Introduction

For a Critical Historiography
of Byzantine Studies

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Byzantine studies applies a variety of humanistic disciplines (art history, archaeology, history, literature, philosophy, theology, and philology) to the study of cultural, political, and social phenomena within a circumscribed chronology (ca. 500–1500 CE) and geography (the eastern Mediterranean and adjoining landmasses). If conceptualized as a transnational and multigenerational project to describe and understand human activity in the past, it may serve as a model for coalition building and problem solving in the present and the common envisioning of a just future. If, by contrast, it is reckoned to be an arcane body of knowledge—difficult to access and limited in appeal—then it may serve as a redoubt for reaction, a refuge for the highly educated who seek personal comfort and security in the present and see little hope for the future.

The question of colonialism is key to the current trajectory of Byzantine studies and to the future of the field. That said, we do not presume to answer our titular question with a simple "yes" or "no," much less to save (or to damn) our discipline. Instead, we hope to highlight the distinctive character of our object of study (the Byzantine Empire)

and of our discipline (Byzantine studies): namely, that both are simultaneously colonial and colonized.

We are not the first to inquire into the relationships between Byzantine studies and European colonialism. Take, for example, two works published in 2019: one by Panagiotis Agapitos and the other by George Demacopoulos. Agapitos studies an extractive mission undertaken by the Byzantinist Franz Dölger to occupied Athos in 1941 and its relation to his influential "view of the Byzantine empire as a fully developed system of a national population under a constitutionally organized state."[1] Demacopoulos studies a much older group of texts about Byzantium—those produced by participants in another extractive colonialist enterprise, the Fourth Crusade—and employs postcolonial critique to understand the enduring concepts of Christian difference embedded therein.[2]

Similarly, we are far from the first to address the historiography of Byzantine studies. Among the many earlier contributions included in the bibliography at the end of this volume, we wish to highlight one of the most recent. Published in 2021 and edited by two contributors to the present volume, Nathanael Aschenbrenner and Jake Ransohoff, *The Invention of Byzantium in Early Modern Europe* offers an impressive "cross section" of the discipline's founding figures, albeit without explicitly addressing their direct participation (or indirect implication) in colonial projects.[3]

Our concept of "critical historiography" is shaped by two studies of neighboring disciplines. In *The Nation and Its Ruins* (2007), Yannis Hamilakis demonstrates that modern Greek studies "can only be adequately addressed if it is positioned within the discourse of post-colonial studies, and only when the interplay between colonialism and nationalism is fully explored."[4] Similarly, in *Beyond Balkanism* (2019), Diana Mishkova highlights the origins of southeast European studies in the work of "scholar-officials" employing "the language of the then triumphant European colonialism."[5]

As the contributors to this volume demonstrate, Byzantine studies is no less entangled with the practices and legacies of European colonialism than are modern Greek studies and southeast European studies, even as the contours of its entanglement—the specific knots and nodes that tie the production of knowledge to projects of colonial rule

and extraction—are distinctive. It is the job of a systematic critical historiography of Byzantine studies both to map this topography and to envision the alternatives: how Byzantine studies might contribute to the formation of a more just and equitable society.

Accordingly, we consider the chapters below and the thematic bibliography that follows as contributions to this much broader project. The bibliography is meant as a tool, not as a comprehensive record of all works mentioned in this volume. It was compiled collectively by participants in our original workshop and contributors to this volume. It reveals that the critical historiography of Byzantine studies is still a fragmented (more optimistically, a nascent) discourse. None of the texts cite or refer to any substantial portion of the others. This is not the intellectual production of a self-conscious field of critical historiography; rather, it is an undercurrent of locally occasioned critical reflections. We hope that in mapping it across disciplines and specialties, the book and bibliography may serve as a foundation for a more coherent intellectual project, both by gathering various approaches to the question of colonialism in Byzantine studies and by looking outward and situating Byzantine studies among the neighboring disciplines of classics and medieval studies.

Orientalism and Nationalism

Unlike the study of ancient Greece and Rome and the study of the Western Middle Ages, the study of the Byzantine Empire was never essential to the formation of modern Europe and the pursuit of its colonial enterprises. Rather, Byzantium was constructed as the decadent, effeminate foil to a vigorous, manly Europe: in short, as an especially proximate branch of an imagined Orient.[6] Beginning in the nineteenth century, this marginalization provoked a response on the part of scholars in orthodox Christian nations who sought to construct an equally imaginary, idealized image of Byzantium as a usable past in the service of modern political projects.[7]

The foregoing observations, whose truth we fully acknowledge, have led some of our interlocutors to pose two objections to our titular question. First: Byzantium is so marginalized and orientalized that Byzantine

studies cannot possibly be a colonialist discipline. Second: nationalism, not colonialism, is at the root of the discipline's discontents.

It is hard to argue with the premise of the first objection. Of course, and as we discuss in greater detail below, Byzantium has been marginalized by traditional histories of Western civilization. In a material act with symbolic significance, Byzantine strata have been stripped off excavation sites to reveal the prized yet architecturally formulaic monuments of antiquity hidden below.[8] Even while granting the premise, however, the conclusion does not necessarily follow. Marginalized fields of study can be conducted in a colonialist manner: one need look no further than the histories of the study of Sanskrit philosophy and Arabic literature.[9] In short, while Byzantium may be marginal to Eurocentric discourse, Byzantine studies, if practiced in a colonialist mode, can contribute further to its marginalization.

The second objection brings us to questions of definition. What is colonialism? What is nationalism? And have they been, as the objection suggests, clearly distinct and mutually exclusive factors in shaping the history of scholarship?

Defining colonialism is not a straightforward task. In 1995, Jürgen Osterhammel devoted an entire book to this project, delineating six forms of colonialism, six epochs, and three basic types with a plethora of subdivisions. According to Osterhammel's preferred definition, "colonialism is a relationship of rule between collectives, in which the fundamental decisions about the lives led by the colonized are made and carried out by a culturally foreign minority of colonial rulers, uninterested in acculturation, and primarily driven by external interests. In modern history, this is usually combined with missionizing justificatory doctrines, which rest upon the colonial rulers' conviction of their own cultural supremacy."[10]

Such theoretical work continues, with various authors arguing at different times that empire and colony are different, or that a colony is a part of an empire, or indeed that the two concepts are best collapsed.[11] Nevertheless, the applicability of the concept of colonialism to the medieval world remains contested. Osterhammel's first epoch is 1520–70, after the end of the Byzantine state and contemporary with the origin of Byzantine studies.[12]

In bringing the concept of colonialism to bear on the historiography of Byzantine studies, we do not intend to contribute to this technical-definitional debate. We have not chosen colonialism because we believe it to be a clear and bounded concept better suited to explaining East Rome than the commonsense "empire." Concepts in the world are never siloed off from one another, nor are they composed of discrete sets of necessary and sufficient conditions. Their use is often messy, "a complicated network of similarities, overlapping and criss-crossing," guided more by family resemblance than essence.[13] Empire and colonial empire have more commonalities than differences. Both rely on the existence of a hierarchical extractive regime encompassing vast swaths of peoples, cultures, and linguistic traditions. But they are different in what they evoke and in the history of their study.

Accordingly, we chose to bring colonialism to the discussion because we hoped that its history would help reframe some key questions relating both to the history of Byzantium and to the history of Byzantine studies. In particular, we believe that the field of postcolonial studies offers us the tools to think critically about both the Byzantine Empire and the field dedicated to its study.

With respect to the history of Byzantium, the term "empire" is sufficiently ubiquitous in our field to have assumed a robust moral ambivalence. It means different things to different people and thus allows consensus without productive debate. Asking whether Byzantium was a colonial empire, even only as a rhetorical provocation, can help reintroduce specificity and genuinely productive disagreement. "Colonialism" conjures the realities of extraction and exploitation upon which empires are based more vividly than the celebrationist studies of the Byzantine Empire's survival (on which see Nicholas Matheou's chapter below). It provokes a different emphasis, different semantic and emotional associations, and, ultimately and most productively, different responses. Foremost of these is a concern with the subaltern, the colonized and oppressed whose lived experience the term brings to the forefront: "the experiences of those people who suffered as a result of state and institution formation."[14]

In terms of the history of the discipline, scholars and scholarship are useful within colonialism as, in Osterhammel's terms, one means by

which colonial rulers convince themselves of their own cultural suprem-
acy. This dynamic has been well explicated in postcolonial studies, dat-
ing back to the foundational works of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty
Spivak, and Talal Asad. These and many other thinkers have elucidated
the role of academies and scholars in the distribution of resources and
power. As Robert J. C. Young wrote in 1990, and in dialogue with Spiv-
ak's work, "the difficult political questions . . . emerge from the analy-
sis of colonialism because it combines its critique of Western history
with one of Western historicism, showing the enactment of the links
between the two in the colonial past and the neocolonial present. The
effect of this has been to produce a shift away from the problem of his-
tory as an idea towards an examination of Western history's and his-
toricism's contemporary political ramifications. For that history lives
on: its effects are operating now."[15] Who gets to speak, and who does
not, is a question as relevant to our medieval sources as it is to our
modern conference programs, and colonialism impacts both.

