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JOHANNES KODER, IOANNIS STOURAITIS (HRSG.)

BYZANTINE WAR IDEOLOGY BETWEEN ROMAN IMPERIAL
CONCEPT AND CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Akten des Internationalen Symposiums
(Wien, 19.–21. Mai 2011)



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PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
DENKSCHRIFTEN, 452. BAND

VERÖFFENTLICHUNGEN ZUR
BYZANZFORSCHUNG

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON
PETER SOUSTAL und CHRISTIAN GASTGEBER

BAND XXX

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1176 – A Byzantine Crusade?*

In his well-written monograph on Manuel Comnenos Paul Magdalino¹ covers the expedition against the Seljuk's of Iconium and the disastrous battle of Myriokephalon of 1176 under the title “The Byzantine Crusade 1175–76”. In this sense Magdalino describes the refortification of Dorylaion under Manuel's initiative as “the beginning of a holy war”². This interpretation of the events of 1176 had been advanced already by Ralph-Johannes Lilie in his book on *Byzanz und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten*³. In Lilie's reconstruction, Manuel's military initiative was the beginning of a crusade (“Iniziierung eines neuen Kreuzzuges”). Scholars involved in the discussion about options and forms of “holy war” in Byzantium may be wondering about this categorical interpretation of the events of 1175/76 as a Byzantine “crusade”. Perhaps one could pass over this without comment as rhetorical hyperbole, if a young scholar in Australia, Andrew Stone, had not brought this topic recently to the center of the discussion, first with an article in the *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*⁴ and soon thereafter with an article in the *Revue des Études Byzantines*⁵.

I decided that I should analyze these events of 1176 in an attempt to contribute to the question dominating this Symposium by offering a paradigm, by producing a *causa ad quam argumentum demonstrandum est*⁶.

Stone attempts an exhaustive analysis of the available historiographical sources, but also of the rhetorical texts of two contemporary authors, Euthymios Malakes, Metropolitan of New Patras and Eustathius as well as Metropolitan of Thessaloniki. Let us look at the evidence more closely.

As a document of fundamental importance Magdalino and Stone cite a letter by Alexander III to his legate to the French Court, Peter, Cardinal of St. Chrysogonus. With this letter the pope informs his legate that he had sent letters to the monarchs of the West, asking them to move with devotion against the Seljuks for the glory of the Christian faith, i.e. to start a new crusade. The pope informs the recipient that his initiative is supported by a letter he received on 16th January 1176 from Emperor Manuel. In his letter the *illustris Constantinopolitanus imperator* informed him that he had invaded the land of the Turks (*Turcarum terram ingressus*), had destroyed castles and cities of the enemies and had refortified a great city, installing there a guard of Latins and Greeks, and that with God's grace he rules from this city over a large area of the Turks

* An early version of this paper was read in Greek at a conference in honour of Helen Ahrweiler on 16.07.2004 on the island of Poros. The invitation to participate at the Vienna conference on Byzantine war ideology encouraged me to retrieve it from a dossier of unpublished papers and present it here with minimal changes.

¹ P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*. Cambridge 1993 (repr. 1997) [Greek transl. Η Αυτοκρατορία του Μανουήλ Α΄ Κομνηνού. Athens 2008].

² MAGDALINO, *Empire* 96–97.

³ R.-J. LILIE, *Byzanz und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten. Studien zur Politik des Byzantinischen Reiches gegenüber den Staaten der Kreuzfahrer in Syrien und Palästina bis zum vierten Kreuzzug (1096–1204)*. München 1981, 201–203. Lilie continues along this path in IDEM, *Handel und Politik zwischen dem byzantinischen Reich und den italienischen Kommunen Venedig, Pisa und Genua in der Epoche der Komnenen und der Angeloi (1081–1204)*. Amsterdam 1984, 511ff. However in IDEM, *Byzanz und die Kreuzzüge*. Stuttgart 2004 122, he speaks no more of a Crusade, but only of Manuel's hope to gain the *Nimbus des Kreuzfahrers* in case of a victory against the Seljuks. In an earlier article that contains quite useful comments of the relative sources, Lilie had not gone that far yet, see IDEM, *Die Schlacht von Myriokephalon (1176). Auswirkungen auf das byzantinische Reich im ausgehenden 12. Jahrhundert*. *REB* 35 (1977) 257–275. Actually it was F. Chalandon who first alluded to this interpretation, cf. F. CHALANDON, *Les Comnène*. Paris 1912, 503–506.

