

narrative together), but also many others from Neolithic Dimini to Hellenistic Delos and Morgantina.

This is a book for all who want to start to understand the whole of the glory that was Greece from its material culture. It also has good illustrations. The publishers have presented it in American English, while the silver Athenian 'owl' coin on the cover does not really convey Christopher Mee's refreshing new approach to the later centuries he covers. It's one up for the prehistorians.

Gerald Cadogan

IDENTITIES AND ALLEGIANCES IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AFTER 1204

Edited by Judith Herrin and Guillaume Saint-Guillain
Ashgate £65

For even the best informed of us, the 13th century can seem like something of a black hole in the history of Byzantium and of Greece. In 1204, the Fourth Crusade captured and plundered Constantinople and set up what has come to be known as the Latin Empire. A Flemish knight was elected to rule as emperor and a Venetian imposed as ecumenical patriarch. Many of the territories of the Byzantine empire were conquered, parcelled out and placed under the rule of western European lords, replacing a centralised empire with a patchwork of small states and lordships. Those Byzantines not wishing to accept this coup joined one of the three Greek successor states at Nicaea, Trebizond or Arta. Normal service was not resumed until 1261 when Michael VIII Palaeologos, ruler of Nicaea, retook Constantinople and restored an Orthodox patriarch to the cathedral of Hagia Sophia. Michael did not, however, succeed in putting the clock back. Large tracts of former Byzantine territory, including much of what is now Greece, remained under western, Latin rule. This fragmented and complex world has, understandably, been avoided by readers and researchers alike.

This volume of 16 essays is an attempt to make sense of the 13th century and most of their authors make use of a valuable new research tool to bring order to the chaos. As **Charlotte Roueché** explains in her introduction, the *Prosopography of the Byzantine World*, a British Academy funded research project has been based at King's College London for many years and has now placed part of its database online. Prosopography, for the uninitiated, is the collection of data on individuals and then accessing that data to discern patterns and trends. As statements of ongoing primary research, these articles are inevitably specialised and technical and not necessarily of interest to those who prefer to read about the broad sweep of history. Nevertheless, there are all kinds of fascinating details in this collection that cannot be found anywhere else.

Two articles will serve as examples. **Cécile Morrisson** presents 22 clear black and white photographs of coins and seals and does a very good job of bringing out the significance of what is written on them. During the 12th century, Byzantine emperors were perfectly happy to have simply their Christian name and the word *despotes* ('lord') on their gold coins (*hyperpera*). After 1204, the rulers of the Greek successor states, eager to prove their Byzantine credentials, generally copied early coins as closely as they could but there were minor differences. The *hyperpera* of John III Vatatzes of Nicaea (1222-1254) are very similar to those of John II Komnenos (1118-1143) except that the former added the word 'Doukas'. Unlike John II, John III of Nicaea had not been born in the purple chamber of the Great Palace in Constantinople and was therefore not a *porphyrogenitos* with an inherited right to the throne. He therefore had to enhance his credentials by stressing his kinship with an earlier Byzantine dynasty. The ruler of Epiros, another John (1237-1242), went one further and described himself on his lead seal as 'emperor and autocrat of the Romans, Komnenos, Doukas': not one previous dynasty but two, and the simple *despotes* replaced by a pair of grandiloquent titles. This John, however, was ruling over a tottering state that had recently been crushed in a disastrous battle against the Bulgarians. He spent most of his reign hunkered down in Thessalonica. The pattern seems to have been the weaker the ruler, the more he talked himself up.

Günter Prinzing focuses on a Greek manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Known now as Codex Cromwell 11, it is a collection of liturgical texts, copied in Epiros in 1225. Towards the end the scribe who wrote it had listed the names of 39 people who had recently died. Some are men and some are women, some are priests, some are laypeople. Some have recognisably Greek names, others Slavonic ones. So why did the scribe list this disparate set of names and what did they have in common? Prinzing suggests that they may have been members of a religious confraternity, something that is known to have existed in Byzantium in earlier centuries, possibly formed for the veneration of a particular icon of the Virgin Mary. If Prinzing is right, we suddenly have a glimpse into the social life of Epiros in the early 13th century, a group of obscure and politically unimportant people coming together for a common religious purpose in the mountainous hinterland of Ioannina. These are the kind of insights that prosopography can bring to the study of Byzantium.

