

Why was it Important for the Byzantines to Read Latin? The Views of Demetrios Kydones (1324–1398)

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Fourteenth-century Byzantium witnessed civil wars between cliques of the ruling elite, constant financial crisis and dramatic territorial reduction. It evolved into a small state which struggled to survive and defend itself against a large number of hostile neighbours, some of whom possessed military forces far superior to those of Byzantium. In the 1350s and 1360s the Ottoman Turks began the conquest of European territories that belonged to the Byzantine empire. Realizing that it was impossible to face the Ottomans militarily, many Byzantines supported the idea of a Crusade against the Ottomans and the union of the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. A staunch supporter of this policy was the prolific author and politician Demetrios Kydones. This article will discuss how Kydones promoted the policy of reconciliation and alliance with western European powers against the Ottomans.

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY was for the Byzantine empire a period of civil wars, dramatic territorial reduction and continuous political, economic and military crisis.¹ The expansion of the Ottomans in European territories in the 1360s and the 1370s reduced Byzantium to Constantinople and its suburbs, a few cities in the Black Sea and Thrace and a few Aegean islands. Thessalonica, which was the second largest city of the empire, was isolated and in tenuous contact with Constantinople. Moreover, the rulers of Byzantine Morea in the

¹ The most comprehensive modern account of the period is Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium* (New Haven, 2011).

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Peloponnese were forced to follow their own independent foreign and military policy.

Therefore, Demetrios Kydones pursued his career in politics and literature during a rather difficult period for the Byzantine state. His father had served in the court of Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328–1341) as an ambassador. In 1341, he was sent to the court of the khan of the Golden Horde.² Demetrios' career spanned over four decades from the 1340s until the 1390s. He served in the court of three emperors, John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354), John V Palaiologos (1341–1391) and Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425). He was involved in important negotiations between the papacy and Byzantium and in crusading projects against the Ottoman Turks. He was a prolific author and his surviving works include a large collection of letters, theological and philosophical works. Kydones was also a convert to Catholicism and promoted Catholic doctrines and the papal supremacy to Byzantium through the translation of western European theological texts.³

Much of the career and life of Kydones is known through his letters and a series of texts known as *Apologiae*. In his first *Apologia*, which he compiled in 1363, Kydones states that he entered imperial service at a young age, when the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354) invited him to the court in Constantinople.⁴ As Kantakouzenos writes in his *Histories*, Kydones enjoyed imperial favour and held the office of *mesazon*.⁵ The precise duties of this office are difficult to discern. Nonetheless, it is probable

² Vitalien Laurent, 'L'assaut avorté de la Horde d'Or contre l'empire Byzantin', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 18 (1960): 145–62.

³ Demetrios Kydones *Briefe*, ed. Franz Tinnefeld, 5 vols (Stuttgart, 1981–2003), I, 4–52. It is likely that Kydones converted to Catholicism as early as 1357. See Raymond Loenertz, 'Démétrius Cydonès II. De 1373 à 1375', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 (1971): 5–39 (p. 10).

⁴ Demetrios Kydones, *Apologia I*, in *Notizie a Procoro e Demetrio Cidone*, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota, ed. Giovanni Mercati (Vatican, 1930), 359–403 (p. 360). For a narrative of the career of John VI Kantakouzenos as a sole emperor see Donald Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Kantakouzenos, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 84–133.

⁵ John Kantakouzenos, *Historiarum libri IV*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, 3 vols (Bonn, 1828–32), III, 285.

