> αι.)', *Δωδώνη*, 16 (1987), 209–24.

<sup>50</sup> Constantinides and Browning, *Dated Greek Manuscripts*, p. 24.

<sup>51</sup> Ulrich Moennig, 'On Martinus Crusius's collection of Greek vernacular and religious books', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 21 (1997), p. 45. On Eustratios' biography, see Claudia Sode, 'Ein bisher unbekannter Epitaphios des Maximos Margounios auf Leontios Eustratios Philoponos (Cod. Chart. B 147 der Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha)', *Codices Manuscripti*, 34–35 (2001), 29–52.

<sup>52</sup> Asaph Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists and Greek Antiquity. Melanchthonian Scholarship Between Universal History and Pedagogy* (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2009), pp. 83–131 (quotation at p. 131).

Like Margounios, Eustratios was opposed by his fellow Orthodox in Cyprus as a pro-Catholic, although there is no concrete evidence to support this accusation.<sup>53</sup> Eustratios himself did not perceive his contacts with Lutherans and Roman Catholics as harmful for his faith. Writing to Margounios from Vienna in 1589, where he studied under the aegis of Elisabeth of Austria's (queen of France, 1571–74) confessor, Eustratios was thankful to God for having befriended his patrons, but noted that he remained adamant in his ecclesiastical customs and doctrines.<sup>54</sup> Byzantine Orthodox culture could, thus, provide opportunities for amicable dialogue, and even collaboration, between Cypriot *Romaioi* and Western European cultural agents, without excluding the preservation of one's doctrinal identity.

#### 4. CONSTANTINIAN MONARCHY

The gathering of Byzantine manuscripts from Cyprus at the time of Athanasios the Rhetor and Colbert reflects the turn of early modern Europe to Byzantium 'as a source of Roman legitimacy and norms of correct practice in the transaction of the tasks of a Christian monarchy'.<sup>55</sup> The image of Constantine I was a central point of reference in early modern imperial ideologies across Europe, becoming another thread in the textile of 'koineisation' between Orthodox and Catholics in Cyprus and beyond. According to Thomas James Dandeleet, 'for the Renaissance of empire, no Roman emperor was more important as a model of imperial behavior than the first great patron of Christian Rome'.<sup>56</sup> The 'Constantinian Renaissance' was primarily founded

---

<sup>53</sup> Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos of Athens, *Η Εκκλησία Κύπρου επί Τουρκοκρατίας (1571–1878)* (Athens: Phoenix, 1929), pp. 24–32; Kitromilides, *Κυπριακή Λογισσύνη*, p. 132; A. Edward Sicienski, *The Filioque: History of Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 180–81 (on Margounios' position on the *Filioque*); cf. George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, IV (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 323–25 (on Eustratios' alleged deviation from Orthodoxy).

<sup>54</sup> Eleni Kakoulidi-Panou, *Κυπριακός Πεζός Λόγος, 15<sup>ος</sup>–17<sup>ος</sup> αιώνες* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2011), pp. 140–41.

<sup>55</sup> Kitromilides, 'The Byzantine Legacy', p. 666.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas James Dandeleet, 'The Imperial Renaissance', in *The Renaissance World*, ed. John Jeffries Martin (New York–London: Routledge, 2007), p. 322.

on 'the close relationship between the Spanish Empire and the papacy'.<sup>57</sup> The renovated basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome (1488–1523), for example, was a visual celebration of 'Spain's providential destiny to propel Christendom to victory'.<sup>58</sup> Interest in Constantine grew particularly under Charles V (1516–56) and Philip II of Spain (1556–98), both of whom presented themselves as defenders of Catholic Christendom against the Reformers and the Ottomans.<sup>59</sup> Another member of the House of Habsburg, the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II (1578–1637), saw his mission to protect Catholicism and his empire through the same lens of Constantinian emperors.<sup>60</sup> France, as we have briefly noted above, was no stranger to claims of *translatio imperii*. The famous 'Constantine Tapestries' by Rubens (1577–1640) were designed and woven in Paris in 1622.<sup>61</sup> Under the patronage of Louis XIV, the French *Constantinus Novus*, his court painter, Charles Le Brun (1619–90), published (1666) two large Constantinian prints: *La bataille du pont de Milvian* (*The Battle at the Milvian Bridge*) and *L'entrée triomphale à Rome de Constantin* (*The Triumph of Constantine*).<sup>62</sup> The 'Constantinisation' of French political ideology sparked tension in the diplomatic and artistic relations between Paris and Rome for almost a century (1590s–1690s), since both France and the papacy considered themselves as legitimate successors of Constantine's empire.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Dandeleit, 'The Imperial Renaissance', p. 323.

<sup>58</sup> Jack Freiberg, *Bramante's Tempietto, the Roman Renaissance, and the Spanish Crown* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 34.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas James Dandeleit, *The Renaissance of Empire in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 138–98.

<sup>60</sup> Robert Bireley, *Ferdinand II, Counter-Reformation Emperor, 1578–1637* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 36, 86–87, 130, 165, 284, 310, 312.

<sup>61</sup> Koen Brosen, *The Constantine Series* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

<sup>62</sup> Louis Marchesano, 'Charles Le Brun's Constantine Prints for Louis XIV and Jean-Baptiste Colbert', in *L'estampe au Grand Siècle. Études offertes à Maxime Préaud*, ed. Peter Fuhring, Barbara Brejon de Lavergnée, Marianne Grivel, Séverine Lepale and Véronique Meyer (Paris: École nationale des chartes – Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2010), pp. 463–83. On the iconography of Constantine I in Byzantium and the post-Byzantine period, see Christopher Walter, *The Iconography of Constantine the Great, Emperor and Saint (with associated studies)* (Leiden: Alexandros Press, 2006), esp. at pp. 98–110 ('New Constantines').

<sup>63</sup> Marc Fumaroli, 'Cross, Crown, and Tiara: The Constantine Myth between Paris and Rome (1590–1690)', *Studies in the History of Art*, 48 (1995), 88–102.

Constantine and his mother, Helen, had been venerated as a saintly couple in Cyprus since Byzantine times, leaving their imprint on the island's Orthodox hagiography, art, and folk culture.<sup>64</sup> The late medieval tradition concerning the Cypriot origins of St Catherine and her alleged family connections to the Constantinian dynasty added prestige to the Frankish Lusignan kings of Cyprus, and was embraced by both Orthodox and Latin/Roman Catholic devotees.<sup>65</sup> The artistic revival of traditions related to Constantine and the finding of the True Cross by Helen took place in the Venetian period, when the Christians of Cyprus experienced the growing Ottoman threat. Being a symbol of Christian militarism against Islam, the phrase *In hoc signo vinces*, accompanying the Cross, appeared on the papal banner during the battle at Lepanto (1571), when the allied Christian fleet defeated the Ottomans soon after the conquest of Cyprus.<sup>66</sup> Sebastian Venier, one of the leaders of the Lega Sacra and later doge of Venice (1577–78), was praised by the Cypriot noble and scholar Giason Denores (1510–90) as the man who had led the arms of Christendom against Muslim banners. Denores' intention might have been to implicitly associate Venier with Constantine and the True Cross, alluding to well-established rhetorical and ideological formulas of the Constantinian model.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Theodoros Papadopoulos, 'Εκ της αρχαιότητας ιστορίας του Πατριαρχείου Ιεροσολύμων. Το κείμενον αρχαίας παραδόσεως περί επισκέψεως της αγίας Ελένης εις Παλαιστίνην και Κύπρον', *Νέα Σιών* (1952), 1–30; Simos Menardos, *Τοπωνυμικαί και λαογραφικαί μελέται*, 2nd edn (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2001), 315–40.

<sup>65</sup> Lorenzo Calvelli, 'Cypriot origins, Constantinian blood: the legend of the young Saint Catherine of Alexandria', in *Identity/Identities in Late Medieval Cyprus*, ed. Tassos Papacostas and Guillaume Saint-Guillain (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2014), 361–90.

<sup>66</sup> Stylianou and Stylianou, *The Painted Churches of Cyprus*, pp. 198, 200–5; Walter, *The Iconography of Constantine*, pp. 61, 89–90; Eugenia Drakopoulou, 'In hoc signo vinces between 1453–1571: the iconography of an encounter between art and history', *НИИ И ВИЗАНТИЈА*, 12 (2013), 393–94. On the possible association between Constantine and Alexander the Great in art, see Demetrios D. Triantaphyllopoulos, 'Κωνσταντίνος και Μεγαλέξανδρος στα Ιωάννινα. Ιερο-κοσμικός χώρος στο Μεταβυζάντιο', in *Αφιέρωμα στον ακαδημαϊκό Παναγιώτη Λ. Βοκοτόπουλο*, ed. Vasilis Katsaros and Anastasia Tourta (Athens: Kapon, 2015), 527–38.

<sup>67</sup> *Oratione di Iason Denores al Sereniss. Principe di Venetia Sebastian Veniero, per nome di quei Gentil'huomini del Regno di Cipro, che dopo la perdita della patria si trovarono presenti nel tempo della sua feliciss. creatione* (Padova: Lorenzo Pasquati, 1578), f. 5<sup>v</sup> [Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, B-492], with description in Navari, *Manuscripts and Rare Books*, pp. 164–65.

During the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus, the great Cross relic preserved at Stavrobouni and believed to have been left on the island by St Helen, was burned by the Ottomans; Ottoman soldiers also tried, unsuccessfully, to destroy the Cross relic at Leukara. Naturally, these Ottoman attacks on local Cross relics were viewed as lamentable and insulting for the island's Christians.<sup>68</sup> At least three letters, written by Orthodox Cypriot ecclesiastics and laymen (1609 and 1611) and addressing Philip III of Spain (1598–1621) in order to liberate Cyprus from the Ottomans, make reference to the banners of the 'most Catholic' king that would hearten the Christians of Cyprus in their planned revolts against the Ottomans.<sup>69</sup> Taking into consideration the widespread emphasis on Constantine and the revival of Christian militarism, it may be reasonable to assume that these letters alluded to the symbol of the Cross and Constantinian ideology.

The ideological implications of Cross symbolism in relation to Constantine and Christian militarism, of which the Christians of Cyprus appear to have been aware, might have also influenced Catholic perceptions of Cyprus and its Byzantine Orthodox heritage. Catholic travelers in Cyprus after 1571 (e.g., the French Jacques de Villamont and Henry de Beauvau) mention the monastery of the Holy Cross at Stavrobouni, founded by St Helen to preserve relics of the Cross, as a venerable pilgrimage site worthy to be known by their readers.<sup>70</sup> We need to underline that these accounts lack the hostility occasionally traceable in Latin/Roman Catholic voices before the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus: by the early seventeenth century, the Cross came to embody the unity of Christendom, Eastern and Western, against the common

---

<sup>68</sup> Menardos, *Τοπωνυμικά και λαογραφικά μελέται*, pp. 293, 327.

<sup>69</sup> *Ισπανικά Έγγραφα της Κυπριακής Ιστορίας (ΙΣΤ'-ΙΖ αι.)*, ed. Ioannis K. Hassiotis, 2nd edn (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2003), pp. 55, 59, 82.

<sup>70</sup> *Les Voyages du Seigneur de Villamont, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Hierusalem, Gentilhomme ordinaire de la chambre du Roy* (Paris, 1596; 6th edn: Lyon: Claude Lariot, 1609), pp. 187–88 [Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, B-166], with description in Navari, *Manuscripts and Rare Books*, pp. 87–88; *Relation journalière du voyage du Levant fait et décrit par Messire Henry de Beauvau* (Toul: François Du Bois, 1608), pp. 119–20.

Muslim enemy.<sup>71</sup> This must have been clear to Francesco Ferretti, captain of the Ordine di Santo Stefano, a Catholic military order, which attempted, unsuccessfully, to capture Famagusta in 1607. In his *Isolario*, published in Ancona in 1579 and 1604, Ferretti described Cyprus as ‘a most Christian country’ (*paese christianissimo*), once visited by ‘St Helen, mother of Constantine the emperor’ (*Santa Helena madre di Constantino Imperatore*); the island was now in the hands of ‘the most arrogant and infidel grand Turkish lord’ (*superbissimo infedele gran Signor Turco*).<sup>72</sup> In 1616, Zerbin de Vernin (Verny), a Roman Catholic noble from Cyprus related to the Lusignans and the Palaiologoi, approached King Philip III, proposed bringing to Spain the venerable relic of the Cross, preserved in a Cypriot monastery not far from the sea. Vernin’s attempt to attract the Spanish king’s attention, in order to liberate Cyprus, was unsuccessful; his proposal, however, should be interpreted through the prism of Constantinian monarchy (Philip III as *Constantinus Novus*) and the unifying power of the Cross symbol.<sup>73</sup>

Through the multifaceted legacy of Constantine/Helen and the Cross, Byzantium was present in the way Catholic Europeans and Orthodox Cypriots

---

<sup>71</sup> In the pre-conquest period, some Latin/Roman Catholic Christians had been less ready to accept the validity of Orthodox hagiographical traditions on the Cross (MS *Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation B-030*), had claimed full control over the island’s pilgrimage sites (Leontios Makhairas on the Holy Cross of Tochne incident), and had not tolerated syncretism (Felix Faber); see: Kyriacou, *Orthodox Cyprus*, pp. 83, 86, 131–32, 155–56; *Κυπροβενετικά*, ed. Kyriacou, pp. 46, 79, 112; Kyriacou, *Christian Diversity*, p. 47.

<sup>72</sup> *Dialoghi Notturni del Capitano Francesco Ferretti Cavaglier di S. Stefano* (Ancona: Giovan Battista Ciotti, 1604), p. 115 [Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, C-084], with description in Navari, *Manuscripts and Rare Books*, pp. 200–1; 1st edn: *Diporti Notturni. Dialloghi Familiari del Capitano Francesco Ferreti Cavagliero dell’Ordine di Santo Stefano* (Ancona: Angelo Marrelli, 1579). On the Famagusta attack, see Hassiotis, ‘Οι αντιτουρκικές κινήσεις’, pp. 171–75; Marios Hadjianastasis, ‘Corsair tactics and lofty ideals: The 1607 Tuscan raid on Cyprus’, in *City of Empires. Ottoman and British Famagusta*, ed. Michael J. K. Walsh (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 22–36. As mentioned earlier, around the same period, Logizos Skevophylax consulted local *Romaic* hagiographical traditions on St Helen.

<sup>73</sup> Πηγές της Κυπριακής Ιστορίας από το Ισπανικό Αρχείο Simancas: Από τη Μικροϊστορία της Κυπριακής Διασποράς κατά τον ΙΣΤ΄ και ΙΖ΄ αιώνα, ed. Ioannis K. Hassiotis (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2000), pp. 174–79. Perhaps this should be also interpreted as an allusion to Heraclius’ (610–41) return of the True Cross to Jerusalem, after the Persian war; Constantin Zuckerman, ‘Heraclius and the Return of the Holy Cross’, *Travaux et mémoires*, 17 (2013), 197–218; cf. Sammlung Städelmuseum, ‘Adam Elsheimer, *The Altarpiece of the Exaltation of the True Cross, 1603–1605*’, <<https://sammlung.staedelmuseum.de/en/work/the-altarpiece-of-the-exaltation-of-the-true-cross>> [last accessed 11 May 2021].

imagined Cyprus in the decades following the Ottoman conquest, indicating that the island was perceived as part of a shared Christian culture in East and West.<sup>74</sup>

## 5. BYZANTINE IMPERIAL PRIVILEGES

The restricted domination of the Orthodox hierarchy in the new conditions created by the Ottoman rule, was manifested through the invention of tradition, a process defined as 'the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes'.<sup>75</sup> In the early seventeenth century, Logizos Skevophylax wrote (echoing Lusignan's similar statement about the Latin archbishop)<sup>76</sup> that the Orthodox archbishop of Cyprus enjoyed the privilege, allegedly granted to him by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451), not to be subject to any of the patriarchs, and to be dressed in red, like a Catholic cardinal.<sup>77</sup> This is the first instance of an Orthodox author associating the so-called 'imperial privileges' of the archbishop with the autocephalous ('self-headed') status of the Church of Cyprus, sanctioned by the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in 431, and not by the Fourth Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon, as claimed by Lusignan and Logizos.<sup>78</sup> But the earliest traces of the 'imperial privileges' go back to another Cypriot historian, the Roman Catholic Florio Bustron (*d.* 1570). In Bustron's narrative, the Byzantine emperor Zeno (474–91,

---

<sup>74</sup> On the eschatological and anti-Muslim implications of the monumental Crucifixion in the eighteenth-century murals of the Nicosia Orthodox cathedral, see Demetrios D. Triantaphyllopoulos, 'Αποκαλύψεως οράματα στην Κύπρο. Ιστορική πραγματικότητα και εσχολογική προοπτική', *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί*, 64–65 (2000–1), 395–96, 399–402, 404, 406.

<sup>75</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 6. On the making of a 'Cypro-Ottoman' elite, see Marios Hadjianastasis, 'Cyprus in the Ottoman Period: Consolidation of the Cypro-Ottoman Elite, 1650–1750', in *Ottoman Cyprus: A Collection of Studies on History and Culture*, ed. Michalis N. Michael, Matthias Kappler and Eftihios Gavriel (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 63–88; Hadjikyriacou, 'The Ottomanisation of Cyprus', pp. 81–96; Hadjikyriacou, 'Beyond the millet debate: communal representation in pre-Tanzimat-era Cyprus', in *Political thought and practice in the Ottoman Empire. Halcyon days in Crete IX*, ed. Marinos Sariyannis (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2019), 71–96.

<sup>76</sup> *Estienne de Lusignan, Chorographia*, f. 32<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>77</sup> *Λογίζου Σκευοφύλακος, Κρόνικα*, ed. Perdakis, p. 67.

<sup>78</sup> Glanville Downey, 'The Claim of Antioch to Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction over Cyprus', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 102.3 (1958), 224–28.

with interruptions) in the late fifth century had granted to Archbishop Anthemios of Constantia, upon Anthemios' discovery of the relics of St Barnabas, the privilege to carry an imperial sceptre decorated with an orb and to wear a cape with a red cross.<sup>79</sup> According to Joseph P. Huffman, the invention of the 'imperial privileges' within Roman Catholic ecclesiastical circles in Nicosia was based on the *Donatio Constantini* forgeries.<sup>80</sup> This probably coincided with the Counter-Reforming activities of Archbishop Mocenigo in the 1560s. Benedict Englezakis has convincingly argued that the 'imperial privileges' have nothing to do with the confirmation of the Cypriot autocephaly in Ephesos or the discovery of St Barnabas' relics at the time of Zeno. Although the privileges are attributed to a Byzantine emperor, they seem to have appeared in the late medieval/early modern period.<sup>81</sup> Looking at the privileges from the viewpoint of an Ottomanist, Michalis N. Michael has analysed their function in visualising the powers of the Orthodox Cypriot archbishop in the seventeenth century, and his close connection to the Ottoman elite in Constantinople.<sup>82</sup> What has not been adequately stressed in earlier studies, is that the Orthodox archbishop seems to have adopted the privileges to convey his upgraded authority and role as leader of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians under the Ottomans.

The termination of Roman Catholic hegemony after 1570/71 led the Roman Catholics of Cyprus to either convert to Islam or pass under the jurisdiction of Orthodox bishops by officially becoming Orthodox. This was facilitated due to the friendly relations between the Orthodox hierarchy of Cyprus and the Roman Catholic powers for much of the seventeenth century, sealed by the signing of pro-Catholic confessions of faith on the part of Cypriot bishops and clergymen, who presented

---

<sup>79</sup> Joseph P. Huffman, 'The Donation of Zeno: St Barnabas and the Origins of the Cypriot Archbishops' Regalia Privileges', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 66.2 (2015), 246–47.

<sup>80</sup> Huffman, 'The Donation of Zeno', pp. 237, 250–52, 260. On the papal *Donatio Constantini* rhetoric in late sixteenth-century Rome, see Moffitt Watts, 'The Donation of Constantine, Cartography, and Papal 'Plenitudo Potestatis' in the Sixteenth Century: A Paper for Salvatore Camporeale', *Modern Language Notes*, 119.1 (2004), S88–S107.

<sup>81</sup> Englezakis, *Είκοσι μελέται*, pp. 365–90, 667–75.

