UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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Empires Reshaped and Reimagined:
Rome and Constantinople, Popes and Patriarchs, 1204-1453

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

Natalie Sherwan

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Empires Reshaped and Reimagined:

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Doctor of Philosophy, History

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This dissertation discusses the politics of conquest and the strategies of legitimization pursued by Latin, Greek and Slav contenders for hegemonic rule in the northeastern Mediterranean after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the wake of the fourth crusade. It reevaluates the relationship between the concepts of empire and Christendom as played out in the process of political realignment, and closely examines the ways in which the key actors claiming to represent these concepts - emperors, popes, patriarchs - fought or cooperated with one another in order to assert regional preeminence.

The first part of the dissertation focuses on the tension between the Roman/Byzantine ideal of universalism, which entailed a sole holder of imperial power, and the concrete reality of several empires coexisting within the same geographical area. Chapters one and two provide a survey of the main theoretical issues encountered in the study of medieval empires, and an assessment of the relationship between Byzantine *basileis*, patriarchs, popes and Western emperors prior to 1204. Chapters three and four investigate the competing but interconnected ruling systems which emerged in the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor after 1204, tracing their policies of war and appeasement until the recovery of Constantinople by the Nicene Greeks in 1261. The analysis of ruling patterns, diplomatic encounters and military engagements indicates that, even if the state or Church leaders playing the game of empire used different means to reach their ends, they all acted within the same conceptual framework regarding universal rule, which eventually prevented the multipolar world produced by the fourth crusade from becoming a long-lasting phenomenon. The secular participants in the quest for hegemony established imperial centers as alternatives to Constantinople, but they made use of Byzantine regalia, titles, rhetoric of power and governing style to promote themselves as legitimate possessors of the *imperium*. Full control over the former Byzantine capital was still understood as a major prerequisite to universal leadership, and most wars and negotiations during this time period took place either to acquire or to protect the city.

The second part of the dissertation, consisting of chapters five and six, investigates the ways in which the patriarchate of Constantinople, part of the Byzantine power structure for most of its history, redefined its role after 1261, as it responded to the challenges posed by the papacy and the rising Balkan empires which sought to redraw ecclesiastical boundaries in areas previously under Byzantine jurisdiction. While much of the confrontation between the

patriarchate of Constantinople and its rivals took place via diplomatic contacts and negotiations at high level, emerging local rulers played a critical role in deciding the outcome of these encounters. The success of the patriarchal plans of ecclesiastical reintegration was to a very large extent contingent upon local priorities and interests; political maneuvering, patronage networks, and military hostilities often concurred to prevent the patriarchs from reestablishing their authority in the region. This study combines close readings of imperial registers, patriarchal *acta*, papal correspondence, and historical narratives with inquiries into local politics and social dynamics, in order to create the context for a better understanding of the dynamics of power in the late medieval northeastern Mediterranean.

The dissertation of Natalie Sherwan is approved.

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To Patris

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INTRODUCTION

The Question and its Historical Background: This dissertation examines the dynamics of regional dominance, conflict and diplomatic exchange in the northeastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The contextual framework is provided by the emergence of competing centers of imperial power in Asia Minor and the Balkan Peninsula after the collapse of the Byzantine political and cultural unifying framework in the wake of the fourth crusade. The analysis focuses on two major themes: 1) the Latin, Greek and Slav strategies for building empires and legitimizing imperial status in an area hitherto dominated by Byzantium's drive to universalism and its insistence on having exclusive right to the *imperium*; and 2) the parallel policies pursued by the patriarchate of Constantinople in order to restore ecclesiastical unity to the politically and religiously fractured Christian *mundus* of the northeastern Mediterranean. The multipolar world that replaced the Byzantine Empire challenged the underlying assumption of a cohesive Christendom in the Greek East, and allowed for several formulas of leadership to be tested simultaneously as alternatives to one predominant ruling system. At the same time, the emperors, popes and patriarchs involved in the pursuit of regional hegemony still operated within the conceptual framework devised in the late Roman antiquity, which regarded universal rule as the ideal way to exercise authority, and the man holding it as the vicegerent of Christ in his double capacity of king and high priest. This theoretical construct favored Byzantium as the political heir of Roman universalism, with the implicit expectation that the successful candidate in the hegemonic quest would appropriate the Byzantine imperial title, regalia and governing style, including the dual leadership paradigm of emperor and patriarch. The Byzantine dyarchy, according to which the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople ruled together and in harmony over the Christian *oikoumene*, the former as its spiritual shepherd, the latter its

benefactor and protector, was adopted and adjusted to local political realities by all contenders for the imperial title, whether Latin, Slav or Greek. Its only challenger was the papacy, which since the twelfth century had styled itself as the highest spiritual and temporal authority over the Christendom.

The present study explores the ways in which post-1204 rulers attempted to solve the conflict between the ancient understanding of universalism, the papal claims to supremacy, and the concrete reality of several empires coexisting within the same geographical area. It looks closely at the patterns of ruling and the tactics of interaction and negotiation employed by secular and religious leaders in order to expand and consolidate control over Anatolia, the Aegean, and the Balkans. The goal is to shed light on the political and diplomatic practices employed by the major power players in their efforts to attain preeminence in the northeastern Mediterranean: the Latin Empire, the papacy, and the aspiring Byzantine *basileiai*. A significant dimension to the geopolitical landscape carved by the crusaders and the Greek and Slav heirs of Byzantium in the northeastern Mediterranean was added by the patriarchate of Constantinople's participation in the reconstruction of a unitary Christian *oikoumene*. Patriarchal policies in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries receive special consideration, especially in the second part of this study. The central question around which investigation revolves concerns the endurance of the Byzantine dyarchic leadership as the archetype of hegemonic rule despite its failure to provide adequate answers to the crises of the late Middle Ages: fragmentation of power, broken ecclesiastical unity, constant small-scale warfare, political instability, economic decline, and Turkish invasion. The analyses provided in the following chapters rely on, and refer to, concrete historical developments; future studies could look more into the worldview based on which the founders of new empires operated, and into the ideological aspects of the policies they pursued.

The papal and western leadership paradigms were foreign implants in the northeastern Mediterranean. They had the advantage of being promoted by the winners, but the disadvantage of being perceived as alien, and thus far removed from local concerns and traditional ways of governing. At the same time, both models lacked the mechanisms necessary to control and force into obedience the conquered population and even the individual crusader states, which chose internal and foreign policies based on their immediate needs and interests, not those of the center. On the other hand, the Byzantine formula, which proposed a synergistic relationship between the emperor, as patron and defender of the Christian *oikoumene* and the patriarch of Constantinople, as head of the Church, had shaped the political and religious landscape of northeastern Mediterranean, creating a sense of identity and commonality among the orthodox people. Its obliteration at the hands of crusaders did nothing to diminish its prestige. Right after the fall of Constantinople in 1204, four different polities (Trebizond and Nicaea in Asia Minor and Bulgaria and Epirus in the Balkans) attempted to resuscitate it. Although all four states began by asserting themselves vigorously on the regional scene through successful military campaigns, only Nicaea was able to combine victories on the battlefield with the re-creation of key Byzantine institutions (especially the emperor and the patriarch), and ultimately to recover Constantinople and restore the Byzantine Empire.

While the Byzantine model remained so influential as to have Bulgarians and Serbians in the fourteenth century endeavor to replicate it in their realms, it had actually outlived its political usefulness. As a result of civil wars and poor administrative decisions, Byzantium turned in the early 1300s into a minor Balkan state: its territory was substantially reduced, its treasury depleted, its army made up largely by mercenaries, and it could not take advantage of its access to the sea since it had no navy and its trade was in the hands of Venetian and Genoese merchants.

The Byzantine dyarchy (emperor/patriarch) was no longer able to engage political and military realities effectively. Emperors and patriarchs parted ways, if not formally (since the mystique of the joint rule of Church and state was maintained until the very end of Byzantium), then in their actions and reactions to external challenges. The late *basileis* made the survival of the state their foremost priority, being ready to sacrifice long-established policies and strategies on its altar. They sought papal favor in return for military aid, and when that failed to materialize they made their dwindling empire vassal to the Ottomans. In their turn, the patriarchs were concerned with preserving the unity and cohesiveness of the Christian *oikoumene,* which included many other political entities beyond Byzantium. They saw in union with Rome a betrayal of orthodoxy, and in submission to the Ottomans an endangering of their religious identity. As a result, emperors and patriarchs often undermined one another, failing to provide a coherent course of action against the common enemies of the empire.

Historiography: This study comes to supplement a growing body of literature on post-1204 developments in the northeastern Mediterranean. While there is no recent comprehensive historical narrative of the time period, several older monographs provide general overviews of specific areas or polities. George Finlay's *Medieval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond* (1877), Antonios Meliarakes' *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἠπείρου (1204-1261)* (1898), William Miller's *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece* (1908), Alice Gardner's *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The Story of an Empire in Exile* (1912), Jean Longnon's *L'empire latin du Constantinople et la Principauté de Morée* (1949), Donald M. Nicol's *The Despotate of Epirus* (1957), have been standard accounts of political and military encounters taking place in former Byzantine territories as a result of the Latin expansion into the East. Influenced by nineteenth century scholarship, the above-mentioned scholars tended to view

the crusading phenomenon in a positive light and to take at face value the anti-Greek attitudes prevailing in the Latin sources of the time period. Starting with the 1950s, the approach to historical evidence has become more balanced and has been accompanied by a shift towards theme-oriented research. Specialized articles and books have been dealing with such issues as the relationship between papacy and the Greeks,[1] the Latin Church in the East,[2] the institutions and organization of the Latin states in the Balkans and the Aegean,[3] the crusades launched to defend Latin gains in Romania and the Near East.[4] The perspective of these studies has remained predominantly Western, even if it has been increasingly more nuanced and more willing to engage non-Latin sources.

[1] [Note: The references in this footnote and the ones below are by no means exhaustive, given the considerable number of scholarly works on contacts and conflicts between Latins and Greeks after the fourth crusade. Additional references are provided as pertinent in each chapter, and in the bibliography.] The negotiations to end the schism between Rome and Constantinople have occupied a place of honor in the research on East-West interactions. Classical treatments of the topic are Walter Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz. Die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung, bis zum Untergange des byzantinischen Reichs* (Berlin, 1903); Donald M. Nicol's articles published by Variorum reprints as *Byzantium: its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, 1972); Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1976-1984); Joseph Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy, 1198-1400* ((New Brunswick, NJ, 1979). Tia Kolbaba's *The Byzantine Lists. Errors of the Latins* (Chicago, 2000) is a recent endeavor to study the ecclesiastical relationship between East and West not from an institutional point of view, but from that of the Byzantine polemical literature against the Latins.

[2] For the Latin religious activity in Romania, see Robert Lee Wolf's articles on the Latin patriarchate of Constantinople, published in the 1940s and 1950s in *Speculum* and *Traditio*, reprinted under the title *Studies in the Latin Empire of Constantinople* (London, 1976); Elizabeth Brown, "The Cistercians in the Latin Empire of Constantinople and Greece, 1204-1276," *Traditio* 14 (1958) 63-120; Romain Clair, "Les Filles d' Hautecombe dans l'empire latin de Constantinople," *Analecta Sacri Ordinis Cisterciensis* 17 (1961) 261-77; Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus, 1195-1312* (Aldershot, 1997); Nickiphoros Tsougarakis, *The Latin Religious Orders in Medieval Greece, 1204-1500* (Turnhout, 2012). Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States* (London, 1980) and Giorgio Fedalto, *La Chiesa Latina in Oriente* (Verona, 1981) focus on the Latin patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria in the Near East.

[3] David Jacoby, *La féodalité en Grèce médiévale. Les 'Assises de Romanie:' sources, application et diffusion* (Paris, 1971), idem, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion* (Northampton, 1989), and idem, *Byzantium, Latin Romania and the Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 2001); Kenneth M. Setton, *Catalan Domination of Athens* (Cambridge, MA, 1948) and idem, *Athens in the Middle Ages* (London, 1975); Aneta Ilieva, *Frankish Morea, 1205–1262: Socio-cultural Interaction between the Franks and the Local Population* (Athens, 1991); Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204-1500* (London, 1995); Filip van Tricht, *The Latin renovatio of Byzantium: The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204-1228* (Leiden, 2011).

[4] Kenneth M. Setton ed., *A History of the Crusades*, 6 vols. (Philadelphia, 1958-1989); Nikolaos G. Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204-1282* (Turnhout, 2012).

During the past three decades, historians of Byzantium have added to the scholarly discourse on the aftermath of the fourth crusade the missing Byzantine dimension. Dimiter Angelov, Michael Angold, Ruth Macrides and Teresa Shawcross, to name just a few, address the effect of the loss of Constantinople on Byzantine political thought and practice.[5] Clive Foss analyzes the growing reputation of Nicaea as an alternative imperial center prior to 1261.[6] François Bredenkamp, Apostolos Karpozilos, Elena Kaffa, and Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis tackle the multifaceted ecclesiastical issues that the Greeks in the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor faced once their world was no longer religiously uniform.[7] Contributions of other scholars, published in collected volumes, deal with the ways in which the Latin presence in the northeastern Mediterranean determined political, diplomatic, ecclesiastical and commercial exchanges in the region; the drawing, redrawing or removing of boundaries between conquerors and the conquered; the formation and expression of cultural identities after 1204.[8] Also

[5] Dimiter Angelov, "Byzantine Ideological Reactions to the Latin Conquest of Constantinople," in *Urbs capta [see below]* 293-310, and idem, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007); Michael Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile: Government and Society under the Lascarids of Nicaea, 1204-1261* (London, 1975); idem, "Byzantium in Exile," *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 5 (1999) 543-568; idem, "Greeks and Latins after 1204: the Perspective of Exile," *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean* [see n.7 below] 63-86; and idem, "Byzantine Politics vis-à-vis the Fourth Crusade," *Urbs Capta*, 55-70. Ruth J. Macrides, "The New Constantine and the New Constantinople - 1261?," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 6 (1980) 13-41; idem, "From the Komnenoi to the Palaiologoi: Imperial Models in Decline and Exile," *New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th-13th Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994) 269-282. Teresa Shawcross, "The Lost Generation (c.1204-c.1222): Political Allegiance and Local Interests under the Impact of the Fourth Crusade," *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean* [see n.7 below] 9-46. Two recent and valuable collections of articles on the outcomes of the fourth crusade are Angeliki Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, DC, 2001); Angeliki Laiou ed., *Urbs capta: the Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005).

[6] Clive Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and its Praises* (Brookline, MA, 1996).

[7] François Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki (1224-1242)* (Thessalonica, 1996); Apostolos D. *Karpozilos, The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epirus, 1217-1233* (Thessalonica, 1973); Elena Kaffa, *The Greek Church of Cyprus, the Morea and Constantinople during the Frankish era (1196 - 1303): A New Perspective* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014); Nickiphoros I.Tsougarakis, "On the Frontier of the Orthodox and Latin World: Religious Patronage in Medieval Frankish Greece," in Emilia Jamroziak and Karen Stöber eds., *Monasteries on the Borders of Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 2013) 193-210.

[8] Benjamin Arbel, Bernard Hamilton, and David Jacoby eds., *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (London, 1989); Alexander Daniel Beihammer, Maria G. Parani, and Christopher Schabel eds., *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1000 - 1500: Aspects of Cross-cultural Communication* (Leiden, 2008); Judith Herrin and Guillaume Saint-Guillain eds., *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204* (Farnham, 2011); Jonathan Harris, Catherine J. Holmes, and Eugenia Russell eds., *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern*

significant are the studies dealing with the relationship between Christian and Muslim communities in the area. Speros Vryonis examines the reorganization of metropolitan and episcopal sees under Seljuq rule in Anatolia, while Anastasios (Tom) Papademetriou surveys the religious life of the Greek and Slavic communities in Asia Minor and the Balkans during the early Ottoman conquests.[9]

The present study considers another aspect of the East-West encounters, namely the efforts to adapt and adjust the rhetoric of universal rule and the concrete ways in which power was exercised to the unwelcome yet indisputable fact that rival groups with similar hegemonic pretensions now shared the same geographical area. The Latins' coexistence alongside Greeks and Slavs complicated the struggle for regional predominance, as Western political values, norms and expectations had to be taken into account when devising diplomatic and military strategies. The Latin factor became less significant politically by the end of the thirteenth century, when the crusader states abandoned the race for hegemony in the northeastern Mediterranean. It remained however important ecclesiastically, as popes continued to pursue their vision for a united Christendom under their rule, and economically, as Italian merchants searched for new markets and seized upon local weaknesses to extend their trade. The unyielding persistence of the Latin element in the Greek East, together with the fleeting rise to power of Slavic empires in the Balkans in the fourteenth century, completely upset the Byzantine exclusivist understanding of its right to the *imperium.* Bulgaria and Serbia adopted the imperial model proposed by Byzantium but allowed that it could co-occur with similar political

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Mediterranean World after 1150 (Oxford, 2012); Nikolaos G. Chrissis and Mike Carr eds., *Contact and Conflict in Frankish Greece and the Aegean, 1204 - 1453: Crusade, Religion and Trade between Latins, Greeks and Turks* (Farnham, 2014); Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock eds., *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden, 2015).

[9] Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1986); Tom Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan*. *Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford 2015); idem, "The Turkish Conquests and Decline of the Church Reconsidered," in *Church and Society in Late Byzantium*, ed. Dimiter Angelov (Kalamazoo, MI, 2008) 183-200.

arrangements. The Byzantine emperor had few resources left to put up resistance to such a proposition, although the two Balkan empires were opposed by the patriarchate of Constantinople, which sought to reassert its authority over the peninsula, and exploited by the papacy, which did its utmost to impose its presence upon the area. Circumstances, however, could no longer be controlled through mechanisms drawn from an imperial ideology which had its roots in the ancient Roman past. The emergence of a new regional superpower with a very different cultural and religious outlook, the Ottoman sultanate, correlated with the unstoppable process of disintegration of the larger political units into smaller and weaker principalities throughout the Balkans and the Aegean, brought to a permanent halt the medieval Christian contest for hegemony in the northeastern Mediterranean.

Historical Evidence: In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the late medieval patterns of imperial governance in the northeastern Mediterranean, a panoply of sources have been consulted, ranging from chronicles and histories to ecclesiastical and imperial *acta* to official and personal correspondence. The changes that took place between the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders in 1204 and its recovery by the Byzantines in 1261 are well represented in both Western and Eastern sources, although these are unevenly distributed chronologically and geographically, so that certain areas or time periods are better documented than others. The post-1261 developments analyzed in this work are predominantly those occurring in Byzantium and the Balkans, so the evidence tends to be considerably based on Byzantine, Bulgarian and Serbian records, although papal and other Western documents germane to the investigation have also been examined.

Several crusaders - Geoffrey de Villehardouin (a French noble, although not belonging to the leading group of barons), Robert de Clari (a poor French knight), and an anonymous low-

ranking German clergyman - left detailed narratives of the events leading to the attack on Constantinople and its immediate aftermath.[10] A few other works were penned by monks or clerics based on eye-witness accounts of participants in the crusade: Gunther, a Cistercian monk of the abbey of Pairis in Alsace, wrote a chronicle which relied on the recollections of his abbot Martin, who had joined the crusaders in 1202 and returned from Constantinople with a nice collection of icons and relics; an unknown clerk of the cathedral of Halberstadt left a brief account on Bishop Conrad's involvement in the attack on Constantinople; another unknown writer, a canon of the cathedral of Soissons, dealt with the transfer of relics from the Byzantine capital to the cathedral by its bishop, Nevelon of Chérisy.[11] Two documents drawn up by the crusaders and the Venetians offer significant information on the early administrative decisions of the Latin Empire of Constantinople: the March Pact and the partition of the conquered territory.[12]

The Western narratives on post-1204 developments are less in number and usually authored by clergymen or laymen who did not experience the events described first-hand. Henri

[10] Villehardouin and de Clari wrote in Old French; the German cleric's account is in Latin. Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. Edmond Faral, 2 vols. (Paris, 1961); English trans. as "Conquest of Constantinople," in Margaret R. B. Shaw, *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 2009); Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, Old French edition with modern French trans. by Jean Dufournet (Paris 2004), English trans. by Edgar H. McNeal, *Conquest of Constantinople* (New York, 1936); Anonymous, *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, ed. and trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, "The *Devastatio Constantinopolitana*, a Special Perspective on the Fourth Crusade: An Analysis, New Edition, and Translation," *Historical Reflections* 19 (1993) 131-149.

[11] Gunther of Pairis, *Hystoria Constantinopolitana*, ed. Peter Orth (Zurich 1994), English trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, *The Capture of Constantinople: The 'Historia Constantinopolitana' of Gunther of Pairis* (Philadelphia 1997); Anonymous of Halberstadt, *De peregrinatione in Greciam et adventu reliquarum de Grecia libellus*, ed. Paul Riant in *Exuvia sacrae Constantinopolitana* (Paris 1877) 1-20, English trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, "The Anonymous Chronicler of Halberstadt's Account of the Fourth Crusade: Popular Religiosity in the Early Thirteenth Century," *Historical Reflections* 27 (1996) 457-477; Anonymous of Soissons, *De terra Iherosolimitana et quomodo ab urbe Constantinopolitana ad hanc ecclesiam allate sunt reliquie*, ed. and trans. by Alfred J. Andrea and Paul I. Rachlin, "Holy War, Holy Relics, Holy Theft: The Anonymous of Soisson's *De terra Iherosolimitana*, An Analysis, Edition and Translation," *Historical Reflections* 18 (1992) 157-175. See also Alfred J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden, 2008), which provides translations of a few other relevant accounts, such as the letter of Count Hugh of Saint Pol and the chronicles of Ralph of Coggeshall and Alberic of the Trois Fontaines. A discussion of the main Western sources related to the fourth crusade is in Alfred J. Andrea, "Essay on Primary Sources," in Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1997) 299-313.

[12] The Latin text of the March Pact is in Othmar Hageneder et al eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III*, v. 7. 205, English trans. and commentary by Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden 2008) 140-144. The agreement reached regarding the distribution of territories is edited by A. Carile, "Partitio terrarum imperii Romaniae," *Studi veneziani* 7 (1965) 125-305, at 217-222.

de Valenciennes, who wrote an account of the Latin Empire Constantinople during the reign of Henry of Flanders (1205-1216), is a notable exception, as he was a clerk in the entourage of Baldwin of Flanders, the first Latin emperor.[13] The other chroniclers gathered their information from travelers, pilgrims and Church hierarchs who had spent time in the Near East, the Balkans or the Aegean. Useful narratives are the *Chronique rimée* by Philippe Mouskes, born in Ghent, canon and then bishop of Tournai (the chronicle is a versified history of the kings of French up to 1243, with references to the Latin Empire of Constantinople); *Chronica majora* by Matthew Paris, an English Benedictine monk from Saint Albans abbey (the work is in the form of annals, from the creation of the world to 1259); and the *Chronica* of Alberic [Aubry] de Trois Fontaines, a Cistercian monk from the abbey of Trois Fontaines in Champagne (his writing covers the history of the world from creation to 1241).[14]

The Venetian dealings with the Latin Empire of Constantinople and the crusader and Greek states in Romania and Anatolia were reported in part by Italian historians. Martino da Canale (d. after 1275) wrote in Old French a chronicle of Venice which traced the history of the city until 1275. Andrea Dandolo (1306-1354), a professor of law at the University of Padua and doge of Venice from 1343 to his death, discussed the city's expansion from its foundation to the year 1339; his work, written in Latin, survived in two versions, short and extended. Lorenzo de' Monacis (1351-1428), a Venetian notary, chancellor of Crete and historian, left an account of Venice from origins to the year 1354; he was the first Western author to use Byzantine sources

[13] Henri de Valenciennes, *Histoire de l'Empereur Henri de Constantinople*, ed. Jean Longnon (Paris, 1948).
[14] Philippe Mouskes, *Chronique Rimée*, ed. Frederic-Auguste baron de Reiffenberg (Bruxelles 1836); Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*, ed. Henry Luard, 7 vols. (London, 1872-1883); "Chronica Albrici Monachi Trium Fontium," ed. Paul Scheffer-Boichorst, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptorum*, v. 23 (Hanover, 1874) 631-950, with English trans. of the sections on the fourth crusade in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 277-290.

for the reconstruction of the the fourth crusade, and the complex cultural milieu it shaped.[15]

The increased activity of the Church of Rome in the northeastern Mediterranean as a result of the crusaders' settlement of the area is reflected in the large number of papal letters, encyclicals, conciliar decisions, and charters focused on the Latin churches in the conqured territory (Romania), and in the agreements negotiated with various Greek and Latin rulers. An important source on Innocent III (1198-1216), during whose reign the fourth crusade took place, is *Gesta Innocentii III*, which provides the letters exchanged by the pope with the Byzantine emperor and patriarch, the Bulgarian tsar, the Frankish barons and Venetian doge prior and right after the capture of Constantinople.[16] A comprehensive and reliable edition of Innocent's correspondence is *Die Register Innocenz'*, which so far has published thirteen volumes of his letters, covering the years 1198 to 1211.[17] The extensive communication of Pope Honorius III (1216-1227), Innocent's successor, with the Latin rulers in Greece and the Aegean, including his efforts to launch a crusade against the Greeks of Epirus who were threatening the Latin Empire of Constantinople, has been recently made available by William O. Duba and Chris Schabel. The collection provides the Latin text of the letters with full English translations of main pieces and summaries of the rest.[18] Popes Gregory IX (1227-1241) and Innocent IV (1243-1254) carried out frequent negotiations with the Greeks established at Nicaea on the union of churches, and their letters reveal the main issues (theological, practical and disciplinary) at stake. Part of this

[15] Martino da Canale, *Les Estoires de Venise*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Firenze, 1973); Andrea Dandolo, *Chronica per extensum descripta*, ed. Ester Pastorello, 7 vols. (Bologna, 1938-1958); Lorenzo de' Monacis, *Chronicon de rebus venetis ab U.C. ad annum 1354*, ed. Flaminius Cornelius (also Flaminio Cornaro) (Venice 1758). For background on the Venetian school of historiography, see A. Pertusi ed., *La storiografia veneziana fino al sec. XVI. Aspetti e problemi* (Firenze, 1970).

[16] Latin text in David Gress-Wright ed., "The *Gesta Innocentii III*. Text, Introduction and Commentary," Ph.D. Diss., Bryn Mawr College (1981), and "Gesta Innocentii papae III," ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1890); English trans. by James M. Powell as Anonymous, *Deeds of Innocent the Great* (Washington, DC, 2004).

[17] Othmar Hageneder et al eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III*, 13 vols. (Graz/Köln/ Rome/Vienna, 1964-2015). The letters dealing with the fourth crusade are translated in English by Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 7-176.

[18] William O. Duba and Chris Schabel eds., *Bullarium Hellenicum: Pope Honorius III's Letters to Frankish Greece and Constantinople* (Turnhout, 2015).

material has been edited by the Vatican Publishing House in the *Pontificia commisio ad redigentum codici iuris canonici orientalis* (PCRCICO) series.[19] Pope Alexander IV (1254-1261) wrote to the Latin clergy in Greece and Cyrus, asking for their help in calling another crusade, this time against the Greeks of Nicaea, who were closing in on Constantinople. He also corresponded with the Nicene authorities on the prospect of ending the schism, emphasizing however papal primacy and the Greeks' duty of submitting themselves to the pope's authority.[20]

On the Byzantine side, Nicetas Choniates, a well-positioned official at the imperial court under the Comneni and the Angeli who fled Constantinople after it fell to the crusaders and first took refuge at Selymbria, then at Nicaea, left a vivid account of the conquest and the widespread destruction inflicted by the Latins upon the city. His history also traced the military encounters between Bulgarians, Franks and Greeks in the Balkans, and between Franks, Greeks and Seljuqs in Asia Minor, during the years 1204 to 1206.[21] Choniates attributed the tragedies that befell the Byzantines to the corruption and manifold sins of their rulers, especially of the emperors from the Angeli dynasty; he understood the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders as an act of divine punishment and took a dim view on the future of his people. George Acropolites, another court official, composed the history of the Nicene state from its foundation until 1261 in a more critical manner. He was at the same time more optimistic, as he wrote his detailed account after the recovery of Constantinople by the Byzantines. Acropolites had been raised in Latin-ruled Constantinople, but as a young man he was sent by his parents to study at Nicaea, where he remained and entered the service of Emperor John III Vatatzes. Although very close to the

[19] Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Honorii III (1216-1227) et Gregorii IX (1227-1241)*, PCRCICO series III, v. 3 (Rome, 1950); Theodosius Haluscynskyj and Meletius Wojnar eds., *Acta Innocentii papae IV (1243–1254)*, PCRCICO series III, v. 4.1 (Rome, 1962).
[20] Theodosius Haluscynskyj and Meletius Wojnar eds., *Acta Alexandri papae IV (1254-1261)*, PCRCICO series III, v. 4.2 (Rome, 1966).
[21] Jan Louis van Dieten ed., *Nicetae Choniatae Historiae* (Berlin, 1975), English trans. by Harry J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984).

imperial circle, Acropolites was no supporter of Vatatzes or Theodore II Lascaris, because of their anti-aristocratic policies. Acropolites favored instead Michael VIII Palaiologus, and his history echoes his biases. Nonetheless, his writing provides the most complex narrative of the post-1204 Mediterranean world from a Byzantine perspective.[22]

Significant information on the political and religious interactions between Latins and Greeks, and between the Greeks of Nicaea and those of Epirus, can be gleaned from formal and informal sources originating in ecclesiastical circles. The early contacts (1204-1206) between the papal legate to Constantinople and the Byzantine prelates and monks who had remained in the occupied city are discussed by Nicholas Mesarites in the funeral oration to his brother John.[23] After he moved to Nicaea in 1207, Nicholas was appointed metropolitan of Ephesus and in this capacity he took part once again in union negotiations (1214-1215). Nicephorus Blemmydes, a scholar, teacher and later monk who also participated in talks with papal representatives during the reign of Vatatzes, wrote letters and an autobiographical account which allow insights into the religious and cultural life of the Nicene state, and into the many intrigues at the imperial court.[24] The correspondence carried out by the Epirote hierarchs John Apocaucus of Naupactus, George Bardanes of Corfu, and Demetrius Chomatenus of Ohrid with the patriarchs of Nicaea are out main source for the ecclesiastical controversy which severely alienated the Greek churches in Europe from those in Asia Minor in the 1220s.[25] The patriarchal *acta* issued during the Nicene

[22] August Heisenberg ed., *Georgii Acropolitae Opera* (Leipzig, 1903), repr. with corrections by P. Wirth (Stuttgart 1978); English trans. by Ruth Macrides, *The History* (Oxford, 2007).
[23] August Heisenberg ed., "Der Epitaphios des Nikolaos Mesarites auf seinen Bruder Johannes," in *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion*, v. 1 (München, 1922).
[24] Joseph A. Munitiz ed., *Nicephori Blemmydae autobiographia sive curriculum vitae necnon epistula universalior* (Turnhout, 1984); English trans. of the autobiography by Joseph A. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes: A Partial Account* (Leuven, 1988).
[25] John Apocaucus' letters are in Vasilje G. Vasiljevky ed., "Epirotica saeculi XIII," *Vizantiiski Vremennik* 3 (1896) 233-299. Raymond-Joseph Loenertz ed., "Lettre de Georges Bardanes, métropolite de Corcyre, au patriarch oecuménique Germain II, 1226-1227 c. [1228 c.]," in *Epeteris hetaireias byzantinon spoudon* 33 (1964) 87-118, repr. *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca* (Rome, 1970) 467-501. An older edition of Demetrius Chomatenus' letters is in

exile cover a wide variety of topics, from the relationship between emperor and the Church, to episcopal appointments, disciplinary measures, theological errors and union negotiations with Rome.[26]

The political and religious crises that followed the return to Constantinople of the imperial court are tackled by George Pachymeres, whose history covers the years 1260-1308. Pachymeres taught liberal arts the patriarchal academy in the Church of Saint Sophia and held important offices at the court. Unlike his predecessor Acropolites, he took quite a dislike to Michael VIII Palaiologus, whom he upbraided for his pro-aristocratic and pro-Western policies. He spent much of his account detailing the political machinations of the emperor, as well as the lengthy ecclesiastical negotiations meant to heal the Arsenite schism and the raging theological debates that accompanied the Union of Lyons (1274).[27] Another relevant source for the difficulties Byzantium encountered after 1261 is the correspondence of Patriarch Athanasius of Constantinople (1289-1293, 1303-1309). His letters contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between emperor and Church at the time of military and economic disaster, mainly the conquest of western Asia Minor by the Turks and the ravaging of Thrace by the Catalans hired to fight the Turks in the early 1300s, which provoked an economic collapse. The patriarch urged the emperor and other governmental officials to deal swiftly and adequately with the consequences of having agricultural lands devastated and a huge wave of Christian refugees fleeing from Anatolia to Constantinople. Athanasius I also criticized the corruption of the

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Jean-Baptiste Pitra ed., *Analecta Sacra et Classica Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata* v. 7 (Rome, 1891); an updated collection of Chomatenus' personal and official correspondence together with verdicts and other documents issued by the archiepiscopal court of Ohrid under his direction is now Günter Prinzing ed., *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*. *Das Aktencorpus des Ohrider Erzbischofs Demetrios. Einleitung, kritischer Text und Indices* (Berlin, 2002).

[26] Vitalien Laurent, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. IV. (Paris, 1971).

[27] Georges Pachymérès, *Relations historiques*, Greek text with French trans. by Albert Failler and Vitalien Laurent, 5 vols. (Paris, 1984).

Byzantine aristocracy and likewise of the Church hierarchs, finding the way out of the moral crisis in the strict enforcement of canon law.[28]

Two important historical narratives written in the 1360s recorded and commented on the major developments of the first half of the fourteenth century: the civil war between emperors John VI Cantacuzenus and his son-in-law John V Palaiologus (1341-1354), and the Hesychast controversy (1341-1351). Cantacuzenus himself wrote one of these histories, which covered the years 1320 to 1356.[29] The other history was composed by his friend and later enemy, the scholar Nicephorus Gregoras, who related developments from 1204 to 1358.[30] Both authors gave greater weight to the events in which they were direct participants, and both tended to be subjective and at times self-defensive, as the need arose to explain their stance throughout the war and during the ruthless theological debates centered on Gregory Palamas. Their accounts provide a solid background for understanding the troubles that plagued Byzantium during the first half of the fourteenth century and had serious repercussions on the next. Cantacuzenus' and Gregoras' rather lengthy histories are supplemented with the more concise anonymous chronicles, which usually deal with a limited number of political and military events, but give more details for each of them.[31]

The main source for the ecclesiastical affairs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is the register containing the official documents (patriarchal letters and synodal decisions) issued by the patriarchate between 1315 and 1402. The collection, published by Franz Miklosich and Joseph Müller in the nineteenth century, is based on two manuscripts found in the Austrian

[28] Greek text with English translation in Alice-Mary M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Washington DC,1975).
[29] Ludwig Schopen ed., *Iohannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1828-1832).
[30] Ludwig Schopen and Barthold Niehbuhr eds., *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, 3 vols. (Bonn, 1829-1855).
[31] Peter Schreiner ed., *Chronica Byzantina Breviora*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1976-1978).

National Library in Vienna (Hist. Graec. XLVII and XLVIII).[32] Parts of it have been superseded by the new critical edition of Hunger and Kresten which so far has covered the years 1315-1363.[33] Most of these documents deal with episcopal appointments, directives to holders of various sees, arbitration in disputes, and conduct of the clergy. The Institut Français d'Études Byzantines in Paris also published a complex collection of patriarchal acts, which used a wider variety of sources than Miklosich-Müller (including the archives of the monasteries on Mt. Athos, Russian chronicles, and saints' lives); however, it does not provide the official documents themselves, but only their summary, plus a critique meant to set each patriarchal act in its historical context.

Another major collection useful in the analysis of the relationship between Church and State in Byzantium is that drawing on imperial registers, the acts that recorded the emperor's intervention in ecclesiastical matters providing valuable data to this study.[34] The relationship between the patriarch and the emperor was constantly worked out over the many centuries of Byzantine rule; even as the empire faded away, several attempts were made by ecclesiastics to adjust their partnership with the secular power to the realities of the day. The most relevant text is the one issued under Patriarch Neilos (1380-1388) upon the request of Emperor John V (1341-1381), concerning the rights and limitations of the emperor vis-à-vis the higher clergy. It was the first time when imperial prerogatives in this regard were put down in writing. The Greek text together with its French translation was published by Laurent.[35] Two other documents from the early fifteenth century reveal a growing ecclesiastical concern with restricting imperial

[32] Franz Miklosich and Joseph Müller eds., *Acta et Diplomata greaca medii aevi sacra et profana*, 6 vols. (Vienna, 1860-1890).
[33] Herbert Hunger and Otto Kresten eds., *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel, 1315-1363*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, vol. 1-3 (Vienna, 1981, 1995, 2001).
[34] Franz Dölger ed., *Regesten der Kaiserkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 565–1453*, vol. 5: *Regesten von 1341–1453* (München, 1965).
[35] Vitalien Laurent, "Les droits de l'empereur en matière ecclésiastique," *Revue des études byzantines* 13 (1955) 5-20.

involvement in church administration: the treatise of Makarios, the metropolitan of Ankara,[36] and the *Dialogue in Christ* of Symeon, bishop of Thessaloniki.[37]

A serious Byzantine concern after the 1350s was the reorganization of metropolitan sees and bishoprics, as much of the territory which belonged ecclesiastically to Constantinople had fallen under Ottoman rule. Episcopal lists compiled by imperial or patriarchal chancelleries for administrative purposes give a sense of the geographical and hierarchical distribution of the sees, and of the changes that took place during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: loss of dioceses because of people's flight from conquered areas or because of their conversion to Islam, establishment of new sees closer to Constantinople, elevation of bishops to the rank of metropolitans, and so on. Jean Darrouzès published in 1981 the extant episcopal lists as part of the broader initiative of the Institut Français d'Études Byzantines to assemble a collection of sources for an ecclesiastical geography of the Byzantine Empire.[38]

In regards to the Balkan empires of the fourteenth century, the documents issued by Bulgarian and Serbian political authorities are instrumental in understanding the difficulties encountered by Slavic rulers, perceived as outsiders by the supporters of Byzantium and its traditional leadership paradigm, in legitimizing and preserving their emperorship.[39] Besides administrative, diplomatic and legislative records which are relevant for the struggle both states went through as they sought to acquire imperial status, hagiographical or encomiastic writings in Slavonic also offer glimpses into the Slavic imperial experience of the time. Among them, the

[36] Cod. gr. 1379, ff. 98r-148r, Bibl. Nat., Paris; a summary is available in Vitalien Laurent, "Le trisépiscopat du Patriarche Matthieu I^{er} (1397-1410)," *Revue des études byzantines* 30 (1972), 89-96.
[37] J.-P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 155, col. 305-469; a brief discussion is provided by Vitalien Laurent, "Le rituel de l'investiture du patriarche byzantin au début du XV^{e} siècle," *Bulletin de la Section historique de l'Academie roumaine* 28 (1947) 231-232.
[38] Jean Darrouzès ed., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin* , pt. 1: *Le siège Constantiople et le patriacat oecuménique*, t. 1: *Notitiae Episcoparum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981).
[39] Kiril Petkov ed., *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden, 2008), provides translations of a wide variety of secular and ecclesiastical documents of the time period. More bibliography is in chapter 6 of this work.

most significant are the *vitae* of Bulgarian holy men composed by Patriarch Euthymius of Trnovo in the second half of the fourteenth century,[40] the *vita* of Theodosius of Trnovo (d. 1367), one of the first and most famous Hesychasts from Bulgaria, written in Greek by Patriarch Kallistos of Constantinople but surviving only in its Slavonic translation,[41] and the funerary orations and other appropriate works of the Hesychast monk and diplomat Gregory Camblak.[42]

The Western sources used for the second part of this study are predominantly those issued by the papal chancery: correspondence with Byzantine patriarchs and emperors, and with Latin clergymen and rulers, concerning matters in Byzantium or the Balkans, as well as other official documents such as bulls, encyclicals, sermons, etc. addressing eastern concerns.[43] An important source for Roman ecclesiastical transactions in the northeastern Mediterranean is the *Life of Saint Peter Thomas*, a Dominican who acted as papal legate at the court of Prince Stephen Dušan of Serbia and in Cyprus, and as Latin patriarch of Constantinople, and who in this latter capacity was involved in the conversion of several Byzantine scholars to Catholicism.[44]

Methodological Approach: The Christian imperial experience of the Middle Ages, despite its endurance and overall significance for the history of Europe, enjoys less popularity in today's scholarship, which is concerned primarily with modern empires and their impact on local

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[40] Emil Kałużniacki ed., *Werke des Patriarchen von Bulgarien Euthymius, 1375-1393* (Vienna, 1901).
[41] Kallistos of Constantinople, "Life of Theodosius of Trnovo," ed. by Vasil N. Zlatarski in *Sborniku za narodni umotvorenija, nauka i knižina*, xx (Sofia, 1904), 1-41, English translation in Petkov, *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, 286-314.
[42] Gregory Camblak, "Encomium to Our Holy Father Euthymius, Patriarch of Trnovo," ed. by Peno Rusev in *Pohvalno slovo za Evtimij ot Grigorij Camblak* (Sofia, 1971).
[43] *PCRCICO series III*, vol. 10: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Innocentii Papae VI, 1352- 1362* (Vatican City, 1961); vol. 11: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Urbani PP. V, 1362 – 1370* (Vatican City, 1964); vol. 12: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Gregorii PP. XI, 1370 - 1378* (Vatican City, 1966); vol. 13, t. 1: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Urbani PP. V (1378 – 1389), Bonifacii PP. IX (1389 - 1404), Innocentii PP. VII (1404 - 1406) et Gregorii PP. XII (1406 - 1415)* (Vatican City, 1970); vol. 13, t. 2: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta pseudopontificum Clementis PP. VII (1378 - 1394), Benedicti PP. XIII (1394 - 1417), Alexandri PP. V (1409 - 1410) et Ioannis PP. XXIII (1406 - 1415)* (Vatican City, 1970); vol. 14, t.1-2: Aloysius L. Tautu ed., *Acta Martini PP. V, 1417 - 1431*(Vatican City, 1980); vol. 15: Giorgio Fedalto ed., *Acta Eugenii Papae IV, 1431 – 1447* (Vatican City, 1990).
[44] Phillipe de Mézières, *Vita sancti Petri Thomae*, ed. and intro. by Joachim Smet (Rome, 1954).

communities. Empires are usually assessed negatively, as greed-based entities established through violent acquisition of territory and maintained via political and social subjugation, economic exploitation, and cultural assimilation.[45] A more balanced approach to imperial power has been recently proposed by Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, who see 'empire' as a long-lasting type of polity in the history of the world, owing its endurance to the ability of recognizing and managing human diversity through complex yet most often accommodating governing strategies. An important role in the effective ruling of a vast and diverse territory belonged to the 'intermediaries,' locally influential people who saw the political and economic benefits of associating themselves with the center, and became channels through which imperial matters were communicated to the peripheries and decisions enforced. These intermediaries also ensured that the formative ideal of the ruling elite reached and left its mark on the masses. To preserve unity and consensus despite the multiplicity of forms of thinking and acting within the empire, the elites' ideal had to become prevalent (whether it was cultural-oriented, as in China or Ancient Rome, religious, as in Byzantium or the Arab caliphate, legalistic, as in the British Empire, or political-ideological as in the Soviet Union). An empire disintegrated and/or fell prey to a neighboring power whenever the effort to preserve the balance between local differences and the center lost ground to the opposing endeavor of accumulating and exercising authority locally.[46] The interpretation of empires proposed by Burbank and Cooper provides a much more reliable framework for understanding medieval imperial practices than the rather simplistic narrative of empires as repressive structures of conquest and continual mistreatment of local populations. The

[45] See for instance John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global Empires* (London and New York, 2008); Herfried Münkler, *Imperien. Die Logik der Weltherrschaft. Vom alten Rom bis zu den Vereinigten Staaten* (Bonn, 2005); Timothy Parsons, *The Rule of Empires: Those Who Built Them, Those Who Endured Them, and Why They Always Fall* (Oxford, 2010).
[46] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, 2010).

authors themselves reserve less space to medieval empires than to the modern ones (the Carolingian, Byzantine and Islamic empires are discussed together in one chapter, as attempts to establish universal rule using monotheism as the unifying ideal), but their overall analysis is helpful in understanding political formations that do not fit neatly into the current, post-modernist explanatory paradigm of imperial power.

The Christian polities examined in this work are those which put forth claims of universal leadership in the northeastern Mediterranean after the collapse of Byzantium at the beginning of the thirteenth century. The disintegration of the political structure which had held together or at least kept within its sphere of influence the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor prompted the dual contest for recreating the vanished empire and for instituting smaller but self-contained, self-governing units. Monarchs of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries alike still emulated the Byzantine model of governance, whose reputation outlasted its failure to provide an adequate response to the crusaders, but the Western imperial paradigm and the papal ideal of worldwide rule were also tried out, alongside the attempts to establish autonomous principalities and kingdoms. The northeastern Mediterranean became an area of experimentation for various styles of leadership, among which however the pursuit of imperial power was predominant. Empire-building and the subsequent efforts of preserving imperial status are analyzed from the perspective of ruling practices and modes of interaction meant to overcome both the centrifugal tendencies of the regions incorporated by force in the new polity and the neighboring powers with similar expansionist goals. Successful governance implied war and violence as well as diplomatic initiatives leading to peace negotiations, military pacts, and marriages alliances between the center and the periphery, or between the various contenders for hegemony. Another significant factor affecting the quest for supremacy in the Mediterranean was the thorny

relationship between secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The ways in which emperors, patriarchs, and popes articulated and defended their right to control regional affairs are investigated through the prism of medieval constructions of power and legitimacy. In this same context of the interaction between politics and religion, a fresh reading of the sources allows for the reassessment of the view predominant in Byzantine studies, according to which during the last two centuries of Byzantium, the patriarch of Constantinople, by virtue of the authority vested in his person as spiritual patron of the Christian *oikoumene*, remained powerful across the Orthodox world even when imperial assistance was no longer available.

Chapters and Organization: The first part of this study centers on the geopolitical realities shaped by imperially-driven visions in the northeastern Mediterranean after the fourth crusade. The focus is predominantly on military and diplomatic encounters between the various power players in the area, and on their efforts to build coherent political structures, able to withstand the rough competition for hegemony. The second part, which deals with post-1261 developments, narrows down the focus to the more localized imperial endeavors in the Balkans. A key factor in the regional negotiations of power became the patriarch of Constantinople. His success in recreating a hegemonic space in the peninsula depended on the ability to (out)maneuver both the newly formed imperial authorities and his junior colleagues who had unilaterally declared their independence from the Byzantine Church.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the main issues encountered in the study of medieval empires, the papacy and the patriarchate of Constantinople, as well as a summary of the patriarchal challenges to the authority of the Byzantine *basileis*, particularly in regard to uncanonical marriages and coronation. Chapter 2 reasseses the relationship between the main actors in the East and in the West (Byzantine *basileis*, patriarchs, popes and Western emperors)

prior to 1204, arguing that Byzantium, the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire depended on one another in the ways in which they defined themselves and acted out these self-definitions in the world they claimed to lead. Their interactions ranged from friendly to openly hostile, but each recognized the other two as unavoidable partners in the constant dialectic of power and domination they engaged in. Prior to the fourth crusade, military encounters between Byzantium on one hand, the papacy and/or the Holy Roman Empire on the other took place in areas peripheral to all three: usually in southern Italy and Sicily, but also in central Europe and the western Balkans. The fourth crusade brought the two most powerful Western institutions to the East, right in the heart of what used to be Byzantine territory, pushing the Byzantines to the edges.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the attempts made by Latins, Greeks and Bulgarians to reintegrate the northeastern Mediterranean into one grand into imperial structure. Most of the empires born from the ashes of Byzantium were successful for short spans of time only, as their rulers were not able to exploit politically and militarily their initial conquests, either because they did not understand local circumstances accurately and as a result lacked coherent policies to build strong connections between the center and the peripheries, or because other, stronger participants in the imperial race attacked and won in direct confrontations. Besides, apart from the Byzantines of Nicaea and Epirus, no others had experience at building and consolidating empires, and this lack of traditions in holding together large and diverse polities also played a role in their demise. In its turn, the papacy, while seemingly the greatest winner of the crusade (the pope became the lord suzerain of Latin principalities strewn throughout the northeastern Mediterranean, and the religious head of the Eastern Christians who had been previously members of the Byzantine Church), did not actually succeed in extending its authority over the

Greek and Slavic East. The papacy could not persuade the local population, whose values, norms and expectations had been shaped by Byzantine cultural and religious mores, to accept its claims to universal leadership, and it lacked the mechanisms to enforce its rulings in places where it was only nominally the head of the Church.

The last two chapters discuss the major ruling patterns in the Balkans after the recovery of Constantinople in 1261 by the Greeks of Nicaea. The restored Byzantine Empire was unable to regain its former prestige and influence in the area, as it spent its first fifty years engrossed in major, crippling disagreements between the Church and the emperor, and between various factions within the Church, and the next fifty years in devastating civil wars. In the second half of the fourteenth century, Hesychasm, a monastic movement of spiritual renewal centered on Mount Athos, gained audience and support in Constantinople, becoming a major force in the pacification and reunification of the empire. Chapter 5 reassesses the view prevailing in Byzantine studies that Hesychasm was also the main factor that contributed to the success of the Byzantine policies of reconciliation with the Bulgarian and Serbian churches. The political and military weakening of Byzantium had led to the emergence of two neighboring empires, Bulgaria and Serbia, which sought to take over the Byzantine self-proclaimed mission of leading the Christian *oikoumene*. A first step in the process was the rejection of the authority of the patriarch of Constantinople. Current scholarship considers that the patriarchs reasserted their jurisdiction over the peninsula by planning and implementing a series of strategies centered on Hesychast beliefs and on a close cooperation with loyal Hesychast monks from Bulgaria and Serbia. These monks acted in their homelands as advocates of the patriarchal vision of pan-orthodox unity and eventually reversed local policies of ecclesiastical autonomy and insubordination to Constantinople. But, while the use of Hesychasm for political ends was to a great extent effective

within the Byzantine Empire, it played a comparatively minor role in restoring consensus between Constantinople and the Balkan churches. Since on local scenes Hesychasm never gained the type of influence and popularity it enjoyed in Byzantium, it was unable to become the architect of ecclesiastical reconciliation.

Chapter 6 investigates the rise of Balkan empires and the efforts made by the patriarchate of Constantinople to regain control over Bulgarian and Serbian ecclesiastical affairs. It argues that serious limitations to the effectiveness of patriarchal strategies in this regard arose inadvertently from the spread of the Byzantine model of governance to a local level. The Byzantine dual leadership (emperor/patriarch) had played well into the hands of Bulgarian and Serbian tsars, as they forged a close relationship with the local archbishop, who then chose to obey his political patron and ignore his ecclesiastical superior in Constantinople. While previous scholarship has emphasized the elevation of the patriarchs of Constantinople to a position of prestige that supplanted and surpassed the *basileus*' political influence in the northeastern Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages, this research shows that the ability of the patriarchate to reassert its authority over the breakaway churches was in reality hampered by the general weakness in the imperial exercise of power. Without an emperor to back them up, the patriarchs attained only a modest degree of success, mainly in the places where local authorities were themselves sympathetic towards Constantinople's diplomatic efforts to uphold unity and orthodoxy. The Byzantine primacy in ecclesiastical matters was widely acknowledged once again only after the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans sapped the local rulers' hold on power, and the return under the jurisdiction of Constantinople could bring some form of military relief in exchange.

CHAPTER 1. KEY CONCEPTS AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Medieval Empires: General Considerations

In discussing the Christian polities which put forth claims of universal leadership during the Middle Ages, several issues confront the historian who works from a comparative perspective. Identifying a set of common features is hampered by the distinctive characteristics each empire acquired in the geopolitical context in which it emerged and carried on. Issues of continuity, change and adaptation, of exclusion and inclusion, play a role in understanding dissimilarities between political entities which pursued roughly the same goals during the same time period: centralizing authority, managing diversity by developing and controlling local networks of power, defending borders, promoting Christianity and ensuring the prevalence of orthodoxy. The Christian imperial enterprise had an unbroken presence in the Greek East since the foundation of Constantinople in the fourth century until its conquest by Ottomans in 1453, while within the same chronological framework the West saw empires come and go, none able to establish a stable center similar to Constantinople. On the other hand the papacy, although a non-political body, advanced its own universalist ideal and quasi-imperial goals; by the twelfth century it had become the most influential institution on the European scene, with plans to incorporate the East within the Christian world united under its sway.

The constitutive elements of imperial authority and the way in which it was exerted differed significantly East and West. The Byzantine Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire, from which it inherited the imperial title and vision, the bureaucracy with its offices, rules and strategies, the foreign policy, the army with its organization and war tactics, the provinces with their fully functioning traditions of local governing.[1] The Byzantines had to adapt

[1] "Byzantine Empire" is a term coined in the West after the political entity to which it refers vanished completely from the historical record. The people who ruled the empire as well as those who lived in it called it "Roman," as

(i.e. Hellenize, Christianize, update, sometimes radically modify) Roman administrative, legal and religious practices, so as to correspond with contemporary needs and values, but they did not need to create the ruling institutions and the imperial ideology anew.[2] The exact point in time when the transition from "Roman" to "Byzantine" took place is still disputed: some historians place it quite early, in the fourth century, with the alternative dates of 330 (inauguration of Constantinople) and 395 (the permanent division between the two halves of the Roman Empire), others would have it occur in the seventh century (after the loss of the Near East and North Africa to the Arab Muslims), in the eighth century (the recovery from the "Dark Ages" and the start of the Isaurian dynasty), or even as late as ninth century (the end of the Iconoclastic controversy).[3] Byzantinists agree however that regardless of the precise moment when Byzantium took on its unique medieval features, the empire was not a new political formation, but the reorganization of a state with a lengthy imperial past.

In the West, the Roman Empire disintegrated in the late 400s, and the empire founded north of the Alps in the ninth century, like its successors, lacked a firm, direct association with ancient Rome, although some emperors did try to present their government as a restoration of Roman rule. The Western imperial structures, legislation, and cultural institutions were of mixed (Roman, Germanic and Christian) origins, but their general outlook was "Frankish," as they were devised by German monarchs to meet the need of ruling peoples who had little to no connection

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they saw no breaking point between the ancient Roman state and theirs. Constantinople, their capital, was the "New Rome," and they themselves were "Romans." After the re-creation of an empire in the West in the ninth century, they were increasingly identified in papal or imperial correspondence as "Greeks," and their ruler as "emperor of the Greeks," which implicitly set limits to the claims of Roman (i.e. universal) leadership. Modern scholars also use the term "Byzantine" (sometimes "Greek" as well) rather than "Roman," in order to differentiate between the classical, Latin-speaking empire centered on Rome and Italy, and the medieval, Greek-speaking polity centered on Constantinople, Thrace and Asia Minor.

[2] General introductions to Byzantine institutions and life outlook are provided by Louis Bréhier, *Les institutions de l'Empire byzantin* (Paris, 1970); Guglielmo Cavallo ed., *The Byzantines* (Chicago, 1997); Judith Herrin, *Byzantium: The Surprising Life of a Medieval Empire* (Princeton, 2007); Cyril Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York, 1980).

[3] For an overview of the problems related to the periodization of Byzantine history, see Liz James, "Byzantium: A Very, Very Short Introduction," in Liz James ed., *A Companion to Byzantium* (Chichester, UK, 2010) 1-8.

to Roman political patterns and traditions.[4] In contrast, the papacy could and did emphasize its Roman character, pointing out to its unbroken link to the ancient empire, often finding itself at odds with the Byzantines, who saw themselves as sole heirs of Rome. The papacy had the advantage of having been established in Rome, and of ruling from Rome, based on an administration that had converted Roman secular institutions into their ecclesiastical counterparts so as to serve religious purposes. The College of Cardinals as an advisory body and the curia with its chancery, treasury, commissions and law courts followed closely the governing pattern of imperial Rome.[5]

The first builders of an empire in the medieval West, the Carolingians, seem to have been rather unsure of the exact nature of their relationship with the Roman Empire. When Charlemagne assumed the imperial title in A.D. 800, he controlled a large swath of European land. He did it within the Frankish understanding of political authority as hegemonic lordship over an assorted array of lesser rulers, not according to the Roman notion that the emperor was a public magistrate in charge of people's welfare. His coronation as emperor by the pope does not appear to have changed the way in which he viewed his political role as primarily a chief overlord. [6] The sources differ in how they assessed the event: those of Frankish origin reflected

[4] A traditional discussion of the medieval ideal and practice of emperorship in the West is in Robert Folz, *L'idée d'empire en occident du V^e^ au XIV^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1953), English trans. by Sheila A. Ogilvie, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century* (Westport, CT, 1969). For a more recent approach to the imperial political culture in the Middle Ages, see Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany, 800-1500* (Turnhout, 2006).

[5] Brief, one-volume introductions to the medieval papacy are Roger Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven*: *A History of the Papacy* (New York, 2009), Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes (*New Haven, CT, 2002), Bernhard Schimmelpfennig, *The Papacy*, trans. James Sievert (New York, 1992), and Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages (*London, 1972).

[6] Jennifer R. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Washington, DC, 2015) 361-364; Janet L. Nelson, "The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual," in eadem, *The Frankish World 750-900* (London, 1996) 98-131; Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe* (Philadelphia, 1993) 125-140. Also see Warren Brown, "The Idea of Empire in Bavaria," Weiler and MacLean eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany*, 37-55; Nelson, "Kingship and Royal Government," in Rosamund McKiterrick ed., *New Cambridge Medieval History*, v. 2: *c. 700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995) 383-430, with the Carolingian ideology of power discussed on 422-430.

Charlemagne's reluctance to style himself into a Roman emperor, while pro-papal writings constructed his coronation and later reign as the revival of the defunct Roman Empire.[7] The papacy had an interest in promoting the idea of *translatio imperii* (geographical transfer of the empire from the Byzantines to the Franks), as it was in the process of separating itself from Constantinople. Charlemagne himself never really asserted that his authority replaced that of the "Roman emperors" who ruled from Constantinople. According to his biographer Einhard, he bore "with great patience" the envy of the *basileis* (who claimed exclusive rights to call themselves "Roman"), and tried to find ways to negotiate his recognition as co-equal rather than fight with the Byzantines over supremacy.[8] Charlemagne did not assume the title "emperor of the Romans" or *imperator Romanorum* (which he recognized as belonging to his Byzantine counterparts), but called himself *imperator, Romanum gubernans imperium* (emperor in charge of, or ruling, the Roman Empire). He never renounced his royal title, *rex Francorum et Langobardorum* (king of the Franks and Lombards).[9]

Depending on the evidence prioritized, scholars have either favored the Roman position which saw in Charlemagne's elevation to the imperial office the restoration of the ancient emperorship with all its claims to supremacy and universalism, or followed the Frankish narrative by highlighting the fact that more important for him was to acquire a title which could

[7] Matthias Becher, "Die Kaiserkrönung im Jahr 800: Eine Streitfrage zwischen Karl dem Großen und Papst Leo III," *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 66 (2002) 1–38; Roger Collins, "Charlemagne's Coronation and the Lorsch Annnals," in Joanna Story ed., *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester and New York, 2005) 52-70; Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority in the Carolingian World* (Leiden, 2008) 286-292; Rosamund McKiterrick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004) 104-110.

[8] H. W. Garrod and R. B. Mowat, *Einhard's Life of Charlemange: The Latin Text* (Oxford, 1915) Bk. II.28, p. 30, English trans. by Lewis Thorpe, "The Life of Charlemagne by Einhard," in *Two Lives of Charlemagne* (London, 1969) 81. For the relationship between Byzantium and the Carolingian empire, see Michael McCormick, "Byzantium and the West, 700-900," in Rosamund McKiterrick ed., *New Cambridge Medieval History*, v. 2: *c. 700-c.900* (Cambridge, 1995) 349-380; Riché, *The Carolingians*, 122-124.

[9] Robert Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne: 25 December 800* (London, 1974) 151-155.

confirm his political and military predominance over other realms.[10] Robert Folz, Ildar H. Garipzanov and Owen M. Phelan maintain that Charlemagne appropriated the Roman imperial idea not directly, but indirectly, via Christianity and its vision of the ideal state (which was both Roman and Christian).[11] Henry Mayr-Harting contends that Charlemagne needed a conceptual framework through which he could justify his rule over the Saxons, and this is why he accepted the revival of emperorship in the West.[12] Roger Collins suggests that the assumption of the imperial title was an attempt to bring unity to Italy, the place where it would have made most sense (as north of the Alps people were less impressed with Charlemagne's *imperium*, given the lack of such political traditions).[13] Jennifer R. Davis sees the coronation as one more means by which Charlemagne sought to achieve control over the areas he had conquered. He saw himself first and foremost as a king, but he liked to have access to various tools by which he could reach his royal ends.[14]

Charlemagne's successors remained ambiguous as to their association with the Roman imperial heritage. Louis II (844-875), for instance, used the title *imperator Romanorum* in a letter to the Byzantine emperor Basil I, who had addressed him just as *rex*. Louis wrote to justify his use of the imperial title, in turn calling Basil only *imperator Graecorum*, to draw the *basileus*' attention to the fact that he had no right to claim leadership over the "Romans," as he only ruled over a Greek empire. In the end, the Byzantine emperor had to accept him as a "spiritual brother" ruling over the West, albeit a junior and less important one. Later

[10] A good but somewhat dated presentation of the main schools of thought in respect to the motives and significance of Charlemagne's coronation is in R.E. Sullivan ed., *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What did it signify?* (Boston, 1959). See also the historiographical forays of Garipzanov, *Symbolic Language*, 4-13, 276-280; and Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Toronto 1998) 147-153.
[11] Folz, *Coronation of Charlemagne*, 155-177; Garipzanov, *Symbolic Language*, 291-305; Owen M. Phelan
[12] Henry Mayr-Harting, "Charlemagne, the Saxons, and the Imperial Coronation of 800," *English Historical Review* 111 (1996) 1113-1133.
[13] Collins, *Charlemagne*, 148.
[14] Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire*, 347-361.

Carolingians were less interested in the imperial title and its meanings, as they had more pressing issues to deal with: keeping their shrinking territories together. Their relationship with Byzantium did not improve, as they tried (most often in vain) to remove whatever Western territory was still under its sway (southern Italy, central Europe and the Western Balkans). They increasingly called the Byzantine *basileus* "emperor of the Greeks," refusing to acknowledge his connection to the Roman Empire, but did not deny him the right to emperorship, as the Byzantines themselves did with the Carolingians. The dissolution of the empire in the West in the 920s gave the *basileus* a brief respite in the race for the imperial hegemony.[15]

The empire was revived again in the West in the second half of tenth century by Otto I (962-973), who drew on several competing imperial traditions: Roman, papal-Christian, Carolingian, and Byzantine.[16] His grandson, Otto III (996-1002), promoted quite explicitly the idea of *renovatio imperii Romanorum*, moving his capital to Rome, reviving Roman institutions and styling himself as a Roman emperor. He built an imperial residence in the city and brought to his court scholars, artists and loyal bishops. He oversaw local synods and the way in which ecclesiastical affairs were carried out, while denying to the pope the right to temporal authority, even declaring the Donation of Constantine a forgery. Otto III also adopted the ancient Rome's worldview that turned neighboring peoples into *amici et socii* (friends and allies), thus endeavoring to claim a universal mission for his empire. But his attempt to live up to the

[15] For the later Carolingians, see Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes and Simon MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2011) 213-222, 379-427; Patrick J. Geary, " Germanic Tradition and Royal Ideology in the Ninth Century: the *Visio Caroli Magni*," in idem, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 1994) 49-76; Riché, *The Carolingians*, 145-246.

[16] John W. Bernhardt, "Concept and Practice of Empire in Ottonian Germany (950-1024)," in Weiler and MacLean eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany*, 141-163, at 142-149; Eckhard Müller-Mertens, "The Ottonians as Kings and Emperors," in Timothy Reuter ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, v.* 3: *c. 900-c.1204* (Cambridge, 2000) 231-266; Timothy Reuter, "The Ottonians and the Carolingian Tradition," in idem, *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities* (Cambridge, 2007) 268-283.

Roman/Byzantine standards of emperorship was short-lived and did not survive his death.[17] His successors were less resolute in pursuing the Roman imperial dream or to keep Rome as their capital.

The city of Rome had been on and off part of the Carolingian and the Ottonian empires, but never its center. Charlemagne had established his capital in Aachen, and for many of his successors the city continued to be the focal point of the empire: the imperial residence, and the site of royal inauguration, delivery of justice, church councils, and so on. After its devastation by Norsemen in late ninth century, Aachen stopped being used as the base of imperial power, although it remained a city of symbolic importance for the kings of Germany (the Carolingians were crowned here, practice continued by subsequent dynasties until mid-sixteenth century). The imperial association with Rome remained nonetheless important, since there a ruler became emperor through anointing and coronation by the pope.[18] But the act itself gave the pope too much power over the emperor, as it seemed that the former was the decisive factor in bestowing imperial status. Imperial investiture at the hands of the pope, combined with other temporal prerogatives increasingly assumed by the Vicar of Christ and the overall significance of Rome, which far exceeded that of the empire, made it impossible for the two leaders to share the city as their capital. The emperors preferred to distance themselves from the Apostolic See, although not all of them were ready to renounce the claim of their empire's Romanity, even if a direct link to Rome could not be established.

The Hohenstaufen emperors, especially Frederick I (1155-1190), Henry VI (1191-1197) and Frederick II (1220-1250), sought to construct for themselves a Roman identity based on the

[17] On the reign of Otto III, see Bernhardt, "Concept and Practice of Empire," 154-158; Timothy Reuter, "Otto III and the Historians," *History Today* 41 (1991) 21-27; David Warner, "Ideals and Action in the Reign of Otto III," *Journal of Medieval History* 25 (1999) 1-18.
[18] Folz, *Coronation of Charlemagne*, 101-117.

idea of *dominium mundi* and the renewal of the ancient empire through control over Italy and the Mediterranean. Their claims were supported to some extent by their hold on Sicily and southern Italy, and by the crusades, through which they gained access to the Near East, becoming suzerains of Armenia, Antioch, Cyprus, and the kingdom of Jerusalem. Frederick I even entertained the thought of attacking Byzantium while on his way to Jerusalem during the third crusade. After 1204, their rivals to extending their pretensions of Roman universality to the East would be not only the Byzantines, who were trying to recreate their empire in the Balkans and Asia Minor, but also the newly founded Latin Empire of Constantinople, which refused to become a vassal of the Holy Roman Empire, and took over its suzerain rights in the Near East.[19]

Universalism: As successors or imitators of the Romans, the Christian medieval empires as well as the papacy frequently asserted their right to rule over the entire world. While emperors were aware that attaining worldwide territorial control and recognition was an utterly unrealistic proposition, as even imposing or preserving authority regionally often became a major challenge, the rhetoric of universalism represented a chief tool in constructing and expressing imperial power. It targeted primarily the peoples under the emperor's sway, and was expected to also have an impact on neighboring kings, princes or chieftains.[20] Papal universalism, which was presumably religious in nature and sought the higher, spiritual good (salvation for all), rested on a jurisdictional understanding of the dictum *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (there is no salvation outside the Church [with the term "Church" increasingly understood during and after the pontificate of Innocent III as the "Church of Rome"]). Pagan people were expected to convert to

[19] Folz, *Imperial Idea in the West*, 98-114; *Peter Munz, Frederick Barbarossa: a Study in Medieval Politics (London 1969); Thomas C. van Cleve, The Emperor Frederick II of Hohestaufen: Immutator Mundi (Oxford, 1972); Björn Weiler, "Reasserting Power: Frederick II in Germany,"* Weiler and MacLean eds., *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany*, 241-271.
[20] Susan Reynolds, "Empires: A Problem of Comparative History," *Historical Research* 79.204 (2006) 151-165, at 154-155.

Christianity in its Roman version, and those already Christian - to bring their churches under the authority of the Apostolic See. Even if the papal goal of becoming the ultimate steward and shepherd of the Church was not political in itself, its achievement depended on the willingness of local rulers to cooperate with Rome, and on each pope's ability to become a significant power player in the political transactions of the day.

The papacy had developed its notion of universal leadership over time, as it tried to separate itself from Byzantium in the eighth century, and then as it sought to contain and control the empire it had created for its own safety in the West. The popes rationalized their claim to universalism by pointing to the mission of spreading Christianity worldwide entrusted by Christ to Peter, the foremost of the apostles, and through him to his successors, the bishops of Rome. To stress their status above and beyond the earthly reality of the political state, they adopted the visual symbols of imperial authority: the papal hat with a crown (the earliest form of the later triple crowned tiara), the crimson cloak, the scepter, and grand, spectacular processions through the city.[21] The Western emperors, on the other hand, never worked out a clear definition of their empire's mission, and of the role of, and relationship between, the main institutions on which the empire rested.

While the papacy could proclaim itself heir of ancient Rome and its universal mission, the Western empire had to content with the more modest position as the largest, and at times most influential, political entity in the West. The Carolingians in the ninth century, the Ottonians in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, then the Hohestaufen in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries invoked their election by God in order to support their self-styling as promoters and defenders of Christendom, but the actual area over which they extended military, political and religious control was limited to the fluctuating boundaries of their empire. The emperors could

[21] Folz, *Imperial Idea in the West*, 76-89.

never present themselves as masters of entire Europe (places such as Spain, England and most of Italy remained outside their reach), and even less could they assert any type of authority or influence in the areas under the sway of the Byzantine Empire. The papacy however had jurisdiction over all Western Christendom, and was making inroads in the Near East, in the crusaders' states, and after 1198/99 in Armenia as well. Byzantium of course escaped its grasp, but the reformed papacy was making efforts to remedy the situation, with a certain degree of success once former clients of the Byzantine emperor (such as the Bulgarian and Serbian tsars) agreed to place their states under papal jurisdiction in exchange for political autonomy. No Western emperor could boast such an extensive sphere of power and influence.

As for Byzantium, it claimed both political and religious universalism. As direct successors of the Roman emperors, the Byzantine *basileis* appropriated their mission of reigning over the diverse yet civilized world within the empire's boundaries, and of spreading civilization to the barbarians living outside it. Adoption of Christianity in the fourth century turned the emperor into God's vicegerent on earth, and his state into an *imperium Christianum*, understood by its advocates as the earthly replica of the heavenly kingdom. The Christian religious dimension was added to the universal imperial mission, many a time undergirding Byzantine diplomatic relations, foreign policy and wars. Likewise, the Church became tied to the empire in solving internal crises. Furthermore, the emperor involved himself on a regular basis in ecclesiastical affairs, be they theological, ritual-related, disciplinary or administrative in nature. Initially all Christian communities within his realm, including the Western ones overseen by the bishop of Rome, were expected to comply with imperial rulings on religious matters. After the patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem fell to the Arab Muslims in the seventh century, and the papacy pursed successfully its ecclesiastical independence in the eighth century,

the patriarch of Constantinople, who controlled a vast area in the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor, became the major religious figure in the Byzantine Empire. Emperors and patriarchs came to be seen as the two main legitimate authorities entrusted by God with the guidance and protection of the Christian *oikoumene*. And throughout the centuries, many of them ran with competence - although not always in agreement - the vast and diverse world which was Byzantium. The interconnection between the two offices was emphasized by legislation, daily practice, and even architecture, as the imperial palace and the seat of the patriarch were located close to each other in Constantinople.

Church and State in the Middle Ages: The Byzantine partnership between the emperors and patriarchs puzzled modern scholars, many of whom relied on the Western assumption that the ideal form of government included the separation of Church and state, a system of checks and balances, people's participation in the governing process, and individual freedoms. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Byzantinists were dismissive of the Byzantine diarchic model. Influenced by Enlightenment historians and philosophers who viewed Byzantium as a mixture of oriental despotism, arbitrariness, corruption, superstition and dogmatism, they branded the relationship between the two offices as "caesaropapism." The term assumed supreme imperial authority over the Church, and the patriarchal readiness to accept without opposition (or with just timid and ineffective resistance) the emperor's decisions and whims in the religious sphere.[22] By the second half of the twentieth century, however, most historians of Byzantium have come to terms with the idea that medieval polities did not develop a clear cut distinction between the political and religious realms. The fact that the Byzantine emperor did not deal solely with

[22] See for instance Hendrik *Berkhof, Kirche und Kaiser: Eine Untersuchung der Entstehung der byzantinischen und der theokratischen Staatsauffassung im vierten Jahrhundert* (Zurich, 1947); Martin Jugie, *Le schisme byzantin, aperçu historique et doctrinal* (Paris, 1941) 3-7; *Jean Marie Sansterre*, "*Eusèbe de Césarée* et la naissance de la theorie 'cesaropapiste,'" *Byzantium* 42 (1972) 131-195 and 532-594; *Cyril Toumanoff*, "*Caesaropapism* in Byzantium and Russia," *Theological Studies* 7 (1946) 213-243.

matters that we would call today "secular," but was active in ecclesiastical affairs as well, is no longer seen as evidence that he was both political ruler and the Eastern equivalent of the pope.[23] The relationship between emperor and patriarch is now understood as complex, with a certain degree of countervailing power available to each of them.[24]

The Byzantine *basileus* controlled high-ranking clerical appointments, church and monastic resources, ecclesiastical councils and their outcomes, and interfered in doctrinal debates. In turn, the Church had its own mechanisms of coercion and defense. It could forbid an erring emperor from receiving communion, or even place him under anathema. It could oppose policies deemed harmful for the faithful, as happened twice when emperors signed the union with the Church of Rome. Moreover, the patriarch was key factor in the imperial coronation, since without his endorsement a candidate to the throne was not recognized as fully invested with imperial authority. However, in terms of concrete historical unfoldings, the balance of power between the two offices was as a rule tipped in favor of the emperor, who held highest authority in the state and treated the patriarch not as an equal partner in administering the empire, but as a subordinate. A disobedient patriarch was usually deposed and replaced with a complying one, while most bishops preferred to ingratiate themselves with the emperor rather than confront him. The Nicene exile was a period of unusually close cooperation and mutual support between Church and state, which nonetheless did not lead to substantial, long-term changes in the

[23] Rejections of caesaropapism as an explanatory concept are in Hans Georg Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (München, 1978) 33-108; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003) 282-312; Deno J. Geanakoplos, "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of the Problem of Caesaropapism," *Church History* 34 (1965) 381-403 and idem, "Church-Building and Caesaropapism, A.D.312-565," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966) 167-186; Steven Runciman, "Byzantium, Russia and Caesaropapism," *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue Canadienne des Slavistes* 2 (1957) 1-10.

[24] See Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957) 1-53; Norman H. Baynes, "The Byzantine State," Byzantine Studies and Other Essays (London, 1955) 47-66; Louis Bréhier, "Hiereus kai Basileus," *Mémorial Louis Petit: Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Bucharest, 1948) 41-45; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1966) 2.724-850; Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'Idéologie politique de l'empire byzantine* (Paris, 1975); Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge, 1977).

relationship between emperor and patriarch. Once back in Constantinople, the former returned to the customary heavy-handedness in matters pertaining to the Church. But as the prestige of the *basileis* declined considerably after the disastrous attempt to enforce union with Rome in the late thirteenth century, and the massive loss of territory to Bulgaria, Serbia and the Turks in the fourteenth century, some patriarchs attempted to redefine their position vis-à-vis secular power by relegating more political clout to themselves. However, none would go so far as to envision their office as completely separated from that of the emperor.

Drawing a clear dividing line between the secular and the ecclesiastical authority was quite impossible in the Middle Ages, given the ways in which religious structures, practices and beliefs were embedded in the ruling system and made integral part in the administrating and legislating processes. Church and state were expected to support one another in all domains, from salvation of souls to defense of the Christian community to bestowal of justice and assistance to the poor. High-ranking hierarchs (popes, patriarchs, archbishops) inaugurated rulers via anointment and coronation, acted as their advisors, and delivered judgements on the uprightness of their public and private conduct. Bishops and abbots established local networks of power on whose cooperation the medieval ruler depended for the smooth running of the state. Both Old Testament kings and Christian Roman emperors provided models of royal conduit, and both assumed a close association between the secular and the religious realms.[25] And indeed, more often than not, monarchs East and West found in the Church a willing supporter that strengthened political power rather than a rival trying to undermine it (and this despite the late medieval papal efforts to control and even subordinate secular authority to its own universalist

[25] On the importance of Biblical or early Christian imperial models, see for instance Janet L. Nelson, "Translating Images of Authority: The Christian Roman Emperors in the Carolingian World," in idem, *The Frankish World, 750-900* (London, 1996) 89-98; Claudia Rapp, "Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium," in Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson eds., *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, DC, 2010) 175-197.

designs). The importance of Christianity in the building and efficient governing of the Western empires and Byzantium has been recently reassessed by Dimitri Angelov and Judith Herrin.[26]

Byzantium: A Secular republic? Anthony Kaldellis gives a different, and radically novel, interpretation to the relationship between Church and state, arguing that the Byzantine Empire was a secular republic in which Christianity played politically only a marginal role.[27] He understands the term "republic" or *res publica* in its ancient Roman usage, as referring to both the state of the Romans and its public affairs, regardless of the political regime which governed it (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy). In a republic (the opposite of which was tyranny), the rulers were held accountable by the people, the rulers and the ruled alike were subject to the law, and there was a sense of community based on shared expectations and values.[28] The goal of any type of government which acted within the framework of a republic was to work for the common good. In the case of Byzantium, it was the *basileia* (the imperial office or the monarchy) that had as its main duty to rule for the benefit of its subjects. Emperors were custodians of the empire, not its owners, and they frequently emphasized the fact that they acted based on public rather than personal interest.[29] Moreover, they were answerable to the people, who held sovereign power. The people were in fact the ultimate source of political legitimacy: they gave the authority to rule to an emperor (through universal acclamation), and they could withdraw their consent and initiate the movement that led to his removal from the throne (through rebellion).[30] In this context, of the sovereign will of the people, asserting that the Byzantine Empire relied on

[26] Dimiter Angelov and Judith Herrin, "The Christian imperial tradition – Greek and Latin," in Peter F. Bang and Dariusz Kolodziejczyk eds., *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge, 2012**)** 149-174.
[27] Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), esp. 165-198.
[28] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 21-25.
[29] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 32-71.
[30] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 89-164.

a theocratic imperial idea which upheld the emperor as the God's chosen one is completely inaccurate. Byzantium was a secular state, based on Roman republican foundations which gave maximum credit to the people; however, to answer the "monarchy's systemic instability" and place themselves "beyond the reach of the army's whim" (p. 176), the emperors did resort to the rhetoric of divine election and ordination.[31] The Byzantines understood the distinction between secular and religious matters, which explains why they could both accept an emperor as chosen by God (the religious view) and rebel against him, even murder him, when displeased with his actions (the secular "take" on political life). The emperor was primarily seen as the steward of public resources, and had to answer for the way he handled them. The Byzantine republic was then affected by religion, but not defined by it. The fact that the polity became Christian was an accident of history, and Christianity was certainly not its defining element. What characterized Byzantium was the sovereign will of its people and the emperors' awareness that they held power in order to promote general welfare.[32]

Kaldellis' interpretation has the merit of bringing to the forefront of scholarly inquiry "the people," a factor often overlooked when discussing the Byzantine equation of power. However, his analysis of the people's overall importance in the good functioning of the "Byzantine republic" fails to persuade, not in the least because of unsubstantiated or poorly substantiated claims made throughout the book. Kaldellis misreads into the past current concerns and ideals (such as the sovereign will of the people, secular state, religion as a distinct area of life that can be separated from politics, socio-economic activities, and culture), turning Byzantium into a medieval replica of the modern state. His redefinition of the Byzantine Empire as a "republic" in which people were sovereign and the emperors were promoters and protectors of

[31] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 176.
[32] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 165-198.

the common good, held accountable when abusing their power, seeks to counteract the older image of oriental despotism proposed by the pre-war generation of Byzantinists (and actually laid to rest for good by the post-war generation). He criticizes his forerunners for having bestowed on Byzantine studies the inaccurate but rather enduring construct of an "absolutist Orthodox Christian empire," which he replaces with his own: Byzantium as a secular monarchical republic in the Roman tradition, "masquerading, to itself as much as to others, as an imperial theocracy."[33] Kaldellis engages (and explains away) some of the more recent assessments of Byzantium as a Christian empire in which Church and state shared goals and strategies only in the last chapter, where he emphasizes the preponderance of the secular element in imperial policies as well as in people's actions and reactions.

The major role Kaldellis assigns to the people (rather vaguely defined as "the δῆμος of the Romans, the old *populus*"[34]) is the making and unmaking of emperors, based on examples drawn mainly from the early and middle Byzantine periods.[35] But a careful reading of the same evidence may very well lead to the opposite conclusion: rather than being the key factor in deciding the fate of a candidate to the office, or of a ruling emperor, the people were nothing more than manipulable mobs, goaded into action by those in power or by those seeking to gain it. The rational, informed choice of the "sovereign people" was absent in either situation. The crowds of Constantinople were expected to confirm an already elected emperor, which as a rule they did, so there was no real "negotiation" between authorities and the people on the Hippodrome, where the acclamations usually took place (as Kaldellis suggests[36]). It was a formality in which all sides participated willingly. The crowds were also maneuvered into rioting

[33] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 200.
[34] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 89.
[35] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 104-116, 120-125, 128-138, 141-143.
[36] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 108.

by a pretender to the throne who knew how to play on the general discontent with an incompetent or ruthless emperor. This could cause a violent change of rulers or the vigorous intervention of the imperial forces which ended the rebellion in a bloodbath. The people's will was hardly free and prevailing in such cases, but rather misused by elites to reach their own ends. Kaldellis ignores the main power brokers in Byzantium, their ambitions and political machinations, focusing exclusively on the masses, which results in a distorted understanding of the latter as playing the chief role in determining who sat on the imperial throne.

Kaldellis has a difficult time expanding his concept of "the people's sovereignty" beyond Constantinople, to the Byzantines dwelling in the provinces.[37] He rightly criticizes the prevailing view that "Byzantium equaled Constantinople," and that only the opinions expressed in the city mattered, but he does not build a strong case for the provincials as significant participants in the political process either. According to Kaldellis, the way in which the people outside the capital expressed their sovereign will was by turning usurpers into emperors. In the general scheme of things, the public opinion voiced by the provinces weighed as much as the public opinion of the Constantinopolitan demos, since there was no one impartial forum able to assign legitimacy apart from the people.[38] The weakness of his theory comes from the postmodernist perspective underlying it: to Kaldellis, a rebel's construction of reality (himself as the lawful ruler, even if recognized only in some provinces and not sanctioned with a crown by the patriarch) appears as valid as the authority held and exercised, de jure and de facto, by the emperor in Constantinople. While some usurpers were undeniably proclaimed emperors outside the capital, they did not become legitimate holders of the imperial office unless they took Constantinople and were crowned by the patriarch. Starting with the seventh century, the patriarch came to be the essential

[37] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 150-159.
[38] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 152.

element confirming the lawfulness of a candidate's ascension to the throne. People's acclamations, however widespread and enthusiastically given, did not make valid emperors. Even if in the eyes of some provincials the usurper might have become the legal ruler, until he reached the center with all its resources and symbols of imperial authority, he remained an outsider to the imperial venture. The primary source of legitimacy was not the people, as Kaldellis contends, but the possession of Constantinople, together with the patriarchal endorsement via coronation and the full access to imperial powers, functions, ceremonies, and regalia, which all set the emperor apart from the rest of the pretenders. People's acknowledgment did matter, and the grand display of imperial power during the inauguration ceremony, religious festivals and processions through the city was mainly done for their sake, but they were not the decisive factor when emperors were throned and dethroned. For a better understanding of the part played by the demos in the Byzantine polity a more nuanced approach is needed, which should start from the sources themselves and not from preconceived notions of the type of power held by the people and its employment. Many factors were involved in the election or removal of an emperor, most of which were completely unrelated to the people's wishes, preferences or choices.

The weakest point in Kaldellis' argumentation is his dismissing of Christianity as a non-essential, non-defining element in the governing of the "Byzantine republic," a necessary accessory emperors resorted to mainly for propagandistic reasons. The instability that resulted from maintaining the republican foundation of the state forced emperors to look for a theoretical principle of legitimacy which lay beyond the people's reach. A divinely appointed emperor was less likely to be questioned, found wanting and overthrown by the masses. So the rulers' use of Christianity was a rhetorical tool of "damage control," through which they hoped to attain some

degree of stability. The people accepted it for what it was, since they did not want "to expose the systemic weakness of the imperial regime." Rather than being "a self-standing and supreme principle of legitimacy," the Byzantine theocratic idea was "a defensive response to a far more powerful force:" the people, who "regularly did *shape* history."[39] Kaldellis does not explain why the Byzantines would have adopted the Roman view of their society as being a *res publica*, that is a political community whose members agreed on a set of common norms and values, chief among them being the need for cooperation between people and rulers for the general welfare, but would have decided to abandon its defining component, which was religion. Public affairs in ancient Rome, irrespective of who governed the *res publica* (kings, patricians, emperors), were permeated and driven by religion.

Like their contemporaries, the Romans made no distinction between the secular and the religious realms. Even more, they did not have a distinctive priestly class: the same men who held political authority were also charged with religious responsibilities. The major public priesthoods (pontifices, augures, decemviri and epulones) as well as the minor ones (fetiales, flamines, fratres arvales, luperci) were acquired based on social and political status, or sometimes through election, but did not require special religious training or spiritual calling. Patricians, and after the third century BC some plebeians as well, could perform administrative, civil, military **and** religious functions (usually successively, not simultaneously) - **all** of them equally valid ways to serve the republic. During the Principate, Augustus and his successors emphasized their role as protectors of Rome and promoters of the people's welfare. One important way of advancing the interests of the Romans was the preservation of a good relationship with the celestial world, and as Rome's first and foremost citizens, it befitted the emperors to become the principal mediators between gods and humans. The emperors

[39] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 174-175.

accumulated all important religious functions in the state: were chief priests (Augustus became *pontifex maximus* in 12 BC, and all emperors carried this title until Gratian repudiated it between AD 379 and 383), members in all other priestly colleges, performers of main sacrifices, interpreters of major signs, upholder of religious traditions. Additionally, to underscore the rulers' special connection to the supernatural, many of them beginning with Julius Caesar were deified upon death by the senate, some even having a cult and temples dedicated to them.[40]

To propose that a religious republic became secular in Byzantine hands is to propose that a cultural revolution of grand proportions took place once the republic was inherited by the Byzantines, who (unlike any other of their contemporaries) were able to separate the secular from the spiritual in their public life and act accordingly. However, art, architecture as well as archaeological, epigraphic, numismatic and written evidence does not support such a proposition; on the contrary, it attests to the overwhelming presence of Christianity in the public sphere. Kaldellis himself does not explain when, how and why this revolution occurred. He takes it for granted that it did, since some Byzantine historians (Psellos and Attaleiates, for instance) had a secular view on politics,[41] and since it would be implausible to assume that the Byzantines were unable to tell the difference between religious and non-religious matters.[42] But these are non-arguments: one can easily point to the fact that Greek and Roman historians such as Thucydides, Polybius, Sallust, or Tacitus also made a case for human causality when discussing political and military developments, but this did not change the religious character of their polities. Making the distinction between religious and non-religious issues on a personal level

[40] For Roman religion and its impact on public life, see Mary Beard and John North eds., *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World* (Ithaca, NY, 1990); Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price eds., *Religions of Rome*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1998); Martha Hoffman Lewis, *The Official Priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians* (Rome, 1955); Eric M. Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic* (Leiden, 1997); G. J. Szemler, *The Priests of the Roman Republic: A Study of Interactions between Priesthoods and Magistracies* (Brussels, 1972).
[41] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 197-198.
[42] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 190.

did not imply that public affairs were secular. However individual Greeks, Romans or Byzantines might have chosen to live their lives, politics and religion were always intertwined at a public level. The Byzantines themselves often sought to delineate more clearly the roles of the emperor and of the Church especially in regards to the involvement of the former in the governing of the latter, but the two institutions worked together to meet the needs of the commonwealth. Moreover, the Byzantine emperor, like his Roman predecessors, held religious functions and drew his legitimacy from his privileged access to the sacred: he was God's appointee, and in this capacity he oversaw the Church, controlled key ecclesiastical appointments, intervened in theological disputes or any other types of religious crises whenever these concerned or affected the public good. He was not "masquerading" the theocratic idea, he was living it.

Kaldellis takes issue with the historians who have discussed Byzantine political theory and failed to see the importance of the secular Roman formula in governing the empire (people's power to make/unmake emperors and rulers' concern with the general welfare rather than their own gain), emphasizing instead the emperor as an absolute monarch. He is correct in criticizing Francis Dvornik, who in his impressive work on the early Christian and Byzantine political thought investigated Egyptian, Mesopotamian, biblical and Hellenistic influences, but made no mention of the Roman political experience and its possible impact on the Byzantine imperial ideal.[43] Yet Kaldellis himself disregards any other political models that might have inspired Byzantium save for the Roman *res publica*, despite the fact that late Roman emperors such as Diocletian and his colleagues in the tetrarchy openly embraced and even institutionalized Hellenistic ruling practices, which elevated the imperial office far above that of the *princeps-imperator*, to a quasi-divine status, enhanced by the wearing of magnificent robes and golden

[43] Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 167.

diadems encrusted with gems, by elaborate court rituals and by declaring the emperor a special representative of one of the main Roman gods. The emperor became less visible to the public and even less accessible to his armies, to underscore the remoteness and sacredness of his office, and thus make himself less vulnerable a target for conspiracies and rebellions.[44] Constantine the Great and his successors preserved the sophisticated ceremonial at the court and in public appearances for the same reasons, although they altered the traditional imperial connection to the gods by giving it a Christian bent. Kaldellis does not explain why the Byzantine demos, while living in a world imbued with Hellenistic political values and majestic representations of imperial power, would have thought up the meanings and workings of their polity in exclusive Roman terms, which (presumably) were secular and emphasized the sovereignty of the people. Hellenism assumed a special relationship of the ruler with the divine world, and saw kingdoms as personal possessions of rulers. It would have been worthwhile to consider the hypothesis that at least the Byzantine emperors (if not the demos) might have entertained similar ideas: that they owed their throne to divine intervention, and that they owned the empire.

Kaldellis' theory that the legitimacy of the Byzantine emperor and his continuance in office depended entirely on popular consent betrays a Western mindset informed by expectations first raised during the Enlightenment, when philosophers began arguing that the secular state ruled by the will of the people was the best possible type of polity (as opposed to the political entities led by monarchs who claimed to have been divinely-appointed, or who allowed the Church to interfere in temporal matters).[45] The interpretation of Byzantine political life as unfolding within the framework of a republic in which people's will was sovereign resembles a

[44] Pat Southern, *Roman Empire from Severus to Constantine* (London, 2001) 153-154; George Mousourakis, *A Legal History of Rome* (New York, 2007) 135-137.
[45] Kaldellis relies on Rousseau's social contract theory, which assigns sovereignty to the people and places government at their service; vid. *Byzantine Republic*, 97-100.

Western secular manifesto where wishful thinking about the ideal state replaces the cautious investigation of medieval political realities, which were much more complex and multidimensional than the author's reductionist reading of sources may imply. From this point of view, the author finds himself in the company of the pre-war generation of Byzantinists, who imposed Western values and standards on the Byzantine world and found it fell short of their lofty democratic and secular ideals. Their Byzantium was authoritarian, rife with intrigue and violence, obscurantist and irrational. Kaldellis' construct is as artificial and disconnected from Byzantine political theory and practice as theirs, the main difference being that his Byzantium passes the test of modernity, as a non-religious political enterprise in which people's will was sovereign and Christianity had no role to play in the running of the empire.

1.2. Church and State prior to 1204: Strengths and Weaknesses of the Byzantine Dyarchy

Byzantine political thought did not allow for the existence of an emperor without a patriarch. The view prevailed, ever since the conversion of Constantine the Great, that the empire and the Church were created by God at the same time in history with the purpose of working harmoniously, in a symbiotic relationship, for the benefit of humankind.[46] This idea was reinforced by centuries of legislation and political practice. Emperor Justinian I gave it legal

[46] Eusebius of Caesarea was the first to give voice to the opinion that the Roman Empire of Octavian Augustus and the Church were born concurrently through the mysterious working of divine providence, which later on united the two powers so that salvation could be pursued by all people under the twofold guidance of temporal and spiritual authorities: "At the same time [with the advent of the Church] one universal power, the Roman empire, arose and flourished, while the enduring and implacable hatred of nation against nation was now removed. As the knowledge of one God and one way of salvation, the doctrine of Christ, was made known to all mankind, so at the self-same period the entire dominion of the Roman Empire was vested in a single sovereign, and profound peace reigned throughout the world. And thus, by the express appointment of the same God, two roots of blessing, the Roman Empire, and the doctrine of Christian piety, sprang up together for the benefit of men." *Oratio de Laudibus Constantini* XVI.4, Greek text in Heikel et al. eds., *Eusebius Werke* 8 vols. (Leipzig 1902-1908) 1.193-259, at 249; English trans. In H.A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius's Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, 1976) 83-127. For the claim of divine origin of both empire and Church, see N. H. Baynes, "The Byzantine State," *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London 1955) 47-66; for the empire as replica of the heavenly realm, see idem, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Byzantine Studies*, 168-172, and S. Runciman, *The Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge 1977) 5-25.

sanction in the sixth century, in a novella which underlined the common divine origin, joint interests and mutual support of the two institutions.[47] During the first four centuries of imperial Christianity, the Byzantine understanding of 'Church' included both East and West, and the expectation for compliance with the emperor's rulings in religious matters applied not only to the four eastern patriarchates, but to the Apostolic See as well. By the ninth century, after the loss of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem to the Arabs in the 600s, and the emancipation of Rome from imperial control in the late 700s, the Byzantine discourse on Church and state became concerned primarily with the relationship between the patriarchate of Constantinople and the emperor.

The patriarch became an integral and influential part of the ruling structures, although he rarely made it to the first echelon. His interventions on the political scene aimed at steering social policies or diplomatic exchanges on a course favorable to the Church, and at counseling members of the imperial family and chief dignitaries at the court on the selection or removal of emperors. Occasionally, the patriarch could play a crucial role in the state, mainly in times of crisis, when an emperor was not available or was too weak to provide an adequate response. For

[47] Nov. VI, Praefatio: "*Maxima quidem in hominibus sunt dona dei a superna collata clementia sacerdotium et imperium, illud quidem divinis ministrans, hoc autem humanis praesidens ac diligentiam exhibens; ex uno eodemque principio utraque procedentia humanam exornant vitam. Ideoque nihil sic erit studiosum imperatoribus, sicut sacerdotum honestas, cum utique et pro illis ipsis semper deo supplicent. Nam si hoc quidem inculpabile sit undique et apud deum fiducia plenum, imperium autem recte et competenter exornet traditam sibi rempublicam, erit consonantia quaedam bona, omne quicquid utile est humano conferens generi.*" **"**The priesthood and the Empire are the two greatest gifts which God, in His infinite clemency, has bestowed upon mortals; the former has reference to Divine matters, the latter presides over and directs human affairs, and both, proceeding from the same principle, adorn the life of mankind; hence nothing should be such a source of care to the emperors as the honor of the priests who constantly pray to God for their salvation. For if the priesthood is everywhere free from blame, and the Empire full of confidence in God is administered equitably and judiciously, general good will result, and whatever is beneficial will be bestowed upon the human race." Latin and Greek text in P. Krüger et al [T. Mommsen, P. Krüger, R. Schöll, W. Kroll] eds., *Corpus Iuris Civilis* 3 vols. (Berlin 1904) 1.35-36; Fred H. Blume, *Annotated Justinian Code*, 2nd ed., accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/1-40/novel%206_replacement.pdf. See John Meyendorff, "Justinian, the Emperor and the Church," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 22 (1968) 43-60; Milton V. Anastos, "Justinian's despotic control over the Church as illustrated by his edicts on the theopaschite formula and his letter to Pope John II in 533," in *Mélanges George Ostrogorsky*, vol. 2 (Belgrade, 1964) 1-11, repr. in Anastos, *Studies in Byzantine Intellectual History*, Variorum Reprints (London 1979) art. IV; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 303-304.

instance, Patriarch Sergius I (610-638) organized the defense of Constantinople during the Avar-Persian siege of 626, while Emperor Heraclius (610-641) was on a military campaign against the Persians.[48] Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (901-907, 912-925) was the head of a regency council for underage Constantine VII, and in this capacity carried out peace negotiations with Symeon of Bulgaria in 913, awarding him the title of *basileus* and arranging the marriage of one of his daughters to the young Byzantine emperor.[49]

But for most of their common history, patriarchs and emperors did not share the same honors and privileges. The imperial office outranked and exerted control over the patriarchate, the emperor being able to make decisions in areas that belonged to the Church: administration of religious affairs, theology and canon law. In time, however, the patriarch gained some leverage over the emperor through the coronation ceremony, which became the only means by which a candidate to the throne was fully confirmed in the office. Even if the patriarch did not take part (formally) in the election of the emperor, which was a secular matter, without his sanction via an elaborate crowning ritual usually performed in Hagia Sophia, the claimant to the imperial purple

[48] The most relevant primary sources for the siege are *Chronicon paschale*, ed. by Ludwig Dindorf (Bonn 1832) 715-726, English trans. by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284-628 AD* (Liverpool, 1989) 169-181; Theodore Syncellus, "On the Siege of Constantinople," ed. by L. Sternbach in *Analecta Avarica (*Krakow 1900) 298–320, reprint. with French translation in F. Makk, *Traduction et commentaire de l'homélie écrite probablement par Théodore le Syncelle sur le siège de Constantinople en 626* (Szeged 1975); George Pisidia, "Bellum avaricum," edited with Italian transl. by A. Pertusi, *Poemi I. Panegirici epici*, Studia Patristica et Byzantina 7 [Ettal, 1959] 176-200. For modern accounts of the siege, see Franjo Barišic, "*Le siege de Constantinople par les Avares et les Slaves en* 626," *Byzantion* 24 (1954) 371-395, and James Howard-Johnston, "The Siege of Constantinople in 626," Cyril Mango et al eds., *Constantinople and its Hinterland: Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium on Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993* (Aldershot, 1995) 131–142.

[49] Evidence for this event is in Theopanes Continuatus, "De Constantino Porphyrogenneto," *Chronographia*. *Liber VI*, in Immanuel Bekker ed. *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, CSHB (Bonn, 1838) 385; and in the sermon attributed to Theodore Daphnopates, delivered when peace was signed with Bulgaria in 927, Greek text with English transl. in I. Dujčev, "On the treaty of 927 with the Bulgarians," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978), 217-295, at 254-289. For discussion, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1969) 261-264; GrahamA. Loud, "A re-examination of the 'coronation' of Symeon of Bulgaria in 913," *The Journal of Theological Studies* (1978) 109-120; Romily J. H. Jenkins, "The peace with Bulgaria (927) celebrated by Theodore Daphnopates," *Polychronion, Festschrift F. Dölger zum 75. Geburtstag* (Heidelberg, 1966) 287-303; P. Karlin-Hayter, "The homily on the peace with Bulgaria of 927 and the 'coronation' of 913," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 17 (1968) 29-39; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 142-148; Kirił Marinow, "In the Shackles of the Evil One: The Portrayal of Tsar Symeon I the Great (893-927) in the Oration 'On the Treaty with the Bulgarians,'" *Studia Ceranea* 1 (2011) 157-190.

remained just a usurper. This section provides an overview of the relationship between the two main offices in order to explain the reasons for which a Byzantine political entity needed a patriarch to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its subjects and to be able to function effectively. It also underscores the ambiguous, at times powerful, at times vulnerable position of the patriarch vis-à-vis political authority and its representatives.

In the 880s, Emperor Basil I commissioned the compilation of a legal code, *Eisagoge*, which began by specifying the competencies of both emperor and patriarch. They two had the same ultimate goal, the welfare of their subjects, but different ways of reaching it. The emperor had to ensure that justice, peace, and orthodoxy prevailed in the *basileia*; to this end, he issued laws and applied them fairly, acted as a benefactor, upheld the teachings of the Church and preserved its unity. The patriarch had to provide the appropriate religious framework within which the faithful were able to ripen and thrive spiritually; he was their teacher, guide, chastiser and judge. Ecclesiastical policies could originate with either office, and both emperor and patriarch were expected to cooperate in order to implement the strategies necessary for the defense, expansion and safeguarding of orthodoxy.[50] The relationship between the two offices was rarely as smooth as envisioned by Byzantine law-makers, but overall it worked well enough to never be challenged by alternative political theories. The issue that at times became subject of criticism and reformist efforts was the extent of imperial control over the Church.

The emperor, as God's vicegerent on earth, had to make sure that all institutions in his *basileia*, and especially the Church, functioned in accordance with divine law; as such, he had

[50] Vid. *Eisagoge* Tit. II Peri basileos, Tit.III Peri patriarchos, Greek text in *Collectio Librorum Juris Graeco-Romane Ineditorum*, ed. Z. von Lingenthal (Leipzig, 1852) 60-217, at 65-68; English translation in Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957) 89-96. The first chapters of this legal compilation on the roles of emperor, patriarch and bishops were most likely written by Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople; vid. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 231.

wide-ranging prerogatives in the ecclesiastical realm.[51] The emperor appointed the patriarch, usually choosing him from among three candidates proposed by the synod; he could also depose a patriarch who had made himself guilty of abuses, corruption, or heterodoxy. More often than not, though, he removed from office patriarchs who became a political nuisance when they protested or refused to comply with imperial decisions on matters affecting the Church. The emperor monitored and sometimes intervened in the election of other high-ranking clergymen, as well as in the process of establishing the hierarchy of episcopal sees. He selected the clergy working in the main offices of the Great Church, summoned the ecumenical councils, oversaw the definition of Church dogma and people's adherence to it, and signed conciliar canons into laws.[52] The emperor controlled taxation of Church properties and the granting of exemptions, and could legislate on the acquisition, use, and disposal of ecclesiastical and monastic holdings.[53]

[51] Eusebius of Caesarea innovated in this area as well; he was the first to have bestowed on Constantine the Great the title of 'universal bishop,' by which he might have intended to acknowledge the reality of an emperor with a de facto authority in the religious sphere which superseded that of the regular bishops, who held power locally (*Vita Constantini* I.44.1-2). If the emperor was appointed by God to rule over the entire empire, then as a 'bishop' his jurisdiction would likewise extend over the entire Church. In a different place, Eusebius seems concerned with delineating more precisely the 'episcopal' authority of the emperor: at a banquet Constantine had given in honor of the clergy, he likened himself to a bishop, but 'of those outside the Church,' with the possible interpretations of claiming religious authority over pagans and heretics (who by default were outside the Church), or over the 'externals' of the Church - that is, its worldly affairs. See discussion in William Seston, 'Constantine as a 'Bishop,'" *Journal of Roman Studies* 37 (1947) 127-131; also Ginette Dupuis–Masay, "*L'episcopat* de l'*empereur Constantin*," *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 118–157, and Claudia Rapp, "Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as 'Bishop,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 49.2 (1998) 685-695.

[52] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 306-307; Francis Dvornik, "Emperors, Popes, General Councils," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 6 (1951) 1-23; for an (unconvincing) attempt to reassess the extent of imperial power over the church, and reduce him to the laity 'personified' see Nikolas K. Gvosdev, *Emperors and Elections: Reconciling the Orthodox Tradition with Modern Politics* (Huntington, NY, 2000) 80-84.

[53] Eleutheria Papagianni, "Legal Institutions and Practice in Matters of Ecclesiastical Property," *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou 3 vols. (Washington 2001) 3:1059-1069; Eric McGeer, *The Land Legislation of the Macedonian Emperors* (Toronto, 2000) 21-25, 90-96. Justinian's Novella 7.2.1. seems to imply that the property belonging to the Church was no different from that of the state, as both owed their existence to the emperor's generosity: "We therefore permit the emperor, whenever a necessity arises for the common benefit and the advantage of the state which requires the possession of immovable property, such as we have mentioned, that he may receive it from the holy churches and the other holy houses and institutions, provided that indemnity in every respect shall be given such establishments, and they shall be given by the receiver an equal or better property than that which was taken… For there is not much difference between priesthood and empire, or between holy and public things, in as much as the holy churches always receive their abundance and their status through the munificence of the emperor." English translation in Fred H. Blume,

He also enjoyed certain liturgical privileges which gave the imperial office a quasi-sacerdotal nature: on major feasts, he could enter the sanctuary, cense the altar, and offer the gifts; if so he wished, he could offer a sermon to the audience.[54] On the day of his coronation, the emperor took communion inside the sanctuary, as the priests did, by taking the consecrated bread in his hands and drinking the consecrated wine from the chalice - instead of receiving the sacrament in a spoon, outside the altar, as laity did.[55] In the twelfth century, a new title with religious overtones was claimed by emperors, that of *epistemonarches.* The title designated the monastic office of 'disciplinarian,' and the Comneni *basileis* who laid claims to it saw themselves as guardians and enforcer of order in the Church. By 'maintaining order' they implied an entire range of actions, from electing, deposing or transferring bishops and metropolitans, to legislating on ecclesiastical matters, dealing with heresy, and, above all, demanding patriarchal submission to all decisions involving the Church.[56]

These extensive imperial prerogatives in ecclesiastical affairs did not go unchallenged. The boundary between empire and Church had never been clearly defined, and strong-minded patriarchs could at times take advantage of comparatively less articulate emperors and attempt to broaden the scope of ecclesiastical authority. Patriarch Photius (858-867, 877-886) took the first formal step towards placing his office on the same level with the imperial one. In Title III of the

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Annotated Justinian Code, 2nd ed., accessed December 16, 2014, http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/1-40/novel%207_replacement.pdf.

[54] Canon 69, Council of Trullo, Greek text in Heinz Ohme ed., *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, Series Secunda: Volumen Secundum, Pars Quarta* (Berlin and Boston, 2013) 50; Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007) 357-358; Cyril Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 2005) 219-220; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 293-295; Louis Bréhier, "Hiereus kai Basileus," *Mémorial Louis Petit* (Bucharest, 1948) 41-45.

[55] For the ritual of empire coronation, see Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *De Ceremoniis Aulae Byzantinae* I.38-39, Greek text ed. by J. Reisky, 2 vols. (Bonn, 1829) 1.191-202, English trans. by Ann Moffat and Maxeme Tall, *The Book of Ceremonies*, 2 vols. (Canberra, 2012) 1.191-202 [hereafter *De ceremoniis*]; discussion in F. E. *Brightman, "Byzantine Imperial Coronations," Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1900-1901) 359-392 and George P. Majeska, "The Emperor in his Church: Imperial Ritual in the Church of Saint Sophia," in Henry Maguire ed., *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204* (Washington, 1997) 1-12.

[56] Angelov, *Imperial ideology*, 359-360; Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261* (Cambridge, 1995) 99-103; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 248-267.

Eisagoge, he defined the patriarch as 'the incarnate and living image of Christ,' exalted description traditionally reserved for the emperor and meant to underline the analogy between the absolute heavenly sovereignty of Christ and the absolute earthly sovereignty of the *basileus*.[57] By making the patriarch the carrier of Christ's image, Photius laid claim to extensive powers for the incumbent of the patriarchal office, with the aim of curbing the imperial resolve to treat the Church as yet another department (albeit an important one) within his government. The emperor was not above the law, but subject to it - and Photius included here not only the Roman law, but also the divine commandments as set forth in the scriptures and the canons issued by local or general synods (tit.II.4-5); as for the canons themselves, only the patriarch could interpret them and decide upon their validity (tit.III.5-7); appointment of bishops and metropolitans, as well as the judgment and condemnation of erring clerics or monastics belonged to the patriarch alone and his sentence could not be appealed (tit.III.10); dealing with spiritual matters including heresies fell exclusively within the province of the patriarch and those to whom he delegated power (tit. III.11). In relationship to the other Eastern patriarchates, the see of Constantinople had primacy of authority, which allowed its occupant to issue the final decision in case of disputes or controversial ecclesiastical pronouncements (tit.III.9).

Gilbert Dagron contends that Photius shaped his vision of an all-powerful patriarchal office on the (otherwise much resented) papal model of asserting preeminence over secular authorities and exercising universal jurisdiction over the Church.[58] Photius' not-so-cordial encounters with the thought and practice of the Apostolic See during the controversy over his own appointment as patriarch, then over the right to organize and control the recently-converted Bulgaria, might have persuaded him that there was some merit, in the end, in the papal doctrine

[57] *Eisagoge* Tit. III.1,11; see Angelov, *Imperial ideology*, 363; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 229-235.
[58] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 234.

of primacy. The model, however, was doomed to failure in Byzantium, where for centuries the uncontested ruler of the Christian *oikoumene* had been the emperor, not the Church. It is unclear whether Emperor Basil I promulgated the *Eisagoge* or not, but regardless of the official status of the new legislation, nothing changed in the actual working of the patriarchate within the *basileia*.[59] The ideal of two offices of equal authority found no advocates in the imperial circles. As soon as a new emperor came to the throne, Patriarch Photius was deposed and exiled, while his see was entrusted to a much more pliable ecclesiastic, the nineteen-year old monk Stephen, brother of the *basileus*. The relationship between the two offices returned to its usual pattern.[60]

Almost two centuries later another patriarch, Michael Cerularius (1043-1058), attempted to redraw the boundary between the emperor and the Church in favor of the latter. But Cerularius preferred to act rather than legislate: he put on the purple sandals traditionally reserved for the emperor, participated in the overthrowing of Michael VI and the installation of usurper Isaac I Comennus on the throne, restricted Isaac's involvement in ecclesiastical appointments and other Church matters, and attempted to prevent the *basileus* from issuing legislation unfavorable to monastic property. When unsuccessful, Cerularius threatened the emperor with deposition. This high-handedness brought about his own downfall, as Isaac Comnenus accused him of heresy and treason, deposed and exiled him. Cerularius' high-view of the patriarchal office was likely influenced by the *Constitutum Constantini*, the eighth-century forgery used by the papacy to bolster its claims to both spiritual and temporal powers, a document which became known in Byzantium during the theological polemics of the mid eleventh century in which the patriarch

[59] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 234, suggests that the *Eisagoge* was initially promulgated, then repealed; John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York 1974) 82-84 agrees with the older view maintained by Zacharia von Lingenthal in his *Geschichte des Griechisch-Romischen Rechts* (Berlin 1892, repr. 1955) 424, according to which the legal compilation never became official; Spyros Troianos argues for the contrary opinion, that the code was ratified as law: see "Byzantine Canon Law to 1100," in Wilfried Hartmann ed., *The History of Byzantine and Eastern Canon Law to 1500* (Washington DC, 2012) 115-169, at 153.
[60] For a general history of the period, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick 1969) 233-242.

had fully participated.[61] As the pope could argue that by virtue of Constantine's donation of imperial crown and privileges to Sylvester, the fourth-century bishop of Rome, the papacy inherited the right to universal authority over Christendom, so the patriarch of Constantinople, the city declared by conciliar canons to be the New Rome, could declare himself heir to the same imperial rights and honors. But Cerularius' effort of adapting papal hegemonic concepts to Byzantine realities did not fare any better than Photius.' Cerularius died in exile like his famous predecessor, while his see was handed over to Constantine III Lichudes, a high-ranking officer in the imperial administration disinclined to endanger his close ties to the intellectual and political elite of the day by pursuing aggressive ecclesiastical policies.[62]

For all the Byzantine mystique of a God-given *basileia* built upon the dual authority of the emperor and patriarch, the latter held at best a secondary position in the hierarchy of power, and was usually mindful of the inadequate ways in which he could affect, correct or restrict the former. The very way in which the Church functioned set limits to the types of reaction a patriarch might have to various imperial abuses. The means by which he could reach the emperor were but a few: private or public admonition, forbidding access into the sanctuary, excommunication and anathema. Nonetheless, in an age of deep religious convictions, such means could become quite effective when applied to the right context. Emperors could not ignore patriarchal censure entirely, if not for reasons of faith, then at least for political calculations, since rejection by the Church implied rejection by God as well, and subsequently the loss of support among the people. The unruly population of Constantinople could easily turn into a dangerous weapon in the hands of a rival to the throne, who would not be seen as a danger

[61] On *Constitutum Constantini* as a source for the patriarchal claims to wide prerogatives in the state, see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 238-247, and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology* 363-365.
[62] Michael Attaleiates, *The History* c.12, Greek text with English trans. by Anthony Kaldellis and Dimiter Krallis (Cambridge MA 2012) 112-121; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 339-341.

to the existing order if by his actions he punished a godless emperor. Sensitivity to the mutinous potential of the Constantinopolitan crowds made emperors eager to compromise when their violation of canon law became a matter of public outcry. A recurrent issue which patriarchs had to prevent from happening was that of uncanonical imperial marriages, as emperors frequently gave priority to making and maintaining suitable political alliances, or to the need for male heirs, instead of considering the lawfulness of their undertaking. It was mainly in this area that the patriarchs scored their modest victories vis-à-vis political authority.

Byzantine canonists made allowances for divorce under certain circumstance (such as adultery), but frowned upon a second marriage, and some of them demanded that the couple at fault be excommunicated for one year. Canonists viewed a third marriage as 'defilement,' but in case it did take place – since in the end it was preferable to 'unrestrained fornication' – they prescribed four years of public penance (i.e. denial of communion) if the persons involved were in their early thirties, or five years if aged forty or over. A fourth marriage was denounced as 'polygamy' and forbidden.[63] Given the sacramental character of the matrimonial union and the strict regulations protecting it, the patriarchs could not afford to turn a blind eye when emperors made canonically irregular choices, even if the likelihood of a successful intervention was rather limited. Patriarch Tarasius (784-806) was faced with handling an imperial divorce followed immediately by a second marriage when Emperor Constantine VI (780-797) forced his first wife to take the veil in order to marry his mistress. Tarasius did not denounce the act publicly, for fear of plunging the empire - which was just recovering from the Iconoclastic crisis - into a new

[63] Gregory of Nyssa succinctly expressed the Byzantine view on the plurality of marriages: "The first marriage is legal, the second is a concession, the third is a transgression of law, and one beyond this, the life of a swine." Oratio 37.8, in J.P. Migne ed., *Patrologia graeca* v. 36 col. 292B, English trans. by Patrick Viscuso, *Orthodox Canon Law* (Brookline, MA, 2006) 41. See also Theodore Balsamon on the Tomos of Union, Greek text in G. A. Rhalles and M. Potles, *Syntagma ton theion kai hieron kanonon ton te hagion kai paneuphemon apostolon, kai ton hieron oikoumenikon kai topikon synodon, kai ton kata meros hagion pateron*, 6 vols. (Athens, 1852-1859) 4.481; John Meyendorff, "Christian Marriage in Byzantium: The Canonical and Liturgical Tradition," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990) 99-107.

religious controversy, but neither did he agree to perform the wedding ceremony. He threatened the emperor with excommunication, who countered by threatening with the renewal of Iconoclasm. As the patriarch did not relent, Tarasius' biographer wrote, the emperor wandered about the palace seeking desperately a clergyman willing to officiate the wedding, and took revenge on the patriarch by filling his office with spies and enemies.[64] The patriarch was rather cautious in his reaction as long as Constantine was in power, but once the emperor lost his throne and then his life, he deposed the priest who had married the two. The act came late and targeted the least important participant in the transgression, but nonetheless it called attention to the moral duty of obeying the Church's teachings on marriage. The perceived hesitancy of the patriarch, who had continued to allow the emperor to enter the church despite being in a state of sinfulness through his uncanonical marriage, had prompted the monks of the Saccudion monastery in Prusa, Bithynia, to break off communion with Constantinople. Emperor Constantine responded by imprisoning Plato, the abbot, and by having the other monks flogged and exiled to Thessalonica. The monks were allowed to return after the emperor passed away. A decade later, another emperor, Nicheporus I (802-811) also resorted to exiling monks, this time those from the monastery of Studion in Constantinople. Theodore, their abbot, had severed communion with the patriarch after the latter had given in to imperial pressure and reinstated the priest who had performed the marriage of Constantine VI.[65]

These clashes between *basileus* and Church hierarchs or monastics, even if most often ended with an imperial victory, signaled to the secular authorities that there were certain

[64] *Theophanis Chronographia* ad. ann.794/5, ed. Karl de Boor (Leipzig, 1883) 469.23-27, 470.1-7; Engl. trans. by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott as *Theophanes Confessor:Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997) 645 [hereafter Theophanes, *Chronographia*]; Ignatius the Deacon, *The Life of Patriarch Tarasius* c.46, Greek text with English trans. by Stephanos Efthymidias (Aldershot, 1998) 192. For a general history of the period, see Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, CA, 1994) 417-424.

