

From Huns into Persians: The Projected Identity of the Turks in the Byzantine Rhetoric of Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries

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Note on naming

Byzantine names in this dissertation are given according to the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. Following the standards of Central European University, I use traditional English spelling for Byzantine names (e. g. “John” rather than “Ioannes”). Where there are two sources with the same title, I use an anglicized name for one of them to avoid confusion. Thus, Michael Attaleiates is the author of *Historia*, while Niketas Choniates is the author of *History*.

Seljuk names and titles are spelled in accordance with the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*. As the *Encyclopedia* is a work in progress, the names absent from it are given in the forms they appear in Andrew Peacock's *The Great Seljuk Empire*.

Abbreviations:

BS = Byzantinoslavica

BZ =Byzantinische Zeitschrift

DOP = Dumbarton Oaks Papers

EI = Encyclopedia of Islam

JÖB = Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik

ODB= Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium

RCEA= Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe

REB =Revue des études byzantines

VV = Vizantiyskiy Vremennik

ST = Σύγγραμμα των Θείων και Ιερών Κανόνων

CHAPTER I. Identity of the Turks? Introduction

“The Nephthalite Huns, the neighbors of the Persians, who are separated from land of Persia by Ganges river which four and half mile wide, crossed it” wrote Byzantine military judge Michael Attaleiates in his description of Constantine IX Monomachos’ reign (1042-1055).¹ The “Huns” of Attaleiates belonged to the group that we call the Great Seljuks. In the eleventh century, this conglomerate of Persianized pastoralists migrated from northern Iran to Aleppo and Antioch and created the sultanate of the Great Seljuks.² After the battle of Manzikert (1071), the sultanate became the dominant force in the region that we now call “the Middle East.” The Byzantine army was diminished to naught, while Byzantine nobles struggled for the throne and invited Seljuk adventurers to participate in this struggle. Finishing his *Historia* in 1081, Michael Attaleiates described the Turks’ presence in Bithynia. In the 1080s the new emperor Alexios I Komnenos struggled to shift the boundary zone from the suburbs of the capital but did not achieve much.³ When the participants of the First Crusade arrived in Asia Minor (1096), they found the Turks in Bithynia, next to Nicaea.

Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118), his son John II Komnenos (r. 1118-1143) and grandson Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143-1180) applied many measures to limit the influence of the Turks. One hundred years later, Eustathios of Thessaloniki summarized the one hundred years of the presence of the Turks in the peninsula by comparing them with the rooted tree that the Byzantine emperors did not manage to uproot.⁴ The student of Eustathios, Niketas Choniates grudgingly recognized the “Persian” sultan of Ikonion Kay Khusraw I as the rightful ruler of the Anatolian hinterland. The literary transformation from migrating group into the legitimate

¹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tzolakis (Athens: Academia Atheniensis Institutum Litterarum Graecarum et Latinarum Studiis Destinatum, 2011), 35, lines 19-20.

² See A.C.S. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: a new interpretation*. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

³ Jonathan Shepard “Father or Scorpion? Style and Substance in Alexios’ Diplomacy,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1996), 63-86.

⁴ Eustathios of Thessaloniki, “The Epiphany Oration of 1174,” in *Eustathios of Thessaloniki, Opera Minora*, ed. P. Wirth (New York: De Gruyter, 2000), 283, tr. A. Stone, *Eustathios of Thessaloniki: Secular Orations* (Brisbane: Center for Early Christian Studies, 2013), 57.

masters of Byzantine space, from neighbors of Persia into the rulers of Asia, from “Ephthalite Huns” to the Persians themselves is of particular importance here.

This dissertation explores how the Byzantine literati constructed the identity of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric. Following the work of Klaus Eder, I perceive collective identities as “narrative constructions which permit the control of the boundaries of a network of actors”.⁵ This dissertation investigates the changing identity of the Turks within the Byzantine rhetoric. My dissertation is based on rhetorical sources by which term I understand the whole corpus of texts written in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by the Byzantine intellectuals. The dissertation will investigate the connections between the changes in the identity of the Turks in rhetoric, political history of Byzantium. It will also trace the connections between particular literati and the images they used to promote their agenda in the world. This explains the choice of the term: while being problematic, “identity of the Turks” is more dynamic than “image of the Turks.”

Term “Turks” refers in this dissertation to the mass of the Turkic-speaking pastoralists as a collective entity. For the sake of clarity I will distinguish between the “Great Seljuks” and “Turks of Asia Minor.” The “Great Seljuks” are the sultans and subjects of the greater political conglomerate created by Toghril Beg and his followers (fl. 1050-1118). Under the “Turks of Asia Minor” I understand the sultans, amīrs and subjects of the political entities that Turkic-speaking rulers created in the territory that the Byzantines called “Asia” and that stretched from Constantinople to the upper Euphrates, roughly coinciding with the borders of present-day Turkey.

1. Previous Research.

The history of the relations between the empire of the Komnenoi and the Turkic polities of Asia Minor has for the longest time been rather peripheral to the fields of Byzantine Studies, Crusader Studies and Ottoman Studies. It demands the knowledge of more than one source language and, what is more demanding, the knowledge of at least two traditions. The two

⁵ K. Eder, “A Theory of Collective Identity Making Sense of the Debate on a ‘European Identity,’” *European Journal of Social Theory* 12 (2009): 427-447.

“founding fathers” of the field are Paul Wittek and Ferdinand Chalandon, who in the first half of the twentieth century wrote the works that defined the perspectives of Ottomanists and Byzantinists for a long period of time.⁶ Writing in the wake of the French school of Crusader Studies, Chalandon was interested in the empire of the Komnenoi and the West, while Wittek focused on the emergence of the Ottoman state. I do not make extensive use of these studies directly as they are present in the work of the next generation of scholars.

The first person to systematize the Byzantine perceptions of the Turks was Gyula Moravcsik. His work, *Byzantinoturcica*, was partially inspired by the “Touranist” ideas that postulated the imagined unity of all the Turks. Moravcsik produced a catalogue of the all names and titles of the “Turkish people” mentioned in the Byzantine sources that were available to the author in pre-war Budapest and the extensive archives he visited.⁷ The work of Moravcsik is now referred to in every article that deals with the history of the Byzantine-Turkic relations from his time till the present day. The present dissertation investigates the functions of the some of Moravcsik’s terms and thus at least partly continues his work in a different methodological framework.

After Chalandon and Moravcsik, the crisis of the Byzantine state in the eleventh century attracted the attention of Speros Vryonis. Vryonis connected the migration of the Turks with the later growth of the Ottoman state and with the so-called *ghaza* thesis. Working in the pre-digital era, Speros Vryonis used all the available Byzantine sources combined together with the data derived from the Ottoman tax registers. His study on the de-Hellenization of Asia Minor became a staple reference book for the students of Ottoman and Byzantine studies.⁸ The works of the French Turcologist Claude Cahen complemented it, providing important data from the Arabic sources about the other side of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations. The work of Vryonis and Cahen

⁶ F. Chalandon, *Les Comnène. Etudes sur l’empire Byzantin au XI^e et au XII^e siècles*, vol. 2, *Jean II Comnène (1118-1143) et Manuel I Comnène (1143-1180)* (Paris: Picard, 1912); Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1938).

⁷ G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2 vols (Budapest, Kir. M. Pázmány Péter Tudomány egyetemi Görög Filológiai Intézet: 1942).

⁸ S. Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

are still valuable as the “grand narratives” that describe the general timeline of Anatolian history.

After his monograph, Vryonis published a short article that summarized his ideas about the transformation of Asia Minor. He introduced the concepts of “islamization” and “nomadization” of Asia Minor as well as the whole topic of a Byzantium that, allegedly, stroke back. According to this article, the Turkic migrants effectively turned Asia Minor into their pastures and subsequently de-Christianized the population, which led first to the establishment of the sultanate of Ikonion and then to the success of the Ottomans in the fifteenth century.⁹ Vryonis based his argument primarily on the literary sources from the “Byzantine” side of the conflicts that were available in the 1970s. This dissertation will question the relations between the two concepts and the data found in the Byzantine sources, including those unavailable to Vryonis.

Another work that premises the dissertation is the book by François Hartog on the image of the Scythians in the *Histories* of Herodotus.¹⁰ Hartog stated that for Herodotus, the Scythians, as well as the Egyptians, Persians and other “ethnicities”, belonged to the category of the “Other”. He subsequently analyzed Herodotus' description of different aspects of the image of the Scythians, including geography, religion, way of life and power, focusing especially on the rhetorical figures used by Herodotus.¹¹

In the following decade the publication of new sources and the advent of the linguistic turn to Byzantine studies stimulated new research in the twelfth-century Byzantium. In his seminal monograph on the reign of Manuel Komnenos, Paul Magdalino demonstrated the importance of the sources that were mostly ignored by Vryonis, namely examples of Byzantine court rhetoric.¹² He also pointed to the tremendous role that court rhetoric played in the Byzantine empire of the Komnenoi, that effectively was an empire of letters. The publication of

⁹ Speros Vryonis, “The Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor,” *DOP* 29 (1975): 41-75.

¹⁰ F. Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of Other in the Writing of History*, tr. J. Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

¹¹ For Hartog's analysis of rhetorical figures see special chapter of his work Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 212-260.

¹² Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

new sources stimulated a long discussion on the role and importance of genre in Byzantine rhetoric which allowed one to deconstruct the artificial divides between the different forms of rhetoric, opening the ground for wider comparative studies of which the present dissertation is a part.

At the same time when Magdaino published his book, Byzantinists under the influence of Russian formalism and new historicism re-formulated the conceptual framework of the Byzantine rhetoric, clearing the way for discourse analysis. Stepping aside from the old division of Byzantine literary productions into fixed “genres” Margaret Mullett demonstrated the many interconnections between works of rhetoric that were considered to be incomparable.¹³ Finally, the advent of the digital humanities created a possibility to study the corpus of Byzantine rhetoric with digital methods that allowed to see the occurrence of one lexical unit in the many texts of different genres. My dissertation follows this framework and uses sources belonging to many different genres.

While historians of Byzantine rhetoric were re-evaluating the boundaries of genre, Byzantine historians began the re-evaluation of the “immutable Byzantine empire”. The advent of the postcolonial critique prompted several Byzantinists to reconsider the notions of empire and republic that looked so stable just a generation ago.¹⁴ The question remains, what comes to replace the image, but the questioning of the old image of “immutable empire” is current trend. My dissertation follows this trend: I perceive Byzantium as an empire that was very fast to change its rhetoric and ideology and tailor it to the moment.

