

Προβολές και Αντανακλάσεις
Ελληνικά και Αραβικά
κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους

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Μέσους Χρόνους

Επιστημονική επιμέλεια:

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Αν. Καθηγήτρια Αραβολογίας, ΕΚΠΑ

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Πρόλογος

Αγαπητές κι αγαπητοί συνάδελφοι,

Με ιδιαίτερη χαρά έχω σήμερα την ευκαιρία να καθελκύσω εκ μέρους των πρυτανικών αρχών του ΕΚΠΑ ένα πνευματικό πλοίο με εξαιρετο φορτίο και προορισμό. Το θέμα της Ημερίδας αυτής, «Ελληνικά και Αραβικά κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους: Προβολές και Αντανακλάσεις», προβάλλει και αντανακλά το ίδιο ένα καίριο θέμα των νεοελληνικών και διεθνών επιστημονικών ενδιαφερόντων για μια εποχή και πραγματικότητα γόνιμων πολιτισμικών αλληλεπιδράσεων: τον Μεσαίωνα ως χώρο όχι απομόνωσης αλλά συνεχούς αμοιβαίας επαφής και αλληλογνωριμίας ανθρώπων, ιδεών και κάθε μορφής πνευματικής δημιουργίας. Η γνήσια ιστορία γνήσια απεχθάνεται τα στεγανά όπως η φύση τα κενά. Η περίπτωση του αμοιβαίου έμπρακτου σεβασμού αραβικού και ελληνικού πολιτισμού στα μεσαιωνικά χρόνια είναι ένα κεφάλαιο πολύ σημαντικότερο τελικά από τις πολεμικές αναμετρήσεις. Το υγρόν πυρ παρέρχεται αλλά το διανοητικό παραμένει και θερμαίνει διαχρονικά.

Είναι λοιπόν καθήκον μου να εκφράσω τα πρόποντα συγχαρητήρια και τις ευχές επιτυχίας προς τους συντελεστές αυτής της εκδήλωσης, με κορυφαία την ψυχή αυτής της όλης διοργάνωσης, την αγαπητή κι άξια φίλη Ελένη Κονδύλη, που μόχθησε και μοχθεί σταθερά για την προώθηση της σπουδής των ελληνοαραβικών σχέσεων στη χώρα και το πανεπιστήμιό μας. Εύχομαι το περιεχόμενο των ανακοινώσεων που θ' ακολουθήσουν να δικαιώσει τον ζήλο της και να στεφθεί από επιτυχία έως και το στάδιο της τελικής δημοσίευσης των πρακτικών αυτής της Ημερίδας. Τα τείχη που τείνουν να χωρίζουν ανθρώπους και πολιτισμούς αντιμετωπίζονται με οικοδομήματα που συναποτελούν τελικά τέτοιοι πολύτιμοι δόμοι. Καλή συνέχεια!

Κώστας Μπουραζέλης,
Αναπληρωτής Πρύτανη
Ακαδημαϊκών Υποθέσεων και Διεθνών Σχέσεων
ΕΚΠΑ

Εισαγωγή

Le miracle grec. Ευτυχώς δεν ειπώθηκε στη γλώσσα μας. Άλλοι είπαν ότι το κράμα ιδεών και ανακαλύψεων με ελληνικά γράμματα είναι « la première grande civilisation mondiale ».

Κι ένας άλλος κορυφαίος πολιτισμός, ευτυχώς και πάλι σε άλλη γλώσσα, ονόμασε τον Αριστοτέλη, πνευματικό εγγονό του Σωκράτη, ‘al-awwal’ (al-cheikh ή al-mu’allim), με σεβασμό περισσό ‘Πρώτον Καθηγητή’.

Με επιστημονικό ενδιαφέρον στις προβολές αλλά και στις αντανακλάσεις μεταξύ των πολιτισμών έστω και η Ημερίδα: «Προβολές και Αντανάκλασεις: ελληνικά και αραβικά κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους», την 9^η Ιουνίου 2016. Πραγματοποιήθηκε στο φυσικό της χώρο, το Εθνικό και Καποδιστριακό Πανεπιστήμιο Αθηνών.

Το Τμήμα Γαλλικής Γλώσσας και Φιλολογίας, αποδεικνύοντας άλλη μια φορά πως η έκφραση (και όχι μόνο το γαλλικό της περιεχόμενο) ‘Διαφωτισμός’ ανήκει στην πολιτισμό και την παιδεία που εκπροσωπεί, ανέλαβε την δημοσίευση των πρακτικών της ημερίδας καθώς άλλωστε συμπεριέλαβε με νόημα το γνωστικό αντικείμενο της Αραβολογίας, που είχε ζητήσει η Φιλοσοφική Σχολή το 1994.

Ευχαριστούμε θερμά τη Διεύθυνση Δημοσιευμάτων και Εκδόσεων του ΕΚΠΑ που πραγματοποίησε τη δημοσίευση των πρακτικών, άρα είμαστε προς το Πανεπιστήμιο τριπλά ευγνώμονες, πρώτον γιατί έχουμε την τιμή να είμαστε μέλος του, δεύτερον για την ίδια την Ημερίδα, τρίτον για τη δημοσίευση των Πρακτικών.

Ο Αναπληρωτής Πρύτανη Ακαδημαϊκών Υποθέσεων και Διεθνών Σχέσεων Καθηγητής κύριος Κώστας Μπουραζέλης στήριξε κάθε διαδοχικό βήμα στην προσπάθεια πραγμάτωσης της ημερίδας αυτής, και έδωσε επίσης βήμα για την εξέλιξη του αντικειμένου της Αραβολογίας στις διεθνείς ακαδημαϊκές σχέσεις του ΕΚΠΑ. Ο Κοσμήτορας της Σχολής Οικονομικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών καθηγητής κύριος Μιχάλης Σπουρδαλάκης στήριξε επίσης την ημερίδα, καθώς και άλλες εκδηλώσεις που έδωσαν βήμα στις διεθνείς μας σχέσεις με αραβικά κράτη όπως ο Λίβανος. Την ευγνωμοσύνη μου, αλλά και την συναδελφική αγάπη την εκφράζω εδώ. Πώς θα ήταν δυνατόν να οργανωθεί, και μάλιστα από μένα, μια ημερίδα, χωρίς την καθάρια στήριξη και την ευσυνειδησία τους; Και επίσης, πώς θα

γινόταν μια όντως πολύ ενδιαφέρουσα ημερίδα, χωρίς να ανασκουμπωθούν και να βοηθήσουν εκλεκτοί συνάδελφοι από το δικό μας και άλλα πανεπιστήμια, από το Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών, και ακόμη και άνθρωποι που μοχθούν στη Μέση Εκπαίδευση, ήδη διδάκτορες αυτού του τομέα σπουδών, καθώς και υποψήφιοι διδάκτορες που ήρθαν από το εξωτερικό αλλά και την Ελλάδα; Έτσι αποδεικνύεται ότι είναι καιρός αμειγείς αραβικές σπουδές να ανθίσουν στη χώρα μας.

Η Ελληνική Επιστημονική Εταιρεία Σπουδών Μέσης Ανατολής (ΕΕΕΣΜΑ), της οποίας το 2016 ήμουν πρόεδρος και το ΔΣ μου ανέθεσε την οργάνωση της Ημερίδας όταν εργαζόμουν στο Τμήμα Τουρκικών και Σύγχρονων Ασιατικών Σπουδών. Η ΕΕΕΣΜΑ ιδρύθηκε το 2003 κατόπιν παρότρυνσης της European Association for Middle Eastern Studies. Έχει ως σκοπό την πληροφόρηση ως προς τις μεσανατολικές σπουδές στη χώρα μας και την ανάπτυξή τους, το συντονισμό των σχετικών σπουδών στην Ελλάδα με την υπόλοιπη Ευρώπη. Συμμετέχουμε στην ετήσια συνέλευση της Ευρωπαϊκής Εταιρείας Σπουδών Μέσης Ανατολής εκπροσωπώντας τη χώρα μας, ενημερωνόμαστε και ενημερώνουμε για την πορεία των σπουδών, και είμαστε παρόντες ως ελληνική επιστημονική ομάδα στην Ε.Ε..

