

# Is there any room on the Bosphorus for a Latin lady?

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The title seems to suggest that it was Western Europe that stood on the Byzantine door-step in the role of a petitioner. But such was not the case. As a matter of fact in the time of the Palaiologoi it was the Byzantine Empire that was interested in arranging marriages with Latin ladies.<sup>1</sup> There was no risk of kinship because there were hardly any connections between the Western and Byzantine families (the Gattilusio and Montferrat families are an exception here). Therefore the crucial issue was the difference of Creeds, which made the papal dispensation necessary, even though the condition was sometimes ignored.

The Byzantine Empire did not welcome family connections with the West. But I do not need to remind the reader that Constantine Porphyrogenitus accepted marriages with the so-called Franks as the people of the same religion.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, the schism of 1054 changed the status of mixed marriages. The parties involved regarded each other as heretics and schismatics. The scholars tend to point out a particular nuance, that is to say, the fact that no council ever called the Latins heretics, even though they were regarded as such.<sup>3</sup> The temporary rapprochement between the two sides during the preparations for and the actual time of the Union of Lyons (1274) and the Union of Florence (1439) overcame the obstacles only for a short time.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a modest summary of my post-doctoral dissertation: *Łacinniczki nad Bosforem. Małżeństwa bizantyńsko-łacińskie w cesarskiej rodzinie Paleologów (XIII-XV w.)* [The Latin Ladies on the Bosphorus. Byzantine-Latin Marriages in the Imperial Family of the Palaiologoi (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)], Łódź 1996. I am indebted to my sister, Dr. Dorota Filipczak for the English version of this article. The text summarises the state of knowledge as it was when I was closing my dissertation (namely, in 1994) I had an opportunity to present this paper due to the invitation of Professor Andrew Louth during the 36<sup>th</sup> Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies „Was Byzantium Orthodox?“ As a new department has been operating at the University of Lodz for three years (its name is Department of European and Levantine History in the Middle Ages) I would like to bring this text to the reader's attention, hoping that new developments that have been happening in the field will be informed by the awareness of my research in the first half of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>2</sup> *Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, De administrando imperio*, ed. Gy. Moravcsik, vol. I, Budapest 1949, 70-72. Cf. J. SHEPARD, *Aspects of Byzantine attitude towards the West in the tenth and eleventh centuries*, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 13 (1988) 67-118.

<sup>3</sup> This is emphasized, for example, by D. M. NICOL, *Symbiosis and Integration. Some Greek-Latin Families in Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979) 122.

Undoubtedly the time of Palaiologoi was the apogee for mixed marriages in spite of the Fourth Crusade which should have given enough reasons to stop them. However, the situation of the Empire was particularly difficult. Threatened by the Latins in the first place and then by the Turks, the Empire could not face the danger on its own. Taking advantage of the antagonisms in the Western world, the Empire gained the support of some Latin people in the conflict with the other Latins. Faced with the threat of Turkish invasion, the Empire sought allies in the divided Christian world, where the schism was not considered a major obstacle.

Out of fifteen imperial matches (since Michael VIII till Constantine XI) nine were concluded with the Latin ladies. I considered two matches of Constantine XI when he was a Despot. My research also involved marriages, which were planned and not realized (for example the intended union of Michael IX with Catherine de Courtenay<sup>4</sup>). Nine other Byzantine-Latin marriages were arranged within the imperial family (Emperor's children and siblings). This gives us the total of eighteen matches. The so-called "marriage geography" is very interesting. The Latin brides for the Emperors were: Anne of Hungary, Yolanda of Montferrat, Rita of Lesser Armenia, Adelaide of Brunswick, Anne of Savoy, Eugenia Gattilusio, Sophia of Montferrat, Magdalene Tocco and Catherine Gattilusio.<sup>5</sup>

Their origin shows that this was not exactly the most attractive choice to make. Therefore, it is particularly important to answer the question

<sup>4</sup> Byzantium needed this match in order to avoid the claims that were laid to Constantinople by the family of Courtenay, the previous rulers of the Latin Empire. The marriage was not concluded. Catherine married Charles of Valois, brother of Philip IV, King of France, which revived the French claims to Constantinople. Cf. G. BRATIANU, *Notes sur le projet de mariage entre l'empereur Michel IX Paleologue et Catherine de Courtenay (1288-1295)*, *Revue Historique du Sud-Est Européen* 1 (1924) 59-63.