By bringing the concept of colonialism to our field, we do not deny
the impact of nationalism on Byzantine studies. As Partha Chatter-
jee demonstrated in his 1986 *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*,
the discourses of nationalism and colonialism have much in common,
including their civilizing mission and their patriarchal sense of gender
and sexuality. Indeed, although nationalist discourse "challenged the
colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellec-
tual premises of 'modernity' on which colonial domination was based."[16]
Moreover, to construct the nation from the top down itself requires a
form of colonization, which irons out the creases of regional and local
difference.[17]

It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that nationalism as a discourse
emerged from centers of imperial and colonial rule.[18] Some of the regions
whose medieval histories are studied under the remit of Byzantine stud-
ies—including Turkey and the Balkans—were never directly colonized
by modern European powers.[19] Other regions, such as the Caucasus,
Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, and Syria, were. Nevertheless, the intellectual
elites of both were often educated in colonial capitals: Amsterdam,
Brussels, London, Moscow, Paris, Vienna.

Accordingly, we do not seek to dismiss the role of nationalism in the construction of Byzantine studies, both historically and today. Rather, we hope that by placing nationalist scholarly production within a broader framework of colonial relations and intellectual hegemony, we might view the role of nationalism in our field differently. Let us begin by rejecting the pernicious distinction, effectively highlighted by Chatterjee, between the "good" nationalism of the West and the "evil" nationalism of the East.[20] Nationalism is a condition that unavoidably shapes all scholarship in Byzantine studies, regardless of the national affiliations of the author. The question, then, is what we choose to do with it. Can this shared condition serve not as a cause for perennial lament, or mutual recrimination, but as a tool for comparing our own field to others and for building transnational resistance to the ongoing material and intellectual legacies of European colonialism?

Empire and Discipline, Colonizer and Colonized

Features of colonialism and coloniality can be found at different times in both the East Roman Empire in the medieval Mediterranean and in the modern discipline of Byzantine studies. This ambiguity makes Byzantium an especially fascinating object of analysis and should allow Byzantine studies to contribute productively to postcolonial studies.

Byzantine history is conventionally related in terms of the shifting fortunes of the East Roman state and its post-1204 successors, especially of their elites. Periods traditionally viewed as "golden ages"—the era of Justinian, for example—are unmistakably marked by colonial empire. In raw material terms, Corisande Fenwick has shown that the Justinianic conquest of North Africa did not represent the return of the beloved king, but rather an aggressive and unwelcome exploitative regime run out of small fortifications amid the sprawling, yet no longer defensible, urban landscapes.[21] Similarly, Anthony Kaldellis has argued that Byzantine rule in eleventh-century Bulgaria "looks more like an occupation": Bulgaria was governed "through primarily military and fiscal institutions, without giving its people much opportunity to rise in the Roman system."[22]

To these instances of direct colonial rule, we may add less direct mechanisms of Byzantine colonialism: in particular, production of ethnographic and geographic knowledge and conversion to Orthodoxy. East Roman bureaucrats recorded information about the histories of nonliterate peoples in the Balkans and central Asia for the purposes of diplomatic domination. The most famous example is the *De administrando imperio* by Emperor Constantine VII (913–59), the functions of which have been aptly characterized by Paul Magdalino: "Constantine applies to each geographic area on the imperial horizon the degree of historical narrative and topographic description that is appropriate to his imperial and . . . dynastic interests. The depth and angle of coverage varies not only according to the quantity and quality of his sources and the degree of processing, but also, and I would argue primarily, according to the potential for imperial intervention and domination, both inside and outside the empire."[23] For all its distortions, this record is often all we have for imagining what those subalterns would say if they could speak. As Alexandra Vukovich notes in this volume, who gets to name a people is not a neutral question.

The relation of Orthodox missions to Byzantine colonialism is more complex. Sergey Ivanov has charted the central contradiction of missionary work in Byzantium, which pitted a universalist, Christian discourse against an exceptionalist, civilizing one: "What happened when these two discourses collided with each other? Almost always the cultural snobbery inherited from the Roman Empire prevailed. Only Imperial Christianity, in which the Imperial predominated over the Christian, was recognized as genuine. A barbarian was located outside the dichotomy of 'Christianity' versus 'paganism.'"[24] In other words, Byzantine missions closely resemble Osterhammel's "missionizing justificatory doctrines, which rest upon the colonial rulers' conviction of their own cultural supremacy." It is telling that Dimitri Obolensky, the twentieth-century Russian-British historian, employed the term "commonwealth" to describe the influence that Byzantium exerted on its neighbors by means of its perceived religious authority.[25] Perhaps he sought merely to render the Byzantines sympathetic by analogy to the British Empire's postwar rebranding as a soft-power "commonwealth." In doing so, however, he opened up the possibility that Byzantium

could itself be colonial. Outside our field, the colonial nature of Byzantine missions has not gone unnoticed. For example, Alan Strathern has compared Byzantine conversion of the Slavs with more recent colonial Portuguese missions in Sri Lanka and Oceania.[26]

So, Byzantium could be colonial—and yet it could also be colonized. In periods for which the principal narrative frame has been the decline of state power, claimants to the inheritance of East Rome found themselves vassals or clients to emergent foreign powers. In the seventh century, elite authors bemoaned the collapse of Roman hegemony in the Mediterranean.[27] After 1204, Constantinople and large portions of the southern Balkans were added to the colonial conquests of the crusaders. Loss of territory continued, and East Roman elites lamented their reduced state in elaborate prose. Many simultaneously integrated into the new elite cultures—be they Latin or Islamicate—that shaped the early modern eastern Mediterranean.[28]

So far, all these questions have concerned the shifting fortunes of Byzantine elites on a global stage. By contrast, the exploitation of masses of non-elites from the empire's various ethnic communities was a constant through the Byzantine millennium. These people served the state as its laborers and soldiers in its various deadly wars. In the late medieval period, they were exploited by the colonial ventures of the Venetians and Genoese, who took control of key territories in the Aegean and Black Sea.[29] There is, of course, no need to assume that exploitation along ethnic or linguistic lines is any less extortionate than that done by "foreign" elites.

In brief, throughout Byzantine history, we find the key features of colonialism both exerted by the East Roman state upon others (including its own subaltern) and exerted by others upon East Roman elites or their claimant successors. The Byzantine Empire—at different times and places, and in regard to different social classes—was both colonist and colonized.

Multiple contributors to this volume, including Arietta Papaconstantinou, Alexandra Vukovich, and Nicholas Matheou, draw attention to the realities of this violence, both physical and semantic. They thus participate in a growing resistance within medieval studies to the abstraction of medieval violence. As Geraldine Heng has written,

since it is "fictionalized as a politically unintelligible time, because it lacks the signifying apparatus expressive of, and witnessing, modernity, medieval time is . . . absolved of the errors and atrocities of the modern, while its own errors and atrocities are shunted aside as essentially nonsignificative, without *modern* meaning, because occurring outside the conditions structuring intelligible discourse on, and participation in, modernity and its cultures."[30] By naming colonial violence when we see it in our sources—whether enacted by, against, within, or despite Byzantium—we render Byzantine history intelligible as human history and thus combat the fictionalization of Byzantium as an extrahistorical entity.

