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 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

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

Byzantine noblemen, with Nicaea, Arta and Trebizond as their capitals,


BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 24 (2014) 157-176
respectively, whereas at the same time the Bulgarian state with Turnovo as its capital began to emerge as a dynamic power⁹. These rulers, in terms of foreign policy, aspired to either retain Constantinople or make Constantinople their capital city¹⁰.

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 Sociology¹¹, the definition of the term collective identity

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¹⁰. On the rivalry between Nicaea and Arta in particular, see STAVRIDOU-ZAFRAKA, Νίκαια και Ἡπείρος; A. D. KARPZILOS, The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233) [Βυζαντινά Κράιμα και Μελέτει 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 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.


14. See the discussion of the same subject by P. Gounaridis, ‘Greeks’, ‘Hellenes’ et ‘Romains’ dans l’état de Nicée, Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Νίκο Σβορώνο, v. 1, 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 (Ῥωμαῖοι) 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: Ὁ 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


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’Études byzantines, Athènes 1976. Rapports et Co -Rapports, Athènes 1980, 22-26.

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

The second excerpt marks the transfer of Constantinople to the emperor of Nicaea. More specifically, George Akropolites notes that ἡ Κωνσταντίνου προνοίᾳ θεοῦ καὶ αὖθις 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.

20. OsTROGORsKY, Geschichte, 89-91, A. CHRisTOPHiLOPOULOU, Περὶ τὸ πρόβλημα τῆς ἀναδείξεως τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ αὐτοκράτορος, ΕΕΦΣΠΑ 12 (1961-1962), 458-497, particularly 472ff; EAD., Βυζαντινὴ ἱστορία, v. II/1 (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 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, 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 δίκαιον τε καὶ προσήκοντα, Ἰουλίου εἰκοστὴν καὶ πέμπτην ἄγοντος, οὔτος ἐπινεμήσεως τετάρτης καὶ ἀπὸ γενέσεως κόσμου ἔτους ὄντος ͵ςψξθʹ, ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρατουμένη χρόνου 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 βασιλεῦ 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. REIsKE, v. 1, Bonn 1829, 429.18-20: τῇ τοῦ παντοδυνάμου Θεοῦ χρώει, τῇ τε ἑκατέρα κοινῆ ἐκλογῇ πρὸς τὴν βασιλείαν χορηγήσαντες, τὴν οὐράνιον πρόνοιαν ἐπικαλούμεθα [= J. P. MiGnE, PG 112, c. 792]; see also AHRWIELEr, 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), 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.


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\textsuperscript{31}. In order to define its various meanings, the term should be examined within its own context.

\begin{quote}
"Ελλην\textsuperscript{32}"
\end{quote}

The second term to be examined is the name "Ελλην and its derivatives. The study of the sources of the period under consideration leads to the

\begin{quote}
Ῥώμης ὁρμώμενοι, ἐβουλόμην μὲν καλεῖν ὑμᾶς ὡς ὁμογνώμονας καὶ ὁμόφρονας [...]
\end{quote}

31. See, for instance, Akropolites I, 14.1-2: Ὅ δὲ Μιχαήλ, ἵνα ἰστορήσως ὁ λόγος πέφθακε τῆς Ἑπείρου κατάρξαι καὶ τίνος μέρους τῆς χώρας Ῥωμαίων [...]; cf. also ibidem, 14.4-6: τῷ βασιλεῖ Ῥωμαίων συνήν Θεοδώρῳ τῷ Λάσκαρι, ὑπηρετῶν αὐτῷ ὡς καὶ οἱ λοίποι τῶν Ῥωμαίων.

