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Barbarians & Heretics: Anti-Greek and Anti-Latin
Sentiments in Crusade-Era Chronicles, 1096-1204

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26 May 2022

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Introduction

The Fourth Crusade, which lasted from 1202 to 1204, was an attempt by the Papacy to rally an organized effort under their control to “liberate” the Holy Land and retake Jerusalem, which Ayyubid Sultanate had conquered in 1187. The crusade was an abject failure in this regard. The crusaders planned to sail to the Holy Land instead of marching over land, learning from the mistakes of past crusades. Marching through the Balkans had resulted in protracted negotiations and conflicts with the Byzantine Empire and marching through Anatolia left them vulnerable to Turkish attacks.¹ The crusade leaders, namely Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, Count Baldwin of Flanders, Count Hugh of St. Pol, and Count Louis of Blois, estimated that they would raise an army of 33,500 troops, and contracted with Venice for the construction of a transport fleet, agreeing to pay 85,000 marks and half of all loot acquired during the expedition.² Their estimations were horribly inaccurate: only roughly 11,000 soldiers assembled at Venice, and the crusaders became 34,000 marks in debt to Venice. To make the unruly crusader army leave Venice, the Doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo (r.1192-1205), proposed that the crusader army sail to the city of Zara³ and put down the rebellious city and restore Venetian authority in the region.⁴ After sacking the city in 1202 and receiving condemnatory letters from Pope Innocent III (r.1198-1216), a Byzantine pretender, Alexios IV, approached the crusader army with a proposition: in exchange for installing him on the Byzantine throne, he would convert both himself and the Empire to Catholicism, pay the crusaders 200,000 marks, and raise an army of ten thousand men to join the crusade.⁵ It is worth noting that the diversion to Constantinople

¹ Queller, Donald M, and Madden, Thomas. *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 6, 19

² *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 10

³ Modern Zadar, Croatia.

⁴ *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 56

⁵ *Byzantium and the Crusades*. 153

was highly contentious within the crusader army. Two thousand men deserted the expedition, and the army almost mutinied during a stop at the island of Corfu.⁶

Promising that the diversion would be brief, the crusade leaders managed to restore order and sail on, arriving before the sea walls of Constantinople. Despite Alexios IV's promises, there was no coup or revolt within the city, and the crusaders were forced to assault the monumental fortifications of the city.⁷ Against all odds, the crusaders managed to fight long enough to force the reigning Byzantine emperor to flee, and Alexios IV and his father, Isaac II, were installed by the crusaders and the city's populace as co-emperors.⁸ Despite the promises of the crusade leadership, the diversion was not a quick affair, and Alexios IV required assistance in extending his power beyond the walls of Constantinople, as the previous emperor, Alexios III, had fled to the provinces. The crusader army remained outside the walls of the city, with some aiding Alexios IV in his campaigns, but tensions mounted as he could not keep his promises to the crusaders, especially his promise to pay 200,000 marks to them. When riots broke out and clashes began between the crusaders and the notoriously unruly population of Constantinople, the crusaders set a fire that spread throughout the city, destroying huge sections, and creating a massive refugee crisis within the city.⁹

It became entirely politically untenable for Alexios IV to maintain his alliance with the crusaders, and when they brazenly demanded more money, he refused, and the crusaders declared war. A court bureaucrat, Alexios V, overthrew and murdered Alexios IV in a palace coup, further angering the crusaders, whose indebted claimant was just deposed. Once again,

⁶ *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 98

⁷ Constantinople's walls were some of the most formidable fortifications in ancient and medieval history. The land fortifications included three layers of walls and a moat. The sea walls were less intricate but nonetheless formidable. See *The Walls of Constantinople* by Stephen Turnbull.

⁸ *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 129-133

⁹ *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 133-145

against all odds, the Venetians managed to scale the sea walls and the crusaders managed to breach the land walls. Alexios V fled the city, and Constantinople surrendered to the crusader army. For the first time in the city's history, a brutal sack began, resulting in unprecedented widespread looting and destruction. The crusaders established the Latin Empire upon the city's ashes, and temporarily destroyed the Byzantine Empire. Most of the provinces broke away under the leadership of local magnates, independent of Latin control.¹⁰

Pope Innocent III officially proclaimed the Fourth Crusade on August 15th, 1198; six years later, on April 12th, 1204, the Byzantine Christian city of Constantinople fell to the crusaders.¹¹ Despite the fact that the crusade's goal was to reclaim Jerusalem, the expedition never even reached the Middle East. It was meant to be the first crusade with direct papal control, yet Pope Innocent III could not even prevent the crusading army from sacking the Croatian city of Zara or diverting entirely to Constantinople. Why the crusade never reached Egypt, its intended target, or even fought any Muslims, and why the Byzantine Empire became the victim of this crusade has been a matter of historiographical debate for centuries. Even in the years immediately after the Fourth Crusade, sources have laid the blame for the crusade's diversion at the Venetians,¹² the pope,¹³ or attempted to justify the diversion by accusing the Byzantines of heresy and degeneracy. The debate regarding the Fourth Crusade began mere years after the event and continues among historians to this day. Historians debate almost every single important event during the crusade, namely the building of the crusader fleet, the Sack of Zara, the arrival in Constantinople, and its fall and sack.

¹⁰ *Byzantium and the Crusades*. 162-170.

¹¹ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 1

¹² Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade*, 1

¹³ Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade*, 5

However, modern historians have too often ignored the topic of stereotypes and the role which they played in Byzantine-crusader interactions during the first four crusades, and this has not received enough serious scholarly attention. Too frequently, scholars have simply thrown up their hands and stated that the whole event was an unfortunate accident instead of examining the wider context of deep-rooted hateful sentiments between Byzantines and Western Europeans, as most historians view these sentiments as outdated pieces of evidence for long disregarded theories.

This work will argue that anti-Byzantine and anti-Latin sentiments permeated crusade-era primary sources, particularly narrative histories, and that these stereotypes directly interfered with political decision-making, resulting in disastrous misinterpretations and errors during Byzantine-crusader interactions. Chapter one contains a history of the historiography of the Fourth Crusade and the prominent theories explaining its diversion to Constantinople. Chapter two presents direct evidence from the primary narrative sources of the first four numbered crusades, organized by author. Chapter three contains a comparative analysis of the evidence presented in chapter two, and an argument for this evidence's inclusion into an expanded version of Jonathan Harris' theory. An original translation of an obscure Fourth Crusade primary source, the *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, is included in the appendix.

Chapter One: Fourth Crusade Historiography

The historiography of the Fourth Crusade, as pointed out by Thomas Madden, is an endless series of debates regarding the motives and actions of the primary actors.¹⁴ Over the past

¹⁴ Madden, Thomas F. "Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade." *The International History Review* 17, no. 4 (1995): 738.

century, historians have proposed and rejected preposterous conspiracy theories,¹⁵ engaged in victim blaming,¹⁶ placed all blame upon the Venetians,¹⁷ and exonerated the Venetians.¹⁸ Therefore, there is extraordinarily little consensus regarding the motives, events, and results of the Fourth Crusade. The debate on the Fourth Crusade has been ongoing for centuries and will continue to do so. Jonathan Harris stated that “The diversion of the Fourth Crusade provides a fascinating case study of this question as it can be seen as the result either of cunning planning and manipulation or of forces over which the participants had no control. As long as human beings maintain an interest in their own ability to shape their historical destiny, therefore, the debate will continue.”¹⁹ Though some historians argue that the debate is meaningless and endless,²⁰ there is great insight to be gained by examining the Fourth Crusade and the reasons for its diversion, especially now ignored aspects such as stereotypes.

This chapter will examine the evolution of historiographical attitudes concerning the Fourth Crusade, the transformation from the dominance of grand narrative theories to synthesis and nuance, and the arguments of the prominent Medieval and Byzantine historians Donald Queller, Michael Angold, and Jonathan Harris, each of whom wrote important monographs on the Fourth Crusade and put forth new theories and ideas regarding the origins of the crusade. This chapter will argue that Harris’ theory is the most convincing and well-argued but does not go far enough in examining the role of stereotypes and hostile language in primary sources.

¹⁵ Alfonso Lowe claimed that the Venetians and Papacy preplanned the entire Fourth Crusade, including the diversion to Constantinople. Lowe, Alfonso. *The Catalan Vengeance*, 3

¹⁶ “The Fourth Crusade was not simply a matter of western aggression. Byzantine weakness and miscalculations were just as important. It would be a harsh judgement, but not without some foundation, that the Byzantines had only themselves to blame for the way events turned out.” Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 28

¹⁷ Primarily Donald Nicol and Charles Brand. “Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade.” 731

¹⁸ Primarily Donald Queller and Thomas Madden. “Outside and Inside the Fourth Crusade.” 733

¹⁹ Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade*, 11

²⁰ Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade*, 10

Grand Narratives

The historiography of the Fourth Crusade began almost immediately after the actual event, as crusade participants sought to write narrative accounts absolving themselves of dereliction of their crusading duty to protect the Holy Land and defend their actions in Constantinople. Geoffrey de Villehardouin, one of the leaders of the crusade, wrote an account arguing that the diversion occurred due to deserters weakening the crusade army, while Robert de Clari claimed in his account that the diversion to Constantinople was a convenient method for the rich leaders of the crusade to acquire more riches, even directly stating that the attack against the Byzantines was entirely motivated by greed.

Nineteenth century scholars mostly blamed individuals, such as the crusade leader Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, or Doge Enrico Dandolo and his city of Venice, for the disastrous end of the Fourth Crusade. These were very simplistic theories which accepted the narratives argued by authors of the primary sources themselves without criticism. Although some historians continued to parrot these narratives into the twentieth century, these very shallow explanations largely died out during that century.

The twentieth century saw the rise of two major theories: the “clash of civilizations” and “accidental” theories. The clash of civilizations theory argues that the Fourth Crusade was a massive clash of two fundamentally different civilizations, East and West, and that the Eastern and Western civilizations themselves were not compatible and were building up to conflict for centuries.²¹ The pitfalls of such a theory are obvious. No major western European powers, such as France or Germany, participated directly in the Fourth Crusade, and even Pope Innocent III condemned the actions of the crusaders during the expedition, excommunicating contingents of

²¹ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 1

the army. This theory also assumed that the Western and Eastern civilizations were monolithic, acting with one will and one set of beliefs. Though this theory has rightfully come under intense scrutiny in the past decades, some historians still argue variations of it in more focused and nuanced forms synthesized with the other primary theory, the accidental theory.²²

The “accidental” theory, pushed even by crusade leaders such as Geoffrey of Villehardouin in the years immediately following the crusade, argues that the diversion of the crusade was a mere series of accidents, and that no one is truly to blame.²³ Historians in the nineteenth century widely accepted this theory, dismantling previous notions of grand civilizational clashes and attributing the attack against the Byzantines to a series of miscalculations and mistakes, such as the underestimation of the number of crusaders who would arrive at Venice. This theory has taken much more criticism over the years from modern scholars. This idea almost entirely denies agency and intent and argues that the participants in the crusade and its leaders were merely acted upon by uncontrollable forces, as if it was destined to happen. Further, it removes responsibility from the crusaders and their leaders for their horrific actions against the Byzantines, and likewise downplays the errors the Byzantines made in prior crusades when interacting with the western expeditionary forces. Again, like the clash of civilizations theory, this hypothesis only survives in modern scholarship in much more nuanced variations.

In the past forty years, historians Donald Queller, Michael Angold, and Jonathan Harris authored the most prominent historical works regarding the Fourth Crusade. Although differing in detail, these authors presented new theories, utilizing more obscure sources, such as surviving letters and lesser-known narrative accounts, and combining the accidental and clash of

²² Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 185

²³ Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade*, 6

civilizations theories into a new, modern, and nuanced synthesis, piecing together ideas and elements from both theories while adding new contributions.

Synthesis

To some extent, each of the modern authors, Queller, Angold, and Harris, present syntheses of the clash of civilizations and accidental theories. Queller's argument is a much more revised and nuanced version of the accidental theory, while combining elements from the clash theory, while Angold and Harris' arguments are primarily derived from the clash of civilizations theory. However, all these authors differ in their arguments regarding the origins of the diversion to Constantinople.

Donald Queller is famous for his popular revisionist history *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. In this text, the author argued that modern historians have defamed Venice and its doge, Enrico Dandolo, utilizing the controversial figure as a convenient scapegoat while ignoring the other important factors in the diversion of the crusade. Queller sought to exculpate Venice from its traditionally held role as the evil plotting power which caused the demise of the Byzantine Empire, instead arguing that Venice's actions on the crusade were logical and self-interested. He made particular use of non-narrative primary sources, such as papal letters and correspondence between the crusade leaders to reinforce his argument.

Queller argues, contrary to most of his contemporary historians, that men like Boniface of Montferrat and Geoffrey of Villehardouin consistently supported the crusade's diversion to the Byzantine Empire, often against the soldiers' wishes. He claims that the crusade leadership's overprediction of turnout for the crusade, 33,500 men, instead of the actual 11,000 that appeared in Venice, was the crucial factor in determining the diversion to Constantinople, as the debt to

Venice and weakness of the army meant they would never make it to Egypt.²⁴ He also stresses the massive financial effort put in by the Venetians towards the crusade, providing this as evidence for the lack of a premeditated plot and their genuine desire to lead the crusade to Egypt.²⁵

Queller further claims that the diversion of the crusade was not a case of entrapment by the Venetians, but a logical and reasonable demand from the doge to recover their lost money. He points out that there is no direct evidence to prove that there was an entrapment plot by the Venetians, and that the power of merchant families and financial prosperity were foundational pillars of the republic's existence.²⁶ If Dandolo did not act in Venice's financial interests, the prominent Venetian families would replace him with someone who would. Queller notes how Pope Innocent III expressly forbade the diversion of the crusade to help Alexios IV,²⁷ but his promises to help the crusaders were too tempting, as they would resolve the financial difficulties in which Venice and the crusade army were embroiled in. Queller importantly notes that Pope Innocent III expressly forbade attacking the Byzantine Empire in a letter; rather than tell their troops the truth, the crusade leadership deliberately lied to the army and claimed that the diversion had papal support.²⁸

Therefore, Queller synthesized the accidental and civilizational clash theories into a new hybrid theory. He wrote that the attack against the Byzantines was not a premeditated plot conjured by Doge Enrico Dandolo, but rather the result of the greed and chivalric ideals of the

²⁴ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 45

²⁵ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 17

²⁶ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 55

²⁷ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 91

²⁸ Queller *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 92

other crusade leaders. His primary goal was to dispel the theory that Venice plotted the destruction of the Byzantine Empire and shift blame onto leaders such as Boniface of Montferrat.

In his work *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, Michael Angold argues a synthesis of both the accidental and clash of civilizations theories, claiming that the Fourth Crusade was the result of a series of deliberate decisions and events based upon growing animosity between crusaders and Byzantines, but without any major conspiracy or overarching plan.²⁹ His focus on the background of events, particularly the previous history of interactions between the crusaders and the Byzantines during prior crusades, demonstrates that his work was greatly derived from the clash of civilizations theory.

He argues that the crusade leaders genuinely erred in their misestimation of the number of troops who would appear at Venice,³⁰ and that they initially attacked the Byzantines due to chivalric notions of restoring a rightful claimant which were too glorious to resist and because the reduced number of crusaders made the original target of Egypt no longer realistic. Angold also claims that Philip of Swabia, the King of Germany, orchestrated Alexios IV's meeting with the crusade leaders in Zara, and that Boniface of Montferrat "allowed himself to be used by the German king..."³¹ implying that the diversion to Constantinople was a German plot, claiming that there was a degree of premeditation.

Angold claims that the crusade leadership possessed a broader definition of crusading than the soldiers under their command, believing that crusading could not only defend the Holy Land, but also spread the faith and combat heresy.³² Taking inspiration from Queller, Angold

²⁹ Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 50

³⁰ Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 81

³¹ Angold *Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 86

³² Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 90

reduces the role of the Venetians in his Fourth Crusade narrative, stating that they did not likely back the diversion to the Byzantine Empire as zealously as the other crusade leaders, but nonetheless acted in their commercial interests.

Utilizing letters from former crusade leaders after the crusade, Angold attributes the sack of Constantinople itself to the perception of the crusaders that the Byzantines had betrayed them by not paying the sums that Alexios IV promised. Therefore, he writes that the sack of Constantinople was a deliberate act, not an accident, but that misjudgments and accidental errors, such as the overestimation of troops in Venice, greatly influenced the course of events and placed the crusaders into a position where sacking Constantinople was viable and profitable.

Jonathan Harris argues in his work *Byzantium and the Crusades* that the preceding decades and centuries of Byzantine-crusader interactions, especially during the First, Second, and Third Crusades, played a crucial role in the decision making of both the crusaders and the Byzantines. He argues that placing the Fourth Crusade within this context is necessary to understand the motives of both sides and examines crusader-Byzantine interactions during the first four crusades. He further claims that the Byzantine diplomatic bureaucracy misjudged the intentions and capabilities of the crusaders, and that this was the cause of the Fourth Crusade's diversion and the attack on Constantinople.

Harris convincingly argues that the Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople were the result of cumulative Byzantine foreign policy failures and misunderstandings since the First Crusade.³³ The Byzantine Empire's policy of putting its own territory and interests above those of the crusade and using any means necessary to keep the country safe meant that the Crusaders

³³ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 162

and western Europeans developed a sense of animosity towards the Byzantines, who decried them as treacherous, weak, and immoral. Harris relies on examples such as this and Manuel I Komnenos' attacks on the crusading armies during the Second Crusade to argue that almost all trust between the west and the Byzantine Empire had evaporated, and that the Byzantine bureaucracy had severely misjudged the crusaders' intentions and strength.³⁴ Harris also cites German Emperor Henry VI's threatened invasion of the Byzantine Empire in 1195 as an example of the building tensions between western nations and the Byzantine Empire, as Henry VI threatened to invade unless the Byzantines paid him five thousand pounds of gold, opened their ports, and joined their fleet with his in a new crusade.³⁵ Though this threatened invasion never occurred, the threat itself demonstrated the increasing hostility towards the Byzantine Empire among western nations.

Regarding the diversion to Constantinople, Harris argues that, for over a century prior, crusaders were constantly trying to get the Byzantines to provide more assistance to the crusades in the form of both troops and logistical support, and Alexios IV's offer proved to be the best opportunity yet for the crusaders to acquire the resources of the Byzantine Empire and use them to their advantage on crusade.³⁶ The crusaders firmly believed that prior Byzantine Emperors had betrayed and undermined the crusades, scamming them at trading markets and refusing to provide sufficient military or logistical support. They believed that the Byzantine emperors were anti-Latin and installing their own pro-Latin candidate would end this hostility.

Commenting upon the capture and sack of Constantinople, Harris claims that the Byzantine government failed to anticipate the strength and capability of the crusader army. He

³⁴ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 100

³⁵ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 148

³⁶ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 70

emphasizes that the dedicated diplomatic corps of the Empire failed in their assessment of the crusades throughout all four crusades, but especially in the Third and Fourth Crusades. The corps informed the Byzantine emperors that the crusaders were mere barbarians who stood no chance against the Byzantine army, and that the government could emulate the actions of previous emperors against the crusaders, not considering the huge power imbalance that had developed in prior decades.³⁷

Therefore, although these historians argue variations of a synthesis of the two primary theories, stereotypes and hostile language present within crusade-era primary sources play an exceedingly small role in modern historiography of the Fourth Crusade. The only scholars to emphasize the role of anti-Byzantine and anti-Latin stereotypes in decision making during the Fourth Crusade are Michael Angold and Jonathan Harris. Angold, arguing his hybrid theory, does not deny that tensions mounted between the crusaders and Byzantines during the previous three crusades. However, these tensions and stereotypes do not form an integral part of his argument, and he allocates very little space in the book on the subject.

Jonathan Harris argues that historians must place the Fourth Crusade in its proper context, viewed together with the previous three crusades. Mounting tensions and repeated hostile interactions play a key role in Harris' argument that the Byzantine bureaucracy severely misjudged the intentions and power of the crusaders. Harris does not believe in the clash of civilizations theory due to the intertwined nature of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and the fact that there were pro and anti-Latin factions within the Byzantine Empire. Further, he argues that the original plan of the Fourth Crusade was not to attack Constantinople, and that the lack of

³⁷ In the late twelfth century, Byzantine power had disintegrated in the Balkans with the revolt and rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Further, the Angeloi dynasty emperors neglected the army and navy, to the point that only a handful of ships in poor repair could be mustered for the defense of Constantinople in 1204.

Catholic support for the Latin Empire after the sack demonstrated that western Europeans did not condone the actions of the crusaders.³⁸ Instead, Harris synthesized both the clash of civilizations and accidental theories, and proposed that the Fourth Crusade and conflicts with the crusaders occurred due to Byzantine ideology, particularly regarding the idea that Anatolia and all lands taken in the previous crusades, including Antioch and Jerusalem, were rightfully Byzantine. Harris also emphasizes the crusader views that the Byzantines were not contributing enough to the crusades, and that the crusaders needed to compel the Byzantines by force to remedy this. He notes that the crusaders resented treatment of being shadowed by Byzantine armies and being locked out of Constantinople during the first three crusades, and that they saw Byzantine diplomacy with Muslim states as betraying the Christian cause.³⁹

Harris, however, does not particularly emphasize the role of stereotypes and hostile language against Latins in Byzantine sources, instead focusing on the Byzantine imperial ideology and worldview. Nevertheless, stereotypes regarding “barbarians” comprised an integral aspect of the Byzantine worldview, as evidenced by the multitude of evidence within the primary sources of the era. The Byzantines believed that the crusaders, and all western Europeans, were just as much “barbarians” as the Muslims were and refer to them as such in their texts. Byzantine authors held great disdain for the defective character traits of the Latins and understood them to have taken their actions due to these traits.

