

BYZANTIUM AND ENGLAND *

At the very beginning of the Roman Empire, Horace, the court poet of the first Emperor, described the *imperium romanum* as extending from Persia at one end to Britain at the other. «Praesens divus habitur Augustus, adiectis Britannis imperio gravibusque Persis»¹. Britain was the furthest point west that anyone could imagine. At the very end of the Roman Empire, and at the beginning of the Ottoman Empire, we find a court historian of the Sultan Mehmed II still expressing much the same opinion. Kritoboulos of Imbros, dedicating his history to the Sultan, declares that if his great deeds were to be written in Turkish then only Orientals would be able to read them; but if they are written in Greek, then not only Hellenes will be able to read them but also all the peoples of the western world, those beyond the Pillars of Hercules and even those who live in the Britannic islands². To the Greeks, the Romans, the Byzantines and the Turks Britain was always the remotest extremity of the known world — the *ultima Thule*.

Kritoboulos was perhaps too optimistic about people's ability to read Greek in Britain. It was not really until about 1600 that classical Greek came to be taught in all the public schools of England. The statutes of St. Paul's school in London, founded in 1510, directed that the High Master should, if possible, be learned in Greek. Even at the Universities the teaching of Greek was erratic. The present degree examinations in classics at Oxford and Cambridge were not established until 1800 and 1824³. But the classical scholars in England in the 18th and 19th centuries were not interested in Byzantium and despised Byzantine Greek as a depraved and corrupt form of the language of antiquity. Kritoboulos would have been disappointed to know that his *History* was not widely read in Europe, let alone in England. There is only one manuscript of it; and even that was not edited until 1870⁴. Western interest in Byzantium was generally connected with trade. The Italians of Venice and Genoa, being the nearest to the Byzantine markets, enjoyed the most continuous

* The text of this paper was delivered as a lecture at the Institute for Balkan Studies in March 1974.

1. Horace, *Odes*, III, v, 2-4.

2. (Kritoboulos of Imbros) Critobul din Imbros, *Din Domnia lui Mahomed al II-lea anii 1451-1467*, ed. V. Grecu, Bucarest, 1963, § 3, p. 27.

3. Cf. M. L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England 1700-1830*, Cambridge, 1945, pp. 10 ff., 25-39.

4. C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum*, V, i, Paris, 1870.

contacts. The English, being the furthest removed, had no regular relationships with Byzantium at all. But there were occasional contacts and exchanges between the two societies.

The English may not often have thought about Byzantium. But the lack of interest was mutual. The Byzantines rarely thought about England. If they did they thought of it as an island or a collection of islands in the far west that had once belonged to the Roman Empire. But they had little direct knowledge of it. Imperial envoys from Constantinople sometimes got as far afield as Germany or France; but few ventured across that dread stretch of water called the English Channel. If they read their Procopius they would have discovered some passages describing England and its strange inhabitants in the 6th century¹. And some may have remembered that Constantine the Great was first proclaimed Emperor at York, where his father Constantius died in 306. The army of Britain had the distinction of being the first to recognise Constantine as Emperor. One of the English chroniclers tells us that when he left England Constantine took with him 30,000 Britons to his new city of Constantinople; and that such men of British race in Byzantium, in token of their blood and lordship, were allowed to carry axes². This of course refers to the Emperor's bodyguard, the celebrated Varangians, who, after the 11th century, were mainly or wholly of English stock. To them we shall return.

Another legend had it that Constantine was in fact related to the Kings of England. The legend has been immortalised in the nursery rhyme of Old King Cole. It was first written down by a Welsh chronicler in the 12th century, Geoffrey of Monmouth. Old King Cole was a merry old soul and he called for his fiddlers three... His fiddlers three were his three sons, who went by the Celtic names of Trehern, Llewellyn and Merio. He also had an only daughter called Helena who married Constans; and he had by her a son called Cystennyn (or Constantine). This Constantine, with his three uncles, made war upon Rome and «Maxen the Cruel» — i.e. Maxentius. So, St Helena was a daughter of Old King Cole of England, and Constantine was his grandson. There is a measure of truth in this legend — but St Helena was *not* the daughter of any English king³.

We cannot claim a British ancestry for Constantine — though we *can* for some of his successors on the Byzantine throne. It is a provable fact that all the last Byzantine Emperors, from John V to Constantine XI Palaiologos,

1. Procopius, *History of the Wars*, III, i, 18; ii, 31, 38; VI, xv, 4 f.; VIII, xx, 4-6.

2. (Adam of Usk) *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A. D. 1377-1421*, 2nd ed., E. M. Thompson, London, 1904, pp. 97, 272.

3. Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, ed. A. Griscom, London, 1929, pp. 338-340.

were descended from the Norman, William I, the Conqueror, who was King of England from 1066 to 1087. The line of descent can be traced back through nine generations from John V's mother, Anne of Savoy, who in 1326 became the wife and Empress of Andronikos III. It is also possible to prove that the same Anne of Savoy was descended from Duncan, King of Scotland—the Duncan who was murdered by Macbeth in 1040¹. So, by a stretch of the imagination, one can say that the last six Emperors of Byzantium had flowing in their veins a mixture of Norman-English blood and of the Scottish blood shed by Macbeth, which Lady Macbeth found so difficult to wash from her hands.

But to return to the England of pre-Norman times. There are many stories about the activities of Greek missionaries in England before St Augustine arrived in 596 to organise the English church and make Christianity official. The earliest monks in England and in Ireland were certainly strongly influenced by Egyptian and Palestinian example; and Irish historians are still very fond of stating that the knowledge of Greek language and literature never died out in the monasteries of Ireland during the Dark Ages. This is hard to prove². But we do know for sure that Greek learning was revived for a while in England in the 7th century. In 668 a Greek priest from Tarsus called Theodore was appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury. Theodore of Tarsus had a profound effect on the church in England, as an administrator and as a scholar. He convened its first synod, at Hertford in 673—event which has been described as «a landmark in the making of England». But he also established schools for the education of the barbarous Britons. The most famous was that at the Monastery of St Augustine at Canterbury. This was the first centre of Greek studies in England. It had a library, to which Theodore presented the large number of manuscripts that he had brought with him from the East, including a copy of Homer. The part played by Theodore of Tarsus in educating and civilising the English can hardly be overrated. He died in 690 and was the first Archbishop of Canterbury to be buried inside his cathedral³.

1. Duncan's granddaughter Matilda married Henry I of England. Their grandson, Henry II (died 1189), had a daughter and a granddaughter who each married Kings of Castile. It was a granddaughter of Alfonso X of Castile called Yolanda who, in 1284, married Andronikos II Palaiologos, the grandfather and (for a time) co-emperor of Andronikos III, who married Anne of Savoy. Her genealogy can be traced back through the same number of generations to Louis VI of France (died 1137) and to Matilda, the granddaughter of Duncan of Scotland. I am indebted for these observations to Mr. Christopher A. Lake.

2. See, e.g., the cautious remarks of W. B. Stanford, «Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland», *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, LXX, Sect. C, 3 (1970), pp. 13-91 (especially pp. 22 ff.); L. Bieler, «The Classics in Celtic Ireland», in *Classical Influences on European Culture, A.D. 500-1500*, ed. R. R. Bolgar, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 45-49.

3. On Theodore of Tarsus see E. Amann, in *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, XV,

His disciples continued the study and translation of Greek texts for some time; but the knowledge of Greek in England died in spite of their efforts. There is said to have been a Greek bishop at the court of King Edgar (died 975). But Edgar, although a very devout king, was accused of the crime of favouring heathen customs and inviting too many foreigners to settle in England. And in any case the monks at Ely found the Greek bishop, whoever he was, to be more of a politician than a scholar¹. People forgot how to read the texts of Greek manuscripts. But they could still admire and copy the pictures. Greek or Byzantine influence on English art became very noticeable in the 8th and 9th centuries. This was partly the result of the arrival in the West of numbers of Byzantine monks and artists fleeing as refugees from the iconoclast Emperors of the time. They came clutching their icons and their illuminated manuscripts, which western monks copied and adapted. In England the Byzantine influence on art can be seen from Winchester in the south to Northumbria in the north². But the Greek monks who brought their treasures with them were anonymous. We do not know who they were; and they must have felt that gloomy old England was a very long way away from the bright lights of Constantinople.