⁴ A. E. STONE, *Eustathian panegyric as a historical source*. *JÖB* 51 (2001) 225–258, particularly 243f.

⁵ A. E. STONE, *Dorylaion Revisited. Manuel I Komnenos and the refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion in 1175*. *REB* 61 (2003) 183–199.

⁶ After the conference in Vienna and during the process of editing this paper for publication an article of Dr Stouraitis, one of our hosts, was published on the broader topic of religious warfare in which the battle of Myriokephalon is interpreted along parallel lines, see I. STOURAITIS, *Jihād and Crusade: Byzantine positions towards the notions of ‘holy war’*. *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011) 11–63, in particular 42–49. I thank him for sending me an electronic offprint.

and that with God's favor the road to the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord was safe for Latins and Greeks. Since the Emperor promised, the letter continues, not to abstain from assaults against this incestuous people, the pope therefore wants to transmit Manuel's proposal for a military initiative to the monarchs and rulers of the world⁷.

From this letter so much is clear: we learn that Manuel informed the pope about his expedition of 1175 and the refortification of Dorylaion, about his intention to move against Iconium and about his proposal (*propositum*) to the pope to initiate a new crusade of the rulers of the West. Given the geopolitical circumstances of the day Manuel apparently needed to improve his relations with Rome and to strengthen the net of communication and cooperation with the Crusaders' states in the Near East. One of his main goals was to isolate Frederick Barbarossa, whose aim was to appear as the protector of the Christians in the Holy Land and who allegedly incited the Sultan of Iconium to start a war against the Byzantines⁸. It is therefore easy to explain Manuel's extensive military offensive against the Seljuks and it is equally easy to explain Manuel's effort to present to the pope his initiative in such a phraseology as if he supported the papal goals, namely to safeguard the crusaders' dominion in Jerusalem and to enforce the idea of the crusade, which at that time was considered a preponderant idea and the noblest duty of the pope and any Christian in the West. On the other hand, if Manuel could convince the pope to call for a new crusade of the French rulers through the lands controlled by the Seljuks, this would facilitate Manuel's own strategic plans in Asia Minor. But are all these apparent reasons sufficient to give to the Byzantine initiative the attribute of a "crusade"? Did the Byzantines initiate or consider the option of initiating crusades of their own?

In order to support his interpretation of the events of 1175/76 Magdalino refers to further evidence, which we must scrutinize. Firstly he utilizes the evidence provided by John Kinnamos that Manuel prepared a war fleet of 150 ships and sent them to Egypt. This information refers to a naval initiative against Egypt, datable in 1177, rather than 1175 or 1176⁹. Magdalino combines this information with what we know about the land expedition against Iconium and on that basis he concludes that Manuel initiated a crusade. It is obvious that the careful preparation, the large volume of military forces and the personal involvement of the emperor in the expedition against Iconium demonstrates that he had decided to deliver a crushing blow to the Seljuk sultan and that this aim was part of a wider geopolitical program. However, this does not characterize the adventure as a crusade nor the attack on Egypt, possibly ordered *post eventum* and for different strategic reasons. Let us look at this piece of evidence more closely:

It is significant to underline that none of the historiographers of the time, John Kinnamos, Niketas Choniates, William of Tyre or Michael the Syrian ascribe the attributes of crusade to those events of 1175/76, although they describe in some detail the military operations of Manuel¹⁰. The four historiographers praise the emperor for his bravery and for his plans to destroy the enemy and also mention his sorrow for the defeat at Myriokephalon, which he compared to the defeat of Romanus IV Diogenes at the battle of Mantzikert one hundred years before¹¹. They further underline the advantages of the peace concluded after the defeat because through this peace the largest part of the army was saved and a cross captured by the enemies, with relics of the Holy Cross, was returned.

