From Venice to Byzantium and Back: Relations between Venetians and Greeks, 1200-1600

by

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................ iii
Preface.......................................................................................................................... iv
Introduction.................................................................................................................. 1

Chapter 1. Imperial Venice and the Greek People
1204-1453 ................................................................................................................. 12

Chapter 2. Venice as a Center of Greek Learning
C. 1500 ...................................................................................................................... 43

Chapter 3. Venetians in Constantinople and Greeks in Venice
1200-1600 .................................................................................................................. 70

Conclusion................................................................................................................... 99
Maps.............................................................................................................................. 105
Bibliography............................................................................................................... 111
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Preface

Two years ago, traveling through Greece, it seemed to me that everywhere I went, I ran into Venice. A port city here, fortifications there; almost a dozen of my destinations had been “under Venetian control” for “long periods of time.” Within the first half of my semester studying in Athens I had seen the Venetian strongholds in Euboea, Nauplion, Monemvasia, and Crete. I remember standing in the port city of Chania, or Candia as the Venetians called it, thinking to myself, “If I’m in Greece, why do I keep running into Venice?” My Spring Break travels with my family to Santorini and Corfu peaked this curiosity even further. Walking through the streets of Corfu Town, hearing Greek spoken with a strange accent, I felt as though I was back in Italy. Eating a cuisine that delightfully resembled Italian more than the greasy gyros, keftedes, and patatopita I had been enjoying for the past months, I knew I wanted to explore this intriguing mixture of cultures.

A year later, standing in Piazza San Marco, I looked up at the Basilica for the first time in almost a decade. I had forgotten how amazing the city was, how grand and impressive. But I found myself noticing that the church standing before me was profoundly different from those I had seen in my new home in Bologna and my travels through northern Italy. When I asked myself why, I realized it was none other than the influence of the Byzantines. The Greeks! I had found them in Italy just as I had found Italians in Greece. As Hadrian’s Arch in Athens and the ruins of Siracusa in Sicily were the remnants of antiquity, this church and those fortresses were the remains of a later time. But when? I knew I had to study the story behind this fascinating connection between East and West.

Am I prejudice for choosing Venice? I don’t think so. Never once did I run into Genoa when I was traveling through Greece. This is obviously a factor of where I chose to travel: I didn’t make it to the Dodecanese, the northeastern Greek isles, or the Northern areas of the Black Sea. However, I never sat down with a guidebook and looked for Venice either. I just stumbled upon her legacy in the Aegean, over and over again. And with this yearlong investigation into the relationship between Venice and Greece, I finally found the answers I was looking for.
Introduction

The lasting effects of the Greco-Venetian interactions of the late middle ages and early modern period are still evident today. From the Venetian ports scattered throughout the Aegean to the bronze horses on San Marco and the Biblioteca Marciana in St. Marks Square, even an unsuspecting tourist might see the undeniable evidence of a relationship between these members of East and West. It is obvious that the people of Italy and Greece have been interacting for millennia, starting in ancient Greece and ending, most notably, with the independence movements of the nineteenth century. This thesis will explore the era in which the dying Byzantine Empire saw the introduction and duration of a new Venetian Empire that partially took her place. The diverse ways in which the people of these opposing powers came in contact with one another will demonstrate the evolution in their relations from rivalry and opposition to alliance and cooperation.

This thesis is a multi-faceted approach that explores how the relationship between Greeks and Venetians changed from 1200-1600 by examining, chronologically and thematically, the political and social elements that provided for this change. Through a focus on three key themes, the Venetian Empire in the East, Venice’s role as a center for Greek learning, and the communities of Venetians in Constantinople and Greeks in Venice, I will trace how this relationship experienced eras of conquering and exploitation, then welcoming and borrowing, and finally acculturation and assimilation.
The thirteenth to sixteenth centuries encompass a time of great change in the Eastern Mediterranean. Following the creation of the separate Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church with the Great Schism of 1054, Christianity was divided between East and West. With the Fourth Crusade of 1204, these divides were made even greater with the Latin crusaders’ conquest of Constantinople and the subsequent, yet temporary, displacement of the Byzantine Empire. After winning back the city in 1261 under the leadership of Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus, the reaffirmed Byzantine Empire spent the next two centuries clinging to life, dealing with the superior forces of the trading empires of the Venetians and the Ottomans. Although Venice lacked sufficient ambition to conquer the Byzantines again and remained satisfied with her commercial monopoly of the area, the Turks were unrelenting. By 1453, the city of Constantinople had fallen to Ottoman forces; this time for good. In the following century and a half, in fear and uncertainty, the Greek people fled from their homes in the Eastern Mediterranean, many of them making their way to Western Europe.

The relation between the Venetians and Greeks from the period from 1200 to 1600 is the subject of a diverse historiography that has shifted focus over time from extensive narrative histories based on chronicles to more complete and focused expeditions into social histories on a smaller-scale, drawing from archival material. With such a limited amount of primary source documentation still published today, scholarly works have come to rely most heavily on individual research in archives. However, in economic history a significant exception occurred during the first half of the twentieth century when limited amounts of archival material were published for
the first time. This dramatic change allowed the focus of historians to shift from political and military histories to more challenging investigations into economic and social history.

Most historians have chosen to focus on a specific historical approach, whether it be political, military, economic, intellectual, or social, or have narrowed their questions to a single century or movement. However, I try to show how the diverse effects of these various forces and this long timeframe of four centuries provided for these changing interactions. With my comprehensive analysis of this relationship, focusing on the aspects of the story that experience the most contact between the two groups, the Venetian dominions in the East, the role of Greek émigrés in Renaissance humanism, and the coexistence of Venetians and Greeks in the cities of Constantinople and Venice, I have found that both groups were able to benefit from this contact, even though Venice always had the upper hand. For those historians who do not see this interplay as irrelevant, an examination of this interaction is always secondary to a historical question. However, with my broad survey of this period, the connection between these groups is the heart of my historical examination.

Deno John Geanakoplos was a renowned scholar of Byzantine, Renaissance, and Orthodox Church history. Fluent in an astounding nine languages, Geanakoplos could use primary and secondary material from a myriad of sources.\footnote{Geanakoplos knew nine languages: English, Italian, Latin, French, German, Russian and ancient, Byzantine and modern Greek. He was also the recipient of the Gold Cross of the Order of King George I in 1966, a Greek decoration awarded to him for his cultural contributions, and was named Archon “Teacher of the People” by the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church in Constantinople in 1975. For more on his life, see “Former prof. dies at 91,” Yale Daily News, 11 October 2007.} Although some of his conclusions have recently been critiqued, Geanakoplos is incredibly important.
for bringing new views of Byzantine history into American historical scholarship.\(^2\)

Publishing mostly from the 1950s to 1970s, the majority of his works share a concentration on the relations between East and West, possibly a response to the Cold War.

Bringing together his studies of the Renaissance and the Greeks, Geanakoplos’s 1962 work *Greek Scholars in Venice* was the first to discuss this intellectual community in Venice who made the city “a kind of substitute homeland.”\(^3\) Focusing on intellectuals from Crete, Geanakoplos' aim was to show the reasons for their movement westward and to understand the sudden emergence of Cretan intellectual prominence because he felt that “despite a certain recognition of the importance of [their] contribution, insufficient attention [had] been directed to the social and intellectual conditions on the island which constituted the early environment for these expatriates.”\(^4\)

Geanakoplos also includes the background of what he terms the Greco-Byzantine colony in Venice in this work, a topic that he would also include in his 1966 work *Byzantine East and Latin West: Two Worlds of Christendom in Middle Ages and Renaissance*. This study outlines his opinion that the Great Schism of 1054 was because of ecclesiastical differences but “in a much broader context, of political, 


\(^4\) Ibid., 41.
cultural, and psychological considerations as well.” \(^5\) Here, Geanakoplos combines examinations of Byzantine cultural influences on the medieval western world with the Council of Florence of 1439 and the Byzantine role during the Italian Renaissance. His contributions provide the fundamental foundations to the synthesis of Byzantine and Italian religious, cultural, and social histories.

Frederic C. Lane is one of the most esteemed historians of Venice. The first to stress the concept of a Venetian Empire, with his 1973 work, *Venice, A Maritime Republic*, Lane unveils the story of Venice through a complex mixture of economic, political, military, and cultural history of the thriving and expansive trading empire. Although he does discuss “artistic production, political events, influential personalities, environmental and demographic conditions,” Lane draws his focus on what he terms “nautical affairs,” because he believes them to be “important in determining Venetian social structure and the city’s fortunes,” and centers his narrative on Venice’s sea-based dominion. \(^6\) Lane is responsible for creating a thorough account of Venetian history while placing an emphasis on its central commercial and diplomatic strengths in the eastern Mediterranean that allowed the Most Serene Republic to prosper in multiple spheres of influence. Therefore, his discussion of relationships between Venetians and Greeks remains focused on economic and political contacts.

There have also been important studies on the Greek involvement in Italian Humanism. James Hankins’ *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* of 1990 is considered


part of the foundation of this scholarship, concentrating on the discourse on Plato between famous émigrés such as Chrysoloras and Bessarion.\textsuperscript{7} However, this work neglects to discuss Venice, drawing a focus on the earlier humanist centers of Florence and Rome. Like others in this field, less is discussed of the relations between the scholars and their hosts than of the content of their writings.

John Monfasani, one of the foremost scholars of the Byzantines in Renaissance Italy, attributed Geanakoplos as the one who first introduced him to the field. Throughout his career in intellectual history, writing in both English and Italian, Monfasani published and read manuscripts in Greek and Latin written by important scholars of the Renaissance era, especially Cardinal Bessarion, in order to deduce their views, their aims, and their significance. A combination of biography and close readings of the intellectuals’ work, in his collection of essays published in 1995, \textit{Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Emigrés}, he continually attempts to set the record straight, discrediting historians of the distant and recent past that have drawn the wrong assumptions from the texts, aiming to clarify their wrongs.\textsuperscript{8} His work is authoritative in its discussions of specific figures and texts but, similarly to Hankins, often lacks discussion of relations between these Greeks and their Italian intellectual peers.

Art historians Patricia Brown and Deborah Howard have explored the relationship between East and West of this period through artistic exchange.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{8} John Monfasani, \textit{Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Emigrés} (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1995).
Although Howard focuses on Islamic influences, Brown’s 1996 groundbreaking work *Venice and Antiquity: The Venetian Sense of the Past* is more directly relevant to this thesis. It demonstrates the artistic relationship between Venice and Classical Greece and attempts to show how Venice defined this relationship throughout its history. Brown is able to exploit both visual evidence and the written word “to reveal the emergence of a sense of the antique past and its distinctive relationship to the present [in Venice].”

Throughout this artistic and cultural approach to history, the eastern influence of the Byzantines’ predecessors and their continued role as a link to the past is implied. The Venetians’ ongoing interaction with the East allowed them to further define their relationship to the Greeks of the past through their relationship with the Greeks in the present.

There is also much scholarship on diaspora the includes the interaction of Venetians and Greeks. James Ball’s 1985 dissertation on *The Greek Community in Venice, 1470-1600* traces how, “from the foundation of the Greek Scuola until the death of the first Greek Archbishop resident in Venice… it grew in size, prestige and importance, presenting itself within Venice as a body within Venetian society and abroad as the expression of Hellenic culture.” Ball briefly explores Venetian contact with the Greek world, then demonstrates how the Greeks founded their *Scuola* and church and ends by studying their collective and individual contributions to the cultural life of the city. Ball uses archival material in both Venetian and Greek to bring this community to life for the first time. By adding his discoveries about the everyday life of Greeks in Venice, without his work, a synthesis of these materials

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10 Ibid., xii.
and the clarification and modification of the ecclesiastical histories of Fedalto and Geanakoplos, the story of the Greek experience would remain incomplete.¹²

In another look at the Greek Diaspora, Jonathan Harris’ 1995 work, *Greek Emigrés in the West, 1400-1520* focuses on a specific period in the relations of Greeks and Europeans based on years of work in various European archives where he collected material about émigrés throughout Western Europe but with a particular focus on Italy. Harris explores the reasons behind the emigration, claiming that for many it was a direct result of the Ottoman conquest and the combined loss of wealth, power, and security that faced the Greeks of the former Byzantine Empire. His book gives central prominence to Venice, claiming it was the gateway for this eastern community to enter into western society. By giving Venice an importance in his argument, he implies that she had also been more important in her relation with the Byzantines than her fellow western powers in the preceding centuries.

At the same time, Peter Lock published his analysis of the Crusader states in the Byzantine lands, *The Franks in the Aegean 1204-1500*, with which his intention was “to remove that aura of romanticism which has attached itself to the Frankish settlers in former Byzantine territory in the thirteenth century… [and] to add to William Miller’s study of 1908 something of the results of the historical and archaeological research of the last 80 years,” while showing how that research has modified perceptions of the Franks in the Aegean.¹³ Thorough and highly

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¹² Ball relied heavily on Giorgio Fedalto’s *Richerche storiche sulla posizione giuridica ed ecclesiastica dei Greci a Venezia nei secoli XV e XVI* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1967) for the ecclesiastical history of the community. A more recent venture into this community is Ersie C. Burke, *The Greek Neighbourhoods of Sixteenth Century Venice, 1498-1600 Daily Life of an Immigrant Community* (Ph.D. Thesis, Monash University, 2004). Whereas Fedalto focuses on church history, Burke expands on the work of Ball and focuses on the day to day lives of the Greeks.

informative, Lock addresses the context and identity of the “Franks,” from Catalans to Italians, the evolution of their involvement in the Aegean, the governing bodies, economic policies, and the secular role of religion before beginning his own discussion of the development of a Franco-Greek culture. By investigating mixed marriages, the language barrier, and Frankish contributions to Greek society, Lock concludes that, “clearly in personal and perceptual terms there was a real change on the part of the majority Greek population to the Latins which they hosted.”

At the turn of the twenty-first century, a new interest in identity emerged from scholars such as Eric Dursteler and Gill Page whose important works added to this discussion of community and diaspora. Eric Dursteler chose to explore the Venetian settlement in Constantinople with his work, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Although the work’s main focus is on the relations with the Ottomans after 1453 and not the Byzantines, it still sheds light on the Venetian presence in Constantinople after 1204 and explores the dynamic process of creating this Venetian identity. He explains, “The archetypal Venetian merchant in Constantinople was Venetian not by birth but as a result of shedding- or rather adapting- cultural, political, and even religious layers of identity in order to participate in the lucrative Levantine trade.” By illustrating the defining elements of a Venetian within this specific community in Constantinople, Dursteler’s microhistory succeeds in demonstrating larger trends in identity formation and illuminates Venetian interactions in the city.

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14 Ibid., 308.
16 Ibid., 19.
Page’s 2008 work *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans* is “an in-depth study of Frankish rule in the Peloponnese to reveal the trends in the development of Byzantine identity under the impact of the Franks.”\(^{17}\) Page, who was a student of Lock, discusses the general influence of Latin culture, as opposed to that of a specific state, on the Morea from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. By using the primary Greek accounts of Niketas Choniates (1155-1216) and the *Chronicle of the Morea* (1204-1292), Page searches for answers from the Greeks about their own identity. Analyzing the *Chronicle*, a record of thirteenth century Latin activity on the Morea available in French, Italian, Aragonese, and Greek, deemed, “the primary resource for inter-ethnic relations in that period,” Page claims that the fluid identity of the Rhomaioi, or those of the Roman Empire, was continually changing as evidenced by the variety of groups to which the term referred in the text. Page concludes that “the Frankish conquest was an event of major significance for the Byzantine Roman identity which brought the religious, cultural and perceived racial aspects to the fore at the expense of the political, forging new ethnic identities.”\(^{18}\) With the Latins ruling the Byzantine people after 1204, concepts of identity were increasingly changing as the western occupation of the east created a new political and social climate in which both groups lived together.

It is evident from this brief historiographical survey that the past fifty years has seen a great change in the study of Venetian and Byzantine history and their relationship to one another. Often neglected by scholars in favor of eras and regions with more plentiful primary sources and extensive scholarship, the eastern

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\(^{17}\) Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), i.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 272.
Mediterranean, especially its people during the final centuries of the Byzantine Empire, unfortunately lacked a concerted effort until recently. Increasingly, Venetians and Greeks have been examined in relation to one another and over time, with more specificity and concentration. In more recent scholarship, new areas have been investigated in ever-increasing detail. More focused attention has been placed on the trends of diaspora communities and identity formation as new archive material has been explored by scholars. The aim of this thesis is to incorporate diverse approaches and show the evolution of these interactions as a three-step process focusing on the political, driven by economic ambition, the intellectual, and the social elements of Venetian and Greek history.

The first chapter will examine the particular part that Venice played in the Greek dominions following the establishment of the Latin empire. The second will demonstrate how the Greeks took on a special role during the Italian Renaissance, becoming the fundamental part of the Humanist movement by providing the tools for Greek learning. And the third will explore the different situations in which the communities of Venetians in Constantinople and Greeks in Venice developed. From enemies to allies and from coexistence to cooperation, throughout these investigations I will show the changing perceptions between Venetians and Greeks and how, even though Venice was always the higher authority as the political and social climate of the eastern Mediterranean dramatically changed from the thirteenth to sixteenth century, both groups began to benefit from their relationship.
Chapter 1

The Venetian Empire and the Greek People c. 1000-1453

During the late Middle Ages and early modern period, the Republic of Venice developed a thriving commercial maritime empire throughout the eastern Mediterranean. Following the development of a profitable mercantile economy whose success was greatly due to her nautical capabilities, Venice entered into the Fourth Crusade (1199-1204) along with contingents from France, Flanders, and Montferrat with a commanding role in the preparations, the fighting, and the spoils received in the aftermath. Although the original destination was Muslim Jerusalem, the Crusade instead ended with an attack on Greek Constantinople. With the conquest of the Byzantine Empire in 1204, the native population was forced to deal with the Latins on a new scale. Throughout this period of Latin occupation (1204 - 1453), the Venetian presence proved to be greater in its ambition, success, and longevity than its Latin peers.

As the former Byzantine Empire’s dominions throughout the Aegean and its surrounding western mainland areas were being redistributed to the Crusaders, the Venetians chose to focus their efforts on maintaining a sea route from the city on the lagoon at the height of the Adriatic to Constantinople and the Black Sea as well as important Levantine trading centers like Alexandria. Throughout these Venetian colonies, or the areas which fell under their jurisdiction and became home to a Venetian emigrant population, the affairs of business were safeguarded by a tight administration over a feudal system which secured the trading posts and stopovers
along their trade routes throughout the Levant. The diverse colonies set up by the Venetian government were chosen more for their location than for their resources. The Republic exercised a pragmatic approach to territorial gains, taking on the cost of administrative responsibilities only in return for commercial benefits. The Greek population proved to be one of these administrative issues for whom the Venetians were forced to account. Through various chronicle descriptions, law codes, and notarial documentation, I will explore their relations in this chapter. After two and a half centuries of dealing with one another throughout her dominions, by 1453 the incoming Turkish threat caused a change of perspective for the Greek subjects from enmity to unity. This chapter will analyze the ways in which the Venetians interacted with the Greek people of the eastern Mediterranean during the Republic’s prolonged stay in the region from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries, as well as how the sentiment between the two groups evolved from resentment to cooperation over this period. From examining the origins of these interactions and the affects of the Fourth Crusade as well as the establishment and maintenance of the colonial dominions, this chapter will explore Venetian-Byzantine relations in the East.