<sup>82</sup> Michalis N. Michael, 'Βυζαντινά σύμβολα οθωμανικής πολιτικής εξουσίας: η περίπτωση των προνομίων των αρχιεπισκόπων Κύπρου', *Τα Ιστορικά/Historica*, 51 (2009), 315–32.

themselves and were perceived by the *Propaganda Fide* as crypto-Catholics. There were also *Romaioi*, Latin and Maronite converts to Islam who continued to practice Christianity in secrecy (crypto-Christians).<sup>83</sup> It seems that, by 1629, a number of Syrian Jacobites and Copts either moved under the jurisdiction of the Maronite bishop or were placed under the Orthodox archbishop and bishops. After 1629, the Maronites of Cyprus who wished to remain in communion with Rome were placed under the Roman Catholic bishop of Paphos.<sup>84</sup> In 1668, the Maronite Stephen El Douaihy was bishop of the Cypriot Maronites; following his death, he was succeeded by a certain Luke (1670–73).<sup>85</sup> According to the Franciscan Archives, the 'Maronite villages [were] administered by Latin priests from 1690 to 1759, which shows that the Maronites lacked priests of their own rite'.<sup>86</sup> The lack of pastoral care, despite occasional visits from Roman Catholic bishops who performed baptisms, continued until around the time of Archbishop Sylvestros (1718–34), when the Maronites passed under Orthodox jurisdiction. In 1845, the French consul obtained an Ottoman *firman*, restoring the Maronites of Cyprus under the jurisdiction of the Maronite hierarchy in Lebanon.<sup>87</sup> During the period of Orthodox ecclesiastical supervision (a. 1734–c. 1845), the Maronites followed Roman Catholicism, but were obliged to pay to the Orthodox archbishop a special tax, acknowledging his primacy.<sup>88</sup> The Armenians, who were in

---

<sup>83</sup> Passing to Orthodox jurisdiction: *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 2–3, 8, 19, 36. Pro-Catholic confessions of faith: Zacharias N. Tsirpanlis, *Ο Κυπριακός Ελληνισμός της Διασποράς και οι Σχέσεις Κύπρου-Βατικανού (1571–1878)* (Thessalonica: A. Stamoulis, 2006), pp. 269–83 (arguing that 'conversions' to Roman Catholicism were superficial). Conversions and crypto-Christians: *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 2–3, 69–70, 106–7, 127–28, 153, 239; Jennings, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 137–43; Guita G. Hourani, 'The Maronites of Cyprus under Ottoman Rule', in *The Minorities of Cyprus*, ed. Varnava, Coureas and Elia, pp. 120–21; Kostis Kokkinofas, *Εξισλαμισμοί και επανεκχριστιανισμοί στην Κύπρο* (Nicosia: Holy Monastery of Kykkos Research Centre, 2019), pp. 18–25.

<sup>84</sup> *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 1–3, 17, 193–94, 199.

<sup>85</sup> Guita G. Hourani, 'The Maronites', pp. 122–23. Generally on the Maronites in seventeenth-century Cyprus see Jennings, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 148–49.

<sup>86</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, p. 382.

<sup>87</sup> The piece of information concerning Sylvestros comes from the archbishop's own report, published in *Λογίζου Σκευοφύλακος, Κρόνικα*, p. 148; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, pp. 382–83; Hourani, 'The Maronites', pp. 124, 129–34.

<sup>88</sup> Archbishop Sylvestros in *Λογίζου Σκευοφύλακος, Κρόνικα*, p. 148; Archimandrite Kyprianos, *Ιστορία Χρονολογική της Νήσου Κύπρου* (Venice: Nikolaos Glykes of Ioannina, 1788), p. 395; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, p. 383; Hourani, 'The Maronites', pp. 120–21, 124.

good terms with their Muslim overlords and struggled to maintain their rights over the Armenian church of Nicosia (also claimed by the Orthodox), were more successful in maintaining the communal autonomy under an Armenian bishop. Eventually, they, too, were obliged to recognise the primacy of the Orthodox archbishop. By the late eighteenth century, 'the Armenian church in the capital made an annual gift to the Archbishop in token of subjection'.<sup>89</sup> This custom lasted down as late as the early 1900s.<sup>90</sup>

Overall, we observe the deconstruction of the pre-war confessional barriers, followed by a tendency towards centralisation under the Orthodox bishops and archbishop, who were entrusted by the Ottomans with the collection of taxes (1660).<sup>91</sup> The property of the Orthodox Church witnessed a significant growth. In 1629, for example, the archbishop's income was estimated around 7,000 *piastres*, of which 3,000 were paid to the Ottomans.<sup>92</sup> The Roman Catholic failure to counterbalance the stronger status of the Orthodox hierarchy by re-installing a Roman Catholic bishop of Paphos, confirmed the elevated position of the Orthodox archbishop as the leader of Cypriot Christians. By the eighteenth century, the Orthodox archbishop's primacy among all other confessions was acknowledged through the paying of a special tax by non-Orthodox Christians. Seventeenth-century Roman Catholic missionary reports from Cyprus claim that Orthodox centralisation under the archbishop was sometimes achieved through coercion and the 'persecution' (*persecutioni*) of non-Orthodox.<sup>93</sup> This, however, does not necessarily indicate a continuous tension between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christians. Archbishop Philotheos (1734–59), for example, was said by

---

<sup>89</sup> Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, p. 383.

<sup>90</sup> Archimandrite Kyprianos, *Ιστορία Χρονολογική*, p. 395; Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, p. 383; *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 38, 204, 208–9; Jennings, *Christians and Muslims*, pp. 146–48; Gilles Grivaud, 'Les minorités orientales à Chypre: perspectives historiques et enjeux contemporains', in *Chypre et la Méditerranée orientale. Formations identitaires: perspectives historiques et enjeux contemporains*, ed. Françoise Métral, Marguerite Yon and Yannis E. Ioannou (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée Jean Pouilloux, 2000), p. 48; Gérard Dédéyan, 'The Armenians of Cyprus during and after the Ottoman Rule', in *The Minorities of Cyprus*, ed. Varnava, Coureas and Elia, pp. 81–91.

<sup>91</sup> Michael, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου*, p. 109; Hadjikyriacou, 'Beyond the millet debate', pp. 81–88.

<sup>92</sup> *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, pp. 50–51, 206.

<sup>93</sup> *Ανέκδοτα Έγγραφα*, ed. Tsirpanlis, p. 8.

a Maronite papal envoy to be 'treating the Maronites in the same manner as he treated his own flock'.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, the archbishop's imperial privileges should be understood as a visible reminder of the underlying and growing process of centralisation during the seventeenth century. This is eloquently captured in the 1673 icon of the enthroned St Barnabas, the Orthodox archbishop's apostolic predecessor; St Barnabas is depicted receiving from two angels an imperial sceptre and a world globe, among other insignia. The island of Cyprus, in the form of a map, also appears in the icon, as St Barnabas' footstool.<sup>95</sup> St Barnabas is, thus, imagined to be the spiritual ruler of Cyprus and the bearer of the Byzantine imperial privileges; his successor, the Orthodox archbishop, is an earthly image of the saint's heavenly reign, under whom all Christians in Cyprus were (or hoped to become) united. Unfortunately, we possess no information on the way other Cypriot Christian confessions saw the imperial privileges and their elite symbolism. Yet, the striking continuation of the privileges tradition from Ottoman times to this day is indicative of the dynamism of rituals, symbols and ideas associated with Byzantium and its imperial legacy. It also suggests that the privileges were part of the seventeenth-century Byzantine koine, a new form of transcultural language that was mutually understood by all Cypriot Christian groups.

By enabling the powerful construction of an authority image, the 'imperial privileges' were employed in the internal conflicts of the Orthodox hierarchy, providing legitimisation to their bearers and adding to the claims of different parties an aura of apostolic antiquity that guaranteed doctrinal correctness. In 1651, Archbishop Nikephoros, whose pro-Catholic orientation has already been noted, appealed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, concerning his dispute

---

<sup>94</sup> Hourani, 'The Maronites', p. 125.

<sup>95</sup> Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou, 'A Map of Cyprus in a Post-Byzantine Cypriot Icon', *Τετράδια Εργασίας*, 25–26 (2004), 337–46 (esp. at p. 339); Veronica Della Dora, 'Windows on Heaven (and Earth): The Poetics and Politics of Post-Byzantine Cartographic Icons', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures*, 38.1 (2012), 84–112.

with other Cypriot bishops over the recognition of the archbishop's primacy. Although Constantinople supported Nikephoros in his attempt to restore canonical order, the power struggle among Orthodox prelates did not end.<sup>96</sup> It is in this context that Nikephoros presented himself as the legitimate successor of St Barnabas, through the depiction of the imperial privileges in the Kalopanagiotis reliquary (1641) and the 1673 icon of the enthroned St Barnabas mentioned earlier.<sup>97</sup>

Nikephoros' tenure would soon be threatened by an even greater opponent. In 1674, Hilarion Kigalas (1674–78), formerly student of the Pontificio Collegio Greco di Sant' Atanasio in Rome and pro-Catholic missionary, managed — partly with the help of Nektarios, the former Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem (1660–69) — to depose Nikephoros and become archbishop of Cyprus. Kigalas' rise to the throne and his earlier anti-Catholic collaboration with Nektarios, coincided with the leading role exercised by the patriarchs of Jerusalem (especially Dositheos II, 1669–1707, and Chrysanthos, 1707–31), in refuting Roman Catholic theology and defending Orthodox possessions in the Holy Land.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, Kigalas' need to distance himself from both his pro-Catholic past and Nikephoros highlighted his declared attachment to the Byzantine Orthodox tradition and St Barnabas. Kigalas' public image was in line with broader developments among the Orthodox throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans: a renewed interest in the Byzantine roots of Orthodoxy and a tendency towards 'hierocracy' (per Dimiter Angelov), namely the continuation of the Byzantine imperial idea through church representatives. These hierocratic tendencies — strengthened after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and revived under Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem and the Moldavian/Vlachian princes —

---

<sup>96</sup> Michael, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου*, pp. 78–79, 108–9.

<sup>97</sup> Reliquary: Christodoulos Hadjichristodoulou, 'Κτήτορες ναών και δωρητές κειμηλίων την εποχή της Τουρκοκρατίας στην Κύπρο (1571–1878)', I (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cyprus, 2008), pp. 66–67.

<sup>98</sup> Zacharias N. Tsirpanlis, 'Μορφές επικοινωνίας του κυπριακού μοναχισμού με την καθολική Δύση (17<sup>ος</sup> αι.)', *Δωδώνη* 25 (1996), 130–36; Theocharis Stavridis in *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο και Κύπρος. Τα πατριαρχικά έγγραφα των ετών, 1600–1878* (Nicosia: Holy Monastery of Kykkos Research Centre, 2001), pp. 24–26; Kitromilides, *Κυπριακή Λογιοσύνη*, pp. 152–55; Tsirpanlis, *Ο Κυπριακός Ελληνισμός*, pp. 128–36, 171–81.

went back to Late Byzantium.<sup>99</sup> The broader re-appearance of Byzantine 'hierocracy' could explain why Kigalas promoted the veneration of St Barnabas by restoring the saint's Byzantine monastery outside Constantia and composing hymns for his feast-day (11 June). Wishing to emphasise the archbishop's primacy among his fellow bishops, Kigalas also declared, in a 1676 document, that the imperial sceptre and the cinnabar-red signature had been exclusively granted to the archbishop by the emperors of old: Zeno and Justinian (probably referring to Justinian II, 685–95 and 705–11, but sometimes confused with Justinian I, 527–65).<sup>100</sup>

Kigalas' pro-Orthodox, hierocratic and anti-Catholic activities would sanction the on-going centralisation of the Orthodox archbishop and his restricted hegemony over all other Christian confessions on the island. Around the end of the seventeenth century, if not earlier, the Orthodox hierarchy seems to have eventually realised that Western Catholic powers had no interest in sending an expeditionary force to liberate Cyprus from the Ottomans.<sup>101</sup> The dreams for a *Constantinus Novus* from the West disappeared; the archbishop was now the island's *Constantinus*, or rather *Barnabas*

<sup>99</sup> Selected bibliography on hierocracy: Δέκα τουρκικά έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483–1567), ed. and comm. Elisabeth A. Zachariadou (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation–Hellenic Institute of Byzantine Studies, 1996), pp. 41–50; Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 351–416 (employing the term 'hierocracy'); Bernard Russell, 'From the 'Shield of Orthodoxy' to the 'Tome of Joy': The anti-Western stance of Dositheos II of Jerusalem (1641–1707)', in *Orthodox Constructions of the West*, ed. George Demetracopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 71–82; Frédéric Gabriel, 'Tradition orientale et *vera ecclesia*: une critique hiérosolymitaine de la primauté pontificale. Nektarios, de Jassy à Londres (v. 1671–1702)', in *Réduire le schisme? Ecclésiologies et politiques de l'Union entre Orient et Occident (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. Marie-Hélène Blanchet and Frédéric Gabriel (Paris: Collège de France – CNRS, 2013), 198–236; Ioannis Kyriakantonakis, 'Between Dispute and Erudition. Conflicting Readings of Byzantine History in Early Modern Greek Historical Literature', in *Héritages de Byzance en Europe du Sud-Est à l'époque moderne et contemporaine*, ed. Olivier Delouis, Anne Couderc and Petre Guran (Athènes: École Française d'Athènes, 2013), pp. 161–78; Kitromilides, 'The Byzantine Legacy', pp. 655–58.

<sup>100</sup> *Ακολουθία τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου ἀποστόλου Βαρνάβα* (Venice: Antoni Bortoli, 1756), p. 30; *Bibliographie hellénique*, III, ed. Émile Legrand (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895), p. 324; Andreas Tillyrides, 'Άγνωστα κείμενα διὰ τοὺς μητροπολίτας Κυρηναίας Τιμόθεον (1625;–1647), Πάφου καὶ Τριμυθούντος Νεκτάριον (1677–1686) καὶ Αμαθούντος Γερμανόν (1572–1600)', *Θεολογία*, 46.4 (1975), 825–27; *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο καὶ Κύπρος*, ed. Theocharis Stavridis, pp. 39–40, 272–75 (esp. at p. 274).

<sup>101</sup> Stavridis in *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο καὶ Κύπρος*, p. 26; Hassiotis, 'Οι αντιτουρκικές κινήσεις', p. 179.

*Novus*. The archbishop's increasing collaboration with the Ottoman ruling elite, mostly in matters of taxation, created new conditions that enhanced Cyprus' alienation from the West, in terms of the abandonment of the pro-Catholic line pursued by seventeenth-century archbishops.<sup>102</sup> One of Kigalas' eighteenth-century successors, Archbishop Philotheos, would stress the Byzantinised image of the Orthodox primate even further.

Philotheos wished to repudiate claims made by the Orthodox patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem concerning the status of the Orthodox archbishop of Cyprus. This crisis went back to 1600, when Archbishop Athanasios (1592–1600) had been deposed by Patriarch Matthew II of Constantinople (1599–1602), for his uncanonical behaviour and activities. When Athanasios turned against the representatives of Patriarch Meletios Pegas of Alexandria (1590–1601) – namely the people supervising the local situation *in lieu* of the Constantinopolitan primate – Patriarch Joachim Ibn Ziade of Antioch (1593–1604) took the opportunity to claim jurisdiction over the Orthodox Church of Cyprus. Meletios Pegas and Matthew II sided with the Cypriots and the autocephaly discussions seemed, for the moment, to have ended.<sup>103</sup> It was around the same period that Logizos Skevophylax pointed out in his chronicle that the Orthodox archbishop of Cyprus was free from patriarchal jurisdiction and enjoyed the special privilege of being dressed in red. This shows that the imperial privileges were also employed as a way of re-affirming Cypriot ecclesiastical independence in the Orthodox world. But around the late seventeenth century,<sup>104</sup> Patriarch Dositheos II of Jerusalem came to challenge the privileged status of the archbishop; according to Dositheos, the Cypriot archbishop was simply one of many 'ordinary metropolitans

---

<sup>102</sup> Michael, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου*, pp. 80–81, 109–10, 121.

<sup>103</sup> *Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο και Κύπρος*, ed. Stavridis, pp. 31–37, 257–65; see also, Archbishop Chrysostomos Papadopoulos of Athens, *Η Εκκλησία Κύπρου*, pp. 35–36; Michael, *Η Εκκλησία της Κύπρου*, pp. 104–5; Carsten-Michael Walbiner, 'The relations between the Greek Orthodox of Syria and Cyprus in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Chronos*, 16 (2007), 113–28.

<sup>104</sup> Kostas Sarris, 'Ο Χρύσανθος Νοταράς και η έκδοση της 'Δωδεκαβίβλου' του Δοσιθέου Ιεροσολύμων: μια περίπτωση αναληθούς χρονολογίας έκδοσης (1715/c. 1722)', *Μνήμων*, 27 (2005), 29–30.

vested with independent powers'.<sup>105</sup> Archbishop Philotheos replied to Dositheos by turning once again to the apostolic past of Cyprus and the Byzantine 'imperial privileges', so as to strengthen his argument that the Cypriot archbishop was more than an independent metropolitan. In c. 1744, Philotheos had the discovery of St Barnabas' relics and the imperial privileges painted on the walls of St John the Theologian's cathedral in Nicosia.<sup>106</sup> In 1756, he sponsored the publication of St Barnabas' Office in Venice.<sup>107</sup> In 1788, his *Presentation of the Privileges of the Church of the Cypriots* (written in 1740 and attacking Dositheos' thesis) was published as an appendix to Archimandrite Kyprianos' *Chronological History of the Island of Cyprus*.<sup>108</sup> The Byzantine imperial idea, inseparable from the notions of apostolicity and doctrinal correctness, was becoming more and more embedded in the core identity of the island's Christian leader. In 1812, a few years before his execution during the great anti-Ottoman revolution of 1821 in Greece, Archbishop Kyprianos (1810–21) had his inkpot decorated with the images of St Barnabas and Emperor Zeno granting the privileges to the island's primates. In a masterful stroke of visual rhetoric, Archbishop Kyprianos was himself depicted to be holding the sceptre, while lifting up the fallen personification of Ottoman-ruled Cyprus.<sup>109</sup>

## 6. CONCLUSION

This paper set out to investigate the appropriation of Byzantine culture, especially church culture, during the first century of Ottoman domination in Cyprus. We have argued that this process produced new and mutually understandable forms of a

---

<sup>105</sup> John Hackett, *A History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus* (London: Methuen, 1901), pp. 246–50 (quotation at p. 249).

<sup>106</sup> Athanasios Papageorghiou, 'Ο καθεδρικός ναός του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου. Προβλήματα της ιστορίας της μονής του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Πίπη και της εικονογράφησης του ναού', *Κυπριακαί Σπουδαί*, 61 (1997), 64, 69–75.

<sup>107</sup> This is the aforementioned *Ακολουθία τοῦ ἁγίου ἐνδόξου ἀποστόλου Βαρνάβα*, which includes Kigalas' hymns on St Barnabas.

<sup>108</sup> Archimandrite Kyprianos, *Ιστορία Χρονολογική*, pp. 370–90; Hackett, *A History*, pp. 250–60.

<sup>109</sup> Englezakis, *Είκοσι μελέται*, pp. 367, 371–76.

transcultural language employed in both communal (intra-Orthodox) and inter-confessional communication. The core area of this koine was the Eastern Mediterranean, although its echo reached as far as the Louvre and the Lutheran humanists of Germany. The eclectic re-appearance and metamorphosis of Byzantine cultural elements served the construction of images of power and the self-definition of groups and individuals identifying themselves with Byzantine ideas, symbols and practices.

- (a) *Byzantine religious culture and Christian humanism.* As noted at the beginning of this paper, the seventeenth-century Byzantine koine focused on Late Antiquity/Early Byzantium and the concept of a unified Christian Roman world. The idea of a common Christian past is reflected, among many other cases of artistic interaction and theological *ressourcement*, in the publication of the Epiphanius frontispiece by Adolos, which should be read in the context of Roman Catholic anti-Reformation apologetics. The collecting of Byzantine manuscripts and Greek books with Byzantine materials by learned Western Europeans brought Cyprus at the forefront of the early modern re-discovery and selective adaptation of Byzantine culture, contributing to the formation of novel images of power (Catholic absolutism) and confessional identity (Lutheran revival of the early church). Cypriot scribes and scholars involved in the process of cultural dialogue (e.g., Philotheos of Hierax, Eustratios Leontios and Athanasios the Rhetor) did so for different reasons (e.g., local patriotism, confessional openness, love of learning, and pro-Catholic zeal); some of them managed to cultivate friendly relations with the West, without necessarily distancing themselves from their religious and cultural tradition.
- (b) *Constantinian monarchy.* By c. 1600, the symbolism of the Cross as an emblem of Christian unity *vis-à-vis* Muslim victory was stressed anew in East and West. This paper has proposed that Roman Catholics from Western Europe and Orthodox Cypriots might have approached the Cypriot legacies of

Constantine, Helen and the Cross as points of reference to the ideologies of Catholic 'Constantinian' monarchies and the *translatio imperii* from Byzantium to the West. Although this is a hypothesis, it seems to be supported by the following points: (i) the broader ideological background; (ii) the Cypriot traditions on Constantine/Helen and the Cross going back to the Byzantine period; and (iii) Cypriot appeals to Western powers to liberate their island.

