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Colour in Byzantine Historiography (13th–15th centuries)

ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΠΑΝΟΥ

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ΙΝΣΤΙΤΟΥΤΟ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΩΝ ΕΡΕΥΝΩΝ
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ΤΟΜΟΣ 29 VOLUME

EIRINI PANOU

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(13th-15th CENTURIES)

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«Οὐκ εὐσύμβολον τὸ χρώμα τοῦτό», φησιν,
«ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν κατὰ τὴν
ῥῶραν τοῦ πολέμου ταῖς ἀγαθαῖς τύχαις
ἀντιπρῶττον».

(*This is not an auspicious colour, O Emperor,
but in the hour of warfare it very much militates
against good fortune*¹).

This is the second publication arising from the research conducted for the Sylvester Syropoulos conference at Birmingham University in 2009, the proceedings of which were published in May 2014². Due to the anchoring of that first publication in the proceedings of the Ferrara-Florence Council, other works of the period had to be left untouched, a state of affairs the current article will change not primarily in the selection of authors but of words. For example, having surveyed word colours of red one finds in Sylvester Syropoulos such as κόκκινος, χρυσοκόκκινος and ἡερονοκόκκινος, κοκκοβαφής, other words meaning 'red' such as ἐρυθρός are examined in the current article. Likewise, for the colour purple only the

1. *Nicetae Choniatae historia*, ed. I. L. VAN DIETEN, Berlin 1975, 189 [hereafter: *Choniates*]; H. J. MAGOULIAS (trans.), *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, Detroit 1984, 107 [hereafter: *MAGOULIAS, O City*].

2. E. PANOU, The colours Sylvester Syropoulos saw: The ideological function of colour in Byzantine histories and chronicles (13th-15th centuries), in: *Sylvester Syropoulos on Politics and Culture in the Fifteenth-Century Mediterranean*, ed. F. KONDYLI – V. ANDRIOPOULOU – E. PANOU – M. B. CUNNINGHAM, Farnham 2014, 175-184.

word *πορφυρός* had been recorded while now *φοινικοῦς*, *ὄξυς*, *δίχρους* / *δίχρωμος*, and *άλουργός* were added. Green and white have also been studied but their uses outside Syropoulos' work are offered in the current publication. As for the colours mentioned here for the first time (black, blue, yellow, orange, and grey), they complete the puzzle of colours' function in Byzantine historiographical texts from the thirteenth up until the fifteenth century, and provide an holistic view of the matter.

The idea to work on colour in the histories of the Late Byzantine period emerged during the research I conducted for the Sylvester Syropoulos publication. Having examined his approach to colour I was intrigued by the idea of how other historians of the same era approached colour. And as with the first publication, selectivity has been necessary to present such ample material. To facilitate the study of colour words in Byzantine historical accounts used by writers with the same linguistic background, other literary genres (non-historical)³, non-Greek sources, pre-thirteenth and post fifteenth-century additions to the sources discussed here⁴, have all been excluded from this study⁵. As to the method of selection and analysis of the material, colours in this article will be presented starting from the most popular to the least popular (shown in the number of words and times referenced in a text).

3. A third publication should consider how historians treat colour in their non-historical works. For example, in his treatise against Gregory Palamas, included in his *Roman History*, Nikephoros Gregoras uses black, white and gray [Nicephori Gregorae, *Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. SCHOPEN, I-III, Bonn 1829-1855, XXXIV.63: III.473 (hereafter: Gregoras): *οὔτε μὴν τῷ μέλανι πρὸς τὸ λευκὸν δραμεῖν εὐθὺς εὐχερὲς ἐν οἷς ἐπεφύκει ... ἐνταυθοῖ δὲ τοῦ φαιοῦ*], but because of the section's theological content these colours will not be considered.

4. Niketas Choniates' inclusion is justified by the fact that he is considered a thirteenth-century writer writing *on* the twelfth century rather than a historian *of* the twelfth century. See A. SIMPSON, Niketas Choniates: The Historian, in: *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer*, ed. A. SIMPSON – S. EFTHYMIADIS, Geneva 2009, 33.

5. The last centuries of the Byzantine Empire were not recorded only in Greek histories. A number of works appeared until shortly after the siege of Constantinople, but have been excluded from this article on the basis that they were not originally written in Greek, see M. PHILIPPIDES - W. K. HANAK, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies*, Farnham 2011, 10-46.

The main question to address is, why is it important to know the associations made by the Byzantines with each colour⁶? On a primary level, scholarship has shown that many colour words originated in ancient Greek literature, from which Byzantine historians adopted forms of expressing their thoughts, feelings and contemporary moral values⁷. If we accept that the ‘perception of colors [...] is also a cultural phenomenon’⁸, then we can safely argue that through the reuse of colour words, the Byzantines brought new connotations into their era using the language of the past. On a secondary level, colours not only signified classification and demonstrated the degree to which the Byzantine court and army constituted ranked institutions, but they also functioned as self-referential tools revealing the peculiarities of the interaction between the Byzantines and other political and religious entities⁹. On a third level, colour is a symbolic language through which descriptions are transformed into commentary of political and religious nature. Colour, in other words, functions as concealed critic which could be decoded by the reader of the same linguistic background. Finally, and most importantly, colour safeguarded the ideals of imperial ideology despite the political, military, financial, and ecclesiastic turmoil it experiences over its last three centuries. This function of colour has been brought up in scholarship¹⁰, but no study until now has examined colour in the totality of Late Byzantine historical works.

At this point, the reader may wonder, which are the boundaries between colour use in material culture and its function as commentary¹¹? In their works, writers did include descriptions of objects either by naming

6. For the definition of ‘colour’ in Byzantium, see L. JAMES, *Light and Colour in Byzantine art*, Oxford 1996, 74-80.

7. For colour words of ancient Greek origin used in Byzantine sources, see JAMES, *Light and Colour*, 69-72.

8. M. PASTOUREAU, *Medioevo simbolico*, Bari – Roma 2005, 67.

9. PANOU, *The colours*, 175-176.

10. See later in this article.

11. The notion the Nicetas Choniates’ colours ‘are in fact almost always moral or ethical symbols’ (A. KAZHDAN – S. FRANKLIN, *Nicetas Choniates and others: Aspects of the art of literature*, in: *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Past and Present Publications, Cambridge 1984, 263) should be reconsidered, as it is clearly shown in the current article.

their hue (red, blue, green) or the value of their colour (light, dark)¹². Variations in the number of these colour descriptions depend not only on literary genre (analogically to their extent, there are more colour words found in histories than in chronicles)¹³, but also on the personal style of each historian. Niketas Choniates (1155-1215/1216) quotes Homeric expressions that include colourful descriptions, and George Pachymeres (1242-1310) places colour to his wider fondness for metaphors and plays on words¹⁴. Throughout the texts examined in the current article, actual descriptions go in hand with an aesthetic approach to material culture. At the same time, these descriptions are often vested with multiple symbolisms that pin down the essence of Byzantine identity. Colour is multifunctional and this article demonstrates that it should be treated as such.

12. See for example Syropoulos' description of the interior of a Venetian galley in: *Les 'Mémoires' du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438-1439)*, ed. V. LAURENT, Paris 1971, 236.

13. JAMES, *Light and Colour*, 79: 'Though the vocabulary remains fairly consistent, there may perhaps be some sort of pattern as to which colours is appropriate to mention in what sort of text: the nature of a romance might allow for more colour than, say, a hagiography.' This is also related to the nature of historiographical narrative which in contrast to chronicles 'it offered significantly more opportunities [...] to indicate relations of cause and effect'. See E. C. BOURBOUHAKIS - I. NILSSON, *Byzantine Narrative: the Form of Storytelling in Byzantium*, in: *A companion to Byzantium*, ed. L. JAMES, Chichester 2010, 268.

14. Georgios Pachymeres, *Συγγραφικὰ Ἱστορία*, ed. A. FAILLER, *Georges Pachymeres, Relations historiques*, I-IV, Paris 1984-1999 [hereafter Pachymeres] II.3: I.135; Pachymeres VI.5: II, 557; VI.36: II, 665. Gregoras also uses metaphors and contrasts, e.g. Gregoras, XIII.4: II, 652: (τὸ τοῦ ἀέρος μειδίμα = the wind's laughter); also, XI.11: I, 562: (σκοτός δὲ βαθὺ τὸ τοῦ ἡλίου κάλλος = the beauty of the sun consisted in its deep darkness), and his relationship with colour is unique, a thorough examination of which deserves a study of its own. Apart from using the greatest number of colour words than the rest of writers included in this article Gregoras, XXIX.13: III, 232 also uses the word colour (χρῶμα) but it does not describe hue, as for example in καὶ τὸ χρῶμα τῆς γνώμης ἄστατος καὶ ἀβέβαιος (= the colour of opinion was unstable and uncertain), τὸ τῆς κακίας χρῶμα [Gregoras XVIII.4: II, 888 = the colour of spite], τὸ χρῶμα τῆς ἐγκρατείας [Gregoras, XXI.5: II, 1027 (the colour of restraint)]. Moreover, he has a variety of uses of the word χρῶμα without referring to a single colour such as in ποικίλον τοῖς χρώμασι ἱστουροῦντος χιτῶνα [Gregoras XVIII.2: II, 880] and καὶ παντοδαποῖς περιηγησιμένην τοῖς χρώμασι [Gregoras XXVIII 43: III, 204].

Ἐρυθρὸς

Ἐρυθρὸς (= red) has multiple uses, but it is particularly attached to Byzantine power¹⁵. It describes objects that are correlated to the taking up or loss of imperial power, and it appears much more regularly than any other form of red in the histories and chronicles of the period¹⁶.

Royal power

In contrast to κόκκινος¹⁷, the word ἐρυθρὸς is associated with written commands. Choniates refers to the doctrine embraced by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180), according to which the Father is greater than Christ¹⁸, using the phrase Ἀμέλει καὶ γραφαῖς ἐρυθραῖς ὡς φλογίνη ῥομφαία τὸ δόγμα τοῦτο διειληφώς¹⁹, meaning that Manuel I attributed imperial authority to this doctrine²⁰. Red ink conveys power, which is why Choniates, writing on the fortune of monasteries fallen into misuse, mentions that red dye can revive old commands similarly to blood²¹. Choniates' demonstration of the power of red ink is repeated by George Akropolites²²,

15. KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, Nicetas Choniates, 260.

16. In the works examined in this article, ἐρυθρὸς appears approximately three times more than κόκκινος. For the uses of κόκκινος in histories between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century, see PANOY, *The Colours*, 176-179 and p. 201 in the present article.

17. Κόκκινος in relation to written evidence is used only once by Ephraem of Ainos (chronicle written by 1332, see *Ephraem Aenii, Historia Chronica*, ed. O. LAMPSIDES, Athens 1990, xvii [hereafter: Ephraem]) for the official documents signed by Manuel Komnenos Doukas [D. I. POLEMIS, *The Doukai*, London 1968, 90, n. 43]. See Ephraem, vv. 8142-8143: ἐχρητο μάλλον βασιλικῶς συμβόλοις, / ἐν ὑπογραφαῖς διὰ κοκκίνου γραφῶν.

18. Choniates, 212: ἀποδέχομαι μὲν καὶ τὰς περὶ τοῦ ὁ πατήρ μου μείζων μού ἐστι τῶν θεοφόρων πατέρων φωνάς, λέγω δὲ εἰρησθαι τοῦτο καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐν αὐτῷ κτιστὴν καὶ παθητὴν σάρκα [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 120]. For the controversy see N. ZORZI, *La storia di Niceta Coniata*, Venice 2012, 311, with further bibliography.

19. Choniates, *Historia*, 212 [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 121: [e]mblazing this doctrine in red letters].

20. Manuel I convened a synod in 1166 for this reason, see P. MAGDALINO, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180*, Cambridge 1993, 291.

21. Choniates, 207: ὥστε καὶ τὴν νεαρὰν νομοθεσίαν [...] ἔθετο παύουσαν τὰς μονὰς ἐμπλατύνεσθαι κτήσεσι, [...] τῷ ἐρυθρῷ τῆς βαφῆς ὡς αἷματι ἀναθάλψας ἐξώωσεν [transl. MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 125].

22. *Georgii Acropolitae, Opera*, ed. A. HEISENBERG, Leipzig 1903 [=A. HEISENBERG – P. WIRTH, Stuttgart, 1978²], v.1, 43 [hereafter Akropolites]: ἐρυθροῖς δὲ γράμμασι τὰς αὐτοῦ

George Pachymeres, John Kantakouzenos, and Nikephoros Gregoras²³. On the contrary, *setting aside the red ink*²⁴ or *observing the writings in red inconsiderately*²⁵ means disregard of imperial commands, a serious offence considering the power of letters in Byzantium (*δύναμις τῶν γραμμῶν*)²⁶. *Ἐρυθρός* is also frequently used for signing decrees on enthronement or deposition. Gregoras uses *ἐρυθρός* to describe the colour of the signature of Andronikos II (1272-1328), who signed the decree of his deposition after he was forced by his grandson, Andronikos III, to retire: *ὕφ' ἑτέρου λοιπὸν τὴν χεῖρα χειραγωγούμενος ἄνω μὲν ἐρυθρὸν προὔθηκε τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σταυροῦ τύπον, κάτω δὲ μέλανα*²⁷.