The Beginnings of Relations with the Byzantines: Common Interests and Mutual Antagonisms

Founded in the sixth century, Venice began as a small lagoon community of refugees escaping Lombard invasions from the mainland. Though a social hierarchy did exist, the inhabitants were primarily boatmen and their families, working on the sea and tending to their own affairs. By 697, whether elected by the inhabitants as is
claimed by later Venetian chroniclers or appointed by Roman-Byzantine officials, the lagoons of Venice were given a separate military command under a doge who received orders and honors from the Byzantine emperor.\(^\text{19}\) After an unsuccessful attempt by the son of Charlemagne to capture Venice in 810, a peace treaty was signed between the Holy Roman Empire and the Byzantines that officially declared the Venetian duchy to be under Byzantine control. However, over the ensuing centuries the lines of sovereignty were blurred and Venice came to assert its independence. The Byzantine Emperor too gradually lost interest and treaties were made with the Lombards of the Po Valley that gave them access to the Adriatic through Venetian ports.

*The Venetians Begin to Trade*

Exploiting her position as the gateway to the Adriatic and the East, Venice found economic success soon after these political negotiations. With a burgeoning commercial enterprise that focused on the slave trade and the export of lumber to their mainland neighbors, Venetians began to extend their horizons from the rivers of northern Italy to the sea. “The Adriatic was a natural conduit between supply and demand, and Venice became the center of this trade.”\(^\text{20}\) As Christianity viewed the enslavement of pagans and infidels as a means to salvation, it put no obstacle before the common practice of slave trading, and the Venetians turned to their Slavic neighbors as their source of supply. With deforestation in the East and with a plethora of timber in the untouched surrounding plains of the lagoon, shipbuilding


\(^{20}\) Ibid., 8.
and the export of lumber also saw a dramatic rise. With greater success, came greater ambition. With this combination of trading opportunities, the reception of duties from foreigners using their port, and the proliferation of a naval and commercial fleet, Venetians started looking to Africa and the Levant. Wood was sold to the Muslims in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria in exchange for gold and silver that the Venetians could then use to buy desirable luxury goods in Constantinople.

By exploiting these markets, the Venetian commercial system developed momentum. As the political system functioned at the hands of the patrician class, politics and economics became seamlessly intertwined. With the prospect of fortune always a deciding factor, “behind such collegiate decisions stood the pride, wealth, and collective self-consciousness of the Venetian nobility as a whole, a group of a few hundred businessmen for whom the affairs of state were no more (and no less) than the affairs of the biggest and most important company in which they could participate.”

With this said, the Venetians and their government would pick and choose when and where their alliances would be. With the ultimate aim of maintaining commercial privileges in Romania, they were continually prepared to fight for or against the Normans and Byzantines in pursuit of mercantile dominance, the key to the collective success of the Republic and the noble fortunes it facilitated. (See Map 1)

A momentous opportunity for Venice presented itself in 1082 that would lay the foundations for her imperial hold on the eastern Mediterranean and a seemingly

22 Romania, the land of the Romans, consisted of the mainland areas of Byzantine control between the Italian peninsula and Constantinople: from Dalmatia eastward to Thrace in the north and the Morea in the south.
new age in her relations with the Greeks. As Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus faced the threat of the Normans without a fleet, he called on the Venetians for naval assistance. Already commanding a strong presence in the Adriatic and along the sea path to Egypt and Palestine where she had now been trading for almost a century, Venice also found the obstruction of the Frankish knights necessary in order to safeguard her own mercantile operations. Those on Venetian vessels were forced to simultaneously fill both economic and military roles, trained to fight at sea and bargain in the ports. Though an alliance was being created, the Venetians knew they could request a steep price for their much-needed military support, demanding trading privileges throughout Byzantine dominions. A fully satisfied and grateful Alexius issued a chrysobull that exempted Venetians from all excise taxes both entering and leaving Constantinople as well as many other centers throughout his empire. With the trading privileges afforded to Venice by the Emperor, the Pisans and Genoans could barely compete with their rival’s rapidly growing mercantile potency. By asserting herself in negotiations and proving herself in war, Venice had gained a reputation of strength in the eyes of her Eastern and Western counterparts.

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23 The Venetians’ greatest concern was that Robert Guiscard would capture important centers along the southeastern coast of Italy as well as in Dalmatia and therefore have the ability to block entry and departure of all Venetian stops at the base of the Adriatic. With a Norman prince ruling over southern Italy, Robert Guiscard, also known as Robert “the Crafty,” appealed to his fellow mercenaries who had fought alongside him in southern Italy and also sent home for more support as he began fighting wars of conquest of his own, capturing Amalfi and Bari in 1071 and then Salerno in 1076 before setting his sights on the Byzantine world.

24 Lane claims that the battles of 1081-85, which also included Greek ships alongside those of the Venetians, demonstrated that the naval defense of the Byzantine Empire depended on the Venetian fleet. See Lane, *A Maritime Republic*, 32. McNeill explains that though Alexius could and did produce a fleet when necessity presented itself, the inherent difference between the two fleets was that the Venetians were economically minded while the Byzantines were not. Venetian ships could fight and trade, seemingly always turning over a profit. Byzantine ships were always a financial burden to the state and would be disbanded quickly if danger subsided. See McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe*, 8-9.
Over the twelfth century, Venetian-Byzantine relations were notably strained. Military assistance came at a great cost to the Byzantines who saw the influx of the Venetian trading presence detrimental to their own business affairs. Though Venetians were in their ports conducting business, the Greeks were excluded from participating in their lucrative dealings. A high degree of disdain existed between the two groups, with the Greeks expressing contempt at the conceit of the privileged foreigners in their cities and the Venetians demonstrating inflated confidence in their dealings throughout the Greek dominions, always ready for a fight and even publicly mocking the emperor and the Greek people.\(^{25}\)

In 1172, capitalizing on an opportune moment as the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa kept all of northern Italy preoccupied with his attacks, Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Comnenus staged an attack against Venetian holdings throughout the ports of his domain, arresting Venetians and confiscating their property.\(^{26}\) Though the Venetian naval response was immediate, it was unsuccessful due to an outbreak of the plague among her crews. Fortunately for the Republic, Emperor Manuel was forced to capitulate by 1176 as Venice had set up a formidable

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\(^{25}\) In 1148, while the Greeks and Venetians had a joint fleet fighting against the Normans, arguments arose between the allied seamen. The Venetians insulted Emperor Manual Comnenus and his men by dressing up a slave in imperial robes on a captured galley and parading him around for the fleet while they parodied imperial court ceremonies which were regarded as sacred rituals. See Lane, *A Maritime Republic*, 34.

\(^{26}\) Barbarossa and Manuel I both saw themselves as the true Roman Emperor and shared the same aspiration of securing Italy under their authority. The development of the Lombard League, of which Venice played a commanding role in formation and diplomacy if not warfare, ultimately succeeded in repelling the advance of Barbarossa at the Battle of Legnano in 1176. See McNeill, *Venice: The Hinge of Europe*, 26-27.
alliance with the Normans just as the Seljuk Turks were claiming victories in Asia Minor. Even with trading privileges reinstated, however, a bitter taste remained.\textsuperscript{27}

**The Fourth Crusade, 1199-1204**

The Fourth Crusade marked a turning point in both Venetian and Byzantine history, essentially constituting the beginning of a new empire and the beginning of the end of another. Although the Crusade’s original destination was Muslim Jerusalem, the attack on the infidels in the Holy Land was replaced with an assault on Christian Constantinople. As the Franks made the Greeks the target of their Crusade, this already unstable relationship would be crippled even further.

Throughout the planning, preparation and the execution of the Crusade, Venice’s skill in negotiation, shipbuilding, and warfare proved to be better than that of her Latin peers. Venice secured authority and respect from her Crusading partners as well as enmity and disdain from the Byzantine enemy. As Venice played an essential role in the success of the campaign, this responsibility became part of her legacy to both the Latins and Greeks.

When envoys from Champagne were sent to Venice under the leadership of Geoffrey de Villehardouin, Doge Enrico Dandolo negotiated a financial and political deal on behalf of the city. Not only was Venice to transport and feed the crusading knights for one year for the exorbitant amount of eighty-five thousand marks of silver, she was also to provide and man fifty thousand galleys in return for an equal

\textsuperscript{27} The exemption from taxation that had been assured in 1082 was often disregarded over the next century in spite of existing treaties. When these benefits were withdrawn, Venice found ways to convince the emperor to reinstate them, either through diplomacy or direct, small-scale military action. The Venetians were also disgruntled by the extension of similar privileges to their primary rivals, the Pisans and Genoans. See Lane, *A Maritime Republic,* 34-38.
share of both confiscated goods as well as conquests on land and sea. However, when the Venetians had finished constructing the ships by the summer of 1202, the Franks could not pay in full, still owing over thirty thousand marks.

With this debt as bargaining chip, Dandolo first secured the assistance of Villehardouin’s men in the submission of the Dalmatian port of Zara, one of Venice’s trading rivals whose location made it desirable as a stopover for trade operations. Villehardouin offered an account of the Doge’s appeal to his men about how the insufficient payment would be handled.

The King of Hungary has taken from us Zara in Sclavonia which is one of the strongest places in the world; and never shall we recover it with all the power that we possess, save with the help of these people. Let us therefore ask them to help us reconquer it, and we will remit the payment of the debt of 34,000 marks of silver, until such time as it shall please God to allow us to gain the moneys by conquest, we and they together.

Though not all were content by the proposal, it was nevertheless accepted and put into action. Zara was besieged on St. Martin’s Day, the eleventh of November 1202 and within the next few months, the Crusaders had made their way to Constantinople on the pretext of reinstating the disposed Byzantine Emperor Alexius the Younger.

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28 Ibid., 37. Lane explains that 85,000 marks of silver was more than twice the annual income of the King of England or the King of France.
30 According to Villehardouin, the rightful Emperor Isaac had freed his brother Alexius from Turkish captivity only to have him turn on him, tear his eyes from his head, and imprison him with his son, also named Alexius. The son escaped, fled to Ancona and began to make his way to find his sister, now the wife of King Philip of Germany. On his way, he stopped in Verona where he ran into many pilgrims on their way to Venice. They counseled him to appeal to the crusading army for assistance. He sent envoys to Boniface of Montferrat and ultimately won the favor of the crusaders. However, in the end, he and his family were not reinstated to the throne. Filled with arrogance, Alexius failed in his promised payments to the crusaders and they laid siege to the city without him. See Villehardouin, Chronicle of the Fourth Crusade, 17-18, 52-53.
After the win at Zara, Dandolo and Boniface of Montferrat hoped to convince the crusaders to divert to Constantinople before heading to Palestine.\textsuperscript{31} A combination of the resentment stemming from the Great Schism of 1054, the strategic commercial gains possible from control of the city, and with the excuse of reinstating the wrongfully deposed Emperor Alexius IV, the two leaders succeeded in convincing their men to attack the Byzantine stronghold at the gateway to the Black Sea.

Although they arrived in Constantinople and launched their first attack in July 1203, it was not until their second assault the following April that the Byzantines were defeated and a new Latin Empire was proclaimed in its place. Throughout the fighting, the Franks were aware of their debt to the Venetians as well as their counterpart’s military capabilities and know-how. The leaders and heroes of the campaign, Venice emerged from the conflict entitled to half of the acquired booty, and a large share of representation in the new empire’s administration, as well as the distribution of the empire’s dominions. Venice was undisputedly the greatest victor in the campaign.

Villehardouin explains in his chronicle, “that which was brought to the churches was collected together and divided, in equal parts, between the Franks and the Venetians, according to the sworn covenant. And you must know further that the [crusaders], after the division had been made, paid out of their share fifty thousand

\textsuperscript{31} The crusaders’ new commander, Boniface of Montferrat, who had claims in Salonica and was a friend of Philip of Swabia, the Holy Roman Emperor, also favored this diversion. After the Fall of Constantinople, he hoped to be voted emperor but the Venetians favored Baldwin, the Count of Flanders as Montferrat had previously been a known ally of the Genoese. With Baldwin in place as emperor, Montferrat struck a deal with the Venetians, who paid him in cash for the claim to Crete he personally made with Alexius IV in 1203, in return for supporting his claims to Salonica and the surrounding areas. See Lane, \textit{A Maritime Republic}, 38, 41-42 as well as Peter Lock, \textit{The Franks in the Aegean 1204-1500} (London: Longman, 1995), 43-45, 49-50.
marks of silver to the Venetians.” He further estimated, that after three days of pillaging, the seized possessions amounted to 400,000 marks of silver, ten thousand suits of armor, and a myriad of priceless holy relics. Many of these holy relics, including the famous four bronze horses, made their way to Venice and were put on display in the city as evidence of the victory.

As the Venetians celebrated their new fortune, the Greeks lamented the destruction of their city. By recounting the Greek perspective on the horrifying siege of the city and the plundering of their homes, the Byzantine chronicler Niketas Choniates expressed the resentment of his people toward the Crusaders in the aftermath of Byzantium’s fall.

Thus it was that Constantine’s fair city, the common delight and boast of all nations, was laid waste by fire and blackened by soot, taken and emptied of all wealth, public and private, as well as that which was consecrated to God by the scattered nations of the West…The despoilers took up quarters in the houses spread out in all directions, seized everything inside as plunder, and interrogated their owners as to the whereabouts of their hidden treasures, beating some, holding gentle converse with many, and using threats against all. Taking possession of these things… they spared nothing and shared none of the belongings with their owners… because they showed them utter disdain and refused to mingle with them, taking them captive while heaping abuse upon them and casting them out.

While for the Latins, the Venetians took greatest responsibility for the success of the Crusaders’ mission, in the eyes of the Byzantines, the Venetians held the greatest blame for their destruction.

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32 Ibid., 66. Villehardouin admits that there was surely a fair amount of theft by the Crusaders after the sack of the city, which was sternly punished, but Constantinople had such an endless supply of riches that this individual hoarding was insignificant.
33 Lane, A Maritime Republic, 41.
Citing the brutality inflicted on his people by the Crusaders, Choniates also discussed his personal circumstances, explaining how a Venetian acquaintance of his, “deemed worthy of protection,” helped to save him, his family, and their home from harm. “Putting on his armor and transforming himself from merchant to soldier, he pretended to be a companion in arms and, speaking to them in their own barbaric tongue… he beat off the despoilers.”\footnote{Ibid., 323.} As all Venetians needed to be prepared to fight and trade on the same naval vessels, so too did this “client” of Choniates on the city streets of Constantinople. Not only does this passage show the constant duality of a Venetian’s role abroad, it also demonstrates that individual bonds were being made between businessmen from both ethnicities while general trends of resentment still existed, with each group viewing the other to be savage as a whole.

**Venice’s Gains: Harbors and Subjects**

In the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, the Latin powers carved up the Byzantine Empire. With the Pact of 1204, a partition committee was drawn up of twenty-four members, twelve Franks and twelve Venetians, whose task was to inventory the resources of the empire and divide the territory in the proportion of one-quarter to the Latin emperor, three-eighths to the Frankish crusaders, and three-eighths to the Venetians.\footnote{Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean*, 47.} As the divisions were drawn, the Republic renounced any direct authority over the territories of Epirus, Acarnania, Aetolia, and the Peloponnese to which she had been assigned and was fully satisfied to secure the most important
harbors and islands along the route to Constantinople and the Black Sea, as well as to Syria and Egypt.\textsuperscript{37} (See Map 2)

Although there were weak links in the chain of naval bases, the colonial empire which the Venetians obtained from the Fourth Crusade, combined with their privileged position in the trade and government of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, and the firm hold on Dalmatia which Enrico Dandolo had obtained by the submission of Zara, gave the Venetians undisputed maritime preeminence in the eastern Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{38}

As rival Greek despots and incoming Frankish lords quickly seized these abandoned territories with their own mercenaries, Venice and her nobles remained content because they had been able to acquire strategic areas throughout the new empire that would ensure her commercial needs.\textsuperscript{39} “While others used the crusades to acquire territory, the Venetians, used them to gain sea power; as soon as they had firm control of waters important for their commerce, they applied their naval power so as to make themselves and their city richer.”\textsuperscript{40} Although the Latin Empire was short-lived, lasting only until the reconquest of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaeologus in 1261, the Byzantines never regained the same degree of power they had exercised previously and the new Venetian territorial gains remained in her

\textsuperscript{37} Venice also acquired Dyracchium and Ragusa on the Adriatic Coast, the Ionian Islands, Crete, most of the Cycladic islands including Euboea (with Negroponte), Andros and Naxos, the strategic ports of Gallipoli, Rhadestus, and Heraclea on the Hellespont and the Sea of Marmora, as well as Adrianople in the interior of Thrace. See George Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1969), 423.
\textsuperscript{38} Lane, A Maritime Republic, 43.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 42. Lane claims that the territories of the former empire were essentially “up for grabs.” These Greek despots were notably from Trebizond, Nicaea, and Epirus. Boniface of Montferrat received Salonica, Villehardouin’s nephew took the Morea, and Marin Sanudo seized the Cycladic islands, setting up the Duchy of Naxos with fellow Venetian nobles.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 58. Freddy Thiriet also argues that Venice’s only ambition was to maintain trading posts to facilitate the commercial exchanges with Greece, the Levant, and Asia. The Venetians did not want to launch a project of territorial conquest, which would inevitably mean a permanent occupation, but ultimately felt that they needed to implement a colonial policy in order protect these commercial trade routes. See Freddy Thiriet, La Romanie Vénitienne au Moyen Age: le développement et l’exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien, XIIe- XVe siècles (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1959), 105-07.
hands, allowing the flow of sea trade to remain under her influence for the next four centuries.

Although the areas acquired were for the purpose of establishing trade routes at sea, the Venetians found themselves forced to control the associated territory on land. Throughout this period, Venice had to contend with its rivals throughout the region, with many holdings constantly changing hands. The Venetians were able to secure points along Dalmatia such as Zara and Ragusa, the Ionian islands such as Corfu and Kephalonia, the naval fortresses at Modon and Coron at the base of Morea, the large, strategically essential island of Crete, the Cycladic islands of the Duchy of Naxos, and finally the depository on Euboea at Negroponte, all crucial strongholds along the trade routes to Constantinople and the Levant. (See Map 3)

Because holding these areas created heavy administrative and defensive responsibilities, the Venetians also acquired uncooperative Greek subjects. “The Byzantine population tolerated the Latin dominion with extreme reluctance, not only on account of the arrogance of their conquerors, but also because of the rite between the two Churches of the victors and vanquished.” 41 The Venetian superiority-complex perceived by the Greeks was at the heart of their discontent. But for the profit-driven Venetians, the mercantile benefits proved to be greater than the disadvantages associated with governance.

At the heart of this quest for profit was the commercial destination of Constantinople. Along with other trading states such as Pisa and Genoa, Venice had a notable community within the city. These neighborhoods had functioned mostly autonomously under the supervision of their respective officials while they served as

41 Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, 425.
a base for commercial affairs and a home for those who conducted them. Maintaining Venetian citizenship status, inhabitants were afforded all the rights and privileges their government negotiated.

With the victories of the Crusade and the opening of the Black Sea to trade for the first time, the Venetians were granted three-eighths of the city, including the strategic areas of the arsenal and docks. With the new divisions of the city, Venice acquired a larger area for its own affairs but also a prestigious fraction of assumed power. When Baldwin I was installed as Emperor of Constantinople, all Frankish princes were obligated to take an oath of fealty to him. However, as Venice’s Dandolo was exclusively exempt from all feudal obligations, “the Doge justifiably styled himself ‘lord of a quarter and a half (of a quarter) of the Roman Empire.’”

For the Venetians, this persona signified prestige and authority. For the Byzantines, it signified a potent and determined enemy, politically separate but just as barbaric as the other Latins who had taken over their domain.

Varieties of Venetian Colonies

The coastal areas throughout the Adriatic and Aegean that the state of Venice secured after 1204 differed greatly, despite the fact that all fulfilled the same fundamental function as naval and commercial bases. Each of the Venetian colonies differed in its size, its resources, and most importantly, its method of dealing with the local Greeks. Gaining control of the most strategic areas first, such as Crete, Venice exercised a policy of strict supervision at the cost of the contentment of the subjects. However, over time, Venice was willing to adopt an approach that was more

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42 Ibid., 424.
satisfactory to the indigenous populations, sharing privileges and a nominal degree of authority with the local elite, as was the case with Corfu.

