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WILLIAM OF TYRE: SHAPING OF ANTI-BYZANTINE SENTIMENTS IN THE PERIOD PRECEDING THE FOURTH CRUSADE

When in 1204 western armies invaded Constantinople and later proclaimed Latin Empire over the greater part of Byzantium, the event evoked controversial reactions among religious authorities and private individuals of that time. There was disgust, bitterness and rejoicing, but above all, surprise. Although modern historians interpret the outcome of the Fourth Crusade as a product of changes inside the Byzantine society and of economic interactions with the west, primarily the Italian republics,¹ there is another aspect, the anti-Byzantine prejudice, which must not be forgotten.

Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum,² (further only the *Historia*), a chronicle by William, Archbishop of Tyre,³ mirrors the development of this prejudice indicating that well before the end of the twelfth century there ex-

¹ See Angold, M.: *The Road to 1204: the Byzantine Background to the Fourth Crusade*. *Journal of Medieval History* 25, 1999, p. 257–278.

² As my basic source and for reference, I used the edition published in *Continuatio medievalis* (1986), however, the older *Récueil des historiens des croisades* proved to be useful for comparison.

³ Although life and work of William of Tyre are beyond the scope of this essay, there are numerous scholarly papers and treatises written on this subject. Basic and most modern study is *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East*. Cambridge 1988 by P. W. Edbury and J. G. Rowe. Some information about William's life and work can also be obtained from *Kreuzzugsideologie und Toleranz*. Stuttgart 1977 by R. C. Schwinges as well as from a number of specified papers: Mayer, H. E.: *Zum Tode Wilhelms von Tyrus*. *Archiv f. Diplomatik, Schriftgeschichte Siegel- und Wappenkunde* 5–6, 1959–1960, p. 182–201. This paper was apparently written before the discovery of the twelfth chapter of book XIX of William's chronicle, which describes his studies in Europe, and thus a part of his assertions is already outdated. Krey, A. C.: *William of Tyre: The Making of an Historian of the Middle Ages*. *Speculum* 16, 1941, p. 149–166. Vessey, D. W. T. C.: *William of Tyre and the Art of Historiography*. *MS* 35, 1973, p. 433–455. Hiestand, R.: *Zum Leben und Laufbahn Wilhelms von Tyrus*. *Deutsches Archiv f. Erforschung des Mittelalters* 34, 1978, p. 345–380. Prutz, H.: *Studien über Wilhelm von Tyrus*. *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft f. ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 8, 1983, p. 93–132. Classen, P.: *Die Hohen Schulen und die Gesellschaft im 12. Jahrhundert*. *Archiv f. Kulturgeschichte* 48, 1996, p. 155–180.

isted a negative image of the Byzantines, which further deteriorated just prior to the Fourth Crusade. Although the archbishop himself probably died well before 1204,⁴ the western view of the Byzantines captured in his work provides an additional component to the above-mentioned political and economic factors. From the Latin perspective, the Byzantines lacked five virtues:

- (1) trustworthiness,
- (2) true faith and proper morality,⁵
- (3) generosity and
- (4) military prowess. Based on the information provided by the *Historia*, the goal of this thesis is to reconstruct the anti-Byzantine prejudice and suggest how its various aspects impacted Latin thinking in respect to the events of the crusade of 1204.

The formation of prejudice in any culture is a result of two opposite processes: evaluation of the behavior of “others” to “us” and the acceptance or condemnation of their differences. Such assessment of another culture is never objective and thus our particular perception (often influenced by stories of past wrongs) has a decisive impact on the resulting character of mutual interactions. William’s work implies a strong dependence between the various incidents and misunderstandings (real or fictive) and his perception of the Byzantine emperors and their subjects.

