

Why was it important for the Byzantines to read Latin? The views of Demetrios Kydones (1324-1398).

Abstract

Fourteenth-century Byzantium witnessed civil wars between cliques of the ruling elite, constant financial crisis and dramatic territorial reduction. As a result of two catastrophic civil wars that were fought in 1321-1328 and 1341-1347, the Byzantine empire evolved into a small state which was struggling to survive and defend itself against large numbers of hostile neighbours, some of whom had or gradually acquired the resources to develop military forces far superior to those of Byzantium. In the 1350s and 1360s the Ottoman Turks began the conquest of European territories that belonged to the Byzantine empire and threatened the very existence of the Byzantine state. Seeing that it was impossible to face the Ottomans militarily many Byzantines began to support the idea of a Crusade against the Ottomans and the reconciliation between the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches. One of the most staunchest supporters of this policy was the prolific author and politician Demetrios Kydones. This article will discuss how Kydones promoted the policy of reconciliation and alliance with Western European powers against the Ottomans.

The fourteenth century was for the Byzantine empire a period of civil wars, dramatic territorial reduction and continuous political, economic and military crisis. The expansion of the Ottomans in European territories in the 1360s and the 1370s reduced Byzantium to Constantinople and its suburbs, a few cities in the Black Sea and Thrace and a few Aegean islands. Thessalonica, the second largest city of the empire was isolated and in tenuous contact with Constantinople, while the rulers of Byzantine Morea in the Peloponnese were forced to follow their own independent foreign and military policy.¹

It is under this rather pessimistic political context that Demetrios Kydones pursued his career in politics and literature. His father had served in the court of Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-1341) as an ambassador. In 1341, he was sent to the court of the khan of

¹ The most comprehensive account of the period is Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium* (New Haven: Yale University Press).

the Golden Horde.² Demetrios' career spanned for over four decades from the 1340s until the 1390s. He served three successive emperors, John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-1354), John V Palaiologos (1341-1391) and Manuel II Palaiologos (1391-1425) and was involved in important negotiation between the papacy and Byzantium and in crusading projects against the Ottoman Turks. He was a prolific author and his surviving works include a large collection of letters, theological and philosophical works. He was also a convert to Catholicism who promoted Catholic doctrines and the papal supremacy to Byzantium through the translation of Western European theological texts.³

Much of the career and life of Kydones is known through his own writings, mainly from a series of texts known as *Apologiae* and his letters. In his first *Apologia*, which he compiled in 1363, Kydones writes that he entered imperial service at a young age, in his mid-twenties, when the emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347-1354) invited him to the court in Constantinople.⁴ As Kantakouzenos writes in his *Histories*, Kydones enjoyed his favor and as a *mesazon* he needed to be with the emperor all the times and stay in the palace.⁵ The precise duties of the *mesazon* are difficult to discern. Nonetheless, it is probably that the holder of this office was the head of the civil administration of the empire.⁶ Moreover, a series of letters written by Kydones in the 1340s indicate that his family was associated with the Kantakouzenos family. Kydones expresses his support to John Kantakouzenos during the catastrophic civil war, which was fought from 1341 until 1347. This was fought between Kantakouzenos, who claim to be the legitimate regent of the son of the deceased emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-1341), John V, and the regency which was established in Constantinople. Kydones was also in contact with John Kantakouzenos' second son, Manuel.⁷ Describing his duties, Kydones relates that John VI elevated him to a high position so no one should be able to make requests of the emperor in any other way than by speaking to Kydones first. Among the petitioners there were many Western emissaries, merchants,

² Vitalien Laurent, 'L' assaut avorté de la Horde d' Or contre l' empire Byzantin,' *Revue des Études Byzantines* 18 (1960): 145-62.

³ Franz Tinnefeld, *Demetrios Kydones Briefe*, vol 1 (Stuttgart: Hiershemann, 1981), pp.4-52. It is likely that he converted to Catholicism as early as 1357. See Raymond Loenertz, 'Démétrius Cydonès II. De 1373 à 1375,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 37 (1971): 5-39, p. 10.

