

# MANUEL I KOMNENOS (1143-1180) AND THE UNIVERSAL EMPIRE THE LAST ATTEMPT OF *RENOVATIO IMPERII* BEFORE THE IV<sup>TH</sup> CRUSADE

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When Manuel Komnenos<sup>1</sup> became the emperor of the Byzantine Empire he inherited a powerful and long imperial tradition. Like his ancestors, he strove to embody the ideal of the Christian monarch as Eusebios of Caesarea had outlined it: because there is an only God in heaven, than must be an only monarch and a unique Christian law to rule the Earth Kingdom<sup>2</sup>. The imperial tradition, his ambitious personality, eager to fulfil his dream of universal hegemony, as well as his unusual propensity for the Latin civilisation<sup>3</sup>, made the regaining of the territories that had been lost during the XI<sup>th</sup> century be the banner of the prestige and power of the New Rome- Constantinople. The main targets of his idealistic political programme were the unification of Italy with Rome the imperial land *par excellence*<sup>4</sup>- and of the Western territories with the Empire. Consequently, he stubbornly acted as being the unique and universal emperor of the Christian world.

Constantinople had never recognized the loss of the Western territories and that is why it had appealed to skilful ideological constructions in order to preserve the illusion of the unique Roman Empire: the barbarian kings were considered as mere representatives of the emperor as well as later, the leaders of other states were integrated to the "byzantine Commonwealth". The appearance at 800 of another

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<sup>1</sup> The first work dedicated to Manuel I Komnenos is included in the outstanding study of Fr. Chalandon on the Comnenian dynasty, *Les Comnènes. Jean Comnène (1118-1143) et Manuel Comnène (1143-1180)*, Paris, 1912. The latest study belongs to P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Comnène (1143-1180)*, New York, 1993. In Romanian language, a vivid portrait of the emperor can be found at N. Bănescu, *Chipuri și scene din Bizanț*, Cluj, 1927, p. 154-184.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebiu de Cezareea, *Discursul festiv la aniversarea a 30 de ani de domnie a Împăratului Constantin (Tricennalia)*, PSB, vol. 14, București, 1991. R. Farina, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea. La prima teologia politica del cristianesimo*, Zürich, 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Manuel I was a great admirer of the Western world whose behaviours and customs he not only tried to imitate but also to impose them at his Court. He embodied the ideal knight who was an undaunted warrior and invincible in tournaments. This sympathy can be also noticed in the promotion of the Latins in administration, army and in other important offices. Political reasons compelled him to marry twice with Latin princesses. See also Ch. Diehl, *La société byzantine à l'époque des Comnènes*, Paris, 1929, p. 75-90.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. Dölger, *Rom in der Gedankenwelt der Byzantiner* in "Byzanz und die europäische Staatenwelt. Ausgewählte, Vorträge und Aufsätze", Ettal, 1953, p. 70-118.

*Imperium Romanum*, by the imperial coronation of the French king Charlemagne (768-814), meant the split between Western territories and Constantinople, an intolerable reality from the imperial doctrine point of view which had been contested by diplomatic means for a long time<sup>5</sup>. The official chronicler of Manuel's reign, John Kinnamos, testified that the byzantine claims over Italy and the whole Western world had been preserved more vivid than ever<sup>6</sup>. The imperial title (τὸ τῆς βασιλείας ὄνομα) disappeared in Rome a long time ago. The barbarian kings conquered the capital of the Roman Empire but it was set free by generals of Justinian, only for a short time. The Western rulers were "barbarian rebels" (τύραννοι βάρβαροι) who mocked the imperial tradition by entitling themselves as kings. But their title was phoney, illegal (κίβδηλος) because the only legitimate heirs of Constantin the Great were the emperors from Constantinople and consequently only they could grant the king title because it was considered to have its roots in the imperial institution (ἐκ τοῦ τῆς βασιλείας καθίενται κράτους).

Moreover they were not only content with the usurpation of the imperial prerogatives but they even dared to entitle themselves emperors. This approach was only a byzantine rhetorical exaltation, which seemed to ignore that between the two worlds a political, cultural and spiritual border had been traced which was to be finalized by the schism of 1054.

Our aim is to survey the means by which Manuel Komnenos tried to restore the great achievement of Justinian a century after the split of the Churches<sup>7</sup>. We also intend to underline the outcomes of the clash between his plans and other two views of the universal rule: the pope's one, which had an astonishing development beginning with the middle of the XI<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8</sup> and the German one which was embodied by the Staufen dynasty. The pope Gregory VII (1073-1085) did not accept but one political authority- that of the Church. The state was considered only as its appendix. He elaborated the papal imperial doctrine that was to be perpetuated

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<sup>5</sup> W.Ohnsorge, *Das Zweikaiserproblem im früheren Mittelalter*, Hildesheim, 1947.

<sup>6</sup> Ioannes Cinnami, *Epitome*, recensuit A. Meineke, "Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantine", Bonnae, 1836; Jean Kinnamos, *Chronique*, traduite par J. Rosenblum, Publications de la Faculté de Lettres et des Sciences Humaines de Nice, 1972 (Kin). The diatribe against the West, Kin. , V, 7.

<sup>7</sup> About the relationships between East and West in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, see P. Lamma, *Comneni e Staufer. Ricerche sui rapporti fra Bisanzio et l'Occidente nel secolo XII*, 2 vol, Roma, 1955, 1957.

<sup>8</sup> During its long conflict with Constantinople and later with the German Empire, the Papacy had gradually developed its own idea of supremacy in *Imperium Romanum*. According to *Donatio Constantini*, Constantin the Great would have granted to the Pope the imperial insignia over Rome and the Western territories. A useful synthesis can be found at M. Folz, *L'idée en Occident de V<sup>e</sup> au XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, 1953. See also, K. Schatz, *Der päpstliche Primat. Seine Geschichte von den Ursprüngen bis zur Gegenwart*, Würzburg, 1990.

from pope to pope in the next centuries. They would claim to be both priests and rulers of the whole Christian world. On the other hand, the German Empire asserted that it inherited the same Roman Empire from Charlemagne. For the German historian Otto of Freising (1111-1158)<sup>9</sup>, the idea of *translatio imperii* meant that Rome was replaced with Constantinople only for a short time because in 800, the francs reconquered it. On his account, the Germans were nothing else but a branch of the French people and they consequently embodied the old Roman Empire.