A new generation of scholars in Byzantine-Turkic studies has produced a new interpretational framework for the Byzantine-Seljuk relations that questions the validity of the bipolar approach suggested by Vryonis and Cahen. Dimitri Korobeinikov wrote a comprehensive monograph on the Byzantine-Seljuk relations in the thirteenth century that questioned the

¹³ M. Mullett, “The Madness of Genre,” *Homo Byzantinus*, DOP, 46 (1992), 235-243

¹⁴ A. Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), A. Cameron, *Byzantine Matters* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 2014).

paradigm of “nomadisation” and “islamization”.¹⁵ Alexander Beihammer published two articles that address specific aspects of Byzantine-Seljuk communication and interaction.¹⁶ Rustam Shukurov published a monograph on the Byzantine-Seljuk relations of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries that demonstrates the importance of the Seljuk migrants in Palaiologan Byzantium.¹⁷ Finally, the seminal monograph of A.C.S. Peacock on the empire of the Great Seljuks questioned many points of Vryonis, especially the barbarity of the Turks.¹⁸ Collectively, these studies created the new framework that allows one to perceive Byzantine-Seljuk relations as a relation of two mutually interested cultures. In her book on oriental motives in the Byzantine art of the tenth to twelfth centuries, Alicia Walker suggested that Byzantine artists used specific motifs of the Seljuk art to suit the Byzantine propaganda of the day.¹⁹

This dissertation continues its argument in the direction set by the scholarship mentioned above. The idea to analyze the projected identity of the Turks comes from Moravcsik, the study of the Byzantine sources as a unified discourse comes from Vryonis, while the need to study the image of the Other in several aspects is inspired by François Hartog. The works of Paul Magdalino supported the idea to include rhetoric in the analysis of the projected identity, while the works of Shukurov, Beihammer, Korobeinikov and Walker suggest to search for some borrowed (or at least elusively common) elements in the Byzantine identity of the Seljuk Turks. Thus in my dissertation I will see how the Byzantine literati used contemporary data, classical references to constructs the identity of the Turks that would suite their political and social needs.

¹⁵ Dimitri Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

¹⁶ Alexander Beihammer, “Defection Across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations,” in *Speculum* 86.3 (2011): 597-651; Alexander Beihammer, “Muslim Rulers Visiting the Imperial City: Building Alliances and Personal Networks between Constantinople and the Eastern Borderlands,” *Al-Masaq* 24 2 (2012):157-177.

¹⁷ They also fell out of Vryonis's scope. R. Shukurov, *Byzantium and the Turks, 1204-1264* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

¹⁸ A.C.S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

¹⁹ A. Walker, *Emperor and the World: Exotic Elements and the Imaging of Middle Byzantine Imperial Power, Ninth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012) The main critique lies in the problematic dating of the selected objects. L. Shafran, “Review on Alicia Walker: Emperor and the World,” *West* 86 20.1 (2013): 126-128.

The investigation of the image of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric will inevitably raises the question about the usability of some of the terms that were developed and projected by the previous generation of historians, such as “Komnenian reconquista” or “nomadization”.

2. Outline

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the construction of the Byzantine identity of the Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, from the first embassy of the Great Seljuks to Constantine IX Monomachos to the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and the Empire of Nicaea and from Michael Psellos to Niketas Choniates. The primary research question is rather straightforward: how did Byzantine literati construct the projected identity of the Turks? This query falls into several sub-questions.

The first group of sub-questions addresses the issue raised by the title of my proposed PhD dissertation, namely the question of naming. How did the Byzantines call the Turks as a group? What collective labels did they use for the members of the ethnicity which modern scholarship calls “Seljuk Turks”? Can one trace any pattern between usage of a special name (e.g. “Persians”) and the description of a certain situation (distribution of power after death of sultan)?

The second group of questions deals with the imagined space and place of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric. Where did the Byzantine literati imagine the “springboard” of the Turks to be? How did they imagine migration of the Turks to the Byzantine “Asia” and did they plan to reconquer it?

The third group of questions deals with the Persian authority. What were the terms that the Byzantines used to describe the power of the Turks? Were these term new, or were they old coins with new images on them? Another issue to be investigated here is the Byzantine views on the beliefs of the Turks. How did Byzantine literati imagine Seljuk Islam and which role did it play in the projected identity? Were the Seljuk Turks Muslims or pagans in Byzantine eyes, and if they were, in which sense and in which sources?

The fifth group of sub-questions addresses the most important problem of this dissertation, namely the crossing of the imagined boundary between the two communities. Who

were those who dared to cross the border and how did Byzantine literati imagine them? What was their attitude to the spatial boundary, Byzantine-Turkic marriages and religious conversions? Were there any families that received some credit for their shift of the sides during the problematic period of the Crusades?

The fifth group of sub-questions deals with the individual images of the Turks who are present in several sources. How did the Byzantine literati imagine “positive” and “negative” Turks? Could one trace the connections between the Byzantine “use” of the Turks and the Byzantine attitudes towards their own rulers?

To answer these research questions I separate my dissertation into seven chapters.

The first chapter introduces the chronological and methodological framework of my project, as well as my primary sources and secondary literature. The second chapter addresses the collective labels that the Byzantines used to denote the Seljuk Turks and the Turks of Asia Minor. In the section on naming, I will deal with many “Huns”, “Scythians” and “Persians” present in the discourse. The third chapter aims to trace down the changing perception of space and place occupied by the Seljuk Turks in the changing universe.

The fourth chapter focuses on the Byzantine view of the authority among the Seljuks (the perception of the Great Seljuks after the battle of Manzikert was much different from the perception of the Anatolian warlords during the Komnenian Reconquista of the twelfth century). This chapter examines the role that Seljuk authority played in the power landscape of the Komnenian era and the image of the Seljuk Turks created by the last author of the “long twelfth century” – Niketas Choniates.²⁰ The final subchapter of this chapter addresses the problem of the Byzantine perception of gender relations among the Seljuk Turks

The fifth chapter addresses the question of religious identity of the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine sources. It focuses on the perception of the “Seljuk Islam” in the late-eleventh centuries, studies the failed Byzantine reading of the Seljuk animistic beliefs in the works of

²⁰ “The long twelfth century” is the term used by Averil Cameron in her Natalie Zemon Davis lecture at the Central European University on 24.10.2014. See A.Cameron, *Arguing it out: Discussion in the twelfth-Century Byzantium* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2016).

Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos and analyzes the lengthy Philippics against “uncircumcised neighbors” in the work of Niketas Choniates..

The sixth chapter deals with those who cross the border, namely with the people who leave one community for the other. In this chapter I will discuss the mobility of medieval Turks and Byzantines, the heterotopias and counter-spaces of Asia, the defectors and rebels, the interracial marriages and the Byzantine attitude to sex on the borderlands. This chapter finishes with two case studies of two families that made border-crossing the sources of their identity and symbolic capital

The seventh chapter of the dissertation focuses on the images of the individual Turks in the Byzantine sources. In this chapter I list the images of the Seljuk Turks that gained some credit among the learned men of Byzantium and see how different authors employed the individual images to achieve their own aims. At the end of this chapter, I study the unique case of Niketas Choniates who altered the image of Kay Khusraw I of Ikonion in the three versions of his *History* to suit his own agenda, transforming him from an unlucky son of the heroic father into a semi-ideal ruler of runaway Romans.

. Finally, the eighth conclusive chapter summarizes the results of the research and demonstrates how the projected identity tailored by the Byzantine literati in the twelfth century was interconnected with the imperial politics. The conclusion will also summarize the perspectives of the further development of the topic.

3. Methodologies and Definitions

The traditional method first suggested by Moravcsik is the content-analysis, namely the study of the terms that Byzantine literati used to describe the Turks. In recent years, at least five colleagues wrote articles and books that analyzed or discussed the image of the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric through the analysis of the terms that the Byzantine literati used to describe the Seljuks.²¹ Most of these scholars tend to focus on these images in the separate

²¹ Rustam Shukurov, “The Byzantine classification of the Turks: Archaization or Academic Traditionalism.” In *ΦΛΑΟΠΛΑΤΩΝ. Festschrift Für Arne Effenberger zum 70. Geburtstag* (Mainz: Verlag

sources rather than to study the development of the image in the discourse, focusing either on historiography or on panegyrics in prose. By contrast, in my project I use both histories and panegyrics (in some cases it is hard to separate one genre from the other), adding several other sources, e.g. the Byzantine epic of *Digenis Akritis* or *Taktikon of St. Nikon of the Black Mountain*.

Besides analysis of the terms, three additional methodologies are used in this project. They include the theory of lexical field, intertextuality, and theory of space. The final part will introduce the definitions for the borderland and the idea of cultural brokerage. Both terms were occasionally used in the Anatolian context, but the authors rarely defined them in their work.

a. Byzantine categories of the Other

Before starting the dissertation about the projected identity of the foreign group in the Byzantine rhetoric, it seems important to introduce the key terms that the Byzantines used to characterize the Other. It is equally important to present the two terms that the reader will encounter through the texts of the dissertation, namely borderland, cultural broker and blind zone. Two first categories to define here are *genos* and *ethnos*.

The terms *genos* and *ethnos* are present in many Byzantine sources that describe the new barbarian groups in the Byzantine universe. In his recent monograph, Rustam Shukurov addressed the problem of the Byzantine classification of the Turks. According to Shukurov, the Byzantines used certain “scientific method” that allowed them to classify all the barbarians that they met on the borders according to their *genera* and species. In his monograph, Shukurov argued, that the Middle- and Late-Byzantine literati used term, *genos*, “kin,” to denote the ideal type, e.g. Huns were horse-riding pastoralists from the north. Term *ethnos*, “people,” depicted

des Römisch-Germanisch Zentralmuseums, 2012), 273-296; Alexander Beihammer, “Byzantine Orthodoxy and Religious Antagonism in the Byzantine Image of the Seljuk Turks”, *Al-Masaq* 23(1) (2011): 15-36; Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks in the Thirteenth Century*; Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and People in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Angeliki Papageorgiou, “οἱ δὲ λῦκοι ὡς Πέρσαι: The image of the “Turks” in the reign of John II Komnenos (1118-1143)”, *BS* 1-2 (2011): 149-161.

the subgroup of the ideal type real group of pastoralists in the Steppes, e.g. Cumans.²² According to the monograph, the Byzantines classified the twelfth-century Cumans as Scythians/Huns/Turks by *genos* and as “the Cumans” by their *ethnos*.²³

In this dissertation I accept Shukurov’s definition of *genos* and *ethnos* as two important categories, that Byzantine literati used to classify the “Other.” However, I accept this definition with two important reservations. First of all, the coherent system of classification is present in a few works of Byzantine rhetoric. Only some learned men used the terms *genos* and *ethnos* together. Secondly, in the twelfth century the system of classification through *genos* and *ethnos* was used almost exclusively in the very specific context namely in the descriptions of *origo gentis*. In the twelfth century the characterization of the Other by *genos* and *ethnos* was a literary device that the Byzantine literati used to highlight the barbarity of the “other people”. As chapter II demonstrates, the classification of the other according to *genos* and *ethnos* was casual and situational.

