

Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Nikaian Generation: Roman Political Culture in the Years of Exile

by
Aleksandar Jovanović

M.A. (Classical Philology), University of Belgrade, 2014

B.A. (Classical Philology), University of Belgrade, 2013

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the
Department of History
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

© Aleksandar Jovanović 2019
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2019

Approval

Name: Aleksandar Jovanović

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy

Title: Michael VIII Palaiologos and the Nikaian
Generation: Roman Political Culture in the Years
of Exile

Examining Committee: **Chair:** Mary-Ellen Kelm
Professor

Dimitris Krallis
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor

Paul Edward Dutton
Supervisor
Professor

Thomas Kuehn
Supervisor
Associate Professor

David Mirhady
Internal Examiner
Professor
Humanities

Cecily Hilsdale
External Examiner
Associate Professor
Art History and Communication Studies
McGill University

Date Defended/Approved: July 30, 2019

Abstract

The present dissertation examines the ways in which Roman officials and dignitaries acted as active agents vis-à-vis the emperor by engaging with the various publics that comprised Roman society in order to gain the public support necessary for the advancement of their careers. It is my aim to explore the communicative actions—oral textual, visual, and material—employed by these officials as they promoted themselves to wider Roman audiences throughout the empire. In order to emphasize the individuality of bureaucrats, I have opted to offer a biographic narrative of a Roman official by the name Michael Palaiologos, who donned the imperial dignity in the very last days of 1258. By following Palaiologos' public life from his formative years to his imperial coronation, a whole new world of social interactions arises before us and we see individual agents other than the emperor engaging in the public arena of Roman society in the hopes of carving out a place for themselves under the sun.

By focusing on the importance of communicative methods in the political lives of Roman officials, I contribute to a wider scholarly conversation about the role wider publics—those who did not dwell at the imperial court—played in shaping the politics of the Roman polity. It is my argument here that the publics' role was essential not only in maintaining the existing regime, but for advancing an individual's career within the Roman system of officialdom. In arguing so, I hope to demonstrate the communicative creativity of officials such as Michael Palaiologos, who had to come up with orthodox and unorthodox ways of endearing themselves to specific interest groups in the empire in order for their political lives to prosper.

Keywords: Roman empire; Byzantine empire; public sphere; public consensus; communicative actions; textual history.

Acknowledgements

The completion of this doctoral project would not have been imaginable without the support I have gladly received from a number of people and institutions, both lay and academic. To Dimitris Krallis, I owe a multilayered thank you for being an attentive supervisor ready to engage in academic talk at any given moment, as well as a genuine friend, who was always there to help me stay focused and optimistic. I know that it was not always easy to balance the two roles since the student, once off duty, was quite imposing on your free time. Paul Dutton—I am grateful for our conversations during the preparatory period for the comprehensive exams. I still vividly recall our talk about Charlemagne, Harun al-Rashid, and an elephant, which inspired me to start thinking about the significance of communication among various members of premodern polities that ended up being the core of this dissertation. Thomas Kuehn—I immensely appreciate the time you have taken to gradually introduce me to the world of the later Ottomans. Working with you has activated my constant re-imagination of our perceptions of Byzantine governing, social, and cultural practices informed by concepts widely developed and employed in the field of Ottoman Studies. I genuinely thank all three of you for offering your patient and constant guidance in the never-ending process of my scholarly morphosis. Thank you, too, Cecily Hilsdale and David Mirhady, for joining the dissertation committee and for offering much-appreciated feedback.

I owe a special thank you to the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' Office for the financial support I have received in the form of Multi-Year Funding Package, which made my scholarly journey at SFU much more pleasant. Without the generous support received from the GPS Office, as well as from the SNF Centre for Hellenic Studies, my escapades around Vancouver, Belgrade, and Athens, would have been much more restricted, and the writing process would have been far more onerous.

There are a number of people who prevented potential headaches related to administration and deadlines. From my first email inquiring about the graduate program at SFU back in September 2013, all the way to scheduling the date of defence in the summer of 2019, Ruth Anderson, I thank you for being more than a patient guide in my navigation of administrative waters at SFU. I owe thanks to Chris Dickert and Lauren Gilbert, who were always there to help me cope with any issues I had while being at Hellenic Studies. A special thanks goes to the librarians at the Bennett Library who were

always able to acquire whatever I requested either through outright purchase or interlibrary loan.

Crossing the Atlantic and settling in Vancouver took much more patience and courage than I ever could have imagined. For being there for me in moments when I lacked both patience and courage, I cannot express enough gratitude to Alex Grammatikos—from the moment I landed at YVR in 2014, you have been beyond supportive and patient with me and my peculiarities, while always finding the time to iron out the ESL oddities in my writings, this dissertation included. I am eternally grateful for having had the chance to become friends with Shawna Vickerman—thank you for all the hikes, vacations, gossip sessions, and medical advice—and Nicole Vittoz—thank you for all the conversations over beer and pizza at both Alibi Room and Corduroy. You have made my Vancouver experience truly special. Finally, thank you, Jovana Anđelković, for being an amazing colleague and friend in the past three years. To this day, I remember our walk over Cambie Bridge and your patient listening to a monologue at the end of which I came up with the idea of writing social history through the biography of Michael VIII Palaiologos.

It would not be possible to conclude this public act of gratitude without mentioning all those who made me what I am today. I am forever grateful to my happily divorced parents, Valentina Šćekić and Dragan Jovanović, for insisting on my learning English from the age of three and for supporting me in all my decisions, even when, at the age of 12, after having heard several cheesy pop songs by Anna Vissi and Despina Vandi (to whom I will always be grateful for introducing this language called Greek into my life), I told them I wished to study things Greek. Thank you for being so supportive even when not completely understanding me. Speaking of understanding me, I owe an immense debt to Aleksandra Pavlović, who greatly contributed to my understanding of the world around me since 1993 and Milica Špadijer with whom I learned how to truly appreciate the beauty of Greek and Latin literature and without whom, the challenges imposed by the Department of Classics in Belgrade would not have been bearable. I thank you both for being my friends, even five years into my emigration from Serbia. Last, but certainly not the least, I wish to thank you, Larisa Orlov-Vilimonović, for having actively kindled my interest in things Byzantine (in every sense of the term) and for remaining a supportive friend and colleague despite the distance between us.

Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Content.....	vi
Note on Translation and Transliteration	viii
List of Abbreviations.....	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction: Meeting the Roman Public	1
1.1. The Empire of Individuals: Communicative Actions and Individual Agency	2
1.2. Biography: A Vehicle for Writing Social History	6
1.3. Places of Communication: The Public Arena	10
1.4. Publics and Actions by Chapters.....	16
Chapter 2. Making Roman Officials in Exile: The Case of the Palaiologoi	20
2.1. Preparation for Greatness: Education at the Imperial Court.....	23
2.2. Education: A Public Affair	27
2.3. <i>Progymnasmata</i> in Action: Michael Palaiologos' Erudition on Public Display.....	33
2.4. Like Father Like Son: Andronikos and Michael Palaiologos in the Public Eye	38
2.5. A Useful Life: Andronikos Palaiologos in Provincial Public Service	41
2.6. A Useful Afterlife: The Place of Andronikos Palaiologos in the Public Memory of Thessaloniki	49
Chapter 3. Linking the Golden Chain: The Social Network of Michael Palaiologos ..	55
3.1. Keeping Checks and Balances among the Romans	59
3.2. Michael's Trial: A Hot Mess?.....	65
3.3. A Fresh Start with Old Friends: Imperial Son-in-Law and New Appointment.....	72
3.4. Theodoros II Laskaris: The Breaker of Chains	84

Chapter 4. “Je veux être calife à la place du calife”: Michael Palaiologos in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum	91
4.1. The Prodigal Son: The Seljuk Sultanate of Rum.....	94
4.2. The Sultanate of Rum: A Byzantine Safe Haven?.....	99
4.3. Flight to the (Un)Known	103
4.4. Michael Palaiologos: A Seljuk Dignitary.....	113
4.5. There and Back Again	123
Chapter 5. “The Return of the King”: Michael Palaiologos Claims Imperial Dignity	126
5.1. Homecoming.....	129
5.2. The Rhetorical Side of SPQR: Obtaining Public Support for the Mouzalones’ Regency 137	
5.3. The Violent Side of SPQR: Obtaining Public Support for the Palaiologan Regency ..	143
5.4. Social Capital in SPQR: Michael Palaiologos, Guardian of the Empire	148
5.5. The Final Countdown: Michael Palaiologos Goes for the Throne	152
5.6. <i>Panem et Circenses</i> : Michael Palaiologos and the Public Consensus.....	158
5.7. The Man Who Wrote the Book	162
Chapter 6. Conclusion	165
6.1. The Publics and Their Wants.....	165
6.2. Concluding the Conclusion.....	168
Bibliography	170

Note on Translation and Transliteration

In the present dissertation, I adhere to our contemporary standards of naming people, nations, and places by their autochthonous and not Anglicized names. Much as nobody has any qualms (or at least I hope not) with my name being Aleksandar and not Alexander, I have decided to extend the same courtesy to the medieval Romans, who are the central actors of the pages to follow. To begin with, then, the term Byzantine and its derivatives are used interchangeably with the term Roman and its cognates, although the latter is preferred, for the people under study here were Romans and Romans alone. Also, there is no John or Johannes, but only Ioannes; no Latinized versions of names and places such as Alexius I Comnenus and Dyrrachium, but rather Alexios I Komnenos and Dyrrachion. All this to say that I have opted to transliterate virtually all Greek proper nouns. At the expense of complete transparency of the graphemes, but for the ease of reading, I have omitted placing lengths on long vowels. Thus, there will be no distinction between ϵ (*epsilon*) and η (*eta*) or \omicron (*omikron*) and ω (*omega*). For example, the title hero of the narrative is named Michael Palaiologos and not Michaël Palaiologos; his arch-nemesis in contemporaneous narratives is named Theodoros II Laskaris and not Theodōros II Laskaris. I have applied the same rules of transliteration to the offices and dignities of the Romans: *megas stratopedarches*, *megas konostaulos*, etc. All other names of Perso-Arabic or Turkish provenance, as well as Italian and Frankish names, have been transliterated in accordance with existing practices, while, again, omitting placing lengths on long vowels. For example, we find Sulayman ibn Qutlumush and not Solomon ibn Kutlumush, nor the modern Turkish Kutalmıışoğlu Süleyman Şah. Finally, it should be noted that there are some exceptions to the rule. Some geographical locations as well as Latin speaking emperors of the Romans have become an integral part of common parlance in English, and thus have been preserved in their Anglicized forms: Constantinople, Constantine the Great, Thessaloniki.

In order to keep up with the consistency of naming practices, I have opted to offer my own translation of all the texts (unless otherwise noted). Having said that, in translating from Greek, I have consulted, where available, existing English and other translations of the sources. Here I wish to emphasize that I have relied heavily on Ruth J. Macrides' translation of Georgios Akropolites' *The History*, as well as Vitalien Laurent's French translation of Georgios Pachymeres' *Historical Relations*.

List of Abbreviations

<i>Actes d'Iviron III</i>	Lefort, Jacques, Oikonomidès, Nicolas; Papachryssanthou, Denise, et Kravari Vassiliki eds. <i>Actes d'Iviron III: de 1204 à 1328</i> . Paris: Peeters, 1994.
Akropolites, <i>Chronike</i>	Heisenberg, Augustus, ed. et comm. <i>Georgii Acropolitae Opera</i> , I. Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1903 (editionem anni MCMIII correctiorem curavit P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978).
Aphthonios, <i>Progymnasmata</i>	Rabe, Hugo, ed. <i>Aphthonii progymnasmata</i> . Lipsiae: Teubner, 1926.
Autoreianos, <i>Testament</i>	Migne, Jean-Pail, ed. <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> 140. Parisiis: Garnier Fratres, 1865.
Blemmydes, <i>Curriculum</i>	Munitiz, J.A. ed. <i>Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia sive Curriculum Vitae necnon Epistula Universalior</i> . Turhout: Brepols, 1984.
Blemmydes, <i>Epitome Logikes</i>	Migne, Jean-Paul, ed. <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> 142. Parisiis: Garnier Fratres, 1863.
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
ByzSym	<i>Byzantina Symmeikta</i>
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Paper</i>
FM	<i>Fontes Minores</i>
JÖB	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>

Laskaris, <i>Letters</i>	Festa, Nicola, ed. <i>Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII</i> . Firenze: Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento, 1898.
MM	Miklosich, Fraz et Muller, Josef, eds., <i>Acta et diplomata medii aevi sacra et profana</i> VI vol. Vindobonae: C. Gerold, 1860–90.
ODB	Kazhdan, Alexander P. <i>Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Pachymeres, <i>Chronikon</i>	Failler, Albert, éd. et intro., Laurent, Vitalien transl. <i>Georges Pachymérès Relations historiques</i> , I. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984.
Palaiologos, <i>Autobiography</i>	Grégoire, Henri. "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi <i>De vita sua</i> ." <i>Byzantion</i> 29-30 (1959-60): 447-74
PLP	Trapp, Erich, ed. <i>Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit</i> . Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976.
REB	<i>Revue des Études Byzantines</i>
<i>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</i>	Volkman, Hans, ed. and transl. <i>Res gestae Divi Augusti das Monumentum Ancyranum</i> . Leipzig: Reisland 1942.
<i>Synopsis Chronike</i>	Sathas, Konstantinos, ed. Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη VII. Venice: Phoenix, 1894.
ZRVI	<i>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta SANU</i>

Chapter 1. Introduction: Meeting the Roman Public

At 9:00 PM on March 18, 2014, a group of political activists—most of whom were students—stormed and occupied the Legislative Yuan, Taiwan’s parliament. Hundreds of student and other activists decided to occupy Taiwan’s parliament in order to turn the political elites’, as well as the wider public’s, attention to the ruling party’s intention to sign the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement. According to the protesters, the free trade agreement with the People’s Republic of China would heavily infringe on Taiwan’s economic and, in the long run, political independence vis-à-vis its mainland counterpart. After twenty-three days of occupation, the ruling Kuomintang party capitulated and offered a public point-by-point review of the document before signing it. Once the agreement between the activists, by now labelled popularly as the Sunflower Movement, and Kuomintang had been reached, the building hosting both the Legislative and Executive Yuan was evacuated.¹

The news about the occupation of the Yuan took Taiwan by storm and soon hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Taipei to express their approval or disapproval of the Sunflower Movement. This unprecedented event in Taiwan’s fairly passive political culture shook the state as a whole. Riding on the tide of the Sunflower Movement, however, individuals of the likes of Huang Kuo-Chang, one of the most vocal activists within the occupied Legislative Yuan, were able to introduce themselves to the wider public as potential long-term alternatives to the existing political establishment. Indeed, a year after the Sunflower Movement, Huang became the leader of the New Power Party and, as its candidate, managed to secure a place for himself in the Legislative Yuan in 2016.

Academics were fairly quick to address the rise of the Sunflower Movement by focusing on the cracks within the Taiwanese governing establishment that social movements used to their advantage to shake up an otherwise passive public opinion.² The speeches delivered by leading activists and the president of Taiwan, as well as massive public gatherings in the streets of

¹ For an overview of the event see: I. Rowen, “Inside Taiwan’s Sunflower Movement: Twenty-Four Days in the Student Occupied Parliament, and the Future of the Region,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74 (2015), 5–20.

² For instance see: M.S. Ho “Occupy Congress in Taiwan: Political Opportunity, Threat, and The Sunflower Movement,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15 (2015), 69–97; Ho, “From Mobilization to Improvisation: The Lessons from Taiwan’s 2014 Sunflower Movement,” *Social Movement Studies* 17 (2018), 189–202; and Ho, *Challenging Beijing’s Mandate of Heaven: Taiwan’s Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong’s Umbrella Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2019).

Taipei—all of which were broadcast by the main media outlets domestically and internationally—have enabled scholars to analyze the significance of a primarily student-led social movement in shifting the political paradigm in Taiwan and East Asia more broadly. To this date, the free trade agreement with China has not been ratified by the Legislative Yuan and thus, continuing scholarly interest in the 2014 movement has proven justified. While theoretical and methodological frameworks of academic inquiry deployed to look at the Sunflower Movement have varied greatly depending on researchers' academic interests and educational background, one common thread can be noted: the unrestricted and rapid flow of information has been taken for granted by every scholar. The Yuan was occupied at 9:00 PM; by 9:30PM, the majority of Taiwanese citizens were aware of what was going on; and by 10:00 PM most of the world could find relevant information about the event in more than a few languages. Thanks to such a rapid spread of communiqués targeted at the voting Taiwanese, Huang Kuo-Chang was able to make himself known to the wider public. In the long run, he used the political capital he accumulated during the twenty-three-day occupation of the Yuan to advance his own position in the country's political life. But what happens when an instantaneous and geographically unlimited flow of information is cut off from an individual blocking the Legislative Yuan? What value does the very act of occupation have if the news about it take days, weeks, or even months to reach the targeted audiences that are supposed to be influenced by the Sunflower Movement? How would Huang Kuo-Chang have become a democratically elected MP in the Legislative Yuan if nobody had heard of him and his speeches during his twenty-three-day stay in the building of the parliament? It is with such questions in mind that I turn our attention from our contemporary Huang Kuo-Chang to Michael Palaiologos, a thirteenth-century Byzantine magistrate-turned-emperor of the Romans.

1.1. The Empire of Individuals: Communicative Actions and Individual Agency

The present dissertation aims to explore the ways in which individual agents employed different public arenas in order to establish popular consensus for their own political agendas among specific societal interest groups within the Roman polity. That is, by examining active agency of individuals in the public life of the Roman state in exile (1204–1261), I demonstrate the necessity of transclass engagement with the Roman body politic as a prerequisite to advancing one's political career. Of course, one has to keep in mind the quite limited premodern means of disseminating ideas about one's merit and abilities among the elites and the wider Roman

populace alike. In exploring the ways in which individual state officials promoted themselves to a wide range of social groups as ideal candidates for public offices, I chart and analyze specific communicative methods employed by statesmen in order to gain the needed support of the empire's publics. By examining the means of public self-promotion in the Roman empire, I hope to be able to contribute to the wider conversation in the field of Byzantine and Medieval Studies about the complicated role that elites and the general populace played in shaping the governing practices of the medieval Roman polity.

In the second half of the 20th century, scholars working on the pre-modern Mediterranean have begun to look towards sociological and anthropological theories to explain the ways in which vast multi-ethnic (or at least multi-lingual) empires operated and endured over time. The introduction of theoretical frameworks led scholars to deploy academic jargon previously unused in the historical examination of pre-modern polities. Thus, nowadays, we are quite comfortable talking about the *public consensus* in Rome, *political and legal culture* in Han China, or *body politic* in the seventeenth-century Ottoman empire.³ The rise of such conceptual models of inquiry has led scholars working on various premodern empires to re-examine the ways in which we imagine the very essence of these polities' social, economic, political, and cultural practices.

Diving into the sea of available concepts, mostly concerned with the 18th century and beyond, Clifford Ando in his *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalties* employed Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action's significance in maintaining consensus in the public sphere of bourgeois societies in Early Modern and Modern Europe.⁴ Ando's goal was to adjust Habermas' observations and make them suitable for an examination of the ways in which the Roman empire of the first two centuries CE established and maintained rather peaceful coexistence for its inhabitants regardless of their social, economic, racial, or linguistic background. There were, however, a catch or two. In his analysis Ando had to disregard such means of information dissemination as the newspapers or affordable printed books that were employed by modern Europeans in public debates. Habermas' idea about the value of communicative actions in maintaining public consensus among modern Europeans, however,

³ For instance, see: Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press 2000); P.R. Golding, "Han Law and the Regulation of Interpersonal Relations: 'The Confucianization of the Law' Revisited," *Asia Major* 25 (2012), 1–31; B. Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge, New York et al: Cambridge University Press 2010).

⁴ J. Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, T. McCarthy transl. (Boston: Beacon Press 1979); Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., T. McCarthy transl. (Boston: Beacon Press (1984/1987)).

served as a useful tool for Ando to explain the consensus the Roman state had built through communicative methods, of which sheer force was but a subset. According to Ando's model we see a rather vivid Roman provincial society whose peaceful and willing support becomes crucial for operating the polity:

For a society like that of Rome, which believed that its legitimacy as a normative order and, indeed, its good relations with the divine derived directly from the *consensus of its participants, communication as a process for reaching understanding was of the utmost importance*. Indeed, the Roman empire achieves its unique status among world empires in no small part through its gradual extension of government by consensus formation to all its subjects. In doing so, it had to create, adopt, or extend the *institutions of communicative practice* throughout its territory. Thus Romans believed that the maintenance of their society depended upon a communicative practice that had to satisfy certain conditions of rationality—although it was in the first instance that Rome defined those conditions. Yet that practice exposed the conditions themselves to question: their validity came to rest not on the power of Rome to assert them, but upon the integrative work of Roman and provincial who together coordinated their social actions through criticizable validity claims.⁵

The consensus reached by every free body in the empire, then, became the means by which the state apparatus functioned for several centuries. In turn, such consensus was maintained mainly through the communicative institutions that state and emperor forged over the centuries of Roman dominance in the Mediterranean. These communicative institutions relied on communicative actions. The communicative actions in the premodern Roman empire were limited to the following: imperial effigies sent around the empire, imperially sponsored building projects in the provinces, universal legislation and the ubiquity of imperial legal proclamations' around the empire. There was also, the Roman legal system offering justice to whomever was in want of it, and record-keeping in provincial cities.⁶ All these practices established public support for the Roman empire and ensured the willing integration of its subjects into the Roman nation. The success of these communicative actions is best represented by emperor Caracalla's issuance of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* granting Roman citizenship to all the subjects of the Roman state, that is people who had been Romanized (and had influenced the perception of Romanness) over the course of the two centuries of *Pax Romana*.⁷

Building upon Ando's idea that a wider public consensus maintained the Roman polity, Anthony Kaldellis in *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* offered a new

⁵ Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 77 (emphases added are my own).

⁶ Ando, 73–130; 206–76.

⁷ On the *Constitutio Antoniniana* and its political significance see: O. Hekster, *Rome and Its Empire, AD 193–284*, Edinburgh 2008, 45–55; C. Ando, *Law, Language, and Empire*, 19–36.

framework for the study of the medieval Roman polity's political system; one that discarded narratives about the theocratic nature of the Byzantine government and introduced public consensus as central to maintaining a regime in power.⁸ Kaldellis' campaign against the rather essentialist views of Byzantine political and social culture that still mark the field was aided by Ando's communicative action approach as well as by several scholarly surveys of the Byzantine governing apparatus that cast the state as far more Roman in essence than traditionally allowed.⁹ With *The Byzantine Republic*, then, a new view of Byzantine governing practices comes to fore: while the emperor exercised immense power, his rule would be impossible without the support of the empire's elites, as well as the populace at large.

While Kaldellis engaged with Byzantine political culture and governing practices, the main scope of his research rests in demonstrating that in every aspect of their existence the Byzantines were Romans.¹⁰ Contributing to the exploration of various aspects of medieval hellenophone Romanness, scholars such as Leonora Neville and Dimitris Krallis have offered single author studies. These single author studies take us to the practical level of one's Romanness and show how specific individuals negotiated existing social and political realities and their own expectations from their careers. Thus, in *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios*, Neville examines the ways in which Roman heroic ethos was employed by Nikephoros Bryennios, a leading Byzantine courtier of the 12th century, in writing his historiographic narrative.¹¹ Moving away from cultural legacy, Krallis in *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh Century Byzantium* and *Serving Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates* engages with the life of a Roman judge, Michael Attaleiates, in order to explore the ways in which the statesman himself theorized the world around him and the historical memory

⁸ A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA/London, UK: Harvard University Press 2015).

⁹ J.B. Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene* (London: MacMillan, 1889); H.-G. Beck, *Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel: Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966); Beck, *Res Publica Romana: Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1970).

¹⁰ Kaldellis' monographs on identity in the medieval Roman empire: A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, UK/New York et al: Cambridge University Press 2007); Kaldellis, *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium* (Cambridge, MA/London, UK, 2019).

¹¹ L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in the Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios* (Cambridge, UK/New York et al: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

of the Roman nation in the 11th century.¹² By examining the ways in which specific historical agents conceptualized the world they lived in thanks to their own erudition and reading of pre-existing literature, Neville and Krallis captured specific social and cultural trends in the constantly shifting political realities of the Roman state and society and, from it, draw wider conclusions about the Byzantine polity. In so doing, both scholars escaped a somewhat essentialist approach of grand narratives that seem to argue, intentionally or not, that the Byzantine state and its culture remained monolithic and unchanged over the centuries.

Engaging with such scholarship, my dissertation is the first to look at how individual agents employed specific communicative actions for their own political advancement. That is, I demonstrate how individuals who were not emperors used their active agency in the framework of the existing Byzantine political and social culture in order to advance their own fortunes in the imperial administration. It is my aim to examine the role interactions among people with names and surnames such as Bryennios and Attaleiates played in the grand narratives of depersonalized state bureaucratic apparatuses and defaced masses. In doing so, I hope to contribute to the wider understanding of medieval Roman societal practices in governing the state, albeit not from an aerial view, but from an on-the-ground perspective. In other words, I look at the ways in which individuals could mobilize and even shape Ando's and Kaldellis' faceless "institutions of communicative practice."¹³ By focusing on one individual, Michael Palaiologos, while not conducting a single author study, I move away from the singular person's worldview to offer a personalized version of the communicative means people had at their disposal in order to publicly promote themselves to various socio-economic and political factions of the Roman empire.

1.2. Biography: A Vehicle for Writing Social History

When writing the biography of Ioannes VI Kantakouzenos, Donald Nicol noted that his work attempted to reconstruct the life, including all the personal aspects, of a Byzantine emperor. Thus, as Nicol made clear to his readers: "[the] book does not aim to present a social and political history of the Byzantine Empire in the fourteenth century."¹⁴ In direct opposition to

¹² D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh Century Byzantium* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies 2012); Krallis, *Serving Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates* (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan 2019).

¹³ Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 77.

¹⁴ D. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295-1383* (Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

Nicol's biographical narrative of Ioannes Kantakouzenos, the biographical framework of this dissertation serves as a means to present social history of the 13th century. The present biography of Michael Palaiologos should not be read as an attempt at a definite reconstruction of his life; questions concerning Michael Palaiologos' psyche, desires, emotions, and his personal life are not taken into consideration here. Rather, questions that revolve around the choices Palaiologos made in his public career prior to his enthronement in 1259—which have come down to us through multiple sources—make up the central part of this biography. Thus, whether Michael *really* plotted or not against Ioannes III Batatzes or Theodoros II Laskaris, remains beyond the scope of this project. What concerns us here is that Romans reading accounts of Michael's actions, including accusations of his alleged acts of treason, could find these actions plausible. The very plausibility of actions ascribed to Michael Palaiologos, either by himself or by other authors, is what makes them relevant for our narrative.¹⁵ By looking at these plausible actions, I explore different aspects of communicative action in Michael Palaiologos sought public self-promotion to emperors, elites, and commoners alike and examine how by means of such communicative actions Palaiologos to fulfill his political aspirations. The biography of Michael Palaiologos, then, serves as an ideal means by which to combine different themes in social and cultural history into a single cohesive narrative.

Michael Palaiologos proved to be an ideal candidate for writing the social biography of imperial magistrates, as his public career took him all around the empire during the Roman polity's exilic era. That is, Palaiologos was born in 1223 in Roman-ruled Bithynia, when the imperial capital of the Roman empire, Constantinople, had been under the rule of Western European crusaders. The convenience of this time period rests in the fact that, for the first time since, arguably, the reign of Constantine the Great, we see historians and other literati of the empire writing from a non-Constantinopolitan perspective. With the sack of Constantinople in 1204, the traditional dichotomy between the clear image of the central government's *modus*

¹⁵ On plausibility, or rather truth-telling as a persuasive technique in Byzantine historiography see: S. Papaioannou, "The Aesthetics of Historiography: Theophanes to Eustathios," in R.J. Macrides, ed., *History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 3–24; also, on rhetorical practices including the role of plausible truth-telling in historiography see: A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); M.J. Wheeldon, "'True Stories': The Reception of Historiography in Antiquity," in A. Cameron, ed., *History as Text: the Writing of Ancient History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 33–63; M. Mullett, "Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction," in J. Burke et al, eds., *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott* (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006), 1–28.

operandi and the blurred provincial social and political realities had come to an end.¹⁶ Thus, in following Michael's life and career in Asia Minor and the Balkans we escape Constantinople's gravitational pull and see, for the first time in a long while, how provincial notables and populations at large reacted to the Roman state and its high officials. This rare opportunity to explore the magistrates' ability to mobilize the provincial populaces' support in order to promote their own careers allows us to examine the communicative actions the likes of Michael Palaiologos had at their disposal in crafting an attractive public persona for their audiences.

Michael VIII Palaiologos' imperial tenure (1259–1282) and the public persona he projected toward the Roman publics has not escaped contemporary scholarly attention. Being the emperor under whom Constantinople was restored to the Romans, as well as a man who obtained the throne solely for himself by blinding a child emperor, Michael had to carefully justify his position. In doing so, as shown by Alice-Mary Talbot and Cecily Hilsdale, Michael embarked on an artistic and architectural programme to emphasize the role of divine providence in his imperial elevation.¹⁷ The emperor did not miss a single opportunity to explain that his imperial ordination was an act of God and not the outcome of actions set in motion by his own will. Thus, statues, images, and coins traditionally represent the emperor in the company of a divine figure. In literary production Palaiologos himself, and his main intellectual mouthpiece, Georgios Akropolites, name divine grace and providence as Michael's Platonic *daimon*.¹⁸ All these communicative actions served to justify Michael VIII's imperial elevation and controversial actions that followed it that include the blinding of young Ioannes IV and the signing of an ecclesiastic union between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. Whether these communicative actions served their purpose or not remains open for discussion. On the one hand, the emperor stayed in power until his peaceful death in 1282. On the other, he died excommunicated by both the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome. Be it as it may, Michael VIII Palaiologos

¹⁶ For examination of medieval Roman provincial society before 1204, for example, see: P. Lemerle, *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century. The Sources and Problems* (Galway: Galway University Press, 1979); L. Neville, *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100* (Cambridge, UK/ New York et al, 2004); J Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis: Authority across the Byzantine Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). For the provincial society during the period of exile see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204-1261* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁷ M.-A. Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *DOP* 47 (1993), 243-61; C.J. Hilsdale, "The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)," *DOP* 64 (2010), 151–99; Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline* (Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 31–87.

¹⁸ On the role of divine protectors and providence in the image of Michael VIII Palaiologos see: Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, 31–87; R.J. Macrides, "Introduction," in: Georgios Akropolites, *The History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 54–5.

successfully branded himself as both the mighty New Constantine and restorer of Constantinople, as well as the victim of *fatum*, that is of divine providence, in the vein of Virgil's Aeneas.¹⁹ Both imperial images could be used at any given occasion depending on the audience and the desired effect they ought to produce. Through series innovations resting on his personal connection with the divine in his public image, then, Michael VIII Palaiologos managed to keep public consensus on his side until his very last breath.

How did Michael Palaiologos and his associates come up with all these ideas? Why would Michael care to forge an image of a divinely sanctioned New Constantine during his reign? Why was Michael elected emperor in the first place? It is by examining Michael Palaiologos and his career before he became emperor of the Romans that we find answers to these questions. Traditionally, it is imperial reigns that receive scholarly attention, not the formative years and career of an emperor-to-be.²⁰ In contrast to this approach, I begin the biographical narrative with Michael's formative years and end with his imperial coronation in 1259. By doing so, I hope to emphasize the importance active individual agency and public relations occupied in careers of officials and their promotions. While Michael VIII Palaiologos has been usually labelled as the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty with which the Roman empire enters the last stage of its development, here I look at Michael Palaiologos, a Roman official and member of the Nikaian generation; that is, a generation of officials and intellectuals raised at the imperial courts and palaces of the Roman empire in exile (1204–1261). The focus on the Nikaian generation shows Michael, as well as other authors who left their accounts of the events during the exilic period, as social and intellectual products of Laskarid educational and cultural policies. The individuals belonging to the Nikaian generation, in turn, shaped the first generation of Palaiologan scholars and bureaucrats serving under Michael VIII Palaiologos with whom scholars traditionally begin their accounts of the Palaiologan renaissance of arts and culture.²¹

Examining the ways in which non-emperors were able to employ communicative actions allows us to see how state officials gradually forged a reliable public image of themselves in order to stake out a spot for their own careers on the political scene of the Roman empire. By not exploring the public persona of an emperor, but rather that of his subordinates, I hope to

¹⁹ R.J. Macrides, "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261," *BMGS* 6 (1980), 13–41; for the role of divine providence and mercy see n.17 and n.18.

²⁰ For the example of Michael VIII Palaiologos and the exclusive focus on his imperial reign see: D.J. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West (1258–1282)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959).

²¹ For example, see: E.B. Fryde, *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261-c. 1360)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

demonstrate the complexities that hide behind the employment of communicative actions by state officials vis-à-vis the emperor. That is, while the emperor had the means and the ideological apparatus (i.e. institutions of communicative practice as Ando names them) to support his public image-building process, state officials had to be careful not to infringe on any of the emperor's prerogatives in their own self-promotion to peers and other Romans. For this reason, I believe studying the social and political agency of Roman statesmen, and not solely that of emperors, becomes pertinent for our conceptualization of power and social relations among various intertwined socio-economic factions within the empire.²² By shifting our gaze from the centre of power—the emperor—to traditionally faceless groupings in contemporary scholarship—bureaucrats, generals, and anonymous citizens—I hope to offer a nuanced reading of medieval Roman governing and social practices. After all, much like his political allies and adversaries, Michael Palaiologos did not shy away from bending expected codes of conduct in order to secure a place for himself in the highest echelons of power in the Roman empire, while, at the same time, relying on the existing governing apparatus and social system.

1.3. Places of Communication: The Public Arena

That Roman emperors and dignitaries employed the plethora of communicative actions—either visual or auditable—in order to gain public support for their respective agendas was a commonplace in the Roman empire. But what were these spaces in the empire where individuals could gain access to public opinion? That is, where and how could one get the opportunity to mobilize the public for their cause? Furthermore, how far-reaching were the echoes of communicative actions? In dealing with such questions, the basic premise on which I rely here is the concept of the public sphere, which one can define as “*a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about them. It is the locus of emergence for rhetorically salient meanings.*”²³ So, the public sphere becomes the conceptual space in which individuals like Michael Palaiologos could hope to influence public opinion and gain advantage over their political adversaries. The task that remains is to try to locate the spaces, be they physical or conceptual, within which the public sphere operated. Since the premodern polity of the Romans is the focus of the dissertation, we have to keep in mind that the limited communicative actions

²² For instance, both Ando and Kaldellis examine the centre of power focusing on emperors, imperial image, consensus in hand of the emperors.

²³ G.A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press 1999), 60.

available to individuals had to nevertheless be able to influence the very essence of the discursive public sphere.

An important qualifier for our understanding of public opinion, and really the public sphere in the medieval Roman empire, comes from the very fact that there was not just one faceless public that reacted in the same way to communicative actions across the empire. Rather, there were multiple coexisting publics that to some extent had shared interests. In referring to multiple publics in the Roman empire, I turn to Gerard Hauser's observation that since the later 18th century, European societies have developed numerous publics with different interests and agendas.²⁴ Hauser's inquiry focuses mainly on socio-economic and class relations in explaining the process of the rise of civil society in Europe that allowed for several separate public spheres to coexist. These groups with different agendas were oftentimes in conflict with the interests of the state or with other socio-economic groups. This brought about the fragmentation of the state's monopoly over public discourse which could now be mobilized by various entities.²⁵ Thus, according to Hauser, "discursive spaces within this network displaced the state's claim as the domain in which social will was articulated and executed."²⁶ This remark becomes pertinent for our understanding of premodern publics and their employment of discursive spaces both physical and conceptual. Granted, Hauser himself believes that premodern societies (especially medieval ones) did not develop these discursive networks affecting the articulation of social will which would determine the course of politics.²⁷ For him, coexisting discursive spaces could exist only in civil societies of later Early Modern and Modern Europe as well as in those societies that developed their political cultures from the European antecedent. As inspiring as Hauser's concept of multiplicity of publics is, then, the approach I take here differs from the one found in *Vernacular Voices* in two regards. First, I argue that the public sphere, as well as multiple publics, certainly did exist in the medieval Roman state, albeit in a different form. Second, in order to fit the historical context of a premodern society, the means of rhetoric used by active political agents do not always correspond to the ones identified and analyzed by theorists of the modern period; this especially applies to questions of time and space.

In the medieval Roman empire, public discourse had never been an exclusive domain of the state and its head, the emperor. The production and preservation of knowledge was more often

²⁴ Ibid., 19–39.

²⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁶ Ibid., 23.

²⁷ Ibid., 19–20.

than not in the hands of state and ecclesiastic officials, who fairly frequently criticized and challenged the regime.²⁸ As such, discursive spaces have been influenced by multiple voices. Even though discursive spaces were heavily reliant on Aristotle's rhetorical model in which *political animals'* service for the good of the state as a whole played a pivotal role in praising or criticizing given regimes, the discourse about the state was never dominated by a single regime. For instance, one of the main narrative sources for the period of exile is Georgios Akropolites, who wrote his *The History* as, one could argue, an official apology of Michael VIII Palaiologos' rise to power.²⁹ In the same generation, another author offered a paraphrasis of Akropolites' narrative in which he excluded all encomiastic references to Palaiologos in the hopes of changing the discourse promoted by the Palaiologan regime in the Roman elites' public memory. It is with such zeal that the literati under study here attempted to dominate the public discourse about the state by inevitably entering into a dialogue with their political opponents.³⁰ The state, with all its resources, could not do much to put this process to a halt, but rather had to engage with the literary production of the empire's intellectuals cum officials in order to try and dominate public discourse. Thus, the public sphere was open to anybody who had the social and economic means to try to sway some degree of public opinion to their side.

The first public that I am concerned with is the one comprised of the most affluent state officials who monopolized a lion's share of the public discourse and spaces in the Roman empire together with the emperor, who himself originated from this group. The discursive space of their operation was at times physical—meetings of the senate, ecclesiastic and state ceremonies, military camps, *theatra*—and at times confined to their personal reading and literary production—i.e. the case of Georgios Akropolites' *The History* and his interlocutor's ideologically modulated paraphrasis. Thus, narrative sources, on which the present dissertation mostly relies, belong to the realm of conceptual discursive spaces: the texts were written for the authors' peers who were educated and, importantly, affluent enough to be able to read and afford book manuscripts.³¹ Of the literary sources used here, the histories of Georgios

²⁸ For an overview of Byzantine history writers, their views and agendas see: L. Neville, *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing* (Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press 2018).

²⁹ Macrides, "Introduction," 60–5; R.J. Macrides, "George Akropolites' Rhetoric," in E. Jeffreys, ed., *Rhetoric in Byzantium Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 201–10.

³⁰ D. Krallis, "Historiography as Political Debate," in A. Kaldellis and N. Siniosoglou, eds., *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) 599–614.

³¹ On book production in the medieval Roman empire see: N.G. Wilson, *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Dumbarton Oaks: Centre for Byzantine Studies, 1975); D.M. Gorecki, "Books, Production of Books and Reading in Byzantium," *Libri* 14 (1984), 113–29.

Akropolites and his namesake Pachymeres together with Palaiologos' autobiographical narrative found in the *typikon* (foundation chart) of the monastery of St Demetrios in Constantinople are the base for most of the reconstructed biography of Michael Palaiologos' public life prior to 1259. In addressing Michael's position in the Roman state, the three narratives are in direct dialogue with one another. Akropolites' *The History*, composed either in the seventh or eight decades of the 13th century, is the oldest of the three narratives.³² As has been noted, *The History* was a piece of Michael VIII's propaganda offering a plausible explanation for the rise of Palaiologos to the imperial throne. In writing what was in effect an encomium in the form of history, Akropolites hoped to dominate those public spaces inhabited by intellectuals and, in turn, cement a brilliant image of Michael VIII Palaiologos in the memory of these elite Romans. In the same vein, Palaiologos' self-eulogizing autobiography dating from 1282, the last year of the emperor's life, served the same purpose, together with the monastic structure he had built in the centre of Constantinople as part of his pious public endeavours.³³ Georgios Pachymeres' *Chronicle*, on the other hand, was composed from a very different perspective and stands in opposition to the two other mentioned sources. Writing in the 14th century, during the reign of Michael VIII's son, Andronikos II, Pachymeres, in the first two books of his *Chronicle*, offers a rehabilitation of Ioannes III Batatzes and, up to a point, Theodoros II Laskaris, whose reputation had been tarnished in Akropolites' narrative. Furthermore, in explaining Palaiologos' rise to power, Pachymeres represents the emperor-to-be in rather negative light, with only a few lesser merits ascribed to his name.³⁴ Relying on these three sources, to begin with, we can think of the intellectual publics and their engagement with the production and preservation of knowledge for the Romans. In doing so, the public sphere they were concerned with was one that revolved around learned discussions of the *theatra* and literary political dialogues of composed works. Thus, the first discursive space under examination was animated by the interests and sensibilities of state officials much like the three authors studied here.

The content of the three aforementioned narratives, together with other documents used in this dissertation, also provides us with the information necessary to conceptualize other publics and how these engaged in the empire's public sphere. Leaving the *theatra* and reading rooms of

³² On composition date see: Macrides, "Introduction," 32–4.

³³ On the autobiography and the *typikon* see: A. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1* [Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXV] (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2000), 1237.

³⁴ On Pachymeres see: A. Failler, "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymérés," *REB* 39 (1981), 145–249.

the highborn elite, texts provide us with a vivid image of the squares, streets, churches, palaces, courts, taverns, and other places of mass and socially diverse congregation. It is by following the narrative descriptions of these places, in which individual agents such as Michael Palaiologos operated in order to win over a specific publics' support, that I conceptualize the communicative actions employed by state officials in attempts to dominate the wider public discourse. The methods used varied from the delivery of public speeches to the erection of structures dotted with public inscriptions commemorating the *ktetor*, granted the latter was traditionally reserved for the emperor when it came to public buildings. The great care individuals took to promote themselves and their families to different interest groups in the empire becomes clearer once we contrast the communicative actions upon which these political agents relied to attract the attention of distinct publics. It was thus one thing to write elaborate accounts for the elites and a completely different thing to dominate the so-called vulgar discourse of the wider populace, which was marked by gossip.³⁵ For instance, Michael VIII Palaiologos' autobiographic *typikon* was meant to attract the attention and, hopefully, support of the elites, judging by the length and complexity of the text. On the other hand, the same ruler's inscription on the church of St Demetrios in Thessaloniki was meant for the commoners who had very different literary expectations from the intended audiences of the *typikon*.³⁶ The inscription in Thessaloniki is significantly shorter and simpler in style than the text of the *typikon*. This certainly did not mean that Michael VIII cared less for the commoners of Thessaloniki and their support than for the Constantinopolitan elites; rather, it meant that the Thessalonian audiences preferred the simple message to be delivered to them so that they would be able to engage with it and make it part of the vernacular discourse about the emperor in the city.

The question of which communicative actions pair best with which public has so far been addressed to a greater or lesser extent in the terms of class-related interest groups: the highly educated elites read long histories in complex classicizing Greek, the people in the streets prefer short texts in vernacular *rhomaika*.³⁷ Another dimension which we have to keep in mind

³⁵ Habermas finds gossip and the opinion of the masses to be part of vulgar speech which does not meaningfully affect the rationale of the public sphere: Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Thomas Burger transl. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press 1989), 27. On the other hand, Hauser emphasizes the importance of this vulgar speech in public rhetoric: Hauser, *Vernacular Voices* 42.

³⁶ B.A. Φωσκόλου, "Ο Ίώμης άναξ στην επιγραφή του Αγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Χορηγία, αυτοκρατορική πολιτική και ιδεολογία στα χρόνια του Μιχαήλ Η΄ Παλαιολόγου," *ByzSym* 23 (2013), 11–30.

³⁷ On classicizing vis-à-vis vernacular Greek see: G. Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), 211–392; On politization of Rhomaika in the empire see: Kaldellis, *Romanland*, 83–113.

when dealing with premodern states, that neither Hauser nor Habermas had to consider in their theories, is that of time and distance. The success of the 2014 Sunflower Movement was in great part enabled by the quick and uninterrupted first hand access to information about the occupation of the Legislative and subsequently the Executive Yuan. Regardless of whether people lived next to the building of the Yuan, in the greater Taipei area, or in the southern Kaohsiung City, thanks to TV receivers and mobile devices, everybody could follow directly the situation as if they were physically present outside or even inside the national Yuan. The main task of activists such as Huang Kuo-Chang was to isolate their target publics based on their class, gender, social, economic, and political views. Once the target publics were isolated, reaching out to them with appropriate words, gestures, and actions was the only concern remaining for the leading activists. By contrast, Michael VIII Palaiologos' consecration of the monastery of St Demetrios in 1282 was witnessed by several different publics: the ecclesiastic elites, the state officials, members of his family, the commoners of Constantinople. The people of Thessaloniki, on the other hand, could not witness the event taking place in Constantinople. Thus, Michael VIII, the same as every other emperor, bureaucrat, or random citizen of the Roman empire, had to think of the spatial outreach of their deeds and, when needed, instigate several parallel projects independent from one another to maintain the consensus of various publics under his control. The *typikon* and the very structure of St Demetrios in Constantinople were a unifying communicative action undertaken by Michael VIII to display his piety publicly—at the time under question given his excommunication by both the patriarch and the pope—to the attention of both the commoners and the elites. On the other hand, for the people of Thessaloniki or, say, the recently recovered areas of the Peloponnese, the emperor had to employ different means by which to demonstrate his presence and piety to local elites and commoners alike.³⁸

Ultimately, as much as they tried to show their care for everybody in the empire, the lack of imperial physical presence in the provinces meant that the discursive life of provincial cities remained, for the most part, uncontrolled by the central government. It was much easier to maintain popular consensus in the capital where the emperor dwelled and could always manifest himself publicly than it was in the provinces where the ruler had to rely on such communicative actions as inscriptions, coinage, and invocation of his name during liturgies in maintaining the support of the locals. As effective as these actions were, the emperor

³⁸ For example, see inscriptions on two churches in Mani and Kythera in the Peloponnese: V.A. Foskolou, "In the Reign of the Emperor of Rome...": Donor Inscriptions and Political Ideology in the Time of Michael VIII Paleologos," *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 27 (2011), 455–62.

understood that the threat to the imperial reputation and power in the provinces came from the local elites as well as the centrally appointed governors and officials who could always use their physical presence to win over the sympathies, and at times allegiances, of the provincials for their own political goals. Every emperor, then, had to be wary of the governors he himself appointed. In turn, every state official, as was Michael Palaiologos, could only hope to start building a base of public support in the provinces away from the imperial centre of power. In other words, it is the periphery that becomes the key to political promotion and security once one had reached the highest echelons of power in the imperial centre.³⁹

1.4. Publics and Actions by Chapters

Following the public life of Michael Palaiologos from his early days and upbringing to imperial elevation opens for us a whole new world of communicative interactions between members of various publics. Exploring multiple narratives, primarily composed by intellectuals and clerks other than Michael Palaiologos, the analysis of the dissertation might at times correspond more to depersonalized narratives about governing mechanisms, power relations, transclass actions, and other concepts than an individual's history. On the other hand, by using the figure of Palaiologos as the dissertation's focal point, I hope to offer a narrative that emphasizes the importance of individual political agents in exploring the role of communicative actions within the sphere of multiple publics whose support was essential if one were to successfully govern the Roman empire in the 13th century.

In the opening chapter, I chart Michael's early life by focusing on his education at the imperial court and his early career under the service of his father Andronikos Palaiologos, whom Ioannes III had elevated to the rank of *megas domestikos*. By looking at the imperial education programme put in place by Ioannes III, I explore the interactions Michael had with the officials and bureaucrats in his childhood while being educated at the court. These two groups, the officials and bureaucrats, based on their shared ways and spaces of interaction formed a core public of Michael's social engagement. Other than social interactions, examination of literary and other texts employed in the educational system sets the stage for the exploration of communicative actions undertaken by individuals like Michael Palaiologos, whose way of thinking was surely influenced by their very *morphosis* at the imperial court. The second part of

³⁹ Which is a reversal of the maxim by Kekaumenos, according to which: "the emperor in Constantinople always wins" (Κεκαυμένος, *Στρατηγικόν*, 234).

the chapter focuses on Michael's early career as governor of Serres and Melnikon under his father Andronikos. Andronikos Palaiologos and his career become the centre of the analysis as I explore his interactions with the notables of Thessaloniki on whom, after his father's death, Michael relied in order to forge a solid support base for the Palaiologoi in the city. The chapter ends with Michael's first independent communicative action taken in Thessaloniki. Away from the emperor in Asia Minor, Michael had ample room to publicly commemorate his father and his deeds. To do so he hired an intellectual by the name of Iakobos to compose a funerary speech and three poems in celebration of his father's accomplishments in Thessaloniki. The rhetorical programme Michael Palaiologos sponsored was the first step in gaining the support of various interest groups in Thessaloniki. The nature of those diverse groups is revealed by the genre of those poems, which were written in different registers of Greek.

The second chapter looks at the ways in which members of the highborn elite working for the central government interacted with the people of provincial cities they operated in. Here we encounter Michael learning how to engage with the wide audience of provincial citizenry, just as he did in Thessaloniki after his father's death, as well as a separate public comprised of local elites with their own interests and way of communication which differed from those of the wider urban populace. In this aspect, the case of Michael Palaiologos is rather telling since, unlike his father, he ran into conflict with the local notables headed by a certain Nikolaos Manglavites. Manglavites, according to Akropolites, went as far as to accuse Michael Palaiologos of treason in front of the emperor, which led to Michael's deposition and subsequent trial. The case of Nikolaos Manglavites allows us to explore the not always smooth path that individuals had to tread in order to gain public support in the provinces. For once, we see that a major official, and member of the senatorial elites, was accused by a local notable, likely a merchant, who knew how to use Roman law in order to protect his own interests. This chapter, then, focuses on the communicative actions taken by both senatorial and local elites in the provinces in order to extend our understanding of the centre-periphery relationship in the Roman empire. It was not only the imperial officials who served as a link between the centre and the periphery, but in order to neutralize their social or political opponents, affluent members of provincial society knew exactly the ways in which they could engage with the central authorities. In doing so, we see that the state was very much present in the empire's European provinces, much as it was in the traditional Laskarid imperial centres in Magnesia and Nikaia. The second part of the chapter deals with Michael's trial. Here we explore the social networks of the Palaiologoi as a clan and Michael Palaiologos as an individual. It is thanks to these networks in the highest echelons of

power as well as with the soldiery of the imperial army (a special public of their own) that Palaiologos managed to get away unharmed and even enjoy promotion after the trial. The last part of the chapter is concerned with the change on the throne and the ways in which Theodoros II wished to alter the existing power constellation at the very centre of power. Looking at Theodoros II's political maneuvers, I examine the extent and limit of both imperial and elite power in relationship to one another.

The third chapter represents a break in the narrative as we follow Michael Palaiologos on his self-imposed exile in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. The opportunity to view Michael, a Roman general and senator, serving a ruler of a different polity allows us to see how communicative actions as well as the public sphere at large operated in a different political system. This is pertinent as, in the 13th century, the majority of the urban population in the Sultanate of Rum was still Roman. This chapter, then, explores the ways in which Romans of Rum negotiated their new position in a Muslim polity. We look at both the Romans occupying positions of power in the government as well as those who comprised invisible scholarly vernacular voices of the sultanate. In reconstructing the public lives of Romans under Seljuk rule, I rely on both textual and material sources that have come down to us. Furthermore, in order to explore the street life of Seljuk cities, I employ Romaic textual production of non-Roman elements in the sultanate. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate the vividness and active presence of Romans in the social fabric of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, showing that their voices could not be overlooked by the central authorities in Ikonion. The Romans of Rum have mostly been ignored by modern scholarship. They were, however, a public that neither the sultan nor Palaiologos could afford to ignore.

In the final chapter, we follow Michael Palaiologos' return to the Roman empire and pick up the thread of social relations among different publics in the imperial centre—that is, the officials and dignitaries, the ecclesiastics, the commoners, and the soldiers—on whose support the regime had to rely. After the death of Theodoros II, the regency of three brothers, who belonged to the family of Mouzalones, that was established for the young emperor, lacked the support necessary to maintain itself in power. The regency serves as a good case study for the importance of forging closer ties with Rome's various publics before coming to power. Where the Mouzalones failed, however, Michael Palaiologos did not. In the second half of the chapter, we follow the ways in which Michael cashed-in his accumulated social capital with different public interest groups and managed to claim the regency and subsequently the imperial throne for himself. A series of rhetorical communicative actions taken by Michael Palaiologos in the last

months of 1258 allow us to examine the ways in which he, holding more power than before, further reinforced existing social support and gained new allies as he sought to claim the imperial dignity for himself. With the imperial coronation in Nikaia in January 1259, Michael VIII Palaiologos' career, and with it all his communicative actions, experienced a drastic change. No longer did Michael Palaiologos need to maneuver carefully among emperor, elites, and populace in order to carve out a spot for himself in the social and political life of the empire. Now his main goal was to maintain his imperial position by promoting the image of his own splendour and by carefully preventing anybody else's attempts to carve out too big a spot for themselves in the public sphere of the Roman polity. It is with this drastic shift in his political life that this dissertation bids farewell to Michael Palaiologos, the Roman official.

Chapter 2. Making Roman Officials in Exile: The Case of the Palaiologoi

In *The History*, written well after the Roman re-conquest of Constantinople in 1261, Georgios Akropolites, *megas logothetes* and renowned teacher, joyfully reminisces about advice he allegedly received from Ioannes III back in 1234, at the beginning of his own studies in Nikaia:

These [young men] I have taken from Nikaia and handed them over to the school, but you I have taken from my household and released to be taught together with them. Demonstrate that you indeed come from my household and engage in your studies accordingly. For if you were to become a soldier by occupation, you would have so much from my majesty by way of sustenance and perhaps a little more because of your illustrious *genos*. But should you prove to be versed in philosophy, you will be deemed worthy of great honours and rewards. For, alone of all people, the emperor and the philosopher are the most known.⁴⁰

Here, Akropolites highlights the importance of extensive education and training for civil officials-to-be from a young age.⁴¹ Such advice is worth paying attention to since it served Akropolites well. Our historian successfully navigated his way through imperial administration over three successive imperial tenures. Having received an education as a gift from his imperial patron Ioannes III, Georgios served both this emperor and his son, Theodoros II, as well as Michael VIII Palaiologos. Securing an important position even under the administration of Michael VIII, which was cleansed of officials close to Theodoros II, stands as a testimony of Georgios' political acumen.⁴²

⁴⁰ τούτους μὲν ἐκ Νικαίας λαβὼν τῷ διδασκαλείῳ παρέδωκα, σὲ δὲ τοῦ ἐμοῦ ἐκβαλὼν οἴκου τουτοισὶ συναφῆκα διδάσκεσθαι. δεῖξον οὖν, ὡς ἀληθῶς τῆς ἐμῆς οἰκίας ἐξῆεις, καὶ οὕτως τῶν μαθημάτων ἀντιποιήθητι. στρατιώτης μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα γεγονὼς ὅποσα ἂν ἔσχες τὰ τοῦ σιτηρεσίου παρὰ τῆς βασιλείας μου, τσαῦτα ἂν ἴσως ἢ καὶ ὀλίγον πλείω διὰ τοι τὸ τοῦ γένους περιφανές· ἔμπλεως δὲ φιλοσοφίας φανείς μεγάλων ἀξιωθῆσθαι τῶν τιμῶν τε καὶ τῶν γερῶν· μόνοι γὰρ τῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπων ὀνομαστότατοι βασιλεῖς καὶ φιλόσοφος.
(Akropolites, *Chronike*, 32.7–16.)

⁴¹ For educational practices and curricula see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 174–181; C.N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in 13th and Early 14th Centuries (1204–ca.1310)* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre 1982): 5–27.

⁴² For Michael's cleansing of imperial administration see: Akropolites, *Chronike*, 77 and Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 113.15–115.6.

Not long after Georgios composed *The History*, his younger contemporary Michael VIII Palaiologos⁴³ takes pride (not unlike Akropolites) in his upbringing in the imperial household of Ioannes III and boasts in an autobiographical narrative that:

Before I had even outgrown my childish years, the divine [emperor] in the imperial palace (the very famous Ioannes was in the imperial office at the time) took me up with great care, as if I was genuinely his own [family]. He nourished me and brought me up, taking care of my education and studies in all matters and he appeared affectionate as if he was my father. Because I made use of the instructions provided by that great mind and I became a student worthy of such a teacher, others say this, for the first time already as a young man I entered the official ranks and was able to carry weapons, I was chosen to exercise military command by Ioannes himself; needless to say, I was preferred to those who have been previously engaged with this affair.⁴⁴

Both Georgios and Michael VIII emphasize their physical proximity to and acquaintance with the imperial court from a young age to explain their social success and rise on the Roman *cursus honorum*. The prime value of this familiarity with the imperial household, however, lay beyond the obvious direct contact with the emperor and other members of the Laskarid family. Georgios as much as Michael relished the fact that elite contacts afforded them both an exquisite education and a sense of politics that only life among high officials could offer. Ioannes III himself was rarely at the palace. He usually spent the warm season (and sometimes even winter) away from Nikaia and Nymphaion in the Balkans reconquering and then administering Roman lands.⁴⁵ As a result, young notables did not benefit much from direct contact with the emperor. Instead what mattered for their formation was the excellent training they received at imperially-funded schools. Michael, just like Georgios, was able to make use of this opportunity and excel in his training. This raised his profile at court where he was noticed by the emperor and other senior officials. Michael's well-known surname may have helped his case, but in equal measure, he had to prove himself worthy of his *genos'* reputation. To do so, he had to complete

⁴³ Georgios Akropolites was born in 1217 (Macrides, "Introduction," 6.); Michael Palaiologos around the year 1224 (Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 17).

⁴⁴ ἄρτι μὲν γὰρ οὐπω καθαρῶς τὴν βρεφικὴν παρῆμειβον ἡλικίαν, καί με ὁ θεῖος ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις ἀνελόμενος (ὁ ἐν βασιλεῦσιν ἀοίδιμος Ἰωάννης οὗτος ἦν) ἐπιμελῶς ὅσα καὶ αὐτοῦ γνήσιον ἔτρεφε καὶ ἀνῆγε, φιλονεικῶν ταῖς περὶ πάντων πραγμάτων ἐκπαιδεύσεσι καὶ σπουδαῖς καὶ αὐτοῦ δὴ πατὴρ περὶ ἐμὲ φανῆναι φιλοστοργότερος• εἰ δὲ καὶ τῶν εἰσηγήσεων τῆς μεγάλης ἐκείνης φρενὸς ἀπωνάμην καὶ τὸν μαθητὴν ἄξιον παρεσχόμεν τοῦ παιδευτοῦ, ἄλλοι λεγόντων, ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς εἰς μείρακας ἤδη πρώτως παρήγγελλον καὶ ὄπλα φέρειν ἦν ἰκανός, ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ δὴ ἐκείνου στρατηγεῖν ἐκρινόμεν ἵνα μὴ λέγω ὅτι καὶ τῶν πολλοῖς ἔτεσι πρότερον ἀψαμένων τοῦ πράγματος προύκρινόμεν. (Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 4.4–15.) Here Michael echoes traditional Roman *credo* that skill and virtue have the precedence over kinship in building a successful military career under good emperors. For example, see Leo VI's thoughts on good generals in *Taktika*: G. Dennis, ed., transl. and comm. *The Taktika of Leo VI*, (Washington DC, Dumbarton Oaks 2010), 16–36.

⁴⁵ On Ioannes III's calendar and itinerary see Akropolites, *Chronike*, 19–52.

his studies under imperial supervision. While Georgios and Michael took different career paths—the former became a prominent civil servant and the latter a popular military commander—they both originated from the imperial household. How did they end up there? How were they chosen and subsequently enrolled in imperially sponsored schools that promised to provide the best training possible?

The Roman polity before 1204 had its own share of prominent educators. Whether around churches and monasteries, to which schools were attached, or through private tutors for those who could afford them, ambitious Romans had access to all levels of education. Taking advantage of such educational practices, ambitious and affluent young men trained in hopes to catch the imperial eye in order to secure a position in imperial service.⁴⁶ The reputation of a teacher would depend not only on one's teaching skills but also on one's connections with the imperial household and other prominent families in the empire that could help individuals' careers. Michael Psellos, in the 11th century, attracted students to his classroom not just because he was a good lecturer. He was also a well-connected member of Constantinopolitan central administration.⁴⁷ Like Michael Psellos, Eustathios, in the 12th century, before becoming archbishop of Thessaloniki, was able to promote his own pupils to the emperor. Thus, even newcomers to the city of Constantinople who could afford a teacher, had a decent chance of catching the imperial gaze. Eustathios' student from the provincial city of Chonai, a young man by the name of Michael, succeeded in making a name for himself at the court of Manuel I Komnenos. Once at the court, Michael was able to secure a decent ecclesiastical position for himself. What is more, he leveraged his new courtly connections to put his younger brother Niketas on course for a career at court.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ On educational practices of the 11th century see: G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1973); P. Speck, *Die Kaiserliche Universität von Konstantinopel* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1974); P. Lemerle, "Le gouvernement des philosophes: notes et remarques sur l'enseignement, les écoles, la culture," in *Cinq études sur le XI^e siècle byzantin* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 1977), 195–248; F. Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry 1025–1081* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014), 210–13.