Throughout these foreign dominions, the coexistence of Venetians and Greeks took different forms. Because Venetian citizens retained full rights, they also kept their various responsibilities to the government at home, including tax paying and military service. This distinction sometimes created a perceptible divide. Especially in the decades following 1204, the Venetian sense of superiority to the native was an early source of discord between the two groups.

Another cause of friction was the close watch of the colonies by the Venetian authorities. The success of trade and the supervision of local governments were made possible by the correspondence network that was developed in conjunction with the Venetian sea routes. Allowing for swift transfer of news and notarial documentation, even the Latin emperor depended on Venetian ships for his communication and supplies. Any travelers entering Venetian ports could be summoned to provide current information about political and commercial affairs at the office of the notary. As the brief accounts were compiled, the relevant information was passed onward to reach Venice. Because the Venetian government did not allow diversion from the main sea route, by the late fourteenth century, the journey to Venice from Alexandria or Beirut could be completed in less than forty days while the route from

43 Many of these documents still exist in the Venetian State archives. In Notai di Candia, there are early fifteenth century accounts of Genoan and Greek merchants giving information to the Cretan authorities about things they had heard and witnessed throughout their travels. Even word of mouth carried political happenings. See Three Reports from Crete on the Situation in Romania, 1401-1402 in Byzantium and the Franks 1350-1420, edited by George T. Dennis. (London: Variorium Reprints, 1982), 243-265.
Crete to Constantinople required less than four weeks.\textsuperscript{44} With such a tight grasp on her affairs in the East, Venice had the ability to touch the lives of the Greek people.

Of the Venetian colonies, Crete represented the largest and most closely monitored but there also existed a conglomerate of semi-autonomous fiefdoms throughout the Aegean isles, important ports of call and depositories on the mainland, and more densely populated Venetian emigrant settlements in the Ionian Sea. In order to show the diverse features of Venetian colonial life, aspects of administrative policy will be explored through the examples of Crete, the Duchy of the Archipelago, the mainland ports of Modon and Coron on the Morea, and finally, Corfu.

\textit{Crete: The Heart of the Venetian East}

En route to Constantinople as well as Egypt and Syria, a single Mediterranean island was of the utmost importance to the success of Venice. The seat of Venetian power in the Aegean and epitomizing Venetian colonialism at its most extreme, Crete provides a vivid example of many of the most fundamental elements associated with the growing empire. With her large territory and population, her strategic position, and the heavy administrative hold of the Venetians, Crete was Venice’s most guarded and supervised colony, as well as her most enduring, staying in her possession until 1669.

The island of Crete, acting as a barrier at the south of the Aegean, had the strategic position between the Adriatic and the Levant from west to east as well as the

\textsuperscript{44} F. Melis determined these times from thousands of letters in the Datini archives. Freddy Thiriet mentions travel times between Aegean destinations and Candia. For Constantinople, twenty-five to twenty-eight days, Mykonos (one of the most northern Cycladic Islands, part of the Duchy of the Archipelago) took six to seven days, and Modon took from ten to twelve days. See Thiriet, \textit{La Romanie Vénitienne au Moyen Age}, 188.
Black Sea and Africa from north to south. Unlike its smaller neighbors, the island of Crete is a staggering three thousand square miles, making it the largest of the Byzantine isles and the one with the largest Greek population. Because of Crete’s position, for the next five hundred years, Venice was occupied fighting off opponents such as the Genoans and Turks to safeguard this precious maritime asset.

Administration

Knowing the supreme importance of the possession of Crete, Venice had worked hard in negotiations at the Treaty of Adrianople of 1204 with Boniface of Montferrat, a known ally of Genoa, and paid a reasonable price of one thousand silver marks to secure the deed of the island for the Republic so it would not fall into the hands of her rivals. After solidifying the deal in 1204, the Venetian government set up a firm structure of command. “Instead of delegating the task of ruling and administering the colony to individual subjects or commercial companies, the Venetian state established an administration directly accountable to the Senate.”

The Venetian Lesser Council appointed a doge of Candia, Crete’s main city, to act as chief magistrate and military commander for a term of two years, as opposed to a lifetime office. With the Doge watching over the other appointed patricians, the Venetian Senate set up important offices of the capitano for ensuring the defense of the island, the podestà for the safeguarding of justice for its citizens stationed there, and the camerlengo for the collection of revenues from the feudal estates. Sent to

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45 With the securing of Crete, “The Venetian Commune kept possession of the largest Mediterranean island after Sicily for nearly five centuries, longer than the English held India, Spain held Mexico, or France held Quebec.” See Sally McKee, *Uncommon Dominion: Venetian Crete and the Myth of Ethnic Purity* (Philadelphia: the University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 5.

46 Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, 145.

Crete from the city on the lagoon, Venetian officials acted in the interest of the Republic, directly answering to the central government.

In an attempt to mimic the bureaucratic administration that existed at home, the Republic wanted to encourage the local communities of Venetian emigrants settled throughout the cities of Crete to participate in public affairs. These overseas residents were able “to enjoy accustomed roles on governing boards and councils, while centralized control was assured by entrusting principal executive powers to officers appointed from Venice.”

Giacomo Tiepolo, the first doge of Candia, partitioned the island into six separate administrative units, giving each the name of a Venetian urban district, or sestier. Elaborately building up the island’s main cities to facilitate trade and correspondence, a Venetian could walk the streets and feel at home. On an island that now modeled itself on the city it served, salaried governmental employees ran a miniature Venice halfway along the route to the trading centers of the East.

Feudalism

Just as the rest of Romania functioned as part of a feudal system during the Middle Ages, both under the Byzantines and then the Latins, so too did the Venetian colonies. The distribution of lands on Crete was an early project that intended to place a feudal institution on the island with Venetian patricians installed at the top of the Cretan social hierarchy. These feudatories, or military settlers, were given fiefs of workable land that could also include other property such as buildings, fortifications, and residences as well as the villeins, or unfree peasantry, who provided labor on the

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49 Ibid.
estates. Exploited in a way that no other Venetian colony could or would be, Crete’s lands functioned as “bread basket for the home republic,” producing grain, olive oil, wine, cheese, and timber for the home city as well as for the Venetians living in Negroponte and the nearby islands of the Archipelago.\textsuperscript{50} A middle class of artisans, professionals, servants, and unskilled laborers, also existed and was comprised of both Venetian colonists and Greek natives.

Dealing with the Cretan population was not always an easy task as the coexistence of these groups in a feudal system led to some fundamental problems with the Venetian-dominated officials. In general, Venetians remained in the coastal towns while most of the native population stayed in the countryside. The cosmopolitan Venetians’ inexperience with dealing with rural societies often led to instability.\textsuperscript{51} Some of the Greek landed families who had been stripped of their estates, aided by the Genoans and the Emperor of Nicaea, offered strong resistance. The Venetians were also forced to negotiate between the rival native noble families, a divide and conquer tactic that produced mixed results. By giving privileges to one family, others would be angered. On the one hand, after years of revolt by the Kallergis family, concessions granted did not only change the family’s alliance but also set up a routine transfer of grain in large amounts to the Venetians. In contrast, the Curtacio family murdered doge Marino Zeno in 1275.\textsuperscript{52} As some Greeks found ways to prosper under the new situation, others remained bitter about the changes.

\textsuperscript{50} Lock, \textit{Franks in the Aegean}, 152.
\textsuperscript{52} Lock, \textit{Franks in the Aegean}, 154.
Immediately following 1204, the new Latin rulers composed a law code whose intention was to emulate those used in the West. The so-called Assizes of Romania were drafted to be used throughout the entire empire as the new emperor Baldwin wished to,

> Put the said Empire in such a good state and good condition that his men and people and all manner of folk going and coming in the said Empire should be governed and ordered by justice, right and reason… since the city of Constantinople is surrounded by many kinds of people, and especially by people who do not obey the laws of Rome or by the other people who came on the said conquest.\(^\text{53}\)

Though these laws later came to mainly represent the code used on the Morea for areas such as Negroponte and the ports of Modon and Coron, the Venetians were aware of their existence from the beginning and used them as helpful guidelines for dealing with their Greek subjects.

For the urban Republic, feudalism was a new and foreign concept. By following the example of their more experienced Latin peers, the Venetians learned the way in which a feudal system was intended to work. The code answered important questions about dealing with Greek vassals and villeins such as the how inheritance of estates functioned after interethnic marriage, how the land of a vassal who had been captured by his enemy would be governed, and what was to be done if a treasure was found on one’s fief.\(^\text{54}\) The code was an instrumental tool for the feudally inexperienced Venice and helped her expand from her urban setting at home to include more rural territories abroad.


\(^{54}\) Ibid., specifically 61, 71, 78.
The Church and Integration

In Crete as in other areas, the Orthodox Churches of the East were now used for the Latin rite. However, as opposed to the general trend of other Frankish colonizers, the Venetians were less concerned with imposing the Western rite over her Greek subjects. Though religious freedom was technically in place, the Latin rite obviously maintained supremacy, as did the rest of Venetian culture. Greek priests were not allowed to leave the island to be ordained under the Greek rite and since the churches of the island were now under the control of the Roman Church, it was much harder to practice the Orthodox faith than it had been previously.

Always thinking of the next trade negotiation, Venetians were known to have angered the See of Rome on numerous occasions for their continued dealings with the infidels of the East, the Turks and other Muslims. Once again, just as her alliances had been flexible in earlier centuries, the alliance to the Pope and his religious politics was continually ambiguous. Always coming second to her commercial needs, the religious policy of Venice on its Greek subjects was more relaxed than the policies of its Latin counterparts. With this said, relations were still tense.

Over time, the Venetian government and the Venetian people came to represent two separate entities to the local population. With the Greeks not looking to assimilate and with the Venetians greatly outnumbered, for many Venetians, their previous way of life, including their language, cuisine, and fashion, was naturally absorbed by the local custom.55 There are many instances of intermarriage and

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55 In Uncommon Dominion, Sally McKee argues that the Greeks of Crete, in reaction to their subjugation by Venice, developed a stronger sense of their own culture as a response to the foreign presence. She claims that after five centuries of Venetian control, the ethnic identity of the native Cretans was stronger than it had ever been. See McKee, Uncommon Dominion, 4-6.
conversions between the populations.\(^{56}\) Most conversions were Greeks changing to the Latin rite, but there were also instances of Venetian converts to Eastern Orthodoxy. Obligated to submit a declaration to the patriarchal synod of Constantinople, the Venetian converts were also forced to profess, “I reject the addition to the Creed made by the Latins… and I renounce all their customs and way of life in so far as these are foreign to the ways of the apostolic and catholic church.”\(^{57}\) Not only was the liturgical language different but the religious Greeks felt that the foundations of their faith were truly incompatible with that of Rome. For the Greeks, the Byzantine Church signified their identity as it remained the only permanent institution in their disintegrating world. The Patriarchs of Constantinople seemed to offer more stability than the Emperor. To cut off this link entirely for the population in the Venetian dominions would have proven disastrous for the administration.

Especially on the island of Crete, where the two groups lived closely with one another, the beginnings of the transition from animosity to amicability are evident within the first century of colonization. Throughout the island and other Venetian dominions, communities began to form that blurred the distinction between Greek and Latin, native and colonist. The Greeks began to see the difference between the Venetian government and the Venetian people as they experienced life together. Whereas the early foreign occupation was seen as an obstacle for the Greeks to the freedom and prosperity of the Venetians with whom they lived side by side, over

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\(^{56}\) The children of these interethnic couples were referred to as gasmouloi in Greek. As for the Venetian administration’s treatment of these families, including their offspring, they were allowed to freely choose to be “Greek” or “Latin.” See Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, 294.

\(^{57}\) Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 88-89.
time, the Venetians and Greeks both came to disapprove of aspects of the administration. There are instances where both groups allied together against the state with their demands for reform.

On a practical level in daily life, with the shifting of the cultural boundaries separating them from the indigenous population, members of the Latin community had less and less incentive, to varying degrees depending on their rank, to call themselves Latins. This cultural convergence proved politically crucial at certain times during the fourteenth century, because, despite this acculturation, the Venetian regime continued to treat Latins and Greeks differently before the law.\textsuperscript{58}

However, with new threats by the next century the Venetian government would come to signify universal protection. In comparison to the hostile Turks, Venetian demands began to seem reasonable.

The colony of Crete, the largest and most strategic of Venice’s dominions in the East, was carefully administered and ruthlessly defended. Although the Venetians were not experienced with the feudal model, they nevertheless divided the large territory into fiefs and distributed them to a group of Venetian patricians. Because of its large size, Venice was forced to also deal with its large population. Although the Venetians were religiously tolerant and did not force the Latin rite onto their subjects, limitations were still in place for the Greeks. However, over time, the local and emigrant communities mixed and a distinction was drawn on the part of the Greeks in viewing the Venetians among them as different from the Venetian ruling class.

\textit{The Duchy of the Archipelago: Venetian Fiefs within the Latin Empire}

With the original partition of the Latin Empire, Venice received title to all the islands of the Aegean. However, not wishing to incur the responsibilities associated

\textsuperscript{58} McKee, \textit{Uncommon Dominion}, 6.
with governing and maintaining these islands directly, Venice opened them to free enterprise to its citizens, encouraging its wealthy and ambitious patrician class to occupy the islands as they wished. These small self-sufficient communities soon became prey to a group of ambitious Venetian nobles. With its headquarters on the island of Naxos, Marco Sanudo set up the Duchy of the Archipelago in 1207 with Marino Dandolo, brothers Andrea and Geremia Ghisi, and other Venetian nobles.

Though technically outside the jurisdiction of Venice and with communications limited due to tides, wind, and the subsequent absence of sea traffic, the nobles stationed throughout the Archipelago were still expected to give direct material support to Venice both as tax-paying Venetian citizens and with the export of corundum and marble from Naxos. After only a few years in the Aegean isles, Sanudo surprisingly “sought out the suzerainty of the emperor in order to establish his and his descendants’ claim to the Archipelago and to secure a measure of independence from Venice” and in 1236, the duchy was nominally granted to Guillaume de Villehardouin as part of the Latin Empire. However, though Venice was not particularly concerned with the dukedom as it offered little benefit to the city politically or economically, this so-called independence would not be fully allowed by the Venetian government and tribute continued to be expected.

59 Anthony T. Luttrell, The Latins and Life on the Smaller Aegean Islands, 1204-1453, in Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204, Arbel, Hamilton, and Jacoby, eds., 146. The archipelago of the Cyclades consists of over two thousand square kilometers, and thousands of islands, islets, and rocks. By 1400, less then two dozen were occupied.
60 By 1212, six Venetian families had holdings in the Archipelago. Along with Sanudo, Dandolo, and Ghisi were Jacopo Barozzi, Leonardo Foscolo, Marco Venier, and Jacopo Viaro. See Lock, Franks in the Aegean, 149. Marino Dandolo, the duke of Argos and nephew of Doge Enrico Dandolo, was also in contention for the office of Doge of Candia with Giacomo Tiepolo. After lots were cast and Tiepolo claimed the victory, Pietro Ziani, the Doge of Venice, refused to accept him, creating a rift between the Dandolo and Tiepolo families. See Chronica per extensum descripta by Enrico Dandolo, 282-289, in Thomas F. Madden, Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 235.
61 Lock, Franks in the Aegean, 7.
Generally, the Latins constituted less than ten percent of the overall population. Set apart from the mercantile frenzy of Venetian trading and its sea route, travelers often overlooked these small islands as they had little to offer. As was the case in Crete, the Venetians remained in the large coastal towns and left the countryside undisturbed to the Greeks. However, their relations here were somewhat more amicable as the native and foreign populations worked together to sustain the island’s economy. The incoming noble families exercised a nominal amount of control, rarely had the ability or desire to exploit the land for its scant resources, and kept interaction with the natives to a minimum.

The Morea: the Mainland Ports of Modon and Coron

The Venetian territorial policy, or lack thereof, was apparent on the Greek mainland’s coastal strongholds on the Morea, or Peloponnese, just west of the Cyclades. Although, with cities and fortresses constantly changing hands over the next few centuries between competing Latin colonizers and the indigenous Greek inhabitants, few areas remained firmly in Venetian hands. The main exceptions were the two fortified ports in Modon and Coron on the Messinian peninsula, located on the southwestern side of the Morea.\(^62\) (See Map 3) In true form of Venice’s original aim, these were commercial bases that did not entail significant administrative responsibilities for a subject population.

The “eyes” of the Republic, with Modon facing westward and Coron eastward, these ports acted as a center of communication at the stopover between the Ionian and Aegean. Immediately after the Crusade, Venice had occupied both ports

\(^{62}\) Methone and Korone in Greek, Mothoni and Coroni in Venetian.
until 1209, expelling all other Franks and setting up small but securely fortified commercial bases with only a limited amount of interaction with the local Greeks.

On the Greek mainland, Venetian naval power and her lack of territorial ambition led to advantageous results for the Republic when dealing with her Latin counterparts. Though Venice was in control of the ports at the time, she was always prepared for a fight to safeguard her important assets, wherever they were throughout the eastern Mediterranean. According to the *Chronicle of Morea*, shortly after taking over the title Prince of Achaia from his brother Geoffrey II in 1246, Guillaume de Villehardouin sent envoys to the doge of Venice with an offer favorable to the Republic.\(^63\) Guillaume asked,

That the Commune should afford him, until he should capture the castles of Monemvasia and Nauplion, four good galleys with their full equipment; that he should give to the Commune the castle of Korone and its villages and the land around it and, likewise, Methone for the Commune of Venice to hold as an inheritance; and also that, from that time on, having taken the castles, Venice should always give for the protection of the land two, and only two, galleys with full crews and the prince would pay all their expenses.\(^64\)

Knowing his rival’s aversion to territory and her naval capabilities, Guillaume, Venice’s greatest Latin threat on the peninsula, had conceded claims to these areas and recognized the Venetian presence in exchange for a few galleys.

In many ways, the Greek population on the peninsula viewed the Venetians differently than the other Latin rulers because of their commercially driven policy to

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\(^{63}\) Guillaume, or William I, de Villehardouin was the son of Geoffrey I Villehardouin and the last Villehardouin Prince of Achaia. He is most well known for setting up the Duchy of Athens, which for a time exercised an overlordship over Achaia as well as the Venetian islands in the Archipelago and Euboea. The Chronicle of Morea is a series of chronicles that have been preserved in eight manuscripts in Greek, French, Aragonese, and Italian. The Aragonese and Italian versions are taken from the Greek and French, but it is still unclear which account is the original as dates are still unknown. See Harold E. Lurier, *Crusaders as Conquerors: The Chronicle of Morea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 32-37.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 152.
remain in a select few coastal areas instead of conquering as many fiefs as possible. Although the port cities were directly controlled by the Republic and did not have a feudal function, the two populations respectfully, or ambivalently, allowed the other to function without an ongoing struggle. Especially as the Turks made their way to the Morea in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Venetian presence in the coastal towns offered a strong sense of protection and optimism for the Greeks.

Corfu: A Peaceful Coexistence of Venetians and Greeks

As evidenced by the Ionian island of Corfu, by the fourteenth century, the colonial policy of the Venetians had significantly changed and now took the view of the Greeks into consideration. Although the Venetians had originally occupied the island in 1204, the state decided to cede it to the powerful Kingdom of Naples in an attempt to maintain its much-needed support, opting to use Ragusa as their stopover port instead. When Ragusa was no longer available for Venice’s use and the threat from Naples had diminished, Venice bought title to Corfu from its Greek nobles and began to annex it in 1386. Upon signing an agreement with the leading noble Corfiotes, the island at the base of the Adriatic was heavily fortified and the area between the city of Venice and Corfu came to be referred to as the ‘Venetian gulf.”