Apart from decrees, attire worn in enthronement or deposition ceremonies was also described using the colour word *ἐρυθρός*. Akropolites tells us that John Komnenos Doukas, ruler of Thessalonike (1240-1242), removed his red sandals (*τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐρυθρὰ πέδιλα ἀπεβάλλετο*) and exchanged them for the insignia of despots²⁸. In contrast, putting on red buskins was interpreted as an acquisition of imperial power. Choniates writes

γραφὰς ἐπεκύρου (cf. George Akropolites, *The History: Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, by R. MACRIDES, Oxford 2007, 182) [hereafter: *Akropolites, The History*].

23. Pachymeres, V.13: II, 485: *πέμψας βασιλικὰς συλλαβὰς ἐνσεσημασμένας τῷ ἐρυθρῷ*; Pachymeres, IV.29: I, 415: *ἀλλὰ διεξοδικῶς γράφειν δι' ἐρυθρῶν οἰκεία χειρὶ Ἀνδρόνικος Χριστοῦ χάριτι βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων*; Pachymeres, I.17: I, 79: *Καὶ ἐξετίθεντο μὲν τὰ προσταττόμενα παμπληθεί, τὰς δὲ δι' ἐρυθρῶν βασιλικὰς ὑποσημάνσεις ...*. *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri iv*, ed. L. SCHOPEN, v. I-III, Bonn 1828 [hereafter Kantakouzenos], III.81: II, 499: *κηρὸν αὐτῷ παρεσχημένον καὶ σφραγίδα, ἄμφω ἐρυθρά*; Kantakouzenos, III.34: II, 9: *ἐρυθραῖς ὑπεσημαίνετο ὑπογραφαῖς*; Kantakouzenos, I.23: I, 116: *ὑπογραφαῖς τῆς οἰκείας χειρὸς ἐρυθραῖς*. Gregoras, IV.8: I, 109: *καὶ δι' ἐρυθρῶν ὑπογράφειν γραμμῶν προστάγματα*. See also, Gregoras, XV.3: II, 758: *Ἐκείνος μὲν οὖν ἐρυθροῖς τε καὶ οἰκειοχείροις εἰς μῆκος ἐκτείνας γράμμασι τὴν ἐπιστολήν*. For its translation, see Gregoras, *Rhomäische Geschichte*, ed. trans. J. L. van DIETEN, III, Stuttgart 1979, 151 [hereafter *Rhomäische Geschichte*].

24. Choniates, 327: *παρηγωνίσαντο ἂν τὸ ἐν τοῖς γράμμασιν ἐρυθρὸν ...* [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 180].

25. Kantakouzenos, IV.37: III, 269: *οὐκ ἐπιστῆσαι τοῖς γεγραμμένοις, ἀλλ' ἀπερισκέπτως τοῖς ἐρυθροῖς ὑποσημῆνασθαι*.

26. Syropoulos, *Les 'Mémoires'* [as in n. 12], 120.

27. Gregoras, IX. 10: I, 446. For its translation, see *Rhomäische Geschichte*, II.2, Stuttgart 1973, 232.

28. Akropolites, 67. *Akropolites, The History*, 219-220.

that during the coronation of John II Komnenos (1118–1143), the emperor put on red sandals²⁹, as Ephraem writes of John III Vatatzes³⁰, Akropolites of Theodore Komnenos Doukas (1215–1230)³¹, Pachymeres of John II Megalokomnenos³², John VI Kantakouzenos of himself³³, and Gregoras of John VI Kantakouzenos³⁴. The word κόκκινος is used in Doukas' (1400–after 1462) description of the shoes of John VI³⁵, while John VI chooses ἐρυθρός to describe the buskins during his proclamation as emperor in Didymoteichon³⁶. To the best of my knowledge, Doukas' κόκκινος is the only case in the histories of the period where buskins are described in such terms, since ἐρυθρός was the accustomed word for this particular sartorial element. It should be noted that ἐρυθρός involves loss or assumption of power but never usurpation, as is the case with κόκκινος. For example, Pachymeres writes about John Tarchaniotes (first cousin of Andronikos II) *καὶ μᾶλλον βασιλειᾶν κατακριθέντος, ὥστε κἂν μιᾶ τῶν συνελεύσεων ἐς μέσον ἐμφανισθῆναι χειρίδας ἐμμαργάρους κοκκίνας καὶ ἄλλ' ἅττα ὡς δῆθεν σημεῖα βασιλικά, ἃ δὴ, παρὰ τινι τῶν αὐτοῦ εὐρεθέντα, τὴν ἀναφορὰν τῆς κατηγορίας πιστὴν ἐπ' ἐκείνῳ παρεῖχε, καὶ διὰ ταῦτα φυλακῆ καὶ πάλιν δοθέντος (he had been primarily suspected of aspiring to sovereign power, since he appeared in an assembly wearing red gloves and*

29. Choniates, 16: *πεδίλοις ἐρυθροῖς*.

30. Ephraem, v. 8473: *πέδιλ' ἐρυθρά*.

31. Akropolites, 33–34: *πορφυρίδα τε ὑπενδύεται καὶ ἐρυθρὰ περιβάλλεται πέδιλα*. See also Akropolites, 61: *καὶ ἐρυθροῖς πεδίλοις τοὺς πόδας ἐκείνου ὑπέδησε* (On Theodore's son, John).

32. Pachymeres, VI.34: II, 657: *Τὸ δ' ἐπ' ἐρυθροῖς μεταλαμβάνειν*. That this phrase refers to shoes and insignia and not to garments, see Pachymeres, II, 657, n. 5.

33. Kantakouzenos, III.27: II, 166: *ἐρυθραῖς κρηπίσι τοὺς πόδας κατεκόσμη*; Kantakouzenos, IV 37: III, 269: *καὶ τοῖς τε ποσὶν ὑπέδν κρηπίδας ἐρυθρὰς*; Kantakouzenos IV 49: III: 357–358: *ἔπειτα τὸ νῦν ἔχον πλὴν τῶν ἐρυθρῶν, ὁποῖας ἂν αὐτῷ δοκοῖη καινουργήσαντι κρηπίδας ἐπιτρέψας ὑποδέσθαι*.

34. Gregoras, XII.16: II, 625: *τὰ ἐρυθρὰ ὑποδησαμένον πέδιλα*; Gregoras XII.2:II, 578: *συνωθῶν τὰ ἐρυθρὰ ὑποδήσασθαι ὑποδήματα*; Gregoras, III.4: I, 69: *ταύτην ἐρυθραῖς ὑποδεδέσθαι κρηπίσι προσετετάχει*. For a translation of the last sentence, see *Rhomäische Geschichte*, I, Stuttgart 1973, 98.

35. Doukas, *Istoria Turco-Bizantina (1341–1462)*, ed. V. GRECU (Bucharest 1958) [hereafter Doukas], 6.2.4: 49: *ἀμφιέννυται τὰ κόκκινα καὶ τὰ σηρικὰ πέδιλα*.

36. See n. 33.

beaded other ornaments which were found [belonging to] someone of his party, and this was the reason he was imprisoned)³⁷. The correlation between colour and power is clearly illustrated in the above example. Historians and chroniclers ‘attached’ the word *έρυθρός* only to ‘genuine’ assumption of power (but not necessarily a Byzantine one), which is not always the case for the compound word *έρυθρός*, as will be shown later.

Έρυθρός is associated with objects of material culture that, broadly speaking, constitute elements of imperial display. A red marble slab is included in Choniates’ description of the tomb of Manuel I³⁸, Pachymeres refers to the red columns to the west of the naos of Hagia Sophia, where a veil depicting Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282) was hung³⁹, and John VI mentions the red veils that formed part of the decoration during imperial coronations held at the Church of Hagia Sophia⁴⁰. As mentioned in the introduction, colour also denoted hierarchy, which (as Gregoras and Laonikos Chalkokondyles imply) was reflected in Byzantine or Ottoman military campaigns. Gregoras mentions the red saddle of horses that belonged to the Byzantine imperial army⁴¹, and Chalkokondyles describes coverings made of white and red felt used by *the janissaries and the rest of the (Ottoman) army* during the fall of Constantinople⁴². He also uses the same word to describe the sultan’s tent during campaigns: *Σκηνην δὲ ἐρυθρὰ αὐτῷ. Ὅτε μὲν δύο, ὅτε δὲ καὶ τρεῖς ἴδρυνται αὐτῷ τῷ βασιλεῖ, ἀπὸ πύλου ἐρυθροῦ χρυσόπαστοι, καὶ σκηναὶ ἕτεραι ἀμφὶ τὰς πεντεκαίδεκα, πᾶσαι ἐντὸς τῶν νεηλύδων*⁴³. When *έρυθρος* does not strictly pertain to royal power, it adds overall to the solemnity of imperial ceremonies and demonstrates the

37. Pachymeres, VIII.12: III, 153.

38. Choniates, 222: *προσκύνησιν δέχεται λίθος ἐρυθρὸς ἀνδρομίχης* [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 125] and comments in ZORZI, *Coniata*, 322.

39. Pachymeres, XIII.23: IV, 677: *ἦν ἐκεῖνος βασιλεῖ Μιχαὴλ πατριαρχεῦων ἀνήρτα τῶν πρὸς τῇ δύσει μέσον ἐρυθρῶν κίωνων*.

40. Kantakouzenos, I.41: I, 197: *πέπλοις Σηρικοῖς ἐρυθροῖς*.

41. Gregoras, IX.9: I, 436: *τοὺς βασιλικοὺς ἵππους μετὰ τῶν ἐρυθρῶν ἐφεστρίδων*.

42. Laonikos Chalkokondyles, *The histories*, ed. trans. A. KALDELLIS, v. I-II, Cambridge Mass. – London 2014 [hereafter Chalkokondyles], II, 178: *στεγάσματα πύλοις λευκοῖς τε καὶ ἐρυθροῖς παρασκευασάμενοι*.

43. Chalkokondyles, I, 378: (*His tent is red. Sometimes two and sometimes three tents are pitched for the sultan himself, which are of red felt embellished with gold, and about fifteen other tents as well, all of them within the janissary encampment*).

extent to which the Byzantine and the Ottoman armies were associated with the colour red⁴⁴. Colour accentuated classification in political and military hierarchy, and Byzantine historians bore witness to this.

Emotional State

When it comes to expressing feelings, *έρυθρός* denotes humility, grief and anger, as Choniates, Gregoras, Pachymeres, and John VI tell us. More analytically, Choniates refers to eyes reddened out of wrath⁴⁵; Gregoras, Pachymeres and John VI associate it with humility⁴⁶; and Pachymeres with the ritual of removing red imperial garments during grief, as he tells us of the πορφυρογέννητος Konstantinos Palaiologos after the death of Anne, Andronikos II's wife (*ἀποβαλόντα διὰ τὸ πένθος τὰ ἐρυθρά [...] τῶν ἐρυθρῶν ἐκστάντα τῷ βασιλεῖ*)⁴⁷. In all these cases, red expresses an emotional change, which Pachymeres places within the framework of Byzantine court ceremonial. It is important to note that, apart from recording emperors' grief, when humility and anger are mentioned in relation to colour, they are never described otherwise than with *έρυθρός*.

Compound words of ἐρυθρός

Ἐρυθροβαφῆς

Unofficial-Illegitimate power

In contrast to *έρυθρός*, the addition of the suffix *-βαφῆς* to *έρυθρός* functioned similarly to *κόκκινος* and presented political power as either illegitimate in the case of enemies or unofficial in the case of short-term co-operations of the Byzantines with other political figures. Akropolites

44. Red and white colours seem, according to J. HATHAWAY (*A Tale of two Factions: Myth, Memory, and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen*, Albany 2003, 101), "to have enjoyed precedence as 'Ottoman' colors".

45. Choniates, 477: *ἀλλ' ἄρεος ὄντες τροφίμοι θυμοῦ μὲν πυρὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐρυθραίνονται* [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 262].

46. Gregoras, XXXII.2: II, 1105: *ὄγκ ἐρυθριᾷ διαβάλλον ἐτέρους*; Gregoras, XXVI: 12: III, 80: *ὄγκ ἐρυθριῶντας*; Pachymeres, II.2: II, 461: *διὰ τοι ταῦτα ἐρυθριῶν*; Kantakouzenos, II.2: 318: *μὴ δὲ ἐρυθριῶντες*.