- (c) *Byzantine imperial privileges*. In the seventeenth century, the Orthodox archbishop's imperial privileges, borrowed from the sixteenth-century Latin archbishop of Nicosia, expressed primacy, apostolicity and doctrinal correctness. The archbishop's high status was recognised by both Muslims and Christians (Orthodox and non-Orthodox alike) in Cyprus; it was also defended against the claims of other Cypriot bishops and the demands/criticisms of the patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem.

Multi-faith Cyprus in the 1600s was an island experiencing the sharing, appropriation, re-working, and even invention of cultural expressions related to Christian humanism, Constantinian monarchy and the Byzantine imperial heritage of the Orthodox Church under the Ottomans. These symbols, ideas and practices were dynamically employed in the communication and conflicts of groups and people in the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond. Long after its collapse, the empire of the Orthodox *Romaioi* was still alive in faith and ritual, in images of power and age-old manuscripts, in people's expectations and their ambitions.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is part of the research project 'Aspects of multiconfessionalism and human geography in early modern Cyprus, from the Venetians to the Ottomans — *CyChrist*' (RESTART 2016–20, DIDAKTOR, POST-DOC/0916/0060), co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus, through the Cyprus

Researcher and Innovation Foundation, and hosted by the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation. I would like to thank the journal's anonymous reviewers for their criticisms, corrections, and suggestions. Many thanks go to the director of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation and coordinator of this project, Dr Ioanna Hadjicosti. I am indebted to Dr Charalambos Dendrinou, Dr Vlada Stankovic, and Dr Panos Christodoulou, for our fruitful discussions on the main ideas developed in this paper, and to Dr Claudia Sode, who kindly shared with me her paper on Leontios Eustratios.

# The Topic of Persia in Medieval Literary Imagination, with a Focus on Middle High German Literature



Albrecht Classen  
University of Arizona

*Abstract: After a review of how the western world has viewed Persia and Persian culture since the turn of the eighteenth century, this article explores older forms of reception of Persia, first during the seventeenth century, but then, which is the main focus, in the high and late Middle Ages. As far as I can tell, Middle High German poets seem to have been at the forefront within the European context of engaging with the topic of Persia in their romances and other genres. Many of those references, of course, constitute nothing but fiction, and they were most likely not based on practical travel experiences or personal encounters. Nevertheless, we can identify a significant interest in that part of 'the East,' probably determined by the strong impact of the myth of Alexander the Great and his conquest of the Persian empire in the third century BCE on medieval literature. However, most of the references to Persia go far beyond that ancient topic and might signal a significant opening up toward non-European culture to the east already during the high and late Middle Ages. The thematic approach identified here facilitates the combination of a number of different texts from the late twelfth to the late fifteenth and even sixteenth century and intends to provide a new puzzle piece to the exploration of the notion of the Global Middle Ages.*

## PERSIA AND THE WEST IN CULTURAL-HISTORICAL TERMS

Persia can boast of a long and very rich history and culture that date back to antiquity and exerted a wide influence throughout time,<sup>1</sup> even though modern research has paid fairly little attention to the intellectual exchanges, or at least to the reception of Persia in western literature or the arts.<sup>2</sup> While we know a lot about nineteenth-century European interest in Persia, earlier forms of reception have been mostly ignored, or are assumed not to have existed.<sup>3</sup> As Richard N. Frye now argues, 'Persia has changed from being seen in ancient times as a respected enemy, to an envied enemy, a respected friend, a despised friend, and currently a despised enemy'.<sup>4</sup> While Persia mattered considerably for the West during antiquity, with the arrival of the Arabs and their conquest of Persia in the seventh century, that is, with the fall of the Sasanian Empire of Iran (Persia) in 651, the situation changed radically.<sup>5</sup>

From a cultural-historical perspective, however, the West has had a continuous interest in Iran, formerly Persia, as documented, for instance, by great literary and philological efforts well before the modern age. This study will present substantial evidence that medieval German poets, above all, had a fairly clear sense of Persia and projected it as an impressive, if not ideal, culture, although the Persians were not

---

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Parker and Brenda Parker, *The Persians: Lost Civilizations* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> *Eastern Voyages, Western Visions: French Writing and Painting of the Orient*, ed. by Margaret Topping (Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> *Persien im Spiegel Deutschlands: Konstruktionsvarianten von Persien-Bildern in der deutschsprachigen Literatur vom 18. bis in das 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Christine Maillard and Hamid Tafazoli, *Faustus/études germaniques* (Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2018); Marzieh Gail, *Persia and the Victorians* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1951); John D. Yohannan, *Persian Poetry in England and America: A Two Hundred Year History* (New York, NY: Caravan Books, 1977); Hasan Javadi, *Persian Literary Influence on English Literature: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2004); Laetitia Nanquette, *Orientalism Versus Occidentalism: Literary and Cultural Imaging Between France and Iran Since the Islamic Revolution* (New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2013); Hamid Dabashi, *Persophilia: Persian Culture on the Global Scene* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Richard N. Frye, 'Persia in the Mind of the West', in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 14.4 (2003), 403–06 (p. 403).

<sup>5</sup> Frye, 14.4, 404.

Christians. The purpose cannot be to identify what was actually known about that country far to the east; instead, the interest here focuses on imagology – the working of images about the world, or cross-national perceptions – and mentality in high and late medieval German literature.<sup>6</sup> The guiding question will hence be how medieval German poets projected that distant land/culture and how they evaluated Persia as such, contributing thereby to a kind of Persia discourse already in the thirteenth century and beyond (maybe even a kind of Persophilia). To set the stage for my actual analysis, I will first explore connections between both worlds as they emerged in the modern period.

## PERSIA IN LATE EIGHTEENTH- AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY WESTERN LITERATURE

Since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, above all, western scholars and poets have embarked on studying Persian literature, art, and philosophy more intensively. The Frenchman Anquetil Duperron was the first to translate the *Vendidad* (a kind of an ecclesiastical code) in 1759, followed by works done by Sir William Jones (1746–1794) and Sylvestre de Sacy, who worked on *Pahlavi* texts. The German Romantic poet and scholar Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866) was one of the first to make major contributions to the study of Oriental languages, especially by translating many Asian literary texts, including Persian, such as in his *Die Weisheit des Brahmanen* (The Wisdom of the Brahmins), published in six volumes from 1836 to 1839.<sup>7</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had already transformed many of the poems by the medieval Persian poet Hafiz (1315–1390) into his own creations in his *West-Östlicher Diwan*

---

<sup>6</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'Imagination, Fantasy, Otherness, and Monstrosity in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age', in *Imagination and Fantasy in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Projections, Dreams, Monsters, and Illusions*, ed. by Albrecht Classen, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 24 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020), 1–229.

<sup>7</sup> *Der Weltpoet Friedrich Rückert, 1788–1866: Dichter, Orientalist, Zeitkritiker*, ed. by Rudolf Kreutner (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2016).

(1814–1816),<sup>8</sup> based on the translation by the Austrian Orientalist, Baron Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856) in the *Enzyklopädische Übersicht der Wissenschaften des Orients* (1806).<sup>9</sup> Additionally, numerous English poets from the Victorian period engaged extensively with ‘classical’ medieval and modern Persian literature, as Reza Taher-Kermani has now demonstrated in his recent study.<sup>10</sup> If we widen our perspective, we actually recognize a kind of *Persophilia* throughout the nineteenth century, as illustrated already by Hamid Dabashi.<sup>11</sup> Let us next take into view what Baroque writers had to say about Persia, a time when the interest in that country developed first more noticeably.

## PERSIA IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY WESTERN LITERATURE

Recent scholarship has been able to identify older efforts by western intellectuals to learn about Persia; writers, diplomats, and scientists began to explore that part of the Middle East since the early seventeenth century. Most importantly, the Persian poet and Sheik Muslih al-Dīn Sa’di, author of works such as *Bustān* (1255) and the *Rose Garden* (*Gulistān*) (1258), was translated into French for the first time by André de Ryer in 1634. This was followed by a Latin translation in 1651 by Georgius Gentius, parallel with the Persian text: *Musledini Sadi, Rozarium Politicum, sive amoenium sortis Humane Thearum, de Persico Latinum versum necessaiue illustratum*. On the basis of the French

---

<sup>8</sup> Atefeh Soleimani, *Goethes Persien-Bild: eine intertextuelle Studie zum ‘West-Östlichen Divan’*, Siegener Schriften zur Kanonforschung, 12 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> J. T. P. de Bruijn, ‘Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph Freiherr von’, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XI.6 (2003, updated 2012), 644–46 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hammer-purgstall>> [accessed 1 May 2020].

<sup>10</sup> Reza Taher-Kermani, *The Persian Presence in Victorian Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020). As he summarized in an email to me on 26 April 2020: ‘...my scope in the book is not confined to the study of translations of medieval Persian poetry. The word “Persia” meant more to the Victorians than the poetry of Persia’s medieval poets (e.g., Khayyām or Firdausi). Knowledge of the country had reached the discursive realms of British imagination through thousands of years and from a variety of sources including Classical and Biblical texts, history, and travel-writings’. I would like to express my gratitude to him for reading a draft of my article and for providing me with some valuable feedback concerning his research area.

<sup>11</sup> Dabashi, *Persophilia*.

translation, Friedrich Ochsenbach created a German version in 1636 with the title *Gulistan. das ist / Königlicher Rosengart*. In 1654, the North-German diplomat and scholar Adam Olearius published his German translation under the title *Persianischer Rosenthal*, which was subsequently re-published numerous times, including in 1688 and 1696.<sup>12</sup>

## PERSIA IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

However, here I want to go even further back and probe whether and to what extent medieval German poets commented on Persia. We can be certain that this was the case, although scholarship has not yet fully paid attention to this topic. We must accept, however, that it would be highly unlikely that those literary remarks were based on actual knowledge about Persia drawn from personal travels, although famous authors such as Marco Polo and Odorico da Pordenone did not ignore that region in their travelogues altogether. The former, for instance, states in his *Travels* (c. 1300): 'Persia, a very great province and at one time a very splendid and powerful one, but now ravaged and devastated by the Tartars. In Persia is the city called Saveh, from which the three Magi set out when they came to worship Jesus Christ with some efforts'.<sup>13</sup> The latter only touched on Persia, but did not engage further with it.<sup>14</sup> Late medieval spectators might also have been able to glean some information about Persia

---

<sup>12</sup> Wolfgang Struck, "'Persien in Persien suchen und nicht finden": Adam Olearius und Paul Fleming auf der Reise nach Isfahan (1633–1639)', in *Ins Fremde schreiben: Gegenwartsliteratur auf den Spuren historischer und fantastischer Entdeckungsreisen*, ed. by Christof Hamann, Poesis, 5 (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), pp. 23–41; Franklin Lewis, 'Golestān-e Sa'dī', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, XI/1 (2012), 79–86 <<http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/golestan-e-sadi>>; Elio Brancaforte, 'Persian Words of Wisdom: Seventeenth-Century European Translations of Sa'dī's *Gulistan*', in *Knowledge in Motion: Constructing Transcultural Experience in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods (1200–1750)*, ed. by Gerhild Scholz Williams and Christian Schneider, *Daphnis* 45.3–4 (Leiden and Boston: Brill Rodopi, 2017), pp. 450–72; Albrecht Classen, 'Persia in German Baroque Literature: Sa'dī's *Rose Garden* and Adam Olearius's Embassy to Persia: New Ways in Approaching World Literature from a Pre-Modern Perspective', *Orbis Litterarum*, 76.2 (2021), 51–66.

<sup>13</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by Ronald Latham (London: Penguin, 1958), p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Odorico da Pordenone, *Relatio de mirabilibus orientalium Tatarorum*, ed. by Annalia Marchisio, Edizione nazionale dei testi mediolatini d'Italia, 41. Series I, 23 (Florence: Sismel – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2016), I.7; III.14; V.6.

on *mappae mundi*, such as the one in Hereford and the one in Ebstorf (both early fourteenth century), although such world maps did not really serve to provide geographical orientation for travelers.<sup>15</sup> None of that, however, would indicate that the medieval poets and their audiences had a clear concept of the geographic and cultural identity of 'Persia', which for them was simply situated east of Damascus, maybe centered on Babylon, the iconic city in the East which the Old Testament had already discussed so much. Nevertheless, there is a clear distinction between the Arab and the Persian world, as our literary sources will confirm.

In the process of 'worldmaking', as Nelson Goodman called it, i.e., a projection of other parts of the world in people's minds, western people had plenty of opportunities to imagine Persia, especially through the lens of the historical and literary accounts of Alexander the Great.<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer reports about the knight in the General Prologue to his *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1400) that he had been involved in many different battles against Muslims, but the farthest he had travelled appears to have been Turkey and Armenia, and not Persia.<sup>17</sup> His near contemporary, the South-Tyrolean (German) poet Oswald von Wolkenstein, boasted of having seen many parts of Europe and the Middle East, and even included Persia in the list of countries he had visited in his past life – 'Durch Barbarei, Arabia, | durch Hermani in Persia' (Kl. 44, 1–2; [I traveled] through Barbary, Arabia, Armenia and Persia) – but this probably amounted to nothing but name dropping.<sup>18</sup> Even if Oswald had reached those distant

---

<sup>15</sup> Jürgen Wilke, *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte*, 2 vols, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für historische Landesforschung der Universität Göttingen, 39 (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2001); *Die Ebstorfer Weltkarte, kommentierte Neuausgabe in zwei Bänden*, ed. by Hartmut Kugler, Sonja Glauch and Antje Willing, 2 vols (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis, IN; Hackett, 1978). For numerous responses to his ideas, see the contributions to *Worldmaking*, ed. by William Pencak, *Critic of Institutions*, 6 (New York: Peter Lang, 1996); see also the contributions in *Cultural Ways of Worldmaking: Media and Narratives*, ed. by Vera Nünning, Ansgar Nünning and Birgit Neumann, in collaboration with Mirjam Horn, *Concepts for the Study of Culture*, 1 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. by Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 2012), General Prologue, vv. 51–67. See also the contributions in *The Oxford Companion to Chaucer*, ed. by Douglas Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> *Die Lieder Oswalds von Wolkenstein*, ed. by Karl Kurt Klein, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, rev. by Burghart Wachinger, *Altdeutsche Textbibliothek*, 55 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2015).

countries, which is not completely unlikely in his case, his audience would not have been able to comprehend the specific global perspectives projected here.

Could we thus leave this topic and be content with the sense that Persia indeed was not yet of real relevance for most people in the high and late Middle Ages? Its presence in medieval literature indicates that we should not dismiss this topic out of hand. The name of Persia also appears in other contexts and was used, for instance, by Chaucer, John Gower, and William Caxton on some occasions, but not in any systematic or deliberate fashion.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, I want to examine specifically how references to Persia entered a range of medieval German literary works and what they might have meant for the various poets. Analyzing the fictional accounts allows us to comprehend the 'mindwork', or spatial mentality, of that time,<sup>20</sup> specifically regarding common notions about countries east of Europe, whether based on 'classical' sources, unidentified oral accounts by travelers/merchants, or imagination.<sup>21</sup> I will finally reflect on the meaning of this imagination of Persia for our currently emerging concept of Global Medieval Studies. The notion of 'worldmaking' as applied here can only refer to a slow accumulation of loose references to that eastern country, somehow associated with wonders of nature and a sophisticated culture, though not yet Christianized. The poets' efforts regarding Persia did, however, lead to a kind of aggregate concept, which might have laid the foundation for early modern explorations of Persia by such travelers and linguists as Adam Olearius.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See the entry on 'Persian. *n.* and *adj.*', *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www-oed-com.ezproxy1.library.arizona.edu/view/Entry/141452?redirectedFrom=Persian#eid>> [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>20</sup> Alexander W. Astin, *Mindworks: Becoming More Conscious in an Unconscious World* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> *Imagination and Fantasy in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Projections, Dreams, Monsters, and Illusions*, ed. by Albrecht Classen, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 24 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Classen, 'Persia in German Baroque Literature'.

## PERSIA IN MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN LITERATURE

Anyone interested in world history, especially antiquity, during the Middle Ages was fully aware of the major accomplishments of Alexander the Great (356–325 BCE). No medieval world chronicle could afford to ignore the most successful Macedonian general and ruler,<sup>23</sup> and the number of literary manifestations involving his life is simply legion. There are many facets in his biography that easily explain the emergence of a veritable myth surrounding this astounding leader who managed to defeat the Persian Emperor Darius and establish his own control over vast territories in the Middle East up to India, Palestine, Egypt, and neighboring countries. Medieval artists and poets responded to this myth in a myriad of fashions,<sup>24</sup> and it is no surprise that he also figures prominently on various *mappae mundi*.<sup>25</sup> In the next section, I will examine a variety of Middle High German voices addressing Alexander and Persia, whether identified as a kingdom or an empire, in order to identify a pervasive and intriguing topic in late medieval German literature influenced by pre-modern ideas of globalism. While medieval and early modern poets regularly talk about ‘Saracens’ as their enemies or simply as religious foreigners, certainly using it as a pejorative term for Muslims in the Arabic world,<sup>26</sup> the reference to Persia appears to constitute a different category. Imagologically, Persia was deeply associated with the classical account of Alexander conquering that huge kingdom/empire, and although the Persians are systematically identified as non-Christians, we will observe a considerable degree of respect for Persian rulers or knights in German/European narratives.

---

<sup>23</sup> Though he is mentioned many times throughout, there is no separate entry for Alexander in the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. by Graeme Dunphy, 2 vols (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Rolf Bräuer, ‘Alexander der Große: Der Mythos vom unbesiegbaren Eroberer der Welt als Vorbild, Warnung und pejoratives Exempel’, in *Herrscher, Helden Heilige*, ed. by Ulrich Müller and Werner Wunderlich, *Mittelalter Mythen*, 1 (St. Gall: UVK – Fachverlag für Wissenschaft und Studium, 1996), pp. 3–19.

<sup>25</sup> Jutta Zackor, *Alexander der Grosse auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten: Alexander Macedo – domitor mundi?* (Berlin: Winter Industries, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: Interpretations of the Chansons de Geste* (Edinburgh University Press, 1984).

## PRIEST LAMBRECHT

We know of many different versions of the Alexander story in medieval literature, whether we think of Walter of Châtillon<sup>27</sup> or Priest Lambrecht.<sup>28</sup> But wherever we look, the basic story line is always the same, with Alexander waging his war against the mighty but ineffectual Persian Emperor Darius whom he eventually defeats, whereupon Alexander explores further countries to the north and east, until he finally turns west again to rule over his empire. We are specifically told many times that the young leader energetically fights against his enemies and that he manages to gain victory each time, but Persia as such, in geo-physical, political, economic, or artistic terms, does not emerge in our mind.

In his *Alexanderlied* (c. 1150), Lambrecht emphasizes the personal exchanges between Alexander and Darius until the latter's death. The battles themselves are also of great interest to the poet, whereas the Middle Eastern empire hardly gains in profile. Darius, however, is gloriously presented: 'Der Persen kuninc hēre, | der vil grōzir ēre | wielt ubir manich rīche' (3302–04; The King of the Persians who ruled with great honor over many countries).<sup>29</sup> However, according to the poet, as soon as he realizes that many of his men have been killed or wounded, he is the first to flee, which makes the entire army run with him, granting the Greeks (Macedonians) absolute

---

<sup>27</sup> Walter of Châtillon, *The Alexandreis of Walter of Châtillon: A Twelfth-Century Epic*, trans. by David Townsend, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> *Alexander the Great in the Middle Ages: Transcultural Perspectives*, ed. by Markus Stock (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2016); *Alexanderdichtungen im Mittelalter: Kulturelle Selbstbestimmung im Kontext literarischer Beziehungen*, ed. by Jan Cölln, Susanne Friede, and Hartmut Wulfram, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Göttinger Sonderforschungsbereich 529: Internationalität nationaler Literaturen, 1 (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2000). For the Persian tradition, see *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. by Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Richard Netton, Ancient Narrative, 15 (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing and Groningen University Library, 2012). For the Arabic tradition, see Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus: A Survey of the Alexander Tradition Through Seven Centuries: From Pseudo-Callisthenes to Sūrī*, Mediaevalia Groningana New Series (Paris and Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

<sup>29</sup> All translations of Lambrecht's texts are my own.

victory, while Darius appears like a coward and an unworthy leader of his army (3331–42).

