

**“PART OF OUR COMMONWEALTH”: A STUDY OF THE  
NORMANS IN ELEVENTH-CENTURY BYZANTINE  
HISTORIOGRAPHY**

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## **Abstract**

In the eleventh century several Norman mercenaries went to Byzantium where they alternately served or rebelled against the Empire. This thesis examines how Byzantine courtiers' knowledge of Roman histories affected their perception of these Normans. At first, Byzantine courtiers took little notice of the Normans, and did not use Roman histories in order to categorize or portray them. But as various Normans attained significant power within Byzantium, Byzantine courtiers began to struggle with issues of defining them. Two notable Byzantine courtier-historians, Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates, drew material and parallels from Roman histories to argue for the integration of the Normans into the Byzantine elite. These two historians made their arguments by portraying particular Normans as capable leaders, by constructing genealogies that gave the Normans and Byzantines a common ancestry, and by using ancient ethnic labels to define the Normans as a group that had a special relationship with Byzantium.

**Keywords:** Byzantine History; Normans; Michael Psellos; Michael Attaleiates; Byzantine identity, Classicism.

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My family has suffered under this project, as the dining room light bulb and my laptop keyboard remained active well into the night as I mumbled about the eleventh-century. I cannot thank my mother, father, and Brother Michael enough for their endurance, support, and care.

# Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1: <i>Romanitas</i> in Eleventh-Century Byzantium .....	20
Chapter 2: Early Byzantine Roman Perceptions of the Normans .....	33
Chapter 3: The Norman Mercenary Leaders .....	47
Chapter 4: Working with Roman History: Making Trajan a Celt.....	68
Chapter 5: Working with Roman History: Turning Normans into Latins.....	81
Conclusion.....	98
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>103</b>
Works Cited.....	103
Primary Sources .....	103
Secondary Sources .....	104
Websites Reviewed .....	108

## Introduction

In the spring of 1074 a Byzantine courtier, the *protovestēs* Basileios Maleses, from his vantage point in Bithynia (now modern Turkey) stared across the straits that separate Europe from Asia. He was waiting for a message from the Byzantine Roman emperor, who was in the imperial palace on the European side of the water.<sup>1</sup> Maleses had suffered injustices at the emperor's hands: his property had been seized and his children were being held hostage in Constantinople. He was, however, feeling optimistic about the situation because he was now acting as an advisor to Roussel of Bailleul, a Norman general who had been a successful defender of the empire's eastern front and had held the prestigious Byzantine title of *vestēs*.<sup>2</sup> Roussel was leading a rebellion against the emperor and was demanding (through Maleses as an intermediary) that the Roman imperial throne be handed over to himself.

Maleses had seen Roussel in action in the previous months and years and was certain that this was the man that the empire needed during these turbulent times when rebellions and raids by foreigners were frequent. In addition, if the rebellion were successful, Maleses was bound to increase his status and wealth. But the emperor was not responding to Roussel's demands. Speaking in Greek, Roussel conferred with Maleses, and Ioannes Doukas (who was the empire's *kaisar* and the emperor's uncle), about what

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<sup>1</sup> For the term "Byzantine Romans" see: Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 6. Page rightly points out that the term "Byzantine" is an anachronistic label used by western European scholars, while "Greek" is a term that eleventh-century Byzantine Romans did not use to refer to themselves. However, to call them "Romans" would certainly confuse the Anglophone reader who would most likely consider them to be from Rome in Italy. Thus, Page used the term "Byzantine Roman." I shall do the same.

<sup>2</sup> For Roussel's title, see Jonathan Shepard, "The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium." *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1992): 300; For Maleses's career and involvement in this incident, see Attaleiates, *History* 187.

to do next.<sup>3</sup> Maleses suggested heading inland to gather more soldiers, but Roussel was growing impatient and wanted a response from the emperor. Speaking in a Romance language (either Latin or Old French), he ordered his three thousand Norman mercenaries to set fire to the town of Chrysopolis, thinking that such desolation within sight of Constantinople would lead to an imperial reply. Sure enough, a boat arrived delivering to Roussel his wife and children (whom the emperor had been holding hostage), but still no word on the throne. Frustrated, Roussel agreed with Maleses to head inland and gather more soldiers.<sup>4</sup>

Military rebellions were not unusual in eleventh-century Byzantium; indeed, there were several.<sup>5</sup> But this rebellion was unusual because several members of the Byzantine elite, such as the *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas, Basileios Maleses, and at least *post facto*, the judge of the hippodrome and the *velum* Michael Attaleiates, appeared to be endorsing a non-Byzantine in a bid for the imperial throne.

Because Roussel was not a Byzantine Roman, I find his rebellion intriguing and it leads me to the following question: how did members of the eleventh-century Byzantine elite perceive the Normans who came into Byzantium in the eleventh century through the empire's lost provinces in Western Europe? How might Byzantine Roman courtiers' exposure to Roman historiography have affected these perceptions? Both Michael

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<sup>3</sup> On the position *Kaisar*, see Alexander Kazhdan "Caesar" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 16 April 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e0866>. The title was generally applied to a person that was close to the emperor, usually the emperor's son.

<sup>4</sup> The rebellion of Roussel is discussed in depth in Michael Attaleiates' *Historia*. Mainly, it is in section 187.

<sup>5</sup> There were many military rebellions in Byzantium between the mid and late eleventh century. The rebels were generals of Byzantine, Armenian, and Norman background. In this context Roussel was hardly unusual. J. C. Cheynet has written extensively on this theme. See J.C. Cheynet, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris: Sorbonne, 1990).

Attaleiates and Ioannes Doukas had read ancient Roman histories, and both of them possessed a worldview profoundly influenced by these texts.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Michael Attaleiates wrote one of the major Byzantine histories of the eleventh-century, emulating the style and substance of the ancient Roman histories written in Greek.<sup>7</sup> Roman histories greatly influenced eleventh-century Byzantine courtiers' sense of geography, politics, and perception of ethnicity, because as far as eleventh-century Byzantines were concerned, *they* were the Romans. Thus, educated Byzantines at the time were constantly re-mapping the classical past onto their present situation in an effort to make sense of their changing world. Did Byzantine courtiers view the Normans as descendants of the Celts that Caesar had fought because that is what they had read in Plutarch? Or did they manage to overcome a major gap (at least in the eyes of many Byzantine Romans) between themselves as Romans and the Normans as outsiders by reading Roman histories in new ways? Indeed, there were leaders in Roman history, their history, such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, who according to the third-century historian Cassius Dio had been born in Western Europe, far from the eleventh-century borders of Byzantium. How did awareness of such realities affect the eleventh-century Byzantine perception of the Normans?

In this thesis I argue that Roman history was not very relevant initially (at least not between 1017 and 1063) to the Byzantine perception of the Normans. However, I also

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<sup>6</sup> We are aware that Ioannes Doukas had the *De Administrando Imperio* copied. This text included sections of lost histories and discussed how to rule the Roman Empire. See the introduction by Gy. Moravcsik to the *De Administrando Imperio*, translated by R.J.H. Jenkins (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967), 32.

<sup>7</sup> On Attaleiates's career and historical text, see Alexander Kazhdan "Attaleiates, Michael" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 16 April 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e0568>. For a comprehensive analysis of Attaleiates's work, see Dimitri Krallis, "Michael Attaleiates: History as Politics in Eleventh-Century Byzantium" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2006).

suggest that as the Normans became more powerful both within and outside the empire during the 1060s and 1070s, Byzantine courtiers began to take notice of these newcomers to the Mediterranean. By the early 1070s, Norman mercenaries were serving in Byzantium, alternately providing a useful defence against Turkish attacks on the empire's eastern provinces, and (like many Byzantine warrior-leaders) rebelling against the empire's administration. Thus, the Normans' military might was both a threat to the empire and a possible solution to its problems. I argue that in response to these developments, some Byzantine Roman courtiers began to use Roman history in order to argue for the integration of various Normans into the Byzantine hierarchy.

Byzantine Roman perceptions of the Normans in the eleventh century are an important topic for historians for several reasons. First, the Byzantines and the Normans had a very important, and complicated, political and military relationship with one another. Indeed, the Normans were Byzantium's closest western neighbour because they were geographically contiguous and had also been exposed to Byzantium (and vice-versa) through southern Italy, which Byzantium ruled until 1071.<sup>8</sup> Over the course of the eleventh century, Norman war bands carved out their own fiefdoms in southern Italy at the expense of Byzantium. Yet at the same time, other Normans were serving the empire, very effectively, as defenders of Byzantium's eastern borders (located in modern-day Armenia). Thus, it is important to understand how Byzantine courtiers made sense of this seemingly paradoxical relationship. This thesis argues that for a brief period of time near the end of the eleventh century, Byzantine courtiers resolved this paradox by inventing an appropriate (at least for many Byzantine Romans) ancestry for the Normans. Essentially,

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<sup>8</sup> The Normans receive considerable, even disproportionate, treatment in the eleventh-century Byzantine sources. Other Latins (ie. Venetians, Genoese, French, Germans) receive far less attention or distinction with the texts.

some Byzantine Roman courtiers argued that the Normans were vaguely related to themselves.

This study also addresses important issues of Byzantine and Norman identity at the beginning of the high Middle Ages, a period when increasingly aggressive Catholic, Latin-speaking western Europeans and beleaguered Orthodox, Greek-speaking Byzantines reconfigured their sense of self in juxtaposition to one another.<sup>9</sup> The major shift in the Byzantine perception of the west occurred between the late eleventh and early thirteenth centuries, resulting in a new dichotomy in which some Byzantines appeared as “Greeks” and juxtaposed themselves with Latin “Barbarians.”<sup>10</sup> Scholarship has discussed this shift, with an emphasis on what Byzantine Roman identity *became*, but they have devoted surprisingly little attention to what it shifted *from*. This thesis fills the gap by developing the story of the gradual evolution of Byzantine Roman identity. I will argue that in the first half of the eleventh century the Byzantines possessed a clear idea of themselves as “Romans” and a vague idea of western Europeans as “Franks.” Yet, by the end of the century, Byzantine categorization of western nations had become more subtle as they clearly distinguished the westerners from one another. As a consequence, by the turn of the century the Byzantine Romans treated the Normans as a distinct ethnic group.

The study of Byzantine views of the Normans is also important to our understanding of the First Crusade. This watershed event marked the culmination of both Byzantine and Western European political and social history in the eleventh century. The Byzantines played a crucial role in both summoning and contributing to this armed pilgrimage: a role that scholarship has often overlooked because all of the First Crusade’s

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<sup>9</sup> See the historiography section below, including works by Gill Page, Alexander Kazhdan, and Anthony Kaldellis.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 283.

primary sources (both Crusader and Byzantine) were written in hindsight and had specific reasons for misconstruing the events that occurred by portraying the Byzantines and Crusaders as hostile to one another from the beginning.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the typical narrative of the First Crusade speaks of an unprepared Byzantine reception of the Crusader army, and a distrustful interaction between the two that was further aggravated throughout the campaign. This view, strongly conditioned by a rather uncritical adherence to crusader narratives, is mistaken and has been challenged by scholars such as Steven Runciman and Jonathan Shepard, who have demonstrated that the Byzantines worked well with many of the Crusaders. In fact, collaboration was particularly good with the contingent of southern Italian Normans, who received positions as the official liaisons between their fellow Crusaders and the Byzantine Roman administration.<sup>12</sup> My work provides an explanation for why the Normans held this privileged position and in so doing contributes more generally to the overall knowledge of this watershed event.

Finally, the study of Byzantine-Norman interaction can tell us more generally how Byzantine courtiers used ancient Roman history in an attempt to influence the political scene in which they operated. Essentially, the following chapters demonstrate how various late eleventh-century Byzantine courtiers used Roman history as a means for actively manipulating and shaping politics, rather than simply as a means of illustrating it. Such a distinction can help historians understand how the texts of eleventh-century

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<sup>11</sup> For a good discussion and explanation of the First Crusade, see Steven Runciman's *The First Crusade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951). Although somewhat Orientalist, it is the best synthesis of the numerous primary sources dealing with First Crusade and the Byzantine, Fatimid, and Seljuk roles in this event that has typically been viewed from an overwhelmingly Latin Christian perspective.

<sup>12</sup> See Jonathan Shepard, "When Greek Meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097-1098," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 189-277.

Byzantine Roman historians such as Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates, both of whom will receive considerable attention in this thesis, should be read.

To date, no in-depth study exists on how the Byzantines perceived the Normans during the eleventh century. Although scholars, both Byzantinists and western medievalists, have studied the diplomatic, religious, and economic relationships that marked the interaction between these two cultures, few have analyzed how Byzantines in particular *perceived* the Normans. Even fewer scholars have dealt with the relations of the Byzantine Romans and Latin Europe in the century preceding the Crusades, a century that witnessed a dramatic increase in contact between the two cultures.<sup>13</sup>

Scholarship has also overlooked the importance of a cultural element that the Byzantines and Latins held in common: Roman culture and history.<sup>14</sup> It is this particular cultural element that I will focus on in my thesis. It provides a “new door” through which I shape my approach to how Byzantine Romans perceived Western Europeans, such as the Normans. It is useful to describe the medieval west as a fusion of three cultural ingredients: Christian, Roman, and Germanic.<sup>15</sup> In Byzantium, the story was similar except that no Germanic ingredient existed; in its place were classical Greek learning and language. Many scholars have emphasized the importance of Byzantium’s Greek and Christian ingredients, but have generally overlooked the Roman one. Thus it is typically argued that Byzantines identified themselves mostly by their Orthodox Christian religion

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<sup>13</sup> Runciman’s *The First Crusade* is a notable example of scholarship that discusses the increase in western European traffic through Byzantium on the way to Jerusalem during the eleventh century.

<sup>14</sup> I use the term Latins to describe Christian people who spoke regional derivatives of Latin, and came from what are now the countries of France, England, the Low Countries, western Germany, and Italy. They were in communion with the Roman Pontiff, and have often been collectively termed “Latin Christendom.”

<sup>15</sup> This useful analogy is from Paul Dutton and it can be found in Paul E. Dutton, ed., *Carolingian Civilization-A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004), xiv.

and their Greek language. Examples of this scholarship include the works of major Byzantinists such as the late Dimitri Obolensky, Cyril Mango, and Warren Treadgold.<sup>16</sup>

Greek language and Orthodox Christianity certainly were important elements of Byzantine identity, but they did not solely define it. The Roman ingredient, so evident in Byzantine sources, yet so neglected by modern scholars, is important because it was crucial to the Byzantine perception of both themselves as members of a polity and of the peoples around them. My project focuses on this neglected aspect, and largely grows out of recent scholarship that emphasizes the importance of Roman history and culture to the Byzantine identity and worldview. Two examples of such scholarship are studies by Gill Page and Anthony Kaldellis. Gill Page's *Being Byzantine* acknowledges the existence of a "Roman" identity in Byzantium, arguing that this "Roman" identity was an ethnic one: essentially that the Byzantines believed they were a group that was descended from the ancient Romans.<sup>17</sup> Anthony Kaldellis' *Hellenism in Byzantium* is similar to Page's work in that it emphasizes the "Roman" identity of Byzantines, but unlike Page, Kaldellis argues that this Roman identity was often attained by people who immigrated to

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<sup>16</sup> Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1980); Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971); Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). Mango claims that Byzantines had no sense of a national or ethnic identity (page 6). For examples from Obolensky's work, see the first chapter of this thesis. Treadgold's work, which is the best current monograph on Byzantium, does little to discuss Byzantines as Romans and even claims that the "Byzantine Empire is a reminder that people of different nationalities can live together as one, over wide areas, for centuries." This assertion does create a problem within the text because throughout his work Treadgold has denied the existence of nationalism in Byzantium, yet by the end he has indirectly acknowledged the existence of some sort of ethnic-based or national-based identity without ever defining it explicitly. A closer look at the language employed by Treadgold reveals that this implicitly-acknowledged ethnic or national group was "Greek." The narrative of *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* ends with the fall of the last Byzantine outposts to the Ottomans in 1461, and states: "the majority of Greeks remained subject to the sultan until the nineteenth century." The former quote can be found on page 853. The latter assertion can be found on page 803. For a detailed discussion of these biases, see the second chapter of Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*.

<sup>17</sup> Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity before the Ottomans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Byzantium, indicating a process of “ascent” or “naturalization into a matrix of customs and identifiers that constituted *Romanitas*.”<sup>18</sup> This “matrix” of customs and identifiers included Christian Orthodoxy, the Greek language, visual identifiers such as hairstyle and dress, and the acknowledgement of membership in the Roman imperial polity. Kaldellis emphasizes that Byzantines viewed their own history as a continuation of the ancient Roman history contained within the texts of Polybius, Plutarch, Appian, and Cassius Dio, authors who wrote in Greek but were considered in antiquity by their peers, and in three of the four cases by themselves, as thoroughly Roman.<sup>19</sup> This worldview, grounded in classical texts, presented Byzantines as civilized “Romans” facing masses of “Barbarians.” Kaldellis’ model of *Romanitas* serves as a foundation on which my project’s question is built. It is with his conclusions in mind that I am asking the question: how did eleventh-century Byzantine *Romanitas* affect elite Byzantine courtiers’ perception of the Normans?

Several scholars, namely Paul Magdalino, Anthony Kaldellis, Gill Page, and Alexander Kazhdan, have argued that a major shift in the Byzantine perception of western Europeans occurred between the late eleventh and early thirteenth centuries.<sup>20</sup> Kaldellis and Page both note that this shift probably was a reaction to the marked rise in western European military incursions into Byzantium during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, most notably the fourth crusade of 1204, in which Western Europeans sacked Constantinople. In addition, the increasing presence of foreign mercenaries and merchants in Byzantine society served to exacerbate the anti-Latin attitude apparent in

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<sup>18</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 95, 107.

<sup>19</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 64.

<sup>20</sup> For Magdalino’s work, see footnote 28; for Kaldellis’s and Kazhdan’s work, see footnote 22; For Gill Page’s work, see footnote 17.

the sources from the period.<sup>21</sup> This body of scholarship argues that as a consequence, Byzantine identity (at least at the elite level) transformed from Romano-centric to Helleno-centric, stressing the Roman background less and the classical Greek background more by the thirteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Thus, this line of scholarship acknowledges the existence of a more Romano-centric Byzantine identity and worldview in the eleventh century, often using it as a starting point for their studies. What such scholarship is only beginning to do, however, is examine the eleventh-century Romano-centric worldview in depth.<sup>23</sup> Nor have these scholars extended their analysis into how a Roman worldview would have affected the Byzantine perception of the empire's western neighbours. My project will focus on both of these latter points.

Jonathan Shepard is the scholar who has discussed the eleventh-century Byzantine interaction with the Normans in depth. He has written several articles focusing on the Byzantine military strategy in the empire's Eastern provinces, and how this strategy deliberately made use of Norman manpower.<sup>24</sup> Shepard argues that the Norman mercenaries who had careers in Byzantine service were able to reach positions of prominence within the military during the latter half of the eleventh century, even though

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<sup>21</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 293.

<sup>22</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 283. Kaldellis argues that by the thirteenth century, the new dichotomy that Byzantines used when viewing themselves against foreigners was as "Greeks" versus "Barbarians." For a study of how the Byzantine sources' philology changed between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, see Alexander Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001) 85-86.

<sup>23</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of All Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 14, no. 1 (2007): 1-22.

<sup>24</sup> Shepard, J. "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy Towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries." In *Byzantium and the West, c.850-c.1200: Proceedings of the XVIII Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*. Oxford 30<sup>th</sup> March-1<sup>st</sup> April, 1984. Amsterdam; "The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium." *Anglo-Norman Studies* 15 (1992): 275-305; "When Greek Meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097-1098." *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 189-277.

they also rebelled against the authorities in Constantinople at one time or another. He also suggests that the south Italian Normans had a privileged position on the First Crusade because the Byzantine emperor felt he could trust them better than the other Crusader contingents. Shepard provides the bulk of his material and analysis on the Normans in the Italian and Eastern Anatolian “military frontiers” of the empire, not within the elite circles of Constantinople or Byzantine society in general. Nor does he deal with ideas of “perception.” By examining how the Byzantine political elite perceived Normans, I will be covering an angle that adds to Shepard’s analysis of the eleventh-century interaction between Byzantium and the Normans.

Other scholars, namely Donald Nicol and to a certain extent Paul Magdalino and Anthony Kaldellis, have *indirectly* examined the theme of Byzantine perception of the Normans. They have done so by treating the topic of Norman “integration” into the Byzantine elite. Donald Nicol’s article “Symbiosis and Integration” focuses on evidence drawn from three elite Byzantine families of Norman ancestry that flourished in the twelfth century.<sup>25</sup> Nicol argues that these Normans became “Hellenized” because they learned Greek, intermarried with Byzantine aristocrats, and converted to Orthodox Christianity, all of which were indicators of Byzantine culture.<sup>26</sup> Paul Magdalino’s important monograph *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* briefly discusses how Norman families integrated into the Byzantine aristocracy through marriages orchestrated by the Komnenoi family that held the reins of power in Byzantium between

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<sup>25</sup> Donald M. Nicol, “Symbiosis and Integration: Some Greco-Latin Families in Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7, (1979): 113-135.

<sup>26</sup> Like many scholars, Nicol does not use the term “Romanize” thus reflecting a belief that the Byzantines were “Greek” and not “Roman.”

1081 and 1185.<sup>27</sup> This body of scholarship analyzes the transformation of Normans into Byzantines via intermarriage and religious conversion. However, this scholarship has only examined twelfth-century evidence, and does not address the use of “Roman” history in this assimilation. My research has found the latter component to be particularly important in the eleventh-century sources.

One article does raise the possibility that eleventh-century *Romanitas* may have influenced the Byzantine interaction with, and perception of, Latin Europeans. “The Byzantine Background to the First Crusade,” by Paul Magdalino, argues that the Byzantine utilization of “Norman manpower, Amalfitan sea-power, and alliances with the papacy” are indicative of a Byzantine openness to western Europeans that was the result of a Byzantine belief that they were in fact closely related to those “barbarians” themselves.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Magdalino suggests that a more inclusive “Roman” identity existed in eleventh-century Byzantium. However, he only hints at the influence of Romano-centric views in the eleventh-century interaction between Byzantium and the Normans, and his article does not draw out the analysis further.

