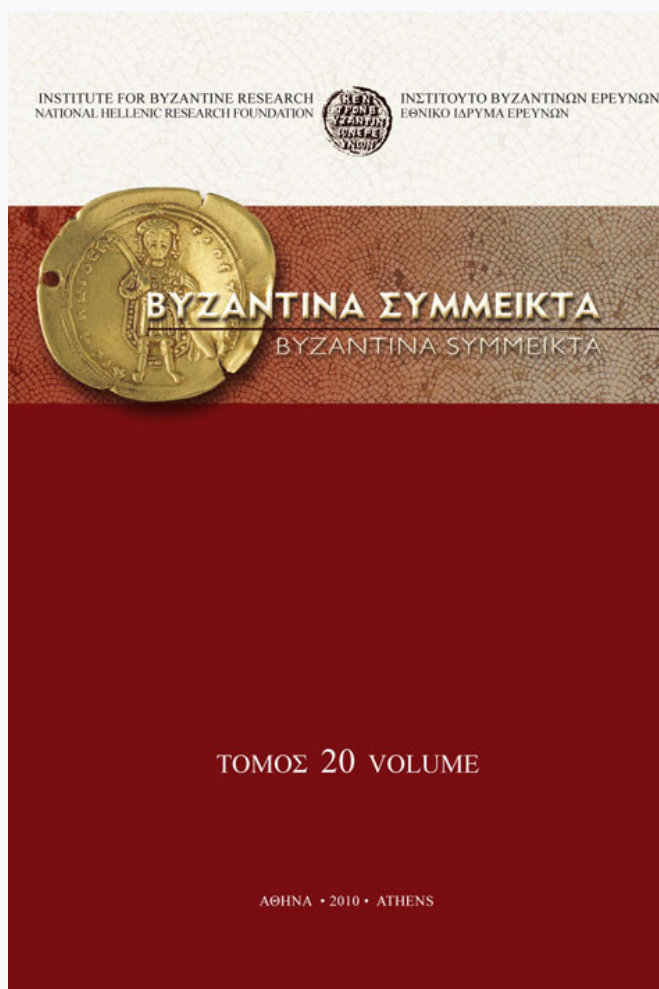


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### Byzantine war against Christians – an "emphylios polemos"?

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IOANNIS STOURAITIS

BYZANTINE WAR AGAINST CHRISTIANS – AN *EMPHYLIOS POLEMOS*?\*

The Byzantine perception of civil war (*emphylios polemos*), as well as of war against other Christian peoples, is part of the wider issue of Byzantine war ideology. In the course of recent research on this subject<sup>1</sup>, I noticed that some Byzantine authors after the ninth century define or present Byzantine wars fought against other Christian peoples as *emphylios polemos*. The central role of Christian religion and Christian identity in the Byzantine perception of war against all foreign enemies motivated me to undertake a separate study of the perception of Byzantine *emphylios polemos*<sup>2</sup>, focusing on the question of ideological and political similarities or differences between Byzantine civil war and wars fought between the

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1. I. STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7. – 11. Jahrhundert)* [Byzantinische Geschichtsschreiber, Ergänzungsband 5], Wien 2009.

2. Within the framework of this study, an additional paper on the ideological legitimization and justification of civil war by the Byzantines is forthcoming: I. STOURAITIS, Bürgerkrieg in ideologischer Wahrnehmung durch die Byzantiner: Die Frage der Legitimierung und Rechtfertigung, *JÖB* 60 (2010) 149-172.

Επιμέλεια έκδοσης: ΧΡΗΣΤΟΣ ΜΑΚΡΥΠΟΥΛΙΑΣ, Πανεπιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων

Byzantines and other Christian peoples<sup>3</sup>. The main goal of this study is to further clarify the role played by religious identity in the Byzantines' perception of the enemy when at war.

### 1. Byzantine understanding of the term *emphylios polemos*

First, an overview of the term's employment in Byzantine sources of the period under investigation is necessary in order to clarify the Byzantines' understanding of the term *emphylios polemos*, which modern historians usually translate as "civil war"<sup>4</sup>. W. Treadgold has suggested "as a working definition of Byzantine civil war an armed conflict in which a significant number of Byzantine soldiers fought on both sides with a significant number of casualties"<sup>5</sup>. That definition seems to me to be a reasonable one and applicable as a description of most of the internal military conflicts in

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3. This study is chronologically limited to the Middle Byzantine period (seventh to twelfth century) and focuses particularly on the time from the late ninth to the early twelfth century, in which the ideological concept of civil war against other Christians is evident in the Byzantine sources. The chronological limit of the seventh century is justified on the one hand by the geopolitical and cultural transformation of the East Roman Empire, which was characterized by the reduction of its territory, its "Hellenization" and the establishment of a religious "orthodoxy" in the remaining territories; on the other, by the at least formal Christianization of most peoples in Roman territories that was concluded between the seventh and tenth centuries. In respect to this last question, an examination of the sources from the sixth century for a possible employment of the term *emphylios polemos* in regard to wars against the Christianized Franks did not provide any evidence. On the political and military dimension of the phenomenon of armed conflicts inside Byzantine society in the period under consideration, see J.-Cl. CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* [Byzantina Sorbonensia 9], Paris 1990; W. E. KÄEGLI, *Byzantine Military Unrest 471-843. An Interpretation*, Amsterdam 1981; F. WINKELMANN, *Studien zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz* [BBA Bd. 54], München 1987, 33-94; K. A. BOURDARA, *Καθοσίωσις καὶ Τυραννὶς κατὰ τοὺς Μέσους Βυζαντινοὺς Χρόνους. Μακεδονικὴ Δυναστεία (867-1056)*, Athens-Komoteni 1981, 35-128.

4. The modern term "civil war" has a specific meaning that does not fully correspond with the meaning of the Byzantine term *emphylios polemos*. However, it is conceptually the nearest term to *emphylios polemos* and therefore it will be used in this study when referring to Byzantine internal conflicts.

5. W. TREADGOLD, Byzantium, the Reluctant Warrior, in: *Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. N. CHRISTIE – M. YAZIGI, Leiden-Boston 2006, 224.

Byzantium; however, as it is an extrapolation from a present-day point of view, it does not correspond with the broader Byzantine perception of the term *emphylios polemos*. In regard to this argument, let us mention two examples which show that the presence of Byzantine soldiers on both sides was not necessary to the Byzantines in order to define, i.e. perceive, an internal conflict as a civil war. Sources that document the *Nika* revolt (532) during the reign of Justinian I report on a civil war between the people of the *demos* and the Emperor's barbarian guard: *...civil wars were troubling the city... hate had grown by the demos against the emperor and the empress, for the reasons already mentioned, so that both parties, Benetoi and Prasinoi – although traditionally opposed – came to an agreement and started a revolt. The emperor tried to stop the revolt by sending against them a division of barbarians, the so called Ailouroi*<sup>6</sup>. Nicetas Choniates reports on a conflict between the Byzantine army and the Venetians, who were allies of Manuel I Comnenos during the Byzantine expedition against the Normans in Corfu (1149); the author defines a possible escalation of that conflict as civil war: *The emperor had any right to punish the barbarians immediately, but he was afraid that a civil war could break out that would make the unrest even bigger. For that reason, he sent some of his own kin to the Venetians and assured them that their unlawful deeds against him as well as their hostile action against the Romans would stay unpunished*<sup>7</sup>.

In both cases, the authors define the conflict as an *emphylios polemos* (civil war), although Byzantine soldiers were not fighting on both sides. Moreover, the way in which the term *emphylios polemos* is used by the Byzantine authors reveals a Byzantine perception of the phenomenon that goes beyond the framework of political and military organization. The term

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6. ... τὴν δὲ πόλιν κατέτρυχον ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι, ...μίσους γὰρ ἐμφύντος τοῖς δήμοις κατὰ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος καὶ τῆς βασιλείας δι' ἅπερ εἴρηται, ὁμονόησαν ἅμφω τὰ μέρη, τό τε Βένετον καὶ τὸ Πράσινον, καίτοι ἀεὶ ἀλλήλοισι ἐναντιούμενα, καὶ στάσεως ἤρξαντο. ὁ δὲ γε κρατῶν μοῖραν τινα βαρβάρων τῶν καλουμένων Αἰλούρων αὐτοῖς ἐπαφείς στησαι τὴν στάσιν οὕτως ἐπιχειροῦσεν, *Ioannis Zonarae epitomae historiarum libri xviii*, vol. 3, ed. T. BÜTTNER-WOBST [CSHB], Bonn 1897, 153.4-12.

7. Ἀλλ' εἶχε μὲν ἀξίαν ἐπιθεῖναι δίκην τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐκ τοῦ παραντίκα ὁ βασιλεὺς, δείσας δέ, μὴ ἐμφυλίου κινηθέντος πολέμου εἰς πλεῖον προχωρήσῃ τὰ ἄτοπα, πέμψας τῶν ἐξ οἴκειου γένους τινὰς ἀμνηστίαν δίδωσι τοῖς Βενετίκοις ὧν τε εἰς αὐτὸν ἠνομήκασιν καὶ ὧν εἰς Ῥωμαίους ὥς δυσμενεῖς ἐκακούργησαν, *Nicetae Choniatae historia*, ed. J.-L. VAN DIETEN [CFHB 11.1], Berlin 1975, 86.25-87.1.

is used sometimes metaphorically, as for example in one of the letters of Theodorus Studites when he uses the phrase “the civil war of the flesh”<sup>8</sup> to define the mental struggle between body and spirit. The monk Philagathus (twelfth century) uses it to define the slaughtering of the newborns by King Herod<sup>9</sup>. Aside from these examples, authors employ the term mainly to define the war inside an *ethnos* (“nation”)<sup>10</sup>. For instance, Theophylactus Simocatta refers to the *civil war among the Medoi* (Persians)<sup>11</sup> and later reports that *a civil war broke out among the Turks*<sup>12</sup>. Theophanes Confessor speaks of the civil war inside the “nation” of the Arabs: *...but his brother, Abdelas, as well as his father’s army revolted against him in that same country of Chorasán and caused a civil war among their nation*<sup>13</sup>. Constantine VII reports that *the so called Goths, situated beyond the Danube, started a civil war among*

8. *Theodori Studitae Epistulae*, ed. G. FATOUROS, vol. 1-2 [CFHB 31], Berlin 1992, 406.42-3. Cf. *Gregorius Nyssenus, Orationes viii de beatitudinibus*, PG 44, Paris 1857-1866, 1289.40-47.