Remarkably, Lambrecht comments on the great grief affecting all of the country where parents mourn the deaths of their sons, wives the deaths of their husbands, and children the deaths of their fathers. Darius, however, is increasingly characterized as a weak personality who gives in completely to crying over his miserable defeat.<sup>30</sup> While in the past he had conquered many countries and gained the highest respect in the world, now he has been defeated by this Greek warrior, who brought the greatest shame upon him (3303–421). He blames the workings of Fortuna and thus indirectly responds, at least in the medieval context, to the teachings by Boethius in *De consolatione philosophiae* (c. 524), but then in a letter he tries to appeal to Alexander to accept his peace offering, which would make the opponent the de facto ruler of Persia (3479). Of course, as we know from history, and Lambrecht does not deviate from his Franco-Provencal source in this regard, Alexander does not accept this proposal and keeps fighting, both against Darius and then against the Indian King Porus, always gaining victories, irrespective of what new military challenges he has to handle, such as elephants as attack animals.

In the famous letter to the philosopher Aristotle, Alexander outlines the many different wonders he and his men have experienced, which represents a twelfth-century concept of the exotic aspects in the East, Orientalism *avant la lettre*, so to speak.<sup>31</sup> At the end, Alexander even arrives at the wall surrounding Paradise, but must realize and accept that he has reached the limits of his powers, so he finally returns west. Persia itself, its culture or people, however, do not enter this picture developed

---

<sup>30</sup> For other parallel cases of miserable, pathetic male figures in medieval German literature, see Albrecht Classen, 'Angst vor dem Tod: Jämmerliche Männerfiguren in der deutschen Literatur des Spätmittelalters (von *Mauritius von Craûn* zu Heinrich Kaufringer und *Till Eulenspiegel*)', in *Jenseits: Eine mittelalterliche und mediävistische Imagination: Interdisziplinäre Ansätze zur Analyse des Unerklärlichen*, ed. by Christa Agnes Tuczay, Beihefte zur Mediävistik, 21 (Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 213–31.

<sup>31</sup> Florian Schmitz, *Der Orient in Diskursen des Mittelalters und im 'Willehalm' Wolframs von Eschenbach*, Kultur, Wissenschaft, Literatur: Beiträge zur Mittelalterforschung, 32 (Berlin, Bern, et al.: Peter Lang, 2018).

by Lambrecht (or Walther of Châtillon), apart from very general comments that hardly contribute to specific cultural awareness.

Even though Alexander overcomes all opposition, defeats all his enemies, and then ascends to the Persian throne, he does not become a second Persian emperor with the typical trappings of an Asian autocrat, focused only on his own affairs. Instead, he endeavors very hard to be a fair ruler, granting justice to everyone who deserves it, and punishing those who have proven to be traitors, and this to the full satisfaction both of the Persians and the Greeks (3978). Otherwise, Lambrecht brings to the table the same fabulous accounts as were contained in the ancient narratives about Alexander. Persia itself, however, remains a fairly unspecific country in the East where the ancient hero Alexander gained his greatest victories and experienced miraculous situations.<sup>32</sup>

## WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH

We encounter another significant reference to Persia in Wolfram von Eschenbach's epic poem composed in the vein of a *chanson de geste*, *Willehalm* (c. 1220), based mostly on the Old French *chanson de geste* *Aliscans*. Here the protagonist has to defend himself against a huge army of Muslim and Persian forces that besiege his castle in Provence. As we know from the French source, he had himself been taken prisoner by the Muslim lord Tibalt, but the latter's wife, Arabel, had fallen in love with Willehalm and then eloped with him back to France, where she converted to Christianity and assumed the name of Gyburc. In the first part, we encounter the protagonist facing an overwhelming hostile army that slaughters all of his men – only the protagonist manages to survive and to return to his castle, which Gyburc is defending on her new husband's behalf.<sup>33</sup> One of the greatest losses for Willehalm is the death of his nephew

---

<sup>32</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'Globalism before Globalism: The Alexander Legend in Medieval Literature (Priest Lambrecht's Account as a Pathway to Early Global Perspectives)', *Esboços: histories in global contexts*, 28:49 (2021), 813–833.

<sup>33</sup> Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Willehalm*, ed. by Werner Schröder (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1978); for an online version of Karl Lachmann's fifth edition (1891), see <<http://www.hs->

Vivianz, who dies while lying in his lap (47–48), but he has no resources left to avenge the death of the young man. After all, as the narrator clearly indicates, the small Christian band of warriors faces a huge army consisting of many different peoples: ‘A company assembled from far and wide was riding in the army of Terramer, and many Moors, black but radiantly beautiful, who had decked themselves out splendidly before they commenced their charge’ (32).<sup>34</sup> Willehalm will later remember especially Vivianz’s death after he has defeated the Persian prince.

The situation for Willehalm is nothing less but desperate, facing a hostile ‘global’ army, so to speak, with all of his men dead at the end, with the Christian cause basically lost after this attack from forces having arrived from many parts of the eastern world (49–59). The tired man then tries to make his way back to the castle, when he encounters a group of royal enemies, among them Gyburc’s own son, Ehmereiz, whom she had left behind when she fled together with Willehalm to France to lead a life with him as a Christian woman. The protagonist slays or wounds them all, except for Ehmereiz whom he does not want to touch for those personal reasons (50–51), but only to run into new conflict, this time with two kings, Tenebruns of Liwes Nugruns, and the other, Arofel of Persia, whom the narrator identifies as Gyburc’s uncle (51). In short, Persians are identified as close allies fighting on the Muslim side against Willehalm and hence against the Christian world.

Almost ironically, although the war pits the Christian against the Muslim world, and although the enemies have killed Willehalm’s entire army, the narrator cannot help it but give the Muslims great praise: ‘These were likewise brave knights and veritable rocks in time of the battle, yet these two heroes who had gained much

---

augzburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/13Jh/Wolfram/wol\_wi00.html>; for an English translation, see Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Willehalm*, trans. by Marion E. Gibbs and Sidney M. Johnson (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1984); for critical studies, see the contributions to *Wolfram’s ‘Willehalm’: Fifteen Essays*, ed. by Martin H. Jones and Timothy McFarland, *Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture* (Rochester, NY, and Woodbridge, Suffolk: Camden House, 2002).

<sup>34</sup> Joachim Bumke, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, 8th edn, rev. ed., *Sammlung Metzler*, 36 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2014).

renown were heading for a heavy toll' (51). While Willehalm can apparently defeat Tenebruns and kill him without great effort, he finds a true match in the Persian prince Arofel, who is identified as the finest and most powerful fighter in Terramer's entire army. For Wolfram, Arofel's greatest virtue, apart from his knightly skills, consists of his exorbitant generosity: 'he himself had excelled to such an extent that no more generous hand was known anywhere so long as he was alive' (52).

Tragically, Arofel's armor shifts suddenly during his charge, which exposes his leg, a great opportunity for Willehalm who immediately cuts it off, which makes his opponent defenseless and useless. Lying on the ground, Arofel then begs Willehalm to let him live, which would seem rather likely because of Arofel's high nobility and great accomplishments as a knight, which his opponent would certainly have appreciated despite the military situation and their differences in religion. Being defeated and now completely at Willehalm's mercy, Arofel makes him the greatest possible offer of material wealth if he lets him live. He even reminds the victorious duke that killing him now would not gain him any honor (52), but Willehalm can only think of his own losses, especially of Vivianz's death, so he rejects any deal, even if it were to include so much gold equivalent to the entire Caucasus mountain. Brutally, he then simply slays the amputated man, another terrible victim of this senseless war.<sup>35</sup>

But for Willehalm, this represents the only available opportunity to get back home safely: he puts on Arofel's armor, rides on the latter's horse, and can thus make his way through the hostile army without being identified or accosted (53–54). Ironically, however, when he then arrives at his castle, not even his wife Gyburg recognizes him, and she denies him entrance until he has demonstrated to her that the armor he wears hides his true self.

---

<sup>35</sup> James A. Rushing, Jr., 'Arofel's Death and the Question of Willehalm's Guilt', in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 94.4 (1995), 469–82; Florian Nieser, 'Das getilgte Ding: Arofels Schild im 'Willehalm' Wolframs von Eschenbach', in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 139.3 (2017), 329–44.

We are not told much about Arofel's background, except that he is a most worthy warrior, the king of Persia, enormously rich, and highly virtuous, as demonstrated by his generosity. We are clearly given the impression of a most respectable knight, from Persia, a ruler over many princes, a truly courtly protagonist, practically directly borrowed from any of the many contemporary romances, and certainly a character very parallel to Feirefiz in Wolfram's *Parzival* as will be seen below. When the narrator emphasizes, 'The mighty Arofel was fighting boldly now, and indeed he had already attained renown in full measure' (52), we are given the signal that he is a true match for Willehalm, and the latter might not have won their joust at all, had unfortunate circumstances not intervened. Finally, we must also remember that he is Gyburc's uncle, so again someone belonging to her close family, although the family relationship is not getting really clear in the text. While Willehalm spared her son, he could not do so with her uncle. This then concludes this part of the narrative, and we no longer hear about Persia in any other context.

Surprisingly, when we also consider Wolfram's earlier Grail romance, *Parzival* (c. 1205), where he freely plays with hundreds of names of countries, kingdoms, and other locations, Persia appears only twice, and then just in passing (Book 15, 17, and 657, 27).<sup>36</sup> Once, when Parzival's father roams the eastern world in search of knightly service and glory, he also spends time in Morocco and in Persia, and we are informed about his activities specifically in Damascus and Aleppo, admittedly reflecting a rather confused sense of geography.

In the other chapter, the courtly lady Orgeluse relates to Gawan the history of the magician Clinschor, who had committed adultery with Iblis, the wife of the king of Sicily; but the king had caught the couple *in flagrante* and castrated the competitor as a punishment for his misdeed. Clinschor then turned to magic in order to

---

<sup>36</sup> Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, ed. by Karl Lachmann, trans. by Peter Knecht, intro. by Bernd Schirok (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998). For the English translation, see Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (London: Penguin, 1980).

compensate for his pain and shame, causing much harm to many different people. As the narrator emphasizes, he learned the art of magic not in Persia, but in a city with a very similar name, 'Persidâ'. Wolfram was obviously familiar enough both with the concrete kingdom of Persia as a geo-political entity and the general assumption that it was the origin of the magical arts, but he dismissed that false belief, and he also spurned the opportunity to explore the meaning of the country in the Middle East for his own narrative.

By contrast, in the early part of the romance, Parzival's father had roamed throughout the world in the east and west, and achieved enormous glory, while serving under Baruc, the ruler of Baldac (Baghdad) (ch. 13). It appears rather unclear whether Wolfram might have thought here also of Persia, since Baghdad was founded in the eighth century and soon turned into the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, but geographic precision does not matter to him at any rate, very similar to virtually all medieval poets. He is only concerned here with highlighting the attractiveness of those eastern lands, which could have included the Persian empire as well, if we consider that Baghdad probably belonged to it at that time, but then under Muslim rule. For most medieval poets, and so for Wolfram, the specific geo-political and religious conditions in the East were rather nebulous, and Baghdad was simply an iconic city representing 'otherness.' Marco Polo himself comments about it in a rather unspecific manner: 'In Baghdad, which is a very large city, the Caliph of all the Saracens in the world has his seat, just as the head of all the Christians in the world has his seat at Rome' (51).

### *REINFRIED VON BRAUNSCHWEIG*

We have available a long list of other passages in Middle High German literature where the narrators included some comments on Persia, either as a location where luxury items had originated from (*Mai und Beafloer*), or as a major kingdom/empire in antiquity to which a chronicler felt obliged to refer (*Ottokar, Österreichische*

*Reimchronik*). However, in most cases, Persia appears only fleetingly, maybe as a kind of marker on a mental map which extended also beyond the Holy Land. For instance, the figure of the King of Persia, Arofel, is mentioned once in Ulrich von Liechtenstein's *Frauendienst* (all late thirteenth-century), and in the *Jüngere Titurel* by the poet Albrecht (perhaps von Scharfenberg) another Persian prince joins a tournament and gains much acclaim for his knightly accomplishments. In Wirnt von Grafenberg's *Wigalois* we are even told of the Queen of Persia. Beyond that, there are all kinds of additional allusions to that country in heroic epic poems, in Arthurian tales, in courtly love poems, and other genres.<sup>37</sup>

Persia gains true importance only in the anonymous but expansive romance, *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, from the late thirteenth century. The protagonist embarks on a crusade to the Holy Land and personally decides the final battle through his victory over a Persian prince who was allied with the Muslim forces. For our purposes, this scene with the two protagonists fighting against each other, the prince at the end begging for his life – just like Arofel in Wolfram's *Willehalm* – and Reinfried ultimately realizing that he would not gain much at all from killing his opponent or from forcing him to convert to Christianity, deserves closer analysis.<sup>38</sup> Previous scholarship has already recognized here a remarkable situation in which a definite element of toleration enters the picture because it suddenly dawns upon Reinfried that it would be pointless, if not even foolish, to force a heathen to accept the Christian faith. He would only create a false Christian through that process, deeply hurt and embarrass

---

<sup>37</sup> The *Mittelhochdeutsche Begriffsdatenbank* (Salzburg) lists a total of 638 passages in medieval German literature containing references to Persia.

<<http://mhdadb.sbg.ac.at/mhdadb/App;jsessionid=562A5F3B3112296890B222FD7DCF63E0?action=TextQueryModule&string=Persia&filter=&texts=%21&startButton=Suche+starten&contextSelectListSize=1&contextUnit=1&verticalDetail=3&maxTableSize=100&horizontalDetail=3&nrTextLines=3>> [accessed 18 February 2021].

<sup>38</sup> *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, ed. by Karl Bartsch, trans. by Elisabeth Martschini, 3 vols (Kiel: Solivagus-Verlag, 2018).

the prince, and create more aggression and hostility than to gain a new convert to the own religion.<sup>39</sup>

Undoubtedly, the anonymous poet drew heavily from Wolfram's *Willehalm*, both in his characterization of the Persian prince (here unnamed) and in the description of the battle between Christians and Muslims. However, the defeated opponent is not killed; instead, the two men engage in a lengthy conversation and then basically develop a friendship with each other, whereupon the two embark on a lengthy touristic journey through Persia where Reinfried has the opportunity to witness many of the typical miracles and wonders of the East.

In contrast to Wolfram's *Willehalm*, the anonymous poet makes a great effort to provide us with background information about this Persian prince, here identified as a king. Despite his young age, he stands out in his boldness, courage, energy, and good character (vol. 2, 16749–53). Intriguingly, the poet then goes one step further and specifies that he is Arofel's son, whom Willehalm had slain. Whatever praise on a worthy man any medieval poet might have heaped, here we are presented with the finest character in ethical, moral, and social terms, although he is a heathen and an enemy of the Christians.

Moreover, we also learn that he is the master of the Caucasus mountains, which consist of pure gold (16766–67), and he uses this enormous resource to demonstrate nearly endless generosity. While many other individuals either do not have the necessary means at hand to display such generosity, or are too miserly to follow that ideal, this king spends freely and rewards everyone who might be worthy of it: 'er sô keiserlîchen warp | daz sîn lop noch nie verdarp | und mac verderben niemer' (16813–

---

<sup>39</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'Tolerance in the Middle Ages? The Good Heathens as Fellow Beings in the World of *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, Konrad von Würzburg's *Partonopier und Meliur*, and *Die Heideninne*', in *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik*, 61 (2006), 183–223; Albrecht Classen, 'The Crusader as Lover and Tourist: Utopian Elements in Late Medieval German Literature: From *Herzog Ernst* to *Reinfried von Braunschweig* and *Fortunatus*', in *Current Topics in Medieval German Literature: Texts and Analyses (Kalamazoo Papers 2000–2006)*, ed. by Sibylle Jefferis, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 748 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 2008), pp. 83–102; Albrecht Classen, *Religious Toleration in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: An Anthology of Literary, Theological, and Philosophical Texts* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2020), pp. 24–27, with an English translation of the relevant passage.

15; he acted so much like an emperor that his praise was never hurt and will never be damaged).<sup>40</sup> Young Arofel, as we might call him, has demonstrated his great leadership qualities both with the help of his sword (militarily) and with his virtuous generosity (1619–21). The poet can hardly limit himself in his profuse praise of this young man, the best among the entire world of heathendom (16828), who perfectly fulfills the role of the ideal ruler, demonstrating justice to poor and rich, being a strong defender of his people, and beloved by all women far and wide.

For the narrator, the contrast between Arofel and most other princes in the West sheds a highly negative light on the latter, and we are actually presented with sharp criticism of the general malaise in the aristocratic circles in Europe, while the Persian receives highest praise: 'des wart sîn tugentrîcher lîp | durch al die welt gerüemet' (16928–29; for this reason, this virtuous man was extolled throughout the world). When he prepares himself for the fight with Reinfried, the narrator hastens to present Arofel as the most glorious knight equipped with outstanding armor and weapons, identifying him as a most worthy champion of courtly love, with the classical formula inscribed on it: 'amor vincit omnia' (17119; love conquers all), originally coined by Virgil in his *Eclogue X*. The fact that it is written in Heathen (Arabic), Latin, and German (17120), however, remains an idiosyncrasy by the poet. To be sure, he becomes thereby a most sympathetic figure virtually anyone among the contemporary audience could easily identify with. Although not a Christian, Arofel strongly appeals to the fundamental ideals and values of medieval chivalry and knighthood.

Nevertheless, Reinfried is similarly matched and receives the narrator's highest praise as well, so these two knights emerge as equal opponents, both in character and in physical appearance, in ethical values and social status. Not surprisingly, their joust then pits two virtually perfect and ideal fighters against each other, neither one of them being able at first to overcome the other, which proves to be a close parallel to the joust between Feirefiz and Parzival in Wolfram's grail romance. But, as to be

---

<sup>40</sup> All translations from *Reinfried* are my own.

expected, Reinfried ultimately wins, and when Arofel lies before him on the ground, he could have killed him. Yet they engage in a conversation, and soon reach an agreement. When Reinfried then even forgoes his original plan to force the Persian to convert to Christianity, there is no longer any conflict between them, and the two strike a friendship that lasts to the very end of the romance.

As soon as everything is peacefully settled, Arofel embraces Reinfried in a loving fashion (17821) and begs him to join him on a touristic journey through Persia. He balks, however, at the idea of being forced to convert and asks Reinfried to imagine how such a situation would make Reinfried look among his own people, if he had accepted, because of external pressure, the Islamic faith. Both his family and people would suffer 'laster und unêre' (17854; shame and loss of honor), an argument which Reinfried can easily accept, so he quickly changes his mind and no longer requests this action by Arofel, which then removes all remaining conflicts between both men. Reinfried subsequently receives the Holy Land for Christianity, restores all the religious sites, and re-establishes the churches, while he enjoys highest respect by the Persian king and all of the heathendom for his leadership qualities (18214–15).

Even though the poet spends some time discussing the various sites in Palestine, once Reinfried has settled his affairs there and has appointed worthy administrators, he and his friend embark on a really important journey, the voyage across the Persian Empire. Arofel has already demonstrated impatience and asked him intensively to come along with him because there are so many wonders to see (18188–19). What Persia really means, however, remains rather murky; the narrator only comments on the direction they take: 'lant gën Persyâ' (18199; through many lands toward Persia). We know that Arofel is the absolute ruler there, but other details remain elusive.

In fact, from here on, things become rather unspecific, with Persia itself not emerging as a specific country. Instead, we learn about many wonders and miracles there, very much in the tradition of late antique and medieval monster lore. There is the mysterious mountainous region, the Caucasus, with all of its gold and griffins,

then there are giants, the Amazons, monsters, and many other aspects. Reinfried constantly inquires about further wonders, and is most anxious to find out what might happen next, so when he tells the Persian king: “wist ich waz gensît wære | dem gebirge”, sprach der degen, | “sô müest ich hôhes muotes pflügen” (18324–26; ‘If I knew about what is on the other side of the mountains’, said the hero, ‘it would greatly please me’). Arofel feels more than obliged to comply with this wish, so the touristic travel continues for thousands of verses that do not need to be examined here. The narrator simply defines all those countries in the distant East, that is, well beyond the Holy Land, as part of the Persian empire, but he does not go into further details.

There is, however, one significant comment later on that sheds important light on the overall political structure as projected by the anonymous poet. Fairly at the end, a messenger from Brunswick arrives to find his lord and to inform him that his wife back home has delivered a baby boy and that she would want him to return again. The messenger particularly seeks out the ‘bâruc’ (23912; Baruch) because he knows that Reinfried had spent some time at his court. Deeply frustrated over his failure to track down his lord, he relates to the Baruch what he himself knows about Reinfried’s travels; i.e., that he had left the Holy Land and gone to Persia (23940–41). The messenger had followed those tracks, but still missed his lord, who had obviously continued with his journey moving into new territories even further east, but those are not defined in any detail by the narrator and belong, at any rate, to the category of the monster lore and the discourse on the exotic East. However, the messenger also emphasizes that he searched out the Baruch because Arofel is his grandson (23954–55). This thus allows us to argue that already in Wolfram’s *Parzival* (ca. 1205) the land controlled by the Baruch, in whose service Gahmuret (the protagonist’s father) had entered, was supposed to be part of Persia.

