

## Byzantine perceptions of the West in John Kinnamos account on the reign of Manuel Komnenos (1143-1180)\*

### ABSTRACT

El *Epítome* escrito por Juan Cinnamo constituye uno de los escasos relatos históricos contemporáneos al reinado del emperador bizantino Manuel I Comneno (1143-1180). Este periodo se ha considerado como relativamente próspero dentro de la historia bizantina, en comparación con los problemas políticos que vividos a finales de siglo. Un elemento que ha caracterizado a este periodo ha sido el de las relaciones entre el mundo bizantino y los europeos occidentales, que parecieron empeorar según avanzaba el siglo hasta desembocar en los sucesos de la Cuarta Cruzada. Este artículo investiga la perspectiva de Juan Cinnamo al respecto de las relaciones entre bizantinos y occidentales en su relato histórico, prestando especial atención a aquellas secciones en donde el autor parece aprobar o al menos tolerar las prácticas heterodoxas de los extranjeros.

This article examines John Kinnamos' perception of «Western» individuals and their culture through analysing his historical account, known as the *Epítome*. Instead of focusing in the sections that reproduce the more famous Byzantine pejorative stereotypes about barbarians in general, and Latins and Franks in particular, I will focus in the few sections where Kinnamos portrayed Westerners and their practices under a positive light.

John Kinnamos was a Byzantine author who lived through the central decades of the twelfth century. That period is generally associated to stability and prosperity for the Byzantine empire, following an epoch of turbulence in the second half of the eleventh century<sup>1</sup>. Compared with the territories controlled by the emperor Basil II at the beginning of the eleventh century, by the end of the century the empire had lost control of southern Italy, the inner lands of Anatolia, Armenia and the Syrian coastline<sup>2</sup>. The remaining territory, however, upheld a strong political entity in the eastern Mediterranean during the period known as the «century of the Komnenians» (1081 and 1180). Manuel Komnenos, the main character in John Kinnamos' historical account, promoted an aggressive policy east and west, marching against the Norman kingdom of Sicily, the Armenian and Latin polities in Cilicia and Syria, the Serbian principalities, and the kingdom of Hungary. Our perception of mid-twelfth century Byzantium and the reign of Manuel has not only changed due to the availability of primary source materials, but also as a result of shifting paradigms in the study of the Byzantine past. For instance, while Ostrogorsky's now-classic *History of the Byzantine State* echoed earlier research depicting Manuel as ambitioning «universal imperial sovereignty», more recent research empha-

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<sup>1</sup> VLYSSIDOU 2003.

<sup>2</sup> KALDELLIS 2017, pp. 271-279 approaches the Byzantine imperial collapse at the end of the eleventh century, not as a result of the negligence of the following emperors, but as an event linked to the magnitude of the Turkish invasion and the very nature of the imperial institutions.

sised the conservative character of the imperial policies from this period, which were focused, in turn, in preserving the Roman core of the empire<sup>3</sup>.

One of the key aspects concerning Manuel's reign and the history of twelfth-century Byzantium in general is the increasing importance of the Byzantine engagement with their Western counterparts. Concerning the Byzantine relations with the Western side of this study, we may first acknowledge that the categories used by the Byzantines to describe «Western Europeans» do not coincide with the names used by the Byzantines themselves. The articles written by Alexander Kazhdan or Eleni Tounta, for instance, analyse the rise of different concepts used to describe the Western non-Roman populations among the Byzantines. Kazhdan, particularly, underlined how the word «Latin» became more common in the Byzantine sources after the First Crusade, as a means to denominate, mostly, the Normans and other inhabitants of the Italian peninsula<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, the peoples living beyond the Alps tended to be known as «Franks»<sup>5</sup>. According to Kazhdan, the rise of these globalising categories may speak of the Byzantine perception of a growing consolidation of the different polities as a single ethnic entity<sup>6</sup>. There are different possible explanations for that change in the Byzantine perception of their Western neighbours. Firstly, the increasing presence of «Latins» and «Franks» in eleventh-century Byzantine cities and trade routes as merchants or mercenaries (perhaps marking the period when Constantinople began to harbour substantial ethnic minorities) may have affected the Byzantine perception of these groups<sup>7</sup>. Secondly, the rise of the Pope's authority over much of the Western European territories and the consolidation of religious wars against the Muslims (in the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily and Syria) may have contributed to the perceived homogeneity of the West from a Byzantine viewpoint<sup>8</sup>. Throughout the twelfth century, the Byzantines found themselves «sandwiched» between the Venetians and Normans in the West and the principalities ruled by Latin characters along the Syrian coast following the First Crusade in the East.