32. Modern research on the subject of the Greek element in Byzantium has resulted in two trains of thought. The first accepts the presence of the Greek (or Hellenic) element as an integral part of the Byzantine identity and even traces it back to the pre-Christian past; the other tendency views it as a “mimesis” or as an intentional revival, serving the needs of a specific historical period. From the relevant bibliography see indicatively C. M\textsuperscript{argo}, Byzantine Literature as a Distorting Mirror, Inaugural Lecture, University of Oxford, May 1974. Oxford 1975, 3-18; P. \textsc{magdalone}, Hellenism and Nationalism in Byzantium, in: Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium, First Publication Variorum, Norfolk Aldershot 1991, XIV; \textsc{sp. \textsc{vyronis}}, Greek Identity in the Middle Ages, Études Balkaniques - Cahiers Pierre Belon 6 (1999), 19-36; J. \textsc{köder}, Griechische Identitäten im Mittelalter - Aspekte einer Entwicklung, in: Βυζάντιο Κράτος καὶ Κοινωνία, μνήμη Νίκου Οἰκονομίδη (eds. A. \textsc{avramea}, A. \textsc{laiou}, Ev. \textsc{chrysoς}), Athens 2003, 297-319; R. \textsc{beaton}, Antique nation? Hellenes on the eve of Greek independence and in twelfth century Byzantium, BMGS 31 (2007), 76-95; A. \textsc{kaldelis}, Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition, Cambridge University Press 2007; G. \textsc{page}, Being Byzantine. Greek Identity before Ottomans, Cambridge University Press 2008; C. \textsc{rapp}, Hellenic Identity, Romanitas, and Christianity, in: Hellenisms. Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity, (ed. K. \textsc{zacharia}), Ashgate Variorum 2008, 127-147; \textsc{chr. \textsc{malatras}}, The making of an ethnic group: the Romaioi in the 12th-13th centuries, 4th European Congress of Modern Greek Studies, Granada, 9-12 September 2010. Identities in the Greek World (from 1204 to the present day), v. 3, ed. K. A. \textsc{dimadis}, Athens 2011, 419-430.

For an analytical presentation of the modern literature on the matter, see \textsc{th. \textsc{papadopoulou}}, Συλλογικὴ ταυτότητα καὶ αὐτογνωσία στὸ Βυζάντιο. Συμβολή στὸν προοδοσιασμὸ τῆς αὐτοκεντρικῆς τῶν Βυζαντινῶν μέσα ἀπὸ τὴν λόγια γραμματεία τους (11ος-ἀρχές 13ου αἰ.), (diss. in press: Σύλλογος πρὸς Διάδοσιν Ὠφελίμων Βιβλίων, Athens), 45-53.
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 Alphaeus, 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 ἐλληνίς φωνῆ (Hellenic voice), known from other sources, as well, to denote the Greek language. For instance, he

33. Choniates, Historia, 144.83: ὕποια πάλαι τῷ Περσέως λογοποιοῦντες κατηγόρευον Ἕλληνες.
34. Choniates, Historia, 610.16-611.21: Ἀλλ᾽ ὦ Ἕλλην ποταμὲ Ἀλφειέ, ῥεῦμα ῥέον δι᾽ ἅλμης πότιμον, ξενίζον ἄκουσμα, ἐμπύρευμα ἐρωτος, μὴ δὴ τὰ Ἑλληνίδα δυσπραγήματα τοῖς ἐν Σικελίᾳ βαρβάροις διατρανώσειας, μηδ᾽ ἐκπύστα θείης ὁσά οἱ ἐκ σφῶν ἐπιστρατεύσαντες Ἑλλησὶ καθ᾽ Ἑλλήνων ἐμεγαλούργησαν, ἵνα μὴ χοροὶ στῶσι καὶ παιάνες ἀσθῶσι καὶ πλεῖους κατάρωσιν οἱ διάφοροι.
35. Choniates, Historia, 580.94-95.
36. Choniates, Historia, 580.94-1: πῶς ἂν ἑγώει τὸ βέλτιστον χρῆμα, τὴν ἱστορίαν, καὶ κάλλιστον εὑρίσκω τῶν Ἑλλήνων βαρβαρικαῖς καθ᾽ Ἑλλήνων 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 Ἑλλην 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 (ἑλληνίδα 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