9. *Philagathus Homiliae*, in: G. ROSSI TAIBBI, *Filagato da Cerami Omelie per i vangeli domenicali e le feste di tutto l'anno* [Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoeellenici. Testi e Monumenti 11], Palermo 1969, 24.12.3-5.

10. In Byzantine sources, the term *ethnos* (“nation”=people) is often used identifiably in connection with the terms *phyle* (tribe/race) and *genos* (kin); it is used to define a group of people of common origin, i.e. common characteristics without presupposing political structures: see D. PAPADOPOULOU, *Συλλογική ταυτότητα και αυτογνωσία στο Βυζάντιο. Συμβολή στον προσδιορισμό της αυτοαντίληψης των Βυζαντινών μέσα από την λόγια γραμματεία τους (11ος αιώνας - αρχές 13ου αιώνα)*, unpublished dissertation, Ionian University Corfu 2008, 225-307 (particularly 302-37). The word *emphylios* originates from the word *phylon* which according to Stephanus Byzantius means the same as the word *ethnos*: *phylon* (race) is the *ethnos* (nation), which originates from *phyle* (tribe/race) or of which *phyle* originates. *Compounded becomes emphylos and emphylios* (in the same race/tribe)..., *Stephani Byzantii, Ethnika*, ed. A. MEINEKE, Berlin 1849 (repr. 1958), 675.1-2.

11. *Μήδοις ὁ ἐμφύλιος καταταρρεύεται πόλεμος*, *Theophylacti Simocattae historiae*, ed. C. DE BOOR, Leipzig 1887 (Stuttgart 1972, 1st edn. corr. P. WIRTH) 4.1.4.1.

12. *... συγκροτεῖται τοῖς Τούρκοις ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος*, *Theophylactus Simocatta* 4.1.8.2-3; cf. *Photius, Bibliothèque*, ed. R. HENRY, 8 vols, Paris 1959-1977, 65.392b.24-25.

13. *... πρὸς ὃν Ἀβδελᾶς, ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ, στασιάσας ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς χώρας τοῦ Χωρασάν ἅμα ταῖς πατρικαῖς δυνάμεσιν ἐμφυλίου πολέμου τῷ κατ’ αὐτοὺς ἔθνει γέγονεν αἷτιος*, *Theophanis chronographia*, ed. C. DE BOOR, vol. 1, Leipzig 1883 (Hildesheim 1963), 484.8-10; for the translation see C. MANGO – R. SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, Oxford 1997, 665.

*themselves and were divided in two parts*<sup>14</sup>, or mentions the *civil wars of the Hellenes* (ancient Greeks)<sup>15</sup>. These examples make it obvious that the Byzantine understanding of the term *emphylios polemos*, following the Byzantine perception of *ethnos* (“nation”), did not presuppose a political, i.e. military, organization.

Theophanes Continuatus draws a detailed picture of the Byzantine perception of civil war when he refers to the civil war between Michael II and Thomas the Slav (821-823): *At that time, a civil war began in the East which brought all kind of evil upon the oikoumene and reduced the numbers of people; fathers armed their right hands against their sons and brothers against the ones that were born from the same womb and friends against the ones that had loved them the most*<sup>16</sup>. An almost identical perception is given by Michael Attaleiates in his report on a battle during the civil war between Isaakios Komnenos and Michael VI (1057): *Then, father and son did not hesitate to slaughter one the other contrary to their own nature; the child defiles his right hand with his father's killing and brother gives his brother the final stroke and they neither show mercy nor make any distinction for relatives or family or people of the same race...*<sup>17</sup>. Regarding the question of a common identity of the enemies in a civil war, Patriarch Nicephorus accentuates the Christian identity of the Byzantines when he

14. Ὅτι ἐπὶ Οὐάλεντος τοῦ βασιλέως οἱ πέραν τοῦ Ἰστροῦ καλούμενοι Γότθοι ἐμφύλιον πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς κινήσαντες πόλεμον εἰς β' μέρη ἐτιμήθησαν, *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, vol. 1: *excerpta de legationibus*, ed. C. de BOOR, pts. 1-2, Berlin 1903, 387.2-11. Cf. Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica*, in: *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique* (Livres I-VII), ed. P. MARAVALL – P. PÉRICHON, Paris 2004-2007, 3.33.1.

15. ... ἐν τοῖς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐμφυλίοις πολέμοις, *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, vol. 2: *excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*, ed. T. BÜTTNER-WOBST – A. G. ROOS, pt. 1, Berlin 1906, 1.213.1.

16. Κατὰ γὰρ τὸν καιρὸν τοῦτον ἀρχὴν λαβὼν ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος ἐξ Ἀνατολῆς παντοίων ἐνέπλησε τὴν οἰκουμένην κακῶν καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν ὀλίγους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους εἰργάσατο, πατέρων δηλονότι τὰς δεξιὰς κατὰ τῶν υἱῶν ὀπλισάντων, καὶ ἀδελφῶν κατὰ τῶν ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς φύντων γαστρος, καὶ φίλου τὸ τέλος κατὰ τοῦ φιλοῦντος τὰ μάλιστα, Theophanes Continuatus, ed. I. BEKKER, Bonn 1838, 49.20-50.3.

17. τότε τοῖνυν πατὴρ μὲν καὶ υἱός, τῆς φύσεως ὥσπερ ἐπιλαθόμενοι, πρὸς σφαγὴν ὀργᾶν ἀλλήλων οὐκ ἐλάβουντο, καὶ δεξιὰν παῖς πατρικῇ χραίνει φόνῳ, καὶ ἀδελφὸς ἀδελφῷ καιρίαν ἐλαύνει, καὶ συγγενείας ἢ συμφυΐας εἴτε τῶν ὁμοφύλων ἔλεος οὐδὲ διάκρισις ἦν, *Michaelis Attaliotae historia*, ed. I. BEKKER [CSHB], Bonn 1853, 55.14-21.



reports on the civil war of the years 741-743<sup>18</sup> between Constantine V and Artabasdos: *Under these circumstances the Roman State was in extreme distress, inasmuch as the struggle for power among those men aroused a civil war among Christians (Byzantines)*<sup>19</sup>.

All these statements demonstrate that *emphylios polemos* was understood as a war inside a “nation”, i.e. a community, in which the enemy parties were connected by social, cultural, religious, as well as family bonds. Based on this idea, Byzantine sources employ the term *emphylios polemos* to distinguish a war inside the Byzantine Empire, i.e. society, from a war fought against a foreign people. Writing in the ninth century, Theophanes Confessor reflects on the distinction between civil wars and those fought against barbarians during the reign of Constantine I: *And thus at last the affairs of the Christian state enjoyed the perfect peace, with the tyrants put out of the way through the might of the life-giving Cross, and with God’s partner Constantine alone controlling the Roman Empire. ...he was a man resplendent in all aspects, manly in spirit, sharp in mind, well educated in speech, upright in justice, ready as a benefactor, dignified in appearance, great in the barbarian wars through courage and fortune and invincible in civil wars, strong and unswerving in his faith*<sup>20</sup>. The author of a military

18. For the beginning of Artabasdos’ revolt in the year 741 see P. SPECK, *Artabasdos der rechtgläubige Kämpfer der göttlichen Lehren. Untersuchungen zur Revolte des Artabasdos und ihrer Darstellung in der byzantinischen Historiographie* [Poikila Byzantina 3], Bonn 1981, 19-77. A new approach on this matter re-dates the revolt a year earlier because of new evidence that puts the death of Emperor Leo III in the year 740; see F. FÜEG, *Corpus of the Nomismata from Anastasius II to John I in Constantinople 713-976. Structure of the Issues, Corpus of Coin finds, Contribution to the Iconographic and Monetary History*, Lancaster, Pa. 2007, 14ff.

19. ἐντεῦθεν ἐν μεγίσταις συμφοραῖς τὰ Ῥωμαίων διέκειτο, ὁπηνίκα ἡ παρ’ ἐκείνοις περὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἄμιλλα τὸν ἐμφύλιον Χριστιανοῖς ἀνεροίπισε πόλεμον, Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*. Text, Translation and Commentary by C. MANGO [CFHB 13], Washington, D.C. 1990, 65.15-17.

