The Terms Ῥωμαῖος, Ἕλλην, Γραικὸς in the Byzantine Texts of the first Half of the 13th Century

PAPADOPOULOU
Theodora
http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/byzsym.1067

Copyright © 2015 Theodora Papadopoulou

To cite this article:

The terms Ρωμαίος, Ελλην, Γραικός in the Byzantine Texts in the First Half of the 13th Century

Athens • 2014 • Athens
The terms Ῥωμαῖος, Ἑλλην, Γραῖκος in the Byzantine Texts in the First Half of the 13th Century*

The Topic

One way to approach the past is by the analysis of words and terms in the texts written at the time, because they carry special semantic load and, thus, help us to understand the way of thinking, the perspective of various social groups. Collective nouns are a special category of such terms, because they are connected to self-definition, namely the identity of various social groups. In Byzantine texts the terms Ῥωμαῖος, Ἑλλην and Γραῖκος are conspicuous and therefore have attracted the attention and interest of modern researchers. Although found in Greek sources already before the Christian era, they are almost continually in use throughout the entire Byzantine period. Consequently, a question about their content and connotations arises as to whether their meaning has changed over time or remained stable.

Before proceeding to the analysis of the names mentioned above, it is necessary to make two comments. The first concerns the terms Ἑλλην and Γραῖκος. In the modern era, these words designate specific groups and denote their national identity. Therefore, the modern reader is tempted to

* This article is based on a paper presented in the XXIIth International Congress of Byzantine Studies in Sofia, August 2011, where matters concerning Byzantine identity were the topic of other presentations, as well. See, for instance, J. Koder, Byzantium as seen by itself – images and mechanisms at work, Proceedings of the 22nd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22-27 August 2011. v. I, Plenary Papers, Sofia 2011, 69-81. I am grateful to Professor J. Koder for his valuable advice regarding this presentation.
attribute a similar meaning to the terms as well within their Byzantine context. The issue becomes even trickier, because the term *nation* (ἐθνός) is also attested in Greek sources of pre-Christian as well as those of Christian era. Nevertheless, it would be anachronistic to perceive the meaning of ἐθνός in the Byzantine sources in the way it has been defined in the Modern era, an era marked by the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution.

The term *ethnicity* could be suggested, collective as it is, to designate a social group denoted in the sources by the terms Ἕλληνες and Γραικοί. According to anthropological literature, however, this term was introduced with well-founded argumentation a little after the 1970’s and is mainly associated with the industrial and post-colonial social contexts, despite the fact that pre-existing cultures have been taken into consideration. Therefore, the term *collective identity*, as it is broader in terms of meaning, is considered more appropriate for use in the present work which describes pre-modern societies and perspectives.

The second comment concerns the origin of the sources. They are part of a literature created by scholars who had ties to the imperial court and quite often held an office, so they express the official line of the state. This is an additional factor that emphasizes the caution that is needed for the interpretation of these terms, as they may have multiple meanings depending on the context of the work in which they appear, the time to which they refer and the audience whom they address. In addition, the conditions of


2. *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, eds. A. Barnard – J. Spencer, London - New York 1996/2003 (hereafter: ESCA), entry ethnicity, where further bibliography is referred. Three different approaches to understanding ethnicity have been formed, the premordialist, the instrumentalist and the constructivist. Although it is argued that all three theories could be integrated into one coherent theory of ethnicity, it is noted that the nucleus of such a synthesis would be the constructivist conceptualization that emphasizes the contingency and fluidity of the ethnic identity (ESCA, same entry).
the historical period in question can delineate a collective identity, both of
the writers and their audience. In the present study, the authors are scholars
and their audience is their immediate circle, the court of the rulers of the
State of Nicaea and their environment.

The Time

The sources were written in the first half of the 13th century, a period
that marked a turning point in the history of Byzantium. After the Fall
of Constantinople in 1204, the empire disintegrated and new states
were created among its territories. Some of these were states created by
Crusaders who belonged to the nobility, the most significant being that
which retained Constantinople as its capital. Three states were created by

3. On higher education in Nicaea, see C. N. Constantinides, Higher education in
Byzantium in the 13th and early 14th centuries (1210 - ca. 1310) [Texts and Studies of
the History of Cyprus, XI], Nicosia 1982, 5-27; N. G. Wilson (Scholars of Byzantium,
London 1983/1996, 218-228), makes reference to Nicaea and comments that their main
was to restore the educational system as it had been before 1204, a task in which they
succeeded. Generally on literacy, books production and education, see Dumbarton Oaks
Colloquium 1971: Byzantine Books and Bookmen, Washington DC 1975; R. Browning
[Byzantine Scholarship, Past and Present 28 (1964), 3-20], presents the scholarly production
in Byzantium, but makes no reference to the thirteenth century; cf. id., Literacy in the
World, Variorum Reprints, Northampton 1989, VII, 39-54], where he argues that literacy
was more widespread in Byzantium than it is usually thought. See also, P. Schreiner, Byzanz,

4. On the partition of Byzantium among the Crusaders before its Fall, see A. Carile,
Partitio terrarum imperii Romanie, Stîven 7 (1965), 125-305.