Though Venice did not officially gain the island until the end of the fourteenth century, she was able to hold it for four centuries until her ultimate fall in 1797. With her somewhat close proximity to the city on the lagoon, taking only two weeks to reach, Corfu became an extension of Venice itself. In contrast to other areas under

Venetian control, Corfu experienced a high density of Venetian settlers in relation to the native Greek populace. Unlike the estimated ten percent in most other dominions, the Venetian population of Corfu was a much larger figure and the cultural influences on the island and its capital, Corfu Town are highly evident. The port city was built up to resemble the streets of Venice and a series of massive fortresses guarded it.

Settled much later than her other colonies, Corfu, as well as other Ionian islands, is also important because it provides an example of Venice’s new colonial policy of the fourteenth century, a stark contrast to her previous approach. An improvement of relations between Venetians and Greeks stemmed from the new strategy. Although Venice did not give up her administrative power, she did respect the local customs and also allowed Greek nobles to participate in the colonial government. Venetian authorities negotiated with the local elite, establishing their dominance while also granting privileges to the indigenous population. Some of these privileges included amnesty of crimes committed before the occupation, guaranteed protection from incoming forces, as well as the right to use the Venetian judicial system.  

According to Thiriet, Corfu appeared to be autonomous, resembling a protectorate of Venice. Whereas two centuries earlier, Crete had been secured through a strict administrative hold that angered Venetians and Greeks alike, the Venetian authorities were now controlling territory with finesse instead of force. By sharing management of the colony with the indigenous elite without giving up their economic interests, and extending privileges to the native population, the Venetians

67 For more on the annexation of Corfu and the privileges given to the Corfiotes, see Thiriet, *La Romanie Vénitienne au Moyen Age*, 395- 400.  
68 Ibid., 215.
showed their understanding that cooperation with the Greeks was now a possible method for ensuring their dominance in their colonies.

**Changing Attitudes: Christians Unite As the Turkish Threat Advances**

Just two and a half centuries after the Crusading knights came to Constantinople and made it their own, the Ottoman Turks successfully accomplished the same feat. What began as an attack of Romans on Romans ended with their mutual defeat by a Muslim enemy. According to the Venetian Nicolò Barbaro, as the Turkish forces approached, cries were heard throughout the city.

‘Mercy! Mercy! God send help from Heaven to this Empire of Constantine, so that pagan people may not rule over the Empire!’ All through the city all the women were on their knees, and all the men too, praying most earnestly and devoutly to our omnipotent God and His Mother Madonna Saint Mary, with all the sainted men and women of the celestial hierarchy, to grant us victory over this pagan race, these wicked Turks, enemies of the Christian faith.69

Although it was already too late, the Venetian and Byzantine empires finally stood together, united against a common enemy.

Both the Venetians and the Greeks lost Constantinople on May 29, 1453 as the Muslims overtook the Christian forces. Barbaro, a Venetian patrician living in the city during the prolonged siege, kept a diary of the events leading up to the Ottoman conquest (April 5 - May 29). He emphasizes the unity the Greek people now felt with their Christian brothers, a notable change from the tensions following 1054. Barbaro recounts how the Byzantine Emperor pleaded with the Venetians for their help, so they would not leave him, his city, and his people in order to protect themselves and

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the merchandise on their galleys. Though his bias cannot be ignored, he portrays the Byzantines’ understanding of the crucial role of Venice’s presence in their lands. “Thereupon the Most Serene Emperor answered kindly that Constantinople had come to belong more to the Venetians than to the Greeks, and because he wished the Venetians well, he was willing to give the four gates of the city with all the keys in their charge.”

According to Barbaro, the Greeks and Venetians fought hard together. Many Venetian nobles gave their lives in defense of the city and their economic assets, no doubt because it was their lifeline to the Black Sea trade. Barbaro even argues that the Venetians proved to be more valiant in the defense of the city because they had more to lose. And in some ways, this was very true. From an economic standpoint, Venice was significantly crippled. As a recent historian puts it, with the Ottoman takeover, “Venetian power and privilege in the Levant had been decisively and emphatically rolled back. The doge’s annual marriage with the sea had become an empty boast: it was now the Turkish fleet that predominated along all the Mediterranean coasts.”

However, even if Venice’s commercial interests were notably threatened, the Turks were not without political benefits for the Republic. As Chambers argues, “in some respects they provided a stimulus, and gave Venetian dominion a protective appeal for local populations.” By the end of the fourteenth century, Venice’s maritime empire was inflated with emigrants from territories now under Turkish rule.

70 Ibíd., 25.
72 Chambers, The Imperial Age of Venice, 44.
Within the next century, the city of Venice itself would also become home to these Greek refugees.

With her enduring history in the Eastern Mediterranean, her commercial success, her restrained territorial policy, the emigration of her people to the Greek lands, and her role as protection from the Turks, Venice, as opposed to other Latin powers, solidified a unique role with the Greek people with whom she had become accustomed and aligned. Venice’s medieval imperial success paved the way for a continued connection to the East into the early modern period. Venice would become the obvious choice as home and portal for the Greek migration from East to West in the aftermath of 1453.

A new age for Venice had begun. A transition from the medieval to modern period marked a move from commercially dominated Venetian influences eastward to intellectually dominated Greek influences westward. Her mercantile prestige would soon be matched by her cultural prestige, with much thanks being owed to the influx of Greeks and their learning during the Renaissance.
Chapter 2

Venice As A Center of Greek Learning, c. 1500

After two centuries of improving relations between Venetians and Greeks in the colonies of Venice, the city on the lagoon would become a new arena for these continuing interactions. Through this connection, with a Greek library, printshop, and intellectual émigré community, the dissemination of Greek learning from Venice was made possible. With the Greeks providing the tools, the humanist movement found a new center at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Although the rest of Italy had seen the influx of a few Greek scholars much earlier than the fall of 1453, Venice’s story really began to take shape after the imperial demise of Byzantium. It is now considered a historical myth by most scholars that the Byzantines brought the Renaissance to Europe, however, the Greeks, without a doubt, brought the tools necessary for the Renaissance to become such a successful, profound, and enduring movement.73

By 1500, Venice would eclipse other centers in Italy as the capital of Greek learning on the peninsula. With her solidified and ongoing relations with the East through her foreign dominions and commercial networks, a wealthy patrician class interested in the arts, and her unrivaled combination of treasure, technology, and

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73 Throughout the medieval period, the ancient Greek works of philosophy, drama, and history that had been lost in the West were preserved, studied, and read in Byzantium. Acting as the librarians of the Antiquity’s greatest works, Kenneth Setton argues, “The Byzantines maintained tradition and resisted innovation; they were custodians, not experimenters…they were the teachers of the Italians, who became the teachers of the rest of us.” See Kenneth M. Setton, The Byzantine Background to the Italian Renaissance (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1976), 74.
teaching, Venice became the headquarters for Greek scholarship and its dissemination to Europe. By the turn of the century,

Because of her own schools and the great university of her nearby satellite Padua, her many scores of printing establishments staffed by scholars preparing first editions of the Greek classics, and the Venetian colonial administrators’ need to learn Greek, Venice became a mecca for devotees of Greek coming from other parts of Italy as well as from the more distant areas of western Europe.\(^4\)

Three important figures: one Greek, one Italian, and one Cretan (an ethnic Greek who grew up in the Italian sphere), share responsibility for creating this haven of Greek learning in Venice. Cardinal Bessarion (1403-1472) donated his collection of manuscripts to Venice in 1468, creating the largest Greek library in the West. As a result, Aldus Manutius (1450-1515) chose Venice as the site for his printshop, where he invented the technology necessary to print Greek texts. Finally, Marcus Musurus (1470-1517), one of the Aldine editors, lived and worked in Venice before becoming the Chair of Greek at Venice’s state university at Padua. The new kinds of relations between Venetians and Greeks developed within a larger intellectual movement but required materials in Greek, a new technique for their distribution, and a mechanism to ensure ongoing knowledge of the language, all of which were now available in Venice. From the most well-known to the more obscure, this chapter will demonstrate the ways in which these figures and their contributions helped to transmit Greek learning and shape the humanist movement in Italy and Europe.

In this movement, Venice was the portal to the West. With her trading networks to the East, shipping goods and diplomats, she also transported scholars, texts, and ideas. For a Greek entering Italy or returning home, Venetian ships

provided an efficient and secure form of transport throughout an extended network to the islands and mainland of the Greek world. “It is not difficult to see why there should be close links between Greeks and Venetians, given the Republic’s position as colonial power in a large part of the Greek world… thus the Venetians literally provided the link between the world from which many of these émigrés came and the West.”

The rest of Europe was not nearly as welcoming as Venice. This can be evidenced from the fates of those Greek émigrés who chose other centers in Italy and northern Europe for their work and residence during the fifteenth century. In correspondence from Greek scholar Constantine Lascaris, he laments the ill fortune of many of his comrades in the late fifteenth century. Theodore Gaza died in poverty in Calabria, Andronicus Callistus died while seeking refuge in England, Demetrius Castrenus returned to Greece, and John Agyropoulos died alone in Rome, selling his books day to day in order to buy sustenance. In places elsewhere, Greek exiles had to resort to other professions to stay afloat while in Venice in the following years, the learning of Greek remained a priority.

A fundamental agent in this development was the small but growing Greek community in Venice dating from the thirteenth century, which significantly increased in numbers after 1453. Whereas in the rest of Europe Greek émigrés were

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76 John Monfasani points out how many scholars changed their career path upon arrival in Italy. For instance, Theodore Gaza became a professional translator at the papal court and then an ecclesiastical benefice holder because he could not make enough money teaching Greek. George of Trebizond, or Trapenzuntius, did indeed teach Greek but made his living teaching Latin. John Agyropoulos taught Greek but made his living teaching Aristotelian philosophy. Andronicus Callistus began his stay in Italy as a scribe and then taught Greek at the University of Bologna but could never attract enough students to support himself financially so he began to teach Aristotle in Latin. For more examples see John Monfasani, “Greek Renaissance Migrations,” in *Greeks and Latins in Renaissance Italy: Studies on Humanism and Philosophy in the 15th Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 11-13.
insulahtable groups, in Venice their numbers offered more protection, comfort, and connections. Even though the colony was incredibly small, making up only three percent of the whole Venetian population, the extensive social network that developed, the governmental patronage of Greek study, and the opportunity for employment, this Greek community on distant soil afforded immigrant scholars a sense of security in a foreign world.

**Greek Instruction in Italy Before 1500**

It is often assumed that the Greek language was absent from Western Europe for the duration of the Middle Ages and that, with the coming of Manuel Chrysoloras and his fellow diplomatic colleagues to Florence, Rome, and Venice at the behest of the Byzantine emperors in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Greek miraculously appeared once more in the West. However, this was not in fact the case. Though these envoys were responsible for introducing the people of the Byzantine Empire in an official capacity as representatives of the state and its church at the turn of the fifteenth century, they were not the only speakers of Greek on the peninsula. There still existed a fairly significant population of Greek speakers in the former Byzantine areas in southern Italy, where teachers and translators could be found before the fall of 1453.

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77 Ibid., 4. Monfasani explains, “Hence, except for their colony in Venice, émigré Renaissance Greeks were everywhere demographically an insignificant group.” See “Greek Renaissance Migrations,” 4.
78 From the late fifteenth to the sixteenth century, at the time of Venice’s rise to dominance in the sphere of Greek scholarship, the Greek community of Venice was between 4,000 and 6,000 out of a total population of 190,000.
80 Harris, *Greek Emigrés in the West*, 121. It was not until the eleventh century that that the Byzantine Empire lost its dominions in Southern Italy and Sicily.
During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, scribes copied Greek writings and translated them into Latin at the courts of Palermo and Naples. From the mid-fourteenth century, pioneers Francesco Petrarca and Giovanni Boccaccio revived interest in the ancient classics, even though neither knew Greek themselves. As the Italian Renaissance humanists began their pursuit of Greek learning, various centers in Italy played an important part in the progress of the developing movement. Florence played the most prominent role in this early stage before being eclipsed by Venice at the turn of the sixteenth century and then passing the primacy to Rome.

Since as early as 1296, Byzantine scholars had been making their way to Venice as ambassadors and dignitaries. In 1391, Demetrius Cydones, a Byzantine scholar and prime minister who much enjoyed Latin culture and his time spent in the West, was granted honorary Venetian citizenship after a year’s residency in the city. Though it was most likely for diplomatic reasons, his scholarly interests must have also played a part in the distinction. In 1393, after acting as leader of an embassy sent to Venice by Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus to ask for assistance against the Turks, Manuel Chrysoloras returned home to Constantinople with a few Italian pupils. By 1397, Chrysoloras was invited back to Italy to hold the Greek Chair at the University of Florence where he taught Greek grammar and literature to some of

81 Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 3.
82 Petrarca is known to have kept a Greek copy of Homer next to his bed even though he could not understand it. According to Wells, he received it from a Byzantine diplomat while in Avignon. “His letters show it to be one of his most prized possessions; he was dying to be able to read it.” See Wells, Sailing from Byzantium, 52.
83 Geanakoplos Greek Scholars, 28.
84 See Wells, Sailing from Byzantium, 62-5.
the most notable humanists of his time and helped revive the study of Platonic philosophy with Marsilio Ficino.\textsuperscript{85}

One of Chrysoloras’ pupils at Constantinople, Guarino da Verona, was responsible for establishing the first humanist school in Venice, teaching the Venetian nobles’ sons from 1414-1418.\textsuperscript{86} Though some of the patriciate saw this new humanist teaching as a worthy pursuit, it did not catch on in these early years. The reason for this was because, even though instruction in the Greek language was a seemingly pragmatic endeavor, it was still possible to learn the vernacular language abroad and the contemporary diplomatic tongue did not necessarily conform to that of ancient texts.

Of the few select Venetians who did express an interest in Greek learning, the statesman Francesco Barbaro (1390-1454) was an exceptional example. One of Guarino’s most important students, Francesco Barbaro translated some of the lives of Plutarch and collected Greek manuscripts as a boy before serving administrative office in Crete. While there, he patronized a number of scribes on the island in order to supplement his manuscript collection and was responsible for bringing one of these scribes, the famous George of Trebizond (1395-1486), back with him to Venice in 1417.\textsuperscript{87} Trebizond would go on to become one of the most famous Greek scholars in the West. From the island of Crete, George of Trebizond translated Plato’s \textit{Laws} and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{85} For more on Platonic philosophy in Italy during the Renaissance, see James Hankins, \textit{Plato in the Italian Renaissance} (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990).
\item \textsuperscript{86} Guarino da Verona, first a pupil at the University of Padua and then at Constantinople, would later teach in Ferrara from 1436 – 1460 after his successful stint in Venice from 1414 -1418. See Geanakoplos \textit{Greek Scholars}, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Barbaro later formally greeted Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus in 1423 on the emperor’s diplomatic trip to Venice. Also known by the Latin version of his name Trapenzuntius, although he was born and lived in Crete, George of Trebizond’s parents were both from Trebizond, thus his name. For more on Barbaro and George of Trebizond see Geanakoplos, \textit{Greeks Scholars}, 28-31.
\end{itemize}
dedicated the work to the Doge after the Senate had been persuaded that the text
would provide a practical guide for public life. Soon after, he would begin a career
teaching Latin in the school of the ducal chancery while giving Greek lessons
privately.

Cardinal Bessarion: From the Council of Florence to the Biblioteca Marciana

Basilios Bessarion (1403-1472), a Greek from the region of Trebizond who
would later become a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church, remains the most well-
known and important Greek émigré of the Renaissance. “John Bessarion would, after
Chrysoloras, become the most influential Byzantine émigré scholar, a teacher, friend,
or patron to virtually every major humanist, Byzantine or Italian, of his day.”

Originally traveling to Italy for religious and political diplomatic missions, Bessarion
made continual attempts for unity and reciprocal exchange between East and West.
Because of his proclivity to cater to the West’s technology, rulers, and ways of life,
including those concerning religion, Bessarion was viewed by his own people as a bit
of an ideological traitor, calling for them to assimilate and align with western thinking
and progress.

Greatly influenced by Bessarion, the Council of Florence (1431-1439)
represented a turning point in relations between Catholicism and Orthodoxy.
Concluding in the city of Florence in 1439 after time in both Basel and Ferrara, the
ecumenical council was another medium that provided for contact between
Byzantines and Italians, this time through the members of their clergies. Though the

88 He is also referred to as John or Johannes Bessarion.
89 Wells, Sailing from Byzantium, 95.
Council did not fulfill its ultimate goal of a reunification of the Roman Catholic Church with the Eastern Orthodox Church, it did reaffirm papal supremacy while allowing for the continued existence of the Byzantine rite, a compromise that allowed for a great amelioration between the two groups on the basis of religion.\(^{90}\)

The new denomination, Uniate Catholicism, denoted those Byzantine Christians who accepted the sovereignty of the Bishop of Rome but maintained a Byzantine form of worship. “Though such conversion entailed acceptance of papal primacy, it allowed for the preservation of the Greek ritual, which for the sophisticated scholar-Greek of the diaspora did not necessarily mean repudiation of one’s ethnic distinctiveness.”\(^ {91}\) With this compromise, relations between Greeks and Latins were significantly improved.

His participation in the debates in Florence had been a deciding factor in creating a union between the churches on July 6, 1439 and led to many opportunities for him in the West. “The pope’s appreciation of his services to Christian unity was shown in the immediate offer of a pension, which would be payable at a higher rate if he chose to become a member of the Roman curia.”\(^ {92}\) By forming relationships with leading Italian humanists of the day, including Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455), Bessarion developed an intellectual network for Greek scholars leaving the lands of Byzantium.


After a brief return to Constantinople, where the opinion of the Greek people remained against him and the decisions of the 1439 council, he returned to Florence in 1440 before taking up residence in Rome three years later and beginning a tradition as “protector of the Greeks” in Italy. In Rome he created a safe-haven for Greek émigré scholars at his palace on the Quirinal and Bessarion’s “Academy,” as termed by his secretary Niccolò Perotti, had the aim of translating Greek works into Latin and discussing the philosophy of Plato. He also garnered the respect of the Church and the governments of Italian city-states in order to ensure diplomatic protection for his fellow Greek colleagues throughout the peninsula.

His participation at the Council of Florence was only the beginning of a lifelong crusade to save Greek culture from extinction through western intervention and cooperation. Urging the Greeks to adopt technology from the West, most notably in warfare, transportation, and fortifications, in his letter to Despot of the Morea Constantine Palaeologus c. 1444, Bessarion gives insight into the way in which he envisioned Greeks making their way to Italy for diplomatic, political, and social reasons. He asks, “Send four or eight young men here to the West, together with appropriate means – and let not many know of this – so that when they return to Greece they can pass on their knowledge to the Greeks.” This passage shows Bessarion’s understanding of the reluctance of his fellow Greeks to adopt western technology but his belief that it could help his people prosper.

93 Bessarion’s “Academy” was the scene of the well-documented debate between Bessarion and George of Trebizond over the interpretation of Plato and Aristotle. Bessarion wrote a treatise against the “slanderer of Plato”, the Aristotelian Trebizond. See John Monfasani, “Il Perotti e la Controversia tra Platonici ed Aristotelici” in Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy: Cardinal Bessarion and Other Emigrés (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 1995), 195-231.
94 “Bessarion Urges the Greeks to Adopt Western Technology” in Byzantium, ed. Geanakoplos, 379.
Greek resistance to and suspicion of the Latins would crumble within the next decade as the Byzantine Empire fell apart at the hands of the Turks. As his Greek predecessors had done for centuries before him, Cardinal Bessarion appealed to the Venetians for help against the Turks. Writing to the Doge of Venice on July 13, 1453, only a month and a half after the taking of Constantinople, Bessarion expresses his torment after the fall of a great empire at the hand of barbarian enemies of the Christian faith, begging for aid not only for his fatherland and his city, but for the safety of all Christians. Appealing not only to their unity as Christian brothers but also to their political situation in the East, Bessarion includes the economic threat to the state as a means for immediate action.