In and after the 8th century traffic began to move in the opposite direction—from West to East. Pilgrimage to Jerusalem became both fashionable and popular. To begin with pilgrims made the journey by sea since the overland route was too dangerous. The most famous of the early English pilgrims was Willibald, who later became Bishop of Eichstädt in Bavaria. He took ten years over his journey from England to Jerusalem and back, by way of Rome, from 719 to 729. An interesting account of it was written by a nun. His travels did not take him to Constantinople; though he did stop off at Cyprus and also at Monemvasia or, as he calls it, Malvasia, which he found to be inhabited not by Greeks but by Slavs (but that is another matter)³. Later pilgrims came through Eastern Europe by land. All pilgrims coming this way had of necessity to pass through Constantinople. They came in their thousands. The great pilgrimage led by German bishops in 1064 numbered at least 7,000 men and

i, cols. 229-231; B. Colgrave, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV, p. 17. Cf. R. S. Lopez, «Le problème des relations anglo-byzantines du septième au dixième siècle», *Byzantion*, XVIII (1948), pp. 139-162 (especially pp. 147-149).

1. See F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1971, pp. 181-182.

2. See, e.g., R. Byron and D. Talbot Rice, *The Birth of Western Painting*, London, 1930; D. Talbot Rice, *Byzantine Painting and Developments in the West before A.D. 1200*, London, 1948; *idem*, «Britain and the Byzantine World in the Middle Ages», in *Byzantine Art - An European Art*, Athens, 1966; Lopez, *op. cit.*

3. On Willibald see B. Colgrave, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV, p. 945.

women. It included a party from England, among whom was the English secretary of William the Conqueror¹. A curious relic of this pilgrimage is an 11th-century Byzantine seal found during recent excavations at Winchester. It shows the scene of the Anastasis on one side, and on the other is inscribed the name of Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who died soon after receiving the German and English pilgrims in his city. From an independent source we know that the Patriarch Sophronios gave his visitors a cordial welcome, entertaining them with music and illuminations. He seems also to have issued them with medals to commemorate the occasion — one of which found its way back to Winchester in the pocket of an English pilgrim².

There seems to be little evidence of official diplomatic exchanges between the Anglo-Saxon kings of England and the Emperors in Constantinople. But one curious tale is told about King Edward the Confessor, who died in 1066. The English chronicles record that Edward sent ambassadors to the Emperor in Constantinople to enquire about a dream that he had had. Edward, who founded Westminster Abbey, has been called rather more of a monk than a king. He was to be made a saint after his death. The dream that troubled him was about the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. He dreamt that they had turned over in their sleep and that this was a bad omen for the future because they would not turn again for 74 years. We are told that the Emperor received the English envoys with kindness and sent them on to Ephesus to make investigations. They then returned to England to report to King Edward that the Seven Sleepers had in fact turned over and were sleeping on their left sides³.

Another Byzantine lead seal found at Winchester bears the name of Joannes Raphael *protospatharios*. He is thought to have accompanied or led a diplomatic mission from Constantinople to England about the year 1070, to recruit soldiers to fight the Seljuq Turks⁴. If so, he came to England at the

1. E. Joranson, «The Great German Pilgrimage of 1064-1065», in *The Crusade and Other Historical Essays Presented to D. C. Munro*, New York, 1928, pp. 3-43; S. Runciman, «The Pilgrimages to Palestine before 1095», in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K. M. Setton, I: *The First Hundred Years*, ed. M. W. Baldwin, Philadelphia, 1955, pp. 76-77.

2. V. Laurent, «Un sceau inédit du patriarche de Jérusalem Sophrone II trouvé à Winchester», *Numismatic Circular*, LXXII, 3 (1964), pp. 49-50.

3. *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster attributed to a monk of St. Bertin*, ed. and transl. F. Barlow, London, 1962, pp. 67-71; William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, London 1887-89, p. 275. Possible indirect Byzantine influences on Anglo-Saxon life and customs (e.g., the adoption of Byzantine titles and offices by the Kings of the 10th century) are discussed by Lopez, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-162.

4. V. Laurent, «Byzance et l'Angleterre au lendemain de la conquête normande. A propos d'un sceau byzantin trouvé à Winchester», *Numismatic Circular*, LXXI, 5 (1963), pp. 93-96. Cf. M. Biddle, «Excavations at Winchester 1962-1963. Second Interim Report», *The Antiquaries Journal*, XLIV (1964), p. 195.

right moment. The year 1066 is a memorable one in English history. In fact it was a year of anxiety and ill-omen all over Europe. Men sensed disaster when they saw an unusually brilliant comet in the sky. It was the first recorded appearance of what we now call Halley's comet. In England it portended the end of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy and the beginning of the Norman occupation of the island. King Harold, successor of Edward the Confessor, was defeated and killed at the Battle of Hastings by William of Normandy, the Conqueror. The Normans were already well known to the Byzantines. They had appeared in the Byzantine province of south Italy nearly forty years before; and five years later, in 1071, they were to conquer Bari and bring an end to Byzantine rule in that part of the world. They were much more familiar to the Byzantines than the Anglo-Saxons (or English) whose land they occupied in 1066.

Their ancestors, the Northmen from Scandinavia, Vikings or Varangians, had found their way to Byzantium in the 9th century. They had come first as raiders, then as mercenary soldiers. Many had returned to the frozen north when they had made their fortunes and told of the wonders of Constantinople, or Micklegarth as it is called in the Nordic Sagas. They fought alongside Byzantine troops against the Arabs in Crete and Anatolia in the 10th century. They came to form the élite Varangian Guard — the palace guards of the Emperor. Their weapons were heavy axes and two-edged swords. The greatest of them was Harold Hardraada of Norway. The Byzantine writer Kekaumenos in his *Strategikon* tells how Harold was the son of a king (Ἀράλτης βασιλέως μὲν Βαραγγίας... υἱός). And yet he was content to come to Constantinople to serve the Emperor (Michael IV) with his 500 soldiers. That was about the year 1034. He was in the imperial service for nine years, fighting the Arabs and the Bulgars, until he returned by way of Jerusalem and Russia to become King of Norway. But we are told that he «never lost his love for the Romaioi» and that he was always proud to bear the titles of *manglabites* and *spatharokandidatos* which the Emperor of Constantinople had given him¹. Harold was real Viking or Varangian, not an Anglo-Saxon. He was killed trying to invade England, at the battle of Stamford Bridge, in September 1066. But there is no doubt that the tales of his career of glory in Byzantium and the East were well known in England by that time. The city of Constantinople, the middle of the earth, had already acquired a mystical significance for the English.