5. Nicetae Choniatae, Historia rec. I. A. Van Dieter [CFHB 9], Berlin 1975 (hereafter:
Choniates, Historia), 638.52-53: Eïs tosaxías têis tvrmvndas diairethíou tês épitéas
thi mén tòv kólou oîn aíph, ti dê tòv kàcov oîn pàrph, cf. his comment about the
situation in the eastern byzantine regions and generally about the dissents of the Byzantines
among themselves, ibidem, 639.77-83: Kái dêov òmounkróstov pròboulévnooita ti kai
kataparátmatai pròfoulaktikovn mén tòv mépov kàcov pevnohtovn tês patridos mèrov,
ánaklhrkion dê tòn òlkomvndov pòleovn, oî dê eîs dovmonián evkhráshmevntov
kai kàlèvthta tûrnvndos vèlontov kath' énthn àpsilizon tês čhrarzov, bavthimovn kai vèfvoz,
eîpèi dî' òn tîs kai pavnohtovn kai tròpovn àev ègodoov tòv tòn Ròmavndov polèmov tò
dovnovovn álilhovs kai diestánai brbvevntov.
Byzantine noblemen, with Nicaea, Arta and Trebizond as their capitals,


8. Choniates, Historia, 638.69-639.74: Δαυίδ δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξιος οι ἐξ υἱέως φύντες τοῦ τῶν Ῥωμαίων τυραννήσαντος Ανδρονίκου (Μανουὴλ ἐκείνῳ τὸ ὄνομα), οἱ μὲν τὴν κατὰ Πόντον Ἡράκλειαν καὶ Παφλαγόνας διείπεν, ὁ δ’ Ἀλέξιος Οἰναίου τε καὶ Σινωπέων τῆς πόλεως καὶ Ἰππασζόντος αὐτὴς τὴν δυναστείαν περιεζώννυτο, Ακροπολίτες I, 7.33-37: Παφλαγονίας δὲ πάσης ἐγκρατής ἦν Δαυίδ, ἀδελφὸς ὁν Ἀλέξιον τοῦ τῆς Ἱππασζόντος κρατήσαντος, ἦν καὶ Μέγας ὁνομάζετο Κομνηνός οἱ τοῦ βασιλείου Ανδρονίκου ἐπήχον έγγονοι, Μανουὴλ τῷ τούτου τεχθέντες υἱῶ. On Trebizond, see A. Bryer - D. Winfield,
respectively, whereas at the same time the Bulgarian state with Turnovo as its capital began to emerge as a dynamic power\(^9\). These rulers, in terms of foreign policy, aspired to either retain Constantinople or make Constantinople their capital city\(^10\).

In the mid-13th century, Byzantine Nicaea fulfilled this ambition. For this reason, the sources on which this study is based derive from the scholarly circle of Nicaea. The conditions during the period delineated by the first Fall of Constantinople and the enthronement of Michael Palaiologos as its ruler constitute a new historical setting. Within this framework, we will examine the Byzantines’ self-concepts and self-definitions, in other words, their collective identity.

**Collective Identity: the modern theories**

First of all, it should be noted that the issue of collective identity is part of theoretical debate concerning the modern period. Therefore, the question of the collective identity of the Byzantines is, of course, expressed through the perspective of contemporary researchers, thus, making it necessary to clarify the meaning of the term.

According to Sociology\(^11\), the definition of the term *collective identity*
is the awareness of any individual belonging to a particular social group, from which he derives his values and worth\textsuperscript{12}. In addition, the members of this group are bound together in a complex environment of common beliefs and values, seeing themselves as sharing ideals and, simultaneously, differentiating themselves from other groups and their members\textsuperscript{13}.

At this point, it would be only natural for some reservations to be expressed concerning the validity of a modern theory being used to interprete historical phenomena from a pre-modern era. However, this theoretical pattern of interpretation can also be applied to pre-modern societies, because it has a broader scope, and, as already mentioned, takes into account the common beliefs and values of any social group, characteristics which are not restricted to modern societies. It is these beliefs and values that constitute the self-image of the Byzantines during the first half of the 13th century that are the subject of this paper; more specifically, it is the self-concept of the Byzantines as delineated by the names Ῥωμαῖος - Ἕλλην - Γραικός\textsuperscript{14}.

\begin{footnotesize}
\bibliography on the subject; C. Dion Smythe, Byzantine Identity and Labelling Theory, in: \textit{XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies. University of Copenhagen 18-24 August 1996. Byzantium: Identity, Image, Influence, v. II, Major Papers, Copenhagen 1996, 28}, [hereafter \textit{XIX ICBS}], where it is clarified that historians are interested in the sociological and anthropological aspects of identity, not the psychological; J. Koder, Byzantinische Identität - einleitende Bemerkungen, in: \textit{XIX ICBS, v. II, 3}, where identity is connected with the 'Sich-Erinnern', which in turn depends on the dimensions of historical thought; it is also shown how this theory can be applied on byzantine history.


14. See the discussion of the same subject by P. Gounaridis, ‘Greeks’, ‘Hellenes’ et ‘Romains’ dans l’état de Nicée, \textit{Αφιέρωμα στὸν Νίκο Σβορώνο, v. I}, Rethymno 1986, 248-257. The author asserts that the identity of the Byzantines in Nicæa consisted of two contradictory elements, the ethnic Hellenic element and its rejection, the Roman element, this last referring to the Greek-speaking Orthodox. The name Γραικός, according to Gounaridis, was imposed by the Latins, so it could not be identified with Ἕλλην. He concludes that Nicæa was aiming at the restoration of the empire, which naturally was the opposite of a national idea, a conclusion which is correct since nationalism and the idea of the nation-state belong to the modern era.
\end{footnotesize}
The Terms in the Sources

Ῥωμαῖος

It is commonplace to note that the Byzantines called themselves Romans (Ῥωμαῖοι) and the state the Roman State (Ῥωμαϊῶν πολιτεία). Their laws and institutions derived from ancient Rome, although there were occasional reforms, according to the needs of the times\textsuperscript{15}. Similarly, the ecumenical ideology of the state was also of Roman origin, but in the Byzantine period it had the additional feature of being Christian. Thus, the political connotation of the term ῶῥωμαῖος was inextricably connected with the religious element\textsuperscript{16}.