Like Byzantium, the discipline of Byzantine studies, embedded as it is within national academic regimes, has found itself on both sides of the colonial/colonized coin. In the *longue durée* of Western historiography, the study of the East Roman Empire has always been the preserve of a hyperliterate elite, versed in dead languages and provisioned with the necessary *corpora* and *instrumenta*. Similarly, its entanglement with European colonialism has remained a constant over time, even as its institutional configurations have shifted. As Aschenbrenner and Ransohoff show in this volume, the earliest humanist scholars of Byzantium, such as Hieronymus Wolf, relied for their patronage on the system and profits of early modern European colonialism, while the knowledge they produced was instrumentalized in power politics (as, for example, a tool against the Ottomans).[31] The efflorescence of Byzantine studies at the court of Louis XIV (1643–1715) coincided with the establishment of the French colonial empire in North America and the Caribbean. Jean-Baptiste Colbert was the architect of France's notorious Code Noir, which legitimated and regulated slavery in the colonies; a patron of the *Byzantine du Louvre*, a new corpus of Byzantine historical works; and a collector of medieval Greek manuscripts, nearly nine hundred in total, all now in the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.[32] Whereas absolutist France deemed Byzantine splendor worthy of emulation, the balance shifted in the following century, even as the relation to contemporary empire remained. For Edward Gibbon, the long history of the Roman Empire exposed the flaws of universal

monarchy; Britain's maritime empire (he believed) was immune to any analogous decline into despotism.[33]

These colonial entanglements continued into the age of universities. As Ihor Ševčenko observed, the "old Byzantinists" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries "lived in an elitist world that was deemed conceptually and intellectually stable. . . . It was commonly understood that few people would land at the top and that those who did would wield considerable power."[34] Some wielded that power directly in the service of colonial empire. For example, as a Byzantinist, Arnold J. Toynbee wrote an authoritative monograph on Emperor Constantine VII; as a colonialist, he served as a delegate to the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.[35] The nature of his advocacy is intimated in his *Nationality and the War,* in which he explicitly calls for the colonial partition of Afghanistan between Russia and British India.[36]

Not all Byzantinists were so directly involved, but Byzantine studies legitimized itself as a discipline in part through the promise of producing useful knowledge for the colonial powers that funded it. Thus, for example, Karl Krumbacher, justifying the independence of his discipline in the first issue (1892) of the *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*—the first journal dedicated to Byzantine studies and, to this day, one of the most prestigious—remarked that "neither the Turkish nor the present-day Greek nor indeed the Slavic law can be understood without the history of Byzantine law."[37]

Krumbacher's claim is characteristic not only in its instrumentality but also in its perception of Byzantium as a superior, civilizing force within the complex linguistic and religious landscape of the eastern Mediterranean—in his words, "a unique, half-cultured, half-wild ethnic complex that lies between civilized Europe and barbaric Asia."[38] As Papaconstantinou shows in this volume, the so-called Oriental Churches, too, were perceived as secondary emanations from Byzantine Christianity, to be studied by Byzantinists who believed the achievements of Latin and Greek far superior to those of Coptic or Syriac. Even now, the study of medieval Armenian, Georgian, Syriac, Coptic, or Slavonic is often offered as a supplement to Byzantine studies proper; in the Metropolitan Museum's influential exhibition and catalogue of 1997,

the material remains of such cultures are displayed as testaments to the "glory of Byzantium."

This intellectual environment shaped the discovery and use of Byzantine material culture. In this volume, Arielle Winnik shows how the acquisition of Byzantine-period materials was directly entangled with colonial rule. Art from the Byzantine period was taken from Egypt during the so-called British Protectorate, then displayed and interpreted in step with the broader colonial project of nineteenth-century Britain. At other times the relations were far more complex than colonizer-colonized, as discussed in this volume by Hugh Jeffery, with reference to the archaeological work done by the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople (1885–1914), and by Stephanie Caruso, with reference to such local agents as Osman Hamdi Bey, the French-educated director of the Ottoman Imperial Museum in Istanbul.

By drawing attention to connections between European colonialism and the emergence of Byzantine studies, we do not discredit the genuine intellectual curiosity that has motivated many individuals to undertake arduous scholarly labors, often with little remuneration or recognition. We seek, instead, to elucidate the underlying conditions that have enabled such work and to which each scholar has of necessity responded, whether explicitly, through support or opposition, or (as far more frequently) implicitly, through silence. We must engage frankly with the fact that Byzantinists could, at one time or another, be the profiteers of colonial wealth, the intellectual architects of colonial rule, or simply passive but complicit participants in these wider political processes.

This view of Byzantine studies may seem fully at odds with some of the other essays in this volume. More generally, it may appear jarring to some Byzantinists today, whose experience has often been defined by a sense of marginality. The East Roman Empire has never held the same central position in narratives of Western civilization as its classical ancestor. As Averil Cameron notes in her contribution to this volume, even some prominent chairs of Byzantine studies held a disparaging attitude toward Byzantine culture and civilization. Consider, for example, a judgment by Romilly Jenkins, then Lecturer in Modern and Medieval Greek at the University of Cambridge and later named to the Koraes

Chair of Modern Greek and Byzantine History, Language and Literature at King's College, London: "The Byzantine Empire remains almost the unique example of a highly civilized state, lasting for more than a millennium, which produced hardly any educated writing which can be read with pleasure for its literary merit alone."[39] Or consider how Cyril Mango, briefly Jenkins's successor in the Koraes Chair and later Bywater and Sotheby Professor of Byzantine Greek at the University of Oxford, concluded his account (still widely praised) of the Byzantine reception of classical statuary: "Here ends our sad story—sad, because the Byzantines derived so little benefit from the statues that they took care to preserve. Byzantium fulfilled its historic role by transmitting to the more receptive West the Greek heritage in parchment and paper; it was unable to transmit in the same fashion and at the right time the heritage in bronze and marble."[40] As Kaldellis notes in this volume, the derogation of Byzantium by Byzantinists represents the internalization of the Eurocentrism of the (Western) academy: a Eurocentrism that left the medieval Roman empire in the cold while laying claim to ancient Greek and Roman culture as the foundations of Western liberal democracy.

In this account, Byzantium is no more than the hapless but necessary conduit of the surviving scraps of classical culture ("the Greek heritage in parchment and paper"). Frequently, editions of classical sources extract excerpts and publish them with no reference to their medieval collectors. Figures as complex as Constantine VII and Eustathios of Thessaloniki—not to mention the anonymous but equally complex authors of the Souda lexicon and similar compilations—are seen as no more than passive vessels for this great inheritance.[41]

It is tempting to characterize this as a problem of representation: Byzantium lacks a national successor, and thus Byzantine studies lacks an advocate in the world of national academies.[42] The young Greek state, as Hamilakis has shown, was eager to cash in on Western fascination with classical Athens and accordingly remained ambivalent toward its Byzantine past. In the historiography of other Balkan nations, Byzantium has become an uncomfortable reminder of Eastern isolation, its textual output no more than an awkward imperial record from which to rescue national histories.[43] Nor is Eurocentrism the only foe of a flourishing Byzantine studies. As Şebnem Dönbekci, Bahattin Bayram, and

Zeynep Olgun discuss in this volume, other hegemonic frameworks can marginalize Byzantine history, such as (in Turkey) a mythologizing glorification of the Seljuks and Ottomans.

One might argue in response that the Byzantines were in fact truly European, or truly Anatolian, but this is an intellectual dead end. The politics of representation will not save Byzantine studies. Efforts to integrate Byzantium into Europe, as Kaldellis notes, harm both others (for example, those east of Byzantium who are pushed out) and the discipline itself. The cost of admission is too high. It solidifies existing parochialisms, when the ambiguous status of Byzantium might help rather to destabilize and dissolve them.

Race Before Modernity

How might this destabilization work in practice? By way of an example, we turn to one of the most contested questions in premodern scholarship today: the origins of race and racism.[44] A steady stream of publications over the course of the last two decades have argued that race and racism existed in the classical world and in the Middle Ages. In 2004, Benjamin Isaac published his case, entitled *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*.[45] In 2018, unperturbed by this, Geraldine Heng published her *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*.[46] Other contenders for the birth of prejudice, and particularly anti-Black prejudice, can be found in the histories and rhetoric of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, or in ancient philosophy.[47]

By contrast, and as Jules Gleeson has recently observed, "Byzantine studies still awaits a treatment of racism and ethnic-prejudice equivalent to Geraldine Heng's book *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*."[48] Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to argue that modern racism or white supremacy were invented in Byzantium—precisely because Byzantium rarely, if ever, served as a positive exemplum for the architects of European colonialism. Nevertheless, and as we discuss in detail below, anti-Black prejudice is amply attested in Byzantine art and literature. Accordingly, a view from Byzantine studies can help shift the discussion of premodern race from a debate about origins to an analysis of cultural practice.

In its broadest outlines, the debate about origins pits gradualism against catastrophism. The former position identifies elements of ancient and medieval thought that later evolved into modern racism. For example, Cord Whitaker identifies a medieval transition from a "desire for unity" to the "desire for strife," predominantly in the context of religious thought. When the desire for strife was bonded to a metaphorical conception of sin as black and salvation as white, contemporary hierarchies of race began to fossilize.[49]

Among scholars of premodern race, Heng is one of the most uncompromising in her assertion that the logic and functions of racism can be found in the medieval world. For Heng, race "is a structural relationship for the articulation and management of human differences." It thus names "a repeating tendency . . . to demarcate human beings through differences amongst humans that are selectively essentialized as absolute and fundamental, in order to distribute positions and powers differentially to human groups."[50] Her benchmark example is thirteenth-century England, where the state used a series of racializing policies and technologies to demonize Jews, legalize violence against them, and eventually expel them en masse. For Heng, not calling this racism is a historiographical failure.