[65] Theophanes, *Chronographia* ad.ann.795/796, on p. 646-647, and ad. ann. 808/809, p. 665. The matter is discussed by Patrick Henry, "The Moechian Controversy and the Constantinopolitan Synod of January A.D. 809," *Journal of Theological Studies* 20.2 (1969) 495-522.

boundaries to their power, which – if broken – could lead to schism and unrest. Such was the case with the fourth marriage of Emperor Leo VI (886-912). Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus (901-907, 912-925) did criticize him bluntly for stepping outside canonical limits, and refused to allow him access into the church. The emperor promptly deposed and exiled the patriarch. Nicholas Mysticus' successor chose to express his negative attitude toward the marriage it in a milder form. He offered Leo VI a 'dispensation,' but deposed the priest who had married the emperor, required the emperor to do public penance, and refused to proclaim the fourth wife as *augusta* in the church. He also insisted that Leo added a special law in his new legislation which made it illegal to marry a fourth time. It was not enough to calm down the spirits, and a schism ensued between the supporters of Nicholas Mysticus and his uncompromising stance, and those of Euthymius and his more pragmatic approach. The schism ended in 920 with a council in Constantinople, which issued a *Tome of Union* that declared the fourth marriage illicit and invalid.[66]

The removal of a disobedient patriarch did not always end in schism. Whenever an emperor controlled the Church too closely and even ruthlessly, the outcome was full submission to the imperial will. Patriarch Theodosius I Borradiotes (1179-1183) refused to marry the illegitimate daughter of Andronicus I Comnenus to the illegitimate son of Manuel I Comnenus, on the canonical grounds that the two were second-degree cousins. Andronicus I, who was not yet crowned emperor, but had the precarious status of regent for the underage Alexius II Comnenus, persuaded the archbishop of Bulgaria who was in Constantinople at the time to perform the wedding. Andronicus then engineered the replacement of Patriarch Theodosius with Basil Camaterus (1183-1186), who sanctioned the uncanonical marriage with no qualms. The

[66] P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii Patriarchae CP: Text, Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (Brussels, 1970) Treadgold, *History of Byzantine State*, 468; Aleksandr A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Madison, WI, 1952) 332-334.

new patriarch ostensibly promised Andronicus in writing that he would obey him in everything the latter might wish to see accomplished. According to Eusthatius of Thessalonica, Camaterus was a man who 'breathed one passion' with the regent, 'joining one another in a fusion of character and finding themselves identical in the choice of action which they made.'[67] No great scandal followed, since once crowned emperor by Camaterus, Andronicus unleashed a reign of terror against his real and imagined adversaries which few were willing to confront.

Some emperors however preferred to argue their case and persuade rather than take forceful action against their patriarchs, so that they could avoid further troubles. Patriarch Polyeuctes (956-970) forcefully reproved Nicephorus II Phocas (963-969) for his second marriage to Empress Theophano, who was his 'spiritual relative.' The emperor apparently had baptized at least one of Theophano's sons, and Byzantine canon law placed such a relationship of spiritual affinity into the category of legal impediments to marriage. Nicephorus II went to great lengths to persuade the patriarch that in fact it was his father, not himself, who had stood as godfather for the Theophano's offspring, and Polyeuctes eventually had to accept the union since an unbending attitude in the matter could have led to civil war.[68] Patriarch Alexius the Studite (1025-1043) had his own share of distress over the marriage of Empress Zoe to Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1055). It was the third marriage for both spouses, but the terrible state in which Byzantium found itself at the time made Constantine appear as the only viable alternative to the hand and crown of Zoe. The patriarch settled for a compromise: he did not perform the wedding and the coronation ceremonies himself (a priest of the Great Church did), but gave the

[67] Eusthatius of Thessaloniki, *The Capture of Thessaloniki* c.39, Greek text with English trans. by John R. M. Jones (Canberra, 1988) 49. See also Nicetas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* c. 261-262, English trans. by Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit, 1984), 145-146 [hereafter Nicetas, *Annals*]; Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni*, 1081-1261 (Cambridge, 1995) 119.
[68] Leo the Deacon, *The History* Bk.III.9, trans. by Alice-Mary Talbot and Denis F. Sullivan (Washington, DC, 2005) 99-100; Treadgold, *History of Byzantine State*, 499; Romily H. Jenkins, *Byzantium: The Imperial Centuries AD 610-1071* (Toronto, 1987) 277-278.

spouses his blessing once the formal procedures were over.[69]

Even if these episodes of challenging imperial authority were only marginally successful from a patriarchal perspective (rather than simply annulling the uncanonical marriages, the patriarchs almost always had to make concessions for *raisons d'état*), they nonetheless indicate a certain vulnerability of the emperor before the Church. The imperial marriage, when recognized and blessed by the patriarch, brought stability to the *basileia* and conferred legitimacy to the heirs; without patriarchal sanction, the emperor and his spouse remained in a legal limbo which invited widespread public criticism and made rival claims to the throne seem appropriate. To avoid such a precarious situation, many emperors were eager to seek out solutions that satisfied Church exigencies, and many patriarchs were ready to accept them based on the ecclesiastical principle of *oikonomia* (making an exception to the law in the name of a higher good, in this case preserving the peace in the empire). Patriarchs who followed the letter of the law too strictly might get themselves deposed, as it happened to Nicholas Mysticus in the tenth century and Theodosius I Borradiotes in the twelfth. But if emperors could dispose of troubling patriarchs with relative ease, they could not afford to do away altogether with the Church validation of the problematic marriage, so they sought as replacements clergymen willing to endorse it. The backing of the Church in this matter was too critical to their rule to be discounted.

Apart from imperial marriages, one other key area presented the patriarchs with the opportunity to exercise authority over the secular realm: the coronation ceremony. In Byzantium, the inauguration of an emperor was initially a secular affair, with several elements (such as selection, acclamation, solemn procession, rising on a shield, receiving the imperial insignia) organized and emphasized according to the needs of the moment. The office of the emperor was

[69] Michael Psellus, *Chronographia* VI. 20, ed. by Konstantinos N. Sathas (London, 1899; repr. New York, 1979) 101; English trans. by E.R.A. Sewter, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers* (London, 1966) 165.

elective, and although the exact procedure was never clearly defined, the bodies that initially participated in the process were the imperial family, the army and the senate, with the *demos* (primarily the population of Constantinople) confirming the choice through acclamation. A ruling emperor could designate a son, a brother or other family member, a trusted advisor, etc. as successor, but his choice still needed the formal recognition of the other constitutive elements of the Byzantine society.[70] The patriarch came to play a role in the ceremony somewhat later, and not in its initial stages, but at the very end, at the coronation, endorsing rather than creating the *basileus*.[71] The accounts of early imperial inaugurations at the end of Book 1 of *De Ceremoniis* attest to the fluid character of the process as far as the leading actors, location and succession of required events were concerned.[72]

The early Byzantine centuries had been a time of exploration, as old Roman practices of making emperors were constantly adapted to the new set of beliefs and values that emerged with the Christianization of the empire. Patriarch Anatolius (449-458) was apparently the first ecclesiastical hierarch to perform an imperial coronation, in the year 457, not yet with the purpose of conferring sacred overtones to the act, but for the practical reason that there was no living emperor or empress to place the crown on the head of Leo I, the newly-elected *basileus*.[73]

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[70] F. E. Brightman, "Imperial Coronations in Byzantium," *Journal of Theological Studies* 211 (1901) 359-392, at 364-368; Nicol, "Byzantine Political Thought," in J. H. Burns ed., *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c.350–c.1450*, (Cambridge, 1988) 49-80, at 63-64; Michael McCormick, "Emperors," in Guiglielmo Cavallo ed., *The Byzantines* (Chicago, 1992) 230-254.

[71] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 79-83.

[72] *De ceremoniis* I. 91-96, discussed in Brightman, "Imperial Coronations," 368-377; Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 54-59. The place of the ceremony was not fixed; it could take place in the Hebdomon, the Hippodrome, the atrium of the palace, the palace church or the Great Church.

[73] Theophanes, *Chronographia* ad. ann. 457/458, p. 169; however John Malalas has Leo I crowned by the senate in the presence of the patriarch, in *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia* 14.35, ed. by Ludwig Dindorf (Bonn, 1931) and revised by Johannes Thurn (Berlin 2000), English trans. by Elizabeth Jeffreys et al, *The Chronicle of John Malalas* (Sydney, 1986). According to Malalas, Anatolius had been present at the coronation of the previous emperor Marcian (450-457) as well, but did not have any contribution to the process. The inauguration of the emperor as described by these early sources was a purely civil function, to which Patriarch Anatolius contributed nothing other than his presence. Dagron contends that in the case of Leo, the new emperor simply placed the crown on his head himself; vid. *Emperor and Priest*, 63-64.

Crowning by the patriarch did not become a rule right away. In 474, when Leo I chose his grandson, also called Leo, as successor, he himself crowned the child, in the presence of the patriarch and other dignitaries. But the consultations between senators and other officials on the election of the next emperor took place increasingly in the presence of the patriarch and the Gospels, tokens of holiness which were meant to communicate and seal the sacred character of the undertaking. For the Byzantines, the one ultimately deciding on the next ruler of the empire was God himself, the people simply echoing and implementing the divine decree. The emperor received the right to rule directly from God, while his subjects played their part in identifying the divine choice and the Church in legitimizing it. [74]

In 491, Patriarch Euphemius (490–496), who took part in the election of Anastasius I and crowned him as well, added a new religious dimension to the formal proceedings by asking the emperor to take a written oath that he would preserve orthodoxy unaltered.[75] The constant and often erroneous imperial meddling with the definition of Church dogma had caused serious worries among ecclesiastical leaders, who were thus hoping to contain further misguided efforts in this direction. Despite the growing contribution of the patriarch to the imperial inauguration, in the fifth and sixth centuries the ceremony remained primarily secular. Only in the 600s did the coronation part move inside the church. Patriarch Cyriacus (595-606) was the first to crown an emperor, Phocas I (602-610), in the church of St. John the Baptist in the Hebdomon.[76] Phocas had come to power through violent usurpation, and receiving the crown inside a sacred area

[74] In accordance with the Byzantine belief that *vox populi vox dei*, the one ultimately deciding on the next ruler of the empire was God himself, the people in their various walks of life simply echoing and implementing the divine decree; vid. Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 82-83.
[75] Theophanes, *Chronographia* ad. ann. 490/491, p. 208.
[76] Ludwig Dindorf ed., *Chronicon Pascale* (Bonn, 1832) 693.16-19, English trans., *Chronicon Paschale*, 142; Immanuel Bekker ed., *Theophylacti Simocattae Historiarum libri VIII* (Bonn, 1834) Book VIII.10.6, English trans. by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *The History of Theophylact Simocatta* (Oxford, 1986) 225.

emphasized that his action was direct by and succeeded through divine will, rather than being the mere result of crafty scheming against a lawful emperor.

In time, coronation in the church (usually Hagia Sophia), on an important feast day, at the hands of the patriarch, accompanied by his prayers and blessings, and by the imperial oath, now mandatory, became standard procedure. The ritual was complex, dazzling, and imbued with sanctifying properties: although it did not involve a Western-like 'royal unction' (there was no anointing with oil, the patriarch simply placed the Bible at the nape of the emperor's neck and recited a blessing), it marked the *basileus* as distinct from the rest of the world and set apart for God. It reinforced the widespread belief that the emperor was to be revered and obeyed as God's sacred representative on earth.[77] This growing emphasis on the religious implications of the coronation, coupled with the disturbing events in the West where in 962 Otto I had been crowned Emperor of the Romans by the pope, turned the patriarch from one of the many dignitaries attending the inauguration process into its main performer. Without the concluding, impressive ceremony in the church, the aspiring emperor lacked the required proof of divine favor and could not take charge of his office.

John I Tzimisces (969-976) was unable to ascend the throne for which he had conspired to murder his predecessor Nicephorus II Phocas, as long as Patriarch Polyeuctes refused to crown him because of his involvement in the assassination. Usurpation in itself was not deemed a criminal act in Byzantine political thought, but rather a sign from God that the reigning emperor had lost divine support and a new ruler had found favor with the heavenly realm; however, brutal elimination of one's rivals was both a sin and a crime, and required that harsh

[77] Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 267-276; Janet Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byzantium and the West in the Early Middle Ages," in idem, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986) 259-282.

punishments be meted out on the offenders.[78] Only after Tzimiskes acceded to the patriarchal requests to banish from the palace his lover and co-conspirator, the Empress Theophanu, to severely punish the perpetrators of the regicide, and to overturn the previous emperor's ruling on ecclesiastical properties, did Polyeuctes sanction the usurper's assumption of the imperial title. The coronation ceremony not only legitimized the new emperor, but was also able to absolve him of the sins incurred through participation in the murder, or so the canonist Theodore Balsamon argued in the twelfth century.[79]

In the later centuries, election by the army and the senate, and the *demos*' confirmation became more and more a formality, their acclamations being just a way of expressing assent to a decision already made by the inner circle of power and over which they had little control. New emperors were usually chosen by the ruling dynasty, or could take power through usurpation. The patriarch still had the final say, however, for only with his formal assent did one lawfully become emperor. Sometimes this, too, was just a matter of convention, especially during political crises, when opposing the coronation of the new *basileus* could end in bloodshed. But even if, for *raisons d'état*, the patriarch had no room for an outright refusal, he could still impose certain conditions on the soon-to-be emperor if the way in which this attained the throne had involved too much violence. Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118), whose bid for power had caused looting, raping and slaying in Constantinople, was crowned by Patriarch Cosmas (1075-1081), but had to do penance for all the savagery his rebellion had wrought on the city. For forty days,

[78] On imperial usurpation and legitimacy in Byzantium, see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 16-24; Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance, 963-1210* (Paris,1990) 177-184; Rosemarry Morris, "Succession and Usurpation: Politics and Rhetoric in the Late Tenth Century," in P. Magdalino ed., *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium 4th-13th Centuries*, (Aldershot, 1994) 199-214; Eleni Tounta, "Usurpation, Acceptance and Legitimacy in Medieval Europe," in Margo Kitts et al eds., *State, Power and Violence* (Wiesbaden, 2010) 447-473; and the volume *Power and Subversion in Byzantium. Papers from the 43rd Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 2010*, edited by Dimiter Angelov and Michael Saxby (Farnham, UK, 2013).

[79] Leo the Deacon, *History*, VI.4; Balsamon as quoted by Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 267-268.

Alexius wore sackcloth next to his skin, slept at night on bare ground with a stone as pillow, fasted, prayed and wept for his sins to the point where the palace "became a scene of tearful lamentations."[80] Patriarch Cosmas continued to act firmly and later on blocked Alexius' efforts to rid himself of his wife, Irene. The emperor was hoping to enter a politically more convenient matrimonial alliance with Maria of Alania, the wife of ex-emperor Michael VII Ducas. But Maria would have been at her third marriage, so the patriarch insisted that the emperor desisted from his plans. Cosmas incurred the anger of the emperor's mother, who disliked Irene, her daughter-in-law, and besides wanted on the patriarchal throne a man more inclined to listen to her than to the emperor. Alexius deposed Cosmas to please his mother and appointed in his place an uneducated monk, Eustratius Garidas.[81] Even when a patriarch scored a victory or two over the emperor, it was always the latter who held the upper hand in the relationship between the two offices, since he had the right to decide who occupied the patriarchal see. The patriarch's power was restricted to endorsing or rejecting a choice which he did not make. With all its limitations, it was still a powerful weapon.

The fact that the patriarch came to play a decisive role in endorsing an elected emperor in the office has been contested by Milton Anastos, who argues, based on the crowning of Michael IV (1034-1041) by his lover, Empress Zoe, rather than by the patriarch, that patriarchal coronation never became a constitutional requirement for elevation to the throne in Byzantium.[82] This is however a broad generalization drawn from evidence describing only one particular set of circumstances. According to Psellus, Empress Zoe simply brought Michael to the imperial hall,

[80] Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad* III.5, trans. E.R.A. Sewter (New York 2003) 114-115.
[81] Anna Comnena, *Alexiad* III.7-8, p.115-122; Angold, *Church and Society*, 46-47.
[82] Milton V. Anastos, "The Coronation of Michael IV in 1034 by Empress Zoe and Its Significance," in idem, *Aspectsof the Mind of Byzantium*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot 2001) art. VII. The opposing viewpoint, to which Anastos' paper actually responds, has been expressed by Peter Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance in the Later Byzantine Empire," *Byzantion* 15 (1940/41) 49-66.

clothed him with the imperial robe, placed the crown on his head and had him sit on the imperial throne. Thus Zoe at first formally "made" him co-emperor by investing him with the official insignia, and only afterwards did she seek the recognition of the other significant groups in the Byzantine society: the members of the imperial court, the Senate, and the people (the inhabitans of Constantinople). Psellus did not mention a coronation by the patriarch, but neither did he record the expected acclamations by the army (another important element in the process of legitimization of a new emperor). Whether these omissions are the author's or Zoe's, it is difficult to tell. Psellus was certainly selective in the events he chose to discuss. For instance, he failed to record the marriage of Michael to Zoe, but we know from other sources that the event did take place, and in quite a rushed manner. Skylitzes and Kedrenus noted that the marriage occured right before the coronation of Michael, with the couple bribing the patriarch with a hundred pounds of gold to perform the ceremony while the defunct Emperor Romanus was still waiting to be buried. Zonaras placed the marriage after the coronation of Michael, but still prior to the burial of Romanus, without any reference to the bribe given by the two lovers to the patriarch.[83] While these historians provided information on Zoe's marriage which Psellus did not find necessary to include in his account, they all seem to agree with Psellus that the patriarch did not participate in the coronation ceremony, as they offer no data on it. So it might be the case that the patriarch actually played no part in the process. Michael's coronation by Empress Zoe, however, should not become the touchstone by which imperial legitimization in Byzantium is judged.[84] Byzantine political practice remained flexible enough to allow rules to be bent,

[83] Anastos' essay provides an in-depth discussion of the episode and its sources, see esp. 25-30, and n. 20 on p. 39.
[84] The two other examples brought by Anastos in support of his theory are also unconvincing: John IV (1258-1261) and Constantine XI (1449-1453). John IV actually did go through a coronation ceremony, but because of Michael VIII Palaiologus' usurpation of the imperial diadem on that occasion, he received only the caesar's crown (see infra p. 303, n. 17). Constantine IX did not request a patriarchal coronation because the then-patriarch was a supporter of the recently signed Union of the Churches, and his endorsement was liable to upset the anti-unionist party, very strong in Constantinople at the time. Anastos cites the late Byzantine historian Ducas, for whom the last valid

especially in situations when imperial designs and determination found no match in the patriarchal desire to follow customary procedures. But most emperors in the Middle and Late Byzantine periods diligently sought the validation that came with the coronation at the hands of the patriarch, and some actually went to great lengths to secure it.[85]

A candidate to the title of *basileus* had no lawful means to rid himself of a patriarch determined not to recognize his accession to power. Only an emperor fully invested into his office could make decisions over ecclesiastical appointments; and no imperial investiture was valid without the patriarch's participation. To avoid a political impasse, the pretenders to the throne were prepared to work with the patriarch rather than against him, at least until they saw themselves crowned. In the rare case when the would-be emperor did find a way to have an uncooperative patriarch deposed, he still needed to search for a clergyman ready to place the crown on his head, or else the *basileia* continued to elude him. Andronicus I Comenus came to power on a wave of vicious fighting and sly maneuvering of friends and foes; in less than a year, he put to death all his adversaries save the young heir to the throne, Alexius II. The reigning patriarch, Theodosius I, witness to Andronicus' ruthlessness and vindictiveness, was by no means disposed to offer him the crown. And the uncrowned Andronicus was unable to depose him, so he plotted behind the scene with the other bishops to pressure Theodosius into resignation and choose as patriarch a man eager to cooperate. The bishops complied and picked Basil Camaterus, who readily crowned Andronicus and pardoned all his evildoings, including the murder of Alexius II which had occurred soon after the emperor had been confirmed into office

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Byzantine emperor had been John VIII; to him, uncrowned Constantine was not the real *basileus* (although Ducas used the imperial title more than once when referring to Constatine) – vid. Anastos, 32-33.

[85] See for instance the coronation of Theodore Lascaris and Theodore Ducas Comnenus, discussed infra ch. 4, and that of Michael VIII Palaiologus, infra ch. 5.

by the new patriarch.[86] However questionable the process that led to Andronicus' assumption of throne and crown had been, once the Church gave her much-needed sanction, he was fully entitled to claim the empire and rule it as God's highest representative on earth. As in the case of imperial marriages, the endorsement which came through coronation by the patriarch was the sine-qua-non condition for the legitimacy of the emperor in the eyes of God and men; it was also vital for preserving political stability, or in some cases for returning to peace and order in the *basileia*.

The relationship between emperor and patriarch did not transform in radical ways during the 'exile' period at Nicaea. The introduction of imperial anointment at the coronation ceremony did not add any privileges or powers to those already held by the patriarch, nor did it place the Church in a better position in regards to the imperial office. However, the shared goal of returning to Constantinople and ruling the faithful once again from the city which had been traditionally the heart of the Christian *oikoumene* made the emperor and the patriarch design common strategies and cooperate closely with each other, solving differences between them before they became major crises. Even the many overtures that the Lascarids made to the papacy during this time period were supported by the patriarchs, who understood them for what they were, a political tool meant to bring Constantinople back in Byzantine possession. The coordination between imperial and patriarchal policies ended rather abruptly with the death of Theodore II Lascaris in 1258 and the rise to power of Michael VIII Palaiologus, whose approach to ecclesiastical affairs resembled the high-handedness of the Comneni.[87]

[86] Eusthatius, *Capture of Thessaloniki* c. 33-35, p. 36-41; Angold, *Church and Society*, 116-120, and idem, *The Byzantine Empire*, 264-265.

[87] The changes brought by the ascension of Michael VIII to the throne are discussed in chapter 4 of this work. For a general survey of the relationship between the two main Byzantine offices during the Nicene exile, see M. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford 1975) 45-69.

While the installation of a patriarch at Nicaea in 1208 assisted tremendously its rulers by providing them with the traditional endorsement necessary to back up their imperial claims, gaining full legitimacy in the eyes of the wider world (former Byzantine subjects, Latin crusaders and settlers, and the papacy) was a much longer process. Chapter four of this work surveys the challenges, discords and obstacles that the early Lascarids had to overcome in order to become widely acknowledged as rightful heirs of the Byzantine emperor.

CHAPTER 2. BYZANTIUM AND THE WEST: A FAILED BROTHERHOOD

2.1. Introduction

In the political order shaped by the Roman Empire, the emperor emerged as the sole ruler of the *oikoumene* - the inhabited (and civilized) world.[1] Imperial authority belonged to him alone. Kings, princes and chieftains derived their power from him. They were his subjects, and their lands, whether inherited from ancestors or acquired through conquest, were understood as imperial bequests.[2] Adoption of Christianity in the fourth century further enhanced imperial dignity by adding to it the concept of the emperor as vicegerent of God. In this capacity, the emperor oversaw the Church, ensured its welfare and assisted in its expansion.[3] The Roman Empire became identified with *imperium Christianum.*

The collapse of the Western part of the empire in the fifth century did not alter the heightened view of the emperor's place in the political hierarchy of the day. The rulers of the new principalities established in the West acknowledged the sovereignty of the Byzantine

[1] In Roman and later Byzantine view, *oikoumene* included those parts of the world conquered by Rome or within its sphere of influence. It was centered on the Mediterranean, even if for a while the empire extended across the Alps and reached as far as Britain. It did not apply to the Parthians and then the Sassanians, who had established in the Near East political entities as advanced and powerful as the Roman Empire, and as such were treated as equals. See Evangelos Chrysos, "The Title βασιλεύς in Early Byzantine International Relations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 32 (1978) 29-75, at 33-36.

[2] For the Roman understanding of the emperor's place and role in the *oikoumene*, see Fergus Millar et al, *The Roman Empire and its Neighbors* (London, 1967). On how the Byzantines adapted and amended their Roman imperial inheritance, see F. Dölger, "Die Kaiserurkunde der Byzantiner als Ausdruck ihrer politischen Anschauung," *Historische Zeitschrift* 159 (1939) 229-250; George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956) 1-14; Evangelos Chrysos, "Byzantine Diplomacy, AD 300-800: Means and Ends," *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers from the Twenty-fourth Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (Aldershot, 1992) 25-39.

[3] The emperor as God's appointee and his relationship with the Church have been the object of numerous studies. The 'classics' are Ernest Baker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957) 1-53; Louis Bréhier, "Hiereus kai Basileus," *Mémorial Louis Petit: Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Bucharest, 1948) 41-45; F. Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy* 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1966) 2.724-850; Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'Idéologie politique de l'empire byzantine* (Paris, 1975); Steven Runciman, *Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge, 1977). A more recent appraisal of the emperor's authority in secular and religious matters is in Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. by J. Birrell (Cambridge, 2003). Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in the New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015) argues (rather unconvincingly) for a radical shift from the traditional scholarly paradigm of the theocentric Byzantine political order to that of Byzantium as a secular Roman republic in which the emperor received power from the people and held it with their consent (see above ch. 1).

emperor. The territory they occupied belonged to him, but they were granted titles and delegated power to rule in his name.[4] Ecclesiastically, the West also remained dependent on the emperor who resided in New Rome (Constantinople). Its leaders, the popes, were confirmed by him and at times could be arrested, exiled and even put to death at his orders.[5] The idea of a far-reaching imperial authority was preserved during the Byzantine 'Dark Ages,' despite the emperor's evident inability to control the barbarians – Arabs, Avars, Bulgars, and Slavs – who poured into the empire, seized huge portions of it, and showed no inclination to recognize him as their overlord. Even when these invasions cut off the emperor completely from his alleged domains in the West, the fiction remained.[6]

The first real challenge to it came from Charlemagne, who in 800 assumed the imperial title which the Byzantines regarded as the exclusive prerogative of their leader. At the time of his elevation to imperial office, Charlemagne controlled most of Western Europe. The papacy offered him its full support, as it preferred the Frankish upstart with no historical claims over the

[4] In most cases, the honors given by the emperor to various Germanic rulers simply recognized a situation over which he had no control; sometimes however they were meant to prompt barbarians into action in favor of Constantinople, or to reward such action. For instance, Emperor Zeno (474-475, 476-491) conferred the title of *patricius* on Odoacer in 476 since there was little else he could do, but then a decade later (488) he bestowed gifts and titles upon the Ostrogoth leader Theodoric the Great, and sent him to Italy to fight Odoacer and remove him from power. See Malchus, "Fragments" #14, Greek text with English translation in R. C. Blockley ed., *The Fragmentary Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2 vols. (Liverpool 1983) 2.418-421; "Anonymus Valesianus XI.49," Latin text with German translation in Ingemar König ed., *Aus der Zeit Theodorichs der Grossen: Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle* (Darmstadt, 1997) 76. The Frankish king Clovis fought with the help of Byzantine armies against the Visigoths, and received from Emperor Anastasius (491-518) an honorary consulate and possibly the patriciate as well. See "Historiarum Francorum" II.38, Latin text in Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison eds., *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis libri historiarum X*, in MGH. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum v.1 (Hannover, 1951). See discussion in Ralph W. Mathisen, "Clovis, Anastasius, and Political Status in 508 C.E.: The Frankish Aftermath of the Battle of Vouillé," *The Battle of Vouillé, 507 CE: Where France Began*, eds. Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer (Boston and Berlin, 2012) 79-110; also Rodolphe Guilland, "Les patrices byzantins du VIe siècle: Contribution à l'histoire des institutions et à la prosopographie de l'émpire byzantine," *Paleografia* 7 (1958) 37-71.

[5] A survey of the early papacy and its relationship with the emperor is in Jeffrey Richards, *Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476-752* (London, 1979) 55-215; Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (London 2006) 25-85.

[6] Byzantine political instability and military anarchy of the late sixth and seventh centuries are discussed in Jonathan Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: the Transformation of a Culture* (Cambridge, 1990); Eleonora Kountoura-Galake ed., *The Dark Centuries of Byzantium* (Athens, 2001).

Church of Rome to the high-handed imperial administration in Constantinople. By late eighth century, the Apostolic See completely detached itself from Byzantium. It also became sovereign lord of the Papal States, territory comprising some of the Italian duchies and cities which used to be part of the Byzantine Empire (such as Rome, Perugia, Ravenna, and the Pentapolis). Byzantium still held onto southern Italy and Sicily, but it meant little in the new political order.[7]

Incensed as they were at the audacity of the 'barbarian' who styled himself emperor, as if co-equal to their *basileus*, and at the papal betrayal, the Byzantines had to accept the political and ecclesiastical loss of the West as a fait accompli. They did, but in the centuries that followed the rhetoric of imperial grandeur and regional preeminence grew unabated. It was bolstered by military victories in Anatolia and the Balkans, and by the successful Christianization of the southern Slavs and the Russians. As Byzantium reached its apogee in the tenth century, the emperor preserved and even augmented his position within the *oikoumene*: he was now the head of a great family made up of 'junior brothers' (the Western emperor and the Muslim caliph), 'beloved sons' (the Bulgarian tsar, the Russian prince, and the Armenian ruler) and 'faithful servants' (the Venetian doge). He was the source of secular power, granting offices, titles, regalia, money and sometimes even Byzantine princes to the deserving members of this family.[8]

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[7] For the emergence of the Carolingian Empire, its relationship with the papacy and the Byzantine empire, see Judith Herrin, "Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Byzantine Diplomacy*, 91-107*;* Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751-987* (Cambridge, 1983)16-72; Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe* (Philadelphia, 1993) 85-140.

[8] Our best source for imperial diplomacy in Middle Byzantium is Constantine Porphyrogenitus, esp. his *De administrando imperio*, parallel Greek edition by G. Moravcsik and Engl. transl. by R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington, DC 1967), and *De ceremoniis aulae Byzantinae/The Book of Ceremonies*, transl. by Ann Moffatt and Maxene Tall, with Greek text from the Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1829) 2 vols (Canberra, 2012), 2.679-692. Also important is Liutprand de Cremona's *Relatio de Legatione Constantinopolitana*, ed. and trans. by Brian Scott (London 1993), discussed by Jon N. Sutherland, "The Mission to Constantinople in 968 and Lituprand of Cremona," *Traditio* 31 (1975) 55-81. Imperial diplomatic practices vis-à-vis rulers of surrounding or farther away states are analyzed by André Grabar, "God and the 'Family of Princes' Presided over by the Byzantine Emperor," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954) 117-123; Jonathan Shepard, "Byzantine Diplomacy, AD 800-1204: Means and Ends," *Byzantine Diplomacy*, 41-71. See also Karl Leyser, "The Tenth Century in Byzantine-Western Relationships," *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1973) 29-63. A critique of the idea of 'family of

He ruled from a resplendent city, the veritable center of the *oikoumene*. The unrivaled affluence, beauty, and size of Constantinople, the majestic palaces and churches within its impenetrable walls, and the elaborate court ceremonial reinforced the message of quasi-divine imperial authority to locals and foreigners alike. [9] So did the fact that the emperor resided in a city which was a repository of holiness through the many relics, shrines and monasteries it contained.[10] As the emperor was the ruler of Christendom, so was Constantinople its sacred capital. The fate of the city was intertwined with that of the emperor. Until 1204, one was inconceivable without the other.

The sack of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204 and the subsequent collapse of the Byzantine political order was the second, and more radical, challenge posed by the West to the *basileus* and his assumed role of leader of the Christian world. The damage inflicted to the credibility and prestige of Byzantium was so great that years passed before a pretender to the throne was able to secure regional recognition and gather enough support to launch the *reconquista.* All the while, a Latin emperor ruled from Constantinople, a Latin patriarch oversaw

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princes' is in Wolfram Brandes, "Familiebande? Odoaker, Basiliskos und Harmatios," *Klio* 75 (1993) 407-437, whose analysis, however, is centered on very early (fifth century) developments.

[9] A tenth-century Byzantine collection of (earlier) descriptions of, and legends about, the monuments of Constantinople offers glimpses of the city's art, architecture and culture from a popular perspective; see *Medieval Accounts of Medieval Constantinople: The 'Patria'* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), discussed by G. Dagron in *Constantinople imaginaire: études sur le recueil des "Patria"* (Paris, 1984). Accounts of diplomats and travelers are also revealing: see Liutprand de Cremona (n. 8 above) and the survey of Krijnie N. Ciggaar, *Western Travelers to Constantinople. The West and Byzantium, 900-1204* (Leiden, 1996). Harun ibn Yahya, an Arab prisoner of war brought to Constantinople who left complex descriptions of some of its monuments, is discussed by Henri Gregoire, "Un captif arabe à la cour de l'Empereur Alexandre," *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 666-673; A. A. Vasiliev, "Quelques remarques sur les voyageurs du moyen-age a Constantinople," *Mélanges Charles Diehl* (Paris, 1930) 293-298, and idem, "Harun-ibn-Yahya and his description of Constantinople," *Seminarium Kondakovianum* 5 (1932) 149-163; Jean-Claude Duchène, "Une deuxième version de la relation d'Harun ibn Yahya sur Constantinople," *Der Islam* 82 (2005) 241-255.

[10] Niketas Choniates, the historian who left a vivid account on the sack of Constantinople by crusaders, decried the destruction and chaos brought upon the city which used to be the "leader of Faith," "guide of Orthodoxy," "tabernacle of the Most High," "supramundane wonder, abode of every good thing, splendor of splendors, the rarest vision of the rare wonders of the world," in *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. I. Bekker (Bonn 1835), and I. van Dieten, 2 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1975), English translation by H.J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984) c. 577, p. 317 & 592, p. 325 [hereafter Choniates, *Annals*]. On the city before the Fourth Crusade, see Jonathan Harris, *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium* (London, 2007).

its churches, Latin principalities sprung all over the Aegean and the Balkans, and the pope looked expectantly to the moment when he would become the widely acknowledged spiritual and temporal master of the East, as he was in the West. But the sudden Latin expansion into the Greek- and Slavic-speaking areas of the northeastern Mediterranean did not bring about the long-lost unity of Christendom. On the contrary, it brought out into the open the deep political, religious and cultural divide between East and West, made even deeper by the ruthlessness of the conquest and the resentment of the conquered.

As background to the post-1204 contest for political and ecclesiastical hegemony in the Northeastern Mediterranean, this chapter provides an excursus into the relationship between Byzantium and the West prior to the fourth crusade, with a focus on imperial-papal encounters and exchanges. It emphasizes that the rivalry between the emperor and the pope, which stemmed from similar claims to universal leadership over Christendom, reached a high point right before the fourth crusade, when Innocent III's radical hierocratic views collided with Alexius III's uncompromising imperial ideology and pushed negotiations for return to communion into an impasse. The first part of the chapter traces the early imperial involvement in the Church affairs, especially in the definition of orthodoxy, and the way in which this eroded the Western zeal for religious and political unity, to the point where the Church of Rome separated from Constantinople and reconstructed its identity along substantially different lines than her sister churches in the East. The second part discusses the papal determination to impose its newly articulated philosophy of power, which granted the Apostolic See sweeping prerogatives and privileges over both secular and spiritual realms, upon the East, with the result that the religious differences between Latins and Byzantines were politicized and turned into insurmountable obstacles on the path to ecclesiastical reunion.

2.2. A Master of Little Patience: The Emperor and his Church in Late Antiquity

At the time of the fourth crusade, the rift between Byzantium and the Church of Rome was considerable, but neither old nor wide enough to have become unbridgeable. Greeks and Latins had drifted apart gradually, as historical circumstances allowed each Church to develop its own relationship with the temporal power, its own theological propositions and emphases, and its own liturgical life imbued with local flavors. In the formative centuries of Christian theology – the 'imperial age' between the fourth and the eighth centuries – Constantinople and Rome had more than once come into open conflict over matters of belief and practice, breaking off communion with each other.[11] Although short-lived, these early schisms had a lasting impact on how each Church came to understand 'orthodoxy' and the authority in charge of defining and defending it.

Both East and West claimed to have preserved unaltered the faith as delivered by Christ, handed down by the apostles, guarded by the bishops, and clarified in its fine points by the ecumenical councils. Novelty in dogmatic definitions and explanations was rejected, as was any revision and modification of creedal formulas. During the Trinitarian and Christological controversies that shook the Christian world in Late Antiquity, the bishops of Rome tended to stand firm by this traditional understanding of orthodoxy. The patriarchs of Constantinople, however, could rarely afford a firm stance. In the East, the Church had grown in the shadow of the emperor and learned – sometimes the hard way – to bend to his will.[12] And when it came to theological disputes, the Byzantine *basileis* were rather willful.

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[11] For a succinct overview of these crises, see Milton Anastos, "Constantinople and Rome: A Survey of the Relationship between the Byzantine and the Roman Churches," *Aspects of the Mind of Byzantium*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot, 2001) c. VIII; Henry Chadwick, *East and West: The Making of a Rift in the Church* (Oxford 2003)7-76; Tia Kolbaba, "Latin and Greek Christians," *The Cambridge History of Christianity: III. Early Medieval Christianities c.600-c.1100* (Cambridge, 2008) 213-229.

[12] Anastos, "Constantinople and Rome," argues that the emperor always succeeded in imposing his dogmatic views upon the Church, which is correct at least as far as the patriarchate of Constantinople was concerned. The response

According to the Late Antique worldview, it was the emperor's incumbent duty to maintain peace, unity and harmony within his realm, and implicitly within the Church, which Constantine the Great had made into one of the foundational pillars of the empire. In the East, this imperial duty often translated into theological pronouncements made unilaterally by an emperor who sought to refine or redefine doctrines already declared orthodox in an ecumenical council, in an effort to appease parties unhappy with conciliar decisions. Quite a few *basileis* took it upon themselves to redraw the fine boundary between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in order to reach the greater good of concord among their subjects. A few others went even further, proposing or giving full support to novel interpretations of faith or worship practices. As a rule, the patriarchs of Constantinople went along with whatever the emperor decided, since doing otherwise had consequences of a highly unpleasant nature for clergymen often unwilling to see their plight as a spiritual labor in Christian humbleness and self-denial. The price of defying imperial decrees was usually deposition and exile, but occasionally could lead to imprisonment, torture and even execution. The Church of Rome could afford to rebuke the emperor and disobey his orders, since it lay outside his immediate reach.

The pattern of imperial action and divergent East/West religious reaction was established quite early in the history of the Christian Roman Empire. The Arian controversy, not settled at Nicaea in 325 despite Constantine's efforts, dragged on for several more decades since emperors in the East supported pro-Arian factions and proclaimed as 'orthodox' versions of the creed that denied the Nicene understanding of the *homoousian* relationship between God the Father and

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of the three other Eastern patriarchates was more diverse, ranging from submission to outright rebellion, and leading in the fifth century to the split-up between Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian churches. The focus of this chapter is on Constantinople and Rome, since after the Arab conquest of the Middle East in the 600s, the attitude of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem towards theological and ecclesiological issues decided by the Byzantine emperor ceased to carry any weight. Thus "Church of the East/Eastern Church," "Byzantine Church" or simply "Church" refer to the patriarchate of Constantinople and by extension to the ecclesiastics and monastics it oversaw, unless otherwise specified.

God the Son. Rome and the Western bishops upheld the Nicene definition, but failed to make an impact on their Eastern counterparts. Moreover, during Constantius' visit to the West in the mid-350s, many Church hierarchs including two of the staunchest defenders of Nicaea, Bishop Hosius of Cordova and Pope Liberius of Rome, surrendered to imperial pressure and signed a creed proposed by the Arianists. The emperor's persistent threats and chastisements, followed by the exile and mistreatment of dissenters, had induced even the Western bishops to relent. But after the death of Constantius, they returned to a pro-Nicene stance, while the East continued to ruminate and debate, sometimes violently, over the exact way to define the Son's relationship to the Father. It took a Western-born and bred emperor, the Spaniard Theodosius, to rule over the East and bring it back to the Nicene position in 381.[13]

During the Christological controversies of the fifth century, Rome and Constantinople initially found themselves on the same side of orthodoxy as defined at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), while churches in Armenia, Egypt, Palestine and Syria broke away, causing the first major schism in the Church. Defining Christ's nature(s) proved to be as complicated and divisive an undertaking as defining the Trinity a century earlier. To many in the East who had subscribed to Cyril's miaphysite formula ('one incarnate nature of the divine Logos'), the Chalcedonian dyophysitism ('two natures, without confusion, change, division, or separation') sounded dangerously close to Nestorianism. The situation became explosive in the large cities of the Eastern Empire, especially in Alexandria and Antioch, where disgruntled Miaphyistes put up strong (and even armed) resistance against any Chalcedonian ecclesiastical encroachment. Three emperors in three successive centuries attempted to reconcile the warring parties: Zeno by publishing the (in)famous *Henotikon* or Act of Union in 482, Justinian I by issuing the edict on

[13] For extensive background and bibliography on Arianism and the councils meant to refute or endorse it, see Leo D. Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, MN, 1983) 33-133.

the (allegedly Nestorian) Three Chapters in 544, and Heraclius by promoting Monotheletism in his *Ekthesis* (Statement of Faith) of 638. None of these attempts succeeded in anything else but deepening the existing rift in the East and alienating the churches in the West.

Zeno's *Henotikon* sanctioned the Nicene Creed, endorsed Nestorius's condemnation at Ephesus and Eutyches's at Chalcedon, but refused to acknowledge any definition of Christ's natures, placing anyone who did under anathema. Since the issue at heart was exactly this, the *Henotikon* failed to reach its purpose. The breach between Chalcedonians and miaphysites stayed on, and a new one was added to it. Rome saw in *Henotikon* an unwarranted imperial tampering with the Christological formula decided upon by an ecumenical council. Pope Felix III (483-492) pressured Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople (471-489) to publicly withdraw his support of the *Henotikon*, which the latter could not do unless prepared to deal with the consequences of disobeying an imperial order. Neither Acacius, nor his successors were eager to face the emperor's wrath. In response, the Apostolic See excommunicated Acacius and refused communion with subsequent patriarchs of Constantinople, while the popes' names were removed from the diptychs of the Eastern Church. The schism lasted until another emperor, Justin I (518-527), rejected the Henotikon as heretical and re-entered communion with Rome.[14]

Justinian (527-565), the Late Antique emperor with perhaps the most ample record of interference in Church affairs, sought to placate the miaphysites by issuing the edict on the so-called Three Chapters. It was as much a political gesture as a theological pronouncement. The edict placed under anathema the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Theodoret of Cyrus, and the letter of Bishop Ibas of Edessa to Maris, perceived as supporting Nestorianism by the opponents of Chalcedon. Justinian perhaps assumed he could make the best of both worlds: keep

[14] Davis, *First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 134-225; John Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions: The Church AD 450-680* (Crestwood, NY, 1989) 165-206.

Chalcedonian definition intact, and bring back non-Chalcedonians by condemning the most outspoken supporters of the dual nature of Christ. But the edict created further troubles. After some hesitation, the patriarchate of Constantinople accepted it, while the Church of Rome rejected it. The fifth-century theologians who stood condemned by the emperor had died at peace with the Church, and it was unjust and excessive to have them judged and pronounced guilty when they could no longer defend themselves or recant their position. Justinian had little patience with disobedient prelates, so he persuaded Pope Vigilius (537-555), in a rather forceful manner, to sign the edict.[15] The bishops of Northern Italy under the leadership of Aquileia, and many of those in Illyricum, Gaul, Spain and North Africa refused to subscribe to the condemnation of the Three Chapters and to recognize the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (553) which sanctioned it. Justinian had them deposed and exiled. While the Apostolic See remained faithful to the emperor's ruling against the theologians accused of Nestorianism, the West went through a schism of its own. The bishop of Aquileia broke away from the Church of Rome, which he deemed to have become heretical, and declared his see an independent 'patriarchate.' The emperor could do little about it, since Northern Italy came under Lombard rule. At the same time, in the East, neither Justinian's edict nor his council induced the non-Chalcedonians to reunite with the Chalcedonian churches.[16]

The Eastern division became permanent during the reign of Heraclius (610-641), despite his frantic efforts to heal it. Heraclius spent most of his reign fighting at first the Persians, then

[15] On Justinian and Pope Vigilius, see Claire Sotinel, "Emperors and Popes in the Sixth Century," Michael Maas ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005) 267-290, at 279-284. In the wake of Justinian's reconquest of Italy in the 540s and 550s, the papacy came under Byzantine influence to a much greater extent than in previous centuries. Many popes were Greeks from the East or Byzantine-held Sicily, or at a minimum had spent time in Constantinople as *apocrisarii* and became familiar with the imperial ways of handling Church crises. Justinian involved himself directly in the election of the sovereign pontiff; later emperors would just confirm the newly-elected candidate. An in-depth discussion of this time period is in Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590–752* (Plymouth, UK, 2007).

[16] Davis, *First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 225-257; Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 207-250.

the Arabs. In the second decade of the seventh entury, the armies of the Sassanian king Khosrou II occupied Armenia and Asia Minor, then took over Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Three of the four Eastern patriarchates (Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria) were in Persian hands. The areas conquered by Khosrou were also those in turmoil over Chalcedonian Christology. To gain the support of local Christians against the Persian invader, Emperor Heraclius and Patriarch Sergius (610-638) tried to find a compromise theological formula that would reunite the parties in dispute. In the 620s, they came up with Monoenergism or the doctrine of two natures, but one divine energy or activity (ἐνέργεία) of Jesus Christ. The novel Christological articulation was appealing to many of the miaphysites in Syria and Egypt, and even to the Nestorians who had taken refuge in Persia since the fifth century.[17] Pleased with the overall reaction, Heraclius, after

[17] The idea of one activity/energy/ operation of Jesus Christ was not entirely new, as somewhat similar notions had been expressed by a handful of theologians prior to the 620s. The novelty came from Heraclius' promotion of a marginal point of view to an imperially-sanctioned dogma, thus turning it into official theology mandatory for all Christians. Monoenergism had circulated prior to the seventh century among the Chalcedonians of the East who were dissatisfied with Pope Leo's dyophysitism, which had been accepted as *the* orthodox explanation of Christ's dual nature at the Council of Chalcedon in 431. The Eastern theologians were seeking a Christological definition closer to Cyril of Alexandria's formula μία φύσις τοῦ θεοῦ λόγου σεσαρκωμένη (i.e."one nature of the Word of God incarnate"), so they posited the idea that the hypostatic union between Christ's divine and human natures was fulfilled through His single, divine, energy. Two main proponents of this interpretation were Patriarch Anastasius of Antioch (559-570; 593-598) and Bishop Theodore of Pharan, in Sinai (c. 570-before 638). See Daniel Larison, "Return to authority: The Monothelete Controversy and the Role of Text, Emperor and Council in the Sixth Ecumenical Council," PhD Thesis (University of Chicago 2009) 51-54. Larison contends that Monoenergism and its offshoot, Monotheletism, were neo-Chalcedonian attempts to reconcile Cyril's quasi-miaphysite position with Chalcedonian dyophysitism, and not, as traditionally argued, "an olive branch to compromise with heretics," i.e. the enemies of Chalcedon. Through Monoenergism, neo-Chalcedonians were trying to recover Cyril's discourse, appropriated by heretics and used as a weapon against those who believed in the two natures of Christ, and recast it in a form that reconciled divergent (dyophysite and Cyrillian) positions among the supporters of Chalcedon. Larison downplays the importance of political considerations in Heraclius' decision to support Monoenergism (i.e. appeasement of miaphysites); he maintains that, on the contrary, the imperial formulations of faith and subsequent actions were geared quite clearly *against* non-Chalcedonians. The emperor issued theological definitions that sought to reevaluate Cyril in a positive light, in order to bring peace among the Chalcedonians. If Cyril was found orthodox (i.e. in agreement with Chalcedon), then the miaphysites could no longer use his theology to rationalize their rejection of dyophysitism. Larison's analysis proposes an interesting reassessment of Monoenergism as a compromise meant to reach a consensus within the Chalcedonian camp, rather than bring heretics in the orthodox fold. However, it fails to make a compelling case for Heraclius' dogmatic interventions as efforts to reunite the orthodox. No evidence is adduced to indicate such a serious crisis existed during his reign between the adherents of Cyril's theology and those of Leo's dyophysitism that would necessitate an imperial pronouncement on orthodoxy. Also, it is not sufficiently explained why an emperor who had serious troubles with the Persians on the Eastern front, would seek to alienate even further people who refused to submit to his authority but were welcoming of the Persian king.

his final victory over the Persians in 628, began pursuing a unionist policy throughout his reconstituted *basileia.* A formal Union proclamation took place in 633 in Alexandria, hailed by Pope Honorius I (625-638) in Rome. The only high-ranking prelate unhappy with Monoenergism was Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (634-638), who declared it unorthodox, since it underplayed Christ's humanity. The emperor had the patriarch of Constantinople search for another formula that could please all the parties. Heraclius saw this especially necessary, since he had lost Syria and Palestine once more, this time to the Arab Muslims, who had poured into the Near East in 634; restoration of religious unity could advance his military cause once again.[18]

In 638, Emperor Heraclius issued the *Ekthesis* or statement of faith, which proposed that Christ had two natures, divine and human, but only one, divine, will (θέλημα). It was based on Pope Honorius' attempt to explain away - in a letter to the patriarch of Constantinople – any suspicion and skepticism regarding the orthodoxy of Monoenergism, by making it clear that there was one agent in Jesus Christ since there was only one will. The letter paved the way for the Monothelete definition. All the Eastern patriarchates supported it (Sophronius having died before he could pronounce on the matter). Pope Honorius passed away in 638, and his successors took a radically different stand, rejecting without hesitation the doctrine of "one will" as heretical. A new schism divided East and West, as Heraclius and the emperors who came after him were adamant that Monotheletism be adopted by every church, for the sake of preserving Christian unity. Those who spoke out against it were persecuted. The most famous victims of

[18] This is the traditional interpretation of the reasons behind Heraclius' renewed efforts of finding an acceptable theological definition, for which see John F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Cambridge, 1997) 41-91, Andrew Louth, "The Byzantine Empire in the Seventh Century," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, I. c.500–c.700*, ed. Paul Fouracre (Cambridge, 2005) 289-316, at 296-298; Ostrogorsky, *History of Byzantine State*, 107-109; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997) 300-305. An account of Heraclius' military engagements is in Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003); also Bob Ekkebus, "Heraclius and the Evolution of Byzantine Strategy," *Constructing the Past* 10 (2009) 73-96. For a different take on the religious considerations that prompted Heraclius to refine the orthodox definition of Christ's natures, see D. Larison, "Return to Authority."

imperial crackdown on protesters were Pope Martin (649-655), who was arrested, abused physically and verbally, tried and sent into exile, and Maximus the Confessor (580-662), a Constantinopolitan monk and theologian, who was imprisoned, tortured, had his tongue and right hand chopped off, then was exiled to Georgia, where he died soon afterwards.[19]

All the imperial violence geared towards those who opposed Monotheletism was in the end of little use. By the early 640s, the Arab Muslims controlled Syria, Palestine and most of Egypt. The Byzantine emperors lost access to these areas and implicitly any possibility of influencing the doctrinal and ecclesiological developments among the churches which refused to recognize the Chalcedonian patriarchates. The Monothelete theology thus became superfluous, since those who were supposed to become reconciled with Chalcedonian orthodoxy through it were no longer imperial subjects, likely to be swayed by dogmatic concessions. The emperors who succeeded Heraclius, however, remained obstinately attached to it. As a consequence, the schism between Constantinople and Rome continued for several decades, until Emperor Constantine IV (668-685) convened an ecumenical council in 680, which repudiated the "two natures, one will" formula, and reaffirmed the Chalcedonian definition of faith.[20]

The early disagreements between East and West were not always theological in nature. Canon law could lead to conflicts as well, especially if the emperor assumed that Byzantine religious practices were the only ones which deserved to be labeled as 'orthodox.' The canons issued by the Quinisext Council (691/692) reflected the clerical discipline and ritual observances which had become standard in the East. The council was summoned by Justinian II (685-695, 705-711), and was meant to be a supplement to the fifth and sixth councils which had dealt

[19] Phil Booth, *Crisis of Empire: Doctrine and Dissent at the End of Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2014) 186-328; Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome*, 128-141.
[20] General overviews of the Monothelite controversy are in Davis, *First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 258-287, and Meyendorff, *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions*, 333-373.

exclusively with doctrinal matters. It aimed to bring unity and uniformity in worship, organization and morality. Its participants were largely from Byzantium, Syria, Palestine and Egypt, so most of its canons dealt with issues prevalent in the East. But several canons addressed Western practices that the East found objectionable, such as celibacy of the lower clergy (Canon 13), fasting on Saturdays during Lent (Canon 55), or depicting Jesus Christ as a lamb (Canon 82). Pope Sergius I (687-710) did not participate in the council, and did not send legates to it. Ekonomou suggests that the papal *apocrisarius* (envoy) in Constantinople was likely present at the proceedings, and together with the bishop of Crete, a suffragan of Rome also in attendance, represented the Apostolic See and subscribed to the canons in its name.[21]

Even if this were the case, the pope was unhappy with the outcome. He considered the canons which contradicted Roman traditions as "erroneous novelties" and refused to sign the conciliar tome sent to him by the emperor.[22] Justinian II did not take this kindly, and ordered that Sergius be arrested and brought before him to Constantinople. The local militia in Ravenna and Rome took up arms against the Byzantine agents who came to enforce the imperial command, and the pope escaped unharmed. But no council could be formally considered valid and "ecumenical" (pertaining to the entire Church) without papal signature. Imperial pressures on Rome continued, so in 710 Pope Constantine I (708-715) answered Emperor Justinian's order to visit Constantinople, and once there signed or at least accepted verbally the canons of the Quinisext council.[23] Although it did not lead to a full hiatus in the communication between East and West as previous ecclesiastical disputes had done, the quarrel over canons pointed to deeper

[21] Ekonomous, *Byzantine Rome*, 220.
[22] Ekonomous, *Byzantine Rome*, 222.
[23] Davies, *First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 284-286; Andrew Louth, *Greek East and Latin West: The Church AD 681-1071* (Crestwood NY, 2007) 31-39.

and ever growing dissimilarities in the ways in which emperors and popes understood and exercised authority.

While geographical distance often spared the popes much of the (mis)treatment applied by emperors to disobedient Eastern patriarchs, the Apostolic See was not free from vigorous interventions. The imperial arm stretched as far as Rome whenever a tough-minded emperor found it necessary to discipline a rebellious pope. Until the late 700s, both East and West agreed that the Roman emperor was the ultimate authority entrusted by God with the protection and preservation of Christendom. The Church of Rome, however, regarded the emperor as its subject in matters of religious discipline, doctrine and ritual. From Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century to Pope Gregory III in the eighth, gross imperial violation of Christian ethics or meddling with definitions of faith and ritual practices had been criticized, resisted, and sometimes penalized with excommunication. The wide range of prerogatives that the emperor enjoyed in the East was unacceptable in the West. In addition, the elevation of the bishopric of Constantinople to a place of honor second only to Rome was met with open disapproval and even hostility. The popes feared that the emperor's presence rather than the apostolic foundation of a see would become the decisive factor in turning a city into the leading center of Christianity.[24] Rome used to enjoy prestige as *the* capital of the empire and as the place where two foremost apostles, Peter and Paul, taught and died as martyrs. But by the end of the fourth century, the city had lost much of its previous association with imperial power, as the Western emperors chose to reside and rule from places strategically located closer to the borders - Trier, Milan, and Ravenna being the usual alternatives. Constantinople was an even more serious

[24] For the tension between the principle of accommodation (according to which the power of a bishopric depended upon the political importance of the city in which it was located) and the principle of apostolicity (which made the apostolic roots of a bishopric fundamental for its power and prestige), see Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New York, 1966) 27-58; idem, *The Idea of Apostolicity in Byzantium and the Legend of the Apostle Andrew* (Washington DC, 1958) 3-39.

competition, as it had been built especially to fulfill the role of the administrative, economic, and religious capital of the Eastern part of the empire. Tying the religious significance of a city to its overall political weight could spell disaster for the Church of Rome, which stood to lose its ecclesiastical preeminence to places where imperial authority was stronger.[25]

The bishops of Rome addressed this threat to their special status within Christendom by emphasizing the unique ecclesiastical position of their see, heir to the all-encompassing authority given to Peter by Jesus.[26] In the *Chronograph* of 354, Peter was promoted from the position of founder of the local church to that of first bishop of Rome.[27] Starting with Damasus (366-384),

[25] There were in fact serious reasons to worry from a papal perspective. Five decades after the rather obscure Βυζάντιον/Byzantium became the city of Constantine the Great and capital of the Roman Empire, its equally obscure bishopric received, via the third canon of the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 381), τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς ("the prerogatives of honor") μετὰ τὸν Ῥώμης ἐπίσκοπον ("after the see of Rome"). The archbishop of Constantinople was thus elevated to the second position in the hierarchy, before the much older and apostolically-founded sees of Alexandria and Antioch. In mid fifth century, Canon 28 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon 451) reaffirmed the importance of the archbishopric of Constantinople, making its prerogatives equal (ἴσον) to those of the Church Rome, and extending its jurisdiction to include the dioceses of Thrace, Asia and Pontus. The canon further specified that the Church Fathers had previously given the prerogatives of honor to the archbishop of Rome "because it was the imperial city" (διὰ τὸ βασιλεύειν τὴν πόλιν ἐκείνην). Now, since Constantinople was the new capital of the empire, the Fathers "sensibly" (ἐυλόγως) granted the same prerogatives to the archbishop of New Rome, thus definitely connecting the preeminence of the see to the political status of the city. Greek and Latin texts of the canons with English translation are in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1990) 1.32, 99-100; see also Peter L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils* (Crestwood, NY, 2000) 119-122, 267-297. The emperor's residence in the city and his active involvement in Church affairs, as well as the fall of the other three Eastern patriarchates in the hands of Muslim Arabs in the early seventh century contributed to the New Rome's rise in ecclesiastical power and influence. The patriarch of Constantinople did become the main religious figure in the East, although always subordinated to the emperor.

[26] The basic biblical text used to justify this claim is Mt.16:13-19. For other NT verses brought in support of Petrine primacy, see Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches: A Study in Schism*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco, 2010) 191-192. A detailed analysis of the early papal discourse of authority is in George E. Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter* (Philadelphia, 2013), where the author argues that the popes' reliance on Peter in order to justify the assumption of extensive prerogatives in the Church was not sign of an ever growing papal power, but of the vulnerability and anxiety caused to the bishops of Rome by challenges coming from both East and West. For the traditional thesis of a forceful and inevitable ascent of papal authority throughout the Middle Ages, see Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955); Klaus Schatz, *Papal Primacy from its Origins to the Present* (Collegeville, MN, 1996); and the more ecumenically-bent collection of articles in Michele Maccarrone ed., *Il Primato del Vescovo di Roma nel Primo Millennio. Ricerche e Testimonianze. Atti del Symposium Storico-Teologico, Roma, 9-13 Ottobre 1989* (Vatican City, 1991).

[27] Even if the New Testament and other first-century Christian sources do not name the founder of the church in Rome, by the time of Irenaeus (fl.160s-190s) Peter and Paul were credited with its establishment and with entrusting its episcopal see to Linus – vid. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* III.3.2-3, Greek text in Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutreleau eds., *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les hérésies. Livre III*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1974); English translation by Robert M. Grant, *Against Heresies* (London and New York, 1997) 94. In the fourth century, the list of bishops included in the *Chronograph* of 354 (the so-called Liberian Catalogue) listed Peter as the first bishop of the Church of Rome,

the popes enthusiastically sponsored the cult of Peter, initially together with that of Paul, the other apostle who lived, preached and was martyred in Rome. By the early fifth century, however, the memory of the latter was pushed aside, since no leadership implications could be drawn from associating his name with that of the city.[28] In 382, Damasus upgraded the episcopal see of Rome to the status of *the* Apostolic See (*sedes apostolica*), with no need for further qualifications or reference to other sees, as a sign that it inherited Peter's leading role in the early Church.[29] In the 440s, Leo the Great (440-461) developed a complex rhetoric of papal entitlement and privilege based on the doctrine of Petrine primacy. He also took on the Roman (pagan) title of *pontifex maximus* (abandoned by the Christian emperors at the end of the fourth century), to underscore the exclusive prerogatives of the bishop of Rome in relation to other bishops.[30] Gelasius I (492-496) started to use the title *vicarius Christi* (Vicar of Christ) in his official correspondence, with the implication that the pope, as successor of Peter to whom Jesus had delegated the power to rule over the faithful, was the sole rightful leader of the Church.[31] In his dealings with the *basileus*, Gelasius attempted to define the relationship between ecclesiastical and political powers in a way that affirmed and promoted the preeminence of the

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position in which he has remained ever since in official papal histories, although there is no evidence that he ever held any office in that church, or in any other associated with his name (Jerusalem and Antioch). For the list, see R. W. Burgess, "The Chronograph of 354: Its Manuscripts, Contents and History," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5 (2012) 345-396.

[28] On the initially joint cult of Peter and Paul in Rome and the fifth-century shift of emphasis on Peter alone, see Charles Pietri, "Concordia apostolorum et renovatio urbis*:* Culte des martyrs et propagande pontificale," *Mélanges d'archéologie e d'histoire de l'Ecole française de Rome* 73 (1961) 275-322, and J.M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum*: *Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: A Study in Early Christian Iconography and Iconology* (Oxford, 1982). On Pope Damasus and the transformation of Rome into a Christian city, see Lucy Grig, "Portraits, Pontiffs and the Christianization of Fourth-Century Rome", *Papers of the British School at Rome* 72 (2004) 203–230, and Dennis Trout, "Damasus and the Invention of Early Christian Rome," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003) 517–536.

[29] Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*, 202-203.

[30] Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter*, 31-72.

[31] Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter* 73-101.

spiritual over the temporal.[32] Over the centuries, the definition of papal authority became more precise and the prerogatives assumed by the papacy more complex, but the overall impact of these developments on the East was null.

The four Eastern patriarchs agreed to a primacy of honor due to the Apostolic See, but not to a primacy of power; that is, they never understood the pope's authority as extending beyond the boundaries of his Western archdiocese. In the early Church, the episcopal sees had been equal in rank and honor, but in time the bishop of a *metropolis* (the capital of a province) assumed the right of supervision over the other bishops in the province, the Church hierarchy thus beginning to parallel the Roman territorial and administrative organization. The Council of Nicaea in 325 recognized three bishops with supra-metropolitan jurisdiction: those of the ancient sees of Alexandria, Antioch and Rome, each in charge of several provinces. The bishop of Rome received no special authority beyond that which he already had over his diocese in the West. The bishop of Jerusalem was formally awarded the rank of metropolitan as well, but in practice he remained a subordinate of the metropolitan of Caesarea. Only at Chalcedon in 451 did Jerusalem

[32] He admonished Emperor Anastasius I (491-518), who was trying to force the Henotikon upon the Church of Rome, to confine himself to his (secondary) place in the hierarchy of power when it came to Church issues: *Dua quippe sunt, imperator auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur: auctoritas sacrata pontificum et regalis potestas. In quibus tanto gravius est pondus sacerdotum quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem. Nosti etenim, fili clementissime, quod licet praesideas humano generi dignitate, rerum tamen praesulibus divinarum devotus colla submittis, atque ab eis causas tuae salutis exspectas, inque sumendis coelestibus sacramentis eisque ut competit disponendis, subdi te debere cognoscis religionis ordine potius quam praeesse, itaque inter haec ex illorum te pendere judicio, non illos ad tuam velle redigi vohmtatem.* Letter 12, Latin text in Andreas Thiel ed., *Epistolae Romanorum pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilaro usque ad Pelagium II*, v.1 (Brunsberg, 1867) 349-358, at 350-351. English translation in J. H. Robinson, *Readings in European History* (Boston 1905) 72-73: "There are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sacred authority of the priests and the royal power. Of these that of the priests is the more weighty, since they have to render an account for even the kings of men in the divine judgment. You are also aware, dear son, that while you are permitted honorably to rule over human kind, yet in things divine you bow your head humbly before the leaders of the clergy and await from their hands the means of your salvation. In the reception and proper disposition of the heavenly mysteries you recognize that you should be subordinate rather than superior to the religious order, and that in these matters you depend on their judgment rather than wish to force them to follow your will."

attain autocephaly, its jurisdiction covering the entire Palestine.[33] Constantinople was a new addition to the Roman administration, but its bishop was also granted at Chalcedon a large diocese, comprising Thrace, Pontus and Asia, as befitted the shepherd of the imperial capital. Justinian's legislation fixed the title (*patriarchus*) and the order of precedence (Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem) of the five hierarchs, now declared *totius orbis terrarum patriarcha* (patriarchs of the entire earth).[34]

In the Eastern view, the five patriarchs derived their authority from ecclesiastical and imperial legislation. All of them enjoyed equal prerogatives and privileges, but the patriarch of Rome was allotted special reverence as *primus inter pares* ("first among equals"), in virtue of his being the successor of Saint Peter.[35] A certain juridical preeminence of Rome was also acknowledged in Byzantium, based on canons issued by the Council of Serdica (343), which stated that bishops who considered themselves unjustly sentenced could appeal the pope to hear their case.[36] Several Eastern patriarchs made use of this canon prior to the split between East and West in the High Middle Ages. But the East remained steadfast in its support of the pentarchy as the highest authority within the Church, and a church council was considered "ecumenical" only when all five patriarchs or their representatives participated in it. In the later Middle Ages, this

[33] Canons 6 and 7 of Nicaea, in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington DC, 1990) 1.8-9. For the principle of accommodation, see Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, 32-36.
[34] Nov. 109, Praefatio and Nov. 123, Cap. 3; Latin and Greek text in P. Krüger et al [T. Mommsen, P. Krüger, R. Schöll, W. Kroll] eds., *Corpus Iuris Civilis* 3 vols. (Berlin, 1904) 3.517-518 and 597-598, English trans. Fred H. Blume, *Annotated Justinian Code*, 2nd ed., accessed October 10, 2014, http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/101-120/novel%20109_tk.pdf and http://www.uwyo.edu/lawlib/blume-justinian/ajc-edition-2/novels/121-140/novel%20123_replacement.pdf. See also Alexander Kazhdan et al., "Patriarchate," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1991) 1599-1600.
[35] The Byzantine understanding of Roman primacy is detailed in John Meyendorff ed., *The Primacy of Peter: Essays in Ecclesiology and the Early Church* (Crestwood, NY, 1992); surveys of the Western perspective on the Petrine doctrine are in Maccarrone, *Il primato del vescovo di Roma nel primo millenio* and Aidan Nichols, *Rome and the Eastern Churches*.
[36] The appeal canons (3c and 7) are discussed in Hamilton Hess, *The Early Development of Canon Law and the Council of Serdica* (Oxford, 2002) 179-200, with Latin and Greek texts, and English translation on p. 213-255.

belief would be heavily contested by Rome, as the pope increasingly saw himself as the only head of the Church, entitled to decide and implement changes as he saw fit.

To the Byzantines, such a proposition could appear as nothing other than outlandish. For them, the ultimate authority over the Church belonged to the emperor, and he held the right to decide in ecclesiastical matters, ideally in conjunction with the five patriarchs. He also held the right to request and extract obedience from the patriarchs, Rome included. When this was not offered, imperial resolutions could be imposed by coercion. The method at times backfired, as the Apostolic See preferred to sever communion with the East rather than follow ordinances that they found unacceptable. Nonetheless, until late eighth century when the popes managed to extricate themselves from the emperor's grip, imperial will in religious matters prevailed, regardless of whether it coincided or not with that of the Church of Rome. By the end of the sixth century, the *basileis* relied on the exarch of Ravenna to bring further pressures upon uncompliant popes.

The exarchate, established in 584 by Emperor Maurice to represent and promote Byzantine interests in the West, was thus expected - though rarely able - to exercise control over the papacy on behalf of Constantinople. For all intents and purposes, the exarch was and remained an outsider in an area dominated by local aristocratic and ecclesiastical interests. His success in making Italians and especially the Church of Rome obey imperial rulings was consequently minimal.[37] In the early 620s, as the Byzantine Empire was fighting for its survival

[37] A comprehensive monograph on the Byzantine presence in Italy is in T.S. Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers: Imperial Administration and Aristocratic Power in Byzantine Italy A.D. 554–800* (Rome, 1984). For more Ravenna-focused studies, see T. S. Brown, "The Interplay between Roman and Byzantine Traditions and Local Sentiment in the Exarchate of Ravenna," *Bisanzio, Roma et l'Italia nell'alto medioevo* 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1988) 1.127-160, and idem, "The Aristocracy of Ravenna from Justinian to Charlemagne," *Corsi Ravennati* 33 (1986) 135-149; R. A. Markus, "Ravenna and Rome, 554-604," *Byzantion* 51 (1981) 566-578. Older but still relevant are A. Guillou, *Régionalisme et indépendence dans l'Empire byzantin au VII^e siècle: l'Exemple de I'Exarchat et de la Pentapole d'ltalie* (Rome, 1969); Charles Diehl, *Études sur l'administration Byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne (568-751)*

before relentless Avar and Persian attacks, the authority to confirm a newly elected pope devolved from the emperor to his representative in Italy. This addition to the exarch's official responsibilities did nothing to endear him to the Italians. He continued to be seen as an intruder by the local population and rarely garnered enough support so as to act as custodian of the Apostolic See. The exarch could be a nuisance at times - as was the ill-famed John III Rizocopus, for instance, who in 710 put to death several important papal officials while the pope himself was visiting Constantinople. But generally the exarch was not able to break off the local networks of power. Moreover, the bureaucracy and the army on which the exarchate relied were increasingly made up of Italians, who could always instigate their fellow countrymen to rebellion against the Byzantine foreigner (as happened to John Rizocopus, who was killed by the people of Ravenna).[38] But however unwelcome the exarch was in Italy, what led to a swift and radical deterioration in the relationship between Rome and Constantinople in the eighth century was not his often tactless interventions, but another theological controversy, started in the East by an emperor no longer at ease with the use of icons in public worship.

2.3. Changing Masters: the Papacy and its Carolingian Venture in the West

The battle over images was the last significant confrontation between papal and imperial wills, which put an end to the subordination of the Apostolic See to the Byzantine emperor.[39]

(Paris, 1888), and L. M Hartmann, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Byzantinischen Verwaltung in Italien (540-750)* (Leipzig, 1889).

[38] For the story of John III Rizocopus, see "Constantinus," L. Duchesne ed., *Liber Pontificalis* 2 vols. (Paris, 1886) 1.390; English translation in Raymond Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs* (Liverpool, 2001) 92.

[39] The bibliography on iconoclasm is so vast as to render it impossible to do justice in a footnote to all significant works on the topic. Already in 1973 Peter Brown had remarked that "the Iconoclast controversy is in the grip of a crisis of over-explanation" (in "A Dark-Age Crisis: Aspects of the Iconoclastic Controversy," *The English Historical Review* 88 [1973] 1-13). This has not prevented art historians, historians and theologians to continue to tackle the iconoclastic crisis and its implications from various angles. The most recent interpretative attempt is in L. Brubaker and J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclastic Era, c. 680-850: A History* (Cambridge, 2011), which comes with an extensive bibliography. For the canons of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), see Daniel J. Sahas, *Icons and Logos: Sources in Eighth-Century Iconoclasm* (Toronto, 1986).

When the Iconoclastic controversy began, Emperor Leo III (717-741) had actual control over the patriarchate of Constantinople, and at least nominally over the Church of Rome. The three Eastern sees of Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria were no longer in Byzantine territory, and their incumbents could not be obliged by any of the means available to the *basileus* to follow imperial rulings in doctrinal or ceremonial matters. Like his predecessors, Leo chose to resort to force when dealing with the hierarchs still under his power who refused to comply with his iconoclastic policies. In 728, Leo sent Eutychius as the new exarch to Ravenna, to replace the previous one who had been murdered in a mutiny, and to restore order in northern Italy, which was in turmoil over the imperial move against icons. The exarch was also to attempt to eliminate Pope Gregory II (715-731), who had been defying the emperor for too long. In Constantinople, the emperor forced anti-iconoclastic Patriarch Germanus (715-730) to resign, and replaced him with the patriarch's main adviser and assistant, the *synkellos* Anastasius. Anastasius (730-754) was a supporter of iconoclasm, or at least of whatever doctrinal pronouncement was made by the reigning emperor (he changed his position on the issue twice, in accordance with the theological opinions entertained by the person who occupied the throne).[40]

Pope Gregory II fared better than his Byzantine counterparts. The pope had opposed Leo twice, each time with considerable success. In 722, the emperor had sent assessors to Italy to reevaluate taxable land and property, with a view to increase taxes in order to finance his war against the Arabs. Gregory not only refused to pay more taxes on Church lands, but also instigated the population of Rome to rise in revolt against the imperial governor of the city. Then in 727 the pope took action against Leo's order to have icons removed from churches.[41] He

[40] On Anastasius' fortune as shepherd of the Byzantine flock, see Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (London, 1987) 340-343; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 164-166.

[41] The exact sequence of events that led to the official start of iconoclasm is still a matter of debate. Ostrogorsky maintains that Emperor Leo came in 726 under the influence of iconoclast bishops from Asia Minor who were

summoned a synod which denounced the emperor's interference in religious affairs, and encouraged the local troops in Ravenna and the Pentapolis (the five cities on the Adriatic shore under Byzantine administration) to attack the imperial officials. The then exarch of Ravenna was killed in fighting. In retaliation, the new exarch designed a plot to have the pope murdered, and when that failed he turned to the Lombards and goaded them into attacking Rome. It was a similarly unsuccessful attempt, as Pope Gregory persuaded the Lombard leader to refrain from besieging the Eternal City.[42]

The first round of hostilities between the emperor and the pope ended with the latter gaining the upper hand. Perceived as outsiders, the Byzantine officials in Italy could not count on much local assistance, while Gregory came from a respected Roman family and had a large base of support in Rome. Moreover, he showed himself eager to defend his subjects, especially if their interests coincided with those of the Church. In fact, his Greek-speaking predecessors who had come from Constantinople, Syria, Greece or Sicily and had occupied the papal throne since the late sixth century, also acted loyally to Rome, even if not completely abandoning their allegiance to the emperor. But for them as for the Latin-speaking popes, safeguarding orthodox beliefs and

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visiting Constantinople, but proceeded with caution. His initial moves were to preach against *iconolatria* in several sermons, then to order the removal of the icon of Christ from the Chalke (Brazen) Gate, the main entrance to the Great Palace. His first and only decree against icons was issued in 730, and it forbade the use of icons of saints, martyrs and angels in private and public worship. See Ostrogorsky, "Les débuts de la querelle des images", *Mélanges Charles Diehl: Études sur l'Histoire et sur l'Art de Byzance*, 2 vols. (Paris 1930) 1.235-255, and idem *History of the Byzantine State*, 162-163. M. Anastos, using the "Life of Gregory II" in *Liber Pontificalis* as his main source, contends that Leo began his iconoclastic policies in 726, when he issued his first decree, which then prompted the pope into action; vid. "Leo III's Edict against Images in the year 726-727 and Italo-byzantine Relations Between 726 and 730," *Byzantinischen Forschungen* 3 (1968) 5-41. According to Herrin, *Formation of Christendom* 336-337, what Emperor Leo issued in 726 was an order for the pope to ban the use of icons in Rome and Italy, as a way to coerce him to agree with the planned new taxes. There was no general imperial edict against images until 730, year in which Patriarch Germanus took a formal pro-icons stand. The fact that Leo started earlier than 730 to take iconoclastic measures, even if these were not yet empire-wide policies, is confirmed by John of Damascus' first treatise in favor of icon veneration, written between 726 and 730 – see Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 51-54.

[42] On Pope Gregory II, see Jean-Charles Picard, "Gregory II," *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (New York 2002) 2. 642-643; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom* 336-337, 342.

practices as understood by the Apostolic See held priority over the attempts made by various Byzantine *basileis* to rework the meanings of orthodoxy.[43]

Pope Gregory III (731-741), a Syrian by birth, continued in the line of his predecessors: right upon assuming the see of Rome, he wrote to Leo advising him to curb his zeal against icons. In 730, the emperor had convened a gathering of magistrates (the *silention*) at which he had banned the use of any images, of Christ or of the saints, in worship. Patriarch Germanus rejected the meeting's outcome, since only a Church council could decide on matters of faith and practice. As the emperor was unimpressed, the patriarch resigned and complained to Rome. In the letter written in 731, upon becoming pope, Gregory III reprimanded the emperor in strong terms. When Leo threw in jail the bearers of the papal message, the pope convoked a synod in Rome which condemned iconoclasm. The emperor resorted to force again. To bring the papacy into obedience, in 732 he sent a fleet in a punitive expedition to Italy, which however was destroyed in a storm in the Adriatic Sea. The emperor was not deterred, but found a yet better way to even the score with the Church of Rome. In 733, he transferred the churches of Calabria, Sicily and Illyricum from the control of the Apostolic See to that of the patriarch of Constantinople.[44]

Thus, the second round of hostilities ended with the emperor as the victor: the loss of the Italian islands and the Balkans weakened the papacy, already hard-pressed by Lombards in the north and aggressive duchies in the south, all bent upon expanding their territory and influence at

[43] Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome*, 298-299.

[44] The year favored by the majority of scholars for Leo's decree against the papacy is 732/733, during the pontificate of Pope Gregory II (715-731). See Franz Dölger, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches* vol. 1 (München 1924) no. 301; L. Bréhier, *Le monde byzantine I. Vie et mort du Byzance* (Paris, 1947) 80; M. Anastos, "The transfer of Illyricum, Calabria and Sicily to the Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 732-733," *'Silloge Byzantina' in onore di Silvio Giuseppe Mercati* (Rome, 1957) 14-31. V. Grumel argues for a later date, placing the imperial move in the context of the alliance between Pope Stephen II and the Franks; see "L'annexion de L'Illyricum Oriental, de la Sicile et de la Calabre au patriarchat de Constantinople," *Recherches de science religieuse* 40 (1952/1953) 191-200.

the expense of Rome. In contrast, the patriarchate of Constantinople found itself in control of a huge area, the boundaries of which now coincided with those of the empire. One imperial signature turned the patriarch into the leading ecclesiastical authority in Christendom. And since his see was in the capital of Byzantium, it implicitly meant that the emperor gained direct control over the largest number of Christians. The papacy did not assent to the handover of its dioceses to Constantinople, but it was in no position to argue against it. In mid-eighth century, the foremost papal priority was the deliverance of the city of Rome from its Lombard enemy. The issue of losing a geographically and economically significant territory in the south and in the east through an imperial decree had to be left unattended.

The forceful elimination of the papal presence from the Balkans had long-term consequences for both sides, contributing to the parting of ways between Rome and Constantinople. The peninsula had already lost most of its Latin-speaking population starting with the late sixth century, when it had come under massive Avar and Slavic invasions. The new situation made it difficult for the papacy to find suitable bishops for dioceses now dominated by barbarians, the great majority of whom were pagans in need of conversion. When the *basileus* placed these areas in the care of the patriarchate of Constantinople, the Latin clergy still working in the Balkans had to move out and let the Byzantines convert and watch over the Avar and Slavic faithful. With its access to the region curtailed, the Apostolic See could no longer shape Balkan Christianity in its own mold. Lacking a space of close interaction and caught in solving crises very different in nature, the two halves of Christendom developed significantly dissimilar political, ecclesiological and theological views. Throughout the Middle Ages, the papacy hoped that it could regain control over the Balkans and pursued this goal tenaciously whenever offered the chance. But most of the peninsula had come too heavily under the influence of Byzantine

civilization to be swayed back to Roman Christianity. To the Slavic satellites of Constantinople as to the Byzantines themselves, the Western religious makeup would appear foreign, its values confounding, its teachings unorthodox.[45] The papal insistence on holding exclusive prerogatives as sole leader of the Church increased mutual animosity, and widened the gulf separating East from West.

But in the eighth century, the estrangement between Rome and Constantinople was still in its early stages. During the reign of Constantine V (741-775), Leo's son and successor, the dispute over images increased in intensity in Constantinople, but it became rather subdued at Rome. The new *basileus* was a die-hard iconoclast; he launched a harsh campaign against dissenters, especially against monks and nuns, traditional supporters of icon veneration. In 754 he convened a synod which declared the painting of Christ and of the saints blasphemous, outlawed the use of images in worship, and condemned iconophile writing to destruction by burning. Constantine tried to promote it as an ecumenical council, with decisions binding for the whole Christian world, but the main legitimizing authorities (the four Eastern patriarchs and the pope or his representatives) did not take part in it, nor was their opinion solicited. Although this did not stop Constantine from implementing its decisions, several decades later the pro-icon party found in the patriarchs' nonattendance serious grounds for the council's repudiation.[46] In the West, the reaction to the new wave of imperial iconomachia was restrained. More pressing, military concerns troubled the papacy. Eutychius, the exarch who had tried without success to overcome Rome's opposition to iconoclasm and then to assassinate the pope, fell victim to the Lombards. In 751, they captured Ravenna, putting an end to the exarchate and to Eutychius

[45] Harry J. Magoulias, *Byzantine Christianity: Emperor, Church and the West* (Chicago, 1970) 90-91; a survey of the Byzantine polemics against the Christianity advocated and practiced in the West is in Tia Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Chicago, 2000).
[46] Davies, *First Seven Ecumenical Councils*, 300-305; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 368-370.

himself. Rome was their next target.[47] As Byzantium was too embroiled in its theological controversy to be able to react adequately to the challenge, Pope Stephen II (752-757) took advantage of the circumstances and walked out of the emperor's patronage for good.

Stephen II was the first pope who did not request imperial confirmation after his election to the see of Rome. He sought instead a protector for his Church north of the Alps, among the powerful Frankish overlords. He found it in Pepin the Short, whom he consecrated with oil in 754.[48] The event was to have momentous consequences for the history of Europe, and for the future relationship between East and West, although its contemporaries did not perceive it as particularly significant.[49] The anointing of Pepin validated the removal of the Merovingian dynasty from the Frankish political scene; it was also a successful attempt of adding an otherworldly dimension to an otherwise quite mundane assumption of power. Pepin was not of royal blood, and he had come to the throne of Merovingian Gaul by means of usurpation.[50]

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[47] A succinct account of these events is in T. S. Brown, "Byzantine Italy c. 680 - c.876," in Rosamond McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History* II: *c. 700 - c. 900* (Cambridge 1991) 320-348, at 326-328. See also "Stephanus II," c.8-27, L. Duchesne ed., *Liber Pontificalis*, 2 vols. (Paris 1886) 1.442-448; English translation in Raymond Davis, *The Lives of Eighth-Century Popes* (Liverpool 2007) 55-63.

[48] "Stephanus II," c.8-27, *Liber Pontificalis*, 442-448, and *Lives of Eighth-Century Popes*, 55-63. A discussion of the factors which led to the "papal emancipation" from imperial control is in Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955) 52-57. Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984) 94-98, argues that the papal trend toward separatism from Byzantium had begun much earlier and bore fruit in the early 730s, when Pope Gregory II (715-731) took a clear anti-iconoclastic and thus anti-imperial stance, throwing off "every vestige of imperial authority over Rome." Noble also comments that the appeals of Pope Gregory III (731-741) to Charles Martel for assistance before Lombard attacks were made on equal footing, as if by a head of state seeking to enter a defensive alliance with his counterpart. This interpretation gives too much credit to a papacy which was actually frail and quite helpless at the time; it is not supported by the desperate (and often unheeded) papal appeals to Charles Martel and Pippin, nor by the author of *Liber Pontificalis*, who took it for granted that the popes of those difficult years, including Stephen II in the 750s, were still subject to the Byzantine emperor.

[49] Janet Nelson, "Inauguration Rituals," *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986) p. 284-304, at 292.

[50] Pepin had already been anointed by the archbishop of Mainz and other bishops present at the assembly of Soissons in 751. The double anointment (episcopal and papal) points to his vulnerable position as a legitimate ruler. The first ceremony came right after Pepin was elected king by the nobles in his entourage, while the lawful Merovingian king, young Childeric III, was deposed, tonsured and forced to join monastic life. The anointing ritual brought the necessary sanction (rule by divine right) to Pepin's irregular seizure of power. The second ceremony, performed in 754 by the pope himself, held wider religious, diplomatic and political implications. The papal anointment propelled Pepin the Short into a special position in regard to the Church, since the pope declared him her guardian and bestowed upon him the title of *patricius Romanorum,* to underscore the unique position of the new

Through anointment, he placed himself in the tradition of biblical kings who received the right to rule from God, not from men.[51]

Likewise, the anointing benefitted the papacy in special ways. On an immediate level, it led to the strengthening of ties with the Franks at the critical moment when the Lombards were looming threateningly over Rome. The pope also received from Pepin the promise to be "given back" the territories seized by the Lombards, including the exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, which were all part of the Byzantine Empire, at least theoretically.[52] At a more underlying level, the anointment broadened the scope of papal authority, which now comprised the secular realm as well. By performing the royal unction, the pope as *vicarius Christi* turned the warrior Pepin into a king, conferring upon him divine grace, the right to rule, and the office necessary to perform his duties. And among these duties, defending the Church had high priority.

Frankish king in the political order of the West. As Pepin's wife and sons were anointed at the same time, the rite also established a new dynasty and gave it divine sanction, indicating that the replacement of the ineffectual Merovingians had been done with heavenly support. See Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946) 55-59; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms Under the Carolingians 751-987* (London, 1983) 46-49; D. H. Miller, "Sacral Kingship, Biblical Kingship and the Elevation of Pepin the Short," in T. F. X. Noble and J. J. Contreni eds., *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, 1987) 131-154; Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government*, 65-74.

[51] For the opinion that the eighth-century Franks saw themselves as the 'new Israel,' and their kings similar to the time-honored biblical models of Moses, Joshua, David and Solomon, see Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 56-57, and a more recent, qualified interpretation in M. Garrison, 'The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne," in Yitzhak Hen and Mathhew Innes eds., *Using the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000) 114-161. For the opposite view that royal anointment had roots in the rites of baptism and confirmation, see Jean de Pange, "Doutes sur la certitude de cette opinion que le sacre de Pépin est la premiére époque du sacre des rois de France ," in C-E. Perrin ed., *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen age dédie a la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), 554-564; C. A. Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning, the Development of the Latin Ritual for the Anointing of Kings and the Coronation of an Emperor Before the XIth Century* (Groningen, Netherlands, 1957) 112-113; and Janet Nelson, "National Synods, Kingship as Office and Royal Anointing," in *Politics and Ritual* 239-257, here at 250-251.

[52] On the so-called Donation of Pepin, see Marios Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy* (Cambridge, 2007) 311-313. McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 47; Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, 93-94. The promise made to the pope in 754 was fulfilled after the Frankish victory over the Lombards in 756. The Frankish king could not actually donate lands which belonged to the Byzantine Empire, but neither could the *basileus* take action to protect them. Nor was the pope entitled to receive them, despite his assertion to the contrary. In the end, the lands became the property of the ruler who had the military strength and the political means to control them. As history would have it, that person was the king of the Franks. In 756, his armies defeated the Lombards and pushed them out of Ravenna and the Pentapolis. Pepin kept the promise and "restored" these areas to the papacy. The Donation of Pepin was confirmed by his son and successor, Charlemagne, during his visit to Rome in 774.

The pope granted to the Frankish king the title of patrician of the Romans, a gesture normally performed by the emperor, the sole authority who had been hitherto able to bestow honors and offices on his assistants.[53] Pepin became the designated protector of the Apostolic See. The Byzantine emperor's contribution in the matter was no longer expected or solicited.

Pope Stephen II established a precedent which proved its worth several decades later, when Rome's need for protection against the Lombards once again became urgent matter. Earlier in the eighth century, Byzantium had proven its inability to handle the political and military crises that afflicted Italy. The besieged papacy needed long-term assistance from someone closer to home, a powerful yet preferably more accommodating ally than the far away Byzantine emperor. And while a king would do, a 'Roman' emperor could prove a wiser choice, as it would stop any further Byzantine claims over Italy in particular and over the Latin Christendom in general. Since there was no longer an imperial office in the West, it had to be recreated. The only authority with competency in the area was the papacy, or so the popes alleged, that as vicars of Christ they had been empowered to decide in both the spiritual and the temporal realms. The late eighth-century forgery *Constitutum Constantini* stated that the papacy was to enjoy extra-ecclesiastical prerogatives, secular authority (or *imperium*) more precisely, after Constantine the Great had entrusted Pope Sylvester and his successors with governing the West in his stead, while he removed himself to the East.[54] Pope Leo III took maximum advantage of the supposed imperial grant. On the Christmas day of the year 800, he anointed and

[53] The title of patrician conferred by the Byzantine *basileus* implied a subordinate position in the imperial hierarchy. The papal homonym was devised by Stephen II on that model, with the implicit expectation that the awardee would be an obedient subject of the papacy; see Eric Voegelin, *History of Political Ideas: The Middle Ages to Aquinas* (Columbia, MO, 1997) 57-58.

[54] Latin text in H. Fuhrmann ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Fontes iuris Germanici antique* (Hannover 1968) 10.56-98; English trans. in B. Pullan ed., *Sources for the History of Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1966) 9-14. Historians are not in agreement regarding the document's date and place of origin. The majority opinion is that the *Constitutum Constantini* was produced by the papal chancery in the second half of the eighth century with a view to regulating the rapport between the Church of Rome and the growing power of the Franks. Its first use was in a letter

crowned Pepin's son, Charlemagne, as *imperator Romanorum.*[55]

The act not only reestablished a Roman emperor in the West, but also gave new weight to the assertion that the Vicar of Christ was the source of temporal power, able to institute secular offices and officers as needed. In contrast to the Byzantine patriarch who only confirmed God's choice for an emperor at coronation, the pope *made* the emperor by anointing and crowning him.[56] In addition, by restoring the Western emperorship, the pope sought to render the Byzantine *basileus*' self-assumed privilege of being the exclusive heir to the Roman Empire null and void. To mark the distinction between the re-emergent Roman power in the West and its disintegration in the East, papal and Carolingian documents increasingly labeled the Byzantines "Greeks" and not "Romans." The official propaganda thus reduced the *basileus* with his professed universal authority over the Christian *oikoumene* to the position of a ruler with

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of Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne from May 778. See Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government*, p. 74-86. T. S. Brown suggests that the document was forged by the pope's specialists in order to justify his claims over Ravenna, vid. "The Church of Ravenna and the Imperial Administration in the Seventh Century," *English Historical Review* 94 (1979) 1-28, at 27. In accord with his high view on the (rather feeble) eighth-century papacy, Noble considers the *Constitutum* a reflection of the "ideology of the Republic of Saint Peter," and as such its objective was not to justify, but to describe the papal emancipation from the Byzantine Empire; vid. *Republic of Saint Peter*, 134-137. At the other end of the spectrum, Johannes Fried, *Donation of Constantine and* 'Constitutum Constantini:' *The Misinterpretation of a Fiction and its Original Meaning* (Berlin, 2007), claims that the document was written in a Frankish monastic environment (Corbie or St. Dennis) in mid-ninth century, and its goal was not to emphasize papal authority in temporal and spiritual matters, but to establish the limits of secular power. The traditional interpretation seems to fit the Donation best into the circumstances that led to the reinstatement of the imperial office in the West.

[55] Historians dispute whether the new emperor of the Romans was anointed or not on this occasion, since the Byzantine rite of coronation, upon which the pope modeled Charlemagne's, did not include anointing. Several Latin sources mention consecration with oil as part of the ritual: "Vita Leonis III," in *Liber Pontificalis*, v. 2, p.7; *Annales Laureshamenses* ad ann. 801 and *Chronicon Moissiacense* ad. ann. 801, both in MGH Scriptores, ed. Georg H. Pertz, vol. 1 (Hanover 1826) 38 and 305-306. Theophanes Confessor, a Byzantine monk who in the second decade of the ninth century wrote a chronicle (Χρονογραφία) of world events from ancient times to the death of Emperor Michael Rhangabe in 813, added the detail that Pope Leo III anointed the Frankish ruler "from head to foot," in Cyril Mango and Roger Scott trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813* (Oxford, 1997) AM 6289 [AD 796/7] p. 649 [hereafter Theophanes, *Chronicle*]. It is unclear whether he relied on any source for this information or used it as a literary device to underscore the pope's full involvement in the event. Anointment by the pope became mandatory for the Western emperors after Louis II of Italy (844-875) was thus consecrated to the office in 850; vid. Ildar H. Garipzanov, *The Symbolic Language of Royal Authority in the Carolingian World (c.751-877)* (Leiden, 2008) 151. See also Robert Folz, *Le couronnement impérial de Charlemagne, 25 décembre 800* (Paris 1964), English trans. by J. E. Anderson, *The coronation of Charlemagne, 25 December 800* (London, 1974) 132-150; Francois Louis Ganshof, *The Imperial Coronation of Charlemagne: Theories and Facts* (Glasgow, 1949).

[56] Janet Nelson, "Symbols in Context: Rulers Inauguration Rituals in Byzantium and the West in the Early Middle Ages," *Politics and Ritual*, 259-281; Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government*, 143-156.

authority confined to the Greek-speaking East. The popes themselves aspired to the universalism claimed by Byzantium, but were unwilling to share it with their own creation, the Western Roman emperor. The idea that the two institutions, papacy and empire, held distinct but complementary powers, similar to the dual leadership of emperor and patriarch in Byzantium, did not take hold in the West, despite the Carolingians', and later on the Ottonians' determination to act like the *basileis* in Church-related matters.[57] Starting with the High Middle Ages, historical circumstances favored the increase in the political weight of the Apostolic See, which assumed the position of sole source of all earthly power, ecclesiastical and secular.

The papacy's transition from subordination to leadership, however, was not as smooth and straightforward as the eighth-century popes had envisioned. Despite all the positive implications that the coronation of Charlemagne held for the Apostolic See, prior to the eleventh century the popes were still in a weak position vis-à-vis political authority. Separation from Byzantium did not automatically enable them to act as masters of the West, let alone of the entire Christendom. In the 800s, they continued to depend on the Carolingians for retaining control over the Papal States, expanding papal authority beyond the Alps, and enforcing ecclesiastical reforms. When the Carolingian dynasty and the empire it had created became extinct, the papacy fell into the hands of several influential families in Rome, who were fighting viciously with one another for local predominance. These families used the papal throne as a means to assert their ascendancy over rival factions, and the men they placed on it were some of the most unsavory characters in the lengthy and tortuous history of the Church of Rome.[58] In late tenth century, the popes found again powerful protectors north of the Alps, the Ottonian emperors. This protection

[57] See Ullmann, *Growth of Papal Government*, 94-102, who, however, gives too much credit to papal authority in the early centuries after its separation from Byzantium.
[58] For an overview of papal history during this period, see Roger Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven: A History of the Papacy* (New York, 2009) 145-165; Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners* (London, 2006) 103-109; Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2003) 71-78.

came at a price, though, since the Ottonians treated the Apostolic See as the Byzantine *basileis* used to: they confirmed (and often manipulated) papal elections, required the newly-installed pope to swear fealty as a loyal vassal would do, and expected obedience in all matters, temporal and spiritual. Before the reforms of the eleventh century, the papacy was "a contradictory mixture of exalted theory and squalid reality."[59]

In mid eighth century, when the popes turned their backs on heterodox Constantinople, they did not expect to face at home challenges similar to those posed by the uncompromising Byzantine *basileis*. But their hero, Charlemagne, was set on emulating the Eastern emperor rather than submitting to the Apostolic See. He considered himself a champion of orthodoxy, and thus entitled to intervene in Church affairs whenever necessary, regardless of the pope's position on a given issue. He also expected the bishops in his realm to be able to define, refine and protect the Church dogma. In the early 790s, while not yet crowned emperor, Charlemagne commissioned the Visigoth theologian Theodulf (abbot of Fleury and later bishop of Orléans) to write a refutation of the *acta* issued by the Second Council of Nicaea (787), which had denounced Iconoclasm as heretical, had restored images to public and private worship, and had given a theological foundation to icon veneration. The conciliar decisions had the approval of the Byzantine Empress Irene (780-802) and of the pope, but this mattered little to the Frankish ruler. What had reached his court was a faulty translation of the *acta* that rendered two different Greek concepts, προσκύνησις (prostration) and λατρεία (adoration, worship), through the Latin *adoratio* (worship), thus leaving the impression that the council had sanctioned idolatry, i.e. the worship of images rather than their veneration.[60] Charlemagne assumed that it was his duty to

[59] Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 110.
[60] Ann Freeman, "Scripture and Images in the 'Libri Carolini,'" *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 1994) 163-195, at 166-167, and Ann Freeman with Paul Meyvaert, "Einleitung," in idem, *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* (Munich, 1998), English trans. "An Introduction," in Ann Freeman, *Theodulf of Orléans: Charlemagne's*

correct the erroneous ways of the East. An initial version of Theodulf's *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum* (*Libri carolini*) was sent to Pope Hadrian (772-795), who rejected it as groundless. But the pope had no more power over Charlemagne than he had had over the Byzantine *basileus.* The Frankish king authorized Theodulf to finish his work, which even in its final version was a stern critique of the council and its presumed fall into idolatry.[61] Charlemagne did not stop there: he wanted the Church's sanction of the Frankish position on image worship.

In 794, he summoned a local synod in Frankfurt, which delegitimized the Nicaea council, by arguing that it did not deserve the label "ecumenical" since its leaders had not invited bishops from all over the Christendom (in this case, Francia) to participate in its works. Besides, it had dealt with a matter which from a Frankish perspective was worthless, since the use of images in worship could only end in idolatry. And what is more, its use of scriptural and patristic evidence was defective and its *acta* went counter the decisions approved by previous ecumenical councils. The bishops gathered in Frankfurt endorsed the Theodulf's *Opus Caroli regis* as the official stance of the Frankish Church on the use of images in worship. Two other major theological decisions were made on this occasion: the *Filioque* clause added to the Nicene Creed was declared orthodox, and the Adoptionist views held by some Spanish bishops were rejected as heretical.[62] Pope Hadrian agreed with the last pronouncement, but both he and his successor, Leo III (795-816), opposed the attack upon the iconophile council and the use of *Filioque* in the

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Spokesman agasint the Second Coucil of Nicaea, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot 2003) art. I, at 31-33. But see Michael Ed. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850* (Washington, DC, 2011) 269-271, who contends that the Latin theological vocabulary was not yet fixed in the eighth century, so that even the popes failed to make a clear distinction between *adoratio* (worship) and *veneratio* (veneration). Theodulf's rejection of the iconodule position was based not on a mistranslation and/or misunderstanding of key terms, but on a theology of the Holy Spirit different than that of the East.

[61] A recent edition of the text is in Ann Freeman and Paul Meyvaert eds., *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum (Libri Carolini)* Monumenta Germanica Historiae Concilia 2, Supplementum I (Munich, 1998). For the context of the text's production and reception, see Ann Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the 'Libri Carolini,'" *Viator* 16 (1985) 65-108; also Stephen Gero, "The 'Libri Carolini' and the Image Controversy," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 18 (1973) 7-34.

[62] Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 434-444; Brownen Neil, "The Western Reaction to the Council of Nicaea II," *Journal of Theological Studies* 51 (2000) 533-552, at 542-552.

creed. It was however to no avail, since Charlemagne remained attached to his assessment of the Second Council of Nicaea as heterodox. He also required that the churches in Aachen (Aix-La-Chapelle), his capital, recite the creedal formula with the interpolated *Filoque* clause in the liturgy; from there it spread throughout his kingdom.[63]

Western bishops and theologians did not see any potential doctrinal flaws in affirming the procession of the Holy Spirit from God the Father and God the Son. Their emphasis was not on explaining the Spirit's mode of origin, but on underlining the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, still denied in Arian circles. What did concern them and brought them together for deliberations in local synods were the circumstances under which additions could be made to the Nicene Creed, which stated only that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father. Canon seven of the Council of Ephesus (431) had placed under anathema anyone who dared to "propose, edit or compose another faith than that set out by the holy fathers assembled in Nicaea with the Holy Spirit."[64] Did that canon apply to the interpolation of the clause "and from the Son" into the creed? Was the clause a new Trinitarian interpretation, radically different from the one put forth by Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)? Or was it a mere clarification of the relationship between the three divine persons? Most Western churchmen and statesmen answered positively to the last question. To them, the *Filioque* was not a novel way of talking about the Trinity, but a more precise explanation of the eternal dynamics between the three *hypostases*. The Visigothic king Recared in 589 and Charlemagne in 794 upheld its insertion into the creed. Paulinus, the independent patriarch of Aquileia, also held a council at Friuli in 797 which defended the

[63] The Frankish acceptance of the *Filioque* as doctrinally accurate is discussed by R. G. Heath, "The Western Schism of the Franks and the 'Filioque,'" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23 (1972) 97-113. On Spanish Adoptionism, see Wilhelm Heil, *Alkuinstudien I: zur Chronologie und Bedeutung des Adoptianismusstreites* (Düsseldorf, 1970).

[64] Greek and Latin texts with English translation in Norman Tanner ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington DC, 1990) 1.65; Peter L'Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils* (Crestwood NY, 2000) 159-163.

addition of the *Filioque* as necessary and permissible. The clause was consistent with the patristic and conciliar understanding of the Trinity, and its use put an end to the Arian attempts of subordinating the Son to the Father. By the end of the eighth century, the interpolated creed was sung in the Spanish, English, Frankish and North Italian churches.[65] The pope might have been frustrated by these developments over which he had no control, but there was little he could do besides protesting. Few in the eighth-century West had subscribed to the papal theory that Roman primacy was *the* definitive paradigm of Church leadership.

The Byzantines' reaction to the Frankish meddling with theology was more nuanced. To them, the idea that barbarians could deliver valid judgments that would override the decisions made by a large gathering of devout and learned theologians was preposterous at best. Consequently, Theodulf's *Opus Caroli regis* and the council which acclaimed it had no impact on the Easterners' rediscovered passion for icons and on its recently articulated theological foundation.[66] But the political issues undergirding the religious controversy widened the disagreements between Constantinople, Rome and Aachen. Byzantine imperial and ecclesiastical authorities were startled by the self-assurance of the Frankish overlord who took it upon himself to delineate the boundaries of orthodoxy and produce definitions which contrasted with those approved by an ecumenical council. The *basileus* was the sole legitimate authority who could address dogmatic issues in consensus with the Church, convoke general synods and turn their decisions into laws. In the 780s and 790s, however, the throne of Byzantium was occupied by a woman, Irene, who, as a regent to her son Constantine VI, had presided over the Council of

[65] For the early history of the *Filioque*, see Edward Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (Oxford, 2010) 51-94. Dennis Ngien, *Apologetics for Filioque in Medieval Theology* (Milton Keynes, UK, 2005) 1-23, looks at the theological roots of the Western belief in the double spiration of the Holy Spirit.

[66] Theodulf's book, despite its commendations by Charlemagne and the Frankish bishops, had a limited circulation even in the West, and brought no radical change to the use of images in Latin worship; see Ann Freeman, "Carolingian Orthodoxy," 65-68 and Freeman and Meyvaert, "Introduction," 11-17.

Nicaea and turned the tide in favor of icons. This fact seems to have emboldened Charlemagne to act, since according to the Salic law no woman could run a state, even less pass resolutions binding for the entire Christian world. The duty to protect the Christian faith then devolved upon the West; but, as Charlemagne saw it, not upon the pope, but upon himself.

The Frankish ruler had not always been contemptuous of the Byzantine empress. In 781, when he had negotiated with Irene the engagement of his daughter Rotrude to the heir of the Byzantine throne, he likely had a better opinion on the woman's capacity to rule and decide. The prospect of extending his power to the shores of the Black Sea was too appealing to snub the woman who had proposed the marriage alliance. But disagreements over Italy, Irene's key role in the restoration of icons in 787, and her cancellation of the planned marriage in the following year eroded whatever goodwill Charlemagne might have felt toward the empress.[67] He had his court theologian, Theodulf d'Orléans, launch a strong attack against the Byzantines and their foolishness for letting themselves be taught and ruled by a woman.[68] Irene ignored the criticism, and she and her advisors also dismissed the other pronouncements made by the Frankish hierarchs as inconsequential, although their ultimate intention had been to undermine Byzantium's position of leadership over the Christendom.[69] The Franks' quest for ecclesiastical preeminence was nonetheless too recent to be regarded as threatening by the Byzantine imperial elite, whose position of command at the top of the Church had been firmly secured through centuries of successful interference in religious affairs.

As for the pope, he found himself trapped between two secular rulers who claimed to govern and safeguard the Church, while failing to acknowledge the leading role of the Apostolic

[67] Theophanes, *Chronicle* AM 6274 [AD 781/2] p. 628, AM 6280 [AD 787/8] and AM 6281, p. 636-637; Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 412-413; Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe* (Philadelphia 1993) 118-119.
[68] *Opus Caroli regis* III.13, 385-391.
[69] Harry J. Magoulias, *Byzantine Christianity: Emperor, Church and the West* (Chicago 1970) 96-98.

See in religious matters. The Byzantine empress still considered and treated Pope Hadrian as one of her subjects. In his letter to the Council of Nicaea, the pope had asked that the Church of Rome be acknowledged as the "head of all churches." That section was simply omitted from the Greek translation. He had also requested the return of Calabria, Sicily and Illyricum to his jurisdiction. He was flatly refused.[70] In the first half of the eighth century, the papacy had signaled its distancing from (at the time) iconoclastic Constantinople by gradually renouncing several imperial-related customary practices. For instance, the popes no longer mentioned the emperor in the public prayers, acclaiming instead the Frankish rulers; they stopped displaying imperial portraits through the city and in main churches; they issued coinage carrying the name and the portrait of the current pope, or of St. Peter, rather than those of the emperor.[71] But if these actions sent a message of papal autonomy to the population of Rome, they did not impress the Byzantine authorities, who continued to expect compliance on the part of the Apostolic See. In regard to Charlemagne, the papal optimism that he would be less threatening to Roman primacy than the Byzantine emperor proved misplaced. The Frankish ruler was not any more governable than the Eastern *basileus*. Pope Hadrian had recognized the Second Council of Nicaea as valid and ecumenical. He criticized the Frankish (over)reaction to it and assumed that Charlemagne would desist from further action. In addition, infuriated by the Byzantine refusal to restitute the Italian and Balkan dioceses, the pope appealed to Charlemagne for support. The Frankish king paid little attention to papal opinions and pleas, and instead proceeded to revise and amend the Church dogma, without taking into account the position of the Apostolic See on the issues discussed.[72]

[70] Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 415-416; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 183-184.
[71] Herrin, *Formation of Christendom*, 413-414.
[72] Brownen, "Western Reaction," 545-548 (n. 61 above).

To add insult to injury, Charlemagne and his bishops declared the *Filioque* orthodox and encouraged its use in the liturgy. Neither papacy nor Byzantine emperor nor Eastern churches were consulted on the matter. A new center of orthodoxy was zealously taking shape north of the Alps, and traditional Church authorities had no bearing on the process. Charlemagne entrusted Theodulf d'Orléans with providing the necessary dogmatic foundation to the double procession of the Holy Spirit. The theologian had already endorsed the *Filioque* in Book 3 of his *Opus Caroli regis,* where he had also criticized the Byzantines for affirming that the Spirit came forth from the Father "through the Son," which seemed to place the Son in a subordinate position to the Father.[73] In his new treatise, Theodulf provided a thorough defense of the Western understanding of the Holy Spirit, relying on arguments culled from both Latin and Greek Church fathers.[74] The Frankish emperor then summoned another local council, held in 809 at Aachen. The bishops gathered with this occasion reaffirmed the orthodoxy of *Filioque* and took a further step, declaring it a central dogma of Christianity. Charlemagne sent three messengers to Rome, to inform the pope of the decisions reached and to request his support for the formal addition of *Filioque* to the creed throughout Christendom. Pope Leo III (795-816), like his predecessor Hadrian, was unwilling to comply. It was unlawful for a local council to add anything to the Nicene Creed; it was also an effrontery to make a decision involving dogma and ritual without consulting the Vicar of Christ. The popes did not consider the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's double spiration erroneous, but they could not assent to the ways in which the Franks sought to impose their beliefs upon the Church. Leo urged the Frankish bishops to abandon the recent

[73] Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople, at the opening session of the Second Council of Nicaea, mentioned in his profession of faith that the Holy Spirit proceeded *ex Patre per filium*. The idea had been expressed by Greek theologians of previous centuries, among them Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria, and Maximus the Confessor, but did not become the official stance of the Greek East on the procession of the Spirit. See Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 33-34.

[74] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 97-98. Latin text in *Libellus De Processione Spiritus Sancti (Theodulphus Aurelianensis) - Concilium Aquisgranense A. 809* (Turnhout 2010).

custom of reciting the creed with the *Filioque* addition. As before, Charlemagne was not ready to accommodate the papal request, and the interpolated creed became the norm in Frankish lands.[75]

The papacy remained resolute in its refusal to add the *Filioque* clause to the creed until the early eleventh century, when pressures from the Ottonian emperor Henry II (1014-1024) made it relent. In 1014, Pope Benedict VIII (1012-1024) crowned Henry in Rome and, eager to please his new master to whom he owed the recovery of his see, he revised the creed sung in the Roman liturgy so as to conform to the German standards.[76] This version with the interpolated *Filioque* became the only creedal formula accepted as orthodox in the Western Church. In the centuries that followed, the *Filioque* turned out to be the single most divisive issue between Rome and Constantinople, and once the papacy and the four Eastern patriarchates split up, it became the main stumbling-block on the path to Church reunion.

The East rejected the addition to the Nicene Creed unequivocally. The theology undergirding the clause as well as the manner in which it had found its way into the Western churches were found inappropriate and incorrect. The idea that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both God the Father and God the Son implied that there were two primordial sources or causes in the Trinity rather than one, which greatly endangered the unique characteristics of each divine person. God the Father was seen by the Greek patristic tradition as the head and sole generative principle of the Trinity. The double spiration theory, by attributing a role in the procession of the Spirit to the Son, diminished the monarchy of the Father, and implicitly positioned the Spirit in a subordinate position to the two other *hypostases*. This interpretation contradicted the Trinitarian dogma established by the early ecumenical councils, which posited the co-equality and co-

[75] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 98-100.
[76] The event is mentioned by Berno of Reichenau, "Libellus de quibusdam rebus ad Missae Officium pertinentibus," *Patrologia Latina* v. 142, c. 1060-1061. See discussion in Steven Runciman, *The Eastern Schism: A Study of the Papacy and the Eastern Churches during the XIth and XIIth Centuries* (Oxford, 1955) 30; Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 112-113.

eternity of the Father, Son and Spirit. On an ecclesiological level, the problem stemmed from the way in which the *Filioque* had been included in the Nicene Creed. Any addition to or modification of the creed could be made by the Church collectively, via a general synod, and not individually or locally by rulers, popes, and provincial synods.[77] But this Eastern critique of the *Filioque* was rather late. The growing estrangement between Rome and Constantinople which followed the Iconoclastic controversy and the coronation of Charlemagne delayed the moment when the two parts of Christendom came into open conflict over the issue.[78]

While the dispute over images impaired the emperor's relationship with the papacy, in Byzantium itself the imperial office came out of the controversy much stronger than it had been at the turn of the eighth century. The "Byzantine Dark Ages" that had followed the death of Heraclius in 641 were brought to an end during the reigns of Leo III and Constantine V, through a combination of military victories, economic recovery and strong imperial action in internal

[77] For an overview of the Eastern position on the interpolated creed, see John Meyendorff, *The Orthodox Church* (Crestwood NY, 1981) 195-197. A detailed treatment of the controversy in the medieval era is in Siecienski, *The Filioqu*e, 111-172.

[78] The addition of the *Filioque* clause has continued to be disputed into the present era. In the words of the twentieth-century Russian theologian Vladimir Lossky, "the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit has been the sole dogmatic ground for the separation of East and West. All the other divergences which, historically, accompanied or followed the first dogmatic controversy about the *filioque*, […] are more or less dependent upon that original issue," in "The Procession of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Trinitarian Doctrine," J. Erickson and T. Birds eds., *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Oxford, 1974) 71-96, at 71. Many modern Orthodox scholars share with their medieval counterparts the radical opposition to the *Filioque*, since in their view the clause determines a flawed understanding of the Trinity, which in turn has negative implications for the Christian spiritual life. Because of this, the pursuit of union with Rome is deemed as a harmful and unwelcome policy. On the other hand, the Catholic Church, as part of the post-Vatican II efforts of reconciliation with the "sister churches," has been more open to reconsidering the intransigence of its pre-modern positon, relegating the debate over the *Filioque* to the domain of semantics. In the view of contemporary Catholic theologians, the battle over the interpolated creed has been a battle over words rather than over different theological interpretations of the Trinity. The Greek version of the creed uses the verb ἐκπορεύεσθαι to express the idea of "proceeds," which implies "coming forth from one single source." Thus the original Greek τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον means "taking His origin from the Father," the emphasis being on the "monarchy" of God the Father, as sole cause of both the Son and the Spirit. In Latin, the verb used is *procedere*, which stresses not the primal cause or origin, but the Son's participation in the procession of the Spirit. The goal of the formula *ex Patre Filioque procedit* was not to affirm two separate sources of the Holy Spirit (which would have been a heresy), but to underscore the divinity and consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, denied by the Arians. See Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "The Greek and Latin Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit," *L'Osservatore Romano* (20 September 1995) 3-6, reprinted in Eugene F. Rogers Jr. ed., *The Holy Spirit: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Chichester, UK, 2009) 81-90.

affairs. The fight against icons, initiated by the emperors, was also controlled by them and used as a means of communicating and re-imposing authority after decades of imperial weakness and ineffectiveness. As overseers of the Church, the *basileis* assumed the right to identify heterodox worship practices and to devise appropriate measures against them, despite protests from certain monastic and clerical circles. Later on, two empresses with iconodule leanings, Irene in 787 and Theodora in 843, made use of the same imperial prerogative in order to restore the veneration of icons. Given the theological issues involved in the use of images for liturgical and devotional purposes, both emperors and empresses sought to have their policies backed up by conciliar definitions of orthodoxy. With a Church accustomed to doing the imperial bidding, on each occasion a large number of prelates were eager to endorse the already-made imperial decisions. The council of Hiereia (754) had three hundred thirty-three bishops sanctioning Constantine V's *iconomachia*; the council of Nicaea (787) had more than three hundred fifty participants approving Empress Irene's restoration of icons. Two smaller, local councils were also held in Constantinople in the second phase of Iconoclasm: one in 815, at the behest of Emperor Leo V, to once again repudiate image veneration; the other in 843, summoned by Empress Theodora, to reinstate icons in communal and private worship. Even if the occupants of the imperial throne did look for the consensus of the Church in order to confer an aura of legitimacy to their decisions in religious matters, they introduced changes in theology, worship and ecclesiastical administration as they deemed proper. It was this heavy-handedness in areas that according to the Apostolic See pertained exclusively to the Church that most popes resented, and which set them off to explore courses of action that could free Rome from the burdensome imperial yoke.

The Frankish venture of the papacy, begun as a search for a reliable protector, had been expected to bring about the much-desired ecclesiastical autonomy as well. But in its earliest

unfoldings, it seemed to have been nothing more than a change of masters. Even worse at times, the popes had to walk a thin line between two emperors, one on the Bosporus, the other north of the Alps, in order to preserve some degree of harmony between the two antagonistic Christian worlds that they had unwittingly created. In the early ninth century, the Byzantine emperors were greatly unsettled by Charlemagne's assumption of the imperial title, and by the papal willful contribution to the undertaking. Fortunately for them, after the remarkable reign of Charlemagne and the comparatively less remarkable reign of Louis the Pious (d.840), the Carolingians were too busy fighting and splitting the empire among themselves to present a real danger to Constantinople. The *basileis*' attitude towards their western rivals moved from open (and often armed) hostility to condescending neglect. The revived office of the emperor in the West, however, remained a thorny problem for the Byzantines. It forced them to admit that part of the world they used to rule by themselves (at least in theory) was now under a different sovereign, who claimed privileges similar to those hitherto enjoyed only by the *basileus*. One of these privileges was control over the Church, the papacy included.

2.4. Troubles in the West: Popes, Emperors and the Struggle for Ecclesiastical Control

By reorienting their political allegiances, the popes escaped the Byzantine grasp, but did not acquire the ascendancy over the secular realm that they had hoped for. With Carolingian help, they succeeded in extending papal jurisdiction in the vast Frankish territory, including the largely pagan Saxony, Bavaria, and the Slavic areas to the east. Yet Rome's hold on its new dioceses was precarious, since Carolingian emperors, kings and local aristocrats used ecclesiastical appointments as a means to preserve and strengthen their own power. The Frankish political class chose bishops, archbishops and abbots from among family members or loyal

followers, leaving the popes little room for maneuvering whenever an office remained vacant.[79] Charlemagne himself seems to have had rather limited expectations from the papacy: in his letter from 796, he enjoined Pope Leo III to pray and intercede fervently for the success of the imperial army in defeating the pagans and spreading the Christian faith, just as Moses did on behalf of Israel. The consolidation of the Church in all other aspects was an imperial concern.[80]

Troubles also beset papal operations in Italy, where the Apostolic See had to compete for preeminence with domestic magnates, Byzantine civil and military agents, and Frankish officials. The pope's authority as sovereign ruler of the papal state was frequently contested and defied, despite the promises made by Pepin and Charlemagne to protect it.[81] In Rome, prominent aristocratic families continued to encumber the papal elections. A synod held in the Vatican in 769 had decided to place the process entirely in the hands of the clergy, in an effort to prevent the laity from further interfering with it. But the edict failed to keep the nobles out of an election whose outcome had the potential to upset significantly the balance of power in the city. In the years following the synodal decision, Pope Hadrian I (772-795), member of a leading family in Rome, assigned many of his relatives to key positions in the papal administration. When Leo III (795-816), a man of modest origins, was next elected pope by the clergy, Hadrian's relatives designed a plot to remove him from office, so that they could place their own man on the papal throne. Leo III had to rely on Charlemagne's military assistance to gain back his see, and recompensed the king by offering him the imperial crown.