<sup>5</sup> Anne of Hungary was Andronikos II's (1282-1328) first wife, Yolanda of Montferrat was the second. Andronikos' son, Michael IX (1294-1320) married Rita of Lesser Armenia. Their son Andronikos III (1328-1341) had two Latin wives: Adelaide of Brunswick, and then Anne of Savoy. Eugenia Gattilusio became a wife of John VII (1390), Sophia of Montferrat was John VIII's (1425-1448) second spouse. Constantine XI (1448-1453) was married as a Despot, first to Magdalene Tocco and then to Catherine Gattilusio. As to the matches within the close Imperial family, Andronikos II's niece, Maria, became a wife to a Catalan commander, Roger de Flor. His companions took over the Duchy of Athens in 1311. Andronikos' son, Theodore of Montferrat, married a Genoese lady, Argentina Spinola. Andronikos III's sister, Anna, became the second wife of a Venetian, Nicolas Orsini, Count of Cephalonia and then Despot of Epiros. Andronikos' daughter, Maria, married Francesco Gattilusio, rather a Genoese pirate than a noble. He became a lord of Lesbos. John V's (1341-1390) son, Theodore I, Despot at Mistra, married Bartholomea Acciaiuoli, daughter of Nerio, Florentine ruler of Duchy of Athens. Manuel II's (1391-1425) illegitimate daughter, Isabella, became the wife to a Genoese, Hilario Doria. Manuel's son, Theodore II, Despot at Mistra, married Cleope Malatesta, the daughter of the Count of Rimini, connected with the Papal State. Their daughter, Helena, married John of Lusignan, King of Cyprus; Manuel's youngest son, Thomas, Despot in the Morea, married Catherine, daughter of Centurione Zaccaria, Genoese Prince of Achaia.



what were the advantages of these matches. However, this is beyond the scope of my paper, later on I will go back to the problem in order to show who profited by particular arrangements. The aim of my research was to reconstruct the collective portrait of the Latin ladies. While respecting the points made by Ch. DIEHL, D. NICOL and then by Lynda GARLAND, I did not want to follow the same pattern, specifically because it consisted in retelling the biographies of particular Empresses.<sup>6</sup>

In the time of the Palaiologoi the Empire desperately needed the political support rather than hunted dowries.<sup>7</sup> The Byzantine rulers looked out for fathers-in-law of considerable power and influence. At first glance the matrimonial geography of these matches does not seem to confirm it. But, when we explore the background, we shall see other powers involved, namely Genoese and Venetian nouveaux-riches who made fortunes on matchmaking.

The importance of marriages could be seen in spectacular embassies. The crucial issue was not only providing the Empire with an heir who could guarantee the survival of the dynasty. What mattered was gaining an ally on the political stage.<sup>8</sup> It is possible to recreate the membership con-

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My interests overlap with the field of several scholars, but mainly with D. M. Nicol and A. Laiou. Prof. Nicol examined the marriage policies of Epiros and proved that out of eleven women in the Epirotic dynasty, eight married Latin men. Cf. D. M. NICOL, *Mixed Marriages in Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century*, in: *Studies in Church History*, vol. I, London 1964; *Byzantium, Its Ecclesiastical History and the Relations with the Western World*, London, Variorum Reprints 1972, IV, 160-161. A. Laiou wrote a great deal about the institution of marriage and the role of women in Byzantium. Cf. for example: A. LAIOU, *Mariage, amour et parenté à Byzance aux XI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Travaux et Mémoires 7 (1992); eadem, *Gender, Society and Economic Life in Byzantium*, Hampshire, Variorum Reprints 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Ch. DIEHL, *Figures byzantines*, vol. I-II, Paris 1925-1927; idem, *Imperatrices de Byzance*, Paris 1959; *The Byzantine Lady. Ten Portraits 1250-1500*, D. M. Nicol (ed.), Cambridge 1994; L. GARLAND, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and power in Byzantium A.D. 527-1204*, London 1999. Both Diehl and Nicol referred to Yolanda of Montferrat and Anne of Savoy, who are best represented in the sources. The latest book by L. Garland focuses on the earlier epoch, and the author imitated the model of writing chapters as biographies of successive Empresses.

