The Terms Ῥωμαῖος, Ἕλλην, Γραικὸς in the Byzantine Texts of the first half of the 13th century

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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* (ἔθνος) 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 ἔθνος 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 Ἑλλήνες 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 environment³.

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 disintegrated⁴ and new states
were created among its territories⁵. 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
task 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,
München 1994³, 113, 152-154.

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

5. Nicetae Choniatae, Historia rec. I. A. VAN DIETEN [CFHB 9], Berlin 1975 (hereafter:
Choniates, Historia), 638.52-53: Εἰς τοσαύτας δὲ τιμαννίδας διαιρεθείσης τῆς ἑσπέρας
τί μὲν τῶν καλῶν οὐκ ἀπῆν, τί δὲ τῶν κακῶν οὐ παρῆν; 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: Καὶ δέον ὡμονοιασθαί προφυλακτικῶς τι καὶ
καταπράξασθαι προφυλακτικῶς μὲν τῶν μῆπω κακῶς πεπονθῶν τῆς πατρίδος μερῶν,
ανακλητικῶν δὲ τῶν ήλιουν πόλεων, οἱ δὲ εἰς δοξομανίαν ἐκτραχηλισθέντες καὶ
καλεῖσθαι τίραννοι θέλοντες καθ᾽ ἑαυτῶν ὥπλιζον τὰς χεῖρας, βακτηρίαν καὶ νῆψιν,
εἰπῇ δ᾽ ἄν τις καὶ πανοπλίαν καὶ τρόπαιον ἐξ ἐφόδου τοῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων πολεμίοις τὸ
διχονοεῖν ἀλλήλοις καὶ διεστάναι βραβεύοντες.
Byzantine noblemen, with Nicaea⁶, Arta⁷ and Trebizond⁸ as their capitals,


respectively, whereas at the same time the Bulgarian state with Turnovo as its capital began to emerge as a dynamic power. These rulers, in terms of foreign policy, aspired to either retain Constantinople or make Constantinople their capital city.

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, the definition of the term collective identity


10. On the rivalry between Nicaea and Arta in particular, see STAVRIDOU-ZAFRAKA, Νίκαια και Ήπειρος, A. D. KARPOZILOS, The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233) [Βυζαντινά Κράτη και Μελέται 7], Thessaloniki 1973.

11. For a brief and cohesive presentation of identity see ESCA, entry identity, where also
is the awareness of any individual belonging to a particular social group, from which he derives his values and worth. 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.

At this point, it would be only natural for some reservations to be expressed concerning the validity of a modern theory being used to interpret 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.


14. See the discussion of the same subject by P. Gounaridis, ‘Greeks’, ‘Hellenes’ et ‘Romains’ dans l’état de Nicée, Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Νίκο Σβορόνο, v. I, Rethymno 1986, 248-257. The author asserts that the identity of the Byzantines in Nicaea 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 Nicaea 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.
The Terms in the Sources

Ῥωμαῖος

It is commonplace to note that the Byzantines called themselves Romans (Ῥωμαίοι) and their state the Roman State (Ῥωμαίων πολιτεία). Their laws and institutions derived from ancient Rome, although there were occasional reforms, according to the needs of the times. 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 Ῥωμαῖος was inextricably connected with the religious element.

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 Ῥωμαίων (Faithful in Christ Basileus and Emperor of the Romans). This is the earliest example of the signature of Theodore I Laskaris, addressed to the πράκτωρ of the theme of Thrakesion Basileios Blatteros. 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...
Χριστῷ βασιλεύς (faithful in Christ Basileus)\(^\text{19}\). They also continue to use the term αὐτοκράτωρ (emperor) which was formally adopted as a title at the second half of the 9th century\(^\text{20}\).

The second excerpt marks the transfer of Constantinople to the emperor of Nicaea. More specifically, George Akropolites\(^\text{21}\) notes that ἡ Κωνσταντίνου προνοίᾳ θεοῦ καὶ αὐθής ὑπὸ χεῖρα τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐγένετο κατὰ λόγον δίκαιον 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\(^\text{22}\).

\(^{19}\) JGR, I, Nov. XXV (year 629); P. A. YANNOPoulos, La société profane dans l’empire byzantin des VIIe, VIIle et IXe siècles, Louvain 1975, 97-100; W. E. KÆG, Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium, Cambridge 2003, 186, 194.