Another important term is “collective label” It is a technical term that I use used to describe the groups of the Others that the Byzantines conceptualized in their rhetoric. “the Turks” is a good example here.

b. Linguistics: Semantic Changes

One of the main challenges of the dissertation lies in the many labels that the Byzantines used to describe the Turks as a collective entity. To denote the Turks, the Byzantine literati used the terms “Persians,” “Turks” and “those of Hagar.” All these terms were not eleventh-century inventions. The question remains, why did the Byzantines use these collective labels. To explain this, my predecessors used the notion of archaization that is the Byzantines employed “old” names to convey the idea of similarity between people of the past and people of the present.

This dissertation suggests to analyze these multiple labels with the different intellectual tools in mind. To provide new interpretations for these collective labels, I introduce the notion of

²² Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 25-35.

²³ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 36.

“lexical field.” This notion was used first in linguistics to define set of topically oriented lexemes that describe parts of the same notion from a different perspective (e.g. “bay” and “river” both describe different types of water). I suggest to read the collective labels (Turks, Persians) as the lexemes that describe certain communities of the Turks in a similar way.²⁴ In other words, I suggest to read the collective labels not as a mere imitations of classical writers, but as a code that allows the author to put an additional meaning into his text. When the Byzantine literati had to describe the new political entity, they choose some of the old terms and changed their meaning. The process when somebody ascribes the new meaning to the word is called the semantic change.

According to the classical definition, semantic change is the “change of the meanings of linguistic expression over time.”²⁵ In the eleventh century, the Byzantine literati used the term “Persians” to describe the Great Seljuks, while in the twelfth century they used it to portray the Seljuks of Ikonion. The concept of the semantic change allows me to pin down the time of the possible change, investigate the context, in which the Byzantine literati changed the names for the Turks, and trace the connection between the changing political situation of the empire and the changes in rhetoric. This allows me to demonstrate that the Byzantine identification of the Turks was much more flexible and dynamic than it was thought before.

c. Intertextuality²⁶

To construct their images of the Seljuk Turks, Byzantine writers used “citations, references, cultural languages, which cut across the text in various stereophonies.”²⁷ Thus, to

²⁴ The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* describes the lexical field as “as part of the vocabulary of a specific language at a specific stage in its history.” For the application see E. Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Medieval Ireland* (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 100.

²⁵ For the detailed discussion of the term see Willem Hollmann, “Semantic change,” in *English language: description, variation and context*, ed. J. Culpeper, F. Katamba, P. Kerswill, and Tony McEnery (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), 301-313; E.C. Traugott, R.B. Dasher, *Regularity in the Semantic Change*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁶ One can indeed perceive intertextuality as a branch of narratology. Still these methodologies can be separated out according to their subject. Narratology fixes on the structures inside the narrative, while intertextuality studies connections between the selected narrative and other texts.

²⁷ Roland Bartes, *Image-Music-Text*, tr. S. Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 160.

study the image of the Seljuk Turks I need intertextuality as a methodology that allows one to reveal and describe the intricate networks of allusions and quotations within the selected text. A good example here is Niketas Choniates' description of the battle at Myriokephalon (1176).²⁸

This narrative is typical of Choniates' polemics with an official imperial ideology. We are lucky to have one surviving "information letter" (supposedly from Manuel Komnenos to Henry II Plantagenet), which gives us a possibility to compare the described events and their style.²⁹ What is obvious from the comparison of two sources is Choniates' wide usage of different quotations and allusions. In the description of Myriokephalon I see at least two layers of such quotations and allusions, which I will analyze consequently.

The first "layer" consists of Old and New Testament quotations. Van Dieten carefully notes them in the critical apparatus. They define two narratives "behind" the text of Choniates: the narrative of the heavenly ordained punishment of the emperor (where Seljuk Turks play a role of the weapon of the Lord)³⁰ and a rather complex story of David saved on the day of the battle (with Manuel = David, Kılıç Arslan = Absalom).³¹

The second layer of associations in Choniates' description is connected with Herodotus. In the description of peacemaking scene, Choniates used a direct quotation from Herodotus (Nisibean horses),³² which allows one to connect Manuel not only with David (as in the Biblical layer of the narrative), but with Persian kings of the *Histories* as well.³³ More than that: Manuel's behavior before the battle (such as his rejection of the peace treaty) is reminiscent of the behavior of king Darius during his ill-fated expedition against the Scythians. One can read in that Manuel is similar to Darius, while the Seljuks are similar to the Scythians.

The description of the battle at Myriokephalon shows a complexity of the image of Seljuk

²⁸ Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. A. Van Dieten (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975), 182-192.

²⁹ *Epistola Manuelis Constantinopolitani imperatoris* in Roger of his Howeden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1868), 102-104, tr. A. Vasilyev, "Manuel Comnenus and Henry Plantagenet," *BZ* 29 (1929-1930): 237-244.

³⁰ See esp. Choniates, *Historia*, 181, line 27; 187, lines 11-12.

³¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 188, lines 26-28.

³² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 189, lines 51-52.

³³ Herodotus, *Histories*, ed. Ph.-E. Legrand, vol. 4, (Paris: Les belles Lettres, 1960) VII.40.

Turks in the scene of the battle at Myriokephalon. Niketas Choniates constructed this image with the help of many allusions and direct and indirect quotations. Intertextuality allows me to trace connections between the description of Choniates and other texts. This, in turn, enables more exact observations on the meaning and the role which Seljuk Turks play in Choniates' story. However, not every narrative of Byzantine rhetoric is so rich with embedded quotations and not every work of rhetoric has so many layers.

d. Concepts from the Theory of Space

The theory of space was developed by the same team of people who introduced the very notion of "discourse" into French Academia in 1970s. Following the works of Gaston Bachelard, Henri Lefebvre developed the lexicon that allowed him to describe the landscape of modern city and find in it some "structures" that supposedly were present in all cities, especially in the urban space of the United States of America.³⁴ Lefebvre introduced in his work the idea of "counter-space," that is a space in direct opposition with the normalized place of the modern city.³⁵ Strangely enough, this term has immediate analogues in the works of Byzantine rhetoric. Same Niketas Choniates describes a strange community of Greeks at lake Pousgousa in Asia Minor who waged war against the emperor and did not allow him to build a fortress on the islands situated in the middle of the lake. The peculiar situation of the island on a lake, defended by the Romans against the Roman looks like a reversal of the usual topos of the Komnenian Reconquista, where the emperor builds a fortress on the hills and settles the Romans there. This de-normalized rebels on a lake suit well the idea of counter-space.

Another term that has Byzantine analogues is "heterotopia." According to Michel Foucault, it is the other space in between that is accessed under certain conditions during the special rituals.³⁶ This term, "the other space" defines well the position of the imperial palace in the imagined universe of Byzantium. Very much like the church, the imperial palace is a special

³⁴ H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, tr. D. Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2015), 350-365.

³⁵ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 381.

³⁶ M. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias." *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984): 46-49.

place with limited access and special relations between the emperor and the Turks. In the palace, emperor can give a ritualized banquet to his former enemy, e.g. Manuel I Komnenos to Kılıç Arslan II in 1161. Inside the palace, the Byzantine emperors could have a separate space in “Persian style” that symbolized their power over the Turks. The use Foucault's term in my dissertation aids in demonstrating the importance and “otherness” of the palace in the symbolic landscape. I will use heterotopia in my analysis of the spaces in between, that I included in chapter VI of this dissertation.

The final term that I introduce into the topic is the notion of the “imperial gaze”. According to Marie Louise Pratt, the imperial gaze was something the eighteenth-century colonizers exercised over the colonized South Americans. In my dissertation I compare it with the function of “viewing” in the triumphal poetry of Komnenoi, where the audience is invited to see the re-conquered landscape of Anatolia and the defeated Turks in the triumph. The notion of “gaze” invites comparison between modern and pre-modern politics of space and paves a way for the possible comparison of Byzantine Empire with other Empires. However, this dissertation is focused on the Turks and their identity in rhetoric.

It seems likely that the concepts of counter-space, heterotopia and “imperial gaze” will allow to reveal the new features of the imagined landscape in Byzantine rhetoric and clarify the “spatial” aspect of the projected identity of the Turks.

e. Borderland and Cultural Brokers

The history of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations was for a long time the history of the Byzantine-Seljuk frontiers, borders and borderlands. Many scholars produced many terms that denote the imagined space of conflict that supposedly stretched between the Byzantine fortresses and the centers of the Seljuk polities.³⁷ For some scholars, like Vryonis this was a sign of the Byzantine “decline.”³⁸

³⁷ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 128-129

³⁸ More recently, John Haldon argued, that the existence of the standing imperial army and the network of fortresses allowed the Byzantine to keep control over Asia Minor even when more the Arab armies

To avoid any modernizing notions, I will call this shifting intermediary zone the “borderlands”. I define them as a space between the centers of the military activity of the two sides. In the 1080s the borderland in Bithynia stretched from Nicomedia and Nicaea (which Alexios I Komnenos tried to take back without any success until the First Crusade). Later successes of the Byzantine army moved the borderland to the upper part of the Meander valley, the valley of Dorylaion and Paphlagonia in the north. In the second half of the twelfth century, the border zone stabilized in the same regions that saw some change only after the fall of Constantinople and the establishment of the empire of Nicaea. The very existence of the borderland was problematic and was a subject of constant discussion during the negotiations between Byzantium and Ikonion. The people who helped in those negotiations were cultural brokers.

A cultural broker is a person that operates in the framework of two or more cultures. In the context of this dissertation the cultural broker is a person who works as an intermediary between the Byzantines and the Seljuks, but is not always present physically in the border space between the two polities. The term “cultural broker” itself has a long history in sociology. In this dissertation the definition of cultural broker is adapted from the recent article of Helmold Remnitz. According to Remnitz, the “cultural broker is a simultaneous member of two or more interacting networks who provides nodes for the community communication with the outside world”.³⁹ As Remnitz noted, the cultural broker not only crosses the boundary between the communities and networks, but also supports the very presence of the boundary by his brokerage. I apply this term to the two families who performed functions of cultural brokers in Constantinople and Ikonion, namely the Gabrades and the Axouchoi. I describe them in the last subchapter of chapter VI, but the term itself will appear in several other chapters. It seems likely that some of the members of these “broker families” were also frontier brokers, but the limited presence of the latter in Byzantine rhetoric does not allow me to delve deep into this matter. As

invaded it on a yearly basis. See Haldon, *Empire that Would not Die*, 140-143.

³⁹ H. Remnitz, “The Historian as a Cultural Broker in Late and Post-Roman World,” in *Western Perspectives of the Mediterranean: Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and Western Middle Ages*, ed. A. Fischer, I. Wood (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 45.

such the frontier brokers fall into “blind zones” of the Byzantine rhetoric.

The term “blind zone” or “blind spot” originally described the space on the road that the driver cannot see because the car itself blocks the view. In my dissertation I use the term to describe some aspects of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations that are literally absent from the surviving Byzantine sources. For example, none of the sources I know of contains any detailed information about the status of the Christian population in the sultanate of Ikonion in the first half of the twelfth century. This notion is important, because it allows one to understand the limits of the Byzantine rhetoric.