Γνωρίζουμε όλοι ότι οι ελληνικές σπουδές έχουν σε κάθε ακαδημαϊκό ίδρυμα μέχρι σήμερα ξεχωριστή θέση. Δεν θα σας κουράσω με την ελληνική ονοματολογία σε διάφορες επιστήμες, ούτε θα σας θυμήσω αν τα ευαγγέλια γράφτηκαν ελληνικά. Τα ξέρουμε όλοι αυτά. Θα σας υπενθυμίσω μόνο ότι ο μεγάλος Μροντέλ έγραψε την περίφημη *Γραμματική των Πολιτισμών* αφιερώνοντας στο πολυσέλιδο τόμο του μοναχά τρία τέταρτα της σελίδας στο Βυζαντινό Πολιτισμό, κι ότι ο Μορέν¹, αναφερόμενος στην ενότητα της Μεσογείου, παραλείπει εντελώς την Ελλάδα ή τον ελληνικό κόσμο (πλην ενός ‘Athènes’ για τον 4^ο αι. π.Χ.), ενώ αναφέρει από την βόρεια πλευρά της Μεσογείου την Ισπανία, Ιταλία, Αλβανία, Γιουγκοσλαβία κ.λπ.. Σαν δλδ, ο όρος ‘βυζαντινός’, να έχει διακόψει τη συνέχεια της ελληνικής γλώσσας, του πολιτισμού και της ιστορίας της ελληνικότητας. Ίσως για την ιστορική και βεβαίως επιστημονική αλήθεια, να πρέπει να θυμίζουμε την διαρκή ιστορική ύπαρξή μας, καθώς τίποτε δεν πλησιάζει την αλήθεια, αν δεν τείνει και δεν προσπαθεί να είναι πλήρες.

¹ Edgar Morin. «Penser la Méditerranée et méditerranéiser la pensée». *Confluences Méditerranée* no 28 1998-1999, σελ 33-47.

Κατά τους Μέσους Χρόνους, αυτούς δλδ που δεν έχουν δικό τους όνομα, αλλά στέκουν ανάμεσα στην Αρχαιότητα και την Αναγέννηση, αδικημένοι σχετικά, κάποιοι μάλιστα τους χαρακτηρίζουν ακόμη (μέχρι τότε άραγε;) *σκοτεινή εποχή* από την δυτική Ευρώπη, έλαμψαν και η ελληνικότητα και η αραβισύνη, σε συχρωτισμό, ανταγωνισμό, γειτνίαση, και πλήθος ανταλλαγών οι μεν προς τους δε. Τις ανταλλαγές αυτές, κυρίως ελληνο-αραβικές, μελετούν μεγάλα πανεπιστήμια και ερευνητικά κέντρα διεθνώς, οργανισμοί ετοιμάζουν συνέδρια με ιδιαίτερο ενδιαφέρον. Προσωπικότητες γίνονται γνωστές χάρη στις μελέτες τους τους γύρω από τον ελληνικό ή τον αραβικό κόσμο. Εμείς θελήσαμε να προβάλλουμε και τις ελληνοαραβικές, αλλά και τις αραβοελληνικές σχέσεις. Προβολές και Αντανακλάσεις εκατέρωθεν που πιστοποιούν τη λάμψη του ελληνικού και του αραβικού πολιτισμού στους μέσους χρόνους.

Προβολές και Αντανακλάσεις λοιπόν, που αποφασίστηκε να γίνει αυτή η ημερίδα χάρη στη συνεργασία τριών ανθρώπων που εκπροσώπησαν αυτό το όραμα σε τρεις γεωγραφικές και πολιτιστικές σφαίρες: από την Ανατολή, τη Δύση, και τον τόπο μας:

Η Νάντια-Μαρία Ελ-Σείχ, Κοσμήτορας (σημειωτέον: πρώτη γυναίκα σε τέτοια θέση στον αραβικό κόσμο) της Σχολής Ανθρωπιστικών Σπουδών του Αμερικανικού Πανεπιστημίου του Λιβάνου (American University of Beirut) καθηγήτρια βυζαντινής ιστορίας,

Η Μαρία Μαυρουδή, καθηγήτρια Κλασικών Σπουδών, Βυζαντινής Ιστορίας και Αραβολόγος του Πανεπιστημίου του Berkeley, και η υπογράφουσα τούτες τις γραμμές.

Αποφασίσαμε να ξεκινήσουμε αυτή την προσπάθεια χωρίς καμιά οικονομική στήριξη από πουθενά, με σκοπό να μπορέσουμε να έρθουμε σε γόνιμη ανταλλαγή απόψεων μεταξύ πανεπιστημιακών συναδέλφων και υποψηφίων διδασκτόρων. Βασισμένοι στην απόλυτη ταύτιση απόψεων μεταξύ μας, προχωρήσαμε σε ό,τι ακολούθησε. Και φυσικά, τα καλά και τα ωραία που έγιναν τα χρωστάμε στην συνεργασία μεταξύ όλων των συνέδρων, ό,τι ανάποδο και ελλειπές, μάλλον οφείλεται αποκλειστικά σε μένα.

Οφείλω εδώ να αναφέρω ότι έφτασε στην ημερίδα μας και μια μοναδική οικονομική χορηγία: ευχαριστούμε την Αυτού Θειοτάτη Μακαριότητα Πατριάρχη Αγίας πόλεως Ιερουσαλήμ και πάσης

Παλαιστίνης κ. Θεόφιλο Γ,' που ανέλαβε τα έξοδα του γεύματος των συνέδρων.

Επίσης, ευχαριστίες στην εικαστικό κυρία Ειρήνη Γκόνου που πλαισίωσε την ημερίδα μας με την έκθεση έργων της στο αμφιθέατρο Αργυριάδη του Πανεπιστημίου μας.

Τα θέματα των προσκεκλημένων επιβράβευσαν την αγωνία της επιτροπής διοργάνωσης, ενώ η δημοσίευση των πρακτικών επαληθεύει την ποιότητα των ανακοινώσεων.

Τα αποτελέσματα της Ημερίδας είναι άμεσα και έμμεσα, άλλωστε ίσως να μην υπάρχει στο τέλος-τέλος διαφορά ανάμεσα στην αμεσότητα και την εμμεσότητα: το πρώτο και κύριο ήταν ότι ήρθαν σε επαφή φοιτητές προπτυχιακοί, μεταπτυχιακοί, υποψήφιοι διδάκτορες, με ειδικούς επιστήμονες και μπόρεσαν να ανταλλάξουν ιδέες και να πλαισιωθούν σε ζητήματα γνώσης μέσω της συζήτησης και της επαφής που δημιουργήθηκε. Επίσης, υπάρχουν αυτή τη στιγμή άνθρωποι που ήρθαν τότε από το εξωτερικό, και τελικώς εγκαταστάθηκαν στον ελληνικό χώρο για να συνεχίσουν εδώ το έργο τους. Εξάλλου, είμαστε σίγουροι ότι, παρά κάποιες προσωπικές και κοινωνικές δυσκολίες, η υπόσχεση που δώσαμε στο κλείσιμο της ημερίδας, ότι θα συνεχίσουμε τη διερεύνηση των ελληνοαραβικών πολιτιστικών σχέσεων θα επαληθευτεί σύντομα. Άλλωστε, όπως είχαν προηγηθεί της ημερίδας αυτής και άλλες, σε συνεργασία μάλιστα και με τη Γαλλική Σχολή Αθηνών, με την ίδια θεματική σε διαφορετικό χρονικό πλαίσιο, ελπίζουμε και πιστεύουμε ότι η προσπάθεια θα συνεχίσει αβίαστα και σχεδόν φυσικά.

Στις ακόλουθες ανακοινώσεις, σεβόμαστε τον μεταγραμματισμό αραβικών και άλλων ανατολικών γλωσσών έτσι όπως τον χρησιμοποιεί ο κάθε συγγραφέας, όπως επίσης σεβόμαστε και τις ιδιαιτερότητες ως προς τα κεφαλαία και μικρά για την αναφορά σε εθνοτικές και θρησκευτικές κοινότητες, ιδεολογικά ρεύματα, κ.ά.

Ελένη Κονδύλη,
Αναπληρώτρια Καθηγήτρια Αραβολογίας,
Τμήμα Γαλλικής Γλώσσας και Φιλολογίας,
Αντιπρόεδρος της Ελληνικής Επιστημονικής
Εταιρείας Σπουδών Μέσης Ανατολής,
Υπεύθυνη της Οργάνωσης της Ημερίδας.