\(^{20}\) OSTROGORSKY, Geschichte, 89-91, A. CHRIStOPHiLOPOULOU, Περὶ τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς ἀναδείξεως τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, ΕΕΦΣΠΑ 12 (1961-1962), 458-497, particularly 472ff; EAD., Βυζαντινή Ἑστορία, v. II/1 (610-867), Athens 1981, 250-252; YANNOPoulos, Société profane, 98; BECK, Jahrtausend, 60-70, 78-80; R. - J. LiLiE, Byanz. 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 Palaiologoi: 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, 260-282 [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.

\(^{21}\) On George Akropolites, his life and work, see the introduction in R. MACRIDES, George Akropolites. The History. Introduction, translation and commentary, Oxford 2007, esp. 5-65.

\(^{22}\) Akropolites I, 85.68-73: καὶ ἡ Κωνσταντῖνου προνοίᾳ θεοῦ καὶ αὐθής ὑπὸ χεῖρα τοῦ βασιλέως τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἐγένετο κατὰ λόγον δίκαιον τε καὶ προσήκοντα, Ἰουλίου εἰκοστῆν καὶ πέμπτην ἄγοντος, οὔς ἐπινεμήσεως τετάρτης καὶ ἀπὸ γενέσεως κόσμου ἔτους ὄντος. Cf. the way the nun Eulogia, sister of Michael Palaiologos, announces to her brother the victorious news: Akropolites I, 86.15-16: ἄναστηθι βασιλεύ ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπεχαρίσατό 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. REISKI, v. I, Bonn 1829, 429.18-20: ὑπὸ τῆς παντοδυνάμου Θεοῦ κρίσει, τῇ τε ἕμετρα κοινὴ ἐκλογὴ πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν χορήσαντες, τὴν οὐρανίου πρόνοιαν ἐπικαλούμεθα [= J. P. MIQUE, PG 112, c. 792]; see also AHREWEILER, Idéologie politique, 9-14; KARAyANNOPoulos, Πολιτική θεωρία, 7-8. About the rejoicing of the common people due
quotation, the state terminology (βασιλεύς Ρωμαίων), 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 Ρωμαῖος 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 Ρωμαίων), even if his reign was only over the eastern parts of the former Roman Empire. He is also addressed as the protector of the Romans, as Akropolites writes in his funeral oration for John III Vatatzes.

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.

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 Ῥωμαϊκὸν τῷ τότε γεγένηται πλήρωμα... οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἦν ὁ μὴ σκιρτῶν τε καὶ ἀγαλλόμενος καὶ μικροῦ δεῖν τῷ πράγματι ἀπιστῶν διὰ τὸ ἀπροσδόκητον τοῦ ἔργου καὶ τὸ ὑπερβάλλον τῆς ἡδονῆς.


26. H. HUNGER - I. ŠEVCENKO, Des Nikephoros Blemmydes Βασιλικὸς Ἀνδρίας 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.
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.

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 ἰστορήσας ὁ λόγος πέθανε τῆς Πετρών καταρρέα καὶ τινὸς μέρους τῆς χώρας Ῥωμαίων [...] cf. also ibidem, 14.4-6: τῷ βασιλεῖ Ῥωμαίων 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 καλλίστον εὑρήμα 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 ἔλληνις φωνὴ (Hellenic voice), known from other sources, as well, to denote the Greek language. For instance, he

33. Choniates, Historia, 144.83: ὅποια πάλαι τῷ Περσέως λογοποιούντες κατηγόρευον Ἕλληνες.

34. Choniates, Historia, 610.16-611.21: Ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Ἕλλην ποταμὲ Ἀλφειέ, ῥεῦμα ῥέον δι᾽ ἅλμης πότιμον, ξενίζον ἄκουσμα, ἐμπύρευμα ἔρωτος, μηδὲ τὰ Ἑλληνία δυσπραγήματα τοῖς ἐν Σικελίᾳ βαρβάροις διατρανώσεις, μηδὲ ἐκπύστα θείης ὅσα ὁι εκ σφῶν ἐπιστρατεύσαντες Ἑλλησι καθ᾽ Ἑλλήνων ἐμεγαλούργησαν, ἵνα μὴ χοροὶ στῶσι και παιάνες ἄσθοσι και πλείους κατάρωσιν οἱ διάφοροι.

