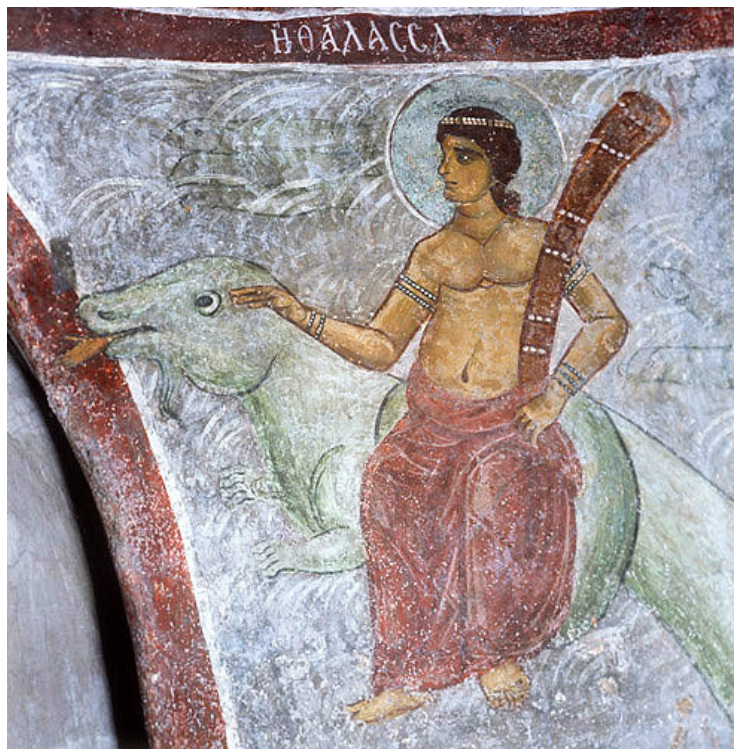


**The Late Byzantine Mediterranean:
Byzantine Connectivities, Experiences
and Identities in a Fragmented World**



2022 Virtual Byzantine Colloquium

In memoriam

Speros Vryonis, Jr. (1928-2019)

Elizabeth A. Zachariadou (1931-2018)

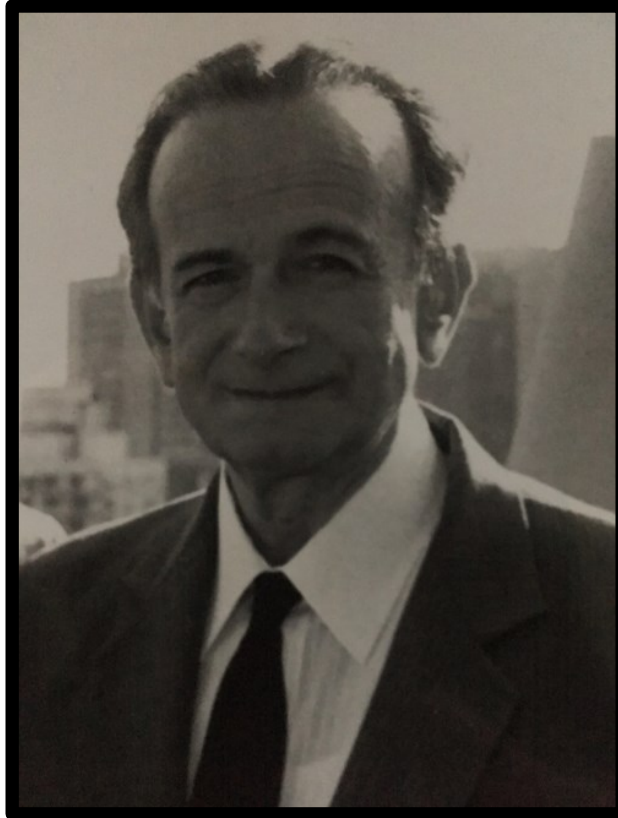
7-8 June 2022

Senate House, University of London

Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

Frontispiece: Personification of the Sea
Saint Nicholas of the Roof, Kakopetria, Cyprus, 13th century
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In memoriam



Speros Vryonis, Jr. (1928-2019)



Elisabeth A. Zachariadou (1931-2018)

The Late Byzantine Mediterranean: Byzantine Connectivities, Experiences and Identities in a Fragmented World