38. Choniates, Historia, 322.42-45: Κατὰ δὲ τὰ ἀρχεῖα γινόμενος ἀπὸ τῶν ἐξωθεν διατριβῶν τε καὶ διαχύσεων οὐκ ὠλίγον μὲν καὶ τὸ περὶ αὐτὸν εἶχε δορυφορικόν, καὶ τοῦτο ἐκ βαρβάρων ἠλῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν λοιμῶν ἀπαιδευσία καὶ τὰ πλεῖστα μηδ᾽ ἐπαιδέων Ἑλληνίδος φωνῆς.

39. Mesarites I, 42.3-4: ὡς παῖδες Ἑλλήνων τερθρεύονται; Mesarites ΙΙ, 22.27-28: ἤστορηται 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 ΙΙΙ), 33.1-6: Ὁ δὲ μὴ πρὸς τὰ στεφάνα ἀντιφερόμενος, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἀάρωμαματισθέντα μονὸν καὶ ἐκπεισάς καὶ τὴν Ἑλληνίδα γλώτταν ὡς καταρατησφυγε̣νένην κατάκρως, ὅτε ὑπὸ τοῦ θείου πνεύματος ἐμπνεομένην, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς τῇ ἱδίᾳ διαλέξῃ πεπλατυνμένην πλατεῖ στόματι μεγαλένας, εὐλογήσας ἢμᾶς ἀπολέξας ἀνακοίτη αυτοῦ τοῦ σώματι ὡς κεκοπιακότας ἔν' ἱκανὸν ἀρίστον γάρ ἐκάλει 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 στηλεύτηκας πρῶτος, PG 35, col. 536 A: Πρῶτον μὲν, ὅτι κεκοιμήθης τὴν προσηγορίαν
verb *hellenize* when referring to πρωτοασηκρῆτις, the Greek equivalent of an office of Latin origin.  

In the work of George Akropolites the term "Ἑλλήνες" 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* (*ἕλληνικῶς*) refers to the Greek language and the expression *Hellenic land* (*ἕλληνὶς γῆ*) delineates the Byzantine land, as a synonym for the expression *Roman land* (*Ῥωμαϊζ̖*)<sup>50</sup>. Thus, although Akropolites avoids calling his contemporary Romans "Ἑλλήνες," he names their Roman land Hellenic, with a subtle touch of emotionality, caused by the use of the possessive pronoun "our," "our..."
Hellenic land”\textsuperscript{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 Epiros\textsuperscript{52}. The term \textit{Ἑλλην} 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{Ἑλλην} 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{quote}
51. Akropolites I, 80.21: \textit{τῆς Ἑλληνιδος καὶ ἣμετέρας γῆς}.


56. Lascaris, \textit{Epistulae} epist. CCXVI, 4-5: \textit{ἡ Ἑλληνιδί διαλέξομαι} σοι διάλεξον, \textit{ἡν καὶ} \textit{μᾶλλον} ἐγκαθαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ ἀναπνεύ
d


58. Lascaris, \textit{Opuscula}, 34.225-228: \textit{ὁμοὶοι πάντων ἔθνων κατεκράτησας, καὶ τοῖς πρῶτοι τὸ δώρατο τὸ Ἑλληνικόν συνάξοντας στῆθος ποιοκόνοιν συνέδησας καὶ ὦς ἀνάρεποδα ἄδειες, καὶ ἐν ταῖς τῶν Ῥωμαίων πόλεων καὶ φρουρῶν ὀικοδομής τῶν βραχών τοῖν τε καὶ τῶν πυργωμάτων ταπεινοῖς ὕπηρέτας τοῖς πρὸ καρτεροῖς}.

\textit{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” (Ῥωμαίας γῆς), “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.

