Reinventing the ancient Greeks : the self-representation of Byzantine scholars in Renaissance Italy

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Introduction

Topic, aims, and contentions

This study is about the poetics and politics of Greek identity in the Byzantine diaspora in Italy, and the role of the classical tradition in it. It is well known that the Byzantines had traditionally seen themselves as heirs to ancient Rome and had therefore called themselves Romans or *Romaioi* in Greek. During most of their millenary history, they had regarded the ancient Greeks as a foreign people divided from themselves by a gulf of time. The study of ancient Greek literature was 'learning from the outside' as opposed to scriptural and theological learning. 'Hellenes' was the term for pagans of any language or origin. The post-Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy, however, disowned the Romans and introduced themselves to their Italian hosts as the representatives of the ancient Greeks. One of them even wrote that their present misery was due to the fact that they had neglected the wisdom and customs of their ancestors, while they also called themselves Romans instead of Hellenes.[1] For this reason, their example has often been cited as an indication of the important role of the Greek diaspora in the emergence of a modern sense of Greek nationality. Still, the works of these displaced Byzantine Greeks have never been explored in detail in order to understand with what strategies they identified themselves with the ancient Greeks and why they did so in the first place.

By trying to answer these questions, this study hopes to contribute to our understanding of the sudden emergence of distinctive Greekness after Byzantium, especially in the Italian diaspora. Its intention is not to *rewrite* the complex history of Greekness after Byzantium, but to *reframe* it. It does so by finding an alternative to two extreme views on 'Greek identity'. The one extreme is represented by the nationalist perspective on the Greek diaspora. From this vantage point, the Byzantine Greek intelligentsia in Italian exile present the very first example of 'a modern sense of nationality'.[2] The other extreme is represented by modernist approaches to Greek identity that try to correct the perennialist and essentialist assumptions of Greek nationalism and argue that Greek identity is the exclusive product or 'construction' of eighteenth-century nationalism.[3]

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[1] See below chapter 2, pp. 64-65.

[2] Vakalopoulos (1970) 257. Cf. Geanakoplos (1984a) 64, quoting Vakalopoulos with approval.

[3] I will not dwell on the axiomatic problems that haunt these two approaches since these have been discussed in sufficient detail elsewhere. A clear discussion and criticism of both nationalist

While nationalist interpretations often lift tiny bits of evidence out of their context in order to make huge claims about Greek continuity, modernists tend to omit sources dating from before the eighteenth century. The former overdetermine the sources, the latter exclude important evidence. For this reason, our understanding of the matter would benefit much from a critical return to the sources.

Such a critical revaluation of the sources requires clarity about what 'Greek identity' is supposed to mean and how it relates to the texts under study. This study starts from the idea that 'Greek identity' is perhaps not the best concept to understand the complex and variegated ways in which the Byzantines identified with the ancient Greeks. As the texts under study do not reflect the voice of a coherent Greek people and cannot be seen as transparent expressions of what their authors really felt and thought, they hardly allow for grand generalisations about 'Greek identity' and 'national consciousness'. Recasting the notion of 'Greek identity' in terms of self-representation, this thesis tries to reveal the Byzantines' complex identification with the ancient Greeks as it is often obscured by the way nationalists and national historians use the notion of identity. At the same time, it argues that certain 'identity constructs' have a history that predates the comfort zone of modernism.

In addition, this study reviews the relation between Latin humanism and Greek patriotism. In discussions of how Byzantine scholars in Italy rejected or maintained their Hellenism, Latin humanism has sometimes been construed as an impediment to Greek identity or Greek patriotism. This view not only sees Greek patriotism and humanist cosmopolitism as mutually exclusive phenomena,[4] but also considers humanist rhetoric to be a serious impediment to the veritable expression of Greek patriotism.[5] In such cases, the question what this 'authentic patriotism' would be is left unanswered, while

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and modernist stances is in Smith (2000, 2009). The most up-to-date criticism of modernist approaches to national identity in particular is Hirschi (2012) 20-33. Convenient overviews of different approaches to the nationalism theory debate from different perspectives are Grosby (2005), Lawrence (2005) and Ichijo & Uzelac (2005). See also Özkırımlı & Grosby (2007). References concerning the debate about the role of early modern humanism in the evolution of proto-nationalism can be found below in n. 6.

[4] See, for instance, the series of contributions of Irmscher (1976, 1964, 1961), in which he asked whether three prominent Byzantine refugees (Theodore Gaza, George Trapezuntius of Crete, and Bessarion) cherished their Hellenism or on the contrary turned their back on it after their emigration.

[5] This idea especially resonates in Binner (1980), who offers the only more or less detailed discussion of late- and post-Byzantine crusade appeals for western powers. See also Binner (1971) for a synopsis of his views.

the notion of Hellenism or Greekness is narrowed down to a commitment to the Greeks 'at home' and Greek liberation. Apart from the fact that such a view runs the risk of anachronism, recent scholarship regarding early modern humanism and patriotism has shown that Latin humanism and Greek patriotism are not irreconcilable.[6] This book starts from the idea, most recently expressed by Caspar Hirschi, that Italian humanism in particular catalysed the emerging competition among European humanists.[7] Italian cultural hegemony forced non-Italians, such as the Germans and the French, to position themselves vis-à-vis the Italians, and to seek means to be distinctive even without the close connection with Rome the Italians could claim for themselves. This book argues that the Byzantine intellectuals in Italy were similarly provoked to enter the emergent national competition, and that their link with the ancient Greek past was their major advantage to create a sense of positive distinctiveness. From this viewpoint, Hellenism did not wither away due to the constraints of Latin cosmopolitism, but was articulated within the empowering limits of humanist culture.

In this way, finally, this study critically reflects upon the ideological substrata of our own modern classifications and frames of reference where national identity is concerned. More than two centuries of nationalism have successfully trained us to see groups of the past in terms of modern nations and by the criteria of modern nationalism.[8] One example may illustrate what I mean. In a review of the monumental *Charta of Greek Printing* (which maps printing activities of Greek printers in the West) an otherwise benign critic wrote that 'there is an unexplained elasticity [in the selection of authors and publishers] about who is and who is not a Greek'.[9] According to the critic in question it was, for instance, unclear why the author of the *Charta* had included Michael Marullus in his selection since – he argued – the poet had been born in Italy from Greek parents, received a Latin education, and wrote Latin poems. Although the

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[6] The general importance of specifically the humanist movement for the emergence of patriotism and early forms of nationalism has been stressed in several studies, most importantly Hirschi (2012, 2005), Helmchen (2004) and Münkler (1998). Leerssen (2006b) 36-51 in particular stresses the role of Latinate learning and humanism in the development of alternatives to traditional biblically-based models of ethnic descent with the introduction of group rubrics such as 'Gauls', 'Belgae', 'Goths', and 'Germans'.

[7] This idea is cogently worked out in Hirschi (2012).

[8] The tendency to see, for instance, ancient Egyptians and Greeks as nations alongside their modern counterpart has been dubbed 'retrospective nationalism' (Smith 1995: 22). It must be noted that the bias to see the Byzantines as Greeks instead of Romans predates nationalism by almost a millennium. I will return to this issue in chapter 1, but especially in chapter 2.

[9] Green (2001) 244.

selection can be criticised, asking for clear-cut criteria to include or exclude individuals *as Greeks* is both historically and conceptually problematic. The reviewer's critique implies a set of objective and abiding criteria for Greekness (in this case birthplace, education and language) that may be valuable to the modern reviewer in question, but less so to Marullus. Given the fact that the Spartan poet more than once emphatically called himself, his ancestors and his people Greeks and Pelasgians, his language Greek, and his fatherland 'Graecia', we cannot simply deny that he was a Greek even if he was born in Italy and did not leave Greek writings.[10] It is therefore imperative to look at what Byzantines themselves have to say about what it meant to be a Greek. In order to understand them, we must escape our 'temporal provincialism'[11] and imagine a situation in which there were no full-blown ideologies of Greek nationalism, no sovereign nation state that governed in the name of all the Greeks, and no common education that infused Greek minds with a cogent narrative of the nation. As I shall show in what follows, one way to sharpen our focus and to avoid anachronism is to look at the Byzantines' 'Greek identity' in terms of self-(re)presentation.

For the study of the modern Greek diaspora, Georgios Anagnostou has argued that we must abandon the diaspora-homeland dualism to see the historical specificity of the diasporic Greeks, their internal differentiation, and the syncretism of their cultural makeup. Just like the modern Greek diaspora the post-Byzantine diaspora was a place where commitments to one place and desire for another as well as affiliations with 'here and there' did not operate independently, but co-existed in tension.[12] As we shall see throughout this book, for Byzantines in Italy, 'there' entailed not only a geographical or territorial space that must be recovered, but also a return to a lost Hellenism. In other words, 'there' was as much an intellectual ideal, or 'a province of Western thought', as it was an imagined place with a geography, a history, and a population.[13] This puts into perspective Nancy Bisaha's observation that Byzantines in Italy 'spoke of matters that

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[10] The language of Marullus' patria was Greek (2.8.1-4), his fatherland was 'Graecia' (*Ep.* 2.32.109, 4.32.6, *Nen.* 3.13) or the 'Inachian lands' ('Inachium solum', *Ep.* 2.17.1). He called himself 'Graecus' (*Hym.* 2.8.3) or 'Graiugena' (*Ep.* 2.32.101) and his compatriots Greeks (*Ep.* 1.22.21, 3.37.40, *Hym.* 2.6.27, 3.1.256, 4.1.20) or Pelasgians (*Ep.* 1.48.29, 3.29.1, 3, *Hym.* 3.1.275). References are to Marullus, ed. Perosa (1951).