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The core of any *renovatio Imperii* was represented by the possession of the South Italian territories where the Norman Kingdom<sup>10</sup> included the former byzantine provinces<sup>11</sup> of Justinian and Basil II (976-1025). From the very beginning, the Normans who had embraced the pope's vision of universal supremacy in the Christian World were the main enemies of Byzantium<sup>12</sup>. The Eastern authorities viewed their military campaigns as a Western planned action against the Empire, an outcome of Schism of 1054<sup>13</sup>. Manuel I tried to solve the "Sicilian issue" by unifying Byzantium and the Norman Kingdom through a matrimony. So, in 1143 a byzantine legation reached the Court of Roger II (1130-1154) with the mission of facilitating a marriage between a byzantine princess and one of the king's sons<sup>14</sup>. The project failed due to Roger's claims of being equal in majesty with the basileus (τὸ ἐν' ἰσῶ μεγαλείου βασιλεία)<sup>15</sup>. Taking into account the traditional enmity between the two powers, such a proposal must have been an opportunistic one. Manuel I

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<sup>9</sup> Otto von Freising, *Chronik oder die Geschichte der zwei Staaten*. Übersetzt von Adolf Schmidt, Berlin, 1960, (prologue of the Book V).

<sup>10</sup> The best work on the Normans is still Fr. Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination normande en Italie et en Sicilie*, 2 vol., Paris, 1907 (reprinted in New York, 1960, 1969).

<sup>11</sup> *Apulia*, disputed for a long time by Longobars, Arabians and Byzantines, enclosed in the Macedonian's Empire, was lost for ever along with the Norman conquering (~1070); *Calabria*, former part of the Exarchate of Ravenna, then of the duchy of Sicily, became a theme in the beginning of the XI<sup>th</sup> century and was conquered by Normans in 1060; *Sicily*, a former byzantine theme, capital of Constans II (641-668) in his last years of reign, was conquered by Arabians in 902, then by Normans in 1072.

<sup>12</sup> The byzantines had not easily forgotten the destructive campaign of Robert Guiscard (1059-1085), when Alexios I had been proclaimed emperor (1081-1118). It had not been forgotten either the participation of the Norman rulers in the first Crusade and their anti-byzantine propaganda. J. Deer, *Das Papsttum und die Südditalienischen Normanden (1053-1212)*, Göttingen, 1969; W.B. Queen, *Relation between the Normans and Byzantium (1071-1112)*, "Byz." 56(1980), p. 427-476.

<sup>13</sup> H. Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantin*, Paris, 1975, p. 75-87.

<sup>14</sup> Fr. Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565-1453*, 2. Teil: *Regesten von 1025-1204*, München, 1925, nr. 1331 (Dölger).

<sup>15</sup> Kin., III, 3.

had taken the power instead of his elder brother Isaac, the legitimate successor of the throne. Although Kinnamos tried to find arguments in favour of Manuel's legitimacy, Choniates mentioned the considerable concessions that he granted to the Church for fear that "Isaac might incite rebellion in the City on the grounds that he had a better right by birth to the crown"<sup>16</sup>. The new emperor may have chosen this diplomatic trick in order to avoid a Norman campaign and strengthen his internal power. The same matrimonial idea would constantly appear during the negotiations with the German emperor, Conrad III (1138-1152), which had to prolong the Western policy of Alexios I and John II. Bertha of Sulzbach<sup>17</sup>, Conrad's sister-in-law, arrived at Constantinople in 1142, in order to seal the alliance between the two emperors, but for political reasons the marriage took place only in 1146, when the German princess was rebaptized in Orthodox tradition and received a new name: Irene.

Due to this alliance Manuel's back was safe and consequently he could start a military action in Italy. But an unfortunate event delayed his initial projects: the starting of the Second Crusade<sup>18</sup>. It is not our intention to discuss on the Crusade issue<sup>19</sup>, but to highlight the diplomatic abilities of the Emperor who tried to change the situation in his favour. The Crusade started with the passionate preaches of Bernard of Clairveaux<sup>20</sup> (1091-1153) and by the commitment of French King Louis VII (1137-1180), but in its core it was a papal initiative by which Eugenius III (1145-1153) intended to extend the prestige of Papacy and to proclaim himself as the only defender of the Christians against the enemies of God<sup>21</sup>. In his letter to Louis VII (1<sup>st</sup> December 1145) in which he proclaimed the Crusade, we must notice his constant reference to pope Urban II (1088-1099), the promoter of the first Crusade but also of

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<sup>16</sup> The will of John Komnenos, Kin, I, 9; "O City of Byzantium, *Annals of Niketas Choniates*", translated by Harry Magoulias, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1984, I, 49 (Chon).

<sup>17</sup> "She was not so much concerned with physical beauty as with her inner beauty and the condition of her soul. Disdaining face powder, eye liner, and eye shadow underneath the eye, and rouge instead of nature's flush, and ascribing such aids to silly women, she was adorned by the virtues to which she was devoted." (Chon, II, 54). A delightful reading is Ch. Diehl, *Figuri bizantine*, vol II, Bucure[ti], 1969, p.193-230.

<sup>18</sup> The progress of the Crusade at Kin, II, 12-20; Chon, II, 62-71. F. Chalandon, *Manuel Comnène...*, p. 263-340.

<sup>19</sup> From the reach bibliography on this subject we mention only: St Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, "The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East (1100-1187)", Cambridge, 1968, p. 234-288; M. Setton, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. I (*The Second Crusade*, p. 463-512), Madison, 1969.