4. Sources and Genres

It would be a mistake to start the study on the projected identity of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric without making some preliminary notes on Byzantine rhetoric.⁴⁰ Any study on the image of the Seljuk Turks becomes problematic if one does not take into account recent debates about Byzantine historiography that *opinio communis* considers the main genre to study the image of the Turks.

In 2000, Paolo Odorico argued that it is hard to produce a definition of Byzantine literature.⁴¹ The same is true for historiography: the *ODB* defines historiography as a “genre of Byzantine literature.”⁴² This traditional viewpoint (represented by Herbert Hunger) labels as Byzantine historiography of the eleventh and twelfth century⁴³ a group of works, which dealt with history in one way or another. Equally in 2000, Margaret Mullett looked at the situation from a different perspective. For Mullett, works gathered under the title of *Geschichtsschreibung*

⁴⁰ Names of the sources are given according to Oxford dictionary of Byzantium. In the case when *ODB* gives two versions (Bryennios, Choniates), I use the English one. The only exception is the work of John Kinnamos, the title of which will be explained in a special footnote.

⁴¹ P. Odorico, “L’auteur byzantin: Un essai de définition,” *Actes du colloque pour une nouvelle histoire de la littérature byzantine*. Ed. P. Odorico, P. Agapitos (Paris: École des Hautes Études, 2006), 61-80.

⁴² *ODB*, vol. II, 937-938.

⁴³ H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, Vol. II (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1967), 372-443.

in Hunger's book represent rather different trends in history writing than a united "genre".⁴⁴ Some eleventh and twelfth century writers (Skylitzes) oriented themselves to produce "a summary of more reliable chronicles", using Theophanes the Confessor as an example. Others, like Anna Komnene, composed narratives which combined a much more visible position of the author with an obvious political bias. In the same year Paolo Odorico demonstrated that what seems to be historiography by the scientific classification of Hunger, could serve many different purposes.⁴⁵

Besides the "continuation/change" problem, which was in the focus of Mullett's attention. There are at least three more clusters of problems connected with Byzantine historiography as a genre.⁴⁶

The first cluster is a cluster of problems related with the author. In the second half of the twentieth century, this approach focused on the "social background" and "social" views of the author. Modern scholars now take the biography of the authors into account, but no longer perceive the "social background" as the only factor of influence over the work. Another point of interest for modern scholarship is an aim, with which this or that work was written: a work of historiography (e.g. *Alexiad*) is no longer perceived as a history for the sake of history, but as a carrier of other messages, which can tell much about both the audience and the author.⁴⁷

A second set of problems deals with the content and structure of the works of historiography. Imitation of ancient examples in the works of historiography remains a debated issue: it is no more perceived as a direct "borrowing" from antiquity, but as another medium by which the author conveys the message. Another problem is related with the motive of

⁴⁴ Margaret Mullett, "Novelisation in Byzantium: Narrative after the Revival of Fiction," in *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in honor of Roger Scott*, ed. J. Burke et al. (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2006), 1-29.

⁴⁵ P. Odorico, "Les trois visages de la même violence: les trois prises de Thessalonique," in *Actes du colloque pour une nouvelle histoire de la littérature byzantine*, 147-181.

⁴⁶ I. Nilsson, "To narrate the events of the past: on Byzantine Historians and Historians on Byzantium" in *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honor of Roger Scott*, 47-58.

⁴⁷ P. Magdalino, "The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the mid-twelfth century in the *Alexiad*," in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. T. Gouma-Peterson (New York - London: Garland, 2000), 15-43.

Kaiserkritik..⁴⁸ It seems that this motive is present in many works of rhetoric. At the same time, it is important to perceive it not as a coherent “structure,” but in the connection with other motives present in this or that work. The new summary (if not the new definition) of *Kaiserkritik* remains a desideratum

The last problem is the audience and the reception of the Komnenian rhetoric. The present consensus states that rhetoric was primarily directed towards the educated nobility of the Komnenian era. Paul Magdalino described the interests of the key element of this audience in his seminal monograph. Margaret Mullett tried to reconstruct at least part of the intellectual network of the age of Alexios Komnenos on the basis of Theophylact of Ohrid’s correspondence.⁴⁹

As I stated above, this dissertation is about Byzantine rhetoric. The sources are not limited to Byzantine “historiography” or Byzantine “poetry” or Byzantine “ecclesiastical rhetoric.” I perceive genres as subcategories of Byzantine rhetoric and I still think that Herbert Hunger’s classification with all its limitations is useful as an orientation grid. Among the forms of rhetoric I analyze, there are lengthy narratives that Hunger categorized as “history-writing.”⁵⁰ and their authors (e.g. Michael Attaleiates and Anna Komnene) identify as histories. The editors of the other narrative classify them as *basilikoi logoi* (and Hunger would label them as “encomia” in rhetoric chapter).⁵¹ I classify these narratives as panegyric and, if they use poetic

⁴⁸See Hunger, Herbert, “On the Imitation (ΜΙΜΗΣΙΣ) of Antiquity in Byzantine Literature.” *DOP* 23 (1969-70): 15-38. F. Tinnefeld. *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971); P. Magdalino, “Aspects of 12th century Byzantine Kaiserkritik,” *Speculum* 58, No. 2 (1983): 326-346. Tinnefeld is of special importance because several authors of my interest used in their work the *topoi* of Kaiserkritik.

⁴⁹ P. Magdalino *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop* (Ashgate: Variorum, 1997).

⁵⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. E. Tzolakis (Athens: Academy of Sciences, 2011); Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. D. Reinsch (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015); John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. I. Thurn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971); Johannes Zonaras, *Ioannis Zonarae Epitoma Historiarum*, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst, vol. 3 (Bonn: Weber, 1897); Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, ed. Paul Gautier (Brussels: Byzantion, 1975); John Kinnamos, *Epitoma rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis Gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke (Bonn: Weber, 1836); Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. D. Reinsch, A. Kambylis (New York: De Gruyter, 2001). Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. A. Van Dieten (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975).

⁵¹ Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974), *Nicephori Basilacae Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. A. Garzya

forms, as court poetry. Besides it, the dissertation uses use many lesser forms of poetry, including epigrams for the objects of art and book epigrams that avoided the attention of Hunger. Third, I use the works of the ecclesiastical writers These I classify as the ecclesiastical rhetoric.
⁵² In my dissertation this subtype includes sermons (Eustathios, later bishop of Thessaloniki, 1174), *typica* (Nikon of Black Mountain).

Another group of sources includes letters written both by private individuals. In my dissertation, I use letters written by one member of the elite to the another (Theophylact of Ohrid), by Byzantine emperor to the foreign ruler (Letter of Manuel Komnenos to Henry II Plantagenet) and by a literatus to his patron (letter of Nikephoros Basilakes to John Axouch).⁵³

The last group includes two sources, namely the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* and the poem of Constantine Manasses.⁵⁴ The epic and the rhymed history lie on the intersection of many genres and include elements of some of them. The dissertation will demonstrate how very few images present in these text contribute and connect with the images of the Turks in the other genres of rhetoric.

As the same Margaret Mullett once noted, there is no manuscript that provides the evidence for the existing strict system of genre at work in the twelfth century Byzantium. To sum up, this dissertation recognizes the usability of “genres” as an orientation grid, but aims at studying the image of the Turks in the Byzantine discourse of the eleventh and twelfth centuries as a whole. In this context it seems necessary to provide a short characteristic for the sources that I use in my work.

a. *Chronography* of Michael Psellos

(Leipzig: Teubner, 1984); Michael Italikos. *Lettres et Discourse*, ed. P. Gautier (Paris: Institut français d'études byzantines, 1972).

⁵² N. Duobouniotis, “Νεοφύτου Εγκλείστου ανεκδοτα εργα,” *Επετηρίς Εταιρείας Βυζαντινών Σπουδών* 17(1937) 45-47.

⁵³ *Epistola Manuelis Constantinopolitani imperatoris* in Roger of his Howeden, *Chronica*, ed. W. Stubbs, vol. 2 (London: Longman, 1868), 102-104, translation A. Vasilyev, “Manuel Comnenus and Henry Plantagenet,” *BZ* 29 (1929-1930): 237-244.

⁵⁴ See *Digenis Akritis*, ed. and tr. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Manasses, Constantine, *Breviarium Chronicum*, ed. O. Lampsidis (Athens: Institute of Greek and Roman Antiquities, 1996).

Prominent courtier and rhetor Michael Psellos was born in Constantinople around 1018. He studied rhetoric and law under John Mauropus together with the future patriarch Constantin Leichoudes and with John Xiphilinos. Later he worked as a judge in the imperial provinces. Upon his return to Constantinople in the 1040s, Psellos became an imperial secretary and advanced through the court ranks with great speed, reaching a status of considerable importance under the reign of Constantine Monomachos (r. 1042-1055).⁵⁵ At the end of the latter's reign, Psellos left the court due to some intrigue and entered a monastery, but soon returned and regained his high standing. For the next thirty years he enjoyed a prominent position at the court and was among the chief advisors of Michael VI (r. 1055-1057), Isaak I Komnenos (r. 1057-1059), Constantine Doukas (r. 1059-1068), Romanos Diogenes (r. 1068-1071) and Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078), while being at the same time the “Chief of the philosophers” and a prominent teacher of the time. His death is conventionally dated to the end of the 1070s, albeit some scholars say that Psellos died in the 1080s.⁵⁶

Summarizing the lengthy career of Michael Psellos, Stratis Papaioannou noted that there were “many Pselloi”.⁵⁷ Michael Psellos was a philosopher, a courtier and a hagiographer too. He produced many works of rhetoric preserved in 1709 different manuscripts, among which *Chronographia* is the most famous one. In *Chronography* Psellos mentioned the Great Seljuks twice. However short, these two mentions are of extreme importance. They provide the context for many other references to the Great Seljuks in Psellos court rhetoric. It seems possible that Psellos contributed much to the formation of the Byzantine image of the Turks – and that is why the analysis of his works usually opens the chapters of this dissertation.

b. *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates

Michael Attaleiates was a court official and a military judge (1020/1030- after 1081),

⁵⁵ For the recent survey of intricate between Michael Psellos and Constantine Monomachos as potential patron of his poetry see short survey of Floris Bernard. F. Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 248-250.

⁵⁶ Anthony Kaldellis, “The Date of Psellos’ Death, Once Again: Psellos was not the Michael of Nicomedia mentioned by Attaleiates,” *BZ* 104 (2011): 651-664.