That friction between Romans and Latins or Franks may have led to the development of mutual hostility, developing from a generalised sentiment of cultural superiority against the barbaric «other». For instance, Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, possibly the Byzantine history containing the most detailed account of the First Crusade, includes pejorative references to the Latins, delineating a number of (negative) characteristics that made them different from the Romans<sup>9</sup>. In turn, pejorative stereotypes about the eastern romans were activated in Western literature since, at least, the second half of the eight century<sup>10</sup>. Now that the two groups were in closer contact than in previous centuries, there was a ground for the development of mutual hostility between both communities, reaching its peak in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade or, more specifically, in the discourses developed in Orthodox communities in subse-

<sup>3</sup> OSTROGORSKY 1968 (1956), p. 380; AHRWEILER 1975, in turn, understands Byzantine politics as a combination of imperial ambitions and retraction to a national core; HARRIS 2003 approaches Byzantium's interaction with the crusaders as a continuation of traditional diplomatic means and political goals; KALDELLIS 2019, p. 201, defines Byzantium as a non-imperial policy, primarily focused on preserving the territories inhabited by Roman population.

<sup>4</sup> KAZHDAN 2001; TOUNTA 2010.

<sup>5</sup> KAZHDAN 2001, pp. 85-86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>7</sup> KALDELLIS 2019, pp. 225, 258.

<sup>8</sup> JACOBY 2000, pp. 134 and 137-138; BALARD, 2005; MACEVITT 2008, pp. 43-46; KALDELLIS 2017, pp. 285, 301.

<sup>9</sup> KAZHDAN 2001, p. 91.

<sup>10</sup> KALDELLIS 2007, pp. 87-95.

quent decades<sup>11</sup>. Relations between Byzantium and the West have often been approached as a slow yet steady deterioration leading to unavoidable hostility and conflict. That approach, however, looks more complex once we approach individual sources and episodes situated throughout the twelfth century<sup>12</sup>.

The reign of Manuel Komnenos becomes especially significant for the analysis of non-hostile relations between Byzantines and Latins. It has become customary to ascribe to this emperor some degree of «Latinophile tendencies»<sup>13</sup>. Jonathan Harris, however, considers that Manuel's policy did not constitute a significant alteration of the traditional Byzantine diplomatic principles: any alignment with the Western polities was meant to become beneficial for the government in Constantinople. The political and ideological goals of the empire remained the same; it was the world around the empire that had changed, so that good relations with Western polities became a priority for the Byzantines<sup>14</sup>. Manuel had to adapt to this change: to cite the famous phrase from *Il Gattopardo*, «se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi»<sup>15</sup>.