47. Pachymeres, VI.28: II, 629-631 referring to Konstantinos Palaiologos (PLP 21492) and Failer's comments, 630, n. 1.

and Pachymeres use this word in a single case of usurpation and one of bestowal of Byzantine power on individuals who are otherwise enemies of the empire. Akropolites refers to the manner in which the Western Church manipulated its power after the siege of the City by the Latins in 1204, whereas Pachymeres refers to the former Seljuk Sultan Azz-Ed-Din, who co-operated for a short period with Michael VIII Palaiologos⁴⁸.

Cardinal Pelagius, Bishop of Albano, arrived in Constantinople in 1214 to help persuade the Greek clergy to recognize the Pope as head of both the Eastern and the Western Church. Akropolites describes the cardinal's outfit as well as the equipment of the horse that carried him, which had been provided by the Latin emperor of Constantinople between 1206–1216, Henry of Hainault: *ἐρυθροβαφῆ καὶ γὰρ ὑπεδέδετο πέδιλα, ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς δὲ χροιάς καὶ τὰ ἐνδύματα εἶχε, καὶ ἡ ἐφεστῶν δὲ τοῦ ἵππου καὶ τὰ χαλινὰ τῷ τοιούτῳ ἐβάπτοντο χρώματι*⁴⁹. Spyropoulos believes that this emphasis on the delegate's external appearance shows how impressive Pelagius looked to the Byzantines⁵⁰. Although this is plausible, for the reasons discussed below it seems that the impression had negative undertones for the Byzantines and that the delegate chose his colour to deliberately express the claims of papal authority over both the Eastern Church and the Byzantine emperor.

William Durandus (d. 1296), in his work *The Sacred Vestments*, writes that red garments were worn on certain feast days of the Latin Church⁵¹. In his time, popes and bishops wore red sandals, the inner parts or stripes of which were sometimes the same (red) colour *to signify the*

48. See recently A. BEIHAMMER, Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations, *Speculum* 86 (2011), 597-651, mainly 643-644.

49. Akropolites, 29: Cfr. *Akropolites: The History*, 154; *For he wore red-dyed shoes and had clothes of the same hue and his horse's saddle and reins were also dyed in the same colour.*

50. S. SPYROPOULOS (ed. trans.), *Γεώργιος Ακροπολίτης, Η Χρονική Συγγραφή*, Thessalonike 2004, 564, n. 114.

51. *Durandus on the sacred vestments: an English rendering of the third book of the 'Rationale divinatorum officiorum' of Durandus, Bishop of Mende*, transl. by Th. H. PASSMORE, London 1899, 145-148.

*colour of martyrdom*⁵². Durandus refers to the Roman clerics' right by the indulgence of the Emperor Constantine, to wear shoes with socks of white linen⁵³. Durandus mentions Constantine I in the context of the *Donation of Constantine*, which pertains to the appeal of the first Byzantine emperor to the Pope to allow him to wear shoes with socks of white linen: *We also decree that the clergy of the same holy Roman church [...] be distinguished in the same way as our Senate, which makes use of shoes with felt socks – that is, with white linen*⁵⁴. Thus, the *Donation of Constantine* includes white, rather than red, shoes⁵⁵. However, while in Constantinople, Pelagius wore red shoes. As Macrides notes, Nikolaos Mesarites “was sent by Theodore I to meet Pelagius in Constantinople and Nicaea in 1214/5 [...]. Mesarites relates that Pelagius made a point of showing him his red shoes, at the start of the proceedings, claiming that the successors of St. Peter were given the right to wear them by Emperor Constantine⁵⁶”. Pelagius here states what Durandus would claim in his work a few decades later: that the Western Church had been given the right to wear red shoes by the founder of the Byzantine state. But the forged *Donation of Constantine* (as Lorenzo Valla discovered in 1440) nowhere mentions red shoes. The reference to the first Byzantine emperor and the change of colour from white to red must have

52. Durandus, transl. PASSMORE, 65-67,79; J. BRAUN, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik*, Freiburg 1907, 400, n. 3 and p. 751. See also J. GAGE, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, London 1995, 131. Eastern Christianity held red-coloured cloaks for the traditional garments of martyrs, who suffered in their blood for the Christian faith. See the so-called *καθίσματα μαρτυρικά* (Tone 4) read on Saturday matins (Orthros): *Τῶν ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ Κόσμῳ Μαρτύρων σου, ὡς πορφύραν καὶ βύσσον τὰ αἵματα, ἡ Ἐκκλησία σου στολισαμένη, δι' αὐτῶν βοᾷ σοι Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός...* (Clothed as in purple and fine linen with the blood of your martyrs throughout the world, your Church cries out to you through them, Christ God).

53. Durandus, transl. PASSMORE, 72.

54. Lorenzo Valla, *On the donation of Constantine*, trans. G. W. BOWERSOCK, Cambridge, Mass – London 2007, 83, 85.

55. Lorenzo Valla comments on this point that the word *sock* refers to *shoes*: *...he thought he ought to speak about the shoes. He did not call them 'lunettes' but felt socks or rather with felt socks, which, in the way of this hopeless man, he explains that is, with white linen, as if felt socks are linen*. See Lorenzo Valla, *On the donation*, 97.

56. Akropolites, *The History*, 156.

had a specific ideological function in Latin-held Constantinople. Following the Byzantine sartorial tradition, usurpers of the imperial throne wore red buskins⁵⁷. For Pelagius, however, Constantinople's occupation by the Latins was not regarded as such, but was considered to be a right given to the Latin Church by the Byzantines themselves through Constantine. His remark on his red shoes leads to the thought that the Latins used Byzantine language of sovereignty to insinuate papal claims of authority over the Eastern Church, which had been promulgated from the eighth century onwards with the forged *Donation of Constantine*. By manipulating the power of imagery, Pelagius represents the claims of the Latin Church over the Orthodox Church, which explains not only his red garments and shoes but also the red coverings of his horse⁵⁸. Gregoras refers to Pelagius riding in the imperial carriage and to the jewels that decorated it: ἐν τῶν βασιλικῶν ὀχημάτων ἀναβιβάσας, ὡς εἶχε τῶν ἐρυθροβαφῶν κοσμημάτων⁵⁹. He uses ἐρυθροβαφῶν in this case, but when he mentions the saddles of the horses of the Byzantine royal army, he writes ἐρυθρῶν⁶⁰. Gregoras' use of red shows, as was argued earlier, that ἐρυθροβαφῆς highlighted invalid claims for power and demonstrates the response of writers to the messages that colour transmits.

The semantic nuance of colour is also shown by its use in political content. Michael allowed Azz-El-Din to use (ἐχρᾶτο) red-dyed buskins, one of the symbols of Byzantine power (τοῖς τῆς ἀρχῆς συμβόλοις)⁶¹. In the cases mentioned above, Latins and Turks assumed Byzantine power that was not bestowed on them as a result of legitimate succession; colour thus encompassed the ideals of a powerful Byzantine state and Church that held the reins in the ecclesiastical and political arena.

By contrast, Doukas is the only historian to use the word κοκκινοβαφῆς to describe the red-dyed sails of an Ottoman galley⁶², and

57. The second Latin emperor of Constantinople, Baldwin II, wore red buskins, as it was accustomed in Byzantium. See Akropolites, 185-186.

58. See n. 49 above. *Akropolites, The History*, 154.

59. Gregoras IX.6: I, 425; For the translation, *Rhomäische Geschichte*, II.1, 99: *Er nahm ihn von dor mit, setzte ihn auf eines der kaiserlichen Pferde, geschmückt, wie es was, mit den rotgefärbten Decken.*

60. See n. 41 above.

61. Pachymeres, II.24: I, 185: ἐρυθροβαφῆς πέδιλον ὑποδούμενος.

62. Doukas, XLIV.4: 417: καὶ ἰδόντες τὰ ἰστία εὐρύχωρα καὶ κοκκινοβαφῆ, ὑπέλαβον

the *zarkolas* (or *zerkulah*), a hood of red colour worn by the Ottomans⁶³: Τὸ γνωριστικὸν δὲ σημεῖωμα τούτων τὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς κάλυμμα, ὃ κατὰ τὴν κοινὴν γλῶτταν Ῥωμαῖοι ζαρκολᾶν λέγουσι καὶ γὰρ κοινῇ πάντες Τοῦρκοι τὸ αὐτὸ χρώντες ὡς κεφαλῆς περιβόλαιον, οἱ μὲν πάντες, ὅσοι ἐξ ἰδιωτῶν καὶ ἐξ εὐγενῶν τυγχάνουσι, κοκκινοβαφῆς τοῦτο χρώνται ...⁶⁴. Doukas seems to attribute no special connotations to his choice of *κόκκινος* instead of *έρυθρός*, and it could be the result of his preference for the vernacular⁶⁵.

τὸν στρατηγὸν εἶναι καὶ ἐχάρησαν. For its translation, see H. J. MAGOULIAS (trans.), *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks by Doukas: An Annotated Translation of 'Historia Turco-Byzantina'*, Detroit 1975, 253. This is probably the *bayrak*, the red banner, which was allegedly introduced by Emir Orhan, see F. BABINGER, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, Princeton, N. J. 1978, 108. For a discussion of Ottoman banners, see HATHAWAY, *A Tale of two Factions*, 99-100.

63. G. MORAVCSIK, *Byzantinoturcica. Sprachreste der Turkvölker in den byzantinischen Quellen*, II, Berlin 1958, 129. The fifteenth-century chronicler Theodore Spandounes describes the *zerkulah* and its colour [Theodore Spandounes, *On the origins of the Ottoman emperors*, trans. D. M. NICOL, Cambridge 1997, 118] but his work has not been included here since it was originally written in Italian.

64. Doukas, XXIII.9. 179. For its translation, see MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 135: *their distinctive emblem is their headdress which in the common language of the Romans is called zerkulah. All Turks usually wear this for a head covering. However, both commoners and nobles wear a red-colored headdress.* According to H. INALCIK [The Rise of the Turcman Maritime Principalities in Anatolia, Byzantium, and the Crusades, *BF* 11 (1985), 179-217, reprinted in IDEM, *The Middle East and the Balkans under the Ottoman Empire: essays on economy and society*, Bloomington 1993, 325], it was accustomed for the naval troops *azeb* to wear red caps, and white caps were worn by the *beg* and noble Turko-Mongols. See also E. ZACHARIADOU, Holy War in the Aegean during the fourteenth century, in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, ed. B. ARBEL – B. HAMILTON – D. JACOBY, London 1989, 224, n. 31.

65. Between the thirteenth and fifteenth century, *κοκκινοβαφής* is found in Byzantine romances such as in *Livistros and Rodamne* [where red clothes made of silk are mentioned, see T. LENDARI (ed.), *Ἀφήγησις Λιβίστρου καὶ Ροδάμνης (Livistros and Rodamne): the Vatican version*, Athens 2007, line 1982: *μετάξια κοκκινόβαφα*], and *Phlorios and Platziaphlora*, where we read about red lips burning like flame, see F. J. ORTOLA SALAS, *Florio y Platzia Flora. Una novela bizantina de epoca Paleologa*, Madrid 1998, line 818: *καὶ χεῖλη κοκκινόβαφα νὰ καίουν ὡς τὴν φλόγα*.

Ἐρυθρόδανος, ἡρυθροδανωμένη, ἐρυθροσήμαντος, ἐρυθρογράφων

Ἐρυθρόδανος, ἡρυθροδανωμένη, ἐρυθροσήμαντος and *ἐρυθρογράφων* (= writing in red) is strictly used in relation to imperial documents or to the colour of the ink used to write and sign them. *Ἐρυθρόδανος*, sometimes also referred to as *ἐρευθέδανον*⁶⁶, is a plant that produces red dye⁶⁷. *Ἐρυθρόδανος* and *ἡρυθροδανωμένη* (= rose madder dye) are attested only in Choniates and refer either to royal commands (*οἷα κατὰ κλύδωνα τοῦ κακοῦ κορυθουμένου καὶ μεταρσίως αἰτομένου καὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν ἀπαλείφοντος ἐρυθρόδανον, ὡς γράφειν ἄντικρυς τοὺς γράφοντας δοκεῖν καθ' ὑγρῶν καὶ ὑποσημαίνεσθαι μάτην τὰ οἰκεία κελεύσματα*)⁶⁸ or to the ink produced by the *ἐρυθρόδανον* (*ἐκ τοῦ τῷ Στυππειώτῃ ἐγχειρισθῆναι δοχεῖον ἐρυθροδάνου διάλιθον χρύσειον*)⁶⁹. *Ἐρυθροσήμαντος* is attested both in Choniates and Ephraem and refers either to red letters or to the action of writing in red⁷⁰. Finally, the word *ἐρυθρόγραφον* is used by Choniates to describe a letter written by Alexios III (1195-1203) in red ink⁷¹. The same word in genitive plural (*ἐρυθρογράφων*) is used by Ephraem to note that *writing in red was the custom for a [Byzantine] king*⁷². This last phrase contextualizes *ἐρυθρός* as a primary component of Byzantine political ideology, proved by the fact that it accompanied the emperors' reigns, dethronements, campaigns, and ceremonies. The legitimate user of *ἐρυθρός* enjoyed all the above and could only be God's chosen sovereign, the Byzantine king. If not, then *ἐρυθροβαφῆς* identified the usurpers.