that the *mesazon* was the head of the civil administration of the empire.⁶ Moreover, a series of letters written by Kydones in the 1340s indicate that his family was associated with the Kantakouzenos family.⁷ Kydones expresses his support to John Kantakouzenos during the catastrophic civil war, which was fought from 1341 until 1347. This was a war between Kantakouzenos, who claimed to be the legitimate regent of the son of the deceased emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos, John V, and the regency which was established in Constantinople. Kydones was also in contact with John Kantakouzenos' second son, Manuel.⁸ Describing his duties, Kydones relates that John VI elevated him to a high position so no one could make a petition to the emperor without speaking to Kydones first. Among the petitioners there were many western emissaries, merchants, mercenaries and important travellers. However, oftentimes communication with these foreign individuals was rather difficult. Sometimes there was no interpreter available, or those who happened to be available were unable to follow the level and accuracy of the conversation. As Kydones comments, among the foreigners there were also some who liked to think deep thoughts and demonstrate their intellectual prowess by engaging in verbal controversy.⁹ Consequently, Kydones decided to learn Latin. He found a competent instructor who was a Dominican monk in the Genoese colony of Pera which was established opposite the city of Constantinople.¹⁰

Kydones' translations

Kydones claims that as he expanded his knowledge of Latin language, he sought to acquire deeper insights and knowledge. For that purpose

⁶ Hans-Georg Beck, 'Der byzantinische Ministerpräsident', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 48 (1955): 309–38; Jean Verpeaux, 'Contribution à l'étude de l'administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων', *Byzantinoslavica* 16 (1955): 270–96.

⁷ Martin Jugie, 'Démétrius Cydonès et la théologie latine à Byzance aux XIVe et XVe siècles', *Échos d'Orient* 27 (1928): 385–402 (pp. 387–88).

⁸ *Démétrius Cydonès Correspondance*, ed. Raymond Loenertz, 2 vols (Vatican, 1956–1960), I, 37–40, 46–8. For Manuel Kantakouzenos see Donald Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study* (Washington, 1968), pp. 122–28.

⁹ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 360.

¹⁰ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 361; Jugie, 'Démétrius Cydonès et la théologie latine', 389–90.

his teacher gave him the *Summa Contra Gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas.¹¹ The *Summa Contra Gentiles* was probably compiled between 1258/59 and 1264. It focused on the development of arguments that support the Christian beliefs and could be used against the Muslims.¹² Kydones calls it 'the crowning glory of Thomas Aquinas' wisdom'. Consequently, he decided to translate and share it with his friends. He remarks that the emperor himself encouraged him to translate the entire book saying that it would be of a great advantage to the cause of the Byzantines.¹³ This is not surprising, since John Kantakouzenos was the author of theological works against Islam. Nevertheless, during the civil war of 1341–1347 he had relied heavily on Turkish military support and he was the first Byzantine emperor to marry his daughter to a Muslim ruler, the leader of the Ottomans, Orhan (1326–1362).¹⁴ The translation of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* was completed in December 1354.¹⁵ It is interesting that the completion of this work coincided with the deposition of John VI Kantakouzenos by John V Palaiologos. This change did not affect Kydones' career who was soon employed by the new emperor.

Between 1355 and 1358 Kydones completed the translation of another major work of Aquinas, the *Summa Theologiae* which was compiled between 1271 and 1272. A significant part of this work was translated by Demetrios' brother Prochoros.¹⁶ The translation of the *Summa Theologiae* shows that the Kydones brothers were faithful translators keeping more or less to the verbal structure of the Latin text. They adopted a literal style of translating, retaining the Latin word

¹¹ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 362–63.

¹² James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d' Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (Oxford, 1975), p. 395.

¹³ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 363; Jugie, 'Démétrius Cydonès et la théologie latine', 391–92.

¹⁴ Kantakouzenos, *Historiarum libri IV*, II, 587–88.

¹⁵ Phillipos Demetrakopoulos, 'Demetrios Kydones' Translation of the "*summa theologiae*", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32 (1982): 311–20.