Overall, the Fourth Crusade is one of the most highly debated events in history. Historians have blamed nearly every participant and leader, from Pope Innocent III, Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, and Doge Enrico Dandolo. Conspiracy theories claim that the Doge and

³⁸ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 1

³⁹ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 61

the Venetians preplanned the whole event, as Alfonso Lowe demonstrated.⁴⁰ Some authors such as Runciman⁴¹ argue that the crusade was a series of events with a tragic outcome, claiming that the Sack of Constantinople was "...one of the greatest crimes against humanity..."⁴² Other authors, such as Angold, downplay the severity of the sack, claiming that it was mostly Byzantine propaganda. There is no universally accepted consensus, especially in modern times, about the cause for the diversion of the crusade. Some historians have claimed it was inevitable, others that it was the result of premeditation, others that it was an accident. However, authors such as Harris, Queller, Madden, and Angold, all provided unique perspectives and insight on the Fourth Crusade, largely combining elements of the two primary theories into newer, more nuanced forms. Despite the wide differences of opinion, each historian offers unique insight into one of the most divisive and decisive events in history.

Out of all these theses, Harris' argument is by far the most convincing explanation for the degradation of Byzantine-crusader relations during the first four crusades. Taking a wholistic view, Harris correctly places the Fourth Crusade into the context of Byzantine-crusader interactions, surveying relations not just in the Fourth Crusade, but the first three as well. He understood that both the Byzantines and the western Europeans possessed several narrative histories of previous crusades and attempted to analyze and learn from the mistakes of their ancestors, or to emulate their perceived successes. He also convincingly argued that the government of the Byzantine Empire misunderstood the intentions and strength of the crusade armies, seeking to exploit, deflect, or otherwise manipulate them in accordance with the highly defensive Byzantine imperial ideology.

⁴⁰ Lowe, Alfonso. *The Catalan Vengeance*, 3

⁴¹ Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade* 7

⁴² Harris *The Debate on the Fourth Crusade* 7

One area, however, that could reinforce Harris' theory greatly is the direct analysis of primary sources. In his work, Harris did not specifically comprehensively survey and compare the narrative accounts from the first four numbered crusades and did not investigate the role of hostile language and stereotypes contained within, instead choosing to provide an excellent analysis on high-level diplomatic interactions and strategic decision making. This work will present an in-depth analysis of western and Byzantine narrative sources from the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Crusades, and will demonstrate that hostile stereotypes contributed to poor decision-making and misinterpretation of each other's actions by both Byzantine and crusade leaders. This argument will serve to strengthen and extend Harris' theory of misinterpretation and misjudgment.

Chapter Two: Analysis of Primary Sources from the First Four Crusades

First Crusade Sources

The First Crusade (1096-1099) was the first and by far the most successful of the crusades. Called for by Pope Urban II (r.1088-1099) in 1095 at the Council of Clermont, the crusade resulted in the capture of important Levantine cities such as Antioch and Jerusalem, and the establishment of the crusader states, namely the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Principality of Antioch, and the Counties of Tripoli and Edessa. On their march East, the crusaders also defeated the forces of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum at Nicaea and Dorylaeum, allowing the Byzantine Empire to begin the reconquest of Anatolia.

Initially, the goal of the crusade was twofold: to aid Byzantine Emperor Alexios Komnenos' (r.1081-1118) fight against the Turks, who had conquered nearly the entirety of

Anatolia in the preceding decades, which had formerly been the Byzantine heartland, and to take the Holy Land, securing the region for Christian pilgrimage. Though they ostensibly strove towards the same goals, the interactions between the Byzantines and the crusaders were often tense, sometimes breaking out into hostilities. Various crusading contingents making their way to Constantinople raided Byzantine territory in the Balkans seeking supplies and loot.⁴³ Rumors that Alexios had imprisoned certain crusade leaders threatened to break out into open warfare.

Bohemond d'Hauteville, the Norman lord of Sicily (r.1089-1111), certainly did not lessen tensions when he joined the crusade. The Normans had fought the Byzantine Empire for control of Sicily and Southern Italy for decades, and Bohemond and his father Robert Guiscard (r.1057-1085) had both launched an invasion of the Byzantine Empire itself.⁴⁴ Though he and the other crusade leaders, namely Raymond of Toulouse, Hugh of Vermandois, Godfrey de Bouillon, Stephen of Blois, Tancred d'Hauteville, and Robert of Flanders, all reluctantly swore oaths to return any land taken to the Byzantine Empire, the Byzantine suspicion regarding their true motives was not fully allayed.⁴⁵

Indeed, this oath swearing satisfied neither side, for the Byzantines did not trust the westerners and the crusaders felt that they were compelled to swear the oath by force, as they could not proceed past Constantinople without Byzantine permission and aid. Therefore, when the crusaders had established their new principalities in the Levant, only Raymond of Toulouse,

⁴³ "It was when provisions ran short and the crusaders resorted to plundering food from the local population that longstanding negative images that each had of the other were intensified, often to the point of near collapse of the coalition." Bell, Gregory D. "In Starvation's Shadow: The Role of Logistics in the Strained Byzantine-European Relations during the First Crusade." *Byzantion*, 2010, Vol. 80, p39-40.

⁴⁴ Robert Guiscard, with his son Bohemond, launched the first invasion of the Byzantine mainland in 1081, fighting until their defeat at the hands of Emperor Alexios in 1085. Bohemond would launch a second invasion after the First Crusade in 1107-1108, which likewise failed.

⁴⁵ Shepard, Jonathan. "Alexius Comnenus and the First Crusade." *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*, 1997, p110.

ruling over the County of Tripoli, pledged allegiance to the Empire. Bohemond d'Hauteville, Prince of Antioch, and his successor Tancred, both fiercely fought Byzantine attempts to pry Antioch from their grasp. The Kingdom of Jerusalem retained far more peaceful relations with the Empire, but the Byzantines never forgot that these princes ruled former Byzantine territory.

The First Crusade is notable in its wealth of contemporary narrative sources, namely the narrative accounts of the crusade from the western perspective. The chief works are the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*,⁴⁶ the *Historia Hierosolymitana* of Robert the Monk,⁴⁷ the *Gesta Tancredi* of Ralph of Caen,⁴⁸ the *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium* of Fulcher of Chartres,⁴⁹ the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* of Raymond d'Aguilers,⁵⁰ and the *Historia Ierosolimitana* of Albert of Aachen.⁵¹ Sadly, the Byzantine perspective does not benefit from the same plenitude of sources. The only near contemporary primary source from the Byzantine perspective is *The Alexiad*,⁵² a biography of Emperor Alexios written by his daughter Anna.

The Alexiad

The Alexiad, written by Anna Komnena (1083-1153) sometime in the mid-twelfth century, is a biography of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r.1081-1118), Anna's father. Of

⁴⁶ Dass, Nirmal. *The Deeds of the Franks and Other Jerusalem-Bound Pilgrims the Earliest Chronicle of the First Crusades*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011.

⁴⁷ Robert the Monk. *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*. Translated by Carol Sweetenham. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2006.

⁴⁸ Raoul de Caen. *The Gesta Tancredi of Ralph of Caen: A History of the Normans on the First Crusade*. Translated by David S. Bachrach and Bernard S. Bachrach. Abington, UK: Routledge, 2010.

⁴⁹ Peters, Edward. *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.

⁵⁰ D'Aguilers, Raymond. *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem*. Translated by John Hugh Hill and Laurita Lyttleton Hill. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1968.

⁵¹ Edgington, Susan. *Albert of Aachen, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*. Vol. 1, bks. 1–6 of *The First Crusade, 1095–1099*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2013.

⁵² Komnene, Anna. *The Alexiad*. Edited by E. R. A. Sewter. Translated by Peter Frankopan. London: Penguin Books, 2009.

particular interest is the extensive account of Alexios' interactions with western Europeans and the crusaders during the First Crusade (1096-1099). As an imperial princess, Anna was an eyewitness to most interactions between crusade leaders and Emperor Alexios and drew extensively upon these memories during the writing of *The Alexiad*. This text is doubtlessly the most important Byzantine primary sources of the First Crusade and is a masterpiece of Byzantine literature. However, the *Alexiad* is not without problems for modern scholars. One of the significant issues with trusting information from *The Alexiad* is that Anna is extraordinarily biased in her writing. Allegedly, after a failed coup attempt against her brother, Emperor John II Komnenos (r.1118-1143), the government banished Anna to a monastery to live out the rest of her days in exile. Bitter due to her plot's failure, Anna largely left Prince (and future emperor) John Komnenos out of the history. Anna was also understandably very biased against the crusaders and nearly all westerners, referring to them as "barbarians" and even using tribal language regarding German dukes, calling them "chieftains."⁵³ Another problem in the *Alexiad* is Anna's unknown sources. Anna herself claims that she was an eyewitness to most events, and that she learned of those she did not witness from authoritative sources and other eyewitnesses, such as Alexios' soldiers.⁵⁴

These issues garnered Anna a reputation of hysteria, jealousy, and general untrustworthiness both among later Byzantine historians and within the modern historiographical tradition until the work of Ostrogorsky in the mid-twentieth century. Rampant sexism within Byzantine society and western society at large until the mid-twentieth century also contributed greatly to the dismissal of Anna's works. Luckily, modern historians have come to appreciate

⁵³ *Alexiad*, p53, 59, 64.

⁵⁴ *Alexiad*, p459

Anna's unique style of writing, her love of and references to classical Greek authors, and the veracity of her information.⁵⁵

The *Alexiad* contains some of the most blatant anti-Latin sentiments in Byzantine histories, particularly regarding the supposed characteristics of the Latin "barbarian." Like nearly all Byzantine works, Anna constantly refers to western Europeans as "barbarians"⁵⁶ throughout the text. This trope fits perfectly into the Byzantine world view, in which all who lived outside of the *oikoumene*, or the "civilized" world (of course referring to lands controlled by the Byzantine Empire), were barbarians. However, her anti-Latin sentiments went far further than simply referring to the crusaders as barbarians. She also had much to say regarding their character and moral failures. According to Anna, "...all Latins lust after money: for one obol they would sell even their nearest and dearest."⁵⁷ Anna repeats these claims of greed throughout the text, especially when describing the crusaders. When the rumors of the First Crusade began to reach the Empire, Anna observed that, "[Alexios] dreaded their arrival, knowing as he did their uncontrollable passion their erratic character and their irresolution, not to mention [their] other peculiar traits...their greed for money, for example, which always led them, it seemed, to break their own agreements without scruple for any chance reason."⁵⁸ Anna particularly focuses on the connection between their supposed greed and their fickleness regarding agreements and treaties. Doubtlessly Anna, writing decades after the events of the First Crusade, was influenced by the decision among the crusaders such as Bohemond d'Hauteville and Godfrey of Bouillon to establish independent states rather than accepting the overlordship of the Byzantine Empire.

⁵⁵ *Alexiad*, Introduction by E.R.A. Sewter

⁵⁶ *Alexiad*, p53, 59, 60, 62, 95, 175, 309, 381, 439, 449

⁵⁷ *Alexiad*, p193

⁵⁸ *Alexiad*, p308

It is important to note that, according to almost every single primary source, the crusaders made an agreement with Emperor Alexios to return all former Byzantine lands to the Empire.⁵⁹ When the Byzantines found out about the crusaders reneging on this oath, Anna wrote that, “It was now clear that these barbarian Franks were violating the oaths taken by them with respect to Antioch. Despite the large sums of money Alexios had personally spent, despite the many perils he had faced in transporting these enormous armies from the west to Asia, he had always found them a haughty, embittered race...the situation was intolerable. Reprisals were absolutely inevitable, and they would have to be punished for behavior so inhuman.”⁶⁰ From the Byzantine point of view, although their troops did not participate directly in the crusade in large numbers (though there was an important Byzantine contingent at Nicaea and Antioch, more on that later), Alexios rightly viewed his financial and logistical aid as crucial to the success of the crusade. Further, all the land the crusaders seized had formerly been under Byzantine rule. Although Jerusalem and the entirety of Palestine and Syria had been lost to the Arab invasions of the seventh century, the Byzantines presided over campaigns of reconquest in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries which resulted in the capture of Antioch in 969. The Seljuks only captured Antioch from the Byzantines in 1084, merely eleven years before the First Crusade.

It is easy to dismiss Anna’s anti-Latin language throughout the *Alexiad* as simply imperial propaganda or representative of Anna’s personal hatred of those who were not Byzantine. However, it is important to note that, at the time of her writing, Anna was living in exile, disconnected from the imperial court and on extremely poor terms with her brother, Emperor John II (r. 1118-1143), and his successor, his nephew Manuel I (r.1143-1180). Surely, Anna had no illusions that the imperial government would champion her work. Therefore, it is

⁵⁹ *Alexiad*, p323

⁶⁰ *Alexiad*, p439

highly unlikely that the use of anti-Latin language was a propaganda technique. As contemporary and subsequent sources all contain similar anti-Latin language the argument that Latin hatred was unique to Anna is easily dismissed, though these sentiments noticeably intensify as relations between the Byzantine Empire and western states deteriorated throughout the twelfth and into the thirteenth century.

Robert the Monk

Robert the Monk was the author of the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, a modest update and revision of the anonymous *Gesta Francorum*. Though Robert himself was not a participant on the crusade, and thus not an eyewitness to its events, he attended the Council of Clermont in 1095. Carol Sweetenham, the author of a modern translation of the *Historia Hierosolymitana*, argues that the work was prepared in 1106 or 1107 as Bohemond d'Hauteville was touring the west, rallying support for an anti-Byzantine crusade. This work may have been produced as a part of this effort. Unsurprisingly, Robert vilifies the Byzantines, depicting them as cowards and Alexios Komnenos specifically as a cartoonishly evil plotter who sought to destroy the crusaders, while the Franks are depicted as the chosen people of God.

The first of Robert's many dubious claims regarding crusader-Byzantine interaction is that the "Prince's Crusade," that is, the phase of the crusade when aristocratic leadership had been solidified, contained no looting whatsoever.⁶¹ Instead, Robert outright lies and states that Bohemond's contingent was "...positively forced by lack of food to steal and plunder sheep, cows, rams, pigs, and whatever could be eaten."⁶² This retroactive justification of opportunistic looting reeks of an attempt to absolve Bohemond of the actions taken by his men, perhaps even

⁶¹ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 91

⁶² *Historia Hierosolymitana* 96

trying to change his reputation as a fierce and brutal warlord. As Sweetenham points out, Bohemond was an “arch manipulator” who coveted Byzantine territory and viewed the crusade as a tool to increase his own power.

Regarding the portrayal of Emperor Alexios, it is quite clear what Robert, and by extension the Normans, thought of him. He wrote, “As [Alexios] saw the camp of the Lord grow...the crafty emperor – lacking in courage, devoid of sense, and short on wisdom – began to get extremely angry.”⁶³ The qualities Robert mentions in this passage - craftiness, cowardice, and stupidity - come up repeatedly throughout crusader descriptions of the Byzantines in the first four crusades. Though Robert does acknowledge that Alexios promised and delivered some logistical support, including ferrying the crusaders across the Sea of Marmara, providing supplies, and sending a contingent of soldiers to aid the crusaders,⁶⁴ he claims that these promises were broken even before the Siege of Nicaea (1097) and that the surrender of the city directly to the Byzantine envoys instead of the crusaders was part of Alexios’ schemes to weaken the crusaders.⁶⁵ Crucially, Robert notes that the leaders of the crusade only swore the oath to return former Byzantine territory back to the Empire because of the necessity of Byzantine logistical support.⁶⁶ The city of Constantinople was too fortified and well placed geographically, and the Byzantine navy too powerful for the crusaders to have simply crossed on their own. The idea of sailing directly to the Holy Land for crusading purposes came later, mainly during and after the Third and Fourth Crusades, due to increasing technological developments in shipbuilding. Further, most of the leaders of the First Crusade did not have powerful navies of their own which could transport all their troops; besides, one of the key goals of the First

⁶³ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 99

⁶⁴ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 99

⁶⁵ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 112

⁶⁶ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 100

Crusade was ostensibly to help the Byzantine Empire against the Turks. Bypassing the Empire entirely would have undermined the justification for the crusade itself and was geographically impossible.

Importantly, Robert does mention Tatikios, the Byzantine general whom Alexios sent to join the crusaders with approximately two thousand troops, but states that this officer broke his oath, lied to the crusaders, and abandoned his post during the siege of Antioch. This event serves to further cement the Byzantines as traitorous oath breakers in the narrative, while proving their cowardice and effeminacy.⁶⁷

There is a strange event in the *Historia Hierosolymitana* regarding the oath swearing worthy of note and eerily close to what would happen in the Fourth Crusade. According to Robert the Monk, “[Raymond of Toulouse], though, directly refused when asked to do homage: if he had been taken at his word, the whole city along with its inhabitants and emperor would have been destroyed. But there was no justification for sacking such a royal city and so many churches consecrated to God, nor for burning so many holy relics or taking them from their resting places.”⁶⁸ According to this account, Raymond of Toulouse threatened to sack Constantinople itself, massacre the inhabitants and the emperor, and loot the holy relics in the city if he was not released from swearing such an oath. Only the city’s royal and religious qualities prevented the crusaders from agreeing to this plan, though Robert does not say if this is a plan that the leaders seriously discussed or was a mere outburst of anger from Raymond. This account is not corroborated by most other First Crusade sources, all of which portray Raymond

⁶⁷ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 128

⁶⁸ *Historia Hierosolymitana* 99

of Toulouse as the most pro-Byzantine crusade leader. Anna even stated that Alexios trusted Raymond as he was the most honorable and virtuous of all the leaders of the crusade.⁶⁹

Therefore, what should we make of this event, given that most other sources do not corroborate it and it is likely to be an invention of Robert? It is entirely possible that Robert's observation represented a desire for ruling Constantinople that many crusader sources implied. Nearly every source praises the wonders of Constantinople, including the monumental architecture, churches, and holy relics. However, almost every source simultaneously represented the Byzantines as decadent, unchristian, and deceitful heretics who were unworthy of ruling such a beautiful city. This strange cognitive dissonance, admiring Constantinople while hating those who lived within in, was an important aspect of the stereotype of Byzantine cowardice and effeminacy. The Byzantines were not men, in western eyes, and therefore were unworthy to rule.

Raymond d'Aguilers

Raymond d'Aguilers, the author of the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* (The History of the Franks who Captured Jerusalem), was Count Raymond of Toulouse's personal chaplain and accompanied him on the crusade.⁷⁰ As a close confidant of Raymond of Toulouse, d'Aguilers had access to authoritative information from the count himself. As Count Raymond formed a personal friendship with Emperor Alexios and was the most pro-Byzantine crusade leader, one might expect Raymond d'Aguilers to hold a similar pro-Byzantine opinion. Therefore, it is shocking that d'Aguilers was one of the most anti-Byzantine writers of the crusades (only topped by Odo of Deuil, the Second Crusade author). Despite his liege's friendliness towards the Byzantines, d'Aguilers, just like Robert the Monk, portrays the

⁶⁹ *Alexiad* 330

⁷⁰ Edgington, Susan. "The First Crusade: Reviewing the Evidence." *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*. Manchester University Press, 1997. p56.

Byzantine Empire and Emperor Alexios as obstacles that the crusaders had to overcome, indeed as another test from God before they could take the Holy Land.

The *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* was written in 1102, very shortly after the success of the crusade in 1099.⁷¹ Although titled the “history of the Franks,” the focus of the text is Count Raymond of Toulouse, his actions, and the events his contingent witnessed.

According to John Hill, the translator, d’Aguilers “hated the Greeks.”⁷² Not only did he frame the Byzantines as treacherous and plotting against the crusade, he also invented promises which any Byzantine Emperor would almost certainly never have made, such as allowing a foreign mercenary army to loot an important imperial city like Nicaea.⁷³

Raymond d’Aguilers’ anti-Byzantine sentiments are not merely off hand comments in the narrative. Rather, Alexios’ treachery, cowardice, and hatred towards the crusaders form a core component of d’Aguilers’ narrative, despite his liege’s high opinion of Alexios and the Byzantines. When describing the contingent’s march through the Balkans, d’Aguilers wrote that, “...we believed that Alexios and his followers were our Christian brothers and confederates. But truly with the savagery of lions they rushed upon peaceful men...these brigands, operating by night, slew our people in droves...and stole what they could from them.”⁷⁴ Clearly, d’Aguilers considered the raids by highwaymen and bandits on crusader camps as personally directed and ordered by Emperor Alexios, despite the fact that imperial officials, such as governor John

⁷¹ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 7

⁷² *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 8

⁷³ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 27

⁷⁴ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 18

Kommenos, promised peace and safe conduct through the Byzantine Balkans,⁷⁵ while crusader armies were simultaneously raiding and looting these territories.