Looking into the meaning of the term in the sources of the period under study, we note that it is primarily linked to the state and the government. Initially, we shall mention two characteristic excerpts that mark the beginning and the end of the Nicaean state. The first comes from the early years of the Nicaean state, on a document dated June 1207, and refers to the title of the ruler of Nicaea: Ὅ ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς Βασιλεὺς καὶ Αὐτοκράτωρ ῶῥωμαῖων (Faithful in Christ Basileus and Emperor of the Romans). This is the earliest example of the signature of Theodore I Laskaris\textsuperscript{17}, addressed to the πράκτωρ of the theme of Thrakesion Basileios Blatteros\textsuperscript{18}. Laskaris and his successors use the same title as did the rulers of Byzantium, and in fact in Greek, since the time of Heraclius, Πιστὸς ἐν


\textsuperscript{17}. Theodore had left Constantinople a few months before its capture by the Crusaders and was crowned emperor in Nicaea in spring or summer of 1205: N. Oikonomides, La décomposition de l’Empire byzantin à la vieille de 1204 et les origines de l’Empire de Nicée: à propos de la “Partitio Romaniae”, in: XV Congrès International d’Etudes byzantines, Athènes 1976. Rapports et Co-Rapports, Athènes 1980, 22-26.

\textsuperscript{18}. MM IV, 217-218; Dölger, Reg. 1676; Angold, A Byzantine Government in Exile, 37; Yarenis, Θεόδωρος Λάσκαρης, 296ff.
Χριστῷ βασιλεύς (faithful in Christ Basileus) 19. They also continue to use the term αὐτοκράτωρ (emperor) which was formally adopted as a title at the second half of the 9th century 20.

The second excerpt marks the transfer of Constantinople to the emperor of Nicaea. More specifically, George Akropolites 21 notes that ἡ Κωνσταντίνου προνοίᾳ θεοῦ καὶ αὖθις ὑπὸ χεῖρα τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐγένετο κατὰ λόγον δίκαιων τε καὶ προσήκοντα. The historian ascertains that it was justifiable that Constantinople should come into the hands of the king of the Romans, meaning the emperor of Nicaea, with the help of God and be freed from their enemies, the Latins 22. In this


20. OSSTROGORSKy, Geschichte, 89-91, A. CHristOPHILOPOULou, Περί το πρόβλημα τῆς ἀναδείξεως τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, EEΦΣΠΑ 12 (1961-1962), 458-497, particularly 472ff; EAD., Βυζαντινὴ Ἑστορία, v. ΠΙ/Π (610-867), Athens 1981, 250-252; YANNOPoulos, Société profane, 98; BECK, Jahrtausend, 60-70, 78-80; R. - J. LILiE, Byzanz. Kaiser und Reich, Köln - Weimar - Wien 1994, 31-44. Regarding the continuation and revival of the imperial tradition and imagery during the last centuries of Byzantium, as traced through orations, see R. MACRiDES, From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologi: imperial models in decline and exile, in: New Constantines: Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th centuries. Papers from the Twenty-sixth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, St Andrews, March 1992, ed. P. MAGDALINO, Variorum 1994, 269-282 [mainly 280-282], where it is argued that in Nicaea only Theodore I Laskaris followed the type of the imperial image of renewal, introduced by the Comnenian dynasty, whereas John III and his son Theodore II, forced by the dire reality of their times, strived for the survival of the state rather than its revival.


22. Akropolites I, 85.68-73: καὶ ἡ Κωνσταντίνου προνοίᾳ θεοῦ καὶ αὖθις ὑπὸ χεῖρα τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐγένετο κατὰ λόγον δίκαιων τε καὶ προσήκοντα, Ἰουλίου εἰκοσατέταχτην καὶ πέμπτην ἄγοντος, οὖσας ἐπινεμήσεως τετάρτης καὶ ἀπὸ γενέσεως κόσμου ἔτους ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρατουμένη χρόνους πεντήκοντα καὶ ὀκτώ; cf. the way the nun Eulogia, sister of Michael Palaiologos, announces to her brother the victorious news: Akropolites I, 86.15-16: ἀνάστηθι βασιλεύ ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς ᾑπεχαρίσατο σοι τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν. About the πρόνοια of God intervening in the enthronement of the new emperor, see the acclamations for Justin I, in: Constantini Porphyrogeniti, De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae, ed. J. J. REiSKE, v. 1, Bonn 1829, 429.18-20: τῇ τοῦ παντοδυνάμου θεοῦ χρίσει, τῇ τε ὑμετέρᾳ κοινῇ ἑκλογῇ πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν χωρίσαστε, τὴν οὐράνιον πρόνοιαν ἐπικαλοῦμεθα [= J. P. MiGENE, PG 112, c. 792]; see also AHRWEiLER, Idéologie politique, 9-14; KARAyANNOPoulos, Πολιτική θεωρία, 7-8. About the rejoicing of the common people due
quotation, the state terminology (βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων), the religious faith (προνοίᾳ Θεοῦ) and the significance of this event (κατὰ λόγον δίκαιον καὶ προσήκοντα) are intertwined.

If we focus on the scholarly works, such as historiography, orations, letters and court poetry, rather than on official documents, we observe that the term Ῥωμαῖος is primarily linked to the emperor and refers to administrative matters. Needless to say, that the formal title of the ruler of Nicaea is emperor of the Romans (βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων)\textsuperscript{23}, even if his reign was only over the eastern parts of the former Roman Empire\textsuperscript{24}. He is also addressed as the protector of the Romans, as Akropolites writes in his funeral oration for John III Vatatzes\textsuperscript{25}.