<sup>20</sup> Abbot of Citeaux and the most important ecclesiastical personality in West, the personal adviser of the pope Eugenius III, whom is dedicated the work *De consideratione*. The author insists on the unity of Churches, its unique guarantor being the pope, *vicarius Christi*, the only ruler of the Christian World. A Seguin, *Bernard et la seconde croisade* in: "Bernard de Clairveaux", Paris, 1953, p. 379-411.

<sup>21</sup> For the political programme of Eugenius III, see H. Gleber, *Papst Eugenius III unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner politischen Tätigkeit*, Iena, 1936.

the first negotiations for the Union of Churches<sup>22</sup>, who strove to urge the "sons of the Holy Roman Church from different parts of the world" (*sancte romane ecclesie filios de diversis mundis partibus*) to fight for their freedom. The Pope underlined the great danger that lay upon "the God's Church and the whole Christianity" (*ecclesie Dei et toti Christianitati*) after the seizure of Edessa.<sup>23</sup> Eugenius III relinquished to the very enticing Norman proposals for giving a helping hand, which meant that he intended to preserve the good relationships with the basileus and also to approach the union of the Churches. This idea is highlighted from the correspondence of bishop of Olmüz, one of the papal legates of Crusade. The bishop was asked to urge Conrad to pay attention to the honour and glory of the Holy Roman Church and also to be concerned with the union of the two Churches, "as they used to be in the old times" (*Constantinopolitane Ecclesiam ei unire sicut olim fuisse elaboret*)<sup>24</sup>. But this was only the expression of a religious enthusiasm that did not surpass the theoretical assertions. In the letter that he had sent to the Emperor there are specified only the practical means of passing through the byzantine territories.

In his turn, Manuel used this opportunity to strengthen the relationships with Rome. He was favourable to this "collective movement" (*συγκίνησις*), started "for the benefit of Christians and for destruction of the pagans, enemies of God" (*εις ωφέλειαν τῶν χριστιανῶν καὶ ἀπάνισμον τῶν ἀθέων ἐχθρῶν τοῦ θεοῦ*)<sup>25</sup> and he was ready to facilitate the passing of the Western armies. Beside these general issues, the basileus tried to create a closer relationship with Eugenius III and he expressed his astonishment concerning the fact that the Pope had not sent any legation and he had not written anything about his welfare that he was enjoying by God's benevolence. Because he did not receive any answer, the emperor expressed again his clear wish to get out of this mutual lack of knowledge, which was inconvenient for both parts, and he argued in the favour of making steps toward a closer relationship between Rome and Constantinople: "If your Holiness wishes to do something for our union and for a better understanding between us, my Majesty will be

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<sup>22</sup> See W. Holtzmann, *Die Unionsverhandlungen zwischen Kaiser Alexios I und Papst Urban II im Jahre 1089*, "Byzantinische Zeitschrift", 1928, p. 38-67;

<sup>23</sup> Otto von Freising, *Die Tanten Friedrichs oder richtiger Chronica*, Übersetzt von Adolf Schmidt, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1965, I; 37 (Gesta); P.J. Cole, *The Preaching of the Crusades in the Holy Land*, Cambridge, 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Apud W. Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung bis zum Untergang des byzantinischen Reiches*, Berlin, 1902, p. 83-84.

<sup>25</sup> Published by A. Miklosich, F. Theiner, *Monumenta spectantia ad unionem Ecclesiarum Graecae et Romanae*, Vindebone, 1972, p. 6-8; V. Grumel, *Au seuil de la II<sup>e</sup> croisade. Deux lettres de Manuel I Comnène au pape*, "Revue des études byzantines", tom III (1945), p. 143-167 (clarifies a few chronological issues); Dölger, nr. 1348.

pleased and will welcome this initiative in the benefit of the Christian lands". (*Si vero plus etiam quid vult inter nos fieri tua sanctitas ad unionem nostri et concordiam maiorem, gratum hoc et acceptum imperium meum arbitrabitur vel in utilitatem provinciarum christianorum*)<sup>26</sup>. Facing the unexpected event of the Crusade, which had raised a justified fear, the emperor was ready to approach the issue of the religious union or at least to preserve good relationships with the Papacy.

It is not only that he did not receive any answer to his letters but he had to face a dangerous situation due to the Crusade: the presence of the Normans in the van of the western armies which nourished again the opinion of general Western aggression, and the participation in the Crusade of Conrad III, the only ally which basileus could count on. The Crusade proved to be a mere wreck because it was badly managed and led but the whole responsibility for this failure was granted to Manuel I, who was accused of betrayal in favour of pagans and of the undermining of the plans of the Crusade.

The account of Odo de Deuil (1100-1162), the secretary and the chaplain of the French King, is a clear anti-byzantine manifest, an interesting testimony of the hatred and distrust that existed between the two Christian worlds after a century of schism between the Churches<sup>27</sup>. From the very beginning the abbot declared that his refusal to mention the name of the Greek emperor because "*it is not recorded in the Book of Life*" (*cuius nomen ignoro quia non est scriptum in libro vitae*) and he accused the Greeks of perjury, treachery and flattery. For the first time we encounter an attempt to deny the Christian quality to the Greeks and to insinuate that they might be schismatic. The abbot mentioned the Greek's robberies against the western armies as well as their betrayal by concluding a treaty with the Turks<sup>28</sup>. But all these would have been bearable if other blasphemies had not been added. Odo is surprised that if the Latin priests celebrated the mass on Greek altars, the Greeks afterwards purified them with propitiatory offering and ablutions, as if they had been defiled. *We know other heresies of theirs- says the chronicler - both concerning their treatment of the Eucharist and concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost*" (*Alias haereses eorum novimus, et more Sacrificii et processione Spiritus Sancti*). For all these reasons the Latins hated the Greeks and denied their Christianity (*Ob hic iudicabantur non esse Christiani*). It is now understandable why the bishop of Langres urged the crusade

<sup>26</sup> *Non est enim inconueniens ut nec imperium meum crebro discat de salutibus tue sanctitatis nec tua sanctitatis, quomodo a Deo adiuuatur imperium meum.* The letter was published by W. Ohnsorge, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Manuels I von Byzanz*, in "Abendland und Byzanz. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte der byzantinisch-abendländischen Beziehungen und des Kaisertums", Weimer, 1958, p. 407-410.