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[79] Riché, *The Carolingians*, 285-302; for the general state of the Church in the Carolingian empire, see Rosamond McKiterrick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London, 1977).
[80] Letter published in Ernst Dümmler ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Karolini Aevi* (Berlin 1895) v. 2, p. 136-137; partial translation in Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morrall eds., *Church and State through the Centuries: A Collection of Historic Documents and Commentaries* (Westminster, MD, 1954) 12.
[81] Thomas F.X. Noble, "The Papacy in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," in Rosamond McKitterick ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History* [NCMH] vol.2 (Cambridge 1995) 561-586; Paolo Delogu, "Lombard and Carolingian Italy," NCMH, 2.290-319, at 303-319; idem, "The Papacy, Rome and the Wider World in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," in Julia M.H. Smith ed., *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden 2000) 197-221.

Leo's actions opened the way to Frankish involvement in papal affairs. With the emperor as his patron, the pope tried to lessen the influence of the Roman rich and powerful on the Church. His small gains in this regard were undone by his immediate successors, Stephen IV (816-817) and Paschal I (817-823), who, in a settlement reached with Louis the Pious, reopened papal elections to lay participation, nobles and commoners alike. The emperor was to play no role in determining the result of elections, though he had to be notified by each new pope upon elevation to the office. The pact also confirmed the pope's authority over the territories 'donated' by Pepin and Charlemagne, their judicial affairs, taxes and revenues included; it promised freedom from external (Frankish and Lombard) intervention, but guaranteed imperial support when and if solicited.[82] The goal of the pact was to consolidate the pope's position as sovereign of the papal state and at the same time to bring a degree of stability to Rome. It actually made matters worse, as Roman and regional elites openly resumed their intrigues and machinations at the papal court in order to advance their own interests. Violence was often used to solve disputes, whether these involved land rights, court decisions deemed unsatisfactory, or political issues.[83]

Several years later, Lothar, king of Italy since 823, and his father, Louis the Pious, made another attempt to instill some sense of order and fairness in the way in which papal elections in particular and ecclesiastical affairs in general were conducted in Rome. The inauguration of a king in Italy had added one more variable to an already complicated formula of sharing and contesting power in the peninsula. Lothar mediated a conflict between the monastery of Farfa

[82] The ninth-century text of the *pactum Ludovicianum (Hludowicianum)* is no longer extant; the earliest evidence comes from the canon law collections of the eleventh century, but most historians consider it an interpolated variant. For the reconstructed Latin text, see Alfred Boretius ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regnum Francorum* v. 1(Hanover 1883) 352-355. The document is discussed by Adelheid Hahn, "Das Hludowicianum. Die Urkunde Ludwigs d. Fr. für die römische Kirche von 817," *Archiv für Diplomatik, Schriftgeschichte, Siegel- und Wappenkunde* v. 21 (1975)15-135; Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, 148-153 and 300-308; Marios Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy: Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfa, c.700-900* (Cambridge, 2007) 315-323.

[83] Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven*, 152-153; Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 80.

and the papacy, deciding in favor of the former.[84] The papacy had seized property from the monastery and imposed payments upon it despite the tax exempt status awarded to Farfa by the Lombards and then Charlemagne; Lothar required the pope to return the lands acquired unlawfully and recognize the monastery's immunities.[85] It was a clear case of secular power intervening in a dispute involving the upper echelons of the Church, despite the wide-ranging authority to act in such matters granted by the emperor to the Apostolic See through the pact of 817. Paschal I had to comply, but not long afterwards two papal officials with close connections to Lothar were put to death for treason, apparently at the pope's instigation. Emperor Louis sent his envoys to investigate, but before they could act the pope purged himself of any wrongdoing through a public oath.[86] This incident together with the turmoil which followed Paschal's sudden death in 824 and the rushed and contested election of his successor made Emperor Louis aware of the need for a better imperial management of the Roman affairs. The emperor, his son and the new pope drew up an agreement, known as *Constitutio Romana*, designed to both curb the nobles' influence on the Church and bring the papacy under the closer Frankish supervision. The constitution demanded Rome's dwellers to obey the pope in all matters, and declared inviolable any person who was under papal or imperial protection (clause 1); it forbade any infringement of papal rights and privileges (clause 2) and made it unlawful for laymen to meddle with the papal election (clause 3). Two inspectors were to be appointed, one by the pope, the other by the emperor, to oversee the administration of justice in the city (clause 4), and the Roman officials were to introduce themselves to the king of Italy in order to receive further instructions on how

[84] Caroline J. Goodson suggests that he might have been sent to Rome by his father specifically to deal with this case; see *The Rome of Pope Paschal I: Papal Power, Urban Renovation, Church Rebuilding and Relic Translation, 817-824* (Cambridge, 2010) 269.
[85] Costambeys, *Power and Patronage*, 334-342.
[86] *Annales Regni Francorum* (Annales Laurissenses maiores) ad. ann. 823, Latin text in Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Regnum Germanicarum v.1 (Hanover 1826) 210-211; English translation in B.W. Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor 1972) 37-125, at 112-114. For discussion, see Caroline J. Goodson, *The Rome of Pope Paschal I*, 32-34 and 268-273.

to perform their tasks (clause 8). City violence was to stop (clause 7) and the papacy was to return lands seized unjustly to their rightful owners (clause 6). Finally, the populace of Rome had to swear loyalty to King Lothar and Emperor Louis, and to pledge not to elect a pope other than by canonically sanctioned means. Moreover, the elected pope could only be consecrated after he had taken the oath of loyalty before the imperial inspector and the people (clause 9).[87] The pact of 824 thus brought the papacy under imperial control in ways reminiscent of Byzantium's overseeing of the Apostolic See. A Carolingian official was to reside in Rome and watch over judicial transactions and papal elections, while the popes needed to formally express their allegiance to the emperor and wait for his confirmation before taking office.

These early ninth-century efforts to regulate the relationship between the papacy and the Carolingian empire indicate that a coherent understanding of the role of either institution in the political order created by Charlemagne's rise to power had yet to take shape. For the Franks, the 750s onwards were a time of testing out traditional and novel practices in regards to the royal succession, the refashioning of administration along imperial lines, and the reformation of the judicial system and the Church. The pope's main part in this new world was to legitimize its rulers through anointment and coronation. But it did take some time until the task became his sole responsibility. Charlemagne lapsed into the older Frankish ways of making rulers in 813, when he required the general assembly of nobles, army leaders and high-ranking Church dignitaries gathered at Aachen to approve his designation of Louis as successor to the imperial throne , who was then crowned co-emperor.[88] Louis proceeded similarly in 817, when he

[87] Latin text in Alfred Boretius ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Capitularia regnum Francorum* v. 1 (Hanover 1883) 322-324; English trans. in Ehler and Morrall eds., *Church and State through the Centuries*, 13-15 (n. 80 above). See also Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy*, 342-344; Noble, *Republic of St. Peter*, 308-324.

[88] *Annales Regni Francorum* ad. ann. 813, MGH SrG I, 200, *Carolingian Chronicles*, 95; Einhard, "Vita Caroli Magni" 30, Latin text in Oswald Holder-Egger ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Regnum Germanicarum* v.25 (Hanover, 1911) 34; English trans. by Lewis Thorpe, *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, 49-90, at 83.

declared his eldest son Lothar principal heir to the imperial throne.[89] However, both Louis (in 816) and then Lothar (in 823) also wished to be crowned by the pope, the former in Rheims, the latter in Rome itself, as a way to give divine sanction to political decisions taken by the Frankish court.[90] Louis the Pious, according to his biographer Ermoldus, received from Stephen III the golden crown with gems which had belonged to Constantine the Great.[91] The reference to the fourth-century emperor was meant to signal papal patronage, as the pope was – according to *Constitutum Constantini* – the direct heir of Constantine in the West, capable of bestowing secular power on a ruler. In his turn, Lothar was invested by Paschal I with a sword, yet another symbol of the pope's special privilege of making emperors.[92] Nonetheless, these concrete papal signs that in the understanding of the Church of Rome the spiritual prevailed over the temporal did not prevent the Carolingians from regarding the Vicar of Christ as their subject, albeit one of a highly honored status.

The same ambiguity as to the precise role of the papacy characterized Charlemagne's program of ecclesiastical reforms. He relied on papal authority, but was not limited to or constrained by it. He solicited and received from Pope Hadrian the collection of canon law known as the *Dionysio-Hadriana*, to which he added further regulations as needs arose. Through royal capitularies and conciliar decrees, Charlemagne and his successors targeted the Frankish clergy for issues such as discipline, instruction of the laity, pastoral responsibilities, preservation

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Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris* 6, in Ernest Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. 64 (Hannover, 1995) 182, English trans. by Thomas F. X. Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer* (University Park, PA, 2009) 196-197.

[89] *Annales Regni Francorum* ad. ann. 817, MGH SrG 1, 204; *Carolingian Chronicles*, 102.

[90] *Annales Regni Francorum* ad ann. 816 & 823, MGH SrG 1, 203 & 210; *Carolingian Chronicles*, 101 & 112-113.

[91] Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici*, lines 1076–1077, Latin text with French trans. in Ermold le Noir, *Poème au roi Louis le Pieux et épîtres au roi Pépin*, ed. Edmond Faral (Paris, 1964) 84; English trans. by Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, 152.

[92] See Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven*, 150-151.

of orthodoxy and the use of standardized liturgical practices.[93] The pope's ability to monitor the developments north of the Alps and intervene if necessary was hindered by his own weak position at home, in Italy, and by the commanding personality of the man whom Rome had turned into an emperor, and was then unwilling to concede to the Apostolic See the spiritual leadership of the Christian West. But however feeble a pope's position was in respect to imperial power, the status and prestige of the institution he represented could be used for local gains. The authors of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, for instance, appealed to papal authority in order to strengthen the position of the Frankish bishops vis-à-vis secular magnates, metropolitans and church councils.[94] Even if obeyed only when convenient, the pope's special place at the helm of the Church of Rome as heir to the Apostle Peter was recognized and revered, and the use of his name carried enough weight to justify issuing decrees on his behalf.

After the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, the pope regained control over the theological sphere, as subsequent Carolingian kings and princes had little interest in dogmatic definitions; but matters such as episcopal appointments, oversight of monasteries and trials involving clergymen were still in the hands of the secular power. The partition of the empire between the sons and grandsons of Louis and the frequent military campaigns that accompanied it weakened the Carolingians' hold on the papacy, as well as the papacy itself. Without royal protectors, the popes had to deal by themselves not only with the Lombards, rebellious Italian dukes and powerful Roman families, but also with Arab attacks on the peninsula and the renewed war on icons in Byzantium during the second phase of Iconoclasm (815-843). With few exceptions, such as Nicholas I (858-867) and John VIII (872-882), the occupants of the Apostolic See did not rise up to the complex challenges of the late ninth and tenth centuries.

[93] McKiterrick, *The Frankish Church*; Mayke de Jong, "Charlemagne's Church," in Joanna Story ed., *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester and New York, 2005) 103-135.
[94] Schafer Williams, *Codices Pseudo-Isidoriani: A Palaeographico-Historical Study* (New York 1971).

Most of them were mere pawns in the hands of competing aristocratic clans in Rome. Plots, riots, scandals, disputed elections and contested popes were the norm. The safety and welfare of the most important religious figure in Western Christendom depended on the immediate interests of those who had placed him on the papal throne. Support could be offered as easily as it could be withdrawn.[95] These decades of instability and violence seemed to come to an end in the second half of the tenth century, when a new dynasty with imperial designs emerged in East Francia. The Vicar of Christ could afford to take heart once again: a powerful ruler with centralizing policies meant that the era of papal subordination to local power players would cease.

To the popes' dismay, however, the Ottonians showed themselves even more willing than their Carolingian predecessors to assume and exercise all the attributes of imperial authority as understood in Byzantium. They kept a tight rein on the Church, appointing bishops and abbots and using them in imperial service, supervising and often interfering in papal elections, curtailing the pope's right to intervene in local ecclesiastical affairs, and disposing of church lands as they saw fit. The Byzantine princess Theophanu, wife of Otto II (973-983) and mother to Otto III (996-1002), contributed to the consolidation of imperial power along Eastern lines.[96] Under her influence, Otto III attempted to recreate the Roman Empire, moving the capital to Rome, where he lived in a palace built especially for him on the Palatine Hill. He adopted elaborate, Byzantine-style court ceremonial, revived ancient offices, and presented himself as the protector and ruler of Christendom, using titles such as *servus Jesu Christi* ("servant of Jesus Christ") and *servus apostolorum* ("servant of the apostles"). To preclude any resistance from the papacy, he declared the Donation of Constantine, which the Church of Rome had been using to back up its

[95] Collins, *Keepers of the Keys of Heaven*, 154-186; Duffy, *Saints or Sinners*, 97-105.
[96] On Theophanu, see Adelbert Davids ed., *Empress Theophanu: Byzantium and the West at the Turn of the First Millenium* (Cambridge, 1995).

claims to spiritual and temporal authority, a forgery.[97] Otto III also placed on the papal throne a twenty-five year old cousin (Gregory V), the first German to be elevated to this position. When the cousin died in rather suspicious conditions three years later, Otto decided for a more prudent choice, in the person of the learned Frenchman Gerbert of Aurillac, who in 999 became Pope Sylvester II. After the death of Otto III in 1002 and that of Sylvester a year later, the papacy fell again into the hands of the feuding families of Rome. It was rescued once more, but only for a short time, by the last Ottonian, Henry II (1014-1024).[98] The next two decades were a time of great turmoil for the city of Rome and implicitly for the papacy; the incumbents of the Apostolic See were not only willing participants in the factional strife, but also masters of self indulgence and scandalous choices. It took a new German dynasty, the Salians, to finally remove the papacy from Roman influence and push for radical disciplinary reforms that would eventually allow the popes to become de facto leaders of the Church.

King Henry III of Germany (1039-1056) played a key role in unshackling the Apostolic See from its strong ties to the aristocratic families of Rome, although he did not necessarily seek a papacy completely free from secular interference. In 1046, Henry III needed a pope to crown him emperor, and although three options were available, none of the men claiming to be the true Vicar of Christ was legally competent to perform the coronation ceremony: Benedict IX and Gregory VI had attained their office via simony, while Sylvester III's papal status was more a matter of personal opinion than a widely recognized fact. Pope Benedict IX (1032-1046) owed

[97] Latin text in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata regum et imperatorem Germaniae*, v. 2, p..819; English translation in Robert Folz, *The Concept of Empire in Western Europe* (Westport CT, 1969) 186-188. The document accused the popes of "negligence, incompetence and dishonest practices," of pushing their "arrogance to such a point as to confuse the greater part of our empire with their apostolic powers," and of inventing lies and drawing-up letters of privilege which they back-dated to Constantine the Great (Folz, p.187).

[98] A survey of the Ottonian emperors is in Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages, 800-1056* (New York, 1991), and Eckhard Müller-Mertens, "The Ottonians as Kings and Emperors," in Timothy Reuter ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History* v. 3 *c.900-c.1024* (Cambridge, 2000) 231-226. For the relations between papacy and the German emperors, see Collins, *Keepers of the Keys*, 186-200; Duffy, *Saints or Sinners*, 105-109.

his see to the bribes that his father, the count Alberic III of Tusculum, had paid to the Roman aristocrats in order to elect his son as Vicar of Christ. The pope had been a layman in his early twenties when chosen to the office, and his subsequent ordination and elevation to the highest position in the Church did nothing to temper his dissolute way of life. He was deposed and expelled from Rome in 1036, but he persuaded the then-emperor Conrad II (1027-1039) to assist him in gaining back the see. Benedict was forced out of Rome again in the fall of 1044, and this time a new pope, Sylvester III (January-March 1045), was elected in his stead. Benedict returned to Rome with the help of his family, and after a fierce struggle on the streets of Rome he succeeded in driving Sylvester out of the city and reinstating himself as sovereign pontiff. Soon afterwards, however, Benedict IX decided he wanted to marry, and accepted the bribe that his godfather, the archpriest John Gratian of the St. John Church by the Latin Gate, was ready to pay in order to become the next pope. Gratian had earned a good name for his piety and moral conduct, so many people in Rome actually welcomed his accession to the pontifical throne. He ruled as Pope Gregory VI for a year and a half (May 1045-December 1046), although a few months after his election Benedict had returned to Rome, reclaiming his see.

The scandal of three popes – Benedict, Sylvester and Gregory – reached Henry III, who was looking forward to his coronation in Rome meant to legitimize his assumption of the imperial title. In December 1046, Henry marched with his army into Italy and held a council at Sutri, forty kilometers north of Rome, at which he deposed all three claimants of the papal see.[99]

[99] Two sources discuss the Council of Sutri and its outcome: *Annales Romani*, in G.H. Pertz ed., *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, *Scriptores* v. 5 (Hannover, 1844) 468-480, here at 468-469, English translation in Maureen C. Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Controversy* (Boston and New York, 2005) 64-65; and Bonizo of Sutri, *Liber ad amicum* Bk. 5, in E. Dümmler ed., *Monumenta Germaniae historica*, *Libelli de Lite*, v. 1 (Hannover, 1891) 584-586, English trans. Miller, *Power and the Holy*, 65-69. For literature, see Pius Engelbert, "Heinrich III. und die Synoden von Sutri und Rom im Dezember 1046," *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte* 94 (1999) 228-266; Duffy, *Saints and Sinners*, 110-112; Ian S. Robinson, "Introduction" to *The Papal Reform of the Eleventh Century. Lives of Pope Leo IX and Pope Gregory VII. Selected sources translated and annotated* (Manchester 2004) 5-7.

But he found no suitable replacement; according to Bonizo, bishop of Sutri, Church reformer and historian, "it was impossible to find [among the Romans] a candidate who was not illiterate, or guilty of either simony or concubinage."[100] Henry III chose then a German bishop, Suidger of Bamberg, as pope, most likely not because there were no Italians who could adequately perform the role of sovereign pontiff, but because he wished to put an end to the prolonged crisis of leadership in the Church of Rome. The control of papal affairs by Roman aristocrats had turned the popes into mere puppets who were acting on behalf of local political and economic interests instead of providing spiritual guidance and pastoral care to the faithful.

The new pope, Clement II (1046-1047), inaugurated the series of German pontiffs dedicated to reforming the Church by tightening its discipline and freeing it from imperial, royal, and aristocratic meddling. They undoubtedly went much further with their reformist zeal than Henry III himself had envisioned. Upon his coronation on Christmas Day 1046, Pope Clement II conferred on him the title *patricius Romanus*, also borne by Pippin and Charlemagne. Although this was not its original meaning, Henry took it to entail the right to elect and depose popes. He and especially his son and successor, Henry IV, (1056-1105) attempted to supervise closely the ecclesiastical appointments at high level, only to encounter much resistance on the part of the reformist popes. The Vicars of Christ had learned their lesson, and were unwilling to let their authority slip away again. For two centuries and a half after its separation from Byzantium, the Apostolic See had not been able to cast off the secular control over the Church. Whether those lording over it had been Roman noblemen or Frankish monarchs, none of them had expected the pope to be more than a spiritual shepherd, and the channel through which divine grace was poured upon rulers and kingdoms. It was only as a result of the 'investiture controversy' of the

[100] Miller, *Power and the Holy*, 68.

late eleventh century that the popes attained, at long last, the desired prestige and deference on the part of of secular authorities.

2.5. Churchmen at Sword's Point: East-West Clashes over Church Doctrine and Practice

If the papal claims to leadership over Christendom did not enjoy much sympathy or support under the political arrangements that arose in the West after 800, they were even less appreciated in the East. The post-800 encounters between Rome and Constantinople were marked by mistrust and suspicion. The pope had placed himself in the enemy's camp, and the Byzantine *basileus* and patriarch were all too willing to find faults with his choices, judgments and decisions. On his part, the Vicar of Christ was hopeful to regain the ground lost in the East, especially since after second wave of Iconoclasm ended in 843, he resumed cordial relationships with Byzantium. But the East was not ready to acknowledge him as anything other than the leader of the Church of Rome. In fact, when icon veneration was restored, Empress Theodora and Patriarch Methodius did not ask for papal approval in order to do so.[101] The pope had no recognized ecclesiastical, legal or pastoral preeminence over churches lying outside his jurisdiction.

An opportunity to address this situation and uphold the primacy of the Apostolic See arose in the 860s, when Pope Nicholas I sought to arbitrate in a rather typical Byzantine ecclesiastical conflict. Emperor Michael III the Amorian (842-867) had replaced Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople with the lay scholar and statesman Photius. At the time of his appointment, Photius was the head of the imperial chancery, with no training or experience in the ecclesiastical realm. He had to be rushed in several days through all the offices of the clerical hierarchy. The procedure was uncanonical, although not without precedent in Byzantium; the

[101] Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 225.

deposition of Ignatius was likewise irregular, forced upon the former patriarch by the emperor for political reasons. In 860, the pope received a letter from Photius, who was formally announcing his election, and a letter from Emperor Michael, who was inviting Nicholas to send representatives to a council in Constantinople. The pope withheld the recognition of Photius until he learned more about the patriarch's appointment, sending two legates to examine the removal of Ignatius and, while they were at it, to demand the return of Calabria, Sicily and Illyricum to papal jurisdiction. The council, which took place in the summer of 861, reaffirmed Ignatius' deposition and declined the papal request for the return of its former patrimony. The papal legates were somehow tricked into accepting Photius' appointment as canonical, thus exceeding their mandate. Nicholas I was enraged that neither Byzantines nor even his own officials waited for a papal resolution to the case. In 863 he held a synod in Rome which deposed and excommunicated Photius, and reinstated Ignatius on the patriarchal throne.[102]

The decision, radical as it was, had no practical consequences, since the pope could not carry it out without the cooperation of Byzantine political and religious authorities, who were by default opposed to Roman interference. The patriarch of Constantinople considered himself independent from the papacy, view fully supported by the emperor. Moreover, Nicholas' verdict against an imperial action could be construed as usurpation of an imperial right: the *basileus* alone could depose and elect a patriarch. The Apostolic See had no say in the matter. A council

[102] The most comprehensive discussion of what came to be known as 'the Photian Schism' is in Francis Dvornik, *The Photian Schism: History and Legend* (Cambridge, 1948). Milton V. Anastos, "The Papal Legates at the Council of 861 and their Compliance with the Wishes of the Emperor Michael III," in idem, *Aspects of the Mind of Byzantium*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot 2001) art. VI, challenges Dvornik's thesis according to which the pope had summoned the council of 861 in order to have Ignatius' case examined by his legates, with the aim of underscoring his right to judge a Byzantine patriarch. Anastos argues instead that the entire affair was planned and coordinated by the Byzantine emperor Michael III, who was seeking to have Ignatius formally condemned by the papal legates, and ultimately by the pope himself, highlighting thus the prevalence of his (imperial) will over papal intentions. The conversion of the Bulgarians also played an important part in the dispute between Rome and Constantinople; see Liliana Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and Cross: Photios, Bulgaria and the Papacy, 860s-880s* (Amsterdam, 1998); also Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 167-192. Tia Kolbaba's *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and the Filioque in the Ninth Century* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2008) focuses on the religious debates between Byzantines and Latins at the time of Photius.

organized by Photius in 867 excommunicated the pope and declared illegitimate his meddling in a Byzantine internal dispute. Like the papal move against Photius, the patriarch's act was to remain without concrete results. The emperor was no longer able to force Rome into obedience.[103] On their part, neither Church leader (patriarch or pope) had the means to enforce the pronouncements he had made against an autonomous and similarly positioned hierarch. But each conciliar decision was meant to convey an important message regarding the locus of ecclesiastical universalism to the adversary. Photius' council actually went a step further: it denounced the papal-supported Franks as heretics, the main reason being their addition of the *Filioque* to the creed.

While caught in this dispute with the papacy, Byzantium was also engaged in a contest with the Carolingian Empire over the conversion of the Slavs of Central Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, and implicitly over extending influence into those areas. Ratislav of Moravia (846-870) hastened the clash between Eastern and Western political and religious interests when he sought the friendship and support of the Byzantine emperor against his immediate neighbors, Khan Boris I of Bulgaria (852-889) and King Louis II of East Francia (840-876). The two had struck an alliance that threatened the independence of Moravia, and Ratislav placed himself under the protection of Constantinople. In an attempt to curb the growing influence of Frankish bishops in his realm, in 862 he also asked Michael III the Amorian to send a Slavic-speaking "bishop and teacher" to instruct the local Moravian priests in the truths of the Christian faith in

[103] Nicetas David, the biographer of Patriarch Ignatius, wrote that the Byzantine emperor Michael III went so far in his disdain for the pope as to negotiate with Louis II (844-875), king of Italy and Carolingian emperor, the recognition of the imperial title in exchange for the removal of Nicholas I from the Holy See – vid. Nicetas David, *The Life of Patriarch Ignatius* 52, Greek text with English trans. by Andrew Smithies (Washington DC, 2013) 77. The matter is discussed by Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 121-122. If the information is accurate, it reflects the typical Byzantine understanding of the powers of the emperor, which stretched as far as to depose a disobedient pope.

their own language.[104] The Byzantine mission led by the two brothers from Thessalonica, Cyril-Constantine and Methodius, was to be of crucial importance for the Slavic world, which acquired at the time an alphabet, the first translation of the Bible and other religious writings into Slavonic, and a Slavonic liturgy.[105]

The Moravian ruler hailed the brothers' diligent labor in making Christianity accessible to a general audience, but the Frankish clergy resented the intense Byzantine activity in a territory they used to regard as theirs, and complained to the pope. Pope Hadrian II (867-872), however, gave full support to the brothers' undertaking. In 868 he met the Byzantine missionaries in Rome, declared their translations and teachings in Slavonic free of error, and ordained Methodius and some of his disciples to the priesthood. Constantine died in Rome at the end of 868, after he had donned the monastic garb and taken the monastic name of the Cyril, but his brother Methodius resumed his work among the Slavs. He was active in Pannonia and Bohemia, and spent the last years of his life back in Moravia, where he also died in 885. Several times during his lengthy ecclesiastical and missionary career he was charged with heresy by the Frankish clergy, because of his resort to a "barbaric" language when celebrating the Divine Liturgy, and his dissemination of the creed without the added *Filioque*. The pope cleared Methodius of any accusation in 880, the papal bull *Industriae tuae* issued on this occasion

[104] "Life of Constantine" c. 14, in *Medieval Slavic Lives of Saints and Princes*, ed. and trans. by Marvin Kantor (Ann Arbor, 1983) 23-81, here at 65; "Life of Methodius" c. 5, in *Medieval Slavic Lives*, 99-129, here at 111.
[105] The brothers' impact on Moravia is discussed in Maddalena Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia (858-882): Papal Power and Political Reality* (Leiden and Boston, 2014). The standard account on the ninth-century Byzantine endeavor to convert the Slavs is in Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs: SS. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1970). See also Dimitri Obolensky, "Saints Cyril and Methodius, Apostles of the Slavs," in idem, *Byzantium and the Slavs: Collected Studies*, Variorum Reprints (London, 1971), art. IX; Roman Jakobson, "The Byzantine Mission to the Slavs" and "Minor Native Sources for Slavic Church History," in idem, *Comparative Slavic Studies: The Cyrillo-Methodian Tradition* (Berlin and New York, 1985) 101-114 and 159-190; Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, *Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica: The Acculturation of the Slavs* (Crestwood, NY, 2001).

confirming Methodius' orthodoxy.[106] Despite this, after the death of Methodius his close associates were expelled from Moravia by the Frankish clergy, who had found a supporter of their cause in the new pope, Stephen V (885-891), an opponent of the new trend toward a Slavic Christianity. The pope forbade the use of Slavonic liturgy in Moravia, Bohemia and Pannonia, and those celebrating it found shelter in Bulgaria, whose tsar was delighted to be able to offer to his recently Christianized people the liturgy in their own language rather than in Greek.

As Central Europe came increasingly under Carolingian sway, the race between Byzantine and Frankish missionaries for the conversion of the Slavs moved south of the Danube, into the Balkans. Each side searched for reasons to denounce the rival party as heretical and thus challenge its right to expand its religious and political influence into the peninsula. The acceptance of the *Filioque* clause became a key element in the war propaganda: it was concomitantly orthodox and heterodox, depending on the faction discussing it.[107] The papacy at this point in time was only indirectly engaged in the contest. The popes were still not favoring the addition of the *Filioque* to the Nicene Creed, hence their initial upholding of the Byzantine mission among the Slavs, which they did not perceive as theologically flawed or spiritually dangerous. On the other hand, the Apostolic See sought to bring the new converts under its authority, and as a result it also supported the Frankish proselytizing activity in Central Europe. The Franks were papal subjects and more likely to work for the extension of the Roman jurisdiction in that area than were the Byzantino-Slavic missionaries. Matters came to a head in 867, at the council of Constantinople, when Patriarch Photius denounced the Frankish missionaries in the Balkans for their theological error (viz. the belief that the Holy Spirit

[106] Betti, *The Making of Christian Moravia*, 87-88.
[107] For the theological conflict between Byzantine and Frankish churches, see Richard S. Haugh, *Photius and the Carolingians: The Trinitarian Controversy* (Belmont, MA, 1975). Tia Kolbaba, *Inventing Latin Heretics: Byzantines and the Filioque in the Ninth Century* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2008) discusses the transmission and content of the three anti-Filoque texts attributed to Photius, and the nine-century lists of Latin errors.

proceeds from both the Father and the Son), and the pope for his ecclesiastical stance (namely his conviction that he could interfere in dioceses that did not belonged to Rome's jurisdiction).

In the invitation sent to the Eastern patriarchs a year prior to the council of 867, Photius listed the grave errors committed by the Franks: fasting on Saturdays, priestly celibacy, chrismation only by the bishop, and, worse than anything else, ruining the Nicene Creed through the addition of the *Filioque.* In the same encyclical, Photius put forth the first Byzantine argument against the double procession of the Holy Spirit, which would form the backbone of all subsequent attacks on the *Filioque*.[108] He used harsh words for the Franks ("barbarians who came out of darkness," "beasts," "common pests," "servants of the enemy"), indicative of the contempt still felt in the East for the people who had put an end to Byzantine universalism, while at the same time presuming to teach as "orthodox" beliefs that ran counter to those of the Byzantine Church.

The immediate cause of this first formal attack on Frankish-sponsored theology and ritual was Khan Boris of Bulgaria. The khan had been baptized by Photius in 864, when Emperor Michael III the Amorian had acted as his godfather. Greek-speaking missionaries flooded Bulgaria afterwards, and the khan began worrying about the excessive Byzantine presence in his lands. He wanted a degree of ecclesiastical autonomy for his church that Constantinople was not ready to grant, so he appealed to Pope Nicholas for recognition and help. The pope was quite happy to intervene in an area where the Church of Rome had been denied access for more than a century, so he sent his representatives to the Bulgarian capital. The khan, impressed with Rome's

[108] Greek text in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris, 1900) CII, cols. 741-742; partial English translation in Coleman J. Barry ed., *Readings in Church History* (Westminster, MD, 1985) 314-316. See discussion in Kolbaba, *Inventing Latin Heretics,* 57-75. Two other writings traditionally attributed to Photius further develop the argument against the *Filioque*: a letter to the patriarch of Aquileia written after 882, and *The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit*, probably finished during Photius' second exile in 886. For problems with the authorship and textual transmission of these writings, see Kolbaba, *Inventing Latin Heretics*, 76-117. An English translation of the second text is available in Joseph P. Farrell, *Saint Photius: The Mystagogy of the Holy Spirit* (Brookline, MA, 1987).

promises, expelled the Byzantines from his territory and invited Frankish missionaries in their stead. It was at this point that the Byzantine monks and clergymen who had lingered in Bulgaria came into contact with Latin practices and the interpolated creed, which convinced them that the Franks were heretics and measures had to be taken to stop them from gaining adherents among the Bulgarians.[109] Photius' council endeavored to do just that, by directly accusing of heresy the Frankish missionaries to Bulgaria and indirectly the pope who was backing them.

This was however the patriarch's last moment of glory: by the end of the year, a new emperor, Basil I (867-886), took over the throne and deposed Photius, restored Ignatius as patriarch and resumed relations with the Apostolic See. He held another council in 869-870, in which legates of the new pope, Hadrian II (867-872), also participated. Photius was tried, excommunicated and exiled, but there was disagreement among the attending parties as to who was entitled to pronounce the previous patriarch guilty and punish him for his trespassing: the pope or the emperor. In the end, the latter prevailed, since Constantinople was not prepared to allow Rome any type of jurisdiction over the East.[110] This was not the only victory of the Byzantine emperor over the papacy. As the council progressed, an embassy from the Bulgarian khan arrived in Constantinople, prepared to negotiate the placement of their church under the

[109] Matthew Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans* (Hamden CT, 1968) 57-72; John V. A. Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor MI, 1983) 117-131; also Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and Cross*, 113-248.
[110] The conciliar Definition echoes some of this tension: Pope Nicholas was "the most blessed and aptly-named pope of old Rome, sent from above as another cornerstone" (*beatissumus et pheronymus papa senioris Romae desursum misit veluti quendam alterum angularem lapidem*) to confront Photius and "pierce him with the lance of truth" (*veritatis mucrone pupugit*). As Photius refused to pay heed, Nicholas excommunicated him (*penitus interfecit atque cum coniuncta ei quasi sacerdotali dignitate per anathema*). The most a pope could do, even in the best of times when the Byzantines accepted his intervention, was just that: instruct, chastise, and cast off an unrepenting member of the Church. On his part, the *basileus* was depicted as "the most religious friend of Christ, whom the heavenly Emperor and Lord of majesty has raised up for the salvation of the world" (*piissimus et Christi amicus quem caelestis Imperator et Dominus maiestatis in salutern orbis terrarum erexit*). As ultimately responsible for the Christians' wellbeing, the emperor was to decide the fate of the erring patriarch, the highest-ranking clergyman in the Byzantine Church. Basil deposed and exiled Photius, bringing Ignatius back to the see of Constantinople. Such settlements had always been the *basileus*'s privileges as overseer of the Church, and he was not likely to renounce them in favor of the pope. The Latin text of the council's *acta* with parallel English translation is in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington DC, 1990) 1.157-186, here at 163-164.

authority of the Byzantine patriarchate. Disappointed in the pope's refusal to grant an autonomous patriarch to Bulgaria, Boris turned once again to Byzantium. This time the emperor and his patriarch acted more prudently, placing the Bulgarian church under Byzantine jurisdiction but offering it a large degree of autonomy.[111] Bulgaria thus exited the papal sphere of influence and became thoroughly immersed in the type of Christianity preached and practiced in Byzantium. At the same time, the tsar's sponsorship of the Slavic mission, now headed by Methodius' disciples Clement and Naum, meant that the Christians of Bulgaria had access to the liturgy, scriptures, religious literature, and pastoral care in their own language.

Papal prestige in the East acquired a few more wrinkles as a result of Rome's inability to handle convincingly and effectively the Photian and the Bulgarian crises. The Vicar of Christ remained, from a Byzantine perspective, a subject of the emperor, and it was the latter who had the final word in matters pertaining to Church administration, expansion and organization. Even more, after centuries in which the Apostolic See had played the role of defender of orthodoxy before the various heterodoxies proposed by Eastern *basileis* and churchmen, it now found itself accused of supporting heretics, although no direct accusation was made against the pope himself, since the interpolated creed was not yet used in Rome. But from a theological standpoint, the battle lines were drawn between East and West during the Photian schism. Pope Nicholas I perceived the Byzantine attack on the *Filioque* clause and certain Latin practices as an attack on the Church of Rome, which considered itself the sole promoter and protector of sound doctrine. In a letter to Bishop Hincmar of Reims, the pope complained that Photius, the "neophyte, usurper and adulterer of the Church of Constantinople," slandered the papacy and every Latin-speaking church by making absurd accusations against them, while daring to entitle himself "universal

[111] Dvornik, *Photian Schism*, 132-158; Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and Cross*, 263-271. The episcopal gathering of 869-870 is considered in the West as the Eighth Ecumenical Council; in Byzantium, however, the council was repudiated in 879-880, when Photius was once again promoted to the see of Constantinople.

patriarch," thus robbing the Vicar of Christ of his forefront position as head of the entire Church. The pope urged Frankish bishops and theologians to refute the Byzantine calumnies against the See of Peter.[112] The first anti-Byzantine treatises defending the use of the interpolated creed were written at this time, by Aeneas of Paris (*Liber adversus Graecos*) and Ratramnus of Corbie (*Contra Graecorum Opposita Romanam Ecclesiam Infamantium*).[113]

But affairs in Byzantium were as a rule treacherous, and in 879 the papacy found itself compelled to follow once again Constantinople's lead, this time in order to reverse its initial opposition to Photius, approving the man's exoneration from all previous accusations and his reinstatement as patriarch. By 876, Emperor Basil I and Patriarch Ignatius had reconciled with Photius, who, upon the death of Ignatius in 877, was elevated to the see of Constantinople for a second time. Basil summoned then a council to validate the patriarchal appointment, which took place in 879-880, again with the participation of papal legates. Pope John VIII (872-882) wrote to the Eastern patriarchs and the bishops attending the council of his readiness to accept Photius as patriarch, provided that he admitted and apologized for past errors, and stopped the Byzantine involvement in Bulgaria. Also, in a letter entrusted to his legates to the council, he agreed to pronounce the two previous anti-Photian councils null and void, as "there is no tie that cannot be unfastened, except for those who persist in their error."[114] The council cleared Photius' name, confirmed his election as patriarch, and invalidated the *acta* of the councils of 863 in Rome and that of 869/70 in Constantinople. Also, it condemned any tampering with the creed, although without making specific reference to the *Filioque* clause. Anyone who added to or subtracted

[112] Latin text in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* (Paris 1900) CXIX, 1152-1157; English translation in Barry, *Readings in Church* History, 316-319.
[113] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 104-107.
[114] The pope's *commonitorium* (mandate) to the council did not survive in Latin; the extant Greek version was believed for a long time to have been interpolated by Photius, in order to show that he had obtained the papal pardon and support. For a rejection of this interpretation and an argument for the authenticity of the Greek text, see Dvornik, *The Photian Schism*, 174-179; also Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and Cross*, 317-324.

from the Nicene definition of faith was to be defrocked, if clergyman, or anathematized and exiled, if layman.[115] It was yet another setback for the papacy. Rome had to accept back in communion the patriarch whom it had placed under anathema, despite the fact that Photius' repentance was short-lived and he soon resumed his attacks on the *Filioque* and his patronage of the Bulgarian church.

For the rest of the ninth century and during the tenth century as well, the Apostolic See maintained overall good relations with Byzantium. Nonetheless, the issue of the interpolated creed continued to erode the bonds between the two parties. When the Ottonian emperors placed on the papal see hierarchs of German origin, the patriarch of Constantinople refused to recite their name during liturgical prayers, since these popes were supporters of the *Filioque* heresy. When Pope Sergius IV (1009-1012), an Italian, sent the letter announcing his election to Constantinople, Patriarch Sergius II (1001-1019) refused to inscribe his name on the diptychs, because the pope had sent as his profession of faith a version of the creed which contained the *Filioque* clause. Afterwards, no pope was commemorated during the Byzantine divine service, although no formal schism had yet taken place.[116] The official inclusion of the *Filioque* in the creed recited by the Roman Church by Pope Benedict VIII in 1014 did not provoke an immediate scandal in Constantinople, but allowed the Byzantines to direct their future attacks on the papacy itself, as advocate of heresy and destroyer of Church unity.[117] Other differences in worship and discipline between Byzantium and the West were increasingly taken into account and used as proofs that the other side was deviating from the truth.[118] Papal primacy as understood in Rome

[115] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 103-104.
[116] Francis Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy* (New York, 1966) 126-127; Runciman, *The Eastern Schism*, 32-33.
[117] Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 112-113.
[118] For the main problems the Byzantines found with the Roman liturgical, fasting and disciplinary practices, see Tia Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of Latin Religious 'Errors:' Themes and Changes from 850 to 1350," in Angeliki

(authority over the entire Church) continued to be discounted in the East, where the theory of five patriarchates of equal powers and privileges was still seen as the best expression of universal leadership.

For the Apostolic See, achieving a general recognition of the doctrine of papal primacy became the main objective during the reformist movement which swept through the Latin Church in the eleventh century. Reform-minded popes sought to put an end to the lay control of ecclesiastical appointments, and to the widespread moral abuses (simony, absenteeism, pluralism, concubinage, etc.) among the clergy, but papal decrees and rulings could not be implemented without an enhanced understanding of the role of the Vicar of Christ within the Church. During Carolingian and Ottonian rule, privately built and owned churches or monasteries had been the norm. Appointing priests, bishops or abbots for these foundations was a matter of personal concern for the lay person who had constructed them. Such clerical and monastic offices were not only highly profitable, but also politically sensitive; they were usually granted to people with strong connections to the local networks of power, but with little to no interest in providing pastoral care to the faithful. Many of the troubles that plagued the church in the West were blamed by the reformers on the laymen's dominance over the main Church offices. The solutions proposed encompassed the centralization of papal authority, exclusive papal nominations for episcopal and metropolitan sees, placement of monasteries under direct papal supervision, and stricter enforcement of Church discipline. The pope's rule covered all Christians, whether clerics, monastics or lay people.[119] It was at this time that the term "papacy"

E. Laiou and Roy Parvis Mottahedeh eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington DC, 2001) 117-143; also Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Chicago, 2000).

[119] For the context of the papal reforms of the High Middle Ages, see Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989) and Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1993); also Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, 128-130; Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 291-303.

(*papatus*) was coined, to indicate that the Holy See as an institution surpassed in power and rank the episcopacy (*episcopatus*), since its rule was universal, not restricted by geography, politics or law.[120] As the reformers pursued the goal of making the exercise of papal power a concrete reality throughout Christendom, they inevitably came to loggerheads with the Byzantines, who had always understood their churches as autonomous (never as part of papal jurisdiction).

The first reformist pope, Leo IX (1049-1054), wished to extend papal control over entire Italy, although the southern peninsula and Sicily were at least nominally Byzantine, and the Greek-speaking population living in those areas followed the Byzantine religious rite. The pope sought to impose the Latin rite on all Italian Christians. Standardization of ritual practices was part of the reformers' program aimed at bringing unity and purity to Christian worship. Greek liturgical usages were so different as to become suspect. Those adhering to them seemed impervious to the spiritual danger involved in following incorrect Eucharistic procedures, therefore a campaign was carried out throughout southern Italy in order to spread the Latin rite to the Greek churches. In 1053, Archbishop Leo of Ohrid (the main see in Illyricum) wrote a treatise to the Greek bishop John of Trani (in Byzantine Apulia), in which he defended the Byzantine liturgy and criticized the Latin Mass, especially its resort to 'Jewish customs' such as the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist.[121] The bishop was to pass the treatise on to the pope. Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, a staunch reformist and right hand of the pope, responded to Leo of Ohrid with a long, disparaging letter, condemning most Greek practices as heresies. Polemics might have remained at this level of heated correspondence, had not politics

[120] Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 298-299.
[121] On the relevance of the dispute over the leavened/unleavened bread used in the Eucharist to the 'schism' of 1054, see Mahlon H. Smith III, *And Taking Bread…: Cerularius and the Azyme Controversy of 1054* (Paris, 1978); Brett Whalen, "Rethinking the Schism of 1054*:* Authority, Heresy, and the Latin Rite," *Traditio* 62 (2007) 1-24. A partial English translation of Leo of Ohrid's treatise is in Deno J. Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen through Contemporary Eyes*, selection #150 (Chicago, 1984) 207.

interfered. Southern Italy and Sicily were threatened by the Normans, and both pope and Byzantine emperor were desperate to keep them out. Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-1059) invited Leo IX to send representatives for negotiations, and the pope sent a delegation headed by Cardinal Humbert.[122]

The cardinal however did not go to Constantinople with friendly talks in mind. He wanted the Byzantines to learn the depth of their errors and accept obediently the theological, pastoral and legal preeminence of the Apostolic See. When Humbert arrived at Constantinople in spring 1054, he handed to Patriarch Michael Cerularius (1043-1058) a papal letter full of accusations and particularly critical of the assumption of the title "ecumenical" by the patriarch, which Leo IX saw as a direct attack against papal primacy. Humbert also circulated a shorter version of his diatribe against Leo of Ohrid, which did not make the already charged atmosphere any friendlier. He then asked the emperor to pressure those who stood against Rome to recant. The monk Nicetas Pectoratus (Gk. Stethatos), author of treatises censuring the Latins for the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, their fasting practices and the celibacy imposed on priests, retracted his criticism. It was during the dispute with Nicetas that Cardinal Humbert brought up the issue of the *Filioque*, wrongly accusing the Byzantines of having deleted it from the creed and thus becoming heretics. As Patriarch Cerularius refused to change his position and accept papal rulings on ritual, doctrine and discipline as universally binding, the cardinal wrote a bull of excommunication against him and left it on the altar in Hagia Sophia. Cerularius swiftly summoned a synod which excommunicated the papal legates for entertaining heterodox beliefs, chief among them being the double procession of the Holy Spirit.[123]

[122] For an overview of the early circumstances which led to the mutual excommunications of 1054, see Dvornik, *Byzantium and the Roman Primacy*, 131-135; Louth, *Greek East and Latin West*, 305-318; Runciman, *The Eastern Schism*, 35-54.

The mutual excommunications were technically invalid. The cardinal acted with an authority which exceeded his mandate as papal legate; besides, Leo IX was dead by the time Humbert reached Constantinople, which rendered void his right to operate on the pope's behalf. The Byzantines in turn, according to their own pentarchic theory, could not excommunicate a member of an autonomous sister church via a local (i.e. not ecumenical) council; the bishops had also acted in haste and exceeded their powers. The immediate outcome of this conflict was not open schism, but greater estrangement between Rome and Constantinople. Cerularius tried to get the other three Eastern patriarchs to join him in the denunciation of the Latin Church as heretical, but his colleagues refrained from such a radical gesture. Byzantium was soon caught in the political crisis which followed the death of Emperor Constantine IX in 1055, and solving the disagreement with Rome lost its urgency. In the West, Cardinal Humbert had the sympathy and support of the next pope, Stephen IX (1057-1058), who had been previously a papal legate to the capital of Byzantium. When criticizing the Byzantines, Humbert focused on their firm rejection of the primacy of the Vicar of Christ. This is how later papal historians would treat the topic. By the twelfth century, they construed the 1054 incident as the Great Schism, with Patriarch Cerularius as its main instigator.[124] But relationships between the papacy and Byzantium continued, even if cold and strained at times. They were accompanied by a radicalization of the discourse on the differences between the Latin and Greek churches. If until the eleventh century hierarchs and canonists both East and West tolerated one another's dissimilar customs and

[123] English translations of Humbert's bull and the synod's response are in Geanakoplos, *Byzantium*, 208-212. On the significance of the interpolated creed in the dispute, see Siecienski, *The Filioque*, 113-115. A recent assessment of the events that took place in the summer of 1054 in Constantinople is by Axel Bayer, *Spaltung der Christenheit. Das sogenannte Morgenländische Schisma von 1054* (Cologne, 2002). For traditional interpretations of the schism, see Anton Michel, *Humbert und Kerullarios* (Paderborn 1925 and 1930); V. Grumel, "Les préliminaires du schisme de Michel Cérulaire ou la question romaine avant 1054," *Revue des études byzantines* 10 (1952) 5-23.
[124] Runciman, *The Eastern Schism*, 50-51.

usages, after 1054 they saw the two rites and the theologies supporting them as mutually exclusive.

The gulf which separated Rome from Constantinople by mid-eleventh century became wider as the reforming process advanced in the West. During the controversy between popes and Holy Roman Emperors over the right to invest church officials, the Apostolic See moved from the ideal of primacy to that of supremacy.[125] A document usually credited to the chancery of Pope Gregory VII (1072-1085), the *Dictatus Papae*, provides insight into the type of prerogatives and privileges that the papacy arrogated to itself. The document resembles more a working draft than an official statement, and was probably drawn up to be used as an aid during the pope's meeting with Emperor Henry IV (1056-1106), who continued to appoint prelates at will.[126] Some of the statements underscored the papal wide-ranging control over the bishops: the pope could depose, transfer and reinstate them, without the need of a council to sanction such decisions; he could divide rich bishoprics and unite poor ones; he could hear complaints against bishops from their subordinates; his legate to a council had power over the bishops, irrespective of his rank within the Church hierarchy.[127] The pope also asserted his authority over the secular realm: he alone could wear the imperial insignia, depose emperors, absolve vassals from fealty to 'wicked' men, and his feet alone were to be kissed by rulers. Several statements targeted the Byzantine emperor with his claims to universality and to ultimate power as God's vicegerent on

[125] Comprehensive yet accessible literature on the topic remains Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia, 1988); Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society at the time of the Investiture Contest* (Oxford, 1970); still relevant is W. Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1955) 262-309.
[126] On Pope Gregory, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073–1085* (Oxford, 1998), *Dictatus Papae* discussed at 502-510; Ian Stuart Robinson, "'Periculosus Homo:' Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority," *Viator* 9 (1978) 103-131. An introduction to the papal document and an English translation is available in Maureen C. Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Controversy* (Boston and New York, 2005) 81-83.
[127] Later acts by the Roman synod (1078, 1080) would formally prohibit lay investiture, placing under the penalty of excommunication anyone who accepted a clerical or monastic office from the hands of an emperor, king, or any other laymen. See Miller, *Power and the Holy*, 104-105.

earth: only the pope was to be called 'universal' and only his name was to be mentioned in the prayers of all churches; he was the sole authority entitled to summon an ecumenical council; his judgments could not be challenged or changed by anyone, nor could anyone judge him. The Church of Rome alone was founded by God, and because of this she could not err; whoever refused to submit to her was not to be considered a Christian.[128] In the attempt to end lay investiture and the abuses deriving from it, the author(s) of the document blurred the boundaries between the religious and the secular, placing the pope in charge of both realms. As Vicar of Christ, he received from his Master, who was at the same time High Priest and King of the World, spiritual *and* temporal powers. He was the one able to delegate authority to earthly kings and princes, and to withdraw it if need be. Although in its very early stages and without significant results during the dispute with Emperor Henry IV, the theory of papal supremacy put forth in 1075 was to prove very fruitful in later centuries in the West, where no comparable political power emerged to rival the papacy. As paradigm of leadership, the papal ideal was completely at odds with the political model practiced in Byzantium, but it took more than a century for the two to collide.

While the papacy broadened the scope of its authority to cover clerical orders and secular rulers alike, and developed the philosophical arguments necessary to back it up, the Byzantine Empire floundered, beset by decades of incompetent leadership and significant territorial losses in Italy, Balkans and Asia Minor. In 1059, Pope Nicholas II reached an alliance with the Normans, who had overrun southern Italy, Calabria and Sicily. He gave them recognition as rulers of those territories in exchange for fealty and protection. Nicholas became the first pope who was also a political overlord. Religiously, he succeeded to bring the much-coveted

[128] English translation in Miller, *Power and the Holy*, 81-83.

Byzantine areas under papal control.[129] The Normans pushed further into the western Balkans, while Patzinkas and Cumans attacked the center and the eastern peninsula, endangering the Byzantine hold over the region.[130]

The most significant Byzantine loss was however in the East. The defeat of Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes by the Seljuqs at Manzikert in 1071 resulted in much of Asia Minor being invaded and settled by Turkish tribes. The increased Turkish pressure on the Byzantine borders made Emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1081-1118) appeal to the pope for military assistance, and led to the onset of crusades and of close contact between Byzantine and Western military, political and religious customs and values. Each side found little to appreciate in its halfhearted war partner, and the misunderstandings over the exact objective of their alliance and the ways to attain it were often blown out of proportions by cultural differences.[131] During the first three crusades, anti-Greek parties were formed within the Latin armies, which sought to attack the Byzantines under the excuse that they were 'heathens' (because of their too frequent siding with the Turks against the crusaders) or at least schismatics (because of their incomprehensible rites and theological errors). But the papal summoning of the crusades was done in the name of Christian brotherhood and with the goal of providing help against the infidels to fellow-believers, and until 1204 the view prevailed that turning weapons against the Christians of the East would be a heinous sin.[132]

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[129] Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge, 1992) 9-32; G. A. Loud, *The Church and the Norman Conquest* (Cambridge, 2007) 135-146.
[130] Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge, 2006) 293-310; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 281-282.
[131] The scholarship on the crusades is too vast to be cited here; a good introduction to the topic from a Byzantine perspective is in Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London, 2003). Also useful is the collection of articles published by Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington, DC, 2001).
[132] William M. Daly, "Christian Fraternity, the Crusaders and the Security of Constantinople, 1097-1204: The Precarious Survival of an Ideal," *Medieval Studies* 22 (1960) 43-91. See also Angeliki E. Laiou, "Byzantium and the

Even if the popes strove to keep in check via promises of plenary pardons and threats with excommunication the otherwise unruly holy army that they had unleashed upon the Near East, they themselves played a major role in the growing Byzantine discontent with the West. Acting upon its recent understanding of itself as 'mother of all churches,' the Apostolic See confirmed the crusaders' establishment of Latin patriarchates directly subordinate to Rome in Antioch (1098) and Jerusalem (1099), ignoring the centuries-old local tradition of autonomous leadership, with only the Byzantine *basileus* as universal overseer of the Church. The Greek patriarchs had to take refuge in Constantinople, from where they received imperial support which enabled them to guide on their flocks.[133] The papal appointments of Latin patriarchs and bishops to sees located in areas where Rome had no jurisdiction raised awareness in Byzantium regarding the changes that took place in Western ecclesiology. The pope was no longer content with his role as the religious authority ('patriarch') of the West, and supreme arbiter and judge of the Church (granted to him by Canons four and five of the Council of Serdica, 343, and usually recognized in Byzantium, at least by those who had an interest to make appeals to Rome). He acted as an absolute ruler, claiming the right to make decisions and intervene in the internal affairs of archdioceses and dioceses which had never been under his sway. From a Byzantine standpoint, he simply rivalled the emperor.

Crusades in the Twelfth Century: Why was the Fourth Crusade Late in Coming?," in A.E. Laiou ed., *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and Its Consequences* (Paris, 2005) 17-40.

[133] Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States* (London, 1980) 159-187.

2.6. Who Rules the Christian Faithful? Last Byzantino-Papal Confrontation before the Crusaders' Storming of Constantinople

By the end of the twelfth century, the pope and the *basileus* found themselves on irreconcilable positions. Throughout the 1100s, the polemics between Greek and Latin theologians had brought to the forefront the Petrine doctrine, relegating practical issues such as azymes or fasting days, and even the *Filioque*, to a secondary place in the debates, but there had been no direct confrontation between popes, emperors and patriarchs.[134] The situation changed when Innocent III ascended the papal throne in 1198. Innocent was a canonist who advocated an ultra-papal stance: the Church founded by Christ and the Church of Rome were one and the same; the head of this Church had been at first Apostle Peter, then his power of binding and loosing had been passed down to his heirs, the popes, who were solely in charge of governing, guiding and chastising the faithful. They alone enjoyed *plenitudo potestatis* (the fullness of power, spiritual and temporal) and universality. There was no autonomous church, since there was no division in the body of Christ. All local churches were part of the Church of Rome, and led by the pope. Outside this Church there was no salvation.[135]

When Emperor Alexius III (1195-1203) wrote to congratulate Innocent on his election to the papacy and to explore the possibility of a joint alliance against the Holy Roman Emperor, he received a thorough introduction to the pope's radical ideology.[136] Innocent exhorted him to return to obedience to the Church of Rome, since by remaining outside her, the emperor and his nation risked incurring God's wrath. Once Byzantium became again part of the true Church, no

[134] Tia Kolbaba, "The Orthodoxy of the Latins in the Twelfth Century," in Andrew Louth and Augustine Casiday eds., *Byzantine Orthodoxies* (Aldershot, 2006) 199-213.
[135] Alfred J Andrea, "Pope Innocent III as Crusader and Canonist: His relations with the Greeks of Constantinople, 1198-1216," PhD Thesis, Cornell University (1969) 163-212; Walter Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism: The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists* (London, 1949) 76-113; Michele Maccarrone, *Vicarius Christi: Stori del Titolo Papale* (Roma, 1952) 110-118.
[136] A detailed commentary on the chronology, meaning and significance of the correspondence between Pope Innocent, Emperor Alexius and Patriarch Camaterus is in Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist," 100-188.

real danger could threaten it. The emperor did not have to summon a council to discuss the reunion between Rome and Constantinople. Convoking an ecumenical council was the pope's duty, while the emperor's and his patriarch's was to reenter full communion with the Apostolic See. There was no need for negotiation and debate: the schism was to be healed when the patriarch came to Rome and paid homage to the pope, his spiritual master. Innocent then took Alexius to task for refusing to send troops to participate in the crusade that he (the pope) had just summoned. As God's vicegerent, as Alexius claimed to be, he was surely privy to God's will and knew that He desired the recovery of the Holy Land. Should the emperor act upon Innocent's bidding, he would receive a plenary pardon for all his sins, past, present and future. Should he decide not to obey, the pope as Vicar of Christ would be forced to move against him, as offender of Christ.[137]

There was little in the letter that made sense to Alexius. The Byzantine *basileus* had no reason to return to full obedience to the Church of Rome. He had never been her subject; rather, it had been the other way around for a long time in the common history of the two institutions. Furthermore, it was the emperor's responsibility to call a general council, oversee its proceedings, and endorse its decisions. The pope, by himself or through his representatives, had the obligation to attend in order to validate the ecumenicity of the gathering, but did not have the authority to convene it. As for the crusades, they enjoyed no popularity with the Byzantines, and the emperor saw little reason in sending out troops to help the Latins occupy the Holy Land. The promise for full absolution of sins was probably least comprehensible from a Byzantine point of

[137]Alexius' first letter to Innocent is no longer extant. The pope's response is edited in Theodosius Haluščynskyj, *Acta Innocentii III* (Vatican City,1944) no. 178 [hereafter *Acta Inn. III*]. Alexius' answer to it is preserved only in Latin, see *Acta Inn. III*, no. 550. The letter discussed here is the second one by Innocent, published in *Acta Inn. III*, no. 195. It is also quoted in full in *Gesta Innocentii III* c. LX, Latin text in David Gress-Wright, "The *Gesta Innocentii III*: Text, Introduction and Commentary," PhD Diss., Bryn Mawr College (1981); English trans. by James M. Powell, *The Deeds of Innocent III* (Washington, DC, 2004) 77-81 [hereafter *Deeds of Innocent III*]. The letters and their context are discussed in Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist,"100-112, 116-126.

view: sins already committed were forgiven by a priest in confession; future sins could not be pardoned in advance. The pope had nothing to offer in terms of absolution beyond what any parish priest could offer. But the veiled threat at the very end of the letter had the potential to put Byzantium in danger. In the context of 1198, it meant that Innocent would choose to side with Philip of Swabia, regent for the underage Holy Roman Emperor, against Alexius, which could lead to attacks on Byzantine territory, especially if the Apostolic See marked the Byzantines out as schismatics. During the third crusade, the then Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa (1155-1190) created a host of problems for Constantinople, and the *basileus* had no desire to see them repeated while he ruled. Neither did he want to allow the pope to speak as if the higher-ranking party in the negotiations, when in fact the emperor was the one delegated by God to rule over the Christian *oikoumene*. Innocent's stance on the papacy as holder of ultimate authority was inacceptable.

Patriarch John X Camaterus (1198-1206) also expressed no small perplexity regarding the pope's claim to supremacy, and the Church of Rome's claim to be the one universal and true Church. For good measure, the pope had also updated the Byzantine patriarch on the latter's proper place in the new hierarchy of power envisioned by the Apostolic See. To Camaterus' confusion, Innocent answered with a defense of the extensive powers assumed by the papacy based on New Testament passages to which he could give an interpretation that grossly underscored the importance of Peter above all apostles. (For instance, Peter alone walked on water, mastering it; since water in the Old Testament symbolized the world, this act of Peter indicated that only he and his successors received power over the world. Likewise, Peter's jumping into the water when he alone recognized Jesus after the resurrection meant that only Peter was entrusted the world. Jesus prayed for Peter not to fail in faith, but strengthen his

brothers, which implied that Peter would never be wrong. Peter was told to forgive his brothers seventy times seven: seventy is the perfect number, so Peter had sole power to forgive sins of all mankind. Jesus told 'Follow Me' to Peter alone: Peter was not simply asked to imitate Jesus in his way of life, since all apostles imitated Jesus in life and death as martyrs; but Peter was to imitate Jesus in His role as leader of the Church. Peter was the first to preach, convert and baptize three thousand people; he was the first after Jesus to work a miracle; he pronounced the death sentence on Ananias and Saphira, and so on). Peter's position as leader of the apostles explained, in Innocent's view, why the Church of Rome (and not that of Jerusalem, as the patriarch had intimated) was the mother of all churches: she had inherited from Peter his primacy and leadership. The Church was born in Jerusalem but led from Rome, which had been the see of Peter, the first and foremost of the apostles. Rejecting this obvious truth meant rendering asunder the seamless garment of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, persisting in such error removed one from the promise of salvation. The pope expressed his hope that the patriarch would obey him "willingly, kindly and devotedly," and return to the embrace of the true Church of Christ; otherwise, he and the bishops gathered at the projected council would decide "what must be decided" – a vague threat, most likely to be translated in an act of excommunication of the patriarch as schismatic.[138]

Patriarch Camaterus did not find Innocent's line of reasoning any more persuasive than the emperor did. The patriarch, like most Eastern prelates, had an understanding of ecclesiastical history which relied on a common set of experiences, starting with the foundation of the Church by Jesus in Jerusalem, then going through the first centuries of expansion and persecution, through a time of steady advance under the protection offered by the emperor, through theological debates and conciliar definitions, and a series of practices and rites that all together

[138] Patriarch Camaterus' initial letter is in *Acta Inn. III*, no. 546; Innocent's reply is in *Acta Inn. III*, no. 187; *Deeds of Innocent III* c.LXI, 81-89. For discussion, see Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist," 126-142.

gave a sense of identity and unity to Christians. The papal pushing of the Church of Rome above and beyond all other churches had no precedent in this shared past. Religious leadership had not been granted by God to any one single church, nor to any one single person, but to all the bishops, who drew their authority from the teachings of Christ, the apostolic canons, the decisions of ecumenical and provincial councils, and the imperial legislation concerning the Church. The patriarch wrote back emphasizing his idea of a pentarchy with all five patriarchs having equal powers and privileges, reserving no special place to the pope, to whom he denied even the primacy of honor which the Eastern churches were usually ready to admit. Everything that Jesus Christ said or gave to one apostle, be it Peter or someone else, was equally valid for all of them. Likewise, primacy was equally shared by all the five main sees, as each of them enjoyed some type of preeminence: in Jerusalem the Church had been established; in Antioch the followers of Christ received the name of "Christians;" Rome used to be the capital of the Roman Empire; Constantinople was now the capital of the Christian Empire, and so on. The pope had no reason to emphasize Rome's position as exceptional among other churches.[139]

The patriarch's uncompromising letter never made it to Innocent, for reasons unknown. Alexius also wrote a reply to the pope, firmly but politely, to avoid antagonizing a potential ally, and at the same time trying to reestablish the terms of dialogue in a way closer to the Byzantine political outlook. The emperor pointed to the absence of any scriptural evidence for the exalted position that the pope had assumed. God placed the emperor in charge of both laity and clergy, while He taught the apostles and their descendants to humbly seek the lowest positions in any given hierarchy. Apostle Peter himself had exhorted the early Christians to submit themselves to secular rulers, since all earthly authority came from God for the purpose of maintaining order

[139] This letter of Camaterus was never answered by the pope, which made scholars assume that it never reached him. For possible explanations, see Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist,"151-156, who has also edited the letter on p. 556-570.

and morality in society (1 Pt.2:13-14). The pope was, like any other member of the Church, subject to the emperor.[140] But this determined reiteration of the Byzantine understanding of the relationship between political and religious powers was the most Emperor Alexius could do. He was aware, like many of his predecessors, that the Apostolic See was no longer under Byzantine sway and that he lacked the means by which he could compel Rome to answer positively to his proposals. Moreover, Alexius himself was in a weak position within the empire, as he had come to the throne through usurpation and many still resented the way he had treated his brother, the ousted emperor Isaac II (1185-1195, 1203-1204). He needed the pope as a friend not as a foe, so he did not pushed matters any further.

Predictably, Innocent strongly disagreed with the emperor's placement of imperial authority above the priestly order. To emphasize his displeasure, he addressed his new letter to "Alexius, Emperor of Constantinople," without using the usual epithet "illustrious" or any other appellation that might have suggested that the pope paid any special reverence to the Byzantine ruler. The tone was still friendly, but authoritative, as a ruler would write to his subordinate. The emperor was misreading the Scripture: Peter had written in a spirit of humbleness, since Christ had taught His followers to have a servant's mind, to be meek and obedient. It had never been the intention of either Christ or Peter to give secular authority more than was its due. The emperor had power over the laity, but could not "judge the servants of another," that is the clergy who belonged to the Church, the bride of Christ. Only the pope had the right to judge, rebuke and punish the clergy and the laity alike. When Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep, he committed the entire flock to him, not parts of it; those who refused to recognize the authority of Peter and his successors placed themselves outside the flock. God instituted both the spiritual

[140] The text of Alexius' letter is lost, but it can be reconstructed from the detailed reply given by Innocent to it. See Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist," 156-158.

office of the bishop and the temporal office of the emperor, but spiritual power was higher, as it dealt with the eternal soul. The Vicar of Christ was like the sun, the emperor like the moon, taking his light from the sun. The emperor did not perceive rightly his secondary position within the divinely established chain of command, and because of that he did not show respect even to his own patriarch, whom he allowed to sit on the left of his footstool, instead of rising in his presence and then giving him a place of honor, as other princes and kings did in the presence of Church hierarchs. Alexius thus chastised for his groundless pronouncement of the imperial office as superior to the papal one, Innocent closed by urging the emperor to show the right devotion to the Church of Rome, and by making another, rather imprecise, threat.[141]

By the time the pope sent his letter to Constantinople (1201), he had already moved against Philip of Swabia, so the Byzantine emperor rightly conjectured that there was little to fear from the Hoy Roman Empire. Even if Innocent was to place him and his church under ban, the act would have had little meaning for the Byzantines, where papal supremacy remained an empty concept. The pope could no longer be controlled, but it could be prudently ignored. The letter-exchange indicated that no actual dialogue could take place between Constantinople and Rome: the two had moved too far apart in their understanding of the locus of ultimate authority and the roles attributed to those in charge of the secular and the religious spheres. Neither side was willing to compromise on its views in order to reach an agreement, so further discussion on the topic was futile, at least as long as no Western army threatened Byzantium. But the historical context of the early 1200s did not favor Alexius's rather relaxed take on the widening gulf separating Byzantium from Rome. The emperor soon found himself caught in a series of

[141] The letter is published in J. P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina*, v. 216, col. 1182-1185, and quoted in full in *Gesta Innocentii III;* English trans. in *Deeds of Innocent III* c.LXIII, p. 89-94. Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist," 159-164.

difficulties which were graver than anything he had anticipated, and for the prevention of which he came to depend upon the pope.

Alexius' nephew, the son of the ex-emperor Isaac II, had succeeded to escape imprisonment and find shelter with his brother-in-law, Philip of Swabia. This nephew, also called Alexius, persuaded the pretender to the German imperial title that the current Byzantine *basileus* had usurped the throne from Isaac through deceit and violence, and thus rightly deserved to be removed from power. Philip of Swabia seemed quite interested in the prospect of waging war against Byzantium under the pretext of restoring the rightful emperor. The young Alexius also presented his case in Rome, before the pope, providing the latter with a most welcome means for pressuring the current *basileus* into obedience. It was unlikely that Innocent would have sided with the brother-in-law of his rival Philip of Swabia, or that he would have agreed to promote to the throne of Byzantium an emperor related by marriage, and on very good terms, with the foremost papal enemy. But the new development did bring Innocent certain leverage over Alexius III, who was now in the danger of being besieged by troops brought to the gates of Constantinople by his nephew. The pope wrote again to the emperor, making it clear that he had the authority to halt or to permit an attack on Constantinople. He was inclined to give Alexius one more chance to prove his goodwill by sending envoys to the Church council and troops to participate in the upcoming crusade. Innocent's letter was sent out on November 16, 1202.[142] Alexius did not have time to act upon it, since the crusaders moved against Constantinople faster than he expected, and without paying heed to the papal ban on attacking the Christian nations in the East.

The fourth crusade was the unintended outcome of the negotiation deadlock reached by Rome and Constantinople at the turn of the thirteenth century. Both pope and emperor realized

[142]*Acta Inn. III*, no. 231; Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist,"175-188.

that serious issues alienated East from West, but they identified the reasons for the breakup and located the solutions in different areas. Moreover, each part adopted an intransigent attitude toward the other, making it impossible to settle differences. Alexius III remained true to the Byzantine worldview which affirmed the emperor as God's vicegerent on earth, and thus as the highest authority entrusted with ruling, judging, directing and protecting the Christian world. The long and overall successful history of Byzantium validated this theoretical construct, making it clear that the pope had separated himself from the rest of Christendom by promoting an ideal of authority which was both foreign and pernicious to the divinely-established order, as it blended temporal and spiritual powers in ways that made the Vicar of Christ resemble an ambitious, self-seeking worldly ruler. To reintegrate the papacy into the true Church founded by Christ, guided by the bishops, and overseen by the emperor, an ecumenical council was necessary, since only through such a general gathering God's will could be discovered, and theological, liturgical and canonical errors eliminated. But even if the Byzantines considered the papal model of leadership flawed and imprudent, this did not stop them from recognizing the scope of papal power in the West, and to address him as the chief, influential factor in diplomatic consultations and exchanges, especially when Byzantium found itself threatened with invasions.

Innocent's understanding of divine order and earthly authority was located at the opposite pole, and owed its development to the reformist bishops of the eleventh century and the canonists of the twelfth. It rested on an ecclesiology which stressed the supreme power of the pope within the universal Church, power received from Christ through Peter and exercised over clergy and laity alike. The pope was the ultimate leader, law-maker, judge and pastor of the faithful. No council could make decisions without him, nor could it pass resolutions against him. He could be the judge of all, but was to be judged by no one, since he was "lesser than God but more than

men."[143] The Church of Rome, founded by Peter and led by the pope, was the universal Church, the fountainhead of all power, knowledge, and wisdom, outside which there was no salvation. By refusing to acknowledge the pope's authority, the Byzantines found themselves beyond the boundaries of the true Church. Despite his negative view on the Greek-speaking East, Innocent did not hesitate to engage the emperor and the patriarch in dialogue, since he desired their conversion to the papal version of the truth. The reunion with Byzantium did not need the summoning of a general council, theological debates or extended negotiations. The pope had the authority to receive them back in communion if they recognized the Church of Rome as the universal Church and the pope as its uncontested, unique leader. Innocent did not outright accuse the Byzantines of heresy, but their rejection of papal primacy, and of the theology, ritual and discipline practiced by Rome did not allow any other conclusion. However, the pope acknowledged that the *basileus* was, to a certain extent, a legitimate authority, but not as "emperor of the Romans," as Alexius called himself, but simply as the ruler of the "Greeks." The Roman Empire had been transferred from the Byzantines to Charlemagne in 800, and then from Charlemagne's successors to the German house of Hohenstaufen. Innocent was responsible for deciding the suitability of any candidate to the imperial throne, and he most likely wished to extend this prerogative to cover the "ruler of the Greeks" as well. As for the patriarch, according to Innocent he did enjoy the validity of his order (i.e. as bishop), but had only limited sacramental power, since he was in schism with the one, true Church, which was the sole repository of divine grace.[144]

No common ground seemed likely to be found between the two traditions of leadership, power and privilege. Centuries of political theory and practice, legal developments and religious

[143] Sermon "On the Consecration of the Supreme Pontiff," in *Pope Innocent III: Between God and Man. Six Sermons on the Priestly Office*, trans. by Corinne J. Vause and Frank C. Gardiner (Washington DC, 2004) 18-27.
[144] Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader and Canonist," 212-243.

accomplishments had reinforced each of them, giving each an aura of absolute truth beyond which negotiation and compromise was not possible. The fourth crusade that followed forced the Byzantine and papal political worldviews to meet and collide in the East, with the immediate result that the former collapsed while the latter failed to become a convincing replacement. The following chapters analyze the long-term implications of this encounter, and the competing paradigms of leadership that emerged after the dissolution of the Byzantine Empire.

CHAPTER 3. POLITICAL UPHEAVAL AND PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE NORTHEASTERN MEDITERRANEAN, 1204-1261

3.1. Introduction

The early thirteenth-century Eastern Mediterranean witnessed an unexpected realignment of powers when the Byzantine Empire was brought to its knees by Western armies, apparently with no hope of recovery. On 12 April 1204, Constantinople fell to the joint forces of Venetians and Latin crusaders. The center of Byzantine political, ecclesiastical and cultural life vanished in one ruthless stroke. In the months that followed, the rest of the empire collapsed as well. Crusaders overran and occupied Thrace, Macedonia, Greece, and most of the Ionian and Aegean islands, then organized their new territories in accordance with the feudal structures and mentalities of their homelands. They replaced central authority with a network of vassals and fief-holders, and strengthened local power by creating a system of privileges and mutual obligations reinforced by ceremonial, lifestyle and a rigidly stratified society. In this new system, the locals found themselves at the very bottom, often with the legal status of dependent (unfree) persons.[1] For these former subjects of the Byzantine Empire, survival meant coming to terms with unfavorable Western political, social and economic arrangements. For the elite of Constantinople, survival required much more than adjusting to life under new masters. It demanded as well a swift reassessment of their place in a world no longer willing to recognize the divine nature and purpose of their city, emperor, and Church.

In Byzantine thought and practice, Constantinople was not only the political and administrative capital of the *basileia*, but also the spiritual center of the Christian *oikoumene.* Although the political boundaries of the empire and those of the universal community of the

[1] David Jacoby, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece," *The New Cambridge Medieval History: v.5 c.1198-c.1300* (Cambridge, 1999) 523-542, here at 534-539; Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204-1500* (London, 1995) 266-302; Anastasia Papadia-Lala, "Society, Administration and Identities in Latin Greece," in Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock eds., *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden, 2014) 114-144.

faithful were not coterminous, since through the vagaries of history the former had shrunk while the latter had expanded, from a Byzantine standpoint the indisputable ruler of both entities was the *basileus*, seconded by the patriarch of Constantinople. As God's vicegerent, the *basileus* was entrusted with the double mission of creating an empire reflective of the beauty and harmony of heaven, and that of protecting the universal Church and promoting it to the furthest stretches of the earth. He accomplished this through close collaboration with the patriarch, and with aid provided by the neighboring kings and princes, who ruled their realms with power received from the Byzantine emperor, the source of all earthly authority.[2]

This lofty understanding of the place of Constantinople and its emperor in the order of creation, however compellingly stressed by imperial rhetoric, ceremonial and art, was not shared by all of Byzantium's neighbors, and for sure not by the Latins who took over the city and disposed of its emperor with all his aura of otherworldly majesty rather ungraciously. The crusaders knew a very different version of the grand narrative on the *locus* of all earthly authority, one that espoused in the West by the papacy, and according to which the fullness of power had been vested by Christ into the hands of Peter and of his successors, the bishops of Rome. By virtue of his office as Vicar of Christ, the incumbent of the Apostolic See had jurisdiction over the entire Christendom, and only he could delegate power to lesser authorities, be they religious or secular.[3] A chief promoter of this paradigm of papal supremacy was Pope

[2] Ernest Barker, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium* (Oxford, 1957) 26-53 and Francis Dvornik, *Social and Political Thought in Byzantium*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1966) 2.611-850, who both see Hellenism as having the major influence on Byzantine political theory and practice. At the opposite end is Anthony Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), esp. 53-61, 165-198, who argues that the Byzantine emperor was a magistrate in the Roman senate (a custodian and public servant of the empire, not its master), using religion as a means to achieve harmony and stability. More nuanced views are in Louis Bréhier, *Le monde byzantin. II. Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1969) 11-75; Cyril Mango, *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome* (London, 2005) 218-221; Steven Runciman, *The Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge, 1977).

[3] A good introduction to the development of the concept and practice of papal authority remains Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (London, 1955); on the changing role of the popes who moved from local power holders to rulers with claims to universal leadership in the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

Innocent III (1198-1216), who also called for the crusade which would end up in Constantinople and dealt with its immediate consequences. The interpretation of spiritual and temporal power championed by the Apostolic See was foreign to the Byzantines, and their steady refusal to accept the claims to jurisdiction of any kind over their city, emperor, and patriarch, made them liable to charges of 'schism' and 'heresy' by the papacy, and ultimately the justifiable target of crusades.

The West, with the pope proclaiming complete dominion over the universal Church, and the hastily-established Latin emperor of Constantinople alleging to have won the city with divine approval, for the chastisement of the schismatic Greeks and their return to full submission to Rome, posed the most significant threat to the Byzantine definition and expression of authority. It was not, however, the only one. In the decades preceding the fourth crusade, attempts had been made within the *basileia* itself to break the Constantinopolitan hold on imperial power. In 1184, Isaac Comnenus, a grandnephew of Emperor Manuel I (1143-1180), seized control of Cyprus, forced the bishops of the island to appoint a patriarch, and had himself crowned as emperor. After ascending the throne in Constantinople, Isaac II Angelus (1185-1195, 1203-1204) tried but failed to take back the island. The Cypriote *basileus* did not savor his victory for long, as in 1191 he fell into the hands of Richard the Lion-Hearted, who was leading a contingent of crusaders to the Holy Land, and on the way attacked and subdued Cyprus. The island never returned under Byzantine dominion.[4] In 1188, the city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor became the headquarters of another self-proclaimed emperor, the local magnate Theodore Mangaphas, who even issued

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see Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996); I. S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1990).

[4] Jan Louis van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historiae* (Berlin, 1975), English trans. by Harry J. Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984) c. 369-371, p. 204-205 [hereafter Choniates, *Annals*]. Charles Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West* (Cambridge, MA, 1968) 55, with reference to primary sources and scholarship in n. 63 on p. 330; Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (New York, 2003) 128, 141-142; Wipertus H. Rüdt de Collenberg, "L'empereur Isaac de Chypre et sa fille (1155–1207)," *Byzantion* 38 (1968) 123–177.

coinage bearing his name, title (*basileus*) and image. In the summer of 1189, the Byzantine emperor Isaac II Angelus besieged Philadelphia, but the approaching crusading armies forced him to reach a compromise with Mangaphas and return in haste to Constantinople. The latter was to remain ruler of Philadelphia, but had to renounce the imperial title. In 1193, Mangaphas was finally expelled from the city, but came back to it and resumed his title during the mayhem created by the first attack on Constantinople and the deposition of Alexius III Angelus (1195-1203) by the crusaders.[5] He then lost the power, the title and all the territories accumulated to Theodore Lascaris in late 1205 or 1206.[6]

What set apart these two acts of rebellion at a time when numerous others took place in Byzantium was that the two self-styled emperors were not trying to capture Constantinople and usurp power from the legitimate *basileus*, but rather hoped to establish alternative centers of imperial power in places which for centuries had been part of the empire. Both experiments in emperorship outside Constantinople were short-lived and doomed to failure, since there was little general support for such bold enterprises other than that offered locally. As information about Isaac Comnenus and Theodore Mangaphas comes only from hostile sources, we do not know how the two rationalized their acts and where they located themselves within the Byzantine worldview, which had room only for one 'Roman' emperor, ruling from the 'New Rome' (Constantinople). But their actions point to a growing trend toward de-centralization away from Constantinople in the last decades of the twelfth century, a direct result of the weakening of imperial authority during Manuel Comennus' successors.[7]

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[5] Choniates, *Annals* c. 399- 401, p. 219-221. See Jean-Claude Cheynet, "Philadelphie, un quart de siècle de dissidence 1182-1206," in Hélène Glykatzi-Ahrweiler ed., *Philadelphie et autres études* (Paris 1984) 39-54.
[6] George Acropolites, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg with corrections by P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978); English trans. by Ruth Macrides, *The History* (Oxford, 2007) c.7, p.119-120 [hereafter Acropolites, *History*].
[7] For the general history of the period, see Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire 1025-1204: A Political History*, 2nd ed. (London, 1997) and Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*.

In the acephalous Byzantine society produced by the fourth crusade, this trend was amplified by the local magnates in Anatolia, Thrace and Greece who struggled for recognition as independent rulers of their territories. The situation was further complicated by the three Byzantine aristocrats related by blood or marriage to the Comneni, the imperial family who had ruled Byzantium for more than a hundred years before it lost the throne to Angeli in 1185. These aristocrats assumed the title of emperor and fought with one another and with the rest of the contenders for the recovery of the *basileia* and its capital. In order to validate their claims to emperorship, all three were crowned by the highest-ranking clergyman in their realms; one patriarch, in Nicaea, and two archbishops, one in Ohrid and the other in Trebizond, disputed then the right to hold the ultimate ecclesiastical authority able to sanction the divine choice for the legitimate successor of the previous *basileis.* Prompted by the customary expectation of providing support to the imperial power, each of these hierarchs argued the case of the *basileus* he had made, pushing the Church on the brink of schism.

Challenges to the Byzantine sense of valid leadership over the empire and the community of the faithful came from the larger *oikoumene* as well. In 1185, the brothers Theodore and Asen centered in Trnovo area (Bulgaria) started a full-scale rebellion against Isaac II Angelus, which ended up with the creation of an independent political entity, the Second Bulgarian Empire, and with Theodore crowned as Tsar Peter IV. The title 'tsar' was interpreted as the Slavic equivalent of *basileus* by the Bulgarians, but it only meant 'caesar' in Byzantine understanding. And as a king, Peter IV was viewed and treated as a subordinate by the emperor in Constantinople. Kaloyan, the youngest brother and successor, was resolved to gain recognition as an independent ruler. For this, he broke away from the Byzantine *oikoumene* and submitted himself, his kingdom and his church to the papacy, from which he had hoped to obtain the title of *imperator*

Bulgarorum et Vlachorum, emperor of the Bulgarians and the Vlachs. Similar to the Byzantines, the pope was not prepared to acknowledge him as anything higher than a local king, but the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders provided Kaloyan with the necessary pretext to take up arms and fight for emperorship. His target was quite high: he intended to replace the deposed Byzantine *basileus* and assume the title for himself, with all the political and religious implications attached it. The tsar waged war against the Latin emperor of Constantinople, whom he considered a usurper, and although unable to appropriate the much-desired title, he did succeed in adding former Byzantine territory to his realm.[8] In his turn, the Serbian ruler Stephen II Nemanjič also disrupted in 1217 the ecclesiastical unity of the Byzantine *oikoumene* (albeit on a smaller scale, as he made no attempts to secure the emperorship as well) when he accepted the papal primacy in exchange for the royal crown.[9]

The fourth crusade shattered even more the cultural and religious unity of the Balkans and the Aegean, introducing new political formulas, shifts in ecclesiastical allegiances, and Western-style economic, commercial and legal activities. The next two chapters investigate the modes of governance attempted in the northeastern Mediterranean after the crusaders' capture of Constantinople, with a focus on those paradigms of leadership that sought to unify the area under one banner, whether papal, Latin or Byzantine. Unlike many of the smaller crusaders' states, which made better use of the local resources and context, and were able to endure past the recovery of Constantinople by the Greeks of Nicaea in 1261, most imperial projects of the time lacked a realistic assessment of the diverse regional situation and either failed to create the

[8] John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1994) 29-33, 54-56, 83-87; Matthew Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans* (Hamden, CT, 1968) 102-108.
[9] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 106-109; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 83-87.

structures necessary to survive in the post-1204 environment, or made poor military and political choices which undermined their quest for hegemony.

3.2. Crusaders as Emperors: Failed Attempts to Redesign the Imperial Tradition in the Greek East

Even prior to its coming into existence, the Latin Empire of Constantinople was envisioned by its founders as a hybrid political entity, preserving main Byzantine institutions, offices and ceremonial, yet organized and ruled according to Western customs. The crusaders detailed the administration of their future imperial possessions a month in advance of the conquest of Constantinople. In the written agreement known to historians as 'the March Pact,' they laid down the procedures for the election of an emperor and a patriarch, the division of war spoils, and the organization of the new state along feudal lines.[10] The agreement assumed not only a God-supported victory against the Byzantines, but also the divine right of replacing the two main leading figures in the Byzantine Empire with two of Latin extraction. There was no intention of destroying Byzantium, but of taking over it and ruling it "for the honor of God, the Holy Roman Church and the empire."[11]

According to the agreement, the Latin emperor was to be chosen by an electoral college made of six crusaders and six Venetians. The clergy from the party which did not get one of its numbers elected as emperor were to appoint a Latin patriarch of Constantinople, and hold onto the Church of Saint Sophia. The emperor received one fourth of the conquered territory and the palaces of Blachernai and Bucoleon; three fourths of the territory was to be divided in half

[10] Latin text in Othmar Hageneder et al eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III* 13 vols. (Graz/Köln/ Rome/Vienna, 1964-) 7: 205, English trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden 2008) 140-144. See also Anonymous, *Deeds of Innocent the Great* xcii, English trans. by James M. Powell (Washington, DC 2004) 163-166, Latin text in David Gress-Wright, "The *Gesta Innocentii III*. Text, Introduction and Commentary," PhD Diss., Bryn Mawr College (1981), and "Gesta Innocentii papae III," J-P Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris 1890) v. 214, cols.17-228.

[11] *Deeds of Innocent* xcii, 165.

between Venetians and the "Franks" (everyone else in the crusading army save for the Venetians). The treasures found within the city were to be brought together in one place, and then divided according to the needs and obligations of each party: the Venetians, to whom the crusaders owed the funding of their military venture, were to receive three parts of the loot, and the Franks were to receive the remaining one part. Another committee of twelve Venetians and twelve Franks was to distribute fiefs and honors to the crusaders, who were to keep the lands they were granted freely and absolutely, "from heir to heir, male and female." Apart from the oath of loyalty and the vassal duties they owed to the Latin emperor, the crusaders could act however they wished in their new realms. The guarantor of the agreement was to be the pope, the highest religious and temporal authority in Western Christendom, who would punish with excommunication anyone who transgressed its provisions.

The election as well as the distribution of spoils and fiefs did not go as smoothly as expected, given the wide variety of interests, expectations and ambitions among the crusaders. Boniface, the marquis of Montferrat, who had led the crusade until the conquest of Constantinople, hoped that he would keep the position by being elected emperor. He tried to influence the choice of electors to ensure his success, but things did not go as planned, since the Venetians disliked his friendly connections with the Genoese, and many among the crusaders feared his growing power. The barons disagreed as to what men should be their representatives in the electoral college, and according to Robert de Clari, they argued with one another over the issue for fifteen days in a row. In the end, they decided to appoint as electors some of the bishops and abbots who had accompanied them in the crusade, considering the clergy less susceptible to being swayed by one faction or another.[12] Apart from the marquis of Montferrat, one other

[12] Robert de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 93-94, English trans. by Edgar Holmes McNeal (New York, 1936) 113-117; Old French edition with modern French trans. in Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and

candidate had emerged who seemed to have greatest chances of being elected: Baldwin, count of Flanders and Hainault. To avoid conflict between the partisans of the two, it was decided that if one of them got the emperorship, the other would receive in compensation the prosperous Byzantine provinces in Asia Minor and the Morea, yet to be conquered.[13] Finally, after almost a month from the conquest, the electors chose Count Baldwin of Flanders as emperor, and then Thomas Morosini, a Venetian subdeacon, was placed by his fellow countrymen on the patriarchal throne.[14]

The marquis of Montferrat was not happy with his lot. He saw his imperial dream crushed by the electors, and the lands promised to the defeated candidate did not satisfy him. He accepted Baldwin, the new emperor, as his suzerain and performed the mandatory oath of fealty, but asked that Thessalonica and the surrounding area be granted to him instead of Asia Minor and Greece.[15] Thessalonica was the largest Byzantine city after Constantinople, not as majestic as the capital, but affluent and famous enough to satisfy the marquis' royal pretentions. However, like other territories which the crusaders treated as part of the Latin Empire, Thessalonica was still in Byzantine hands. Moreover, it was not for Baldwin to decide upon its

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trans. by Jean Dufournet (Paris, 2004). For a discussion of the context, see Michael J. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (London, 2003) 129-131; Donald E. Queller and Thomas F. Madden, *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (Philadelphia, 1997) 200-201.

[13] Geoffrey of Villehardouin, "Conquest of Constantinople," in Margaret R. B. Shaw trans., *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 2009) 95; Old French text in E. Faral ed., *La Conquête de Constantinople*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1961). See Jean Longnon, *L'empire Latin de Constantinople et la Principauté de Morée* (Paris, 1949) 49-51; Queller and Madden, *Fourth Crusade*, 201; Filip van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)* (Leiden, 2011) n. 24 on p. 48.

[14] According to the Greek historian Nicetas Choniates, who was present in Constantinople at the time of imperial elections, the entire process was manipulated by Enrico Dandolo, the Venetian doge, who wanted on the throne a less experienced man, whom he could control and influence - see *Annals* c. 596-597, p. 327-328. The French crusaders who reported the events had a more positive take on Dandolo's interventions, as meant to avoid the escalation of the quarrel among the Frankish factions into a fight - see Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 96-97; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c.95, p.113-118.

[15] Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 99-107; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 99-100, p. 118-121, 124. This incident and its consequences for the Latin Empire of Constantinople are discussed in Longnon, *L'empire Latin de Constantinople*, 58-61; Thomas F. Madden, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople's Fractured Foundation: The Rift between Boniface of Montferrat and Baldwin of Flanders," in Madden ed., *The Fourth Crusade: Event, Aftermath and Perceptions* (Aldershot, 2008) 45-52.

fate, but for the commission in charge of the division of lands to the emperor, the crusaders and the Venetians. The commission had not as yet been appointed, so Thessalonica had not been granted even theoretically to anyone. The existing accounts of the quarrel that followed between Baldwin and Boniface do not entirely overlap, but they agree that the emperor made some kind of promise to the marquis regarding Thessalonica, only to have his forces take the city in the summer of 1204, before the marquis could arrive to claim it. This action heightened resentments between the two, as Boniface decided to make the emperor pay for the breach of trust, and his rebellion against Baldwin placed the fragile unity of the Latin Empire at great risk.

One of the first steps Baldwin had undertaken as emperor had been to pursue his rivals, the ex-*basileis* Alexius III Angelus and Alexius V Murtzuphlus, who had withdrawn with their forces to Thrace, specifically to Mosynopolis. Baldwin first took over Adrianople, whose Greek dwellers decided to surrender the city without a fight. Then he moved against Mosynopolis, only to find out that both Alexii had fled the city. From there Baldwin marched against Thessalonica, despite the pleas of Boniface that he would be allowed to be the first to enter the city. The marquis insisted that he was expected there as the new ruler on account of his wife, the previous Byzantine empress Maria (Margaret) of Hungary, widow of Isaac II Angelus.[16] But Baldwin paid no attention to Boniface's appeal, and the latter decided to attack in return Adrianople, which now belonged to the Latin emperor. On the way he subdued Didymoteichon (Demotica), and many other Greek towns accepted the marquis as their ruler, since they approved of the connection he had to the Comneni house through his wife Maria and her son from Isaac, Manuel. Boniface tried to persuade the citizens of Adrianople to change their allegiance to him, as potential restorer of the Comneni dynasty, but they required that he install first young Manuel on

[16] de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c.101-103, p. 119-120; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 100-101.

the throne of Constantinople, as proof of his genuine intentions.[17] He laid siege to the city subsequently, and what could have turned into a full-scale war between the marquis and the Latin emperor was averted at the last moment by the intervention of the Venetian doge and the barons who had stayed behind in Constantinople. Both Boniface and Baldwin agreed to submit to their arbitration, and in the end the marquis received Thessalonica and Baldwin recovered Adrianople and the other Thracian towns that had been seized from him.[18]

The division of spoils was also marked by troubles, and created tensions among the crusaders that threatened to deteriorate into direct armed confrontation. The eye-witnesses who left written accounts of the conquest of Constantinople confessed their astonishment at the great amount of treasures found in the city, and at their unsurpassed beauty and quality.[19] The barons' efforts to keep all the loot in one place under vigilant guard until it was justly apportioned to everyone in the army did not work, since whoever had access to the booty stole as much as he could from it. When the spoils were finally handed out, the barons took the lion's share while the knights and the regular soldiers received the least valuable items.[20] Moreover, when the rank and file returned from Baldwin's first expedition in Thrace, they found out that even the little that they had received had been redistributed among the crusaders who had remained in

[17] Choniates, *Annals* c. 598-599, p.328-329; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 100.
[18] Choniates, *Annals* c. 600, p.329-330; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 104 and 110, p. 120-121, 124; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 104-107.
[19] According to Robert de Clari, "two thirds of all the wealth of the world was in Constantinople, and the other third was scattered throughout the world" – c. 81, p. 101; chapters 82-92 describe some of the "marvels" (palaces, aristocratic residences, churches, monuments etc.) the crusaders discovered in the city they had just taken. Geoffrey of Villehardouin also stood in awe before the amount of spoils gathered by the crusaders ("never, since the world was created, had been so much booty won in a city"), and at the fact that it contained "every choicest thing found upon the earth," p.102-114. Gunther of Pairis, a Cistercian monk who took part in the crusade, described in detail the loot (icons and other ritual or devotional items) taken from Byzantine churches for his monastery back in Alsace – see Paul Riant ed., *Guntheri Alemanni, scholastici, monachi et prioris Parisiensis, De expugnatione urbis Constantinopolitanae* (Geneva, 1875) c. 24; English trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, *The Capture of Constantinople: The 'Historia Constantinopolitana' of Gunther of Paris* (Philadelphia 1997) c. 24, p. 125-128. Nicetas Choniates, on the other hand, lamented the extent of depredation and devastation brought upon the city by the crusaders, in *Annals* c. 573-582, p. 314-320.
[20] de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 80-81, 98, 105, p. 100-102, 117-118, 121; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 94-95.

Constantinople. It was with great difficulty that Baldwin persuaded them to desist from getting back by force what they considered their rightful possessions.[21] Robert de Clari, who was among the commoners who had derived little benefit from having participated in sack of Constantinople, would explain the capture of Baldwin and the death of many barons and knights at the hands of Tsar Kaloyan's forces at the battle of Adrianople in April 1205 as God's punishment for the bad faith they had shown to the poorer members of the crusading army.[22]

The distribution of fiefs was done with more care and precision than that of spoils, based on the tripartite formula of imperial, Venetian and "Frankish" (non-Venetian) territory. The *Partitio terrarium imperii Romaniae*, drafted in Constantinople sometime between May and September 1204, listed some – but not all – of the Byzantine lands which the commission was going to assign as fiefs. The agreement relied on Byzantine fiscal documents which recorded the taxes paid to the imperial government by various regions in 1203. The list was not exhaustive (such an important city as Thessalonica was absent, for instance), but it gave the crusaders enough information to draw on when deciding how to divide the Byzantine Empire among themselves.[23] Although we have little information about the way in which Constantinople was divided, the accounts of Nicetas Choniates, Villehardouin and de Clari give details on the

[21] de Clari, Conquest of Constantinople c. 105, 121-122.
[22] de Clari, Conquest of Constantinople c. 112, 126.
[23] The Latin text of the agreement reached by the crusaders and the Venetians on the territorial division of Byzantium is in A. Carile, "Partitio terrarum imperii Romaniae," *Studi veneziani* 7 (1965) 125-305, at 217-222. For various problems posed by the document, including its dating, see Carile, "Partitio," 155-169; Benjamin Hendrickx, "The Main Problems of the History of the Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1261)," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 52. 4 (1974) 787-799, at 794-797; Nikolaos Oikonomides, "*La Decomposition de l'empire* byzantin a *la* veille *de* 1204 et les origines *de l'empire de* Nicée: a propos *de la* Partitio Romaniae," in *Actes du XVe Congrès international d'études byzantines* v. 1 (Athens, 1976) 3-22. Van Tricht considers the Partitio a working document, not the definitive version of the territorial distribution, and places its redaction after the election of Baldwin in early May and right after the end of his argument with Boniface in September 1204 – see *Latin Renovatio*, 47-53. See also Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204-1500* (New York, 1995) 49-51.

fiefdoms awarded to or claimed by Venetians and leading crusaders in Asia Minor, the Balkans and the Aegean.[24]

Some of the barons felt entitled to more than what they had been initially allotted, and had no qualms about going to war in order to adjust the extent of their territory to their expectations. Boniface of Montferrat was one of them, seeking to increase his lands in Greece and making allies of both fellow-crusaders and local magnates to achieve this. His state centered on Thessalonica soon covered most of Thessaly, Boetia, Euboea and Attica. Like the Latin emperor, he then handed out fiefs in this new territory to his companions, creating a solid network of vassals in the area.[25] The Peloponnese was Venice's share through the partition treaty of 1204, but two knights, Geoffrey I of Villehardouin and William of Champlitte, carried out in 1205 a campaign for conquering it on behalf of Boniface. They established their own rule in the peninsula, William becoming the first prince of Achaia, nominally vassal to Boniface. He maintained this position until 1208, when he departed for France and Geoffrey of Villehardouin replaced him. In 1209, when the Latin emperor put down a rebellion of the Lombard barons who were seeking to take over the Kingdom of Thessalonica, Geoffrey became direct vassal to the Latin emperor. Venice had to fight to get back some of its territory in the Peloponnese, and in 1206 its fleet attacked and occupied two key ports, Modon (Methoni) and Coron (Koroni).[26]

These initial crises were a sign of the inherent weakness of the Latin Empire, established in haste on political ideals which did not favor the creation of an integrated political entity: decentralization of authority, administration of justice according to local customs and practices,

[24] Choniates, *Annals* c. 601-606, p. 330-332; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 107 and 111, p. 123 and 125; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 108-110.
[25] Choniates, *Annals* c. 610-615, p. 334-335; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 113-114. See discussion in van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 161-162.
[26] The post-1204 developments in mainland Greece are discussed by Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 62-111; David Jacoby, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Frankish States in Greece," *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, v. 5 (Cambridge 1999) 523-542; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571*. I: *The Thirteenth and the Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia 1976) 16-26.

conflict resolution through mediation by a mixed council of Venetians and Franks.[27] What kept the emperor, the barons, and the knights together were the oath of loyalty sworn by vassals to their suzerain, the mutual military obligations, and perhaps more than anything else, the awareness of their condition as outsiders in an area inhabited by peoples with different political and religious norms, who were as a rule hostile to the crusaders' exploits. But these bonds often proved not adequate enough to prevent clashes within the crusading army. In order to defend and expand their fiefdoms, the barons made and broke alliances among themselves, fought one another, and even allied with the local Greek or Slavic population against one of their own. The fact that the crusaders themselves came from various areas in Western Europe, and that their Venetian partners prioritized their commercial interests over the crusading ideal, staying loyal as long as their trade was protected and advanced by the emperor and his vassals, did not help in consolidating the unity and stability of the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

But while the internal conflicts were localized and small-scale, much more threatening to the empire's prospects of survival were the external enemies, especially those who aimed at seizing Constantinople. The two Alexii who had lost the throne to the crusaders and were entertaining such thoughts did not have the manpower to attack the city and recapture it. Tsar Kaloyan was the first significant rival of the Latins, as he had a stable army plus a sizeable contingent of Cuman and Wallachian mercenaries at his disposal, and in the beginning many of the Thracian Greeks backed him up as well. The tsar's relentless attacks on the empire did not allow it to establish a firm base in Thrace, which meant that Constantinople remained vulnerable to attacks by land. Kaloyan, however, even if he sowed terror in the hearts of the crusaders with his swift and brutal victories, could not capitalize on his gains, and was not able to hold onto the many Thracian fortresses and towns that he had taken from the Latins. Even his utter defeat of

[27] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 54-59.

the crusaders at Adrianople in the spring of 1205, when he took Baldwin captive, did not turn into a long-term political success. His cruel treatment of the conquered population, including massacres and forced relocations to remote parts of Bulgaria, prompted the Greeks to seek the Latins' friendship and assistance, which deprived the tsar of an important base of support.[28] Kaloyan died in 1207, giving the Latin Empire a brief respite.

Henry of Flanders, Baldwin's brother and successor, adopted a different tactic than that of the first Latin emperor of Constantinople. He preferred negotiation to fighting, and whenever possible, he built political and matrimonial alliances with his most powerful rivals in the region rather than engage them in war. He married the daughter of Boniface, and after her death, the daughter of Tsar Kaloyan. Henry's brother took as wife the daughter of Michael Ducas of Epirus, and Henry's niece, the daughter of his sister Yolanda, wedded Theodore Lascaris of Nicaea.[29] But these tactics did not bore fruit in the long run, since the prize that the Bulgarians and Byzantines were after was Constantinople itself, not good relations with their Latin neighbor. The fact that the tsar and the two Byzantine aspirants to the imperial office made war on one another, not only on the crusaders, allowed the Latin Empire survive for several decades, even though after the death of Henry I in 1216 it did not benefit from any remarkable leadership. Constant warfare in the Balkans and Asia Minor down to 1212 sapped its energy and resources, while Western help decreased considerably. Despite desperate papal efforts to keep it alive via further crusades against the "schismatic" Greeks, the Latin Empire was never a viable alternative to Byzantium, which it had purportedly replaced.

[28] Choniates, *Annals* c. 612-624, p. 335-342 and c. 627-637, p. 343-350; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 119-154, 157-159. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 80-87; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 106-108.
[29] de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 114-118, p. 126-128. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 91-94; Longnon, *L'empire Latin de Constantinople*, 97-98, 105; Setton, *Papacy and the Levant* I, 27-43.

Even if the crusaders' state centered on Constantinople never reached the political, military, economic and cultural status of the Byzantine Empire, its rulers did style themselves in successors of the *basileis*, appropriating their titles, diplomatic practices, and ways of life. The impression created by Constantinople as an imperial capital was too overwhelming to leave even the most experienced among the crusaders' leaders indifferent. Baldwin of Flanders himself, upon election as emperor, participated in a quasi-Byzantine coronation ceremony in the Church of St. Sophia, dressed in the imperial robes and placing on his head the imperial crown found in the Blachernae palace during the early days of looting. He then led the ceremonial procession to the Bucoleon palace riding a white horse, clad in full regalia, and once arrived he sat on the imperial throne, underlining his position as continuator of the long line of Byzantine *basileis.*[30]

When he wrote to Pope Innocent III to justify the diversion of the crusade from its original target (seizing Jerusalem from Muslim hands) to attacking a Christian city, Baldwin also invited him to hold his planned ecumenical council in the capital of Byzantium, in accordance to ancient conciliar traditions. If other popes had visited the great city for lesser reasons, the Latin emperor insisted, how much more Innocent ought to be eager to come to celebrate the reunion of all Christians, now accomplished as a result of the crusaders' victory over the Byzantines.[31] The affluence and majestic beauty of Constantinople, as well as its prestige in matters of debating and deciding upon orthodoxy, compelled Baldwin to act in the manner of the *basileis*, insisting that the pope follow the old practice of holding synods in the New Rome, at the bidding of the emperor, rather than the other way around. Innocent had rejected a similar proposal of the Byzantine emperor Alexius III, arguing that Rome was the center of Christianity and thus the

[30] de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 96-97, p. 115-117.
[31] Latin text in *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.152, with English trans. by Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 98-112, here at 109-112; also in *Deeds of Innocent the Great*, 156-163, at 161-163.

appropriate place to hold such gatherings. He had no intention to yield to Baldwin's imperial pretentions, and in fact did not even acknowledge his request.

To the Byzantines who had remained in Constantinople after the city passed into Latin hands, the idea of being ruled by a Latin emperor rather than by a *basileus* of local extraction did not seem entirely outlandish. Violent usurpation happened often enough in Byzantium, and if successful, it was understood as God's will rather than the betrayal of the legitimate ruler.[32] It was a valid path to the throne, so Baldwin was most likely accurate when reporting to the pope that the Greeks in Constantinople welcomed his election as emperor and participated in his coronation ceremony alongside the crusaders and the Venetians. The information is confirmed by Robert de Clari and Nicetas Choniates.[33] Some Byzantines even cooperated with their conquerors. The drafting of the *Partitio terrarium*, which relied on imperial fiscal records, could not have taken place without the assistance of Greek-speaking civil servants, who knew where to locate and how to work their way through such documents.[34] Greeks in the territories conquered by the crusaders in Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, and mainland Greece also frequently worked with, rather than against, their new Latin masters.[35]

Emperor Henry I made the wise move of inviting the Byzantines to participate in the ruling of the new empire after the debacle of Adrianople in 1205, when the joint forces of Bulgarians and Greeks had wiped out the crusaders and captured his brother Baldwin. Some

[32] For the Byzantine understanding of usurpation as a legitimate way of ascending the throne, see Eleni Tounta, "Usurpation, Acceptance and Legitimacy in Medieval Europe," in Margo Kitts et al eds., *State, Power and Violence* (Wiesbaden 2010) 447-473.
[33] Choniates, *Annals* c. 573, p. 314; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 97, p. 117.
[34] David Jacoby, "Multilingualism and Institutional Patterns in Latin Romania (Thirteenth-Fourteenth Centuries)," in Alexander D. Beihammer et al eds., *Diplomatics in the Eastern Mediterranean 1000-1500: Aspects of Cross-cultural Communication* (Leiden 2008) 27-48, here at 29-31.
[35] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 151-154, 239-248, 276-280.

Greek aristocrats as well as former civil functionaries were coopted by the new administration.[36] Theodore Branas, for instance, was awarded the title of *caesar* for the services rendered to the Latin emperor. He governed Adrianople and Demotica (Didymoteichon) in his name, and often acted as mediator between Henry I and the Bulgarians and Greeks of Thrace.[37] Branas' wife was the Latin princess Anna of France, the daughter of King Louis VII, who had been previously married to two Byzantine emperors, Alexius II Comnenus in 1180 and Andronicus I Comnenus in 1183.[38] This connection might have smoothed his way into the crusaders' administration, but there were other Byzantine aristocrats who served the Latins even without being related to Western ruling families. Constantine Tornikes was the *logothetes tou dromou*, both before and after the fall of Constantinople; in contrast, his son Demetrius was loyal to the Greek rulers in Nicaea, for whom he acted as *mesazon* (chief minister).[39] The father of the historian George Acropolites remained in Constantinople and worked in some (civil or fiscal) capacity in the crusaders' government.[40] Others fought alongside the crusaders for the expansion or defense of the Latin Empire. Philokales, father-in-law of ex-emperor Alexius V, received from Emperor Henry I the island of Lemnos as fief in 1206 and the title *megas-doux* (commander of the fleet) in 1210.[41] George Theophilopoulos led the Greeks entrusted with the defense of Latin territories in Asia Minor.[42] Henry wanted to succeed in bringing stability to his faltering empire, and he

[36] The Byzantine historian George Acropolites, *History* c. 15, 16 and 17, p. 148-149, 153, 154-155, mentioned 'many Romans' (i.e. Byzantines) among the magnates who were part of Henry I's entourage, and praised the friendly ways in which the Latin emperor treated his Greek subjects.
[37] His exploits are mentioned by Choniates, *Annals* c. 627, 629, 642, p. 344, 345, 352-353.
[38] According to Robert de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople* c. 53, Branas was already married to Anna in 1203, prior to the fall of the city in the crusaders' hands.
[39] Acropolites, *History* c. 49, p.250.
[40] Acropolites, *History* c. 29, p. 189.
[41] For historical evidence and discussion of his case see van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, n. 32 on p.112.
[42] Acropolites, *History* c.16, p. 153.

knew how to engage the assistance and benevolence of the Greek population.[43]

After the conquest of Constantinople, the peaceful transition from a Greek ruler to a Latin one had been facilitated by the retention of Byzantine imperial ceremonies, titles and regalia, and by the preservation of court hierarchy, which to a great extent concealed the political makeover of Byzantium into a westernized feudal structure. Coronations, military and religious processions, the double-headed imperial eagle, the purple mantle and sandals, the ranks and offices granted to relatives and close associates, the coins minted with Byzantine iconography – all these were adopted and employed in order to persuade the Greek subjects that the Latin emperors carried on the millennium-old Byzantine tradition of assuming and exercising authority.[44] By God's will, the new rulers of Constantinople came from the West; this was the only element of discontinuity in an otherwise unbroken chain of imperial political practices. For the same purpose of preserving local ruling institutions even if they did not function according to local standards, the election of an emperor was soon followed by the designation of a patriarch.

The relationship between the two offices, however, was not modeled on the Byzantine one. In Byzantium, the emperor held wide control over the administration, taxation and doctrinal integrity of the Church; in the West and consequently in the Latin Empire as well, the emperor and the patriarch were to stay and act each within his own sphere of rights and responsibilities. Moreover, unlike traditional Byzantine political thought and practice which awarded the patriarch highest jurisdiction across the empire, in the case of the Latin Empire it was the pope who held ultimate authority, both spiritual and temporal; the patriarch was his ecclesiastical

[43] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio,* 263-264; Teresa Shawcross, "Conquest Legitimized: The Making of a Byzantine Emperor in Crusader Constantinople (1204-1261)," in J. Harris et al eds., *Byzantine, Turks and Latins in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1150* (Oxford 2012) 181-220, at 210-213.
[44] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio,* 61-95; Shawcross, "Conquest Legitimized,"181-204.

subordinate, the emperor his political vassal.[45] The Latin emperor used a Latinized version of the Byzantine imperial title (e.g. *Henricus Dei gratia fidelissimus in Christo imperator a Deo coronatus Romanorum moderator et semper augustus*), sometimes also calling himself *imperator Constantinopolitanus*, to emphasize the fact that he held Constantinople, which validated his claim to be "emperor of the Romans," and set him in opposition to Nicaean or Epirote rivals, who were, at best, "emperors of the Greeks."[46] But neither Baldwin, nor his successor claimed, as the Byzantines *basileis* had done throughout history, that he was the only lawful heir of the Roman Empire. The conquest of Constantinople had been accomplished *ad honorem Dei et sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae et imperii*,[47] that is, in the honor of God, the Roman Church and the Holy Roman Empire, and the newly-formed Latin state on the Bosporus was ready to content itself with a secondary role in the political order of the day. The Holy Roman Empire retained the privilege of standing for the *imperium Romanum*.[48]

The Latin understanding of the role of the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople restricted the worldwide political significance of the state which they led, thus contradicting the Byzantine ideal of universal leadership. To the Greeks who had fled Constantinople in 1204, this downplaying of the regional role played by the empire which sprang up on the ruins of Byzantium proved once more that the Latins were mere punitive instruments in God's hands, and could not provide valid alternatives to the Byzantine emperor and his patriarch. The Latin Empire, indeed, could never rise above its own, somewhat modest, expectations. It remained a conglomerate of larger and smaller fiefdoms, each owing allegiance and support to a lord, who – despite adopting many of the titles, insignia and privileges of the Byzantine *basileus* as the

[45] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 307-312.
[46] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 61-79.
[47] See Baldwin's letter to Pope Innocent (n. 32 above).
[48] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio* 61-62; Shawcross, "Conquest Legitimized," 207ff.

universal monarch – never achieved political, military or economic control over his vassals. The Latin emperor sought to impose his rule following the traditional course of forceful military action, negotiations, and marriage alliances, but could not overcome the fragmentation and localization of power which characterized the political life of his subjects in their native places. As a result, he was unable to put up long-term resistance and hold his empire together before a reinforced Byzantine counterstroke.

3.3. Papal Universalism and its Discontents in the Northeastern Mediterranean

Pope Innocent III welcomed with enthusiasm the (more or less) unexpected turn of events which placed him in charge of the Greek East. His way of rationalizing the attack upon and conquest of a Christian city was consistent with his exalted vision of the papacy at the helm of all Christendom. God delivered the rebellious Byzantine Church into the care of the Roman Church, and his duty as Christ's vicar was to receive the wayward sheep back into communion and lead it gently into the fullness of truth by having her accept the doctrines hitherto hotly contested (such as the Petrine primacy and the *filioque*).[49] At first, Innocent's intention was to replace completely the Greek rite with the Latin one, and to this end he sent his legate Benedict, cardinal priest of Saint Susanna, with full powers to "root out and destroy" the beliefs, customs and usages that differed from those of the Church of Rome. The legate was authorized to discipline as he saw fit the Greek clergy who resisted his Latinization attempts. The pope firmly advised the Byzantine hierarchs, now perforce brought into the Roman fold, to take heed and obey, and swiftly

[49] "Letter to the Latin clergy in Constantinople," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.154, and "Letter to Baldwin," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 8:56, both translated and discussed in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 115-126 and 154-157.

implement Cardinal Benedict's decisions aimed at bringing their dogma and rituals up to the Roman standards.[50]

The three meetings held in 1206 between the papal legate and the representatives of the Greek clergy had no positive outcomes. Opposition to papal universal jurisdiction, a novel idea with no support in the common Christian past according to the Byzantine point of view, prevailed, as did apprehensions over certain points in the Latin dogma and ritual deemed as heterodox by the Byzantines.[51] The papal demand that they swear allegiance to the Church of Rome and accept its beliefs and practices without any debate over controversial issues was nothing but sheer arrogance. The Greek bishops and priests considered that they owed nothing, let alone obedience, to the pope. Their understanding of ecclesiastical authority was thoroughly Byzantine: their spiritual leader was the patriarch of Constantinople, a Greek-speaking man like themselves, chosen by the synod of bishops and confirmed in his see by the emperor. The pope had no business appointing patriarchs in the East, since they had never belonged to his jurisdiction. Moreover, pope and patriarchs were equals; the see of Rome had only a primacy of honor. There was little understanding in Byzantium for the papal claims to leadership over the entire Christendom. It was a foreign concept impossible to back up with any known Byzantine historical tradition. The utter "otherness" of the Catholic clergy sent by the pope to the East alienated even more the Byzantines from the Church of Rome: these high prelates spoke Latin, recited a different version of the creed, wore strange vestments and no beards, baptized and

[50] "Letter to Baldwin," *Register* 8.56, and "Letter to the Greek clergy in Constantinople," *Register* 8.57, trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 157-159.
[51] Joseph Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy: 1198-1400* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1974) 30-35; Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford 1986) 189-191; Tia Kolbaba, "Byzantine Perceptions of the Latin Errors: Themes and Changes from 850-1350," in Angeliki Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh eds., *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World* (Washington DC, 2001) 117-143, here at 128-130.

celebrated the liturgy in a different way, used unleavened bread in the Eucharist, did not revere the icons, and fasted on Saturday - all unfamiliar practices to the Byzantines.[52]

Innocent's initial intransigence toward the Byzantine patriarch of Constantinople played a role in the deepening of the divide between Greeks and Latins. At the time when the pope addressed his first letter to the Greek clergy, John X Camaterus, their ecclesiastical superior, was still alive, and actually not officially removed from his see by any legitimate authority (be it emperor, ecclesiastical synod, or even pope). Camaterus had fled the city after its conquest by the crusaders, abandoning his flock to their mercy. The Greeks continued to regard him as their spiritual leader, while no one on the victors' side seems to have been particularly concerned with his formal status.[53] The pope however wished to avoid repeating in Constantinople the scandalous situation in the Near East, where the sees of Jerusalem and Antioch had each two patriarchs, one Greek and one Latin, the former overseen by the Byzantine emperor and the latter under Roman jurisdiction. The dual episcopacy was a clear sign of papal failure in the Christian East. The Apostolic See did not succeed in persuading the local Christians that its claims to universal leadership were legitimate, and thus failed to induce them to switch allegiance from the *basileus* to the Vicar of Christ. But the fall of Constantinople in Latin hands could change the state of affairs in the East in a way favorable to Rome. A Latin emperor replaced the Byzantine one, and there was hardly any reason to consider the Byzantine patriarch still in charge of ecclesiastical matters. He had lost his see in the same way that the *basileus* had lost his throne, as a result of the crusaders' victory. From Innocent's perspective, God had magnificently brought to

[52] See Kolbaba, *The Byzantine Lists: Errors of the Latins* (Urbana and Chicago 2000) 33-87, for the Latin "errors" singled out by Byzantine documents of the ninth to twelfth centuries. As Kolbaba underlines in her study, the lists of errors may seem trivial to the modern reader, but at the time they were written down they represented strong reasons for not accepting Latin "orthodoxy." The medieval faithful in the East and in the West made no distinction between liturgical practices and dogmatic beliefs, both understood as having deep roots in God's eternal truth and thus as being immutable and indisputable.
[53] Choniates, *Annals* c.593, p. 326.

completion His plan of healing the division within Christ's body by subduing the Byzantines through military conquest. Unavoidably, success on the battlefield had to lead to the reintegration of the errant Greek East with the true Church, which was the Church of Rome.[54] In addition, Byzantium had not only been in schism with Rome, but also entertained heretical ideas, as it rejected the teachings of the Apostolic See on such topics as the *filioque*, papal primacy, use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and so on. According to Western canon law, the Byzantine emperor and the patriarch were actually illegitimate, and their replacement with Latin counterparts in full obedience to Rome was to be acclaimed and upheld.[55]

While pleased with the events that brought the see of Constantinople under his jurisdiction, Innocent was nonetheless critical of the uncanonical way in which the Latin patriarch had been chosen: not by the Apostolic See, as canon law required, but by laymen who did not have the authority to make ecclesiastical appointments, and by churchmen who had not been empowered by the papacy to act in the matter. In addition, the March Pact provisions had turned the patriarchate of Constantinople into the private office of a nation, the Venetians. The pope was simply asked to confirm the new developments in the East, not to play any role in their initiation and progression. Innocent could not allow a major decision such as the transfer of the main patriarchal see in the East to the Latins to take place without him controlling the process. He annulled the irregular election, but then, in his desire to not disturb more than legal necessity mandated a process which had begun so auspiciously – the reconciliation with the Byzantine

[54] "Letter to Baldwin" and "Letter to the Latin clergy in Constantinople," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.153 and 154, trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 112-126 ; for discussion, see Alfred J. Andrea, "Pope Innocent III as Crusader and Canonist: His relations with the Greeks of Constantinople, 1198-1216," Ph D Thesis (Cornell University 1969) 163-212.
[55] Andrea, "Pope Innocent III," 526-544; "Letter to the Latin clergy in Constantinople," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.203, trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 131-139, here at 133-134.