[11] Cf. Rice & Grafton (1994) 110.

[12] Cf. Anagnostou (2010) 92, 112.

[13] Artemis Leontis made a similar distinction between the *logos* of Hellas (Hellas as an historical, philological and literary concept) and the *topos* of Hellas (Hellas as the site of social, economic and cultural activity). See Leontis (1995) 22-25.

were at once very Greek and yet universally humanist and "Western"'.[14] As I will show later in this introduction, the notion of self-(re)presentation may also help us to see the Byzantine intelligentsia in the context of their host societies, in which they negotiated a positive sense of Greek distinctiveness for themselves and their group within the constraints of Latin culture. Before explaining this, however, it is useful first to provide in the next two sections the necessary historical background, and to outline the main scholarly contexts in which the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy have been set and seen.

Historical background: The Greek diaspora in Italy

In the late fourteenth and in the course of the fifteenth centuries, increasingly more Byzantines came to the Latin West. Some of them visited the West as part of diplomatic enterprises such as the missions under Manuel II (1395–1402) and John VIII Palaeologus (1443) as well as the ecclesiastical Councils of Constance (1416–1418) and Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439). In addition to such occasional visits some Byzantines decided to settle permanently in the West, especially in Italy, not only after but also before the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Their large-scale migration to Italy and other parts of Europe from the onset of the Quattrocento is a notable chapter in the history of the Greek diaspora.[15] The early modern Greek diaspora has not received as much attention as its modern counterpart. Studies devoted to the early modern Greek diaspora generally take a historical point of view and examine the motivation of the migrants, their activities in their host societies, the centres of their settlement, their contribution to the revival of Greek studies and their role in cultural transfers from East to West.[16]

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[14] Bisaha (2004) 117.

[15] Cf. Chassiotis, Katsiardi-Hering & Abatzi (2006), Harris (1995b), Zakythinos (1976) 115-139, Vakalopoulos (1970) 234-255.

[16] For Greeks and Greek communities in Italy see esp. Monfasani (2012, 2002a), Solaro (2006), Porphyriou (1998), Harris (1995b) esp. 24-32, Manoussakas (1991). For Greeks and Greek communities in Livorno see Tomadakis (1940); for Milan see Tomadakis (1967), Sartori (1957); for Naples see Nikas (2000, 1991, 1982, 1981), Chassiotis (1981, 1970, 1969b), Ambrasi (1961), Lambros (1926, 1911); for Padova see Betto (1993), Ploumidis (1971), Fabris (1942); for Rome see Harris (2011), Niutta (1999), Tsirpanlis (1980); for southern Italy see: Tsirpanlis (1995), Tomai-Pitinca (1974), Setton (1956) 1-17, Weiss (1953); for Venice see Harris (2002), Imhaus (1997), Manoussakas (1989, 1982), Ball (1985, 1982), Mauroeidi-Ploumidis (1989, 1983, 1970), Geanakoplos (1984a, 1966c, 1965, 1962), Liata (1976), Kurris (1968), Fedalto (1967), Moschonas (1967). For the English connection see also Harris (2000a) and Harris & Porphyriou (2007). For Greek communities elsewhere see, e.g., Janeković-Römer (2006) and Croskey (1988). An extensive bibliography about the Greek diaspora is available on the internet for which see

How many Byzantine migrants came to the West is unknown due to the absence of statistical data.[17] The fall of Constantinople, the capture of the Morea (1460), the seizure of Negroponte (1470), the Venetian loss of Lepanto (1499) and other Ottoman advances into Greek-speaking areas all stirred waves of migration. Still, the migrants were not always 'fugitives' who, in Edward Gibbon's words, escaped 'from the terror or oppression of the Turkish arms'.[18] They left their homes for many reasons – political, religious, economic and cultural.[19] George Trapezuntius, for example, left his native Crete for Italy as early as 1416, the island remaining secure under Venetian rule for another two centuries.[20] In addition, some Byzantines chose to remain in the Ottoman empire and acquired high positions there, such as Trapezuntius' friend George Amiroutzes.[21]

Besides prominent members of late-Byzantine intellectual and political life, there were also less learned and less eminent Byzantines who turned to the Italian peninsula, where they contributed to their host societies in various fields. In Venice, for instance, Byzantine migrants found employment in the city's naval and mercantile enterprise; they were rowers on Venetian galleys or carpenters in the Arsenal, or they worked as tailors or joined the *stradioti*, a corps of reputed Greek mercenaries. While the majority of Byzantine expatriates lived in Greek communities such as those in Naples and Venice, the members of the Byzantine elite were welcomed at the courts of Italian princes and popes in Florence, Urbino, Milan and Rome, or at Bessarion's Roman court next to the Church of the Santi Apostoli, which remained a home for many Byzantine intellectuals until the cardinal's death in 1472.[22]

The opinions and viewpoints of the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy were not representative of those of their compatriots in general. The expatriate Byzantine intellectuals constituted one of several different elites in the post-Byzantine Greek-

www.fhw.gr/projects/migration/15-19/gr/v2/bibliografia.html (August 1, 2012). A very short and accessible overview of the Greek diaspora throughout history is Kamperidis (2000).

[17] Harris (1995b) 24-38.

[18] Gibbon, ed. Bury (1926) 7: 129.

[19] Harris (1995b) 9-38.

[20] Harris (1995b) 23.

[21] On George Amiroutzes see, most recently, Monfasani (2011) and Janssens & Van Deun (2004) with up-to-date bibliographies.

[22] For some Greeks in Bessarion's circle see Mastrodimitris (1971) and Diller (1967); in the entourage of Lorenzo de'Medici Irmscher (1995); at the papal court in Rome Harris (2011) and Niutta (1990). On the relations of some of these intellectuals with the Greek communities of Italy see Pardos (1998) and Mauroeidi-Ploumidi (1971) 181-184.

speaking world besides, for instance, the Byzantine clergy and the Greek merchant class, which began to emerge later in the sixteenth century.[23] The Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy chiefly stemmed from the late-Byzantine aristocracy and had the attendant sophisticated education. While the first generation could boast a Byzantine education in Mistra, Constantinople or both, later generations received a humanist training together with their Italian hosts. Although they stemmed from all parts of the later Byzantine world (Constantinople, the Peloponnesus, the Greek islands, Thessaloniki, and the Pontic port of Trebizond), they all saw themselves together as Hellenes because they shared learning and language. Importantly, the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy were characterised by an outspokenly pro-western attitude. This not only means that they recognised and appreciated – sometimes grudgingly – Italian progress in the domains of art and scholarship.[24] It also means that they very often in addition converted to Roman Catholicism or at least adhered to the Union of the Churches of 1439.

For the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy this implied at the same time a rapprochement with Latin humanists and an estrangement from the majority of the Byzantine population and the clergy at home. Their rapprochement with the Latins was at least in part motivated by their views on the menace of the Ottoman Turks. In contradistinction to a large and influential part of the Byzantine clergy, many members of the Byzantine intelligentsia argued that the advance of the Ottoman Turks could only be halted with the assistance of the Latin West, and the papacy in particular. Depicting the Turk as a common enemy was one way to come closer to the Latin West and to move western powers towards a crusade to liberate the Holy Lands and to safeguard Constantinople.

The emergence of Italian humanism also improved mutual relations between Byzantine and Italian scholars. The last Palaeologan Renaissance had produced the kind of scholars the Italians sought in order to improve their knowledge of Greek and Greek literature. At the end of the fourteenth century, leading Florentine humanists had welcomed Manuel Chrysoloras as the restorer of Greek and Latin letters at their university (see pp. 81-82 below). The Florentine invitation of Chrysoloras initiated a tradition of Byzantine professors teaching in the West that was continued after the fall of Constantinople. Many of the men whose works I studied for this thesis – George Trapezuntius of Crete, Theodore Gaza, Johannes Argyropulus, Demetrius Chalcondylas, and Janus Lascaris – were involved in teaching activities in Italy. Very

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[23] Falangas (2007).
[24] Harris (1995b) 42-43.

often, the Byzantine professors in the West combined their teaching with galvanising support for the Greek case. This confluence of interests and concerns brought it about that some members of the Italian and Byzantine elites resumed more harmonious relations. Still, it also opened the gates to new arenas of tension and conflict, as we shall see in particular in chapter 2, but also elsewhere in this study.