⁴⁷ For Michael Psellos' biography and teaching see: S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2013), 4–14; Bernard, *Writing and Reading*, 213.

⁴⁸ Michael Choniates network-building during his lifetime (including the relationship with Eustathios of Thessaloniki) see: Φ. Κολουβού, *Μιχαήλ Χωνιάτης. Συμβουλή στη μελετή του βίου και του έργου του το Corpus των Επιστολών* (Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών 1999), 37–51. For Niketas Choniates's social networking see: A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 24–36.

While the catastrophe of 1204 left the Roman polity paralyzed for a number of years, most state officials and members of the courtly elite, the Palaiologoi included, gathered around Theodoros I Laskaris as he re-constituted the imperial administration in Bithynia. Since the polity and its apparatus, much as the Romans themselves, were mostly recovering from the trauma caused by the loss of Constantinople, the production of a new class of state officials was not of immediate concern. By the 1220s, however, many existing officials were well past their prime and the task of keeping the central administration of the state running became a burning issue.⁴⁹ For this reason, Ioannes III took upon himself to create new cohorts of capable officials. He did so by organizing a new system of state-sponsored training for ambitious young individuals.⁵⁰ Much like the Choniates brothers in the 12th century, individuals from (well-off) provincial families now sought to obtain training that would help draw imperial attention onto their persons. With the imperial gaze and interest came access to state-sponsored education, albeit this time in the provinces and not in Constantinople. While *novi homines* were by no means a *rara avis* among Laskarid officials, more often than not the trainees came from already established families in the central government, the so-called *archontopouloi*. It was precisely this mix of intelligence and pedigree that placed Georgios and Michael in the rarefied world of imperial education. The Akropolitai had, after all, been attested in civil administrative positions since the early 11th century,⁵¹ while the Palaiologoi had held high positions next to the Komnenoi since Alexios I's enthronement in 1081.⁵²

2.1. Preparation for Greatness: Education at the Imperial Court

Thanks to Theodoros I's efforts to gather most of the pre-1204 notable families under his imperial authority, his successor Ioannes III had quite a few literati to choose from when he looked for the teachers to train his new cohort of capable civil and military officials.⁵³ Early education—*grammatike* or *hiera grammata* which introduced students to writing, grammar, and basic Homeric poetry—was not part of Ioannes III's educational master-plan. This was to be obtained by trainees elsewhere at their own expense.⁵⁴ Ioannes III took in the best among a

⁴⁹ Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 9–10.

⁵⁰ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 174–81; Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 9–17.

⁵¹ D. I. Papanikolaou, "Introduction," in *A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography* (London: Athlone Press 1968), 152–64; J.-C. Cheynet, J.-F. Vannier, *Études Prosopographiques* (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne 1986), 123–87.

⁵³ On the intellectuals and other members of the elite who joined Theodoros I see: Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 5–8; Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 9–22.

⁵⁴ Bernard, *Writing and Reading*, 213–22.

number of affluent young pupils, providing them with the next level in their formation—the *enkyklios paideia* that taught students more elaborate rhetorical composition. The selection process was based on recommendations from the polity’s literati-teachers. In a sense, the circle of people who could attract imperial attention was limited to families affluent enough to provide a head start for their male offspring with a formidable early education. Academic merit notwithstanding, finding a teacher well-connected to the imperial court was a paramount goal of any ambitious *novus homo*.⁵⁵ The pedigree of the teacher mattered more than that of the student.

This state-sponsored educational initiative was only introduced in the 1230s. Before this period, ambitious individuals were left to their own devices when it came to acquiring their first letters and, hopefully, garnering imperial attention. Thus, a leading erudite of the Nikaian period, Nikephoros Blemmydes, obtained his entire education completely on his own, or at least on his family’s dime. After obtaining *grammatike* and *enkyklios paideia*, Nikephoros went to study philosophy under a hermit by the name of Prodromos around the Skamander region (which was under Latin control until 1224).⁵⁶ Having completed his education under Prodromos, he continued his studies of the Holy Scriptures at Nymphaion. Without state-sponsored educational institutions, how did Nikephoros, an utter *novus homo*, catch Ioannes III’s attention? He did so precisely thanks to personal connections he made during his early education. In his *Autobiography*, Nikephoros explains that he was invited to Nikaia by the patriarch Germanos II, who introduced him to the imperial court where he underwent an official examination before the emperor.⁵⁷ Nikephoros’ knowledge was tested by the *hypatos ton philosophon* Demetrios Karykes, who was in charge of higher education. The examination was held in the presence of a larger audience of *logades*. In this public event, Nikephoros managed to shine and prove himself worthy of an office in the state administration.⁵⁸ Ioannes III offered him a position immediately, but Nikephoros chose a career in the Church under Germanos II’s patronage.

While the how and where of Nikephoros’ first encounter with Germanos II remain unknown, it is clear that this earlier social connection, one most likely established through education, gave Nikephoros access to the aforementioned examination and selection process. We therefore see

⁵⁵ For instance, see the case of Ioannes Bekkos and his teacher on p.7 of this chapter.

⁵⁶ On Nikephoros’ early education see: Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, i.3–4; for his studies and curriculum under Prodromos: *ibid.*, i.6–8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, i.12.1–4.

⁵⁸ For Nikephoros’ education in Nymphaion and public examination see: *ibid.*: i.14–21; Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 9.

that even before the emergence of a state-sponsored education-based selection practice for future public servants was set in motion, Ioannes III's court nourished the idea of meritocracy when it came to awarding public offices. For, as Floris Bernard points out for the 11th century:

[e]ducation is the cornerstone on which the meritocratic ideal of the intellectual elite is built. It transmits necessary competences and skills, forges ties of long-lasting friendship, and serves as a criterion on the basis of which careers are assigned. [...] it was also put up as a barrier for determining who could appeal for membership of the elite and who could not.⁵⁹

By the time of Nikephoros Blemmydes' examination, notable pre-1204 intellectual offices had been re-established. There was at Nikaia an *hypatos ton philosophon* and *logades*, who were all involved in public examinations of prospective candidates.⁶⁰ The court at Nymphaion became a place where young literati could attract the attention of both established notables and the emperor.⁶¹ This allowed *archontopouloi* as well as *novi homines* to secure unbiased witnesses to their budding erudition. By putting their intellectual wares on public display, these aspiring young men could be in no doubt that regardless of social connections, the truly talented among them would indeed be offered a position in the administration.

Early in the 1230s, Ioannes III sought to regularize the system of selection for the polity's civil service by establishing a state-sponsored educational system open to those pupils who had distinguished themselves during their initial privately funded early education. In modern parlance this system resembled a Public Private Partnership. While teachers received their salaries directly from the emperor, which meant that students had their education paid for by the state, instructors and schools continued to operate outside the court. For instance, Nikephoros Blemmydes' institution—attached to his monastery of St George the Wonderworker by Ephesos—accepted imperial donations and students, while retaining curricular independence. Georgios Akropolites was one of the first pupils in this imperially endowed academy for future officials. In his own words, Georgios describes his parents sending him to the emperor once he had finished the *grammatike* in Constantinople. We learn that he was placed at that school in 1233 along with four other students.⁶² From this point on Georgios's official training lasted for about five years. He began his higher education at the age of 17 under Theodoros

⁵⁹ Bernard, *Writing and Reading*, 209.

⁶⁰ Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 5–9.

⁶¹ Blemmydes emphasized that Ioannes set up the imperial court in Nymphaion (and not Nikaia): τὴν ἀνακτορικὴν σκηνῶσιν ἔχειν ἐν Νυμφαίῳ προεῖλετο. (Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, i.12.9–10.)

⁶² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 32.1–6; 17–18; on the total number of five students see: Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, i.49.3–5.

Hexapterygos, who dwelled mostly on rhetoric and “he was,” as Georgios put it, “a man not very versed in philosophy but good at matters of speech, since he had dwelt extensively on rhetorical studies and had studied skilful expression and had acquired great reputation because of this.”⁶³ After Theodoros’ death, the group of five studied under Nikephoros Blemmydes. This time, Georgios was exposed to philosophy, astronomy, and theology. Despite having rejected an official position, Nikephoros remained close to the court and as a monk obtained a grant to build his own monastery and school in the region of Ephesos.⁶⁴ In exchange for such imperial support Nikephoros was to play a part in educating future state officials.

By employing already existing teachers in their respective schools, Ioannes III, as well as his successor Theodoros II, kept institutions of learning alive, while at the same time making the state’s imprint prominent in the provinces away from the court. Not only were the pupils at schools aware that their education was paid for by the state, but the textbooks used in class made it clear that their instructors were also dependant on imperial patronage. For instance, in *Epitome Logikes* composed to teach philosophy to Georgios Akropolites and his four classmates, Nikephoros Blemmydes opened the textbook with an appropriate proem:

Imperial rule and philosophy have a lot in common and are of the same kind. They both represent the greatness of divine power and they both strive to the same goal: the former to rise high in dignity and to control [imperial] power; the latter to govern arts and sciences and to enact laws for all of them. For this reason, [philosophy] is called the art of arts and the science of sciences, the same as the imperial reign is called the dignity of dignities and the authority of authorities. [...] These my emperor knew, when he introduced the great study of philosophy, adjoining the study of [philosophy’s] greatness to nature’s advantages, from both of which she grew to entirely accomplish every honourable deed.⁶⁵

While the *prooimion* pays necessary lip service to the regime, it also encourages students to exceed in their studies by comparing the role of philosophy to that of the emperor. In order to become good public servants, students had to emulate the greatest of public officials, the

⁶³ ἄνθρωπος οὐ πάντως μὲν ἐπιστήμων ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν, ἀγαθὸς δὲ φράζειν, οἷα ῥητορικοῖς λόγοις κατάκρως ἐνδιατρίψας καὶ τὸ ἐξαγγέλλειν εὐφυῶς μεμελητηκῶς καὶ πολλοῦ διὰ τοῦτο ἠξιωμένος ὀνόματος. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 32.19–22.)

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.24–29.

⁶⁵ Βασιλείας καὶ φιλοσοφίας πολὺ τὸ συγγενές τε καὶ ὁμοίотροπον. Καὶ ἄμφω γὰρ τὸ μεγαλεῖον τῆς θαρραλίας ἐξεικονίζουσι, καὶ τὸ ἴσον προτίθενται σκοπὸν ἑαυταῖς, ἢ μὲν τῶν ἀξίων ὑπερέχουσα, καὶ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς ἐπιπάπουσα. ἢ δὲ τῶν τεχνῶν ἐξάρχουσα καὶ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν, καὶ νομοθετοῦσα ταύταις ἀπάσαις καὶ καλουμένη διὰ ταῦτα τέχνη τεχνῶν καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν ἀξίων ἀξία καὶ ὑπεροχὴ τῶν ὑπεροχῶν. [...] Ταῦτ’ οὖν ὁ ἐμὸς αὐτοκράτωρ εἰδὼν, ὅτι πόλλην περὶ φιλοσοφίαν εἰσάγει σπουδὴν, τοῖς φυσικοῖς πλεονεκτήμασι τὴν περὶ τὰ κάλλιστα μελέτην ἐπισυνάπτων, ἐξ ὧν ὁμοῦ πέφυκεν ἐντελῶς κατορθοῦσθαι πᾶν ἔργον τίμιον. (Blemmydes, *Epitome Logikes* [PG 142], 689.)

emperor of the Romans. The relation between education and imperial dignity is made clear by comparing the two: just as philosophy is held in the highest esteem among arts and sciences, so is the imperial office among public dignities. By proclaiming emperorship a meritocratic dignity to be emulated, Nikephoros masterfully displayed a sense of gratitude to Ioannes III (who held the dignity thanks to his own exceptional qualities) for imperial patronage. Simultaneously, he emphasized the importance of education rooted in philosophy by employing the language of state officialdom.

Georgios and his four colleagues remained with Nikephoros until two of the students accused their teacher of embezzling money from the metropolitan in Ephesos. Even though he was cleared of charges at both imperial and ecclesiastic courts, Nikephoros decided not to take on any more imperially sponsored students.⁶⁶ An exception was made several years later, when he agreed to tutor young Theodoros, son of Ioannes III. The emperor, however, had to look for new places of learning for his officials-to-be. Fortunately for Ioannes III, having completed his education, Georgios Akropolites was immediately accepted into the imperial administration, while on the side, he also started teaching. By the 1240s, the governing of the state as well as the training of future officials was in the hands of individuals such as Georgios, who were raised and educated after 1204. With them the Nikaian generation came to the fore.

2.2. Education: A Public Affair

If we are to trust the author of the *Synopsis Chronike*, Ioannes III “put together libraries around the cities from books dealing with all kinds of arts and sciences.”⁶⁷ These establishments were certainly staffed with the intellectual progeny of Nikaian teachers. The organization of public secondary education allowed the state to make itself (as well as the potential lucrative careers it had to offer) known to the provincial elite throughout the lands of the polity, thus opening a path that led from local affairs to central administration. Providing this path was a good way to secure the lesser local notables’ allegiance to the regime. To reinforce such links between centre and periphery, the government employed teachers from among the court circles in Nikaia, Nymphaion, and Magnesia. Such men could be trusted in their recommendations of prospective officials-to-be. A good example of this process is an otherwise unknown teacher by the name of

⁶⁶ Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 12.

⁶⁷ *Synopsis Chronike*, 507.19–20.

Georgios Babouskomites, who worked at a school outside the capital.⁶⁸ Georgios kept in touch with his friends Michael Theophilopoulos, Ioannes Makrotos, and Nikolaos Kostomyres, who were imperial secretaries, in order to promote his students to them.⁶⁹ Thus, a well-connected and credible teacher, even one far from the major administrative centres of Nikaia and Magnesia, would advocate for capable students by mobilizing his friends in the civil service.⁷⁰ The most famous student Georgios launched into a public career was Ioannes Bekkos, who eventually followed the ecclesiastic track; a well-made decision, one could argue, since he ended up on the patriarchal throne. Ioannes, however, initially had doubts about his prospective career path. Georgios refrained from giving his pupil advice. He simply noted in a letter that while his school would serve his pupil well in both ecclesiastic and state careers, it was up to the young intellectual to decide which path he wished to take.⁷¹

The imperial court did not stop at opening schools around the empire and hiring trusted teachers. The regime kept a close eye on the training process itself in order to ascertain the quality of future cadres. We have already seen how Nikephoros Blemmydes was publically examined. Examining individuals who had completed education at their own expense was one way to assess one's capability to serve the state. Another was to randomly summon students while they were still at school to test their progress. In a letter written between 1254 and 1258 to Andronikos Phrangopoulos and Michael Senachereim, teachers at the imperially endowed school of St Tryphon in Nikaia, Theodoros II, now the sole emperor of the Romans, congratulated the two teachers on training their students well by acknowledging that "the group of six [students] sent to me testifies to your presence [at the school], wise men worthy of praise."⁷² The letter suggests that the emperor, with higher officials in tow, randomly chose and examined a cohort of students to make sure that specific schools and students were worth the investment. Another peculiarity of the letter is that the emperor summoned a group of five

⁶⁸ V. Laurent, "La correspondance inédite de Georges Babouscomitès," in *Εἰς μνήμην Σπυρίδωνος Λάμπρου* (Ἀθήναι: Ἐπιτροπή ἐκδόσεως τῶν καταλοίπων Σπυρίδωνος Λάμπρου 1935), 87.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 83-100.

⁷⁰ Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 17, argues that Georgios Babouskomites's school was on imperial payroll, however, the letters do not provide us with any information on the topic. The fact is that he was in touch with imperial secretaries and that he promoted his students to them. Whether these students paid for their education from their own pockets or the imperial one, remains an open question. In the fifth letter, however, we learn that Ioannes Bekkos left the school in order to pursue his education elsewhere only to come back to Georgios. While it is not implausible that one would leave a place at the school with imperial patronage, it is also possible that young Ioannes wished to spend his money elsewhere.

⁷¹ Laurent, "La correspondance inédite," 93, 13–15. Post-1204 education retained the early practice of not separating secular and ecclesiastic education (see: Bernard, *Writing and Reading*, 211–12).

⁷² καὶ τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἄγει πρὸς τοὺμφανῆς ἢ τῶν νέων ἐξᾶς ἢ πρὸς με πεφθακυῖα, ὧ σοφώτατοι ἄνδρες καὶ ἀξιέπαινοι. (Theodoros II Laskaris, *Epistulae*, 217.92–94)

students who were at the same level, i.e. studying rhetoric after finishing with grammar and poetry, and one who was studying poetry.⁷³ It thus seems that the cohorts were not particularly large and that the number of five students per class was standard in state sponsored schools—from Georgios Akropolites' cohort of 1233 to the one of mid-1250s at St Tryphon. This means that the selection of students for state sponsored schools was open only to the most promising candidates. Also, groups of five were easier to examine whenever it was deemed necessary. On the other hand, groups of five students per cohort in schools around the empire could surely secure a sufficient number of recruits for the upper rungs of central and even provincial administration.⁷⁴ This is especially true since more than one cohort of five was enrolled at a single school as is seen from Theodoros II's letter where a complete group of five is counted, plus one younger student.

One's education did not, however, end once that individual became a state official. Rather, state officials took time off from work to undergo what we would today call professional development. In Theodoros II's correspondence, we encounter brief letters in which the heir apparent asks secretaries of the fisc about the benefits of professional development. In one of the five letters to his secretaries, Theodoros II writes:

On the one hand, knowledge requires schools, on the other, nature [requires] discussion during walking (τὸν περιπάτον) as well: but when the unison of these occurs, it suffices for both to be appropriate. Surely, having completed the school, you fell in love with *peripatos*, but having found *peripatos* in me, you are already falling for school again. It seems to me, however, that you found the two of them suitable in me, had oblivion not made you forget this fact. Certainly, you can justly explain this to me: are you falling for *peripatos* again or do you attentively continue with school? I would like to know this. For I will never forget such a thing.⁷⁵

This brief letter sent to his secretaries shows that Theodoros II was deeply invested in state officials' training. He kept in touch with those who were absent from their workplaces for

⁷³ οὗτοι γὰρ πεντὰς καὶ ἑξάς· ἡ μὲν πεντὰς ὡς ἀρχὴ αἰσθητικῆς καὶ ζωικῆς ὑπάρξεως, γραμματικῆς δηλονότι· ἡ δὲ συντελεστικὴ μὴ μόνος τῆς ἑξάδος ποιητικῆς ἐστὶ προσβολή. (ibid., 217.94–96)

⁷⁴ For comparative purposes see the number of intellectuals present at the court in the 10th century (prior to the establishment of the office of *hypatos ton philosophon*): Paul Lemerle, "Élèves et professeurs à Constantinople au Xe siècle," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 113 (1969), 576–87; idem, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase* (Canberra: Australian Association of Byzantine Studies, 1986), 281–309.

⁷⁵ Ἡ μὲν ἐπιστήμη ἀπαιτεῖ τὴν σχολὴν, ἡ δὲ φύσις καὶ τὸν περίπατον· ὁπόταν δὲ συνέλυσσις τούτων γένηται, ἀρκεῖ καὶ τοῖς ἀμφοτέροις πρὸς τὸ κατάλληλον. περᾶσαντες γοῦν ὑμεῖς τὴν σχολὴν ἠράσθητε τοῦ περιπάτου, ἐν ἐμοὶ δὲ τοῦτον εὐρόντες ἤδη πάλιν ἐρᾶσθε σχολῆς. ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ, ἐν ἐμοὶ τῶν ἀμφοτέρων εὔρατε τὰ οἰκεία, εἴ μὴ πως ὑμᾶς αὐτοῦ τούτου ἡ λήθη ἐπιλελήσθαι ἐποίησε. Διασαφήσατε γοῦν ἡμῖν ἀρτίως· ἐρᾶσθαι πάλιν μέλλετε τοῦ περιπάτου ἢ κατάκρως συνεζεύχθητε τῇ σχολῇ; ἀρεστὸν γὰρ ἔχω τοῦτο μαθεῖν. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐκ ἐπιλήσμων τισὶ γενήσομαι πώποτε. (ibid., 119)

professional development by posing reflective questions to them. Theodoros went as far as to ask them which method of learning they preferred. In demonstrating his care for state officials, Theodoros II also managed to send a clear message that he was vigilant of major and lesser officials' deeds—for better or for worse. The combination of personal public examination during one's studies as well as occasional briefing during one's career allowed the court of the post-1204 Roman polity, which was significantly smaller and thus needed fewer officials to be run than the Komnenian empire, to keep track of the central administration at various levels. It was also made clear to the officials, such as the state secretaries who went on to further their education, that positions were indeed obtained by virtue of merit. Keeping their skills polished could only help officials to advance even further in their careers.

Michael Palaiologos was brought up in this very system of education and selection. Unlike the *novi homines* or even members of families that had served the state for generations, such as Georgios Akropolites' *oikos*, Michael originated from one of the leading families of the empire. That is, the Palaiologoi actively occupied some of the highest positions in the empire since the later 11th century and by the 13th century they formed integral linkages of the *golden chain* households. While Michael had to prove himself worthy of high office, as he explained in his writings, he could rest assured that a position would be found for him, if only based on his family's illustrious background.⁷⁶ For the very same reason, however, Michael was under greater scrutiny than his peers at court. For, just like Akropolites, Palaiologos was brought up at the court. Unlike Georgios, though, Michael operated close to his parents and relatives who were frequenting the court and did not dwell in Latin occupied Constantinople. So, why was Michael raised—as he himself notes—by the side of the imperial family? Having a young Palaiologos close to the imperial administration served a number of purposes. First, just like lesser state officials-to-be, Michael would be aware of the court's vigilance and of its care for him. He would internalize the imperial gaze and would be raised to think twice before trying to betray his benefactor. Secondly, by being at court, Michael had a chance to obtain a better sense of the duties and obligations that were the purview of the polity's great notables.⁷⁷ Finally, on a more personal level, while Michael was from a well-off family, he was brought up by his

⁷⁶ On Byzantine public offices' interrelation with kinship, family background, and patronage see: J. Haldon, "Bureaucracies, Elites, and Clans: The Case of Byzantium, 600–1100," in P. Crooks, ed., *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2016): 147–69.

⁷⁷ On Byzantine governing practices and the place of the great notables in it, see: A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*.

sister Maria Palaiologina before he had moved to the court, since his mother died while Michael was a child and his father busied himself with a career that took him all around the empire.⁷⁸

Where Michael received his early education—the *grammatike*—remains unknown. Once he was taken up by Ioannes III, however, his whereabouts and actions become better known to us. From the time of his *enkyklios paideia*, Michael lived in Nymphaion, close to the imperial family, the senate, and other institutions related to the court. We have already seen that young individuals such as Georgios Akropolites sojourned at the court before they were sent to Nikephoros Blemmydes. Much like Georgios, Michael was surrounded by other *archontopouloi*, since this was apparently a common practice at the court. It is less likely, however, that Michael was too familiar with the emperor or his immediate family. Ioannes was, more often than not, campaigning in the Balkans or, to a significantly lesser extent, against the Seljuk Turks and raiding Turkmens. Thus, Michael and other imperially sponsored students did not have an opportunity to get too close to the emperor.

Another important factor limiting the mobility of courtiers and other people present at the court was the very infrastructure of the palace. Later Byzantine imperial palaces, such as Blachernai and Nymphaion, were not built in the fashion of traditional Late Antique and Medieval Roman aristocratic *domus*.⁷⁹ The layout of these palaces was quite different from the Great Palace at Constantinople, which stayed in parallel ceremonial and administrative use with other residences taken up by various emperors since the 10th century.⁸⁰ While the Great Palace was a vast ground floor structure, subsequent palaces were multi-storeyed and consisted of several buildings arranged around a central courtyard. Taking into account the layout of the palace in Nymphaion, it is easy to see how several interconnected buildings allowed for *archontopouloi* to dwell within the palace without at the same time having unfettered access to all quarters of the imperial palace. The emperor and his family could therefore be so close and yet so far away, completely secluded from unwanted contact with those who spent time within the palace. Such distance notwithstanding, future state officials, who had the opportunity to live within the palace complex for the duration of their education, were able to witness the daily workings of the

⁷⁸ On Michael's elder sister Maria, religious name Martha, see: *PLP*, 21389.

⁷⁹ On Late Antique origins of Byzantine palatial architecture see: P. Niewöhner, "The Late Antique Origins of Byzantine Palace Architecture," in M. Featherstone et al., eds., *The Emperor's House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism* (Berlin: De Gruyter 2015), 31–52.

⁸⁰ On the Great Palace see: A. Berger, "The Byzantine Court as a Physical Space," in *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture* (Istanbul: Koç University Press 2013), 3–12; M. Featherstone, "The Everyday Palace in the 10th Century," in *The Emperor's House*, 149–158.

central administration. Learning by observing how the state apparatus functioned was therefore undoubtedly one of the greatest benefits of growing up at the court. The imperial palace was the seat of administrative units such as the scriptoria and the fisc. It housed both imperial secretaries and governing bodies such as the senate.⁸¹ At court, young Michael and his peers also observed how the palace as a space interacted with the outer world. The essence of the court's communication with the outside was the admission of peoples' petitions either by the emperor or his representatives during his absence. If we are to trust Theodoros II's description of his daily agenda, dealing with petitions consumed quite a few hours of his day:

Care for my troops gets me out of my bed at dawn. I receive ambassadors in audience during sunrise and when the sun is at its highest and then I inspect the army. I devote the middle of the day to my studies. Afterward, mounted on a horse, I receive petitions of those who were not able to join others within the gates of the palace. In the evening, I execute judgements.⁸²

By having, albeit limited, access to various aspects of state administration and by seeing individuals of all manner of rank and provenance circulating around different parts of the palace, students developed a sense of the court as a public space. Many people, oftentimes unrelated to the imperial family, dwelled in the palace. Aside from the civil servants permanently employed in offices by the court, other Romans and foreigners passed through the palace on business, as it seems, smoothly. All these men—be it monks and *paroikoi* at each other's throats, contesting the possession of public land,⁸³ a soldier seeking a *pronoia*,⁸⁴ a local citizen displeased with a lack of attention from the emperor,⁸⁵ or a grand Mongol embassy sent by the Great Khan⁸⁶—contributed to making the palace a vibrant meeting place for conducting all manner of business. By maturing in such an environment rather than in the private and more secluded household of the Palaiologoi, Michael did not only obtain a firsthand experience about the ways in which the

⁸¹ On imperial governing bodies c.1204–1261 see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 147–236.

⁸² ἀνατέλλοντος τοῦ ἡλίου περὶ τῶν ὀπλιτῶν ἡμῖν ἢ φροντίς ἐκ τῆς κλίνης συνανεγείρεται, ἀνερχομένου τε καὶ ἀναφερομένου περὶ τὰ ὑψηλότερα ἢ τῶν πρέσβευων μέριμνά τε καὶ εἰσδοχὴ καὶ ἀπεκβολή, ἔτι δὲ ἀναφερομένου ἢ τῶν φαλάγγων τάξις τάττεται παρ' ἡμῶν, ἴσταμένου δὲ περὶ τὸ ἡμερήσιον μέσον ἢ τῶν δεομένων μελέτη μελετᾶται τε καὶ κατασκευάζεται, καὶ ἵππῳ βαίνομεν ὡς τῶν μὴ πρὸς τοὺς ἐν ταῖς πύλαις τῶν βασιλείων εἰσελθεῖν δυναμένων ἀκροασόμενοι, ὑποκλίνοντος δὲ τὰς κρίσεις τῶν ὑποκλιθέντων ἀποπληροῦμεν. (Theodoros II Laskaris, *Epistulae*, 50.63–71)

⁸³ *MM*, 36–39.

⁸⁴ M.C. Bartusis, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2012), 213–24.

⁸⁵ *Synopsis Chronike*, 463.

⁸⁶ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 41.

administration operated, but also had an opportunity to learn a thing or two about the psyche and mores of his compatriots who did not belong to his social group.

2.3. *Progymnasmata* in Action: Michael Palaiologos' Erudition on Public Display

While learning by observing the dynamics of the imperial court helped prepare Michael for serving the empire, the most significant portion of his education came from the classroom. Here, Palaiologos received official state-sponsored education just like Georgios Akropolites and other officials-to-be. This included extensive training in rhetoric and, up to a point, philosophy. Even though Michael eventually chose a military career path, he did not skip the basic upper level education. After all, it was not uncommon for young *archontopouloi* to receive formidable education by the age of seventeen and then decide which way they wished to direct their careers. Regardless of the path they chose, the art of rhetorical persuasion was always welcome. Michael's scholarly erudition and rhetorical training is best displayed in the extensive autobiographical portrait he included in the *typikon* of the Monastery of St Demetrios in Constantinople.

In the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, teachers and theorists of rhetoric composed textbooks on writing, style, and rhetoric that contained a number of examples and exercises for the purposes of instruction.⁸⁷ These rhetorical textbooks, called *progymnasmata*, served as a base for any education one was to receive in the Roman empire all the way to 1453. All *progymnasmata*, be it the ones originating from Late Antiquity—such as those of Libanios, Hermogenes, or Aphthonios—or the ones from later periods—by Psellos, Basilakes, Hexapterygos, or Pachymeres—contained virtually the same exercises and rules followed by different examples.⁸⁸ At the time of Michael Palaiologos' education, the most widely used textbooks,

⁸⁷ On *progymnasmata* see: G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature 2003); G.A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), 202–8; R.F. Hock, "General Introduction," in R.F. Hock et al., eds., *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*, (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature 1986), 3–60.

⁸⁸ Michael Psellos, *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art*, eds. C. Barber and S. Papaioannou (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press 2017); Nikephoros Basilakes, *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes*, ed. and transl. J. Beneker and C.A. Gibson [Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 43] (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2016); W. Hörander, Die Progymnasmata des Theodoros Hexapterygos, in W. Hörander et al., eds., *Βυζάντιος*. Festschrift für Herbert Hunger zum 70. Geburtstag (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1984), 147–162.

alongside those of contemporary teachers, were the *progymnasmata* of Hermogenes and Aphthonios.⁸⁹

Rhetorical exercises emphasized the importance of clarity and good style in composing orations of any sort. Rhetorical training, however, also prepared one for public service; being a good writer and speaker had a lasting impact on one's career. As we have seen, secretaries of the imperial administration took "sabbaticals" in order to perfect their existing training so that they would be able to keep up with the requirements of their own office and even achieve promotion to higher positions. Clarity and persuasiveness in writing and speaking was crucial for both civil and military officials who were all expected to relate effectively and cohesively their own or other people's ideas, requests, and affairs. Furthermore, polished language and urbane witticism were norms of communication among the elites of the empire.⁹⁰ Thus, rigid training in *rhetorike technē* helped students polish their communication skills and draft official speeches and documents.⁹¹ Such training went beyond memorizing and mimicking classical authors and their language, as is seen by the very content of the exercises. For example, students had to write appraisals and refutations of specific individuals or concepts.⁹² By being exposed to such training, selected young men learned how to craft persuasive arguments for their respective side, while seeking to outmaneuver their opponents in public debate of any sort, a skill much appreciated in medieval Roman society.

Michael, who made a career for himself in the military, nevertheless took pride in showing off his eloquence. Throughout his autobiography, Michael adhered to the rules of rhetorical composition he had learned as a teenager at school. In order to forge a positive image of himself, he relied heavily on the rules for composing an *enkomion* (praise) in the *progymnasmata* of Hermogenes and Aphthonios that instruct:

You should elaborate [the *enkomion*] in the following chapters. You will compose an introduction proper for the subject; then you will state the person's origin, which you will divide into nation, homeland, ancestors, and parents; then you move to the upbringing, which you will divide into habits and acquired skill and principles of conduct; then you will compose the greatest chapter of the praise, the deeds, which you will divide into those of

⁸⁹ For example, see: Blemmydes, *Autbiographia*, i.4.

⁹⁰ On acquired urbane qualities, including well-polished rhetorical skills in conversation, expected of a general see: D. Krallis, "Urbane Warriors: Smoothing out Tensions between Soldiers and Civilians in Attaleiates' Encomium to Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates," in M. Lauxtermann and M. Whittow, eds., *Being in Between: Byzantium in the Eleventh Century* (London/New York: Routledge 2015), 154–68.

⁹¹ For example, Akropolites was in charge of drafting documents for Ioannes III since 1246 (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 44).

⁹² Kennedy, *A New History*, 3–60.

mind, body, and fortune: mind, as courage or prudence; body, as beauty, swiftness, or strength; fortune, as power, wealth, or friends; after these a comparison, attributing superiority to what is being praised by contrast; then an epilogue rather fitting a prayer.⁹³

Michael adapted this rhetorical blueprint to his own needs: to celebrate his own career in the rules of a monastery he built before his death in 1282. Thus, the narrative begins with Michael's glorious ancestry—emphasizing the antiquity of his family line, the Palaiologan position in Constantinople, as well as his grandfather's and father's illustrious careers, followed by the mother's reputable ancestry. Once he had pointed out the greatness of his lineage, Michael turned to his own upbringing, the excellent education he had received, and his excellence in it, which exceeded all expectations. After these introductory chapters, the author continued by showcasing his own deeds. These he divides in three categories. He starts with the deeds of mind, which are: courage in battle from a young age and prudence in dealing with domestic and foreign affairs. Then he turns to the deeds of the body: swiftness in the battlefield. Michael leaves fortune last in this three-part account. Aware of the problematic nature of his elevation to the imperial office, Michael decided to frame this topic as a matter of fortune: "I was elevated to emperor of your people by you [God]."⁹⁴ By following the tripartite division of deeds, Michael was able to completely circumvent his somewhat problematic enthronement that was anything but scandal-free. Finally, in place of comparison, Michael positions himself vis-à-vis other emperors and mentions that his son will be the next ruler of the Romans. In place of "an epilogue rather fitting a prayer," Michael introduces St Demetrios, his protector saint, and offers a prayer to him in exchange for protecting himself and the imperial family.

It does not come as a surprise that Michael deployed a rhetorical *deus ex machina* to avoid compromising himself on the issue of elevation to the throne. On the other hand, he went to a great deal of trouble to also explain away his flight to the Seljuk Turks. In openly addressing his abandonment of the Romans and his running away to the Turks of Ikonion, truly an act of betrayal, Michael notes:

For over and over again campaigns, battles, and God yet again pointed out those who distinguished themselves and were successful in all matters and entrusted them to wage

⁹³ Ἡ μὲν οὖν διαίρεσις αὐτῆ τοῦ ἐγκωμίου· ἐργάσαιο δ' αὐτὸ τοῖσδε τοῖς κεφαλαίοις· προοιμίᾳ μὲν πρὸς τὴν οὐσαν ὑπόθεσιν· εἶτα θήσεις τὸ γένος, ὃ διαιρήσεις εἰς ἔθνος, πατρίδα, προγόνους καὶ πατέρας· εἶτα ἀνατροφὴν, ἣν διαιρήσεις εἰς ἐπιτηδεύματα καὶ τέχνην καὶ νόμους· εἶτα τὸ μέγιστον τῶν ἐγκωμίων κεφάλαιον ἐποίησις τὰς πράξεις, ἃς διαιρήσεις εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα καὶ τύχην, ψυχὴν μὲν ὡς ἀνδρείαν ἢ φρόνησιν, σῶμα δὲ ὡς κάλλος ἢ τάχος ἢ ῥώμην, τύχην δὲ ὡς δυναστείαν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ φίλους· ἐπὶ τούτοις τὴν σύγκρισιν ἐκ παραθέσεως συνάγων τῷ ἐγκωμιαζομένῳ τὸ μείζον· εἶτα ἐπίλογον εὐχῆ μᾶλλον προσήκοντα. (Aphthonios, *Progymnasmata*, 21.20–22.11)

⁹⁴ ἀναλαμβάνομαι εἰς βασιλέα τοῦ σοῦ λαοῦ παρὰ σοῦ. (Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 6.9–10.)

war against the Latins who through misfortune occupied the queen of the cities herself, and [sent] the army across the city to Asia. Needless to say, it was in the most extreme of difficulties that I matched them [the armies] in battle with God as my ally. Coming from all the sides, I kept them away from disembarking by pushing back the assaults and cutting off the provisions for life. These were all possible while [Ioannes III] was alive and we were elevated from one dignity to another always growing greater from great, since God led us with kindness. When the state of the Romans passed on to his son, who must have been hit by the arrows of envy, I too was put on trial like so many others. How did God then deliver us from danger and how did he take us from oppression to safe lands? To state it briefly, he saved us with the Persians. There God held me by my right hand, and he elevated me with honour; those songs are heard even nowadays, the resistance against the Massagetai [i.e. the Mongols] and the thrust, the clash, as well as the great trophy against those who seemed unstoppable before. Although this was not because we were among the Persians, but because God stood by our side. Henceforth, embassies and many letters were sent to us by the emperor who was summoning us back to our people and fatherland.⁹⁵

Here Michael masterfully deals with the scandal that followed his flight to the Turks by promoting an image of himself as a faithful citizen of the empire who was forced to run for his life by an emotionally unstable emperor. Furthermore, Michael singles out divine good faith as his protector in exile. Because of God's patronage, the fame of his deeds among the Persians echoed in the hearts of his fellow Romans, who still sung paeans about his military exploits in exile. According to Michael, his reputation was so strong that even the emperor relented for plotting against him and invited him back to Roman lands. But why did Michael need to address this unpleasant episode in an autobiographical narrative attached to a monastic *typikon*? Why did he not deploy yet another *deus ex machina* and avoid the scandalous affair at any cost? To grasp the magnitude of Michael's image problem we have to consider the optics of his Seljuk escape. While blinding and removing Ioannes IV had been an odious act, it had at least been a domestic affair. Flight to the Turks, on the other hand, was a betrayal, not of the regime per se, but of the Roman body politic as a whole. Even Georgios Akropolites, who cast Michael as the

⁹⁵ Ἐντεῦθεν στρατηγίαί πάλιν καὶ ἀγῶνες πάλιν καὶ θεὸς αὐτίθις εὐδοκιμοῦντας ἐν πᾶσι καὶ κατορθοῦντας δεικνυσὶν ὁπότε καὶ τὸν πρὸς Λατίνους οὓς ἐπὶ κακῶ τῷ ἑαυτῆς ἢ βασιλῆος ἐφρούρει τῶν πόλεων ἐγχειρισθεὶς πόλεμον, καὶ τὴν ἀντιπέραν τῆς πόλεως Ἀσίαν ἔων στρατόπεδον, οὐκ ἔχω εἰπεῖν ὡς οὐκ εἰς τοῦσχατον ἀπορίας αὐτοὺς ὑπὸ θεῶ συμμαχοῦντι συνήλασα. ἀπανταχόθεν αὐτῶν εἴργων τὰς ἀποβάσεις, καὶ τὰς ὀρμὰς ἀναστέλλων καὶ περικόπτων τὰς τοῦ ζῆν ἀφορμὰς. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ἦν ἕως ἐκεῖνος ἦν ἐν τοῖς ζῶσι, καὶ προὔβαινομεν ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν μείζονες αἰεὶ ἐκ μεγάλων γινόμενοι, θεοῦ διὰ τῶν εὐθυμοτέρων ἄγοντος. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὰ Ῥωμαίων κράτη ἐπὶ τὸν ἐξ ἐκεῖνου μετῆλθε καὶ τῶν τοῦ φθόνου βελῶν σὺν πολλοῖς καὶ ἄλλοις τοῖς πεπειραμένοις ἐχρῆν καὶ ἡμᾶς πειραθῆναι, πῶς ἐξάντεις ποιεῖ καὶ τότε θεὸς καὶ πῶς ἐκ θλίψεως ταύτης ἐξάγει εἰς πλατυσμόν; σῶζει πρὸς Πέρσας, ἵνα συντεμῶν εἴπω· κἀνταῦθα κρατεῖ τῆς ἐμῆς δεξιᾶς καὶ μετὰ δόξης προσλαμβάνει με· ὑμνούντων ἔστιν ἀκούειν ἐκείνων ἔτι καὶ νῦν, τὴν κατὰ τῶν Μασσαγετῶν ἀντιπαράταξιν καὶ τὴν ὀρμὴν· καὶ τὴν συμπλοκὴν καὶ τὸ κατ' αὐτῶν ἀνυποστάτων τέως δοκούντων μέγα τρόπαιον ὅπερ οὐχ ἡμεῖς ἐν μέσῃ τῇ Περσικῇ, θεὸς δὲ δι' ἡμῶν ἴστησι· πρεσβείας μὲν οὖν τούντεῦθεν παρὰ βασιλέως καὶ γράμματα ὅσα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀπελύετο, πρὸς τὸ γένος καὶ τὴν πατρίδα παρακαλοῦντα. (Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 5.1–23.)

otherwise impeccable hero of *The History*, ascribed his protagonist's escape to the Turks to a weakness of human nature.⁹⁶ If members of the elite, who had supported the emperor after 1258 felt the need to denounce him on account of this incident, we can only imagine how useful this scandal could prove for Michael's political opponents. Fully aware of this fact and wishing to tackle the issue at hand, Michael embraced yet another rhetorical technique he had learned and apparently mastered in school. He employed what is known as "the statement of confirmation" (περὶ κατασκευῆς), which in any of the major *progymnasmata*, was described as such:

Confirmation is validation of a matter at hand. Matters that should be confirmed are neither very clear nor completely impossible ones, but rather those that hold the middle ground. Those who are confirming should employ arguments opposite of those in refutation and first mention the good reputation of the claimant, then, in turn, provide an exposition.⁹⁷

Reading these instructions in relation to Michael Palaiologos' autobiography, the emperor's rhetorical training comes to the fore. The episode of the flight begins with Michael's faithful and successful defence of the empire and the emperor against the invading Latins. This allows the author to "first mention the good reputation of the claimant." Then Michael exposes an affair that lies in unclear waters. Having God by his side (let us not forget that the whole narrative is appended as an introduction to a *typikon* and divine providence played a major role the emperor's public image), Michael builds a case for himself as an honest and just person who enjoys divine protection. The only logical way to explain his flight then is to cast the blame on irrational imperial policies for which the escape to the Seljuk Turks was the only and, more importantly, godly sanctioned, solution. Furthermore, to counter the malicious gossip (that we can imagine echoing in the streets of Constantinople),⁹⁸ Michael emphasized the heroic songs that circulated among the populace to commemorate his campaigns with the Turks against the Mongols. That is, instead of public gossip about his fidelity to the Romans, Michael introduces public acclamations of himself among the populace of Constantinople.

⁹⁶ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 64.22–40.

⁹⁷ Κατασκευὴ ἐστὶ προκειμένου τινὸς βεβαίωσις πράγματος. Κατασκευαστέον δὲ τὰ μήτε λίαν σαφῆ μήτε ἀδύνατα παντελῶς, ἀλλ' ὅσα μέσσην ἔχει τὴν τάξιν. Δεῖ δὲ κατασκευάζοντας τοῖς ἐναντίοις χρήσασθαι τῆς ἀνασκευῆς καὶ πρῶτον μὲν εἰπεῖν εὐφημίαν τοῦ φήσαντος, εἶτα ἐν μέρει θεῖναι τὴν ἐκθεσιν. (Aphthonios, *Progymnasmata*, 13.20–14.1.)

⁹⁸ On the Constantinopolitans' love of gossip and public ridicule, see Niketas Choniates' description of the people's reaction to Kilic Arslan II, during his visit to Constantinople, and Manuel I's *pretending* to limit the citizens' freedom of speech (τὸ ἐλευτερόστομον) in the streets on Kilic Arslan's bequest (Choniates, *Annales*, 120.14–21).

Michael's school years officially came to end while he was still a young man.⁹⁹ His formation now took him out of the classroom and into the army camp where, by holding his first military ranks, Palaiologos entered the final stages of his state-sanctioned education. This time, however, young Palaiologos was not far away from the emperor studying in the palace, but on the battlefield under the careful watch of Ioannes III and his entourage. It was not uncommon, that young men would follow the imperial camp to demonstrate and further advance skills obtained at school. This sort of internship was practiced by both military men and civil servants who attended military campaigns in order to write reports and draft diplomatic documents. As Nikephoros Blemmydes states "this too was called education."¹⁰⁰ All emperors in exile, unlike the majority of their predecessors, were active in the battlefield. They led the armies themselves and oftentimes were present when treaties with enemies were being discussed and negotiated. For this reason, part of the imperial cabinet was always on the move with the emperor, while other officials remained in Nymphaion, Nikaia, and Magnesia to regulate affairs of Asia. Georgios Akropolites took pride in his internship under Ioannes III, whom he followed on his campaigns and for whom he drafted numerous imperial documents.¹⁰¹ Michael, unlike Georgios who took up a career in civil administration, dedicated himself to the arts of war and was acknowledged by the emperor as an exquisite warrior from his young age. Given his education in rhetoric, philosophy, and other disciplines, and his illustrious background, Michael was assured a bright future in the imperial government. Time spent at court was also used to build personal networks with other students and courtiers. Among students and recent graduates at the court were Michael Palaiologos' future long-term allies: Georgios Akropolites and Alexios Strategopoulos.¹⁰²

2.4. Like Father Like Son: Andronikos and Michael Palaiologos in the Public Eye

Taking up children of established state officials and notable Roman families into imperial care was also advantageous for the *paterfamilias*, who did not have to think about educating and preparing his offspring for officialdom. In the exilic Roman empire the state assumed this task. In turn, mature officials could focus on their official duties, assured that their progeny was on the

⁹⁹ ἐγὼ δὲ ὡς εἰς μείρακας ἤδη. (Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 4.11–12.)

¹⁰⁰ παιδείουσιν καὶ ταύτην καλοῦσιν. (Blemmydes, *Autobiographia*, i.6.3–4.)

¹⁰¹ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 44.

¹⁰² According to Georgios, all three men were together in the imperial camp on one of Ioannes III's campaigns in 1253 (for the date see: Macrides, *The History*, 251): Akropolites, *Chronike*, 49.36–40.

royal road to imperial service. Andronikos Palaiologos, Michael's father, was one such high official, who was able to focus on the advancement of his own career, while the state occupied itself with his son's education.

Little is known about Andronikos Palaiologos' youth and early career under Theodoros I Laskaris. He was born into a wealthy household of the Palaiologoi around 1190 in Constantinople. His father was *mezas doux* Alexios Palaiologos, who had married Eirene Komnene around 1180. By getting married into the household of the Komnenoi, Alexios had boosted his immediate family's reputation among other notables.¹⁰³ Cashing in on this reputation, Andronikos entered public service during Theodoros I's reign, only to reach the zenith of his career under his successor, Ioannes III. Most likely, just a few years after his accession to the throne in 1222, Ioannes elevated Andronikos to the rank of *mezas domestikos*.¹⁰⁴ The first major task we are aware of that Andronikos conducted for the state was the *exisosis* of 1224—a large-scale fiscal survey—with an eye to land reorganization in the newly reconquered region of Skamander.¹⁰⁵

After the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders and the fragmentation of the Byzantine polity, power relations among the Romans shifted drastically as Constantinopolitan monastic and ecclesiastic foundations, as well as aristocratic families, lost their holdings in Asia Minor and in lands now held by the crusaders. In these new chaotic conditions, Theodoros I Laskaris had to tackle local magnates and villagers who appropriated officially unoccupied land in order to reclaim it for the state.¹⁰⁶ While this conflict with local magnates and other parties caused new domestic troubles for the regime, the emperor was thus able to acquire significant swaths of territory for the public fisc. These possessions needed to be surveyed anew to ensure effective collection of adequate tax revenues.¹⁰⁷ They often also had to be assigned new owners from among the populace. A well-regulated and accurately measured countryside would assure that the imperial treasury remained full, so that the emperor could afford his expensive wars against

¹⁰³ On Andronikos Palaiologos's family and background see: Polemis, *The Doukai*, 156–57; Cheynet, Vannier, *Etudes prosopographiques*, 176–78.

¹⁰⁴ Polemis ascertained that Andronikos was invested into the office of *mezas domestikos* by Theodoros I, more recently, Cheynet and Vannier (*Etudes prosopographiques*, 176.) suggested it was more probable that Ioannes III elevated Andronikos into this office.

¹⁰⁵ On *exisosis* and *apographe* see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 210–212. On the date of Andronikos's *exisosis*: Cheynet et Vannier, *Etudes prosopographiques*, 177.

¹⁰⁶ Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 185, 191.

¹⁰⁷ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 202.

Latins, Epirotes, and Bulgarians in the Balkans, as well as Seljuk and nomadic Turks in Asia Minor.¹⁰⁸

During Ioannes III's reign, the polity entered a new stage of constant expansion, first in the Marmara region, followed by conquests in the Balkans. The size of the newly reconquered territories meant that the state acquired more land that it could effectively tax, grant, or cultivate. In order to efficiently turn acreage into substantial sources of income, the state had to survey the land. The task of meticulously surveying these lands was entrusted to high state officials directly connected to the court.¹⁰⁹ By putting members of court elites in charge of such surveys, the imperial regime sent a clear message to the local populace: whether a plot was recognized as private property of Roman citizens or as public land, the state remained vigilant and asserted its capacity to tax and protect private and public property from any kind of threat. As the state asserted its authority over the newly conquered lands, two types of surveys were conducted by the Laskarid polity: *apographe* and *exiosis*. *Apographe* took place on a more regular basis and was based on a census of the people and the land. *Exiosis*, on the other hand, was a rarer general survey of land parcels, the populace, tax units, as well as public and private property and was usually conducted in newly acquired lands.¹¹⁰ Both of these surveys, at least during the period of exile, were carried out by two officials.¹¹¹ This minimized the chance of manipulation and bribery of the officials by local notables who wished to retain the land they occupied after the commotion of 1204.¹¹²

The significance of Laskarid land surveys was underlined by the author of the *Synopsis Chronike*. In this account, Ioannes III's fiscal arrangements clearly benefited the wider Roman population. The historian praises the emperor for filling up the imperial treasury in Magnesia, opening trade routes from India to Egypt, as well as for establishing schools and libraries, only to conclude with the emperor's meticulous surveys of Roman land by saying:

¹⁰⁸ On relations of the Byzantines with the Seljuk and other Turks in the 13th century see: D. Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the 13th Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2014).

¹⁰⁹ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 210.

¹¹⁰ On the two types of survey see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 210–214. While Angold ascertains that *apographe* was conducted by high officials of the central government same as *exiosis*, I suggest that enough room was left for local notables to conduct *apographe*. For examples see the case of the *apographe* of Thessaloniki conducted by two members of the city's urban elite in 1262 (*Actes d'Iviron* III, no. 59, 96–103).

¹¹¹ For example: Andronikos Palaiologos and *kaisar* Romanos see: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 222.7–11; for two notables carrying out an *apographe* of lands around Thessaloniki see: *Actes d'Iviron* III, no. 59, 96–103.

¹¹² MM IV: 217–18; 320–1; 327–9.

[Ioannes III] ordered *apographe* and *exisosis* by men recognized by him as God-fearing to be carried out in all the lands, which he liberated from the hands of adversaries; he was fond of doing such things his whole life. Because of this, once all the taxes were collected, [the state] became rich and both the conscripted soldiers and the class of the great men had access to manifold *pronoiai* and estates with which they increased their means of sustenance.¹¹³

According to the *Synopsis Chronike*, the *exisosis* was a means by which the state affirmed its presence in the province, while also to projecting its power in local affairs. Such reorganization of land and ownership in provinces could only be undertaken by the central administration. No local notable or administrator was allowed to obstruct the process. By managing this process throughout the empire, the polity showed it had both the means and the will to impose itself as the sole caretaker of public affairs. The men employed to conduct the land survey were deemed pious men of utmost integrity in the society. There was little room to doubt their judgement. What is more, by conducting *exisoseis* and *apographai*, the state was able to accumulate wealth from taxation or, alternatively, to distribute *pronoiai* to those who were found deserving of this tax-based income.¹¹⁴

In 1224, Andronikos Palaiologos and the otherwise unknown *kaisar* Romanos conducted an *exisosis*.¹¹⁵ As an *exisotes* of the public fisc, Andronikos Palaiologos carried out one of the first major land surveys of Ioannes III's reign. Serving as a representative of the state he did not simply survey land for the state but also demonstrated to the local Romans that the polity was present, capable of managing its affairs, and taking care of its citizens. Having a notable from a famous *genos* in the province certainly left a mark in the minds of local land owners, since it was not the *doux* otherwise in charge of civic and military affairs of a province who was taking care of the taxation, but rather a different pair of individuals sent directly from the centre with only one task at hand: to conduct an *exisosis*.

2.5. A Useful Life: Andronikos Palaiologos in Provincial Public Service

After the *exisosis* of 1224, which coincided with the year of Michael's birth, the sources remain silent about Andronikos' career until 1233 when "[the emperor Ioannes III] gave to Andronikos

¹¹³ ἀπογραφήν δὲ καὶ ἐξίσωσιν ἐν ταῖς χώραις ἅπαξ γενέσθαι προστάξας παρ' ἀνθρώπων φοβεῖσθαι τὸν θεὸν ἐπεγνωσμένων αὐτῷ, ἀφ' οὗ καὶ τῆς τῶν ἐναντίων χειρὸς αὐτὰς ἠλευθέρωσε, παρ' ὅλην αὐτοῦ τὴν ζωὴν ταύτην ἔστειρε. (*Synopsis Chronike*, 507.21–24.)

¹¹⁴ On *pronoiai*: Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*.

¹¹⁵ Pachymeres, *Chronikonapht*, 222.1–6.

Palaiologos (whom he had appointed *megas domestikos* and about whom I spoke a little earlier) the troops and their generals and dispatched him to the island of Rhodos with a sufficient number of triremes and other ships so that he might attack the renegade with greater strength and inflict damage on him with those methods of strategy he knew.”¹¹⁶ The renegade in question was Leon Gabalas, whose family had ruled independently over Rhodos and some more distant Kykladid islands ever since 1203.¹¹⁷ While Georgios tells us little about the outcome of this, we discern that Andronikos was experienced in warfare since he employed “those methods of strategy he knew.” Most likely then, Andronikos spent the years between the *exisis* of 1224 and the military expedition of 1233 in active service to the imperial army.

Another piece of information Akropolites shares with us is that Andronikos was given command over imperial troops (including their generals), which means that he was not in charge of any specific province at the time. Rather, instead of commanding provincial troops as a *doux*, Andronikos was sent on campaign with an imperial mandate. Much as he had been sent to conduct the *exisis* of 1224, taking his orders directly from the imperial court he was once more on imperial duty. We can thus conclude that at least during Michael Palaiologos’ childhood, his father Andronikos had held offices at the imperial court, close to the emperor as well as his own family. This meant, in turn, that when the time came for Michael to pursue higher education, it was only logical that he was sent to the imperial household, which his father had served for over a decade.

While Michael studied at the court, his father was active in the Balkans waging war against the empire’s enemies by Ioannes’ side. In fact ever since the Rhodian expedition, we keep encountering Andronikos in the emperor’s entourage “directing the affairs of the armies.”¹¹⁸ We learn from Georgios, who was for the most part present in the imperial camp as a fresh graduate of an imperially sponsored school, that Andronikos assumed an important role in the

¹¹⁶ τῷ Παλαιολόγῳ Ἀνδρονίκῳ, ὄν μέγαν δομέστικον εἶχε, περὶ οὗ καὶ μικρὸν πρόσθεν εἰρήκειν, τὰ στρατεύματα καὶ τοὺς στρατηγοὺς παραδοὺς καὶ περὶ τὴν νῆσον Ῥόδον τριήρεσιν ἱκαναῖς καὶ λοιπαῖς ἔξαποστείλας ναυσίν, εἴ πως βριαρώτερον ἐπιτεθεῖη τῷ ἀποστάτῃ καὶ καταβλάψειεν οἷς οἶδε λόγοις τῆς στρατηγίας. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 28.2–7.)

¹¹⁷ Macrides, *The History*, 188. On his coinage, which he minted himself as an independent ruler, Leon did style himself as *kaisar* and servant of the emperor (M. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection* iv (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks 1999), 649–50.), so it would not be completely unfeasible that he had accepted Nikaian rulers as his nominal masters prior to Andronikos’s expedition. Furthermore, Georgios Akropolites employs the term renegade to describe Leon vis-à-vis Ioannes, which indicates that at least officially Ioannes was recognized as the emperor in Rhodos too.

¹¹⁸ τὰ τῶν στρατευμάτων διεξάγων πράγματα. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 40.44.)

imperial council. For instance, after the death of the child-emperor of the Bulgarians, Kaliman, in 1246, Ioannes was deliberating whether to reclaim the city of Serres for the Romans. This was an opportune moment, though the emperor did not in fact have enough troops for a proper siege. While most generals opted not to attack the city, Andronikos convinced the emperor to roll the dice. It was a good call, as the Bulgarian governor of Serres, Dragotas, surrendered the town to Ioannes III, promising to also deliver Melnikon to the Romans.

Andronikos' career reached a new high that same year with the surrender of Thessaloniki to the imperial forces. He now became *praitor* of the Balkans, in charge of civilian and military administration.¹¹⁹ While based in newly conquered Thessaloniki, Andronikos' jurisdiction covered all Balkan lands of the Roman polity. He therefore had to deal with all manner of people, from different ethnic backgrounds, at different levels of provincial civil and military institutions. Luckily for Andronikos, around that time his son Michael—a fresh graduate from Nymphaion—became a governor of Serres and Melnikon, two important cities in the wider hinterland of Thessaloniki.¹²⁰ Having his son in control of public affairs in two important centres close to his own capital surely made Andronikos more secure in his position since he was now more protected from potential conspiracies and uprisings from his immediate surroundings. On the other hand, Michael, still a young man, was to hold his first public post under the supervision of his own father. Even though his days training in both classroom and military camp were behind him, Michael was able to perfect his governing skills under the caring and vigilant eye of his own father.

The *megas domestikos* remained in charge of Thessalonian and Balkan affairs until his death in 1248.¹²¹ Governing a major city such as Thessaloniki—second only to the Queen of Cities—was a demanding but potentially rewarding business. The city with its proud populace stands as an example of Byzantine urban social and political life after 1204. A few months before the city opened its gates to the imperial forces in 1246, several members of local notable families, such as Demetrios Spatenos and Nikolaos Kampanos, decided to get in touch with emperor Ioannes III, having deemed their own *despotes* Demetrios Angelos incapable “to rule a

¹¹⁹ On Andronikos's title of *praitor* see: Macrides, Introduction, 27. For the role of *praitor* see: H. Glykatzis-Ahrweiler, “Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX-XIème siècles,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1) (1960), 75–8; J. Herrin, “Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180–1205,” *DOP* 29 (1975), 266–7. The *praitor* in the Balkans had the same authorizations as did the *doukes* in Asia Minor (Herrin, “Realities,” 266.); for the *doukes* in Asia Minor see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 250–8.

¹²⁰ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 46.14–19.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 46.25–26.

state and be in lawful command.”¹²² It was deemed that the *despotes*, who had nominally recognized the emperor as his master, eventually started to rule on his own right without taking the empire’s benefit into consideration.¹²³ Demetrios and Nikolaos supported by other local notables like certain Iatropoulos and Koutzoulatos,¹²⁴ as well as “the distinguished ones [such] were Michael Laskaris and Tzyrithon, whom emperor Ioannes honoured as *megas chartoularios*,”¹²⁵ organized a successful conspiracy against Demetrios Angelos. In order to crown the endeavour with success, Demetrios and Nikolaos had to secure not only the support of the notables and distinguished men, but rather of the wider populace once the city came into Ioannes III’s hands. They had done so by paying a visit to the emperor “to truthfully obtain a chrysobull of public interest comprising the customs and rights which from the beginning were attached to Thessaloniki, and providing for their own freedom.”¹²⁶ Keen to get the city under his control, the emperor conceded to this request and once Thessaloniki was in his hands, a chrysobull in the public interest was promulgated in order to swiftly bring the populace to his side. The fact that the conspirators opened the gates for the emperor, and nobody was hurt during the takeover of the city helped immensely in reinforcing the perception of Ioannes III as a righteous and merciful ruler.

The account of Thessaloniki’s affairs before the conquest of 1246 reveals a great deal about the importance of public support in running a Roman city. Practically speaking, this event demonstrates that both local notables as well as those distinguished men connected directly to the imperial court relied on the populace when seeking to govern Thessaloniki. To be sure Demetrios Spatenos and Nikolaos Kampanos first sought and secured the support of other notables in the city, most likely members of the council with a recognized legal right to manage the city’s affairs.¹²⁷ Then they communicated with the emperor’s representatives. Eventually, however, they had to deliver a “chrysobull of public interest for the general populace.” The

¹²² πολιτείας κατάρχειν καὶ νομίμως ἐπιστατεῖν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 45.15–16.)

¹²³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 45.

¹²⁴ We know nothing about these two men, however, their offspring continued to play a significant role in Thessaloniki in the later 13th century. This means that the two men’s households played an important role in local affairs prior to their involvement with the conspiracy against Demetrios Angelos in 1246, which brought them further benefits.

¹²⁵ οἱ δὲ τῶν ἐπισήμων ὁ τε Μιχαὴλ ὁ Λάσκαρις καὶ ὁ Τζυρίθων, ὃν καὶ μέγαν χαρτουλάριον ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰωάννης τετίμηκεν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 45.18–20.)

