in the time frame suggested, would have been especially unimpressed, since he could read Greek. Thirdly, there is no evidence that Basil II confiscated valuables from episcopal churches, as opposed to private monasteries and individuals, and it is *a priori* extremely unlikely that he would have done so in the case of an august public institution such as the patriarchate of Antioch, which was vital for the restoration of the empire's authority in its newly-reconquered Syrian enclave.

If we suspend judgment on the second of these points, we can get around the other objections by modifying the hypotheses of both Saunders and Angar as follows. Eustathios Maleinos originally commissioned the container as an *artophorion* for his private chapel, from where Basil II confiscated it along with the rest of Maleinos' estate in Cappadocia, as recorded by Skylitzes (Angar, pp. 66–71). Being a consecrated object, it was deposited not in the imperial treasury but in one of the palace chapels an Constantinople, from where an emperor, probably Basil II, removed it along with the relic of St Anastasios the Persian, in order to present both as diplomatic gifts to his western counterpart, who was probably Otto III but not impossibly Henry II. The gifts could have been combined in Constantinople or at destination, but either way, if we envisage that the container was improvised as packaging, and not a purpose-made receptacle, this helps us to get around the problem posed by the mismatch between the label on the box and its contents.

It is becoming fashionable to write history through the 'cultural biography' of objects. The Aachen reliquary is ideal for this purpose, since it undoubtedly has an interesting medieval story, political as well as cultural, to tell. But it is not a typical story of relic translation – if indeed a typical story existed, outside the general narrative of Western appropriation, which this book re-tells so well.

Paul Magdalino
University of St Andrews (Emeritus)

N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (2nd edition). London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. Pp xii + 245.
DOI:10.1017/byz.2018.32

This second edition of a book first published twenty-five years ago deserves to be reviewed in this journal for several reasons. The author Nigel Wilson (W) has been a frequent contributor to Byzantine studies generally, his book has long been considered a standard account of the transferal of Greek learning from Byzantium to Italy in the fifteenth century, and its first edition never received a review here. If there are readers who want a clear, concise overview of the topic and have not yet read W's magnificent survey, a splendid opportunity awaits them. In his brief preface to the new edition, W notes that new literature led him to adjust the text and update the notes, which he has done with the same terseness and modesty as before.

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The preface to his first edition explains that the book continues the account of "the preservation of the classical heritage" begun in his *Scholars of Byzantium* (1992). In the present book, W begins with accounts of failed late medieval attempts to learn Greek, Petrarch being the most notable example. Even though Petrarch possessed a manuscript of Homer, he famously wrote that the text 'was dumb to him, while he was deaf to Homer', demonstrating as well the orality of poetry. W's narrative then turns to the offer made in 1396 to the Byzantine diplomat and scholar Manuel Chrysolaras to teach Greek in Florence. Even though Chrysolaras stayed for only three years, he was the first to succeed in teaching the ancient language to westerners due in part to his approachable grammar book that, for example, listed ten types of nouns versus the fifty-seven of Manuel Moschopoulos's late Byzantine grammar for native speakers. Aldus Manutius printed Chrysolaras's book in 1512, the approximate chronological terminus of W's book. Chrysolaras taught a number of students, who in turn taught others. Thus began the genealogy of Greek studies in the West that continues today whenever someone learns Greek in school or uses a Greek dictionary or grammar.

Chapters follow on early Italian translators and teachers of Greek, including most importantly Leonardo Bruni, Vittorino da Feltre, Guarino da Verona, who studied with Chrysolaras in Constantinople, Francesco Filelfo, who also studied there and married into Chrysolaras' family, as well as Lorenzo Valla, the great humanist who discredited the Donation of Constantine, translated Demosthenes, Thucydides, Herodotus and the Iliad and from his reading of the Greek New Testament found fault in the Latin of the Vulgate. In the center of the book, a chapter on "Greek Prelates in Italy" introduces the Council of Florence. What some Italians might have seen as its greatest accomplishment was the immigration and conversion of Bessarion, the Orthodox bishop of Nicaea and later Cardinal of the Latin Church. More could have been written about Bessarion in the Renaissance, but here as elsewhere the classical heritage remains the focus. Thus for Bessarion, W concentrates on the cardinal's *In calumniatorem Platonis*, an extended refutation of the interpretation of Plato by another Greek émigré, George of Trebizond.

In the second half of the fifteenth century, W takes up the translations that Pope Nicholas V and his successors commissioned, as well as developments in Florence in the later Quattrocento, especially the Greek studies of its finest scholar, Politian. A chapter on Venice introduces Pietro Bembo, whose work extended past the chronological limits of the book, and also the city's printing industry, which for Greek texts principally comprised the publications of Aldus Manutius. While Manutius had the distinction of issuing the *editiones principes* of many important authors, he did not have access to Bessarion's great collection of manuscripts donated to the Republic of Venice in 1468. In the conclusion, W estimates that by the early sixteenth century almost all of Greek literature that survived the Fourth Crusade had been transmitted to Italy.

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Given the lucid prose and accessible scholarship of W, one yearns for more, and he has complied with his recent volume in the I Tatti Renaissance Library, *Aldus Manutius: The Greek Classics* (2016), a book of translations with annotations of the prefaces to the Aldine Greek volumes. Although the book under review constitutes a vital and useful overview of the reception of Greek literature in the Renaissance, readers will not find it easy to move from it to specialized literature, because W, as he states, wanted to avoid the extraneous references found in the most books and articles on these subjects. His point is well taken, although this fond reader of footnotes regrets that he did not share more of his erudition. Finally, the volume is not the study that some might want of the social, intellectual, and historical context of Greek in Renaissance Italy, the book that a Renaissance intellectual historian might write and which some reviewers of the first edition sought. B.J. Maxson's recent *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence* (London, 2014) admirably applies this approach to Latin Humanism. Maxson depends, however, on the work of previous generations. To compare W's pioneering achievement to a hypothetical book is not fair, because the author of that yet to be written study would be relying on W and others. Reading W for the first time some years ago reminded me of Keats' "Upon first Looking into Chapman's Homer" (an early English translation) and one of his extended similes. Like Chapman, W has given us that "peak in Darien" from which "stout Cortez…with eagle eyes" first gazed upon the Pacific.

Robert S. Nelson
Yale University

Liana Giannakopou and Kostas Skordyles (eds), *Culture and Society in Crete from Kornaros to Kazantzakis*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017. Pp. xxii, 311.
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In June 2014 a conference was held in Selwyn College, Cambridge, to honour the retirement of David Holton, Professor of Modern Greek Language and Literature. The papers presented covered aspects of Cretan literature, language and social history from the late Venetian era to the twentieth century, beginning and ending with two landmark writers, Kornaros and Kazantzakis. But the volume of conference proceedings provides even more than its title promises. It discusses writers from Chortatsis (late sixteenth century) to Galanaki (early twenty-first century), offering scholars a broader spectrum of topics than they might have expected. To divide this heterogeneous material into distinct sections was not a simple matter; the titles of Parts IV ('Social and linguistic aspects in historical perspective') and V ('Crete and… beyond') were cleverly designed to group together a wide variety of contributions.

Producing such a book is a demanding task, and Giannakopoulou and Skordyles show themselves to be professional, knowledgeable and painstaking editors. However,

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