The objections raised against this literature are plentiful, and some have been motivated by ill will. But a more potent and intellectually robust critique holds that our modern racial order is different in kind, not degree, from those of the classical and medieval world. The catastrophes of colonialism and transatlantic slavery and the subsequent globalization of white supremacy render modern racism fundamentally distinct from the production and policing of racial, ethnic, or religious difference in the premodern world.

Vanita Seth and Charles Mills are among the most recent and forceful advocates of this position. For Seth, looking for race in the Middle Ages is a failure of intellectual historical practice, as it rests on "the implicit presumption that racism is an empty vessel residing outside the history it is said to contain."[51] She suggests instead "that it is possible to speak of conversations across time without presuming a continuity of meaning over time. . . . One can recognize, for example, the long history of Christian vilification of Jews or Muslims without thereby presuming

that medieval renderings of heathens and infidels share the same conceptual meaning as contemporary anti-Semitism or Islamophobia."[52]

Similarly, Mills emphasizes the radically unique conditions that produce and sustain modern white supremacy and, with it, the possibility of an oppositional Black philosophy. For him, a number of necessary conditions must be fulfilled for racial subordination to be identified, including "the existence of race as a social category, the existence of Blackness as one of the extant racial categories, and the subordination of Africans and Afro-descendant populations under that designation."[53] The premodern world cannot fulfill this third condition in particular, because "even if race as ideology, discourse and iconography is older than the conventional post-war narrative claimed, race as a planetary system is unambiguously modern. . . . Race is ontologized in a way that it is not in premodernity because inherited discourses of racial stigmatization, whether secular or Christian, now have coercive power behind them in the form of the racial state."[54] While Mills grants that medieval states could be racial, pointing to Heng's example of thirteenth-century England, the modern, post-Enlightenment racial state is rendered unique by the contradiction between the "declared universal equality" of liberalism and the new inequalities that it consolidated.[55]

Byzantine Anti-Blackness

We turn now to the question of race in Byzantium, in the hopes that it might help dissolve the strong dichotomy between the gradualist and the catastrophist positions on premodern race. Since Byzantium was neither the origin of nor the chosen exemplum for modern Europe, Byzantine ideas about race cannot have evolved directly into modern racism and white supremacy. We are therefore free to consider not whether Byzantium was (or Byzantines were) racist, but how certain ideas about skin color could be deployed to different ends under different circumstances. Skin color was not and is not the only basis for racialization, but a study of the full complexity of race in Byzantium lies outside the scope of this introduction. Accordingly, and because of the origin of our volume in Black Lives Matter, we focus here on Byzantine anti-Blackness.

In this investigation, we take our cue from Stuart Hall's concept of "the elements of a cultural practice," which "do not in themselves have any necessary political connotations. It is not the individual elements of a discourse that have political or ideological connotations; it is the way those elements are organized together into a new discursive formation."[56] In the following, we are concerned with a specific element of Byzantine cultural practice, namely, the figure of the Ethiopian demon. Our question is not "Is this figure racist?" but rather "How has this figure been recombined and deployed to political ends?"

All students of Byzantine art and literature confront the frequent representation of demons as Black, African, and ugly.[57] In a characteristic example from the tenth-century *Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, the saint's late servant, Theodora, relates that on her death she "saw clearly multitudes of Ethiopians standing around my bed, creating a disturbance and commotion . . . contorting in mockery their black and gloomy and dark faces, the mere sight of which alone seemed to me most terrifying and more bitter than even the Gehenna of fire."[58] The medieval figure of the Ethiopian demon shares with modern anti-Black stereotypes an association between black skin and African origin, on the one hand, and moral and aesthetic depravity, on the other.[59] In Theodora's account, moreover, as in other contemporary saints' lives, the demons are counterpoised to beautiful, virtuous, White angels: "As I turned my eyes here and there away from the loathsome and accursed sights and directed the spiritual gaze of my soul elsewhere (for I could in no way stand to see or hear the chatterings of those polluted creatures), I suddenly saw two exceedingly beautiful young men just then coming toward me, their heads resplendent with golden hair, their skin white as snow, exceedingly sweet in appearance, clad in dazzling garments."[60]

The figure of the Ethiopian demon finds precedents in earlier eras. In pre-Christian Greek and Latin literature, "demonic beings" and "the unquiet dead" were characterized by black skin, sometimes associated with African origin.[61] For example, Suetonius describes a masque "in which scenes from the lower world were represented by Egyptians and Ethiopians."[62] However, some ancient authors considered the fear of Black people to be childish, a principle enunciated by the geographer and historian Agatharchides (second century BCE): "But the Ethiopians
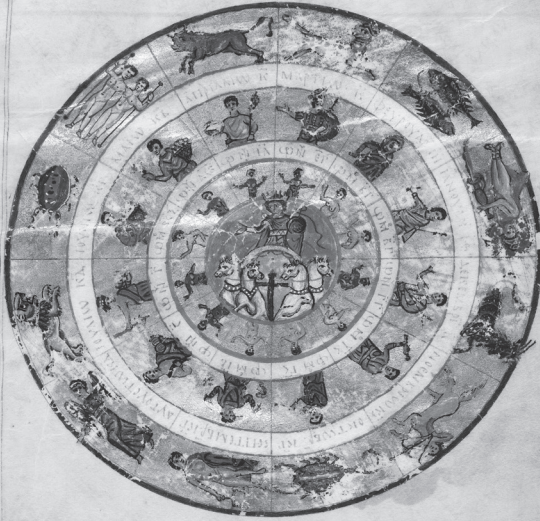
Fig. I.1 Solar diagram from the *Handy Tables of Ptolemy*, ca. 800. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticanus graecus 1291, fol. 9r. © 2023 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

will terrify the Greeks. How? By their blackness and the strangeness of their appearance? Among us such fear does not persist beyond child-hood. In wars and important disputes, however, the matters at issue are decided not by appearance and color but by daring and intelligence."[63]

The demonic combatants of early Christian literature both hard-ened preexisting associations between black skin and moral and aes-thetic depravity and weakened the accompanying skepticism.[64] Among the earliest examples is the *Acts of Peter*, in which Marcellus beholds in a vision the apostle beheading a demon, "a most hideous woman, in appearance entirely Ethiopian, not Egyptian, but completely black."[65] As David Brakke has argued, such stories served above all to illustrate their heroes' divinely granted clarity of vision, which enables them to perceive the demons' blackness.[66]

The contrast between demonic blackness and saintly clarity of vision was further developed in middle Byzantine hagiography. In the

tenth-century *Life of Saint Andrew the Fool*, the hero explains that only blackness separates demons from angels: "the angels of God are spotless and pure . . . whereas the demons are useless, black, dark, sinful, and accursed."[67] The faces of the righteous shine with white light.[68] By contrast, the devil's eyes emit smoke, as when a monk recognizes the devil "in the shape of a black Ethiopian, smoke coming forth from his eyes."[69] In the closely related *Life of Niphon*, the hero's friend tells him, "your face looks black, like an Ethiopian," upon which Niphon "realized that his vision had been darkened from the multitude of his sins."[70]

The association between black skin and visual impairment may underlie the Byzantine convention of representing night as a Black woman. The goddess Nyx appears rarely in ancient Greek and Roman art and is not distinguished by skin color.[71] By contrast, in the Vatican Ptolemy, produced around the year 800 in Constantinople, a ring of twelve "black- and white-skinned women represent the night and the day, respectively" (fig. I.1).[72] In the Octateuchs, manuscripts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries that contain the first eight books of the Bible, personifications of Night and Day accompany Genesis 1:3–5, the separation of light from darkness. Once more, Night is a dark-skinned woman at left, Day a light-skinned boy at right, and the hand of God illumines the latter (as in fig. I.2).[73]

One final aspect of the Ethiopian demon is worthy of note in the present context: its conflation with the figure of the Muslim "Saracen."

Fig. I.2 The separation of light from darkness (Genesis 1:3–5), twelfth century. Smyrna, Evangelical School A.1 (lost), fol. 4v. D. C. Hesseling, *Miniatures de l'Octateuque grec de Smyrne* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1909), fig. 3.