John Kinnamos worked as secretary (βασιλικὸς γραμματικὸς) of the emperor Manuel. His *Epitome* encompasses the years 1118-1176, corresponding to the reigns of John II Komnenos (addressed in relative brevity) and most of the reign of John's son Manuel. Some scholars have advised approaching Kinnamos' version of history from a sceptical stance, given the accounts' tendency to praise Manuel's policies. They suggested, in turn, relying more on the account by Niketas Choniates, which also describes the central decades of the twelfth century but remains more critical of Manuel's political decisions<sup>16</sup>. Paul Magdalino's detailed monograph on the reign of Manuel, however, has used the information conveyed in Kinnamos' account thoroughly, together with the surviving *enkomia* to the emperor. Magdalino claims that Choniates' account is not too different to Kinnamos' oeuvre, inasmuch as he also carefully selected the information displayed in his narrative. Choniates sought to trace back the causes of imperial decline to Manuel's policy. Magdalino thus suggests analysing the similarities and differences among the different accounts concerning Manuel's reign, understanding that each of them grounded their views on different pre-existing materials, and were intersected by different authorial goals<sup>17</sup>. An even more recent publication by Jakov Ljubarskij underlines the originality on Kinnamos' depiction of the two Komnenian emperors, avoiding a simple combination of history and *enkomion* and depicting Emperor Manuel as perhaps too eager to expose himself on the battlefield.<sup>18</sup> Both Magdalino and Ljubarskij, thus, emphasise the importance and originality of Kinnamos' *Epitome*.

In the case of Kinnamos' *Epitome*, we may not be able to fully grasp his thoughts concerning Manuel's reign beyond the overall encomiastic tone, since the final sections of the account are missing. The only surviving manuscript of the *Epitome*, *Vat gr. 163*, dated to the thirteenth century, was mutilated at its end, while the author was describing the emperor's preparation

<sup>11</sup> MESSIS 2011.

<sup>12</sup> KAZHDAN 2001, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> OSTROGORSKY 1968 (1956), p. 380: «his whole way of life bore the stamp of Western chivalry»; JOUANNO 1992, p. 288.

<sup>14</sup> HARRIS 2003, pp. 87-93; LILIE 2003, pp. 220-222, 251.

<sup>15</sup> TOMASI DI LAMPEDUSA 1969 (1958), p. 41.

<sup>16</sup> ANGOLD 1997 (1985), p. 174.

<sup>17</sup> MAGDALINO 2003.

<sup>18</sup> LJUBARSKIJ 2000, pp. 166-177, 172-173.

of a major campaign in the east in 1176<sup>19</sup>. This campaign became a major fiasco of Manuel's policy, culminating in the defeat at Myriokephalon and leading to a decrease of the empire's authority in the east. It is of interest, however, to study how Kinnamos depicted the recent past of the empire and in which ways he distanced his account from the tropes that were common in contemporary works.

This article will analyse Kinnamos' depiction of Westerners (Franks, Latins, or else) and aspects associated to this group in the *Epitome*. Moving beyond the more common negative stereotypes associating Westerners to some sort of barbarism and lack of ideal Roman qualities, we will focus on those occasions when Kinnamos adopts a neutral, or even favourable, attitude towards Western individuals as well as their values and actions.

Our study of Kinnamos' perception of the Latins as reflected in his *Epitome* could be summarised in five points, grouped in two sections. The first section, concerning the Latins and their identity, takes into consideration the different Latins mentioned in the account, as well as a number of revealing moments in the account when Kinnamos does not approach Latins as completely alien to the Byzantine society. The second section is dedicated to the manner in which Kinnamos describes different elements of the Latin culture, including erudite mentions regarding the Latins, descriptions of Latin practices, as well as some overtly positive remarks about them.

#### IDENTIFYING WESTERNERS IN THE *EPITOME*

We will first analyse some of the characters from Kinnamos' work whose origin could be traced back to Western Europe. In early mention to the «axe-bearers» (πελεκυφόροις, now known as the Varangian guard) presented them as «the British nation, which has been in service to the Romans' emperors from a long time back»<sup>20</sup>. Shortly after, Lombard knights are represented fighting alongside Turkish riders in John Komnenos' campaign against the Hungarians<sup>21</sup>. We can spot the foreign origin of other characters in the *Epitome* based on their names: the account mentions the *kaisar* John Roger, related to the emperor Manuel and finally depicted as a traitor<sup>22</sup>; the former count of Gravina Alexander of Conversano, who plays a main role in the account on the side of the Byzantines<sup>23</sup>; as well as minor characters such as Giphard or Petraliphas<sup>24</sup>. Despite the relative abundance of Western characters in Kinnamos' account, the power they could hold within the imperial institutions may have been limited, compared to other periods. While the contemporary account by William of Tyre depicted the emperor Manuel surrounded by Latin characters at court<sup>25</sup>, the number of Westerners occupying military high ranks may have decreased throughout the first half of the twelfth century. Furthermore, Latins serving the Byzantine emperors did not pose relevant threats to the empire from within, unlike eleventh-century Latin characters such as Hervé Frangopoulos or

<sup>19</sup> OSTROGORSKY 1968 (1956), p. 362; ANGOLD 1997 (1985), p. 174.