66. E. CHRISTOPHORIDOU et alii, Το περίφημο ριζάρι (ερυθρόδανο το βαφικό) και η τεχνολογία του, *Αρχαιολογία καὶ Τέχνες* 99 (2006), 85.

67. R. J. FORBES, *Studies in ancient technology*, IV, 1987², 107-108.

68. Choniates, 326 [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 180: *but these imperial constitutions remained a dead letter; it was as if the cresting waves of this tempestuous evil washed away the imperial red*]; Choniates, 49: *ἔτέραν ἡρυθροδανωμένην βασιλείον γραφήν* [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 29: *a second royal letter written in red*].

69. Choniates, 112: [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 64: *Styppieotes was presented with an inkwell adorned with gems and gold to hold the red ink made of madder since he was the keeper of the inkstand, the imperial secretary*].

70. Choniates, 49: *γράμμα ἐρυθροσήμαντον*; Ephraem, v. 4791: *ἐρυθροσημάντω δὲ δοὺς γραφῆ*.

71. Choniates, 529: *ἐγχειρίσας γραμμάτιον ἐρυθρόγραφον* [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 290].

72. Ephraem, v. 8524: *ἐρυθρογράφων ἐξ ἄνακτος ὡς ἔθος*.

Φοινικοῦς and its compound words

Φοινικόχρoος, φοινικοῦς, φοινικοβαφής

Words that denoted the colour purple were diverse. Since *πορφυρὸς* was examined in the 2014 publication, attention will now be drawn to the function of other words of similar hue, starting with *φοινικόχρoος*, *φοινικοῦς* and *φοινικοβαφής*, which are translated as *purple*, *purple-red* and *crimson*⁷³, and describe attire, veils and texts.

Φοινικόχρoον is used by Choniatēs for sandals⁷⁴, which Ephraem describes using the term *φοινικοῦν*⁷⁵. Ephraem's extensive use of Choniatēs' work is shown in the fact that, apart from *ἐρυθροσήμαντος* and *ἐρυθρόγραφον* – *ἐρυθρογράφων*, he employs Choniatēs' wording to describe similar objects⁷⁶. *Φοινικοῦν* is used in the realm of imperial display when John VI Kantakouzenos writes that he dreamed of young men covering him with a purple veil. Shortly after the dream, he learned that General John Vatatzes, who had abandoned John VI and had attempted to get some of his Turkish allies on his side, had been murdered by the Turks⁷⁷. When describing the fatal battle between Alexios Vranas and Conrad of Montferrat, Choniatēs also exalts Conrad's armour over that of his comrades with the word *ἐπίσημον* (= official, significant) and, what is of importance here, with his reference to its colour⁷⁸. Conrad's power, however significant, was not recognized in the eyes of the Byzantine author. Apparently, *ἐρυθρός*, *φοινικόχρoους* and *φοινικοῦς* functioned in an opposite manner to *ἐρυθροβαφής* and *φοινικοβαφής*, which is reminiscent of the common understanding of the addition of – *βαφής* to denote illegitimacy.

73. LSJ⁹, svv. For examples from texts, see MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 191: *purple dyed buskins*; *ibid.*, 274: *crimson*. For Aelius Herodianus (2nd c. AD), the *φοινικοῦν* colour is the red colour, see Aelius Herodianus, *Herodiani partitiones*, ed. J. F. BOISSONADE, London 1819 [=Amsterdam 1963²], 147: *φοινικοῦν χρωμα, τὸ κόκκινον*.

74. Choniatēs, 498: *περιέβαλες τὸ διάδημα καὶ τὸ φοινικόχρoον περιέδησας πέδιλον*.

75. Ephraem, v. 5820: *καὶ φοινικοῦν πέδιλον εἰλίσσει πόδας*.

76. A. J. SIMPSON, *Niketas Choniatēs: a historiographical study*, Oxford 2013, 117-118.

77. Kantakouzenos, III.90: II, 555: *πέπλον φοινικοῦν ἔχειν, [...] ᾧ φέροντες οἱ νεανίσκοι περιεκάλυπτον τὸν βασιλέα*. Cf. I. TAXIDIS, *Ὀνειρα, οράματα καὶ προφητικὲς διηγήσεις στα ιστορικὰ ἔργα τῆς ὑστερῆς βυζαντινῆς εποχῆς*, Athens 2012, 80-83.

78. Choniatēs, 346: *φοινικοβαφὲς μετὰ τῶν αὐτῶ συνόντων τὸ τῶν ὀπλων ἔχων ἐπίσημον*.

Ὄξις and its compound words

Ὄξις, ὀξύλευκος, ὀξυβαφή

Ὄξις ranges from the violet of the πορφύρα to dark purple⁷⁹. It is attested either on its own or as a compound word (ὀξυβαφής) and pertains to garments, insignia and documents. Choniates writes that προῖόν δὲ [Ἰσαάκιος] καὶ φάλαρα ὀξυβαφῆ αὐτῷ ἐνέδωκε ἔχειν, τοῦ ἱεροῦ σχοινίσματος ὄντι, καὶ ἐφεστρίδα τοιαύτην ἐν τῷ ἰππεύειν κεκτῆσθαι καὶ διὰ βαφῆς ὁμοίας ὑποσημαίνεσθαι τοὺς τόμους τῶν δημοσίων λόγων καὶ τὰ γραμμῆματα⁸⁰. Here, - βαφῆς differentiates between legitimate imperial power and power delivered by the emperor himself to a person of his preference, which, however, would not have been given if it were not for the emperor himself. The chronicler John Kananos (first half of the 15th c.) refers to a legend in which, during one of Constantinople's sieges by the Turks, a woman wearing purple clothes walked fearlessly along the city walls⁸¹. In these two references, ὀξις is given imperial connotations. In the first case, it is equated with assumption of power by differentiating between two ranks; in the second, it alludes to the protection of the City, a miracle performed by the Virgin Mary (τό πανθαύμαστον θαῦμα τῆς Παναγίας)⁸². Finally, ὀξύλευκος is a mixture of purple and white used only by Pachymeres to describe the insignia of the σεβαστοκράτωρ John Doukas, who removed them to show humbleness (τὸ ταπεινὸν) towards his brother, Michael VIII⁸³.

79. A. CARILE, Produzione e usi della porpora nell'impero bizantino in: *La porpora. Realtà e immaginario di un colore simbolico (Atti del Convegno interdisciplinare di studio dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, Venezia, 24-25 ottobre 1996)*, Venice 1998, 249.

80. Choniates, 438 [MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 241: *Isaakios allowed him (Theodore Kastamonites, Isaakios Angelos' uncle) to have the imperial purple trappings and to wear the purple military cloak; he was allowed to sign the public decrees and rescripts in dye of the same color*].

81. See the new edition by A.M. CUOMO, *Ioannis Canani de constantinopolitana obsidione relatio* [Byzantinisches Archiv 30], Berlin 2016, 40, v. 349. For the translation of this part (*wearing violet clothes*), see Kananos, ed. CUOMO, 41.

82. Kananos, ed. CUOMO, 41.

83. Pachymeres, IV.29: II, 417: *καὶ τὰ ὀξύλευκα παράσημα ἀπεβάλετο*. See also A. FAILLER, *Les insignes et la signature du despote*, *REB* 40 (1982), 174, 177.

Δίχρους, δίχρωμος

Pachymeres and Choniates use the term *ὀξύλευκος* interchangeably with *δίχρους* or *δίχρωμος*. Both consist of a mixture of white and purple or violet⁸⁴, which seem to be juxtaposed, whereas the purple or violet took more space in the described attire⁸⁵. A visual representation of what this combination looked like is offered in a miniature in the Monastery of Sinai, showing the emperor John VIII Palaiologos (1425-1448) with a red and white crown⁸⁶.

Choniates refers to Isaakios II Angelos' cloak of two colours in his bloodstained confrontation with Stephanos Hagiochristophorites before the former's elevation to the throne in 1185⁸⁷. According to Pachymeres, *δίχροα* were worn by Byzantine emperors, who wore purple shoes, insignia and garments on their assumption of the throne. He describes despot John II Μεγαλοκομνηνός wearing *δίχροα* shoes in the absence of Michael VIII Palaiologos. John was asked to change to black ones, the accustomed colour for despots, to differentiate between the two ranks⁸⁸.

Άλουργός

Purple is also denoted by the use of the word *άλουργός*, a colour that derives from a sea product⁸⁹ and describes sartorial elements, veils and carpets, similarly to *φοινικοῦς* and its compound words. Due to the limitations of this article, the only examples where *άλουργός* is attested can be located in the work of Choniates, who uses it for veils and carpets⁹⁰, and the work of Akropolites, who uses it to describe the cloak of the Byzantine military official Melnik Dragotas⁹¹ (a reward for his services to Emperor John III Vatatzes)⁹².

84. FAILLER, *Les insignes*, 174.

85. FAILLER, *Les insignes*, 176.

86. Codex Sinaiticus gr. 2123, fol. 30v. See CARILE, *Produzione e usi*, 259.

87. Choniates, 342: τὸ δὲ σῶμα λωπίῳ διχρῶμῳ συνεῖχε περὶ τὴν ἰξὴν καταβαίνοντι.

For its translation, see MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 188: 'he wore a cloak of two colours which descended to the waist'.

88. See n. 32 above.

89. LSJ⁹, s.v.

90. Choniates, 244: τάπησι καὶ πέπλοις ἀλουργέσι; Choniates, 86: ἀλουργοῖς τάπησιν.

91. Akropolites, 75: ἀλουργὸν δὲ χλαῖναν ὁ Δραγοῦτᾶς χρυσίῳ συνυφασμένην ἐνεδέδυτο. Akropolites, *The History*, 230.

92. Akropolites, *The History*, 290.

Βύσσινος, ὑακίνθινος, ὑγινοβαφῆς

Βύσσινος derives from *βύσσος*, a herb from which linen made of flax, cotton or silk is produced⁹³. In texts, it denotes either the fabric or the colour in which it was dyed⁹⁴. Based on these two qualities, it can be translated either as linen⁹⁵ or as linen dyed in whitish (*ὑπόλευκος*) or purple hue⁹⁶. When Doukas describes the clothes of the dead Hamzas, he writes: *Φθάσας οὖν ἔν τινι τόπῳ λιβαδιαίῳ καὶ εὐθέτῳ ὄρᾳ πάλους πεφυτευμένους μυριαρίθιμους, βρίθοντας ἀντὶ καρπῶν νεκρὰ σώματα, καὶ τὸν Χαμζᾶν, ὃν προείπομεν, ἐν μέσῳ μετὰ βυσσίνων καὶ κοκκίνων ὧν ἐφόρει πεπερονημένον ἐν τῷ πάλῳ* (*He came upon a meadow where he saw countless stakes planted in the ground, laden not with fruit but with corpse, and on a stake in the middle was transfixing Hamza, still wearing his purple and red garments*⁹⁷). The information on the death of Hamzas must have been sufficient to the reader and the sentence would in no way be incomplete if it stopped with ... *transfixing Hamza*. However, the author conveys a second message with his last sentence. Considering the association of red objects with imperial power in Byzantium and the Byzantine influence of the colour red on the Ottomans⁹⁸, it is not unreasonable to argue that Doukas is insinuating that Hamza's aspirations to power were thwarted by his death⁹⁹.

93. LSJ⁹, s.v.

94. BRAUN, *Gewandung* [as in n. 52], 400.

95. Choniates, 577 refers to its fabric (silk) in the sentence Ὡ ἡ πολύγονος καὶ βύσσον καὶ πορφύραν ἡμφιεσμένη βασιλείον [o prolific City, once farbed in royal silk and purple, see MAGOULIAS, *O City*, 317].

