and the Islamic world; the economic and social revival of Western Europe; the rise and de­cline of the Holy Roman Empire; Capetian France and Norman England; the Crusades; Church and culture in the Latin West; medieval lay society; Eastern Christendom (Byzant­ium and the Turks, the Slavs); politics, economics and religion in Western society; and early Renaissance culture (Latin and Byzantine humanism, philosophy, and art).

To use a contemporary idiom, this is a book that "puts it all together". This is history “come alive”—fascinating, exciting, illuminating. The author is a well established scholar who knows his historical sources, knows how to use the research of others constructively, and who is ever alert to bring new light to a period that he loves to investigate and to recon­struct for scholar and student alike with a total historical perspective. 

Medieval Western Civilization and the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds is a long overdue corrective in a fundamental discipline and Deno Geanakoplos was the right person to pro­vide it. It is a text that deserves the widest possible dissemination because it is truly histori­cally properly balanced.

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For some six centuries, the Varangians have captured the fancy of the public, as they did of the author of this book. To the citizens of the Byzantine Empire, the Varangians were fierce barbarians. For a Norse saga writer, they had a certain colorful glamor, especially since the Byzantine Emperors regularly used Varangian guards for various purposes.

Blöndal relates how the Norsemen came to be taken into the Imperial service. Basil II, perhaps the greatest of all the Emperors of the East, shaped the Varangians into a regiment of guards rendering particularly important services to the Empire. The history of this regiment is portrayed right down to the fall of High Byzantium in 1204, and even further to the very last day of the Empire in May 1453. Englishmen eventually replaced the Norsemen, with resulting changes in the position and duties of the Varangians in the Byzantine state.

The author draws on numerous sources for his account, including Scandinavian, Greek, Latin, Russian, Arabic, and Armenian literature. He cites archaeological evidence from Venice, Byzantium, and Sweden in documenting what has survived of the famous band of Varangians. Its most famous member, Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway, died as a Viking, fighting against hopeless odds at Stamford Bridge in 1066.

The book traces the Varangians and their origins in a facile manner belying the diffi­culty encountered in gathering the widely-scattered sources of information and piecing them together into a coherent story. The author needed some 15 years to complete his work.

The first chapter provides an interesting account of the Varangians and their origins. The second chapter recounts how the Varangians gradually entered the army and navy of the Byzantine Empire, and eventually the Imperial Guard. Chapter Three describes how Harald Sigurrarson, later King Harald III of Norway, entered the Imperial service as a Varangian and served in Constantinople (1034-1043). His most notorious military expedition was the campaign in Sicily and southern Italy between 1038 and 1041, under the command of Georgios Maniaces.
By the end of 1081, the Varangians were extremely prominent among the Imperial guards on duty in Byzantium. Some 30 years earlier, a Varangian force had captured Stira and Lecce. After Constantine IX died in 1053, Theodora, the only survivor of the legitimate Imperial family, reigned alone, at least in name, for about 18 months. "She appears to have esteemed her Varangians greatly, and when she died the guards, including the Varangians, took oaths of fealty to her successors" (p. 107).

Chapter Six traces the Varangians during the period between 1081 and 1204. Alexius I received the Varangian troops that had served his predecessors so well into his service, and they now showed him the same unwavering loyalty which they had previously accorded to others. The Crusades increased the number of Varangians in the Imperial service: "It is very likely that various Norsemen who took the cross decided to settle in the Empire, especially as it offered a high rate of pay for its forces, and, moreover, we have some evidence of Norse chiefs who took part in the Crusades and allowed some of the contingents they brought to enter the Emperor's service; there is also evidence that some Icelanders will have formed part of the original Scandinavian contingent" (p. 130).

Chapter Seven covers the period from 1204 to 1453, with the Varangian presence gradually reduced to "the ghost of the regiment".

The concluding chapters deal with the problem of accurate historical documentation. The author discusses in detail his various sources and his method of making inferences from them. Of special interest is the fact that, until the time of the Commenian Emperors, the greater number of the Varangians were Swedes. A number of runic stones have been found in Sweden, bearing the names of various men who died in Byzantium and in whose memory these stones were erected. Old Swedish legal codes providing for the inheritance of men residing in Greece constitute evidence of the frequent journeys of Swedes to the Byzantine Empire.

_The Varangians of Byzantium_ is an extremely well-documented work which also provides the sense of drama seldom associated with historical documentation. The author frequently shows the reader the methods he uses to reach his conclusions, citing first one line of evidence and then another, followed by the final decision. Nevertheless, the aura of romance that has clung to the Varangians for many centuries remains for the reader.

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JAMES KLEON DEMETRIUS

Semavi Eyice, _Biyans devrinde Bogazici_, Turkiyede Ortaçağ Sanate Araştırmaları, III [The Bosphorus during the Byzantine Period. Institute of Medieval Art in Turkey, III], Istanbul 1976, pp. XI + 184 with 69 plates.

This is a book, the third in the series "Research in Medieval Art in Turkey" (Turkiyede Ortaçağ Sanati Araştırmaları, III), published by the School of Letters at the University of Istanbul.

As the author mentions in his Prologue (pp. VII-XI), the incentive for writing this book was given to him by the Symposium "The Present, Past and Future of Bosphores", at which he participated. The author qualifies his book as a "simple effort" aiming to give to the reader an idea of the Bosphorus during the Byzantine period. He describes the material compiled up to the present that is: photographs, plans and drawings of architectural ruins,