At the same time, the pro-western Byzantine intelligentsia alienated from the ecclesiastical elite in Constantinople and the majority of the Byzantine population. Generally, the Byzantine Greeks resisted a union with the Roman Church, and for many of them familiarity with Latin culture suggested sympathy with the Church of Rome. Some Greek adherents to union with Rome were forced to spend their last years in Rome.[25] Even if the majority of the late- and post-Byzantine population left the theological quarrels between Greeks and Latins to the theologians, the Fourth Crusade and the Latin occupation of Constantinople (1204–1260) remained an open wound.[26] After 1453, the Patriarchate of Constantinople became the cultural and administrative centre of the Greek-speaking world so that Hellenism became inextricably bound up with loyalty to the patriarchal institutions, and thus with chiefly anti-Roman or anti-Latin sentiments.[27] All this widened the gap between the pro-western expatriates and the Byzantine Greeks at home. At the same time, the fact that the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy did not see their own sympathy for Roman Catholicism as an impediment to identify with the Greek-speaking orthodox in itself shows that their sense of affinity with them was something that transcended religious divergences.

The Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy thus exemplify the sociological commonplace that there may exist divergence between the concerns and interests of self-proclaimed representatives and those they claim to represent.[28] Even if the Byzantine expatriates claimed to act as ambassadors of the Greek nation it is important to keep in mind that they did not voice common Byzantine views or sentiments. In other words, the sources studied in this book represent the viewpoint of only a very small segment of the late- and post-Byzantine population. If we want to understand their status in the Greek-speaking world they come closest to what has been labelled an *ethnie*, i.e. a named group with a sense of shared kinship and common memories, common cultural treats (of language and religion at least), and an association with an historic territory or homeland, even if

[25] Cf. Monfasani (2012) 40-44.
[26] Harris (2010) 63-64.
[27] Livanios (2008).
[28] Brubaker (2004) 19.

they no longer inhabit it. The members of such elitist *ethnies* typically consider themselves to be part of one distinctive people and have a sense of solidarity that is not by definition reciprocated by the wider population they feel part of.[29] With an eye on the sources, however, it is important to stress that viewpoints were hardly uniform as to what it meant to be a Greek, even if it seems that Byzantine expatriates did not go into debate over the particularities of their Greekness. The Conclusion will resume this point which emerges as one of the distinctive aspects of post-Byzantine Hellenism in Italy throughout the following chapters.

Status quaestionis: Contexts and narratives

In light of the thriving interest in issues of (national) identity and diaspora as well as the classical tradition, it might seem remarkable that the topic of this study has as yet remained underexposed. This is mainly due to the boundaries of traditional disciplines. Byzantinists ignored the issue as being too recent and too Italian, Hellenists saw it as being too Latin, and Neo-Latinists discarded it as being too Greek.[30] At the same time, the study of the Greek diaspora almost exclusively focused on modernity. Illustratively, the *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* is keyed to 'the Greek experience from the late eighteenth century to the present', so that the period between the end of Byzantium and 'classical modernity' (defined as the period between 1453 and the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789) has generally fallen between the cracks. The Byzantines in Italy have mainly been studied by scholars working on the intellectual history of Europe, the national history of Greece, or both. As 'venerable scholars fleeing from Constantinople with the Greek classics under their arms', they have been understood as protagonists in a narrative of cultural reawakening and revival of antiquity that dominates our accounts of the Italian and, by extension, European Renaissance.[31] From the point of view of national

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[29] Smith (1995) 28-29.

[30] The absence of an overview of the seminal Latin texts produced by Byzantine intellectuals was signalled by Jozef IJsewijn in the first part of his seminal *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies*, but has since then not been remedied. Remarkably, IJsewijn does not refer to the extensive and invaluable bibliography of Émile Legrand that – although its primary focus is providing bibliographical information about *Greek* publications by Greeks – also includes many useful references to Latin productions of Manilius Cabacius Rallus and Johannes Gemistus.

[31] Phrasing after Harris (2009). Also in other domains, this image gained currency through such various works as Gibbon's *History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* and Friedrich Schöll's much translated history of Greek literature. It resonates in modern accounts of Byzantine emigration to Italy (such as Wells 2006) as well as in the novel about Constantine Lascaris by Abel Villemain (1837).

Greek history, they have been discussed as fellow Greeks, i.e. an integral part of the Hellenic community of origin or *omogenia*.[32] As far as they fit in the narrative of national accumulation the post-Byzantines of the diaspora are praised, but they equally run the risk of being rejected as traitors of the homeland.[33]

Historians of classical scholarship or Renaissance humanism have studied the Byzantine intellectuals in Italy chiefly in the context of textual transmission.[34] The emphasis on their role as transmitters of Greek learning is already apparent from the very first monographs on their lives and works, written by Humphrey Hody and Christian Friedrich Börner in the eighteenth century.[35] The titles of their works introduce the Byzantines as '*instauratores* of the Greek language' and tell us that they achieved the '*altera migratio* of Greek letters from Greece to Italy'.[36] Especially since the late nineteenth century, the philological and educational activities of the Byzantines in Italy have generated an impressive body of scholarship mapping their contribution to the preservation and dissemination of Greek learning in the West. These works often

[32] Cf. Anagnostou (2010) 85.

[33] Note that these two research orientations roughly resemble those of recent research regarding the modern Greek diaspora. Anagnostou (2010) demonstrated that the Greek diaspora in the US has been examined from a nation-centric perspective, the nation being either America or Greece. This means that either their Americanness was stressed to the detriment of Greekness, or vice versa.

[34] Harris (1995b) made the important point that cultural transmission was not the exclusive prerogative of the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy. Few scholars have focussed on the tangible results of textual transmission from Byzantium to the West over and beyond the study of Greek literature. A notable exception is Glowotz (2006) who examines the fascinating role Byzantine expatriates played in the transmission of ancient musical theory.

[35] Before Börner and Hody, among others Jovius dedicated a few pages to the Byzantine scholars of Italy in his *Eulogia virorum illustrium* (first published in 1546). See Jovius, ed. Meregazzi (1972) 56-64 (= *El.* 23-64), discussing Manuel Chrysoloras, cardinal Bessarion, George Trapezuntius of Crete, Theodore Gaza, Johannes Argyropulus, Michael Marullus, Demetrius Chalcondylas, Marcus Musurus, and Janus Lascaris.

[36] Humphrey Hody (regius professor of Greek at Oxford from 1698) left a manuscript, posthumously published under the title *De graecis illustribus linguae graecae literarumque humaniorum instauratoribus* (Hody 1742). Before the publication of Hody's work, Christian Friedrich Börner had earned his PhD with a thesis called *De altera migratione Graecarum litterarum de Graecia in Italiam*, followed a year later by an additional study on the subject (Börner 1705, 1704). At the end of his academic career – spent as professor of theology at the university of Leipzig – Börner issued a synthesis in 1750, *De doctis hominibus Graecis litterarum Graecarum in Italia instauratoribus liber*. These learned volumes are full of obscure knowledge, and compile evidence concerning the *vitae* and *opera* of the Byzantine protagonists of Greek learning.

take the form of monumental catalogues listing manuscripts, printed books and Greek scribes,[37] or monographs keyed to the life and works of individual scholars.[38] Together these studies contribute a great deal to our knowledge about the ways in which Greek learning was disseminated, transmitted and digested. They paint the Byzantines in Italy as ardent collectors of Greek manuscripts and diligent scribes;[39] they show them at work as textual critics and reconstruct how they pieced together the first editions of our classics;[40] they evoke them teaching their language to students from all over Europe.[41] In

[37] Marie Vogel and Viktor Emil Gardthausen, for instance, inventoried the Greek copyists who produced manuscripts of Greek classics both long before and shortly after the advent of the printing press, while Émile Legrand listed and localised the works published in print by Greek editors during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Vogel & Gardthausen 1909 with Harlfinger 1974; Legrand 1885–1906 with Manoussakas & Staïkos 1987, Ladas & Chadzidimos 1976, and Iliou 1973).

[38] Classic examples include Henri Vast's studies on cardinal Bessarion and Janus Lascaris (Vast 1878a, 1878b), Ludwig Mohler's monumental three-volume work on cardinal Bessarion and his circle (Mohler 1923–1942), Börje Knös' monograph on Lascaris (Knös 1945) as well as Giuseppe Cammelli's pioneering biographies of Manuel Chrysoloras, Johannes Argyropulus and Demetrius Chalcondylas (Cammelli 1941–1954). Some of these scholars have recently received renewed monograph-length attention. See, most notably, for Manuel Chrysoloras Thorn-Wickert (2006); for cardinal Bessarion Monfasani (2009) and Bianca (1999); for Constantine Lascaris Martínez Manzano (1998, 1994), and for George Trapezuntius of Crete Monfasani (1984, 1976).

[39] On the scribal activities and aspects of the libraries of individual Byzantine scholars see, for example, Jackson (2003a, 2003b), Zorzi (2003, 2002), Fereri (2002), Antonopoulos (2000), Markesinis (2000), Gentile (1994), Manfredini (1994), Mioni (1994, 1975, 1971, 1967), Pontani (1992b), Bianca (1990, 1980), Coccia (1988), Labowsky (1980, 1979a, 1979b, 1965), Mastrodimitris (1971), Moraux (1970), Papademetriou (1970), Gasparini (1968), Fernández Pomar (1966), Diller (1967), Alfonsi (1949), Nolhac (1886), Dorez (1882), Vogel (1854, 1849). Monfasani (2012) 58-68 provides a list of émigré and visiting Greek copyist in the Renaissance.