Yet, here, the Baruch can only confirm that ‘der hôhgemuot Persân’ (23979; the highly spirited Persian) had traveled, together with his friend, into the country of the Pygmies, where Reinfried then killed a dangerous giant, after which the two men had moved on, without the Baruch knowing anything of their whereabouts. In fact, he

assumes that both have died, which is not true of course, but it indicates that for him there is a vast geographic openness toward the East which not even he can fathom. At that very moment, another messenger arrives with a letter from both the Persian and Reinfried confirming that they are well, which returns general happiness to everyone. The German messenger then sends instructions to Reinfried's army, which the prince had left behind in Persia (24197), to come to join them, obviously in the Baruch's empire, Baldac, which confuses the geo-physical map projected by the poet considerably for the western audience.

Nevertheless, we can conclude that the notion of Persia as a mighty kingdom or empire with a most noble ruler and a respectable culture clearly emerges in this narrative, although the details remain rather obfuscated because the account about the wonders matters more than any possible further comments about Persia itself. Arofel and his people pay greatest respect to Reinfried and honor him profusely when he departs from the East in order to return home (27105–29). The Persians altogether are characterized as noble, chivalric, worthy, and completely comparable to the best people back in Christian Europe. The religious difference never matters in all of those comments, and the narrator concludes with general praise and a high level of recognition of Persia. Finally, Arofel heaps many exotic gifts on Reinfried and stays behind deeply grieved that he is losing his friend: 'Der Persân trûric hie belip' (27207; The Persian sorrowfully stayed behind).

## KONRAD VON WÜRZBURG

A near-contemporary, Konrad von Würzburg (d. ca. 1290), the author of numerous short verse narratives, several religious tales, a courtly romance about friendship (*Engelhard*), and the huge *Der trojanische Krieg* (more than 40,000 verses, c. 1280), also composed a massive poem about the lives of two young lovers, Partonopier and Meliur, who have to go through many challenges and difficulties until the

circumstances prove to be right for them to marry.<sup>41</sup> He is the heir of Anjou and Blois, she is the heir of Byzantium, but only once Partonopier has demonstrated through many struggles and ultimately also through his victories at a tournament that he is the right partner for Meliur, have all barriers been removed and can they marry. The protagonist faces, however, a serious contender for her hand: the Persian prince, Floridanz. We do not learn much more about him than in *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, but he is also portrayed as a most noble, worthy character who would have almost been chosen as Meliur's husband and thus as the successor to the throne. But religious concerns at the end prevent this from happening, in addition to Partonopier's victory over him, which then leads to a happy end for the lovers.

Similar to *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, religious differences at first hardly matter. Cultural or ethnic differences also do not play a significant role, which allows us to probe more deeply how Konrad views the Persian and why he included this figure.<sup>42</sup> Again, Floridanz proves to be an outstanding knight who enjoys everyone's respect, including Partonopier's (15959–61), and the narrator profiles him in glowing terms: 'der küene soldân' (16235; the brave Sultan), suddenly merging the usual title of prince or king with the standard formula for a Muslim ruler, sultan. We find many examples of this, so when he praises him outright: 'ist ouch an êren vollekomen' (16915; he is also perfect in his honors), and 'an herzen unde an muote | ist der vil reine wandels frî' (16920–21; he is impeccable in his heart and mind and is an upright person). We also hear that the Persian prince would be willing to convert to Christianity, if that

---

<sup>41</sup> Konrads von Würzburg, *Partonopier und Meliur*, ed. by Karl Bartsch, Deutsche Neudrucke (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1970). For pan-European approaches, see the contributions to *Partonopeus in Europe: An Old French Romance and its Adaptations*, ed. by Catherine Hanley, Mario Longtin, and Penny Eley, *Mediaevalia*, 25.2 (2004); Rüdiger Brandt, *Konrad von Würzburg, Wege der Forschung*, 249 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1987); Rüdiger Brandt, *Konrad von Würzburg: Kleinere epische Werke*, 2nd rev. edn, *Klassiker-Lektüren*, 2 (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'The Encounter with the Foreign in Medieval and Early Modern German Literature: Fictionality as a Springboard for Non-Xenophobic Approaches in the Middle Ages: *Herzog Ernst*, *Wolfram von Eschenbach*, *Konrad von Würzburg*, *Die Heidin*, and *Fortunatus*', in *East Meets West in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Transcultural Experiences in the Premodern World*, ed. by Albrecht Classen, *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, 14 (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2013), pp. 457–87 (pp. 471–75). All translations from Konrad's works are my own.

would help him to win Meliur's hand. Indeed, she is emotionally attached to him already, in clear conflict with her feelings for Partonopier (17336–41). For background, we also need to consider that Konrad identifies this prince as connected with Babylon (13340), and yet introduces him in the best possible terms as a courtly knight, exactly conforming to the highest ideals of the western world: 'der soldân ûf der minne solt I wolte ein vrouwen ritter wesen (13566–67; the sultan wanted to be a servant of courtly love, on behalf of a lady).

Although we cannot forget that Floridanz adheres to a non-Christian religion, the narrator always ranks him among the members of the highest nobility (14250); nevertheless, he does not engage in any further discussions about Persia as a kingdom. We are, though, left with an amazing imagination of a highly worthy and respectable courtly and chivalric culture there since Floridanz had almost been chosen as the successor to the Byzantine throne as Meliur's future husband.

## PERSIA IN LATE MEDIEVAL GERMAN LITERATURE

In the late Middle Ages, the interest in Persia was also noticeable, but perhaps less so than in the previous examples. In the more or less first proto-novel in prose, *Fortunatus* (first printed in Augsburg in 1509), the protagonist has acquired through accident a miraculous purse that never becomes empty, which allows him to traverse the entire world out of curiosity. At the end, he also explores parts of Asia, after having received official permission to do so by the Sultan of Egypt. At first, he travels through the Empire of Persia, then the kingdom of Cham, and finally reaches India where he visits the legendary Prester John. Persia thus exists on the poet's mental map, but it does not receive any further attention despite the strong focus on travel facilitated by endless amounts of money.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Jan-Dirk Müller, Bibliothek der frühen Neuzeit, 1 (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), p. 489. All translations from *Fortunatus* are my own.

We would face even more difficulties tracking down further references in similar prose novels, such as Thüring von Ringoltingen's *Melusine* (1456), although there Melusine's sons successfully operate in various parts of the eastern Mediterranean, including Turkey and Armenia.<sup>44</sup> And, turning to the sixteenth century, the interest in Persia seems to have dwindled even further. The only reference I am familiar with is contained in the anonymous *Historia D. Johann Fausten* (printed in 1587), a major representative of early modern German literature, where the protagonist can travel throughout the world with the help of the devil, who will eventually kill him and take possession of his soul. After having spent considerable time in various parts of Europe, Faustus also turns east. The list of his stop-overs, however, proves to be so perfunctory that the individual countries hardly matter, except that they fill a mental map: 'Engelland | Hispaniam | Franckreich | Schweden | Polen | Dennemarck | Jndiam | Aphrican | Persiam | etc.' (England, Spain, France, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, India, Africa, Persia, etc.).<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, we should never ignore the fact that all these authors contributed in their own ways to mental maps of a wider, global world, even when they did not much more than to drop names of distant countries, cities, and peoples.

## JOHANN SCHILTBERGER

Most impressively, one major 'travel' author, Johann Schiltberger, after having escaped in 1426 from a thirty-year long period of slavery in the Ottoman Empire and neighboring kingdoms following his capture at the battle of Nicopolis in 1396, provided considerably detailed reports also about Persia in his *Reisebuch* (travelogue). This has survived in ten manuscripts and was one of the earliest secular printed books in Germany (1461), which experienced numerous reprints far into the sixteenth

---

<sup>44</sup> *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 11–176.

<sup>45</sup> *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, p. 915.

century.<sup>46</sup> In his account, Schiltberger obviously drew extensively from other chronicles and travelogues and compiled a rather detailed list of data about the various kingdoms, rulers, cities, and geographical settings. Since he served various lords and was thus sent around the entire Middle East, he also had occasion to come across Persia, which he introduces later in a rather dry, if not dull manner:

The chief city of all the kingdoms of Persia is called Thaures. The king of Persia has a larger revenue from the city of Thaures, than has the most powerful king in Christendom, because a great many merchants come to it. There is also a kingdom in Persia, the capital of which is called Soltania. There is also a city called Rei, in a large country where they do not believe in Machmet as do other Infidels. They believe in a certain Aly who is a great persecutor of the Christian faith; and those of this doctrine are called Raphak.<sup>47</sup>

We learn about rulers, cities, trade conditions, the relationship between Christians and Muslims, then also about an extraordinarily old man who is worshipped as a saint, the availability of gems, markets, mountains, and unicorns. Schiltberger also points out that Persia is an important transit country to reach India. To some extent, we recognize here the same focus as applied by Marco Polo in his *Travels*, and to some extent the interest of a historian, all of which is coupled with mythical accounts derived from the world of wonders. But, in contrast to the literary narratives, we hear nothing of an outstanding, noble, heroic, or chivalric Persian king, and at the same

---

<sup>46</sup> Johann Schiltberger, *The Bondage and Travels of Johann Schiltberger, a Native of Bavaria, in Europe, Asia, and Africa 1396–1427*, ed. by Karl Friedrich Neumann, trans. by J. Buchan Telfer (London: Hakluyt Society, 1879) <[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/52569/52569-h/52569-h.htm#Page\\_44](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/52569/52569-h/52569-h.htm#Page_44)> [last accessed on 7 August 2021]; cf. Albrecht Classen, 'Global Travel in the Late Middle Ages: The Eyewitness Account of Johann Schiltberger', *Medieval History Journal*, 23.1 (2020), 1–28 <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0971945819895896>>; Albrecht Classen, 'The Topic of Imprisonment in Medieval German Literature: With an Emphasis on Johann Schiltberger's Account About his 30-Year Enslavement in the East', *Studia Neophilologica*, 92.3 (2020), 315–27 <<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00393274.2020.1755362>>.

<sup>47</sup> Schiltberger, ch. 33.

time, the author refrains from resorting to the typical fictionalization of Persia seen during the Middle Ages as a location of luxuries, wonders, and miracles.

## PERSIA AND THE GLOBAL MIDDLE AGES

Finally, what does that mean in terms of the emerging Global Medieval Studies? Recent scholarship has made great efforts to widen our perspectives, to move away from Eurocentrism and to include other medieval cultures in Asia, Africa, and the Americas as equally important in our global approach.<sup>48</sup> Literary scholars have followed suit and now are talking increasingly about global literature, and this also with respect to the pre-modern age.

However, none of those efforts, as welcome and important as they certainly are in modern political terms, have overcome the universal and systemic compartmentalization on the ground, which makes it extremely difficult, if not problematic, to compare, for instance, the Middle Ages in the kingdom of Mali with the Middle Ages in China or Peru. In fact, they achieve fairly little because in most cases there were no concrete connections, no direct exchanges, no practical or long-term associations, or communications, irrespective of some economic exchanges at certain meeting points, such as in the Black Sea.<sup>49</sup> Thematic comparisons as explored

---

<sup>48</sup> *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Global Medieval Life and Culture*, ed. by Joyce E. Salisbury, 3 vols (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 2009); *Weltdeutungen und Weltreligionen 600 bis 1500*, ed. by Johannes Fried and Ernst-Dieter Hehl, WBG Welt-Geschichte, III (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2010); *The Oxford Handbook of Global Studies*, ed. by Mark Juergensmeyer, Saskia Sassen, and Manfred B. Steger (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); *Universal History and the Making of the Global*, ed. by Hall Bjørnstad, Helge Jordheim, and Anne Régent-Susini, Routledge Approaches to History (New York and London: Routledge, 2019); *A Companion to World Literature*, ed. by Ken Seigneurie, 6 vols (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, 2020).

<sup>49</sup> Geraldine Heng and Lynne Ramey, 'Early Globalities, Global Literatures: Introducing a Special Issue on the Global Middle Ages', *Literature Compass* (2014), 1–6 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12156>>; Geraldine Heng, 'Reinventing Race, Colonization, and Globalisms across Deep Time: Lessons from the Longue Durée', *PMLA*, 130.2 (2015), 358–66; *Europa im Geflecht der Welt: Mittelalterliche Migrationen in globalen Bezügen*, ed. by Michael Borgolte, Bernd Schneidmüller, Julia Dücker, Marcel Müllerburg, and Paul Predatsch, *Europa im Mittelalter*, 20 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 2015); Naomi Standen and Monica White, 'Structural Mobilities in the Global Middle Ages', *Past & Present*, 238, suppl. 13 (2018), 158–89; see also the studies collected in *Other Globes: Past and Peripheral Imaginations of Globalization*, ed. by

in the new online *Encyclopedia of the Global Middle Ages* reflect the currently rising awareness that we live in a global world today, but this does not mean that we can, therefore, assume the same for the Middle Ages.<sup>50</sup>

Marco Polo, Odorico ad Pordenone, or Giovanni da Pian del Carpine were true globetrotters, so to speak, and they intensively interacted with the various peoples they encountered in the East. But their explorations did not lead to any forms of outreach from the Chinese or Mongols to the West, and we can hardly conceive of transculturality in that context. In fact, the anonymous author of *Fortunatus* (1509) explicitly states that it would be an absurdity for East Indians, for instance, trying to visit Europe because they would encounter dangerously inclement weather, bad food, and open hostility.<sup>51</sup> The Japanese Middle Ages did not really begin until the late sixteenth century, predicated specifically on 'splendid' isolation. American medieval cultures have virtually nothing to do with the Europeans, whereas there were considerable trade contacts between the sub-Saharan kingdoms and the Mediterranean.<sup>52</sup> Altogether, only when we take into considerations how intellectuals, artists, diplomats, medical doctors, and others endeavored to translate significant texts or ideas in other worlds for their own audiences, can we begin to talk meaningfully about Global Middle Ages in terms of images of other parts of the world positively associated and well-integrated into the western literary discourse.<sup>53</sup> To be upfront, however, all that I can do here is to embark on this topic from a European, specifically medieval German perspective, whereas I cannot yet address the global dimension in terms of intercultural contacts, for instance.

---

Simon Ferdinand, Irene Villaescusa-Illán, and Esther Peeren, *Palgrave Studies in Globalization, Culture and Society* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

<sup>50</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Global Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon Ford (London: Bloomsbury, 2019) <<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350990005>>.

<sup>51</sup> *Romane des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, p. 491.

<sup>52</sup> *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa*, ed. by Kathleen Bickford Berzock (Princeton: Princeton University Press; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

<sup>53</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'India, Persia, and Arabia in the Mind of a Late Fifteenth-Century German Author: Transcultural Experiences through the Literary Discourse. Antonius von Pforr and His *Buch der Beispiele der Alten Weisen*', *Philological Quarterly*, 99.2 (2020), 119–45.

A significant contributor to this discourse, who also included Persia in his comments about the Middle East, was the anonymous author of the *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* (ca. 1350), who remarked that the Persians did not embrace any particular religion and simply adopted any faith which their neighbors or friends pursued.<sup>54</sup> It would be necessary to traverse Persia in order to reach India, and the Persians would try their hardest to block both monks and merchants on their way, though they could not prevent their travels altogether. They would impose high tariffs, but would get only little from the foreigners because they are subject to the emperor of Kathagien, meaning, the Mongol Khan, obviously a supporter of Christians (149). Although the narrator proves to be highly detailed whenever he turns to other parts in the Middle East, Persia remains strangely bland here.

Altogether, numerous Middle High German poets already projected the possibility of their protagonists traveling to Persia, interacting with the Persian king/emperor, and enjoying the marvels of Persia, as if they were already developing a form of globalism *avant la lettre*, at least from their own perspective. When seventeenth-century scholars in Europe embarked on studying the Persian language and literature, they certainly embraced more global concepts in spirit as well as in letter than their predecessors, and their nineteenth-century successors can be credited with that ideal as well, pursuing it much more forcefully.

How are we then to evaluate the references to the noble Persian King or to the exotic world of the Persian empire/kingdom in the various Middle High and early modern German texts? We can certainly not claim that Lambrecht, Wolfram, the anonymous poet of *Reinfried von Braunschweig*, or Konrad had a clear understanding of Persia, nor any direct travel experiences, apart from Johann Schiltberger. However, in their literary framework, they endeavored to open up a more global perspective and to project Persia as a significant country: Even though it was located far to the

---

<sup>54</sup> *Der "Niederrheinische Orientbericht": Edition und sprachliche Untersuchung*, ed. by Anja Micklin, *Rheinisches Archiv*, 14 (Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna: Böhlau, 2021).

east, well beyond the Holy Land, the values of courtly culture ruled supreme there as well.

Despite the religious differences – always duly noted – for the German poets who drew upon a variety of literary genres, the Persian world proved to be intriguing, fascinating, and surely worth their attention, and remarkably never in any negative terms. Even Schiltberger, although having suffered in slavery, provided nothing but factual information about Persia and refrained from commenting on that country from a subjective, negative perspective. Altogether, we face mostly literary imagination, but the fictional discourse already establishes a certain geo-political concept of Persia which facilitated the development in Europe of a medieval global perspective centered in western imagology, at least *in nuce*. The literary public was obviously extensively aware of Persia, however defined, as the many references in the textual examples discussed above indicate. The large number of literary texts in Middle High German including references to or comments about Persia strongly suggests that those poets reflected an opening-up of the medieval worldview and participated, at least in a rudimentary fashion, in what Goodman has called 'worldmaking' on a more global level.

Despite the religious differences, Persia emerged increasingly as a geographical operation platform for western protagonists, and the various audiences were encouraged to recognize in Persia a mighty and highly developed kingdom or empire located somewhere between India and the Holy Land where the European travelers would encounter a sophisticated, as well as materially, ethically, and morally superior world. We cannot yet talk about transculturality in these cases, but the examples discussed here certainly reveal a significant level of interculturality, and this already in the Middle Ages.

## CONCLUSION

Where does this leave us then? We can reach several valuable insights from the many references to Persia in the history of medieval German literature, even though they appear to be rather loosely woven into the various narrative fabrics. Compared to those early modern (seventeenth century) and modern (nineteenth century) efforts at translating medieval Persian literature and traveling to Persia in diplomatic missions (Adam Olearius), the situation in the Middle Ages looked very different. And yet, we can now confirm that there was a considerable body of Middle High German literature and other narratives (mostly romances and other genres) in which Persia emerged as a country in the Middle East where western knights and other travelers would encounter a highly developed and sophisticated culture, determined by Islam, but nevertheless completely comparable to the one in the West. Courtly, chivalric, and knightly values were projected onto the Persians, especially the Persian king. But Persia was also associated with many miracles and wonders, which considerably increased its intrigue in touristic terms, if that might not be an anachronistic term.

Schiltberger certainly did not go there voluntarily, but the various poets discussed above happily incorporated a variety of references to Persia that indicate at least a certain level of familiarity with and interest in that country by the western writers, probably induced by classical learned literature (the Alexander myth) and influenced by a panoply of images of a mysterious, luxurious, highly-cultured, yet non-Christian empire. By contrast, both Marco Polo and Johann Schiltberger, who reported about their actual travels, provided concrete details concerning Persia, and the name of this country also appears, though in rather vague terms, on some of the medieval *mappae mundi*. We thus face a fascinating phenomenon of the amalgamation of factual and fictional imagination in the world of medieval and early modern German literature.

Although most members of the medieval audiences in the Holy Roman Empire might not have had a clear understanding of what Persia actually might have meant,

the Middle High German poets strongly insinuated to them that it represented an impressive, even though non-Christian civilization. Granted, we do not learn anything in concrete terms about Persians traveling to Europe, which limits the notion of 'globalism' considerably. Nevertheless, the medieval German imagology significantly opened a gateway toward the Persian East as an attractive, powerful, highly sophisticated, and cultured world.<sup>55</sup> To what extent these medieval sources later inspired early modern comments and reports about Persia (e.g., Olearius), cannot yet be determined, but I would suggest that we grasp here the emergence of an intriguing discourse from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>56</sup> Persophilia was certainly present already at a very early stage, as the various testimonies in medieval German literature have demonstrated.<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> See the contributions to *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. by Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).