<sup>7</sup> The importance of dowry has been the subject of detailed analysis, to mention only: D. HERLIHY, *The „Medieval Marriage Market“*, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976) (reprint in: *The Social History of Italy and Western Europe 700-1500*. Collected Studies, London Variorum Reprints 1978, XIV3-27); D. E. QUELLER – T. F. MADDEN, *Father of the Bride: Fathers, Daughters and Dowries in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Venice*, *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993) 685-711; Ch. KLAPISCH-ZUBER, *Le complexe de Griselda. Dots et dons de mariage au Quattrocento*, in: *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 94, 1 (1982) 7-43. For Byzantium the dowry meant also regaining the territories that had been taken away by the Latins, for example the Kingdom of Thessalonica or the Principality of Achaia.

<sup>8</sup> There is an interesting treatise on this matter by Manuel II Palaiologos. It has the form of a conversation between the Emperor and the Empress Mother. The Empress emphasizes two basic advantages of contracting a match that is having an heir and eliminating pretenders to the throne. Cf.: *Manuel Paleologos, Dialogum dematrimonio*, ed. C. Bevegini, Università di Catania 1983. Cf. M. DĄBROWSKA, *Ought One to Marry? Manuel Palaiologos' Point of View*, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 31, 2 (2007) 146-156.



nected with particular marriage negotiations. By way of example, I will mention previous Patriarch Germanos and megadux Lascaris who escorted the Hungarian wife for Andronikos II or parakoimomenos Andronikos Tornikes and great kubikularios Jean Gibelet who negotiated the marriage of Anne of Savoy with Andronikos III.<sup>9</sup> The Dominican friars often acted as interpreters for the parties involved.<sup>10</sup> The obvious origin was Pera, the Latin district of Constantinople as in the case of Joannes Angelos, dispatched to France to contract the marriage between Michael IX and Catherine de Courtenay. The mission, however, was a failure not because of his fault.

Marriage contracts have not come down to us but it is possible to recreate some marital arrangements, for example, that between Yolanda of Montferrat and Andronikos II. As a result of the conquest of Thessalonica by Boniface of Montferrat during the Fourth Crusade, the Montferrat family laid claims to the city. In order to solve the problem, Yolanda gave up Thessalonica which was her dowry. In return, the Emperor paid a substantial sum of money.<sup>11</sup> Thus the marriage put an end to the conflict over Thessalonica. The actual union with Yolanda did not cause any problem, because her father, the Marquis of Montferrat had been excommunicated by the Pope which made the dispensation unnec-

<sup>9</sup> Georgios Pachymeres, *De Michaelē et Andronico Paleologis*, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (further CSHB), ed. I. Bekker, vol. I, Bonnae 1835, 318. The participation of a prominent clergyman in the embassy provided it with a particular significance. Michael Lascaris was not an accidental choice for this mission. He was Theodore I Lascaris' brother. Theodore's daughter, Maria, married Bela IV, King of Hungary. This couple's son, Stephen V was now on the way to be the Emperor's father-in-law. As for the second, Byzantine-Latin embassy, cf.: *Joannes Cantacuzenus*, *Historia*, CSHB, vol. I, ed. L. Schopen, Bonnae 1928, 194-195.

<sup>10</sup> M.-H. CONGOURDEAU, *Notes sur les dominicains de Constantinople au debut du 14<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Revue des études byzantines* 45 (1987) 179. The Byzantine Dominican Friars can be mentioned in the context of their role in the marriage negotiations concerning John VIII Palaiologos and Sophia of Montferrat. Cf.: R.-J. LOENERTZ, *Les dominicains byzantins Théodore et André Chrysobergès et les négociations pour l'union des Églises grecque et latine de 1415-1430*, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 9 (1939) 27.