Ῥωμαῖος can also refer to the people of ancient Rome. Thus, Blemmydes in his work on the ideal sovereign writes about Cato who was a Roman general. Blemmydes makes no distinction between the pre-Christian Romans and the Romans of his time, as if he considers them to belong to the same people, just in different eras\textsuperscript{26}.

to the return of the Byzantines to Constantinople, see how it is presented by Akropolites I, 88.35-39: ἐν εὐφροσύνῃ γοῦν καὶ θυμηδίᾳ πολλῇ καὶ ἀπλέτῳ χαρᾷ τὸ Ῥωμαικὸν τῷ τότε γεγένηται πλήρωμα · οὐδὲὶς γὰρ ὁ μὴ σκιρτῶν τε καὶ ἀγαλλόμενος καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν τῷ πράγματι ἀπιστῶν διὰ τὸ ἀπροσδόκητον τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τῆς ἡδονῆς.


\textsuperscript{24} Nicetae Choniatae Orationes et Epistulae, ed. J. VAn DIETEN, Berlin-New York 1972, 120.1-5: Σελέντιον γραφὲν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀναγνωσθῆναι ὡς ἀπὸ τοῦ Λάσκαρη κήρ Θεοδωρὸν κρατοῦντος τῶν Ῥωμαῖων ἀνατολικῶν χωρῶν, ἤγεια ἡ Κωνσταντινούπολις ἐλλὰ ὑπὸ Λατῖνων καὶ παρ᾽ ἑαυτῷ ὡς δορύκτητος κατέχετο μετὰ τοῦ ἐποίησε τῶν Ῥωμαίων χωρῶν; cf. ibidem, 129.1-4: Λόγος ἐκδοθεὶς ἐπὶ τὸ ἀναγνωσθῆναι εἰς τὸν Λάσκαρη κήρ Θεοδωρὸν βασιλεύον τῶν ἐνοίκων Ῥωμαίων πόλεων, ὅτε οἱ Λατῖνοι κατέχει τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν, ὁ δὲ ἐκ Μυσίας Ἰωάννης κατέτρεψε μετὰ Σκυθῶν τὰς δυσικὰς Ῥωμαίας χώρας.


\textsuperscript{26} H. HUNGER - I. SIEVENKO, Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδριὰς und...
In theological or ecclesiastical context, however, the term Ῥωμαῖος acquires yet another meaning, defining a person who comes from Old Rome in Italy or is connected to it in some way, such as the Pope himself. It can also obtain a more specific connotation, that being a member of the Western Christian Church, a meaning which is attested primarily when referring to dialogues and disputes between the two Churches. Mesarites’ quotation about the old and the new Rome is enlightening on this matter, as it explains the reason by which Constantinople was named New Rome; the City was lavished with the same ecclesiastical honours as ancient Rome.

It should be taken into account that during the negotiations between the two Churches, and despite disputes, the Byzantine authors emphasize that the common name, Rome, underlines the common descent of both peoples, which in turn should lead to concord and unity.


πρὸς δέ γε Κάτωνα Ῥωμαίων στρατηγὸν οἱ τῶν Βρεττανῶν ὑπὲρ φιλίας διαπρεσβευσάμενοι βασιλεῖς,

cf. ibidem 60, ch. 59.1-4: ἐπαινῶ τοὺς προγενέστερον βεβασιλευκότας Ῥωμαίων, ὅτι τὸ «ἡ γαληνότης ἡμῶν» πᾶσιν αὐτῶν ἐνετίθουν τοῖς διατάγμασιν ἀντὶ τοῦ γράφειν «ἡ βασιλεία μου», δηλοῦντες ὅτι τὸ γαληνόν τε καὶ ἥμερον ἀφωσιωμένον τῷ καὶ ἐξαίρετον καὶ ἐξαίρετον καὶ τὴν ἁλουργίδα καὶ τὸ διάδημα. Blemmydes follows the chronographical tradition that starts enumerating the rulers of Byzantium since the times of Rome in Italy, even though his work is of a different type, cf. Zonaras, Ι, 12.11-13: ἀναγκαῖόν μοι ἐνομίσθη καὶ περὶ τούτων συγγράψασθαι, καὶ παραδοῦναι πόθεν τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἔθνος κἀκεῖνος τὴν ἀρχὴν.

27. Mesarites II, 49.5-8:

ἐκεῖθεν οἱ τῆς πρεσβύτιδος Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοποι τὴν ἐφ᾽ 'ἅπάσαις ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις εἴληχον κυριότητα.


30. Akropolites II, Contra Latinos A, 1, 4-6: Ἄνδρες Ῥωμαίοι, οἱ τῆς προερήθης
Nevertheless, the name Ῥωμαῖος retains its primary explication, denoting the Byzantine Empire, the emperor and his subjects, as is attested in various sources such as state documents and scholarly literature. In order to define its various meanings, the term should be examined within its own context.

Εἷλην

The second term to be examined is the name Ἕλλην and its derivatives. The study of the sources of the period under consideration leads to the Ῥώμης ὁρμώμενοι, ἐβουλόμην μὲν καλεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοὺς ὡς ὁμογνώμονας καὶ ὁμόφρονας [...].