<sup>56</sup> Albrecht Classen, 'Global History in the Middle Ages: A Medieval and an Early Modern Perspective. The *Niederrheinische Orientbericht* (ca. 1350) and Adam Olearius's *Vermehrte New Beschreibung der Muscowitischen vnd Persischen Reyse* (1647; 1656),' forthcoming in *Philological Quarterly*.

<sup>57</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to internal readers among the editorial staff and three anonymous outside readers of this paper. Their comments helped me to sharpen my arguments and to clarify some of my comments.

# A Brief Account of the Emerald and its Magico-Medical and Symbolic-Religious Qualities against the Black Death



Raissa R. Bombini  
Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo  
and Stockholm University

When the Black Death started to spread throughout Europe following its arrival in 1347, the medical responses, looking for answers to the death and desolation that fell upon the people, were rapid. One of the first medical treatises written on the plague in this period was the *Compendium on the epidemic by the college of the Faculty of Parisian Physicians* (*Compendium de epidemia per collegium Facultatis Medicorum Parisius*). It was produced in October 1348, at the request of King Philip VI (1293 – 1350), by physicians from the University of Paris as a collective work explaining the etiology of the disease and proposing prevention and cure regimens, which were largely composed of the consumption of medicines.<sup>1</sup>

One of the ‘antidotes’<sup>2</sup> for the plague proposed by the *Compendium* was an electuary for the heart that protected the patient from poisonous air (bearing in mind

---

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Patrick Byrne, *The Black Death* (Westport; London: Greenwood Press, 2004), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Of the antidotes which are to be described, some to be shaped in the manner of a pill, some in the manner of a troche; others to be prepared in the manner of an apple and of an electuary’. L.-A. Joseph Michon, *Documents inédits sur la peste de 1348 (consultation de la Faculte de Paris, consultation d’un praticien de montpellier description de guillaume de machaut)* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière et fils, 1860), p. 65. Translations from Latin into present-day English are my own unless otherwise indicated.

that the Black Death was explained by the miasmatic theory),<sup>3</sup> from fever, and from pestilential abscesses:

**R**: *cinnamomi, alit ℥j, et semis, ligni aloes indi, florum, anthos, cubebae, piperis longi al., an scr. ij, nucis moschatae, gariophyllor., galangae, been, utriusque deronicae, cardamomi maj., ana ℥ss., spicae nardi, fol. zedoar., croci orient., sem. basiliconis, melissae, menthae siccae, ana scr. ij., omnium margaritarum, hyacinthorum, smaragdi, coralli rubri, carabi, ana scr. S.; rosarum rubrarum electarum, omnium sandalorum, ossis et cornu cervi, spodii, limaturae eboris, ana ℥ S.; seminis acedulae, quatuor seminum frigidorum et majorum, medull., seminis citoniorum, ana scr. j.; serici tincti, in kermes minutim incisi, scr j; ambrae grisiae, ℥ss.; musci, scr. j; camphurae, g. vj; pinearum, modice epistorum? passularum enucleatorum, ana ℥j, et semis, conserva citri minutim incisa, ℥ ij; sacchari, camphorae, ana lib. ij, conficiantur cum aqua rosarum et buglossi, et cooperiatur (cooperatur) tota massa cum foliis auri puri.<sup>4</sup>*

This mixture is broadly based on recipes from ancient antidotaries, with the addition of some new ingredients. John of Burgundy, a physician from Liège who wrote a well-known tractate on the plague in 1365, would have considered such additions to be contributions from *magistri moderni*, or 'modern masters', his contemporary fellow physicians who were supposedly 'more experienced in epidemic pestilential disease than all the doctors and authors of the art of medicine from Hippocrates to the later ones.'<sup>5</sup> Some precious stones were among these new ingredients.

---

<sup>3</sup> The miasmatic theory states that certain diseases would be caused by putrid vapours in the air or by the air itself corrupted by such vapours. Jon Arrizabalaga, 'Facing the Black Death: perceptions and reactions of university medical practitioners', in *Practical medicine from Salerno to the Black Death*, ed. by Luis García-Ballester et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 237–288 (p. 246).

<sup>4</sup> Because scholars are unsure of the precise correspondence of many medieval ingredients with modern labels medieval recipes are often left untranslated. For the medical recipe, I have chosen to maintain the Latin original names, following scholars such as M. L. Duran-Reynals, C-E. A. Winslow, John M. Riddle, etc. By doing so, scholars hope to avoid errors in using supposedly English equivalents, especially for the herbs. Michon, *Documents inédits sur la peste*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>5</sup> Karl Sudhoff, 'Pestschriften aus den ersten 150 Jahren nach der Epidemie des "schwarzen Todes" 1348, III. Aus Niederdeutschland, Frankreich und England', *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin*, 5.1/2 (1911), 36–87 (pp. 68–9).

In this brief paper, I will discuss one of the precious stones mentioned in the *Compendium* recipe, probably the most recurrent gem in medical treatises for preventing and curing the Black Death symptoms and action on the body, i.e., the emerald (*smaragdus*). It's worth mentioning that other precious stones, minerals, and non-mineral gems were also frequently mentioned, such as pearl, jacinth, coral (usually the red type, *corallus rubrus*), sapphire, the carbuncle (*carbunculus*), ruby, bezoar and, in a broader sense, amber, ivory and the bone from a deer's heart (*ossis de corde cervi*), although the later stones are not usually found in lapidaries.

Traditional historiography has considered the use of gemstones in medieval medicine to be random. As an example, we may observe George Frederick Kunz's statement that, 'Indeed, many of the most highly recommended electuaries contained all kinds of stones, as though the effect to be produced did not depend upon the qualities of any single stone, or class of stones, but rather upon the quantity used.'<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, there was a logic behind the use of each gemstone against particular diseases, including the Black Death, and this logic was based on the versatility and polysemy of gems. This polysemy came from the magico-medical and symbolic-religious qualities of the stones, and the correlations between these qualities: The gems, with their forms, their materials, their functions, their legends, their relationships with lapidaries, and with their uses provide an infinity of different references, all carrying allusive meanings. In other words, each gemstone contained a variety of qualities and multiple potential meanings. Therefore, their use by physicians was not a random; rather, it was very well-grounded knowledge that was related to different spheres, such as religion, magic, astrology, and medicine, and was part of lapidary, encyclopedic, exegetical, and biblical literature, in addition to iconography. The emerald is an excellent example of this complexity.

---

<sup>6</sup> George Frederick Kunz, *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* (Nova Iorque: Halcyon House, 1913), p. 372.

The magico-medical qualities of gemstones as remedies or protection against the Black Death were primarily based on their cold and dry characteristics, in relation to the qualities of humoral theory as well as the theory of complexions. The pestilence was known to be hot and humid matter, like a vapor, which would be mixed with blood, also hot and humid. From there it would reach the organs and cause putrefaction, characterized mainly by excess heat and humidity. The theory of complexions, as well as the humoral theory, dictated that it was necessary to balance the primary qualities (hot, cold, humid, and dry), or the humors, through opposing forces; that is, applying cold to hot, hot to cold, wet to dry, and dry to wet. From this it is understood that it was necessary to counterbalance the hot and wet qualities of plague and putrefying blood with something dry and cold.<sup>7</sup>

In this sense, the use of gemstones would be a way of bringing balance to the body and, above all, a way of fighting the corruption of matter caused by the pestilence. This explanation appears in the 11th century work of the Egyptian scholar 'Alī ibn Riḍwān (998–1068 AD), who was influenced by Galenic medicine. Ibn Riḍwān shows the relationship between curing pestilence and the use of precious stones — including the emerald — in his treatise *On the Prevention of Bodily Diseases in Egypt* (*Kitāb Daf' Maḍārr Al-Abdān bi-arḍ Miṣr*):

If the air becomes polluted — and this is more frequently what produces epidemic disease [...] the wearing of gems is advantageous, such as sapphire, emerald, pearl, gold, silver, high quality carnelian and all the precious stones. In general, all things that bring happiness are beneficial; the best of them are the cold and constrictive ones.

---

<sup>7</sup> Hippocrates, 'On Ancient Medicine', in *Hippocratic Writings; On the Natural Faculties by Galen*, ed. by Hutchins Robert Maynard, trans. by Francis Adams, Great Books of the Western World, vol. 10 (Chicago; London; Toronto: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 1–9 (p. 4); Galen, 'On the Natural Faculties', in *Hippocratic Writings; On the Natural Faculties by Galen*, ed. by Hutchins Robert Maynard, trans. by Arthur John Brock, Great Books of the Western World, vol. 10 (Chicago; London; Toronto: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 167–215 (p. 192 and 196).

Coldness and constriction act against the state of corruption, which is from the heat and excessive moisture of decaying things.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from this elementary quality, precious stones also had magico-medical properties that were found in lapidaries and encyclopedic literature, which were consulted by physicians. These properties help us explain the use of the emerald – and of other gems – in plague recipes.

According to these materials, emeralds had properties that could heal fevers,<sup>9</sup> which would be helpful against a pestilential fever. The green stone also had power against poisons and poisonous matter, like the plague. The antidote property of the emerald is also mentioned in the *Compendium* of the University of Paris: ‘*Smaragdus* is also a notorious medicine against all poisons.’<sup>10</sup> This property must have been introduced to the Latin West by two texts from the Arab world: the *Book of General Principles* (*Kitab al-Kulliyat*) by Averrois and the *Book to Facilitate Therapeutics and Regimen* (*Kitab al-Taysir fi mudawat wa-l-tadbir*) by Avenzoar. Both texts were translated into Latin in the 13th century, and were widely copied thereafter.<sup>11</sup>

There is yet another quality that could explain the use of *smaragdus* in medical treatises. According to Thomas of Cantimpré (c. 1186–c. 1276), in his *Book on the Nature of Things* (*Liber de Natura Rerum*), from the 13th century, ‘if carried reverently, [the emerald] avoids deadly diseases.’<sup>12</sup> This apotropaic power would be useful against a

---

<sup>8</sup> ‘Alī ibn Riḍwān, *Medieval Islamic Medicine. ibn Riḍwān’s Treatise ‘On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt’*, trans. by Adil S. Gamal and Michael W. Dols (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), p.140–1.

<sup>9</sup> Albertus Magnus, *Book of Minerals*, trans. by Dorothy Wyckoff (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 120; Marbode of Rennes, *De lapidibus; considered as a medical treatise*, trans. by C. W. King and John M. Riddle (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1977), pp. 44–5.

<sup>10</sup> ‘*Smaragdus est etiam insignis medecine contra omne venenum*’. Michon, *Documents inédits sur la peste*, p. 62.

<sup>11</sup> Henry A. Azar, *The Sage of Seville: Ibn Zuhr, His Time, and His Medical Legacy* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo, 2008), pp. 36–8; Giuliano Tamani, ‘The Generalities of the Averroes Medicine’, *Medicina nei Secoli* 6.2 (1994), pp. 407–23.

<sup>12</sup> ‘*Si reverenter portetur, fugat caducum morbum*’. Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de Natura Rerum: Text*, ed. by Walter de Gruyter (Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 1973), p. 368.

lethal plague like the Black Death, even when the emerald was ingested as part of electuaries,<sup>13</sup> if we think of them as amulet-remedies.

Beyond magico-medical properties, precious stones carried also symbolic-religious qualities by being associated with religious figures and motifs, through which they would channel protective and healing powers. The memory of the person or place evoked by the gem, whether it be Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Celestial Jerusalem, or another reference, contributed to the effect they would have. In this sense, the physician was manipulating the symbolism that linked a material thing to the beliefs that surrounded it. In that regard, the magico-medical effectiveness of gems depended on these symbolic links as much as on the medical properties mentioned above.

The emerald was one of the gemstones mentioned by the English monk Bede in the third book of his work *Explanation of the Apocalypse* (*Explanatio Apocalypsis*), written between 710 and 716. Bede creates an exegesis to the symbology of the precious stones on the wall of heavenly Jerusalem, in which the emerald is the representation of the Christian faith, of the divine word and of virtue. Another symbolic aspect that Bede attributes to the emerald is the representation of the Four Evangelists, who, according to the religious explanation, were responsible for making the faith known to the world through the Gospel.<sup>14</sup> This plurality of symbolism points to another quality of the emerald, which is an aura of divinity and faith, very important in a moment of misfortune and despair like the one brought by the pestilence, considered a punishment from God upon mankind.

---

<sup>13</sup> The electuary was traditionally a pasty medicine, in contrast to solid troches or liquid potions. It was made from powdered ingredients joined, usually, with fat, honey or, after appropriation by Arab medicine, sugar, psyllium, etc. Other sticking substances were also used by the Greeks, such as gum-resins produced in trees (e.g., myrrh) and maritime scilla. The origin of this compound dates to Mesopotamian medicines consumed by licking, reaching the Hippocratic Corpus with the same function. In the Middle Ages, however, electuaries gained broader meanings, encompassing various remedies. On the history of the electuaries, see Liliane Plouvier, 'L'electuaire, un médicament plusieurs fois millénaire', *Scientiarum Historia*, 19.2 (1993), 97–112.

<sup>14</sup> The Venerable Bede, *The explanation of the Apocalypse*, trans. by Rev. Edw. Marshall (Oxford; London: James Parker and Co., 1878), p. 153.

In conclusion, the emerald, ingested as a component of remedies, or carried close to the body, had healing, strengthening, apotropaic and divine qualities derived from its material and its symbology that would explain its use against the Black Death. Furthermore, this brief analysis has sought to demonstrate how the use of a specific gemstone in the prevention and cure regimes of the Black Death treaties followed a well-structured logic, which was based on the knowledge and beliefs current in the late Middle Ages. Considering gemstones as conscious choices made by doctors at the time, and not as arbitrary selections based on a supposed ignorance, allows us to critically reassess the image of 14<sup>th</sup>-century medicine presented within more traditional historiographical currents. By moving away from these judgments, we are able to re-interpret the use of gemstones in medieval medicine, a rich source of new knowledge both *per se* and in its relationship with other areas of medieval life and learning. As representatives of this, the gems, to which the emerald was used an example here, contain fruitful associations, meanings, symbolisms, virtues, and powers that ascribe them magico-medical and symbolic-religious qualities: this is the path forward for understanding the possible logic of the use of gemstones in medieval medicine.

# A Presentation of Grupo de Estudos em História Medieval



Luiz Felipe Anchieta Guerra  
State University of Montes Claros (Unimontes)

The Study Group of Medieval History (Grupo de Estudos em História Medieval, GEHM), was created in early 2020 through the initiative of undergraduate students from the State University of Montes Claros (Unimontes) who were studying themes involving the Middle Ages for their bachelor theses. It accompanied a surge of interest in the field of Medieval Studies in both pop culture and in academia in many countries, including Brazil.<sup>1</sup> This was largely due to the recent growth in popularity of medieval themes in movies, books, and TV shows like *Game of Thrones*, which even inspired a “medieval” Brazilian telenovela.<sup>2</sup> But the aforementioned surge also benefited, to some extent, from the advancement of new technologies that allowed easier access to primary sources and recent publications, as well as a greater exchange of information between international researchers. This stimulated scholarship and interest about the European Middle Ages in Brazil, and allowed

---

<sup>1</sup> Néri de Barros Almeida, ‘A História Medieval no Brasil’, *SIGNUM-Revista da ABREM*, 14.1 (2013), 1–16; Clinio Amaral and João Guilherme Lisboa Rangel, *A historiografia medieval no Brasil: de 1990 a 2017* (Curitiba: Appris Editora, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Carolina Gual Silva, ‘Relações de Gênero e Telenovelas: um estudo de caso com abordagem de neomedievalismo’, *SIGNUM-Revista da ABREM*, 22.1 (2021), 183–203; Richard Utz, ‘Don't be Snobs, Medievalists’, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 24, 2015 < [www.chronicle.com/article/dont-be-snobs-medievalists/](http://www.chronicle.com/article/dont-be-snobs-medievalists/) > [Accessed 6 May 2022].

students to engage with the academic environment beyond the Medieval History course, which is mandatory in the History curriculum at Unimontes.

Within this context, GEHM was envisioned as a safe environment for the students of Unimontes to discuss scholarship, as well as their own research themes and ideas. While it is formally under the supervision of professors Vinícius César Dreger and Robson Murilo Della Torre, the group is student-led, and is always coordinated by an undergraduate, who at the time of founding was Karolina Santos. This workshop environment was to be achieved through weekly in-person meetings at the Unimontes campus. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020, only the first in-person meeting ever took place, and soon the group was forced to adapt to the new “remote” reality.

The transition, however, was ultimately beneficial for GEHM, as it allowed for undergraduate students, graduate students, and even professors from other institutions and parts of Brazil to participate in and engage with the meetings, bringing different perspectives and expertise. This also opened the possibility to invite guests, usually the authors of the texts being discussed, to partake in the debate, which eventually led to the idea of inviting non-Brazilians for special meetings and trying to make the group truly global. Starting with Richard Utz and including other well-known scholars like Louise D'Arcens, Ronald Hutton, and Daniel Wollenberg, GEHM's seminar series has hosted, to date, over 30 scholars, from 5 continents, ranging from graduate students to retired professors. These seminars have, in turn, also attracted both a regular and varied international audience from all over the world.

Following the success of this internationalization effort, in 2021 GEHM hosted its first conference: the 2021 Global Medievalisms Conference,<sup>3</sup> which had over 300 registrants and included participants and guests from around the world, reaching far beyond the traditional Anglophone world and including Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Central and South America. The conference also produced a

---

<sup>3</sup> Fully available at GEHM-Unimontes, Home [YouTube Channel] (n.d.) <<https://youtube.com/channel/UCeN4Xsyc8k7avSEVVt8XuBA>> [Accessed: 6 May 2022].

selection of texts, curated from the papers, which are in the process of being transformed in a peer-reviewed book.

As a result, the group grew and started to incorporate other members from outside of Unimontes as members and collaborators, including graduate student Luiz Guerra, PhD candidate Leandro César, and Prof. Dani Galindo. Currently, the group comprises more than 20 academics, from undergraduate students to tenured professors, who conduct research within or are interested in the fields of Medieval Studies, Medievalism, and Late Antiquity, with specialties that encompass many themes, sources, locations, and methodologies. The current coordinator is the undergraduate student Melissa Martins Veloso, with Luiz Felipe Anchieta Guerra acting as co-coordinator, and professors Vinícius Dreger and Robson Della Torre as supervisor and co-supervisor respectively.

Due to its newfound broader audience, GEHM decided to keep its activities 100% online, even as the COVID-19 restrictions started to be lifted, and has maintained its international profile with regular guests and special events. Also, the group will be hosting its second international conference in 2022, Global Medievalisms II. This will be the final conference that GEHM organizes on the topic of medievalism; we plan to hold a more traditional Medieval Studies conference in 2023, and possibly a hybrid conference (in person and remote) in 2024. The group also hosts weekly meetings to discuss texts and research ideas, in Portuguese, and monthly meetings in English with guests or volunteers. All meetings and events hosted by GEHM are open for all to watch and participate in, regardless of degree or background, and they are also free of charge, including the conference. So, anyone who is interested is more than welcome to come to a meeting and see how it goes.

To be updated on the group's schedule and announcements, please check our Facebook and Instagram pages (@gehm.unimontes). For up-to-date news about the 2022 conference please check its website (globalmedievalism.org). Finally, for any inquiries, doubts, questions, proposals, or suggestions please contact us via [medieval.unimontes@gmail.com](mailto:medieval.unimontes@gmail.com). We hope to see some new faces soon!

Stefka G. Eriksen, Karen Langsholt Holmqvist, and Bjørn Bandlien, eds.,  
*Approaches to the Medieval Self: Representations and Conceptualisations of  
the Self in the Textual and Material Culture of Western Scandinavia, c. 800–  
1500* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2020). Print, viii + 339 pp., €89,95, ISBN:  
9783110655551.



---

*Review*

In recent decades, academia has witnessed a continuing outpour of scholarship that can be roughly divided into two streams. The First (re)examines, problematises, and analyses concepts that have been thought of as postmodern constructions. The second stream focuses on theories and methodological frameworks and does not always separate itself from the first. Older theories are re-examined and re-assessed, while theories from other disciplines are adopted and adapted to medieval resources.

More often than not, a piece of research work incorporates both streams, and the subject of this review, *Approaches to the Medieval Self*, is such an example. Consisting of 16 papers (introduction and conclusion included), this collaborative volume examines on the one hand a group of diverse, creatively assembled sources from which one may get a glimpse of a concept of self in a medieval Scandinavian context; on the other hand, it applies a set of different yet correlative theories to these source materials. As a result, the volume is highly experimental in its nature; as its title suggests, it does not seek to (re)define the self but ‘aims to engage with the current discussions and investigate how the various definitions and approaches to the self may complement each other’ (p. 2). In other words, the volume strives at the *how* rather than the *what*.