This is of course Byzantine traditional narrative. How then can we explain the lack of any hint that Manuel was fighting a holy war? To this question Magdalino's answer is as follows: "As far as his subjects were concerned, his crusade of 1175–6 was a traditional imperial war of reconquest – which is perhaps why mod-

⁷ Epistolae Alexandri III Papae (*PL* 200, no. 1233). An English translation of the passage in STONE, *Dorylaion Revisited* 185ff.

⁸ There is no evidence to substantiate this allegation of modern scholars. I thank Dr Eleni Tounta who checked the source once more on my request and confirmed this opinion.

⁹ Most probably this expedition is identical with the one mentioned by William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, XXIII, 1 (*PL* 201, 879–985), dated to 1177. Cf. B. HAMILTON, Manuel I Comnenus and Baldwin IV of Jerusalem, in: *Καθηγήτρια. Essays Presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th Birthday*, ed. J. CHRYSOSTOMIDES. Camberley 1988, 353–375, here 362ff.

¹⁰ Cinnamus VII (ed. A. MEINEKE, *Ioannis Cinnami Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum* [*CShB* 25–6]. Bonn 1836, 291–300); Choniates 179–194 (ed. J.-L. VAN DIETEN, *Nicetae Choniatae historia* [*CFHB* 11.1]. Berlin 1975); William of Tyre 97 (ed. R. B. C. HUYGENS, *Willelmi Tyrensis chronicon*. Turnhout 1986); Michael the Syrian 368–372 (ed. J.-B. CHABOT, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*. Paris 1905).

¹¹ Choniates 191, 27–30 (VAN DIETEN): Νῦν δὲ ταυτοπαθῆ πῶς ἑαυτὸν Ρωμανῶ τῷ Διογένει κατονομάζων, ἐπεὶ καὶ οὗτος ὁ βασιλεὺς κατὰ τῶν Τούρκων ἐξενεγκῶν ποτε πόλεμον τό τε πολὺ τῆς στρατιᾶς ἀπεβάλετο καὶ αὐτὸς συλληφθεὶς ἀπὶ χθονὸς αἰχμάλωτος.

ern historians have been so slow to appreciate its crusading dimension¹². But this is not a convincing explanation of the fact that the authors who experienced these events and wrote about them, Byzantines, Westerners and Orientals as well as modern historians have failed to see the nature of a crusade in the expedition. In my mind there is only one plausible answer: in the perception of the four historiographers Manuel's military initiative was not any sort of a crusade but an enterprise framed within the traditional conceptions of the Byzantines on war against their Muslim adversaries in the East¹³.

Magdalino refers further to a letter of Manuel to the King of England Henry in November 1176, in which he describes what had happened on the expedition¹⁴. In this letter too there is no hint that could be understood as a reference to a crusade, planned or materialized. Here the Byzantine Emperor reports in an expressive way the hatred he always nurtured against the Seljuks, who – of course – were God's enemies who blasphemed against the Christians as triumphant over the true God and as conquerors of Christian lands. However he continues with concrete information about the outcome of the battle of Myriokephalon and the heavy losses that led to the peace agreement that the sultan asked for. This reference in the letter to the procedure of the peace agreement with the Seljuks demonstrates that for the Byzantines it was not impossible, however unpleasant it may have been, to accept the Muslims as counterparts in international consultations and agreements in Byzantium's own way.

Paul Magdalino and more extensively Andrew Stone have analyzed some sentences in contemporary rhetorical texts written by Eustathius of Thessaloniki and Euthymios Malakes, which are interpreted in the phraseology of a crusade. We have to study them closely.