Evidently, there is a small, but impressive, body of scholarship dealing with the Byzantine-Norman interaction in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but very little for this interaction in the preceding century. Furthermore, what scholarship does exist focuses little on the role played by *Romanitas* in the Byzantine perception of the Normans. In this sense the ensuing chapters differ from previous scholarship in that they

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 210.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Magdalino, “The Byzantine Background to the First Crusade,” (Canadian Institute of Balkan Studies, 1996), page 6.

focus on the role played by *Romanitas* in the Byzantine perception of the Normans during the eleventh century.

In order to find out how members of the eleventh-century Byzantine elite perceived the Normans, and how their exposure to Roman historiography affected these perceptions, I will analyze eleventh-century Byzantine and southern Italian sources. These sources are mostly formal histories and a handful of chronicles, the most important of which are the formal histories of two Byzantine Roman courtiers—Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates. There are three reasons why I use histories as the basis for my argument. First, the formal histories are the main sources that discuss the arrival of the Normans in Byzantium. Second, members of the Byzantine Roman elite generally used history as a means for the shaping, reshaping, and reinterpretation of the empire's past and present. Their use of history makes these texts important sources for understanding what constituted the collective identity of the Byzantine Romans (and by extension how they viewed outsiders).<sup>29</sup> Third, I argue that the histories of Michael Attaleiates and Michael Psellos in particular deliberately attempted to fit the Normans into a broader Byzantine Roman history in order for the empire to take advantage of the Normans' skills in warfare.

The drawback to using these histories is that they were written by and for people at the highest level of Byzantine society: the palace. Hence, the texts' writers and audiences were the administrative and governing elite of Byzantium. After all, the historians Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates were both educated, worked in the

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<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of historical texts' contribution to Byzantine identity, see Gill Page, 24. After all, Byzantine histories treated the Byzantine Roman Empire and its inhabitants as their subject.

imperial government, and wrote for an educated palace audience.<sup>30</sup> However, particularly when working with Byzantium, one should not emphasize the “elite” as a static group. The Byzantine Roman elite were not a hereditary class in the eleventh century. Rather, they were a mutable group whose membership consisted of whoever held imperial titles and offices, often acquired through merit.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, both Psellos and Attaleiates did not come from exceptionally powerful families. Thus, a prominent place in the imperial court represented the highest achievement for military figures or bureaucrats. It was the location from which the empire’s wealth, collected in the form of taxes, was redistributed as gifts and salaries.<sup>32</sup> The court was also practically synonymous with the senate, a body of the empire’s leading officials, making it a focal point from which ideas, wealth and decisions, were transmitted into the rest of the empire.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence for what the average Byzantine Roman thought about politics is very fragmentary (as it is for any pre-modern society) and therefore it would be presumptuous to extend this thesis’ argument to all Byzantine Romans. Hence, when I discuss Byzantine Romans, I will mainly be treating courtiers and the empire’s administrative elite.

This thesis will use several sources to advance its argument. Information regarding the eleventh-century interaction between the Normans and the Byzantine Romans can be found in an assortment of chronicles and histories written in Byzantium and Southern Italy between the early eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The initial

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the drawbacks of using formal histories as evidence, see Gill Page, 25.

<sup>31</sup> John Haldon, “Social Elites, Wealth, and Power,” in *A Social History of Byzantium*, ed. John Haldon (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 183.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Magdalino, “Court Society and Aristocracy,” in *A Social History of Byzantium*, ed. John Haldon (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 213.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Magdalino, “Court Society and Aristocracy,” 217. For further discussion of the court, see Alexander P. Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, *The Social World of the Byzantine Court*, in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Byzantine perception of the Normans can be gleaned from local chronicles from the city of Bari in Southern Italy and from a Byzantine palace document known to posterity as the *De Administrando Imperio* (hereafter referred to as the *D.A.I.*), both of which will be discussed in chapter 2.

As the Normans became more numerous in the Mediterranean, they figured more prominently in the three Byzantine Roman histories that covered the eleventh century: the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos, the *History* of Michael Attaleiates, and the *Synopsis Historion* of Ioannes Skylitzes. The *Chronographia* is a political memoir that covers Byzantine history from the reign of Basil II (r. 976-1025) until the accession of Isaakios Komnenos (r. 1057-1059). It was written by 1063 at the latest,<sup>34</sup> although there is a continuation that covers the period between 1059 and 1071 that was written during the early part of Michael VII's reign.<sup>35</sup> Michael Attaleiates' *Historia* was written in the latter 1070's and was completed in 1080. It covers the period between 1034 and 1080. Both Psellos' and Attaleiates' texts emulate classical histories in their style and in the parallels and analogies they draw with their own time.<sup>36</sup> Skylitzes' text is less stylized and presents its information in a more straightforward narrative of what happened in Byzantium between 811 and 1057. Like the *Chronographia*, it has a continuation that was probably

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' "Chronographia"* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' "Chronographia."* 11.

<sup>36</sup> For Attaleiates' text and historical style, see Dimitri Krallis, "Michael Attaleiates: History as Politics in Eleventh-Century Byzantium" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2006); Dimitri Krallis, "Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos," in *Reading Michael Psellos*, (eds.) Barber and Jenkins (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006). Also, see Alexander Kazhdan "Attaleiates, Michael" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 16 April 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e0568>.

written by Skylitzes himself.<sup>37</sup> Psellos, Attaleiates, and Skylitzes were all highly-placed courtiers. Psellos and Attaleiates knew one another and were active in eleventh-century Byzantine politics.<sup>38</sup> Skylitzes was younger than the previous two and thus wrote in either the late eleventh or early twelfth century. His career in the palace took place during the reign of Alexios Komnenos (r. 1081-1118).<sup>39</sup>

Several other histories and chronicles, both Byzantine and Italian, provide context, details, and help to establish chronology. For Byzantium, these sources are Anna Komnene's *Alexiad* and Ioannes Kinnamos' *Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos*. For Italy the sources are Amatus of Montecassino's *History of the Normans*, Geoffrey Malaterra's *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, and William of Apulia's epic poem *The Deeds of Robert Guiscard*. All of these sources were written near the end of the eleventh century or in the twelfth. They will be treated as they appear in the Thesis.

The sources that will receive the most analysis are the texts that contain the argument for the integration of the Normans into Byzantium. These texts are the *History* of Michael Attaleiates and the *Historia Syntomos* of Michael Psellos. The two texts provide the evidence for the courtiers' use of Roman history to argue for the integration of the Normans into the Byzantine elite. Attaleiates' work has received its introduction already. Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* is a compilation of brief biographies of Roman kings,

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<sup>37</sup> For dating the composition of Skylitzes' *Historia Synopsis*, see Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 89. Holmes argues that Skylitzes wrote the text in two different periods, one early in the reign of Alexios Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), and the other section sometime closer to 1118. Page 83 argues that the continuator was probably Skylitzes himself.

<sup>38</sup> Psellos was involved with the court from the 1040s until the mid-1070s when he fell out of favour with the Doukai family that ruled Byzantium at the time, which will be discussed further in chapter 4. Attaleiates was a judge who became highly-placed at court in the 1060s and 1070s, as will be discussed further in chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> Holmes, 80-83.

consuls, and emperors from Romulus (alleged founder of Rome) to Basil II (r. 976-1025 C.E.). It was probably written in 1073 or 1074 as a mirror of princes for the emperor Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078). Although the source treats earlier history, I argue that the text contains a veiled reference to the Normans of the eleventh century, and thus I will analyze it in depth in chapter 4.

Throughout this thesis I will examine parallels between the eleventh-century Byzantine histories and the ancient Roman histories that provided the Byzantine Roman historical frame of reference. These ancient texts are the histories of Polybius, Plutarch, Appian, Cassius Dio, and Prokopios, histories that were written in Greek and thus represent the canon of Roman history that was accessible to Byzantine Roman courtiers such as Psellos and Attaleiates. Consequently, these sources will be consulted for their ability to influence the Byzantine Roman courtiers' conception of Roman history. Often, this will mean analysis of the texts' use of specific words such as "Latin" or "Celt."

The first chapter in this thesis analyzes what it meant to "be Roman" in eleventh-century Byzantium and also examines the role and influence of classical Roman history among the empire's political elite. Essentially, it establishes the premise for the analysis that ensues. Chapter two examines the empire's Italian frontier in the eleventh century and the Byzantine Romans' initial perception of the Normans within that context. By reading the fragmentary sources from southern Italy and a Byzantine Roman palace document, I suggest that the Byzantines did not at first perceive the Normans as different from other western Europeans. The Normans simply did not figure in the Byzantines' worldview before the eleventh century, and as a consequence Byzantine Roman history had not yet "created" a place for them. With this observation at the very heart of my

analysis I will then focus on how the Byzantine Roman courtiers came to create a space for the empire's new neighbours by using Roman history.

The third chapter examines the careers of various Normans who held positions of influence within Byzantium between the 1050s and 1081; a period that I argue witnessed a significant change in the position of the Normans within Byzantine society. At that time they went from being a small group of mercenaries to a significant force in the Byzantine polity. The sequential increase in the influence of three key Norman mercenaries who achieved positions of power--Hervé Frankopoulos, Robert Crispin, and Roussel of Bailleul, and the *de facto* leader of the Italo-Normans, Robert Guiscard --stands as evidence of this process. I will also look at the various Norman warriors who were exiled from southern Italy and subsequently sought refuge in Constantinople; men who did not figure prominently in the Byzantine sources (although they did appear in the Italian ones) because of successful integration into Byzantine Roman culture. The careers of these figures indicate that the Normans were getting the attention of Byzantine courtiers because they were attaining prominent positions within the administration and aristocracy. It was this change in position that served as an impetus for some Byzantine Roman writers to use Roman history as a means of suggesting how to handle the Normans.

The fourth and fifth chapters examine how Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates used Roman history as a means to create places for the increasingly important Normans within the Byzantine court and army hierarchy, even going so far as to promote the idea of a Norman leader for the Byzantine Empire as seen in this introduction's opening anecdote. Psellos did this subtly; Attaleiates much more explicitly. Both of them

tried retroactively to portray the Normans as somehow related to Byzantine Romans, even if distantly.

At the end of this thesis the reader will have become familiar with two stories. The first is a story about the transformation of the Normans within Byzantine elite society; how they went from being outsider barbarians to registering as Romans (in some cases) or “Latins with preferred treatment.” The other story is about how two Byzantine Roman intellectuals worked creatively with historical texts in order to make a place for these Normans.

## Chapter 1: *Romanitas* in Eleventh-Century Byzantium

This chapter will impress an important point upon the reader: from the Principate (first and second centuries C.E.) until the period discussed in this thesis the Byzantines viewed themselves as “Romans.” Along with this worldview came another important Byzantine Roman belief: Byzantine Romans were surrounded by non-Romans known as Barbarians. The boundaries between Romans and non-Romans were well-defined but not unbridgeable in Byzantine minds. Provided that a person was willing to make certain changes regarding their religion, language and customs, he or she could become a Byzantine Roman through a process of naturalization. This point is important for any discussion of the Byzantine perception of the Normans and various Byzantine Romans’ subsequent attempts to integrate them. Thus, this chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the thesis by setting out the ideas that underpin its argument. In the pages that follow, I first define what it meant to the Byzantine Romans to be a “Roman” or, conversely, a “Barbarian” in the eleventh century. Then I examine the ideological import of Roman history for eleventh-century Byzantine courtiers, particularly its perceived usefulness for governing the Byzantine Roman Empire and defining *Romanitas*.

The reader may be confused with my usage of the word “Roman.” After all, were Romans not the inhabitants of Rome? Were Romans not the ancient Latin-speaking Italian peoples that created an empire around the Mediterranean? Is the Catholic Church not the “Roman” church? Conversely, how could Greek-speaking Orthodox people be “Roman?” Should they not be “Greek?” Indeed many western Europeans, in both the Middle Ages and the modern period, referred to the Byzantines as “Greeks,” and not “Romans.” Many modern scholars, both Western European and Greek, have reinforced

this belief through their works.<sup>40</sup> But no Byzantine Roman would have accepted this label. I do not wish to argue that the label “Roman” is the monopoly of one particular group, such as the Byzantines. Rather, I argue that the Byzantines were a legitimate inheritor of Roman culture. Thus, in this thesis I will refer to the Byzantines as Byzantine Romans. Accordingly, when I discuss “*Romanitas*” (Roman-ness) I will be discussing the eleventh-century Byzantine Roman version of it. In other words, I am discussing what it meant to be a Roman in eleventh-century Byzantium.

The Byzantines had good reason to believe that they were Romans. Their empire was the continuation of the ancient Roman one, complete with Roman law and Roman political institutions (such as the senate). The Byzantine Romans saw themselves as Romans. They called themselves “Romans (Ῥωμαῖοί),” and accordingly referred to their empire as the “Roman Empire (or alternatively Romania)” and their leader as the “Roman Emperor.” Of course, they were not in every sense identical to the Romans from the ancient republic or Principate that dominate the imagination of the modern reader. Eleventh-century Byzantine Romans did not wear togas, speak Latin, or worship Jupiter. Roman culture, as was to be expected of any culture after several hundred years, had gradually changed and was marked by different criteria by the eleventh century. By that time, as far as a Byzantine Roman was concerned, a Roman was someone who professed Christian Orthodoxy, spoke Greek, recognized the emperor in Constantinople as their ruler, and presented a particular set of customs and conventions that was recognized as distinctly “Roman.” How this transformation gradually occurred between the ancient and

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<sup>40</sup> For examples of such scholarship, see Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome*; Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth*; Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*.

medieval periods is not important for this argument.<sup>41</sup> What is important for our purposes is to demonstrate that eleventh-century Byzantines viewed themselves as Romans.

To be a Byzantine Roman in the eleventh century, one had to speak Greek (although Byzantine Romans recognized that Latin was their “ancestral” language).<sup>42</sup> A notable example of Byzantine Romans viewing Greek as the Roman language was the ninth-century emperor Michael III’s (r. 842-867) letter to Pope Nicholas I. This letter is a valuable example of how the Papacy and the Byzantines imperial administration both claimed to be the “true” Romans. In this letter the emperor responds to the Pope’s claim that the Byzantines were not Roman by arguing that the Pope spoke Latin, which according to Michael III, was a “barbarous” language.<sup>43</sup> The implication was that ninth-century Romans spoke Greek, not Latin.

Eleventh-century Byzantine Romans were also Orthodox in their religious beliefs. Byzantine Romans often labelled themselves as Christians, and accordingly viewed non-Christians, such as Muslims, as an external threat to the Roman Empire. But one could not become a Roman simply by professing Orthodox Christianity. Some scholars, most notably the late Dimitri Obolensky, mistakenly overemphasized the importance of Orthodox Christianity as a component of Byzantine identity. Obolensky’s work *The*

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<sup>41</sup> Scholars such as Clifford Ando and Simon Swain have discussed this process in their works. See Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Simon Swain, “Introduction,” in *Approaching Late Antiquity: The Transformation from Early to Late Empire*, eds. Simon Swain and Mark Edwards (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World AD 50- 250* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

<sup>42</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 69. Kaldellis notes that Latin was largely gone from Byzantium by the seventh century, yet Byzantine Romans continued to use thousands of words that were borrowed from Latin. Also, see Jonathan Shepard, *Emperors and Expansionism: From Rome to Middle Byzantium*, in *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe. Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, ed. Jonathan Shepard (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 71-72. Shepard points out that palace acclamations continued to use Latin as late as the tenth century.

<sup>43</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 68; “Pope Nicholas letter 86 (“to Emperor Michael”),” in *Patrologia Latina* 119, ed. J. P. Migne, page 932.

*Byzantine Commonwealth* argued that Byzantium was a supranational commonwealth of Christian peoples, and that Byzantines “recognize[d] the right” of “every nation” to “become a part of the Christian family,” and thus become Byzantine.<sup>44</sup> This assertion is frankly mistaken because it implies that anyone who became an Orthodox Christian automatically became a Byzantine too. Obolensky’s assertion simply does not work when held against the evidence. For example, after conquering the Bulgars, Byzantine Romans continued to refer to them as non-Roman or “semi-barbarian (μιξοβάρβαροι),” despite their Orthodox Christianity.<sup>45</sup> Thus, to be a Byzantine Roman required more than Orthodoxy. In other words: all Byzantine Romans were Orthodox Christians. But not all Orthodox Christians were Byzantine Roman.

Thus far we have established that Christian Orthodoxy and Greek language were important factors of eleventh-century *Romanitas*, although they were not enough to fully constitute it. Other important factors were visual identifiers, including hairstyles and dress.<sup>46</sup> These visual identifiers were very important for the simple reason that they were regarded as the first noticeable sign of *Romanitas* by Byzantine Romans. Even outsiders

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<sup>44</sup> Obolensky, 105, 151.

<sup>45</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 98. Another possible example would be the Serbs, who also were Orthodox, but not considered by Byzantine Romans to be “Roman.” It should also be noted that the most violent wars that Byzantium fought in the tenth and eleventh centuries were against the Bulgars, who had already converted to Orthodox Christianity.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 107.

could recognize a “Byzantine,” by their physical appearance.<sup>47</sup> Hairstyle was another important indicator of Byzantine Roman affiliation, and like clothing, both Byzantine and Western European sources mention it. A notable example is Skylitzes’ discussion of how the ninth-century emperor Theophilos issued edicts ordering all Byzantine Roman subjects to wear their hair a certain way.<sup>48</sup> Even ninth and eleventh-century sources from Italy discussed the contrasting hairstyles of Byzantines and westerners, in addition to explaining how people on the southern Italian border of Byzantium could find themselves deciding how to wear their hair as a reflection of their political loyalties.<sup>49</sup> Although Byzantine Romans recognized a person as a “Roman” and the western Europeans recognized the same person as a “Greek,” both could see that the Byzantine Romans were part of a clearly and visibly-defined group.

Interestingly, there are also Italian sources, written in Latin, from the tenth and eleventh centuries that refer to Byzantines as “Romans,” meaning that not all westerners denied Byzantines their claim to the Roman legacy. The tenth-century works of

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<sup>47</sup> Byzantine dress is mentioned in many primary sources. For example Ioannes Skylitzes tells a story of a Bulgarian King being accidentally shot down by his own soldiers because he was dressed as a “Roman.” See Ioannes Scylitzes, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis Historiarum-A Synopses of Histories (811-1057 A.D.) a Provisional Translation*, trans. John Wortley (Manitoba: The Center for Hellenic Civilization at the University of Manitoba, 2000), 177. Liudprand of Cremona, a tenth-century Italian and outsider to Byzantium discusses Byzantine fashion as distinct (although he labels it “Greek” fashion. See Liudprand of Cremona, *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona*, trans. Paolo Squatriti (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 119. Another Italian, the poet William of Apulia writing in the eleventh century, discusses some Norman mercenaries’ encounter with a Lombard who was wearing the “peculiar costume” of the “Greeks.” For this last example see William of Apulia, *The Deeds of Robert Guiscard*, trans. G.A. Loud (University of Leeds, 2006), 3.  
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/weblearning/MedievalHistoryTextCentre/medievaltexts.html>.

<sup>48</sup> Skylitzes, 38.

<sup>49</sup> A ninth-century source from Italy describes how the Beneventans in Southern Italy that were resisting the Frankish Emperor Charlemagne, expressed their loyalty to Constantinople. They allegedly did this by wearing their hair and clothes in the style of the Byzantine Romans instead of cropping their hair short like the Franks. See Barbara M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 7. The eleventh-century Italian historian Amatus of Montecassino specifically mentions the beards of the Byzantine Romans as being distinct, claiming that one of the Archbishops of Salerno wore his beard “as if he were from Constantinople.” See Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. Prescott N. Dunbar (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 125.

Liudprand of Cremona are a particularly illustrative example of the Byzantine claim to the Roman legacy. Indeed, Liudprand of Cremona's earlier work, the *Antapodosis* portrayed the Byzantine emperor as the "legitimate" Roman Emperor.<sup>50</sup> He even believed that the Byzantine Roman aristocracy was descended from the ancient Roman senatorial families that had allegedly resettled in Constantinople under orders from the fourth-century emperor Constantine.<sup>51</sup> Even when insulting Byzantines, Liudprand considered them to be "Roman." The most notable example of this attitude is in the *Embassy*, where the emperor Nikephoros Phokas (r. 963-969) insultingly calls Liudprand a "Lombard." Liudprand responds with the insult that the Romans (referring here to the Byzantine Romans) were descended from the "fratricidal Romulus" who was the son of a whore, and who founded a city full of murderers. Liudprand then proceeds to tell the imperial court that, as Romans, they were full of practically every vice known to man.<sup>52</sup> This exchange is revealing because Liudprand is proudly claiming that he is not a Roman (despite hailing from Italy), and that the Byzantines, as "Romans," are degenerate. The angry reaction of the Byzantine Roman courtiers demonstrates that they were indignant at having their Roman ancestry mocked. Thus, between the two works of Liudprand, we can see that whether he was praising or insulting the Byzantine Romans, and despite his Italian background, he did accept that fact that the Byzantines were fundamentally "Roman."

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<sup>50</sup> Paolo Squatriti, *The Complete Works of Liudprand of Cremona* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 32. Despite Liudprand's modern reputation for being anti-Byzantine (an attitude found in his satirical *Embassy*), he was actually a pro-Byzantine diplomat who spent considerable time in Constantinople and admired its culture. His pro-Byzantine work, *The Antapodosis*, circulated far more widely in the tenth century than his *Embassy*.

<sup>51</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, 62.

<sup>52</sup> Liudprand of Cremona, *Embassy*, 146-147.

Roman history was also an important element of what defined *Romanitas* because it provided a collective political consciousness for Byzantine Romans as a group and a sense of continuity with the ancient empire. Byzantium had long-standing institutions, and a clear historical conception of itself as a single political entity. The texts of Roman historians, both of the republican and imperial eras, were crucial for reinforcing this sense of continuity. It is true that histories were mostly read by Byzantium's elite, but it should also be noted that these figures had an effect on Byzantine society that was out of proportion to their relatively small numbers.<sup>53</sup> Members of the Byzantine Roman elite read the texts of Polybius, Appian, Plutarch, and Cassius Dio, particularly in the tenth and eleventh centuries, in order to obtain an understanding of their empire's history.<sup>54</sup> The popularity of Roman histories in Byzantium is well demonstrated by the fact that the only non-Roman histories that survived in large numbers were those of Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon. These three histories were considered to be exciting to read and great examples of historical writing. But beyond those three texts, no other Greek histories were copied in substantial numbers. Indeed, Byzantines saw no need to copy Hellenistic histories, hence posterity does not have them. But Roman histories were copied, and thus there is an unbroken chain of Roman histories from Polybius in the second century B.C.E. until the last decades of Byzantine civilization.<sup>55</sup>

Roman history was very important in the eleventh-century Byzantine Roman courtier's frame of reference, partially because it provided them with models of great statesmen. For example, Michael Psellos mentioned Augustus, Marcus Aurelius, Caesar,

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<sup>53</sup> Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 376-7.