¹⁶ Athanasia Glykofrydi-Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts', in Charalambos Dendrinos et al. (eds), *PORPHYROGENITA: Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 175–85 (175).

order whenever it was possible and using a consistent vocabulary. The translation follows Aquinas' text so closely as to occasionally use an obviously Latin expression transported into Greek.¹⁷ Nevertheless, while Aquinas had divided his text into *questions*, *articles*, and *objections* at the beginning of each chapter, Kydones used simply the term *zetema* (questions) without making any further division. Furthermore, there are quite a few examples indicating that Kydones corrected the Aristotelian text which had been changed in the Latin translation used by Aquinas.¹⁸

In addition, between 1356 and 1363 Demetrios Kydones translated two shorter works of Aquinas, the *De rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos ad cantorem Antiochiae* and the *De articulis fidei et Ecclesiae sacramentis ad archiepiscopum Panoramintanum*, and other Latin works including Augustine's *Soliloquia* and *Sententiae* and Anselm of Canterbury's *De processione Spiritus Sancti*.¹⁹ In all these translations Kydones follows the same method and technique. He is faithful to the Latin text, though occasionally he carries out changes in tenses and introduces periphrastic language whenever it is needed.²⁰

Demetrios Kydones provides useful information regarding the process of collecting material and translating it. In a letter to his friend Maximos Chrysoberges he recounts the problems he faced in his attempts to carry out his translation project:

When I was very young I attempted to translate works by Thomas. At that time I was unable to learn the Italian language as much as I wanted for both my official duties and the responsibilities the emperor assigned me did not allow me to translate them accurately. And thirdly, one should attribute this to the scarcity of books. For I was able to buy only one from where it should be transported, so that it was not easy for me to find out or correct any damage on it, since there was no other copy available by which

¹⁷ Frances Kianka, 'Demetrius Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 264–86 (p. 270).

¹⁸ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts', 179–82.

¹⁹ Jugie, 'Démétrius Cydonès et la théologie latine', 396.

²⁰ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts', 184; Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', 271.

one would collate it and decide on the true meaning of the text. For there is no depository of Latin books close to me, but I had to suffice with which that happened to be found.²¹

Similarly, in his first *Apologia* Kydones comments that supply and demand was a factor that affected the choice of texts to be translated. He claims that when people, both Byzantine Greeks and westerners heard about his translation projects brought him books that for whatever reason happened to be in their possession.²²

The impact of Kydones' translations is reflected in the comments of contemporary Orthodox theologians. Joseph Bryennios was a leading scholar who was acquainted with the Latin language and Catholic theology. He frequently quoted passages from the *Summa Theologiae* to his work and in a letter to Kydones he praised him for his qualities, including the accuracy of his translation of Latin.²³ Moreover, while Kydones' translation of Aquinas' major works led to a dynamic dialogue between Byzantine and Latin thinkers, it also caused the creation of two opposing groups in Byzantium: the pro-Thomists and the anti-Thomists. This theological debate continued in the fifteenth century and attracted the attention of important Byzantine theologians of the period, such as Demetrios Chrysoloras and Gennadios Scholarios, who referred to the translations of Kydones. To understand the importance of the translations of Latin we should recall that the last important theologian of Byzantium and the first patriarch of Constantinople under the Ottomans, Gennadios Scholarios, though an enemy of the union of the churches, expressed an admiration for Thomas equal to that of Kydones.²⁴

Motives

There is no doubt that one of the fundamental reasons why Demetrios Kydones translated Latin theological works was the internal Byzantine controversy over the theology of Gregory Palamas, the defender of

²¹ *Démétrius Cydonès Correspondance*, II, 267–68.

²² Kydones, *Apologia I*, 363–64.

²³ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts', 178.

²⁴ Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', 283; Jugie, 'Démétrius Cydonès et la théologie latine', 397–402.

the *hesychast* monks. Kydones used Aquinas' works against Palamite theology.²⁵ Moreover, Kydones' work was not in line with the aims of the Orthodox Church in Constantinople. In the fourteenth century the patriarchs of Constantinople sought to maintain the unity of the Orthodox Church and to promote the cultural and spiritual identity of the Orthodox world. This contradicted Kydones' pro-Latin stance.²⁶

Nonetheless, it seems that the most important motive of Kydones' translations was the promotion of the idea that Byzantium needed western European military support against the Ottoman Turks. Kydones writes that through his translations it became apparent that the Latins were people capable of the highest intellectual attainments, something that had not been widely known in the past among the Byzantines. Usually, Kydones continues, Byzantines judged all the westerners by the men they saw in their own country: sailors, navigators, and persons associated with commerce and seafaring. This is an allusion to the large presence of Venetian, Genoese and other Italian merchants in Byzantine lands. Moreover, he claims that his translations provided Byzantine scholars with the opportunity to become even more learned.²⁷