That having been said, the reader cannot possibly fail to extract at least some characteristics of the self. In the following, I will structure this review giving an overview of the volume and summarising what, I as a reader, have been made aware of, when it comes to the self in medieval Scandinavia.

To begin with, the self is constantly changing, yet without having impaired the continuity of the individual's sense of identity and personhood. Though shaped by past experience and anticipation of the future, the self is very much a thing of the present; what it is at any given moment depends on the individual's actions and decisions, which in turn depend first on the person's cognitive processes. In other words, it is both a private and a communal matter. Several papers of the volume examine approaches to the self primarily on the individual level. These include first Eriksen and Turner's 'Cognitive Approaches to Old Norse Literature', which, having re-assessed and borrowed from the cognitive sciences, examines the possible creative processes behind different genres of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. One very interesting and useful concept here is that of stories and blending; it concerns how the human brain makes sense of the world by creating narratives and processes the information it receives through analogies and disanalogies. The example Eriksen and Turner used to demonstrate these processes and their role in narrative-making concerns the genres such as the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas written centuries after Iceland and Norway had been Christianised—a result of the blending of the pre-Christian myths and the Christian mindset. This particular blending is picked up in Tulinius's article, 'The Medieval Subject and the Saga Hero', and applied to close readings of two sagas of Icelanders, *Hrafns saga Svenbjarnarsonar* and *Egils saga*. In particular, introducing the concepts of *habitus* and social norms, he examines how the two sagas shows different degrees of blending Christian and non-Christian elements. Literary texts here have become manifestations of the self of a given society, reflecting its complexity and multifariousness.

In the following paper 'The Precarious Self', Steen examines how King Sverrir of *Sverris saga* utilises blending and narrative-making to adopt and adapt his 'self' to a variety of circumstances, so as to successfully navigate through the turbulent political events surrounding his accession to the throne and to stabilise his position as King of Norway. Eriksen returns yet again with not only the cognitive sciences but also the principles of multimodal communication and interpretation, only that this

time she focuses on the 'selves' of medieval scribes and readers of medieval manuscripts. Using two *Njáls saga* manuscripts as example and particularly focusing on the rubrics and initials, Eriksen demonstrates how the scribes' and the readers' meaning-making might impact on the layout of the manuscript itself. In doing so, her article also functions as an important reminder that, while working on medieval texts, one deals with multiple selves: not just those of the characters and the authors, but the readers also play a role in the shaping of the story.

The individual, however, is but one side of the story; the sense of self is also largely shaped by the individual's social, cultural, and physical surroundings. Shaw, for instance, in his paper 'The Networked Historical Self, Traveling Version', views the self as 'a function of networks of ideas, things, animals, and bodies' (p. 21) and examines the ongoing change of the self as the individual moves between the familiar and the foreign. Then, in a series of papers in the second half of the volume, innovative sources are examined as potential gateways to medieval Scandinavian self: both utilising archaeological evidence, Naumann in 'Food, Everyday Practice, and the Self in Medieval Oslo' and Croix in 'Identifying "Occasions" of the Self in Viking-Age Scandinavia' examine two human activities that are both private and communal: eating and weaving. The former reads food and food preparation as a social practice that provokes a 'multitude of actions, emotions, and meanings' (p. 213), from which a sense of self could be drawn. The latter introduces the gender aspect into the discussion by examining specific architectural spaces associated to textile production, a craft dominated by women belonging to a variety of social classes. Bonde and Holmqvist on the other hand decentres the self and, with the help of the practice theory, put nonhuman objects to the fore. In Bonde's 'Searching for the Self in Danish Twelfth-Century Churches', the narrative/meaning-making process is analysed against a blending of the human subjects (in this case, participants in Mass), the ritual of Mass itself, and the round arch of the church building. Comparing two groups of graffiti found respectively in Maeshowe, a Neolithic cairn, and in Nidaros Cathedral,

Holmqvist analyses how different aspects of the self may surface according to the individual's changing physical environment and company.

In addition to their innovative approaches, the last four titles also showcase the richness of the resources available to us so as to uncover the concept of the self. These are further expanded by contributions by Bandlien, Nordby, Diesen, and Bauer, who investigate seals, oath-swearing (in law codes), children's experience in hagiography and accounts of miracles, and tenement names. Together, they give a glimpse of a treasure hoard of historical sources that would allow future scholars of various academic background opportunities to pursue and further the inquiry, to arrive at a more or less complete picture of the medieval self.

However, just as treasure hoards are always guarded by dragons and monsters alike, it could be dangerous to approach these sources without caution. The self, as mentioned, is as multi-layered as it is dynamic; it may involve a complicated group of both human and nonhuman factors intricately tied to each other. In the process of blending, compressing, and decompressing these factors, the self may be lost in its multiplicity and inconstancy. Johannsson's contribution, 'The Selfish Skald', warns us of precisely this danger. Tracing the textual transmission of *Egils saga* and focusing on the poem *Sonatorrek*, he problematises any attempt at finding a literary self of Egill, for the saga/poem as we know is a product of much later era and a combined effort of both scribes and readers (cf. Eriksen's paper on the *Njálla*).

Overall, faithful to the title and the editors' promise in the introductory chapter, the volume does deliver multiple approaches to the medieval self as could be extracted from a diverse group of sources. Its experimental nature decides that the majority of the articles, inevitably, devote a disproportionate space to theories and literature review, making the final analysis part (which in many cases takes only 2 to 3 pages out of 10) seem somewhat underwhelming. The reader is left with a strong desire to know more, which is in fact a bright side and a very positive result indeed. Although, many of these papers are only preliminary in nature and due to the

limitation of space can only offer an overview, they do promise the coming of many individual research projects, which I for one very much look forwards to.

Minjie Su

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main



Yaniv Fox and Erica Buchberger, eds., *Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediterranean Christianities, 400–800* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019). Print, 400 pp., €80.00, ISBN: 9782503581132.

---

*Review*

The fifth to the ninth centuries were some of the most transformative years in Mediterranean history, impelled largely by the transition from a Roman to a post-Roman world and catalyzed by Christianization. Consequently, this period has attracted significant multidisciplinary scholarly attention, which has challenged preexisting paradigms and offered new perspectives and methodologies to crucial questions and ongoing debates of great importance. The edited collection under review is the first of two volumes that promise collectively to add much to the conversation if this first volume is any indication. The two volumes together will consider the fifth to the ninth centuries with a concentration on the multifarious transactions in which Christian communities engaged as they grappled with key debates surrounding access to resources – broadly defined – which are ultimately rooted in questions of identity and the decisions that a community makes as to what to include or exclude which, as many essays in this volume demonstrate, can prove profoundly consequential.

Though the volume's title would appear to delimit both the geographical and chronological scope, a few chapters indicate the editors' self-admittedly capacious understanding of what constitutes a 'Mediterranean' Christian community as they follow in the footsteps of Henri Pirenne. Most of the chapters discuss the expected places such as Spain, Italy, and Gaul. Fox, however, writes that the case could be made to include such 'Mediterranean hinterlands' as Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, and Britain due to the sizable impact of the Mediterranean communities in these countries in terms of intellectual, economic, and cultural influence (p.4). Due to this reasoning,

readers will find an essay on *Beowulf*, for instance, that might otherwise come as a surprise in a volume on late antique and early medieval Mediterranean Christianities. The volume itself is divided into four parts, each containing two to four essays therein.

Part one, 'Literate Communities and their Texts,' commences with a careful study of the *Liber pontificalis* in which Carmela Franklin reassesses the argument that the version of the *Liber pontificalis* in a collection of ninth-century Carolingian manuscripts were purposely amended to support Carolingian political aims in the eighth century. Franklin argues that there is no so-called 'Frankish redaction' which posited the Franks modified the papal chronicle for political ends. Instead, she contends that the archetype was actually Roman and any revisions in favor of the Carolingians were at the direction of the papacy. Following Franklin's piece, Dirk Rohman turns attention to the manner in which nascent Christian communities excluded heterodox philosophies that posed a challenge by, *inter alia*, expanding the definition of the word 'heresy' to include pagan writings. Christian authors, Rohman posits, excluded texts threatening orthodoxy by highlighting their descent from pagan teachings. Rohman's piece concludes with an assertion that will likely prove controversial among medieval Irish specialists. Rohman's final few pages argue that parts of the well-known Hiberno-Latin *Hisperica Famina* show evidence of derision of key Christian doctrines that emanated from presumably no longer extant texts 'confiscated by Christian missionaries in Ireland' (p.65). Part I concludes with Shane Bjornlie's piece suggesting that *Beowulf* was written to address primarily Anglo-Saxon and Frankish concerns about 'cultural conflict' vis-à-vis the presence of as yet unassimilated Scandinavians in England.

Part two, entitled 'The Internal Dialogue of the Church,' begins with Yonatan Livneh's essay, which argues that the historians Socrates Scholasticus and Sozomen's focus on internal discord in their writings was intended to critique the acrimonious tenor of contemporary debates within the fifth-century Church. The next essay, by Daniel Neary, turns to the writings of seventh-century Palestinian monk Anthony of Choziba, who writes in the context of the ongoing Chalcedonian debates. Neary draws

attention to Anthony's indifference to the concerns, that his contemporaries focused on, and instead lamented their affinity for schism which he believed would prevent the Church from achieving its former glory. Part two concludes with Peter Schadler's chapter that shows how Christian communities in the Levant, in the wake of decreased contact with Constantinople and increased Muslim scrutiny over the authority of church councils, saw those councils prior to and including the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE as their primary sources of authority.

Part three, which focuses on 'Persecution and Dissent,' comprises four outstanding contributions. Éric Fournier's superb chapter offers a valuable reassessment of the coercive methods employed by the Vandals, showing how Huneric and his legal counselors appropriated Roman legal precedent, particularly some of the least coercive laws of Honorius, seemingly to avoid the death penalty. Instead, they primarily opted to use laws that punished the offender with banishment or fines. Fournier argues that the onus of the most severe legislation targeting presumed heretics is on the North African Nicene bishops instead of the Vandals. Robin Whelan's chapter acts as a valuable corrective to modern tendencies which tie Homoian Christianity with ethnicity, particularly the Goths, thereby overemphasizing the importance of ethnicity and diminishing the role of correct doctrine. Whelan uses Visigothic Spain and Ostrogothic Italy to reassess the relationship between religious identity (Homoian Christian) and ethnic identity (Goth) to determine if they were viewed as related by contemporaries. Whelan makes the case that the texts demonstrate that upholding Christian orthodoxy was paramount. Erica Buchberger continues the discussion of Spain, focusing on the period after the 589 conversion to Catholicism by the Visigothic king Reccared. She looks at the way in which Gothic identity was shaped in the seventh century: its close association with Catholicism and the consequent marginalizing effect this vision of a unified Catholic people had on the kingdom's exclusionary policies towards the Jews who served as the 'most convenient other' against which the Goths could 'reassert' themselves (p.212). Picking up on the theme of anti-Jewish policies, Thomas

MacMaster considers the *Chronicle of Fredegar* anew and argues that the ultimately unsuccessful anti-Jewish policies of Emperor Heraclius proved inspirational to King Dagobert I, who instigated a campaign in the 630s against the Jews in Merovingian Gaul, giving it the dubious distinction of being the first Christian state to be purged of its Jewish population.

The volume's final section, 'Elite Networks,' contains two essays that focus on the distinctions made between Romans and 'barbarians' in the fifth century. Emmanuelle Raga's paper analyzes Sidonius Apollinaris's use of food and feasting as a strategy to distinguish between Romans and barbarians. She argues that Theodoric is presented as a typical Roman sovereign on the whole. In contradistinction to typical Roman ethnographic writings, which highlight the differences in barbarian food choices, remarks on Visigothic food are noticeably absent in Sidonius's works, possibly because the Visigoths did not use food as a vehicle of identity expression or distinction. Sidonius does follow the traditional Roman custom of remarking on barbarian foods, but it was always to distinguish social status and not ethnicity, which she argues shows Sidonius did not connect barbarian cuisine with their ethnicity. In part four's final chapter, Aleksander Paradziński provides an illuminating case study of the method one fifth-century family of Roman officials with Alanic ancestry, the Ardaburii, negotiated their identity as both part of yet still distinct from the Roman elites, thus allowing them to tap into Roman and non-Roman networks of power alike. However, their continued attachments to certain aspects of 'barbarian' identity ultimately led to their downfall when their powerful foes used the perception of them as non-Roman to undercut the family's ambitions.

While collected volumes of this sort sometimes suffer from being only loosely related to the collection's theme, the authors and editors are to be commended for ensuring this volume's cohesiveness. Perhaps the only minor critique for this reviewer would be the conspicuous lack of discussion on gender as a criterion of exclusion or inclusion, which perhaps will be addressed in the second forthcoming volume. Nevertheless, readers can expect to find on the whole that each contribution offers a

rich discussion of various strategies for inclusion and exclusion. There is much to recommend in this stimulating volume which will serve as an invaluable resource for those studying not only Mediterranean Christianities between the fifth and ninth centuries but also for those with an interest in strategies of inclusion and exclusion more broadly.

Meredith Cutrer

Worcester College, University of Oxford



Sinah Theres Kloß, ed., *Tattoo Histories: Transcultural Perspectives on the Narratives, Practices, and Representations of Tattooing* (Routledge: New York, 2020). Ebook \$68.99 (print, 336 pp., \$252.00), ISBN: 9780429319228.

---

*Review*

Many of the seminal tattoo studies of the last generation have opened with a description of what tattooing is, but given the increasing ubiquity of tattoos within modern culture, it is unlikely that many readers still need to have this described for them. However, Sinah Theres Kloß, in her Introduction, immediately takes something that most people think of as being a key characteristic of a tattoo – permanence – and challenges it, stating that '[t]attoos are impermanent, fluid, and volatile. They change and disappear when people die. They are transformed in shape and intensity on human bodies over time ... and are frequently reworked, removed, covered, or extended'. (p.3) This paradox, furthermore, is not just a modern phenomenon but one which can be seen throughout history, both physically and through evolving attitudes within and across cultures. This transcultural approach across both space and time is evident throughout all the contributions.

*Tattoo Histories* is divided into four parts, taking neither a geographical nor a chronological approach to compartmentalising the chapters: this volume does not seek to impose a uniform or linear History upon the subject matter, allowing instead for a multiplicity of perspectives and histories to be discussed. Part one, 'Tattoos as Individual or Communal Body Projects', examines issues of gender, sexuality, identity construction, ethnicity, and class within contemporary tattooing culture through an analysis of the reality program *Miami Ink* (Verena Hutter), and extensive interviews with the Italian LGBTQ+ (Alessandra Castellani) and American Latinx (Beverley Yuen Thompson) communities. Part two, 'Tattoos and Othering', examines how tattoos have been used to 'other' individuals and whole communities within very different

historical and fictional contexts: ancient Mediterranean and near-eastern cultures (Martin T. Dinter and Astrid Khoo), revolutionary-era France (Victoria N Meyer), nineteenth-century America (Amelia Klem Osterud), and the fictional supernatural horror TV series *Salem* (Stephanie Weber). Part three, '(De-)Colonisation, Revitalization, and Cultural Appropriation', contains the greatest number of contributions, with five chapters to discuss different aspects of colonisation, decolonisation, and revitalisation within the indigenous societies that tattooed historically in North America (Pauline Alvarez), North-Western India and neighbouring Myanmar (Ata Mallick, Lars Krutak), as well as cultural appropriation through Westerners having Chinese language tattoos (Guy Almog) and the acquisition by tourists in East Africa souvenir tattoos (Nico Nassenstein and Maren Rüschi). Lastly, part four, 'Tattoo as Embodied Art', explores tattoos primarily in an art historical, rather than cultural or historical, context through ancient Thracian tattooing as depicted in ancient Greek art (Owen Rees), a Damien Hirst artwork, *butterfly, divided*, of a butterfly tattooed upon a woman's vulva (Ole Wittmann), and a novel, *The Garden of Evening Mists*, whose main protagonists, a Malaysian war victim and her Japanese lover find mutual catharsis through the long process of tattooing her back with an artistic *horimono* tattoo (Hannah M.Y. Ho).

At first glance, the contributions to *Tattoo Histories* may seem to be rather loosely connected and eclectic; but upon closer reading, there are, in fact, several clear themes that emerge through the approach of the various authors as well as the overall editorial continuity. Each of the chapters within the four parts complements and contrasts each other exceptionally well, and the way that Kloß contextualises each part with its own literature review aids in this impression of connectivity.

One of the striking themes throughout *Tattoo Histories* is the blurred line between fiction and reality. Ho and Weber analyse fictional sources which use real tattooing motifs and motivations within mostly plausible historical settings, and Meyer examines political propaganda in the fictional (though plausible) caricature *Republican Discipline*. Osterud provides an excellent discussion of nineteenth-century

heavily tattooed 'freak show' performers with real tattooed bodies and fictional personal histories. Their popular captivity narratives, designed to be shocking and titillating, played upon society's fears and preconceptions of the exotic, deliberately blurring the history of the individual to fit into the trope, with varying degrees of fictionalised narratives being built upon a base of truth. But playing with the truth is not just confined to historical tattooing, as Nassenstein and Rüsç note in the context of (post-)colonial tourism that people "tend to display souvenirs that reflect their *ideal* self-image as opposed to their *real* self-image" (p.238). Aside from the small inconvenience that almost all of the nineteenth-century performers' tattoos were quite obviously of Western design and technique, it is ironic that such narratives framed these individuals as being forcibly tattooed in order to culturally assimilate into their captors' society. Actually, the converse was the case historically with Indigenous people around the globe being forced to relinquish their tattooing traditions in order to be deemed successfully assimilated into their colonisers' societies, as discussed by Alvarez, Mallick, and Krutak.

Within these considerations of fictional narratives, the theme of 'authenticity' is closely interwoven, and how tattoos have a multiplicity of meanings for different audiences. Contemporary culture, being centred on the experiences of the individual, highly values tattoos which are unique, individual, and often meaningful as a memento of a person, place or time, as detailed by Castellani, Thompson, Nassenstein and Rüsç, and Wittmann. This is of course completely different to historical and contemporary indigenous tattooing traditions which value the communal, with design choice, placement, and meaning taken from a small cultural cache.

The last recurring theme I want to highlight is that of power and authority, which can manifest either overtly or covertly or be subverted from within. Most obviously, punitive tattooing is about overt displays of power and subjugation, and this is seen in Meyer's analysis of late eighteenth-century political propaganda, as well as in both Rees's and Dinter and Khoo's examination of ancient European tattooing which details the identification of tattooing with criminality and servility in the

Graeco-Roman world. Both essays provide a cultural contrast to this with, respectively, a discussion of Thracian and early Christian tattooing traditions which subverted Graeco-Roman narratives of authority.

Equally overt as punitive tattooing are edicts that forbid the practice of tattooing as seen within the history of white settler colonialism, especially when coupled with evangelical Christianity. Other, more subtle, expressions of power are in acts which can be argued as cultural appropriation as with souvenirs and Chinese language tattooing. Or in the way that traditional gender roles and stereotypes affect how and where people, usually women, get tattooed. But power is not at all one-sided, since being *empowered* is often the emotional meaning that many people attach to their tattoos, whether they are reclaiming their indigenous heritage, or seeing their tattoo art as manifesting their evolving identity.

It is also important to note that many of the tattooed performers discussed by Osterud were women, from a non-white or lower-class background, or (shamefully at the time) were considered to be intellectually disabled due to their physical 'deformities' or their race. As such, she notes that most had their narratives ghost-written for them by a white adult male. A less overt version of this patronising, objectifying, and de-humanising approach still can be seen to persist within mainstream society within the context of tattooing, as Hutter shows in her analysis of how contemporary women's tattoos are deemed culturally acceptable when kept within a standardised set of motivations, designs, reactions, and interactions. 'Small, cute, and hidden' (pp.36, 44, 52) is what women's tattoos are expected to be, and when women transgress this expectation, they are treated differently both within tattooing communities and without, as discussed separately by Hutter, Castellani, and Thompson.