⁵⁷S. Papaioannou, *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3.

who wrote a detailed history of the eleventh-century Byzantine Empire. He was born in Attaleia (modern Antalya) and moved to Constantinople to study law, probably under Michael Psellos.⁵⁸ He gained prominence in the reign of Romanos IV Diogenes (r. 1068-1071) who appointed him to the new post of military judge.⁵⁹ As a military judge Michael Attaleiates participated in the Romanos' campaigns against the Seljuk Turks and probably accompanied this emperor to the battle of Manzikert (1071). After the battle, Michael Attaleiates entered the service of the new emperor Michael VII Doukas (r. 1071-1078) and gained his favor by writing a law treatise. Attaleiates died around 1080 and was buried in the monastery that he founded in Constantinople.⁶⁰

Attaleiates composed his main work, *Historia*, in the 1080s. It encompasses the events from the death of Roman Argyros (1034) to the succession of Nikephoros Botaneiates (1081) and presents a story of the gradual decline of the Roman empire in the eleventh century. The reign of Attaleiates' patron Romanos Diogenes occupies central place in the narrative. Attaleiates praised Romanos for his military valor, criticized him for his imprudence and harshness and highlighted his own status as the close advisor to the emperor. In the later part of *Historia* the author proves sympathetic towards young Alexios Komnenos who is "lurking in the background" of his narrative.⁶¹ The final panegyric to the emperor Nikephoros Botaneiates is problematic due to the contrast between this pompous praise and the feeling of insecurity about the future of the Roman empire.

Attaleiates was the first Byzantine author to describe in some detail the origins of the Seljuk Turks, their sultan, the first raids of the Turks against Byzantium, the battle of Manzikert and the treaty between Romanos Diogenes and the Seljuk sultan. *Historia* plays a role in all

⁵⁸ D. Krallis, "Attaleiates as a Reader of Psellos," in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. C. Barber and D. Jenkins (Brill: Leiden, 2006), 187-193.

⁵⁹ For recent works on Attaleiates see for image of foreigners in Attaleiates see A. Vratimos, "Identification of Scythians in the Service of Romanos IV's First Expedition to Anatolia," *BS* 37 (2009): 191-198. Also see John Haldon, "The *Krites* tou Stratopedou: a new office for a new situation?," *Travaux et mémoires* 14 (Paris, 2002): 279-86.

⁶⁰ For the ordnance of this monastery see P. Gautier, "La Diataxis de Michel Attaliat", *REB* 39 (1981): 5-143.

⁶¹ Krallis, *History as Politics*, 333-356.

chapters of my dissertation starting from Chapter II and finishing with Chapter VII.⁶²

c. *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes.

John Skylitzes was a Byzantine judge who held the office of the *droungarios* of the watch and was the eparch of Constantinople in 1092.⁶³ There is no additional information on his family background: he was probably born circa 1050 and received a good education that brought him ultimate success at the court.⁶⁴

It seems likely that Skylitzes composed his main work, *Synopsis of Histories* circa 1092.⁶⁵ This narrative encompassed events from 811 to 1057. The *Synopsis* enjoyed certain popularity: Bernard Flusin counted nine manuscripts of the Skylitzes' text without illustrations. One of these manuscripts, the so-called Madrid Skylitzes (Codex Madrid Bibl. Nat.Vitr.26.2) is the only example of an illustrated chronicle from the middle-Byzantine period. Previously it was dated to the thirteenth century but recently it has been re-dated to the end of the twelfth century.⁶⁶ It seems likely, that the Greek-speaking subjects of the Norman kingdom of Sicily ordered this manuscript.⁶⁷

John Skylitzes is the first among known Byzantine writer to incorporate in his history the story of the origins of the Seljuk Turks.⁶⁸ In a later part of his work, he narrated at length the coming of the Seljuk Turks into Persia, their struggle against the Byzantines in Mesopotamia and Iberia and (finally) their first raids in Anatolia. He also included many names of Seljuk sultans

⁶² The only exception is the chapter on the religion as Michael Attaleiates did not recorded much material on the religion of the Seljuk Turks.

⁶³ See Jean-Claude Cheynet, "Introduction: John Skylitzes, the author and his family" in John Skylitzes, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History*, tr. J. Wortley (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2010), ix-xi.

⁶⁴ It is not clear when Skylitzes died, albeit one can note that his probable relatives had posts at the courts of both John and Manuel Komnenoi.

⁶⁵ For the argumentation on dating see C. Holmes. I sincerely doubt that the man who was a judge and the eparch of the city at the same time could write the protracted narrative totally alone without any help. C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of the Empire*, 47.

⁶⁶ See N.G. Wilson, "The Madrid Skylitzes", *Scrittura e civiltà* 2 (Turin, 1978): 209-19.

⁶⁷ For recent assesment see E. Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past: The Perception of History in the Illustrated Manuscripts of Skylitzes and Manasses* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁶⁸ See the analysis of the origins of the Turks A. Beihammer "Die Ethnogenese der seldschukischen Türken im Urteil christlicher Geschichtsschreiber des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts", *BZ* 102 (2009): 589-614.

and amīrs.

The abundance of information present allows one to suspect that Skylitzes had at his disposal some sources on Byzantine-Seljuk relation that were not available (or simply not used) by his contemporaries. Jonathan Shepard and Catherine Holmes voiced the opinion, that in his work Skylitzes used a much earlier source, probably coming from the Armenian background.⁶⁹ For the length of this dissertation, I perceive Skylitzes as a combinator who synthesized his chronicle from many narratives with aims that will be discussed further in this dissertation.

This is true for another work, *Continuatio* of Skylitzes Continuatus that covers the years from 1056 to 1081 and was written probably by Skylitzes himself after the *Synopsis*.⁷⁰ The narrative of *Continuatio* follows the *History* of Michael Attaleiates.⁷¹ In his work Skylitzes shortened and re-designed the story of Attaleiates, cutting out his digressions on personal matters and inserting some valuable factoids e.g. information on the plot of Michael Psellos against Romanos Diogenes some months before the battle at Manzikert (1071).

d. Theophylact of Ochrid: letter G78 to Gregory Taronites and the *Speech of 1088*

The only representative of the “Alexian era” in this list *stricto sensu*, Theophylact, the archbishop of Ohrid (after 1055–after 1107), was born in the middle of the eleventh century. He acquired his education in Constantinople. At the end of the eleventh century he eventually became *maistor ton rhetoron* and teacher to the heir presumptive to the empire, Constantine VII Doukas.⁷² After several turbulent years, the educated young man was promoted to the archbishopric of Ohrid. For the remainder of his life he retained this post, performing all

⁶⁹ See J. Shepard "Skylitzes on Armenia in the 1040s, and the Role of Catechumenos," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 11 (1975-76): 269-311.

⁷⁰ E. Kiapidou, "Remarks on the Authorship of Skylitzes Continuatus: Is it the work of John Skylitzes?" in *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies*, vol. III (London: London University Press, 2006), 161.

⁷¹ See "Introduction" in Joannes Skylitzes Continuatus, *Historiarum Compendium*, ed. Thurn (Thessaloniki: Hetaireia Makedonikon Spondon), 50-55.

⁷² Margaret Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 43-45.

necessary ecclesiastical functions, fighting heretics and restoring buildings.⁷³ Besides, he was a prolific writer leaving after him a voluminous letter collection, one imperial panegyric, an educative treatise for the young prince and a commentary on the Gospels, Acts, Letters and Minor Prophets, that are used in the Orthodox churches up to present day.

Theophylact of Ohrid did not mention the Seljuk Turks in his letters and orations very often. In his panegyric to Alexios I Komnenos Theophylact mentioned the sultan of the Great Seljuks and described the conversion of the Bithynian Turks. In one of the four letters, namely in G78, Theophylact of Ohrid described the successes of the Seljuk leader Dānişmend in the regions around the Black Sea and provided his student with spiritual advice on the preparation of war with the Seljuk leader.⁷⁴ The Byzantine literatus constructed the image of the “unholy enemy” and inscribes it in the laudatory letter that he weaves around psalm 18. I use this letter of Theophylact in my chapter on “Seljuk beliefs” and in the subchapter on “sacred war”.

e. Theodore Prodromos and his poems

Byzantine intellectual and panegyrist Theodore Prodromos (before 1100–after 1150) remains one of the most puzzling figures of the “long twelfth century”. It is not very clear when or where he was born, or what was his city of origin.⁷⁵ He probably acquired his education in Constantinople in the circles close to the doctor of Alexios I Komnenos and poet Nicholas Kallikles.⁷⁶ Later on Prodromos became “the official poet of the court” of John Komnenos and enjoyed fame as a man of many talents.⁷⁷ According to the recent re-dating by Elizabeth Jeffreys, Prodromos composed his panegyrics to John II Komnenos between 1133 and 1143.⁷⁸

⁷³ See M. Angold, *Church and the Society under the Comneni, 1081-1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 160-165.

⁷⁴ See summary of the letter in M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, 235.

⁷⁵ For the short biography of Prodromos see E. Jeffreys, “Literary Trends in the Constantinopolitan Courts,” in *John Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium, in the Shadow of Father and Son*, ed. A. Bucossi, A. Rodriguez Suarez (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 110-120.

⁷⁶ See M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, 78.

⁷⁷ Term was coined by P. Magdalino in personal communication 23.01.2015.

⁷⁸ Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974); Nikolaos Zaglas, “Theodore Prodromos: The Neglected Poems and Epigrams (Edition, Translation and Commentary),” PhD Dissertation (Wien: 2014); Elizabeth Jeffreys,

While re-formulating the Komnenian worldview in political verse, Theodore Prodromos also constructed the new image of the Seljuk Turks. He used some components already present in Byzantine discourse (the collective label “Persians”) and combined these with some classical and biblical allusions (e. g. Herodotus and the Persian kings of the Old Testament). With his poems, Theodore Prodromos implemented a profound change in the image of the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine discourse for the whole twelfth century. This partly explains why I deal with different poems of Theodore Prodromos in all the chapters of my dissertation. Theodore Prodromos knew about the Seljuk Turks much more than it is conveniently believed. He incorporated his knowledge into the complex textile of the new Komnenian propaganda and became one of the most important poets of the late Byzantine era.⁷⁹

f. The *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene⁸⁰

Byzantine princess Anna Komnene (2 December 1083-c. 1053) was the daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and the wife of Nikephoros Bryennios. Her life after the death of her father remains the question of hot debate.⁸¹ While under the arrest, she formed an intellectual circle and patronized several works of scholarship.⁸² Her death was the subject of lament for the members of her circle, one of whom, Theodore Prodromos, later praised her as the “tenth muse”.⁸³ Anna Komnene patronized art, communicated with fellow intellectuals and eventually wrote a panegyric biography of her father.⁸⁴

Four Byzantine Novels, 59.

⁷⁹ For the general characteristic see N. Zagklas, *Theodore Prodromos*, 56. For the short description of one of the collections see F. Bernard, *Writing And Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry*, 55-56.

⁸⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. D. Reinsch, A. Kambylis (New York: De Gruyter, 2001).

⁸¹ To quote Angeliki Laiou, “she was still writing in 1148 when she was sixty-five years old.” A. Laiou, “Introduction: Why Anna Komnene?” in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, (New York - London: Garland, 2000), 1-15; L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in the twelfth-Century Byzantium*, 18.