Inevitably, Kydones faced criticism. He writes that some suggested that to put the works of the Latins next to the Byzantine ones and to make young Byzantine intellectuals aware of them was tantamount to downgrading what was ancient and traditional in Byzantium. He was accused of effectively launching an attack against the official state religion and of importing features of what was seen as the corrupt Creed of the Latins and therefore, preparing the way for schism and division within the Orthodox church.²⁸ Kydones argues that the ignorance of Latin language was the main reason why the Byzantines continued the old division between 'barbarians' and 'Greeks'. As he writes: 'The Byzantines held fast to their stupid myopic view that the Latins were no more than oxen and donkeys. The Latins could not be credited as being capable of anything worthy of human beings.'

²⁵ Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', 272.

²⁶ Frances Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Italy', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 99–110 (p. 103).

²⁷ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 366.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

Kydones comments that those who were motivated by envy were not able to see that behind the unfamiliar terminology of the Latin language lay the ideas of Aristotle and Plato. He concludes that the inability to read the works of Latin scholars and the insufficient knowledge of Classical philosophy led many Byzantines to regard the western European ideas as innovations invented by the Latins.²⁹

However, it seems that striving to emphasize the importance of his translations and the need to seek military aid from the west against the rapidly expanding Ottoman Turks, Kydones exaggerates the negative attitudes of the Byzantines towards the westerners. In general, with extremely few exceptions, late Byzantine authors did not call the westerners barbarians, despite the continual animosities, military conflicts and endless ecclesiastical debates, conflicts and negotiations.³⁰ The expansion of the Latin West at the expense of Byzantium was more economic and less territorial, while the territorial expansion of the Ottomans in the Balkans threatened the very existence of Byzantium. In literary sources this struggle for survival took the form of a struggle between good and evil and unlike westerners, the Ottomans are constantly presented as uncivilized barbarians.³¹ Moreover, the social structure of the later Byzantine state was relatively close to that of western European societies and many western customs, ideals and ideas had infiltrated the Byzantine elite long before the period under discussion.

Kydones appears to exaggerate the hatred of the Byzantines towards the westerners. Nevertheless, he makes the important point that inability to read their language is the main reason for the identification of others as barbarians, and his translations aimed at ending this ignorance. Furthermore, Kydones argues that his reading of Latin led him to the conclusion that there was a significant agreement between the teachings of Greek and Latin Fathers. He concludes that there was nothing in these teachings that could make the division between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches necessary. It is language that gave

²⁹ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 366.

³⁰ Robert Browning, 'Greeks and the others from Antiquity to the Renaissance', in Thomas Harrison (ed.), *Greeks and the Barbarians* (New York, 2002), 257–77.

³¹ Savvas Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium, 1204–1453* (Leiden, 2011), p. 35.

rise to the separation.³² Moreover, striving to convince his audience of the need for military aid against the Turks, Kydones included in his first *Apologia* interesting comments regarding the identity and cultural heritage of the Byzantine empire and the origins of the imperial office. He reminds the Byzantines that Constantinople is the New Rome and that the imperial dignity comes from the Old Rome. Kydones claims that the fact that in the past the Roman emperors ruled the entire world has to be credited to the Old Rome and whatever is to be hailed in New Rome comes from the Old.³³

Rhetorical works

Demetrios Kydones' support for a western European military intervention against the Ottomans is reflected in his rhetorical works. In 1366, Kydones compiled an oration entitled *Pro subsidio Latinorum*, which is also known as *Advisory Address to the Byzantines*. The context of the oration is the following. In 1366, Amadeo VI of Savoy, who was a cousin of the emperor John V Palaiologos, leading around 1500 mercenaries conducted what can be defined as a private Crusade. With the help of the Genoese rulers of the Aegean island of Lesbos, he seized from the Ottomans the city of Gallipoli, which was of enormous strategic importance, and returned it to the Byzantines. He also recovered on behalf of the Byzantines a couple of cities along the coast of the Black Sea.³⁴