20. καὶ οὕτω λοιπὸν τελείας ἀπήλυνσε γαλήνης τὰ πράγματα τῆς Χριστιανῶν πολιτείας, τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ ζωοποιοῦ σταυροῦ γεγονότων ἐκποδῶν τῶν τυράννων, καὶ μόνου κρατήσαντος τοῦ θεοσυνεργίτου Κωνσταντίνου τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχῆς ... ἦν δὲ ἀνὴρ τὰ πάντα λαμπρός, δι’ ἀνδρείαν ψυχῆς, δι’ ὀξύτητα νοός, δι’ εὐπαιδευσίαν λόγων, διὰ δικαιοσύνης ὀρθότητα, δι’ εὐεργεσίας ἐτοιμότητα, διὰ ἀξιοπρέπειαν ὄψεως, διὰ τὴν ἐν πολέμοις ἀνδρείαν καὶ εὐτυχίαν, ἐν τοῖς βαρβαρικοῖς μέγας, ἐν τοῖς ἐμφυλίοις ἀήττητος, ἐν τῇ πίστει στερεὸς καὶ ἀσάλευτος, Theophanes, 20.12-16; cf. MANGO – SCOTT, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 33.

treatise included in the tenth-century *De cerimoniis* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos highlights the distinction between civil war and armed conflict with foreign raiders: *Lord Jesus Christ, My God, I place in Your hands this Your city (Constantinople). Defend it from all enemies and misfortunes which approach it, from civil war and from the inroads of foreign people*<sup>21</sup>. A similar Byzantine attitude is evident in the sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Writing about the period of Constantine IX (1042–1055), Michael Psellos reports that *first civil wars upset the state; afterwards, barbarian raids despoiled most of our land...*<sup>22</sup>. Ioannis Zonaras distinguishes between battles fought in a civil war and battles fought against barbarians: *Having reported all about the civil battles up to that point, the narration turns now to the barbarian ones*<sup>23</sup>. Michael Attaleiates designates the attack of the Christianized Rus' against Constantinople after the civil war of Maniakes (1042–1043) as *allophylos polemos* (= war with a different race/people),<sup>24</sup> which can be literally understood as the opposite of *emphylios polemos* (=war among the same race/people): *After having settled these troubles the emperor had to face immediately new ones. A war (caused)*

21. Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὁ Θεός μου, εἰς χεῖράς σου παρατίθημι ταύτην τὴν πόλιν σου. φύλαξον αὐτὴν ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν ἐπερχομένων ἐν αὐτῇ ἐναντίων καὶ δυσχερῶν, ἐμφυλίου τε πολέμου καὶ ἐθνῶν ἐπιδρομῆς, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus, Three Treatises on Imperial Military Expeditions*, introduction, edition, translation and commentary by J. F. HALDON [CFHB, 28], Wien 1990, 114.324-327. Haldon uses the English word “heathen” to translate the Greek word “*ethnōn*”, identifying in this way *ethnos* with a non-Christian people. However, by this time the Byzantines used the word *ethnos* to characterize also Christian peoples (Bulgars) threatening the Empire: in the letters of Nicholas Mystikos there are numerous mentions of *ethnos Boulgarōn* (see for example Nicolaus Mysticus, *Epistulae*, ed. R. J. H. JENKINS – L. G. WESTERINK, *Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople, Letters* [CFHB 6], Washington, D.C. 1973, 14.61). Therefore, I use instead the broader term “foreign people”, which from my point of view corresponds better to the context of the text.

22. νῦν μὲν γὰρ ἐμφύλιοι πόλεμοι τὴν ἀρχὴν διετάραξαν, αὐθις δὲ βαρβαρικάί τινες ἐπιδρομαὶ τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν ἡμετέρων ληϊσάμεναι, Michel Psellos. *Chronographie ou histoire d'un siècle de Byzance (976-1077)*, ed. É. RENAULD, 2 vols, Paris 1926-1928 (repr. 1967) 6.72.11-13.

23. Μέχρι μὲν οὖν τοῦδε μάχας ἐμφυλίου ὁ λόγος διηγησάμενος μεταβήσεται νῦν πρὸς μάχας βαρβαρικάς, Ioan. Zon. 631.6-7.

24. For the meaning of *allophylos* (= of another race) see Suda, s.v. ἀλλόφυλος, in: A. ADLER, *Suidae lexicon*, 4 vols. [Lexicographi Graeci 1.1-1.4], Leipzig 1928-1935 (repr. 1967-1971), vol. I, 123.



by a foreign people, a naval war, took place in the area of the capital as far as Propontis<sup>25</sup>. Finally, Ioannis Scylitzes and Ioannis Zonaras distinguish the wars that took place between Basil II (976–1025) and the military aristocrats Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas from the wars fought against the Bulgars of Czar Samuel by defining the first as civil wars. According to Scylitzes: *After the end of the civil wars and troubles, the emperor was thinking about how to deal with Samuel and the other local leaders who used his engagement in the rebellions as an opportunity to do great damage on the empire*<sup>26</sup>. Zonaras reports: *And the control over Bulgaria passed to Samuel alone who took advantage of the civil wars of the Roman armies and attacked the whole western part of the empire*<sup>27</sup>.

This information demonstrates that the Byzantines perceived *emphylios polemos* as a war fought among Romans and that they differentiated it from wars fought against other “nations”, i.e. non-Romans, whether Christians or infidels, for which they occasionally used the contrasting terms *allophylos* or *barbarikos polemos*. Moreover, it confirms the main image of Byzantine civil war in the Middle Byzantine period until the end of the Comnenian era as a war fought within Byzantine society between two or more parties (one of which usually was the reigning emperor), i.e. a power struggle<sup>28</sup>. Based on the aforementioned evidence, it is particularly interesting to attempt an analysis of the sources’ information on wars between Byzantines and other Christian peoples, which seem to have been viewed by Byzantine authors as civil wars.

25. Ἀπαλλαγεῖς οὖν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς τοσαύτης φροντίδος, εἰς ἑτέραν αὐτοῖς ἀνάγκην ἐνέπεσε. πόλεμος γὰρ ἀλλόφυλος ναυτικός ἄχρι τῆς Προποντίδος τὴν βασιλίδαν κατέλαβε, Mich. Attal. 20.9-11; cf. the report of Psellos, who defines the attack of the Rus’ as *barbarikos polemos*, Mich. Psel. 6.90.1-2.

26. Ἀπολυθεὶς δὲ τῶν ἐμφυλίων πολέμων καὶ φροντίδων ὁ βασιλεὺς, πῶς ἂν διάθῃται τὰ κατὰ τὸν Σαμουὴλ ἐσκόπει καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς τοπάρχα, οἵτινες ταῖς ἀποστασίαις ἐνασχολούμενον ἄδειαν εἰληφότες οὐ μικρὰ τὰς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐπικρατείας ἐλύπησαν, *Ioannis Scylitzae synopsis historiarum*, ed. J. THURN [CFHB 5], Berlin 1973, 339.64-66.

27. καὶ ἡ τῆς Βουλγαρίας ἀρχὴ εἰς μόνον περιέστη τὸν Σαμουήλ, ὃς τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν στρατευμάτων τοῖς ἐμφυλίοις ἀσχολουμένων ἄδειαν εὐρηκὼς τὰ τῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἡγεμονίας ἐσπέριον ξύμπαντα περιήρει, Ioan. Zon. 548.2-6.

28. On the key role of the Byzantine aristocracy in most of the civil wars of the Middle Byzantine period see WINKELMANN, *Quellenstudie zur herrschenden Klasse von Byzanz*, 34ff.; CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance*, 13.

## 2. Cases of war against Christians presented as civil war

The letters of Patriarch Nicholas I Mysticos to the Bulgar Czar Symeon dealing with the wars between the Byzantines and the Bulgars (914–926) are characterized by a rhetoric which allows little doubt that, because both sides were Christian, the Patriarch viewed and presented these wars as civil wars. To begin with, Symeon is addressed in almost all the Patriarch's letters as his “child” and the Bulgars as the “sons and brothers of the Romans” (=Byzantines)<sup>29</sup>, an indication that he sought to emphasize close kinship between the Byzantines (whom he represented) and the Bulgars. In his ninth letter to Symeon, the Patriarch speaks of the devil that makes people fight against each other and, in commenting on the war with the Bulgars, highlights all characteristics of a civil war: *Out of his insensate purpose from the beginning, brothers have armed their hands against those who are from the same seed and the same womb; fathers have slain sons for whom they have often prayed they might die before them; and friends have forgotten friendship. From that accursed demon (alas) come also the sufferings that afflict me now, and the complaints, and the tears; from his evil arts the rupture of the league of love between the children of my Christ and God, the Roman and Bulgar dominions*<sup>30</sup>.

With respect to the Byzantine-Bulgar conflict, he accentuates in letter 31 the difference between wars against foreign enemies and wars against relatives and fellow-believers. In doing so, he reflects the established Byzantine perception of civil war as the worst kind of war<sup>31</sup>: *Wars are bad even against outside enemies; but what shall one say of wars against fathers, brothers, friends, fellow-believers, who have chosen one God, one*

29. A. KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, Το εμπόλεμο Βυζάντιο στις ομιλίες και τις επιστολές του 10ου και 11ου αι. Μια ιδεολογική προσέγγιση, in: *Το εμπόλεμο Βυζάντιο (9ος-12ος αι.)* [ΕΙΕ/ΙΒΕ, Διεθνής Συμπόσια 4], Athens 1997, 235.

30. Ἐκ ταύτης τῆς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μανιώδους αὐτοῦ προαιρέσεως καὶ ἀδελφοὶ ὥπλισαν χεῖρας κατὰ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σπέρματος καὶ τῆς αὐτῆς προελθόντων γαστροῦ καὶ πατέρες ἀπέκτειναν παῖδας, ὕπερ ὧν ἠϋξάντο πολλάκις τὰς ψυχὰς προαφεῖναι, καὶ φίλοι φίλους ἡγνόησαν. Ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀλάστορος οἴμοι δαίμονος καὶ τὰ νῦν ἐμὲ καταλαβόντα πάθη καὶ οἱ θρῆνοι καὶ τὰ δάκρυα· ἐκείνου τῆς κακομηχανίας ἢ διάρρηξις τοῦ συνδέσμου τῆς ἀγάπης τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ μου τέκνων, τῆς τε Ῥωμαϊκῆς καὶ τῆς Βουλγαρικῆς ἐξουσίας, Nic. Myst. Epist., 9.14-21.