In his "Introductory Homily for Holy Lent"¹⁵, which Eustathius delivered in February 1176, there is clear reference to the refortification of Dorylaion: "It had been taken away from us and it lay as the inheritance for foreigners, but now it has returned to us with the emperor restoring its eminence and completing its fine quality for us; and animals of the woods have been driven away and the feet of the mild one are treading under the good feet of the emperor; and on account of this there has been peace and the joyful news of every good thing for us"¹⁶. Despite the panegyric character of this reference there is no hint of crusading activities. The emperor is praised for the liberation of lands lost to the hands of the Seljuks. It is a praise common to many Byzantine sources, especially rhetorical ones, for the *reconquista* of lost territory. The loss of a part of the Empire's territory was always seen as a temporary accident and the recovery of lands lost to the enemies was considered as the first priority of the emperor, τῶν ἀπολωλότων δι' ἀγρύπνου ἐπιμελείας ἢ ἀνάληψις, as we read in the title *περί βασιλείως* in the *Eisagoge*.

As for the ideas expressed in two homilies by Euthymios Malakes, the Metropolitan of Neai Patrai, I would comment upon them in a not dissimilar way: in his homily "for the emperor Manuel Komnenos after he had returned from his victorious expedition in Persia"¹⁷, Euthymios praises the emperor for the refortification of Dorylaion with the following sentence: "But my emperor both founds cities in the land of others – building Dorylaion on Turkish soil – and he does not permit it to be foreign anymore. And what was our land long ago, and what was then seized by our enemies, he makes ours again"¹⁸. And he continues: "In this way we

¹² MAGDALINO, *Empire* 109.

¹³ Cf. the relevant paper of I. STOURAITIS cited above, n. 6.

¹⁴ On the letter with an English translation see A. A. VASILIEV, Manuel Comnenus and Henry Plantagenet. *BZ* 29 (1929/30) 233–244. It is significant that Manuel reports in this letter that he started the war "inasmuch we were compelled to do so"! This explanation refers to the Empire's needs and strategy rather than to a crusading mission.

¹⁵ Λόγος προεισόδιος τῆς ἀγίας τεσσαρακοστῆς, (ed. P. WIRTH, *Eustathii Thessalonicensis opera minora magnam partem inedita*. Berlin 2000), 17–45; cf. S. SCHÖNAUER ed., *Eustathios Archbishop of Thessalonica, Logos proeisodios tēs hagian Tessarakostis. Reden auf die große Quadragesima*. Frankfurt 2006. For the English translation of this and the following rhetorical passages I rely gratefully on the expertise of my friend John Melville-Jones, Perth.

¹⁶ Eustathios Thess. 41, 82–86 (WIRTH): ἡμῶν μὲν ἀπέσπαστο, τοῖς δὲ ἀλλοφύλοις ὡς εἰς κληρονομίαν ἔκειτο, νῦν δὲ ἐπανήλθεν ἡμῖν ἀνακαλεσαμένου τὸ ταύτης πρεσβεῖον τοῦ παρ' ἡμῖν συμπληροῦντος τὸ καλὸν αὐτοκράτορος. Καὶ θῆρες μὲν οἱ τοῦ δρυμοῦ ἀπηλάθησαν, πόδες δὲ πραέων ἐκεῖ πατοῦσιν ὑπ' ἀγαθοῖς ποσὶ βασιλικῶς, δι' ὧν εἰρήνης ἡμῖν καὶ καλοῦ παντός εὐαγγέλια.

¹⁷ Euthymios Malakes, Λόγος εἰς τὸν αὐτοκράτορα κύριον Μανουὴλ Κομνηνὸν μετὰ τὴν τῆς Περσίδος νικηφόρον στρατείαν ἐπανακάμψαντα, in: K. BONIS, *Εὐθυμίου του Μαλάκη μητροπολίτου Νέων Πατρῶν, δυο Εγκωμιαστικοί Λόγοι, νυν το πρώτον εκδιδόμενοι εἰς τον αυτοκράτορα Μανουήλ Α' Κομνηνόν* (1143–80). *Theologia* 19 (1941–42) 513–558.