DISCOVERING, SHARING AND TASTING. FLAVOURS AND CULINARY PRACTICES BETWEEN BYZANTIUM AND THE ARAB WORLD

Maria Leontsini

A miniature of the illustrated version (γ), of the so-called *Alexander Romance* by Pseudo-Callisthenes, captures a scene of a banquet with Alexander the Great, where he appears disguised as a Persian and dines with king Darius. The richly illustrated manuscript is dated in the second half of the fourteenth century and was addressed to the imperial court of the Empire of Trebizond. The Trapezuntine version of the *Romance* depicts Alexander as a Byzantine emperor acting in an oriental ambience. The Alexander–Darius comparison constituted for the Byzantines a familiar projection of the long-standing relations with the rulers of eastern countries.¹ The gathering of Alexander and Darius

¹ Venice Hellenic Institute Codex Gr. 5, fol. 75r, *The Greek Alexander Romance*, introduction N. S. Trahoulia, Athens 1997, 199; N. S. Trahoulia, *The Venice Alexander Romance: Pictorial Narrative and the Art of Telling Stories*, in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as literature in Byzantium*, Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007, Farnham 2010, 145–168; D. Kastritsis, *The Trebizond Alexander Romance (Venice Hellenic Institute Codex Gr. 5): The Ottoman Fate of a Fourteenth-century Illustrated Byzantine Manuscript*, in C. Kafadar, N. Necipoğlu (eds.) *In Memoriam Angeliki Laiou, Journal of Turkish Studies* 36 (2011), 103–131; A. Walker, *The Emperor and the World. Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.*, Cambridge University Press, New York 2012, 129–130, 169–171; U. Moennig, *A Hero Without Borders. Alexander the Great in Ancient, Byzantine and Modern Greek Tradition*, in C. Cupane, B. Krönung, *Fictional Storytelling in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond* [Brill's Companions to the Byzantine World 1], Leiden, Boston 2016, 171, 177–178; Gl. Peers, *Trebizond and its world through manuscripts*, in A. Eastmond, Gl. Peers, B. Roggema, *Byzantium's Other empire. Trebizond*,

around a ceremonial table in particular, delivered a symbolic view of the cultural contacts of the Byzantine court with the eastern royal rulers' entourage that could be traced back to rituals established already in the Hellenistic period. The new political and cultural views of Byzantium adapted to the realities that were formed with the downfall of the Sasanian Empire and the rapid expansion of the Muslim empire emerge clearly for the first time in a version of the Alexander Romance written in Syria (8th / 9th century). Alexander's portrait presented in this version was a ~~directly~~ reference to the emperor Herakleios (610–641) who had tried to ~~realize~~ the progress of the Muslim forces and the spread of Islam and despite these ~~adversities~~, he made intense efforts to restore a resilient empire. His reign coincided with a critical period of transformations that affected the balance of power in the East and ~~caused~~ internal unrest and a series of equally critical situations that challenged the political and social stability. In this unfavourable context, however, the imperial power was reinvigorated and Constantinople secured its role as an important urban center and strengthened its polar position, continuing to attract intellectual and cultural activities in the Mediterranean and the East.² The Byzantine imperial court, with the emergence of these new realities, sought ways to communicate directly with Muslim leaders and, alongside with military conflict, often chose to adopt conventional diplomatic practices in order to resolve disputes and respond to growing demands. Thus,

Istanbul 2016, 114–115. On the recension (γ) see C. Jouanno, *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre. Domaine grec*, Paris 2002, 440; The banqueting scenes are commented by B. Garstad, Alexander the Great, the Disguised Dinner Guest, *Symbolae Osloenses* 92 (2018), 171–197.

² L. Conrad, Theophanes and the Arabic Historical Tradition. Some Indications of Intercultural Transmission, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 15 (1990), 1–44; J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century. The Transformation of a Culture*, Cambridge 1990, 38, 441; G. J. Reinink, Heraclius, the New Alexander: Apocalyptic Prophecies during the Reign of Heraclius, in G. J. Reinink, B. J. Stolte (eds.), *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641). Crisis and Confrontation* [Groningen Studies in Cultural Change 2], Louvain 2002, 81–94; W. E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, Cambridge 2003, 212, 230; F. C. W. Doufrikar–Aerts, A Hero without Borders. Alexander the Great in the Syriac and Arabic Tradition, in Cupane, Krönung, *Fictional Storytelling*, 193.

from an early period, a series of contacts activated the development of a diplomatic etiquette addressed specifically to caliphs.³ Various studies on this etiquette have shown that missions, in the context of foreign policy prospects, provided the donation of gifts ranging from works of art and manuscripts to products with symbolic values.⁴ The middle Byzantine imperial protocol and the apparatus of a well-thought-out and structured diplomacy, as an expression of recognition and goodwill, assessed gift exchange as a tool that could accordingly mirror the attitudes and policies pursued by the caliphates. Given the nature of the information available, it is clear that the mobility of the literati played a particularly important role in communications, due to their direct involvement in these refined contact procedures, as transpires from the concluded treaties and trade agreements.⁵ These exchanges contributed

³ A. D. Beihammer, *Nachrichten zum byzantinischen Urkundenwesen in arabischen Quellen (565–811)* [Ποικίλα Βυζαντινά 17], Bonn 2000, 99–103, 121–133, 330–332; H. Kennedy, Byzantine–Arab diplomacy in the Near East from the Islamic conquest to the mid eleventh century, in J. Shepard, S. Franklin (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Aldershot 1995, 133–143; Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium*, 256–258.

⁴ M. Mundell Mango, Hierarchies of Rank and Materials. Diplomatic Gifts sent by Romanus I in 935 and 938, *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 24 (2003), 365–374; M. Leontsini, Some Observations on the Relations between Byzantium and the Umayyads. Recognition and Repugnance, in Y. Y. al-Hijji, V. Christides (eds.), *Cultural Relations between Byzantium and Arabs*, Athens 2007, 103–114; A. D. Beihammer, Transkulturelle Kommunikation und Identitätsbildung in den diplomatischen Beziehungen zwischen Byzanz und der islamischen Welt, in M. Borgolte, J. Dücker, M. Müllerburg, P. Predatsch, B. Schneidmüller (eds.), *Europa im Geflecht der Welt. Mittelalterliche Migrationen in globalen Bezügen* [Europa im Mittelalter 20], Berlin 2015, 173–192.

⁵ A. Ricci, The Road from Baghdad to Byzantium and the Case of the Bryas Palace, in L. Brubaker (ed.), *Byzantium in the Ninth Century. Dead or Alive?*, Papers from the Thirteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham 1995, Aldershot 1998, 131–146; P. Magdalino, The Road to Baghdad in the Thought-World of Ninth-Century Byzantium, in Brubaker, *Byzantium in the Ninth Century* 195–213; A. D. Beihammer, Die Kraft der Zeichen. Symbolische Kommunikation in der byzantinisch-arabischen Diplomatie des 10. und 11. Jahrhunderts, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen*

to the development of two-fold influences on aesthetic trends and artistic expression (patterns and techniques, ~~minor objects~~, architectural ~~decorations~~) and fostered a continuous mutual communication between Byzantium and the Muslim world with the main protagonists being diplomats and scholars also artisans and craftsmen of both sides.⁶

This paper seeks to exploit the context of this cultural interaction focusing specifically on the formation of dietary preferences, that were

Byzantinistik 54 (2004), 159–189; M. G. Parani, Intercultural Exchange in the Field of Material Culture in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Evidence of Byzantine Legal Documents (11th to 15th Centuries), in A. D. Beihammer, M. G. Parani, Chr. Schabel (eds.), *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000–1500. Aspects of cross-cultural communication*, Leiden 2008, 349–372; N. Drocourt, Christian–Muslim Diplomatic Relations. An Overview of the Main Sources and Themes of Encounter (600–1000), in D. Thomas, A. Mallett (eds.), *Christian–Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History*, vol. 2, 900–1050, Leyden 2010, 66–70; Idem, Quelques aspects du rôle des ambassadeurs dans les transferts culturels entre Byzance et ses voisins (VIIe–XIIIe siècle), in R. Abdellatif, Y. Benhima, D. König, E. Ruchaud (eds.), *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale*, Ateliers des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Paris 9, Munich 2012, 31–47; Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 38–40; M. Sardi, Le livre comme cadeau diplomatique dans l’Islam médiévale, in N. Tsironis (ed.), *Le livre. Texte et objet, Études Balkaniques Cahiers Pierre Belon* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Maria Sardi for sharing with me her unpublished paper and for reading and commenting upon an earlier draft of the present article.

⁶ L. Brubaker, J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680–850). The Sources. An Annotated Survey, with a Section on The Architecture of Iconoclasm. The Buildings* by R. Ousterhout, Aldershot 2001, 18, 25–28; L. Brubaker, Representation c. 800: Arab, Byzantine, Carolingian, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (2009), 37–55; H. Kondyli, *Αραβικός Πολιτισμός*, Athens 2011, 289–291; R. Hillenbrand, Reflections on the Mosaics of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, in A. Al-Helabi, M. Al-Moraekhi, D. Letsios and A. Abduljabbar (eds.), *Arabia, Greece and Byzantium. Cultural contacts in Ancient and Medieval Times*, Proceedings of the International Symposium on the Historical Relations between Arabia, the Greek and Byzantine World (5th c. BC–10th c. AD), Riyadh 2012, 163–201; Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 40–44; J. Sypiański, Arabo–Byzantine relations in the 9th and 10th centuries as an area of cultural rivalry, in A. Kralides, A. Gkoutzioukostas (eds.), *Proceedings of the International*

promoted by the availability of oriental products and ingredients during the period extending from the Arab expansion in the seventh to the eve of the crusader's campaigns in the East, namely from the seventh to the twelfth century. Constantinople, like the Greek world earlier with Alexander's expeditions, became a remarkable nexus in the ~~network~~ that stretched from Spain to Persia, India and China. The products of eastern origin, especially spices, medical materials and perfumes which were already known in the Greek and Roman eras for their use in religious worship, in medicine, pharmacy, cosmetology and food preparation, began to circulate more widely after the economic and social recovery in the beginning of the middle Byzantine era.⁷

Symposium Byzantium and The Arab World Encounter of Civilizations, Thessaloniki 16–18 December 2011, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki 2013, 465–478; A. Ballian, Exchanges between Byzantium and the Islamic World. Courtly Art and Material Culture, in A. Drandaki, D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi and A. Tourta (eds.), *Heaven and Earth. 1: Art of Byzantium from Greek collections*, Athens 2013, vol. 1, 292–296.