31. On this ideological concept see STOURAITIS, Bürgerkrieg in ideologischer Wahrnehmung durch die Byzantiner, 153-155.

*Lord and Master and Saviour?*<sup>32</sup> In letter 17, he specifies that Romans and Bulgars were connected through bonds that were equal to kinship: *But when slaughterers and slaughtered are partners not only in the way I have described, but are fathers and sons and brothers of one another, yea, and the Inheritance of Christ our God, Who has paid the price of the Blood of His holy Side (this incomparable benefit), that He might redeem us and make us His one Portion—when these people arm themselves against one another, and pollute the earth and their hands with slaughter, then what can one say?*<sup>33</sup> Further on in the same letter, he presents all Christians as one people having the same Christian blood and being united under their common leader, Jesus Christ: *But what is not uncertain is this: whether the Bulgar force shall be destroyed by the Roman steel, or whether the Romans are cut to pieces by that of the Bulgars, Christian blood will be spilt by Christians, and the earth will be polluted with blood of Christians, and our Christ and God, of Whom you and these are the Chosen People and Sons and Inheritance, will sorrow over the destruction of the slaughtered*<sup>34</sup>.

In letter 24, he rounds out this ideological concept by distinguishing between Christians and infidels, defining the latter as enemies of all Christians and highlighting once more the bonds of kinship that unite Christians as a single people: *You are not at arms against the infidel, or the enemies of the cross of Christ, or nations who do not know God's name, but against fathers, against brothers, in a word, against your kin, whom not*

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32. κακοὶ γὰρ καὶ οἱ πρὸς τοὺς ἔξωθεν ἐχθροὺς πόλεμοι, ὅσοι δὲ πρὸς πατέρας, πρὸς ἀδελφούς, πρὸς φίλους, πρὸς ὁμοπίστους, πρὸς τοὺς ἕνα θεὸν ἐπιγραφόμενους, ἕνα κύριον καὶ δεσπότην καὶ σωτῆρα, τί ἂν τις εἴποι, Nic. Myst. Epist. 31.100-104.

33. Ὅταν δὲ οἱ σφάζοντες καὶ σφαζόμενοι οὐ μόνον καθ' ὃν εἵπομεν λόγον ἔχουσι κοινωνίαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρες τυγχάνωσιν καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀδελφοί, ναὶ δὴ καὶ κληρονομία τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ ἡμῶν τοῦ τὸ αἶμα τῆς ἀγίας αὐτοῦ πλευρᾶς τὸ ἀσύγκριτον τοῦτο τίμημα δεδωκότος, ἵνα ἡμᾶς ἐξωνήσῃται καὶ κληρὸν οἰκεῖον ἀποδείξῃ· ὅταν οὗτοι κατ' ἀλλήλων ὀπλίζωνται, ὅταν τὴν γῆν καὶ τὰς χεῖρας μιαινῶσι ταῖς σφαγαῖς, τί ἂν τις εἴποι, Nic. Myst. Epist. 17.41-47.

34. Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἄδηλον, κἂν τε ὑπὸ Ῥωμαϊκῆς μαχαίρας τὸ Βουλγαρικὸν ἀναλωθῇσεται, κἂν τε ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν Βουλγάρων Ῥωμαῖοι κατατιμηθῇσονται, Χριστιανικὰ αἵματα ὑπὸ Χριστιανῶν χέεται καὶ γῇ τοῖς Χριστιανῶν αἵμασι μολύνεται καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς καὶ θεὸς ἡμῶν, οὗ λαὸς ὑμεῖς τε καὶ οὗτοι περιούσιος καὶ τέκνα καὶ κληρονομία, ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν σφαζομένων ὁδυνήσεται ἀπωλεία, Nic. Myst. Epist. 17.59-69.

*flesh and blood, but the All-holy Spirit of God has made one with you*<sup>35</sup>. Finally, in letter 22 war among Christians is once more identified with war between brothers, friends or fathers and children: ... *and to the shame of the demon who out of his own malice has during so many years incensed Christians against Christians, friends against friends, and – in a word – brothers against brothers, sons against fathers*<sup>36</sup>.

Comparing the Patriarch's effort in all these letters to present the war between the Bulgars and the Romans as a war between people of the same kin with the aforementioned excerpts from Theophanes Continuatus and Michael Attaleiates in which Byzantine *emphylios polemos* is perceived explicitly as the war in which fathers, children and brothers fight against each other, it cannot be doubted that Nicholas Mysticos was trying to demonstrate in his letters an ideological concept of war among Christian peoples as an *emphylios polemos*. The ideological concept presented by the Patriarch seems to recognize a Christian identity that overshadowed any other cultural or political identity and formed bonds of kinship and community within the framework of which wars were considered to be civil wars. Certainly, the rhetorical exaggeration of a Church leader in his effort to prevent a war against the Empire through diplomatic means, along with the absence of the term *emphylios polemos* or any similar term in his writings, cannot be considered sufficient evidence for the existence of an established ideological concept among the ruling class of Byzantine society. However, almost two centuries later, when the empire was faced once more with Christian enemies, Anna Comnena presents the same concept again and goes a step further by directly defining wars between Byzantines and other Christians as civil wars.

In her report on a peace agreement reached in the summer of 1094 between Alexios I Comnenos and Bolcanus<sup>37</sup>, the leader of the Dalmatians

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35. Οὐ κατὰ ἀσεβῶν ὀπλίῃ, οὐ κατ' ἐχθρῶν τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐ κατ' ἐθνῶν μὴ εἰδόντων τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ πατέρων, κατὰ ἀδελφῶν, ἀπλῶς κατὰ συγγενείας, ἦν οὐ σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα, ἀλλὰ τὸ πανάγιον πνεῦμα ἥνωσε τοῦ θεοῦ, Nic. Myst. Epist. 24.51.

36. ... καὶ εἰς αἰσχύνην τοῦ δαίμονος, ὃς τῇ ἑαυτοῦ κακοτροπία ἐπὶ τοσοῦτοις ἔτεσιν ἐξέμηνεν κατ' ἀλλήλων, Χριστιανοὺς πρὸς Χριστιανούς, φίλους πρὸς φίλους, καὶ ἵνα συντόμως εἴπω, ἀδελφοὺς πρὸς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ τέκνα πρὸς πατέρας, Nic. Myst. Epist. 22.28-31.

37. F. CHALANDON, *Essai sur le règne d'Alexis Comnène (1081-1118)*, Paris 1900, 150ff.; I. KARAYANNOPOULOS, *Ιστορία Βυζαντινῆς Κράτους*, vol. III, Thessaloniki 1990, 65-67.

(Serbs), she describes how a civil war between Christian parties was prevented: *When Bolcanus heard that the Emperor had arrived at Lipenium and saw him in occupation and realized the impossibility of defying the Roman lines in their close formation and full strategic equipment, he at once asked for terms of peace, proposing at the same time to send those long-promised hostages and never again to commit any hostile act. So the Emperor received the barbarian with pleasure, for he hated the idea of, and wished to avert, civil fight; for though they were Dalmatians, they were still Christians*<sup>38</sup>. The Dalmatians were barbarians from the Byzantine point of view and not direct subjects of the Roman emperor (i.e. they were not Romans), a fact proven by their signing of a peace agreement with Alexios I. This means that wars waged against them by the Byzantines should be considered to be wars waged against barbarian foreigners. Nevertheless, the fact that they were also Christians caused the Emperor to view the war waged against them as a civil war. Instead of the descriptive rhetoric about a war fought between brothers, fathers and sons, as was the case with the letters of Nicholas Mysticos, here the author chooses to use the term *emphyilia mache* (civil battle), a term equivalent to *emphylios polemos*.

In the same work, Alexios I Comnenos is shown as viewing a conflict with the Crusaders as a civil war: *To begin with, he insisted that not a single person should go out of the city to fight the Latins, firstly, because of the sacredness of that day (for it was the Thursday of the greatest and holiest week, the day on which our Saviour suffered an ignominious death for us all) and secondly, because he wanted to avoid murder among the same*

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38. Μεμαθηκώς δὲ ὁ Βολκάνος τὴν εἰς τὸ Λιπένιον τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἔλουν καὶ ἐπικαταλαμβάνοντα τοῦτον θεασάμενος καὶ πρὸς τὰς ῥωμαϊκὰς παρατάξεις καὶ τὸν συνασπισμὸν ἐκείνον καὶ τὴν στρατηγικὴν πανοπλίαν μὴδ' ἀντωπῆσαι δυνάμενος ἀποστείλας παραχρῆμα τὰ περὶ εἰρήνης ἡρώτα ὑπισχνούμενος ἅμα καὶ αὐτοὺς τοὺς προὔποσχεθέντας ὁμίλους ἀποστείλει καὶ μὴδὲν τι δεινὸν τοῦ λοιποῦ διαπραΰνασθαι. Δέχεται τοίνυν τὸν βάρβαρον ἀσμένως ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ ἀκηδιῶν οἶον καὶ ἀποστρεφόμενος τὴν ἐμφύλιον μάχην· κἂν γὰρ Δαλμάται ἦσαν, ἀλλ' ὅμως Χριστιανοί, *Annae Comnenae Alexias*, ed. D. R. REINSCH – A. KAMBYLIS [CFHB 40/1], Berlin 2001, 279.95-280.8; for an English translation cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena being the history of the reign of her father Alexius I, Emperor of the Romans, 1081-1118 A.D.*, translated by E. A. S. DAWES, London 1928 (New York 1978), 233.

people<sup>39</sup>. And further on: *For, as I said above, he respected the sanctity of the day and did not wish for murder among the same people*<sup>40</sup>. In this case, it is obvious that the term *phonos* (murder) refers to killing in battle, while the use of the term *emphylios* is reliant on the Byzantine perception of a *phylon ton Christianon* (race/nation of the Christians)<sup>41</sup>. Therefore, *emphylios phonos* stands here clearly for *emphylios polemos*, i.e. civil war.