αἰγυπτίως ἀπετέλεσας: 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].

Oὐ γὰρ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τωτῷ σχῆματι ἢ Σκάμανδρῳ. The name Ἑλλῆν referring to the government is used in a scholar 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: ἔχεις τοίνυν οἶδα χαράν, ἐπειδὴ καλῶς ξυνίης τὸν οὕτως φιλοσοφήσαντα καὶ τὸ τῆς νίκης κῦρος τοῖς Ἑλλήσι χορηγήσαντα.

60. Lascaris, Epistulae CXXV, 38: μέγα ὤραμα τοῖς ὁρῶσι καὶ δόξα πολλὴ τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν.


62. Lascaris, Epistulae epist. CXXV, 52-54: Σὺ δὲ πῶς ἄν ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἀνέλθῃς εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα; πῶς ἄν δὲ καὶ τὴν Ὀρθάχιν διελθὼν τὸν Ἑλλῆσποντον διαπεράσῃς καὶ τὴν ἐσω Ἀσίαν κατίδῃς;

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

64. Θεοδώρου Λασκάρου, Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις, Λόγοι Α΄-Δ’, ed. N. Festa, Giornale della società asiatica italiana, Firenze 1898 (hereafter: Lascaris, Κοσμικὴ δήλωσις), 112-25. πῶς δὲ καὶ τὸ οἴκεται ἡξιώθησαν, εἰ αὐτὰ εἰς αὐτὰ ἔθεσαν γεγονόντως, εἰ μὴ παρὰ τὸν ὄντος καὶ ἱκανόντως ὑφονοοῦντων Ἑλληνικῶς.


BYZANTINA SYMMEIKTA 24 (2014) 157-176
period, the term is used within the context of conflicts between ‘Latin’ and ‘Greeks’, mainly concerning their religious conflicts\textsuperscript{66}, but sometimes also referring to their character or moral matters\textsuperscript{67}. Moreover, in some passages, the term refers to the Greek language, as in older texts\textsuperscript{68}.

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 Ορθοκός in Byzantine texts shows

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{66} Choniates, Historia, 575.68-70: καὶ τῶν Πατρῶν ὁρμήσαντες πόλεως. Γραικῶν ἐξεπόρθουν καὶ εἰς ἁρπαγὴν ἐτίθεντο, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ κατὰ τῶν οἰκητῶν τῆς τῶν Πατρῶν ὁρμήσαντες πόλεως.

\textsuperscript{67} Boniface of Montferrat considers Baldwin to be deceitful, unreliable and fickle, even more than the Greeks (Γραικοί), writes Choniates, Historia, 599.14-15: Γραικὸν ἀπαντήσατε καὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἔρωτας καὶ παλάβωλον ἐπέρ διτραχὺ καὶ κίβον τῶν Βαλδουίνου ἀποκαλούσαν; 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’ Αλαμαννοὶ τοιοῦτον ἄπαθον ἔθαμβοι τῶν ὁρμαμοὺς τούτους φανείνη, διότι καὶ ἀνέδιαλον μᾶλλον τὸν ἔφοσα, ὃν ὑπέτυφον ταῖς λαμπρομοιώσισι τῶν Ρωμαίων ἐνανύομεν, καὶ ἡμῖν τάχιον κρατῆσαι Γραικῶν ὡς ἄγεννόν τά ἐς πόλεμον καὶ περισσουδαζόντων τάς ἀνδρακοδοθέντως χλίδες. Nikolaos Mesarites, I, 47.27-30: κατασημίσατο γὰρ ὡς ἐστὶ τὰς τῶν μονηρώτων ἐνταῦθα κρατέται τῆς ἐπενεχθείσας τῶν Γραικῶς συμφοράς, φανείνη πλούτους ἀκλίνες καὶ ἑδή πειραιμοῦς ἀδεμαντίνον λίθον στεροῦσαν.