31. See, for instance, Akropolites I, 14.1-2: ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ, δὲν ἵστορήσας ὁ λόγος πέθανα τῆς Πετρούμνετα κατάρξει καὶ τινὸς μέρους τῆς χώρας Ῥωμαίων [...] cf. also ibidem, 14.4-6: τῷ βασιλεί Ρωμαίων συνήν Θεοδώρῳ τῷ Λάσκαρι, ὑπηρετῶν αὐτῷ ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων.

conclusion that the meaning of the term varies depending on the context of the text. Niketas Choniates refers by it to the ancient Greeks, a connotation which is already known from the sources of the previous centuries. In Choniates’ work, however, the term also refers, quite often, to the author’s contemporaries, whom he usually designates by the name Ῥωμαῖοι. A passage from his “History” is quite illuminating on the matter: the author narrates the march of the Crusaders and laments the collapse of Byzantium. In poetic style, he personifies the river Alpheus, who is Greek (or rather, Ἕλλην) and flows into Sicily. Choniates then implores him not to tell the inhabitants of the island the misfortunes of the Greeks (Ἕλληνες); nor the sufferings that the Hellenes have inflicted upon other Hellenes. Using the phrase “sufferings of the Hellenes” the Byzantine scholar refers to the conflicts between the Angeloi emperor brothers, who led the Crusaders into Constantinople. Elsewhere in his narrative, Choniates states that he has no intention of wasting History, “the most beautiful invention of the ancient Hellenes” (τὸ κάλλιστον εὕρημα τῶν Ἑλλήνων), recounting deeds in which barbarians were victorious instead of the Hellenes. Through the locus communis “Hellenes-barbarians”, Choniates’ contemporary Romans are identified with the Hellenes.

Choniates uses the expression ἑλληνὶς φωνὴ (Hellenic voice), known from other sources, as well, to denote the Greek language. For instance, he

33. Choniates, Historia, 144.83: ὁποία πάλαι τῷ Περσέως λογοποιοῦντες κατηγόρευον Ἔλληνες.

34. Choniates, Historia, 610.16-611.21: Ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Ἕλλην ποταμὲ Ἀλφειέ, ῥεῦμα ῥέον δι᾽ ἅλμης πότιμον, ἐμπύρευμα ἐμπύρευμα ἐμπύρευμα, μὴ δὴ τὰ Ἑλληνὶκα δυσπραγήματα τοῖς ἐν Σικελίᾳ βαρβάροις διατρανώσειας, μηδὲ ἐκπυστὰ θείης ὅσα οἱ ἐκ σφῶν ἐπιστρατεύσαντες Ἐλληνα καθ᾽ Ἑλληνῶν ἐμεγαλούργησαν, ἵνα μὴ χοροὶ στῶσι καὶ παιάνες ἀφοῦ καὶ πλείους κατάρωσιν οἱ διάφοροι.

35. Choniates, Historia, 580.94-95.

36. Choniates, Historia, 580.94-1: πῶς ἄν ἐγὼς εἰκὼν τὸ βέλτιστον χρῆμα, τὴν ἱστορίαν, καὶ κάλλιστον εὔρημα τῶν Ἑλλήνων βαρβαρικαῖς καθ᾽ Ἑλληνῶν πράξεις χαριζόμενος.

accuses Andronikos I that his personal guard consisted of barbarians who barely spoke Greek.

Nicholaos Mesarites was also an eyewitness of the first Fall of Constantinople, like Choniates. However, he does not use the term Ἕλλην as often as Choniates; and when he does, it is primarily to denote the ancient Greeks and moreover their non-Christian faith. The emphasis on the religious connotation of the term is not surprising, as Mesarites was a clergyman, bishop of Ephesus and head of the delegation that conducted the theological discussions with the Latins. As far as dogma is concerned, his disagreement with them emerges in his work, as does his opinion about them, that they were barbarians and frauds. Moreover, he witnessed the Latin Capture of 1204, which he very eloquently describes in the funeral oration for his brother John.

Nevertheless, despite his being a cleric, when commenting on the Greek language (ἕλληνιδά γλῶτταν), he emphasizes that this is inspired by the Holy Spirit. So, he concludes, it is appropriate to express the Christian doctrines; and for this comment, he quotes Gregory of Nazianzos.

In the same context, referring to language, Mesarites uses the
verb *hellenize* when referring to πρωτοασηκρῆτις, the Greek equivalent of an office of Latin origin.\(^{44}\)

In the work of George Akropolites the term "Ἑλληνες" denotes either the ancient Greeks\(^{45}\) or emphasizes their non-Christian religion, depending on the context in which the term is used\(^{46}\). In this way, he seems to make a distinction between Hellenes and Romans, as stated in the introductory lines of his historiographical work\(^{47}\). The derivative *Hellenic* (ἑλληνικῶς) refers to the Greek language\(^{48}\) and the expression *Hellenic land* (ἑλληνὶς γῆ) delineates the Byzantine land\(^{49}\), as a synonym for the expression *Roman land* (Ῥωμαΐς)\(^{50}\). Thus, although Akropolites avoids calling his contemporary Romans "Ἑλληνες", he names their Roman land Hellenic, with a subtle touch of emotionality, caused by the use of the possessive pronoun "our", “our

---

\(^{44}\) Mesarites ΙΙΙ, 12.13-14: οὕτω γὰρ ἐξελληνιζόμενον ἐφερμήνευται φυλακὴν ἐνθεῖναι τῷ στόματι; about the translation of this office into Greek, see also the commentary of the editor, ibidem 74-75.

\(^{45}\) Akropolites Ι, 1.12-17: οἱ μὲν οὖν τὰ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἱστορικῶς συγγραψάμενοι ἄλλην ἄλλος πεποίησαν τὴν ἀρχήν οἰ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ἤρξαντο, οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἀξιολόγου τινὸς ἀρχῆς, ἢ Περσῶν ἢ Έλληνων ἢ Ῥωμαίων ἢ ἄλλων οὐσίασσον τῶν ἰδῶν, ἐστερημένος πρὸς τὸν εὐανοῦσα σχολὴν τὸ οὐσίαν καταρτιζόμενον σύμχρονα. In this context, Akropolites uses the term *Roman* with the meaning of the ancient *Roman*, whereas he usually identifies it with the term *Byzantine*, e.g. op. cit., 19.2: ἐπιλαμβάνεται τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν σκήπτρων Ἰωάννης ὁ Δούκας.

