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Internal Strife and Unrest in Later Byzantium, XIth-XIIIth Centuries (A.D. 1025-1261). The Case of Urban and Provincial Insurrections (Causes and Effects)

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INTERNAL STRIFE AND UNREST
IN LATER BYZANTIUM, XIth-XIIIth CENTURIES
(A.D. 1025-1261)
THE CASE OF URBAN AND PROVINCIAL INSURRECTIONS
(CAUSES AND EFFECTS)*

I

The late Byzantine period, which is inaugurated with the death of the warrior-emperor Basil II the 'Bulgarslayer' (Bulgaroctonus) on 15 December 1025, was one of steadily accelerating political, economic, administrative and military decline for the Eastern Empire. D. Zakythenos aptly observed that, although in the years following Basil II's death the Empire seems to have maintained its territorial status, this preservation was in fact superficial, as the Turkish invasions and settlements manifest¹. The Empire was literally 'impregnated' with both rebellious and separatist uprisings on the part of eminent representatives of its military aristocracy, especially during the XIth, XIIth and XIIIth centuries². In the course of the former, i.e. *rebellious* movements, the insurgents attempted to overthrow the Byzantine ruler (of Constantinople until 1204 and of Nicaea following the latter date), whereas in the course of the latter, i.e. *separatist* or autonomy movements, they usually proclaimed the independence of the areas which they controlled or had been governing under the control of the central government³.

* The personages dealt with in the present study have been restricted, for lack of space and for obvious methodological reasons, to insurgents of Byzantine-Greek origins [see list at end]. Therefore, insurrections like those of the Asenid brothers, Dobromir Chrysus et al., have not been included.

1. D. Zakythenos, *Βυζαντινή Ιστορία*, I: A.D. 324-1071, Athens 1972, repr. 1977, pp. 467, 468.

2. See remarks by D. Xanatalatos, *Βυζαντινά Μελετήματα. Συμβολή εις τὴν Ἱστορίαν τοῦ Βυζαντινοῦ Λαοῦ*, Athens 1940 (Texte und Forschungen zur Byzantinisch-Neugriechischen Philologie, 38), pp. 68, 75 ff. 86 (XIth cent.), 78 ff., 86 ff. (XIIth cent.) and 68, 79, 87 ff. (XIIIth cent.).

3. On the differentiation between rebellious and separatist movements (στασιαστικά-αὐτονομιστικά κινήματα) see introduction in my recent Ph. D. dissertation: A.

The mighty rule of the bellicose sovereigns of the Macedonian dynasty (867-1025), a period during which Byzantium had reached the apex of its power and glory in south-eastern Europe and the Near East, was a thing of the past. Basil II's decease was ensued by a rapid decline of the Empire's military and socio-economic foundations, through which the great soldier-emperor, who had foreseen the dangerous growth and upsurge of aristocratic influence, had striven to curb the limitless greed of the *nobiles*, for the most part consisting the majority of the powerful landowners¹. In fact, Basil's ineffective successors, 'Macedonians' only by name, offered to the most ambitious members of the military landed aristocracy the opportunity to obtain more privileges, thus contributing to the state of internal corruption and segregation. In the decades following 1025 the most wealthy and prominent among the magnates (γαιοκτηματίαι, μεγαλογαιοῦχοι) were in a position to materialize their aspirations to topple their sovereign and usurp imperial power. It was through the insensible policy of the later Macedonians (1025-57) and their successors, the Comneno-Ducae (1057-81), that various pretenders were eventually enabled to raise arms against their suzerain². The situation of an 'illusion of a durable peace' ('l'illusion d'une paix durable') envisaged by P. Lemerle some years ago to explain the fact that Basil's *epigoni* did very little to continue the policies of the Macedonian house (which had established a long and uninterrupted *pax byzantina*), contributed significantly both to the internal disorder in the Empire as well as to its growing inability to oppose its external enemies effectively³. It is precisely to this 'illusion of a durable peace' that D. Nicol

Savvides, *Βυζαντινὰ Στασιαστικά καὶ Αὐτονομιστικά Κινήματα στὰ Δωδεκάνησα καὶ τὴ Μικρὰ Ἀσία, 1189 - c. 1240 μ.Χ. Συμβολὴ στὴ Μελέτη τῆς Ὑστεροβυζαντινῆς Προσωπογραφίας καὶ Τοπογραφίας τὴν ἐποχὴ τῶν Ἀγγέλων, τῶν Λασκαριδῶν τῆς Νίκαιας καὶ τῶν Μεγαλοκομνηνῶν τοῦ Πόντου*, University of Thessalonica, 1985.

1. See G. Ostrogorsky, *Observations on the Aristocracy in Byzantium*, DOP 25 (1971), p. 7.

2. For general remarks on Byzantine decline from the XIth cent. onwards (coin devaluation resulting in a shaky economy, degradation of the Empire's national army through enlistment of various foreign mercenaries, collapse of the Empire's defenses in view of the new formidable foes, internal unrest through outbreak of insurrections in the urban centres and provinces) see D. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, London 1972, pp. 2, 3 ff., 8.— R. Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries, 610-1071*, London 1966, repr. 1969, p. 333 ff.— R. Brown, *The Byzantine Empire*, London 1980, p. 92 ff. Cf. A. Savvides, *Κινήματα*, op. cit., p. 70 ff. & refs.

3. P. Lemerle, *Cinq Études sur le XIe Siècle Byzantin*, Paris 1977 (Le Monde Byzantin), chap. 'Byzance au tournant de son Destin', pp. 249-312, esp. 263 ff., 265,

referred to —some years before Lemerle— as “a sense of false security”¹.

The careers of several *homines seditiosi* as well as their seditions (στράσεις) in the period 1025-1261 have been surveyed in my recent monograph on *Studies in Byzantine History, XIth-XIIIth Century*². It will be evident by a superficial look at the surnames of the protagonists of these seditions (both rebellious and separatist) that they almost invariably originated from aristocratic households (οἴκοι), and that they held —in most cases— high military (or sometimes civil) posts and ranks in the Empire’s administration³. The critical period from the death of Basil II, the indomitable emperor who had reigned for about 50 years having “left behind him an Empire which stretched from the mountains of Armenia to the Adriatic and from the Euphrates to the Danube”⁴, and the recapture of the City by the general of Michael VIII Palaeologus, Alexius Strategopulus, on 25 July 1261, witnessed an impressive chain

267 ff. Cf. A. Kazhdan, *Remarques sur le XIe Siècle Byzantin à propos d’un livre récent de Paul Lemerle*, Byzantion 49 (1979), pp. 491-503.

1. Nicol, *Last Centuries*, op. cit., p. 3.

2. See A. Savvides, *Μελέτες Βυζαντινῆς Ἱστορίας 11ου-13ου αἰ.*, Athens 1986, chaps. II (period: 1025-1098), III (period: 1104/5-1195/6) and IV (period: 1199/1200-1258/9) with detailed refs. The *kinemata* of the years 1025-56 have also been treated in detail recently by Calliope Burdara, *Καθοστώσεις καὶ Τυχαίης κατὰ τοὺς Μέσους Βυζαντινοὺς Χρόνους. Μακεδονικὴ Δυναστεία, 867-1056*, Athens-Comotene 1981, pp. 103-28 & refs. See also remarks by A. Kazhdan, *La Ville et le Village à Byzance aux XIe-XIIIe Siècles*, in: Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou (ed.), *Le Féodalisme à Byzance: Problèmes du mode de Production de l’Empire Byzantin*, Paris 1974 (Recherches Internat. à la Lumière du Marxisme, 79/2), pp. 78 ff., 81 ff., who refers to the ‘decentralization’ of the Empire.

3. A variety of sources attests the presence of more than 300 prominent Byzantine aristocratic (and non-aristocratic) houses, which flourished during the latter part of the middle as well as throughout the later Byzantine period (IXth-XVth cent.). Particularly on the period from 976 to 1204 see the statistical survey by A. Kazhdan, *Sotsialnyi Sostav Gospodstvuiushchego Klassa Vizantii, XI-XII Vekov* (= On the Social Structure of the Ruling Class in XIth-XIIth Century Byzantium), Moscow 1974, *passim*; cf. review by C. Mango, *Engl. Historical Review* 92 (1977), pp. 851-853.

These *familiae* had active members in eastern and western Thrace, Macedonia, Asia Minor (Anatolia), Epirus, Thessaly, Hellas (mod. Sterea Hellas, i.e. Attica, Boeotia, Euboea, Phocis and Aetolia-Acarnania), the Peloponnese (Moreas) and the Aegean Islands (Dodecanese, Cyclades, Sporades, Crete) as well as on Cyprus. On those *oikoi*, active in the last 6 centuries of the Byzantine era, see now detailed refs. in my *Μελέτες*, op. cit., appendix I, pp. 140-159.

4. G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, Oxford 1968², repr. 1984², p. 314.

of *κινήματα*, both rebellious or separatist, in Byzantine mainland and insular Greece (inclusive of Cyprus). Their overwhelming majority, however, occurred in Asia Minor, which had since the VIIth century been a stable source of manpower and economic virility and prosperity for the *imperium byzantinum*¹.

The history and background of Byzantine insurrection, particularly during the 2nd part as well as the 1st part of the late Byzantine period (867-1025 and 1025-1261 respectively), has gained considerable grounds among Byzantinists in recent years. About 50 years ago a Greek scholar from Munich University, Diogenes Xanatalos, published an important treatise on the seditions (*στάσεις, ἀποστασίαι*), uprisings (*ἐξεγέρσεις*), mutinies (*ἀνταρσίαι, ἐπιβουλαί*), 'tyrannids' (*τυραννίδες*) and conspiracies (*συνωμοσίαι*) in the Byzantine Empire from the IVth century until the fall of Constantinople to the ironclad knights (*ἱππότες κατάφρακτοι*) of western Christendom in 1204, in the course of the ignoble Fourth Crusade. On a general basis, Xanatalos's treatment of this intricate and demanding subject, as well as his corollaries, were quite substantial and contributed to the further advancement of research on the political, administrative, social, economic and military conditions prevalent in the Eastern Empire². The limited space which this pioneer study occupies, however, makes it inevitably one of generalities, since the author attempted in a mere 91 pages to encapsulate and portray the cardinal trends of an epoch and not to study separately and in detail on a parallel basis the careers of the *dramatis personae*, who were the protagonists in a long array of rebellions until 1204.

The gradual intensification of insurrections throughout the period under discussion is closely intertwined with the upsurge of the *nobilitas byzantina*. In his relevant 1971 study G. Ostrogorsky dealt in detail with the rise of Byzantine aristocracy, which reached its apex in the period between the Xth and XIVth centuries, its fundamental elements

1. The position and historical rôle of Asia Minor as a bastion of the Byzantine Empire, its demographic development, its cultural integration with its great urban and provincial Greek-Christian centres, as well as its social and economic contribution to Byzantium until the early decades of the XIth cent., when a gradual —albeit steady— decline commenced, are treated by P. Charanis, *Cultural Diversity and the Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor*, DOP 29 (1975), pp. 1-20. Charanis also discussed the stable withering of the Graeco-Byzantine element amidst a rather dissimilar 'mosaic' of nationalities (Armenians, Georgians, Syrians, Hebrews, Moslems *et al.*) from the XIth cent. onwards.

2. See above, p. 237, n. 2. Cf. review by I. Dujchev, BZ 41 (1941), pp. 481-487.

being those of personal wealth and noble origins, government service, military and administrative experience and personal connections¹. The year 1974 marked the appearance of A. Kazhdan's analytical monograph on the social structure of the ruling classes in Byzantium, with particular emphasis on the powerful urban nobility of the Empire's provinces in the XIth and XIIth centuries, and more precisely from Basil II's accession in 976 until 1204. This fundamental study, now a classic in its field, undertakes a statistical scrutiny of about 340 known aristocratic 'households' (οἶκοι) as a basis of power in Byzantium (especially from c. 1000 onwards); here Kazhdan distinguishes between a *civil* and a *military aristocracy*, whence most of the *homines seditioni*, and defines, like Ostrogorsky above, the basic characteristics pertaining to the ascent of the *nobiles*: military achievements and high posts, noble lineage, ethnic origin and geographical-geopolitical conditions².