⁴ Kydones Demetrios, *Apologia I*, in *Notizie a Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota*, ed. Giovanni Mercati (Vatica: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1930), 359-403, p. 360.

⁵ Kantakouzenos John, *Historiarum libri IV*, ed. Ludwig Schopen, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1828-1832), III, p. 285.

⁶ Hans-Georg Beck, 'Der byzantinische Ministerpräsident,' *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 48 (1955): 309-38; Jean Verpeaux, 'Contribution à l'étude de l' administration byzantine: ὁ μεσάζων,' *Byzantinoslavica* 16 (1955): 270-296.

⁷ Raymond Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès correspondance*, 2 vols. (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1956-1960), I, pp. 37-40, 46-8.

mercenaries and important travelers. However, oftentimes communication with these foreign individuals was rather difficult. Sometimes there was no interpreter available, or those who happened to be available were unable to follow the level and accuracy of the conversation. As Kydones comments, among the foreigners there were also some who liked to think deep thoughts and demonstrate their intellectual prowess by engaging in verbal controversy.⁸ Consequently, Kydones decided to learn Latin. He found a competent instructor who was a Dominican monk in the Genoese colony of Pera which was situated opposite the city of Constantinople.⁹

Kydones claims that as he expanded his knowledge of Latin language he sought to acquire deeper insights and knowledge. For that purpose his teacher gave him the *summa contra gentiles* of Thomas Aquinas.¹⁰ The *summa contra gentiles* was probably compiled between 1258/59 and 1264 and it is a work that focuses on the development of arguments that support the Christian beliefs and can be used against the Muslims.¹¹ Kydones calls it, ‘the crowning glory of Thomas Aquinas’ wisdom.’ Consequently, he decided to translate and share it with his friends. He points out that the emperor himself encouraged him to translate the entire book saying that, it would be of a great advantage to the cause of the Byzantines.¹² This is not surprising, since John Kantakouzenos was the author of polemic works against Islam, although for reasons of political expediency he was the first Byzantine ruler to marry his daughter to a Muslim ruler, the leader of the Ottomans, Orhan (1326-1362).¹³ The translation of the *summa contra gentiles* was completed in December 1354.¹⁴ It is interesting that the completion of this work coincided with the deposition of John VI Kantakouzenos by John V Palaiologos in December 1354. However, this change on the throne did not affect Kydones’ career.

Between 1355 and 1358 Kydones completed the translation of another major work of Aquinas, the *summa theologiae* which was compiled between 1271 and 1272. A significant part of this work was translated by Demetrios’ brother Prochoros.¹⁵ The translation of the

⁸ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 360.

⁹ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 361.

¹⁰ Kydones, *Apologia I*, pp. 362-3.

¹¹ James Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d’ Aquino. His Life, Thought and Works* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), p. 395.

¹² Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 363.

¹³ Kantakouzenos, II, pp. 587-8.

¹⁴ Phillipos Demetrakopoulos, ‘Demetrios Kydones Translation of the “*summa theologiae*”,’ *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32 (1982): 311-20.

¹⁵ Glykofrydi-Leontsini Athanasia. ‘Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts,’ in *PORPHYROGENITA. Essays on the History and Literature of Byzantium and the Latin East in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*, eds. Charalambos Dendrinos et als. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003): 175-85, p. 175.