Striving to convince the Byzantines to welcome Amadeo's forces to Constantinople, Kydones repeats the argument regarding the common identity of the two Romes. Amadeo's soldiers were identified as Romans. As he asks, 'what closer allies can be for the Romans than the Romans themselves?' He repeats that Rome was the metropolis of Constantinople and Constantine, the founder of the Byzantine capital was Roman himself. Therefore, there is no group to which the Byzantines could more justly turn for help than the Latins.³⁵

³² Kydones, *Apologia I*, 382.

³³ Kydones, *Apologia I*, 372.

³⁴ Eugene Cox, *The Green Count of Savoy, Amadeus VI and Transalpine Savoy in the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 209–30.

³⁵ Demetrios Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, in *Patrologia Graeca* 154, cols 962–1008 (977–80).

This is followed by an account of how the westerners in the past had helped the Byzantines. Here Kydones makes allusions to the Crusades. He remarks that in the past the Latins pushed the barbarians as far as Syria and Palestine and restored freedom and faith to the Byzantines in Asia without asking anything in return. He also mentions the Crusade launched by the fleet of the Holy League, which was composed of ships and soldiers provided by Venice, the Pope, King Hugh IV of Cyprus and the Hospitallers of Rhodes, against the emirate of Aydin in western Asia Minor in 1344.³⁶ Kydones comments that this Crusade benefited the Byzantines. However, the reality was more complicated. In the 1330s and early 1340s the emirate of Aydin was a close ally of Byzantium and the capture of Smyrna by a western fleet meant that Kantakouzenos, who had developed a close friendship with Aydin's ruler Umur, lost his most useful ally in the civil war against the regency of John V in Constantinople. Moreover, Kydones claims that the westerners had the experience of fighting against enemies such as the Ottomans, something Kydones considered an essential requirement for the war against the Turks. The Latins are portrayed as people who have a proven hatred against the Turks. They never make treaties with them and they consider that this enmity brings glory to them. Furthermore, Kydones argues that the Latins had the necessary wealth to equip themselves and the military training to achieve victories against the Turks. Kydones portrays the activities of the western Europeans in the Mediterranean in terms of a conflict between the faithful Christians and the infidel Muslims.³⁷ However, he does not mention the commercial agreements between Italian states and the Turks.³⁸

Kydones finds it necessary to respond to the Byzantine suspicions of the Latins. To the suspicion that the Latins are too strong to be Byzantium's allies and could replace the current enemies of the empire, he replies that weak allies cannot help Byzantium. He also claims that the Latins were not motivated by profit. He argues that they have gone to such an expense that they could not possibly recuperate

³⁶ Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, 980–81; Paul Lemerle, *L'Émirat d'Aydin. Byzance et l'occident* (Paris, 1957), pp.180–203.

³⁷ Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, 981–84.

³⁸ See Elisabeth Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300–1415)* (Venice, 1983).

the investment they made. Indeed, if greed was their motive, they would be mad to do what they are doing.³⁹ However, what Kydones did not foresee, is that in 1367 the emperor paid a large amount of money to Amadeo of Savoy as compensation for the wars he fought for Byzantium from money he borrowed from the Genoese.⁴⁰ Consequently, the alliance and Crusade Kydones supported was quite an expensive affair for the impoverished Byzantium. Nevertheless in 1369, Kydones played a leading role in the negotiations between the Byzantine empire and the papacy and followed John V to his trip to Rome. In the negotiations and in the ceremony of John V's conversion to Catholicism, Kydones served as the emperor's interpreter and the pope addressed him as the chancellor of the Byzantine emperor.⁴¹