⁸² See Jeffrey C. Anderson, “Anna Komnene, Learned Women, and the Book in Byzantine Art,” in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. Thalia Gouma-Peterson, (New York-London: Garland, 2000), 126-127.

⁸³ See Rae Dalven, *Anna Komnene* (New York: Twayne, 1973), 74-75.

⁸⁴ The most recent study belongs to Penelope Buckley. P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene. Artistic Strategy in the Making of the Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). The new monograph of Leonora Neville “*Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*” will appear in the second half of 2016. For the older, but still valuable contribution see Georgina Buckler, *Anna*

In his article printed 15 years ago, Paul Magdalino formulated the problem of the time gap that separates the composition of the *Alexiad* and the actual events described in the text. This gap varies from 40 years (Komnenian revolt) to 20 years. Very much like in the case of Skylitzes, Anna's sources probably conveyed information that was gathered earlier in the reign of her father. At the same time, some passages of Anna contain a certain amount of hidden criticism against John II Komnenos and his son and emperor Manuel Komnenos.⁸⁵ The question remains, how one should read Anna. Is she a source of the mid-twelfth century, or more the source of the eleventh century, or both?

For the length of this dissertation I treat Anna Komnene as a mid-twelfth century writer that probably had access to eleventh century information and tailored it to discuss twelfth-century problems. This means that Anna probably preserved in her work some data unknown from elsewhere. In the *Alexiad* the Turks as "the eastern enemy" which balances "the western enemy," namely the Normans of Sicily and Crusaders.⁸⁶ Anna expressed obvious hostility against the Seljuk Turks. This allows me to use the *Alexiad* in every chapter of my dissertation..

g. The Letter of Manuel I Komnenos to Henry II Plantagenetus

The unique source among many used in this dissertation is the so-called Letter of Manuel Komnenos to Henry II of England. It was written soon after the battle of Myriokephalon and was preserved in the contemporary English chronicle of Roger of Hoveden.⁸⁷ All the scholars who have worked with this document automatically considered it to be an actual letter that Manuel Komnenos actually sent. As far as the format is concerned, this letter is a typical *Auslandsbrieft*. The standard of such texts remained mostly the same for a very long time; they began with the full title of the Byzantine emperor and the title of the receiver (*Anrede*), continued with the essence of the letter (*Narratio*) and finished with the purpose of the letter (*Dispositio*).⁸⁸ In the

Komnene: A Study (London: Milford, 1929).

⁸⁵ Paul Magdalino, "The Pen of Aunt: Echoes of Mid-twelfth Century in *Alexiad*," in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. Th. Gouma-Peterson (New York-London: Garland, 2000), 15-45.

⁸⁶ For analysis of Alexios' diplomacy and its descriptions by Anna see Shepard, "Father or Scorpion?" 68-132.

⁸⁷ Choniates, *Historia*, 191, lines 23-30 (Magoulas, 108).

⁸⁸ The structure and technology of the creation of the *Auslandsbrieft* are described according to F. Dölger,

end there was often a date, which could be formulated in various chronological systems. The letter itself, as one can easily guess, did not come straight from the pen of the emperor himself, but was probably composed by his Latin secretaries, who had special offices in the court at least since the time of his father John II.⁸⁹

The first language of such a letter was always Greek and a “vernacular” variant accompanied it – and that was probably Roger of Hoveden’s source..⁹⁰ The content of the text preserved in Roger’s Chronicle points to the events at Myriokephalon; thus, on the basis of the form and content, I believe that one can accept the *Letter of Manuel* as preserved in the *Chronica* as a likely letter of the emperor in Constantinople, or, more precisely, its Latin version.

In the context of this dissertation the letter is unique, because it gives one a possibility to see how the Byzantine rendering of the Turks was translated into the contemporary Latin and had some audience outside Mediterranean.⁹¹

h. *Historia* of Niketas Choniates⁹²

The future writer, bureaucrat, and dogmatist Niketas Choniates was born in the city of Chonae in Byzantine Asia Minor around 1155. He acquired his education in Constantinople under the guidance of Eustathios and started his service probably around 1182 as a minor tax collector.⁹³ Later on, Niketas was able to enter the corps of imperial secretaries, where he served

J. Karayannopulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1968), 90-93 (hereafter: .Dölger and Karayannopulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre*).

⁸⁹ For the Latin translators and culture brokers see A.R. Suarez, “From Greek into Latin: Western Scholars and Translators in Constantinople during reign of John II,” in *John Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium, in the Shadow of Father and Son*, ed. A. Bucossi, A. Rodriguez Suarez (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 91-110

⁹⁰ Another letter sent by Manuel to Friedrich Barbarossa after the battle was for sure written within golden letters as well as other similar documents from the twelfth century. This question is carefully discussed in O. Kresten “Der “Anredestreit“ zwischen Manuel I Komnenos und Friedrich I. Barbarossa nach der Schlacht von Myriokephalon,” *Römische Historische Mitteilungen*, 34/35 (1992/1993): 75-77.

⁹¹ The time limits of the dissertation prevent me from pursuing the question about the English audience of the Letter much further.

⁹² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. A. Van Dieten (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975).

⁹³ For the detailed biography of Choniates see A. Simpson, „Niketas Choniates: His Life and Works“ in A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates: A Historiographical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11-

during the reign of Alexios II (1180-1182). He escaped the repressions of Andronikos I Komnenos (1183-1185) and supported the rebellion of Isaak Angelos. Choniates reached the zenith of his career in 1195, when he became the grand logothete -- the highest civil office in the state. All of it came to an end with the fall of Constantinople (13 April 1204), when Niketas had to flee with his wife and children first to Thessaly and then to Nicaea. Finally, in 1217, the former head of the imperial bureaucracy died, leaving for the generations to come a small corpus of letters, several orations, one dogmatic treatise, and his main work that is known under the name *History*.⁹⁴

This bulky historical narrative is divided into nineteen large books. Choniates began it in 1190 and finished the last of the three version after 1214.⁹⁵ The *Historia* covers the period from the death of Alexios Komnenos in 1118 to the expedition of the Latin emperor of Constantinople against the Bulgars in 1206. In recent years, many scholars have tried to characterize the work of Choniates from many different points of view. Anthony Kaldellis described the whole narrative as the story of the gradual imperial decline from ideal taxis (the reign of John II Komnenos (1118-1143) to the peak of *antitaxis* (the fall of Constantinople in 1204).⁹⁶ To convey his message Choniates created a sophisticated system of classical quotations and biblical allusions that adds density to his moral judgments on some characters of *History* like Andronikos Komnenos or Alexios III Angelos. In certain cases, Choniates used quotes from classical authors to form sub-narratives, that went aside the main story, twisting around it, like the letters of Theophylact of Ohrid twist around this or that Psalm. This is true for many quotes from

50 ;А. Каждан, “Никита Хониат в византийской литературе” (Nicetas Choniates in Byzantine literature) in [A. Kazhdan] А.Каждан, *Никита Хониат и его время* (Nicetas Choniates and his time) (Saint Petersburg: Dimitriy Bulanin, 2005), 284-288.

⁹⁴ It would be more correct to call it the “Chronicle,” because the author’s title is “Xronikn dihgshis,” A. Kazhdan, “Nicetas Choniates in Byzantine literature,” 287. Traditionally, however, it is called *Historia*.

⁹⁵ A. Simpson, “Before and after 1204: Three versions of Historia of Niketas Choniates” in *DOP* 60 (2006): 189-221.

⁹⁶ See *Niketas Choniates A Historian and A Writer*, ed. A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis (Genève: Pomme d’Or, 2011).; A. Kaldellis, “Paradox, Reversal and the Meaning of History,” in *Niketas Choniates A Historian and A Writer*, ed. A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis (Genève: Pomme d’Or, 2011), 75-101; See N. Gaul, “Andronikos Komnenos, Prinz Belthandros und der Zyklus: Zwei Glossen zu Niketas Choniates Chronike Diegesis,” *BZ* 96 (2003): 623-60.

Herodotus of Thucydides in *History*.⁹⁷

The images of the Seljuk Turks occupy a prominent place in the grand panorama of the imperial decline painted by Choniates. A scion of Chonae, an important center on the Byzantine-Seljuk border, he described the Turks with a certain bias. At the beginning of *History*, the Turks are “bad enemies of good emperors.” The image of the Turks becomes fairly complex in the later books of *History* when Choniates introduces into the narrative the ugly and cunning sultan Kılıç Arslan II, his Greek-speaking vizier [Hıyas-ed-Din ibn] Gabras and the good Byzantine soldier Poupakas the Turk. The Turks as a collective entity have their place in the apocalyptic sub-narrative of Choniates. In book VI (that describes the battle at Myriokephalon) the Seljuks are a powerful weapon of the divine punishment that Lord used against the wrongful emperor.

i. Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*⁹⁸

The Byzantine epic of *Digenis Akritis* is a highly controversial piece of medieval Byzantine rhetoric. The original poem (if there was any) had vanished. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, different scholars uncovered five later versions of this epic poem, and the beginning of the twentieth century brought forth another manuscript. The current scholarly consensus states that two versions – (G)rottaferrata and (E)scorial – are closer to the lost original than the other four manuscripts.⁹⁹

In his article on the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis*, Paul Magdalino pointed out that this version of the epic “can be related to the conspicuous examples of the trends in the twelfth-century literature”.¹⁰⁰ The topics and style of the G-version are familiar to the reader of the

⁹⁷ The description of Manuel I Komnenos march to Myriokephalon remains one about the ill-fated expedition of Ten Thousand in *Anabasis*. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 171-175.

⁹⁸ I follow the spelling of Jeffreys and call the epic “Digenis Akritis” for the sake of the clarity.

⁹⁹ *L'Akrite : L'épopée byzantine de Digénis Akritas*, tr. Paolo Odorico, Jean-Pierre Arrignon (Toulouse: Anacharsis, 2002), 15; See detailed analysis of the study on *Digenis Akritis* in the preface to the Italian editions. *Digenis Akritis versione dell'Escorial*, ed. And tr. Francesca Rizzo Nervo (Messina: Rubettino, 1996), 1-18. See *Digenis Akritis*, ed. And tr. Elizabeth Jeffreys, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), xiii.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Magdalino, “Digenis Akritis and Byzantine Literature: the twelfth-century background to the Grottaferrata version” in *Digenis Akritis: New Approaches to the Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, ed. R. Beaton and E. Jeffreys (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 3.

Komnenian poetry.¹⁰¹ After putting forward some historical details of the Grottaferrata version, Paul Magdalino dated it back to 1100, and suggested that it was recorded during the reign of John Komnenos (1118-1143).¹⁰² To sum up, the Grottaferrata version most probably represents the epic adapted to the literary fashions of the Komnenian court of that time.¹⁰³ This makes it a valuable (and understudied) source for many aspects of the Byzantine life of that era, including Byzantine-Seljuk relations.