summa theologiae shows that the Kydones brothers were faithful translators keeping more or less to the verbal structure of the Latin text. They adopted a literally style of translating retaining the Latin word order whenever it was possible and using a consistent vocabulary. The translation follows Aquinas' text so closely as to occasionally use an obviously Latin expression transported into Greek.¹⁶ Nevertheless, while Aquinas had divided his text into *questions, articles, and objections* at the beginning of each chapter, Kydones used simply the term *zetema* (questions) without making further division. Scholars agree that Kydones remained faithful to the Latin text. Nonetheless, there are quite a few examples indicating that Kydones corrected the Aristotelian text which had been changed in the Latin translation used by Aquinas.¹⁷ It is worth adding, that while Kydones' translation of Aquinas' major works led to a dynamic dialogue between Byzantine and Latin thinkers, it also caused the creation of two opposing groups in Byzantium the pro-Thomists and the anti-Thomists.¹⁸ In addition, between 1356 and 1363 Demetrios Kydones translated two shorter works of Aquinas, the *de rationibus fidei contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos ad cantorem Antiochiae* and the *de articulis fidei et Ecclesiae sacramentis ad archiepiscopum Panoramintanum* and other Latin works including Augustine's *Soliloquia* and *Sententiae* and Anselm of Canterbury's *de Processione Spiritus Sancti*. In all these translation works Kydones followed the same method and technique. He is faithful to the Latin text, though occasionally changes in tenses and introduces periphrastic language whenever it is needed.¹⁹ It seems that Kydones' skills as a translator were appreciated by contemporary Byzantine Orthodox theologians. Joseph Breyennios was a leading scholar and acquainted both with the Latin language and Catholic theology. He also frequently quoted passages from the *summa theologiae* to his work and in a letter to Kydones he praised him for his qualities, including the accuracy of his translation of Latin.²⁰

Demetrios Kydones provides useful information regarding the process of collecting the available material and translating it. In an undated letter to his friend Maximos Chrysoberges he recounts the problems he faced in his attempts to carry out his translation project.

¹⁶ Frances Kianka, 'Demetrius Kydones and Thomas Aquinas,' *Byzantion* 52 (1982): 264-86, p. 270.

¹⁷ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts,' pp.179-82.

¹⁸ Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Thomas Aquinas', p.283.

¹⁹ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts,' p. 184; Kianka, 'Demetrios Kydones and Thomas Aquinas,' p. 271.

²⁰ Leontsini, 'Demetrios Kydones as a Translator of Latin Texts,' p. 178.

‘When I was very young I attempted to translate works by Thomas. At that time I was unable to learn the Italian language as much as I wanted for both my official duties and the responsibilities the emperor assigned me did not allow me to translate them accurately. And thirdly, one should attribute this to the scarcity of books. For I was able to buy only one from where it should be transported, so that it was not easy for me to find out or correct any damage on it, since there was no other copy available by which one would collate it and decide on the true meaning of the text. For there is no depository of Latin books close to me, but I had to suffice with which that happened to be found.’²¹

Similarly in his first *Apologia* Kydones ascertains that supply and demand was a factor that affected the choice of texts to be translated. He claims that when people, both Byzantine Greeks and Westerners heard about his translation projects brought him books that for whatever reason happened to be in their possession.²²

There is no doubt that one of the fundamental reasons why Demetrios Kydones translated Latin theological works was the internal Byzantine controversy over the theology of Gregory Palamas, the defender of the *hesychast* monks. Kydones used Aquinas’ works against Palamite theology.²³ Moreover, Kydones work contradicted the aims of the Orthodox church in Constantinople. In the fourteenth century the patriarchs of Constantinople sought to maintain the unity of the Orthodox church and to promote the cultural and spiritual identity of the Orthodox world. This was not comabtible with Kydone’s pro-Latin stance.²⁴

Nonetheless, it seems that the most motive was the promotion of the policy of reconciliation with the papacy and the most important motive behind Kydones’ translations was the promotion of the idea that the Byzantines needed to obtain Western European military aid against the Ottoman Turks. Kydones writes that through his translations it became apparent that the Latins were people capable of the highest intellectual attainments something that had not been widely known in the past among the Byzantines. Usually, Kydones continues, Byzantines judged all the Westerners by the men they see in their own country. Sailors, navigators, and whatever associates with commerce and seafaring. This is an allusion to the large presence of Venetian, Genoese and other Italian merchants in Byzantine lands. Moreover, he claims that his translations provided Byzantine learned scholars with the

²¹ Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès correspondance*, II, pp.267-8.

²² Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 263.

²³ Kianka, ‘Demetrius Kydones and Thomas Aquinas,’ p.272.