[40] On the philological activities of individual Byzantine scholars see, for instance, Lauxtermann (2009), Beullens & Gotthelf (2007), Schiano (2007), Lautner (1995), Eleuteri (1994), Monfasani (1994b), Rigo (1992), Boter (1989) 261-278, Charlet (1987), Alfieri (1984), Keany (1982), Whittaker (1977b), Mioni (1968).

[41] Authoritative accounts of how Renaissance humanists learned their Greek are Ciccolella (2008) and Weiss (1977). For the contribution of the Byzantine scholars in Italy see esp. Ciccolella (2008) 118-149 with special emphasis on the Greek grammars of Manuel Chrysoloras, Theodore Gaza and Constantine Lascaris (118-124) and on the teaching method of Michael Apostoles (146-149). On the contribution of individual Byzantine scholars to the dissemination of the Greek language in Italy see further, for example, Pagliaroli (2004), Papademetriou (2000), Minnich (1988), Geanakoplos (1984b, 1976c, 1974a, 1974b), Monfasani (1984a), Clough (1964), Manoussakas (1963). Many surveys pay tribute to the Byzantines' distinctive contribution to the

other words, they reveal them as humanists in the Kristellerian sense of the word, i.e., as professional teachers, transmitters and disseminators of ancient erudition, devoted to the revival of antiquity.[42]

The present study is indebted to Kristeller's view that humanism was first and foremost a philological, rhetorical and educational movement. At the same time, it pays tribute to the conviction that the humanist movement was about more than the collection, transmission and dissemination of ancient texts alone. Humanists explored the Latin heritage of ancient Rome also outside the immediate context of classical scholarship and classroom education. This is equally true for their Byzantine colleagues. We shall see that, apart from transmitting ancient texts, they appropriated and explored them to make their own arguments.[43] Such humanist appropriations of the classical

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revival of Greek learning and classical scholarship in the West. See especially Monfasani (2012), Bianca (2010), Madafaz de Matos (2009), Saribalidou & Vassileiou (2007), Konstantinou (2006), Signes Codoñer (2003), Karamanolis (2003), Vranoussis (1986), Geanakoplos (1988, 1984a), Barker (1985) 11-20, Pertusi (1966), Hartmann (1958), Setton (1956), Zakythinos (1954). Monfasani (2012) 69-71 provides a list of émigré teachers of Greek in the Renaissance.

[42] The traditional alternative to Paul Oskar Kristeller's view of the humanist movement is that of Eugenio Garin; it states that humanism was a proto-Enlightenment philosophy of man. Although Garin's view is still in vogue in Italy, Kristeller's is now commonly accepted by scholars working both in the United States and in northern Europe. For both positions and their significance see in more detail Celenza (2004) 16-57. On Kristeller's view of humanism and a benign and nuanced criticism of it see especially Witt (2006). A concise contextualisation of Garin's views on humanism and humanist education is in Black (2001) 12-21. As for the post-Byzantine humanists, Karamanolis (2003) argued that they have too often been studied as *instruments of* rather than *participants in* the humanist movement. He wants to see the Byzantine scholars in Italy as a distinctive movement of Greek humanists operating alongside Italian, German and French humanists. Apart from the fact that it remains largely implicit what Karamanolis means by 'Greek', he did not engage with the general historiographical problem of humanism that is crucial to his argument.

[43] Especially since the late 1980s, scholars have paid more and more attention to the political-ideological implications of humanist scholarship. See, e.g., Grafton (1997, 1991, 1990) together with Grafton & Jardine (1986a). More recent studies regarding the political-ideological dimensions of humanist scholarship are Bizer (2011) about the ideological instrumentalisation of Homer in Renaissance France and Krebs (2011, 2005) about the ideological appropriation of Tacitus' treatise *Germania*. The fact that humanism was not restricted to philological scholarship and education also appears from Neo-Latin studies. The study of Neo-Latin literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries illuminates the many ways in which humanists exploited the classical tradition in political-ideological discourse. See on this topic in particular the useful introductions of Enenkel (2012) and Laureys (2012). For helpful overviews of the tendencies in historiography on Renaissance humanism in general see Hankins (2006) and Baker (2009) 1-37.

tradition distort the idea of a 'quiet and tidy' transmission of texts underlying most research about the Renaissance *translatio studii* from Byzantium to Italy.[44] Together, the next chapters confirm the idea that traditional accounts of cultural or textual transmission are in need of a reappraisal in so far as they do not take into account issues such as cultural identity and appropriation.[45]

Different scholarly cultures produce different historiographical narratives. Since national histories celebrate 'national accumulation' and resist national loss,[46] the fifteenth-century brain drain from Byzantium to Italy is notoriously problematic for Greek national historians. Some claimed that the Byzantine intelligentsia not only abandoned the national faith of the Greeks, but also left their people behind uneducated, an image confirmed by some contemporary Greek sources.[47] Other national historians, on the other hand, found reasons to praise the Byzantines and to incorporate them in their national narratives. They highlighted the contribution of the Byzantine diaspora in four domains of national accumulation: (1) the diaspora's preservation of the Greek heritage, (2) its arousal of philhellenism in the West, (3) its activities to liberate Greece, and (4) its role in the emergence of Greek national identity or consciousness. After the founder of modern Greek historiography Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos, especially modern Greek historians writing about the history of

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The ancient past has retained much of its ideological function in modernity as the collected papers in Klaniczay, Werner & Gecser (2011) and Haagsma, Den Boer & Moormann (2003) amply demonstrate.

[44] For a criticism of the traditional idea of transmission for the study of early modern intellectual and literary culture see Grafton in Grafton & Blair (1990) 1-7. For a useful overview of the uses of the concept of *appropriation* in general and in medieval and early modern studies in particular see especially Ashley & Plesch (2002) 1-15, esp. 1-6.

[45] In a seminal and pioneering article, Anthony Cutler readdressed the transmission of artefacts from Byzantium to Italy from the perspective of Italian responses to Byzantine objects (Cutler 1995). It is notable that in general studies regarding cultural transmission and exchange in late medieval and early modern Europe, the case of the post-Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy remains underexplored or even unmentioned. See Hollengreen (2008), Burke & Hsia (2007), Höfele & Von Koppenfels (2005), Sorelius & Srigley (1994), Grafton & Blair (1990). See also the four volumes of *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Robert Muchembled (2006–2007), where the topic is only raised in Harris & Porphyriou (2007).

[46] Cf. Anagnostou (2010) 80, citing Laliotou (2004) 8.

[47] Harris (2000b) 27.

Hellenism such as Dionysios Zakythinos and Apostolos Vakalopoulos expounded upon these issues.[48]

These four forms of national progress are most frequently discussed in alternating combinations. Vakalopoulos, for example, emphasised both the post-Byzantines' role in the preservation of the Hellenic heritage and their arousal of philhellenism in the West through 'their literary and political earnestness, as well as the impact of their everyday discussions with foreigners'.[49] In this way, he brought the displaced Greek intelligentsia within the nationalist narrative of progressive national evolution.[50] As to the Byzantines' expatriate patriotism, some national historians insisted that the post-Byzantine diaspora had exerted its influence to liberate Greece and had promoted their country in the West. In this view, Byzantine expatriates become pioneers of the struggle for Greek liberation that materialised in the War of Independence (1821–1832). This line of argument was pursued, for instance, by Manoussos Manoussakas in a celebratory speech on the occasion of the 142nd anniversary of Greek Independence Day, on March 25 1963.[51] His brief discussion of the crusade appeals of Byzantine refugees actually reads as a rehabilitation of the Greek intelligentsia in the West. For Manoussakas, national Greek resistance to Ottoman domination had been an unbroken chain of uprisings starting in 1453 and climaxing with the Greek Revolution. Throughout his speech, he represented the post-Byzantine scholars in Italy as part of this continuous resistance against the Ottoman Turks. In his words, they became canonised as full-blown national heroes who had been one of the few sparkles of hope for the Hellenic nation in captivity. Needless to say, approaches such as that of Manoussakas often project modern nationalist aspirations back to fifteenth-century minds.

More generally, it has been noted in the scholarship that the post-Byzantine diaspora helped a kind of Greek national consciousness to emerge outside the sphere of influence of the patriarch in Constantinople. Deno J. Geanakoplos in particular argued that '[t]here can be little doubt that what, in the last analysis, made the Greek people feel

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[48] Zakythinos (1976, 1965), Vakalopoulos (1961, 1970). Especially their preservation of the few traces of Hellenism during the Turkocracy was underlined in the pioneering Greek studies of Sathas (1863) and Paranikas (1867) in addition to the volumes of Kournoutos (1956).

[49] See esp. Vakalopoulos (1970) 234-255 (quotation from 263).

[50] Stressing that they preserved the Hellenic heritage to the benefit of all, Vakalopoulos also moored the Greek diaspora to European history, so suggesting the argument of cultural debt that the Byzantine scholars themselves had used in their attempts to win the West over for a crusade against the Turks (for example Janus Lascaris, as we shall see in chapter 3).