It is most probable that such a serious battle just outside the walls of Constantinople never took place and that it was just an invention of Anna in an effort to lend credence to her depiction of the Crusaders as enemies<sup>42</sup>. Thus, it was easier for her from a political and ethical standpoint to justify her father's actions against the Crusaders, even though they were fellow Christians. However, the casting of this battle as a civil war by Anna – an author who did not represent the Church, but rather expressed the imperial point of view – taken together with the information from the letters of Nicholas Mysticos confirms the existence of an ideological concept in Byzantium that enabled wars fought between Christian parties to be perceived as civil wars. The fact that religion was a key element of Byzantine identity seems to have played a central role in the formation of this ideological concept. As the texts of Patriarch Nicephorus and Theophanes Confessor demonstrate, in their narrations of Byzantine civil wars Byzantine authors identify the Romans as Christians or the Roman (i.e. Byzantine) State as the State of the Christians. Anna Comnena does so as well when, referring to the rebellion of Alexios Comnenos, she mentions the Patriarch's words to

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39. Τὰ μὲν οὖν πρῶτα οὐδ' ὄντιναοῦν κατὰ τῶν Λατίνων τοῦ τείχους ἐξενεγκεῖν προτεθύμητο, τὸ μὲν διὰ τὴν ἐνισταμένην ἐκείνην σεβασμίαν τῶν ἡμερῶν (πέμπτη γὰρ ἦν τῆς μεγίστης καὶ ἀγίας τῶν ἐβδομάδων, ἐν ᾗ ὁ Σωτὴρ τὸν ἐπονείδιστον ὑπὲρ ἀπάντων ὑπέστη θάνατον), τὸ δὲ καὶ τὸν ἐμφύλιον παρεκκλίνων φόνον, Anna Com. 310.8-12; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 259.

40. Ἐδεδίει γὰρ, ὡς ἄνωθεν εἴρηται, τὸ τῆς ἡμέρας σεβάσιμον καὶ τὸν ἐμφύλιον φόνον οὐκ ἤθελεν, Anna Com. 311.30-31; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena* 260.

41. On the use of the term *phylon Christianōn* (race/nation of the Christians) by the Byzantine authors see Papadopoulou, *Συλλογικὴ ταυτότητα καὶ αυτογνωσία στο Βυζάντιο*, 262-274.

42. On the problems in Anna's narration of this conflict see R.-J. LILIE, Anna Komnene und der erste Kreuzzug, in: *Varia II* [Poikila Byzantina 6], Bonn 1987, 75- 78; cf. also R. D. THOMAS, Anna Comnena's account of the First Crusade. History and politics in the reigns of emperors Alexius I and Manuel I Comnenus, *BMGS* 15 (1991) 277-278.



emperor Nicephorus III Botaneiates (1078–1081): *Do not begin a civil war, he said, nor resist God's decree. Do not allow the city to be defiled with the blood of Christians (Byzantines), but yield to the will of God, and depart from our midst*<sup>43</sup>.

Evidence from the sources leads to the observation that the Byzantines' identity as Christians<sup>44</sup> seems often to have overshadowed their identity as Romans when it came to civil conflict. This observation raises the question of Byzantine identity when Byzantines waged war against other Christian peoples. This question is closely related to the issue of religion as a means of foreign policy in the Middle Byzantine period. The examples cited above suggest that, when the Byzantines were at war, the fact that they were fighting other Christians took precedence over the fact of these enemies' non-Roman, "barbarian" identities, thus facilitating the perception of a civil war. That this ideological concept can be traced for the first time in letters written by Nicholas Mysticos during the first quarter of the tenth century indicates that its emergence should be explored in association with the political and cultural development of the Roman *oikoumene*<sup>45</sup> and the Byzantine State during the period from the late sixth to the ninth century. This period was characterized by the significant loss of Roman territories between the late sixth and the early eighth century (Syria, Mesopotamia, Egypt, North Africa, parts of Italy) which weakened the Byzantine Empire politically and economically and prevented it from reclaiming its former geopolitical domination through military means until the tenth century. At the same time, the at least formal Christianization of most foreign

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43. ... «μὴ χάσῃ» λέγων «πρὸς ἐμφυλίου πολέμους μὴτ' ἀντίβαινε Θεοῦ προστάξει. Αἵμασι Χριστιανῶν μὴ θέλε μιανθῆναι τὴν πόλιν, ἀλλ' εἴξας Θεοῦ βουλῇσει ὑπέκστηθι τοῦ μέσου», Anna Com. 86.47-50; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 70.

44. On Christian identity in Byzantium in general see R. FARINA, *L'impero e l'imperatore cristiano in Eusebio di Cesarea: La prima teologia politica del Cristianesimo* [Biblioteca Theologica Salesiana I 2], Zürich 1966, 159-162; N. H. BAYNES, Eusebius and the Christian Empire, in: *Byzantine Studies and other Essays*, London 1955 (reprint 1960), 168-172; for the Middle Byzantine period see ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ, *Συλλογική ταυτότητα και αυτογνωσία στο Βυζάντιο*, 207-224.

45. On the Byzantines' ideological *oikoumene* see J. KODER, Die räumlichen Vorstellungen der Byzantiner von der Ökumene (4. bis 12. Jahrhundert), in: *Anzeiger d. philos.-hist. Klasse der Österr. Akad. d. Wiss.* 137/2, Wien 2002, 25-31.

peoples<sup>46</sup> (except Arabs) who occupied territories of the Roman *oikumene* was concluded. These developments seem to have favored, by the end of the ninth century, the promotion by the Byzantine ruling elite of an ideological concept that propagandized the Christianization of foreign peoples<sup>47</sup> as a substitute for war within the framework of Byzantine power politics, i.e. of the pursuit of political control over peoples within the Empire's geopolitical sphere that could not be easily subjugated through military means<sup>48</sup>. This ideological and political development is evident in source information on the Christianization of Slavs and Bulgars in the ninth century. Leo VI in the *Tactica* and Georgius Monachus Continuatus praise this policy and emphasize that it meant the end of hostility and conflict between these groups and the Empire, thus making political control over them easier<sup>49</sup>. Especially in the *Tactica*, the author defines the Christian peoples of the Roman *oikoumene*, i.e. the Franks, Lombards and Bulgars, as friends and allies of Byzantium, even though the situation was in reality very different. The author propagandizes that war against these peoples was not in the Empire's best interest because of their common religion<sup>50</sup>. The interaction

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46. For the Christianization of Bulgars and Slavs see M. NYSTAZOPOULOU-PELEKIDOU, *Οι βαλκανικοί λαοί κατά τους μέσους χρόνους*, Thessaloniki 1992, 129-156; D. OBOLENSKY, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe, 500-1453*, London 1971, 84-101.

47. On the employment of religion as a means of political propaganda in Byzantium see H. G. BECK, *Christliche Mission und politische Propaganda*, *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* XIV (1967) 649-674 (= IDEM, *Ideen und Realitäten in Byzanz* [Variorum Reprints], London 1972).

48. On this ideological concept and its use within the framework of the Byzantine elite's political goal of predomination in its geopolitical sphere see STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden*, 232-244.

49. *Leonis VI Tactica*, ed. G. T. DENNIS *The Taktika of Leo VI*. Text, translation and commentary [CFHB, 49], Washington, D.C. 2010, 470.95; *Georgii Monachi Vitae Recentiorum Imperatorum*, ed. I. BEKKER [CSHB], Bonn 1838, 824.18-23 (further Georg. Mon. Cont.). Constantine Porphyrogennitus employs this concept retrospectively in *De administrando imperio*, in order to praise the policy of the Christianization of the Croats and the Serbs by Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century, see *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio*, ed. G. MORAVCSIK, 2nd edn. [CFHB, 1], Washington, D.C. 1967, 31.31-42; cf. OBOLENSKY, *Commonwealth* 86-87.

50. *Leonis VI Tactica* 452.42, 458.59; on Leo VI's attitude towards the Bulgars, as the main Christian enemies of the Empire at the time, see S. TOUGHER, *The Reign of Leo VI (886-912). Politics and People* [The Medieval Mediterranean, Peoples, Economics and Cultures 400-1453, vol. 15], Leiden-New York-Köln 1997, 172-183.

between this ideological concept in the *Tactica* and the principal Byzantine concept of God-given Roman superiority over all other peoples<sup>51</sup>, whether Christian or non-Christian, produced the Byzantine political agenda of employing religion as a political tool for enabling peacemaking with other Christian peoples of the Roman *oikumene* while insisting on the political supremacy of the Christian Roman emperor of Constantinople<sup>52</sup>. It is within this ideological framework that we should look for the development of the Byzantine concept of war against Christians as civil war.

Nicholas Mysticos wrote his letters to Symeon a few years after the *Tactica* were written within the framework of a diplomatic effort to prevent the latter's attacks against the Empire. In connection with his characterization of Symeon as a tyrant who tried to usurp the God-given rule of the Byzantine emperor over the *oikoumene*<sup>53</sup>, the Patriarch's views about a war fought between fathers and brothers of the same religion prove that he followed an ideological – political agenda that identified political order with a Christian peace in the Christian *oikumene* under the suzerainty of the Byzantine emperor. Anna Comnena verifies that this concept remained current until her time. She characterizes her father's conflict with the Crusaders as a civil war while she defines attacks from other Christians against the Empire as tyranny, a term that was used to describe internal

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51. This idea, highlighted in the Middle Byzantine period by Constantine Porphyrogenitos in *De administrando imperio*, goes back to the first theoretical construct of Christian Roman ideology by Eusebius; see Eusebius, *De laudibus Constantini*, in I. A. HEIKEL, *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 1 [Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller 7], Leipzig 1902, 16.5-7; *De administrando imperio*, Proim. 31-39.