¹²⁶ τῆ δ’ἀληθείᾳ κοινῷ χρυσοβούλλου ἐπευμοιρῆσαι, τῶν ἀνέκαθεν προσαρμοσάντων Θεσσαλονίκη ἐθίμων τε καὶ δικαίων περιεκτικοῦ καὶ τῆς σφῶν ἐλευθερίας παρεκτικοῦ. (ibid., 45.25–28.)

On the chrysobull see: D. Kyritses, “The ‘Common Chrysobulls’ of Cities and the Notion of Property in Late Byzantium,” *ByzSym* 13 (1999), 229–245.

¹²⁷ On city councils in Late Byzantium see: A. Κοντογιαννοπούλου, *Τοπικά συμβούλια στις βυζαντινές πόλεις: Παράδοση και εξέλιξη (13ος-15ος αι.)* (Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών 2015).

common benefit of all citizens became the pivotal point of the conspiracy. This was after all framed as the removal of a tyrant, which was to grant the people their sovereign rights. Though mostly born after 1204, Thessalonians were nevertheless still aware of their Romanness and of all the rights that sprung from it. For this reason, the emperor did not hesitate to grant the status that the city had enjoyed before the events of 1204. With one stroke of a pen the rule of the Franks and the “tyranny” of the Epirot *despotai* was expunged from Roman history. For the Thessalonians, Ioannes’ rule was legitimate because he was the lawfully acting ruler of the Romans (and they too were Romans), who brought them back into the Roman orbit from which they were forcefully removed.

Needless to say, the conspirators and their families benefited personally from the conspiracy. During Theodoros II’s reign Demetrios Spatenos led the embassy to the papacy and about fifteen years after the events of 1246, we encounter Nikolaos Kampanos holding the high office of *prokathemenos* of Thessaloniki.¹²⁸ In 1284, well after the death of our protagonists, Demetrios’s son Ioannes Spatenos occupied the office of *prokathemenos* of Thessaloniki. With imperial support, members of such local notable families as the Spatenoi and the Kampanoi controlled the municipal affairs of Thessaloniki under both the Laskarides and Palaiologoi. By granting positions of authority to the more affluent members of Thessaloniki’s society, Ioannes secured this group’s undisputed support much as he secured the support of the populace at large by protecting their rights. In this way, the emperor established a direct connection with all of Thessaloniki’s social groups. The Thessalonians returned the favour by supporting his regime. Obtaining their support granted Ioannes III calmer seas on which to sail the ship of state. With his actions, Ioannes III made it clear that he was the caretaker and benefactor of the people.

Another way for the emperor to demonstrate his care for the people in his absence was to appoint capable men as governors of cities and provinces. In this respect, Andronikos Palaiologos was a sensible choice. He was a high official experienced in affairs pertaining to both the army – having been a general and member of the imperial military council – and civil administration – having managed the *exisosis* of the Skamander region. The post of governor of Thessaloniki and *praitor* of the Balkans was also a boon for Andronikos, as it helped him

¹²⁸ *Prokathemenos* was at the head of the municipal administration and his position would usually be approved by the emperor and not the provincial administrator such was the *doux*. For more on *prokathemenos* see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*. 264–266. On the Kampanoi and Spatenoi see: Macrides, *The History*, 238–39, n.6–7.

promote himself and his *genos* in two different directions. First, by handling local affairs without turmoil, he demonstrated his continued administrative and military competence to the emperor. Second, by taking care of the local people's safety and wellbeing, Andronikos established himself as their caretaker. Andronikos was able to make it clear that he was the one directly providing for them by being constantly physically present in Thessaloniki's public life. These two directions of self-promotion were in fact intertwined since any actions by the empire's representatives in the provinces were perceived as an imprint of the state itself.

Archbishop Iakobos of Bulgaria, an inhabitant of Thessaloniki at the time, tells us that Andronikos secured the citizens' gratitude (and thus gained in popularity) by maintaining the city-walls and by proving a just governor and judge when dealing with city affairs.¹²⁹ By promoting himself as an effective caretaker of the Roman populace, Andronikos mirrored traits that the emperor himself sought to associate with his public image. Unlike the emperor though, whose public image remained more generic, in order to appeal to Romans all around the empire, Andronikos' public image was carefully calibrated to the peculiar needs of the city of Thessaloniki, where the Palaiologoi were building a power base. It is for this reason, after all, that emperors usually reassigned governors of provinces on a nearly annual basis.¹³⁰ In doing so, the administration sought to undermine a popular governor's local support, by ensuring that a respected and well-entrenched public servant could not rise against his more distant emperor.

Local notables of Thessaloniki were fully aware that they owed their posts to the emperor of the Romans. They still did not shy away, however, from building cordial relations with the *megas domestikos*, who was in charge of overseeing their affairs. Whether Andronikos went out of his way to actively accommodate the needs of local influential citizens in Thessaloniki or even turned a blind eye to some of their less laudable actions, we will never know. For whatever reason, Andronikos was able to gain the support of both the populace at large and the more affluent members of the society. By keeping on good terms with the Palaiologoi, people like Demetrios Spatenos and Nikolaos Kampanos secured positions for their families not just during Ioannes III's and Theodoros II's reigns but well into the Palaiologan period. The local elites' best chance of maintaining their prestigious status in the local community was to connect themselves

¹²⁹ S.G. Mercati, *Collectanea Byzantina* I (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo 1970), 69.18–70.5; 70.13–28.

¹³⁰ On the limited term of office holders in the provinces during the period of exile see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 250; Ahrweiler, "L'histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317), particulièrement au XIII^e siècle," *TM* 1 (1965) 138–48; F. Dölger, "Chronologisches und Prosopographisches zur byzantinischen Geschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts," *BZ* 27 (1927), 307–10.

with the high representatives of the imperial administration. Such associations opened new opportunities for them. As we have seen, the otherwise unknown Demetrios was sent as an ambassador to the pope by Theodoros II. Surely, Demetrios' role in the events of 1246 and direct correspondence with Ioannes III made him known to the imperial court and to Theodoros. For let us not forget that the emperor would read letters of political interest before his council and Georgios Akropolites was present as a member of that council when the fate of Thessaloniki was being decided.¹³¹ It would not be implausible to suggest that Demetrios established a good report with Akropolites, who in turn promoted the Thessalonian's career on the grand imperial stage. Demetrios' as well as Nikolaos Kampanos' good rapport with Akropolites and Andronikos Palaiologos surely helped them in gaining the offices of *apographeis* and conducting an *apographe* of the theme of Thessaloniki.¹³²

Apart from the local elites, during his tenure as the *praitor* of the Balkans, Andronikos had to deal with the local populace at large. Andronikos' presence in the province made the local populace mindful of the fact that, if need be, they could quickly take their affairs and concerns beyond the level of local administration and even above the regional authority of the *doux*. In Andronikos the provincials had access to the emperor and his immediate representatives. In this way, the state of Ioannes III was able to present itself in the provinces and expand its direct influence on the ground at the expense of local notables. That is, instead of looking to the local magnates for protection, the villagers and town-dwellers could rely on the imperial government. On the other hand, local notables as well as minor landholders were able to take up their business to the imperial court and thus circumvent the provincial administration that served as an intermediary between authorities around the emperor and the local populace. This allowed the Laskarid state, at least in theory, to be present at all levels of private and public life in the empire. In practice, of course, local courts in cities and villages as well as major provincial courts overseen by the *doux* were as busy as the central administration when it came to landownership disputes and other affairs.¹³³ For instance, in the region of Smyrna, we encounter legal disputes between villagers that are settled by a local *oikodespotes* who was no more than

¹³¹ On loud reading and public performance in Byzantium and Rome see: P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2002³), 339–353; M. Mullet, "Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople," in M. Angold, ed., *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX–XIII Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1984), 173–201; A. Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 235–37.

¹³² *Actes d'Iviron* III, no. 59, 96–103.

¹³³ Blemmydes, *Curriculum*: 17, 29–30; Theodoros II Laskaris, *Epistulae*, 298–9.

a major village figure.¹³⁴ On another occasion, we see a provincial *doux* conducting an official investigation around the province to disperse justice.¹³⁵

Judging by all the cases from Andronikos' times that have come down to us, whether they were investigated and settled at a local level or by the imperial administration, we clearly see that public discourse was alive and well in the Laskarid polity. It was not just the emperor or even such courtiers as the Palaiologoi and Tornikoi, who openly expressed their opinions and grievances. Local *pronoïars*—for the greater part of Ioannes III's reign soldiers obtained *pronoïai* to arm and support themselves¹³⁶—and *paroïkoi* also took to the courts to protect what they saw as their rights.¹³⁷ Once at court, *paroïkoi* employed appropriate legal language well enough to frame their case in a manner in accord with the legal traditions of the empire. Such well-versed Roman citizens, regardless of their social standing, would have made Andronikos' work in the province less difficult to cope with vis-à-vis his previous career focused around the imperial centre. While, unfortunately, not a single case that was conducted under Andronikos' supervision has come down to us, we still have enough material to imagine the type of individuals and cases he must have dealt with. For instance, in the case of the monks of Lemviotisa vs. the *paroïkoi* of the village Potamou which was given as *pronoïa* to certain *kavallarios* Syrgares,¹³⁸ we see how far both sides were willing and able to go to prove their case.¹³⁹ Both sides, that is the monks and the *paroïkoi* in question, took the case of *pronoïa* ownership to the emperor. The villagers, much as the more educated representatives of the monastery, directly addressed the emperor, who listened to their grievances and the case they presented against their accusers. It was only after the initial trial that the *pronoïar* Syrgares took up the role of the defender of his *paroïkoi* at court. Thus, the *pronoïar*, benefiting from helping the *paroïkoi* to ascertain their rights against other *paroïkoi* or institutions (such as the monasteries), acted as a patron of his clients otherwise independent from him; for it was these clients who initiated the defense and they were the ones who were accused by the monastery, not the *pronoïar*. Cases such as this one allow us to understand that public discourse in local and imperial courts was not reserved for the selected few. Rather, the emperor and his men, as

¹³⁴ MM IV, 81.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 36–7.

¹³⁶ On *pronoïa* before 1204 as well as under the Laskarids see: Bartisis, *Land and Privilege*: 112–240.

¹³⁷ On social dynamics in Byzantine villages as well as the sense of collectivity and belonging to the Roman nation in rural parts of the empire see: D. Krallis, Villages, Towns, Soldiers and the Search for Elusive Byzantine Commons, *ByzSym* 28 (2018), 11–48.

¹³⁸ On *kavallarios* Syrgares see: MM IV, 209–210.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 36–9.

was Andronikos, had to be present, in both theory and practice, to listen and settle disputes of all the empire's citizens.

2.6. A Useful Afterlife: The Place of Andronikos Palaiologos in the Public Memory of Thessaloniki

Whether Andronikos was supposed to be rotated into a new post before he became too close to the local elites we will never know, since he died in 1248 before completing his second year in office. On his deathbed, Andronikos took monastic vows and assumed the monastic name Arsenios.¹⁴⁰ This transition from secular to monastic life suggests that he had time to make arrangements for a peaceful death in Thessaloniki. While Theodoros Philes replaced the deceased *megas domestikos*,¹⁴¹ the connections Andronikos made in the city remained at his son's disposal. The successful network Andronikos forged in Thessaloniki is perhaps best represented by the prominent careers of the Spatenoi and Kampanoi well into the reign of his son Michael Palaiologos. Furthermore, the impact of Andronikos' tenure on the city and the public support generated by it for the Palaiologoi comes to the fore in the carefully crafted image of Andronikos that survives in the city's public memory. Almost immediately after the death of his father, Michael Palaiologos hired the logographer Iakobos who, having served as metropolitan of Ochrid, was certainly a prominent ecclesiast in the Balkans.¹⁴² Employing Iakobos, a celebrity in Thessaloniki's social scene, to commemorate Andronikos was a smart move on Michael's part. A popular preacher would surely attract more people to the congregation than a less known priest or rhetorician. In order to enhance the populace's fond memory of the *megas domestikos*, Iakobos produced a funerary oration as well as three poems commemorating Andronikos and his deeds.

To live up to the literary expectations of the time, Iakobos naturally followed the rules prescribed by rhetoricians in *progymnasmata* for epitaphic prose. He praised Andronikos for his illustrious origins, birth, upbringing, career, good deeds for the people, as well as faithful service to the emperor.¹⁴³ An image of a morally righteous person comes to the fore from the bishop's speech. Hearing about the exquisite character of the deceased in a funerary oration is by no means surprising; after all, one would not commission a speech on mediocrity. What is special

¹⁴⁰ S.G. Mercati, *Collectanea*, 72.1.

¹⁴¹ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 46.28–9.

¹⁴² On Iakobos see: Mercati, *Collectanea*, 99–103.

¹⁴³ Mercati, *Collectanea*, 66–73.

about Iakobos' oration is its content and context. While following the expected formulae for speech writing, Iakobos rooted his oration entirely in the affairs of the city of Thessaloniki. For starters, he exclusively addressed Thessaloniki as a "community of the people"¹⁴⁴ who made up the city. Speaking to this specific audience then, Iakobos focused solely on those deeds, which Andronikos accomplished for the sake of the citizens of Thessaloniki. He is completely silent about *megas domestikos*' earlier endeavours such as the *exisosis* of Skamander and the conquest of Rhodos. This narrower focus on Thessalonian affairs allowed the listeners to associate the deceased with local affairs since those were already familiar to them. More importantly, Iakobos recognized that it was local affairs that truly mattered to his listeners and not Andronikos' other accomplishments. By framing his speech around facts and deeds known to the audience, Iakobos crafted Andronikos' public image as a devoted benefactor of Thessaloniki. In doing so the orator's speech fulfilled a specific political goal: he shored up public support, or at least sympathy, for the Palaiologoi in Thessaloniki.

In painting a portrait of a desperately missed governor in his funeral oration, Iakobos often deployed the first-person plural "we" to designate the community of citizens with which he self-identified. By doing so, he was able to cast his personal grief as that of the whole community. For instance, he ascertained that everybody was in distress because of the loss of such a marvelous governor by exclaiming: "the community of citizens, we are all gazing at the public penalty and the shipwreck of our dwelling place."¹⁴⁵ Creating a sense of despair and ruin after the death of the *megas domestikos* was a better means of introducing the great deeds Palaiologos accomplished on behalf of the city and its dwellers. To prepare his audience for the reception of his Palaiologan message, Iakobos inserted in his oration a brief digression on the crusaders. These "barbarian dogs,"¹⁴⁶ were mentioned in strictly pejorative terms and would have heightened the audience's attention. Lest we forget, Thessaloniki was one of the cities that experienced Latin occupation. This crusading interlude was thus still fresh in the memory of her citizens. Having primed his audience, Iakobos took the narrative back to Andronikos who fought off the Latin imposters and then refurbished the city and its walls. By dwelling on common knowledge about the city's recent history, the author successfully created a bond between the

¹⁴⁴ τὸν κοινὸν τῶν πολιτῶν (Mercati, *Collectanea*, 69.1)

¹⁴⁵ τὸ πάνδημον θεώμεθα πρόστιμον, τὸ κοινὸν τῶν πολιτῶν καὶ τῆς περιοικίδος ναυάγιον. (Mercati, *Collectanea*, 69.1–2.)

¹⁴⁶ σκύλα βαρβαρικά (ibid., 69.10)

deceased and the populace, which should be eternally grateful to Andronikos, and by extension to the Palaiologoi, for their toils and labours on the city's behalf.

While Andronikos was cast as the utmost benefactor of the city, Iakobos was very careful to not infringe on the rights of the emperor in the city and the state. When addressing the deceased for the first time in the oration, the author introduces the emperor as well: “alas, oh Andronikos of the great name, save for the greatest emperor, you prevail over all men in terms of the strength of your wisdom, the capability of your hands, prudence, richness; what is this thing [death]?” By introducing the comparison with the emperor from the onset, Iakobos avoids creating tension between praising the deceased and respecting the throne. The author promotes an image of Andronikos as a just official faithful to the regime. When describing the misdeeds of the crusaders and the advent of Nikaian forces to the region, Iakobos makes sure to note that:

But since the horn of salvation was given by God—the emperor of course celebrated with happy name, who brought under his scepter the whole of the land of the Ausonians, all those lands that were in the east and in the west, he now transformed those who were not people because they were oppressed by the perverted [crusaders] into people by destroying those oppressors—since he became the master of our paradise, he established you as a flaming sword irresistible in meeting opponents in battle, empyrean in these, but our very own saviour.¹⁴⁷

The audience then received a twofold message: first, Andronikos was a faithful subject of the emperor and the benefit of the people he worked for was also to the benefit of the emperor. Second, while Andronikos was the utmost caretaker of Thessaloniki, he was able to be so only because the emperor was wise and just in placing such a marvelous man in charge of public affairs. Imperial prudence was in no way threatened by *megas domestikos'* exceptional personality; rather, it was in fact enhanced through Andronikos' wise governing. Thus, Thessaloniki's prosperity was a result of masterful imperial governance to which Andronikos pledged his abilities and loyalty.

While the speech meant to commemorate Andronikos, its main goal was to promote the Palaiologoi to the citizens of Thessaloniki, especially, the *megas domestikos'* son Michael, who

¹⁴⁷ ἀφ' οὗ δὲ κέρασ σωτηρίας ἀντεδόθη παρὰ θεοῦ—ὁ χαριτωνομῆι δῆπου κλειζόμενος βασιλεὺς, ὁ τὴν Αὐσονίδα πᾶσαν μικροῦ τοῖς ἰδίοις σκήπτροις αὔθις συναγαγών, ὅση τε κατ' ἀνίσχοντα ἥλιον καὶ ὅση περὶ δυσμεύοντα, ὁ τὸν πρὶν οὐ λαὸν διὰ τὴν καταδθναστείαν τῶν παλμναίων νῦν εἰς λαὸν ἀντικαθιστὰς διὰ τὴν ἐκείνων καταστροφὴν—ἀφ' οὗ οὖν οὗτος ἐκυρίευε παραδείσου τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς, οἷόν τινα φλογίνην ῥομφαίαν ἐγκατέστησέ σε τοῖς ἀντιμάχοις ἀπρόσμαχον, ἐμπύριον μὲν αὐτοῖς, ἡμῖν δὲ καὶ λίαν σωτήριον. (ibid., 69.10–17)

was already serving as governor of the neighbouring cities of Serres and Melnikon. In the introduction of the speech, Michael is mentioned by Iakobos vis-à-vis Andronikos: “but he who is elder of all, olden hope, golden wreath of your brightness, who after you is the heir of your charisma and of the capable *genos* of the Palaiologoi, second after the first but in no way less bright, the very famous Michael.”¹⁴⁸ By receiving such a laudable mention in the speech, Michael was openly promoted as a worthy heir to Andronikos. Thus, Iakobos introduced his benefactor—most likely it was Michael who commissioned the oration and the three poems—to the people of Thessaloniki, who were expected to embrace him as a worthy substitute to Andronikos.

Much like the speech, the three poems by Iakobos addressed the same occasion and issue.¹⁴⁹ Why did Michael commission these three poems together with the funerary oration? By looking at the language and content of the poems, it becomes clear that they were written in different registers of Greek. The first poem celebrating the deceased *megas domestikos* was written in highly archaizing hexametric Homeric Greek employing defunct Aiolic, Doric, and Ionic morphology. The second was written in standard iambic classicizing *koine*. Finally, the third was composed in the form of a Q&A. Questions presented in a not particularly classicizing *koine* ask the audience to reminisce on the life and career of Andronikos—again in Thessaloniki alone—while appropriate short answers are offered that keep the audience focused. The content is pretty similar in all three poems and resembles that of the funerary oration. The poems open with Andronikos’ illustrious birth. They focus on his Constantinopolitan origin, his background and ties to Palaiologoi, Komnenoi, and Doukai. What follows is an account of the *megas domestikos*’ service under Ioannes III, with an account of his deeds for Thessaloniki and its people and finally his death. In all three poems, as well as in the speech, Michael Palaiologos is cast as the natural heir to his father’s dedication to and works for the public’s benefit.

While the content of all four works is rather similar, the target audiences of the three poems were quite different. In the 13th century, Thessaloniki was surely home to a vibrant intellectual scene, as the presence of men like Iakobos in it suggests. Judging by his career as an encomiast to the Palaiologoi and, as of the 1250s, to Ioannes III himself, Iakobos was no stranger to the circles of highly educated Roman literati. The first poem, then, was written to

¹⁴⁸ ὁ δὲ τούτων πρεσβύτερος, ἡ γηρωκόμος ἐλπίς, ὁ χρύσεος τῆς σῆς λαμπρότητος στέφανος, ὁ μετὰ σὲ τῶν σῶν χαρίτων ὄντως διάδοχος καὶ τοῦ τῶν Παλαιολόγων γένους ἀριπρεποῦς μετὰ τὸν πρῶτον ὁ δεύτερος οὐκ ἐλάσσω φωστήρ, ὁ παγκλεέστατος δηλαδὴ Μιχαήλ. (ibid., 67.26–29.)

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 73–79.

address the refined tastes of these very same cultured individuals. By commissioning an archaizing poem, Michael was able to cast himself as a patron of fine arts; a quality certainly appreciated by ambitious literati who would often offer their services to generous patrons.¹⁵⁰ Having such men at his disposal meant that Michael could always rely on them for well-crafted propaganda, even if Iakobos were not to be available.

The second poem was composed in language not different from that of the funerary oration. We can imagine that, like the funerary speech, this piece was read at church. The local and imperial elites sitting in the front rows of the church—the Spatenoi, Kampanoi, and others from among Thessaloniki's notables— could certainly have engaged with the poem's classicizing *koine*. They would not have had problems understanding its content. This is in fact truer for the poem since it was composed in verses that conveyed Iakobos' message directly, while the oration was filled with overly elaborated and rhetorically ornamented syntax. The introduction of the iambic poem relied heavily on biblical motifs evoking Solomon and David and then addressed the passing of human beings only to continue by praising the life of the famous Andronikos Palaiologos, emphasizing again all the good deeds he was able to perform as a result of the emperor's prudent choice. By invoking Ioannes III, much as he had done in the speech, Iakobos' sought to present the Palaiologoi as fully faithful to the regime. Furthermore, these biblical motifs made this poem suitable for recitation before a church congregation. It is clear from the above that the audience for the iambic poem was wider than that of the hexametric Homeric poem.

The final poem by Iakobos commemorated Andronikos in a mostly unaffected *koine* that was not, however, completely devoid of archaizing impulses. The Q&A format in which the poem was put together allowed the author to pose brief and intelligible questions, while offering short answers that everybody could understand. For instance, a part of the poem says:

Q: Who nourished him? A: the city of Constantine.

Q: And where did he move to? A: to the plain of Asia.

Q: Thereafter what dignity did he hold? A: *Megas Domestikos* in Romais.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ On artistic and literary patronage in Byzantium see: Magdalino, *The Empire*, 413–488; Mullet, "Aristocracy and Patronage," 173–201; В. Станковић, *Комнини у Цариграду (1057–1185): еволуција једне владарске породице* (Београд: САНУ 2006), I. Drić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2016).

¹⁵¹ (α) θρέπτειραν οἶαν ἔσχε; (β) τὴν Κωνσταντίνου.

(α) ποῖ δ' αὖ μετέστη; (β) πρὸς πλάτος τῆς Ἀσίας.

(α) τὴν ἀξίαν ἔπειτα τίς ἐστι φράσον;

(β) δομέστικος μέγιστος ἐν Ῥωμαῖδι. (Mercati, *Collectanea*, 78.7–10)

Where and how this poem was performed remains unknown, but we can speculate that there was more than a single performer involved. The very form of the song demands at least two readers: one asking and one responding. This could have been done in the church, by the grave, or anywhere else where the *meγas domestikos* was being commemorated. The dramatic dialogue between the main orator asking the questions and a possible stand-in for the deceased man, responding with information about Andronikos' life would have made for an interesting and engaging poem. The linguistic register suggests that a wide range of listeners would have been able to understand it, making this peculiar poem an exceptional piece of commissioned poetry by any notable family of the period.

Iakobos' four works about the deceased Andronikos Palaiologos stand as testimony to Michael's careful crafting of his public persona from the early days of his career. The Thessaloniki-based content of the speech and poems strongly suggests that the targeted audience for these pieces were indeed the citizens of this great Balkan metropolis. The different registers of language employed in each of these works testify to Michael's attempts to engage as wide an audience as possible while trying to satisfy the tastes of influential groups in the city. Hiring a single author to compose these diverse works of literature speaks to Iakobos' status as a renowned logographer and preacher in the city. Having such a celebrity writer compose four very different pieces in form, yet similar in content, enabled Michael to draw attention to his person from the widest possible cross-section of the city's population.

Having obtained his education and early experience in public affairs at the imperial court, Michael certainly knew how to use rhetoric to his own benefit. Crafting a relatable image of a popular public figure in a major city such as Thessaloniki, where the Palaiologoi had been present since the 12th century, was a smart move on Michael's side. Whatever his aspirations, having the support of the public at all levels—from man on the street to local elite—made governing the province easier and Michael's future better secured. Unfortunately for Michael, he was about to learn that maintaining the support of local notables was not as easy an endeavour as his initial successes among the Thessalonians may have suggested.

Chapter 3. Linking the *Golden Chain*: The Social Network of Michael Palaiologos

Surviving narratives about the early life of Michael Palaiologos and his immediate family members offer a vivid image of social realities at the imperial court and provincial administration, while speaking to the role of the Palaiologan *genos* in the Roman polity after 1204. The situation changes drastically for the brief but crucial period of Michael's life: roughly from the moment he was accused of high treason and incarcerated in 1253 to his enthronement in 1259. The accounts for this period tend to be brief and seem somewhat incomplete, even though these six years were marked by a high-profile trial, incarceration, marriage into the imperial family, flight to the Seljuk Turks of Rum, yet another arrest, and Michael Palaiologos' eventual election to the imperial office by the senate in late 1258. The fact that both Michael and his main apologist, Georgios Akropolites, left these six years unaddressed in their narratives should not surprise us. After all, being accused of treason and running away to a foreign polity to escape potential trial, certainly leaves little to no room for praise. Thus, the two authors muddied the flow of their narratives and managed to describe the period of 1253–58 in unclear fashion. Nevertheless, swimming through the murky waters of Michael's pre-imperial career still offers enough material to conceptualize the public sphere in the empire of the Romans and Michael's potential role in it.

In his autobiographical *typikon* of St Demetrios' monastery, Michael addresses none of these issues save his escape to the Turks and eventual enthronement. Both, however, he de-historicizes by emphasizing the role of divine providence.¹⁵² Georgios Akropolites, on his part, provides a very colourful account of the trial, to which he had been witness.¹⁵³ Here Georgios cast Michael as the arch-hero, with Ioannes III and his circle playing the role of antiheroes. This substantial narrative of the trial by a first-hand witness offers a rather rare opportunity to examine a high-profile public trial in Later Byzantium, concerns about objectivity notwithstanding. In contrast to Akropolites, Georgios Pachymeres dedicated a chapter of *The History's* first book to Michael's incarceration around the time of the trial, which he does not address. He also wrote about Michael's reconciliation with Ioannes III and subsequent marriage with the emperor's niece.¹⁵⁴ Unlike Akropolites' narrative, which serves as an apology of Palaiologos' rise to power, Pachymeres' is a hostile account that builds a case against Michael

¹⁵² Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 5–6.

¹⁵³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50–51.

¹⁵⁴ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 37.2–39.14.

in the course of his work. Thus, we are left with two conflicting narratives of Michael's life from 1253 to 1258. Regardless of these two authors' conflicting agendas, they both had to bow to the essential rule of history writing: *truth telling*. That is, they both had to craft their accounts out of the known facts from Michael's life.¹⁵⁵ By focusing on the known facts, they could inflect them in ways that revealed the image of Michael Palaiologos' character that fit their agenda. Somewhat more importantly, Akropolites and Pachymeres guide us into the world of social, cultural, and political practices and expectations of the 13th century. Their political agendas aside, both authors employed arguments and reasoning as they built their cases that corresponded to the contemporaneous worldview and anxieties of the Romans.

By gradually unpacking the intertwined narratives of Palaiologos, Akropolites, and Pachymeres, in the present chapter, I chart out a crucial period in Michael's life. Reconstructing Michael's biography in these six tumultuous years in turn leads to the examination of the Nikaian elites' employment of public support, spaces, and events in maintaining or even enhancing their position within the polity of the Romans.¹⁵⁶ All the sources covered in this chapter were, after all, meant for public distribution. Michael's autobiographical narrative as part of a monastic *typikon* was available to the public gaze, while the two histories had the empire's educated elites as their target audience.¹⁵⁷ The very emphasis on specific aspects from Michael's life in these sources was an endeavour in and of itself to project a carefully crafted image of the emperor to a wider public, either to praise or criticize him.

¹⁵⁵ On truth-telling as a persuasive technique in Byzantine historiography: Papaioannou, *The Aesthetics of Historiography*, 3–24. On rhetorical practices including the truth in historiography: Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*; M.J. Wheeldon, "'True Stories,' 33–63; Mullett, "Novelisation in Byzantium," 1–28. On different techniques used by historians vis-à-vis rhetoricians to depict emperors in Byzantium see: A. Angelov, "In Search of God's Only Emperor: *Basileus* in Byzantine and Modern Historiography," *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014), 123–141.

¹⁵⁶ For the Byzantine polity and the populace see: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*; D. Krallis, "Popular Byzantine Agency," 11–48; for the alliances of Byzantine elites during the 12th century see: Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos*.

¹⁵⁷ For the public display of inscriptions in Byzantium see: A. Rhody, "Interactive Inscriptions: Byzantine Works of Art and Their Beholders," in A.M. Lidov, ed., *Spatial Icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia* (Moskau: Indrik 2011), 317–333; id., "Tower Established by God, God Is Protecting You: Inscriptions on Byzantine Fortifications – Their Function and Their Display," in C. Stavrakos, ed., *Inscriptions in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine History and History of Art* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2016), 341–370; I. Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion*; id., "Painter as Scribe: Artistic Identity and the Arts of *graphē* in Late Byzantium," *Word & Image* 29 (3), 334–353; P. Agapitos, "Poets and Painters: Theodoros Prodromos' Dedicatory Verses of His Novel to an Anonymous Caesar," *JÖB* 50 (2000), 173–185. For Byzantine performativity of works of history see: Magdalino and Macrides, "The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism," in P. Magdalino, ed., *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London/Rio Grande: Bloomsbury Academic 1992), 117–56.

Before engaging with Michael's high-profile trial, I follow him into provinces where I pick up the thread of public influence in the empire by unspooling the tale of Michael's role in the city of Melnikon. Moving away from the relationships that Byzantine highborn notables forged with the wider populace, which was the theme of the first chapter, I shift our gaze to Michael's relationship with local notables. Going a step up the social ladder, in the remainder of the chapter, I explore Michael's social network in the highest circles of the society. Examining the social network Michael formed around himself serves as a good example of alliance building and power brokerage among the empire's elites including the imperial family. In the process of constant power struggle among the elites, the imperial household was weary of other prominent clans building up their own system of alliances and allegiances at the expense of the imperial family in whose service they thrived. It is this peculiar power relationship that appears as a common theme throughout the chapter.

In order to focus on the relevance and intersection of social connections with local and high elites of the empire, I centre our story on Michael's public effort to defend his person from accusations of treason before and after that very trial. I also draw links between the account of the trial and Michael's position as governor in the city of Melnikon. By examining actions of a prominent member of Melnikon—Nikolaos Manglavites—vis-à-vis Michael Palaiologos in the context of the trial, a rather complex image of social and power relations arises before our eyes. This set of relations among a highborn Roman (Michael Palaiologos), a local notable (Nikolaos Manglavites), and the emperor (Ioannes III) reveal the complexities caused by the state administration's direct presence and interest in its provinces. Exploring the physical setting of the trial and the audience present at it, as described by Georgios Akropolites, affords one clearer insight into wider social dynamics of a public event of this sort. Furthermore, following the entire process enables us to conceptualize the limits of imperial authority in a public trial as well as the role of the *kritai* and witnesses in building the case for and against Michael Palaiologos.¹⁵⁸

Michael's subsequent reintroduction to public service and marriage into the imperial family gives us an insight into the carefully orchestrated manoeuvres that were supposed to protect the

¹⁵⁸ On Byzantine legal culture see: Z. Chitwood, *Byzantine Legal Culture and the Roman Legal Tradition, 867–1056* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2017); for legal practices in Middle and Late Byzantium see: A. Γκουτζιουκώστας, *Η απονομή δικαιοσύνης στο Βυζάντιο (9ος-12ος αιώνες): τα δικαιοδοτικά όργανα και τα δικαστήρια της πρωτεύουσας* (Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης: Σχολή Φιλοσοφική 2004) (PhD Thesis); N. Oikonomides, "The 'Peira' of Eustathios Rhomaios: an Abortive Attempt to Innovate in Byzantine Law," *FM* 7 (1986), 169–92.

emperor from other notable officials in the empire. By concluding a marriage between an aristocrat of dubious allegiance and a member of his family, Ioannes III reveals the limits of imperial autocracy.¹⁵⁹ This constrained imperial authority draws the emperor into constant negotiations with the aristocrats “for whom the *golden chain* of high birth was welded.”¹⁶⁰ Pachymeres’ reference to the Homeric *golden chain* becomes an apt label for the empire’s elites. The balance of power between the emperor and the *golden chain oikoi* also depends on the ability of either side to muster public support by building alliances among them and by directly communicating directly with the Roman populace. In this context, Michael’s efforts to publicly celebrate and shape the common memory of Andronikos Palaiologos in Thessaloniki become more meaningful for our own understanding of Roman politics in the 13th century.

The chapter concludes with the examination of Theodore II Laskaris’ rise to power and his promotion of certain *novi homines*—first and foremost the Mouzalones—to the highest-ranking offices. I argue here that in his attempt to introduce new families of provincial stock to prominent positions, Theodore II did not wish to eradicate the aristocratic families of the *golden chain*.¹⁶¹ Rather, he strove to add new links—albeit loyal exclusively to him—to the existing chain in order to weaken the individual influence of certain aristocrats. To this end, the emperor had to remove a number of prominent individuals from their offices, but he never tried to eliminate families that had been connected to the imperial administration at least since the times of the Komnenoi. Unfortunately for Michael, he found himself among those officials to be removed. For this reason, Michael Palaiologos had to choose whether to remain in the polity and suffer demotion or seek refuge beyond the empire’s *limes*.

¹⁵⁹ For the most emphatic view of Laskarid emperors as Godsent autocrats who controlled the highborn Romans as if they were pawns on a chessboard see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 37–93. For a less reductive and more nuanced take on the imperial power as a Roman office that had to be maintained through power brokerage see: Beck, *Senat und Volk*; Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*; idem, *The Byzantine Republic*; Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics*. For a sacral image of a Later Byzantine emperor (conveniently enough Michael VIII Palaiologos) as a means of imperial public propaganda that served to bolster the emperor’s prestige vis-à-vis other Romans see: Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*, 31–87.

¹⁶⁰ Pachymeres, *Realtiones*: 1.21.

¹⁶¹ Traditional scholarly depictions of Theodoros II represent the emperor as the most ‘anti-aristocratic’ monarch of the three Laskarid emperors (Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 60–79). Recently, Dimiter Korobeinikov pointed out that we should be cautious in labelling the three Laskarid emperors (Theodoros I, Ioannes III, and Theodoros II) as ‘anti-aristocratic’ rulers (Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 40–80, especially 58–75). Here, I push Korobeinikov’s argument further by ascertaining that not even Theodoros II had any intention of eradicating the influential families from the public scene.

3.1. Keeping Checks and Balances among the Romans

During his public service in Melnikon and Serres, under the wings of his father Andronikos, Michael Palaiologos came in contact with the local urban elite for the first time. Much like Andronikos, who kept on good terms with such families as the Spatenoi and Kampanoi of Thessaloniki, Michael had to rely on and occasionally accommodate the aspirations of the elites at Melnikon. This was all rather new for Michael, who so far in his career had to do business only with his peers of the *golden chain*. Fortunately for Michael, he benefited from his father's instruction. Another factor that made Michael's job easier was that the region he was assigned to govern was far from underdeveloped. In the 13th century, Melnikon retained its pre-1204 urban characteristics and was an important commercial centre of the region.¹⁶² Traces of Melnikon's prosperity are best preserved in archaeological sites such as the so-called Byzantine House—a dwelling place of affluent merchants of the city that was modelled on the palaces of Asia Minor and Constantinople.¹⁶³ Structures like the Byzantine House and the geographical distribution of settlements in the vicinity of Melnikon attest to the presence of an affluent local elite, whose members had the means to advertise themselves to the city's populace. By ensuring that they were well regarded by their fellow citizens, the elites of Melnikon strove to obtain high positions within the city and further their *oikos'* reputation in the region. If we are to trust Akropolites' account, Nikolaos Manglavites, member of a major landowning family, was “one of the most distinguished men among the inhabitants of Melnikon.”¹⁶⁴ Nikolaos became a pivotal figure in regional politics when, according to Akropolites, he gave a fiery public speech to the people in the streets of Melnikon in 1246. Manglavites sought to persuade local Roman dwellers (and Bulgarians living in the city) to willingly join Ioannes III. As Nikolaos put it “our land belongs to the empire of the Romans [...] since all of us originate from Philippopolis, pure Romans by birth.”¹⁶⁵ As a leader of the citizens of Melnikon, Nikolaos negotiated the terms upon which the city would join Ioannes III and support his cause in the Balkans against the Bulgarians and the Epirotes. Nikolaos' dealing with the emperor certainly made him a major public figure in Melnikon, once the city successfully passed from Bulgarian to Roman rule. We have no way to

¹⁶² On the role of Melnikon as the regional mercantile and administrative centre see: M.S. Popović, “Zur Topographie des spätbyzantinischen Melnik,” *JÖB* 58 (2008), 107–119; id., “Die Siedlungsstruktur der Region Melnik in Spätbyzantinischer und Osmanischer Zeit,” *ZRVI* 50 (2010), 247–76.

¹⁶³ For the Byzantine house in Melnikon's features that correspond to palatial architecture of Byzantine Asia Minor see: P. Neiwöhner, “Houses,” in P. Neiwöhner, ed., *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017), 115.

¹⁶⁴ εἷς ἦν τῶν ἐπιφανεστέρων ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Μελενίκου οἰκήτοσιν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 44.10–11)

¹⁶⁵ ἡμέτερος χώρος τῆ τῶν Ῥωμαίων προσήκει ἀρχῆ [..] ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες καὶ ἐκ Φιλιππουπόλεως ὀρμώμεθα, καθαροὶ τὸ γένος Ῥωμαῖοι. (Ibid., 44.29–30, 32–33.)

assess Nikolaos' political role at Melnikon during Michael's tenure in the city. We can, however, think of him as a vocal representative of the urban elites' interests in the city. Michael surely could not afford to dismiss his intercessions on their behalf. We can also presume that both Michael and Nikolaos were politically active in the public eye. Michael was an imperially appointed governor of Melnikon and Serres. On top of his official appointment, Michael belonged to the well-known *oikos* of the Palaiologoi, who had occupied some of the highest offices in the empire since the reign of Alexios I Komnenos.¹⁶⁶ Such genealogy and concurrently held public office surely made Michael the talk of the town. Nikolaos, on the other hand, was a local man. He made a name for himself in Melnikon while the city was under Bulgarian rule, certainly becoming even more prominent after his successful direct dealings with emperor Ioannes III. Having men such as him on his side would have eased Michael's efforts to run the city's affairs.

Michael, however, did not share in his father's good fortune in doing business with the local elites. Akropolites explains that Nikolaos accused Michael of treason against the emperor, on account of popular rumors spreading around Melnikon. This was something that Michael's deceased father Andronikos had never experienced during his career. Michael had to deal with this issue on his own. Thanks to Georgios' fervent defence of Michael, we have in our hands a forensic account of the criminal trial of Michael Palaiologos in 1253.¹⁶⁷ Akropolites dedicated a whole chapter to this trial, which is also the first in the series of scandals that will plague Michael until his death almost thirty years later. In building the case for Michael, Akropolites inevitably offered a detailed – albeit rhetorically embellished – report of the events surrounding the trial in order to dismiss any accusations against Michael.¹⁶⁸

According to Akropolites, the accusations against Michael were nothing but rumors whirling around the streets and taverns of Melnikon; after all, at the time Michael was the talk of the town. These rumors reportedly sprung from a misunderstanding between two men engaged in a conversation about Michael. Their discussion had focused on Michael's sadness for the passing of Demetrios Tornikes, who "had a wife who was the first cousin of the *megas domestikos* [Andronikos Palaiologos]." ¹⁶⁹ In the conversation, one of the two men noted that the two

¹⁶⁶ For Palaiologoi under the Komnenoi see: Chenyet et Vannier, *Études*, 133–187; Polemis, *The Doukai*, 152–164.

¹⁶⁷ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.

¹⁶⁸ For Akropolites' employment literary techniques in the depiction of the trial in order to build a case supporting Michael Palaiologos see: Macrides, "George Akropolites' Rhetoric," 201-111.

¹⁶⁹ σύζυγον ἔχων τοῦ μεγάλου δομestίκου πρωτεξαδέλφην. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.16–17)

Palaiologoi in charge of the region were great men and that Michael should perhaps marry the sister of the Bulgarian monarch. A secret marriage alliance between Michael and the Bulgarian princess would certainly have raised alarm bells at the imperial court. According to Akropolites, Michael knew nothing of these conversations. Word had, however, spread out before he could stop it and Nikolaos rushed to lay charges against Michael before the emperor. Interestingly enough, Akropolites did not use the term treason, leaving accusations against Michael vague.¹⁷⁰ Georgios Pachymeres filled in the blank for us by emphasizing that Michael was accused of high treason against the crown for allegedly conspiring with his namesake Michael Angelos, the *despotes* of Epeiros. According to Pachymeres, Palaiologos was to marry the daughter of Angelos and they were to rule the empire together after Ioannes III's assassination.¹⁷¹

The imperial reaction was swift, and Michael was removed from public office and incarcerated,¹⁷² which meant that the accusations fell under civil criminal procedure.¹⁷³ Akropolites on his part did not mention Michael's removal from office and his incarceration. He rather noted that once learning of the accusations the emperor set the case aside until a suitable hour, "since it was not the time for inquiry into such affairs but for campaign and battle."¹⁷⁴ Pachymeres, as we saw, complements Akropolites' account by writing that Michael was put under arrest. We should not disregard how Michael's presumed actions at Melnikon must have looked to the members of the imperial household. He was closely tied to the imperial family through upbringing and kinship. He was also carefully building a successful career and a good name for himself in the newly reconquered territories in the Balkans under the supervision of his father Andronikos Palaiologos. In those lands, which were newly reintegrated in the Roman polity, the local populace was not accustomed to the imperial regime from Nikaia. In the absence of strong allegiances to a distant emperor, court elites charged with the administration of these lands had breathing room to carve out their own share of public support at the expense of the common consensus behind the reigning emperor. Through their positions, charitable deeds, and patronage, Andronikos and Michael Palaiologos could win over the populace of Northern Greece for themselves rather than to the imperial household. That is, by being at the very outskirts of Ioannes III's empire and so close to the Bulgarians and the Romans of Epeiros,

¹⁷⁰ Macrides, *The History*, 246, n.12.

¹⁷¹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 37.3–20.

¹⁷² For Michael's incarceration, which Akropolites does not refer to, see: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 39.2–3.

¹⁷³ For civil criminal procedure see: "Civil Procedure," in *ODB I*, 467. For operating of the ideal court see: R.J. Macrides, "The Competent Court," in A. Laiou, ed., *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth-Twelfth Centuries* (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks 1992), 117–29.

¹⁷⁴ ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐκ ἦν καιρὸς τοιούτων πραγμάτων ἐρεύνης ἀλλ' ἐκστρατείας καὶ μάχης. (Akropolites: 50.6–8)

Michael surely looked well positioned to challenge the emperor's authority, if not in the empire as a whole than at least in Roman Macedonia where his deeds made him popular among the locals. This was by no means a benign threat to Ioannes III, who had experienced a fair share of conspiracies against his rule.

While Nikolaos' reasons for turning on Michael remain obscure, the preserved description of the entire criminal procedure against the accused Palaiologos extends our understanding of socio-political and legal practices in the later Byzantine period. Serendipitously, it also sheds light on the complex relationships forged among the emperor, court elites, and provincial Roman citizens. For it is telling that a local affluent Roman citizen from a provincial city such as Melnikon was able to generate enough commotion to have a member of the high court elite arrested under charges of treason. Another important aspect of the story, so vividly reported by Georgios Akropolites, is that Ioannes III did not, or rather could not, simply have Michael executed. Rather, the emperor had him incarcerated before the trial. Akropolites does not commend the emperor for not acting hastily. He might have avoided doing so because he was casting Ioannes III as the villain of the story in *The History*. It is also possible that by not staging the trial or execution immediately, the emperor was simply following established legal practice. A law promulgated by Theodosius I, which, as Michael Attaleiates informs us, was revived in the later 11th century by emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates stipulated "that no man could be executed before a span of thirty days had elapsed after the final verdict against him."¹⁷⁵ Attaleiates introduced the story of Theodosius I's law and Nikephoros III's revival of it in order to praise the emperor. The eleventh-century historian left us with another trace of why this law might have remained in practice after Nikephoros III's tenure: "he [the emperor] read the law aloud to the assembly of the Senate, all of whom were in agreement and greatly pleased by this."¹⁷⁶ Presenting the law to the Senate meant that the senators became very well aware of

¹⁷⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *The History*, transl. A. Kaldellis and D. Krallis (Cambridge, MA/London, UK: Harvard University Press 2014), 571. Theodosius I's original proclamation jointly with his co-emperors Gratian and Valentinian goes as follows: "Imppp. Gratianus, Valentinianus et Theodosius aaa. Flaviano pf. p. Illyrici et Italiae. Si vindicari in aliquos severius, contra nostram consuetudinem, pro causae intuitu iusserimus, nolumus statim eos aut subire poenam, aut excipere sententiam, sed per dies XXX super statu eorum sors et fortuna suspensa sit. Reos sane accipiat vinciatque custodia, et excubiis solertibus vigilanter observet. Dat. XV. kal. sept. Verona, Antonio et Syagrio coss. Interpretatio. Si princeps cuiuscumque* gravi accusatione commotus quemquam occidi praeceperit, non statim a iudicibus, quae ab irato principe iussa sunt, compleantur, sed triginta diebus, qui puniri iustus est, reservetur, donec pietas dominorum iustitiae amica subveniat." (*C. Th.* 9.40.13.) For the date of the law's issuance see: J.F. Matthews, "'Codex Theodosianus' 9.40.13 and Nicomachus Flavianus," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 46 (1997), 196–213.

¹⁷⁶ Attaleiates, *The History*, 573.

such a law which provided them with a sort of Byzantine *habeas corpus* for imperial associates. Ioannes III, who just like the emperors before him, had to constantly negotiate his own position and authority vis-à-vis other members of the *golden chain*, was probably aware (or maybe even reminded by his entourage of notables) of this law.¹⁷⁷ Theodosius I's law was certainly there to remind the emperor of his precarious position and the constant need to maintain a healthy relationship with the Roman elite. After all, *do ut des* had been part of Roman legal culture since the early days of the Republic. Michael's position was not then as desperate as it might have initially seemed: he was expected to be judged first and then punished if convicted after a potential lapse of thirty days. The emperor assembled a tribunal with judges chosen from the ranks of imperial administrators to examine whether or not Michael, a Roman citizen and senator himself, plotted against the crown. By putting together a public trial, Ioannes III ensured that he would not fall victim of his own wrath. Quickly and extra-judicially executing Michael, a member of a most prominent Roman family, could have damaged Ioannes III's standing. It could have triggered a rebellion of the highborn notables or even of the armies and populace in Northern Greece whose loyalty Michael had carefully cultivated.

On his part, Nikolaos, a landowning notable in the backcountry of Thessaloniki, accused a state official and a member of a major aristocratic family by taking the case to the emperor. The fact that he did not try, or at least not to our knowledge, to bring the case against a person of Michael's position with the local courts, that were technically under Michael's supervision, tells us that Nikolaos was aware of the limits of local authority in cases against major political figures. Furthermore, taking the case to the emperor meant that Nikolaos followed the rules of Roman law as prescribed in the *Ekloga Basilikon* of the mid-12th century.¹⁷⁸ According to this text, "the law gave to every man a competent judge and ordained that [this official] alone can judge the man. Thus, a cleric and a monk [are] under the jurisdiction of a local bishop or the patriarch, a senator under the emperor, and a guild member under the eparch."¹⁷⁹ Nikolaos, at least through the pen of Akropolites, was sufficiently aware of legal practices to know that Michael as a senator fell directly under the jurisdiction of the emperor to whom Nikolaos had to file a

¹⁷⁷ This case is comparable to Ioannes III's clemency towards the perpetrators of Andronikos Nestongos' conspiracy, most of whom were liberated unharmed while the emperor "applied the law more compassionately" to the head perpetrators.

¹⁷⁸ On *Ekloga Basilikon* see: Chitwood, *Byzantine Legal Culture*, 33–35; Macrides, "The Competent Court," 118–19.

¹⁷⁹ ὁ νόμος ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων δέδωκε δικαστὴν πρόσφορον καὶ ὥρισε παρ' ἐκείνου κρίνεσθαι μόνον, οἷον τῷ κληρικῷ καὶ τῷ μοναχῷ τὸν κατὰ χώραν ἐπίσκοπον ἢ τὸν πατριάρχην, τῷ συγκλητικῷ τὸν βασιλέα, τῷ συστηματικῷ τὸν ἑπαρχόν. (*Ekloga Basilicorum*, 7.3.23.2: 35–38.)

complaint.¹⁸⁰ We see no attempt by Nikolaos to denounce Michael to the *praitor* in Thessaloniki under whom Palaiologos technically served. Rather, he took the case straight to Ioannes III. The example of Nikolaos seems to suggest that pre-1204 Roman legal practices continued well into the 13th century.

The case of Nikolaos Manglavites vs. Michael Palaiologos also stands as a testament to the central government's presence in the empire's provinces. Following the trajectory of Michael's tenure in the city of Melnikon, we can see the administrative practices of the imperial government unravel before our eyes. Michael was appointed by the emperor to govern the region of the city of Melnikon. Being sent directly from the imperial centre, Michael served as a link between the centre and the province. Michael was there to make sure that the region operated smoothly on behalf of the emperor and simultaneously he was there to offer Roman services to the local populace. On the other hand, by sending an imperially trained official, the emperor did not just send a capable administrator, he also made sure that the local notables did not end up accumulating too much unchecked power in their hands. This pattern demonstrates well the top-down distribution of authority.

What of the interests, however, of the people of Rome (after all, it all started with SPQR)? How were their interests safeguarded from potential maladministration coming from the top? The case of Nikolaos Manglavites reads as a direct legal remedy to this very issue. Nikolaos, in order to protect his own interests, took his case against the administrator Palaiologos to emperor Ioannes III. Either because Nikolaos sincerely felt his allegiance lay with Ioannes III – in which case he appears to have served as the emperor's eyes and ears in the city ever since the two men negotiated the surrender of Melnikon to the Romans – or because he was displeased with Michael Palaiologos, this local notable was prepared to seek help outside provincial boundaries. In doing so, Nikolaos demonstrated that people in the provinces had the very same expectations of access to state services and justice as those displayed by Constantinopolitans in the era before 1204. By avoiding provincial administration and taking his issue to the imperial court, Nikolaos showed us that exercising rights from the bottom-up kept the whole system in check. To be sure, Nikolaos had enough influence and funds to get the

¹⁸⁰ The case of Nikolaos Manglavites against Michael Palaiologos was not by any means a precedent in Roman legal history. For example, see the case in the eleventh-century legal manual *Peira* composed by Eustathios Rhomaios about a group of villagers taking their case against the local official Romanos to the higher authorities: Panagiotis Zepos ed., *Πεῖρα Εὐσταθίου τοῦ Ῥωμαίου* (Athens: Fexis 1931; repr. Aalen: Scientia Verlag 1962).

emperor's attention. A less fortunate citizen might not have had the means to directly invoke imperial attention. This did not mean that this citizen's problems would necessarily stay short of imperial attention. A harmed citizen without the adequate funds would have to rely on his patron to deliver the message. In the absence of such a patron, one would have to put his trust in the collectivity of citizens whose violent reaction against an administrator could provoke an adequate imperial reaction.¹⁸¹

The emperor, on his side, had the duty to take care of the plaintiff's petition. In our specific case, the emperor could be grateful that the plaintiff was a well-off individual and not a mob roaming around Melnikon. According to Akropolites, Ioannes III was eager to put together a trial against Michael for he saw him as a threat to the throne.¹⁸² All this does not mean that any of the three parties—Manglavites vs. Palaiologos vs. the crown—did not try to play one against the other through backchannels and informal communication. Unfortunately, Akropolites' ardently pro-Palaiologan account does not offer any insight into potential lobbying against Nikolaos by Michael or his family and associates.; his storyline only sheds light on the ways in which the emperor himself wished to influence the trial in order to secure Michael's condemnation. Akropolites' bias is clearly on display in his work, and yet the machinations depicted in the trial, as fictitious or exaggerated as they might be, nevertheless cast light on Roman legal procedure and the judgements the Byzantines produced about their compatriots' actions.

3.2. Michael's Trial: A Hot Mess?

In order to exculpate Michael Palaiologos, Georgios Akropolites carefully discredited his hero's adversaries. He thus did his best to convincingly depict both Ioannes III and Theodoros II as incapable and unjust monarchs.¹⁸³ Akropolites avoided simply labelling Ioannes III as incapable or unjust, rather he attacked the emperor's very right to rule over the Romans by describing his actions as unworthy of an imperial office holder. Akropolites rhetorically crafted his entire narrative as a cohesive whole, which should, by its end, discredit Ioannes III to the readers. He did this while, at the same time, withholding personal judgment. The task was by no means an easy one, as Ioannes III appears to have entered the pantheon of excellent Roman rulers

¹⁸¹ On urban agency in Byzantine cities see: D. Krallis, "Historians, Politics, and the Polis in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *TM* 21 (2017), 419–48.

¹⁸² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.

¹⁸³ For the critical description of Ioannes III and Theodoros II see: Macrides, "Introduction," *The History*, 55–65.

almost immediately after his death. Thus, Akropolites employed all his rhetorical skill to cast the trial of 1253 as evidence on the base of which to undermine Ioannes III's virtue in the eyes of his readers. In the process, Akropolites left us with a substantial description of the whole juridical process: from evidence collection, to interrogation, trial, final verdict, and lastly the expectations Romans had of their judicial system.

Akropolites opened his account by focusing on the investigation and collection of proofs that would have enabled Ioannes III to condemn Michael Palaiologos. From the onset of the story, Akropolites tells us that both men, who were conversing about Michael, “were detained and questioned about the conversation they had.”¹⁸⁴ The man who reported the conversation to Nikolaos repeated his claims to the emperor. The other man, who uttered the very words that raised the spectre of treason, adamantly ascertained that “he [the first man] has spoken truthfully, since he heard this from me. It was not with knowledge of Komnenos [Michael] that I spoke so, but I myself have brought these words forward.”¹⁸⁵ In this scene of interrogation Akropolites used passive constructions to present the line of questioning, thus occluding the identities of the interrogators. The man who uttered the words of treason was then tortured—a common practice used to obtain confessions from defendants in criminal procedures.¹⁸⁶ Since the torment was to no avail and no fingers could be pointed towards Michael, the accused man together with the one who brought the charges to Nikolaos Manglavites were armed and—for the lack of witnesses—engaged in the trial by combat.¹⁸⁷ The tortured man lost, which was taken as evidence that his testimony was false. He was, however, left alive and was questioned again, only to once more refuse to change his statement. At this point, Akropolites abandoned the passive voice and introduced the emperor as instigator of torture and trial by combat. In his words: “since it appeared that the emperor would learn the truth by greater torture, as he was the kind of man who made examinations more exact, he applied the ordeal by death to the man.”¹⁸⁸ Thus the active Ioannes III, who wishes to condemn Michael Palaiologos at any price, staged the execution of the poor man, who, even though exhausted by torture and under the

¹⁸⁴ κατασχεθέντες οὖν καὶ ἄμφω ἠρώτηνται περὶ τῶν λελεγμένων (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.42–3)

¹⁸⁵ ἀληθῶς μὲν οὐτοσὶ εἰρήκει, παρ' ἐμοῦ γὰρ ἀκήκοεν· ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδήσει μοι εἶρηται τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ τοὺς λόγους τούτους προήνεγκα. (Ibid., 50.44–7)

¹⁸⁶ For torture in Byzantine court to extract confession see: “Torture,” in *ODB* III, 2098–99.

¹⁸⁷ For the Romans' acceptance of trial by combat, which was a novelty in the times of Alexios I Komnenos coming from the West, by the time of Michael's trial see: Macrides, *The History*: 265.n.18; idem., “Trial by Ordeal on Whose Order?,” in P. Armstrong, ed., *Authority in Byzantium* (Farnham: Ashgate 2013), 31–46.

¹⁸⁸ ἐπεὶ δὲ διὰ πλείονος βασάνου ἔδοξεν ἐπιγνῶναι τὸν βασιλέα τὸ ἀληθές, οἷος ἐκεῖνος τὰς ἐξετάσεις ἀκριβεστέρας ποιούμενος, τὸν διὰ θανάτου ἐπήγαγε τῷ ἀνδρὶ ἔλεγχον. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.58–61)

impression that he was about to be killed, still assured the judges that Michael knew nothing of what he himself had said in private conversation. Since he did not change his statement under the threat of death, Ioannes III had no choice but to spare the man's life and incarcerate him for his own treasonous words and ideas. By marking Ioannes III as the perpetrator of the misfortunate simpleton's trial by death and subsequent incarceration, Akropolites played on his readers' expectations of justice: the emperor acted harshly applying a series of ordeals and punishments against a helpless Roman citizen.

This story preceding the very central point of the chapter—the trial itself of Michael Palaiologos—served Akropolites well in casting Ioannes III as a vicious monarch who put his own convictions and wishes above those of his fellow Romans and even above truth itself. Despite his political and rhetorical agenda, Akropolites, nevertheless, touched upon several points that illuminate the early procedure of a high-profile trial. First, both parties were extensively interrogated. The defendant was in fact tortured and, given the lack of witnesses the two men met in combat. Obtaining a confession from a defendant who had already admitted to uttering treasonous words about Michael's plausible future actions was pertinent to the trial. Not even the emperor, who heavily rested his hand on the scales of justice, could afford to publicly condemn Michael Palaiologos given the lack of evidence. While it was necessary for the monarch to get involved in the trial of a senator, Ioannes III's insistence on Michael's guilt, as described by Akropolites, suggests that the public saw such actions as bad governance. Applying torture and trial by combat per se were not the actions contested by Akropolites. What Akropolites saw as unjust were Ioannes III's constant intervention in the process and his effort to extort a confession through a feigned trial by death.

Having successfully laid the ground for depicting Ioannes as a jealous and unjust ruler, Akropolites came to the central point of the narrative: the interrogation itself of Michael Palaiologos. From the narrative, we learn that Akropolites was one of a number of otherwise unnamed judges.¹⁸⁹ The trial took place in an army camp in the vicinity of Philippi in Northern Greece. We can picture a large audience comprised of soldiers and other retinue around the camp attending the trial. The presence of a large crowd meant that whatever the outcome of the trial, it would have to be accepted by the soldiers who might otherwise start a not so peaceful commotion. Akropolites employed his rhetorical skills to juxtapose Michael, the true hero of the trial, to a villainous Ioannes III, who was assisted in his inequity by his friend Phokas, the

¹⁸⁹ Macrides, *The History*, 264.n.7.

metropolitan of Philadelphia. With emphasis on staging and the opposition of good and bad, the official account of the trial is almost completely omitted. Rather, Akropolites framed the affair as a private conversation between the corrupt Phokas and a dignified and witty Michael. Somehow Akropolites happened to overhear this conversation and relates it to his readers:

Taking Michael aside (for I [Akropolites] have heard this) he [Phokas] told him that: you are a noble man and were born of nobles. For this reason, you must think now and act accordingly to what behoves you for the sake of your reputation, your good faith, and all your *genos*. Since in your case there is no proof by witness, you must produce the truth through the red-hot iron.¹⁹⁰

In this alleged statement, Phokas suggested that in the absence of concrete proof of treason Michael should undergo trial by hot iron. The metropolitan insisted that Michael do this in order to once and for all clear his own name and that of the Palaiologoi of all charges. While this was a suggestion offered in private, Michael was not subjected officially to the ordeal by iron since the very practice was considered uncanonical by jurists in the years following the sack of Constantinople. Ordeal by fire originated in Western Europe and sole instances of its application (or rather suggestions of its application) come from the period of exile. In writings of two major exilic ecclesiastic jurists—Demetrios Chomatenos and Ioannes Apokaukos—we find instances when the ordeal by fire was suggested.¹⁹¹ Both jurists write from Epeiros and find the practice to be barbarian in origin. Chomatenos goes as far as to deny its validity in the eyes of either ecclesiastic or secular civil law.¹⁹² As it has been noted, trial by hot iron was employed only if valid proof was lacking. The ordeal was performed by secular authorities and only if the accused agreed (or themselves proposed) such a trial.¹⁹³ While some jurists, such as Apokaukos, might accept trial by fire as a legitimate way to prove one's innocence, it becomes clear that in every recorded case that has come down to us, the defendant had to explicitly accept to undergo the ordeal.