<sup>54</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 64.

<sup>55</sup> For the gap in histories between Xenophon and Polybius, see Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, 21, 10-12.

Trajan, Hadrian, and Cato in his eleventh-century history, the *Chronographia*, a text that discussed events in the Byzantine Roman Empire during his own lifetime.<sup>56</sup> He mentioned them as examples of leadership. Psellos' contemporary, Michael Attaleiates did the same in his contemporary history, mentioning numerous classical Roman figures, including Hadrian, Scipio Asiaticus, Aemilius Paulus, and Theodosius.<sup>57</sup> Like Psellos, Attaleiates used the Scipiones and Aemilius Paulus as Roman figures to be emulated. A contemporary Byzantine Roman courtier named Kekaumenos explicitly said that ancient Roman history was important because figures like Scipio Africanus had paid and led armies effectively on enemy soil and thus were worth reading about as a model for military leadership in his own day.<sup>58</sup> The fact that these writers utilized classical Roman figures and ideas in their narratives indicates how important they were in the Byzantine Roman conception of history and politics.

But ancient Roman history did not merely serve as a collection of exempla for eleventh-century Byzantine Romans to emulate. It also contained ideas about how to run the state and army. For example, the histories of Polybius have been copied and transmitted to modernity because of the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII's (r. 913-957) efforts. Attempting to assist bureaucrats in running the state, Constantine VII ordered his officials to copy and organize ancient histories (including Polybius) into an *Encyclopedia of History and Statecraft*.<sup>59</sup> Several histories were used, of which only three were non-Roman, further highlighting how important Roman histories were to these

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<sup>56</sup> Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (Suffolk: Penguin books, 1966). See pages 63-65 for Marcus Aurelius and Augustus (*Chronographia* III-2). See page 68 for references to Caesar, Trajan and Hadrian (*Chronographia* III-9). See page 322 for mention of Cato (*Chronographia* VII-75).

<sup>57</sup> Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* 187. On Hadrian see, sec. 262. On Scipio Asiaticus and Aemilius Paulus, see sec. 219-220. On Theodosius, see sec. 313.

<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Shepard, *Emperors and Expansionism: From Rome to Middle Byzantium*, 90.

<sup>59</sup> David S. Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 72-73.

Byzantine courtiers.<sup>60</sup> Similar sentiments led Psellos' good friend Ioannes Xiphilinos to compile an epitome of the third-century Roman historian Cassius Dio (to which posterity owes the bulk of its information regarding this Roman historian's text), specifically focusing on the Augustan period because of its apparent relevance to eleventh-century Byzantine governance.<sup>61</sup>

On a more subtle level it even appears that historians like Michael Attaleiates and Michael Psellos were influenced by Roman republican ideas that were probably presented in the second-century B.C.E. histories of Polybius.<sup>62</sup> The fact that Byzantine Roman courtiers were subversively promoting the idea of a Roman republic rather than an imperial government in the eleventh century is particularly remarkable. Psellos even wrote: "the aristocratic consuls' rule proved itself to the Romans to be stronger than the monarchy, and during a long period their state enjoyed prosperity."<sup>63</sup> These are the words of an eleventh-century Byzantine Roman courtier who critically read Roman history in order to critique the government of his own day.

Roman history even affected the way that Byzantine Romans labeled themselves: many Byzantines called themselves "Ausones," which was an ancient term for people from Italy which became very popular amongst Byzantine writers again in the tenth century.<sup>64</sup> Several Byzantine Roman families constructed lineages in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with the most common ancestor being the mythical founder of the

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<sup>60</sup> Potter, 73.

<sup>61</sup> Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians*, 20-21.

<sup>62</sup> See Dimitris Krallis, "'Democratic' action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates's 'Republicanism' in Context," *Viator* 40, no. 2 (2009): 35-53.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, Trans. W. J. Aerts (Berlin, 1990), 9.

<sup>64</sup> Shepard, *Emperors and Expansionism*, 79; Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 63.

Romans, Aeneas.<sup>65</sup> According to Michael Attaleiates, the powerful aristocratic family of tenth and eleventh-century Byzantium, the Phokades, were descended from the ancient Roman families, the Fabii and the Scipiones.<sup>66</sup> Another powerful family, the Doukai, claimed descent from the family of Constantine I.<sup>67</sup> While these lineages were artificial and were devised with rhetorical purposes in mind, they matter because they illustrate how important it was for eleventh-century Byzantine Roman families to imagine themselves as part of a Roman historical tradition going back thousands of years to Romulus, and even Aeneas. On a day-to-day level, they affected how decision-makers ran the Byzantine state.

The fact that Byzantine Romans living as far apart as Italy and Constantinople were able to share language, religion, sense of history, and fashion, indicates a high degree of cohesion, particularly for a pre-modern context.<sup>68</sup> There is important evidence for this cohesion in many non-Byzantine sources. Nothing testifies to it as much as the fact that the Arab sources referred to the Byzantines as the *Rum* (Romans),<sup>69</sup> and claimed that the Byzantine Romans were very “united” and cohesive compared to other peoples.<sup>70</sup> By this point the following should be clear to the reader. Byzantine Romans were recognized by one another as “Romans” due to their political allegiance, language, religion, customs, dress, and hair. These markings were so noticeable that even non-

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<sup>65</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 89.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* sec. 217-220. Discussed further in Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 89.

<sup>67</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 89.

<sup>68</sup> Influential modernist scholars, such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson, have argued that horizontally defined communities such as nations and ethnic groups have been created as a by-product of industrialization (in Gellner’s case) or the enlightenment (in Anderson’s case). I am merely pointing out that such recognizable communities did exist in the medieval period, and that the Byzantines are an example of a self-identifying community. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Press, 1983).

<sup>69</sup> Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 22.

<sup>70</sup> El Cheikh, 111. The quote is from a tenth-century Arabic anthology written by Ibn Abd Rabbih.

Byzantine Romans, such as Arabs and central and southern Italians could recognize someone as a Byzantine “Roman.” In addition, the “Roman” name was important to this identity, with even foreigners such as the Italian Liudprand calling Byzantines “Romans” in both complementary and derogatory contexts. Finally, the fact that the Arabs labelled Byzantine Romans as “Rumi,” simply reinforces the argument. Roman cohesiveness is significant because it sets up the problem of this thesis. How did a the community of Byzantine Romans perceive a group of outsiders such as the Normans?

Indeed, in the Byzantine Roman worldview, the barbarians were the “other” that was juxtaposed against the civilized Romans and their empire. Although the word “barbarian” evolved slightly as the Roman Empire’s culture changed throughout the Middle Ages with its conversion to Christianity, shifting borders, and linguistic changes, its pejorative connotations and power to juxtapose non-Romans against Romans remained intact. Thus, eleventh-century Byzantine Romans used the term “barbarian” to describe various peoples who did not live within the borders of Byzantium, did not speak Greek, and were not Christian. Other images accompanied this label, including the stereotype of the barbarian as being non-urban.<sup>71</sup> The Byzantine world was conceptualized as a civilized state and culture surrounded by barbaric peoples; and thus the Byzantine Romans viewed their state’s frontier as the border between the civilized and uncivilized worlds.<sup>72</sup>

This divide was articulated in formal histories. Throughout Byzantine Roman history, it was a common literary technique to use classical terms when labeling

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<sup>71</sup> Gill Page, *Being Byzantine: Greek Identity Before the Ottomans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 43-45.

<sup>72</sup> Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5.

contemporary peoples surrounding the Byzantine Roman Empire, a technique that modern scholarship has often called the “distorting mirror.”<sup>73</sup> For example, in the early Middle Ages, the Byzantine historians frequently called Arabs “Persians,” while in the eleventh century, Byzantine writers referred to Pechenegs as “Skythians.”<sup>74</sup> Thus a view of the world that divided people into Romans and barbarians was consistently delivered in Byzantium through histories.

Despite the fact that a clear divide existed between “Romans” and “Barbarians,” in the Byzantine worldview, the divide was not unbridgeable. As Anthony Kaldellis argued in *Hellenism in Byzantium*, membership in the Byzantine Roman “imagined community” was not defined through descent, but through expression of its customs.<sup>75</sup> In other words, one could “ascend” into the Byzantine Roman community by adopting its customs. There are numerous examples from Byzantine history, particularly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, of such assimilation. Indeed, scholarship has already noted that many members of the Byzantine Roman elite in the ninth through twelfth centuries had mixed ancestry that included Frankish, Armenian, Bulgarian, Arabic or Russian figures.<sup>76</sup> The examples are numerous, so only one will be used to illustrate the point. This notable figure was Ioannes Axouch, a Turkish boy taken captive during the First Crusade. He was subsequently raised in Constantinople, learned Greek, became Christian, and ultimately was the right-hand man of the emperor Ioannes Komnenos

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<sup>73</sup> For the prime example of this phenomenon, see Cyril Mango, “Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror,” *Inaugural Lecture, University of Oxford, May 1974* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 15.

<sup>74</sup> For labelling the Arabs as “Persians,” see Nikephoros of Constantinople, *Short History*, trans. Cyril Mango (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990); Genesios, *On the Reigns of the Emperors*, trans. Anthony Kaldellis (Canberra: Association for Byzantine Studies, 1998); Attaleiates sec. 187. For examples of calling Pechenegs “Skythians” see Anna Komnena. *Alexiad*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 238 (VII-9).

<sup>75</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 107; for information on the imagined community see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Books, 1983).

<sup>76</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 90.

(r.1118-1143).<sup>77</sup> The fact that this boy, who would have been born into a Turkic-speaking, Muslim family, was able to become the second most important figure in the empire is suggestive of the Byzantine Roman willingness to invite new members into their community. Thus we can see that non-Romans could become part of the elite Byzantine Roman community provided that they learned Greek, adopted a Greek name upon baptism, acknowledged the emperor, and adopted other Roman cultural expressions.<sup>78</sup>

Byzantine Romans considered themselves “Roman” and thus Roman history was important to them. To be a “Roman” meant one was a member of a distinct group that was differentiated from other medieval populations on the basis of religion, language, membership in the Roman Imperial polity, custom (political or other) and physical appearance. The collective identity of the Byzantine Romans was heavily influenced by Roman histories which provided continuity to the community’s existence and identity. Despite the cohesive nature of the Byzantine Romans, a foreigner could become a member of this Roman community by changing his or her customs and language.

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<sup>77</sup> Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. H. J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 6-7; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180*, 218-221, 223; Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 92.

<sup>78</sup> Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 90.

## Chapter 2: Early Byzantine Roman Perceptions of the Normans

This chapter examines the early encounters between the Byzantine Romans and the Normans, encounters that took place between 1017 and 1041 in southern Italy, and up to 1063 in Byzantium. First, I introduce the reader to the Normans and explain how they came to Italy and, by extension, Byzantium. Then I argue that the Byzantine administrative elite in Constantinople took little notice of the Normans during this period (even in 1041). In fact, when the Normans registered on the Constantinopolitan horizon, they were thought to be just another group of “Franks,” which was a generic term employed by Byzantine Romans when referring to western European Christians north of the Alps. This observation demonstrates that initially the Normans were not a clearly-defined group in Byzantine eyes. Instead, Byzantine courtiers were passively labelling them with a term that had been consistently applied to Western Europeans throughout the preceding four centuries.<sup>79</sup> Historians like Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates only later employed Roman histories to categorize the newly arrived people.

In order to make this argument, I first examine Byzantine and Southern Italian primary source material, looking for evidence of the initial Byzantine interaction with the Normans. In so doing, I emphasize the problems that these texts pose for understanding the said encounter. Then, I analyze how the Byzantine Romans used the term “Franks” to describe the Normans. Lastly, I will take the reader through two years of the Byzantine campaign in Sicily (1038-1040) and the earliest examples of Byzantine courtiers’

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<sup>79</sup> This term was used in the histories of Prokopios, and in the tenth-century text, the *De Administrando Imperio*, which will be discussed below.

references to the Normans. At this point I will introduce in a brief and simplified fashion the political and cultural landscape of eleventh-century southern Italy.

At the opening of the eleventh century, southern Italy was divided into two Lombard duchies (based around Salerno and Capua), two Byzantine provinces (based around the toe and heel of the Italian peninsula) and three city-states on the western coast (Amalfi, Naples, Gaeta) that professed nominal loyalty to Constantinople.<sup>80</sup> The nearby island of Sicily (which was formerly Byzantine) was controlled by three Muslim Emirs. Despite these political divisions, there was a vibrant cultural exchange in this small space. Indeed, to sharply distinguish between “Byzantine” and “Lombard” in southern Italy during the tenth and eleventh centuries would be to oversimplify the situation. Cities such as Amalfi and Naples often accepted Byzantium as a distant overlord, with Naples maintaining independence as a Byzantine satellite until 1130, long after the Norman conquest of the rest of Southern Italy. Even Lombard cities such as Salerno were influenced by Byzantine Roman culture.<sup>81</sup> In fact, nobles in the coastal cities of Amalfi and Naples often spoke Greek and followed Byzantine Roman customs as a way of deliberately distinguishing themselves from Lombards.<sup>82</sup> Obviously the lines of separation between Byzantine Roman and Lombard were murky in the border regions, but what should be clear is that a frontier existed in Southern Italy and it contained Byzantine Romans, Lombards, and people in the coastal city-states whose culture was influenced by both Byzantines and Lombards. The Normans eventually took advantage of this fragmented and complex political situation and thus conquered two Lombard

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<sup>80</sup> For a detailed introduction to how Southern Italy looked before the Norman arrival, see Barbara M. Kreutz, *Before the Normans: Southern Italy in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).

<sup>81</sup> See Kreutz, xxvii. For examples of Byzantine culture, see the same 14-15.

<sup>82</sup> Kreutz, 14-15.

principalities, two Byzantine provinces, and three Muslim Emirates, in order to create the Norman kingdom in Southern Italy.<sup>83</sup>

The eleventh century was the period when western European Christian society, which until that time had been defending itself against Muslim and Pagan attacks, started expanding.<sup>84</sup> Christian Europeans, who spoke Latin or Germanic languages, and resided in what would now be considered France, Germany, the Low Countries, and northern Spain, began to retake lands from the Muslims in Spain and Sicily, and from the Pagan populations living in the Baltic. By the end of the century, the First Crusade had been launched, and western Europeans were in possession of new lands across the Mediterranean. An improvement in climate and the resulting population growth contributed to the large-scale population movements of western Europeans.<sup>85</sup> Concurrent with these developments, primogeniture (the custom of leaving the bulk of a family's land to the firstborn son) led many younger, aristocratic, militarily-trained men, away from their homes in order to acquire land and wealth through warfare.<sup>86</sup>

At the forefront of this movement were the Normans, a people who lived in northern France in the region now referred to as Normandy. They were partially descended from Vikings who had been offered land there at the beginning of the tenth century, a factor that differentiated them from their "Frankish" neighbours and probably

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<sup>83</sup> For a detailed examination of these events, see G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (Edinburgh: Pearson, 2000).

<sup>84</sup> Kagan, Donald, and Steven Ozment and Frank M. Turner, *The Western Heritage Vol.1: to 1740*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010), 203.

<sup>85</sup> Kagan et al, 227; Barbara H Rosenwein. *A Short History of the Middle Ages. Vol. 2, From c.900 to c.1500*. Rev. ed. (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004), 167.

<sup>86</sup> On primogeniture, see Rosenwein, 149; Davis, R. H. C. *A History of Medieval Europe: From Constantine to Saint Louis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Edited R. I. Moore (Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2006), 160.

contributed to their more martial culture.<sup>87</sup> By the eleventh century, their place in the Capetian kingdom of France was unusual compared to the other Frankish groups. Indeed, the Duke of Normandy was actually more powerful at the time than his neighbour (and supposed overlord) the King of France.<sup>88</sup> In his domain, the Duke possessed unique executive powers that allowed him to exile potential rivals, a factor that led many Norman nobles to move elsewhere. Consequently, internal conflicts in Normandy led to surges in the numbers of exiles which caused increased numbers of Norman adventurers to make their way into the Mediterranean.<sup>89</sup> These factors all combined so that by the end of the eleventh century, Normans ruled England, a kingdom in southern Italy, a Crusader state based in Syria, and a principality in Northern Spain. This expansion was exceptional because of its scale and it distinguishes the Normans as a particularly aggressive medieval ethnic group.

When studying various peoples' perceptions of the Normans it is very important to keep this aggressive culture in mind. The eleventh-century Latin sources, written by Lombards and Normans, claim that the Normans possessed the "desire for domination (*aviditas dominationis*)."<sup>90</sup> The eleventh-century historian (probably a Lombard), Amatus of Montecassino, described the Normans and their move from Normandy to Italy:

Abandoning little in order to acquire much, these people departed, but they did not follow the custom of many who go through the world placing

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<sup>87</sup> Else Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 203, 206-7.

<sup>88</sup> William Chester Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 14.

<sup>89</sup> Loud, 88-91; Elisabeth van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 62.

<sup>90</sup> For a scholarly discussion of this phenomenon, see pages 17-20 of Kenneth Baxter Wolf's introduction to Geoffrey Malaterra *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

themselves in the service of others; rather, like the ancient warriors, they desired to have all people under their rule and dominion.<sup>91</sup>

Amatus' contemporary, Geoffrey Malaterra (who was probably a Norman émigré to southern Italy), wrote a similar description:<sup>92</sup>

They are a very shrewd people indeed, quick to avenge injury, scorning the fields of their homeland in hope of acquiring something more, avid for profit and domination, ready to feign or conceal anything, maintaining a certain balance between avarice and largess.<sup>93</sup>

Such comments did not solely come from Italian sources. Orderic Vitalis, a half-French, half-English monk writing north of the Alps in the early twelfth century had this to say:

The Normans are an untamed race, and unless they are held in check by a firm ruler they are all too ready to do wrong. In all communities, wherever they may be, they strive to rule and often become enemies to truth and loyalty through the ardour of their ambition.<sup>94</sup>

These sources were written in the late eleventh century (some time after the Norman invasion of southern Italy), but they do underscore the aggressive nature of the Norman communities. The Normans were exceptional warriors, and this fact needs to be kept in mind in the subsequent chapters because it enabled them to have an influence on Byzantine courtiers' imaginations that was disproportionate to their numbers. Byzantine sources, written in the latter half of the eleventh century, echoed many of these Latin authors' sentiments. However, the Byzantine sources will not be treated here because

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<sup>91</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, trans. Prescott N. Dunbar (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 46 (Book I, chapter 2).

<sup>92</sup> On Malaterra's ethnicity, see the introduction to Geoffrey Malaterra, *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 6-7.

<sup>93</sup> Malaterra, 52 (Malaterra, 1.3).

<sup>94</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, in Elisabeth van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 77.

they were written long after the Norman arrival, and the purpose of this chapter is to examine the initial Byzantine response to the Normans.

It is not entirely clear when and why Normans showed up in southern Italy. It seems that by the beginning of the eleventh century, some were visiting the area as pilgrims, primarily to go to the shrine of the Archangel Michael at Monte Gargano.<sup>95</sup> Shortly thereafter, small groups of adventurers and nobles began settling in the region, and it is estimated that at least two-thirds of them were Normans.<sup>96</sup> During the 1020s and 1030s, these Normans served local Lombard princes as mercenaries, and thereby managed to receive lands from which they created their own fiefdoms. The late-eleventh-century epic poet, William of Apulia, claimed that the Norman mercenaries deliberately prolonged warfare in order to keep contracts and acquire more land from their employers.<sup>97</sup> Eventually, Norman warriors expanded their clientele and found employment with Lombard Dukes, Byzantine governors, and Muslim Emirs. Half way through the eleventh century the Normans began to work for themselves and created lordships at the expense of their former employers. By 1071, the Normans had captured Bari, the last Byzantine city in southern Italy. By 1091, they captured the last Muslim town in Sicily.

The Byzantine Romans' initial response to the Normans is not easy to follow because of significant problems with the sources for both southern Italy and Byzantium

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<sup>95</sup> Loud, 64-65. Loud suggests that a connection may have existed between the monastery of Mont St-Michel in Normandy and the Shrine of Michael on Monte Gargano.

<sup>96</sup> For the ethnic backgrounds of these adventurers, see Houben, Hubert. *Roger II of Sicily. A Ruler between East and West*. Translated by Graham A. Loud and Diane Milburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11; Loud, 83. The remaining third of the adventurers came from Normandy's neighbouring regions of Brittany and Maine.

<sup>97</sup> William of Apulia, *The Deeds of Robert Guiscard*, trans. G.A. Loud (University of Leeds, 2006), 6-7. July, 2010.  
<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/history/weblearning/MedievalHistoryTextCentre/medievaltexts.html>.

in the early 1000's. All the Byzantine histories and chronicles that cover the eleventh century in detail were written near the end of the century or in the early 1100s.<sup>98</sup> For southern Italy, the situation is similar. There are two histories and one epic poem that describe the Norman conquest of the region, but they too were written at the end of the eleventh century. In addition, the Italian sources were revisionist given that Norman lords lavished their patronage on the authors.<sup>99</sup> Thus, although the Byzantine and Italian narratives provide a wealth of information regarding eleventh-century events, because they were written in hindsight, they cannot be relied upon for determining how the Byzantine Romans perceived the Normans during the first years of contact in southern Italy (1017-1040).

In order to detect the early Byzantine Roman responses to the Normans, we have to rely on two other sets of documents: a collection of local chronicles from Southern Italy and a Byzantine government document. The local chronicles are from the Byzantine provincial capital of Bari, and are referred to as the *Bari Annals*, the *Annals of Lupus Protospatharius*, and the *Bari Anonymous*. The most informative source is Lupus' chronicle, which was compiled between 1102 and 1181, and appears to make extensive

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<sup>98</sup> For the dating of Psellos' *Chronographia*, see Anthony Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' "Chronographia"* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 11. Kaldellis argues that the text was composed in two sections, the first by 1063, and the second during the early 1070's. For dating the composition of Skylitzes' *Historia Synopsis*, see Catherine Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 89. Holmes argues that Skylitzes wrote the text in two different periods, one early in the reign of Alexios Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), and the other section sometime closer to 1118. For the dating of Michael Attaleiates' *Historia*, see Dimitri Krallis, "Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos," in *Reading Michael Psellos*, (eds.) Barber and Jenkins (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006) 190. Krallis argues that the text's composition is complex, but that it was written over the course of the 1070s and completed by 1080.