The Norman conquest of England was virtually completed by 1070. Many

1. (Kekaumenos) *Cecaumeni Strategicon et incerti scriptoris De officiis regis libellus*, ed. B. Wassiliewsky and V. Jernstedt, St. Petersburg, 1896, chap. 12, p. 97.

aristocratic families in England today pride themselves on their alleged line of descent from William the Conqueror, the Bastard of Normandy, who conquered their country in the 11th century. But in 1066 there were many Anglo-Saxons, and Danes too, who preferred to emigrate and seek their fortunes elsewhere rather than live under foreign domination. Some of them sailed for the Mediterranean, and after many adventures found their way to the city of Constantinople of which they had heard so much. The fact is confirmed by a number of English or Norman chronicles. Orderic Vitalis, the 12th century monk of Normandy, gives a long account of the English emigration in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

«And so the English» he writes «groaned aloud for their lost liberty and plotted ceaselessly to find some way of shaking off a yoke that was so intolerable and unaccustomed. Some sent to Swein, king of Denmark, and urged him to lay claim to the kingdom of England which his ancestors Swein and Cnut had won by the sword. Others fled into voluntary exile so that they might either find in banishment freedom from the power of the Normans or secure foreign help and come back to fight a war of vengeance. Some of them who were still in the flower of youth travelled into remote lands and bravely offered their arms to Alexius, emperor of Constantinople, a man of great wisdom and nobility. Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia, had taken up arms against him in support of Michael, whom the Greeks—resenting the power of the senate—had driven from the imperial throne. Consequently the English exiles were warmly welcomed by the Greeks and were sent into battle against the Norman forces, which were too powerful for the Greeks alone. The Emperor Alexius laid the foundations of a town called Civitot for the English, some distance from Byzantium; but later when the Norman threat became too great he brought them back to the imperial city and set them to guard his chief palace and royal treasures. This is the reason for the Anglo-Saxon exodus to Ionia; the emigrants and their heirs faithfully served the holy empire, and are still honoured among the Greeks by Emperor, nobility, and people alike»¹.

This account of Orderic Vitalis is amplified and embellished in two other

1. Text and translation in M. Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, II (Books III and IV), Oxford, 1969, pp. 202-205; cf. IV, pp. 14-17. The fundamental study on the arrival of the English in Byzantium in the 11th century is that by A. A. Vasiliev, «The opening stages of the Anglo-Saxon immigration to Byzantium in the Eleventh Century», *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, IX (1937), pp. 39-70, where the older literature is cited and discussed. Cf. F. D(ölger), in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXVIII (1938), pp. 235-236; and see now J. Shepard, «The English and Byzantium: A study of their role in the Byzantine army in the later eleventh century», *Traditio*, XXIX (1973), pp. 53-92.

sources — one the so-called Saga of Edward the Confessor, the other a recently published World Chronicle in Latin. The Saga reports that the party of English refugees from the Normans was led by Sigurd, Earl of Gloucester, two other earls and eight barons. They sailed from England in 350 ships. Their wanderings took them south to Gibraltar, North Africa, Majorca and Minorca and then to Sicily. There they heard that there was a great war at Micklegarth (Constantinople). The city was under attack from pagans by land and sea. The great Emperor «Kirjalax» (Alexios) had only just come to his throne and was in great difficulties. So the English sailed from Sicily to help him. They arrived by night and destroyed all the ships of the pagans who were attacking the city. The land army fled in terror; and great was the surprise of the citizens in the morning to see that their enemies had gone and that there were ships of a new and strange appearance in their harbour. The Emperor then asked the English to stay as his bodyguard. But Sigurd and the other earls felt that they would rather have a piece of land to call their own. The Emperor told them that there was a land that lay to the north across the sea. It had once belonged to the Empire, but had now fallen into the hands of heathens. If the English could conquer this they could have it. Some of them then remained in the Emperor's service, but the rest sailed off to the north (up the Black Sea). After six days they reached the place, attacked it and drove all the inhabitants away. They then took it over and gave it the name of England and settled there. They gave English names to the towns that were there, calling them London and York; and they gave other English names to the new towns that they built. They would not accept «the law of St Paul, which is current in Micklegarth», but they sent to Hungary for bishops and priests of their own faith. «This land lies six days' and nights' sail across the sea to the east and north-east of Micklegarth; and there is the best of land there; and that folk has abode there ever since»¹.

The newly published Latin chronicle tells much the same tale, but with some important differences and additions². It tells us that the princes of Eng-

1. *The Saga of Edward the Confessor*, in *The Orkneyingers' Saga*, III, Rolls Series, London, 1894, pp. 425-428. Cf. R. M. Dawkins, «The Later History of the Varangian Guard: Some Notes», *Journal of Roman Studies*, XXVII (1947), pp. 39-46 (especially p. 42); Shepard, «The English and Byzantium...», pp. 79-84. The problem of the identification of the Anglo-Saxon or Varangian settlements on the Black Sea coast as recorded in the Saga of Edward has recently been studied by J. Shepard, «Another New England?—Anglo-Saxon Settlement on the Black Sea», *Byzantine Studies / Études Byzantines*, I, i (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1974), pp. 18-39.

2. Krijne N. Ciggaar, «L'émigration anglaise à Byzance après 1066. Un nouveau texte en latin sur les Varangues à Constantinople», *Revue des Études byzantines*, XXXII (1974), pp. 301-342, where the English translation of the Edward Saga version is reprinted as an appendix (pp. 340-342). The possible location of «Domapia» is discussed at pp. 334-337.

land who declined to submit to King William set out to sea in 235 ships (not 350); that the year of their arrival at Constantinople was 1075 (which may well be right); and that the Emperor Alexios issued them with a sealed charter confirming them and their heirs as defenders of the Empire and guardians of his own person, of his wife and sons, and of the whole imperial family. The number of those who stayed in Constantinople on these terms is given as 4,350. But a much larger number left to seek their fortunes elsewhere, in a place called Domapia on the Black Sea, which they conquered and called Nova Anglia. This Nova Anglia lies at a distance of twice three days sailing from the imperial city towards the north, «in the beginning of the Scythian country».

The chronicler goes on to relate two interesting anecdotes about those whom he calls the «Oriental Angli». We hear that «Nicephorus, prothosimbolus of the Emperor Alexis, was sent by him to demand tribute from the Oriental Angli, and was murdered by them. Whereupon the Emperor of the Greeks made plans to kill *all* the Angli; and many of them were driven by fear of this prospect to cross over to Nova Anglia, while others (deserted the Emperor's service and) took to piracy. The Emperor then regretted his threat and sent messengers to invite them back. The Oriental Angli did not wish to be subject to the Patriarch of the Greeks, so they sent some of their own priests to Hungary to be consecrated as bishops who would be under the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff—a fact which greatly displeased the Emperor and the Greeks»¹. The other anecdote tells how «the Oriental Angli sent a man called Hardigt to the Emperor. He was reputed to be the strongest of all the Angli, for which reason he was suspect to the Greeks, who cunningly let loose a lion to devour him. Hardigt was alone in the courtyard of the palace. But he ran to the marble columns that stood in the atrium of the palace to use them as protection against the lion. Then (by a series of adroit manoeuvres) he succeeded in braining the lion by bashing its head on a column. This Hardigt of the race of the Angli was later wrongfully accused of treason by two Greeks, but he defended his innocence against them in a flight on foot, brave though they were. One of them he forced to the ground with his arm severed from his side; the other he fell upon and split him in two from his chest. The Emperor appointed this man leader of all his guards and not long afterwards made him commander of the naval forces»².

Such were the barbaric English who took over the duties of the Varangian Guard in Constantinople and came to be known as the «axe-bearing Britons» (πελεκυφόροι Βρεταννοί), who carried their swords on their right shoulders.

1. Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, p. 323, lines 85-91 (text), p. 337 (commentary).

2. Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, p. 323, lines 95-109 (text), pp. 337-338 (commentary).

These are the men whom Anna Komnene calls the «Varangians from the isle of Thule»—the descendants of those fictitious 30,000 Englishmen that Constantine was thought to have taken with him when he left Britain¹. We find them fighting alongside the Byzantine army of Alexios at Dyrrachion in 1081—against their natural enemies, the Normans, led by Robert Guiscard. A few years later they were sent to garrison the new fortress which, as Anna Komnene reports, was built by the Emperor on the Gulf of Nikomedia as a bulwark against the Seljuq Turks. This is the castle that Orderic Vitalis calls «Civitot» (Chevetot)—in Greek «Kivotos»; though the English did not garrison it for long before the Emperor recalled them to Constantinople as his palace guard². An English monk returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem about 1090 was overjoyed to meet men from his own country in Constantinople, especially as they were able to let him in to see the treasures and relics in the palace chapel. The chapel was strongly guarded, but since the English were well known to the commander of the guard they were able to make a special case for a monk from Canterbury. It seems that he even got away with a relic of the Apostle Andrew to take home with him³. That the English guards were much appreciated by the Emperor is clear from the advice given him by Kekaumenos—that he should not be so generous in conferring honorific titles like *primmikerios* and *strategos* on men of the English race (τὸν ἐξ Ἑγγέλης ἔθνικόν)⁴.