[51] Manoussakas (1965). Cf. Vakalopoulos (1970) 256-263 and see also Irmscher (1976, 1964, 1961).

different from all others was the knowledge of the accomplishments of the ancient Greeks and necessarily, a priori, a sense of identification with them as ancestors'.[52] In conjunction with this, he also claimed that their 'sense of individuation was often heightened by the attitude of Italian humanists, who not only admired their skill in ancient learning but sometimes flattered them as being the progeny of the ancients'.[53] These observations entail issues that are central to the topic of this study: the role of the ancient Greek past in the Byzantines' 'individuation' or self-identification, and the role of the Italian humanists in the emergence of this identification. After Geanakoplos wrote these lines in the 1970s, research in the humanities and the social sciences has provided us with concepts to understand better not only processes of identification, but also the role of the past in the way individuals construct images of the group with which they identify. In order to show how we may benefit from these insights, the next section clarifies some basic concepts and terms that underlie my discussion of 'Greek identity' in the Italian diaspora throughout this study.

Who needs Greek identity?

Throughout this study, Greek identity is understood in terms of self-representation. The advantage of the concept of self-representation is that it avoids the intuitive polysemy that haunts 'Greek identity' and that sends us *linea recta* into a conceptual marsh.

The word 'identity' has been used with so many meanings in so many domains within the humanities and social sciences that it has become a 'heavily burdened, deeply ambiguous term'.[54] In an important but underexposed article – titled 'Beyond Identity' – Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper therefore proposed to abandon the word altogether. They sensibly argue that for the sake of analysis we may better employ 'alternative analytical idioms that can do the necessary work without the attendant confusion'.[55] At the same time, it is important to stress that to abandon a word is not tantamount to abandoning the variegated concepts it entails. It rather prompts us to articulate as precisely as possible *what* we mean to investigate and so helps us to avoid merging different incongruous paradigms.[56] After a concise outline of the problems

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[52] Geanakoplos (1976b) 174.
[53] Geanakoplos (1976b) 175.
[54] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 8.
[55] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 8-9, 14, 35-36.
[56] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 7 observe that in analyses of identity, we often find a conflation of constructivist vocabulary and essentialist argumentation.

entailed in the concept of identity in general and Greek identity in particular, I will introduce the concept of self-representation as an means to think about Greek identity in the Byzantine diaspora in Italy.

In order to substantiate their claim that identity is a burdened and ambiguous term, Brubaker and Cooper meticulously charted the various ways in which the concept is used in the humanities and social sciences and clustered them in two distinct currents. 'Hard' conceptions see identity as a fundamental predisposition or sameness, or even as a deeper essence that is the core of selfhood.[57] 'Soft' or 'weak' conceptions on the contrary conceive of identity as either the product of social and political action, or as the 'the evanescent product of multiple and competing discourses' with the result of being fundamentally unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented.[58] While hard conceptions of identity are chiefly found in nationalist discourse and certain strands of psychological literature, soft conceptions are found in scholarship influenced by Michel Foucault, post-structuralism, and post-modernism, and they are also dominant in situationalist and contextualist accounts of ethnicity.[59] Apart from the fact that it does not contribute to the precision of analysis to use the same word for the extremes of immutability and fluidity and everything in between,[60] I see problems particularly in the ways in which such conceptions often implicitly frame the relation between what they understand as identity and the texts through which it is supposed to be articulated or shaped. 'Hard' notions of identity are generally overly historicist and reduce the performative role of texts to either reflecting or distorting the qualities that an identity self-evidently entails. 'Soft' notions, on the other hand, often lapse into presentism, or the idea that identity is only the product of present contingencies. While they unmask identities as discursive and contingent constructs, they have difficulties explaining how such constructions are historically loaded with meaning and significance and why they can elicit strong emotions of belonging or alienation. They often also lose sight of the role of the agents

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[57] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) distinguish between (1) identity as a fundamental predisposition effectively motivating social and political behaviour on a non-instrumental basis; (2) identity as a fundamental sameness among members of a group or category, understood objectively (as a sameness in itself) or subjectively (as an experienced sameness), and manifesting itself in solidarity, in shared dispositions and consciousness, or in collective action; (3) identity as something allegedly deep, basic, abiding or foundational which must be distinguished from more superficial and contingent attributes of the self, i.e. a 'core aspect of selfhood'.

[58] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 8.

[59] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 6-8.

[60] Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 35.

who manipulate existing terms of reference variably in this or that direction and in so doing endow existing repertories of symbols and images with renewed meaning.[61]

The notion of 'Greek identity' itself is perhaps even more burdened than the word 'identity' alone (cf. pp. 3-4 above). Most problematically, the use of the rubric tacitly presupposes what 'Greek' means. As such, its usage often boils down to projecting back modern understandings of Greekness to the past. At worst it imposes modern tenets of Greek nationalism to fifteenth-century minds. This aprioristic and normative use of the concept is obviously problematic. In addition to this, the notion of Greek identity is heavily burdened by the fact that so many people today claim it for themselves or bestow sentiments of belonging upon it. In short, 'Greek identity' is a category of ethnopolitical practice perhaps not best suited to do serious analytical work.[62] A telling example of this is an interpretation of the Greekness of cardinal Bessarion, dating from the 1980s. At least one modern critic fiercely refused to call the cardinal a 'Hellene' because in his view Roman Catholicism was at odds with a Greek identity.[63] Even so, as we shall see in chapter 3, Bessarion himself left no doubt about the fact that he considered himself to be a Hellene who thought and behaved in line with the Greek tradition of his ethnic ancestors. In this case, modern perceptions of what it means to be a Greek govern the interpretation of the past. In order to avoid such pitfalls, and especially to shed light on what the Byzantine émigrés themselves had to say about what it meant to be Greek, I prefer to think in terms of self-(re)presentation.[64]

Self-(re)presentation and the uses of the ancient past

The sociological notion of self-presentation pares down the question of Greek identity to manageable analytical proportions. Self-presentation entails the basic and now commonly accepted sociological axiom that individuals attempt to present themselves to their target-audience in the way that is most favourable to their purposes in specific circumstances.[65] The dramaturgical image Erving Goffman originally used to explain the

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[61] Cf. Brubaker & Cooper (2000) 8.

[62] For the distinction between the two categories see Brubaker (2004) 10, 31-33.

[63] Zisis (1980) 215, 218.

[64] I will use the notion of identity only in its sense of close similarity (cf. *OED* s.v. 'identity' nr. 2). For a discussion of the provenance of the word see De Boer (2003).

[65] In cultural and literary studies, *self-presentation* (or the German *Selbstdarstellung*) is often used interchangeably with the much younger concept of *self-fashioning*. The terms must be kept separate. *Self-presentation* is a category from sociology and social psychology primarily associated with Erving Goffman's classic *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). *Self-fashioning*, on

idea is that of actors who perform their situation-specific roles in such a way as to provide their audience with an impression that is as consistent as possible with their desired goals.[66] Still, self-presentation must not be seen as a one-sided imposition of self-images. Expounding upon Goffman's dramaturgical model, Richard Jenkins analysed the dynamics of self-presentation in terms of internal and external 'moments' of identification. The internal moment refers to the way in which individuals present themselves and 'offer' their self-image for acceptance to their audience. The external moment denotes the way in which others identify them and respond to their representations of themselves (e.g. by accepting, rejecting, or modifying their self-image).[67] While the original dramaturgical interpretation of the concept by Erving Goffman has been criticised for being too artificial to study interaction in modern everyday life, it fits in very well with the notably self-conscious mode of humanist writing and the role of self-presentation therein.[68]

For literary and cultural scholars in particular, it is useful to make an explicit distinction between self-presentation as the social act or strategy of representation and self-*re*presentation as the specific representation or image that results from this social act.[69] Seen in this way, the sociological notion of self-presentation offers the contextual

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the other hand, was introduced by the cultural historian Stephen Greenblatt (1980) to capture the very different issue of the creation of new forms of subjectivity and subject positions in Renaissance art and literature (see for the background of Greenblatt's concept Pieters 2001: 39-65).

[66] Goffman (1959). It is perhaps needless to recall that self-presentation must be distinguished from psychological categories such as the self-concept or self-consciousness, which concerns the individual's authentic beliefs about who he or she really is.

[67] See Jenkins (2004) 15-26, 68-78.

[68] Note that Peter Burke argued that Goffman's notion of self-presentation is even more important for the study of the Mediterranean world in the past than it is for American society in the present. He even remarked that it is of 'obvious relevance' for Renaissance Italy (Burke 2005: 49). The role of self-presentation and social identification in humanist letter writing is discussed particularly in Van Houdt, Papy *et al.* (2002). For the implications of the highly crafted and self-conscious mode of humanist writing for humanist autobiographical writing see in particular Enenkel (2008).