Church – he appointed the same Thomas Morosini to the see of Constantinople.[56] In the letters he wrote to the Venetian doge, the Latin emperor and Morosini himself, the pope insisted on the necessity of acting according to canon law and thus discontinue the illicit practice of appointing only Venetians to key ecclesiastical positions.[57] Innocent released Morosini from the oath he had taken that he would abide by the stipulations of the March Pact, and urged him to show deference and obedience to the Apostolic See rather than to his own countrymen.[58]

Innocent took issue with other aspects of the March Pact which were limiting his jurisdiction and turned him into a quasi-subordinate of the crusaders and Venetians. The agreement asked the pope to excommunicate any person who would not abide by its provisions, although Innocent himself had not been informed as to the exact nature of these provisions, and had never made any promise to abide by laymen rulings. Banning someone from communion was an ecclesiastical affair, and secular rulers could not decide on the matter, nor could they constrain a clergyman, even less a pope, to act in this regard based on their own judgement of what constituted an offense serious enough to incur excommunication. Furthermore, the March Pact offered no protection of ecclesiastical property, treating it as if part of the war spoils and allowing it to be divided among laymen, while in fact it belonged to the Church and had to remain under its ownership. Baldwin, the Venetian doge, the Latin clergy in Constantinople and their patriarch were firmly instructed not to seize any piece of property that belonged to a church or monastery, since only with the ultimate accord of the Apostolic See could it be sold, ceded to or taken over by the secular power.[59]

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[56] "Letter to the Latin Clergy in Constantinople," and "Letter to Enrico Dandolo," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.203 and 7.206, English trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 131-139 and 144-148. For discussion see Andrea, "Innocent III as Crusader," 379-383.
[57] Anonymous, *Deeds of Innocent* c. xcvi-xcviii, p. 175-182.
[58] Anonymous, *Deeds of Innocent* c. xcix, p. 182-183.
[59] "Letter to the Latin Clergy in Constantinople" and "Letter to Baldwin," *Die Register Innocenz' III* 7.203 and 7.208, English trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 132- 139, here at 137-139, and 149-

Despite the problems Innocent had with the crusaders and the Venetians who were often acting without seeking or waiting for his advice, his most frustrating experience in terms of challenges to his assumed role of universal ruler of the Christian faithful came not from the Latins in Constantinople, but from the Greeks. Whether residing within or without Constantinople, the former citizens of Byzantium refused to acknowledge the pope as their ruler in the spiritual realm. They remained steadfast in their loyalty to the patriarch and looked with hope across the Bosporus, where Theodore I Lascaris, son-in-law of ex-emperor Alexius, was trying to recreate a Byzantine state in exile. Lascaris had already acquired the title of despot from Emperor Alexius III, when he had married his daughter Anna in 1189. In 1205 he was proclaimed emperor by the Byzantine officials and ecclesiastics who had accompanied him to Nicaea. But when he asked Patriarch John X Camaterus, who had been deprived of his see but not formally of his office, to come down to Nicaea and perform the coronation ceremony, he met with a categorical refusal. The patriarch, who had taken refuge in Didymoteichon after the sack of Constantinople, invoked old age as reason for turning down the invitation, and even submitted his resignation from office.[60]

The patriarch's response might have been caused by his uneasiness at crowning a new emperor while the previous one, Alexius III, was still alive and seeking to take back his throne.[61]

151; pertinent letters to Marquis de Montferrat, Enrico Dandolo and the Latin clergy are translated in *Deeds of Innocent* c. xciii, xcvii, ci – cii, p. 166-170, 177-178, 184-192. See also Andrea, "Innocent III as Crusader," 409-419; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 192-206.

[60] *Acropolites, History* c. 7, p. 119. Acropolites' account does not make it clear to whom the letter of resignation was addressed, whether to the hierarchs still residing in Constantinople (who would have been the appropriate forum to deal with the issue), or directly to Lascaris and the churchmen gathered at his court in Nicaea (who in fact would not have had, at the time, the authority to decide on such matters). Likewise, Acropolites does not elaborate on the outcome of Camaterus' request. Choniates, who does not seem to know about a resignation letter, calls Camaterus 'patriarch' when mentioning his death, see Choniates, *Annals* c. 633, p. 346.

[61] According to Villehardouin, Alexius had been stripped of the imperial insignia (the purple mantle and the purple boots) by Boniface of Montserrat, who had come upon him in the vicinity of Thessalonica in the summer of 1205. See Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 109. Choniates also discusses the incident, adding that Alexius III actually gave away his insignia in exchange for 'a ration of bread and an allowance of wine;" vid. *Annals* c. 612, p. 335. It is unlikely that the patriarch, even if apprised of this development, would have ceased to consider Alexius

The fact that the patriarch was related by blood with Empress Euphrosyne, Alexius's wife, could have also played a role in his decision to stay loyal to the ex-emperor. Furthermore, the situation in Thrace was confused after the Latins had been defeated by Tsar Kaloyan's armies at Adrianople in April 1205, and Emperor Baldwin I taken captive, never to be heard of again.[62] Henry of Flanders, Baldwin's younger brother, was established as regent, but he was not crowned as Latin Emperor of Constantinople until sixteen months later, in August 1206, when the death of Baldwin finally became certain.[63] The Bulgarian tsar aimed himself at the imperial title, so he took advantage of the Latins' disorientation during this time and pressed his troops further into the weakened Latin Empire. In such a precarious context, it appeared more sensible to wait rather than crowd the political scene with yet another *basileus*. At any rate, John Camaterus died in the early summer of 1206, during the siege laid by Kaloyan to Didymoteichon, leaving Lascaris with no immediate solution to his plan of becoming emperor.[64]

Learning about Camaterus's death, the Byzantine clergymen and monks in Constantinople asked Emperor Henry to grant them permission to choose a new patriarch. To them, seeking and securing imperial help in the matter was a logical step: they had accepted the existing state of things, and regarded the Latin emperor as their lawful sovereign. As such, they needed his support in the process of appointing a new patriarch. But Henry, in accordance with the Western understanding of imperial prerogatives, did not find the issue within his domain of intervention, and urged the Byzantines to petition the pope directly. John Mesarites, an influential monk, was entrusted by the Byzantine clergymen and monastics to write a letter to

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the rightful emperor, given the fact that the Latins were seen as usurpers with no right to decide upon the fate of Byzantine emperors.

[62] Choniates, *Annals*, c. 615-617, p. 337-338.

[63] Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 143-144; see discussion in Jean Longnon, *L'empire Latin de Constantinople et la Principauté de Morée* (Paris, 1949) 81-89; also Robert L. Wolff, "Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut, First Latin Emperor of Constantinople: His Life, Death, and Resurrection, 1172-1225," *Speculum* 27.3 (1952) 281-322.

[64] Choniates, *Annals* c. 632-633, p. 346-347, places his death in June 1206. Acropolites does not mention it.

Pope Innocent III, which he did, in the fall or winter of 1206, in a very uncompromising manner. The letter did not ask Innocent to make an appointment, or recognize one already made, but only to permit Henry to intervene in the matter, in conformity with the Byzantine practice of electing the patriarch, which required that the emperor formally confirmed the choice made by the synod. There was no hint of the Byzantines' acceptance of the papal jurisdiction over their church.[65] The letter elicited no response on the pope's part.

A few months later, in early 1207, the moderates among the Byzantine clergy wrote another letter, more conceding in tone. They asked that the Byzantines be permitted to appoint their own Greek-speaking patriarch, who would then function alongside the Latin-speaking one, as it did happen in the churches of Antioch and Jerusalem. It is unclear whether this letter reached Innocent or not, but even if it did, the request could not be granted. Western canon law did not allow for two bishops in a city, and Innocent's rigid understanding of the Church of Rome as the one and only source of ecclesiastical authority and means of salvation did not allow for any compromise in the matter.[66] The Greek-speaking patriarchs of Antioch and Jerusalem were not papal appointees, but were in schism with the true Church, as was the patriarch of Constantinople.

In fact, from a papal perspective, Camaterus' demise was a relief, as it put an end to an embarrassing situation over which Innocent had no control. Despite the fall of Byzantium into Latin hands, the Byzantine "soul" continued to elude him. To force it into the Latin religious path, Innocent kept sending his representatives to Constantinople.[67] He saw uniformity in language, ritual and dogma as the only way to abiding unity between the Byzantines and the

[65] Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader," 480-482.
[66] Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader," 483-484; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 34-35; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 191.
[67] Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 189-191; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 32-34.

Church of Rome, so his legates were not there so much to negotiate as to persuade. Cardinal Benedict of Santa Susanna's talks with the Byzantine clergy and monks residing in Constantinople had ended in deadlock. The Byzantines were averse to the exercise of papal authority over their church and refused to recognize Thomas Morosini, the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, as their own ecclesiastical leader. On their part, the Latins remained hostile to the idea of electing a new Greek-speaking patriarch. As for the pope, canonical legislation, Latin ecclesiological thought and practice, political circumstances, and Innocent's own uncompromising attitude toward the Byzantines impeded him from any openness to negotiating the election of a Greek hierarch for the Greek flock in the Latin Empire.[68]

When neither Emperor Henry nor Pope Innocent granted them the right to choose their own patriarch, many of the ecclesiastics still residing in Constantinople chose to join Theodore Lascaris in Nicaea. That was exactly what the ambitious despot needed to turn his imperial dream into reality. In fall 1207 and early winter 1208, Lascaris summoned the neighboring bishops, the high-ranking clergy of Hagia Sophia and the abbots of the monasteries in Constantinople to gather together at Nicaea in order to choose a new patriarch. In the third week of Lent, on March 20, 1208, this ad-hoc synod elected Michael IV Autorianus as the patriarch of Constantinople temporarily residing at Nicaea, in exile.[69] A few weeks later, on the Easter Sunday, the patriarch anointed Theodore I Lascaris with myrrh and crowned him emperor.[70] The

[68] Joseph Gill, "Innocent III and the Greeks: Aggressor or Apostle?," in Derek Baker ed., *Relations between east and West in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1973) 95-108.
[69] On the date of election, see V. Laurent, "La chronologie des patriarches de Constantinople au XIIIe s. (1208-1309)," *Revue des études byzantines* 27 (1969) 129-150, here at 129-132. For the context, *Acropolites, History* c. 7, p. 119, and Macrides' commentary in her "Introduction" to Acropolites' history, p. 83; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 207.
[70] The anointing was a novelty in the Byzantine rite of coronation. It was widely practiced in the West, where the pope anointed the Holy Roman Emperor, and archbishops anointed kings and princes. For the reason of its adoption at Nicaea and its impact on the relationship between patriarch and emperor, see Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium Under the Comneni, 1081-1261*(Cambridge, 1995) 542-546; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*: *The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. J. Birrell (Cambridge, 2003; first published in French as *Empereur*

solution found by the Byzantines to the ecclesiastical impasse created by the death of their patriarch was more in consonance with their historical past than seeking papal assistance. Starting with 1208, the Vicar of Christ was once again compelled to take into account his traditional rivals in the East, the Byzantine emperor and the exiled patriarch of Constantinople, when trying to impose ecclesiastical unity under the direction of Rome over entire Christendom.

After the rise of Nicaea, Innocent's envoys and the Latin hierarchs in Constantinople increased their pressure on the Greek clergy under their control inside Romania to accept the Apostolic See as their leader, but to no avail. Cardinal Pelagius of Albano, the pope's legate to the Latin Empire in late 1213, imprisoned and threatened with the death penalty the prelates and monks who refused to accept papal primacy and to commemorate the pope and the Latin patriarch in their liturgical prayers. Emperor Henry I intervened to have them released, although nothing changed in the Greek attitude toward Rome.[71] In Constantinople and throughout the northeastern Mediterranean, papal universalism and the Latinization of the Greek rite continued to be seen as impossible-to-meet prerequisites for ecclesiastical reunion. After further unsuccessful attempts to reconcile the Greeks with their new – and largely unwelcome – status as members of the Church of Rome, the pope took a milder approach, making concessions in regards to the Byzantine religious practices. He allowed the Greek clergy to maintain their language and rite, provided that they recognized the pope's universal rule and the Latin usages as valid. But as Canon four of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 indicates, even this openness to the Greek traditions did not advance Rome's case. Most Greek clergy stayed faithful to their own patriarch and rituals. They refused to show obedience to the pope, rebaptized Christians who had

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et prêtre: Étude sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin [Paris 1996]) 267-281; Donald M. Nicol, "Kaisersalbung. The unction of emperors in late Byzantine coronation ritual," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (1976) 37-52.

[71] *Acropolites, History* c. 17, p. 154-155; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 36-45; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 211-213.

undergone the Latin baptism, and cleansed altars on which Latin priests had celebrated the sacrifice of the Mass as if defiled by the Latin ritual.[72]

But however stern many Greek clergymen remained in their opposition to the papacy, the geopolitical context dictated a different diplomatic tactic to the rulers of Nicaea. As it became increasingly clear that the recovery of Constantinople was not to be an easy and straightforward process, and that talks over Church reunion were to carry at least as much weight as alliances with neighboring heads of state and anti-Latin military action, negotiations with the Church of Rome became a constant dimension in Nicene diplomacy. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the papacy was still the most powerful institution in the West, with designs for a unified Christendom and a solid grasp over major or minor European monarchs, able to launch crusades or end aggression against infidels or schismatics. Every *basileus* after 1208 was compelled by circumstances to try at least once during his reign to placate the pope by displaying interest in the union of the Eastern churches with Rome.[73]

Nonetheless, the imperial terms, goals and topics of negotiation differed from those of the papacy, providing as many reasons for the failure to find a common path to ecclesiastical reconciliation. The Byzantine emperors and their patriarchs thought that the best way to solve the disputed issues between East and West was through an ecumenical council summoned by the reigining *basileus.* The popes saw no need for debate, just the recognition on the part of the Byzantines that they had been in error and were ready to repent and submit to papal authority. The Lascarids and then the Palaiologoi used the talks with the Apostolic See as means of forestalling further Latin attacks on their empire, and later on for obtaining military assistance

[72] On the situation of the Greek churches in areas under Latin occupation, see Nicholas Coureas, "The Latin and Greek Churches in former Byzantine Lands under Latin Rule," in Nickiphoros I. Tsougarakis and Peter Lock eds., *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden, 2014) 145-184; Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean, 1204-1500* (London and New York, 1995) 193-216; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 192-206.
[73] Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 211-213.

against the Ottoman Turks. There continued to be in Byzantium no sympathy toward the papal claim to universal leadership over Christendom, a role which the *basileis* still professed as theirs, and no real willingness to accept Roman jurisdiction over the Byzantine Church. On his part, the pope sought unconditional acceptance of his primacy and could not comprehend that what appeared as an obstinate refusal to submit to his authority was in great part due to the Greeks' reliance on an ecclesiastical tradition which had never granted Rome any type of control over the East. The accounts of Church history circulating in the West and with which the pope was familiar attributed to the Vicar of Christ the role of universal leader of the Christian faithful from the time of the apostles. When the two parties did agree to carry out talks, these ended in stalemate because the positions on the most significant topics – papal primacy, procession of the Holy Spirit, Eucharistic bread, baptismal and fasting practices – were irreconcilable.

The patriarchs who resided in exile at Nicaea were as a rule supportive of imperial policies which pursued a pro-Rome agenda, as long as the result of discussions was a serious offer of papal support to the plans of recovering Constantinople. Germanus II (1223-1240) and his political master, Emperor John III Vatatzes, Lascaris' son-in-law and successor, persistently sought to gain the pope's approval for the Byzantine offensive against the Latin Empire. The patriarch wrote in 1232 to Pope Gregory IX, emphasizing the Byzantine desire for ecclesiastical unity, while at the same time asking the pope to put an end to the violation of property and life which often occurred in the areas where the Latins ruled.[74] The pope sent a delegation of two Franciscans and two Dominicans to confer with the Nicene secular and religious authorities on the possibility of Byzantine submission to the Apostolic See. The envoys arrived in January 1234, but despite the genuine efforts of all parts involved to reach an agreement, the discussions

[74] Angold, *Church and Society*, 522-523; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 61-65; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 213-214.

bore no fruits. The Byzantines wanted an ecumenical council to bring a definitive resolution to the controversies over the *filioque* and the Eucharistic bread, while the friars were authorized only to explain the Latin position on these topics and request formal acceptance of the pope as the supreme leader of the Church. Moreover, Emperor Vatatzes asked the friars to promise that he would receive recognition of his rights to Constantinople in exchange for submission to the pope. The friars were unable to deliver such a promise, and returned home empty-handed.[75]

In 1234, Gregory IX launched one more crusade for the recovery of the Holy Land. But, as the Latin Empire was being attacked relentlessly, and successfully, by the Bulgarians under Tsar John II Asen and by the Nicene forces of Vatatzes, the pope in December 1235 redirected some of the French and Hungarian barons to a crusade in defense of Constantinople.[76] It took four years to the holy warriors to assemble and organize themselves, and in the meantime John Vatatzes did not remain idle. In a letter written in very strong terms to the pope, he took Gregory to task for refusing to recognize the ruler of Nicaea for what he was (the emperor of the Romans), and supporting instead those who had ransacked the capital of Byzantium, killing its people, raping its women and destroying its churches and monuments. The pope had addressed Vatatztes as "nobilis vir" rather than "imperator et augustus," but used the full title for the Latin emperor of Constantinople. An angry Vatatzes emphasized his right to bear the imperial title as true and sole heir of Constantine the Great, while his Latin rival in Constantinople was a mere usurper with no right to the imperial office. Even if the *basileis* moved the palace across the Bosporus by force of necessity, they did not lose the "immovable and unchangeable right to

[75] The encounter is analyzed in detail by John S. Langdon, "Byzantium in Anatolian Exile: Imperial Vicegerency Reaffirmed during Byzantino-Papal Discussions at Nicaea and Nymphaion, 1234," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 20 (1994) 197-233. See also Angold, *Church and Society*, 523-525; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 65-73; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 215-216.

[76] On the crusading activity of the 1230s, see Michael Lower, *The Barons' Crusade: A Call to Arms and its Consequences* (Philadelphia, 2005) and Sidney Painter, *The Scourge of the Clergy* (Baltimore, 1937); the impact on Byzantium is discussed in Nikolaos G. Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes, 1204-1282* (Turnhout, 2012) 84-86.

rule." It was wrong for Rome to continue to endorse the "piratical and bloodthirsty possession" of Constantinople by crusaders who had attacked the Byzantine with such "crudeness that even the Muslims did not demonstrate." The pope himself demanded in vain recognition of his position as ultimate leader of Christendom. He could not claim to have inherited any special prerogatives from Constantine the Great, and the see he occupied was no different from other episcopal sees.[77] For all its violent language, the letter did not produce much impression on the pope.[78] Even if Vatatzes had made good progress in recovering Byzantine territory from the Latin Empire, for the Apostolic See he remained no more than a Greek ruler who was fighting to increase his regional power in clear opposition to God's will, who had transferred the Byzantine Empire to the Latins.

To put Rome under pressure, in 1238 the Nicene emperor struck an alliance with the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, the pope's archenemy in the West. He even married Frederick's daughter Constance-Anna in 1242, to strengthen the mutual bond.[79] The dowry was a Sicilian fleet to reinforce Vatatzes' renewed campaign against Constantinople.[80] The dangers posed by a close relationship between two rulers who both had set sights on expanding their power and influence in the Mediterranean did not escape Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254). The situation in Constantinople had deteriorated, as John of Brienne, the titular emperor had died and the new one, Baldwin II, was rather ineffective. The crusaders summoned in 1235 had finally left

[77] The Greek text is in Luca Pieralli ed., *La corripondenza diplomatica dell'imperatore bizantino con le potenze estere nel tredicesimo secolo (1204-1282)* (Vatican, 2006) 119-126. For discussion, see V. Grumel, "Un problème littéraire: l'authenticité de la lettre de Jean Vatatzès, empereur de Nicée, au Pape Grégoire IX," *Échos d'Orient* 29.160 (1930) 450-458; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant. I: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1976) 63-64; Dimitri Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks* (Oxford, 2014) 40-45, who also provides partial translation.

[78] According to Grumel, this happened because either the letter was not sent at all, or was sent in a different, milder redaction; see "Un problème littéraire," 453-458.

[79] For the date and context of this marriage, see John S. Langdon, "The Forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian Assault and Siege of Constantinople, 1235-1236, and the Breakup of the *entente cordiale* between John III Ducas Vatatzes and John Asen II in 1236, as Background to the Genesis of the Hohenstaufen-Vatatzes Alliance of 1242," in *Byzantine Studies in Honor of Milton V. Anastos*, ed. Speros Vryonis (Malibu, CA, 1985) 106-135.

[80] Langdon, "Forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian Assault," n. 4 on p. 123.

for Romania, but scored no important victory against either Bulgarians or Greeks. There was famine in Constantinople and many of the Latins chose to leave the city.[81] Under these circumstances, when the *basileus* expressed willingness to resume talks on Church union, the pope readily sent his envoy to Asia Minor, to meet with Vataztes and the Byzantine clergy. The papal representative came to Nymphaeum (the Lascarids' winter residence) in 1249 and Byzantine emissaries visited the pope in 1251, but again negotiations had no clear outcome, as neither party was willing to compromise on the issues that each valued the most.[82]

In late 1253, Vatatzes took even bolder steps when approaching the papacy: he asked that Constantinople be returned to him and the Latin patriarchate be discontinued; in return, he was ready to allow the name of the pope be inscribed in diptychs and commemorated in the liturgy, to give primacy of place and honor to the pope in councils, and to consider his decrees binding if not contravening the gospel teachings and existing canon regulations.[83] It was not the unconditional surrender which the papacy expected from the East, but it was the closest a Byzantine emperor had come to acknowledging the Vicar of Christ as leader of the Church. Pope Innocent might have contemplated an eventual agreement after further negotiation, but he died in 1254 before he could make any decision on the matter. As for Vatatzes, he was hoping to take over Constantinople soon and needed papal assurance that Rome would not react negatively to the event. The Mongol threat to Nicaea had receded by 1253, allowing the emperor to concentrate again his forces agasint Constantinople.[84] But he died in 1254 as well, without achieving either Church union, or the conquest of Constantinople.

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[81] Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, 64-65.
[82] Angold, *Church and Society*, 525-526; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 89-90; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 216-217.
[83] Angold, *Church and Society*, 526; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 91-95; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 217-218.
[84] The impact that the Mongol invasion into Asia Minor had on the Nicene foreign policy is discussed by John S. Langdon, "Byzantium's Initial Encounter with the Chinggisids: An Introduction to the Byzantino-Mongolica," *Viator* 29 (1998) 95-140, here at 128-131.

Theodore II Lascaris, Vatatzes' son and heir to the throne, was not militarily as successful as his father, and consequently had little with which to impress the pope and co-interest him in the eventual restoration of the Byzantine rights to Constantinople. He planned and had meetings with papal emissaries in 1256, but as on previous occasions, they ended without any concrete result as far as the union of churches was concerned.[85] Papal universalism remained too sensitive an issue for the Byzantines to be tackled without firm guarantees that Constantinople would be theirs again. Submission to the pope was a political concession which the temporal power was willing to grant under certain circumstances, but the religious class continued to be skeptical as to its potential benefits. The popes themselves understood the political dimension of the Byzantine diplomatic attempts to reconcile with Rome, hence the cautiousness with which they approached the Nicene proposals for reunion.

The Apostolic See had several options when it came to imposing its jurisdiction over the East. If pressure on the Greek subjects of the Latin Romania and negotiations with Byzantine secular and ecclesiastical authorities did not produce significant results, the papacy could always resort to crusades. Innocent III had placed the Latin Empire under his special protection and this included aid in case of military emergency.[86] After the assault on Constantinople in 1204 and the war against the Cathars in southern France in 1209-1229, the concept of Christian holy war expanded to include attacks on "internal enemies" – schismatics and heretics. When the Latin emperor then subsequently found himself besieged by Bulgarians and Greeks, he made appeals to the West for more soldiers and settlers. In 1206, Pope Innocent III allowed that Constantinople itself (rather than the Holy Land) had become the ultimate goal of a small-scale crusade meant to

[85] Angold, *Church and Society*, 526-529; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 97-100; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 218-219.
[86] "Letter to Baldwin," *Die Register Innocentz' III* 7.153, trans. in Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade,* 112-115.

bring reinforcements to Henry I's worn-out army. Like the crusaders who set out to recapture Jerusalem, the participants in the Latin venture in Romania took vows and were offered indulgences. Bishop Nivelon of Soissons preached and organized the expedition, which set out for Thrace in 1207. Other such crusades were launched by Pope Honorius in the early 1220s to save the kingdom of Thessalonica, attacked by Theodore Comenus Ducas of Epirus, and by Pope Gregory IX in the late 1230s in support of the Latin Empire, the existence of which was seriously threatened by Vatatzes' forces. After the recovery of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologus in 1261, the popes summoned crusaders to fight for the recapture of the city in the name of the deposed Latin emperor.[87]

Although recurrent phenomena until 1282, the papal crusades in Romania, like the papal efforts to impose jurisdiction upon the East, were largely unsuccessful. Lack of adequate funding, crusaders' reluctance to fight for saving Constantinople instead of Jerusalem, the deployment of forces to southern France during the Albigensian crisis, the Mongol invasion of the 1240s are some of the factors that contributed to the failure of these military undertakings.[88] None of the holy wars against the 'schismatic' Greeks helped the Latin Empire or the crusaders' principalities in the Balkans and the Aegean survive. Most of the Latin states fell victim to Epirus, then to Nicaea, and finally after 1261 to the restored Byzantine Empire.

The papal vision of a united Christendom under the direction of the Apostolic See suffered serious setbacks once the Byzantines retook Constantinople and the *basileis* reaffirmed their own claim to universal leadership. Although no longer able to reassert preeminence in the northeastern Mediterranean, which remained politically and religiously fragmented, Byzantium was still the main rival to the papal hegemonic pretensions in the area. As the Byzantines

[87] An overview of the crusades in the Balkans and the Aegean following the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, see Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece*.
[88] Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece*, 259-262.

reconstituted their empire, the Church of Rome lost many of its dioceses in the Balkans and the Aegean, and as such the papacy had limited opportunities of reaching out and influencing the local population. The Latin churches and religious orders which continued their activity in the East had minimum impact on the Greeks and Slavs, while the local clergy who had submitted to the Apostolic See found little incentive to stay loyal to an institution that they perceived as foreign, exacting and untrustworthy.

3.4. Byzantine Endeavors to Regain the *βασιλεία τῶν Ῥωμαίων* (*basileia ton Rhomaion*)

The fourth crusade shook Byzantine elite to its very core. The foundation on which it had stood for centuries was obliterated in one ruthless stroke on April 12, 1204, when the Latin armies attacked and crushed the imperial forces defending Constantinople. The city, which had been understood by its dwellers as the earthly replica of Christ's heavenly kingdom, now lay in shambles before troops claiming to be Christ's holy warriors. The city praised by its poets and orators for all its worldly splendors and otherworldly pursuits, came to be trampled upon and ravaged by foreigners oblivious to its beauty, its unrivaled history, its Orthodoxy and spiritual preeminence.[89] To the Byzantines' dismay, the victors even credited their triumph to God's powerful intervention, calling the conquest of Constantinople a "miracle above all miracles."[90] For the crusaders, the capital of the Byzantine Empire was by no means a paragon of Christian virtues. On the contrary, "out of hatred for the Apostolic See," it could not even "bear to hear the name of the prince of the apostles," and refused to concede any Greek church "to him who had

[89] A general introduction to the city before and after the Fourth Crusade is in Jonathan Harris, *Constantinople: Capital of Byzantium* (London and New York, 2007).
[90] "Baldwin's letter to Pope Innocent III, May 1204," Latin text in *Die Register Innocentz' III*, 7:152, English trans. by Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade*, 98- 112, here at 107.

received from the Lord Himself dominion over all churches." It was the city which for too long had defied Rome, and now was rightly paying for it.[91]

From a Byzantine standpoint, making sense of the loss of Constantinople was an ungrateful task: it required reconciling the ancient belief in a divinely-appointed imperial office and a divinely-ordained Christianizing mission of the empire, with utter military defeat, sweeping territorial losses, contempt for the Byzantine Church, and forced submission of its members to the universalist claims of the papacy. Worse than anything, all these misfortunes came at the hands of people proclaiming themselves instruments of divine will. Survival and recovery depended on the ability of Byzantine elites to regroup outside Constantinople and form a government in exile, as well as on finding to the fateful event an explanation which confirmed the Byzantine world view, despite outward evidence to the contrary. Neither task was easy under the strained circumstances created by the fourth crusade. The Byzantine Empire had always rested on two pillars, the emperor and the patriarch, and the fall of Constantinople seemed to have put an end to both offices, at least as known in their Byzantine form.

The age-old political theory which attributed to God the creation, protection, and perpetuation of both empire and Church had to be adjusted to meet the exigencies of life in a world unwilling to recognize either institution. At first, the Byzantine aristocrats with close ties to the imperial family who had fled Constantinople and found shelter in strongholds outside the immediate reach of the crusaders, pursued the well-trodden path of deposed emperors or rebels: rally troops from the provinces, march them upon the city, and fight until victory or death. When this approach bore no fruit, the idea began to take shape that the empire and its Church could actually be recreated outside Constantinople. Once a legitimate emperor was identified,

[91] "Baldwin's letter," 108-109.

administrative and ecclesiastical structures reestablished, and reliable troops gathered and trained, then the *reconquista* could be more efficiently planned and launched.

Refashioning Byzantium outside Constantinople proved difficult from the start. As it often happened with the Byzantines, the problem was not the lack of a suitable candidate for the mission, but a rather too long list of contenders. Quite a few ex-emperors and would-be emperors made their bid for the vacant office of *basileus kai autokrator ton Rhomaion,* and dutifully fought one another and the Latin emperor of Constantinople in order to reach this lofty goal. But this was by no means the only problem. The real stumbling block to all rival claimants of the imperial title was that the *basileia* itself was disintegrating, which made the very idea of Byzantine survival and continuity seem highly questionable.

The fourth crusade did not end with the capture of Constantinople. The crusaders, forgetful of the initial purpose of their expedition (redeeming the Holy Land from the hands of the infidel), set out to conquer and settle as much Byzantine territory as possible. Since no emperor was available to organize and lead defense, or at least to supply troops and arms to the provinces under attack, the Byzantines dwelling in those areas were unable to put up any significant resistance. Before long, large portions of Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece, most of the Aegean and the Ionian islands, and strips of coastal land in northwestern Asia Minor were lost to the Latins. Western-style principalities promptly arose on the ruins of the Byzantine Empire.[92] In addition, the breakup of central authority had prompted local Greek magnates in Anatolia and the Balkans to pursue their own interests, which for most of them translated into proclaiming independence, then invading and annexing the poorly defended Byzantine lands in their

[92] For a general survey of the establishment of Frankish states in the Balkans and the Aegean, see Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, 35-107; Longnon, *L'empire Latin de Constantinople*, 48-80; William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant* (New York, 1908) 27-48.

neighborhood.[93] While these local aristocrats did not present a major threat to the bigger power players engaged in the quest for the imperial title, waging war against them taxed energy and resources.

As the *basileia* collapsed, establishing a valid alternative to the Byzantine Empire in exile became an almost unsurpassable challenge. Any credible attempt to refashioning the empire outside Constantinople required vision, competent leadership, flexibility of means and of anticipated outcomes. It also required an efficient propaganda, able to convey and maintain the image of imperial endurance and strength; large, well-trained and well-equipped armies, with the skills necessary to design and achieve the recovery of lost territory; and a shrewd diplomatic service, capable of making inroads into the enemy's camp wherever military encounters could not be won. Few of those aspiring to the imperial title understood or could meet the needs of the moment. To most of them, recovering Constantinople and with it the Byzantine throne continued to be a paramount, if unattainable, goal.

The ex-emperor Alexius III Angelus, overthrown by crusaders in July 1203 during their first attack on Constantinople, pursued doggedly and to no avail the city and the imperial position which once had been his. After his deposition, he fled to Adrianople, and from there to Mosynopolis. In fall 1204, as the Latin armies poured into Thrace, he moved on to Thessalonica, then to Corinth, where he married his daughter Eudocia to the local magnate, Leo Sgurus (Sgouros), on whom he also bestowed the title of 'despot.' The title, created in 1163 by Emperor Manuel I Comenus, was granted to the sons or sons-in-law of a reigning emperor, and placed its recipient in the second highest position in the empire, after that of the emperor. While not necessarily formally eligible for succession, the despot could entertain reasonable hopes that the

[93] Oikonomides, "La décomposition de l'empire byzantine," 3-22; Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Berkeley, 1971) 126-133.

throne would eventually be his.[94] With not many allies left to support him, Alexius III was bent on creating several new ones by any means available. Although hardly in a position to offer any title or office, he nonetheless played on the anticipation that the idea of becoming a Byzantine despot could create in the beneficiary, and generously conferred it upon his new son-in-law. Sgurus did not seem to aim so highly, though; he was already in the process of establishing his own independent principality in southern Greece. He had acquired Argos and Corinth in the Peloponnesus in 1201, and when the crusaders led by Boniface of Montferrat arrived in Attica in late 1204, they found him besieging the city of Athens, bravely defended at the time by its metropolitan, Michael Choniates.[95]

Boniface of Montserrat, recently proclaimed king of Thessalonica and keen on expanding his realm, defeated Sgurus and put an end to his rule in the area. Boniface also captured Alexius III and sent him as prisoner first to Halmyrus in Thessaly, then to Montferrat in Italy. The ex-emperor was at some point ransomed by his cousin, Michael I Angelus Ducas, who had established himself as an independent ruler in Epirus. By 1209, Alexius was at his cousin's court in Arta. But again, Michael had his own military and political designs, so Alexius III had to seek support for his claim to the Byzantine throne somewhere else. He left western Greece and journeyed east to Konia, the Seljuq capital, where he hoped to interest the sultan into collaborating in an attack on Constantinople. The sultan preferred instead to attack Theodore I Lascaris of Nicaea, another son-in-law of Alexius and a noteworthy contestant in the race for the imperial title. The sultan was subsequently killed in battle in 1210, and Alexius III fell captive to his fellow Byzantines. Lascaris forced him to don the monastic garb, and Alexius ended his days

[94] Alexander Kazhdan, "Despotes," in Kazhdan et al eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols. (Oxford 1991) 1.614.
[95] Choniates, *Annals* c. 605-608, p. 332-333. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 33-38, 66-67.

sometime after the year 1211 in the monastery of Hyacinthus in Nicaea.[96] He had failed to grasp that the historical circumstances created by the fourth crusade no longer favored the earlier approach to getting back in power; seeking military help in the provinces, assembling an army, and leading it against the city had only worked so long as the Byzantine Empire still held together. In the new context of decentralization and localization of power, the recovery of the city and the reconstitution of the *basileia* could only be a long-term project, worked-out with diligence and patience from a power base strategically located and with easy access to resources.

Alexius V Ducas, the emperor overthrown by crusaders in April 1204, was not any wiser, nor did he fare any better than Alexius III, but at least his plight ended much sooner. When he lost the throne, he took refuge in Thrace, in the town of Mosynopolis, where Alexius III, his father-in-law, resided at the time. Alexius V likely had high hopes that he would receive the military assistance needed to defeat the crusaders and win back Constantinople. Alexius III received him well, but soon realized that he was giving shelter to the second entitled claimant to the imperial title after himself. Therefore he resorted to the typical Byzantine method of taking rivals out of the way: he had Alexius V blinded. Since in theory no physically mutilated person could become emperor, he thus quashed any hope that the latter might have still entertained for regaining the throne. Alexius III then sent his unfortunate son-in-law on his way, and in the fall of the same year Alexius V was captured by a crusaders' contingent somewhere across the straits in Asia Minor, and taken to Constantinople. There, he was charged with treason for the murder

[96] Choniates, *Annals* c. 608, 612, and 620, p. 333, 335 and 339; *Acropolites, History* c. 4 and 8-10, p. 113-114, 121-132; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 109. See Jean-Claude Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations à Byzance (963-1210)* (Paris, 1990) 440–442, 464 –465; Ruth Macrides, "Introduction" to Acropolites' history p. 79-81 and idem, "1204: the Greek Sources," in Angeliki Laiou ed., *Urbs capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005) 141-150.

of the crusaders' ally Alexius IV Angelus (the nephew of Alexius III, who had unwittingly brought the Franks and the Venetians to the gates of the city), and was put to death.[97]

The Bulgarian tsar Kaloyan (1197-1207) yearned in his turn for Constantinople and the imperial crown that came with it. He took advantage of the unstable situation in Thrace, allied himself with its wealthy Greek residents, and proceeded to attack Baldwin I, the Latin emperor. In April 1205 he defeated the crusaders' army in a battle near Adrianople, captured Baldwin and threw him into prison; the first Latin master of Constantinople died soon afterwards, the manner of death unknown. After this huge victory, jealousy and suspicion pervaded and eventually broke down Kaloyan's alliance with the Greeks of Thrace, and his dreams of taking over Constantinople and becoming the next Byzantine emperor came to an unwelcome end. Both he and his later successor, John Asen II (1218-1241), continued to fight the Latin Empire and to accumulate territories at the expense of crusaders and Byzantines alike, but neither of them succeeded in acquiring the city or the imperial title, nor were they able to provide viable alternatives from afar.[98] However much the Bulgarian tsars would have liked to style themselves as *basileis ton Rhomaion*, there was little in their historical past to give substance to such a claim.[99] Control of Constantinople might have lent credibility to the adoption of the title, but outside the city no Bulgarian ruler could hope to construct for himself a genuine imperial identity. In the Byzantine understanding of the world, Constantinople stood for empire,

[97] Choniates, *Annals* c. 608-609, p. 333-334; *Acropolites, History* c. 5, p. 115 ; de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople*, c. 108-109, p. 123-124; Villehardouin, *Conquest*, 108-109.
[98] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 80-87; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 104-108.
[99] Symeon I of Bulgaria (893-927) was one of the very few who formally assumed the imperial title. In 913 he invaded Thrace and prepared an attack on Constantinople, forcing the regents for underage Constantine VII to accede to his demands and crown him tsar (emperor). The Byzantines still saw him as a subordinate of the real *basileus*, although Symeon himself claimed equal status. For the issues associated with Symeon's reign, including his coronation, see John V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, 1983) 132-157; Graham A. Loud, "A re-examination of the 'coronation' of Symeon of Bulgaria in 913," *Journal of Theological Studies* 29 (1978) 109–120; Steven Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian Empire* (London, 1929) 154-169; Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge, 2004) 18-23.

Orthodoxy, and "Romanity" – the three elements which formed the basis of human civilization, in stark opposition to barbarianism, the condition of which all other nations suffered. It was not unknown for the city to adopt barbarians and even allow them to become emperors, but it was unheard of a barbarian to become and act as a lawful *basileus* from outside the city walls.[100] And despite the many centuries in which the Bulgarians had been within the political orbit of Constantinople and integrated in the Byzantine Church, they remained, for all intents and purposes, the barbarian outsiders.

For the Byzantine aristocrats connected to the ruling families, however, matters stood quite differently. Raised as part of the imperial elite, they embodied the Byzantine civilization; even if proclaimed emperors far from Constantinople, they had great chance of recognition as long as they cleverly exploited post-1204 political circumstances, military alliances and territorial divisions. Alexius I Comnenus, grandson of Emperor Andronicus I Comnenus (1183-1185), made the first attempt to create a plausible version of the Byzantine *basileia* centered not on Constantinople, but on Trebizond, a city on the southeast coast of the Black Sea in Asia Minor. In the spring of 1204, he and his brother David, aided by their relative Queen Thamar of Georgia, established themselves as rulers of the Byzantine theme of Chaldia.[101] The move took place in April, before the news of the Latins' victory could have reached the remote Anatolian area, so it was not a direct response to the crusade, but most likely fell in line with similar attempts of breaking away from the Byzantine Empire recorded elsewhere in Asia Minor, and

[100] At certain times in their history, the Byzantines had been forced by unfavorable circumstances to concede to the assumption of the imperial title by "outsiders:" Michael I Rhangabe (811-813) recognized Charlemagne as emperor in 812, Michael III the Amorian (842-867) was ready to acknowledge Louis II's emperorship (see supra n.103 at 124), and the Byzantine regency led by Patriarch Nicholas Mysticus elevated Symeon I of Bulgaria to the rank of *basileus* (see supra n. 99 at 194). However, such political concessions were made with the understanding that these "non-Roman" bearers of the imperial title did not enjoy the same far-ranging prerogatives as the one, true and universal *basileus ton Rhomaion*, who ruled the Christian *oikoumene* from New Rome (Constantinople).
[101] A. A. Vasiliev, "The Foundation of the Empire of Trebizond (1204-1222)," *Speculum* 11.1 (January 1936) 3-37 here at 19; *William Miller, Trebizond, the Last Greek Empire* (New York, 1926; Amsterdam, 1968) 14-15.

also in Greece and Cyprus.[102] Shortly afterwards, Alexius I, finding out that there was no valid Byzantine emperor in Constantinople (or anywhere else for that matter), claimed the imperial title for himself and declared his rather small state an empire. In all likelihood, he was crowned emperor by the bishop of Trebizond. But coronation alone was not enough to turn a local ruler into a generally acknowledged emperor, nor could a former Byzantine province substitute itself to the *basileia* by mere proclamation. Alexius I had to expand his territory by means of arms and at the same time build an imperial identity through a strong rhetoric of legitimacy and continuity. And above anything else, he needed the support of the Church, especially of its politically most influential member, the patriarch of Constantinople. Alexius began by adding territory to his budding empire: he besieged and overtook key towns and fortresses in the area surrounding Trebizond, while his brother David occupied Pontus and Paphlagonia, then advanced as far as Tarsia in Bithynia.[103] By 1206, the empire of the Grand Comneni was the largest Byzantine state in existence, with the potential to expand further into Nicomedia, and eventually reach across Bosporus, to Constantinople.

Trebizond's territorial expansion was nonetheless halted by Theodore I Lascaris of Nicaea, the most important rival of Alexius I to the title of *basileus.* Since he could not withstand the Nicaean armies by himself, David Comnenus, the emperor's brother, opted for a policy of compromise, becoming vassal of the Latin emperor of Constantinople in order to secure military

[102] On the fragmentation of the *basileia* even before 1204, see Hélène Ahrweiler, *L'idéologie politique de l'Empire byzantine* (Paris 1976) 90-96. In Asia Minor, the Byzantine government began losing its control over its themes right after the Battle of Manzikert (1071), with things getting out of control in the late twelfth century - see Peter Charanis, "Cultural Diversity and the Breakdown of Byzantine Power in Asia Minor," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 29 (1975) 1-20, and Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA, 1986). For a similar process in Greece, see Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 36-38.

[103] Choniates, *Annals* c. 626, 638–639, p.343, 350-351; Akropolites, *Historia* c. 11, p. 132. The Comneni family had its domains in Paphlagonia, in the Kastamonu district, since the tenth century, so David probably felt entitled to take over the area. See George Finlay, *Medieval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond* (Oxford, 1877) 316; Anthony A. M. Bryer "David Comnenus and saint Eleutherios," *Αρχεῖον Πόντου/ Archeion Pontou* 42 (1988/1989) 163-187, here at 176-182.

aid against Lascaris. But this strategy did not bring David the desired advances against his main Byzantine opponent in western Anatolia. On the contrary, the years 1206-1208 were marked by losses in Bithynia and Paphlagonia, and David had to withdraw his western border to Heracleia Pontica. There seems to have been no major military encounter between him and Theodore I after 1208 and until 1214, but in the latter year Theodore Lascaris subdued most of Paphlagonia, while Sinope became target of Seljuqs attacks.[104] David Comnenus disappears from the historical record around this time.[105] Alexius Comnenus entered the down path of defeat and submission as well. He had lost his key ally, Queen Thamar of Georgia, who died in 1212, and her son was less inclined to support Trebizond, in which he saw an unwelcome competitor to Georgian political and military preeminence in the area.[106] Alexius was unable to hold out by himself against the Seljuqs. In 1214 he lost Sinope, a key port on the Black Sea coast, which practically cut him off from further direct contact with the Byzantines and the Latins. He even fell captive to Izz-ad-Din Kay Kavus I (1211-1219), the sultan of Rum; to regain freedom, he agreed to become a Seljuq vassal and pay tribute.[107]

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[104] Choniates, *Annals* c. 639–641, p. 350-352. See Finaly, *Empire of Trebizond*, 321-322; Vasiliev, "Foundation of Trebizond," 21-24; van Tricht, *Latin renovatio*, 353-355.

[105] Various hypotheses have been advanced by scholars in order to explain David's whereabouts after 1214. Miller, *Trebizond*, 18 and Vasiliev, "Foundation of Trebizond," 27 suggest that he was killed during the Seljuq siege of Sinope in 1214. Based on a note in a Vatopedi manuscript regarding the death of a monk name David Comnenus in December 1212, some historians contend that David was captured by Theodore I Lascaris during one of the Trapezuntine-Nicene clashes and interned in a monastery on Mt. Athos – vid. Bryer "David Comnenus and saint Eleutherios," 184-186; Michel Kuršanskis, "L'Empire de Trébizonde et les Turcs au XIIIe siècle," *Revue des études byzantines* 46 (1988) 109-124, at 111; N. Oikonomidès, *"Cinq actes inédits* du patriarche Michel Autôreianos," *Revue des études byzantines* 25 (1967) 113-145, at 141. Rustam Shukurov, "The enigma of David Grand Komnenos," *Mésogeios, Revue trimestrielle d'études méditerranéennes* 12 (2001) 125-136, argues that David had actually become an inconvenient rival to his own brother, Alexius, who as a consequence placed him in an Athonite monastery, as far as possible from Trebizond. But according to van Tricht, the David Comnenus who died in 1212 at Vatopedi was a different member of the imperial family, the one who acted as duke of Thessalonica in the mid-1180s. The Trapezuntine David was still alive in 1214, fighting with relative success against Lascaris in Paphlagonia, after which nothing more is heard about him. See *Latin renovatio*, n. 10 on p. 355-356.

[106] Vasiliev, "Foundation of Trebizond," 29.

[107] Shukurov compares the loss of Sinope to the Seljuqs with the Byzantine disaster at Manzikert in 1071: both defeats opened the doors to the rapid Turkification of Anatolia; vid. Rustam Shukurov, "Trebizond and the Seljuks (1204-1299)," *Mésogeios, Revue trimestrielle d'études méditerranéennes. Special edition "The Saljuqs"* 25/26

Vassalage to the two other states seeking to broaden the scope of their Anatolian possessions, the Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Sultanate of Rum, was not the ideal status for a ruler claiming to be God's vicegerent on earth, the maker and enforcer of law, the protector of the universal community of the faithful and the upholder of Orthodoxy. These time-honored tasks of a Byzantine emperor assumed sovereign power and dominion over the surrounding kingdoms and princedoms. But Alexius I was in no position to act as a *basileus* beyond the boundaries of his realm - which, to make matters worse, began shrinking considerably after 1214, when the Seljuqs decided to reassert themselves as masters of Anatolia. Alexius I ceased to be a major player on the regional scene, or to count in the race for Constantinople and the true Byzantine emperorship.[108]

Nevertheless, even with Trebizond weakened externally to the point of becoming irrelevant as an alternative to the vanished Byzantine *basileia*, Alexius I and his successors continued to hold unto the title of 'emperor and autocrat of the Romans' until late thirteenth century. Internally, Alexius I embarked upon a building program meant to reinforce his imperial claims and conceal, through an architectural rhetoric of grandness and splendor, his lack of political and military sway in the area.[109] Palaces, churches, monasteries and public squares were built anew or restored in such a way as to accommodate, reveal and magnify the emperor's presence in the city and of his public activities (coronation, triumphal entries, attendance of major religious feasts, marriages and funerals). Alexius' son-in-law Andronicus I Gidus (1222-1235) and his grandson Manuel I Grand Comnenus (1238-1263) followed suit with their own

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(2005) 71–138, here at 78-98. See also Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 328; Vasiliev, "Foundation of Trebizond," 21-24; Kuršanskis, "L'Empire de Trébizonde et les Turcs," 112-113.

[108] Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 319-331. In the histories of the post-1204 Byzantine successor states, Trebizond is usually dismissed in a few lines, as it played only a marginal role in the fight for the recovery of Constantinople.

[109] Antony Eastmond, *Art and Identity in Thirteenth-Century Byzantium: Hagia Sophia and the Empire of Trebizond* (Aldershot, 2004) 19-20.

construction projects, which added new dimensions to the traditional artistic representations of imperial power. As Eastmond points out, the Grand Comneni of Trebizond had no direct acquaintance with Constantinople and its monuments. Furthermore, while their aspiration was to recreate a magnificent version of the Byzantine capital on the southeastern shores of the Black Sea, they had to take into account the greater ethnic diversity of their city. Trebizond was home not only to Greeks, but also to Armenians, Georgians, Lazes and Turks. By sheer necessity, the Grand Comneni pursued an inclusive internal policy and overlooked Romanity as the defining characteristic of their state. Consequently, their political and religious edifices combined architectural and decorative principles culled from Byzantine written sources with many expressions of local creativity. By refusing to build their capital on the principle of Byzantine exclusivism, the Grand Comneni, an ethnic minority in their own realm, ensured a fairly high rate of approval among their subjects.[110]

The extent to which the Trapezuntine diverse ethnic milieu was also reflected in the literary output of the thirteenth century remains unknown. No writing produced at the court of the Grand Comneni in that period has survived. Because of that, we are equally uninformed on the main features of the imperial propaganda that used the written word as its medium. In all likelihood, dynastic continuity figured high in the Grand Comneni's rhetoric of legitimacy. Alexius I and his brother were direct descendants of a Comnenian emperor, family who had ruled Byzantium competently for most of the twelfth century.[111] The echoes of this assumed imperial connection reached as far as Nicaea, where it was acknowledged but not welcomed.

[110] Eastmond, *Art and Identity*, see esp. ch. 8, p. 139-151, and the concluding remarks on p. 154-156.
[111] The importance given by the Grand Comneni to their imperial connections is discussed by Nikolaos Oikonomides, "The Chancery of the Grand Comnenoi: Imperial tradition and Political Reality," *Αρχεῖον Πόντου/Archeion Pontou* 35 (1978) 299-332, here at 322-324, and Ruth Macrides, "What's in the name 'Megas Komnenos'?," *Αρχεῖον Πόντου/ Archeion Pontou* 35 (1978) 238-245. For the ways in which the enmity between the Comneni of Trebizond and Lascaris of Nicaea affected the use of titles, see Odysseus Lampsidis, "*La rivalité* entre l'état des Grands Comnènes et celui de Nicée. A propos de l'héritage de l'idée byzantine," *Actes du XVe Congrès international des études byzantines v. 4* (Athens, 1980) 186-191.

Pro-Nicene Byzantine sources rarely deigned to mention the two brothers, but when they did, it was with the appellatives 'grandsons of Andronicus I Comnenus,' 'progenies of the son of the Roman tyrant,' or the less considerate 'the snake's posterity' - with the implication that as grandfather Andronicus I had been an awful emperor who suffered an awful end, so the two would finish their imperial adventure equally awfully.[112] Even with its negative connotations, the blood relationship to a legitimate and overall well-regarded line of Byzantine emperors was a strong political argument in favor of the Grand Comneni. However, it does not seem to have been enough.

Seals of David Comnenus as well as paintings preserved in the Church of Saint Sophia built by Manuel I Comnenus show a sustained effort to tie Trebizond's rulers to the anointed kings of the Old Testament, as a way of visually enhancing their claim that rebuilding the Byzantine Empire in northeastern Anatolia enjoyed full divine support.[113] The *translatio imperii* was too daring an initiative to be undertaken by appealing solely to the immediate, Comnenian past; invoking biblical precedents allowed the Trapezuntine rulers to place themselves in the tradition of divinely-chosen and ordained monarchs. It was God who had been in charge of selecting the next generation of *basileis* and the new location of the *basileia*, acts which came to complete the divine punitive intervention against Constantinople.

Like the Latins, the Grand Comneni of Trebizond could easily justify the loss of the city and all it had stood for as God's punishment. Unlike the Latins though, they would pin the blame on the Angeli, the unscrupulous aristocrats who had usurped the throne from the Comneni in 1185, only to lose it to the crusaders in 1204. Once God's wrath abated, a new empire could arise out of the ashes, centered on a city with historical ties to Byzantium but not involved in the

[112] Sergei Karpov, "The Black Sea Region, before and after the Fourth Crusade," in Laiou ed., *Urbs Capta*, 285-294; A. A. *Vasiliev*, "*Mesarites as a source*," *Speculum* 13.2 (1938) 180–182.
[113] Bryer, "David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios," 166; Eastmond, *Art and Identity*, 144-146.

corruption and excesses of the previous one. Trebizond fit the bill quite well: a former provincial capital adequately exposed to Byzantine culture and politics, it was far enough from Constantinople to not have been tainted by its wicked ways, and made an important point of communication between the Middle East, Caucasus and Western Anatolia.[114] To consolidate even further their position at a local level, the Grand Comneni enlisted the help of an indigenous saint, Eugenius, who became the patron saint of the state. Eugenius was honored with an imperial cult, festivals, churches built in his name, and his image was represented on the silver coins issued by Manuel I and later emperors.[115]

Despite all these appeals to earthly and heavenly authorities, Trebizond failed to turn into the empire that the Grand Comneni had hoped to create. The Seljuq advance into the Pontus area severed Trebizond from the key developments in Western Asia Minor and Thrace. With no contribution to the political and military exchanges between the other claimants of the imperial title, the Grand Comneni had even less to say in religious matters. It was the duty of the *basileus* to defend and promote the interests of Christendom, but the ruler of Trebizond could barely ensure the safety of his own Christian subjects when the Seljuqs and Mongols attacked his territory. Nor could he secure a powerful Church for his realm. Byzantine political practice required that the emperor worked in close cooperation with the patriarch, whose task was to oversee ecclesiastical affairs within and without the *basileia.* The patriarch's jurisdiction reached

[114] On the earlier history of Trebizond see Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 308-315.
[115] On Eugenius see Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 329-331; Karpov, "The Black Sea Region," 288-290. Striking coins was an imperial prerogative; the first Trapezuntine emperor to do so seems to have been Andronicus I Gidus, from whose time period a number of copper coins have survived – vid. D.M. Metcalf and I.T. Roper, "A Hoard of Copper Trachea of Andronicus I of Trebizond (1222-35)," *Numismatic Circular* 83 (1975) 237-239 and S. Bendall, "Andronicus I of Trebizond," *Numismatic Circular* 88 (1980) 400-401. Manuel is the first to have issued silver coins, in the beginning with the Virgin on the observe, soon replaced with the standing figure of St. Eugenius. On Manuel's coinage, see Michael F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c.300-1450* (Cambridge, 1995) 522-523; Michel Kuršanskis, "The Coinage of the Grand Komnenos Manuel I," *Αρχεῖον Πόντου/ Archeion Pontou* 35 (1978) 23-37.

much further away than the boundaries of the Byzantine Empire, and often he and his clergy at Saint Sophia were sent by the emperor on diplomatic missions.

The highest hierarch to whom the ruler of Trebizond had access was the local metropolitan, whose jurisdiction did not extend beyond his diocese. The metropolitan had no control over bishops who were not his direct subordinates, nor could he exact obedience from ecclesiastics or princes who lived outside Trebizond. In this significant area of imperial power, the Grand Comneni were and remained powerless. Even if they sought to acquire the independence of the Church in their territory, and denied to the patriarch of Constantinople the right to make appointments for Trapezuntine sees, without the authority to interfere in religious matters outside their state, they could hardly compete with their adversary in Nicaea, who had secured a patriarch, a synod, and all the benefits that came from working side by side with the highest ecclesiastical authorities of the Byzantine world.[116]

Limited as the scope of the Trapezuntine power was, it did produce some unexpected results after Michael VIII Palaiologus assumed the imperial title in 1258 and closed in on Constantinople, with clear chances of capturing it and making it again the capital of the Byzantine Empire. In 1260, Michael VIII began negotiations with Manuel I Grand Comnenus of Trebizond (1238-1263) in order to persuade him to drop the title of *basileus ton Rhomaion* and accept as a fact his lower ranking position in the political order of the day. No imperial family, however well-established and appreciated by its contemporaries, could contend successfully from afar against the man who was about to return Constantinople to the Byzantines. With the Queen of Cities back as the political and spiritual center of Byzantium, the prospects of having

[116] We have little information on the Trapezuntine church prior to 1261, but its relationship with Nicaea was likely strained, given the political rivalry between the two Byzantine states in Anatolia; see Lampsidis, "*La rivalité* entre l'état des Grands Comnènes et celui de Nicée," 190. Some documents point to an early refusal of David Grand Comnenus to recognize the authority of the Byzantine patriarch residing at Nicaea, preferring his own nominee for the bishopric of Amastris. For sources and context, see Bryer, "David Komnenos and Saint Eleutherios," 180.

any other state recognized as an authentic version of the Byzantine Empire were virtually non-existent. To appease his Trapezuntine rival whom history pushed into a secondary role (at best), Michael VIII proposed a marriage alliance between the two ruling families. In his turn, Manuel I pressed for the recognition of Trebizond's ecclesiastical autonomy.[117] Although not a standard procedure, Patriarch Nicephorus II (1260-1261) had to acquiesce, since it was already a *fait accompli* and denying it would have only upset a party which needed to become well-disposed towards the military successes of the Nicene emperor.

In the official document issued by the patriarch and the synod, it was granted that, on account of the "hazards of travelling" through Asia Minor, the metropolitan of Trebizond could be elected by the local authorities rather than by the patriarch, and ordained in his city by a patriarchal representative, rather than come to get his episcopal consecration from the hands of the patriarch. The metropolitan could continue to appoint bishops in his diocese, but not outside it. He was categorically forbidden to ordain metropolitans or archbishops in the neighboring dioceses (a patriarchal prerogative), as was the ruler of Trebizond forbidden to create new metropolitan or archiepiscopal sees in his state (an imperial prerogative).[118] The metropolitan had to make a profession of faith before the patriarch's representative at ordination, and then to mention the patriarch's name in all prayers and liturgical offices. The decision attempted to reconcile canon law with ecclesiastical reality: it demanded that the metropolitan acknowledged his superior and no longer considered secession as an option, but at the same time recognized the

[117] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1351 (January 1, 1261), p. 153-155. The document was issued by the patriarch and synod just a few months before the recovery of Constantinople; Greek text with commentary on its significance in Louis Petit, "*Acte synodal du patriarche Nicéphore II* sur les *privilèges du métropolitain de Trébizonde," Izvestiia Russkago Arkheologicheskago* (1903) *163-171.*

[118] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, 155. Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon entrusted the ordination of all metropolitans and archbishops of the dioceses of Asia, Pontus and Thrace to the patriarch of Constantinople, who was also to ordain bishops in the dioceses located in territories outside the empire. Political necessity had forced the patriarch previously to relinquish some of his privileges in Bulgaria (autonomous twice) and Serbia (Peč), and now he had to make some concessions in order to accommodate the church in Trebizond.

status-quo (the autonomy of the see of Trebizond). It was a significant gain for Manuel I Grand Comnenus, particularly since the proposed marriage alliance with the Palaiologoi did not take place, and he held on to his imperial title.

The change in the status of the Trapezuntine rulers came two decades later, in 1282, when Manuel's son and successor, John II Grand Comnenus (1280-1297), married the daughter of Michael VIII Palaiologus and agreed to stop calling himself 'emperor and autocrat of the Romans.' Initially, John II had been in quite a strong position vis-à-vis Michael VIII, whose unionist policies had thrown the Byzantine world into turmoil. Those who resented the Union with Rome proclaimed at the Second Council of Lyons (1272-1274) did not hesitate to recognize the ruler of Trebizond, who was upholding Orthodoxy against the 'heresies' of the Roman Church, as the true Byzantine emperor.[119] But Michael VIII was too seasoned a politician to allow the young and unexperienced 'prince of the Lazes,' as John II was labeled by the Byzantine authorities, to escape his grasp. He sent able diplomats (among them, the historian Acropolites and Xiphilinus, the grand oikonomos of the Hagia Sophia) to Trebizond, to pressure John II into forming a marriage alliance and accepting his modified political status.[120] The Grand Comnenus finally gave in and became Michael VIII's son-in-law. He still considered himself *basileus*, albeit a minor one when compared to the 'Roman' one: John II was now 'emperor of all the East, Iberia and Perateia.' The title of course had no correspondence in the immediate reality. Trebizond ruled over a very small part, not 'all' of the East, Iberia had been lost by Andronicus II to the Georgians in the 1230s, and Perateia, or the 'land beyond the sea,' comprised the Crimean regions of Cherson (southwest) and Kerch (east) over which the Grand Comneni had

[119] Ludwig Schopen and Barthold Niehbuhr eds., *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* (Bonn 1829, 1830, 1855) V.2.4, v. 1, p. 128 [hereafter Gregoras, *Historia*]; Luke Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, vol.V ad ann.1276 (Rome 1733) 65-67.
[120] Georges Pachymérès, *Relations historiques*, Greek text with French trans. by Albert Failler and Vitalien Laurent (Paris 1984) VI.34, v. 2, p. 652-659; also Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 345-348; Miller, *Trebizond*, 27-29.

only limited control (the peninsula having been overrun by Mongols in the 1240s).[121] John II and his successors continued to bear the title nonetheless, since it enhanced their prestige on a local level; they also wore on the imperial insignia, including the purple robes, on which a one-headed eagle was now embroidered, rather than the two-headed eagle symbolizing 'Roman' imperial power.[122] Trebizond itself remained a Byzantine state in its institutional and administrative makeup, but its geographical remoteness and its concern with predominantly regional matters did not allow it to have a bearing on the evolution of events in and around Constantinople. Trebizond developed into an Anatolian political entity only loosely connected through political and matrimonial alliances to the Byzantine Empire on the Bosporus. Even if the Grand Comneni's attempt to rebuild the Byzantine *basileia* in the distant Pontic setting failed, the state that they had created in 1204 endured self-reliantly for over two centuries, until it was absorbed, in 1461, into the Ottoman Empire.

The conquest of Constantinople in 1204 and the subsequent breakdown of the Byzantine Empire pushed Northeastern Mediterranean politics into unchartered territory. Several leadership formulas were tried and found wanting. The Latin Empire sought to replicate the Western imperial model, but at the same time had to adapt to local expectations and realities. In the end, it neither articulated a political framework able to capitalize on the huge momentum created by the conquest of Constantinople, nor became a viable substitute to Byzantium. Its efforts to acquire hegemony in the region were quickly eroded by constant warfare with neighbors, by the refusal of its vassals to give priority to imperial concerns over local interests, and by poor leadership. The papal resolve to achieve ecclesiastical control and political predominance over an area in which it traditionally had played a marginal role failed to find many enthusiasts in the Greek and

[121] Oikonomides, "The Chancery of the Grand Comnenoi," 321-330.
[122] Finlay, *Empire of Trebizond*, 347-348.

Slavic-speaking communities. It remained a vision shared by few outside the Church of Rome, sometimes imposed through political pressure but never garnering the support needed to overcome local bitterness and opposition to ecclesiastical reunion. The ousted Byzantine emperors and the Bulgarian tsar tried without success to recover Constantinople, while members of the Byzantine elite endeavored to recreate the Byzantine Empire in exile, refashioning its key institutions (imperial office, patriarchal see in exile, senate, administration, standing army) outside the city which had been its vital core. Although each of these aspiring empires at some point or other in their history posed threats to the Latins who had occupied Constantinople, geographical location, regional developments and intelligent military and political strategies allowed only the Lascarids' state in Nicaea to emerge as heir of the Byzantine Empire.

CHAPTER 4. MEDITERRANEAN GREEK EMPIRES: NICAEA AND EPIRUS

4.1. Refashioning Byzantium in Exile. The Lascarid Venture

The Grand Comneni of Trebizond were not the only Byzantine aristocrats with a vision of restoration and renewal. Their key adversary in Anatolia, Theodore I Lascaris, also sought to recreate the Byzantine Empire in exile. His version was to be centered on Nicaea, and in his case both geography and history concurred to turn ideals into reality. To his advantage Lascaris had the location of his principality, in the proximity of Constantinople, the reputation of Nicaea as a city with firm Christian roots, and the fact that most of the imperial court officers and clerks, army leaders, and high-ranking ecclesiastics had joined him there, so that he had a significant reservoir of manpower to draw on for his military forces, civil and legal administration, and church affairs.[1] Moreover, he had already acquired the title of despot from Alexius III, when he had married the emperor's daughter Anna in 1189. To some degree, being a member of the imperial family paved Lascaris' way towards acceptance by the Byzantine elite. He reconstituted the imperial bureaucracy, the tribunal, the senate, a standing army and the leading ecclesiastical structures with relative ease.

However, Lascaris did have his share of challenges from within as well. At first he had to use Prusa (Bursa) as a base of operation, since the citizens of Nicaea did not welcome him in their midst, nor were other cities in Bithynia ready to switch allegiance from the still living ex-emperor Alexius III to his son-in-law, whose actions smacked of rebellion and usurpation.

[1] For a brief introduction to Nicaea as the most competent among the successor states of the Byzantine Empire, see Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1969) 427-434. Michael Angold, *A Bzyantine Government in Exile* (Oxford, 1975) investigates Nicene administrative, economic, religious, and social realities. There is no recent study of the Lascarids, but Alice Gardner's *The Lascarids of Nicaea. The Story of an Empire in Exile* (London, 1912) is still a reliable survey of the dynasty. The political and military career of John III Vatatzes is discussed by John S. Langdon, "John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Empire in Anatolian Exile," PhD Diss. (University of California, Los Angeles, 1978). An older monograph on Theodore II Lascaris is by Jean B. Pappadopoulos, *Théodore II Lascaris, empereur de Nicée* (Paris, 1908).

Lascaris seems to have tried to persuade them of his good intentions by claiming that he was acting on behalf of his father-in-law.[2] At the same time, several Byzantine magnates in the western of Asia Minor took advantage of the mayhem created by the crusaders and asserted themselves as independent rulers. Of these, noteworthy were Manuel Maurozomes, father-in-law and ally of Sultan Kay Khusraw, who held Phrygia and occupied the Maeander valley as well; Theodore Mankaphas, proclaimed emperor twice, first in 1188, then again in 1204, both times with no real consequence upon the course of Byzantine history, who held Philadelphia and several neighboring cities in Lydia; and Sabbas Asidenos, a local aristocrat who took over Sampson (on the Aegean shore) and the lower valley of the Maeander river.[3] But the most serious Byzantine resistance to Lascaris' rule in Asia Minor came from the East, namely from the Grand Comneni of Trebizond. While Lascaris managed to deal effectively with the minor Anatolian rulers by the end of 1205, it took him ten years to annihilate the Trapezuntine threat.

Likewise, Lascaris needed many years, resources and battles to finally put a stop to the Latins' advance into Asia Minor. After the capture of Constantinople, the victors divided the territory of the Byzantine Empire (yet to be conquered) among themselves: the Latin Emperor received one fourth of it, the Venetians three eighths, and the crusading barons and counts the remaining three eighths. In Asia Minor, Emperor Baldwin was to be master of Mysia, Bithynia (without Nicaea), Paphlagonia and Pontus; Nicaea itself went to Louis of Blois; the emperor's

[2] Nicetas Choniates, "Oration 14," p. 131.12-132.6, in I. A. van Dieten ed., *Orationes et epistulae* (Berlin and New York, 1972); George Acropolites, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg with corrections by P. Wirth (Stuttgart, 1978), English trans. by Ruth Macrides, *The History* (Oxford, 2007) c. 6-7 with footnotes, p.117-123 [hereafter Acropolites, *History*]. See also Macrides' commentary in the "Introduction" to Acropolites' history, p. 81-83, and idem, "1204: the Greek Sources," in Angeliki Laiou ed., *Urbs capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences* (Paris, 2005) 141-150. Geoffrey of Villehardouin, "Conquest of Constantinople," in Margaret R. B. Shaw trans., *Chronicles of the Crusades* (London, 2009) 110.

[3] Harry J. Magoulias trans., *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates* (Detroit, 1984) c. 626 and 638, p. 343 and 350; Greek text in Jan Louis van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae Historiae* (Berlin, 1975) [hereafter Choniates, *Annals*]. Acropolites, *History* 7, 119-120. Theodore's early quest for legitimacy in Anatolia is discussed by John S. Langdon, "The Image of Thirteenth-Century Anatolian-Byzantine βασιλεῖς as Warriors," in *Text and Tradition: Studies in Greek History and Historiography in Honor of Mortimer Chambers*, eds. Ronald Mellor and Lawrence Trittle (Claremont, CA, 1999) 303-328, at 305-308.

brother, Henry of Flanders, got Adramyttium (a seaport in south Mysia); and Stephen of Perche was granted Philadelphia (in Lydia). [4] Lascaris himself targeted these very same areas. In November 1204, the crusaders set out across the straits to take possession of their Anatolian lands.[5] Lascaris was determined to prevent them, but the initial confrontations were definitely not in his favor: he or his allies suffered utter defeated at Pegai in November 1204, at Poimanenum in December 1204, and in Adramyttium in March 1205.[6] The Latins seized control of northwestern Asia Minor; however, the troubles caused by the Bulgarian tsar in Thrace forced them to temporarily call off their Anatolian offensive.[7] This gave Lascaris the necessary respite to fight his Byzantine rivals in western Anatolia and push David Comnenus back into

[4] See Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 108.The Latin text of the agreement reached by the crusaders and the Venetians on the territorial division of Byzantium, with commentary, is in Antonio Carile, "Partitio terrarum imperii Romaniae," *Studi veneziani* 7 (1965) 125-305. For further bibliography, see supra n. 23 at 162.

[5] This was not a coordinated attack on Asia Minor; rather, the barons went in person or sent out their knights to seize the territories awarded to them and whatever else they could capture on the way. Louis of Blois, the duke of Nicaea, dispatched his knights under the leadership of Peter of Bracieux and Payen of Orléans on All Saints' Day (November 1); he himself never set foot in Asia. His knights crossed the Straits of Abydos from the Gallipoli peninsula to the town of Abydos, and from there moved east along the coast to Pegai (Spiga), the site of a first and successful encounter with the Byzantines. They continued their march towards Nicaea going to Cyzicus, then inland to Poimanenum, where they again engaged and defeated a contingent of the Byzantine army, then attacked and took Lopadion (Lopadium) and Apollonia. The knights also besieged but failed to take the city of Prusa. Henry, the Latin emperor's brother, set sail on Saint Martin's Day (November 11), crossed the straits and took Abydos, then marched southward towards Adramyttium, where he battled and crushed the Byzantine troops led by Lascaris' brother, Constantine. Baldwin I sent about one hundred knights under Macaire de Saint-Menehould to fight for his lands in Bithynia; the warriors met with no resistance when attacking Nicomedia, settled in the city and from there began their own war against the Byzantines. Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 108-112; Choniates, *Annals* c. 602-603, p. 330-331; Choniates, "Oration 14," p. 132 ll.7–8; Acropolites, *History* 7, p. 120; Robert de Clari, *Conquest of Constantinople*, English trans. by Edgar Holmes McNeal (New York, 1936) c. 111, p. 125 **[**Old French edition with modern French trans. is in Robert de Clari, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. and trans. by Jean Dufournet (Paris, 2004)].

[6] Choniates, *Annals* c. 602-604, p. 330-331; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 108-112. Choniates's account of the Battle of Adramyttium (c. 604) has the 'emperor' Theodore Mankaphas leading the Greeks into battle against the Latins, and winning it. Villehardouin has Theodore Lascaris sending his brother Constantine at the head of an army which was thoroughly defeated by the Latins. Korobeinikov suggests that Theodore Lascaris himself did not take part in any of the clashes of spring 1205 between the Byzantines and the Latins (Adramyttium, Prusa, Nicomedia), as he was visiting the sultan of Rum, Kay Khusraw, in an attempt to strike an alliance with him in order to get military assistance against both Latins and Byzantine rivals in western Anatolia; see Dimitri Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 2014) 55 and 136. Acropolites mentions in passing an agreement through which Lascaris 'accomplished his aim' (*History* c. 6, p. 118; c. 8, p. 124); see also Choniates, "Oration 14," p. 132 ll.21–28, where a reference is made to an alliance between the two, which should have taken place prior to Lascaris' war with Maurozomes, the father-in-law of the sultan.

[7] Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 116-117.

Paphlagonia;[8] and in between battles, to promote himself to imperial status.

The Byzantine sources mentioning the assumption of the imperial title place the move in the context of Lascaris' efforts to curb the autonomist tendencies of his Byzantine neighbors. The hasty departure of the crusaders and the alliance struck in the spring of 1205 with the sultan of Iconium allowed him to give undivided attention to the threats coming from fellow-seekers of glory, power and preeminence in Asia Minor. According to Acropolites, Lascaris had begun his Anatolian exploits in 1203, when his father-in-law had been expelled from his city, and thus before the fall of Constantinople to the crusaders. By 1205, he had sufficiently enlarged his power base so as to have himself proclaimed *basileus* by the military, civil aristocracy and ecclesiastics gathered at Nicaea. Acropolites also has Lascaris crowned on this occasion by Patriarch Michael Autorianus - which was not possible, since the latter was appointed patriarch only in the spring of 1208.[9] But no aspirant to the imperial title could rightfully bear it without a patriarch sanctioning the move through a coronation ceremony, and John X Camaterus, the patriarch still alive in 1205, had declined to get involved. Acropolites might have made a clumsy attempt to build a case for Lascaris' legitimacy starting right then in 1205, even if the two events of proclamation and coronation were separated by three years in which few paid attention to Lascaris' imperial claims.[10] Choniates mentions the proclamation in passing, while decrying the

[8] Choniates, *Annals* c. 625, p.342-343. Lascaris defeated Theodore Mankaphas and took him prisoner in the spring of 1205. In the summer of the same year he overran Sabbas' territory and the latter seems to have chosen to submit rather than fight on; he even married into Lascaris' family and obtained the title of *sebastocrator*. Granting of titles was the typical Byzantine way of ensuring the loyalty of dependent princes and kings. Later in 1205 Lascaris overcame Manuel Maurozomes and his Turkish allies, and in the spring of 1206 he signed a peace treaty with Sultan Kay Khusraw, Maurozomes' father-in-law. See Choniates, *Annals* c. 640-641, p. 351-352; also Angold, *Byzantine Government*, 61-62; Warren Treadgold, *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997) 713-714. On Lascaris' war against David Comenus, see George Finlay, *Medieval Greece and the Empire of Trebizond* (Oxford, 1877) 321-322.

[9] Acropolites, *History* c. 7, p.119-121.

[10] The historian might have been misinformed; he made the same error when discussing the proclamation and coronation of Theodore Ducas in 1225, two distinct events treated as one. He might have talked based on his own (later) experience, when emperors were proclaimed, crowned and anointed at the same time. See Filip van Tricht, *The Latin Renovatio of Byzantium. The Empire of Constantinople (1204–1228)* (Leiden, 2011) 351-352, 359-362.

fate that befell the Byzantine Empire, overrun by crusaders and torn apart by wars between various Byzantine factions. In his opinion, the Anatolian pretenders to the throne, Manuel Maurozomes, Theodore Lascaris and Alexius Comnenus, formed together a 'polyarchy,' 'a three-headed monster' made up of three foolish men.[11] Instead of joining forces to expel the Latin enemy, they fought one another and vainly hoped for an office to which they were not entitled. For Choniates, the proclamation of yet another *basileus* in Asia Minor was not an earth-shattering event; it was just one more piece in the Byzantine mechanism of self-destruction set in motion by the crusaders.

For Lascaris himself though, the proclamation - even without a coronation - proved useful, even if not entirely fruitful. The event took place in the summer of 1205, after he had the lesser enemies (Mankaphas and Sabbas) out of the way, and before he launched his full-scale attacks against the main opponents, Manuel Maurozomes and David Comnenus. The assumption of the imperial title brought him the political and military prominence necessary to garner support for the wars of major significance. Later in 1205, Lascaris overcame Manuel Maurozomes and his Turkish allies, and forced David Comnenus to withdraw from Bithynia to Heracleia Pontica in Paphlagonia.[12] The victories increased his prestige at a local level, but not beyond it. His emperorship also remained acknowledged at a local level only. His Trapezuntine counterpart fought him back, while the various Balkan contenders were caught in their own conflicts and paid little heed to what was happening in Asia Minor. The Latins had no need for a

[11] "θηρίον τρικάρηνον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀβελτέρων διαλεχθέν," Choniates c. 625, p. 343. The historian refrained from calling Lascaris or any other pretender 'emperor'. Only Alexius III received the imperial title, sometimes qualified by 'wretched.'

[12] In the spring of 1206, Lascaris signed a treaty with Sultan Kay Khusraw, which ceded to Maurozomes, the sultan's father-in-law, a generous portion of the upper valley of the Meander, including the cities of Chonae and Laodicea. See Choniates, *Annals* c. 626 and 639, p. 343 and 350; also Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 61-62; Treadgold, *Byzantine State and Society*, 713-714. David Comenus was trying to reach Nicaea with his army, but its commander, Synadenus, was defeated by Lascaris and forced to withdraw from Bithynia. Vid. Choniates, *Annals* c. 640-641, p. 351-352.

Byzantine emperor; they were having a hard time keeping their own on the throne. The Latin historians of the fourth crusade seem to have not been apprised of Lascaris' move, or if they were, they did not consider it worth mentioning. When they talked about Lascaris, no title accompanied his name.[13] As for the Byzantine magnates, those in Thrace had sided with Tsar Kaloyan and were assisting him in the war against the Latin emperor, while those in Greece were busy carving out territories for themselves and warding off the crusaders. One more claimant of the imperial title in distant Anatolia was irrelevant to their local struggles.

While the Balkan turmoil might have made the news on Lascaris' proclamation seem of no immediate consequence, it is unclear whether Lascaris himself was informed of the latest developments in the peninsula, and whether these had any bearing on his suing for the Byzantine throne. In late 1204 or early 1205, ex-emperor Alexius III had lost his imperial insignia to Boniface of Montserrat, who sent the purple boots and the imperial robes to Baldwin I at Constantinople; Alexius was arrested and imprisoned.[14] In April 1205, the Bulgarians had crushed the Latin armies at Adrianople and taken Baldwin I, the Latin emperor, into captivity; he died (or more likely was put to death) shortly afterwards.[15] In the space of a few months, Lascaris' major European foes had ended up in the dustbin of history, but even if aware of this, he could not capitalize on the state of confusion which subsequently prevailed in the Balkans. Apart from declaring himself the *basileus ton Rhomaion* and hoping for recognition at least among some of the Greeks in Thrace and Greece, he could do nothing. His military power did

[13] Villehardouin never calls Lascaris emperor, and neither does Choniates, both contemporary with the man and his coronation. See van Tricht, *Latin renovatio*, 356-358.
[14] Two historians mention the capture of ex-emperor Alexius III, although the details differ. Vid. Villehardouin , *Conquest of Constantinople*, 109, the marquis stripped Alexius of his insignia and dispatched him to Montferrat, in northwestern Italy. Choniates, *Annals* c. 612, p. 335, asserts that the ex-emperor exchanged the imperial insignia for a ration of bread and an allowance of wine, and was imprisoned in Halmyros, Thessaly; in c. 620, p. 339, Alexius was sent by Boniface farther away, "across the sea to the ruler of the Germans."
[15] Choniates, *Annals* c. 616-617, p. 337; Villehardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 122.

not stretch to the opposite shore of the Bosporus.[16] Furthermore, the crusaders recovered quickly from the shocking loss of their first emperor of Constantinople and made Henry of Flanders, Baldwin's brother, their new emperor. He continued the anti-Bulgarian offensive, with more success than his brother. At first, he paid less attention to Lascaris, whom he saw as an ambitious local ruler who dreamed bigger than his circumstances warranted.

In late 1206, Henry of Flanders resumed the Latin campaigns in Asia Minor, but the Balkan front once more required the presence of a large Latin contingent to wage war against Tsar Kaloyan. Henry decided that preserving territory in Europe was more important than adding Anatolian cities and towns to his empire. In early 1207, he signed a two-year truce with Lascaris, retaining under Latin control only Nicomedia, Cyzicus and several fortresses, and returned with his army to Thrace.[17] Lascaris again had Asia Minor for himself, and he tried to make the most of it, strengthening his rule in the western provinces and fighting against David Comenus in Paphlagonia. He also struck an alliance with the Bulgarian tsar, in the hope that together they could expel the Latins from Constantinople, but the partnership bore no fruit. Kaloyan was killed by one of his own Cuman allies in the fall of 1207, while attacking Thessalonica (whose ruler, Boniface of Montserrat, had just been slain in an ambush by Bulgarian soldiers). The next tsar, Boril (1207-1218), was weakened by internal divisions and rebellions, and proved no match for the Latins. In 1208 his forces were crushed at Philippopolis by Henry's army, and afterwards Boril no longer posed a real danger to the Latin Empire.

[16] Choniates, *Annals* c. 625, p. 342 accuses the Byzantines in Asia Minor of ignoring the plight of their brothers in Thrace, allowing the Latins to ravage their territories. "The indifference of the Romans in the East for their suffering compatriots, and their total neglect and obliviousness, were intolerable; they provided, moreover, neither monetary nor military assistance to the western cities. The Latins withdrew from Asia and ravaged Thrace, which alone risked everything to win freedom for the Romans."
[17] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 353.

The Latin emperor's Balkan predicament, however, did not end with his victory over the Bulgarian tsar. In 1208-1209, Henry had to deal with the 'Lombard rebellion' of the Italian crusaders, who were trying to impose their own man on the vacant throne of Thessalonica, and with the rising star of Epirus, Michael I Comnenus Ducas Angelus (1204-1214/15), the cousin of ex-emperor Alexius III, who was seriously threatening the crusaders' possessions in mainland Greece. By means of negotiations, threats of war and war, the Latin emperor restored the minor son of Boniface to the throne of Thessalonica, with the queen mother as a regent, overcame the Lombard barons who had taken refuge southward into Greece, and engaged Michael I Ducas successfully, but not decisively. In an effort to contain the ruler of Epiros, whose armies seemed ready to spill over into Macedonia and Thessaly, Henry had his brother Eustace marry Michael's daughter.[18] Then finally, in early 1210, he left for a new campaign in Asia Minor, only to find out that once again his presence was required in the Balkans, where Michael I Ducas had not been effectively contained and as a result arrived with his forces at the walls of Thessalonica.

Theodore Lascaris, while still unable to influence the events in the Balkans, greatly benefitted from them, since they let him expand into Asia Minor with no fear of a forceful return of the Latin armies. What is more, he was able to extract great political advantages from Patriarch John Camaterus' demise in 1206 and Emperor Henry's decision not to interfere in the ecclesiastical affairs of his Byzantine subjects. Even if the leadership provided by Camaterus had been only nominal after his self-imposed exile in Thrace, his death meant that the Greeks were left without a recognized spiritual leader and thus exposed to increased papal pressures to submit themselves to the Church of Rome. Emperor Henry, unlike the Byzantine emperors of the past but in true Western tradition, was not interested in, and perhaps also not accustomed to,

[18] A survey of these developments in Greece is in John V. A. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, 1997) 65-69; Apostolos D. *Karpozilos, The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epirus, 1217-1233* (Thessalonica, 1973) 33-39.

providing direction in religious matters, in which he gladly deferred to the pope. Pope Innocent III refused to allow the Greek hierarchs still residing in Constantinople to choose their next patriarch, urging them to acknowledge the Latin patriarch as their new and lawful shepherd. The Greeks instead appealed to Lascaris for help. Institutionally as well as geographically, he was the closest to holding a leading position in the Byzantine Church and the most susceptible to acting in its interest: he had been proclaimed emperor by his troops in 1206 (even if few had taken the act seriously at the time) and lived across the Bosphorus, at Nicaea, making communication and even relocation easier. Lascaris saw in the appeal the opportunity of his lifetime: he invited the leading bishops and monks to come to Nicaea and elect a new patriarch there, under his protection - which they did during the Lent of 1208. Then, on Easter Sunday, he had himself crowned emperor.[19] It was a decisive move for his political future, and likewise for the reconstitution of Byzantine identity outside Constantinople.

The two pillars which had supported Byzantine society throughout its long history were thus reinstated, but not everyone rushed to acclaim them. The circumstances in which they had been reestablished were questionable, as was their outcome. Appointing a patriarch of Constantinople outside the see itself and with no prospects of recovering that see anytime soon, by a synod that likewise met outside its customary residence and was made up of whatever bishops chanced to be present in Nicaea, was uncanonical, as was the confirmation given to the appointment by someone not yet crowned emperor. The coronation of Lascaris as the Byzantine *basileus* also rested on shaky ground, since it took place outside Constantinople and was performed by a patriarch whose position was irregular. But then, the entire context in which the Byzantines found themselves after 1204 was highly irregular, so those benefitting from the

[19] Vitalien Laurent, "La chronologie des patriarches de Constantinople au XIIIe siècle (1208-1309)," *Revue des études byzantines* 27 (1969) 129-150, here at 131-133.

recent developments could easily invoke in their support the ecclesiastical principle of *oikonomia* (prudent adjustment of canon law to the needs created by exceptional circumstances, with the goal of attainting a higher spiritual good).[20]

The history of previous centuries provided the churchmen and statesmen gathered at Nicaea with enough precedents of 'economy' by which they could justify their actions. After the crusaders' conquest of the Near East and the subsequent installation of Latin patriarchs in Antioch (1098) and Jerusalem (1099), the Greek patriarchs of these sees were as a rule elected and lived in exile in Constantinople. The most famous case was that of the twelfth-century canonist Theodore Balsamon, born and educated in Constantinople, who resided in the city his entire life, including the decade in which he was appointed and functioned as patriarch of Antioch (ca. 1185-1195). The situation created by the crusades in the high Middle Ages was not new. In its early centuries, the Byzantine Empire had been confronted with recurrent invasions, and the Church had allowed the bishops and metropolitans who had lost their sees as a consequence of war and foreign occupation to seek refuge in the capital and carry out their liturgical and pastoral duties there, with no reduction in authority or infringement upon the validity of their office.[21]

The existence of past norms and practices vis-à-vis the high-ranking clergy living in exile made it easier for the new patriarch of Constantinople, Manuel Autorianus, to gain general acceptance among its subjects. His transfer to the city of Nicaea was understood only as a

[20] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 90-91; Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 19-27. On *oikonomia* see P. Rodopoulos, "*Oikonomia* nach orthodoxem Kirchenrecht," *Österreichisches Archiv für Kirchenrecht* 36 (1986) 223-231; Gilbert Dagron, "La règle et l'exception: Analyse de la notion d'économie," in D. Simon ed., *Religiöse Devianz* (Frankfurt, 1990) 1-18.

[21] Canon 37, Council of Trullo, Latin text in Heinz Ohme ed., *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium Quinisextum)* in Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, Series Secunda II: Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Tertium, Pars 4 (Berlin and Boston, 2013) 40. English trans. by Henry R. Percival, "Canons of the Council of Trullo," in P. Schaff and H. Wace eds., *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, 14 vols. (repr. Grand Rapids MI, 1955) 14.356-408, here at 382-383.

provisional solution to the loss of access to Constantinople itself, not as a claim to the see of Nicaea, which had its own metropolitan. For all intents and purposes, the patriarch remained the archbishop of Constantinople, with the temporary residence in the monastery of Hyacinthus, where the synod also met.[22] A year after Autorianus' election, an unexpected recognition of his office came from the autocephalous Church of Cyprus, which requested the patriarch and his synod to confirm the archbishop elected by the clergy of the Latin-ruled island in 1205. The novelty lay in the fact that the Church of Cyprus had never been subject to the patriarch of Constantinople; jurisdictionally, it had belonged to the patriarchate of Antioch, from which it separated as an autonomous church in A.D. 431. Its archbishop was elected and confirmed by the Byzantine emperor. But in the aftermath of the fourth crusade, with no *basileus* available to take care of the ecclesiastical problems of Cyprus, the local bishops convened and appointed an archbishop of their own choice. They elected Isaac, the archbishop of Lydda, who had fled his see in Palestine when violence had increased in the area, and had taken refuge on the island. Aware of the uncanonical situation of their leader (transferred from one jurisdiction to another and appointed by the local church rather than the emperor), the Cypriotes appealed to the newly installed patriarch of Constantinople for confirmation, which was uncanonical as well. But in 1209, Lascaris' imperial status was still perceived as uncertain, while the patriarch's position, with no rivals to contest it and enough canonical precedents to sanction it, seemed secure. Autorianus and his synod of seventeen bishops confirmed the election of Isaac of Lydda as archbishop of Cyprus, invoking the principle of economy.[23] It was an authoritative and

[22] Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 29.
[23] Vitalien Laurent, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. IV. (Paris, 1971) no. 1210 (June 17, 1209), p. 11-12 [hereafter Laurent, *Regestes* IV], and Vitalien Laurent, "La succession épiscopale des derniers archevêques grecs de Chypre, de Jean le Crétois (1152) à Germain Pèsimandros (1260)," *Revue des études byzantines* 7 (1949) 33-41. Context discussed by Michael Angold, "Greeks and Latins after 1204: The Perspective of Exile," in Benjamin Arbel et al eds., *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean* (London, 1989) 63-85, at 72-73.

consequential act on the part of the patriarch, who thus established the credibility and validity of his office, despite its functioning in exile.[24] The appointment of the patriarch was Lascaris' finest move, as it enabled Nicaea to become the new center of Byzantine ecclesiastical power, and in time, given the close association between Church and state in Byzantine thought and practice, the new center of imperial power as well.

Lascaris did not fare as well as Autorianus. Even with a crown on his head and a patriarch at his side, he did not gain immediate and widespread recognition as emperor. Those who acknowledged him expected the coronation to be a prelude to future victories over the Latin usurpers. They believed in Lascaris, since he obviously had been crowned with full divine support. The Byzantine Empire, which was the best earthly reflection of God's heavenly kingdom, could only be rebuilt by an emperor sanctified through the coronation ceremony performed by the patriarch of Constantinople. It was the only way to ensure that the man who assumed the imperial title was indeed God's vicegerent on earth. Michael Choniates, the metropolitan of Athens living in exile on the island of Keos, hailed the crowned Lascaris as 'restorer of the fallen empire,' 'savior' and 'liberator.'[25] The metropolitan's brother Nicetas, the man of letters who after some hesitations had finally joined Lascaris at Nicaea, likened the new emperor to the Jewish leader Zorobabel leading back the exiles from Babylon to the Holy City.[26] However, Lascaris' victories over the Latins were slow in coming. Many Greeks had

[24] While solving the Cypriotes' critical need for an ecclesiastical leader, Autorianus' decision created a precedent of interference in a church that had hitherto been autonomous and had guarded jealously its independence from Constantinople. In the 1220s, when the Greeks of Cyprus were pressured by the Latins to submit to the papacy, and the Greek hierarchs vacillated between acceptance and opposition, the patriarch intervened in force threatening with excommunication if the clergy turned to Rome. Neophytus, the then archbishop of Cyprus, appealed to his superior, Emperor John III Vatatzes (partially recognized in the Mediterranean world as the Byzantine *basileus*), asking for help against the patriarch. The archbishop accused Patriarch Germanus II of creating unnecessary troubles for the islanders through his illegal interference in their affairs. See Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1250 (July 1229), 1251 (September 1229), 1252-1253 (c. 1231), p. 56-60, and Angold, "Greeks and Latins after 1204," 73.

[25] Michael Choniates, Letters 94 and 136, Greek text in Foteini Kolovou ed., *Michaelis Choniatae epistulae* (Berlin, 2001), 122-124, 222-223.

[26] Nicetas Choniates, "Oration 14," p. 147 l.6, and "Oration 16," p. 175 ll. 32-34. See Dimitri Angelov, "Ideological Responses to 1204 in Nicaea," in Laiou ed. *Urbs Capta*, 293-310, here at 297; van Tricht, *Latin renovatio*, 358.

reservations about his empire-in-the-making project. In 1208, he was still fighting the Grand Comneni, whose popularity and power in Asia Minor were greater than his. His Balkan impact was minimal. Lascaris understood the precariousness of his position, even within his own realm. To bolster support for his emperorship, he exacted an oath of fidelity from his relatives, from the army, provincial governors, magistrates and civil servants, from the residents of Nicaea and the Church.[27]

It had become customary for the Byzantine *basileis* to request and receive an oath of fidelity upon the assumption of the throne. The groups targeted were the army and the imperial officeholders, more liable to rebel or participate in plots against the new emperor, but at times Church hierarchs and even 'all subjects' (mainly the inhabitants if Constantinople) were asked to take the oath.[28] Lascaris pushed matters a step further and also required loyalty to his wife Anna and his underage son Nicholas. In the case of his death, the political, military, bureaucratic and ecclesiastical elites had to promise allegiance and support to the empress, as regent to their son, and then to Nicholas himself, as legitimate successor. It was an (almost desperate) effort of Lascaris to ensure long-term faithfulness to himself and his family, at a time when little could guarantee the success of his imperial enterprise. The very wording of the oath reveals his vulnerability: the oath-takers pledged not to entertain hostile ideas or plot against Lascaris, and never to ally with his enemies, be they 'Romans' (i.e. Byzantines) or 'barbarians' (i.e. everyone else, Latins and Seljuqs included), 'crowned or not,' and especially not with the 'grandsons of Andronicus Comnenus' (i.e. the Grand Comneni of Trebizond, the biggest threat to Nicaea at the time). Lascaris wanted an all-inclusive list. His real or potential adversaries were too many to be entered by name or location, with the exception of his Trapezuntine rivals, who might have

[27] The context is discussed in Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 27-28.
[28] For the history and implications of the oath of fidelity, see Nicolas G. Svoronos, "Le serment de fidelité à l'empereur Byzantine et sa signification constitutionnelle," *Revue des études byzantines* 9 (1951) 106-142.

drawn allegiance much more easily than any others, as direct descendants of an emperor still well-liked in Asia Minor. Not by accident, the ruler of Nicaea used in the text of the oath his full name, Theodore Lascaris Comnenus, to forestall his subjects from running into the camp of the Grand Comneni: he himself was a member of the prestigious family, even if arrived at it through the back door (as son-in-law of Emperor Alexius III Angelus). The metropolitans and bishops present at Nicaea bound themselves to communicate to the faithful in their diocese the duty to stay loyal to Lascaris, and to do everything in their power to safeguard his emperorship. This provision was meant to be a cost-free and effective propaganda to the provinces within or without the Nicaean kingdom. The patriarch of Constantinople held a larger territory under his ecclesiastical sway than Lascaris, and his subordinates could reach and influence people who lived in places where Lascaris' opponents ruled.[29] In time, the plan bore fruit, although not without incidents, of which the most upsetting (from a Nicene perspective) was that with the hierarchs in Western Greece, who chose to remain loyal to the rulers of Epirus.

We do not know how far and wide the immediate echoes of Lascaris' coronation travelled. There are no records of a papal reaction to the event, but Innocent III had not been impressed with Lascaris' previous imperial claims. In a letter dated March 17, 1208, Innocent addressed Lascaris simply as '*nobilis vir*,' and exhorted him to accept the will of God *qui mutat tempora et transfert regna*: it was by divine design that the Byzantine Empire had been handed over to the Latins, as a punishment for having rendered apart the seamless robe (*tunica inconsutilis)* of Jesus Christ. The Byzantines lost their position of preeminence because they had refused to submit themselves to the Vicar of Christ. Now Lascaris owed to the Latin emperor,

[29] The text of the oath reached us through the patriarchal and synodal *tomos* issued in April 1208, still extant; published by Nicolaos Oikonomides in "Cinq Actes Inédits de Patriarche Michel Autoreianos," *Revue des études byzantines* 25 (1967) 113-145, at 122-124, with commentary at 136-144. See also Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1207 (April 1208), p. 6-8.

raised to this exalted position by God himself, loyalty, obedience and honor, and to the pope – devotion and reverence.[30] The letter would produce no effect on Lascaris. By the time he received it, he had already gone through the coronation ceremony. As a crowned *basileus kai autokrator ton Rhomaion*, the likelihood of submitting himself to the Latin emperor of Constantinople or to the pope became so remote as to render it unattainable. The Byzantine *basileus* was not merely another emperor among the others bearing the same title; he was the universal leader of the Christian faithful, above and beyond any other political or ecclesiastical rank, subject to none by God himself.

The Latin emperor did not respond to Lascaris' coronation, as he had more pressing issues to handle in the Balkans. Besides, he might not have understood the long-term implications that the event could have for the Byzantines. For him, Lascaris was an inconvenient rival in Anatolia, but by no means as troublesome as the Balkan opponents. In 1209, as the two-year truce with Lascaris came to an end, Henry struck an alliance with Kay Khusraw, the sultan of Iconium, the only other Anatolian ruler powerful enough to become a nuisance for the Latin designs in Asia Minor. This reduced some of Henry's worries about the eastern front, but added more pressure on Lascaris. In 1211, the sultan attacked him, prompted into action by ex-emperor Alexius III, who in the meantime had been rescued from the Italian captivity by his cousin, Michael Comnenus Ducas of Epirus, and came to Kay Khusraw's court in Iconium. Alexius most certainly understood the implications of Lascaris' coronation, which made his status of 'ex-emperor' definitive, but by himself could do nothing to turn the tide of history. Kay Khusraw however could, since he had the military strength to engage Lascaris in battle, the right pretext to attack – Lascaris' usurpation of the Byzantine imperial title, and the obligation to help. Before 1204, the sultan had spent several years as a refugee in Constantinople when his brother had

[30] Letter 47, Latin text in J-P Migne ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris, 1890) v. 215, cols. 1372–1375.

taken over the throne of Rum, and befriended Alexius III, who at the time was the Byzantine emperor. According to Acropolites, Kay Khusraw had even been baptized by Alexius III.[31] The sultan took his duty towards his godfather seriously. In his eyes, Alexius – who had been deposed by outsiders, not by the Byzantine people – was entitled to keep the emperorship and all the privileges which derived from it, now appropriated by Lascaris. A victory against Lascaris would have restored the imperial title to Alexius and, more importantly, could have led to Seljuq expansion into the Meander River valley.[32] The two armies met near Antioch on the Meander, and the war had unanticipated results. Despite superiority in numbers and tactics, the Seljuqs were crushed by the Nicaean forces. The sultan was killed in battle, according to some sources by Lascaris himself, and the Turkish troops, bewildered by the loss of their commander, left the battlefield in haste. Alexius III was taken prisoner and forced to don the monastic garb.[33] Elated by his triumph over the Turks, Lascaris sent out letters to the Greek provinces, hoping that the astounding success would add more supporters to his next cause: *citò terram de Latinis canibus liberare* (swiftly free the land from the Latin dogs).[34]

Lascaris had little time to savor his victory, however. Henry of Flanders decided that the ruler of Nicaea had now become his *primus et maximus inimicus*, and feared that many of his own Greek subjects would be ready to offer assistance to Lascaris, if the man decided to besiege Constantinople. Lascaris had already attacked Pegae, one of the few remaining Latin possessions in Asia Minor, in the hope that he would expel completely the crusaders from the area. The Latin emperor led a small punishing expedition across the Hellespont, and put the Anatolian Greeks to

[31] Only Acropolites provides this information, vid. *History* c. 8, p. 124.
[32] Acropolites. *History* c. 9, p. 129-130, contended that Kay Khusraw used Alexius as an excuse, his real goal being to overrun and plunder, or even subjugate, the entire territory held by the Nicene ruler.
[33] Acropolites, *History* c. 10, p. 131.
[34] Quoted in a letter of Emperor Henry I, published as "Epistola Henrici imperatoris Constantinopolitani ad universos amicos suos," in Edmond Martène and Ursin Durant eds., *Thesaurus Novus Anecdotorum*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1717) 1.821-825, here at 823.

flight. The Latins then marched on, caught up with the Byzantines near the Luparcus (Rhyndacus) River, and engaged them in battle on October 15, 1211. Henry of Flanders, with only a handful of knights, thoroughly defeated the numerous but exhausted troops of Lascaris.[35] Other clashes between the two armies took place as the Latins moved southward towards the Meander River, where the Greek military defense was less well organized and political loyalties less clearly defined.[36] Many towns and fortresses sided with Henry rather than fight. However, Henry tried but failed to take Nymphaeum, the winter imperial residence of Lascaris,[37] and returned north, according to Acropolites "partly because he was sated by his conquests, partly because he wished to obtain a truce—for the Latin race does not have great endurance in battle."[38] Both Henry and Lascaris realized that their troops were too worn out to score a decisive victory, and signed a peace treaty, probably in the summer or fall of 1213.[39]

The text of the agreement has not survived, so we do not know its detailed provisions, and what title was assigned to Lascaris. Given the widespread Latin belief that the Byzantine Empire had been transferred from the Greeks to the crusaders by divine will, it is unlikely that he was to the Latins anything more than a leading Byzantine aristocrat who had amassed considerable power and influence in western Anatolia. Our only source for the treaty is Acropolites, who makes no comments on this aspect, but at least gives the territorial divisions among the two: the Latins were to keep Mysia and the northern coast of Bithynia including Nicomedia, while all other provinces in western Asia Minor down to the Meander River remained under Lascaris. The partition allowed the Latins to control the Dardanelles Straits and

[35] "Epistola Henrici," 823-824; Acropolites, *History* c.15, p.148-149.
[36] Filip van Tricht, "La politique étrangère de l'empire de Constantinople, de 1210 à 1216," *Le Moyen Age* 107 **(**2001) 409-438, at 415.
[37] On Nymphaeum and Nicaea as imperial residences, see Macrides, "Introduction" to Acroplites' *History*, 87-88.
[38] Acropolites, *History* c.15, p.149.
[39] For the problems related to the exact dating of the Treaty of Nymphaeum, see van Tricht, "La politique étrangère," 415-416.

the Sea of Marmora, as well as the former Byzantine theme of Optimaton located across the Bosporus, which ensured that Constantinople remained safe from attacks originating in Asia Minor.[40] Lascaris gained as well, despite his overall unsuccessful encounters with the Latins: he secured a stable peace which permitted him to focus energies and resources on battling the Grand Comneni of Trebizond, and on keeping the Seljuqs at bay. It was not as much as he had requested in his letter to the pope - western Asia Minor to himself and the sea as boundary between the Latins and the Nicaeans, which would have made it easier to plan and launch an assault on Constantinople, but nonetheless it was much more than his military performance would have recommended.[41]

The treaty of Nymphaeum put an end to the on-and-off war between the Latin and Nicaean armies, and eased the process of turning Nicaea into the capital of the Byzantine Empire in exile. Unlike his rivals in Trebizond, who could no longer count on the Latins' support, Lascaris continued to extract benefits from the complicated situation in the Balkans which had made Asia Minor only a minor Latin concern. The crusaders kept their word and made no further attempts to invade Anatolia, content with the lands apportioned to them through the peace settlement. With no threats coming from the north, Lascaris increased his domain unperturbed, subduing cities and towns south and east of Nicaea; and as he did so, his fame increased as well. But territorial expansion and reputation for able leadership, while crucial for setting the foundations of the empire, were not enough to bring him the much-sought recognition as the Byzantine *basileus*. For its subjects, Byzantium was more than a territory to be expanded at the expense of neighbors. To exist as a political entity, it did not have to control vast lands, but to be widely accepted as the leading force of Christendom, instituted by God and mirroring godly

[40] Acropolites, *History* c. 15, p. 149; van Tricht, "La politique étrangère," 417-418.
[41] Lascaris' letter is no longer extant, but a summary of his proposals to the pope were preserved in Innocent's reply to the ruler of Nicaea; see Innocent, Letter 47, *Patrologia Latina*, v. 215, cols. 1372D-1373B.

realities. Its capital had to be identified with the administrative, cultural and spiritual center of the Christian *oikoumene*, and its ruler had to be acknowledged as the universal emperor, the lord and protector of the faithful.[42] Lascaris then needed to make a persuasive case for Nicaea as the head, heart and soul of Byzantine civilization – what Constantinople had hitherto been. And he proceeded to accomplish this with zeal and wisdom, constantly adjusting and amending long-established Byzantine political traditions to the fluid circumstances in which he lived.

Lascaris began by creating a reliable state apparatus. The presence of Constantinopolitan aristocratic and bureaucratic elites in the city enabled him to organize his court and then the government along traditional Byzantine lines, although in a simplified form, adapted to the much reduced needs of the Nicaean state.[43] He entrusted the highest offices to his relatives and to select members of the old Comnenian aristocracy, who were also eligible to receive the two most important dignities in the state after that of the emperor, those of *despotes* and *sebastocrator*.

[42] Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades* (London 2007) 23.

[43] The exact extent and configuration of Lascaris' administration is unclear from the surviving sources, which do not include any list of offices. Angold suggests that the *secreta* (the various departments within the Byzantine administration) disappeared at Nicaea, their functions being taken over by the secretaries of the imperial household, which made Lascaris' government resemble a chancery rather than a fully-fledged government. Within this diminished state apparatus, the *mesazon* (initially just a title awarded to chief ministers who acted as intermediaries between the emperor and his subjects) became the main office, with supervising and mediating responsibilities. The first to hold this position was Demetrius Tornikes, member of an aristocratic family of Armenian or Georgian origins who reached political preeminence during the Comeni. See Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford 1975) 147-166 and idem, "Administration of the Empire of Nicaea," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 19 (1993) 127-138. More recently, Dimitri Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford 2014), 69-74, has argued instead that the Nicaean government, however reduced in size, had - at a minimum - the chief four offices which would later be present in the Palaiologan administration: the minister of the imperial household (*logothetes tou genikou*); the minister of foreign affairs (*logothetes tou dromou*); the minister of the imperial military (*logothetes tou stratiotikou*); the minister of the imperial herds (*logothetes ton agelon*). The *mesazon* was still a title which could be carried by any officer in the government, and did not imply either running the administrative affairs or acting as a powerful intermediary; the man who bore it was important in the imperial chancery, where his signature confirmed the authenticity of documents. After Demetrius Tornikes and his successor, Andronicus Tornikes, no *mesazon* enjoyed a special position in the government, since they came from the lower strata of Nicaean society and yielded no influence at the court. Korobeinikov bases his argumentation on the fact that Michael VIII Palaeologus, once back in Constantinople, did not issue an imperial bull for the reconstitution of the four offices, which would indicate that they were already in existence; then, an oblique reference by Acropolites in his *History* seems to imply that he was the *logothetes tou genikou* (minister of the household) in the early 1250s. See Acropolites c. 49, p. 250; for his official title, see Macrides, "Introduction," 21-23.

The lower administrative and military positions went to the Anatolian nobility.[44] The local magnates, however prominent in their own areas, found it difficult to infiltrate and integrate in the upper echelons of the Nicaean ruling class, where they had to compete with the grand aristocratic families from Constantinople who had enjoyed power, prestige and influence during the Comneni and the Angeloi emperors.[45] The active presence of these families on the Nicaean political scene conveyed a message of continuity and solidarity with the Byzantine imperial past, so Lascaris supported them liberally. Like the Grand Comneni of Trebizond, he sought a way to connect himself and his reign to the recent dynasties that had enjoyed popularity among the Byzantines. His rivals in Trebizond had the advantage of being grandsons of an emperor; Lascaris was only the son-in-law of one, while he himself came from a more modest background. The fact that he was able to garner the support of former Constantinopolitan grandees bolstered his prestige and the legitimacy of his state. The capital of Byzantium could be (temporarily) lost, but the aristocrats whose knowledge, skills, and wealth had served it for decades were now employing their resources for the benefit of the empire which was slowly coming back to life on Anatolian soil.

But Lascaris' success in the imperial enterprise also depended on the goodwill of the locals, especially the powerful ones, so he cultivated them as well. In order to draw and retain the allegiance of the Anatolian magnates he had fought and subdued, he co-opted them in his government. Following the well-trodden path of Byzantine diplomacy, he granted his former enemies titles and offices, allowed them to rule their provinces as governors, and even

[44] Angold, *Byzantine Government*, 73-79; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 58-68.
[45] Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 59-60, notes that two-thirds of the Nicaean top political and military hierarchy belonged to the former Constantinopolitan elite. There were further delineations within its ranks as well: only members of the Lascarids and Palaiologoi could become despots; the sebastocrators were drawn from the Lascarids, Palaiologoi, Vatatzai, Kontostephanoi and Tornikai. The only outsider who received the title of *sebastocrator* was Sabbas Asidenos.

encouraged them to marry into his family. Sabbas Asidenus, Lascaris' foe from the lower Meander Valley, continued to oversee the area that he had claimed as his, was awarded the title *sebastocrator*, a senior court title usually bestowed only on the emperor's brothers, and married into Lascaris' family. Nicephorus Contostephanus, who owned estates along the Meander River, also remained in charge of the area. Leo Gabalas, the quasi-independent ruler of the island of Rhodes, received the title of *Caesar* and was allowed to rule his domain with little interference from Lascaris.[46] The subsequent Nicaean emperors, John III Vatatzes (1222-1254) and Theodore II Lascaris (1254-1258), showed even more openness to the locals, coming to rely heavily on their Anatolian subjects, in both administration and the military. In an effort to curtail the access to power of the former Constantinopolitan aristocracy, which had grown bolder and ever more assertive in their desire for power and their machinations to acquire it, the two emperors gave the main offices in the state to provincials and even commoners.[47] The emperors also encouraged Nicaean self-sufficiency through a strong local economy, allowing smaller and greater Anatolian landlords and business owners to prosper and thus become more interested in supporting the Lascarid rule.[48] By the 1240s, Nicaea had forged a strong Byzantine identity, and the old Comnenian families were no longer essential in linking the now imperial Lascarids to the recent history of Byzantium. The Nicaean ruling house itself had become an integral and influential part of Byzantine history.

Politically and administratively, Nicaea was able to construct a credible image as a Byzantine state. Theodore I Lascaris and his successors, however, aimed at much more than that:

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[46] Acropolites, *History* c.7, n.18, p. 122-123; Angold, *Byzantine Government* 61-62, and idem, "Administration of Nicaea," 129. Paul Orgels, "Sabas Asidénos, dynaste de Sampson," *Byzantion* 10 (1935) 67-80.

[47] Acropolites, *History* c. 49, p. 250, decried the lack of adequate 'secretaries' in the service of Vatatzes, which was the result of the emperor's policy to resort to 'chance people.' See discussion in Angold, *Byzantine Government*, p. 75-79, and Dimitri Angelov, "Ideological Responses," 303-305.

[48] Hélène Glykatzi-Ahrweiler, "La politique agraire des empereurs de Nicée," *Byzantion* 28 (1958) 51–66, 135–36, repr. in idem, *Etudes sur les structures administratives et sociales de Byzance*, Variorum Reprints (London, 1971) no. IV; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 442-444.

they wanted full recognition of Nicaea as *the* Byzantine Empire, entitled to fight for and repossess Constantinople. To reach this end, they fine-tuned the traditional Byzantine foreign policy, which was predominantly defensive, to the realities of a still tottering, largely ignored, Anatolian-based *basileia*, the defense and promotion of which required a more assertive strategy. The Lascarids alternated military campaigns with periods of intense diplomatic activity, both undergirded by an ideology of reconquest and restoration. The Nicaean court rhetoric advanced the belief that the nascent empire-in-exile replicated the exilic experience of the ancient Jews after the fall of the first Temple. The analogy offered the proper rationalization for survival outside Constantinople, the Byzantine holy city, and for holding onto the idea that its recapture was not only a necessity, but also a certainty. Like the ancient Jews, the Byzantines - God's new Chosen People – had to suffer defeat and exile because of their thorough sinfulness and lack of repentance. God did not withdraw completely his support from Byzantium in order to replace it with another political power, He was punishing the Byzantines temporarily for their faithlessness. In the encomia written in the honor of the Nicaean emperors, the Lascarids were often compared to Zorobabel, the leader of the first group of Jewish exiles who had return from the Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem, and like Zorobabel, they were expected to take over the city and open its gates to welcome back its former residents.[49] Panegyrists dwelled on the image

[49] Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium Under the Comneni, 1081-1261*(Cambridge, 1995) 518; Dimitri Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007) 98-101 and idem, "Ideological Responses to 1204 in Nicaea," 296-299; Deno J. Geanakoplos, "*The Byzantine Recovery of Constantinople* from the Latins in 1261: A Chrysobull of Michael VIII in favor of Hagia Sophia," in idem, *Constantinople and the West: Essays on the Late Byzantine (Palaeologan) and Italian Renaissances and the Byzantine and Roman Churches* (Madison, WI, 1989) 173-188. The Old Testament had furnished convenient explanatory paradigms ever since the Roman Empire turned Christian and had to adapt pagan imperial thinking to biblical values, traditions and institutions. The emperor was hailed as heir to the Davidic dynasty, endowed with sacred and quasi-priestly attributes, the empire was the New Israel and Constantinople as the New Jerusalem; unworthy emperors were censured as Ahabs, while the enemies of orthodoxy became the new pharaohs; it is hardly surprising then that the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders and the subsequent lengthy separation from it was interpreted by court officials, ecclesiastics and emperors as the new Babylonian exile. For general literature on the use of the Old Testament in Byzantine political theory, see Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*: *The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. by J. Birrell [Cambridge, 2003; first published in French as *Empereur et prêtre: Étude*

of the emperor as general and soldier, since few envisioned the recovery of Constantinople other than by means of arms.[50] But until that glorious moment in the future, war and diplomacy were to serve the more immediate goal of turning Nicaea into the only legitimate heir of the vanished Byzantine Empire.

After his victory over the Seljuqs in 1211, Theodore I Lascaris took a diplomatic approach when dealing with these potentially dangerous rivals, who – like the Byzantine themselves – aspired to hegemony in Asia Minor. He adhered to the Byzantine policy of appeasement, inherited from the Later Roman Empire and perfected through centuries of practice on the Balkan and Eastern frontiers, policy which sought to pacify troubling neighbors by diplomatic means rather than by war, or, in case of a war fought and won, to preserve the peace achieved by force through collaboration rather than compulsion. Rulers of the states which came into contact with Byzantium were treated as 'sons of the emperor,' receiving lavish gifts, titles, and Byzantine princesses into marriage in exchange for loyalty and the recognition of the emperor as their overlord. To powerful sovereign neighbors such as Sassanid Persia in late antiquity or the Seljuq sultanate in the Middle Ages, Byzantium did acknowledge an equal status, but retained its goal of forming and maintaining peaceful relationships rather than fighting for

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sur le "césaropapisme" byzantin (Paris, 1996)] 3-4, 47-50; Francis Dvornik, *Early Christian and Byzantine Political Philosophy: Origins and Background*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1966), 2:645; Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson eds., *The Old Testament in Byzantium* (Washington, DC 2010), especially "Introduction," 1-38, E. Jeffreys, "Old Testament 'History' and the Byzantine Chronicle," 153-174, and Claudia Rapp, "Old Testament Models for Emperors in Early Byzantium," 175-197.

[50]Angelov, *Imperial ideology*, p. 98-99, finds in this emphasis on the military prowess of the Lascarid emperors a counterpoise to the parallel deemphasizing of his aristocratic virtues, which signaled the existence of a strong anti-aristocratic undercurrent at Nicaea; see also Angelov, "Ideological Responses to 1204 in Nicaea," p. 303-305. Korobeinikov contends that the Nicaean panegyrists and other close associates of the emperors were less purveyors of an anti-aristocratic ideology as they were pragmatic observers of Lascarid reality, which had not sprung from noble roots. Talking about the 'nobility' of either Lascaris or Vatatzes would have sounded sarcastic, not complimentary, so they focused on what set these emperors apart, their military strategies and qualities on the battlefield. See Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 66-68.

preeminence.[51] Lascaris endeavored to achieve the same outcome with the Seljuqs. He smoothed his way into a military alliance with Kay Kavus I, the son and successor of Sultan Kay Khusraw whom the Nicaean emperor had killed in battle, by sending expensive gifts to the new Seljuq ruler and a substantial sum of money to be distributed as alms at the funeral of the deceased sultan.[52] Kay Kavus was not hostile to the man who had slayed his father; the unhappy event had occasioned his own ascension to the throne, and besides, the two rulers needed each other in order to isolate and ultimately defeat their common enemy, Alexis Grand Comnenus of Trebizond, which they did in 1214.