<sup>99</sup> For the dating of Amatus of Montecassino's *History of the Normans*, see Graham Loud's introduction to Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, 1. Loud argues that the text was written a year on either side of 1080. For the dating of William of Apulia's *The Deeds of Robert Guiscard*, see Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 5. Loud argues that the poem was composed between 1095 and 1099. For the dating of Malaterra's text, see Wolf's introduction to *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his Brother Duke Robert Guiscard*, 10. Wolf places the text's composition in the year 1098, or possibly early 1099 before the Crusaders took Jerusalem.

use of annal entries, paschal tables, and a lost Greek source from the eleventh century (probably earlier in the century). The *Bari Anonymous* is more mysterious, but does cover the early eleventh century. The *Bari Annals* hardly mention the Norman arrival, and provides the wrong date. These chronicles are laconic and also partially retrospective in their composition. Despite these limitations, they are the closest we can get to a “contemporary” account of the Norman arrival.<sup>100</sup>

The second source is a tenth-century document that describes in depth how the Byzantine Roman Imperial administration perceived and interacted with the world around its borders. This document is known to posterity as the *De Administrando Imperio* (referred to throughout the rest of this thesis as the *D.A.I.*), and was compiled by the tenth-century emperor Constantine VII’s (r. 913-959) bureaucrats who were tasked with putting together an encyclopaedia on how to run the empire’s diplomacy. The result is a miscellaneous catalogue of imperial intelligence reports, lost histories, and descriptions of the various tribes and kingdoms that surrounded Byzantium.<sup>101</sup> The problem with the source is that it was written in the tenth century, and thus does not talk about the Normans at all. However, it still provides the best available “snapshot” of how the Byzantine Roman administration saw the world during the period under discussion.

Sections in the *D.A.I.* that focus on the empire’s western borders consistently claim that the lands to the empire’s west were inhabited by “Franks.” The “Franks” were a group of tribes that took over Gaul during the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the

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<sup>100</sup> W. J. Churchill, “The Annales Baresnes and the Annales Lupi Protospatharii-Critical Edition and Commentary.” (PhD Diss., Centre of Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 1979). For the dating of Lupus’ chronicle see page 101. For that chronicle’s sources, see pages 93, 95. See also *Composite Chronicles from Bari, ca. 1000-1117*, trans. Tehmina Goskar and Patricia Skinner, in *Medieval Italy. Texts in Translation*, ed. Katherine L. Jansen, Joanna Drell, and Frances Andrews (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 490.

<sup>101</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, translated by R.J.H. Jenkins (Greek Text Edited by Gy. Moravcsik) (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967).

fifth century. Thus they were mentioned in the histories of late antique historians such as Prokopios, but not in the earlier Roman histories of Polybius, Appian or Cassius Dio (in which period the west was inhabited by peoples labelled as “Gauls,” “Germans,” “Celts,” and eventually “Romans”). By the late eighth century, practically all Byzantine Roman references to contemporary western Europeans were to “Franks.”<sup>102</sup> One group were the peoples to the North of the Alps in the Carolingian and Ottonian Empire which the *D.A.I.* repeatedly labels as “Franks.”<sup>103</sup> A paradoxical group are the Venetians, who are also labelled as “Franks.”<sup>104</sup> Despite calling them Franks, the *D.A.I.* considers them to be servants of the Byzantine Roman Empire because they allegedly resisted the ninth-century emperor Charlemagne’s “Franks” and maintained loyalty to the Byzantine Roman emperor.<sup>105</sup> Clearly then, the Byzantine Romans did not perceive the “Franks” as a politically unified or monolithic group. Rather, they viewed the west as a collection of Frankish “tribes.”<sup>106</sup> Overall the Byzantine Romans regarded these “tribes” in a positive light. Indeed there were several Byzantine Roman prophecies in the tenth century in which it was believed that the “blonde” peoples of the west would aid Byzantium in a war against Islam.<sup>107</sup> The *D.A.I.* even makes the argument that the Franks are a special group of barbarians vis-à-vis Byzantium. Essentially, Constantine VII (or his writers)

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<sup>102</sup> Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century,” 84. Kazhdan observes that the late eighth-century historians Nikephoros and Theophanes used the words “Gauls,” and “Celts,” in order to describe ancient inhabitants of Western Europe but not medieval ones.

<sup>103</sup> *De Administrando Imperio*, 109.

<sup>104</sup> *De Administrando Imperio*, 119, 121.

<sup>105</sup> See Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 11-18 for an explanation of how Venice was situated “between” the Frankish and Byzantine worlds in the Low Middle Ages. This specific incident refers to Charlemagne’s Franks under his son Pepin.

<sup>106</sup> Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century,” 99.

<sup>107</sup> Shepard, “Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy Towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,” 92.

argued that no foreigners, except the Franks, could marry Romans. The reason for the exception was two-fold. First, the text claimed that Constantine the Great “drew origin” from Frankish lands. Second, the *D.A.I.* labelled the Franks as a “noble” people.<sup>108</sup> These are significant statements that emphasize that the Franks were not typical barbarians. Barbarians they were, but somehow noble and sharing an ancestor with Constantine, a highly regarded Byzantine Roman emperor.

The Byzantine Roman sources made practically no mention of the Norman arrival in Italy. The first primary source references we have to the Normans on the peninsula are in 1017 and 1019 in the *Chronicle of Lupus Protospatharius*. In the entry for 1017, Lupus mentions the Byzantine Roman army defeating some Normans (“Normannos”) led by a local Lombard potentate and rebel named Melos.<sup>109</sup> Yet in the entry for 1019, Lupus writes about the aftermath of another battle between Melos and the Byzantine forces in which Melos had to flee northward with his “Franks.”<sup>110</sup> It is reasonable to suggest that Lupus’ use of the word “Normans” in the entry for 1017 was a by-product of his twelfth-century editing, and that in Lupus’s sources these Normans were referred to as “Franks.” Indeed, the shorter entries in both the *Bari Annals* and the *Bari Anonymous* mention Melos and his “Franks” being defeated at Canne.<sup>111</sup> What is probable is that Byzantine Roman elites (aside from some provincial magnates in Italy) did not take notice of the Norman arrival. The fact that this rebellion failed makes it more

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<sup>108</sup> *De Administrando Imperio*, 71, 73.

<sup>109</sup> *Annales Lupi Protospatarii*, In *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 155, p. 132. “Et vicit Melem et Normannos.”

<sup>110</sup> *Annales Lupi Protospatarii*, p. 132. “Et Mel fugit cum aliquantis Francis ad Enerichum imperatorum.”

<sup>111</sup> *Composite Chronicles from Bari, ca. 1000-1117*, 492. The *Bari Annals*’ entry is for 1021, but is mistaken.

likely that the Byzantine Roman elite (aside from some provincial magnates in Italy) did not take notice of it.<sup>112</sup>

The next stage in the Byzantine engagement with the Normans may be followed in the Sicilian campaign of 1038-1040; intermittently led by the generalissimo Georgios Maniakes. Constantinopolitan courtiers took notice of the campaign to retake Sicily from the Muslims. Michael Psellos, writing twenty years later, claimed it was important to retake this “noble” province for the Romans.<sup>113</sup> Maniakes commanded a large army of Byzantine Romans, Varangian guardsmen, and other mercenaries, including a large band of Normans.<sup>114</sup> It is important to note that the eleventh-century Byzantine Romans did not really recruit and pay mercenaries for their campaigns. Instead they received “auxiliaries” from border lords and allied kingdoms that were in the area of military operations.<sup>115</sup> The local allied lord, Prince Guimar of Salerno, had a band of Norman mercenaries in his employ in order to fight in the internecine wars with his rival, the Lombard prince of Capua. Allegedly, Guimar was anxious to get rid of his Norman mercenaries because he was beginning to fear them. Thus, when he found out that the Byzantine Romans were requesting auxiliaries for an upcoming campaign, he was only too happy to pass the Normans onto them.<sup>116</sup> The Normans were apparently unaware of this arrangement between border lords and the Byzantine imperial administration.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Loud, 67.

<sup>113</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*,. 193 (VI-78).

<sup>114</sup> Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 587.

<sup>115</sup> Shepard, “The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 280-281.

<sup>116</sup> Malaterra, 55 (1.7).

<sup>117</sup> Shepard, “The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium,” 284.

In 1040, the Byzantine army won a major victory over the Muslims outside the city of Troina.<sup>118</sup> The Normans played a major part in this battle and accordingly demanded a large share of the spoils. The Normans sent their interpreter, a Lombard named Arduin, to complain to a Byzantine Roman official about the distribution of the loot. The sources differ regarding the identity of this official. Geoffrey Malaterra claims it was Georgios Maniakes, whereas William of Apulia, Ioannes Skylitzes, and Michael Attaleiates claim it was the Byzantine Roman Katepan (and replacement for Maniakes) Michael Dokeianos.<sup>119</sup> What the sources all agree on is that the Byzantine Roman official ordered Arduin to be beaten and flogged for what he saw as unreasonable demands. The sources agree that this beating was the catalyst for the Norman rebellion. Following this incident, Arduin and the Normans abandoned the army in Sicily and returned to the Italian mainland.

In the subsequent year, the aforementioned Norman contingent from Sicily carved out its own independent lordship in Melfi. Afterwards, many Normans left France and joined this settlement. This increasingly numerous Norman army ultimately captured all of Byzantine Calabria and Apulia, except for Brindisi, Hydrous, Taranto, and Bari, which were located on the coast, and thereby effectively defended and in close communication with Constantinople.<sup>120</sup> By 1071, these cities had fallen too.

The earliest of the eleventh-century Byzantine Roman histories, the *Chronographia* of Michael Psellos, written between 1059 and 1063,<sup>121</sup> makes no mention

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<sup>118</sup> Loud, 78.

<sup>119</sup> Malaterra, 56-57 (1.8); William of Apulia, 8; Skylitzes, 227; Amatus of Montecassino, 68 (2.14), simply does not name the general. Attaleiates does not go into detail about the event itself, but does blame Dokeianos for alienating the Normans.

<sup>120</sup> Skylitzes, 228.

<sup>121</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' "Chronographia"* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 11.

of the Norman rebellion, and only provides one brief reference to Normans at all in which they are now described as “Italians.”<sup>122</sup> An analysis of this reference indicates that Psellos still considered the Normans to be “barbarians,” and rather alien to Byzantium. This portrait of the Normans is part of Psellos’ account of his participation in a diplomatic mission to the rebel Byzantine general Isaakios Komnenos in 1057. The *Chronographia* tells the reader that to approach Isaakios Komnenos one first had to pass two sets of foreign mercenaries; namely the Scandinavians of the famous Varangian guard and another group described as “Italians (Ἰταλοί).”<sup>123</sup> This last group was almost certainly a band of Normans as they allegedly carried lances (the Normans were famous for their effectiveness with this weapon) and came from Italy.<sup>124</sup> Psellos describes these mercenaries as “barbarians,” and then proceeds to discuss their characteristics in combat. He claimed that they “were impetuous and led by impulse,” and were “irresistible” at first but then “they quickly lost their ardour.”<sup>125</sup> Thus, Psellos’ entry from 1063 portrays the Normans very much as barbarians. However, when Michael Psellos wrote this entry in the *Chronographia*, western Europeans, such as the Normans, were only beginning to make a mark *within* Byzantium proper. Despite the fact that the handful of Normans that surrounded Isaakios Komnenos was an interesting and physically intimidating sight for Psellos, he probably did not perceive this group of men as capable of being politically active within the empire.

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<sup>122</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 289 (VII-24.23).

<sup>123</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 289 (VII-24.23).

<sup>124</sup> See Shepard, “The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-century Byzantium,” 292-293. Shepard does an excellent job in this article of identifying these mercenaries specifically as Normans who had come to Byzantium by way of southern Italy.

<sup>125</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 289 (VII-24.23).

Within a few years of the *Chronographia*'s composition, Michael Psellos' contemporary, the courtier Katakalon Kekaumenos recorded Halley's Comet of 1066 as foreshadowing an attack by "Robert the Frank (Robert Guiscard who was the dominant Norman in Italy by that time)."<sup>126</sup> Thus by the mid 1060s the Constantinopolitan elite were taking notice of the Normans in Italy, but were mostly still calling them "Franks."

Early eleventh-century Byzantine administrators and historians did not have a conception of the Normans as a distinct group. However, in the 1060s as the Normans evolved into an important and obviously distinct group of westerners, it was important to start defining them. At that point eleventh-century historians did just that, by looking in Roman histories in an effort to create a place for these newcomers to the Mediterranean. I will examine this development in chapters 4 and 5. First, however, we must examine the Norman individuals who made the greatest impact on the Byzantine imagination because their careers led to Byzantine Roman courtiers re-evaluating their conception of the Normans. These Norman individuals were to be found, not in the borderlands of Southern Italy, but in the core of Byzantium itself. These were the Norman mercenary leaders.

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<sup>126</sup> Shepard, "Aspects of Byzantine Attitudes and Policy Towards the West in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries." 96.

## Chapter 3: The Norman Mercenary Leaders

This chapter argues that Norman mercenaries became increasingly important in Byzantium's internal politics between the 1050s and 1070s. Their significance in the empire's internal politics made it impossible for Byzantine courtiers to ignore them by the mid-1070s, ultimately acting as an impetus for Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates to address the role of the Normans in Byzantium. I focus here on the careers of three Norman mercenary leaders, Hervé Frankopoulos, Robert Crispin, and Roussel of Bailleul, in sequence.<sup>127</sup> They were active in Byzantium between 1049 and 1080. By comparing these three figures and their successive advance within Byzantine Roman politics, I show that each Norman mercenary leader acquired more power than his predecessor, and as a result they collectively claimed the Byzantine Roman courtiers' attention. I also briefly discuss here the many other Normans living in Byzantium by 1071 and that, although these figures did not openly figure in Byzantine Roman sources, we can infer that they were becoming a presence in Byzantine Roman elite culture.

Although Normans were few in number at first, they made an impression on Byzantine Roman observers. By the late 1040s (the exact date cannot be known) the Byzantine Roman imperial administration began to employ Norman mercenaries in the Balkans and eastern Anatolia. The latter region was increasingly assaulted by Seljuk war bands and as a consequence the Byzantine administration employed many Norman mercenaries in the area.<sup>128</sup> These mercenaries became known to Byzantine Romans for

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<sup>127</sup> I refer to these figures as "mercenary leaders" because that is what they were. Byzantine sources often call them ἄρχοντα, which literally means "leader."

<sup>128</sup> Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*. See pages 592 to 601 for a chronology of the increasingly large Turkish raids between 1044 and 1071. For a good narrative of the original Seljuk Turk invasion of Anatolia, see Steven Runciman, *The First Crusade*, 26-27. It should also be noted that the first Turkish raid occurred in 1029.

their resourcefulness and military usefulness.<sup>129</sup> One notable story concerned a Norman who singlehandedly destroyed a Turkish siege engine outside the city of Manzikert in the 1050s. The story definitely circulated widely given that it appeared in both Michael Attaleiates's *History* and the Armenian chronicle of Matthew of Edessa. The story goes that the Turks were besieging the city of Manzikert, slowly but surely wearing down the city's walls with a large catapult. A lone Norman volunteered to destroy the machine. He rode alone to the Turkish camp, and thus the Turks did not attack him because they thought he was a messenger. Left to his own devices, the Norman took the opportunity to stop beside the catapult as though he were admiring it. Then he pulled out three bottles of Greek fire and threw them onto the siege engine, burning it down.<sup>130</sup> The story illustrates how the Normans were making a reputation within Byzantium for being both brave and cunning. This opinion was uncannily similar to those recorded at about the same time in Italy and France discussed earlier.

Looking at the career of the first noted Norman mercenary leader, Hervé Frankopoulos, we can see that early on the Normans were relatively isolated from the Byzantine elite, despite their usefulness to the empire. Of the three mercenary leaders studied here, we know the least about Hervé. Unlike his successors Robert Crispin and Roussel of Bailleul, Hervé is not mentioned in any Norman or Italian sources, despite the fact that he did apparently serve in Maniakes' Sicilian campaign.<sup>131</sup> The limited attention he receives in the Byzantine Roman sources consists of a couple of passages in Skylitzes'

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<sup>129</sup> Shepard. "The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 276.

<sup>130</sup> For this story, see Michael Attaleiates, *Historia* 46.3-47.4; Matthew of Edessa, *The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. Ara Edmond Dostourian (New York: University Press of America, 1993), 88.

<sup>131</sup> Skylitzes, 256.

*Synopsis Historion* and a possible reference in Attaleiates' *History*.<sup>132</sup> Attaleiates mentions an unnamed "Latin (Λατίνov) man who was extremely brave, mighty, and second to none in understanding what had to be done," defeating Pecheneg raiders that harassed Byzantine towns in the Balkans during the late 1040s and 1050s.<sup>133</sup> It is believed that this figure was Hervé.<sup>134</sup> Skylitzes is the first to explicitly mention Hervé, claiming that by 1049, he was fighting in the Balkans alongside an important Byzantine Roman general and aristocrat, Katakalon Kekaumenos.<sup>135</sup> Psellos' *Chronographia*, written a couple of years after Hervé reached the acme of his power, does not even mention the Norman. Hervé's limited presence in the Byzantine sources, combined with the western sources' silence, suggests that he probably came from relatively humble origins but managed to achieve status within Byzantium as a soldier for the empire.<sup>136</sup> He therefore deserves attention because he was the first of the Norman mercenary leaders to appear in the sources as a modestly powerful figure in Byzantium.

It seems that Hervé did a good job as an officer in the Balkans, but we do not know what happened to him for most of the 1050s. We do know, however, that by 1057 he was living on the empire's eastern frontier in present day Armenia. He headed west to meet with the emperor in Constantinople, where he asked for a promotion to the rank of *magistros* and a corresponding increase in salary. The emperor, Michael VI (r. 1056-1057), refused the request in an insulting fashion. Skylitzes portrays Hervé's reaction: "Hervé, true barbarian, was beside himself with rage, totally unable to swallow his

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<sup>132</sup> Skylitzes, 256; Attaleiates sec. 35.12.

<sup>133</sup> Attaleiates sec. 35.

<sup>134</sup> J. Shepard, "The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-Century Byzantium," 291.

<sup>135</sup> Skylitzes, 248-249.

<sup>136</sup> Elisabeth van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*. On page 228, van Houts notes that nothing is known of Hervé's past before he arrived in Byzantium.

pride.”<sup>137</sup> As a result of this rejection, Hervé returned to his estate on Byzantium’s eastern frontier zone and persuaded 300 Norman cavalry who were posted nearby to join him in a rebellion.<sup>138</sup> Hervé led these 300 men to Chliat, a town on Byzantium’s eastern border, where they banded with several Seljuk nomads in launching raids on the surrounding area. The raiding did not last long; a Turkish warlord betrayed Hervé and killed many Normans in their sleep. Having captured Hervé, the Turkish warlord sent him in chains to the Byzantine Roman emperor as a way of gaining favour.

The Byzantine administration’s reaction to Hervé’s rebellion indicates that the Norman’s actions were not deemed particularly threatening. The events that followed, in fact, indicated that Hervé’s military value was recognized and rewarded accordingly. Instead of being punished for his rebellion against the previous emperor Michael VI (r. 1056-1057),<sup>139</sup> Hervé received the court titles of *magistros* and *vestes*, and the position of “*stratelates of the Orient*,” which put him in charge of both Norman and Byzantine Roman soldiers in a section of the eastern frontier.<sup>140</sup> The promotion illustrates Hervé’s military importance on the eastern frontier, but it is not mentioned in any history or chronicle from the period. It is only attested on a surviving personal lead seal (which will receive further attention below). Hervé’s death is also not mentioned in any Byzantine Roman sources.<sup>141</sup> Overall, our data suggests that Hervé had a significant role to play on

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<sup>137</sup> Skylitzes, 257.

<sup>138</sup> For Hervé’s rebellion, see Skylitzes 256-257. For the Normans who joined him, we do not know if they were “his” men or simply other Normans.

<sup>139</sup> It is probable that Hervé returned after the coup of Isaakios Komnenos (r. 1057-1059) and as a result was not regarded as treasonous.

<sup>140</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century,” 92.

<sup>141</sup> The only mention is in the Armenian chronicle by Matthew of Edessa which claims that Hervé was drowned on the Emperor’s (the chronicle does not say which one) orders. See Matthew of Edessa. 101.

the empire's frontier, and yet he did not draw the attention of many in the Byzantine courtly and administrative system.

Both Skylitzes' account and the lead seal provide several pieces of information indicating that Hervé was not well integrated with the Byzantine Roman Elite. According to Skylitzes, Hervé's defection occurred at the same time as a major military revolt led by several high-ranking Byzantine Roman generals who ultimately put one of their own, Isaakios Komnenos (r.1057-1059), on the imperial throne.<sup>142</sup> The fact that Hervé was not a participant in this rebellion, despite living close to one of the rebellion's ringleaders, Kekaumenos, leads us to infer that he was not treated as part of the Byzantine Roman military elite.<sup>143</sup> Skylitzes writes about Hervé's lack of knowledge of the generals' intention to revolt: he was "unaware of the conspiracy that the Romans were hatching."<sup>144</sup> Indeed the *Synopsis Historion* portrays both Hervé and the Byzantine Roman generals as victims of Michael VI's insolence and dismissiveness. But whereas Skylitzes portrays Hervé's reaction to the emperor's insulting reply as hasty, he portrays Byzantine Roman generals' reaction as calm and collected. So while the emperor's dismissive attitude led the Romans to make a conspiracy to seize the throne, Hervé's response was to be full of "rage."<sup>145</sup> For Skylitzes, Hervé's decision stemmed from his barbaric background and character which is juxtaposed with the Romans' rationality. Skylitzes then clearly considered Hervé to be an outsider and not a Byzantine Roman.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> For this rebellion see Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 289 (VII-24.23).

<sup>143</sup> Shepard, "The Uses of the Frank in Eleventh-century Byzantium," 298.

<sup>144</sup> Skylitzes, 256.

<sup>145</sup> Skylitzes, 256.

<sup>146</sup> There is a possibility that Michael VI was favouring a particular Norman at court named Randolph the Frank, of whom we know little. He appears in Skylitzes (page 262), who mentions him as a figure that duelled with Nikephoros Botaneiates, who ultimately became Emperor in 1078. Apparently, Randolph led soldiers for Michael VI against a rebel army, hinting that Michael VI had good reason to trust him.