In 1974 two more important publications on the insurrections of the 1st part of the later Byzantine era made their appearance, the first being an interesting article on the period 1185-95 (reign of Isaacius II Angelus) by the Greek historian Theodore Vlachos³, and the second a lengthy dissertation by the German Byzantinist Jürgen Hoffmann, who examined the crucial period from the aftermath of the fateful battle at Manzikert (1071) until the 6th year of the exiled Byzantine state of Nicaea, i.e. the year 1210⁴. The latter study in particular consists a detailed look into local separatism in the various provinces of the Empire

1. Ostrogorsky, *Observations*... (above, p. 238, n. 1), pp. 1-32, *passim*. This was the late Ostrogorsky's paper delivered at the Dumbarton Oaks Symposium on *Byzantine Society* (1969), directed by the late Peter Charanis (†1985).

2. See above, p. 239, n. 3; cf. Kazhdan's resumé in *Byzantion* 49 (1979), p. 512, and Irène Sorlin's detailed presentation: *Publications Soviétiques sur le XIe Siècle*, TM 6 (1976), pp. 367-398, esp. 367-380; also Vera Prochova (below p. 243, n. 3), pp. 10-11 as well as the detailed reviews by B. Funk, *Klio* 58 (1976), pp. 489-490, M. Loos (†1985), *Bsl* 38 (1977), pp. 44-49, and P. Wirth, *Historische Zeitschrift* 224 (1977), pp. 425-427. The publication of Kazhdan's detailed statistical dossier is a *desideratum* for Byzantine social history and prosopography.

3. Th. Vlachos, *Aufstände und Verschwörungen während der Kaiserzeit Isaakios II. Angelos*, *Βυζαντινά* 6 (1974), pp. 155-167.

4. J. Hoffmann, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im Byzantinischen Reich. Untersuchungen über Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und ihr Verhältnis zu Kaiser und Reich, 1071-1210*, Munich 1974 (*Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia*, 17), *passim*. Cf. reviews by W. Lackner, *Südost-Forschungen* 33 (1974), pp. 505-506, F. Hill, *JÖB* 24 (1975), pp. 297-298, Ch. Brand, *Speculum* 52 (1977), pp. 698-699 and P. Lemerle, *Revue Historique* 259 (1978), p. 565.

as well as the geopolitical conditions which helped or hindered it; it examines separately the tendencies towards independence (*Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen*) as well as the uprisings of several insurgents (στασιασταί, κινήματα), troublemakers (ταραχοποιοί), opportunists (καιροσκόποι) and 'innovators' (νεωτερισταί), who attempted to set up their own splinter-states (*Territorialstaaten*) both in the European and Asiatic provinces of the Empire¹. These 'movements' (κινήματα) were directed against the central authority of the Byzantine dynasties of the later Macedonians (1025-57), the Comneno-Ducae (1057-81), the Comneni (1081-1185) and the Angeli (1185-1204) at Constantinople, and —after 1204— the Lascarids of Nicaea (1204-61). Hoffmann's monograph is certainly most useful despite certain omissions as regards some important uprisings as well as a number of inadequacies concerning both a detailed critical parallelism of all available source material and secondary literature, especially in relation to several problems as regards the various rebels and potential usurper (σφετερισταί) of the Byzantine crown. The author has undertaken a considerably detailed fragmentation of each examined insurrection (*Beispiele*) (in fact it has been characterized as «extraordinarily repetitious»²); he has also looked into the results that those στάσεις had on the development of new conditions in Byzantium (*Ergebnisse*), particularly following the formation and establishment of several 'toparchies' (τοπαρχίαι), which contributed to the reshaping of a new socio-political *status quo* (*neue politische Gebilde*). Hoffmann, however, has not fully succeeded in differentiating the examined seditions into 2 cardinal categories:

a) into the definitively rebellious movements (ἐπαναστατικά and στασιαστικά κινήματα), mainly for the period until 1204, in the course of which the insurgents sought to overthrow the Byzantine sovereign, thus

1. Note the Greek rendition of the term *Territorialstaaten* as ἐμβρυα πριγκηπάτα by T. L o u n g h i s, in the latter's tr. of A. K a z h d a n, *Κεντρομόλες και Κεντρόφυγες Τάσεις στο Βυζαντινό Κόσμο, 1081-1261. Ἡ Δομή τῆς Βυζ. Κοινωνίας, Βυζαντινὰ 3* (1983), pp. 93-110. It consists a *verbatim* rendition of Kazhdan's *embrionof knjazhestvo* (below, p. 243, n. 3). Cf. also the term μικροκρατίδια ἐν τῷ κράτει (= small states within the state) adopted by A. D i o m e d e s, *Βυζαντιναὶ Μελέται*, I, Athens 1951, p. 79, in relation to the rise of ecclesiastical and monastic power and influence, acquired through numerous privileges during the late Byzantine period. On this cf. P. C h a r a n i s, *The Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire*, DOP 4 (1948), pp. 53-118 with detailed refs (= *Social, Economic and Political Life in the Byz. Emp.*, London 1973: Var. Repr., I).

2. C h. B r a n d, *Speculum* 52 (1977), p. 699.

usurping the Constantinopolitan throne¹ —or the Nicaean in 2 cases after 1204²— and

b) into the movements towards independence or separatist movements (αὐτονομιστικά or χωριστικά κινήματα), which constituted attempts deriving from centrifugal tendencies (κεντρόφυγοι τάσεις)³ for the period after 1204, a period of Byzantine history not so “highly obscure” any longer, as the numismatist M. Hendy believed some 20 years ago⁴. In this latter case the insurgents, far from having imperial aspirations (since the Byzantine Empire had fallen to the Latin Crusaders), were in most cases content to proclaim the independence (αὐτονομία) of the imperial areas they had heretofore governed or wielded influence over, from what they considered to be an arbitrary and corrupt régime; naturally, they were not disposed to recognize the legitimacy of the Lascarid inheritance. If we take into account that in the first category (a) above the rebels refused to obey what they deemed a crumbling régime (especially that of Andronicus I in 1183-5 and the Angeli in 1185-1204),

1. E.g. the *staseis* of the 4 Pseudo-Alexii in the mid. 1190s (Brand, *op. cit.*, p. 698; cf. below, p. 245, n. 1). J. Karayannopoulos, *Κεντρόφυγοι καὶ Κεντρομόλοι Δυνάμεις...* (below p. 252, n. 1), pp. 5 and 18, correctly observes that the military movements of the XIth century cannot be considered as separatist (χωριστικά), for they do not constitute examples of slackening in the cohesive bonds of the state, since the insurgents did not aim at the establishment of independent principalities, but at seizing the throne and assuming imperial power.

2. As, for example, with the insurrections of the Lascarid brothers of Theodore I in 1224/5 and the Nestongi against their cousin, John III Ducas Batatzes, in 1225. Cf. below, p. 245, n. 1.

3. The terms centrifugal and centripetal tendencies/forces (κεντρόφυγες and κεντρομόλες τάσεις/δυνάμεις) were extensively examined in a sub-heading section of the history rapports/co-rapports during the XVth International Congress of Byzantine Studies at Athens in 1976: *Forces Centrifuges et Centripètes dans le Monde Byzantin entre 1071 et 1261*, with important contributions by Hélène Glycatzi-Ahrweiler, Vera Hrochova, J. Karayannopoulos, A. Kazhdan, N. Oikonomidès and Zinaïda Udaltsova. Cf. esp. Z. Udaltsova, *Forces Centrifuges et Centripètes de la Monde Byzantin entre 1071-1261. Aspects Socio-économiques du Problème*, V. Hrochova, *Les Villes Byzantines aux XIe-XIIIe Siècles. Phénomène Centrifuge ou Centripète dans l'Évolution de la Société Byzantine?*, A. Kazhdan, *Sotsialnaja Struktura Vizantijskago Obschestva Tsentrastrimutelnje i Tsentrobezhnje Silj v Vizantijskom Mire*, J. Karayannopoulos, *Κεντρόφυγοι καὶ Κεντρομόλοι Δυνάμεις...* (below, p. 252, n. 1) with useful remarks on the centrifugal and semi-autonomous movements against central authority on the part of the members of the empire's urban and provincial aristocracy from 1025 onwards.

4. M. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081-1261*, Washington D.C. 1969 (Dumbarton Oaks Studies, 12), p. 227, n. 13.

they were apparently even more reluctant to recognize the newly-born Nicaean state. In their initial steps the Lascarids were not unanimously accepted by a considerable part of the Greek populations in the Balkans and Anatolia as the lawful upholders of Byzantine imperial tradition.

In 1981 Calliope Burdara published her doctoral thesis on the 'abjurations' (καθοσιώσεις) and 'tyrannids' (τυραννίδες) in the period of the Macedonian dynasty (867-1056), where, as the author herself states in the prologue, she has examined "the historical events which constituted crimes against the Byzantine emperor"¹. Of particular importance is part II of Burdara's study, dealing with the various penalties (ποιναί) that the arrested insurgents had to face, which ranged from public ridicule (διαπόμπευσις), exile (ἐξορία) and property-confiscation (δήμευσις) to mutilation (ἀκρωτηριασμός), blinding (τύφλωσις) and execution (ἐκτέλεις) through decapitation and other severe methods². A year after Burdara's contribution, Speros Vryonis discussed in detail the notion of 'tyrannid', i.e. the illegal seizure of military authority and the ensuing forceful and despotic toppling of legitimate authority through rebellion, a notion loathed in Byzantium, if we judge by the illustrative testimony provided by the Archbishop of Achrida (Ohrid), Theophylactus Hephæstus († c. 1226) in his *Παιδεία Βασιλική*, addressed to prince Constantine Ducas, son of the emperor Michael VIII Ducas "Parapinaces" (1071-78) and —initially— heir apparent of Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118) until the late 1080s³.

The author of this article has recently attempted to re-evaluate the importance of both rebellious and separatist movements in his doctoral dissertation, focusing on the insurrections in the Byzantine provinces of Dodecanese and Asia Minor in the epoch of the Angeli and the Lascarids. This work, based on a wide range of primary sources and secondary material, actually covers the period 1189-c. 1240 and concentrates on 12 rebellious and autonomy 'movements', thus carrying on Hoffmann's aforementioned study (which ends in 1210) to the middle of the XIIIth cent⁴. Some of the κινήματα included in Hoffmann are re-examined,

1. C. Burdara, *Καθοσιώσεις και Τυραννίς κατά τοὺς Μέσους Βυζαντινοὺς Χρόνους. Μακεδονικὴ Ἀναστασία, 867-1056*, Athens-Comotene 1981, p. 11 *et passim*; reviewed by J. Darrouzès, REB 40 (1982), pp. 262-263, E. Kissinger, JÖB 33 (1983), p. 437, T. Lounghis, BZ 76 (1983), pp. 384-385. On the terms καθοσιώσεις, τυραννίς, ἀποστασία, συνωμοσία, etc., see Burdara, *op. cit.*, pp. 135 ff., 137 ff., 142 ff.

2. See details below, p. 259, n. 3 ff.

3. See details below, p. 256, n. 1 ff.

4. Savvides, *Κινήματα* (1985). On the rebellious movements (1189-1204, 1224 and 1225) cf. *ibid.*, pt. I, and on the independence or autonomy seditions (separatist

especially in relation to the early years of the Nicaean Empire, when the last of the noteworthy centrifugal attempts were made on the part of powerful independent or semi-independent lords (ἄρχοντες), local rulers (δυνασται), or provincial governors (ἐπαρχιακοὶ κυβερνήται), such as Manuel Maurozomes, Leo Gabalas, the Lascarid brothers of Theodore I, the Nestongi, etc.¹. Additional prosopographical and genealogical information is also provided on the specific late Byzantine οἴκοι, aristocratic or otherwise, whence the examined rebels originated, while on a parallel basis there is a detailed examination of the geography and topography of those areas of the Empire, where the specific insurrections broke out, as well as their administrative *status* in relation to the administrative centre: Constantinople until 1204 and Nicaea from 1204/5 onwards.