<sup>20</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), p. 8.15-16: ἔθνος δέ ἐστι τοῦτο Βρεταννικὸν βασιλεῦσι Ῥωμαίων δουλεῖον ἀνέκαθεν; my English translation of Kinnamos' words will follow BRAND 1976.

<sup>21</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38, 148.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-140, 148.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 110.

<sup>25</sup> Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi *Chronicon*, R. HUYGENS (ed.), p. 1020.

Roussel de Bailieul. In words of Alexander Kazhdan, «the Komnenoi tamed the relentless spirit of earlier “Franks” and transformed them into obedient servants of the empire»<sup>26</sup>.

A second aspect to consider is the ambiguity of the ethnic identity of some of these characters. Knowing about the Latin origins of a given character does not tell us much information in itself regarding their integration in the Byzantine society and culture. Assimilation could be expected to be a complex process, not necessarily unidirectional. The aforementioned Alexander of Conversano, for instance, is depicted as a refugee (προσπεφευγώς) at the service of the emperor after being expelled from his lands in Italy<sup>27</sup>. Another character, Thomas, is presented as Antiochene regarding his γένος, but Kinnamos also emphasises his long-lasting loyalty to the emperor<sup>28</sup>. The opposite may occur with another Thomas, born in Lesbos but depicted as a lowborn and disloyal to the emperor: emphasis here is not so much in these characters' ethnicity rather than in their relation with the imperial institutions through their life<sup>29</sup>. This ambiguity referring to the weight of ethnicity in the representation of a given character is not exclusive of Latins. Following the introduction of our second Thomas, Kinnamos introduces Manuel as a character of some barbarian γένος (even citing his previous name, Ishaq), who worked for the emperor's household. Manuel exceeded in his cruelty punishing some deserters in the name of the emperor: according to Kinnamos, his extreme violence may have been explained in some inner rage against the Romans. While the narrative emphasises Michael's sentiment of alterity with such statement, Kinnamos has the emperor forgiving Manuel's actions instead of punishing him the same way, since he did not want to inflict the same punishment on Romans<sup>30</sup>. Manuel's representation shows, at once, two potential representations of the characters as either outsiders or insiders to the Roman community.

#### KINNAMOS' AMBIGUITY TOWARDS WESTERN PRACTICES

Kinnamos' *Epitome* also contains multiple references to elements of Western geography and culture. For instance, Kinnamos referred to the frères (φρέριοι) who submitted to the emperor John Komnenos in Antioch, and to the masters of the Knights Templar from the Palestinian territories<sup>31</sup>. The narrator also slowed the pace of his account in order to clarify that the seat occupied by the French monarch Louis VII, in the presence of the emperor Manuel but occupying a lower position, was called a σελλίον «by those who speak the language of the Romans»<sup>32</sup>. Although this term clearly alludes to the Latin language, the allusion to Latin being the Roman language may be related to the «talismanic» function of the Latin language in Byzantine culture, underlying the Byzantine's Romanness by defining Latin (and not Greek) as their ancestral language<sup>33</sup>. In that case, it would not be so much a direct reference to the name used by the visiting Latins to the chair but either a reference to the formulaic court language, or even a hint to the ancient ties uniting the Latin-speaking visitors to the Roman court in

<sup>26</sup> KAZHDAN 2001, pp. 97-98.