<sup>11</sup> Pachymeres, op. cit., vol. II, 87-88; Nicephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina historia*, CSHB, vol. I, ed. L. Schopen, Bonnae 1829, 167-168. Neither of them is explicit about the transfer of rights to Thessalonica to Byzantium, however, the Byzantinists are convinced. Cf. S. RUNCIMAN, *Thessalonica and Montferrat Inheritance*, Gregorios 'o Palamas 42 (1959) 27-34. D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady...*, 49. The Latin chronicler is discreet in this matter but he speaks about the rights to Montferrat inherited by Andronikos' son, Theodore. Cf. Galeotto del Carretto, *Cronaca di Monferrato*, Monumenta Historiae Patriae Scriptorum, vol. 3, Torino 1848, 1163. The transfer of rights to Thessalonica seems to have been the Byzantine initiative, whereas the Latin initiative was the transfer of north-western Peloponnesus to Constantine XI, at that time the Despot. Carlo Tocco, defeated by Constantine, offered these lands as a dowry of his daughter Magdalene. Cf. Georgios Phrantzes, *Annales*, CSHB, ed. I. Bekker, Bonnae 1838, 129. This fragment of Sphrantzes is incorporated into Melissenos' chronicle. A. ZAKYTHINOS, *Le despote grec de Morée (1262-1460)*, vol. I, Histoire politique, Paris 1932, 205.



essary.<sup>12</sup> The example shows the extent to which the Latin-Byzantine unions were possible, because it was quite easy to bypass the papal authority. Still, the Latin ladies came to the Orthodox world, and were supposed to bring up their children in the religion which was not their own. Most of them had to change their Creed in the same way that they changed their names. Only very few of them such as Anne of Hungary and Sophia of Montferrat were allowed to stick to the Catholic faith but that was in the time of preparations for the Church Union.

Thus the Western ladies had to close the door of the Latin world and face Byzantinisation which involved, among other things, worshipping God according to different rituals. They were not entirely unwilling to do so. What is more, some of them, e.g. Anne of Savoy disappointed the Pope who hoped for her husband's conversion. The aggressive propaganda against Byzantium spread in the West did not help matters. But it does not seem probable that Anne was affected by the views of people like Brocardus who referred to the agreement with Greeks as the feeding of vipers and scorpions. He named Anne's husband Andronicos III a hypocrite, a liar and a drunkard who had forced Anne to enter the marriage.<sup>13</sup> Obviously, this was not the case. Paradoxically, Anne turned out to be the most Byzantine of all the Latin Empresses. Undoubtedly, this was partly the result of the fact that she was the regent.<sup>14</sup> Such situations make it impossible to support the view presented by former scholars such as VILLIER, who attributed the break up between Sophia of Montferrat and John VIII to the religious difference.<sup>15</sup> This marriage was concluded in

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<sup>12</sup> William V of Montferrat, Yolanda's father, was involved in the conspiracy which led to the Sicilian Vespers. He was excommunicated just like Peter III of Aragon but, as Runciman states, he did not feel the need to be reconciled to Rome. S. RUNCIMAN, *op. cit.*, 30-31.

<sup>13</sup> Brocardus, *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*, Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens, II, Paris 1906, 423-431. The text was meant for Philip VI, King of France, Charles of Valois' son. Charles' wife was Catherine of Courtenay, the heiress of Latin Emperors. Brocardus propagates the expedition to Constantinople, which he considers as necessity and the question of honor. According to him, the blood of the French killed in 1261 should be avenged (*ibidem*, 445). Of course, he exaggerates, because most Frenchmen fled and the inhabitants of Constantinople opened the gates to Michael VIII's army.

<sup>14</sup> The rumour that Anne went back to Catholicism cannot be proved and does not seem likely. Cf. D. MURATORE, *Una principessa sabauda sul trono a Bisanzio. Giovanna di Savoia, Imperatrice Anna Paleologina*, Chambery 1909, 324-325. As a Catholic regent she would not have been able to cooperate with a Patriarch. Before her death she entered the Byzantine nunnery and changed her name to Anastasia. Cf. D. M. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady...*, 94; S. ORIGONE, *Giovanna. Latina a Bisanzio*, Milano 1999, 49.

<sup>15</sup> M. VILLIER, *L'union des églises entre Grecs et Latins depuis concile de Lyon jusqu'à celui de Florence (1274-1439)*, VIII, *Les auxiliaires de l'union*, Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique 18 (1922) 44. Villier is not insightful. Even the Genoese chroniclers claimed that the failure of Sophia's marriage was caused by religious differences. Cf. *Georges et Joannes Stella, Annales Genuenses*, ed. G. Petti Balbi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 17, II, Bologna 1975, 302. I cannot agree with this view. Sophia's disfigured face



the time preceding the Church Union. It was not Sophia's attachment to Catholicism that proved essential but her disfigured face which resulted in her rejection. So this was the private tragedy of the couple rather than a political discord. The conclusion is that religion was not so important as diplomatic business.