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PRODIGAL DAUGHTER:

A Journey To Byzantium

Myrna Kostash

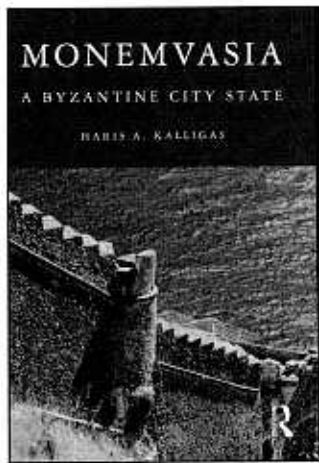
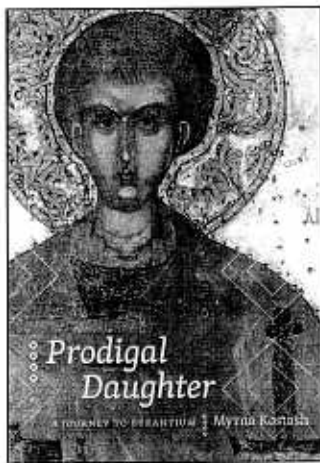
University of Alberta Press \$34.95

Short-listed for the 2011 Runciman Award

This book begins in the mid 1950s in Canada when a nine-year-old Myrna Kostash, 'a little Ukrainian-Canadian girl', is asked by her class teacher where she comes from. 'I'm Greek' is her reply. This, says Kostash, is the first link she made between her home on the Canadian prairie and her ancestral roots in the world of eastern Christianity. Some 50 years later, in the summer of 2000, during a writers' convention at St Peter's Abbey in Muenster, Canada, Kostash stumbles upon a book on the art of the Eastern Church. In the book, the icon of one particular saint – that of St Demetrius of Thessalonica – triggers an irresistible fascination which inspires the author to embark upon a quest 'to find the real Demetrius'. This leads Kostash on a ten-year quest from Edmonton to the Balkans to uncover the cultural, historical and spiritual significance of Demetrius both to herself and to the people of those lands.

In the first half of the book, 'Demetrius among the Slavs', Kostash travels through Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria in an effort to discover how different cultures have fought for the possession of the Saint. She learns that Demetrius miraculously defended the city of Thessalonica in the early 4th century and that he died a martyr defending Christianity against the pagan Slavs – those same people who later revered him. The conflicting myths and legends surrounding St Demetrius and how he is perceived by different cultures are recounted in detail through visits to churches and monasteries with particular links to the Saint, as well as interviews with academics, curators, priests and monks. The second half of the book, 'Demetrius in Byzantium', takes on a more reflective and spiritual approach as the author frequently relates her findings and experiences gained from her search for Demetrius back to her own Ukrainian, Slavic and Greek religious origins. In many senses, the book is as much a self-examination by the author as a history of St Demetrius himself.

As one would expect, Kostash frequently intersperses her book with smatterings of Byzantine and Slavic history. Important events and well-known stories, such as the mission of Saints Cyril and Methodius to the Slavs, are carefully interwoven with the history of St Demetrius and that of the lands in which he is venerated. The author also has a good eye for humour and amusing anecdotes, such as that of Onesiphoros, the miserly sexton of the Basilica in Thessalonica who was reprimanded by St Demetrius for stealing candles, are retold in such a way as to make the book an agreeable read. These lively accounts, coupled with astute observations and interviews with experts on St Demetrius, do much to make the book come alive. Kostash's meetings with various eccentric academics in smoke-filled communist-era cafés, or trips to remote monasteries in the pouring rain, are in many ways more enthralling than the legends of Demetrius himself. On reading *A Prodigal*



Daughter, the reader is rewarded with a vivid picture of the lands through which Kostash is travelling – not just the religion and medieval history of those regions, but how they exist today in their modern post-Soviet guises. Although the Balkan cities Kostash visits seem to be almost always gray and dreary, her appreciation of the culture of these regions and respect for the intellect of the many people and institutions she visits shines through the drab exterior with which she is often confronted. It is the connection of the Balkan people to the unbroken lineage of Eastern Christianity which really attracts Kostash to their history and to that of St Demetrius.

Although *A Prodigal Daughter* may appear like a slightly unusual concept for a book, Kostash does an admirable job of placing the post-Soviet Balkan states, and the martyrdom of a Byzantine saint, against the rich backdrop of Eastern Christianity. As one would expect from a book that took ten years to complete, Kostash's work is well-researched and would be of interest to an academic as well as general readership.

The author's highly-acclaimed *All of Baba's Children*, published in 1977, examined the Ukrainian ethnic identity in Canada: her newest book goes a step further and helps remind the western-European world of the importance of Byzantium both in the past and the present.

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**MONEMVASIA:
A Byzantine City State**
Haris A. Kalligas
Routledge £65

Haris Kalligas is well equipped to write this synthesis. Trained initially as an architect, she took her doctorate in history at King's College, London, under the supervision of Donald Nicol, who was Steven Runciman's last pupil. The fruit of this research was her ground-breaking *Byzantine Monemvasia: the Sources* (Monemvasia, 1990). Together with her husband, she has dedicated her life towards helping to restore the houses of the lower town, as well as hosting a delightful series of annual seminars, (*Monemvasiotikos Homilos*), attended on two occasions by this reviewer.