From the formal point of view, the Seljuk Turks are present only at the margins of the *Digenis* narrative. They participate in the raid of the emir (the protagonist's father) against Byzantium.¹⁰⁴ This is the only direct mention of “the Turks” in the whole poem. A short reference to “the tribute to Ikonion” may (or may not) be a hint at the Seljuk sultanate of Ikonion in Asia Minor.¹⁰⁵ The very terms that the anonymous author (or editor) of *Digenis* used for the description of the Arab leaders are very similar to the ones that the Byzantine *literati* of the twelfth century used to describe the Seljuk Turks. The father of the protagonist is known by his rank-turned-name, Emir , while his portrait looks conspicuously similar to the descriptions of amīrs in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene.

These similarities make the G-version of *Digenis Akritis* a valuable source for the study of different images and perceptions of “the Eastern Other”. In my dissertation I use *Digenis* in the chapters that deal with the “Seljuk authority”, “Seljuk beliefs” (the image of Islam in *Digenis* could be projected to the Seljuk amīrs), imagined geography and military matters. Thus, the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* allows one to see the perception of the “Eastern other” that probably had some popularity among the many members of the Byzantine elite in the twelfth century – without being influenced by the personal grievances and revenges to the degree of

¹⁰¹ See Elizabeth Jeffreys, “Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*: A Summary” in *Digenis Akritis: New Approaches to the Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, 26-38.

¹⁰² Paul Magdalino, “*Digenis Akritis* and Byzantine Literature”, 8-9.

¹⁰³ Margaret Mullett notes the “entertaining” functions of this epic see M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, 77

¹⁰⁴ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, Book I,5, line 45

¹⁰⁵ I suspect, that this mention of the tribute provoked Paul Magdalino to move *date ante quem* for G-version to the year 1100. *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, Book 4,128, line 1043.

many other narratives of this era.

5. The Limits of the Dissertation

The present dissertation is the first study on the the identity of the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric. With a notable exception of two chapters in the recent monograph of Rustam Shukurov, this is the first study on the topic. The complexity and scale of the topic imposes certain limits. Due to the limited size of the dissertation, it omits the linguistic and military aspect of the Seljuk identity. The study on the image of the Seljuk military in the Byzantine rhetoric would demand a separate dissertation, while the study on the Turkic loanwords and the Byzantine ideas about the language of the Turks would demand a separate chapter equal to the size and depth to the recent study of Shukurov.¹⁰⁶ Since it is not possible to seize the unseizable, this dissertation consciously omits these two important aspects of the “Image of the Other”

The dissertation has chronological limits. It focuses exclusively on the eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine literature. It will be fruitful to compare the resultant image of the Turks with the image of the Arabs and Mongols, but the absence of a summarizing monograph in each of these two fields demands separate investigations. In this dissertation, the comparison between the image of the Turks and the image of the Arabs is limited to a few footnotes.¹⁰⁷ Same is true for the image of the Turks in the Palaiologan rhetoric.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, in some chapters theI compare the situation in Anatolia with the situation Medieval Iberia, but the comparison is limited to a few articles .¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the dissertation investigates the possible

¹⁰⁶ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 306-388.

¹⁰⁷ The main monograph for factual history is the new book of John Haldon. For the situation on the border I consulted the works of Asa Eger. For one of the few studies that deals with the “Image of the Other” see the article of Luisa Andriollo. J. Haldon, *The Empire that Would Not Die*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); A. Eger *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier: Interaction and Exchange among the Islamic and Christian Communities* (London: Tauris, 2015); L. Andriollo, Il “De Creta capta” di Teodosio Diacono fra epos storico ed encomio imperiale,” *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 47 (2011), 31-56.

¹⁰⁸ For the basic reference book on Palaiologan rhetoric I use monograph of Dimiter Angelov. *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium (1204-1330)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

¹⁰⁹ C. Valenzuela, “The Faith of Saracens,” *Millennium* 10 (1) 2013: 310-315; M. Gallego, “The Languages of the Medieval Iberia and their religious dimensions,” *Medieval Encounters* 9.1 (2003), 108-

connections between the image of the Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric and the contemporary Crusader sources, including here letters of the participants of the First Crusade, as well as some of the Crusader chronicles of the period. However, the analysis of this connections is limited to some footnotes.¹¹⁰

The dissertation omits some Byzantine sources for different reasons. These are the sources with the problematic dating and authorship. Skylitzes Continuatus is mentioned once and not used extensively. The *Musae* of Alexius I Komnenos are mentioned in brief, but not investigated properly.¹¹¹ Finally, so-called *Alphabetical Poem* attributed to Stephen Physopalamites is beyond of the scope of this dissertation due to the problematic attribution of this piece of poetry to the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. In the Appendix 2 I raise the question of the dating and argue, that the poem belongs probably to the age of John II Komnenos (most probably 1130s) and not to the age of Alexios I Komnenos himself (r. 1081-1118). The text of Michael Italikos should have much more attention, and this is even more true for the many texts of Theodore Prodromos.¹¹² Same holds true for the sermons of Eustathios of Thessaloniki. However, the inclusion of this rich material would significantly enlarge the dissertation. I plan to work with them in the nearest future.

139; S. Barton, "Marriage across frontiers: sexual mixing, authority, and identity in medieval Iberia," *Journal of Iberian Studies* 3.1 (2011), 1-25

¹¹⁰ As a sources I use *Gesta Francorum*, edition of First Crusade letters by Hagenmeyer, and chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres. I also use the summarizing works of Tolan and Louchitskaya to compare image of Hagarenes in Byzantine rhetoric with the data of eleventh- and twelfth-century Latin sources. See Rosalind Hill, *Gesta Francorum. The Deeds of the Franks and Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962); K. Hagenmeyer, *Epistulae et chartae ad historiam primi belli sacri spectantes. Die Kreuzzugsbriefe aus den Jahren 1088-1100* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1901); Fulcher of Chartres, *The Expedition to Jerusalem*, ed. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1913); [S.Louchitskaya] С. Лучицкая; *Образ Другого. Мусульмане в хрониках крестовых походов* (The image of the other. Muslims in the Chronicles of the Crusades) (Saint Petersburg: Aleteia, 2001; J. Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

¹¹¹ Paul Maas, "Die Musen des Kaisers Alexios I." *BZ* 22 (1913): 348-359;

¹¹² For the recent analysis of Prodromical poetry as a group of texts that reflects some actual events in Constantinople see P. Magdalino, "The Triumph of 1133," in *John Komnenos, Emperor of Byzantium, in the Shadow of Father and Son*, ed. A. Bucossi, A. Rodriguez Suarez (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 53-71.

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CHAPTER II. Collective Labels as Pillars of the Projected Identity

The Byzantine literati constructed the projected identity of the Turks by using different collective labels which they used to describe the community of the Turks. These are: “Turks,” “Persians,” “Hagarenes”.¹¹³ All these terms carried different meaning and suggested different contexts. The names perplexed many scholars who worked on the Byzantine-Seljuk conflict. Alexander Beihammer described this situation between Byzantium and the Seljuks as a “colorful potpourri” of the collective names.¹¹⁴ More recently, Anthony Kaldellis declared, that the collective labels represent “ideal types” present in Byzantine rhetoric.¹¹⁵ Rustam Shukurov tried to re-construct the epistemological scheme which allowed the Byzantines to describe the Turks according to their *genos* and *ethnos*.¹¹⁶ Basing his views primarily on the *Byzantinoturcica* of Moravcsik, Shukurov argued that all the names mentioned formed part of the coherent and stable system which allowed the Byzantines to classify their eastern neighbors between 1204 and 1453.

The present chapter aims at describing the formation of the Byzantine naming of the Seljuk Turks in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. The study of the names is important as these formed a coherent part of the general perception by the Byzantines of their Eastern Other.

In contrast with the previous studies, this chapter focuses not on the coherent system that was allegedly present in the Byzantine naming of the Turks, but on the dynamics of the collective labels in the rhetoric. To analyze the changes in the system, the chapter investigates the semantic changes which the Byzantine literati used to describe the changing conglomerates

¹¹³ For the term “Turks,” “Persians,” and “Hagarenes” see the relevant entries in Moravcsik. These entries do not include the mentions of the terms in the critical editions published after 1945. See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 320-327, 252-254, 55.

¹¹⁴ A. Beihammer, “Strategies of Identification and Distinction in the Byzantine Discourse on the Seljuk Turks,” in *Visions of Community in the Post-Roman World*, ed. W. Pohl (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 512.

¹¹⁵ Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 115.

¹¹⁶ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 11-42.

of the Seljuk Turks. Under the term “semantic change” this chapter understands a process when the literati apply the old term to the new group, e.g. when Michael Attaleiates labeled migrating Turks as “Huns.”

The chapter focuses on the processes of semantic changes which allowed the Byzantine literati to include the old collective labels (Turks, Persians, Hagarenes) into their description of the new political reality of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The chapter interprets collective labels as the part of the lexical field that the Byzantine literati constructed to describe the Turks. In the lexical field, each label was a piece of a mosaic.¹¹⁷ With notable exceptions, previous studies on the collective labels essentialized the single scheme of naming which the Byzantines supposedly used for the Seljuk Turks. In my opinion, however, the Byzantine system of naming of the Turks was by nature changeable. Primary attention is thus paid to two semantic changes which allowed the Byzantine literati to construct differentiated images of the Turks. Organized chronologically, two main subchapters describe the first semantic change (the formation of the image of the Great Seljuks) and the “Persification” of the Turks of Asia Minor in the Byzantine rhetoric under John II Komnenos.¹¹⁸

It seems logical to describe the first semantic change by means of analysing the names of the Turks which appeared in the eleventh century. Here the priority belongs to the person who in many ways preceded the Komnenian rhetoric. His name was Michael Psellos.

1. The birth of the Turks. Semantic change of the eleventh century

The Byzantines first met the pastoralist groups associated with the Seljuk Turks probably in the 1030s.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, no source in Greek described the first encounters. John Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion* gathered data about the origins of the Turks during the reign of Basil II

¹¹⁷ The pioneer of the field was Gyula Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 270-271.

¹¹⁸ Koray Durak, “Defining the Turks: Mechanism of Establishment of Contemporary Meaning in the Archaizing Language of the Byzantines,” *JÖB* 59 (2009): 66-79 mentions the existence of one of these shifts, but does not pursue the issue further.

¹¹⁹ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 86-87; Peacock, *Early Seljuq History*, 132-133.