Anna Komnene was a little confused about the true nationality of the Varangians. But her «isle of Thule» is most probably to be identified with the island of Britain and not with some part of Scandinavia. The first direct mention of Englishmen among the foreign auxiliaries of the Byzantine army is probably in the text of the chrysobull issued by the Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates for the monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos in 1080; the second is in the chrysobull of Alexios I for Christodoulos, founder of the monastery

1. *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. A. Reifferscheid, Leipzig, 1884, ii, 9; I, p. 84, lines 18-20: τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Θούλης Βαράγγους (τούτους δὴ λέγω τοὺς πελεκυφόρους βαρβάρους); ii, 11: I, p. 90 line 10: τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς Θούλης νήσου βαρβάρους. Cf. Dawkins, *op. cit.*, p. 40; and especially Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

2. *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. Reifferscheid, vi, 10: I, pp. 208-213. Cf. Geoffrey of Malaterra, *De Rebus Gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae Comitis*, ed. E. Pontieri (*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, V, i), Bologna, 1928, iii, pp. 27, 29, 74, 75. See Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58; Shepard, «The English and Byzantium...», pp. 72-76.

3. C. H. Haskins, «A Canterbury monk at Constantinople, c. 1090», *English Historical Review*, XXV (1910), pp. 293-295. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64; Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

4. Laurent, *op. cit.*, *Numismatic Circular*, LXXI (1963), pp. 93-96, proposed that the original text of Kekaumenos read: ἐξ Ἑγγέλλ(ων) γῆς. For discussion of the date and significance of this passage of Kekaumenos see now Shepard, «The English and Byzantium...», p. 64; Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 308-309, 327-328.

of St John on Patmos in 1088. One of the many privileges granted to both monasteries was that of not having to provide quarters for soldiers, whether Greeks or foreigners—and among the foreigners are listed the Varangians and the Inghinoi; though the fact that Varangians and English are so distinguished must mean that there were still some Scandinavians in the imperial service¹. Inghinos (or Englinos) is the commonest form of the word for English thereafter; and the compound form «Englinovarangoi» is later used for the name of the imperial bodyguard, which clearly indicates the nationality of its members. Kinnamos, writing of a campaign in Macedonia in 1123, says that the axe-bearing barbarians were of British race and had then been for long in the Emperors' service². Niketas Choniates later refers to the «captain of the axe-bearing Britons whom they now call 'English'» (ὁ τῶν πελεκυφόρων δὲ κατάρχων Βρεττανῶν, οὗς νῦν φασὶν Ἰγγλίνους)³. When the Venetians and the knights of the Fourth Crusade laid siege to Constantinople in 1204, the English Varangians were prominent among the defenders of the city, fighting heroically on the side of the Byzantines. Niketas Choniates specifically records the bold counter-attack of the «axe-bearing barbarians» on the Golden Horn near Blachernai⁴. Geoffrey of Villehardouin and Robert of Clari, who were there at the time, both say that there were Danes as well as English among the defenders on the walls. But this is the kind of distinction that a Byzantine would not have observed. He would have regarded these fearsome barbarians from the furthest north as indiscriminately barbaric. Robert of Clari informs us that the English had their own priests in Constantinople⁵. We have already seen from the Saga of Edward the Confessor that, at the beginning, the English refused to acknowledge the Patriarch of the Greeks and preferred to find their

1. «Chrysobull of Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1080)», ed. M. Goudas, «Βυζαντινὰ Ἐγγραφα τῆς ἐν Ἀθῶν ἱερᾶς μονῆς τοῦ Βατοπεδίου», *Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν*, III (1926), pp. 120-124 (especially p. 122, line 33); «Chrysobull of Alexios I (1088)», ed. F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata graeca mediæ aevi*, VI, pp. 51-53. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56; Shepard, «The English and Byzantium...», pp. 60-70.

2. *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn, 1836), p. 8, line 15; Jean Kinnamos, *Chronique*, trad. par J. Rosenblum (Publications de la Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Nice, 10), Nice, 1972, p. 20 (text), p. 198 (notes). On the term «Inghinos» see now Shepard, «The English and Byzantium...», pp. 60-62.

3. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), p. 547, line 3.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 721, line 19.

5. Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, xxxv, 171; xxxviii, 185, ed. N. de Wailly, Paris, 1882, pp. 96, 106; ed. E. Faral, Paris, 1938-39, I, pp. 172, 188. Robert of Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, lxxiv, lxxx, ed. P. Lauer, Paris, 1924, pp. Cf. Anna M. N. Patrone, *Roberto di Clari, La Conquista di Costantinopoli (1198-1216)*, Genoa, 1972, pp. 207, 213.

own bishops from Hungary, a Catholic country. Whether the English clergy in Constantinople in 1204 were still from Hungary or sent from England cannot be determined. But the chances are that they were English. For there is a curious account of the building of an English church in Constantinople at the end of the 11th century. It comes in the *Life of Saint Augustine of Canterbury* written by an English monk called Goscelin who died c. 1100¹. «While the first king from the Normans, William, was reigning over England, an honourable man educated in the chapter of the Blessed Augustine, along with many noble exiles from the fatherland, migrated to Constantinople; he obtained such favour with the Emperor and Empress as well as with other powerful men as to receive command over prominent troops and over a great number of companions; no newcomer for very many years had obtained such honour. He married a noble and wealthy woman, and remembering the gifts of God, built, close to his own home, a basilica in honour of the Blessed Nicholas and Saint Augustine, his patron...». The *Latin World Chronicle* mentions one «Coleman» who also built a church in Constantinople. Perhaps the two men are to be identified². The Emperor and Empress at the time were probably Alexios Komnenos and his wife Eirene Doukaina. That an English nobleman should have settled down and married a Greek lady in the 11th century is not at all unlikely. The Byzantine families of Raoul and Petraliphas were the hellenized descendants of Norman knights who had come to Byzantium and married Greek wives at about the same time. The name Varangopoulos must mean the son of a Varangian; such a one was *kephale* of Kos in the 13th century³. Unfortunately we have no record of any of the descendants of either of these Englishmen; nor is it possible to identify the church of Sts. Nicholas and Augustine which one of them is said to have founded (though some have identified it with the ruined chapel at Bogdan Sarai)⁴. There was, however, a monastery in Constantinople dedicated to the Panagia Varangiotissa, which was still in existence as late as 1361⁵.

1. *Miracula Sancti Augustini Episcopi Cantuariensis*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, May, VI, p. 406; translated by Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

2. On the identification of this Englishman and on the relation between the *Life of St. Augustine of Canterbury* and the *Latin Chronicle* see Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-313, 326-328.

3. Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et Diplomata*, VI, pp. 186-187. On the family of Raoul see D. I. Polemis, *The Doukai. A contribution to Byzantine prosopography*, London, 1968, pp. 172-174; S. Fassoulakis, *The Byzantine Family of Raoul-Ralli(s)*, Diss., University of London, 1972. On the family of Petraliphas see D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, Oxford, 1957, pp. 215-216; Polemis, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

4. R. Janin, *La Géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, III: *Constantinople. Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed., Paris, 1969, p. 579. Cf. Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

5. Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et Diplomata*, I, pp. 423-425. Cf. Janin, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.