One of two things must happen; either your Highness, together with other Christian princes, must curb and crush the violence, not to say madness, of the barbarian, in these very beginnings, not only to safeguard yourselves and your own, but also in order to take the offensive against the enemy; or the barbarian, when he has shortly become master in what remains of Greece… may bring Italian affairs to a most dangerous crisis.95

He continues that the Turks chose this time to strike because Christian forces had been battling one another in the West. However, if they stood strong together, the barbarians would retreat in fear. Appealing once again to the Doge, throwing compliments and promise, Bessarion pleads for immediate action.

Rise up then, renowned prince… exhort [the Christians]… in dedicating themselves to avenging the violence of the barbarians, to destroying the enemy of the Christian faith, to recovering that city which formerly belonged to your republic, and which would be yours again once victory had been achieved. Nothing you could do would be more profitable for your empire… nothing more glorious for your own fame.96

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95 “Bessarion Pleads for Western Aid Against the Turks” in Byzantium, ed. Geanakoplos, 442-443.
96 Ibid.
A surprising message from a Greek, Bessarion seems to offer Constantinople to the Republic as a reward for her efforts against the Turks. Bessarion, like his fellow Greeks, was undoubtedly aware of Venetian priorities in the East, those rooted in trade. As the gateway to this Black Sea trade, Bessarion appeals to the Venetians for help in Constantinople through the promise of profit.

The cardinal continually tried to convince governments throughout Italy, especially that of Venice, that the Turkish threat was far more important than feuds and rivalries among themselves. Bessarion had a close relationship with the humanist Pope Pius II, whom he had helped win election to the pontificate during the enclave of 1458. The next year, Pius II convened the congress of Mantua for the purpose of creating a coalition of Christian princes against the Turks. According to Jonathan Harris, “Pius was so impressed by Bessarion’s efforts that in 1459 he sent a force of one hundred mercenaries to the Morea, not because he thought they could do any good but because he did not want to disappoint the Greek cardinal who had ‘set his heart on it.’” Though Bessarion did not get his wish of saving the dying Byzantine Empire from the Turkish advance, he was able to save many works of his classical ancestors.

With Bessarion’s gift of his personal collection of Greek manuscripts to the city of Venice, the Republic had the largest library of Greek material in the West. Greek manuscripts were the portals to the past for the humanists, the key to their studies. After 1453, “the reproduction of manuscripts provided a way in which many of the less fortunate exiles could earn themselves a living…As well as copying

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97 Harris, Greek Emigrés in the West, 105-6.
manuscripts such employees were often set to task of unearthing existing ones."  

Both Italians and Greeks living in Italy were sent to Constantinople by powerful patrons like Bessarion and Lorenzo de’ Medici in search of manuscripts to bring back to be used in instruction.

In the letter accompanying the deed of donation for the gift of his manuscripts to Venice in 1468, Bessarion explains how he began collecting these treasures from a young age, even writing them in his own hand at times, because he understood the power of the knowledge that they entailed. However, his lifelong pursuit became more critical after the events of 1453.

My sense of urgency became the greater after the destruction of Greece and the pitiful enslavement of Byzantium. Since then, all my strength, my effort, my time, my capacity, and my concentration has been devoted to seeking out Greek books…They must be preserved in a place that is both safe and accessible, for the general good of all readers, be they Greek or Latin.  

Although Bessarion lived in Rome, he nonetheless chose Venice as the site of his library for two reasons. His first reason was that Venice is a safe place “where minds are free to think as they wish.” His second reason, his true motive for choosing Venice, was the existence of the Greek community there, a community to whom he wanted the collection to be available.

I came to understand that I could not select a place more suitable and convenient to men of my own Greek background. Though nations from almost all over the earth flock in vast numbers to your city, the Greeks are most numerous of all: as they sail in from their own regions they make their first landfall in Venice, and have such a tie with you that when they put into your city they feel they are entering another Byzantium. 

98 Ibid., 124.
100 Ibid., 358.
101 Ibid. Stress my own.
Venice presented itself as the only city in Italy in which he could leave his gift “with complete peace of mind,” because there justice rules, minds are free, power, in the hands of the wise, is available but exercised in restraint, and all men work together for the benefit of the commonwealth.  

By highlighting the Republic’s endearing qualities with this flattering description, Bessarion is not only justifying his choice to make Venice the home of his collection, he is also confirming to the Greek community that Venice is a welcoming home for them as well.

Bessarion’s manuscripts totaling 752, of which an astounding 482 were in Greek, arrived in Venice from Rome in fifty-seven crates. With nowhere to house them, the crates were scattered throughout government offices for nearly five decades without any progress. Finally, in 1515, the Senate had a debate about where it was to be housed and what funds would be used to set up the new library. The Venetian patrician Marin Sanudo includes a copy of the decree in his diaries. The tone demonstrates the importance placed on the works and their access to the citizens and the prestige that would follow.

Libraries are often used to celebrate and add special luster to well-founded cities. Such was the custom in Rome, Athens, and other ancient wealthy cities. For, beyond providing an ornament, [libraries] also encourage minds toward learning and erudition, when good morals and other virtues are wont to arise… it is fitting at last to erect a most precious repository [for the treasure] that the vicissitudes of time held nearly hidden, especially since the procurators of our church of San Marco have willingly donated a place in the Piazza itself. There could be no lovelier location in this city, nor one more convenient to the learned, in addition to the fact that once the library has been

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102 Ibid.
103 To view the works donated by Bessarion, see Carlotta Labowsky, Bessarion's Library and the Biblioteca Marciana: Six Early Inventories (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1979). For a discussion of the nature of the content of Bessarion’s library as well as the scholia he himself wrote into the margins, see Wilson, From Byzantium to Italy, 62-7.
finished it will present a perpetual monument to our heirs and a mirror and light to all Italy.  

As determined by the Senate, the final resting place of the library, the Biblioteca Marciana, or Library of St. Mark, would be in Piazza San Marco at the heart of the city and was to be opened to the public. With construction beginning in 1537, architect Jacopo Sansovino was chosen to complete the library, Loggetta, and Zecca, or mint. Taking the Tabularium of the Capitol in Rome as his model, “the adoption of a classical basilica form for the library created a complementary metaphor for the wisdom and justice of the state… [and] taken together, the three buildings document Venice’s acceptance of her Roman legacy and her rightful inheritance of Roman virtù.” Adorned with sculptures of classical figures, the new structure was a fitting home for the writings of antiquity.

In 1564, almost a century after the collection had originally arrived in Venice, the manuscripts were finally moved into the library. Even though it took much longer than anticipated for Bessarion’s gift to make its way into the hands of the reading public, the knowledge of its donation was well-known from the beginning and the anticipation brought much attention to the city. And with the its opening, as Venice had hoped, this collection helped to make it an even greater beacon of classical learning to all of Italy.

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Aldus Manutius Establishes the Aldine Press in Venice

Interestingly, Venetian-Greek relations were greatly improved by the role of a man whose roots were elsewhere. Although Aldus Manutius (1450-1515) was technically neither Venetian nor Greek by birth, the defining period of his life saw him relocated to the city of Venice, living and working among Greeks, and greatly changing the nature of their continued contact.

History would have indeed been quite different if Aldus had set up his printshop in Carpi as friend Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) and his nephews, Alberto and Lionello Pio had sought. During his tenure as the princes’ tutor (1483-1490), Aldus developed his plan to found a large press to print Greek texts accurately, affordably, and on a sufficient scale for the first time in Italy. Born in the Papal States, Aldus was the product of a humanist upbringing, learning Latin in Rome and then later studying Greek at Ferrara under Guarino da Verona before his teaching career. However, Manutius did not choose to remain in Carpi, but instead made his way to Venice in 1490.

There are many reasons why Venice was the right choice for Manutius’ project to establish a Greek-language press. As the seat of a thriving empire, its wealthy patrician class had the means and interest to buy his publications. This empire also provided a close connection with the Greek world and the community that had developed within the city which afforded him a large supply of possible employees. But, as has been assumed by many previous historians, the dedication of Bessarion’s manuscripts to the city also provided a most alluring set of resources.
When combined with the successfully growing printing industry in the city, all these assets dictated the choice of Venice as his new home.

Manutius was not only a pioneer for his love of Greek and his devotion to producing these works, making them available and useful for a wider audience, he also revolutionized the printing industry itself with his innovative techniques. “Aldus represents in a real sense the first great advance over Gutenberg’s invention-- the humanist scholar-printer, working in a predominantly secular intellectual milieu, issuing a myriad of books for learning and books for pleasure in active demand from an eager readership.”106 With an already thriving commercial printing center before his arrival, with two hundred competing presses in the city by 1500, Manutius made Venice the undisputed printing center of its time with his innovative contribution of developing the Greek type for successful publication for the first time.107

Before the founding of his press, only about a dozen works had been printed entirely in Greek, most notably in Milan and Florence, but no effort had been successfully made to produce the works on a commercial scale.108 His predecessors who had attempted to print Greek also had run into problems with the typeface. More so than the Roman alphabet, Greek letters proved to be a more daunting task for printers. Whereas Latin script tended to be more hierarchic and uniform, Greek script thrived on individuality, providing for changing trends in the script. Latin letters

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106 H. George Fletcher, *In Praise of Aldus Manutius: A Quincentenary Exhibition* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), 1. In the last decade of the fifteenth century, the Italian printing industry was, by definition, an up and coming industry. Gutenberg’s press had only been invented four decades before Manutius opened his printshop in 1494, just three decades after printing had crossed over the Alps from Germany into Italy.

107 Labalme and White, eds., *Cità Excelentissima*, 432. It was not only the content of his works that brought him renown, it was the innovative spirit of his achievements.

108 The first attempts, as early as the 1470s, were small in scale. For examples, see Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaeca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 80-1.
were also more easily separated from one another, while those of the Greek alphabet were meant to intersect. As opposed to the attempts by his printing predecessors, Manutius created a script with vitality, one that did not appear to be letters simply thrown together to produce words but that more closely resembled the writing of a scribe. By creating distinctive forms of many letters and also using blocks of letter combinations and even commonly used whole words in the printing process, Manutius was the first to successfully engineer a Greek font for the printing press.\textsuperscript{109}

On February 25, 1495 Aldus applied for a patent to secure his unique type for twenty years, allowing his publications to be printed with his own “lettere greche in summa belleza di ogni sorte.”\textsuperscript{110}

The market for Greek works was small, but Manutius was determined for his own idealistic motives to supply humanist students with the tools they would need to study in Greek. Manutius seems to have been perfectionist. In one of his earliest publications, the \textit{Thesaurus Cornucopiae} of 1496, Aldus discusses the hardships of his project.

\begin{quote}
In our day it is indeed a difficult task for the friend of good literature to print Latin books correctly, it is even harder to print Greek books, and the hardest of all tasks is to print in both languages without mistakes…This striving for perfection and eagerness to be of service to you, to supply you with the best books, has developed into an instrument of torture…I have provided myself
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{109}Only a few attempts at printing in Greek had occurred, in addition to Milan and Florence there were also projects in Vicenza and Parma. The transition from scribe copying to the printing press posed a difficult challenge. For more detail about the attempts of Manutius’ predecessors to create a Greek typeface, see Nicolas Barker, \textit{Aldus Manutius and the Development of Greek Script & Type in the Fifteenth Century} (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992), 21-42. Wilson explores the four fonts of Manutius, one from Rhusotas, another probably from a member of the Gregoropoulos family, a third likely based on the script of Musurus, and a final “extraordinarily like the hand of Aldus himself.” For more see, Wilson, \textit{From Byzantium to Italy}, 128-9.

\textsuperscript{110}Manutius chose the model of the hand of professional calligrapher Immanuel Rhusotas for his type. A total of three hundred separate punches were cut for letters, including idiosyncratic abbreviations and differential forms (7 for each \textit{alpha} and \textit{nu}), all to make the text seem more like the work of a calligrapher than a printing press. See Barker, \textit{Aldus and Greek Script & Type}, 52-58.
with trouble and overburdened myself with great labors. My only consolation is the assurance that my labors are helpful to all, and that the fame and the use of my books increase from day to day.\textsuperscript{111}

He also tells the students of Greek of his plan to provide them “practically everything that anyone could desire in order to achieve perfect knowledge of Greek literature.”\textsuperscript{112}

As important as his Greek mission was to Aldus, making money was necessary to keep his printshop afloat in order to continue this dream. Of no less importance, if not altogether more fundamental in the implication that Manutius was a printing pioneer, was his development of the italic typeface and the octavo volume. The foundation of his true commercial success, with the new compact italic font and smaller page, Manutius created the original paperback, a book that was easier and cheaper to produce, small enough to carry and read at one’s leisure as opposed to large, hefty editions that had no choice but to remain at home or in the library. Aldus printed Latin and Greek classics in the octavo, as well as a small number in the vernacular. Some of his earliest octavo publications were Publius Vergilius Maro’s \textit{Opera} (1501), Petrarch’s \textit{Le cose volgari} (1501), and Sophocles’ \textit{Tragoediea} (1502).\textsuperscript{113}

The employment opportunities that developed with the Greek printing industry in Venice began to attract intellectuals from the Greek areas under Venetian control, especially the flourishing island of Crete. From the beginning, these exiles played a prominent role in the evolution of the press. For the Greek immigrant to

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{111} Aldus Manutius as quoted in Antje Lemke and Donald P. Bean, \textit{Aldus Manutius and his Thesaurus Cornucopiae of 1496} (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1958), 3.
\textsuperscript{112} Lemke and Bean, \textit{Aldus Manutius and his Thesaurus Cornucopiae of 1496}, 3.
\textsuperscript{113} Because the Greek text was so much more difficult to set and print, especially in this small format, the cost of Greek editions were usually twice the price of those in Latin and vernacular. To see examples and descriptions of some the Aldine octavo classics, see Fletcher, \textit{In Praise of Aldus Manutius}, 49-54.
\end{footnotes}
Venice, employment as editor at a press was more exciting and prestigious than the simple work of a scribe. This group of Greek intellectuals would become Aldus’ friends and colleagues because for him humanist study and business went hand in hand. By surrounding himself with a circle of intellectuals, Manutius became the boss, benefactor, and friend to a large group of Italian and Greek humanists from Venice and beyond.

Just as Bessarion had created a circle of Greek intellectuals in Rome in the mid-fifteenth century, Aldus Manutius followed his lead and created his Neakademia, or New Academy at the turn of the sixteenth century in Venice. This institution, centered around his printshop, is another indication of the shift of the Greek intellectual center of Italy from Florence and Rome to Venice. Manutius utilized this new forum for discussion for finding Greek works to be published and solutions to literary and philological problems that arose in preparing for printing of the texts. His academy of scholars drew up a constitution in Greek providing for the exclusive use of the language at all sessions. Important members included Venetian noblemen such as Marin Sanudo and Pietro Bembo, influential Greeks from Venetian dominions like Crete, Corfu, and Constantinople, such Janus Lascaris and John Gregoropoulos, his former student Prince Alberto Pio of Carpi and the most famous of its members, Desiderius Erasmus.114

The humanist’s view of the Greek intellectual was one of esteem. This new informal institution that Aldus had created, provided an arena in which Greeks, Italians, and other Europeans acted in cooperation and with respect. This new forum

114 According to Geanakoplos, at this point Janus Lascaris, French ambassador to the Republic of Venice, had taken over Bessarion’s role as “protector of the Greeks.” See Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 130.
brought together different ethnicities and political affiliations in the common goal of studying the classics. Through his personal predilection for Greek, shown in his employment of Greeks in his printshop and his insistence that Greek be the only language spoken at the Academy, Manutius was creating an atmosphere where the foreigner was not only included, but also admired.

An indication of the extent to which Aldus’ Academy helped him with his business affairs, his relationship with Marin Sanudo demonstrates the valuable connections afforded to him through the networking of the Neakademia. There is little doubt that Manutius actively promoted himself and his works through flattery of the powerful and respected intellectuals around him. Sanudo claims to have been instrumental in helping Manutius secure the patent for his italic type, an important task because of widespread piracy. On October 7, 1502, Sanudo writes, “At my instigation the council proposed a bill to grant the request of magistro Aldo the Roman, who prints books, works, and new letters and things that no one else may print for the next ten years, etc. The vote for it was unanimous.”

Already, within his own lifetime, the people of Venice could see that Manutius was creating a legacy for their city.

By the time of his death, Aldus was already a famous and applauded man. According to Marin Sanudo, after days of ill health, the “optimo humanista e greco,” who had printed many Latin and Greek works “ben corrette,” died on February 8, 1515. Sanudo records in his diary that he was one of the many people to whom

115 Sanudo, Città Excelentissima eds. Labalme and White, 432.
116 Marino Sanudo and Paolo Margaroli, I diarii (1496-1533): Pagine Scelte. (Vicenza: N. Pozza, 1997), 258. All text is in the original Venetian dialect. Speaking of Manutius’ life, Sanudo also includes that he was the son-in-law of his business partner, the established printer Andrea Torresani,
Manutius dedicated his books, possibly trying to assert his relationship to the
celebrity. In the city of Venice, public lecturer in *humanitas* Rafael Regio gave an
oration in his honor at the funeral in the church of San Patrinian as his coffin lay
surrounded by a collection of his publications. Through his love of Greek, Aldus
Manutius fostered a change in relations between Greeks and Venetians in their city.
Through his life’s work, Manutius promoted a new appreciation and veneration for
the Greek intellectual community in Venice.

*Marcus Musurus and Greek Studies*

Called the “Renaissance’s greatest Hellenist,” Marcus Musurus (1470-1517) is an important example of Greek émigré activity in Venice for three reasons.

First, he represents the significant stream of colonial Greeks who made their way
from Crete to the city on the lagoon in pursuit of employment and opportunity.

Second, he was one of Aldus Manutius’ closest friends and chief editor as well as a
devoted founding member of his New Academy. Third, he is considered responsible
for rejuvenating Venetian and foreign interest in university studies due to his tenure
as the holder of the chair in Greek at Padua. In 1508, Demetrius Ducas remarked,

> It is through your efforts, Musurus, in the celebrated and renowned city of
Padua, where you teach publicly from that chair as from the height of a
throne, that one sees depart each year from your school, as from the flanks of

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97 In fact, Manutius dedicated publications of Poliziano, Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, and three works by Ovid to Sanudo from 1501-1503. Manutius referred to him as a “delight of the Venetian nobility, a man filled with *humanitas* and courtesy, a man of great character and unusual judgment.” Aldus marveled at Sanudo’s library, consisting of 6500 works at its largest and he also wrote, “deeply modest and devoted to public affairs, he never stops writing and compiling whatever is worthy to be read.” See Labalme and White, *Cità Excelentissima*, 432.

98 Ibid.

99 Wells, *Sailing from Byzantium*, 112.
the Trojan horse, so many learned pupils that one could believe them born in the bosom of Greece or belonging to the race of the Athenians.  

Just as she attracted Greeks in search of employment, Venice also became a destination of Western intellectuals pursuing the Greek knowledge and resources she had to offer. Musurus “taught no less than twenty-five of the West’s subsequently noted humanists, who on their return to their homelands spread the seeds of interest in ancient Greek learning.” Coming from Germany, England, France, Poland, and Hungary, the most notable of these foreign humanists was none other than the Dutch Desiderius Erasmus.

Although Musurus moved first to Florence around 1486 to begin his education, most likely under the instruction of the revered Janus Lascaris who gave public lectures there at the time, he left after the death of Lorenzo de’ Medici. In 1493, with his teacher gone and with the onset of political instability, Musurus sought a new intellectual environment. Although it is uncertain why Musurus chose Venice, it seems likely that his origins in Crete made the city appealing in a letter to his Cretan friend John Gregoropoulos, he said he “hoped to deepen his philological knowledge and acquire some measure of wealth and fame.”