Fig. I.3 Saint Michael defeating an attack on Constantinople, 1347–49, from the church of the Archangel Michael, Lesnovo, North Macedonia. Photo: Erich Lessing / Art Resource, New York.

For example, in the eleventh-century *Life of Saint Neilos of Rossano*, the devil places "terrible snares" in the hero's path, among them "a crowd of Saracens—black Ethiopians with wild eyes, evil faces, all appearing like demons—reclining beneath a grove of trees."[74] As Kalina Yamboliev observes, "the vitriolic language the hagiographers employed in reference to the Muslims, in sharp contrast to the terms of angelic purity they assigned to the demeanor of the saints, was essential to the affective framing that promoted Italo-Greek oppositional identity to the Muslim Saracen."[75]

For an analogous figure of the Black Saracen in visual art, consider a fourteenth-century painting in the Monastery of the Archangel Michael in Lesnovo, which depicts the first Arab siege of Constantiople (674–78). The attacking sailors, identified by the inscription as "Saracens," are vanquished by the archangel (fig. I.3). As Paul H. D. Kaplan remarks, "the nine attackers all have tightly curled hair and dark skin. Although their ethnicity surely denotes Islamic religious identity, the presence of the winged archangel Michael also suggests that the dark men have a demonic dimension."[76] Thus, both saint's life and painting take an additional step: the racialization of Muslims as Black.

In most of the representations discussed thus far, the figure of the Black Ethiopian serves as a foil to a figure of divine Whiteness. The Ethiopian demons at Theodora's bedside in the *Life of Saint Basil the Younger* are contrasted to White angels; the personification of Night serves as a foil to divine illumination; and the figures of Black Muslims reinforce the divine protection accorded to Christians. In this sense, the Ethiopian demon falls short of Mills's final necessary condition for the existence of racism. The intent was not to subordinate Africans. Byzantine anti-Blackness did not spur wars of conquest against African states. Nor is it clear that it correlated to, or encouraged, prejudicial treatment of black people in Byzantium.[77]

Nevertheless, and as Yamboliev writes, medieval hagiography and European anti-immigrant discourse share a common structure and purpose: "The resonant utilization of an affective rhetoric of violence, danger, and invasion, whether directed at Muslim 'Saracens' or modern migrants is, at its root and across the centuries, a language of self-preservation employed by those who seek to protect traditional hierarchies of power and privilege."[78] Just as contemporary anti-immigrant discourse results in actual violence against the individuals whom it casts as foreign, so too did the metaphorical conception of Blackness in premodernity directly affect the lives of Africans—for example, the actors in Suetonius's masque, and the Ethiopian man who was kidnapped by Venetians and forced to mock imperial ceremonial in the reign of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80).[79]

Cultural Practice, Then and Now

Returning now to Hall's account of the elements of cultural practice, it remains for us to investigate how Byzantine concepts of Blackness could be deployed in new discursive formations with distinct political connotations.

We have sought in vain the textual record of Black Byzantines. We know no analogues in medieval Greek literature to the Black poets who used Arabic poetic forms to comment upon their racialization.[80] For a reflection on Byzantine racialization, we might rather turn to the Nubian painters at the cathedral of Pachoras, who carefully distinguished the

Fig. I.4 Saint Peter and Bishop Petros I (974–97) from the cathedral of Pachoras, Faras. National Museum in Warsaw, 234031 MNW.

dark brown complexion and black mustache of Bishop Petros I (974–97) from the white complexion and white beard of Saint Peter (fig. I.4).[81] As Andrea Myers Achi and Seeta Chaganti write, Nubian art is "of neither Byzantium nor Africa" but "of both worlds."[82] It therefore provides a space within which black artists could represent and reconceive the poles of Byzantine anti-Blackness, simultaneously preserving difference and rejecting any associated moral or aesthetic hierarchy.

However, Byzantine concepts of Blackness have also been deployed in a manner closer to their original purposes, namely, to produce an ideal concept of Whiteness. Consider, as an example, the illuminated manuscript Biblioteca Marciana Gr. VII, 22 (=1466), executed in 1592 in Venetian-ruled Crete by the artist Georgios Klontzas.[83] Over the course

of some 217 paper folios containing extensive texts in Greek and over
400 drawings in pen and ink, the Klontzas Codex presents a universal
history from a Christian viewpoint. Of these, 22 folios and 25 drawings
relate the life of the Prophet Muhammad from an explicitly anti-Mus-
lim perspective. Muhammad's skin is consistently marked by cross-
hatching, in contrast to those around him; the manuscript, accordingly,
depicts him as Black.[84]

In one drawing, for example, the blackness of Muhammad, at right,
establishes by contrast the whiteness of the Byzantine emperor Her-
akleios, at left (fig. I.5). Another drawing, entitled "the idolatry of the
Ishmaelites," accompanies an excerpt from the anti-Muslim treatise
of John of Damascus, according to which the Arabs "worshipped the
morning star and Aphrodite" (fig. I.6).[85] The artist uses the same tech-
nique, crosshatching, to depict both the skin of the worshippers and

Fig. I.5 The meeting of
Muhammad and Her-
akleios, 1592. Venice,
Biblioteca nazionale
Marciana, Marc. gr. VII,
22 (=1466), fol. 48r.
Photo courtesy of the
Ministero per i beni e
le attività culturali e
per il turismo.
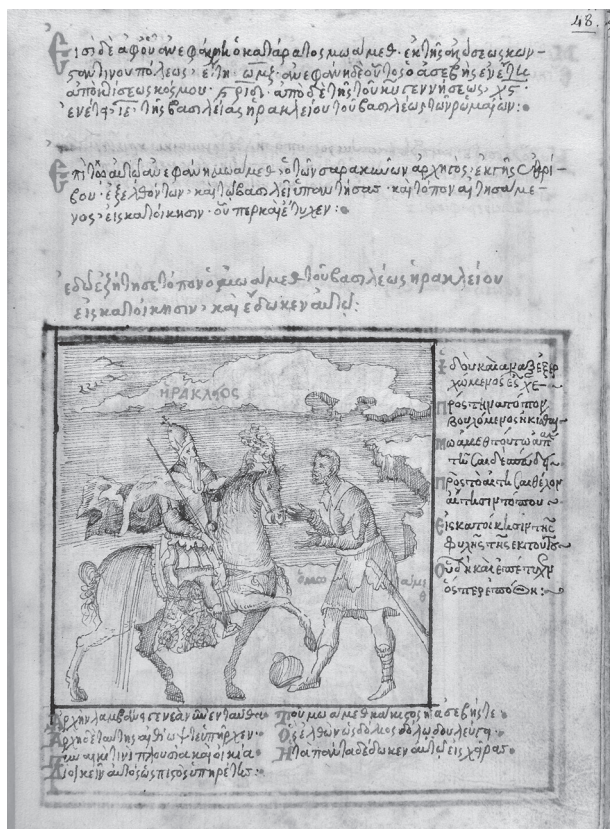
the atmosphere that envelops them: their Blackness, and the obscurity of their vision, the ultimate source of their heresy.

The Klontzas Codex gathers many of the elements of Byzantine anti-Blackness. Black skin is associated with moral depravity, obscurity of vision, and Muslim faith. It thereby establishes the Whiteness (and corresponding righteousness) of the Byzantines. To what end? Klontzas was an affluent, Greek Orthodox resident of Chandax, the center of Venetian rule. His Black Muhammad serves, at least in part, to establish the Whiteness (and righteousness) of the subaltern community to which he belonged.[86]

Klontzas was not a Byzantinist, but he was a contemporary of the first full-time scholars of Byzantium. As Aschenbrenner and Ransohoff observe in this volume, the work of one such scholar, Hieronymus Wolf, was funded in part by the labor of enslaved Africans and Native Americans and was intended in part to aid European powers in the
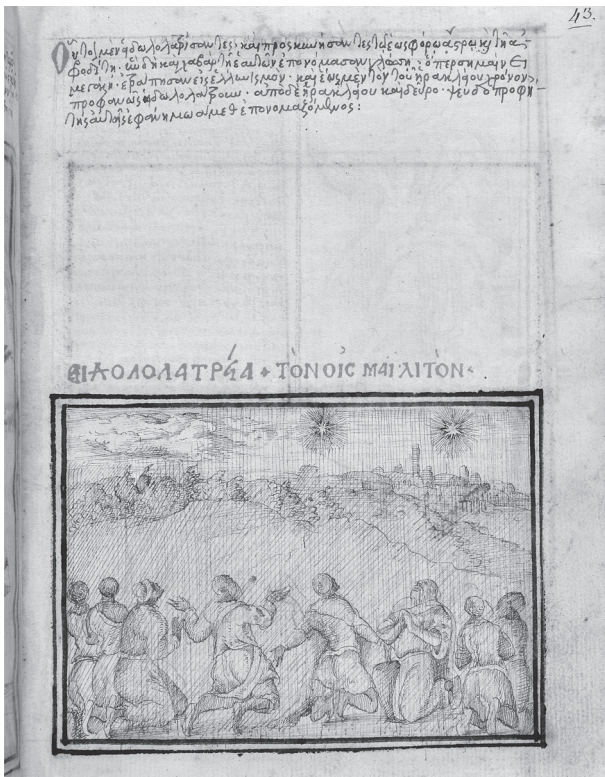

Fig. I.6 "The idolatry of the Ishmaelites," 1592. Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, Marc. gr. VII, 22 (=1466), fol. 43r. Photo courtesy of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali e per il turismo.

fight against the Ottomans. Wolf's investment in Byzantium was very different from Klontzas's—Aschenbrenner and Ransohoff note that he "reserved special loathing for the people he sometimes called Byzantini"—but both were produced at the nexus of race and colony, and they entailed a careful and deliberate organization of the preexisting elements of Byzantine cultural practice.