Later references to the Varangian Guard are few and scattered. But it seems to have survived the *Frankokratia* and to have been reconstituted first in Nicaea and then in Constantinople after 1261. The Chronicle of the Morea relates that when William of Villehardouin, Prince of Achaia, was taken prisoner by Michael Palaiologos in 1259, he was held under guard by the Varangians and Greeks who protected the Emperor¹. Pachymeres writes of the «axe-bearing Kelts» in the service of the Empire at Nicaea, and it seems probable that by Kelts he means English or Danes². The «Englinovarangoi» as an imperial bodyguard in Constantinople in 1172 are specifically mentioned in a *prostagma* of Michael VIII; and it was presumably they, called simply Varangians, who were set to guard the Patriarch Arsenios when he was arrested in 1264³. A neglected passage of Pachymeres reveals that about 1285 the captain of the guard in Thessalonica was an Englishman called Henry (Ἑρρῆς ἐξ Ἑγκλίτων). He was not a good advertisement for his country, since he conspired to arrange the escape from prison of one of the Emperor's more important political prisoners, Michael, son of John Doukas, the *Sebastokrator* of Thessaly. The escape was easy because, as Pachymeres says, Henry was entrusted with the keys of the city gate. If the plan had succeeded he was going to marry Michael's sister. But they did not get away quickly enough, and they were all arrested. That, we must assume, was the end of Henry the Englishman's career as captain of the guard at Thessalonica⁴.

It is not clear whether the Varangian Guard was a hereditary organisation or whether its soldiers were always recruited direct from England. There seems to be no evidence of such recruitment in English sources. The Guard was certainly still in existence in the 14th century, as we know from incidental references in Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos. In 1329, e.g., Kantakouzenos speaks of the «Varangians with their axes» (τοὺς πελέκους ἔχοντας Βαράγκους), whose duty it was to keep the keys of any city in which the Emperor was staying⁵. The *Διήγησις τοῦ Πρωτομολόγου* (Book of Fruits) has the

1. *Chronicle of the Morea*, ed. P. P. Kalonaros, Athens, 1940, lines 4318-4321.

2. George Pachymeres, *De Michaelae Palaeologo*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), p. 71, line 10; cf. p. 378, line 16.

3. *Prostagma* of Michael VIII for Andronikos II (November 1272), ed. A. Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit* (Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philol.-hist. Klasse, 1920, Abhandlung 10), Munich, 1920, pp. 37-41 (especially p. 39, lines 30 and 41); «Testament of Arsenios», in Migne, *Patrologia series Graeco-Latina*, CXL, col. 956 B.

4. Pachymeres, *De Andronico Palaeologo*, pp. 73 ff.

5. John Cantacuzenus, *Historiae*, ed. L. Schopen (Bonn, 1828-32), I, p. 389, line 15.

Varangians in attendance at the court of King Kydonios (King Quince)¹. And finally the *Book of Offices* of Pseudo-Kodinos, which dates from the middle of the 14th century, records the interesting fact that at the Emperor's Christmas banquet it was the custom for the Varangians, among other foreigners, to salute the Emperor in their own language. After the Genoese, the Pisans, the Anconitans and the Venetians had said their piece, «then came the Varangians and wished the Emperor long life in the language of their country, namely English, at the same time clashing their axes with a loud noise» (Ἐπειτα ἔρχονται καὶ πολυχρονίζουσι καὶ οἱ Βάραγγοι, κατὰ τὴν πάτριον καὶ οὕτω γλῶσσαν αὐτῶν, ἤγουν ἐγκλιμιστή)². I find no mention of the Varangians or English bodyguard later than this. The guard that Kantakouzenos recruited to garrison his new fortress at the Golden Gate in Constantinople were Catalans, not Varangians, to the number of 300. But they were dismissed by John V in 1354; and after that the Emperors could hardly afford the luxury of a palace bodyguard imported from the ends of the earth³. Knights and soldiers from England continued occasionally to serve as mercenaries in Byzantium right to the end; and some served the Emperors in other capacities—for example Peter the Englishman (Ἰγγλινος Πέτρος), who was employed by Isaac Angelos as imperial ambassador to Genoa in 1192⁴. But there is no mention of the Varangian Guard in the accounts of the siege of Constantinople in 1453.

The change in the nationality of the Varangian Guard from Scandinavian to English in the 11th century must have made the Byzantines more aware of the existence of England. There are scattered references in western sources to «Angli» living in Constantinople⁵. Diplomatic exchanges certainly increased. The Chronicle of Abingdon tells of an embassy sent by Alexios I to Henry I and Matilda of England some time between 1100 and 1118. It was led by Wlfricus, a native of Lincoln, who brought with him as presents relics of St John the Evangelist and other saints, which were deposited in the monastery at Abingdon near Oxford⁶. The Emperor Manuel Komnenos, the grandson

1. G. Wagner, *Carmina Graeca Medii Aevi*, Leipzig, 1874, p. 200, line 56. Cf. Vasiliev, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

2. Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices*, ed. J. Verpeaux (*Le Monde byzantin*, I), Paris, 1966, p. 209, line 26—p. 210, line 3. There are several other references in this treatise to the Varangoi as the Emperor's bodyguard: see Index (p. 382) *s.v.* Βάραγγοι.

3. Cantacuzenus, III, pp. 225-228, 300-304.

4. Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et Diplomata*, III, pp. 37-40 (p. 40, line 7); cf. F. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches*, II, Munich-Berlin, 1926, no. 1612. See C. M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West, 1180-1204*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 212.

5. Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-317.

6. *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series, London, 1858, p. 46; cf. Ciggaar, *op. cit.*, pp. 317-318.

of Alexios, is well-known for his fondness for westerners. He believed that he had a special relationship with King Henry II of England; and after the Byzantine defeat at the battle at Myriokephalon in 1176 he wrote a long and celebrated account of the disaster to Henry, whom he describes as «the most noble King of England and his dearest friend (carissimus amicus)». Among other matters he was pleased to report that some of the leading men of the nobility of England had fought at Myriokephalon¹. One English chronicle tells of Greek ambassadors being sent to Henry II in 1170 with a proposal that his son John should marry the daughter of the Emperor Manuel. This marriage never materialised. But Manuel was quite justified in reminding King Henry that they, or at least their children, were already closely united by ties of blood. For Manuel's children by his second wife Mary of Antioch were the second cousins of the children of the English Queen Eleanor, Henry's wife². There are several entries in the royal archives of England concerning the visit of Byzantine ambassadors in 1176. We know that they were entertained by King Henry at Westminster, and that an English Knight, Geoffrey de Haie, was sent to Constantinople to return his king's respects to the Emperor. Another Byzantine embassy came to England in 1177 and was delayed for some time at Dover—a frustrating but not unusual occurrence³. The English (or Welsh) chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis writes that the Emperor Manuel was so eager to learn about the kingdom and people of Britain that Henry II wrote for him an elaborate account of the customs and peculiarities of the island. As a result of these friendly exchanges the King, who had no doubt been told about Manuel's love of hunting, sent him a pack of English bloodhounds. The dogs were dispatched on a ship going to Constantinople from Bremen, at a cost of £ 6.6.9⁴. In 1185 we hear of an English nobleman, Richard of Limesia, travelling to Constantinople on the King's service⁵. The public records of the English Chancery no doubt contain many more such entries and perhaps some information of greater significance. But so far they have only been consulted for limited periods. A systematic search has yet to be made.

The Fourth Crusade was almost wholly destructive to Byzantium. But it brought numerous benefits to Western Europe. One of the consequences of

1. A. Vasiliev, «Manuel Comnenus and Henry Plantaganet», *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXIX (1929-30), pp. 233-244 (translation of text: pp. 237-240). The Latin text of Manuel's letter is in the Chronicle of Roger of Hovedon: *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Hovedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, London, 1869, II, pp. 102-104. Cf. Dölger, *Regesten*, II, no. 1524.