²⁴ Frances Kianka, ‘Demetrios Kydones and Italy,’ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 99-110, p. 103.

opportunity to become even more learned. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that Kydones faced criticism. He writes that some suggested that to put the works of the Latins next to the Byzantine ones and to make young Byzantine intellectuals aware of them was tantamount to downgrading what was ancient and traditional in Byzantium. He was accused of effectively launching an attack against the official state religion and of importing features of what it was seen as the foul Creed of the Latins and therefore, preparing the way for schism and division within the Orthodox church.²⁵ Kydones argues that the ignorance of Latin language was the main reason why the Byzantines continued the old division between ‘barbarians’ and ‘Greeks.’ As he writes: ‘The Byzantines held fast to their stupid myopic view that the Latins were no more than oxen and donkeys. The Latins could not be credited as being capable of anything worthy of human beings.’ Kydones comments that, those who were motivated by petty envy were not able to see that behind the unfamiliar terminology of the Latin language laid the ideas of Aristotle and Plato. Kydones concludes that the inability to read the works of Latin scholars and the insufficient knowledge of Classical philosophy led many Byzantines to regard the Western European ideas as innovations invented by the Latins.²⁶

Therefore, Kydones implies that for the Byzantines the Westerners were ‘barbarians.’ However, it seems that trying to emphasize the importance of his translations and the need for the weakened Byzantine state to seek military aid from the west against the rapidly expanding Ottoman Turks he exaggerates the negative attitudes of the Byzantines towards the Westerners. In general, with extremely few exceptions late Byzantine authors did not call the westerners barbarians, despite the continuous animosities, military conflicts and endless ecclesiastical debates, conflicts and negotiations.²⁷ The expansion of the Latin West at the expense of Byzantium was more economic and less territorial, while the increasing Turkish threat and the continuous territorial expansion of the Ottomans in the Balkans threatened the very existence of Byzantium. In literary sources this struggle for survival took the form of a struggle between good and evil and unlike westerners the Ottomans are constantly presented as uncivilized barbarians.²⁸ Moreover, the social structure of the later Byzantine state was relatively close to that of Western European societies and many western customs, ideals and ideas, had infiltrated the Byzantine elite, some of them long before the period under discussion. Nonetheless, although he might have exaggerated the hatred of the Byzantines for

²⁵ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 366.

²⁶ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 366.

²⁷ Robert Browning, ‘Greeks and the others from Antiquity to the Renaissance,’ in *Greeks and the Barbarians*, ed. Thomas Harrison (New York: Routledge, 2002): 257-77.

²⁸ Savvas Kyriakidis, *Warfare in Late Byzantium, 1204-1453* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 35.

the westerners, Kydones makes the important point that inability to read their language is the main reason for the identification of others as ‘barbarians’ and his translations aim at ending this ignorance. Furthermore, Kydones argues that his reading of Latin led him to the conclusion that there was a significant agreement between the teachings of Greek and Latin Fathers. He concludes that there was nothing in the teaching of both Latin and Greek Fathers that could make the division between the Catholic and the Orthodox churches necessary. It is language that gave rise to the separation.²⁹ Moreover, striving to convince his audience for the need to receive western aid against the Turks, Kydones included in his first *Apologia* interesting comments regarding the identity and cultural heritage of the Byzantine empire and the origins imperial office. He reminds the Byzantines that Constantinople is the New Rome and that the imperial dignity comes from the Old Rome. Kydones claims that the fact that in the past the Roman emperors ruled the entire world has to be credited to the Old Rome and whatever is to be hailed in New Rome comes from the Old.³⁰ This statement makes it obvious that the approach with the Papacy and a Crusade against the Ottomans were fundamental motives behind his translation project.