35. Choniates, Historia, 580.94-95.


accuses Andronikos I that his personal guard consisted of barbarians who barely spoke Greek. Nicholas 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 (ἡλληνίδα γλώτταν) 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.

38. Choniates, Historia, 322.42-45: Κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἀρχεῖα γινόμενον ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξωθέν διαστριβῶν τε καὶ διαχύσεων οὐν ὁλόγον μὲν καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν εἶχε δοξοφοιμικόν, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ βαρβάρων ἰλῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων λοιμῶν χαιρόντων ἀπαιδευσία καὶ τὰ πλεῖστα μηδ’ ἐπαϊόντων Ἑλλήνιδος φωνῆς.

39. Mesarites I, 42.3-4: ὁποῖα παιδεὶς Ἑλλήνων τερθρεύονται; Mesarites II, 22.27-28: ἰστόρηται γὰρ ὡς Γαλιήνου τοῦ καὶ Αὐρηλίου τὰ Ἑλλήνων θρησκεύοντο.


41. Nikolaos Mesarites I, 46.5ff.

42. See above, footnotes 37 and 38.

43. Nikolaos Mesarites, ed. A. HEISENBERG, Neue Quellen ... [as in n. 23] III. Der Bericht des Nikolaos Mesarites über die politischen und kirchlichen Ereignisse des Jahres 1214 (hereafter: Mesarites III), 33.1-6: Ο δὲ μὴ πρὸς ταῦτα ἀντιφερόμενος, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἀφορματισθέντα μόνον καὶ ἐκθείασας καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνίδα γλώτταν ὡς καταρερητευμένην κατάκρως, ἀπε ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος ἐμπνεομένην, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς τῇ ἱδίᾳ διαλέξει πεπλετυμένην πλατεῖ στόματι μεγαλύνας, εὐλογήσας ἠμᾶς ἀπολέλυκεν ἀνακωχὴν δοῦναι τῷ σώματι ὡς κεκοπιακότας ἐφ’ ἱκανόν ἀρίστου γὰρ ἐκάλεσε καιρός. Mesarites alludes to Gregory’s of Nazianzos strong conviction that the Greek language should be studied by the Christians. Gregory makes a clear distinction between the Greek language and the Greek religion, whereas he accuses the emperor Julian of identifying the two on purpose. See, for instance, Κατὰ Ἰουλιανοῦ βασιλέως στηλιτευτικὸς πρῶτος, PG 35, col. 536 A: Πρῶτον μὲν, ὦτι καισάριόν την προσηγορίαν

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verb *hellenize* when referring to *πρωτοασηκρῆτις*, the Greek equivalent of an office of Latin origin. In the work of George Akropolites the term *Ἑλληνες* denotes either the ancient Greeks or emphasizes their non-Christian religion, depending on the context in which the term is used. In this way, he seems to make a distinction between Hellenes and Romans, as stated in the introductory lines of his historiographical work. The derivative *Hellenic* (*ἑλληνικῶς*) refers to the Greek language and the expression *Hellenic land* (*ἑλληνὶς γῆ*) delineates the Byzantine land, as a synonym for the expression *Roman land* (*Ῥωμαϊζῶς*). 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 III, 12.13-14: ὁ ἐντὸς 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 I, 1.12-17: οἱ μὲν οὖν τὰ καθ´ ἡμᾶς ἱστορικῶς συγγραφήσαμεν ἄλλην ἄλλος πεποίησαν τὴν ἁρχήν οἱ μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου γενέσεως ἤρχαντο, οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἀξιολογίας τῶν ἄρχων, ἢ Περσῶν ἢ Ἑλλήνων ἢ Ῥωμαίων ἢ ἄλλου ὑπολογοῦν τῶν ἔθνων, ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν ἐαυτοῦ σκοπὸν τὸ οἰκεῖον καταρτιζόμενος σύγγραμμα. 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 Ῥωμαιικῶν σκήπτρων Ἰωάννης ὁ Δούκας.