II

The slackening of the Anatolian thematic administration was brought about chiefly on account of the overburdening taxation, especially that levied by Basil II's successors from 1025 onwards, as well as on the criminal negligence on the part of the state itself concerning the needs of the once thriving frontier-zone soldier-guards in Anatolia, the *acritae*.

movements) (1204-c. 1240) cf. op. cit., pt. II. On the general condition (especially internal) of the Empire in the period 1025-1261 cf. op. cit., introductory chapter, and on the differentiation between στασιαστικά and αὐτονομιστικά κινήματα see op. cit., prologue. On the particular uprisings during which the ambitious rebels made use of Turkish help (of the Seljuks of Rûm and the Turcoman chieftains) cf. also my London (King's College) M. Phil. dissertation: A. S a v v i d e s, *Byzantium in the Near East: Its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm in Asia Minor, The Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols A.D. c. 1192-1237*, Thessalonica 1981 (Βυζαντινὰ Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται, 17), pp. 59, 60, 61 ff., 74 ff., 85 ff.

1. The 7 rebellious movements examined in the thesis are those by *Theodore Manacphas* (1189-1204/5, chap. I), *Basil Chotzas* (c. 1190-1204/5, chap. II), the 3 Anatolian *Pseudo-Alexii* (c. 1192-1196, chap. III), the *Lascaridae* (1224/5) and the *Nestongi* (1225) (chap. IV). The 5 autonomy seditions are those by *Manuel Maurozomes* (1204-6, chap. V), *Sabbas Asidenus* (1204-6, chap. VI), *Theodore II Gabras* (1204-c. 1208, chap. VII), *David (Grand) Comnenus* (1204-12, chap. VIII) and *Leo Gabalas* (1204-c. 1240, chap. IX). Throughout the work, the relations of the Byzantine state as well as those on the part of the insurgents with the Empire's external enemies (Seljuk Turks, Armenians of Cilicia, Franks, Venetians, etc.) are examined in detail and set within their proper context. However, this important issue presented in my above dissertation, was inevitably under chronological and geographical limitations, since only the period 1189-c. 1240 was treated in detail concerning the development of the chosen insurrections in the Dodecanese and Asia Minor.

This aggravated condition inevitably led to the comparatively easy penetrations of the Seljuk Turks and the Turcoman nomadic bands in the 1040s onwards. The Christian populations of the Anatolian provinces must have lost their faith in their sovereigns, if we contemplate the rash step taken by the emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1055) to allow those among the military aristocrats, who could afford it, to buy off their military service¹.

The feeble Byzantine rulers after 1025 adopted on several occasions a cajoling and rather servile attitude towards the most eminent representatives of the well-do-do military gentry, for the latter were instrumental —so the emperors believed— in sustaining them on their weak throne in view of a potential massive popular uprising. In reality, however, by annulling most of the former stringent decrees, which had aimed to curb the excesses and peculations on the part of the powerful (*δυνατοί*), the later Macedonians enabled the urban and provincial *dynatoi* to resort to their older methods of acquiring more privileges and concessions at the expense —this is almost certain— of the interests of the state itself².

The power and influence of Byzantine aristocrats, whose hey-day has recently been dated to the period that runs from the IXth to the early XIVth century³, seems to have been considerable. It is certain

1. See C. A m a n t o s, *Σχέσεις Ἑλλήνων καὶ Τούρκων*, I: 1071-1571, Athens 1955, p. 28.— N. O i k o n o m i d e s in: *Ἱστορ. Ἑλλην. Ἔθν.* vol. VIII, Athens 1979, pp. 137-138.— A. S a v v i d e s, *Τὸ Βυζάντιο καὶ οἱ Σελτζούκοι Τούρκοι τὸν 11ο αἰ.*, Athens 1980, p. 22.— M. A n g o l d, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204. A Political History*, London - New York 1984, pp. 40-41.

2. See S a v v i d e s, *Κινήματα*, pp. 73-75 & refs. On the 'powerful' (*δυνατοί*) and the 'poor' (*πένητες*) see the background information by R o s e m a r y M o r r i s, *The Powerful and the Poor in Xth Century Byzantium: Law and Reality*, Past and Present. A Journal of Historical Studies, no. 73 (Nov. 1976), pp. 3-27.

3. See M. A n g o l d, *Introduction*, in: M. A n g o l d (ed.), *The Byzantine Aristocracy, IXth-XIIIth Centuries*, Oxford 1984 (BAR Intern. Ser., 221), p. 7.

The topic of IXth-XIIIth century Byzantine aristocracy was treated in detail during the 1982 British XVIIth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, held in Edinburgh, under the direction of M. Angold, who in 1984 edited a lengthy volume based on the agenda of the symposium and supplemented by new contributions. The papers included therein (by St. Runciman, Evelyne Patlagean, A. Kazhdan, P. Magdalino, D. Nicol, Rosemary Morris, Lucy-Anne Hunt, R. Cormack, Margaret Mullet, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Vera von Falkenhausen and M. Angold) shed new light on the social history, genealogy, artistic and intellectual life, as well as everyday living conditions of Byzantine nobility from the accession of the Macedonian dynasty to the close of the XIIIth century. See A n g o l d (ed.), *Aristocracy*, with detailed

that several notable representatives or *dynatoi* came to control whole cities in the Empire, where a considerable portion of the inhabitants used to 'sell' their freedom in order to secure the 'protection' of some powerful lord (archon) according to G. Ostrogorsky¹. As M. Angold observes recently, the leading *archons* (ἐπιφανείς) of a city (πόλις) originated from old established families with local interests, though they seem to have maintained—whenever this was feasible—ties with Constantinople and the imperial government². However, the degree of their real autonomy is not certain. A. Kazhdan has characterized their state as one of "an individualism without freedom"³, yet this view holds true when applied to the Constantinopolitan or large-cities nobility and not to the powerful provincial military aristocracy. The urban *archontes* of the XIth-XIIth and XIIIth centuries, writes Angold, "were slaves of

presentation by J.-Cl. Cheynet, REB 44 (1986), pp. 301-3 and A. Savvides, Περὶ ἀσσοῦς 28/3 (Athens 1986), pp. 433-435. Of particular importance to the topic of Byzantine insurrections are the following papers: A. Kazhdan, *The Aristocracy and the Imperial Ideal* (pp. 43-57), D. Nicol, *The Prosopography of the Byz. Aristocracy* (pp. 79-91), Vera von Falkenhausen, *A Provincial Aristocracy: The Byz. Provinces in Southern Italy, IXth-XIth Cent.* (pp. 211-35) and Angold, *Archons and Dynasts: Local Aristocracies and the Cities of the Later Byzantine Empire* (pp. 236-253).

Moreover, Angold draws a basic distinctive line between the ἄρχοντες who wielded influence over the eastern provinces of the Empire, i.e. the great landowning families who controlled the Anatolian themes from their massive country estates (κτῆματα), and the ἄρχοντες of the European provinces, consisting of leading families who basically congregated in the urban centres, the πόλεις, who were "the strongpoints from where the reconquest of Macedonia and the Greek lands was effected". See Angold, *Archons*, p. 237.

1. Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 393; cf. A. Kazhdan, *The Concepts of Freedom (Eleutheria) and Slavery (Duleia) in Byzantium*, in: *La Notion de Liberté au Moyen Age. Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia, IV, Oct. 1982), Paris 1985, p. 221.

2. Angold, *Byz. Empire*, op. cit., p. 237.—I d e m, *The Shaping of the Medieval Byzantine 'City'*, BF 10 (1985), pp. 1-37, esp. 16 ff. (*archontes*), 20 ff. (*dynasts*) et passim with important details on economic aspects. On the terms προῦχοντες and πρωτιστεύοντες in the Empire's cities (πόλεις) and towns (πολίσιμα) cf. remarks by A. Kazhdan, *La Ville et le Village...*, op. cit. (above, p. 239, n. 2), p. 78-79; among the most famous προῦχοντες of the late XIth cent. was προῦχων Theodore I Gabras of Trebizond (Saint Gabras), who had seized control over the Pontic capital "as if it were his own inheritance" according to Anna Comnena (ed. B. Leib, vol. II, 151: «Τραπεζοῦντα ἐλὼν καὶ ὡς ἴδιον λάχος ἐαντὶ ἀποκληρωσάμενος»). On this Gabras see now detailed refs. in my *Μελέτες*, p. 32.

3. See A. Kazhdan & G. Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium*, Washington D.C. 1982, p. 34.

the emperor, but retained a strong sense of family independence. They were eager to conform to the standards of the court, but flaunted their individualism. They were public figures who valued their privacy above all, shutting themselves away behind the high walls of their palaces. They were contradictions at the heart of Byzantine society"¹.

Already severely harmed by the hazardous policy of the bureaucracy-oriented dynasties of the later Macedonians and the Commeno-Ducae, Byzantium gained a period of relative resurgence under the able Comneni (1081-1185)². Erosion, however, had gone too deep, and the hapless Angeli (1185-1204) struck the fatal blow of disaster, which paralyzed the Empire³. One of the major goals of the latter dynasty, which lost

1. Angold, *Introduction*, op. cit., p. 8; cf. P. Magdalino, *Byzantine Snobbery*, in: Angold (ed.), *Byz. Aristocracy*, op. cit., pp. 56-78, a valuable study tracing the social status and ambitions on the part of the Byzantine aristocratic circles, the εὐγενεῖς or nobility, as they are viewed in the contemporary sources. Cf. Kazhdan, *Ville et le Village*..., p. 79.

2. See S. P. Vryonis, *Byzantine Imperial Authority: Theory and Practice in the XIth Century*, in: *La Notion d'Autorité au Moyen Age. Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Colloques Internationaux de la Napoule, Oct. 1978), Paris 1982, p. 152. On the temporary resurgence during the Comnenian era see the important dissertation by A. Hohlweg, *Beiträge zu Verwaltungsgeschichte der Öströmischen Reiches unter der Komnenen*, Munich 1965 (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia, 1), *passim*. On the Empire's economic condition in the same period see now R.-J. Lilie, *Handel und Politik zwischen dem Byzantinischen Reich und den Italienischen Kommunen Venedig, Pisa und Genua in der Epoche der Komnenen und der Angeli, 1081-1204*, Amsterdam 1984 (A. Hakkert), *passim*: cf. reviews by A. Faller, REB 43 (1985), pp. 294-295, and A. Savvides in *Ελληνικά* 36/1 (1985), pp. 201-202 (in English) and in *Παρνασσός* 28/1 (1986), pp. 148-159 (in Greek). Finally, another notable contribution to Comnenian bibliography is the recent 2-volume genealogical study by the late C. Varzos († 1985), *Η Γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, Thessalonica 1984 (Βυζαντινά Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται, 20α-β), who succeeded in presenting the complex Comnenian era not solely in the form of lengthy *curricula vitarum* of its various personages, but in the wider sense of historical framework; cf. review by A. Faller, REB 53 (1985), pp. 280-281.

3. As St. Runciman (*Byzantine Civilization*, London 1933, repr. 1975, p. 54) characteristically put it, "the rule of the Angeli... was a tale of melancholy weakness, of more disorder and poverty in the Empire and more concessions to the Italians..."; on Byzantium's commercial relations with the Italian maritime states of Venice, Genoa and Pisa during the Comneni and the Angeli see the monograph of Lilie cited in the previous n. Also, on the gradual economic infiltration of the western powers and the takeover of Byzantine economy, a phenomenon clearly manifested in the Palaeologan period, especially from the XIV cent. onwards, see now Angeliki Laiou-Thomadakis, *The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade-System: XIIIth-XVth Centuries*, DOP 34/35 (1980/81), pp. 177-

control of many provinces and caused a financial crisis through a shaky economy resulting from a fast-sinking monetary devaluation¹, was to attempt to bribe the potentially menacing lords and provincial magnates, thus buying them off, but the awkward and ineffective way in which they handled fiscal affairs had exactly the opposite result. As it has been said recently, "the fatal weakness of provincial administration under the Angeli was a willingness to connive at local power combined with oppressive and erratic taxation"². The provincial —and in some instances the urban— populace more or less opted for supporting their local lords (ἄρχοντες-τοπάρχαι) in the latter's separatist movements against imperial oppression and tyranny³.