<sup>27</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), p. 135.17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.19-21: Θωμάς δέ τις, γένος μὲν Ἀντιοχεύς βασιλεῖ δὲ αὐτόματος ἐκ μακροῦ γεγενημένος.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 296-297.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 298-299.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19.7, 188.12: ὃν τέμπλου μαῖστορα Λατίνοι ὀνομάζουσιν.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.3: ῥωμαῖζοντες ... ἄνθρωποι.

<sup>33</sup> KALDELLIS 2019, p. 101.

Constantinople. Shortly after, Kinnamos introduced a lengthy explanation for a French by-word mocking the Germans' ability fighting on horseback<sup>34</sup>. Later on, he would refer to the Alpine origin of the rivers Sava and Danube<sup>35</sup>, and even had Andronikos Komnenos (Manuel Komnenos' brother) wear an Italian cloak in order to avoid being recognised in the Roman camp<sup>36</sup>. While narrating Manuel's campaign in southern Italy, Kinnamos equates the Latin rank of chancellor to the Roman *logothete*<sup>37</sup>. Not all the erudite references to the Latin world are, of course, sympathetic: Kinnamos later introduced a lengthy excursus defending the legitimacy of the imperial title in Constantinople by referring to historical events dating back to late Antiquity, even addressing the pope (τὸ Πάπα ... ἄξιωμα) directly in a figurative speech, criticising his hypocritical treatment of the imperial dignity. At the end of the excursus, Kinnamos himself admitted that his speech was inappropriately long for the history he was composing<sup>38</sup>.

Nevertheless, these references to the Latin world are only occasionally mixed with reproach to their barbarian condition. It is noteworthy the manner in which Kinnamos avoids criticising some of the Latin practices described in his account. Not only Kinnamos alluded to marriages between members of the Komnenos dynasty with Latin princesses (a matter prone to criticism decades earlier)<sup>39</sup> but he also referred to the Roman acceptance of Western diplomatic practices, such as accepting the cession of Southern Italy to the empire as a spouse's dowry<sup>40</sup>, or considering the cession of Antioch to its prince as a feudal pact:

Raymond often went to the emperor and warmly begged to yield him the city, on condition that the emperor should be and be proclaimed its lord, but he [Raymond] should lawfully be guardian of it by [the emperor's] authority<sup>41</sup>.

Kinnamos also refers to the existence of Latin clerics joining the battle, although he never criticised what would look as an oddity from a Byzantine perspective<sup>42</sup>. Two references to a trial by ordeal are also included in Kinnamos' account. The first example describes in detail a duel between a Latin soldier from the imperial army and his rival from the enemy camp. The combat happened during the Orthodox Easter, and yet no explicit reproach comes from the narrator of the scene, which resulted in a Roman victory<sup>43</sup>.

Finally, we encounter several references to aspects of the Frankish or Latin culture that are not only tolerated by the narrator, but even receive direct praise. We can first appreciate that a number of positive remarks about Western characters and their actions are directly linked to the Western ramifications of the imperial family. The French monarch Louis VII, the father of the princess to be married to Manuel Komnenos' heir, is depicted in a markedly positive way,

<sup>34</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), pp. 84.13-85.8.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.18.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.8-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.12-13: *καυτζίλεριω ... ὃν λογοθέτην εἶποι ἂν τις ἐλληνίζων ἀνήρ.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218-14-220.24; again, p. 292.1-5.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16, 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.23-19.3: *ὅθεν καὶ συχνὰ ἐπὶ βασιλέα Ῥαιμουῦνδος ἐξιὼν θερμῶς ἐλιπάρει τὴν πόλιν αὐτῷ παραδιδούς ἐφ' ᾧ βασιλέα μὲν κύριον εἶναι καὶ λέγεσθαι, τὸν δὲ δικαίῳ τῷ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ταύτης ἐπιτροπεύειν.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19.7, 188.12, as referred above; see also 182.19: *ἀμονάχων μοναχῶν.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159-160 and 168; see also MACRIDES 2013.

particularly during his visit to the imperial territories during the Second Crusade<sup>44</sup>. Raymond, the father of the empress Marie, is praised for his strength and vigour, even though Kinnamos recognises that this character posed a number of problems to the empire<sup>45</sup>. Praising the barbarian relatives of the imperial family, primarily as a way to elaborate an encomiastic depiction of the emperor and his closest relatives, is not a novelty of the twelfth century. About a century earlier, Michael Attaleiates' *History* included an encomiastic depiction of the Celtiberian warriors that fought against the Ancient Romans with extreme bravery, and were allegedly related to the emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates, the author's patron and the account's heroic figure<sup>46</sup>.