<sup>27</sup> Odo de Deuil, *De profectone Ludouici VII in orientem*, ed. V. Berry, New York, 1948; See also, G. Constable, *The Second Crusade as seen by contemporaries*, "Traditio", IX, (1953), p. 213-279

<sup>28</sup> Kin, IV, 11; Dölger, nr. 1352.

armies to conquer Constantinople when the Western armies reached its walls. He argued that this city had to be seized because "it was Christian only in name", so anticipating the tragic event from 1204<sup>29</sup>.

After Crusade, Manuel I strove to regain the alliance with Conrad III, for whom he organised a magnificent welcome with horse races and showy parties, in order to forge a military alliance against Italy. It is interesting to be mentioned the Kinnamos account on the king's disinterest in the Southern Italy, an area which was going to be a part of the Byzantine Empire "as dowry for the empress Irene" (Ἰταλία εἰς ἔδωκ τῇ βασιλίδι ἀνασώσαιτο Εἰρήνη)<sup>30</sup>. In fact this was an attempt to strengthen the legitimacy over this former byzantine territory, especially that the guarantor of the treaty was Frederick Barbarossa, the nephew of Conrad III and the future emperor. This truce allowed Manuel I to push back the Normans from Corfu and Avlon which were considered an ideal military basis for launching an attack against Sicily, but "in the future he intended to join Sicily and the whole Italy to the Roman Empire"<sup>31</sup>. Roger II, who raised a mutiny in Serbia and in Germany prevented this military expedition in Italy and consequently compelled the two emperors to give up their Italian projects. The Norman king tried to gather all the anti-byzantine forces for starting a new Crusade<sup>32</sup>. At this difficult moment, Manuel I received a precious support from the abbot Wibald of Stalbo, the councillor of Conrad III and the sturdy enemy of Roger II who had chased him away from Motecassino. The bishop had a continuous correspondence with Constantinople and Rome<sup>33</sup> that nourished a new German-byzantine military expedition in Italy and managed to break the alliance between the pope and Roger II. Now Manuel I could feel relieved because the project of a new Crusade was definitively prevented. But the German emperor died exactly at the beginning of this military expedition leaving the byzantines without their most important ally.

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<sup>29</sup> Odo of Deuil, *op. cit.*, p.55-57; 69-71.

<sup>30</sup> Kin, II, 19; Dölger, nr. 1374. A deeper survey can be found at P. Lamma, *op. cit.*, I, p. 89-93.

<sup>31</sup> The military operations were led by the *mega dux* Kontostephanos, the Emperor brother-in-law, and after his death by the *protostator* John Axouch. (Kin, III, 4-5; Chon. II, 76-89).

<sup>32</sup>The most influential persons from the pope's entourage were devoted to this project: Theodowin, the papal legate for the German Crusade, Peter the Venerable, Bernard of Clairveaux and the abbot Suger, the secretary of Louis VII, who paid his attention to a possible union of Churches. Still, Eugenius III hesitated in granting his agreement because of the great mutiny lead by Arnold of Brescia. (More details on the crusade project, F. Chalandon, *op. cit.*, p. 335-337).

<sup>33</sup> Wibald, *Epistolae*, in "Veterum Scriptorum Monumentorum", ed. B. Franklin, New York, 1968.

The successor of Conrad III, Frederick Barbarossa (1152-1189) was the supporter of a new German political trend whose main feature was the supremacy in Italy and the gaining of the Roman imperial crown<sup>34</sup>. For Manuel I this political programme was the German reply to his own ambitions and ideals, it was a challenge that he had to face it along his whole life<sup>35</sup>. An outcome of this new trend was the treaty of Konstantz, concluded between Frederick and Eugenius III in the context of Frederick's coronation as Roman Emperor. They supported each other against Sicily and the Greek Empire<sup>36</sup>. Frederick, *Frederic, Dei gratia Romanorum Imperator Augustus*, swore "not to give up to any sea lands in favour of the Greek emperor" (*regi autem Grecorum ex ista parte maris terram non concedet*); and if the Greek emperor invaded these territories he engaged himself to push him back as soon as possible". The treaty undermined the byzantine claims in Italy and Manuel I tried to prevent its effects by reopening the marriage negotiations. During the year 1153, by the help of Wibald, during the year 1153, the two parts exchanged legates and letters by which both emperors amiably contested each other's imperial title<sup>37</sup>. In one of his letters Frederick divulged his imperial ambitions: he wished to gain the Byzantine's friendship through a marriage with an imperial princess "until our love unifies our Empires" (*quatenus Imperia nostra per dilectionem unum fierent*) and on both sides are the same enemy and the same friend<sup>38</sup>. In his turn, Manuel I expressed his opinion about the marriage affair in the context of Frederick's political intentions (who was called only as *rex Romae*): "He wishes my Empire much more than the unity of the two states" (*vult enim meum imperium magis ac magis utrumque regnorum unitionem*)<sup>39</sup>. After this exchange of views, the project of an alliance between the two empires, failed opening a long period of fight for supremacy in *Imperium Romanum*.

The year 1154 was a turning point for all the Mediterranean political actors. In this year the sturdy enemy of Byzantium, Roger II, died and it was elected a new pope Hadrian IV (1154-1159), a great defender of Gregorian theses

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<sup>34</sup> Soon after he became emperor, Frederick sent a letter to the Pope in which he expressed his wiliness to "restore the ancient greatness of Roman Empire". The letter is published in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Consitutiones, Acta publica Imperatorum et Regnum*, ed L. Weiland, Hanover, 1896, tom I, doc 137 (MGH). The best study about the beginnings of the Frederick's reign belongs to P. Rassow, *Honor Imperii. Die neue Politik Frederick Barbarossas (1152-1158)*, Darmstadt, 1974.

<sup>35</sup> Kinnamos says that Manuel tried to undermine Frederick's boldly planes against "Romania", which attracted his greed". (Kin. V, 9).