The primary challenge posed by this comparison, then, is to understand Byzantine studies, the academic discipline, as part of a much broader field of cultural production, within which the elements of Byzantine cultural practice have been deployed to a dizzying variety of ends by a wide cast of characters: scholars, yes, but also artists, authors, politicians, and amateurs.

Many have followed Klontzas and Wolf in placing elements of Byzantine culture at the service of anti-Muslim polemic. In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI quoted at length from the work of "the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Palaiologos" (1391–1425) in an address held at the University of Regensburg. Benedict used the Byzantine author to position Christian Europe as the heir to Greek reason, in contrast to Muslims, who posit an "absolutely transcendent divinity," whose "will is not bound up with any of our categories, even that of rationality."[87] In 2016, Serbian president Tomislav Nikolić opened the Twenty-Third International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Belgrade by calling upon attendees to assist him against the majority-Muslim state of Kosovo. He then compared himself to Emperor Constantine XI Palaiologos (1449–53), who had likewise "turned to Europe to ask for help against the infidels [неверника]."[88]

Benedict is a scholar—albeit not a Byzantinist—and Nikolić is not, but both share a conception of Byzantium as an "*antemurale* state," or "Christendom's rampart against the barbarians."[89] This conception appears in Krumbacher's founding statement, too: "This multiform confusion of peoples [i.e., Byzantium] formed in the past Europe's defensive wall against Asiatic barbarism."[90] As Byzantium had witnessed the rise of Islam, Byzantine polemics against Islam (such as those by John of Damascus, Niketas Byzantios, and Manuel II Palaiologos) are accorded a particular authority.[91] Similarly, as Byzantium fell to a Muslim power,

its fate becomes a cautionary tale—either of its own doctrinal intran-
sigence or of the Western powers' failure to intervene.[92]

In extreme versions of the latter trope, Byzantium becomes the
original "lost cause": a strong Christian state betrayed by European
powers.[93] This conception permeates right-wing American discourse
on Byzantium.[94] It finds its grisliest manifestation in the manifesto
penned by the white supremacist who murdered fifty-one people in
two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019, which
proclaimed that "until the Hagia Sophia is free of the minarets, the men
of Europe are men in name only."[95]

There is another way. Other artists and authors have followed the
lead of the Nubian painters at Pachoras and reconfigured the elements
of Byzantine cultural practice to anti-racist ends. Take, for example, the
artist Mark Doox, whose work Maria Mavroudi discusses in her contri-
bution to this volume. Doox's self-described "iconoclastic icons" expose
the "weakness in our sacred images, which have been steeped in Ameri-
can divisions of race and power."[96] Many more examples of such progres-
sive appropriations, ranging from the playful to the studied, appeared in
a recent exhibit at the Pera Museum on Byzantium in popular culture:[97]
for example, the artist Fikos, who painted Greek-Nigerian basketball
star Giannis Antetokounmpo in Byzantine style;[98] the Greek Commu-
nist comic artists of the mid-twentieth century, who related Byzan-
tine history through the lens of "an implicit pacifism, internationalism,
and universalism";[99] and the authors of science fiction, who take Byz-
antium as a starting point for "pondering about notions of empire."[100]

So too can Byzantine studies, as a scholarly pursuit, be practiced
in a decolonial mode. Geraldine Heng and Sierra Lomuto have called
for a global medieval history that is not simply a diversity exercise but
one that actively dethrones European hegemony through the introduc-
tion of multiple centers and temporalities.[101] Byzantinists have much
to offer this project, but not by demanding greater representation in
traditional forums for business-as-usual work—more Byzantine art in
undergraduate surveys, more Byzantine articles in flagship journals,
more chairs of Byzantine studies. Instead, we must begin by actively
questioning our own orthodoxies: first and foremost, those about the
strength and beneficence of the Byzantine state, the pliancy of its

subjects, its dazzling image in the eyes of its neighbors, and even its coherence as a stable object of analysis.

Byzantium's peculiar position, as a medieval state that lacks an obvious modern successor, can in this sense count to its advantage. Byzantium's national homelessness draws to its study many of those whom former British prime minister Theresa May derogatorily called "citizens of nowhere."[102] Early-career Byzantinists today often lead itinerant lives on short-term (one-year or even one-semester) contracts across continents and countries. The neoliberalization of the academic market has meant that, across East and West and across national boundaries, the experiences of early-career scholars have much in common. Global precarity has opened possibilities for global solidarities. This kind of solidarity can result in critical reflection, and it is not surprising that many contributors to this volume have received their intellectual formation not in single, siloed, national academies but through engagement with multiple national, and indeed multi- and transnational, scholarly institutions and discourses.

In short, Byzantine studies is increasingly practiced beyond national boundaries, and its object of study defies traditional national histories. It should accordingly play a leading role in the production of a new, radical, global history. This potential can only be realized on the basis of a constant and critical examination of our own history and our own cultural practice. In our introduction, we have attempted to review the former. But it is not enough to simply be conscious of the contradiction that we inhabit and share with our fellow scholars in other disciplines: our material reliance upon the spoils of hierarchical systems of oppression (be they colonial, imperial, or national) that we outwardly abhor. We must also make use of the distinctive nature of our field of study—our own intellectual capital—to change the conditions that our own students and successors will inherit.

A number of contributors to this volume suggest concrete steps that we can take toward this goal. For example, Matheou calls for us to write histories that do not simply avoid identifying with a particular modern nation but rather disavow identification with states (both empires and nations) altogether. Matthew Kinloch asks us to think explicitly about whom we cite and why: these are political choices, even if they seem

natural and commonsensical. Finally, Andrea Myers Achi and Elizabeth Dospěl Williams ask how we can transform the institutions whose custodians we may become.

Taken as a whole, the following chapters illuminate the mechanisms by which Byzantine studies and the very idea of Byzantium, as a distinctive culture with its own art and literature, are produced and reproduced. Colonized and colonizer, cultural hegemon and exotic other, Byzantium and its scholarly reception remain ripe fields for critical inquiry. Their potential to generate new radical histories lies precisely in their ambiguity. If the proposals found in this volume oscillate between the simple and practical and the utopian, we consider that a virtue—we must not let the pessimism of the intellect suffocate the optimism of the will.

Notes

1. Panagiotis A. Agapitos, "Franz Dölger and the Hieratic Model of Byzantine Literature," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 112, no. 3 (2019): 707–80.

2. George Demacopoulos, *Colonizing Christianity: Greek and Latin Religious Identity in the Era of the Fourth Crusade* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019).

3. Nathanael Aschenbrenner and Jake Ransohoff, eds., *The Invention of Byzantium in Early Modern Europe* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2021).

4. Yannis Hamilakis, *The Nation and Its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), x.

5. Diana Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 15.

6. On the relation between Byzantine studies and Orientalism, see Averil Cameron, *The Use and Abuse of Byzantium: An Essay on Reception* (London: The School of Humanities, King's College, 1992); Robert S. Nelson, "Living on the Byzantine Borders of Western Art," *Gesta* 35, no. 1 (1996): 3–11; Dimiter G. Angelov, "Byzantinism: The Imaginary and Real Heritage of Byzantium in Southeastern Europe," in *New Approaches to Balkan Studies*, ed. Dimitris Keridis, Ellen Elias-Bursać, and Nicholas Yatromanolakis (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2003), 3–23; Averil Cameron, *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Premysław Marciniak, "Oriental Like Byzantium: Some Remarks on Similarities Between Byzantinism and Orientalism," in *Imagining Byzantium: Perceptions, Patterns, Problems*, ed. Alena Alshanskaya, Andreas Gietzen, and Christina Hadjiafxenti (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, 2018), 47–54; Leonora Neville, *Byzantine Gender* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 5–21; and Yannis Stouraitis, "Is Byzantium an Orientalism? Reflections on Byzantium's

Constructed Identities and Debated Ideologies," in *Identities and Ideologies in the Medieval East Roman World*, ed. Yannis Stouraitis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022), 19–47.