Kydones' support for an alliance with European powers against the Ottomans raises the question of his views about what modern scholars have defined as the Byzantine commonwealth, that is to say political entities in the Balkans and eastern Europe, the culture and political ideology of which was heavily influenced by Byzantium. Such were Byzantium's neighbours Bulgaria and Serbia, as well as Russia. These political entities followed Orthodox Christianity and adopted many elements of the Byzantine religious and political traditions. However, from Kydones' point of view neither Bulgaria nor Serbia could become useful allies in the fighting against the Ottomans. He writes that it would be ideal to ally with the Serbians and the Bulgarians against the Turks; however the Byzantines should not forget that in the past the Bulgarians and the Serbians had attacked and seized Byzantine lands without any provocation, they had shown brutality towards the Byzantines, they had imposed heavier taxation than the Turks and they had not accepted proposals for alliance based on common religion. Kydones does not specify when these alliance proposals were made. It is likely that he implies the diplomatic contacts between Byzantium, Serbia and Bulgaria in the 1350s and the 1360s. In 1355, the eldest son and co-emperor of John V, Andronikos IV was married to Maria Kyratsa who was a daughter of the Bulgarian ruler John Alexander. The patriarchate of Constantinople issued a document with which

³⁹ Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, 988–89.

⁴⁰ Cox, *The Green Count of Savoy*, 230.

⁴¹ Oscar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (1930; rpt London, 1972), p. 196.

it approved the marriage and stated that it would be beneficial to the Christians, Byzantines and Bulgarians, and pernicious to the 'infidel'.⁴² However, Kydones writes that the marriage of a Byzantine ruler to a Bulgarian princess brings humiliation to the Byzantines and glory to the Bulgarians. He also reminds his audience of the fact that the Bulgarians had blocked John V on his way back from his trip to Hungary.⁴³ In 1363, the patriarch Kallistos led an embassy to the widow of the Serbian ruler Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) for a peace agreement. However, he died before reaching his destination. There were suspicions that he was poisoned. Although Kantakouzenos rejects this theory, the suspicion that he was poisoned remained.⁴⁴ In any case in the 1360s the kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria were too fragmented and too poor to provide any military aid. The kingdom of Serbia under Stefan Dušan had evolved into the most powerful state in the Balkans and had expanded dramatically at the expense of Byzantium. In the 1340s, the Serbians had under their control a large part of the Adriatic coast and Albania. They had also captured Epirus and Thessaly from the Byzantines and almost the entire Macedonia. However, Dušan's son and successor Stefan Uroš (1355–1371) was unable to maintain the unity of his father's dominions.⁴⁵ In the 1360s Bulgaria was rather weak and in conflict with Byzantium. In 1362, a few years before the compilation of the *subsidio Latinorum* by Kydones, Bulgaria and Byzantium were involved in a war over the control of cities along the Black Sea coast.⁴⁶ Furthermore, Kydones omits to mention another reality that affected Byzantine attitudes; that the Turks imposed lower taxation than the Byzantines in newly conquered areas.⁴⁷

⁴² Johannes Koder-Martin Hinterberger-Otto Kresten, *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel, 1350–1363* (Vienna, 2000), nr. 261.

⁴³ Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, 976; Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance a Rome*, 135.

⁴⁴ Kantakouzenos, *Historiarum libri IV*, III, 361.

⁴⁵ See George Christos Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium During the Reign of Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) and his Successors* (Washington, 1984).

⁴⁶ Kantakouzenos, *Historiarum libri IV*, III, 362.

⁴⁷ See Nicholas Oikonomides, 'Ottoman Influence on Late Byzantine Fiscal Practice', *Südost Forschungen* 45 (1986): 1–24.

The oration *De non reddenda Kallipoli* (not to surrender Gallipoli) was compiled in 1371. Its aim was to dissuade the Byzantines from surrendering this strategically important city, which is located on the European side of the Dardanelles straits, to the Ottomans who had sent an embassy demanding it in exchange of a peace treaty. Gallipoli was captured by the Ottomans in 1354 and was returned to the Byzantines by Amadeo of Savoy in 1366. In this oration Kydones repeats ideas he had mentioned in the previous oration and adds others. He accuses the Turks of being the cause of all of Byzantium's sufferings. The Turks, as Kydones writes, follow false beliefs and lead a despicable way of life. He emphasizes the gratuitous nature of the western aid and the sympathy felt by the westerners for the Christians in the East. The sacrifices of the westerners led to the return of Gallipoli to the Byzantines who could now control the straits. The surrender of Gallipoli to the Turks would be a shameful act and would lead the westerners to ask why the Byzantines prefer servitude to freedom. If the Byzantines surrendered Gallipoli to the Ottomans, the Catholic Church was unlikely to encourage anyone to help them again.⁴⁸