<sup>36</sup> MGH Const., doc 145.

<sup>37</sup> See W. Ohnsorge, *Zu den aussenpolitischen Anfängen Friedrich Barbarossas*, "Abendland und Byzanz", Weimar, 1958, p. 411-433; P Classen, *Die Comnenen und die Kaiserkrone des Westens*, "Journal of Medieval History", 3 (1977), p. 207-224.

<sup>38</sup> Wibald, 387; Dölger, 1388.

<sup>39</sup> Wibald, 388; Dölger, 1389.

concerning the Western Empire<sup>40</sup>. In this context, Manuel I ventured again in Italy but he was grievously defeated and the byzantine commander was taken prisoner<sup>41</sup>. Yet he did not abandon his previous projects: some byzantine officials as Michael Palaiologos and John Doukas were sent in Italy in order to attract the Norman senior rebels with a great amount of money. If they did not succeed in their attempt, they had to take over Italy by their owns<sup>42</sup>.

The political background was very difficult because Frederick gathered his armies in the Northern Italy in order to reach Rome for receiving the imperial coronation. In the Eternal City where the German ruler would have delivered a long speech in front of the Roman people<sup>43</sup>. He asserted that once the majesty of Rome was moved to the queen-city of Orient (*translatum sit ad orientis urbem regiam*). But thanks to the French people the Empire regained its old power and majesty after it had been swept away by the Eastern Empire, ironically called *Greculus*. So the Germans inherited the Roman Empire, and consequently he was the legitimate owner of the City (*legitimus possessor sum*). Soon after he was crowned the German ruler left Italy without accomplishing his promises made to the pope (June 1155).

After an intensive diplomatic activity the byzantine armies invaded the Southern Italy<sup>44</sup>. The account of Kinnamos revived the old times of Justinian. The cities recognized the authority of the byzantine rule as vassals (*δουλοί*) and they were ready to subject to "the Romans' will" (*Ρωμαίος βουλομένοις*). Moreover, the military powers of the new king William were increasingly weakened and consequently the rumour of the Romans invincibility was spreading over Italy. In fact, they conquered only a small sea shore land from Pescara to Brindisi due on the one hand, to the great amount of money with which was gained the support of the Norman rebels and, on the other hand, due to the deep inhabitants' discontent with the Norman administration. At a first sight the projects of Manuel seemed to be promising but unlike Justinian he did not organized the conquered territories politically and administratively point of view. This military attempt was nothing more than a demonstration of the imperial prestige and power and it had nothing to

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<sup>40</sup> Hadrian IV, the first English Pope at Rome, supported the idea of ruling the Christian Empire as being an essential mission (*monarhatu papae*) in which the German emperor was nothing more than an appendix -*branchium Romanae Ecclesiae*. See W. Ullmann, *The Pontificate of Hadrian IV*, in "The Papacy and Political Ideas in the Middle Ages", Variorum Reprints, 1976, p. 233-252.

<sup>41</sup> Kin, II, 12-13.

<sup>42</sup> *Idem*, IV, 1; Chon, II, 91.

<sup>43</sup> Gesta, II, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Kin, IV, 2; Chon, II, 91-99 estimates the byzantine expanses in this military campaign at 30000 golden pounds. About the byzantine military campaign of 1155, see H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la mèr. La marine de guerre, la politique et les institutions maritimes de Byzance aux VII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Paris, 1966, p. 251-255.

do with an understanding of the Italian realities<sup>45</sup>. However the coming of the byzantine armies in Italy after a few centuries changed the balance of power in the peninsula.

That is why, Hadrian IV, as an ally of the Sicilian king, was compelled to define his political position in order to brake away with the diplomatic isolation that emerged after the leaving of German king. In the autumn of 1155, the pope sent a legation to the byzantine generals asking them to “*come to Rome for discussing some important issues*” because he had gathered a large army and he declared himself ready to join to the byzantine army<sup>46</sup>. The meeting between Manuel I and Hadrian IV had a hazy account in the historical sources<sup>47</sup>. It is a certainty that the Roman expert in Oriental affairs, Anselm of Havelberg<sup>48</sup> (1129-1158), had been in Constantinople in the previous year and on his return he visited Thessalonic (October 1154) where he discussed with the archbishop Basil II of Ochrid<sup>49</sup> (1145-1150) about the procession of the Holy Spirit<sup>50</sup>.

A papal legation was sent to Constantinople to discuss with the Emperor because the byzantine military campaign in Italy as well as the Frederick's departure made the Pope's political position very precarious. On their return, they sent a letter to the archbishop of Thessalonic who had proved to be a feasible negotiator concerning the union of Churches<sup>51</sup>. The letter is interesting for the view that the two worlds had upon the schisma. After some diplomatic assertions the Pope “*servus servorum Dei*” found the Eastern Church in charge of splitting with the Holly Church of God. That is why the successors of Saint Peter strove very much to put an end to the schisma and to bring those who split back to the Church”. Because God reproved those who did not bring inside what was thrown out, did not cure what was sick, did not seek what was lost, the Pope assumed the mission to find the

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<sup>45</sup> Between the autumn of 1155 and summer of 1156 the official papers of the churches and monasteries in the byzantine conquered lands are dated according to the reign of Wilhelm. (cf P. Lamma, *op. cit.* „I, p. 198).

<sup>46</sup> Kin, IV, 5; Dölger, 1403.

<sup>47</sup> See, J. G. Rowe, *Hadrian IV, the Byzantine Empire and the Latin Orient*, in “*Essays in Medieval History presented to B. Wilkinson*”, Toronto, 1969, p. 3-16.

<sup>48</sup> The bishop was in Constantinopol in 1135 as a legate of Lothar II where he participated at theological discussions with Niceta, archbishop of Nikomedeia about Filioque and papal primacy. (N. Russel, *Anselm of Havelberg and the Union of Churches*”, Sobornst”, 1.2(1979), p. 19-41; *Ibidem*, 2.1(1980), p. 29-94).