96. A. MITSANI, Το παλαιοχριστιανικό κιβώριο της Κατοπολιανῆς Πάρου, *ΔΧΑΕ* 19 (1996-1997), 320-321. That it was of red hue, see for example Cyril of Alexandria (*PG* 68, col. 737): *Βύσσος δὲ ἦν ἄρα καὶ πορφύρα ταυτὶ*; Herodianus [as in n. 74], 10: *βύσσος, τὸ κόκκινον*; and L. BACHMANN (ed.), *Anecdota Graeca*, I, Leipzig 1828, 132, s.v. *βύσσος*: *στολὴ ἢ ἔσθος πορφυροῦν*. The lexicographer Hesychius translates it as *purple* [Hesychius, *Lexicon*, ed. K. LATTE, I, Copenhagen 1953, entry 1341: *βύσσινα*: *πορφυρᾶ*] and the thirteenth-century lexicographer Pseudo-Zonaras as *red* (τὸ κόκκινον) [*Zonaras Lexicon*, ed. J. A. H. TITTMANN, Leipzig 1808, 411, s.v. *Βύσσινον*]. That it was white, see (among others) Nikolaos Mesarites' *Seditio Joannis Comneni* [A. HEISENBERG (ed.), *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, Würzburg 1907, 44: *τῷ βυσσίνῳ λελευκασμένῃ*].

97. Doukas, XLV. 22. 12: 433: For its translation, see MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 260.

98. HATHAWAY, *A Tale of two Factions*, 101.

99. For Doukas' regard of the Turks as usurpers of the Byzantine throne, see Michael Doukas, *Βυζαντινοτουρκική Ιστορία*, ed. trans. V. KARALIS, Athens 1997, 26-27.

Gregoras refers to the act of *engraving* (writing) letters and decrees in *ύάκινθος*, a hue that ranges between blue and (dark) red¹⁰⁰. Finally, the hue of *ύσγινοβαφής* varies between orange and vermilion¹⁰¹, and is used by Choniates to describe the scarlet (according to Magoulias) clothes of the *ραβδούχοι*¹⁰², the teamsters who transported envoys, as Sylvester Syropoulos tells us¹⁰³.

White

White and black often function as two sides of the same coin in the sense that they present both sides of a situation or of a person (good–evil). They are not, however, simply an indication of contradiction, since each colour has its own distinctive use. Similarly to red and purple, white and black are often, but not exclusively, bound to the Byzantine political sphere. Through the description of objects, feelings, thoughts and animals, white and black underline the differences between the Byzantines and ‘others’, without excluding cases of no particular ideological insinuation.

Λευκός-ἄσπρος

White is denoted with the words *λευκός* and *ἄσπρος*, and is attested in compound words with *-χροια* (= hue) – as in *λευκόχροα* (= of white hue). Unlike *ἄσπρος* (mentioned below), *λευκός* describes a variety of objects that range from sartorial elements, architectural parts and naval equipment to feelings, moral values, countries, people and animals.

Λευκός is mentioned in combination with materials such as linen (*ἐπὶ λίνου λεπτοῦφοῦς καὶ λευκοῦ*)¹⁰⁴, but more usually with objects such as shoes (*καὶ λευκαῖς κρηπίσι περιστελλόμενον τοὺς πόδας*)¹⁰⁵, bands

100. Gregoras, XIV.3: II, 697: *χρώματι δ' αὖ ὑάκινθίνῳ τὰς τῶν ἐπιστολῶν καὶ ψηφισμάτων ἐγγαράττειν ἐπισημασίας.*

101. LSJ⁹, s.v.

102. Choniates, 343: *οὐχ οἱ τὰ ὑσγινοβαφῆ φοροῦντες ῥαβδοῦχοι* [*Nor lictor dressed in scarlet*], see MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 189].

103. Syropoulos, *Les 'Mémoires'*, 436: *ἐλθόντες οἱ ῥαβδοῦχοι μετὰ ὀρισμοῦ βασιλικοῦ ἄγουσιν ἐμὲ καὶ τὸν πρωτέκδικον εἰς τὰ βασίλεια.*

104. Gregoras, IX.1: I, 395; *Rhomäische Geschichte*, II.1, 82: *auf dünnem wießen Linnen*; Kantakouzenos, III.36: II, 218: *ὀθόνη λευκῆ.*

105. Choniates, 332: *λευκαῖς κρηπίσι* [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 183; *his legs were covered up to the knees in white boots*]. Kantakouzenos IV.49: III, 358: *λευκαῖς κρηπίσιν.*

(λευκόλινα)¹⁰⁶, shirts (καμίσιον λευκὸν)¹⁰⁷, coverings made of white felt (στεγάσματα πύλοις λευκοῖς)¹⁰⁸, decorative marble (ἐπὶ λιθίνου λευκοῦ τετραπλεύρου)¹⁰⁹, sails (ὡς νῦν γε οὐχ ἰστίοις λευκοῖς τὰς ναῦς πτεροῦσαι ἡμῖν γενήσεται)¹¹⁰, and head covers (Ὁ δὲ Χαλίλ [...] ἐκέλευσε τὰς λευκὰς καλύπτρας ὑποκρύπτειν τὸν καθένα)¹¹¹. In the last reference, found in Doukas' work, the word καλύπτρα refers to the pyramid-shaped καλύπτρα worn both by the Ottomans and by the Byzantines¹¹². Doukas also describes the *white-colored headgear* (οὔτοι λευκόχροα φοροῦσι τὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς περιβόλαια)¹¹³, *made of whitest felt* (ἐκ πύλου λευκοτάτου)¹¹⁴, worn by the *foreigners who have succumbed to the yoke of slavery and are registered as slaves of the ruler* (καὶ πάντες ὀνομάζονται καὶ εἰσὶ τοῦ ἀρχηγοῦ δοῦλοι)¹¹⁵.

In times of grief, emperors removed their red garments and replaced them with white ones, as Gregoras¹¹⁶, Michael Panaretos (1320-1390)¹¹⁷, and

106. Choniates, 594: καὶ τὰ κατὰ νότου κειμήνια λευκόλινα [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 326].

107. Syropoulos, *Les 'Mémoires'*, 340: εἷς ἐκ τῶν Λατίνων καμίσιον λευκὸν ἐνδεδυμένος.

108. See n. 44 above.

109. Choniates, 643 [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 353: *four-sided white marble*]; Doukas, 13.3: λευκῶ μαρμάρῳ συνηρμοσμένῳ... [MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 82: *white marble joined together*].

110. Choniates, 166 [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 94. *L'et us now spread the ships' white sails*].

111. Doukas, 28.12: Halil [...] gave orders that everyone should hide his white headdress [MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 166]. According to the fourteenth-century account of Aflaki, Mehmet I of Karaman introduced to the Turkomans in the thirteenth century the custom of wearing white hats, see Sh. Al-dīn Aḥmad-e Aflākī, *The feats of the knowers of God : Manāqeb al-ārefīn*, trans. J. O'KANE, Leiden 2002, 334. See also C. CAHEN, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey : a general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history, c. 1071-1330*, New York 1968, 303-304.

112. M. BALIVET, *Les Turcs au Moyen-Age: des croisades aux Ottomans (XIe-XVe siècles)*, Istanbul 2002, 106.

113. Doukas, 23.9; MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 135.

114. Doukas, 23.9; MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 135.

115. MAGOULIAS, *Decline and Fall*, 135.

116. Gregoras, XII.12:II, 612: ἐκ τῆς πορφύρας ἔς τὸ λευκὸν, ὡς εἶθιστο τοὺς βασιλέας περὶ τὰς λύπας αἰεὶ ποιεῖν [...] καὶ διήρκεσεν ἐκεῖθεν λευκοῖς ἐνδύμασι χρώμενος. For its translation, see, *Rhömische Geschichte*, III, 63.

117. O. LAMPSIDES (ed.), *Μιχαὴλ τοῦ Παναρέτου περὶ τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν*

John Kantakouzenos tell us¹¹⁸. When Choniates refers to the *change towards the whiteness of truth* (= approaching the truth)¹¹⁹, he continues the Greco-Roman textual tradition of using white as an indication of morality¹²⁰. In the same context, Akropolites records a saying that *you cannot whiten* (λευκαίνεσθαι) an Ethiopian¹²¹, a popular derogatory reference in the ancient Greek and early Christian world¹²² to describe the untrustworthy Michael II Angelos Doukas (1230-1266/68)¹²³. Akropolites' criticism stems from the fact that, although Michael had signed a treaty with John III Vatatzes, he revolted against him¹²⁴.

Laonikos Chalkokondyles' love for ethnological and geographical observations is shown in his description of the skin colour of the tribal confederation of the White Sheep Turkomans with whom the Greeks of Trebizond intermarried¹²⁵. Most importantly, it is also shown by his division of Sarmatia (Southern Russia) into *white* and *black* according to its own populations¹²⁶. Chalkokondyles writes that those who live closer to the

[Ποντικάι Ἔρουναι 2], Athens 1958, 73: ὁ βασιλεὺς μεγάλως ἐλυπήθη ἐπιστὰς ἐν τῇ προπομπῇ τῆς ἐξόδου αὐτοῦ φορέσας καὶ λευκὰ διὰ τὴν θλίψιν, καθὼς εἶθισται τοῖς ἄναξι.

118. Kantakouzenos, III.27: II, 167: λευκὰς περιεβάλλοντο ἐσθῆτας, ὅπερ ἐστὶ τεκμήριον πενθούντων βασιλέων.

119. Choniates, 136: πρὸς τὴν τῆς ἀληθείας μεταβαλέσθαι λευκότητα [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 78].

120. B. L. GAY, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature*, London 2002, 37.

121. Akropolites, 89: τὸ στρεβλὸν ξύλον οὐδέποτ' ὀρθόν, καὶ ὁ Αἰθίοψ οὐκ οἶδε λευκαίνεσθαι.

122. E. L. von LEUTSCH – F. W. SCHNEIDEWIN, *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*, I-II, Hildesheim 1965. I, 294, n. 92, II, 549, n. 25. GAY, *Symbolic*, 29-51.

123. For the original text, see Akropolites, 89: εἰς ἀποστασίαν γὰρ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐφώρμησε.

124. K. M. SETTON, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571: The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries*, I, Philadelphia 1976, 69-70.151 *Acropolites the history*, 252 and n. 6.

125. Chalkokondyles, II, 304: καὶ ἐπιγαμίας μὲν ποιεῖσθαι πρὸς τοὺς ὁμόρους βαρβάρους τοὺς λευκοὺς Ἀσπροπροβατάντας καλουμένους. Chalkokondyles probably refers to the leader of the White Sheep Turkomans, Uzun Hasan, who married Theodora Komnene /Despoina Chatoun, the daughter of Emperor John IV of Trebizond, see D. NICOL, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten portraits 1200-1500*, Cambridge 1994, 121 and *PLP* n. 30736.

126. Chalkokondyles, I, 212: τὰ μέντοι πρὸς Εὐξείνιον πόντον Σαρματῶν γένη [...]

Black Sea call it black, while those who live closer to the ocean under the Arctic Circle call it white¹²⁷, without justifying exactly how this division was shaped in the mind of the inhabitants¹²⁸. Nikolouides however provides a number of reasons for the division of Sarmatia into white and black. He writes that “the distinction between a white and a black Sarmatia is rather puzzling. Possible explanations suggest that it is due either to the worship of a white or black god or to the clothes of the inhabitants in certain areas or to the period when the country was occupied by the Lithuanians. According to another view, the names were due to the white and black colours of the Viking’s ensigns who had occupied them in the 9th century, or it means that white Russia is the northern free part of the country, while the black is the one still under foreign rule”¹²⁹.

Skin is described as *white* (λευκός) or *snow-white* (χιονώδης), when for example Choniates describes Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)¹³⁰, or only as *snow-white* in the fifteenth-century *Chronicle of the Tokkoi*¹³¹.

The final set of examples consists of animals, such as when Pachymeres describes the differences between Skythia and Ethiopia, both countries belonging to the Mameluk Sultanate¹³². One of the differences he points out is the colour of animals in both countries¹³³. He writes that in the North

ἔς τὴν μέλαιναν οὕτω ὑπὸ σφῶν αὐτῶν καλουμένην Σαρματίαν τελοῦσι and τὰ δὲ πρὸς ὠκεανὸν ὑπὸ τὴν ἄρκτον οἰκημένα γένη λευκὴν Σαρματίαν καλοῦσι.

127. See previous note.

128. Chalkokondyles, I, 214. Πρὸς μέντοι ὠκεανὸν πόλις Οὐγκράτης καλουμένη, ἔς ἀριστοκρατίαν τετραμμένη, ὄλβον τε παρέχεται καὶ αὐτὴν εὐδαιμονία ὑπερφέρουσαν τῶν ἄλλων τῆς Σαρματίας πόλεων, τῆς τε λευκῆς καὶ μελαίνης οὕτως καλουμένης.

129. N. G. NIKOLOUDES (ed. trans.), *Λαονίκου Χαλκοκονδύλη Βυζαντίου Ἄλωσις*, Athens 2005, 342, n. 44. See for example, the justification of the name by the white clothes worn by its inhabitants in Chalkokondyles, I, 214: Ἡ μέντοι πρὸς ὠκεανὸν διήκουσα Σαρματία ἐπὶ Προυσίαν καλουμένην χώραν διήκει καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς ταύτη λευκοφόρους Ναζηραίους.