The tattoo at the centre of Wittmann's essay similarly plays on these very expectations, being relatively small, artistically executed, and ordinarily hidden, before subverting this trope. Wittmann contextualises the artwork (which consists of both the actual tattoo as well as the art photograph of the tattoo) within Hirst's *oeuvre*:

the vertical axis of this piece is provided by the model's pudendal cleft rather than literal dissection as with some of his other pieces involving animals in general, making *butterfly, divided* one of his most ethical artworks given the clear and informed consent shown by all participants both before and after the process, as well as the lack of direct animal deaths involved in its creation. The choice of motif is highly significant, connecting other Hirst works involving the same butterfly species (*Morpho cypris*), but also referencing one of Aphrodite's epithets: *Kýpris* – the 'Cypriot'. Multiple strands of meaning overlap, with the location of the tattoo being the 'mount of Venus', famously depicted by Botticelli when Aphrodite covers her vulva in *The Birth of Venus*, itself linked to other famous art such as *The Origin of the World*. Adding another layer of complexity, female wearers of butterfly-tattoos have, especially until the late twentieth century, been strongly associated with low social status, promiscuity, and even criminality, and other commentators have noted the traditional gender authority relationship implied by the male tattooist and male artist creating such a personal piece. However, Shauna Taylor, the woman who underwent this most painful process and whose genitalia is in a sense no longer private any longer, has elsewhere attested how the artwork placement and design have, in fact, personally empowered her. In contrast to the 'Shame Laid Bare' of the title, Taylor's attitude proves that shame is in the eyes of the beholder, not the bearer.

Throughout all the contributions, *Tattoo Histories* successfully examines how practices marginalised for millennia have persisted, been subverted, and ultimately transformed at various times and places in history. Voices that have traditionally been marginalised within societies that devalue tattooing – female, queer, indigenous, and radical narratives – can all be heard quite clearly within these chapters, offering important perspectives on issues of representation and identity from the communal to the personal level. This work is an accomplished collection of essays which sits comfortably alongside other important works from the last twenty years, such as those edited by Jane Caplan, Margot DeMello, Aaron Deter-Wolf, Lars Krutak, and Ben

Lester. It will appeal to both students and academics in the field and will surely be considered as a seminal work in years to come.

Erica Steiner

University of Sydney



Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood, eds., *Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages, Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 30* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019). Print, viii + 332 pp., €80.00, ISBN: 9782503566733.

---

*Review*

The volume, *Crossing Borders in the Insular Middle Ages*, edited by Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood, is a collection of papers that investigates cultural connections in north-western Europe (Britain, Ireland, and Iceland) during the high and late Middle Ages. A special focus is reserved for cross-border translation and transmission, fundamental components of literary histories.

The studies suggest the importance of a collaborative scholarship and a considerable openness to cross-cultural material. The innovative research from international scholars, working in Celtic, Norse, and English Studies, is shown to be key to overcoming the conventional boundaries of their discipline. These contributions are a conversation between specialisms intended to facilitate comparative scholarly interests. The modern comparative literary scholarship in the Anglophone context, indeed, had little interest in Insular regions and its affirmation has encountered some political problems as Byrne and Flood explain in their introduction.

The connections between “cultures plural” (p.7) and not a singular Insular culture, not a homogeneity of cultural process, are well highlighted in the concept of multilingualism. Cultural contact and textual transmission in the Insular world open numerous questions about the problems of language contact, the stratification of minority and majority languages, and the relationship between vernacular use and national identity. The specialists, with a range of contemporary approaches, examine how these aspects intertwine and coexist in Insular literature and how they relate to the rest of Europe.

The collection tends to be organized broadly according to a geographical principle, starting with the literary activity in Wales, followed by England, Ireland, and Iceland.

The first three essays focus on the intellectual activity in Wales. Helen Fulton's chapter investigates two important anthologies of medieval Welsh literature: The Red Book of Hergest and the White Book of Rhydderch. Particular attention is given, by the scholar, to the gentry libraries and the important role played by the Welsh families in the cultural influence and the contemporary multilingualism in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Elena Parina's paper explores the translation of two medical texts into Welsh. The two texts, *Rhinweddau Bwydydd* and *Y Pedwar Gwlybwr*, indeed, are the translation of the *Flores dietarum*. Parina's analysis demonstrates the Welsh reception of the long tradition of medicine, from late Antiquity to Greek and to Arabic, but also the adaptation of their source texts for practical use, which shows the medieval Welsh scientific interest in medicine. Victoria Flood's contribution discusses the translation into Welsh of English political prophecies, *Lily, Lion and Son of Man*, into Welsh during the early Tudor period, with a particular study on the political context and the conceptualization of Welsh national identity even with the use of English material. Joanna Bellis's article examines two fourteenth-century Anglo-Latin poems: *The Dispute between the Englishman and the Frenchman* and *An Invective against France*. She explores the overuse of Latin in poetry from the Hundred Years' War and considers the multilingualism and multiculturalism mutually involving English and French in the "constructions of otherness" (p.109). The permeability of national language is the basis of Rory McTurk's contribution. It focuses on contrapuntal alliteration in *Piers Plowman* and Skaldic Poetry: a comparative approach that invites investigation beyond conventional disciplinary boundaries. The translation of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* in Early Modern Irish is explored by Erich Poppe. It appears as an excellent example of the crusading culture where connections are more evident than clashes. The Crusade literature is also considered by Aisling Byrne in her essay, including the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*. Her examination considers the Irish context in

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and how the ecclesiastical circles played an important role in the diffusion of these kinds of texts. The two contributions by Marianne Briggs and Julie Leblanc are still focused on the Irish area. Both authors investigate Irish adaptation of classical texts. Briggs explores the translation of Statius's *Thebaid* and proves that the final product differs from the source by placing itself in a more Irish context rather than a Mediterranean one. LeBlanc also examines the Irish *Aeneid*, drawing a very similar conclusion to those drawn by Briggs. In fact, there is an adaptation rather than a rigid translation in the vernacular composition, which may be considered as a product of the Irish culture. In the tenth chapter of the collection, Matthias Egeler considers the relationship between the Norse *Glæsisvellir* and the Irish literature. He argues that the Irish voyage tales found an echo in the Norse world: a very interesting comparative study where a paradisiacal land is found in several Old Norse texts, but it was derived from early medieval Irish production. Sif Rikhardsdottir's study investigates the incursion of the French and England material into Scandinavia in the mid-thirteenth century. He examines the 'cycle of cultural transmission and expansion begun almost four centuries earlier with the Viking expansion outward from the Northern peripheries of the known world to the neighbouring insular regions' (p.251). The 'emotive scripts' in the translation of the literary texts provide evidence of cultural differences in sociocultural emotive coding. Sarah Braccianti's contribution shows how Monmouth's Old Norse translation of the *Historia regum Britanniae* in the thirteenth century was a real appropriation, like Arthurian romances, which came to create the 'possibility of connecting the Trojan dynasty with the Norwegian dynasties and hence with the leading Icelandic families' (p.294). The final study comes from Sabine Heidi Walther, in which she explains the translation of *De excidio Troiae historia* into Old Norse. She highlights how the role played by Hercules in the *Trójumanna saga* is greater than its source: there is a transformation of the classical hero into a courtly hero thanks to the French influence.

The Mediterranean Sea is considered as a network of connections where different cultures bump into each other and dialogue, likewise the North Sea and the

Insular world is now reconceptualized as a cultural centre. *Crossing Borders* is a lens on the far western and on the no singular Insular culture, on the multicultural contact across north-western Europe in the later Middle Ages. By a transversal reading, it is possible to perceive a dynamic culture rich in connections both with the ancient world and with the rest of the continent in the same chronological period. The book is a laboratory where not only the contributions connect to each other, but offers new horizons and new perspectives of research.

Veronica De Duonni

Università degli Studi di Salerno



Emily Dolmans, *Writing Regional Identities in Medieval England: From the Gesta Herewardi to Richard Coer de Lyon* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2020).  
Print, xiv + 235 pp., £60.00, ISBN: 9781843845683.

---

*Review*

In *Writing Regional Identities in Medieval England: From the Gesta Herewardi to Richard Coeur de Lyon*, Emily Dolmans examines representations of English identity in romance and historiography from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. Focusing on cross-cultural counters in Latin and Anglo-Norman texts, Dolmans argues that English identity is plural, multiple, and diverse. The role of borders and borderlands is central to Dolmans' study: she suggests that 'England and English identity are defined by their borderlands', but also notes that Englishness is 'most vigorously challenged' in these contact zones (p. 13). *Writing Regional Identities* is structured chronologically and each chapter focuses on a different region of England, moving from the local and the regional to the global and the transnational.

Chapter one examines the story of Hereward and the significance of Ely in the *Gesta Herewardi*. In contrast to previous scholarship, Dolmans contends that Hereward is a local rather than a national hero; indeed, she points out that 'Hereward's insurgence is motivated by the Normans' oppressive treatment of his family and neighbours, and his actions are always impelled by local events' (p. 35). Dolmans shows how Hereward's story is 'ingrained within the landscape' of Ely (p. 38), and she compares the topographical descriptions in the *Gesta Herewardi* to the *Liber Eliensis* to indicate how writers constructed Ely as a symbol of pre-Conquest England, with the marshes dividing the region from the rest of the country. This re-assessment of the *Gesta Herewardi* is thoughtful, cogent, and persuasive, and Dolmans clearly demonstrates how Hereward's rebellion against the crown is presented as a conflict between the margins and the centre.

Chapter two analyses the construction of English identity in Geffrei Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis*. Dolmans contends that 'Gaimar creates an idea of Englishness that is intimately connected with regional matters and local stories, accessible to all peoples living in the areas in which he was writing, regardless of whether they were ancestrally Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, or Anglo-Danish' (p. 65). This chapter focuses on various intercultural exchanges between the English and the Danes; it also situates these stories within the wider context of the Viking invasions of England from the ninth century and the legacy of the Danelaw in Lincolnshire. Dolmans carefully draws out the differences between the story of Havelok in the *Estoire* and the *Lai d'Havelok* to demonstrate how Gaimar gives local stories national significance. She also suggests that Havelok's story anticipates the reign of Cnut in the *Estoire*; however, the relationship between the reigns of the two kings could be discussed in more detail, which would further strengthen the main argument of the chapter about the interconnected histories of England and Denmark.

Chapter three considers the tension between national unity and regional identity in the Anglo-Norman romance, *Fouke le Fitz Waryn*. Although the text is set in Shropshire, and documents the history of a prominent Marcher family, Dolmans challenges the dominant view of *Fouke* as a border story. Instead, she argues that *Fouke* constructs a regional Marcher identity that connects – rather than divides – the English and the Welsh. Dolmans suggests that the March could be considered a 'Third Space' as it disrupts binary oppositions and destabilises national identities (p. 105). The chapter examines how local histories, folklore, and national mythologies are reshaped to unite the English and the Welsh within this Marcher context; it also contains some excellent and detailed analysis of the landscape that shows how *Fouke* navigates the Marcher territories, erasing the boundaries between England and Wales to create a 'borderless Britain' (p. 102).

Chapter four, 'Englishness Outside England: Embracing Alterity in Medieval Romance', focuses on the Anglo-Norman romances *Gui de Warewic* and *Boeve de Haumtone*. This chapter moves away from texts set in England to focus on the

representation of English identity abroad. Dolmans argues that *Gui* and *Boeve* construct 'multi-layered English identities that are at once dynastic, local, national, transnational, exotic, and religious' (pp. 133–134). She also suggests that these texts grant their audiences 'imaginative access to the world beyond England's shores' (p. 134). The chapter primarily focuses on the structure of the two texts as exile-and-return romances, examining how English identity and ideas of belonging are re-oriented abroad. The argument of this chapter is well-executed through a close comparison of the two texts, but some consideration of the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon past and the Anglo-Norman present in these romances would have further demonstrated the complexities of English identity.

Chapter five, 'England at the Edge of the World', examines English identity in a global context. The chapter focuses on two Alexander romances – including Thomas of Kent's *Le roman de toute chevalerie* and its Middle English translation *Kyng Alisaunder* – as well as the Middle English romance *Richard Coer de Lyon*. Dolmans asserts that these three texts 'present English identity in constant negotiation with the outside world' (p. 165). In the first half of the chapter on the Alexander romances, Dolmans shows how England is constructed from the perspective of the hero as a place of marvels beyond the borders of civilization. Meanwhile, the second half of the chapter on *Richard Coer de Lyon* considers the representation of Richard I as a cannibal with demonic ancestry who becomes 'a character of unbridled foreignness and emphatic Englishness' (p. 183). These texts are linked by their focus on marvels and monsters, but further discussion of their Crusading contexts could have improved the structure of this chapter.

*Writing Regional Identities* shows how borders both reinforce and destabilise English identity. In her analysis of the texts, Dolmans assesses how English identity was reconfigured and rewritten within different regional contexts; however, the overall structure and argument of this study could be more cohesive. Each chapter is presented as an individual case study, and the transition from local to global in the final two chapters is considerably different from the earlier chapters that focus on

specific places. Yet in terms of content and style, *Writing Regional Identities* is an engaging and thought-provoking study that illustrates the international, transcultural, and multilingual nature of medieval England.

Victoria Shirley

Cardiff University



Oisín Plumb, *Picts and Britons in the Early Medieval Irish Church: Travels West Over the Storm-Swelled Sea* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2020). Print, 204 pp., €55.00, ISBN 9782503583471.

---

*Review*

Where the first volume of the new Brepols series, ‘The North Atlantic World: Land and Sea as Cultural Space, AD 400–1900’, *What is North?* took a big-picture view of this region through a diverse collection of essays, this second volume zooms in to a more narrowly defined cultural, chronological, and geographical subset of the broader scope of the series. Adapted from Oisín Plumb’s 2016 Edinburgh doctoral dissertation, *Picts and Britons in the Early Medieval Irish Church* has two aims: “to consider the evidence for migration from northern Britain to the Irish Church, in particular that of British and Pictish individuals ... [and] to examine how such migration came to be perceived in later times” (p.165).

Structurally, *Picts and Britons* has a two-part introduction, a three-part reflection and conclusion, with the meat of the investigative work sandwiched in between. In the first chapter, Plumb provides his broad definition of migration as encompassing both “movement resulting in prolonged residence” and “less permanent relocation ... resulting ... in an extended period of residence in Ireland” (p.19). He very briefly discusses both secular and ecclesiastical accounts of migration and travel between Ireland and Britain, illustrating the importance and prevalence of travel between these societies. On a side note, the theme of royal and secular exile, briefly introduced here, plays but a minor note throughout this book. The second chapter provides an excellent and measured summary of the primary sources that form the basis of his research; that is, those annals, chronicles, martyrologies, *vitae*, histories, and other written sources from medieval and early modern Britain and Ireland relevant to its

ecclesiastical history. These two chapters will be highly beneficial for those readers less familiar with the early medieval period and some of the problems with its sources.

Chapters three, four, and five present the evidence for historically detectable individuals of northern British origin who travelled to Ireland between the fifth and eighth centuries. Respectively, Plumb considers a cluster of fifth-century individuals who were thought in the medieval sources to have had a familial relationship with Patrick; the enigmatic sixth-century Uinniau; and a group of seven probably Pictish 'brothers' who all travelled to Ireland around the late seventh and eighth centuries. One of the most interesting conclusions Plumb makes here is that within the Irish sources, Britain was increasingly being cast as a sort of 'hagiographical Eden' (pp. 82, 138, 160, 166), or idealised place of origin. Given the focus of this work on the physical movements of individuals from the north of Britain to Ireland, it is a shame that the only map is relegated to a single footnote referring the reader to the second appendix, following the extensive (though not exhaustive) bibliography. This map plots the likely locations in Ireland associated with the 'seven brothers', though it could have benefitted from an overlay with contemporary political boundaries of the seventh and eighth centuries so that Plumb's argument that the 'group of four' "demarcate the widest possible expanse of [Uí Néill] territory" (p.136) is thus more readily apparent. However, despite appearances, these chapters are not entirely comprehensive. The most obvious omission is that of Patrick. He is referred to throughout *Picts and Britons*, but beyond a single footnote where Plumb condenses the debate about his place of origin to stating that "[t]here has been little consensus beyond the likelihood of a western British location", Plumb's attitude is that "[g]iven the volume of discussion that exists on Patrick, consideration of his own historical career has been avoided" (p.57). This may have been an expedient course of action for Plumb's dissertation, but for a book of this scope, the lack of discussion is a jarring note. Especially since, as Plumb points out, all of the other named individuals within chapter three are defined in the sources by their perceived relationship to Patrick. A different discrepancy between the dissertation and *Picts and Britons* is in the omission of 'Ailbe', who has a

substantial discussion in the former and not a single reference in the latter, despite numerous (admittedly contradictory) sources providing him with a British origin.

The final two chapters and conclusion of *Picts and Britons* provide the most amount of excitement in the book, as it is here that most of his synthesis of ideas is demonstrated. In chapter six, Plumb steps back from the accumulated evidence and assesses geographic ‘channels of migration,’ which consist of the broad stretch of northern Britain from Galloway to Lothian, the area of Columban influence, generally centred on Iona, and the far northern Hebrides and Orkney Isles. this latter ‘channel’ remains detectable in the face of both the absence of a charismatic figure like Columba or Uinniua, as well as the significant disruptions to society that resulted from the incursion of the Norse from the turn of the ninth century onwards. Lastly, in chapter seven, Plumb considers how the idea of these figures having a British origin changed over time, arguing for the eighth century being the turning point after which time “Irish hagiographers began to view British identity as a useful device in the depiction of the early Church.” (p.163) An interesting observation, but one which could have been developed much further and taken *Picts and Britons* to another level. Ecclesiastico-political tensions between the Columbans and the Patricians are frequently mentioned, but not as motivating factors for this shift in the presentation of the origins of early members of the Church. Contemporary flashpoints such as the Easter Controversy and the fallout of the Synod of Whitby in seventh-century Northumbria are but briefly alluded to. Moreover, the early eighth-century *expulsio familiae Iae*, arguably a fundamental trigger (not to mention it also being a source of actual migration) for the hagiographical shift Plumb identifies, is similarly only mentioned twice in relation to not being an indication of a severing of communications with the far northern Pictish zone and Ireland (pp.143, 145–6). Does Plumb consider there to have been a direct relationship between this event and both the hagiographical shift and the continued migration he identifies with the far north? It is hard to tell.

Plumb does not mention why his focus does not extend past the eighth century. Of course, the Scandinavian incursions were deeply disruptive to both Irish and northern British society during the course of the ninth and tenth centuries, and arguably were irrecoverably so for Pictish society, allowing for an opportunistic 'Scottification' of the political vacuum in the far north. This undoubtedly must have disrupted ecclesiastical patterns of life and 'channels of migration', yet Plumb avoids the issue altogether, with just a small note on the inclusion of St Magnus in the *Aberdeen Breviary* (p.162). It would have been a valuable expansion of this book's general thesis, and thereby have differentiated itself from Plumb's dissertation, had it explored how these channels were altered after the Scandinavian incursions (and indeed conversions), or alternatively to have noted that the paucity of the evidence was such that firm statements on its state could not be comfortably made.

There are a few methodological aspects related to study's parameters that troubled me. First is the decision to limit his sources to literary texts, as it is only in passing that Plumb acknowledges non-manuscript written evidence for a Pictish presence in, or connection to, Ireland, such as with the inscription within the tomb at Knowth which likely contains the Pictish name *Talorc* (p.25), or the ogham-inscribed spindle whorl from From Buckquoy, Orkney (p.149). This is somewhat surprising given that, again in his dissertation, there is much more attention given to the evidence from sculpture and inscription. Equally important and equally under-utilised is a more detailed role given to linguistic evidence. Ecclesiastical Early Irish was arguably greatly indebted to British, and Plumb does mention when discussing personal names that "British influence has been argued for some of the processes of creating hypercorisms in Irish, such as the borrowing of *-oc* from British *awc* and the voicing of consonants." (p.39) However, British influence upon early Irish was far greater than this. As Inge Genee ('Latin Influence on Old Irish?', 2005, p.41; after Jackson (1953) and McManus (1983)) noted, "the majority of Latin loans in medieval Irish had a pronunciation that was based on British Latin: lacking their own habits of speaking Latin, the Irish resorted to adopting the pronunciation of the British clerics who

introduced many of these words.” These ‘British clerics’ may not have survived to be identifiable as historical individuals within the surviving sources, but their numbers and importance must have been as great as the small number who did. With Plumb’s focus on recovering firm evidence for the existence of historical *individuals*, it is arguable that he somewhat loses sight of the bigger picture; in identifying individual specimens, it is hard for the reader to get a sense of how great the metaphorical forest of British ecclesiastics within Ireland must have been. However, on the other hand, to extend this metaphor a little further, Plumb’s great attention to detail, his singling out of individual saplings and mature trees, has brought these individuals out from a blurred and anonymous forest and allowed us to acknowledge and identify them, in some cases, for the first time in many centuries.

Ultimately, the question is – is *Picts and Britons* a useful work? The answer must be an emphatic yes, given that it fills an important *lacuna* within scholarship. The aims of this work have been clearly articulated and met, and though the reader is left wishing that the study could have been both broader in scope and bolder in asserting its conclusions, this does not detract from the inherent importance of this research.

Erica Steiner

University of Sydney