¹⁸ Malakes 529, 3–5 (BONIS): Ὁ ἐμὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ πολιρίζει τὴν ἀλλοτρίαν — by building Dorylaion in Turkish territory — καὶ οὐδὲ ἀλλοτρίαν ἔτι ταύτην εἶναι παραχωρεῖ. Πάλαι δὲ ἡμετέραν οὖσαν, εἶτα δὴ παρὰ τῶν δυσμενῶν ἀρπαγεῖσαν, ἡμετέραν αὖθις ποιεῖ.

wash the shame caused by the enemies, who had destroyed the city”. And further: “With this action the morale of the Romans and their self-esteem are raised and therefore they are now happier and comelier”¹⁹. Euthymios quotes further from a speech of the emperor to his soldiers aiming at strengthening their morale for battle. The emperor refers to the religious difference that legitimizes their action: “We labor for the sake of piety, o soldiers, we fight for God” and continues as every Byzantine general would continue in a speech before the battle: “We do not occupy barbarian cities and do not pursue what belongs to others; we do no wrong to others, (but) we fight for what is ours; for it is a terrible thing when the inheritance of God is plundered and trimmed back by impious men”²⁰. In order to better understand the reference to God’s inheritance is it worth mentioning that the enemies are labeled in the Byzantine phraseology as *barbarians*, not as infidels.

Further on Euthymios praises Manuel by projecting his future plans: “He was not satisfied with killing the barbarians with the sword, but he also took them prisoner and enslaved them and will by no means cease from doing such things, until he has recovered the boundaries that are appropriate for the realm of the Romans; and arraying the nations under him as they puff in vain insolence, he puts on this tunic of monarchy, with which it was previously dignified”²¹. Apparently this is the goal until he has recovered the boundaries that are appropriate for the realm of the Romans. Recovery and restoration of Byzantine sovereignty was the outmost goal of the military expedition.

Very useful, I would say even revealing, is yet another passage in which Euthymios declares in rhetorical clothing that the utmost aim of Manuel’s expedition was not the liberation of Palestine and Jerusalem, the permanent goal of the crusaders, but the conquest of an ancient Persian city, renowned for its uncountable treasures, namely Ekbatana, which Plutarch had praised in his biography of Alexander the Great. Here is what Euthymios has to say: “I imagine that day to myself, and my spirit is full of joy and I am almost persuaded to dance, when the army of the Romans dines in Ekbatana and the children of the Persians pour wine and eat their own bread happily – as it has been written – and drink wine with a good heart, and they tell each other stories of those whom they have fought and destroyed, when our emperor, celebrating a most brilliant triumph over central Persia, presents his victories and puts on the crown of monarchy; and sitting on the imperial throne of Darius in royal fashion under the golden canopy and transacted business for those around him and divided the land of Persia in the best possible way into separate units of government, anointed princes and rulers from among his own servants”²². In however way one interprets this passage, I think it is not easy to place these images and the rhetorical exaltations into a plan of a crusade. The images and figures derive from ancient history and literature, familiar to Byzantine scholars, a constant source for their thoughts and their writings. They serve the outmost dream of recovery of the lost lands and they measure their contemporary leaders with Alexander the Great’s achievement. Manuel was of course not aiming at Ekbatana, which was at best a ruin of a city in his time, but a source of imagination. But by the same token Euthymios Malakes reveals that Manuel was, of course, not aiming at the liberation of ... Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Malakes 530,7 and 15–16 (BONIS): λύεται καὶ ἡ παρὰ τῶν πολεμίων αἰσχὺνη, παρ’ ὧν ἡ πόλις ἠφάνισται... Ρωμαίοις τῆς ψυχῆς ἀνορθοῦται τὸ λῆμα καὶ ἡ γνώμη πρὸς ὕψος αἴρεται καὶ εἰσὶ πῶς ἑαυτῶν φαιδρότεροί τε καὶ κοσμιώτεροι.