⁷ M. Chroni, *Η πανίδα στην διατροφή και στην ιατρική στο Βυζάντιο* [Σύλλογος πρὸς διάδοσιν Ὠφελίμων Βιβλίων], Athens 2012, 35, 364 ; A. Dalby, The Flavours of Classical Greece, in I. Anagnostakis (ed.), *Flavours and Delights. Tastes and Pleasures of Ancient and Byzantine Cuisine*, Athens 2013, 33–34; M. Gerolymatou, *Αγορές, ἔμποροι και εμπόριο στο Βυζάντιο (9ος–12ος αι.)* [National Hellenic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, Monographs 9], Athens 2008, 126, 249–250; B. Caseau, L'encens au 7^e et 8^e siècle: Un marqueur du commerce en Méditerranée?, in Kralides, Gkoutzioukostas (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium Byzantium and the Arab World*, 105–116; N. Koutrakou, The Eastern Luxury Nexus in Middle-Byzantine Literature. A Reality Check, in A. Al-Helabi et al. (ed.), *Arabia, Greece and Byzantium. Cultural Contacts in Ancient and Medieval Times*, vol. 2, Riyadh 2012, 321–340; for the transmission of the relevant written tradition with similar perceptions and practices emanating from Greek literature see M. Leontsini, Byzantine references to the flora and fauna of the Arabian Peninsula and the Classical Greek tradition (4th–12th c. AD), in Al-Helabi et al. (eds.), *Arabia, Greece and Byzantium*, 361–385. The international trading routes between the East and the West followed new paths in the transitional period from the 7th to the 8th century and established new important trading centers such as Cyprus, see S. Cosentino, A Longer Antiquity? Cyprus, Insularity and the Economic Transition, *Cahiers du Centre d'Études Chypriotes* 43 (2013), 93–102.

Luxurious goods of oriental origin were always available in the Byzantine imperial court as it is apparent in the case of the formal request for Indian spices to the Byzantine general Priskos by the Avar Khagan (Easter of 598, 30 March). Costly spices and flavors were actually considered suitable for ceremonial gifts exchanged between sovereigns; Priskos was in a position to respond by sending pepper, Indian leaf, cassia, and the *product* (as formulated by Theophylaktos Simokattes) called *costus* (saussurea, Indian Kushta, probably a kind of ginger).⁸ These species could easily be found in the royal courts, where moreover dietetics and pharmacology were developed with a medical perspective. Eastern imported materials like nard, pepper and rice were recommended by medical doctors like Oribasios (c. 320–403), the renowned medical writer and personal physician of the Roman emperor Julian; similar products were suggested by the physician Anthimos (fl. 511–534), in his diet treatise compiled during his exile at the court of the Ostrogoth king Theodoric the Great (471–526)⁹. In this early period the intensified handling of luxury goods from the East through the sailing routes from the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea is outlined in the Roman commercial and travel text known as the *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, compiled in the first and copied again in the beginning of the

⁸ Theophylacti Simocatae, *Historiae*, ed. C. de Boor, P. Wirth, Leipzig 1887, Stuttgart 1972, 7.13.1–, 267.20–268.2; M. Whitby, M. Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta*, Oxford, New York 1986, 196–197; A. Dalby, *Flavours of Byzantium. The Cuisine of a Legendary Empire*, London 2003, 43. The Byzantines were intermediary resellers of spices as was demonstrated in the exchange of pepper, among other precious goods, by the Amastris inhabitants in the trade with the Pechenegs by barter, see Laiou, *Exchange and Trade*, 727.

⁹ M. Grant, *Oribasius, Dieting for an Emperor. A Translation of Books 1 and 4 of Oribasius Medical Compilations*, Leiden, New York, Cologne 1997, 9, 1.16, 52–53, 131, 133–134, 175, 4.2.19, 219, 274, 313; M. Grant (transl. and ed.), *Anthimos De observatione ciborum. On the observance of foods* Trowbridge 2007, 51, 55, 61, 75, 91, 115; McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy*, 710–711; Anagnostakis, *Byzantine Diet and Cuisine*. In *Between Ancient and Modern Gastronomy*, in Anagnostakis, *Flavours*, 49–50, 54–55; M. Kokoszko, K. Jagusiak, Z. Rzeźnicka, *Rice as Food and Medication in Ancient and Byzantine Medical Literature*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 108 (2015), 129–155.

tenth century, as also in the *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, a fourth century commercial–geographical survey.¹⁰ The persistence of the overseas transactions in the Early Byzantine period is illustrated in the list of imported goods recorded in the legal provision incorporated in the *Digest* (AD 530–533).¹¹ Moreover detailed descriptions on the supply of condiments, like frankincense, cassia, and *calamus* that came from Ethiopia alongside pepper of India were reported in the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes,¹² dating from the sixth century; the text was also recopied in the ninth and tenth centuries, demonstrating the renewal of interest for eastern products.¹³ Markets

¹⁰ L. Casson, *The Periplus Maris Erythraei: text with introduction, translation and commentary*, Princeton, New Jersey 1989, 5; J. Rougé, *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* [Sources Chrétiennes 124], Paris 1966, 7–19, 147–155; M. Mundell Mango, Byzantine Trade. Local, Regional, Interregional and International, in Idem (ed.), *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional, and International Exchange*, Papers of the Thirty–eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St. John's College, University of Oxford, March 2004, Ashgate, 2009, 13.

¹¹ *Digest* 39.4.16.7, ed. P. Krueger, T. Mommsen, *Corpus Juris Civilis*, I. *Institutiones, Digesta*, Dublin, Zurich, Berlin 1973, 651. This legal provision listed imports subjected to state taxation, like cinnamon, long pepper, white pepper, pentaspherum, barbary leaf, costum, costamomum, nard, Turian cassia, the wood of the cassia tree, myrrh, amomum, ginger, malabathrun, Indian spice, chalbane, benzoin, assafoetida, aloes, wood, cardamom and cinnamon wood. Formal treaties between the Persians and Byzantium and later on with the Arabs also provided interstate agreements on trade, like the one that was launched between Justinian I and Chosroes I in 562, see H. Magoulias, The lives of the saints as sources of data for the history of commerce in the Byzantine Empire in the VIth and VIIth century, *Kleronomia* 3 (1971), 303–306; P. N. Androudis, Το εμπόριο των αρωμάτων και των αρωματικών φυτών στο Βυζάντιο, in *Φαρμακευτικά και αρωματικά φυτά. Παραδοσιακές χρήσεις και δυνατότητες αξιοποίησής τους*, Ζ' Τριήμερο Εργασίας, Κύπρος, Παραλίμνι, 21–25 Μαρτίου 1997, Athens 2001, 138–152.

¹² *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk*, Translated from the Greek, and edited with notes and introduction, by J. W. McCrindle, New York 1897, Cambridge 2010, 51; M. Mundell Mango, Byzantine trade, 13.

¹³ M. Mundell Mango, Byzantine maritime trade with the East (4th–7th Centuries), *ARAM* 8 (1996), 143 n. 16; L. Brubaker, The Christian Topography (Vat. gr. 699) Revisited. Image, Text and Conflict in ninth–

and large monasteries in the West waited until about the beginning of the eighth century to be resupplied with eastern commodities. Despite difficulties, Constantinople seemed to maintain communication and keep the positive outlook on the East as a provider of luxuries and wealth; this idea is projected for instance in the reference of Theophanes' *Chronographia* to the trading caravans of the Ishmaelite tribes, commenting on the Old Testament, but referring to the persistence of the commercial activation of Arab tribes in the East in the seventh century.¹⁴

The attitude on wealth and prestige secured by the relations with the East arranged in a concrete order of rank is displayed in the narrative of two episodes of novelistic character dated in the reign of Herakleios, who, as already mentioned, witnessed the outset of the spread of Islam, being a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad. His reign coincided with a period that marked the end of the ancient Persian kingdom and the emergence of the new religion in the Orient. The first of these narrations comes from Theophanes' *Chronographia* and describes the plundering by the Byzantine army of the royal residence of Khosrow II (590–628) in Dastagird, close to Ctesiphon, where valuable goods were preserved such as aloe, pepper, sugar and ginger;¹⁵ the episode was rightly thought to have signaled the symbolic seizure of the abundance and wealth of Persia and India and emphasized the exotic and astounding proportions of Herakleios' triumph. The second account is a similar reformulation of the allegory of the relations between Byzantium and the East in the new historical context of the Byzantine and Muslim worlds. This time the narration originating from an eastern source, related that a jar of ginger was sent by the Byzantine emperor as a gift to the Prophet

century Byzantium, in E. M. Jeffreys (ed.), *Byzantine Style, Religion and Civilization In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, Cambridge 2006, 3–24.