The Latin community was not homogenous. Some of the newcomers arrived directly from the West, for example, the exotic lady Adelaide of Brunswick. The antipapal attitude of her family was a serious advantage for Byzantium.<sup>16</sup> But other ladies were the descendants of Latin families from the Aegean region, for example, the ladies from the Genoese family of Gattilusio settled on Lesbos or from the Venetian family of Tocco connected with Epiros and Cephalonia. The Gattilusio ladies were wives of John VII and Constantine XI, while Magdalene Tocco was the second wife of the last Emperor. It can be said that the ladies born in the Aegean area had already been hellenized, which means, among others, that they spoke Greek.<sup>17</sup> The ones who had come from the West were supposed to learn it. They must have been pretty good at it, if Yolanda of Montferrat quarreled with her husband ignoring the courtly ritual. This is what Gregoras, the historian of those times, could not forgive her.<sup>18</sup> It seems therefore that when in Church, the Latin ladies understood the Byzantine

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was an obvious reason for her being neglected. Ducas was most outspoken on the subject. Cf. *Ducas, Historia byzantina*, CSHB, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1834, 100-101; M. DĄBROWSKA, *Sophia of Montferrat or the History of One Face*, in: *Acta Universitatis Lodzensis, Folia Historica* 56 (1996) 177-199.

<sup>16</sup> She was not so exotic as she might be seen. Her grandmother was Alasia of Montferrat, William V's sister and Yolanda's of Montferrat aunt. The chronicler of Brunswick calls her Adelaide. Cf. *Cronica ducorum de Brunswick*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores qui vernacula lingua usi sunt, vol. 2, Deutsche Chroniken und andere Geschichtsbücher des Mittelalters, Hannover 1877, 584. Runciman thinks that it was Yolanda who arranged marriage for her stepson's son. S. RUNCIMAN, *The Marriages of the Sons of the Emperor Manuel II*, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 1 (1980) (= *Miscellanea Agostino Pertusi*, vol. I, Bologna 1980), 275. The view is difficult to accept as Yolanda did not like her stepson at all. Byzantium really valued the connections of Brunswick with antipapal Hohenstaufen and the fact that Adelaide's father, Prince Henry, was excommunicated by the Pope John XXII. The Church's permission for the mixed marriage was not necessary. P. ZIMMERMANN, *Das Haus Braunschweig-Grubenhagen. Ein genealogisch-biographische Versuch*, Wolfenbüttel 1911, 2.

<sup>17</sup> J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES, *Italian Women in Greece in the late Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries*, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 2 (1982) (= *Miscellanea Agostino Pertusi*, vol. II, Bologna 1982), 119-132. The Author complains of the lack of sources on the so-called "colonial" women. Their knowledge of Greek seems indisputable.

<sup>18</sup> *Gregoras*, op. cit., vol. I, 235. Yolanda's son, Theodore, recalls his mother reading the Bible in Greek. Cf. *Les enseignements de Théodore de Montferrat*, ed. Ch. Knowles, London 1983, 30. Theodore himself, transferred the knowledge of Greek to the court of Montferrat. M. DĄBROWSKA, *Family Ethos at the Court of the Palaiologos in the light of the testimony by Theodore of Montferrat*, in: *Byzantina et Slavica Cracoviensia* 2, ed. A. Różycka-Bryzek and M. Salamon, Cracow 1994, 73-81.



liturgy.<sup>19</sup> There is no evidence that they suffered because of cultural and religious differences. Time was an important factor here. Having left the West at a very young age, they spent most of their lifetime in Byzantium. Most of them fulfilled their basic duty. They gave birth to an heir. Their maternal role consumed most of their time. In spite of their familiarity with the Byzantine world, it was too difficult for them to see through the courtly intrigues, let alone get involved in them. The exception is Anne of Savoy, who was given a special possibility as a regent on behalf of John V but this resulted in disastrous consequences. The same situation applies earlier to Yolanda of Montferrat, who was Andronikos II's second wife, and therefore her major concern was to secure her children's rights.<sup>20</sup>