Hervé's lead seal also suggests that he was not well assimilated into the Byzantine Roman elite. Lead seals are an important type of evidence for Byzantine prosopographical and social history because they enable historians to find out about many imperial officials who would otherwise be unknown to us.<sup>147</sup> This is because lead seals were used for stamping Byzantium's official documents and often bore the official's name, position, and image on them. Hervé's seal reveals much about his status: on one side it reads "Hervérios Frankopoulos, *magistros vestes stratelates* of Orient."<sup>148</sup> The titles of *magistros* and *vestes*, despite having once been significant in Byzantium, had become less important by the eleventh century.<sup>149</sup> The other side of the seal has an image of St. Peter, which was an uncommon Saint to portray in Byzantium, and reflects Hervé's commitment to a more western European Latinate expression of Christianity.<sup>150</sup> Thus we can see that Hervé, despite making a mark on the Byzantine Roman written record, did not fully adopt Byzantine Roman culture, which typically embraced a more Greek Orthodox visual marker of Christianity.

The next Norman mercenary leader I will examine is Robert Crispin. More is known about him than his predecessor Hervé, and I argue that the Byzantine Roman elite took more notice of him on account of his close connection with both the Doukai

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<sup>147</sup> Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*, 16.

<sup>148</sup> "Herve Phrangopoulos" In the Byzantine prosopography project. [Http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk).

<sup>149</sup> These titles had been very important at one time. See Alexander Kazhdan "Magistros" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 25 February 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e3247>; Alexander Kazhdan "Vestes" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 25 February 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e5710>

<sup>150</sup> Shepard. "Uses of the Frank." 300. Shepard notes that icons of Saint Peter were not common in Byzantium.

(Byzantium's ruling family at the time) and the army. This influence was hard to ignore, indeed, for the first time in Byzantium, a Norman was playing an important role in the empire's *internal* politics.

Robert Crispin's background deserves some attention here because it explains his martial background and why he came to Byzantium. He was born in Normandy, and was the third son of a powerful castellan named Gilbert Crispin.<sup>151</sup> The family was an important one in Normandy, its members recognized widely for their connection to the Duke of Normandy and their bristly "pine hair" (*Crispus pinus* in Latin).<sup>152</sup> Indeed, Robert's father was close to the Norman Ducal family and his nephew became the abbot of Westminster Abbey after the Norman conquest of England.<sup>153</sup> However, whereas Robert's two older brothers each received a castle in Normandy, he had to find his fortune elsewhere.<sup>154</sup> After leading Christian warriors against the Muslims in Spain, and following a brief stay in Norman Italy, Crispin journeyed to Byzantium, where he was by 1069 at the latest.<sup>155</sup> Attaleiates provides the first Byzantine Roman reference to Crispin's arrival in the empire:

A certain Latin man from Italy had approached the emperor. His name was Krispinos and he was sent to the East to pass the winter along with his countrymen who had sailed and arrived along with him.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, 60-61.

<sup>152</sup> Milo Crispin, *On the Origin of the Crispin Family*, in *The Normans in Europe*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) 84-85. The "pine hair" allegedly looked like pine needles.

<sup>153</sup> van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, 88, 297.

<sup>154</sup> van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, 297.

<sup>155</sup> For Crispin's career in Spain, see Amatus of Montecassino, 46-47 (Book 1, chapters 5-6). For his stay and Italy, including at the monastery of Montecassino, see Amatus of Montecassino, Book 1, chapter 8 (page 47); van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, 270.

<sup>156</sup> Attaleiates, *History* 122.10.

The passage is important because it demonstrates that Crispin was a soldier of some means when he arrived in Byzantium, most likely commanding a following of Normans who had accompanied him from Italy and were personally attached to him.

Like Hervé before him, Crispin's relationship with the imperial administration was initially of a military nature. The Norman led fellow Norman soldiers on Byzantium's eastern border. Soon, however, just like Hervé, Crispin felt that he had not received enough money and recognition from the imperial administration. He too rebelled, robbing tax collectors in Byzantium's Eastern provinces.<sup>157</sup> The rebellion, however, did not last long because Crispin decided to ask the emperor Romanos IV (r.1068-1071) for forgiveness. According to the continuator of Skylitzes, the emperor forgave Crispin because he "respected him for his courage and bravery in battle, having fought against many Turks during his rebellion and having accomplished many great deeds."<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless, according to Michael Attaleiates, the reconciliation was short-lived because a German mercenary accused Crispin of planning more treachery.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, Crispin was banished to the city of Abydos, on the north-western coast of modern-day Turkey and not far from the capital, where imperial officials could keep an eye on him.<sup>160</sup>

Court factionalism enabled Crispin to leave Abydos rather quickly, demonstrating that he had gained the attention of various members of the elite in the capital. The aristocratic family known as the Doukai, which was led by the *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas and his relatives, were embroiled in a struggle with the emperor (and Crispin's old

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<sup>157</sup> Treadgold, *History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 602-604.

<sup>158</sup> Skylitzes Continuator 134.20-22.

<sup>159</sup> Attaleiates 125.4-5.

<sup>160</sup> Attaleiates 170.7-8.

employer) Romanos IV, and they sought Crispin's assistance. Essentially, Ioannes Doukas' son Andronikos had successfully undermined the emperor Romanos at the battle of Manzikert, and as a result, the Byzantine Roman army suffered a major defeat at the hands of the expansionist Seljuk Turks, with the emperor Romanos IV being captured.<sup>161</sup> In his absence, the Doukai placed one of their own, Ioannes's nephew the crown prince Michael (Michael VII Doukas r. 1071-1078), on the throne. After the Turks released Romanos and provided him with soldiers, the Doukai and their supporters fought a civil war for the next few months against the former emperor and his allies in Asia Minor. It is in this context that Crispin was recalled from Abydos by Michael VII.<sup>162</sup>

Crispin's involvement with the powerful Doukai in 1070s Byzantine politics demonstrates that he was much more than a frontier warlord. Over the next few months, Crispin assisted the Doukai in establishing control over Asia Minor. At a battle in southeastern Anatolia, Crispin worked closely with Andronikos Doukas to defeat the forces of the deposed emperor, allegedly leading his Norman cavalry on a charge that broke through Romanos' formation, securing a victory for the Doukai.<sup>163</sup> Romanos was forced to hide in a nearby castle from which he attempted to convince Crispin to switch sides. Crispin would not do so, and shortly afterwards Romanos surrendered.<sup>164</sup> Upon receiving the former emperor, the Doukai broke their promise to leave him unharmed and blinded him so brutally that Romanos died of his wounds.

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<sup>161</sup> Demetrios I. Polemis, *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London: the Athlone Press, 1968), 55-56. Andronikos undermined Romanos by leading the Varangian guard and noble retainer cavalry away from the field at the moment it was needed.

<sup>162</sup> Attaleiates 171.1-3.

<sup>163</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 364 (VII-30).

<sup>164</sup> Polemis, 55-56.

The last reference we have to Crispin concerns his death and underscores the degree to which Crispin was close to the Byzantine Roman elite. Psellos wrote in the margins of the *Chronographia*, in the section where he discussed Crispin's role in the capture of Romanos IV, "I am writing these words on the very day he died."<sup>165</sup> Given the short period between Crispin's death and Psellos' recording of it, we can infer that Crispin was in the capital at this time, and by extension, close to the palace complex. Such proximity is important because the palace was the center of Byzantine Roman elite culture and society, and access to it was an important marker of status.<sup>166</sup> Such a physical location reflects a deeper social one: Crispin's older residence had been the castle of Maurokastron ("Black Castle") in the Armenian provinces, not far from Hervé's old estate at Dagarabe.<sup>167</sup> Thus it seems probable that Crispin ended his life in good standing with the Doukai, enjoying access to the imperial family in the capital, and possessing a Constantinopolitan abode rather than living on the frontier.

Crispin was evidently popular with several key members of the Doukas family. He reportedly got along well with Andronikos, as Michael Psellos, the eleventh-century historian, courtier, and supporter of Ioannes Doukas, claimed in his depiction of a battle in Asia Minor: "Crispin the Frank was standing with Andronikos and they were encouraging one another."<sup>168</sup> Thus it seems that Crispin spoke Greek too. He also was apparently popular with the soldiers, both Norman and Byzantine Roman. Attaleiates claimed that Crispin's arrival before the battle with Romanos' forces "greatly raised the

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<sup>165</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 364 (VII-30).

<sup>166</sup> Alexander P. Kazhdan and Michael McCormick, *The Social World of the Byzantine Court*, in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 185-186.

<sup>167</sup> Attaleiates 125.6.

<sup>168</sup> Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 363-364 (VII-30).

morale of the soldiers.”<sup>169</sup> This popularity with the army probably stemmed from his successes against the Turks in previous years, a factor that understandably would have enhanced his popularity among the Byzantine Roman soldiers who frequently found themselves unable to stop the Turkish incursions that devastated parts of Asia Minor in the 1060’s. Indeed, Attaleiates claimed that Crispin was “exceptionally brave in hand-to-hand combat and seemed to be the strongest man alive.”<sup>170</sup> Rhetorical flourishes aside, it certainly appears that Crispin was a widely valued man within the army, and this popularity would have made him useful to the Doukai in particular and the Byzantine Roman elite in general.

Perhaps the greatest indicator of Crispin’s effect on the Byzantine Roman elite is his portrayal by Byzantine Roman historians. Indeed, they composed both texts of praise and apology about him. Michael Psellos, a supporter of the Doukai, highlighted Crispin’s loyalty to the Byzantine Romans, writing: “This Crispinus had at first appeared as an enemy to the Romans, but later he changed his attitude, and his new loyalty was no less evident than his former hostility.”<sup>171</sup> The fact that Psellos does not label Crispin a “barbarian” further serves to underscore his praise of the man. Attaleiates acts as an apologist for Crispin’s actions, albeit rather subtly. While he vehemently denounced the horrific blinding of Romanos IV, labelling it an “unholy decision” that was disastrous for the empire and carried out by an incompetent and ungrateful Michael VII, Attaleiates never mentions Crispin’s role in the final battle that led to Romanos’ surrender and blinding. Basically, Attaleiates had reasons not to connect Crispin with this unpopular

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<sup>169</sup> Attaleiates 171.1-3. Shepard: “Uses of the Frank,” 298.

<sup>170</sup> Attaleiates 171.3.

<sup>171</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 364 (VII-30).

and catastrophic event (although it is possible that his intense dislike of Michael VII caused him to concentrate as much blame as possible on him).

In summation of Crispin's career in Byzantium, it is clear that he drew the Byzantine Roman elite's attention and acquired their patronage. Like Hervé, he was militarily capable, although probably more popular within the army. Unlike Hervé, he achieved considerable success by aligning himself with the Doukai, ultimately dying near the palace and receiving praise from their courtier, Michael Psellos. Crispin certainly had become a powerful force in Byzantium during the turbulent years of the early 1070s. Yet his successor, Roussel of Bailleu, achieved even greater prominence in Byzantine politics, and it is to him that this analysis now turns.

According to Geoffrey Malaterra's late eleventh-century history, Roussel of Bailleu was in Sicily in 1063, helping the Norman count Roger I (Robert Guiscard's brother) defeat a Muslim army outside the city of Cerami. Malaterra's brief portrait of Roussel is of an exceptionally brave knight who criticizes Roger I for hesitating to fight the Muslims who vastly outnumbered them.<sup>172</sup> Later Byzantine Roman writers claimed that Roussel came from Crispin's band of Normans.<sup>173</sup> It is entirely possible that Roussel came across the Adriatic with Crispin seeking employment, but this cannot be known for certain. Roussel is next mentioned in Byzantium a few years later leading a group of Norman and Pecheneg warriors toward Chliat on Byzantium's eastern border.<sup>174</sup> Apparently he did this at the behest of Romanos IV.<sup>175</sup> Thus we can see that Roussel had been deputed with important military responsibilities by the time of Manzikert. After

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<sup>172</sup> Malaterra, 109 (2.33).

<sup>173</sup> Bryennios 147.24.

<sup>174</sup> Attaleiates 148.8.

<sup>175</sup> Attaleiates 148.19-23.

disappearing from the record between 1071 and 1073, Roussel re-emerges in 1073 as a leader of 400 Normans.<sup>176</sup> He was ordered to follow Isaakios Komnenos, a Byzantine Roman general, into Asia Minor to fight against the marauding Seljuk Turks that were overrunning the region in the aftermath of Manzikert. Roussel did not follow Isaakios very far; he had an argument with him and then headed inland with his Norman followers “becoming the master of his own fate.”<sup>177</sup>

Thus, like Hervé and Crispin before him, Roussel led a revolt against the imperial administration. What sets his rebellion apart from those of his predecessors is its scale, Roussel had almost 4000 Norman warriors under his banner (Hervé only rode with 300 men). The magnitude of Roussel’s rebellion was described by the Byzantine general Bryennios in his early twelfth-century history: “his rebellion was the greatest of all, grew out of control, and became the cause of great evils for the empire of the Romans.”<sup>178</sup> Roussel took over the Armeniakon province (near his predecessors’ estates, an area where many Normans seem to have been stationed) and began collecting the local tax revenues for himself.<sup>179</sup> When Michael VII sent his uncle, the *kaisar* Ioannes, with an army to stop Roussel, the Norman defeated it and captured the *kaisar* Ioannes. Upon hearing that the emperor had taken his wife and children hostage in retaliation, Roussel marched on the capital, allegedly seeking the throne. At first, Michael VII tried to co-opt Roussel by offering him the prestigious title of *Kouropalates* in exchange for an oath of

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<sup>176</sup> Attaleiates 183.5

<sup>177</sup> Attaleiates 183.5.

<sup>178</sup> Bryennios, 209.3-5.

<sup>179</sup> For a concise but clear summary of Roussel’s rebellion, see Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 606-607.

loyalty.<sup>180</sup> But he failed in his attempt to pacify the Norman. Roussel pressed on with his advance on Constantinople accompanied by at least three thousand Norman warriors.<sup>181</sup> In addition, Roussel surrounded himself with some Byzantine Roman courtiers. Finding it impossible to cross the straits to Constantinople, Roussel set fire to Chrysopolis and demanded his wife and children be returned to him. They were delivered to him, but unable to capture the capital, he marched back into the interior with his army. Roussel paused to raise the *kaisar* Ioannes to the position of Emperor (an important point that will be discussed shortly), and then moved East in an attempt to raise more soldiers. While in the interior, he successfully battled more Turks, but ultimately fell into the hands of a much larger Turkish war band, was defeated, and such was the end of his attempt to acquire imperial power. However, his wife successfully ransomed him. Upon being freed, Roussel continued to control his own lordship in eastern Anatolia for at least another year, paying himself with the provinces' taxes while fighting against the Turks. After a year he was captured by the young Byzantine general and future emperor Alexios Komnenos.<sup>182</sup>

The two following chapters include significant sections that examine the ways in which Byzantine Roman courtiers reacted to Roussel's rebellion, including the utilization of Roman history in order to argue for greater Norman integration in Byzantium. But for the purposes of this chapter I will simply discuss the aspects of Roussel's career and

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<sup>180</sup> Attaleiates 187.3. For the significance of the title "Kouropalates," see Alexander Kazhdan "Kouropalates" *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan. Copyright 1991, 2005 Oxford University Press.. The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium: (e-reference edition). Oxford University Press. Simon Fraser University. 25 February 2011 <http://www.oxford-byzantium.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/entry?entry=t174.e2947>. This title was only conferred on a handful or high-ranking generals from outside the imperial family, and it remained very important until the twelfth century when it declined. Its holders were permitted to wear purple.

<sup>181</sup> Attaleiates 188.11; For the threat that 3000 soldiers could pose within Byzantium, see John Haldon, *Warfare, State and Society in the Byzantine World 565-1204* (London: UCL Press, 1999), 104.

<sup>182</sup> For this event, see Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 35 (1-ii).

rebellion that indicate the degree to which he gained the attention of the Byzantine Roman elite.

The most important indicator of Roussel's importance in the eyes of the Byzantine Roman elite was that several high-ranking Byzantine Romans actually supported him in his bid for the throne.<sup>183</sup> Indeed, by closely reading Attaleiates' *History*, we come across several figures that did so. The first was a Byzantine Roman courtier and *protovestis* named Basileios Maleses, who acted as an advisor to Roussel during the rebellion.<sup>184</sup> Maleses appears to have done this willingly, despite having originally been captured by the Norman. Another supporter was Theodore Dokeianos, who held the court title of *Kouropalates* and was related to the powerful family of the Komnenoi.<sup>185</sup> According to the history of the Byzantine Roman general (and subsequently a member of the imperial family) Nikephoros Bryennios, Theodore argued that Roussel was "a brave man who could have been of great benefit to the affairs of the Romans."<sup>186</sup> Theodore's comments reflect an awareness on the part of some Byzantine Roman courtiers that Roussel's abilities were just what the empire needed in its vulnerable state. These sentiments are discussed in depth in the next two chapters, but what should be clear for the present chapter is that courtiers took notice of Roussel's power and argued that it

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<sup>183</sup> Barbarians had attempted to become Emperors of Byzantium, but always at the head of foreign armies. The most notable example was Symeon of Bulgaria (r. 893-927). Despite his Orthodox Christianity and his blockade of Constantinople, he was not granted the title "Emperor of the Romans," willingly by the Byzantine Romans. Rather, they used various means to make his title illegitimate, nor did they allow him into Constantinople. See John Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 144-148. Another important example, was Charlemagne, whom the Byzantine Emperor Michael I recognized as an Emperor, but not as an Emperor of the Romans, on account of his being a Frank.

<sup>184</sup> Attaleiates, 187.

<sup>185</sup> "Theodore Dokeianos" In the Byzantine prosopography project. [Http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk](http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk).

<sup>186</sup> Bryennios, 195.15.

needed to be used to help the Byzantine Empire. Hence, they were sympathetic to his rebellion.

Yet perhaps the most surprising and important of Roussel's supporters was the *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas, the uncle of Michael VII and an influential figure in the empire's government. Ioannes had practical reasons to support the Norman rebel. After all, relations between Ioannes and his nephew Michael VII were probably strained before Roussel's rebellion. Thus, in 1073 Michael VII gave his uncle the "mission impossible" of capturing the renegade Norman.<sup>187</sup> With this strained relationship in mind, it does not seem so strange that Ioannes continued to accompany Roussel after they turned back from Constantinople and that he subsequently remained with him during the campaign against the Turks in which the *kaisar*, along with Roussel, were captured and held for ransom. Attaleiates claims that upon being ransomed, the *kaisar* Ioannes returned to Constantinople, removed his secular clothing, renounced the position of *kaisar*, and had his hair shorn in the style of a monk.<sup>188</sup> Only after doing all of the above, did Ioannes meet with his nephew the emperor. The *Historia* states that people in the capital were suspicious of the *kaisar* Ioannes, believing he had been cooperating with Roussel (a reasonable suspicion given that he had accompanied Roussel throughout the campaign). One of the people most sceptical of Ioannes' role in the Roussel affair was Michael VII, who had informed the senate that he "saw the Frank's onslaught as part of a home-hatched plot."<sup>189</sup> Attaleiates tellingly leaves this charge unanswered in the *Historia*.<sup>190</sup> However, it is clear that the *kaisar* Ioannes, along with several other courtiers, supported

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<sup>187</sup> Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 606. This would have been a difficult task in which Ioannes was unlikely to succeed.

<sup>188</sup> Attaleiates, 191.

<sup>189</sup> Attaleiates, 186.8.

<sup>190</sup> Attaleiates, 191.

Roussel. This support made his rebellion a serious one, and therefore it made courtiers pay attention to the Norman's actions.

It also seems that Byzantine Roman provincials in Asia Minor reacted favourably to Roussel's rebellion, another factor that the Byzantine Roman elite would probably have taken into account. The twelfth-century princess and historian, Anna Komnene, who held a very low opinion of Western Europeans in general, lets as much slip in her account of Roussel's capture by her father, Alexios Komnenos. With characteristic contempt for provincial Byzantine Romans, Anna Komnene discusses how the fickle "common folk" did not want Roussel to be captured by the imperial forces.<sup>191</sup> Here she is actually referring to Byzantine Roman citizens who found themselves a part of Roussel's rebel lordship and were appreciative of the protection he provided them against nomadic Turkish raiders. Roussel pocketed the empire's taxes from the regions that he took control of, but this act indicates that he was fairly familiar with the government's tax system in the area, and probably co-opted local Byzantine Roman bureaucrats and tax collectors.<sup>192</sup>

It is also possible that some Byzantine Roman soldiers reacted favourably to Roussel, although it is not clear if Byzantine Romans joined the Norman in his rebellion. Attaleiates writes that Roussel initially raised Ioannes to the purple in order to "gain the support of the Roman soldiers and thus massively reinforce his own army."<sup>193</sup> Shortly afterwards, while discussing Roussel's move inland in order to fight Turks. Attaleiates writes: "none among the indigenous peoples had yet to join him, as the news of the

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<sup>191</sup> Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 35 (1-ii).

<sup>192</sup> Shepard, "Uses of the Frank." 300.

<sup>193</sup> Attaleiates 189.5.

*kaisar*'s acclamation had not been widely circulated."<sup>194</sup> The implication is that Byzantine Roman soldiers eventually did join Roussel, although there is no evidence for whether or not Byzantine Roman soldiers joined him.

Roussel did not simply obtain the attention of Byzantine Roman courtiers. I argue that he actually adopted many Byzantine Roman customs, which made him more appealing to many Byzantine Roman courtiers. One indication of Roussel's adoption of Byzantine Roman customs was his use of imperial symbolism to elevate Ioannes Doukas to the position of Emperor. In the words of Attaleiates, Roussel "proclaimed him Emperor of the Romans, handing power over to him in great pomp, along with the symbols of royal authority."<sup>195</sup> Thus it seems that Roussel was actually investing Ioannes by means of a proper Byzantine Roman acclamation and ceremony. This act further indicates a level of collaboration on Ioannes's part.

Another piece of evidence demonstrating Roussel's "Romanization" is his lead seal. Whereas Hervé bore Saint Peter on his seal, Roussel's seal portrayed the Virgin Mary, an image that was extremely common in Byzantium.<sup>196</sup> It is an interesting detail, and one cannot be sure if Roussel acquired this more "Byzantine" form of Christian taste in Byzantium, or possibly even during his time in Southern Italy. According to Geoffrey Malaterra, when Roussel was at the battle of Cerami in Sicily, the Normans were led by an apparition of Saint George, a saint popular with the Byzantine military, but not particularly common in the west.<sup>197</sup> Thus we can see that compared to Hervé, Roussel

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<sup>194</sup> Attaleiates 190.1.