120 Taken from Demetrius Ducas’ prefatory epistole to Musurus in the first volume of the Aldine Rhetores Graeci, published in November 1508. See Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 139.
121 Geanakoplos, Interaction of the “Sibling” Cultures, 179.
122 Although he was never officially enrolled in the university, he undoubtedly attended Musurus’ lectures and even stayed at his home on one occasion. His biographer and pupil, Beatus Rhenanus even mentions that Erasmus would consult Musurus if he had any difficulty with a Greek passage, claiming he was a Greek as competent in Latin as Theodore Gaza and Janus Lascaris. For a detailed account of Erasmus’ time in Venice and his relations with those in the Aldine Academy, see Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 256-78.
123 Ibid., 120. John Gregoropoulos worked as a corrector at the Venetian press of Zacharias Calliergis, another press devoted entirely to Greek printing in the city but with less success and longevity. Calliergis’ press was responsible for a 1499 publication of a dictionary/encyclopedia entitled Etymologicum Magnum, of which Musurus wrote the preface, praising his fellow Cretans and their work in the press industry. After its temporary closing for financial reasons c. 1500, Gregoropoulos, along with other Cretan printworkers now out of work, were hired by Manutius. Gregoropoulos
Upon his arrival in Venice, Musurus met Manutius. Becoming close friends and coworkers, Musurus was responsible for providing Aldus with a model for his Greek type, writing Greek epigrams for his editions, and providing Latin translations for his Greek texts, becoming the chief editor of the Aldine Press in its formative years from c. 1494-1500. After these first influential years working in Greek printing, Musurus moved to Carpi where he took up the role of tutor to Prince Alberto Pio, Manutius’ good friend and former student. During this time, Musurus frequently traveled between Emilia-Romagna and Venice, continuing both his work for Manutius as editor and his participation in the Academy.

Over the next decade, the Cretan Musurus gained a reputation as the Venetian government enlisted his help with diplomatic affairs and education. The Republic now found Greek scholarship important enough to be patronized, promoting and controlling humanist studies by appointing scholars to teaching and administrative positions. Sanudo comments that Musurus, known for giving public lectures in Greek, was the winner of a public debate, a popular form of entertainment for Venetians. We also know from Sanudo’s diaries that Musurus was helpful to the Venetian administration because in June 1512 he translated a letter from Greek into

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became an important figure in Manutius’ Neakademia, acting as head of the correctors in the Academy. For more on Gregoropoulos and Calliergis, see Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 123-8. There are also letters published of the men’s correspondence in Emile Legrand, Bibliographie hellenique des XVe et XVIe siecles, volume II. (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve & Larose, 1962).

124 According to Geanakoplos, there is some controversy over Musurus’ work at the press. Some historians view him exclusively as a corrector of manuscripts that had already been set into type. However, the more accepted view is that he compared manuscripts and prepared them for publication, making him an editor. See Geanakoplos, Greeks Scholars, 120-1. For an extensive report of Musurus’ editing and remarks until his death in 1517, see Wilson, From Byzantium to Italy, 148-156.

125 Sanudo, Cità Excelentissima, eds. Labalme and White, 434, 438, and Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars, 132.
Latin that had been sent by Sultan Selim.\textsuperscript{126} In addition, Musurus had an official post under the Senate, entitled \textit{publica Graecarum literarum officina}, in which he censored Greek works published anywhere the city.\textsuperscript{127} Musurus also won a teaching position at the School of the Ducal Chancery, where he taught Greek to civil servants who were to fulfill administrative positions in the East. However, this phase of his teaching career came after his earlier and more notable occupation in Padua.

Possibly the most influential position to which Musurus was appointed by the Venetian government was at its state university at Padua. This institution was important because, after taking control of the nearby city in 1405, the Senate decreed just two years later that Venetians were forbidden from matriculating at any other Italian university. With his appointment, Musurus would have the important role of teaching Greek to future generations of Venetian officials.

The Athenian Demetrius Chalcondyles, the first to hold the Greek Chair at the University of Padua, discussed the importance of Greek learning in his famous inaugural oration in 1463.\textsuperscript{128} Chalcondyles argued for the value of Greek. “I believe that none of you is ignorant that the Latins received every kind of liberal arts from the Greeks… [who] flourished so much in every kind of virtue and learning, that it is authenticated: to no one did they yield in anything during the time in which they flourished.”\textsuperscript{129} Continuing that Latins are correctly thought to have later excelled all

\textsuperscript{126} Sanudo, \textit{Cità Excelentissima}, eds. Labalme and White, 440.
\textsuperscript{127} Barker, \textit{Aldus and Greek Script & Type}, 18.
\textsuperscript{128} Chalcondyles, a pupil and friend of Theodore Gaza, taught at Padua from 1463 to 1472 before moving on to Florence and then Milan. His most famous pupils were the Byzantine Janus Lascaris and the Venetian Giovanni Lorenzo. For more on Chalcondyles, see Geanakoplos, \textit{Interaction of “Sibling” Cultures}, 231-241.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 256.
other nations, Chalcondyles concludes “no one could deny that the study of Greek letters offers much fruit to the Latin in every kind of learning.”

Over the middle decades of the fifteenth century, the merit of Greek instruction was gaining favor despite opposition. The Venetian Lorenzo de’ Monaci, friend of humanist Francesco Barbaro, saw the study and translation of the language as useless. However, the increased prestige of humanist study changed that perception. By the time Musurus had taken the chair half a century later, Venice’s state university garnered prestige for its Greek studies and Venetian nobles encouraged their sons in pursuit of the knowledge that would make them better businessmen and citizens. Succeeding Lorenzo Camerti in July of 1503, Musurus held the chair in Greek at the University of Padua until 1509 when the War of the League of Cambrai forced the government to temporarily close the school and use its funds for military action.

The mark of a good Greek teacher was his ability to translate accurately, swiftly, and with style, a skill that Musurus undoubtedly possessed. Musurus’ teaching consisted of mornings devoted to grammar and evenings to subjects like the poetry of Homer, Hesiod, and Theocritus. Also, given Padua’s reputation as a center for Aristotelian studies, Musurus likely lectured on Aristotle. Thanks in large part to the publications of Manutius, he also employed a common form of instruction.

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130 Ibid.
131 Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars*, 133. Lorenzo Camerti was also referred to as “the Cretan” because of his seven years of study on the island. Musurus was originally appointed as a temporary replacement when Camerti was sent to Portugal to fulfill a role as an envoy, however when he died two years later, the appointment became permanent. With the fear of the great anti-Venetian alliance that now waged war against them on the mainland, 1509 also coincides with the closing of Manutius’ press and his temporary relocation to central Italy to protect his possessions.
132 Ibid., 137.
in which Greek and Latin texts were available side-by-side, allowing for translation and cross-referencing from one to the other.

From his beginnings as editor at the Aldine press, to his remarkable tenure at Padua and finally, his many positions working in conjunction with the Venetian government, Musurus played a large part in securing Venice’s role as a center for humanist studies at the turn of the sixteenth century. As Manutius himself said in the introduction to one of his noted publications, “Venice at this time can truly be called a second Athens because students of Greek letters gather from everywhere to hear Marcus Musurus, the most learned man of this age, whom you have zealously brought by public stipend.”\(^{133}\) Just as Bessarion had called the city of Venice another Byzantium, it was now also another Athens. The impact of Musurus’ teaching and editing were felt throughout Europe through the works of the pupils he instructed and the publications he helped to create. Marcus Musurus is just another example of the potency of Venetian resources in the humanist movement of the early sixteenth century and the reason for its primacy as a center for Greek learning.

Venice’s undoubted position as the center of humanist studies in Italy was short-lived, lasting just over two decades. By the time of Musurus’ death in 1517, he had left the city of Venice in favor of the new humanist center at Rome. Upon instruction from the Medici Pope Leo X, Musurus relocated in order to teach at the pope’s newly founded Greek college. “He must have become increasingly aware of the political decline of Venice and its replacement by Rome as the leading center of

\(^{133}\) From Manutius’ epistle in volume I of the Aldine \textit{Rhetorum Graecorum Orationes}, published April-May 1513, as quoted in Geanakoplos, \textit{Greek Scholars}, 143-4.
After fighting off the League of Cambrai and setting intellectual developments on hold for a short, Venice would never regain her previous prestige in the realm of humanist learning. After her scholars dispersed in fear of war and due to a lack of government-sponsored scholarly work, few made their way back after peace had been ensured in 1516. Though Venetian primacy in Greek Studies had ended, an important cultural legacy would continue through the Biblioteca Marciana, the Aldine Press, and the University at Padua. And throughout the city, relations had significantly changed between the intellectual community of both Greeks and Venetians.

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Chapter 3

Venetians in Constantinople and Greeks in Venice, 1200 – 1600

From the thirteenth to sixteenth century, both the Venetians and Greeks formed communities abroad in the cities of Constantinople and Venice. Motivated primarily by economic and political reasons, these communities developed in size and power as the Venetians and Greeks were forced to deal with one another’s presence. This chapter will analyze the types of immigrants and their motivations, as well as the representation and privileges they received from the local authorities as a community within the two cities. It will then focus on the experiences of each immigrant group. The chapter will also show the contrast between the experiences of the Venetians, individuals represented by their state, and the Greeks, members of a foreign ethnic group, based on the political and religious atmospheres in which they lived. As the Venetians lived under the jurisdiction of their own government while in Constantinople, the Greeks, lacking state representation after 1453, remained at the mercy of the Republic while in their capital.

The Trends of Migration between East and West

The first Venetians to make their way to Constantinople in the eleventh century did so in the hope of Black Sea and Levantine trade. As the Venetian trading empire grew, the nobles and wealthiest citizens were the proponents of this commercial enterprise. Under their direction, trading agents were also eventually sent out to posts throughout the Levant to help carry out their business dealings. Their safety was secured through the added presence of a Venetian embassy and its
staff. Therefore, in the initial stages, the Venetians who were fortunate enough to become involved in the prosperous trading opportunities that Constantinople afforded to the Republic were of the most elite classes: patricians and wealthy citizens who worked the mechanisms of trade or who represented the merchants through diplomacy. By the end of the period, however, “the romanticized patrician merchant world traveler of medieval Venice no longer existed. After Lepanto [1571], Venetian commerce in the Mediterranean came to be practiced not by adventuresome patricians but almost entirely by non-noble factors and agents.”

Commerce was now delegated to representatives overseas and a new type of merchant evolved as Venice’s monopoly on trade in the East came to an end.

By contrast, the first notable group of Greeks to make their way to Venice were artists and artisans enlisted to construct the church of San Marco in the eleventh century. As the Venetian trading empire gradually expanded into the Greek dominions, Greek merchants undoubtedly attempted to get involved. However, this objective probably met with little success as the Venetians strongly safeguarded their own interests by excluding all non-Venetians from participation in their trade. After 1204, when Venice and her Latin partners had captured Constantinople, the animosity of the Greeks toward these “barbarians” reached a new height and the city was no longer a favored destination. However, once Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus had reestablished the Byzantine Empire by 1261, the following two centuries showed a steady rise in Greek participation in the workings of Venetian trade and a gradual amelioration of frictions between the two groups.

With almost all Venetians who spent their time abroad acting as merchants, it was only natural that they learned vernacular Greek to carry on their trading activities in the Greek dominions. Although this participation in commerce did not always see the Venetian traders residing permanently in the East, their continued presence in the Greek lands was an unavoidable factor of their long excursions. For those who did remain in the East for generations, working as agents of the wealthy trading families, their relations with the Greeks extended further than business dealings. Geanakoplos states that, over time, an acculturation to the language and customs of their Greek neighbors created a familiarity that led to tolerance.\textsuperscript{136} Also, according to Deborah Howard, Venetians who lived in the East for decades normally clung to their national identity while abroad and kept in regular contact with the home city.\textsuperscript{137} Because so many Venetians had lived and continued to live with Greeks in Constantinople, the Morea, and the Ionian and Aegean isles, it did not feel awkward to be in the presence of Greeks upon their return home. And as a result, the Greek community in Venice would greatly benefit from the mutual familiarity between themselves and the Venetians.

By the late fourteenth century, with the Ottoman threat advancing, the next notable wave of Greeks to enter Italy included those sent by the Emperor on diplomatic missions. Making trips to the West to seek military assistance against the Turks on the grounds of protecting Christianity from the Islamic infidels, this group, as we have seen in Chapter Two, were the first in a long line of scholarly émigrés.

who would ultimately take up residence in Italy, and in large part Venice, playing an important part in the dissemination of Greek learning during the Renaissance.

Although some Venetians and Greeks remained in Constantinople after 1453, refugees were flooding into Venice as the Turks took over the city, leaving the Greek people without a state with which to identify. Without a patria of their own, Greeks now found it helpful to note their political status as Venetian subjects throughout the Eastern dominions. However, many also thought it would be safer to leave the areas of Ottoman occupation in search of opportunity in the West.

A common trend in diaspora, these displaced Greeks followed the currents of trade. Although many Greeks made their way to other established commercial centers such as Alexandria, the Greeks who lived in Venetian territory flooded to her Western capital. Continual attacks from the Turks at sea left Venice’s future in the East uncertain. Although she would retain Crete until 1669, Venice would lose Cyprus in 1570, her strongholds on the Morea such as Modon and Coron by 1540, and Negroponte and most of her smaller Aegean islands as early as 1480. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the regions of Greece and Dalmatia still under Venetian control, seemed to no longer retain one-fifth, or in some areas one-tenth of their previous population. Though a fair number of these Greeks went to Constantinople, an even greater number made their way to the stable and prosperous city of Venice. As one contemporary put it, “On the one hand, the continual invasions of the Turks deprive those provinces of their population; and so those who remain, thinking to protect themselves and live in peace, seek new countries. On the other, the desire for riches inspires them to leave their homelands or come to live in
Venice.”\(^{138}\) Both in fear and in hope, Greeks made their way westward to start new lives.

The well-known economic prospects associated with the Venetian trading empire made her home city a point of destination for the opportunistic foreigner. The majority of Greek immigrants found themselves employed within the business of trade upon their arrival. “Since so much merchandise converges upon Venice from all parts of the world, a large proportion of the population is employed in commerce and making more money than it would in any other place. In such a populace city there are plenty of opportunities for poor people who are willing to bestir themselves in the pursuit of honest gain.”\(^{139}\) These opportunities could be filled in a wide range of occupations for both the rich and poor, both skilled and unskilled Greek immigrants.

By the early sixteenth century, the social climate of Venice was greatly changing. With such a cosmopolitan outlook it was no surprise that various foreign groups made their way to the city on the lagoon. Another contemporary observer noted, “All the rest are such new people that there are very few of them whose fathers were born in Venice; and they are Slavs, Greeks, Albanians, come in other times to be sailors, or to earn money from the various trades pursued there, the profits of which have been able to keep them.”\(^{140}\) He also observed that these foreigners were so obsequious towards the nobles it was as if they almost worshiped them. Though fear may have been a factor for some of this behavior, it seems that in this city full of


wealth and prestige, the immigrants stood in awe of their destination and its powerful elite.

The common approach taken by many Greeks, as well as the other foreigners in the city, was also noted. As most immigrants, especially in the early stages, were adult males in pursuit of work, one Venetian observed, “The majority also have families in their own countries, and many after a little while leave for home, and in their place send others, who care for nothing except making money; and so from them can come no disturbance whatever.”

This network of families between the eastern colonies and the city of Venice allowed for Greek immigrants to prosper while participating, by fulfilling the menial yet essential roles, in the Venetian trading mechanism. Therefore in the case of both the Venetians and Greeks, the relocation to the foreign cities of Constantinople and Venice was primarily for economic, and to a lesser degree, political reasons.

The Foreigners’ Relationship to Local Authority

The relationship of foreigners with the local government was remarkably different in the two cities. The most fundamental difference was that the Venetian community in Constantinople functioned almost completely autonomously within the Greek metropolis. The Venetian embassy, under the direction of the bailo, operated under the close observation of the Doge, the Senate, and the Council of Ten. Through diplomatic relations going back to the eleventh century, Venice was able to guarantee herself full jurisdiction over her own citizens within Constantinople. After 1261, following the Frankish conquest and nearly six decades of holding three-eighths of

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Ibid.
the city’s area under the occupation of the Latin Empire, Venice maintained this jurisdiction, only required to answer to Byzantine courts in the case of homicide.

In contrast, the Greeks who made their way to Venice were people acting independently and no formal institution of the Byzantine Empire represented them there. Because Venice’s government understood its success as a whole would depend on its patrician merchants’ success in trade with the East, it assured their status through diplomatic negotiations with the Emperor. However, because the Greeks lacked the representation of a political entity, especially after 1453 with the end of the Byzantine Empire, they were forced to ask Venice for concessions from the city’s magistracies. The most important of these concessions were the right to found a Scuola, or confraternity, which was granted in 1498 and would become the representative body of their community, and the right to construct and worship in their own church, S. Giorgio dei Greci, which was approved in 1526. However, these forms of representation greatly differed. Whereas the Venetians were protected by an official government body with immense diplomatic power, the Greeks were not guaranteed benefits of any kind through their state-less organizations.

The policies of the Venetian government toward the native and foreign inhabitants of their city and colonies demonstrated tolerance and even offered the chance of integration. Venice allowed the possibility of gaining citizenship, a title that would afford great privileges such as tax exemption and the right to trade, through the whole of Venice’s empire and trading posts. By the mid-sixteenth century, a time when the Greek population had firmly established itself within the city, attaining citizenship was a possibility for any foreigner who could prove his
allegiance to the Republic. A reading of the deliberations and orders, “written by Venetian ancestors makes it clear that the benefit and privilege of citizenship are extended to those persons who wish to remain in this city and be domiciled permanently herein, together with all their descendants, renouncing allegiance to every other city, with the firm intention of dying and living through their descendants in this land.” However, it was noted that once men gained these rights, after roughly a decade, they would abuse them by leaving the city and taking their acquired wealth elsewhere.

Therefore, the Senate determined that citizenship at home, that is, within the city of Venice only, was contingent on fifteen years consecutive residence with the man’s entire family and the payment of all taxes. In order to have citizenship status abroad, the fifteen years was increased to twenty-five years consecutive residency, along with faithful tax-paying. After citizenship was granted, all men were obligated to proclaim themselves Venetian citizens everywhere that they traded and even present a record of this every five years. In addition, all citizens were forced to take an oath that all goods which they transported were indeed their own so as to avoid abuse of their privileges by their foreign brothers.

Venice’s policy of tolerance provided that the law would be the same for all of the city’s inhabitants: citizens, Venetians by birth, or foreigners. Combined with the longstanding relationship between the two groups, both of which identified as Roman and Christian, a considerable amount of respect was afforded to the Greeks as

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143 Ibid. If a Venetian wife was taken, the residency was only eight years.
a community. As we shall see, while the Emperor was obligated to provide certain things such as port facilities and judicial jurisdiction to the Venetian community in Constantinople through diplomatic arrangements, Venice merely agreed to allow an ethnic organization and the construction of their own church for the Greeks living in their city. Because the Greek ethnic community lacked any previous foundations in the fifteenth century, the Greeks were forced to build this organizational structure from the ground up themselves. Whereas Venice had her military prowess as a bargaining chip to maintain her own authority abroad, the Greeks lived under the local authority of Venice while being afforded the possibility of citizenship and the privilege of founding devotional and charitable institutions, a benefit that could be withdrawn at any time.