It is difficult to say how the Latin ladies passed their time in Byzantium when they did not take part in the Imperial or Church ceremonies. And yet each of them spent quite some time in Byzantium. The amount of time can be calculated in most cases. Anne of Hungary died after 9 years in the Empire, Yolanda spent 34 years there, Rita of Lesser Armenia – 38 years, Adelaide of Brunswick – 7, Anne of Savoy – 38, Eugenia Gattilusio – 43 years, but she was the woman from the Hellenic context so the discrepancy between the world of her childhood and the world of her adulthood was negligible. Unfortunate Sophia of Montferrat spent only 6 years in the Empire and was the only one who left.

In spite of the silence of the sources, it can be said that the years spent in Byzantium were not the time of discomfort for the Latin ladies. Only one of them, Rita of Lesser Armenia, who retired to the nunnery after her husband's death, as was the usual custom, took the name Xene that is the Foreign One. All the ladies were foreign so what was the reason for her feeling of foreignness? It was neither political nor religious but private. She disagreed with her own son Andronikos III, and adopted a perfect stranger, Syrgiannes, who stood up against her son. The conflict may have been connected with Cantacuzene's influence on her son, but that is another matter.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> As early as in the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Latins spoke Greek at Manuel I's court. Choniates complains that it was far from perfect. Cf. *Nicephoros Choniates, Historia*, CSHB, ed. I. Bekker, Bonn 1835, 265.

<sup>20</sup> Gregoras, op. cit., 233-235. A. LAIOU, *Constantinople and the Latins. The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328*, Cambridge Mass. 1972, 229. Cf. J. BARKER, *The Problem of Byzantine Apanages during the Palaiologian Period*, *Byzantina III* (1971) 103-122.

<sup>21</sup> *Cantacuzenus*, op. cit., vol. I, 335; D. M. NICOL, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, ca 1295-1383*, Cambridge 1996, 30. The Armenian court looked after the family connections with Byzantium. The example is the visit of Rita's brother, King Hetum in Constantinople in the early years of her marriage. Cf. *Sempad, Chronique du Royaume de la Petite Arménie*, *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Historiens arméniens*, vol. I, Paris 1869, 655-656.

Although there are gaps in the available material, it is possible to reconstruct the model of the young lady's upbringing in the West. A standard of *savoir-vivre* in the West required that the young lady should obey the customs in her husband's country and adjust to the demands connected with his post. Thus it is difficult to agree with Father GILL who believed that the Latin ladies suffered a great deal as a result of their transfer to the foreign milieu.<sup>22</sup> The model of education they received prepared them for this experience. The relations between husband and wife were specified. One of the marriage treatises of the time enumerated four duties of the husband which were: provide his wife with instruction, correct her, live with her and provide her with financial security. In her turn, the woman was supposed to do the following: approach him with respect, serve him, obey him or remonstrate with him, if necessary. The couple should give each other love, fidelity and marital duties.<sup>23</sup> Such a model of Christian marriage was celebrated in literature, to mention only Petrarch's "Griseldis" which was echoed in other texts, e.g. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. The female protagonist's fate was presented as a model of a woman's imitation of Christ. She was supposed to bravely endure the sufferings inflicted on her by her husband.<sup>24</sup>

"Avertimenti di maritaggio" which were very popular in the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century, had a form of a dialogue between a mother and a daughter. The message included the following elements: the lady should cause the household cuisine to follow her husband's taste; she should not interfere with his public business; she should not do anything without her husband's consent. She should not force her husband to do anything he particularly dislikes. She should take care of her appearance, she should be young and beautiful. She should not leave her home on her own, she should not know too much; her husband's relatives should be closer to her than her own.<sup>25</sup> Such texts were popular in the Mediterranean region. They prepared a young woman to break connections with her family background and to completely adjust to her husband's environment. The Latin ladies' life stories in Byzantium prove that each of them was ready to follow this pattern. Yolanda of Montferrat makes a drastic exception, but this resulted from her character.

<sup>22</sup> J. GILL, *Matrons and Brides of Fourteenth Century Byzantium*, Byzantinische Forschungen 10 (1985) 54.