2. Vasiliev, «Manuel Comnenus...», pp. 234-236.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-242.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 242-243.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 243-244.

the establishment of a Latin Empire of Constantinople was that travel to and contacts with Byzantium became easier for westerners. Unfortunately, very few of them were interested in appreciating Byzantine culture. But some took the trouble to learn Greek; and others brought Greek manuscripts home with them. The slow revival of Greek learning in the West which resulted owes not a little to English scholars—especially the Franciscans Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon in the 13th century. Grosseteste, who was Bishop of Lincoln, collected a whole library of Greek manuscripts and assembled a group or seminar of native Greek scholars to help him with his commentaries on Aristotle and the Fathers. Most of these were Greeks from south Italy and not from Constantinople¹. But Grosseteste's great friend, John of Basingstoke, who died in 1252, had actually studied in Athens. He was a monk of the Monastery at St Albans and later Archdeacon of Leicester. He claimed to have learnt a great deal in Athens from a young lady called Constantina, a daughter of the Archbishop. Constantina, though barely twenty years old, had already mastered all the trivium and quadrivium and knew more than John himself had learnt in all his own years of study in Paris. She was also infallible at predicting eclipses and, better still, earthquakes. She must have been a very remarkable girl—though there is some doubt about her identity. If she was a daughter of the Greek Archbishop of Athens, her father would have to have been the learned Michael Choniates. But Michael expressly states that he had no children. Anyway, John of Basingstoke returned to England well-versed in Greek and bringing with him a large number of manuscripts. He also compiled a Greek grammar, and introduced Greek numerals into England². The most famous of the English Hellenists in the 13th century was of course Roger Bacon. He lived a generation later and so was able to build on the work of his predecessors, as well as benefiting from contact with Greeks already living in England. He too compiled a Greek grammar which, it is interesting to note, follows the Byzantine style in pronunciation of the language and arrangement of the subject-matter³. Unfortunately this renaissance of Greek studies in England in the 13th century did not last.

An ordinary Englishman's account of Constantinople, its people and its customs about the year 1350 is contained in the *Travels and Voyages* of Sir

1. K. M. Setton, «The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance», *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, C (1956), pp. 60 ff.

2. Matthew Paris, *Chronica maiora*, ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series, London, 1880, V, pp. 285-287. Cf. Setton, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62; W. Miller, *The Latins in the Levant. A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)*, London, 1908, p. 20.

3. R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries*, Cambridge, 1954, pp. 228-229.

John Mandeville¹. The first part of this amusing work described the pilgrims' route from England to Jerusalem by way of Constantinople where, as he says, lived the Emperor of Greece. And there, he goes on, is the most fair church and the most noble of all the world, the church of Saint Sophia. And in front of that church stands the statue of Justinian the Emperor, covered with gold, crowned and sitting on a horse. He used to hold a golden apple in his hand; but it has fallen out. And men say that this is a token that the Emperor has lost a great part of his lands and of his lordships: for once he was Emperor of Romania and of Greece, of all Asia Minor, and of the land of Syria, of the land of Judaea, in which is Jerusalem, and of the lands of Egypt, Persia and Arabia. But he has now lost everything, except for Greece. That is the only land he has left². What impressed an English Christian like Mandeville was the number of churches and holy relics in Constantinople. He does give an interesting description of the Emperor's palace and of the hippodrome. He also tells the tale, which I have already mentioned, that St Helena, the mother of Constantine, was a daughter of King Cole of England. But he writes at much greater length about the relics—from the True Cross and the tunic of Christ to the bodies of St Anne, of St Luke and of St John Chrysostomos, all of which were preserved in Constantinople. And he was especially intrigued by the differences between the Greek form of Christianity and his own Roman faith and creed. «If so be», he writes, «that the men of Greece are Christian, yet they differ from our faith. For they say that the Holy Ghost comes not from the Son, but only from the Father. And they say that their Patriarch has as much power on his side of the sea as the Pope does on this side. Therefore the Pope sent letters to them, how the Christian faith should all be one; and that they should be obedient to the Pope who is God's Vicar on earth. ... And they answered him in these words: 'We know well that your power over your subjects is great. We cannot tolerate your pride, which is also great. We do not intend to satisfy your great avarice. So the Lord be with you, since the Lord is with us'». Mandeville also lists the differences in creed and custom—in the sacraments, in the matter of Purgatory (which the Greeks deny), and in the rules for fasting and the marriage of the priests. Finally, he remarks that «the Emperor of Constantinople makes the Patriarch, the Archbishop and the Bishops...and so he is lord both spiritual and temporal in his country»³.

1. M. Letts, *Mandeville's Travels. Text and translations* (Hakluyt Society, Series II, vols. CI, CII), London, 1953.

2. Letts, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 5-6; II, pp. 232-233.

3. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 13-15; II, pp. 237-239. English travellers occasionally passed through Byzantine Trebizond on their way to places further east. See W. Miller, *Trebizond. The Last Greek Empire*, London, 1926, p. 31; E. Janssens, *Trebizonde en Colchide*, Brussels, 1969, pp. 93-94.

These are the observations of an average pilgrim or tourist visiting Constantinople in the 14th century. He is interested in the sights of the city and in the strange ways and beliefs of a foreign people. He even lists the letters of the Greek alphabet in case anyone should want to know how these foreigners write their language. But he reveals no interest in the literature written in that language, whether ancient or contemporary. It is a pity that we do not have any other English traveller's account which might have shown a deeper and less superficial appreciation of Byzantine culture and civilisation.

The event which ought to have done most to promote contacts between England and Byzantium was the visit of the Emperor Manuel II to London in 1400. I have written about this elsewhere; but perhaps I may briefly describe the circumstances¹. The visit had been preceded by a number of exchanges of ambassadors and letters. After the failure of the crusade at Nicopolis in 1396, in which an English contingent had participated, Manuel wrote to all the rulers of the western world, urging them to send men or money for the rescue of Constantinople. Charles VI of France seemed the most likely to help; but his neighbour King Richard II of England might be approached too since he had a reputation as a crusader. So in 1397 and again in 1398 we find Byzantine ambassadors crossing over from France to England. They were well received by King Richard II, who even conferred a knighthood on one of them at a ceremony at Lichfield; and the king's council voted that a sum of money should be contributed by every bishop and lord of the land for the relief of Constantinople.

In the meantime the Pope had set up a defence fund for Constantinople, and his agents came to England in 1399 to establish collection centres in Lincoln, Leicester, Winchester and York. Records survive of the exact amounts subscribed and collected. The Archbishops of Canterbury, York and London made private donations. A special box for offerings was placed in St Paul's Cathedral in London. And King Richard advanced the sum of £ 2,000 for «the liberation and support of Manuel, Emperor of Constantinople, and for the protection of his Empire from extermination by the infidel» Turks. The money was to be conveyed through a bank in Genoa. Richard wrote to Manuel apologizing for not being able to do more. By 1399 England was on the verge of civil war; while the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish were all making trouble².

Eventually it was decided that the Emperor should visit France to put

1. D. M. Nicol, «A Byzantine Emperor in England: Manuel II's visit to London in 1400-1401», *University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, XII, 2 (1971), pp. 204-225; reprinted in D. M. Nicol, *Byzantium: its ecclesiastical history and relations with the western world*, (Collected Studies: Variorum Reprints), London, 1972.

2. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-210.

his case in person. The arrangements were made by the French Marshal Boucicaut, who led a small army to Constantinople in 1399; and Manuel and his party reached Paris by way of Italy in June 1400. He travelled in style, bringing his own priests and dignitaries as well as gifts of relics and treasures for his hosts. From Paris he made inquiries about visiting England. By 1400 things had changed at the English court. Richard II, who had promised Manuel £ 2,000, had been dethroned by King Henry IV; and in the summer of that year Henry was away in the north of the island fighting the Scots. Several months passed before he was back in London and ready to receive the Emperor. Finally, on 11 December 1400, Manuel sailed from Calais to Dover. The sea was, as usual, rough and he was glad to reach the soil of England. From Dover he proceeded first to Canterbury, where he was welcomed by the Prior of Christ Church and his Augustinian friars on 13 December, the Feast of St Lucy. There he was entertained for some days. The King had commissioned a nobleman to greet the Emperor and escort him to London; and on 21 December King Henry himself came out to Blackheath, some nine miles from the city, to meet his honoured guest¹.