**The Venetian Community in Constantinople**

By the end of the twelfth century, a contemporary chronicler reported that the Venetian community in Constantinople numbered around 20,000. Although the total population of the city was between 800,000 and 1,000,000, considering that the size of Venice c. 1200 was only 64,000 and that Paris had less than 100,000, this Venetian community was of a considerable size.\(^\text{145}\)

Venice was first granted the right to establish a trading base in Constantinople in 1082. In acknowledgement of Venice’s military support against the Normans, the Byzantine Empire gave jurisdiction to the Venetians over their own quarter within the city to act as their trading base. “Before this time Venetians in Constantinople had

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lived under Byzantine rule; now they were able to preserve their native loyalties and affiliations, and, even more importantly, to keep in regular- and regulated- contact with the homeland.” 146 Along with their quarter, the Venetians were granted tax reductions, pensions, and port facilities. They were also granted permission to worship according to the Latin rite in the churches of Santa Maria de Embulo and San Marco. In judicial affairs, the Venetians had their own judges to whom even Greek plaintiffs had to submit their cases when the accused was a Venetian. 147

All functioned relatively smoothly until 1171 when the Venetians were expelled from their quarter by the Emperor for attacking the Genoans. Though they were later welcomed back and even compensated for their losses by the Byzantines, the Fourth Crusade would dramatically change the balance of power within the city in favor of Venice. 148

The Fourth Crusade and the Reconquest by the Byzantines

In 1204, Venice and the Latins had conquered Byzantium. At the price of this Latin victory, the city of Constantinople fell victim to the effects of warfare: the plundering of its riches, the burning of its buildings, and the end of its glory. The contemporary chronicler Niketas Choniates discussed the pillaging of Constantinople’s treasures, including Justinian’s tomb, and the melting down of ancient bronze statues for their previous metals. He claims that the Latins showed no remorse or respect. “The Western nations spared neither the living nor the dead, but

146 Howard, Venice & the East, 30.
148 Ibid., 267-8. It is assumed by scholars that the Venetians were not yet back in the city by 1182 when there was an attack on the Latins because it is missing from their chronicles.
beginning with God and his servants, they displayed complete indifference and irreverence to all.”

Choniates was also wracked with fear and disgust of the burning of the city. Lamenting the destruction of the city at the hands of the crusaders, he notes that as the Latins set fire to the buildings,

the flames divided… meandering like a river of fire. Porticoes collapsed, the elegant structures of the agorae toppled, and huge columns went up in smoke like so much brushwood. Nothing could stand before these flames… Shooting out at intervals, the embers darted through the sky, leaving a region untouched by the blaze, and then destroying it when they turned back and fell upon it… neither the baked brick nor the deep set foundations could withstand the heat, and everything within was consumed like candlewicks.

Because so much had been destroyed, the city remained in great need of reconstruction, a task that the Latins would later undertake only for the benefit of their own profit. Venice did not treat the city well during the almost sixty years it held a majority of its territory and exercised the highest de facto authority under the Latin Empire. In the decade following the reconquest of Constantinople by the Byzantines, discontent with the Venetian presence was at a new height. In the eyes of the Greeks, the city was “little more than a shadow of its former self,” after being ravaged in 1204.

Following the Crusade, the numbers of Venetian immigrants significantly grew as Venice acquired three-eights of the city, including its most strategic port

149 Niketas Choniates and Harry J. Magoulias, O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1984), 357-60.
150 Ibid., 303.
areas along the Golden Horn, as well as a commanding role in its business affairs. According to Geanakoplos, Doge Pietro Zano even contemplated transferring the seat of government to Constantinople in 1214. Within the next two decades, Marino Zeno fortified the colony, nobles like Marco Polo established private residences and by 1220 Jacopo Tiepolo had built a new fondaco, or merchant house, a regulated and protected site for all trading activities between Venetians and their clients and suppliers. As the Venetians stripped lead from the roofs of Byzantine churches to build their fortifications, the homes of the local inhabitants fell into disrepair, and much of the previous splendor of the city was lost.

After the reconquest of the city in 1261, the reestablished Byzantine Empire began negotiations with the Latin powers. Despite the discontent of his people, Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus could not deny the importance of Venice to Constantinople’s economy. “It was clear [to the Emperor] that Constantinople, grand entrepôt that it was, could not truly flourish without the presence of the Latin merchants. They were more enterprising than the Greeks, who were rooted in antiquated methods of business; and all too frequently the Latins had at their disposal larger amounts of liquid capital.” The emperor’s policy was generous but realistic. His settlement with the Latins in 1261 stipulated that each group would be allowed to live undisturbed in a strictly defined area of the city, that each Latin colony would be subject to its own laws and customs under an officer

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152 Howard, *Venice & The East*, 32. The number of Venetians estimated to be living in Constantinople in the thirteenth century ranges from 10,000 to 30,000, although the accuracy of these figures cannot be confirmed by contemporary sources.
dispatched from home, and that merchants were to pay no duties and would be allowed to continue their activities in accordance with their former practices.\textsuperscript{155}

The proposed Truce of 1265 offered to Venice by Emperor Palaeologus called for an alliance between the two powers, promising quarters in Constantinople, tax exemption, and the expulsion of Genoa from the Empire. However, the Doge rejected it because he wanted to keep his possessions throughout the Aegean as well as the possibility of regaining the city by force.\textsuperscript{156} At the cost of maintaining future opportunity, Venice missed a chance to oust her greatest rival from the Empire.

Within the next three years, the Doge of Venice and Byzantine Emperor finally came to an agreement. With the Truce of 1268, Emperor Palaeologus granted a considerable number of concessions to the Venetians, allowing them “to settle and trade in the ports of the Empire, to use their own weights and measures, to worship according to Latin rites in their own churches, and to enact their own laws for all crimes except homicide.”\textsuperscript{157} Even more concessions would be made. In the subsequent agreement of 1277, the Byzantine emperor was also responsible for

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  \item These representatives were the podestà for Genoa, the consul for Pisa, and the bailo for Venice. At this time only a few Venetians remained in comparison to the Genoans and Pisan communities. The Venetians had fled the city in thirty ships to go to Negroponte after their defeat in battle in 1261. The Genoans then flowed into the city because they had signed a pact, the Treaty of Nymphaeum, with Emperor Palaeologus before the reconquest. The response from Venice was to threaten Genoa with excommunication through their relations with Rome in order to split Genoa from the Greeks in their anti-Venetian alliance. Palaeologus wanted good relations with Venice but still distrusted them to a degree. His main aim was to prevent an alliance between Venice and her Latin allies under Latin Emperor Baldwin I who could challenge his reaffirmed Byzantium.
  \item The stipulations of the truce were as follows: 1. Quarters were promised to Venetian colonists in Constantinople, Thessalonica, and other important centers in the Greek Empire, with the chief official of the colonists to be called the bailo. 2. Venetian merchants were to be exempt from duties in Byzantium. 3. Genoa was to be expelled from Byzantine Empire and Michael promised to not conclude a treaty with them without the consent of Venice. 4. Venice would remain at peace with Michael, even if others attacked Constantinople. 5. If Genoa attacked Constantinople, Venice would supply Michael with an equal number of ships. 6. Venice would keep Modon, Coron, and Crete. 7. Michael could attack the other Latins on Negroponte but not the Venetians, and they could not give assistance to their neighbors. 8. Venice would have to surrender all of the Aegean possessions acquired during the conquest. The Doge was most dissatisfied with articles four and eight.
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\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 182-3.
\textsuperscript{157} Howard, \textit{Venice & The East}, 32.
providing and maintaining the house of the bailo, one warehouse, and twenty-five lodgings for merchants. 158

During this time, the bailo 159 would become one of the most powerful men in the city, at times second only to the Emperor himself. As the chief ambassador, the term bailo came from his role as representative to the Byzantine Emperor, or Basilieus. Second in command to the bailo was his secretary, responsible for correspondence with the Senate, the Council of Ten, and other magistracies in the home city. The secretary served as the notary for the Venetian nation, notarizing wills and last testaments, as well as commercial transactions, and would also regularly substitute for the bailo. 160 As time progressed, another important job for the secretary was to gather information on Ottoman affairs. With Venice as the sole regular courier between Europe and the Levant, Venetian authorities could examine most of the mail that went through the city.

As Venice’s administration represented Venice’s citizens, it also came to represent her Venetian and Greek subjects. For those Greeks who remained in Venetian territory after 1261, Venetian resident status was increasingly important for legal purposes. “Whether merchants or diplomats, slaves or renegades, Greeks or exiles, all who considered themselves Venetians interacted in some fashion with the

158 Ibid., 35.
159 The term bailo comes from the primary function as Venice’s representative before the Byzantine Emperor, or Basilieus. The position began simply for commercial affairs but then grew to take on a role as ambassador. The bailo even wore imperial purple. In all other colonies and outposts, a Venetian consul would protect the rights and security of settlers and visitors, sometimes with the assistance of two counselors. The Venetians also built their own premises on Black Sea ports such as in Trebizond and had similar provisions in other areas of the Levant at the same time, especially in Damascus, Alexandria, and Acre.
160 Dursteler, Venetians in Constantinople, 33.
officials and institutions of Venice in Constantinople.” Their base of operations was Venice’s bailate, the huge complex that acted as its political headquarters and housed the bailo and his famiglia, a group ranging in size anywhere from fifty to one hundred people at a given time. The embassy served as the location of the meetings of the Council of Twelve, the magistracy in Constantinople that emulated the Council of Ten back at home whose task was to maintain state security. The bailate also had public rooms, including a chancellery where inhabitants and visitors would register their political status, a banquet hall for festivities, and a small chapel for worship.

After the Ottoman takeover, between 1453 and 1499 the bailate relocated across the Golden Horn to the international suburb of Galata, where the Genoan colony had been located following 1204. (See Map 4) Following the Venetian-Ottoman war of 1537-40, a second household was made for the summer months. Located in the Vigne di Pera, the hills just outside the city walls, the location was not only cooler and a sanctuary from the plague but also afforded the bailo more freedom. As the suburb of Galata closed its gates at night, the new location afforded the Venetian official and his staff the ability to function under less surveillance.

As did their bailate, after 1453, the Venetian community was also forced to move to Galata from their prime location inside the city. This suburb now functioned as the center of foreign communities under the Ottomans. Their neighbors were no

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161 Ibid., 40.
162 Ibid., 32. The upper famiglia consisted of the positions of secretary, coadiutore (assistant secretary), rasonato (accountant), chaplain, house physician (or barber, who could perform simple medical procedures), dragomans, and giovani della lingua. The lower famiglia was comprised of servants, pages, squires, and couriers.
163 Ibid., 25-6. The bailo was even suspected to have harbored escaping Greeks and Venetians who had been enslaved by the Ottomans.
longer the Pisans and Genoans, but the French, English, and Ragusans as well as the Greeks from the islands of their own *stato da mar*.

In the early years, Venetian merchants continued to enjoy the favor of Mehmed the Conqueror, who continued to acknowledge their previous privileges until 1463 when the Republic declared war on the Sultan. Over the next fifteen years the Venetian presence in the city dwindled to almost nothing and the Ottomans used this time to intentionally weaken the city’s dominant position in Mediterranean trade.\(^{164}\) Constantly at odds, a series of six Ottoman-Venetian Wars continued for over a century until 1571, with the Venetian defeat at the Battle of Lepanto and the loss of Cyprus. Although the Venetians would stay in the new Istanbul for over two centuries following 1453, their Golden Age in the city had ended.

The change to Ottoman rule meant a new language, which necessitated the use of dragomans. Derived from the Persian *terdjuman*, dragomans mastered Turkish and served as official interpreters. In 1500, there was only one dragoman employed by the Venetians, but this number had increased to six by the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. By 1551, the Senate had conceived a program to train young, loyal Venetian citizens and subjects in the eastern languages to act as future dragomans. These were called *giovani di lingua*, or language apprentices and the practice was copied by other western powers in the Levant. The grand dragoman would spend his time in the divan and the palaces of the Ottomans whereas the little dragoman would stay at the port and merchant loggia, interpreting for the merchants and dealing with Ottoman commercial officials.\(^{165}\)

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\(^{164}\) Ibid., 24.

\(^{165}\) Ibid., 36.
**Greeks and Venetians Together in Constantinople**

Because the Ottomans preserved existing treaty provisions, after the fall in 1453 there was also a large Greek population in Constantinople living under the jurisdiction of the “official nation” of Venice and within its community in Galata. Because of desperate conditions in the islands as the Ottomans continued to attack, these Greeks were officially discouraged from coming to the city because they would, mostly innocently, pass on information that the Venetian government hoped to censure for political and military reasons. However,

Despite the problems that their presence created, and the attempts by Venice to get them to leave, the unofficial subjects and the official Venetian nation were interconnected, as each furnished the other with necessary services and support. The Venetian chancellery provided for Greek-Venetians the same sort of functions it did for the official community: registering wills and testaments, administering justice, registering sales of properties, providing deposit services, and so forth.  

The two groups found a way for both to benefit through their exchange in the city.

Greeks from Venetian colonies migrating to Constantinople found jobs as sailors, shoemakers, and grocers, as well as positions in the cloth industry and shipyards. However, as required by Venetian law, these Greeks registered themselves annually at the Venetian embassy in Constantinople under the status of Venetian subjects.

The *fede* was a legal document issued by the chancellery which attested to the status of the resident Greek men and women as Venetian subjects. Though these were Venetian certifications, Ottoman institutions accepted them as valid, legally binding documents and as proof that the bearer was indeed a Venetian subject and therefore not subject to the special taxes required of all non-Muslim...subjects of the sultan.  

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166 Ibid., 83.
167 Ibid., 86.
This simple act allowed the workers to remain under the bailo’s jurisdiction and evade Ottoman taxes. Under the protection of the Venetian bailo, this group of enterprising Greeks, mainly from Crete, traded wine and also lemons, olives, and oil which were all highly sought after by the Ottomans. Although the Greeks were getting the better part of the deal, trading their product to the Ottomans while evading their taxes, the bailo did not mind because it provided a good source of income for the Venetian community as they collected duties on the traded items. \[169\]

**The Greeks in Venice**

Beginning in the mid-fourteenth century, the Greeks who migrated to Venice came mostly from the colonies of Crete, Cyprus, and Ionian islands such as Corfu. The greatest influx of Greeks into the city occurred between 1453 and 1550. As the hope of regaining Constantinople dwindled and the Greeks began to accept their fate as a stateless ethnic group, more and more made their way to the West in fear of Muslim occupation. In 1478, the community totaled more than 4,000 out of 110,000, whereas by 1580, this number had almost quadrupled, amounting to an impressive 15,000 out of a similar total. \[170\]

Venice was undoubtedly an attractive destination. James Ball argues, by the end of the fifteenth and into sixteenth century, “Venice was then the richest, most populous metropolis of western Europe. The city was a meeting place for every race, and a veritable babel of tongues was spoken on the piazzas, in the market places, and

\[168\] Ibid., 16.
\[169\] Ibid., 53. However, Greeks would sometimes attempt to evade the Venetian taxes as well.
\[170\] Geanakoplos, Greek Scholars in Venice, 60.
shops."\textsuperscript{171} Greek ballads and songs could be heard throughout all sections of the city and there was even a half-Venetian, half-Greek dialect circulating.\textsuperscript{172}

The Greeks who made their way to Venice had a number of occupational choices. Many were lodging house inn-keepers, tailors, painters, and workers of precious metal, caulkers and carpenters in Venice’s naval arsenal, and sailors.\textsuperscript{173} The poor and unskilled could find steady work providing labor. However, most Greeks were independent artisans in the private sector. Intellectuals, as we have seen extensively in Chapter Two, also came to Venice where they found work as scribes duplicating Greek manuscripts and then as editors and correctors in the Greek press. These remarkable immigrants were at the heart of the larger humanist community that made Venice a center of the dissemination of Greek learning at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Some Greeks also supplied military service to the Venetian state as \textit{estradioti}, youths from the Greek colonies who made up the republic’s light cavalry and proved themselves to be an important branch of the army.\textsuperscript{174} After garnering a reputation for their daring in their fights against the Turks and Germans, the Senate even appointed Greeks as their officers, making it a unit comprised completely of Greek soldiers.

The most enterprising and successful could engage in commerce, possibly even as ship captains, and by the late fifteenth century, a type of wealthy Greek sea merchant had emerged. As Ottoman expansion increased the risks of commerce,\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 69.
\textsuperscript{172} Ball notes that Greek was the origin of a considerable part of the Venetian lexis, its influence most profoundly felt in activities connected to commerce, shipping and the naming of commodities. He argues that nautical terms provide a valuable basis for comparison between Venetian and other coastal languages of the Mediterranean. See Ball, \textit{Greek Community in Venice}, 23.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.,141-2.
\textsuperscript{174} Geanakoplos, \textit{Greek Scholars in Venice}, 55-6. \textit{Estradioti} is the Venetian form of \textit{stratiotes}, from the Greek for soldier.
Greeks, unlike other foreigners, were allowed to insure their goods with Venetians. Signing trade agreements in front of Venetian notaries, these wealthy Greeks would advance money for trade voyages, staggering their investments onto many ships and gaining impressive returns. Whereas investment in land was harder to transfer, the assets and shares acquired in shipping passed onto their heirs.

Over a few generations, the Greek community had grown significantly wealthier collectively. The richest Greek families in Venice, the Samariaris from Zakynthos, Curcumeli from Crete, and Cubli from Nauplion, were the same families who greatly helped fund the building and philanthropic activities of the Greek Scuola, or confraternity. Even though they fought each other for influence within the scuola, they were allies in trade and important members of the community, endowing much of their wealth to benefit their fellow Greeks.

The Neighbors of the Greeks in Venice

A study of the ethnic communities that lived in the city of Venice alongside the Greeks will demonstrate how Venetian authorities treated immigrant groups differently. The Greeks living in Venice undoubtedly constituted the largest immigrant group within the metropolis but they were not alone. In many instances, the Greeks were seen by the Venetians as a lesser of evils in relation to their foreign neighbors and were accorded much respect and dignity. Venetian lawmakers did not attempt to segregate the Greeks in the way they did beggars, prostitutes, and Jews, nor did they find them as definitively heretical as the Muslims, and in the later years, Protestants which they also tolerated. Of other foreigners, the Germans, Jews, and
Turks were the most substantial minority groups.\textsuperscript{175} The function of these immigrants, as with the Greeks, was to take part in the thriving commerce of Venice. Each of these groups had to make distinct arrangements with the Venetian authorities separately concerning trade, residence, and the practice of their religion.

The German population, a predominantly Protestant group as the sixteenth century progressed, were stationed around the \textit{Fondaco dei Tedeschi} at Rialto, a collegial exchange house, which acted as the compulsory residence for all German merchants and the headquarters of their trade.\textsuperscript{176} Jews, who functioned primarily as moneylenders for the poor, were forced after 1516 to live within the confines of a ghetto within the city. There were two somewhat distinct groups, the Germanic Jews who found a niche in the trade of second-hand clothing and used articles, and the Sephardic Jews, from Spain, Portugal, and the Levant, who acted as agents for trade between Venice and their places of origin. The official acceptance of their presence in the city was based on the supposed possibility of converting them to Christianity. However, new Christian converts, suspected of returning to Judaism, were called “Maranos” and officially banned as heretics in 1497 and 1550.\textsuperscript{177} By the fifteen century, the number of Turks within the city was experiencing a dramatic rise and by the sixteenth century, the Turkish community in the \textit{sestiere} of Cannaregio had amassed to such a number that a designated area for the infidels was proposed.\textsuperscript{178} The Turks agreed without protest, wanting to have an established \textit{fondaco} of their

\textsuperscript{175} There were also Albanians, Slavs, Dalmations, and Armenians from their eastern neighboring areas; the Muslims: Arabs, Turks, and Moors; and the English, Flemings, French, and Spanish from the West.  
\textsuperscript{176} David Chambers and Brian Pullan, eds. \textit{Venice: A Documentary History 1450-1630} (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 325. The warehouse acted in a similar fashion to the \textit{scuola} as means of national incorporation, however, its primary function was economic rather than religious and philanthropic.  
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 326.  
\textsuperscript{178} Ibid. However, Venice did not provide full accommodations to the Turks until 1621.
own that would provide greater security and convenience than they had as individuals.