Thus, while both the state's treasury and the lower social classes, the πένητες, became poorer, the holders of large landed estates, both in the cities and the provinces, grew wealthier and more powerful, and began to act independently from the state's common interests. This process ultimately weakened the Empire's authority and undermined its power of resistance against its numerous enemies, who continually attacked and ravaged the imperial provinces both in Asia Minor and the Balkans, as well as in Italy, from the XIth century onwards, until finally in 1204 the Latins of the Fourth Crusade fell upon an already chopped carcass and rent it asunder. The erstwhile glorious Byzantine Empire had by 1204 become a *cadavre vivant*. The undeniably attested decline of imperial military power, especially the thematic, from the period of the mid-XIth century onwards contributed substantially to this catastrophe (see next note).

As a general rule, Byzantine sovereigns succeeded in most cases in checking and quelling most of the uprisings both in urban centres and the provinces. From the XIth century onwards the emperors managed to suppress in detail the *coups* of celebrated and quite popular personages (i.e. George Maniaces in 1043, Leo Tornicius in 1047, Andronicus Contostephanus in 1183/84, Alexius Branas in 1186, etc.), depending upon

222 with valuable details & refs. The decline of the Empire's economy in the crucial XII cent. was studied in detail by Judith Herrin, *The Collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the XIIth Century: A Study of a Medieval Economy*, University of Birmingham Historical Journal 12/2 (1970), pp. 188-203.

1. H. Haussig, *A History of Byzantine Civilization*, London 1971, pp. 308-309.

2. Angold, *Byz. Empire*, p. 271.

3. Ibid., p. 275 ff., esp. 277: "...Under the Angeloi the imperial government found it more and more difficult to control local power, whence the increased lawlessness in many provinces...".

their well organized —albeit mercenary— armies as well as on an elaborate network of civil bureaucrats, who seem to have exercised effective control over large portions of imperial territory. In the long run, however, it was Byzantium's external enemies who took advantage and profited from the Empire's fratricidal strife: on the northern frontier the Turcophone Ouzoi (Uzes), the Patzinaks (Pechenegs), the Cumans (Qomans) and the Hungarians (Magyars), on the western the Frankish and Italian crusaders (Franks, Flemish, Venetians, Lombards etc.) as well as the Normans of Sicily, and on the eastern the Seljuk Turks and the Turcoman nomadic tribes of Anatolia. Ironically enough, we meet several of these peoples also enlisted as mercenaries in imperial armies and used in order to quell internal seditions in Byzantium from the XIth century onwards¹.

It is important to note at this juncture that the Byzantine insurgents are invariably sharply criticized with rather caustic remarks and styled as pretenders and counterclaimants (*ἀνταπαίτηται*) to the Byzantine throne. They are also characterized as revolutionaries, opportunists, troublemakers, as well as usurpers of imperial rights by an impressively long list of contemporary and later Byzantine historiographers and chroniclers, mainly of the XIth, XIIth, XIIIth and XIVth century, whose accounts are evidently biased against any kind of movement or operation aiming at the overthrow of the divinity (*θεϊότης*), impeccability (*τὸ ἀλάθνητον*) and legitimacy (*νομιμότης*) of their 'God-promoted' (*θεοπροβλητος*) *basileus*, the living representation of the Almighty's power and will on earth². The Byzantine historiographers and chroniclers of

1. See Zakythenos, *Βυζ. Ἱστορ.* I, pp. 479-480.— A. Savvides, *Byzantium's Oriental Front in the 1st part of the XIII Century. The Empires of Nicaea and Trapezus (Trebizond) in view of the Seljuk and Mongol Menace*, *Δίπτυχα* 3 (1982/3), pp. 161-2, n. 4. Haussing (*Byz. Civilization*, pp. 305-306) attributes the decline of Byzantium's military power to the rapid growth of feudalism (on Byzantine 'Feudalism' and the problems it poses cf. refs in my *Κινήματα*, pp. 11 and 74 & refs.); the gradual 'dismantling' of the imperial thematic troops followed suit as a consequence (Haussing, op. cit.): "... The great armies of the themes, which had been stationed in Asia Minor, were no longer the Emperor's willing tools, gathering at assigned places on receipt of mobilization orders, to march along pre-arranged routes into Arab (sc. Moslem) territory. Now the armies of the themes rarely marched to the East; more often they made their way to the West in order to precipitate a revolution in the capital, Constantinople...".

General remarks on the erosion of Byzantine armies by foreign mercenaries from the XIth cent. onwards in my *Μελέτες*, appendix II, pp. 160-172.

2. See Vryonis, *Imperial Authority* (cf. above, p. 248, n. 2), pp. 142, 154. The theme of the ideal Byzantine ruler as envisaged by his subjects is preponderant in the recent

this period are full of scorn and vituperant remarks —with very few exceptions— concerning an endless chain of ‘unpatriotic’ villains (ἀπατριδές), who aspired to gain more power at a time when the state was crumbling from internal rot and ominous external threats¹. “The members of the landed aristocracy”, writes J. Karayannopoulos, “moved in order to subdue central power, thus materializing their own goals and ambitions, despite the fact that in so doing, they contributed to the decline of the Empire’s economic prosperity, social equilibrium, and political stability”².

III

The above observations come very close to what contemporary Byzantine authors thought on the issue: that the sole aim of the insurgents

study by A. Kazhdan, *Certain Traits of Imperial Propaganda in the Byzantine Empire from the VIII to the XV Centuries*, in: *Prédication et Propagande au Moyen Age. Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia), Paris 1983, pp. 13-28. On the various qualities an ideal ruler should possess (military prowess and fortitude, piety and righteousness, chastity and philanthropy, intelligence and —from the XI cent. onwards— noble origins) see now details in A. Kazhdan, *The Aristocracy and the Imperial Ideal*, in Angold (ed.), *Byz. Aristocracy*, pp. 43-57; see p. 45 ff., esp. 48-50, with refs to illustrative extracts from Christopher of Mytilene, John Mauropus, Kekaumenos, Michael Italicus, Attaleiates, Cinnamus and Eustathius of Thessalonica; cf. Kazhdan, *Imperial Propaganda*, op. cit., pp. 20-21. Cf. especially Attaleiates’s eulogies on his paragon-ruler, Nicephorus III Botaneiates, as well as the excessive panegyrics of Cinnamus, Eustathius as well as Theodorus Prodromus’s verses on the innumerable qualities of Manuel I Comnenus (Kazhdan, *Aristocracy*, pp. 46-7; idem, *Propaganda*, pp. 21-22).

The “Paideia Basilike” by the Archbishop of Achris (Ohrid), Theophylactus, contains a precious extract relating to the qualities of the ideal Byzantine ruler: ed.— French tr. P. Gautier, Thessalonica 1980 (CFHB, 16/1), pp. 200-201 (= PG 126, cols. 273D-276A); cf. Engl. tr. by E. Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium from Justinian I to the last Palaeologus. Passages from Byzantine Writers and Documents*, Oxford 1957, repr. 1961, p. 147. See below, p. 257, ns. 2-3.

1. On the vehement accusations (μύδροι) on the part of the sources, aiming at the ‘wickedness’ of the ring-leaders of the seditions, the ἀρχιζινηματίαι, see Savides, *Κινήματα*, pp. 75 ff., 94 ff. & refs to the sources. It seems valid that the acquisition of more power on the part of the urban and provincial magnates contributed to the further weakening of the Empire’s power of resistance against the external threat, while it also gave a considerable furtherance to the ‘feudalization’ of Byzantium’s several important areas (cf. above, p. 250, n. 1). Finally, concerning the gullibility of the popular masses (τὸ ἀγέλαϊον), who followed the insurgents, see remarks by Kazhdan, *Ville et Village*, p. 82.

2. J. Karayannopoulos, *Ἱστορία Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους*, II: 565-1081, Thessalonica 1981², p. 481.

was to overthrow the Empire's *status quo*. These authors, however, have been aptly characterized as "self-interested" (συμφεροντολόγοι ιστορικοί τῆς ἐποχῆς)¹; it has moreover been observed that the majority of Byzantine historiographers had always been propagators of imperial propaganda, in defense of imperial policy, which they attempted to justify in the eyes of future generations². Therefore, the attestations of those 'mouth-pieces' or 'blind agents' (*porte-parole*) of Constantinople —thus Hélène Ahrweiler styles the biased and partial Byzantine authors— must be used with caution by scholars³.

The unswerving legitimacy (νομιμοφροσύνη) of the sources towards the Byzantine monarch is well depicted in the following extracts, selected from important authors of the first part of the later Byzantine period. Firstly, the Thessalian general and magnate, Kekaumenos, composed probably shortly after 1071 his "General's Manual" (*Στρατηγικόν*), in which he strongly urges his sons —and indirectly all potential insurgents against the ruler— to abstain from taking any action on the side of rebels in times of sedition and civil war⁴:

1. *Idem*, *Κεντρόφονγοι καὶ Κεντρομόλοι Δυνάμεις στὸ Βυζαντινὸ Κόσμο*, XVth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Athens 1976, p. 4 (offprint, Section I: Histoire, 1: Forces centrifuges et centripètes dans la Monde Byzantin entre 1071 et 1261).

2. Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'Ideologie Politique de l'Empire Byzantin*, Paris 1975, p. 68; cf. C. Varzos, *Ἡ Γενεαλογία τῶν Κομνηνῶν*, II, p. 13.

3. On the hostile attitude that grew amidst the members of Byzantine provincial aristocracy against the nobility of the capital, a situation which resulted in the outbreak of uprisings against the central government, see Hélène Ahrweiler, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59, 87 ff.

A characteristic case of a 'rebel' maliciously slandered by the official Byzantine sources of the XIIIth-XIVth century, is that of Leo Gabalas of Rhodes (c. 1204-c. 1240). He is, however, partly rehabilitated by his important contemporary, the savant Nicephorus Blemmydes, who happened to meet him on Rhodes, and who has left a vivid account of his impressions in his autobiography. See now A. Savvides, *Ἡ Βυζαντινὴ Δυναστεία τῶν Γαβαλάδων καὶ ἡ Ἑλληνοϊταλικὴ Διαμάχη γιὰ τὴ Ρόδο τὸ 13ο αἰῶνα*, Βυζαντινὰ 12 (1983), pp. 405-428, esp. 411-420. More details on Leo Gabalas in Savvides, *Κινήματα*, chap. IX.

4. Edd. B. Wassiliewsky (V. Vasilievsky) & V. Jernstedt, *Cecaumeni Strategicon et Incerti Scriptoris De Officiis Regiis Libellus*, St. Petersburg 1896, repr. Amsterdam 1965 (A. Hakkert), pp. 64, 73-74 = ed. with Russian tr.—comm. G. Litavrin, *Kekavmena Sovety i Rasskazy (Cecaumeni Consilia et Narrationes)*, Moscow 1972, pp. 248-250, 268; cf. Engl. tr. by E. Barker, *Social and Political Thought* . . . , 124 (except for the last 2 sentences, the transl. here is Barker's). See also comm. by Hélène Ahrweiler, *Recherches sur la Société Byzantine au XIe Siècle: Nouvelles Hiérarchies et Nouvelles Solidarités*, TM 6 (1976: *Recherches*

"If a man rebels and calls himself emperor, do not enter into his counsel, but depart from him. If you cannot fight him and overthrow him, (at any rate) fight for the emperor and the peace of the whole (body politic). If you cannot fight the rebel, depart from him; and, occupying some stronghold with your men, send word to the emperor and try to do him such service as you can in order that you and your children and your followers may have honour. If you have not men enough to occupy a stronghold, leave everything and take refuge with the emperor. But if, on account of your family, you dare not do this, then join his side (i.e. the side of the rebel) but let your heart be on the emperor's side, and, when you can, show some sort of action worthy of praise. For when you join his side (i.e. take part with the rebel), you should draw to you those of your friends who are of a high spirit, practice on him (i.e. act secretly against him), and have faith in the emperor in Constantinople... Whenever somebody dared raise the banner of revolt against the emperor and Romania (i.e. the Byzantine Empire), thus attempting to destroy the peace, he himself perished in the process... I therefore urge you, my dear sons... always be on the emperor's side, for he who resides in Constantinople, i.e. the basileus, always emerges victorious..."