130. Choniates, 51: τὴν δὲ χροῖαν [...] λευκός ἦν καὶ χιονώδης [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 30].

131. G. SCHIRÒ (ed.), *Cronaca dei Tocco* [CFHB 10], Roma 1975, 476, lines 3458-3459: Καὶ παρευθὺς ἐξύγιανεν, ἐγένετο ὡς λέων, / ὄμορφος, πολυφιλόχρους, λαμπρὸς καὶ χιονᾶτος.

132. A. K. PETRIDES, *Ethnography and Narrative: Συγγραφικὰ Ἱστορῖα 3.3-5*, GRBS 49 (2009), 312.

133. PETRIDES, *Ethnography and Narrative*, 303.

(Skythia), animals have become *white* (λελεύκωται)¹³⁴. As will be shown in the next section, where black is discussed, Pachymeres' zoological references functioned as a warning to the Byzantine state, which had developed political relations with different nations, that it needed to accumulate knowledge of the population it interacted with.

Choniates and Gregoras also describe colours in animals. In his description of the approach of Alexios Vranas to the Constantinopolitan city walls to depose Isaakios, Choniates writes that Vranas, ἵππῳ ἔποχος ὦν παρὰ τοσοῦτον μὴ παντὶ μέλανι, παρ' ὅσον λευκαὶ τρίχες ἐς κύκλον σεληναίας περιαγόμεναι φνεῖσαι ἦσαν ἐπὶ τὸ μέτωπον¹³⁵. Although colour made a difference in a horse¹³⁶, the historians of the era did not go into detail when it came to horses, describing either the hue of their hair (black, white) or their attributes (red, yellow, white). In more detail, snow denoted the level of brightness, and it is in this sense that Choniates describes horsehair in the sentence quoted above, as well as in the phrase *whiter than snow*¹³⁷ (inspired by Homer's *Iliad*)¹³⁸. Horses and their coverings were white, described either with λευκός¹³⁹, or ἄσπρος (Leontios Machairas, fifteenth century)¹⁴⁰. Apart from horsehair, sheep-hair and cats were also described as white¹⁴¹.

134. Pachymeres, III.3: I, 237: βορείοις γὰρ τὰ ζῷα λελεύκωται, νοτίοις δὲ μεμελάνωται.

135. Choniates, 378 [: *astride a horse all black but for white horsehairs growing around the blow in a crescent shape*. MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 208].

136. The eparch's horse for example was of white colour, see T. KOLIAS, *The Horse in the Byzantine World*, in: *Le cheval dans les sociétés antiques et médiévales. Actes des Journées internationales d'étude* (Strasbourg, 6-7 novembre 2009), ed. S. LAZARIS, Turnhout 2012, 91. For the colours of horses and their attributes in Byzantine texts, see also A. BABUIN, *Ο ἵππος και η εξάρτυση του κατά την ύστερη βυζαντινή εποχή*, *Βυζαντινά* 27 (2007), 126-127, 133-134, 141-145.

137. Choniates, 19: ἵπποι καλλίτριχες χιόνος λευκότεροι; Choniates, 136: λευκοτέρῳ χιόνος ἔποχος ἵππῳ.

138. *Iliad*, 10: 436-437: τοῦ δὴ καλλίστους ἵππους ἴδον ἠδὲ μεγίστους / λευκότεροι χιόνος...

139. Choniates, 158: ἵπποις λευκοῖς; Syropoulos, *Les 'Mémoires'*, 238: καθεσθεῖς δ' ἐπὶ τοῦ λευκοφόρου ἵππου.

140. R. M. DAWKINS (ed.), *Leontios Makhairas, Chronicle*, v. I, Oxford 1932, 650.

141. Gregoras VIII.11: I, 355: καὶ παρὰστασιν ποιεῖσθαι τοῦ πράγματος θέλοντες τρίχας ἐδείκνυσαν λευκάς, αἱ ἦσαν μὲν ἐκ προβάτων λευκῶν ἐδείκνυντο δ' ὡς ἐκ κεφαλῆς καὶ τῆς ὑπὴνης τοῦ γηραιοῦ βασιλέως (*Rhomäische Geschichte* II.1, 63: *Um die Sache zu*

Finally, the word *ἄσπρος* was very little used and appears particularly in the fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Morea*, where a *white-horse rider* is included in the narration¹⁴².

Black

Μέλας, μελάγχροος, μελαμβαφής, μελάνωμα, μελάνωσις, μελανειμονεῖν, ὑπομελαῖνον, καπνηρός, μαῦρον

The Greek words for black describe physical appearance, feelings, thoughts and moral values, as well as animals, natural phenomena and biological functions. More often than *white*, black is placed in the context of imperial display as it refers to royal tombs and imperial attire (buskins, garments). The various forms in which it appears (*μέλας, μελάγχροος, μελαμβαφής, μελάνωμα, μελάνωσις, μελανειμονεῖν, ὑπομελαῖνον, καπνηρός* and *μαῦρον*) make it the third most commonly used colour after purple and red.

As with white, black is used to describe human skin and facial characteristics. Influenced by Greco-Roman literature¹⁴³, Choniates, Akropolites and Ephraem use the words *μελάγχροος* or *μελάγχρους* to describe dark human skin¹⁴⁴. Elsewhere, Choniates describes the skin of Manuel I Komnenos not with the word *μελάγχροος* but with *καπνηρός* (= smokey)¹⁴⁵. Ephraem uses *μελαντέρα* (= blacker) to justify the title of

beweisen, zeigten sie weiße Haare, die freilich von weißen Schafen waren, aber für Haare vom Haupt und vom Bart des alten Kaisers ausgegeben wurden); Gregoras VII.1: I, 216: *γαλῆν ἔχων τὸ χρῶμα λευκῆν*.

142. J. SCHMITT (ed.), *The Chronicle of Morea*, London 1904, v. 4789: *εἶδαν καὶ ἔμαρτύρησαν πῶς εἶδαν καβαλλάρην / εἰς φαρί... ἄσπραλογᾶτον*. Ἄσπρος is used for Turkish coins by Doukas [22.5: *καὶ τῶν εἰσοδημάτων τοῦ Μεχεμετ τριακοσίων χιλιάδων ἄσπρων ἀριθμόν*] and Phrantzes [*Giorgio Sfranze, Cronica*, ed. R. MAISANO [CFHB 29], Roma 1975, 136: *ἀπῆρεν αὐτὰ δοῦς πρὸς τὸν μεραχούρην ἄσπρα χιλιάδας πολλάς*], but since it does not describe colour and not an object, it has been excluded from this study.

143. GAY, *Symbolic* 39-40.

144. Choniates, 440: *μελάγχροος*; Akropolites, 3: *μελάγχρους ἐφ' ἰκανόν*; Ephraem v. 7520: *μελάγχρους μετρίως*.

145. Choniates, 51: *οὔτε μὴν ἄγαν καπνηρός* [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 30: *nor the color of deep black smoke*].

Anastasios I (491-518) as *Δίκωρος*, since one of his pupils was blacker than the other¹⁴⁶. As to biological functions, having described the symptoms of the monk Bardarios, whose body swelled after he did not consume food and drink for days, Gregoras writes that *blackness was poured over his face*, meaning that his face became black¹⁴⁷. Finally, the chronicler Ephraem uses *μέλαινα* to describe black-coloured gall produced during regurgitation¹⁴⁸.

When it comes to feelings, thoughts and moral values, black describes sadness, evilness, hidden thoughts and shame¹⁴⁹. Choniates, copying Homer, describes tears as a fountain of *black water* (*μελάνυδροσ*)¹⁵⁰, which originates in the thought that sadness leads to tears. Gregoras uses *μελανειμονεῖν* to describe the last hours before the death of emperors, during which they were accompanied by two boys dressed in black¹⁵¹. A hue lighter than black (*ὑπομελαῖνον*) is used metaphorically by Choniates to describe the darkness of evil (in contrast to the *whiteness of truth* mentioned earlier) and lack

146. Ephraem, v. 1059-1063: οὕτως Ἀναστάσιος ἔσχε τὸ κράτος, / ὅστις ἐπωνόμαστο «Δίκωρος» θέσιν, / οἷς οὐχ ὁμοίας ἔσχεν ὀμμάτων κόρας, / ἀλλὰ μελαντέραν μὲν αὐτῶν θατέραν.

147. Gregoras, XXIX.52: III, 260: καὶ μακρὰ τις ἐπεχύθη τῷ προσώπῳ μελάνωσις.

148. Ephraem, v. 446: χολὴν μέλαιναν ἐκπτύσας ἐξ ἐγκάτων.

149. GAY, *Symbolic*, 35-37, 43-44, 50.

150. Cf. Choniates, 7: ὡς κρήνη μελάνυδροσ τὰ δάκρυα χέουσα; *Iliad*, Π.3: δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων ὡς τε κρήνη μελάνυδροσ.

151. Gregoras, IX.14: I, 463: τὸ οὖν μελανειμονεῖν καὶ τὸ ἀσκεπεῖς εἶναι καὶ τὸ δύο τὰ μειράκια φανήναι ἐδήλου τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ τοῦ μέλανος ῥάκουσ ἐνδύμα. The custom of having two boys related to death experiences goes back to ancient Greek necromantic rituals, where two thirteenth-year old boys prepared those who wished to consult the dead, as it was the case in the necromantic oracle of Trophonios in Leibadia, Greece. See F. SPIRO (ed.), *Pausaniae Graeciae descriptio* (Leipzig 1903; repr. 1967), 9.39.7: πρῶτα μὲν ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ αὐτὸν ἄγουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν τὴν Ἑρκυναν, ἀγαγόντες δὲ ἐλαίῳ χρίουσι καὶ λούουσι δύο παῖδες τῶν ἀστῶν ἔτη τρία πού καὶ δέκα γεγονότες, οὓς Ἑρμᾶς ἐπονομάζουσι· οὗτοι τὸν καταβαίνοντά εἰσιν οἱ λούοντες καὶ ὅποσα χρὴ διακονούμενοι ἅτε παῖδες (= First, during the night he is taken to the river Hercyna by two boys of the citizens about thirteen years old, named Hermae, who after taking him there anoint him with oil and wash him. It is these who wash the descender, and do all the other necessary services as his attendant boys). The translation is provided by the Perseus Digital Library.

of clarity¹⁵². Finally, by referring to the *melanoma of shame*¹⁵³, Choniates continues the Greco-Roman textual association of the colour black with immoral behaviour¹⁵⁴.

It was mentioned earlier that Choniates referred to the red colour of Manuel's tomb, but in the same sentence used the word *μελανία* (= blackness) to tell us the colour of the tomb's lid¹⁵⁵. Karagiorgou defines *μελανία* as a mournful blackish colour, resembling the *verde antico*, the ancient green, and notes that there should be no confusion between the words green and black, since the *verde antico* can sometimes be quite dark¹⁵⁶.

Black buskins were the custom for despots and dignitaries (*πρωτοβεστιάριοι*). It has already been mentioned that Pachymeres uses the word *μελαμβαφής* (= dyed black) to describe the sandals of the despot John Komnenos Palaiologos (?-1274), who removed the insignia of sovereignty (*τὰ τῆς δεσποτείας ἀπέβαλε σύμβολα*) and, by wearing black-dyed buskins (*μελαμβαφέσι δὲ πεδίλοις*), was entitled to the title of *δεσπότης* only in name, since his headcover (*καλύπτρα*) and the colour of his horse's attributes (*καθ' ἵππον στολισμοῖς*) suggested he had no right to the title anymore¹⁵⁷. The addition of the component word - *βαφής* was meant also to differentiate between ranks¹⁵⁸, and this was another case of utilising imagery to support imperial ideology. Elsewhere, Pachymeres demonstrates the striking power of imagery in Byzantium by describing how the shoe-colour of a certain Theophylaktos proved him to be an innocent victim. Theophylaktos, one of Pachymeres' relatives, and a secretary to the *πρωτοβεστιάριος* George Mouzalon - was killed by rioters because he looked like his master

152. Choniates, 340: ὑπομελαῖνον τὸ πολυμερὲς τὴν κακίαν νυκτινόμον δαιμόνιον; Choniates, 211: ὅσαι τῶν ἀποστολικῶν ῥήσεων τῇ ἀσαφείᾳ ὑπομελαίνονται.

153. Choniates, 166: διὰ τὸ τῆς αἰσχύνῃς μελάνωμα.

154. GAY, *Symbolic*, 35-37, 43-44, 50; M. PASTOUREAU, *Black: The History of a Colour*, Princeton 2009, 79-81.

155. Choniates, 222: συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον λίθος τὴν μελανίαν ὑποκρινόμενος.

156. O. KARAGIORGOU, *Urbanism and economy in Late Antique Thessaly 3rd-7th century A.D.: the archaeological evidence*, PhD thesis, Oxford 2001, II, Appendix 6, p. 12, nos 6, 14.