¹⁴ *Genesis* 37:27–28; A. Dalby, *Dangerous Tastes. The Story of Spices*, London 2000, 33. On the projection of wealth as a trend of the Islamic society see Kondyli, *Αραβικός Πολιτισμός*, 96–97.

¹⁵ *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, Leipzig 1883 (New York 1980), vol. I, 322.1–6; see I. Anagnostakis, Introduction, in Anagnostakis, *Flavours*, 12–13; On Herakleios in Arab literature see N. M. El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* [Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs 36], Cambridge Mass. 2004, 39–54; Kaegi, *Heraclius Emperor of Byzantium*, 172.

Muhammad, who made all of his companions eat a piece. The account seemed most likely to be a later fabrication which echoed the tradition on conquest of the Persian palace in 628 during the reign of Herakleios.¹⁶ In both episodes, luxury products reappeared as the landmarks in the power relations that were developed between Byzantium and the East.

The common feature of these narratives lies to the fact that they both sought to redefine the East as reference point for flavors, ingredients and elixirs, and Byzantium as a core of control and redistribution of wealth and a guarantor of abundance, thus ensuring a symbolic ecumenical doctrine on the world's domination. In this way of course, the gourmet choices of the East were transmitted to Byzantium and set in motion the beginnings of the typical Byzantine cooking practices, which assimilated the tastes of the East to its own concepts and expressions. These interfusions did not completely overstep the established nutritional habits and always took into account the religious limitations. The Byzantine fasting diet and the prohibitions on the consumption of unclean food and pork for Jews and Muslims was setting a range of restrictions on eating habits and choices.¹⁷ Diet

¹⁶ M. I. H. Farooqi, *Medicinal, Aromatic and Food Plants Mentioned in the Traditions of Prophet Muhammad* Lucknow 1998 (2001), 139–140; I. Anagnostakis, Byzantine Aphrodisiacs, in Anagnostakis, *Flavours*, 78–79, with bibliography; D. G. Letsios, Emperor Heraclius and Prophet Mohamed. Political relations and propaganda during the early Islamic conquests, in E. Egedi–Kovács (ed.), *Byzance et l'Occident IV. Permanence et migration. Antiquitas, Byzantium, Renascentia*, Budapest 2018, 39–52. For references to ginger in the Koran, see N. Qamariah, Ethnobotanical Study of Qur'an Plants, *Pharmacognosy Journal* 11 (2019), 919–928.

¹⁷ B. Rosenberger, La cuisine arabe et son apport à la culture alimentaire européenne, in Flandrin, Montanari, *Histoire de l'alimentation*, 349–360; M. Angel, M. Dolader, L'alimentation Juive médiévale, in Flandrin, Montanari, *Histoire de l'alimentation*, 367–387; H. M. Hāssan, Ο χοίρος στην Αραβική Γραμματεία, *Επιστημονική Επετηρίς της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών* 39 (2007/2008), 513–553; P. B. Lewicka, *Food and Foodways of Medieval Cairenes. Aspects of Life in an Islamic Metropolis of the Eastern Mediterranean* [Medieval Encounters 18.1], Leiden, Boston 2011, 43, 99 n. 182, 178, 341; D. Waines, Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture, *Medical History* 43 (1999), 234; B. Kitapçı Bayrı, *Warriors, Martyrs, and*

and nutritional behaviors were always perceived as an expression of cultural trends and religious standards. Christian teaching criticized paganism and followed the Old Testament's imperatives for the idolothytes, imposing fasting regulations for laymen, priests and monks.¹⁸ These religious rules seem to be under dispute when the coexistence of different communities was mandatory, as happened in the case described in the twelfth-century Chronicle of Michael the Syrian. The anecdote referred to the presence of Ephraim the patriarch of Antioch, probably in 536, in the camp of the Arab Ghassānids. The patriarch was invited to the table by Aretha the Monophysite Ghassānid king. According to Irfan Shahid, the Ghassānid Arabs, in the cross-border line, created a kind of dietary bridge between the Graeco-Roman vital cultural space and the Arab world.¹⁹ Mutton and beef, that were apparently common in the king's diet, were offered to the patriarch Ephraim, to be rejected straight away, since they were not compatible with his priestly office. The Ghassānid ruler also suggested camel meat to the patriarch as an alternative, but it was similarly not accepted. Obviously, the description of the episode reflected the particularity of the diet of the Jews who abstained from the consumption of camel meat, and at the same time, the narrative raised the essential dividing lines between lay dietary habits and the monastic and priestly diet based on vegetables and dry food.²⁰ On the other hand, Byzantines, similar to their Roman predecessors, in spite their particular fondness for pork,

Dervishes. Moving Frontiers, Shifting Identities in the Land of Rome (13th–15th Centuries) [The Medieval Mediterranean 119], Leiden, Boston 2019, 79–80.

¹⁸ E. Kislinger, Les chrétiens d'Orient: règles et réalités alimentaires dans le monde byzantin, in J.–L. Flandrin, M. Montanari (eds.), *Histoire de l'alimentation*, Paris 1996, 334–337; B. Caseau, *Nourritures terrestres, nourritures célestes. La culture alimentaire à Byzance*, Paris 2015, 275–280.

¹⁹ *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche 1166–1199*, ed. J.–B. Chabot, Paris 1901, Brussels 1963, vol. 2, IX.29, 247–248; see I. Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, vol. II, part 2: *Economic, Social, and Cultural History*, Washington, D.C. 2009, 131. In the incident pork meat was not an issue, probably because it was not included in the diet of the Ghassānid Arabs.

²⁰ Chroni, 88–94; Caseau, *Nourritures terrestres, nourritures célestes* 14, 28, 155.

took special care with the food offered to Arab envoys, who had to avoid any contact with pork dishes. A similar concern is also recorded for the Muslims who were present at the official ceremonies by the imperial *Book of Ceremonies* as well as by the tenth-century Arab writers, ibn Rosteh (d. after 903), and al-Muqaddasī (c. 945/946–991)²¹.

Fasting was important for the Byzantines, and, as horticulture and arboriculture were well developed in Byzantium, vegetables, herbs, fruits and nuts formed an important component of their diet. Medical texts and dietary calendars, based on antique texts, provided comprehensive commentaries on the nutritional characteristics of the vegetable diet.²² Reference to the properties of vegetables initially

²¹ A. Vasiliev, Harun-ibn-Yahya and his description of Constantinople, *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 5 (1932), 149–163; A. Vasiliev, M. Canard, *Byzance et les Arabes. La dynastie macédonienne (867–959)*, Brussels 1950, vol. II.2, 388, 423; on a different approach and remarks see L. Simeonova, Foreigners in Tenth-Century Byzantium: A Contribution to the History of Cultural Encounter, in D. C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves. The Byzantine Outsider*, Papers from the thirty-second Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton, March 1998, Aldershot 2000, 229–244. For the ceremonial order regarding hierarchies, the equipment and decoration in the palace's reception halls see M. Featherstone, Δι' ἔνδοξεῖν. Display in Court Ceremonial (De Cerimoniis II, 15), in A. Cutler, A. Papaconstantinou (eds.), *The Material and the Ideal. Essays in Mediaeval Art and Archaeology in Honour of Jean Michel Spieser*, Leiden 2008, 105–106; Chr. Angelidi Designing Receptions in the Palace (De Cerimoniis 2.15), in A. Beihammer, St. Constantinou, M. G. Parani (eds.), *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean. Comparative Perspectives* [The Medieval Mediterranean 98], Leiden, Boston 2013, 484–485.