When letters from Emperor Alexios were sent to Raymond's contingent, promising cooperation, alliance, and brotherhood, d'Aguilers summarily dismissed these as "...empty words, for before and behind, to the right and left, Turks, Cumans, Uzes, and...Pechenegs and Bulgarians were lying in wait for us."⁷⁶ The Byzantine Empire made extensive use of mercenaries, especially those recruited from peoples whom the crusaders and westerners viewed as barbarians, such as the Pechenegs and Turks. The Byzantine army had suffered greatly from the loss of Anatolia and relied upon mercenaries much more than in previous centuries. When the crusaders encountered these mercenaries, however, they understood the use of these peoples as unholy and meant to defeat the crusaders. In fact, Alexios sent these troops to prevent the crusaders from looting and terrorizing the local population.

Referring to the Byzantine troops as "the enemy," d'Aguilers states that "on all sides we were confronted with the Emperor's deceit."⁷⁷ In the same vein, he also refers to the imperial soldiers as "treacherous" for capturing the Bishop of Le Puy when he was "wandering" from camp.⁷⁸ This supposed treachery was the pretext with which the crusaders justified clashing with imperial forces in the Balkans, yet d'Aguilers undermines his own justifications in the next paragraph by highlighting a brutal display of hostility. He wrote, "Soon thereafter we arrived at Roussa, a town where the open contempt of its citizens so strained our customary forbearance that we seized arms, broke down the outer walls, captured great booty, and received the town in

⁷⁵ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 18

⁷⁶ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 19

⁷⁷ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 21

⁷⁸ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 21

surrender. We then left after we had raised our banner over the town...”⁷⁹ D’Aguilers admits that the crusader contingent of Raymond of Toulouse attacked and sacked the city of Roussa⁸⁰ for no reason other than the “open contempt” of the citizenry. Raymond does not present this attack as a shameful example of the undisciplined nature of the army, but as one of the first triumphs of the crusade. In Raymond’s *Historia*, the Byzantines were just as much enemies to the crusade as the Muslims were, and therefore the crusaders’ victories over the Byzantines were just as worthy of note and inclusion into the narrative as the victories in the Holy Land.

When Raymond of Toulouse and his contingent finally arrived in Constantinople, d’Aguilers begrudgingly admits that Emperor Alexios hosted an honorable welcome for the count, and even refers to him by the actual Byzantine title “Basileus,” though continues to denounce the “...most fraudulent and abominable treachery of the Emperor...”⁸¹ D’Aguilers claims that Count Raymond was only won over to meet Alexios due to the Emperor’s bribery of Raymond’s subordinates.⁸² When they met, Count Raymond charged Alexios with betraying the crusaders, while Alexios noted the widespread looting the crusaders committed during their march. D’Aguilers claims that Alexios promised to provide compensation to the crusaders, but that this resolution to the dispute was “contrary to justice.”⁸³

The strange episode in Robert the Monk, where Count Raymond threatened to sack Constantinople, is alluded to in d’Aguilers’ work. When the other crusade leaders pressured Raymond into accepting a compromise with Alexios by, Count Raymond sought revenge for his “unjust treatment.” However, Godfrey of Bouillon and Count Robert of Flanders refused to

⁷⁹ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 21

⁸⁰ Modern Keşan, Turkey.

⁸¹ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 23

⁸² *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 22

⁸³ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 24

support a fight against the Byzantines, while Bohemond d'Hauteville threatened to side with Alexios in such a fight.⁸⁴ In the end, Raymond swore a different oath, promising not to harm the emperor, his subjects, or his property. D'Aguilers did not mention any stipulations of returning former Byzantine lands to the Emperor or Count Raymond and Alexios' friendship, no doubt as an effort to vilify the Byzantines as much as possible. If d'Aguilers portrayed a just and honorable man like Count Raymond as forming a friendship with Emperor Alexios, it would undermine this vilification and potentially make Alexios into a more sympathetic figure.

Fulcher of Chartres

Fulcher of Chartres was an eyewitness and participant in the First Crusade in the contingent of Stephen of Blois and Count Robert of Normandy. Fulcher later joined Baldwin of Boulogne's⁸⁵ contingent as his personal chaplain and accompanied him to Edessa and later Jerusalem, where Fulcher wrote the *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, a history of the First Crusade and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, covering the period between 1096-1127.⁸⁶ Fulcher divided the work into three books, the first of which detailed the First Crusade, the second the reign of Baldwin I of Jerusalem, and the third the reign of Baldwin II. There are significant differences in Fulcher's account of the crusade than in the works of most other authors. Notably, Fulcher's first book contains little anti-Byzantine language or sentiments. Fulcher portrays the Byzantines as just as Christian as westerners, and clearly viewed the justification for the crusade as aiding these eastern Christians. Moreover, Fulcher does not describe Emperor Alexios as a treacherous, lying plotter as he is in most other western sources,

⁸⁴ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 24

⁸⁵ The future King Baldwin I of Jerusalem (r. 1100-1118)

⁸⁶ Edgington, Susan. "The First Crusade: Reviewing the Evidence." *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*. Manchester University Press, 1997. p57.

but as a mostly reasonable, faithful ruler who worked with the crusaders to aid them in their goals. Anti-Byzantine language and statements do not appear until after the crusader capture of Antioch,⁸⁷ and especially after the capture of Jerusalem, where Fulcher sharply pivots towards denouncing the Byzantines for their actions. Books two and three are full of these denunciations, and Fulcher is sympathetic to Bohemond's subsequent invasion of the Byzantine Empire after the First Crusade.⁸⁸ An explanation for this pivot, as argued by the translator of the text Frances Rita Ryan, is that Fulcher gained access to Raymond d'Aguilers' work and the *Gesta Francorum*, both of which were decidedly anti-Byzantine sources.⁸⁹

At the start of Fulcher's narrative, he argues that the First Crusade was genuinely meant to help Eastern Christians.⁹⁰ He did not lambast them as heretics and treated their religious practices with respect; according to Frances Rita Ryan, Fulcher even prayed inside of Byzantine churches.⁹¹ No strong anti-Byzantine language was used, and Emperor Alexios himself was described as cautious but generous. He described no incidents of combat between Byzantine forces and the forces of Robert of Normandy on the road to Constantinople,⁹² and states that the crusaders were not allowed to enter the city in large groups without hostility, simply noting that "...it was not agreeable to the emperor for he feared that possibly we would plot some harm to him..." Fulcher's tone is conciliatory, and he was not insulted by this suspicion, almost understanding of the emperor's caution and respecting it. Despite this suspicion, Fulcher points out that Alexios ordered that the crusaders be given supplies which were crucial to the cohesion

⁸⁷ The crusaders captured Antioch in June 1098.

⁸⁸ Bohemond launched an invasion of the Byzantine Empire in 1107-1108

⁸⁹ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, Introduction 45

⁹⁰ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 71

⁹¹ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 78

⁹² *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 77

of the army, a fact that nearly all other crusade chroniclers ignore.⁹³ Regarding the oath of loyalty, which so many Western crusade accounts lambast and decry as illegitimate, Fulcher writes "...it was essential that all establish friendship with the emperor since without his aid and counsel we could not easily make the journey..."⁹⁴ Fulcher's tone regarding this oath is factual and conciliatory: the crusaders simply would not be able to make it to the Holy Land without the Byzantine emperor's help, and they needed to do whatever was necessary to secure this support.

Unlike other crusade accounts, Fulcher also notes and is appreciative of the gifts Alexios sent to the crusaders.⁹⁵ This practice of gift giving was a crucial aspect of Byzantine diplomacy that most crusade writers chose to either ignore or frame as attempts at bribery. As Paul Stephenson noted in *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, the practice of distributing gifts, tribute, and titles was the chief strategy the Byzantine Empire used to deflect threats.⁹⁶ By granting gifts like these to the crusaders, Alexios was simply following age old Byzantine tradition, treating the crusaders just as he would treat any other "barbarians."

In his account of the recapture of the important Anatolian city of Nicaea, Fulcher does not accuse the emperor of theft or treachery. Though he does note that the Turks secretly surrendered the city to imperial forces, despite the fact that the crusaders provided the majority of the troops for the siege, Fulcher gratefully writes that, "...after all this money was seized [by the Byzantines] the emperor ordered gifts to be presented to our leaders, gifts of gold and silver and raiment; and to the foot soldiers he distributed copper coins..."⁹⁷ This event is crucially important to understanding the reactions of the crusaders to the capture of Nicaea. Other works,

⁹³ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 78

⁹⁴ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 80

⁹⁵ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 80

⁹⁶ Stephenson, Paul. *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*. 87.

⁹⁷ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 83

such as the *Historia Hierosolymitana* and the *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem* portray the surrender of Nicaea to the Byzantines directly as a betrayal.⁹⁸ Further, these sources all claim that Alexios cheated the crusaders of their loot and payment. Fulcher's eyewitness account, which is far more neutral, directly contradicts this interpretation. Emperor Alexios did want the city of Nicaea to surrender directly to imperial forces to avoid a brutal sack of an important Byzantine city. However, he did distribute loot in a fair manner, even paying the foot soldiers instead of merely the princes. This discrepancy in sources suggests that the other crusade writers deliberately lied, selecting a narrative of betrayal and treachery to further discredit the emperor and omitting Alexios' distribution of wealth.

The shift in Fulcher's account comes chronologically during the capture of Antioch, where he entirely omits a discussion of the Byzantine contingent under the command of Tatikios, and especially after the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of the crusader states.⁹⁹ When discussing Bohemond's invasion of the Byzantine Empire in 1107-1108, Fulcher writes that, "The Emperor of Constantinople, Alexios by name, was at that time strongly opposed to our people. By trickery or open violence, he thwarted or tyrannized over the pilgrims going to Jerusalem by land or sea. It was for this reason that Bohemond invaded Alexios' territory..."¹⁰⁰ Suddenly, the *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium* integrates the strong anti-Byzantine language found in other sources such as the works of Robert the Monk and Raymond d'Aguilers. From this point onwards, Fulcher employs this hostile language frequently and frames the Byzantines as enemies of the crusade. One explanation for this shift in tone is that, when Fulcher

⁹⁸ *Historia Francorum qui ceperunt Iherusalem*, 27, *Historia Hierosolymitana* 112.

⁹⁹ The crusaders captured Jerusalem on July 15th, 1099 and established the Kingdom of Jerusalem shortly afterwards on July 22nd.

¹⁰⁰ *Gesta Francorum Iherusalem peregrinantium*, 192

began writing this section, Bohemond d'Hauteville was raising support for an expedition against the Byzantines.

Ralph of Caen

Ralph of Caen was the author of the *Gesta Tancredi*, a history of the First Crusade and its aftermath from the Italo-Norman perspective, specifically that of Bohemond and Tancred d'Hauteville. Importantly, this work was not a *Gesta Francorum* or *Historia Ierosolomitana*, but a *Gesta Tancredi* – a book recording and illuminating the deeds of Tancred above everyone else. Though incomplete (either because of Ralph's untimely death or the final portion simply not surviving), the *Gesta Tancredi* is incredibly illuminating, in that it reveals the perspective of high-ranking members in the Italo-Norman contingent. The work was, for a long time, as pointed out by translators David and Bernard Bachrach, a mostly ignored and obscure source.¹⁰¹ As one might expect from a source from the Norman perspective most sympathetic to Bohemond and Tancred, the *Gesta Tancredi* is virulently anti-Byzantine, even presenting Bohemond's invasion of the Byzantine Empire after the First Crusade as an extension of the crusade itself.¹⁰² Ralph takes every opportunity to defame and insult the Byzantines, referring to Emperor Alexios merely as the “King of the Greeks” instead of emperor,¹⁰³ and generally portrays the Byzantines in a similar manner to Raymond d'Aguilers and Robert the Monk, as treacherous, deceitful cowards who hindered the progress of the crusade.

Opening with Bohemond's contingent marching through the Balkans, Ralph makes his feelings regarding the Byzantines quite clear. He wrote, “[Bohemond] feared the ambushes of the Greeks since they had a habit of attacking even those whom they had earlier invited as

¹⁰¹ *Gesta Tancredi*, Introduction 11

¹⁰² *Gesta Tancredi*, Introduction 19

¹⁰³ *Gesta Tancredi*, 21

guests...destruction had to be wrought on these miserable people...”¹⁰⁴ Although at this point during the march any bandits would have likely been Bulgarians or Serbs, Ralph and the Normans understood them to be Greeks and as such placed the blame on them. When Bohemond’s contingent encountered these highwaymen and defeated them, Ralph wrote that “But just as they had not shown mercy to anyone, now they were not worthy of pity by anyone. This weak people were struck down...they learned that one hundred of them were not equal to one [Frank].”¹⁰⁵ The slaughter of the “Greek” raiders was glorified, and Ralph afforded no sympathy to those killed by the Normans. He deemed the Greeks to be “weak people” who deserved no mercy for their crimes. Naturally, Ralph also placed the blame for such attacks squarely at the feet of the emperor.

When Bohemond, the lifelong enemy of the Byzantines, took the conciliatory step of accepting Alexios’ letters and travelling to Constantinople to meet with the emperor, Ralph castigated him, writing, “Bohemond, who was captivated by the superficial sweetness of these words, did not sense the poison hidden below the surface. Furthermore, the promise of the riches of Constantinople, for which he had long shed blood [for]...led him astray.”¹⁰⁶ Ralph claims that Alexios’ letters were poisoned, and that the great wealth of the Byzantine capital seduced him, corrupting his morals. The language of poison, corruption, and being led astray would have certainly evoked biblical images of the Devil to contemporary readers. Snake-like, Alexios tempted and corrupted the virtuous and honorable Bohemond. Ralph also claims that the other leaders were also “corrupted” by Alexios’ gifts and calls the emperor “perfidious”¹⁰⁷ and a

¹⁰⁴ *Gesta Tancredi*, 23

¹⁰⁵ *Gesta Tancredi*, 25

¹⁰⁶ *Gesta Tancredi*, 31

¹⁰⁷ *Gesta Tancredi*, 32

tyrant.¹⁰⁸ In reality, Alexios summoned all the crusade leaders to Constantinople to attempt to impose a measure of organization and leadership upon the crusade and halt the raiding of Byzantine lands. Naturally, Tancred, the hero of Ralph's story, recognizes the supposedly poisoned bait, and refuses to meet with Alexios or swear the oath of allegiance, which Ralph deems a "yoke" burdening the leaders of the crusade.¹⁰⁹ In sum, Ralph frames Emperor Alexios as deceitful, treacherous, and a corrupting influence upon the supposedly virtuous crusaders, while conveniently excusing or omitting instances of blatant aggression or raiding by the crusaders.

A diplomatic incident worth noting occurred after Tancred reluctantly swore the oath to Alexios. As previously mentioned, the giving of gifts was an integral and serious aspect of Byzantine diplomacy, and Alexios made use of this tool with the crusaders no less than he did with the Turks and other foreign peoples. When Alexios offered to grant the crusade leaders anything they desired as a gift, rewarding them for agreeing to take the oath of loyalty, Tancred callously demanded the imperial tent.¹¹⁰ Contrary to what one might expect, Alexios did not order any punishment for Tancred, although he was not pleased with this insult. However, Alexios' friend and most loyal general, George Palaiologos, physically assaulted Tancred immediately after the brazen suggestion.¹¹¹ The *Alexiad* corroborates this event as well, certainly meaning that this event occurred and was not a mere invention of Ralph.¹¹²

To excuse the oath breaking of Tancred and Bohemond, Ralph frames the oath as a burden illegally imposed upon the crusaders. Alexios corrupted and seduced the leaders with

¹⁰⁸ *Gesta Tancredi*, 36, 41

¹⁰⁹ *Gesta Tancredi*, 32

¹¹⁰ *Gesta Tancredi*, 41

¹¹¹ *Alexiad*, 341

¹¹² *Alexiad*, 341

magnificent gifts, and then compelled them with force to agree to give back all former Byzantine lands, preventing their passage if they refused. Ralph also claims that the Norman contingent broke their oath because Alexios did not join the crusade with the whole Byzantine army, as they claimed he had promised. He argues that they would have served Alexios as his liegemen if he had brought the army, but his support in logistics and tactical advice was not enough.¹¹³

Strangely, Ralph places much of the blame for Alexios not coming to help on Stephen of Blois, who fled the siege of Antioch and returned to warn the emperor of the army's plight and dissuade him from sending a Byzantine army.¹¹⁴ This is perhaps the only time that Ralph does not blame Alexios for not sending more support to the crusaders. Of course, Ralph omits most information regarding Byzantine support of the crusade, not even mentioning Tatikios or the Byzantine contingent at the siege of Antioch.¹¹⁵

Finally, regarding the creation of the crusader states, Ralph writes, "The great strength of the Greek kingdom would not capture Jerusalem...it was not appropriate to hand over these captured cities to such defenders as the Greeks. It was the Franks who alone were capable of this type of protection."¹¹⁶ Though he admits that the "Greek kingdom" possesses great strength, one can easily detect his dismissive and condescending attitude regarding their military capability to defend these lands. He argues that, because the Byzantines formerly ruled and then lost these lands, they were simply unfit to rule over the Levant or provide for its defense. However, the Franks, who had never previously ruled these lands in any capacity, were its rightful rulers, as they "alone" possessed the necessary strength and capability to defend them. Crusade authors often frame the Franks as the chosen people of God, the successors to the Israelites, but no other

¹¹³ *Gesta Tancredi*, 41

¹¹⁴ *Gesta Tancredi*, 96

¹¹⁵ *Gesta Tancredi*, 74

¹¹⁶ *Gesta Tancredi*, 41

author quite so explicitly lays out the reasoning for the creation of the crusader states and the refusal to return formerly Byzantine lands to the Byzantine Empire.

Albert of Aachen

Albert of Aachen, also known sometimes as Albert of Aix, was the author of the *Historia Ierosolimitana*, the most complete, detailed, and factually accurate First Crusade narrative, according to the translator Susan Edgington.¹¹⁷ This is even more interesting as Albert was one of the few crusade authors who did not personally participate in the crusade, instead relying upon firsthand testimony from veterans. Sadly, almost nothing is known of Albert personally, and he remains an obscure figure. Edgington argues that Albert was completely independent of the other crusade authors, using only his own sources,¹¹⁸ and that he was remarkably tolerant towards the Byzantines and the Muslims. He does not engage in the common crusader trope that the Muslims were idol worshippers and pagans and uses positive and laudatory language regarding Emperor Alexios and the Byzantines. Further, Albert is even critical of the crusaders and their actions, chastising them for looting in Hungary and the Byzantine Empire, and lamenting their pointless cruelty against the Jews prior to the crusade and to the Muslims upon capturing Jerusalem.¹¹⁹ Albert is also one of the few First Crusade authors to include a narrative account of the “People’s Crusade,” the first group of crusaders under Peter the Hermit.

¹¹⁷ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 1

¹¹⁸ Edgington, Susan. “The First Crusade: Reviewing the Evidence.” *The First Crusade: Origins and Impact*. p61.

¹¹⁹ Albert condemns the massacres of Jews in the Rhineland prior to the crusade, labelling them “cruel” and attributing their actions to “delusion.” He notes that forced conversions were, according to Church practice, invalid. *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 53. He also condemns the slaughter of Muslims after the capture of Jerusalem, noting that the city was not even under Seljuk Turkish control; the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt had captured the city in 1098, one year prior to the crusader siege and capture of the city in 1099. He also notes that they were tolerant of Christians in the Holy Land, more so than the Turks. *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 445.

According to Albert, when the People's Crusade began and the undisciplined crusaders entered into the Balkans, "...a [Hungarian] count...Guz, by name...had assembled a band of armed soldiers and had entered into a very wicked plot with the said duke, who was called Nichita,¹²⁰ prince of the Bulgars...that the duke...would vanquish and kill the vanguard of Peter's army, while Guz would pursue and behead the men at the rear...so that they might snatch and share...all the spoils..."¹²¹ He argues that, when Peter found out about this plot and attacked the Hungarians, he was justified in doing so, despite the Hungarians being fellow Christians.¹²² After the defeat of the Hungarians, the crusaders continued into the Balkans, where the Byzantine governor of Bulgaria Doux Niketas granted them a license to buy food, only requiring that the crusaders send hostages. Albert writes that these were returned "faithfully"¹²³ and that Niketas behaved rationally and honorably. When hostilities broke out again, Albert blames the crusaders for drunkenly burning seven Bulgarian mills in a violent dispute with a Bulgarian merchant, calling it a "wicked repayment for [the Bulgarians'] kindness" and the crusaders' actions "evil."¹²⁴

When Emperor Alexios finally contacted Peter the Hermit and the leaders of the Peoples' Crusade, Albert admires Alexios' clemency, as he forgave all transgressions against the Byzantine people and leaders and agreed to furnish supplies for the army if they did not remain in any Byzantine city for longer than three days and ceased from raiding their lands.¹²⁵ Peter accepted these terms, but the undisciplined nature of the army meant that sporadic instances of

¹²⁰ The project *Prosopography of the Byzantine World* identifies this man as Niketas Karikes, Doux (Byzantine governor) of Bulgaria. M. Jeffreys et al., *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, 2016 (King's College London, 2017) available at <http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk>.