The same spirit is echoed in the words of the XIIIth century polymath, Nicephorus Blemmydes († c. 1272), in the latter's "Oration on the Right Actions a Kings ought to follow" (*Λόγος ὅποιον δεῖ εἶναι τὸν Βασιλέα*)¹:

"And let there not be the slightest doubt that the basileus ought to be considered as the head and brain of the state, that he may be answerable only to the Almighty and that he should preserve the profound teachings on reverence as well as the rules and regulations postulated by the holy Fathers (the Hierarchs) as sacrosanct and immovable... That he should see to it that the preservation and correction of the

sur le XIe S.), p. 102; cf. Calliope Burdara, *Καθοσίωσις καὶ Τυραννίς*..., pp. 186-187.

1. Ed. J. P. Migne, PG 142, col. 668C; cf. E. Barker's comm., op. cit., p. 154 ff. This *Logos* consists a late XIIIth-cent. refined version of the same scholar's "Royal Statue" (*Ἀνδριὰς Βασιλικός*), composed c. 1250 and addressed to the Nicaean prince and heir-apparent, Theodore (II) Ducas Lascaris. See K. Emminger, *Studien zu den Griechischen Fursten Spiegeln. I. Zum Ἀνδριὰς Βασιλικός des Nikephoros Blemmydes*, Munich 1906, and the bibliogr. cited in Savvides, *Κινήματα*, pp. 15 and 46-47.

polity's errors may be attained by him (i.e. the emperor) through the holy intervention of the Lord... so that his mission on earth will be crowned and rewarded, and that his toils will not have been in vain; but he must also take the necessary steps in order to crush and eliminate those who oppose him (i.e. the various insurgents)..."

Several years before Blemmydes, the historiographer Nicetas Choniates († 1216/17) expressed in his "Historical Narrative" (*Ἱστορικὴ Αὐτοβιογραφία*) his indignation and disgust at the treacherous perpetrations on the part of the Empire's provincial lords, both in Asia Minor and mainland Greece inclusive of the Aegean islands and Cyprus, who had attempted a bold and uncalculated aggrandizement of their territories in such an inopportune time, when the Byzantine state was on the verge of prostration before the Latin onslaught, as a result of the ceaseless decline during the Angelus dynasty. Choniates's tone is revealingly pungent and condemning when referring to those who refused to accept the lawfulness of the Lascarid inheritance, when Theodore I Lascaris of Nicaea, who eventually "in a way harnessed the separatist tendencies of the Anatolian cities"¹, was desperately trying to gather around him a core of the exiled Byzantine element in north-western Anatolia²:

"And then, apart from those unrests, it is virtually impossible to narrate how many more of them (i.e. rebels) and on how many occasions raised the banner of revolt and mutiny; they seemed to spring up from everywhere, as if they had been sown like seeds bearing giants; they used to attack and then vanish again and again, like the hollow blasts which are produced by bellows... The chief reason for those incessant uprisings was the fact that Isaacius (= Isaacius II Angelus) had slackened the grip of his rule, having obviously placed his trust in the belief that he had received the right to govern by God alone, and that it was God Who would protect him against all vicissitudes... There were also those who were consumed by an innate craving to cause harm to their own country; they were base and slavish characters, who, corrupted by luxury and the loss of all

1. See Angold, *Byz. Empire*, p. 276. The same scholar (*Archons and Dynasts...*, in: Angold, ed., *Byz. Aristocracy*, pp. 243-244) correctly observes that the rebellions drew the attention of the historians of the time to the existence of dynasts, who, in more peaceful conditions, would simply be ignored, since their authority was informal.

2. Ed. J.-L. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, Berlin 1975 (CFHB, 11a), pp. 423, 637, 639.

decency, seized several precipitous fortifications and castles, while others occupied walled towns, thus establishing their own wicked tyrannies, instead of opposing the Latins. In this way, by fighting each other, they were in the long run unable to offer effective resistance to the Latins... All of them, instead of uniting their arms and acting concertedly towards the common cause, which ought to have been the liberation of their beleaguered cities and the protection of the Empire's territories (against the Latin and Turkish raids), they instead took up arms against each other (as well as against the central government) on account of their limitless ambition and vain desire to be called 'rulers'. As a result, they delivered in the end their cuirasses and arms as spoils of war to their (common) foe, who had taken the best possible advantage of their discord and lack of cooperation...".

The court historian and high official of the Nicaean state, George Acropolites († c. 1282), reminds us, too, of this chaotic situation in the early 1200s regarding the Empire's fate in his chronicle (*Χρονική Συγγραφή*), written sometime after the middle of the XIIIth century¹:

"And amidst all this confusion which ensued the sack of the City of Constantine (by the Franks), a considerable number of archons, originating from various areas of the state and believing that they could easily gain power, thus becoming absolute masters of the territories, where they had previously governed, proceeded with their plans and —contrary to the will of the local inhabitants— seized control of them...".

The aforementioned passage by Acropolites must have made a deep impression on his contemporaries, if we take into consideration the fact that Theodore Scutariotes, metropolitan of Cyzicus on the north-western corner of Anatolia in the years 1261-c. 1284 and a conscientious annalist of older historical works, copied Acropolites almost *verbatim* in his "Compiled Chronicle" (*Σύνοψις Χρονική*)².

1. Ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, 1: *Historia-Breviarum Historiae-Theodori Scutariotae Addumenta*, Leipzig 1903, repr. with corrections by P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978 (Teubner), p. 12.

2. Ed. C. Sathas, (*Ἀνωτίμων*) *Σύνοψις Χρονική*, Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη 7 (Paris-Venice 1894), p. 452. He also quotes *verbatim* for the period A.D. 1118 onwards extensive extracts from John Cinnamus and Nicetas Choniates. See bibliogr. in my *Κινήματα*, pp. 20 and 58-59.

One of the most characteristic texts which illustrate the negative connotation that the notion of 'tyrannid' (τυραννίς), i.e. the illegal seizure of military authority and the ensuing forceful and despotic toppling of legitimate authority by means of a rebellion¹, bore for the Byzantines, is the Oration (*Logos*) known as "Paideia Basilike"; it was written by Theophylactus Haephestus, Archbishop of Achriss (Ohrid) in the years c. 1090-c. 1108 († 1126)² and formerly tutor to the 'purple-born' (πορφυρογέννητος) prince Constantine Ducas, son of the emperor Michael VII Ducas 'Parapinacius' (1071-78)³; actually, the oration is addressed to Constantine, who enjoyed several privileges in the court of the founder of the Comnenian dynasty, Alexius I, after the latter's accession in 1081⁴, and though it may have been composed before the abdication of

1. Vryonīs, *Imperial Authority* (above, p. 248, n. 2), pp. 142, 145, 152, 153-154 & ref.

2. The death of Theophylactus in 1126 has been established by P. Gautier, *L'Épiscopat de Théophylacte Héphaistos, Archevêque de Bulgarie*, REB 21 (1963), pp. 169-170.—I d e m, *Theophylacti Achriddensis Opera* (ed.), Introduction, pp. 36-37; cf. C. Manaphes, *Γραμματολογικά καὶ Κείμενα Συγγραφέων IB' αἰῶνος*, I, Athens 1976, p. 7.—C. Varzos, *Γενεαλογία Κομνηνῶν*, I, p. 136, n. 8.—N. Ioannides, art. Θεοφύλακτος, *Παγκόσμιος Βιογραφικὸς Λεξικὸς/Εκπαιδευτικὴ Ἑλληνικὴ Ἐγκυκλοπαίδεια*, vol. 4 (Athens 1985), p. 82.

3. Cf. K. Krumbacher, *Gesch. der Byzant. Literatur*, Munich 1897², p. 133.—H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur...*, Munich 1959, p. 649 ff.—A. Hohlweg in *Tusculum-Lexikon*, Munich-Zurich 1982³, pp. 791-792.—H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, I, Munich 1978, p. 161.—R. Browning in *The Penguin Companion to Literature*, IV: *Classical and Byzantine, Oriental and African*, 1969, p. 213.—J. Karayannopoulos, *Πηγαὶ τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Ἱστορίας*, Thessalonica 1975³ (Βυζαντινὰ Κείμενα καὶ Μελέται, no. 2), p. 315, no. 409 = J. Karayannopoulos & G. Weiss, *Quellenkunde zur Geschichte von Byzanz*, Wiesbaden 1982, pp. 446-447, no. 412.—R. Janin, art. *Théophylacte* in *Dict. Théol. Cathol.* XIV, cols. 536-538 and art. *Θεοφύλακτος* in *ΘΗΕ*, vol. 6 (1965), cols. 417-418. See also E. Barker, *Social & Political Thought...*, pp. 145-6.—C. A. Mantos, *Ἱστορ.* II, p. 256, n. 1.—F. Dölger in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV.2 (1967²), p. 242.—Kazhdan, *Imperial Propaganda* (above, pp. 250-251, n. 2), p. 20.—Margaret Mullet in Bsl 45/2 (1984), p. 209 & n. 48; and P. Gautier, (ed.), *Opera*, pp. 179, lines 11-12, 183, lines 20-21; cf. *ibid.*, *Introduction*, p. 27 ff. Constantine Ducas was not a son of Constantine X Ducas (1059-67) acc. to L. Benakes in *Ἱστορ. Ἑλληνικῶν Ἔθνων*, vol. IX (1979), p. 353.

4. On Constantine Ducas (1074-c. 1095), whom Alexius I designated as heir apparent after 1081, see D. Polemis, *The Doukai. A Contribution to Byzantine Prosopography*, London 1968 (Univ. of London Historical Studies, 22), p. 60 ff., no. 23; P. Gautier (ed.), *Theophyl. Opera*, pp. 48-57 & refs. On Constantine's subsequent career until the late 1080s, when he lost the favours he had gained from Alexius I after 1081 together with his mother, the former empress Maria of Alania (or Maria the 'Caucasian'), see Gautier, *op. cit.*, p. 57 ff. & refs, and the detailed

Michael VII in 1078¹, it is more likely dated to 1081 as a *terminus post quem*². Certain extracts from this valuable text epitomize the defects of 'tyranny' in the conscience of contemporary Byzantines³:

"There are three fundamental political situations, of which the first, i.e. monarchy, is also called legitimate and kingship (ἐννομος καὶ βασιλεία), having its foundations on the people... Moreover, monarchy is composed of several lawful archons... and its name is called aristocracy (ἀριστοκρατία), that is, the rule of the best; on top of this, the various contributions of the people to the administration of the state has been termed democracy (δημοκρατία). Now, opposing the three aforementioned situations, there are three more situations which constitute the roots of misfortune: kingship is undermined by tyrannid, while aristocracy is speared by the force of oligocracy, i.e. the situation when a few wealthy and violent people replace the best apt to rule (τοὺς ἀρίστους) in the government; and finally, democracy is menaced by ochlocracy, i.e. the rule of the masses... But here, behold the characteristics between tyrannid and kingship; first, the tyrant uses force in order to control authority (τὴν ἀρχήν); the reigns of government have not been bestowed upon him by the will of the citizens, but he seizes them by slaughter and blood-shedding... therefore, he is stained with blood from the very start... You notice, therefore, how loathsome and abominable can the tyrant become, as

recent treatment by Margaret Mullet, *The Disgrace of the ex-Basilissa Maria*, Bsl 45/2 (1984), pp. 202-211, esp. 204 ff; cf. also Varzos, *Γενεαλογία Κομνηνῶν*, I, p. 69 ff., 176 ff., and Angold, *Byz. Empire*, pp. 103-104. Finally, see the remarks by Aikaterine Christophilopulu, 'Εκλογή, 'Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις τοῦ Βυζ. Αυτοκράτορος, Athens 1956 (Πραγματεῖαι Ἀκαδημίας Ἀθηνῶν, 22), pp. 156-157.