\(^{46}\) Akropolites II, Contra Latinos Β, 1.14-20: ἠκούσα καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τοὺς θεολόγους μὴ πάντα τὰ τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν παριστάμενα ταῖς ἀποδείξεσι, καίτοι γε πλάσματα ὄντα τούτων τῶν θεῶν, ὃν τῆς διανοίας ἀναποστημένη ἡ οὐσία καὶ οἷς ἡ λήθη φθορά, ἀλλὰ καὶ θέσεις προάγουσιν ἀμέσους καὶ ἀναποδείκτους καὶ θεσπίζουσιν αὐτὰς ὡς ἀληθεῖς παραδέχονται.

\(^{47}\) See above, note 45.

\(^{48}\) Akropolites Ι, 76.46-49: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ Σκιθικὸν ἢροντο γένος, οὐ βαρβαρικὰς ἀπεκρίνοντο ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἑλληνικὸς τε καὶ συνετῶς, καὶ οὐ κρείττονα ἄλλον εἰδέναι διαχωρίζοντο εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀπάντων τοῦ Κωμηνοῦ Μιχαήλ.

\(^{49}\) Akropolites I, 80.19-21: συνεστάλησαν οὖν μὲν ἄλλα οἰκεῖα ἡμετέρας σαμενετῶς καὶ συνετῶς, καὶ οὐ χρείττονα ἄλλον εἰδέναι διαχωρίζοντο εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀπάντων τοῦ Κωμηνοῦ Μιχαήλ.

\(^{50}\) Akropolites I, 21.3-4: [ὁ Θεόδωρος Ἀγγέλος Κωμηνὸς τῆς Ἡπείρου] ἐπειδὴ τῆς Θεοσαλωνίκης γέγονεν ἐγκρατῆς πολλὴν τῇ Ἰουνίῳ καὶ ἡμετέρας γῆς.
The terms ῬΩΜΑΪΟΣ, ΕΛΛΗΝ, ΓΡΑΪΚΟΣ

Hellenic land”51. It should be noted that the Hellenic land functions as a symbol in the thought and works of the Byzantine scholars, as they were educated in ancient Greek literature. This Hellenic land, however, is not only a locus literatus, an imaginary homeland, but it is described as an actual land designated by the Pyrenees, the Pindos mountain chain in Epiros52.

The term Ἕλλην appears in the work of Theodore II Laskaris much more often as compared with those of the aforementioned scholars. The term denotes, again, either the ancient Greeks53 or particularly their non-Christian faith54. It refers to the education of the Byzantines that was based on ancient Greek literature55, and to the Greek language, which Laskaris loved more than “breathing”, as he clearly states in one of his letters56. Furthermore, he very clearly links the name Ἕλλην with his Byzantine contemporaries, as well. Thus, he speaks of the “Hellenic troops”57 and the “Hellenic spear” which liberated the Roman towns and castles58. In one of his letters, he narrates a

51. Akropolites I, 80.21: τῆς Ἑλληνίδος καὶ ἲμετέρας γῆς.
52. ODB (Oxford 1991), entry Pindos.
54. Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII, ed. N. Festa, Firenze 1898, (hereafter: Lascaris, Epistulae) epist. CXLV, 26-32: τῆς ἀρχαίας τὰ πρῶτα τό γλαφυρὸν τῆς θεολογίας κοινῶς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ἱθεὶ τὰς ἀνευρέτους ἀρχαίς εἰς τὸ ῥάδιον καὶ θεολογήσεις κοινῆς; εἶτε ἐπιστήμης ἐστι, τοῦτο γὰρ τὼν ἄνω τοῦ ἀσυνήπτου ἐγγύς εἰ μὲν γὰρ Ἑλληνικὰς, οὐ θεολογεῖ, οὕτως ὡς ὅπως συνέρχεσθαι καὶ αὐχένος ἀρχαιότατος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γῆς ἡμῶν ἑπεξετάσεις ἐγγύς εἰς τῆς Ἑλληνίδος καὶ ἡμετέρας γῆς ἑπεξετάσεις, ἀρχαὶ τούτων τὸ λέγειν περὶ Θεοῦ τὸ ἀπείραστον, καὶ τὸ μὴ συν ἀρχῇ.
56. Lascaris, Epistulae epist. CCXVI, 4-5: τῇ Ἑλληνικῇ διαλέξει σον διάλεξεν, ἢν καὶ μᾶλλον ἤποικαιν ἤ τὸ ἀναπειράθη.
58. Lascaris, Opuscula, 34.225-228: ὁμοίως πάντων ἔθνων κατεκράτησας, καὶ τούς πρώην τῷ δόρατι τῷ Ἑλληνικῶν στήθος πολακάκη συνεῖδος καὶ ὡς ἀναδότι θεολογῶν, καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν πόλεων καὶ φρουρίων οἰκοδομαῖς τῶν θριγγίων τοῦτων τε καὶ τῶν πυργωμάτων ταπεινοῖς ὑπηρέτας τοὺς πρὸν καρτεροῖς

BYZANTINA ΣΥΜΜΕΙΚΤΑ 24 (2014) 157-176
philosophical debate that took place between him and a noble scholar from the West in which he emerged victorious, an event that was a cause for rejoicing and glory not only for those who witnessed it, but for all the Hellenes in general. As far as concerns the land where his contemporary Hellenes live, he uses the phrases “Roman land” (ῥωμαϊκή γῆ), “Hellas” (Ἑλλάς) and “Hellenikon” (τὸ Ἑλληνικόν), alternately.