(1) The first chapters of the *Historia* reflect strongly the inheritance of anti-Byzantine prejudice accumulated during the First Crusade. Their most prominent theme is the treacherous nature of Alexius I Comnenus described in a multitude of denigrating stories. According to William (a diligent reader of old Latin chronicles), the emperor constantly occupied himself with preparing traps for the crusader armies, organizing ambushes along their way to Jerusalem and plotting against them with the Muslims. He never missed any opportunity to harm them, apparently rejoiced in their deaths and when kind to them, allegedly plotted the worst of evils.⁶ Having decided to trust the testimonies of his predecessors, the following story shows how well William assimilated their views of the Byzantine emperor and his subjects as dangerous, unpredictable and treacherous:

“...He [Alexius] secretly dispatched archers across the river in boats to the place where the duke’s forces were encamped. At the first break of the day, these bowmen shot and killed a great many of our people, not only those who had gone down to the shore, but others as well who were looking out of the windows.”⁷

⁴ Although the debate over the date of William’s death is not yet sufficiently settled, few historians put it beyond the year 1200.

⁵ Both of these virtues (and their corresponding opposites) are closely interconnected and therefore I put them in one category.

⁶ For further details on Alexius and his treatment of the crusaders see WT, XI.6, p. 503–504.

⁷ WT, II.7, p. 171; transl. B a b c o c k , E. A. and K r e y , A. C.: *History of Deeds*

To better realize the tragedy of this initial misunderstanding, let us take a closer look at the circumstances of the First Crusade. The Byzantines and the Latins made the mistake of approaching each other with the intention of gaining as much as possible at the other's expense and William's description of Alexius as "the greatest persecutor of the Latins"⁸ reflected the result of this method. The emperor certainly was not as evil as the *Historia* portrayed him and could hardly be blamed for taking precautions to protect his subjects in case the crusaders forgot the sanctity of Jerusalem for the riches of Constantinople. Originally, he asked western rulers for soldiers who would help him re-conquer Asia Minor. Instead, several independent Latin armies crossed the frontier of his empire, ready for what they termed "holy war against the unbelievers." Alexius considered the concept of holy war (rejected by the Orthodox Church) a cover for what he perceived an attack on his throne; crusader armies on Byzantine soil hardly behaved like a procession of holy pilgrims and Bohemund of Tarent⁹ this time did not camp under the walls of Dyrrhachium but directly in the capital of the Byzantine Empire. Emperor's security measures however were misinterpreted by the Latins and helped establish a stereotype of the Byzantines as treacherous liars, heretics and usurpers.

After the foundation of crusader states in Syria, Latin distrust focused on the fear that the Byzantine emperor would attempt to regain possession of the newly conquered lands. The conflict over the Latin right to hold the originally Byzantine territories¹⁰ thus became the major bone of contention and reflected strongly on the image of John II,¹¹ probably the greatest among the Comneni rulers. The chronicler agreed that the emperor was "much more humane than his father had been, and, as his worth deserved, was far more acceptable to our people. However, his attitude towards the Latins was not entirely sincere (.)." ¹² When John set out for Cilicia and confiscated ("against all justice") the land where the Duke

Done beyond the Sea. New York 1943 (further only Babcock), p. 127. "...unde manum aggravans misit (Alexius) occulte sagittarios, qui navibus inveci ad eam partem, in qua dux castra locaverat, pervenientes, summo mane in ipso diei crepusculo multos ex nostris, qui ad mare exierant et qui de fenestris speculabantur, sagittis confoderunt, plurimos interficientes..."

8 WT, XII.5, p. 551–552.

9 Son of Robert Guiscard who several times attacked Byzantium already before the First Crusade and during one of these expeditions besieged Dyrrhachium.

10 At the beginning of the First Crusade, the leaders of the Latins promised to hold all conquered territories belonging in the past to the Byzantine Empire as a fief. The emperor, however, failed to fulfill his part of agreement, which required him to set out with his whole army and help the crusaders conquer Jerusalem. Therefore, William and his predecessors claimed that the Latins were no longer bound by their promise and the controversy over Antioch fully revealed the complexity of this issue.

11 John II (1118–1143) was the son of Alexius I Comnenus and a brother of the famous historian, Anna Comnene.

12 WT, XII.5, p. 552, Babcock, p. 523: "...patre multo humanior et meritis exigentibus populo nostro patre longe acceptior, qui etiam non omnino sincerus erga Latinos Orientales exit..."

of Antioch ruled for over forty years,¹³ William and the inhabitants of the Latin East inevitably perceived him as a traitor.