The period between the two falls of Constantinople, namely the Crusader conquest of 1204 and the Ottoman conquest of 1453, witnessed the radical transformation of Byzantium from empire into a mosaic of autonomous and semi-autonomous polities. The fascinating survival and transformation of Byzantine identities in a world dominated by Latin Christian and Muslim powers was the result of complex dynamics, with Constantinople functioning, more or less, as a magnet for the Orthodox populations beyond its narrow political borders. Theodoros Metochites' (d. 1332) rhetoric eloquently captures the ideological, spiritual and cultural radiance of the "Queen City". In his laudatory oration on the Byzantine capital, Metochites describes Constantinople as "the citadel of the whole world" (ἀκρόπολιν τινὰ τῶν ὅλων) and the "shared homeland of all people" (κοινοπολιτεία πάντων ἀνθρώπων),¹ stressing the city's role as a centre, in both geographic and symbolic terms.

Over the past two decades, there has been a remarkable progress in the way scholars approach the history and culture of former Byzantine areas under Latin Christian and Muslim rule in the period between 1200 and 1400. The picture emerging from these studies embraces unity and diversity, interaction and contention, synthesis and conservatism, new identities and old. Research on the history of Mediterranean has also shown that the political, religious and cultural fragmentation of the Eastern Mediterranean increased, rather than restrained, the development of multiple connectivities, among the peoples inhabiting this vast liquid area. Yet, the nature and degree of bonds of unity between Late Byzantium and the former Byzantine lands —encompassing the physical mobility of humans and objects, as well as institutional, ideological, religious and cultural links— requires a more systematic and in-depth exploration.

The aim of this Colloquium is to re-address questions related to Byzantine connectivities, experiences and identities in Latin- and Muslim-ruled Mediterranean areas once belonging to the Byzantine Empire. Borrowed from graph theory, the term connectivities has been employed by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell to describe the networks connecting microecologies with similar structures in Mediterranean landscapes and seascapes, society and

¹ Theodoros Metochites, *Byzantios*, 31, 35, ed. I. Polemis, *Θεόδωρος Μετοχίτης, Βυζάντιος ἢ Περὶ τῆς βασιλίδος μεγαλοπόλεως. Κοσμολογία καὶ ρητορική κατά τὸν ἸΔ' αἰῶνα*, Βυζαντινοὶ Συγγραφεῖς 18 (Thessalonike: Εκδόσεις Ζήτηρος, 2013), pp. 336.9, 372.46.

religion, politics and culture.² Focusing on religion and culture as the main strands of identity preservation, negotiation and adaptation, our Colloquium wishes to examine the threads waving the tapestry of a “Late Byzantine Mediterranean”: a fluidly-defined κοινοπολιτεία under the enduring influence of Constantinople, but in constant communication and exchange with the religious and ethnic Other. The main themes of the Colloquium include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following:

- Byzantine legacies in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1200
- Worlds of interaction and conflict (e.g., Asia Minor, the Holy Land, Cyprus and the Aegean)
- The role of Byzantine culture as a transcultural language of communication
- The impact of intra-Byzantine conflicts in the Eastern Mediterranean
- Experiences of colonisation and foreign rule
- Instrumentalisation of identities in historiography (inclusions and exclusions)

Our speakers represent a variety of scholarly fields and methodological approaches, navigating the sea of Byzantine encounters in the Latin and Muslim worlds from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. By paying close attention to the continuities and discontinuities that (re-)shaped Byzantine identities in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Colloquium aims at providing fresh and stimulating perspectives on the sense of belonging to Byzantium and its broader significance. The Colloquium is dedicated to the loving memory of two great scholars, Speros Vryonis, Jr. and Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, who transformed our perception of the Byzantine legacy in the Eastern Mediterranean.

² Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Oxford-Malden, MA, Blackwell, 2000), pp. 123-172; Horden and Purcell, “The Mediterranean and ‘the New Thalassology’”, *The American Historical Review* 111:3 (2006), pp. 733-734.