47. See above, note 45.


49. Akropolites I, 80.19-21: συνεστάλησαν οὖν μέχρι τῶν οἰκείων ὅρων, εἶτον τῶν Πυρρηναίων ὅρων, ἃ δὴ διορίζει τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ νέαν Ἑπείρον τῇ Ἑλληνιδῷ καὶ ἡμετέρᾳ γῆς.

50. Akropolites I, 21.3-4: ὁ Θεόδωρος Ἄγγελος Κομνηνὸς τῆς Ἡπείρου ἐπειδὴ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης γέγονεν ἐγκρατὴς πολλῆς παλαιῶν καὶ νέαν Ἑπείρον τῇ Ἑλληνιδῷ καὶ ἡμετέρᾳ γῆς.
Hellenic land”\textsuperscript{51}. It should be noted that the \textit{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 Epirus\textsuperscript{52}.

The term \textit{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 Greeks\textsuperscript{53} or particularly their non-Christian faith\textsuperscript{54}. It refers to the education of the Byzantines that was based on ancient Greek literature\textsuperscript{55}, and to the Greek language, which Laskaris loved more than “breathing”, as he clearly states in one of his letters\textsuperscript{56}. Furthermore, he very clearly links the name \textit{Ἕλλην} with his Byzantine contemporaries, as well. Thus, he speaks of the “Hellenic troops”\textsuperscript{57} and the “Hellenic spear” which liberated the Roman towns and castles\textsuperscript{58}. In one of his letters, he narrates a

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{51} Akropolites I, 80.21: τῆς Ἑλληνίδος καὶ ἱματίας γῆς.
\item \textsuperscript{52} ODB (Oxford 1991), entry Pindos.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Theodori Ducae Lascaris \textit{Epistulae} CCXVII, ed. N. Festa, Firenze 1898, (hereafter: Lascaris, \textit{Epistulae}) epist. CXLV, 26-32: τίς ἄρα διὰ τούτα τὸ γλαφυρὸν τῆς theologίας κοινότης ἄρχων καὶ θησίς τῶν ἀνευρέτων ἀρχής εἰς τὸ ὄρομαν καὶ θεολογεῖται κοινός; εἰτὲρ ἐκτός ἡμῶν, τούτο γὰρ τῷ ἄνυντῳ ἐγγίζει εἰ μὴ γὰρ Ἑλληνίδα ἤπειρον, ὥστε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἴσιν καὶ ἐξάγουσιν. ἢ ἀρχή, αἱ μὲν, τῇ ποιμαντὴς τῆς Θεοῦ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀπείραστος κατὰ φύσιν καὶ τῆς εὐβείας ἀρχή τοῦν τὸ λέγον περὶ Θεοῦ τὸ ἀναπείσατον, καὶ τὸ μὴ οὐν ἀρχή.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Lascaris, \textit{Epistulae}, epist. CXXV, 13-14: τῇ Ἑλληνίδα διαλέξομαι οὐ διάλεξον, ὡς καὶ μᾶλλον ἡ θεοπαιδευμὴ ἤ τὸ ἀναπείσαι.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Lascaris, \textit{Epistulae} epist. CCXVI, 4-5: τῇ Ἑλληνίδα διαλέξομαι οὐ διάλεξον, ἢν καὶ μᾶλλον ξημοιάσαιν ἢ τὸ ἀναπείσαι.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Lascaris, \textit{Epistulae} epist. CCIV, 56-59: καλὸς γὰρ ῥᾴδιον διὰ τὴν διατριβὴν τοὺς πολλοὺς καὶ γέγονε, καὶ κλίτος [τρ]άχυος[ο]ι ἀναμασάς τοὺς Ἑλληνίδος στρατεύσασιν ἀπεφάνθησαν.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Lascaris, \textit{Opuscula}, 34.225-228: ὁμοίως πάντων ἔθνων κατεκράτησες, καὶ τοὺς πρὸς τὸν ἡμᾶς Ἑλληνίδα πολλοῖς κατεκράτησες καὶ τῶν ἄνθρωπον ἔδειξες, καὶ ἐν τοῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων πόλεων καὶ φρουρίων οἰκοδομεῖς τῶν θρηγγών τοῦν τε καὶ τῶν πυργωμάτων ταπεινοὺς ὑπηρέτας τοὺς περὶ καρτεροῖς.
\end{enumerate}
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” (Ελλάς) 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...
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 Προφητευτής in Byzantine texts shows

