

COMPTE RENDU

Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Byzantium and the West, 1204–1669: Whose Mediterranean Is It Anyway? Papers from the Forty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Milton Keynes, 28–30th March 2015 (Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies – Publications), éd. par Angeliki LYMBEROPOULOU, Londres et New York, Routledge, 2018, xxiv + 346 pages. ISBN 9780815372677.

Cross-Cultural Interaction Between Byzantium and the West publishes a selection of papers delivered at the Forty-Eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies at the Open University in Milton Keynes between 28th and 30th March, 2015. The volume's editor, Angeliki LYMBEROPOULOU, is Senior Lecturer in Art History at the Open University in the United Kingdom, and her main research interests include Venetian Crete, cross-cultural exchanges between Byzantium and the Latin West, and the Art of the Palaiologan period. The topic of this volume fits with previous Spring Byzantine Symposia published in this collection that centered on the relationship between Byzantium and its neighbours, and on the perception of Byzantium by other cultures. This new volume focuses on the question of the reciprocal and manifold contacts between the Byzantine (Orthodox) East and Latin (Catholic) West, from the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade in 1204, to the Turkish conquest of the last remaining Latin possessions in the Aegean region in 1669. Through a compilation of case-studies, it offers original insights into the ways external powers present in Greece after 1204 shaped art and traditions in Late Byzantine territories and formerly Byzantine provinces; and on how Latin artists and craftsmen were inspired by, learnt, and copied Byzantine styles and methods.

The book offers a collection of sixteen essays written by scholars at different career stages, from different educational and cultural backgrounds, and with different areas of specialization within the realms of Byzantine Art, History, and Material Culture Studies. These different contributors provide a multi-faceted perspective on the question raised in the title of the book. One of the strengths of this volume is that both Western medievalists and Byzantinists participated in the conference in 2015 and therefore offer a multilayered and multifaceted analysis of the (often forced) cohabitation between Orthodox and Catholic Christians in the eastern Mediterranean. This initiative must be emphasized and acknowledged, as the sociocultural interaction between Byzantium and the West is a topic that has long been approached one-sidedly through the study of the workings of the, from either a Byzantine or a Latin viewpoint. Moreover, in the last part of the volume, some chapters explore the fate of Byzantine traditions in Renaissance Italy and in the Muslim world, thereby casting new light on the resilience of cultural norms and values, and on the perpetuation of the Greek language, culture and traditions in a world in transition.

Byzantion 90, 1–4. doi: 10.2143/BYZ.90.0.0000000
©2020 by Byzantion. All rights reserved.

The book follows a geographical organization. The three first sections pertain to three regions of interaction that are representative of the interactions between East and West: Venetian Crete (four papers), Lusignan Cyprus (three papers), the Peloponnese (two papers). The two first sections are homogeneous and in dialogue with each other. The same cannot be said for the third section on the Peloponnese, which includes two very different topics; that is, the presence of the Crusaders in the southern Peloponnese, and cultural exchanges between intellectuals in Late Byzantine Mystras and in the Renaissance Italy. The fourth and last part of the book (seven papers) is an attempt to expand the argument to other cultural regions of the Mediterranean, but it is lengthy and eclectic; it includes some chapters that either pertain to a specific region of Greece (i.e. Epirus) or to a specific topic (Byzantine illustrations in manuscripts and their resonance among Italian humanists). As a general note, the book would have benefitted from an organization by themes, such as cultural groups, political entities, religious and other communities, rather than by geographic regions.

Even though the focus of the book is not meant to be Venetian Crete, this archaeologically and historically well-documented, and particularly long-lived example of Byzantine/Latin interaction in the Aegean region is clearly highlighted in the Introduction and throughout the volume. The overall structure of the book is constructed around the example of Venetian Crete: the reason for exploring Cyprus is that it invites a comparison with Crete; the Peloponnese is presented as another stronghold of the *Serenissima*. Likewise, the timeframe of the book is bracketed by two events: the sack of Constantinople by the Venetians and Frankish knights in 1204, and the fall of Venetian Crete to the Ottoman Turks in 1669. Inquiries pertaining to the interactions between East and West during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries largely dominate the book, but the chosen end-date for the enquiry is slightly ambiguous, as there are in fact a few papers dealing with 16th- and 17th-century materials and they are set in a Post-Byzantine context, with reference to the fall of Constantinople to the Turks.

The first part of the book explores contacts between Byzantium and Venetian Crete. Diana NEWALL reconstructs the evolution of the interaction between Cretans and Venetians between the 13th and the 15th century, based on the content of wills made for Catholic and Orthodox churches in Candia. Second, Maria CONSTANTOUDAKI-KITROMILIDES explores painters' mobility between Venice and Candia in the 14th and 15th centuries. Angeliki LYMBEROPOULOU proposes to reassess Byzantine and Western influences in the Fogg triptych postdating the second half of the 15th century. R. DUTS examines the reciprocal influences in the iconography of Hell between Byzantium, Italy and Venetian Crete in the late 13th and early 14th centuries.

The same trend characterizes the second part of the book, dedicated to contacts between Byzantium and Lusignan Cyprus. T. PAPACOSTAS explores the coexistence of Byzantine and local traditions in church architecture after the Latin conquest of 1196. M. BACCI examines the blending of Byzantine and Gothic traditions in the late 14th-century in the quadrilobe, foliate and heraldic motifs decorating the church of Saint George of the Greeks in Famagusta. Ioanna CHRISTOFORAKI discusses the iconographic program of 13th- century religious painting on Cyprus and its relationships to coeval artistic trends and iconography developed in the Crusader kingdoms of the Syro-Palestinian mainland, in Muslim Syria, and in northern Italy.