Manuel was in England for nearly two months. His stay in London is not as fully documented as his much longer stay in Paris. But some of the English chroniclers of the time provide snatches of information. The Chronicle of Thomas Walsingham has this to say: «At this time (1400) the Emperor of Constantinople accompanied by several Greeks came to England to ask for help against the Turks. The King met him with a noble retinue at Blackheath on the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle, properly receiving him as a hero, and led him to London. There for many days he entertained him in glorious fashion, defraying all the expense of his hospitality and lavishing gifts upon him. The King spent Christmas of that year at his palace at Eltham; and with him was the Emperor of Constantinople with his Greek bishops»². People were evidently very impressed by the Emperor's piety. They noted that he attended Mass every day in his own apartments, and that he and all his company took communion daily. Another English chronicler, Adam of Usk, gives this account: «This Emperor always walked with his men, dressed all alike and in one colour, namely white, in long robes cut like tabards; he finding fault with the many fashions and distinctions in dress of the English, wherein he said that fickleness and changeable temper was betokened. No razor touched head or beard of his chaplains. These Greeks were most devout in their church services, which

1. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-213.

2. Thomas Walsingham, *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti*, ed. H. T. Riley, Rolls Series, London, 1866, pp. 334-335.

were joined in as well by soldiers as by priests, chanting in their native tongue»¹.

The Christmas party held in the Emperor's honour at Eltham Palace outside London was clearly a grand and expensive occasion. There are records of a great tournament that was staged in the palace grounds for his entertainment. The people of the city of London also seem to have enjoyed the occasion. A chronicle of London records that the aldermen of the city and their families staged a masquerade or mummary for the Emperor, for which he expressed great thanks². Manuel hardly saw London at its best in the bleak month of January. But he had great hopes of the positive results of his journey. There is a letter that he wrote from London to his friend Manuel Chrysoloras, who was then in Italy. It is full of praise for «the King of Britain the Great, or, as one might say, of the second universe» (ὁ τῆς Βρετανίας ῥῆξ τῆς μεγάλης, τῆς δευτέρας, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, οἰκουμένης). Manuel praises Henry's virtues and commends him for his courtesy, friendliness and generosity; and he concludes that the king is going to provide substantial help for Constantinople with soldiers, money and ships, which will transport the army wherever it is needed³. Alas, these high hopes were never realised. No regiment of English soldiers, no flotilla of the British navy followed Manuel to Constantinople. He left the shores of England laden down with presents from the king and richer by a sum of money, but otherwise he had nothing to show for his visit.

Even the money that was supposed to have been collected for his cause was hard to find when it was needed. The collecting boxes in St Paul's and other churches appeared to be empty. And the £ 2,000 assigned to the Emperor by Richard II had never passed through the bank in Genoa. Henry IV ordered an investigation. It was still going on more than twenty years later, as the records reveal. But at least he made sure that Manuel got the promised £ 2,000. And on 3 February 1401 the Emperor gratefully acknowledged receipt of this sum in a Latin document written in London and sealed with his own golden bull. It is the only Byzantine imperial chrysobull in the Public Record Office in England. He left London for Calais and Paris in mid-February. Some of his officials stayed in England until May and are known to have visited Staines, Windsor and Gloucester. Back in Paris the Emperor wrote to his friend Euthymios in Constantinople telling him that preparations were already being

1. Adam of Usk, *Chronicon*, ed. E. M. Thompson, London, 1904, pp. 57, 220.

2. Nicol, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-215. The manuscript of the St. Alban's Chronicle in the Library of Lambeth Palace, London (Cod. 6 [E. a. 2], fol. 240^r) has an illustration of the meeting of Henry IV and the Emperor Manuel in the throne-room of a palace.

3. *Lettres de l'empereur Manuel Paléologue*, ed. E. Legrand, Paris, 1893, pp. 51-52; English translation in J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425). A study in late Byzantine statesmanship*, New Brunswick, N. J., 1969, pp. 175-180.

made in Europe for the assembly of a great army to which «the Britons and all our other allies» were to send contingents. But it was an illusion; and early in 1402 the Emperor sadly sent word to his nephew John VII, who was in charge of Constantinople, to say that after all King Henry of England had not been able to provide any real help in the way of troops or of money¹.

John VII, however, thought that a letter from the scene of action might have more affect; and in June 1402 he wrote a letter of his own to Henry IV, appealing for assistance. He paid tribute to the English noblemen who were then actively engaged in the defence of Constantinople. It would be interesting to know who they were. Perhaps they were survivors from the crusade of Nicopolis who had found their way to the city. But it did not seem that any of their countrymen were going to leave England to join them in the East.

The news that the Sultan Bajezid had been defeated and captured by Timur the Mongol at Ankara in July 1402 reached the Emperor Manuel in Paris in September of that year. He left Paris in November; but he did not get back to Constantinople until June 1403. Before that he sent another embassy over to England, probably to let the king know about the changed situation in the East. And in 1403 thirteen Greeks are known to have been in London on the Emperor's business, presumably to make another effort to get help from Henry IV. This was, perhaps, the last official Byzantine embassy to England². There may have been some Englishmen fighting in the defence of Constantinople fifty years later, in 1453. It has been suggested that the army engineer in the service of Giustiniani called John Grando was really a John Grant who came from Scotland and not from Germany³. But there was no official British contingent. And the fall of Constantinople made little immediate impression in England. One might have thought that the Emperor Manuel's visit to London would have inspired both the English and the Greeks to want to know more about each other. But there is no evidence that it had this effect. It is possible that the long account of the geography and customs of the British given by Laonikos Chalkokondyles (the longest in any Byzantine source) derived from someone who had been there in the Emperor's company. Among other peculiarities of these strange Englishmen Chalkokondyles particularly notes the fact that they are in the habit of kissing their ladies a great deal and that they are not ashamed to allow their wives and daughters to be kissed by other men in public⁴. Some scholars have misread this statement as if it implied that

1. Nicol. *op. cit.*, pp. 216-219, 222-223.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 222-224.

3. S. Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople 1453*, Cambridge, 1965, p. 84.

4. *Laonici Chalcocondylae Historiarum Demonstrationes*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn, 1843), pp. 92-95; ed. J. Darkó (Budapest, 1922), I, pp. 86-89. Cf. W. Miller, «The Last Athenian

the English were immoral, adulterous and promiscuous. But in fact this innocent custom of greeting a lady with a kiss was noticed also by Erasmus when he first visited England in 1497. «The English», says Erasmus, «have one practice which cannot be too much admired. When you go anywhere on a visit the girls all kiss you. They kiss you when you arrive; they kiss you when you go away; and they kiss you again when you return. Go where you will it is all kisses». Erasmus enjoyed this social custom. But he was a westerner. To a Byzantine all this kissing must have seemed very strange¹.

