

Zitierhinweis

Chrysovalantis Kyriacou: Rezension von: Ludivine Voisin: Les monastères grecs sous domination latine (XIIIe-XVIe siècles). Comme un loup poursuivant un mouton, Turnhout: Brepols 2021, in sehepunkte 22 (2022), Nr. 2 [15.02.2022],
URL:<http://www.sehepunkte.de/2022/02/36209.html>



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Ludivine Voisin: Les monastères grecs sous domination latine (XIII-XVI siècles)

Ludivine Voisin has produced a well-written, updated and systematic exploration of Greek monasticism under Latin domination between the late twelfth / early thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. By "Greek monasticism", the author describes Greek-speaking monasticism of the Chalcedonian rite (23), which could be also described as "Byzantine Orthodox" or "Rhomaic". The vast geographical area covered in the book - stretching from Southern Italy to the Holy Land but mainly focusing on mainland Greece, the Aegean and Cyprus - highlights Voisin's broad perspective and synthetic approach.

The book - a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation, under the supervision of Professor Gilles Grivaud at the University of Rouen - is divided in five chapters. The Introduction sets the scene by tracing the emergence and development of historiography on the medieval Greek world under Latin domination. Voisin clearly states the key question behind her research: "Comment évoluent les monastères grecs dans des cadres politiques, sociaux, religieux, économiques et culturels différents de ceux de l'époque byzantine?" (23). Chapter One is a survey of the religious, social and legal structures of Greek-Latin societies from the Crusades to the Ottoman conquest, touching upon issues such as religious life, ecclesiastical organisation, the general establishment of a *modus vivendi* and feudalism. Chapter Two examines the status, administration and organisation of Greek monasteries, stressing the elements of institutional continuity and autonomy. The economic role of Greek monasteries and the fate of their property after the Latin conquest are the main themes covered in Chapter Three. Various social and cultural aspects of Greek monasticism are discussed in Chapter Four, including confraternities, the functioning of double monasteries for both monks and nuns, and literary production and transmission. Chapter Five concentrates on Greek monasticism between the spiritual authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Papacy, and its gradual integration into the Universal Roman Church.

The Conclusion summarises Voisin's findings and main argument: "En résumé, l'institution monastique ne subit que peu d'altération, non pas du fait de sa résistance, mais plutôt de sa capacité à dépasser les frontières mentales et à s'adapter aux changements conjoncturels" (402). The historical analysis is followed and enriched by the edition of three hitherto unpublished documents in Latin: (a) a letter of Pope Honorius III to the abbot of Saint Nicholas of Casole (1218); (b) a Venetian decree on the co-habitation of monks and nuns in Crete (1402); and (c) a Venetian decree on the rights of the Greek clergy concerning funerals (1490). A two-page map (406-407) shows the location (ascertained or hypothetical) of Greek monasteries in mainland Greece, the Aegean and Cyprus. The book closes with a lengthy bibliography (409-440) and an index.

One of the book's merits is that it focuses on both continuities and discontinuities in Greek monasticism for most of the long period of Latin domination in the Eastern Mediterranean. Although Venetian rule after ca. 1600 in Crete, the Morea and the Ionians is not discussed, Voisin's presentation of the subject is more than satisfactory in both chronological and spatial terms. The author takes full advantage of earlier and more recently-published primary sources in Greek, Latin and Venetian, especially the papal *bullaria* concerning Cyprus and the other Greek lands. The value of this last category of sources is that it places Greek monasticism within a more "globalised" framework of Latin Christian supervision and control that still left room for ritual and cultural diversity. Voisin shows an in-depth knowledge of the Byzantine monastic institutions and social structures. By doing so, she is able to critically evaluate the new order in which Greek monasteries had to operate after the Third and Fourth Crusades. The author approaches medieval Greek people under Latin rule with sympathy, underlying

their ability to adapt and survive outside the political control of Byzantium. Voisin's inclusive viewpoint is also reflected in the attention she pays to the social / religious role and activities of nuns and laywomen in largely male-dominated societies.

"La 'légende noire' de la papauté en Orient" (327) has been rightly criticised by a number of scholars since the last decade of the twentieth century, including Jean Richard, Benjamin Arbel, Chris Schabel, Gilles Grivaud, and others. Voisin's book follows this revisionist line of scholarship, convincingly arguing against the gloomy picture painted by national historiography. But although the book, like a second mythical *Argo*, sails through the Clashing Rocks "du discours néo-colonialiste ou néo-orthodoxe" (24), it sometimes gives the impression of replacing this dark image with golden age of *Convivencia*.

While Voisin's choice to speak of medieval "Greeks" and "Hellenism" rests on a long scholarly tradition, it implicitly and unintentionally disconnects her Latin-ruled Greeks from their Byzantine "motherland", offering a simplistic view of rather complex issues concerning Byzantine identity/ies. [1] This paradoxical de-contextualisation runs throughout the book. Towards the end of the Introduction (23), the author declares her intention to explore the mentalities, practices and, ultimately, identity of Greek monasticism under the Latins. To do so, one would expect the book to discuss at greater length the symbolic boundaries (be they doctrinal or liturgical) employed in the identity preservation / adaptation process of the Greek populations under examination. If there was no anti-Latin resistance, for example, why did the Greeks insist so much in preserving their rites and customs? If doctrinal and ritual differences between the Old and New Rome did not matter, how are we to interpret Greek perceptions of Latin doctrines or ritual practices as "heretical" and "impure"?