Programme

7 June 2022

15.00 **Welcome** by Professor Katherine Harloe, Director of ICS

15.05 **Opening remarks** by Dr Charalambos Dendrinos, Director of the Hellenic Institute, RHUL

15.15 **Tribute** to Speros Vryonis, Jr. and Elizabeth A. Zachariadou by Professor Stephen Reinert (Rutgers University)

15.30 **Keynote Lecture:** Professor Emeritus Evangelos Chrysos (University of Athens), *The ecumenicity of Late Byzantium and the Eastern Mediterranean*

16.00 **Break 15'**

SESSION 1. BYZANTINE LEGACIES AND IDENTITIES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AFTER 1200

Chair: Professor Stephen Reinert (Rutgers University)

16.15 Professor Vlada Stanković (University of Belgrade), *The Byzantine Commonwealth in the Eastern Mediterranean: connectivities and identities in the post-1204 Byzantine world*

16.30 Professor Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (University of Cyprus), *The formation of the Greek Cypriot dialect during Frankish and Venetian rule: lingua franca or national language?*

16.45 Professor Emeritus Costas N. Constantinides (University of Ioannina), *Thirteenth-century Cyprus: from resistance to accommodation and peaceful coexistence*

17.00 Jack Dooley (RHUL), *Familial connectivities in Late Byzantium: the case of gasmouloi*

17.15 Dr Chrysovalantis Kyriacou (RHUL): *Colonisation, boundaries and multiple identities in the Late Byzantine Mediterranean: the status quaestionis*

17.30 **Discussion 30'**

18.00 **Break 15'**

Chair: Professor Emeritus Costas N. Constantinides (University of Ioannina)

18.15 Professor Efi Ragia (University of Thessaly), *Disintegration and re-composition in the thirteenth century: between reality and legend in the last century of Byzantine domination in Asia Minor*

- 18.30 Professor Johannes Pahlitzsch (Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz), *The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries*
- 18.45 Professor Andrew Jotischky (RHUL), *Meditating on Death: Greek monasteries in the Holy Land in the Mamluk period*
- 19.00 Professor Ilias Giarenis (Ionian University), *Byzantine legacies in the Aegean, 1204-1261*
- 19.15 Dr Marina Koumanoudi (Institute of Historical Research, National Hellenic Research Foundation, Athens), *Divorced or bigamist? Instrumentalisation of identities and Byzantine legal legacy in late medieval Venetian Crete*
- 19.30 **Discussion 30'**
- 20.00 **Closing remarks** by Dr Charalampos Chotzakoglou, Chairman of the Board of the Society of Cypriot Studies and the Cyprus Committee for Byzantine Studies, Teaching Associate of the Hellenic Open University

8 June 2022

SESSION 2. CONNECTIVITIES IN ART AND CULTURE

Chair: Professor Konstantinos Vafeiades (Ecclesiastical Academy of Athens)

- 16.00 Dr Charalampos Chotzakoglou (Society of Cypriot Studies and Cyprus Committee for Byzantine Studies; Hellenic Open University, Athens), *Art and Hesychasm in Latin-ruled Cyprus*
- 16.15 Dr Tassos Papacostas (King's College London), *Beyond the Crusader states, after the Byzantine Empire, within the Venetian world: some thoughts on sixteenth-century Cyprus, church buildings and monastic foundations*
- 16.30 Dr Ioannis Eliades (Byzantine Museum of Archbishop Makarios III), *The Cypro-Renaissance painting of Cyprus*
- 16.45 Dr Angeliki Lymberopoulou (Open University, UK), *Metaphysical connectivities in Eastern Mediterranean: depictions of heaven and hell in Venetian Crete*
- 17.00 **Discussion 30'**
- 17.30 **Closing remarks** by Dr Chrysovalantis Kyriacou (RHUL)

Abstracts

EVANGELOS CHRYSOS

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The ecumenicity of Late Byzantium and the Eastern Mediterranean

The word οἰκουμένη has been applied through the centuries from Herodotus to modern times for different reasons and with different notions. In the Roman times roughly it corresponds in Latin to the word *orbis terrarum*. The self-perception of the Byzantines as incorporating the ecumenical world in the late medieval times is one of the most remarkable because it expresses mainly the geographical area under their domination. However, the terms οἰκουμένη and οἰκουμενικός were most often understood in the Latin world as corresponding to *universum* and *universalis* and this caused misunderstanding between the Greek East and the Latin West. The seemingly paradoxical insistence of using the term ecumenical in a period of decline and shrinkage of the Byzantine Empire is based on the principles of its legitimacy as the heir of the Roman Empire in a rapidly changing world.

Professor Chrysos' contribution to the study of Byzantine ecumenicity (οἰκουμενικότητα) has been profound through his work, as evidenced, among others, by the editing of a seminal volume on "Byzantium as Oecumene", published by the National Hellenic Research Foundation in 2005. His broader research interests include Byzantine history, diplomatic history in the Early Middle Ages, and the history of the Church councils.