Demetrios’ Kydones support for a reconciliation with the papacy and a Western European military intervention against the Ottomans is obvious not only in his translations of western authors, but it is also reflected in his rhetorical works. In 1366, Kydones compiled an oration entitled *pro subsidio Latinorum*, otherwise *Advisory Address to the Byzantines*. The context of the oration is the following. In 1366, Amadeo VI of Savoy, who was a cousin of the emperor John V Palaiologos, leading around 1,500 mercenaries conducted what can be defined as a private Crusade. With the help of the Genoese rulers of the Aegean island of Lesbos, he seized from the Ottomans the city of Gallipoli, which was of enormous strategic importance and returned it to the Byzantines. He also recovered on behalf of the Byzantines a couple of cities in the Black Sea coast north of Constantinople.³¹ Meanwhile, the emperor was blocked by the Bulgarians on his way back from a failed diplomatic mission in Hungary.³² To convince the Byzantines to welcome Amadeo’s forces to Constantinople Kydones repeats the argument regarding the common identity of the two Romes. Amadeo’s soldiers were identified as Romans. As he asks ‘what closer allies can be for the Romans than

²⁹ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 382.

³⁰ Kydones, *Apologia I*, p. 372.

³¹ Eugene Cox, *The Green Count of Savoy, Amadeus VI and Transalpine Savoy in the Fourteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 209-30.

³² Oscar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance a Rome* (Warsaw: Nakladem Towarzystwa Naukowego Warszawskiego Wydane z Zasilku Wydzialu nauk, 1930. reprinted: London: Variorum. 1972), p. 135.

the Romans themselves?’ He repeats that Rome was the metropolis of Constantinople and Constantine, the founder of the Byzantine capital was Roman himself. Therefore, there is no group to which the Byzantines could more justly turn for help than the Latins.³³

This is followed by an account of how the Westerners in the past had helped the Byzantines. Here Kydones makes allusions to the Crusades. He remarks that in the past the Latins pushed the barbarians as far as Syria and Palestine and restored freedom and faith to the Byzantines in Asia without asking anything in return. He also mentions the Crusade in 1344 against the Turkish emirate of Aydin which led to the capture of Smyrna by the fleet of the Holy League which was composed of ships and soldiers provided by Venice, the Pope, king Hugh IV of Cyprus and the Hospitallers of Rhodes.³⁴ It is interesting that Kydones comments that this Crusade benefited the Byzantines. However, the reality was more complicated. In the 1330s and early 1340s the emirate of Aydin was a close ally of Byzantium and the capture of Smyrna by a western fleet meant that Kantakouzenos, who had developed a close friendship with Aydin’s ruler Umur, lost his most useful ally in the civil war against the regency of John V in Constantinople. Moreover, Kydones claims that the Westerners had the experience of fighting against enemies such as the Ottomans, something Kydones considered an essential requirement for the war against the Turks. The Latins are portrayed as people who have a proven hatred against the Turks. They never make treaties with them and they consider that this enmity brings glory to them. Furthermore, Kydones argues that the Latins had the necessary wealth to equip themselves and the military training to achieve victories against the Turks. Kydones portrays the activities of the Western Europeans in the Mediterranean in terms of a conflict between the faithful Christians and the infidel Muslims.³⁵ However, he omits the commercial agreements between Italian states and the Turks.³⁶

Kydones finds it necessary to respond to the Byzantine suspicions of the Latins. To the suspicion that the Latins are too strong to be Byzantium’s allies and could replace the current enemies of the empire, he replies that weak allies cannot help Byzantium. He also claims that the Latins were not motivated by profit. He argues that they have gone to such an expense that they could not possibly recuperate the investment they made. Indeed, if greed

³³Demetrios Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca*, 156 vols. ed. Jean-Paul Migne (Paris 1857-1866), 154: cols. 962–1008, 977-980.

³⁴ Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, cols.980-81; Paul Lemerle, *L’Émirat d’Aydin. Byzance et l’occident* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France), 1957, pp.180-203.

³⁵ Kydones, *pro subsidio Latinorum*, cols. 981-984.