What is missing from Voisin's narrative is a fuller investigation of the boundary-maintenance mechanisms that transformed Greek monastic communities - masterfully portrayed as social nuclei, economic units and cultural centres - into "communities of faith". Constantinople, the distant yet beating heart of Byzantium and Orthodox Christianity, is only a background shadow in the book, with no substantial influence over the former Byzantine lands. A detailed presentation of hesychast networks in the Eastern Mediterranean, building on patriarchal documents, personal letters, hagiographical texts and manuscript repertoires, would have shown that this does not reflect reality. Reconstructing the dynamic activities of such Constantinople-centred nexus would have enabled the author to re-evaluate the involvement of Anthimos of Athens and Joseph Bryennios in Cretan affairs, putting under the microscope local groups of anti-Latin theologians and scholars. [2] The reader is also left wondering why the analysis of Cyprus excludes key sources supporting the book's argument of ritual, cultural and institutional continuity under the Latins, as well as the development of boundary-maintenance mechanisms. [3] The absence from bibliography of major studies on Greek monasticism and religious culture should be noted. [4]

Despite these weaknesses, the book succeeds in solidly reconstructing the historical background behind the continuation, adaptation and evolution of Greek monasticism *après Byzance*. It is an *instrumentum* of the outmost importance for scholars working on the Crusades, Late Byzantium, Latin and Orthodox Christianity, and Venetian colonialism. The author is praiseworthy for embarking on such an ambitious and laborious project, providing a kaleidoscopic analysis of a highly complex subject.

Notes :

[1] E.g., Anthony Kaldellis: *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge 2009; Yannis Stouraitis: *Reinventing Roman Ethnicity in High and Late Medieval Byzantium*, in: *Medieval Worlds* 5 (2017), 70-94; Shay Eshel: *The Concept of the Elect Nation in Byzantium*, Leiden / Boston 2018; Olga Katsiardi-Hering / Anastasia Papadia-Lala / Katerina Nikolaou / Vangelis Karamanolakis (eds.): *Ἑλλην, Ρωμῆς, Γραικός. Συλλογικοί προσδιορισμοί και ταυτότητες*,

Athens 2018; Anthony Kaldellis: *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*, Cambridge, MA 2019.

[2] Nikolaos B. Tomadakis: *Ο Ιωσήφ Βρυέννιος και η Κρήτη κατά το 1400*. Μελέτη ιστορική και φιλολογική, Athens 1947; H       Bazini: *Une premi  re   dition des   uvres de Joseph Bryennios: les Trait  s addresses aux Cr  tois*, in: *Revue des   tudes Byzantines* 62 (2004), 83-132; Georgios K. Papazoglou: *Ιωσήφ Φιλ  γρης    Φιλ  γριος. Ένας λόγιος Κρητικός ιερωμένος και αριστοτελικός σχολιαστής του 14 ου αιώνα*. Συμβολή στην ιστορία της Βενετοκρατίας στην Κρήτη, Komotini 2008; Eleonora Kountoura-Galake, Niki Koutrakou: *Ο Άνθιμος Αθηνών, πρόεδρος Κρήτης, και οι αντιθετικές τάσεις Ορθόδοξης συσπείρωσης και διάσπασης στην Ύστερη Βυζαντινή εποχή*. Μια προσέγγιση μέσω των λογίων αγιολογικών κειμένων, in: *Θησαυρίσματα* 41-42 (2011-2012) 341-359.

[3] Costas N. Constantinides (ed.): *ΗΔιήγησις της Θαυματουργής Εικόνας της Θεοτόκου Ελεούσας του Κύκκου κατά τον ελληνικό κώδικα 2313 του Βατικανού*, Nicosia 2002; Appendices I-III in Chrysovalantis Kyriacou: *Orthodox Cyprus under the Latins, 1191-1571: Society, Spirituality, and Identities*, New York / London 2018, 233-250 (this work is only cited once at 17n30); Chrysovalantis Kyriacou (ed.): *Κυπροβενετικά*. Στοιχεία θρησκευτικής ανθρωπογεωγραφίας της βενετοκρατούμενης Κύπρου από τον κώδικα B-030 του Πολιτιστικού Ιδρύματος Τράπεζας Κύπρου. Εισαγωγή, διπλωματική έκδοση, μετάφραση και σχόλια, Nicosia 2019; Chrysovalantis Kyriacou: *Christian Diversity in Late Venetian Cyprus. A Study and English Translation of Codex B-030 from the Collections of the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation*, Nicosia 2020.

[4] Apart from the studies mentioned above, see Ioannis A. Eliades (ed.): *Maniera Cypria. The Cypriot Painting of the 13 th Century between Two Worlds*, Nicosia 2017; Graham Speake: *A History of the Athonite Commonwealth: the Spiritual and Cultural Diaspora of Mount Athos*, Cambridge 2018; Ioannis A. Eliades (ed.): *Palaeologan Reflections in the Art of Cyprus (1261-1489)*, Nicosia 2019; Alice-Mary Talbot: *Varieties of Monastic Experience in Byzantium, 800-1453*, Notre Dame 2019; Bernard Hamilton / Andrew Jotischky: *Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States*, Cambridge 2020.