\textsuperscript{68} Mesarites III, 47.14-15: καὶ οὖν Λιβύη Εὐρώπη τῇ καὶ Λυκίᾳ τῆς τῶν Γραικῶν διαλέκτου πεπλήρωται;
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 Ἑλληνικός. 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, Ἑλλην, Γραικὸς – is susceptible to different interpretations,


70. Theophanis Chronographia, ed. C. De Boor, Lipsiae 1883, 455.19–25: Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ἀπέστειλεν Εἰρήνη Κωνστάντ τὸν σακελλάριον καὶ Μάμαλον τὸν πριμικήριον πρὸς Κάρουλον τὸν Ῥήγα τῶν Φράγγων, ὧπος τὴν αὐτοῦ θυγατέρα, Ἐρυθρώ λεγομένην, νυμφεύσηται τῷ βασιλείᾳ Κωνσταντίνῳ, τῷ υἱῷ αὐτῆς. καὶ γενομένης συμφωνίας καὶ ὁρκῶν ἀναμεταξὺ ἀλλήλων, κατέλιπον Ἐλισσαῖον τὸν εὐνοῦχον καὶ νοτάριον πρὸς τὸ διδάξαι αὐτὴν τὰ τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλώσσαν, καὶ παιδεύσαι αὐτὴν τὰ ἡθαὶ τῆς Ῥωμαιῶν βασιλείας; J. Koder, Anmerkungen zu γραικώσα, 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 Τακτικά Λέοντος ΣΤ’ τοῦ Σοφοῦ, Βυζαντινά 1(1969), 135-157, according to whom Γραικός means the ‘Orthodox Christian Greek’; see also above, footnote 66.

References:


70. Theophanis Chronographia, ed. C. De Boor, Lipsiae 1883, 455.19–25: Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει ἀπέστειλεν Εἰρήνη Κωνστάντ τὸν σακελλάριον καὶ Μάμαλον τὸν πριμικήριον πρὸς Κάρουλον τὸν Ῥήγα τῶν Φράγγων, ὧπος τὴν αὐτοῦ θυγατέρα, Ἐρυθρώ λεγομένην, νυμφεύσηται τῷ βασιλείᾳ Κωνσταντίνῳ, τῷ υἱῷ αὐτῆς. καὶ γενομένης συμφωνίας καὶ ὁρκῶν ἀναμεταξὺ ἀλλήλων, κατέλιπον Ἐλισσαῖον τὸν εὐνοῦχον καὶ νοτάριον πρὸς τὸ διδάξαι αὐτὴν τὰ τῶν Γραικῶν γράμματα καὶ τὴν γλώσσαν, καὶ παιδεύσαι αὐτὴν τὰ ἡθαὶ τῆς Ῥωμαιῶν βασιλείας; J. Koder, Anmerkungen zu γραικώσα, 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 Τακτικά Λέοντος ΣΤ’ τοῦ Σοφοῦ, Βυζαντινά 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 οροι Ρωμαίος, Ελλην, Γραῖκος στα βυζαντινά κείμενα του πρώτου μισού του 13ου αι.

Στο άρθρο εξετάζονται οι σημασίες και οι συνυποδηλώσεις των συλλογικών ονομάτων Ρωμαίος, Έλλην και Γραικὸς κατά την περίοδο της αυτοκρατορίας της Νίκαιας, οι οποίες ποικίλουν ανάλογα με τα συμφραζόμενα εντός των οποίων αντάπαυτούν. Καθένα από τα ονόματα συνδέεται με συγκεκριμένες αξίες της πολιτικής, της παιδείας και της θρησκείας. Αποτελούν ένα ενιαίο σύνολο με διαχρονία, αλλά ταυτοχρόνως αναπόσπαστα συστατικά μέρη, και δηλώνουν την συλλογική ταυτότητα του ευγενούς και του λογίου στην Νίκαια.