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VLADA STANKOVIĆ

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The Byzantine Commonwealth in the Eastern Mediterranean: connectivities and identities in the post-1204 Byzantine world

The catastrophe of 1204 shattered the Byzantine world and left it politically fragmented practically until the end of the Middle Ages. The unimaginable loss of New Rome had, at the same time, triggered processes of political and ideological adaptations to the new reality and provoked a reassessment of the nature of Roman identity, the core identity marker of the Byzantine political nation. Relying on the well-functioning network of relatives that defined the Byzantine political mechanism within the empire and in its European hinterland, the Byzantines have reshaped the exclusivity of the idea of Romanness and laid greater political emphasis on the Orthodox element of their Roman identity, thus creating a basis for a wider and more heterogeneous community consisting of peoples self-defined by either of these two identity components. The paper traces the reorientation of the Byzantine identity policies in the post-1204 world and analyses the importance of the Holy Land and the Eastern Mediterranean in the somewhat surprising connectivity of the Byzantine–Orthodox world after the Latin conquest of Constantinople.

Professor Stanković's research explores Byzantine history and literature between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, focusing on the Comnenian dynasty; Byzantine imperial ideology and political theory; the medieval Balkans (especially Serbia); social networks in the post-1204 Byzantine world in the West and in the Eastern Mediterranean; and Roman identity.

NOTES

ANGEL NICOLAOU-KONNARI

Associate Professor of the History of Hellenism under Latin rule

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The formation of the Greek-Cypriot dialect during Frankish and Venetian rule: lingua franca or national language?

The four centuries of the history of Cyprus under Frankish and Venetian rule (1191/92-1570/71) provide the chronological, sociohistorical and cultural framework for the formation of the medieval Greek Cypriot dialect, which bears most of the morphological, syntactic, lexical and phonological traits of the modern dialect. The survival of a relatively important number of vernacular texts of a varied nature, which cover the entire period under examination without serious gaps, offers scholars the necessary tools for the adequate study of the process of the formation of the dialect. The permeability of the linguistic frontier to the social changes that followed the Frankish and subsequently the Venetian settlement on Cyprus renders the dialect, the product of identifiable historical and cultural influences and history, an active agent in the social construction of meaning. The paper investigates the way the Cypriots of the time (Greeks, Franks, and other ethnic groups) used the linguistic resources available to them in a multilingual society with relation to the resulting linguistic and ideological phenomena, reflecting the multicultural construction of the Cypriot dialect and the role of language in defining group awareness and expressing ethnic antagonism.

Professor Nicolaou-Konnari's main area of research covers the Latin-ruled world, particularly the history of Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus, exploring aspects of cultural interaction and exchanges between Greeks and Latins, as well as ethnicity, self-perception, and the perception of the *Other*; gender relations; Cypriot historiography and prosopography; and the depiction of medieval Cypriot history in eighteenth and nineteenth-century opera and French historiography.

NOTES

COSTAS N. CONSTANTINIDES

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Thirteenth-century Cyprus: from resistance to accommodation and peaceful coexistence

The paper examines the political and religious issues that prevailed in Cyprus after the island came under western rule in the course of the Third Crusade in 1191, the strong reaction of the powerful Orthodox Church against the plans of the papacy and the Catholic hierarchy established on the island to bring “schismatic Greeks” back to the fold of the See of Rome. This strong resistance, that reached its peak with the martyrdom of the monks of Kantara in 1231, lasted for almost seventy years and resulted in a compromise provided by the *Constitutio Cypria* of Pope Alexander IV in 1260. The papal decree brought about the submission of the Church of Cyprus to the See of Rome and ruled that the Orthodox bishops, reduced from fourteen to four, had to acknowledge the supremacy of the Latin bishops on the island and take an oath of obedience before consecration. The papal bull brought a relatively peaceful coexistence of the two doctrines on the island and allowed them to live side by side. This accommodation, however, was far beyond the limits of Byzantine *oikonomia*. Thus the Church of Cyprus was expelled from the community of Orthodox Churches and failed in its efforts to be reunited with the Ecumenical patriarchate in the early fifteenth century. It was after the Ottoman conquest of Cyprus in 1570/71 and the expulsion of the Latins from the island that the Church of Cyprus was accepted back to the Orthodox community of Churches and the indigenous Orthodox Greeks gradually recovered their traditional identity.