[69] Normally, self-presentation and self-representation are used interchangeably, both in the social sciences and in the humanities. In the humanities, the designations are sometimes distinguished, albeit to different effects. So, for instance, Martin Huang refers to self-*re*presentation when an author discourses on his characters or 'created self', while he speaks of self-presentation when an author *explicitly* discourses on his own self (his 'revealed self') (Huang 1995: 48-49). As Huang understands both concepts as fundamentally intertwined, he consistently speaks of 'self-re/presentation'.

framework in which literary and cultural self-representations can be analysed. As I understand it, self-representations concern not only the self-image or *persona* individuals design, but also the representation of attributes with which they link this self-image (such as a certain in-group or a specific place). So, for instance, if a Byzantine émigré presents himself as a Greek patriot striving to regain his fatherland, his representation of his *patria* gives substance to his self-image as a Greek patriot.[70]

In Italy, the Byzantines' self-representation entailed an identification *as Greeks* and *with the ancient Greeks*. When they identified themselves *as Greeks*, they represented themselves as members of a group. For this reason, we must understand specific self-images as part of a wider process of social identification or self-presentation (pp. 19-21). At the same time, their identification as members of a Greek community hinged upon their strong sense of connection with the ancient Greeks, which implied a specific view on their relation with the ancient past (pp. 22-24).

When the Byzantines identified themselves *as* Greeks, they presented themselves as representatives of their *in-group* that they defined in relation to significant *out-groups*. Sociological theories of identity show that individuals who identify themselves as members of an in-group will normally enhance the image of the group by means of intergroup comparisons. These comparisons normally generate differences with the out-group in favour of the in-group, while differences *within* the in-group are minimised. The result is a form of *positive distinctiveness* that favourably marks off the in-group from the targeted out-group.[71] What determines favourable distinctiveness in a particular context is a historical variable. It seems that, in the fifteenth century, collective honour was the basic ingredient of in-group distinctiveness. Polemical antagonism with out-groups was important to assert this collective honour. One of the principal sources of collective honour was the antiquity of the in-group.[72] The Byzantines' identification with

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[70] Although they are usually used as synonyms, the notion of self-presentation is sometimes narrowed down to *self-relevant images*, while impression management is used to denote the strategic representations of other entities than the self (see for this distinction Leary & Kowalski 1990).

[71] Among sociologists, there is debate about the motivation of such *distinctiveness*. There are two main schools. The founding fathers of social identity theory argued that in-group favoritism is motivated by value and status advantages for the in-group (Tajfel & Turner 1986). More recent research emphasises on the other hand that security motives rather than self-enhancement underlie in-group favouritism and speaks of *optimal distinctiveness* as the aim of social identification (Brewer 2007). On some similarities and differences between social identity theory and identity theory see Hogg, Terry & White (1995).

[72] Cf. Hirschi (2012) 78-103.

the ancient Hellenes, and the strong sense of superiority they derived from it, is consistent with this. I will come back to this below in my discussion of the importance of the past in the post-Byzantines' self-representation.

It is important to stress in this context that in order to be relevant for social interaction in- and out-groups need not exist in reality as 'mutually interacting, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivit[ies] with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity, and capacity for concerted action'.[73] Group rubrics such as 'Hellenes' or the 'Greek nation' not simply *invoke* groups that exist 'out there', but they also *evoke* or *constitute* them discursively even in historical contexts where no internally homogenous and externally bounded groups really exist.[74] Therefore we may speak of imagined groups or imagined communities.[75] This implies that group rubrics such as 'Italians' and 'Greeks' are not merely *descriptive*. They are also *prescriptive* and *evaluative*. To present oneself as a 'Greek' not only describes who one is, but also prescribes one's attitudes as a member of the group and furnishes an evaluation of the in-group with its individual members.[76]

Following Richard Jenkins' distinction between internal and external moments of identification, we must realise that Byzantine intellectuals in Italy did not only present themselves as Greeks, but also *were* identified as such. Previous case studies of Byzantine self-representation in the Italian diaspora have chiefly focused on the internal moment of identification, but paid little if any attention to the way Byzantines *were* identified by others.[77] Even so, this element is particularly important for our understanding of how they shaped images of themselves. As they formed a dependent minority and entirely relied upon the support of their target-audience to achieve their goals, they had to negotiate ways to be positively distinctive *without* losing the sympathy and benevolence

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[73] The definition of Brubaker (2004) 12.

[74] Cf. Brubaker (2004) 7-27.

[75] The term 'imagined community' was famously coined by Benedict Anderson (1983), but in his usage the term implies a political community that is imagined as 'inherently limited and sovereign'. Even so, the idea is not restricted to political communities and can be applied to various kinds of groups, for which see in particular Brubaker (2004). A recent critique of Anderson is in Hirschi (2012) 20-33.

[76] Hogg, Terry & White (1995) 259-260.

[77] See in particular Glaser (2006) and Harris (2000, 1999). Harris discusses how George Amiroutzes and cardinal Bessarion could mutually identify despite their different religious and political loyalties, while Glaser took a group of seventeenth-century Greek Catholics associated with the St. Athanasios College in Rome to illustrate how they developed an 'alternative identity' for their compatriots besides their strictly Hellenic one.

of the Italians. In chapter 2, we shall see that Byzantines and Italians could interpret the import of the Greek rubric very differently. Such evaluative implications of the Greek rubric appear best from the *stereotypes* with which Italians characterised the Byzantine Greeks in direct confrontations with them; these were the signs Byzantines would anticipate in their self-(re)presentation.[78] The total sum of positive and negative stereotypes attached to a group typically amounts to a complex and often internally conflicting image which is sometimes called the *imageme* of a group.[79] From the Romans the Italians indeed inherited a wide array of conflicting stereotypes they could apply to the Byzantine Greeks, for better or worse.[80] Some of these stereotypes (e.g. the idea that the Greeks were in their nature hostile to the Latins) were clearly discrediting and even socially disruptive. In these cases, we speak of *stigmatisation*, which often results in marginalisation and discrimination.[81]

As representatives of a stereotyped out-group, the Byzantine expatriates in Italy manipulated Italian stereotypes and averted the effects of potential stigmatisation, while they also tried to maximise the positive distinctiveness of the Greeks collectively.[82] Depending on the circumstances, they could follow several routes. So, for instance, Byzantine intellectuals generally highlighted those elements of their *imageme* that were outspokenly positive so as to minimise the risk of reputation damage. If they were discredited, on the other hand, they could undermine the credibility of their detractors by revealing the inconsistency of their evaluation of the Greeks, as did George Trapezuntius of Crete (see chapter 4, pp. 139-140). Although increasing intergroup contact (as that between Byzantines and Italians) normally reduces the power of stereotypes and creates room for more differentiated evaluations of members of

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[78] Although Italians used long-standing intergroup stereotypes (see chapter 2), the period under scrutiny predates the systematisation of intergroup stereotyping in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that is particularly visible in neo-Aristotelian poetical writing in the wake of Scaliger, most notably in De La Mesnardière's *Poétique* of 1642 (Leerssen 2000: 272).

[79] Leerssen (2000) 278-280. The historically contextualised study of modern national *imagemes* is imagology, on which see in particular Leerssen (2006a, 2000). For an introduction to the field, see also the contributions in Beller & Leerssen (2007) 3-75.

[80] I here follow the trend in cultural and literary studies to regard stereotypes as discursive objects and not as mimetic representations of reality (Leerssen 2000: 270). Stereotypes function because of their intertextually established recognisability and often have a textually unspecific origin and 'every one knows'-effect (Leerssen 2000: 285-286).

[81] The term *stigma* was introduced by Goffman (1963).

[82] Although his focus lies elsewhere, the Italian audience is recognised as important by Glaser (2006) 202-203.

recognised out-groups, we shall see that humanist stereotyping was rather conservative in this respect.

The very rubric 'Ἕλληνες' which the post-Byzantines used to identify themselves in Greek related them to the ancient Greeks, while they also explicitly referred to themselves as 'children of the ancient Hellenes' or to fellow Greeks as 'autochthones of ancient Hellas'. This brings us to the second aspect of the Byzantines' self-representation that is in need of some clarification, i.e. their identification *with* the ancient Greeks. While social theories about identity are especially useful to understand the group aspect of their self-images, memory studies may help us to understand their role in the representation of the Greek past. Especially within the humanities it has been shown that the construction of a shared or common past through artistic media such as literature and architecture provides individuals with a sense of belonging to a wider imagined community. This common past is considered to be *constructed* in so far as it is a *representation* of an individual's view of the past that he claims to share with the larger community of his in-group. Some events are foregrounded, while others are omitted. Also originally unrelated events may be related (*lumping*), while related events can be separated in order to form new narratives of the past (*splitting*).[83]

As the past is always recreated in the present, representations of it are liable to manipulation and instrumentalisation, especially in such contexts where rules for its reconstruction are loose. In such cases, representations of the past are often keyed to the benefit of the in-group in relation to others.[84] On the other hand, such an instrumentalist view on representations of the past should not lead to presentism, or the idea that the present entirely dominates views on the past. Especially where the authority of tradition counts as important – as is clearly the case with the fifteenth century – new versions of the past must somehow be anchored in ancient sources and authorities, even if they had to manipulate them for it. So, for example, when Gemistos Plethon represented the Romans of the East as Hellenes, he mined the ancient sources for clues to legitimise the identification of Romans with Greeks (see chapter 1, pp. 41-43). In our case studies, we shall find more examples of this kind. When, for instance, Janus Lascaris tried to prove that Latins and Greeks could be considered one and the same people, he relied on

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[83] My mnemonic terminology in these lines mainly relies on Eviatar Zerubavel (2003) 25-27, 29-31, 61, 86-88. A concise and critical overview of recent memory studies and its main debates is in Koning (2007) 2-7.