<sup>195</sup> Attaleiates 189.6.

<sup>196</sup> Shepard, "Uses of the Frank." 300. Shepard points out that the Virgin Mary was a common image on seals.

<sup>197</sup> Malaterra, 109-110 (sec. 2.33).

was more Romanized as far as his religion was concerned. Such Romanization would have probably made courtiers more sympathetic to Roussel as a contender for the throne.

We therefore can follow a progression in the careers and lives of the three Norman mercenary leaders. Each one gained more influence with the Byzantine Roman elite than his predecessor. Each one also seems to have been more connected with the Byzantine Roman elite society and culture than his predecessor. Thus, while Hervé was relatively isolated from much of the Roman officer class, Crispin was closely acquainted with the military aristocrats of the Doukai. Roussel, in turn, had a chance, albeit small, at acquiring the throne, and his acceptance by Byzantine Roman courtiers, provincials, and possibly soldiers, indicates a high level of influence among Byzantine Romans. Cultural clues provide further evidence for the mercenary leaders's status in Byzantium. While Hervé seemed very much a foreigner in terms of his cultural expressions, Roussel expressed several Byzantine Roman customs.

One other Norman, despite not serving in the Byzantine Roman army, achieved a remarkable level of importance in the eyes of Byzantine Roman courtiers. This figure was Robert Guiscard, a Norman warrior and the younger of several brothers, who managed to become the *de facto* leader of the Normans in Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily by the 1060s. Guiscard's career and conquest of southern Italy have been well covered elsewhere in scholarship. What interests us is his importance to many Byzantine Roman courtiers. After Guiscard captured Bari from the Byzantines in 1071, the emperor Romanos IV proposed a marriage alliance with him, in which the Norman's daughter would marry one of Romanos' sons.<sup>198</sup> The proposal was never answered because

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<sup>198</sup> Loud, *the Age of Robert Guiscard*, 211.

Romanos IV was deposed shortly thereafter, but Michael VII raised the issue again in 1071. In 1074, after three previous proposals, Guiscard accepted the Byzantine offer. His daughter would marry Michael VII's son (also named Constantine), and Guiscard received the title of *nobelissimos*--the highest title a non-imperial family member could receive in Byzantium--plus the right to confer Roman titles on some of his followers, and a yearly salary of 200 pounds of gold.<sup>199</sup> This title and salary were substantial and indicate how badly the Byzantine Roman administration wanted to co-opt Guiscard during the 1070s. It should also be noted that Guiscard was glad to receive his position and salary from Byzantium, despite the fact that Guiscard refused the first three offers. Amatus of Montecassino, the historian who portrayed Guiscard in a favourable light, wrote "the Duke wisely hid his desires so that he might obtain even greater gifts and promises."<sup>200</sup>

There are a handful of other Normans that need to be addressed briefly in this chapter because they complete the picture of the increasing presence of the Normans in Byzantium during this period. Hervé, Crispin, and Roussel all rebelled at one time or another, and Guiscard actually invaded a significant portion of Byzantine territory, hence they all received attention in the Byzantine sources. In contrast, there are many other Normans about whom we know little because they did not cause trouble in Byzantium.<sup>201</sup> Yet there were several Normans in Constantinople by the 1070s that are mentioned in Italian sources. Amatus of Montecassino relates how the Norman lords, Roger

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<sup>199</sup> For Michael VII's first and second proposals, see Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*, 156-157. Michael VII asked that Guiscard's daughter Olympia marry his brother Constantine. Guiscard refused, but was presented with another offer in 1073, in which Michael VII asked for a marriage alliance and Norman soldiers. For the final offer, which Guiscard accepted, see Loud, *the Age of Robert Guiscard*, 212.

<sup>200</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, 178 (VII-26).

<sup>201</sup> Shepard. "Uses of the Frank." 276.

Toutebove, Joscelin de la Blace, and Abelard (Robert Guiscard's nephew) all revolted against the Duke Robert Guiscard in 1067. By 1068 their rebellion had failed, and they fled to Constantinople.<sup>202</sup> Malaterra claims that Abelard and his brother Herman both lived out their days "serving the emperor" in Byzantium.<sup>203</sup> Joscelin, however, returned to Italy in 1071 to assist Byzantine Roman soldiers in the defence of Bari. According to Malaterra, he arrived "marvellously dressed" like a "Greek."<sup>204</sup> As discussed in chapter 1, dress was an important indicator of eleventh-century *Romanitas*, and in this case may demonstrate that some Normans were becoming more "Romanized" in the elite circles of Constantinople. Despite the major difference in the magnitude of their mark on the sources, both Roussel and Joscelin demonstrate that by the early 1070s many Normans were adopting Roman customs and strengthening their ties to the Byzantine Roman elite. In the span of two decades, the Normans had come a long way in Byzantium. The next two chapters will discuss how the Byzantine courtiers used Roman history in order to carve out a clearer place for those Normans in the Roman body-politic.

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<sup>202</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, 133-134 (V-4); for the rebellion's date, see Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 237-239.

<sup>203</sup> Malaterra, 137 (sec. 3.6).

<sup>204</sup> Malaterra, 122 (sec. 2.43).

## Chapter 4: Working with Roman History: Making Trajan a Celt.

As discussed in chapter one, Roman histories were important to Byzantine Roman courtiers. This chapter examines a Byzantine Roman historian who used ancient Roman history in an attempt to influence the empire's future in various ways, one of which was to subtly argue for the integration of the Normans into the Byzantine hierarchy. This historian was the enigmatic, brilliant, and devious Michael Psellos; a polymath courtier and philosopher who wrote a history of his time called the *Chronographia* in which he recounted his deeds as an advisor to several Byzantine Roman emperors.<sup>205</sup> Less popular and well-known (in both the modern era and Psellos' own time) is his *Historia Syntomos* (*Short History*), written as a Mirror of Princes for the emperor Michael VII Doukas (r.1071-1078). The latter text is a compilation of brief biographies of Roman kings, consuls, and emperors from Romulus (the alleged founder of Rome) to Basil II (r. 976-1025 C.E.).

A small detail in Psellos' portrait of the early second-century emperor Trajan in the *Historia Syntomos* is the entry point into the larger discussion of how eleventh-century Byzantine Roman courtiers suggested that the Normans could be integrated into Byzantium. In his account of Trajan, Psellos describes the emperor's career and character in glowing terms. Like his fellow second-century emperors Nerva, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, Trajan is described as a strong ruler who strove to administer the Roman state justly while also expanding its borders. However, along with stock praise, Psellos mentions something unusual, noting that: "The Emperor Trajan was a Celt

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<sup>205</sup> See Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' "Chronographia."*

and a barbarian."<sup>206</sup> This detail is strange because it was unattested in the older Roman histories he was using. Where did Psellos get the idea that Trajan was a barbarian? And why did he decide to label him a "Celt" in particular?

The term "Celt" was very unusual in eleventh-century Byzantine sources. Aside from Michael Psellos, no other eleventh-century Byzantine authors refer to anyone as a Celt. Even in Michael Psellos's *Chronographia* it has no place, while Psellos' near contemporaries and fellow historians Michael Attaleiates and Ioannes Skylitzes, who wrote later in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries respectively, did not use the word either. The only other Byzantine writer to do so was Anna Komnene, but she was writing significantly later in the mid- twelfth century, using "Celt" as an archaizing word for the Normans who had attacked Byzantium in the eleventh century.<sup>207</sup>

Such a radical rewriting of Roman history requires an explanation. Since it would be presumptuous to attribute sloppy research and careless writing to one of Byzantium's most erudite and politically-involved writers, I suggest that a deliberate agenda informed the claims he made in the *Historia Syntomos*. I argue that the evidence and explanation for this agenda can be found in the world of late eleventh-century Byzantine politics and international affairs.

Psellos wrote the *Historia Syntomos* around 1073 when the Normans had just completed the conquest of what remained of Byzantine Italy and the Byzantine emperor Michael VII was negotiating a marriage alliance with the Duke Robert Guiscard, the Italo-Normans leader. At the same time, many Norman mercenaries were serving in Byzantium and had joined the Norman leader, Roussel, in rebelling against the emperor

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<sup>206</sup> Michael Psellos. *The Historia Syntomos*, Trans. W. J. Aerts (Berlin, 1990), 21.

<sup>207</sup> Alexander Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century," 85-86 and 99.

Michael VII Doukas. As discussed in chapter 3, several high-ranking officials--many of whom were closely connected with Michael Psellos--actually supported Roussel's rebellion. I argue here that Michael Psellos' comment regarding Trajan's "Celtic" background indicates either sympathy for Roussel's imperial aspirations, or alternatively, an attempt to promote the idea of a marriage alliance with Guiscard. Both possibilities would have meant that Normans would acquire a prominent place in the imperial hierarchy. Psellos deliberately picked the word "Celt" in order to evoke the archetype of the generic western barbarian for his influential readers—a select group which included members of the powerful family of the Doukai, but also a broad spectrum of courtiers and officials. Psellos accordingly re-wrote an important piece of Roman history in order to reconcile Byzantine Roman courtiers to the idea of a barbarian emperor. I will demonstrate this claim by examining the context in which the *Historia Syntomos* was written, and I will illustrate the motives for Psellos' intensely political revision of Roman history.

Because Psellos put his pen to parchment almost a thousand years after Trajan's death, he had to make use of an older source in order to write the *Historia Syntomos*' section on the second-century Roman emperor. This source had to be Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. Whereas Psellos could consult Plutarch, Appian, or even Polybius for information on Republican figures like Scipio Africanus, he would have been unable to find much on the empire's second century's history. Indeed the only available works with information on Trajan would have been Cassius Dio's *Roman History*, which was written in the third century and remains a principal source for the Roman empire's history in the

later Principate.<sup>208</sup> Dio's text is a massive account of Roman history divided into eighty books. Its manuscript tradition is messy to say the least.<sup>209</sup> The content of books 35-80 survive in their abridgement because they were copied down in the 1070s by Ioannes Xiphilinos, a friend and colleague of Michael Psellos.<sup>210</sup> Thus, two points are evident: first, Cassius Dio provides an extant source that contained material on the emperor Trajan. Second, the principal figure who assisted in transmitting the texts of Cassius Dio to posterity was Xiphilinos, a close associate of Michael Psellos.<sup>211</sup>

Psellos had to have used Dio's *Roman History*, and indeed we can find evidence that he did so in his *Historia Syntomos* when he discusses Marcus Aurelius' alleged ability to summon rain for his thirsty soldiers through prayer.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, this very story is mentioned in Cassius Dio as well.<sup>213</sup> Another example of Cassius Dio can be found in Psellos's *Chronographia*. The text's passage concerning the emperor Romanos III's (r. 1028-1034) campaign in the east is based on a passage in Cassius Dio's history. But whereas Trajan decisively handles Parthian armies and embassies in Cassius Dio's text, Romanos incompetently deals with the Arab embassies and armies.<sup>214</sup> The fact that

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<sup>208</sup> For a discussion of Psellos' possible sources, see the introduction to Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, xxiv.

<sup>209</sup> Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 16.

<sup>210</sup> For the transmission of Cassius Dio, see David S. Potter, *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (London, Routledge, 1999), 74-77. Also see N. G. Wilson, *Scholars of Byzantium* (London: Gerald Duckworth and co., 1983), 179.

<sup>211</sup> For Psellos's relationship with Xiphilinos, see Anthony Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, Edited and translated by Anthony Kaldellis (Notre Dame, Ind.: The University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 5-6.

<sup>212</sup> Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, 23.

<sup>213</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History Epitome of Book LXXI-9*, Translated by Earnest Cary (Cambridge: Harvard U.P., 1914). Reprinted 1939, 1954, 1961 (vol. 9 of the Loeb editions).

<sup>214</sup> Jonathan Shepard, *Emperors and Expansionism: From Rome to Middle Byzantium*, 87. For Michael Psellos' passage, see Psellos, *Chronographia*, 67-69. For the passage in Cassius Dio, see Cassius Dio, *Roman History Epitome of Book LXVIII*.

Psellos used Cassius Dio for his earlier work means that he was already familiar with this text by time he produced the *Historia Syntomos*.

Dio's *Roman History* provides some important information regarding Trajan's ancestry, and explains that Trajan's merit led to his rise to the position of *Princeps*. Dio writes: "Nerva (the Emperor before Trajan) did not esteem family relationship above the safety of the State, nor was he less inclined to adopt Trajan because the latter was a Spaniard instead of an Italian or Italiot, inasmuch as no foreigner had previously held the Roman sovereignty; for he believed in looking at a man's ability rather than at his nationality."<sup>215</sup> Meritocracy aside, what is particularly interesting for us is that Dio refers to Trajan as a "Spaniard" or in Greek, an "Iber" (Ἰβηρ). In other words, Dio makes a distinction between the regional origins of Trajan and that of other Roman Emperors by pointing out that Trajan was a Spanish provincial rather than an Italian. However, at no point does Dio imply that Trajan was not "Roman" or that he was somehow a "barbarian." He was simply noting his *provincial* background. Appian, another classical author, supported the idea that Trajan was a Roman. In a brief reference (he did not cover the reign of Trajan in his history), he claimed that Trajan came from the city of Italica in Spain;<sup>216</sup> a city founded as a Roman colony during the second Punic war by Scipio Africanus and was populated by the descendants of Roman veterans.<sup>217</sup> Thus, both Dio

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<sup>215</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* LXVIII-4-2, (Loeb vol. 8, 367). ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἰταλὸς οὐδ' Ἰταλιώτης ἦν, ἤττον τι παρὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸν ἐποιήσατο. ἐπειδὴ μηδεὶς πρόσθεν ἀλλοεθνῆς τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κράτος ἐσχίκει. τὴν γὰρ ἀρετὴν ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν πατρίδα τινὸς ἐξετάζειν δεῖν ᾔετο.

<sup>216</sup> Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book VI* "The Wars in Spain," 6-7-38, Translated by Horace White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912). Reprinted 1928, 1932, 1958 (Loeb Vol. 1, 197). Appian did not cover the reign of Trajan in his history. Rather he discussed the Roman wars in Spain and the establishment of colonies there. Only after discussing Scipio's establishment of Italica did Appian note that the Emperors of his own lifetime, Trajan and Hadrian, were from there.

<sup>217</sup> Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book VI* "The Wars in Spain," 6-7-38, (Loeb Vol. 1, 197).

and Appian present Trajan as a Roman. Nowhere in these classical sources is there any mention of Trajan having been a Celt or a barbarian.

As seen earlier, Psellos' *Historia Syntomos* provides a very different account of Trajan's ancestry. While he agrees with Cassius Dio's assessment of Trajan as a just and effective ruler who expanded the empire's borders, he provides a radically different description of Trajan's background. Rather than call him a "Spaniard," Psellos refers to Trajan as a "Celt (Κέλτοϛ)."<sup>218</sup> Then, he explicitly describes Trajan as a "barbarian (βάρβαροϛ)," a term that for centuries was used pejoratively by Byzantine Romans to describe non-Romans whom they regarded as uncivilized.<sup>219</sup>

Yet while the word "Celt (Κέλτοϛ)" was unusual in the eleventh-century Byzantine context, it was actually very common in the histories of Polybios, Appian, Plutarch and Cassius Dio. Both Polybios and Appian used the term interchangeably with "Gauls."<sup>220</sup> Plutarch and Cassius Dio used the term somewhat differently, generally distinguishing between "Gauls" (who were on the west bank of the Rhine) and "Celts," mostly using the latter term when referring to Germanic tribes.<sup>221</sup> Thus, the precise geographical meaning of the term varied among the classical Roman historians who wrote in Greek. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that they agreed on two things: Celts were barbarian tribes, and they were from regions north of the Alps. Eleventh-century Byzantine Romans reading classical Roman histories understood this much.

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<sup>218</sup> Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, 21.

<sup>219</sup> Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, 21. See chapter one for discussion on barbarians.

<sup>220</sup> For Polybios, see Polybios *The Histories* II.18.7-8 and Book II.21.9 and 22.1 (Loeb vol. 1 p.287, 295-296). For Appian, see Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book IV* "The Gallic History" IV.1.1-2. (Loeb vol. 1 pp.99-100).

<sup>221</sup> For example, see Cassius Dio, *Roman History* XXXIX.49 (Loeb vol. III, p. 381). For Plutarch, see Plutarch, *Caesar* xv.1.

In turn, the image and character of the Celts in the classical sources as barbarians and often as enemies of Rome was fairly consistent. A notable example is Plutarch's biography of Caesar, which uses the words "Celt" and "barbarian" interchangeably in reference to the same characters and tribes.<sup>222</sup> Appian labelled Celts "intemperate by nature," given to over imbibing, and claimed that they were impulsive.<sup>223</sup> He also claimed that on account of this impulsive nature the Celts lacked endurance, and thus quickly became fatigued.<sup>224</sup> Cassius Dio echoed this description, writing "they are men of ungoverned passion and uncontrolled impulse."<sup>225</sup> He also paints a very similar portrait to Appian's account of Gallic and Germanic barbarians, claiming that they had "no element of endurance, since it is impossible for reckless audacity to prevail for any time."<sup>226</sup> In addition, the Romans generally considered Celtic barbarians to be stupid and even gullible. Appian explicitly states this when he describes Hannibal's alleged ability to easily impress the Gauls by frequently changing his clothes.<sup>227</sup> Thus, Roman histories provided Byzantium with a set of images that portrayed the barbarians of Western Europe as impulsive, reckless, drunken, and stupid.

But the Gallic barbarians occupied a unique place in Roman history as the people who had once successfully sacked Rome. Classical Romans may have viewed them as barbaric and lacking in military planning or the ability to endure a long battle, but none of them doubted their short-term fighting power. The barbarians of the west were important to tenth and eleventh-century Byzantine Romans for other reasons. As mentioned in

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<sup>222</sup> Plutarch, *Caesar*. See xxii.2 for example.

<sup>223</sup> Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book IV* "The Gallic History" IV.7.1-10 (Loeb vol. 1, p.111). Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book VIII* "The Punic Wars" VIII.7.47 (See Loeb vol. 1, p.475).

<sup>224</sup> Appian, *Appian's Roman History Book IV* "The Gallic History" IV.7.1-10 (Loeb vol. 1, p.111).

<sup>225</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* XII.20.2-4 (Loeb vol. 2 p. 43).

<sup>226</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* XII.20.2-4. (Loeb vol. 2 p. 43).

<sup>227</sup> Appian "The Hannibalic War" II.6 (Loeb vol. 1 p.313).

chapter 2, the emperor Constantine VII (r. 913-959) allowed intermarriage with western, Frankish barbarians on account of their “nobility,” and “converse” with the Byzantine Romans.<sup>228</sup> Thus we can see a general understanding of the Western European barbarian as somewhat closer to the Byzantine Roman than other barbarians. Thus western barbarians were somewhat malleable in the Byzantine Roman view. They could be a threat or an ally to the empire, and they could have the labels Celt, Gaul, or Frank.

When Psellos wrote the *Historia Syntomos*, the closest thing to a Celt in Byzantium would have been a Norman, a fact that educated courtiers would have probably understood given the geographical overlap between ancient Celts and eleventh-century Normans. As discussed in chapter 3, by the early 1070s the Normans had obtained an important position within the empire, and were becoming more noticeable in the empire’s politics. Accompanying the rising fortunes of the empire’s Norman mercenaries was the gradual decline of the empire as a whole. Indeed, the Byzantine Empire’s strategic position had dramatically deteriorated by the early 1070s when Michael Psellos was writing the *Historia Syntomos*. Psellos found himself in a greatly changed world in which the Byzantine Roman Empire, which in his childhood had been the undisputed power of the Mediterranean, was now struggling to survive.

Michael Psellos was aware that a possible solution to the empire’s strategic predicament was closely linked with the Normans. As early as 1071, he took part in the Doukai’s negotiation for a marriage alliance with the principal leader of the Normans in southern Italy, the Duke Robert Guiscard. The negotiation culminated in a promised marriage between the son of the emperor Michael VII and Robert Guiscard’s daughter

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<sup>228</sup> Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, 71, 73.

Helena, but also in a promise for Norman manpower that could be placed at the empire's disposal.<sup>229</sup> Interestingly, Psellos claimed to have used Roman history in the negotiations. He wrote "priestly books and true histories teach me that our states have a single root and origin."<sup>230</sup> Thus Psellos was, according to his own words, using histories to prove to Guiscard that the Normans and the Byzantine Romans were descended from the same people. Unfortunately, we cannot know "which" people Psellos was referring to, nor which texts he had acquired this information from.

What we do know is that such a marriage would have had significant implications for the Byzantine palace and the Doukai because the possible successor to the Byzantine Roman throne would be a half-Norman. It is hard to ascertain whether or not such a possibility would have unsettled members of the Byzantine Roman elite at the time. Given that the *Historia Syntomos* was written before the marriage alliance had been agreed to, it is possible that Psellos was simply trying to help the Doukai by legitimizing this marriage by means of the text. In effect, Psellos may have been trying to convince other courtiers that the proposed marriage with Guiscard's daughter was not a bad thing given that a "Celt" had once been a very effective Roman emperor. This may be the answer to our question regarding Psellos' remark concerning Trajan's origins.

The other possible, and in my opinion more probable, explanation for Psellos' detail in the *Historia Syntomos*, is that Psellos' comment subversively supported

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<sup>229</sup> On the marriage alliance and negotiation, see G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*, 211-212. On the request for Norman manpower, see Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*, 158. Also see Elizabeth van Houts, "Normandy and Byzantium," *Byzantion* 55 (1985): 553. Van Houts discusses a Norman source, William of Poitiers' *History of William the Conqueror*, which includes a reference to the Byzantine Roman emperor's desire for William to be his neighbour, so he could stop Turkish incursions.

<sup>230</sup> Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204*, 156.