66. Choniates, Historia, 575.68-70: and those Byzantines who use the term as an alternative to Ἑλλήνων and a differentiation to Ἰταλοῖς, whereas (as he writes) they both have a common name, i.e. Roman, Akropolites II, Contra Latinos B, 27.16-22: oίνου ἄλλα ἐπεταξάτο τοὺς ἐν τῷ θέματι ἐπεκείνετο ἐν μιᾷ ὦ εἰς Λιβύη Εὐρώπη τε καὶ Ἀσία τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν διαλέκτου πεπλήρωται; ὥστε καὶ οὐκ Λιβύη Εὐρώπη τὲ καὶ Ἀσία τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν διαλέκτου πεπλήρωται;

67. Boniface of Montferrat considers Baldwin to be deceitful, unreliable and fickle, even more than the Greeks (Graikoi), writes Choniates, Historia, 599.14-15: Ἐπαθημάτευσαν καὶ τὸ Ἥδος ἠπείπτων καὶ παλάβηθολον ἐπέρ ὄρεικον καὶ κύβον τῶν Βαλδουινίου ἀποκαλούν; cf. Choniates’ comment that Germans believed they would easily defeat Romans, because Greeks (Graikoi, as alternative to Romans) were inexperienced in war matters and indulged into luxuries, Choniates, Historia, 477.9-20: οἱ δὲ Ἀλαμανοί τοσοῦτον ἀπείρον ἑσπαρθότοι τοῖς ὄχρομενοι τούτοις φανερά, ὡστε καὶ ἀνέθαλπον μᾶλλον τὸν ἔρωτα, ὅπετε τῶν ὀργάνων μὲν ἐναυόμενον καὶ δὲν ἦχοι τῶν Ρωμαίων ἐναυόμενον, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τῶν μονοτρόπων ἐνταῦθα κριτίσειται Γραικὸν ὡς ἄγεννον τὰ ἐς πόλεμον καὶ περιποιηθῶν τὰς ἀνδρασκοδοκίας φυλής; Nikolaos Mesarites, I, 47.27-30: καταμεμήνυτο 

68. Mesarites III, 47.14-15: καὶ οὐ λιβήν Εὐφρώπη τῇ καὶ λυθοῦ τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν διαλέκτου πεπλήρωσαν;
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 “Ελλην”69. Besides, the words γραικός and γραικῶω 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 language70 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 – Ρωμαῖος, Ἑλλην, Γραικὸς – is susceptible to different interpretations,


70. Theophanis Chronographia, ed. C. De Boor, Lipsiae 1883, 455.19–25: Τοίσω τῷ ἔτει ἀπέστειλεν Εἰρήνη Κωνστάντιν τὸν σακελλάριον καὶ Μάμαλον τὸν πριμικήριον πρὸς Κάρουλον τὸν ὑδατόρροιον, ὧν οἱ Βασιλείος Ρωμαίων ἀυτοκράτωρ Βασίλειος τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐθῶν ἐπείσεται, καὶ γραικώσας καὶ ἀρχοῦσι κατὰ τὸ Ῥωμαϊκὸν τύπον ὑποτάξας, καὶ βαπτίσας τῆς τε δουλείας ἠλευθέρωσε τῶν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχόντων, καὶ στρατεύεσθαι κατὰ τῶν Ῥωμαίων πολεμοῦντων ἐθνῶν ἑξεπαιδεύσας. J. Koder, Anmerkungen zu γραικώσας, Byzantina 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, Byzantina 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 Ἕλλην.

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, Ἑλλην, Γραικὸς στα βυζαντινά κείμηνα του πρώτου μισού του 13ου αι.

Στο άρθρο εξετάζονται οι σημασίες και οι συνυποδηλώσεις των συλλογικών ονομάτων Ῥωμαῖος, Ἑλλην και Γραικὸς κατά την περίοδο της αυτοκρατορίας της Νικαιάς, οι οποίες ποικίλλουν 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 διαφορά, αλλά ταυτοχρόνως αναπόσπαστα συστατικά μέρη, και δηλώνουν την συλλογική ταυτότητα του ευγενούς και του λογίου στην Νίκαια.