The present book tells the story of the evolution of this Peloponnesian town from around 600 AD, when supposedly it was founded, to the Greek War of Independence. The author illustrates with telling detail what Kevin Andrews in his *Castles of the Morea* (Princeton, 1953; repr. 2006) calls 'its history, repetitious to the point of constancy, standing out among the long fluctuations of wars and foreign invasions like a sea-mark in a tide pulling now East, now West, always the last corner of Greece to succumb to its successive conquerors'. Kalligas recounts the long sieges of the Byzantine town by the Frankish conquerors of the Peloponnese (c. 1247-1252) and of the Turkish-occupied town by the Venetians in 1687-1690, as well as other attacks and incidents as the town passed through successively Byzantine, Frankish, Byzantine again, Papal, Venetian, Turkish, Venetian again, Turkish again and then finally Greek control.

The final chapter describes the monumental remains to be

found in both the upper and lower town. Given her familiarity with the archaeological and restoration work ongoing since the late 1960s, it is not surprising that this chapter is an exemplary account of many of the town's buildings, secular and ecclesiastical, on the acropolis and in the lower town. Regrettably, however, the work contains no plans, of the lower town in particular, and hence no key to the buildings discussed in the text. Furthermore, the only map of the city and its hinterland is to all intents and purposes illegible (p. xiv). Nevertheless, the book is well-annotated and illustrated, although the publisher's editors are to be reprehended for their failure *passim* to correct solecisms arising from the author's writing in a second language.

Three features stand out in Kalligas' telling of the story. The first is the account, contained in the *Middle Byzantine Chronicle of Monemvasia*, that the town was founded by refugees fleeing from Sparta. Myth or not, the story provided the foundation for the considerable ecclesiastical and fiscal privileges that the town enjoyed throughout its mediaeval history, supported by the relevant document, sometimes forged. Another feature is the irony that Monemvasia became a mediaeval naval power despite having an inferior harbour. On several occasions a besieging fleet had to move to the fjord-like harbour of Hierax to the north because there was no safe anchorage at Monemvasia. Finally, Kalligas shows how important the adjacent mainland hinterland was to the town, a territory which enabled Monemvasia to be called a 'city state.'

Ultimately, however, the town depended upon its near-impregnable natural position, augmented by the formidable fortifications of the acropolis and the lower town. For Kazantzakis in his *Travels in Greece* (Oxford, 1966) this 'hulk of granite [was the] Gibraltar of Greece. At night it seemed to me a terrible beast lying in wait; today in the light of dawn it gleamed above the water like a monstrous anvil.' Written in September 1937, this description does not, however, testify to what perhaps were Monemvasia's greatest challenges after 1830, namely desolation and depopulation. Here fittingly Runciman is the most appropriate witness. Monemvasia was the first place he visited in Greece in 1924; years later, he wrote in his introduction to *Byzantine Monemvasia: the Sources* that he found 'the town that straggled on its lower southern slope was a sad place, with many of the old houses in decay. The former inhabitants had left or were leaving to enjoy the better amenities provided by a village that was being developed on the mainland.' Now, thanks in part to Kalligas and her husband, many of the houses have been restored and the lower town has become a vibrant community. Her book, therefore, commemorates a fascinating long history and a modern 'renaissance' town.

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**BYZANTIUM AND VENICE, 1204-1453:
COLLECTED STUDIES**

Julian Chrysostomides

Edited by Michael Heslop and Charalambos Dendrinos
Ashgate £80

This volume is a collection of articles, bringing together 40 years of research by the late Julian Chrysostomides. The former director of the Hellenic Institute at Royal Holloway, University of London, made significant contributions to the study of Late Byzantium and Latin-held Greece. Foremost among them stand the editions of primary sources, such as the collection of documents on the 14th- and 15th-century Peloponnese (*Monumenta Peloponnesiaca*), and Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos' *Funeral Oration* on his brother Theodore.

The works presented in this volume can be broadly divided in two groups. Firstly, those dealing with the negotiations between John V Palaiologos and Venice in the 1370s, regarding loans and the cession of the island of Tenedos, which eventually sparked the devastating War of Chioggia between Venice and Genoa (Nos. I, II, XI; the latter published here for the first time). The second and largest group of articles examines various aspects of Venetian and Florentine presence in the Peloponnese, and the Italians' relations with the native population (IV-X). Outside those two groups, but relevant to both, stands