Byzantines and English were indeed still strangers to each other in the 15th century. Even the interest in ancient Greek philosophy and literature which English scholars had shown in the 13th century did not last. The revival of Greek studies in Italy in the early 15th century is well known. It was stimulated by the teaching there of Manuel Chrysoloras and then by the event of the Council of Florence in 1439 and the settlement there of Bessarion and Gemistos Plethon. But all this had distressingly little effect in England. As the late Roberto Weiss has shown, the work of such men as Grosseteste and Bacon was not followed up by their countrymen; and indeed it is doubtful whether Greek was studied at all in England in the 14th century². We know that Petros Philargos from Crete, who later became Pope Alexander V, studied at Norwich and Oxford about 1370. We know that Manuel Chrysoloras himself visited London and the library of Salisbury Cathedral in 1409. But neither of these scholars found any scope for teaching Greek in England. When the Florentine humanist Poggio Bracciolini came to England at the invitation of the Bishop of Winchester in 1418 he found it quite impossible to pursue his studies in Greek because he could not find any Greek books or teachers. The Venetian scholar Del Monte encountered the same problems twenty years later; and he was also discouraged by the horrible climate and the barbarous customs of the country³. The humanism of English scholars in the 15th century, such as

Historian: Laonikos Chalkokondyles», *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, XLII (1922), pp. 36-49 (especially p. 46); K. Dieterich, *Byzantinische Quellen zur Länder und Völkerkunde 5.-15. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig, 1912, II, pp. 124-125. It was believed in some Byzantine (or post-Byzantine) circles that the English were polygamous: Ps.-Phrantzes (Makarios Melissenos), *Chronicon*, in Georgios Sphrantzes, *Memorii 1401-1477*, ed. V. Grecu, Bucarest, 1966, p. 362, lines 20-21: 'Εν Βρεταννία δὲ πλείστοι τῶν ἀνδρῶν μίτ̄ συγκαθεύδουσι γυναικί καὶ πολλαὶ γυναῖκες ἐνὶ ἑταιρίζονται ἀνδρί.

1. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

2. R. Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1967, p. 9.

3. Weiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12, 13-21, 25-26. On Petros Philargos see D. J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Oxford, 1966, pp. 153-154. On Manuel Chrysoloras see G. Cammelli, *I Dotti Bizantini e le Origini dell' Umanesimo*, I: *Manuele Crisolora*, Florence, 1941, especially pp. 146-147.

it was, was based on classical Latin not on Greek. Hardly any English humanists knew any Greek at all. Those that did were mainly interested in obtaining MSS of religious works, or of Plato and Aristotle. Greek secular literature was simply not studied, except in Latin translation. Towards the end of the century we know of a number of Greeks who were employed in copying MSS. One was Emanuel of Constantinople, who may even have taught some Greek at Oxford. Andronikos Kallistos and Georgios Hermonymos of Sparta spent some months in Oxford and London in 1475. Demetrios Kantakouzenos was in London in the same year and copied a volume of extracts from Herodotus. While Johannes Serbopoulos of Constantinople worked in Oxford and then in an Abbey at Reading for some years in the 1480's. He transcribed several copies of the Greek Grammar of Theodoros Gazes, which seems to indicate that there *were* people in England anxious to learn Greek¹. But, as has already been observed, it was not really until the 16th century that Greek language and literature found their rightful place in the education and scholarship of England.

The English were slow to enter the common market of Greek culture. But by a strange series of circumstances, the soil of England received and still contains the mortal remains of one of the last reputed descendants of the last Byzantine Emperors. In the parish church of Landulph in Cornwall an inscription records the burial there in 1636 of one Theodore Palaiologos from Pesaro in Italy. He is said to have been descended from the imperial line of the last Christian Emperors of Greece, and the inscription is adorned with the double-headed eagle. The genealogy of Theodore is traced through four generations from Thomas, brother of Constantine Palaiologos, the Emperor². Theodore was born about 1560 and was the nephew of two gentlemen of Pesaro called Leonidas and Scipione Palaiologos. All three were convicted of attempted murder. Leonidas was executed, but his nephew Theodore was exiled from Italy. He found his way to England in the dishonourable capacity of a hired assassin

1. Weiss, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-148; Geanakoplos, *op. cit.*, p. 157; A. E. Vacalopoulos, *Origins of the Greek Nation. The Byzantine Period, 1204-1461*, New Brunswick, N. J., 1970, pp. 250-254. On Demetrios Kantakouzenos see D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, XI), Washington, D.C., 1968, No. 100, p. 228.

2. The inscription on a brass plaque (now set in the wall inside the church at Landulph) has been published several times. See D. A. Zakythenos, *Le Despotat grec de Morée (1262-1460)*, I, Paris, 1932, pp. 295-297; D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, London, 1972, pp. 425, 437, and references there cited. Theodore's claim to be a descendant of Thomas Palaiologos through Thomas's son John must be held unproven since there is no independent evidence for the existence of this John Palaiologos. Cf. Zakythenos, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-297.

and a soldier in the service of the Earl of Lincoln. There he settled and in the year 1600 married Mary, daughter of William Balls, of Hadleigh in Suffolk. The wedding took place at Cottingham in Yorkshire. His first child, Theodore, was born only ten weeks after the marriage, but he died in infancy (September 1601). He had three other sons and three (not two) daughters. He is known to have fought as a soldier in the Netherlands between 1609 and 1621; then to have lived in Plymouth; and finally to have settled at Clifton mansion in Landulph, Cornwall. The register in Exeter Cathedral gives the date of Theodore's burial as 20 October 1636 (not, as in the inscription, 21 January). In 1795 his grave was accidentally opened revealing an oak coffin. When the lid was lifted the body was found to be in perfect condition — so that it was possible to see that Theodore Palaiologos had been a very tall man with a strong aquiline nose and a very long white beard¹.

His eldest daughter Dorothy married a gentleman of Cornwall called William Arundel in 1636. The entry in the marriage register says she was of imperial stock («Dorothea Paleologus de stirpe imperatorum»). But as she was then fifty years old it is unlikely that she had any children. His younger daughter Mary probably never married; and his third daughter died young. There were three sons: John Theodore Palaiologos, who was born in 1611 and is known to have been in Barbados Island thirty years later; Theodore junior, born in 1609, who became a Captain in the British army and died in 1644 (he was buried in Westminster Abbey, not because of his imperial ancestry but because he fought on the side of Parliament against the Royalists in the Civil War); finally Ferdinand Palaiologos, born about 1615. He too was a soldier, but he emigrated to Barbados in the West Indies before the Civil War broke out. It seems that he and his brother John went there to join relations of their mother (Mary Balls) who had already settled in Barbados. They were among the first colonists, since the island was not discovered until about 1620. Ferdinand acquired a small landed estate there, married a lady called Rebecca Pomfrett and had one son named Theodorious. His will survives, dated September 1670, and he died in October 1678. He was long remembered on Barbados as «the Greek prince from Cornwall». When his grave was opened in 1844 it was found that Ferdinand had been buried with his feet pointing to the East, «according to the Greek custom», and that, like his father, he was exceptionally tall. In 1906 a monument was erected in the churchyard at Barbados, with an inscription commemorating the death of «Ferdinando Paleologus, descended from

1. Most of this and the following information about Theodore Palaiologos and his family is derived from the researches of Canon J. H. Adams published in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, new series, VI, 2 (Truro, 1970), pp. 95-120 (where a definitive text of the Landulph inscription is printed at p. 106).

the imperial line of the last Christian Emperors of Greece». His son Theodorios (or Theodore) named, Greek style, after his grandfather, became a sailor, returned to England (in fact to Stepney in London) and died at Corunna in Spain in 1693. He married a Martha Bradbury of Barbados, and we know that they had a son born in Stepney and perhaps also a daughter¹.

It would be interesting to know if there were any descendants of the Varangian English (any Varangopouloi) still living in Greece or Constantinople as late as the 16th and 17th centuries. It would be interesting to trace the families of some of the nobility of England who fought on the Byzantine side at Myriocephalon or in the defence of Constantinople in the 15th century. But the evidence, so far as I know, is not available. One would like to know too why the author of the *Song of Belisarius* (Διήγησις τοῦ Βελισαρίου) chose England (νησίῳ τῆς Ἑγγλητέρας) as the scene of one of his hero's exploits². The contacts between Byzantium and England in the middle ages were, as I have tried to show, irregular and infrequent. Sometimes they were fruitful; and at least they were never hostile. But it was not until long after the fall of Constantinople that the English acquired a lasting taste for Greek culture. And by then it was too late for the Romaioi to learn anything from England.

1. J. H. Adams, *op. cit.*

2. The *Song of Belisarius* is published in three versions by G. Wagner, *Carmina Graeca Medii Aevi*, pp. 304 ff., 322 ff., 348 ff.