<sup>49</sup> See, Hans G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im Byzantinischen Reich*, München, 1969, p.626.

<sup>50</sup>Published by J. Schmidt, *Des Basilius von Achrida, Erzbischofs von Thessalonich, bisher unedierte Dialoge*, München, 1901; J. Darrouzès, *Les documents byzantin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle sur la primauté romaine*, “REB”, 23 (1965), p. 59-65.

<sup>51</sup> A Romanian translation followed by a long commentary, at Th. M. Popescu, *La o sută de ani după schismă. O inițiativă Papală de unire a bisericilor*, ST, VII (1938-1939), p. 47-87.

"lost drachma" and "the lost sheep" and he finally claimed the papal supremacy over any other power: "The Holy Fathers enlightened by the Holy Spirit set up the supremacy of the Roman Church over all other Churches and consequently its decisions had to be beyond all other laws". The pompous tone of the letter commanded an ironical answer: "I could notice from your letter the depth of your humility, your greatness love for God which does not narrow your apostolic heart but on the contrary, enlarges it in order to welcome all the Christians". He cannot understand the connection between the hint to the lost sheep and Constantinople, because the Eastern Church respected the Saint Peter's testimony and it had not added a single word to the Gospel. Then, making reference to the Popes' claims of being the lieutenants of Christ, he replied with the same irony: "To erase the difficulties which split us and to establish again the unity of the Church would be the proof of your sanctity. The same as Christ did, you will be able to gather in one piece what has been split". This letter exchange is a sample of the long dispute between the two Churches over the papal primacy problem, an issue that overrun all other dogmatic and canonical differences.

After this short break at Thessalonice the pope's legates came back with the emperor answer written by the bishops of Ephesus "on behalf of the emperor"<sup>52</sup> (πρὸς τὸν πάπαν Ῥώμης ὡς ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ βασιλέως). Manuel I enjoyed for receiving the Pope's letter and informed him of 'his deep concern for unifying the two Holy Churches of God'. Then, the greatest attention is granted to the refutation of the papal primacy. The author argued that the only head of the Church is Christ, not Paul or Appolo, that Christ is the plenitude of deity, that he is the bedrock which was disregarded by the builders but it is also the foundation on which the Church of Constantinople was set up. (Ἐπὶ τούτῳ τῷ θεμελίῳ καὶ περιδόξῳ Κωνσταντινουπόλεως ἐκκλησίας ἀεὶ ἐστήρικται). The Emperor made a reference to the Zevedeus' sons who claimed to sit to the left and to the right of Jesus and they were refused because He wished the apostles be honoured not for their dignity but because they would share with Him the same drink and the same baptism. Because the Church was set up on a unique basis - the Peter's testimony that was revealed to him by the Father, that is why the Church is one and the gates of the hell will never destroy it. "These are the reasons for which the wish of my soul is the Churches' unity and it seems to me that your Sanctity has not only the same opinion but makes concrete efforts to fulfil it". The basileus thought that any "human vanity" (ἀνθρώπινον διανόημα) had to be surpassed and the Holy Fathers doctrine should be fully applied and so the unity would be accomplished. But those who would oppose to this process and try to prevent it would be responsible for the spiritual wound. Even if the bishop of Ephesus made the drawing up it represented the imperial point of view concerning the

<sup>52</sup> J. Darrouzès, *George et Dèmètrios Tornikès. Lettres et Discours*, Paris, 1970, the letter no. 30.

issue of papal primacy, considered to be the main obstacle in accomplishing the Churches' unification.

No doubt that the pope's initiative was due to the necessity of finding out new allies. Once with the great byzantine defeat of Brindisi (May 1156), the pope's interest in Byzantium ceased. This can be noticed in the summer of 1157 when for the last time the byzantines tried to conquer Italy. Alexis Axouch was sent with a great amount of money at Ancona (the last city devoted to Manuel) "*in order to take over Italy and to maintain this centre as a basis for his future expeditions*"<sup>53</sup>. With this money it was paid an army of the Norman seniors rebel, which defeated William's army a few times and reached Rome. The people of the city used this opportunity to rise against Hadrian IV, who was allied with the king of Sicily. The pope was extremely angry and he excommunicated his own people saying "*there was nothing between the two cities because there it had been such a long time since they were split*". Obviously, this was another rhetorical construction of the historian but the core of the byzantine involvement in the Italian affairs was preserved. The German account also accused the Greeks that they had corrupted the whole province with gold so that they should obey to the byzantine power. So they proved to be enemies of the Roman Empire and guilty for the crime of les-majesty<sup>54</sup>. Even more, Frederick humiliated the Greek legation at Würzburg, demanding it to pay its respect for "*the Roman emperor and the master of the city and of the world.*" (*Romanum princeps et Urbis ac Orbis dominator*)<sup>55</sup>.

Manuel I took the decision of concluding a peace treaty with the Sicilian king as a result of the great expanses of his military campaign. The official account presented the leaving of Italy as an act of indulgence, trying to soften the failure. In a long letter the king would have begged for forgiveness and praised the Manuel's achievements because he managed to conquer more territories in Italy than the old Roman Empire and so he gained a glory that was not reached by any other emperor after Justinian<sup>56</sup>. He concluded a treaty with William (spring of 1158), which did not bring him any advantage and forced him to leave Italy. But he noticed the unexpected opportunity for involving in the conflict between the Pope and Frederick, which had outburst in the Diet of Besançon (October, 1157)<sup>57</sup>. Even if

<sup>53</sup> Kin, IV, 14.

<sup>54</sup> "*Cumque manifestis indiciis hostes Romani imperii convicatur, non aliud superesse, quam ut pro crimine lese maiestatis de ipsis omnibus supplicium sumatur*" (Gesta, III, 23).

<sup>55</sup> Dölger 1414.

<sup>56</sup> "κλέος ἀνεδήσω, 'ο μετὰ Ἰουστινιανὸν ἀρχαῖον Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτορα οὐδενὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὑπερξεν." (Kin, IV, 15)

<sup>57</sup> In the Diet of Besançon, the cardinal Rolando Badinelli, the future pope Alexander III wrote a letter from Hadrian IV in which Frederick I was asked not to forget that he received the imperial dignity

Hadrian IV died shortly after this, the future trends of the conflict between the Pope and the Empire had been already traced.