<sup>23</sup> Bernardo de Siena, *De matrimonio*, after: D. HERLIHY – Ch. Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles. Une étude du catasto florentine de 1427*, Paris 1978, 587.

<sup>24</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Griseldis*, many editions. Cf. *Amour, mariage et transgression au Moyen Age*, Actes du colloque des 24/25, 26 et 27 mars 1983, Université de Picardie, ed. D. Breschinger et A. Crepin, Goppingen 1984, 447-454.

<sup>25</sup> *Avertimenti di maritaggio*, in: *Strenne nuziali del secolo XIV*, ed. O. Tergoni Tozzetti, Livorno 1893. Cf. P. CERTALDO, *Libri di buoni costumi*, ed. A. Schiaffini, Firenze 1948. The model promoted a submissive woman who had been brought up according to strict rules. Cf. R. KELSO, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance*, Illinois 1956.



The compensation for renunciation was an attractive marriage which satisfied snobbish ambitions. No title was greater than that of the Emperor. The Latin lady arrived on the Bosphorus equipped with a role model to follow. At the same time she came from the world of troubadours' songs. The Montferrat court was the centre of Provençal poetry. Its name was made famous by Raimbaud de Vaquieras, among others. Yolanda surely knew these songs and the same goes for the other ladies.<sup>26</sup> The message of these songs did not have anything in common with Griselda's story. It was the praise of love, of great love.<sup>27</sup> And the nostalgia for this probably accompanied the Latin ladies to their destination. They expected the Emperor and the lover. They met the former but not the latter. But this was the result of marriages arranged for political reasons. They often turned out to be private disasters. Apart from the splendour of the Imperial title, the Latin ladies did not enjoy any other benefits connected with their transition to a different world. Who was then the beneficiary under the circumstances? Certainly, it was the lady's family whose members welcomed the spectacular promotion: they became imperial fathers or brothers-in law.<sup>28</sup> It was quite a career for Marquis of Montferrat, Count of Savoy, even King of Hungary, let alone merchants or pirats such as Gattilusio and Tocco.

Paradoxically, it was not the ladies' families that profited mostly by these arrangements but Venice and Genoa, which remained in the background. Their connections with both parties are obvious enough. What advantages could Byzantium gain by inviting the Latin Princesses? First of all, the Empire managed to avoid the scenario of the Fourth Crusade.

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<sup>26</sup> A. BARBERO, *La corte dei marchesi di Monferrato allo specchio della poesia trobadorica. Ambizioni signorili e ideologia cavalleresca fra XII e XIII secolo*, Bolletino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino 81 (1983) 653-659. Raimbaud de Vaquieras, a poor knight and jongleur, became a confidant of Boniface of Montferrat. He accompanied him in the Kingdom of Thessalonica where he was given some land. He died in the same year as his benefactor, that is, in 1207. *Breviarz miłości. Antologia liryki staroprowansalskiej* [Breviary of Love. Anthology of Old Provençal Lyric], ed. Z. Romanowiczowa, Wrocław – Warszawa – Gdańsk 1963, 81-85. Cf. J. RAYNAUARD, *Choix des poesies originales des troubadours*, Paris 1928.

<sup>27</sup> In Byzantine literature the Latin ladies met the same ideal of love. It presupposed chastity and fidelity, as mentioned above. Cf. L. GARLAND, "Be Amorous but Be Chaste". *Sexual Morality in Byzantine Learned and Vernacular Romance*, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies 14 (1990) 64-120.

<sup>28</sup> In spite of political and economic troubles, Byzantine court perfectly realized the value of the imperial title, which was explicitly expressed by the embassy sent by John V Palaiologos to Peter II Lusignan, King of Cyprus in 1372. Suggesting John's daughter as a wife for the King, the messengers said that the Emperor would be Peter's father and the King would be his son. Cf. L. Makhairas, *Recital Concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus Entitled "Chronicle"*, ed. R. M. Dawkins, vol. 1, Oxford 1932, 328. On the importance of the imperial connections: R. MACRIDES, *Dynastic Marriages and Political Kinship*, in: *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies*, Cambridge March 1990, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin, London 1992, 72-93.