1. Cf. Savvides, *Κινήματα*, p. 17.

2. B. Leib, (*La Pαιδεία Βασιλική de Théophylacte, Archevêque de Bulgarie, et sa Contribution à l'Histoire de la Fin du XIe Siècle*, REB 11 [1953], pp. 197-204, esp. 203) had dated the oration to 1088/9; this was however corrected to *post* 1081 by P. Gautier, *Le Discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie à l'Autocrator Alexis Ier Comnène*, REB 20 (1962), pp. 105-106 and 117, line 15; cf. *idem* (ed.), *Introd.*, p. 67. See also Polemis, *Doukai*, pp. 62, n. 13 and 63, n. 24; Manaphes, *Γραμματολογικά*..., op. cit., p. 5.

3. Ed.— French tr.— comm. by P. Gautier, *Theophylacti Achridiensis Orationes, Tractatus, Carmina*, Thessalonica 1980 (CFHB, no. 16/1), pp. 194-197, 198-201, 200-203; cf. Barker, *Social & Political Thought*, p. 146.— Vryonis, *Imperial Authority*, 154. See also the remarks by D. Balanos, *Οἱ Βυζαντινοὶ Ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ Συγγραφεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ 800 μέχρι τοῦ 1453*, Athens 1951 (Βιβλιοθήκη Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας, 34), pp. 89-90.

opposed to the most desirable and bright beauty of the king... he does not acquire authority by force, or steep his garments in blood, for his foundations are the good will of the populace (εὐνοία πλῆθους) and the latter's assent, which go hand-in-hand with his own moderation and mercy. He becomes king as a reward for his virtue (ἀρετῆς... ἔθλον) and all men are readily disposed to concede what is considered best to him who is deemed the best of men... . The tyrant, on the other hand, is always surrounded by fear and threats, so he is usually busy committing murders (of his opponents), a headache he cannot dispense with easily...".

IV

The rebellious and autonomist (separatist) movements usually occurred in the Empire's maladministered provinces (ἐπαρχίαι), and their ring-leaders were often initially successful, either by means of their personal might and imposing personality, assisted by the support —albeit not unswerving— of the populations inhabiting the areas which they had controlled or governed¹, or by means of lucrative pacts (συνθήκαι), often with foreigners, which befitted their purposes². Their opportunism on several occasions did not prevent them from concluding treacherous alliances (συμμάχαι) with Byzantium's enemies³.

1. Such were the cases of George Maniaces (1042/3), Leo Tornicius (1047), Alexis Branas (1186), Leo Sgurus (c. 1200-c. 1208) et al.

2. As with Leo Gabalas and his 1234 treaty with the Venetians (see bibl. above, p. 252, n. 3).

3. Nicephorus (III) Botaneiates in 1077/8 and Nicephorus Melissenus in 1080/81 used Seljuk mercenaries from the chieftain Kutlumush and the latter's son, Süleyman I ibn Kutlumush (the founder of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rûm in Asia Minor), in their bid for the Byzantine throne. The renegade Leo (or Constantine) Diogenes, the so-called Pseudo-Diogenes, laid a 48-days siege to Adrianople with hordes of Cuman mercenaries in 1094, while the *protostrator* Alexius Axuchus also used Cuman aid in his attempt to overthrow Manuel I Comnenus in 1167. The three Pseudo-Alexii of Anatolia in the last decade of the XIIth century made ample use of Seljuk and Turcoman help, and so did the Anatolian magnates Theodore Mancaphas of Philadelphia and Manuel Maurozomes of the Maeander valley regions in the early XIIIth century. David Grand Comnenus of the Pontus, on the other hand, attempted to dislodge Theodore I Lascaris from Bithynia by signing a pact of alliance with the Latin régime of Constantinople (the Empire of "Romania") in 1206.

On the Pseudo-Alexii, Mancaphas, Maurozomes and David Megalocomnenus cf. details in Savvides, *Κινήματα*, chaps. I, III, V and VIII. On those local rulers (dynasts) who succeeded in maintaining a certain amount of independence without foreign help, like Basil Chotzas of Tarsia in the period 1190-1205, Sabbas Asidenus

A familiar pattern of the internal strife in Byzantium, which in effect was a clash between military aristocrats and civil bureaucrats, was that in several cases, at the outbreak of a sedition or a separatist *κίνημα*, the majority of the population of the rebelled areas sided with the insurgents, hoping for deliverance from imperial oppression, as was the case of Leo Tornicius in the mid-XIth century. T. Lounghis has recently pointed out that "social struggle in Byzantium initially assumed the form of uprising against the state itself and not against the ruling class as such; on several occasions the popular rural masses assisted the bid for power on the part of fief-owners... the middle Byzantine period witnessed the creation of a new ruling class of a feudal character, which—up to the mid-XIth century—often opposed the state with the support of agrarian populations, who were fed up with the existing social conditions and the taxation system..."¹.

As the seditions progressed, however, the local populations eventually abandoned the insurgents, fearing possible reprisals on the part of the emperor, in case the latter was victorious. Without popular support it would not have been possible for the rebels to put up an effective stand against the superior and better-trained imperial forces, which were sent to suppress the seditions². Therefore, the *kinematiai* were ultimately abandoned to a more or less cruel fate, since they were invariably arrested or handed over to the imperial troops and led in front of the emperor in chains. The penalties (ποιναι) which they had to face were various and severe³: they were paraded and ridiculed in the streets and the

in Sampson on the Ionian littoral in the years 1204-6, and Theodore (II) Gabras in Pontic Amisus (Turk. Samsun) in the years 1204-c. 1208, cf. Savvides, op. cit., chaps. II, VI and VII. Finally on the *kinemata* of the XIth-XIIth centuries (until 1189), see above, p. 239, n. 2 & refs.

1. T. C. Lounghis, *Κοινωνικοί Αγώνες στο Βυζάντιο*, in: *Μεγάλη Γενική Ἑγκυκλοπαίδεια Ὑδρία*, vol. 16 (Athens 1981), pp. 194-197, esp. 195. Most of these local rulers had begun their career as imperial military commanders or various governmental officials, and ended up as independent and semi-independent feudatories with vast estates and properties. They succeeded in detaching a considerable amount of imperial territory, taking advantage of the general atmosphere of instability, fratricidal strife, economic exploitation by the westerners, and invasions of Byzantine lands by new raiders, i.e. Patzinaks (Pechenegs), Cumans, Normans, Crusaders (French, Germans and Italians), Seljuks, Turcomans etc.

2. Cf. the useful commentary by D. Xanatalatos, *Βυζ. Μελετήματα*, pp. 17, 31, 52 ff., 70 ff.

3. Xanatalatos, op. cit., p. 21 ff. On Byzantine courthouses and punishments (δικαστήρια-ποιναι), cf. Ph. Kukules, *Βυζαντινὸν Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός*, III, Athens 1949, pp. 44-49.

Hippodrome of Constantinople (διαπόμπευσις)¹, they were blinded (τύφλωσις)², or otherwise horribly maimed (ἀκρωτηριασμός)³, they were held in custody and stringent detention (φυλακή, περιορισμός)⁴, they were exiled (ἐξορία) to far-away areas⁵, they had their hair shaven and were shut up in monasteries (κουρά and ἐγκλεισμός)⁶, they had their property confiscated (δήμευσις)⁷. The capital punishment, i.e. various ways and methods of execution, was also adopted on certain occasions⁸.

Most Byzantine rulers of the period 1025-1204 bestowed lavishly many privileges (προνόμια) upon the members of military aristocracy both in the large urban centres and the provinces⁹, with the result that the most ambitious among them actually acquired unlimited prerogatives within their domains, even forming their own private small armies. They began to act as they pleased in the territories they had been assigned to govern, and their recalcitrant attitude soon developed into open disregard of the emperor's orders¹⁰. The central administration of the capital, basically composed of civil bureaucrats, were alarmed at the rapid growth of power on the part of the provincial military magnates. Thus there developed a "rule of the civil bureaucracy" (period 1025-81) *versus* a "rule of the military aristocracy" (period 1081-1204), a situation

1. Cf. P h. K u k u l e s, *Διαπόμπευσις κατά τοὺς Βυζαντινοὺς Χρόνους*, Byzantina-Metabyzantina 1/2 (New York 1949), pp. 75-101 = *Βυζαντινῶν Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός*, III, pp. 184-208.

2. Cf. the doctoral dissertation by O d. L a m p s i d e s, *Ἡ Ποινὴ τῆς Τυφλώσεως παρὰ τοῖς Βυζαντινοῖς*, Athens 1949; cf. C. B u r d a r a, *Καθοσίωσις καὶ Τυραννίς*, pp. 165-167.

3. The most frequent mutilation penalty appears to be that of wrist mutilation (χειροκοπία, χειροκοπή). It seems rather unlikely that victims of such cruel treatment would have survived in those years, when the only way to face such horrible wounds as those of maimed limbs was either cauterization or herb ointment application.

4. Cf. B u r d a r a, op. cit., 160-2. On prisons and captives in Byzantium see P h. K u k u l e s, *Βίος καὶ Πολιτισμός*, III, pp. 145-183, 209-246.

5. B u r d a r a, pp. 167-168.

6. Ibid., p. 167.

7. Ibid., p. 162 ff.

8. Ibid., pp. 159-160, 164 ff. on the various κεφαλικά ποινά.

9. Cf. A n g o l d, *Archons* . . . , op. cit., p. 245 ff.

10. The case of Leo Sguris, with his meteoric career in the north-eastern Peloponnese, (Sterea) Hellas and Thessaly in the years c. 1200-c. 1208, comes to mind. On Sguris see refs. in my *Μελέτες*, pp. 41-42, 124-125 & notes, 175; cf. M. K o r d o s e s, *Ἡ Κατάκτηση τῆς Νότιας Ἑλλάδας ἀπὸ τοὺς Φράγκους. Ἱστορικά καὶ Τοπογραφικά Προβλήματα*, Ἱστοριογεωγραφικά 1 (Ioannina-Thessalonica 1986), pp. 64-65, 66 ff., 72 ff., 76 ff. *et passim*.

well defined and masterfully treated by G. Ostrogorsky in his *History*¹. The bureaucrats may have been victorious for the most part of the XIth century, but it was the military who eventually gained control in 1081. As A. Vasiliev observed several years ago, "a distinguishing feature of this period (=1056-81) was the struggle waged by the military element and the large landowning nobility, especially that of Asia Minor, against the central bureaucratic government. This struggle between the provinces and the capital ended, after a number of fluctuations, in the victory of the army and the landowners, which was the victory of the provinces over the capital"². The work of the Comneni, however, was marred by the Angeli, and by 1204 the Empire had been brought to a lamentable condition on the eve of the disastrous Fourth Crusade, the first of the two decisive blows that paralyzed it.

Several Byzantine sources, especially those of the late XIIth-early XIIIth century, provide ample information concerning the fiscal oppression of the urban and provincial lower classes, the *πέρητες*, by the greed of their local masters, the *δυνατοί*, as well as by the government tax-collectors, the *ἀναγραφεῖς*, *ἀπογραφεῖς*, *φορολόγοι*, *φοροεισπράκτορες*, and *πραίτορες* of the Greek authors³. "With the steady growth of private estates", wrote Ostrogorsky, "the administrative system of the dwarf provinces became unavoidably dependent upon the local landed proprietors. The weakness of the central government was such, that it was only a step to the replacement of the provincial governor by the landowner and to the development of independent principalities"⁴.

1. Ostrogorsky, *Aristocracy*... (above, p. 238, n. 1), pp. 7 and 9.— Idem, *History*, p. 316 ff., 351 ff. (cf. also the bibliographically updated Greek transl. of Ostrogorsky's *Ἱστορία Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους*, vol. II, Athens 1979, p. 201 ff. and vol. III, Athens 1981, 13 ff.). See also Zakynthinos, *Ἱστορ.* I, p. 478 ff.