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The new pope, Alexander III<sup>58</sup> (1159-1183), was an undesirable person for Frederick who opposed him an anti-pope, Victor III (1159-1164). So it began a long period of schism inside the Western Church and this was an opportunity for Frederick to proclaim himself as the ruler of the whole Christian world as well as of the Church<sup>59</sup>. That is why Alexander III clustered around him an anti-German coalition formed by the Western kingdoms and Italian cities. Manuel I understood the great advantages of his presence in the middle of this conflict, because his dreams met the Pope's wish to find a powerful protector against the German Emperor. Between Rome and Constantinople started an intense exchange of diplomatic missions<sup>60</sup> opened by the letter of cardinal Wilhelm of Pavia, who was the representative of the discontent Italian clergy concerning Frederick politics. In his letter, the cardinal asserted the respect that the basileus had always showed to the Roman Church and on the other hand, he underlined the troubles created by "*the barbarian's tyranny*" of those who had usurped the imperial title. They declared themselves as Manuel's subjects and they supported the Eastern Empire's expansion<sup>61</sup>.

The emperor prepared the alliance with Alexandru III in detail, acting as a supporter of the Western point of view in the religious dispute stirred up by Demetrios of Lampe (1166) around the biblical words: "*Father is greater than Me*". Basileus was very stubborn in supporting the idea of Christ's inferiority because of His human nature. He fought to convince each bishop and metropolitan of his views and he imposed to the synod his own dogmatic formula<sup>62</sup>. Then he included

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from the Roman Church. The emperor was very irritated and adopted tough measures against the papal legates declaring that he received the imperial power "*per electionem principum a solo Deo*" (Gesta, III, 10-13). W. Ullmann, *Cardinal Roland and Besançon*, in *op. cit.*, p. 107-125.

<sup>58</sup> M. Baldwin, *Alexander III and the 12th Century*, New York, 1966; F. Liolta, *Rolando Badinelli, Papa Alessandro III*, Sienne, 1986.

<sup>59</sup> At the end of 1159 he summoned a concilium at Pavia, where he said: "*Due to our imperial dignity we have the right to convoke councils as Carol the Great and Otto did, mainly in a period of great dangers for the Church*" (Gesta, IV, 64); In 1165, at Aachen, the capital of Charlemagne, took place gorgeous ceremonies for the canonization of the French king, who became protector of the Empire. (R. Folz, *Le souvenir et la légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval*, Paris, 1950, p. 159-202).

<sup>60</sup> Dölger, nr. 1451. F. Chalandon, *op. cit.*, p. 558-563.

<sup>61</sup> The letter can be found at W. Norden, *op. cit.*, and p. 92.

<sup>62</sup> V. Grumel, V. Laurent, J. Darrouzès, *Les Regestres des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople*, tom II, nr. 1059 (Grumel); L. Petit, *Documents inédits sur le concile de 1166 et ses derniers adversaires*, "*Vizantiskii Vremennik*", 11 (1904), p. 465-493;

it in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy<sup>63</sup> and he elaborated a decree by which those who would have opposed him would have been excommunicated. This behaviour emerged from the influence of the emperor's Western councillors, namely Hugo Eteriano (~1110-1168)<sup>64</sup>, adviser in Western theological issues and who was in touch with great Western theologians<sup>65</sup>. Hugo wrote *Libellus de Filii minoritate ad Patrem Deum*, which became a source of inspiration for the emperor during the dispute which had just outburst. This created major internal difficulties in Byzantium, mainly because it was a dogmatic issue, but it favoured his plans of reviving the ancient Roman Empire.

While the basileus' imagination was stirred up by the dream of unifying the two Churches under the Constantinople's rule, for the pope Alexander the relationship with basileus was only temporary and under the pressure of some needs. Beyond everything he needed a financial help in order to support the Lombard League against Frederick and also to come back from his long French exile. The historians did not agree with the exact moment of negotiations between the pope and basileus. It is known that Manuel I sent two or three times legates to Rome and in his turn, the Pope sent several legates to Constantinople between 1166-1170. An account of these negotiations can be found in the *Dialogue* of Andronikos Kamateros that is the prologue of his work "Ἱερὰ ὀπλοθήκη"<sup>66</sup>. This was a bulk of patristic testimonies concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit "from the Father". The cardinals started with the responsibility of the schism and declared the papal primacy as a necessary basis for continuing the negotiations. The emperor argued that Rome should not claim to be "the mother of Churches" (*mater Ecclesiarum*) because Antiochia where the disciples were called Christians for the first time or Jerusalem where the Saviour suffered can both could assume themselves this title. But the greatness of the Rome had to follow the Empire because

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<sup>63</sup> A liturgical document elaborated at the end of the iconoclastic period and adopted in the Sunday of Orthodoxy (843), which contains the decisions of each synod and the anathema against the heretical beliefs. Published by J. Gouillard in *Travaux et Mémoires*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, vol. II, Paris, 1967.

<sup>64</sup> Born in Pisa, Etheriano studied theology and philosophy in France and Italy and came in Constantinople in 1160 with his brother Leon Tuscus. At the emperor's demand he wrote a survey where he tried to demonstrate that Filioque is a part of the patristic tradition. (A. Dondaine, *Hugues Ethérien et Léon Toscan*, in "Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littérature du Moyen Age", 19(1952), p. 67-134.

<sup>65</sup> See, P. Classen, *Das Konzil von Konstantinopel (1066) und die Lateiner*, BZ, 48(1955), p. 339-369; A. Dondaine, *Hugo Ethérien et le concile de Constantinople de 1166*, "Historische Jahrbuch", 77 (1958), p. 473-483.