Roussel's rebellion. Probably at the time of Psellos' writing of the *Historia Syntomos*, Roussel was leading his rebellion against the Emperor Michael VII Doukas. Like most courtiers, Psellos took notice of this development. He even noted in the continuation of the *Chronographia* (written in the early-to-mid 1070s) that Amasea, which was Roussel's stronghold, was "the place that everyone is talking about."<sup>231</sup>

And courtiers were indeed talking about the place and the Norman who controlled it. The main source of information for Roussel's rebellion, the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates, a Byzantine Roman judge, courtier and historian, and acquaintance of Michael Psellos, provides a glowing description of the Norman renegade, and provides the names of several Byzantine Roman figures that were sympathetic to him and his rebellion. It has also been mentioned that Michael VII saw Roussel's rebellion as part of an internal plot by people in the capital.<sup>232</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, Roussel carried out his rebellion with a Byzantine Roman courtier named Basileios Maleses, who acted as his advisor.<sup>233</sup> The *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas also appears to have followed Roussel willingly. Even Theodore Dokeianos, a relative of Alexios Komnenos and great-uncle of Anna Komnene's considered Roussel to be of great usefulness for the empire.<sup>234</sup>

But what is especially important for this chapter, is Michael Psellos' close connection with the faction of Byzantine Roman courtiers who were supporting Roussel. Psellos was a good friend of Ioannes Doukas, whom he lauded at length in the *Chronographia*.<sup>235</sup> It is also probable that Roussel's advisor, Basileios Maleses, was

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<sup>231</sup> Psellos, *Chronographia*, 360 (VII-23).

<sup>232</sup> Attaleiates, 186.8.

<sup>233</sup> Attaleiates, 187.

<sup>234</sup> Anna Komnene, *Alexiad* 1-ii. (page 35 of the Penguin version)

<sup>235</sup> See Psellos, *Chronographia* VII-16. This is perhaps the only sincere praise that Psellos provides in his discussion of the Doukai. See Anthony Kaldellis, *The Argument of Psellos' Chronographia*.

Michael Psellos' own son-in-law.<sup>236</sup> This trio of courtiers had good reason to support Roussel's revolt because their own influence at court was ebbing away. The Emperor Michael VII was relying more and more on different officials, particularly a eunuch named Nikephoritzes who was given the very powerful position of logothete of the post. With his new influence, Nikephoritzes worked hard to remove rival courtiers. In the words of Michael Attaleiates, he "accused all of the Emperor's closest associates, and denying them access to Michael, he fully dominated the child-like Emperor."<sup>237</sup> Nikephoritzes is blamed for turning Michael VII against his uncle, ultimately sending the *kaisar* on the mission against Roussel.<sup>238</sup>

After their capture by Roussel, Ioannes Doukas and Maleses worked with the Norman *condottiere* long enough to permanently turn Michael VII Doukas against them. The subsequent exile of Maleses by the Emperor, and the removal of Michael Psellos and Ioannes Doukas from the court, reinforces this point.<sup>239</sup> It appears that by 1074, shortly after Roussel's return to the Eastern provinces (and shortly before his capture by Alexios I Komnenos), Ioannes Doukas, Michael Psellos, and Maleses had all fallen out with the Emperor Michael VII, who now completely relied on a different group of officials, including the eunuch Nikephoritzes, and the half-Norman logician John Italos. The latter figure directly affected Psellos, having first been taught by him, but by the mid-1070s (possibly still during Roussel's rebellion), succeeded him as "Consul of the Philosophers," under the order of Michael VII Doukas, to whom he had become very

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<sup>236</sup> For this discussion see Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, 16, 159-160; Polemis, 34.

<sup>237</sup> Attaleiates, 182.

<sup>238</sup> Polemis, 37; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society*, 606.

<sup>239</sup> Kaldellis, *Mothers and Sons, Fathers and Daughters: The Byzantine Family of Michael Psellos*, 16.

close.<sup>240</sup> In fact, it was Italos who carried out the latter phase of the correspondence between Michael VII and Robert Guiscard, further indicating Psellos' loss of importance in the administration.<sup>241</sup>

Trajan supplies another useful parallel with Roussel on the issue of meritocracy. Psellos brings this idea forth in his text, as did Cassius Dio, who wrote that Trajan became Emperor because of his "ability."<sup>242</sup> Psellos, in the *Historia Syntomos*, echoes Dio's assertion that Trajan acquired the throne based on merit, claiming that Trajan had been very successful on campaigns while Nerva was Emperor.<sup>243</sup> This emphasis on Trajan's merit (particularly in a military role) nicely parallels what we know about Roussel's career and his ability to defeat Turkish armies. The parallel was useful to Psellos' argument because there were Byzantine Roman courtiers that valued the Normans' contribution to the empire's defence against the Turks.

We should locate the composition of the *Historia Syntomos* and Psellos' comment regarding Trajan within this window. With this context in mind, I shall retrace the steps of this analysis in an effort to bring the pieces of this puzzle back together. Sometime around 1073, Psellos was writing a Mirror of Princes for the Emperor Michael VII Doukas. Concurrently, the Norman mercenary Roussel was leading a rebellion and had captured the *kaisar* Ioannes. It is therefore probable that the *Historia Syntomos* was written during the crucial months when Roussel was outside the capital demanding the

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<sup>240</sup> Robert Browning, "Enlightenment and Repression in Byzantium in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Past and Present* 69 (1975): 12-13; Lowell Clucas, *The Trial of John Italos and the Crisis of Intellectual Values in Byzantium in the Eleventh Century* (Munich, 1981), 2-3.

<sup>241</sup> Browning, 14.

<sup>242</sup> Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 68-4-2, (Loeb vol. 8, 367). ἀλλ οὐκ Ἰταλὸς οὐδ' Ἰταλιώτης ἦν, ἤττον τι παρὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸν ἐποίησατο, ἐπειδὴ μηδεὶς πρόσθεν ἀλλοεθνῆς τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων κράτος ἐσχίκει. τὴν γὰρ ἀρετὴν ἀλλ οὐ τὴν πατρίδα τινὸς ἐξετάζειν δεῖν ᾔετο.

<sup>243</sup> Psellos, *The Historia Syntomos*, 19.

release of his wife and children as well as imperial recognition. Psellos was not necessarily out of favour at court yet, but he was affiliated with a palace faction that was working very closely with a Norman rebel.

Alternatively, Psellos's comment concerning Trajan may be an allusion to Robert Guiscard, acknowledging the possibility of intermarriage with the Normans in Italy. Perhaps this was part of Psellos' hint to Michael VII that a marriage alliance with the Normans in Italy was not a bad idea, and that in fact, a western barbarian could be a very capable Roman Emperor, and by extension a half-Norman boy could capably succeed to the throne. This possibility is less likely than the former one, although it remains a possibility if the *Historia Syntomos* was written a bit earlier in the reign of Michael VII Doukas.

Either way, Psellos chose to cast the Emperor Trajan as his model "Barbarian Emperor," pointing out that this highly esteemed ruler had been born in the western provinces and had acquired the Principate based on merit. Psellos was trying to convince fellow courtiers that having a barbarian on the throne was not unprecedented, and that the Romans had been led by one in the second century, a time of imperial glory and prosperity. By transforming Trajan from Dio's characterization of him as provincial Roman into Celtic Barbarian, Psellos made him appear similar to the Normans of his own day. The Byzantine Roman courtier was rewriting Roman history in order to influence other educated figures in the imperial administration, and by doing so, he accommodated a skilled barbarian warrior in the Byzantine Roman imperial order. Psellos' argument is a testament to both his subtlety and grasp of ancient Roman histories.

## Chapter 5: Working with Roman History: Turning Normans into Latins

A few years after the *Historia Syntomos* was written, another courtier argued for the Byzantine Roman elite to integrate the Normans into the upper rungs of Byzantine Roman society. This courtier was Michael Attaleiates, a judge, bureaucrat, advisor to both the Emperors Romanos IV and Nikephoros Botaneiates (who overthrew Michael VII Doukas in 1078 and reigned until 1081), and associate of Michael Psellos. Attaleiates witnessed and partook in many of the major political and military events that profoundly altered Byzantium between the 1050s and 1080s. Thus he witnessed the transformation of the empire from the dominant polity in the Mediterranean to a shell of its former self. Deeply affected by these events, Attaleiates wrote a history that emphasized what he thought the Byzantine Romans did wrong in this period, inserting arguments for what he believed they should have done instead, and often implying what they should do in the future. In order to make these arguments in his *History*, Attaleiates used various protagonists, including ancient Romans and eleventh-century Normans as exemplars of good governance and military leadership. In the *History* Attaleiates portrays the Normans as excellent defenders of the empire, and implies that Byzantium needed to make better use of them in the future.

Attaleiates employed his own text and ancient Roman history in a variety of ways in order to argue that the Byzantine Roman elite needed to integrate the Normans. One method was Attaleiates portrayal of the mercenary leader Robert Crispin and Roussel in a favourable light, often in juxtaposition with the Byzantine Romans. Another method was his claim that the Byzantine Roman Emperor, Nikephoros Botaneiates (to whom

Attaleiates dedicated his *History*) actually shared ancestry with the Normans. Also, and more importantly in the long term, Attaleiates often changed the label of the Normans from “Franks” to “Latins” and “Albans,” labels that were found in classical Roman histories and that referred to ancient Italian peoples who went from being competitors of Rome to becoming fully Roman themselves. By examining how the *History* employed the aforementioned strategies we will see how Attaleiates envisaged and promoted further integration of the Normans into the Byzantine Roman elite.

Before examining the *Historia* in depth, an introduction to Attaleiates is necessary. He was born in Attalia, a Byzantine provincial capital in what is now South-western Turkey. In the mid-to-late 1030s, he went to Constantinople to receive an education and claim a place in the Byzantine Roman bureaucracy.<sup>244</sup> Attaleiates received some of his education by attending Psellos’ lectures.<sup>245</sup> Indeed, Attaleiates became well acquainted with Michael Psellos; they probably both moved in the same circles and later in life shared an enemy in the eunuch Nikephoritzes (discussed in the previous chapter).<sup>246</sup> Attaleiates served in the imperial bureaucracy in various capacities, principally as a judge. By the late 1060s, he had risen far in the government and was an advisor to the Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes.<sup>247</sup>

Attaleiates’ *History* chronologically correlates to his career. It starts in 1034 and goes to 1080, essentially taking the reader from Byzantium’s apex of power to one of the lowest points in its history, emphasizing the latter years in which Attaleiates was closely

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<sup>244</sup> For a good introduction to Michael Attaleiates, see these details in Dimitri Krallis, “Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos,” in *Reading Michael Psellos*, (eds.) Barber and Jenkins (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2006) 167-168.

<sup>245</sup> Krallis, “Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos,” 167-168.

<sup>246</sup> Krallis, “Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos,” 190.

<sup>247</sup> Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204* (London: Longman, 1984), 84-85.

connected with the major figures in Byzantine politics. He makes several references to himself in the text, not only emphasizing his familiarity with these events, but also his expertise regarding the empire's decision-makers and their shortcomings. One notable example is Attaleiates' retrospective portrayal of his discussion with the Emperor Romanos IV on where to campaign in 1069. In this discussion, Attaleiates allegedly convinced the Emperor to change the campaign plans by explaining to him the value of capturing the region around Chliat and preventing the Turks from using it as a base for their raids.<sup>248</sup> There are many other examples of the autobiographical impulse in his work as Attaleiates discusses his own participation in historical events, but there is simply not enough room to discuss them all here.<sup>249</sup> What is important is that the *History* discussed events that took place in its author's life time, and these events profoundly impacted Attaleiates' agenda and views on governance. These views and opinions were articulated and presented in his *History*.

Attaleiates certainly wrote his text with the objective of influencing the elite in Constantinople. After all, the *History*'s complaint was delivered to an audience that consisted of Byzantine courtiers in the capital.<sup>250</sup> In the *History*'s preface, the text is dedicated to the Emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates (r. 1078-1081), an elderly general who took power after the tonsuring of Michael VII Doukas, and whom many historians have

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<sup>248</sup> Attaleiates, 131.

<sup>249</sup> For Attaleiates hearing Romanos' voice personally, see Attaleiates, 98; for Attaleiates discussing his march with the army, see Attaleiates, 121; for self-reference and autobiography in Byzantium see Michael Angold, "The Autobiographical Impulse in Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 52 (1998): 240-241.

<sup>250</sup> Anthony Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 14, no. 1 (2007): 15.

viewed as an ineffective leader.<sup>251</sup> With this audience in mind, Attaleiates proceeds not only to present a narrative of what the Byzantine Romans of his lifetime had done wrong, but also to articulate what they should do correctly in the empire's future administration. It was the objective of Byzantine historians to influence imperial government.

Attaleiates' introduction stated the objective of histories:

There is much utility in them for they convey clear instruction and contain the pattern of future events. They lead us sincerely to imitate what was discerned well and to avoid all that was ill-advised and shameful in wars, battles, and all other ventures and challenges that come upon us by necessity.<sup>252</sup>

The events of Attaleiates' lifetime had left the historian with an axe to grind, and he does not let his audience forget the *History's* overarching complaint: Byzantine Romans had become ineffective defenders of their state. He even goes so far as to tell his readers that he hates the "cowardice, ineptitude, or wretchedness of the Romans."<sup>253</sup> Such comments are numerous, so only a few will be presented here for illustrative purposes:

I realized that the Romans of our day are not capable of seizing opportunities, nor of organizing companies, deciding everything prudently in the midst of bitter war, or discerning the strength of their opponents.<sup>254</sup>

When it comes to wars with the foreigners we appear cowardly, unmanly and appear to turn our backs to the enemy even before the battle begins.<sup>255</sup>

In order to overcome these problems, Attaleiates implies throughout the *History* that the Roman Empire needed a powerful army supported by an effective system of

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<sup>251</sup> Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," 3; Krallis, "Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos," 171. Recently, some scholars have questioned how sincere Attaleiates was in his praise of the emperor.

<sup>252</sup> Attaleiates, 7.

<sup>253</sup> Attaleiates, 113.

<sup>254</sup> Attaleiates, 115.

<sup>255</sup> Attaleiates, 198.

taxation. He also argues that it was more important for the Emperor to base his decisions on military and political factors rather than try to follow Christian values and practices.<sup>256</sup> At one point in the text, Attaleiates praises the Emperor Isaakios Komnenos (r. 1057-1059) for taking wealth from monks and putting it in the state's coffers, an act that did not sit well with many Orthodox Christians.<sup>257</sup> According to a new study by Anthony Kaldellis, Attaleiates believed that "proper planning," combined with the "confidence" "that one enjoys God's favour because one has acted in accordance with tradition," was what enabled a polity's success.<sup>258</sup> This belief did not specifically require Christian beliefs. Indeed Attaleiates often used Roman Pagans and even Muslims as examples of effective leaders.<sup>259</sup>

Attaleiates found a model for good governance in the histories of the ancient Romans. He makes this model clear to his reader, in one passage explicitly stating that the old Romans, despite not having received the Word of God, were successful in their wars because of their prudence and magnanimity.<sup>260</sup> Attaleiates mentions the ancient Romans--Scipio Africanus, Scipio Asiaticus and Aemilius Paulus--as models for the Romans of the eleventh century to take inspiration from.<sup>261</sup> Given his interest in Republican Roman figures, it is not surprising that Attaleiates used the histories of

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<sup>256</sup> Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," 18.

<sup>257</sup> Attaleiates, 61.

<sup>258</sup> Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," 9. Also, see Dimitri Krallis, "Sacred Emperor, Holy Patriarch: A New Reading of the Clash between Emperor Isaakios I Komnenos and Patriarch Michael Keroularios in Attaleiates' History," *Byzantinoslavica* 67 (2009), 169-190.

<sup>259</sup> Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," 9.

<sup>260</sup> Attaleiates, 193-194.

<sup>261</sup> Attaleiates, 219.

Polybius, Appian, Plutarch and Cassius Dio.<sup>262</sup> Indeed, he was particularly well-acquainted with Polybius and Plutarch, and his knowledge of Roman history and government was further reinforced by his expertise in Roman law.<sup>263</sup> This interest in, and knowledge of, ancient Roman history underlies the *History* and also heavily influenced Attaleiates' worldview in general. As a result, Attaleiates' complaints of the Romans of the eleventh century are often followed by praise of the ancient Romans.

Attaleiates also praises the Normans, treating them in a similar fashion to the ancient Romans of his text. The Normans were in the present, in his eyes, very useful to the Byzantine Roman Empire. After all, he had personally witnessed their bravery and decisiveness in action during Romanos IV's campaigns. Throughout the *History*, he tells stories of the feats of Norman soldiers, effectively portraying them as protagonists in Byzantium's defence against the Pechenegs and Seljuk Turks. Early on in the narrative, Attaleiates tells the story of the Norman who singlehandedly burned down the Turks' catapult outside of Edessa, the story also described by the Armenian chronicler Matthew of Edessa (and mentioned in the third chapter of this thesis).<sup>264</sup> Furthermore, Attaleiates discusses each of the previously examined Norman mercenary leaders, consistently portraying them and their military skills in a positive light. He describes the un-named Norman discussed in chapter 3, who is believed to have been Hervé, as "very capable," and "extremely brave, mighty, second to none in understanding what had to be done."<sup>265</sup> Attaleiates then proceeds to describe how this Latin drove Pecheneg raiders out of the

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<sup>262</sup> Kaldellis, "A Byzantine Argument for the Equivalence of all Religions: Michael Attaleiates on Ancient and Modern Romans," 22.

<sup>263</sup> Krallis, "'Democratic' action in Eleventh-Century Byzantium: Michael Attaleiates's 'Republicanism' in Context," 35.

<sup>264</sup> Attaleiates, 47.

<sup>265</sup> Attaleiates, 35.

Balkans and thus restored peace to the region. The *History*'s treatment of Crispin is similar; Attaleiates describes him as "a most courageous man, more brave than anybody else."<sup>266</sup> The description of Roussel is even more emphatic: "a great soldier and general, capable of healing many of the flaming ills of the troubled East, a reasonable man and not devoid of wisdom."<sup>267</sup> Thus, Attaleiates' portrayal of these various Normans is consistent: they were brave, capable leaders. They are exactly what he argued the empire needed during the crisis of the 1070's.

Several times in the text, Attaleiates directly juxtaposes the Normans' actions with those of the Byzantine Romans in order to present the Normans as the more powerful and moral of the two. When discussing the rebellion of Robert Crispin, Attaleiates claims that the Byzantine Roman forces attacked the renegade Norman on Easter Sunday.<sup>268</sup> The Normans, allegedly using the day for rest, nevertheless handily defeated the attackers. According to Attaleiates, Crispin explained to the defeated Byzantine Romans how impious their actions were and that no Christian should commit violence on such a holy day. After lecturing them, Crispin released the Byzantine Roman prisoners, except for their wounded whom he saw tended to thereby making him appear more Christian than his Byzantine Roman counterparts. Attaleiates draws another stark contrast between the Normans and Byzantine Romans when he discusses one of Romanos IV's campaigns against the Turks. One day, while the majority of the Byzantine Roman army was out (either foraging or looking for Turks), a band of Turks attacked the almost-empty Byzantine Roman camp. According to Attaleiates, the only soldiers in the camp who resisted the Turks were a company of Normans. Attaleiates

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<sup>266</sup> Attaleiates, 171.3-6.

<sup>267</sup> Attaleiates, 207.4-10.

<sup>268</sup> For this story, see Attaleiates, 123-124.

writes: "During all this not one of the Roman companies stationed there furnished any assistance to the Franks, not even a simple charge."<sup>269</sup> He also claimed that the rebel Roussel did a better job of keeping Turkish raiders out of Anatolia than the earlier Byzantine Roman armies had done. This claim segues into an accusation against Nikephoritzes, claiming that the Byzantine Roman courtier "preferred to have the land of the Romans under the rule of the Turks, rather than see the Latin settle in it and deflect their invasions."<sup>270</sup> Attaleiates, therefore, consistently juxtaposes brave and decisive Normans with his cowardly, bickering, and indecisive eleventh-century Roman compatriots.

But Attaleiates does not simply use the Normans as a model for the Romans of his own day. Rather, he argues that the Normans should be integrated into the Byzantine Roman leadership. A notable example of this argument is his treatment of Roussel's rebellion, in which he discusses the actions of the rebel's Byzantine advisor Basileios Maleses--who was Attaleiates' friend--as patriotic.<sup>271</sup> Attaleiates even claims that if Maleses had been successful in the rebellion and had committed regicide by killing the emperor Michael VII Doukas, it "would have been a marker of bravery."<sup>272</sup> The inference is that if Maleses had helped Roussel capture the throne, it would have been a good act for the Byzantine Romans. When Attaleiates discusses Roussel's capture, he digresses to a discussion about how the Norman should have been used for the benefit of the Roman state. Essentially, Attaleiates condemned Michael VII Doukas' imprisonment of Roussel,

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<sup>269</sup> Attaleiates, 127. It should be noted that this particular band of westerners might have been French in general and not necessarily Norman. However, Attaleiates and his contemporaries were only beginning to make such a distinction, thus it is not really important for the argument.

<sup>270</sup> Attaleiates 199 .

<sup>271</sup> Maleses was the man who acted as Roussel's advisor and was Attaleiates' friend and probably Michael Psellos' son-in-law.

<sup>272</sup> Attaleiates, 188.

believing that it would have been much better to have given the Norman a command. Attaleiates writes: “he deprived without noticing it the Roman dominion of the greatest strength and prosperity.”<sup>273</sup> This quote is very important for understanding Attaleiates’ argument. He is arguing that a pragmatic emperor would have forgiven Roussel and made use of his military abilities by giving him a command, effectively enabling the Norman to continue defending the empire against the Turks.<sup>274</sup>

Attaleiates obviously wanted to improve the position of the Normans within Byzantium. So far, I have demonstrated his practical reasons for doing so, including making use of the Normans’ martial expertise for an empire that was in a state of military collapse. Now I will discuss how Attaleiates used classical Roman history in order to argue in a more subtle way for the integration of the Normans into the Byzantine Roman leadership. His use of Roman history is significant as it ultimately influenced subsequent Byzantine Roman historians by altering how they labelled various groups of Western Europeans. Whereas earlier Byzantine Roman historians and courtiers used the term “Franks” to describe the Normans and other Western Europeans, Attaleiates started interchanging “Franks” with “Latins” (Λατίνοι), a term used by ancient Romans who wrote in Greek. Indeed, he used this term consistently throughout his work, probably

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<sup>273</sup> Attaleiates, 207.