7. Paschalis M. Kitromilides, "On the Intellectual Content of Greek Nationalism: Paparrigopoulos, Byzantium, and the Great Idea," in *Byzantium and the Modern Greek Identity*, ed. David Ricks and Paul Magdalino (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 25–33; Diana Mishkova, "The Afterlife of a Commonwealth: Narratives of Byzantium in the National Historiographies of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania," in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, vol. 3, *Shared Pasts, Disputed Legacies*, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Alexander Vezenkov (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 118–273; Bratislav Pantelić, "The Last Byzantines: Perceptions of Identity, Culture, and Heritage in Serbia," *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 3 (2016): 430–55; Diana Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums: Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

8. Kostis Kourelis, "Byzantium and the Avant-Garde: Excavations at Corinth, 1920s–1930s," *Hesperia* 76, no. 2 (2007): 391–442.

9. On the former, see fundamentally Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. On the latter, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

10. Jürgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen* (Munich: Beck, 1995), 21. Cf. the English translation by Shelley L. Fritsch, *Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 1997).

11. See especially Robert J. C. Young, *Empire, Colony, Postcolony* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015); Krishan Kumar, *Empires: A Historical and Political Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2021); and Krishan Kumar, "Colony and Empire, Colonialism and Imperialism: A Meaningful Distinction?," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 63, no. 2 (2021): 280–309.

12. Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus*, 34–35.

13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §65–71, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 27–29. Kumar applies Wittgenstein's concept of "family resemblance" to the definition of empire and colony in *Empires*, 1–5.

14. Ian Forrest, "Medieval History and Anarchist Studies," *Anarchist Studies* 28 (2020): 47.

15. Robert J. C. Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004), 218.

16. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (London: Zed Books, 1986), passim, the quote at 30; Partha Chatterjee, "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India," *American Ethnologist* 16 (1989): 622–33.

17. See, for example, Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); John Stone, "Introduction: Internal Colonialism in Comparative Perspective," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 3 (1979): 255–59, with the other contributions to this special issue; Krishan Kumar, "Nation-States as Empires, Empires as

Nation-States: Two Principles, One Practice?," *Theory and Society* 39, no. 2 (2010): 119–43; Charles Pinderhughes, "Toward a New Theory of Internal Colonialism," *Socialism and Democracy* 25, no. 1 (2011): 235–56; and Joe Turner, "Internal Colonisation: The Intimate Circulations of Empire, Race, and Liberal Government," *European Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 4 (2018): 765–90.

  18. Consider Adamantios Korais in Paris: Paschalis Kitromilides, *Enlightenment and Revolution: The Making of Modern Greece* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 175–96.

  19. Nevertheless, two caveats are in order. First, Greece, alongside Thailand, has served as a paradigmatic example of "crypto-colonialism": Michael Herzfeld, "The Absent Presence: Discourses of Crypto-Colonialism," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 899–926. Second, historians are increasingly willing to acknowledge Ottoman complicity with and emulation of European colonialism, in particular during the nineteenth-century "scramble for Africa": Mostafa Minawi, *The Ottoman Scramble for Africa: Empire and Diplomacy in the Sahara and the Hijaz* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

  20. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought*, 3.

  21. Corisande Fenwick, "Imperial Anxieties and Colonial Confrontations: Towards an Archaeology of Byzantine Imperialism," paper given at the Imperialism, Colonialism and Postcolonialism in the Byzantine World workshop, University of Oxford, 17 May 2019.

  22. Anthony Kaldellis, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019), 239.

  23. Paul Magdalino, "Constantine VII and the Historical Geography of Empire," in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. Sahar Bazzaz, Yota Batsaki, and Dimiter Angelov (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 24–42, at 36.

  24. Sergey A. Ivanov, *"Pearls Before Swine": Missionary Work in Byzantium* (Paris: ACHCByz, 2015), 219.

  25. Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500–1453* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971). Ivanov writes that "the 'Byzantine Commonwealth' was not so much an actual construction as a self-delusion"; see *"Pearls Before Swine,"* 221.

  26. Alan Strathern, *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 236 and 275.

  27. *Locus classicus* is *Doctrina Jacobi Nuper Baptizati* 3.10. For an English translation, see "Teaching of Jacob Newly Baptized," trans. Andrew Jacobs, accessed 22 July 2022, http://andrewjacobs.org/translations/doctrina.html.

  28. *Locus classicus* is Manuel II Palaeologus, letter 16: see George T. Dennis, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1977), 42–51. See also Theodore Metochites, *On the Human Condition and the Decline of Rome: Semeioseis gnomikai,* 27–60, ed. and trans. Karin Hult (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2016), esp. 28, 37.

  29. See especially Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

30. Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 21.

31. Further on the ties between *Türkenfurcht* and the study of Byzantium: Agostino Pertusi, *Storiografia umanistica e mondo bizantino* (Palermo: Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici, 1967), and Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 94–134.

32. Vernon Valentine Palmer, "The Origins and Authors of the Code Noir," *Louisiana Law Review* 56, no. 2 (1996): 363–407; Teresa Shawcross, "Editing, Lexicography, and History Under Louis XIV: Charles du Cange and *La byzantine du Louvre*," in Aschenbrenner and Ransohoff, *Invention of Byzantium*, 143–80; Donald F. Jackson, "A Delivery of Greek Manuscripts in 1686," *Scripta* 3 (2010): 73–75.

33. John Robertson, "Gibbon's Roman Empire as a Universal Monarchy: The *Decline and Fall* and the Imperial Ideal in Early Modern Europe," in *Edward Gibbon and Empire*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick and Roland Quinault (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 247–70.

34. Ihor Ševčenko, "Old Byzantinists and the Place of Byzantine Studies Today," *Byzantinoslavica* 67, nos. 1–2 (2009): 50–54, at 50.

35. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

36. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Nationality and the War* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1915), 467–70.

37. Karl Krumbacher, "Vorwort," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 1 (1892): 1–12, at 9. On Krumbacher's foreword, see further Anthony Kaldellis, "From 'Empire of the Greeks' to 'Byzantium': The Politics of a Modern Paradigm Shift," in Aschenbrenner and Ransohoff, *Invention of Byzantium*, 349–67, at 364–65.

38. Krumbacher, "Vorwort," 2.

39. Romilly Jenkins, *Dionysius Solomós* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940). For an alternative view, see Stratis Papaioannou, "Readers and Their Pleasures," in *The Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*, ed. Stratis Papaioannou (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 525–56.

40. Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 53–75, at 75.

41. For a vital reassessment of their works, see Panagiotis Manafis, *(Re)writing History in Byzantium: A Critical Study of Collections of Historical Excerpts* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

42. Thus Kaldellis, *Romanland*, 14–15.

43. Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums*.

44. For a partial yet substantial bibliography of studies of race in the premodern world, see Jonathan Hsy and Julie Orelmanski, "Race and Medieval Studies: A Partial Bibliography," *Postmedieval* 8 (2017): 500–531.

45. Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

46. Heng, *Invention*.

47. For instance, see David Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Aaron P. Johnson, "Blackness of Ethiopians: Classical Ethnography and Eusebius's Commentary on the Psalms," *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no. 2 (2006): 165–86; Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Inquiry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Julie K. Ward and Tommy L. Lott, eds., *Philosophers on Race: Critical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

48. Jules Gleeson, review of *Byzantine Intersectionality* by Roland Betancourt, *Oxford Art Journal* 44, no. 2 (2021): 335–39, at 339.

49. Cord Whitaker, *Black Metaphors: How Modern Racism Emerged from Medieval Race-Thinking* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 151.

50. Heng, *Invention*, 3.

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53. Charles W. Mills, "The Illumination of Blackness," in *Antiblackness*, ed. Moon-Kie Jung and João H. Costa Vargas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 17–36, at 20.

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58. *The Life of Saint Basil the Younger*, ed. and trans. Denis F. Sullivan, Alice-Mary Talbot, and Stamatina McGrath (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2014), 201.

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61. Jack Winkler, "Lollianos and the Desperadoes," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (1980): 155–81, at 161.

62. Suetonius, *Caligula* 57, in *Suetonius*, ed. and trans. J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1:503.