¹²¹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 15

¹²² *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 15

¹²³ "fideliter" *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 20

¹²⁴ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 21

¹²⁵ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 29

raiding continued. He also notes that Alexios commanded the crusaders to lodge far from Constantinople to prevent any chance of looting within the capital city.¹²⁶

Regarding Alexios' character, Albert writes that he was a "magnificent and most famous emperor"¹²⁷ who was "most Christian."¹²⁸ Later in the account, Albert also labels Alexios a "glorious and most powerful emperor."¹²⁹ Far from the scathing remarks of the other writers, it is clear from the choice of words "magnificent," "most Christian" and "most famous" that Albert admired and respected Alexios, and at the very least did not accept any version of events claiming that Alexios backstabbed the crusaders or cheated them in any way.

Albert's account of Byzantine logistical aid is further evidence of this positive view of Alexios and the Byzantines. He writes that the emperor provided Peter and his army with money, licenses to buy food, and naval vessels to cross the Bosphorus into Anatolia.¹³⁰ Crucially, Albert stresses that the Byzantine merchants sold goods to the crusaders "fairly and in good measure."¹³¹ When Godfrey de Bouillon's army crossed the Danube promising not to raid Byzantine territory, Albert notes that Alexios granted Godfrey's army "...a wonderful abundance of food..."¹³² Finally, Albert frequently notes Alexios' generous gifts to the crusaders, both the leaders and the army, throughout the text.¹³³ These crucial acts of Byzantine logistical and financial support are frequently omitted by crusade writers from their accounts in order to frame Alexios as a villain.

¹²⁶ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 30

¹²⁷ "*magnificus et nominatissimus imperator*" *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 28

¹²⁸ "*christianissimus*" *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 30

¹²⁹ "*gloriosum et potentissimum imperatorem*" *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 84

¹³⁰ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 31

¹³¹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 31

¹³² *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 73

¹³³ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 91, 95, 111, 117

When troops from the Princes' Crusade, specifically the contingent of Godfrey de Bouillon, arrived at the Danube frontier, Albert writes that Alexios ordered the Byzantine army to intercept the group and convey the message that the emperor would grant them a license to purchase food if they refrained from raiding Byzantine territory. Labelling this act an example of the emperor's "goodwill," Albert presents this request from the Byzantines as rational and fair.¹³⁴

A curious incident occurred at this time which Albert cites as the cause for much of the conflict between the crusades and the Byzantines. According to Albert, "...certain strangers from the land of the Franks arrived secretly in the duke's¹³⁵ camp, and they warned him very seriously to beware the tricks and poisoned garments of the emperor, and his deceitful words, and under no circumstances to go into his presence...but to mistrust everything he offered to them. The duke, therefore, warned by the strangers...did not go into the emperor's presence at all."¹³⁶The language used in this incident, such as the supposed "deceit" of the emperor, his "poisoned" gifts and his "tricks" are suspiciously similar to the language employed by Robert the Monk, Raymond d'Aguilers, and the *Gesta Tancredi*. A subsequent passage illuminates who these secret Franks really were.

Soon after, Godfrey accepted the warnings of these strangers and began raiding Byzantine lands. At this time, he received more messengers, except this time they clearly identified themselves. According to Albert, the messengers stated that "Bohemond, most wealthy prince of Sicily and Calabria, asks you not to return to friendship with the emperor in any way, but to withdraw into [Bulgaria] and [winter] there, confident that at the beginning of March, Bohemond himself will be there with all his forces to help you overcome this emperor and

¹³⁴ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 71

¹³⁵ Godfrey de Bouillon

¹³⁶ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 75

invade his domain.”¹³⁷ Apparently, Godfrey was put off by this blatant call for invasion of Christian lands during crusade, and instead sought to make peace with Alexios, to which the emperor promptly agreed.¹³⁸ However, this incident clearly demonstrates that Bohemond sought to sow dissent between the crusade leaders and the Byzantine emperor, and used his messengers to spread slanderous messages. The Normans would repeat this tactic during the Second Crusade, with similar disastrous effects.

On the question of crusader leaders swearing oaths to Alexios, Albert writes that all the crusade leaders swore to become vassals of the emperor and return all former Byzantine territory to his rule.¹³⁹ Though he notes that early in the crusade there were false rumors that Alexios had imprisoned crusade leaders who came to Constantinople,¹⁴⁰ he does not present the oath swearing as a particularly contentious event, and certainly does not depict it as forced upon the crusaders by Alexios and the Byzantines. Albert specifically notes that Bohemond swore these oaths as well and agreed to become a vassal of the emperor, no doubt due to Bohemond’s later renegeing of this oath and subsequent wars with the Empire. He also corroborates Anna’s account of Count Raymond and Emperor Alexios’ friendship and makes no mention of any threats from Raymond to attack Constantinople.¹⁴¹

Crusade authors often used the events of the siege of Nicaea, as previously mentioned, to demonstrate the teachery of the Byzantines, as they supposedly cheated the crusaders of their rightfully earned loot. Albert tells a quite different tale. Albert provides detailed information

¹³⁷ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 83

¹³⁸ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 87

¹³⁹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 87-91, “Bohemondus homo imperatoris factus est” – “Bohemond was made a man of the emperor” and “...they had promised with an oath not to keep any part of the emperor’s kingdom, no fortresses, no cities, unless by his wish or gift.” 111

¹⁴⁰ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 75

¹⁴¹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 93

about Byzantine logistical and financial support for the crusade army. However, specifically regarding this siege, Albert emphasizes that “...merchants were striving to race across the sea with ships full of rations, corn, meat, wine, barley, and oil... [the crusaders] rejoiced in the abundance...”¹⁴² This logistical support was crucial in the crusaders’ ability to successfully maintain the siege of the city. Without these Byzantine supplies, the crusaders would have been forced to live off the land entirely, ranging far from camp, leaving them open to raids which the Turks were experts at conducting.

Albert also includes the earliest mention of Tatikios in any crusader source, noting that Alexios sent him to join the crusaders with a Byzantine contingent. His role as a commander¹⁴³ was to lead the Byzantine contingent and provide the crusade leaders with tactical, logistical, and geographic advice. He specifically mentions Tatikios’ geographic and tactical knowledge, along with his experience fighting Turks, as reasons for his presence.¹⁴⁴ Albert further attributes the surrender of Nicaea directly to imperial forces to Tatikios’ negotiations with the Turkish garrison of the city.¹⁴⁵ Albert’s portrayal of Tatikios in later events, however, falls far more in line with the other crusade accounts. He notes that he was present at the siege of Antioch, but that he fled “terror-stricken” and “in false faith.” He argues that Tatikios promised to beseech Alexios to send troops and supplies to aid the ailing crusader army, but that since this aid never materialized, Tatikios must have acted in bad faith.¹⁴⁶

This condemnation of Tatikios is rather strange, as Albert notes shortly afterwards that certain crusader princes, such as Count Hugh of Vermandois, had abandoned the siege of

¹⁴² *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 111

¹⁴³ In the words of Albert, a “*ductor Christiani exercitus*” – “commander of the Christian army” *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 101

¹⁴⁴ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 97

¹⁴⁵ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 127

¹⁴⁶ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 197, 201, 313

Antioch and personally informed Emperor Alexios that the situation at Antioch was hopeless and that he should not send any aid.¹⁴⁷ Even Ralph of Caen, who is usually quite hateful towards Alexios, notes that he acted based on the information given to him by Hugh and does not appear to blame Alexios for this.

The *Historia Ierosolimitana* contains the most direct admission that Bohemond and the crusaders betrayed their oath to the emperor by keeping Antioch for themselves, instead of returning the city to Byzantine rule. Albert writes that, “They had vowed to him¹⁴⁸ that if Antioch were taken, they would keep it for him...because it was a part of his kingdom, like Nicaea, and they would restore it to his sovereign power.”¹⁴⁹ Most crusade sources are very light on details regarding the loyalty oath and what specific stipulations the oath entailed. This passage in Albert’s work specifically states that the crusaders promised to return Antioch to the Byzantine Empire if they captured it. Though not related to anti-Byzantine language and sentiments, this passage proves that reliable information was available to crusade writers that the crusaders betrayed their oath by refusing to return Antioch. However, Albert is the only western historian of the First Crusade to mention this, even comparing this decision directly to their actions at Nicaea, which was under Turkish rule and had formerly been a Byzantine city, just like the events at Antioch.

After Bohemond had seized Antioch and established himself as the Prince of Antioch, he sought to enlarge his principality through conquest. One of his main targets was the city of Latakia, also known as Laodikeia or Laodicea, which was an important Byzantine city on the Syrian coast. Raymond of Toulouse who, had captured the city, kept his oath to Alexios and

¹⁴⁷ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 313

¹⁴⁸ Emperor Alexios

¹⁴⁹ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 341

returned the city to Byzantine rule. In 1099, Bohemond attempted to take Laodikeia by siege. According to Albert, Bohemond justified this oath breaking and attack upon the Byzantines because "...the citizens of Latakia were false Christians, and always opposed to the Christian brothers..."¹⁵⁰ This is one of the first instances among western crusader sources labelling the Byzantines "false Christians" or "heretics." This idea, however, would become far more common and prominent in subsequent crusades, no doubt due to Bohemond's propaganda and calls for an anti-Byzantine crusade in the early 12th century.

Albert does discuss this attempted "crusade" against the Byzantines. Between 1104 and 1108, Prince Bohemond canvassed France and Italy, recruiting troops, raising money, and spreading slanderous accounts of the treachery of Alexios, the heresy of the Byzantines, and the need for a crusade against these traitors to the faith and the crusade. Gaining the support of the pope, Bohemond invaded the Byzantine Balkans in late 1107, laying siege to Dyrrachium.¹⁵¹ Though he was decisively defeated and forced to submit to Byzantine authority, he died shortly afterwards, and the Principality of Antioch would remain an independent thorn in the side of the Byzantine Empire until Emperors John and Manuel Komnenos would subjugate the principality in the mid-12th century. This event does, however, demonstrate that Bohemond's propaganda and anti-Byzantine sentiments were strong enough to lead to such an expedition. However, its subsequent military failures, such as the lack of zealous recruits joining this expedition equal to the amount of those who joined the First Crusade, demonstrates that not everyone in Europe bought Bohemond's propaganda.

SECOND CRUSADE SOURCES

¹⁵⁰ *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 481

¹⁵¹ Modern Durrës, Albania.

The Second Crusade, which lasted from 1147-1150, is by far the most obscure of the first four numbered crusades in both historiographical and historical perspectives. This is primarily due to a dearth of primary sources: among western sources, only that of Odo of Deuil focuses on the expedition to the Middle East, and John Kinnamos is the only Byzantine historian to write an extensive account of the Byzantine perspective during the crusade. Called by Pope Eugene III in 1145 in response to Zengi's capture of the County of Edessa, one of the crusader states established after the First Crusade, King Conrad III of Germany (r.1127/1138-1152) and King Louis VII of France (r.1137-1180) committed to a crusade to restore the lost state.¹⁵² Both the French and German armies separately marched through Byzantine territory in direct emulation of the armies of the First Crusade, and both armies were under the direct control of each king. The lack of western sources can perhaps be explained by the fact that the crusade was, at least in the east, an abject failure.¹⁵³ The County of Edessa was not reestablished, the German army was decisively defeated in battle by the Seljuk Turks, and the remnants of the French army barely managed to arrive in Jerusalem, symbolically completing a pilgrimage, but achieving no territorial gains for the crusader states. The reigning Byzantine ruler, Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, grandson of Alexios I Komnenos, emulated his father's actions and measures taken to protect the empire from potential western threats. The Second Crusade is of particular importance in Byzantine-crusader relations, as tensions between the two sides rose to new heights, even breaking into open conflict between German and Byzantine troops in Thrace. Although relations between the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos and King Louis VII of France were better, the primary western source, the *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem* of Odo of Deuil, is by far the most anti-Byzantine western source written throughout the crusading

¹⁵² Spencer, Stephen. "Feelings of Betrayal and Echoes of the First Crusade in Odo of Deuil's *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*," 657.

¹⁵³ Odo of Deuil. *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, transl. by Virginia Gingerick Berry, 1948. Introduction, xiv.

period. Meanwhile, the main Byzantine source, John Kinnamos' *Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*, glories in Emperor Manuel's outwitting and "defeat" of the crusaders.

Odo of Deuil

Odo of Deuil was, without doubt, the most anti-Byzantine crusade writer. Odo was Louis VII's personal chaplain who accompanied him on the crusade, and as such was an eyewitness to key events and high-level decision making. According to the translator of his work Virginia Gingerick Berry, Odo wrote in 1148 while the French army rested in Antioch. With the repeated defeats of the crusader armies fresh in his mind, Odo wished to warn future crusaders of the treachery of the Greeks and call for revenge against the Byzantines and the emperor, who, in Odo's mind, prevented the success of the crusade.¹⁵⁴ Odo's virulent anti-Byzantine sentiments are a constant throughout the narrative, and it remained his singular purpose in writing to depict the Byzantines as treacherous, evil, and anti-Christian as possible.

Odo made the purpose for writing quite clear throughout the *De Profectione*. He states that the advice within the work is meant to guide and advise future pilgrims and crusaders, hoping that they "...will be more cautious because of our experiences."¹⁵⁵ Odo does not focus solely on denouncing the Byzantines. He also provides crucial details regarding geography, roads, and the best routes. However, regarding the Byzantines, Odo writes that, "...[we] will always have something to bewail if the sons of these men do not avenge their parents' deaths. To us who suffered the Greeks' evil deeds, however, divine justice, and the fact that our people are not accustomed to endure shameful injury for long, give hope of vengeance...we shall follow the

¹⁵⁴ Spencer, Stephen. "Feelings of Betrayal and Echoes of the First Crusade in Odo of Deuil's *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*." 657

¹⁵⁵ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 31

course of our misfortunes so that posterity may know about the Greeks' treacherous actions."¹⁵⁶ This is perhaps the most blatant call for violence against the Byzantines by any crusade author. Odo explicitly states that the wrongs he attributes to the deception of the Byzantines must be avenged, and that he is writing this work in order to record these wrongs for future generations of Frenchmen. Odo meant for future generations to read his account widely and to spread anti-Byzantine sentiment throughout France.

When King Louis VII, after sending ambassadors ahead to Emperor Manuel, received messages from the emperor, Odo claims that the Byzantines engaged in excessive flattery and made spurious promises which they failed to fulfil.¹⁵⁷ This accusation becomes a trend in Odo's work, as he constantly accuses Byzantine ambassadors of flattery, excessive praise, and circumlocution. He even claims that the French King and his bishops had to intervene during the Byzantine ambassadors' introductions, to tell them to get to the point.¹⁵⁸ Titles were a crucial aspect of Byzantine government, hierarchy, and diplomacy, and it was not unexpected for Byzantine ambassadors to engage in, what western elites might perceive as, excessive flattery.

In his discussion of Byzantine deceit, Odo confirms that Normans spread anti-Byzantine rumors, and Odo crucially indicates that he wholeheartedly agreed with them rather than dismiss them as propaganda. Odo wrote, "There were men in the assembly who said that the Greeks, as they had learned either by reading or by experience, were deceitful. Would that the King and his men...had entertained some fear of deceitful wiles! But because mortal wisdom and prudence do not exist against God, they who were destined to die chose the route through Greece."¹⁵⁹ These men, Odo confirms shortly afterwards, were Italo-Normans from the Kingdom of Sicily. This

¹⁵⁶ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 99

¹⁵⁷ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 11

¹⁵⁸ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 11, 27

¹⁵⁹ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 15

proves that the Norman propaganda machine was still working in earnest, despite the death of Bohemond decades prior. This warning certainly made an impression upon Odo, as he chose to include it in the narrative, exclaiming that King Louis should have heeded their words.

Just like the during the First Crusade, Emperor Manuel wished for the crusaders to swear an oath not to harm Byzantine lands and restore any lands retaken to their rule. After long negotiations, the French delegation "...swore to the security of the Greek realm on behalf of the king, and by a similar oath on behalf of their emperor the Greeks confirmed the promise of a sufficient market, suitable exchange, and other privileges..."¹⁶⁰ This agreement demonstrates that both the Byzantines and crusaders had learned from their previous interactions, and the Byzantines sought to provide enough supplies to maintain discipline and prevent looting among the crusader armies. However, Odo notes that the German army, which they marched in the wake of, were "...plundering everything," burning towns, and "...were unbearable even to us."¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, there is less information regarding the German expedition than the French, but these actions demonstrate that whatever accommodations the Byzantines attempted to provide for the Germans failed, resulting in widespread destruction.

The French expedition resulted in far less destruction in Byzantine lands, at least at first. However, Odo argues that Manuel committed perjury by setting up unsuitable markets, claiming that the Byzantine coinage was worth less than other countries.¹⁶² He also notes that the terrified Byzantines refused to admit the crusader troops into their towns, instead lowering supplies down from the walls. They could not transfer sufficient amounts of supplies in this way, so the French

¹⁶⁰ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 29

¹⁶¹ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 43

¹⁶² *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 33. Byzantine coinage during this period was becoming highly debased, a problem that had plagued the Roman Empire for centuries and would cause even more conflict during the 13th and 14th centuries in Byzantium, especially with interactions with the Catalan Company.

troops "...procured supplies for themselves by plunder and pillage."¹⁶³ Luckily, this looting did not result in an outbreak of full-scale conflict between the French and Byzantines, and the French army and King Louis VII made it to Constantinople.

Here, however, the French learned of diplomatic developments that greatly undermined Franco-Byzantine relations. Odo writes that Emperor Manuel negotiated a twelve-year truce with the Seljuk Turks, labeling this a "crime" and stating that "...his treachery was increased and made manifest."¹⁶⁴ At this point, the Turks had inhabited Anatolia for close to one hundred years, and the Byzantine Empire frequently negotiated truces with them. Furthermore, the Byzantines conducted diplomacy with all peoples, including their eastern neighbors, out of sheer necessity. Regarding this truce specifically, Manuel almost certainly concluded peace in order to deal with the crusaders marching through his territory. An absent emperor or imperial army would leave the countryside and cities vulnerable to raids or attacks by the crusaders. Based on the Byzantines' understanding of the First Crusade, there every reason to believe that Manuel viewed the crusaders rightfully as a threat to the Empire and freed up his diplomatic and military resources as necessary.

Odo, however, had only just begun his scathing criticisms of Byzantine practices. When he learned of Greek religious practices, he wrote, "Perhaps this condition would have been bearable...if blasphemy had not been added. For instance, if our priests celebrated mass on Greek altars, the Greeks afterwards purified them...as if they had been defiled...we heard of an ill usage of theirs which should be expiated by death; namely that if...one of our men...has been baptized in the Roman way, they rebaptize him...we know other heresies of theirs...it was for these reasons that the Greeks had incurred the hatred of our men, for their error had become

¹⁶³ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 41

¹⁶⁴ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 55

known even among the lay people. Because of this, they were judged not to be Christians, and the Franks considered killing them a matter of no importance...”¹⁶⁵ The language in this passage is stunningly blunt. Odo believed that the Byzantines religious practices were blasphemous and heretical and claims that even the common soldiers in the army learned of their religious practices and hated them. Therefore, he stated that they viewed the Byzantines as no longer Christians, thus equating them with the enemies of the crusades such as the Turks and Arabs. Because they were no longer Christians, the crusaders could slay them as legitimate enemies in war. This is the most blatant example of dehumanization in any of the crusade texts.¹⁶⁶

Odo also supported the conquest of Constantinople and seizing it for the crusaders. According to Odo, “...the Bishop of Langres, however, urged us to take the city. He proved that the walls...were weak, that the people were inert, and that by cutting the conduits the fresh water supply could be withdrawn...[and] that if that city were taken it would not be necessary to conquer the others, since they would yield obedience voluntarily...[and] that Constantinople is Christian only in name...[since] her emperor had ventured a few years previously to attack the Prince of Antioch...and [replaced Catholic bishops] with heretics...”¹⁶⁷ The ideas presented in this argument are eerily similar to the events of the Fourth Crusade. The idea that taking Constantinople would force the rest of the Byzantine Empire to yield was replicated by the crusaders in 1204, who were later shocked that they had to venture out and conquer the rest of the empire from local magnates who had broken away and formed independent realms instead of submitting to the rule of crusader kings. As will be seen below, authors writing about the Fourth

¹⁶⁵ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 57

¹⁶⁶ No other author presents the Byzantines as heretics so evil that they must be slain. The author of the *Historia de Expeditione*, Robert de Clari, and Villehardouin all note the heresy of the Byzantines, but do not state that this alone provides justification for their mass slaying.

¹⁶⁷ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 71

Crusade replicate the idea that Constantinople was Christian in name only, who praise the wealth and relics of the city while condemning its inhabitants, their culture, and their society. Odo himself later states in his text that “Constantinople is arrogant in her wealth, treacherous in her practices, corrupt in her faith...”¹⁶⁸ This was an important justification for attacking or preparing an attack upon a city renowned in the Christian world as a holy city of wonders, full of monumental churches and holy relics. It is also interesting that Odo would justify such an attack by reminding readers that Manuel had subjugated the Principality of Antioch and forced the acceptance of an Orthodox patriarch in the city, replacing the Catholic one. This is a further entrenchment of the idea that the Byzantines were heretics hostile to the Catholic faith, an idea that is not present in previous crusades except in language promulgated by the Normans.