157. Pachymeres, VI.1: II, 435: Ὅθεν καὶ κοινὴν ἄλλως ἐκ χρυσοσύρματος καλύπτραν ἐνθέμενος, μελαμβαφέσι δὲ πεδίλοις καὶ τοῖς καθ' ἵππον στολισμοῖς χρώμενος μόνον τὸ δεσπότης κεκλησθαι ἀναφαίρετον εἶχε.

158. Pachymeres, VI.1: II, 435, and I, 85, n. 3.

(προσόμοιος τῷ κυρίῳ τὰ πάντα); unfortunately for him, his killers had not noticed the colour of his black buskins (τὸ γὰρ πέδιλον ὑποφανὲν τοῦ ποδός, μέλαν ὄν), while a πρωτοβεστιάριος wore green buskins¹⁵⁹. It was mentioned earlier that the despot John Komnenos Doukas was advised to wear his black shoes again¹⁶⁰, as this was considered to be the transitional colour between the ranks of despot and emperor¹⁶¹.

Black was worn by everybody in times of grief¹⁶², except for emperors, who wore only white, as mentioned earlier. George Voustronios (fifteenth century) uses the phrase *cut black clothes* (ἐκόψεν μαῦρα = he wore black) during grief: Καὶ μανθάνοντά το ὁ αποστολὲς πως ἐπέθανεν ἡ ρήγαινα ἐπῆρεν μεγάλην πλῆξιν Καὶ ἐκόψεν μαῦρα κ' ἐκεῖνος καὶ οἱ δουλευτάδες του [on learning that the queen had died the postulant grieved greatly, and both his servants dressed in black]¹⁶³. Gregoras refers to the black garments surrounding every age, meaning that death can come anytime¹⁶⁴, and to the sorrow expressed by wearing black clothes¹⁶⁵. Choniates uses μέλινα to describe the clothes of a widow¹⁶⁶. Chalkokondyles describes the black garments worn by the people surrounding Halil Pasha, the Granz Vizir of the Ottoman Empire, who mourned him after they were informed that he had been murdered in Andrianople¹⁶⁷. He also refers to the illness called μέλαινα, which caused black secretions (hence its name) and, ultimately, death¹⁶⁸.

159. Pachymeres, 85.

160. See above, p. 200.

161. Pachymeres, II, 657, n. 5.

162. The shoe colour of the *protovestiarios* was customarily green but in times of grief it was black, see Pachymeres, I, 84, n. 3. See also Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices-Introduction, Texte et Traduction*, ed. trans. J. VERPEAUX, Paris 1966, 153. R. MACRIDES et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court*, Farnham 2013, 52-53. For green colour, see below.

163. G. ΚΕΧΑΓΙΟΓΛΟΥ (ed.), *Τζάορτζης Μπουστρούς Διήγησις Κρονίκας Κύπρου*, Nicosia 1997, 35, 471.

164. Gregoras, XI.11: I, 562: μελανιμονούσης ἡλικίας ἀπάσης.

165. Gregoras, XV.3: II, 752: ἀλλ' ὁμόσε πάντας ἐλέσθαι μελαιναίς ἐσθῆσι ξυνεπεπτώκει κεχρησθαι.

166. Choniates, 548: γυνή τις ἡμφιάσατο μέλινα χήτει ἀνδρός.

167. Chalkokondyles, I, 208: ἐναυθθα μὲν ὄρμηντο τῶν θεραπόντων αὐτοῦ οἱ πλεῖστοι μελανοφορεῖν καὶ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων, ... ὃς ἂν ἐσθῆτα μελαιναν φοροοίη.

168. Chalkokondyles, I, 270: ὑπενεχθεῖς ἐς τὴν μέλαιναν ὑπὸ λύπης.

Apart from death and sadness, black signified a loss of power. After the death of Anne, wife of Andronikos II, Michael VIII Palaiologos seized the opportunity to deprive his son of the right to wear purple garments (= become emperor) and attempted to remove his authority by forcing him to continue wearing black, which (as we have seen) was the colour of a despot's outfit¹⁶⁹. Pachymeres mentions that when the army of John Palaiologos surrounded John I Doukas (ruler of Thessaly, 1268-1289) in a fortress in Neopatras, the latter managed to escape by dressing in a black cloak and pretending to be a servant¹⁷⁰. Ephraem described as 'wretched' the black clothes of Michael V Kalaphates (1041-1042), who sought refuge to the monastery of Stoudion¹⁷¹, and for Ephraem and Pachymeres the phrase *to become μελαμφόρος* meant *to become a monk*¹⁷². Another use of black was Gregoras' description of a Bulgarian tribe he encountered as a Byzantine ambassador to Serbia in 1326¹⁷³. Gregoras also characterizes the second patriarchate of Athanasios I as more cruel than the first by using the Aesopian myth of a black cat, which he uses as a metaphor for *becoming a monk* (τὸ μοναδικὸν περιέθετο σχῆμα). He describes the fur of a white cat that turned black after falling into black dye¹⁷⁴. Now that the cat was black (like a monk's attire), its prey (mice) initially believed that it would not be hungry for meat, since monks do not consume it. However, the cat became even hungrier for mice than before, by which Gregoras insinuates that Athanasios' monastic disguise did not alter his fierce church policy. The use of black to describe animals also allowed for remarks on Byzantine political ideology. It has already been

169. Pachymeres, VI.28: II, 631: Σοφὸν δὲ ἄρα καὶ τὸ τοῦ καιροῦ ἦν, ὡς μὴ δόξαι τὰ ἐπίσημα μεταλλάττειν καί, ἅμ' ἀποβαλόντα τὰ ἐρυθρά, μεταλαμβάνειν τὰ ποικιλτά, ἀλλὰ, χρόνου ῥυέντος διὰ τὸ πένθος ἐπὶ μόνοις μέλασιν, ἀνεκτὴν τὴν μεταβολὴν δεδῶσθαι, ὡς ἐξ ἀρχῆς κοσμηθέντος τοῦ φορέσαντος τοῖς μετὰ βασιλεία λαμπροῖς. See also above, n. 47.

170. Pachymeres, IV.31: II, 423: εὐθύς τε μετασχηματίζεται καὶ γλαῖναν μὲν μέλαιναν περιτίθεται.

171. Ephraem, line 1059: μέλαν τι τριβώνιον ἐνδύς ἀθλίως.

172. Ephraem, line 2078: πέμψας τυράννω τὰ παράσημα κράτους, αὐτὸς δ' ὑπεκστὰς γίγνεται μελαμφόρος. Ephraem, v. 3452: ὁ Μιχαὴλ δὲ γίγνεται μελαμφόρος. Pachymeres, VI. 27: II, 627: ὁ δεξάμενος βουλὴν εἰσάγει τῷ κινδυνεύοντι καταφυγεῖν πρὸς τὸ μέλαν καὶ τὰ τῶν μοναχῶν ἀμφίεσασθαι.

173. Gregoras, VIII.14: I, 377: μελαίνας ἐσθῆτάς τινας περικείμενοι.

174. Gregoras, VII.1: I, 217: ἐν ἧ τὸ τὰ σκύτη μελαῖνον ὁ σκυτεὺς ἐκείνος εἶχεν ὑγρόν, καὶ μόλις ἐκείθεν ἄνεισι μέλαν ἔχουσα χρῶμα.

mentioned that Pachymeres discusses the differences between Skythia and Ethiopia. Following his observation that in the South (*Ethiopia*) animals have turned black (*μεμελάνωται*)¹⁷⁵, he describes a giraffe, a gift donated by the Mameluk Sultan of Egypt (Ethiopia) Baybars to Michael VIII¹⁷⁶. The detailed description of the giraffe, which includes the reference to a black line along the body of the animal¹⁷⁷, as Petrides argues, “may seem like vintage historiographical ἀκρισία, lack of judgment [...] on the part of Pachymeres [...]. Nonetheless, [...] this assorted beast may symbolise the very kingdom of the Mameluks, a curious blend of nations and idiosyncrasies, a τέρας in its own right. If so, such use of zoological allegory here would be extremely interesting”¹⁷⁸. Pachymeres implies that having cultural, ethnological and political information on a potential ally is always helpful for the Byzantine state to establish a fruitful relationship with it. The use of antithetical colours indicated the level of polarity between the Byzantines and their allies-to-be, which, according to Pachymeres, called for the careful examination of the people with whom the Byzantines interacted. According to Kaldellis “the light and dark colors may signify the mixed nature of the Mamluk state that prevailed in the Near East”¹⁷⁹. Popular geography reveals the relationship between geography and history in Byzantium, since the location of people influenced their way of life, language and mentality and thus their interaction with the Byzantines¹⁸⁰.

Finally, Leontios Machairas describes the colour of a horse using the word *μαῦρος*, which denotes a Byzantine vernacular origin since neither

175. See n. 135 above.

176. For this unusual gift, see N. MOSCHONAS, Η αγορά των δούλων, in: *Χρήμα καὶ ἀγορά τὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν Παλαιολόγων*, ed. N. MOSCHONAS, Athens 2003, 251, n. 11. For diplomatic gifts in general, see A. CUTLER, Gifts and Gift Exchange as Aspects of the Byzantine, Arab, and Related Economies, *DOP* 55 (2001), 247-278.

177. Pachymeres, III.4: I, 239: *λευκὸν τὴν κοιλίαν, καὶ ἀπὸ τραχήλου διὰ ῥάχεως πάσης καὶ ἔως οὐρᾶς μετρίως γραμμὴν ἐπὶ στάθμην μέλαιναν ἰθύντατα περικείμενον.*

178. PETRIDES, *Ethnography*, 315.

179. A. KALDELLIS, *Ethnography after Antiquity. Foreign lands and peoples in byzantine literature*, Philadelphia 2013, 159.

180. For the term *popular geography*, see D. ANGELOV, Asia and Europe commonly called East and West: Constantinople and Geographical imagination in Byzantium, in: *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. S. BAZZAZ – Y. BATSAKI – D. ANGELOV, Boston, Mass – London 2013, 45.

has Classical origin¹⁸¹, as is the case with an *all-black horse* (κατάμαυρον) in the *Chronicle of the Tokkoi*¹⁸². The progressive use of ἄσπρος instead of λευκός and μαῦρος instead of μέλας marks the linguistic evolution of the Greek language towards the *koine*. Other uses of black include Michael Kritoboulos' (1410-1470) paralleling of the sun to black copper (χαλκοῦ μέλανος)¹⁸³, Pachymeres' description of bread made with bran (πιτυρίας)¹⁸⁴, and the black grains of θηριακή (theriac)¹⁸⁵, an antidote against the poisonous bites of animals and serious diseases¹⁸⁶. Chalkokondyles uses it for stones¹⁸⁷, Kritoboulos for machinery¹⁸⁸, and Choniates for implements of iron¹⁸⁹.

Green

In the previous article, green was examined against the framework of Syropoulos' *Memoirs*¹⁹⁰. An additional form of the same colour is the *colour of frog* used by Choniates to describe the buskins of a πρωτοβεστιάριος and the discoloration of a bull's body during fight (*he was turning greener than the colour of a frog*)¹⁹¹. Kantakouzenos refers to a χλοάζουσα (= bright

181. See n. 140 and JAMES, *Light and Colour*, 89. For the language of the chronicle of Machairas, see N. ANAXAGOROU, *Narrative and stylistic structures in the Chronicle of Leontios Machairas*, Nicosia 1998, 17-18.

182. SCHIRÒ, *Cronaca dei Tocco*, 238, line 229: Φαριν ἐκαβαλλίκεψεν κατάμαυρον...

183. See Michael Kritoboulos, *Historiae*, ed. D. R. REINSCH, Berlin 1983, 5.8.1: ὁ γὰρ ἦλιος [...] ἡμαυρώθη, καὶ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἡμειψεν ὡς ἐς χαλκοῦ μέλανος χοριάν.

184. Pachymeres, VI.29: II, 635: τὸν σκληρὸν πιτυρίαν καὶ μέλανα.

185. Pachymeres, VII.28: III, 91: ἀλλά τινα τύπον θρυμμάτων μελάνων θηριακῆς ἢ τινος ἄλλου τοιοῦτου σκευάσματος.

186. E. LEV – Z. AMAR, *Practical materia medica from the Cairo Genizah*, Leiden 2008, 569.

187. Chalkokondyles, II, 176: τοὺς δὲ λίθους μέλανας ὄντας...

188. Kritoboulos, *Historiae*, 45: μελαίνοντος ἔνδοθεν ὠθουμένη ἢ πάσσαλος πνεύματι ξηρῶ.

189. Choniates, 41: πῆ μὲν ἐς τὰ μέλανα καὶ σίζοντα σιδήρια.

190. PANOU, *The Colours*, 182.

191. Choniates, 507: καὶ τὰ βατράχεια τὸ χρῶμα πέδιλα τοῦ πρωτοβεστιαρίου; [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 279]; Choniates, 654: ὑπὲρ τὸ βατράχειον χρῶμα ἐχλώριζε [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 361].

green) olive branch¹⁹², which could, however, also mean ‘fresh’. Overall, green is one of the most underrepresented colours in the historiography of the period under discussion.