²² E. Jeanselme, Les calendriers de régime à l'usage des Byzantins et la tradition hippocratique, *Mélanges offerts à M. Gustave Schlumberger membre de l'Institut, à l'occasion du quatre-vingtième anniversaire de sa naissance* (17 octobre 1924), Paris 1924, 217–233; J. Koder, Fresh Vegetables for the Capital, in C. Mango, G. Dagron (eds.), *Constantinople and its Hinterland*, Papers from the Twenty-Seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993, Aldershot 1995, 49–56; Grant, *Oribasius, Dieting for an Emperor*, 13; A. M. Talbot, Byzantine Monastic Horticulture. The Textual Evidence, in A. Littlewood, H. Maguire, J. Wolschke-Bulman (eds.),

appeared in the Arabic medico–culinary handbooks composed within the broader context of the translation movement in Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid caliphs.²³ Greek humoral medicine was then introduced by the Nestorian *Hunayn Ibn Ishāq* and his disciples (who translated approximately a hundred works by Galen).²⁴ Thenceforth, medical and dietetic advice began to be incorporated into the Arabic culinary manuals. This first step was followed by a creative tendency of composition of original dietetic works in Arabic.²⁵ The fourteenth–century Arabic treatise called *The Description of Familiar Foods* (*Kitab wasf al-aṭ'ima al-mu'tāda*), a known literary work of this kind, highlighted the abstinence from eating meat and fish (the latter being permissible only during feast days in Christian monastic diet), as a special feature of the Christian diet. A special chapter in this collection was dedicated to vegetarian meals; its subtitle indicates that their consumption was attributed to popularized curative practices that corresponded to the Christian monastic diet, probably suggested in the East by the Nestorian Christian doctors.²⁶ Similarly, vegetarian recipes,

Byzantine Garden Culture, Washington 2002, 37–67; S. Weingarten, A Vegetable Zodiac from Late Antique Alexandria, in S. R. Friedland (ed.), *Vegetables. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery*, 2008, Totnes, Devon 2009, 225–237; Caseau, *Nourritures terrestres, nourritures célestes*, 143–150.

²³ Ch. Messis, Traduction de l'arabe au grec, in H. Touati (ed.), *Encyclopédie de l'humanisme méditerranéen*, printemps 2014 ([url:http://www.encyclopedie-humanisme.com/Traduction-de-l-arabe-au-grec](http://www.encyclopedie-humanisme.com/Traduction-de-l-arabe-au-grec), 11.11.2016); M. Mavroudi, Translations from Greek into Latin and Arabic during the Middle Ages. Searching for the Classical Tradition, *Speculum* 90 (2015), 28–59, esp. 50.

²⁴ On *Hunayn Ibn Ishāq*, see J. Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842. Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*, Farnham, Burlington 2014, 431, 433.

²⁵ Waines, Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture, 230–231; A. Touwaide, Agents and Agencies? The Many Facets of Translation in Byzantine Medicine, in F. Wallis, R. Wisnovsky (eds.), *Medieval Textual Cultures. Agents of Transmission, Translation and Transformation*, Berlin 2016, 13–38.

²⁶ Ch. Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in M. Rodinson, A. J. Arberry, Ch. Perry, with a foreword by Cl. Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery. Essays and translations*, Devon, 2006, 283, 443–444.

called *muzawwar*, were prepared also as medicinal compounds, and were attributed to the Christian physician Ibn Māsawayh (d. 857), according to the earlier tenth-century extant culinary manual, known as the *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*, compiled by Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq.²⁷ Vegetarian diet seemed to be to have different reception in Byzantium and the Arab world. These separate religious and dietary traditions on vegetable consumption came across each other again with the introduction of spinach and eggplants which although were common in the East and recorded frequently in the Arabic recipe collections, remained unknown in Byzantium before the 11th century.

The beginning of a more intensive circulation of goods imported from the East, is confirmed by the ninth century, a time of enhanced exchanges, which promoted the circulation of new materials and products and corresponded to the increase in demand for spices and other items which gradually became a trend of the diet of the economically wealthy social groups and particularly the members of the imperial court. During this period prisoners were frequently exchanged and this procedure had brought closer the two conflicting parties through war negotiations and diplomacy. Despite the different concepts outlined in texts composed by each side, it seems that these policies promoted a sort of intimacy between high officials in the courts of Constantinople and Baghdad.²⁸ In such missions, as we are informed by an eleventh century Fatimid text, among other gifts, sent by the caliph of Baghdad, Hārūn ar-Rashīd (786–809) to the emperor Nikephoros I (802–811), were perfumes, dates, raisins and theriac (thēriaké,

²⁷ *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens. Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's Tenth-Century Baghdadi Cookbook*, ed. N. Nasrallah [Islamic History and Civilization 70], Leiden, Boston, 2007, 232–239, 433–437; Waines, *Dietetics in Medieval Islamic Culture*, 238–239.

²⁸ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, 120–123; M.–F. Auzépy, *Le rôle des émigrés orientaux à Constantinople et dans l'Empire (634–843): acquis et perspectives*, *Al-Qanṭara* 33 (2012), 475–503; D. König, *Caught between Cultures? Bicultural Personalities as Cross-Cultural Transmitters in the Late Antique and Medieval Mediterranean*, in Abdellatif, Benhima, König, Ruchaud (eds.), *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale*, 56–72.

antidote);²⁹ al-Tabari also reports that large quantities of musk were among other precious offerings sent to the emperor Theophilos (829–842) by al-Ma'mūn, (813–833), and, again, musk and saffron were included among the gifts offered in 861 to Michael III (842–867) by the envoy of caliph Al-Mu'tasim (833–842).³⁰ Exactly at that time, flavorings of this kind, used for pharmaceutical preparations and culinary recipes, were also systematically sent as diplomatic gifts equally to the rulers in the East and West.³¹ Musk was a substance carried always among the essentials in the imperial campaigns' luggage. Particular reference is made to musk included in a set of gifts sent in 938 to al-Rādī –Billāh, the Abbasid caliph of Baghdad (934–940) by the emperors of Constantinople, probably Romanos I (920–944), and Constantine VII (913–959).³² This diplomatic gesture by the Byzantine emperor to send to the Arab rulers this fine natural material

²⁹ M. Canard, La prise d'Héraclée et les relations entre Hārūn ar-Rashīd et l'empereur Nicéphore Ier, *Byzantion* 32 (1962), 359 [=Byzance et les musulmans du Proche Orient, London, Variorum Reprints, 1973, XVIII]; N. Drocourt, Les animaux comme cadeaux d'ambassade entre Byzance et ses voisins (VIIe–XIIe siècle), in B. Doumerc, Chr. Picard (eds.), *Hommage à Alain Ducellier, Byzance et ses périphéries*, Toulouse 2004, 71.

³⁰ A. Vasiliev, M. Canard, *Byzance et les Arabes. La dynastie macédonienne (867–959)*, Brussels 1935, vol. I, 320; O. Grabar, The Shared Culture of Objects, in H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, Washington 1997, 115–129, esp. 117; A. R. Littlewood, Gardens of the Palaces, in Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Court Culture*, 17; Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 40–41, 192.

³¹ A. Cutler, Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001), 247–278. Exchanging diplomatic or ceremonious gifts became much more sophisticated when the movement of people and goods was intensified after the 13th century, see, for example, D. Behrens-Abouseif, *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate. Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World*, London, New York 2014.

³² *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, ed. J. F. Haldon [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 28], Vienna 1990, (C), 220, 108; M. Hamidullah, Nouveaux documents sur les rapports de l'Europe avec l'Orient musulman au moyen âge, *Arabica* 7 (1960), 286–288; Mundell Mango, Hierarchies of Rank and Materials, 366.

emphasized, as stated by Marlia Mundell Mango, that ‘the exotic material was then, fashioned into a Byzantine object and was sent abroad into another exotic milieu with the stamp of the Empire upon it’.³³ The manuscript of the *Materia Medica* of Dioscorides, that was offered by the Byzantine emperor to the Cordoban caliph ‘*Abd al-Rahmān III* in 948/9, served similar symbolic and practical purposes. This first-century scientific textbook, alongside its basic topics on the medicinal properties of plants, raised issues of medico-culinary interest. Quite some decades later Dioscorides’ manuscript reached Cordoba and was updated by Ibn Juljul (c. 944–c. 994). It seems that the theme of this work was at all times influential in the Muslim world, since it had been already translated in the Abbasid court of Baghdad about a hundred years earlier, in the time of caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–861).³⁴

The interest of the Byzantines in eastern products was not only due to their willingness to improve their tastes and exoticising their diet, but also expressed the need to understand and use the dietary and medicinal properties of food to protect wellness. The circulation of such products is occasionally testified at the level of commercial transactions. Private contracts and official treatises make notice on the marketing of oriental food products and materials, while a more organised trade is evidenced by the report of the annual spice/perfume fair that took place in Augustopolis (Phrygia, theme of Anatolikon).³⁵

³³ Mundell Mango, *Hierarchies of Rank and Materials*, 373.

³⁴ El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs*, 109–110; Drocourt, *Quelques aspects du rôle des ambassadeurs dans les transferts culturels entre Byzance et ses voisins (VIIe–XIIe siècle)*, in Abdellatif, Benhima, König, Ruchaud (eds.), *Acteurs des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale*, 35–36; A. McCabe, *Imported Materia Medica, 4th–12th centuries, and Byzantine Pharmacology*, in M. Mundell Mango (ed.), *Byzantine Trade, 4th–12th Centuries. The Archaeology of Local, Regional and International Exchange*, Papers of the thirty-eighth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St John's College, University of Oxford, March 2004, Farnham, Burlington 2009, 286; Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilus*, 431–432. For the symbolic and practical purpose of this diplomatic gift see Sardi, *Le livre comme cadeau diplomatique* (forthcominhg).