Not all the Latin characters and practices receiving Kinnamos' praise, however, are directly related to the imperial family. The Holy Roman emperors Lothar II and Frederick Barbarossa, for instance, are occasionally depicted under a positive light despite their position as enemies of the empire. In the case of Frederick, he is depicted assisting his vassals while at war, as it would be expected from a responsible ruler<sup>47</sup>. Two Italian women are also represented as unlikely heroic figures for the Romans. In the first case, an anonymous Italian woman is depicted assisting the emperor John Komnenos in his Hungarian campaign. Paul Stephenson convincingly demonstrated that these and other details introduced by Kinnamos in his depiction of John's campaign contribute to lessen the prestige of Manuel's predecessor, consolidating, in turn, the superior glory of Manuel's own campaign in Hungary a few years later<sup>48</sup>.

The second case concerns the heroic actions of Aldruda Frangipane, duchess of Bertinoro, who is represented intervening in favour of the Romans during the siege of Ancona in 1173 by an alliance of the Venetians and Frederick Barbarossa:

More generous than anyone else, and in particular masculine; since she had been bereft of her husband long before, she had maintained a chaste life from then on. When she learned the facts regarding Ancona and that [the siege] was in its ultimate straits, inflamed by ardour (for she maintained friendship for the Romans), she hastened to assist the city by outlays from her own house<sup>49</sup>.

As the narration continues, we are told that Aldruda reinforced the garrison of Ancona with her own troops, leading the defending armies. Her actions contributed to the salvation of the city, which remained under imperial control<sup>50</sup>. In this case, the representation of a female barbarian as the saviour of the Roman cause could perhaps be understood as a way to underline the Roman failure in living up to their ideals. Not only were the Romans defeated in Italy: the unexpected success in Ancona is due to the assistance of a marginal character, a non-Roman widow no less. Once again, Michael Attaleiates depicted similar situations in his *Histo-*

<sup>44</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), pp. 82-87.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 215,22-216.2: 'Ραιμούνδον δὴ τὸν ἐκ Πετούης, οὐπερ ἰκανῶς ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεμνήσθημεν λόγους, ἀνδρα ἰσχύι καὶ ῥώμῃ κατὰ τοὺς θρυλλουμένους ἐκείνους Ἡρακλεῖς.

<sup>46</sup> Michaelis Attaleiatae *Historia*, E.T. TSOLAKIS (ed.), pp. 170.12-171.25.

<sup>47</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), pp. 71-72, 88.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12; STEPHENSON 1996.

<sup>49</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), pp. 288.17-22: Ἰταλὴ μὲν τὸ γένος μεγαλόφρων δὲ εἶπερ τις καὶ ἀρρενωπὸς μάλιστα, ἐπειδὴ τε ἀνδρὸς πάλαι χηρωθεῖη, σωφρονικὸν ἐξ ἐκείνου τὸν βίον ἐτήρει. Αὕτη ἐπειδὴ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Ἀγκῶνα ἐπύθετο καὶ ὡς ἐν ἐσχάτοις εἶη τοῖς κακοῖς, ζήλω διαθερμανθεῖσα (ἐτύγχανε γὰρ Ῥωμαίοις τηροῦσα τὸ φίλιον) ἠπείγετο ταῖς οἴκοθεν δαπάναις τῇ πόλει ἐπαρκέσαι.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288.17-22.

ry. He complained that, while the Romans would be expected to act virtuously due to their knowledge of the Christian revelation, their collective character has fallen so far behind that they underperformed in comparison to other peoples, Christian and non-Christian alike<sup>51</sup>.