³⁶ See Elisabeth Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade. Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300-1415)* (Venice: Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, 1983).

was their motive, they would be mad to do what they are doing.³⁷ However, what Kydones omits or did not foresee is that in 1367 the emperor paid a large amount of money to Amadeo of Savoy as compensation for the wars he fought for Byzantium from money he borrowed from the Genoese.³⁸ Consequently, the alliance and Crusade Kydones supported was a quite expensive affair for the impoverished Byzantium. Nevertheless in 1369, Kydones played a leading role in the negotiations between the Byzantine empire and the papacy and followed John V to his trip to Rome. In the negotiations and in the ceremony of John V's conversion to Catholicism, Kydones served as the emperor's interpreter and the pope addressed him as the chancellor of the Byzantine emperor.³⁹

Kydones' support for the formation of an alliance with Western European powers against the Ottomans raises the question of Kydones' views about what modern scholars have defined as the 'Byzantine commonwealth,' that is to say political entities in the Balkans and eastern Europe the culture and political ideology of which was heavily influenced by Byzantium. Such were Byzantium's neighbors Bulgaria and Serbia as well as Russia. These political entities followed Orthodox Christianity and adopted many elements of the Byzantine religious and political traditions. However, from Kydones' point of view neither Bulgaria nor Serbia could become useful allies in the fighting against the Ottomans. He writes that it would be ideal to ally with the Serbians and the Bulgarians against the Turks; however the Byzantines should not forget that in the past the Bulgarians and the Serbians had attacked and seized Byzantine lands without any provocation, they had shown brutality towards the Byzantines, they had imposed heavier taxation than the Turks and they had not accepted proposals for alliance based on mutual religion. Kydones does not specify when these alliance proposals were made - probably they were never made- and omits to mention that the Turks imposed lower taxation than the Byzantines in newly conquered areas.⁴⁰ In any case in the 1360s the kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria were too fragmented and too poor to provide any military aid. The kingdom of Serbia under Stefan Dušan (1331-1355) had evolved in to the most powerful state in the Balkans and had expanded dramatically at the expense of Byzantium. In the 1340s, the Serbians had under control a large part of the Adriatic coast and Albania, had captured Epirus and Thessaly from the Byzantines and almost the entire Macedonia. However, Dušan's son and successor Stefan Uroš (1355-1371) was unable to

³⁷ Kydones, *pro subsidio Latinorum*, cols. 988-989.

³⁸ Cox, *The Green Count of Savoy*, p. 230.

³⁹ Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance a Rome*, p.196.

⁴⁰ See Nicholas Oikonomides, 'Ottoman Influence on Late Byzantine Fiscal Practice,' *Südost Forschungen* 45 (1986): 1-24.

maintain the unity of his father's dominions. In the 1360s Bulgaria was rather weak and in conflict with Byzantium. In 1362, a few years before the compilation of the *subsidio Latinorum* by Kydones, Bulgaria and Byzantium were involved in a war over the control of cities along the Black Sea coast.⁴¹ In addition, Kydones reminded his audience of the fact that the Bulgarians had blocked John V on his way back from his trip to Hungary.⁴²

The oration *de non reddenda Gallipoli* (not to surrender Gallipoli) was compiled in 1371. Its aim was to dissuade the surrender of the strategically important city, which is located on the European side of the straits Dardanelles, to the Ottomans who had sent an embassy demanding it in exchange of a peace treaty. Gallipoli was captured by the Ottomans in 1354 following an earthquake and was returned to the Byzantines by Amadeo of Savoy in 1366. In this oration Kydones repeats ideas he mentioned in the previous speech and adds others. He accuses the Turks of being the cause of all of Byzantium's sufferings. The Turks, as Kydones writes, follow false beliefs and lead a despicable way of life. He emphasizes the gratuitous nature of the western aid and the sympathy felt by the westerners for the Christians in the East. The sacrifices of the westerners led to the return of Gallipoli to the Byzantines who could now control the straits. The surrender of Gallipoli to the Turks would be a shameful act and would lead the westerners to complaint and ask why the Byzantines prefer servitude to freedom. If the Byzantines surrender Gallipoli the Catholic church is unlikely to encourage anyone to help them again.⁴³