The change of imperial policy

In 1371, or perhaps a few years later, the Byzantine emperor sought peace with the Ottomans and became a tribute-paying vassal of Murad I (1362–1389).⁴⁹ The failure of his diplomatic efforts and the increasing Ottoman pressure led him to this decision. Did this shift in foreign policy influence Kydones' views? There are indications that there were difficulties in the relations between Kydones and John V Palaiologos.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, in his second *Apologia*, which he wrote after 1371, Kydones defends the sincerity of his views and rejects the accusation that he only says these things to satisfy the Latins. On his

⁴⁸ Demetrios Kydones, *De non reddenda Kallipoli petente Amurate*, in *Patrologia Graeca* 154, cols 1009–36.

⁴⁹ See George Ostrogorsky, 'Byzance état tributaire de l'Empire Turc', *Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta* 5 (1958): 49–58; Polymnia Katsoni, 'Ο χρόνος έναρξης της Βυζαντινής υποτέλειας στους Οθωμανούς' [The Year of the Beginning of the Byzantine Vassalage to the Ottomans], *Byzantiaka* 14 (1994): 459–81.

⁵⁰ *Demetrios Kydones Briefe*, I, 27.

deathbed he would show himself as a proper Orthodox.⁵¹ In a letter written in 1385, which was addressed to the Byzantine despot of Morea in the Peloponnese, Theodore I Palaiologos (1383–1407), who was involved in military conflict with a Navarrese company of mercenary soldiers, Kydones describes the war between the Byzantines and the Ottomans as inevitable, due to the barbarity of the enemy. On the other hand, the despot of Morea was fighting against enemies with whom he shared common customs, faith and laws. Kydones writes that there is nothing in common between the war against the Turks and against the Latins. The war against the barbarians is continuous, as if it is an inheritance given by nature. The Byzantines are prudent, while they behave licentiously.⁵² However, Kydones' comparison between the westerners and the Turks did not prevent the Byzantine ruler of Morea from calling on the help of the most powerful and most famous Ottoman frontier lord, Evrenos Beg, against his external and internal enemies.⁵³

Conclusion

Demetrios Kydones was not the first Byzantine statesman to translate Latin theological texts. Fifty years before him, the diplomat and orator Maximos Planoudes had translated classical Latin authors such as Cicero and Ovid and the dogmatic work of Augustine *De trinitate*, a translation acquired by Kydones.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Demetrios Kydones was the first Byzantine to explain and justify the aims of his translations. The works of the Kydones brothers encouraged cultural transmissions from the west to the east and contributed to the development of a vigorous dialogue between the Byzantines and the Latins in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Furthermore, Kydones' translations promoted the idea of union of churches and of a Crusade against the expanding Ottoman Turks, who in the second

⁵¹ Demetrios Kydones, *Apologia II*, in *Notizie a Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota*, ed. Mercati, 403–25.

⁵² *Démétrius Cydonès Correspondance*, II, 239.

⁵³ Nevra Neçipoglu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 239.

⁵⁴ Kianka, 'Demetrius Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', 271; Edmund Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261–c. 1360)* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 257–63.

half of the fourteenth century threatened the very existence of the Byzantine state. His comments regarding the criticism his translations received reflect the ideological conflicts within the late Byzantine society, changes in the Byzantine approaches towards Christian West and their significant impact on the Byzantine intellectual and political circles. Kydones was one of the first Byzantine intellectuals to promote the closer contacts with the west. Many more would follow in the fifteenth century. Some of them would move to Italy to teach and help the westerners read Greek.

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