It should be emphasized, though, that Laskaris makes derogatory comments about the ancient Greeks and rejects their philosophy, which he studied and admired, when this does not abide with Christian doctrines.

The name Γραικὸς does not appear for the first time in the Byzantine sources of the 13th century. Although the relevant quotations are limited, they are quite clear in their content; they refer to the Greek language and culture as well as to the people of Greek (Hellenic) origin. In the sources of this

αἵγησις ἄπετέλεσας: cf. the quotation by his teacher Blemmydes, where he is referring to the Byzantine rule over the valley of Skamandros in Northwestern Asia Minor by the term ‘Hellenic sceptres’, Nicephori Blemmydae Autobiographia ...[as in n. 28]. 6.11-12: οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τοιοῦτο σχῆμα ἢ Σχάμανδρος. The name Ἑλλην referring to the government is used in a scholarly text that does not address directly to the ruler of the state, as an oration would, or a state document.

59. Lascaris, Epistulae epist. CXXV, 49-51: ἐχεῖς τοίνυν οἶδα χαράν, ἐπειδή καλῶς ξυνίης τὸν οὕτως φιλοσοφήσαντα καὶ τὸ τῆς νίκης κῦρος τοῖς Ἑλλήσι χορηγήσαντα.

60. Lascaris, Epistulae epist. CXXV, 38: μέγα ὅραμα τοῖς ὠραίοις καὶ δόξα πολλὴ τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς.


62. Lascaris, Epistulae epist. CXXV, 52-54: Σὺ δὲ πότ' ἂν ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἀνέλθῃς ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα; πότ' ἂν δὲ καὶ τὴν Θρᾴκην διελθὼν τὸν Ἑλλήσποντον διαπεράσῃς καὶ τὴν ἔσω Ἀσίαν κατίδῃς;

63. Lascaris, Epistulae, epist. XLIV, 83-84: μόνον δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν αὐτὸ βοηθεῖ ἐαυτῷ οἰκοθέντας λαμβάνον τὰς ἀφορμὰς.

64. Θεοδώρου Λασκάρεως, Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις, Λόγοι Α΄-Δ’, ed. N. Festa, Giornale della società asiatica italiana, Firenze 1898 (hereafter: Lascaris, Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις), 112-23. 25: πῶς δὲ καὶ τὸ αὐτόθεν ἰξώθησαν, εἰ αὐτὰ εἰς αὐτὰ φθοράς γεγόνασιν αὐτία, εἰ μὴ παρὰ τῶν ὄντως καὶ ἑναρχής φρονοῦντον Ἐλληνικός;

period, the term is used within the context of conflicts between ‘Latin’ and ‘Greeks’, mainly concerning their religious conflicts, but sometimes also referring to their character or moral matters. Moreover, in some passages, the term refers to the Greek language, as in older texts.

It should be noted that the term is more often found in texts written at a time when the Byzantines came into closer contact, or even conflict, with the Westerners than in previous centuries. As has been documented, the western sources use the term Graecus to refer to the Byzantine emperor instead of the term Roman; so, the term Προφύλακας in Byzantine texts shows

66. Choniates, Historia, 575.68-70: καὶ τῶν Γραικῶν ἡμῶν εὐσεβζέτεροι τε καὶ δικαιότεροι καὶ τῶν Χριστιαν διαπαγμάτων φιλόσφοι· ἀκριβέστεροι; see also Akropolites, who uses the term as an alternative to Ἑλλήν and a differentiation to Italian, whereas (as he writes) they both have a common name, i.e. Roman, Akropolites II, Contra Latinos B, 27.16-22: οὐκ ἄλλα ἄττα τῶν ἐνδον εἰς τοσαύτην προσβολὴν τῆς ὑμοῖν της κτισματικῆς ὑπέτυφον ὡς Γραϊκὸς τε καὶ Ιταλικός καὶ εὐσεβζέτερος καὶ ἀκριβέστερος ἐν ἐτοις Ἱταλικοῖς καὶ αἱ λογικαὶ ἀπήστησι καὶ τὰ μαθήματα. καὶ ἂκριβεστε ἤνα μὴ τοῖς ἐθνικοῖς τούτοις διάμεσος περιγράφωσαται, τῇ προεβεβλητῇ Τούμη ἑτέρα νέα ἀντωνομάζεται, ἐνα μὴ προσαντικών τοῦν τοῦν Ρωμαίων πάντως κατονομάζοντο, ἐνα μὴ προσαντικών τοῦν τοῦν Ἑλληνίδων πάντως κατονομάζοντο.

67. Boniface of Montferrat considers Baldwin to be deceitful, unreliable and fickle, even more than the Greeks (Γραικοί), writes Choniates, Historia, 599.14-15: Γραϊκῶν ἀπασχολητέρον καὶ τὸ ἄττα ἀπιστον καὶ παλαμήθερον ἦτε ὑποτακτι καὶ καθὸν τῶν Βαλδουηίνων ἀποσκαλῶν; cf. Choniates’ comment that Germans believed they would easily defeat Romans, because Greeks (Γραικοί, as alternative to Romans) were inexperienced in war matters and indulged into luxuries, Choniates, Historia, 477.9-20: οἱ δ’ Ἀλαμανοὶ τοῦν ἰκανῶν ἐναντίον τοῦς φυγάκης φεύγαται, ὡστε καὶ ἀνέπεμπτοι μᾶλλον τοῦν ἐνοτάτα, δὴ ὑπετύφον τοῖς ἰερασχομονίας τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐναντίον, καὶ ἦσαν τῶς καθὰ ταῦτα γραφῆται Γραϊκῶν ἢς ἀγνωρὸν τοῦ εἰς πόλεον καὶ περισσοῦσαντον τῶς ἀνδρασκοδομῶς χάλαξας: Nikolaos Mesarites, I, 47.27-30: καταμεμήνυτο γὰρ ὡς ἦσαν τοῖς τῶν μονοτρόπων ἐντακτικα κρείμα τῆς ἐπισκεψίας τοῦς Ἐρικοίς συμφορᾶς. χρέωσις πλούτους ἅπαλες καὶ τός περισσομος ἀδαμαντοῦ λίθους σερδοτερος.