Lascaris' Anatolian prospects were in fact quite favorable. His neighbors were ready to see in the Nicaean state the restored Byzantine *basileia* and to seek his friendship. Seljuq records indicate that Lascaris was recognized by the sultanate as the genuine leader of the Byzantines; the titles that accompanied his name were 'emperor of the Romans' (*malik al-Rum*), 'caesar of the Romans' (*qaysar al-Rum*) or *basileus* (*fasilyius*). Whether the Seljuqs were also aware of all the political implications of the terms or they simply used the addressing formulas inherited from previous official documents is hard to say, but they did make a distinction between Lascaris and Alexius I, the Grand Comnenus of Trebizond. The latter was spoken of as 'lord' (*kir*) and 'king' (*takwur*), the same titles by which the Armenian Leo I was addressed as well.[53] The Greeks living under Seljuq rule also took seriously Lascaris' claims to emperorship. Inscriptions in two Cappadocian churches renovated in the thirteenth century honor him as the Byzantine *basileus*

[51] A. Kazhdan, "The Notion of Byzantine Diplomacy," in J. Shepard and S. Franklin eds., *Byzantine Diplomacy. Papers from the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (London 1992) 3-21.
[52] ibn Bibi, *Akhbar-e Salajeqe-ye Rum* [*Mokhtasar-e Seljuqname*] (Tehran 1971) 46-47, with discussion in Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 149-151.
[53] Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 46-47.

and protector of Christians.[54] The Grand Comneni of Trebizond refused any recognition of Lascaris, but their opinion on the identity of the legitimate *basileus* hardly carried any weight after their defeat at the hands of Byzantines and Seljuqs in 1214. King Leo I of Cilician Armenia, who had established himself as a powerful ruler in southeastern Anatolia, acknowledged Lascaris readily, as he was trying to expand his own influence in the area and sought to contract advantageous alliances. Lascaris himself, always wary of the Seljuqs, saw the benefit of befriending the Christian ruler whose kingdom bordered the sultanate of Rum in the south.[55] A marriage with the king's daughter was proposed, viewed with caution by the patriarch and synod in Nicaea, since Leo I and his family had joined the Latin Church, and the Byzantine ecclesiastical authorities wanted to ensure that Lascaris' new bride would adopt the faith of her imperial husband.[56] In early 1214, after prolonged negotiations, Lascaris married Philippa, King Leo's niece, but the marriage lasted less than two years, for reasons yet unclear.[57] Philippa

[54] Alexis G. C. *Savvides, Byzantium in the Near East: its Relations with the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in Asia Minor, the Armenians of Cilicia and the Mongols, 1192-1237* (Thessalonica, 1981) 123-124; Peter Charanis, "On the Asiatic Frontiers of the Empire of Nicaea," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 13 (1947) 50–62; van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio,* n. 26 on p. 360.

[55] Between 1211 and 1214, Sultan Kay Kavus, Lascaris' ally, had struggled to recover his throne from his brother Kay Qubad. The Armenian king had sided with the latter, and only in 1213 switched sides, when circumstances clearly showed that the Kay Qubad was the losing party. It was at this moment that he initiated talks with Lascaris. See Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 151-152.

[56] V. Laurent, *Regestes* IV, n. 1214 (October 1213), p. 16-18.

[57] Acropolites, *History* c.15, p. 148, was rather vague when discussing the identity of Lascaris' second wife: "a woman from Armenia," and the motives behind her repudiation: "when he became displeased with her, he sent her away to her native land of Cilicia." Scutariotes wrongly affirmed that she was Leo's daughter – *Synopsis Chronike* in Sathas, *Bibliotheca Graeca Medii Aevi* VII (Paris, 1894) p. 462. The Armenian chronicle of Smbat Sparapet specified that King Leo I gave his niece Philippa, the daughter of his brother Ruben, as wife to Lascaris, see Smbat Sparapet's *Chronicle* 102, 665 A.E [27 Jan 1216/25 Jan 1217]. For the problems related to this marriage and bibliography on the topic, see Macrides' commentary in Acropolites, *Historia* n. 5 to c. 15, p. 150-151. Gardner's interpretation, according to which Lascaris repudiated his wife and son once he found out that the woman he married was not Leo's daughter but his niece, is no longer tenable. The Armenian king did marry his own daughter Stephanie (Rita) to John of Brienne, the king of Jerusalem, since his priorities lay in the Near East, not in Western Anatolia. But he also let Lascaris know that the woman he would send to Nicaea was his niece, whom he raised at his court after his brother had abdicated and joined the monastic life. The marriage negotiations were rather lengthy, as Lascaris felt slighted by Leo's choice to marry his daughter to a mere king, while himself as the *basileus* was to receive a niece. See Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The Story of an Empire in Exile* (London 1912), p. 87-88, and the critique of her position in Laurent, *Regestes* p. 17-18. John Langdon suggests that a Seljuq attack on Armenia prompted Lascaris to withdraw from his alliance with Leo I, now become a liability. He did not want to incur Seljuq wrath and risk a war when Nicaean stability had just been attained; vid. "John III Vatatzes' Byzantine

returned to Armenia together with her very young son, and henceforth both disappeared from the historical record. The unhappy ending of the marriage did not alter the balance of power in Asia Minor, which favored Nicaea. This allowed Lascaris toward the end of his reign, and then his successors, to focus their foreign policy on Europe, where the main Byzantine interests lay.

4.2. Wooing the Latins: The Lascarid Policy of Appeasement

Forced by a context which seemed unwilling to yield him any significant victory over his Latin neighbors, Lascaris opted for a policy of compromise and accommodation. In early 1219, he wedded Mary of Courtenay, a niece of Henry of Hainault, daughter of the Latin emperor's sister Yolanda and Peter of Courtenay.[58] The move might seem surprising to the modern historian attempting to pin down the concept of Byzantine identity, the substance and boundaries of which remained elusive during the period of exile. The Orthodox ruler of Nicaea, crowned *basileus* by the patriarch and determined to win recognition as such, in order to restore the lost *basileia* and eventually recover its capital, pushed his diplomatic strategies so far as to marry into the family of his utmost foe, the one holding Constantinople, widely acknowledged as its emperor, and willing subject to the meddlesome papacy. The Latin emperor was everything

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Imperium in Anatolian Exile, 1224-1254: The Legacy of His Diplomatic, Military and Internal Program for the *restitution orbis*," Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Los Angeles (1978) 58-60. Leo was bent on taking hold of Antioch, and Bohemond IV, its ruler, appealed to Kay Kavus for assistance, who gladly obliged by invading northern Armenia and seizing several fortresses - see Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey* (New York, 1968) 123. However, according to Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 152-153, there was no full-scale war between Armenia and the Seljuq sultanate, but rather some frontier skirmishes, not sufficient to warrant such a radical action on the part of Lascaris: the rejection of both wife and only living son, his potential heir.

[58] Acropolites, *History* c. 15, p. 148; Gregoras, *Historia*, I.2, v. 1, p. 21 ll.20–25, Greek text in L. Schopen and B. Niehbuhr eds., *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* (Bonn, 1829, 1830, 1855) [hereafter Gregoras, *Historia*]. On Lascaris' policy of détente with the Latins after 1214, see Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 58-59, and his essay "Background to the Rise of the Vatatzai to Prominence in the Byzantine *oikoumene*," in *To Hellenikon: Studies in Honor of Speros Vryonis, Jr*, I, *Hellenic Antiquity and Byzantium*, ed. John S. Langdon (New Rochelle, New York, 1993) 179-210. Jean Longnon, *L'empire Latin*, p. 157, places the marriage in the context of Queen Yolande's efforts of increasing the number of her allies in the area as a way to protect the Latin Empire from the advances of the Epirote ruler into her territory. The marriage alliances between Byzantine and Latin imperial or aristocratic families after the fourth crusade are discussed by Michael Angold, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople, 1204-1261: Marriage Strategies," in Judith Herrin and Guillaume Saint-Guillain eds., *Identities and Allegiances in the Eastern Mediterranean After 1204* (Burlington, VT, 2011) 47-68.

Lascaris loathed, the epitome of the 'Frankish' history of deceit, treachery and usurpation.[59] But politics often makes strange bedfellows. The pull of Constantinople was too great for Lascaris to leave unexplored any potential channels for gaining it back. Unable to take the city by means of arms, he was ready to try the more peaceful means of matrimonial union, in the hope that an heir to the joint families might become the next ruler of Constantinople. Lascaris' contemporaries at Nicaea did not seem appalled by the choice of a princess from the family who had fully participated in the destruction of Byzantium, or at least no echoes of any protest against it have reached us. Later historians such as Acropolites, who penned his account in the 1270s, and Gregoras, who wrote a century later, in the 1350s, mentioned the marriage in passing, neither deploring it, nor justifying it. It was simply within the logic of the Byzantines' attempt to respond as best as possible to the catastrophe that had separated them from their capital.

Likewise, no patriarchal act formally denounced Lascaris' marriage to a non-Orthodox princess, nor is there any official record of her taking a Byzantine name and renouncing allegiance to the Church of Rome, which used to be the accepted practice in such unions.[60] Since 1215, Lascaris had been drawn into negotiations with the papal legate to Constantinople, who pursued actively and even aggressively the ecclesiastical reintegration of the Greek East with Rome. For the Nicaean ruler, the negotiations were a good opportunity to push forth a more political agenda: his recognition as emperor and the withdrawal of papal support to the Latins in Constantinople. The first round of talks bore no fruit, as the argument over theological differences became too heated.[61] But Lascaris kept up his hopes of reaching some form of

[59] See however the rather appreciative portrait of Henry of Hainault as a gifted and moderate ruler, drawn by Acropolites, *History* c. 16, 153.
[60] Ruth Macrides, "Dynastic Marriages and Political Kinship," in Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin eds., *Byzantine Diplomacy: Papers of the Twenty-Fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March 1990* (London, 1992) 263-280, here at 277.
[61] Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 40-45.

agreement with the papacy, and in 1219 he had Patriarch Manuel Sarantenos (1217-1222) prepare envoys to be sent to Rome for preliminary discussions on Church reunion.[62] Political sensitivity required then that matters such as switching ecclesiastical jurisdictions by the imperial bride be left unattended. The benefits to be gained from the marriage itself, especially if the pope could be made to sympathize with the Nicaean position, outweighed the princess' Latin religious outlook. From Lascaris' perspective, the Byzantine identity was fluid and flexible enough to accommodate foreign elements if in the long run they could contribute to the greater goal of recovering Constantinople.

There was continuity with past practices in this approach: since the eighth century, diplomatic marriages had been a fundamental instrument of Byzantine foreign policy, the way of accomplishing goals that wars had failed, or could fail, to reach.[63] No such marriage until then, however, had involved stakes so high, or had the Byzantine *basileus* in so weak a position. Marrying Byzantine princesses to 'barbarian' (i.e. non-Roman) rulers had been a means of concluding peace or improving relationships with peoples intruding upon the *oikoumene*, or living in its bordering areas. Marrying members of the Byzantine imperial family to Latin princesses had been a way of strengthening ties with rising Western potentates.[64] In either situation, the Byzantine emperor used to be the stronger partner in the contract, and the marriage itself was part of the gifts and rewards he bestowed upon his nearby or faraway clients. But in the post-1204 context, Lascaris had to negotiate himself into a matrimonial alliance with the family who at that time held the imperial title and the bargaining power. The talks likely started prior to 1216, when Henry of Hainault was still alive, but the marriage itself took place while

[62] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1223 (December 1219), p. 30.
[63] Alexander Kazhdan, "The Notion of Byzantine Diplomacy," 17-18.
[64] Donald M. Nicol, "Mixed marriages in Byzantium in the Thirteenth Century," *Studies in Church History* 1 (1964) 160-172, repr. in Nicol, *Byzantium: its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the Western World* (London, 1972) art. IV.

Yolanda acted as regent of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Lascaris' claim to emperorship was still a private Anatolian affair, with little echoes on the European continent. Henry did recognize Lascaris for what he was - an influential local ruler, who could be turned from adversary into ally if given a Latin princess as wife. It was the Byzantine foreign policy at its finest, applied now by an emperor from the West to his clients in the East.

Henry and his sister Yolanda, on their part, availed themselves generously of the advantages brought by diplomatic marriages. They were monarchs of an area with which they shared no roots, no family connections, no religious or political traditions. They had no reason to be there other than that given by the right of the conqueror. To consolidate their sway over the empire bestowed upon them by the vote of the crusading barons, the two established a network of marriage alliances with their Latin vassals in the Balkans and the Aegean, and with local rulers. Henry himself married Maria, daughter of Tsar Kaloyan, as a way to secure the frontiers of his empire from further attacks on the part of the Bulgarians.[65] His unnamed daughter by an unnamed mistress also married a Bulgarian, the despot Alexius Slav, nephew of the Asanids and quasi-independent ruler of a principality in the Rhodope Mountains. Henry had his younger brother Eustace take the daughter of Michael of Epirus as a wife, in an (unsuccessful) attempt to keep this belligerent Greek neighbor in check. Yolanda of Flanders continued her brother's policy, marrying off several offspring to local kings and overlords. Her namesake daughter Yolanda became the wife of King Andrew II of Hungary in 1215, Agnes wedded Geoffrey II of Villehardouin, prince of Achaia, in 1217, and Maria joined Lascaris at Nicaea in 1219.[66] These

[65] According to Mouskes, bishop of Tournai and author of a rhymed chronicle, she was also the cause of Henry's premature death in 1216; vid. de Reiffenberg ed., *Chronique Rimée* ll.22981–22986 (Bruxelles, 1836). See also Longnon, *L'empire Latin*, 160-161.

[66] Angold sees in this policy an assimilation of the Byzantine diplomatic practices and an effort to maintain Constantinople as center of power; see "Marriage Strategies," 50-60. Longnon, *L'empire Latin*, 157, places the marriages in the context of creating strategic alliances.

marriages could of course backfire and undermine rather than strengthen the Latin hold on Constantinople and Thrace. Sons-in-law or their progeny could consider themselves entitled to the throne of the Latin Empire and take action to turn the claim into reality, as Lascaris did in the early 1220s. King Andrew II of Hungary also expected to be elected Latin emperor in 1216 when Henry of Hainault died, only to have his hopes ruined by the promotion of his father-in-law, Peter of Courtenay, to the office.[67] Since the emperorship was an elective position similar to the one of the Holy Roman Emperor in the West, the final decision belonged to the barons involved in the election process, regardless of what various relatives of the deceased emperor might have expected or plotted for.

Lascaris, then, assumed too much in marrying Mary of Courtenay: even if the marriage produced a male heir, there was no guarantee that the Latin barons would have chosen him as emperor of Constantinople. Nor was there any assurance that the Latins themselves would not use the couple's offspring to raise claims to the throne of Nicaea, after the demise of Lascaris. However, since the marriage was not blessed with children, these scenarios came to nothing.[68] The ruler of Nicaea could only witness helplessly how the throne which he coveted for himself passed from one undeserving Latin emperor to the next. After Henry of Flanders' demise in June 1216, Peter of Courtenay was elected emperor. But he never reached Constantinople to assume power. In April 1217, he and his wife Yolanda were crowned in the basilica San Lorenzo outside Rome at the hands of Pope Honorius III (1216-1227), and set off towards their new capital.[69]

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[67] Nora Berend et al eds., *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c. 900-c. 1300* (Cambridge 2013) 441.

[68] Gregoras, *Historia*, I.4.3, v. 1, p.21.

[69] Honorius' letter to Patriarch Gervase of Constantinople (12 April 1217), in William O. Duba and Chris Schabel eds., *Bullarium Hellenicum: Pope Honorius III's Letters to Frankish Greece and Constantinople* (Turnhout, 2015) no. 12, p. 152; *Richard of San Germano, Chronica 1189-1243 ad ann. 1217, Latin text in Georg Heinrich Pertz* ed., Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicum 53 *(Hanover, 1864) 41.* The coronation took place outside the city of Rome to deter Peter from advancing any kind of claims on the Holy Roman Empire later on (only the Holy Roman Emperor was crowned in Rome); see Acropolites, *History*, n. 13 to chapter 14, p. 147.

While on the way, Peter made a brief detour to attack Durrazzo (Dyrrachium), prompted by the Venetians, who had lost this key city-port on the Adriatic to Epirus in 1212. It is unclear whether his small army took the city from the Epirotes or not, but Peter himself was captured by them and died (or was put to death) soon afterwards.[70] His wife Yolanda reached Constantinople safely and ruled as regent until 1219, when she passed away.[71] Philip of Namur, the eldest son of the imperial couple, was then elected Latin emperor by the barons, but he declined the honor. The crown was offered to the second son, Robert of Courtenay, who accepted it gladly. But Robert lived in distant France, and like his father he had to travel all the way to Constantinople. In the meantime, the barons chose the crusader and trouvère Conon de Béthune as regent, and after his death, Maria, Robert's sister and Lascaris' wife, likely acted as *baiula imperii Constantinopolitani*.[72]

Disappointed by the turn of events which brought him so close to the much-coveted city yet did not place him in control, Lascaris resorted to war. As in the past, he could not overcome the Frankish barons, and sued for peace.[73] In 1221, Robert of Courtenay finally arrived to take possession of his throne and Lascaris, in order to restore the Latins' trust in his goodwill – as

[70] Acropolites, *History* c. 14, p. 145; *Richard of San Germano, Chronica ad ann. 1217, 41. See also* Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 112-113. Pope Honorius wrote a series of letters to Theodore Ducas himself and to the Latin barons in Romania, in an attempt to pressure the Epirote ruler to release the Latin emperor and the papal legate who had been accompanying Peter of Courtenay, and had been taken in captivity as well. The pope threatened Theodore with excommunication (like his brother Michael, Theodore had pledged allegiance to the papacy), and required the crusaders to take firm action against Epirus if the emperor and the legate were not freed. The latter would regain his freedom, but the former perished while still a prisoner. See Letters 30-36 (28 July 1217), 42 (4 November 1217), 47-51 (25/26 January 1218), in *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 172-182, 191-194, 199-205.

[71] Acropolites, *History* c.18, p. 157; Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea* (London 1912) 93-94.

[72] Conon de Béthune had been regent before, after the death of Henry in 1216 to the arrival of Empress Yolanda in 1217. Conon died shortly after his second appointment to regency, in December 1219; vid. Longnon, *L'empire Latin*,158. On Conon, see Jean Frappier, *La Poésie lyrique francaise aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles, les auteurs et les genres* (Paris, 1966) p. 123-140. Macrides in n. 6 to Acropolites, *History* c.15, p. 151, argues based on a letter of Maria from 1228, which confirmed Pisan privileges in the Latin Empire and was signed by her as *baiula imperii Constantinopolitani*, that the Nicaean empress also acted twice as regent of the Latin Empire: between 1219 and 1221, that is after Conon's demise and until her Robert's assumption of the throne, and in 1227-1228, when her brother travelled to the West to request military assistance, journey during which he also died (November 1227). Maria's letter is published in *Archive de l'Orient Latin* v. 2.2 (Paris, 1884) 256-257.

[73] Mouskes, *Chronique rimée*, p. 405-406, ll. 23083-23100; Longnon, *L'Empire latin*, 159.

well as his own future chances to lay claim to Constantinople – betrothed his daughter to the new ruler of the Latin Empire. The marriage did not take place, however, since the patriarch and the synod opposed it on canonical grounds: Lascaris could not be at the same time brother-in-law and father-in-law to the Latin emperor.[74] In the end, the Nicaean ruler had to acquiesce in the fact that Constantinople was not to be his or his heir's by the less confrontational way of matrimonial alliances.

Even with its limited success, Lascaris' marriage into the family of the Latin emperor was indicative of a certain openness of Nicaea toward its archenemies from the West. In 1219, the same year in which he wedded Maria of Courtenay, Lascaris carried out negotiations and then signed a trade agreement with Giacomo Tiepola, the Venetian podestà at Constantinople. Venice, the grand nemesis of Byzantium which had played such a nefarious role in the crusaders' attack on Constantinople, was awarded free trade, without fear of abuse or harm on the part of the Nicaean authorities (*sine dampno, sine mollestia, et sine aliqua inquisition*), and exemption from the payment of dues (*sine commerkio et sine aliqua alia dactione*) in Lascaris' realm. The Nicaean merchants, on the other hand, had to pay their dues if trading in Venetian territories. For five years, Nicaean warships and trade ships could not transit through the waters of the Latin Empire without permission from the podestà. Both parties pledged not to copy or counterfeit the other's coinage, and to return goods recovered from shipwrecks or bequeathed by merchants who

[74] Acropolites, *History* c.18, p. 157; Mouskes ll. 23117-23143, p. 406-407; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1229 (1222), p. 34. Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 59-60, argues that Patriarch Manuel Sarantenos (1217-1222) came from a strong anti-Latin background and opposed the marriage of Eudocia, Lascaris' daughter, to Robert of Courtenay, primarily because he disagreed with the policy of détente pursued by Lascaris vis-à-vis the Latins. The violation of canonical legislation was a mere pretext. See also van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, p. 366, who agrees with this interpretation. The problem is, however, that the same patriarch had made no attempt to stop Lascaris from contracting his own marriage with the Latin Maria of Courtenay, and he had cooperated with Lascaris in his pro-Rome ecclesiastical maneuvering, sending envoys to the pope, calling upon the other Eastern patriarchs to participate in the planned ecumenical council and chastising the bishops of Western Greece who refused to enter negotiations with the papacy. If Manuel Sarantenos disliked the Latinizing turn of Lascaris' foreign policy, he waited for a long time to make it known.

died while abroad.[75] The agreement was meant first and foremost to protect Venetian military and commercial interests. Nicaea gained little by it, other than an increase in foreign imports.

To Lascaris, the agreement was important primarily on a diplomatic level. It gave him the opportunity to issue a chrysobull, echoing the gesture of his illustrious predecessor, Alexius I Comnenus, who in 1082 signed the first such imperial charter granting free trading rights to the Venetians. It was the gesture of an emperor and Lascaris could not forego his chance to act and be recognized in this capacity. He used his full imperial name, Theodore Lascaris Comnenus, and most likely his full imperial title. The chrysobull has survived only in its Latin translation, where his title was rendered alternately as *imperator et moderator Romeorum* (emperor and autocrat of the Romans) in the *intitulatio*, and as *imperator et moderator Graecorum* (emperor and autocrat of the Greeks) in the signature. It is highly improbable that the Greek original designated Lascaris as anything but 'emperor and autocrat of the Romans.' The Latin version shows the dilemma of the Venetian translator, who understood the significance of an act written in purple ink and sealed with a golden seal, but could not bring himself to fully recognizing the person who issued it as the Byzantine *basileus*. From a Western perspective, the one who now bore that title was the Latin emperor of Constantinople. Theodore Lascaris Comenus was acknowledged as an emperor in his own right, but only 'of the Greeks.'[76] The chrysobull was thus valuable for its political implications. But in the end, neither party seems to have extracted great benefits from it. Lascaris' external recognition remained limited to certain circles, and there only as *imperator Graecorum*. The Venetians themselves did not make use of the treaty's

[75] The Latin version of the treaty is in G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1856-1857) 2. 205-207. For discussion, see David Jacoby, "The Economy of Latin Constantinople, 1204-1261," in Laiou ed., *Urbs Capta*, 196-214, at 206-207; Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice* (Cambridge, 1988) 163-164; Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 430-431.
[76] Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 114; Gardner, *Lascarids of Nicaea*, 95; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 44-45. The labeling of the Byzantine emperor as *imperator Graecorum* was not new in Western official documents. After the restoration of the empire in the ninth century, this had been the usual way in which the Carolingians and their successors addressed or referred to the Byzantine *basileus.*

provisions, especially since John Vatatzes, Lascaris' successor, was ill-disposed towards them and determined to encourage local production and ban foreign imports.[77]

The year 1219 undeniably marked a turning point in Lascaris' foreign policy towards the Latins. Not content with appeasing his close-by enemies, the emperor and the podestà of Constantinople, he also sought to resolve differences with his most prominent enemy in the West, the pope. The pope was, however, a much more difficult party to please. If marriage and commercial privileges worked with the crusaders and the Venetians, respectively, the Vicar of Christ expected nothing less from the Byzantines than complete submission to the Church of Rome. Innocent III had made it abundantly clear in his early correspondence with Emperor Alexius III and Patriarch Camaterus that only the return to full obedience to the Apostolic See would place them again in good standing before God. Until then, Byzantium was in schism and liable to experience divine wrath. But from the Byzantines' point of view, there was nothing to return to. They had never been part of the Roman jurisdiction, and they had never sworn allegiance to the pope. The pope had no business appointing any of the Eastern patriarchs in fact, since they did not belong to his jurisdiction. Pope and patriarchs were equals; the see of Rome had only a primacy of honor. There was no sympathy in Byzantium for the papal claims to leadership over the entire Christendom. It was the emperor who ultimately oversaw the Church and endorsed the election of its patriarchs, the pope included.

For most (but not all) Byzantine political and religious authorities, the dissolution of the empire after 1204 changed nothing in regards to the relationship with Rome. The Byzantine Church remained an entirely autonomous ecclesiastical entity, not dependent on or subject to the Apostolic See. On his part, Pope Innocent took the fall of the 'schismatic' East into the hands of the crusaders, and implicitly into his hands, as an act of God. The excesses which accompanied

[77] Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 443.

the fall were to be deplored and denounced, but they did not change the fact that the Church was now united under his leadership. He soon realized, however, that even if the East had been formally integrated with the Church of Rome, in actual fact a large number among his new subjects stayed loyal to the Greek patriarch of Constantinople. Papal legates travelled to Constantinople to convince the hierarchs of the Byzantine Church to switch their allegiance to the Apostolic See and teach their flocks to follow suit. The first to arrive in the conquered city, the cardinals Pietro Capuano and Soffredo Gaetani, were actually legates to the Holy Land and had left their post without papal permission.[78] Towards the end of 1204, they gathered the Byzantine clergy, leading monks and aristocrats still lingering in Constantinople in the Church of St. Sophia and asked them to swear loyalty to the pope. The Byzantines refused, and no threats uttered by the two cardinals changed their minds.[79]

Innocent was displeased with the action carried in his name but not with his authorization, and in 1205 he dispatched Cardinal Benedict, a man of much milder disposition, to talk the Greeks into submission. He met with Byzantine ecclesiastics in Thessalonica, Constantinople and Athens, with no more success than his predecessors. He could not allow negotiations on divisive issues, since this would have implied that the Church of Rome had not yet arrived at the whole Truth, but was still searching and needed the help of the East to find it. He consented however to hear the Byzantines' views on the *filioque*, papal primacy, Latin ordinations, baptism, the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, and so on, hoping that they would come to see their own errors. They did not, clinging instead to their belief that the papal

[78] See Pope Innocent III's letter to the two cardinals from February 1205, Latin text in Othmar Hageneder et al eds., *Die Register Innocenz' III* 14 vols. (Graz/Köln/ Rome/Vienna, 1964-) 7: 223, English trans. by Alfred J. Andrea, *Contemporary Sources of the Fourth Crusade* (Leiden 2008) 152-154. For the context, see Alfred J. Andrea, "Pope Innocent III as Crusader and Canonist: His relations with the Greeks of Constantinople, 1198-1216," PhD Diss., (Cornell University, 1969) 399-401.

[79] Gardner, *Lascarids of Nicaea*, 99-100; Raymond Janin, "Au lendemain de la conquête de Constantinople. Les tentatives d'union des Églises (1204-1208)," *Échos d'Orient* 32.169 (1933) 5-21, at 9-14.

teachings on the matters under dispute were heterodox and thus the Church of Rome found itself outside the Church of Christ. Even more, upon the death of Patriarch John Camaterus in 1206, the Byzantines petitioned the pope to consent to the election of a new Greek leader, ignoring Innocent's position that there was already a Latin patriarch in Constantinople whom they should obey and follow. Cardinal Benedict's efforts to have the former subjects of Patriarch Camaterus accept the Venetian Morosini as their immediate shepherd and the pope as the supreme head of the Church were in vain.[80] The cardinal returned to Rome almost empty-handed, his most noteworthy achievement being the oath taken from Bishop Theodore of Negroponte, who had accepted to give obedience to the Apostolic See.[81]

The failure of the papal legate to persuade the Byzantines to join the Roman fold and the subsequent choosing of a Greek patriarch in exile, at Nicaea, in defiance of papal wishes and instructions, did not put Innocent off. In 1213 he sent another legate, Cardinal Pelagius, to resume the talks with the Byzantines in Constantinople, and at the same time to settle the disputes within the Latin Church over the appointment of a new patriarch (Morosini had died in 1211 and rival candidates had been proposed by the Frankish barons and the Venetians).[82] Pelagius chose a heavy-handed approach with the Byzantine clerics and monastics who refused to submit to Rome, throwing them in prison and closing their churches. According to Acropolites, Emperor Henry disliked the cardinal's campaign against his Greek subjects and freed the prisoners. Some of them preferred to leave Constantinople altogether and took refuge in

[80] Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 32-34; Janin, "Les tentatives d'union des Églises (1204-1208)," 14-19. The Byzantine side of the story is told by Nicholas Mesarites in the funeral oration to his brother John, Greek text in August Heisenberg ed., "Der epitaphios des Nikolaos Mesarites auf seinen bruder Johannes," in *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion* v. 1 (München, 1922).
[81] Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 32.
[82] On the Latin patriarch, see Robert L. Wolff, "Politics in the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954) 225-303, here at 246-253.

Lascaris' lands.[83] Patriarch Theodore Irenicus (1214-1216) wrote from Nicaea to the Greek faithful living under Latin occupation, urging them to resist pressures to accept papal supremacy, commemorate the pope's name in the liturgy, or recognize the Latin patriarch as their leader. Under pain of excommunication, the Byzantines were forbidden to submit themselves to a foreign shepherd or to accept any of the novel doctrines promoted by the Church of Rome.[84]

Faced with vehement opposition in Constantinople, Cardinal Pelagius changed tactics. He approached Lascaris through two messengers sent to Nicaea. It was an implicit recognition of the Nicene ruler as the one holding major influence over the Byzantine Church, and of course Lascaris could not let it pass. After discussion with the cardinal's envoys, he agreed to send a delegation to meet with Pelagius in Constantinople. The leading member was Nicholas Mesarites, metropolitan of Ephesus. The debates focused on papal primacy and the type of bread used in a valid Eucharist, with the members of each party confident that they were exposing the truth and the others grossly erred. Since no one relented, no headway was made. Cardinal Pelagius, whose political insight was greater than his tact in religious matters, sent another envoy to Lascaris, who at the time was campaigning against David Comnenus in Paphlagonia. Unlike his patriarch, Lascaris realized the political potential of a peace signed with the Apostolic See, so he insisted that the Byzantine delegation confer again with the cardinal's men. More debates on papal primacy and *filioque* followed, with no better results than the previous ones. The Byzantines held onto their opinion that the Church of Rome went astray in matters of faith and practice, while the papal representative insisted that the Greek Church was both in schism and in error. As before, the Byzantine solution was a general council where the divisive issues were to

[83] Acropolites, *History* 17, p. 154-155. See Raymond Janin, "Au lendemain de la conquête de Constantinople. Les tentatives d'union des Églises (1208-1214)," *Échos d'Orient* 32.170 (1933) 195-202, at here at 196-198.
[84] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1219 (Oct. 1214/Nov.1215) 24-26. The patriarch's letter was published by A. Papadopoulos-Kérameus in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10.1 (1901) 182-192. For discussion, see Longnon, *L'empire latin*, 144-147.

be discussed and decided upon, while the papal answer was the Greeks' unconditional submission to the Church of Rome.[85]

A general council did take place in November 1215, but at Pope Innocent's summons and on his own terms, without addressing any of the Byzantines' theological and ecclesiological concerns. At the beginning of his tenure, Innocent had informed the emperor and the patriarch of Constantinople that they or their representatives could attend the proceedings of a council organized by the Apostolic See only if repenting of their errors and obstinacy, and accepting papal authority. Such a council would not meet to discuss the problems that troubled the Greeks, since those problems existed only as long as they refused to obey the pope; once in communion with Rome, questioning papal primacy, *filioque,* unleavened bread and the rest would simply be dismissed as misguided and unwarranted.[86] Innocent's take on the grievances put forth by the Byzantines was not conducive to winning him followers among the churches of the East. The only Greek bishop who attended the Fourth Lateran Council was Theodore of Negroponte, as part of the entourage of the Latin patriarch of Constantinople. Nicholas I, the Greek patriarch of Alexandria, also sent a deacon as his representative.[87] All other Eastern ecclesiastics present at the council were Latin. The focus of the council was on Church reforms and the launching of a new crusade. The unruly Greeks did receive some attention, though: according to the fourth canon, those among the clergy who washed the altars after a Latin mass had been celebrated on it, as if polluted, and those who rebaptized the faithful who had been baptized by the Latins, as if the Latin baptism were not valid, were to be excommunicated and deposed. Canon nine allowed

[85] Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 40-43; Janin, "Les tentatives d'union des Églises (1208-1214)," 199-202.
[86] Innocent letter to Emperor Alexius III is in Theodosius Haluščynskyj, *Acta Innocentii III* (Vatican 1944) no. 195. It is also quoted in full in *Gesta Innocentii III* c. LX, Latin text in David Gress-Wright, "The *Gesta Innocentii III*: Text, Introduction and Commentary," PhD Diss., Bryn Mawr College (1981); English trans. by James M. Powell, *The Deeds of Innocent III* (Washington DC, 2004) 77-81, at 80-81. The letter and its context are discussed in Andrea, "Pope Innocent as Crusader,"100-112, 116-126.
[87] Gill, *Byzatium and the Papacy*, 43.

sacraments and other rites to be administered in the local language, perhaps as an effort to reach out to the native churches of the East that argued Latin was a barrier to a meaningful participating in the liturgy, while Canon fourteenth instructed married priests (an Eastern custom) to renounce their marriage bond and live in chastity.[88] There is little evidence that these canons were enforced among the Greeks who had sworn allegiance to the papacy.[89] For all others who rejected the leadership claims of the Apostolic See, the council carried no weight. It was and remained an entirely Western affair, a sign of the ever-widening gap between the Church of Rome and its sister churches in the East.

If Innocent's council meant nothing to the Byzantines, his goodwill towards their burgeoning empire in Nicaea could become meaningful if attained, as it was likely to induce others in the West to take a friendlier stance toward the Anatolian heir of Byzantium. Lascaris however never managed to impress Innocent as anything more than an adventurer seeking to usurp power from the Latin emperor, whom the pope saw as the only legitimate successor of the Byzantine *basileus.* Innocent died a few months after the council, without having changed his view on the Nicene ruler. Honorius III (1216-1227), the next Vicar of Christ, seemed much more willing to reconsider the papal position on Nicaea, given the right circumstances. The pope had reasons to be optimistic about the Eastern churches, since in 1217 and 1218, quite early in his reign, two powerful Balkan rulers, Stefan Nemanjič of Serbia and Theodore Ducas of Epirus, joined the Church of Rome. On his part, Lascaris saw the move for what it was: a clever exploitation of papal ambitions to advance local political interests. Neither Balkan ruler had pursued union with Rome for the sake of ecclesiastical concord. Neither forced the bishops and

[88] Canons 4, 9 and 14, Latin text in Antonio García y García ed., *Constitutiones Concilii quarti Lateranensis una cum Commentariis glossatorum* (Vatican, 1981), English trans. in H. J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis, 1937) 236-296.
[89] Nicholas Coureas, "The Latin and Greek Churches in former Byzantine Lands under Latin Rule," in N. I. Tsougarakis and P. Lock eds., *A Companion to Latin Greece* (Leiden, 2015) 145-184.

archbishops in his realm to live and act in obedience of the Apostolic See. Both needed the pope to secure vital gains on a local level. Stefan Nemanjič had applied for and received the royal crown from Rome; with papal support, the first king (*rex*) of Serbia hoped to contain his main enemy (and now co-religionist) to the north, the king of Hungary.[90] The ruler of Epirus had just disposed of Peter of Courtenay, the Latin emperor who had unwittingly picked a fight with the Epirotes while ill-equipped to do so. Now Theodore was preparing his eastward campaign toward Constantinople, so he wanted a rather benevolent pope who would not send a punishing expedition against him.[91] As for Lascaris, he had even more to gain if he could get in the pope's good graces. His objective was withdrawal of the papal protection given hitherto unreservedly to the Latin Empire, and was ready to discuss submission to Rome in exchange for that.[92]

To show his goodwill to the pope, in late 1219 Lascaris asked Patriarch Sarantenus (1217-1222) to contact the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, the higher clergy in Western Greece, and Theodore Ducas of Epirus, for an upcoming council in Nicaea which was to discuss the reunion of churches and the sending of envoys to Rome to negotiate in this regard.[93] The summoning of an ecumenical synod had been an imperial prerogative in Byzantium. Lascaris was all too happy to avail himself of the opportunity to act as an emperor and invite to his capital religious leaders from all over the Greek-speaking world. He had contributed nothing to the grand council organized and led by his rival to the title of God's vicegerent, Pope Innocent III, and this was to be his moment of ecclesiastical glory. The event was scheduled to take place in 1220, at Easter.

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[90] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 106-108; Matthew Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans* (Hamden, CT, 1968) 83-85.
[91] Pierre-Vincent Claverie, *Honorius III et l'Orient (1216-1227): Étude et publication de sources inédites des Archives vaticanes* (Leiden 2013) 200-201. Christopher D. Schabel, "Pope Honorius (1216-1227) and Romania," in William O. Duba and Chris Schabel eds., *Bullarium Hellenicum: Pope Honorius III's Letters to Frankish Greece and Constantinople* (Turnhout, 2015) 9-87, at 17-22.
[92] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1223 (December 1219), p. 30.
[93] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1222 and 1224 (December 1219), p. 29, 30-31.

The Eastern patriarchs had already recognized Nicaea as the new Byzantine capital, the center and promotor of orthodoxy. Their attitude toward Rome was less straightforward, a mixture of outright rejection and prudent accommodation, depending on the political context. In 1215, Symeon II of Antioch (1206-1235) had been forced under trying circumstances to submit to the Apostolic See, but in 1217 or 1218 he came to Nicaea to repent before Patriarch Sarantenus and the synod. He remained there and associated himself with the anti-Latin party.[94] Euthymius of Jerusalem (1195-1230), a former resident of Constantinople, moved back to the Near East when the Muslim ruler who succeeded Saladin (d. 1193) allowed the Greek patriarchs to return to their see. He lived either in Jerusalem or most likely at St. Catherine's monastery on Mt. Sinai (where he was also buried), and did not seem to have encountered troubles with the Latins in Palestine, or with the pope.[95] Nicholas I of Alexandria (1210-1243) corresponded with Innocent and Honorius, trying to maintain cordial relations between his see and Rome. He was the only Greek patriarch to send a representative to the Fourth Lateran Council.[96] The situation was more complicated in Western Greece, where many bishops refused to recognize the patriarch of Nicaea as their leader, and reacted strongly against the idea of negotiating union with the Church of Rome. No invitations were sent to the Bulgarian and Serbian higher clergy, but then their states, or at least their rulers, had already joined the Roman Church: Kaloyan in 1204 and Nemanjič in 1217.

[94] Laurent, *Regestes* IV (1217/1218), p. 28. On the ecclesiastical situation in Antioch during the early thirteenth century, see Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris 1940) 510-516; Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church* (London 1980) 217-221.
[95] Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 180 and 310-312.
[96] John M. Neale, *A History of the Holy Eastern Church. The Patriarchate of Alexandria* (London 1847) 278-280.

Despite its high stakes, the meeting of Greek prelates did not take place as envisioned by Lascaris.[97] In 1220, tensions increased between Nicaea and the Latin Empire. The fifth crusade was in full swing in Egypt, making traveling from and to the area difficult. The bishops in Greece remained adamant in their hostility to any plan seeking papal approval and support. Lascaris therefore missed the chance of buttressing his emperorship through the organization and supervision of an ecumenical council. Nor was he able to connect with the Apostolic See in a way that could have been auspicious for the future of his empire. However, his attempt of using negotiations with Rome on ecclesiastical reunion as a tool for reaching political goals, as his Balkan neighbors also did, would become a mainstay in Byzantine diplomacy. All his successors, Lascarids and Palaiologoi alike, would resort at one point or another during their reigns to courting Rome in order to safeguard their own rule or their borders. It was an implicit admission of the fact that no Byzantine emperor after 1204 could recover the full authority that he claimed to be holding as God's main representative on earth. In the grand schemes of things, submission to the papacy meant that the *basileus* was left with only secondary roles to play.

Lascaris' friendly overtures to the Latins, in whatever form they came, did not endear him to the Greeks in Asia Minor or the Balkans. There was an anti-Latin party in his own turf, reluctant to participate in consultations with the papacy, and worried about the possible outcome of the marriage connections planned or already established with the usurpers across the Bosphorus. Such imprudent associations presumably allowed the Latin emperor to make his own designs for the throne of Nicaea, especially since Lascaris' only surviving son had been

[97] According to Laurent, the Greek prelates present at Nicaea on Easter 1220 did come together in a meeting to discuss the sending of envoys to Rome and to ordain the monk Sava, brother of the Serbian king, as archbishop of Serbia. See *Regestes,* no.1225 and "Chronologie," 31-32. It seems however strange that a council at the same time would deliberate on taking steps to heal the schism with Rome and remove the Serbian church from Rome's control. While Sava returned in full glory to Serbia and began reorganizing his church according to the needs of an independent archbishopric, there were no echoes of further union talks with Rome. Even if the Easter council addressed the issue, it did not lead to any changes in the relationship between Nicaea and the papacy.

repudiated together with his mother, the Armenian Philippa, and John Vatatzes, his son-in-law, did not enjoy much popularity at the court. In addition, two of Lascaris' brothers, the sebastocrators Alexius and Isaac, took the newly-forged friendship with the Latins to an even more perilous level: upon Theodore's death in late 1221, they fled to Constantinople and asked Robert of Courtenay for military support in order to secure the throne of Nicaea for themselves.[98] Lascaris' grand imperial project threatened to dissolve into a petty struggle for power between his brothers and his son-in-law. A similar struggle had brought the Latins to the gates of Constantinople in 1203. Those who remembered the consequences of engaging Latin help for solving internal Byzantine disputes now cringed in dread.

The fears of the anti-Latin party were, however, unfounded. The Latin emperors after Henry I posed no real threat to Nicaea. Like the crusader states in Outremer, the empire built in haste on the ruins of Byzantium was made up of numerous fiefs, the rulers of which had pledged allegiance and military aid to the emperor, but frequently fought him or one another, ignoring the needs or requests of their overlord. Moreover, the Latin emperors had to keep in check, from the very beginning, the Bulgarian tsars bent on seizing Constantinople, or at least large portions of Thrace, and from 1212 onward, the rulers of Epirus who pursued similar goals: Constantinople, and if that was not possible, whatever lands lay between their realm and the Queen of Cities. The situation in the Balkans demanded that the Latin emperors channeled all their resources to Europe, not to Asia Minor. Moreover, in 1224-1225, in the confrontations between the Latins who had come to the aid of Lascaris' brothers, and the new emperor John III Vatatzes, the former lost all their Anatolian possessions except for the Optimaton theme and a few strongholds

[98] Acropolites, *History* c. 22 and 24, p. 165-166, 171; Gregoras, *Historia* II.1.3, v.1, p. 25 had Theodore Lascaris' brothers leading the Latins against Nicaea, angry for not having been designated as successors, and ready to fight for the throne using whatever means they could resort to, including an alliance with the Latins.

along the coast of Propontis.[99] The anti-Latins of Nicaea thereafter had little to fear from the Latin Empire of Constantinople; a more serious danger posed the Greek principality of Epirus, the rulers of which pursued relentlessly and quite successfully their own imperial dream.

4.3. The European heir of the Byzantine Empire: Epirus and its Balkan counteroffensive

Many of the former Byzantine subjects in southeastern Europe (Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece) resented Lascaris' claims to reinventing the *basileia* at Nicaea. The inhabitants of Constantinople who chose to stay on after 1204 recognized the Latin emperor as their rightful *basileus*, seeing in the violent events that brought him to power nothing more than the usual turbulences associated with dynastic changes in Byzantium.[100] They accepted the crusaders' discourse of power and viewed Lascaris with suspicion, as an illegitimate contender for a throne lawfully held by the Latin emperor. To the Greeks living in the Balkan Peninsula, Lascaris was far away and not exactly relevant. They had their own local interests to protect and promote. Their friends and foes changed with political and military circumstances: they fought with the Bulgarian tsar against the crusaders, and then with the crusaders against the tsar; they allied with a faction of the Frankish barons to fend off the Latin emperor, then supported the Latin emperor against the barons. And of course, quite as frequently, they made war upon one another.[101] From 1212 onwards, many of these quasi-independent princes and dukes found themselves threatened by a common enemy, the ruler of Epirus. Michael Comnenus Ducas initially acted like his neighbors, sometimes favoring, at other times opposing the Latins, depending on his immediate

[99] Mouskes, *Chronique Rimée*, 23181–23206, p. 409. For discussion of this campaigns, see Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 68-73; also van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio*, 368-371, who places the war in Asia Minor in the context of the Epirote anti-Latin offensive in the Balkans. Vatatzes took advantage of Theodore Ducas' siege of Serres, which had prompted Robert of Courtenay to dispatch troops to help, and attacked the Latin Empire. Robert was unable to fight on two fronts and as a consequence his forces, led by Lascaris' brothers, suffered defeat in Asia Minor.
[100] van Tricht, *Latin Renovatio* 39f.
[101] A comprehensive narrative of the Balkan history in the aftermath of the fourth crusade is in Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 62-111.

interests. But after 1212 he embarked upon a plan of systematic conquests in Albania, Thessaly and Macedonia, with Constantinople as the final target.

Michael was the illegitimate son of sebastocrator John Angelus, an uncle of the former Byzantine emperors Isaac II and Alexius III. Before the fall of Constantinople, Michael had been a fiscal officer (ἀναγραφεύς) in the theme of Mylasa and Melanoudion in SW Asia Minor, then its governor (δούξ). After 1204, he joined the crusaders, offering his services to Boniface of Montferrat, who conquered Thessalonica and overran Thessaly. Michael then switched sides and fought with the Western Greeks against the crusaders. He went to Arta in Epirus (the Byzantine theme of Nicopolis), married the widow or daughter of the Byzantine governor, and soon took over the governorship. He participated in the war in the Peloponnesus against the forces of William of Champlitte and Geoffrey of Villehardouin, and lost at the battle of the Olive Grove of Koundouros in Messenia in the spring of 1205.[102] Like his royal neighbor in the northeast (the Bulgarian tsar), he found religious identity expandable and contingent upon political and military interests. To gain leverage over the crusaders, he swapped ecclesiastical jurisdictions, vowing allegiance to Pope Innocent III in 1207. The Western barons and knights could no longer use schism or heresy as pretexts for invading his realm. In 1209, Michael became the vassal of the Latin Empire for the territory he conquered in Thessaly, reinforcing this relationship through the marriage of his daughter to Henry's brother Eustace. Michael also accepted the status of vassal to the Venetians; these had been allotted Epirus through the partition treaty of 1205, but found it hard to subdue the mountainous area and preferred to rule it by delegating power to a local. In secret, however, Michael continued to plan, and in 1212 he launched, his *reconquista* of Byzantium. The first victims were the Venetian Durrazzo and Corfu. He also expanded into the

[102] Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, "Aux origins du despotat d'Épire et de la principauté d'Achaïe," *Byzantion* 43 (1973) 360-394, at 377-381, argues that Michael who fought against the crusaders in southern Greece was not the son of the sebastocrator John Angelus, but a local Greek who bore the same name.

south, down to Naupactus. Michael died in late 1214 or early 1215, without having made too many inroads eastward, toward Constantinople.[103]

Michael's half-brother and successor, Theodore Comnenus Ducas (1214-1230), was much more successful in his quest for reestablishing the Byzantine Empire. He had been among the Byzantine aristocrats who had taken refuge at Nicaea in 1204, but sometimes before 1210 he moved to Arta, at his brother's request. Before leaving, he swore allegiance to Lascaris. Once sole ruler of Epirus, he ignored Lascaris and resumed Michael's Eastern campaigns.[104] Constantinople as the final prize weighted more heavily than loyalty to the Nicaean self-proclaimed emperor in Theodore's political agenda. In the end, he was of real Comnenian ancestry, while Lascaris was a newcomer to the exalted world of imperial transactions. The blood relationship to the family who ruled Byzantium in its times of glory validated Theodore Ducas' fight for its restoration. Lascaris could boast no distinguished background; he was from a minor aristocratic family, his only connection to the imperial household coming through his father-in-law, the previous emperor Alexius III. And Alexius III was not particularly loved in the

[103] Choniates, *Annals* c. 529.18–24, p. 290; 638.43–45, p. 350; Acropolites, *History* c. 8, p. 124; c.14, p. 144-145. Villerhardouin, *Conquest of Constantinople*, 113-117. On Michael Comnenus Ducas, see Günter Prinzing, "Studien zur Provinz- und Zentralverwaltung im Machtbereich der Epirotischen Herrscher Michael I. und Theodoros Dukas," *Epirotica Chronica* 24 (1982) 73-120 and *Epirotica Chronica* 25 (1983) 37-112; François Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki (1224-1242)* (Thessalonica 1996) 58-64; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 65-69. Lucien Stiernon, "Les origins du despotat d'Epire," *Revue des études byzantines* 17 (1959) 90-126; Donald M. Nicol, "The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires, 1204-1261," ed. Joan M. Hussey, *Cambridge Medieval History IV. The Byzantine Empire, Part 1: Byzantium and its Neighbors*, 275-330, here at 297-300.

[104] Acropolites 14, p.144, with Macrides' commentary in n. 6, p. 146; Raymond-Joseph Loenertz, "Lettre de Georges Bardanes, métropolite de Corcyre, au patriarch oecuménique Germain II, 1226-1227 c. [1228c.]," *Epeteris hetaireias byzantinon spoudon* 33 (1964) 87-118, repr. *Byzantina et Franco-Graeca* (Rome 1970) 467-501. Acropolites, writing from the perspective of Nicaea, was hostile to Theodore Comnenus Ducas and accused him of breaking the oath of fidelity. The exact chronology is unclear, but if Theodore Ducas' departure took place after 1208, then he most likely had taken the oath extracted by Lascaris from all his subjects after coronation. However, according to Metropolitan Bardanes, a Greek hierarch who supported the Epirote rulers and wrote to the authorities of Nicaea in defense of Theodore Ducas, Lascaris had not yet donned the purple mantle when he exacted the oath, so that the latter did not actually committed an intentional act of deceit. For discussion, see Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 85-90 and 288-291.

Balkans, not least because of the disgraceful manner in which he had handled the events leading to and resulting from the crusaders' first attack on Constantinople in 1203.

Theodore Ducas had the advantage of a historical context which made it easier to conquer the Latin Empire from its edges rather than through a direct assault on Constantinople. Lascaris either failed to understand this, or, more likely, lacked the military capacity to attack the Latins on European soil. Ducas on the other hand realized that there was little chance of success in a direct confrontation for Constantinople, so he advanced slowly against it. Between 1216 and 1222, he took over several key Bulgarian towns and cities in Macedonia, including Ohrid and Prilep, captured Beroia in Thessaly, then engaged and defeated Robert of Courtenay at Serres and Drama. After 1222, he moved his armies against Thessalonica, the second largest Byzantine city after Constantinople, at that time part of the Latin Kingdom established by Boniface Monserrat in 1205. Lascaris died in late 1221, before he could witness the outcome of this action. In 1224 Theodore Ducas occupied Thessalonica, and soon afterwards he had himself proclaimed *basileus*.[105] And unlike Lascaris, he had many European Greeks on his side, who gave him recognition as valid heir and successor to the Byzantine emperors.

Within a decade, Epirus had become the most serious threat to Nicaea's imperial claims. It seemed unstoppable on the battlefield, and too shrewd at diplomatic games to be outdone by its Anatolian rival. What is more, Theodore Ducas accompanied his swift military and political victories with resolute efforts of shaking off Epirus' ecclesiastical dependence on the patriarch of Constantinople. Creating an autonomous church was a key factor in building a Balkan-based

[105] Acropolites, *History* c.14, p.144-145 and c. 21, p. 162-163; also Macrides' commentary in n. 7, p. 165. See Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 65-79, for the conquest of Thessalonica; Lucien Stiernon, "*Les origines du Despotat d'Epire.* La date du couronnement de Theodore Doukas," *Actes du XII^e Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines* vol. 2 (Belgrade 1964) 197-202, and Apostolos Karpozilos, "The Date of Coronation of Theodore Doukas Angelos," *Byzantina* VI (1974) 251-261, for the problems of dating Theodore Ducas' coronation. Bredenkamp, 112-118 & 123-130, places the proclamation in 1225 and the coronation in 1227.

Byzantine *basileia*. As long as the patriarch who lived in exile under Lascaris' protection and direction was in charge of Epirote religious affairs, there was little chance for Theodore Ducas to get his bid for the imperial crown sanctioned by the hierarchs of his realm. They owed obedience to the patriarch and implicitly to his political patron. Endorsing Ducas as emperor would have amounted to an act of rebellion. Furthermore, the patriarch was responsible for appointing metropolitans, archbishops and bishops to the vacant sees in the area, and he was not going to select for these positions men who would betray Lascaris. Theodore Ducas therefore needed to find clergymen sympathetic to his imperial dream, willing to relinquish their allegiance to the patriarch and to work together with their monarch at the formation of an ecclesiastically independent Epirus. As chance would have it, the ground for challenging Nicaea had already been prepared before he assumed power, by the intervention of his brother Michael in matters pertaining to the local church, and by the reluctance of John Apocaucus of Naupactus, the most influential metropolitan in Western Greece, to submit to patriarchal authority.[106]

In 1213, Michael Comenus Ducas made two appointments to sees that had become available through the death of their incumbents. He did not act all by himself, but convoked a synod at Arta and asked the clergy gathered with this occasion to select a bishop for Larissa and a metropolitan for Dyrrachium.[107] According to canon law, provincial synods could choose local bishops if they had patriarchal authorization to act in the matter. Metropolitans and archbishops, however, could be elected only by the patriarch and the permanent synod. Prominent civilians could play a role in the nomination of bishops, but they were not supposed to intervene in the elections of high-ranking clergymen, which was the domain of the patriarch. The only exception

[106] John Apocaucus has received hitherto little scholarly attention, despite the fact that he was one of the most influential Greek hierarchs during the struggle over ecclesiastical jurisdiction between Epirus and Nicaea. A brief introduction to his career is in Angold, *Church and Society*, 213-231.
[107] Vasilje G. Vasiljevky ed., "Epirotica saeculi XIII," *Vizantiiski Vremennik* 3 (1896) 233-299 [hereafter *Epirotica*], no. 16, p. 268-269, at 268 ll.1-14.

was the emperor, who selected the patriarch from a list of three candidates presented by the permanent synod.[108] Michael Ducas and the synod of Arta acted outside canon law, since they had no patriarchal authorization to proceed, and went too far by appointing a metropolitan. The action, however, was intended by those who participated in it to be a temporary solution to a local problem at a time when communication with Nicaea was impaired by the overall regional instability. Michael was not interested in separating the Epirote church from its spiritual leader, and shortly after the event he sent a letter to the patriarch in Nicaea, asking him to ratify the two appointments.[109] For reasons unknown, the letter and the situation it addressed remained unattended until 1221. By the time Patriarch Manuel I Sarantenus decided to deal with the matter, it was too late. Theodore Ducas had turned Michael's one-time action into an ongoing ecclesiastical policy, selecting churchmen loyal to himself for the prominent sees of his expanding principality. Two of these uncanonical appointees would stand apart for their determined promotion of an autonomous church in Epirus: Demetrius Chomatenus (Chomatianus), appointed archbishop of Ohrid in 1216, and George Bardanes, made metropolitan of Corfu in 1219.[110] Theodore Ducas' close ally and adviser in all the uncanonical nominations was John Apocaucus of Naupactus, who had his own axe to grind with his ecclesiastical superior in Nicaea.

In 1215, Patriarch Theodore II Irenicus appointed a new exarch for the stavropegial monasteries located in the Naupactus diocese, ignoring Apocaucus who had held this position

[108] On clerical appointments, see Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 50-51; Louis Bréhier, *Le monde byzantin. II. Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1969) 403-418; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 312-335.
[109] *Epirotica* no. 17, p. 270-278, at 270.
[110] Günter Prinzing contends that Chomatenus was appointed to the see of Ohrid in 1216, right after the death of the previous archbishop, Basil Camaterus; see Prinzing, "A Quasi-patriarch in the State of Epirus: The Autocephalous Bishop of 'Boulgaria' (Ohrid) Demetrius Chomatenos," *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta/ Recueil des travaux de l'Institut d'Études Byzantines* 41 (2004) 165-182, at 172; Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy,* 57, sets the election somewhat later, in 1217 or 1218.

since 1199.[111] The metropolitan felt slighted, considering his demotion an act done in haste by a hierarch who had not found it worthwhile to communicate with his subordinates in advance, in order to let them know of his own election to the see of Constantinople and to ask their opinion on whether sending a new exarch was warranted or not. Apocaucus launched a campaign to recruit supporters for his cause among the clergy in Western Greece and among the secular authorities of Epirus.[112] He also wrote back in no meek terms to Patriarch Irenicus, accusing him of canonical innovation (καινοτόμημα) and of misjudgment in considering a man who was not even a bishop worthier for the position of patriarchal delegate than the metropolitan himself.[113] The response, if any, did not survive.

The details of this affair are known only from Apocaucus' letters, which shed no light on what had determined the patriarch to remove the metropolitan from his position as exarch.[114] The monasteries under discussion owed allegiance directly to Patriarch Irenicus, not to local bishops, and were an important source of revenues for the patriarchate of Constantinople, especially during its exile at Nicaea. The patriarch might have had suspicions about the accuracy with which revenues were recorded and reported by Apocaucus, who was one of the most powerful hierarchs in Greece, with close connections to local magnates and the ruling house of Epirus. Strong interests bound together the ecclesiastical and political elites of Western Greece, and perhaps the metropolitan of Naupactus had become increasingly and quite visibly less motivated in promoting the welfare of patriarchal institutions in the area. Whatever the reason behind the new appointment, the situation of the stavropegial monasteries in Naupactus did not take a turn

[111] François Bredenkamp, "The 'Sampson Incident' [ca. 1215] and the Deterioration of Epirote-Nicaean Orthodox Ecclesiastical Relations," Βυζαντιακά/*Byzantiaka* 4 (1984) 11-31, at 17-18.
[112] Bredenkamp, "Sampson Incident," 18-22.
[113] Bredenkamp, "Sampson Incident," 23-25.
[114] Apocaucas' letters have been edited by E. Bees-Seferle in "Aus dem Nachlass von N. A. Bees" to *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 21 (1971-1974) 57-160, here at 107-116.

for the better once Sampson, the new appointee, arrived in the diocese. He received a very cold welcome thanks to Apocaucus' negative publicity, and afterwards little to no help in accomplishing his mission. Sampson died in 1219, and with his death, the patriarch's prospect of exercising influence over the area also appeared to be extinct. By then, not only the metropolitan of Naupactus, but many of the higher clergy in Greece and Macedonia had thrown their lot in with Theodore Ducas.[115] Those who still upheld the Nicaean patriarch and his canonical right to exercising jurisdiction over the Greeks of the West did not find support for their cause in the surrounding context. The ruler of Epirus was on a steady path of invasion and conquest, expanding his principality into Serbian, Bulgarian and Latin territory. His military achievements made the Nicene leadership look particularly inconsequential.

To underscore his sovereignty, Theodore Ducas entrusted the ecclesiastical affairs in his realm to a synod made by metropolitans, archbishops and bishops. His message was clear: Epirus had no need to rely on Nicaea for matters pertaining to the Church. Up to 1220, the voice that carried most weight among the Epirote prelates was that of John Apocaucus.[116] When, at the end of 1219, Patriarch Sarantenus contacted Theodore Ducas and the Western clergy to invite them to the projected council on Church reunion, the metropolitan of Naupactus took it upon himself to reply. He dealt with the matter firmly and squarely. He informed Sarantenus that the papacy and the Latins were *the* enemy par-excellence, and negotiating with them would be to the detriment of all Greeks. The Nicene state might have ulterior, political motives for seeking unity with Rome, but the Epirotes were to stand fast by their ruler in his fight against the Latins. If the Eastern Greeks pursued the unionist plan to its completion, Epirus would cut them off from

[115] Bredenkamp, "Sampson Incident," 25-27.
[116] Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 41-43.

communion.[117] Apocaucus quite conveniently forgot to mention that Theodore Ducas had submitted himself to the pope a few years earlier. To his credit (from an Epirote perspective), Ducas had not tried to enforce the union within his principality. It had been a political move with no effect on the religious life of Epirus. Even so, Apocaucus spoke from a self-righteous position which was incongruous with the political and military strategies to which Greeks in both East and West had resorted after the fourth crusade. Survival in a Latin-dominated landscape meant readiness to compromise, and oftentimes this included forging alliances with the Latins and submission to the papacy. In 1219, Theodore Ducas no longer needed or sought Latin friendships, but this did not obviate the fact that he and his brother had had dealings with the enemy previously. But to Apocaucus only the present mattered, and this looked bright enough from the Epirote edge to encourage a haughty response to the patriarchal invitation to the council.

Apocaucus's answer was an open act of insubordination. He knew he could afford it, because Patriarch Sarantenus was not able to enforce any disciplinary measure upon the Epirote clergy without their cooperation. And they were highly unlikely to cooperate with patriarch of Constantinople in Anatolian exile against one of their own. Moreover, the patriarch was already in a weak position vis-à-vis his Balkan subjects. The Bulgarian and the Serbian rulers had taken advantage of the mayhem created by the loss of Byzantine hegemony in 1204 and had removed their churches from patriarchal jurisdiction. The Western Greeks seemed willing to follow suit. They denied assistance to patriarchal envoys. They refused to accede to patriarchal requests. They continued to make episcopal and metropolitan appointments without patriarchal approval. The most appalling move had been installing Demetrius Chomatenus as the archbishop of Ohrid.

[117] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1222 and 1224 (December 1219), p. 29, 30-31; *Epirotica* no. 15, p. 265-267. For discussion, see Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 54-56.

The see of Ohrid held an autonomous status in the Byzantine Empire, similar to that of Cyprus: its incumbent was chosen by the emperor, usually from among the clergy of Saint Sophia. He was not a direct subordinate of the patriarch, managing the internal affairs of his archdiocese without interference from Constantinople. However, the two usually had a cordial relationship, since they belonged to the same ecclesiastical circles and had the same goal of promoting Byzantine interests over those of local churches.[118]

In 1216, Theodore Ducas, on Apocaucus' advice, bestowed the see of Ohrid upon Chomatenus, who was then ordained by a provincial synod. The appointment was of course uncanonical, but the see, given its autocephalous status, was too important to be left in the hands of Lascaris, who would have selected for it a man loyal to Nicaea. Lascaris had already been recognized as the legitimate *basileus* by the four Greek patriarchs and the archbishop of Cyprus, the highest-ranking clerics in the East, who depended on the emperor for election and/or confirmation. A pro-Lascaris archbishop in Ohrid would have strengthened Nicaea's position in the Balkans, area which until then had been reluctant in supporting the Anatolian heir of the Byzantine Empire, and at the same time would have ruined Theodore Ducas' own imperial ambitions. The Epirote ruler and his upper clergy moved fast, elevating Chomatenus to the office of archbishop right after death of the incumbent, to forestall any intervention from far away Nicaea. Chomatenus had been close to the Constantinopolitan clergy through family connections and education, and to the church of Ohrid through his work. Before 1200, he had acted as the *apocrisarius* of the Ohrid archdiocese in Constantinople, representing its interests at the imperial

[118] General introductions to the archbishopric of Ohrid in medieval times are: Heinrich Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida: Geschichte und Urkunden* (Leipzig, 1902, repr. Aalen, 1980); Igor Snegarov, *Istorija na Ochridskata archiepiscopia* (Sofia, 1924, repr. 1995); Vasilka Tăpkova-Zaimova, "L'archevêché autocéphale d'Ohrid: Ses relations avec le patriarcat de Constantinople et les autres Églises dans les Balkans, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 29 (2007) 419-436; Iliya Iliev, "The First Two Centuries of the Archbishopric of Ohrid," *State and Church: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium* (Sofia, 2011) 237-252; Günter Prinzing, "The Autocephalous Byzantine Ecclesiastical Province of Bulgaria/Ohrid: How Independent were its Archbishops?," *Bulgaria Medievalis* 3 (2012) 355-383.

and patriarchal courts. In 1214 or 1215, he was promoted to the office of *chartophylax* of the Ohrid archdiocese, and moved there to take care of its legal documents and archival records. He was liked and trusted equally by the clergy and secular authorities of Epirus, and thus his appointment met no opposition.[119]

There is no record of a Nicaean reaction to the event. Given the already fragile relationship between the Balkan churches and the patriarchate, Sarantenus likely preferred not to antagonize the Western Greeks to the point of schism. He needed friends in the area, not further enemies. The patriarch might have hoped that Chomatenus, with his training in canon law and friendly connections to the imperial city, would refrain from radical gestures of defiance and remain faithful to the Nicean leadership, which claimed continuity with the Constantinopolitan one. Until proven otherwise, Sarantenus abstained from condemning the uncanonical election. On his part, Chomatenus took seriously his office as an archbishop with extensive autonomy, and tried to meet the needs of his new patrons in Western Greece as best as he could. He replaced the Bulgarian bishops in his archdiocese with Greek hierarchs, and also had a hand in the uncanonical appointments which continued in Epirus, especially for the key metropolitan sees of Neopatras, Larisa, and Corfu.[120] He advised Theodore Ducas and other aristocrats on religious and secular matters, and together with his synod issued judgments on a wide range of legal cases.[121] In his official correspondence, he used the patriarchal formula ἡ μετριότης ἡμῶν ("our humility") and the title ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Πρώτης Ἰουστινιανῆς καὶ πάσης Βουλγαρίας ("archbishop

[119] Prinzing, "Quasi Patriarch,"170-173, and idem, "The Authority of the Church in Uneasy Times: The Example of Demetrius Chomatenos, Archbishop of Ohrid, in the State of Epiros 1216-1236," in Pamela Armstrong ed., *Authority in Byzantium* (Farnham, UK 2014) 137-150, at 140-142.
[120] Prinzing, "Quasi-Patriarch," 173; Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 58-62.
[121] Angold, *Church and Society*, 419-425.

of Justiniana Prima and all Bulgaria").[122] In many of his pursuits, he emulated the patriarch without actually claiming to be one himself.

The title used by Chomatenus had been inaugurated by his predecessor John Comnenus (1143-1160), and was based on the (faulty) understanding of the archbishopric of Ohrid as successor to Justiniana Prima, established by Justinian in 535 and endowed with special ecclesiastical privileges. The emperor had been seeking at the time to curtail the influence of Thessalonica in the northern Balkans, so he raised the civic status of his newly-founded city to that of the seat of the Illyrian prefecture, and detached it ecclesiastically from the bishopric of Thessalonica, granting Justiniana Prima the right to choose its own archbishop and regulate its own affairs without any outside interference (Novella 11/ AD 535). The city, however, did not succeed in replacing Thessalonica either administratively or religiously. It had been established too shortly before Justinain's novella, in a place with no tradition of participation in large-scale, imperial politics. Moreover, ten years after establishing the autocephalous see of Justiniana Prima, the emperor gave in to papal pressures and placed the archbishopric under Rome's authority (novella 131.3/ AD 545). The city disappeared from the historical record in the early seventh century, during the Avar and Slavic invasions in the Balkan Peninsula.[123]

Ohrid's emergence as a major religious and cultural center was connected not with the Late Antique Byzantium, but with the First Bulgarian Empire, the capital of which it was between 990 and 1018. Its ecclesiastical status was changed from an independent Bulgarian patriarchate to an autocephalous archbishopric within the Byzantine Empire by Emperor Basil II,

[122] Prinzing, "Authority of the Church in Uneasy Times," 142-143; on the titles used by the patriarchs of Constatinople, see Vitalien Laurent, "Le titre de patriarche oecumenique et la signature patriarcale," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 6 (1948) 5-26.

[123] See Alexander Kazhdan, "Justiniana Prima," *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3 vols. (Oxford 1991) 2.1085; also R.A. Markus, "Carthage-Prima Justiniana-Ravenna: An Aspect of Justinian's Kirchenpolitik," *Byzantion* 49 (1979) 227-302, at 289-92; Bernard Bavant, *"Caričin Grad* and the Changes in the Nature of Urbanism in the Central Balkans in the Sixth Century," in A. G. Poulter ed., *The Transition to Late Antiquity on the Danube and Beyond* (Oxford 2007) 337–374.

who conquered Bulgaria in 1018.[124] At first, the emperor installed a Bulgarian archbishop, but afterwards all incumbents of the see were Greeks. To better protect their autonomy, these Greek hierarchs preferred to place Ohrid not in the tradition of the first Bulgarian patriarchate, more recent and quite resented in Constantinople, but in that of Justiniana Prima, part of the revered Byzantine past.[125] As recent research has showed, Ohrid was not actually located within the jurisdiction of the Late Antique archbishopric of Justiniana Prima, which is now identified with the modern Caričin Grad, in Southern Serbia (about 28 miles southwest of Niš).[126] Whether aware or not of the lack of any geographical and historical continuity between the two sees, the Ohrid ecclesiastics resorted to the alleged connection whenever they needed to defend their autonomy.

For Chomatenus, this need arose sooner than he expected when Serbia, an ally of Epirus in regional politics and under Ohrid's jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters, made the move toward autocephaly. Serbia's religious situation became rather complicated after its ruler, Stefan Nemanjič Prvovenčani (the First-Crowned), had placed himself under papal authority in exchange for the royal crown. While not forcing his church to follow suit, he seemed willing to build close relationships with Rome. Furthermore, his marriage to the granddaughter of Enrico Dandolo, the Venetian doge who had participated in the fourth crusade, strengthened trade relations with Venice, especially in the coastal areas, where Western prelates also were very

[124] Greek text of Basil's decree is in Heinrich Gelzer, "Ungedruckte und wenig bekannte Bistümerverzeichnisse der orientalischen Kirche," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 2 (1893) 22-72, at 42-46. For historical context, see Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 300-313.

[125] Aristeides Papadakis, *The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy* (Crestwood, NY, 1994) 241-245; Günter Prinzing, "*Entstehung und Rezeption der Justiniana-Prima-Theorie im Mittelalter," Byzantinobulgarica* 5 (1978) 269-87; Vladimir Zlatarski, "Prima Justinian aim Titel des bulgarischen Erzbischofs von Achrida," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929-1930) 484-489.

[126] C. A. Ralegh Radford, "Justiniana Prima (Tsaritsin Grad): a 6th-Century city in Southern Serbia," *Antiquity* 28.109 (1954) 15-18; H-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinische Reich* (München, 1959) 186; Prinzing, "Quasi-patriarch," 169. The site of Justiniana Prima had been initially identified with Tauresium (Taor), located 12 mi SE of Skopje, Macedonia. See Arthur Evans, *Antiquarian Researches in Illyricum* (Westminster, 1893) 132-141; also J. Zeiller, "Le site de Justiniana Prima," *Mélanges Charles Diehl* 2 vols. (Paris, 1930) 1.299-304.

active.[127] Serbian bishops and especially the king's brother, Sava, an Athonite monk, worried about the growing presence of the Roman Church in their territory, and searched for a solution to Stefan Nemanjič's need for political recognition that would not endanger their religious and cultural traditions.

Pope Innocent III's view of the Church of Rome as the one and only true Church founded by Christ, the universal Church outside which there was no salvation, found few supporters in the East. This Rome-centered ecclesiological model placed the many local churches that dotted the Christian world either under papal control, or in schism.[128] The same Innocent had also advanced the theory that the papacy was the source and ultimate judge of all authority, the secular sphere included, thus making the Christian rulers subject to the Apostolic See in temporal affairs as well.[129] While the political class of Serbia might not have been distressed by the radicalization of the papal discourse of power as long as it was accompanied by the granting of a series of privileges to them, the Serbian clergy remained attached to their forefathers' beliefs and practices, which had come to their lands in the ninth century, with the Greek missionaries from Constantinople.

In the pre-1204 world, the Serbian quandary would have been settled through an appeal to Byzantium - the only Christian power that had inherited from the Roman Empire the dual authority of granting secular titles and religious autonomy. There was a Balkan precedent to the Serbian situation, that of Bulgaria, which in 870 had acquired from Constantinople autonomy for its church, and in 913 the title of *tsar* (caesar or king) for its ruler.[130] In the aftermath of the fourth crusade, however, no one political entity could claim the institutional ability to bestow

[127] Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 83-84.
[128] Andrea, "Pope Innocent III as Crusader," 197-211.
[129] Andrea, "Pope Innocent III as Crusader," 226-237.
[130] See Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 37-45; John V. A. Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, 1983) 124-126, 144-148.

crowns on princes and autocephaly on churches. The states with imperial aspirations that emerged after the breakdown of Byzantium – Trebizond, Nicaea, the Latin Empire of Constantinople, the Kingdom of Thessalonica and Epirus – for all their pretentions, did not attain the full range of competencies necessary to provide recognition, protection and direction to the local potentate who sought to elevate his political status *and* gain ecclesiastical self-government. The papacy did attempt to fill the power-vacuum produced by the Byzantine collapse, but its authority in temporal and spiritual affairs continued to be contested in the northeastern Mediterranean. Besides, papal sanction of a secular office came at a cost. The Apostolic See sought to increase its hold over areas which had hitherto escaped its grasp, not to create the type of autonomous structures that the Byzantine Empire used to establish in the past. The popes' single-minded dream was a Christendom made up of loyal vassals and obedient churches.

Few in the East were eager to come under Rome's yoke, unless it brought along benefits that outweighed fears of papal universalism. Such was the case of Serbia: its king had solicited and obtained from Pope Honorius III the royal crown so as to gain certain leverage over his most aggressive enemy, the king of Hungary. As fellow members of the Church of Rome, the two rulers were expected to keep the Christian peace by solving mutual disputes peacefully and respecting each other's borders. This way of ending Hungarian encroachments upon Serbian territory did not satisfy the Serbian church, however. Its clergy refused to submit to papal leadership. They had hoped for ecclesiastical autonomy, as behooved the young and self-reliant kingdom of Serbia, not for being ruled by the Apostolic See, from which they were separated by language, theology, and centuries of performing rites according to different liturgical traditions. The Serbian clergy then had limited choices: either remain subordinates to the Byzantine archbishopric of Ohrid, or turn themselves into papal subjects.

It was under these complex circumstances that Sava the monk, the king's brother, decided to take his chances on Nicaea, whose emperor and patriarch were regarded by the Greeks of Asia Minor and the Near East as true heirs of the Byzantine Empire. Canonically Sava had no right to do so, since he had to address his petition on autonomy to his direct superior, Demetrius Chomatenus. But politically Sava was correct: the archbishop of Ohrid had little incentive to award to the Serbian church rights and privileges that would have diminished his own authority. The archdiocese had already lost suffragans to Bulgaria in the late 1180s, when the Asen brothers had founded the autonomous archbishopric of Trnovo. There was no reason to further reduce the regional influence and revenues of Ohrid by releasing the Serbian bishops from under its sway. In addition, Chomatenus was too close to Epirus' ruler and his expansionist goals to be willing to consider empowering a potentially troubling neighbor by granting self-government to its church. Theodore Ducas in his turn, much as he tried to maintain good relationships with Serbia, even marrying his daughter Anna to Stefan Nemanjič's son, Radoslav, in 1219 or 1220, had no reason to encourage the Serbian pursuit of ecclesiastical independence at the expense of Ohrid, the main see in his kingdom.[131] Sava sensibly concluded that no real help could come from Epirote quarters. He journeyed to Nicaea at the end of 1219, and in the beginning of the next year he returned to Serbia bringing recognition of his brother's royal status, autocephaly for his church, and the rank of archbishop for himself.[132]

We have no information on the content of the negotiations carried out in Nicaea. The patriarchal *acta* on the matter have not survived. The talks are mentioned in the two *vitae* of Saint Sava, both written several decades after the monk turned archbishop had passed away, and

[131] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 116-118.
[132] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1220, p. 31-32, places the ordination of Sava on or immediately after Easter 1220, when the synod gathered at Nicaea to discuss the initiation of union negotiations with Rome. Other historians place the event in late fall or winter 1219; vid. Francis Dvornik, *The Slavs in European History and Civilization* (New Brunswick 1962) 99; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 116; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 85-87.

in the letter written in the spring of 1220 by an enraged Demetrius Chomatenus, who was protesting the patriarchal interference in his autonomous archdiocese.[133] But even if no details of what happened in Nicaea transpired in the records of the time, we can infer from the overall context that it had been a win-win situation, with each party eager to take full advantage of what the other had to offer. The patriarch who resided in exile at Nicaea had not been yet accepted by all previous suffragan bishops of Constantinople as the successor of the Byzantine patriarch. The ordination of Sava and the granting of autocephaly to the new archbishop of Serbia served as a golden opportunity to assert authority in an area which used to belong ecclesiastically to Byzantium, but until then had refused to recognize the Nicene state as heir of the vanished empire. Theodore Lascaris gained his longed-for acknowledgment as *basileus* among (at least some of) the Balkan Slavs. Serbia achieved recognition as a kingdom with an autonomous church. The Serbian clergy had to give precedence in their prayers to the patriarch of Constantinople, as a way to indicate their acceptance of his position as the spiritual head of the churches in Anatolia, the Balkans and Eastern Europe, but besides that requirement they were free to act according to their own interests. They could choose and ordain their archbishop, with no need to obtain imperial or patriarchal confirmation.[134] As for the royal title assumed by Stephen Nemanjič, it was simply accepted as a fact by the Nicene authorities, as there was nothing they could do to overturn the development. Nicaea had practically no control over the Balkans, hence its willingness to accommodate the Serbia's evolution into a quasi-independent kingdom. Ecclesiastical and political self-rule was the most generous privilege a *basileus* would grant to a client state. As it had been the case with Symeon of Bulgaria in early tenth century, it indicated a major crisis of leadership in the Byzantine state. Lascaris still struggled to persuade

[133] Laurent, "Littérature," in *Regestes* IV, 31.
[134] Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 84-86; Papadakis, *Christian East*, 254-256.

former subjects or allies of Byzantium that he was the lawful successor of the Comneni, and thus held the right to the imperial office usurped by the Latins. The fact that the Serbians were ready to acknowledge him in exchange for autonomy was an unexpected stroke of luck which he wisely put to good use for his own political benefit.

The first reaction to the change in the status of the Serbian church came from the archbishop of Ohrid, who had lost several of his bishoprics in the process. In May 1220, Demetrius Chomatenus wrote an angry letter to Sava of Serbia, reminding him that he was a subordinate of Ohrid and that the patriarch had no say in a matter involving the internal affairs of the archdiocese. Even if one was willing to concede that the bishop residing at Nicaea was indeed the patriarch of Constantinople in exile, it did not mean that he was authorized to interfere in churches which were not under his jurisdiction. The archbishopric of Ohrid (which, in Chomatenus' view, corresponded to the ancient Justiniana Prima) was an imperial foundation, and only the *basileus*, who was its direct overseer, could make decisions regarding the status of one of its suffragans. Likewise, only the *basileus* could redraw ecclesiastical boundaries and redefine ecclesiastical rank. But there was no Byzantine emperor after 1204, so Lascaris' act was lacking any canonical foundation.[135]

There was a great degree of truth in Chomatenus' contention: although not the continuator of Justiniana Prima, Ohrid had been placed under imperial authority by Emperor Basil II in 1020, and should have stayed free of patriarchal interference. The claim of the Nicene ruler to be the legitimate Byzantine *basileus* was not unanimously recognized by the European Greeks and Slavs, so his pronouncements on church issues did not bear the mark of imperial

[135] Chomatenus' letter is published in Jean-Baptiste Pitra, *Analecta Sacra et Classica Spicilegio Solesmensi Parata* vol. 7 (Rome, 1891) cols. 381-390, and more recently in the revised edition of Günter Prinzing, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora* (Berlin, 2002) 296-302. See also Papadakis, *Christian East*, 255-257; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 87-89.

authority and did not have to be obeyed. However, Epirote interests forced the archbishop of Ohrid to accept the Serbian religious developments without causing any disturbances between the two states. Theodore Ducas was focused on his campaign in eastern Greece, aiming at Thessalonica, and he needed no troubles from his royal neighbor to the north. The move of the Nemanjič brothers (the king and the archbishop) did give Lascaris significant political credit and opened the Balkans to his influence, but the conquest of Thessalonica, the second largest Byzantine city after Constantinople, could undo much of the Nicene gains and propel Theodore Ducas as the leading candidate to the imperial office. As a result, rather than getting embroiled in a futile ecclesiastical controversy with Serbia, the ruler of Epirus marched his troops deep into the heart of Latin Romania.

The Epirotes' swift advance toward Thessalonica frightened the Latins, who found themselves deprived of adequate military leadership. None of the barons settled in Greece and Thrace seemed able to assume and organize the defense of the crusaders' Balkan states. Their overlord, the Latin emperor Peter of Courtenay, was unavailable; he had been taken into captivity by Theodore Ducas in 1217 and not heard of ever since. Demetrius of Montferrat, the underage ruler of the Kingdom of Thessalonica, was too unexperienced to handle the crisis by himself, and travelled to Italy to ask for the pope's and the Holy Roman Emperor's assistance. The latter made promises but nothing concrete materialized. The former tried desperately to stop Theodore Ducas' march against Thessalonica. In theory, the ruler of Epirus was still a member of the Church of Rome, and as such he was supposed to refrain from making war upon his coreligionaries. Honorius went to great lengths to have the Epirotes reach an agreement with the Latins in Romania, but none of his strategies worked.[136]

[136] On the Latin reaction to Theodore Ducas' war upon the crusader states in Macedonia and Greece, see Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 65-79. For Pope Honorius' efforts to prevent the disintegration of Romania

In 1220 the pope excommunicated Theodore, as well as the Latin mercenaries serving in the Epirote army.[137] The disciplinary measure produced no impression on those for whom it was intended. In 1221, Honorius gave up hopes that Peter of Courtenay was still alive, and agreed to the ascension of the man's son, Robert, to the throne of Constantinople. He then urged the new Latin emperor to provide military aid to Demetrius of Montferrat, and asked all the barons, counts and knights in Romania to stay united and "humbly, devotedly, bravely and forcefully" help their new overlord (*humiliter et devote ac assistendo viriliter et potenter*) in the fight against the common enemy.[138] But pressing problems with neighboring Nicaea prevented Robert of Courtenay from taking immediate action against Epirus.[139] In 1223, the pope launched a crusade against Theodore Ducas, which was met with a lukewarm response on the part of the Western barons and knights.[140] Honorius excommunicated the ruler of Epirus once again, as he did with anyone who supplied him with manpower, weapons, horses or provisions.[141] In 1224, he reissued the call for a crusade to Romania. The relatively few crusaders willing to go to the rescue of Thessalonica took too much time to assemble and set off; when they finally did, in 1225, it was too late, as the city had already been taken by the Epirote army.[142] As before, despite its efforts to the contrary, the papacy proved unable to control Balkan developments. Different interests and priorities animated those involved in the conflict, which rendered useless the papal exhortations to unity, the excommunications, and the summoning of a crusade.

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under the blows of the Epirote army, see Nikolaos G. Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece: A Study of Byzantine-Western Relations and Attitudes* (Turnhout, 2012) 57-82; Schabel, "Pope Honorius and Romania," 15-30.

[137] Letter 103 (11 December 1220), *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 281.

[138] Letters 144 (27 June 1222), 145 (27 June 1222) and 158 (24 September 1222), *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 353-357, 371-373. On Emperor Robert, see Filip van Tricht, "Robert of Courtenay (1221–1227): An Idiot on the Throne of Constantinople?," *Speculum* 88.4 (2013) 996-1034.

[139] Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 69-71; Longnon, *L'empire latin*, 159.

[140] Letter 175, 177-178 (13 May 1223), *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 396-397, 398-400. The promises for granting forgiveness of sins to all those accompanying the Marquis William of Montferrat in the crusade against Theodore Ducas were renewed in 1224; vid. letters 223-226 (7/8 February 1224), *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 484-492.

[141] Letter 176 (13 may 1223), *Bullarium Hellenicum*, 397-398.

[142] Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 75-79; Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece*, 72-78; Schabel, "Pope Honorius and Romania," 24-28.

Theodore Ducas' victorious entry into Thessalonica in December 1224 changed the balance of power in the northeastern Mediterranean. The Latins' half-hearted defense of Romania had allowed him to become the key political player in the region, threatening all others who had similar hegemonic goals. The Latin Kingdom of Thessalonica disappeared as a political entity, and its ruler, Demetrius of Montferrat, fled to Italy, to the court of Frederick II, where he remained until his death in 1230.[143] To Robert of Courtenay, the conquest of the kingdom administered a heavy blow. The emperor of Constantinople was deprived of an important ally who had also acted as a buffer between the Latin Empire and Greece. Robert had lost his territories in Asia Minor at the battle of Poimanenon in early 1224, and his shrinking state now bordered hostile Greeks with obvious designs on Constantinople on almost all sides.[144] In his turn, the prince of Achaia, Geoffrey of Villehardouin, remained isolated in central Thessaly, completely cut off by Epirus from his Latin allies in the Balkans.[145]

To the Bulgarian tsar John Asen II (1218-1241), Epirus turned to be a major hindrance in reaching his regional objectives. The tsar intended to extend his realm into Macedonia and Thrace, hoping to get Constantinople as well, but was not powerful enough to challenge directly Theodore Ducas, who entertained the same ambitions. John Asen sought alternate ways to increase his control in the area. He established friendly relationships with his main neighbors (Serbia, Hungary and the Latin Empire), and upon Robert of Courtenay's death in late 1227, he offered his daughter in marriage to Robert's minor son Baldwin II, and his assistance as regent until the youth could assume the throne. It would have been the easiest way for Asen to acquire Constantinople, but the barons understood the danger involved in accepting the Bulgarian

[143] Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean: 1204-1550* (London 1995) 61-62.
[144] Acropolites, *Historia* c. 22, p. 165-166. See also Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 63-73; Longnon, *L'empire latin*, 160-162.
[145] Lock, *Franks in the Aegean*, 80-82; Longnon, *L'empire latin*, 162-168.

proposition, and choose one of their own: John Brienne, a prominent crusader and king of Jerusalem since 1210, who became regent of the Latin Empire in 1229.[146]

John III Vatatzes was perhaps hit hardest by Ducas' successful military campaign against the Latin Kingdom of Thessalonica. Although the conquest did not affect Nicaea territorially, the greatest loss for the Anatolian state was political. By conquering the largest Byzantine city after Constantinople, the ruler of Epirus had become the main contender in the race for the *imperium*. His already considerable prestige among the European Greeks grew even more, while the same group offered little to no admiration and support to John III Vatatzes. There was nothing except immediate action that could give a boost to the Nicene popularity in the Balkans. In 1225, Vatatzes sent troops to take Adrianople, whose inhabitants had appealed to him for assistance. He acquired a very important bridgehead in Europe, close to Constantinople, but was unable to hold onto his gain for too long. Theodore Ducas continued his expansion into Thrace, and claimed Adrianople for himself.[147] In 1227 he was crowned *basileus*.[148] His empire covered western Greece, northern and eastern Thessaly, Macedonia and Thrace. It was the largest state in the Balkans, controlling many former Byzantine possessions. Until 1230 when Theodore Ducas unwisely sought to eliminate his Bulgarian rival by attacking his territory, and was crushed by the Bulgarian army, Vatatzes did not succeed to make any further inroads into the Balkans. With

[146] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 123-124.
[147] Acropolites, *Historia* c. 21, p. 162-163. On the Vatatzes family connections to Adrianople and John III's efforts to secure the city for himself, see Langdon, "John III Vatatzes,"20-43, 78-82. Also Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 130-133.
[148] The year of Theodore Ducas' coronation is still debated by scholars. Several options have been proposed: 1225, soon after the conquest of Thessalonica (Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 74-75); late 1227 or early 1225 (Stiernon, "La date du couronnement de Theodore Doukas," 200-202); and spring-summer 1227 (Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 126-128). Günter Prinzing argues that in all probability some time passed between Theodore Ducas' proclamation (1225) and his coronation (April-August 1227), as had been the case with Theodore I Lascaris (who had assumed the imperial title in 1205 but was crowned emperor in 1208). See Prinzing, "Die *Antigraphe* des Patriarchen Germanos II. an Erzbischof Demetrius Chomatenus von Ohrid und die Korrespondenz zum nikäisch-epirotischen Konflikt 1212-1233," *Rivista di studi bizantini e slavici* 3 (1984) 21-64, here esp. at 49-54.

no impressive military achievements in the area, he failed to persuade the European Greeks that he was the rightful emperor and that Ducas was a mere usurper.

The political antagonism between the two would-be *basileis* escalated into an open confrontation when the Epirote clergy rejected the authority of the patriarch residing at Nicaea, provoking a schism within the Church. Given the strong interconnection between religion and politics in Byzantine thought, the refusal to recognize patriarchal jurisdiction over Epirus was understood as an implicit rejection of the claims to universal leadership made by the man whom the patriarch had crowned as emperor. According to Acropolites, John III Vatatzes would have been willing to acknowledge Theodore Ducas as second in the hierarchy of power, provided that in his turn the Epirote was willing to concede that the Nicene monarch was the legitimate *basileus.*[149] In contrast, the letters sent to the patriarch by high-ranking prelates in Western Greece in order to justify their request for ecclesiastical autonomy point to Epirote authorities' reluctance to see in John III Vatatzes anything more than an Anatolian potentate, with no right to impose his rule on, and expect compliance from, the Balkan Christians.[150]

To downplay the political significance of Vatatzes, the clergy who supported Theodore Ducas' bid for the imperial title argued that their candidate had both the appropriate lineage (as great-grandson of Alexius I Comnenus and first cousin of the previous Angeli emperors, Isaac II and Alexios III), and categorical victories over the Latin invaders (which were the mark of true Byzantine leadership). Vatatzes could boast neither. Although of aristocratic stock, his origins were more modest than those of Theodore, and he had yet to make a decisive military move

[149] Acropolites, *Historia* c. 21, p. 162-163.
[150] Our main source for the ways in which Epirus envisioned its relationship with Nicaea during the reign of Theodore Ducas is the correspondence carried out by Epirote hierarchs with the patriarch, and especially the letters of John Apocaucus of Naupactus, George Bardanes of Corfu, and Demetrius Chomatenus of Ohrid. For specific bibliography, see below.

against the Latins.[151] The recovery of the main cities in the Balkans (Serres, Drama, Thessalonica, Adrianople and Demotica) had indeed given Theodore Ducas an obvious advantage over Vatatzes, not only because he now controlled areas where the majority of the population was Greek-speaking and pro-Byzantine, but also because it had opened up his path toward Constantinople. Vatatzes did push the Latins out of most of Asia Minor in 1224, but was unable to capitalize on that early success and lead an anti-Latin expedition in Europe. Local tensions, including a coup d'état organized by Anatolian magnates, forced him to concentrate his energy on securing his rule instead of extending his realm into Thrace.[152] As the Nicene ruler struggled to consolidate his position at home, he appeared quite ineffective when compared to his Epirote rival. The idea that the successful Theodore Ducas should accept the luckless Vatatzes' claim to the *imperium* and subordinate his foreign policy and military campaign to Nicene political priorities could hardly find support among the European Greeks.

War accomplishments provided the Epirote bishops with a solid reason to support the political preeminence and implicitly the sovereign status of their ruler. Theodore Ducas' blood connection to two recent and popular imperial families, the Comneni and the Angeli, was also a valid argument in his favor, although the Byzantines were not opposed in principle to dynastic changes when the historical context led to such developments. Political legitimation in Byzantium was only partially based on hereditary claims. Resounding victories on the battlefield and violent usurpations could also be construed as proofs of the candidate's privileged status before God, and thus of his suitability for the throne. The clergymen in Theodore Ducas' realm interpreted his conquests as acts in defense of the faith and as evidence of divine approval for his

[151] *Epirotica* no. 21, p. 282-283.
[152] Acropolites, *Historia* c. 23, p. 169-170. Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 75-77.

imperial endeavors. His coronation was thus legitimate and timely, as was their participation in it.[153]

The Western Greek bishops had a more difficult case to make against the patriarch's interference in Epirote church affairs. Political and ecclesiastical boundaries had not overlapped in Byzantium; patriarchal jurisdiction had extended far beyond the frontiers of the empire. For Theodore Ducas, this meant that his independence and regional hegemony did not preclude the subordination of his churches to the patriarch who resided in exile at Nicaea. But as a contender for the imperial title, Theodore could not accept such authority over his territory. Patriarch and emperor came together in one package, and after 1204 both offices had been ostensibly restored at Nicaea. The head of the Byzantine Church was backed by and in his turn backed the Nicene ruler's pretentions to be the legitimate *basileus*. This automatically excluded Theodore Ducas from the imperial race, at least from the perspective of Nicene authorities. Moreover, if ecclesiastical affairs in Epirus were to be decided at Nicaea, they would come to reflect and promote the interests of the Anatolian leading class. Theodore Ducas and his prelates had little incentive for the preservation of the current status-quo. To dispense with the patriarch's jurisdiction over their churches, they sought to circumscribe his authority to the boundaries of the Nicene state, which – they argued – was not the same as the Byzantine Empire, but a political improvisation created as a matter of expediency after the conquest of Constantinople. Its leaders therefore could not lay claim to the wide-ranging rights and privileges which used to belong to the Byzantine emperor and patriarch.

The conflict over the status of the Epirote churches had begun prior to Theodore Ducas' seizure of Thessalonica, and picked up intensity after he assumed the imperial title and began

[153] *Epirotica* nos. 23-25, p. 283-288.

organizing his state according to the constitutive principles of the Byzantine Empire.[154] The issue that caused angry protests on the part of the patriarch and sparked the controversy was the continuation of irregular episcopal appointments in Epirus by Theodore Ducas and the synod of Arta. In the *synodicon* issued in December 1219, when George Bardanes was elected metropolitan of Corfu, the bishops gathered in Arta justified their action by pointing out to the troubles afflicting most Western churches: Latin occupation, heavy papal propaganda, and the expulsion of Greek hierarchs from their sees. The bishops acted based on *oikonomia*, placing the higher good (the salvation of souls) above canon law, and providing the scattered flocks in danger of being tempted into the Roman camp with virtuous shepherds who could keep them strong and united in faith.[155] The appeal to perilous circumstances and the need for capable and morally-sound religious leaders would form the backbone of all further Epirote attempts to justify violations of canon law.

It might have taken some time for the news on the *synodicon* to reach Nicaea, because Patriarch Manuel Sarantenus did not react to it right away. In 1221, he took up instead the older issue of the uncanonical appointments made by Michael Ducas for the sees of Dyrrachium and Larissa in 1213. The patriarch had the permanent synod issue a document which sanctioned those appointments in the name of ecclesiastical harmony and brotherly love, but forbade any future unauthorized elections. He sent to Epirus an envoy, the referendary Constantine Aulenus, who read the document in the cathedral of Bonditza and then met with Theodore Ducas, informing him of the patriarchal request that no additional breaches of canon law should take

[154] Acropolites, *Historia* c. 21, p. 162. On the development of Epirus into a quasi-Byzantine Empire under the leadership of Theodore Ducas, see Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 153-190. The schism between Epirus and Nicea is discussed in detail by Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 46-95, and Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 91-103, 123-153. See also John Meyendorff, "Ideological Crises in Byzantium, 1071 to 1261," in idem, *The Byzantine Legacy in the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood NY, 1982) 67-85, at 74-79, and Papadakis, *Christian East*, 212-215, who argues that since the rift between Epirus and Nicaea did not involve matters of doctrine, but was rather an extension of political rivalry, it should not be referred to as a 'schism' (p. 214).
[155] *Epirotica* no. 13, p. 260-263. Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 59-62.

place.[156] It was an indirect note of caution to the ruler of Epirus that his attempts to play the emperor by summoning synods and undergirding their decisions were to cease. By early 1222, Patriarch Manuel learned of the more recent episcopal nominations, and wrote a heated letter to two of the senior hierarchs in Epirus, the metropolitan of Naupactus and the archbishop of Gardicium (Gardikion). He insisted that no excuse could be made for the bishops selected and ordained locally, whose obligation had been to come to Nicaea for confirmation but failed to do so. Even clergy from the barbarian north, he continued, were appointed according to canons, so what reason could prevent the Epirotes from presenting themselves before the patriarch and the permanent synod? Manuel accused Demetrius Chomatenus, whom he deemed an unlettered foreigner ignorant of theology and ecclesiastical regulations, of being behind the illegal appointments. To emphasize his position as leader of the orthodox faithful, the patriarch signed the letter using the epithet "ecumenical."[157]

Within the year, John Apocaucus wrote an equally firm response, rejecting the accusations against Chomatenus, reiterating the Epirote position that circumstances compelled the local clergy to act outside the canon law, and emphasizing Theodore Ducas' contribution to the liberation of Greek cities from the Latins, and to the reinstatement of orthodox bishops wherever they had lost their sees because of the crusaders' invasion. The fact that Ducas had appointed Chomatenus, a man much learned in both theology and canonical discipline, to the see of Ohrid had not been an infringement on the rights of the *basileus*. In fact, no one at the time held the *imperium*, so the election of Chomatenus was valid even if done locally, by the pious yet powerful ruler of Epirus. As Constantinople was still in foreign hands, no Greek could claim

[156] *Epirotica* no. 16, p. 268; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1227 and 1228 (1221), p. 32-33. Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 62-63.
[157] *Epirotica* no. 16, p. 268-269; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1230 (February 1222), p. 34-36. Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 63-64. Manuel Sarantenus' full signature was "Manuel, by the grace of God archbishop of Constantinople the New Rome and ecumenical patriarch."

universal leadership before taking back the city and the throne. Likewise the patriarch, by residing outside Constantinople, as the rest of the Greek refugees did, could not arrogate the powers of his predecessor who lived in Constantinople. He was the head of the Nicene church, but had no jurisdiction over other churches.[158] By refuting Nicaea's claims to have been the restored Byzantine Empire in exile, Apocaucus was eliminating the basis for patriarchal intervention in Epirus. The metropolitan of Naupactus also reacted strongly to the use of the title "ecumenical patriarch" by Manuel Sarantenus, reminding him of the other three Eastern patriarchs who oversaw the orthodox *oikoumene*, equal in rank and power to the patriarch of Constantinople.[159]

Patriarch Manuel Sarantenus passed away at the end of the year, without having the chance to respond to Apocaucus' attacks. His successor, Germanus II (1223-1240), did not engage the Epirotes immediately upon elevation to the patriarchal throne; by the time he did in 1226, the terms of discussion were very different, since in the meantime Theodore Ducas had captured Thessalonica (December 1224) and had been proclaimed *basileus* (most likely in early 1225).[160] The situation was too critical for John III Vatatzes to ignore it. Fear abounded among the Nicenes that Ducas would also raise an anti-patriarch, and thus turn Epirus into a state with the serious potential of becoming the renewed Byzantine Empire.[161] In 1226, Vatatzes summoned an emergency meeting of the bishops in his realm, who came together in Bithynia, where he was campaigning against the Latins.[162] The synod produced a letter in which the sovereign of Epirus was required to renounce wearing the purple robe and signing official

[158] *Epirotica* no. 17, p. 270-278. Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 64-67.
[159] *Epirotica* no. 17, p. 271.
[160] At least two years elapsed between Ducas' proclamation and his coronation.
[161] See *Nicephori Blemmydae autobiographia sive curriculum vitae necnon epistula universalior*, ed. Joseph A. Munitiz (Turnhout 1984) Bk. I.23; English trans. by Joseph A. Munitiz, *Nikephoros Blemmydes: A Partial Account* (Leuven 1988) c. XV, p. 56-57 [hereafter Blemmydes, *Partial Account*].
[162] For the dating of this synod, see Joseph A. Munitiz, "Introduction" to Blemmydes, *Partial Account*, 18-19.

documents in purple ink (which were imperial attributes), since there could not be two *basileis* and two patriarchs in the world. The Byzantines already had, at Nicaea, both a valid emperor and a valid head of the Church.[163] There was little chance that the letter would stop Ducas from moving on with his imperial project. His successes on the battlefield had propelled him as the foremost ruler of the Greeks, the likely restorer of Byzantine former greatness.

Theodore Ducas was crowned emperor in Thessalonica in 1227. The honor of performing the ceremony fell upon Demetrius Chomatenus, the archbishop of Ohrid. The local metropolitan, Constantine Mesopotamites, had remained loyal to Nicaea and refused to participate in the making of a rival *basileus.* He left the city, giving the patriarch a good reason to intensify his protests regarding the inauspicious developments in Epirus. As if dealing with another claimant of the Byzantine *imperium* and the loss of the main metropolitan see (Thessalonica) was not enough, Germanus II also faced outright defiance on the part of most European bishops. Emboldened by Theodore Ducas' forceful moves, the Epirote prelates convened in Arta and issued a statement (*pitakion*) detailing the policy of their *basileia* vis-à-vis Nicaea.[164] God had rewarded Ducas' incessant fight for orthodoxy with the imperial crown. The Nicene authorities had to recognize him as a legitimate *basileus*, and understand that the two states were to coexist separately, each with its own political and ecclesiastical administration. The patriarch had no jurisdiction over the new empire, but the Epirote bishops agreed to continue commemorating his name in the liturgical prayers provided that he agreed to their full autonomy.

What the prelates in Epirus asked was not much different from the requests made by Bulgarians in the 860s and Serbians in 1219: recognition of their ecclesiastical independence,

[163] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1239 (1225 or 1228), p. 47. Laurent's dating assumes that the synod took place after the coronation of Ducas (which used to be placed either in 1225 or in 1228); however, as Munitz points out using the evidence furnished by Blemmydes, the episcopal gathering occurred in the first half of 1226, after Ducas' proclamation as emperor and prior to his coronation, while Vatatzes was fighting in Asia Minor.
[164] *Epirotica* no. 26, p. 288-293; Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 72-76.

while maintaining the primacy of honor of the Byzantine patriarch. The case of Epirus, however, was different from that of Bulgaria and Serbia. The tsars had been and remained outsiders to the Byzantine elite, with little chance of recognition even if by some feat of military excellence they would have managed to seize Constantinople. Theodore Ducas, on the other hand, was a descendant of a famous and still well-regarded imperial family and had lawful claims to the imperial throne. It was obvious that he planned to attack and take Constantinople, and thus restore Byzantium. He had already earned the admiration and support of many in Greece, Macedonia and Thrace, and there was little doubt that in case of a successful undertaking against the Latin Empire he would enjoy immediate recognition among the former Byzantine subjects. Theodore Ducas was the most serious menace to Vatatzes' similar imperial designs, and thus he could not entertain high hopes of being acknowledged by the Nicene authorities as a valid *basileus* overseeing his own, autonomous church.

Anticipating the opposition, the Epirote hierarchs resorted to threats: if the patriarch did not allow them to elect their own bishops, they would turn to the Church of Rome.[165] It was the same weapon that the Bulgarians and the Serbians had used whenever they failed to persuade the Byzantines to grant them ecclesiastical autonomy. It had great bargaining power, since neither emperor nor patriarch could afford to lose significant segments of the population they governed to the papacy. Used by the Epirotes, the threat of submitting to the Apostolic See presented an increased danger. At stake was the very unity of the Greeks of Europe and Asia, who had stayed one in faith throughout centuries and now seemed ready to become divided along political and ecclesiological lines. If the Epirotes became part of the Church of Rome, they would not only rent asunder the Greek Church, but also signal to its remaining members that political expediency could dictate religious affiliation and raise boundaries where previously had been

[165] *Epirotica* no. 26, p. 291.

none. Bringing the unionist option to the negotiating table was at the same time a brazen move on the part of the Western Greeks, who had just praised the orthodoxy of Theodore Ducas and had linked his successes against the Latins to his readiness to protect the faith. Moreover, a few years earlier they had scolded the patriarch for trying to organize an ecumenical council on Church union, which they adamantly refused to attend. But autonomy for their churches would have been, if acquired, an important step forward on the path toward reestablishing the Byzantine Empire, so the bishops were ready to use any available means to pressure Nicaea into the agreeing with their request. They gave Germanus three months to reflect on the above propositions and respond.

The patriarch did not let himself be intimidated. Even if residing outside Constantinople, his predecessors had acquired enough recognition in the orthodox world to make it unlikely for the Epirotes to be able to confine patriarchal jurisdiction to the shores of Asia Minor. In a response to the European Greek prelates given in 1228, he rejected all their requests and reprimanded them for having continued to make illegal appointments. He also criticized the expulsion of the metropolitan of Thessalonica from his see, the refusal to accept the patriarchal appointee for the see of Dyrrachium, the alliance made by Theodore Ducas with the infidels, and his breaking of the oath of loyalty to Lascaris and his successors.[166] It is unclear what the patriarch meant by accusing Ducas of associating himself with the Muslims. Perhaps he had in mind the friendly relations of the Epirote sovereign with the Seljuqs, which he had established while in the service of Theodore I Lascaris in Asia Minor.[167] The rulers of Nicaea were also striving to maintain the good will of the Seljuqs, in order to avoid diverting troops and resources

[166] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1243 (1228-1229), p. 50-51. The letter has not survived, but summaries of its content are in the responses written to the patriarch by George Bardanes (Greek text in Loenertz, "Lettre de Bardanes," 92-94) and Demetrius Chomatenus (edited by Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, cols. 483-486, and Prinzing, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*, p. 371).
[167] Acropolites, *History* c. 38, p. 207, and Macrides, "Introduction," 94.

to wars that could not bode well for their future in Asia Minor. It would seem rather out of place to condemn Ducas for taking the same approach, but the Nicenes probably feared a potential Epirote-Seljuq alliance geared against John III Vatatzes.[168] Furthermore, underlining Ducas' friendship with the Muslims was an effective way of discrediting his efforts to style himself the defender of orthodoxy. The reproach that he was a perjurer likely fulfilled the same goal. The oath had been taken before God and the Church, and someone ready to violate such pledges in order to advance his own political interests was not worthy of the universal leadership of the faithful.

The patriarch also wrote an answer to Demetrius Chomatenus, who had informed him in a letter of the latest Epirote developments, including the coronation and anointment of Theodore Ducas. Germanus was incensed: the archbishop of Ohrid had no right to make a Roman emperor, so the crowning was invalid; never in history had a mere local hierarch dared to arrogate such a privilege. The myrrh specifically prepared for such solemn occasions by the patriarch had not been available in Thessalonica, so the anointment was invalid as well. While talking about the unity of the Greeks, Chomatenus himself was introducing division, as his action implied that there could be two emperors and two patriarchs ruling the Christian *oikoumene*. Despite the grievous offenses of the Epirote bishops, the patriarch and the permanent synod were ready to forgive if those guilty of transgressing canon law and traditional political conventions repented and amended their actions accordingly.[169] What the patriarch expected, of course, was unconditional submission to his authority, which implied acceptance of the hierarchs elected by

[168] According to John Langdon, *Byzantium's Last Imperial Offensive in Asia Minor*: *The Documentary Evidence for and Hagiographical Lore about John III Ducas Vatatzes' Crusade against the Turks, 1222 or 1225 to 1231* (New Rochelle, NY 1993), Nicaea actually engaged the Seljuqs militarily during the late 1220s, in an effort to halt their territorial expansion into Western Anatolia. John Vatatzes had then a good reason to worry about the consequences of an eventual cooperation between his political rival in Europe and his enemy in Anatolia.

[169] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1244 (1228-1229), p. 52, letter no longer extant but mentioned in Chomatenus' reply to the patriarch (Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, cols. 488-489; Prinzing, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*, p. 372-373).

him for the vacant sees in Epirus. It was exactly what the religious and secular authorities in Epirus could not afford to do, since it would have implied permitting pro-Nicene clergymen to fill key positions in the growing Empire of Thessalonica. The importance of bishops and metropolitans in local affairs increased considerably after 1204, when the Byzantine secular administration broke down.[170] They had great influence over their parishioners, and could turn them against Theodore Ducas, if so they wished. The new emperor *basileus* and his prelates could not allow any canonical considerations to have preeminence over the political interests of their realm.

Theodore Ducas himself was the recipient of a harsh letter from the patriarch, in which he was accused of being responsible for all the ill-will and animosity that pitted the Greeks in Europe against those in Asia Minor. Ducas had usurped the imperial title, violated his oath to Lascaris, compelled the clergy in his realm to act against canon law, put to flight the lawfully elected metropolitan of Thessalonica and refused to accept the hierarch whom the patriarch had appointed to the see of Dyrrachium.[171] Such an uncompromising address to the man who considered himself the real *basileus* and had many anti-Latin victories to back up his claim was hardly able to facilitate reconciliation between Epirus and Nicaea.

The mission of handing in the patriarchal letters to Ducas and the Epirote bishops fell upon the Nicene envoy Nicholas Kaloethes, the metropolitan of Amastris. Kaloethes was sent by the patriarch into a diplomatic mission to Thessalonica, where he had to inquire into the state of affairs, to meet with both leading clergymen and Theodore Ducas, and to appraise the Epirotes' willingness to reach a settlement in ecclesiastical matters.[172] He reinforced the content of the

[170] Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 93-94.
[171] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1249 (1228-1229), p. 56; letter lost but referred to in Bardanes' answer to the patriarch (Loenertz, "Lettre de Bardanes," 104).
[172] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1248 (1228-1229), p. 55.

letters he had brought with him with his own assessment of the issues at stake, which was as categorically pro-Nicaea as that of his superior. As a result, the mission was a complete failure, since neither the prelates nor their ruler were ready to give in to the patriarchal demands, which they deemed as an unnecessary hindrance in their march toward reestablishing the Byzantine Empire. The Epirote hierarchs assembled in Thessalonica and decided to erase the patriarch's name from the diptychs, thus formally breaking off communion with the Nicene church.[173]

George Bardanes, the metropolitan of Corfu, wrote the document which announced the now official schism between the two churches to the patriarch. The Western Greeks' grievances as expressed by Bardanes reiterated earlier Epirote positions, chief among them the lack of a clear canonical status of the patriarch who lived in exile in Nicaea, and the uprightness of Theodore Ducas, the protector of the orthodox faithful. According to Bardanes, Patriarch Germanus acted as if he were the real head of the Byzantine Church, while in reality he was only a local metropolitan, without jurisdiction over European Greeks. As long as Constantinople was in Latin hands, no one could claim the overarching authority of the patriarch. Given his own unconventional situation, Germanus had better used *oikonomia* when dealing with the prelates of Epirus. They were no guiltier of irregularities and legal innovations than he was. As for the refusal to accept a Nicene prelate for Dyrrachium, it stemmed from the obvious fact that the city had been taken back from the Latins with Epirote blood and sweat. It would have made little sense to let the far away Nicene authorities to decide upon the ecclesiastical fortunes of a see for which they spent no efforts fighting.[174] Dyrrachium was a large city-port offering access to the Adriatic See, hence the interest of both Epirus and Nicaea to gain control over it; the latter, however, could only do it with the cooperation of the former, and there was hardly any reason

[173] Loenertz, "Lettre de Bardanes," 94-95.
[174] Loenertz, "Lettre de Bardanes," 110, 112-115.

for the Epirotes to make such concessions in order to meet the strategic needs of their rival. Bardanes also refuted the accusation that Theodore Ducas expelled the metropolitan of Thessalonica, underlining the fact that the prelate himself had chosen to flee the city when the Epirote ruler assumed the imperial title, for which Ducas was more than qualified, as his successful fight for the true faith proved.[175] Bardanes created an obvious contrast between the prelate with pro-Nicene sympathies, ready to abandon his flock, and the new *basileus*, willing to take up any risks in order to defeat the enemies of orthodoxy.

Demetrius Chomatenus wrote to the patriarch as well, rejecting his charges of canonical innovation and emphasizing the pressure of the historical context on both Eastern and Western Greeks to find effective political and ecclesiastical solutions to the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire. After the loss of Constantinople in 1204, two political entities had emerged and developed separately from each other: Lascaris' in Anatolia, and Ducas' in Epirus. The Greeks of Anatolia had awarded Lascaris the imperial title in order to better respond to hostile circumstances. They even proclaimed a patriarch, although the decision had been locally made and not supported by all in the orthodox world. It was clearly anomalous to have the same prelate act as patriarch of Constantinople and metropolitan of Nicaea. The Greeks of Epirus also adapted themselves to adverse conditions, investing Theodore Ducas, the man who was able to deliver them from their enemies, with the *imperium*. Chomatenus himself, as the autonomous archbishop of Ohrid, had performed the anointing and coronation ceremony. He deliberately misread one of Justinian's novellae, and claimed papal-like powers of performing imperial unction and coronation.[176] His see (which he conflated with Justiniana Prima) ranked obviously far above

[175] Loenertz, "Lettre de Bardanes," 111-112, 116-118. See also Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 138-140.
[176] The archbishop of Ohrid had been autocephalous since the eleventh century, responding directly to the emperor, but in the Church hierarchy of ranks and privileges it did not share the same place with Rome or the Eastern

that of Nicaea, and the metropolitan there did arrogate the right to crown and anoint emperors. Even more, the metropolitan of Nicaea had illegally intervened in the affairs of the see of Ohrid, granting to the Serbians parts of Chomatenus' archdiocese, and recognizing the autocephaly of the Serbian church. Canonical violations, then, had been first and foremost introduced by the Nicene authorities, as a way to advance their political interests in the difficult regional setting created by the collapse of Byzantium. The Epirotes were also protecting their safety and well-being as best as they could, and there was no reason to accuse them of breaking law and customs. If the patriarch did censure their actions, he implicitly censured his own as well.[177] Chomatenus addressed Germanus from a position of equality, and while seeking to put developments in both Nicaea and Epirus into a historical perspective, he showed little concern in reconciliation.

To the archbishop of Ohrid, the post-1204 northeastern Mediterranean was a new world with new rules. The fourth crusade had fractured the Byzantine *oikoumene*, and trying to bring it back together appeared, in the 1220s, an impossible task. The many states that rose to local and regional power after the conquest of Constantinople could no longer follow the old Byzantine paradigm of leadership, which had conferred solely upon the *basileus* the right to universal rule. There was at least one serious contender to the same exclusive privilege, the pope, and various rulers in the Balkans, the Aegean and Asia Minor who bore the imperial title and aspired to some form of hegemony in the areas they controlled: the Latin emperor of Constantinople, the Bulgarian tsar, the Greek *basileis* in Nicea, Thessalonica and Trebizond. Chomatenus took the realistic approach of accepting the changed landscape of power and making the best of the unfriendly circumstances in which the former subjects of Byzantium were forced to live after

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patriarchates. See Ruth Macrides, "Bad Historian or Good Lawyer? Demetrios Chomatenos and Novel 131," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 46 (1992) 187-196.

[177] Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, cols. 487-498, and Prinzing, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*, 372-373,with partial translation and detailed discussion in Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 81-86.

1204. In the complex new political order which accommodated so many emperors independent from one another, the Byzantine theory of one single *basileus* who sat at the top of the hierarchy of worldly power had become obsolete. Its corollary was also true: the Byzantine Church could no longer have one single shepherd; like the empire which used to support and supervise it, it had been fragmented in many local entities now dependent on the local sovereign. In the case of Epirus, this meant that its prelates had no reason to remain in a relationship of subordination to Nicaea, especially when its ruler had more regional clout than Vatatzes.[178]

Chomatenus and the other bishops who defended the ecclesiastical autonomy of Epirus promoted ideas that from a traditional Byzantine viewpoint were both novel and dangerous. The Epirotes expected that the political independence of their state be followed by the parallel independence of their church. They tied the scope of ecclesiastical jurisdiction to that of secular authority, understanding the boundaries of the two as coterminous. For the bishop residing in Nicaea (who, in their opinion, had not inherited the prerogatives of the patriarch of Constantinople), this implied that his ecclesiastical sway was limited to the dioceses located within the Nicene state. His involvement in the affairs of non-Nicene churches was rendered uncanonical. The Epirote view had the double advantage of supporting Epirus' quest for autocephaly while circumscribing the authority of the patriarch to the state he lived in. In Byzantium, on the other hand, patriarchal jurisdiction had covered an area much larger than that controlled by the emperor. However, such matters as establishing, redrawing or removing ecclesiastical boundaries had been decided by the emperor. Autocephaly, when awarded, did not mean complete severance from imperial authority, but involved its recognition and assumed the

[178] Pitra, *Analecta Sacra*, cols. 487-489; Prinzing, *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata Diaphora*, p. 372-373.

mentioning of the patriarch's name in liturgical prayers.[179] The Epirotes instead promoted localized ecclesiastical power structures over and against centralized authority, seeking to curtail the right of intervention and supervision of both Nicene emperor and patriarch.

But the theory had the inherent weakness of undermining Epirus as well, as it enabled bishops in other self-governed political entities to demand autonomous status for themselves. When the archbishop of Serbia did just that, Chomatenus reacted furiously, since his own jurisdiction was directly affected. Arguing that Epirus had the right to react and adapt itself to circumstances, but denying the same right to Serbia did not strengthen his case. The patriarch was overall not impressed with his argumentation. He remained firm on his position that Nicaea was the only valid continuation of the Byzantine Empire, and the events in Epirus were nothing less than rebellion and usurpation. Even worse, the Western Greeks - who presented themselves as defenders of orthodoxy - endangered through their actions the very orthodox world which they claimed to be defending, breaking its unity and leaving it vulnerable to Latin propaganda. The bishops in Epirus saw things differently and remained firm in their repudiation of the patriarch.