These orations promote the official imperial policy aimed at attracting military aid against the Ottomans. However, either in 1371-the same year he compiled the oration about Gallipoli-or a few years later, the Byzantine emperor sought peace with the Ottomans and became a tribute paying vassal of Murad I (1362-1389).⁴⁴ The failure of his diplomatic efforts and the increasing Ottoman pressure led him to this decision. Did this shift in foreign policy influenced Kydones' views? There are indications that there were difficulties in the relations between Kydones and John V Palaiologos.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, in his second *Apologia*, which he wrote after 1371, Kydones defends the sincerity of his views and rejects the accusation that he only says these things to satisfy the Latins and that on his deathbed he will show himself

⁴¹ Kantakouzenos III, p. 362.

⁴² Kydones, *pro subsidio Latinorum*, c.976.

⁴³ Demetrios Kydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum*, in *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca*. 156 vols. ed. Jean-Paul Migne (Paris, 1857-1866), vol. 154, cols. 962-1008.

⁴⁴ See Georgi Ostrogosky, 'Byzance état tributaire de l'Empire Turc', *Zbornik Radova Vyzantoloskog Insttuta* 5 (1958): 49-58; Katsoni, Polymnia. 'Ο χρόνος έναρξης της Βυζαντινής υποτέλειας στους Οθωμανούς,' [The Time of the Beginning of the Byzantine Vassalage to the Ottomans] *Byzantiaka* 14 (1994): 459-81.

⁴⁵ Tinnefeld, *Demetrios Kydones Briefe*, vol 1, p. 27.

as a proper Orthodox.⁴⁶ In a letter written in 1385 which was addressed to the Byzantine despot of Morea in the Peloponnese, Theodore I Palaiologos (1383-1407), who was involved in military conflict with a Navarrese company of mercenary soldiers, Kydones describes the war between the Byzantines and the Ottomans as inevitable, due to the barbarity of the enemy. On the other hand, the despot of Morea was fighting against enemies with whom he shared common customs, faith and laws. Kydones writes that there is nothing in common between the war against the Turks and against the Latins. The war against the barbarians is continuous, as if it is an inheritance given by nature. The Byzantines are prudent, while they behave licentiously.⁴⁷ However, Kydones' comparison between the westerners and the Turks seem to have limited impact. It did not prevent the Byzantine ruler of Morea from calling on the help of the most powerful and most famous Ottoman frontier lord, Evrenos beg, against his external and internal enemies.⁴⁸

Demetrios Kydones was not the first Byzantine statesman to translate Latin theological texts. Fifty years before him, the diplomat and orator Maximos Planoudes, whose translation work focused on classical Latin authors such as Cicero and Ovid, had translated the dogmatic work of Augustine *de trinitate*, a translation acquired by Kydones.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Demetrios Kydones was the first Byzantine to explain and justify the aims of his translations. The works of the Kydones brothers encouraged cultural transmissions from the west to the east and contributed to the development of a vigorous dialogue between the Byzantines and the Latins. Furthermore, Kydones' translations aimed at promoting the idea of the union of the churches and of a Crusade against the expanding Ottoman Turks who in the second half of the fourteenth century threatened the very existence of the Byzantine state. His comments regarding the criticism his translations received reflect the ideological conflicts within the late Byzantine society, as well as changes in the Byzantine approaches towards Christian West. Kydones was one of the first Byzantine intellectuals to promote so staunchly the closer contacts with the west. Many more will follow in the fifteenth century. Some of them will move to Italy to teach and help the Westerners read Greek.

⁴⁶ Demetrios Kydones, *Apologia II*, in *Notizie a Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota*, ed. Giovanni Mercati (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1930): 403-25.

⁴⁷ Loenertz, *Démétrius Cydonès correspondance*, II, p.239.

⁴⁸ Nevra Neçipoglu, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 239.

⁴⁹ Kinaka, 'Demetrius Kydones and Thomas Aquinas,' p. 271; Edmund Fryde, *The Early Palaiologan Renaissance (1261-c.1360)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 257-63.