³⁵ Ch. Pellat, *Gāhiziana*, I: *Le Kitāb al-Tabaṣṣur bi'l-tiğāra attribué à Ğāhiz*, *Arabica* 1 (1954), 159; A. E. Laiou, *Exchange and Trade, Seventh–Twelfth*

Information on the movement of products intended for culinary and medical use is provided in the regulations concerning the guilds of Constantinople included the manual known as the *Book of the Prefect* or *Eparch* dated in the reign of Emperor Leo VI (886–912). The rather expensive materials mentioned in these regulations, such as spices and perfums, were most likely consumed by the well-off social groups in Constantinople. Spices, such as pepper and cinnamon marketed by the guild of *myrepsoi*³⁶ are also found in the later vernacular poems composed by the twelfth-century scholar Ptochoprodromos, indicating that these products corresponded to regular supply demands of the upper social classes.³⁷ The exchange of these products as diplomatic gifts, even as presents sent among friends, as well as the interest expressed in narratives, letters and treatises in relation to natural and nutritional properties of food, reveal the willingness of both parts to become familiar with the ingredients and flavours in order to ameliorate diet and improve health.³⁸ Such data can offer a supplement to our knowledge on the Byzantine cooking ways, since the recording of recipes or cooking instructions did not customarily attract the interest of Byzantine writers with the exception of some scholarly commentaries and the outlining of instructions on the preparation of meals contained in the Byzantine dietetic treatises. The compilation of cooking recipes and the recommendations on good manners in table were, on the other hand, a significant part of the literary production in the Muslim world, addressed especially in the courts of the caliphs.³⁹

Centuries, in A. E. Laiou (ed.), *The Economic History of Byzantium*, Washington 2002, vol. 2, 716–718, 725, 731, 746; Kl. Belke – N. Mersich, *Phrygien und Pisidien* [Denkschriften, phil.–hist. Klasse 211, TIB 7], Vienna 1990 65, 196–197; M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy. Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900*, Cambridge 2002, 591.

³⁶ *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*, ed. J. Koder [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 33], Vienna 1991, 10.1, 110–111.

³⁷ Ptochoprodromos, II 38, 111, III 115.1, 122, III 188, 192, 128, IV 212, 150.

³⁸ A. Karpozilos, *Realia in Byzantine Epistolography X–XIIc*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 77 (1984), 29–30; Idem, *Realia in Byzantine Epistolography XIII–XVc*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 88 (1995), 81.

³⁹ M. Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, Westport Conn., London, 2004, 116–117; A. Touwaide, *Botany*, in St. Lazaris (ed.), *A Companion to Byzantine Science, c. 400–1500*, Leiden 2020, 345–349; Br. Power *Art of the*

This material offered by the Arabic culinary literature can even fill some gaps to our knowledge on Byzantine food preparation. In this regard, it is important to note that the type and quality of certain foodstuffs and some products or meals were defined occasionally by their origin: materials and foodstuffs of oriental origin were called *Indian* or *Saracen* in Byzantine texts, while in the Arabic sources the term *al-rūmī* was used for Byzantine foods.⁴⁰

Information provided in the Arabic medical, dietetic and culinary texts, as in the case of Byzantine society, highlighted the cultural background and the choices of the upper classes in the Muslim world. Arabic culinary textbooks, dating from the tenth century, refer to dried or cooked meat that was called *al-rūmī*. Saffron is once mentioned and featured as *Byzantine* and there was a kind of myrtle (myrtus), called *Greek*.⁴¹ There are also some allusions to a sauce or a condiment used in Arab cuisine called *murrī*, and on one occasion it is called *Byzantine murrī*,⁴² a name possibly deriving from the ancient Mediterranean brine sauces and could be a corruption of the Greek word *halmyros* which means brine; the more common version of this sauce was made from fish, salt and spices and it could be also used as digestive, quite possibly being a variant or a kind of the Roman and subsequently Byzantine

Object.Food Related Arts and Rituals. From Baghdad to Cordoba: Ziryab and the Art of Gracious Dining (url: <https://www.academia.edu/33355350>, 24.5.2020).

⁴⁰ Saracen for example, were called in the Book of Eparch the fabrics that came from Syria, see *Das Eparchenbuch Leons des Weisen*, 5.2, 94–95; Kislinger, *Les chrétiens d'Orient*, 342; Anagnostakis, *Byzantine Diet and Cuisine*, 54–55. On the term Saracen see R. Shukurov, *Turkoman and Byzantine Self-Identity. Some Reflections on the Logic of Title-Making in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Anatolia*, in A. Eastmond (ed.), *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, Papers from the Thirty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Warwick, Coventry, March 1999, London 2017, 267–270.

⁴¹ Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in Rodinson, Arberry, Perry, Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 407, 484.

⁴² *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 136; Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in Rodinson, Arberry, Perry, Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 406–407; D. Waines, *Murrī: The Tale of a Condiment*, *Al-Qanṭara* 12 (1991), 371–388.

dressing known as *garum* or *garos*.⁴³ Common dietary preferences in the Arab and the Byzantine transactions in the Eastern Mediterranean are also identified in the trading of food products, like the Sicilian cheese mentioned as well in Arabic texts. Cheese being always an important component of the Byzantine diet, was also mentioned among the products exported by the Arab Emirate of Crete (824–961). Different qualities of cheese have started to be widely traded from the tenth century. It was obviously distributed on a larger scale later and was included among the species imported from distant regions to Constantinople, like all the products that could be befitted to the life–style of and afforded by the high class Byzantines.⁴⁴

The preference of the Byzantines for flavors of oriental origin is expressed in the positive projection of the sweet called *paloudaki(o)n* in the Dream Book of Achmet (late 9th 10th c.); its appreciation is also

⁴³ Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in Rodinson, Arberry, Perry, Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 282; I. Anagnostakis, Byzantine Delicacies, in Anagnostakis, *Flavours*, 85–86.

⁴⁴ Reports on commercializing various types of cheese are increasing from 9th c. on, thanks to the growth of trade and the improvement of maritime transport in the Eastern Mediterranean, cf. V. Christides, *The Conquest of Crete by the Arabs* (ca. 824). A Turning Point in the Struggle between Byzantium and Islam, Athens 1984, 117 (with sources); Ch. Perry, Sicilian Cheese in Medieval Arab, *Gastronomica* 1 (2001) 76–77; Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in Rodinson, Arberry, Perry, Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 338; D. Jacoby, Mediterranean Food and Wine for Constantinople. The Long–Distance Trade, Eleventh to Mid–Fifteenth Century, in Idem, *Medieval Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond*, London 2018, 127–129; M. Leontsini, G. Merianos, From Culinary to Alchemical recipes. Various Uses of Milk and Cheese in Byzantium, in I. Anagnostakis, A. Pellettieri (eds.), *Latte e Latticini. Aspetti della produzione e del consumo nelle società mediterranee dell'Antichità e del Medioevo*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Atene, 2–3 Ottobre 2015, Lagonegro 2015, 210–211; Maria Gerolymatou, *Τυρὴν κρητικόν, τυρὴν τούρκικον, τυρὴν ἀπὸ Βενετίας*. Concerning the Cheese Trade in the 14th century in Anagnostakis, Pellettieri, *Latte e Latticini*, 173–184. I thank I. Anagnostakis for signaling to me the identification of the *paloudakion* with the *fālūdhaj*.

highlighted in the poems of Ptochorodromos.⁴⁵ As rightly suggested by Ilias Anagnostakis, it can be identified with the Persian-derived term *fālūdhaj*, mentioned in the tenth century Arabic cookery book *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*, compiled by Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq. *Paloudaki(o)n* is listed among a number of recipes of different sweetmeats usually made from ground almonds and sugar. It must be noticed that these recipes included also remarks for the nutritional and digestive properties of preparations and meals.⁴⁶ Imported foodstuffs to Byzantium were more regularly recorded in Byzantine sources from the tenth century onwards. Sugar (*sachar*) and rice, among the products started to be traded in the East from the seventh century onwards, were listed in the supplies carried in the imperial military luggage (10th c.) and in the basic foodstuffs and medicaments in the directory of the *Typikon* of the monastery of Christ Pantokrator, built by emperor John II Komnenos (1118–1143). Their use by the members of the imperial environment, initially for pharmaceutical purposes, was soon extended to their nutritional use as indicated in the alimentary treatise compiled by Symeon Seth, an 11th-century both Arabic and Greek speaking scholar, and high Byzantine official.⁴⁷ A preparation of sugar, rice and milk was

⁴⁵ M. Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation. The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and Its Arabic Sources*, Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 2002, 70–72, 78, 97; Ptochoprodromos, ed. H. Eideneier, *Ptochoprodromos. Einführung, kritische Ausgabe, deutsche Übersetzung, Glossar* [Neograeca Medii Aevi 5], Cologne 1991, IV 330, 157. On Byzantine pastry making see Anagnostakis, *Byzantine Delicacies*, in Anagnostakis, *Flavours*, 87–89; M. Leontsini, *Plakountai, Pies and Pancakes. Festive and Daily Baked Desserts in Byzantium (4th–15th c.)*, in A. Pellettieri (ed.), *...come sa di sale lo pane altrui. Il pane di Matera e i pani del Mediterraneo*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Matera, 5–7 Settembre 2014, Foggia 2014, 123–131.