All the ecclesiastical, military, and political gains of Epirus came to a naught in 1230, when Theodore Ducas attacked his ally, the Bulgarian tsar John Asen, and was thoroughly defeated by him in the battle of Clocotnitza. Theodore Ducas was taken captive, blinded and imprisoned. His brother Manuel succeeded him as ruler of Thessalonica, but as a vassal to John Asen, who in a short period of time occupied much of the Epirote territory in Thrace and Macedonia. The tsar replaced the Greek bishops in the towns and cities he had seized from Epirus with Bulgarian ones, and even tried to subordinate the metropolitan of Thessalonica to the

[179] For the late medieval changes in the understanding of ecclesiastical autonomy, see J. Erickson, "Autocephaly in Orthodox Canonical Literature to the Thirteenth Century," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* (1971) 28-41.

archbishop of Trnovo.[180] Manuel was overwhelmed by these developments and unable to put up resistance. At first he sought the assistance of Rome, sending George Bardanes as an envoy to Pope Gregory IX, to discuss submission to the Apostolic See.[181] But pressures on the part of his prelates made him change strategy and seek the friendship of John III Vatatzes instead. The clergy of Epirus saw their efforts at grounding autocephaly on political independence falling apart; a weak state could not afford to maintain an autonomous church. The Epirotes were now caught between Trnovo, Rome and Nicaea. Despite the schism dividing them, the Eastern Greeks still looked like the best option, given the shared cultural background and history. The bishop encouraged Manuel to seek the friendship of Nicaea.[182] Manuel had not taken up the imperial title, so negotiations regarding the leadership of the orthodox *oikoumene* did not pose many problems. He pledged in a letter to the Nicene emperor and patriarch to raise no imperial pretensions in the future; he also agreed to ecclesiastical reunion, asking Germanus to send an envoy to Thessalonica to ratify the episcopal appointments made without patriarchal approval.[183] In the summer of 1232, the prelates of Epirus came together in a synod and pronounced themselves formally in communion with Nicaea. The patriarchal envoy oversaw the actual implementation of reunion.[184]

The abrupt end of the Empire of Thessalonica strengthened John III Vatatzes' claim to the *imperium*. There was no significant contender left in Europe, and he made the most of the new favorable circumstances. Between 1232 and 1234, he carried out union talks with the representatives of Pope Gregory IX, in the hope that he could gain Rome's recognition and

[180] Acropolites, *History* c. 25-26, p. 178-184. For a discussion of the aftermath of the battle, see Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 191-203, and Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 124-127.
[181] Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 206-208; Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 89.
[182] The ecclesiastical reunion between Epirus and Nicaea is examined in detail by Bredenkamp, *Empire of Thessaloniki*, 203-217 and Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 87-95.
[183] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1254 and 1255 (1231-1232), p. 60-62.
[184] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1261 (August 1232), 1263-1264 (early 1233), p. 71, 72-74. Karpozilos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy*, 91-93.

support for his impending campaign to recover Constantinople.[185] When these failed, he allied himself with John Asen, marrying his son Theodore to the tsar's daughter Helen, and granting autocephaly to the Bulgarian church, on condition that the Bulgarian archbishop of Trnovo continued to pay taxes to and commemorate in liturgical prayers the patriarch of Constantinople.[186] Then, together, the tsar and the *basileus* besieged Constantinople by land and sea, once in 1235 and a second time in 1236, both undertakings without success. However, the two did succeed in capturing the Latin possessions in Thrace, reducing the Empire of Constantinople to the city itself.[187] John Asen withdrew from his alliance with Vatatzes, perhaps fearing that the Nicene ruler would capture Constantinople and then turn against the Bulgarians. In 1237, the tsar joined forces with the Latins against Vatatzes, attacking the Nicene-held fortress of Tzurulum, but changed his mind again and made peace with the Eastern Greeks.[188] The Latins were weakened considerably by the Bulgarians' defection and by the death of John of Brienne, regent of the Latin emperor Baldwin II. The latter went to seek help in the West, and in 1237/8 the pope urged the Hungarians, then the French and the English, to participate in a crusade against the Bulgarians and the Greeks, using the Balkan heresy of Bogomilism as a pretext. All that the crusade achieved was to take Tzurulum from Nicaea.[189]

Although Constantinople remained in a desperate situation, Vatatzes could not take advantage of it and launch a decisive attack, as he had more pressing troubles at home. The Mongols had invaded Anatolia, a large wave of Cuman refugees had crossed the Danube into the

[185] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1256-1257 (1232), 1267-1276 (winter-spring 1234), p. 62-68 and 76-83. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 64-72; Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 162-181.
[186] Acropolites, *History* c. 32-33, p.191-194; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1282 (spring 1235), p. 88-89. For the context, see Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 145-162, 181-194; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 109-112.
[187] Acropolites, *History* c. 33, p. 195. John S. Langdon, "The forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian assault and siege of Constantinople, 1235-1236," *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina: Byzantine Studies in Honor of Milton Anastos* 4 (Malibu 1985) 105-133.
[188] Acropolites, *History* c. 34 and 36, p. 197-199, 200-202. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 130-131, Langdon, "John III Vatatzes," 233-238.
[189] Acropolites, *History* c.37, p. 202-204. Chrissis, *Crusading in Frankish Greece*, 102-126.

Balkans, and the blind Theodore Ducas had escaped prison and sought to reestablish himself in Thessalonica. Vatatzes searched for friends farther away, in the West, and found relative openness to his plight in the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, who was fighting with the papacy and needed allies. Vatatzes supported him with troops in 1238, and then in the early 1240s made an alliance with him, marrying his daughter Constance in 1242.[190] After the death of Tsar John Asen in 1241, Vatatzes launched a military assault on southeastern Europe, taking many Thracian and Macedonian cities, conquering Thessalonica in 1246 and forcing Epirus into vassalage in 1248.[191]

But even if Vatatzes created a large and powerful *basileia* which extended on both the European and Asian sides of the northeastern Mediterranean, Constantinople continued to elude him. Nonetheless, his military conquests and political acumen were finally acknowledged where he had hoped least: at Rome. In 1248, Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) declared himself ready to consent to the retaking of Constantinople by the Greeks of Nicaea, if they agreed in turn to submit to the Apostolic See. Negotiations were carried out, but both the pope and Vatatzes died in 1254 before any conclusion could be reached.[192] The task of recovering the Byzantine capital fell upon Theodore II Lascaris, John's son and heir, who was however unable to capitalize on his father's gains. The city was finally taken in 1261 by the troops of Michael VIII Palaiologus. The great merit of Vatatzes was to have turned the Nicene Empire into a regional power easily identifiable with Byzantium, and to have laid - through his conquests in the southeastern Europe - the groundwork for the repossession of Constantinople.

[190] Langdon, "The Forgotten Byzantino-Bulgarian Assault and Siege of Constantinople," 123.
[191] A survey of Vatatzes' campaign in the Balkans is in Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 154-160; Treadgold, *Byzantine State and Society*, 724-729.
[192] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1319 (summer 1253), p. 126-128. Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 89-96.

The ultimate success of Nicaea was due to Vatatzes' astute leadership at a time when other pretenders to the imperial title were also fighting competently for it, but also to Lascaris' initial recreation of Byzantine governmental and ecclesiastical structures. Epirus during the reign of Theodore Ducas had both a capable ruler and a Byzantinized administration, but it lacked the ecclesiastical prestige and authority which the existence of a patriarch brought to Nicaea. Many in the orthodox world accepted the notion of a patriarch residing in exile, and the Balkan rulers who sought to affirm themselves in the area, after failing to do so with papal help, addressed him for autocephaly. This allowed Nicaea to become the religious center of the *oikoumene*, fulfilling the void left by the conquest of Constantinople. In time this led to the acknowledgment of Nicaea as the valid replacement of the Byzantine *basileia*. While in exile, the balance of power between emperor and patriarch was slightly tipped in favor of the latter, as the imperial office would not have gained recognition without the endorsing presence of the patriarch.

The competing endeavor of the Epirote church to elevate its status from subordination to complete independence and to become a comparably significant force in southeastern Europe relied too much for its success on political and military circumstances. As long as those were favorable, the Western Greek bishops could push their agenda without fears for reprisals from Nicaea. In their case, it had been the imperial office which had given impetus to the quest for ecclesiastical self-rule and preeminence. Chomatenus' interpretation of empire as no longer a unique polity, but as a state which could be realized wherever circumstances permitted, and could coexist with similar entities, had also provided a useful rationalization for the Epirote attempt to create a European version of the *basileia* in exile. But since there was no tradition in the Byzantine past to support the Epirote demand for autocephaly, when the context changed

inauspiciously for Epirus, the bishops could no longer defend their policies, and returned to full obedience to the patriarch.

The recovery of Constantinople in 1261 brought new challenges to the Byzantine leadership formula, which had survived with both offices - imperial and patriarchal - intact during the exile period. Chapter five discusses the difficulties encountered by the political and ecclesiastical authorities of the newly-restored Byzantine Empire in working together to find mutually satisfying solutions to internal dissensions, Western military threats, and papal pressures for submission to Rome. The friendly cooperation between Church and state at Nicaea gave way to vehement disagreements, fighting and persecution, as emperor and patriarch understood priorities and responded inside and outside provocations differently. Chapter five analyzes the complicated context created in the Balkans by the emergence and coexistence of Slavic empires which rivalled and often outshone Byzantium. If Chomatenus' theory of multiple empires had found no supporters outside Epirus, and definitely not at Nicaea, the fourteenth-century Byzantine civil wars provided the best environment for its actualization. Both Bulgaria and Serbia adopted the diarchic rule by emperor and patriarch, rejecting the old Byzantine idea that the world had room for only one *basileia*. The patriarch of Constantinople, encumbered by increasingly weak and ineffective *basileis*, strove - often by himself - to reassert the ecclesiastical and political primacy of an otherwise rapidly declining Byzantium.

CHAPTER 5. BYZANTIUM RESTORED: POLITICAL VIOLENCE, RELIGIOUS DISORDER AND THE QUEST FOR CONSENSUS, 1260s-1390s

5.1. Introduction

The swift and almost bloodless recovery of Constantinople in the summer of 1261 by the troops of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologus was followed by intense ecclesiastical and political drama. Michael VIII blinded his co-ruler and rightful successor to the throne, the underage John IV Lascaris, thus rendering him unable to claim his imperial inheritance. Patriarch Arsenius Autoreianus excommunicated the emperor for the act and found himself deposed. Supporters of the patriarch and implicitly of his stance against Michael VIII protested vehemently. A schism with strong political undercurrents ensued within the Church, which set the tone for the entire Palaiologan period. Violently contested imperial legitimacy and deep religious dissensions over disciplinary and doctrinal matters characterized the last centuries of Byzantium, the two types of crises most often conditioning and fueling one another. Shortsighted and hot-headed, the Palaiologan emperors plunged the state into a series of domestic and foreign conflicts without having the material resources or the political acumen necessary to pursue them to a positive conclusion. As usual, the emperors also intervened in Church affairs, at times creating new disputes, at other times inflating existing ones. The patriarchs in their turn vacillated between ἀκρίβεια (strictness) and οἰκονομία (leniency) in their answer to the religious and secular challenges posed by the turbulent post-1261 context, unable to embark upon a consistent course of action that would have brought peace and stability to the Church in particular and to society in general. The Byzantine model of leadership which had relied on the harmonious collaboration between emperor and patriarch seemed no longer functional after 1261.

One significant reason for the failure of the two leading offices to cooperate was that the traditional understanding of their roles undermined the search for appropriate solutions to pacify

the empire and ensure its survival. After the Nicene "honeymoon," during which emperors and patriarchs eagerly joined forces for the recreation of the Byzantine Empire in exile and then for the recovery of Constantinople, the former returned to the Comnenian mindset regarding the latter. The Comneni had seen themselves as *epistemonarches* or guardians of ecclesiastical discipline and order, and the Palaiologoi followed in their footsteps, keeping a tight grip on the Church.[1] The patriarchs had gained an awareness of their own weight within the Byzantine government during the years of exile and frequently attempted to tip the balance of power in their own favor, but rarely with any noteworthy success. The emperors continued to control the top hierarchy of the Church through the appointments they made or rescinded. Rebellious patriarchs or metropolitans could always be replaced with clergymen ready to abide by the imperial will. A disgruntled patriarch sometimes might urge the faithful to rebel against, or at least openly disregard, an imperial decision perceived as dangerous to the people's spiritual welfare; the usual outcome was increased factionalism within the Church, not the reversal of the emperor's pronouncement. The imperial insistence on holding onto old practices when dealing with the patriarchs and on clothing new, radical ideas on the role of the Church in the old garment of ecclesiastical obedience and subservience to secular power hindered the cooperation between the two main Byzantine institutions and prevented them from adequately dealing with the raging political and religious controversies.

The same division between imperial and patriarchal ideals made itself manifest in the ways in which external crises were addressed. For the emperor, the obvious option for preventing the complete annihilation of Byzantium was siding with one or the other of its two nemeses: the

[1] On the Comneni and their assumption of the status of *epistemonarches* of the Church, see Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261*(Cambridge, 1995) 99-103; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003) 252-267. The relationship between emperors and patriarchs during the Nicene era is discussed in Michael Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford, 1975) 46-59.

papacy, which required full submission to the Church of Rome, or the Ottoman Turks, which entailed vassalage to a non-Christian power. Either option indicated that the *basileus* was no longer living up to the ancient Roman ideal which had envisioned the emperor as the sole, ultimate leader of the civilized world. It was a pragmatic acceptance of the diminishing importance of Byzantium, whose status on the regional scene had declined from empire to that of a minor Balkan state. Several Palaiologoi (Michael VIII, John V, Manuel II, John VIII) had a realistic understanding of their new position in the world and acted accordingly, but they were hampered from achieving the desired results by anti-unionist patriarchs, impatient popes, or adverse political and military circumstances. Other emperors (Andronicus III, John VI Cantacuzenus, John VII) prioritized their own access to and control of the throne over the security of Byzantine borders and the long-term fortune of the dwindling empire. They dragged Byzantium into ruthless civil wars which at first impaired and then reversed the reconstruction process. Even more, while the Byzantines were busy fighting among themselves, their Slavic and Turkish neighbors prospered and extended their realms at the expense of the tottering *basileia*.[2]

The patriarchate of Constantinople had no coherent or effective view on how to address the post-1261 troubles. The imperial designs for the salvation of Byzantium could hardly resonate well with it, as they endangered its leading position in the Christian East. The

[2] The best one-volume introduction to Byzantium after 1261 remains Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (Cambridge, 1993); for the last five decades in the history of the Byzantine Empire, see Jonathan Harris, *The End of Byzantium* (New Haven and London, 2010). Monographs on the Palaiologan emperors written with various emphases and from various perspectives nuance our understanding of the time period: see, for instance, Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West: A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, MA, 1959); Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328* (Cambridge, MA, 1972); Ursula Victoria Bosch, *Kaiser Andronikos III. Palaiologos. Versuch einer Darstellung der byzantinischen Geschichte in den Jahren 1321–1341* (Amsterdam, 1965); Donald M. Nicol, *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295-1383* (Cambridge, 1996); Oscar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (London, 1972); John W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969), George T. Dennis, *The Reign of Manuel II Palaeologus in Thessalonica, 1382-1387* (Rome, 1960); Ivan Djuric, *Il crepuscolo di Bisanzio: La fine dell'impero romano d'Oriente (1392-1448)* trans. from Serbian by Mario Gallina (Roma, 1995); Donald M. Nicol, *The Immortal Emperor*: *The Life and Legend of Constantine Palaiologos, Last Emperor of the Romans* (Cambridge, 1992).

protection, expansion or recovery of patriarchal jurisdiction in the Balkans, the Aegean, Lithuania and Russia were deemed as more important than the political endurance of the state under whose patronage the see of Constantinople had emerged as the most powerful among the four Eastern patriarchates. Negotiations with the papacy for the reconciliation and reunion of churches were welcomed by the Byzantine patriarchs, as long as they led to an ecumenical council where differences in beliefs and practices were debated and resolved. But submission to the Apostolic See was dissuaded, and if such a gesture was made by an emperor, it was usually condemned and opposed. Acceptance of papal supremacy, apart from leading to the loss of Byzantine ecclesiastical autonomy, came with a complicated package of doctrines and ritual observances regarded as erroneous, even heretical, in the East - such as the *filioque* and purgatory, the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, baptism by aspersion, fasting on Saturdays, etc.[3]

Vassalage to the Ottoman Empire was equally disquieting, especially since the news from Asia Minor and the Balkans on churches turned into mosques, bishops forbidden to take up their sees or return to their dioceses, flocks left unattended by their Christian pastors and converting to Islam, made the Turks prowling in the vicinity of Constantinople seem an impending danger.[4] Nonetheless, the emperor's surrender of his autonomy before the Ottoman sultan did not provoke as strong a reaction on the part of the patriarchs as the imperial yielding to the papacy. Union with Rome was seen as the greater threat, since associating with heretics put at risk the eternal salvation of the faithful; the Turkish attacks on Christian churches could be interpreted as divine

[3] For an overview of the papal-Byzantine encounters and exchanges after 1261, see Joseph Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy: 1198-1400* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1974) 97-255, and idem, *Church Union: Rome and Byzantium (1204-1453)* Variorum reprints (London, 1979) articles V-XIX; Aristeides Papadakis, *The Christian East and the Rise of Papacy: The Church AD 1071-1453* (Crestwood, 1994) 199-408.

[4] On the relationship between the patriarchate of Constantinople and the Ottoman invaders, see Speros Vryonis, "Decisions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople as a Source for Ottoman Relgious Policy in the Balkans prior to 1402," *Recueil des travaux de l'institut d' études byzantines* 9 (1980) 283-297.

chastisement for sins and allowed to run its course until God's mercy prevailed once again. Even if the faithful were reduced in numbers, their Orthodoxy remained intact.[5]

This chapter looks at three major Byzantine crises – the Arsenite schism, the reaction to the Union of Lyons, and the Hesychast controversy – that affected the relationship between emperor and patriarch in the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. It contends that, while the imperial hold over the Church weakened considerably during this time, the corollary did not become true: the Church did not gain more authority and influence within and without Byzantium, since its leadership lacked a consistent strategy and unifying vision when dealing with inside or outside challenges. When trying to heal the schism provoked by the Arsenites or suppress the strident popular response to the Union of Lyons, the patriarchs vacillated between accommodation (based on the traditional principle of *oikonomia*, i.e. relaxing the application of canon law for the sake of a greater good) and strictness (*akribeia*), usually associated with hierarchs coming from a monastic background. The turmoil over Michael Palaiologus' enforcement of union with Rome was silenced through direct imperial intervention, once the new

[5] Patriarch John XIV Calecas wrote to the Nicenes that the Turkish conquest of their city had been permitted by God as a punishment for their sins, but the faithful had to endure and keep the divine commandments until the end – vid. Jean Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. V. (Paris, 1977) no. 2185 (1338) p. 142 [hereafter Darrouzès, *Regestes* V]. Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus also saw the Turks as "instruments of God's wrath," vid. Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2487 (March 1365) p. 407. He encouraged the metropolitan of Caesarea, who was receiving the sees of Sebasteia and Iconium as *epidosis* (donation to supplement ecclesiastical income) because his own city had been victim of Turkish invasion and devastation, to see in the difficult situation an opportunity to assume Peter's role of apostle and martyr, by preaching to the Gentiles (i.e. the Turks), in Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2559 (August 1369) p. 470-471. Some churchmen had their own dealings with the Turks, contrary to patriarchal instructions: A hieromonk from Pharos had a lucrative trade with the Turks in his area, to whom he was delivering Christian refugees as slaves, in Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2647 (April 1372) p. 542-543. Dorotheus, the metropolitan of Peritheorium, escaped an imperial prison and defected to the Turks; protopapas Constantine Cabasilas, member of the imperial clergy from Blachernae, accused of various irregularities, threatened to flee to the Turks if not acquitted: in Jean Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. VI (Paris, 1979) nos. 2710 (1380) p. 32, 2724 (fall 1381) p. 42 and 2728 (November 1381) p. 44-45; no. 2759 (September 1383) p. 69-70. Vid. also the famous remark attributed to mega duke Lucas Notaras by Ducas: "It would be better to see the turban of the Turks reigning in the center of the city than the Latin miter," in Ducas, *Istoria turco-bizantina (1341-1462)* XXXVII.10, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958) p. 329; English trans. by H. Magoulias entitled *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks* (Detroit, 1975) 210. See Johannes Preiser-Kepeller, "Conversion, Collaboration and Confrontation: Islam in the Register of the Patriarchate of Constantinople," *International Review for Turkish Studies* 1.4 (2011) 62-79.

basileus, Andronicus II, decided to repudiate his father's submission to the papacy, but the patriarchs' rather erratic approach to the Arsenite schism prolonged the crisis into the fourteenth century, exposing Constantinople to further challenges, especially in areas which were no longer under Byzantine political control (such as Asia Minor or the Balkans). It was only in the second half of the fourteenth century, when Hesychast theology became part of the Church dogma and its general acceptance had to be enforced, that the patriarchs acquired a political tool with which they could both unify the empire and consolidate their grasp on ecclesiastics and monastics who had hitherto refused to submit to Constantinople.

5.2. Disputed and Disrupted: Imperial Authority and its (Im)pious Contesters in the post-1261 Byzantine World

The close bond that had formed between emperors and patriarchs during the years of exile began to falter in the late 1250s, the person responsible for its deterioration being the aspiring *basileus* Michael Palaiologus. Whatever prestige the patriarchs had gained within and without the *basileia* as they had endeavored alongside the Nicene emperors to reestablish Byzantine authority in the northeastern Mediterranean proved to no avail when confronted with a determined and resourceful contender for the imperial office. Michael's usurpation could not take place without the patriarch's assent. The fact that he succeeded in obtaining patriarchal endorsement despite the repeated attempts of the latter to safeguard the legitimate heir's rights to the throne reveals the structural weakness of the Church vis-à-vis imperial power. The traditional ecclesiastical weapons to which Patriarch Arsenius Autoreianus (1254-1260, 1261-1264) resorted – exaction of loyalty oaths, refusal to endorse unconditionally Michael's election, excommunication and finally stirring of the population against the usurper – were unable to deter the emperor from pursuing the desired course of action. At each step in the process of stripping

young John IV of power, Michael Palaiologus outsmarted the patriarch, while seemingly ready to comply with his requests. When Arsenius' response to the broken imperial pledges was deemed too severe, the *basileus* employed his own, more effective, weapon: the right to depose and exile the patriarch. There was little novelty in the power play between the two chief Byzantine dignitaries up to that point, or in the ultimate triumph of imperial will over patriarchal opposition. But the removal of Arsenius from his see in 1264 triggered a schism which affected Byzantine society at multiple levels for more than four decades, signaling the increasing inability of both political and religious authorities to deal with segments within the Church that had grown accustomed to acting independently of secular power and even against it. The lower clergy and especially the monks in Constantinople, Asia Minor, and later on the Balkans, became the main antagonists of the Palaiologoi; even after the crisis ended in 1310, the part of the Church which sought to increase its influence at the expense of the imperial office drew its strength from their numbers.

The attachment of clergy and laity from undistinguished backgrounds to the Lascarids had its origin in the dynasty's growing interest in appointing commoners to key position in the government, as a means of curtailing the influence of grand aristocratic families at the court.[6] When elevated to the patriarchal see in 1254, Arsenius himself had been a monk with little education and no sacerdotal position, having been rushed through the usual offices of deacon, priest and bishop in the course of a single day, according to Acropolites. The same historian added that Theodore II Lascaris' choice of an unsophisticated monk for the topmost Byzantine see came from the emperor's desire to surround himself with "boorish men" who "succumbed easily" to imperial wishes, and thus avoid the prelates with a good education who would stand up

[6] Michael Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile* (Oxford, 1975) 60-79.

to the emperor and defend their views.[7] To a great extent, Acropolites was correct in judging Arsenius as a man ready to comply with imperial rulings without disputing their rightness, but this held true for most occupants of the patriarchal throne, regardless of their social status and upbringing. Blatant disobedience of the emperor meant losing one's office, and few were willing to risk it. However, when it came to protecting the minor heir to the throne from the machinations of Michael VIII Palaiologus, Arsenius did clash with the usurper, for which he was criticized harshly by Acropolites, who was among the well-born and well-educated Byzantines frustrated with the Lascarids' policy of promoting the rank and file to administrative positions.[8] Michael Palaiologos himself also belonged to this group of discontents.

Early in his military career, Michael insinuated himself into the circle of power close to Emperor John III Vatatzes; he was well-regarded as an army commander, and appointed governor of Melnik and Serres in 1246. In 1253 he incurred John III Lascaris' suspicions and went to trial for treason, where however he was acquitted. He still had to take an oath of loyalty to the emperor before the patriarch and the synod, which he repeated twice during Theodore II Lascaris's reign. The new emperor, like his father, was highly apprehensive about the young and successful general, and for good reasons. After John III's death, Michael - fearing that Theodore's capricious and vindictive disposition might reach him - took refuge with the Seljuqs and fought under the sultan of Rum. When forgiven for this defection and given another command on the Balkan front, he resumed his scheming against the ruling dynasty.[9] After the

[7] George Acropolites, *Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg with corrections by P. Wirth (Stuttgart 1978), English trans. by Ruth Macrides, *The History* (Oxford, 2007) c.53, p.277-278 [hereafter Acropolites, *History*].
[8] Acropolites, *History*, c. 80, p. 379; the historian supported the ascension of Michael VIII to the imperial office, so his assessment of Arsenius and the schism he created in response to Michael's usurpation was skewed by political sympathies.
[9] For these early incidents, see Acropolites, *History* c.46, 50-51, p.241-245, 259-270; Georges Pachymérès, *Relations historiques*, Greek text with French trans. by A. Failler and V. Laurent (Paris, 1984) 1. 7, 9-12, p. 36-40, 42-56 [hereafter Pachymeres, *Relations Historique*]; Vitalien Laurent, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. IV. (Paris, 1971) no. 1230, p. 128 [hereafter Laurent, *Regestes* IV]. For discussion, see Alice

premature death of Theodore II, the scheming started to bear fruit. Michael had George Muzalon, the man chosen by the former emperor as regent for his son and heir to the throne, assassinated, and himself promoted in his stead. An assembly of aristocrats, court bureaucrats and bishops gathered in September 1258 at Magnesia proclaimed him regent for John IV, μέγας δούξ (grand duke, i.e. commander of the fleet) and guardian of the imperial treasury.[10] It was the triumph of the Byzantine elite over the upstart new men whom the Lascarids had promoted liberally. Now Michael himself was very liberal in distributing gifts to those who had elected him, and to those who could become his future supporters. The patriarch was unhappy with the course of events, but found little backing among the other clergymen, to whom Michael's generosity was more concrete and persuasive than the defunct emperor's wishes concerning the regency. Besides, Michael himself convinced the patriarch to sanction his appointment, claiming that the other options for the regency would be much more dangerous for the imperial future of John IV.[11]

When Arsenius Auteroianus relented and came from Nicaea to Magnesia in November 1258 to give his formal blessing to the new regent, the latter performed the *officium stratoris* for the patriarch.[12] An uncommon gesture in Byzantium, the office of a groom had been presumably rendered by Constantine the Great to Pope Sylvester (according to the *Donation of Constantine*), and, closer to Michael's age and better documented, by Frederick I to Pope Hadrian IV in 1155. It was a sign of humbleness and deference to the authority of the Church on the part of the temporal ruler. For Michael Palaiologus, it was a necessary step in the process of winning the

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Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea: The Story of an Empire in Exile* (London, 1912) 189-192, 222-230; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus and the West*, 23-32; John S. Langdon, "Twilight of the Byzantine Lascarid *Basileia* in Anatolian exile, 1254-1258: Continuity and Change in Imperial Geopolitical Strategy," *Viator* 34 (2003) 187-207.

[10] Acropolites, *History* c. 76, p. 343-344, and Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* I.19, 21-23, p. 80-89, 90-99; Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 80-83; Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, 232-236; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 33-44. For the sequence of events, see Albert Failler, "Chronologie et composition dans l'histoire de Pachymère," part 1, *Revue des études byzantines* 38 (1980) 5-103, and part 2, *Revue des études byzantines* 39 (1981) 145-249.

[11] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* I.25, p.100-103.

[12] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* I.26.

patriarch, hitherto devoted to the Lascarids, over to his side.[13] And indeed to Arsenius, who was quite an uncomplicated person, this demonstration of deference and devotion to the ecclesiastical office he represented was sufficient enough to convert him to a more positive attitude toward Michael, whose regency he then supported without further objections. But his good will was soon shaken by the regent's subsequent move.

Several days after the patriarch had expressed his approval, Michael pushed things further and required the aristocrats and the bishops to proclaim him despot. The office placed its holder on the second place in the Byzantine hierarchy of power and entitled him to aspire to the imperial office. The situation of the empire of Nicaea seemed rather desperate at the time, as one of its major adversaries, Michael II of Epirus, joined forces with Manfred, king of Sicily, and William de Villehardouin, the lord of Achaia, to attack the European possessions of the Lascarids. A forceful answer was needed, and Michael promised to deliver it if elevated to the rank of despot. The patriarch was reluctant to accept the new promotion, which brought Michael dangerously close to the throne. But he held a minority position among the court officials and even among his colleagues, so he availed himself of the one means of restraint he had at his disposal: the oath of loyalty. To ensure that the rights of young John IV were preserved intact, Arsenius asked the despot to pledge himself to take no action against the ruling dynasty.[14] Michael did as requested, but, as in the past, the oath did not preclude him from seeking more power. On January 1, 1259, in Magnesia, he was raised on a shield by the army and the civil officers, and proclaimed emperor.

[13] This act and its significance is analyzed by Ionut-Alexandru Tudorie, "Le schism arsénite (1265-1310): entre *akribeia* et *oikonomia*," in *Recueil des travaux de l''Institut d'études byzantines* 48 (2011) 133-175, here at 149-151.
[14] Acropolites, *History*, c. 77, p. 346; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* I.27-28, p. 104-113; Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 83-89; Gardner, *Lascarids of Nicaea*, 236; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 45. On the oath taken before Patriarch Arsenius, see Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 1341, p.145.

For the third time in a few months, the patriarch was presented with *a fait accompli* to which he was simply supposed to give his assent. Even if he disliked the direction in which matters moved so rapidly, he again sought the answer in vows and promises. Although these had already proved inconsequential, Arsenius found no other way to react. Nicephorus Gregoras is the only historian to report that the patriarch took a harsh stance against Michael's assumption of imperial power from the beginning, excommunicating as usurpers those who had proclaimed him emperor and the emperor himself. But Gregoras penned his history two hundred years after the event, and contemporary sources do not confirm his report.[15] What most sources agree on is that Arsenius summoned the synod and had the bishops issue a tome according to which the proclamation would receive ecclesiastical sanction only on condition that young John IV was crowned first, and that Michael returned full power to the Lascarid emperor once the latter turned fourteen.[16] Making yet another pledge of loyalty to the minor Lascarid heir was no hindrance to Michael's plans. Whatever the patriarch might have hoped to achieve through a new oath, it did not materialize. When Michael and his wife arrived at Nicaea for the coronation ceremony, they pressured the patriarch to crown them first, with the imperial diadems. Arsenius was too weak and too cornered by his peers, who had no qualms about performing the ritual in any way Michael wished, to raise any opposition. In the end, John IV had to content himself with being the second in the hierarchy and receiving only a cap encrusted with gems on his head.[17]

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[15] Ludwig Schopen and Barthold Niehbuhr eds., *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia* 3 vols. (Bonn, 1829, 1830, 1855) IV.1.1, v.1, p. 78 [hereafter Gregoras, *Historia*], information repeated by Pseudo-Sphrantez or Macarios Melissenos, *Cronica (1258-1481)* I. 2, ed. by Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1966). See also Arsenius, "Testamentum," *Patrologiae cursus completes, series graeca*, ed. J-P. Migne, v. 140, cols. 947-957, here at col. 956A. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, n.66 on p. 45, argues that Arsenius had simply threatened with excommunication, but was mollified once Michael pledged to remain faithful to John IV.

[16] Arsenius, "Testamentum," col. 949D; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique*, II.1-3, p. 128-137; Darrouzès, *Regestes*, nos. 1343 and 1344, p.146-147.

[17] Acropolites, *History*, c. 77, p. 346-347; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* I.29 and II.4, 7-8, p. 112-115 and 136-137, 140-147; Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 89-90; Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, 237-240; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 45-46.

According to Acropolites and Pachymeres, Michael's falling out of the patriarchal good graces happened after the coronation, when he started to act as if full and sole emperor. By the end of 1259 or early 1260, Arsenius felt overwhelmed by a process that he had been unable to overturn, left his see in protest, and retired to the monastery of St. Diomedes. He refused to resign, but neither did he wish to perform his duties as a patriarch.[18] Michael Palaiologus was not entirely displeased with that development: he had never liked Arsenius and his allegiance to the Lascarids, so the patriarch's abandonment of his throne was a good opportunity to intervene and rid himself of an influential opponent. He asked the patriarchal synod to depose the patriarch who had been uncanonically elected (he had not been a bishop when nominated, but had to pass through all the steps of the clerical ladder in one day), and to transfer Nicephorus of Ephesus to the see of Constantinople. Two prominent metropolitans, those of Sardis and Thessalonica, who sided with Arsenius against Michael Palaiologus, were also deposed and exiled. Some clergymen refused to recognize the new patriarch, as the imperial promotion to the see of Constantinople through transfer was also uncanonical, but most of them went along with whatever decision the emperor made, as was customary with the Byzantine Church.[19]

Nicephorus died within a year of his appointment, leaving the patriarchal throne vacant. Michael VIII was forced to accept the return of Arsenius, for fear that creating an ecclesiastical crisis would result in his deprivation of a second, more magnificent coronation ceremony. His forces had recovered Constantinople in the meantime, and he wanted to be crowned like most of his predecessors in the Church of Saint Sophia.[20] As sole restorer of Constantinople to the

[18] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* II.9, 13, 15, p. 146-148, 152-156, and 165-158.
[19] Acropolites, *History*, c. 84, p. 370-371; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* II. 15-18, p. 158-171; Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 90-91; Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, 254.
[20] For the recovery of Constantinople and Michael's immediate actions to take full charge of it, see Acropolites, *History*, c. 85-87, p. 375-383; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* II. 27-34, p. 194-225; Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea*, 256-260; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 92-137; Alice-Mary Talbot, "The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993) 243-261.

Byzantines, he demanded from the patriarch to be allowed to rule by himself, and that John IV be reduced to the lowly status of a private citizen, with no imperial or other political pretensions. Arsenius agreed to return to his see and crown Michael a second time, but refused to make any compromise on John IV's rights to the imperial office.[21] As before, Michael solved the impasse through radical action: after his second coronation, he had his ward blinded on Christmas Day, making it impossible for John IV to ever advance any claims to the throne. Moreover, the unfortunate son of Theodore II Lascaris was to remain under guard in a fortress in Asia Minor for the rest of his life.[22] The act was done in secret, so it took several weeks until the news reached the patriarch. Appalled by what he heard, the patriarch excommunicated Michael, and for two years refused to lift the ecclesiastical ban despite repeated imperial pleas and threats. His prerequisite for revoking it was that Michael Palaiologus relinquish the throne, this time denying the emperor the right to *oikonomia* (leniency in applying canon law for obtaining a higher good, in this case peace and stability in the empire).[23] The excommunication was too serious to be treated lightly, hence Michael's disinclination to depose Arsenius right away. An emperor excluded from the Church, whose repentance was deemed untrustworthy and rejected, could hardly claim to be God's chosen one for the restoration of Byzantium.[24] It was important to reestablish a workable relationship with the patriarch, as the cooperation between the two offices

[21] On the demands made of the ex-patriarch for his reinstallation, see Arsenius, "Testamentum," cols.953 C-D, and 954A; also Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* III.1-2, 228-233.
[22] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* II. 35, p. 224-225, III.10, p. 254-259; Gardner, *Lascarids of Nicaea*, 260-261; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 145. For the revolt of John IV's supporters in Asia Minor, see Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* III. 258-267; the events that turned the hapless boy into valid cause for war against the Palaiologoi, then –when this failed – into a saint whose relics were venerated are discussed by Teresa Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor: Politics of Resistance after the Palaiologan Usurpation," *Byzantinoslavica – Revue internationale des études Byzantines* 66 (2008) 203-227.
[23] Arsenius issued his excommunication sentence in January 1262; "Testamentum," 956A. For the way in which the emperor sought to settle the crisis, see Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* III.14, 19 and 26, p. 266-271, 280-283, 312-315; IV. 1-2, p. 328-335; Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile*, 91-93.
[24] On Michael VIII Palaiologus' image as the new Constantine who reestablished God's kingdom on earth, see *Ruth Macrides, "The New Constantine* and the New Constantinople—1261?," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 6 (1980) 13–41.

was a sign of divine approval. But, contrary to Acropolites' low view of Arsenius, the patriarch did not bend under imperial pressure despite his modest background. Likewise, it was mainly the commoners who, in support of the patriarch, rose in opposition to Michael Palaiologus, whom they branded as perjurer and usurper.

The blinding of John IV provoked angry reactions in ecclesiastical and monastic circles as well as among the laity in the capital and in Asia Minor. Michael did not let his authority challenged, reacting swiftly and brutally. His opponents in Constantinople were arrested, mutilated, then exiled or put to death. The most famous case was that of Manuel Holobolos, member of the imperial chancery, who had expressed his dissatisfaction publicly and as a result had his nose and lips split, and was then imprisoned in a monastery in the Petra district.[25] Michael sent the army to Anatolia, where Lascarid supporters in Trikkokia (the mountainous area south east of Nicaea) had come up with a false John IV, behind whom they rallied all those affected by the new taxes imposed by the emperor. The rebels were peasants and townsfolk living on the frontiers of the empire; they had been granted tax exemptions and *pronoia* gifts by John III Vatatzes and Theodore II Lascaris, who sought to ensure in this way their loyalty and willingness to defend the borders on behalf of the Nicene government. Michael needed funds for the reconstruction of Constantinople and its defense, so he cancelled the privileges, taxing again the lands, reducing the size of properties, and forcing the locals to enroll as soldiers in the regular army. The violent response to these changes of the Anatolian highlanders was short-lived, as the imperial army overcame their resistance either through bribes and promises of amnesty, or through successful engagements on the battlefield. [26] Michael managed with relative ease to

[25] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* III.11, p.258-259; Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor," 207-209.
[26] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* III.12-13, p.258-266; Mark C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society 1204-1453* (Philadelphia 1992) 54-57; Angeliki E. Laiou, "Peasant Rebellion: Notes on its Vocabulary and

contain the revolt of those who had found fault with the way in which he had discarded John IV, but a lingering restlessness remained both in the capital and in Asia Minor, which picked up strength again after the deposition of Patriarch Arsenius in May 1264.

When the emperor realized that Arsenius would never allow him back into the Church, he accused the prelate of participating in an anti-imperial conspiracy and summoned a gathering of bishops, court dignitaries and members of the senate to depose him. Arsenius was exiled to the monastery of St. Nicholas on the island of Proconnesus, where he remained until he died in 1273.[27] Michael's next choice for a patriarch was another monk, Germanus III (1265-1266), who was well-disposed toward the Palaiologoi but too feeble a character to stand up to the pressures put on him by the Arsenites. In the end, he did not dare to lift the excommunication imposed on the emperor, and resigned after one year.[28] His place was taken by Josephus, abbot of the St. Lazarus monastery on Mt. Galesius (near Ephesus) and father confessor of the imperial family. Unlike Arsenius, Josephus was willing to apply the principle of *oikonomia* to the case of Michael's seizure of power through perjury and cruelty. He absolved the repentant emperor soon after election (February 1267), thus ending the five-year crisis of image of a *basileus* claiming divine favor but not allowed to partake of the Church sacraments and blessings.[29] But the pardon issued by the patriarch deepened the religious split between the Arsenites, who held onto their leader's strict view that the emperor could not be forgiven before he stepped down from power, and the followers of Joseph, who agreed that true repentance brought about complete forgiveness and no political sanctions had to be bestowed on the penitent. The two factions excommunicated one another and refused to recognize as valid the ordinations and appointments made by their

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Typology," *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter: Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion*, ed. von M. Th. Fögen (Frankfurt 1995) 99-117; Shawcross, "In the Name of the Emperor," 209-211.

[27] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* IV.3-9, p. 334-355.

[28] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* IV.12-13, 17-18, 21, p. 362-369, 378-385 and 388-391.

[29] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique*, 23-25, p.392-399.

rivals.[30] The Arsenite monks and priests became increasingly vocal at the very time when matters in the West were taking a definite turn against Michel Palaiologus.

Since 1266 a new and more impressive rival had appeared in the West: Charles of Anjou, the brother of King Louis IX of France, himself king in Sicily and Southern Italy, who was planning to expand his territory into the Eastern Mediterranean and had as main objective the reconstitution of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. For this end, he allied with Baldwin II, the ex-Latin emperor, and William de Villehardouin, the prince of Achaia, planning a joint attack against Byzantium. To forestall it, Michael Palaiologus approached the papacy and proposed the reunion of churches and his own participation alongside Western forces in the planned crusade. Pope Clement IV (1265-1268) was interested in the prospect of turning Michael into an ally, especially since he feared the growing power of Charles of Anjou. But he took the hard line of Innocent III regarding Church union: what he expected from the emperor and his patriarch was the straightforward, wholehearted return to full obedience to the Apostolic See; no general council was needed for such an act. The Byzantines were to accept without reservations the doctrines and usages of the Church of Rome. In the papal view, the Church of Rome upheld the faith in its original, pure form, so there was no need for negotiation. In his letter to Michael from March 1267, the pope included a detailed profession of faith, to be acknowledged and recited by the emperor, the clergy and the laity.[31]

But Michael Palaiologus could not induce the patriarch to apply the principle of *oikonomia* in this area as well. Patriarch Josephus was resolutely against Church union on

[30] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* V.2, p. 436-441; Vitalien Laurent, "L'excommunication du patriarche Joseph I[er] par son prédécesseur Arsène," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30.1 (1929) 489-496. For a review of the primary sources and secondary literature on the Arsenite schism, see Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 135-144.
[31] Luke Wadding ed., *Annales Minorum* IV (Florence, 1931) ad.ann. 1267, p. 301-307; Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*,120-141; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 223-224; Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant, 1204-1571: The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries* (Philadelphia 1976) 100-105.

Rome's terms, and even took an oath not to assent to it in case the imperial plan went through.[32] At first, the emperor employed peaceful means of persuasion available to him: he summoned a synod and tried to convince those present of the necessity of the Union, and of its little actual impact on the Byzantine religious life once it would take place. He asked that a *tomos* be issued, which stated that the Church of Rome was fully orthodox. His arguments failed to impress the intended audience. An anti-unionist reply was prepared by several uncompromising Church hierarchs and members of the laity, among whom was the historian Pachymeres. John Beccus, the carthophylax of Saint Sophia, declared the Latins heretics and any reconciliation with them impossible. The emperor saw his position as epistemonarch of the Church defied and denied. He sent some of his radical opponents, including Beccus, to prison, and harassed the others into submission.[33] But the result was not conformity to the proposed plan of union with Rome. An anti-unionist faction began taking shape around Patriarch Joseph, which only added to the tensions created by the Arsenite schism. Although both groups reviled the idea of giving in to papal demands, they held irreconcilable positions on the dynastic issue, so the discord within the Church grew rather than abated. Patriarch Joseph was intransigent regarding his condemnation of the Lascarid supporters, although he himself could not approve Michael Palaiologus' unionist policies.

Michael was as powerless in putting an end to the anti-Latin movement as he was in suppressing the Arsenites, who had become a constant thorn in his side, reminding him of the precariousness of his legitimacy in the eyes of his subjects. He styled himself a new Constantine,

[32] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* V. 16-17, p.488-495; Laurent, *Regestes* IV no. 1401 (June 1273) 197. See also Vitalien Laurent, "Le serment anti-latin du Patriarche Joseph I[er] (Juin 1273) *Echos d'Orient* 26 (1927) 396-407, Greek text and French trans. at 405-407; Donald M. Nicol, "The Greeks and the Union of Churches: the Preliminaries to the Second Council of Lyons, 1261-1274," in idem, *Byzantium: its Ecclesiastical History and Relations with the West*, Variorum reprints (London 1972) art. V.
[33] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* V.11-15, 18-20, p. 472-489 and 494-505.

who re-created Constantinople as the center of Byzantine power and who was going to reunite the Church as his illustrious predecessor did, but few were taken in by this propaganda.[34] His inability to pacify the quarreling factions and restore ecclesiastical unity within his realm did not even qualify Michael for claiming leadership over the Greek Church, let alone engineer the union with Rome in Byzantine terms. In fact, he was ready to recognize papal primacy in religious and secular matters, an implicit admission that he ceased to be the ruler of the Christian *oikoumene.* But Michael's reign was beset with problems and he had no time to search for long-term solutions that could confirm and strengthen the traditional Byzantine worldview. Turks, Mongols, and Greeks unhappy with his assumption of power were creating disruptions in Asia Minor, while Bulgarian, Greek and Latin princes in the Balkans were targeting his European territory, some of them having their eyes on Constantinople itself. Worst of all, the papacy was supporting the former Latin emperor's plans of retaking the city, because the pope considered its reoccupation by the Byzantine schismatics as a scandalous appropriation of what God had granted to the Latins. Michael opted for expediency, the reunion with Rome being necessary for political reasons, not because of his religious convictions. The pope as an ally could lead to peace on the Western front, and perhaps some aid against the Eastern enemies of Byzantium in Anatolia.

The Byzantine crisis of authority took a turn for the worse after the Council of Lyons where, in July 1274, Michael VIII submitted himself to the Church of Rome and made the (unrealistic) pledge that his Byzantine subjects would follow suit. His oath of obedience to the pope followed the pattern anticipated by Innocent III at the turn of the thirteenth century and spurned by the then-Byzantine patriarch and emperor: Michael took the oath with no debate on the disputed disciplinary, doctrinal and ritual-related issues, but via a confession of faith put

[34] Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 119-137, Macrides, "New Constantine," passim.

together by the pope and delivered by the *basileus* (through his representative at the Council, the historian George Acropolites).[35] Most Byzantine clerics and monastics, as well as members of the aristocracy and the majority of the population, actively opposed the union. The other three Eastern patriarchates and the churches in Epirus, Bulgaria, Serbia and Russia refused to recognize it.[36] Michael's authority and credibility were strongly contested both in the Byzantine Empire and outside it. He had become a subject of the papacy, similar to many other rulers in the West, no longer able to present himself as God's vicegerent on earth. But he did not have the luxury to rethink the position of the emperor within the world hierarchy of powers, and to devise a new, well-articulated, persuasive formula of leadership. He worked within the long-established framework, trying to push things in the desired direction by replacing top Church hierarchs who were opposed to Rome with pro-union clergymen. This proved to be a cosmetic change, since the anti-unionist stance permeated all ecclesiastical levels and was too well-entrenched to be broken off by a new patriarch, however sternly he might have acted. This was indeed how John Beccus, who was appointed after the resignation of the anti-unionist patriarch in 1275, approached the situation. During the time spent in prison he had radically changed his opinions on the Church of Rome, which he now considered fully orthodox, viewing the misunderstandings between Greeks and Latins as being rooted in linguistic, not theological, differences. Once installed in the see of Constantinople, Beccus launched a vigorous campaign in favor of the union, holding synods that endorsed it and anathematized those who opposed it, writing pro-Latin pamphlets and encouraging other to do the same, harassing the anti-unionist

[35] Many of the Greek documents related to the Council of Lyons are published in Vitalien Laurent and Jean Darrouzès, *Dossier grec de l'Union de Lyons (1273-1277)* (Paris 1977). For the context, see Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 258-276; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 53-57; Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, 106-122.
[36] John V. A. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor 1994) 184-188, 191-194; Papadakis, *Christian East*, 222-223.

clerics and monks.[37] In parallel, the emperor unleashed a persecution against those who criticized his submission to the papacy and refused to do the same, his adversaries being blinded, mutilated, put to death or exiled. Neither he nor the patriarch accomplished much by adopting harsh measures.[38]

The emperor could resort to violent methods to silence the most outspoken enemies of Rome, and could replace unyielding hierarchs with complying ones, but he was unable to force the entire population to accept the Union. The popular resistance was substantial across all social strata, as the papacy was deemed responsible for the losses and hardships that the Byzantines had to endure as a result of the fourth crusade. Those familiar with the main differences between the Latin and Greek theologies argued that the Latins were to be avoided "like mad dogs," as they were heretics, and succumbing to their authority would lead to the loss of salvation. Moreover, the union with Rome gave the Epirote rulers the opportunity to pose as champions of orthodoxy. In May 1277, Nicephorus I Comnenus Ducas and John the Bastard, the sons of Michael II of Epirus, held a council at Neopatras which excommunicated and placed under anathema the emperor, the patriarch and the pope.[39] Two months later Patriarch Beccus held his own council in Constantinople which answered in kind. Division, mistrust, and conflict characterized the Church, which the emperor was no longer able to control; nor was the papacy capable of healing the schism and bringing back Christian unity. On the contrary, the Apostolic See proved quite unable to comprehend the complexity of the situation in which Michael found himself, and responded to his struggles at home with a harshness unwarranted by the context.

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[37] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* V. 24, v.2 p. 512-521; Joseph Gill, "John Beccus, Patriarch of Constantinople 1275-1282," *Byzantina* 7 (1975) 253-266, repr. in idem, *Church Union: Rome and Byzantium (1204-1453)* Variorum reprints (London 1979) art.VI.

[38] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* V.22-23, v.2 p. 508-513; on Byzantine reaction to the Union of Lyons, see Joseph Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 120-181, and idem, *Church Union*, art. V; Joan Hussey, *Orthodoxy Church*, 220-242; Nicol, *Byzantium: Ecclesiastical History*, art. VI and VII; Setton, *Papacy and the Levant*, 123-139.

[39] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1435 (July 16 1277) 227-228**;** Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267-1479* (Cambridge, 1984) 20-21.

Unable to regain his standing as protector of orthodoxy, Michael also had to witness, helplessly, the rapid deterioration of his relationship with the papacy. At Lyons, he had pleaded with Rome to allow the Byzantines to retain their rites and customs, and Gregory X (1271-1276), eager to have both the *basileus* and Charles of Anjou participate together in the upcoming crusade, had agreed. The popes who came after Gregory, however, had little patience with the Byzantines' ways, and especially with their widespread refusal to acknowledge the supreme authority of the Apostolic See. They considered the emperor guilty of having failed to effect the ecclesiastical reunion in his territory. In October 1281, Pope Martin IV (1281-1285) *excommunicated Michael* (a sentence renewed twice in the following year), and withdrew the offer of support against Charles of Anjou.[40] Martin was himself French and looked with sympathy on Charles' plans of invading Byzantium. Fortunately for the *basileus*, these plans were ruined by the insurrection of the Sicilian population, which ousted Charles and placed the island under the rule of Peter III of Aragon in 1282.[41] The first Palaiologan emperor did not have the time to enjoy his diplomatic victory over his main foe in the West. He died a few months after the event, in December 1282, leaving the empire in turmoil and much more weakened than when he had assumed its leadership. His people rejected him for having tried to impose upon them an allegiance to the Western institution which many regarded as the main reason for Byzantine vulnerability and distress. Upon his death, Michael was buried without the usual

[40] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VI.30, v.2 p.636-639; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 305-334.
[41] Michael Palaiologus might have had a share in inciting the rebellion which took place just in the nick of time for the Byzantines; in his own words: "If I were to say that their [Sicilians'] freedom was brought about by God, and were to add that he brought it about by means of us, I would be saying only what confirms the truth." Michael Palaiologus, *De vita sua opusculum*, Greek text in Henri Gregoire, "Imperatori Michaelis Palaiologi de vita sua," *Byzantion* 29/30 (1959/1960) 447-476, English trans. by George Dennis, "Typikon of Michael VIII Palaiologos for the Monastery of St. Demetrios of the Palaiologoi-Kellibara in Constantinople," in John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero eds., *Byzantine Monastic Documents* (Washington, DC, 2000) 1237-1253, at 1246. See also Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 335-368.

imperial ceremony and without the Christian rites in a monastery in Selymbria; his name could not be commemorated publicly.[42]

Michael's son, Andronicus II Palaiologus (1282-1328), had the political wisdom to address immediately the main issues that had shaken the Byzantine Church and society, and had produced a split among the churches of the East. He renounced the union with Rome several days after his accession to the throne, placed John Beccus under arrest in a monastery in the capital, and brought Joseph back to the see of Constantinople. The anti-unionists pressured to have Beccus and other prelates who had been promoting the union forced to renounce priesthood. In January 1283 they held a council which declared the ex-patriarch heretic and exiled him to a monastery in Prusa (Bursa), Asia Minor, where he spent his time writing in defense of his unionist views and actions.[43] Andronicus also sought to redress the grave harm done by his father to the rightful heir to the throne. In 1290, the emperor visited John IV in the fortress where he was imprisoned, ensured he had all the comfort he needed, and asked for his forgiveness. In 1304, in a public address, Andronicus decried once again the evil deed of his father and expressed his hopes that it could be finally relegated to the past – a sign that the Palaiologan legitimacy was still under question.[44] Last but not least, Andronicus was open to reconciliation with the Arsenites, who until then had refused to recognize all the patriarchs that had been elected after Arsenius' deposition, and all the hierarchs these patriarchs had ordained. The emperor chose one of their number, the bishop of Sardis, as his father confessor, and gave the Arsenites the right to use a church in the capital. But Patriarch Joseph continued to be categorically against reaching any settlement with his rivals, so situation remained tense between

[42] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VI.36, v. 2 p. 660-667; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaeologus*, 368-371; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 87-89.
[43] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII. 3-11, v. 3 p. 24-47; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 93-96.
[44] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII. 36, v. 3 p. 118-121; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 99; Shawcross, "In the Name of the True Emperor," 215-216.

the two factions. However, Joseph had to resign a few months after his reappointment for health reasons, leaving the emperor with the option of electing a patriarch more inclined towards ending the schism.[45] The Arsenites hoped that one of them would be selected, but Andronicus was reluctant to take his policy of leniency that far. An Arsenite patriarch would have meant an implicit recognition of the correctness of their position, and thus a reason for those who favored the Lascarids to bring once more to the forefront the delicate issue of Palaiologan illegitimacy.

While looking for a middle course in choosing a man for the see of Constantinople, the emperor pushed for the reintegration of the Arsenites into the Church. The patriarchs he picked, however, had no consistent vision regarding the solution to the crisis, reacting to Arsenite demands based on ad-hoc personal preferences and short-term priorities. Andronicus hesitated in his attitude towards the patriarchs who refused to uphold his policies of appeasement of the opposition. He had come to the throne after an emperor who had been heavy-handed in Church matters and who had incurred the population's hatred and spite; with such a legacy, Andronicus preferred to be cautious and defer ecclesiastical decisions with significant bearing on the empire's stability to the patriarchs. As successor to Josephus he chose Gregory II of Cyprus, a lay scholar, who was then ordained by a metropolitan, Gerasimus of Heraclea, a cleric with a clear background from the Arsenite point of view (anti-unionist and not a partisan of Josephus).[46] Gregory (1283-1289) was willing to reach an understanding with the Arsenites, and held two councils, one in Constantinople in 1283, the other a year later in Adramyttion in Asia Minor (an imperial concession to have an episcopal gathering in an Arsenite stronghold), both aiming to

[45] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII.12-13, v. 3 p. 46-53; Nicol 97-97; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 158-159.
[46] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII. 14-15, v.3 p. 52-61; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 97; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 159.

purify the Church of its heretical (i.e. unionist) members.[47] The Arsenites were not mollified, since Gregory refused to have ex-patriarch Joseph placed among the heretics; Joseph, he argued, had remained staunchly loyal to orthodoxy and deserved to be called a confessor. Patriarch Gregory proposed, and then performed, the canonization of the previous patriarch, a gesture which enraged the Arsenites, but greatly pleased the anti-unionist party.[48] The synods thus failed to improve the relationship between Arsenites and Josephites, and in 1285 Andronicus felt obliged to make another friendly overture to the former, allowing them to bring the bodily remains of Arsenius to Constantinople and inter them in the monastery of Saint Andrew. Members of the imperial family and many officials took part in the procession, showing their consideration for the man whom Michael VIII had regarded as one of his worst enemies. The Arsenites pushed the case for Arsenius' veneration, arguing that his relics were already known to perform miracles.[49] Matters looked brighter after this episode, but new dissensions soon appeared in the Church, which moved the emphasis to theological debates and pushed the Arsenite issue into the background.

John Beccus had asked and received permission to have his case examined; he rejected the label "heretic" placed on him in 1283 and was thought to have amassed enough arguments to persuade the bishops that his opinions were orthodox. A council with multiple sessions took place in 1285 at the Blachernae palace, at which Beccus only succeeded in proving himself a Latinist and thus a heretic. He was imprisoned in a fortress in Bithynia, where he languished until he died in 1297. Patriarch Gregory refuted the Beccus position on the *filioque* in a tomos

[47] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII.21-22, v. 3 p. 68-77; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 97-98; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 159-160.
[48] P. Gounaridis, "La canonisation du patriarche Joseph I[er]," *Symmeikta* 17 (2005) 239-253; Tudorie , "Le schisme arsénite," 159-160.
[49] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII. 31, v. 3 p. 94-99; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 98, Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 160-161.

which drew sharp criticism on the part of several bishops, who considered some of its statements heterodox. The patriarch wrote other treatises to prove his innocence, but in the end he had to stand trial in another synod, held in June 1289 at the Blachernae palace in the presence of the emperor. Although he was declared suspect of heresy on one point only, and he was able to defend himself effectively, he preferred to resign rather than create further troubles in the Church.[50]

Once again, the Arsenites became hopeful that Andronicus would choose one of them patriarch, but before making any decision the emperor asked them to specify the conditions under which they would rejoin the Church. The requirements put forth by the Arsenites followed their strict interpretation of orthodoxy: Church dogma had to be completely purified of errors; all the erroneous statements of faith and all the excommunications imposed on those who had preserved the faith unaltered had to be annulled; the commemoration of Joseph was to stop, as he had been excommunicated from the Church; all prelates were to be closely investigated according to Canon 102 of the Quinisext council; and of course, the next patriarch had to be an Arsenite, ordained by a bishop who was above all reproaches.[51] Andronicus might have agreed with most of these conditions, but could not accept the elimination of Joseph's name from the diptychs. Joseph was considered a saint by then, and any action against him would have created a new controversy instead of healing the old one. The emperor rejected the Arsenite memorandum, but tried not to alienate the factions completely by choosing Athanasius as patriarch, a monk who, although not one of them, met the rigorous strictures of faith expected by the Arsenites.

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[50] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VII. 34-35, v. 3 p. 100-119; VIII.1-12, v.4 p. 124-157. A comprehensive discussion of the issues discussed at the council and Gregory's position is in Aristeides Papadakis, *Crisis in Byzantium: The* Filioque *Controversy in the Patriarchate of Gregory II of Cyprus (1283-1289)* (New York, 1983); see also Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 98-99. See as well Aristeides Padadakis, "*Gregory II of Cyprus and an unpublished report to the Synod," Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975) 227-239.

[51] Vitalien *Laurent*, "Les grandes crises religieuses à Byzance. La *fin* du *schisme arsénite*," *Bulletin de la Section Historique, Academie Roumaine* 26.2 (1945) 225-313, at 286-287; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 161-162.

As a monk, Athanasius had won a name for the harsh discipline to which he subjected his person; as a patriarch (1289-1293;1303-1309), he both surprised and alarmed the clergy and laity in the capital with his determination to uphold his austere lifestyle: he ate frugally, traveled on foot, wore rough clothes and sandals made by himself, and avoided extensive use of the luxurious patriarchal palace, residing for a long time in a small, damp cell at the Chora Monastery (at that time in a state of advanced decay). He was a man of little secular education and with limited theological interests. Like his body, his mind and spirit had been shaped in the stern atmosphere of seclusion, self-denial, and intense prayer that characterized the monastic centers in Asia Minor, Palestine, and Mt. Athos. His main goal was to reproduce Christ's ways in his own life, in the life of his fellow-churchmen, and in that of the entire population.[52] The Arsenites, although many of them sharing Athanasius' ascetic leanings, disliked the new patriarch, because he was as stern in his understanding of orthodoxy as he was in his lifestyle, and thus disinclined to reach a settlement with those who broke away from the Church, regardless of the reasons that prompted them to do so.

The emperor had picked Athanasius because he was unaffiliated with any of the warring ecclesiastical factions, hoping that the new patriarch would be able to reconcile them through negotiation and compromise, while also accommodating the higher echelons of society whose support Andronicus greatly needed for his costly but usually ineffective military enterprises. But

[52] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VIII. 13-16, p. 156-169; John L. Boojamra, *Church Reform in the Late Byzantine Empire: A Study for the Patriarchate of Athanasios of Constantinople* (Thessalonica 1983) 39-46; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 106-107. For an introduction to the chief issues during the two terms of Athanasius as patriarch, see Nicolae Banescu, "Le Patriarche Athanase I et Andronic II Paleologue: Etat religieux, politique et social de l'Empire," *Bulletin de la Section Historique, Academie Roumaine* 23 (1942) 28-56; John L. Boojamra, *Church and Social Reform: The Politics of the Patriarch Athanasios of Constantinople* (New York 1993), and idem, "Athanasios of Constantinople: A *Study* of Byzantine Reaction to *Latin* Religious *Infiltration*," *Church History* 48 (1979) 27-48; Joseph Gill, "Emperor Andronicus II and Patriarch Athanasius I," *Byzantina* 2 (1970) 13-19; Angeliki E. Laiou, "The provisioning of Constantinople during the winter of 1306-1307," *Byzantion* 37 (1967) 91-113; Alice-Mary M. Talbot, "The Patriarch Athanasius (1289-1293; 1303-1309) and the Church," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 27 (1973) 11-28.

Athanasius was not a man of compromises, nor had he an obliging nature. He envisioned radical changes that would transform the entire Byzantine society into a huge quasi-monastic community with no room for schismatics, abusive clergymen, corrupt bureaucrats, and self-indulgent elites.[53] His first term as a patriarch was a turbulent period of conflicts with monks, whom he expected to adopt his rigorous ascetic practices; with the clergy, whom he required to distribute church wealth to the poor; with the bishops residing in Constantinople, whom he urged to leave the entertaining life of the capital and return to their sees, many in areas under Muslim control; and with various members of the aristocracy, whom he chastised for pursuing vain pleasures instead of providing effective support to the Christians displaced from Anatolia and living in dire poverty in the capital.[54] In all these actions, the patriarch counted heavily upon Andronicus for assistance. Athanasius held onto the traditional view that the emperor had received his authority from God in order to defend the Church and promote its interests: "Who other than the Lord has the power to correct this situation, except for my holy emperor, who has received wisdom and love and power from God for this very purpose?"[55]

Athanasius created enemies everywhere, but especially in the Church that he was expected to pacify and fortify. His plan for the restoration of unity was to simply eradicate the Arsenites, as a source of permanent instability in the empire. He asked Andronicus repeatedly for tough repressive measures against them, including their expulsion from Constantinople. They were both creating disturbances and corrupting the faith of those who remained obedient to the Church. Andronicus could not afford to comply with such requests; he was eager to have the

[53] Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 46-50; Rodolphe Guilland, "La Correspondance inedite d'Athanase, Patriarche de Constantinople," *Melanges Charles Diehl*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1930) 1.121-140, at 137.
[54] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VIII.21, v. 3 p.184-187; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1551 and 1552 (summer 1293), 1554 (fall 1293), p. 340-342.
[55] Letter 1, lines 39-41, Greek text with English translation in Alice-Mary M. Talbot, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople* (Washington, DC, 1975) 4-5 [hereafter Athanasius, *Correspondence*].

Arsenite problem settled, but looked for a peaceful solution that would bring the erring party back into the Church without endangering the position of his dynasty, the legitimacy of which he felt still rested on shaky grounds. As for the monks, who used to be the most vocal and trouble-making element in each faction, the patriarch sought to control them by restraining their freedom of movement through the city, and by forbidding their involvement in politics. Confinement in the monastery and abandonment of politics was not what the monks had in mind, so they became the harshest critics of Athanasius throughout his both patriarchates. Athanasius' attempt to limit the annual income of the clergy, as well as the decision to abolish the permanent synod in Constantinople so that the bishops from other cities had no more reasons to linger in the capital but could return at once to their own flocks, caused great discontent among the higher-ranking clergy who constantly complained to Andronicus about their plight.[56] The emperor, as he was engaged in fruitless military and diplomatic pursuits outside Constantinople, could not bear the thought of disgruntled subjects back home. His piety might have been strong, but his desire to maintain the throne was even stronger, so he gave in to the pressures of the Church and deposed Athanasius in the fall of 1293.[57]

The patriarch did not leave without taking some cautionary steps: he wrote a letter of excommunication against his persecutors and the man "misled by them" who had forced him to resign, and hid it in a pot on the top of a column in St. Sophia.[58] When discovered by chance by some boys who were stealing baby pigeons from their nests inside the church, the letter threw the emperor into great confusion: a patriarch's excommunication decision was all-binding, and a

[56] Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 50-52; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 100-101.
[57] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* VIII.22-24, v. 3, p. 186-199; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1555-1557 (October 1293) 343-345; Albert Failler, "La première démission du patriarche Athanase (1293) d'après les documents," *Revue des études byzantines* 50 (1992) 137-162.
[58] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* IX.24, v. 3 p. 276-285; Gregoras, *Historia* VI.7.1-4, v.1, p. 191-193; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 53-54.

mere monk – as Athanasius now was – could not lift it. The man he thought would solve the ecclesiastical turmoil which affected the empire had now added to the existing distress by excluding from the Church the emperor and the clergymen who plotted to have the patriarch deposed. Without intending it, Andronicus found himself in his father's position, although his entire efforts had been towards reestablishing peace, not escalating conflict. To soothe the emperor's worries, the bishops came together in a synod and declared the excommunication decision uncanonical and void. For Andronicus this was not enough, and he asked Athanasius for an explanation. The former patriarch admitted that he acted in a moment of anger and misjudgment, and that in his inner self he had already lifted the ban.[59] Still, Andronicus was not released from his fears of being and remaining outside the saving power of the Church. He needed Athanasius back in the see of Constantinople, so that Athanasius as patriarch could remove the anathema according to the canon law. When the bishops became displeased with the rather gentle reformist attempts of the new patriarch, John XII, and engineered his downfall, Andronicus took advantage of the situation and reinstated Athanasius on the patriarchal throne in 1303.[60]

Athanasius had learned a lesson the hard way: it was not enough to remind the emperor of his duties to the Church. It was necessary to have his full commitment to the reform program meant to ensure the well-being of the Church and of the Byzantine society at large. To obtain it, Athanasius initially refused the new appointment, claiming old age and opposition from most bishops; when Andronicus insisted, Athanasius had him sign a promissory letter which

[59] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, letter 2, p.7-11; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* X.11, v. 4 p. 330-331; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 55-56.
[60] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* X.34-36, v. 4 p. 392-401; Gregoras, *Historia* VII.3, v.1, p. 215 offers a somewhat different explanation for Athanasius' reappointment as a patriarch: Andronicus was convinced that the holiness of this monk would not only inspire the Byzantines to maintain the boundaries of the empire intact, but also help them in recovering lost territory. See also Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 57.

guaranteed the Church freedom from any interference on the part of the civil authorities. In the light of the traditional relationship between Church and state in Byzantium, this letter was a watershed – the patriarch claimed to be more than the emperor's partner in governing the *basileia*; he was its very head, and all other types of authority (civil, political, judicial, legislative) existed to help him perform his duties toward God and the Christian community. The emperor pledged "to fulfill a slave's obedience" to the Church, to submit himself to – and, when needed, to enforce – all its decisions, regulations and canons, and to hold no one and nothing as more important or valuable than its progress (lines 34-44). He also promised to eliminate heretics (mainly the Arsenites, as the pro-unionist party had been reduced to silence by then), to assist Athanasius in his fight against corruption and abuses, and to support his "spiritual whip" against erring monks and recalcitrant clergymen (lines 47-57). In exchange, the Church would pray for the well-being of the emperor and for the deliverance of Byzantium from the many enemies who were threatening its very existence (lines 60-64).[61]

The Church seemed to have come a long way since Eusebius declared that the emperor was also chief bishop of them all, ordained by God to oversee the external matters of the Church. Athanasius presented the relationship between the two institutions in such a light as to persuade Andronicus II that his first and foremost obligation was to comply with the requests and decisions of the patriarch, who was God's representative on the earth. Nevertheless, when the ideal relationship between Church and state as envisioned by Athanasius and pledged by Andronicus was confronted with the realities of early fourteenth-century Byzantium, the results were seldom those expected by the patriarch. The bishops were delighted with a Church claiming

[61] Greek original and French trans. are in Vitalien Laurent, "Le serment de l'empereur Andronic II Paleologue au patriarche Athanase I[er] lors de sa seconde accession au trône oecuménique" in *Revue des Études Byzantine* 23 (1965) 124-139; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* XI.1, v. 4, p. 402-405. The significance of this act is discussed by Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007) 371-372; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 60-70.

authority over the secular power, provided that this authority would not turn against them as well. Before long, however, it did. As soon as he got back on the patriarchal throne, Athanasius re-initiated his previous requests that the monks pursue a strict ascetic and secluded life, the clergy distribute church wealth to the poor, and the bishops flooding into the capital turn back to their sees, particularly those in Asia Minor. On their part, the aristocrats and bureaucrats at the court of Andronicus were probably open to the idea of a powerful Church if that pleased God enough to save the empire; but they could not tolerate to be permanently under threat for the corruption, fraud and abuses which were in fact integral part of Byzantine court life. They poured complaint after complaint into Andronicus' ears, making his life miserable: he was afraid of losing his officials' support as much as he was afraid of losing God's.[62]

With the tide of hostility rising against him shortly after reelection, and the emperor wavering as to whose words to listen to and whom to back, it was indeed remarkable that Athanasius did have several important achievements during his second patriarchate (1303-1309). One of this was the publication of the *Neara* – a collection of civil laws covering a wide range of issues from rape, adultery and murder, to inheritance, marriage, and prostitution, to fasting during Christian feats and the functioning of bathhouses and taverns on holidays. The *Neara*, issued by Andronicus in 1306, was entirely based on the decisions of a synod held by Athanasius in 1304.[63] While not all laws were enforced with the same amount of success – those trying to reform public Christian morality were particularly unsuccessful – Athanasius reforms geared toward monks, nuns and monasteries fared quite well. On one hand, he obtained both imperial legislation and direct imperial involvement in the protection of monastic property. On the other,

[62] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1590 (summer 1303) p. 373-374, nos. 1595, 1598, 1599, 1600 (between 1303 and 1305) p.377-383; Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* XI. 2 and 20, v. 4, p. 406-409, 448-451; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 70-74.
[63] For a presentation of the *Neara* see Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1607 (October 1304) 389-395; also Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 74-84.

he managed to curb many abuses within monasteries: he suppressed double convents (where monks and nuns lived under the same roof or in close vicinity to one another); he curtailed unnecessary travel outside the monastic community, and especially the long visits to wealthy city-people under the pretext of gathering financial support for the monastery; he forced monks and nuns to put an end to their frequent contacts with outside family and friends, and use instead their time to cultivate moral virtues through ascetic practices, making daily activities such as participation in the liturgy, reading of Scriptures, recitation of prayers and labor in the fields or workshops mandatory; and he directed that monastic wealth be used exclusively for charitable purposes.[64]

By far Athanasius' most bitter struggle was with the bishops and metropolitans whose sees had fallen under foreign rule in Asia Minor, Thrace and the Balkans. These prelates deserted their flocks to seek refuge in Constantinople, where they led a care-free life under the protection of the emperor. The situation was not new for the Church. The invasions of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries had led imperial and religious authorities to seek canonical solutions to the forced displacement of bishops from their sees. Canon 37 of the Council of Trullo decreed that hierarchs who lost their sees as a result of barbarian invasions were allowed to come to Constantinople, but had to return to their dioceses once the danger had been removed.[65] In the twelfth century, Balsamon adapted the canon to the reality of his time - the Turkish invasion of Anatolia. The bishops and archbishops who became σκολάζων ("without church") were

[64] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos. 1590, 1615, 1618, 1651, 1670, 1679, 1719, 1747. Athanasius' attempts to reform monastic life are discussed by Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 149-179. See also Peter Charanis, "Monastic Properties and the State in the Byzantine Empire," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948) 51-117, Sévérien Salaville, "La vie monastique greque au début du XIVe siècle," *Revue des études byzantines* 2 (1944)119-125.

[65] Canon 37, Council of Trullo, Greek text in Heinz Ohme ed., *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium Quinisextum)* in Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, Series Secunda II: Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Tertium, Pars 4 (Berlin and Boston, 2013) 39-40, English trans. by Henry R. Percival, "Canons of the Council of Trullo," in *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2nd series, 14 vols., eds. P. Schaff and H. Wace (repr. Grand Rapids, MI, 1955) 14.356-408, here at 382-383.

transferred either to bishoprics in Turkish Anatolia that could still be accessed, or to bishoprics in the Byzantine Empire. Although they could seek refuge in the capital, transferal (μετάθεσις) to sees outside Constantinople was preferred. Similarly, bishops who managed to keep their sees in the occupied territory but could not have a decent living because of the confiscation of the church property by the Turks, could apply for a transfer to another bishopric. There, in the new place, they usually received as a grant (ἐπίδοσις) pastoral and liturgical privileges, but were not allowed to sit on the throne in the sanctuary, reserved solely for the local bishop.[66] By the time of Athanasius, many churches in Anatolia, subject to constant fiscal pressure by the Turks, had become seriously impoverished. In cities where Christians converted to Islam in large numbers, the Turks no longer allowed the local bishop to stay and oversee his shrinking flock. These destitute clergymen fled to Constantinople, where Andronicus permitted them to take up residence in urban monasteries and use local resources to support themselves.[67]

Athanasius was incensed at these bishops, who mingled in his affairs and assumed ecclesiastical honors and rights even if outside their jurisdiction. He found them an arrogant, recalcitrant, and undisciplined lot, agents of disorder and intrigue rather than advocates of charity and compassion. Athanasius' letters to the emperor were full of references to the abuses perpetrated by these bishops: they mismanaged church funds, took bribes, indulged themselves in all sort of worldly pleasures, schemed and conspired against one another and together against the patriarch.[68] He insisted that Andronicus II sent them back to their sees, since it was the bishops' chief duty to take care of the flocks that had been entrusted to them regardless of the harsh conditions in their dioceses.[69] The patriarch never tired of reminding Andronicus that the

[66] Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor* (Berkeley 1971) 194-223; 288-332.
[67] Vryonis, *Decline*, 311-312; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 91-100.
[68] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 15, 16, 24, 25, 48, 49, 83.
[69] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 25, 30, 48, 61, 69.

empire was created by God to support the Church and not vice versa: "For what other reason, I ask, did God adorn the Church with an empire, if not for the exercise of protection over it?"[70] It was an emperor's obligation to look after the interests of the Church, and especially to defend its freedom – which for Athanasius meant his enforcing of the canon law without any kind of interference or hindrance from the civil authority. As long as Andronicus supported the enemies of the Church, allowing them to mock and defy its canons and piling favors and privileges on themselves, the Church could not be free.[71] Athanasius frequently resorted to the Old Testament as a theocratic paradigm to justify his claims: like the ancient Israel in the old times, the New Israel (Byzantium) was ruled by its priesthood to whom God granted both spiritual and secular authority; the emperor was subject to the Church, and his main duty was to serve it by making sure all canons were obeyed and all offenders punished. Only then could the emperor be sure that the New Israel would not share the fate of the Old one: deliverance into the hands of the enemies.[72]

Despite Athanasius' many exhortations and Andronicus' own pledge to comply with all Church decisions and regulations, the emperor was very slow in acting on his promises. Athanasius protested in many of his letters that Andronicus refused to listen to him; that he would be kept long hours, even days, waiting for an audience which would never be granted; that none of his requests was given due attention; that his correspondence and memoranda were probably discarded without being read; that the emperor even declined to see him for two whole years, and so on.[73] Athanasius insisted that his petitions were "imperial adornments that lead to salvation" and were made "out of love alone" for the emperor and for the people, not for

[70] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letter 61, lines 44-46; Letters 81, lines 2-4; 104, lines 24-28.
[71] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 57, 62 and 69.
[72] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 1, 2, 3, 6, 17, 32, 36, 37, 67, 82, and 110; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1692 (not dated), p. 479-482. See Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 182.
[73] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 14, 18, 35, 49, 76, 79, 80, 93 and 99.

personal gain.[74] But the patriarch was asking too much from an emperor prepared to give too little. Andronicus favored peace in the Church much more than the strict implementation of rules, fearing that the latter might produce further disturbances. It was what actually happened once the bishops were finally removed from Constantinople: most of the clergymen affected by the measure broke off communion with Athanasius, threatening him with a new schism.

Before a vociferous body of prelates ready to resort to calumnies, open protests, outrageous intrigues and machinations, Andronicus lost his confidence in Athanasius' abilities to find the right remedies for the many evils afflicting the Church, and withdrew his support.[75] The patriarch himself, disillusioned by the enmity he saw all around him and by the lack of imperial help, resigned and retired to the monastery of Xerolophos.[76] His claim on ecclesiastical ascendancy over the secular power was somewhat vindicated: it was the Church which had the last word in this confrontation, not the emperor, who had just given in to its pressure. But unfortunately for Athanasius, it was that part of the Church which he had endeavored all his life to amend and correct – the corrupt, manipulative, schismatic ecclesiastics who cared more about their own interests than the general Christian welfare. Well-meant and greatly needed, Athanasius' reforms upset too many in their easy, complacent ways and risked to tear asunder even more the already frayed fabric of the Church. With Athanasius gone, the emperor resumed his search for a patriarch who was more interested in restoring peace among Christians rather than in compelling them to live up to highest moral standards.

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[74] Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letter 80, lines 21-26, 35-38.

[75] Among other things, they placed under the patriarch's stool a picture representing Christ and Andronicus with a bridle in his mouth, being led by Athanasius, and after the aged and almost totally blind Athanasius stood on it, they accused him of impiety and iconoclasm – see Gregoras, *Historia* VII.9.1, v.1, p. 258-259 and Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 88.

[76] On resignation, see Athanasius, *Correspondence*, Letters 112-115, p. 287-303; Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1666 (September 1309), p. 461-462; Boojamra, *Church Reform*, 89-90.

Early in his second term, Athanasius had been requested by Andronicus to invite the Arsenites once more for talks. The two parties met in September 1304 in a synod in Constantinople, and achieved nothing, since neither would modify its radical stance.[77] The patriarch who succeeded Athanasius, Niphon I (1310-1314), was however very amenable to negotiation, and within a few months of his election, in September 1310, he succeeded in bringing the Arsenites back into the Church. The emperor himself was open to making concessions, preferring to have that faction on his side rather than against him. The Arsenites had supported the rebellion of the Byzantine general Alexios Philanthropenos, who in 1295, after scoring important victories against the Turks in the Meander Valley in Asia Minor, decided to call himself "autocrator" and rule the region as his independent territory.[78] Then they had taken part in the attempted coup d'état of John Drimys, discovered and crushed in the winter of 1305.[79] Still uncomfortable whenever the issue of Palaiologan legitimacy was raised by his adversaries, Andronicus agreed to the Arsenite demands, so as to eliminate any reason for the faction's future participation in the anti-imperial conspiracies.

The Arsenites' requests had not changed much. While they renounced the idea of having one of their own placed on the patriarchal throne, they still wanted the name of Joseph, their main foe, removed from diptychs and never again to be commemorated in public ceremonies. By 1310, many of Joseph's supporters had passed away, and the ex-patriarch himself was no longer a sensitive issue whose unjust treatment could raise a huge outcry, so the emperor consented to the Arsenite request.[80] He in fact acquiesced with whatever else the Arsenites demanded: a

[77] Pachymeres, *Relations Historique* XII.2, v. 4 p. 508-527; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 163.
[78] Angeliki Laiou, *"Some Observations on Alexios Philanthropenos* and Maximos Planoudes," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1978) 89-100; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 123-124.
[79] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, nos.1636 and 1637 (winter 1305-1306), p. 429-432; Albert Failler, "Le complot antidynastique de Jean Drimys," *Revue des études byzantines* 54 (1996) 235–244; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 104-105.
[80] Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 165.

confession of faith delivered by the emperor, in which all the teachings of the Fathers be preserved unaltered; the pardoning of those unjustly excommunicated (i.e. the Arsenites); the deposition of all prelates ordained during the patriarchate of John Beccus; the deposition of simoniacs; the prohibition of Athanasius I and John XII Cosmas (who had proven themselves thoroughly unsympathetic to the Arsenite cause) from ever returning to the see of Constantinople.[81] At the reconciliation ceremony which took place in Saint Sophia, Arsenius' body was brought from its tomb in the monastery of St. Andrew and dressed in patriarchal robe, then from his hand Niphon took a document which gave absolution to all those who had been excommunicated by Arsenius. This included Michael VIII, which was a late, but very important recognition of the Palaiologan family's claim to the throne.[82]

The Arsenite schism triggered by Michael VIII's usurpation of the throne in 1261 and brought to an end by Andronicus II in 1310 spanned the first five critical decades after the reconquest of Constantinople. The schism, together with the dissensions caused in the Church by Michael VIII's submission to Rome in 1274, hindered, through the wide range of political, social and religious implications, the functioning of an empire which had just regained its vital center but was threatened along its peripheries from all sides. To be able to respond adequately to external challenges, Michael Palaiologus chose to treat internal religious conflicts in the manner of his Comnenian predecessors, with frequent and ruthless involvement in Church affairs, making far-reaching administrative and doctrinal decisions, and punishing hierarchs who opposed him with the loss of office, physical mutilation, exile, or death. But the severity of punishments silenced few of his antagonists; they would rather separate themselves from the

[81] The Greek documents related to the end of schism with French trans. are in Laurent, "Les grandes crises religieuses a Byzance," 285-313; see also Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2002-2004 (September 1310) p. 2-6; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 165-166.
[82] Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 253.

imperial Church, whom they saw as tainted with heresy, and function in a parallel, 'pure' ecclesiastical community which they declared the true apostolic Church. In the case of the Arsenites, their categorical rejection of the Palaiologan family led them to associate with any pretender to the throne who claimed to represent Lascarid interests. The Byzantine part of Asia Minor which had been the heartland of the empire in exile became a Lascarid/Arsenite fief, with the constant potential of anti-Palaiologan intrigues and insurrections. Despite his harsh interventions in the Church, Michael VIII had in fact less control over it than ever in the past. Andronicus' milder approach to ecclesiastical matters often meant that he allowed the patriarchs to dictate the course of action, but the men he chose for the office had conflicting views and tactics when dealing with factionalism, their policies ranging from conciliatory to uncompromising. These approaches produced discontents who threatened to separate themselves from the Church, and until 1310 the patriarchs failed to bring back the Arsenites.

The fact that the Church managed to escape full imperial control did not make it any stronger. The factions which appeared as a result of unsolved political, disciplinary, or theological disagreements weakened the central ecclesiastical authority, allowing several centers of power to emerge and compete with the patriarch and with one another. The Byzantine ability to solve conflicts through mediation and negotiation seemed severely impaired. Even the long hoped-for settlement reached with the Arsenites in 1310 was not welcomed by everyone, provoking a minor yet revealing division in the Church. Theoleptus, the metropolitan of Philadelphia (1285-1326), broke off communion with Constantinople and for ten years refused to have anything to do with the patriarchs or mention their names in prayer.[83] He had condemned

[83] Vitalien *Laurent*, "Les crises religieuses à Byzance : Le schisme antiarsénite du métropolite de Philadelphie Théolepte († c. 1324)," *Revue des études byzantines* 18 (1960) 45-54; Robert E. Sinkewicz ed., *Theoleptus of Philadelphia: The Monastic Discourses* (Toronto 1992) 11-18; Tudorie, "Le schisme arsénite," 165-166. For the situation in Philadelphia at the time of Theoleptos, see Hélène Ahrweiler, "La région de Philadelphie, au XIVe

the Arsenites for introducing a split in the body of Christ, even if their harsh stance against Michael VIII was justified; furthermore, he disliked them for their stern conservatism (mainly the fact that they urged followers to refuse any interaction with the priests ordained by the mainstream Church, including receiving pastoral advice and the sacraments at their hands). He even wrote two treatises on the temporal and eternal dangers of schism. [84] But when it came to accepting the Arsenite reunion with the Church, he preferred to separate himself from the body of Christ rather than admit the miscreants back into it. The patriarchs ignored him, afraid lest a local instance of disobedience might escalate into a wider schism, and Theoleptus after a while reintegrated himself into the official hierarchy. While that metropolitan's split from Constantinople remained confined to Philadelphia, it did signal to both emperors and patriarchs that Church leadership was increasingly heading down the path of fragmentation and localization of ecclesiastical authority. The likelihood of reversing the process was limited by the patriarchs' vacillation between the political mode of mediating disputes and the monastic approach which allowed little room for negotiation.

The patriarchs' inability to decide on a series of coherent strategies in attempting to address the problems that plagued Byzantine Christianity after 1261 was another major factor that weakened the Church. The patriarchs had allegiances to different power players and came to the office with different sets of priorities, so they would often cancel policies initiated by predecessors, undermining the chances for consistency, stability and unity. Short-sightedness, self-seeking pursuits, and personal likes and dislikes took precedence over the long-term interests of the institution they headed. Athanasius' challenge of Andronicus and the formal

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siècle (1290-1390), dernier bastion de l'hellénisme en Asie Mineure," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 127e année*, 1 (1983) 175-197.

[84] Robert E. Sinkewicz, "A Critical Edition of the Anti-Arsenite Discourses of Theoleptus of Philadelphia," *Medieval Studies* 50 (1988) 46-95.

acceptance by the emperor of a much augmented role of the patriarch in the running of the *basileia* had pointed to the significant capital of strength and influence that the Church had won at the expense of imperial power. It all came to nothing, since the bishops were not willing to sacrifice personal welfare and overlook the benefits derived from a close association with the emperor and the prominent officials at the court for the general good of the Church. Likewise, the gains achieved by Athanasius in the realm of ecclesiastical and monastic discipline dissolved into a sea of protests and intrigues when those touched by the reforms began losing the privileges, honors and easy lifestyle to which they had been accustomed.

The patriarchs' authority and their capacity to organize a well-coordinated response to the problems afflicting the fourteenth-century Byzantium were further tried by civil wars, the rise to regional preeminence of Bulgaria and Serbia, and the Turkish invasion of the Balkans. The religious controversy centered on ascertaining the orthodoxy of Hesychast ascetic practices, and of Gregory Palamas' writings which sought to give them a theological foundation, created at first another deep rift in the Byzantine society, especially after the religious dispute became mixed up with the civil war of 1341-1354. But the appointment of four successive patriarchs coming from the Athonite monastic environment and sharing a common, Hesychast theological makeup helped restore unity to the Church and brought a certain degree of stability to the dying empire. Moreover, it allowed the patriarchate to regain the prestige and authority it had lost during the second part of the thirteenth century, much of these gains being made at the expense of the emperor. John V Palaiologus, the *basileus* who had the misfortune of ruling Byzantium during one of the worst times in its millennium-long history, attempted all venues available to him to safeguard the ever-diminishing Byzantine state, but in the end he failed lamentably. Close and faraway neighbors – Bulgarians, Hungarians, Serbians, Turks and Venetians – were all able to

exploit the economic, military and political decline of Byzantium, which by the end of the fourteenth century was a minor Balkan state, no longer in a position to claim leadership over the Christian *oikoumene*. The patriarchs themselves felt the effect of waning Byzantine imperial power, achieving only moderate success in their dealings with the Balkan churches, which had asserted their ecclesiastical independence from Constantinople (issue discussed in the next chapter). While both within Byzantium and in areas outside of the borders of the empire not powerful enough to try to escape Constantinopolitan control (Moldova, Wallachia, Russia, Trebizond), the patriarchs enjoyed a reputation solid enough to allow them to consolidate their authority once more, they only regained access to the major Balkan churches when able to take advantage of the distress and hardships produced by the Ottoman conquest.

5.3. Hesychasm, the Gateway of Ascetics into the World of Politics

In modern scholarship, Hesychasm (from the Greek ἡσυχία, "stillness," "quiet," "silence") is used as an umbrella term that covers at least four distinct, yet to a certain degree overlapping, areas of Orthodox spirituality: 1) the quest for solitude and quietness which characterized monasticism since its inception in the late third century; 2) the internalized prayer "of the heart" (following the silencing of the mind through the banishment of all thoughts and images), prayer sometimes accompanied by bodily postures and respiration techniques meant to enhance concentration and contemplation, as taught by Nikiphoros the Hesychast in the thirteenth century; 3) the theological foundation given by the Athonite monk Gregory Palamas in the fourteenth century to the chief experience reached by those practicing the prayer of the heart: the vision of light, identified with the divine light enfolding Jesus on Mt. Tabor; and 4) the ideology that undergirded the political agenda of the patriarchate of Constantinople for

reinstating itself as the center of ecclesiastical authority in the Balkans.[85] According to Meyendorff, all these four meanings of Hesychasm stem from and uphold the Orthodox understanding of the ultimate destiny of the human person: deification and communion with God.[86]

If the Hesychast quest for God through seclusion and inner prayer had a long history in Byzantine monasticism, the theological propositions put forth by Gregory Palamas in support of the Hesychast practice sounded quite novel and strange in the world of thought of fourteenth-century Byzantines.[87] In order to defend the claim of Hesychast monks to encounters with God as light before an Orthodox audience steeped in the apophatic thinking of the Church Fathers, Palamas introduced a distinction between divine essence and divine energies. God in His essence was and remained beyond human grasp. But God's energies or modes of operation into the world were accessible to humans through mystical experiences attained at the end of sustained *askesis*, which included fasting, vigils, breathing techniques, inner prayer, and imageless contemplation. The light seen by Hesychasts was neither external, material light, nor an internal illumination of the mind, but God's uncreated, eternal energy through which humans could participate in the

[85] The basic meanings of Hesychasm are outlined by John Meyendorff in "Is Hesychasm the Right Term?," *Okeanos: Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 447-457 and "Introduction," *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological and Social Problems* (London, 1974) i-vii; see also Kallistos Ware, *Act out of Stillness: The Influence of Fourteenth-Century Hesychasm on Byzantine and Slav Civilization* (Toronto, 1995), 4-9, with slightly modified definitions of the term. Ware suggests that in the case of Palamas' theology, the term "Palamism" would be more appropriate than the more general "Hesychasm;" in this chapter 'Hesychast theology,' 'Palamite theology' and 'Palamism' will be used interchangeably.

[86] Meyendorff, "Introduction" iv.

[87] For the Christian methods of prayer that can be labeled as 'Hesychast,' see E. Behr-Sigel, *The Place of the Heart: An Introduction to Orthodox Spirituality* (Torrance, CA, 1992) 63-103; Kallistos Ware, "Ways of Prayer and Contemplation: Eastern," in Bernard McGinn and John Meyendorff eds., *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York, 1985) 395-414 and Kallistos Ware, "Symeon the New Theologian" and "The Hesychasts" in Cheslyn Jones et al eds., *The Study of Spirituality* (London, 1986) 235-258. Still useful are J. Bois, "Les hésychastes avant le XIVe siècle," *Échos d'Orient* 5.1 (1901) 1-11 and Irénée Hausherr, *Hésychasme et prière* (Roma, 1966).

divine nature and become deified.[88] Palamas' theology created a huge uproar in the capital, and its orthodoxy was seriously questioned on several counts, but once its author could demonstrate that he was doing nothing more than restate ideas already exposed by the early Church Fathers, it became integral part of Orthodox dogma.

As for the fourth meaning of Hesychasm, loosely characterized as a "political ideology," this is a modern concept rather than a medieval model explaining man's interaction with God. The term 'political Hesychasm' assumes that fourteenth-century Hesychast clergymen and laymen from Byzantium and the Balkans made deliberate use of their common set of beliefs and practices in order to narrow the rift that had been growing for decades between local churches and the patriarchate of Constantinople. In this modern reading of late medieval developments, Hesychasts joined forces into a pan-orthodox movement by means of which the patriarchs could communicate and enforce their decisions on the pressing public issues of the day, and especially on ecclesiastical unity and the realignment of Balkan religious life and thought to the Constantinople-defined orthodoxy. The first to approach Hesychasm from an ideological perspective was the Russian scholar Gelian Prokhorov, who described the close cooperation between the Byzantine patriarchate and the Hesychast monks as a 'vast social movement' with decisive impact not only on spirituality, but also on the politics, society and cultural life of the late fourteenth-century Balkans and Russia.[89] Other scholars built upon this understanding of

[88] The most comprehensive yet accessible discussion of Hesychast theology remains J. Meyendorff, *Introduction a l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1959), English translation *A Study of Gregory Palamas* (Crestwood, NY, 1998). An excellent discussion of Palamas and his theology, but from a less sympathetic position, is in Lowell Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy in Byzantium in the Fourteenth Century: A Consideration of the Basic Evidence" PhD Diss. (University of California, Los Angeles, 1975). See also a more recent appraisal by *Dirk Krausmüller*, "*The Rise of Hesychasm*," in Michael Angold ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, v. 5: *Eastern Christianity* (Cambridge, 2006) 101–126.

[89] Gelian Prokhorov, "L'hésychasme et la pensée sociale en Europe orientale au XIVe siècle," *Contact: revue française de l'Orthodoxie* 31 (1979) 25-63, at 43-48.

Hesychasm, discussing the role of Hesychasm in fostering a 'Byzantine commonwealth,'[90] the internationalism of Hesychasm and its part in creating an Orthodox identity that transcended the accidents of language and locality,[91] and Hesychasm as political tool meant to further the Byzantine goals of preserving and strengthening Orthodoxy in Southeastern Europe.[92] The success of the patriarchate of Constantinople in reconnecting the Balkan peripheries to the center by means of political Hesychasm is placed in the context of a sharp decline in imperial authority, with the corollary that the Byzantine patriarchs replaced the emperors as guardians of the Orthodox *oikoumene* and thus ensured its survival after the demise of the Byzantine Empire in 1453.[93]

This section takes up the issue of Hesychasm as theology and ideology, examining the connection between these two facets of the fourteenth-century monastic revival, and questioning the extent to which they influenced each other and together the course of events in the Balkans. The discussion begins with a brief foray into the circumstances that forced this ascetic movement to leave its secluded monastic environment and plunge into the turbulent world of Byzantine politics, then moves on to assessing the factors which turned Hesychasm from heresy into orthodoxy, and next into political strategy. The goal is to provide an alternative view to the established notion that there is a direct and necessary correlation between a) Hesychasm, b) the rise of the patriarchs to unrivaled authority within and without Byzantium, and c) the restoration of Balkan churches to the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople.

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[90] Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonewealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (London, 2000) 301-308.
[91] Alexandru Elian, "Byzance et les Roumains à la fin du Moyen Age," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Bzyantine Studies* (London, 1967) 195-203.
[92] Meyendorff, 'Introduction" v., followed by John A. McGuckin, *Standing in God's Holy Fire: the Byzantine Tradition* (London, 2001) 117-119.
[93] John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY, 1989) 117; also Joan Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 290-291.

The fourteenth century brought new challenges to the Byzantine Empire. While relationships with the West slowly began to improve to the point where both papacy and secular rulers no longer found any merits in a foreign policy geared towards the 'Latin recovery' of Constantinople, a series of civil wars in Byzantium put an end to its chances to restore political and military preeminence in the northeastern Mediterranean.[94] Between 1321 and 1328, young Andronicus III launched several military campaigns against his grandfather, Emperor Andronicus II, the last one successful. Andronicus II lost the throne and had to don the monastic garb. His grandson ruled for thirteen unremarkable years. Initially he managed to recover territory in Greece (Thessaly and Epirus), but lost Albania and Macedonia to the Serbian tsar Stephen Dušan (1331-1355). Andronicus III also lost to the Ottoman Turks three key Byzantine cities in Asia Minor: Prusa (1326), which became Bursa, capital of the newly established Ottoman state, Nicaea (1331) and Nicomedia (1337). Upon his death in 1341, another civil war began which lasted until 1354. It was a ruthless confrontation between John Cantacuzenus, a close friend of Andronicus III and his *megas domestikos* (i.e. commander-in-chief of the land army), and the members of the regency for John V Palaeologus, Andronicus' minor son and heir. The war shook Byzantium to its foundations. It deepened the rift between aristocracy (most of them supportive of Cantacuzenus, himself one of the wealthiest Byzantine land-owners) and commoners (loyal to the Palaeologan dynasty). It depleted the imperial treasury, left the countryside devastated, the urban economy paralyzed, and most people impoverished. The crisis

[94] For the reorientation of the papal policies in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Byzantine response, see Norman Housely, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades* (Oxford, 1986) 9-46; Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328* (Cambridge, MA, 1972) 309-329; Donald M. Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice: A Study in Diplomatic and Cultural Relations* (Cambridge, 1994) 246-252; M. Viller, "La question de l' union des églises entre Grecs et Latins depuis la concile de Lyons jusqu'à celui de Florence (1274-1438)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* XXVII (1921) 260-305.

worsened when in 1347 the first wave of plague hit the Byzantine Empire.[95]

The Byzantine civil war affected the Balkan Peninsula as well. Both John Cantacuzenus and John V Palaiologus sought allies among the neighboring powers, inviting them to join in the fight. Serbia and Bulgaria gladly obliged and, taking full advantage of the murky Byzantine political scene, seized territories and imposed new geopolitical arrangements that drastically reduced the Byzantine presence and influence in the Balkans. By 1350, the Serbian tsar had wrested Thessaly and Epirus from Byzantine hands. In his turn, the Bulgarian tsar Ivan Alexander (1331-1371) had pressured John V to grant him the city of Philippopolis and several other towns and fortresses on the Upper Marica River in exchange for military help.[96] Both tsars unshackled their principalities from any allegiance owed to Byzantium and removed their churches from the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople. The political and ecclesiastical landscape of the peninsula was reshaped in terms imposed by Slavic concerns and priorities.

The Byzantine patriarchs of this period were faced with the double emergency of pacifying the political factions contending for the throne, and reasserting control over areas that had slipped out of their grasp. Under the difficult circumstances created by the civil war, and considering the post-1261 poor record of the patriarchate in mediating political crises, this was already an ambitious agenda; the religious conflict over the Hesychast practices and theology

[95] The civil war of 1341-1354, its stages, socio-political ramifications and implications, and aftermath are discussed by Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 185-250 and idem, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295-1383* (Cambridge, 1996) 45-83, 118-133. Mark Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia, 1997) discusses the military aspects of the civil wars as well as the organization, financing and functioning of the Byzantine army. Eva de Vries-Van der Velden, *L'élite byzantine devant l'avance turque à l'époque de la guerre civile de 1341 à 1354* (Amsterdam, 1989) addresses the war from the perspective of Byzantine aristocracy. For a succinct presentation of the civil wars during this time period, see George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1969) 499-533.

[96] The impact of the Byzantine civil war upon the Balkans is discussed in Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 292-329; George Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331-1355) and His Successors* (Washington DC, 1984) 10-59.

added more strain and anguish to it. The struggle for and against Hesychasm increased the division and factionalism created by the civil war, as the contending parties blended - or rather muddled up - politics, war, and religion according to their immediate interests. The first patriarch to deal with the Hesychast controversy, John XIV Calecas (1334-1347), was hesitant at the onset of the dispute as to which faction he should support, especially when the emperor had not yet made a decision in this regard. After Andronicus III died and the civil war that ensued drew the lines of the theological battle more clearly, the patriarch sided with the anti-Palamites. But he lost his office when John Cantacuzenus, a close friend of Palamas, won and ascended the throne. Cantacuzenus promoted to the see of Constantinople a series of Athonite monks who practiced the Hesychast ascetic discipline and supported Palamite theology. These patriarchs transformed the spiritual movement into an ideological tool with which they pacified and reunited the Byzantine society. They cleverly used the momentum gained by Cantacuzenus after the civil war to impose their views as orthodox and placed in key metropolitan and archiepiscopal positions likeminded prelates, drawn from Hesychast monastic circles. Even after Cantacuzenus was forced to abdicate, these patriarchs enjoyed such authority and influence that the next emperor, John V Palaiologus, not particularly favorable to Hesychast mysticism but quite open to the West, found he had little say in ecclesiastical matters.

A defining moment in the rise to power of the Hesychast patriarchs was the acceptance of unorthodox Athonite meddling with theology by ecclesiastical and imperial authorities. Several factors contributed to the extension of such unprecedented leniency to laymen who were specifically forbidden by canon law to teach, question or revise Church dogma. Many of the monks proposing (or supporting the proposed) doctrinal (re)definitions were well-connected, some coming from socially prominent families, linked by blood or friendship to the Palaiologoi.

The patriarch who addressed the complaints against Athonites in the beginning chose to overlook their uncannonical forays into theology. He did not want to upset the complex web of patronage ties and power interests which protected the monks and could easily turn them against him; besides, his main concern at the time was to prevent a theological dispute among monks from evolving into a full-fledged controversy that could lead to schism in the Church and violence in Byzantine society.

The monk who started the Athonite venture into the realm of theological reflection was Gregory Palamas.[97] In the 1330s and 1340s, he wrote a series of treatises meant to provide a doctrinal basis to the ascetic practices and mystical visions experienced by Hesychasts. Palamas, an aristocrat close to the imperial family, was a mere priest (albeit a well-educated one) and thus not qualified to make novel theological pronouncements or bring changes to the established dogma. Ever since the Arian controversy in the early fourth century, Church hierarchs had been wary of allowing anyone else but bishops, preferably when gathered in provincial or general council, to define or refine Church doctrines and practices.[98] Emperors could and often interfered with dogma and ritual, but they had a privileged status within the community of the faithful,

[97] There are two extant *vitae* of Gregory Palamas, written by Hesycast patriarchs of the fourteenth century: Philotheus Coccinus, Palamas' close friend and loyal supporter, recent edition in Demetrius G. Tsames ed., *Philotheu Kōnstantinupoleōs to Kokkinu hagiologika erga* (Thessalonica, 1985) 427-591, older edition "Encomium Gregorii Palamae auct. Philotheo CP.," in *Patrologia Graeca* 151, cols. 551B-656C; and Neilus Kerameus, "Encomium Gregorii Palamae," J.-P. Migne ed., *Patrologia Graeca* 151, cols. 655D-678D. Interest in Palamas's life and teachings faded away in the fifteenth century, to be rekindled only at the beginning of the twentieth century by the rather negative assessment made to the Byzantine theologian by Martin Jugie in "Palamas Gregoire," *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique*, 15 vols. (Paris, 1903-50) v. 11.2, cols.1735-1776, and idem, "Palamite (controverse)," *Dictionnaire de theologie catholique* (Paris, 1932) v. 11.2, cols. 1777-1818. The first modern Orthodox answer to Jugie's critique of Palamas came from Dumitru Staniloae, *Viata si Invatatura Sfintului Grigorie Palama* [*Life and Teachings of St. Gregory Palamas*] (Bucharest, 1938). The best introduction to the life and thought of Palamas in a language of wide circulation is Jean *Meyendorff, Introduction* à *l'étude de Grégoire Palamas* (Paris, 1958), Engl. version John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, trans. by George Lawrence (Crestwood, NY, 1964, 1974).

[98] Canon 19 of Chalcedon, Greek and Latin text with English translation in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Council*, 96; Canon 64 of Trullo (on banning laymen from teaching theology), Greek text in Heinz Ohme ed., *Concilium Constantinopolitanum a. 691/2 in Trullo habitum (Concilium Quinisextum)* in Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, Series Secunda II: Concilium Universale Constantinopolitanum Tertium, Pars 4 (Berlin and Boston, 2013)] 48-49.

above and apart from the rest of the Christian clergy and laity. The doctrinal speculations of Palamas might have remained unknown to the larger world and thus unchallenged for their orthodoxy had they not been forced out into the open by the Athonite monk's unwitting clash with another monk, Barlaam of Calabria. Barlaam had been formed in a completely different cultural and religious milieu, but like Palamas, although just a monk, had no reticence in writing treatises and polemics on theological issues.

Barlaam was a Greek from Southern Italy, raised in the Byzantine Church but well-acquainted with the Latin theological thought. He came to the Byzantine Empire to immerse himself in the study of Aristotle in the original language.[99] He arrived in Thessalonica in 1326, then in 1330 moved to Constantinople, where he impressed the emperor and his court with his knowledge in astronomy, philosophy and theology. Through the intervention of Andronicus III, Barlaam received a teaching position at the imperial university, and at some point during his stay in the capital was also appointed hegumen of Christ Akataleptos (the Incomprehensible Christ).[100] His fame as a scholar was undermined by his propensity to quarrel and treat with scorn scholars who did not share his views. He made few friends as a result, although Andronicus III remained his protector.

In 1334, when two papal legates came to Constantinople to discuss the possibility of Church union in view of military cooperation against the Turks, the emperor asked Barlaam to provide the envoys from Rome with the Eastern view on the main differences between Greeks and Latins. The papal legates returned to Rome and presented the Byzantines' case as explained by Barlaam. The new pope, Benedict XII (1334-1342), wished to hear more and asked the emperor to send their representatives to Rome. In 1339, Andronicus dispatched Barlaam to

[99] Nicephorus Gregoras, *Fiorenzo, o intorno alla Sapienza*, ed. and trans. by P. M. L. Leone (Napoli 1975) 18-19.
[100] Antonis Fyrigos, *Dalla controversia palamitica alla polemica esicastica* (Rome 2005) 162-163; John A. McGuckin, "Barlaam of Calabria," *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Orthodox Christianity* v. 1 (Oxford 2011) 67-68.

Avignon, as the scholar most able to understand and negotiate in the Latin theological idiom. Barlaam reiterated the Eastern position on the *filioque,* explaining it in scholastic terms. He made however no lasting impression on the pope and the other bishops present at the meeting, so he returned home empty-handed.[101]

In the meantime, in 1336, one of Barlaam's tracts refuting the Latin doctrine of the *filioque* (in which he had used the Latins' scholastic method) fell into the hands of Gregory Palamas.[102] Palamas was appalled by the audacity of the Italian monk to resort to the Latins' scholastic way of argumentation, considered vain and pointless from a Byzantine perspective, when the early Church Fathers had provided the seeker with the best methods to refute theological errors. An exchange of letters between the two followed, centered on the possibility of knowing God. Gregory Acindynus, a monk and scholar based in Thessalonica, who was on friendly terms with both, acted as moderator. The tone of the correspondence became increasingly strident and unfriendly, as Barlaam and Palamas found they shared little common ground: the former held onto a radical apophaticism (God was entirely unknowable), the latter contended that logical demonstration and especially mystical experience allowed one to encounter and understand the divine mystery in part.[103] In 1337, while carrying on his dispute with Palamas, Barlaam came upon a new topic of debate. A few Hesychast monks he met in

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[101] On Barlaam, see Martin Jugie, "Barlaam de Seminara," *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, v. 6 (Paris 1931) 817-834; and more recently Antonis Fyrigos ed., *Barlaam Calabro: l'uomo, l'opera, il pensiero. Atti del convegno internazionale, Reggio Calabria, Seminara, Gerace, 10-11-12 dicembre 1999* (Roma, 2001). For Barlaam's writings concerning the Church of Rome, see Giovanni Mercati ed., *"Un progetto di Barlaam Calabro per* l'*unione delle Chiese*," in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (Vatican City, 1946) 171-180, and Tia M. Kolbaba, "Barlaam the Calabrian. Three Treatises on Papal Primacy: Introduction, Edition, and Translation," *Revue des études byzantines* 53 (1995) 41-115.

[102] The early phase of the controversy is discussed by John Meyendorff, "Les Debutes de la Controverse Hesychaste," *Byzantion* 23 (1953) 87-120, chronology critiqued and revised by Robert E. Sinkewicz, "A New Interpretation of the First Episode in the Controversy Between Barlaam the Calabrian and Gregory Palamas," *Journal of Theological Studies* 31 (1980) 489–500. See also, John Meyendorff, "L'origine de la controverse palamite: la première lettre de Palamas à Akindynos," *Théologia* 25 (1954) 603-613 and 26 (1955) 77-90 (Text).

[103] Robert E. Sinkewicz, "The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God in the Early Writings of Barlaam the Calabrian," *Medieval Studies* 44 (1982) 181-242.

Thessalonica introduced him to their method of prayer, which he found shockingly crude, vulgar, and heretical.

Hesychasm emphasized strict ascetic practices and incessant prayer as means to cure the sinful soul, and the withdrawal into solitude in order to silence one's mind through deep, thought-free contemplation. The more advanced monks could practice the prayer of the heart, an internalized prayer in which the mind did not participate, and could achieve the mystical encounter with the Divine Light, usually associated with the light the apostles saw on Mt. Tabor. This vision was a preamble to communion with God and deification (*theosis*), the ultimate goals of spiritual life in Byzantine Christianity. To ensure the mystical experience, some monks accompanied their prayers with a series of psychosomatic exercises meant to enhance the stillness of mind and hasten the inner awareness of the Divine Presence. They used a combination of bodily postures, breath-control exercises and navel-gazing to silence thought and imagination and thus achieve concentration. The vision of Divine Light was perceived to be a sensorial experience, as the light was expected to enter through the nostrils and flow down towards the navel, from where it flooded the body and finally exited through the nostrils. Or, as Barlaam himself understood it:

> I was initiated by them [the Hesychast monks] into certain monstrosities and absurd doctrines […], the product of an erroneous belief and a rash fantasy. They told me about their teachings concerning marvelous separations and reunions of the intellect with the soul, about the fusion of the demons with the soul, about the different sorts of red and white lights, about certain noetic entries and exits through the nostrils in conjunction with the respiration, about some kind of palpitations which occur around the navel, and finally about the union of our Lord with the soul which comes to pass within the navel in a manner perceived by the senses with full certitude of heart.[104]

[104] Barlaam of Calabria, Letter 5, in Giuseppe Schirò ed., *Barlaam Calabro. Epistole greche. I primordi episodici e dottrinari delle lotte esicaste* (Palermo, 1954) 323-4, English trans. by Kallistos Ware, "Praying with the Body: The *Hesychast Method* and *Non-Christian Parallels*," *Sobornost* 14.2 (1992) 6-35. Vid. Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 42-47. On the Hesychast prayer, see Irénée Hausherr, "La methode d'Oraison Hesychaste," *Orientalia*

The Hesychast quest for the vision of Divine Light was justified by its practitioners as the best way to participate in the process of deification (*theosis*). This however minimized the role of the Church and its sacraments in the process: if the monk by his own efforts could reach deification, the liturgy and the Eucharist were of little import. It was these practices, which appeared bizarre and non-Christian to the outsider, as well as the emphasis placed on individual spiritual exertions versus communal worship, that made Barlaam lodge an official complaint with the patriarch against the Hesychast monks, whom he accused of Messalianism.[105]

Messalians had greatly troubled the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries, when groups of ascetics in Syria and Asia Minor preached a life of prayer and contemplation, emphasizing the personal striving towards purification and union with God at the expense of participating in the sacramental life of the Church. They did not attribute any salvific value to the sacraments, since they held matter in contempt, and refused any deference to ecclesiastical hierarchy. It took a series of local councils and one ecumenical council to suppress this heresy, without however wiping it out completely, as groups with similar theology and practices resurfaced under different name in Asia Minor.[106] In time, any ascetic movement entertaining dualist ideas and questioning or outright disobeying Church authority was labeled "Messalian." The eighth-century Armenian Paulicians were associated with it. In the tenth century, the Balkan heresy of

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Christiana Periodica 2.2 (1927) 101–209; Kallistos Ware, *The Power of the Name: The Jesus Prayer in Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford, 1974).

[105] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2178 (1337/1338)136-137.

[106] On Messalianism in the early Church, see Aelred Baker, "Messalianism: The Monastic Heresy," *Monastic Studies* 10 (1974) 135-141; Jean Gribomont, "Le monachisme au IVe siècle en Asia Mineure: de Gangres au messalianisme," *Studia Patristica* 2 (1957) 400-416, and idem, "Le dossier des origines du *Messalianisme*," in *Epektasis*: *Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. by Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris, 1972) 611-625; Klaus Fitschen, *Messalianismus und Antimessalianismus. Ein Beispiel ostkirchlicher Ketzergeschichte* (Göttingen, 1998); Andrew Louth, "Messalianism and Pelagianism," *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982) 127-135; Columba Stewart, "New Perspectives on the Messalian Controversy," *Studia Patristica* 19 (1989) 243-249, and idem, *'Working the Earth of the Heart:' The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford, 1991).

Bogomilism was treated as another resurfacing of Messalianism.[107] Cases of monks accused of 'Messaliniasm' (Bogomils, most often) were known even on Mt. Athos, the bastion of orthodox ascetic living. Palamas himself was suspected to have befriended some of them.[108] If there were indeed any connections between Hesycham and the Bogomil heresy, the fourteenth-century ecclesiastical and imperial authorities were bound to intervene officially to put an end to the Hesychast movement.

Barlaam's accusation therefore could not be taken lightly. In the fall of 1340, Patriarch John XIV Calecas convened the synod of Constantinople in order to examine the Italian's allegations. The bishops present were not persuaded by the evidence, however, and exonerated the Hesychast monks of the charges of heresy, asking Barlaam to mind his own business. Barlaam was not liked in the capital, while the Athonite monks enjoyed prestige for their presumed holiness, so perhaps the bishops had little incentive to pursue the matters too closely. Barlaam continued his attacks on the Hesychasts, which prompted Palamas to reply with his first series of *Triads*, in which he gave theological support to the Hesychast claims that the light they saw in their vision was of divine origin. Palamas made a clear distinction between God's

[107] On dualist heresies in general, see Steven Runciman, *The Mediaeval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy* (Cambridge, 1947); a collection of primary sources in translation is in Bernard Hamilton et al eds., *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World C.650-C.1450: Selected Sources* (Manchester ,1998). For specific dualist movements, see Nina G. Garsoian, *The Paulician Heresy. A Study in the Origin and Development of Paulicianism in Armenia and the Eastern Provinces of the Byzantine Empire* (The Hague, 1967); Charles L. Vertanes, "The Rise of the Paulician Movement in Armenia and its Impact on Medieval Europe," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 2.2 (1985/86) 3-27; Dmitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948, repr. New York, 1978).

[108] According to Philotheus Coccinus, Palamas, who had just decided to don the monastic garb, was travelling in c.1317 from Constantinople to Mt. Athos when he came upon an entire village of 'Messalians' (Bogomils) in Western Thrace, at the border with Macedonia. He engaged in debate, winning their leader and a few others to orthodoxy –vid. *Encomium*, 563A-565D. Later on, in 1325, while at Mt. Athos, Palamas seems to have had close contacts with Bogomil monks who were identified as such by authorities, accused of heresy and expelled. He and the future patriarch Isidore were said to have even venerated a Bogomil nun as prophetess. This information reaches us via two unfriendly witnesses, Gregory Acindynus and Nicephorus Gregoras; the latter implies that Palamas left the Holy Mountain not because of the constant Turkish raids which disrupted contemplative life, but in fear of an imminent condemnation as heretic). For bibliography and discussion of this episode, see Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 35-37; Milan Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages* (Prague, 1974) 330-332.

essence, unknown forever to the human being, and God's uncreated energies, through which He made himself known to the world, and the fortunate ones could even see these energies (the Divine Light) with their spiritual eyes.[109] In the second part of his *Triads*, Palamas attacked Barlaam by name. The Italian monk reacted by writing his own treatise, *Against the Messalians*, in which he declared Palamas heretical and ridiculed his teachings.[110]

Both monks, Barlaam and Palamas, were in violation of canon law and conciliar decisions. Theological commentaries, doctrinal definitions, and reassessments of traditional interpretations were the sole privilege of bishops (and of the *basileus*, although his theological interventions were sanctioned by practice, not by canon law). Neither monk had reached that rank, so neither had the right to address theological issues and make doctrinal statements. This did not stop the two from writing treatises in which they dealt with matters of dogma. Palamas even went to Mt. Athos and pressured his fellow Hesychasts to defend formally his theology. The Athonites were ready to support Palamas, despite his uncanonical stance and rather peculiar theological interpretations. In the summer of 1340, twenty monks and hieromonks came together in a synod to refute the accusation of Messalianism brought against them by Barlaam of Calabria. The outcome of the synod was a *tomos* which used Gregory Palamas' theology to give a doctrinal foundation to Hesychast ascetic discipline. In the spring of 1341, the *tomos* received the signature of the bishop of Mt. Athos.[111] But even with an episcopal signature, the entire procedure was in violation of canon law. Only bishops gathered in a provincial synod summoned

[109] Text translated by John Meyendorff, *Gregorie Palamas. Defense des Saints Hesychastes* (Louvain, 1959), partial English translation by Nicholas Gendle in Gregory Palamas, *Triads* (Mahwah, NJ, 1983). On the distinction between divine essence and divine energies, see Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 202-227.
[110] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 49-50.
[111] A comprehensive discussion of the Athonite tome with its theological and canonical implications is in Lowell Clucas, "The Hesychast Controversy in Byzantium in the Fourteenth Century: A Consideration of the Basic Evidence," PhD Diss. (University of California, Los Angeles, 1975) 13-137.

by, and under the leadership of, a metropolitan could issue formal dogmatic statements. Monks and hieromonks could not, however versed in theology they might be.