The ultimate insult to the Byzantines contained in *De Profectione* is Odo’s label of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos as “the idol.” This label implies that the Byzantines, who had great reverence for their emperors, especially those as successful as Manuel, were idolaters. Idolatry was a great crime in Abrahamic faiths, in direct contradiction to the Ten Commandments. The implication that the Byzantines were idolaters was to further reinforce the idea that they were not Christians, but enemies of the faith equal to the Muslims.¹⁶⁹

One further comment worth elaborating upon is Odo’s chastising of the Byzantines for allowing Anatolian cities to fall into ruins. He commented, “...the lazy [Greeks] would have lost all [to the Turks] if they had not defended themselves by importing knights from various nations...Nevertheless, they always lose...Nicomedia shows us this...her lofty ruins testify to

¹⁶⁸ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 87

¹⁶⁹ The crusaders often identified the Muslims as idolaters, violating the First Commandment of God. Hamilton, Bernard. “Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam at the Time of the Crusades.” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 7, No. 3 Nov. 1997, pp. 374.

her former glory and her present masters' inactivity."¹⁷⁰ This idea is very similar to that propagated by some First Crusade writers, such as Ralph of Caen, who argued that the Byzantines were not strong or manly enough to defend such glorious cities, but that only the Franks were capable of such feats.¹⁷¹ Odo presented the Byzantines as men who "...degenerated entirely into women; putting aside all manly vigor..."¹⁷² were simply not strong enough to defend Anatolia or the Holy Land; that was a "man's job," unfit for the womanly Greeks, but a job the Franks were manly enough to carry out.

Therefore, Odo of Deuil presents the most blatant anti-Byzantine sentiment of all the crusade writers considered thus far. He accused the Byzantines of idolatry, lambasted their religion, accused them of heresy, called for the conquest of Constantinople, and blamed them entirely for the failure of the Second Crusade. Although there is no evidence that *De Profectione* became a widely read text, the fact that Odo wrote such a scathing account proves that anti-Byzantine sentiments existed among French elites in the 12th century.

It might be easy for a modern historian to dismiss Odo of Deuil as a hysterical, xenophobic writer who deserves to be observed in isolation. However, historian Stephen Spencer argues that "...Odo's vilification of the Byzantines should be reinstated as a primary...literary objective...An examination of the emotional rhetoric of *De Profectione* reveals that Odo's defamation of the Greeks was both deeper and more consistent than recent analyses have

¹⁷⁰ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 89

¹⁷¹ Mentioned by Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi* 41

¹⁷² *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 59

allowed.”¹⁷³ Therefore, modern scholarship has engaged in deeper rhetorical analysis of this text, and modern historians should not dismiss Odo outright.

John Kinnamos

John Kinnamos was a Byzantine soldier and bureaucrat during the reigns of Manuel I Komnenos (r.1143-1180), Alexios II (r.1180-1183), and Andronikos I (r.1183-1185). His text, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*, was likely written in 1182, during the reign of Manuel’s son Alexios II, according to Charles Brand.¹⁷⁴ Brand also claims that Kinnamos did not have access to the imperial archives during the composition of this work, as he fell out of favor of the new imperial court due to his anti-Latin sentiments.¹⁷⁵ An unfinished and unrevised work, the narrative ends abruptly before the disastrous Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176. In this text, Kinnamos sought to praise John II and his successor Manuel I as much as possible, and to discredit their enemies. As their enemies were frequently crusaders, crusader states, or westerners, *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos* provides an interesting viewpoint regarding Byzantine views of westerners, and the only near contemporary Byzantine perspective on the Second Crusade.

One of the main points of contention between the Byzantines and the crusaders was the seizure of formerly Byzantine lands during the First Crusade. Kinnamos articulates this directly in a speech allegedly made by Emperor Manuel I responding to Antiochene ambassadors, writing that “...if someone has robbed something from the other, then it would be just that it be returned...so why did you not earlier yield Antioch to the Romans, but by force and violence

¹⁷³ Spencer, Stephen. “Feelings of Betrayal and Echoes of the First Crusade in Odo of Deuil’s *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*.” 679

¹⁷⁴ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. Introduction, 4.

¹⁷⁵ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. Introduction, 5

steal it from my father?¹⁷⁶ Did the Turks not first take it when it belonged to us? ...It first belonged to our state. If you are not ashamed to transgress your own agreements, why do you come charging us with slighting your rights, while we should justly demand correction from you?”¹⁷⁷ Note the language employed by Kinnamos. He equates the establishment of the Principality of Antioch to robbery, stolen by force from its rightful owner, the Byzantine Empire. Further, he accuses crusaders of breaking their own agreements and treaty with the Empire, particularly the oath they swore in Constantinople prior to fighting the Turks in the First Crusade.

Regarding the Second Crusade, Kinnamos writes that Manuel abandoned the siege of Ikonion and made peace with the Seljuk Turks because, “...there increased daily a rumor which warned that the nations to the west, rebelling by ancestral custom, would invade the Romans’ land in full force.”¹⁷⁸ Kinnamos frames the rumors of the new crusade as an “invasion,” just as Anna Komnene did when describing rumors of the First Crusade. Therefore, it is clear both from Manuel’s actions and from Kinnamos’ account that the Byzantines viewed the new crusade as a direct threat to imperial sovereignty. He continues, stating that, “The Normans and French and the nation of Gauls, and whoever lived around old Rome, and British and Bretons and simply the whole western array had been set in motion, on the handy excuse that they were going to...fight the Turks en route and recover the church in Palestine and seek the holy places, but truly to gain possession of the Romans’ land by assault and trample down everything in front of them.”¹⁷⁹ Again, like Anna, Kinnamos argued that the true goal of the crusades was to attack the Byzantine Empire and steal their land. Viewed through this lens, the ability of Manuel to deflect the

¹⁷⁶ Emperor John II.

¹⁷⁷ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 33

¹⁷⁸ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 43

¹⁷⁹ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 58

invaders from Byzantine lands was a great accomplishment. Kinnamos also employs language which would no doubt bring to a reader's mind the barbarian invasions of old, with hordes of peoples in motion, setting out to steal Byzantine land. As Kinnamos presented the crusaders and all westerners as barbarians, it makes sense that they would act barbarically in this way. He even compared this "invasion" to that of the Persian king Xerxes in the 5th century BCE, equating the crusaders to one of the greatest threats to the existence of Greece in its history.¹⁸⁰ It is worth noting, however, that Odo wrote this text forty years after the events of the Second Crusade, and was likely working with faulty sources.

Regarding the Byzantine demand for the Germans and French to swear an oath similar to that the crusade leaders swore to Alexios I in the First Crusade, Kinnamos claims that Manuel only wished to verify that the crusaders had no intent on harming Byzantine lands, and that if they were being genuine, that swearing the oath would prove their innocence and good intentions. When they swore the oath, but then later began raiding, he wrote that this was a manifestation of "...their evil intent."¹⁸¹ The French and German armies raiding Byzantine lands was not forgotten by the Byzantines, and Kinnamos used this as proof of their hostile intents regarding the empire.

For Kinnamos, King Conrad III of Germany takes the place of Bohemond in Anna's narrative of the First Crusade. Kinnamos claims that "...a certain barbaric heedlessness drove him. For in prosperity the barbarian is likely to be exalted and boast beyond measure, but in disaster he is downcast..."¹⁸² Conrad is depicted as a raging, dumb barbarian who stood no match against the might of the Roman Empire. As a "barbarian," he possessed the traits the

¹⁸⁰ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 60

¹⁸¹ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 61

¹⁸² *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 67

Byzantines assigned to barbarians, namely rage, stupidity, and hostility towards the Empire.

Kinnamos compares the whole German army to brutes who were "...cowardly and ignoble and incapable of either doing or planning anything."¹⁸³

Strangely, a far contrast from Odo of Deuil's account, Kinnamos claims that the French army was largely well behaved, that Manuel and Louis VII maintained a good relationship, and that they crossed into Asia after pledging friendship and alliance to Manuel.¹⁸⁴ He omits the many strains in the relations between the French and Byzantines, perhaps as a literary device to contrast the more "civilized" Louis VII to the raging barbarian Conrad.

Finally, Kinnamos claims that the Antiochenes were "naturally oath breakers..."¹⁸⁵ for breaking free from subjugation under the Byzantine Empire. As demonstrated by the *Alexiad*, one of the key components in the Byzantine idea of the Latin barbarian was oath breaking and deception; that they were naturally disposed to do so, because of their status as a barbarian. This belief was reinforced by the fact that the rulers of Antioch refused to accept Byzantine suzerainty except when compelled by force.

THIRD CRUSADE SOURCES

The Third Crusade, sometimes known as the Kings' Crusade, began in 1189 with the goal of recapturing Jerusalem, which Saladin, the Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt and Syria, conquered in 1187. This crusade is one of the most well-known, as it featured famous figures such as King Richard "the Lionheart" I of England (r.1189-1199), Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (r.1155-1190), and King Philip II "Augustus" of France (r.1190-1223), all of whom joined the expedition in person. While the French and English contingents reached the Holy Land by sea,

¹⁸³ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 68

¹⁸⁴ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 69

¹⁸⁵ *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 179

the army of Frederick Barbarossa marched overland as the armies of the First and Second Crusades had done. This march brought the Germans into conflict with the Byzantine Empire, which, under the incompetent rule of Isaac II Angelos (r.1185-1195), attempted to halt the progress of the German army. At this point, the Byzantine Empire had suffered military defeats in the west and the east, losing control of large portions of the Balkans, including Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Bulgaria to rebellions. Unlike the Empire under Manuel I, the Byzantine Empire under Isaac II was in no position to defeat Frederick's armies. This power imbalance resulted in the first instance where the Byzantine Empire caved to crusader demands,

Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris and the Itinerarium Peregrinorum

The *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, or the *History of the Expedition of Emperor Frederick*, is an anonymously written chronicle detailing the Third Crusade from the German perspective. According to its translator G.A. Loud, the *Historia de Expeditione* was completed no later than 1200 CE, and likely beforehand, closer to the events of the Third Crusade. There is debate regarding the authorship of the text, as historians have noted that substantial portions of it directly correspond to other sources, and thus this *Historia* may be a compilation of sources rather than authored by a single writer.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that a large portion of the text was written by an eyewitness to the crusade.¹⁸⁷ Like most crusade writers before, the author employed a variety of anti-Byzantine stereotypes and language in discussing the actions of Emperor Isaac and the Byzantines.

When Emperor Frederick marched into the Balkans in 1189, the author wrote that, "...the Emperor of Constantinople informed [Frederick] that since he had his suspicions, which derived

¹⁸⁶ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, Introduction, 18

¹⁸⁷ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, Introduction, 18

from the general opinion of his people, that the expedition to Jerusalem would [in fact] be a hostile invasion of his kingdom...then if he was not given satisfactory assurances concerning this suspicion he would not allow us entry ...and would resist us in every possible way. [Frederick] absolved himself and all his men from this suspicion through an oath... [the Byzantines promised] escort on a good road, the best possible market preparations and free passage across the sea would be provided. But their tongues were deceitful and ‘the poison of the snake was on their lips,’ since none of the things that they had sworn was afterwards fulfilled.”¹⁸⁸ The author claims that it was the general opinion of the Byzantine people, not just the emperors or elites, that the crusade was a hostile invasion of the Empire. He further writes that the Byzantines made promises to provide fair markets and free passage but compares their deceit to that of evil men possessed by the devil.

The author also claims that the local rulers in Bulgaria were ordered by Emperor Isaac to ambush crusader forces, writing that, “...he showed the emperor and the whole army that he was deceitful and most wicked, just like the other Greeks.”¹⁸⁹ Notably, the author does not merely mention that this local ruler was untrustworthy, but that all other Greeks were too, making a blanket, generalized statement. The writer emphasizes the deceit of the Byzantines, with Isaac’s letter to Frederick claiming to not have received advanced warning also labelled as a “trick.”¹⁹⁰ The author sought to contrast the deceit and sinfulness of the Byzantines, especially Emperor Isaac, with the holy virtue of Emperor Frederick.

Continuing this trend, when the Serbs and Bulgarians wished to ally with Frederick against the Byzantines, the author claims that Frederick denied them, saying that he did not wish

¹⁸⁸ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 49

¹⁸⁹ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 53

¹⁹⁰ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 54

to fight fellow Christians while on crusade, except “He and his men would, however, take up arms to force their way through, sword in hand, against false Christians who ambushed the pilgrims of Christ, just as though they were pagans.”¹⁹¹ This passage implies that the Byzantines, who did attempt to hinder their progress, were “false Christians” and were equivalent to pagans. This was a telling insult to the Byzantines, placing them at the level of the Muslims in the western Catholic view, as enemies of the crusade and therefore legitimate targets.

The author does not entirely omit crimes committed by the crusaders marching through Byzantine territory. For example, he writes that “...the servants and boys of the army were using the excuse of gathering fodder to plunder the district and were gradually becoming more unruly and breaking the holy laws that should have been observed to preserve the peace in the land of the Greeks.”¹⁹² However, this incident was not narratively used to generate sympathy with the Byzantines, but rather to demonstrate the virtue of Frederick, who put a stop to the looting.

When the Germans reached the city of Sofia, the Germans “...found [it] empty and lacking through poverty in all human comfort, and it was then that the perjury and open deceit of the Greek emperor and his men began to become clear.”¹⁹³ This is one of the few examples when the crusaders accusing the Byzantines of outright treachery were correct. Isaac did, indeed, order the governor to abandon Sofia and for a Byzantine army to guard the road and prevent the passage of the German army, as Niketas Choniates corroborates, the then governor of Philippopolis, who Isaac similarly ordered to abandon his city in the face of the crusader threat. This was, as Jonathan Harris argues, a grave foreign policy miscalculation.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 55

¹⁹² *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 56

¹⁹³ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 58

¹⁹⁴ Harris, Jonathan. *Byzantium and the Crusades*. 133

One of the more contentious accusations made by the crusaders, as recorded by the anonymous author of the *Historia De Expugnatione*, was that the Byzantine Empire concluded an alliance with the Ayyubid Sultanate, whose ruler was the famous Saladin. Harris argues that this was almost certainly untrue, but rather a misunderstanding of typical Byzantine diplomatic negotiations, and that the Byzantines were actually seeking to gain the title of Protector of the Holy Sepulcher from Saladin.¹⁹⁵ The subtleties of Byzantine diplomacy with Muslim states were lost upon the crusaders, who believed that the Byzantines opposed them because "... [Emperor Isaac] wanted to gain the favor of his friend and confederate the Saracen Saladin, the enemy of the Cross and of all Christians."¹⁹⁶ Naturally, by framing Isaac and the Byzantines as allies of Saladin, the author firmly placed them into the enemy camp, as opposed to merely an annoyed neutral third party.

Claiming to have a preserved letter from Frederick to his son and heir Henry VI (r.1191-1197), the author of the *De Expeditione* writes that Frederick said, "Since, therefore, our crossing of the Arm of St George will be impossible until we obtain hostages from the Emperor of Constantinople, [who must be] without exception men of great distinction and importance, and we make the whole of Romania subject to our empire, we urgently request your prudent and noble royal person to send suitable envoys from your serene majesty to Genoa, Venice, Ancona, Pisa and other places to obtain a squadron of galleys and other vessels, to meet us at Constantinople around the middle of March, so that they may attack the city by sea while we do so by land."¹⁹⁷ This is a direct admission that Frederick and the German army was planning to attack Constantinople, by land and sea, with the full might of the armies and navies of the Holy

¹⁹⁵ Harris, Jonathan. *Byzantium and the Crusades*. 131

¹⁹⁶ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 59

¹⁹⁷ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 60

Roman Empire, and that they sought to make the entire territory of the Byzantine Empire subject to their empire.

Regarding the title of Roman Emperor, the author claims that, when Isaac used the customary Byzantine title “Emperor of the Romans” and referred to Frederick merely as King, “...in his customary fashion this same little Greek¹⁹⁸ mendaciously called himself the Emperor of the Romans, while he referred to our most serene and august lord not as Emperor of the Romans but only as ‘King of the Germans’. Once this letter had been read and translated, the lord emperor, filled with Divine grace, was unwilling any longer to suffer in silence the rash pride of this foolish king and the borrowed title of the false emperor... [he said] I am, therefore, amazed that my brother, your Emperor of Constantinople, usurps for himself an inappropriate and unwarranted title and glories in an honor that does not belong to him and is utterly foolish, when he should clearly know that I, Frederick, am in name, word and reality Emperor of the Romans and always Augustus.”¹⁹⁹ The dispute over the titulature of “Roman Emperor” was nothing new. In the 10th century, Liuprand of Cremona, an ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire, visited the Byzantine court and engaged in a heated verbal dispute with Emperor Nikephoros II Phokas over who was the “true” Roman Emperor.²⁰⁰ In the dispute between Isaac and Frederick, the Byzantines acknowledged Frederick with the neutral title “Emperor of ancient Rome and King of the Germans.”²⁰¹

Finally, after Frederick rejected Byzantine diplomatic overtures as insincere, the two sides finally reached a peace agreement after the Germans had widely raided the Byzantine countryside and taken many towns and cities. The terms of this treaty were extensive, but from

¹⁹⁸ Emperor Isaac. *Graeculus* is typically used contemptuously, not affectionately.

¹⁹⁹ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 64

²⁰⁰ Squatriti, Paolo. *The Complete Works of Liuprand of Cremona (Medieval Texts in Translation)*, 240-246

²⁰¹ *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 65

the crusaders' perspective the most important stipulation was that it confirmed that Isaac would provide Frederick and the crusaders with a fair market, enough transport ships to cross into Asia, a stable agreed currency exchange rate, and reparations for blocking their path.²⁰² These terms did not result in any Byzantine territorial losses, but did result in significant financial hardship. Frederick's son, Henry VI, would make similar financial demands upon the Byzantine Empire, though in a more threatening manner, claiming he would invade the Empire if he was not paid an absurd amount of gold.²⁰³

The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum* is another anonymous Third Crusade narrative text about which very little is known, including the date of composition and the authorship.²⁰⁴ The author primarily focuses on the perspective of the forces of King Richard I of England and their campaigns in Palestine, and therefore contains few references to the Byzantines.²⁰⁵ The text does, however, contain an important passage regarding crusader-Byzantine interactions and the Byzantines' supposed character. When discussing the passage of the German army through Byzantine territory, the author writes, "...the Greeks know that they themselves are completely ignorant and unwarlike...Perfidious people, wicked and altogether degenerate...their decline is the more extraordinary because they used to be so illustrious..."²⁰⁶ This demonstrates that the author of the *Itinerarium* too utilized hostile stereotypes regarding the Byzantines, including familiar narratives of degeneracy, cowardice, and effeminacy.

Niketas Choniates

²⁰² *Historia de Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, 72-74

²⁰³ Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 148

²⁰⁴ Nicholson, Helen. *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1997. p6.

²⁰⁵ The forces of Richard I of England sailed to the Holy Land, avoiding the overland route across Byzantine territory.

²⁰⁶ Nicholson, Helen. *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade*. p57.

Niketas Choniates, a Byzantine imperial bureaucrat, governor, and author, wrote the *Historia*, a history of the reigns of Emperors John II, Manuel I, Alexios II, Andronikos I, Isaac II, and Alexios III and Alexios IV, covering a period from 1118 to 1204. His account of the Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople, to which he was an eyewitness, is the most famous aspect of his account, but he also touches upon the Third Crusade. During this crusade, Niketas was the governor of Philippopolis, an important city in Byzantine Thrace. He wrote the *Historia* after the Fourth Crusade, and therefore looked back in recent history bitterly seeking an understanding as to why the Byzantine Empire fell.

Like all the other Byzantine historians considered thus far, Niketas refers to the beginning of the Third Crusade as rumors of barbarian movements, which he labels as evil.²⁰⁷ He attributes the outbreak of hostilities to the failure of Byzantine government officials to gather enough supplies to satisfy the huge German army, and Isaac's foolish decision to imprison Frederick's envoys. Niketas also claims that he himself received contradictory orders from Emperor Isaac, first to rebuild Philippopolis' defenses, and then to tear them down and abandon the city.²⁰⁸

Unlike many historians of the period, Niketas does not aggrandize himself or the emperor under whom he served, Isaac II (r.1185-1195). Rather, he freely admits that Isaac's orders were confused and ineffective, and that Frederick, whom he describes as a barbarian, was a virtuous barbarian who upheld the terms of the agreements he made with Isaac, while the Byzantine Emperor frequently broke them.²⁰⁹ Further, he admits that he personally fled from the crusader army into Byzantine held northern Greece, and that he and his men were forced to loot from his

²⁰⁷ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 221

²⁰⁸ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 221

²⁰⁹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 222

own province.²¹⁰ Therefore, it seems unlikely that Niketas was heavily biased and told lies to aggrandize the Byzantines or himself.

That does not mean, however, that Niketas refrained from slandering the “barbarians.” He compared the German practice of men of unequal rank sitting together to hogs in a sty all mixing together, writing “...just as the swineherds herd all the hogs into a sty without separating the fat ones and allow them to mingle about, in like manner all the [Germans] stood together.”²¹¹ Certainly, comparing the Germans to pigs was a grave insult and illustrates what he truly thought of them. However, at this point in the narrative, Niketas says comparatively little about the characteristics of the western barbarians, but at the same time he praises the character of Frederick.

Niketas wrote of Frederick that, “He was a man who deserved to enjoy a blessed and perpetual memory...because his burning passion for Christ was greater than that of any other Christian monarch of his time...thus the man’s zeal was apostolic, his purpose dear to God, and his achievements beyond perfection.”²¹² He also emphasized Frederick’s adherence to the oaths and treaties negotiated between the Germans and Byzantines. This is a rare example of a Byzantine historian praising a western ruler for his piety and faithfulness during the period of the crusades.

