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Latin in Byzantium I. Late Antiquity and Beyond. Preface

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LATIN IN BYZANTIUM I
LATE ANTIQUITY AND BEYOND

TURNHOUT
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2019



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LATIN IN BYZANTIUM I
LATE ANTIQUITY AND BEYOND

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Alessandro GARCEA

Michela ROSELLINI

Luigi SILVANO

TURNHOUT
BREPOLS  PUBLISHERS
2019

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Preface

In memoriam
Andreas SCHMINCK
(1947–2015)

This is a project on literacy, cultural identity and the transmission of Latin texts in 'New Rome'. The place of Latin in Constantinople has been studied throughout the twentieth century and continues to attract the attention of experts from different fields. Nevertheless, the most stimulating works focus on very specific topics that demand to be put in a wider and more comprehensive perspective (see Garcea in this volume).

While in the fifth century Latin was essentially a technical *langue d'État* of the administration in the eastern part of the empire, new historical conditions at the beginning of the sixth century caused a profound transformation (see Silvano's chapter). This can be seen in the association of Rome and Constantinople in Priscian's and Corippus' *panegyrici* (as appears in Zarini's contribution), and also in Greek texts and pictorial representations. Greek speaking authors demonstrated a particular interest in Latin, as it is attested by literary quotations or anthologies, *gnomologia*, etc., as well as by several translations (see Capone, Gastgeber, Gengler, and Rochette in this volume). Historiographical works demonstrate knowledge of the Roman past (as demonstrated by Mecella and Roberto); the œuvre of Iohannes Lydus carefully examines the history of the Latin language, modelled on Varronian erudition (see Baratin's chapter). Even if Emperor Phocas suspended the teaching of Latin, Teophylactus Simocatta (*fl. c.* AD 630) still seemed to be familiar with certain Latin political concepts and vocabulary.

From a linguistic point of view, it is worthwhile to broaden the analysis to the low levels of Latin literacy among soldiers and the attendance of public events (see Biville's contribution). Multilingual communities are found in Byzantine Egypt and in Middle Eastern monasteries (see, respectively, Fournet and Rapp in this volume). The latter reveal a lively interest in Latin as a technical or liturgical medium, though not as a spoken language. Finally, it is important to distinguish synchronic variants of Latin fluency from the broader, diachronic evolution of the Latin linguistic system (an aspect treated by Niehoff-Panagiotidis and Schreiner).

The linguistic problem cannot be adequately approached without studying the diffusion of literacy and the transmission of both Greek and Latin literary *classici auctores* (see Nocchi Macedo and Agosti in this volume).

As such, the sources concerning the Latin spoken in Constantinople and the use of Latin written documents, including inscriptions (analyzed in Rhoby's contribution), should be compared. Linguistic policies can also be taken into account, like Justinian's protectionism and its ideological roots. Furthermore, the study of the contemporary production of juridical texts (see Miglietta, Rodríguez Martín, and Van Bochove in this volume) allows us not only to reconstruct the history of a fundamental period of Roman jurisprudence, but also to better analyse Latin technical vocabulary – for instance, borrowings, neologisms, and the evolution of certain forms.

The production of Byzantine Latin law texts can be put in relation with the parallel development of Latin grammatical teaching. The latter is in itself a promising field of study, especially with regard to the teaching of Priscian (and his pupils) in Constantinople (see the chapters of Rosellini–Spangenberg Yanes and Signes Codoñer). From such a perspective, one might consider the following questions: the grammarians' choice of Greek and Latin grammatical and lexicographical sources; the alleged reference to linguistic usage (the *usus* of established literary *auctores* or of learned living people?); the development of a technical vocabulary more or less influenced by Greek; finally, the evolution of pedagogical tools used by teachers and students of Latin. More generally, authors such as Libanius (see Pellizzari's contribution) reflected on the conflict between ancient and new forms of *paideia*.

The study of these topics through the different disciplinary approaches of this volume demonstrates that in the sixth and seventh centuries, there were many distinct groups of people in Constantinople and in the Eastern Roman Empire as a whole, who could speak Latin, and others who could read, understand, or occasionally make use of it. Each of these groups had specific cultural, political and sociological features.

For the first time, a comprehensive, though by design not exhaustive, view of these problems will be provided together with a thorough presentation of the ancient sources, weaving together multiple disciplines and bridging the gap between literary and non-literary texts, between history and philology.⁽¹⁾ Our hope is that this book will stimulate others to continue avenues of research that are only hinted at in the present volume, or were not given adequate consideration here. A provisional list of *desiderata* would include: (1) a systematic census of Latinisms in medieval Greek language, to be carried on through extensive surveys of Greek lexica and vocabularies (both modern and medieval ones) and written sources (including both 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' literature, and documentary texts as well); (2) a mapping of Latin in the modern Greek dialects (see the contribution by Niehoff-Panagiotidis); (3) a thorough survey of quo-

(1) Orthography and punctuation in Latin quotations respects each contributor's scholarly tradition.



tations and borrowings of words, phrases, and motifs from Latin sources in medieval Greek literature (with all reservations that have to be made in highlighting connections between these two literary systems: see Agosti's essay); (4) accurate studies on the language, rendition technique, and scope of translations from Latin into Greek and from Greek into Latin (an approach ventured here by Capone); and, finally, (5) a systematic study on the cultural representations of ancient Romans and contemporary 'Latins', possibly to be extended to the visual arts. In all, there is work to do for many, and for many years to come.

We would like to thank the following institutions for their financial support: Institut Universitaire de France, Sorbonne Université, Università di Roma 'La Sapienza', Università di Torino.

This volume would have greatly benefited from the advice of Andreas Schminck, who had enthusiastically adhered to our project, but could not see its completion. Thus we wholeheartedly dedicate it to his memory.

Alessandro Garcea
Michela Rosellini
Luigi Silvano