William's evaluation of the emperor improved after the controversy was resolved in accordance with the Latin wishes. He appreciated that John helped his people conquer Muslim territories and even described him as a glorious fighter against the unbelievers and a man "of famous memory, generous and pious, kind and merciful (...) of lofty character and famous for his war deeds."¹⁴ The chronicler thus adorned John with values he generally considered rare in the Byzantines: proper morality, piety, military prowess and generosity, which implies a temporary stabilization of the Byzantine-Latin relationship and perhaps the chronicler's hope for further cooperation between both peoples.

The power of inherited prejudice became manifest also in the case of Manuel, John's son and later William's model of an ideal emperor. According to the *Historia*, he equipped the crusader armies with ships and provisions so as to enable them continue their march on Jerusalem. But the Byzantine guides brought (allegedly with his full knowledge) both expeditions, the German and the French, to places where they became an easy prey to the Muslims.¹⁵ The chronicler copied the story (the origin of which can be traced back to the work of Odo of Deuil¹⁶) and apparently believed it.

Until William met Manuel in person, he had no problem accepting the assertion of the French chronicler; the Byzantines behaved treacherously in the past and there was no other plausible explanation of why the Second Crusade with its pious goals did not succeed.¹⁷ To rationalize the Byzantine betrayal, he con-

¹³ WT, XIV.24, p. 663. The chronicler apparently did not know about the Treaty of Devol (1108) signed by Bohemond of Tarent and Alexios I, which recognized the Emperor and his heirs as legitimate rulers of Antioch.

¹⁴ WT, XV. 23, p. 706: "...*vir inclitus, liberalis, pius, clemens et misericors (...) moribus conspicuus et actibus insignio militaribus...*"

¹⁵ WT, XVI.20–23, p. 743–749.

¹⁶ WT, XVI.21, p. 745–746. "...*Dicebatur publice, nec a verisimili multum abhorrebat, quod de conscientia et mandato imperatoris Grecorum, nostrorum propectibus invidentis, constructa fuerunt hectam periculosa molimina...*" The whole description of the second crusade is an enigma because it does not correspond with reality and is even in contrast with William's picture of Manuel. In order to understand it, it is necessary to realize that William was not a direct observer of the events described and was not even present in the East. His narrative thus depended on information acquired from other sources. The Byzantine guides on whom the archbishop blamed the massacre of the Latin armies provided the clue to the discovery of William's source. Otto of Freising, who took part on the crusade and gave rather accurate information about it, did not mention them. The information originated in the work of Odo of Deuil (PL CLXXXV, p. 1229.) who took little interest in the worries that a presence of two huge armies caused to Manuel, whose absolute material support even on the territory of the enemy he took for granted. (For a very good treatise of this issue see Chandon, F.: *Les Comnene II*, Paris 1912, p. 269–315.)

¹⁷ WT, XVI.25, p. 752: "...*Benedicte domine Iesu, quod populus iste, tibi tam devotus, pedum tuorum volens adorare vestigia, loca venerabilia, que tua corporali consecrasti presentia, deosculari cupiens, per manus eorum, qui te oderunt, ruinam passus est? Vere iudicia tua*

cluded that it was due to envy, distrust and rivalry, which the Byzantines felt towards the Latins (especially the Germans) who "illegitimately appropriated the imperial title."

William's opinion of the Byzantine emperor and his subjects improved considerably after he met Manuel. Compared with Alexius I and the crusading leaders whose interactions the chronicler perceived mostly through the eyes of his predecessors and often through the prism of their prejudice, his description of the relationship of Manuel I and the king of Jerusalem, Balduin III, represents the climax of Byzantine-Latin cooperation. Both rulers first met in the autumn of 1158 when the emperor came to the East to punish the Armenian ruler Thor and Prince Renaud of Antioch, on which occasion Balduin acted as a mediator.¹⁸

Although not entirely without blemish, this meeting marked a new chapter in reciprocal perception of the two cultures. After the First Crusade, Anna Comnene was not wrong when she wrote about its leaders that "their mouths gape wide for gifts and money, but they have no intention whatever of doing the things for which the money is offered."¹⁹ The rulers of the newly established Latin states nevertheless soon realized the necessity of the emperor's help if they did not want to suffer the consequences of losing his favor; a siege between the armies of the sultans of Egypt and Iconium. Balduin represented yet a new generation, which considered the East their home and Byzantium a more reliable ally than the distant rulers of the west.