¹⁹⁰ παραλαβὼν Μιχαήλ, κάμου τῶν λόγων ἀκρωμένου, ταῦτ' εἶπεν ὡς 'εὐγενῆς μὲν ἀνὴρ σὺ καὶ ἐξ εὐγενῶν γεγέννησαι. δεῖ οὖν σε τὸ δέον ὑπὲρ τῆς σῆς ὑπολήψεως τε καὶ πίστεως καὶ παντός σοι τοῦ γένους καὶ νοῆσαι καὶ διαπράξασθαι. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐκ ἔλεγχος παρὰ μαρτύρων ἐν σοί, δεῖ σε τῷ μύδρῳ τῆν ἀλήθειαν παραστήσασθαι. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.100-6)

¹⁹¹ D. Chomatenos, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*, G. Prinzing ed (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter 2002), 397–399, 302-3; A. Παπαδόπουλος-Κεραμεύς, *Βυζαντίς 1* (Ἀθήναι: κ. κ. Ελευθερουδάκη καὶ Μπαρτ 1909), 27–8.

¹⁹² Chomatenos, *Ponemata*, 303.22–4.

¹⁹³ Macrides, "Trial by Ordeal," 31–46.

Akropolites, knowing his laws and judicial opinions, made much of this scandalous proposal and cast Michael as an intelligent young man of 27 years who was quick to respond:

I do not know in what way such a thing is called holy, oh lord, but I am a sinful man and cannot work such wonders. But if a metropolitan who is a man of God advises me to undertake such action, you yourself should put on all your holy attire, as you have the custom when you are entering the holy shrine on foot and when you are frequenting with God. Then heat up the iron for me with your own hands which touch the holy sacrifice, the body of our lord Jesus Christ sacrificed for the entire world and which is ever sacrificed by you, priests and hierarchs, and with these holy hands of yours place the iron in my hand, I confide in lord Christ that He will overlook my every sin and work the truth through miracle.¹⁹⁴

After Michael's convincing retort that resembles the arguments produced by such jurists as Chomatenos and Apokaukos,¹⁹⁵ Phokas changed tack and noted:

Oh, my good young man, not only is this not a Roman practice of ours, but it is not in ecclesiastical tradition, nor did it proceed from the laws or, earlier, from the divine and holy canons. The fashion is barbarian and unknown amongst us; it is put into practice only by imperial order.' And [Michael] said, 'O the greatest hierarch of God, had I myself been born of barbarians and had grown up with barbarian traditions or had been brought up from childhood in such laws, I would pay my penalty in barbarian fashion. On the other hand, if I am a Roman and [originate] from Romans, let this trial of mine come to a conclusion in accordance with Roman laws and written traditions.¹⁹⁶

Michael thus chose not to undergo the ordeal by fire, and this seemed to have been a legitimate choice not even the emperor could impose on the defendant. Rather, Michael had the opportunity to reject the ordeal twice: once when some of the judges suggested it and then when Phokas proposed it. Both times, the argument employed was that trial by fire was the quickest way to clear his name and his family's reputation. Likewise, both times, Michael had

¹⁹⁴ 'οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως τὸ τοιοῦτον κέκληται ἅγιον, ὃ δέσποτα' ἔφη· 'ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν ἁμαρτωλὸς εἰμι ἄνθρωπος καὶ τερατουργεῖν τοιαῦτα οὐ δύναμαι. εἰ δέ μοι συμβουλευῆ μητροπολίτης ὦν καὶ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος τοῦτι διαπράξασθαι, ἔνδυσαι μὲν αὐτὸς τὴν ἱεράν σου πᾶσαν στολήν, καθὼς εἴωθας ἐν τῷ θείῳ εἰσέρχεσθαι βήματι καὶ ἐντυγχάνειν θεῷ· εἶτα δὴ ταῖς σαῖς χερσίν ἐκπύρωσόν μοι τὸν σίδηρον, αἷς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐφάπτη θύματος, τοῦ σώματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς τοῦ κόσμου τεθυμένου καὶ ἀεὶ θυομένου παρ' ὑμῶν τῶν ἱερέων τε καὶ ἱεραρχῶν, καὶ ταύταις δὴ ταῖς ἱεραῖς σου χερσίν ἐπίθεος τῇ χειρὶ μου τὸν σίδηρον, καὶ τεθάρρηκα εἰς τὸν δεσπότην Χριστόν, ὡς πᾶσαν μὲν οὗτος ἁμαρτίαν μου παροράσεται, θαυματουργήσειε δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.' (Ibid.50.107–21)

¹⁹⁵ For the ordeal by fire and the judicial opposition to it see: R. Macrides, *Trial by Ordeal*, 31–46.

¹⁹⁶ 'ὦ καλὲ νεανία,' ἔφη, 'τοῦτο οὐκ ἔστι τῆς ἡμετέρας καὶ Ῥωμαϊκῆς καταστάσεως, ἀλλ' οὔτε τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς παραδόσεως, οὔτε μὴν ἐκ τῶν νόμων οὔτε δὴ πρότερον ἐκ τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ θείων κανόνων παρείληπται. βαρβαρικὸς δὲ ὁ τρόπος καὶ ἀγνώως ἐν ἡμῖν, προσταγῆ δὲ μόνον ἐνεργεῖται βασιλικῇ.' καὶ ὅς 'ὦ μέγιστε ἱεράρχα θεοῦ, εἰ μὲν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκ βαρβάρων γενένηται καὶ βαρβαρικοῖς τοῖς ἤθεσιν ἀνατέθραμμα ἢ καὶ νόμοις τοιοῖσιν ἐκπεπαιδευμαι, καὶ βαρβαρικῶς ἐκτισαίμην τὴν δίκην μου· εἰ δὲ Ῥωμαῖος καὶ ἐκ Ῥωμαίων, κατὰ νόμους Ῥωμαϊκοὺς καὶ παραδόσεις ἐγγράφους ἢ κρίσις τερματωθήτω μοι.' (Akropolites, *Chronike*: 50.122–32)

quick and witty answers to the proposals emphasizing the illegitimacy of the very trial, much in the same vein as Chomatenos had done some twenty years earlier.

The History's account of the whole episode, often cited by scholars as evidence of the Byzantines' adoption of the ordeal by hot iron, is therefore a rhetorical set piece that emphasizes the barbarity of the procedure and shows such practices to hold no solid legal ground, much as Ruth Macrides has suggested.¹⁹⁷ The whole episode was an off-the-record conversation and the only witness to the conversation was, conveniently enough, Akropolites himself. Michael was not really expected to undergo ordeal by fire since, as the hero of *The History* emphasized in the narrative, it was neither a Roman practice nor a Christian one. It is exactly for this reason that Akropolites decided to insert this epyllion in prose into the larger narrative. Akropolites' depiction of the supposed conversation reflects on the anxieties of contemporaneous Byzantine elites, who, in the end, are the main audience of the work. Even the pro-Laskarid historian Pachymeres had to admit that under Theodoros II the option of undergoing the ordeal by fire was sometimes imposed on the highborn Romans whose reputation the emperor sought to tarnish. After Michael's takeover in 1259, any ordeal by fire was made officially illegal. Akropolites employs the story of the ordeal by fire under the Laskarides to discretely remind the highborn Romans of Michael VIII Palaiologos' just governance.

Leaving the ordeal by fire aside, Michael's formal trial, itself a major public event in an army camp at Philippi, was less exciting than the exchange between the metropolitan and the young Palaiologos. Akropolites quite simply notes:

Even though he made a great attempt, the emperor did not find a single fault to hold against Michael Komnenos, but [along the way] he led the guiltless to guilt with the force of words or whips. When all gave their decision, both the Latins and the Romans, and especially the Latins, since they tend to speak more freely toward their lords, Michael Komnenos was found guiltless according to everybody. I myself heard this, for I was present at the judgement, and with me was Ioannes Makrotos. We were hastily numbered by the emperor into those passing judgement who, as if they were no different from wood, were made to stand there. For the emperor wanted everyone to vote with him against him [Michael], but we uttered no words since Michael Komnenos was being judged without reason.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Macrides, *Trial by Ordeal*, 31–46.

¹⁹⁸ ὁ μὲν οὖν βασιλεὺς διάπειραν πολλὴν πεποικῶς οὐχ εὔρε κατά τι τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαὴλ ὑπαίτιον ὄντα, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τὸν ἀνάπιον εἰς αἰτίαν ἄγων τῇ βία ἢ τῶν λόγων ἢ τῶν μαστίγων. πάντες γὰρ ἀπεφαίνοντο οἷ τε τῶν Λατίνων οἷ τε τῶν Ῥωμαίων, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν Λατίνων, ἐπεὶ γε οὗτοι ἐλευθερωτέρᾳ χρώνται πρὸς τοὺς δεσπότης τῇ γλώττῃ, ἀθῶον εἶναι ἐπὶ πᾶσι τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαήλ· ἤκουσα δὲ καὶ

The official trial is fairly easy to reconstruct: having spent time in prison and not facing firm evidence against him, Michael was brought to the trial. This was a large tribunal and the attending public was allowed to cast their vote on the issue of Palaiologos' guilt. Both Roman and Latin soldiers in the camp supported Michael. Then, the council of the highest state officials, including emperor Ioannes III himself, who "wanted everyone to vote with him against him [Michael],"¹⁹⁹ cast their vote. Despite the emperor's exhortation to find Michael guilty, this group apparently also affirmed Michael Palaiologos' innocence with their vote. Ioannes III, who according to the law was the only one who had the right to judge senators, was left with no other choice than setting the defendant free. This was no secret trial behind closed doors, attended only by the senatorial elite. Rather, a larger group was involved, even the non-Roman elements fighting for the Romans. The emperor could not convict Michael all on his own – if indeed that was his intention as argued by Akropolites. This would have placed him against both the senators and regular soldiers, essential constituent members of the Roman body politic. Alienating both senate and army was not something any emperor could afford.²⁰⁰ Ioannes III, on his side, had to constrain himself within the legal parameters of the procedure having failed to sway the judges and the public.

The emperor was not able to simply have Palaiologos executed without trial since Michael had too many supporters among the men who were in the camp and likely more broadly among the citizenry of Macedonia's towns. According to the Akropolites, the whole case had to be eventually dismissed "because he [Michael] was loved—and love is truth—not just by us [senators] alone but also by all those in office, the generals, the soldiers, and the common people themselves."²⁰¹ This suggests that prior to the trial Michael had done an exquisite job in securing the support of both the elite and the commoners in northern Greece. His public endeavours, such as the commemoration of his father Andronikos in Thessaloniki, appear to have paid off. Michael's support among the elites as well as popularity among the soldiers and civilians around the army camp protected him from the emperor's wrath. In order to smoothly

αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τῇ κρίσει παρών, καὶ σὺν ἐμοὶ ὁ Μακρωτὸς Ἰωάννης, τάχα καὶ ἡμεῖς συναριθμούμενοι τοῖς κρίνουσι πρὸς τοῦ βασιλέως, ὡς ξύλων ἂν τινες μὴδὲν διαφέροντες ἐνταῦθ' ἴστανται. ἐβούλετο γὰρ πάντας κατ' αὐτοῦ συμψηφίζεσθαι, ἡμῖν δὲ οὐκ ἦν λόγος, ἄνευ λόγου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ Μιχαὴλ κρινομένου. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.139–52)

¹⁹⁹ ἐβούλετο γὰρ πάντας κατ' αὐτοῦ συμψηφίζεσθαι (Ibid., 50.150–1)

²⁰⁰ For the role of public opinion, often forged in military camps, in Byzantium see: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 89–164; Krallis, "Popular Political Agency," 11–48; specifically, for the interaction between soldiers and civilians in disseminating ideas about the empire: 23–41.

²⁰¹ ἐφιλεῖτο γὰρ—φίλη γε ἡ ἀλήθεια—οὐ πρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς παντὸς τῶν τε ἐν τέλει τῶν τε στρατηγῶν τῶν τε στρατιωτῶν καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν τῆς ξύγκλυδος. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 50.152–5)

remove Michael from the political scene, the emperor first had to sway public opinion. Otherwise, a backlash from the populace could be expected.²⁰² In the end, the lack of convincing evidence saved Michael from the emperor's clutches.

3.3. A Fresh Start with Old Friends: Imperial Son-in-Law and New Appointment

Having avoided conviction Michael knew that the emperor would have to reach out and seek rapprochement. Ioannes III knew this too, for as much as he held Michael in suspicion after the trial, he could not afford to stay on bad terms with the Palaiologoi and other *oikoi* closely affiliated with them.²⁰³ According to Akropolites, the emperor was very much aware of the fact that “[Michael’s] closeness with other magnates did not allow the emperor to hold grudges against him.”²⁰⁴ After the dramatic narrative of the trial, Akropolites explains how Ioannes III went about achieving reconciliation with the Palaiologoi. Initially, the emperor sought to unite Michael in marriage to his granddaughter Eirene. Such a move was a bit problematic since Eirene was Michael’s second cousin and Ioannes knew that the Church prohibited such liaisons. Ioannes III could surely rest on precedents to achieve such a union. As Akropolites notes, “even though forbidden by the church, [marriage between cousins] is allowed to the emperors for sake of common welfare and interest.”²⁰⁵ Nevertheless, electing not to aggravate the prelates of the Church over such an uncanonical marriage, Ioannes III backed off and sought a different means by which to publicly harmonize relations with Michael Palaiologos.

The emperor, in fact, still involved the Church. In the proceedings. According to Akropolites, the patriarch Manuel II was to bind Palaiologos with sacred oaths never to conspire against the imperial family.²⁰⁶ While Akropolites notes that this happened at the emperor’s bidding, Pachymeres offers a somewhat different version of the story. According to him, Manuel II took the initiative, approached the emperor and suggested that Michael be sent to him so that oaths

²⁰² Populace rebelling to express their will see: A. Kaldellis, “How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium: The Role of Public Opinion in Sedition and Rebellion,” in D. G. Angelov and M. Saxby, eds., *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2010* (Farnham, UK/Burlington, VT 2013), 43-56.

²⁰³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 51; Pachymeres even mentions that Michael was kept imprisoned after the trial since he was still kept in suspicion (*Relations*: 39.2–3).

²⁰⁴ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς μεγάλους γνήσιον τούτου οὐκ εἶα τὸν βασιλέα ἐν περιφρονήσει φέρειν τὰ κατ’ αὐτόν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*: 51.4–6)

²⁰⁵ κἂν γὰρ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ κεκώλυται, ἀλλὰ τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἐφεῖται τῆς κοινῆς προμηθείας χάριν καὶ τοῦ συμφέροντος. (Ibid., 50.176–77.)

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 51.1–15.

of fidelity could be taken.²⁰⁷ Thus, after patriarchal mediation Michael was brought back to imperial grace. Pachymeres' version enhances the general image of the church that the author promoted in his *History*, by emphasizing the patriarch's role in reconciling the Romans in the name of public benefit.²⁰⁸ Both historians, with different goals in mind, agree on the fact that Michael was bound to the emperor by oaths offered to the patriarch. To a random observer of the oath-taking event, it becomes clear that the regime of Ioannes III could count on the unconditional support of the Church. By involving the patriarchate in the Palaiologos affair, Ioannes III made it a matter of public knowledge that any collusion on Michael's part against the imperial *oikos*, would automatically lead to the abrogation of sacred oaths that would result in excommunication. Staging the oath swearing as a public event before a Church synod,²⁰⁹ the emperor turned everybody's attention to his rapprochement with Michael. Simultaneously, Ioannes III was sending a clear message to all *golden chain* members: acting against the imperial family in collusion with Michael Palaiologos would lead to Church-sanctioned damnation. Acting against the emperor and his family was a criminal offence according to the law, but by making Michael swear oaths to the patriarch, Ioannes III was able to add sacred sanction resonant with the general public.²¹⁰

Taking a public oath of fidelity to the imperial *oikos* was a clear gesture of goodwill on Michael's side, but this meant that Ioannes III would still have to compensate Palaiologos for backing off from the proposed union with his granddaughter. Instead of Eirene, Ioannes III opted for a union between Michael and Theodora, the imperial niece and granddaughter of the emperor's deceased brother, the *sebastokrator* Isaakios Doukas.²¹¹ Theodora grew up at the imperial court under the care of her mother Eudokia since her father Ioannes Doukas died while she was young. Having entered this marriage, Michael was now elevated to the rank of *meegas konostaulos*—commander in charge of the Latin troops in the empire—²¹² and he was relocated from his office in the Balkans to Bithynia in the winter of 1253/54. By bringing him closer to the imperial centres in Asia Minor, Ioannes III played it safe and kept Michael under his administration's supervision. Michael had built solid support for himself and his family around the major city of Thessaloniki and its hinterland, which were only recently reincorporated into the

²⁰⁷ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 39.3–14.

²⁰⁸ For Pachymeres' engaged historiography see: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 260–85.

²⁰⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 39.15–41.3.

²¹⁰ For oath taking see: N.G. Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité à l'Empereur Byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle," *REB* 9 (1951), 106–42.

²¹¹ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 51. For Theodora see: A.-M. Talbot, "Empress Theodora Palaiogina, Wife of Michael VIII," *DOP* 46 (1992), 295–303.

²¹² R. Guillad, *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines I* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1967), 471–74.

empire. We have already seen how Michael employed Iakobos of Bulgaria to commemorate his father Andronikos in Thessaloniki. On his part, Akropolites keeps reminding us that Michael was *loved* by all. His public display of generosity and kind administration were evidence that the emperor had been prudent in the selection of high officials. At the same time, Michael's competence made it possible for him to pose as a benefactor of the populace. His success as a local administrator was all the more significant in newly re-conquered lands where the emperor had not had the opportunity to effectively cultivate his own image. All this is to suggest that it is likely that Michael would have been relocated even without the trial. This was, after all, a very common practice that prevented aristocrats from endearing themselves all too much to the local populace.²¹³ In his new office in Bithynia—the centre of the Laskarid regime—Michael was a horse ride away from the emperor and his men in Nikaia, Nymphaion, and Magnesia. Here any suspicious behaviour would be noted with greater ease. Furthermore, any Palaiologan benefaction would compete here with the heavy patronal footprint of the emperor himself.

Thus, Ioannes III officially pardoned Michael after the swearing of the aforementioned oath of loyalty. Palaiologos was in turn promoted and married into the imperial family—to which he was already connected through kinship. Akropolites offers a straightforward explanation for Ioannes III's leniency to Michael:

The emperor, having thus dismissed the case, went to the east, while Michael Komnenos, as I said, was held in suspicion. Because of the [Palaiologan] family's nobility and his own kinship with him and, further, his close ties with other magnates did not allow the emperor to hold him in contempt.²¹⁴

Thanks to Michael's personal and familial ties, Ioannes III was not able to downgrade Michael after the unsuccessful trial. Quite the opposite, Ioannes III had to find a way to work with Michael, who, by the mid-1250s, had already established strong personal connections with members of the empire's elite. On top of his personal social ties, Michael was related to empress Eirene who, like Michael's mother Theodora, was the granddaughter of Alexios III. Not that the sanguine connection to the household meant anything; in 1223/1224, Ioannes dealt with the *sebastokratores* Alexios and Isaakios – his predecessor's rebellious brothers – quite harshly, as they were removed from the public scene.²¹⁵ Ioannes was able to deal with his

²¹³ Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 250.

²¹⁴ Ὁ μὲν οὖν βασιλεὺς οὕτωςι τὰ τῆς ὑποθέσεως διαλύσας εἰς τὴν ἕω ἀπήει, ὁ δὲ Κομνηνὸς Μιχαήλ, ὡς εἰρήκειν, ὑπεβλέπετο. ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ τοῦ γένους περιφανὲς καὶ τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸν συγγενές, ἔτι γε μὴν τὸ πρὸς τοὺς μεγάλους γνήσιον τούτου οὐκ εἶα τὸν βασιλέα ἐν περιφρονήσει φέρειν τὰ κατ' αὐτόν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*: 51.1–6)

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

rebellious in-laws with ease because, unlike Michael, they broke into open rebellion by fleeing to the Latins. This action certainly did not resonate with the local populace and Theodore's brothers were quickly labelled public enemies. Ioannes used the sentiment against them to mete out brutal, extrajudicial punishment. Michael Palaiologos, on the other hand, was popular (at least in northern Greece) and had supporters among the imperial elites. Michael's case was, in fact, more like the conspiracy of Andronikos Nestongos, Ioannes III's cousin. In 1224, Andronikos with the support of numerous aristocrats from the Tarchaneiotai, Makrenoi, and Synadenoi clans plotted to topple Ioannes and take the throne. Having escaped the plot, Ioannes had to punish all the perpetrators and the penalty for high treason was death. The emperor, however, applied the law more compassionately. Save for Andronikos Nestongos and Makrenos, who were blinded and each had a hand amputated, all other conspirators were restored to their duties.²¹⁶ Much like Michael, members of these prominent families were well connected amongst themselves, with links even in the imperial *oikos*, so Ioannes in reality had no choice but to spare them. Extended purges would have damaged his relationships with the surviving members of these families, which had been intermarrying since the dawn of the 12th century.²¹⁷ By Ioannes III's time, removing a whole *oikos* from the political scene was nearly impossible without serious negative effects on the functioning of the Roman state whose top offices were occupied virtually exclusively by the members of the *golden chain*. Ioannes III understood this very well.

After 1204, Emperors were themselves members of the *golden chain* and relied heavily on the elite that followed them in Asia Minor. Out of the twenty families that occupied high posts in the period of exile, thirteen were politically and socially active in Constantinople of the 12th century.²¹⁸ Another two were on the rise in the later 12th century, while five came to prominence after the catastrophe of 1204, which surely testifies to the effectiveness of state-sponsored

²¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

²¹⁷ For family politics in the 12th century see: Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos*, 180–315.

²¹⁸ For the composition of the Laskarid elites see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 69–73; П. И. Жаворонков, "Состав и эволюция высшей знати Никейской империи: элита," *ВО* (Москва 1991), 83–90; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 59–66. In his account Korobeinikov updates the lists of families created by Angold and Zhavoronkov based on Pachymeres' text as well as surviving seals from pre-1204 by relying on Byzantine literary sources from the 12th and 13th centuries. Based on Korobeinikov's finalized list the twenty families were: Tzamantouroi/Laskarids, Tornikai, Strategopouloi, Rhaoul, Palaiologoi, Vatatzai, Nestongoi, Kamytzai, Angeloi, Tarchaneiotai, Kantakouzenoi, Petraliphai, Vardanes, Syadenoi, Kontostephanoi, Philai, Kaballarioi, Aprenoi, Livadarioi, and Philanthropenoi. The last five families (Philai, Kaballarioi, Aprenoi, Livadarioi, Philanthropenoi) comprise the wholly new families that came into prominence only after 1204. To this, we can also add the Mouzalones, who for a brief period occupied some of the highest positions in the empire.

education in recruiting the deserving (and affluent) individuals. If we were to add families occupying middle ranking offices in the empire such as the Akropolitai²¹⁹ to the families that were, by the virtue of intermarriages going back to the Komnenian period, connected to the imperial household, the number of pre-1204 families in the administration would swell even more. In this rather complex system of over twenty families connected through marriage, it is quite difficult, if not completely impossible, to identify specific moments in time when Michael became personally associated with prominent individuals from the Laskarid elite. Recreating the Palaiologan social network in the 13th century alone would be quite a challenge, if we consider that the Palaiologoi were arguably the most illustrious of the Laskarid highborn families, having occupied the highest offices since Georgios Palaiologos allied himself to Alexios I Komnenos before 1081. The intermarriage of the Palaiologoi with other members of the *golden chain* ensured that one could always find some point of affinity between Michael and other notables. Adding to the illustrious background of the Palaiologoi before 1204, the exilic era Palaiologoi were the only family, but for the Laskarids themselves, who had a member granted the title of *despotes*.²²⁰

Reconstructing the Palaiologan social network would only partly help in our effort to understand Michael's personal connections to the Roman elite. Nevertheless, the prominent position of the Palaiologan *oikos* and with it the family's blood ties to other aristocratic clans, helps us in understanding why Michael was able to position himself in the centre of a network that was going to shape Byzantine history from mid-1250s until the final passing of the empire two hundred years later. Recreating Michael's personal socio-political network, on the other hand, sheds light on the power dynamics at the very pinnacle of Byzantine government. We have enough hints to reconstruct at least tentatively the personal circle Michael built around himself to secure his position vis-à-vis Ioannes III and later Theodoros II. It was one thing to have nominal allies as a member of the leading family in the empire, but it was a completely different matter to have ardent supporters in a time of trouble. Michael managed to secure such support by forging strong personal ties of *philia* between himself and quite a few members of the elites.²²¹ After all, Michael needed allies as much as each and every ally of his needed him and

²¹⁹ The Akropolitai have occupied middle ranging administrative positions since the 10th century (Macrides, *History*, 6–7).

²²⁰ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 59.

²²¹ For Byzantine family alliances in form of *philia* see: M. Mullett, "Byzantium: A Friendly Society?," *Past and Present* 118 (1988), 3–24; L. Neville, *Authority*, 90–93. For an analysis of personal network building process see: M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (New York: Variorum 2016; first published in 1997), 163–222. For the social network of the Laskarid aristocracy

other magnates of the empire in order to keep one another as well as the emperor in check. Even the most prominent members of the society did not stand a good chance of surviving the competitive world of Roman politics on their own.²²² Anyone in Byzantium could fall easy prey to other magnates with substantial support and of course to the imperial administration. This is something Andronikos I Komnenos learned the hard way in the 12th century.²²³ Operating as a member of aristocratic constellations, which would usually include the imperial family, was the safest way to maintain one's position. This trend was noted by Byzantine authors as well. Scholars have traditionally cited Ioannes Zonaras' critique of Alexios I Komnenos for marrying family with state affairs as an example of this awareness.²²⁴ But it was Georgios Pachymeres, who in his rather pompous Greek style, labelled the court elite as members of the *golden chain*.²²⁵ By employing this evocative metaphor, Pachymeres rightly hinted at the importance of socio-political ties between the elites. If any link were to break, the chain would immediately fragment.

The concept of *philia* was tricky though. While one would have to work hard to maintain close ties with various social and political circles, one had to be cautious about one's friends. It was a general rule that friends bound by *philia* are there for social and political gain, not for emotional fulfillment. Kekaumenos himself was so cautious that, even though admitting that one needs friends to maintain their position, he advised to: "guard yourself more from your friends than your enemies."²²⁶ This maxim, itself a paraphrase of a popular maxim in Byzantine anthologies, certainly found its way to the mind of Michael Palaiologos. After all, the Palaiologoi had mastered the game of *philia* in order to maintain themselves on the very top of the *golden chain* for two hundred years. Through good fortune and prudence, Michael established a significant personal social network in the empire. Being a member of the Palaiologoi and occupying administrative positions that allowed him to build up a base of popular support made Michael

see Vicent Puech's doctoral dissertation: V. Puech, *L' aristocratie et le pouvoir à Byzance au XIIIe siècle (1204–1310)* (I–II. Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines 2000).

²²² For instance, see Kekaumenos' eleventh-century advice on the necessity of *philia* in public relations and office holding: Κεκαυμένος, *Στρατηγικόν*, Δημ. Τσουγκαράκης (εισ. και μετ.) (Αθήνα: Κανάκη 1993), 80. In the same work, the author also calls for caution against friends with whom, he sees, one maintains contact and cordial relations for no other reason than political gain. For friendship as a political mechanism see: Mullett, "Byzantium: A Friendly Society," 3–24; Chitwood, *Byzantine Legal Culture*, 45–75; J. Ransohoff, "'Consider the Future as Present': The Paranoid World of Kekaumenos," *Speculum* 93 (2018), 77–91.

²²³ Κ. Βάρζος, *Η Γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν 1* (Θεσσαλονίκη 1984), 493–638.

²²⁴ P. Magdalino, "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik," *Speculum* 58 (1983), 326–346.

²²⁵ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 93.14–15.

²²⁶ Κεκαυμένος, *Στρατηγικόν*, 80.

became a desired friend in the Laskarid polity. Thus, by the death of Andronikos Palaiologos in the mid-13th century, Michael, who had now become the head of the Palaiologan *oikos*, was in an enviable position, being able to pick and choose his potential associates.

The fastest route to uncovering Michael's socio-political network is by looking at allies who left written traces of their affinities. In this regard too, Georgios Akropolites leads the way. It has been noted in analyses of Akropolites' *The History*, not the least by Macrides in the extensive commentary accompanying her translation of his work, that the arch-hero of the story is Michael Palaiologos. The whole history can be read as an apology for Michael's scandalous rise to the throne. Thanks to Akropolites' tendency to insert himself into the narrative we can tentatively pinpoint times and places when *The History's* author and Palaiologos were both present in the same spot. Michael and Georgios probably met at the court of Ioannes III. Akropolites had been a member of the court since 1234 when he arrived from Constantinople to study under Ioannes III's sponsorship. We see Akropolites actively taking part in courtly philosophical discussions in 1239. He also tutored the young Theodoros II in the 1240s, while simultaneously building a career as an imperial secretary and eventually as *logothetes tou genikou*.²²⁷ Michael, on the other hand, finished his education at the court by 1242/43 when he was 18 years old, as he tells us in the *typikon* of St Demetrios monastery.²²⁸ Akropolites and Palaiologos therefore overlapped for quite a few years at court. Over this period the two men likely forged amicable ties. They in fact must have found establishing ties of *philia* with one another socially and politically fruitful. Michael saw a useful friend in the imperial secretary in charge of composing letters and decisions on behalf of Ioannes III, while Akropolites understood that forging close ties with Michael, the member of an illustrious *oikos*, was an effective way to improve his socio-political standing vis-à-vis other imperial administrators. Both Michael and Georgios, then, had a good grasp of the benefits they could bring each other: Palaiologos gained a friend in the heart of imperial administration, Akropolites a friend from a highly influential family and a potential patron.

After leaving the court, Michael spent most of his time following Ioannes III in his Balkan campaigns. It was precisely at one such military expedition that Michael crossed paths with Georgios. The two men stood side by side in the imperial tent, during Ioannes III's Balkan

²²⁷ For Akropolites' life see: Macrides, *The History*, 5–29; for his titles and honours in the 1240s and 1250s see: Macrides, *The History*, 21.

²²⁸ Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 4.

campaign of 1246.²²⁹ After the conclusion of the campaign, Akropolites was in charge of drafting imperial letters and decrees to newly reincorporated cities of the empire: Thessaloniki, Serres, and Melnikon. There may have been shared satisfaction in the knowledge that Akropolites was the one letting those cities know that their new administrators would be the father-son duo of the Palaiologoi. Michael, on his friend Georgios' side, was assured of a glowing introduction to the people of Melnikon and Serres. We can quite reasonably conclude that by the death of Ioannes III in 1254, Akropolites had become closely associated with Michael. Furthermore, sometime before 1256, Akropolites was joined in marriage with imperial blessings, either of Ioannes III or Theodoros II, to a certain Eudokia, a cousin of Michael Palaiologos.²³⁰ This marriage cemented the ties between the *oikoi* of Palaiologoi and Akropolitai. Marrying into even a lesser line of the Palaiologan clan assured Akropolites membership in the *golden chain*.

Alliance with Akropolites, an ambitious and capable statesman as well as a rising intellectual of the empire, turned Michael into a potential patron for men of letters in the Roman polity. One such fortunate man was the famed rhetorician and once-archbishop of Ochrid, Iakobos. While Iakobos produced an encomium for Ioannes III's visit in Thessaloniki, the greater part of this author's surviving works were dedicated to commemorating the deceased Andronikos Palaiologos who left behind him a *glorious offspring* in the person of Michael.²³¹ Having a celebrity such as Iakobos on his side in Thessaloniki boosted Michael's prestige in Northern Greece. Aside from having Iakobos as intellectual support, Michael could hope to tap into the ex-archbishop's social connections as well. Iakobos, it appears, was on good terms with yet another prominent member of the Nikaian elites: Nikephoros Blemmydes, arguably the most influential intellectual, teacher, and theologian of the period. Around the year 1253, Blemmydes sent a friendly tract on the procession of the Holy Spirit to Iakobos, who at the time was already in Thessaloniki.²³² The amicable relations between the two ecclesiastics and scholars could not have escaped Michael's attention. Ioannes III held the scholar in high regard ever since the public examination at the very beginning of Blemmydes' career. The emperor entrusted Blemmydes with the education of his son, offered the patriarchal throne to him on several occasions, and even used his imperial prerogatives to free Nikephoros of charges filed against

²²⁹ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 44–46.

²³⁰ The exact relationship between Eudokia and Michael is unknown, but, during his reign, Michael did refer to Georgios Akropolites as his *gambros* (Macrides, *The History*, 79.n4); Georgios' son Constantine Akropolites refers to his mother in his *Testament* ("Constantini Acropolitae hagiographi byzantini epistularummanipulus," H. Delehaye, ed., *Analecta Bollandiana* 51 (1933), 282).

²³¹ For Iakobos and his role in Palaiologan activities in Thessaloniki see: Chapter I.

²³² PG 142, cols. 533–566. For the date of the tract see: Blemmydes, *Curriculum Vitae*, 46; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 66, 66.n.137.

him by a certain Romanos, one of his students.²³³ Here we see, once more, Ioannes III interfering in the judicial process, albeit this time to protect an individual from charges and not to convict the defendant as was the case with Michael Palaiologos.

Beside Blemmydes' friendly relations with Iakobos, we cannot overestimate the relationship that the star tutor and intellectual maintained with his former student, Georgios Akropolites. The social and political ties between the two were so strong that, when compared, Blemmydes' *Autobiography* and Akropolites' *The History* characterize their contemporaries in identical light.²³⁴ Thus, for instance, of the aforementioned patriarch Manuel II who acted as mediator between Michael and Ioannes III, Akropolites has to say: "a man of devotion and chaste in life and demeanour, even though he had been married; otherwise, though, he had no experience of letters and was unable to discern the meaning of what he read."²³⁵ This account of a patriarch whom Ioannes III handpicked in order better to control the church corresponds well with Blemmydes' own negative account.²³⁶ Furthermore, it seems that Blemmydes and Akropolites, who had both at some point taught Theodoros II, experienced a major falling out of favour with this monarch. Their shared predicament certainly helped keep the two intellectuals close. It is by no means a stretch to therefore conclude that the three intellectuals—Nikephoros Blemmydes, Georgios Akropolites, and Iakobos—became associates of the aristocratic Michael Palaiologos by the mid-1250s. Michael could rely on Iakobos to memorialize his deeds among the people of Thessaloniki, much as his contact with Blemmydes and Akropolites—both men influential at the imperial court—bought him influence at the centre of power. Such influence could perhaps ensure that Ioannes III would pardon him when faced with accusation of treason, much as he had pardoned the conspirators in the much more dangerous case of sedition by Nestongos.

With these three influential intellectuals on his side—two of whom were very close to the imperial centre, while Akropolites built for himself a remarkable career in the imperial administration—Michael forged ties of *philia* outside the *golden chain*. While making socio-political alliances within the court elite was a given, Michael gained an advantage over his peers of the senate by aligning himself with two *novi homines*. Blemmydes was after all a son of

²³³ For Blemmydes' career see: Blemmydes, *Curriculum*; Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium*, 9, 12–15; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*. For the charges by Romanos and imperial intervention see: Constantinides, *Higher Education*, 12; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*; as well as Blemmydes' poem composed in gratitude for imperial intervention in his favour: Blemmydes, *Curriculum*, 100–108.

²³⁴ Macrides, *The History*, 9, 47–49.

²³⁵ ἄνθρωπος εὐλαβοῦς καὶ βίου καὶ πολιτείας σεμνῆς, εἰ καὶ γυναικὶ συνεζύγη, ἄλλως δὲ οὐ πεπειραμένος γραμμάτων οὐδὲ ὧν ἀνεγίνωσκεν ἀνελίπτων τὴν ἔννοιαν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 51.8–10)

²³⁶ Blemmydes, *Curriculum Vitae*, 1.69.11–18.

physician and Akropolites came from a mid-tier administrative family. Both were close to Ioannes III but had no ties of any sort with other members of the *golden chain*. Seizing the opportunity to further strengthen his *philia* with Blemmydes and Akropolites, Michael hired Iakobos to eulogize the deceased head of the Palaiologoi, the *megas domestikos* Andronikos. The relationship Michael fostered with Iakobos corresponded more to the traditional Komnenian, patron-client relationship. Still, as an associate of Blemmydes' Iakobos was a welcomed client in Michael's circle in the Balkans. At the same time, promoting himself as a generous patron of the arts, Michael could hope to attract other rhetoricians too to his family's service.

Having close associates among the relative newcomers to the central imperial administration was useful for Michael as he sought to obtain access and information about the imperial centre. As advantageous as these relationships might have been, they would count for nothing had Michael not worked to further bolster the *philia* with other aristocratic families occupying high offices. Forging ties with the members of the *golden chain* was somewhat easier since earlier connections of kinship and *philia* had existed between the Palaiologoi and other notable *oikoi* for generations. On the other hand, this also meant that Michael was not the only one seeking to develop these existing relationships. Other members of aristocratic *oikoi* were trying to promote their own names in the wider socio-political circles of the empire. Thus, Michael had to lead a delicate dance of forging alliances with other high elites while, at the same time, trying to establish himself as the epicentre of multiple alliances among the empire's notables. Thanks to Michael's famous father and even more famous surname, it is somewhat impossible to pin down the moment when Michael and the Palaiologan *oikos* allied with specific individuals: were the Palaiologoi allied with the households of Tarchaneiotai and Akropolitai before or after Michael's takeover of the *paterfamilias* role? In order to try to untie the Gordian knot of interfamilial relationships and Michael's place in those, the best starting point is to look at the individuals who supported Michael's cause in the trial for high treason. At this point, we would have to leave Akropolites' flattering remarks that all the senators, soldiers, and civilians were against Michael being condemned because he was so much loved and focus on specific individuals who could be singled out in making a strong case on Michael's behalf with Ioannes III. It is needless to say that tracing these individuals is somewhat tricky. Offices occupied in the imperial service cross-listed with familial ties to the Palaiologoi becomes the main tool in the attempt to reconstruct Michael's links with the *golden chain*.

The strongest potential intercessor between Michael and Ioannes III was *epi tes trapezes* Nikephoros Tarchaneiotos, who was held in high esteem by the emperor, especially since his

triumphant military leadership at the siege of Tzouroulos in 1237.²³⁷ The role of Nikephoros Tarchaneiotas in Ioannes III's government testifies to the degree of flexibility the monarch demonstrated in managing relationships with the notables. Thirteen years before the triumph in the name of that emperor at Tzouroulos, Nikephoros' predecessors in the *oikos* of the Tarchaneiotai had supported Andronikos Nestongos' rebellion. The emperor, as we have seen, forgave all the perpetrators of the rebellion, who mostly retained their offices. Nikephoros, a member of the not-so-long-ago renegade *oikos*, became Ioannes III's right hand in military campaigns. It was only by flexibly and continuously renegotiating relations with his closest associates (who were also most likely to rebel) that an emperor could maintain himself on the throne. The means employed by both the emperor and the aristocrats to negotiate their share in power were clemency, popular support, and military skill. Ioannes III played the clemency card with the Tarchaneiotai, which won over Nikephoros.

On his side, Nikephoros employed his military genius to gain the emperor's attention. He was so successful that Ioannes III, after Andronikos Palaiologos' death, invited Nikephoros "to execute the duties of the *megas domestikos*."²³⁸ While occupying offices of great importance and remaining in the trust of the emperor, Nikephoros also secured his position on the chain by marrying Andronikos Palaiologos' daughter Maria.²³⁹ The marital union with the Palaiologoi improved Nikephoros' social standing in the empire. The Tarchaneiotai were a politically active family since the 10th century. During the Komnenian period, however, the family continued to occupy offices but not the highest ones. Under Theodore I and Ioannes III the family reached its political zenith.²⁴⁰ Thus, Nikephoros' marriage to Maria was a clear sign of the family's prestige in the empire. Marrying Michael's sister came at a price, for now Nikephoros' interests became closely entwined with those of the Palaiologoi. Other than having Michael as brother-in-law, Nikephoros, witnessed the lavish commemoration Michael organized for his deceased father in the city of Thessaloniki. This posthumous commemoration of Andronikos Palaiologos was an ideal event for Nikephoros to witness the influence Michael wished to exercise in the region. At

²³⁷ On Nikephoros Tarchaneiotas see: Cheynet and Vannier, *Études*, 176–8; Macrides, *The History*, 36.n5, 49.n8. For the Tarchaneiotai in Byzantine service since the 10th century see: K. Άμαντος, "Σύμμεικτα: Πόθεν το όνομα Ταρχανειώτης," *Ελληνικά* 2 (1929), 435–6; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*, 210, 232, 281, 371.

²³⁸ οἶον τὰ τοῦ μεγάλου δομεστίκου διεκπιηροῦντα. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 49.25).

²³⁹ Macrides, *The History*, 36.5; A. Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit* (München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1911), 11.

²⁴⁰ For the Tarchaneiotai before 1204 see: A.Π. Каждан, *Социальный состав господствующего класса Византии XI-XII вв.* (Москва: Институт всеобщей истории (Академия наук СССР) 1974), 116; Angold, *The Byzantine Government*, 69; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 58, 63–65; ODB 3, 2011–12.

the same time, this was an opportunity for Nikephoros Tarchaneiotos to publicly show support for his brother-in-law Michael Palaiologos. Given the family connections and social links Nikephoros could be counted on to present the case of the Palaiologoi to the emperor, if the need ever arose.

By the end of Ioannes III's reign in 1254, we see Michael Palaiologos personally linked to several important figures of the Roman state. First, by marrying an imperial grandniece, Michael's closeness to the imperial *oikos* was confirmed. Secondly, by having his sister Maria married to Nikephoros Tarchaneiotos, Michael bolstered his ties with a major Laskarid household. On the other hand, marrying his distant cousin Eudokia to Georgios Akropolites, Michael secured the friendship of an influential member of the central administration. Akropolites' own intellectual ties with Blemmydes, only further helped Michael secure his position in the aristocratic constellation. He now had allies in virtually all spheres of public life: the court elite, central administration, intellectual circles, as well as public support through his soldiers and citizens of northern Greece. We get a much clearer sense of the number of Michael's potential allies – men, who just like Michael sought support in one another without necessarily trying to overthrow Ioannes III or his son – when we turn to the reign of Theodoros II who, during his brief reign, systematically sought to undermine the privileged position of grandees from among the Palaiologoi, Tarchaneiotai, Philai, Strategopouloi, and Rhaoul.²⁴¹ It is likely that the rapport and understanding between individuals from these families developed during their early careers. Thus, for example, before assuming his duties as governor of Melnikon and Serres, Michael had served in the army alongside Alexios Strategopoulos and Ioannes Makrenos, his future close associates.²⁴² We cannot know if such affinities involved the Palaiologoi more broadly or if they ultimately represented Michael's personal inner social circle. It is certain, however, that in Theodoros II Laskaris many members of the *golden chain* found a common opponent who actively sought to break their ties. Thus, with the accession of Theodoros II to the throne, both Akropolites and Pachymeres in order to point out the families whose authority in the empire had been weakened by the new imperial office holder, gave us a glimpse into the personal network of the affected *oikoi*. In Theodoros II breakdown of the *golden chain* standing next to the Tarchaneiotai, Philai, Strategopouloi, and Rhaoul, we find Michael Palaiologos.

²⁴¹ On Theodoros II's reign and work see: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 204–252.

²⁴² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 49.

3.4. Theodoros II Laskaris: The Breaker of Chains

Upon his accession to the throne, Theodoros II embarked on a campaign to weaken the overly influential members of old-established families. Many individuals honoured during the reign of Ioannes III found themselves removed from offices and brutally punished by the young emperor.²⁴³ Even Pachymeres, who generally offers a positive portrait of the Laskarides said of Theodoros II that “he was rash in all things and also [believed that] he was thought little of—for the illness which has struck him and afflicted him greatly persuaded him to pay attention to terrible things.”²⁴⁴ Because of his illness, Pachymeres claims, Theodoros II “introduced measures to bring down the brow of those related to him.”²⁴⁵ It is somewhat surprising that even a supporter of the Laskarides had to comment on the irrational fears that spurred the emperor to purge many deserving highborn Romans. In the same passage, Pachymeres reveals that Theodoros II incarcerated or dismissed Alexios Strategopoulos²⁴⁶ and Alexios Rhaoul²⁴⁷—both members of aristocratic families securely entrenched in the administration for centuries. Some other prominent officials fared even worse. For instance, one of Strategopoulos’ sons, Konstantinos, was blinded. The same fate befell Theodoros Komnenos Philes,²⁴⁸ the “unlawful *paitor*” of the emperor’s correspondence.²⁴⁹ Philes took over the office from the deceased *paitor* of the Balkans, Andronikos Palaiologos and served until his deposition in 1254. Both Philes and Strategopoulos were blinded for alleged *lèse-majesté*. Akropolites also mentions the sufferings of *megas primmikerios* Konstantinos Tornikes,²⁵⁰ *protovestiarites* Georgios Zagarommates,²⁵¹ *epi tou kanikleiou* Nikephoros Alyates,²⁵² as well as the four sons of Alexios

²⁴³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 75; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 41.6–43.3.

²⁴⁴ θερμός ἦν ἐκεῖνος πρὸς πάντα, ἐτι δὲ καὶ τὴν τοῦ καταφρονεῖσθαι δόξαν—ἡ γὰρ νόσος ἐπεισπεσοῦσα καὶ μᾶλλον τρύχουσα ἔπειθε δεινὰ ὑπιδέσθαι (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 41.6–8)

²⁴⁵ ἔκαινοτόμει, τὴν ὄφρυν τῶν πρὸς αἵματος καθαιρῶν (Ibid.41.19–43.1)

²⁴⁶ The Strategopouloi have been connected to the side branches of the Komnenian *oikos* since the times of Alexios I (Βάρζος, *Γενεολογία*, 306–7).

²⁴⁷ The Rhaoules were relative newcomers to the list of the highborn families managing to intermarry with the imperial family only under the Angeloi (Каждан, *Социальный состав*, 113–14, 119, 129).

²⁴⁸ The family of Philai came to prominence only after 1204 (Жаворонков, “Состав и эволюция,” 88, 90).

²⁴⁹ For blinding of incarceration and blinding of officials see: Akropolites, *Chronike*, 75. On Theodoros Philes see Macrides, *The History*, 75.n10; for Theodoros II’ expression of disdain towards Philes see: *Epistulae*, 105.23–106.41.

²⁵⁰ The Tornikai have been around the prominent aristocrats since the Komnenoi, never occupying the highest posts until the Laskarid period (Каждан, *Социальный состав*, 116; Βάρζος, *Η Γενεολογία*, 446; Polemis, *The Doukai*, 185–85).

²⁵¹ Georgios Zagarammates was a *protovestiaris* serving as a good example of provincial elite advancing into the central administration under Ioannes III (Ahrweiler, “Smyrne,” 177–8).

²⁵² The Alyates served in the imperial chancery before 1204 (I. Ševcchenko, “On the Preface to a *Praktikon* by Alyates,” *JÖB* 17 (1968) 65–72).

Rhaoul.²⁵³ Some, like Nikephoros Blemmydes, managed to avoid the imperial wrath, even when they did have a fallout with Theodoros II. Akropolites, beaten under imperial orders, nevertheless managed to profit from the whole situation and become the new *praitor* of the Balkans.²⁵⁴

Around the time of his promotion to *praitor* in the Balkans in 1256, Akropolites also wed Michael Palaiologos's cousin, Eudokia; a marriage most likely arranged by Theodoros II in his attempts to dilute the accumulated power of the families of the *golden chain*.²⁵⁵ While it certainly served Michael, who managed to connect himself with every *praitor* in Thessaloniki succeeding his father, to have a prominent ally so close to the emperor, he was not so lucky with the other favourites of the emperor. Akropolites explains that the emperor appointed to positions of the highest authority in the state men with ancestors in the provincial and central administration from outside the *golden chain*. This assured him of the allegiance of the newly promoted individuals. Akropolites had choice words for the men Theodoros II promoted:

On the spot he appointed to command the armies Manouel Laskaris, whom he named *protosebastos*, an utterly useless simpleton who was in horrible shape to command, and Konstantinos Margarites, who was pointed out earlier in the narrative, a peasant man born of peasants, reared on barley and bran and knowing only how to grunt.²⁵⁶

Having pointed out how these *nouveau riche* individuals had no refinement and how undeserved epithets such as *megas* now appeared next to their names, Akropolites explained how:

Georgios Mouzalon, whom he loved above everybody else, who was *megas domestikos*, he honoured as *protosebastos*, and *protovestiaris*, as well as *megas stratopedarches*; his brother Andronikos, his brother Andronikos, who was *protobestiarites*, he named *megas domestikos*; Ioannes Angelos, who was *megas primmikerios*, he honoured *protostrator*; pitiful fellas, worth no more than three obols, brought up in childish games and songs accompanied by cymbals, to whom the Homeric

²⁵³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 75.

²⁵⁴ Macrides, *The History*, 12, 66.9, 82.5; Akropolites, *Chronike*, 66, 68, 72, 79, 82. His career in the post was short-lived for he was soon captured by Michael Angelos of Epeiros in the siege of Prilep and was held in custody until Michael Palaiologos managed to secure his release in 1259.

²⁵⁵ Macrides, "Introduction," 27.

²⁵⁶ αὐτόθι γοῦν εἰς ἡγεμόνας τάξας τόν τε Λάσκαριν Μανουήλ, ὃν καὶ πρωτοσεβαστὸν κατωνόμασεν, ἀνθρώπιον ἀφελέστατον καὶ κακῶς εἰδὸς στρατηγεῖν, καὶ τὸν Μαργαρίτην Κωνσταντῖνον, ὃν προφθάσας ὁ λόγος ἐδήλωσεν, ἄνδρα ἀγροῖκον καὶ ἐξ ἀγροῖκων γεγεννημένον, μάζη καὶ πιτύροις ἀνατεθραμμένον καὶ λαρυγγίζειν μόνον εἰδότα. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 60.3–9)

phrase “false of tongue, nimble of foot, peerless at beating the floor in dance” suits perfectly.²⁵⁷

The historian’s rant openly marks these individuals as people from outside his personal social network, even though Akropolites himself was as much of a *novus homo* in the administration as Georgios Mouzalon and his relatives. In his characterization of the Mouzalones and the others, Akropolites exaggerated in pointing out that these men had nothing to do with the administration. The household of Mouzalones had been significant in the provincial administration of Asia Minor since the 12th century. Granted no member of the family ever extended the family’s influence outside the provinces, yet in the 13th century Asia Minor was the empire.²⁵⁸ While the Mouzalones did not come from those circles of society that usually occupied the highest posts in the empire, Theodoros II knew well the men he chose as his main advisors and administrators. Despite Akropolites’ protestations, they were far from undereducated and inexperienced officials. Pachymeres in fact informs us that the Mouzalones “had been attached as *paidopouloi* when [Theodoros II] was still an heir to the throne.”²⁵⁹ Thinking about the social and spatial dynamics of the imperial palace, we can see that Ioannes III would not have allowed random lowborn Romans to serve as his son’s companions (*paidopouloi*). Quite the contrary; entering the court and receiving state-sponsored education, room, and board was reserved for the affluent members of society. Akropolites made sure to reproach the Mouzalones and other associates of Theodoros II for their lack of prestige, a statement that comes off as quite ironic when we consider that Akropolites himself was a sort of *novus homo* since none of his family members had ever before reached the ranks he had. Among Akropolites’ (as well as Michael Palaiologos’) allies we see other families that came into prominence relatively recently (e.g. Strategopouloi) and some even only after 1204 (e.g. Philai).

The reasons behind Mouzalones’ unpopularity with the members of the *golden chain*, then, do not have much to do with their ancestry since men like Georgios Akropolites were welcomed in the circles of the high state officials. If we were look at other *novi homines* in the empire, we would see that they integrated pretty successfully into the *golden chain*. For instance, a certain

²⁵⁷ καὶ τὸν μὲν Μουζάλωνα Γεώργιον τὸν ὑπὲρ πάντας ἄλλους τοῦτω φιλούμενον, ὄντα μέγαν δομέστικον, πρωτοσεβαστὸν τε καὶ πρωτοβεστιάριον καὶ μέγαν στρατοπεδάρχην τετίμηκε, τὸν δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀδελφὸν Ἀνδρόνικον, πρωτοβεστιάριήν τε ὄντα, μέγαν δομέστικον κατωνόμασε, τὸν δὲ Ἄγγελον Ἰωάννην, μέγαν πριμικήριον τελοῦντα, τετίμηκε πρωτοστράτορα, ἀνδράρια μηδενὸς ἢ τριῶν ὀβολῶν ἄξια, παιδιαῖς ἀνατεθραμμένα καὶ κυμβάλων μέλεσί τε καὶ ἄσμασι, πρὸς οὓς τὸ Ὀμηρικὸν εὐστόχως ἂν ἀπετόξευσε· ‘ψεῦσταί τ’ ὄρχησταί τε χοροτυπήσιν ἄριστοι.’ (Ibid., 60.31–41)

²⁵⁸ On Mouzalones: V. Puech, “The Aristocracy and the Empire of Nicaea,” in J. Herrin & G. Saint-Guillain eds., *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Farnham: Ashgate 2011), 69–79.

²⁵⁹ εἰς παιδοπούλους δὲ αὐθεντοπουλευομένῳ τεταγμένους αὐτῷ. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 41.14–15)

novus homo from the Balanidiotes family, who grew up as a *paidopoulos* to Theodoros II, was a promised fiancé to Theodora, Michael Palaiologos' niece by his sister Maria. When Theodoros II decided to break the engagement and marry Theodora off to Basileios Kaballarios, a member of a prominent household, the Palaioiogoi protested. That is, Theodora herself as well as her mother Maria preferred the *novus homo* than a Kaballarios to enter their family.²⁶⁰ Cases such as the ones of Balanidiotes or Akropolites, clearly demonstrate that the *novi homines* were more than welcome in the highest echelons of power, despite occasional snotty comments about one's background. The Mouzalones brothers, on the other hand, were disliked by their peers not so much because of their background but because of their exclusive ties with the emperor. In other words, Georgios and his two brothers owed their whole careers to Theodoros II. They did not try to engage with other notables in the central administration, nor with the urban populace, not even with the soldiers. Because of this exclusive dependence on imperial grace, the Mouzalones became naturally disliked by the *golden chain* households. They also, unlike Michael, proved dispensable.

Theodoros II might have decimated the ranks of the high officials from his father's reign, men from among the empire's prominent families, but by no means did he wish, nor could he afford, to completely oust these families from Roman politics. Rather, as Pachymeres explains, Theodore strengthened the ties of his new high officials with the families of the old aristocracy he had just attacked. And so, Pachymeres, explains how the old grandees were crushed only for their families to find themselves in marriage alliances with the new rich:

He dismissed Alexios Rhaoul from his office, who had been in the honour of *protovestiaros*, placing in honour Georgios Mouzalos of Atrammytion, whom he had married to Theodora of the Kantakouzenoi, who was a niece of [Michael] Palaiologos, while he installed Georgios' younger brother, Andronikos, as *meγas domestikos* and betrothed him to Rhaoul's daughter, and the third brother he promoted to *prothiekarios*.²⁶¹

By pointing out that Mouzalones were married into the families whose members were incarcerated by the emperor, Pachymeres strongly hinted at Theodoros II's plans for the empire's

²⁶⁰ For Balanidiotes's linkage to Theodoros II: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 55.18–21; Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 176. For Balanidiotes' engagement with Theodora and her subsequent marriage to Basileios Kaballarios see: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 55.17–26.

²⁶¹ παραλύει μὲν τοῦ ἀξιώματος εἰς πρωτοβεστιάριου τεταγμένον τιμὴν τὸν Ῥαοῦλ Ἀλέξιον, ἀντεισάγει δ' εἰς ταύτην τὸν ἐξ Ἀτραμμιτίου Γεώργιον τὸν Μουζάλωνα, συνοικίσας αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἐκ Καντακουζηνῶν Θεοδώραν, τοῦ Παλαιολόγου οὗσαν ἀδελφιδὴν, τὸν δὲ παραλύει μὲν τοῦ ἀξιώματος εἰς πρωτοβεστιάριου μετ' ἐκεῖνον Ἀνδρόνικον μέγαν δομέστικον καθιστᾶ, τὴν τοῦ Ῥαοῦλ θυγατέρα οἱ συναρμόσας, τὸν δὲ γε τρίτον τῶν ἀδελφῶν προβάλλεται πρωθιερακάριον. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 41.8–14)

elites. It is hardly believable that the insecure emperor wished to eradicate the existing aristocratic families, some of which had been around for two or more centuries. Rather, he envisaged a path for new local elites, whom he could trust unconditionally, to join society's high rungs. In order for these men to be fully accepted, though, they needed to *ennoble* themselves and the best way to achieve this was marriage into the very families whose members were forcefully removed from high office. In this way, the emperor managed to demonstrate that he did not plan to crush the families that occupied high positions for generations. He simply wanted to weaken their position in order to strengthen his own authority and, ultimately, increase the state's vigour and revenues, while enjoying strong support from his staff. Theodoros II was no breaker of the *golden chain*. He simply loosened its grip on power by adding new links to it. After all, while Theodoros II might have been more radical in his attempts to weaken all the highborn families, let us not forget that among the purged families were the Philai who came to prominence by *ennoblement* through marriage only after 1204. Thus, Theodoros II clearly did not have any major plans to deal solely with the pre-1204 Komnenian elite, but rather with all the families that were intertwined by kinship in the 1250s regardless of the period when they came to prominence. The same Philai, for instance, found no major opposition from the older members of the *golden chain* in the early 13th century. Rather, they were able to build up alliances even with the most ancient of the highborn families such were the Palaiologoi. It was within this socio-political landscape, that Michael Palaiologos had to operate during the mid- to late 1250s.

Michael followed Theodoros II's rise to the throne from his post in Bithynia. The last year of Ioannes' reign brought no further trouble for him as he successfully commanded the armies in Bithynia and managed to defeat the Latins of Constantinople in their attempts to occupy Roman lands in Asia Minor.²⁶² Michael spent the first year and half of Theodoros II's reign in western Asia Minor where "he had been entrusted with the command of the entire place."²⁶³ His duties seem to have been similar to those at his post in Melnikon and Serres; only this time, Michael was closer to the ever weary and all-seeing imperial centre. As Pachymeres explained: "[Michael] was always held in suspicion of [wanting] the imperial majesty [for himself] and it was clear, from his insidious disposition, that he would change the regime if he could but grasp an opportunity."²⁶⁴ Truly, witnessing the purges of his allies, Michael knew that he should remain

²⁶² Michael, *Autobiography*, 5; Akropolites, *Chronike*, 64; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 43.6–45.12.

²⁶³ τὴν τῆς ἀπάσης ταύτης χώρας ἡγεμονίαν ἐμπειπιστεῦσθαι (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 64.10–11)

²⁶⁴ Ὑποπτος μὲν εἰς βασιλείαν αἰεί ποτ' ὦν καὶ δῆλος, ἐξ ὧν ὑποκαθημένως εἶχε, νεωτερίσων, εἰ καιροῦ λάβηται. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 37.7–8)

cautious in regard to the new emperor. His close associates were one-by-one falling out of favour with the emperor. Even Theodoros II's two beloved teachers (and Michael's allies), Nikephoros Blemmydes and Georgios Akropolites, were not able to keep their relationship with the emperor intact. Generally speaking, Michael and Georgios shared similar relationships with the reigning emperors. Akropolites had no known fallouts with Ioannes III. This does not mean that he was not on good terms with Michael Palaiologos who, both before and after the trial, occupied high positions under the very same emperor. On the other hand, Akropolites surely had a reason to hold grudges against Theodoros II, even though this emperor for the most part was benevolent and generous to him. According to his own biased narrative, Theodoros II had him beaten in the army camp when the latter expressed an opinion the emperor did not like.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, Akropolites was promoted by Theodoros II to the rank of *praetor* in the Balkans, where he was captured and taken to Epeiros in the siege of Prilep in 1256. It was Michael Palaiologos who secured Akropolites' release once he was emperor in 1259. During Theodoros II's reign, however, Blemmydes too came into open conflict with his ex-student over the issue of taxation—this conflict was to last until the emperor's death in 1258.²⁶⁶ At this time Blemmydes composed an advisory piece, the *Imperial Statue*, in which he criticized the emperor by promoting as ideal imperial behaviour actions opposed to those of Theodoros II. The time of Blemmydes' fallout coincides with Akropolites' own strained relationship with the emperor. These series of conflicts with the emperor left Michael, by now a shrewd politician, wary of his own position. If men such were Blemmydes and Akropolites did not avoid conflict with Theodoros II, what could Michael, the perpetual suspect of the regime, expect from the emperor?

In the summer of 1256, Michael's associate Kotys, who worked at the imperial court, visited Michael in Bithynia to warn him about the emperor's intention to incarcerate him.²⁶⁷ Kotys advised Michael to take drastic measures by saying that "both of us must desert to the Persians, if you wish to keep your eyes."²⁶⁸ At the conclusion of his discussion with Kotys Michael knew that he had been blacklisted, much like the Strategopouloi, Philai, Rhaoul, and even Blemmydes. Being aware that he was aligned more with the deposed officials than with his in-law Georgios Akropolites, Michael accepted Kotys' advice and finding himself in dire straits fled to the safety of the Seljuk court. A life in shameful self-imposed exile was preferable to

²⁶⁵ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 63.