Professor Constantinides has published extensively on a wide range of subjects, including Byzantine history, the history of Cyprus, Greek palaeography and codicology, Byzantine education, and the preservation of Ancient Greek literature in the Byzantine period.

NOTES

JACK DOOLEY

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Familial connectivities in Late Byzantium: the case of gasmouloi

The paper explores the role of the “Other” within Late Byzantine society, focusing on the *gasmouloi* (or *basmouloi/vasmouloi*), namely offspring of mixed marriages, usually Greeks and Latins, who would become an increasingly important group in the Late Byzantine state, army and society. As a case study, we examine the Frangopouloi, progenies of Greek and Frankish unions, in terms of their identity, inter-relations, role and place within the socio-economic, political, religious confessional, and cultural context. The material covers a wide range of evidence beyond narrative studies, including epistolographical, sigilographical, legal, and archaeological sources. This is a first systematic attempt to investigate perceptions and self-perceptions of the *gasmouloi*, in order to better understand how the “Other”, especially those of mixed parentage, were received by, and functioned within the Late Byzantine society.

Jack Dooley’s research interests lie in the history, literature and culture of Late Byzantium focusing on aspects of identity in the Palaeologan period, especially concerning the *gasmouloi*, which he explores in his doctoral thesis. He is also interested in Greek palaeography and epistolography, especially the Letters of George of Cyprus and George Oinaiotes.

NOTES

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Colonisation, boundaries and multiple identities in the Late Byzantine Mediterranean: the status quaestionis

Western European expansion in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Crusades has been described by some scholars as a form of pre-modern colonialism while others have rejected any relationship between the Middle Ages and colonial domination. The Byzantine territories conquered by the Latins after the late twelfth century provide a fruitful area for testing the relevance, if any, of the colonial paradigm. The paper presents a critical survey of major themes in historiography related to colonialism and the Crusades, examining their potential and limitations. The main argument supports the view that any attempt to understand more accurately and comprehensively the dynamics of co-existence, interaction, and conflict in the former Byzantine lands should take in due consideration not only the structures of the post-conquest period but also the experiences of the dominated Orthodox populations. Such an approach brings to the fore the concept of “symbolic boundaries” as a key mechanism for the survival/adaptation of Latin-ruled Orthodox communities and the development of multiple —including “subaltern” — identities.

Dr Kyriacou’s research interests cover the history, literature and culture of the Eastern Christian world, concentrating on Byzantine and post-Byzantine Cyprus as a case study of religious co-existence, interaction and conflict, within a broader Mediterranean context.

NOTES

EFI RAGIA

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Disintegration and re-composition in the thirteenth century: between reality and legend in the last century of Byzantine domination in Asia Minor

The way Byzantinists view the thirteenth century today is largely defined by the way the Byzantines themselves saw it. The authors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries compared the Lascarid and the Palaeologan dynasties and found the latter wanting. Michael VIII Palaiologos took a large part of the blame, as he was thought to be the representative of the social group that brought him to power, namely the aristocracy. By contrast, John III Batatzes and Andronikos II Palaiologos drew the people's hopes for regeneration, as portrayed in the legends of the time, which were created perhaps while the emperors still lived or shortly after their death. The present contribution explores Byzantine historical memory and examines the historical and popular codification of one of the most significant periods of the Byzantine history, which begins with the loss of Constantinople in 1204 and ends with the loss of Asia Minor in 1302.

Professor Ragia's research covers various aspects of Byzantine social history, including the composition, identity and mechanisms of social projection of Byzantine social groups; Byzantine economy; and the daily life of the Byzantines.

NOTES

JOHANNES PAHLITZSCH

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The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries

The paper presents the changing history of the Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem after the fall of the First Crusader Kingdom in 1187. After 30 years of Ayyubid rule, Jerusalem came from 1229 to 1244 again under Frankish control because of the treaty Frederick II concluded with sultan al-Kamil. It seems that the Orthodox Church enjoyed a certain stability during this period, which ended as the Khwarazmian Turks sacked Jerusalem in 1244. For the second half of the thirteenth century we still have some information about the Church's position, for example from documents from Islamic qadi courts. But only from the beginning of the fourteenth century are the situation of the Orthodox Patriarchate and its connections with Byzantium again better documented.