Manuel putting aside his imperial dignity in order to nurse Balduin injured on a hunt,²⁰ as described by William, is certainly a scene that highlights the solidarity between the Byzantine and Latin ruler. Unfortunately, this improvement of western attitude towards Byzantium did not survive its founders and in the following period the relationship of the Byzantines and the Latins resumed its slow decline. With it, the idea of solidarity gradually disappeared from the pages of the *Historia* while the images of cunning and quarrelsome Byzantines multiplied.

The relationship however did not significantly deteriorate until the beginning of 1180's when during the *coup d'état* of Andronicus Comnenus the Massacre of the Latins in Constantinople took place. This event brought William's worst nightmares to life exposing his secret doubts and fears and made him abandon

abyssus multa et non est qui possit ad ea: tu enim solus es, domine qui cuncta potes et non est qui possit resistere voluntati tue..."

18 WT, XVIII.23, p. 844.

19 AC, XIV.2, p. 444 (trans. Sewter, E. R. A., p. 425).

20 WT, XVIII.25, p. 848: "...*Quod ut domino imperatori innotuit, ei multa humanitate compatiens, chirurgicorum implens officium, flexo ante eum genu tanquam unus de popularibus operam ministrabat diligentem, ita ut cum indignatione stupeant et mirarentur euis principes et consanguinei quod maiestatis oblitus imperatore et augustalem negligens dignitatem regi se exhiberet ita devotum et familiarem, quod etiam eorum cuilibet videretur indignum. Redeuntibus ergo inde, ob casum qui acciderat, Antiochiam, per dies singulos visitationis gratia dominum regem adibat et cataplasmatibus innovatis cum unguentis necessariis fascia iterum diligenter involvebat, tanta circa eum cura sollicitus, qua maiorem vix posset egrotanti filio adhibere...*"

his pro-Byzantine views and decide that cooperation between the Byzantines and the Latins was impossible: "In such fashion did the perfidious Greek nation, a brood of vipers, like a serpent on a bosom or a mouse in the wardrobe evilly requite their guests,"²¹ he wrote. Although William was not a direct witness of the event and his account can be exaggerated or biased, it certainly mirrors the Latin fears of the Byzantines and represents an important chapter in the formation of anti-Byzantine prejudice.

In course of the Massacre the Byzantines attacked everything the Latins valued, in the first place, their families and personal property:

*"...the Greeks seized all those who appeared capable of resistance, set fire to their houses, and speedily reduced the entire quarter to ashes. Women, children, the aged and the sick, all alike perished in the flames..."*²²

An attack on Latin families doubtlessly shattered all the trust the Latins had developed towards their hosts throughout the centuries. On the other hand, the capital of Byzantium was a major market and the Latins did not want to lose profits, which few other cities of that time could offer. Therefore, the Massacre did not cause a massive exodus of the Latins but the lack of safety for their families and property necessarily increased their distrust towards the rule of those of the Byzantine rulers who were supposed to grant it.

The destruction of the Latin populace and profane buildings did not cause as much evil as the Byzantine trespassing on the delicate ground of the sacred, which William carefully and reproachfully described. The Byzantines beheaded the papal legate John and "fastened [his head] to the tail of a filthy dog as an insult to the church,"²³ they tortured monks and priests of the Catholic rite ("monks and priests were special victims of the madness and were put to death under excruciating torture"²⁴), and they murdered the defenseless sick from the hospital of St. John ("the vandals repaired to the hospital of the St. John, as it is called, where they put to the sword all the sick they found."²⁵)

Furthermore, they did not spare Latin graveyards ("in the midst of such frightful sacrilege, worse than parricide, not even the dead, whom impiety itself usually spares, were suffered to rest undisturbed. Corpses were torn from the tombs