63. Agatharchides of Cnidus, *On the Erythraean Sea*, trans. Stanley M. Burstein (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1989), 51 (fragment 16). On this passage, see Albrecht Dihle, "Zur hellenistischen Ethnographie," in *Grecs et barbares*, ed. Hans Schwabl et al. (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1962), 207–39, at 214–15; Frank M. Snowden Jr., *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1970), 177–80; and Winkler, "Lollianos," 162.

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68. Ibid., 2.119 (Andrew's snow-white and dazzling face) and 2.201–3 (statement of principle).

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73. Kurt Weitzmann and Massimo Bernabò, *The Byzantine Octateuchs* (Princeton: Department of Art and Archaeology, 1999), 17–18.

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75. Kalina Yamboliev, "Italian Narratives of Oppositional Identity: Hagiography and Affect in Distancing the Late Antique and Medieval Saracen, and the Modern Migrant," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 3, no. 1 (2019): 77–113, at 94.

76. Paul H. D. Kaplan, "Introduction to the New Edition," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, vol. 2, pt. 1, *From the Early Christian Era to the "Age of Discovery"; From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), 1–30, at 9.

77. See in general Apostolos Karpozilos, "Η θέση των μαύρων στη βυζαντινή κοινωνία," in *Οι περιθωριακοί στο Βυζάντιο*, ed. Chrysa A. Maltezou (Athens: Goulandre-Chorn, 1993), 67–81. For evidence of color prejudice in Byzantium, see Myrto Hatzaki, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz

James (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2010), 93–107, at 95 and 97; Apostolos Karpozilos, "Ἰωάννου Νομικόπουλου Ἔκφρασις Αἰθίοπος καὶ ἵππου πάνυ ταλαιπωρημένου," *Dodone* 9 (1980): 285–97; and Ilias Taxidis, *The* Ekphraseis *in the Byzantine Literature of the 12th Century* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2021), 157–58.

78. Yamboliev, "Italian Narratives," 111–12.

79. *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 50–51; discussed by Roland Betancourt, *Byzantine Intersectionality: Sexuality, Gender, and Race in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 175.

80. Touria Khannous, *Black-Arab Encounters in Literature and Film* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), especially chapters 1 and 2; Rachel Schine, "Race and Blackness in Premodern Arabic Literature," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, 29 October 2021, https://oxfordre.com/literature/view/10.1093/acrefore /9780190201098.001.0001/acrefore-9780190201098-e-1298; Bernard Lewis, "The Crows of the Arabs," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1985): 88–97.

81. Stefan Jakobielski, *Pachoras, Faras: The Wall Paintings from the Cathedrals of Aetios, Paulos and Petros* (Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, 2017), 338–41. This volume collects several similar pairings. Note especially the anonymous woman and Saint Aaron (198–200); Queen Mother Martha and the Virgin and Child (248–53); Bishop Marianos and the Virgin and Child (308–13); the queen protected by the Virgin and Child (395–98); and the dignitary protected by Christ (403–6).

82. Andrea Myers Achi and Seeta Chaganti, "'Semper Novi Quid ex Africa': Redrawing the Borders of Medieval African Art and Considering Its Implications for Medieval Studies," in *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov, Anna Kłosowska, and Vincent W. J. van Gerven Oei (Earth: Punctum Books, 2020), 73–106, at 83.

83. Athanasios D. Paliouras, *Ὁ ζωγράφος Γεώργιος Κλόντζας καὶ αἱ μικρογραφίαι τοῦ κώδικος αὐτοῦ* (Athens: Ekdoseis Grēgorē, 1977).

84. See Charles Barber, "Reading an Icon of the Black Mohammed: Georgios Klontzas on Islam," in *After the Text: Byzantine Enquiries in Honour of Margaret Mullett*, ed. Liz James, Oliver Nichols, and Roger Scott (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 273–88.

85. John of Damascus, *De haeresibus*, 100, in *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, vol. 4 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1981), 60.

86. Barber perceives rather "a strategy to argue for the inferior status of Mohammed" ("Reading an Icon," 274). For him, the manuscript exhibits "a racism built upon binary expectations that specifically adds colour, a more contemporary concern, to the themes found in the early medieval theological and historical texts that had provided Klontzas' point of departure" (286).

87. Benedict XVI, "Lecture of the Holy Father, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, Tuesday, 12 September 2006," accessed 20 July 2022, https://www .vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf _ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html. On Manuel's *Dialogue with a Persian*, see Siren Çelik, *Manuel II Palaiologos (1350–1425): A Byzantine Emperor in a Time of Tumult* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 138–57.

88. Tomislav Nikolić, "Угрожена српско-византијска баштина на КиМ" (Endangered Serbian-Byzantine heritage in Kosovo and Metohija), 22 August 2016, https://www.predsednik.rs/pres-centar/saopstenja/ugrozena-srpsko-vizanti jska-bastina-na-kim.

89. For both the term and the definition, see Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40. See further Liliya Berezhnaya and Heidi Hein-Kircher, eds., *Rampart Nations: Bulwark Myths of East European Multiconfessional Societies in the Age of Nationalism* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019).

90. Krumbacher, "Vorwort," 2. For a more recent formulation, see Mark C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 1: "Byzantium became the bulwark of Christendom against the Arabs, the Christianizer of the Slavs, the preserver of ancient Greek culture, and up through the eleventh century the only European state worthy of the name."

91. Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 30–56.

92. Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), especially at 29–34. For contemporary versions of the same tropes, see Adam J. Goldwyn, "Byzantium in the American Alt-Right Imagination: Paradigms of the Medieval Greek Past Among Men's Rights Activists and White Supremacists," in *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium*, ed. Michael Edward Stewart, David Alan Parnell, and Conor Whately (London: Routledge, 2022), 424–39.

93. In American historiography, the "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" refers to a set of myths about the Civil War. In the words of Adam H. Domby, "first, the Confederacy's cause was noble and just, and the war was fundamentally about states' rights, not slavery. Second, slavery was benevolent and slaves content in their station. . . . Third, Confederates were among the greatest soldiers in history, and they were only defeated due to the Union's superior manpower and resources. . . .This memory of the past offered a useful tool for politicians wanting to justify and defend white supremacy in the Jim Crow South." Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 4.

94. Goldwyn, "Byzantium," 425.

95. Quoted in Perin Gürel, "Turkey, White Supremacy, and the Clash of Civilizations," *Contending Modernities*, 10 July 2019, https://contendingmodernities.nd .edu/global-currents/turkeyclashofcivs/.

96. Mark Doox, "The N-Word of God: Envisioning the Image of Christ," *Religion News Service*, 24 June 2020, https://religionnews.com/2020/06/24/the-n-word-of -god-envisioning-the-image-of-christ/.

97. Emir Alışık, ed., *"İstanbul'da Bu Ne Bizantinizm!": Popüler Kültürde Bizans | "What Byzantium Is This in Istanbul!": Byzantium in Popular Culture* (Istanbul: Pera Museum, 2021).

98. Brigitte Pitarakis, "Çağdaşlaştırılan Bizans Sanatı: Yunan Tarihyazımı Anlatısının Prizmasında Yunan Devrimi'nden Atina Sokak Sanatına / Byzantine

Art Made Contemporary: From Greek Revolution to Athenian Street Art through the Prism of the Greek Historiographical Narrative," in *"İstanbul'da Bu Ne Bizan-tinizm,"* 86–121, at 115–17.

   99. Haris Theodorelis-Rigas, "Didaktik Popülerleştirmeden Karşıt Kültüre: Bizans Çizgi Roman Dünyasıyla Buluşuyor / From Didactic Popularization to Counterculture: Byzantium Meets the World of Comics," in *"İstanbul'da Bu Ne Bizantinizm,"* 264–89, at 279.

   100. Emir Alışık, "Olağandışı Bir Bizans'a Doğru: Spekülatif Kurguda Bizantinizmin Toposlarını Saptamak / Towards an Unearthly Byzantium: Mapping Out Topoi of Byzantinisms in Speculative Fiction," in *"İstanbul'da Bu Ne Bizantinizm,"* 290–317, at 317.

   101. Geraldine Heng, "The Global Middle Ages: An Experiment in Collaborative Humanities, or Imagining the World, 500–1500 C.E.," *English Language Notes* 47, no. 1 (2009): 205–16; Sierra Lomuto, "Becoming Postmedieval: The Stakes of the Global Middle Ages," *postmedieval* 11 (2020): 503–12.

   102. "Full Text: Theresa May's Conference Speech," *The Spectator*, 5 October 2016, https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/full-text-theresa-may-s-conference -speech.