Professor Pahlitzsch's area of specialisation includes Byzantium and the Crusades; Byzantium and the Islamic world; and Byzantine Church history and the history of the Melkites.

NOTES

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Meditating on Death: Greek monasteries in the Holy Land in the Mamluk period

The failure of Latin territorial control in the Holy Land, the rise of the Mamluks and the loss of influence and resources from Constantinople in the thirteenth century all contributed to the gradual decline of Greek monasteries in the Holy Land. In the mid-fourteenth century, however, the refounding of the monastery of St Euthymios, with support from the Byzantine regime in Trebizond, briefly promised a revival of monastic practices and ideals. The paper examines the circumstances of the refounding and the personalities behind it as a focus for a wider discussion of the trajectory of Greek monasticism in the Holy Land in the Mamluk period.

Professor Jotischky's research interests cover the Crusades and the Latin East; cultural and religious interactions between Eastern and Western Christendom; pilgrimage; and monastic and religious life.

NOTES

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Byzantine legacies in the Aegean, 1204-1261

The paper focuses on the Byzantine legacies on the islands of the Aegean Sea in the period between the Latin conquest of Constantinople (1204) and the Byzantine reconquest (1261). It examines the competition for power on the Aegean islands especially between the so-called “Empire of Nicaea” and Venice, and sketches the relevant phases of balance or confrontation throughout this critical period. We provide glances on the situation on Lesbos, Chios, Samos, Icaria, Negroponte (Evrivos), Rhodes, Patmos, Cos, and Crete, and give an outline of the *status quo* of these islands between Nicaea and the Serenissima, shedding some light on each island and its condition, which in many cases was not that of a steady or uncontested Latin rule.

Professor Giarenis’ research interests cover Byzantine history, literature, education and culture, focusing on the Empire of Nicaea; the Greek world in the thirteenth century; and Byzantine scholarship, learning and book production.

NOTES

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Divorced or bigamist? Instrumentalisation of identities and Byzantine legal legacy in late medieval Venetian Crete

The paper draws on a fifteenth-century court case concerning the legal status of a family of Cretan peasants to explore the marriage and divorce practices among the Orthodox population and the position of the Latin Church in the territories under Venetian rule during the late Middle Ages.

Dr Koumanoudi's research interests focus on three interconnected areas: the social and economic history of Latin-dominated Greece during the late medieval period; the administrative history of Venetian-ruled Greek territories (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries); and Western religious orders in medieval Greece between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.

NOTES

CHARALAMBOS CHOTZAKOGLU

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Art and Hesychasm in Latin-ruled Cyprus

The paper explores political aspects during the Palaiologan period that influenced Cyprus providing the historical framework. It examines the ecclesiastical situation between the Eastern and Western Churches and their traces in Cyprus, and analyses the echo of the Palamite controversy on the island on the basis of published and unpublished texts preserved in manuscripts. The Cypriot anti-Palamite clergy in Constantinople and its connection to the Cypriot Church also played an important role. It seems that the initial position of the Cypriot clergy towards Palamas' teachings was mainly based on the political background in Constantinople and the position of the emperor and the patriarch than to the teachings themselves of the leading figure of Hesychasm. The paper also examines the impact of the theological conflicts in Cyprus on its architecture and monumental painting, which reflect Cypriots' efforts of artistic resistance to the pressure of the Roman Catholic Church. Several iconographical subjects reflecting doctrinal issues from the Palaiologan iconography of Constantinople appeared during that period in Cypriot churches demonstrating the tight connections between Latin-ruled Cyprus and the Byzantine capital, a fact supported also by the presence of Constantinopolitan painters in Cyprus.

Dr Chotzakoglou's wider research interests cover Byzantine history, archaeology and art history.

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Beyond the Crusader states, after the Byzantine Empire, within the Venetian world: some thoughts on sixteenth-century Cyprus, church buildings and monastic foundations

The period of Venetian rule in Cyprus (late 15th - late 16th c.) is exceptionally well documented in terms of both textual and material evidence compared to other periods in the island's history. This is the result of accidents of survival, historical development but also a flourishing of artistic and building activity in the context of economic and demographic growth. As is well known, construction in the main urban centres was concentrated on fortification works. A less understood trend of the period is the regeneration of the ecclesiastical landscape, primarily at the instigation and for the benefit of the majority population of Greek rite and language. In rural areas the phenomenon is most noticeable within monastic foundations. Many were furnished with new buildings while surviving archival sources shed some light on attitudes and intentions. The paper focuses on perceptions and uses of the past in town and countryside as reflected through architectural solutions and texts of the period, in an attempt to discern the references and aspirations of different segments of the population.