In other sections of the *Epitome*, Kinnamos praises the warrior virtues of the Latins, specifically their use of cavalry and long spears, which terrorised the Romans in the battlefield. In this respect, Kinnamos describes how the emperor Manuel decided to change the weaponry of the Roman soldiers. He chose to leave aside the small, round shields in favour of long spears, also reducing the army's reliance of archers in favour of riders. Manuel also resolved to prepare his army and himself for war while at peace, practising equestrianism and some sort of jousting. According to Kinnamos, «in a brief time the Roman excelled the mettle of French and Italians»<sup>52</sup>.

Our last case belongs to Manuel's campaign in Hungary. The emperor was still a young man and had recently married Bertha of Sulzbach. According to Kinnamos, Manuel exposed himself to severe danger in the battlefield due to his age and in his attempt to please his wife by fulfilling the expectations established by Latin culture. In Kinnamos' words:

The emperor, impelled by his youth, and having not long since wedded a wife, himself desired to achieve something in battle, according to their custom. For to the Latin who has just taken a wife, not to appear noble brings no common disgrace<sup>53</sup>.

Manuel is thus portrayed as a Roman seeking to please his foreign wife by following Latin ideals in the battlefield. Furthermore, Kinnamos underlined Manuel's success later on in the account, as the empress claimed that she had not seen a warrior like her husband<sup>54</sup>. The *Epitome* reveals some degree of admiration among the Byzantines of the Latin martial skills. The emperor Manuel was not only represented transforming his armies to match Latin excellence, but also disputing Latin bravery in the battlefield himself. While Kinnamos' explicit admiration of Latin culture focuses in these martial elements, he also argues that the Romans were able to surpass them through effort and cunning revision of their own practices.

In sum, the *Epitome* written by John Kinnamos shows an attempt to present Manuel Komnenos' reign, together with several members of his own family and particularly his foreign relatives, under a positive light, which certainly conditioned the portrayal of Latin characters and practices. The account could well have been composed during Manuel's regency, thus explaining the positive depiction of the French king Louis VII, the father-in-law of Manuel's son and successor Alexios II, or Raimond of Poitiers, Manuel's own father-in-law. Praising these Latin characters meant praising the Byzantine ruling family<sup>55</sup>. Some other elements from the *Epitome*, such as the author's interest in some elements of Latin culture, could also be explained by the author's own predilections. Nevertheless, although Kinnamos explicitly re-

<sup>51</sup> Michaelis Attaleiatae *Historia*, E.T. TSOLAKIS (ed.), pp. 126.25-127.4, 152.9-153.7.

<sup>52</sup> Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome*, A. MEINEKE (ed.), p. 125.12-13: Τοίνυν και ἐν βραχεί Ῥωμαῖος ἀνὴρ τὴν Γερμανῶν και Ἰταλῶν ὑπερῆρεν αἰχμῆν.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.6-10: Βασιλεὺς δὲ τὸ μὲν τῆ ἡλικίᾳ τυραννοῦμενος τὸ δὲ τι και γυναικὶ οὐ πολλῶ ξυνοικήσας πρότερον, κατὰ ἔθος τὸ αὐτῶν αὐτουργήσαι τι ἐς τὴν μάχην ἤλθεν. Ἄνδρι γὰρ Λατίνῳ ἄρτι γυναικῆ εἰσοικισαμένῳ μὴ οὐχὶ ἀριστέα φανῆναι αἰσχύνην οὐχὶ τυχοῦσαν ἐπάγεται; LJUBARSKIJ 2000, p. 168 also discussed this passage, noting that Manuel's attempt to impress his wife contrasts to his indifference later on.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99.21-100.3.

<sup>55</sup> STEPHENSON 1996.



ferred to the Latin superiority in the battlefield, he also underlined that the Romans, if properly commanded by a virtuous emperor, could be able to surpass their barbarian neighbours, all while upholding their dignity as «civilised» Romans beyond any doubt.

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