²⁶⁶ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 292–296.

²⁶⁷ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 43.6–20.

²⁶⁸ αὐτομολητέον πρὸς Πέρσας καὶ ἀμφοτέρους, εἴ σοι μέλει τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν (*Ibid.*, 43.12–13)

immediate disgrace and imprisonment. And so, in the summer of 1256, Michael embarked on a journey to Ikonion, the dwelling place of the sultan of Rum, where he sought refuge against Theodoros II's wrath. The shameful act of cowardice and even treason, as we will see, remained arguably a permanent stain on Michael's reputation for the rest of his life.

Chapter 4. “Je veux être calife à la place du calife”: Michael Palaiologos in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum

Sultan Kaykhusraw I lost his life in the battle of Antioch on Menander against the Roman forces in 1211. Following his death, the sultan’s successor, Kaykaus I had to assert his position by outmaneuvering other members of the Seljuk family as well as their political supporters at both the court and in the provinces.²⁶⁹ During the tumultuous months of 1211, the Romans of Attaleia, nominally subjected to the sultan, rebelled against Seljuk rule and embarked on a four-year rebellion that became a burning issue in Kaykaus I’s early reign. This was particularly true since the Lusignan Kingdom of Cyprus offered support to the rebels. Without wishing to attract any further foreign intervention the sultan stormed and conquered the city in 1215 and punished those who rebelled.²⁷⁰ The remarkable uprising of the Roman populace in Attaleia has come down to us thanks to two Seljuk histories written in the second half of the 13th century: the first one was composed by a court official named Ibn Bibi and the second by an anonymous citizen of Ikonion. Byzantine narratives, on the other side of the border, remain altogether silent about this long-lasting Roman insurgence. Even the main chronicler of the 13th century’s first half, Georgios Akropolites, refrained from commenting on the rebellion in Attaleia.

Adhering to the unwritten rule of Byzantine historiography in describing solely the affairs of the Roman state and not the Romans within and without the empire, unless directly related to the affairs of the state, Akropolites, much as Pachymeres, left us with no information about the lives and deeds of those Romans who lived and served in other countries.²⁷¹ The two authors focused virtually exclusively on the affairs of the Roman state, save the brief excerpt of Michael Palaiologos’ flight to the Turks in Akropolites’ *The History*.²⁷² Venturing outside the expected contextual framework of Byzantine historiography, Akropolites himself admits that he had to broaden the scope of his historical narrative in order to be able to defend his hero’s flight to the

²⁶⁹ On Kaykhusraw I and Kaykaus II see: C. Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History (c. 1071–1330)* J. Jones–Williams, transl., (New York: Sidgwick & Jackson 1968); for a critical overview of Seljuk history in the 13th century see: Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 81–110.

²⁷⁰ On the rebellion of 1211 in Attaleia see: *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibī*, H. Duda transl. (Copenhagen: Munksgaard 1959), 61–4; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, E.A.W. Budge ed. and transl. (London: Oxford University Press 1932), 369.

²⁷¹ On rare occasions, Akropolites writes about Romans outside the so-called successor states of Nikaia and Epeiros.

²⁷² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 64–65; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 43–45.

Turks.²⁷³ While *The History* works as a source of Michael's endeavours in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, Akropolites was not particularly interested in describing his hero's surroundings at Ikonion. Akropolites' outline of Michael Palaiologos' escape to the Turks serves more as a vehicle to analyze the footprint of such otherwise unknown Romans as were the rebels in Attaleia dwelling in the Sultanate of Rum than a detailed account of Michael's engagement with the Seljuk polity. By following Michael's travails across the border river Sangarios, I explore here the Roman presence in the sultanate. Lively evidence emerges on both commoners and courtiers. Michael's movements from the border regions to Ikonion and subsequently Aksaray and Kastamon offers us a route to follow as we conceptualize the ways in which a Byzantine notable could have engaged with fellow Romans of various social standings in the Seljuk polity in Asia Minor. The reconstruction, however partial, of the social and political world of the Romans under Seljuk rule enables us to discuss the ways in which prominent Romans and the Roman populace employed the public sphere in a very Roman fashion in order to advance their careers at the court and in streets of Seljuk cities.

In order to understand the social and political role of the Romans in the Sultanate of Rum, where Michael Palaiologos fled, we have to rely on Greek language textual production outside the borders of the Roman state as well as on occasional mentions of Romans in non-Roman sources. Besides the historiographic narratives of Akropolites and Pachymeres, works of Michael Palaiologos' rather famous contemporaries, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi and his son Sultan Walad, both of whom dwelled in Ikonion, offer a rather peculiar insight into the public and daily life in the Seljuk capital.²⁷⁴ The two Sufi intellectuals left a deep mark on Islamic literature. Consciously or not, Rumi and Walad provided enough material with which to seriously reconstruct the urban setting in which the two authors composed their works. While their oeuvre mostly belongs to the realm of contemplative poetry and prose, it also relates to the social and cultural norms of Ikonians and other urban dwellers of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum. Furthermore, these two authors' ghazals composed in the Greek language offer a unique insight into the cultural negotiation that was taking place in the Sultanate of Rum between the majority Roman populace and the new Persianate settlers.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Ἐνταῦθα δὲ τοῦ λόγου γενόμενοι τὰ τῆς ἱστορίας, ὡς δέον ἐστίν, ἐμπλατύνομεν (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.1–2.)

²⁷⁴ For the life and opus of Rumi and Sultan Walad see: Lewis, *Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalal al-din Rumi* (New York: One World Publications 2014).

²⁷⁵ For the Greek works of Rumi and Sultan Walad see: G. Meyer, "Die griechischen Verse in Rabâbnâma," *BZt* 4 (1895), 401–411; R. Burguière, R. Mantran, "Quelques vers grecs du XIIIe siècle en

Complementing textual sources, material artefacts, and infrastructure also helps obtain a better sense of the multicultural character of the Seljuk state in Anatolia. Of specific interest to this chapter is the architectural infrastructure that was built by or for the Romans living in Rum: churches, monuments of Roman antiquity, and similar exclusively Roman pieces of architecture.²⁷⁶ By bringing together the architectural and textual evidence of the Romans' enduring presence in Anatolia, I suggest that we can reconceptualize the ways in which we think about the role of the Romans in the sultanate's daily life, as well as in the highest echelons of government.

Thanks to the extant sources, the main focus of this chapter is the issue of *Romanitas* in foreign lands. By following Michael Palaiologos' venture outside the Romania into public service within the Seljuk polity, we have an opportunity to examine how *Romanitas* was negotiated vis-à-vis other communal identities—this time around, without the help of a state deliberately promoting a sense of Roman unity to the populace.²⁷⁷ The issue of belonging to a specific imagined community becomes even more relevant when we take into account that the sultanate's urban populace was predominantly Roman even in the 13th century. In the same vein, Michael's flight to the Seljuk Turks and his service in the Seljuk military certainly raise issues not just about Palaiologos' allegiances but also about his very identity. Was he still Roman—albeit of dubious allegiances—while in self-imposed exile? Was he becoming a Persian of Roman origin?²⁷⁸ Such questions are addressed in our sources, which relate Michael's pleasant stay at the Seljuk court. Along the same lines, the question of how and

caractères arabes," *Byzantion* 22 (1952), 63-80; Δ. Δέδες, "Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα του Μαυλανά Ρουμή και του γιου του Βαλέντ κατά τον 13ον αιώνα," *Τα Ιστορικά* 10 (18-19) (1993), 3-22.

²⁷⁶ Most existing scholarship focuses on sacral architecture of the Romans in Asia Minor; for Christian architectural endeavours in Seljuk Anatolia as well as the maintenance of old and new ecclesiastic and monastic establishments, see: T.B. Uyar, "Thirteenth-Century 'Byzantine' Art in Cappadocia and the Question of Greek Painters at the Seljuq Court," in A.S.C. Peacocks, B. de Nicola, S. N. Yıldız, eds., *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia* (New York: Routledge 2016), 215–32; M.V. Tekinalp, "Palace Churches of the Anatolian Seljuks: Tolerance or Necessity," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 33, 148-67.

²⁷⁷ Questions of Roman identity both from top-down and bottom-up within the Roman polity have received significant scholarly attention in the past decade: Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*; *ibid.*, "The Social Scope of Roman Identity in Byzantium: An Evidence-Based Approach," *ByzSym* 27 (2017), 173–210; L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans*; D. Krallis, "Popular Political Agency," 11–48.

²⁷⁸ For Byzantine perception of foreigners see: A. Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Peoples and Lands in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2013); for Byzantine views on Persian and Turkic identities see: A. Jovanović, "Imagining the Communities of Others: the Case of the Seljuk Turks," *ByzSym* 28 (2018), 239–73.

whether Michael interacted with other Romans in Seljuk service or even simply under Seljuk rule awaits an answer.

4.1. The Prodigal Son: The Seljuk Sultanate of Rum

The Byzantine loss at Manzikert opened the path to roaming Turkmen tribes in Anatolia. These tribesmen were not, however, particularly interested in conquering Roman cities nor in a systematic settlement of Asia Minor. Neither were they driven by religious zeal of punishing the infidels. Rather, the Turkish tribes in Asia Minor continued living their lives as nomads.²⁷⁹ The nomadic lifestyle was sustained through transhumant herding and, in case of stronger communities at least, pillaging of random targets. These Turkmen then, nominally under the rule of the Great Seljuk sultan, who was trying to centralize the new vast empire from Baghdad, formed distinctive autonomous nomadic tribes that roamed Asia Minor without much direction from the sultan or any other sedentary entity.²⁸⁰ The first change in the lifestyle of these nomads was prompted by the Byzantines themselves. Upon understanding that Malikshah or any other sultan was not able to exercise direct control over the Turkish groups, Roman notables started hiring the nomads as mercenaries in their own armies.²⁸¹ With the loss of significant parts of land that were tenured by the villager-soldiers of the Roman state, apostates turned emperors such as Nikephoros III Botaneiates and Alexios I Komnenos did not shun away from filling their contingents with Turkish and other mercenaries at the expense of the now-collapsing *theme* system.

One such tribal leader who managed to pillage the Roman country-side and even conquer Nikaia and Nikomedia in 1075 was Sulayman ibn Qutlumush, a once-removed cousin to the Great Seljuk sultan Malikshah. Two years after the conquest of Nikaia, Sulayman I was

²⁷⁹ For the Turkish settlement in Asia Minor post 1071 see: A.D. Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia* (New York: Routledge 2017), 169–304. Beihammer convincingly deconstructs traditional views of religious motivation and rhetoric surrounding the Turkish conquest of Anatolia: *ibid.*, 18–19.

²⁸⁰ For the state of the Great Seljuks with its seat in Baghdad see: A.C.S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2015); C. Lange and S. Mecit, eds., *Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2011). For the Turkmens see: D. Korobeinikov, “Raiders and Neighbours: the Turks (1040–1304),” in J. Shepard, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2008), 692–727; R. Shukurov, “Christian Elements in the Identity of the Anatolia Turkmens (12th-13th centuries),” in *Cristianità d’Occidente e Cristianità d’Oriente (secoli VI–XI): 24–30 aprile 2003* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 2004), 707–64.

²⁸¹ Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*, 198–243.

allegedly proclaimed sultan of an independent Seljuk entity in Asia Minor.²⁸² The career of Sulayman ibn Qutlumush was no different from many other Turkish tribal leaders turned mercenaries for the Byzantines. During his time in Bithynia, Sulayman lent his support to Byzantine emperors and rebels: first to Michael VII Doukas, whom he abandoned to support Nikephoros III Botaneiates. Then, Sulayman joined Nikephoros Melissenos, who in 1080 rebelled against Nikephoros III. Once Nikephoros, for whom he massed popular support in tumultuous Bithynia, decided to support Alexios I Komnenos, the Turkish garrisons were let into Bithynian cities. Alexios I Komnenos, himself not lacking in experience with Turkish mercenaries, recognized Sulayman's position in Bithynia. Thus, from its nascent days, the Sultanate of Rum was tied to Byzantium.²⁸³

Sulayman conquered the city of Nikaia, allegedly to proclaim himself sultan, and left Bithynia in 1084 to wage war in the east. Sulayman I conquered the city of Antioch but was killed by a Seljuk lord Tutush I in its vicinity in 1086. Sulayman's son, Kilic Arslan I, was sent as hostage to Isfahan and only managed to return to Asia Minor in 1093. The gap between the father's and the son's reigns was marked by Seljuk absence in Bithynia. Four years later, Kilic Arslan I was besieged in Nikaia by Roman and Crusader armies. During the siege of Nikaia, we see Alexios I continue his previous policies towards the Turks by negotiating independently of the Crusaders with Kilic Arslan the surrender of the city to the Roman forces.²⁸⁴ The withdrawal from Nikaia represented the final act in the Seljuk presence in Bithynia. Kilic Arslan continued fighting the

²⁸² Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*, 215–224. The foundational date of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum is as problematic as the foundational date of the Byzantine empire. Just as scholars reached an agreement upon the year 330 CE as a starting point of Byzantium, so too was a consensus reached to date the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum's history from 1077, when Sulayman ibn Qutlumush proclaimed himself sultan in the occupied city of Nikaia. The problems around choice of the year 1077 are greater in number and significance than those surrounding the foundational year of Constantinople. The first major issue is the very act of Sulayman I's sultanic acclamation, which is mentioned for the first time in the 12th century. The very act of a politically conscious state building process is brought into question. Sulayman ibn Qutlumush, instead, appears to have been a leader of a Turkmen band which in the post-Manzikert havoc managed to occupy the cities of Nikaia and Nikomedia. The story of sultanic proclamation and legitimization through the official recognition by the khalif in Baghdad was conveniently crafted in the 12th century when the Seljuk state in Anatolia was being consolidated into a cohesive political player in the region. The only recognition that Sulayman received in his lifetime was that by Alexios I Komnenos, who in a treaty with Sulayman acknowledged him as the autonomous ruler in Bithynia.

²⁸³ For Sulayman ibn Qutlumush see: S. Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs: Evolution of a Dynasty* (London/New York: Routledge 2014), 23–7; for his relations with the Byzantine notables see: Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*: 215–224.

²⁸⁴ For negotiations between Alexios I and the Turks independently of the Crusaders see: Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*, 309–11.

Crusaders actively until 1101, when he settled in the city of Ikonion. This is the first instance in which we learn of Seljuks settling in that city.²⁸⁵

While Ikonion had been under Kilic Arslan I's and his successor Malikshah I's control, it was only under Masud I (1116–1156) that the city became the court's permanent location.²⁸⁶ Masud I went as far as to construct a dynastic mausoleum, the Alaeddin Mosque, in the city, which helped to establish it as the capital of the Seljuk polity in Rum.²⁸⁷ Masud I's construction of the Alaeddin complex was the embodiment of the wider socio-political process in Asia Minor: the adoption of a sedentary lifestyle by the Turks. The 12th century saw the rise of local Turkish lords who settled permanently in Roman urban spaces. Oftentimes, Roman cities, in order to preserve their rights and peace, accepted Turkish overlords. By being exposed to the Byzantine cities' complex mechanisms of political governance and economic production the Turkish warlords started transforming themselves from raiding tribal leaders and mercenaries in the service of Byzantine nobles into "state builders, who started to focus on the consolidation of their rule and the security of the agricultural and financial resources of the territories they came to control."²⁸⁸

The Seljuk sultans of Rum were by no means the only entity that was setting roots in Anatolia. A series of Turkish *beys*, such as Tzachas in Smyrne or the Saltuk dynasty in Erzurum, established *beyliks* in and around Roman cities. Some, namely the Seljuks of Ikonion and Danishmends, with their centre at Sivas, managed to build larger territorial states that encompassed more than one major city. The Danishmends were so successful that they were able to intercede on behalf of Seljuk princes fighting their siblings for the throne. After all, Masud I came to power thanks to Danishmend support and intervention against his brother Malikshah I.²⁸⁹ This adoption of urban lifestyles on behalf of the Turks was not, however, a monolithic process. Seljuks, Danishmends, Artuks, and Saltuks were representatives of certain families and tribes who opted to inhabit Roman and other cities in Asia Minor. Other tribesmen and their

²⁸⁵ For the life and tenure of Kilic Arslan I see: Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 81–90; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 27–39.

²⁸⁶ Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*, 277.

²⁸⁷ For the mosque see: S. Redford, "The Alaeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered," *Artibus Asiae* 51 (1991), 54–74.

²⁸⁸ Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence*, 245. For settling of the Turks see: *ibid.*, 265–303.

²⁸⁹ For the reign of Masud I see: Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 42–53. For the Danishmends role in Masud I's rise to the throne see pages 43–4.

beys continued roaming around Anatolia nominally recognizing one or the other sedentary dynast as their overlord, but *de facto* keeping their autonomy from any central government.²⁹⁰

The new urban *beys* had to adjust to a sedentary lifestyle that included mastering the arts of agriculture, bureaucracy, taxation, and the minting of coinage. While accepting all the charms of urbane life though, the *beys* found themselves in a peculiar situation: they ruled over a predominantly Christian Roman population that lived in cities and villages. The nomadic Turkmen they commanded for years, whether they had settled down or not, were but a minority.²⁹¹ Granted, many Romans escaped to the Balkans with the advent of the Turks. The majority, however, remained in their dwellings in Anatolia. Alongside the Roman populace, together with the Turkic nomads who were settling down, other Turkish and Iranian urban dwellers—merchants, artisans, intellectuals—moved from Iran to Asia Minor. The new overlords and immigrants to Asia Minor contributed to the further diversification of the Seljuk subject populace.²⁹² The Romans, in turn, had to learn how to coexist in their traditional dwelling places with the newly-settled ethnic and national groups that shared religious, linguistic, and cultural practices with the new conquerors.

That the Roman population retained its position and numbers is best seen in the urban landscapes of such cities as Ikonion. Even though major Byzantine churches were turned into mosques, Christian and Roman architecture continued to be built around the city.²⁹³ The sultans went as far as modeling themselves as pious patrons of churches in Ikonion and elsewhere.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Los Angeles: University of California Press 1971), 133–4, 185–94.

²⁹¹ For more on the presence of significant Roman populations in thirteenth-century Seljuk Anatolia see: Vryonis, *The Decline*, 59; D. Korobeinikov, “Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, Part 1: The Two Patriarchates: Constantinople and Antioch,” *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15 (2003), 197–214; and idem, “Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries, Part 2: The Time of Troubles,” *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 17 (2005), 1–29, idem, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 154. For socio-cultural negotiations between the Muslim elite and Christian subjects see: A. Beihammer, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Seljuq Anatolia: Perceptions and Reactions,” in A.S.C. Peacocks, B. de Nicola, S. N. Yıldız, eds., *Christianity and Islam in Medieval Anatolia* (New York 2016), 51–76; D. Korobeinikov, “How ‘Byzantine’ were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450,” in *Османский мир и османистика: сборник статей к 100-летию со дня рождения А.С. Тверитиновой (1910-1973)* (Москва: Институт востоковедения РАН 2010), 224–230; A. Beihammer, “The Formation of Muslim Principalities and Conversion to Islam during the Early Seljuk Expansion in Asia Minor,” in P. Gellez et G. Grivaud, eds., *Les Conversions a l’Islam en Asie Mineure, dans les Balakns et dance le monde Musulman: Comparaisons et perspectives* (Athenes : École française d’Athènes 2016), 77–108.

²⁹² Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 94–95.

²⁹³ M.V. Tekinalp, “Palace Churches of the Anatolian Seljuks,” 148-167.

²⁹⁴ O. Turan, « Les souverains seldjoukides et leurs sujets non-musulmans, » *Studia Islamica* 1 (1953), 65–100.

The pose of benefactor to the Roman population was a clear sign that the Turkish *beys* and sultans adopted Byzantine imperial rhetoric vis-à-vis the Romans they ruled.²⁹⁵ The main reason behind this Byzantine modeling was a sheer necessity of keeping the majority of urban dwellers pacified and even supportive of the regime. This becomes even clearer if we keep in mind that some cities preferred to negotiate their surrender to the Turks than put up a fight in order to preserve their ways even after the new mosques were erected in the town-squares.

The Turkish *beys*, especially the Seljuk sultans of Rum, were careful in the way they communicated with their subjects. Endowing churches and providing the Romans with security was a way to keep them appeased. On the other hand, the sultans were cautious not to claim themselves as heirs of the Byzantine emperors. Quite to the contrary, the Seljuk sultans were fully aware that they were not ruling a single nation, as the emperor of the Romans did, but rather a multiethnic state.²⁹⁶ In order to keep the Turks, Persians, and Arabs appeased, the sultans crafted the official imagery of themselves as members of the prestigious Seljuk family, highlighting their successful conquests. Focusing on their Seljuk origins, though, was strictly qualified so as not to infringe on (and provoke an unwanted reaction to) the rights of the Great Seljuk sultan in Baghdad. The situation changed drastically once the Great Seljuk dynasty in Baghdad was no more, and the Seljuk sultans of Rum were the only ones who could claim descent from the famous Seljuk dynasty. Still, throughout the 13th century, while the exclusiveness of the Seljuk dynasty was being emphasized, the idea of pious Muslim rule over a multiethnic population remained dominant in the sultans' public imagery.²⁹⁷

The image of a just Muslim sultan ruling over many different nations became even more important once the Seljuk state of Rum conquered most of the other Turkic entities in Asia Minor, including the strong Danishmend state. Instead of eradicating all the competing families that ruled these independent entities, the Seljuk sultans preferred to integrate them into the sultanate's elite.²⁹⁸ This was true of both Muslim as well as Roman notables who wished to submit to the sultan of Rum. Since the 12th century, the sultans were eager to accept not only the conquered elites, but also those who were looking for a refuge from their homelands. The

²⁹⁵ On Byzantine emperors' duties to the populace see: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*; Angelov, *Byzantine Imperial Ideology*; Blemmydes, *On Imperial Statue*.

²⁹⁶ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 95, 105–6.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 100–5; D. Korobeinikov, "The King of the East and the West: the Seljuk Dynastic Concept and Titles in the Muslim and Christian Sources," in A.C.S. Peacock and S.N. Yıldız, eds., *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London/New York: Routledge 2013), 68–90.

²⁹⁸ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 82–83.

trend of welcoming foreign nobles into the courtly circles of the sultanate continued all the way through the 13th century, even after the sultanate lost its nominal independence to the Mongol empire in the battle of Köse Dağ in 1243. Thus, Michael's flight to the Turks was by no means an original or an unexpected move. Michael simply adhered to the over-a-century-old practice of seeking refuge at the court of Ikonion.

4.2. The Sultanate of Rum: A Byzantine Safe Haven?

The Turks' rather swift transformation from nomadic to sedentary lifestyle did not escape the Byzantines' gaze. The swiftness with which Byzantine authors reached a consensus on which names should be employed to denote the various Turkish communities living in Anatolia since the later 11th century was comparable to that of post-Manzikert Turkish raids. The reason such a virtually instant consensus was made possible was because Byzantine literary tradition offered a plethora of existing ethnonyms to choose from. In order to differentiate between specific groups and polities of the Turks, Byzantine historiographers adopted both already existing vernacular and classicizing ethnonyms, such as Turk and Persian. On the other hand, when need arose, they did not shun away from adopting terms from other languages, such as Turkoman, to label specific socio-political entities.²⁹⁹ Traditionally, in Greco-Roman historiographic practices, the term Persian was employed to denote a series of successive polities that built up their state apparatus on Iranian models drawn from the Achaemenid period onward. The Great Seljuk Turks' polity was one of these *Persianate* polities—as the main language of administration was Farsi and the whole state apparatus was built on Iranian paradigms—and Byzantine historians did not miss the opportunity to make this clear by applying the ethnonym exclusively to the Great Seljuk dynasty and, later on with the consolidation of power in Ikonion, to the *Persianate* Sultanate of Rum. The nomadic Turks, who did not settle down, were exclusively labelled with the name *Tourkomanos*. The ethnonym Turk, on the other hand, remained reserved for expressing one's racial origin regardless of whether this person was a member of the Persian polity in Anatolia, nomadic communities, or if they were a Roman citizen. Stemming from this then, a Turkoman, a Turkish nomad, could never be a Persian, a member of the Seljuk state, nor could a Persian ever be a Turkoman; but they could all be racially Turks. By looking at the ethnonyms deployed by Byzantine authors, we see

²⁹⁹ On the origins of the terms Turks and Turkomans in Byzantine literature see: R. Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks* (Leiden/New York: Brill 2016), 401; for the list of ethnonyms used to designate different Turkic communities see: K. Durak, "Defining the 'Turk': Mechanisms of Establishing Contemporary Meaning in the Archaizing Language of the Byzantines," *JÖB* (2009), 65–78.

that the Romans made a clear-cut distinction between different socio-political entities that emerged in Anatolia and that we from our present point of view simply label as Turkish. For the Romans, the name Turk was nothing but an ethnic designation; ethnonyms Persian and Turkoman, on the other hand, encapsulated social, cultural, linguistic and other values that made one entity cohesive and different from others.³⁰⁰

Besides the prominent place these newly established Turkish states occupied in the Byzantine social imaginary, they also played a rather prominent role in the lives of Byzantine noblemen. Much in the same vein with the Turkish overlords' willingness to cooperate with the Roman populace, the Seljuk court, itself home to the rebellious branch of the greater Seljuk dynasty, became a safe haven for dissident members of the Komnenian family and Romanía's elites.³⁰¹ The trend of using Turkish lands as a comfortable asylum was inaugurated by the second generation of the Komnenoi in power. Alexios I's son Isaakios, who was honoured with the title of *sebastokrator* by his brother, emperor Ioannes II, fled to the Turks after his participation in a conspiracy against his sovereign was discovered in 1130. While Isaakios roamed the Turkish lands and eventually returned to Constantinople from where he went into a self-imposed exile in Thrace, his son Ioannes Komnenos, due to his own intrigues against Ioannes II, fled to the Danishmends in 1139 and eventually moved to the Seljuk court where he took permanent residence and was integrated into the court elite. He was so appreciated that he was even given Masud I's daughter in marriage.³⁰² Thus, Ioannes Komnenos was able to secure a fairly bright future for himself and his family as a Seljuk state official. By the time of Ioannes, grandson of Alexios I Komnenos, the Seljuk court had become a reliable go-to-place for rebellious or otherwise troubled Romans. If we take into consideration that the Seljuk court in the mid-12th century was gradually consolidating under Masud I, the flights of such high-profile Roman individuals as Ioannes Komnenos meant that Roman elite had been included in Seljuk governance of Asia Minor and its Roman populace from the very onset of its state-building initiatives. This practice continued all the way into the 13th century, when Michael Palaiologos joined other Roman notables in offering his services to the Seljuk sultan.

Having Roman notables at court was beneficial to the sultans in more than one way. First, these men originating from well-known Roman families and resonated with the Roman populace

³⁰⁰ Jovanović, "Imagining the Communities of Others," 239–73.

³⁰¹ A. Beihammer, "Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine Seljuk Chronikon," *Speculum* 86 (2011), 597–651.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 597–651.

at large. Second, they served as diplomatic capital in the sultans' relationship with the court in Constantinople. This became true especially from the reigns of Kilic Arslan II and Manuel I Komnenos onwards, when the two courts established a fairly regular system of correspondence. Kilic Arslan II even visited Constantinople and entered open negotiations with Manuel I over his submission to the Romans.³⁰³ Turkish high-profile visitors in Byzantium became more common after this visit. This did not mean that the Turkish element in Byzantium had not been present before that. The best example of a Roman of Turkish origin was Ioannes Axouch, but unlike the Turkish lords coming willingly to Byzantium in the later 12th century, Ioannes was captured as a child by Alexios I and became a childhood companion of Ioannes II under whose reign he thrived.³⁰⁴ Possibly the highest-ranking long-term visitor at the court of Constantinople was the exiled sultan Kaykhusraw I, who was hosted by Alexios III Angelos for six years (1197–1203). On his way to Constantinople, Kaykhusraw I was also well received by Manuel Mavrozomes, a Byzantine magnate in the Menander valley. Surely, a Roman notable whose estates were so close to the Seljuk realm was fully aware of the benefits one could derive from having a good personal relationship with a major Seljuk figure. Alexios III was aware of this too. Rumour has it that during his stay in Constantinople, Kaykhusraw I was adopted by Alexios III who also, as the story goes, baptized him.³⁰⁵ While we have to take this Roman account with a grain of salt, the fact remains that Kaykhusraw I established an excellent rapport with Alexios III as well as other Roman notables such as Mavrozomes. Even before the sack of Constantinople in 1204, Kaykhusraw I fled the Roman capital and managed to re-establish himself in Ikonion. Once in power, he offered support to Manuel Mavrozomes, who sought to establish himself as lord of the Menander valley after the sack of Constantinople. After being defeated by Theodoros I in 1205, Manuel fled to Kaykhusraw I.³⁰⁶ Exiled emperor Alexios III followed suit and after several years of roaming the Balkans ended up in Ikonion.³⁰⁷ The case of Alexios III shows how great of a political asset Romans at the Seljuk court could be. Under the guise of wishing to see his

³⁰³ For Kilic Arslan II's visit to Constantinople see: P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143–1180* (Cambridge 1993), 76–77. For Manuel I Komnenos' relationship with Kilic Arslan II see: Magdalino, *The Empire*, 76–78; 95–100; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 112–15.

³⁰⁴ For Ioannes Axouch see: K. M. Μέκιος, *Ὁ μέγας δομέστικος τοῦ Βυζαντίου, Ἰωάννης Ἀξούχος καὶ πρωτοστράτηγος ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἀλέξιου* (Ἀθῆναι: Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν 1932). For a general overview of the Turks in Byzantine service, as well as Turkish Romans, see: C.M. Brand, "The Turkish Element in Byzantium, Eleventh-Twelfth Centuries," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43 (1989), 1-25.

³⁰⁵ R.J. Macrides, "The Byzantine Godfather," *BMG* 11 (1987), 139–62; idem., "Kinship by Arrangement: The Case of Adoption," *DOP* 44 (1990), 109–18.

³⁰⁶ For Manuel Mavrozomes and his relationship with Kaykhusraw I see: S.N. Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes and His Descendants at the Seljuk Court: the Formation of a Christian Seljuk-Komnenian Elite," in S. Leder, ed., *Crossroads between Latin Europe and the Near East: Corollaries of the Frankish Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (12th–14th centuries)* (Würzburg: Ergon Verlag 2011), 55–77.

³⁰⁷ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 9–10.

father Alexios III on the throne, as Akropolites tells us, Kaykhusraw went to war with Theodoros I. Unfortunately for Alexios III, Kaykhusraw I was killed in the battle of Antioch on Meander in 1211 and he himself was captured and subsequently blinded by his son-in-law Theodoros I.³⁰⁸

The faith of Manuel Mavrozomes and his offspring was far brighter than that of Alexios III and his adoptee Kaykhusraw I. We do not know much about Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes, other than he was connected through marriage to the imperial *oikos* of Manuel I Komnenos and that, under the Angeloi, he retained an important position thanks to his family's estates in the Meander Valley. After 1204, Manuel Mavrozomes established himself as a local *prouchon* until he was defeated by Theodoros I Laskaris, whom he opposed, and was forced to flee to the Seljuk sultan Kaykhusraw I. Whether Manuel was previously acquainted with the sultan (and to what extent) remains an open question since Choniates and Akropolites offer quite different stories about him. A third version is offered by a Persian historian of the Seljuk sultanate Ibn Bibi.³⁰⁹ What we know is that, once he fled to the Seljuk sultan, Manuel was well received. At Konya he even gave his daughter in marriage to Kaykhusraw I and in return Manuel's son Ioannes married Kaykhusraw's daughter.³¹⁰ Marrying one's daughter to a Muslim sultan, though, was a rather novel way of building enduring relationships with the Seljuk powerholders. Manuel's son and Kaykhusraw's son-in-law, Ioannes, was promoted to the office of *beglerbey* (commander-in-charge) under Kayqubad I, having helped the sultan defeat his political opponents in battle.³¹¹ At about the same time Ioannes was in charge of rebuilding part of the walls of Konya on which he had his name and deeds inscribed in Arabic to commemorate his public endeavours. On the other hand, in letters, this Roman refugee turned Seljuk state official used his Greek inscribed personal seal.³¹² Thus, whenever he would seal a document, we can assume this was done with his Greek inscribed seal. A final, rather revealing, trait of the Mavrozomai in Seljuk service comes to us from 1297, half a century after Michael's stay at the

³⁰⁸ Ibid. 9.

³⁰⁹ Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes," 55–66.

³¹⁰ S.N. Yıldız and H. Sahin, "In the Proximity of Sultans: Majd al-Din Majd al-Din Isqaq, Ibn 'Arabi and the Seljuk Court," in A.C.S. Peacock and S.N. Yıldız, eds., *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London/New York: Routledge 2013), 179; Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes," 66–7.

³¹¹ Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes," 68–69.

³¹² For the Arabic inscriptions of Ioannes Mavrozomes see: S. Redford, "Mavrozomês in Konya," in *1. Uluslararası Sevgi Gönül Bizans Araştırmaları Sempozyumu Bildiriler, İstanbul, 25-26 Haziran 2007=First International Byzantine studies symposium proceedings, Istanbul 25-26 June, 2007* (Istanbul 2010), 48; Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes," 68–69. For the Greek seal see: S. Métivier, "Les Maurozômâi, Byzance et le sultanat de Rûm. Note sur le sceau de Jean Comnène Maurozômês," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 67 (2009), 197-207; Yıldız, "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes," 69–70.

court, when the Greek funerary inscription of the family was carved on the marble sarcophagus to commemorate a young *Amir Arslan*, Michael Mavrozomes. The marble slab with the inscription was found in the Church of Panagia Spiliotissa, which was part of the monastic complex located in the fortresses of Gevele, which played a major role in the defence of Ikonion.³¹³ Thus, the Mavrozomai became members of the Seljuk high elite without even converting to Islam. Quite the opposite, the *oikos* retained its Roman roots and religion for almost a century after the original flight of Manuel and his son Ioannes to the Seljuk court. The cases of Manuel and Ioannes Mavrozomai served as a handy blueprint for Michael Palaiologos to follow once he considered fleeing and offering his services to the Seljuk court at Ikonion.

4.3. Flight to the (Un)Known

Having been warned by Theodoros Kotys, a member of the imperial administration in Nikaia, about Theodoros II's plan to incarcerate him, Michael Palaiologos did what dozens of high-profile Romans did before him: he fled to the Seljuk court. Recent developments in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, though, changed the fortunes of the polity that, at the time of Michael's arrival, found its affairs in disarray. Namely, in the 1243 battle of Köse Dağ, Seljuk forces were defeated by the ever-expanding Mongol armies and the Sultanate of Rum had become a tributary state to the Mongol Ulus.³¹⁴ The waning of the Seljuk sultan's authority, as well as the arrival of Mongol nomads, mostly affected the nomadic Turkmens in Anatolia, who had become almost impossible to control.³¹⁵ In Akropolites' own words: "[the Turkmens are] a people who occupy the furthest boundaries of the Persians and feel implacable hatred for the Romans, delight in plundering them, and rejoice in booty from wars; this is especially true at the time when Persian affairs were agitated and thrown into confusion by the Tatar attacks."³¹⁶ The

³¹³ P. Wittek, "L'építaphe d'un Comnène Konía," *Byzantion* 10 (1935): 505-515; idem, "Encore l'építaphe d'un Comnène Konía," *Byzantion* 12 (1937), 207-211.

³¹⁴ For Seljuk Turks in the 13th century see: Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 119-141; 269-371; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 81-110. For the Mongol Ulus and empire-state building process see: T.T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2001), T. May, *The Mongol Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2018).

³¹⁵ For the Turkmens in the Mongol period see: Korobeinikov, "How Byzantine," 224-32; idem, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 228-34; D. Korobeinikov, "The Formation of the Turkish Principalities in the Boundary Zone: From the Emirate of Denizli to the Beylik of Menteshé (1256-1302)," in A. Çevik, M. Keçiş, eds., *Uluslararası Batı Anadolu Beylikleri Tarih, Kültür ve Medeniyeti Sempozyumu-II: Menteşeoğulları tarihi, 25-27 Nisan 2012 Muğla: bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 2016), 65-76.

³¹⁶ ἐν τοῖς οἰκίμασι τῶν Τουρκομάνων ἀφίκετο—ἔθνος δὲ τοῦτο τοῖς ἄκροις ὀρίοις τῶν Περσῶν ἐφεδρεῖον, καὶ ἀσπόνδῳ μίσει κατὰ Ῥωμαίων χρώμενον καὶ ἀρπαγαῖς ταῖς ἐκ τούτων χαῖρον καὶ τοῖς ἐκ πολέμων σκύλοις εὐφραίνόμενον, καὶ τότε δὴ μᾶλλον, ὅποτε τὰ τῶν Περσῶν ἐκυμαίνετο καὶ ταῖς ἐκ τῶν Ταχαρίων ἐφόδοις συνεταράττετο (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.4-9.)

Roman historian was right to make a causal connection between the restless behaviour of the borderland Turkmens and the weakening of central authority in Ikonion. The Turkmens, then, roamed freely throughout large areas between the sultanate's borders with the land of the Romans and the capital city of Ikonion, which itself was part of the wide Seljuk borderland called the *uj*. The *uj*, unlike in Roman lands, encompassed a rather wide area that even incorporated major cities into it.³¹⁷ Michael, in order to reach Ikonion, had to go through these dangerous border regions of the sultanate that were largely controlled by the nomadic Turkmen tribes.

Akropolites corroborates the fact that the Turkmen tribes wandered across the Seljuk lands by informing us that Michael was attacked and stripped of his goods and companions by the nomads in the border regions the moment he crossed into the Seljuk domains; Palaiologos barely saved his own life.³¹⁸ While Akropolites provides us with the dramatic story of Michael's unfortunate encounter with the Turkmens of western Anatolia, he does not offer us the slightest hint about the route Michael took in reaching Ikonion. Pachymeres, on the other hand, almost completely omits Michael's ventures outside the Roman lands, including the encounter with the Turkmens, but he does mention that Michael "who was invested with the governorship of both Mesothynia and Optimatoi [...] crossed the Sangarios river."³¹⁹ Adding to Pachymeres' account is Michael Palaiologos' own testimony about his battles against the Latins during his time in Optimatoi.³²⁰ Thus, it appears that Michael took flight from the theme of Optimatoi, which was the northernmost theme of the empire, located just opposite the Latin-occupied city of Constantinople and north of Theodoros II's preferred capital at Nikaia. The Sangarios river flows through Optimatoi and passes by Nikaia and all of Bithynia, creating a natural border with the Seljuk lands. While it is possible that on his flight Michael rode down the river on the Roman side and crossed it only once he reached its southern end, it is more plausible that somebody seeking refuge from the regime in power would cross the border as soon as possible and make his way to Ikonion from the Turkish side. Other than following the stark logic of an escapee, the fact that Michael, upon crossing Sangarios, instantly ran into hostile Turkmen raiders further supports the hypothesis that Michael decided to cross the river from the theme Optimatoi. Namely, of the Turkmen tribes, two were particularly notorious for their autonomous and aggressive behaviour near the Roman borderlands and three further east close to Armenian

³¹⁷ Korobeinikov, "How Byzantine," 224–32 idem., *Byzantium and the Turks*, 228–230.

³¹⁸ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.10–13.

³¹⁹ Εἰς κεφαλὴν τεταγμένου Μεσοθινίας καὶ αὐτῶν Ὀππιδμάτων [...] καὶ τὸν ποταμὸν περαιωθεὶς Σάγγαριν Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 43.6–7; 44. 25–6.

³²⁰ Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 5.1–10.

Cilicia.³²¹ It is the tribal communities inhabiting the northern border region around the river Sangarios, all the way to Kastamon, that deprived Michael of his possessions and retinue.³²² It was only by a stroke of luck, or, as Akropolites would have it, divine providence, that Michael himself managed to escape and reach Ikonion.³²³ The encounter with the Turkmens must have been a shock for Michael, who had never before forayed into Turkish territory, having served mainly in the Balkans and then in Bithynia where his main duty was to fight off any Latin incursions into Asia Minor. Yet, it appears that despite the initial traumatic encounter with the Turkmens around the border, Michael reached the court of the sultan Izzeddin Kaykaus II unharmed. Before reaching the sultan's capital, though, Michael had to cross quite a long road, stopping along the way. One of the first cities where Michael could have taken a respite after the encounter with the Turkmen of Kastamon on the major ancient highway to Ikonion was Ankyra.³²⁴

Ankyra was a meeting point on a major crossroads connecting Bithynia with Lykaonia as well as Kappadokia and the Black Sea coast.³²⁵ Since the mid-12th century, the Seljuk Turks had successfully occupied the city and had held all the way into the mid-13th century when Michael likely ventured there.³²⁶ The city itself was a bustling civic community as well as an ancient cityscape with multiple layers of bygone times visible in its streets. Known as a major ecclesiastic centre of the Roman world since the third-century persecutions of the Christians by Diocletian and Galerius, Ankyra hosted one of the first major church councils in 314. As the capital city of Galatia under Roman rule, Ankyra had also become the centre of the regional metropolitan see—a status which the city retained even after the Turkish conquest in the 11th century, all the way until the 20th century.³²⁷ The very presence of a metropolitan in Ankyra during the Seljuk period testifies to a strong Roman presence in the city even after the withdrawal of the Roman state from the region. Thus, as was the case with most post-Roman cities in Anatolia, in the 13th century, the majority of the population was Hellenophone, identified as Roman, and in turn was

³²¹ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 233–4.

³²² *Ibid.*, 234.

³²³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.16–18.

³²⁴ For the road from Nikaia and Bithynia to Ankyra and from Ankyra to Ikonion dating back to Antiquity see: K. Belke, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4, Galatien und Lykaonien* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1984), 94–6, 106. For Byzantine use of Roman roads see: K. Belke, "Transport and Communication," in P. Niewöhner, ed., *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017), 30–2.

³²⁵ Belke, *Tabula*, 94.

³²⁶ For the history of Ankyra from Augustus to the advent of the Ottomans in the 14th century see: *ibid.*, 126–30.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

labelled as such in Seljuk administrative and historiographical sources. While the Romans made up the majority of the city's social fabric, Seljuk governors made sure to leave a permanent Islamic mark on the city's landscape by employing Roman spolia in enhancing the Seljuk imprint on the city. The best example of this practice is the Alaeddin Mosque (homonymous with the better known family mausoleum of the Seljuks in Ikonion) commissioned by the governor Muhiddin Masud Shah, son of Kilic Arslan II.³²⁸ The mosque, together with the names of the city's governors, most of whom were coming from the Seljuk royal family, stand as a reminder of the city's importance in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum.

Employing spolia in constructing new buildings was rather common practice among Romans and Seljuks. Yet, since the 1st century CE, the epicentre of the city of Ankyra, whose location has been fixed through the city's history, had been home to a major temple of emperor Augustus and the goddess Roma.³²⁹ The structure endured the process of Christianization as well as Islamization of the city, surviving, to be sure, as a ruin from classical antiquity, and not as an operating temple to Roma. Unlike many monuments of classical antiquity in Anatolia, the temple has never required uncovering by archaeological teams in the 19th and 20th centuries. Rather, it has remained visible to any passerby over the past two millennia. In the 16th century, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, ambassador of the Habsburg Monarchy to the Ottoman Empire, made a one-day stop at Ankyra on his way to meet with the Persian embassy in Amasia. During his short stay in the city, the ambassador went on a day-long quest for ancient coins and Greek or Latin inscriptions which he would record for the benefit of the wider intellectual public in Europe. Much to his surprise, the ambassador stumbled upon the monument of Augustus and Roma in the city centre. He gives a rather surprising description:

At Angora [Ankyra] we saw a very fine inscription, a copy of the tables upon which Augustus drew a succinct account of his public acts. I had it copied by my people as far as it was legible. It is graven on the marble walls of the building, which was probably the ancient residence of the governor, now ruined and roofless. One half of it is upon the right as one enters, the other on the left. The upper paragraphs are almost intact; in the middle difficulties begin owing to gaps; the lowest portion was so mutilated by blows of clubs and axes as to be illegible. This is a serious loss to literature and much to be

³²⁸ Z. Sönmez, *Başlangıcından 16. Yüzyıla Kadar Anadolu-Türk İslam Mimarisinde Sanatçılar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi 1995), 220.

³²⁹ A. Gökdemir, C. Demirel, et al., "Ankara Temple (Monumentum Ancyranum/Temple of Augustus and Rome) Restoration," *Case Studies in Construction Materials* 2 (2015), 55-65.

deplored by the learned, especially since it is generally agreed that the city was consecrated to Augustus as a common gift from the province of Asia.³³⁰

If the monument's ruins were visible and recognizable in the 16th century despite not having been curated in accordance to our contemporary standards, there is reason to believe that thirteenth-century inhabitants of Ankyra or visitors like Michael Palaiologos could also have cast their gaze on the magnificent ruin. The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* was probably damaged by the 13th century, but, in the worst case, at least the same parts of the text seen by Ogist de Busbecq would have been legible in the times of Michael Palaiologos. The surviving text together with the impressive structure in downtown Ankyra surely provided more than enough material to spark popular imagination about the building and its Roman past. Whether thirteenth-century Romans were aware of the fact that the monument was a temple to Augustus and Roma, or imagined it as a residence of a governor as did Ogist de Busbecq, or perhaps something completely different, we will probably never know. We can be sure, however, that the Romans of Michael Palaiologos' times were able to imagine the city's and their own Roman past by reading the surviving parts of the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*. That any spectator of the ruins was able to engage with Augustus' autobiographical narrative inscribed on the building's walls in both Greek and Latin, either by reading it themselves or by having someone else read it to them, tells us a great deal about the possible impact of structures from bygone times on the people's perception of themselves in the wider world outside their immediate homes and neighbourhoods.³³¹

The citizens of Ankyra left us with no written signs of their engagement with the monument. This does not mean, however, that they simply ignored the massive structure which had dominated the city's centre for more than a thousand years. Fortunately, we have references to both popular and intellectual engagement with monuments of the Greco-Roman pre-Christian past in Byzantium. For example, the seventh/eighth-century *Parastaseis syntomoi chronikai* or the later tenth- to twelfth-century *Patria Konstantinopouleos*, have left us with significant evidence about the ways in which Romans engaged with statues and other monuments of

³³⁰ *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, transl. E.S. Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 2005), 50.

³³¹ For popular imagination around monuments available in local communities in crafting a sense of a unified Roman identity see: Krallis, "Popular Political Agency," 41–5. On landscape theory in examining popular engagement with monuments in Byzantium see: S. Turner and J. Crow, "Unlocking Historic Landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean: Two Pilot Studies Using Historic Landscape Characterisation," *Antiquity* 84 (2010), 216-229; K. Green, "Experiencing *Politiko*: New Methodologies for Analysing the Landscape of a Rural Byzantine Society," in C. Nesbitt and M. Jackson, eds., *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011* (London/New York: Routledge 2016), 133-52.

Constantinople.³³² In the texts, we find numerous references to the popular imagination surrounding specific monuments' past. The statues that were either brought to the city or produced in the city served as an imaginative playground for the citizens of the capital, who invented superstitious stories in order to explain the distant past to themselves. In the story of Kynegion, we hear of a statue that fell on a man and killed him after he boasted that he knew who made it. According to the story, state officials, including the emperor himself, became involved in solving the mystery of a murderous statue, which ends up being buried so that it would not kill anybody in the future.³³³ The whole narrative reads as a short story about a magical statue that would fit perfectly into the repertoire of Shahrazad. What matters here, though, is that the Constantinopolitan collective mythologization of the city's past relied heavily on using the state governing apparatus as a well-known reference point in solving the crime. By employing Roman officials in creating a history of an uninscribed artefact, the citizens of Constantinople made it clear that they were fully aware of Roman governing practices which they experienced on a daily basis. In turn, by imagining a common past around the empire's administration and monuments, the Constantinopolitan mass audience was unknowingly revealing a sense of belonging to a single state and a single nation. Popular stories such as the case of the Kynegion accident testify to the dissemination of ideas about a common Roman community among the general populace by the very same populace.³³⁴ In other words, the imperial administration did not have to superimpose any concepts of common belonging to its populace, but only to mobilize and further boost existing sentiments.

If such fantastic, yet fully Romanizing, stories were forged around nameless monuments, it is likely that the citizens of Ankyra created their own narratives around the ruinous temple. Magical in content or not, unlike the Kynegion of Constantinople, the temple of Ankyra bore a major piece of inscribed state propaganda on its walls. The *Res Gestae* carved on the temple must have informed local popular stories about the Roman past. These stories, in turn, became a popular way of constructing and preserving the identity of middle- and lower-class Romans even

³³² For composition and dating of the two collections see: *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*, A. Cameron and J. Herrin eds., trans., and comm. (Leiden: Brill 1984), 1–54; *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*, A. Berger ed. and transl. (Cambridge, MA/London 2013: Harvard University Press), vii–xxi. For the *Patria* and its composition and legacy see: G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire: étude sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France 1984).

³³³ *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople*, 64–67.

³³⁴ D. Krallis, "Imagining Rome in Medieval Constantinople: Memory, Politics, and the Past in the Middle Byzantine Period," in P. Lambert and B. Weiler, eds., *How the Past was Used. Essays in Historical Culture* (London: British Academy 2017), 49–69, here 49–58 for the *Patria* and the *Parastaseis*.

under foreign rule. Thus, we can think of the Romans in the Sultanate of Rum actively modifying existing narratives about the monument at Ankyra in order to adjust to their new socio-political realities. While the citizens of Ankyra did not live under Roman rule anymore, the traces of their Roman past dominated the city's landscape and the Muslim governors of the city did not care to alter this fact. Combined with the temple of Ankyra were invocations of the emperor's name in church liturgies, as the Romans of the Sultanate of Rum worked on preserving their Romanness. It was in such a still rather Roman city that Michael Palaiologos arrived after the initial shock of his encounter with the Turkmen on the border.

While his encounter with the Turkmen probably caused a culture shock of sorts for Michael, passing through the cities of Anatolia on his way to Ikonion may have comforted him, for not only did the majority of the populace speak *rhomaika*, that is the vernacular Greek language, but even the cities' landscapes made it impossible to forget the Roman past of Asia Minor. Seeing Roman monuments, inscriptions on buildings and walls, as well as hearing emperors' names in liturgies was one thing; reading the autobiography of the first *imperator* of the Romans on a ruinous façade in a Seljuk city was quite a different affair.³³⁵ For an educated Roman such as Michael Palaiologos, Augustus' autobiography did not represent just a story from a distant past, but an account of one of the best known Romans in the polity's history. The place Augustus occupied in the minds of Byzantine elites is hard to grasp, but his name and life were discussed by all major historians of the Roman empire from Cassius Dio to Ioannes Zonaras, as well as by stylistic role models of the Byzantine literati such as Plutarch.³³⁶ Michael would have encountered some of these very accounts during his youth at the court.

Roman intellectuals of Michael's time were not just avid consumers of pre-Christian literature, but also appreciated the art and architecture of Antiquity. The very person Michael was running away from, Theodoros II, has left us with his impressions of ancient ruins at Pergamon, which he visited on his tour of Roman Asia Minor. In the letter to his teacher and official Georgios Akropolites, the emperor wrote:

[Pergamon] is full of impressive sights, which have aged and withered with time. They show as in a reflecting glass their former glory and the greatness of those who built them. These monuments are full of Hellenic ambition and are manifestations of that

³³⁵ For the Ankyra version of the text of *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* see: *Res gestae Divi Augusti das Monumentum Ancyranum*, H. Volkman ed. and transl. (Leipzig: Reiland 1942).

³³⁶ For Byzantines as readers of Plutarch see: Theophili Kampianaki, "Plutarch's Lives in the Byzantine Chronographic Tradition: The Chronicle of John Zonaras," *BMGS* 41 (2017), 15-29. For Byzantines as readers of Hellenic literature under Roman rule see: Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics*, 72–89.

culture. The city displays them to us, reproaching us as descendants with the greatness of its ancestral glory.³³⁷

In the opening of the letter, Theodoros II establishes the topic he wishes to discuss: admiration of the pre-Christian, i.e. Hellenic ruins, of Pergamon. Throughout the letter, the emperor points out specific points of interest such as the Hellenistic walls and towers of the lower city. The greatness of the ruins becomes even more emphasized by their comparison to the significantly more modest condition of the existing city up on the acropolis. In order to show off his erudition to Akropolites and philosophize about the passage of time and the glory of bygone times, Theodoros II actively engages with existing ruins of the city; he goes into such detail that he recognizes how “we saw the hospital, which one might call the home of Galen, deriving this benefit from St Christopher, the patron of travelers.”³³⁸ The emperor was able to make an informed guess about the ruin in front of him by indicating that the ruinous hospital building, (that is the temple of Asklepios) might be connected to Galen who was born in Pergamon. The only way Theodoros II could know about Galen is by reading about the famous doctor during his studies with Nikephoros Blemmydes, and then Georgios Akropolites, both members of Michael’s social circles. By drawing links between ancient ruins he was admiring and texts he had read under Blemmydes’ and Akropolites’ tutelage, the emperor showcases his erudition before other intellectuals of the time. Doing so, he gives us a sense of how Roman intellectuals of the Later Byzantine period were keen to take pleasure in intellectualizing the world around them.³³⁹

Much as Theodoros II learnedly connected the ruins of the Asklepeion at Pergamon to Galen, about whom he had read, we can imagine Michael Palaiologos gazing in admiration at the temple of Augustus and Roma in Ankyra, with its inscribed autobiography of the first emperor. Even if the text was as damaged as it was in the 16th century when the first written account of it came to us, Michael could have read the opening paragraphs of the text in which Augustus boasts about his indispensable role in saving and subsequently running the Roman

³³⁷ θεάτρων οὔσα μεστή, καὶ τούτων οἷων γεγηρακότων καὶ μαρανθέντων τῷ χρόνῳ καὶ ὥσπερ ἐν ὑέλῳ τινὶ τήν ποτε δεικνυμένων λαμπρότητα καὶ τὸ μεγαλοπρεπὲς τῶν δειμάντων αὐτά. Ἑλληνικῆς γὰρ μεγαλονοίας ὑπάρχει ταῦτα μεστά, καὶ σοφίας ταύτης ἰνδάλματα· δεικνύει δὲ ταῦτα πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡ πόλις κατονειδίζουσα, ὥσπερ ἀπογόνους τινάς, τοῦ πατρώου κλέους τῷ μεγαλείῳ. (Theodoros II Laskaris, *Epistulae*, 80.4–9.)

³³⁸ παιόνειον δὲ τι ὥσπερ τὸν τοῦ Γαληνοῦ οἶκον ὀρῶντες, ἀρυόμεθα τὴν ὠφέλειαν, τὸν ἡμέτερον Χριστοφόρον, ἢ κυρτοφόρον, ἔχοντες ὑπουργόν. (ibid, 80.31–33.)

³³⁹ For Roman intellectuals’ engagement with material objects in their narratives see the example of Michael Holobolos describing a silk *peplos* sent to Genoa: Hilsdale, *Art and Diplomacy*, 31–87.

Republic.³⁴⁰ Octavian Augustus opted to compose the account of his life in the first person, which he then had translated into Greek, and both versions of the text were engraved on temples dedicated to Roma and himself in the cities around the empire. Reading the imperial autobiography on the walls of the temple could easily have served as an inspiration to Michael Palaiologos, who during the last year of his life inserted a lengthy eleven-chapter autobiographical narrative into the *typikon* of the monastery of St Demetrios in Constantinople, which he consecrated in 1282. While autobiographic information about the *ktetor* is not unique for the case of Michael Palaiologos, the emperor outdid his predecessors by providing a complete narrative of his secular life: familial background, early life and education, administrative and military career both before and during his imperial tenure, both domestically and internationally. By providing the readers of the *typikon* with the detailed boastful account of his life, emphasizing his accomplishments for the public good throughout his life, Michael Palaiologos, much as Octavian Augustus, defended the necessity of his imperial election. In other words, both Augustus and Michael cast themselves as indispensable saviours of the Roman polity.

Augustus had to go a long way to justify his monopolization of power in the Roman Republic after the period of civil strife was over. In doing so, *Res gestae* served as a major piece of propaganda that the first emperor introduced in order to obtain public consensus about the necessity of his, at the time, extraordinary position in the empire. Emphasizing the role he played in terminating the civil war, as well as his accomplishments in running the state for the public good in the aftermath, Augustus was able to cast himself as the saviour of Rome. He emerges from the text as the one in charge of maintaining the *Pax Romana* for the benefit of every free soul in the empire. In justifying his position as the *princeps* of the Roman Republic, Octavian insisted that he did not wish to hold such great power, but that he simply had to obey the will of the senate and the people who wished for him to maintain such authority.³⁴¹ In the same vein, Michael, in his attempt to justify his takeover and subsequent reign, focuses on the grave necessity underpinning his tenure of supreme power. The necessity of having Michael Palaiologos on the throne becomes obvious when readers of the *typikon* learn about his toiling for the public good: from fighting off the adversaries of the *politeia* to administering the empire prudently. Furthermore, just like Augustus, who emphasized that the senate and the people alike offered to him many honours and extraordinary powers of which some he could decline but

³⁴⁰ *Res gestae Divi Augusti*, 1–5.

³⁴¹ Αὐτεξουσίον μοι ἀρχὴν καὶ ἀπόντι καὶ παρόντι διδομένην [ὕ]πὸ τε τοῦ δήμου καὶ τῆς συνκλήτου Μ[άρκ]ωι [Μ]αρκέλλωι καὶ Λευκίωι Ἄρρουντίωι ὑπάτοις ο[ὐκ ἐδ]εξάμην. (ibid., 5.1–4.)

some he had to take upon himself for the sake of the public good, Michael explains his imperial election as a peaceful and divinely ordained process:

For it was not the many hands coming to assist me or their frightening weapons which elevated me above the heads of the Romans. It was not any highly persuasive speech delivered by me or by my supporters which fell upon the ears of the crowd, filled them with great hopes, and convinced them to entrust themselves to me. No, it was your right hand, Lord, which did this mighty deed. Your right hand raised me on high and established me as lord of all. I did not persuade anyone but was myself persuaded and forced [to the throne], nor did I bring the obligation upon anybody.³⁴²

In his narrative, Michael manages to present himself as an unwilling imperial candidate upon whom imperial power was bestowed by divine providence. By insisting that he was elected emperor in untraditional fashion, that is by avoiding the employment of various means of persuasion to obtain the support of the senators, the armies, and the people, Michael attempted to distance himself from his problematic elevation to the throne even further. This point becomes even more striking once Michael's narrative is compared with Akropolites' and Pachymeres' stories of Michael's election to the throne, wherein we read about persuasive speeches delivered by Michael and other notables alongside the armed turmoil that led Palaiologos to the throne.³⁴³ Granted, Akropolites emphasized Michael's reluctance to take over the throne, while Pachymeres presented the whole process as instigated by Palaiologos. By employing the image of divine will that led him to the throne, Michael follows Augustan logic of the necessity of his extraordinary election for the sake of the Romans and not for his own benefit, albeit in a Christianized form that was attuned to monastic sensibilities.

By engaging with remnants of the distant Roman past during his travels through Seljuk lands, in the same way that Theodoros II was able to admire ancient ruins at Pergamon, Michael Palaiologos likely came up with the idea which stayed with him until the latter parts of his reign, when he composed a *Res gestae*-styled account of his own life. At the time of his likely sojourn in Ankyra, however, Michael was probably not contemplating his own imperial autobiography. Rather, he reflected on the challenges of settling down in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, like dozens of other notable Romans who had done so in the past. What he must have

³⁴² οὐδὲ λόγος πειθοῖ σύγκρατος εἰς ἀκοὰς τοῖς πλήθεσι, τοῦτο μὲν δι' ἡμῶν τοῦτο δὲ καὶ διὰ τῶν σπουδαστῶν ἐμπεισῶν, καὶ μεγάλων ἐμπλήσας ἐλπίδων, ἔπεισεν ἑαυτοὺς ἡμῖν ἐγχειρίσαι, ἀλλ' ἡ σὴ δεξιὰ, κύριε, ἐποίησε δύναμιν· ἡ δεξιὰ σου ὕψωσέ με· καὶ κύριος κατέστην τῶν ὄλων, οὐ πείσας ἀλλὰ πεισθεὶς καὶ βιασθεὶς αὐτός, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀνάγκην ἐπαγαγών τι. (Palaiologos, *Autobiography*, 6.12–17.)

³⁴³ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 76; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 73–79.

witnessed in Ankyra, though, stayed with him and may have inspired his future literary endeavours.