52. On the ideological concept of Byzantine suzerainty over the *oikoumene* see E. CHRYSOS, Το Βυζάντιο και η διεθνής κοινωνία του Μεσαίωνα, in: *Το Βυζάντιο ως οικουμένη* [ΕΙΕ/ΙΒΕ, Διεθνή Συμπόσια 16], Athens 2004, 77; On the theory of a hierarchical world order see G. OSTROGORSKY, Die byzantinische Staatenhierarchie, *SemKond* 8 (1936) 41-61; idem, The Byzantine emperor and the hierarchical world order, *Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956) 1-14; F. DÖLGER, Die "Familie der Könige" im Mittelalter, *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görresgesellschaft* 60 (1940) 397-420; A. GRABAR, God and the "family of princes" presided over by the Byzantine Emperor, *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1959) 117-124. For an alternative view of the issue of Byzantine ecumenical ideology see A. KALDELLIS, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformations of Greek identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Cambridge 2007 (reprint 2009), 100-111.

53. Nic. Myst. Epist. 5.16-21.

usurpation movements, i.e. civil wars<sup>54</sup>. In this respect, let us present as an example her report on Robert Guiscard's war against Byzantium<sup>55</sup>: *...it was fate that introduced other aspirants to the throne from abroad, and foisted them on the Empire like an irremediable sore and incurable disease. To this latter class belonged that braggart Robert, so famed for his tyrannical disposition. Normandy indeed begot him, but he was nursed and reared by consummate wickedness. The Roman Empire really brought this formidable foe upon herself by affording a pretext for all the wars he waged against us in proposing a marriage with a foreign, barbaric race, quite unsuitable to us*<sup>56</sup>. From the author's point of view the king of the Normans was not just an ordinary foreign enemy. Because of his Christian identity, he is characterized as a tyrant attempting to usurp the throne of Constantinople from Alexios I Komnenos, the legitimate Roman emperor<sup>57</sup>.

### 3. The role of Roman identity in the perception of *emphylios polemos*

Having collected the information from sources alluding to the existence of an ideological concept in Byzantium that facilitated a perception of war

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54. On tyranny as a political phenomenon in Byzantium see CHEYNET, *Pouvoir et Contestations à Byzance*, 177-184; BOURDARA, *Καθοσίωσις καὶ τυραννίς*, 137-147; for a typology of the *tyrannos* in Byzantium see L. R. CRESCI, *Appunti per una tipologia del Tyrannos*, *Byz* 60 (1990) 90-129.

55. On Robert Guiscard's war against Byzantium see the latest publication of E. Kislinger with an extensive bibliography; E. KISLINGER, *Vertauschte Notizen. Anna Komnene und die Chronologie der byzantinisch-normanischen Auseinandersetzung 1081-1086*, *JÖB* 59 (2009) 127-145.

56. ... νῦν δὲ ἔξωθέν τινας καὶ ἐπείσάκτους τυράννους τὰ τῆς τύχης ταύτη ἐπείσηγάγετο ἀπρόσμαχόν τι κακὸν καὶ ἀνίατον νόσημα, καθά γε καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ τυραννικῇ γνώμῃ διαβόητον Ῥομπέρτον ἐκείνιν τὸν ἀλαζόνα, ὃν Νορμανία μὲν ἤνεγκε, φανυλότης δὲ παντοδαπὴ καὶ ἐθρέψατο καὶ ἐμαίευσεν. Ἡ δὲ Ῥωμαίων ἐχθρὸν τηλικούτον ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς εἴλκυσε πρόφασιν δεδοκυῖα τῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνου πολέμων τοῖς πρὸς ἡμᾶς κῆδος ἐτερόφυλόν τε καὶ βάρβαρον καὶ τὰ πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀπροσάριστον, *Anna Com.* 34.14-35.21; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 26. On Robert's image as a tyrant cf. *Scylitzes Continuatus*, in: E. T. TSOLAKES, *Ἡ συνέχεια τῆς χρονογραφίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτζη* [Ἑταιρεία Μακεδονικῶν Σπουδῶν. Ἰδρυμα Μελετῶν Χερσονήσου τοῦ Αἵμου 105], Thessaloniki 1968, 167.16-18.

57. Anna Comnena reports also in another part of her narration explicitly that Robert was striving for the mastership of the Roman Empire; *Anna Com.* 121.32-33; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 99.

against Christian peoples as being a civil war, the question that next arises pertains to how strong that concept was among the Byzantine ruling class. In other words, did it dominate the Byzantine perception of war against other Christians or, as only two Byzantine authors make it evident, did it play a secondary role and was therefore only referenced occasionally within the framework of the diplomatic or rhetorical instrumentalization of religion as a means to support the Empire's ideological propaganda as a peace-making power and consequently to further facilitate the legitimation of Byzantine military actions.

The fact that war against other Christians was not principally viewed and perceived as *emphylios polemos* is evident in the aforementioned reports of Attaleiates, Scylitzes and Zonaras, who clearly distinguish the civil wars of Maniakes, Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas from the non-civil wars against the Christian Rus' or the Christian Bulgars of Czar Samuel<sup>58</sup>. Attaleiates makes the distinction evident by employing the term *allophylos polemos* in describing the attack of the Rus (1043). The fact that the Rus had at least formally been Christians since the time of Basil II (976–1025)<sup>59</sup> and yet the author still viewed them as a different people (*allophylos*) proves that in this case he is not partial to the idea of a *phylon Christianōn* that included all Christians (also non-Roman ones), but rather to the idea of a *phylon Rhomaiōn*<sup>60</sup> that emphasized Roman identity as the key element for defining a civil war as such. In the case of Samuel's war, Scylitzes characterizes the movement of the Bulgars as *apostasia*<sup>61</sup> (a term implying a civil conflict); however, he and Zonaras define as civil wars only the wars fought against Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas. This suggests that it was the non-Roman identity of the Bulgars (rather than their Christian identity) that defined the Byzantine perception of war fought against them. However, the way the Emperor treated the defeated Bulgars after the battle of Kleidion (1014) complicates this matter. The fact that Basil II blinded all Bulgar soldiers who fell into his hands<sup>62</sup> is an extraordinary action that finds no

58. See notes 26 and 27 above..

59. A. POPPE, The political background to the baptism of Rus' : Byzantine Russian relations between 986-989, *DOP* 30 (1976) 197-244.

60. On the use of this term see for example the passage in Mich. Attal. 270.13-19.

61. Ioan. Scyl. 328.57-63.

62. Ioan. Scyl. 349.35-39. The great number of captured Bulgar soldiers (15,000) reported by Scylitzes has been questioned, although Cecaumenos in *Strategicon* supports Scylitzes'

equal in the history of Byzantine civil wars<sup>63</sup>. Although blinding, according to the evidence of the Byzantine sources, was the most usual punishment for Byzantine rebels after the eighth century<sup>64</sup>, this punishment was almost always reserved for the leaders of the movement that had caused the civil war rather than for simple soldiers. Thus, the punishment of the Bulgar soldiers may imply on the one hand that they were regarded as Roman citizens who had fought a civil war against their legitimate emperor, which explains why they were not viewed and treated as common prisoners of war<sup>65</sup>. On the other hand, the fact that the punishment was exercised on all soldiers demonstrates a different political and ethical approach that seems to be related to the fact that the Bulgars were not considered Romans<sup>66</sup> and therefore the war against them was not viewed as a Roman civil war<sup>67</sup>.

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version by reporting 14,000 prisoners (see *Sovety i rasskazy Kekaumena. Sochinenie vizantiiskogo polkovodtsa XI veka*, ed. G. LITAVRIN, Moscow 1972, 152). However, the fact that war continued for another four years after the battle of Kleidion makes it difficult to believe that the Bulgars had lost a whole field army there. It seems more probable that the incident concerned a much smaller garrison charged with the defense of the fortress at the Kleidion pass; P. STEPHENSON, *The legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*, Cambridge 2003, 2-6.

63. Shortly after the battle of Kleidion the Emperor re-employed this same punishment against Bulgar war prisoners in the vicinity of Pelagonia, Ioan. Scyl. 353.57-61; cf. STEPHENSON, *The legend of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer*, 6.

64. J. HERRIN, Blinding in Byzantium, in: *Polypleuros Nous. Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*, eds. C. SCHOLZ – G. MAKRI [ByzA 19], Leipzig 2000, 60-65; O. LAMPSIDES, *Ἡ ποινὴ τῆς τυφλώσεως παρὰ Βυζαντινοῖς*, Athens 1949, 34ff; BOURDARA, *Καθοσίωσις καὶ τυραννίς*, 157ff. Byzantine law declared that soldiers captured during a civil war were not considered prisoners of war; see *Epanagoge* (=Eisagoge), in: *JGR* 2, 48.14; *Basilica*, ed. H. J. SCHELTEMA – N. VAN DER WAL, *Basilicorum libri LX. Series A*, vols. 1-8 [Scripta Universitatis Groninganae, Groningen 1955-1988, 34.1.21. It prescribed execution by the sword as the maximum penalty; *Eisagoge* 52.110; Leo VI, *Novellae*, ed. A. DAIN – P. NOAILLES, *Les nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage*, Paris 1944 67.42-44.

65. D. Zakythenos, *Βυζαντινὴ Ἱστορία (324-1071)*, Athens 1971, 441.

66. On Byzantine perception of otherness with regard to Christianized Bulgars see P. STEPHENSON, Byzantine conceptions of Otherness after the Annexation of Bulgaria (1018), in: *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. D. C. SMYTHE, Aldershot-Hampshire 2000, 245-257.