2. See A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire, 324-1453*, Madison Wisc. 1952, repr. 1976, pp. 351-352. See also Longhis, *Κοινωνικοί Ἀγῶνες*..., op. cit., p. 195; Angold, *Archons*, p. 4: "The accession of Alexios I marked the triumph of military aristocracy".

3. On those terms of ranks and offices see Judith Herrin, *Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government: Hellas and Peloponnesos, 1180-1205*, DOP 29 (1975), pp. 266 ff., 270 ff. & refs.

4. Ostrogorsky, *History*, p. 402. Several among the powerful land-holders had had meteoric military careers, like George Maniakes (from c. 1032 to 1043), Nicephorus Bryennius, the grand-gather of the historiographer, his namesake, in c. 1072-1077/8, Alexius Branas in 1185-6, and others, before ending up as local rulers (*τοπάρχαι*), replacing the official provincial governors of the Empire, like Nicephorus Basilacius in 1078, Theodore I (Saint) Gabras in c. 1091-c. 1098, Isaacius Comnenus of Cyprus in c. 1184-91, Leo Sguris in c. 1200-c. 1208, et al. Consequently, more

One such famous source regarding fiscal oppression and exploitation in late Byzantium is the “Memorandum” (Ὑπομνηστικόν) of Michael Choniates († c. 1222), elder brother of the historiographer Nicetas and metropolitan of Athens in the years c. 1182-1204. This work, written about 1198/9 and addressed to the emperor Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203), provides revealing details concerning the miserable conditions prevailing in Byzantium’s Greek (Helladic) provinces at the close of the XIIth century. The disillusioned hierarch expresses his profound disappointment and the oppressed Athenians’s bitter reproofs against the gross peculations on the part of the “merciless” imperial agents, whose tax exactions he colourfully compares to raids of bandits¹:

“And I have to report to you that Athens, once a famous and prosperous city, has gradually become empty and devoid of its inhabitants on account of their incessant maltreatment (by your majesty’s agents); to such an extent is this taking place, that it (= Athens) may soon resemble a Scythian desert. The chief reason (for the city’s misfortunes) will be that we will all have suffered severe hardship to a greater extent than our neighbours (i.e. the rest of the Atticans and the Boeotians), in spite of the fact that they are placed in a lower (administrative) status than we are. . . I shall abstain, your majesty, from relating to you again the excessive demands of the tax-collectors and the ravages inflicted by the sea-faring pirates. But how could I possibly refrain from shedding tears, when narrating to you the unspeakable behaviour of your agents? . . . He (i.e. the tax-collector) pretends that he has to pay a visit (to our city) in order to attend to his errands, producing imperial chrysobulls for this reason; in reality, however, he rushes to our city accompanied not only by his own assistants (i.e. other tax-collectors), but also by certain local shirkers, who in the manner of drones (κηφῆνες) are always ready to make easy gains (by informing the φορολόγοι wherefrom to exact the largest sums)

power and wealth were accumulated by the *dynatoi*, while the central government was powerless to mediate. Its only outlet was to despatch its ‘blood-thirsty’ tax-collectors in the areas which still remained under imperial control, and thus, by exacting heavy tributes, attempt to fill up the imperial treasury.

1. Ed. S p. L a m p r o s, *Μιχαὴλ Ἀχομινάτου τοῦ Χωνιάτου τὰ Σωζόμενα*, I, Athens 1879, repr. Groningen 1968, pp. 307, 308-309, 310. On the miserable socio-economic condition of the Empire’s provinces during this period cf. J u d i t h H e r r i n, *The Collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the XIIth Century: A Study of a Medieval Economy* (above, p. 243, n. 1), pp. 188-203, esp. 196 ff.—E a d e m, *Realities of Byzantine Provincial Government* . . . , p. 269.—H é l è n e A h r w e i l e r, *Idéologie Politique*, pp. 91-92.

They all perpetrate such horrors and robberies — even snatching away the food of the poor and the unprotected— that they rather resemble (foreign) invaders, who raid hostile territory... The loss and hardship that we have been suffering, most serene majesty, is certainly not to the interest of the state; on the contrary, it happens to be at its expense, for it constitutes the cardinal reason for a vast emigration, thus making our lands look desolate and the Empire ending up deprived of its populations... Having, therefore, related to you at least some of the misfortunes which have befallen us, we make a plea, most holy and humane majesty, hoping that you shall extend your mercy upon us, thus putting an end to this cataclysm of peculations. If this be not possible, we hope that you will consider at least replacing them (i.e. the onerous taxes) with lighter ones, so that we may be able to bear them according to our private ways and means (and not to our utter detriment)...”.

Scholarship, however, must watch for misinterpretations. Testimonies like the aforementioned by Michael Choniates have sometimes led recent authors to draw far-fetched and ‘impregnated’ conclusions of a generalizing character, one step —and sometimes many— ahead of the sources, by attempting to give a vivid picture of declining Byzantium as well as of the greed, lust and maladministration on the part of the governmental agents and the ruling class, who mercilessly exploited the πένητες; there the masses of the poor appear almost as hunted animals in deep despair¹.

V

To recapitulate, the chief causes which led various insurgents to proclaim their independence (ἀνεξαρτησία) from the corrupt central government and seek recognition by local populations as territorial masters (αὐθένται, κυρίαρχοι), were the following²:

- i. Exorbitant and arbitrary taxation of the middle and lower classes, especially in the provinces.
- ii. Provocative and extravagant dispensation of the collected sums by the government.
- iii. Gross peculations on the part of the corrupt imperial agents.

1. Cf. my *Μελέτες*, p. 71.

2. Cf. my *Κινήματα*, pp. 87-89 & refs.

iv. Unjust confiscation of land and property to the benefit of the *dynatoi* and at the expense of the *penetes*.

v. Maladministration in both urban centres and the provinces of the Empire, and

vi. Inadequate defence of the state's frontier zones, which resulted in increased invasions by foreign nations (Patzinaks, Turks, Normans, Crusaders, etc.).

As soon as the insurgents succeeded in gaining some sort of control in their territories, they usually proceeded to take the following necessary steps in order to stabilize their position and reach a feasible *modus vivendi* with both the central power and the inhabitants of the apostatized areas:

i. Their newly established *κρατίδια*, i.e. 'mini-states' (*Territorialstaaten*¹), should now be strengthened by the amassment of wealth through the exaction of the hitherto imperial taxes.

ii. The insurgents attempted to delineate a fresh external policy with neighbouring foreign nations, a policy which often differed from that adopted previously by the government of Constantinople. Sometimes certain insurgents did not hesitate to fight on the side of foreign invaders against the Byzantine emperor².

iii. Several insurgents attempted to recruit more followers and consolidate their *status* by claiming rights to the imperial throne, either through the deliberate propagation of their supposed relation to pre-

1. Ibid., Introduction, p. 5 with ref. to J u r g e n H o f f m a n n, *Rudimente von Territorialstaaten im Byzantinische Reich, 1071-1210*, Munich 1974 (above, p. 242, n. 1).

2. Like e.g. Pseudo-Michael (posing as Michael VII) and the Normans against Alexius I Comnenus in 1080/81, Pseudo-Diogenes and the Cumans against Alexius I in 1094, the Pseudo-Alexii, Mancaphas and Maurozomes with Seljuks and Turcomans against the Angeli and Theodore I Lascaris in the late XIIth-early XIIIth cent., etc. Referring to the XIth cent., J. K a r a y a n n o p u l o s, (*Κεντροφύγοι και Κεντρομόλοι Δυνάμεις* . . . , op. cit., pp. 7-8) observes that it is rather incorrect to talk of massive cessions of Byzantine populations to the foreign invader and conqueror (*sc.* the Turk), whom they allegedly preferred to their compatriots and correligionists during the outbreak of rebellious and separatist movements. Furthermore, Karayannopoulos asserts that in the XIth cent. there were no cases of voluntary cession to the enemy, while there was also no outbreak of separatist insurrections aiming at the setting-up of independent principalities (*Territorialstaaten*). He moreover differentiates between the *kinemata* of Greeks and those of Roussel de Bailleul (*Urselius* or *Ruselius* in the Byz. sources) and Philaretus Brachamius in the 1070s, which —although separatist in nature— cannot be regarded as Greek. On Philaretus see S a v v i d e s, *Βυζάντιο και Σελτζούκοι Τοῦρκοι* (above, p. 246, n. 1), p. 52, and on Urselius lius see i d e m, *Μελέτες*, p. 27 & refs.

vicious —and usually quite popular— Byzantine rulers¹, thus hoping that they could count on popular support, or by the formation of strong private armies, an enterprise which required fresh taxation². The harassed local populations soon realized that they had opted for another oppressor instead of the previous one, i.e. the emperor. The threat of a possible punitive expedition on the part of the Byzantine sovereign kept these forces on the alert most of the time. So, the local populations, having lost hope that they could be delivered from persecution and exploitation, were filled with exasperation. This is why frequently they had no scruples about opening their gates to foreign invading forces, especially from the late XIIth century onwards³.

iv. As soon as the local *authentai* felt secure enough, they often attempted an aggrandizement of their territories. Few among them, however, dared to come into direct clash with the imperial troops. The most daring of their kind, like Maniaces, Tornicius, Bryennius et al., perished in their efforts to overthrow the emperor; Tornicius actually laid siege to Constantinople in 1047, but Constantine IX Monomachus was eventually saved on account of the rebel's indecisiveness at a very crucial moment of the siege. Others were content to proclaim their inde-

1. I.e. Pseudo-Michael (posing as Michael VII himself) in 1080/81, Leo (or Constantine) Pseudo-Diogenes, posing as a son of Romanus IV Diogenes in 1094, the three Pseudo-Alexii in the final decade of the XIIth cent., who all posed as the son of the late Manuel I Comnenus, i.e. Alexius II, who had been executed by Andronicus I in 1183, et al. On the death of the hapless Alexius II Comnenus see Ostrorogorsky, *History*, p. 396.— C. A m a n t o s, 'Ιστορία Βυζαντινοῦ Κράτους, II: 867-1204, Athens 1957², repr. 1977², pp. 324-325. More details in P. W i r t h, *Wann wurde Kaiser Alexios II. Komnenos geboren*, BZ 49 (1956), pp. 65-7; cf. A. K a z h d a n, *Two Notes on Byzantine Demography of the XIth and XIIth Centuries*, BF 8 (1982), pp. 14-15, n. 5.

2. Like the cases of Nicephorus Bryennius in 1077/78, Leo Sguris in the period c. 1200-c. 1208, et al. (see above, p. 260, n. 10 and pp. 261-262, n. 4).

3. Several local administrators succeeded in winning over the support of the populations, being recognized as local masters (*αὐθένται*) in the territories assigned previously to them by the imperial government. It seems that it had not been particularly difficult to buy off the conscience of those harassed populations, who would do anything to get rid of the prevalent stringent taxation and enjoy protection and peace. And if bribery could not work, sheer terror could always be implemented by those local lords through their private armies, thus forcing the masses of provincial populations into compulsory obedience. On this topic see the vivid but not always accurate pages of M. V. L e v t c h e n k o, 'Ιστορία Βυζαντινῆς Αυτοκρατορίας (to 1453), Athens 1956, pp. 298 ff. Cf. Y. K o r d a t o s, 'Ιστορία Βυζαντινῆς Αυτοκρατορίας, I: 300-1204, Athens 1959, pp. 568 ff., 576 ff., 604 ff., 646 ff., who follows Lev-tchenko but often draws his own far-fetched conclusions (cf. above, p. 263, n. 1).

pendence and continue to rule in their territories independently of the central government's wishes, like Sabbas Asidenus, Theodore II Gabras, Leo Gabalas et al. in the early XIIIth century, while others dynamically seized provinces of the Empire and attempted either to usurp the crown, like Isaacius Comnenus in Cyprus and Bryennius in Adrianople, or to extend their conquests, like Leo Sgurus in central and southern Greece (Hellas), Manuel Cammytzes in Thessaly and western Macedonia, Michael (I) Angelus of Epirus, et al. The detailed list of the *homines seditiosi* for the period from 1025 to 1261, which is appended to this article, attempts to offer a bird's-eye-view of this situation.