4.4. Michael Palaiologos: A Seljuk Dignitary

Leaving Ankyra and its Roman monuments, in order to settle comfortably among the Seljuk elite, Michael carried on with his journey to the court of the Seljuk sultan in Ikonion. All of our sources—Akropolites, Palaiologos himself, and Pachymeres—remain silent about the rest of Michael's trip to Ikonion. We can only assume that Palaiologos arrived in the capital city without once more falling victim to the Turkmen or other bandits. Following the ancient road from Ankyra to Ikonion that was used by the Seljuk dignitaries and merchants probably made his travels safer and easier.³⁴⁴ Having arrived to Ikonion, Michael found his way to the sultanic court. By the mid-13th century, Seljuk sultans as much as their dignitaries (not a few of whom were of Roman origin themselves) were used to receiving Roman political refugees. At the court, Michael was welcomed with the open arms “for [the sultan] had learned of the man's nobility and all the magnates who were with the Persian ruler marvelled at his appearance and his disposition.”³⁴⁵ Akropolites emphasized the importance of that first impression that Michael left on the sultan and his retinue. Palaiologos was, however, more than a well-mannered, pretty face for the sultan. Once the sultan learned of Michael's experience with military and administrative affairs, Palaiologos was put in charge of the Christian Roman troops in the Seljuk army.³⁴⁶

Taking into consideration the century-long tradition of Roman defectors being welcomed and integrated into the Seljuk polity, Michael's smooth entry into Seljuk high society should not come as a surprise. Georgios Akropolites himself nonchalantly mentioned all these facts—Michael's reception at court and his subsequent honours—which he did not find strange or even worth explaining. By being integrated into the Seljuk court, Michael was not simply received with dignity as a notable refugee whose presence in Konya might serve as a bargaining chip in the sultan's hand. Rather, he was received warmly and immediately entrusted with the highly important position of *kundistabl-i rumi* (Roman constable) in the Seljuk military, a rank which

³⁴⁴ For the road networks of the Byzantine period see footnotes 57–58.

³⁴⁵ τό τε γὰρ εὐγενὲς τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐμεμαθήκει, καὶ πάντες οἱ μετὰ τοῦ περσάρχου μεγιστάνες τελοῦντες τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ φρόνημα τεθαυμάκασιν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.19–22)

³⁴⁶ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.24–36. For Michael Palaiologos commanding specifically Roman troops see: Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 194.

closely mirrored his earlier position of *megas konostablos* in the Roman empire.³⁴⁷ The Seljuk sultan and his government did not seem to have any qualms about granting such an important office to a Roman infidel refugee. What is more, despite Palaiologos' rather recent arrival to the court, he still, as the commander of the Roman contingents in the Seljuk army, was present at all the major military meetings in the palace. This meant that Michael was deeply involved with the military affairs of the sultanate. In order to understand the sultan's as well as other courtiers' nonchalant attitude toward the inclusion of Roman notables among their ranks, we need to gradually unpack Akropolites' narrative of Michael's flight and set it against what we know about Seljuk social and governing practices. Reconstructing Michael's life at the Seljuk court leaves us with a more nuanced image of the sultanate, its cities and populace, as well as the court.

As we have seen in the case of Ankyra and its new mosques that coexisted with Christian and other Roman monuments, the urban landscape of once-Roman Asia Minor had undergone a process of transformation by the mid-13th century. Yet, *rhomaika* was widely heard in the streets of towns and villages.³⁴⁸ Granted, vernacular *rhomaika* took over as the language of textual production, since higher Byzantine education was not as widely available, if at all, in the Seljuk domains. Regardless of this fact, the commoners' lives in the cities were not much affected by this lack of higher education since most urban dwellers would not have sought it in any case. On the other hand, vernacular Greek became more open to evolution and adoption of Persian and Turkish loanwords. Loanwords, however, travel both ways and many Greek words ended up in Turkish or even in the vernacular Persian language of Asia Minor.³⁴⁹ Moreover, rather than simply being heard, Greek was also widely seen around cities. For one, places of Christian worship continued to exist under the Seljuks side-by-side with the new mosques or churches-turned-into-mosques. City walls and buildings often bore Roman inscriptions from both before and after the Seljuk conquest.³⁵⁰ These inscriptions now had to give some room for others composed in Perso-Arabic script, but they were far from being systematically erased, let

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 201–3.

³⁴⁸ For the presence of the Romans in the Sultanate of Rum see footnote 22.

³⁴⁹ Korobeinikov, "How 'Byzantine'," 221–2; R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes," in A.C.S. Peacock and S.N. Yıldız, eds., *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London/New York 2013), 129–33.

³⁵⁰ For Christian architectural endeavours in Seljuk Anatolia as well as maintenance of old and new ecclesiastic and monastic establishments see: T.B. Uyar, "Thirteenth-Century 'Byzantine' Art in Cappadocia," 215–232; M.V. Tekinalp, "Palace Churches of the Anatolian Seljuks," 148–167.

alone forgotten by the local populace.³⁵¹ It was, therefore, not particularly unfamiliar landscapes that Michael Palaiologos negotiated in Ikonion.

Other than on buildings bearing inscriptions in Greek, we have seen in the example of Ankyra how the predominantly Roman populace in Seljuk-controlled cities could engage with their Roman past and present more or less unhindered. Ikonion, at the time of Michael's stay, was no different. One might wonder though: if Romans and *rhomaika* were the most visible group in the streets and squares of Ikonion, what was going on with the Persians, Turks, and other city-dwellers? Surely, Farsi and Turkish were heard in the streets alongside *rhomaika*; after all, loanwords did not come into Greek out of thin air. Based on the existing literary evidence, we can think of the urban populace as multilingual. That is, if we are to put our trust in the literary opus of Sufi humanists and contemporaries of Michael Palaiologos, Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi and his son, Sultan Walad—founder of the Mawlawiya Sufi order famous to this day for its whirling dervishes, spoken *rhomaika* was not unknown among the Muslim populace. Poems written in a combination of Persian, Turkish, Arabic, and Greek, all in Perso-Arabic script, were a trend among the urbane populace as we see in Rumi's ghazals.³⁵² Sultan Walad went even further and composed some of his poetry exclusively in vernacular Greek, albeit still in Perso-Arabic script, following the later manuscript tradition.³⁵³ The fact that Perso-Arabic script and not the Greek alphabet were used even for the pieces written exclusively in *rhomaika* hints at Rumi's and Walad's potential inability to read Greek. This would mean that the Sufi duo had to have learned *rhomaika* in the streets and taverns of which they both fondly write. Such works written in *rhomaika* by Persian and Turkish authors complimented the multilingual inscriptions around the cities and were certainly popular among both the Roman and non-Roman citizens of the Seljuk lands. Even intellectuals like Rumi, who were native speakers of Farsi, the lingua franca of the larger Seljukid world, learned Greek alongside Arabic and Turkish, and used it in their writing. In the realm of language then, Michael had nothing to worry about when he stepped into Ikonion, since he could engage not only with words carved on stone but also with the living dwellers of the town without getting lost in translation.

³⁵¹ For instance, a Greek language inscription probably commissioned by a local magistrate is still seen on the walls of Attaleia: H. Gregoire, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chretiennes d'Asie Mineure* (Paris: Adolf M. Hakkert 1922), 103–4; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 152–3.

³⁵² Korobeinikov, "How 'Byzantine'," 221–2.

³⁵³ G. Meyer, "Die griechischen Verse in Rabâbnâma," 401–11; R. Burguière, R. Mantran, "Quelques vers grecs," 63-80; Δ. Δέδες, "Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα," 3-22.

Michael had the chance to communicate in his mother tongue, albeit employing the unlearned register of the language, with both Roman and non-Roman citizens of Ikonion. The question that arises next is: how would the Muslim, and to a lesser extent Jewish, non-Romans engage with Michael and other mostly Christian Romans? If we, once again, put our trust in Rumi and Walad, the image of a rather cosmopolitan, but spiritually aware, society arises. Rumi himself went as far as composing poems about Jesus Christ, with whom he felt a deep connection.³⁵⁴ Thus, a popular figure among the populace of Ikonion was merging existing religious trends in his poetry and thus offering an engaging experience to all of his audiences. What is more, Rumi even adjusted some of his Persian poems to fit the tastes of the Roman audience too. For instance, in the ghazal entitled *Chinese and Roman Art*, Rumi inverts the traditional Islamic story found in Al-Ghazali's eleventh-century *Wonders of the Heart* and Nizami's twelfth-century *Iskendername* in which Roman and Chinese artists compete in painting a room in order to decide which nation produces the most refined art. In the traditional version, it is the Romans who paint their walls with lavish and expensive colours, while the Chinese polish their side of the room in a way that will allow the bright colours of the Romans to translate more subtly onto their side of the room, based on the natural flow of light entering the room from windows.³⁵⁵ This further allowed the Chinese side of the room to be constantly altered by different shades of colour depending on the angle under which light befell the room. Rumi, in his take on the traditional poem, switches the roles played by Roman and Chinese artisans. In his version, it is the Romans who eventually outsmart the Chinese by polishing their side of the room to reflect the art of the Chinese in a subtler manner.³⁵⁶ By switching the roles, Rumi catered to the pride and tastes of the local audience in front of whom his multilingual ghazals would be read.

Based on Rumi's and Walad's works in Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Greek, it appears that matters of religious doctrine or even the basic dichotomy between Christianity and Islam was not of major, if of any, concern to the populace of Ikonion. Jesus Christ is a hero of Rumi's poems as much as the prophet Mohammed and Roman artists are better than their Chinese counterparts: all the works hint towards a rather eclectic and cosmopolitan society. Once we look at the content of Rumi's Persian ghazals or Walad's exclusively *Rhomaic* ones, we see a

³⁵⁴ For Rumi's ghazals about Jesus see: *The Essential Rumi*, C. Barks with J. Moyne transl. (San Francisco: Penguin 1997), 201–5.

³⁵⁵ On inverting the content of the story see: A. Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press 2004), 149–150, 380.n.25.

³⁵⁶ *Essential Rumi*, 121.

thread of uniting topics: love, seduction, wine and food consumption, nights in taverns, and sexual escapades. From these ghazals inspired by daily life in Ikonion, an image of a lively and even fun-loving city arises. People congregate in the streets, churches, and mosques, as well as in taverns and hostels where they indulge in hedonistic pleasures regardless of their confessional preferences.³⁵⁷ How bluntly one's sexual drives were expressed in public is excellently encompassed by Sultan Walad's *Rhomaic* ghazal that goes as follows:

I'll speak here in *rhomaika*: you've heard, my fair rosy girl,
 what you have seen in my hearth. Come if it seems right to you.
 How you say like a little child: "I'm hungry, I want food!"
 How you say like an old man: "I'm trembling [from cold], I want [to sit in the] corner!"
 How you say, "my thin one is horny, I want cunt!"
 My soul is blackened; I have found water to bathe.³⁵⁸

Stylistically and contextually, the ghazal is a far cry from the classicizing court poetry of Byzantine and Seljuk courts, giving us a rare glimpse into the tastes of the wider populace. Its content offers no hint of the self-centred isolationist religious worldview presented in Khazhdan's *homo Byzantinus*; rather, we see a sexually aroused poet who is out to find a partner for intercourse. We can imagine how poems such as this one or the Perso-*Rhomaic* ghazal – "*If you want me to be full of life / Come near me tonight, golden lady / Day and night the blessedness emanating from you comes from your beauty / Come here so I too can see a heart, oh joy of mine!*"³⁵⁹ – coloured the mood of men frequenting various establishments that the city of Ikonion had to offer.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 1–8, 54–76. For active cultural exchange and original adaptation between Roman and other societies see: C.J. Hilsdale, "Worldliness in Byzantium and Beyond: Reassessing the Visual Networks of *Barlaam and Ioasaph*," *The Medieval Globe* 3 (2017), 57–96. Here, Hilsdale looks at process of "creative adaptation, particularization, and local inflection of a medieval cultural phenomenon so widespread as to be truly global—in a very medieval sense" in order to offer a fresh argument about medieval Roman artistic originality and challenge the traditional scholarly narrative that "that reduces Byzantium to a mere storehouse for rich source material on its predetermined journey towards western Europe" (Hilsdale, "Worldliness," 58).

³⁵⁸ Να ειπώ εδώ ρωμαίικα, ήκουσες καλή ρόδινη
 τ' είδες εις ση εστία μου, να έλθης αν σε φαίνη.
 Πόσα λαλεις γοιον παιδίτζι, Πείνασα εγώ, θέλω φαγή.
 Πόσα λαλεις γοιον το γιόρον, Ρίγωσα εγώ, θέλω γωνή.
 Πόσα λαλεις, Η φιλή μου καυλώθηκεν, θέλω μουνί.
 Η ψυχή μου μαυρώθηκεν, ηύρα νερό να λούνη.
 (Δέδες, "Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα," 17.)

³⁵⁹ The italicized text of the translation is originally written in Farsi.

....
 Έλα απόψε κοντά μου, χρυσή κυρά.

....
 Έλα 'δώ να ιδώ κ' εγώ καρδιά, χαρά.

The Perso-*Rhomaic* opus of Rumi and Sultan Walad does not stand in isolation as a unique case of lascivious poetry in wider Roman world. If we are to look at the 11th and 12th centuries, we would find more than a singular example of Byzantine lewd humour in verse. From Christopher of Mytilene’s eleventh-century satire against a certain monk Andrew who collects alleged relics of saints that he has: “ten hands of Prokopios the martyr, / fifteen jawbones of Theodore, / up to eight feet from Nestor, / on top of this, four hands of George / five breasts from that victorious contender Barbara;”³⁶⁰ to Ptochoprodromos’ twelfth-century poems about the nagging wife who leaves the husband who now “sleeps alone without comfort / without dinner in darkness and despair;”³⁶¹ or Tzetzes’ dirty jokes wherein he tells a woman “to have a priest fuck [her] cunt”³⁶² in the *Epilogue on Theogony*, an image of a humorous and lively society comes to the fore. It is with the pre-existing tradition of salacious verses even among Roman literati in mind that we see the Roman populace of both upper and lower classes, under both Byzantine and Seljuk rule, engaging with the sexual and oftentimes inappropriate content of such poems. Unlike the Roman literati who employed popular humour in their learned verses, Rumi and Walad stand hand in hand with the lower stratum of the Roman populace in the streets of Ikonion from whom, in the end, they learned the Greek language.

In the opus of Rumi and Walad, ghazals evoking a beloved one are fairly common and more than a few of them mention sexual longing, but Walad’s blatant statement “my thin one is horny, I want pussy!”³⁶³ is not found in other poems of theirs. Rather, a similar form of crass, shameless language can be found in authors such as Ioannes Tzetzes and his employment of the word *mouni(n)*. The fact that the whole ghazal was composed in *rhomaika* hints towards the existence of crass, popular poetry in Roman Asia Minor from which both Tzetzes, a Byzantine intellectual, and Walad, a populist Sufi mystic, drew their inspiration.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, the

(Δέδες, Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα, 18.)

³⁶⁰ Προκοπίου μὲν μάρτυρος χεῖρας δέκα,
Θεοδώρου δὲ πεντεκαίδεκα γνάθους
καὶ Νέστορος μὲν ἄχρι τῶν ὀκτῶ πόδας,
Γεωργίου δὲ τέσσαρας κάρας ἄμα
καὶ πέντε μασθοὺς Βαρβάρας ἀθληφόρου.

(*The Poems of Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous*, F. Berbard and C. Livanos trans. and eds. (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press 2018), 242/3.)

³⁶¹ δὲ μόνος κοιμηθεῖς δίχα παραμυθίας
χωρὶς δειπνῶν καὶ σκοτεινὰ καὶ παραπονεμένα
(223–4.)

³⁶² να γαμή το μουνίν σου παπάς (H. Hunger, *Zum Epilog der Theogonie des Johannes Tzetzes*, *BZ* 46 (1953), 305.1.)

³⁶³ Η ψιλὴ μου καυλώθηκεν, θέλω μουνί. (Δέδες, “Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα,” 17.)

³⁶⁴ For popular inspiration in Byzantine comic literature see: M. Alexiou, “The Poverty of Écriture and the Craft of Writing: Towards a Reappraisal of the Prodroomic Poems,” *BMGS* 10, 1–40; idem., “Of Longings

language of the ghazal, *rhomaika*, suggests that Walad was addressing a Roman woman, known in the Muslim world as *al-Rumiyya*. The image of *al-Rumiyya*—a beautiful albeit fully emancipated individual, independent of her husband and family, open to flirting and extra-marital sexual escapades—served as a literary *topos* in Islamic literature since the 8th century.³⁶⁵ Abbasid historians and poets advised their male audience to be extremely cautious when even laying their eyes upon Roman women whose beauty and demeanour would instantly capture their hearts and souls and lead them into peril just like the sirens did to Odysseus' crew.³⁶⁶ On the other side, Roman intellectuals, as well as the Romans in general, had no qualms composing verses with lascivious content about Roman or other women as we have seen on the examples of Ptochoprodromos and Tzetzes. Thus, by relocating to Ikonion, Michael certainly did not end up traveling to the unknown; he was well acquainted with the mentality of the populace at large even before he had left the Roman empire for the people were not only communicating in the same language, but they shared the same outlook on the world around them.

Once he left the streets and taverns of Ikonion, though, Michael would be surrounded mostly by other courtiers in the Seljuk state. Dealing with Persianate officials, who dominated the Seljuk court, certainly meant that Michael had to adjust to his new career at the court which differed from the one at which he served and spent his childhood. It is important, however, to keep in mind that a significant number of local Romans occupied positions in the administration of the sultanate. The Greek scriptorium at the Seljuk court appears to have been active in the state's official correspondence both with its Hellenophone neighbour, the Roman empire, and with other polities around the Mediterranean.³⁶⁷ Thanks to surviving records from the Lusignan period, we know that throughout the 13th century, the Kingdom of Cyprus did not employ French, Latin, Persian, or Arabic but rather Greek as its language of correspondence with the

and Loves: Seven Poems by Theodore Prodromos," *DOP* 69 (2015), 209-24, A. Pizzone, "Towards a Byzantine Theory of the Comic?," in M. Alexiou and D. Cairns, eds., *Greek Laughter and Tears: Antiquity and After* (Edinburgh 2017), 146-65; P. Marciniak, "Laughter on Display: Mimic Performances and the Danger of Laughing in Byzantium," in *Greek Laughter and Tears*, 232-42.

³⁶⁵ N.M. El-Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press 2015), 77-96.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-8.

³⁶⁷ For the Greek scriptorium in the Seljuk court see: Σ. Λάμπρος, "Η Έλληνική ως επίσημος γλώσσα τῶν Σουλτανῶν," *Νέος Έλληνομνημῶν* 5 (1908), 40-78; M. Delilbaşı, "Greek as a Diplomatic Language in the Turkish Chancery," in N.G. Moschonas, ed., *Η επικοινωνία στο Βυζάντιο* (Αθήνα: Κέντρο Βυζαντινῶν Ερευνῶν 1993), 145-153.

Seljuk state.³⁶⁸ This fact should not come as a complete surprise to us, especially if we take into account that both Seljuk sultanate of Rum and Cyprus hosted large numbers, if not majorities, of autochthonous, albeit now arguably subaltern, Roman Greek-speakers. Aside from the staff of the scriptorium, the sultanic harem itself was no stranger to the Greek language; more than one sultan had a Roman mother, who retained their language and probably some of Roman practices while running the harems of their sons.³⁶⁹ This certainly contributed to the proliferation of Greek language at the Seljuk court. Other than the low- and mid-level officials, as well as the Roman women in the harem, Michael's transition to the Seljuk court was smoothed by a relatively high number of Roman officials who made the Seljuk court their permanent home.³⁷⁰

It was with such realities in mind that Michael Palaiologos crossed the river Sangarios and after the initial unpleasant experience with the Turkmen, reached the safe-haven of the Seljuk court, where a few Roman families were well established and politically influential. High dignitaries such as the Mavrozomai must have aided Michael in retaining his Roman ways, much as they had over decades of service, as he adjusted to his new position as a Seljuk official. Given that the ethnic composition of the ranks of Seljuk dignitaries informed the social realities of the court at Ikonion, the fact that the Seljuk sultan proved well-disposed to Palaiologos should not surprise us. Michael's own family shared ancestry with the Mavrozomai and, much like other Romans in Seljuk service, Palaiologos was a good ally to have in appeasing the local Roman populace, especially in the capital of Ikonion. Seljuk sultans oftentimes struggled to maintain their position vis-à-vis other powerful families from the Muslim elite of their state. Thus, for instance, Kaykhusraw I was ousted from power by his brother and once he returned to take power in 1205, he had to deal not just with rebellious *amirs* but also with the Muslim religious authorities in Ikonion that found him not to their liking.³⁷¹ In such circumstances, Seljuk sultans or claimants to the throne could rely on personal relationships with members of the Roman elite of the sultanate, who remained influential among the Christian Roman subjects in Ikonion and other cities. After all, a Greek-inscribed seal of *amir* Ioannes, the son of Manuel Mavrozomes, was likely used to ratify decisions about the affairs of the Roman subjects of the sultanate. As a new arrival at Ikonion, Michael could assume a similar role at the court: he would help keep the Roman populace loyal while acting as a strong ally to the sultan

³⁶⁸ A. Beihammer, *Griechische Briefe und Urkunden aus dem Zypern der Kreuzfahrerzeit* (Nicosia: Zyprisches Forschungszentrum 2007).

³⁶⁹ Shukurov, "Harem Christianity," 116–50.

³⁷⁰ A. Beihammer, "Defection across the Border," 597–651.

³⁷¹ Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, 119–141, 173–201, 216–233.

against potentially dangerous Muslim elites, especially since Michael had no connections with other power-brokers of the sultanate.

Having proven himself a capable soldier and military commander in Macedonia and Bithynia, Michael was appointed the commander of Roman units in the Seljuk army. Michael therefore stepped into a role similar to that of Ioannes Mavrozomes. He was to keep well-disposed to the regime those Roman soldiers who fought battles on behalf of the sultan.³⁷² Beyond the battlefield Michael was expected to mobilize the local Christian populace, which was likely more amenable to being managed by a Roman than by a Muslim official of the Seljuk court. The arrival of Michael Palaiologos, a seasoned military commander, to Ikonion was thus convenient for the sultan and his dignitaries. At the time of Michael's flight, the sultan Kaykaus II refused to grant further pastures and tribute to the Mongol lord Bayju, who was in charge of the Mongol empire's affairs in the Near East, as per the agreement that was made between the Mongol Ulus and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum after the battle of Köse Dağ in 1243.³⁷³ Since Kaykaus II decided to break the agreement with the Mongols and go to war with them, Michael's flight must have looked almost as a God-sent present to the Seljuk sultan. Based on his previous military experience in Roman lands, Michael seemed like a very reasonable choice as leader of the army's Romans: he was both their fellow Roman and a seasoned general. Thus, without much of a break from his career in the Roman polity, Michael now held an important office, albeit this time under a different suzerain.

The very year he arrived at the Seljuk court, Michael had to prove himself in battle. He commanded Roman troops, which he himself led under a banner of the Roman empire,³⁷⁴ against the Mongol army encamped by the city of Aksaray. While in his autobiographical *typon* Michael simply mentions that he had fought for the sultan, Georgios Akropolites provides us with a much more detailed account, focused on Michael's state of mind:

Michael was in a foreign land, and although he considered alliance with the Muslims abominable lest, as he used to say, the pious blood of the one falling in battle should be mixed with unholy infidel blood, he was given courage by divine grace and, having regained his brave spirit, he went forth to battle. The part of the army drawn up in battle by order of Michael Komnenos won a victory by storm over the Tatars opposing him,

³⁷² Korobeinikov, "Orthodox Communities," 197.

³⁷³ For Seljuk Turks in the 13th century see: Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*: 119–141; 269–371; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*: 81–110.

³⁷⁴ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*: 194.

with Michael himself first striking in the chest with a spear the man who rode in advance of the army.³⁷⁵

According to Akropolites' rather romanticized depiction of Michael in the Seljuk army, we see that his behaviour as a commander remained pretty much unchanged: he was present on the battlefield in order to boost the morale of his men. Regardless of whether Michael found fighting for the Seljuk sultan an abominable act or not, he was there to offer his service as military commander. In fact, Michael used this battle and his military ability to demonstrate to the sultan that he was worthy of high position in the sultanate. There was no reason that he and his family could not follow the blueprint of the Mavrozomai, who had occupied high positions in Seljuk society for the last half a century.

Whatever Michael's initial plans in the Seljuk sultanate may have been, they changed at the end of the battle of Aksaray, when the Seljuk army was utterly crushed by the Mongols. Akropolites' eulogizing notwithstanding, Michael took to flight, following the example of the sultan Kaykaus II and the *beglerbey* Tavtash. Once he joined them, they together rode to *beglerbey's* estate around Kastamon, which was part of his demesne as well as the historic hometown of the Komnenoi.³⁷⁶ Thus, Michael ended up visiting his ancestral homeplace some eighty years since it had been ceded to the Seljuks in 1176.

On a less romantic note, whatever the outcome of Michael's friendship with Tavtash, Palaiologos had to strategize about his future. Remaining in the lands of the sultan who was barely in control of his fate was hardly an ideal option. And so, in 1257, about a year after his flight from the Roman empire, either on his own or upon invitation by Theodoros II, Michael returned to his position in the empire of the Romans with the emperor's public pardon. Akropolites remains cagey when it comes to the question of who initiated the contact. Michael, however, explains that it was the emperor who begged him to come back, having understood that the exiled aristocrat was a priceless asset for the empire.³⁷⁷ Pachymeres, on the other hand, recalls that it was the metropolitan of Ikonion, operating uninterruptedly in the Seljuk

³⁷⁵ ὁ δὲ ἐπεὶ ἐν ἀλλοδαπῇ ἐτύγγανεν ὦν, συμμαχεῖν μὲν Μουσουλμάνοις ἀπευκταῖον ἠγεῖτο, μὴ ποτε, ὡς ἔφασκεν οὗτος, ἐν μάχῃ πεσόντος εὐσεβῆς αἶμα αἶμασι συγκραθεῖη ἀνοσίοις καὶ ἀσεβέσι, χάριτι δὲ θείᾳ ἀναρρωσθεῖς καὶ γενναῖον ἀναλαβὼν φρόνημα πρὸς τὴν μάχην ἐξώρμησε. τὸ μὲν οὖν μέρος τοῦ στρατεύματος τὸ παρὰ τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ Μιχαῆλ τεταγμένον τοὺς ἀντιτεταγμένους αὐτῷ Ταχαρίου κατὰ κράτος νενίκηκε, τοῦ Μιχαῆλ αὐτοῦ πρῶτως δόρατι παρὰμαζὸν βαλόντος τὸν τοῦ στρατεύματος προηγούμενον. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 65.37–45.)

³⁷⁶ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 42–68; J. Crow, "Alexios I Komnenos and Kastamon: Castles and Settlement in Middle Byzantine Paphlagonia," in M. Mullett and D. Smythe, eds., *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast: The Queen's University of Belfast 1996), 12–36.

³⁷⁷ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 69.

capital, who, on Michael's request, acted as an intermediary between him and Theodoros II, until the emperor swore a public oath that he would not harm Michael. Michael in turn had to follow the emperor's example and swore an oath that he would never plot against the imperial family.³⁷⁸ Be that as it may, Michael left the tumultuous lands of the Seljuks and went back to occupy his old post in Bithynia.

4.5. There and Back Again

Michael's brief career at the Seljuk court did not pass unnoticed by Seljuk literati. Writing in the 14th century, well past the sultanate's zenith, historian Aqsarayi cast Michael as one of the influential villains at the Seljuk court. In Aqsarayi's rendering of the story of the conflict between Kaykaus II and Bayju, the historian went as far as to ascribe the role of the leader of the Roman party at court to a Roman *constable*, most likely Michael Palaiologos,³⁷⁹ who drove the sultan's anti-Mongol policies. Michael Palaiologos' image among intellectuals of the Seljuk sultanate was solidified thanks to Aqsaray some sixty years after the visit had taken place. Regardless of whether Michael exercised such great influence or not, the very fact that Aqsarayi's readers would find the story of a strong Roman faction at the court plausible testifies not to Michael Palaiologos' remarkable personality, but to the importance of the Romans in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum during its two-hundred-year lifespan.³⁸⁰

As we follow narratives about Michael Palaiologos' travails from the river Sangarios to Ikonion and all the way to Aksaray, the strength of Roman social, cultural, and political presence in Asia Minor gradually unfolds before us. Michael stands at the end of the road of Seljuk dominance in Asia Minor and thus showcases that Roman officials remained welcome at the Seljuk sultan's court throughout the sultanate's history. Living for over a year in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, Michael experienced both the transformative power of Turkic presence in Asia Minor, i.e. the Turkmen roaming rural landscapes, as well as the endurance of Roman urban culture in the Seljuk empire at every societal level: from Roman high officials at the court to Sufi mystics reciting *Rhomaic* verses in the streets and taverns of Ikonion. We can even argue that the Greek language was so widely spoken at the court that the *ferman* issued by the grand vizier Mehmed I of Karaman stating that "from now on, nobody present at the court, the

³⁷⁸ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 45.7–12.

³⁷⁹ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 202.

³⁸⁰ "Aksaraylı Mehmed oğlu Kerimüddin Mahmud," in O. Turan, ed., *Müsâmeret ül-ahbâr. Moğollar zamanında Türkiye Selçukluları Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1944), 49–51; For the translation and the analysis of the relevant part see: Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 201–203.

divan, the councils, or the palace, will speak another language but Turkish”³⁸¹ was not targeted against the Perso- and Arabophone members of the court, but rather against the Roman element, language, and culture omnipresent at the court and in society.

It is the very Roman element that provided the sultanate with much of its political and economic foundations. By following Michael Palaiologos’ journey through the Sultanate of Rum, we saw the ways in which public culture continued to thrive albeit in a different form. The main difference lay in the Roman state being exactly that, the state of the Roman nation, and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, as the name tells us, being a dynastic Muslim entity with the domineering Roman populace among its subjects. Thus, the main difference in the development of the public culture between the Roman empire and the Sultanate of Rum rests in the amount of political agency that the populace mobilized vis-à-vis the state. As we have seen in the first two chapters, the public relations that Michael Palaiologos and other members of the *golden chain* cultivated in the Roman state transgressed their immediate socio-economic stratum. This agility in being able to converse with their peers, local notables, as well as the urban and rural masses, was the only way for Roman officials’ careers to thrive. What is more, it is not just the elites who knew how to employ the public discourse to their benefit, but the peasants and ordinary citizens were well aware of the ways in which they could procure protection or justice individually and collectively by taking their cases publically before designated officials.

Standing in stark contrast to the relevance of public culture in the Roman empire, in the Sultanate of Rum the positions at the court were dependent on the sultan and his immediate family who oftentimes occupied the highest offices. The Romans serving at the court were a useful governmental instrument to keep the Christian populace (especially the soldiers) at bay by giving them Romaic-speaking officials and generals. Beyond this point, however, the Romans serving in the state administration had to rely solely on the sultan and his retinue in promoting their careers. There was no need for them to go about trying to appease the populace or mobilize them to gain political leverage over their opponents. The connection between the public sphere and the centre of power was rather weak. The dignitaries as much as the sultans showed their generosity and care for the populace by leaving behind them structures and inscriptions that openly celebrated the Seljuk family, and not the populace that made up the social fabric of the empire, who were traditionally mentioned in Roman public political culture. In such circumstances, we saw that Michael Palaiologos was completely reliant on the sultan for

³⁸¹ Bugünden sonra divanda, dergâhta, bargâhta, mecliste ve meydanda Türkçeden başka dil kullanılmayacaktır. (N.S. Banarlı, *Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu 1984), 299.)

his career. The potential outings in the streets of Ikonion would have allowed Palaiologos to experience the similarities in customs and traditions of the Romans in the Sultanate of Rum with those in the Roman empire, and thus to divert his attention from the oddities of the Seljuk court, but he did not need public support (and did not have to fear public wrath) in order to prosper at the Seljuk court. Without the invigilation and major impositions of the court and administration, public culture in the sultanate continued to develop on its own, relying heavily on pre-existing Roman societal and cultural practices. As we have seen, the people of Ikonion, Ankyra, and other cities in the Sultanate of Rum could still engage with the Roman past in the streets and taverns both by gazing at the existing infrastructure or by relating their life and other stories in the Romaic language. The social imprint made by Romans on public culture of the Seljuk state in Asia Minor is impossible not to notice. The same populace's mark on the political life of the sultanate, though, remained marginal. On his way back to the Roman empire, Michael, once again, had to get ready to repair the broken and strengthen the existing ties in his homeland.

Chapter 5. “The Return of the King”: Michael Palaiologos Claims Imperial Dignity

During Michael’s absence from the imperial court, the empire of the Romans continued to operate without him. His absence was nevertheless noticed by both the emperor and those relatives of his close to the Palaiologan *oikos*. According to Akropolites, the emperor himself was very annoyed with and paranoid about Michael’s flight to the Turks.³⁸² The *oikos* of the Palaiologoi, on the other hand, was left headless since Michael’s younger brother Ioannes and half-brother Konstantinos, held no official positions in the administration.³⁸³ Following Michael’s example by fleeing Theodoros II’s potential wrath, fearing for his own life, Ioannes took refuge in Rhodos in 1256.³⁸⁴ Theodoros II continued to weaken ties among the aristocrats with his policies of marrying off notable women to the *novi homines* of the imperial administration. In this respect, Palaiologos’ sister Maria saw her daughter Theodora with Nikephoros Tarchaneiotes married to Basileios Kaballarios, after her prior engagement with a certain Balanidiotes, who was one of the *paidopouloi* to Theodoros II, was annulled by the emperor.³⁸⁵ In arranging and rearranging marital affairs on behalf of the Palaiologan *oikos*, the emperor was able to further break the cohesion of the clan and attach his own men to this notable though leaderless household. With his family affairs in such a precarious situation, Michael returned to his former position of *megas konostaulos* in Bithynia from his self-imposed exile in 1257.³⁸⁶

Bringing the narrative back to the affairs of the Roman Empire, the present chapter leaves behind issues of *Romanitas* and continues the theme of Chapters I and II: the examination of the ways in which public opinions were expressed by both the elites and the populace. The case of Michael Palaiologos’ gradual elevation from *megas konostaulos* to imperial dignity becomes here the main means for exploring the Palaiologan endeavours in gaining public support and maintaining the social and political climate favourable to the *oikos* during the delicate process of imperial election. In other words, by looking at the surviving literary depictions of Michael’s

³⁸² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 64.

³⁸³ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 91.10–12.

³⁸⁴ It is not known if Konstantinos was sent on a mission or fled. Since he held no official position at the court or provinces (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 91.10–12.), it is likely that he sought refuge in the island that was part of the empire.

³⁸⁵ For Balanidiotes’s linkage to Theodoros II: Pachymeres, *Relationes*, 55.18–21; Angold, 176. For Balanidiotes’ engagement with Theodora and her subsequent marriage to Basileios Kaballarios see: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 55.17–26.

³⁸⁶ A. Failler, “Chronologie et composition dans l’Histoire de Georges Pachymérès,” *REB* 44 (1980), 16–18.

manoeuvres from the death of Theodoros II to his ceremonial coronation in Nikaia in 1259, the public aspect of the whole electoral process becomes remarkably clear. While behind-the-curtain coercion and political machinations certainly helped the Palaiologan agenda, it is with the public display of the support of the magnates, the prelates, the army, and the people that Michael managed to seize the imperial dignity and obtain legitimacy.

Thanks to the oftentimes conflicting narratives of the surviving sources about Michael Palaiologos' election to the throne, we have the opportunity to chart the communicative actions taken by Michael from the beginning of his career to 1258 that made his imperial election possible. The four sources covering Michael's imperial elevation were written by contemporaries of the event, of whom two were present during the events, namely Michael Palaiologos himself and patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos.³⁸⁷ Unfortunately, though, Palaiologos and Autoreianos employed the imperial election in order to defend their own positions and, thus, remained vague about the bigger picture. We have Michael ascribing his elevation to the throne to divine providence and Arsenios focusing solely on defending his position by dwelling on a set of oaths exchanged between Ioannes IV, Michael VIII, and the notables, while not covering the coronation itself.³⁸⁸ The two Georgioi, Akropolites and Pachymeres, themselves not present at the election, offer more nuanced versions of Michael's imperial elevation.³⁸⁹ Both historians, though absent, were politically and culturally active during Michael VIII's reign and were part of the intellectual and political community that had access to the relevant documents and other texts to reconstruct the events of 1258/59.

The four narratives, despite their differences in genre and socio-political agenda, are in direct dialogue with each other. Akropolites and Michael describe the whole process from Theodoros II's departure from life to Michael's official coronation from a pro-Palaiologan perspective. Pachymeres, on the other hand, takes a far more reserved position in terms of the whole process as he explains how Michael managed to persuade different members of the Roman citizenry—from the street crowds to the magnates and the patriarch himself—to support his cause. Finally, Arsenios Autoreianos, in his *Testament*, writing after his deposition at the synod headed by Michael VIII in 1265, composed his own apology that reads as an invective against

³⁸⁷ Arsenios Autoreianos' *Testament* is published in: Migne, *PG* 140, 947–57.

³⁸⁸ Autoreianos, *Testament*, 949.36–953.14.

³⁸⁹ In 1258/9 Pachymeres still had not completed his education (A. Failler, "La promotion du clerc et du moine à l'épiscopat et au patriarcat," *REB* 59 (2001), 131–2), while Akropolites was in captivity in Arta (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 72; Macrides, "Introduction," 12, 29).

the emperor.³⁹⁰ In his narrative, Autoreianos attempts to rehabilitate himself and cast all the blame on the emperor as well as his secular and ecclesiastic supporters. At the time when Autoreianos' text became known to the public, Akropolites could have already been in the process of writing his *History*. Finally, Palaiologos' autobiographical account was included in a *typikon* issued in 1282.³⁹¹ This meant that in crafting their arguments promoting the idea of Michael's reign as irrevocably necessary, both Akropolites and Palaiologos had read the deposed patriarch's *Testament* and addressed it in their own narratives by refuting the accusations laid against them one by one. Pachymeres' *Historical Relations*, written in the 14th century, addressed the three previous narratives' arguments, while crafting the most detailed account of the four about the imperial election process.³⁹² It is with these nuances of direct political dialogue between the four authors in mind that we start our journey of exploring political agency and propaganda (to which all these narratives inevitably belong) during the tumultuous period following Theodoros II's death.

All these narratives, though, have one common focal point: the necessity of public approval for all the doings of the senate and the patriarchate. In exploring the ways in which social climate can be influenced by individuals, thanks to the loss of Constantinople to the crusaders, we see, probably for the first time, a wider geographical scope of the Roman constituency actively participating in forging a consensus on an imperial election. All four narratives relate events that occurred in the imperial dwellings and public spaces in the cities of Magnesia and Nikaia. Thus, a single-city narrative is replaced by a remarkably vivid and active polycentric provincial populace that is aware of its role in the wider politics of the empire. It is with this argument in mind—the willingness of the urban populace to participate in the affairs of the state regardless of their *patria*—that we follow the unfolding of Michael's political career before his rise to imperial stardom.

³⁹⁰ Autoreianos was deposed in 1265 and had died by 1273 (A.M. Talbot, "Arsenius Autoreianos," in: *ODB I*, 187.)

³⁹¹ Akropolites composed *The History* sometime in 1260s or less possibly in 1270s, he died in 1282 just a few months before Michael VIII (Macrides, "Introduction," 31–4.), and Palaiologos' *Typikon* was composed in 1282 (A. Thomas and A. Constantinides Hero eds., *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1* [Dumbarton Oaks Studies XXXV] (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2000), 1237.).

³⁹² For Pachymeres' dialogue with Akropolites' narrative see: Macrides, "Introduction," 71–5.

5.1. Homecoming

Before Michael Palaiologos' definite departure from the Sultanate of Rum in 1257, emperor Theodoros II established a precedent in Roman legal history by swearing a personal oath to Michael promising not to harm him or his family should he return to Romanía.³⁹³ Swearing oaths in private and in public was by no means an oddity in Roman history: Roman officials swore oaths as they were invested with their offices, private contracts could be bound by formulaic oaths, or emperors' could ask for the nobility's oaths to support the imperially-chosen successor to the throne.³⁹⁴ Theodoros II's oath distinguishes itself from the previous ones based on the fact that it is the emperor who, in a publicly proclaimed oath, guarantees the safety of an individual, Michael Palaiologos. The oath given by Theodoros II was also written down under the aegis of the metropolitan of Ikonion, who acted as an intermediary and a witness to the imperial letter between the emperor and Michael. According to Pachymeres' account of the event:

Since the hierarch [of Ikonion] executed his plans by dispatching letters [to Theodoros II], the emperor signaled towards a pardon, assuring by imperial writings that he [Michael] would suffer no harm from his anger, and so he returned. The emperor graciously received the man who seemed humbled, and embraced the man who has arrived, and pardoned the man who confessed to be conscious of sinning beyond pardon and restored him to his previous honours.³⁹⁵

In this scenario, Theodoros II's written oath served as a guarantee of Michael's safety upon his return to Nikaia; however, the oath itself lacked a public dimension (since it was dispatched to the capital of the Sultanate of Rum). An official ceremony had to therefore be organized in order to demonstrate to the officials and dignitaries that the *oikos* of the Palaiologoi and the imperial household had set their differences aside. The reconciliation was commemorated with a public imperial embrace; an impactful way to announce to magnates and bureaucrats the

³⁹³ On the oath see Macrides, *The History*, 327–8, n.9. For Theodoros II's oath being the first of its kind see: N.G. Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité à l'Empereur Byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle," *REB* 9 (1952), 138–40.

³⁹⁴ For customary oaths taken to the new emperor by all serving officials and dignitaries see: R.J. Macrides, J.A. Munitiz, and D. Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate 2013), 3; Kantakouzinus I, 16.8–14; *Ecloga Basilicorum* VI, 3, 50. For oaths in general in Byzantium see: L. Burgmann, "Oath (ὄρκος)," in: *ODB* 3, 1509.

³⁹⁵ Τοῦ δ' ἱεράρχου γράμμασι σχεδιάσαντος τὴν πρεσβείαν, ὁ κρατῶν κατένευσε τὴν συμπάθειαν, καὶ βασιλικαῖς συλλαβαῖς ἐπ' ἀσφαλείᾳ τοῦ μὴ τι παθεῖν ἀνήκεστον ἐξ ὀργῆς ἐπάνεισιν· ὁ δὲ καὶ δέχεται τοῦτον πρόφρων ταπεινωθέντα καὶ ἀγκαλίζεται προσιόντα καὶ ὁμολογοῦντα ὡς ἑαυτῷ σύνοιδε πταισᾶς ἀσύγγνωστα συμπαθεῖ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς προτέρας ἔχων τιμῆς. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 45.7–12)

rapprochement between the two households.³⁹⁶ Michael's confession, on the other hand, "to be conscious of sinning beyond pardon"³⁹⁷ was a sign of penance. It thus justified, in the public eye, the emperor's wrath, which had led to Palaiologos' flight. That said, the confession itself mostly hints towards the flight to the Seljuks more than to any other specific crime. It is quite possible that the ceremonial reconciliation was followed by an imperial *prostagma*, whose copies would have been sent around the empire to inform provincial officials as well as the populace about Michael's reinstatement to the office of *mezas konostaulos*.³⁹⁸ With a *prostagma* of this kind, Michael's reintegration into the Roman state would have been complete and he could continue to serve in Bithynia as he did before his flight to the Turks.

Michael's stay in Bithynia as the *mezas konostaulos* of the Latin forces was brief. After the Roman army captured the city of Dyrrachion, Michael was dispatched to govern that area.³⁹⁹ In reassigning Michael to a new post, Theodoros II and his dignitaries were following a well-established Roman tradition of, even after 1204, shifting provincial administrators from one province to another every year or so.⁴⁰⁰ For Theodoros II it was imperative that Michael be reassigned on a regular basis so that he would not forge strong ties with the local elites and the people as he had done in the city of Thessaloniki. Fortunately for Michael, who was now dispatched to serve in the Balkans, the in-law of the Palaiologan *oikos*,⁴⁰¹ Georgios Akropolites, was appointed to the office of the *praitor* of the Balkans, the same function the late Andronikos Palaiologos occupied at the time of his death.⁴⁰² Having a strong supporter as the head magistrate in charge of the Balkans gave Michael a respite from the constant imperial gaze, which looked with suspicion on the household and allies of the Palaioiogoi.

Georgios Akropolites, whose career was advanced under Theodoros II, was put in charge of the Balkans in 1257 as part of the emperor's crackdown on the *golden chain* households.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁶ Pachymeres emphasizes that Theodoros II embraced (Pachymeres, *Relations* I, 45.11: ἀγκαλίζεται) Michael, which implied public physical contact. Imperial embrace was usually reserved for the patriarch (*Book of Ceremonies*, 92.5–8). For general code of conduct in emperor's presence see: Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 379–93.

³⁹⁷ ἐαυτῷ σύννοιδε πταισίας ἀσύγγνωστα. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 45.11–12)

³⁹⁸ For *prostagmata* and their functions see: F. Dölger and J. Karayannopolous, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre: Erster Abschnitt, Die Kaiserurkunden* (München: C.-H. Beck 1968), 109–11. For the practice of sending *prostagmata* around the empire see: Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 77.32–79.8.

³⁹⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 45.15–20.

⁴⁰⁰ See chapter 1 as well as: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 250; Ahrweiler, "L'histoire," 138–48; F. Dölger, "Chronologisches und Prosopographisches zur byzantinischen Geschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts," *BZ* 27 (1927), 307–10.

⁴⁰¹ For Akropolites' marriage into the Palaiologan household see: chapter 2.

⁴⁰² Akropolites, *Chronike*, 66–8.

⁴⁰³ Macrides, "Introduction," 27–8.

Georgios came from a family of mid-level bureaucrats and was by no means born into a household of high nobility. As he himself emphasizes, he received his education from the imperially-sponsored education scheme under Ioannes III and, as a result, was included in the imperial administration where he managed to prosper in the same manner as Georgios Mouzalon.⁴⁰⁴ Looking at Akropolites' own account of his rise and Pachymeres' account of Georgios Mouzalon's speech in the senate in 1258, both men derived prestige from the education they received from Ioannes III.⁴⁰⁵ Thus, in Theodoros II's attempts to weaken the traditionally powerful households, Georgios Akropolites, in the same vein as the Mouzalones, was pushed to the fore of state administration. Once in office, Akropolites had quite vast jurisdictions⁴⁰⁶ over the peninsula. As he tells us: "I was given permission to do the following: to replace, as I pleased, the tax collectors and administrators of fiscal affairs, commanders of the armies and those who hold command of regions."⁴⁰⁷ With such broad supervisory authority, the *praitor* was able to make sure that Michael Palaiologos, now governor of Dyrrachion, remained protected from potential opponents in the provincial administration, be they civic or military. In such circumstances, another Nikolaos Manglavites of Serres was less likely to arise from the midst of local notables to make Michael's life more complicated.

In theory at least, Michael's future seemed secured: he was to govern a newly conquered region at the very outskirts of the empire under the supervision of his in-law. Unfortunately for Michael, the emperor had different plans for him, and so he never reached the Adriatic coast. On his way to his new post in Dyrrachion, accompanied by his retinue, which included the newly appointed metropolitan of the city, Michael was ordered to join forces with Michael Laskaris, the emperor's uncle, in order to deal with the rebellion of Theodoros, an illegitimate son of *despotes* Michael Angelos of Epeiros, in the region around Berroia.⁴⁰⁸ Theodoros' insurrection was part of a grand offensive that the Epeirotes organized in alliance with Stefan Nemanjić of Serbia to

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 17, 26–7.

⁴⁰⁵ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 32; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 65.23–73.5.

⁴⁰⁶ For the role of *praitor* see: H. Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX-XIème siècles," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960), 75–8; J. Herrin, "Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180–1205," *DOP* 29 (1975), 266–7. The *praitor* in the Balkans had the same authorizations as did the *doukes* in Asia Minor (Herrin, "Realities," 266.); for the *doukes* in Asia Minor see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 250–8.

⁴⁰⁷ ὤριστό μοι καὶ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀδείας ἔχειν με τοιαῦτα ποιεῖν, ἐνεργοῦντας καὶ δημόσια διαπραττομένους καὶ στρατευμάτων προϊσταμένους καὶ χωρῶν ἡγεμονίαν κεκτημένους ἀνταλλάττειν ὡς ἂν βουλοίμην. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 68.43–6)

⁴⁰⁸ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 70; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 45.15–47.6.

push the Romans of Nikaia east of Macedonia.⁴⁰⁹ The joint Roman army first plundered the rebellious area around Berroia and eventually engaged the Epeirote troops in an open battle at Vodena where it was aided by the imperially dispatched Manuel Lapardas, albeit with meagre reinforcement. In the battle, Michael managed to kill Theodoros, but the imperial army was defeated by Epeiros' better equipped army. Retreating from Vodena, Michael eventually returned to the city of Thessaloniki via Prilep.

The city of Prilep, itself a major fortress on the Laskarid-Angelid frontier, was an obvious target for the Epeirote-Serbian alliance. Akropolites was himself in the city in his function of *praitor*, ensuring that Prilep was properly defended. He recounts the situation from the perspective of an eyewitness:

As Michael Komnenos [Palaiologos], Michael Laskaris, and the generals that were present at the campaign were forced to come to us in Prilep and meet with us; wanting or not they came to us. They stayed with us for a few days, but because they did not have the force to engage in combat and fight the renegade Michael [of Epeiros], they left us and returned [to Thessaloniki]. For they perceived the treachery of the inhabitants and they witnessed consciously the doubtful loyalty of those who had been assigned to guard the town. Then I was left behind in Prilep with those who were there to guard the town. This is what the ruler had ordered me to do.⁴¹⁰

At Prilep, then, the situation was dire, especially since the populace was more prone to support the Epeirotes than the Romans represented by Akropolites and his troops who were few in number. This time around, there were no prominent local citizens, such as Nikolaos Manglavites in Serres, who could sway public opinion in favour of Ioannes III, and thus Akropolites was left alone with the hostile citizens of Prilep.⁴¹¹ After Palaiologos and the other generals left, the city was attacked and eventually conquered by the Epeirotes; Akropolites himself was captured and spent the next two years imprisoned in Arta.⁴¹² The downfall of the city was caused by Akropolites' and other officials' inability to maintain consensus among the populace of Prilep in

⁴⁰⁹ For the Epeirote insurrection see: Akropolites, *Chronike*, 68; Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 289–91. For the alliance with the Serbs see: R. Radić, “Georgije Akropolit i Srbi,” T.Z. Živković, ed., *Kralj Vladislav i Srbija XIII veka* (Beograd: SANU 2003), 89–97.

⁴¹⁰ Ὁ μὲν οὖν Κομνηνὸς Μιχαὴλ καὶ ὁ Λάσκαρις Μιχαὴλ καὶ οἱ ἀμφ’ αὐτοῦς ἡγεμόνες τυγχάνοντες τοῦ στρατεύματος, ἐπεὶ παρ’ ἡμῶν ἠναγκάζοντο καταλαβεῖν εἰς τὸν Πρίλαπτον καὶ ἡμῖν ξυντυχεῖν, ἐκόντες ἄκοντες ἀφίκοντο παρ’ ἡμᾶς. καὶ ὀλίγας ἡμέρας προσκαρτερήσαντες μεθ’ ἡμῶν, ἐπεὶ μὴ εἶχον δυνάμειως συστάδην ξυνελθεῖν καὶ τὸν ἀποστάτην μαχέσασθαι Μιχαὴλ, ἀφέντες ἡμᾶς ὑπέστρεψαν· τὴν τε γὰρ ἀπιστίαν τῶν οἰκητόρων διενοήσαντο καὶ τὸ ἀμφίβηλον τῶν εἰς φύλαξιν αὐτοῦ τεταγμένων βουεχῶς ἐτεκμήραντο. ἐναπελείφθη γοῦν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν Πρίλαπῳ μετὰ τῶν ὄντων εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν τοῦ ἄστεος· οὕτω καὶ γὰρ μοι ὁ κρατῶν προστέταχεν. (Akropolites, *Chronike*, 71.59–70)

⁴¹¹ For public agency deciding the course of politics see: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 119–25, 150–9; Krallis, “Historians, Politics, and the Polis,” 421–36.

⁴¹² Akropolites, 72.

support of Laskarid rule. The political agency of the city's populace proved to be crucial during the siege when the locals opted to offer their support to the Epeirotēs who were helped to eventually enter the city.⁴¹³ Thus, not only was Palaiologos left without governorship of Dyrrachion, as the whole region was dragged into the conflict, but his main ally, Georgios Akropolites, was not there anymore to offer support and, arguably, protection.

On the other shore of the straits, in Asia Minor, the situation looked as grim for the Palaiologan *oikos*. Accompanying the complete collapse of Michael's fortunes in the Balkans, Palaiologos' elder sister was arrested by the emperor whose worsening health led him to suspect everybody of trying to kill him with poison or magic.⁴¹⁴ Michael's elder sister Maria fell victim to Theodoros II's wrath and he ordered the woman arrested. Once in custody, Maria was tortured under the emperor's orders in order to confess to plotting against the crown. The torment was to no avail and Maria confessed to nothing.⁴¹⁵ Thus Theodoros II now had to worry about once more estranging the Palaiologoi by breaking the public oath he had made in 1257 and torturing a member of the family. Adding to Maria's situation, her daughter with Nikephoros Tarchaneiotēs, named Theodora, was forced to adapt her marital arrangements and change grooms because of the emperor's calculations.⁴¹⁶ Under such conditions, Theodoros II was not willing to risk dubious allegiances, especially at a time when many notables in the Balkans were switching sides to join Michael Angelos of Epeiros. An order to bring Michael Palaiologos back in chains was thus issued by the emperor.⁴¹⁷

Michael was in the city of Thessaloniki as the imperially dispatched legate, Konstantinos Chadenos, reached the city with the arrest order and instructions for his transfer to Nymphaion. Thessaloniki was by no means uncharted territory for Michael. Quite the contrary, he and the Thessalonians had a history of understanding: after all, Palaiologos began his *cursus honorum* in the region governing Serres and Melnikon while his father was the *praetor* in Thessaloniki. We already saw how after Andronikos' death, Michael managed to embroider himself onto the city's social fabric by commissioning a series of works by the rhetorician Iakobos to commemorate his father and the *genos* of the Palaiologoi. Thus, unable to proceed to the rebellious areas, where he was to take governorship of Dyrrachion, Michael stayed in Thessaloniki surrounded by local

⁴¹³ Akropolites, 71.65–7.

⁴¹⁴ Pachymeres, 53.13–23.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.9–16.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.17–57.1.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.16–29.

elite families, the likes of the Spatenoi and Kampanoi, who were acquainted with and supportive of him.⁴¹⁸

The news of the pending arrest arrived in Thessaloniki before the imperial legate managed to make his way into the city. According to Pachymeres, having been apprised of the pending arrest and knowing that there was not much he could do to avoid it, Michael turned to the metropolitan of Dyrrachion, who was part of Palaiologan retinue on its way to Albania and was now dwelling in Thessaloniki. The two men went to the monastery of Akapniou to pray for Michael's salvation overnight and during the morning liturgy.⁴¹⁹ The choice of a monastery located in the centre of the city, was by no means accidental. Procuring divine protection at such a prime spot in the city was a way for Michael to mobilize the monks around him to spread the news of his pending arrest to the city's populace.⁴²⁰ By posing as a pious sinner, Michael was able to both awaken sympathy for himself as well as not to openly accuse the emperor of any wrongdoing. As Pachymeres lets us know: "as soon as dawn came and the hierarch was about to recite the prescribed hours, he imposed silence on those outside so that he could perform the office. He himself engaged in a conversation with God in private and carried out in more complete tranquillity the habitual prayers of the morning mass."⁴²¹ By openly silencing the monks present at the morning liturgy, the designated metropolitan of Dyrrachion, a prominent cleric, was able to turn the congregation's attention to Michael's plight. We can only imagine how the echo of silence resonated with those present in the church. The silencing of the monks was an effective way to grasp attention of those in attendance since the morning liturgy was proceeding in an unusual way. That is, instead of usual prayers and sermons, the monks did not hear a thing. This was certainly a bizarre turn of events and would likely become the talk of the town. By making sure that his sermon would be talked about in the city in connection to Michael Palaiologos' plight, the metropolitan of Dyrrachion turned God's holy crew into promoters of Michael's case to the citizenry in Thessaloniki, where the Palaiologoi were by no means

⁴¹⁸ For the Spatenoi and Kampanoi see: Macrides, *The History*, 238–239. n.6–7.

⁴¹⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 47.19–28. For Akapniou monastery and its central location in Thessaloniki see: Th. Papazotos, "The Identification of the Church of 'Profitis Elias' in Thessaloniki," *DOP* 45 (1991), 121-9.

⁴²⁰ For gossiping monks see, for instance, the career of Nikephoros Blemmydes (Blemmydes, *Curriculum Vitae*).

⁴²¹ Ὡς γοῦν ἐπέφωσκεν ἡ ἡμέρα καὶ τὰς νομιζομένας ὥρας διελθεῖν ἔμελλεν ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, ἐφ' ᾧ λειτουργήσῃ, σιγὴν μὲν ἐπισκήπτει τοῖς ἔξωθεν, αὐτὸς δὲ κατὰ μόνους ὠμίλει Θεῷ καὶ τὰς συνήθεις καὶ προτελεστικὰς εὐχὰς μεθ' ὅτι πλείστης ἀπεδίδου τῆς ἡσυχίας. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 47.25–8)

unknown. This meant that when Michael's situation became a matter of public knowledge they would be able to relate.

Pachymeres continues the narrative by presenting two versions of the subsequent events. By not providing a singular factual and contextual interpretation of the events, the historian inevitably invites his readers to take a more active role in passing judgment about the events. In the first account of the subsequent events, Pachymeres says that after the liturgy was over, the metropolitan swore he had heard a divine voice saying *μαρπου*. Not knowing what it was, the metropolitan of Dyrrachion, went to his colleague, metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Manouel Disypatos, who eventually solved the riddle by understanding that M.A.R.P.O.Y. is an acronym standing for: Michael, King of the Romans, the Palaiologos will shortly be celebrated.⁴²² If this story bares any truth, then we see Michael managing to gather the high clergy at his hand to support his cause by spreading the word to the populace of Thessaloniki.⁴²³ Manouel Disypatos, himself a fairly new figure in Thessaloniki's social scene—he started his tenure as the metropolitan of Thessaloniki only in 1258—might have offered his support to Michael, who was known and liked by the Thessalonians together with his father, in order to advance his own position in the city by finding a quick way to gain the general populace's affection and respect.⁴²⁴

According to the second account presented by Pachymeres, Disypatos took no part in this event. Rather,

there are some who say that the [metropolitan] of Dyrrachion did not hear these things nor that the [metropolitan] of Thessaloniki made this prediction but that the latter, being a wise man and interested in such books that describe future reigns, he had come, through arduous research, to know such things and he desired to bring this knowledge to the one to whom the supreme power was guaranteed and, at the same time, relieve this man who feared for his life of distress.⁴²⁵

Even if Disypatos was not included in the dissemination of the idea of Michael's bright future, it is still possible to think that the designated metropolitan of Dyrrachion staged the prayer and offered the interpretation favourable to Michael Palaiologos. This same interpretation together

⁴²² Μιχαὴλ γὰρ ἄναξ Ῥωμαίων Παλαιολόγος ὄξέως ὑμνηθήσεται (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 49.11–2)

⁴²³ We do not know if Disypatos was willing to help Michael at the time. The same metropolitan, though, was an ardent opponent to Michael's imperial elevation in 1258 (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 143.20–3).

⁴²⁴ For Manouel Disypatos see: *PLP*, no.5544.

⁴²⁵ Εἰσὶ δ' οἵτινες λέγουσι μήτε τὸν Δυρραχίου τοιαῦτ' ἀκοῦσαι, μήτε τὸν Θεσσαλονίκης τοιαῦτα φοιβάσασθαι, ἀλλὰ, σοφὸν ἐκείνον ὄντα καὶ περὶ τοιαύτας βίβλους, αἱ δὴ καὶ βασιλείας τὰς ἐς τοῦτιπὸν διατυποῦσιν, ἐπτοημένον, φιλοπονώτερον ἐρευνῶντα, περὶ τοιούτων ἐγνωκέναι καὶ δὴ, γνωρίσαι θέλοντα ταῦτα ὧ γε καὶ ἡ τῆς βασιλείας κατηγγυᾶτο περιωπῆ καὶ ἀναφέρειν οἷον ἐκείνον τῆς λύπης, ἐπεὶ καὶ περὶ αὐτῇ τῇ ζωῇ ἐδεδοίκει. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 49.12–8)

with the metropolitan's odd action of silencing everybody, in order to pray by himself, while everybody else was waiting outside could have still become part of the popular discourse in the streets and taverns of Thessaloniki. With or without Disypatos' support, the case for Michael was made to the Thessalonians who were expected to spread the word further around the city.