Dr Papacostas's research interests include the archaeology, architecture and economic history of Byzantium and the Levant from Late Antiquity to the late medieval period. Dr Papacostas is particularly interested in the historiography of Byzantine and Crusader art, the impact and manifestations of Venetian (and Renaissance) architecture in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the evolution of settlement patterns and urban development.

NOTES

IOANNIS ELIADES

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The Cypro-Renaissance painting of Cyprus

The paper explores the Cypro-Renaissance painting, an artistic trend developed in Latin Cyprus during the late Palaiologan era. Palaiologan art in the first half of the fifteenth century, even before the Fall of Constantinople, will be increasingly influenced by the artistic achievements of the Italian Renaissance. This art by the end of the fifteenth century will mature, turning into a distinct painting language, the Cypro-Renaissance painting that will last until the Ottoman conquest of the island in 1571. The term is related to the art historical term “Renaissance” defining the Italian art of the fifteenth century and the artistic orientation, descending from contemporary humanistic theories. A great number of monuments and icons testify this artistic style all over the island. Their painters are “ambidextrous” artists, who can easily straddle between the Byzantine and Italian art of the Renaissance, with which the Cypriot painters were familiarized due to their contacts with Venice. Their art is marked by the vitality and the freedom which are readily available as a result of the use of new pictorial means and is characterized by careful design and excellent iconographic layout. Achievements of the Italian Renaissance such as one-point perspective and illusive decorative patterns are adopted. The traditional Orthodox iconography of both Cypro-Renaissance painting and the post-Byzantine Cypriot School is renewed and enriched with new subjects that originate in Italian art such as Man of Sorrows, St Anne with Virgin and Child etc. The new artistic trend elaborates traditional iconographic subjects with Italian perspective, modern design and at the same time safeguarding the Orthodox theological doctrines in subjects like the Holy Communion.

Dr Eliades’ work focuses on Byzantine and post-Byzantine art and archaeology, and art history.

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Metaphysical connectivities in Eastern Mediterranean: depictions of heaven and hell in Venetian Crete

The paper explores elements of connectivity in late Byzantine religious art that reflect a more uniform perception of the metaphysical world by assessing the iconography of Heaven and Hell in churches in Venetian Crete (1211-1669), where religious identity remained until the end a relatively thorny issue that separated the native Greek Orthodox and the Venetian Roman Catholic communities. It examines ways and the extent to which shared and different religious beliefs, moral perceptions and theological traditions on spirituality and afterlife offered a common ground during the enforced symbiosis of the Greek subjects and the Venetian masters over the course of four-and-a-half centuries. Numerous wall-paintings in Venetian Crete illustrate choirs of saints waiting the entry of the righteous' souls to Paradise, while the souls of the impious sinners are depicted punished and tortured in eternal flames. Such powerful visuality would have waged a stern figure to all Christian congregation reminding them of the simple and unmistakable law that governs afterlife: piety, virtue and good deeds are rewarded, while impiety, vice and evil deeds are severely punished for eternity, with no exceptions. It is ultimately the connectivity based on the common belief of all Christian people, irrespective of race, status and doctrinal conviction, about the immortality of the soul after death and its inevitable Judgement by Christ that succeeded in building cultural bridges within challenging religious parameters.

Dr Lymberopoulou's research interests include Late and post-Byzantine art, artists and society in Venetian Crete. More specifically, she is interested in the production of wall paintings and icons; commissions and patronage; the status of artists; cross-cultural interaction between the Byzantine Greek Orthodox East and the Catholic (Venetian/Italian) West; and the development and significance of Byzantine iconography and Byzantine style.

NOTES

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**Professor Katherine Harloe and Mrs Valery James
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University of London**

Our speakers and moderators of sessions

**The Hellenic Institute and the Centre for Greek Diaspora Studies,
Royal Holloway, University of London**

The Society of Cypriot Studies

The Cyprus Committee for Byzantine Studies

Organising Committee:

**Dr Chrysovalantis Kyriacou, Dr Charalampos Chotzakoglou,
Dr Achilleas Hadjikyriacou, Jack Dooley and Dr Charalambos Dendrinou**



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