[84] In this context we often speak of *intentional history* (Gehrke 2001: 285) or *usable pasts* (Anagnostou 2010).

authorities such as Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (see chapter 6). To renew versions of the past required ancient authorities to legitimise them.[85]

For our understanding of how the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy related to 'their' ancient Greek past, it is important to realise that the ancient past which they shared transcended their own lifetime. This marked distance between the present and the remembered past typically requires experts who preserve the past and are able to interpret it. While memories of relatively recent events are formed by live interaction of witnesses, the more remote past needs more to be preserved and kept alive.[86] Apart from storage it often demands special linguistic skills and historical knowledge to understand and assess it in the first place. The representation of the past in addition requires access to the proper means to represent and to disseminate the representation of it.[87] Fifteenth-century humanists generally presented themselves as such experts; they as a rule regarded themselves as the restorers and guardians of the Greco-Roman past.[88] Therefore, they claimed an important social role in the quest of many different kinds of groups – from families and small cities to nations – for cultural precedence and antiquity. By virtue of their knowledge of ancient literature, humanists were best qualified to demonstrate the antiquity of groups. They went out of their way to trace

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[85] It must be noted that especially in cultural studies and related disciplines, the importance of repertories of pre-existing images and symbols has been stressed in various contexts and with different nuances, classically by Aby Warburg in art history, and later most notably by, e.g., Jan Assmann in memory studies (see esp. Assmann 1988), Anthony D. Smith in nation studies (see esp. Smith 2009) and recently for instance also in the domain of reception studies in the framework of the collaborative research centre *Transformationen der Antike* at the Humboldt Universität in Berlin.

[86] In memory studies, this distinction is often seen as a distinction between 'communicative memory' and 'cultural memory'. While communicative memory concerns the remembering of recent events by witnesses who are equally competent, cultural memory refers to the conservation of an ancient past by a group of trained experts who have codified the past (chiefly in script). This distinction has famously been made by Assmann (2000) 37-44. Its most important criticism is that communicative memory is not as egalitarian as it may seem and that power relations come into play almost immediately after an event has taken place (see esp. Sluiter & Visser 2004).

[87] In memory studies, increasingly more attention has been given to the specific media through which memory is conveyed and shaped, on which see particularly Erll & Rigney (2009) and Erll & Nünning (2004).

[88] This is not to say, on the other hand, that their interpretation of the ancient past was uniform at all. Traditional memory theory (best exemplified by the seminal studies of Jan Assmann) has been criticised for the idea that cultural memory is 'definitive' and there has increasingly been focus on diversity and debate. Cf. Koning (2010) 4-5.

their origin back to ancient heroes, they invented founding myths that related their community to the ancient past, they appropriated ancient heroes and cultural icons as 'theirs' and pointed at significant places (or *lieux de mémoire*) that associated the present with the past.[89] In Italy, the Byzantine intelligentsia appropriated this function for the Greeks.

The next chapters in particular zoom in on *historical continuity* or *quasi-contiguity* with the ancient past in the Byzantines' self-representation. This involves techniques not only to connect non-contiguous points in history, but also to connect these to the present. In other words, it involves means of *mnemonic pasting*.[90] How did the Byzantines in Italy manage to establish an impression of contiguity between themselves and the ancient Greeks? How did they, for instance, connect the eastern Romans and the Hellenes, whom we lump together as 'Byzantines'? Or how did they see the relation between, for example, Themistocles and the Hagia Sophia? Apart from the 'mnemonic significance of names',[91] they invented more strategies to assert their connection with the ancient Greek past, e.g., by claiming ethnic descent from the ancient Hellenes, or by introducing small plots of Greek history in which they could position themselves and their fellow Greeks.[92]

Sources and limits

Although the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy were preoccupied with ancient Greece, the sources used for my investigation are atypical to investigations of how early modern intellectuals used the ancient past.[93] There was no corpus of historiography available. Byzantine scholars in Italy did not write extensive Greek histories in humanist fashion; they did not produce their own Flavii Blondi or Beati Rhenani in exile. Perhaps this is due to the fact that there was no authority that commanded such histories. They did contribute, on the other hand, to the historiography of the Ottoman Turks (as did

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[89] Many of these concepts were coined in the context of the study of modernity, yet they are widely applied outside the realm of modern history. See, for example, Lambert (2001), showing how concepts such as *invented traditions* and *lieux de mémoire* can be used to study early modern phenomena.

[90] Cf. Zerubavel (2003) 40, 52-54.

[91] Zerubavel (2003) 52.

[92] Such narrative constructs regarding the place of one's in-group in the world are also known as 'myths' on which see Lammersen-Van Deursen (2007) 22-23.

[93] Cf. Lambert (2001) 74-76.

Nicolaus Secundinus) or the Republic of Venice (as did Thomas Diplovatatius).[94] The only attested self-standing work of history reputedly composed by a Byzantine expatriate of the early diaspora is now lost, except for seven third-handedly transmitted and translated pieces.[95] The other works of Greek history composed by Byzantine intellectuals appeared to be the shrewd inventions of 'Prince' Demetrios Rhodokanakis who, in the nineteenth century, forged them so as to substantiate his awkward claims to Roman imperial descent.[96] The preoccupation of Italian humanists with Greek antiquity equally presents us with a paradox. Despite their virtual obsession with Greek antiquity, Italian humanists did not compose self-standing histories about the Greeks either in antiquity or in later eras.[97] In this, they differed from their northern colleagues such as Wolfgang Lazius who did for Greece what Flavius Blondus had done for Italy in his *Italia illustrata*.[98] So, until the publication of Lazius' *Commentarii rerum graecarum*

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[94] On Thomas Diplovatatius see Mazzacane (2001), Ascheri (1971), Koeppler (1936), Kantorowicz (1919), Hortis (1905). The best entry to Secundinus is still Mastrodimitris (1970), but see also Babinger (1965). An edition of Secundinus' history with a good introduction is in Philippides (2004).

[95] It concerns an allegedly lost historiographical work of Janus Lascaris. See the invaluable contribution of Braccini (2006) with the fragments on pp. 103-112. I left out of consideration Constantine Lascaris' Greek *Synopsis* (Σύνοψις ἱστοριῶν), surviving in BNE, Cod. Matr. 4621, as this is as its name indicates a summary of George Monachos' ninth-century chronicle, enriched with a list of Byzantine emperors from Basil I (867) until the last one, and an overview of the vicissitudes of the descendants of Manuel II Palaeologus (see Martínez Manzano 1998: 119-122). A notable historiographical source from the later diaspora is the *Chronicon maius*, previously misattributed to George Sphrantzes, but now commonly attributed to Makarios Melissourgos-Melissenos, the metropolitan of Monemvasia. Apart from the fact that it dates from 1580, it only covers the history of the Palaeologan period until 1477 (see on it Philippides 2008 with a useful bibliography).

[96] Legrand (1895) and Kekule von Stradonitz (1908) 186-188. Rhodokanakis invented 24 titles in total.

[97] Cf. Weiss (1969) 131-144, observing something similar for the humanist interest in Greek antiquities and the discovery of the Greek world. In Ishigami-Iagolnitzer (1989) the theme is conspicuously absent.

[98] The first self-standing history of Greek history is Wolfgang Lazius' *Commentariorum rerum graecarum libri II* (Vienna, 1558). A second edition was published in Hannover in 1605 (under the title *Historicarum commemorationum rerum Graecarum libri II*). Lazius' history was preceded by Nicolaus Gerbelius' commentary (Basle, 1550) to Sophianos' map of Greece (Rome, ca. 1540). To my best knowledge Gerbelius' *Pro declaratione picturae sive descriptionis Graeciae Sophiani libri VII* is the first monograph-length study of historical geography exclusively devoted to Greece and published in Latin in the early modern period. For the first extensive history of modern Greece under Ottoman domination we have to wait until Martinus Crusius' *Turcograeciae libri VIII*

(1558), we find no Greek pendant to such works as Blondus' history of the Italian peninsula, Rhenanus' German history or Lazius' own Austrian history. Leonardus Brunus' *Commentarius de rebus graecis* (composed in the 1440s) can be regarded as 'the first serious work of Greek history by a Latin author since antiquity',[99] but is in fact a compilation of Xenophon.[100]

Yet even if there was no solid body of humanist historiography, the texts Byzantine scholars produced in Italy amply testify to their preoccupation with the classical tradition and ancient Greece in particular. I went through speeches, inaugural lectures, epigrammatic collections, letters, invective treatises as well as paratexts attached to editions that Byzantines prepared for the Italian humanists. These sources showed how central the ancient past was in late- and post-Byzantine self-representation, how the Byzantine intelligentsia substantiated claims of continuity with the past despite the clear signs of discontinuity they themselves recognised, and how they used their privileged relation to the past to, for example, substantiate their claims to Greek liberation and cultural superiority. As to the external moment of identification, the attitudes of Italian humanists vis-à-vis Greeks surface not only in their letters and speeches, but also in their historiographical works, where they adopt the bias of their medieval sources and call the Byzantines 'Graeci' (as far as I have been able to see without notable exceptions).[101]

In what follows, I focus on the early Byzantine diaspora in Italy in 'the long fifteenth century' (ca. 1390–1520), i.e., on the period of the first decades of Byzantine migration to Italy. There seems to be an almost natural break between the first three generations of expatriate Byzantines who lived and worked in Italy (exemplified by cardinal Bessarion, Janus Lascaris, and Marcus Musurus) and the next generation of eminent Greek scholars that emerged only in the second half of the sixteenth century. While Lascaris died in 1534 – outliving most of the younger generation – the most notable post-

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(Basle, 1584). On the views on antiquity of Lutheran humanists in particular see Ben-Tov (2009; forthcoming).