It used marriage negotiations to buy off the territories captured by the Latins. Finally, the Empire did not want to give up an illusion of Western military assistance against the Turks. But it was only an illusion. A question can be asked whether the situation would have been different if Byzantium had allied itself with women from the Balcan and, which is more important, from the Orthodox world. However, the Balcan world could not be a powerful support. Moreover, it could be dangerous, which was proved by the attitude of Serbian rulers such as Stephen Milutin or Stephen Dusan. Paradoxically, the standard of the Balcan courts, even if modelled on the Byzantine ideal, was not regarded as suitable,<sup>29</sup> whereas the encounter with Byzantium was not a cultural shock for the Latin women. To answer the title question – there was enough room for the Latin ladies on the Bosphoros. Their presence at the court coincided with the pro-Latin attitude which was particularly noticeable in the declining years of the Empire. Demetrios Kydones is a prominent exponent of such an attitude.<sup>30</sup> Of course, anti-Latin and anti-Unionist sentiments were also popular. In some circles the Turkish rule was preferable to the Union with the Latin world.<sup>31</sup> What remains certain is that Byzantium was lonely on the political stage.

<sup>29</sup> Pachymeres left us the description of the Byzantine embassy that had gone to Serbia in order to take a closer look at the court of Uros I, whose son was supposed to marry Anne, Michael VIII's daughter. The envoys were to familiarize themselves with the customs in Serbia in order to educate the bride. Having seen an opulent train, Uros said that his court had not been prepared to meet the demand of such lifestyle. He pointed to a woman who was busy weaving and said that this was the way women were treated in his country. The marriage was not concluded. Cf. *Pachymeres*, op. cit., vol. I, 251-252. Uros probably wanted to discourage the envoys and he succeeded. Mavromatis convinces us that Uros' son, Milutin, intended to imitate Byzantine customs which impressed Metochites who negotiated the marriage of Milutin with Simonis, Andronikos II' daughter. (L. MAVROMATIS, *La fondation de l'Empire serbe du kralj Milutin*, Thessaloniki 1978, 43.) It is well known that Milutin, who was over forty did not wait till Simonis was in nubile age and consummated the marriage when she was about eight. Whatever could be said about sexual mores of Constantinople, it is difficult to state that Milutin imitated them. Paradoxically, when allying itself with the Balcan world, Byzantium had to overcome bigger barriers than the ones that separated it from the West. The reception of Balcan brides at the Byzantine court is a separate issue. Kyratza of Bulgaria, John VII's wife and Helena Dragas of Serbia, Manuel II' spouse, played their significant political role.

<sup>30</sup> Demetrios Kydones, John VI Cantacuzene's secretary, came into contacts with Latin texts in his chancellery. He was taught Latin by a Dominican from Pera. This resulted among others in the translation of the works by Thomas Aquinas. Cf. M. JUGIE, *Demetrios Kydones et la theologie latine à Byzance aux XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, *Écho d'Orient* 31 (1928) 385-402. Witnessing the collapse of their state, many Byzantine aristocrats moved to Venice, Kydones regretted that he had not stayed there. F. KIANKA, *Demetrios Kydones and Italy*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995) 99-110.

<sup>31</sup> H. EVERT-KAPPESOWA, *La tiare ou le turban*, *Byzantinoslavica* 14 (1953) 245-257. It is interesting to note that in the matrimonial policy of the Orthodox world it was acceptable to marry Byzantine, Trapezuntine or Serbian ladies to Mongol, Turkish or Turkmen rulers. As A Bryer states, no Orthodox is known to have married a Muslim princess. Cf. A. BRYER, *Greek historians on the Turks: the case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage*, in: *The Writings on History in the Middle Ages. Essays Presented*



Dealing with Byzantine-Latin matches I came to the conclusion that the Latin ladies arrived in the world which did not differ from their own. All the ladies, even Adelaide of Brunswick, who had numerous Italian connections, came from the same Mediterranean world. Byzantium had been a part of this world. The cost of separation from home had always been the case, no matter whether the bride travelled from Italy to England or from Italy to Byzantium. The home education was meant to make this cost as small as possible. It seems that in spite of religious division, the Byzantine-Latin matches were nothing extraordinary. The Latin ladies do not appear to have paid a high price for assimilation. The European elite simply exchanged their children who had been educated to suit the purpose. Everything happened within the great Christian culture, where the division into the East and the West did not prove to be so important as some scholars are willing to suggest.