21 WT, XXII.13, p. 1022–1024, Babcock, p. 465: "...*impius Grecorum populus et genimina viperarum more serpentis in gremio et muris in pera nichil tale meritis nichilque tale venentes male remuneraverunt hospites suos...*"

22 WT, XXII.13, p. 1023, Babcock, 464: "...*peremptis his qui resistere posse videbantur, ignem eorum domiciliis subiciunt et universam eorum regionem subito convertunt in favillam, mulieribus et parvulis, senibus et valitudinariis incendio consumptis...*"

23 Ibidem, Babcock, p. 465: "...*Inter quos virum venerabilem Ioannem nomine, sancte Romane ecclesie subdiaconum, quem pro negotiis ecclesie dominus papa illuc direxerat, comprehendentes, in contumeliam ecclesie decollaverunt, caput eius ad caudam cannis inmundae religantes...*"

24 Ibidem, Babcock, p. 464–465.

25 Ibidem.

and dragged through the streets and squares as if the insensate bodies were capable of feeling the indignities offered them.”²⁶) Finally, the sacred buildings of churches were destroyed (“To vent their rage upon secular buildings alone was far from satisfying their [Byzantine] unholy wickedness; they also set fire to churches and venerated places of every description and burned, together with the sacred edifices, those who had fled thither for refuge.”²⁷).

If the Byzantines did not respect such things as the Catholic priests and churches or the inviolability of hospitals, graveyards and the asylum of churches, William must have asked what things they would respect. If customs traditionally esteemed throughout the Christian and usually in even the pagan parts of the world were once transgressed, there was no guarantee that it would not happen again. Not until the rule over Constantinople was in Latin hands.

To William, the Massacre was apparently treason of everything both cultures revered, the ultimate burning of bridges erected by centuries of mutual cohabitation. He believed that the Latins did much good to the Byzantines who, however, repaid poorly the “treaties and the many services, which our people have rendered to the empire,”²⁸ forgetting the economic and military support and numerous intermarriages that created sacred ties between both nations.²⁹

William was one of the most tolerant chroniclers able to perceive the mistakes of Latin rulers and noblemen, admire virtues and abilities of great Muslim leaders, advocate Muslim human rights, and usually avoid theological controversies with the Orthodox Church. If despite all this William in his reaction to the Massacre described the ensuing Latin invasion of coastal Byzantine cities and cloisters (where the Latins murdered all the inhabitants and stole everything of value) as an act of “rightful wrath,”³⁰ it certainly suggests the intensity of emotions the Massacre evoked on the part of the Latins. The dragon teeth of distrust and enmity, which would be harvested in 1204, were sown.

The second process of prejudice formation outlined at the beginning of this study, depends on perception of the other culture and tolerance or condemnation of its difference. In the *Historia*, this trend is best evident in William’s comments on various aspects of Byzantine culture and lifestyle in particular (2) true faith and proper morality, (3) generosity and (4) military prowess.

(2) “...Our forefathers were religious men and feared God. Now in their places a wicked generation has grown up, sinful sons, falsifiers of the Christian faith, who run the course of all unlawful things without discrimination. (.) Such are the men of the present age, especially those dwelling in the East. One who

26 Ibidem.

27 Ibidem.

28 Ibidem.

29 Ibidem, p. 1024.

30 WT, XXII.14, p. 1024.

would undertake with careful pen to portray their morals, or rather their monstrous vices, would succumb under the vast amount of material; in short, he would seem to be writing satire rather than compiling history..."³¹

According to William, who was much troubled by the invasion of the Muslims and their continuous victories, the lack of true faith and proper morality was the cause of fall of the Christian East. What else than God's wrath, brought about by the vicious deeds of the Christians and especially the Byzantines³² could have resulted in the attack of the unbelievers and the loss of the Holy Shrines in Palestine? The above quoted passage does not refer solely to the Byzantines, however, the expression "falsifiers of the Christian faith" could be a hint at the Great Schism while the final books of the *Historia* provide ample examples of what the chronicler might have meant by "all unlawful things." Although mostly tolerant toward other religions, William did consider the Byzantines heretics who "either created or followed new and pernicious beliefs contrary to the Roman church."³³