The third part of the book gathers two case-studies from the Peloponnese. Sharon E.J. GERSTEL and M. KAPPAS highlight the extent and diversity of western (both

Frankish and Italian) influences in the style and iconography of monumental painting in the southern Peloponnese, based on examples from the 13th and early 14th centuries in rural and urban settings. A. MATTIELLO's contribution discusses the interpretation and contextualization of a drawing attributed to Ciriaco d'Ancona in the codex Mutinensis Graecus 144 that was assembled at Mystras in the mid-15th century; it provides new perspectives on intellectual discussions between Greeks and Latins at the transition toward an early Renaissance world.

The last part of the book aims at examining cross-cultural interactions at large between Byzantium and "the West", and also between Byzantium and the Muslim world. It does so through the analysis of phenomena of transfer, appropriation and adaptation of Byzantine styles, values and traditions outside the (former) Byzantine Empire, often in line with political events and subsequent changes in religious authority and ideology. This section has the merit of examining the important question of the perpetuation Byzantine traditions in the early modern world, but it is somewhat heterogeneous and extensive.

The first chapter of this last section is by Leslie BRUBAKER. It proposes a pan-Mediterranean study of mentalities and social traditions through the analysis of urban processions and their size, actors, sponsorship and routes as indicators of social and civic identity. To this aim, Brubaker focuses on four representative cities with different cultural background and socio-political history: Cairo, Constantinople, Rome, and Thebes. The second chapter, by D. STATHAKOPOULOS, looks at the lives of four aristocratic Italian ladies who were related to one another either by marriage or by blood, and connected to the history of Latin Greece between the 1330s and the 1430s. Special attention is drawn to these women's personalities and their connection to western aristocratic families, however their actual lives in Greece are not discussed in much detail – in fact, some of the persons investigated here have never visited Greece, thereby making the title of the article slightly misleading. Liz JAMES looks closer at the art of mosaic outside the Byzantine world – and particularly in the Italian peninsula – and she questions the identification of these mosaics as "Byzantine," either based on style, on iconography, on the origin of the artist, on the identity of their patron, or on the overall quality of the work. She highlights the way in which these different criteria are often closely related in scholarship and how they heavily depend on our own perception of art and what appears to be "Byzantine". Beyond the aspect of the finished product and the conditions of its realization, James raises the important question of the role of the techniques used in the manufacture of mosaics, which is seldom discussed in the literature. In the next paper, Agnès KRIZA examines the way the Schism between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches sometimes encouraged the reinterpretation of some Byzantine themes and iconography for an explicitly polemical message. Based on the example of the apse mosaic of Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome, she demonstrates that Western depictions of the Coronation of the Virgin, and their differences with the Byzantine prototype (notably the depiction of imperial insignia of the Virgin) promoted the doctrine of papal monarchy. Leonela FUNDIĆ correlates the political alliances, ambitions, and challenges faced by the 13th- and early 14th-century State of Epirus, with trends observed in local ecclesiastic architectural styles and decoration during this period. Special attention is drawn to the interplay between changing Western influences, the resilience of Byzantine traditions, and the emergence of local building methods, and how these features seem to correspond in time with local political events. A: RODRIGUEZ SUAREZ examines traditions of the use of bells

in Byzantine and Latin lands of the Mediterranean through remains that survived the Ottoman period as well as archival documents. The author highlights the resemblances and differences in Western and Byzantine traditions in the use of bells. He also examines patterns of confiscation, destruction and survival of these bells under the Ottomans so as to illustrate the forced abandonment as well as the tolerance of past religious practices during major changes in late medieval and early modern Mediterranean geopolitics. The last chapter of the book, by Francesca MARCHETTI, investigates a clearly non-religious topic; that is, Byzantine botanical and surgical illustrations in the Palaiologan period, their diffusion, and their reproduction by Italian humanists of the Renaissance and the fall of the Byzantine Empire. The author highlights the role of philology in the development of plant and medical studies through the study of Greek captions and their annotations in Latin and other languages, and later through the revived interest for classical texts of medicine and natural science. In doing so, Marchetti clearly demonstrates the role of culture and ideas developed in Palaiologan centers of Byzantine science and knowledge in the emergence of Italian humanism. In this respect, this contribution is similar in its orientation to the chapter by Andrea Mattiello on the codex Mutinensis Graecus 144 assembled in Mystras.

The books lack any conclusion. Although it may be a custom practice in this series, some conclusive remarks would have helped the reader to keep track of the various threads of ideas discussed throughout the book.

One last remark concerns the mainly art-historical orientation of most contributions, with architectural, painting and object-based research complemented with archival and historical evidence. In this context, the study of ecclesiastic art and matters largely prevails. Only two papers discuss strictly non-religious topics (illustrations in Byzantine manuscripts and their links with humanist Italy). Most of the papers focus on the aesthetic, stylistic, and iconographical characteristics of church-related objects, buildings and pieces of art. Apart from Liz James, the authors rarely investigate the methods, the materials, and the technology that were necessary for their realization, even though those are also deeply embedded into networks of economic, social, cultural interactions. The recent developments in the archaeology of the medieval Greece and the Mediterranean, together with the routine application of scientific analysis to the excavation findings, have furthered our understanding of peoples' lives and social practices at the regional and local level, both in the cities and in their hinterland. The present volume investigated the question raised in the title through the analysis of archaeological and historical evidence pertaining to the functioning of the State (and thus the Church). This important and necessary first step could be complemented in the future by a study of daily items of material culture, as a way of exploring how far the ideas and norms diffused by the state penetrated people's lives and mentalities.

Florence LIARD

IRAMAT-CRP2A

Université Bordeaux Montaigne

Florence.liard@u-bordeaux-montaigne.fr