By the time of Konstantinos Chadenos' arrived in Thessaloniki, the whole affair was known to the populace at large. Moreover, Chadenos himself was Michael's acquaintance and either out of friendship or respect, as Pachymeres relates, the imperial legate decided to have Michael seated freely on a saddled horse "so that he [Michael] would not be dishonoured by appearing in chains before the masses in the city, they left during the night."⁴²⁶ By showing respect to Michael and avoiding parading him in chains in front of the Thessalonians, Chadenos averted potential unrest in a city where the popularity of the Palaiologoi in general and Michael specifically could prove to be a challenge to his own authority. If the citizens heard about Michael's apprehension, they could easily be irritated by seeing their champion in chains. Michael's position in Thessaloniki was made more favourable by the fact that, unlike the Palaiologoi, neither Ioannes III nor his successor had spent much time in the city. The emperors had thus not left a permanent mark on the city's infrastructure, as they had been doing in cities across Asia Minor.⁴²⁷ For these reasons, the populace of Thessaloniki felt more attached to Michael Palaiologos than to the emperor in Asia Minor. The risk of an insurrection in the city was made even greater at the time of Michael's arrest since the area west of Thessaloniki was under Epeirote attack, making city-scale sedition even more possible. Taking all these reasons into account, Chadenos smartly opted to lead Michael out of the city in the evening as a free man. Not much was thus made of the exit, ensuring that Michael's "plight" would not arouse the populace, whose pity for a man they knew and liked might easily had turned them to violence.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ Τέως δ' ἀφοσιωσάμενος ἐκείνω τὰ τῆς τιμῆς ὡς οἶόν τε ἀσφαλῶς, μὴ καὶ ἐπὶ πολλῶν ἐντὸς ἀτιμῶτο τῆς πόλεως τοῖς σιδήροις πεδούμενος, νυκτὸς ἔξεισιν. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 51.9–11)

⁴²⁷ For Ioannes III's and Theodoros II's general focus on Asia Minor see: Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*, 506.19–25; 506.28–507.6, 14–18, 535.26–536.4. For the three Laskarid emperors' inscriptions around the city walls of Asia Minor see: K. Μέντζου-Μεϊμάρη, "Χρονολογημένα βυζαντινὰ ἐπιγραφαὶ τοῦ Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum IV 2," *Δελτίον Χριστιανικῆς Αρχαιολογικῆς Εταιρείας* 9 (1979), 106.143–145, 107.149, 150, 109.160, 109–10.161. There are no surviving inscriptions on the walls of European cities by the three emperors.

⁴²⁸ The popular reaction to the leniency shown to Ioannes Italos by the ecclesiastic court that was taking place in public serves as a good example of the mobs reacting violently to the officially made decisions regarding prominent individuals: "the who population of Constantinople ran towards the church looking for Italos. He would most likely have been thrown from high in the middle of the church, had he not hidden in some hole running to the rooftop of the sacred building." (ὁ δῆμος ἅπας τῆς Κωνσταντίνου πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν συγκεκίνητο τὸν Ἰταλὸν ἀναζητοῦντες. καὶ τάχα ἂν ἀφ' ὕψους εἰς μέσον τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἔρριπτο,

The road to Magnesia seems to have been uneventful and upon arrival Michael was imprisoned without meeting the emperor beforehand.⁴²⁹ Michael spent the rest of Theodoros II's reign—that is, until the emperor's death on August 18, 1258—incarcerated, awaiting a trial for which the emperor and his allies could not launch due to lack of evidence. The emperor was not able to do away with Palaiologos simply by imposing his imperial will. It was one thing to arrest a notable of Michael's calibre; a completely different proposition to execute him without a public trial. The trial, though, was never organized since the emperor died, leaving the throne to his young son Ioannes IV.

5.2. The Rhetorical Side of SPQR: Obtaining Public Support for the Mouzalones' Regency

Before dying, though, Theodoros II worked on his son's regency. To do so, he appointed through stipulations in his will, his onetime associate Georgios Mouzalon—a man he knew from his days as a *paidopoulos*—as *protovestiaros*, imperial regent in charge of running state affairs.⁴³⁰ All the notables present in Magnesia, including leading generals and senators of the state, as well as a significant number of soldiers stationed around the city, were made to swear an oath to the regent during Theodoros II's last days.⁴³¹ The oath, we can imagine, was administered during a ceremonial event which sought to make the transition of power to both Ioannes IV and Georgios Mouzalon publicly known and accepted by the aristocrats who were at hand. Thus, the whole business was staged as a traditional oath-swearing to the new emperor by the dignitaries and officials. The soldiers present in Magnesia too would have delivered their oaths in public, probably not inside a single room of the palace.⁴³² Such public and, truth to be told, loud oath-taking would not have been missed by any of the locals dwelling in the city and its vicinity. By pushing for the oaths to Ioannes IV and Mouzalon, Theodoros II was able at least to secure a modicum of popular awareness, if not full support, for his last will.

Despite the oaths taken, Georgios Mouzalon, fearing for his position, convoked the meeting of the senate in order to reach a consensus on the regency.⁴³³ The *protovestiaros'* unease

εἰ μὴ λαθῶν ἐκεῖνος εἰς τὸν ὄροφον τοῦτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τεμένους ἀνελθῶν ἐν τινὶ φωλεῶ ἑαυτὸν συνεκάλυψεν. Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, V, 9, 6, 1–5.).

⁴²⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 51.32–53.3.

⁴³⁰ For Georgios Mouzalon's position in the empire see: Macrides, "Introduction," 24–7; for the dignity of *protovestiaros* see: Guilland, *Institutions I*, 216–36.

⁴³¹ Akropolites, 75.10–11.

⁴³² On swearing oaths see notes 12 and 13 of the present chapter.

⁴³³ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 65.8–21.

about his safety was not unwarranted, for the *oikos* of the Mouzalones, as we have seen, was not much liked by more ancient *golden chain* households. For that matter he was unpopular even with some of the *novi homines* such as Georgios Akropolites. Other than the volatile cohabitation with other members of the empire's high elites—the imperial family excepted—the Mouzalones were not particularly popular with the masses in Asia Minor even during Theodoros II's reign. According to Pachymeres' account:

At this moment [Theodoros II's last months of life], because of the frequently recurring illness, the patient, not knowing from where it came, thought that the cause of the wrath was a demon summoned by magic. The mob outside the palace, which tended to believe in such things, attributed the crime to the Mouzalones, who unknowingly became the object of accusations, which they had not expected.⁴³⁴

Thus, it appears that rumours of Theodoros II's magic-induced affliction spread like wildfire around the city of Magnesia, the populace was quick to suspect the Mouzalones for this, given that both Georgios and his brothers were constantly by the emperor's side. Whether the families of the *golden chain* employed and even promoted these rumours in order to strengthen popular support for themselves at the expense of Mouzalones, we cannot tell. We can suppose, though, that the likes of Akropolites or the blinded Philes and Strategopoulos welcomed the commotion in the streets of Magnesia and elsewhere. Taking into account that both Ioannes III, who was popularly proclaimed a saint after his death, and Theodoros II were generally liked by the populace in Asia Minor, the *golden chain* elites could not attract vast support for themselves at the imperial expense.⁴³⁵ With the Mouzalones losing public support, though, the senatorial elites found convenient scapegoats in order to mobilize the populace around their own political agenda. Much as the populace of Prilep acted on its desire to see the Epeirotes controlling the region or the Thessalonians by displaying public affection to the Palaiologoi without any regard for the central government, thus the citizens of Magnesia were well-placed to directly interfere in state affairs. The senatorial elites and the likes of Michael Palaiologos would not shun away from capitalizing on such an ill-disposed public climate toward the Mouzalones in order to reach their goals. The position of the *protovestiaros* and his brothers was therefore unenviable: they

⁴³⁴ Τότε τοίνυν ἐπιπιπτούσης συχνάκις τῆς νόσου, οὐκ οἶδ' ὀπόθεν, μήνιμα εἶναι τὸ πάθος ὁ πάσχων ἐκ μαγγανείας δαιμόνιον ὑπελάμβανε. Καὶ οἱ μὲν πολλοὶ τῶν ἔξω, οἷς ἦν τὰ τοιαῦτα πιστεύειν, τὸ ἔγκλημα προσέτριβον τοῖς Μουζάλωσι, παραλόγων καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἂν προσεδόκησαν τῶν ἀξιωματῶν τυχοῦσι. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 53.22–6)

⁴³⁵ For Ioannes III's popularity see: Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*; Pachymeres, *Relations* R.J. Macrides, "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaeologan Period," in *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Volume 1980, Part 2*, S. Hackel (ed.), London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1981, 67–87. For Theodoros II's image among his subjects see: Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*, 535.5–536.13; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 57.32–61.22.

were left in full control of the public affairs without the support of the two pillars that made up the public sphere—the senate and the people of Rome.

Taking into account the lack of basic support for the newly established regime, it should come as no surprise that Georgios Mouzalon convened the senate to discuss issues relating to the regency, the moment he took over the reins of the state. Attempting to gain the support of the senate was the first step in reaching a wider public consensus for his regime. The turnout of the senators was astonishing, at least according to Pachymeres, who lets us know that:

At that time, he [Georgios Mouzalon] convened all the members of the senate and all the members of the imperial family, all the archons, and the military class. Also present were the brothers [Manouel and Michael] of [Theodoros I] Laskaris, the great-grandfather of the emperor [Ioannes IV], who had in the past worn the imperial crown and relieved the Roman state of its confusion. The blind men—Strategopoulos and Philes—were not absent, and all the other magnates completed the gathering.⁴³⁶

Adding to the list of attendees, Michael Palaiologos, released from prison after Theodoros II's death, was present as well.⁴³⁷ While the senatorial elite and the representatives of the army were stationed in Magnesia, the ecclesiastic notables were absent from the meeting with the patriarch himself in Nikaia. With the cream of the crop of all secular civic high officials and dignitaries present at the meeting, Georgios Mouzalon acting as the presiding senator began his speech “from a platform, so that both those in front and those at the rear could hear him.”⁴³⁸

Needless to say, the speech recorded in the *Historical Relations* was either composed or at least heavily edited by Pachymeres.⁴³⁹ Nevertheless, the surviving peroration had to be based

⁴³⁶ Τότε τοίνυν συγκαλεσάμενος ὅσον ἦν τὸ τῆς γερουσίας καὶ ὅσον τοῦ βασιλείου γένους, ὅσον τε τῶν ἀρχόντων καὶ ὅσον τῆς στρατιωτικῆς τάξεως, παρόντων ἐκέισε καὶ τῶν τοῦ προπάππου τοῦ βασιλέως Λάσκαρι αὐταδέλφων, ὃς δὴ καὶ οὗτος τὸ πάλαι βασιλείας διέπρεπεν διαδήματι καὶ τὰ τῆς Ῥωμαϊδος πράγματα συγχυθέντα ὡς εἶχεν ἀνεκαλεῖτο, οὐδὲ τῶν τυφλῶν ἐκεῖθεν ἀπόντων—ὁ Στρατηγόπουλος δ' οὗτοι ἦσαν καὶ ὁ Φιλῆς—, καὶ παντὸς ἄλλου μεγιστᾶνος συμπληροῦντος τὸν σύλλογον. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 65.12–20)

⁴³⁷ Pachymeres does not tell us when and how Michael was released. However, at the meeting of the senate, Pachymeres clearly points out Michael's presence by offering a whole speech delivered by the *mezas konostaulos* (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 73.19–23).

⁴³⁸ ἐφ' ὑψηλοῦ στάς, ὡς ἂν ἄμα οἱ τε πρῶτοι ἀκούοιεν καὶ οἱ ὕστατοι. (ibid., 65.20–1)

⁴³⁹ On composing speeches for characters of histories in Greco-Roman tradition see: A. Tsakmakis, “Von der Rhetorik zur Geschichtsschreibung: Das ‘Methodenkapitel’ des Thukydides (1,22,1–3),” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 141 (1998), 239–255. For rhetoric in Byzantine historiography see: R.J. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2010). Also, on rhetorical practices in historiography: A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*, Portland: Areopagitica, 1988; A. Cameron (ed.), *History as Text: The Writing of Ancient History*, Chapel Hill: Duckworth, 1989. On different techniques used by historians vis-à-vis rhetoricians to depict emperors in Byzantium see: A. Angelov, “In

on a typical speech a senator in power would deliver to win over the support of other senators. After all, Georgios Mouzalon had benefited from the imperially sponsored higher education much as his contemporaries Georgios Akropolites and Michael Palaiologos. With such education, Mouzalon was expected to be versed in rhetoric in order to convincingly address his audience. Indeed, in the speech, should we opt to trust Pachymeres' main outline, the *protovestiarios* was quick to demonstrate his close relationship with the emperor for whom he felt "a mixture of love with fear,"⁴⁴⁰ only to acknowledge that many of the senators and their families had suffered under Theodoros II. At this point, all the senators were invited to express their grievances by keeping in mind that Theodoros II was no more and that the young emperor was in need of a good regency. Mouzalon continued by promoting himself as the best option and pointing out that good regents were recognized by their approachability. He thus expanded on the senators' ability "to approach them [the regents] immediately, and to continually poke them with words."⁴⁴¹ Once he had completed the exposé on good regency, Mouzalon continued to further put himself in the hands of the present senators and soldiers:

I took on the care for the emperor, not through a personal and prearranged choice, or with some goal in mind, but primarily to fulfill the written orders of the emperor [Theodoros II], and, furthermore . . . but I do not want to say more. But it is only with your approval that I wish to devote myself to carrying out of this duty. And if you propose one of you to undertake the duty in the future, it will suffice to me to be placed in the lowest office. If someone takes suitable care of the emperor's safety, I will be content to be nothing but a regular subject, and I would love and beseech the ruler not to become angry if my honours seem to have displeased some of you, because it is better to live in security, serving as one of the soldiers, than pass the days in fear and suspicion through taking high office.⁴⁴²

By posing as a modest official reluctant to take upon himself an office that held almost unprecedented power, Mouzalon followed Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition in his effort to persuade his audience.⁴⁴³ The reluctance was followed by a shift of focus on Mouzalon's

Search of God" Only Emperor: *Basileus* in Byzantine and Modern Historiography," *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014), 123–141.

⁴⁴⁰ ἀγάπην φόβῳ μιγνύντες (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 65.30)

⁴⁴¹ προσελθεῖν ἐκ τοῦ παραχρῆμα καὶ νύξαι λέγοντα συνεχέστερον (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 69.25–6)

⁴⁴² Ἐγὼ οὐτ' ἰδίαις καὶ αὐτοβούλοις προαιρέσεσιν, οὔτε μὴν σκοπῶ τινι καὶ μελέτῃ ταῖς τοῦ βασιλέως προσανέχειν ἐπιτροπαῖς ἤρημαι, ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν ἐπιστολάς πληρῶν βασιλέως, ἔπειτα δέ ..., ἀλλ' οὐ βούλομαι λέγειν. Πλὴν καὶ ὑμῶν θελόντων, οὕτω καὶ μόνον προσανέχειν καὶ ἔτι ταῖς ἐπιτροπαῖς βούλομαι· εἰ δ' οὖν, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν τὸν ἐπιτροπεύσοντα ἐφιστάτε, ἔμοι δ' ἀρκέσει τὸ ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις τάπτεσθαι. Κἂν τις τὴν βασιλικὴν σωτηρίαν πρεπόντως πολυωροίη, καὶ ἰδιωτεύσας ἀγαπήσω καὶ προσλιπαρήσω μὴ ὀργίζεσθαι τὸν δεσπότην, εἰ λυπεῖν τινὰς ὑμῶν δοκοίη τὸ ἐμὸν ἀξίωμα· κρεῖσσον γὰρ ὡς ἓνα τῶν στρατιωτῶν ἐξυπηρετοῦντα ἀσφαλῶς διάγειν ἢ φόβῳ καὶ ὑπονοίαις μετ' ἀξιώματος ζῆν. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 71.9–18)

⁴⁴³ On modesty as a method of gaining sympathy and, in turn, persuading the audience to support the orator see Hermogenes' advice: H. Rabe (ed.), *Hermogenis Opera* (Leipzig: Teubner 1913, reprint 1963),

reliability: he noted that he had accepted the office only because the emperor had asked him to. In other words, the *protovestiaros* was trusted enough even by a paranoid emperor, a trait that was pointed out earlier in the speech, to take over such an important position. All this, however, was arrived at without the support of the senate and the army, as Mouzalon himself pointed out. At this point, the speech exits the realm of persuasion and leaves the deliberation to the senators and the present soldiers. By employing rhetorical training in order to persuade the political and military elite to support his cause, Mouzalon was testing the waters and seeing whether there was enough goodwill among them to keep him in office.

The education received under Ioannes III seemed to have paid off and the representatives of the army accepted Mouzalon as regent. The senators were initially more reserved than the soldiers, but they too ended up confirming their loyalty to Mouzalon. They collectively picked up on one of the themes of the speech: the blame for their misfortunes was completely associated with the departed emperor, leaving the Mouzalones in the clear.⁴⁴⁴ Among the senators, it was Michael Palaiologos who was the most ardent supporter of the Mouzalon regency.⁴⁴⁵ Having been only just released from prison, Michael's decision to deliver a speech, according to Pachymeres, was a way for him to reposition himself on the polity's political map. Furthermore, if he had any grievances against the Mouzalones, which was quite possible taking into consideration the fact that he had been arrested and his sister tortured by Theodoros II, while the Mouzalones had occupied the highest dignities, he did not let those bubble up to the surface. Thus, Michael's speech before the senators and the present soldiery was not delivered to simply endear himself to the regents, but to publicly display his comeback from prison as well as his important role in fostering senatorial consensus. All this was done for the eyes of his peers and polity's military establishment. After Michael's laudatory speech of support, everybody swore the customary oaths of allegiance to the new emperor and his regents before leaving for their respective posts.

Pachymeres' choice to provide us with his renderings of both Mouzalon's and Palaiologos' speeches, reminds us of the discursive practices shared among educated Romans. The *protovestiaros'* speech was not taken at face value by the senators present at the meeting, but

2.6. For Hermogenes in Byzantine educational curriculum see: Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium*, 7, 11, 152; P. Roilos, "Ancient Greek Rhetorical Theory and Byzantine Discursive Politics: John Sikeliotis on Hermogenes," in T. Shawcross & I. Toth, eds., *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2018), 159-184.

⁴⁴⁴ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 73.13-17.

⁴⁴⁵ For the whole Palaiologos' speech see: *ibid.*, 73.19-77.16.

rather it was appreciated for the rhetorical techniques that the educated elites could see deployed within the oration. In the same vein, Michael's laudatory speech was perceived by Georgios Mouzalon as a nicely crafted piece of rhetoric with far greater goals in mind than simple appraisal of the regent. On the example of these two orations, we see how the elites were able to differentiate themselves from the rest of the society thanks to their exquisite education. That is, through ostentatious displays of their erudition, the notables—be it the members of the *golden chain* or the *novi homines*—were able to establish a communication nebula that was fully understandable and accessible only to them.⁴⁴⁶ Those, on the other hand, who did not have the same educational background could never appreciate the intricacies of fine speech and would thus not be able to imagine themselves taking an active role in running the state. Regardless of Pachymeres' level of accuracy in the transmission of the speeches content, these pieces of rhetoric had a twofold goal. First, they established the orators themselves as members of the senatorial echelons on account of their education and merit. This point was important to *novi homines* who had to keep demonstrating their merit through word and acts of the pen or the sword. It was, however, equally significant for the members of the old families, who had to prove that individually there was more to their name than their ancestral surnames. It is, in part, for this reason that Mouzalon and Palaiologos found it necessary to deliver the respective speeches. Second, the speeches were supposed to persuade the group of commoners, represented by the soldiers stationed at Magnesia, that the regency should remain in the hands of Mouzalones. In crafting their speeches, the two senators then had to use the language and forms of expression that resonated well with the wider, less erudite, audience. Of course, loud and emphatic pronunciation of the speeches helped in swaying over the soldiers, who in turn showed their support.⁴⁴⁷ Aristocratic virtue signaling notwithstanding, the two speeches also served as a political bridge between senatorial expectations and those of the Roman citizenry at large.

After this mixed session of the senatorial and military establishments adjourned, the Mouzalones had retained their position, albeit after some initial commotion among the senators. Returning to the imperial palace in Magnesia, the regents were quick to notify the wider public of the affairs of the state. As Pachymeres lets us know:

⁴⁴⁶ On the elite Romans sense of being unique and, arguably, better than those who are not part of the group see: P. Magdalino, "Byzantine Snobbery," in *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1984), 58-78.

⁴⁴⁷ On tactics for stirring up emotions in public performance see: Rabe, *Hermogenis Opera*, 1.10.

At this time, *prostagmata* were composed and dispatched all over the cities of the Roman empire and, among other appropriate news, the principal and the greatest news was to announce the death of the emperor [Theodoros II], and to proclaim the young emperor [Ioannes IV], and to make each person swear the customary oaths of allegiance to him. The *prostagmata* were sent out in great numbers, and since the young emperor could not move his hand to sign them, it was given to the aforementioned *logothetes ton aggelon* the task of writing the imperial signature in red ink.⁴⁴⁸

Sending out imperial notifications—*prostagmata*—around the empire was the fastest way of informing as large a number of the populace as possible about the latest events. This move was supposed to secure a wider level of support for the new regime among the people of the Roman Empire. Making sure that the Romans were aware and hopefully supportive of the regime was particularly necessary at a time when both the emperor and his retinue were not seen with kind eyes by the imperial elites. In the end, securing one stable pillar of societal support was better than none. Furthermore, according to the dispatched *prostagmata*, all the notables of the provincial administration had to swear a customary oath of allegiance to the new emperor. In this way, the Mouzalones relied on traditional methods of obtaining publicly acclaimed support by making everybody across the cities of the empire swear oaths of allegiance to the new regime. Thus, the public was involved in the affairs of the polity by means of newly sworn oaths in the empires' provincial centres. The public oath-swearing of the officials from around the empire, following the reception and reading of the *prostagmata*, granted legitimacy to the new regime in the eyes of the empire's subjects and allowed for a more favourable view of the new regime. Hoping to reach a consensus among the senatorial elite and that the Roman populace would be more inclined to support the regency once the *prostagmata* reached their destinations and oaths had been taken, Georgios and his brothers could now focus on running the state.

5.3. The Violent Side of SPQR: Obtaining Public Support for the Palaiologan Regency

The *prostagmata* sent out from Magnesia had not yet reached all the provincial magistrates by the time the volatile cohabitation between the Mouzalones and the other senators came to an abrupt end. The agreements made at the meeting of the senate and the army lasted for about a

⁴⁴⁸ Συνετάπτοντο τοίνυν προστάγματα πανταχοῦ πόλεων τῆς Ῥωμαίων γῆς ἀποσταλησόμενα, καὶ κατ' ἄλλας μὲν χρείας ἐτέρας, τὸ δὲ πλεῖστον καὶ μέγιστον κατὰ τε δήλωσιν τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ βασιλέως, ἅμα δὲ καὶ τῆς τοῦ νέου βασιλέως ἀναρρήσεως, καὶ τοῦ εἰς ἐκεῖνον προστίθεσθαι χάριν συνθήκαις ὄρκων κατὰ τὸ σύνηθες. Καὶ ἐξετίθεντο μὲν τὰ προσταττόμενα παμπληθεῖ, τὰς δὲ δι' ἐρυθρῶν βασιλικῶν ὑποσημάνσεις, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἦν τὸν νέον βασιλέα χεῖρα κινεῖν καὶ ὑποσημαίνεσθαι, τῷ δηλωθέντι λογοθέτῃ τῶν ἀγγελῶν ποιεῖν ἐνεδίδοσαν. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 77.32–79.8)

week.⁴⁴⁹ The regime was toppled at the memorial service for Theodoros II at the monastery of Sosandra, where a not insignificant number of lay people, soldiers, bureaucrats, and senators with their families gathered, together with the regents and Ioannes IV, to commemorate the deceased emperor. The event at Sosandra has come down to us in two versions: one by Akropolites and another by Pachymeres.⁴⁵⁰ Both of them have a similar outline with Pachymeres providing a far more detailed narrative about the events, while Akropolites cites specific names of participants in the commemoration.

What took place at Sosandra was a riot which unfolded in the following fashion. The monastery at Sosandra was on top of a hill in the vicinity of Magnesia. During the commemoration, Ioannes IV, the Mouzalones, and the senators with their families were on top of the hill in the monastery; the people together with the soldiers congregated at the bottom of the hill and observed the ceremony from a distance. As the ceremony was unfolding, the soldiers, especially the Latin contingents which had been under Michael Palaiologos' command, dispersed among the public in order to start a commotion of the masses—the Roman body politic. Pachymeres remains careful in passing any judgement about Michael's or other senators' involvement in staging the rebellion. He does, however, point out that it was the Latin soldiers, usually connected to Palaiologos in his narrative, who started the rebellion.⁴⁵¹ Akropolites' account is not of much help, since it represents Michael and his allies as complete victims of chance. Be that as it may, whether the senators had secretly blessed or even pushed the soldiers to infiltrate the crowds gathered around Sosandra remains less important for our story than the fact that the Mouzalones were not able to change society's mood to their favour. The inability to sway the Roman public their way led to the loss of the public support for the regime in less than a week after the oath-swearing ceremony discussed above.

The reason behind the Mouzalones' rather brief tenure in the high offices lies with their failure to cultivate wider social networks around the empire. The three brothers—Georgios, Andronikos, and Theodoros—spent the years of their education and political maturity as *paidopouloi* of Theodoros II. While the close relationship with the designated heir to the throne turned emperor put the Mouzalones into an advantageous position vis-à-vis other notables while their patron was alive, once the emperor was gone, this very connection became their Achilles'

⁴⁴⁹ Akropolites (*Chronike*, 75.11–2) says three days, Pachymeres (*Chronikon*, 81.5) say nine; Gregoras (*Historia* I, 65.15) concurs with the latter. Failler, "Chrolonolgie," 26–27; Macrides, *The History*, 341, n.4.

⁴⁵⁰ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 75; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 79.11–89.26.

⁴⁵¹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 79.18–24.; 81.9–21.

heel. It is precisely because of their close ties with the emperor that the Mouzalones did not find it necessary to promote themselves to anybody else in the empire. This turned out to be a fatal miscalculation on their part that would doom their *oikos*. During Theodoros II's concerted campaign to dilute the power of the old senatorial elite, the Mouzalones amassed honours, influence, and ultimately power, which, in turn, alienated them from the persecuted senatorial elite. Unlike some other *novi homines* who were more prudent in their acceptance of imperially granted honours at the expense of other members of the elites, the Mouzalones made no effort to temper the skyrocketing of their careers.⁴⁵² The moment Theodoros II was out of the picture, the animosity of the senatorial elite was openly directed towards them. Since the emperor had only attempted to weaken the *golden chain* families rather than break them, their households were quick to consolidate power after the emperor's premature death, putting the integration of new *gene* into the *golden chain* to a definite halt.

While making enemies in the highest echelons of the Roman court was somewhat inevitable for the exclusively imperially supported Mouzalones, they more crucially failed to venture into the arena of wider public discourse. They thus failed to endear themselves to the Roman populace—be it the soldiers or the civilians. When Theodoros II was no more, the Mouzalones would have benefitted from having cultivated the Roman citizenry of Magnesia and other cities in Asia Minor. Unfortunately for the three brothers, they had accumulated little social credit with the masses of the empire. To the contrary, if we are to trust both Akropolites, who has a particularly negative view of the Mouzalones, and Pachymeres, who is far more restrained in criticizing the brothers, we see that during Theodoros II's tenure Georgios and his two siblings managed to estrange the soldiers and other citizenry of the polity. For one, the populace in general was never fond of the Mouzalones who were blamed, both during Theodoros II's life and late, for having conspired to make the emperor sick.⁴⁵³ Adding to this, popular gossip in the streets suggested that: “the Mouzalones, especially the eldest, had deprived the soldiers, while the emperor was still alive, of what they had been awarded [for their service]. They had been scorned in place of being given their due honours, and at his instigation they had been forbidden their free access to the emperor. They had thus been humiliated by order of the *protovestiarios*.”⁴⁵⁴ Such actions—whether real or perceived—made it impossible for the

⁴⁵² For instance, *protovestiarios* Ioannes Axouch decline to appropriate the belongings of Ioannes II Komnenos' estranged sister Anna (Choniates, *O City of Byzantium*, 8–9).

⁴⁵³ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 53.24–26; 79.14–16.

⁴⁵⁴ ὡς παρὰ Μουζαλώνων, καὶ μᾶλλον ἐνὸς τοῦ πρώτου, στεροῦντο, ζῶντος βασιλέως, τῶν εἰς ῥόγας αὐτοῖς ἀποτεταγμένων, ὡς καταφρονοῦντο ἐφ' οἷς ἐδικαίουν ἑαυτοὺς τετιμῆσθαι, ὡς τῆς πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα

Mouzalones to find allies among the general Roman populace. To their disadvantage, members of the *golden chain* carefully cultivated their public image and were more deliberate in rewarding soldiers under their command with due honours and weaving a visible mark of their respective families into the social fabric of the Roman polity. After all, Michael's endeavours in Thessaloniki to commemorate the *genos* of the Palaiologoi were not unique as an example of a noble attempting to imprint positive images of an affluent household in the public memory. Such strategies aimed at securing public sympathies was no-doubt also deployed by other members of the golden chain. Thus, when the time came for the public to take an active role, it was pretty clear it was going to support those members of the Roman elite who had invested in the careful cultivation of popular favour.

The attempt made to appease the senators and the Roman public by deploying rhetorical craftiness was certainly a useful tactic; however, Georgios appears to have come to the public sphere a bit too late in the game. In such circumstances, older allies would have been welcomed, but the three brothers had nobody by their side who would willingly and unconditionally support them. By making their political careers completely dependent on the emperor, the Mouzalones, ironically enough, followed the model that worked for Roman officials in the Sultanate of Rum where personal connections to the sultan almost always guaranteed promotion and stability.⁴⁵⁵ In the political culture of the Roman empire being an imperial favourite was a powerful political tool to be sure. Imperial support, however, was not enough. It had to be combined with the cultivation of social strategies of engagement with other magnates through kinship, tutelage, and amicable relationships. It also required careful courting of Roman citizens via public displays of public care and benevolence.⁴⁵⁶ On its own imperial favour could hardly come in handy once the emperor was gone and the favourites were left on their own to defend their position in the public political arena.

At Sosandra, Mouzalones experienced quite viscerally what it meant not to be in the public's good books. The commotion started during the commemoration, when the soldiers in the

ἀποκλείοντο παρρησίας εἰσηγήσει ταῖς ἐκείνου, ὡς ἀτιμοῖντο, τοῦ πρωτοβεσπιαρίου προστάσσοντος. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 79.20–24)

⁴⁵⁵ For governing practices in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum see: Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 81–110.

⁴⁵⁶ For regime's loss of public support see: A. Kaldellis, "How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium: The Role of Public Opinion in Sedition and Rebellion," in *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2010*, D. G. Angelov and M. Saxby (eds.), Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013, 43-56. For *paidopouloi* in Theodoros II's administration and their exclusive ties with the emperor see: Angold, *A Byzantine Government*, 76, 176–177.

crowds at the bottom of the hill demanded to see the emperor. In referring to their young master, they spoke of him as the captive of his father's murderers, i.e. the Mouzalones. The crowd was quick to join in with the soldiers since in the court of public opinion the Mouzalones had already been judged and condemned for the previous emperor's death. The negative social climate towards the Mouzalones was amplified by the fact that Theodoros II, much as his father Ioannes III, was remembered as a good emperor of the people. Thanks to the public memory of the two emperors, the masses gathered at Sosandra saw in Ioannes IV an emperor who would continue the tradition of his forefathers. Since the people did not wish to see Ioannes IV harmed by the murderous brothers, they demanded to see the young emperor. The elites gathered around the young had to comply and Ioannes IV waved at his subjects from the top of the hill. The young emperor was also asked give the sign to the masses to leave. The sign that the emperor gave, however, was interpreted in two ways, or as Pachymeres' own words tell us:

When the young emperor appeared, the voices grew louder, and the [mobs] caused commotion in an even more disorderly fashion. Those in his retinue instructed him to make a gesture with his hand. This gesture could do one of two things: restrain the commotion or approve it. To those around the young master the assenting gesture of the hand was seen as a sufficient sign for the lords to defend them and bring the rioting under control; the rest, however, took it as an encouragement to go ahead. A scream arose [among the masses], that the emperor approved, and at once the whole crowd rushed forward, and everybody moved as if to defend the emperor, ready to expose themselves to danger.⁴⁵⁷

By using the young emperor as bait, the soldiers in the crowd, possibly with the assent of the senators, attacked the monastery and the regime was brutally toppled. The Mouzalones tried to hide around the monastery, but to no avail: they were found and killed *ek topou* by the enraged soldiers and citizens. The regency came to an end even before it had properly begun at the hands of the Roman citizens. It was thus through employment of violence that the less privileged stratum of the Romans expressed their collective opinion regarding the regime in charge of public affairs. The end of the Mouzalones, then, was brought about by their own inability to change the negative disposition of the people towards them, which, in turn, resulted in the people's bloody expression of their legitimate will.

⁴⁵⁷ Ὡς δὲ φανέντος τοῦ νέου, καὶ μείζων ἤρθετο ἡ φωνὴ καὶ ἀτακτότερον ἐθορύβουν, χειρὶ κατανεύειν οἱ ἄμφ' ἐκείνον ἐκείνον διδάσκουσι· τὸ δ' ἦν ἅμα κροῦον καὶ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρα, ὅτι τε ἀναστέλλοι τὸν θόρυβον καὶ ὅτι ἐκχωροῖ διδοῦς. Καὶ τοῖς μὲν περὶ τὸν νέον ἄρχοντα ἱκανὸν εἰς ἀπολογίαν ἐσύστερον πρὸς τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἢ τῆς χειρὸς κατάνευσις ὑπολέλειπτο, ὡς δὴθεν ἐπισχεῖν οἰκονομοῦσι τὸν θόρυβον, τοῖς δὲ καὶ λίαν ἄρκοῦν ἐνομίζετο πρὸς ἐκχώρησιν. Εὐθύς οὖν βοῆ ἤρθη, ὡς ἐκχωροῦντος τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ ἅμ' ἐχέοντο παμπληθεῖ, καὶ ὡς τιμωρὸς τῆς βασιλικῆς σωτηρίας συνέθεεν ἕκαστος, ὡς καὶ προκινδυνεύειν. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 81.29–83.8)

5.4. Social Capital in SPQR: Michael Palaiologos, Guardian of the Empire

With the Mouzalones and their associates out of the picture—some of whom following the Roman tradition fled to the Sultanate of Rum, while others found themselves imprisoned⁴⁵⁸—the management of state affairs fell completely into the hands of the senatorial elite. Of the senators, Michael Palaiologos was the swiftest to seize the role of Ioannes IV's protector. Granted, during the riot at Sosandra, Michael was best positioned among the senators to take control of the situation since most of the armed soldiers who instigated the coup d'état were Latin soldiers under his command. With the consensus of the soldiers present at the event by his side, Michael managed to offer protection to the young emperor, whose immediate retinue had no choice but to accept.

Being in control of the situation by relying on sheer force during the riot was one thing; maintaining the position of power in the long run was a completely different matter, as Michael was very well aware. With Ioannes IV under Palaiologan guard—Michael put his own two brothers, Ioannes and Konstantinos, in charge of the emperor's safety—the members of the *golden chain* started to quarrel over the issue of guardianship. According to Pachymeres, the senators gathered yet again to decide on the regent for the young emperor. All the leading *oikoi* were present promoting their own candidates for the regency: Laskarides, Tornikioi, Strategopouloi, Philai, Batazai, Nostongoi, Kaballarioi, Kamytzai, Aprenoi, Anggeloi, Kantakouzinoi, Libadarioi, Tarchaneiotai, Philanthropenoi, and the Palaiologoi.⁴⁵⁹ During the deliberation process which lasted for days, the senators sent for the patriarch at Nikaia asking him to join them at Magnesia, as Pachymeres tells us, “not so much out of necessity, but to confirm more surely the action that was being taken.”⁴⁶⁰

At the meeting of the senate, Georgios Nostongos put forward his own candidacy for the regency but was quickly shut down by other officials and dignitaries.⁴⁶¹ Other senators had their own prospective candidates; not before long, though, after a few speeches and arguments, Michael Palaiologos was elected regent for Ioannes IV. Pachymeres justifies this election by pointing out that:

⁴⁵⁸ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 77.14–34; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 89.29–91.9.

⁴⁵⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 91.18–93.15.

⁴⁶⁰ οὐ κατὰ χρεῖαν μᾶλλον, ἀλλ' ἵν' ἀσφαλέστερον τὸ γινόμενον καθιστῶτο. (ibid., 97.7–8)

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 95.1–12.

[Michael Palaiologos] was a most excellent general and his nobility was ancient and of the highest level; and thirdly, he was himself related to the emperor, both through his own kinship and through his wife—the emperor was her second cousin, and the son of his own second cousin—and it was thus natural that he was chosen, above the rest, for the guardianship over the emperor. But this was only one part of the reason why he had been preferred, and the one that those who spoke in his favour placed first. On the other hand, it is normal to think that he himself had managed the affair, deceiving many men by his promises, especially those who happened to have lost their positions of rank because of the harshness of the times.⁴⁶²

Thus, Michael prevailed thanks to his own accomplishments. The illustrious family background and sanguine connection to the emperor further helped his case of entrusting Ioannes IV in Michael Palaiologos' hands, as his supporters emphasize. At a time when the Mongols were pushing the Turkic nomads to the western borders of the Sultanate of Rum and an open Epeirote invasion west of Vardar was taking place, Michael Palaiologos, thanks to his military experience, became an obvious choice for the regency.⁴⁶³ On top of his military prudence, Michael had experience in dealing with civil administration as confirmed by his tenure in Serres and Melnikon. All these accomplishments certainly made him a desirable candidate, but many other members of the *golden chain* families' careers followed a similar trajectory. What made Michael a particularly strong candidate, save his clear merit in public service, was the network of supporters he had carefully amassed over the course of his career among elites and commoners alike. Unlike Georgios Mouzalon, who relied solely on imperial favour in his career, Michael mobilized every possible social resource to gain support from socially diverse Romans: he used the well-known surname Palaiologos to boost his image; he connected himself to the imperial household through marriage; he strengthened the existing ties with the traditional allies of the Palaiologoi; he built new bridges with *novi homines* and intellectuals of the period; and finally, he successfully projected a positive image of his public persona to the public, thus swaying the social climate in his favour.

The only source of support Michael lacked was that of the church and its patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos. The incumbent patriarch was handpicked by Theodoros II to whom he had been a

⁴⁶² Στρατηγικώτατον εἶναι τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ οἱ ἐκ παλαιοῦ αὐταρκες εἶναι τὸ εὐγενές, καὶ τρίτον τὸ πρὸς τὸν κρατοῦντα συγγενές, ἅμα μὲν αὐτόθεν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς συζύγου—τῆς μὲν γὰρ δεύτερος αὐτανέπιος ἦν, τοῦ δὲ δευτέρου αὐτανεπίου υἱός—, πολλὴν ἐμποιεῖν αὐτῷ τὴν εἰς τὸ κηδεμονικὸν τοῦ βασιλέως παρὰ τοὺς ἄλλους ἐκχώρησιν. Ἄλλα τὰ μὲν ἐκείνου πρὸς τὸ προτιμᾶσθαι τῶν ἄλλων δίκαια ταῦτ' ἦσαν, καὶ ὁ ὑπὲρ ἐκείνου λέγων ταῦτα προὔβαλλετο. Παρέχει δὲ καὶ τὸ εἰκὸς ἐννοεῖν ὡς κάκεῖνος τὸ πρᾶγμα μετεχειρίζετο, οὐκ ὀλίγους κλέπτων ταῖς ἀγαθαῖς ὑποσχέσεσι, καὶ μᾶλλον οἷς ἐκπεσεῖν τῶν ἀξιομάτων ξυνέβη ἐκ τῆς τοῦ καιροῦ δυσκολίας τὸ πρότερον. (ibid., 95.22–97.2)

⁴⁶³ Akropolites, 76.1–32.

close associate.⁴⁶⁴ Thus, winning over the patriarch in his power takeover was the last ingredient Michael needed to completely secure his position as the legitimate guardian of Ioannes IV. Much to the ecclesiastic circles' surprise, though, by the time the patriarch reached Magnesia, he found Michael Palaiologos not just a designated regent to Ioannes IV but a *megas doux*. In awaiting Arsenios' arrival, the senators had conferred, with the young emperor's politically unconscious consent, the dignity of *megas doux* to Michael Palaiologos, who held the office of *megas konostaulos* so that his title would befit the high position in the imperial service he now occupied.⁴⁶⁵ With the promotion from *megas konostaulos* to *megas doux*, Michael was elevated to a status similar to that of *protovestiarios* Georgios Mouzalon. In doing so, the senators supporting the Palaiologoi made Michael far less likely to answer for his deeds to the senate. As a *megas doux* and a regent, Michael was put above many other officials, even as his proximity to the emperor was now ceremonially justified. Other than nominal and ceremonial advantages the dignity of *megas doux* brought with it, Michael also gained access to the imperial treasurers. These he used judiciously, directing money from the treasury towards those who were in alleged need of it. Pachymeres simply states that "by this means [Palaiologos] created the foundations of his popularity amongst those who would not forget his goodwill."⁴⁶⁶ The recipients of the coins from the treasury remain unknown. Since, however, the magnates were more concerned with tax exemptions and the turning of their *pronoiai*,⁴⁶⁷ it is conceivable that the money taken from the treasury was used to buy the goodwill of the people in the streets through donations to charitable foundations and the organizing of public events around festivities for the masses. Save the public, the patriarch seems to have been no less susceptible to Michael's monetary charms. Upon the ecclesiastic delegation's arrival in Magnesia, Michael treated Arsenios and the leading metropolitans with the utmost respect and did not spare any money in making the church prelates' stay at the court comfortable. Furthermore, Michael made sure to show the archons of the church that he respected them by granting Arsenios uninterrupted access to the young emperor. The efforts paid off for the regent since the

⁴⁶⁴ For the election of Arsenios Autoreianos see: Blemmydes, Akropolites, Pachymeres.

⁴⁶⁵ For the dignity of *megas doux* see: Guilland, *Institutions* I, 542–51; Macrides, Munitiz, and Angelov, *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 276–8. Pachymeres (*Relations* II, 525.7–11) refers to the title of *megas doux* as dignity and not office; after the death of Michael VIII Palaiologos *megas doux* was demoted into an office (*Pseudo-Kodinos*, 276).

⁴⁶⁶ Κάντεῦθεν ἀρχὰς ἑαυτῷ εὐμενείας προύκατεβάλλετο, οἷς οὐκ ἦν τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἐπιλελῆσθαι. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 101.25–103.1)

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.18–21; 139.6.

patriarch with other prelates accepted Michael's new position.⁴⁶⁸ The one piece in the political puzzle Michael did not seem to control, now appeared amenable to Palaiologan charm.

Once Michael had the leading churchmen on his side, yet another meeting followed, this time a joint session of the senators and the prelates. At the meeting, the magnates supporting Michael were quick to follow Michael's recent elevation to the dignity of *megas doux* with a rather bold suggestion of granting Michael further honours by naming him *basileopator* and promoting him to the rank of *despotes*, the highest dignity available for any Roman save the emperor.⁴⁶⁹ Michael and his supporters saw these further promotions as just compensation for the toils and labours Michael had undertaken on everybody's behalf. While these new honours were eventually bestowed on Michael, consensus was not reached immediately. Rather, Georgios Nostongos together with the Laskarides objected to the proposal.⁴⁷⁰ The split among the senators was marked by an intense debate buttressed by rhetorical craftiness on both sides. In the end, the opposition to Michael's promotion was outvoted and the *megas doux* was elevated to the dignity of *despotes*.

In just a few months since Theodoros II's death and Michael's release from prison in August of 1258, Palaiologos managed to mobilize enough support to occupy the highest positions in the Roman state.⁴⁷¹ Yet, as this episode reminds us, Michael's swift promotion within months was not applauded by everybody and there was a significant opposition he had to deal with among the senatorial elites. The opposition, this time around, was expressed through political debate within the confines of the palace. Words were used instead of swords and, in the end, the pro-Palaiologan current prevailed thanks to their ability to keep the consensus on their side; needless to say, Michael's personal promises and the grants given to his allies surely aided the cause. Be that as it may, through coercion and promises, Michael was crowned *despotes* by Ioannes IV with the help of Arsenios, whose support demonstrated that the Palaiologoi had managed to win over the sympathies of the church as much as those of the state officials. Furthermore, Michael's title of *despotes* was universally acclaimed by the people; that is, those Romans and foreigners manning the empire's armies. Shortly after the meeting of the senate

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 103.18–105.18.

⁴⁶⁹ For *despotes* see: Guiland, *Institutions* II, 1–24. For the title of *basileopator* in general and for its connection to tutelage and protection of a young emperor see: A. Leroy-Molinghen and P. Karlin-Hayter, "Basileopator," *Byzantion* 38 (1968), 278–81, especially 279; S. Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People* (Leiden/New York: Brill 1997), 98–101.

⁴⁷⁰ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 107.12–16.

⁴⁷¹ For the chronology of events from Theodoros II's death to Michael's elevation to *despotes* see: Macrides, *The History*, 348.n.1.

and the ecclesiastic heads, both Roman and non-Roman soldiers were asked whether they wished to see Michael on the throne and, according to Akropolites at least, everybody joyfully assented.⁴⁷² The public acclamation was the last thing necessary for Michael to fully legitimize his new position. By receiving no backlash from the public, a somewhat unpredictable judge, Michael could be proud of his endeavours in winning and maintaining public support despite the many fallouts he had had with previous emperors and their dignitaries. With the soldiers' loud acclamation of him as *despotes*, the news of the latest elevation could spread smoothly around Magnesia and from there to other cities of the empire. It was in such circumstances that, after an initially bloody revolution, Michael Palaiologos succeeded in mobilizing enough public support—both lay and ecclesiastic, elite and common—in order to seize control of the imperial administration.

5.5. The Final Countdown: Michael Palaiologos Goes for the Throne

Even though his rise from the *megas konostaulos* in disfavour to the *despotes cum basileopator* was swift, Michael was very cautious in crafting his public persona. In order to justify his rapid promotion, he had to rely on seemingly legal procedures that stemmed from reaching a public consensus in the senate, the church, and the armies.⁴⁷³ Thus, from August to December of 1258, Michael had to carefully negotiate with these three power-brokers, who had different expectations from him in return for their support. An element that was particularly useful for Michael's maintenance of support was the wellbeing of the young emperor. Thus, Ioannes IV, offshoot of the line of Theodoros II and Ioannes III—two highly beloved monarchs among the people and the armies—served as a perfect shield for Palaiologos. Michael projected to the public the image of himself as a mere protector of the infant emperor, who needed capable guidance in order to grow up into an individual worthy of the imperial dignity and his ancestors' legacy.

While the young emperor's wellbeing kept the elites aligned with the public climate, Michael had to exercise far more caution with the senators, who, thanks to their own education, experience, and ambition were able to perfectly understand Palaiologos' political manoeuvres. The key to Michael's success in securing senatorial and ecclesiastic support for his cause

⁴⁷² Akropolites, 76.37–49.

⁴⁷³ For legality of the people's in Byzantine political theory see: Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 89–117.

rested with his incremental and careful political ascent. During each step of his rise to power that involved senatorial discussion—from the murder of Mouzalones to his elevation to the dignity *despotes* and *basileopator*—Michael gained advantage over potential opponents by being able to discern in the debate that took place in the senate which senators were his allies and which were more reluctant to join the majority. Knowing who his opponents were, Michael, now a regent, could work on weakening their influence. In this endeavour, he had to be very cautious since most of his senatorial opponents were related to his supporters', or even his own, family.⁴⁷⁴ For instance, Manouel Laskaris became an ardent opponent of Michael's rise, while his brother, Michael Laskaris, supported the Palaiologan agenda.⁴⁷⁵ The tight familial links among the senators, to which Michael himself was not immune, ensured that the regent was not simply able to get rid of all his enemies. Rather, he had to find the least painful way to remove them from the court. In the case of the Laskarid brothers, then, he sent Manouel to Prousa where his proximity to the imperial centre ensured that any attempt at dissidence could not pass unnoticed.⁴⁷⁶ Being sent to Prousa, on the other hand, meant that a loud opponent was far away from influencing the senate meetings with anti-Palaiologan speeches. While he managed to remove his opponents from the senate, many of whom willingly left the court which they found themselves in the minority, Michael proceeded to the next step of strengthening his position in the senate: he promoted his allies to honours that would allow them access to the senate. Thus, Michael's brother Ioannes was honoured with the office of *mezas domestikos* without having held any office or dignity in the past.⁴⁷⁷ Upon being invested in his office, Ioannes Palaiologos was immediately dispatched together with Alexios Sarantopoulos and Ioannes Rhaoul—Michael's associates since his early days in the imperial service—to fight the Epeirote-led alliance against the empire.⁴⁷⁸ By putting his brother in command of the armies, Michael ensured that the troops remained under his own men's command. In this fashion, any chance of instigating an open rebellion against the new regime was reduced to a minimum. Furthermore, having a Palaiologos in charge of the armies meant Michael was able to continue promoting his *genos* in the Nikaian-dominated Balkans, in an effort to build a support base that would rival that of the Laskarides in Asia Minor.⁴⁷⁹ Familial politics notwithstanding, other members of the

⁴⁷⁴ For the prosopography and marriages of the Palaiologoi see: Cheynet et Vannier, *Études prosopographiques*, 129–83.

⁴⁷⁵ For Manouel Laskaris see: *PLP* 14551; for Michael Laskaris see: *PLP* 14554.

⁴⁷⁶ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 131.20–21.

⁴⁷⁷ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 77.35–38.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.38–43.

⁴⁷⁹ For the importance of generals consciously building their base of support with the armies and civilians see: Krallis, "Urbane Warriors," 154–68.

Palaiologan alliance were also promoted to higher office, ensuring the *golden chain's* loyalty to Michael.⁴⁸⁰ In a way, like Cornelius Sulla and Julius Caesar, more than a millennium before his time, Michael Palaiologos was able to populate the senate with his own men.

Having methodically and in stages cleansed the immediate senatorial elites of his opponents, Michael was left with his core supporters in the capital to deliberate on the affairs of the Roman state. It is at this point, as Pachymeres tells us, that Michael started lobbying for his elevation to the rank of co-emperor to Ioannes IV.⁴⁸¹ In the meetings of the senate, where the issue was first broached and approved before it would be taken for public approval by the army, pro-Palaiologan supporters made their case for Michael's elevation to the throne, using traditional Roman political virtues associated with good emperors in their rhetoric:

the best to rule is the one who comes through virtue and by proving that he is the best [to rule]. This benefits the masses, since those who are appointed to rule accept the reason for which they have been elected. Just as we do not choose the doctor capable of rendering health from illness on the basis of fortune or birth, so too if we chose the man who must hold the tiller on the basis of birth, then we have placed a pirate, rather than a captain, in charge of the ship. And it is likely that the one who most needs to be pure and well educated, so that he may rule well, will be totally impure, since from his birth he is surrounded with imperial luxuries and soft living, and besieged by flatterers, while truth is banished and the most evil things are presented as the best.⁴⁸²

By employing traditional Roman ideas of merit-based arguments to legally justify Michael's elevation to the imperial office, the pro-Palaiologan party in the senate managed to sway the remaining senators, who were all more or less prone to support the Palaiologan takeover.⁴⁸³ Each of the virtues necessary for one to be justly elected emperor was promoted in antithesis to the alternative: merit vs. birth, education and experience vs. imperial luxury and softness of character. By pointing out the antithetic pairs of virtues and vices, the senatorial rhetoricians left

⁴⁸⁰ Macrides, *The History*, 350.n.10.

⁴⁸¹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 113.7–12.

⁴⁸² τὴν ἐξ ἀρετῆς καὶ δοκιμασίας ἀρίστης ὧν ἄρχειν μέλλει. Αὕτη γὰρ καὶ λυσιτελεῖς τοῖς πλήθεσιν, ἐνδόντων τῶν εἰς ἀρχὴν καταστάντων ἐπὶ τίνι καὶ προσεκληθήσαν. Ἰατρὸν γὰρ οὔτε τὸν ἐκ τύχης οὔτε τὸν ἐκ γένους εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν ὑγίαν τοῖς νοσοῦσιν ἀξιόχρεων εἴποιμεν· καὶ εἰ ἐκ γένους τὸν κυβερνήσοντα ἐγκρινοῦμεν, καταποντιστὴν μᾶλλον ἢ κυβερνήτην ἐπιστήσομεν τῇ νηϊ. Κινδυνεύειν δ' οὕτως καὶ τὸν μᾶλλον καθάρσεως, εἴτ' οὖν παιδεύσεως, εἰς τὸ καλῶς βασιλεύειν δεόμενον ἀκάθαρτον εἶναι μάλιστα, ἅμα γεννηθέντα καὶ ἅμα τρυφαῖς καὶ σπατάλαις παραληφθέντα βασιλικαῖς, ἐφεδρευούσης τε κολακείας, ἐκποδῶν δ' οὔσης ἀληθείας καὶ τῶν κακίστων ὡς καλλίστων ὑποκοριζομένων. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 129.12–21)

⁴⁸³ On traditional imperial virtues see: Menander Rhetor, *A Commentary*, D.A. Russel and N.G. Wilson (transl. and eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 372.2–376.23; for imperial virtues in the Laskarid and early Palaiologan times that include piety, generosity, philanthropy, compassion, and gentleness see: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 84–5. Also, see Leon VI's *Taktika* in which the author makes a case for skill and personal worth in becoming a successful general: *The Taktika of Leo VI*, 16–36.

only one possible path to benefitting the state: granting co-emperorship to Palaiologos. Anybody who voted against such a motion would be voting against the public good.

Pointing out the qualities requisite to proper rule, the senators supporting Palaiologos, indirectly, made an implicit comparison between Michael—the educated commendable state official—and young Ioannes IV—inexperienced *porphyrogennetos* who owed his position to his birth alone. By offering a veiled criticism of the incumbent emperor, the senators, speaking in support of Palaiologos, were further able to emphasize the necessity of Michael's imperial elevation since the reins of the state were in the hands of an inexperienced, even incapable, ruler. In the emerging rhetorical image, it appeared that the young emperor's faults could be rectified through Palaiologos' experienced guidance. Finally, such rhetoric of contrasting merit, embodied in Michael, and birth, represented by Ioannes IV, served another, more sinister, purpose. With the majority of the senators, both at home and in charge of the imperial troops in the Balkans, supporting Michael, the discreet juxtaposition of Michael and Ioannes IV could be easily understood as a threat to the young Laskaris' emperorship. Thus, to friends of Ioannes IV the message was clear: concede to Michael Palaiologos' demands, or the child-emperor would not be unharmed.

Having swayed the senators to support his election as co-emperor—through gifts, coercion, or removal from the court—Michael had to make his case before the church prelates if he wished to continue with the process. While neither the patriarch nor the metropolitans had to agree on his candidacy, Michael knew that he would need the patriarch to ceremonially crown him in front of the Roman citizens who would then publicly acclaim his elevation to the imperial office. Assuming imperial office with the blessings of the patriarch, a spiritual partisan of Theodoros II, Michael could be more certain to fully gain the needed public support even from the populace of Asia Minor whose sentiments were generally pro-Laskarid.⁴⁸⁴ The Palaiologoi had managed to root their public support network in the Balkans, where the imperial imprint was smaller, if present at all. In Asia Minor, however, the Laskarid public imagery ruled supreme. While, however, senators could be convinced, bought, and, when necessary, removed and then replaced with Palaiologan men, Michael exercised no such power nor connections within the ecclesiastic circles.⁴⁸⁵ If lack of public and senatorial support was the Achilles' heel of the

⁴⁸⁴ For the pro-Laskarid sentiment in Asia Minor: Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*, 505.22–31, 506.19–507.6, 535.26–536.4; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 57.32–61.22.

⁴⁸⁵ Palaiologoi notoriously absent from ecclesiastic offices: Cheynet et Vannier, *Études prosopographiques*, 129–83.

Mouzalonēs, lack of ecclesiastic connections was Michael's weak spot. He therefore had to convince the Church representatives and the patriarch himself to support him through less coercive methods, not least of all the patriarch himself. Arsenios Autoreianos was, alas, a particularly difficult nut to crack since, in public, he posed as the spiritual guardian of Ioannes IV and a close associate of the Laskarid *oikos*.⁴⁸⁶ Thus, Michael's co-emperorship would infringe on Arsenios' own public image as protector of the young emperor. In order to keep the balance between his own position and that of the patriarch in the public eye, Michael opted to win over the church prelates by bribing them and making promises to grant a more elevated position to the Church in state affairs. Entering negotiations with the patriarch, Michael was willing to renounce some of his own prerogatives in order to win over the prelates and the patriarch. As Pachymeres tells us:

[Michael] promised to rectify many things: to elevate the ranking of the Church, to honour the priests in greater measure; to promote to a higher rank in state administration those who were worthy; to accept fair judgements and to appoint those who would judge impartially, of whom by far the most important was Michael Kakos, also called Senachereim, who was well educated in both logic and laws; he would grant him the office of *protasekretis*, which had been left vacant for a long while, and would be willing to give him subordinates, so that he could judge remaining impartial and uncorrupted. Furthermore, he would honour education as well as those engaged in scholarship more than anybody else; he would unconditionally show love to the soldiers and their *pronoiai*, and if they fell in battle, or if they died, these [*pronoiai*] would pass down to their children, even if their wives were only pregnant; he would not even speak of introducing unjust levies; there would be no room for slander, the duels would end, as well as the ordeal by iron, since the most terrible danger would be impended if somebody would put the ordeal by iron in practice. The affairs of the polity would be maintained free of any fear in peace so that the rich who had great fortunes would demonstrate their wealth and gain glory without any angst.⁴⁸⁷

In his promises, Michael portrayed himself as an ideal pious Christian ruler who would obey his administrators and advisors, with special regard to the prelates. Other than respecting the

⁴⁸⁶ Autoreianos, *Testament*, 952.36–953.9.

⁴⁸⁷ πλὴν καὶ πολλὰ τινα κατορθοῦν ὑπισχνεῖτο, τὴν μὲν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνυψοῦν ὅσον, τοὺς δ' ἱερωμένους καὶ πλεόν τοῦ μετρίου τιμᾶν, ἀξίαις τε μεγίσταις τοὺς ἀξίους τῶν ἐν τέλει προβιβάζειν καὶ κρίσεις ὑπεραποδέχεσθαι δικαίας καὶ τοὺς ἀρρεπῶς κρινοῦντας ἐγκαθιστᾶν, ὧν καὶ μάλα καὶ πρῶτιστον τὸν Κακὸν Μιχαήλ, τὸν καὶ Συναχηρεῖμ ἐπικεκλημένον, εὖ τῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν νόμων ἔχοντα, ἐν τῷ δοῦναί οἱ καὶ πρωτοασκηρῆτις πάλαι σβεσθὲν ἀξίωμα καὶ οἱ θέλειν ἀσηκρητῆς ὑποτάξαι, ἐφ' ᾧ ἀδεκάστως καὶ ἀνεριθεύτως κρίνοινεν· ἔτι τε λόγον τιμῆσαι καὶ τοὺς ἐν λόγῳ περὶ πλείστου τῶν ἄλλων ποιεῖν· τὸ δὲ γε στρατιωτικὸν ὑπεραγαπᾶν καὶ τὰς ἐκείνων προνοίας, κἂν ἐν πολέμῳ πίπτοιεν, κἂν ἀποθνήσκοινεν, γονικὰς ἐγκαθιστᾶν τοῖς παισὶ, κἂν τισὶν αἱ γυναῖκες κατὰ γαστρὸς ἔχοιεν τὸ κυοφοροῦμενον· εἰσπράξωεν δ' ἀδικῶν μὴδ' ὄνομα εἶναι, μὴδὲ χώραν διδόναι διαβολαῖς, ἀργοῦντος μὲν τοῦ ἐπὶ ταύταις μονομαχίου, ἀργοῦντος δὲ καὶ τοῦ σιδήρου, ὡς ἐπηρητημένου καὶ κινδύνου μεγίστου, εἴ τις τολμῶη τῶν δυναμένων καὶ ἐν ἀρχαῖς ὑπέχειν τὸν μύθρον καταναγκάζειν· τὰ δὲ τῆς πολιτείας οὕτως ἀφόβως ἐν εἰρήνῃ διατηρεῖσθαι ὥστε καὶ τοὺς εὐποροῦντας, ἱκανῶς τῆς περιουσίας ἔχοντας, ἐπιδεικνυμένους τὰ ὑπάρχοντα κυδροῦσθαι καὶ τὸ παράπαν μὴ δεδιδῆναι. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 131.10–133.1)

decisions of the Church above all, Michael also referred to actions that would benefit the masses—turning *pronoiai* of the fallen soldiers into hereditary property, limiting taxation, and prohibiting non-Roman practices. Emphasizing his care for less privileged Romans, Michael left the representatives of the Church rhetorically mute since he rooted his prospective imperial tenure in Christian virtue par excellence: *philanthropeia*.⁴⁸⁸ Finally, by emphasizing his intention to support the intellectuals and the scholars of the empire, Michael sent a clear sign to the prelates—among whom many were active intellectuals—that they would find all the monetary support they desired from the emperor. Persuaded by Michael’s promises, gifts, or eventual threats from the senators to whose families many prelates themselves belonged, the patriarch and the metropolitans capitulated and sanctioned Michael’s elevation to imperial office.⁴⁸⁹

The support of the Church came at a cost, though. First, in order to lift the curse hovering over Michael since he swore the oath to Ioannes III after the trial of 1253 never to attempt to usurp the throne, Arsenios demanded that Michael enter a new oath-binding relationship with Ioannes IV swearing to be a good guide to the young emperor, whose life and crown he himself would never attempt to take.⁴⁹⁰ Michael could not but agree to these new terms that allowed him to legally obtain the throne without breaking the oath sworn to the previous emperor and tarnish his own carefully curated public image. In return, however, Michael “desired that a vow be formulated, and oaths sworn, that if the young emperor thought to undertake any action against him [Michael], the youth [Ioannes IV] would also of necessity be bound by the same conditions. This was done, and the oaths were certified in writing; the writer was Kakos, who held the position of *protasekretis*.”⁴⁹¹ Thus, both emperors were bound by mutual oaths of co-emperorship sanctioned by the Church. Even though such oath swearing practices were quite uncommon in the Roman empire, they had existed in Roman political culture long before the empire was dressed in Christian clothes. Since the earliest days of the Roman Republic, a special vow—*sacramentum*—was put in place to curse the one who breached the oath sworn under religious sanction.⁴⁹² It is, then, in a very Roman way that the cohabitation of the two emperors received both legal and religious sanction from everybody present.