From numerous Byzantine scandals, those of Protosebastus Alexius and Andronicus Comnenus best illustrate how the negative image of the Byzantines as sinners was reinforced in William's time and how vicious the Byzantine culture and lifestyle appeared to a western eye. The *Historia* depicts Protosebastus Alexius as a man who was "like all Greeks unusually effeminate and craving all the desires of the flesh."³⁴ Effeminacy was one of the basic characteristics the chronicler connected with the Byzantines. To William, whose culture celebrated the strength of warriors and their ability to survive harsh conditions, the preference of Byzantine men for soft materials, baths and poetry was not only incomprehensible but necessarily improper. Moreover, soon after Manuel's death, Protosebastus Alexius became a lover of the empress and the pious archbishop criti-

31 WT, XXI.7, p. 969–970, Babcock, p. 406: "...patribus nostris, qui fuerunt viri religiosi et timentes deum, nati sunt filii perditissimi, filii scelerati, fidei christiane prevaricators, passim et sine delectu per omnia currentes illicita, tales aut talibus peiores (...) Tales sunt presentis seculi et maxime Orientalis tractus homines, quorum mores, immo vitiorum monstra si quis diligentiore stilo prosequi temptet, materie immensitate subcumbat et potius satiram movere videatur quam Historiam texere..."

32 William did not specifically use the word "Greeks" at this particular spot, however, although in the quoted passage the Latins are also included among the sinners, soon afterwards "people from the East" are contrasted with western warriors who in fact came and succeeded in fighting the Muslims, which partly withdraws the accusation of the Latins. "The people of the East" at this particular spot cannot be the Muslims whose arrival is perceived as God's punishment of the former named sinners.

33 WT, XXII.11, p. 1021, Babcock, 462: "...Arrogantes enim supra modum et a Romana ecclesia per insolentiam separate, hereticum omnem eum reputant qui eorum frivolas non sequitur traditiones, cum ipsi magnis hereticorum sibi nomen adaptent, dum contra Romanam ecclesiam et apostolorum Petri et Pauli fidem (...) novas et pestilentes opiniones aut gignunt aut sequuntur..."

34 Ibidem.

cized this relationship as illegal and even sacrilegious since Maria, according to the usual custom of imperial widows, took the sacred vows.³⁵

William's opinion of the Byzantine immorality increased during the reign of Protosebastus's successor, Andronicus Comnenus, who gave sacrilege yet a new dimension when he left his first wife and kidnapped Theodora,³⁶ the dowager queen of Jerusalem and "daughter of his own nephew."³⁷ As the archbishop described the situation, Andronicus not only repudiated his wife without a reason, which was forbidden by the canonical law, but consequently carried away another woman, a kinswoman, in fact, and lived with her in a relationship classified by the church as both adultery and incest. No matter how often similar things happened in the west, these particular scandals (debated probably at the court of Jerusalem) demonstrated to William Byzantine depravity and confirmed his idea that the Muslim attacks were a result of their sins and apostasy.

(3) As the war in the east continued and spoils were few, the issue of Byzantine financial support became more central to the Latins. Alexius, John, and Manuel had all been generous towards the crusaders and other Latins living in the capital and the territories under their rule by supporting wars against the Muslims, granting trade privileges and even financing various private matters such as ransoms or dowries.

Under Protosebastus Alexius the situation did not change drastically, nevertheless, William described this ruler as "very avaricious" and as someone who "approached the imperial treasure as if he acquired it with his own hands."³⁸ Although the text of the *Historia* offers no further explanation for the connection between Alexius's avarice and the Latins, Charles Brand suggests that this uncrowned ruler of Byzantium probably devised new means of securing income by making the Pisan and Genoan merchants pay taxes.³⁹ Such a taxation of foreigners and adherents of a different religious rite was common in the west; however, William clearly perceived it as Byzantine exploitation.