²⁰ Malakes 535, 5–9 (BONIS): ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας, στρατιῶται, πονοῦμεν, ὑπὲρ Θεοῦ στρατευόμεθα... Οὐ βαρβαρικὰς κατέχομεν πόλεις οὐδὲ διώκομεν τὰ ἀλλότρια. Οὐχ ἑτέρους ἀδικοῦμεν, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων μαχόμεθα. δεινὸν τὴν Θεοῦ κληρονομίαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀσεβῶν λωποδυτεῖσθαι καὶ περιτέμνεσθαι.

²¹ Malakes 539, 2–6 (BONIS): οὐδὲ μαχαίρα κτείνων τοὺς βαρβάρους ἠρκέσθη, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἠχμαλώτισε καὶ ἠνδραποδίσαστο καὶ οὐδὲ παῖσεται γε πάντως τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιῶν, ἕως ἂν τῆ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῇ τοὺς οἰκείους ὄρους ἐπανασώσῃται καὶ ὑποτάξας ἔθνη τὰ διακενῆς φρυαττόμενα, τὸν τῆς μοναρχίας ταύτην ἐπενδύσῃ χιτῶνα, ἐφ’ ᾧ τὸ πρὶν ἐσεμνύετο.

²² Malakes 542, 19–30 (BONIS) Φαντάζομαι τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ γήθους ἐνθουσιῶ καὶ μικροῦ χορεύειν προάγομαι, ὅταν ἐν Ἐκβατάνοις στρατιᾷ Ῥωμαίων δειπνήσῃ καὶ Περσῶν παῖδες οἰνοχόησωσι καὶ φάγωνται μὲν εὐφροσύνως τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον, καὶ ἐν ἀγαθῇ καρδίᾳ τὸν οἶνον πίνονται, διηγῆσονται δὲ πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὅσους ἀνείλον μαχόμενοι, ὅταν ὁ ἡμέτερος αὐτοκράτωρ, λαμπρὸν ὅ,τι μάλα τὸν θρίαμβον ἐπὶ τῆς Περσίδος μέσης καταγαγῶν θεατρίσῃ τὰς νίκας καὶ τὸν τῆς μοναρχίας στέφανον ἀναδήσῃται καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ βασιλείου θρόνου καθίσας λαμπρότερον τε καὶ ἀρχικώτερον ἢ ὅτε πρῶτος Ἀλέξανδρος ὑπὸ τὸν χρυσοῦν οὐρανίσκον ἐν τῷ Δαρείου θρόνῳ κεκάθικε βασιλικῶς τοῖς ἀμφ’ αὐτὸν χρηματίσῃ καὶ εἰς ἀρχὰς διαφόρους τὸν τῆς Περσίδος χώρον ἄριστα διελῶν, ἐκ τῶν ἑαυτοῦ δούλων χρίσῃ τοὺς ἀρχηγούς τε καὶ ἀρχοντας. Cf. the comment by the same author in: Σχόλια εἰς τοὺς δυο ἐγκωμιαστικούς λόγους.... *Theologia* 20 (1949) at pp. 149–50.

This is the spirit we encounter in the verses engraved on the staurotheque which Manuel had ordered in connection with the expedition²³. Here we read that the emperor's zeal was on behalf of the Christian people and that his purpose was as follows:

Yes, staff of the Cross, strike our opponents,
Yes, cross of Christ, turn back the Persian tribes,
And, placing around the Emperor in a circle
The crown of Victory, set this garland upon him²⁴.

However, there is a passage in this homily of Euthymios that deserves to be analyzed carefully because it is closer to the rhetoric of a crusade. In this passage the orator quotes verbatim David's Psalm 138: "Lord, I hated those who hated you and I was consumed with hatred for your enemies; I hated them with an absolute hatred"²⁵ and he continues on the same path of Byzantine war ideology: "So he also did not desist from casting them down and overcoming them in war, and from seizing back from them the cities that they had seized, and returning them again to the Romans, until the time when he departed, or from the contests of struggles against them"²⁶. He then continues with a sentence that Magdalino considers as revealing the crusading spirit of Manuel: (He did all these) by "making death for the sake of piety a fine winding-sheet, and rousing the spirits of the faithful, and leaping from the catalogue of emperors into the chorus of the saints and receiving as his lot a position near the King of All"²⁷. Relying on this sentence Magdalino asserts that Manuel propagated his expedition against Iconium as the beginning of a holy war of conquest, "as a start of a holy war of reconquest in which he declared himself willing to lay down his life."