67. On this point see the comments in E. CHRYSOS, Νόμος πολέμου, in: *Το εμπόλεμο Βυζάντιο (9ος-12ος αι.)* [ΕΙΕ/ΙΒΕ, Διεθνὴ Συμπόσια 4], Athen, 1997, 207; STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden*, 302.



Furthermore, the same wars against the Bulgars – the Empire’s primary Christian enemy during the tenth century – that were presented by Nicholas Mysticos as civil wars were not only not characterized as *emphylios polemos* among Christians by other Byzantine authors; they were also justified by the Byzantines through a religious concept that emphasized the Christian identity of the Byzantines while concealing, i.e. ignoring, that of the Bulgars. Theophanes Continuatus reports on the war of the empress Zoe against Symeon: *The empress Zoe, seeing Symeon’s arrogance and his attacks against the Christians [scil. Byzantines], decided along with her officials to make peace with the Agarenoi and transfer the whole army of the East in order to fight and destroy Symeon*<sup>68</sup>. Here the Bulgars are not described as fellow Christians and brothers of the Byzantines, but as enemies of the Christians, the latter in this case clearly represented only by the Byzantines. In fact, the religious spirit that dominated the preparation of the Byzantine campaign offered no room for a view of the enemies as fellow-believers:... *after the archpriest of the palace, Constantine, the so called Cephalas, and Constantine of Balelias in Thrace had brought the holy and life-making woods and everybody kneeled down and swore to die for one another, they marched in full strength against the Bulgars*<sup>69</sup>.

Thus, by not mentioning the Christian identity of the Bulgars, the Byzantines were in fact employing religion to underpin the just character of the war against the former. According to this ideological concept, the Bulgars did not deserve to be called Christians, for they had initiated the war, whereas the Byzantines were the true Christians, for they were the ones defending themselves<sup>70</sup>. This concept stands in clear contradiction

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68. Βλέπouσα δὲ Ζωὴ βασίλισσα τὴν ἑπαρσιν Συμεὼν καὶ τὴν κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν αὐτοῦ ἐπίθεσιν, βουλὴν μετὰ τῶν ἐν τέλει βουλευέται, ἀλλάγιον καὶ εἰρήνην μετὰ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν διαπράξασθαι, διαπερᾶσαι δὲ πάντα τὸν τῆς ἀνατολῆς στρατὸν πρὸς τὸ καταπολεμῆσαι καὶ ἀφανίσει τὸν Συμεῶν, Theoph. Cont. 388.13-17; cf. Ioan. Scyl. 202.71-203.86; Georg. Mon. Cont. 880.18- 881.9; Ps.-Symeon, ed. I. BEKKER, *Symeon Magister* [CSHB], Bonn 1838, 723.21-22.

69. ... ἐξαγαγόντων οὖν τὰ σεβάσματα καὶ ζωοποιὰ ξύλα Κωνσταντίνου πρωτοπαπᾶ τοῦ παλατίου, τοῦ Κεφαλᾶ λεγομένου, καὶ Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Βαλελίας ἐν τῇ Θράκῃ, ἅπαντες προσκυνήσαντες καὶ ἐπομοσάμενοι συναποθνήσκειν ἀλλήλοις, πανστρατὶ κατὰ Βουλγάρων ἐξώρμησαν, Theoph. Cont. 388.23-389.4; cf. Ioan. Scyl. 203.83-86.

70. On religious rhetoric and symbolism in Byzantine wars fought against Christian enemies see STOURAITIS, *Krieg und Frieden*, 322-326.

to the concept of a civil war between brothers in faith. Byzantine authors presented religion not as a common unifier between Byzantines and Bulgars, but rather as a means of distinction that justified the actions of the righteous against the unrighteous. This attitude is also evident in the narrations of the Byzantine-Bulgar conflicts from the period of Romanos I Lakapenos<sup>71</sup>. Moreover, no perception of a civil conflict among Christians can be found in Nicephoros II Phokas' answer to the Bulgar ambassadors, in which the Emperor declared a war against the Bulgars whom he described as a barbarian people, not equal to the Romans<sup>72</sup>.

The same attitude is also evident two centuries later, but directed towards the Empire's new Christian enemies, the Normans and the Crusaders. In Alexios I Comnenos' letter to the German emperor Henry IV (1084–1105), as reported to us by Anna Comnena, the war against Robert Guiscard is justified on religious grounds in the same manner as the wars fought against the Bulgars mentioned above: *For your brotherly inclination and affection towards our Empire, and the labours you have promised to undertake against that evil-minded person, in order to make him, the guilty miscreant, the enemy of God and all Christians, pay due retribution for wicked plots, proves the true right-mindedness of your soul, and fully confirms the report of your piety. Our Majesty, prosperous in other respects, is exceedingly disturbed and agitated by the news about Robert. But if we are to place any trust in God and His righteous judgments, then the downfall of this most iniquitous man will be swift. For surely God will never allow the scourge of sinners to fall upon His own inheritance to such an extent*<sup>73</sup>.

71. Theoph. Cont. 402.22–403.8; Ioan. Scyl. 216.42–46; Georg. Mon. Cont. 895.3–12; Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon, ed. ST. WAHLGREN [CFHB 44/1], Berlin 2006, 318.164–172.

72. Leonis diaconi Caloensis Historiae libri X, ed. C. B. HASE [CSHB], Bonnae 1828, 62.4–13.

73. Ἡ γὰρ πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν βασιλείαν ἀδελφική σου αὕτη ῥοπή καὶ διάθεσις καὶ ὁ μετὰ τοῦ κακομηχάνου ἀνδρὸς συμφωνηθεὶς ἀναδεχθῆναί σοι κάματος, ἵνα τὸν παλαμναῖον καὶ ἀλιτῆριον καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ πολέμιον καὶ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀξίως μετέλθῃς τῆς κακοφροσύνης αὐτοῦ πολλήν σοι τὴν ἀγαθοθέλειαν τῆς ψυχῆς διαδείκνυσσι, καὶ τὸ ἔργον τοῦτο φανερὰν τὴν πληροφορίαν παρίσθῃσι τοῦ κατὰ Θεὸν σου φρονήματος. Τὰ δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν βασιλείαν τὰλλα μὲν ἔχει καλῶς, ἐν ἐλαχίστοις δὲ ἀστατεῖ καὶ ταράττεται τοῖς κατὰ τὸν Ῥομπέρτον κυμαινόμενα. Ἀλλ' εἴ τι δεῖ πιστεῦναι Θεῷ καὶ τοῖς ἐκείνου δικαίοις κρίμασι, ταχεῖα ἢ καταστροφή τοῦ ἀδικωτάτου τούτου ἀνθρώπου

Robert Guiscard is called an enemy of God and of the Byzantines. The Byzantines are identified as Christians<sup>74</sup>, which distinguishes them from the Normans, who clearly are not viewed as fellow Christians. The justification of the Byzantine action against Robert is confirmed by God's intervention, which will insure the sinner's failure. The total absence of any concept of a civil war fought among Christians is more than evident in this case as well.

A similar attitude is evident towards the Crusaders<sup>75</sup>. Apart from Anna Comnena's information that it was Alexios I Komnenos' intention to avoid a civil war with the western Christians, the main picture of the Crusaders in the Byzantine sources is not one of fellow-believers or of brothers, fathers and sons in common faith. Anna mentions in her first report on the Crusaders: *Before he (Alexios I) had enjoyed even a short rest, he heard a report of the approach of innumerable Frankish armies. Now he dreaded their arrival for he knew their irresistible manner of attack, their unstable and mobile character and all the peculiar natural and concomitant characteristics which the Frank retains throughout; and he also knew that they were always looking for money, and seemed to disregard their truces readily for any reason that cropped up. For he had always heard this reported of them, and found it very true. However, he did not lose heart, but prepared himself in every way so that, when the occasion called, he would be ready for battle. And indeed the actual facts were far greater and more terrible than rumor made them. For the whole of the West and all the barbarian tribes which dwell between the further side of the Adriatic and the pillars of Heracles, had all migrated in a body and were marching into Asia through the intervening Europe, and were making the journey with all their household*<sup>76</sup>.

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παρέσεται. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀνέξεται πάντως Θεὸς ῥάβδον ἁμαρτωλῶν κατὰ τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐπαφίεσθαι, Anna Com. 112.70-82; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 92.

74. On the identification of the Byzantines as Christians in the war against the Normans under Bohemund see also Anna Com. 155.29-36.

75. On Byzantine attitudes towards the Crusaders as presented in *Alexias* see D. R. REINSCH, *Ausländer und Byzantiner im Werk der Anna Komnene*, *Rechtshistorisches Journal* 8 (1989) 257-274; R.-J. LILIE, *Anna Komnene und die Lateiner*, *BSI* 54 (1993) 169-182; J. HARRIS, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, London-New York 2003, 56.

76. οὐπω δὲ μικρὸν ἑαυτὸν ἀναπαύσας λογοποιουμένην ἡ κηκόει ἀπείρων Φραγγικῶν στρατευμάτων ἐπέλευσιν. Ἐδεδίει μὲν οὖν τὴν τούτων ἔφοδον γνωρίσας αὐτῶν τὸ ἀκατάσχετον τῆς ὁρμῆς, τὸ τῆς γνώμης ἄστατον καὶ εὐάγωγον καὶ τὰλλα ὅποσα ἢ τῶν

The author describes the Crusaders as an external threat and emphasizes their negative characteristics that differentiated them from the Byzantines, leaving aside the issue of the common faith that unified them. The image of the Latins as barbarian enemies stands in clear contradiction with her information about Alexios' view of the potential conflict with them as a civil war among Christians. The image of a civil war is then by no means traceable in the conflicts between Byzantium and the Crusaders as the animosity between them increased after the developments of the First Crusade and the establishment of Crusader states in the East. Certainly, a few occasional reports of a Byzantine unwillingness to fight against the Crusaders because of the fact that they were Christians can be found in the sources<sup>77</sup>, but the concept and the terminology of a civil war is by no means present.