On occasion of Manuel's death, the *Historia* praised the munificence of the deceased emperor who bestowed "*largissima beneficia*" upon the church for which he deserved "*memoria immortalis*".⁴⁰ These superlatives may look clichéd. Nevertheless, they contrast with the following greed of Protosebastus and indicate the Latin impression of being financially disadvantaged and even misused by the Byzantines at this period. From relevant passages of the *Historia*

35 Ibidem: "...Dicebatur etiam, quod cum imperatrice, dicet, vivente adhuc marito sed in extremit laborante, vitam sanctimoniam esset professa, stupri haberet consuetudinem..."

36 The widow of Balduin III, king of Jerusalem.

37 WT, XX.2, p. 914. For further details about Andronicus see Jurewicz, O.: *Andronikos I. Komnenos*. Amsterdam 1970.

38 WT, XXII.11, p. 1021.

39 Brand, Ch.: *Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204*. Cambridge 1968, p. 33.

40 WT, XXI.5, p. 1012.

following Manuel's death is evident that the growing dissatisfaction of the eastern Latins and especially the Italian merchants with the new fiscal policy. Gradually, the Latins came to consider the Byzantines as obstacles to their own progress and financial success, which later necessarily influenced their preferences when Latin and Byzantine rule appeared on opposite sides of the scales.

(4) As Muslim attacks multiplied and the eastern frontier of the crusader states turned into a permanent war zone, William's stress on military prowess in his evaluation of the Byzantines and their emperors increased. After John II,⁴¹ no major warrior-emperor accessed the throne of Constantinople. Although his son Manuel was still described as one in the *Historia's* account of the Battle of Myriokephalon,⁴² the fact that this encounter was one of the most deplorable losses in Byzantine history could not escape the chronicler. A passage discussing why the Christians were unable to stop the Muslims reveals how low his estimation of the military abilities of the Byzantines sunk; they were not even mentioned ("the people of the East" in the following passage denote the Muslims):

*"...In earlier times, those first revered men who came to the lands of the East led by divine zeal and aflame with spiritual enthusiasm for the faith were accustomed to military discipline; they were trained in battle and familiar with the use of weapons. The people of the East, on the contrary, through long-continued peace had become enervated; they were unused to the art of war, unfamiliar with the rules of battle and gloried in their state of inactivity..."*⁴³

William's negative opinion of the Byzantine military abilities was based on his understanding of the western military ideal acquired during his studies in Paris and Bologne. There he witnessed the flourishing knighthood culture, which gave rise to a professional class of holy warriors and a new ideal, sharply contrasting with the increasingly mercenary character of the Byzantine army. William apparently connected the hired army of foreigners with the effeminacy of

41 WT, XV.1, p. 674 -675. "...Urgebat dominus imperator, sicut vir erat magnanimus, studio fervente propositum et propositis braviis adolescentium glorie cupidos ad certamina et congressus Martios accendebat animos, lorica quoque indutus et accinctus gladio, casside caput tectus aurea, mediis inmixtus agminibus nunc hoc, nunc illos sermonibus hortatur congruis, nunc exemplo tanquam unus e popularibus provocat et instat viriliter, ut alios ad instandum reddat animosiores..."

42 WT, XXI.11, p. 977: "...Illustris memorie et amplectende in Christo recordationis, cuius beneficia et liberalitatem eximiam universus pene sentit mundus, dum contra immanissimam Turcorum gentem et impium eorum ducem, Yconii soldanum, pro ampliando christiano nomine, pietatis commendabili motu decerat peccatis nostris exigentibus, suorum stragem infinitam, et copiarum imperialium, quas secum supra hominum etiam opinionem trahebat, enormia circa Yconium passus est dispendia..."

43 WT, XXI.7, p. 970, Babcock, p. 406-407: "...quod tempore preterito, cum illi viri venerabiles, erant ducti divino, ardore fidei interius succensim primum ad Orientales partes descendunt, zelo bellicis assueti disciplinis, preliis exercitati, usum habentes armorum familiarum, populus vero Orientalis econtrario, longa pace dissolutus, rei militaris inexpers, inexercitatus legibus preliorum, vacatione gaudebat..."

the Byzantines. Such army supported their laziness and military incapability, which finally resulted in a failure to protect the eastern Christians and the Holy Shrines. Since only the Latin knights of the First Crusade due to their divine zeal and superior training succeeded against the Muslims, William must have decided that the Byzantines were no longer able to safeguard the Christian East.