In response to this assertion I would note that the quotation from David's Psalm as a quotation demonstrates that the thoughts of Euthymios derive from the multifaceted concept of war in the Old Testament, i.e. the wars of Yahweh, and do not reflect the political ideology of the crusaders of the twelfth century for the anticipated absolution of sins due to the holiness of a concrete crusading expedition.

As for the famous sentence "to make death for the sake of piety a fine winding-sheet", it serves as a rhetorical topos known from the Classical Greek tradition as well as from the Christian literature. With the help of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* I have counted more than eighty uses in both pagan and Christian authors.

If we want to place the rhetorical topos as used by Euthymios ...καλὸν ἐντάφιον νομισάμενος τὸ πεσεῖν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας within the traditional uses, we encounter that his wording fits between those used by Libanios, Basil of Caesarea, and John of Damascus on the one hand: καλὸν ἐντάφιον τὸ πεσεῖν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας – with the additional phrase, relevant for our topic πεσεῖν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας – and the use by John Chrysostom on the other, who speaks of καλὸν ἐντάφιον...τὸ μαρτύριον. However, the formula as applied by Euthymios is in remarkable proximity to the phrase used by Niketas Choniates in an account of the crusading spirit. He quotes from a speech by Louis VII to his crusading soldiers, datable to 1147, before a crucial battle in Asia Minor. Here we encounter the notion of dying during the battle against the infidels. Louis says "if we fall during the battle, then death for the sake of Christ it is good winding-sheet"²⁸. Concerning the expectation voiced by Euthymios with the rhetorical topos for Manuel going after death to "the choir of saints", this is yet another image compatible with the Byzantine tradition. Although the author's intention is to bring the expectation of death closer to the crusading idea of dying for the faith, as it was known in the spiritual climate of the day, he is careful to avoid any identification. Thus Euthymios does not dare to combine Manuel's entering in the

²³ Ἐπὶ τῷ γεγονότι παρὰ τοῦ ἁγίου ἡμῶν βασιλέως τιμίῳ καὶ ζωοποιῷ σταυρῷ ἐν τῷ κατὰ τοῦ Ἰκονίου ταξειδίῳ.

²⁴ οὐ γὰρ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐλευθέρως βλέπειν / ἔστειξε τέκνα δοῦλα τῆς δούλης Ἄγαρ..... / Ναί, σταυρὲ ῥάβδε, πλήττε τοὺς ἐναντίους, / Ναί, σταυρὲ Χριστοῦ, περσικά φύλα τρέπε, / Παρεμβάλων δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ κυκλόθεν / Νίκης στεφάνῳ στέφον αὐτοῦ τὸ στέφος. (ed. Sp. LAMPROS, Ὁ Μαρκεσιανὸς Κώδιξ 524. *NE* 8 [1911] 51).

²⁵ Malakes 540, 14–15 (BONIS): Κύριε, τοὺς μισοῦντάς σε ἐμίσησα καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου ἐξετηκόμην. Τέλειον μῖσος αὐτοῦς.

²⁶ Malakes 540, 15–18 (BONIS): ... Ὅθεν καὶ οὐκ ἀνῆκε βάλλον τούτους καὶ καταπολεμῶν καὶ τὰς ἠρπαγμένας σφίσι πόλεις ἀναφραπάζων καὶ Ῥωμαῖοι αὐθις ἀποδιδούς, ἕως οὗ συναπῆλθε τοῖς κατ' αὐτῶν ἀγῶσι καὶ τοῖς παλαίσμασι....