The content of the *tomos* was breaking away from orthodox dogma. It divided history into three eras corresponding to God's progressive revelation of His nature. The first era was that of the Old Testament, when the One God discovered Himself as Trinity only to the prophets. The second era was that of the New Testament, when the Triune God made Himself known to the world through Jesus, but to the apostles alone He gave an inkling of the manifold divine energies. The third and final era was that of the Hesychast saints, the purified ones to whom God revealed His uncreated energies. Through these energies, the Hesychasts participated in the divine and became deified. It was an elitist rewriting of Christian history, which made the Truth available only to a select few in each era.[112] But this elitist Athonite perspective vindicated the Hesychast practices, which only the uninitiated could take for heretical attempts at reaching God through one's own efforts. The Hesychasts saw themselves as playing a quasi-prophetic role, announcing to the Christian world the possibility to partake of God's deifying grace through the mystical experience of Divine Light. They claimed an authority to probe into the divine mystery that went beyond that of the established Church hierarchy.[113]

The *tomos* gave Barlaam another reason to complain against its proponents. This time his accusations were openly directed against Palamas and his theology. As a result, Palamas was summoned before the synod to explain why he held illegal councils and had doctrinal tomes issued without the approval of the patriarchate. On June 10, 1341, a synod took place at Saint Sophia presided by Patriarch John XIV Calecas, and in the presence of Emperor Andronicus III,

[112] For an English translation of the tome, see *The Philokalia*: *The Eastern Christian Spiritual Texts*, ed. and trans. by G.E.H. Palmer, Kallistos Ware and Philip Sherrard, vol. 4 (Athens, 1961) 418–425.
[113] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2204-2206 (November 1340 to May 1341), p. 158-160; Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 218.

John Cantacuzenus, senators and imperial judges; even many commoners came to attend the gathering.[114] The fact that both emperor and court officials were present indicate that the issues to be discussed were perceived as having major significance. It is unlikely that Palamas' theology, with which few were acquainted, prompted the large gathering; it was mainly the fear that Bogomilism had infiltrated the monasteries on the Holy Mountain that made so many high dignitaries attend the council. In Byzantium, fighting heresy was a joint ecclesiastical and secular undertaking.

The patriarch was not in an enviable position: he owed his see to John Cantacuzenus, the emperor's friend. Although at first the emperor had been reluctant to accept Calecas, he came to rely on him and even appointed him as regent for his son during the Byzantine military expedition against the rebel Syrgiannes.[115] Calecas had no desire to antagonize his powerful protectors. The problem was that both Palamas and Barlaam were also under the patronage of the same two top figures in the Byzantine political hierarchy: the emperor and his megas domesticus. Palamas' father had been a senator and tutor to Andronicus III. When the elder Palamas had passed away, the then-emperor Andronicus II assumed the responsibility for young Gregory's education.[116] Gregory made many friends at the court, including John Cantacuzenus, who despite his military duties, had monastic leanings and was particularly well-disposed toward the type of spirituality embodied by Hesychasm.[117] Barlaam himself enjoyed the support of Andronicus III

[114] Ludwig Schopen and Barthold Niehbuhr eds., *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, 3 vols. (Bonn 1828, 1831, 1832) II.40, v.1, p. 551 (hereafter Cantacuzenus, *Historia*) Gregoras, *Historia*, XI.10.4-5, v. 1, p. 558-559; Philotheus Coccinus, *Encomium*, 599C. On the council of 1341, see Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 138-187, here at 162-163; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 50-56.
[115] Gregoras, *Historia* X.7.3, v. 1, p. 496; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 187.
[116] Philotheus, *Encomium*, 558C; Nilus, *Encomium*, 659A; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 28.
[117] John VI Cantacuzenus not only supported Palamas, but also wrote treatises to promote his theology. He had considered the possibility of retiring to a monastery ever since he had visited Mount Athos in early 1341 in order to pray for the health of Andronicus III (*Historia* IV.24, vol. 3, p. 176-178). For the political and religious career of John VI Cantacuzenos, see Donald M. Nicol in *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295-1383* (Cambdridge, 1996); also his entry on John VI Cantacuzenos in *The*

and Cantacuzenus, who had secured him the teaching position in Constantinople. The patriarch might have had his own worries about Hesychasm, and perhaps was even somewhat sympathetic to Barlaam, but he could not afford to take a radical stance. Allowing matters to degenerate into a theological argument, especially with so many of the laity present, could have led to the creation of a new schism in the Church, with all its attendant clashes and disturbances. He opted then for *oikonomia*: he forbade doctrinal debates at the council, which was to examine simply Barlaam's accusations against Palamas as disciplinary, rather than dogmatic matters.[118]

Barlaam soon found out that, constrained as he was by patriarchal guidelines, he could not make his theological case. Many of his anti-Hesychast accusations were based on what he saw as doctrinal errors in Palamite thought, and, in order to prove the heretical nature of the monastic movement, he needed to address the issue of Divine Light and divine energies, through which the Hesychast monks were justifying their practices. He could not tackle any of the issues which might have tipped the balance in his favor - which was probably what was intended by most officials in the audience, since he was perceived as a querulous foreigner who dared to attack monks striving to live in holiness on Mt. Athos. He was accused of teaching dogma to the people, which he could not do as a lay person.[119] Barlaam realized that he had no support among those present at the council, so on Cantacuzenus' recommendation he confessed being in error and repented. He was forgiven, and at the same time forbidden to open up the topic ever again.

Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100-1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study (Washington DC, 1978) 35-103, and Gunter Weiss, *Johannes Kantakuzenos, Aristokrat, Staatsmann, Kaiser und Mönch, in der Gesellschaftsentwicklung von Byzanz im 14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden 1969).

[118] Gregoras, *Historia* XI.10.4, v.1, p. 558; Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 140-141, 159-161; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 54-56.

[119] Gregoras, *Historia* XI.11.1, v.1, p. 558. Canon 64 of Trullo forbade anyone save for the bishop to teach Church doctrine; see Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 161-182.

The patriarch ordered that all copies of *Against the Messalians* be burned.[120]

The council did not tackle the irregular way in which the Athonite monks had made their views known via an uncanonical *tomos*. Nor was the theology proposed by the monks and backed up primarily by their own mystical experience subject to any scrutiny. Likewise, the council did not accuse Palamas, who was just a hieromonk, of meddling with Church dogma and assuming an authority which he did not have. It recommended, however, that he keep silent and raise no more theological issues. It seems that neither the patriarch, nor the bishops present had taken the time to read the Athonite *tomos* or any of Palamas' writings, and the Athonite monk himself read at the council only from his treatises dealing with the Hesychast prayer.[121] Much of what was really innovative and bordering on heterodoxy in his thinking was left aside. Besides, Palamas was too well-connected, and the monks overall enjoyed too much popularity in the capital to be subjected to a careful examination.

By avoiding a direct theological exchange between Barlaam and Palamas, and by ignoring the blatant breach of canon law by the Hesychasts, Calecas hoped to have put the lid on what had threatened to become a theological controversy of great proportions.[122] Neither Barlaam nor Palamas saw the situation this way. Barlaam hoped to gain an audience with Andronicus III and present his criticism of Palamite theology unencumbered by patriarchal restrictions. But the emperor fell ill unexpectedly and died five days after the council. Barlaam found no other sympathetic ear for his opinions and left Byzantium for good. He went to Avignon, where he became the Greek tutor of Petrarch. In 1342, after he acknowledged the

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[120] Vid. the *Tomos* issued by the second Hesychast synod in July 1341, Greek text in *Patrologia Graeca* 151, cols. 681B-691D, here at 681D; Cantacuzenus, *Historia* II.40, v. 1, p. 555-560; Gregoras, *Historia* XI.10.4-5, p. 558-559. See Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 182-187, Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 54-55.
[121] Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 140-142.
[122] On the role of Calecas in the early stages of the controversy, see Augustine M. Casiday, "John XIV (Kalekas), Byzantine Theology-cum-politics and the Early Hesychast Controversy," in *Le patriarcat oecuménique de Constantinople aux XIVe - XVIe siècles: rupture et continuité; actes du colloque international, Rome, 5-6-7 décembre 2005* (Paris 2007) 19-35.

authority of the pope and accepted the doctrinal position of the Church of Rome, Barlaam was appointed bishop of Gerace, in Calabria.[123]

Despite the synodal interdiction on any further theological exploration, Palamas continued to propagate his ideas in speaking and writing. His distinction between God's essence and God's energies had not been discussed the council, and he assumed that by not condemning it directly, the council implicitly approved it as orthodox. While prior to Palamas a few other Byzantine theologians had proposed such a distinction between divine essence and energies at the level of human understanding, none had gone so far as to state that the distinction was ontological, that there was a real division in God's being. The Athonite monk had promised in a meeting with Patriarch Calecas and with Gregory Acindynus right before the council that he would no longer bring up this controversial doctrinal point. But now that he had won the day, at least in his own eyes, Palamas resumed his teachings, and together with the monks he had brought with him to Constantinople, tried to compel Acindynus to endorse Hesychast theology.[124] Acindynus had expressed reservations on two other important points: 1) Palamas seemed to make a distinction between a "superior deity" inaccessible to humans (God's essence) and an "inferior deity/deities" (God's energies manifested in this world, uncreated and inseparable, but distinct from God), which could easily bring him the accusation of promoting

[123] Alice-Mary Talbot, "Barlaam of Calabria," in Alexander Kazhdan et al eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3 vols. (New York and Oxford 1991) 1.257.

[124] On Gregory Acindynus and his relationship with Gregory Palamas, see Juan Nadal Canellas, "Le rôle de Grégoire Akindynos dans la controverse hésychaste du XIVeme siècle à Byzance," in Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala ed., *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy* (Piscataway, NJ, 2007) 31-60, here at 48-51; idem, "La Critique par Akindynos de l'Herméneutique Patristique de Palamas," *Istina* 19 (1974) 297-328; Angela Constantinides Hero, "Life of Akindynos," in idem, *Letters of Gregory Akindynos. Greek Text and English Translation* (Washington, DC, 1983) ix-xxxiv, here at xvii-xviii. Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 140-141. Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 54-57, offers a rather negative assessment of Acindynus as a theologian and dismisses his mention of threats with death by the followers of Palamas as attempts to justify his change of attitude toward his former friend.

polytheism;[125] 2) Palamas seemed certain that God's energies or His manifestations in the world were uncreated, part of who God was (Barlaam had been certain of the contrary, that they were created, a property of the divine essence). In Acindynus' view, the ontological status of these energies was a divine mystery which the human mind could not penetrate. It was betterthat their status remained undefined, or expressed in the manner of the Fathers, through a paradox.[126]

Palamas wanted that another council, one which could discuss and establish the orthodoxy of his theology in a conclusive manner. In July 1341 a new meeting took place, under the supervision of John Cantacuzenus, who had assumed the role of regent for John V, Andronicus' heir, and in this capacity represented the *basileia*. Court dignitaries were also present, as were a large number of monks, supporters of Palamas. Acindynus appeared as defendant, and – according to his own account – once he presented his arguments, the Hesychast monks became so enraged that they forced him into silence. He was condemned for entertaining erroneous beliefs and falsely accusing others of heresy.[127] The monks asked, and John Cantacuzenus supported their request, that a synodal tome be published. It served the Hesychasts' interests to have their mystical experience sanctioned by an official doctrinal statement. The tome could also prove a useful propagandistic tool for Cantacuzenus, who – as imperial regent – had appropriated the duty of defending orthodoxy. It was only in the presence of an emperor that the bishops could issue new dogmatic definitions or revised existing ones. However, the patriarch refused to sign up and thus endorse Cantacuzenus' imperial role, so the final version of the document said nothing about the megas domesticus, nor did it mention Acindynus. The published tome was a reflection of the June council, at which Andronicus had

[125] Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 201-217; John Meyendorff, "*Une lettre inédite de Grégoire Palamas* à *Akindynos*: texte et commentaire sur la troisième *lettre* de Palamas," *Théologia* 24 (1953) 3-28.
[126] Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 218.
[127] Acindynus also claimed that he barely escaped being killed by the crowd right after the council; see Hero, "Life of Akindynos," xix-xx, with notes 61-63 for bibliography.

been present, and Barlaam had been indicted, although at the time no doctrinal debates were held. It endorsed Palamas' theology, condemned anyone who entertained opinions similar to Barlaam's, and banned further dogmatic pronouncements on the matter of divine essence/energies.[128]

Patriarch Calecas' role at this second council is unclear. He had signed the tome, while Cantacuzenus did not. Later in his *Explication to the Tome of 1341*, Calecas would write that, as at June council, his goal was to avoid any argument over doctrine. But Cantacuzenus, who wanted to play the part of, and be acknowledged as, the emperor, pushed for debate and openly supported the Hesychasts. In the end, Acindynus was found guilty and forced to recant, while Palamas' theories were declared orthodox.[129] While not clearly against Palamas, the patriarch seems to have feared that the monk's push for a dogmatic resolution to his explorations into the divine mystery could wind up in passionate and violent controversy. There were still many in the capital who found the theology proposed by the Athonite monk not in accordance with the Church Fathers. Calecas worried at the same time about the political implications that Cantacuzenus' presence at, and his interventions in the deliberations of, the second council might have. The fight over the regency was still in its earliest stages, but the patriarch had his own designs for the outcome of the struggle, which did not include empowering the megas domesticus.

Until the fall of 1341, John Calecas did not cut a remarkable figure in the controversy over Hesychast theology and practices. He had avoided expressing a clear position, lest he upset

[128] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2213 (summer 1341), p.166-169. On the problems associated with this council, see Clucas, "Hesychast Controversy," 219-231; Hero, 'Life of Akindynos," xx-xxiii; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 59-62. Only seven out of the thirty-six of the bishops who had attended the council in June agreed to sign the tome – vid. Jean Darrouzès, "Lettre inédite de Jean Cantacuzène relative à la controverse palamite," *Revue des études byzantines* 17 (1959) 7-27.

[129] John Calecas' explication of the τόμος of 1341 is published in *Patrologia Graeca* 150, cols. 900-903; see also Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 63-66.

his patrons or permitted the state to plunge into a lengthy and damaging theological schism. But the death of Andronicus and the departure of John Cantacuzenus from Constantinople gave Calecas the opportunity to affirm himself both ecclesiastically and politically. He became the regent for young John V, alongside Alexius Apocaucus, a former megas dux and one-time protégée of John Cantacuzenus, and Empress Anna of Savoy, the boy's mother. The three – the patriarch, the empress and Apocaucus – declared Cantacuzenus a public enemy and the patriarch excommunicated him. In response, the former megas domesticus had himself proclaimed emperor by his troops in October 1341, an event which launched the war for the throne.[130] A month later, the regency had the young John V crowned. At the ceremony Calecas wore vestments and insignia that were meant to indicate an authority equal to that of the imperial office.[131] As usual in Byzantium, he mixed religion with politics, using both as means to make friends and abuse adversaries.

As self-appointed leader of the regency, Calecas sought to bolster his position by making friends in powerful circles, not excluding the Athonite monks. At first, he did not consider Palamas and his Hesychast friends necessarily to be in the enemy's camp. Palamas himself avoided to express allegiance to either party in the burgeoning civil struggle. He kept a low profile, continuing to write against Acindynus, who was also very active in his anti-Palamite opposition. Neither monk had thought it necessary to obey the council's ban on writing and circulating treatises interpreting Church dogma. Palamas was aware of the fame that the Hesychasts had gained as a result of the two councils, and was ready to capitalize on it. Acindynus relied on the support of the patriarch, who was willing to turn a blind eye to the monk's insistence on engaging in theology. In March 1342, Calecas decided to pressure Palamas

[130] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* III.27, v.2, p. 165-169; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 186-191.
[131] John Cantacuzenus, *Historia* III.36, v. 2, p. 218; see discussion in Woodfin T. Warren, *The Embodied Icon: Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford 2012) 166-177.

into overtly taking sides in the raging civil war. He was aware of the Athonite monk's influence and prestige in certain political and ecclesiastical circles, and he needed either to have Palamas on his side, or to have Palamas' reputation tarnished by using the monk's flawed theological ideas as a justification. The patriarch invited Palamas once again to Constantinople for discussions. A delegation of fellow-Hesychasts also came to the capital to negotiate on behalf of Cantacuzenus with Empress Anna; among them were Isaac the protos of Mt. Athos, Macarius the hegumenos of the Great Lavra, Sava of Vatopedi, the future candidate for the see of Constantinople, and Kallistos, the future patriarch. Palamas was counting on the popularity enjoyed by himself and the other Athonite monks, and on their connections in Constantinople, to score another victory. The monks wanted Calecas to call a council attended by both ecclesiastics and civil dignitaries, at which Palamas' teaching on the divine essence/energies was to be recognized as orthodox for once and for all. The patriarch summoned instead a regular synod, which could not address dogmatic issues; thus yet again the discussions focused solely on disciplinary matters. The issue at stake was Palamas' refusal to comply with the request that he stop stirring up theological trouble. The synod decided to have all of Palamas' works written after the June 1341 destroyed, and gave him a warning not to discuss Church dogma any longer.[132]

As before, Palamas showed no desire to stop his theological pursuit. Calecas realized that he had to take a more forceful course of action if he wanted to contain Palamas' growing influence and not let a mere monk undermine his own position as leader of the Church. Moreover, the monk's political sympathies now manifestly inclined towards his friend Cantacuzenus, who in his turn was supportive of Palamite theology. Patriarch Calecas sought to

[132] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2225 (spring 1342), 2231 (early summer 1342), 2233 (September 1342), and 2239 (February/March 1343); there were several meetings, most of which Palamas refused to attend. Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 66-69.

maximize his control of state affairs while Byzantium experienced a vacuum of political power. Palamas thus became an inconvenient adversary who had to be silenced. In November 1343, the patriarch had the monk arrested for what amounted to treason (correspondence with the enemy) and sent to the palace jail. Two previous attempts to imprison him in monasteries had failed, as Palamas still had powerful friends in Constantinople and had escaped with their help to the Church of Saint Sophia, where he had asked for asylum.[133]

Not even prison made Palamas give up on his writing. He penned there his main work against Acindynus, *Antirrheticos.* In November 1344, a regular synodal session led by Patriarch Calecas excommunicated the Athonite monk for heresy and disobedience of Church authority. Metropolitan Isidore, Palamas' friend and supporter, was deposed from the see of Monemvasia. The synod ruled as well that any newly appointed bishop had to sign a statement that he disagreed with Palamas, whose theology was now deemed heterodox.[134] But the prestige and influence enjoyed by the Athonite monks were too great to be overlooked. Calecas decided to appease the monks' indignation at having one of their number jailed and excommunicated by defending in writing his position on the synodal decisions, before matters got out of hand. The patriarch produced and circulated among ecclesiastics and monastics a *Letter to the Athonite Monks*, an *Encyclical*, and an *Explanation of the Tome of 1341*.[135]

To strengthen his own ecclesiastical faction, in December 1344 Calecas ordained Acindynus as deacon, then as a priest, planning to appoint him metropolitan of Thessalonica, the city which had once been a safe haven for many Hesychasts. It was a miscalculated step, however, since Calecas had no canonical support for the ordination of a monk who (like

[133] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 69-70.
[134] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2249 (November 4, 1344), p. 194-195. Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 73-75.
[135] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 76-77.

Palamas) was plainly disobeying conciliar decisions. The promotion of Acindynus to priesthood put serious strain on Calecas' relationship with Empress Anna, so the patriarch renounced his plans regarding Acindynus' further elevation to the rank of bishop. But he did not give up the idea of turning Thessalonica into an anti-Palamite center, and in June 1345 replaced the pro-Hesychast Macarius, metropolitan of Thessalonica since 1342, with Iacintus (1345-46), a Cypriote and firm supporter of Acindynus and his anti-Palamite stance. The new metropolitan launched a wave of persecutions against the monks who supported Palamas. Another anti-Palamite prelate was sent to Monemvasia, to reverse the pro-Hesychast trend started by the former holder of the see, Isidore. Calecas also had on his side the patriarch of Antioch, who was residing at that time in Constantinople.[136] Still, he did not succeed in subduing the Athonite party, which flooded Empress Anna with reports on the injustices suffered by Palamas, persuading her to give the monk another chance to present his case. In July 1345, Calecas' partner in the regency, Alexius Apocaucus, was murdered, which weakened the patriarch's position in the capital.

In the summer of 1346, the empress assumed the role of arbitrator between the Palamite and anti-Palamite factions, without seeking Calecas' advice or consent. She summoned both Palamas and Acindynus before her, and asked the historian Nicephorus Gregoras, politically a partisan of Cantacuzenus but religiously an enemy of Hesychasm, to send her a report on the controversy in order to gain a better understanding of the issues that had created such uproar in the empire. At the same time, six metropolitans who were under arrest in the imperial palace sent Anna a report on the wrongdoings of Calecas: corruption, simony, ordination of a heretic, and violation of the *Tome* issued in 1341 by the synod through the ordination of Acindynus.[137] The

[136] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 77-79.
[137] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2263 (September 1346) and 2264 (October 1346), p. 210-213.

days of John Calecas were numbered; he had become an inconvenience not only religiously, but also politically, as Cantacuzenus was closing in on Constantinople.

In February 1347, the Empress summoned a general council, which was held in the imperial palace and, under pressure from Anna, deposed Calecas.[138] The same bishops who had until then supported him now realized the tide had turned in favor of the Palamites. Calecas refused to accept the decision, and anathematized Palamas and his supporters, including John Cantacuzenus.[139] A few days later Cantacuzenus took Constantinople. Together with Anna, he held another council where the deposition of Calecas was confirmed. Acindynus was excommunicated. Both Calecas and Akyndinos were exiled (each died a few months after the sentence). A new *Tome* was issued in which the two were condemned as heretics and Palamas was declared orthodox. This time, the synodal sentence was confirmed by an imperial decree.[140]

Palamas' victory did not come as a surprise for those who opposed him; it was typical of Byzantine religious life to have the theological faction supported by the winning political party vindicated as 'orthodox.' Many bishops went along with the decision. They elected a new patriarch, Isidore, friend of Cantacuzenus and Palamas. The choice had been from among three famous Hesychast monks: Sava of Vatopedi, who refused worldly responsibilities; Gregory Palamas, who was too contentious to be able to pacify the Church; and Isidore, the former bishop of Monemvasia.[141] The new patriarch (1347-1350) took firm steps to ensure that the victory of his party extended to all ecclesiastical levels and throughout the empire. He ordained thirty-two bishops for key sees, all of them selected from among fellow Hesychasts, thus changing the

[138] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 79-80. Calecas had already been deposed (irregularly) by an episcopal synod held in Adrianople under the leadership of Patriarch Lazar of Jerusalem, who with the same occasion crowned John Cantacuzenus emperor; vid. Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2262 (May 21, 1346), p. 210.
[139] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV. 3, v.4, p. 27-28; Gregoras, *Historia* XV.9, v. 2, p. 782; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2265, 2266, 2268 (February 1347) p.213-215.
[140] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* III.98, v. 2, p. 602-604; IV.3, v. 3, p. 18-28; Gregoras, *Historia* XV.9, v. 2, p. 780-784; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2270 (February 1347) 216-218; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 86.
[141] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2273 (Spring 1347) 221-222; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 87.

makeup of the Church hierarchy. Gregory Palamas received the see of Thessalonica, an appointment which gave him the status required by canon law to act as a theologian. The patriarch also introduced in the confession of faith, which every bishop was to sign upon election, a paragraph against Barlaam and Acindynus, to ensure that no new hierarch would take up the doctrinal battles from where the two left off.[142]

But the fight against the Hesychast party was not over yet. In July 1347, a group of twenty-two bishops and metropolitans challenged the procedure of selecting new bishops as uncanonical, since all the thirty-two sees had actually been occupied when the new appointments were made. The disgruntled prelates gathered at the monastery of Saint Stephen and wrote an open letter which condemned in strong terms Palamas and Isidore. The patriarch Arsenius of Antioch was also among the discontents, refusing to sign the pro-Palamite statements of the two councils which took place in 1347, arguing that the monk had been excommunicated for disobedience and heterodoxy, and could not be now reinstated in the Church and declared orthodox without a theological debate.[143] According to Gregoras, opposition to Palamas' doctrinal innovations came from many quarters including Bulgaria, Serbia, Cyprus, Rhodes and Trebizond. Cyprus was indeed dominated by anti-Palamites until papal pressures on the island's churches made their prelates seek the help of Constantinople. There is however no evidence to corroborate Gregoras' assertion that that the Slavs in the Balkans or the Greeks of Rhodes and Trebizond opposed Palamas and his theology.[144] In August 1347, the regular synod led by Isidore answered the rebellious bishops with a new *Tomos*, which rejected the accusations brought against the Hesychast party, deposed two metropolitans openly supporting Calecas

[142] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.16, v. 3, p. 104; Gregoras, *Historia* XV.12, v. 2, p. 791-793; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, Nos. 2279 and 2280 (May-July 1347) p. 225-227. Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 87.
[143] Gregoras, *Historia* XV.10, v. 2, p. 785-787; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2281 (July 1347) 227-229; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 87-89.
[144] Gregoras, *Historia* XV.10, v. 2, p. 787.

(Neofitus of Philippi and Joseph of Ganos), and threatened with deposition three others: Matthew of Ephesus, Mitrophan of Patras, Chariton of Apros.[145]

By far the most vocal opponents of Hesychasm had been and remained laymen with solid education in philosophy and theology, who found their interpretation of orthodoxy endangered by Palamite mystical approach. These laymen had good connections in the capital, but none of them was able to marshal forces and resources in their favor with the same ease and efficiency as the Athonites. As a result, they incurred the rigors of ecclesiastical *akribeia* over their refusal to accept Palamas' doctrine of divine energies as orthodox. Its first adversaries, Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Acindynus, had been monks with reputation for excellent scholarship, but as outsiders to the circles of power that dominated the religious life in Constantinople, they had to overcome greater obstacles than Palamas in order to have their voice heard by the ecclesiastical and political elite. In the end, both lost and were excommunicated by pro-Hesychast councils, Barlaam himself choosing to leave Byzantium, Acindynus dying in exile. Nicephorus Gregoras, a lay scholar who became a monk late in life, was perhaps the most erudite among the enemies of Hesychasm and the best defender of Byzantine traditional thought. He was close to John VI Cantacuzenus and John V Palaiologus, but these imperial friendships proved of little consequence once he refused to back down from his incensed and incessant criticism of Palamas' theology. Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus, Palamas' friend and chief supporter, had him condemned as heretic at the council of 1351, excommunicated and imprisoned.[146] According to

[145] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2289 (August 1347) 233-236; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 87-89.
[146] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.23-24, v. 3, p. 166-183; Gregoras, *Historia* XVIII-XX, v.2, p. 869-996; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2295 (1347) p. 240; Nos. 2323, 2324, 2326, 2327, 2328 (1351) p. 264-273; No. 2438 (1361/1362) p. 365-366, no. 2515 (May 1366) p. 430-431; Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 92-97. On Gregoras, see Rodolphe Guilland, *Essai sur Nicéphore Grégoras. L'homme et l'œuvre* (Paris, 1926); Theresa Hart, "Nicephoros Gregoras: Historian of the Hesychast Controversy," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 2 (1951) 169-179.

John Kyparissiotes, who took up the anti-Palamite agenda after Gregoras, the Palamites dragged the historian's body through the streets of Constantinople upon his death.[147]

The last stage of the Hesychast controversy dealt with the Athonite monk Prochoros Cydones, who was also disinclined to accept Palamism. Prochorus was a minor dissenting voice on Mt. Athos, the inhabitants of whose monasteries either practiced or were favorably disposed toward Hesychasm. He wrote a treatise against what he identified as errors in Palamas' thought, for which he was condemned as heretic and excommunicated by the council of 1368.[148] John V did not intervene to save him, despite the pleas of Demetrius Cydones, Prochorus' brother and the emperor's close friend. John V was not in a strong position at the time, having just returned from his ill-fated journey to Hungary, where he had been unable to persuade the king or the Roman prelates present in the Hungarian capital of his desperate need for military assistance against the Turks. The emperor was hardly concerned with the orthodoxy of Palamism and the fate of those opposing it at a time when his empire was ready to be swallowed up by Ottomans, and the West seemed unwilling to intervene. Debating the nature of the distinction between divine energies and divine essence seemed superfluous. John Kyparissiotes, after the

[147] Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 233-234. The bibliography on John Kyparissiotes is rather sparse; see Manuel Candal, "Juan Ciparisiota y el problema trinitario palamítico," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 25 (1959) 127-164; Angelo Mercati, "Giovanni Ciparissiota alla corte di Gregorio XI," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929/30) 496-501. His theological texts are edited by Vasileios L. Dentakes, ed., Ἰωάννου τοῦ Κυπαρισσιώτου, τῶν Θεολογικῶν Ῥήσεων Στοιχειώδης Ἔκθεσις. Τὸ κείμενον (μετὰ τῆς λατινικῆς μεταφράσεως τοῦ Franciscus Turrianus) νῦν τὸ πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενον (Athens 1982), and Stavros Th. Maragoudaki, Ἰωάννου τοῦ Κυπαρισσιώτου Κατὰ Νείλου Καβάσιλα Λόγοι πέντε ἀντιρρητικοί, νῦν τὸ πρῶτον ἐκδιδόμενοι (Athens, 1985). See also his "Palamitarum transgressionum" in *Patrologia Graeca* 152, cols. 733 -736.

[148] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2541 (April 1368) 454-458; a modern edition of the tome issued by the synod of 1368 is in Antonio Rigo, "Il monte Athos e la controversia palamitica dal concilio del 1351 al Tomo sinodale del 1368: Giacomo Trikanas, Procoro Cidone e Filoteo Kokkinos," in idem, *Gregorio Palamas e oltre. Studi e documenti sulle controversie teologiche del XIV secolo bizantino* (Florence, 2004) 1-177. On Prochors Cydones, see *Giovanni Mercati, Notizie di Procoro e Demetrio Cidone, Manuele Caleca e Teodoro Meliteniota ed altri appunti per la storia della teologia e della letteratura bizantina del secolo XIV* (Vatican, 1931) 1-61; Norman Russell, "Prochoros Cydones and the Fourteenth-Century Understanding of Orthodoxy," in Andrew Louth and Augustine Casiday eds., *Byzantine Orthodoxies* (Durham, 2006) 75-91; Christos Triantafyllopoulos, "The Thomist Basis of Prochors Cydones' Anti-Palamite Treatise "De essentia et operatione Dei' and the Reaction of the Byzantine Church," in Andreas Speer and Philipp Steinkrüger eds., *Knotenpunkt Byzanz. Wissensformen und kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen* (Berlin, 2012) 411-431.

condemnation of his friend Prochoros, felt no longer safe in Constantinople and fled to Cyprus, whence he moved to Italy, where he joined the Church of Rome. Within two decades after the ascension to the throne of John Cantacuzenus, the enemies of Palamas were either suppressed or put to flight.[149]

Until Cantacuzenus' forced abdication in 1354, the Hesychast patriarchs that occupied the see of Constantinople had his full support to make Palamism official Church doctrine and root out any opposition to it. The emperor attended to ecclesiastical matters very closely, on one hand because he entertained a genuine interest in Hesychasm and had friends among its practitioners, on the other because the Serbian tsar Stephen Dušan was laying competing claims to the title of *basileus* and to the position of leader of the Christian *oikoumene*. The tsar had visited Mt. Athos, lavishly bestowed upon its monks gifts and privileges, and acquired from them the recognition of his imperial title.[150] Cantacuzenus could not afford a powerful enemy with more control over the influential Athonite monks than he himself had. During his relatively short reign, Cantacuzenus fostered a close and harmonious relationship with the Mt. Athos, and the men he chose as patriarchs were drawn from that group. A miniature in a codex containing pro-Palamite conciliar decisions and works of Cantacuzenus on Hesychasm, produced in the monastery of Hodegon in the 1370s, presents the emperor as he wanted to appear before the world, i.e. as defender of orthodoxy and ruler of the *oikoumene*. Although the miniature was conceived two decades after Cantacuzenus had exchanged the throne for the monastic garb, it still aimed at casting the traditional Byzantine image of imperial power: the emperor, fully dressed in imperial robes, crowned, and holding a cruciform scepter in his right hand, is the central and largest figure, surrounded by bishops, monks, and court dignitaries, as befitted the

[149] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 100-101.
[150] See George C. Soulis, "Tsar Stephen Dušan and Mt. Athos," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954) 125-139.

ruler of Christendom. A great portion of the painting is taken by the monks, who had come to play such an important role in the empire during and especially after the civil war. The four bishops around the emperor also wear the type of headgear indicating that they were monks prior to ordination.[151]

But while the miniature accurately reflected the changing balance of power within the Church in favor of the monastic element, it did award the emperor a place of power and prestige which he hardly enjoyed in the second half of the fourteenth century. After John V remained sole emperor in 1354, he faced (and left unsolved) some of the worst crises in Byzantine history: the Bulgarian and Serbian tsars replacing Byzantium as the regional power in the Balkans, the Italian creditors humiliating the *basileus* by keeping him quasi-arrested in Venice, and the unstoppable Ottoman invasion of Thrace and Macedonia. John V constantly courted the papacy for military aid in exchange for which he was ready to make himself subject to the Apostolic See. Rome was not where the Byzantine Church would have looked for answers, but the emperor was too hard-pressed by the geopolitical realities to search for better solutions. In the fall of 1367, John V personally entered full communion with the Church of Rome and made hollow promises that he would convince his people to do the same. Unlike Michael VIII, John V went in person to Rome, but even this did not help. He made his profession of faith before four cardinals on October 13, and then a week later, on October 21, he was received by Pope Urban V (1362-1370) in a public ceremony, in which he had to kiss the pope's foot, knee and cheek – as a sign of his total submission to the authority of Christ's Vicar. The pope, however, neither trusted him nor sent armies to rescue Byzantium from the Turks. In a letter to the Byzantine patriarch dispatched after the event, Urban V expressed his hope that the clergy, together with the laity, would abandon

[151] A discussion of the manuscript and this particular miniature is in Ivan Drpić, "Art, Hesychasm, and Visual Exegesis: Parisinus Graecus 1242 Revisited," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 62 (2008) 217-247. See also Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon*, 167-177.

their schism and join the emperor in his reunion with the Church of Rome. He implied that the Turkish assault on Byzantine lands was the result of obstinate persistence in schism, and that the West would not provide assistance until Byzantium converted to the fullness of truth (as upheld by Rome). Urban rejected the call for an ecumenical council put forth by Patriarch Philoteus Coccinus in May 1367, arguing (like his predecessors) that everything Rome taught and practiced rested on certain foundations; if the Byzantines still doubted it, they could receive proper instruction, but there was no reason for the Roman faith to become object of conciliar debate.[152]

The conversion of John V and the papal letter provoked no strong reactions among the Byzantines. The patriarch disliked the imperial initiative of personal submission to Rome, but did not encourage radical action against such a step by the Byzantine community. The emperor's act was personal in nature, and he never forced the Church in his homeland to comply with the papal request, despite the promises made in this regard to Rome. But Byzantium was now in the awkward position of being ruled by a heterodox *basileus*, who had made himself the subject of an equally heterodox authority. From a Byzantine perspective, the Church of Rome entertained a series of heretical beliefs and practices which actually deprived it of its self-proclaimed leadership over Christendom. Its deceitful character was substantiated by the fact that it did nothing to help its sister churches in the East. As the Turks advanced into the Balkans, Emperor John V was forced to bend his knee before the sultans, and in 1372 he declared Byzantium vassal of the Ottoman Empire. However, this made things even worse. Vassalage did not prevent further Ottoman aggression against Constantinople. Sultan Bayazid laid siege to the city in 1394

[152] A. L. Tautu ed., *Acta Urbani V (1362-1370),* n. 184; discussed with partial translation in Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 220. On the Byzantine initiative for an ecumenical council, see Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2526 (May 1367) p. 283-284; Oscar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (London 1972) 164-165. For a general background to John V's conversion and the Latin element in Byzantium in the fourteenth century, see Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 206-223; Hussey, *Orthodox Church*, 263-267; Nicol, *Last* Centuries, 270-271.

and lifted it only after nine years, in 1402, when the downpour of Timur-i-Lenk's Mongols into Asia Minor forced him to refocus his military strategy.[153] To make matters even worse and more bitter, as vassals to the Ottomans the *basileis* had to take part in the infidels' campaigns against Christian cities - as did for instance Manuel II Palaeologus, who participated in the 1390 Turkish attack upon Philadelphia, one of the few independent cities still left in Asia Minor, and in the 1392 attack on Sinope.[154] The swift and wretched manner in which the Byzantine emperor had lost his lands and his independence eroded whatever prestige he still had with some of his former subjects, now subject to the growing Turcocratia.

The oft-quoted letter of Patriarch Antony IV (1391-1397) to Basil, the grand duke of Russia, which reproved him for having prevented the metropolitan to commemorate the emperor during the liturgy, stands as proof that acceptance of the *basileus* as ruler and defender of the orthodox world was fading away even in places where there was no direct competition for regional political hegemony, as had been the case with Bulgaria and Serbia. The arguments adduced by the patriarch in favor of preserving the imperial ascendancy of Byzantium despite the fact that the empire was drastically reduced in size, military capability and political relevance were the traditional ones which emphasized the emperor's highest, quasi-episcopal authority over the Christian *oikoumene*. He oversaw the Church by appointing its high-ranking hierarchs and establishing its dioceses and provinces, and he protected all Christendom by fighting heresies, summoning ecumenical councils and ratifying their decisions. The fact that he ruled over a much-reduced territory did not lessen the importance of his office. The loss of lands to a non-Christian power was to be seen as a lesson to smaller rulers to not get too prideful, not as a sign of disfavor on the part of God. The *basileus* continued to hold in the Church a place of

[153] Nicol, *Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 313-317.
[154] John W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391-1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1969) 79-122.

honor and leadership unlike any other sovereign, and for his reason he could not be ignored or replaced. He was the only one receiving the ordination, anointing, rank, and prayers due to the sacred ruler of Christendom. There could be no Church without him.[155] There was nothing new in this patriarchal *apologia* for the emperor, and it likely failed to persuade its intended audience. The harsh realities of the day and the imperial policies destined but failing to overcome them contradicted the patriarch's statement. The emperor was vassal to the bitterest enemy of Byzantium, who was imposing demeaning peace terms while continuing to swallow up Byzantine territory. The only other alternative would have been to subject the empire, with all its institutions including the Church, to the pope – which certainly would not have automatically guaranteed the end of Turkish invasion. Besides, the opposition to such a political choice continued to be strong inside and outside the Byzantium.

The Byzantine ecclesiastical authorities were reluctant to accept union with Rome as the solution to the demise of the empire, but were equally disinclined to rethink their position in a shrinking Christian world in which the *basileus* no longer had a part to play. Identifying fresh diplomatic strategies would have required a genuine reassessment of (and detachment from) the one thousand years of Byzantine history in which secular authority had dominated and controlled the most critical decisions and operations of the Church. Given the interdependence between political and religious power structures in Byzantium, clergy and laity alike expected and relied

[155] Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, No. 2931 (1393) p. 210-212. Translation and discussion in John Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus*, 105-110. Michael Cherniavsky, "*Khan* or *Basileus*: An Aspect of Russian Medieval Political Theory," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (1959) 459-476, argues that the name of the Byzantine emperor was actually rarely commemorated by the Russian clergy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Russia was controlled by the Mongol horde and most often than not, if there was a name to be mentioned in the liturgical prayers, it was that of the khan, from whom they expected immunity grants. The *basileus* was too far away to be relevant to their immediate needs. Cherniavsky suggests that the Russians had only a vague understanding of the place and role of the emperor in the world hierarchy of rulers (as explained by Byzantine political theory), so they did not feel constrained to remember his name during liturgical services. Patriarch Antony was in fact trying to reinstate a practice used in all places that were under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. However, the Russian top hierarchs maintained close ties with Byzantium, exchanging letters with the patriarchs and visiting the capital; besides, their metropolitans were usually Greek by origin, so they were familiar with the Byzantine imperial idea and its importance in the overall functioning of the *basileia.*

on imperial interventions in Church affairs, even when these interventions became increasingly rare and ineffectual. But outside of Byzantium, reliance on the emperor could prove detrimental to the interests of the Church, as the *basileus*' primary goal was the political survival of the Byzantine state, not defense of orthodoxy. The emperor was no longer the unifying force of Eastern Christendom, as proven by John V in the late 1360s, and by his grandson John VIII in the late 1430s, both of whom acknowledged the pope as their spiritual master and indisputable head of the Church. While reactions to this imperial surrender to the papacy varied in Byzantium from fiery resistance to pragmatic acceptance, the rest of the *oikoumene* refused to submit to the Church of Rome, and implicitly refused to recognize any leading role of the emperor, who had subordinated himself of the pope.

Sometimes a patriarch would step in and assume the role of universal ruler of the faithful, but these instances were infrequent and the leadership assumed was rather simply stated than concretely acted upon. Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus, in a letter sent in 1370 to the Russian dukes in which he urged them to accept the administrative decision of Constantinople regarding the see of Kiev, presented his position in the Church in terms reminiscent of the popes. He was the God's appointee as leader of all Christians, the guardian of all souls, the teacher and father to all, the one shepherd on whom all others depended.[156] Philotheus could afford to claim that he was the highest authority in the Church, since by then Emperor John V had already become a papal subject, and was consequently unable to carry out the traditional Byzantine imperial prerogatives in the religious realm. But if the patriarch could impress dukes in faraway Russia with such claims, closer to home the rulers and nobles of Bulgaria and Serbia were still not willing to recognize his jurisdiction. While aware of the need for strong and widespread

[156] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2580 (June 1370) p. 491. Discussed in John Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY, 1981) 112-118, with English translation on p. 283-284.

leadership, Philotheus was restricted in the exercise of power by the inherent dependence of the Church upon the emperor, who happened at the time to be particularly inadequate for the task of steering Byzantium to safety through the agitated waters of the late fourteenth century.

In the 1390s, the regional situation improved from the patriarch's perspective. The disintegration of the Bulgarian and Serbian empires prompted the rulers of the smaller principalities emerging from the disintegration of those states to seek Byzantine assistance in the face of relentless Ottoman attacks. And one main prerequisite for any kind of support was ecclesiastical submission to the patriarchate of Constantinople. Patriarch Antony, in the letter to the duke of Moscow, could thus confidently introduce himself as sole leader of the Church. He called himself "universal doctor" in charge of guiding and protecting the souls of the faithful, arguing that he was holding the place of Christ on earth, and as such deserved the respect and obedience due to the King of the Universe. But then he undermined his own assertions by making the case for the emperor's place at the head of Christendom. Despite the great number of churches and places which were under his direction, the patriarch still could not claim to be their only leader, as he continued to rely on the emperor for approval of policies and administrative issues.

Even an emperor as weak as John V, who had deferred to the patriarch's decision on many occasions, allowing his friends Nicephorus Gregoras and Prochorus Cydones to incur the harshest ecclesiastical punishments for criticizing Palamas' theology, took care to have his rights as overseer of the Church acknowledged and protected. Sometimes between 1380 and 1382, he summoned the patriarch and the permanent synod to a meeting during which imperial privileges in nine areas dealing with ecclesiastical appointments and discipline were specified and confirmed. As always, the emperor was to ratify the election of high-ranking prelates and could

refuse a candidate to a metropolitan see if the person did not please him for any reasons; he also had a right to intervene in episcopal transfers, promotions of rank and granting of benefices. He established the boundaries of dioceses and ensured that they were respected. Some provisions of the agreement reached between emperor and Church were prompted by the specific context in which they were drawn. John V had just recovered the throne from his son Andronicus IV (1376-1379) and wished to attain better control over his officials, whether lay or religious, in order to prevent another coup d'état against himself. Thus, new bishops and metropolitans had to swear loyalty to him and to the empire upon election. Imperial servants, civil dignitaries, and members of the senate could not be excommunicated by the patriarch. Rather, they were to be exhorted to amend their ways, and if not complying, they had to be reported to the emperor, who was to deal with the situation as he saw fit, in his capacity of guardian of discipline in the Church.[157] While there was little novelty in the stipulations themselves, the fact that John V had seen the need to have his traditional rights put down in writing points to the growing imperial unease vis-à-vis the Hesychast patriarchs and metropolitans of the time, who challenged and disregarded his will if deemed unorthodox. But in matters of administration and discipline, patriarchal authority remained circumscribed by that of the emperor.

Monarchs outside Byzantium also attempted to set limits to the patriarch's authority; cases of ecclesiastical insubordination appeared wherever local rulers had enough control over their prelates to overlook the decisions of Constantinople. Peter Musat of Moldova installed a metropolitan and a bishop for the main sees in his principality, ignoring both the canonical procedures for the appointments and the patriarch's preferences for those sees. The patriarchal envoy sent in 1391 to deal with the issue was put to flight. The Greek prelate ordained in 1392

[157] Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2699 (1380/82) p. 19-21; Greek text in Vitalien Laurent, "Les droits de l'empereur en matière ecclésiastique. L'accord de 1380/82," *Revue des études byzantines* 13 (1955) 5-20, at 14-16. See also Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 307.

by the patriarch and sent to Moldova to replace the locally chosen metropolitan shared a similar fate. Patriarch Antony placed Moldova's ruler, clergy and people under anathema, but even so no Moldavian seemed willing to comply with the demands of Constantinople. Emissaries sent by the patriarch and the emperor could not induce the local authorities to accept the patriarchal appointee to the local see. The conflict was brought to an end in 1401 by Patriarch Matthew, who agreed to recognize the appointment of the local metropolitan as valid.[158] Constantinople was under siege, surrounded by the armies of Bayazid, and prolonging an ecclesiastical conflict at a time when Byzantium desperately needed friends and military assistance was deemed unwise.

The relationship between emperor, patriarch, and the churches in the larger Christian *oikoumene* during the second half of the fourteenth century was complicated by the overall weakness of the Byzantine *basileia* and the concomitant emergence of new centers of power in the Balkans, which competed with Constantinople for regional preeminence. The Byzantine civil war and the dispute over Hesychasm had changed the dynamics between emperors and patriarchs, as the latter took advantage of the crisis of governance to expand their control over the Church and society, limiting the opportunities for imperial intervention. The Hesychast patriarchs who dominated the Constantinopolitan scene after 1347 were too well-entrenched in their see to be disposed of easily. They had constructed a reliable network of like-minded bishops throughout the empire and beyond it, in all Greek-speaking areas, so that an emperor like John V, who was not friendly towards Hesychasm, chose to stay very much aloof of all theological debates that took place during his rule. He delegated his father-in-law, the former

[158] Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2900 (1391/92) p. 185-186; no. 2916 (1393) p. 196; nos. 2854, 2955, 2956 (1394) p. 228-230; nos. 2994, 2995, 2996 (1395) p. 260-264; nos. 3226, 3227 (1401) p. 447-450. Vitalien Laurent, "Aux origines de l'Église moldave : Le métropolite Jérémie et l'évêque Joseph," *Revue des études byzantines* 5 (1947)158-170; Papadakis, *Christian East and Rise of Papacy*, 262-266.

emperor John VI Cantacuzenus who had become the monk Joasaph, to deal with any issue that had a bearing on Church dogma or practice.

By means of synodal decisions, removals from office and excommunications, public debates, treatises, and hagiographical writings, the Hesychast patriarchs imposed their theological views as orthodox and suppressed most opposition. Whatever dissenting voices still remained, they belonged to an ever shrinking minority and were silenced one by one. But the ultimate success of Hesychasm was due not only to the patriarchs' resolute pursuit of its enemies; it also owed its victory to the capacity it had to provide a spiritual ideal to which people could readily identify and follow on their own. Once endorsed as orthodox, Hesychasm was viewed by the Church hierarchs as nothing else than the authoritative restating of the age-old Byzantine theological traditions. It offered a sense of continuity with the past and pride in one's *partaking in* the ancient set of truths that formed the core of Byzantine identity. In a world shattered by political and religious rivalries, hoping to recover from the disasters inflicted by the civil wars but witnessing with distress the indecision and misjudgment that characterized most of the policies carried out by the emperor who had finally won the throne, the Byzantines could now find unity and security under the Hesychast banner carried by the Church. Those rejecting Hesychasm as erroneous were no longer seen as mere adversaries of a theological point of view, but enemies of what Byzantium stood for: the earthly reproduction of the heavenly order. Hesychasm was the means through which the devout Byzantine could best replicate heaven while still on earth, and the advanced Hesychast practitioner could even participate in the resplendent life of the celestial realm.

From this perspective, Hesychasm may be understood as a political tool in the hands of the patriarchs, whose main goal was to offer a unifying leadership to a society hitherto divided

by war and polemic. Taken out of its monastic context and applied to the wider Byzantine world, Hesychast theology was meant to connect the gloomy present to the dignified past of the Church Fathers and to the anticipated splendors of the afterlife, and thus reinforce the bond between people who shared the same history, traditions, and hopes, making them aware of their unique, exalted position in the world - a world which was otherwise crumbling all around them. Moreover, Hesychasm furnished the Byzantines with models of holy living. The patriarchs turned previously vilified Hesychast monks into heroes of faith, and Gregory Palamas, their theologian, into a saint. The present with its many instances of devout life, then, could not be as terrible as it seemed; furthermore, it could serve as an incentive to all those willing to follow in the footsteps of Hesychast holy men. Hesychasm therefore provided a sanctuary to which people could withdraw (spiritually, at least) in times of troubles, and where they could learn to trust the wisdom of God rather than the folly of secular leaders. Making the best of most unfriendly circumstances, the patriarchs succeeded in presenting Hesychasm - for all its novel and daring theology - as an intrinsic part of Byzantine life and identity.

The patriarchs most likely tried to go even further than that. To reach the Orthodox world which lay beyond the boundaries of Byzantium, they needed strategies that could overcome the emergent national sentiment which linked religious identity to language and territory, and disallowed for any continuity between the local religious traditions and Byzantine Christianity. Hesychasm had the potential to act as a unifying trans-regional force due to its openness to all those interested in spiritual purification and final union with God, regardless of socio-economic status, level of education, regional identity or language spoken. The ascetic movement drew adherents from all over the Orthodox world (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia, Wallachian, and Russia), who trained into the Hesychast discipline on Mt. Athos, Paroria, or other monastic

centers. Many of these monks built and maintained strong bonds with the Hesychast patriarchs of Constantinople. They became in their homelands advocates of the patriarchal vision of a supra-national unity of all orthodox people. Before long, a Hesychast brotherhood steeped in the spiritual search for inner peace and the vision of divine light, and driven by the common goal of preserving orthodoxy, linked the capital of Byzantium to various parts of the Balkans.

But however active this Hesychast network might have been, the monks' actual contribution to the restoration of Byzantine ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Balkan churches remained marginal, as the factors that permitted the patriarchate of Constantinople to use Hesychasm as a rallying cry in Byzantium were not available in either Bulgaria or Serbia. After successive political and religious crises, Hesychasm became the guarantor of unity and harmony among the Byzantines, since accepting its tenets became similar to acknowledging one's attachment to orthodoxy, and orthodoxy was the primary marker of one's identity in Byzantium. Those who opposed Hesychast theology were portrayed as betraying both the Church and their Byzantine identity. In Bulgaria and Serbia, the opposition was not between those who accepted and those who rejected Hesychast theology, but between the pro-national and pro-Byzantine parties. The Byzantines were the enemies par excellence, so one's identity was not forged by a response to Hesychasm, but by loyalty to the policies of enhancing Bulgarian or Serbian preeminence on the regional scene at the expense of Byzantine universalism. Even if the Hesychast monks enjoyed prestige on the local scene, they did not gain much influence at court in Bulgaria and Serbia due to their (real or supposed) association with the patriarchate of Constantinople. They became relevant to local politics only when inside and outside pressures, mainly the deterioration of internal stability and the Ottoman offensive in the Balkan peninsula, made it imperative for the much weakened Bulgarian and Serbian principalities to seek alliances

with Byzantium against a common enemy. At the moment of crisis, Bulgaria and Serbia sent Hesychast monks as emissaries to the pro-Hesychast patriarchate of Constantinople, as a proof of their good will and sincere desire to discuss the return of local churches into the Byzantine fold. The Bulgarian and Serbian monks of Hesychast orientation ensured that communication between Constantinople and the many Balkan peripheries stayed open during the struggle for political and ecclesiastical supremacy of the mid-to-late 1300s, and played a considerable role in the negotiations for reunion. Reunion itself, however, did not come about as a result of deliberate and systematic patriarchal strategies centered on Hesychast beliefs and the close cooperation with local Hesychast monks, but was an immediate consequence of political and military storms raging in the Balkans, viz., the rise and spread of the Turcocratia, and the ineffectual ttempts of the West to stem the growth of Ottoman power.

CHAPTER 6. BALKAN EMPIRES: POLITICAL AMBITIONS, ECCLESIASTICAL DIPLOMACY AND WAR IN THE AGE OF OTTOMAN CONQUEST

6.1. Introduction: The Late Medieval Contest for Balkan Hegemony

In the summer of 1352, the Bulgarian patriarch Theodosius II committed an ecclesiastical outrage: he consecrated the Russian monk Theodoret as metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia. The outrageous character of the act was, of course, quickly ascertained by the Byzantines. The Bulgarians themselves perceived it as another foundational step in the direction of an independent Bulgarian church. The consecration was however problematic for at least two reasons. First, the see of Kiev was not vacant, but was currently occupied by the Greek clergyman Theognostos ever since his election in 1328. Theognostos was now old and ailing, but canon law did not allow for the ordination of a new metropolitan while the incumbent was still alive and reasonably active in his eparchy. Second, the Kievan metropolitanate was under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople; consecration to the see of Kiev by an ecclesiastical authority belonging to a different jurisdiction was invalid. Canon law specifics did not stop Theodoret and his political patron, Prince Olgerd of Lithuania, from seeking nomination and consecration even before the earthly demise of metropolitan Theognostos. Prince Olgerd needed someone in the see of Kiev who would be willing to reverse the pro-Moscovite policies of Theognostos. The monk Theodoret seemed to satisfy that requirement, so Olgerd sent him initially to Constantinople, to affirm and legalize his selection for the soon-to-be vacant see of Kiev. But Patriarch Callistus of Constantinople advised patience: canons had to be obeyed and ordination postponed for when the time was right. Theodoret had little patience or time to spare;

thus he crossed the border into the neighboring Bulgaria and had the patriarch of Trnovo consecrate him.[1]

For the Byzantines, the act had not only religious but also political implications. It was part of the greater struggle for domination and control that characterized the Balkans in the first half of the fourteenth century. Bulgaria and Serbia vied for a position of preeminence in region which traditionally had been part of the Byzantine Empire, or at least had lain within its sphere of influence. The rivalry between the Balkan states was further complicated by the relentless determination of the Church of Rome to carve out a hegemonic space for itself in the peninsula. It was an extension of the older contest between the papacy and Byzantium over the Balkan churches, a contest which originated in imperial decisions made in late antiquity and heavily disputed by the popes.

In 395, the prefecture of Illyricum, of which the Balkans were a part, came under the civil administration of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, but its bishoprics remained within the jurisdiction of the Church of Rome. The foundation of Justiniana Prima (in southern Serbia) by Emperor Justinian in 535 as an autocephalous archiepiscopal see independent of Rome, in an attempt to reduce the scope of papal interference in Balkan affairs, was a short lived experiment, as the city never gained enough religious, political, and economic significance to be able to compete with long-standing ecclesiastical centers such as Naissus (Niš), Remesiana, Serdica (Sofia) and Thessalonica.

The situation changed in the late sixth century, when massive waves of Avar and especially Slavic invaders took over most of the peninsula. They smothered the Romanized

[1] The case of Theodoret and its implications for the relationship between the patriarchate of Constantinople, Lithuania and Russia are examined by John Meyendorff in "Alexis and Roman: A Study in Byzantine-Russian Relations (1352-1354)," *Byzantinoslavica* 28 (1967) 278-288, and idem, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY, 1989) 161-172, 181-199.

society south of the lower Danube, while at the same time cutting off the imperial and papal access to the area. The leading cities of the Roman period were reduced to heaps of rubble, and urban life with all its cultural benefits gave way to farming and grazing. Pagan beliefs replaced Christianity wherever the invaders became predominant. Only the coastal towns and the islands escaped the major Slavic onslaught, although they too were subjected to raids and sieges. Central and southern Greece were overrun by the invaders, but not fully subdued as the north had been. These areas remained at least nominally under the authority of the Byzantine Empire, and ecclesiastically within the papal jurisdiction.[2] But in 732, the Iconoclast emperor Leo III removed all Balkan churches from papal authority and added them to the growing archdiocese of Constantinople. Starting with the eighth century, politics and theology divided the two halves of Christendom to such an extent that emperors and popes found it impossible to cooperate with one another in order to maintain, and where necessary to reassert, their control over the Balkans.

In the 860s, the Apostolic See was offered the unexpected chance to reinstate its authority in the Balkan Peninsula, when Khan Boris, the ruler of the newly formed Bulgarian state, eager to escape the overarching hegemony of Byzantium, petitioned the Church of Rome for an autonomous archbishopric in exchange for his people's acceptance of the Western rite. Pope Nicholas I (858-867) was delighted at the idea of having a large part of the Balkans back under Rome's control, but chose to move cautiously in that direction. He sent his legates to ensure the proper Christianization of the Bulgarians, and promised to found at first a bishopric, to be turned into an archbishopric later on, once more bishops would be needed to serve the faithful. Autocephaly, though, was not a matter open to discussion: the Bulgarian diocese was to be established and remain fully under Roman jurisdiction. Dissatisfied with the papal offer, the

[2] Detailed accounts of the Slavic invasions and their impact on the Balkans are in Florin Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250* (Cambridge, 2006) 58-147; Francis Dvornik, *The Slavs: Their Early History and Civilization* (Boston, 1956) 29-45; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 25-41.

Bulgarian khan switched sides again, pressing the Byzantine authorities for ecclesiastical autonomy. The emperor and the patriarch agreed to the khan's request, for fear that the papacy might eventually relent and thus gain a foothold in the Balkans.[3] It was within the tradition of Byzantine foreign politics, inherited from the Romans, to seek peaceful ways to subdue and assimilate the peoples living on its borders, or those threatening to cross the borders into the empire. A Bulgarian church with minimum supervision from Constantinople was not the ideal situation, but it was preferable to the extension of papal influence into the area. Besides, the Byzantines were ready to send out missionaries to assist the Bulgarians in building a Christian kingdom, missionaries who would then shape Bulgarian religious life within the frame proposed and promoted by Constantinople.

In its turn, the Apostolic See, by refusing any degree of self-government to its potential Bulgarian subjects, missed the opportunity to reassert itself in the Balkans. It was a lesson that Rome would never learn, doomed to be repeated time and again during the medieval era. As 'medieval papalism' grew ever more assertive in the eleventh century, papal primacy as an ecclesiological dogma came to be equated with papal supremacy as a political concept. The popes became increasingly inflexible when their authority as spiritual shepherds or secular overlords was at stake, ignoring the long-term benefits they could have reaped by allowing certain autonomy in areas where the Byzantine governing and cultural tradition had hitherto prevailed.

While the Balkan core remained outside papal control, the Church of Rome made good inroads down the Dalmatian coast. Given its strategic location, the region made the object of

[3] The political and ecclesiastical issues surrounding the conversion of Bulgaria to Christianity are discussed in depth by Liliana Simeonova, *Diplomacy of the Letter and the Cross: Photios, Bulgaria, and the Papacy, 860s–880s* (Amsterdam, 1998); see also John V. A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans* (Ann Arbor, 1983) 113-126 and Matthew Spinka, *A History of Christianity in the Balkans* (Hamden, CT, 1968) 29-50.

intense fighting throughout the Middle Ages. Towns and cities frequently changed hands, as various major and minor power-players (Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire, along with Bosnia, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and Venice) vied for control over the area. For most of their early history, the Slavic settlements south of the Sava River had been under Byzantine rule, although the emperor often delegated his authority to local magnates. Ecclesiastically, two main bishoprics within the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople, Spalatum (Split) in the north and Dyrrachium (Durrazo) in the south, controlled the Adriatic seashore. The churches under their administration offered religious services in Greek, but starting with the ninth century the Slavonic liturgy, an important tool for the Christianization and Byzantinization of the Slavic tribes, was generously used as well.[4]

The Latin liturgy also made its appearance on the Dalmatian shore in the 800s, thanks to Vladislav (821-835), a Croatian prince who allowed the Church of Rome to establish a bishopric at Nin, his residence. The bishopric was to oversee the churches in the entire Croatia, and was to be subordinated directly to the pope, to preclude any attempts by the Byzantine Spalatum, also located in Croatian territory but in the south, to bring its former subjects back under its direction.[5] Prince Vladislav was pleased with this arrangement, hoping that it would shield his territory from further Byzantine and Carolingian interference. The papacy was likewise pleased, since it had obtained a bridgehead in the area which it very much coveted but could not retake without local cooperation.

[4] For the early history of the Dalmatic coast, see Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans,* 248-260; Ivo Goldstein, "Between Byzantium, the Adriatic and Central Europe," in Ivan Supičić, *Croatia in the Early Middle Ages. A Cultural Survey* (London and Zagreb, 1999) 169-178; and Franjo Šanjek, "Church and Christianity," in Supičić, *Croatia in the Early Middle Ages,* 217-236, here at 217-220.
[5] Dvornik, *The Slavs*, 77-78; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 20; A. P. Vlasto, *Entry of the Slavs into Christendom* (Cambridge, 2009) 191-195.

The Church of Rome scored an even greater victory in 925, when Tomislav, the Byzantine governor of the theme of Dalmatia, made the step toward independence and had himself crowned as the first king of Croatia, probably with papal support. He turned the Byzantine bishopric of Spalatum over to the papacy, which elevated it to the rank of archbishopric and placed all Croatian prelates, including the bishop of Nin, under its control. Gregory, the bishop of Nin, protested at Rome for having his see downgraded to a suffragan position, but to no avail. The Apostolic See had a clear interest in transforming the Byzantine Spalatum into a pro-Rome ecclesiastical center, thus turning it into an instrument of papal control in an area that was finally opening itself to the West.[6]

Two councils held at Spalatum, in 925 and 928 respectively, confirmed the papal decisions and provided guidelines for the Croatian hierarchs as members of the Church of Rome. The canons issued with this occasion discouraged the use of the Slavonic liturgy and the Cyrillic alphabet, and required priests and bishops to know Latin in order to be ordained.[7] Another council at Spalatum in 1060 reaffirmed the Latins' antagonism toward the Slavonic liturgy, and banned other practices coming from Byzantium, such as growing beards and long hair by clerics and monastics, or allowing the lower clergy to marry. The Byzantine missionary Methodius, who together with his brother Constantine-Cyril had translated the scriptures, as well as liturgical and other Christian literature into Slavonic, was branded as heretic, which made the alphabet he devised equally reprehensible.[8]

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[6] Dvornik, *Early Slavs*, 134f ; Fine, *Early Medieva Balkans*, 266-273. The bishopric of Nin was dissolved in 928, its territory being divided among other Croatian sees. Nin was reestablished as a bishopric under Spalatum in 1075. See Francis Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions among the Slavs* (New Brunswick, 1970) 237-239; Vlasto, *Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, 201.

[7] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions*, 238-239; Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 251; Vlasto, *Entry of the Slavs into Christendom*, 197-200.

[8] Traditionally Cyril/Constantine was credited with the invention of the first alphabet for the Slavic language, but the archdeacon Thomas of Spalatum (Split) in his *Historia Salonitanorum atque Spalatinorum pontificum* cited the prelates gathered at the council in 928 as attributing to the 'heretic' Methodius the 'gothic' letters, apparently

The papal reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries further increased the pressure upon the Croatians to conform to the expectations of the Apostolic See in all matters pertaining to religious life, including worship, language, and ritual.[9] Western monasticism also contributed to the Latinization of Croatia; by the 1100s, there were about forty Benedictine monasteries along the coast and inland.[10] The Slavonic liturgy, however, did not disappear completely. There were pockets in the Croatian interior and on the islands along the Dalmatic coast where it was still celebrated. In 1247, its sympathizers succeeded in getting Innocent IV's approval to use the Slavonic liturgy in the places where it had been long-observed. The decision rested on Canon Nine of the Fourth Lateran Council, which allowed different rites to coexist if there was a historical tradition in this regard. It was also based on the Croatians' rewriting of the history of the Slavonic liturgy, which was now attributed to Saint Jerome, a native of Dalmatia highly revered in the Church of Rome, rather than to its rightful compilers, the Greek brothers Cyril and Methodius, reviled by the Latins.[11] But despite these efforts to preserve the Slavonic rite, the late medieval Croatian church was widely Latinized.

The Croatian political and ecclesiastical realignment of the tenth century inspired neighboring Slavic populations to pursue similar actions to remove themselves from the Byzantine political and religious hegemony. In mid-eleventh century, the Serbian military nobility in the coastal area south of Croatia sought to gain political independence from Constantinople. In 1042, Vojislav of Diocleia (late medieval Zeta/modern Montenegro)

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confusing (or perhaps likening) him with the fourth-century Arian Ulfila, who had created the alphabet for the Goths: *Dicebant enim, Goticas litteras a quodam Methodio heretico fuisse repertas, qui multa contra catholice fidei normam in eadem Sclavonica lingua mentiendo conscripsit. Quam ob rem divino iudicio repentina dicitur morte fuisse dampnatus.* Latin text with English translation in Archdeacon Thomas of Split, *History of the Bishops of Salona and Split*, ed. and trans. by Damir Karbić, Mirjana Matijević Sokol and James Ross Sweeney (Budapest, 2006) 78-79.

[9] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions*, 239-243.

[10] William M. Johnston, *Encyclopedia of Monasticism*, 2 vols. (Chicago, 2000) 1.341-342.

[11] Dvornik, *Byzantine Missions*, 243-244.

succeeded in freeing his principality from Byzantine control, and then expanded his territory into Travunia (Trebinje) and Zachlumia (Zachlumje). Michael, his son and successor, continued to fight the Byzantines, from whom he seized most of Rascia (Serbia). He began calling himself king, and courted the papacy for recognition. As religious subject and political vassal of the pope, Michael could hope to receive protection from Norman attacks. In 1077, Rome agreed to give him the royal crown, and in 1089 to raise the bishopric of Antibari (Bar), the main coastal city in southern Diocleia, to the rank of archbishopric.[12] The city became a center for the spread of Latin Christianity and Latin culture, and entered in direct competition with its neighbor to the south, the Byzantine Dyrrachium.

While successful in bringing under its wings the Byzantine bishoprics along the coast (Kotor, Diocleia, Skadar, and Ulcinj), Antibari failed to exercise any authority over the episcopal sees in Rascia (inland Serbia), which belonged to the archbishopric of Ohrid. A century earlier, when Tsar Symeon of Bulgaria (893-927) had been at the height of his power, he had placed the churches in Rascia, then part of his territory, under the jurisdiction of his autonomous patriarchate centered on Ohrid.[13] The Byzantine emperor Basil II (975-1025), who conquered Bulgaria in 1018, brought Ohrid and its suffragans back into the Byzantine ecclesiastical orbit. The Slavic churches in the area came under heavy Byzantine influence, and they stayed loyal to Constantinople throughout the disturbances of the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Pecheneg invasion, Norman attacks, crusaders' devastating marches through the Balkans).[14]

In the early 1200s, as Byzantium's ability to control the Balkan Peninsula politically and militarily dwindled, Serbians and Bulgarians sought once again to extricate themselves from their ecclesiastical commitment to Constantinople, and turned to Rome for support. This renewed

[12] Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 211-217.
[13] Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 132-140, 148-157; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 50-56.
[14] Fine, *Early Medieval Balkans*, 197-201, 216-217.

the hopes of the Apostolic See for an eventual recovery of its long-lost dioceses in central and eastern Balkans. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) carried out a sustained diplomatic activity in Bulgaria, where Tsar Kaloyan (1197-1207) was hoping to acquire recognition as emperor, and an autonomous archbishopric.[15] What the tsar received from the pope, however, was just the royal crown for himself and the *pallium* for the bishop of Trnovo. After further negotiations, the bishop, even if not raised in rank to the archiepiscopal position, was conferred the title of "primate of Bulgaria," which meant an implicit acceptance of its autocephaly.[16] The friendship between Rome and Bulgaria did not outlast the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders in 1204. Kaloyan was well-equipped to fight in order to get the imperial title that he so much desired, and launched a sustained campaign against the Latins, infuriating the pope and losing his goodwill and support.[17] After the death of Kaloyan, Bulgaria's position vis-à-vis the Latins of Constantinople, the Greeks of Nicaea and the Hungarians to the north weakened considerably. In 1235, Tsar John Asen II (1218-1241) sought and obtained a matrimonial alliance with John III Vatatzes of Nicaea, marrying his daughter to Theodore II Lascaris, the heir to the Byzantine throne; with the same occasion, the archbishopric of Trnovo was granted patriarchal rank and extensive autonomy.[18]

Serbian political interests followed a similar diplomatic pattern. In the early decades of the thirteenth century, Stephen Nemanjič (1196-1228) tried to persuade the papacy of his serious intentions of bringing himself and his realm into full submission to the Church of Rome. He

[15] The correspondence between Rome and Trnovo is published in *Gesta Innocentii III* c. LXV-LXXXI, Latin text in David Gress-Wright, "The *Gesta Innocentii III*: Text, Introduction and Commentary," PhD Diss., Bryn Mawr College (1981); English trans. by James M. Powell, *The Deeds of Innocent III* (Washington DC, 2004) 95-129.
[16] John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth century to the Ottoman Conquest* (Ann Arbor, 1987) 54-56; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 102-104.
[17] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 80-87; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 104-107.
[18] Vitalien Laurent, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. IV. (Paris, 1971) [hereafter Laurent, *Regestes* IV] no. 1278 (end of 1234), p. 85-86; no. 1282 (spring 1235), p. 88-89; no. 1285 (between 1235 and 1240), p. 93. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 129-133; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 110-112.

became subject of the papacy, and in 1217 received the royal crown from Pope Honorius III (1217-1227). The Serbian church, however, was reluctant to follow suit. Stephen's own brother, the monk Sava, negotiated with the Greek emperor and the patriarch in Nicaea a better deal. In exchange for the Serbians' rejection of Rome, the Serbian ruler was to be recognized as king, and the bishopric of Peč was to become an archbishopric and enjoy autonomy. As in the past, a pro-Byzantine neighbor in the Balkans was to be preferred to a hostile, pro-Rome one, so the Nicene authorities gave in to the Serbians requests.[19]

The recovery of Constantinople in 1261 renewed the Byzantines' hopes for the full restoration of their sphere of influence in the Balkans. Changed circumstances in the area came to their assistance: Mongol raids, Hungarian incursions south of the Danube, and internal struggle for power led to the breakup of Bulgaria into many small and inconsequential principalities. Serbia also had to deal with the Golden Horde and Hungary, but overall it was less affected by their attacks than Bulgaria, being able to maintain a greater degree of territorial unity and stability.[20] Despite the favorable context, Byzantium was unable to recreate its Balkan empire. In the early 1300s, so many internal crises beset Constantinople, that Andronicus II and Andronicus III had let the Balkans completely slip away from their grasp. Bulgarian and Serbian rulers no longer bowed before the *basileus*. Instead, they called themselves "emperors" (a title to which Byzantium had hitherto claimed sole privilege), turned their archbishops into patriarchs (an office which signaled ecclesiastical self-rule and disallowed Constantinople to claim any right of intervention), and governed their expanding territories with all the trappings of imperial

[19] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1220 (before May 1220), p. 31-32. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 116-119; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 86-88.
[20] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 170-184; 195-204; 217-230.

power.[21] The Byzantines witnessed these changes helplessly. Their military might was a thing of the past. The civil wars that had disturbed their empire between 1321 and 1354 eroded all its resources and prestige.[22]

It was only in the late fourteenth century that Byzantium succeeded in reasserting some of its previous authority over the Balkans in the ecclesiastical realm. The patriarchate of Constantinople took advantage of a series of new developments that radically altered the geography of power in Southeastern Europe. The Ottomans invaded and subdued most of Thrace in the 1350s, before long becoming a threat to the entire Balkan peninsula. The Serbian ruler Stephen Dušan died in 1355 and his large realm disintegrated into small principalities engaged in frequent warfare with one another. Bulgaria's impact on regional politics faded away after the mid-century dynastic crisis, while its rival north of the Danube, Hungary, became an active and decisive factor on the Balkan scene. And last but not least, the papacy initiated a highly assertive policy of expanding Catholicism eastward, into the heart of the Balkans.[23] Besieged from many sides, with their power crumbling and hardly able to exert it save on a local level, the Balkan rulers now looked back to Constantinople for guidance and protection. But the emperor in Constantinople was himself no longer able to exert power beyond the drastically reduced borders

[21] A comprehensive introduction to the political situation in the fourteenth-century Balkans is in Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 286-406. For the Byzantine understanding of imperial authority and the attending theocentric model of governance, see Norman H. Baynes, "The Byzantine State ," *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London, 1955) 47-50; George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and the Hierarchical World Order," *Slavonic and East European Review* 35 (1956/1957) 1-14; Steven Runciman, *The Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge, 1977) 1-50.

[22] The Byzantine civil wars of the 1300s with their socio-political ramifications and geostrategic consequences lack a thorough study in the English language. A good overview is in Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453* (Cambridge, 1993) 151-166, 185-250; and idem, *The Reluctant Emperor. A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295-1383* (Cambridge, 1996) 45-83. Mark C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia, 1997), discusses the military aspects of the civil war (p. 85-102). Eva de Vries-Van der Velden, *L'élite byzantine devant l'avance turque à l'époque de la guerre civile de 1341 à 1354* (Amsterdam, 1989), addresses the war from the perspective of Byzantine aristocracy.

[23] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 345-406. On the papal attempts to persuade Balkan rulers to join the Church of Rome see Oscar Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (London, 1972) 22-25; V. Gjuzelev, "La chiesa catolica di Roma e Bulgaria," *Mittelalterliches Bulgarien* (Istanbul, 2001) 229-241; Ivan Dujčev, "Il francescanesimo in Bulgaria nei secoli XIII e XIV," *Medioevo Bizantino-slavo* III (Roma, 1971) 395-424.

of his empire. His patriarchs, however, were better prepared to meet the challenge, since reaching their goal - unity in the Church - was largely dependent on a discerning and perceptive exploitation of a complex political context.

This chapter discusses the ecclesiastical reconciliation of Bulgaria and Serbia with the patriarchate of Constantinople in the context produced by the rise and fall of Balkan empires. It argues that the options available to the Byzantine patriarch to provide the expected leadership as the head of the Church and recover the dioceses that had been cut off from his control as a result of local political decisions were limited by the volatile Balkan geopolitical landscape, in which secular concerns for expansion or defense of territory had priority over religious matters. The success of any patriarchal course of action was increasingly determined by the willingness of local rulers to cooperate with Constantinople. Since for several decades there had been no impulse in Bulgaria and Serbia toward accepting patriarchal authority, ecclesiastical reconciliation with the patriarchate became a lengthy and thorny enterprise.

Reconciliation was a protracted and difficult process not only because the parties engaged in it often had different agendas even when they talked of peace and reunion, but also because their powers and prerogatives were unequal, covering comparatively dissimilar areas of the public sphere. In Bulgaria and Serbia, the tsars had had for some time the last say in matters political *and* religious. They controlled the main sources of power: the land, the natural resources, the finances, the boyars, the infrastructure, including the churches and monasteries. They made the definitive pronouncements in juridical, diplomatic and ecclesiastical affairs. They made the appointments to key positions in central and local administration, and to those in the church. In each case, the tsar's main ambition was complete independence from the Byzantine Empire. John Alexander in Bulgaria and Stephen Dušan in Serbia carefully chose men who were

enthusiastic supporters of this ideal for the main sees in their states – which, according to canons, were subject to the patriarchate of Constantinople. But a tsar's power, however extensive and effective within his realm, was of little consequence outside the borders of his state.[24]

The authority and influence of the Byzantine patriarch, on the other hand, was unencumbered by political boundaries. It extended far and wide, in all areas where the patriarchate held jurisdiction: Asia Minor, the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Crimea, Lithuania, and Russia.[25] It was based on canon law, imperial legislation, apostolic tradition, and long-established customs and practices. Even more, it enjoyed strong imperial backing. For centuries, the preservation and expansion of the Christian *oikoumene* had been the joint concern of both patriarch and emperor.[26] Wherever the patriarch lacked the power to enforce decisions, the emperor intervened by applying diplomatic, commercial and sometimes military pressure.[27] But for the patriarchs of the fourteenth century it became difficult to extract obedience from remote dioceses, especially in areas where strong local leadership had developed. Several factors contributed to this situation: First, the emperor's capacity to influence events on the regional scene was shrinking at a rapid pace by the mid-1300s, so the patriarchs could no longer fully rely

[24] For a discussion of the Second Bulgarian Empire and its political institutions see Ivan Biliarsky, *Institutiite na srednovekovna Balgarija: Vtoro Balgarsko tsarstvo XII-XIV v.* (Sofia, 1998).
[25] Dimitri Angelov**,** *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge, 2007) 353; George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (New Brunswick, 1969) 487; Aristeides Papadakis, *The Christian East and the Rise of Papacy: The Church AD 1071-1453* (Crestwood, 1994) 310-311.
[26] From a Byzantine perspective, the *oikoumene* or 'universal empire' was the entire territory over which the dual Byzantine leadership – emperor and patriarch – exercised direct or indirect control. This included areas that had never been part of the political and administrative structures of the Byzantine Empire, such as Russia - which however belonged ecclesiastically to the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople. See A. Watson, "The Byzantine Oikoumene," *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis* (New York, 2009) 81-84. Unlike the medieval papacy which reclaimed the entire Christendom, West and East, as its domain, the patriarchate of Constantinople, despite its claims to 'universality,' never considered that its prerogatives extended over the Western churches; see Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia* (Crestwood, NY, 1981) 108-118.
[27] The relationship between emperors and patriarchs in the Byzantine Empire has been amply studied; a brief introduction is in Steven Runciman, *The Byzantine Theocracy* (Cambridge, 1977). For various appraisals of 'caesaropapism' see Louis Bréhier, "Heireus kai Basileus," *Mémorial Louis Petit. Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie byzantines* (Bucharest, 1948) 41-45; Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest* (Cambridge, 2003) 282-312; Deno J. Geanakoplos "Church and State in the Byzantine Empire: A Reconsideration of the Problem of Caesaropapism," *Church History* 34 (1965) 381-403.

on effective imperial support. Second, the patriarchate of Constantinople did not have a well-wrought hierarchy similar to that of the Church of Rome, which imposed rules and regulations from top down to the parish level through a highly operative bureaucratic structure. Last but not least, the patriarchate had not succeeded in its thousand-year long history to wrest power from secular authorities. The states which had been part of Byzantium or within its sphere of influence had followed the Byzantine model of governance, in which the political leader exercised ultimate control over ecclesiastical affairs, usually indirectly, by appointing compliant clergymen in the main sees. As a result, the chain of command from Constantinople to the various peripheries functioned weakly within the limits imposed by local political circumstances. If local rulers were unwilling to comply with the decisions of the center, there was little the patriarchs could do.

Even within this limiting context, the patriarchate of Constantinople sought industriously viable diplomatic formulas by which it might be able – on its own – to retain, regain and even extend ecclesiastical jurisdiction. One option was to carry out negotiations and seek compromise solutions that did not endanger the local authorities' sense of power and control over the space they inhabited. In the case of Bulgaria and Serbia, there is little evidence that the patriarchs did so. The Bulgarian John Alexander, at least until the late 1350s, was too well-entrenched in his position to be swayed out of it by accommodating patriarchs. The Serbian Stephen Dušan created an ephemeral, but by far the strongest political entity with imperial aspirations in the Balkans; until his death in 1355, he had no need to negotiate with the patriarchate of Constantinople. In their turn, the patriarchs of this period were not exactly accommodating, but rather unbending and unyielding in protecting their prerogatives within the Byzantine commonwealth. The other option available to the patriarchate was to create a network of individuals prominent on the local Bulgairan and Serbian scene yet friendly towards Constantinople, and work through them to

influence matters in the desired direction. The presence of Hesychast monks in the Balkans at a time when the patriarchate of Constantinople itself was zealously supporting Hesychasm potentially favored the latter solution, but a close study of the rapprochement between Bulgaria, Serbia, and Byzantium indicates a rather marginal role of these ascetics in the process. The reconciliation between Trnovo, Peč and Constantinople was contingent upon political and military developments, and upon their judicious exploitation by the patriarchs, as the following pages will demonstrate.

6.2. Byzantium and its Balkan Rivals in the Second Half of the Fourteenth Century

Between 1331 and 1371, Bulgaria was ruled by Tsar John Alexander, an astute statesman whose clever use of available resources allowed him to maintain a firm stance against Byzantium for most part of his reign.[28] His first actions were geared towards reestablishing Bulgaria as a regional power. He was successful at that, especially in the first decades of ruling. He attacked and defeated the Byzantine emperor Andronicos III Palaeologus at Rhosokastron in 1332, winning back most of northeastern Thrace, including two key ports on the Black Sea, Mesembria (Nessebar) and Anchialos (Pomorie).[29] During the Byzantine civil war of 1341-1347, John Alexander sided with the Byzantine regency against the usurper John VI Cantacuzenus, obtaining the city of Philippopolis (Plovdiv) and eight fortresses in the Rhodope Mountains in

[28] I use the model proposed by Michael Mann in *The sources of Social Power. Volume I: A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760* (Cambridge, 1986) 22-28, 518-524, according to which power rests on four main resources: military, political/ administrative, economic, and ideological. Given the space constraints imposed by nature of this work, I have focused mainly on Tsar John Alexander's military conquests, ecclesiastical measures and ideological propaganda.

[29] *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris Historiarum Libri IV*, eds. L. Schopen and B. Niehbuhr, 3 vols. (Bonn 1828, 1831, 1832) II.26-27, v. 1 p. 459-470 (hereafter Cantacuzenus, *Historia*). Chronology of events differs slightly in Gregoras' account, see *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina Historia*, ed. L. Schopen and B. Niehbuhr 3 vols. (Bonn 1829, 1830, 1855), X.4, v. 1, p.483-488 (hereafter Gregoras, *Historia*). Ivan Dujčev, "Le dernier siècle de l'etat bulgare medieval," *Histoire de la Bulgarie*, eds. I. Dujčev et al (Roanne, 1977) 214-217; John V.A. Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 273-274.

exchange for his military support.[30] In the early 1350s, when hostilities between the two claimants of the Byzantine throne resumed, John Alexander and his more powerful neighbor, Stephen Dušan of Serbia, came together to the aid of John V, the junior emperor, whose limited political experience they could use to their advantage and strengthen their own rule and influence in the Balkans.[31] In the second part of the fourteenth century, the unexpected and rapid rise to power of the Ottoman state greatly diminished Bulgaria's impact on the Balkans, but not its opposition to Byzantium, despite some joint efforts to organize a common front against the Turks.

To strengthen his hold over the Byzantine cities he had occupied in the beginning of his reign, Tsar John Alexander placed their bishoprics and archbishoprics under the authority the patriarch of Trnovo. He then placated the high-ranking ecclesiastical figures in these cities by showering them with gifts and privileges. Local bishops and abbots reacted to the new situation according to their short-term interests, not based on a well-forged loyalty to Constantinople. Surviving Bulgarian charters for the monasteries Mother of God Eleusa and Saint Nicholas of Emona on the Black Sea coast point to the issue that mostly troubled the leaders of these communities: interference in their affairs on the part of political and religious authorities, be they Bulgarian or Byzantine. The fact that their monasteries now belonged to the Bulgarian Church hardly mattered at all, as long as they could get the new ruler to act upon their immediate needs. John Alexander obligingly guaranteed freedom from any outside interference as requested by the

[30] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* III.66, v.2 p. 406-407.
[31] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.33-34, v. 3, p. 247-254; Gregoras, *Historia* XXVIII.2-11, v. 3, p. 177-184; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 118-120.

abbots, placing those who would dare to go against his will under the curses of "the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicaea and the fate of Judas."[32]

As for the metropolitan of Mesembria, he was troubled by the restraints on his freedom to interfere in the life of the monastic communities in his eparchy. When his see had passed under the jurisdiction of Trnovo, Constantinople took over the monasteries which he had hitherto supervised. The metropolitan addressed the Bulgarian tsar, who promptly intervened in this ecclesiastical matter as well, even if the issue at stake seemed to be the reverse of what he had been called to decide upon previously. This time, however, the culprit was not some local authority meddling in monastic affairs, but indeed the y patriarch of Constantinople extending his jurisdiction over a region that now belonged to Bulgaria. Tsar John Alexander readily displayed the range of his newly-acquired powers. He issued a charter which returned the monasteries under the control of the metropolitan of Mesembria, and informed Constantinople that it could no longer intervene in the area based on the previous division of dioceses and eparchies.[33] John Alexander's ruling was effective. Mesembria disappears from the patriarchal *acta* until 1368, when military developments made it possible for Byzantium to recover the city and implicitly its bishopric, churches and monastic establishments.

Another important see which the Bulgarian tsar transferred from the jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Constantinople to that of his own patriarch in Trnovo was Vidin, on the Danube River. Throughout the centuries, the bishopric of Vidin had been subject alternately to Bulgarian and Byzantine jurisdictions. When the Asen brothers founded the Second Bulgarian Empire in late twelfth century, they removed Vidin from Byzantine control and incorporated it into the

[32] The charters are published in Ivan Dujčev, *Iz starata balgarska knizhnina* v. 2 (Sofia, 1944) 140-149, English translation as "Charters of Tsar Ioan Alexander to Monasteries in Nesebar and its Environs," in Kiril Petkov ed., *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden, 2008) 500-502.
[33] "Charters of Tsar Ioan Alexander," *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 502.

eparchy administered by the patriarchate of Trnovo.[34] However, according to the episcopal lists put together by the patriarchate of Constantinople during the reigns of Byzantine emperors Andronicus II (1282-1328) and Andronicus III (1328-1341), Vidin in early fourteenth century was once again under Byzantine jurisdiction, this time as a metropolitan see.[35] In the early 1330s, the city of Vidin was ruled by Despot Michael Belaur, John Alexander's uncle, and its metropolitan was still subject to Constantinople. Belaur, who from the very beginning resented his nephew's accession to the throne, rebelled against him and dragged Bulgaria in a war that lasted five years. He was defeated in the end, and his city became part of the Bulgarian tsardom.[36] In a complementary move, the see of Vidin was added by John Alexander to the growing eparchy of Trnovo.

The tsar was not content to simply weaken the Byzantine patriarch's hold over the Balkans by snatching episcopal and metropolitan sees out of the latter's legal reach. He went even further in asserting the ecclesiastical preeminence of Trnovo: he sent his patriarch down in Serbia, to crown Tsar Stephen Dušan as emperor. The Bulgarian tsar had built friendly relationships with the powerful kingdom of Serbia, which was similarly bent on seizing territory from the Byzantines. As Serbian interests lay mostly in the western Balkans, the two tsars successfully avoided direct armed conflict. Their friendship was further cemented by the marriage of John Alexander's sister, Helena, with King Stephen Dušan of Serbia. When Tsar Dušan subdued Byzantine Macedonia and wished to be crowned emperor, John Alexander quickly provided the means for it.

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[34] Ivan Dujčev, "Preface," *Bdinski Zbornik. Ghent Slavonic Ms. 408 AD 1360* (London, 1972) iii.
[35] Jean Darrouzès ed., *Notitiae Episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* (Paris, 1981), Notitiae nos. 18.85 & 19.92, p. 407, 413.
[36] Ivan Dujčev, "Le dernier siècle de l'etat bulgare medieval," *Histoire de la Bulgarie*, eds. I. Dujčev et al (Roanne 1977) 216; Fine, *Medieval Balkans* 273.

The fortunes of Serbia had been on the rise since the reign of Stephen Uroš II Milutin (1282-1321), who had expanded his territory southward into north and central Macedonia, northward toward the Danube, and westward down to the Adriatic shore. Although most of his conquests had been at the expense of Byzantium, in the second part of his reign he signed peace with Emperor Andronicus II, married his five-year old daughter Simonis, and began the rapid Byzantinization of his administration, borrowing from his former rivals titles, offices, the court ceremonial, the taxation methods of the *pronoia* system. Besides, many of the lands he subdued had been part of Byzantium and thus already had the institutions, laws and practices of the empire. Milutin's marriage provoked a huge outcry on the part of the Church, as it was his fourth and thus forbidden by canon law; plus, his bride was well under the proper age of marrying. Nonetheless, Andronicus put pressure on the patriarch to accept the matrimonial alliance, through which he could recover Dyrrachium, a key port on the Adriatic shore, and central Macedonia.[37] Milutin's grandson, Stephan Dušan, ascended the throne in 1331, and spent the first years of his rule consolidating his power. Then in 1343 he resumed the fight against Byzantium, depriving it of Albania and most of Macedonia, including the city of Serres, the second largest city in the area after Thessalonica. He also involved himself in the Byzantine civil war, initially supporting John Cantacuzenus, then changing his mind and allying himself with the regency. He married his son Uroš with a daughter of Empress Anna of Savoy, in order to bring himself closer to the imperial court and enjoy the privileges that came from associating with it.

[37] On Serbia in the early fourteenth century, see Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 255-268; also Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 129-139; Konstantin Jireček, *Istorija Srba*, trans. in Serbian and updated by J. Radonić, vol. 1 (Beograd, 1952).

He called himself *česnik Grkom* (partner of the Byzantines) until the fall of 1345, when he took Serres, and began using the title "emperor of the Serbians and the Greeks."[38]

Like other aspiring emperors before him, Dušan wanted to have his title confirmed through the coronation ceremony. Byzantine political theory and practice held that a ruler could only be recognized as *basileus* if anointed and crowned by the highest-ranking official of the Church, the patriarch. But the patriarch of Constantinople would have never conceded to place the imperial crown on any other head than that of a Byzantine emperor. The world had room for only one universal Christian empire – the Byzantine one, who was the rightful and exclusive heir of the Roman Empire.[39] Dušan however, similar to his Bulgarian ally John Alexander, was ready to consider the idea proposed a century before by Demetrius Chomatenus, according to which several empires could coexist at the same time, without endangering one another's claim to divine origin and protection. Each new empire legitimized its rise to power by an appeal to divine intervention (the conquests made which added to the initial territory were themselves a result of divine will), but this did not necessarily imply that its purpose was to replace the older political entity that had until then enjoyed imperial status. In the agreement reached with the Athonite monks in 1345, Stephen Dušan permitted them to commemorate first the name of the emperor in Constantinople, and then his, as *de facto* ruler of the Holy Mountain.[40] At least at that time he did not seem determined to proclaim that his state substituted the *basileia*, in the way the

[38] Sima M. Ćircović, "Between Kingdom and Empire: Dušan's State between 1346-1355 Reconsidered," *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century* (Athens 1996) 110-120, at 118; George C. Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium during the Reign of Tsar Stephen Dušan (1331-1355) and his Successors* (Washington DC, 1984) 4-30.
[39] Peter Charanis, "Coronation and its Constitutional Significance in the Later Roman Empire," *Byzantion* 15 (1940-1941) 49-66; George Ostrogorsky, "The Byzantine Emperor and Hierarchical World Order," *Slavonic and Eastern European Review* 35 (1956) 1-14; A. Solovjev, "L'influence du droit byzantine dans le pays orthodoxe," *Relazioni del X Congresso internazionale di scienze storiche I* (Florence 1955) 597-650, at 598-99.
[40] Ćircović, "Dušan's State Reconsidered," 118; George C. Soulis, "Tsar Stephen Dušsan and Mt. Athos," *Harvard Slavic Studies* 2 (1954) 125-139, at 126-128.

crusaders had done in 1204, but rather to assert that Serbia lived and prospered as a Balkan empire alongside Bulgaria and Byzantium.[41]

For his coronation, Stephen Dušan contented himself with two lesser ranking ecclesiastics, the patriarchs of Serbia and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian archbishop of Trnovo had become patriarch in 1235, and the Serbian archbishop of Peč was hurriedly advanced to the same rank just prior to Dušan's coronation in the spring of in 1346. The Great Council of Skopje met on April 16, the Easter Day, and Joannicius II, now patriarch of Serbia, assisted by the archbishop of Ohrid, the Bulgarian patriarch, as well as other Serbian and Bulgarian hierarchs, solemnly crowned Dušan "emperor and autocrat of Serbia and Romania" (*Βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Σερβίας καὶ Ρωμανίας*). The title was carefully devised so as not to usurp that of the Byzantine emperor openly, but at the same time to imply strongly that Dušan was his co-equal, as he also ruled over a part of the realm of the "Romans." John Cantacuzenus perceived the coronation as a direct threat to the Byzantine world order and in response had himself crowned emperor a few weeks later, in May 1346, by the patriarch of Jerusalem who had taken refuge in Cantacuzenus' camp in Adrianople.[42]

According to the epilogue appended to the law code issued by Stephen Dušan in 1349, the ceremony in Skopje was also attended and blessed by "elders of the Athonite council," and by "archpriests of the Greek throne"[43] – by which the tsar probably meant the prelates assigned to bishoprics in the Byzantine territories he had just subdued, who had found it wiser to conform to the wishes of their new ruler rather than follow directions from Constantinople, where at the time matters were quite confused, as Patriarch Calecas was losing influence at the court after the

[41] See Čircovič, "Dušan's State Reconsidered," passim; for the older interpretation according to which Dušan's goal was to conquer Constantinople and proclaim himself *basileus*, see G. Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, 466-467; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 30f.
[42] Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 205; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 30-32.
[43] Čircovič, "Dušan's State Reconsidered," 115.

death of his ally Alexis Apocaucus. The presence of monks from Mt. Athos and their willingness to support Dušan's coronation was probably dictated by their short-term interests as well. The tsar had confirmed their autonomy and possessions, and showed himself sympathetic towards Hesychasm, the spiritual movement which at the time was causing great commotion in Byzantium. Dušan even met with Gregory Palamas, and apparently tried to persuade him to support the Serbian imperial venture, but the monk remained steadfast in his loyalty to his friend John Cantacuzenus.[44]

Once crowned, Stephen Dušan began acting in the manner of other *basileis* - as the fountainhead of law, promoter of justice and order, and defender of the Church and its interests. He adopted a code of law in 1349 which took into account the cultural diversity of the people under his rule; he imparted Byzantine titles (such as despot, sebastocrator, ceasar, grand logothete) upon relatives and close associates; he supported churches and monasteries through donations and the granting of various rights and immunities. He also raised chief bishoprics to the rank of metropolitan sees, an administrative step which could be taken only by a *basileus* in his capacity as head of the Church.[45] In 1347, the tsar, his wife Helen, and his son Uroš visited Mt. Athos and liberally distributed gifts and privileges. For the first and only time in the history of the Holy Mountain, a woman was allowed to visit it. The fact that the monks accepted to bend their strict rules in the matter points to their eagerness to curry maximum favor with Dušan. While they continued to profess allegiance to Constantinople, the monks understood the importance of having an emperor, even a Serbian one, taking an immediate interest in their lives

[44] Soulis, "Tsar Stephen Dušan and Mt. Athos," 135-136; for Palamas' encounter with tsar Dušan, see Philotheus Coccinus, "Encomium Gregorii Palamae" c.108, Greek text in Demetrius G. Tsames ed., *Philotheu Kōnstantinupoleōs to Kokkinu hagiologika erga* (Thessalonica 1985) 427-591, older edition "Encomium Gregorii Palamae auct. Philotheo CP.," in *Patrologia Graeca* 151, cols. 551B-656C.

[45] For an English translation of the code, see Malcom Burr, "The code of Stephen Dušan ," *The Slavonic and East European review* 70 (1949) 187-217 and 71 (1950) 516-539; for the Byzantine-style rule of Dušan after his coronation, see Sima M. Ćircović, *The Serbs* (Oxford 2004) 67-74; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 314-317; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 60-85.

and daily issues. During and after his visit to Mt. Athos, the Serbian tsar settled several conflicts over property, rents, and taxes, and promulgated a series of acts for individual monasteries in which he recognized old exemptions and granted new ones. He also encouraged the Serbs with ascetic inclinations to increase their presence there, and had Serbs elected as *protoi* of the Great Lavra.[46]

In 1347, John Catacuzenus took Constantinople and had himself re-crowned senior emperor by Patriarch Isidore.[47] The Serbian tsar used his then- enemy's victory in the civil war as a pretext to invade Byzantine territory which lay undefended at his southern borders. The plague that swept through Byzantium in 1347-1348 and the readiness of many Byzantine garrisons to submit to the new ruler made Dušan's task even easier. In 1347 he overran Epirus, and in 1348 he took over Thessaly. He then replaced the Byzantine governors of these areas with his relatives: his half-brother Simeon Uroš was appointed despot of Epirus, and his brother-in-law Preljub became Caesar of Thessaly. But Dušan took care to keep his Greek subjects on his side, by granting *pronoiai* to local dignitaries and restoring lands to churches and monasteries.[48] However, he expelled the Greek prelates who refused to accept the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Peč, and had Serbian clergy elected in their place. In 1352, Patriarch Callistus of Constantinople (1350-1353, 1355-1363) retaliated by excommunicating the patriarch of Peč, the Serbian church, and the tsar for having interfered with ecclesiastical procedures which were not within their purview. Callistus' pretext was that the archbishop had been unilaterally and uncanonically

[46] Soulis, "Tsar Stephen Dušan and Mt. Athos," 128-129 and n. 16 and 17 for bibliography.
[47] Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 87-88.
[48] Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium during Stephen Dušan*, 30-39.

elevated to the rank of patriarch, and validly appointed bishops had been removed from their sees.[49]

In the epilogue appended to the law code of 1349, Dušan justified his assumption of the imperial title by contending that God Himself placed into his hands, as He previously did to Emperor Constantine the Great, the lands, coastal areas and large towns of the Greeks. It was also God who had the crown placed on his head. The final objective was not to affirm that the Serbian tsar lorded himself over many people, but that he protected orthodoxy and the Church: "All that happened not according to my desire, neither by some force, but according to the blessing of God and others who appointed me to be emperor for all the Orthodox faithful in order to glorify the One-in essence-Trinity forever."[50] It was of course the typical medieval rationalization of the assumption of power; behind it, the imperial claims of Stephen Dušan had heightened political and religious overtones. They were an assertion of his independence and predominance at all levels, the religious one included.

It was in this context of the Slavic ecclesiastical offensive against Byzantium, that the consecration of the Russian monk Theodoret by the Bulgarian patriarch took place.[51] Theodoret's appeal to Trnovo provided Bulgaria with the unexpected opportunity to extend its influence beyond the Danube and the Carpathian mountains, into the areas controlled by the Lithuanian princes of the Gediminas house, who had recently added Slavic-speaking territory to their realm, including the city of Kiev. John Alexander had little to contribute politically and militarily to Lithuanian rulers capable of turning a small state into a major regional power in a

[49] Konstantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, 2 vols. (Gotha, 1911 and 1918) 1. 387, 389; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 310. See also the critique in Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, No. 2444 (1362) p. 372.
[50] Čircovič, "Dušan's State Reconsidered," 115-116.
[51] Meyendorff, "Alexis and Roman," 281-282.

short period of time, but his patriarch could become a significant power player in the struggle for ecclesiastical preeminence between Kiev, Moscow, and Constantinople.

The churches in both Lithuania and Russia had been traditionally under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Kiev, who in his turn was under the authority of the patriarch of Constantinople.[52] In 1240 Kiev was sacked by the Mongols. It had never completely recovered, so in 1325 metropolitan Peter decided to move his residence from that still-depopulated city to a better protected and more affluent area. He first moved to Vladimir, then eventually established himself in Moscow.[53] His successor Theognostos continued to reside there. As was usual in the Middle Ages, the presence of a high-ranking church official enhanced the political significance of a city. The princes of Moscow worked hard at keeping the metropolitan within their sphere of influence. Fortunately for them, Theognostos' political sympathies, like Peter's, his predecessor, leaned towards Moscow. The situation changed in 1352, when the Lithuanian prince Olgerd (1341-1377) began to articulate his ambitious designs to restore Kiev, now part of his realm, to its former ecclesiastical glory and prestige. Since the patriarch of Constantinople proved reluctant to speed up the consecration process for Olgerd's candidate (viz., the monk Theodoret), the Lithuanian prince turned to Bulgaria for help. The patriarch of Trnovo gladly obliged. He consecrated Theodoret, who then returned to Kiev and began consolidating his power there.[54]

For John Alexander, that act was a confirmation of the full authority which the Bulgarian church had come to enjoy under his rule. The patriarch of Trnovo could now make appointments

[52] For the history of the Kievan see and its relation to Constantinople, see Dimitri Obolensky, "Byzantium, Kiev, Moscow: A Study in Ecclesiastical Relations," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 11 (1957) 22-78; J. Pelenski, "The Origins of the Muscovite Ecclesiastical Claims to the Kievan Inheritance," *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs.* I. *Slavic Cultures in the Middle Ages*, eds. B. Gasparov and O. Raevsky-Hughes (Berkeley 1993) 102-115; A. D. Stokes, "The Status of the Russian Church, 998-1037," *Slavonic and East European Review* 37 (1959) 430-442.
[53] Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 45-47; but see D. Ostrowski, "Why did the Metropolitan move from Kiev to Vladimir in the Thirteenth Century?," *Christianity and the Eastern Slavs*, 83-101, who ties the metropolitan's change of residence not to the Mongol devastations, but to the rise in political importance of Vladimir in the early 1300s.
[54] Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, 164-166.

in faraway places, canonically not even (or not yet) under his jurisdiction, without seeking the approval of Constantinople. For Olgerd the consecration meant winning the first round in the battle over who had the right to choose the highest-ranking clergyman in his lands: himself, as the ruler of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, or the patriarch of Constantinople, as the direct superior of the metropolitan of Kiev.

Like many leaders of his age, Tsar John Alexander accompanied his military conquests and political maneuvering with an adequate propaganda that glorified his deeds and likened him to famous heroes of antiquity. According to the panegyric in the Sofia Psalter of 1337, in his military victories, the tsar resembled Alexander the Great, the young Macedonian prince who (consistent with medieval interpretations) had subjected the world to himself by the will of God, while in his piety the tsar was described as a second Constantine the Great, the Roman emperor who brought his realm to Christ.[55] The panegyric used a novel (and apparently oxymoronic) way to describe John Alexander's devotion to God: "walking straight with bent knees" - suggesting both devotion to Orthodoxy ("walking straight") and an intense prayerful life ("with bent knees).[56] Another panegyric, attached to the so-called London Gospel produced in 1356, underscored John Alexander's virtues as a Christian and as a patron of letters and the arts (by then the military exploits of the tsar were no longer something to boast about): the "faithful, Christ-loving, most high, and God-crowned emperor" discovered the gospel book "like a candlestick that had been left in a dark place and forgotten there, consigned to obscurity by the ancient tsars." He had it translated from Greek into Slavonic, encased in golden covers and

[55] "Panegyric to Tsar Ioan Alexander in the *Pesnivets* [collection of psalms] from 1337," edited in H. Kodov, *Opis na slavjanskite rakopisi v biblioteka na Balgarskata Akademija na Naukite* (Sofia, 1969) 13-16, translation in K. Petkov ed., *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden, 2008) 467-469. For the ideological implications of these comparisons see I. Biliarsky, *Word and Power in Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden, 2011) 233-235, 238-241.
[56] Elka Bakalova, "The Image of the Ideal Ruler in Medieval Bulgarian Literature and Art," in I. Biliarsky and R.G. Paun eds., *Les cultes des saints souverains et des saints guerriers et l'idéologie du pouvoir en Europe Centrale et Orientale* (Bucharest, 2007) 34-80**;** Biliarsky, *Word and Power*, 234.

displayed to be seen by all, "for the strengthening of his tsardom." The "rediscovery" of the gospels was then equated with the discovery of the Holy Cross by Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother, Empress Helena. The tsar played the same role in spreading God's word as those two beloved saints of the Orthodox world had played a thousand years earlier.[57] And indeed, John Alexander had been a defender of orthodox Christianity, organizing councils to combat heresy as Constantine himself had done. In 1350 and 1360 he held two regionally significant councils, aimed at combating Bogomilism, anti-Palamism and several local heresies.[58] And also like Constantine, he fostered a cultural and religious revival reflected in the flourishing of the arts, architecture, theology and literature. Churches and monasteries were built and lavishly decorated with the tsar's funds; chronicles and saints' lives were composed; older Slavonic manuscripts were copied and new translations from Greek were produced, ranging from history to hagiography to biblical and liturgical books.[59] It was not without reason that panegyrists likened the tsar to his ancient and very prestigious Byzantine counterpart, Constantine the Great. In the same vein, the tsar's capital, Trnovo, was now called "Tsarigrad" (the Slavonic name for Constantinople), since for many Bulgarians Trnovo had come to rival Constantinople politically, ecclesiastically, and culturally.[60]

The reaction of Constantinople to the Bulgarian and Serbian challenges to its claim for regional supremacy was slow in coming. The peace signed in 1347 had brought little satisfaction to either of the warring factions. John V Palaeologus, the rightful heir to the throne, was not

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[57] "Note of Simeon, scribe, to the London Gospel of Tsar Ioan Alexander," in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, 513-514, with discussion in Biliarsky, *Word and Power*, 239-241; the illuminated manuscript presented by Ekaterina Dimitrova, *The Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander* (London, 1994).
[58] Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manicheism* (Cambridge, 1948) 250-267.
[59] H. Hristov, *A History of Bulgaria* (Sofia, 1985) 56-60; Elka Bakalova, "Society and Art in Bulgaria in the 14th Century," *Byzantinobulgarica* VIII (1986) 17-72.
[60] "Marginal note in Metropolitan German's Codex, 1359," edited in D. Ivanova-Mircheva, "Germanov sbornik: balgarski pismen pametnik ot X vek v prepis ot 1359," *Balgarski Ezik* 4-5 (1965) 314-316; English translation in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, 449-450. On the ideological significance of proclaiming Trnovo the "New Rome" see Biliarsky, *Word and Power*, 237-238.

content with the position of junior emperor into which he had been pushed at the end of hostilities in 1347. He feared that John VI Cantacuzenus, the winner of the conflict and consequently the senior emperor, took too much interest in his own son, Matthew Cantacuzenus, with the obvious intention of making him heir to the throne, and thus displacing John V from power for good. In 1352, John V attacked Adrianople, the headquarters of Matthew Cantacuzenus, and forced him out of the city. John VI Cantacuzenus rushed to the aid of his son; but his own military resources were limited, so he summoned his Turkish allies, the Ottomans of Bithynia, to come and help. John V responded by promptly allying himself with the two Balkan rivals of Cantacuzenus, John Alexander of Bulgaria and Stephen Dušan of Serbia.[61]

Patriarch Callistus was caught between two fires. He owed allegiance to both emperors: to the senior one, for having selected him for the see of Constantinople and for having battled together the enemies of Gregory Palamas, the Hesychast theologian whose writings had produced the last passionate religious dispute in Byzantium; and he also owed allegiance to the junior emperor, the son and lawful successor of Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus (d. 1341). For the same reasons entertained by John V, the patriarch was uncomfortable with Cantacuzenus' elevation of his elder son, Matthew, to a title-less dignity higher in rank and privileges than that of a *despot* (the usual title bestowed on an heir-apparent), second only to the emperor.[62] Callistus believed that the co-emperors had to maintain, without change, the settlement reached in 1347, when they had agreed to rule jointly until Cantacuzenus' retirement, and afterwards John V to rule by himself. The patriarch acted as an envoy between the two

[61] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.33-34, v. 3, p. 247-254; Gregoras, *Historia* XXVIII.2-11, v. 3, p. 177-184; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 118-120.
[62] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.5, v.3, p. 33; D. M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family of Kantakouzenous , ca. 1100-1460. A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study* (Washington, DC, 1968) 109-110.

emperors, and took pains to reconcile them, to no avail.[63] In late 1352 Cantacuzenus removed John V from the Balkans as a potential threat to stability in the area and sent him to the island of Tenedos in the Aegean.[64] A few months later, in early 1353, John V attempted and failed to take Constantinople by force. That gave Cantacuzenus the right pretext for his next move: proclaiming his own son, Matthew, as co-emperor and heir to the throne. Loyal to the agreement of 1347, Patriarch Callistus refused to perform the coronation ceremony for Matthew as junior *basileus*. He offered his resignation and moved to the island of Tenedos, where John V welcomed him gratefully.[65]

In such a charged political context, Patriarch Callistus had little opportunity to address the challenges posed to his authority by the patriarchs of Trnovo and Peč. Civil war imposed different priorities and the issue of arrogating rights which by canon law belonged to Constantinople was left unattended. The muddled status of the Bulgarian and Serbian tsars (courted as allies by John V to fight against Cantacuzenus, initially their ally) did not improve the situation. To have had his decisions heard and enforced in the wayward Balkan dioceses, Callistus would have needed the strong backing of the Byzantine emperor and a real concern for canon law in Bulgaria and Serbia. Neither of the two Byzantine emperors was interested in solving problems of ecclesiastical preeminence while their own preeminence on the political scene in Byzantium was at risk. For their part, the Bulgarian and Serbian tsars were primarily concerned with establishing their ascendancy over Byzantium in any way possible.

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[63] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.33, v. 3, p. 247-248; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 120.
[64] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.34, v. 3, p. 252-254; Gregoras, *Historia* XXVIII.8-9, v. 3, p. 182-183; Nicol, *Last Centuries of Byzantium*, 239; idem, *Reluctant Emperor*, 121.
[65] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.37, v. 3, p. 272; Jean Darrouzès, *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarcat de Constantinople* I/ fasc. V. (Paris, 1977) nos. 2344 & 2345, p. 283-284 [hereafter Darrouzès, *Regestes* V]; Albert Failler, "La deposition du patriarch Calliste I^{er} (1353)," *Revue des études byzantines* 31 (1973) 5-163; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 122-124.

Even if Callistus was unable to address the ecclesiastical conflict with Trnovo and Peč during his first tenure as patriarch, he at least tried to deal with the other issue, the illegitimate metropolitan of Kiev. Overall Lithuania and Russia maintained a pro-Byzantine attitude during this period which still allowed the patriarch of Constantinople to exercise a considerable amount of authority in the two states. Although no act issued by Callistus on the matter is still extant, a letter to the bishop of Novgorod sent by his successor, Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus in July 1354 gives testimony to the fact that the permanent synod of Constantinople had deliberated on the consecration of Theodoret and issued a verdict: immediate deposition, and, if the monk persisted in keeping his illegally acquired title of metropolitan, excommunication. The synodal decision came probably in late 1352 or early 1353. On the same occasion the synod sent out letters to warn bishops throughout Lithuania and Russia to refuse any kind of communication and interaction with Theodoret. [66] The fact that less than two years later Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus had to remind Bishop Moses of Novgorod of the ecclesiastical danger of cooperating with Theodoret (Λέγει γάρ ὁ κανών ὅτι ὁ ἀκοινωνήτῳ κοινωνῶν καὶ αὐτὸς ἀκοινώνητος ἔστω[67]) indicates the limits of patriarchal authority, even in areas usually willing to accommodate Constantinople. Bishop Moses of Novgorod had most likely befriended Theodoret since they both shared the desire to curb the growing political and religious power of Moscow; it is unlikely that the bishop of Novgorod was concurrently seeking independence from Constantinople. But in faraway dioceses, tactics and alliances were established based on local circumstances and took priority over long-distance commitments. As for Theodoret, he was unimpressed with the verdict of Constantinople and continued to extend his authority throughout

[66] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2336 & 2366, p. 278-279, 302-303; F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi* I (Wien, 1860) no. 157, p. 350-351 (hereafter MM I); Koder et al, *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel* III (Vienna, 2001) no. 195, 126-131.

[67] "For the canon says that whoever has fellowship with an excommunicated person shall be excommunicated." [vid. Canon 2, Council of Antioch A.D. 341], see Darrouzès, *Regestes*, p. 302; Koder et al, *Register*, p. 130.

Lithuania and beyond. His ecclesiastical initiatives frequently conflicted with those of the legitimate successor of Theognostos, metropolitan Alexis, ordained in 1354 by Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus and residing since then in Moscow.[68] The patriarch of Constantinople had been engaged in fervent diplomatic activity with both Kiev and Moscow, hoping to solve the scandal of two competing metropolitans claiming to be rightful heirs of Theognostos of Kiev. But beyond sending letters, receiving delegates, issuing warnings and verdicts, there was little else he could do. Implementation of his decisions was dependent on the readiness of local political and ecclesiastical authorities to take action. The frustrating case of Theodoret was finally brought to an end by Prince Olgerd himself in early 1355, when he supported the deposition of the monk on the condition that Constantinople appoint Roman, a relative of his wife, as metropolitan of Lithuania.[69]

Bringing the rebellious patriarchs in line took much longer. In the second half of the fourteenth century, Balkan politics and military affairs became increasingly disjointed and unpredictable. In Constantinople, Cantacuzenus' sole hold onto power did not usher in the expected era of peace and prosperity. On the contrary, the territorial integrity of his empire was seriously endangered by his very allies, the Ottoman Turks of Anatolia. Back during the civil war, Cantacuzenus' most reliable supporters had been Umur, the emir of Aydin (ancient Lydia on the western coast of Asia Minor) and Orkhan, the emir of the rising Ottoman state

[68] Meyendorff, *Byzantium and Rise of Russia*, 165-166.

[69] The official record of the consecration is lost; see Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2368, who places the ordination of Roman among the last acts of Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus before his deposition in February 1355 (p. 305). Meyendorff argues that it was actually Callistus who performed the consecration, at the beginning of his second term as patriarch of Constantinople (1355-1363). Philotheus Coccinus had been too strong an adversary of the Lithuanian ecclesiastical rise to prominence to condone the idea of a separate metropolitan in Kiev, alongside the one residing in Moscow. Callistus was more willing to adapt his pronouncements and strategies to the local context. Whatever the case, Olgerd's acquiescence to the appointment of Roman to the see of Kiev was not a genuine effort on the part of the Lithuanian prince to end the stalemate with Constantinople, but a diplomatic move meant to increase his chances to win the contest for ecclesiastical supremacy with Moscow. See Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia,* 167-172.