<sup>66</sup> Andronic Kamateros, the *mega droungarios* of the city, forged this polemic work, a *Panoplia dogmatike* of the kind of Euthymios Zigabenos. It would have a great success during the XIII century (cf. Beck, p. 626-627); Excerpts were been published by J. Hergenröter, *Photius, Patriarch von Konstantinopel*, band III, Regensburg, 1869, p. 810-815; The meaning of the work at J. Darrouzès, *op. cit.*, p. 72-78.

Great replaced the imperial symbols from Rome to Constantinople and called the latter "the empress of all the cities". Here there can be noticed the political reasons of the approach, when the theological issues were only tangentially discussed.

After long preparations and discussions with the pope's legates, Manuel I proposed his project of Church union. The moment is carefully chosen because Wilhelm I had just died (May 1166) and the regency of his minor son could not defend Rome against the fourth German military campaign in Italy. Once Frederick was conquering of the city, the Pope had to shelter himself at Benevent under the Norman protection. The cardinal Boson, the biographer of Alexander III, stated that in his letter the basileus expressed his indignation because Frederick outraged the Pope (*Frederic contra jus vexaret pontificem*) and he wished "his Church should join the mother Church" (*ecclesiam suam unire cum romano matre*) in order that the two peoples should live for ever under a common worship of the holy law and under an unique religious leadership, as it used to be in the old times. Manuel I promised to put an end to the schisma, but in return he demanded to be given back the crown of the Roman Empire, because it belonged to him not to Frederick the Alamanikon" (*Romani corona Imperi a sede apostolica sibi redderentur quoniam non ad Frederici Alamani sed ad suum ius pertinere*). In order to make the negotiations with Rome easier, the emperor took the arguments from *Donatio Constantini*, a document meant to legitimate the pope's power in the Western World<sup>67</sup>. So the union of the Churches is closely linked with the fight against Frederick and so it gains an exclusive political feature. Although a papal legation directly addressed to the patriarch, asking him to recognize the papal primacy<sup>68</sup>, the negotiations were in a deadlock for both religious and political reasons. Alexander III strengthened his power as a result of the activity of the Lombard League and let the cardinal's concilium to take a decision. The Greek sources do not say anything about this. Very shortly, Kinnamos described the cause of the failure of negotiations: "basileum claimed that the Roman Empire is at Byzantium while the Pope refused this and he wished to rule at Rome"<sup>69</sup>. Yet, between the two governing conceptions the byzantine and the papal, the agreement was impossible to accomplished, even theoretically.

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<sup>67</sup> P. J. Alexander, *The Donatio of Constantine and its Earliest Use against the Western Empire*, "Religious and Political History and Thought in the Byzantine Empire", *Variorum Reprints*, 1978, IV, p. 11-26 it demonstrates that beginning with Kinnamos the byzantines used the document to reject the imperial claims of Frederick. .

<sup>68</sup> The pope's letter was published by G. Hofmann, *Papst und Patriarch unter kaiser Manuel I Komnenos*, in "Epeteris Hetaireias Byzantinon Spoudon, 23 (1953), p. 74-75 (This is the only one letter of a pope to a Patriarch that was preserved after 1054).

<sup>69</sup> Kin, V, 9.

In spite of the failure, the relationships with pope Alexander continued to be friendly and they kept changing legates and letters. In the Pope's correspondence there was mentioned a letter from basileus "*charissimi in Christo filii nostri Manuелиis, illustris Constantinopolitani imperatoris*" (~1176), in which the Emperor informed the Pope about the preparations for a great military campaign against Turks and also about his wish to build cities where Latins and Greeks should live together and with God's help to conquer many Turkish territories in order to make safe the way to the Holly Sepulchre for Latins as well as for Greeks"<sup>70</sup>.

The unexpected disaster from Myriokephalon in front of the Turks (1176) proved to be a turning point in the Empire's evolution and scattered all the dreams of universal domination<sup>71</sup>. In West, Frederick is also defeated by the Italian cities allied with the Pope. An important congress took place in Venice in 1177 where the two leaders of Western World officially reconciled after two decades of fights and the German emperor accepted to become the secular branch of the Church. For Manuel this reconciliation was as painful as the Myriokephalon defeat, even if in the text of the treaty was written "*the emperor Frederick and his sons will live in peace with the Emperor in Constantinople.*" This was the beginning of the end, anticipated by a very tough letter, which Frederick addressed to the emperor<sup>72</sup>. His predecessors, the Roman emperors, bequeathed him the power to rule not only the Roman Empire but also the Greece Kingdom. He demanded to the emperor to recognize the Western Empire and to obey to the Pope (*nobis Imperio Romano debeat recognoscas et summo pontifici reverentur obedientia exhibeas*, because Rome was indeed, "*the head of the whole world*" (*caput totius orbis*) and the Roman Church was the "*mother of all Churches*" (*omnium ecclesiarum mater*). It was the toughest humiliation for the byzantine universalism.

After he had been the witness to the failure of his political programme, the Emperor died (1180) and he was buried in the Pantokrator monastery, the foundation of his father. The whole political equilibrium embodied by his person was broken and the empire fell in a deep crisis when the successive territorial losses added to the internal anarchy. The Imperial ship left without a skilful leader prepared itself for a sad wreck. It is not easy to evaluate such a complex political programme. Choniates, who wrote after 1204 frequently accused him of trying to

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<sup>70</sup> The latter can be found at P. Lamma, *op. cit.*, p. 282-283; Dölger, nr. 1520.

<sup>71</sup> Lillie, R. J. *Die Schlacht von Myriokephalon (1176). Auswirkungen auf das byzantinische Reich im ausgehenden 12 Jahrhundert*, REB, 37(1977), p. 257-27.

<sup>72</sup> P. Lamma, *op. cit.*, p. 298-300, throws a shadow of doubt concerning its authenticity.

pass over the borders that had been traced by his predecessors and that he had wasted a lot of money, impoverishing the Empire. It is a fact that Manuel I stubbornly followed his universal dream and he ventured in vast actions which went far beyond the Empire's resources. He tried only by his own powerful personality to give a new trend not only to a millenary Empire but also to the whole Mediterranean political system.