It is, of course, impossible to give a contemporary partial and accurate picture of the careers of the various urban and provincial *archons* who opted for independence, since the accounts of the official Byzantine chroniclers of the XIIth-XIIIth century (as well as those of later historiographers of the XIVth century) almost invariably accuse and blame the 'rebels' of unpatriotic attitude, especially when their country needed their combined forces in order to put an effective stand against foreign invaders. This situation was felt more than ever during the closing stages of the XIIth century and the early XIIIth, with the splintering of medieval Hellenism due to attacks from all quarters. In certain cases, however, we have testimonies coming from other sources, like that by Nicephorus Blemmydes on Leo Gabalas of Rhodes, which helps towards a rehabilitation from the slanders which the Rhodian ruler suffered at the hands of the official Nicaean and early Palaeologan sources, i.e. George Acropolites and Theodore Scutariotes, who both saw in Gabalas much to criticize and almost nothing to praise.

ALEXIS G. C. SAVVIDES

A LIST
OF THE HOMINES SEDITIONI
IN BYZANTIUM
A.D. 1025-1261

Key:

- A Apostacy
- C Conspiracy
- R (Open) Rebellion
- S Separatist Movement
- U Usurpation

[The references and brief notes on the coinage of the insurgents are based chiefly on the works by Philip Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, California U.P. 1982, and Michael Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire, 1081-1261*, Washington 1969; *idem*, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy, 300-1450* Cambridge U.P. 1985.]

The names of those who succeeded in occupying the throne are in block capitals.

REIGNING EMPEROR	INSURGENT(S)	DATE	PLACE	KIND OF INSUR-RECTION	COINAGE OF INSURGENT(S)
CONSTANTINE VIII (1025-28)	Constantine Burtzes	1025	Constantinople	C (?)	
	Nicephorus Comnenus (dux and archon of Media and Vaspurakan)	1025/6	Vaspurakan	C-R	
	Bardas Phocas	1026	Cple	C-R	
	Basil Sclerus (patricius)	1026/7 (1st time)	NW Anatolia - Oxeia island	C-R	
ROMANUS III ARGYRUS (1028-33)	Constantine Diogenes (strategus of Threcesion and Paristrion-Paradounavon)	1029 and 1031/2	Cple	C-R	lead seals (molybdo-boulla)
	Basil Sclerus (patricius and magistros, although blinded in 1026/7)	1033 (again)	Cple	C	
MICHAEL IV PAPHLAGON (1034-41)	Constantine Dalassenus (patricius)	1034	Anatolia - Cple	C	
	Gregory Taronites (patricius)	1040	Phrygia	C-R	
	Basil Synadenus (strategus of Dyrracheion)	1040	Dyrracheion	C	
	Michael Cerularius (the future Patriarch: 1043-58) and John Mamembolites	1040	Cple		
	CONSTANTINE (IX) MONOMACHUS (ascended throne in 1042)	1034/5 and 1038	Cple — exiled to Lesbos (Mytilene) until 1042	C	
CONSTANTINE IX MONOMACHUS (1042-55)	George Maniaces (strategus and katapano)	1042/3	Macedonia	R-L	lead seals
	Theophilus Eroticus (strategus-governor of Cyprus)	1042/3	Cyprus	R-S-A	
	Stephanus (sebastophorus)	1043	Cple	C-R	

	Leo Tornicius (strategus-tousured a monk <i>ante</i> 1047)	1047	Macedonia - Thrace	R
	Nicephorus and Michael, sons of Euthymius	1050/1	?	C
	Romanus Boilas (senator-court official)	1051/2	Cple	C
	Constantine Barys	between 1052-57	Cple	C
MICHAEL VI 'STRATIGOTICUS' (1056-57)	Nicephorus Bryennius (I) (strategus of Macedonian tagmata)	1057	Anatolia	C-R
	ISAACIUS (I) COMNENUS (seized throne in 1057, reigned 1057-9)	1057	Anatolia - Cple	C-R
MICHAEL VII DUCAS 'PARAPINACIUS' (1071-78)	John Ducas (caesar) with Roussel de Bailleul (Norman mercenary chief)	1073/4	Anatolia	R-S-A-U
	Nicephorus Bryennius (II), son of N.B. (I) (strategus and dux of Dyrracheion), with his brother, John Bryennius	1077/8	Macedonia-Thrace (Adrianople)	R-S-A-U coins (nomisma-ta) of N.B. (II)
NICEPHORUS III BOTANIEIATES (1078-81)	NICEPHORUS (III) BOTANIEIATES (seized throne in 1078, reigned 1078-81), formerly strategus of Anatolicon	1077/8	Anatolia	R-U no coins before his accession in 1078
	Nicephorus Basilacius (strategus-dux of Dyrracheion)	1078	Thessalonica	R-S-A coins (?)
	Constantine Ducas (younger brother of Michael VII)	1078	Cple	C-R
	Nicephorus Melissenus (strategus)	1080/1	Anatolia	R-U coins (?)
	ALEXIUS (I) COMNENUS (strategus) (occupied throne in 1081)	1081	Anatolia - Cple	R-U no coins before his accession

REIGNING EMPEROR	INSURGENT(S)	DATE	PLACE	KIND OF INSUR-RECTION	COINAGE OF INSURGENT(S)
ALEXIUS I COMNENUS (1081-1118)	Pseudo-Michael (posing as Michael VII) John Comnenus (dux of Dyrracheion, nephew of Alexius I) Rapsomates (governor of Cyprus) Caryces (governor of Crete) Nicephorus Diogenes (elder son of Romanus IV Diogenes) Leo (or Constantine) Diogenes (Pseudo-Diogenes) Theodore (I) Saint Gabras (dux of Chaldia) Anemas brothers (Michael, Leo et al.) Gregory Gabras-Taronites (son of Theodore I, dux of Chaldia)	1080/1 1091 1092 1092 1094 1094 1095/6-98 1104/5 1106/7	W Macedonia - Epirus Dyrracheion Cyprus Crete Cple Thrace Trebizond-Pontus Cple Trebizond-Pontus	R-U C-R R-S-A R-S-A C-R R S-A C-R R-S-A	 coins (?) lead seals coins (?)
JOHN II COMNENUS (1118-43)	Constantine Gabras (son or brother of Gregory G.-T.)	1124/6-1139/40	Trebizond-Pontus	R-S-A	
MANUEL I COMNENUS (1143-80)	Alexius Axuchus (protostrator)	1167	Cple (?)	C-R	
ALEXIUS II COMNENUS (1180-82/3)	ANDRONICUS (I) COMNENUS (cousin of Manuel I)	1182/3	Anatolia - Cple	R-U	no coins before his accession
ANDRONICUS I COMNENUS (1183-85)	Andronicus La(m)pardas (strategus) Andronicus Contostephanus (Me-gas Dux = admiral)	1183/4 1183/4	Anatolia (Adra-myttion ?) Anatolia	R-S-A R-S-A	

ISAACIUS II ANGELUS (1185-95)	John Comnenus-Batatzes (strategus-governor of Philadelphia)	1183/4	Anatolia (Philadelphia)	R-S-A	
	Theodore Cantacuzenus (strategus-governor of Prussa)	1184	NW Anatolia (Nicaea)	R-S-A	
	Isaacijs Comnenus (I) (nephew of Manuel I C.)	1184/5-1191	Cyprus	R-S-A-U	silver coins
	ISAACIUS (II) ANGELUS (strategus, seized throne in 1185)	1185	Anatolia	R-U	no coins before his accession
	Constantine Aspietes	1185/6	Macedonia	C-R (?)	
	Alexius Branas (strategus)	1186	Macedonia	R-U	
	Theodore Mancaphas (governor of Philadelphia)	1189/90 (1st time)	Philadelphian Phrygia	R-S-A	silver coins
	Constantine Taticius	1190	Cple	C-R	
	Basil Chotzas	1190-1204 (1st time)	Tarsia (NW Anatolia)		
	Isaacijs Comnenus (II) (nephew of Andronicus I)	1190/1	Cple	R	
ALEXIUS III ANGELUS (1195-1203)	Pseudo-Alexius (I)	1192	Anatolia (Phrygia)	R-U	
	Pseudo-Alexius (II)	1192	Anatolia (Paphlagonia)	R-U	
	ALEXIUS (III) ANGELUS (brother of Isaacijs II A.) (seized throne in 1195)	1195	Cple	R	no coins before his accession
	Pseudo-Alexius (III)	1195/6	Anatolia (Ancyra regions)	R-U	
	Theodore Mancaphas	1195/6 (2nd time)	W Anatolia	R	

REIGNING EMPEROR	INSURGENT(S)	DATE	PLACE	KIND OF INSUR-RECTION	COINAGE OF INSURGENT(S)
ALEXIOUS III A., toppled in 1203 by his nephew, ALEXIOUS IV ANGELUS, who restored his now blind father, ISAACIUS II A. (1203-4)	Michael Angelus (Michael I of Epirus, ruled: 1204/5-1214/15)	1200/4	SW Anatolia-Caria (Mylassa Melanodium) and Epirus (Nicomolis Arta)	R-U	no coins before 1204; after (?)
	Leo Chamaretus (archon of Lacedaemon)	1200/6	S Morea (Sparta-Mystas)	S-A	lead seals
	Leo Sgurus (archon of Argolis and Corinthia, sebastohypertatus from 1204)	1200/8	Morea (Argolis - Corinthia) and Central Greece up to Larissa in Thessaly	R-S-A	lead seals
	John Comnenus (Axuchus) "Pachys" (= the Fat) (court official)	1201/2	Cple	C-R	
	Manuel Cam(m)ytzes (protostратор)	1201/2	Thessaly-W Macedonia	R-S-A	
CONSTANTINE (XI) LASCARIS (1204-5) and THEODORE I LASCARIS (1204/5-22)	Nicholas Canabus (nobleman)	1204	Cple	U	
	ALEXIOUS (V) DUCAS "MURTZUPHLUS" (seized throne in 1204)	1204	Cple	C-R-U	no coins before his 8-week reign in 1204
	Theodore Mancaphas	1204/5 (3rd time)	Philadelphina - Phrygia	R-S-A	silver coins (?)
	Basil Chotzas	1204/5 (continued)	NW Anatolia (Tarsia)	R-S-A	
	Leo Gabalas (governor of Rhodes)	1203/4 (see below)	Rhodes - Dodecanese	S-A	
	Manuel Maurozomes (governor of Phrygia)	1204/6	Phrygia (Maeander regions)	S-A	coins (?)

JOHN III DUCAS BATA- TZES (1222-54)	Sabbas Asideus (governor of Sam- pson/Priene, sebastocrator from 1206)	1204/6	Sampson (W Asia Minor - Ionia)	S-A	coins (?)
	David (Megas) Comnenus (co- founder of Empire of Trebizond in 1204)	1204/5-7	Pontus-Paphla- gonia (Bithynia ?)	S-A (only if seals Lascaris are to be considered lawful heirs of Byzanti- ne throne) S-A	
	John Cantacuzenus (archon of Mo- thone)	1204/5-9	SW Morea (Mes- senia)	S-A	
	Theodore II Gabras (governor of Amisus/Samsun)	1204/8	Amisus (Pontus)	S-A	
	Leo Gabalas (governor of Rhodes, caesar from 1225/6)	1203/4- 1239/40 : 1225/6, 1234	Rhodes - Dodeca- nese	S-A	copper coins
	Lascaris brothers Isaacus and Alex- sius (brothers of Theodore I L.)	1224/5	Nicaea-Bithynia	C-R	
	Nestongi brothers Andronicus and Isaacus (cousins of John III)	1225	Nicaea-Bithynia	C-R	
	John Gabalas (brother and succes- sor of Leo G.)	1239/40- 1249/50	Rhodes - Dodeca- nese	S-A (?) (soon ac- cepted Ni- caean suze- rainty)	copper coins
	MICHAEL (VIII) PALAEOLOGUS (strategus)	1258	Nicaea	C-R-I	various coins before and after 1261
	JOHN IV LASCARIS (1258)				