[99] Hankins (2003) 262.

[100] The ways in which knowledge about Greek antiquity was collected, digested and disseminated is a still underexplored research topic (but see Ben-Tov 2009). Elsewhere I intend to explore in particular further routes through which ancient Greece could become a self-standing topic of historical reflection in the early modern period (e.g. through historical geography).

[101] As a sample, I examined (in alphabetical order): Accoltius (1544); Bembus, ed. Ulery (2007); Blondus (1483), *id.*, ed. White (2005); Bergamensis (1485); *Conciliorum*, ed. Alberigo & Dossetti (1973); Cribellus, ed Zimolo (1948); Maphaeus (1511); Palmerius, ed. Scaramella (1906); Philelfus, ed. Gualdo Rosa (1964); Piccolomineus, ed. Van Heck (1984); Platina, ed. Guido (1913); Sabellicus (1535).

Byzantine intellectuals after him, such as Maximus Margunius, Johannes Cottunius, and Leonardos Philaras were born in, respectively, 1549, 1577 and as late as 1595 (a notable exception is Franciscus Portus who – being born in 1511 – spent most of his life in Geneva). In the first half of the sixteenth century, moreover, the situation of Greeks changed in many significant ways. To name just a few. With the Counter-Reformation in Italy the atmosphere grew less favourable to the study of Greek and the Greeks. Moreover, most of the Byzantines coming to the West in the course of the sixteenth century were not from the Turkish-dominated mainland, but from territories held by Venice and Genoa. Unlike most fifteenth-century intellectuals they generally came to the West not to teach, but to learn.[102] Apart from the persistent presence of Byzantine scholars in Italy, moreover, we find an increasing number of them in the north, where Lutheran humanists in particular became interested in modern Greek history and contemporary Greeks.[103] In other words, the reality to which Byzantine migrants had to respond, not only in Italy, but also north of the Alps, changed profoundly from the first half of the sixteenth century onwards.

It is a well-known fact that Byzantines traditionally tapped from the sources of ancient Rome and Greece as well as Scripture and the history of the Church.[104] This study focuses on the post-Byzantine appropriation of Rome and Greece, and on how Rome dissolved in Greece's shadow. Scripture and the history of the Church are, on the other hand, outside its general scope. Given the importance of the subject, the religious dimensions of post-Byzantine self-representation would merit a treatment of their own, if only to complement the image painted in this study.[105] Needless to say, wherever the Byzantines' engagement with ancient Greece and Rome intersects with their interpretation of Christianity – as in the case of George Trapezuntius of Crete – I will not blot it out.

Outline of the work

This work is organised in two parts. The first introduces the reader to the Byzantines' traditional stance on Hellenism and its development in the fifteenth century (chapter 1)

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[102] Cf. Glaser (2006) 204.

[103] On Lutheran humanists and Greek antiquity see Ben-Tov (2009).

[104] Kaldellis (2007) 317.

[105] The Byzantines' activities in the field of biblical and patristic studies have received scholarly attention (see, e.g., the remarks in Stinger 1997 and Geanakoplos 1976: 265-280), even though they have not been discussed in the context of their self-representation (but see in this context Geanakoplos 1976: 3-170, esp. 36-54). See also Kany (2001).

as well as to the changing circumstances of the Byzantines' self-representation after their move to Italy (chapter 2). This is necessary to understand the particular instances of self-representation worked out in the case studies in the second part. The first chapter shows that the late-Byzantine identification with the ancient Hellenes was a radical innovation against the backdrop of traditional means of self-representation in Byzantium. In addition, the chapter shows that the Greekness of the post-Byzantine scholars must be seen as part of a wider evolution in self-representational habits going back to Byzantium itself. How Italian humanism stimulated the distinctively Greek self-representation of the Byzantine intelligentsia is the subject of the second chapter. It outlines the ways in which Byzantine intellectuals in Italy presented themselves as Hellenes or Greeks against the background of how Italian humanists perceived of the Byzantines. It shows that Byzantines in Italy had good reasons to present themselves as Greeks, even if the Greek rubric could equally work as a stigma for them. The chapter argues that Byzantines in Italy had not much choice other than to adopt the Greek rubric which the Italians traditionally assigned to them.

The second part of the work offers four case studies. While the second chapter demonstrates that the Byzantines presented themselves exclusively as Greeks and Hellenes rather than Romans, the case studies together show that we must not construe this in terms of a coherent and homogeneous set of beliefs about what it meant to be Greek. They exemplify different forms and functions of Greek self-representation. The third chapter shows how the concept of Hellenic freedom (or 'ἐλευθερία') constituted the self-representation of the most famous Byzantine expatriate in Italy, cardinal Bessarion, both before and after his move to Italy. The concept of Hellenic freedom gives an ideological coherence to Bessarion's views on Hellenism that has hitherto remained unnoticed in the scholarship. At the same time, the chapter reveals his dissimulation of Greekness in contexts where he had to play the role of the Roman cardinal for a Latin audience, which points at the limits of self-representation he apparently experienced. In the fourth chapter, the case of George Trapezuntius of Crete shows how shared Greekness could be invoked to motivate social attitudes and political action, and how Trapezuntius saw the place of the Greeks in history. While Bessarion's *Orationes contra Turcas* have often been cited as proof of the cardinal's persistent Hellenism and Greek patriotism, the case of Trapezuntius has on the contrary been put forward as an example of how cosmopolitan humanism could eclipse Greek patriotism. However, a detailed review of Trapezuntius' self-representation shows that if anything

he did not abandon his Greek background, and that ancient Greece is omnipresent in his works.

While the previous chapters generally emphasised the role of ancient Greece in forging a sense of Greek distinctiveness or alterity for the Byzantines, the fifth chapter shows how Byzantine intellectuals in Italy could also use it to *bridge* the cultural gap with their Italian colleagues. Taking Janus Lascaris' *Florentine Oration* as a starting point, it shows how he created common ground between Greeks and Latins of past and present in the form of an ethno-cultural Greco-Latin continuum from the very origins of both peoples up to the fifteenth century. Paradoxically, Lascaris did so without losing the Greek claim to absolute cultural superiority. The chapter shows that Lascaris' speech was more than an expression of 'nationalistic prejudice'. Together with Constantine Lascaris' *Vitae philosophorum*, it aptly illustrates that Byzantine scholars were able to play on the perceptions Italian humanists had both of themselves and of others in order to win over their Italian audience for their case.

The sixth and final chapter focuses on what seems to be the first explicitly politico-territorial image of Greece. On the basis of Johannes Gemistus' *Protrepticon et pronosticon* to pope Leo X (1516), it addresses the problem of territoriality in the self-representation of the Byzantine intelligentsia in Italy. Even though Byzantine scholars and diplomats exerted all their energies to galvanise western powers against the Ottoman Turks so as to liberate their homeland, they were notably tacit about how they imagined this homeland in past or future. Was it the Palaeologan kingdom they left before the Turkish conquest? Was it the unification of all Greeks under one Greek king? Was it to include parts of Asia such as the former kingdom of Trebizond, or was it a fundamentally European country? Gemistus boldly addressed these issues in his poem. While he spoke in terms of restoration, his image of 'Graecia' did not correspond to any political, territorial or cultural unity before 1516. As a bricolage of elements from Latin sources Gemistus' image of Greece shows how Byzantine intellectuals appropriated Latin sources and discourses to create a sense of Greek distinctiveness.

Together, the case studies offer insight in the various ways Byzantine scholars in Italy represented themselves, their fellow Byzantines and their homeland, and how and why they used the ancient Greek past in this. Yet they do not intend to offer an exhaustive or comprehensive overview. I could have discussed many more Byzantine expatriates, such as Michael Marullus and, slightly later, Marcus Musurus. In the end, I decided to select those cases for inclusion that added both to the general theme of my study and to our

understanding of the individual authors under study.[106] All cases in one way or the other exemplify Caspar Hirschi's astute observation that 'pre-modern people tended to be particularly inventive when denying their inventions'.[107] Although the Hellenism of the late- and post-Byzantine intelligentsia entailed something radically new in the form of a sense of ethno-cultural Greekness, they represented it as if it was self-evidently ancient so as to legitimise their precious possession of it.

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[106] This is why I eventually left out, for example, Michael Marullus. Particularly his Hellenism has found ample treatment in recent scholarship. So, for instance, Marullus' Greekness has been discussed with different emphases in Enenkel (2008), Haskell (1998), Deisser (1996), Kidwell (1989) and Zakythinos (1928). Bibliographical references regarding Marullus can be found in, most recently, Jansen (2009), Lamers (2009) and the collected papers in Lefèvre & Schäfer (2008).

[107] Hirschi (2012) 31.