*The Greeks and their Religion*

The Council of Florence, concluded in 1439, was a turning point in Greek-Italian relations concerning the church. By the establishment of a new Uniate faith, one that agreed upon issues of doctrine while securing papal supremacy, the Greeks were able to practice under the Greek rite while affiliated with the See of Rome. As the proceedings ended in 1439, Doge Francesco Foscari even offered the Basilica of St. Mark to the Byzantine emperor and his contingents for a celebration of the union.179

Before 1439, the Greeks in Venice worshipped in a side chapel or at a separate altar in the city’s Catholic churches, including S. Giovanni in Bragora and S. Biagio, both in the *sestiere* of Castello. However, it was also common for priests to preach in the Greek rite in private homes. Upon hearing of this practice, the Venetian government threatened these priests with exile from the city for five years. In spite of these threats, there are only a few noted instances where offenders were actually prosecuted. Its tolerance was widespread and even in cases of wrongdoing the Greek homeowners were left unpunished.

From the 1439 decree of Union there were no immediate unfavorable consequences; on the contrary, there was soon even support from the Pope himself. In 1445 Eugenius IV, himself a Venetian but not of the patriciate, wrote to the Bishop of Castello to request a concession to Greek priests to celebrate in the church of S.

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Biagio without interference from the parish priest.\textsuperscript{180} The Pope even suggested that if there was a more convenient place, it should be made available to them without restriction. In 1456, the Greeks first received permission from the Senate to worship in an already existing church and the possibility to construct a new one.

However, political climates change and the workings of the church followed. “The Greeks who had in 1456 lived under the ‘obedience of the Holy Roman Catholic Church’ were now regarded as ‘followers of the Greek heresy’ and ‘wandering from Catholic law.’”\textsuperscript{181} In a decree of the Council of Ten in 1470, the worship of the Greeks was restricted to the church of S. Biagio.\textsuperscript{182} For all those found not in compliance, penalties would be assessed. The threat of exile was replaced by fines and was no longer only for the priests but also for the worshippers. With these restrictions in place, the discontent of the Greeks grew.

Their time at S. Biagio was troubled further because the state, patriarchate and papacy were at odds with one another over the Greek presence.\textsuperscript{183} The pope remained responsible for the nomination of the Greek priests, most often humanist intellectuals, while the patriarchate, the local Venetian ecclesiastical authority, handled internal disputes. Of these disputes, many involved disagreements between the Venetians and Greeks forced to share the same church. In October 1511, a petition was addressed to the Council of Ten by the \textit{estradioti}. After a discussion of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{180} Ibid., 30.
\bibitem{181} Ibid., 36.
\bibitem{182} Ibid., 45. The Greek princess, Anna Notaras was an exception to the restriction in 1470 as she was granted permission to worship according to the Greek rite in her own home.
\bibitem{183} Ibid., 35. James Ball argues in his dissertation on that, “The civil power had for its considerations civil order and the desire to retain the goodwill of the Greeks; the Patriarchate tried to guard its own authority against usurpation by the civil power and, especially, against the independence of the Greeks and their consequent direct dependence on the Papacy; the popes often intervened for personal motives, of sympathy for or antipathy to the Greeks.”
\end{thebibliography}
their unfailing service to the state and the problems arising from the shared space of S. Biagio, the soldiers asked for the permission to build a church of their own.

We believe that your lordships regard us as true and Catholic Christians, and will treat us as such by granting us this most holy favour. Otherwise we shall know that your lordships treat us worse than the Turks and Moors do their Christian subjects, for they let them have churches and conduct their ceremonies and services in public, and we, who are such loyal servants of your lordships and Christians to boot, cannot believe that you will refuse us this most honourable request, but rather hope that you will grant us even more than we ask. ¹⁸⁴

After arguing a strong case, the Republic agreed to their request, contingent upon the approval of Rome. The granting of this petition was an acknowledgement of the admirable services of the estradioti, who had appealed to the authorities on behalf of their community and were greatly rewarded.

Establishing the church was a slow process. The Greeks were required to notify the Council of Ten of the land that they had found for the church so that the location could be approved by the state. They chose a site for their new church in the district of S. Canciano and, after the approval of Leo X in 1514, the Greeks received permission from the Council of Ten to purchase the site on July 11, 1526. ¹⁸⁵ The foundation stone of S. Giorgio dei Greci was laid on November 1, 1539. By building their own church with the approval of the Council of Ten, despite protests from the Patriarch of Venice, Antonio Contarini, the Greeks had come under the direct control of the Papacy, effectively freeing themselves from local religious jurisdiction. This direct dependence was symbolized by an annual tribute to Rome of five pounds of white wax. ¹⁸⁶ The Greek Scuola, the secularly regulated corporate body established

¹⁸⁵ Ball, Greek Community in Venice, 48.
¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 49.
in 1499 that allowed the Greeks to have representation as a recognized national community in Venice, had made the founding of the Church of S. Giorgio dei Greci possible.

**The Greek Scuola in Venice**

In Venice, *scuole* acted as economic and social welfare institutions during the late medieval and early modern periods. These confraternities “furnished the mechanism whereby the rich could give for socially useful purposes and by which the deserving- in general the poor and even in certain cases the state itself- could obtain the benefits of their fellows’ piety and patriotism.”\(^{187}\) The presence of *scuole* in Venice took on a different role as well. While in other areas their may have provoked reform or revolution, in Venice they acted as agents of social peace and stability, “as their activity contributed to the ‘myth’ of Venice.”\(^{188}\)

There were four types of *scuole*. The largest and wealthiest were the *Scuole Grandi*. Numbering only six in total within the city, they had impressive headquarters, large revenues, and lengthy enrollment lists. The *Scuole Piccole* were more numerous and smaller in size than their larger cousins but were regulated in a similar fashion. In general, they tended to be more closely associated with a local parish. The *Arti* were economic *scuole* that were fairly numerous and functioned as trade guilds. And finally, the *Scuole Nazionale* represented specific groups of foreigners, allowing them to congregate together while remaining under the regulation of the government.

\(^{187}\) Ibid., 89.  
\(^{188}\) Ibid., 88.
Since the Venetian authorities had permitted the establishment of a national
*scuola* for the Albanians (1442) and also for the Slavs (1451), the Greeks felt they
deserved a *scuola* of their own as well, defined by their language and affiliation to the
Greek Orthodox Church. With these two characteristics designating their
community, the group petitioned the Republic for the right to found their own ethnic
confraternity in 1498.

The said Greeks, knowing the most merciful disposition of Your Most
Excellent Serenity, and trusting in their past service and unfailing loyalty, beg
and petition your Serenity and the most illustrious and excellent Council of
Ten that as a matter of grace they may in their infinite mercy permit the
Greeks to found a *scuola* at the church of San Biagio in the sestier of Castello,
as the Slavs, Albanians and other nations have already done; and the Greeks
ask this on the grounds of their devotion.\textsuperscript{189}

Approval was granted. The secular authorities viewed the *scuola* as way to regulate
the activities of the Greeks through an official medium. For the foreign community,
this regulation was welcomed because it also provided a mechanism for discourse
between the defined ethnic group and the local government.

The Greeks followed the same pattern as the other *scuole* throughout the city.
The Venetian magistracy the Provveditori di Comun provided supervision of the
administrative bodies of the *scuole*. At its head was the guardian or *Gastaldo*, who
would conduct business with a cabinet, or *banca*, of twelve or sixteen. Second in
command was the *Vicario*, followed by the *Scrivan*, or executive controller. The
*scuola*’s fellows elected this administrative body to its positions. Each year these
fellows would gather at a meeting, the *euthuna*, where they would elect new officials,
always with the hope of maintaining a stellar reputation for their organization.

\textsuperscript{189}“Petition of the Greek community, c. 1498.” in *Venice: A Documentary History*, 333.
The founding members of the *scuola* were those present at its first meeting in 1499. While the attendance count for the Albanians and Slavs numbered 81 and 99 respectively, the Greeks only had a turnout of 17 at their first convening. However, whereas the Albanian and Slavic *iscritti*, or members of the *scuola*, decreased over the years, the Greeks grew immensely. In 1499, subscription in the *scuola* was up to 46, rising to 100 in 1501, and reaching its peak in 1527, just after the site for their church had been purchased, at 130.\(^{190}\) This number may seem small considering the Greek community numbered in the thousands, however, the *scuola* was a representative body that included only the more elite and motivated Greek immigrants, such as intellectuals, clergy, and successful businessmen.

Once the *scuola* was founded, it had to draw up its *capitoli*, or articles of association, a list of documents associated with the group and the philanthropic aims of the organization. The aims of the Greeks included helping the infirm, burying the dead, and assisting both widows and orphans.\(^{191}\) The *scuola* later also established a hostel for Greeks and set up a fund to provide dowries for the daughters of the poorer fellows of the organization. Along with their charitable works, these fellows were also obligated to attend Mass each week as well as funerals for members of the community. If they did not attend, they were subject to fines that would be put toward the maintenance of the confraternity and its philanthropy.

The *scuola*’s greatest achievement, as we have seen, was establishing the church of S. Giorgio dei Greci. Although the confraternity itself was comprised of only elite members of this community, the church was the manifestation in which

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\(^{190}\) Ball, *Greek Community in Venice*, 97-100.  
\(^{191}\) Ibid., 104.
their work reached the extent of the ethnic group. With the responsibilities of running their church, appointing and paying its priests, funding its construction, and representing it to the Republic, the Patriarch, and the Papacy, the Greek Scuola’s role as a corporative mechanism for the community was essential. “The petition of 1498 gave them a defined- and privileged- position in Venetian society… The foundation of a Scuola would not only provide the mechanism for their social organization and activities but also assure them of freedom from all but the Venetian civil authorities.”

Upon its founding at the turn of the sixteenth century, the Greek immigrants, like their Albanian and Slavic predecessors, had also defined themselves as an ethnic community within the city of Venice.

Both the Greek and Venetian expatriate communities that developed in Venice and Constantinople from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries found ways to thrive while living in the company of one another. From unstable beginnings, fraught with war and anger in their relations to a better understanding following the Council of Florence in 1439 and the subsequent loss of the Empire in 1453, Greeks began to depend more and more on the Venetians, their old enemies. A change had occurred: the Venetians were no longer simply the conquerors and the Greeks the conquered. The Venetian trading empire gradually began to incorporate enterprising Greeks in her host city and her dominions. Although Venice maintained military superiority and commercial monopoly, the Greeks were incorporated into this position as opposed to being a hindrance to it.

192 Ibid., 109.
Both groups ultimately established a form of representation, whether through an official extension of her home government for the Venetians or the confraternity created by the Greeks. Venice was able to use her diplomatic sway because of her imperial power in the region to have an extension of their home government protecting them in Constantinople. Though Venetians could relocate to Constantinople to do business and maintain their rights and privileges, the Greek migration to Venice, especially in the stage before 1500, was a journey of uncertainty. Since the Greeks lagged behind the Venetians both politically and economically, her lack of authority created an obvious obstacle. To combat this deficiency, the Greeks appealed to Venetian authorities on the grounds of their religion and their service to the state, and in turn, were greatly rewarded.
Conclusion

Especially after the Great Schism of 1054, East and West was thoroughly divided, this time on the ground of religious ideology and its political and social implications. No longer fellow Romans, Greeks began to see the Latins as barbarians and vice versa. With 1204, this divide was only made deeper and this conception of barbarianism was confirmed in the eyes of the Greeks. This thesis has shown how there was a profound change from the Byzantine view of the Venetians as barbarians back to the view of them as fellow Christians and Romans, four centuries after the schism of East and West.

As opposed to other Italian city-states that made their way to the East such as Genoa and Florence, Venice stands out because of her economic, military, and diplomatic superiority. The longevity of Venice’s interactions with the East greatly surpassed her Italian peers. Beginning with her early trade endeavors in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Venice remained in the East, at least in some capacity, until the eighteenth century. Although she gained and lost much of Byzantine territory between 1204 and 1453, she kept possession of Crete and its mixture of Venetian and Greek subjects for four centuries, not losing her territory to the Turks until 1669.

After 1204, the Venetians were a distinct breed of Latins to the Greeks, superior in rank and threat. They were the leading faction in the preparation, execution, and victory of the Sack of Byzantium. The Greeks would never forget the extent of Venetian power and lived in fear she would use it again. Even after 1261,
Emperor Michael VIII Palaeologus had to walk a thin line with Venice diplomatically, worried that they would attack again.

During the last centuries of Byzantium, the Venetians and Greeks developed a new relationship through their diverse interactions. For the Venetians, profit and prestige were the heart of their ambitions whereas for the Greeks, the protection and persistence of their empire, people, and religion were their main objectives. With the Venetians always having the upper hand and using the Greeks for their resources, whether it was their territory or their intellect, both groups were able to recognize the status quo and evolve. As outside factors, mainly the Turks, caused the two to see one another with different eyes, a symbiotic relationship developed where both were able to benefit from their contact even as Venice maintained dominance.

The profound evolution that occurred in this relationship, from enemy to ally, was the result of change in political circumstances and intellectual movement. After the Schism of 1054 and the conquest of 1204, Byzantine and Latin relations were at their worst. Yet, with greater frequency over time, there were instances of cooperation during the Venetian occupation of Greeks lands over the next two centuries. As early as the late thirteenth century, in the Venetian dominions of the East, most notably in Crete, many Venetian emigrants aligned with the Greek natives in revolt against Venetian administrative policy. And with the Council of Florence’s conclusion in 1439, the Venetians and Greeks had, at least in appearance, reached an agreement on religion. Now seen differently than the Jews and Muslim Turks in Venice, as Uniates these Greeks were considered to be Catholic, to an extent, as they confirmed the same dogmatic beliefs and agreed to recognize the sovereignty of the
pope. In the years after Constantinople had become Istanbul, the Greeks were afforded tax exemptions under resident status of Venetian domains. Similarly, the Greeks were also granted privileges in Venice itself, being allowed to found their own *scuola* and church in the sixteenth century. The groups proved that they could not only live together in peace, they could benefit from one another.

Due to her part in the Fourth Crusade, Venice came out of the negotiations of 1204 with a formidable set of territorial possessions. Crete, the most intense example of Venetian colonization, demonstrates the way in Venice proactively created an administration that would safeguard its greatest territorial asset. With trade always in mind, and driving all of her diplomatic, political, and military policies, Venice regarded rule over her Greek subjects always as secondary to the maintenance of ports, resources, and a navy. For the Venetians, the protected network of sea routes to her eastern trade destinations was the lifeline to power. Although the Greek subjects were forced to oversee throughout these territories were an unwanted administrative burden at times, they were a necessary component in order to maintain their position in the East. From 1262 to 1453, this relationship between Venice and Byzantium remained mostly the same, but external factors such as the Turks and internal factors such as the acculturation of resident Venetians and the loosening of the Venetian superiority-complex allowed for an easing of tension. Through the network created by Venice, it was easy for both Venetians and Greeks to travel between east and west, creating passageways for ideas and immigrants along with trade.

The three major contributions that made Venice, as opposed to other Italian city-states, the center of humanist studies c. 1500 were its Greek library, printshop,
and community. Venice was chosen by Cardinal Bessarion, printer Aldus Manutius, and the large Greek emigrant community for a reason: its link to the East. Although Genoa and Florence also had eastern ties, Venice played the role of gateway and magnet for the Greek people. Bessarion himself even called Venice “almost another Byzantium.” The knowledge of the existence of Bessarion’s library, even though it would not be available until almost a century later, was enough to lead intellectuals to Venice in hopes of using the great resource. The establishment of the Aldine Press and Academy fostered Greek learning, provided employment, acted as a refuge for Greeks, and made the printing of Greek texts synonymous with the city of Venice. Also, the Greek community, growing steadily after 1453, representing the largest minority group in the city, made Greek intellectuals feel at home.

There were obviously very different situations in which the communities of Venetians in Constantinople and Greeks in Venice developed. The main difference was that Venice provided its community with state representation. While the Venetians had their bailate, the Greeks had their scuola and their church. Setting up the Venetian district in the most strategic locations after 1204, Venice maintained autonomous status in the city even after the reconquest of Emperor Palaeologus in 1261 and continued to negotiate privileges and sovereignty for its Venetian inhabitants. The Greeks in Venice had a completely different situation. Lacking any state representation or power, they were left to the mercy of the Venetian government. However, the Greeks succeeded in mobilizing the resources of Venetian piety to their own benefit, gaining the privilege to organize and worship as an ethnic community.
The Venetians had proven themselves to be much more than barbarians. Through their dealings in the East, Venice had earned the respect, if not the admiration of the Greeks. Although they were the aggressors in 1204, by 1453 the Greeks were hoping for Venice to be their protectors. Just as the Venetian-Byzantine power struggle of the thirteenth century was lost by the Greeks, that of the Venetians and Turks in the fifteenth century was lost by Venice.

The success of the Ottoman forces in the East and the fervor of Humanism in the West both created opportunities for the Venetians and Greeks, in conjunction with others, to join forces in political and intellectual arenas. Although the struggle against the Turks was ultimately unsuccessful, it is not insignificant that both the Venetian and Greek people were on the same side: both found the Ottoman takeover of the East and the subsequent change of the status quo to be generally disadvantageous. The developments of the Renaissance that were made possible by the participation of Greeks in the humanist movement in Italy were also noteworthy. The tools that the Greek émigrés brought to Italy, and Venice in particular, allowed for the dissemination of Greek learning throughout Western Europe.

The vestiges of these medieval and early modern interactions are still evident today. The Biblioteca Marciana still contains Bessarion’s books and the Basilica of San Marco still has its four bronze horses and other booty from the Byzantine world. The Church of San Giorgio dei Greci still stands in the sestiere of Castello, although its campanile is leaning slightly. The port of Candia, present-day Chania, still has its Venetian-era fortifications and harbor. The people of Corfu still have an Italian accent, a remaining effect of the four centuries of its inhabitants speaking the veneto
*da mar.* And the island of Thira, a tourist’s dream in the glistening blue waters of the central Aegean, is still known to the world by its Venetian name, Santorini. It seems as though Venice and Greece do not want their visitors to deny, or forget, the cultural exchange of their people during this period.
List of Maps

Map 1. Medieval Romania
Map 2. The Venetian Trade Routes Following 1204
Map 3. The Venetian Dominions Following 1204
Map 4. The Latins in Constantinople Before 1204
Map 5. The Sestieri of Venice, Fifteenth Century
Romania, the territory occupied by those called Romans and at least nominally ruled by the emperor of Constantinople, designated a large area during the medieval period. This area reached from the Adriatic to the Black Sea in the north and the Ionian to the Aegean in the south.

Analysis of Italian archives suggests that from the twelfth century, “Rhomania was a term favoured by the Byzantine Romans for their state, with a possibility that it had special application to the western half of the empire.”

Map 2. The Venetian Trade Routes Following 1204

Venice gained control of the large islands of Crete (1204-1669) and Cyprus (1489-1571) before losing them to the Ottomans.

Note the important stopovers at Modon, Crete, and Constantinople.
Map 3. The Venetian Dominions Following 1204

*Crete* (1204-1669), located at the south of the Aegean, was Venice’s largest and most strategic territorial asset. *Modon* and *Coron* (1204-1500), on the southeastern peninsula of Messinia on the Morea, were the “eyes” of the Republic. The *Duchy of Naxos* (1207-1566), set up by Venetian nobles, consisted of the Cycladic islands in the center of the Aegean. *Negroponte* (1204-1470) acted as a well-fortified depository and stopover between Constantinople and Crete. The Ionian Islands in the West, such as *Corfu* (1386-1797), were extensions of Venice with emigrant Venetian communities ruled by Venetian nobles in conjunction with the indigenous noble elite.
Map 4. Latins in Constantinople Before 1204

Note the location of the merchant quarters of the Italian city-states along the Golden Horn.
After 1204, the Genoans would move across the channel to the suburb of Galata.
After 1453, Venice was forced by the Turks to relocate to Galata as well.
The Greek community in Venice was located in the eastern sestiere, or neighborhood, of Castello, home of the Venetian Arsenal. Their church, S. Giorgio dei Greci, was located just behind Piazza San Marco near San Zaccaria. In Venice today, the campanile of the church is visible from the Grand Canal, slightly leaning. (see arrow)
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