FOURTH CRUSADE SOURCES

The Fourth Crusade²¹³ is unusual in that it has so many primary sources, particularly written narrative histories, only comparing to those of the First Crusade in sheer number.²¹⁴ Each

²¹⁰ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 225

²¹¹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 226

²¹² Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 229

²¹³ For background information on the Fourth Crusade, read section “Background” before chapter one.

of the sources provides a unique perspective of the crusade and has different opinions regarding its outcome. Geoffrey of Villehardouin, one of the crusade's leaders, wrote the *De La Conquête de Constantinople*, in which he blames those who deserted the army and failed to appear for the crusade for its results. The main source for the "rank and file" perspective comes from Robert de Clari and the *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*. Robert de Clari, whom Angold argues has not received enough scholarly attention, provides an important and unique perspective from the more common soldier.²¹⁵ Robert de Clari argues that the crusade leadership was to blame for the diversion of the crusade, as they sought an excuse to plunder rich lands to fill their coffers.²¹⁶ He provides interesting insight on the perspective of the common soldiers, as he writes that they were not told of the diversions to Zara and Constantinople until they were already sailing. The *Devastatio*, written by an anonymous author who participated in the crusade, blames the Venetians for the Sack of Constantinople.²¹⁷ The primary source of the Byzantine perspective, Niketas, is controversial, as some historians like Angold accuse him of spouting Byzantine propaganda, while others like Queller accept his firsthand account of the horrors of the Sack of Constantinople at face value.

Geoffrey de Villehardouin

Geoffrey de Villehardouin wrote in the *De La Conquête de Constantinople*, according to the translator of his work Margaret Shaw, an "official history" of the crusade.²¹⁸ As marshal of

²¹⁴ Ibid, 1

²¹⁵ Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 12

²¹⁶ Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 13

²¹⁷ Angold *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*, 18

²¹⁸ Geoffrey Villehardouin, transl. by Shaw, Margaret. *Chronicles of the Crusades*. London UK: Penguin Books, 1973. p11.

the county of Champagne, Villehardouin was a member of the crusade leadership, involved in (though not solely responsible for) high-level decision making. Villehardouin has enjoyed the most scholarly attention, with historians often preferring his account over Clari's due to Villehardouin's position as a decision-maker.²¹⁹ Though his account is mostly factually accurate, Villehardouin, like nearly all crusade writers, held beliefs distorted by stereotypes regarding the Byzantines, as will be seen in this section. In the early sections of the narrative, Villehardouin largely refrained from generalizing or hostile comments regarding the Byzantines, but when conflict began between the two sides, so too did the author's expressions of hostility utilizing familiar hostile language.

After installing Alexios IV, Villehardouin claims that the new ruler confided to the crusaders that "The Greeks...hate me because of you; if you leave me, I shall lose my empire, and they will put me to death."²²⁰ In this passage, Villehardouin framed the Greeks as the treacherous villains in a manner similar to earlier crusade narratives. The noble young prince who was now their ruler feared their treachery and attributed their hatred directly to the fact that an army of western crusaders installed him. It should not be surprising that the population of Constantinople that had massacred the western European population of the city twenty-two years ago would not be thrilled at the prospect of an emperor propped up by a crusader army.²²¹ Therefore, even though Geoffrey did not directly employ hostile language, he still presented the Byzantines in a traditionally stereotypical manner.

²¹⁹ Bull, Marcus. "Geoffrey of Villehardouin's and Robert of Clari's Narratives of the Fourth Crusade." In *Eyewitness and Crusade Narrative: Perception and Narration in Accounts of the Second, Third and Fourth Crusades, NED-New edition*. Boydell & Brewer, 2018. p260.

²²⁰ *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 77

²²¹ The Massacre of the Latins has not received nearly enough scholarly attention. There are no dedicated English-language articles on the matter. The massacre is briefly mentioned in Niketas' *Historia* on p140. Niketas blames the cruel Emperor Andronikos Komnenos for this action, as he encouraged the people of Constantinople to overthrow the Latin-dominated regency for Emperor Alexios II.

When the crusaders became unsatisfied with the payments sent by Alexios IV, Villehardouin wrote that, "...they had now come to realize that the emperor did not intend to honor any agreement he had made with them, and that he never told them the truth."²²² Again, although not employing directly hostile language yet, Villehardouin portrays Emperor Alexios IV in a similar manner to how First Crusade authors presented Alexios I: as a deceitful, untrustworthy ruler who refused to fulfill his obligations and who was hostile to the crusaders. Importantly, according to Villehardouin, the co-emperor Isaac II directly told the crusaders upon their first capture of the city that the terms of the agreement were unrealistic, yet the crusaders either did not believe him or ignored him.²²³ Instead of stating that Alexios, ruler of the city of Constantinople and its immediate surroundings, was unable to fulfill such extravagant terms, Villehardouin presents Alexios as a liar who was deliberately withholding payment.

When Alexios V, a high-ranking official within the Byzantine bureaucracy, overthrew and assassinated Alexios IV, Villehardouin wrote, "Have you ever heard of any people guilty of such an atrocious treachery!"²²⁴ To be fair to Villehardouin, the coup against Alexios IV was particularly brutal, involving the strangulation of the young emperor and such events were not exactly commonplace in the nations of the west. However, palace coups and popular revolts were a time-honored Byzantine tradition.²²⁵ Some of the most successful and famous Byzantine emperors, such as Basil I, came to power through the violent, personal murder of their predecessors. However, Geoffrey mentions this incident as a part of his building evidence for the treachery of the Greeks.

²²² *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 81

²²³ *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 75

²²⁴ *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 84

²²⁵ The most comprehensive and recent investigation into the role of the populace in Byzantium's many civil wars and revolts is Anthony Kaldellis' *The Byzantine Republic*, particularly in chapter five, "The Sovereignty of the People in Practice." In *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome*. Harvard University Press, 2015. p118–64.

An extraordinarily important incident occurred immediately after the news of the coup reached the camp of the crusaders. Villehardouin wrote, "...those who consented to such a thing were accomplices in this crime; and over and above all this the Greeks as a people had seceded from the Church of Rome. 'We therefore tell you,' said the clergy, 'that this war is just and lawful; and if you fight to conquer this land with the right intention of bringing it under the authority of Rome, all those of you who die...shall benefit from the indulgence granted by the Pope.'"²²⁶ This incident demonstrates a number of interesting facts about the soldiers within the crusader army and its attitude regarding attacking fellow Christians on crusade. The fact that they required reassurance from the clergy that a war against fellow Christians on crusade was just, and that the Pope's promise of indulgence still applied, demonstrates that there must have been a deal of uncertainty in the army if they were engaging in a just war. Villehardouin claims that the crime of Alexios V's illegal usurpation was not just to be blamed on the man himself, but on all who consented in this act, meaning all the Byzantines in the city. Further, he states that the most important justification was that the Byzantines were heretics.

Surprisingly, when recounting the actual capture and sack of Constantinople, Villehardouin employed no overtly hostile language and did not present the Byzantines in an unusually vilified manner. It is only after the capture of the city and the establishment of the Latin Empire that Villehardouin resumes the familiarly stereotypical language. He wrote that, "...the Greeks, who were by nature very perfidious, still harbored thoughts of treachery in their hearts."²²⁷ This is a perfect example of old hostile language still being employed in crusade narratives. Just as Robert the Monk, Ralph of Caen, Raymond d'Aguilers, Odo of Deuil, and the anonymous author of the *Historia de Expeditione* wrote, the Greeks were naturally treacherous

²²⁶ *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 85

²²⁷ *Chronicles of the Crusades*. 115

and could not be trusted to follow any agreements. They were a rebellious people who were hostile to the crusaders, and only rulership by westerners would correct their erroneous religious beliefs and force them to join the crusading movement.

Robert de Clari

Robert de Clari was the author of the account *La Conquête de Constantinople*. Far removed from the high-level decision making and diplomacy, Robert de Clari provided the account of a low-ranking knight. Massimiliano Gaggero argues that Clari's account was compiled shortly after his return to France in 1205, after the defeat of the crusader forces at the Battle of Adrianople earlier in the same year.²²⁸ If correct, *La Conquête de Constantinople* would be one of the closest contemporary accounts of the events of the Fourth Crusade. Gaggero also argues that Clari may have written his text in order to legitimize his seizure of Byzantine relics, while also criticizing the perceived poor judgements of the crusade leadership.²²⁹ Though his information may not always be the most accurate, he provides a crucial glimpse into the views and opinions of the more common soldiers comprising the crusader army.²³⁰

Regarding the diversion to Constantinople, he wrote, "The doge of Venice saw right well that the pilgrims were in sore straits...and said: 'Lords, in Greece there is a land that is very rich and plenteous in all good things. If we could have a reasonable excuse for going there and taking provisions and other things in the land until we were well restored, it would seem to me a good plan...' Then the marquis [Boniface] rose and said, 'Lords, last year at Christmas I was in

²²⁸ Gaggero, Massimiliano. "Western Eyes on The Latin East: The Chronicle D'Ernoult Et De Bernard Le Tresorier and Robert of Clari's Conquete de Constantinople." In *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean*. Fordham University Press, 2018. p87.

²²⁹ Gaggero, Massimiliano. "Western Eyes on The Latin East: The Chronicle D'Ernoult Et De Bernard Le Tresorier and Robert of Clari's Conquete de Constantinople." In *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean*. Fordham University Press, 2018. p98.

²³⁰ Kinoshita, Sharon. "Brave New Worlds: Robert de Clari's *La Conquête de Constantinople*." In *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006. p139.

Germany at the court of my lord the emperor. There I saw a youth...son of the Emperor Isaac of Constantinople, whose brother had taken the empire of Constantinople from him by treason. Whoever could get hold of this youth...would be well able to go to Constantinople and get provisions...for this youth is the rightful heir.”²³¹ According to Clari’s point of view, the diversion to Constantinople was not accidental. The crusader and Venetian leadership, understanding that they did not have enough money or supplies to make it to Egypt, the original target of the campaign, simply calculated that they should go to the Byzantine Empire, and extract money and supplies, either through force or cooperation. Further, he claims that it was the crusaders who sent for Alexios IV to join them, not the other way around.²³² He deems Alexios IV’s claim to the Byzantine throne merely an “excuse.” It is important that Clari viewed the diversion in this manner, as it could be reflective of the opinions of a substantial portion of the crusade army demonstrated by the frequent desertions and near mutiny.

After capturing Constantinople for the first time, Clari writes that Alexios IV “...dared not trust himself to his Greeks” and that the Byzantines were “traitors.”²³³ The language within the description implies that even the Byzantine emperor, himself, could not trust his own people, due to their treacherous nature. As a new emperor installed by foreign mercenaries, Alexios IV was in a tenuous political position. Clearly the city’s populace was not thrilled about their new emperor, as evidenced by their lack of action in bringing him to the throne.²³⁴

Robert de Clari corroborates Geoffrey de Villehardouin’s account regarding the bishops reassuring the army of their righteousness when hostilities renewed for a second time. According

²³¹ *The Conquest of Constantinople by Robert de Clari*. 46

²³² *The Conquest of Constantinople by Robert de Clari*. 59

²³³ *The Conquest of Constantinople by Robert de Clari*. 80-82

²³⁴ The population of the city of Constantinople were not shy when they disliked their emperors, and frequently overthrew them in violent coups and riots. See Anthony Kaldellis’ *The Byzantine Republic*.

to Clari, “Finally, the bishops and clergy of the host consulted together and gave judgement that the battle was a righteous one and that they were right to attack them. For anciently they of the city had been obedient to the law of Rome, but now they were disobedient to it, saying that the law of Rome was worth nothing and that all who believed in it were dogs...on this account they were right to attack them, and...it was not at all a sin, but a righteous deed.”²³⁵ Notably, this reassurance to the army occurs only when full-blown warfare had broken out, rather than prior to the initial diversion of the crusade from Egypt to Constantinople. This demonstrates that the crusade army saw a distinction between the installation of Alexios IV and the war against Alexios V. The first was an internal war, the second an external conquest. The fact that the army required such a reassurance at all demonstrates that there was likely doubt among the troops whether their attack upon fellow Christians during a crusade was sinful or not, and if the treachery of the Greeks was enough justification for the conflict.

Near the end of Clari’s narrative, he wrote that “...because of [the Greeks’] treason and disloyalty and the murder that [Alexios V] had done, [God] willed that the city should be taken, and all the people of the city dishonored.”²³⁶ In Clari’s mind, the Byzantines reaped what they had sown. Their treachery, their support for Alexios V and the murder of Alexios IV, had incurred the wrath of God, who justly punished them through the crusaders by destroying their Empire, sacking their city, and humiliating them.

Devastatio Constantinopolitana

²³⁵ *The Conquest of Constantinople by Robert de Clari*. 94

²³⁶ *The Conquest of Constantinople by Robert de Clari*. 96

The *Devastatio Constantinopolitana* is one of the most interesting sources for the Fourth Crusade. The author of this account is unknown. However, based upon their close familiarity with specific numbers of ships, troops, and monetary amounts, Alfred Andrea speculates that he may have been a low-level ecclesiastical administrator involved with financial matters within the army.²³⁷ Whatever his role, it is clear from the language used and the specificity of numbers and events that he employed that the author of this work was a participant in some fashion in the Fourth Crusade.

What makes this text so perplexing is the plentitude of factual information, namely that the text included dates, chronology, and specific numbers of troops, ships, and money, but that it seemingly lacks a clear purpose. The *Devastatio* contains no glorification of crusade leaders, and, in fact, presents a negative attitude towards the Venetians. The author does not dedicate the work to any ruler or individual and attempts to cover the entirety of the events of the crusade in an extremely short account.

Notably, the *Devastatio* contains no grand statements about the natural characteristics of the Greeks, and overall does not follow the trend in crusade accounts of employing stereotypes or hostile language regarding the Byzantines. The text does, however, offer some interesting and subtle passages regarding the perception of Byzantine actions by the crusaders, and considerable details concerning some events during the crusade.

Among the points of disagreement, the *Devastatio* directly contradicts Robert de Clari regarding the diversion to Constantinople. The author wrote, "...a messenger of King Philip²³⁸ came...asking the march lord and the barons, that they help his brother-in-law Emperor

²³⁷ Andrea, Alfred. "The *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, A Special Perspective on the Fourth Crusade: An Analysis, New Edition, and Translation" 125

²³⁸ Philip of Swabia, King of Germany (r.1198-1208.)

Alexios²³⁹ with his difficulty.”²⁴⁰ The account in the *Devastatio* claims that messengers from King Philip of Swabia, the reigning King of Germany, requested that the crusade leaders aid Prince Alexios, not that the crusade leaders sent for the prince, as it is presented in Robert de Clari’s account. This is an important distinction, as deliberately seeking out a claimant to the Byzantine throne would indicate premeditation, while Alexios simply appearing after messages from the King of Germany would indicate spur-of-the-moment action on behalf of the crusaders. It is interesting to note, however, that the diversion to Constantinople had the backing of the King of Germany. Naturally, as his brother-in-law, Philip would gain from installing Alexios on the Byzantine throne, but it is unclear why he asked the crusader army to do this task. Clari emphasized the poor financial and logistical state of the army, so perhaps Philip was aware of this and saw an opportunity to use them to his benefit.

When the Byzantine population began to fight with the crusaders after Alexios IV’s installation, the author wrote, “...the Greeks again were turned in sedition against the Latins ...The Greeks flocked, made an attack...The barons of the Latin army were saddened by this evil...the multitude of Greeks, crushing the Latins, killed captives without mercy, burned the dead with fire, and spared neither age nor sex...The pilgrims and Venetians, enduring with annoyance...attacked the Greeks. The Greeks fled, and the Latins pursued the Greeks all the way up to the wall, killed many, and took many ships of the Greeks in the port filled with many goods and supplies.”²⁴¹ This is one of the only examples of the anonymous author employing hostile language regarding the Byzantines of the type seen in the works of other crusade authors. He labels the Byzantine discontent and clashes with the crusade army “sedition” and “evil.” The

²³⁹ Alexios IV Angelos, the usurper.

²⁴⁰ *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*. Original translation. See Appendix for full translation and original Latin text.

²⁴¹ *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*. Original translation.

author portrays them barbarically, and accuses them of sparing no one, massacring the westerners, and refusing to grant them proper burial. Narratively, this passage occurs when Emperor Alexios IV was venturing out into the provinces with crusader forces attempting to establish order in the countryside. The crusaders and the Byzantines were not yet at war, and therefore the anonymous author pins the blame for the beginning of the conflict on the Byzantines, who acted in “sedition” against them.

The author’s account of the sack of Constantinople is omits a great deal of crucial information. He wrote, “...we entered into the city; and the greatest slaying of Greeks was done. Those who could attack us with inconvenient things, we sent fire [to them] and through fire we repelled them from us. With the coming of night, [Alexios V] fled with a few men. The next day all the Greeks fell before the infantry of the march lord, and they surrendered themselves and all their things into his hands. Then, we took the lodgings and the Greeks fled from the city. We brought all our loot and profit into the city, and we filled three greatest towers with silver. Then it began to be debated about the choosing of an emperor.”²⁴² The author does not elaborate on the looting of the city, merely stating how much loot the crusaders took. The author does state that there was a massive slaughter of the Byzantine population, but makes no comment on the justification of this massacre. However, it is also important to note that the author did not make any positive comments or glorify these actions either.

Overall, the author of the *Devastatio* does not employ the same type of hostile language utilized by previous crusade authors. Labelling the actions of the Byzantine populace “evil” and “seditious” are the only examples of the author utilizing hostile language. What the *Devastatio* does contain, however, is a brief but pessimistic account of the Fourth Crusade, with interesting

²⁴² *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*. Original translation.

details which contradict other accounts, such as Philip of Swabia's explicit backing of Alexios IV. Further, the overall narrative structure of the *Devastatio* is important, as it demonstrates a complete lack of pride in the accomplishments of the crusade and notes the futility of the enterprise, as the rich simply acquired more riches while they paid the poorer soldiers meager scraps.

Niketas Choniates

Niketas Choniates, as previously mentioned on page [INSERT PAGE NUMBER], was a Byzantine imperial bureaucrat, governor, and author who wrote the *Historia* covering the reigns of Emperors John II Komnenos (r.1118-1143), Manuel I Komnenos (r.1143-1180), Alexios II Komnenos (r.1180-1183), Andronikos I Komnenos (r.1183-1185), Isaac II Angelos (r.1185-1195), Alexios III Angelos (r.1195-1203), and the brief reigns of Alexios IV Angelos (r.1203-1204) and Alexios V (r.1204). This huge history, covering the period between 1118-1204, continues the Byzantine historiographical tradition of utilizing hostile language concerning western Europeans. It is important to note that Niketas composed the *Historia* after the sack of Constantinople, to which he was an eyewitness, and understandably wrote about the actions of the crusaders during the Fourth Crusade with great rage and hatred.

When beginning his discussion of the Fourth Crusade, Niketas laments "What judgement is reasonable for him who must relate in detail the common calamities which this queen of cities²⁴³ endured during the reign of the [Angeloi]? I would that I might worthily and fully recount the most oppressive and grievous of all evils. But, since this is impossible, I shall abbreviate the narration...thereby mitigating excessive grief."²⁴⁴ This demonstrates that Niketas

²⁴³ Constantinople

²⁴⁴ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 294

harbored extraordinarily negative feelings about the destruction of his beloved city of Constantinople and that this grief was still very much fresh in his mind. These views certainly distorted Niketas' perceptions of the crusaders and their actions, but it is important to understand that this rage generated by the sack would lead to centuries of hostility against the Latins in the Byzantine Empire. This does not mean that they did not engage in diplomacy with western nations or refuse to employ western mercenaries. What it did mean, however, was that a large section of Byzantine society refused to accept any religious compromise with or support from the western nations during the period of Ottoman conquests. Therefore, Niketas was not alone in harboring a grudge against the Latins for this monumental event.

Regarding the Doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo, and the origins of the Fourth Crusade, Niketas wrote that, "The doge of Venice, Enrico Dandolo, was not the least of horrors...a creature most treacherous and extremely jealous of the Romans, a sly cheat who called himself wiser than the wise and madly thirsting after glory as no other...realizing that he should work some treachery against the Romans...he schemed to include other accomplices...those whom he knew nursed an implacable hatred against the Romans and who looked with an envious and avaricious eye on their goods."²⁴⁵ Niketas denounces Dandolo as a treacherous and jealous "creature" who hated the Byzantines. Importantly, Niketas does not attribute this hatred to a personal grudge, but to the anti-Venetian policies of the previous emperors Isaac II and Alexios III Angelos – their "insulting treatment" of Venice, as he puts it.²⁴⁶ Niketas also continues the Byzantine practice of labelling western peoples "hostile to the Romans" and emphasizes their greed and envy, traits which the Byzantines associated with the "Latin barbarian."