⁴⁶ *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 110, 382–387, 595–596. See also Perry, *The Description of Familiar Foods*, in Rodinson, Arberry, Perry, Roden, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 283.

⁴⁷ *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises*, (C), 220, 108; *Simeonis Sethi Syntagma de alimentorum facultatibus*, ed. B. Langkavel, Leipzig, 1868, 75.14, 130.3; P. Gautier, *Le typikon du Christ Sauveur Pantocrator*, *Revue des Études Byzantines* 32, (1974), 20, 44, 94–95, 96–97; sugar's varieties and their properties were regularly recorded in the Arab recipe collections, see *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 2, 97, 110, 139, 599, 600–602; Mavroudi, *A*

recommended in the dietetic treatise by Symeon Seth for its beneficial effects to health. The reference to this custard that was referred to the Arabic recipe collections mentioned earlier, is quite exceptional in Byzantine cookery. Milk, mentioned by Symeon Seth in this confection constituted a special trend in Arabic cookery certainly due to the availability of dairy products in the Muslim world. In the same way, rice spiced with honey, and not with sugar, appears in the Ptochoprodromic poems, as a desired dish reserved for wealthy monks, although milk is absent from this ‘recipe’, probably due to monastic diet restrictions.⁴⁸

The preference for spicy flavors and sweet preparations with rich savoring shared by both the Byzantine and Arab societies, especially their well-off members, was also evident in the fondness for complex culinary combinations of materials in stew preparations mixing divergent ingredients. Cooking with a ‘bizarre’ blending of ingredients and flavours, enjoyed common assessment and might have been influenced by the popular in the Muslim world cooking preparations such as the *tharīda*, a broth made by stewed meat and bread crumbs that was in fact, priced by Prophet Muḥammad. The Byzantine *pastomageiria* made of meat and bread crumbs and the *monokythron*, both mentioned in the poems of Ptochoprodromos, were composed by vegetables and different kinds of fish and cheese.⁴⁹ Particularly strong

Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation, 65, 67. The handling of sugar in quantities is attested in the 13th century cf. Jacoby, *Mediterranean Food and Wine* 133–134; Kitapçı Bayrı, *Warriors, Martyrs, and Dervishes*, 82–83. On the intellectual personality of Symeon Seth see H. Condyliş-Bassoukos, *Stéphanitès kai Ichnélatès, traduction grecque (XIe siècle) du livre Kalīla wa-Dimna d’Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (VIIIe siècle). Etude lexicologique et littéraire*, Louvain 1997, xxii–xxv, and passim; Touwaide, *Agents and Agencies?* 13–38.

⁴⁸ *Simeonis Sethi Syntagma*, 75.13–15; Ptochoprodromos, IV 324, 157. On rice in agriculture and its uses see M. Decker, *Tilling the Hateful Earth. Agricultural Production and Trade in the Late Antique East*, Oxford, New York 2009, 109–111; Kokoszko, Jagusiak, Rzeźnicka, *Rice as Food and Medication*, 129–155.

⁴⁹ Ptochoprodromos, III 104–106, 115, IV 201–214, 149–150. On *tharīda* see *Annals of the Caliphs’ Kitchens*, 255, 337–343, 354–359; Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs*, 128, 130.

was the impact on the flavours and cooking practices brought by the newly available products in the Mediterranean countries, which were already known to the Arabs, as emerges from the Arabic recipe collections. These collections record several vegetables, such as spinach and eggplants, and citrus fruits such as, oranges and lemons, for which the Byzantines had a vague idea before the tenth century.⁵⁰ Eggplants and spinach were mentioned by Symeon Seth and Ptochoprodromos, thus indicating their arrival to Constantinople probably during the eleventh century.⁵¹ The adoption of these vegetables and fruit could have been possibly favoured by the improved tillage and irrigation systems and horticulture practices introduced into the Mediterranean countries via the contacts with the Arab world.⁵²

The wide scope of the exchanges and the commercial movement of goods from East to Byzantium presented so far, proved that diplomacy and trade facilitated contacts and highlighted the common expectations of Byzantines and Arabs to promote some common ideas on prosperity through the improvement of the way and means of subsistence, especially in relation to diet. The dissemination of cooking materials and techniques that was promoted by these modes of communication between Byzantium and the Arab world has demonstrated that oriental products affected to a great extent the consumption and culinary horizons of the Byzantines. However, intercultural food choices had not penetrated widely into the existing

⁵⁰ M. Montanari, *Modèles alimentaires et identités culturelles*, in Flandrin, Montanari, *Histoire de l'alimentation*, 322–323.

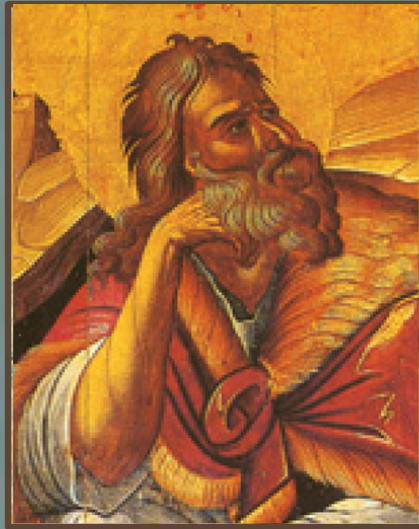
⁵¹ Some of them were rare but known to Dioscorides, see McCabe, *Imported Materia Medica*, 287; for their further dissemination after the expansion of the Arabs see Anagnostakis, *Byzantine Diet and Cuisine*, 62.

⁵² Talbot, *Byzantine Monastic Horticulture*, 37–67; on the contribution of the Islamic world in agricultural innovation see Decker, *Tilling the Hateful Earth*, 219, 226–227. The question is further discussed by the same scholar (Idem, *Plants and Progress: Rethinking the Islamic Agricultural Revolution*, *Journal of World History* 20, 2009, 187–206) as also by P. Squatriti, *Of Seeds, Seasons, and Seas: Andrew Watson's Medieval Agrarian Revolution Forty Years Later*, *The Journal of Economic History* 74 (2014), 1205–1220 and T. J. Wilkinson, Introduction in St. McPhillips, P.D. Wordsworth (eds.), *Landscapes of the Islamic World. Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*, Philadelphia 2016, 1–16.

eating habits of the entire Byzantine society. New species were promoted at a relatively slow pace and adopted principally by the upper classes of the Byzantine society, since Constantinople was the main destination for traded goods. However, the two-fold communication and cultural interaction in visual, aesthetic and taste experience can be summarized in a small excerpt, describing a garden, coming from the narration of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī composed on the occasion of the Byzantine mission to caliph al-Muqtadir (908–932) in Baghdad in 917: ‘around the basin lay a garden with paths where palms were planted ... all very beautiful full of dates. On both sides of the garden grew citrus fruits, sweet melons and oranges’.⁵³ Although it is known that herbs and spices were transported through trade, what yet has not been clarified is whether the new arboriculture and horticulture species, mentioned in this excerpt, were brought over to Byzantium and the Mediterranean world by specialists, like the *phytourgoi* in antiquity (gardeners engaged in transplantation hired by the state or religious institutions) or by cultivators who moved between the two worlds.⁵⁴ To a greater extent than diplomacy, the activation and mobility of traders kept communications and exchanges active through land and sea routes leading from the Middle East and India to Byzantium and the Mediterranean Sea. The way in which our sources described the exchanges between Byzantium and the Arab world shows above all a common willingness on both sides to adopt new products and eating habits with a particular preference for opulent meals, flavoured with aromatic species and luxurious materials. The consumption of these materials focused on prosperity, abundance, and wealth, and therefore their acquisition was also used to symbolize power at the political and social levels.

⁵³ Vasiliev, Canard, *Byzance et les Arabes*, vol. II.2, 77.

⁵⁴ St. Mitchell, Food, Culture, and Environment in Ancient Asia Minor, in J. Wilkins, R. Nadeau (eds.), *A Companion to Food in the Ancient World*, Oxford 2015, 288.



Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν
Πανεπιστήμιον Αθηνών
— ΙΔΡΥΘΕΝ ΤΟ 1837 —

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