⁴⁸⁸ For *philanthropeia* in Byzantium see: D.J. Constantelos, *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press 1968); for *philanthropeia* as imperial virtue see: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 84; Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*, 505.22–26.

⁴⁸⁹ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 133.26–135.4.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 135.2–16.

⁴⁹¹ καὶ ἀντιστρόφως ἐζήτει τὴν ἀρὰν τίθεσθαι καὶ τοὺς ὄρκους γίνεσθαι, εἴ που καὶ ὁ νέος κατ’ αὐτοῦ μελετήσας διαπράξοιτο, ὡς ἐξ ἀνάγκης τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἐνέχεσθαι. (*ibid.*, 135.16–18)

⁴⁹² J. Rüpke, *Domi Militiae: Die religiöse Konstruktion des Krieges in Rom* (Franz Steiner, 1990), 76–80.

The oath swearing did not end with the mutual exchange of oaths between the two emperors, however. Rather, during their traditional swearing of allegiance to the new emperor, the summoned magnates of the empire were made to add a special note to their oaths “for greater security of both [Ioannes IV and Michael Palaiologos], that the subjects must raise their hands in vengeance against either one if he conspired against the other.”⁴⁹³ With such an addendum to the oath of faithful service the patriarch wished to make the conditions of joint rule public in order to protect the young emperor. By making the senators and other officials swear to take action against the potential plotter among the emperors, Arsenios also managed to turn all the officials into active agents in preserving the new status quo. Once all of the oaths were exchanged and written down, we can imagine that, not unlike the Mouzalones, Michael sent out new *prostagmata* around the lands of the polity notifying all the provincial magistrates of his accession and potentially the oaths taken to keep both him and Ioannes IV safely enthroned. Emphasizing Ioannes IV’s imperial position was still the safest way for Michael to ascend to the imperial throne without any rebellions or divisions among the Roman public. In other words, by relying on Laskarid popularity as personified in Ioannes IV, Michael was able to retain the public consensus on his side without having to put in an effort to win over the populace for himself.

5.6. *Panem et Circenses*: Michael Palaiologos and the Public Consensus

Upon the exchange of oaths, Michael VIII took great care to make it clear to as many of his subjects as possible that he was now an emperor. While the *prostagmata* were on their way to reaching the hands of provincial governors and city councils, Michael’s public acclamation in Magnesia took place. According to Akropolites, the senators and the soldiers, to whom Pachymeres adds the prelates of the Church as well, seated Michael VIII on a shield and lifted him up in order for the people to see him elevated and acclaim him emperor.⁴⁹⁴ By employing one of the oldest ceremonial practices in the book, Palaiologos made it immediately clear in open public space that he had taken over Roman affairs.⁴⁹⁵

The moment Michael VIII was acclaimed emperor, he took on the task of repaying his supporters with great acts of generosity. At least according to Pachymeres: the officials were

⁴⁹³ ἔπ’ ἀσφαλείᾳ καὶ ἀμφοτέρων μείζονι, ἧ μὴν ἔτοιμον εἶναι τὸ ὑπήκοον ἐπ’ ἐκεῖνον ὁρμᾶν φωνώσῃ χειρὶ ὃς ἂν ἐπιβουλεύσοι θατέρῳ (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 135.25–26)

⁴⁹⁴ Akropolites, *Chronike*, 78.8–10; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 139.23–141.1.

⁴⁹⁵ For imperial acclamations on shields see: Ch. Walter, “Raising on a Shield in Byzantine Iconography,” *Revue des études byzantines* 33 (1975), 133–76.

further promoted and the most ardent supporters of the new emperor were connected to him through marital arrangements, the soldiers were granted their *pronoiai* in perpetuity, and the common folk of the empire were showered with gifts.⁴⁹⁶ By effectively appeasing all the members of society, Michael was emptying the treasury but, in return, was building up a strong support for his imperial tenure among the rich and poor alike. Appeasing the magnates by promoting them in higher offices was a somewhat easier task than winning over the masses. The latter task demanded more effort and time. Yet, according to Pachymeres, in a rather ruthless public campaign: “[Michael VIII] also took great sums from the public treasury and then, while speaking to the assembled people with the intention of winning their complete support, he would pour out the money for them with both hands, throwing it in profusion to those people who snapped it up like dogs.”⁴⁹⁷ By making himself publicly seen, heard, and remembered for his emotional speeches and lavish donations, Michael VIII was steadily trying to shift the public climate to his favour. By slowly crafting the public persona of Michael Palaiologos the *Philanthropos* for the people of Magnesia, the new emperor was carefully taking over some of the main traits for which Ioannes III, the Almsgiver, and his son Theodoros II were loved for by the people. By assuming the traditional Laskarid epithets, well used in the public sphere, Michael VIII could hope to cast himself as the generous continuator of the previous emperor’s policies. In crafting such an image for himself, though, Michael was also preparing to set Ioannes IV aside, hoping that his co-emperor would not be missed by the people who would be too focused on Michael’s splendour.

With the outbursts of personal generosity during public speeches, Palaiologos was able to go beyond the mere popular expectations of a good emperorship—to be a just and fair ruler who upholds the laws and keeps the Romans safe.⁴⁹⁸ By pouring money over those subjects gathered in front of him to hear him speak, Michael VIII was making the dreams of many commoners in Magnesia come to life. Such dreams are best encapsulated in the pamphlet found in the *Synopsis Chronike*, about a naïve citizen who was walking around Nikaia professing that “very soon a good emperor will show up.”⁴⁹⁹ Having heard about this man’s wishful remarks, emperor Theodoros I Laskaris summoned the citizen and asked him:

⁴⁹⁶ Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 139.3–14.

⁴⁹⁷ Τότε δὲ καὶ πόλλ’ ἄττα τοῦ κοινοῦ ταμείου ἐξεφόρει καί, δημηγορῶν τοῖς συνειλεγμένοις πρὸς χάριν ἄπασαν, εἴτ’ ἀμφοτέραις ἐκείνοις ἐξήντλει τὰ χρήματα, χύδην ἐκρίπτων κυνηδὸν συλλέγουσιν. (ibid., 139.16–19)

⁴⁹⁸ For imperial virtue see note 102 of this chapter.

⁴⁹⁹ ἀναφανήσεται γὰρ δι’ ὀλίγου ὁ ἀγαθὸς βασιλεύς. (Skoutariotes, *Synopsis Chronike*: 463.7.)

“And what of me? Do I not look like a good emperor to you?”
the man said: “and what have you ever given to me so that I would think of you as good?”
and the emperor said: “do I not give myself to you on a daily basis fighting to the death for you and your compatriots?”
but the man responded back at him: “so does the sun shine and thus provides us with warmth and light, but we are not thankful to it; since it fulfills the job it is supposed to do. And you do what you are behoved to do, toiling and labouring, as you say, for the sake of your compatriots.”
the emperor then asked the man: “if I give you a gift, would I be good then?”
“but of course,” responded the simpleton.⁵⁰⁰

Thus, while “toiling and labouring” was part of his duties, Michael VIII also tried to differentiate himself from his predecessors occupying the imperial throne. By granting many personal gifts, however, the emperor caused the state to suffer since its treasury was being unreasonably emptied out, a fact that did not escape future Palaiologan critics.⁵⁰¹ At the time, though, Michael VIII’s excessive generosity to the populace resonated well with the people of Magnesia and, in turn, the emperor received the immediate support he desperately needed in the capital city.

While being generous to the Romans of all walks of life in order to gain their support, Michael, before his official coronation, visited the border fortresses in Asia Minor, including the city of Philadelphia in order to show both to the Roman *akritai*, as well as the Turkmens and the Seljuks that Roman affairs were in order.⁵⁰² What better way to demonstrate the might of the state than by conducting imperial processions around the border so that everybody could see Michael as the guarantor of stability in the realm? On the one hand, the local populace inhabiting the borders could rest assured that the state and its emperor were still there to take care of them. The soldiers stationed in the region would see an emperor ready to command the troops should the need arise.⁵⁰³ Other than being an emperor, as many soldiers surely knew, Michael was a seasoned general with quite a few battles under his belt. On the other hand, the Turkmen chieftains were reminded that the emperor with his armies were close by, should they

⁵⁰⁰ καὶ ὁ βασιλεύς· ‘τί δ’ ἐγώ; οὐ σοὶ δοκῶ καλὸς βασιλεύς;’
καὶ αὐτός· ‘καὶ τί μοί ποτε δέδωκας, ἵνα σέ ἔχω καλόν;’
καὶ πάλιν ὁ βασιλεύς· ‘οὐ δίδομαί σοι καθ’
ἐκάστην ὑπὲρ σου καὶ τῶν ὁμοφύλων μέχρι θανάτου ἀγωνιζόμενος;’
ὁ δὲ ἀνὴρ ἀνθυπέφερε· ‘καὶ ὁ ἥλιος ἐπιλάμπων θερμαίνει καὶ φωτίζει ἡμᾶς, ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔχομεν χάριν αὐτῶ·
ὁ γὰρ προσετάχθη, ἀποπληροῖ· καὶ σὺ γοῦν ὁ ὀφείλεις ἐργάζῃ, ὑπὲρ τῶν ὁμογενῶν, ὡς εἴρηκας, κοπιῶν
καὶ μοχθῶν.’
καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ ἐπέφερεν· ‘ἀλλ’ εἰ δῶσω δῶρά σοι, ἔσομαι ἀγαθός;’
‘καὶ μάλα γε’ ἀντέφησεν ὁ ἀπλοϊκός. (ibid., 463.11–20.)

⁵⁰¹ Anglelon, *Imperial Ideology*, 253–309.

⁵⁰² Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 139.21–141.22.

⁵⁰³ Theodoros II visited the region when he was proclaimed emperor: Akropolites, *Chronike*, 53.5–11.

decide to raid Roman lands. Finally, the sultan and his magnates in Ikonion—many of whom were of Roman origins themselves—could see their ally and ex-official Michael Palaiologos in control of the Roman affairs.

Not sparing a moment to consolidate the public image of himself as a capable and generous ruler, Michael and his senatorial allies were ready to take the final step in completing the imperial election: the coronation in Nikaia. Initially, the agreement between the patriarch and Michael was to crown Ioannes IV first as the senior emperor and then Michael as his junior colleague. Just before the coronation, however, the patriarch was sidelined by the senators and the vast number of prelates, who threatened that they would physically harm Ioannes IV should he be crowned at all.⁵⁰⁴ This time around, the senators did not place their threat under the veil of layered rhetoric. Rather the elite supporters of Michael VIII felt powerful enough to openly state that they would take whatever means necessary to see Michael and Michael alone crowned emperor. Arsenios, not wishing to lose the child, gave in under pressure and crowned Michael and his wife Theodora in a public ceremony, while the young emperor was given minor tokens remotely honouring his imperial status. Following the coronation in the church:

while the child [Ioannes IV] was not paying attention, being engaged in childish games, the man who was now reigning made speeches frequently on that day and afterwards, to endear himself to the masses, throwing silver coins at them with both hands; they gathered them and allegedly praised their benefactor, losing interest in the child and his affairs, without knowing what level of evil they had reached: for the plot of one emperor against the other had already begun.⁵⁰⁵

Thus, Michael continued to fortify his imperial position through displays of generosity and care for the people. This time, however, he was promoting the image of Michael VIII Palaiologos, the emperor of the Romans in his own right, and not a mere regent and guardian to young Ioannes IV.

The coronation of Michael VIII and Theodora represents a new beginning in Palaiologan public policies. In order to strengthen his own position, Michael, now having fully cleansed the

⁵⁰⁴ Autoreianos, *Testament*, 952.36–41; Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 143.13–145.4.

⁵⁰⁵ Τότε δὲ ἀτημελήτως τὸ παιδίον διάγον πρὸς παιγνίοις ἦν παιδικοῖς, καὶ ὁ βασιλεύων ἐν δημηγορίαις τῆς ἡμέρας συχνάκις, εἶθ' ὕστερον καὶ προσφιλοτιμούμενος τοὺς πολλοὺς, κατὰ μέσον σφῶν ἐρρίπτει καὶ ἀμφοτέραις ἀργύρια· οἱ δὲ προσσυλλέγοντες ἀνύμνουν δῆθεν τὸν εὐεργέτην, παιδίον καὶ τὰ κατ' ἐκεῖνο χαίρειν ἐῶντες, μηδ' οἱ κακοῦ εἰδότες γεγόνασιν· ἡ γὰρ κατὰ θατέρου ἐπιβουλή τοῦ ἐτέρου ἐντεῦθεν ἤρχετο. (Pachymeres, *Chronikon*, 147.7–12)

senate of his opponents, opted to sideline the church in the same way he sidelined Ioannes IV on the day of the coronation. Arsenios, understanding what was happening, made Michael's job easier by going into self-imposed political isolation only to return to his duties after the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261.⁵⁰⁶ The new emperor, on the other hand, used the patriarch to gain the public prestige he needed before the coronation. The fact that Arsenios was prevailed upon to crown Michael VIII as sole emperor by means of blatant threats remained a matter of private affairs. In the eyes of the public, the patriarch together with the high officials of the state and the church decided to solely crown Michael VIII because he was ready to rule while young Ioannes IV was not. Once the deed was done, Michael went as far as to privatize religious symbolism for his own public image.⁵⁰⁷ In this aspect Michael outdid his predecessors by crafting an image of Michael Palaiologos, the protégé of Archangel Michael, whose accomplishments for the people of the empire were the result of divine grace alone.⁵⁰⁸ The patriarch, on the other hand, could do nothing but watch from his self-imposed retirement how Michael mobilized diverse religious signifiers to boost the image of himself as a pious and divinely ordained emperor.

5.7. The Man Who Wrote the Book

In January of 1259, Michael VIII Palaiologos sat on the imperial throne which he was to occupy until his death in 1282. He spent his life until 1259 serving in the imperial administration of Ioannes III and Theodoros II. His career had been a remarkable one: he obtained the best education possible under imperial tutelage; he served as a commander and governor of Serres and Melnikon under his own father Andronikos Palaiologos; he married an imperial niece; he commanded the Latin forces of the empire; and became regent to Ioannes IV. On the flip side, for much of his career, Michael was suspected of plotting against the regimes of Ioannes III and Theodoros II: he had to undergo a trial; was incarcerated twice; and at one point committed high

⁵⁰⁶ Autoreianos, *Testament*, 953.10–43.

⁵⁰⁷ For instance, in his treaty with the Genoese before the reconquest of Constantinople, Michael VIII sent a *peplos* to Genoa depicting himself entering the city's cathedral surrounded by his divine protector archangel Michael (C. Hilsdale, "The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)," *DOP* 64 (2010), 151–99). For Michael VIII's depiction of himself in the mercy of divine agents in public spaces see: M.-A. Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *DOP* 47 (1993), 243–61.

⁵⁰⁸ For the role of divine grace in Michael VIII's propaganda see the autobiographical *typikon* (*De vita sua*). Also, otherwise religiously sparse in *The History*, Akropolites ascribes divine grace to Michael Palaiologos several times in the narrative (R.J. "The Thirteenth Century in Byzantine Historical Writing," in Ch. Dendrinos, J. Harris, E. Harvalia-Crook, J. Herrin, eds., *Porphyrogenita: Essays in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides* (London: King's College 2003), 76; Macrides, "Introduction," 54–5).

treason by running away to the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, where he managed to build a solid career in exile. All these actions and events defining his career have one thing in common: they were publicly witnessed episodes of his life. Thus, whether or not Michael plotted against the regime in private remains unknown and outside the scope of this dissertation. What matters was how these snippets of Michael's public life were recorded and interpreted in the literary production of the people who were educated in the Roman empire. In turn, this literary engagement with Michael's public life has allowed us to see in what ways successful politicians of the period managed to navigate the political waters of the medieval Roman state.

The final instances of Michael's service under other emperors are heavily blurred by the lack of a strong ruler. In this context the senate, the church, the army, and the people all played crucial role in determining the future of the Roman empire. In such circumstances, Michael's accumulated social capital allowed him to dominate the senate, while also winning over to his cause the soldiers and common civilians of Magnesia. The election of Michael VIII Palaiologos to imperial office was all but guaranteed. It was only through the careful curating of his public image, as he was dealing with a number of different socio-economic groups within the empire, that Palaiologos was able to climb all the way up to the imperial throne. Once elected emperor, Michael's public life underwent a transition from being a public servant under an emperor to being emperor of the Romans in charge of all the other magistrates. Yet, in his first months in office, we see Michael behaving as he had in the past. Much in the same vein as when he was able to employ his familial background to gain initial repute at the imperial school or in his first office, now too, Michael VIII, an emperor, used the young emperor Ioannes IV as a shield upon which to step as he launched his independent imperial career.

It was only after winning over a significant number of supporters in the wider public that Michael VIII decided to cast off all the anchors tying him to the previous regime. By removing the last obstacle to his own full control of the public sphere in the Roman Empire—the patriarch Arsenios—from the public gaze, Michael VIII entered a new stage of his public life. He no longer needed anything or anybody as a buttress to his political prominence. There was nobody left in the high echelons of the Roman society, lay or ecclesiastic, who could pose an immediate threat to him. Ioannes IV remained sidelined, since Michael VIII did not need the young Laskaris as a shield anymore. His public persona, that of a generous and capable emperor, was the shield upon which he now rested.

Having dominated the public sphere Michael now needed to remain unchallenged by other Roman magnates. From the beginning of his career in the 1240s up until 1259, Michael had learned the art of crafting a public persona to win the support needed to prosper while avoiding imperial wrath. In 1259, Michael VIII became an emperor who now needed to rely on capable administrators and generals. The trick was to find suitable individuals who would not endanger his imperial prerogatives, nor, in any way, infringe on his public image. In other words, it was Michael VIII's turn to be vigilant over the alliances that were being forged among the *golden chain* households of the empire, most of whom were related to him to some degree. With this in mind, Michael VIII no longer had to worry about carving out a spot under the sun for himself in the empire's political arena; rather, he had to make sure that he kept his own public presence radiant enough to overshadow his own administrators and officials in order to preserve the public consensus on his side. Fortunately for Michael VIII Palaiologos, he had a considerable advantage over any potential rival: he was the one who "wrote the book" on how to, step by step, become an emperor. Anybody wishing to do the same would have to follow his blueprint.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1. The Publics and Their Wants

Having followed Michael Palaiologos' career from his days at the imperial school in the later 1230s until his imperial coronation in early 1259, we have encountered diverse publics with which Roman officials had to engage as they sought to promote their own careers or even maintain their position. The publics were numerous, and as has been argued in this dissertation, interests varied from one group to another. Other than having diverse interests, different publics expected to be communicated with in different ways. That is, not every public responded in the same way to a single message. As a consequence, Roman officials who mastered multiple registers of communication were the ones who could expect to gain public recognition for their service and, in turn, see themselves promoted to higher offices and even dignities. Depending on their place on the polity's social hierarchy, officials and other notables of the empire had to bear in mind that very position in order to effectively focus on the publics they specifically needed to court as they advanced through the ranks of the provincial and central administration. Thus, Michael Palaiologos had a very different starting position, as well as political aspirations, from Nikolaos Manglavites. The different agendas of the two men meant that they led distinctly different public lives and ensured that they strove to establish their social connections in different ways. The reason the two men clashed was that they shared the public sphere of Melnikon, where both state official and local notable wished to exercise undisputed control.

There was no one correct way of choosing which socio-economic faction one would engage with first. Rather, depending on a series of factors—one's own familial background, education, proximity to the institutions of power, local social networks, etc.—an ambitious politician would start forging alliances within his own interest group. Taking the needs of his career into consideration, a Roman official or notable would branch out to other targeted publics. Throughout this dissertation we have followed Michael Palaiologos and his public life; in charting the publics of the Roman empire, we follow the same man's order of engagement.

By sheer virtue of his birth and Andronikos Palaiologos' position in the imperial administration, from a young age, Michael had to engage with members of the *golden chain* of which the Palaiologan *oikos* was a significant link. Having benefited from an imperially sponsored education at court, the young Palaiologos was able to carve out a place for himself in the group of prospective officials-to-be. It is because of his education that Palaiologos was able

to establish a firm network with other notables regardless of whether they originated from the empire's respected families or the emerging class of *novi homines*. The high state officials comprised a singular public defined by shared interests and cultural outlook. Most state officials wished to promote their careers and for this to happen they first had to rely on their peers. In their attempts to secure their positions, the senatorial elites were also there to help each other restrict the control that the emperor and his *oikos* exercised over them. This does not mean that there were no political factions within this public; rather, the ways in which they employed and mobilized the production of knowledge and memory in their discursive spaces constituted them as a singular public. After all, histories were written by and for the members of the senatorial elites.

From his early days all the way to his imperial proclamation, Michael had to rely on his peers, and he had to keep engaging with them in order to promote his career. The social network the Palaiologoi forged inevitably helped Michael during the trial for treason instigated by the emperor himself. Furthermore, the strong connection between the *golden chain* households led to Michael's marriage into the extended imperial *oikos*. Finally, it was with the support of the senatorial elites that Palaiologos was able to sway both public opinion and prominent ecclesiastics, to place their trust on him and leave the reins of the state in his hands.

Leaving the imperial centre to serve as governor of Melnikon and Serres under Andronikos Palaiologos' supervision, Michael had to learn how to make himself known to two intertwined yet clearly separate publics: the populace of the empire's cities as well as the city-dwelling local notables. In making oneself known to the wider populace of provincial cities, Michael relied on the help of local intellectual and spiritual figures such as Iakobos in Thessaloniki, who composed a whole programme to commemorate Andronikos as the caretaker and protector of the city and exalt Michael Palaiologos as his father's worthy heir. Next to public discourse, Michael also came to deploy material rewards in the form of provisions and grants for the commoners, as we see him doing in Magnesia and Nikaia during his rapid elevation from *megas konostaulos* to the imperial office. Even outside the Roman empire, as we have seen from the example of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum, governors and central administrators were aware of the importance of keeping the wider populace content. It is with this intention in mind that the Seljuk sultans in Ikonion were more than eager to host and employ Roman political refugees in their central administration. Having a Roman govern Romans was surely one of the most effective communicative actions a Persianate sultan could take. From speeches delivered in Thessaloniki to coins dispersed around Magnesia, Michael also learned that communicative

actions taken in one city do not necessarily matter to the populace of another. Thus, while having similar interests, each city's dwellers comprised an almost self-regulating public on their own.

Obtaining the support of urban provincial potentates was a somewhat more challenging task. As we have seen, initially, Michael was not particularly successful in dealing with this group as he ended up being charged with treason once he had a fallout with Nikolaos Manglavites. Having learned his lesson, Michael VIII Palaiologos successfully kept on good terms with Thessalonian notables, such as the Spatenoi, with whom his father Andronikos had forged good ties. It is, unfortunately for us, impossible to know in what ways state officials like Andronikos and Michael Palaiologos cut deals with local notables in order to secure their support. The only clear and well-recorded action taken by imperial representatives to keep the local notables on their side was the grant of *pronoiai*, as was the case with the elites of Thessaloniki under Michael VIII's tenure. Be that as it may, local notables were not to be underestimated. They could easily affect wider public opinion in a given city and could prove useful allies and extremely dangerous adversaries to any imperial agent and member of the *golden chain*, given their privileged access to the local discursive spaces. At the same time these local actors often possessed the means and at times education with which to procure protection from officials at the imperial centre.

Being comprised of Romans of all walks of life, as well as non-Roman elements residing in the empire, soldiers represented both a public on their own as well as communicative catalysts for spreading ideas about specific persons or concepts, such as state unity. On the one hand, the support of the armed forces could forestall open rebellion against their favorite. On the other, being formed of Roman and non-Roman citizens the soldiers had homes in cities and villages away from the army camp. This meant that the soldiers also engaged with the distinctly local but still Roman public discourse as we have seen in the example of Michael Palaiologos' trial where the soldiers were asked to pass their own judgement. In his career promotion, Michael Palaiologos relied heavily on the soldiers who served under him, as we have seen by the example of the riots at Sosandra. Also, as communicative catalysts, Michael VIII as much as Ioannes III and Theodoros II made sure to keep the veterans on their side in the provinces by granting them extensive *pronoiai*, as we have seen in the cases covered in the first chapter.

The final public Michael Palaiologos needed to win over in order to advance to the highest dignities in the state was that of the leading ecclesiastics. The church prelates were a group

closely connected to the senatorial elites of the *golden chain*; more often than not, the leading ecclesiastics originated from these reputable families, or were at least employed by senatorial households for educational purposes. Yet, the interests of the ecclesiastic public were closely connected to the institution of the patriarchate, to which the senators had no particular, unless ceremonial, affiliations. As we have seen, Michael Palaiologos employed ecclesiastics as intermediaries with the wider public in Thessaloniki: first with Iakobos and then with the unnamed designated metropolitan of Dyrrachion and the metropolitan of Thessaloniki, Manouel Disypatos. The ecclesiastics, while forming their own group, operated in the same discursive spaces as did local notables and city dwellers in general. For their ability to heavily influence the public discourse in provincial centres, the support the prelates could provide was of the utmost importance. We see the final instance of ecclesiastic support in the last chapter of the dissertation, where Michael Palaiologos seeks to win over the prelates who can then convince the patriarch to accept the new realities in the empire's political arena.

6.2. Concluding the Conclusion

Going back to the three questions asked in the “Introduction” to the present dissertation—How did Michael Palaiologos and his associates come up with an effective plan for communicative action? Why would Michael care to forge an image of a divinely sanctioned New Constantine during his reign? Why was Michael elected emperor? —I believe that we can answer them by means of Iakobos' witty funerary Question and Answer format. The answer to the first question rests with the elite's training and education, which more than evidence of sclerotic classicism represented a veritable panoply of politically useful and frequently deployed rhetorical techniques. We saw Michael Palaiologos composing his autobiographical *typikon* with a specific agenda; we can tell that the content of Iakobos' speech and poems was not random, but very much audience oriented; we know how Georgios Akropolites wished to glorify Michael Palaiologos and why his namesake Pachymeres decided to take the opposite approach. It is my hope, then, to contribute with this thesis to the dispelling of the misconception about the Byzantines' supposed obsession with classical forms, but not the content of what they read.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁹ For the seminal work that promotes the image of Byzantine literature as ossified monolith rooted in mimicking classical models at the expense of political, social, cultural, and economic realities see: C. Mango, *Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered before the University of Oxford on 21 May 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1975). Adding to this, for the idea of the medieval Romans' introverted pious and ascetic nature, the so-called *homo Byzantinus*, see: A. Kazhdan

As for the second question: Michael VIII Palaiologos needed to find a common thread for his public persona that he could use to promote the image of a good ruler throughout the empire. During his days as a provincial governor and then *megas konostaulos*, Michael had learned about the complexities and the necessity of maintaining as wide a range of public support as possible. More often than not, Palaiologos had to work on gaining or maintaining the support of different interest groups simultaneously. For instance, this was the case in Thessaloniki when Iakobos composed such a funerary repertoire that every soul—be it members of the local elites, the literati, or the masses—in the city could engage with regardless of their social background. As much as he worked to maintain the good disposition of the public towards him, at times, it was impossible to win over the needed support no matter the means employed, as Michael learned the hard way when dealing with Nikolaos Manglavites. Keeping the lessons learned in mind, Michael VIII Palaiologos embarked on a journey of spreading the word of his imperial abilities to every corner of the empire. In doing so he spared no expense, putting popularity above the treasury. Michael Palaiologos' actions, in the end, reinforce the idea of the indispensable role of public consensus in medieval Roman politics. The Roman empire in the east never developed a dynastic system in the image of the Merovingians of Francia or the sultans of the Ottoman empire. Rather, the pathway to the imperial office was open to anybody who dared call themselves the best of the Romans.

Finally, why was Michael elected emperor in the first place? Simply put, because he developed a public persona that was appealing to a wide majority of the people and public in the Roman empire. Michael Palaiologos had the support of the urban populace and local notables in the big centres around the empire: Thessaloniki, Magnesia, Nikaia; he was able to cleanse the senate of his opponents and establish complete discourse dominance over the *golden chain* members; he swayed the Church prelates to see things his way; he was loved by his soldiers. Thus, in the end, Michael Palaiologos had become a public figure *par excellence*, employing all the available communicative actions at his disposal to gain the respect and support of the diverse public constituting the empire of the Romans.

and G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks 1996).

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Akropolites, George. *The History*. Macrides, R.J. transl. and comm. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Bar Hebraeus. *The Chorography*. Budge, E.A.W. ed. and transl. London: Oxford University Press 1932.

Barber, Charles and Papaioannou, Stratis, eds. *Michael Psellos on Literature and Art*. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2017.

Barks, Coleman with Moyne, John, transl. *The Essential Rumi*. San Francisco: Penguin 1997.

Beihammer, Alexander Daniel, ed. *Griechische Briefe und Urkunden aus dem Zypern der Kreuzfahrerzeit*. Nicosia: Zyprisches Forschungszentrum, 2007.

Beneker, Jeffrey and Gibson, Craig A. eds. and transl. *The Rhetorical Exercises of Nikephoros Basilakes*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2016.

Berbard, Floris and Livanos, Christopher, trans. and eds. *The Poems of Christopher of Mytilene and John Mauropous*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2018.

Berger, Albrecht, ed. and transl. *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The Patria*. Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 2012.

Burgmann, Ludwig, ed. *Ecloga Basilicorum*. Frankfurt am Main: Löwenklau Gesellschaft, 1988.

Burguière, R. et Mantran, R. "Quelques vers grecs du XIIIe siècle en caractères arabes." *Byzantion* 22 (1952): 63-80.

Cameron, Averil and Herrin Judith, eds., trans., and comm. *Constantinople in the Early Eight Century: The Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai*. Leiden: Brill, 1984.

Delehaye, Hippolyte, ed. "Constantini Acropolitae hagiographi byzantini epistularum manipulus." *Analecta Bollandiana* 51 (1933): 263–84.

- Dennis, George, ed., transl. and comm. *The Taktika of Leo VI*. Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010.
- Duda, Herbert, transl. *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bibī*. Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1959.
- Failler, Albert, éd. et intro., Laurent, Vitalien transl. *Georges Pachymérès Relations historiques*, I. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984.
- Festa, Nicola, ed. *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*. Firenze: Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento, 1898.
- Forster, Edward Seymour, transl. *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.
- Grégoire, Henri, ed. *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chretiennes d'Asie Mineure*. Paris: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1922.
- Grégoire, Henri. "Imperatoris Michaelis Palaeologi *De vita sua*." *Byzantion* 29-30 (1959-60): 447-74
- Heisenberg, Augustus, ed. et comm. *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, I. Lipsiae: B.G. Teubneri, 1903 (editionem anni MCMIII correctiorem curavit P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978).
- Heisenberg, Augustus. ed. et comm. *Aus der Geschichte und Literatur der Palaiologenzeit*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1911.
- Hörander, Wolfgang, ed. "Die Progymnasmata des Theodoros Hexapterygos." In W. Hörander et al. eds. *Bυζάντιος. Festschrift für Herbert Hunger zum 70. Geburtstag*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1984: 147–162.
- Hunger, Hunger. "Zum Epilog der Theogonie des Johannes Tzetzes." *BZ* 46 (1953): 302–7.
- Kaldellis, Anthony and Krallis, Dimitris, eds. and transl. *Michael Attaleiates' The History*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2012.
- Lefort, Jacques, Oikonomidès, Nicolas; Papachryssanthou, Denise, et Kravari Vassiliki eds. *Actes d'Iviron III: de 1204 à 1328*. Paris: Peeters, 1994.

- Macrides, Ruth J., Munitiz, J.A., and Angelov, Dimiter, eds., transl, and comm. *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2013.
- Menander Rhetor, *A Commentary*, Russel, D.A. and Wilson, N.G. transl. and eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.
- Mercati, Silvio G. *Collectanea Byzantina I*. Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1970.
- Meyer, Gustav. "Die griechischen Verse in Rabâbnâma." *BZ* 4 (1895): 401–411.
- Migne, Jean-Paul, ed. *Patrologia Graeca* 142. Parisiis: Garnier Fratres, 1863.
- Migne, Jean-Pail, ed. *Patrologia Graeca* 140. Parisiis: Garnier Fratres, 1865.
- Miklosich, Fraz et Muller, Josef, eds., *Acta et diplomata medii aevi sacra et profana* VI vol. Vindobonae: C. Gerold, 1860–90.
- Mommsen, Theodor and Meyer, Pulus M. eds. *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* I. Berolini: Weidmann 1905.
- Munitiz, J.A. ed. *Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia sive Curriculum Vitae necnon Epistula Universalior*. Turhout: Brepols, 1984.
- Prinzing, G. ed. *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*. Berlin/New York: De Gruyter 2002.
- Rabe, Hugo, ed. *Aphthonii progymnasmata*. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1926.
- Rabe, Hugo, ed. *Hermogenis opera*. Lipsiae: Teubner, 1913 (reprinted 1969).
- Sathas, Konstantinos, ed. *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη* VII. Venice: Phoenix, 1894.
- Schopen, Ludwig, ed. and transl. *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia: Graece et Latine*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Schopen, Ludwig, ed. *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri iv* III vols. Bonnae: Weber, 1828/32.

Thomas, John and Constantinides Hero, Angela, eds. *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents 1*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collections, 2000.

Volkman, Hans, ed. and transl. *Res gestae Divi Augusti das Monumentum Ancyranum*. Leipzig: Reisland 1942.

Δέδες, Δημήτριος. “Τα ελληνικά ποιήματα του Μαυλανά Ρουμή και του γιου του Βαλέντ κατά τον 13ον αιώνα.” *Τα Ιστορικά* 10 (18/19) (1993): 3-22.

Τσουγκaráκης, Δημήτριος, εισ. και μετ. *Κεκαυμένου Στρατηγικόν*. Αθήνα: Κανάκη 1993.

Secondary Sources

Agapitos, Panagiotis “Poets and Painters: Theodoros Prodromos’ Dedicatory Verses of His Novel to an Anonymous Caesar.” *JÖB* 50 (2000): 173–85.

Ahrweiler, Héléne. “Recherches sur l'administration de l'empire byzantin aux IX-XIème siècles.” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 84 (1960): 1–111.

Ahrweiler, Héléne. “L’histoire et la géographie de la région de Smyrne entre les deux occupations turques (1081-1317), particulièrement au XIIIe siècle.” *TM* 1 (1965): 1-204 = *Byzance, les pays et les territoires*. Londres: Variorum Reprints, 1976.

Alexiou, Margaret. “Of Longings and Loves: Seven Poems by Theodore Prodromos.” *DOP* 69 (2015): 209-24.

Alexiou, Margaret. “The Poverty of Écriture and the Craft of Writing: Towards a Reappraisal of the Prodromic Poems.” *BMGS* 10: 1–40.

Allsen, Thomas T. *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Ando, Clifford. *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire*. Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press 2000.

- Ando, Clifford. *Law, Language, and Empire in the Roman Tradition*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.
- Angelov, Alexander. "In Search of God's Only Emperor: *Basileus* in Byzantine and Modern Historiography." *Journal of Medieval History* 40 (2014): 123–141.
- Angold, Michael. *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society Under the Laskarids of Nicaea, 1204-1261*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Banarlı, Nihat Sami. *Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1984.
- Bartusis, Mark C. *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Beck, Hans-Georg. *Res Publica Romana: Vom Staatsdenken der Byzantiner*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1970.
- Beck, Hans-Georg. *Senat und Volk von Konstantinopel: Probleme der byzantinischen Verfassungsgeschichte*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1966.
- Beihammer, Alexander D. "Christian Views of Islam in Early Seljuq Anatolia: Perceptions and Reactions." in Peacock, A.S.C., de Nicola, B., Yildiz, S.N. eds. *Christianity and Islam in Medieval Anatolia*. New York: Routledge, 2016: 51–76.
- Beihammer, Alexander D. "Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine Seljuk Relations." *Speculum* 86 (2011), 597–651.
- Beihammer, Alexander D. "The Formation of Muslim Principalities and Conversion to Islam during the Early Seljuk Expansion in Asia Minor." In Gellez, P. et Grivaud, G. eds. *Les Conversions a l'Islam en Asie Mineure, dans les Balakns et dance le monde Musulman: Comparaisons et perspectives*. Athenes: École française d'Athènes, 2016: 77–108.
- Beihammer, Alexander Daniel. *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia* New York: Routledge, 2017.

- Belke, Klaus. "Transport and Communication." In Niewöhner, Ph. ed. *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017: 28–38..
- Belke, Klaus. *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4, Galatien und Lykaonien*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984.
- Berger, Albrecht. "The Byzantine Court as a Physical Space" In: *The Byzantine Court: Source of Power and Culture*. Istanbul: Koç University Press 2013: 3–12.
- Bernard, Floris. *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry 1025–1081*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Brand, Charles M. "The Turkish Element in Byzantium, Eleventh-Twelfth Centuries." *DOP* 43 (1989): 1-25.
- Bury, John B. *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene*. London: MacMillan, 1889.
- Cahen, Claude. *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A General Survey of the Material and Spiritual Culture and History (c. 1071–1330)*. Jones–Williams, J. transl. New York: Sidgwick & Jackson 1968.
- Cheyenet, Jean-Claude et Vannier, Jean-François. *Études Prosopographiques*. Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1986.
- Chitwood, Zachary. *Byzantine Legal Culture and the Roman Legal Tradition, 867–1056*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Constantelos, Demetrios J. *Byzantine Philanthropy and Social Welfare*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1968.
- Constantinides, Constantine N. *Higher Education in Byzantium in 13th and Early 14th Centuries (1204–ca. 1310)*. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 1982.
- Crow, Jim. "Alexios I Komnenos and Kastamon: Castles and Settlement in Middle Byzantine Paphlagonia." In Mullett, M. and Smythe, D. eds. *Alexios I Komnenos*. Belfast: The Queen's University of Belfast, 1996: 12–36.

- Dagron, Gilles. *Constantinople imaginaire: étude sur le recueil des Patria*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984.
- Delilbaşı, Melek. "Greek as a Diplomatic Language in the Turkish Chancery." In Moschonas, N.G. ed. *Η επικοινωνία στο Βυζάντιο*. Αθήνα: Κέντρο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, 1993: 145-53.
- Dölger, Franz and Karayannopolous, Johannes. *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre: Erster Abschnitt, Die Kaiserurkunden*. München: C.-H. Beck, 1968.
- Dölger, Franz. "Chronologisches und Prosopographisches zur byzantinischen Geschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts." *BZ* 27 (1927): 291–320.
- Dölger, Franz. "Chronologisches und Prosopographisches zur byzantinischen Geschichte des 13. Jahrhunderts." *BZ* 27 (1927): 307–10.
- Drpić, Ivan. "Painter as Scribe: Artistic Identity and the Arts of graphē in Late Byzantium." *Word & Image* 29: 334–53.
- Drpić, Ivan. *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Durak, Koray. "Defining the 'Turk': Mechanisms of Establishing Contemporary Meaning in the Archaizing Language of the Byzantines." *JÖB* (2009): 65–78.
- El-Cheikh, Nadia M. *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Failler, Albert. "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymérès." *REB* 39 (1981): 145–249.
- Failler, Albert. "Chronologie et composition dans l'Histoire de Georges Pachymérès." *REB* 44 (1980): 5–87.
- Failler, Albert. "La promotion du clerc et du moine à l'épiscopat et au patriarcat." *REB* 59 (2001): 125–46.

- Featherstone, Michael. "The Everyday Palace in the 10th Century." In: Featherstone, M. et al. eds. *The Emperor's House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*. Berlin: De Gruyter 2015: 149–158.
- Foskolou, Viky A. "In the Reign of the Emperor of Rome...": Donor Inscriptions and Political Ideology in the Time of Michael VIII Paleologos." *Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 27 (2011): 455–62.
- Foskolou, Viky A. "Ο Ήρωμης άναξ στην επιγραφή του Αγίου Δημητρίου Θεσσαλονίκης. Χορηγία, αυτοκρατορική πολιτική και ιδεολογία στα χρόνια του Μιχαήλ Η΄ Παλαιολόγου." *ByzSym* 23 (2013): 11–31.
- Fryde, Edmund B. *The Early Palaeologan Renaissance (1261-c. 1360)*. Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Geanakoplos, Deno J. *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West (1258–1282)*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959.
- Gökdemir, A., Demirel, C. et al. "Ankara Temple (Monumentum Ancyranum/Temple of Augustus and Rome) Restoration." *Case Studies in Construction Materials* 2 (2015): 55-65.
- Golding, Paul R. "Han Law and the Regulation of Interpersonal Relations: 'The Confucianization of the Law' Revisited." *Asia Major* 25 (2012), 1–31.
- Gorecki, Danuta Maria. "Books, Production of Books and Reading in Byzantium." *Libri* 14 (1984): 113–29.
- Green, Katie. "Experiencing *Politiko*: New Methodologies for Analysing the Landscape of a Rural Byzantine Society." In Nesbitt, C. and Jackson, M. eds. *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Newcastle and Durham, April 2011*. London/New York: Routledge 2016: 133-52.
- Guillad, Rodolphe. *Recherches sur les institutions byzantines I*. Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1967.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, T. McCarthy transl. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols., T. McCarthy transl. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984/1987.

- Haldon, John. "Bureaucracies, Elites, and Clans: The Case of Byzantium, 600–1100." in Crooks, P. ed. *Empires and Bureaucracy in World History: From Late Antiquity to the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016: 147–69.
- Hauser, Gerard. *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press 1999.
- Hekster, Oliver. *Rome and Its Empire, AD 193–284*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Hendy, Michael F. *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and the Whittemore Collection IV*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Collections, 1999.
- Herrin, Judith. "Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180–1205." *DOP* 29 (1975): 253–84.
- Herrin, Judith. *Margins and Metropolis: Authority across the Byzantine Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.
- Hilsdale, Cecily J. "The Imperial Image at the End of Exile: The Byzantine Embroidered Silk in Genoa and the Treaty of Nymphaion (1261)." *DOP* 64 (2010): 151–99.
- Hilsdale, Cecily J. *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy in an Age of Decline*. Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Hilsdale, Cecily J. "Worldliness in Byzantium and Beyond: Reassessing the Visual Networks of Barlaam and Ioasaph." *The Medieval Globe* 3 (2017): 57–96.
- Ho, Ming-Sho. "From Mobilization to Improvisation: The Lessons from Taiwan's 2014 Sunflower Movement." *Social Movement Studies* 17 (2018): 189–202.
- Ho, Ming-Sho. *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven: Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019.
- Ho, Ming-Sho. "Occupy Congress in Taiwan: Political Opportunity, Threat, and The Sunflower Movement." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 15 (2015): 69–97.

- Hock Ronald F. et al. eds. *The Chreia in Ancient Rhetoric*. Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 1986.
- Horrocks, Geoffrey. *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2010.
- Jovanović, Aleksandar. "Imagining the Communities of Others: the Case of the Seljuk Turks." *ByzSym* 28 (2018): 239–73.
- Kaldellis, Anthony, *Hellenism in Byzantium: The Transformations of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*. Cambridge, UK/New York et al: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. "How to Usurp the Throne in Byzantium: The Role of Public Opinion in Sedition and Rebellion." in Angelov, D.G. and Saxby M. eds. *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2010*. Farnham, UK/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013: 43-56.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. "The Social Scope of Roman Identity in Byzantium: An Evidence-Based Approach." *ByzSym* 27 (2017): 173–210.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Peoples and Lands in Byzantine Literature*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *Romanland: Ethnicity and Empire in Byzantium*. Cambridge, MA/London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Kaldellis, Anthony. *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome*. Cambridge, MA/London, UK: Harvard University Press, 2015.
- Kazhdan, Alexander P. ed. *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Kazhdan, Alexander P. *Социальный состав господствующего класса Византии XI-XII вв.* Москва: Институт всеобщей истории, 1974.

- Kennedy, George A. *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Kennedy, George A. *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "The King of the East and the West': the Seljuk Dynastic Concept and Titles in the Muslim and Christian Sources." In Peacock, A.C.S. and Yıldız, S.N. eds. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*. London/New York: Routledge, 2013: 68–90.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "How 'Byzantine' were the Early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450." In Zaitsev, I.V. and Oreshkova, S.F. *Османский мир и османистика: сборник статей к 100-летию со дня рождения А.С. Тверитиновой (1910-1973)*. Москва: Институт востоковедения РАН, 2010: 215–39.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, Part 1: The Two Patriarchates: Constantinople and Antioch." *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 15 (2003): 197–214.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "Orthodox Communities in Eastern Anatolia in the Thirteenth to Fourteenth Centuries, Part 2: The Time of Troubles." *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 17 (2005): 1–29
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "Raiders and Neighbours: the Turks (1040–1304)." In Shepard, J. ed. *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press 2008: 692–727.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. "The Formation of the Turkish Principalities in the Boundary Zone: From the Emirate of Denizli to the Beylik of Mentеше (1256–1302)." In Çevik, A. and Keçiş, M. eds. *Uluslararası Batı Anadolu Beylikleri Tarih, Kültür ve Medeniyeti Sempozyumu-II: Menteşeoğulları tarihi, 25– 27 Nisan 2012 Muğla: bildiriler*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2016: 65–76.
- Korobeinikov, Dimitri. *Byzantium and the Turks in the 13th Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

- Krallis, Dimitris. "Historiography as Political Debate." In Kaldellis, A. and Siniosoglou, N. *The Cambridge Intellectual History of Byzantium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017: 599–614.
- Krallis, Dimitris. "Imagining Rome in Medieval Constantinople: Memory, Politics, and the Past in the Middle Byzantine Period." In Lambert, P. and Weiler, B. eds. *How the Past was Used. Essays in Historical Culture*. London: British Academy, 2017: 49-69.
- Krallis, Dimitris. "Popular Political Agency in Byzantium's Villages and Towns." *ByzSym* 28 (2018): 11–48.
- Krallis, Dimitris. "Urbane Warriors: Smoothing out Tensions between Soldiers and Civilians in Attaleiates' Encomium to Emperor Nikephoros III Botaneiates." In Lauxterman M. and Whittow M. eds. *Being in Between: Byzantium in the Eleventh Century*. London/New York: Routledge 2015: 154–68.
- Krallis, Dimitris. *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh Century Byzantium*. Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012.
- Krallis, Dimitris. *Serving Byzantium's Emperors: The Courtly Life and Career of Michael Attaleiates*. Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019.
- Kyritses, Dimitris. "The 'Common Chrysobulls' of Cities and the Notion of Property in Late Byzantium." *ByzSym* 13 (1999): 229–45.
- Lange, Christian and Mecit, Songül, eds. *Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011.
- Laurent, Vitalien. "La correspondance inédite de Georges Babouscomitès." In *Εἰς μνήμην Σπυρίδωνος Λάμπρου*. Ἀθήναι: Ἐπιτροπή ἐκδόσεως τῶν καταλοίπων Σπυρίδωνος Λάμπρου, 1935.
- Lemerle, Paul. "Le gouvernement des philosophes: notes et remarques sur l'enseignement, les écoles, la culture." In: *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977: 195–248.
- Lemerle, Paul. *The Agrarian History of Byzantium from the Origins to the Twelfth Century. The Sources and Problems*. Galway: Galway University Press, 1979.

- Leroy-Molinghen, Alice and Karlin-Hayter, Patricia. "Basileopator." *Byzantion* 38 (1968): 278–81.
- Lewis, Franklin. *Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalal al-din Rumi*. New York: One World Publications, 2014.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "George Akropolites' Rhetoric." In Jeffreys, E. ed. *Rhetoric Byzantium Papers from the Thirty-fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003: 201–11.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "Introduction." in Georgios Akropolites. *The History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007: 3–101.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "Kinship by Arrangement: The Case of Adoption." *DOP* 44 (1990): 109–18.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "Saints and Sainthood in the Early Palaeologan Period." In Hackel S. ed. *The Byzantine Saint: University of Birmingham Fourteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Volume 1980, Part 2*. London: Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius, 1981: 67–87.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "The Byzantine Godfather." *BMGS* 11 (1987): 139–62.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "The Competent Court." In Laiou, A. ed. *Law and Society in Byzantium, Ninth-Twelfth Centuries*. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1992: 117–29.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople – 1261." *BMGS* 6 (1980): 13–41.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "The Thirteenth Century in Byzantine Historical Writing." in Dendrinou, Ch., Harris, J., Harvalia-Crook, E., and Herrin, J. eds. *Porphyrogenita: Essays in Honour of Julian Chrysostomides*. London: King's College 2003: 63–76.
- Macrides, Ruth J. "Trial by Ordeal on Whose Order?." In Armstrong, P. ed. *Authority in Byzantium*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2013: 31–46
- Macrides, Ruth J. ed. *History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007*. Aldershot: Ashgate 2010.

- Magdalino, Paul and Macrides, Ruth J. "The Fourth Kingdom and the Rhetoric of Hellenism." in Magdalino, P. ed. *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* London/Rio Grande: Bloomsbury Academic, 1992: 117-56.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Aspects of Twelfth-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik." *Speculum* 58 (1983): 326–46.
- Magdalino, Paul. "Byzantine Snobbery." In Angold, M. ed. *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX to XIII Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984: 58-78.
- Magdalino, Paul. *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Marciniak, Przemysław. "Laughter on Display: Mimic Performances and the Danger of Laughing in Byzantium." In Alexiou, M. and Cairns, D. eds. *Greek Laughter and Tears: Antiquity and After*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017: 232–42.
- Matthews, John F. "Codex Theodosianus' 9.40.13 and Nicomachus Flavianus." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 46 (1997): 196–213
- May, Timothy. *The Mongol Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018.
- Mecit, Songül. *The Rum Seljuqs: Evolution of a Dynasty*. London/New York: Routledge 2014.
- Métivier, Sophie. "Les Maurozômai, Byzance et le sultanat de Rûm. Note sur le sceau de Jean Comnène Maurozômès." *REB* 67 (2009): 197-207.
- Mullet, Margaret. "Aristocracy and Patronage in the Literary Circles of Comnenian Constantinople." in Angold M. ed. *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IX–XIII Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984: 173–201
- Mullett, Margaret. "Byzantium: A Friendly Society?." *Past and Present* 118 (1988): 3–24
- Mullett, Margaret. "Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction." in Burke J. et al. eds. *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006: 1–28.

- Mullett, Margaret. *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop*. New York: Variorum, 2016; first published in 1997.
- Neville, Leonora. *Authority in Byzantine Provincial Society, 950-1100*. Cambridge, UK/ New York et al: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Neville, Leonora. *Guide to Byzantine Historical Writing*. Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Neville, Leonora. *Heroes and Romans in the Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios*. Cambridge, UK/New York et al: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Nicol, Donald. *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c.1295-1383*. Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Niewöhner, Philipp. "Houses." in Niewöhner, Ph. ed. *The Archaeology of Byzantine Anatolia: From the End of Late Antiquity until the Coming of the Turks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Niewöhner, Philipp. "The Late Antique Origins of Byzantine Palace Architecture." In Featherstone, M. et al. eds. *The Emperor's House: Palaces from Augustus to the Age of Absolutism*. Berlin: De Gruyter 2015: 31–52.
- Oikonomides, Nicolas. "The 'Peira' of Eustathios Rhomaios: an Abortive Attempt to Innovate in Byzantine Law." *FM* 7 (1986): 169– 92.
- Papaioannou, Stratis. "The Aesthetics of Historiography: Theophanes to Eustathios." in: *History as Literature in Byzantium: Papers from the Fortieth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, April 2007*, Macrides, R.J. ed. Surrey: Ashgate, 2010: 3–24.
- Papaioannou, Stratis. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Papazotos, Theodoros. "The Identification of the Church of 'Profitis Elias' in Thessaloniki." *DOP* 45 (1991): 121-9.

- Peacock, A.C.S. *The Great Seljuk Empire*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015.
- Pizzone, Aglae. "Towards a Byzantine Theory of the Comic?." In Alexiou, M. and Cairns, D. eds. *Greek Laughter and Tears: Antiquity and After*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017: 146–65.
- Polemis, Demetios I. *The Doukai: A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*. London: Athlone Press, 1968.
- Popović, Milan S. "Die Siedlungsstruktur der Region Melnik in Spätbyzantinischer und Osmanischer Zeit." *ZRVI* 50 (2010): 247–76.
- Popović, Milan S. "Zur Topographie des spätbyzantinischen Melnik." *JÖB* 58 (2008): 107–19.
- Puech, Vicent. "The Aristocracy and the Empire of Nicaea." in Herrin, J. and Saint-Guillain, G. eds. *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*. Farnham: Ashgate 2011: 69–79.
- Puech, Vicent. *L' aristocratie et le pouvoir à Byzance au XIIIe siècle (1204–1310)*. I–II. Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, 2000 (PhD Thesis).
- Radić, Radivoj. "Georgije Akropolit i Srbi." In Živković, T.Z. ed. *Kralj Vladislav i Srbija XIII veka*. Beograd: SANU, 2003: 89–97.
- Ransohoff, Jake. "'Consider the Future as Present': The Paranoid World of Kekaumenos." *Speculum* 93 (2018): 77–91
- Redford, Scott. "Mavrozomês in Konya." In Ödekan, A., Akyürek, E., and Necipoğlu, N. 1. *Uluslararası Sevgi Gönül Bizans Araştırmaları Sempozyumu Bildiriler, İstanbul, 25-26 Haziran 2007=First International Byzantine studies symposium proceedings, Istanbul 25-26 June, 2007*. Istanbul: Vehbi Koc Vakfi, 2010: 48–50.
- Redford, Scott. "The Alâeddin Mosque in Konya Reconsidered." *Artibus Asiae* 51 (1991): 54–74.
- Rhody, Andreas. "Interactive Inscriptions: Byzantine Works of Art and Their Beholders." in Lidov, A.M. ed. *Spatial Icons. Performativity in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*. Moskau: Indrik, 2011: 317–33.

- Rhody, Andreas. "Tower Established by God, God Is Protecting You: Inscriptions on Byzantine Fortifications – Their Function and Their Display." In Stavrakos, C. ed. *Inscriptions in the Byzantine and Post-Byzantine History and History of Art*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 2016: 341–70.
- Roilos, Panagiotis. "Ancient Greek Rhetorical Theory and Byzantine Discursive Politics: John Sikeliotos on Hermogenes." In Shawcross, T. ad Toth, I. eds. *Reading in the Byzantine Empire and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018: 159-184.
- Rowen, Ian. "Inside Taiwan's Sunflower Movement: Twenty-Four Days in the Student Occupied Parliament, and the Future of the Region." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74 (2015): 5–21.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry*. Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Ševcčenko, Ihor. "On the Preface to a Praktikon by Alyates." *JÖB* 17 (1968): 65–72
- Shukurov, Rustam. "Christian Elements in the Identity of the Anatolia Turkmens (12th-13th centuries)." In *Cristianità d'Occidente e Cristianità d'Oriente (secoli VI–XI): 24–30 aprile 2003*. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 2004: 707–64.
- Shukurov, Rustam. "Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes." In Peacock, A.C.S. and Yıldız, S.N. eds. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*. London/New York: Routledge, 2013: 115–50.
- Shukurov, Rustam. *The Byzantine Turks*. Leiden/New York: Brill, 2016.
- Simpson, Alicia. *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Sönmez, Zeki. *Başlangıcından 16. Yüzyıla Kadar Anadolu-Türk İslam Mimarisinde Sanatçılar*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995.
- Speck, Paul. *Die Kaiserliche Universität von Konstantinopel*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974.

- Svoronos, Nicolas G. "Le serment de fidélité à l'Empereur Byzantin et sa signification constitutionnelle." *REB* 9 (1951): 106–42.
- Talbot, Mary-Alice. "Empress Theodora Palaiogina, Wife of Michael VIII." *DOP* 46 (1992): 295–303.
- Talbot, Mary-Alice. "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII." *DOP* 47 (1993), 243-61.
- Tekinalp, Macit V. "Palace Churches of the Anatolian Seljuks: Tolerance or Necessity?." *BMGS* 33 (2009): 148-67.
- Tezcan, Baki. *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World*. Cambridge/New York et al: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Tougher, Shaun. *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912): Politics and People*. Leiden/New York: Brill, 1997.
- Trapp, Erich, ed. *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1976.
- Tsakmakis, Antonis. "Von der Rhetorik zur Geschichtsschreibung: Das 'Methodenkapitel' des Thukydides (1,22,1–3)." *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 141 (1998): 239–255.
- Turan, Orhan, ed. *Müsâmeret ül-ahbâr. Moğollar zamanında Türkiye Selçukluları Tarihi*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1944.
- Turan, Orhan. "Les souverains seldjoukides et leurs sujets non-musulmans." *Studia Islamica* 1 (1953): 65–100.
- Turner, Sam and Crow, Jim. "Unlocking Historic Landscapes in the Eastern Mediterranean: Two Pilot Studies Using Historic Landscape Characterisation." *Antiquity* 84 (2010): 216-229.
- Uyar, Tolga B. "Thirteenth-Century 'Byzantine' Art in Cappadocia and the Question of Greek Painters at the Seljuq Court." in Peacock, A.S.C., de Nicola, B., Yıldız, S.N. eds. *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*. New York: Routledge 2016: 215–32.

- Vryonis, Speros Jr. *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.
- Walter, Christopher. "Raising on a Shield in Byzantine Iconography." *REB* 33 (1975): 133–76.
- Weiss, Günter. *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos*. München: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1973.
- Wheeldon, M.J. "'True Stories': The Reception of Historiography in Antiquity." in Cameron, A. ed. *History as Text: The Writing of Ancient History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989: 33–63.
- Wilson, Nigel G. *Byzantine Books and Bookmen*. Dumbarton Oaks: Centre for Byzantine Studies, 1975.
- Wittek, Paul. "Encore l'építaphe d'un Comnène Konía." *Byzantion* 12 (1937): 207-211.
- Wittek, Paul. "L'építaphe d'un Comnène Konía." *Byzantion* 10 (1935): 505-515.
- Woodman, John. *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*. London: Croom Helm, 1988.
- Yıldız, Sara Nur and Şahin, Haşim. "In the Proximity of Sultans: Majd al-Din Majd al-Din Isqaq, Ibn 'Arabi and the Seljuk Court." In Peacock, A.C.S. and Yıldız, S.N. eds. *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*. London/New York: Routledge, 2013: 173–205.
- Yıldız, Sara Nur. "Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes and His Descendants at the Seljuk Court: the Formation of a Christian Seljuk-Komnenian Elite." In Leder, S. ed. *Crossroads between Latin Europe and the Near East: Corollaries of the Frankish Presence in the Eastern Mediterranean (12th–14th centuries)*. Würzburg: Ergon Verlag, 2011: 55–77.
- Άμαντος, Κωνστανίνος. "Σύμμεικτα: Πόθεν το όνομα Ταρχανειώτης." *Έλληνικά* 2 (1929): 435–6.
- Βάρζος, Κωνστανίνος. *Η Γενεαλογία τών Κομνηνών* I. Θεσσαλονίκη: Κέντρον Βυζαντινών Έρευνών, 1984.

Γκουτζιουκώστας, Ανδρέας. *Η απονομή δικαιοσύνης στο Βυζάντιο (9ος-12ος αιώνες): τα δικαιοδοτικά όργανα και τα δικαστήρια της πρωτεύουσας*. Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης: Σχολή Φιλοσοφική, 2004 (PhD Thesis).

Κολυβού, Φωτεινή. *Μιχαήλ Χωνιάτης. Συμβουλή στη μελετή του βίου και του έργου του το Corpus των Επιστολών*. Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1999.

Κοντογιαννοπούλου, Αναστασία. *Τοπικά συμβούλια στις βυζαντινές πόλεις: Παράδοση και εξέλιξη (13ος-15ος αι.)*. Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 2015.

Λάμπρος, Σπυρίδωνος. “Η Έλληνική ως επίσημος γλώσσα τῶν Σουλτανῶν.” *Νέος Έλληνομνήμων* 5 (1908): 40-78.

Μέκιος, Κωνσταντίνος Μ. *Ὁ μέγας δομέστικος τοῦ Βυζαντίου, Ἰωάννης Ἀξούχος καὶ πρωτοστράτωρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Ἀλέξιου*. Αθήνα: Ακαδημία Αθηνών, 1932.

Μέντζου-Μεϊμάρη, Κωνσταντίνα. “Χρονολογημένα βυζαντινά επιγραφαί του *Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum* IV, 2.” *Δελτίον Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας* 9 (1979): 77–132.

Жаворонков, Петр Иванович. “Состав и эволюция высшей знати Никейской империи: элита.” Москва: ВО, 1991: 83–90.

Станковић, Влада. *Комнини у Цариграду (1057–1185): еволуција једне владарске породице*. Београд: САНУ, 2006.