²⁴⁵ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 295

²⁴⁶ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 296

Niketas portrays Alexios IV as a misled youth, writing that "...evil was heaped upon evil...for Alexios [IV]...was supplied with letters from the pope...and Philip, King of Germany, that pledged their profound gratitude to these piratical gangs if they would welcome Alexios and restore him to his paternal throne... [Alexios'] presence... provid[ed] not only an opportune camouflage for sailing out to plunder the Romans but also a specious reason for sating the Venetians' avaricious and money-loving temperament...they were all cunning in their ways and troublemakers, and they laid hold of Alexios, who was [a] juvenile...and prevailed upon him to agree under oath to demands which were impossible to fulfill...what was even worse and most reprehensible, he abjured his faith and embraced that of the Latins..."²⁴⁷ Niketas correctly asserts that Alexios IV had the backing of his brother in law, Philip of Swabia, but is incorrect in his belief that Pope Innocent III supported the diversion to Constantinople. In fact, the pope specifically forbade the crusade army from attacking the Byzantines, but the leadership concealed this information from the army.²⁴⁸ Niketas labels the crusade army "piratical gangs" who sought a convenient excuse to loot Byzantine lands to satiate their greed. He also portrays the crusade leaders as criminals who manipulated Alexios IV into accepting terms which Niketas knew were impossible to meet. Finally, Niketas takes an opportunity to condemn the heresy of the Latins and is horrified at Alexios' promise to convert the Empire to Catholicism.

Niketas says little concerning the first capture of Constantinople worthy of note, except that he utterly condemned Emperor Alexios III for his incompetence in fighting the crusaders and laments the first burning of the city. When the city was captured for the first time, however, Niketas writes that, "[The crusaders] made no changes in their expectations of the city...These were...that none of the extravagant pledges to provide the Latins with glory and gain was to be

²⁴⁷ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 296

²⁴⁸ Queller, Donald. *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 91

held back...Alexios, a witless lad ignorant of affairs of state, neither comprehended any of the issues at stake nor reflected for a moment on the Roman-hating temperament of the Latins...no nation loves money more than this race...”²⁴⁹ Niketas once again continues the idea that the westerners were greedy “Roman-haters,” and that Alexios IV was a totally disconnected prince who governed incompetently. He later blames the greed of the crusaders for the melting of precious church icons, a desperate action taken by Isaac II and Alexios IV to pay the crusaders the funds which had been promised to them.

When the crusaders attempted to loot a mosque in Constantinople during the interval between the first and second capture of the city, Niketas labels the crusaders an “evil battalion” and their actions “outrages.”²⁵⁰ It is a fascinating detail in the text that Niketas frames the crusaders as “evil” and the Muslims as righteously defending themselves, putting the actions of the crusaders below those of the Muslims and praising the Byzantines in the city who came to the mosque’s defense.²⁵¹ He attributes the second burning of the city to the crusaders after this incident, who acted in retaliation for the populace’s defense of the mosque.

Regarding the character of the newly crowned Emperor Alexios IV, Niketas wrote that “...[he] committed many more outrageous offenses and sullied the majestic, all-glorious name of the Roman Empire...he crossed over to the tents of the barbarians, where he engaged in drinking bouts and...playing dice...Alexios [was] deemed an abomination by sensible Romans for passing his time with the Latin nobles in such activities...”²⁵² There is a fascinating idea presented here, that Alexios had become Latinized. Unaware of the customs and court practices of Byzantine emperors, Alexios continued acting like he had before becoming emperor, playing

²⁴⁹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 302

²⁵⁰ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 303

²⁵¹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 303

²⁵² Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 305

games with the crusade leaders, and fooling around. According to Niketas, these actions transformed Alexios from an unaware child, as he presented him beforehand, into an “abomination.” He later wrote that Alexios initially refused to fight the crusaders, as he found it “unnatural” to fight the men who installed him upon his throne.²⁵³

Niketas frames the overthrow of Alexios IV not necessarily as a palace coup, but as a general uprising of the population of Constantinople, writing that the people were dissatisfied with the lack of action against the crusaders by the reigning emperors. There was a great gathering at the Hagia Sophia, where the populace attempted to find a nobleman to crown as a new emperor. When Alexios IV heard of this gathering, he resolved to bring crusader troops into the city to quell the revolt. Unable to bear such a betrayal, the general Alexios V launched a palace coup against Alexios IV, imprisoning and later strangling him before his own acclamation as emperor.²⁵⁴ The most important aspect of this passage is that Niketas portrays Isaac II and Alexios III as out of step with the beliefs of the city’s population. The latter wished to fight the crusaders and viewed them as enemies, while Alexios saw them as his only source of power.

The new emperor, Alexios V, finally initiated action against the crusaders, repelling assaults on the city walls and riding out to meet crusader forces in combat. Though he suffered important defeats, including the loss of the Hodegetria,²⁵⁵ Niketas notes that the Byzantine populace appreciated his action. When Alexios V met with Doge Enrico Dandolo for peace negotiations, Niketas claims that the crusaders demanded five thousand pounds of gold and “certain other conditions which were both galling and unacceptable to those who have tasted

²⁵³ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 307

²⁵⁴ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 307-309

²⁵⁵ An important icon of Mary, often paraded on the walls of Constantinople, regarded as the emperor’s general, according to Niketas.

freedom and are accustomed to give, not take, commands.”²⁵⁶ Once again, these demands were wholly unrealistic, likely deliberately so, as the crusaders had already drawn up plans for the division of the Empire and the distribution of loot. Niketas frames their demands as essentially worthy of slaves and subjects, not free people, harkening back to old ancient Athenian ideas regarding freedom and slavery.²⁵⁷

After the crusaders defeated Byzantine attempts to break the siege, the morale of the Byzantine defenders collapsed, and Alexios V fled in the night. The Byzantine Senate and assembly of people proclaimed a new emperor, but he too fled in the night.²⁵⁸ With no other options available, the city surrendered to the crusaders, and they began to sack the city. Niketas emphasizes the horrors and atrocities committed by the crusaders during the sack, including the destruction of ancient Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art, the desecration of churches, and the mass slaughter and rape throughout the city.²⁵⁹ He labels the crusaders “...forerunners of the Antichrist, chief agents and harbingers of his anticipated ungodly deeds...the most wicked and impious deeds were perpetrated by all with one accord...above all, it was difficult...to mollify the barbarians with entreaties...as they were highly irascible and bilious and unwilling to listen to anything. Everything incited their anger...”²⁶⁰ Niketas condemns the crusaders as agents of the Antichrist, committing acts of indescribable evil. He notes that they rarely extended mercy to the Byzantines unless they complied with every request they made and surrendered all of their wealth and possessions.

²⁵⁶ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 312

²⁵⁷ Thucydides and his history were read by prominent Byzantine intellectuals and writers, including Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates.

²⁵⁸ Choniates, Nicetas. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. Translated by Harry J. Magoulias. p314. The Senate and people proclaimed Constantine Laskaris as emperor, but he fled after he was unable to rally enough troops to fight the crusaders. Constantine's brother, Theodore I Laskaris, was the first Nicaean Emperor after the sack.

²⁵⁹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 314-326

²⁶⁰ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 315

The author provides an account of his personal experience during the sack of Constantinople, writing that he was in the city on the first day of the sack and sought shelter in his Venetian friend's house. When the crusaders began demanding to search the house, Niketas and his family joined a large mass of Byzantine refugees leaving the city. They covered themselves in mud to make themselves less attractive targets, and the women marched in the center of the column to prevent the crusaders from easily seizing them. Despite this, a western soldier seized a woman, and Niketas personally begged other soldiers to force him to release the woman, which the soldier relented to after many threats.²⁶¹ Niketas condemns the "...beef-eating Latins...[who] pour out their wine both unmixed and pure in the same way that they pour out their unmitigated gall, and they treat the Romans with arrogance and contempt."²⁶² He connects the western practice of drinking unmixed wine with their audacity and notes their contempt towards the Byzantines.

Niketas summarizes his thoughts about the crusades shortly afterwards. He writes, "Even more culpable were those who had raised the cross to their shoulders, who had time and again sworn by it and the sayings of the Lord to cross over Christian lands without bloodletting...and to take up arms against the Saracens...in truth, they were exposed as frauds...they raged openly against Christ and sinned by overturning the Cross with the cross they bore on their backs, not even shuddering to trample on it for the sake of a little gold and silver. By grasping pearls, they rejected Christ..."²⁶³ Niketas condemns the hypocrisy of the crusaders, who swore to fight the enemies of Christianity and instead committed unheard-of atrocities against fellow Christians. He notes that even the Muslims did not commit such acts when they recaptured Jerusalem, even

²⁶¹ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 323-327

²⁶² Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 326

²⁶³ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 316

though the crusaders acted with extreme brutality when they captured Jerusalem initially. This is the culmination of Latin greed, in the Byzantine mindset – the brutal barbarians were willing to commit any sacrilege or atrocity to enrich themselves.

Niketas also blamed the rulers of the Angeloi dynasty, specifically Isaac II and Alexios III Angelos, for poorly administering the Byzantine Empire during the preceding decades. He wrote, “The Angelos brothers were guilty of poor administration of state affairs...particularly obsessed with the love of money, they...taxed the members of the Latin nation in their midst. Often disregarding treaties made with the Venetians, they mulcted them of monies, levied taxes on their ships...”²⁶⁴ Niketas possessed a surprising amount of perspective and did not simply place all the blame upon the Latins, or on the sins of the Byzantine people, or any other moral reason, as one might expect from a historian of the time. Though he does include some of these reasons as well, Niketas specifically blamed the fiscal policies of the Angeloi emperors stretching back twenty years, understanding that government policy had an effect upon Byzantine-Venetian relations and government finances. He also blames Emperor Alexios III for ignoring reports on the actions and movements of the crusade army, including during period around the sack of Zara.²⁶⁵

Chapter Three: Comparative Analysis and Role in Historiography

There is a multitude of evidence that both crusade authors and Byzantine authors employed the use of hostile language and stereotypes about each other extensively in their writings. However, what is remarkable is the level of continuity throughout over a century of

²⁶⁴ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 295

²⁶⁵ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. 296

writings regarding both stereotypes and larger narrative themes. Among western authors, the stereotypes utilized can be categorized under the rubrics of deceit, heresy, cowardice, and effeminacy. The common stereotypes employed by Byzantine authors were deceit, greed, rage, and stupidity. All these hostile sentiments were present in the works of all the authors who wrote during the period between 1096 to 1204. However, the evidence suggests that continued interactions throughout the crusading period influenced western perceptions of Byzantium and Byzantine perceptions of the west, and that these interactions constantly changed and shifted hostile stereotypes and their expression in narrative works. The addition and emphasis of new stereotypes in later works, particularly heresy, were certainly the result of closer contact and interaction between the crusaders and the Byzantine Empire.

Western

Deceit

The stereotype most emphasized and frequently mentioned in western texts regarding the Byzantines is their proclivity for deceit, plots, and intrigue. The secretive and backstabbing nature of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos in particular plays a key role in narratives of the works of Robert the Monk, Ralph of Caen, Fulcher of Chartres, and Raymond d'Aguilers. According to these authors, all of the actions taken by Alexios and the Byzantines were simply plots and schemes to ensure that the crusade would fail. The bandits who raided crusader camps and supply lines were allegedly agents of Alexios, acting upon his personal orders. The oath to return Byzantine lands, which the crusade leaders swore to the emperor, was illegitimate and forced upon the leaders after Alexios treacherously imprisoned them by luring them to the capital with promises of riches. The capture of Nicaea is presented as a betrayal of the crusade and an example of Byzantine treachery, as the city surrendered specifically to the Byzantines and

Alexios did not allow the crusaders to loot the city, despite the fact that no such promise of looting appears to have been part of the oath the leaders swore to Alexios.

The most important episode of Byzantine “treachery” in these works, however, is the departure of the Byzantine contingent during the siege of Antioch and the failure of Alexios to ride to the aid of the crusaders during this harrowing siege. The western authors present the lack of Byzantine participation in the siege of Antioch as a direct betrayal of the terms of the oath, namely that Alexios would mobilize all of his available forces to assist the crusader army. These authors present the emperor’s refusal to send a large army as a perfect example of the treachery of the Byzantines. Fulcher of Chartres and Ralph of Caen omit mention of Tatikios or the Byzantine contingent during the beginning phase of the siege entirely, in order to reinforce their narratives of Byzantine deceit and betrayal. Robert the Monk and Raymond d’Aguilers include reference to the contingent but claim that its withdrawal was due to a Byzantine plot to destroy the crusade.

Another crucial aspect which led to the development of the deceit stereotype throughout accounts of the First Crusade was the discontinuity between western expectations for the Byzantines’ attitudes towards them and the reality of their actions. Multiple authors write that they expected the Byzantines to welcome them with open arms and hail them as heroes marching to their salvation.²⁶⁶ Historian Gregory Bell wrote that “The crusaders had expected Alexios to be kind and offer provisions, and the fact that this did not always happen...led chroniclers to label their hosts as fraudulent, cunning, and treacherous.”²⁶⁷ Bell argues that the shattering of the

²⁶⁶ Robert the Monk. *Robert the Monk’s History of the First Crusade: Historia Iherosolimitana*. Translated by Carol Sweetenham. p97. Robert claims that the crusaders were confused why the Byzantines were attacking them and acting so treacherously.

²⁶⁷ Bell, Gregory D. “In Starvation’s Shadow: The Role of Logistics in the Strained Byzantine-European Relations during the First Crusade.” p66.

image of the helpless, begging eastern Christian in western eyes was the real cause for the development of anti-Byzantine stereotypes in the west. Far from the desperate Christians that Pope Urban II portrayed in his famous Council of Clermont speech, the Byzantines received the crusaders with wary suspicion, thus creating, in Bell's view, the anti-Byzantine stereotypes which spread throughout western Europe. The Byzantine sources admit that Emperor Alexios and the Byzantines received the crusaders with extreme caution and distrust. The actions of Alexios clearly reflect a fear that the crusaders could fight against the Empire in some way, and that the whole idea of the crusade was a facade. The participation of Bohemond d'Hauteville, a lifelong enemy of the Byzantine Empire, certainly increased Byzantine suspicion of the goals and motives of the crusade.

It is, however, important to note that the First Crusade authors primarily focused on the deceitful character of Emperor Alexios himself, instead of accusing the Byzantines in general of being backstabbers. The authors assume all Byzantine actions during the crusade were undertaken as a result of direct orders from Alexios himself.²⁶⁸ Some historians, such as Savvas Neocleous, argue that First Crusade histories were not even anti-Byzantine, but exclusively anti-Alexios.²⁶⁹ However, one of the key developments of later crusade literature, particularly from the Second Crusade onwards, was the shift from condemning the character of the emperors to lambasting the Byzantines as a people. The later writers presented the Greeks as a whole as possessing these deficient character traits, and the emperors as reflecting these ethnic characteristics, as opposed to the emperor's character alone being immoral.

²⁶⁸ Shepard, Jonathan. "Cross Purposes: Alexios Comnenus and the First Crusade," 1997. 107

²⁶⁹ Neocleous, Savvas. "Is the Contemporary Latin Historiography of the First Crusade and its Aftermath 'Anti-Byzantine?'" p28.

In Odo of Deuil's work, the treachery of the Byzantines is centerstage, as he claims that the Byzantines raided the crusader camps en route, defrauded them at markets, and informed the Turks and other Muslims of the crusaders' locations and numbers. Throughout the entirety of the *De Profectione*, Odo claims that the Byzantines and their emperor Manuel I plotted against the crusade and sought its downfall at every turn. He ties these actions to the Byzantine idea of the sacred empire, claiming that they would do anything and commit any crime, including lying, if it was to the benefit of the empire.²⁷⁰ Importantly, Odo was the first crusade author to focus on both the deceitful character of the reigning emperor, Manuel I, and also the deceitful character of the Byzantine people as a whole.

Forty years later, the anonymous author of the *Historia De Expeditione Frederici Imperatoris* labeled the Byzantines as deceitful and wicked for their actions during the Third Crusade. He portrays Isaac II and the Byzantines as hostile to the crusade, and compares their actions to the deceitfulness of snakes, evoking biblical imagery of the devil.²⁷¹ As the crusaders expected from the Byzantines based upon the reading of previous crusade sources, the emperor refused to uphold agreements with the German emperor until compelled through force of arms. The interactions between the Germans and the Byzantines during the Third Crusade set an example for the westerners, that military threats and conflict were the only tools to force the deceitful Byzantines to uphold any agreements they made. Historian Gregory Bell wrote that, "Over time, Europeans came to expect Byzantine support on crusade, and felt that force might be used if the Byzantine emperor failed to assist in the crusaders' cause...it is strikingly similar in

²⁷⁰ *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, 59

²⁷¹ "But their tongues were deceitful and 'the poison of the snake was on their lips', since none of the things that they had sworn was afterwards fulfilled." Loud, G. A.. *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*. p49. Loud's footnote points out that this passage refers to Psalm 13:3.

nature to the crusaders' anger at not receiving the emperor's military aid during the First Crusade."²⁷² Henry VI of Germany in 1194²⁷³ and the crusaders during the Fourth Crusade employed both the threat of invasion and combat to extract favorable terms in agreements with the Byzantines.

Finally, in the Fourth Crusade sources, both Villehardouin and Clari portray the Byzantines as wily and deceitful men who could not be trusted to uphold agreements or even loyally serve western lords. They described Alexios IV, the claimant whom the crusaders installed upon the Byzantine throne, as a formerly young, noble prince who had become corrupted by the deceitful nature of his subjects, "Byzantinizing" into a backstabbing traitor like the emperors before him. There was no recognition in the western sources that the Byzantines could not meet the terms of Alexios' initial agreement with the crusaders. Instead, they frame Alexios and the Byzantines as betraying the agreement simply because betrayal was a natural Byzantine characteristic.

It is no surprise, therefore, that there was widespread distrust of the Byzantines by the westerners. Stereotypes of Byzantine deceit abounded in crusade histories throughout accounts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and changed extraordinarily little over time. The authors always presented Byzantine emperors as deceitful plotters, who sought to harm the crusade in through informing their enemies, raiding their camps, and defrauding them. It was only logical that the leaders of the Fourth Crusade took the opportunity to "Catholicize" the Byzantine Empire and install an unabashedly pro-crusade emperor. Through installing Alexios IV, the

²⁷² Bell, Gregory D. "In Starvation's Shadow: The Role of Logistics in the Strained Byzantine-European Relations during the First Crusade." p43.

²⁷³ Henry demanded an extravagant sum of money from the Byzantine Empire as tribute in exchange for not invading. Though he died before the Byzantines paid the money, Emperor Isaac still collected the funds in an unpopular tax, labelled the "Alamanikon." Harris *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 148

crusaders could finally rid the crusading enterprise of one of its greatest perceived thorns in its side: the treacherous Byzantines.

Cowardice and Effeminacy

Another remarkably consistent stereotype present in western crusade literature is the sentiment that the Byzantines were effeminate cowards. Modern historians particularly emphasized this stereotype in works investigating the Fourth Crusade.²⁷⁴ Cowardice and effeminacy are noticeably less present and less mentioned than deceit in crusade era primary sources, but the idea itself plays a crucial role in the authors' justifications for the crusaders' actions, such as refusing to return former Byzantine lands to the Byzantines.

The idea of Greek effeminacy and cowardice is mentioned during the First Crusade, particularly by the most hostile authors, Robert the Monk and Ralph of Caen. Both authors emphasize the cowardice and unmanliness of the Byzantines, and mock how their troops fled before them in skirmishes. These authors also present the justification for keeping former Byzantine lands under their own rule instead of returning them, as stipulated in their oaths to the emperor. They argue that the Byzantines lost their right to govern these lands after they lost them to the Turks. The Byzantines were unworthy and simply too cowardly to rule over lands of such importance as Antioch, Jerusalem, and the Levant. Instead, the chosen people of God, being the Franks, were the only ones capable of holding and defending these crucial holy sites. Peter Edbury and John Rowe write that William of Tyre, a Latin chronicler from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, also included these justifications for the establishment of the crusader states, though they note that William was almost certainly relying upon the accounts of famous First Crusade

²⁷⁴ Angold, Michael. *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context*. p63

sources, such as Robert the Monk and the *Gesta Francorum*.²⁷⁵ Conor Kostick identifies the withdrawal of Tatikios from the Siege of Antioch during the First Crusade as a key moment in the development of the stereotype of Byzantine cowardice among westerners.²⁷⁶ During the Second Crusade, Odo of Deuil also furthers these views. He lambasts the Byzantines for “degenerating” into women for promising to give the crusaders everything they wanted, only to stab them in the back through scamming them in the markets and informing the Turks of their movements.

Authors who discussed the Third and Fourth Crusades do not specifically label the Byzantines effeminate. However, they do emphasize the cowardice of the Byzantines, a trait often linked to femininity. The author of the *Historia De Expeditione* mocks the Byzantine attempts to halt the crusade army as pathetic actions to stop the inevitable march of the German emperor. The Germans won victory after victory against them, raiding Thrace and the northern Balkans and seizing key cities in the region. Eventually, the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II had no other options left but to make peace with them and give in to their demands. The Byzantine defeat solidified the western perception of cowardice, and they would continue to militarily threaten the empire in subsequent decades.

The cowardice of the Byzantines plays a central theme in the works of the Fourth Crusade writers. The defeat of the Byzantines repeatedly in battle, and the shocking loss of Constantinople itself, demonstrated to the crusaders that the Byzantines were unworthy to rule such a city. Byzantine troops often barely put up a fight before fleeing in the face of the crusaders’ advance. The starkest example, mentioned by both Robert de Clari and Geoffrey de

²⁷⁵ Edbury, Peter, and Rowe, John. *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988. p133.