In the second half of the twelfth century, the dominating Byzantine view of the Crusaders or the Latins in general is not one of brothers in faith, but of external enemies<sup>78</sup>. Ioannis Cinnamus' report on the beginning of the

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Κελτῶν φύσις ὡς ἴδια ἢ παρακολουθήματά τινα ἔχει διὰ παντὸς καὶ ὅπως ἐπὶ χρήμασι κεκηγότες ἀεὶ διὰ τὴν τυχοῦσαν αἰτίαν τὰς σφῶν συνθήκας εὐκόλως ἀνατρέποντες φαίνονται. Εἶχε γὰρ ἀεὶ τοῦτο ἀδόκονον καὶ πάνυ ἐπαληθεῦον. Καὶ οὐκ ἀναπεπτόκει, ἀλλὰ παντοίως παρεσκευάζετο, ὥστε καιροῦ καλοῦντος ἔτοιμον πρὸς τὰς μάχας εἶναι. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ πλέω καὶ φοβερώτερα τῶν φημιζομένων λόγων ἦσαν τὰ πράγματα. Πᾶσα γὰρ ἢ ἐσπέρα καὶ ὁπόσον γένος βαρβάρων τὴν πέραθεν Ἀδρίου μέχρις Ἡρακλείων στηλῶν κατόκει γῆν, ἅπαν ἄνθρωπον μεταναστεῦσαν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν διὰ τῆς ἐξῆς Εὐρώπης ἐβάδιζε πανοικί τὴν πορείαν ποιούμενον, Anna Com. 297.5-17; cf. *The Alexiad of the princess Anna Comnena*, 248.

77. See for example Nicetas Choniates' report on the unwillingness of Manuel I Comnenos to enter Antioch by force, stressing the fact that he wanted to avoid fighting against Christians; Nic. Chon. 39.18-28.

78. On the terminology of the Byzantine sources regarding the Crusaders, which is indicative of an enemy-image, see the analysis in A. KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, Die Kreuzfahrer und die Kreuzzüge im Sprachgebrauch der Byzantiner, *JÖB* 41 (1991) 163-188. On the image of the Latins in Byzantium during the period of the Crusades see H. HUNGER, *Graeculus perfidus - Ἰταλὸς ἱταμός. Il senso dell'alterità nei rapporti greco-romani ed italo-bizantini* [Unione internazionale degli Istituti di archeologia, storia e storia dell'arte in Roma. Conferenze 4], Roma 1987, 33-46; J. KODER, Das Bild des 'Westens' bei den Byzantinern in der frühen Komnenenzeit, in: *Deus qui mutat tempora. Menschen und Institutionen im Wandel des Mittelalters. Festschrift Alfons Becker*, ed. D. HEHL – H. SEIBERT – FR. STAAB, Sigmaringen 1987, 191-201; C. ASDRACHA, L'image de l'homme occidentale à Byzance: la

Second Crusade is clearly dominated by the perception of an external enemy threatening the Empire with war, and not by the perception of a civil war: *From this point affairs of the west had their outset. Celts and Germans and the nation of the Gauls and all that dwelled round old Rome, and Bretons and British, simply the whole western array had been set in motion, on the handy excuse that they were going to cross from Europe to Asia to fight the Turks on the way and recover the Church in Palestine and seek the holy places, but truly to gain possession of the land of the Romans by assault and trample down everything on their way*<sup>79</sup>.

Conversely, in Byzantine views of the wars of Manuel I in Italy, there is also no trace of the concept of a civil war among Christians, obviously because it was the Empire on the offensive against Christians. Finally, Nicetas Choniates and Nicholas Mesarites demonstrate clearly the Byzantine view of the Latins as foreign enemies shortly before the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204. In a sermon addressed to the emperor Alexius III Comnenos in 1200, Choniates says: *We find ourselves surrounded by all-brazen arms of enemies; from the east, the shameless Persians threaten us and from the west, the Alamanoi (Latins) bully us and take the worst of action against us...*<sup>80</sup>. Nicholas Mesarites reports in his narration of the revolt of Ioannis Comnenos in 1201: *'Hail to the Roman State from now on and to us' they were yelling, 'no barbarian will ever again prevail over it, no*

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temoignage de Kinnamos et de Choniates, *BSI* 44 (1983) 31-40 ; R. J. LILIE, *Byzanz und die Kreuzfahrerstaaten. Studien zur Politik des Byzantinischen Reiches gegenüber den Staaten der Kreuzfahrer in Syrien und Palästina bis zum vierten Kreuzzug (1096-1204)* [Poikila Byzantina 1], München 1981, 275-284.

79. Ἐντεῦθεν τὰ ἐξ ἐσπέρας ἀρχὴν ἔσχε. Κελτοὶ γὰρ καὶ Γερμανοὶ καὶ τὸ Γαλατῶν ἔθνος καὶ ὅσα τὴν παλαιὰν ἀμφινέμονται Ῥώμην, Βρίττιοί τε καὶ Βρετανοὶ καὶ ἅπαν ἄπλως τὸ ἐσπέριον ἐκεκίνητο κράτος, λόγῳ μὲν τῷ προχείρῳ ὡς ἐξ Εὐρώπης ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν διαβήσονται Πέρσαις τε μαχισόμενοι τοῖς παρὰ πόδας καὶ τὸν ἐν Παλαιστίνῃ καταληψόμενοι νεῶν τόπους τε τοὺς ἱεροὺς ἱστορήσοντες, τῇ γε μὴν ἀληθείᾳ ὡς τὴν τε χώραν Ῥωμαίων ἐξ ἐφόδου καθέξοντες καὶ τὰ ἐν ποσὶ καταστρέφοντες, *Ioannis Cinnami epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. MEINEKE [CSHB], Bonn 1836, 67.4-11; cf. English translation in *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* by John Kinnamos, translated by Ch. M. BRAND, New York 1976, 58.

80. κύκλῳ δὲ παγχάλοις ὅπλοις πολεμίους ἡμεῖς εἰλούμενοι ἐωράμεθα, καὶ μὲν τῆς ἔω τὸ Περισικὸν ἐπέχαινε ἀναιδές, ἐκ δὲ τῆς ἐσπέρας ἦσαν Ἀλαμανοὶ ὡς θῆρες δεινὸν βλεμαίνοντες καὶ καθ' ἡμῶν τὰ χεῖρῳ βυσοδομεύοντες, *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistolae*, ed. J.-L. VAN DIETEN [CFHB 3], Berlin 1972, 7.57.11-14.

*Scythian, no Bulgar, no Tauroscythian* [scil. Cumans], *no Persarmenian* [scil. Seljuk Turks of Ankara], *no Illyrian, no Triballian, no Paion, no Alaman, no Italian, no Iberian, no Libyan* [scil. probably also Turks in the area of ancient Libya<sup>81</sup>] *and not even the Persians* [scil. Turks] *who are so powerful nowadays in Asia*<sup>82</sup>.

Both texts, written before the sack of the City could have impacted on their authors' perceptions, draw an image of the Latins as external enemies, placing them on the same level with all foreign and infidel enemies of the Empire. This image indisputably contradicts the notion of brothers in faith who formed part of a wider Christian community within the framework of which war could be understood as civil war.

#### 4. Conclusion

In summarizing the comparative analysis of source evidence on Byzantine wars fought against Christian enemies, the main conclusion of this study is that the idea of civil war did not predominate in the Byzantine perception of such wars. Although after the ninth century an ideological concept becomes evident that allowed an armed conflict fought between Byzantines and other Christians to be characterized as a civil war, information from the sources demonstrates that this concept was of secondary significance. Its rare mention by Byzantine writers in connection with conflicts in which the Empire was defending itself against Christian enemies shows that it was employed within the framework of diplomatic efforts to prevent an attack against the Empire or of a Byzantine rhetoric that aimed to propagandize the Empire as a Christian, peace-loving entity and thus to further legitimize Byzantine military action against other Christians from an ethical – religious point of view. The main Byzantine perception of civil war was one of an armed conflict inside one “nation” (*ethnos*) as this was defined within the framework of the Byzantine perception of ethnicity, i.e. otherness.

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81. See the comment by A. HEISENBERG, *Nikolaos Mesarites, Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, Würzburg 1907, 58.

82. ὥς ἐν τῇ Ῥωμαϊδὶ τὸ ἀπὸ τοῦδε καὶ ἡμῖν «ἐπεφώνουν», οὐ καταστρατηγήσει τις ἔτι βάρβαρος ταύτης, οὐ Σκύθης, οὐ Βούλγαρος, οὐ Ταυροσκύθης, οὐ Περσαρμένιος, οὐκ Ἰλλυριός, οὐ Τριβαλλός, οὐ Παίων, οὐκ Ἀλαμανός, οὐκ Ἰταλός, οὐκ Ἰβηρ, οὐ Λίβυς, οὐκ αὐτὸς ὁ τὰ μεγάλα κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν ἰσχύων Πέρσης τὴν σήμερον, HEISENBERG, *Nikolaos Mesarites*, 21.11-19.



IOANNIS STOURAITIS

BYZANTINE WAR AGAINST CHRISTIANS – AN *EMPHYLIOS POLEμος*?

The central role of Christian religion and Christian identity in the Byzantine perception of war against all foreign enemies motivated me to undertake a study of the perception of Byzantine *emphylios polemos*, focusing on the question of ideological and political similarities or differences between Byzantine civil war and wars fought between the Byzantines and other Christian peoples. The main goal of this paper is to further clarify the role played by religious identity in the Byzantines' perception of the enemy when at war.