Although the chronicler never openly proposed Latin attack on Constantinople, what impression could the hints on Byzantine military weakness make on his readers? The *Historia* indirectly stated that the Byzantines were poor warriors (and so the conquest of Constantinople was no longer impossible) and provided even a pretext for such a conquest: the necessity of protection of the Holy Shrines and the eastern Christians.

The *Historia* of William of Tyre offers an interesting testimony of the formation of anti-Byzantine prejudice and suggests that the establishment of the Latin Empire as a result of the Fourth Crusade was not as unexpected as it often seems from the hollow descriptions of general history textbooks. Simultaneously, the Latin sentiments towards the Byzantines, which it reveals, well complement the conclusions of modern historians who explain the events of 1204 on wider political and economic factors.

William reflects the origins and development of Latin prejudice and shows how the brief improvement of Byzantine-Latin relationship under John II and Manuel I was fast forgotten after the Massacre of the Latins in Constantinople (1182) and in response to various vices of later rulers. Cultural misunderstandings and lack of tolerance for the Byzantine culture and lifestyle in the areas of faith, morality, generosity and the military ideal gradually created a stereotype of the Byzantines as heretics and sinners, the cause of the loss of the Holy Shrines, militarily incapable to fulfill the role of the protectors of eastern Christians and as obstacles to the Latin economic progress. After the Massacre, the Latins fully realized that their personal security, religion and prosperity could not be guaranteed under a Byzantine government and certainly became aware of the advantages a Latin rule over Constantinople would have to offer.

To properly understand the nature of anti-Byzantine prejudice, further studies of synchronous primary sources are necessary together with a study on how the Third Crusade, not described by William, impacted the Latin sentiments. We may assume that like the preceding crusades it only eradicated the Byzantine-Latin fissures. By this time, realistic western leaders abandoned the idea of regaining distant lands of Palestine and Byzantium, diminished in size and vulnerable, became their goal of conquest. The fact that the negative view of the Byzantines simultaneously reached a crisis-point made the question of the Latin rule over Byzantium a matter of a favorable opportunity.

Approximately twenty years after the Massacre of 1182, this opportunity came and the Latins could show how much superior in piety, morality, military prowess, generosity and loyalty they were to the Byzantines. History teaches us that they failed their chance completely.

Abbreviations

- AC** C o m n e n e , Anna: *The Alexiad of Anna Komnena*. Trans. E.R.A. Sewter. Penguin Books 1969.
- Babcock** B a b c o c k , E. A. et K r e y , A. C. (trans.): *A History of Deeds Done beyond the Sea by William Archbishop of Tyre*. New York 1943.
- MS** Medieval Studies
- WT** of T y r e , William: *Chronique*. Corpus Christianorum, Continuation Medievalis LXIII. R.B.C.Huygens (ed.) Turnholti typography Brepols editores pontificii 1986.

VILÉM Z TYRU – VYTVÁŘENÍ PROTIBYZANTSKÝCH PŘEDSUDKŮ V DOBĚ PŘED ČTVRTOU KRÍŽOVOU VÝPRAVOU

Předsudky proti Byzantincům zachycené v díle Viléma z Tyru zajímavým způsobem potvrzují, že události roku 1204 nebyly nečekaným vyvrcholením latinsko-byzantských vztahů, ale pouze projevem jejich dlouhodobého směřování. Z pozice člověka, který na východě dlouho žil a měl příležitost Byzanc dobře poznat, nám Vilém nabízí vzhled do situace křížáckých států a uvažování jejich obyvatel v době nedlouho předcházející osudné čtvrté výpravě. Popis jednotlivých císařů ukazuje, jak důležitá byla jejich politika a drobné byzantsko-latinské konflikty pro formování předsudků, jakou roli sehrál nedostatek kulturní a náboženské tolerance západu, obavy o zajištění výnosného obchodu a neschopnost Byzance vojensky zaštitit křesťanské státy na východě. Podle Viléma západ nakonec ztratil k Byzanci veškerou důvěru v těchto ohledech, a to se jí později zřejmě stalo osudným.