(northwestern Asia Minor).[70] The latter had also become Cantacuzenus' son-in-law, marrying his daughter Theodora in 1346.[71] The armies of both Umur and Orkhan had come repeatedly to Cantacuzenus' aid during the civil war of 1341-1347. Orkhan had also sent his troops later on, when Stephen Dušan of Serbia threatened to take Thessalonica in 1350 and when John V took up arms against Matthew Cantacuzenus in 1352.[72]

Each time the Turks came they took their reward by looting and plundering the areas through which they marched back home. But the last time they came at Cantacuzenus' bidding they failed to leave: sometime in late 1352 or early 1353, the Turks under Orkhan's son Suleyman took over the fortress Tzympe in the Thracian Chersonese (Gallipoli peninsula). The fortress was located between the city-port Gallipoli (modern Gelibolu) and the inland town Plagiari (modern Bolayir), and controlled the Dardanelles straits. Its strategic value for the Byzantines was so great that Cantacuzenus, having failed to recover it by means of arms, offered ten thousand golden coins to Suleyman in exchange for it.[73] The fortress had an even greater strategic value for Suleyman: it was the first Ottoman foothold in Europe. From there further raids and conquests in Thrace and the Balkans could be easily launched and coordinated.[74] The occupation of Tzympe was also the first stage in the campaign for the Dardanelles straits. During

[70] See discussion on John VI and his Turkish allies in Joseph Gill, "John VI Cantacuzenus and the Turks," *Byzantina* 13 (1985) 57-76.
[71] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* III.95, v. 2 p. 585-589; Gregoras, *Historia* XV.5, v. 2 p. 762-763. At the time of marriage Orkhan was about sixty years old, Theodora Cantacuzenus not yet twenty. The questionable union was sought after by Cantacuzenus, who feared his Turkish ally might be bribed to change sides by his rival, Empress Anna. Canon law forbade an Orthodox Christian to wed a non-believer and enter a polygamous relationship, but there was no high ecclesiastical figure in Cantacuzenus' entourage eager to dispute the union on these grounds. See discussion on the context and significance of this marriage in Anthony Bryer, "Greek historians on the Turks: the case of the first Byzantine-Ottoman marriage," *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to R.W Southern*, eds. R.H.C. Davis and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford 1981) 471-493; also Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 76-78.
[72] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.33, v.3, p.242-247; Gregoras, *Historia* XXVIII.2, v. 3, p.178-179; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 120.
[73] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.38, v. 3, p. 276-277.
[74] Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650* (New York 2009), 8-9; Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (New York 1973) 9-10. For an analysis of geopolitical developments in the area on the eve of the Byzantine Empire's extinction, see Nevra Necipoglu's recent study, *Byzantium between the Ottomans and the Latins* (Cambridge, 2009).

the 1340s, the Ottomans had already annexed the principality of Karasi, on the Asian shore of the straits; conquest and settlement of the Gallipoli peninsula would have enabled the Ottomans to fully control the traffic to and from the Mediterranean.[75] The negotiations over the fate of Tzympe were taxing, but Cantacuzenus implied in his *History* that in the end Suleyman agreed to return the fortress to the Byzantines, and thus to suspend Ottoman efforts to gain control over the straits.[76]

In March 1354, before the transaction could be completed, an earthquake struck the peninsula and destroyed most of its settlements. Suleyman took advantage of the terror and confusion that ensued and renewed his offensive along the European littoral of the Dardanelles by occupying the port of Gallipoli. This time he brought along not only his soldiers, but also their wives and families, with the clear intention to settle the area.[77] The emperor was aggrieved not a little (ἠνιᾶτο οὐκ ὀλίγα) by the new developments, but for all his negotiations with Orkhan and his son, the Turks refused to leave their new homes on Byzantine soil. They were there to stay, and not only to stay, but also to expand their control. Not much is known of how the Ottomans fared between 1354 and the death of Suleyman in 1357, but in all likelihood they increased and secured their hold on the Gallipoli peninsula.[78] Some incursions into the Balkans must have taken place as well, as a fifteenth-century Bulgarian anonymous chronicle records the death of Michael Asen IV, the eldest son and heir of Tsar John Alexander, in 1355 in battle

[75] Elizabeth Zachariadou, "The Emirate of Karasi and that of the Ottomans: Two Rival States," *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389), Halcyon Days in Crete I, A Symposium Held in Rethymnon 11-13 January 1991*, ed. E. Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Greece, 1993) 225-236.
[76] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV. 38, v. 3, p. 277 lines 5-8.
[77] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.38, v. 3, p. 277-278; Gregoras, *Historia* XXVIII. 67-68, v. 3 ; p. 220-222; P. Schreiner ed., *Chronica Byzantina Breviora. Die byzantinischen Kleinchronikon* 3 vols. (Vienna 1975, 1977, 1979) no. 7.13, v. 1, p. 66; for other entries see v. 2, p. 283 [hereafter Chron. Brev.]; English translation and comments in P. Charanis, "Les BPAXEA XPONIKA comme source historique," *Byzantion* 13 (1938) 334-362, at 347-349.
[78] Halil Inalcik, "The Conquest of Edirne (1361)," *Archivum Ottomanicum* III (The Hague 1971) 185-210; *Donald E. Pitcher, An Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire: From Earliest Times to the End of the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden 1968) 39-40; Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume 1: Empire of the Gazis* (Cambridge 1976) 16-17. Bulgarian, Byzantine and Ottoman sources on the early conquests in Thrace come from the fifteenth century and often confuse dates, places and historical figures.

against the Ottomans.[79] Also, the fifteenth-century Byzantine historian Chalcocondyles has Suleyman fighting the Serbian tsar Dušan and returning to Gallipoli with considerable booty.[80]

Cantacuzenus' reaction to the Ottoman annexation of Byzantine territory was to step down from power and allow John V Palaeologus to rule in his stead. In the farewell speech he delivered before the new emperor and the senators in December 1354, Cantacuzenus advised that they should try to gain back whatever territory they lost to the Turks by means of negotiation rather than by war, since Byzantium lacked adequate resources to put up a successful fight. To withstand their enemies, the Byzantines needed to procure money and foreign military aid equal to the logistical resources supporting the Ottoman army, and to prepare a naval force able to prevent further crossings into Thrace. With such means they could even compel the Bulgarians and the Serbians to return the territories stolen from Byzantium.[81]

John V Palaeologus took at least part of Cantacuzenus' advice to heart. There is no convincing evidence of him fighting the Ottomans in the Gallipoli peninsula, or anywhere else for that matter.[82] Nor is there evidence for negotiations with Suleyman or Orkhan for the

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[79] Ioan Bogdan,"Ein Beitrag zur bulgarischen und serbischen Geschichsschreibung," *Archiv für Slavische Philologie* 13 (1891) 526-536, translation in "Bulgarian Anonymous Chronicle," *The Voices of Medieval Bulgaria, Seventh-Fifteenth Century*, ed. Kiril Petrov (Leiden, 2008) 458. The author of the chronicle wrongly places this battle in 1326 and has the Ottoman army led by Murad I, son of Orkhan, who actually ruled between 1362 and 1389.

[80] Laonicus Chalcocondyles, *Historiae Demonstrationes*, ed. E. Darko (Budapest , 1922, 1927) I.30-33, p. 26-29 (hereafter Chalc.). At least some of the actions attributed here by Chalcocondyles to Suleyman were in fact performed by his brother and successor, Murad I, in the 1360s.

[81] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.40, v. 3 p. 295-299; speech partially translated in Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 130-131. Whether Cantacuzenus indeed gave these recommendations in 1354 before withdrawing from politics or wrote them years later, when he composed his *History*, with the advantage of hindsight and greater wisdom on what could work in relationship with the Ottomans, he did put his finger on the three main shortcomings of the Byzantine defense system: lack of money, lack of manpower, lack of a standing navy. He also pointed to the expedient solution (foreign aid in cash and troops) and the long-term solution (rebuilding the Byzantine fleet). The latter had been Cantacuzenus' main concern but had ended in catastrophe during the war with the Genoese of Galata (1348-1349); see Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 95-100.

[82]According to the fifteenth-century historian Ducas, Byzantine forces led by Matthew Cantacuzenus did engage the Ottomans at the Hexamilion (Eksamil), a fortress close to Tzympe; Suleyman was killed in that battle - vid. *Istoria Turco-Bizantina*, ed. Vasile Grecu (Bucharest, 1958) X.5, p. 65 (hereafter Doucas, *Istoria*). This event, however, is not reported by either John Cantacuzenus or Nicephoros Gregoras, both contemporaries of Matthew and Suleyman. Moreover, Ottoman chronicles of the fifteenth century give a hunting accident as Suleyman's cause of death; see Inalcik, "Conquest of Edirne," 189. One Ottoman anonymous chronicle states that John V actually tried to attack the

recovery of the lost towns and fortresses.[83] His diplomatic initiatives instead turned westward. In February 1355 he reinstalled his loyal friend Callistus in the patriarchal see of Constantinople. Then with the guidance of his spiritual patron Callistus, he tried to secure an alliance with the Bulgarian tsar John Alexander. The tsar had lost two of his sons to the Turks and was eager to mend his relationship with Byzantium, if that meant joining forces against the common enemy.[84] In a rather unprecedented move as far as foreign protocol was concerned, John V sent the treaty he was going to sign with John Alexander to be examined by the patriarch of Constantinople and his synod. On August 17, 1355, Callistus and the metropolitans present in the capital unanimously endorsed the treaty and the projected marriage between John V's son and John Alexander's daughter, because these acts would contribute to the unity and welfare of all Christians and the ruin of the ungodly (εἰς κοινὴν σύστασιν καὶ ὠφέλειαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν καὶ βλάβην τῶν ἀσεβῶν). If the tsar kept unbroken (ἀπαραβάτους) the oaths he made to the emperor and the Church, he would earn generous assistance from God, and countless blessings from the patriarch.[85]

Turks in the Chersonese in 1357 or 1358 (after the death of Suleyman), by sending several ships to the Saros Bay (north of the Gallipoli peninsula, in the Aegean Sea), but gave up the idea once he saw that the Turks were determined to respond. See discussion in Inalcik, "Conquest of Edirne," 191.

[83] Cantacuzenus and Gregoras discuss the one instance in which John V carried out negotiations with Orkhan, not to take back the Gallipoli peninsula, but to exact from him the promise of no further attacks against Byzantium, no more support to Matthew Cantacuzenus who was still challenging John V's right to the throne, and cancellation of Byzantine debts. These negotiations took place after Orkhan's eleven year old son by Theodora Cantacuzenus, Khalil, had been abducted by Greek pirates and held captive in Old Phocaea (western shore of Asia Minor). Orkhan asked John V to intervene and rescue the child; the latter took advantage of the momentary weakness of the Ottoman emir and pressed for peace. The Byzantine emperor also had his daughter Irene marry Khalil, as a way to ensure future good relationships between the two states. The Khalil incident took place between 1357-1359. Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.44, v. 3, p.320-322, Gregoras, *Historia* XXXVI.2-16, v. 3, p. 504-509; see also Inalcik, "Conquest of Edirne," 189-192.

[84] John Alexander's youngest son by his first wife Theodora, John Asen IV, was killed in battle sometimes between 1348 and 1350, during one of the Ottomans' plundering expeditions near Sredets (Sofia), possibly at the time when they came to the Balkans ostensibly to help Cantacuzenus repel Stephen Dušan's attack on Thessalonica. See "Bulgarian Anonymous Chronicle," *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, 458; "Tomb inscription of John Asen IV," *idem*, 431, Slavonic text in Ivan Goshev, *Tarnovski tsarski nadgroben nadpis ot 1388 godina* (Sofia 1945) 7-8.

[85] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2381; MM I. 185, p. 432-433, Koder et al, *Register*, no. 261, p. 542-547; Gregoras, *Historia* XXXVII.51, v. 3 p. 557-558. John Alexander's daughter, named Keratza ("Miss") in the patriarchal document, was the offspring of Theodora, the second wife of the tsar. *Boril's Synodikon* gives her name as Vasilisa;

The sanction of this alliance by the Church was meant to impress upon Tsar John Alexander the idea that he and his people (including the Bulgarian clergy) were ultimately subjects of the patriarch of Constantinople. But to turn this idea into reality, Patriarch Callistus needed the full support of John V, who was too weak and irresolute to follow through by asserting his dominance over Bulgaria. As a result, Tsar John Alexander failed to be impressed and the ecclesiastical relationship between Bulgaria and Byzantium remained strained. The political alliance itself bore no fruit, and after a decade of ignoring each other the two countries were once again at war, despite the waxing Ottoman threat to both.

The middle of the fourteenth century found Serbia in turmoil as well. In an unexpected move, in the summer of 1354 Stephen Dušan sent an embassy to Pope Innocent IV in Avignon to propose the return of Serbia to full communion with Rome, and to request for himself the title *capitaneus contra Turchos*, which was conferred by the popes upon select rulers who had taken up the cross to fight the Muslims. Until then the tsar had not been well-disposed toward his subjects who professed allegiance to the Apostolic See. Although he had allowed them freedom of worship, there were instances when they were forced to undergo a rebaptism, according to the Byzantine rite; when the unleavened bread they used in the Eucharist was trampled underfoot; or when they were pressured to become part of the Serbian church. In the law code Dušan issued in 1349, the Christianity practiced by the papacy was labeled "Latin heresy," proselytism on the part of Roman clergy was forbidden, and those caught spreading their heretical beliefs were to be arrested, exiled or sent to work in the mines.[86] Yet, but five years later, the Serbian tsar was to seek winning over the pope with his offer of submission for reasons still debated by scholars.

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see "Bulgarian additions to the Synodikon in the Sunday of Orthodoxy" no. 123, in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 258.

[86] Frederick J. Boehlke, *Pierre de Thomas: Scholar, Diplomat, Crusader* (Philadelphia, 1966) 81-82; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 52-54; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 146-147.

Dušan might have wanted to receive from the West military assistance against the Turks, as he claimed, and without the pope's support he would not have been able to gain the trust of Western rulers. By early 1354, though, the most pressing issue for Serbia was to stop Hungarian incursions into its territory. If the rulers of the two countries were both subjects of the Church of Rome, at least in theory they should not go to war against each other. However, worshipping under the same papal banner had not prevented Hungary from attacking Venice and the Latin princes in Western Greece. Dušan thus perhaps hoped that his overtures to Rome might result in some improvement of his relations with Hungary (a peace treaty was indeed signed in May 1355), but his real underlying ambition at the time and the reason for seeking papal support seems to have been the conquest of Constantinople. Meanwhile, by 1354/55, the much-tried Byzantine *basileia* was going again through a period of chaos and change, and was thus too weak to respond effectively to external attacks. Moreover, the Serbians had been excommunicated by the patriarch of Constantinople, and Dušan's attempt to mend that schism had failed. Consequently, he had little to lose ecclesiastically if he reached an agreement with the pope, provided that the autonomy of the Serbian church was recognized and upheld.[87]

Thinking over the political benefits of the potential union with Rome, Stephen Dušan welcomed the two envoys, Peter Thomas and Bartholomew of Trau (Trogir), sent to his court by the pope in early 1355. They also carried a message for King Louis of Hungary, whom the pope tried to influence in the direction of ending hostilities against Serbia during the negotiations for union.[88] But Dušan's initial goodwill wore thin quickly, when he found out that the two envoys were trying to convert locals to the Roman version of Christianity, without having obtained his consent in this regard. Besides, the tsar came to realize that his submission to the papacy was not

[87] Boehlke, *Pierre de Thomas*, 85-86; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 54-57.
[88] Boehlke, *Pierre de Thomas*, 93-94.

the best way to tackle his plans of expanding his empire and his prestige in the Greek-dominated areas of the Balkans. A *basileus* in communion with Rome would have hardly been an enticing alternative for the Greeks to the political crisis then developing in Constantinople. In late 1355 Dušan sent the papal envoys on their way. Peter Thomas went to the Hungarian court, to persuade the king to resume his war with Serbia, now that the tsar had chosen to stay in schism with Rome rather than become part of the true Church. The Hungarian king did not need much persuasion, and despite the treaty signed with Dušan a few months earlier he resumed his raids south of the Danube.[89] The Serbian encounter with the pope's representatives had been brief, marked by mutual suspicion and characterized by little actual desire for cooperation on Dušan's part, since he would have had much to lose if he became a vassal of the pope. Regardless of their relationship with Constantinople, most Slavs and Greeks in the Balkans regarded themselves as part of the Byzantine cultural and religious tradition, and saw submission to the Church of Rome as a betrayal of their heritage and identity.

The Serbian tsar did not have a chance to revise and redirect his regional policies. On December 20, 1355, Stephen Dušan died unexpectedly, according to sixteenth-century sources from Dubrovnik while on military campaign against Constantinople.[90] After his sudden death, the Serbian empire crumbled. Dušan had tried to create a new, viable *basileia* in the Balkans, emulating the Byzantine emperors in many of his administrative, legislative, political and religious initiatives, but he had failed to centralize his authority. In most places, local rulers or his own appointees held great influence and power, even if they paid lip service to the tsar. Dušan also failed to instill a strong sense of loyalty to the Nemanjic dynasty among his relatives

[89] Boehlke, *Pierre de Thomas*, 94-103; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 57-58.
[90] Modern historians doubt that Dušan was on the verge of attacking Byzantium, since no contemporary source mentions such an undertaking. See Čircovič, *The Serbs*, 66; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 334-337; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 58-59.

and friends. The first notable rival of his son and heir Uroš V became the young man's uncle, Dušan's half-brother Simeon. Uroš V was seventeen years old in 1355, and, although Dušan had made him king in 1346 and associated him in the ruling of the state, he continued to rely on his mother and on the Serbian patriarch for major decisions. He was unable to hold onto the territory inherited from his father, and even his mother decided to rule her fief in Serres autonomously. Other members or allies of the royal family who had received appointments as caesars or despots, asserted the autonomy of their own fiefdoms as well. A long war over the division of the former empire began in the late 1350s, which lasted until most of the territory was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in the fifteenth century.[91] The Serbian imperial experiment had depended too much on the personality of its founder to be able to survive his death.

Meanwhile, John V in Byzantium was relieved to have been rid so suddenly of his two-faced Serbian ally, and to witness the subsequent dissolution of Dušan's empire. But the vanishing of the powerful tsar did not make life any easier for the Byzantines, who still had to deal with the imminent attacks of the Turks. John V sought to secure the much needed foreign aid from the West, as Cantacuzenus had urged. In a *chrysobull* signed on 15 December 1355, he promised Pope Innocent VI to convert to the Catholic faith, and submit himself and the entire Byzantine Empire (*omnes populi sub nostro imperio constituti et nostrae jurisdictione subjecti sive laici sive clerici*) to the Holy See in exchange for military assistance against his Greek and Turkish enemies (that is, the Byzantines loyal to Matthew Cantacuzenus, who refused to relinquish his imperial title, and the Ottomans loyal to Cantacuzenus, who justified their assault upon Byzantine lands as support of Matthew's cause). John V asked for transport ships, warships, foot soldiers, and horsemen, money to pay the troops; and the privilege to lead them in

[91] For the fate of Serbia after Dušan's death, see Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 345-346, 357-366, 373-384, 387-389 and 425-427; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 86-119.

battle. His younger son, Manuel, was to go to the papal court as a guarantee that his father would stand by his pledge, and the papal legate in Constantinople was to receive his own palace in perpetuity (*palatium magnum… in perpetuum domini nostri papae et legatorum ipsius*) and a church where to celebrate the Mass (*pulchram et venerabilem Ecclesiam in qua dictum legatum et aliiqui postea venient a domino nostro papa celebrabunt divina officia et Ecclesiastica sacramenta*).[92]

There was little in this proposal to recommend it to the patriarch of Constantinople, a staunch opponent of any association with the Latins, especially if it led to abandoning the Orthodox faith. It is unlikely that Callistus was consulted on the matter. No patriarchal or synodal act issued at the time records any exchange between the head of the state and that of the Church on the possibility of making the empire subject to the Holy See. It was a huge step, one to be undertaken on behalf of people still resentful of the Latins for the calamities they brought upon Byzantium during the fourth crusade. John V realized that he could muster no support from the ecclesiastical quarter, so in all probability he did not even ask for it.[93]

Callistus' position as the head and protector of orthodoxy would have been significantly undermined if the imperial proposition came true. Fortunately for him, it did not. Pope Innocent VI replied to John V's letter by promising to ask Western rulers for aid once the Byzantine

[92] Latin letter published in O. Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Paris, 1880) vol. XXV ad ann. 1335, no.33-37, p. 600-602; Greek text in A. Theiner and F. Miklosich, *Monumenta spectantia ad unionem ecclesiarum graecae et romanae* (Vienna, 1872) p. 29-33; Dölger, *Regesten*, no. 3052. John V's move towards union with Rome is amply discussed by O. Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance à Rome* (London, 1972) 31-59; see also Nicol, *Last centuries*, 258-261, and K. M. Setton, *Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571). Volume I: The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia, 1976) 225-228.

[93] A later document, a letter of Callistus to John V from 1361 on the conditions under which the Church agreed to a treaty with the Genoese and the Venetians, indicates more willingness on the part of the emperor to reach an understanding with his patriarch on the delicate topic of Byzantine interaction with the Latins. The letter sheds light on the patriarch's hostility toward anything Latin: his first prerequisite was that the Church of God (i.e. the Byzantine Church) be protected against any type of papal influence or pressure to accept the dogmas taught by the Church of Rome (Πρῶτον μὲν διαμένειν τὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαν ἀτάραχον καὶ ἔξω πάσης ἡστινοσοῦν ἐπηρείας τῆς ἀπὸ τῶν λατινικῶν κινουμένης δογμάτων). See Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2437; MM I. 184 p. 430-431; Koder et al, *Register*, no. 260 p. 540.

emperor formally sworn allegiance to the Holy See.[94] The papal legate who brought the pope's answer to Constantinople, also had a letter for the patriarch, whose earnest involvement in the conversion of the Greeks was requested. The pope expressed consternation that he had received no correspondence from the Byzantine patriarch on this crucial issue, and conjectured that the letter had been sent but lost through the negligence of the envoy or by accident.[95] The patriarch's answer to all this, if any, has not survived.[96] As for John V, he was rather disappointed that the awaited military aid did not materialize. He made his profession of faith before Peter Thomas, the papal legate, but let the pope know that he could hardly be expected to persuade *all* Byzantines to follow suit, as many of them were still supporting Matthew Cantacuzenus and had no desire to obey their rightful emperor. Without prompt assistance, he would not be able to defeat his enemies, let alone persuade them to unite with Rome. However, to convince Pope Innocent VI that he was still serious about his unionist plans, John V expressed his readiness to replace Callistus, if the patriarch continued to raise opposition to the union of churches (*propter patriarcham vero non dubitetis; deponam enim eum, et ponam alium quem scio sanctae Romanae ecclesiae esse fidelem*).[97]

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[94] The papal answer is dated July 21, 1356. Latin text in L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum* (Lyons 1637) vol. IV ad ann. 1400, no. 2, p. 47-48.

[95] "*…nulla nobis littera tua fuerit presentata, quod vel ex incuria nuntiorum, aut ex aliquo casu fortuito, non ex proposito credimus contigisse. ut ergo fidei et credulitate nostrae testis accedat, exhibitio operis et probatio veritatis, discretionem tua monemus, requirimus et hortamus in Domino; illam attente rogantes tibique tua salutis intuitu expressius iniungentes, quatenus prudenter considerans, quantis illa civium supernorum agmina gaudiis exultabunt in tua et ipsius imperatoris, ac numerosae multitudinis Graecorum conversione*." Full text in L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, vol. IV, no. 3, p. 48-49.

[96] Callistus had little regard for the papal legate and his unionist efforts. In a letter addressed to the clergy of Cyprus and dated late 1361, Callistus labeled Peter Thomas (the legate) "a savage boar that devastated God's vineyard," a "master of error," a "vain doctor" who sought his own profit: to disperse the sheep of Christ, eat their flesh and take their wool; see Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2443.

[97] This letter was probably written in late fall 1357, when Peter Thomas was ready to leave Constantinople and return to Avignon; it survived only in the *vita* of Peter Thomas by Philippe de Mézières, who quotes it in full. See *The Life of Pierre de Thomas*, ed. J. Smet (Rome, 1954) 76-79. F. J. Boehlke discusses its context and significance in *Pierre de Thomas*, 147-150.

Callistus must have felt pushed into the corner. His authority was challenged not only outside the empire, but inside as well, and by the very man who was supposed to protect the Church: the Byzantine emperor. In response to imperial pressure for union, the patriarch turned his attention and resources to the Balkans, hoping that he could persuade the wayward churches of Bulgaria and Serbia to return to the Byzantine fold, and thus strengthen his own position. Recent developments were on his side: the powerful Serbian tsar Stephen Dušan died in December 1355, just as he was preparing a full-scale campaign against Constantinople. His kingdom then fell apart, breaking up in several small principalities, often under incompetent leadership. Bulgaria meanwhile was struggling with its own domestic crises: heretical groups on the offensive, contested succession to throne, territorial splintering. Ottoman incursions from the southeast and Hungarian attacks in the northwest brought additional gloom to an already-murky Balkan picture. Callistus and then his successors Philotheus Coccinus and Nilus Kerameus made good use of their neighbors' troubles. All three patriarchs had in common a monastic past and a close association with Hesychasm. To reach their ends, they often appealed to Bulgarian and Serbian monks of the Hesychast bent, and employed them as patriarchal envoys, negotiators, and pressure groups. In consequence, by late fourteenth century, the Balkan churches were once again shepherded by Constantinople.

6.3. Constantinople and the Rebellious Balkan Churches: The Tortuous Path to Ecclesiastical Reconciliation

In Bulgaria, the process of reconciliation developed in small steps, as the patriarchate of Trnovo had enjoyed its autonomous status for much longer than the Serbian one and was less willing to give it up. Between 1348 and 1365, the see of Trnovo belonged to Theodosius, a

strong-willed Bulgarian churchman who refused to pay heed to anything Byzantine.[98] He had consistently resisted the attempts of Constantinople to put an end to his claims to ecclesiastical self-determination. The lengthy letter that Callistus wrote in 1361 in response to a series of inquiries made by Bulgarian monks regarding the possibility of restoring ecclesiastical ties with Constantinople voiced the main complaints the patriarch had against Theodosius of Trnovo.[99] The head of the Bulgarian church had obtained the title of "patriarch" only as an act of benevolence on the part of Constantinople and not through any kind of merit gained by the incumbent in the see in Trnovo. He remained a subordinate of Constantinople and had to give full recognition to his superior. One way to express his submission was to commemorate first in the liturgical prayers the name of the patriarch of Constantinople.[100] Instead, Theodosius of Trnovo had completely removed the name of his superior from liturgical celebration, and refused to comply with instructions coming from Constantinople on this and other matters. Another gross violation of canon law was the way in which Bulgarian church baptized: not by the triple immersion, but either by one immersion or by sprinkling water on the candidate for baptism. Gospels as well as canon law made it clear that triple immersion was always to be performed,

[98] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 440-441. Anti-Byzantine feelings were much older than the Bulgarian quest for Balkan hegemony in the fourteenth century. They were usually associated with what *Boril's Synodikon* calls "Greek slavery" - the period between the fall of the First Bulgarian Empire in 1018 and the emergence of the Second Bulgarian Empire in 1185, when Bulgaria was ruled by Byzantium; the synodikon is edited in I. Biliarsky et al, *Borilos Sinodik. Izdanie i Prevod (Sofia, 2010), 352. For an introduction to* Bulgarian attitudes towards Byzantium, see the study of Petar Angelov, "The Byzantines as imagined by the Medieval Bulgarians," *State and Church: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium* eds. V. Gjuzelev and K. Petkov (Sofia, 2011) 46-81. Even if anti-Byzantinism was widespread among the fourteenth-century political and religious elites of Bulgaria, pro-Byzantine attitudes were also possible. See below on the Hesychast circles of Gregory the Sinaite and Theodosius of Trnovo.

[99] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2442, p 368-369; MM I. 186, p. 436-442; Koder et al, *Register*, no. 264, p. 560-578. The letter is undated and the recipients' names are not mentioned. In MM it is entered under the year 1355 based on its position in the manuscript (two folios after the patriarchal act of 1355 sanctioning the peace treaty and marriage alliance between Bulgaria and Byzantium, and right before an act issued in December 1355); Darrouzès argues for a later dating (1361 or 1362) based on internal elements– see Critique 1, p. 369. Koder et al places the letter between 1360 and 1362. If the unnamed hieromonk to whom the letter was addressed was indeed the Hesychast Theodosius, as it is usually assumed (see below), then the year 1362 could be problematic, since Theodosius' death it is likely to have occurred in November of that year in Constantinople (November 1363 is the other date proposed for Theodosius' death, see n. 112 below).

[100] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1285 (1235 to 1240), p. 93.

signifying baptism in the name of the Trinity; any other procedure was invalid.[101] Further, the Bulgarian church did not use for the rites of confirmation and holy unction the only acceptable oil, the one consecrated by the Great Church (Hagia Sophia in Constantinople), but oil from the relics of the holy martyr Demetrius and saint Barbaros, in full violation of tradition. Finally, Callistus warned the Bulgarians that, if the patriarch of Trnovo and his clergy were willing to reform their sinful ways, God would forgive them; if not, God's anger would attend them.

For Callistus, the stance of Theodosius of Trnovo was uncanonical on issues essential to the proper functioning of the Church and the well-being of its members: obedience to the ecumenical patriarch, which ensured harmony in the ecclesiastical chain of command and implicitly unity of teaching and practice; baptism, which had to be valid in order to wash away sins and add the candidate to the mystical body of Christ; and sanctified holy myrrh, oil which had to be consecrated in the appropriate manner by the appropriate clergy if the newly-baptized were to be confirmed into the Church or the members in poor health were to receive healing during the sacrament of holy unction. But however wrong the patriarch of Trnovo was in his actions, he was only indirectly addressed and chastised. The actual recipients of Callistus' letter were two monks of Trnovo, presumably highly influential, as they were the ones urged to make things known in their churches and persuade Bulgarian clergy to rally to the position of Constantinople. Callistus was mindful of how difficult it could be to sway his colleague in Trnovo out of his erroneous ways directly, so he settled for lesser goals: to undermine Theodosius' position by having at least some Bulgarian bishops and priests siding with the ecumenical patriarch. And for the fourteenth-century churchmen genuinely interested in the salvation of souls, the transgressions of canon law of which Theodosius of Trnovo was guilty -

[101] This was probably a reminiscence from the brief flirtation of Bulgaria with Catholicism during the reign of tsar Kaloyan (1196-1207). See Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 102-108.

and with him the rest of the Bulgarian church - were dangerous enough to make them push for a friendlier and more compliant attitude towards Constantinople. Callistus most likely counted on just that.

There is, however, no further record among the patriarchal *acta* on this topic. If Patriarch Callistus made any inroads into winning Bulgarians over to his cause, these were rather modest and due to certain local sympathies with Constantinople. Most of these sympathies came from Hesychast circles associated with Gregory the Sinaite and his teachings on the prayer of the heart. Gregory's spiritual quest had taken him from Cyprus to Mount Sinai, where he learned to practice strict ascetic discipline (πρᾶξις), and then to Crete and Mount Athos, where he learned to silence his mind and practice thought-free contemplation (θεορία). After years of searching and wandering, in the late 1320s Gregory finally settled in Paroria, an isolated, mountainous region in southeastern Bulgaria, at the border with Byzantine Thrace.[102] He attracted a large following, among whom were the Greek Callistus, future patriarch of Constantinople, and the Bulgarian Theodosius, leading monastic figure during John Alexander's reign.[103] Callistus and

[102] The place had not been exactly identified; τὰ Παρόρια was probably not a toponym, it simply meant "frontiers," "boundaries,"" borderland." The information we have on Gregory the Sinaite comes from his v*ita*, written in Greek by Callistus, patriarch of Constantinople, and translated soon afterwards into Slavonic. The Greek version was edited by I. Pomialovski, βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ ἐν ἁγίοις πατρὸς ἡῶν Γρηγορίου τοῦ Σιναΐτου in *Zapiski istoriko-filologičeskogo fakul'teta imperatorskogo St. Petersburgskogo Universiteta* 35 (1896) 1-46 [hereafter "Life of Gregory the Sinaite"]; Slavonic text in P. A. Syrku, *Pamjatniki drevnej pis'mennosti i iskusstva* 172 (1909). There is currently no comprehensive monograph on Gregory the Sinaite, but useful discussions of his role in the Hesychast movement of the fourteenth century are in David Balfour, "Gregory of Sinai's Life Story and Spiritual Profile," *Theologia* 53.1 (1982) 30-62; J. Bois, "Grégoire le Sinaite et l'hésychasme à l'Athos au XIVe siècle," *Echos d'Orient* 5 (1901-1902) 65-73; A. E. N. Tachios, " Gregory Sinaites' Legacy to the Slavs: Preliminary Remarks," *Cyrillomethodianum* VII (1983) 113-163. The last article also provides a list of the manuscripts containing the Slavonic translation of the *vita*. For Callistus as author of Hesychast saints' lives, see R. E. Richardson, "Hesychasm in the Hagiographical Works of Patriarch Callistus," PhD Diss. (Harvard University, 1969).

[103] The monk Theodosius is to be distinguished from the Bulgarian patriarch who bore the same name. The monk's *vita* is also attributed to Callistus; it survived only in its Slavonic rendition. The Slavonic text was edited by V. Zlatarski in *Zbornik za narodni umotvorenja, nauka, i kniznina* 20.2 (1904) 1-41; a translation in modern Bulgarian was published by V. S. Kiselkov, *Zhitieto na sveti Theodosii Tarnovski kato istoričeski pametnik* (Sofia, 1926). A full English translation of the *vita* is in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden, 2008) 286-314 [hereafter "Life of Theodosius"]. Callistus' authorship of the text was challenged by Kiselkov, who argued that the patriarch of Constantinople could not have known all the details of religious life in Trnovo and that the writer was one of the Bulgarian disciples of Theodosius, who wrote directly in Slavonic. The English scholar Muriel Heppell proposes

Theodosius remained friends for the rest of their lives. The unnamed leader of the Bulgarian monks who corresponded in 1361 with Callistus is usually identified as Theodosius.[104] It was their long-standing relationship which allowed the patriarch of Constantinople to call the Hescyhast monks to action against their patriarch.

Theodosius was valuable to Constantinople in other ways as well. He had cultivated the friendship of Tsar John Alexander and succeeded in influencing him on a number of sensitive issues. Since Paroria was frequently victim of banditry, the monk acted as emissary of Gregory the Sinaite to the tsar, petitioning him for funds and qualified workers to erect fortifications around their hermitage. John Alexander, for all his political shrewdness, was a man of his age - deeply pious and eager to contribute to the well-being of ascetics who devoted their lives to God through prayer and contemplation; moreover, he was impressed by the reputation for holiness of Gregory the Sinaite, the Greek monk who had found his spiritual haven within the borders of Bulgaria. The tsar sent money, beasts, and men to build not only walls, but also a tower, a church, cells and stables; he also donated lands and a fish pond for the monk's use.[105] When Gregory the Sinaite died, John Alexander encouraged Theodosius to settle close to Trnovo,

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instead that the core of the *vita* was indeed authored by Callistus, and then a later Bulgarian copyist added to it information about the monk's role in the fight against Bogomilism and other heresies, which only a Bulgarian could have intimately known. Callistus' Theodosius was a recluse in search of silence and solitude, the copyist's Theodosius was a militant for orthodoxy, hence the two apparently contradictory images of the same historical figure; see M. Heppell, "Hesychasm in the Balkans," *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans* (London, 2001) 125-137, at 131-132. However, the data we get on the Bulgarian church councils is not so detailed and conversant with the issues at stake as to preclude authorship by a well-connected outsider who obtained the basic information from direct participants in the events. Moreover, ever since Anthony the Great in the fourth century, ascetics have been presented by Christian authors as both withdrawing from the world to remote places and engaged in the world's anti-heretical activities, so the portrayal of Theodosius is not necessarily inconsistent.

[104] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, Critique n. 2, p. 369.

[105] "Life of Gregory the Sinaite," c. XVII, p. 40-41; "Life of Theodosius," 292. This lavish donation lacks confirmation from outside sources, but is analogous to others made by John Alexander to monasteries on Mt. Athos and in his realm, some of which had just come under his control (for instance those on the Black Sea coast). Extant charters are published in I. Dujčev, *Iz starata balgarska knizhnina* v. 2 (Sofia, 1944) and Jordan Ivanov, *Balgarski starini iz Makedonja* (Sofia, 1970); several are translated in K. Petkov ed., *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* (Leiden 2008) 494-502. On the fact that no charter on the donation to Gregory the Sinaite survived, see A. E. N. Tachios, "Sur les traces d'un acte du tsar Ivan Alexandre," *Cyrillomethodianum* 3 (1975) 183-189.

giving him a plot of land (near the modern village of Kelifarevo) to establish a monastic community there.[106] According to the *vita*'s author, as abbot Theodosius was actively engaged not only in introducing monks from all over the Orthodox world to the Hesychast method of inner prayer, but also in combating heresy, especially Bogomilism. He gets the credit for persuading the tsar to hold councils twice (in 1350 and 1358/1360) at which dualist, Judaizing and anti-Palamist teachings were denounced as heretical and their proponents either exiled or put to death.[107] The *vita* attributes little significance to the role played by the Bulgarian patriarch in the matter: "He was at a loss about what to do, for he was a simple man and did not comprehend things well," so he asked Theodosius the monk for help, who then orchestrated everything, from the summoning of councils to the final defeat of heretics.[108] It is unlikely that the patriarch who had put up such strong resistance against Constantinople was unable to deal with challenges at home. The *vita's* uncomplimentary views on Patriarch Theodosius as a leader are rather an expression of its author's disapproval of this resolute adversary of Constantinopolitan ecclesiastical hegemony.[109] But even if the monk Theodosius played only a secondary role in the battle against heresy, the fact that he was in the good graces of the tsar made him a precious ally

[106] "Life of Theodosius," 295.
[107] "Life of Theodosius," 296-300, 302-305. These councils are discussed in detail by D. Obolensky, *The Bogomils: A Study in Balkan Neo-Manicheism* (Cambridge, 1948) 250-267. On Jewish or Judaizing religious influences in Bulgaria, see N. Kochev, "The Question of Jews and So-called Judaizers in the Balkans from the 9th to the 14th Century," *Bulgarian Historical Review* 6 (1978) 61-79.
[108] "Life of Theodosius," 298.
[109] See Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 120, who however wrongly states that the patriarch of Bulgaria at the time of the councils was Symeon (Theodosius' predecessor). Although there is some confusion over the sequence and timeline of the patriarchs of Trnovo during the Second Bulgarian Empire because of the scant evidence on the topic, it is now accepted that Symeon was the patriarch who performed the coronation of tsar Stephen Dušan in 1346, but by 1348 he had already been succeeded by Theodosius, who was in office until mid-1360s. See Ivan Tjutjundjiev, *Trnovskiat Episkopat XI-XXI v.* (Sofia, 2007) 53-59; also Ivan Biliarsky et al, *Borilos Sinodik. Izdanie i Prevod* (Sofia, 2010), which provides an English translation of Tsar Boril's Synodikon, p. 337-375. A scribal note in the gospels book prepared in 1348 in Vidin for John Stratsimir, the eldest son of John Alexander and administrator in his father's name of the province of Vidin, confirms that Theodosius was already patriarch in that year; see Ivan Dujčev, *Iz starata balgarska knizhnina,* 170; English version in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria,* 470-471.

of Constantinople. Patriarch Callistus was undoubtedly hoping that the monk could induce John Alexander to see the benefits of an ecclesiastical rapprochement with Byzantium.

But it seems that Callistus' expectations were running too high. Within a year after his letter to the Bulgarian monks, his friend Theodosius wrote back asking for permission to come to Constantinople to visit the patriarch and receive his blessing as well as confirmation with the holy oil of the Great Church. This information appears only in Theodosius' *vita*, which gives as reason for the request a sickness that had terribly weakened the monk and made him feel the approach of death. Theodosius wished to end his earthly life in full communion with the ecumenical patriarch and fully certain that he had gone through all required rites in the way specified by the canons.[110] While these might have been genuine concerns of Theodosius (which, incidentally, indicates a failure on his part to persuade the Bulgarian ecclesiastical authorities to fall in line with Constantinople), some other factors could have also contributed to his rather precipitous departure from Trnovo. The monk's too openly pro-Constantinople stance and his efforts to influence the Bulgarian tsar in the direction of reconciliation with Byzantium are very likely to have brought him in direct confrontation with the patriarch of Trnovo. However great spiritual prestige Theodosius the monk might have enjoyed within and without Bulgaria, Theodosius the patriarch had a much stronger grip over the country's ecclesiastical policies and was probably more influential at the tsar's court than his ascetic namesake. In the end, the monk decided that there was little left for him to do at home, and set sail to Constantinople, despite firm opposition on the part of the Bulgarian patriarch to this journey (perhaps understood as one last betrayal of Bulgaria's aspiration for self-determination).[111] Four disciples accompanied the monk, among them Euthymius, future patriarch of Trnovo (1375-1393), and Cyprian Camblak,

[110] "Life of Theodosius," 309.
[111] "Life of Theodosius," 310.

future metropolitan of Kiev (1376-1406). All were adherents of the Hesychast ascetic discipline, like Callistus himself, who received them with great joy. Theodosius chose to remain in Constantinople until the end of his life, and received a cell in the patriarchal monastery of Saint Mamas. He died in November 1362 or 1363 and was buried in his adoptive city.[112] His patron, Patriarch Callistus, died in the fall of 1363 in Serres, Macedonia, during a mission intended to bring about reconciliation with the Serbian church.[113]

Callistus had left Constantinople at the head of an imperial embassy to Helen, widow of Stephen Dušan, in the summer of 1363. Helen, who in the meantime had become a nun and bore the monastic name of Elizabeth, continued her involvement in politics after her husband's death in 1355. In the early 1360s, she responded positively to John V's appeals to forge a joint Serbian-Byzantine alliance against the Turks. The emperor sent a delegation to Serres where Helen-Elizabeth lived and ruled, presumably on behalf of her son. The presence of the head of the Byzantine church in the delegation reveals the importance given by the emperor to this diplomatic embassy, which was seeking both to restore political ties between the two states and to bring about the ecclesiastical reintegration of Serbia with Constantinople (or at least at that part of Serbia which was under Helen's and her son's control). But the patriarch and some members of the delegation died of unknown causes (food poisoning as well as plague had been mentioned as possible reasons), and were buried with full pomp by the ex-empress in Phera (Ferres). The exact time of death is not clear, but is usually assumed that it happened in late 1363.[114] Negotiations thus ended abruptly, without any of the expected outcomes.

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[112] "Life of Theodosius," 311-314. The year of his death is not certain; if 1363, then Theodosius died at the same time with, or right after, Patriarch Callistus, who thus could not be the author of the entire *vita Theodosii*, as the writing mentions both Theodosius's demise and burial, and the later death of his close friend Roman, who had taken over the leadership of the Kelifarevski community after Theodosius' departure to Constantinople. These details may be additions of the translator.

[113] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.50, v. 3, p. 360-362; Chron. Brev. no. 7.16, v. 1, p. 66; v. 2, p. 291-292.

[114] For the chronology of the incident, see Charanis, "Les BPAXEA XPONIKA," 351-352.

In 1366, Serres was taken over by another Serbian despot, John Uglješa, who had carved out a powerful principality for himself along the lower Struma. John and his brother Vukašin recognized the rule of Tsar Uroš V, although they rarely cooperated with him. The Uglješa brothers played an important role in improving relations with Byzantium and organizing the Balkan resistance to the Turks; both were to die in the pivotal battle of Maritsa in 1371. The Despot John was very open to resuming negotiations with the patriarchate of Constantinople. In March 1368 he issued a document in which he proclaimed his willingness to restore the churches in his realm back to the Byzantine fold. In the preamble, he made a sharp critique of Dušan's decision to raise his own patriarch, remove episcopal sees from the authority of the patriarchate of Constantinople, and introduce a long and painful rivalry between the two churches. Uglješa sent an embassy to Constantinople to discuss the details of reunion, a gesture much welcomed by Callistus' successor, Philotheus Coccinus, especially since the Serbian despot engaged himself to return all bishoprics which he controlled back under the patriarch's jurisdiction. The patriarch sent his own envoys to Serres, and after talks and the necessary preparations, the reunion was officially proclaimed in May 1371. Philotheus Coccinus acted with the usual Byzantine *oikonomia*, recognizing the ordinations made by the Serbian church, but appointing Greek prelates to the vacant sees.[115] While much of Serbia including the patriarchate of Peč remained in schism, the reconciliation of Uglješa with Constantinople paved the way to healing the remaining ecclesiastical divisions in the Balkans. As the need for military alliances in face of the common Turkish threat became ever more acute, the return of wayward churches to Byzantine jurisdiction became a precondition to receiving logistical and military support from Constantinople.

[115] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2535 (1367/68) p. 448 and no. 2611 (May 1371) p. 514-515; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 364-366; Solis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 92-94.

In the case of John Uglješa, however, the expected Byzantine aid did not materialize. Emperor John V was hesitant as usual, expecting to receive some help from the West for himself, and on the other hand not ready to provoke the anger of the Ottoman sultan by aiding the Serbian despot. The ensuing battle on the Maritsa River in September 1371 was a disaster for the south Serbians, whose armies were wiped out by the Turks. After the death of the Uglješa brothers on the battlefield and, a few months later, of Tsar Uroš V, the idea of a Serbian empire was put to rest permanently. The Serbs could rely only on those local rulers who could muster sufficient resources to provide temporary relief in the face of relentless Ottoman attacks. One such ruler was Prince Lazar, whose authority covered the central and northern parts of Serbia (the Morava region). After the utter defeat of the south Serbians at the Maritsa, he realized the importance of making peace with Byzantium, and, like Uglješa, saw ecclesiastical reunion as the first step to achieving political and military cooperation. The prince had first to persuade Patriarch Sava IV of Peč of the long-term merits of such an enterprise, which evidently was to curb the extensive powers the latter had assumed after the see became independent from Constantinople. Then in 1373, Lazar sent an embassy to Constantinople, whose leading members were Athonite monks. Patriarch Philotheus received his fellow-ascetics gladly, and after, negotiations carried out in the presence of the synod and the emperor, he lifted the excommunication ban placed by Callistus on the patriarch of Peč and his church. In the meantime, Sava IV died and Prince Lazar, together with the local synod, elected as patriarch Ephrem, a monk who championed the reunion with Constantinople. The act was formally celebrated in the spring of 1375, with the provision that the autonomy of Peč was to be preserved. While the Serbians were allowed to continue using the title "patriarch" for the incumbent of that see, Constantinople reverted in its official *acta* to the older title of "archbishop of Peč and all Serbia."[116] Nonetheless, the administrative control over

[116] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2663, p. 552-553; Solis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 104-106. On the title used by the

the see of Peč remained in the hands of Prince Lazar, who, in the late 1370s when his territory reached its maximum extent, began using the title *autocrat*, which the Byzantine emperors had always claimed for themselves. But the Serbian prince did not pose any threat to Byzantium, either militarily or politically, and his principality soon lost its autonomy, becoming vassal to the Turks after the battle of Kosovopolje in 1389, in which Lazar himself lost his life.[117]

The weight of reconciling the Bulgarian church with Constantinople fell on Patriarch Philotheus, who had a second tenure as patriarch over the years 1364 and 1376.[118] Like Callistus, he was a devoted supporter of Hesychasm, especially of its theological foundations as set by Gregory Palamas. He had strong ties with the monks of Mount Athos, many of whom shared his enthusiasm for Palamite theology, but lacked similarly strong connections with the followers of the other great Hesychast master, Gregory the Sinaite, in Bulgaria. Unlike Callistus, who had been part of that group, Philotheus Coccinus was only marginally familiar with its members, so he could use this channel of communication only with caution. Moreover, he was appointed to the patriarchal throne right after a brief military confrontation between the armies of Byzantium and Bulgaria over contested cities on the Black Sea coast.[119] Although that confrontation ended with the restoration of the *status quo antebellum*, the war did nothing to alleviate the hostility and mistrust between the two parties.

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occupant of the see of Peč after 1375, see Michel Lascaris, "Le patriarcat de Peč: a-t-il été reconnu par l'Église de Constantinople en 1375?," in *Mélanges Charles Diehl*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1930) 1.171-175; Vitalien Laurent, "L'archevêque de Peč et le titre de patriarche après l'union de 1375," *Balcania* 7 (1944)303-310; Georges Ostrogorsky, "Byzance, état tributaire de l'Empire turc," in *Zur Byzantinischen Geschichte* (Darmstadt, 1973) 235-244.

[117] Čircovič, *The Serbs*, 81-85; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 408-414.

[118] Philotheus Coccinus, despite his eventful and quite successful career as a patriarch, has received little scholarly attention. There is currently no in-depth study of his role as the head of the Byzantine church, nor of his writings. A useful introduction is in V. Laurent, "Philothée Coccinus," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Paris, 1935) v. 12, col. 1498-1509. See also J. Meyendorff, *Byzantium and the Rise of Russia*, p. 173-199, with a focus on Philotheus' ecclesiastical strategy of in Russia; Marius Telea, *Patriarhul Filotei Coccinus: Exponent al Isihasmului Politic* [Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus: Promoter of Political Hesychasm - in Romanian] (Alba Iulia, 2009), which examines Philotheus' diplomatic activity and administrative measures in light of Hesychast political goals.

[119] Cantacuzenus, *Historia* IV.50, v. 3, p. 362; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 367; Halecki, *Un Empereur de Byzance*, 78-79.

By then both Bulgaria and Byzantium were empires in name only. The Turks under Murad I (1362-1389), the eldest son of Orkhan by his first wife Nilufar, had unleashed a series of attacks on Thrace which no longer stopped at plundering and pillaging, but aimed at conquest and settlement. He wrested from the Byzantines several fortresses in eastern Thrace, located in strategic points on the way to Constantinople: Tzouroullos (Çorlu), Messene (Misinli), Arcadiopolis (Lüleburgaz), and Boulgarophygon (Babaeski). His sent his lieutenants up the Maritsa River; Evrenos-bey took Didymoteichon (Dimetoka), the headquarter of John Cantacuzenus during the civil war, then the fortresses Kisson (Keşan) and Kypsala (Ipşala), while Lala-Şahin-bey captured the Bulgarian cities of Beroya (Stara Zagora) and Philippopolis (Plovdiv).[120] All these conquests almost paralyzed their victims: neither Bulgarians nor Byzantines were able to react effectively on their own, and even less were they able to agree with each other and plan a common strategy.

Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus did his best to pacify the two parties, who pointlessly fought each other at a time of such great distress. In late 1364 he wrote a letter to Tsar John Alexander, pleading with him to acknowledge the treaty with Byzantium and act upon it.[121] But the Bulgarian tsar was too busy keeping his kingdom together to take notice of Philotheus' plea. It was not solely the Turks who were tearing his realm apart. His very own son was also breaking away. In the 1340s, John Alexander had divorced his first wife, Theodora, daughter of the Wallachian ruler Nicholas I Basarab, to marry a Jewish woman who, upon becoming tsarina, converted to Orthodox Christianity and took the (same) name of Theodora.[122] From the first

[120] The chronology of the first Ottomans conquests in Thrace is confused, but it is usually accepted that the first phase of expansion took place under Murad I in the 1360s and focused on Thrace up to the Balkan range. See *Pitcher, Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire*, 42, and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire* 17-19.
[121] Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2464, p. 389-390; MM I.196, p. 453-454.
[122] Theodora of Wallachia was forced to take the veil and died as nun Theophana, probably in Vidin where her son ruled; see Biliarsky et al, *Borilos Sinodik* 355. The "Life of Theodosius" mentions the second marriage of Tsar John Alexander in the context of the Jewish (or Judaizing) controversies that led to the second council of Trnovo,

marriage, the tsar had only one surviving son, John Stratsimir.[123] In the late 1340s, he sent Stratsimir away, as co-ruler and administrator of the province of Vidin. Some ten years later John Alexander proclaimed John Šišman, the first son by his second wife, heir to the Bulgarian throne, passing over John Stratsimir. Not surprisingly, Stratsimir felt wronged by the choice, and retaliated by cutting Vidin off from the rest of Bulgaria. Tsar John Alexander had already lost the northeastern part of his kingdom, Dobrudja, to one of his determined boyars, Balik, in the 1340s.[124] Now the northwestern part (Vidin) was gone as well. And the troubles did not end there. In 1365, Vidin was invaded by the armies of King Louis the Great of Hungary (1342-1382), conquered, and transformed into a banate; Stratsimir was taken captive with his entire family, imprisoned, and forced to convert to Catholicism.[125]

John Alexander took his revenge where he could. In early 1366, his neighbor to the east, John V Palaeologus, undertook a diplomatic journey to Hungary, in a desperate move to persuade King Louis to provide Byzantium with military aid against the Turks. The Hungarian king coveted the lands south of the Danube, so he was quite open to the idea of an anti-Turkish crusade. The Turks themselves had the Danubian frontier in mind, and they were at that moment

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emphasizing that even if she was of the same blood with the agitators, the tsarina "was pious and Orthodox and did not accept the blasphemies uttered against the Orthodox faith" (p. 303). Gregoras adds the detail that she was very beautiful – vid. *Historia* XXXVII.51, v. 3 p. 558. In Bulgarian panegyrics and other literature of the time, including dedications or marginal notes in manuscripts, the new Theodora was always designated by the epithets "faithful," God-crowned," and "newly-enlightened," meant to underscore her dedication to Christianity. See for instance "Marginal note in the codex of Parvoslav, 1350-1360," "Panegyric-postscript to the London Gospel of Tsar Ioan Alexander, 1356," "Scribal note to a translation of Paul's Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles, ca. 1348," in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria*, 448-449, 469-470, 471-472. In the "Life of Theodosius" (p. 303) and in the additions to Tsar Boril's Synodikon, she is extolled for having built, or funded the restoration, of many churches and monasteries - Biliarsky, *Borilov Sinodik* 355. The scandal of an Orthodox Christian ruler divorcing his Orthodox Christian wife to marry a woman of Jewish descent was thus averted by overplaying the 'genuine conversion' factor. See also Dujčev, "Le dernier siècle," 225.

[123] John Alexander had three sons with Theodora of Wallachia, Michael Asen (d. 1355), John Stratsimir (ruler of Vidin ca.1356-1396) and John Asen (d. 1348/50). They are mentioned in this order in a panegyric to the tsar from the year 1337 – see *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 469; their names are not among those listed in the additions to Boril's Synodikon, where only John Alexander's children by his Jewish wife appear (which is understandable, as the additions were done during the reign of Tsar John Shishman, the step-brother of Stratsimir and his rival to the throne).

[124] Dujčev, "Le dernier siècle," 229; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 366-367.

[125] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 367.

the most powerful and well-organized opponents Hungary had to face in the area. But despite being threatened by a common enemy, King Louis and Emperor John were unable to reach an agreement. John V received some vague promises for help, but all depended on his full and genuine submission to the Holy See and his ability to persuade his people to do the same. The emperor reaffirmed his decision that he personally would enter complete and definitive union with the Church of Rome, but it was not deemed enough. He left Buda disappointed, without any concrete results. On the way back to Constantinople, he met with the strong refusal of Tsar John Alexander to grant him entrance into Bulgarian territory. John V had just visited Hungary, Bulgaria's newest enemy, so there was no reason for the tsar to be welcoming of his Byzantine rival. The emperor remained in a sort of semi-captivity in Vidin. The Hungarian king ignored his plight. Andronicus IV, John V's son and John Alexander's son-in-law, was slow in coming to his father's help. The patriarch took no action in support of the emperor. While the Turks were roaming through Thrace, those who suffered mostly at their hands and could have joint forces to fight back were caught in their own petty squabbles. In the fall of 1366 help finally – and unexpectedly – arrived for John V from the West. His cousin Count Amedeo of Savoy, his mother's half-brother, had just started a crusade against the Ottomans on his own. He took Gallipoli back from the Turks and was planning to push them out of the entire peninsula, when he heard about John V's misfortunes. He changed plans and rushed to his cousin's aid. The count sailed along the Black Sea coast, where he attacked and overtook the Bulgarian cities of Sozopolis, Anchialos and Mesembria. In the course of only one month, October 1366, Tsar John Alexander thus lost his access to the Black Sea. His attempt at retaliation against John V had brought him no satisfaction. To avoid further losses, he agreed to release the *basileus,* who then joined Count Amedeo at Sozopolis.[126]

[126] The story of John V's ill-fated journey to Hungary is told in detail by Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance,* 111-

None of these disconcerting events (a Byzantine emperor at the mercy of his neighbors, refused due reverence by his allies and pushed around like a mere commoner) are reflected in the patriarchal register. Philotheus Coccinus' main concern during the months of imperial absence was to stamp out all traces of anti-Palamism from Byzantium and Mt. Athos.[127] There is no record of him trying to engage the tsar or his ecclesiastical counterpart in Trnovo in dialogue. In this, he might have been influenced by his previous experience, when Bulgarian authorities proved non-responsive to appeals coming from Constantinople. Also, he might have been equally disappointed with John V's efforts to get military aid from a Catholic kingdom which sought aggressively to expand both its territory and its religion into the Balkans. The patriarch was by no means a close friend of the emperor. On most issues (religious, political, military) the two were at variance with each other. John V kept making unrealistic promises of moving into the Catholic camp not only himself, but his people as well. That was definitely not what Philotheus Coccinus had in mind for the Byzantines and for the rest of the Balkan world, which he wanted firmly united under the banner of Orthodoxy.

The main Greek source that discusses the emperor's tribulations during his forced stay on borderlands is a speech delivered by Demetrius Cydones, *Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum* in September 1366, as the ships of Amedeo of Savoy were approaching Constantinople. The famous scholar was trying to persuade his fellow citizens, who refused to forget what Latin armies had brought upon Byzantium in the past, to accept Latin aid without fear, and dread the deceitful Bulgarians, whom not even a peace treaty and marriage alliance had kept from causing harm to Byzantium. Unlike Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus, Cydones believed that shared faith, Orthodoxy, was not enough to make good neighbors out of the Bulgarians (or the Serbians for

148, and Setton, *Papacy and the Levant I*, 286-306; see also Chron. brev. I 9.18-20, p. 94, discussion in II. p. 295-296.

[127] See for instance Darrouzès, *Regestes*, nos. 2509, 2515, 2518.

that matter), and to unite all of them against the Turks. The Latins had the power and willingness to help and to stretch out a timely hand that should not be ignored.[128]

As far as John V was concerned, he was not going to ignore the Latins' offer for help. One of the immediate consequences of the *basileus*' delivery from his adventure abroad by Amedeo of Savoy was the renewal of negotiations with Rome. In February 1367, John V and his cousin Amedeo made their way back to the capital. Paul, the Latin patriarch of Constantinople, who had been part of Count Amedeo's crusading taskforce and acted as an emissary between the count and Tsar John Alexander, also came along. He insisted on holding a formal meeting on the return of the Greeks to the Church of Rome.[129] A semi-official consultation between him and representatives of Byzantine political and religious life took place in June. Among those present were John VI Cantacuzenus, now the monk Joasaph, and the bishops of Heraclea, Adrianople, and Ephesus. As Paul had not been officially delegated by the pope to convene such a meeting, the Byzantine heads of state and Church did not attend, but kept themselves abreast of the progress of discussions.[130] Philotheus Coccinus endorsed the final proposal for an ecumenical council, where a decision was to be reached regarding ecclesiastical reunion. Unlike his predecessor Callistus, who had been an adversary of any consultation with Rome on the possibility of reunion, Philotheus Coccinus was open to such an idea within the limits set by the Byzantine tradition: any major issue involving the Church had to be debated and decided upon in

[128] "Oratio pro subsidio Latinorum," *Patrologia Graeca* 154, 961-1008; a detailed presentation of this speech is in Judith R. Ryder, *The Career and Writings of Demetrius Cydones: A Study of Fourteenth-Century Byzantine Politics, Religion and Society* (Leiden, 2010) 63-79.
[129] Setton, *Papacy and the Levant I* 306.
[130] On this meeting see Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance*, 151-162; John Meyendorff, "Projets de Concile Oecuménique en 1367: Un dialogue inédite entre Jean Cantacuzène et le légat Paul," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960) 144-177; Donald M. Nicol, "Byzantine Requests for an Oecumenical Council in the Fourteenth Century," *Annuarium Historiae Conciliorum* 1 (1969) 69-95.

an ecumenical council, summoned by the emperor and attended by all four eastern patriarchs, papal representatives, metropolitans and bishops from all over the Christian world.[131]

The patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem, present at the time in Constantinople, agreed to the proposal. Philotheus then wrote to the patriarch of Antioch and to the archbishop of Ohrid, to persuade them to attend the forthcoming council and bring their suffragan bishops with them.[132] No letters, however, were sent to either the patriarch of Trnovo or to the patriarch in Peč, the two clergymen who still refused to acknowledge their hierarchical superior in Constantinople. As they had placed themselves outside the boundaries of canon law, their formal opinions, even if expressed, would have been invalid. And while Philotheus Coccinus at this time was initiating negotiations with Serbian ruler John Uglješa for the reconciliation between his principality and Constantinople, there is no evidence of an analogous diplomatic activity with Bulgaria.[133] Theodosius of Trnovo, the great adversary of Byzantine ecclesiastical hegemony, was no longer alive, but his successor, Ioanicius/Joanikios (c. 1365-1375), was not any friendlier towards Byzantium.[134] Very little is known about his term as patriarch, and nothing of it has any bearing on the relationship with Constantinople.

As for the see of Ohrid, it had probably just returned under Byzantine control, or at least was considering the move. The official title of the see, as used by Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus in his letter, was archbishopric of "Ohrid, Justiniana Prima and all Bulgaria." That titulature came from the early eleventh century, when the First Bulgarian Empire succumbed to the armies of the Byzantine emperor Basil II Bulgaroktonos ("the Bulgar-slayer"), and no longer reflected latest political and ecclesiastical realities. During the long period of Byzantine domination after

[131] Nicol, "Byzantine Requests for an Oecumenical Council" 89-91.
[132] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2524 and 2525.
[133] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2518.
[134] Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans* 124.

the fall of the First Bulgarian Empire, Ohrid had come under the direct jurisdiction of Constantinople and had been heavily Hellenized. Its archbishops were Greek-speaking and pro-Byzantine in their policies.[135] Until the Second Bulgarian Empire was established by the Asen brothers at the end of the twelfth century, the bishoprics within Bulgaria were controlled by the Greek archbishop of Ohrid. Afterwards they were placed by the new Bulgarian rulers under the archbishop of Trnovo.[136] The see of Ohrid itself remained under Byzantine ecclesiastical (and secular) jurisdiction until Stephen Dušan conquered Macedonia in the 1340s, when it passed under Serbian control. The archbishop of Ohrid – whether out of loyalty or political necessity – had participated in the coronation of Dušan in 1346. But most bishops in that eparchy were still pro-Byzantine, so the return of Ohrid under the authority of the patriarchate of Constantinople was only a matter of time once Dušan was out of the way. No patriarchal act records such an event, but the firm yet friendly way in which Philotheus invited the archbishop to the council indicates that the two were no longer in schism.[137]

The proposed council never took place. Neither party was actually ready to consider fully the other's arguments and interpretations. Each expected the other to accept that it had been in error, repent and return to the "Mother Church" from which it had cut itself off. Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus encouraged the archbishop of Ohrid to attend the council with full confidence, since "the empire guards with total fidelity our dogmas as before and does not trust those who say otherwise. We have established with the papal legates that if, at the council, our dogmas will prove to be more in accordance with the Scriptures than those of the Latins, the latter will make the same profession of faith as us. By God's grace, we are confident that it will

[135] I. Iliev, "The First Centuries of the Archbishopric of Ohrid," *State and Church in Bulgaria: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium* eds. V. Gjuzelev and K. Petkov (Sofia, 2011) 237-252; G. Prinzing, "Ohrid," *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich 1993) VI: 1376-1380.
[136] Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans* 91-92
[137] Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance* 153.

be so."[138] As for Pope Urban V (1362-1370), he did not even consider the option of holding an ecumenical council. He simply praised the Eastern patriarchs for having decided to reunite with the Church of Rome, and urged them to counsel their flocks on the many advantages that would come from such a union.[139]

All the Byzantines received from the pope were words of praise and encouragement; no military aid against the Turks followed. And in the meantime, Murad's troops continued to assail and conquer Byzantine and Bulgarian lands. Towns and fortresses fell one after another. The biggest losses for the Byzantines were Bizye (Vize), a Thracian town north of Constantinople, taken in 1368, and Adrianople, the third largest city of Byzantium after Constantinople and Thessalonica, fallen in 1369.[140] Murad I made it his European capital. The new Ottoman military and administrative base was too close to Constantinople to leave the Byzantines at ease with the situation. A desperate John V proceeded to Rome, to make profession of faith before the pope, hoping that his gesture of submission would be enough to bring some concrete help. It was not, and once again John V returned home empty-handed. [141]

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[138] Darrouzes V, no. 2524, p. 440; MM 1.234, p. 491-493.
[139] Raynaldus v. 26, year 1367, no. 10, p. 49; see discussion in Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance* 166-171.
[140] The exact date of Adrianople's fall is still disputed. Some scholars place it in 1361, at the very beginning of Ottoman's expansion into northern Thrace; see Inalcik, "Conquest of Edirne," 210 and Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire* 18. Pitcher, *Historical Geography of the Ottoman Empire*, suggests 1365 or 1366. However, the patriarchal *acta* of the early 1360s are silent regarding an event of such magnitude, while the Byzantine short-chronicles give September 1368 to August 1369 (year 6877, indiction 7) as the time period within which Adrianople was besieged and taken by the Turks. See Chron. Brev. I 53.2, p. 379; 54.3, p. 388; 55.4, p. 398; 58. 3 p. 418 etc., with discussion and further references in v. II, p.297-299. E. Zachariadou, "The Conquest of Adrianople by the Turks," *Studi Veneziani* XII (1970) 211-217, argues for the year 1369, based on her analysis of the encomiastic poem for John V Palaeologus commissioned by the metropolitan of the city, Polycarpos, in 1366, upon the emperor's successful return from his Hungarian journey. The fact that Adrianople had a metropolitan at the time indicates it had not fallen yet to the Turks (once the city was conquered, Polycarpos fled to Constantinople). I. Beldiceanu-Steinherr, "*La conquête* d'*Adrianople* par les Turcs: La pénétration turque en Thrace et la valeur des chroniques ottomans," *Travaux et Mémoirs* I (Paris 1965) 439-461, also argues 1369 as the year of conquest not by Murad's troops, but by some of his begs. Later on in 1376 or 1377 the city was actually taken over by Murad and turn into his capital.
[141] Halecki, *Un empereur de Byzance*, 188-205; Nicol, *Last Centuries* 270-271.

Little is known of Bulgaria in this period. Neither tsar nor patriarch showed any interest in the negotiations for union, nor in resuming relationships with Byzantium. They were not able even to cooperate with their other desperate neighbors, the Serbians under the brothers John and Vukašin Uglješa, who had decided to confront the Turks in their new stronghold, Adrianople (as earlier related). In September 1371 the brothers and their armies were thoroughly defeated at the battle of Černomin, some 20 miles from the city, on the Maritsa River.[142] The battle was a decisive moment in the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans. With no real power left to oppose them, Macedonia and Greece lay there helplessly exposed, awaiting their dire fate. The remaining Serbian princes became Murad's vassals. A year later, in 1372, John V himself had to sign a treaty with Murad.[143] Bulgaria, still standing on its own, now became the main Ottoman target. John Alexander had died in February 1371, and his eldest son by his second wife, John Šišman, ascended to the throne. He was at war with his brother Stratsimir in Vidin, and stayed aloof from Byzantium. In 1375, to placate Murad I, he had his sister Tamar, previous wife of Despot Constantine of Serbia, marry the Ottoman sultan.[144] In the same year, John Šišman appointed a new patriarch on the throne of Trnovo: Euthymius, a former disciple of the Hesychast monk Theodosius and good friend of Byzantium.

Euthymius proved to be an inspired choice for the Bulgarian church, and a salutary one for Constantinople. In his young days, Euthymius had been a disciple of Theodosius, the

[142] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 379-381; a brief, gloomy account of the battle and its outcome is in the "Historical account of the monk Isaiah about the battle of Chernomen, 1371," Slavonic text in Jordan Ivanov, *Balgarski starini iz Makedonja* (Sofia, 1970) 226-227, English translation in *Voices in Medieval Bulgaria* 454-455.

[143] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 382. H. Matanov, "The Relations between the Ottoman Conquerors and the Balkans States in the 1370s-1380s: Typological Aspects," *State and Church: Studies in Medieval Bulgaria and Byzantium* (Sofia, 2011) 83-91, argues that vassalage of the Balkan states was the main mechanism by which Murad I ensured his further conquests into the peninsula; he used his vassals as buffer states while he concentrated his resources in several strategic directions.

[144] According to the additions to Boril's synodikon, the marriage reached its goal: Tamar "kept her faith and liberated her people," in Biliarsky, *Borilov Sinodik* 355. The "liberation" did not last too long, however: probably in 1376 Bulgaria became an Ottoman vassal and in the 1380s Murad I unleashed a series of campaigns which brought him important Bulgarian cities such as Samokov, Ihtiman and Sofia; see I. Dujčev, "Le déclin de la Bulgarie médiéval," *Histoire de la Bulgarie*, eds. I. Dujčev et al (Roanne, 1977) 235-254, at 236-237.

Hesychast monk who had founded Kilifarevo, and in 1362 had accompanied his master on his visit to Constantinople. After Theodosius died in the Byzantine capital, Euthymius stayed on, dedicating himself to a life of intense prayer and ascetic practices at the Studion monastery. He then left Constantinople for Mt. Athos, where he deepened and strengthened his Hesychast discipline. In ca. 1371 he returned to Bulgaria, where with encouragement and funding from the new tsar, John Šišman (1371-1395), he built a monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity close to Trnovo, which soon became a vibrant center of literary activity.[145] In 1375, when the patriarch of Trnovo died, Bulgarian laymen and clergymen appealed to Tsar Šišman to appoint Euthymius as their new leader. As abbot and patriarch, Euthymius strove to preserve the Orthodox faith by purifying the liturgical and ecclesiastical language of all inadequate expressions and formulations, and by purifying moral and spiritual life. For him, the two were interrelated: a correct religious language ensured no heresy crept in either beliefs or rituals, while correct teachings resulted in a true Christian life.[146] To reach his first goal, he advocated the return to the Old Church Slavonic used by Cyril and Methodius, the "fathers of Slavic Christianity." He also instituted orthographic reforms, had old translations of religious writings checked against their Greek original and corrected wherever needed, made or commissioned new translations. He himself translated the scriptures afresh, act for which in his *vita* he was likened to Moses:

> "This new-lawgiver destroyed all the old books and, carrying in his hands those on which he labored, descended from the mountain of his mind and gave to the Church, like the tablets written by God, that genuine heavenly treasure: the new [scriptures], correct, in accordance with the Gospels, unwavering in the strength of their dogmas, God's grace for the soul of the pious, knife for the tongues and fire for the faces of heretics."[147]

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[145] Euthymius' literary and religious career is described in the *encomium* written for him by a probable relative of his, Gregory Tsamblak, in the early fifteenth century; Slavonic text published by Emil Kałużniacki, *Aus den panegyrischen Litteratur der Südslaven* (London, 1971) 22-88, with English translation in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 355-377.

[146] Maurice L. Hébert, *Hesychasm, Word-weaving and Slavic Hagiography: The Literary School of Patriarch Euthymius* (Munich, 1992) 72-73.

[147] Gregory Tsamblak, "Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius," *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 364. On Euthymius' linguistics and orthographic reforms, their impact on Slavic-speaking peoples and their limitations (creation of an

Like his master, the Hesychast monk Theodosius, Euthymius had his share of heretics against whom to fight. His *vita* mentions a certain Piron, guilty of Nestorianism, Barlaamism, Acindynism, and iconoclasm (it was common in medieval writings to pile up accusations, even if some of the heresies enumerated were long gone), and Theodosius Phudul, who "tore apart the body of the church with lascivious teachings" and transformed "court officials and magnates into madmen." To counter the negative impact of the two, who apparently had caught the ear of important members of the Bulgarian administration and had become influential at the court, Euthymius instructed the people daily in the right faith, and above all, he lived it.[148] His fame as an ascetic and teacher of virtuous living attracted many disciples from Bulgaria and other parts of the Balkans; his opinions on matters of dogma and practice were besought by monks and clergy alike. Three letters have survived, one to the Bulgarian Cyprian Tzamblac, fellow disciple of Theodosius and possible relative, another to the Serbian Nicodemus, abbot of Tismana, and the third to the Greek Daniel Kritopoulos, metropolitan of Argeş.[149] Apart from correspondence, four saints' *lives* and four panegyrics by Euthymius are also extant.[150]

Scholars assume that during Euthymius' tenure as patriarch the ecclesiastical relationship with Constantinople returned to normalcy.[151] Although no patriarchal document records an

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artificial language divorced from the everyday spoken language) see D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth* (London, 1971) 336-337. For a more general discussion of the 'literary school of Trnovo' see Hébert, *Hesychasm, Word-weaving and Slavic Hagiography*, 35-59; M. Heppell, "The Hesychast Movement in Bulgaria: The Turnovo School and its Relationship with Constantinople," *Eastern Church Review* 7 (1975) 9-20, at 16-17.

[148] G. Tsamblac, "Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius," *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 367-369. Two heretics, "Fudul and his teacher, Pyropoulos," are also mentioned in the additions to the Synodikon of Orthodoxy; see Biliarsky, *Borilos Synodik* 358.

[149] Slavonic text edited by Emil Kałużniacki, *Werke des Patriarchen Euthymius von Bulgarien (1375-1395)* (London 1971) 221-238; partial English translation in *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 244-249. Three anti-Bogomil letters written in Greek and addressed to the monks of Trnovo have also been attributed to Euthymius, although why would he use Greek language to write to his conationals is hard to explain. See Hébert, *Hesychasm, Word-weaving and Slavic Hagiography* 25-26.

[150] Hébert, *Hesychasm, Word-weaving and Slavic Hagiography* 35.

[151] See Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans* 125; also Meyendorff, "Alexis and Rioman" 286, who gives 1379 as the year of reconciliation, without elaborating on it. In 1379 the *coup d'état* of Andronicus IV, who had replaced his father John V in 1376 and had brought a new patriarch, Makarios (1377-1379), to the see of Constantinople, came to

official moment of reconciliation, several reasons can be adduced to support this view. First, Euthymius belonged to the pro-Byzantine wing of the Bulgarian church, as his Hesychast master Theodosius did, and was in close association with the Hesychast circles in Trnovo, Constantinople and Mt. Athos. Second, probably while in residence at Athos, Euthymius translated Philotheus Coccinus' liturgical work which standardized Byzantine prayers and offices, showing willingness to attain consistency of practice with the patriarchate of Constantinople. Third, Euthymius wrote his *vitae* following the hagiographic model put forth by his Callistus, the earlier patriarch of Constantinople, thus indicating his wish to conform to the spiritual and literary standards set by his Byzantine superior. Last but not least, his relative and fellow Hesychast, the monk Cyprian of Tzamblac, was appointed by Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus as envoy to Lithuania and then as metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia.[152] All these developments suggest that the formal and informal channels of communication between Trnovo and Constantinople stayed open during Euthymius' tenure and that due to the common interest in the Hesychast way of life the two patriarchates resumed and maintained friendly relationships.

The role played by Hesychasm in the restoration of rebellious Balkan churches to the patriarchate of Constantinople has often been emphasized by scholars of Late Byzantine history.[153] In the case of Bulgaria, adherence to a common Hesychast spirituality undoubtedly

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an end. Makarios was deposed and the Hesychast monk Nilus Kerameus was installed in his stead in the spring of 1380. Reconciliation with Bulgaria should then be placed rather in (or after) the year 1380, when the sees of both patriarchates were occupied by Athonite monks practicing the Hesychast ascetic discipline.

[152] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 442-443; Hébert, *Hesychasm, Word-weaving and Slavic Hagiography* 61-86, 435-493 and Heppell, "The Hesychast Movement in Bulgaria" 17-19; R. Constantinescu, "*Euthyme de Tarnovo et la reforme liturgique au XIVe siècle," Études Balkaniques* 3 and 4 (1986), 62-78 and 53-80, A. Rentel, "Byzantine and Slavic Orthodoxy," *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford, 2006) 252-306, at 291, and R. Taft, "Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988) 179-194, at 191-194.

[153] Alexandru Elian, "Byzance et les Roumains à la fin du Moyen Age," *Proceedings of the XIIIth International Congress of Bzyantine Studies* (London, 1967) 195-203; G. Prokhorov, "L'hesychasme et la pensée sociale en Europe orientale au XIV^{e} siècle," *Contacts: Revue française de l'Orthodoxie* 31.105 (1979) 25-63, at 40-44; John Meyendorff, 'Introduction," *Byzantine Hesychasm: Historical, Theological and Social Problems* (London 1974) iii-v; Dimitri Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonewealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (Crestwood, NY 1971) 389-390.

predisposed the patriarch of Trnovo towards resuming relationships with Constantinople and letting them unfold in accordance with established ecclesiastical canons. But while Hesychasm most likely facilitated the process of reconciliation, its importance should not be overemphasized. Even prior to Eutyhmius' ascension to the patriarchal throne, Bulgarian ecclesiastical and secular authorities had been anything but fully supportive of Hesychasm. Tsar John Alexander had been an active sponsor of Theodosius the monk and his Hesychast establishment in Kilifarevo. The two Theodosii, the patriarch and the monk, had honored the Byzantine position on the Heyschast theology of Gregory Palamas - the anti-Palamite writings of Barlaam of Calabria and Gregory Acindynus were condemned as heretical at the council of 1360, in conformity with the decisions reached by the councils held in Constantinople in the 1340s and 1350s. Patriarch Ioanicius, Euthymius' predecessor, although perhaps himself not a practitioner of Hesychasm, had not opposed its followers (Gregory Tzamblac, the author of Euthymius' *vita*, himself a Hesychast, praises Joanikios for having lived a blessed life, "worthy of a saint,"[154] which would not have been the case had Joannikios acted as an enemy of the movement). Tsar John Šišman had been an enthusiast supporter of Euthymius' literary, moral and spiritual reforms, revealing no dissatisfaction with his patriarch's Hesychast leanings; moreover, the additions to Boril's synodikon done during his reign anathematized the enemies of Hesychast theology, namely Barlaam, Acindynus and Prochors Cydones.[155]

What really divided the Bulgarian church into two camps was not the practice or the theology of Hesychasm, but the attitude of Bulgarian hierrchs and secular officials towards Byzantium: that is, whether the Bulgarian patriarch should recognize himself as a subject of Constantinople, or as an equal with comparable and legitimate claims to ecclesiastical hegemony

[154] Gregory Tsamblak, "Panegyric of Patriarch Euthymius," *Voices of Medieval Bulgaria* 366.
[155] Biliarsky, *Borilos Synodik* 358.

in the Balkans. During the reign of Tsar John Alexander, complete autonomy from Byzantium was the norm in both politics and religion. John Alexander's son, John Šišman, aspired to the same self-determination for his country, but he inherited from his father a much smaller state, with reduced resources to fight back against his disgruntled half-brother in Vidin, his unlikely ally Murad I, and his restless Hungarian neighbors. Šišman desperately needed friends among the surrounding Orthodox states. His choice of a patriarch who practiced Hesychasm and had close ties with Constantinople was in all likelihood by design and not by chance. The military context in which a geopolitically weakened Bulgaria found itself at the end of the fourteenth century thus played a greater role in the reconciliation with Byzantium than Hesychasm by itself ever did. And even if there is no official account on how and when the reunion took place, one can conjecture that at least at a church level, relationships resumed when pressing concerns for the security of Bulgaria made Orthodox allies highly desirable.

Nonetheless, the thaw in the Bulgaro-Byzantine ecclesiastical affairs came too late to effect any substantial changes in Bulgaria's military fortune. While Euthymius was at the height of his ecclesiastical career, Tsar John Šišman was desperately trying to withstand the Ottoman deluge into his realm. After a somewhat uneasy peace following the marriage of Šišman's sister with Murad I, the 1380s witnessed successful Ottoman attacks on several key cities in Bulgaria, including Sofia which fell in 1385. In 1388, an unexpected Serbian victory over Sultan Murad I at Pločnik (SE Serbia) prompted John Šišman to unwisely withdraw from his alliance with the Ottomans. Murad did not take these developments too kindly, especially when his brother-in-law defected to the enemy, and sent troops commanded by his grand vizier Ali-Pasha to discipline Šišman. In the ensuing war, the Bulgarian tsar lost four other strategic cities: Shumen, Cherven, Preslav and Silistra. He was forced to accept Ottoman suzerainty once again, and had to content

himself with holding Nicopolis (on the Danube River), where he established his military headquarters, and Trnovo, which he left in the care of Patriarch Euthymius.[156]

Situation worsened with each passing year. At the battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Serbians wasted a good chance to stop the Ottoman advance into the Balkans, which had dire consequences for all the small kingdoms, despotates, and duchies of the peninsula. The new sultan, Bayazid I, was no longer interested in keeping Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian principalities merely as vassals, because he wanted full access to the Danube and tight control over the central Balkans. In 1393 he attacked whatever remained of Bulgaria. Trnovo fell in July, after three months of valiant resistance organized by Patriarch Euthymius. Once the Turks got hold of the city, they destroyed its Christian heritage systematically: the main churches were confiscated and turned into mosques; the patriarch was unceremoniously sent into exile; other high-ranking church officials were put to death; and many of the leading members of the Trnovian society were either forced to convert to Islam or were taken into slavery. John Šišman held onto his fortress in Nikopol for two more years; in 1395 the Ottomans broke through his ever weakening defense, destroyed his army, captured him alive, and soon afterwards put him to death as a traitor.[157]

Bulgaria's loss of political independence was soon followed by a corresponding loss of ecclesiastical autonomy. All Bulgarian dioceses returned under Byzantine jurisdiction, as the patriarch of Constantinople was their next - and highest - hierarchical authority. The return of the Bulgarian church under complete Byzantine control was thus the direct result of military circumstances which had favored a third party, the Ottoman outsider, in the protracted Bulgaro-Byzantine contest for Balkan hegemony. The see of Trnovo lost all privileges that it had enjoyed

[156] Dujčev, "Le déclin de la Bulgarie médiéval," 237-238; M. Kiel, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period* (Maastricht 1985) 12-14.
[157] Dujčev, "Le déclin de la Bulgarie médiéval," 239-243; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 422-425.

even when it had been an archbishopric under the authority of Constantinople: the right to choose its own bishops, to issue judgments in ecclesiastical courts, to summon regional councils and to adopt disciplinary measures or debate on the orthodoxy of certain theological pronouncements.[158] A few decades after the Ottoman military conquest and the Byzantine ecclesiastical takeover, Trnovo was downgraded to a bishopric, functioning from then on as one of the many sees under the patriarchate of Constantinople. For centuries afterwards, the see was occupied by Greek prelates with little concern for the spiritual and cultural needs of the Slavic-speaking population.[159]

The overall ecclesiastical situation in the Balkan lands, especially the appointment of bishops and metropolitans whose sees came under Ottoman rule between the end of the fourteenth century and the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, when the sultan took charge of the patriarchate, remains largely unknown. The patriarchal *acta* from 1402 onward do not survive, and extant narrative sources (histories, chronicles, saints' lives) rarely mention such data. Monastic records, especially those from Mt. Athos, indicate that the Ottomans were ready to preserve existing arrangements regarding property and its management, and the overall administration of monasteries, provided that the monks stayed loyal to the new ruling elite. It might be surmised from this that the Ottomans were likely to accommodate the bishops as well, if the latter were not too conspicuous and outspoken in expressing their allegiance to the patriarch. As long as Constantinople was still in Byzantine hands, the patriarch's direct subordinates were regarded with suspicion, as belonging to the enemy's camp. Sources related to the Seljuq and the early Ottoman conquests in Asia Minor reveal that no consistent policies as to the fate of bishops and metropolitans existed; the new rulers' attitude ranged from very lenient

[158] Laurent, *Regestes* IV, no. 1285, p. 93.
[159] Vasil Gjuzelev, "Les racines historiques de la lute de bulgares pour un église indépendante," in *Mittelalterliches Bulgarien* (Istanbul 2001) 245-247.

and cooperative to chasing out from the city, sometimes even putting to death, the local Church leader.[160]

6.4. The Patriarchate of Constantinople: Diplomacy and Politics in Vidin[161]

The reconciliation of the Bulgarian principality of Vidin with the patriarchate of Constantinople presents a special interest to the historian of Late Byzantine Empire. It is carefully represented in the patriarchal *acta* , and that allows for a closer examination of the unfolding of events and for a better appreciation of the problems still encountered by the patriarchs, as they tried to reestablish authority over a metropolitanate willing to reenter the oecumenical community under Constantinopolitan jurisdiction. As in the case of Bulgaria proper, a stormy historical context determined the many steps and turns of this reintegration process.

Vidin became a major player in the Balkan politics in the thirteenth century, when its rulers meddled aptly and profitably in local and regional conflicts north and south of the Danube. Vidin's location was a mixed blessing. Defended by the Danube on two sides (north and east) but at the crossroads of different worlds and interests, the area frequently acted as a buffer zone between the Slavs in the south and the Hungarians in the north. Earlier it had laso been the first

[160] The most comprehensive study of the long-term ecclesiastical developments in Asia Minor during the Seljuq and early Ottoman rule is in Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley, 1971). Vryonis' article, "Decisions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople as a Source for Ottoman Religious Policy in the Balkans prior to 1402," *Recueil des travaux de l'institut d' études byzantines* 9 (1980): 283-297, provides insights into the situation of episcopal and metropolitan sees in Thrace and Macedonia during the Ottoman invasion, but covers only the time period reflected in patriarchal sources (i.e. up to the year 1402). A very recent attempt to discuss the fate of Christian communities in the Balkans in the first part of the fifteenth century is in the second chapter of Tom Papademetriou's work *Render unto the Sultan. Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford, 2015) 63-103, which argues that Ottoman policies vis-à-vis the Church developed on an ad-hoc basis, without following any predetermined pattern.

[161] A slightly revised version of this subchapter was presented under the title "Limits of Patriarchal Power in the Fourteenth-century Balkans: The Case of Vidin" at the International Conference on "The Patriarchate of Constantinople in Context and Comparison," Vienna 2012, and will be published as part of the Conference proceedings in a future issue of the international peer-reviewed journal *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik.*

to take the brunt of invasions from the steppe, when barbarian populations had crossed the Danube in search of better pasture lands south of it. Most often controlled politically by Bulgarian or Bulgarian-linked despots, Vidin was also tied religiously to Bulgaria; its bishopric had been under the authority of the patriarch of Trnovo since late twelfth century. In early fourteenth century, however, Vidin appeared in the episcopal lists of the patriarchate of Constantinople as a metropolitan see within its jurisdiction.[162] But Vidin returned under the authority of the patriarchate of Trnovo during the reign of John Alexander. [163] .

Vidin moved back to self-governance in its political and religious affairs in the late 1350s, after Tsar John Alexander unwisely provoked a dynastic crisis by appointing his younger son as heir to the throne of Bulgaria. The eldest son, John Stratsimir, who had ruled the small principality in his father's name, decided to rule in his own name. According to the compiler of a collection of women saints' lives produced in Vidin in 1359, Stratsimir around this time began calling himself "tsar of all Bulgars and Greeks" – a title used by the rulers of the Second Bulgarian Empire and meant to emphasize their claim to a sovereign status.[164] In order to strengthen his independence, Stratsimir also sought to end his ecclesiastical relationship with the patriarchate of Trnovo, and place again the metropolitan of Vidin under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The removal of the metropolitan of Vidin from under Trnovo's authority would have signaled a complete separation from John Alexander's reign. But he had no chance to make such a major ecclesiastical decision, since in 1365 his province was occupied by the Hungarians. Taken into captivity with his family, Stratsimir spent four years in a castle near Zagreb (Croatia),

[162] J. Darrouzès ed., *Notitiae Episcopatum Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae* , Notitiae nos. 18.85 & 19.92, p. 407, 413.
[163] Dujčev, "Le dernier siècle de l'etat bulgare medieval," 205-214; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 220-221, 268-270.
[164] E. Voordeckers, "Introduction" to *Bdinski Zbornik-Critical edition* (Bruges 1973) 20-22.

where he was pressured to submit to the papacy. Many of his subjects in Vidin were also obliged to join the Church of Rome.[165]

The *acta* entered into the patriarchal registers for the period 1365 to 1369 make no reference whatsoever to the situation in Vidin. However, according to the minutes of a meeting on the union of churches which took place in Constantinople in 1367 and brought to the negotiating table the papal legate Paul of Smyrna and the former Byzantine emperor John Cantacuzenus, the latter denounced the baptism of the Bulgarian faithful into the Church of Rome, accusing the Franciscan missionaries who had flooded into Vidin of intentionally making no distinction between heresy and orthodoxy.[166] Three important members of the patriarchal synod, the bishops of Heraklea, Adrianople, and Ephesus, also attended the talks.[167] The situation in Vidin was thus known to the high-ranking political and ecclesiastical circles in Constantinople, but there was little to be done beyond a formal protest, since the usual channels of intervention on a local scene were not available. The tsar was imprisoned in Croatia and the metropolitan of Vidin had taken refuge in the neighboring Wallachia. As for the pope, he was praising King Louis of Hungary for what he called the return of "schismatics" to full communion with the Apostolic See.[168]

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[165] According to the minister general of the Franciscans, the Order's missionaries targeted for conversion to the "true faith" only schismatics and heretics (i.e. Patareni and Bogomils): *Currunt cum suis gentibus principes infideles, juvenes et virgines, senes cum junioribus turmatim confluunt ad baptisma, haeretici similiter et schismatici ad veritatem fidei orthodoxae, ad unitatem sacro-sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae reverturtur… Patareni et Manichaei sunt amplius solito dispositi baptizari et ad Cristum verum lumen converti…* in L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum* VIII (Rome 1783) 196-197. The notion of 'schismatic,' however, was rather generous in the understanding of the Church of Rome, including everyone who refused to acknowledge papal authority; according to this interpretation, most Bulgarians qualified for the baptism of conversion. See Ivan Dujčev, "Francescanesimo in Bulgaria," 415-419; Gjuzelev, "Chiesa catolica e Bulgaria," 231-232; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans* 122.

[166] Meyendorff, "Projets de Concile Oecuménique en 1367," 173; Nicol, "Byzantine Requests for an Oecumenical Council in the Fourteenth Century," 90.

[167] Meyendorff, "Projets de Concile" 164.

[168] *Replevit ingenit gaudio… ad tuam inductionem et cooperationem piissimam ac fratrum dicti ordinis… multa millia personarum utriusque sexus, relictis damnabili schismate aliisque erroribus… ad lumen verae fidei ac unitatem et obedientiam sacrosanctae Romanae ecclesie… redierunt,* in L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum* VIII, 206-207.

The patriarchs of Constantinople, however, were not entirely helpless before such papal propaganda in what were traditionally regarded as Byzantine lands. They were prepared to identify and use to their advantage any opportunity that offered itself for an officially sanctioned - or at least tolerated - involvement in the life of local churches. In 1359, Nicholas Alexander, the *voievode* of Wallachia, requested that Constantinople place his principality under its jurisdiction and asked for a dispatch to his court of a metropolitan who had been ordained by the patriarch and who was an active member of the patriarchal synod.[169] Patriarch Callistus (1354-1363) immediately saw the chance to take firmer hold of an area already exposed to extensive Latin missionization. As a vassal of Hungary, the *voievode* Nicholas Alexander had to acquiesce to a substantial presence of Western clerics, monastics, and friars in his principality; moreover, his wife, a devout member of the Church of Rome, actively supporting papal missions in Wallachia. Given the chance to counteract these activities, the patriarch promptly responded by raising the Greek Hyacinthus, bishop of Vicina, to the rank of metropolitan, and transferring his see to Arges, the Wallachian capital. He also had the *voievode* Nicholas Alexander promise in writing that he and his successors would always keep their principality under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.[170]

Patriarch Callistus hoped that the developments north of the Danube would have a positive bearing to the south, where both Bulgarian and Serbian rulers had severed relations with Constantinople. If these rulers understood the urgency of joining forces in order to block Latin advances in the Balkans, then the patriarchate could remain optimistic as far as an eventual reunification of the Slavic peoples under the aegis of Constantinople was concerned. But in the

[169] Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2411; MM I. 171, p. 383-385.
[170] Darrouzès, *Regestes*, no. 2412; MM I. 171, p. 386-388; C. C. Giurescu, "Intemeierea mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei," *Biserica Ortodoxa Romana* 77.7-10 (1959) 673-697; N. Iorga, *Istoria bisericii romanesti si a yietii religioase a romanilor* (Bucharest 1929) 28-41; M. Pacurariu, *Istoria bisericii ortodoxe romane* (Bucharest 1992) 253-262; P. D. Popescu, *Basarabii* (Bucharest 1989) 74-76.

1360s the leaders of Bulgaria and Serbia, with few exceptions, felt no urgency to return under Byzantine ecclesiastical supervision. Tsar John Stratsimir was one such exception. He was related by blood and marriage to the Wallachian *voievode* and shared his interests in protecting the orthodox faith, but not his good fortune in accomplishing it fast and smoothly. While the tsar was in Hungarian captivity, the fate of the metropolitan see in Vidin remained in the hands of the conquerors, who brought in their own church-officials to replace the local clergy. In 1369, the Wallachian *voievode* Vladislav, son of Nicholas Alexander and cousin of Stratsimir, helped the last recover Vidin from Hungary.[171] But the economic and political situation must have been still very unstable in the province, since Daniel, the metropolitan of Vidin, continued to reside in Wallachia, where he had fled in 1365.

Metropolitan Daniel of Vidin made his first official appearance in the patriarchal *acta* of 1370, when he went to Constantinople as an envoy of Hyacinthus, the aged and ailing metropolitan of Wallachia. On this occasion, Patriarch Philotheus Coccinus established a new metropolitan see in the western part of the Romanian principality, and appointed as its first incumbent Daniel Kritopoulos, *dikaiophylax* of the Great Church and concurrently a member of the Wallachian embassy to Constantinople. Daniel of Vidin, by now familiar with both the religious situation in Wallachia and with the personality of Kritopoulos, might have influenced the patriarchal choice. The new metropolitan was to serve the Severin area, located just to the north of Vidin, a buffer zone between Wallachia and Hungary, and much disputed by both.[172] This was another step of the patriarchate to fortify the orthodox churches which lay in the proximity of the Bulgarian principalities, without as yet being able to intervene there directly.

[171] Dujčev, "Francescanesimo in Bulgaria" 422-423; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans* 367; Voordeckers, *Introduction to Bdinski Zbornik* 26.
[172] MM I.281, p. 535-536; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, nos. 2566, 2588 and 2593; Constantin C. Giurescu, "Intemeierea mitropoliei Ungrovlahiei" 74-81; Mircea Pacurariu, *Istoria bisericii*, 261-267.

A year later, in 1371, Patriarch Coccinus was offered such an opportunity to involve himself directly in Bulgarian church affairs. He awarded the metropolitan Daniel of Vidin, per the latter's request, the bishopric of Sofia to administer and rule with full episcopal rights. It was an *epidosis*, a typical patriarchal grant of a vacant see as a means of support to a bishop who for various reasons could not occupy his own see.[173] This act raises several problems: First, it is not clear why metropolitan Daniel still could not take back his own see in Vidin. Various reasons have been put forth by scholars to explain this situation, none entirely satisfactorily given the lack of sources on the topic: viz., 1) impoverishment of the Vidin diocese beyond recovery as a result of the war with Hungary, 2) a serious decrease in the number of the orthodox faithful, and 3) vassalage obligations of Stratsimir toward Hungary, which would have entailed, among other things, the cessation of the metropolitan's activities in the area.[174] The second issue concerns the status of the bishopric of Sofia, which belonged to the patriarchate of Trnovo. Constantinople had no authority to interfere in an independent jurisdiction and make grants of sees over which it had no direct control. Some historians argue that immediately after the death of Tsar John Alexander in February 1371, Stratsimir of Vidin attacked the lands of his brother John Šišman, the heir to the throne of Bulgaria, and wrested from him a few fortresses and towns, including Sofia.[175] If this was the case, and if Stratsimir had already placed the churches within his territory under Byzantine jurisdiction, then Philotheus Coccinus could decide with legitimate authority upon the fate of Sofia's bishopric. He was entitled to grant a request coming from a metropolitan under his authority, and extending control over both Sofia and Vidin was too good an

[173] MM I,296, p. 551-552; Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2607, Koder et al, *Register*, 20-30.
[174] Razvan Theodorescu, *Bizant, Balcani, Occident la inceputurile culturii medievale romanesti, secolele X-XIV* (Bucharest 1974) 208-210; Voordeckers, *Introduction to Bdinski Zbornik* 26; V. N. Zlatarsky, *Geschichte der Bulgaren* (Leipzig 1918) 175.
[175] Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 368; Spinka, *Christianity in the Balkans*, 123.

opportunity to miss: it provided the ground for weakening the presence and influence of his rival, the patriarch of Trnovo, in Western Bulgaria.

However well-thought and well-intentioned the patriarchal plan may have been, it did not last. In 1372 metropolitan Daniel of Vidin was still in Wallachia, and still without a see of his own. Tsar Stratsimir could not hold onto his conquests in Bulgaria, and Sofia returned to his brother Šišman and thus by extension under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Trnovo. In the same year, the Wallachian *voievode* Vladislav requested from the patriarch of Constantinople a replacement for the metropolitan Hyacinthus of Arges, who had just passed away. He also suggested that Daniel of Vidin be granted a diocese of his own within Wallachia; he may have hoped that the patriarch would appoint Daniel as the new incumbent of the see of Arges. But this was not what Philoteus Coccinus had in mind. The patriarch remained faithful to the customary procedure of appointing to vacant sees clergymen from Thrace and Greece, or monks from Mount Athos. Coccinus' choice fell upon Chariton, the *hegumenos* of the athonite monastery of Kutlumus. Chariton was well acquainted with the church situation in Wallachia, since he had many dealings - not always friendly and peaceful - with Vladislav *voievode*, the patron of Kutlumus.[176] Patriarch Coccinus insisted that Chariton, once installed at Arges, should find a see within his eparchy for the metropolitan of Vidin. In conseuqnece, Daniel of Vidin remained in Wallachia, in all probability until the end of his life; it is possible that between 1376 and 1380, when Chariton was also elected *protos* of Mt. Athos and had to spent more time on the Holy Mountain than in his diocese in Arges, Daniel took over many of his pastoral and administrative duties.[177]

[176] Darrouzès, *Regestes* V, no. 2654; see also "Testaments of Chariton for the Monastery Christ Savior of Koutloumousi on Mt. Athos," in *Byzantine Monastic Documents*, ed. by J. Thomas and A. C. Hero (Washington DC 2000) 1408-1432; Pacurariu, *Istoria bisericii*, 267-269.
[177] Pacurariu, *Istoria bisericii*, 267-269; Theodorescu, *Bizant, Balcani, Occident*, 209-210.

Even if metropolitan Daniel found a solution to his own predicament which gave him not territory, but at least a position of power and influence, the ecclesiastical situation of his see in Vidin remained unsettled for more than a decade. No clergyman could occupy the see as long as metropolitan Daniel was still alive, even if he did not physically reside in the city. Besides, patriarchal ability to intervene in local church affairs was more often than not dependent on a ruler's readiness to cooperate with Constantinople. After 1371, the fratricide wars between the two Bulgarian rulers and the rapid expansion of the Ottoman power into the northern Balkans made Tsar Stratsimir more interested in preserving his independence than in the pursuit of church issues, however urgent these were.

It was only in the year 1381 that Stratsimir finally made a formal request to the patriarchate of Constantinople to appoint a new metropolitan of Vidin, which indicates that by that time Daniel had passed away. Stratsimir sent his own choice for the see, the Bulgarian hieromonk Cassianus, to be ordained and confirmed in his position by Constantinople.[178] This ran counter to the long-established Byzantine practice of appointing Greek bishops and metropolitans to dioceses lying outside the political boundaries of the Empire. Such hierarchs were considered to possess a higher degree of loyalty to Constantinople than local clergymen. But Nilus Kerameus, the new patriarch (1380-1388), operated in more pressing circumstances than his predecessor, Philotheus Coccinus. He could not afford to be too categorical about patriarchal procedures. The Hungarian menace was still alive in the north and west, but a much more acute and immediate threat had now appeared in the south, the Ottomans. Both Constantinople and the Bulgarian tsardom of Vidin were in permanent danger of being overrun by the Turks. In this context, someone already familiar with the actual situation in Vidin could play a better role in the service of orthodoxy than a stranger, who had less incentive to endure the

[178] MM II.345, p. 28-29; Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2718; Voordeckers, *Introduction to Bdinski Zbornik*, 26-28.

hardships of life among impoverished flocks and under the constant threat of Ottoman invasion. Moreover, the Orthodox faithful in Vidin had lacked direct spiritual guidance and comfort for so long, that quibbling over who was to be the next metropolitan seemed out of place. Consequently, Patriarch Nilos raised no objections to the designation of Cassianus for the see of Vidin.

Cassianus, however, proved not to be the best of choices. Five years later he was deposed by Stratsimir under the charge of murder; Cassianus had had one of his monks brutally interrogated and the man had died of the wounds inflicted.[179] The deposition was nonetheless illegal, since only the patriarch and his synod could judge and condemn a member of the higher clergy. Only if Cassianus was found guilty by a patriarchal synod, he could be deposed, defrocked, and handed over to the secular authorities for punishment in accordance with criminal law. The former metropolitan was accordingly summoned to appear before the synod in Constantinople and stand trial; he was slow in complying with the request. Tsar Stratsimir was equally slow in proposing a new candidate for the see of Vidin, which remained vacant for the next six years. Both Patriarch Nilos and his successor, Anthony, kept writing to Stratsimir in this regard.[180] In order to proceed with the election of a new metropolitan, they needed to have either the tsar's proposal, or his permission to elect someone from the Constantinopolitan pool. In the complicated context of various Balkan political entities fighting for recognition and autonomy, the patriarchs could no longer act outside the shrinking borders of the empire itself without endorsement from the local rulers.

In late 1391 Stratsimir finally sent his candidate, the hieromonk Joasaph, to be ordained by Patriarch Anthony. But Antony preferred to be more cautious than his predecessor, and

[179] MM II.434, p.162; Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2808.
[180] MM II.434, p.162-163; Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, nos. 2808 and 2875.

postponed the ordination until he made inquiries both into the character of Joasaph and the real reasons behind the removal of Cassianus from his see.[181] Again, a new metropolitan could not be ordained as long as the previous one was still alive and without a deposition sentence issued by the synod. The members of the synod could not come to an agreement upon the extent of Cassianus's guilt in the matter of the deceased monk, but confirmed his deposition anyway, so in spring 1392 Joasaph was at last ordained to the see of Vidin.[182] He was still a metropolitan when the city fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1396. After that year, patriarchal sources become silent once again about the situation in Vidin. It can be assumed, based on similar cases in other parts of the Balkans, that metropolitan Joasaph was allowed to shepherd his flock until the end of his life, but afterwards the patriarchate of Constantinople appointed predominantly Greek clergymen to the see of Vidin.[183]

After the mid-fourteenth century and into the fifteenth, the Bulgarian and Serbian claims for ecclesiastical preeminence in the Balkans tested the extent of Byzantine authority in areas which were no longer within the political and military reach of Constantinople, authority therein proved to be subject to a variety of forces beyond patriarchal control**.** In eventually reestablishing authority over sees which had originally pledged obedience to Constantinople, the Byzantine patriarchs encountered difficulties in the form of resistance, non-cooperation, overriding of canon law procedures, delays in communication, and in the implementation of decisions. All these were signs of the increasing patriarchal dependence on the willingness of local rulers to give precedence to Byzantine aspirations over their own ambitions. To obtain a favorable response, the patriarchs had to seek solutions which did not endanger the local rulers' sense of

[181] MM II.434, p.161; Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2896.
[182] MM II.434, p.161-164; Darrouzès, *Regestes* VI, no. 2909; Dujčev, "Preface," in *Bdinski zbornik. Ghent Slavonic Ms 408, A.D. 136 (*London, 1972) viii; Emil Turdeanu, *La littérature bulgare du XIV^e siècle et sa diffusion dans les pays roumains* (Paris, 1947) 147-149; Voordeckers, *Introduction to Bdinski Zbornik*, 28.
[183] Dujčev, "Le déclin de la Bulgarie médiéval," 243.

power and control over the space they governed. Only at the turn of the century did the situation change, when the Ottoman conquests inadvertently and ironically came to the assistance of Constantinople. By removing from power tsars and princes who had formerly kept a tight grip over the local church affairs, the Turks enabled the patriarchs to achieve what for decades had seemed a distant goal: bringing the wayward churches in the Balkans under the complete control the patriarch of Constantinople.

CONCLUSION

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which provide the main chronological focus of this dissertation, represent a time of great significance in the history of the northeastern Mediterranean, when major military and religious upheavals led to the redistribution of power and reorganization of territories along new political and ecclesiastical borders. The present study has approached the emergence of a new landscape of authority in the area comprised by Asia Minor, the Aegean and the Balkan Peninsula from two distinct yet overlapping perspectives. On one hand, in order to understand the implications and limitations of the medieval idea of empire and universal rule, it has examined and evaluated the attempts to create (in the case of Latins and Slavs) or recover (in the case of the Byzantines) a long-lasting hegemonic position in the fractured Mediterranean world produced by the fourth crusade. On the other hand, it has discussed the diplomatic activity carried out by the patriarchate of Constantinople in the Balkans and Anatolia in order to prevail over its Greek and Slavic subjects who had accompanied their political independence from Byzantium with corresponding ecclesiastical autonomy, and to counteract the efforts of the Church of Rome to extent papal authority over areas traditionally part of the Byzantine *oikoumene.* The major conclusions are summarized below:

I.1. After 1204, Byzantine political theory which assigned the right to emperorship only to the *basileus* was challenged by both insiders from and outsiders to the northeastern Mediterranean area, who coveted the imperial title without however making exclusive claims to it. The one-empire world envisioned by Byzantium became multidimensional, teeming with polities that ranged from small principalities to large, imperial-like structures, all vying to extend their territory and sphere of influence at the neighbors' expense. Except for the papacy, which was a suprastatal entity with its own rationalization of the right to universal rule, all others who

were engaged in the race for the *imperium* sought to build their states in such a way as to resemble Byzantium in their organization, prestige and influence, and to acquire New Rome/Constantinople as the imperial ruling center – a testimony to the high status that the vanished empire still held for those who sought to replace it. In the long run, however, none was successful in providing a viable substitute, not even the Palaiologoi, the dynasty that recovered Constantinople in 1261 and ruled the restored Byzantium until its final demise in 1453. The state of affairs in the northeastern Mediterranean had changed too much to allow for one Christian empire to emerge as the dominant regional power. The fourth crusade had ruined the cultural and religious unity of the northeastern Mediterranean, and had given an impetus to the already existing trend towards territorial split up and localization of power.

I.2. The crusaders had to reinvent themselves as masters of an empire; they inherited a coherent, fully functional infrastructure from the Byzantines, which they sought to control through the feudal arrangements prevalent in the West, with their complex web of horizontal and vertical mutual obligations and rights. The distribution of fiefs among the crusaders led to the fragmentation of power, which was one of the main causes for the ultimate failure of the Latin Empire. Both crusaders and popes (their suzerain lords) saw in the Empire of Constantinople a continuation (rather than the annihilation) of Byzantium. Neither group, however, expected that the new polity would adopt and promote the universalist pretentions of the previous *basileis*. The expectation was, instead, that – while becoming the predominant regional power – it would preserve itself in the proper relationship of obedience to the Apostolic See. The Latin emperors were loyal sons of the Church of Rome and never challenged the papacy on that count. But they were unable to build a state even vaguely resembling Byzantium in political prestige and military clout. They were overlords ruling a changing number of lesser and greater vassals. Their empire

was an artificial construct of Byzantine titles, offices and regalia superimposed over a feudal structure. The reputation (and implicitly the support) they gained depended not on their imperial status but on their achievements on the battlefield. With the exception of Baldwin I and Henry I, the emperors of Constantinople failed to make new conquests, their territory shrinking constantly before relentless Bulgarian and Greek attacks. The so-called empire died a slow and painful death during the reign of Baldwin II (1237-1261), reduced in size to the city of Constantinople and held alive by the Venetians, whose commercial interests made them persist in protecting the moribund state.

I.3. The papacy in theory was the real winner of the fourth crusade, since with one bold strike the Greek East which hitherto had rejected it became now by force of necessity part of the Church of Rome. In practice however the papal control over the Balkans and the Aegean was hampered by the reluctance of the locals to recognize the pope as their leader, and by the new Latin rulers in the Eastern Mediterranean, often vague and hesitant when it came to implementing papal decisions, as they pursued their own regional interests rather than those of the Church of Rome. The two main Byzantine realms (Nicaea and Epirus) vacillated between compromise with the papacy and opposition to its demands. It was during these years spent outside Constantinople that negotiating reunion with, or more exactly submission to, the Church of Rome became an imperial political tool to be used time and again, as short- or long-term interests dictated. This novel imperial strategy pursued the redemption of the *basileia* in ways violating the centuries-old Byzantine understanding of the empire as the sole conceivable articulation, in human terms, of God's boundless power, since it made God's vice-gerent, the emperor, subject to another earthly authority, the pope. The pope claimed for himself the privilege of being the sole embodiment of God's power on earth, judged by no one but God

himself, and the emperor, by seeking to enter full communion with the Apostolic See, was explicitly accepting papal authority over his own.

I.4. The Byzantines were the only ones with a clearly articulated concept of ruling an empire, but they needed to recreate the political, administrative and ecclesiastical structures that held it together. Of the several attempts to restore Byzantium outside Constantinople, only Nicaea and Epirus had the chance to succeed: the first, because its geographical proximity to the former capital had allowed a substantial number of aristocrats and court officials to withdraw there and recreate a government in exile. The ability to establish a patriarch to validate the imperial title assumed by the Lascarids was played also a major role in the ultimate success of the polity. As for Epirus, its rule belonged initially to two capable members of the Comenus Ducas family, who drew a lot of support from the surrounding Greek principalities and scored quick victories over Latin and Slavic neighbors, opening up the road to Constantinople. To endorse his imperial claims, Theodore Comnenus had himself crowned by the archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrius Chomatenus, a canon law specialist who put forth the theory that it was possible, in the context created by the fourth crusade, for more than one Byzantine *basileia* to coexist, each with its own patriarch, senate and administration. The Epirote church went into schism with the patriarch in Nicaea over such claims, schism which was healed once Epirus lost its military preeminence due to the misguided decision of Theodore Comnenus Ducas to attack the Bulgarians rather than capitalize on his anti-Latin conquests. Chomatenus' idea was too novel to be accepted by the Byzantine world, although it did point to a certain dilution, even alteration, of the traditional understanding of imperial authority among the Byzantines, not fully worked out since military and political realities made the Epirote imperial initiative irrelevant after 1230. On the other hand, the fact that the rulers of both Epirus and Nicaea considered

regaining Constantinople their supreme goal indicates that ultimately they remained attached to the one imperial paradigm centered on New Rome, regardless of how they justified their right to fight for it.

I.5. The reconquest of Constantinople by the Greeks of Nicaea seems to have confirmed the belief that Byzantium was the one true empire that enjoyed divine support and was entrusted with a universal mission. But the post-1261 emperors were unable to keep the new *basileia* together, and to adapt their rule to its much limited resources. They engaged in battles and negotiations with the West (popes, Holy Roman Emperors and various other rulers) to avert another attack on Constantinople, and wasted much of their funds on civil wars, ignoring Asia Minor which they lost to the Turks, and the Balkans where the Serbians and the Bulgarians carved out empires for themselves. The *basileis* of the post-reconquest era also sought reconciliation with Rome as a way to ensure the continuity of their rule. Controversial politically, this strategy was hotly contested by the Byzantine Church as well, since it implied submission to Rome, in Roman terms, of both emperor and patriarch. For many of the patriarchs who oversaw the Church during the last centuries of the Byzantine Empire, defending orthodoxy and the unity of the universal community of the faithful gained precedence over ensuring the survival of Byzantium as a political entity. Frequently they had to act without the traditional backing of the emperor, who became increasingly unable, or unwilling, to allocate resources for the rescue of the *oikoumene* while the empire itself was in peril. As imperial and patriarchal strategies gradually ran into different directions, the former making political concerns a priority, the latter advocating unity and loyalty to shared beliefs and practices as above any other worldly concerns, both emperor and Church grew weaker and increasingly dependent on favorable local and regional circumstances for attaining success.

I.6. While faltering in Constantinople itself, the Byzantine imperial model was tried out with significant but fleeting success in Serbia and Bulgaria. The tsar in each locale emulated the *basileus* by having himself crowned emperor by the local archbishop (elevated to the rank of patriarch), by adopting the ceremonial, legislation and governing practices of the Byzantine court, by removing his church from the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople, by pursuing foreign policies independent of the *basileus* and claiming the universal mission vis-a-vis the Christian *oikoumene* from him. Neither the Serbian, nor the Bulgarian empires sought to master Constantinople in order to validate their imperial claims, sign that the traditional imperial paradigm was no longer understood as depending on a certain political, cultural and spiritual center. New Romes could be recreated anywhere, given the right circumstances. In neither case, however, the empire lasted beyond its founder. The power and prestige of the Byzantine model were not enough to ensure its survival in a context that required a more realistic assessment and adaptation to regional challenges, the greatest one being the Ottoman invasion.

II.1. Another major component of this investigation has been the attempt to frame the metamorphosis of the role of the patriarchate of Constantinople within the pan-Mediterranean world, in the context of its changing relationships with emperors and popes, all striving to achieve universal rule within their sphere of influence. Patriarchal power had increased progressively in late antiquity, as the see of Constantinople turned from a minor bishopric in the fourth century into the main religious authority in the Byzantine Empire by the eighth century. Its power and influence remained unrivaled by any of the other Greek patriarchates in the East or by the papacy in the West, until it suffered major setbacks in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when what used to be the Byzantine commonwealth in the Balkans and Anatolia fell

apart, first under the crusaders' relentless attacks, then under the steady influx of Ottoman invaders.

II.2.The fourth crusade had prompted a diplomatic contest between the papacy and the patriarchate of Constantinople for extending and consolidating control over these areas. As the military and political power wielded by the Byzantine emperor in the northeastern Mediterranean entered a steep decline, local rulers searched for ways in which they could gain and maintain a larger degree of autonomy from the *basileus* and his patriarch. Monarchs of Trapezunt and Epirus in the 1200s, and Bulgaria and Serbia in the 1300s removed their churches from Byzantine jurisdiction, allied themselves with neighboring Turkish or Latin powers, and at times even swore allegiance to the Church of Rome. The patriarchs of Constantinople engaged in an intense and tenacious diplomatic activity in order to reassert jurisdiction over the rebel churches, but the effectiveness of their policies was limited by two major factors: the lack of adequate imperial support and the spread of the Byzantine model of governance to a local level. The late Byzantine emperors no longer made the survival of the Christian *oikoumene* their priority and as a result they failed to give the necessary assistance to the patriarchal policies meant to recover lost allegiances. Furthermore, the Byzantine dyarchy (secular ruler/church leader) was adopted at a local level by princes and despots, who turned the main archbishop in their realms into the leading ecclesiastical authority, and compelled him to sever ties with his ecclesiastical superior in Constantinople. While previous scholarship has emphasized the elevation of the patriarchs to a position of prestige that supplanted and surpassed the emperor's political influence in the northeastern Mediterranean in the late Middle Ages, this research shows that the ability of the patriarchate of Constantinople to reassert its authority over the breakaway churches in Anatolia and the Balkans was in reality hampered by the general weakness in the imperial exercise of

power. Without an emperor to back them up, the patriarchs attained only a modest degree of success, mainly in the places where local authorities were sympathetic towards Constantinople's diplomatic efforts to uphold the Orthodox faith, and eager to cooperate with its representatives and enforce its decisions. The Byzantine primacy in ecclesiastical matters was widely acknowledged once again only after the Ottoman attacks and conquests in the northeastern Mediterranean lessened the local rulers' hold on power, and the return under the jurisdiction of Constantinople could bring some form of military relief in exchange.

II.3. Hesychasm has often been singled out by scholars as *the* main factor that contributed to the success of the patriarchal policies of reconciliation and reunification with the Bulgarian and Serbian churches in the Balkans. In this interpretation, the patriarchs of Constantinople reasserted their authority in the peninsula by planning and implementing a series of strategies centered on Hesychast beliefs and on a close cooperation with Hesychast monks drawn from all over the Orthodox world. These Hesychast monks acted in their homelands as advocates of the patriarchal vision of pan-Orthodox unity and eventually reversed local policies of ecclesiastical autonomy and insubordination to Constantinople. This study has sought to amend the prevalent scholarly view by reexamining Hesychast-related developments within and without the Byzantine Empire in the second half of the fourteenth century. It argues that while the use of Hesychasm for political ends was to a great extent effective within the Byzantine Empire, it played a comparatively minor role in restoring unity and consensus between Constantinople and the rebellious churches in the Balkans. Since on local scenes Hesychasm never gained the type of influence and popularity it enjoyed in Byzantium, it was unable to become the architect of ecclesiastical reconciliation. Other factors, such as internal turmoil in the Balkans states and the

Ottoman conquests in the peninsula, allowed the patriarchate of Constantinople to regain control over the Balkan churches.

II.4. Stated broadly, a major conclusion of this research is that the recognition of patriarchal authority in the late Middle Ages was largely dependent on local circumstances and evolutions, and to a much lesser extent was it due to a rise in prestige and power of the patriarchate of Constantinople. This comes to supplement earlier interpretations of the construction and articulation of ecclesiastical power in the Byzantine world of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, by adding the local perspective to a Constantinople-centered body of scholarly literature.

This study has reevaluated the relationship between empire, universalism and Christendom as envisioned and employed by Greek, Latin, and Slavic rulers in the late medieval northeastern Mediterranean, and has reconsidered the role of the patriarchate of Constantinople in restoring unity to the Christian *oikoumene* even when the overarching and protective structure provided by the Byzantine Empire had collapsed. It also invites further reflection on the role allotted to the patriarchs in the early fifteenth century, as the Turcocratia engulfed the Balkans and completely changed the geography of power in the peninsula. Furthermore, research can be expanded into the situation of the patriarchate during the four centuries of Ottoman rule, when the Church was subordinated to a political power no longer sympathetic as a whole to Christian religious aspirations. Pioneering work in this regard has been done by Steven Runciman, who in *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (Cambridge 1968) offers an excellent survey of the issues encountered by the patriarchate during the centuries of Turkish occupation, and the type of responses given by patriarchs to the challenges posed by a non-Christian

government, and by coexistence with non-Orthodox religious groups. A more recent appraisal of the relationship of the patriarchate of Constantinople and the Greek and Slavic Christian communities with the Ottoman rulers is in Tom Papademeriou's study *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford 2015). Valuable contributions to our understading of the first years of the patriarchate in the nascent Ottoman millet system after Fatih Mehmet II stormed Constantinople are Marie-Hélène Blanchet's monograph, *Georges-Gennadios Scholarios (vers 1400-vers 1472). Un intellectuel orthodoxe face à la disparition de l'empire byzantine* (Paris, 2008), and the collection of articles published in the volume edited by Paolo Odorico, *Le patriarcat oecuménique de Constantinople aux XIVe - XVIe siècles: rupture et continuité. Actes du colloque international, Rome, 5- 6-7 décembre 2005* (Paris 2007). However work remains to be done in order to better understand the ways in which the post-1453 patriarchs of Constantinople redefined their position and reassessed their role as leaders of a now highly heterogeneous Christian commonwealth. Many developments which occurred as a result of the patriarchal interactions with the Ottoman political establishment, with the various religious groups in the millet, and with the West became *longue durée* features in asserting ecclesiastical authority, despite the fact that the patriarchate no longer functioned in a supportive secular environment.

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