68. Mesarites III, 47.14-15: καὶ οὔ Λιβύη Ἔιρωπη ἢς καὶ Λυκίας τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν διαλέκτου πεπλήρωτοι;
either an allusion or direct reference to the Latins. Nevertheless, it is hard to believe that the Byzantine scholars were unaware of the Greek, not Latin (at least, not necessarily Latin) origin of the word Γραικός, since it is mentioned for the first time in Aristotle’s *Meteorology* as a synonym for "Ἐλλήνη". Besides, the words γραικὸς and γραικόω were already in use in certain sources of the 9th and 10th centuries (in Theophanes and in Leo VI), in which they are connected to the Greek language and are not used either in contexts of controversy or to allude to the Latins.

However, it should be noted that in all the above-mentioned texts the name Roman is used when referring to the Byzantines. Furthermore, this is the name which carries political weight and is linked to the State.

**Conclusions**

In the first half of the 13th century, the meaning of each of the three terms – Ῥωμαῖος, Ἐλλην, Γραικὸς – is susceptible to different interpretations,


70. Theophanis Chronographia, ed. C. De Boor, Lipsiae 1883, 455.19–25: ὅτι γὰρ τοῦ ἕτει ἀπεστείλεν Εἰρήνη Κωνστάντινον καὶ Μάμαλον πρὸς Κάρουλον τὸν Ῥῆγα τῶν Φράγγων, ὡς τὴν αὐτοῦ θυγατέρα, Ἐρυθρῷ λεγομένην, νυμφεύσῃ τῷ βασιλεῖ Κωνσταντῖνῳ, τῷ ὑγίῳ αὐτῆς. καὶ γενομένῃ συμφωνίας καὶ ὥρκων ἀναμεταξὺ ἀλλήλων, κατέλιπον Ἐλισσάιον τὸν εὐνοῦχον καὶ νοτάριον πρὸς τὸ διδάξαι αὐτὴν τὰ τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλώσσαν, καὶ παιδεύσαι αὐτὴν τὰ ἣδη τῆς Ρωμαίων βασιλείας; Leon VI Taktika, PG 107, sp. 969, Diataxis 18, §95 ("The Taktika of Leo VI. Text, translation and commentary G. T. Dennis[CFHB XLIX], Washington 2010,470): Ταῦτα (τὰ ἔθνη) δὲ ὁ ἡμέτερος ἐν θείᾳ τῇ λήξει γενόμενος πατήρ καὶ Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτωρ Βασίλειος τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐθῶν ἐπείσε μεταστῆναι, καὶ γραικωσας καὶ ἄρχουσι κατὰ τὸν Ῥωμαϊκὸν τύπον ὑποτάξας, καὶ βαπτίσαται τῆς τε δουλείας ἠλευθέρωσε τῶν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχόντων, καὶ στρατεύεσθαι κατὰ τῶν Ῥωμαιῶν πολεμοῦντον ἐθνῶν ἐξεπαίδευσεν; J. Koder, Anmerkungen zu γραικώσας, *Byzantinà* 21 (2000), 199-202, where the verb in question is interpreted as the activity of propagating the Greek language; see also G. Tsaras, Τὸ νόημα τοῦ γραικώσας στὰ Τακτικὰ Λέοντος ΣΤ’ τοῦ Σοφοῦ, *Byzantinà* 1(1969), 135-157, according to whom ‘Γραικός’ means the ‘Orthodox Christian Greek’; see also above, footnote 66.
depending on the context in which they are used. The term which particularly presents semantic diversity is the term "Ἑλλην.

1. All three collective nouns signify specific convictions and values of the social group that authored the texts, in which the terms appear. These convictions and values can be classified into three categories, namely political, educational and that of faith. A. Politically, the members of this social group are Romans. B. As far as the language, the education, the ethos and the culture are concerned, they are Hellenes. C. As far as their faith is concerned, they are Greek-speaking Christians, i.e. ‘Graikoi’.

2. These three terms compose a unified set. A set with distinct but strong and integral components, each implying and defining one another, without, however, altering their individual connotations. These are the elements that constitute the self-image of the scholar and nobleman in Nicaea.
Οι οροί Ῥωμαῖος, Ἕλλην, Γραικὸς στα βυζαντινά κείμενα τού πρώτου μισού τού 13ου αι.

Στο άρθρο εξετάζονται οι σημασίες και οι συνυποδηλώσεις των συλλογικών ονομάτων Ῥωμαῖος, Ἕλλην και Γραικὸς κατά την περίοδο της αυτοκρατορίας της Νικαιάς, οι οποίες ποικίλουν ανάλογα με τα συμφραζόμενα εντός των οποίων αυτά απαντούν. Καθένα από τα ονόματα συνδέεται με συγκεκριμένες αξίες της πολιτικής, της παιδείας και της θρησκείας. Αποτελούν ένα ενιαίο σύνολο με διαχρονική πολυμορφία, αλλά συντονισμένα αναπόσπαστα συντακτικά μέρη, και δηλώνουν την συλλογική ταυτότητα του ευγενούς και του λογίου στην Νίκαια.