²⁷ Malakes 540, 18–21 (BONIS):καλὸν ἐντάφιον νομισάμενος [instead of νομισάμενος?] τὸ πεισεῖν ὑπὲρ εὐσεβείας καὶ ἀνεγείραι τοῖς πιστοῖς τὰ φρονήματα καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ καταλόγου τῶν βασιλέων ἐπὶ τὸν χορὸν τῶν ἁγίων μεταπηδήσαι καὶ τῆς ἐγγῦς τοῦ παμβασιλέως στάσεως λαχεῖν.

²⁸ Choniates 69, 22 (VAN DIETEN): Εἰ δὲ πεσοῦμεθα, καλὸν ἐντάφιον τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ τελευτᾶν.

“choir of saints” with his probable death on the battlefield nor the connection of his death with a secure seat next to the King of All, the *παμβασιλεύς*.

In conclusion, concerning the rhetorical texts, especially those of Euthymios Malakes we observe his intention to add a religious dimension to Manuel’s expedition and in the last-quoted passage we trace the echo of phrases in texts connected to crusading topics. Apparently in a rhetorical hyperbole he slipped away from Byzantine orthophony.

In the background of all this evidence the question arises as to whether Manuel’s expedition against Iconium was a “Byzantine crusade”. On the ground of what historical and even rhetorical evidence is available, the answer is a negative one. Manuel had his own substantial reasons to refortify Dorylaion and to start the expedition against the Seljuks and these reasons derived from the political and strategic interests of his Empire. From his letter to Pope Alexander that he sent after the refortification of Dorylaion but before the inglorious battle at Myriokephalon, he appears to present his action in the service of the powers in the West who could be enticed into starting a new crusade. His ability to seize Iconium would facilitate the crossing of pilgrims to the Holy Land and even a crusade, as it would pass through central Asia Minor, an actual route which the Second Crusade had failed to follow due to the presence of the Seljuks in the area. Hélène Ahrweiler has pointed out that the castles built by Manuel aimed at creating a new frontier between Byzantium and the Rum Sultanate, a strategic aim completely irrelevant to the crusading ideas and plans produced in the West²⁹.

The question as to whether Byzantium indeed cultivated an idea of “holy war” – with or without quotation marks – or a crusade has been the focus of research over the last two decades and I am very pleased that you have arranged this conference in order to discuss it thoroughly. The book by Athina Kolia has attracted many reviewers, I think that most of them have been critical or hesitant to follow her. Since her book was initially submitted to the University of Ioannina at a time I was still there and was published in a series under my direction, it is not proper to argue here about it³⁰. Therefore I restrict myself to two comments. First, the words *ιερός πόλεμος* in all 470 pages of the book are in quotation marks. Dr Kolia does not suggest that there was really (the concept of) a holy war in Byzantium. She searches instead for associations with a spirit of holy war evident in Byzantine sources. There is no doubt that especially in the tenth century such associations are abundant. However those associations never amounted up to a notion such as *jihād* or crusade. Second, the religiously-loaded character of the military expeditions of the Byzantines did not have real affiliation with the Crusades undertaken exclusively for the liberation of the Holy Land, a goal never set by the Byzantines. All the emperors of the Comnenian dynasty who faced the waves of crusaders and were expected to allow them to pass through Byzantine territories supported with provisions restricted themselves in claiming the restoration of the recovered lands which had once belonged to the Empire. As I have shown in another paper³¹, they regarded as the outmost limit of their territory not the borders of the time of Justinian, including Palestine, but rather the frontiers established in the time of Basil II that were marked some kilometers north of today’s frontier between Syria and Lebanon, as they were agreed together with the Fatimids long before the appearance of the Seljuks.

²⁹ H. GLYKATZI-AHRWEILER, *Les forteresses construites en Asie Mineure face à l’invasion seldjoucid*, in: *Akten des XI. Int. Byzantinistenkongresses München 1958*. Munich 1960, 182–189.

³⁰ See her paper in this volume.

³¹ E. CHRYSOS, ‘*Νόμος πολέμου*’, in: *Το εμπόλεμο Βυζάντιο–Byzantium at War (9th–12th c.)*, ed. N. ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΔΗΣ. Athens 1997, 201–211 at p. 210.