²⁷⁶ Costick, Connor. “Courage and Cowardice on the First Crusade, 1096–1099.” *War in History*, 2013: Sage. p37.

Villehardouin, was the last-ditch attempt by Alexios III to intimidate the crusaders. He marched out of the Theodosian Walls with all the forces he could gather, and the western authors note that they hugely outnumbered their own forces. However, instead of engaging in battle, Alexios retreated into the city and fled during the night, abandoning his post. This blatant display of cowardice was, in the eyes of the western authors, the culmination of Byzantine cowardice. The mere sight of the crusader forces loosely arrayed was enough to provoke Alexios into abandoning his capital during the night.

Some historians, such as John France, argue that there were no longstanding ethnic stereotypes against the Byzantines among the nations of the west. Instead, France argues that one anti-Byzantine First Crusade source, the *Gesta Francorum*, was responsible for spreading these sentiments in other literary sources, and that these stereotypes were not popularly held beliefs.²⁷⁷ Notably, the stereotype of Greek cowardice did not originate during the crusades. Luigi Berto convincingly argues through an in-depth analysis of pre-crusade Italian sources that histories contained anti-Byzantine stereotypes for centuries before the crusades, including the idea that the Byzantines were naturally cowards, were effeminate, and did not know how to properly fight.²⁷⁸ Importantly, these stereotypes were widespread among the Italo-Normans, a group which fought the Byzantine Empire for control of Southern Italy for decades. Therefore, there was longstanding hostility between the Byzantines and Normans which their interactions during the crusades only exacerbated.

Heresy

²⁷⁷ France, John. "Byzantium in Western Chronicles before the First Crusade." *Knighthoods of Christ*, 1st ed, 2007: Routledge. p6.

²⁷⁸ Berto, Luigi. "The Image of the Byzantines in Early Medieval South Italy: The Viewpoint of the Chroniclers of the Lombards (9th–10th centuries) and Normans (11th century)" 13

The most important hostile stereotype to develop from the Second, Third, and Fourth Crusades was the accusation of heresy against the Byzantine people. Traditionally, historians viewed the Great Schism of 1054 as a clear break between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the moment when they became irrevocably separated.²⁷⁹ However, the primary sources of the First Crusade from the western perspective contain little evidence to suggest that the authors thought the Byzantines were evil heretics. The crusade authors clearly had no love for the Byzantines or their emperors, writing scathing accounts of their deceit and backstabbing. Why, then, do they not also accuse them of heresy? One explanation for the lack of religious disputes during the expedition itself is that one of the expressed goals of the First Crusade was to help the Byzantines against the Turks.

The initial goal of the crusade, however, does not explain why the western authors did not accuse the Byzantines of heresy in the aftermath of the First Crusade, when a rift in relations had already occurred. The idea that the Byzantines were filthy heretics had not yet become widespread among western Europeans in the early twelfth century. Perhaps the authors thought that mentioning the intricate theological differences and the rejection of papal authority would ring hollow, given the ongoing Investiture Controversy, a series of disputes between secular rulers and the papacy over the right to nominate bishops.²⁸⁰ Many kings rejected the papacy's authority to nominate bishops and overrule the wishes of the kings

As previously mentioned, there are no examples of accusations of heresy within the First Crusade primary sources from the west. The first author to directly accuse the Byzantines of

²⁷⁹ "In the popular media, if not in academic literature, 1054 C.E. is always given as the year when the Latin and Greek churches permanently split apart, creating two branches of Christendom that remain separated to this day." Frazee, Charles. "1054 REVISITED." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 00220558, 2007, Vol. 42, Issue 2.

²⁸⁰ Blumenthal, Uta-Renate. *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988. 135–82.

heresy was the Second Crusade writer, Odo of Deuil, who argued that the Franks should kill the Byzantines for their false beliefs. He specifically accuses the Byzantines of washing and purifying altars which Catholics had previously used, rebaptizing converts from Catholicism to Orthodoxy, and rejecting papal authority. As a priest, Odo held stronger theological views than the average crusade soldier. However, Odo's inclusion of the charge of heresy is especially important, as it represents the first mention of Byzantine heresy in a crusade history.

In the primary Third Crusade narrative, the *Historia De Expeditione*, the author mentions heresy, but barely as an afterthought. He wrote simply that the Byzantines held incorrect views on the Trinity, believing that the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son and the Father, and that they rejected the authority of the pope. The author placed this passage at the end of his section on German-Byzantine interactions, indicating that he did not view these differences as a key point of tension and conflict between the crusaders and the Byzantines.

By the time the Fourth Crusade authors wrote their accounts, it was well known among westerners that the Byzantines held differing religious beliefs. No Fourth Crusade author included a detailed history of East-West church interactions or differing theological beliefs when explaining the terms Alexios IV agreed to when the leaders diverted the crusade. Rather, they all assumed that the readers would know that the Byzantine religious practices were considerably different from those of the Catholic church.

Interestingly, both Robert de Clari and Villehardouin mention an incident during the outbreak of hostilities between the Byzantines and crusaders. To rally the soldiers and raise their morale, both sources claim that clergy members encouraged them by stating that the Byzantines were heretics and that God and the church viewed the war as justified. It is extremely important to note that this event only occurred after the beginning of war. It was a method of boosting the

morale of the crusaders daunted by Constantinople's high walls, and not a primary justification for the diversion of the crusade itself.

The stipulation that Alexios IV personally convert himself and the Empire to Catholicism indicates that the Orthodoxy of the Byzantines was a primary concern to the leaders of the crusade which they sought to "remedy." Despite the pope's denunciations of this justification for diversion,²⁸¹ it remained a key demand from the crusaders, and the realization that the Byzantines would never accept Catholicism only increased their desire to rule the land themselves.

Narrative Themes

Overall, the authors of crusade narratives throughout the period of 1096-1204 present the Byzantines as enemies of the crusades, an annoying roadblock at best and villains in the story similar to the Muslims at worst. In First Crusade histories, authors present crusader interactions with Byzantines as another trial from God on their holy quest. The Byzantine emperor Alexios I attempted to trick them, weaken them, and plotted their demise, while the crusade leaders endured and outsmarted him. It is notable that, for most First Crusade histories, interactions with the Byzantines comprise about half of the entire story.

In Second Crusade histories, the Byzantine Empire becomes more than merely a roadblock. Odo of Deuil directly blames the Byzantines for the failure of the crusade and their defeat in battle against the Turks, claiming that Emperor Manuel I gave them traitorous guides, attacked them, and informed the enemy of their movements. The Byzantine Empire is the

²⁸¹ *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*. 102

primary villain in the story, and Odo barely mentions the Turks or Muslims. Odo wrote the *De Profectione* while the crusade was still ongoing, ending the narrative when the French army arrived in Antioch, and deliberately stated that the purpose of the text was to teach future crusaders the perils of interaction with the Byzantines and call for revenge against them.

Third Crusade histories are quite different, as the German emperor subdued the Byzantines in war and forced them to agree to his stipulations. The anonymous author of the *Historia De Expeditione* presents the Byzantines and Emperor Isaac II as traitorous cowards, who opposed the passage of the crusaders due to their own treachery and paranoia. Further, he lambasts them as allies of Saladin, the grave enemy of the Third Crusade, directly equating the Byzantines with the Muslims.

Authors of the Fourth Crusade present the Byzantines in many similar ways thematically. Because the crusade never even reached the Holy Land, crusader interactions with the Byzantines comprise the majority of the narrative. Even though the crusaders installed Alexios IV and were ostensibly allied with him and the Empire, they still portray the Byzantine people, especially the inhabitants of Constantinople, as the primary villains of the narrative. They are treacherous, corrupted the formerly honorable Alexios IV, and opposed the crusaders at every opportunity.

Therefore, there is clear continuity between crusade histories of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Crusades. All the histories contain either similar hostile language, stereotypes, or themes which portray the Byzantines as enemies. Naturally, these themes and perceptions changed over time due to the repeated interactions of the crusaders and Byzantines, as the development of the heresy stereotype demonstrates, but the western depictions of Byzantine

treachery, deceit, and effeminacy, along with the Byzantine depictions of western barbarism, unfaithfulness, and greed, all remained remarkably similar over time.

Byzantine

Greed

In Byzantine sources, there is remarkable consistency regarding the characterization of the Latins. The conception of the Latin barbarian came with a set of natural character traits, and the one Byzantine authors mention the most is greed. According to Anna Komnene, John Kinnamos, and Niketas Choniates, writing over a period of one century, the lust for money dominated the actions of the Latin barbarian.

In the First Crusade, Anna believed that the crusaders kept the Holy Land for themselves and reneged on their oath simply due to their greed. They saw the wealth and power of the lands and decided to keep them for themselves. Furthermore, Alexios heaped mountains of gold upon the crusade leaders, as was customary in Byzantine diplomacy, yet they had extraordinarily little gratitude for this crucial financial support. They kept the money and always wanted more. Alexios paying the crusaders for recapturing Nicaea was not enough for these barbarians. They wanted to sack a prominent Byzantine city, despite already receiving payment from Emperor Alexios himself. Writing after the fact, Anna looked back with disdain upon the crusaders and their supposed motives, writing that the entire campaign was all a façade to enrich themselves in coin and land.

Kinnamos presents the same beliefs in his writings on the Second Crusade, comparing the creation of the Principality of Antioch during the First Crusade to robbery and the crusaders to thieves. In attempting to reestablish authority over the crusader states, the Byzantines were

simply punishing a crime and correcting their behavior. Kinnamos also attributes the raiding of the German and French armies to their greed, writing that they were never satisfied with the offerings of the local population, but instead took what they wanted by force.

Writing on the Third and Fourth Crusades, Niketas provides a more interesting perspective. Despite participating in the administration of Isaac II during the Third Crusade, Niketas presents a sympathetic narrative to Frederick Barbarossa, honoring his “apostolic” virtue and admitting that he was honest in his requests from the Byzantines. He did write that the greed for money dominated and drove the actions of the Germans as a whole, and all “barbarians.” In Niketas’ narrative, the greed for Byzantine wealth and lands was the primary motivation for the crusaders.

Niketas continues to express similar ideas in his account of the Fourth Crusade, as he refers to the crusaders as pirates and claims the purpose of the expedition was simply to enrich Venice and the leaders of the crusade. Their greed insatiable, the crusaders would accept no Byzantine peace offer and no amount of tribute that did not meet their impossible expectations. During the sack of Constantinople itself, the crusaders searched every house and intimidated every person they saw to squeeze as much wealth from the city as possible.

Deceit

The Byzantine authors also routinely depict the crusaders as deceitful. During the First Crusade, the chief origin of this stereotype was the betrayal of the oath sworn to Alexios. The leaders of the crusade specifically promised to return all former Byzantine lands, yet they kept the entire Levant under their rule. One of the leaders, Bohemond, even organized an expedition against the crusaders less than a decade after the end of the First Crusade. Further, all Byzantine

authors viewed their claimed desires to liberate the Holy Land simply as a ruse, from this crusade onwards.

In the Second Crusade, Kinnamos wrote that their explanations for the crusade were all lies, and that the true motive for the expedition was the destruction of the Byzantine Empire. The French and Germans used the Holy Land justification as an excuse to pillage Byzantine lands and steal their wealth. This claim matches exactly with those presented in the *Alexiad* and the *Historia* of Niketas.

Likewise, Niketas explicitly states that the crusaders and their justifications were fraudulent. The result of the Fourth Crusade demonstrated, in his view, that the previous Byzantine authors were correct. All crusades were ruses with the hidden goal of sacking the largest and wealthiest city in Europe, Constantinople, and the plight of Christians in the Holy Land was forgotten. Niketas believed that the crusaders deliberately misrepresented their ambitions in order to trick unsuspecting Christians into joining their army and helping their cause, all the while the backstabbing crusade leaders manipulated the army to further their own territorial ambitions in Byzantine territory.

Rage and Stupidity

The final main character trait of the “Latin barbarian” was rage and stupidity. Naturally, as barbarians, they thought that the westerners did not have the intellectual capacity that the Byzantines possessed. Anna portrays the crusaders, especially the leaders, as “barbarian lunatics” whose hatred against the Empire drove them to loot and steal their rightful lands.

Kinnamos likewise characterizes Conrad III of Germany as a raging barbarian during the Second Crusade. Kinnamos contrasts the rage filled, disorganized fighting style of the Germans

to the “scientific” fighting of the Byzantines.²⁸² Conrad raged through Byzantine lands until, according to Kinnamos, he saw the impregnable Theodosian Walls, whereupon he realized that he was not strong enough to force an entry into the city. He also contrasts Conrad’s mental weakness with Manuel’s intelligence, noting how Manuel bribed his vassals to further humiliate the “barbarian.”

Writing about both the Third and Fourth Crusades, Niketas explicitly states that the Latins harbored an undying hatred of the Byzantines. He attributes this hatred to their jealousy, their greed, and their rage. He did, however, unlike previous Byzantine authors, differentiate the Venetians from the rest of the crusaders. He admits that the Venetians possessed a cunning intelligence, and claims they used the crusaders merely as their pawns to achieve their financial and geopolitical goals. He presents the rest of the crusaders, however, as dumb brutes whose rage could not be appeased through any means.

Narrative Themes

Narratively, the Byzantine authors present the crusades as an excuse to raid Byzantine lands and steal their wealth. No Byzantine author accepts their reasoning for going on crusade as true, and most label them liars and tricksters. All the Byzantine works did not exclusively focus on the Byzantines and the crusades, however. Rather, each work examined the reign of one or multiple emperors and the sum of their accomplishments or failures. Therefore, in this context, the authors present the crusaders as merely another challenge to the power of the Empire and the emperors, a challenge which Alexios and Manuel were able to skillfully overcome, and a threat to which Isaac II and Alexios III failed to subdue. The Byzantines depict them as barbarians

²⁸² *The Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. 67

similar to the Turks, the Pechenegs, or even the ancient Persians. In their mind, the crusaders were nothing more than another wave of barbarian invaders.

Norman Propaganda

Another aspect of these texts which requires mention is the role of Norman propaganda. Certain stereotypes, especially heresy, did not develop organically, but through the explicit backing of the Norman lords of Sicily. The *Gesta Tancredi* of Ralph of Caen is the most direct example of Norman propaganda, because this work was explicitly created to glorify Tancred d'Hauteville, nephew of Bohemond, and to defame the Byzantines. Translator Carol Sweetenham speculates that Robert the Monk completed his work, a revision of the *Gesta Francorum*, on behalf of a Norman propaganda effort in the years following the First Crusade, when Bohemond was travelling through western and southern Europe seeking to rally support for an expedition against the Byzantines. It is less clear that this propaganda campaign influenced the other hostile works of the First Crusade, the histories of Fulcher of Chartres and Raymond d'Aguilers. Odo of Deuil specifically mentions that Normans appeared at the French council before the Second Crusade to condemn the Byzantines as deceitful plotters who would undermine the crusade. By the time of the Third Crusade, the German emperors had established their rule over the Norman Kingdom of Sicily, and they no longer played a role in Byzantine-crusader relations. However, their legacy of poisoned Byzantine-crusader relations lived on.

Imperial Propaganda

Likewise, the Byzantine imperial government deliberately sought to exalt the reigning emperor and his ancestors and to defame his enemies. Though not directly sponsored by the imperial government, Anna Komnene wrote the *Alexiad* with the purpose of defending the

conduct of her father, Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, and vilifying his enemies. Kinnamos' *History* did not have direct imperial backing, but he too exalted the deeds of the emperors he served under, John II and Manuel I. The sponsorship of Niketas' *Historia* is less certain, as he bucks the trend of previous Byzantine writers and openly criticizes the emperors, including ones he served under. Harry Magoulias argues that Niketas completed the final part of the work in 1206 in Constantinople, a year before he fled to the Empire of Nicaea, and therefore he could not have received government backing for the final portion of the work.²⁸³

Intertextuality

An important aspect one must consider when examining narrative sources written over the course of one century is intertextuality, the relationship between different texts and authors. John France states that the *Gesta Francorum*, and its subsequent revision, Robert the Monk's *Historia Hierosolymitana*, became the most popular First Crusade narrative account, spreading widely across France, receiving sponsorship from the Normans and the French monarchy for propaganda purposes.²⁸⁴ France claims that most subsequent authors of First Crusade narratives had read and were influenced by the *Gesta Francorum* and its virulent anti-Byzantine tone, and that they were therefore reflective of the attitudes of the Norman principality in Italy and not western Europeans as a whole.²⁸⁵ Contemporary intertextuality is a much lesser concern regarding sources discussing the Byzantines in the Second and Third Crusades, as the only sources of note from these crusades which fit this description are the works of Odo of Deuil and the anonymous author of the *Historia de Expeditione*. These authors did not have other

²⁸³ Magoulias, Henry. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*. Introduction, 3.

²⁸⁴ France, John. "Byzantium in Western Chronicles before the First Crusade." p5-6.

²⁸⁵ "The dependence on the *Gesta* clearly indicates that we need to beware of accepting anti-Byzantine comments picked up by twelfth century sources from its tainted stream." France, John. "Byzantium in Western Chronicles before the First Crusade." p7.

contemporary sources investigating the same topics with which they could consult. However, Odo himself admits that the French had developed suspicions about the Byzantines through reading historical texts, which only could have been the hostile narrative histories from the aftermath of the First Crusade.²⁸⁶ Though there is no such admission by the author of the *Historia de Expeditione*, it is clear from the similarity in the stereotypes which he utilized that the author was well versed in common narrative tropes regarding Byzantine treachery and cowardice. Both Villehardouin and Robert de Clari wrote their accounts of the Fourth Crusade in the immediate aftermath of the expedition, and thus were unaware of each other's accounts. However, like the authors of crusade histories before them, both Villehardouin and Clari utilized stereotypes which were rampant throughout previous crusade texts.

Historiography

One might assume that these arguments fit soundly into the “clash of civilizations”²⁸⁷ theory, that these stereotypes were a representation of the incompatibility of Eastern and Western civilizations, and that the Fourth Crusade was an epic, all-out war of civilizations. Modern scholars have effectively deconstructed the most simplistic of these narratives. For example, this model is based on the assumption that somehow the entirety of Western Christendom had one opinion, one plan of action against the Byzantines, who themselves were also rigid and completely unified in attitude. Different Western European nations, different leaders within the crusader armies, and different factions within those armies all maintained diplomatic relations with the Byzantine Emperor of varying warmth. Furthermore, the Byzantine emperors, as well as

²⁸⁶ Odo of Deuil. *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, p15.

²⁸⁷ See chapter One: Fourth Crusade Historiography.

factions and influential leaders within the Empire were pro or anti-Western to varying degrees throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Rather, the emphasis on stereotypes and hostile language fits well into the theory proposed by Jonathan Harris in his work *Byzantium and the Crusades*. In this work, Harris argued that the Byzantine imperial ideology and worldview, namely their belief in their right to a universal empire and their rightful control over all their former lands, led to hostile encounters between the Byzantines and crusaders. The Byzantine emperors, believing that it was correct to manipulate and lie to the crusaders if it was in service of the Empire, incurred great hostility from the western narrative authors.

Adding the Byzantine belief in the “Latin barbarian,” whose natural characteristics meant that he could not be trusted and could be manipulated, and the western stereotype of the effeminate Byzantine heretic, both of which are widely present in crusade-era primary sources, only strengthens this theory. Hostile stereotypes against the Latins clearly influenced Byzantine decision-makers, who instantly assumed that the crusading movement was intrinsically hostile to the Empire and a ploy to steal their land. They accordingly acted to minimize the freedom of movement and potential threat of the crusader armies, sowing mutual distrust. Meanwhile, the crusaders, who thought that the Byzantines would welcome them with open arms and join them, were extremely jaded after the First Crusade, and wrote their narrative accounts with this feeling of distrust and betrayal. These feelings of betrayal, combined with prior long held stereotypes of Greek treachery, led to evermore hostile encounters between the crusaders and Byzantines, who resorted to threats of violence and open warfare to acquire the supplies and monetary support they deemed fitting for such a rich Christian empire to provide.

Conclusion

Therefore, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence that crusade-era authors employed the use of hostile language and stereotypes frequently and thoroughly throughout their texts. The crusade authors depicted the Byzantines as traitorous, cowardly heretics who were hostile to the goals of the crusade. The Byzantine authors depicted the crusaders as greedy, untrustworthy barbarians who were constantly aiming to destroy the Byzantine Empire. There is direct evidence that contemporaries read these texts, and the authors were often high ranking and important figures within the governments and decision-making bodies of the Byzantine Empire and the crusade contingents. The prevalence of these stereotypes matches perfectly with Jonathan Harris' Fourth Crusade theory that the Byzantine diplomatic bureaucracy misjudged the intentions of the crusaders. They misjudged them because of the Byzantine imperial ideology, and the hostile stereotypes of barbarians was a crucial aspect of this ideology. Furthermore, the crusaders possessed their own crusade ideology and worldview, within which the Byzantines were enemies who opposed their progress repeatedly. The only way to resolve their opposition was, as evidenced by Frederick Barbarossa and Henry VI, with the use of military force. The leaders of the Fourth Crusade adhered to this idea, and the results were devastating for the Byzantines and the crusade movement.

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