Κυανὸς

Κυανὸς is translated either as blue or as the colour of *lapis lazuli*¹⁹³. Gregoras and Akropolites spot differences in decoration but not in colour between the sandals of the *σεβαστοκράτορες* John Palaiologos (brother of Michael VIII Palaiologos) and Constantine Tornikes. The emperor’s brother had eagles woven in gold attached to his blue shoes, whereas Tornikes’ blue sandals were decorated with no eagles¹⁹⁴. Hierarchy is here exalted through decoration only: both men had the same title, but, as a member of the imperial family, John Palaiologos was entitled to more elaborate attire. Syropoulos uses the word *λαζουρίον* (colour of lapis lazuli) to name one of the colours that decorated the small columns of the Doge’s Venetian galley¹⁹⁵, and Pachymeres uses the word *κυανίζειν* (= looking like dark blue) to describe the colour of the sea¹⁹⁶.

Yellow, orange, grey

Χολοβάφινος, κίρρος, ὑπόκιρρον, ὠχρός, πολιδς

Choniates mentions the colour of bile (*χολοβάφινος*)¹⁹⁷ to denote a bad omen before battle: *Οὐκ εὐσύμβολον τὸ χρώμα τοῦτο, φησιν, ὃ βασιλεῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν κατὰ τὴν ὥραν τοῦ πολέμου ταῖς ἀγαθαῖς τύχαις ἀντιπρῶττον.*

In this incident, Gabras observed the yellowish appearance of the surcoat over the emperors’ coat of mail and remarked, ‘This is not an auspicious color, O Emperor, but in the hour of warfare it very much militates against good

192. *Καθὰπερ κλάδος γλοαζούσης ἐλαίας*, Kantakouzenos, VIII.1:II, 13.

193. JAMES, *Light and Colour*, 77, 121.

194. Gregoras, IV.1: I, 79: *ὅτι ἐν τοῖς κυανοῖς πεδίλοις καὶ χρυσοῦφεις αὐτῶ ἐνημοῦζοντο ἀετοί*; Akropolites, 173: *ἐν οἷς ὁ μὲν αὐτάδελφος τοῦ βασιλέως τοῖς κυανοῖς πεδίλοις ἐγκεκολλημένους εἶχε*. See also *Akropolites, The History*, 365-366.

195. Syropoulos, *Les ‘Mémoires’*, 228: *καὶ τοῖς ἐκ λαζουρίου καὶ κινναβάρεως χρώμασιν*.

196. Pachymeres, IX.28: III, 295: *θάλασσαν κυανίζειν τῷ φυσικῷ χρώματι*.

197. That it means yellow colour, see LSJ⁹, s.v.

fortune'¹⁹⁸. This is the most straightforward connection between colour and military campaigns in Late Byzantine historiography and shows the level to which colour had infiltrated Byzantine thought since similarly to an eclipse, colour could be contextualised as a malevolent sign. Alexander Kazhdan interprets the abovementioned quotation as 'the imperial gold turns out to be the colour of bile and bitter defeat' and the here Choniates 'startl[es] the reader with his unconventional interpretation'. The examination of colour use in the current article has shown that there is certainly nothing unconventional about interpreting the colour of bile since apart from the fact that yellow garments were worn by emperors during grief¹⁹⁹, it seems that compound words with *χολή* (= bile, gall) always had negative connotations. For example, Gregoras refers to the mother of Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328-1341), who *abandoned everything of yellowish colour (χολοβάφινον)*²⁰⁰. This comes after the writer contrasts roses with thorns and pure gold with fake metal, meaning that had she abandoned everything that appeared worthless to her, as power would seem to a woman who abandons everything to enter a monastery. In contrast, *κιρρός* does not have negative connotations but defines court titles. *Κιρρός* resembles yellow or orange²⁰¹, and is used by Gregoras to describe the yellow garments, sandals and horse coverings of the *πανυπερσέβαστος* (a fourteenth-century court title)²⁰² and a nephew of Andronikos II, John Palaiologos²⁰³. Pachymeres also uses *κιρρός* to describe ensigns and *ὑπόκιρρον* for chalk²⁰⁴.

198. See p. 195 with the translation.

199. Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des Offices*, 284. MACRIDES et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 17, 263.

200. Gregoras, X. 6: I, 493: *πᾶν εἶ τι λιθαργύρινόν τε καὶ χολοβάφινον ἦν ἐκεῖ καταλελοιπυῖαν.*

201. LSJ⁹, s.v. For Gennadios Scholarios *κιρρός* means yellow, see M. JUGIE – L. PETIT – X. A. SIDERIDES (eds.), *Oeuvres complètes de Georges (Gennadios) Scholarios*, VIII, Paris 1936, 457: *κιρρός, ὁ κίτριος.*

202. M. C. BARTUSIS, *Land and Privilege in Byzantium: The Institution of Pronoia*, Cambridge 2012, 539.

203. Gregoras, VII.11: I, 271: *ἐνδύμασι γὰρ καὶ πεδίλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄσα τὸν ἵππον τούτου κοσμεῖ κίρροῖς τοῖς ἅπασι χρῆσθαι κεχάρισται.* For its translation, see Gregoras, *Rhomäische*, I, 204-205: 'er gestattete ihm, Kleider, Schuhwerk und Pferdeschmuck in gelber Farbe zu verwenden'.

204. Pachymeres, XII.20: IV, 565: *ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῶν κίρρων παρασήμοις σεμνύνει;* Pachymeres, IX.28:III, 295: *λευκὴν τῆς κίμωλλας πλεονασίας, [...] ἀλλαχοῦ [...] ὑπόκιρρον.*

It was shown above (p. 222) that Gregoras took a critical stand towards Patriarch Athanasios I by comparing him with a greedy black cat. Pachymeres makes a similar connection, associating the word *ὠχρός* (= pale) with Patriarch Athanasios I's asceticism, reflected in the fact that his followers were barefoot (*νήλιποι*), pale (*ὠχροίαι*) and skeleton-like (*κατεσκληρότες*)²⁰⁵. Moreover, in his narration of the murder of the Mouzalon brothers in the Sosandron monastery, Pachymeres describes the expression of fear with the phrase *ὠχρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ* (*pale in the face*)²⁰⁶, which Choniates had at an earlier period associated with emotional state²⁰⁷ and immersion into deep thought²⁰⁸. Finally, *πολιός* (= grey, grizzled, grisly)²⁰⁹ is used by Choniates and Gregoras exclusively to describe hair²¹⁰.

Conclusions

Liz James has argued that “there is no organized colour ‘symbolism’; rather the ‘meaning’ of the colour depends above all on the context in which it is used. Considering the unstable nature of manufactured colours, this should not surprise us”²¹¹. From the cases examined in this essay, we can safely argue that this view represents the largest part but not all the examples discussed. This is because in Byzantine histories from the thirteenth up until the fifteenth century, colour functions in two levels: a purely descriptive one, that pertains to objects, facial characteristics, people and animals that the Byzantines were more or less familiar with, and a semantic one, such as the identification of the colour yellow as a bad omen before war. There are colours that lie somewhere in the middle, for they are used both to describe and to convey a message. However, what challenge James’ argument are the specific semantic embeddings for

205. Pachymeres, VIII. 14: III, 161.

206. Pachymeres, I.19: I, 83: *ἅμα δὲ καὶ τὸν νεωτερισμὸν ὑποπτεύοντες, δηλοῦσι σὺν ὠχρῶ τῷ προσώπῳ τοῖς ἔνδοι.*

207. Choniates, 187: *βαπτόμενοι πρὸς ὠχρον ὑπὸ δέους* [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 105].

208. Choniates, 480: *ὠχρός τε καὶ σύννους.*

209. LSJ⁹, s.v.

210. Choniates, 353: *ἀγέρωχος τὸν τρόπον, στικτός, πολιός* [MAGOULIAS, *O city*, 195]; Gregoras, VIII. 2: I, 292: *ἀνὴρ πολιός μὲν τὴν τρίχα*; Gregoras IV. 8: I, 107: *πολιός μὲν ἀνήρ.*

211. JAMES, *Light and Colour*, 123.

certain colour words. For example, *ἐρυθρός* is associated with imperial commands, enthronement or deposition, ‘genuine’ assumption of power, which is the case with other words such as *φοινικόχροος* and *φοινικοῦς*. This is also the case of *ἐρυθρός*, which apart from its correlation to imperial power in Byzantium, it is since antiquity strongly correlated to human emotion (e.g. shame) either as an adjective or as verb and was carried on in later centuries also in this framework by Byzantine historians. Likewise, but in the other side of the same coin we find the suffix *-βαφής* as in *ἐρυθροβαφής*, *φοινικοβαφής* or *μελαμβαφής* that all denote illegitimate access to political or/and religious power. The intellectual ramifications of colours and their hues created a layered approach to the symbolisms they are attached to. For this reason, we can safely argue for the elevated linguistic sensitivity on the part of the Byzantines and a manipulation of the language that lays on their audience’s ability to decode the underlying messages. It can be said that in Late Byzantine historiography colour clearly propagates imperial ideology as it is particularly shown in the selection of words meaning red.

On a different level can we argue that the histories of this era provide detailed information on Byzantine material culture? Certainly not, since the information we have is abrupt especially if we consider that writers excluded a rich source for colourful descriptions: religious art. This choice however should not surprise us. Colour serves the purpose of history being recorded and in this process writers benefited from attending to objects the description of which could either upscale the vividness of their descriptions if colours were used in a purely descriptive manner or to perpetuate the imperial grandeur if colours were used symbolically. What bridges the actual and the symbolic is that the use of colour in historical accounts in the Late Byzantine period often depicts the Byzantine Empire in ‘archaic’ pigments, emphasizing Byzantium’s political ideology but less often than a commentary in on-going events. Thus, colorful descriptions are transformed to bastions of imperial authority using objects of material culture. In other words, the bridging between texts and colour in Late Byzantine historiography reveals that aesthetic approaches in histories did not aim at creating a visual imprint rather to convey the principles of imperial ideology. By referring to aspects of imperial ideology it was easy for the readers to

comprehend the commentary provided through colour as the semantics was familiar to them due to their repetition from writer to writer and from their acknowledgement of the power of imagery in Byzantium²¹².

Overall, Byzantine customs and political status were fortified through colourful descriptions in times when Byzantium was transforming itself through its interaction with other ethnicities because of war, trade, and cultural exchange. Gregoras bears witness to an innovation (*καινοτομία*) that took place during the reign of Andronikos III in the fashion of headgear. What is remarkable is not the novelty itself but Gregoras' equation of new habits in attire with the *dissolution of dominion* (*κατάλυσιν [...] τῆς βασιλείας*)²¹³. Byzantine sartorial customs safeguarded the perpetuation of imperial authority, and this is also exactly the message conveyed by colour: it protected the ideals of Byzantine imperial ideology in a period marked by constant change.

212. On the role of colour as means of social critic, see KAZHDAN – FRANKLIN, Nicetas Choniates, 263.

213. Gregoras, XI.11: I, 567-568. On the understanding of *καινοτομία* in Byzantine political life, see A. SPANOS, Was innovation unwanted in Byzantium, in: *Byzantium Wanted: The Desire for a Lost Empire*, ed. I. NILSSON – P. STEPHENSON, Uppsala 2014 [Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia, v. 15], 48-50.

ΤΟ ΧΡΩΜΑ ΣΤΗΝ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΗ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ (13ος-15ος αι.)

Το άρθρο πραγματεύεται τη λειτουργία του χρώματος στα κείμενα της βυζαντινής ιστοριογραφίας μεταξύ του 13ου και του 15ου αιώνα. Μέσα από την ανάλυση της χρήσης των χρωμάτων και των αποχρώσεών τους γίνεται σαφές ότι το χρώμα αποτελεί μέσο με το οποίο οι συγγραφείς μεταφέρουν το πολιτικό και θρησκευτικό κλίμα της εποχής, προσφέροντας στον σημερινό αναγνώστη τη δυνατότητα διαφορετικής πρόσληψης της ιστορικής διήγησης. Για τον βυζαντινό αναγνώστη, το χρώμα εμπεριείχε ιδεολογικούς χρωματισμούς που προσδιόριζαν τη βυζαντινή ταυτότητα σε σχέση με άλλες πολιτικές και θρησκευτικές οντότητες και έτσι προάσπιζε την αυτοκρατορική ιδεολογία σε μια περίοδο έντονων αλλαγών.