<sup>274</sup> Michael VII did not release Roussel, but his successor (Nikephoros Botaneiates) did, meeting the Norman in the palace afterwards. The Norman “offered the most frightful oaths,” of loyalty and thus the new Emperor gave the Norman a mission. Attaleiates discusses Roussel’s subsequent career briefly, mentioning him accompanying the young general (and future Emperor) Alexios Komnenos, the same man who had captured Roussel previously. Roussel and Alexios led an army against the rebel Nikephoros Bryennios, whom they managed to defeat by means of effective tactics and surprise. Alexios’ daughter, Anna Komnene, discussed the campaign years later in her epic the *Alexiad*. She did mention that there were “Kelts” accompanying her father, but she neglected to mention that Roussel was one of them. In fact, when describing the methods by which the task was carried out, she made a point of saying that “my father was responsible for the whole idea.” For Attaleiates discussion of these events see Attaleiates, 253-254. For Anna Komnene’s discussion of these events see Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 43 (I-6).

using it to label Hervé (if indeed the un-named Norman was Hervé), and definitely using it to label Crispin and Roussel, in addition to the Normans more generally.<sup>275</sup> The term “Latin” had rich classical connotations, and their implications cannot be ignored here. The fact that Attaleiates often used the term throughout the *History* implies that he was making a concerted effort to convince the Byzantine Roman elite that they shared a vague ancestry with the Normans.

Early in the text, Attaleiates labels the Normans as “Latins.” Indeed the first part of the *History* (aside from the proem) treats the Norman invasion of Southern Italy, surprisingly portraying the Norman invasion of Byzantine Apulia and Calabria as the fault of Byzantine Roman officials. This passage is laden with details that reflect how Attaleiates wanted his audience to perceive the Normans, an agenda that is emphasized by its very early location in the text. He claims that Sicily was almost in Roman hands when courtiers at home undermined the campaign by recalling Maniakes, and:

Not only that, but the Albans and Latins who abut upon the Italian regions by the Elder Rome and were previously allies and formed part of our commonwealth, even practicing the same religion, most unexpectedly now became our enemies because the man who held the [Byzantine] command, the *doux* Michael Dokeianos, offended their ruler.<sup>276</sup>

This excerpt demonstrates that unlike other Byzantine or Italian historians that treated the Norman invasion of Byzantine Italy, Attaleiates treats the event as a rebellion by Byzantine allies, not as an invasion by foreigners from beyond the Alps. After all, he emphasizes that the Normans were formally part of a “Commonwealth” with the Byzantine Romans, and that they had inhabited the region for some time. Such a

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<sup>275</sup> For Hervé as a Latin, see Attaleiates 35.12; for Crispin, see Attaleiates 122.22; for Roussel, see Attaleiates 183.11.

<sup>276</sup> Attaleiates, 9.

statement conveniently omits the fact that the Normans violently seized the region from the Byzantines and Lombards who had been there for several hundred years. Attaleiates attributes the Norman revolt to Byzantine incompetence, claiming that the Byzantine official Dokeianos offended the Normans' "ruler." This mention of an offended "ruler" is probably a reference to the Byzantine official's (sources differed on whether this official was Dokeianos or Maniakes) beating of the Normans' interpreter Arduin which occurred in 1040 (covered in chapter 2).

But the detail with the most long-term significance is Attaleiates' use of the words "Latins" and "Albans" in his description of the Normans. The word became common in later Byzantine writings with subsequent Byzantine Roman historians using the term "Latins" to describe many western Europeans.<sup>277</sup> Where did Attaleiates get the term "Latins," and how was it originally used? The word "Latin" is found in the ancient Roman histories of Polybius, Appian, Plutarch, and Cassius Dio to describe a group of peoples that inhabited central Italy. The Latins appear most often in the works of Cassius Dio and Appian, and as previously discussed, Attaleiates is believed to have read both of them. In Cassius Dio, the Latins are first encountered by Aeneas, who has just fled the sack of Troy. Aeneas struggles with them, but ultimately makes peace and marries Lavinia, the daughter of the Latins' king, Latinus. The descendants of Aeneas and Lavinia allegedly created and populated the town of Lavinium.<sup>278</sup> Appian, another Roman historian who Attaleiates probably read, also states that the marriage of Aeneas

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<sup>277</sup> Twelfth-century Byzantine authors used the word frequently. For Anna Komnene (she used the word "Latin" 97 times in the *Alexiad*, using the word "Celt" more often), see Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium," 86; for an example from the continuator of Skylitzes, see "Roussel de Bailleul" In the Byzantine prosopography project. <http://www.pbw.kcl.ac.uk>; for Kinnamos and Choniates, see Kazhdan, "Latins and Franks in Byzantium," 86-87.

<sup>278</sup> Cassius Dio, I.7.1 (Loeb vol 1, pages 3-5).

and Lavinia produced the Romans, adding the claim that the Latins received their name from Aeneas, who named the indigenous Italians of the region after their king.<sup>279</sup> Thus, both Cassius Dio and Appian agreed that the Romans claimed descent from Aeneas (as was commonly believed by Romans), which by implication, meant that because the Romans were descended from the offspring of this union, they too were part Latin.<sup>280</sup>

By calling the Normans “Latins” Attaleiates was implying that the Byzantine Romans shared a common ancestry with the Normans. But the parallels go further because the outcome of the ancient Roman-Latin interaction was suggestive of how the eleventh-century Byzantine Romans could ultimately interact with the Normans. The ancient Roman-Latin interaction included both alliances and open conflict. According to Plutarch, in his *Life of Romulus*, the Latins established friendship with the early Roman king Romulus, thereby making the Latins an ally to Rome at the time of its founding.<sup>281</sup> Yet later, conflict erupted between the Romans and Latins. Cassius Dio presents Rome’s struggles with the Latins as recurring throughout the early centuries of the republic.<sup>282</sup> Appian treats these conflicts in more detail, informing the reader that the Latins made war on the Romans because they “accused the Romans of despising them, although they were allied to them, and of the same blood.”<sup>283</sup> Indeed, the Roman-Latin interaction nicely parallels Attaleiates’ portrayal of the Byzantine-Norman relationship in his own day. Attaleiates admits that the “Latins” (the Normans of his day) often struggle with the

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<sup>279</sup> Appian, I.1.1 (Loeb vol. 1, page 29).

<sup>280</sup> Cassius Dio, I.7.1 (Loeb vol 1, page 9) This excerpt is evidence of the Roman claim of descent from Aeneas.

<sup>281</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, XXIII.5 (Loeb edition page 165).

<sup>282</sup> Cassius Dio, IV-17 and VII.32.1-32.10 (Loeb vol 1, pages 109-111, 237-247).

<sup>283</sup> Appian I.13 (Loeb vol 1, page 39).

Romans (the Byzantine Romans of his day). However, according to Attaleiates they are part of a “commonwealth.”

But what was useful for Attaleiates’ agenda was the outcome of ancient Rome’s struggles with the Latins. By calling the Normans “Latins” Attaleiates was hinting that the Byzantine Romans would eventually be united with the Normans.<sup>284</sup> In ancient Roman histories, the Romans defeated the Latins but subsequently integrated them into the emerging Roman Empire. Dio claims that when the Romans conquered the Latins, they granted all Latins equal citizenship despite the previous struggles between them.<sup>285</sup> Appian, like Cassius Dio, also states that after the Romans conquered the Latins, the Romans granted them partial rights. Later in the text, Appian discusses the famous Republican Romans, the Gracchi brothers, who argued for Rome’s inclusion of the Latins by means of granting them full Roman citizenship. Appian writes: “the senate could not with decency refuse this privilege to men of the same race.”<sup>286</sup>

I will summarize here the parallel that Attaleiates drew between the ancient Latins and the Normans of his own time. The ancient Latins were not necessarily Romans, but they were close to them, as both Cassius Dio and Appian described them as being of the same race and sharing common ancestors. Thus by using the term “Latins” Attaleiates was implying that the Normans were related to the eleventh-century Byzantine Romans. The ancient Latins fought the Romans on and off in the era of the kings and the early

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<sup>284</sup> Here I must thank Emily O’Brien for providing me with guidance on how to articulate my thoughts regarding Attaleiates usage of historical parallels. See Emily O’Brien, “Arms and Letters: Julius Caesar, the Commentaries of Pope Pius II, and the Politicization of Papal Imagery,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 62 (2009): 1075 for a specific example of how a medieval political figure and historian (Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini) used a historical parallel with the classics (Julius Caesar) in order to hint to his audience how the author intended for the future to unfold.

<sup>285</sup> Cassius Dio, VII-32.10 (Loeb vol 1, page 247).

<sup>286</sup> Appian “Civil Wars” 1.3.23 (Loeb vol 3, page 47).

republic, but by the time of the empire the conflict had long since ended and the Latins had become Roman citizens. I have already demonstrated that Attaleiates argued for the co-optation of the Normans in his own day. Thus, by labelling the Normans “Latins” he was implying that the Normans ought to be made equal members of the Byzantine Roman polity.

The same principle of integration applied to another group: the Albans. Attaleiates mentioned the Albans in the aforementioned passage regarding Sicily. He also mentioned them in his reference to Maniakes’ rebellion of 1043, claiming that Maniakes led an army of “Romans and Albans.” It is entirely possible, indeed probable, that these “Albans” were meant to be Normans.<sup>287</sup> Like the Latins, the Albans appeared in the works of the ancient Roman historians. Appian claimed that Alba was originally a military colony founded by the Romans.<sup>288</sup> Plutarch claimed that the Albans were descended from Numitor, who was the grandfather of Romulus.<sup>289</sup> Thus the classical Roman historians presented the Albans and Romans as sharing ancestors. But the significance of the Albans to Attaleiates’ argument goes beyond ancestry, extending to the realm of political co-optation. Appian writes that in the third century B.C.E., when Hannibal threatened Rome, two thousand Albans “hastened to Rome to share the danger,” and that with “such zeal did this small town, alone out of many colonies, exhibit.”<sup>290</sup> Later in the text, when discussing the prelude to the Third Punic War, the Roman senator Censorinus tells the Roman army and Carthaginian ambassadors:

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<sup>287</sup> Maniakes had Normans and Varangians as foreign mercenaries on his campaign. But Attaleiates would have probably used a different classicizing term to describe the Varangians, such as “Skythians.”

<sup>288</sup> Appian, “The Hannibalic War,” VI.39 (Loeb vol 1, 365).

<sup>289</sup> Plutarch, *Life of Romulus*, XXVII.1 (Loeb edition page 173).

<sup>290</sup> Appian, “The Hannibalic War,” VI.39 (Loeb vol 1, 365).

If you remember how we caused Alba, not an enemy, but our mother city, to change her abode to Rome for the common good, acting not in a hostile spirit, but treating the citizens with the honour due to them from their colonists, and this proved to be for the advantage of both.<sup>291</sup>

Clearly, the Albans, like the Latins, were closely related to the Romans and were effectively made a part of the Roman polity. According to ancient Roman histories, it was beneficial for the Romans to co-opt the Albans because they were useful allies and capable warriors. Attaleiates was making links here, strategically drawing parallels between the Latins and Albans of the ancient world and the Normans of his own time.

Attaleiates did not simply try to convince his patron and fellow courtiers that the Normans were closely related to the Romans by labelling the former “Latins” and “Albans.” He even went so far as to claim that some of the Byzantine Roman elite (including their emperor) were partially descended from western barbarians, specifically the Celtiberians. Attaleiates makes this claim in his digression concerning the ancestry of the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates. The *History* points out that Botaneiates was part of the Phokades, a family of Byzantine Roman military aristocrats from Asia Minor who had been key players in the empire’s tenth and eleventh-century internal politics.<sup>292</sup> In turn, Attaleiates claims that the Phokades were descended from the Fabii, from whom the famous and important republican Roman families of the Scipiones and Aemilius Paulus were also allegedly descended.<sup>293</sup> By connecting his patron with Scipio Africanus, Scipio Asiaticus, and Aemilius Paulus, all of whom were individually mentioned in the *History*, Attaleiates was putting Botaneiates into a flattering family tree that would have given him an impressive Roman pedigree.

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<sup>291</sup> Appian. “The Punic Wars,” XII.89 (Loeb vol. 1, page 553).

<sup>292</sup> Attaleiates, 217.

<sup>293</sup> Attaleiates, 219.

Attaleiates also included another group of people in this family tree: the Celtiberians. This inclusion is odd because the Celtiberians were people from Spain who had fought against the Romans for a long time in the republican period and were regarded by Roman sources as “barbarians.” Attaleiates claims that after the Romans subjugated Spain, a “great mixing of populations occurred,”<sup>294</sup> and that ultimately Constantine I (r. 306-337) transferred several of these “mixed” descendants to the East when he founded Constantinople.<sup>295</sup> Attaleiates then discusses the offspring of this union between Celtiberians and the descendants of the Fabii:

“It is from those men that the family of Nikephoros Phokas drew their origins, then given that these people had lived in the past next to the Romans and may be considered autochthonous because of their common origins and homes, there is no difference in nobility and courage, since they had come together in a union that produced beauty.”<sup>296</sup>

Where did Attaleiates find this information? The works of Appian and Cassius Dio discuss “Celtiberians” and the wars between them and the Romans in Spain. Cassius Dio even wrote that the Roman general Scipio Africanus co-opted the Celtiberians in the Second Punic War, obtaining their loyalty through kind acts.<sup>297</sup> But he made no mention of mixing the Roman population with the Celtiberian one. Given the absence of this “mixing” in the sources, it seems that Attaleiates made it up or assumed it was the inevitable result of Scipio’s actions.

Why did Attaleiates do this? The answer is that Attaleiates wanted to create a more important place for the Normans in Byzantium. Throughout the *History* he demonstrated to his audience the effectiveness of the Normans, particularly in combat,

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<sup>294</sup> Attaleiates, 222.

<sup>295</sup> Attaleiates, 222.

<sup>296</sup> Attaleiates, 222.

<sup>297</sup> Cassius Dio, XVI.43 (Loeb vol. 2, page 199).

often juxtaposing them to the ineffective Byzantine Romans of the mid-to-late eleventh century. In addition, his portrayal of the Norman mercenary leaders was consistently positive, including a portrait of Roussel's rebellion in which the Norman was presented as a protagonist. To advance his argument for their integration, Attaleiates frequently called the Normans "Latins," and even "Albans," at some points. These labels had important connotations because they were examples of peoples that were closely related to the Romans. Most significantly, in the classical sources both the Latins and the Albans ultimately became Romans themselves. The parallel was one that Attaleiates wanted his audience to make, and thus he was not subtle in his claims that the Normans were part of a "commonwealth" with Byzantium. Another way of convincing courtiers that the Normans should be integrated into the Byzantine Roman elite was to claim that Botaneiates, the emperor, was somehow partly descended from western European barbarians, like the Normans themselves. This statement was similar to the one concerning the emperor Trajan made by Psellos in the *Historia Syntomos*. But whereas Psellos had to be very subtle, indeed subversive, in his text due to his connection to Roussel's suspected accomplices, Attaleiates was much freer to be explicit in his. Indeed, Attaleiates' text represents the principal source for understanding how the Byzantine courtiers fit the Normans into Roman history in an attempt to integrate them.

## Conclusion

The Byzantine response to the Normans' arrival in the Mediterranean was complex and changed considerably in the period between their first encounter and the First Crusade. The change in Byzantine attitudes tells much about the malleability of the Byzantine Roman elites' worldview. At first, the Normans were simply a vaguely-defined group of Franks, a broader ethnic category employed by Byzantines for centuries to describe the different peoples north of the Alps. No need emerged for the recalibration of this category as the west had relatively limited contact with the empire between the sixth and mid-eleventh century.<sup>298</sup> But between the 1040s and 1060s some Norman warriors conquered Byzantine lands in Italy while other Norman mercenaries played an important role in defending the empire's eastern borders against the Turks. As discussed in chapter 3, by the early 1070s, the Norman mercenary leaders in Byzantium were becoming increasingly important figures in the empire's internal politics. This process of Norman integration into the Byzantine body politics culminated in Roussel de Bailleul's attempt to gain the throne. At the same time, the negotiated marriage alliance between Guiscard and the Doukai, further demonstrated the Normans' power.

Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates both saw the increasing problems of the empire, and recognized the Normans' considerable potential as leaders of the imperial army. The two historians used Roman history in order to create a place for these

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<sup>298</sup> Elizabeth van Houts, "Normandy and Byzantium," *Byzantion* 55 (1985): 550. It should be noted that some scholars have suggested there was more contact between Byzantium and the west than has often been assumed. The works of Michael McCormick which demonstrate that there was some important traffic in people, texts, and ideas between Byzantium and the west in the low middle ages. See Michael McCormick, "Diplomacy and the Carolingian Encounter with Byzantium down to the accession of Charles the Bald," in *Eriugena: East and West. Papers of the Eighth International Symposium of the Study for the Promotion of Eriugenean Studies* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1994), 15-48. Nevertheless, this traffic in ideas seems to have been more prevalent in the Carolingian period, but not so much in the early eleventh century.

increasingly important Normans within the Byzantine court and army hierarchy, even promoting the idea of a Norman leader for the Byzantine Empire. Psellos, who could not afford to be seen as a vocal supporter of Roussel given that his own friend the *kaisar* Ioannes Doukas was already viewed as the Norman's accomplice, did this surreptitiously in a manner that few would have treated as offensive or treasonous. Attaleiates' situation was very different from that of Psellos, and as a consequence his approach to integrating the Normans was more transparent. Thus, in the *History*, he repeatedly emphasized how the administration *should* have been dealing with the Normans. He strengthened his argument by emphasizing that the Normans were "Latins" and thus closely related to Romans. They were supposed to be the Romans' natural allies, and were affiliates of a "commonwealth" with Byzantium. Despite differences in their approaches, the two historians shared one literary strategy: they posited, by deploying fictive genealogies, a complex and historically accurate view of the evolution of Roman identity that "barbarized" the Byzantine Romans, arguing that "Celtic" ancestors existed for the Romans of their own day. Psellos did this by artificially claiming that Trajan had been a Celt. Attaleiates too claimed that the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates had Celtic ancestors.

This study has demonstrated that the eleventh-century Byzantine-Norman interaction was more complex than the typical narrative suggests. Scholarship has generally and mostly correctly argued that the relationship between Byzantium and the west from the early twelfth to the mid fifteenth centuries was characterized by hostility and tension. Even during the First Crusade, there was significant friction between the Byzantine Romans and western Europeans. Such friction was often accompanied by

massacres and invasions. It is anachronistic however, to suggest that the eleventh-century interaction between the Byzantine Romans and the Normans was inherently negative.

Rather, I have shown that the eleventh century, particularly the turbulent 1060's and 1070s, was a window in which other possible relationships between the Byzantine Romans and the Normans were considered by various Byzantine Roman courtiers. At that time the Byzantine perception of the Normans was in a state of flux due to Byzantium's complicated relationship with these newcomers from the west. My study has demonstrated that some of these courtiers reacted to the challenges raised by such cross-cultural interaction by suggesting that the Normans were a valuable resource for the empire. Figures like Psellos and Attaleiates therefore advocated for the integration of the Normans into the Byzantine Roman elite.

My study has also contributed to scholars' understanding of how educated eleventh-century Byzantines received and used ancient Roman histories. Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates actively used Roman histories to achieve their political goals, and searched for ways to categorize, label, and integrate the Normans. But they made this argument *after* the Normans had become a group that demanded the Byzantine elites' attention. In other words, Byzantine Roman historians with political agendas, such as Psellos and Attaleiates, used Roman history to suit their needs as such needs emerged. On a more general level, my research has built on the work of scholars such as Anthony Kaldellis, who have emphasized the importance of Roman history as a component of Byzantine identity. My own project's findings reinforce the conclusion of his scholarship. It is important to note that when the Byzantine elites' wanted to determine or define the Normans' background, they sought their answers in Roman, not ecclesiastical, histories.

This is another indication of how important Roman history was in eleventh-century Byzantine elite ideology.

Psellos's and Attaleiates's efforts also help explain why the Byzantines and Italo-Normans had a "special" relationship during the first crusade. It is unlikely that either Psellos or Attaleiates lived to experience the reign of Alexios Komnenos, the Byzantine Roman emperor who participated in the First Crusade. However, Alexios Komnenos (r.1081-1118) rose to power during the 1070s when the Normans were playing a key role in both the empire's defence and politics, and courtiers such as Psellos and Attaleiates were addressing them in their historical work. Thus it is interesting that Alexios successfully incorporated many Normans into the Byzantine elite, an idea that Psellos and Attaleiates put forth in their texts. Like his predecessors, Alexios made extensive use of Normans in his army and government, but unlike his predecessors, he never suffered a single rebellion by Norman émigré generals. Scholars have pointed out that Alexios effectively obtained many Normans' loyalty by granting them court titles,<sup>299</sup> and substantial lands in the empire.<sup>300</sup> Thus, Alexios co-opted Normans more effectively than any of his predecessors. Alexios also gave preferential treatment to the Italo-Norman contingent during the First Crusade. Although many historians have portrayed the relationship between the Italo-Norman contingent's leader, Bohemond (who was also the son of Robert Guiscard), and Alexios as particularly antagonistic, it appears that Alexios probably worked well with him. Indeed, it seems that the emperor used Bohemond as the

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<sup>299</sup> Shepard, "Uses of the Frank," 303-304.

<sup>300</sup> Donald M. Nicol, "Symbiosis and Integration: Some Greco-Latin Families in Byzantium in the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979): 124-125.

principal liaison between the Byzantine administration and the Crusader leadership,<sup>301</sup> and granted him material wealth and the prospect of career advancement.<sup>302</sup>

I do not wish to argue that *because* historians such as Attaleiates and Psellos used Roman history to suggest that the Normans needed to be integrated into Byzantium, the latter were successfully integrated. Yet it is important to point out, as this thesis has done, that the *History* and the *Historia Syntomos* transformed the way in which Byzantine historians and courtiers talked about the Normans. It is also undeniable that these historical works were added to the Byzantine public discourse shortly before the emperor Alexios Komnenos inducted numerous Normans into the highest echelons of Byzantine society.

Clearly, the works of Polybius, Appian, Plutarch and Cassius Dio were important to many Byzantine Roman courtiers. But Roman history was not a crystalline backdrop that formed a fixed frame of reference for Attaleiates or Psellos. Rather it was a fluid body of material from which to draw information for their arguments and political agendas. Psellos and Attaleiates worked ingeniously and creatively with Roman histories, demonstrating that Byzantium had superb classicists who eagerly sought answers to their challenging times in the writings of their predecessors. We should remember this when reading their texts.

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<sup>301</sup> Jonathan Shepard, "When Greek Meets Greek: Alexius Comnenus and Bohemond in 1097-1098," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 213.

<sup>302</sup> Shepard, "When Greek Meets Greek," 198, 216. Indeed, Bohemond was the only crusader leader to engage in "secret" discussions with Alexios.

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