(976-1025). While his information is not far from modern reconstructions it would be dangerous to perceive *Synopsis Historion* (which was composed during Alexios I Komnenos' reign) as an entirely reliable source for the beginning of the eleventh century.¹²⁰ It is important to note, that in his *Synopsis* John Skylitzes used the term "Turks," which just some decades ago denoted the Hungarians.¹²¹ Unfortunately, the first Byzantine-Seljuk diplomatic exchange of 1059 did not leave any traceable evidence in the eleventh-century Byzantine rhetoric. Likewise, it is impossible to establish how the Byzantine emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (r. 1042-1055) addressed the sultan of the Great Seljuks and vice versa. At the same time, the first scattered mentions of the Seljuk Turks in the works of Michael Psellos the evidence of Psellos should be juxtaposed with the works of his great contemporary, Michael Attaleiates

a. Formation of the Lexicon: Michael Psellos and Michael Attaleiates

Michael Psellos was the first Byzantine author to combine many names for the Great Seljuks in one single unit, his secular orations which were composed under Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos. In the panegyrics to Constantine XI Monomachos Psellos listed the "Turks" among the many enemies supposedly defeated by these emperor.¹²² The "Turks" were listed together with "the Babylonians" and "the Persians." The list of the conquered barbarians looks much like a list of synonyms, and it is hard to establish any system here.

In another oration, Psellos was much more definite. In his rhymed panegyric to the general and emperor Isaac I Komnenos (r. 1059-1061), Psellos wrote: "The Turk, who was roused, is now at rest."¹²³ The roused Turk was probably the founder of the Great Seljuk state, Toghril Beg (r. 990-1063). Psellos's wording might have substituted one for many, 'the Turk' being a label for the collective entity of all the Turks.¹²⁴ In the same panegyric Psellos listed the

¹²⁰ See J. Shepard, "A suspected source of John Skylitzes' *Synopsis Historion*. The Great Katakalon Kekaumenos," *BMGS* 16 (1992): 171-181.

¹²¹ Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. II, 320-321.

¹²² Michael Psellos, *Orationes Panegyricae*, 116, line 25: ὁ Τοῦρκος ἅπαξ μανεῖς ἔσται τῆς λύττης.

¹²³ The editor of the text noted the presence of the term "Turks" as one of the key features of the poem. See Michael Psellos, "To the Death of Isaak Komnenos," in L. G. Westerink, *Michaelis Pselli Poemata*, (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992), poem 18, 257, line 86.

¹²⁴ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 50-51.

Turks between the description of the raid of the Pechenegs (1057) and the negotiations of Isaac Komnenos with Egypt (1058), attested in other sources.¹²⁵ Finally, in the elaborate epitaph to Michael Keroullarios, Psellos labeled the enemies, who attacked the Eastern border of the empire, as “Persians.”¹²⁶ One can note the lack of any system in Psellos’s naming. The literatus combines different ethnicons as he likes, prioritizing two of them – Persians and Turks – above the others.¹²⁷

The focus on the “Persians” looks much more like a legitimate device of a panegyrist who wanted to praise the ruler for the war which the latter was effectively losing.¹²⁸ In his *Taktikon*, veteran soldier and superior of a monastery in the Antioch region, Nikon of the Black Mountain, discussed the Turks in detail.¹²⁹ He used the name only to designate the people who invaded Upper Syria and robbed the countryside.¹³⁰ If we compare the evidence of Nikon with Skylitzes’, it seems likely that in the 1060s the Turks was a general name employed by the Byzantine writers for the Seljuk Turks while Psellos, as a court panegyrist, preferred “the Persians.”

Michael Psellos continued to use the term “Persians” for the Great Seljuk in his panegyrics of the 1070s. Romanos IV Diogenes was credited with victory over the Persians and the Turks. In his *Chronographia*, Psellos used many names for the Great Seljuks. He also

¹²⁵ In the *Chronographia* written some 10 years later, Michael Psellos describes the relations between Byzantium, the Pechenegs, the Turks and Egypt in the very same order. See Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. Reinsch, VII.63, 237, line 6-10.

¹²⁶ Michael Psellos, *Opera Minora*, 320, line 15.

¹²⁷ This prioritization will be explained later in the chapter.

¹²⁸ For the still valuable survey of Constantine Monomachos Eastern policy see Vryonis, *The Decline*, 73-74.

¹²⁹ One can note the absence of Turks in the *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos, that was composed in the middle of the eleventh century. See C. Roueché, “Defining the Foreign in Kekaumenos,” in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. D. Smyth (Aldershot, 2000), 203-214.

¹³⁰ Nikon of Black Mountain: [Viktor Beneshevich] Виктор Бенешевич, “Тактикон Никона Черногорца,” [Taktikon of St. Nikon of Black Mountain], in *Записки Историко-Филологического Факультета Петроградского Университета* [Notes of History-Philology Department of Saint-Petersburg University], vol. 6 (Saint-Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg University Press, 1917), 105: Πνευματικὲ μου ἀδελφὲ κύρι Λουκά, ἀπελάβαμεν τὰ πιττακίτζα καί, καθ ὥς μας ἔγραψες, περιπὰν τῶν ἐν ἐπιτόμῳ πρώην ἐγράψα μὲν σοι σπουδαστικόν, ἀρτί ὡς δὲ πλατυτέρως ἐγράψαμέν σοι τὴν εἴδησιν, ὅτι, καθ ὥς ἐξεύρεις τοὺς πρώην μου διωγμούς, πρὶν ἔλθουν οἱ τῶν Τουρκῶν.

seemed to have been hoping for holy protection against new enemy advancing from the East. In his oration to the Archangel Michael composed around 1070 he consequently referred to the history of Achaemenids, the expedition of Heraclius against Chosroe (622-629), and the Archangel Michael of Chonae.¹³¹ The text might have something in common with the failed miracle of Archangel Michael at Chonae in 1069 described by Michael Attaleiates, who wrote that in this year the Archangel did not save the Christians who had tried to hide in the church of Chonae from the Turkish incursion.¹³² One can understand the oration to Archangel Michael as a defensive invocation of sorts against “the Persians” of the day (these being the Great Seljuks) just before the battle of Manzikert (1071)

In his high-styled chronicle Psellos avoided any collective labeling of the Great Seljuks, be these the “Turks” or the “Persians.” The term “Persians” appeared in the *Chronographia* only once. Psellos described the victor of Manzikert (who was Sultan Alp Arslān (1063-1072) of the Great Seljuks) but purposefully avoided any mention of his name or title. I would suggest that the absence of the name was caused by the fact that there was no established name of the Great Seljuks at the eleventh-century Byzantine court. One can also suggest the connection between the change in naming and the changes in the actual titles of the Great Seljuk sultan. The epigraphic data from Aleppo allows one to conclude, that some version of the title of the Great Seljuk sultan stabilized in the 1080s, close to the time when Michael Psellos finished his *Chronographia*.¹³³ The second explanation for the limited presence of “the Persians” in the *Chronographia* might lie in the intentions of Psellos who wanted to downplay the importance of the Turks, the main threat to the empire during the reign of his protégé Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078). The letter which Psellos supposedly prepared for Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks (1079) hints at the existence of the diplomatic relations after Manzikert, but contained no mention of the title of Alp Arslān or other Great Seljuks.¹³⁴ When Psellos composed his letter for

¹³¹ Michael Psellos, “Λόγος εἰς τὰ θαύματα τοῦ ἀρχιστρατήγου Μιχαήλ”, in Michael Psellos, *Orationes Panegyricae*, ed. E. Fischer (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1994) 230-236.

¹³² Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 109-110.

¹³³ RCEA, vol.7, 240.

¹³⁴ H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, “Un aspect des Relations Byzantino-Turques in 1073-1074, ”in *Actes du XIIe Congrès des études byzantines*, vol. 2 (Belgrade: Comité Yougoslave des Études Byzantines, 1964), 15-

the Great Seljuk sultan Malikshāh, the rebel relative of Malikshāh Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish migrated to Bithynia. The rebel general Nikephoros Botaneiates used the rebel Turks to secure the throne.

By the moment when Psellos's protégé lost the throne, the Turks of Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish had come to Chalcedon in Bithynia. The Byzantines gave up control over the mountain provinces in Asia Minor. The new overlords of Asia Minor were members of the pastoralist confederacy that had rebelled against the Great Seljuks. The speed of the Seljuk conquest stimulated the literati in Constantinople to provide the educated elite with the information about the origins of the Turks. These literati were Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes.

b. Who are the Turks and whence did they come. The Byzantine identifications of the Turks in the eleventh century

Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes were judges who wrote their works for the aristocratic audience and court of Alexios I Komnenos.¹³⁵ Both authors named their works “histories”.¹³⁶ Both works dealt with the period that preceded the collapse of the Byzantine power in the eleventh century. They either explained the reasons for the collapse (Attaleiates) or provided a topically structured factsheet for the educated audience (Skylitzes).¹³⁷ The Seljuk Turks are collective antagonists of both narratives and the authors aim to explain their background, in one way or another.

The eyewitness of the battle of Manzikert (1071), Michael Attaleiates used three names to describe the Seljuk Turks. These are “Huns,” “Turks” and “Persians”. The investigation of the context of the use of each demonstrates that Attaleiates purposefully applied the different names

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¹³⁵ D. Krallis, *History as Politics in the Eleventh Century Byzantium*, 221-229; Holmes, *Basil I and The Governance of Empire*, 112.

¹³⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 6, line1; John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, 3, line 7; D. Krallis, *History as Politics*, 142-143; Holmes, *Basil I and the Governance of Empire*, 67-75.

¹³⁷ On the death of Romanos Diogenes as the reason for the subsequent collapse of the empire see D. Krallis, *History as Politics*, 303-305; C. Holmes, *Basil I and The Governance of Empire*, 89-90.

of the Seljuks. Attaleiates indeed used the label “Persians”, to denote exclusively the sultanate of the Great Seljuks. For him, the diplomatic negotiations were between “the Romans and the Persians,” while a notable official Basileios Maleinos was held in “Persian” captivity. According to Attaleiates, the very word “sultan”, used by the Turks, originally came from the “Persian dialect.”¹³⁸ One can note in Attaleiates, that the label “Persians” carried positive meaning. Closely following the tradition of the writers of Late Antiquity, the judge Michael Attaleiates wrote, that the sultan of Persians and his Turks were adherents of a divine law.¹³⁹ In his *Historia*, Attaleiates described the anonymous ruler of the Persians as a benevolent sovereign who is much more attractive than the erring Romanos Diogenes or Michael VII Doukas. The “Persians” in Attaleiates are noble enemies of Byzantium.

For Attaleiates, “Turks” is the collective name for the coming raiders. Attaleiates never used the label in the singular, but always in the plural.¹⁴⁰ In other words, Attaleiates used the term “Turks” in order to describe the migrating *en masse* semi-pastoralists and the armed groups of lightly armed raiders. His *Historia*, finished in 1081, represents a different level of complexity in understating of the Turks in comparison to that of Psellos (who altered labels for panegyric purposes) or Nikon of the Black Mountain. Michael Attaleiates wrote a complex narrative of the decline of the Byzantine Empire – and “the Turks”, as the invading barbarians, played an important role of a collective antagonist in his narrative.

Contrary to Attaleiates, John Skylitzes, who was a courtier of Alexios I Komnenos, called the Seljuk Turks exclusively “the Turks” in his *Synopsis Historion*. Skylitzes (who might have used an unidentified source for the Seljuk story) differentiated them from the Persians (the

¹³⁸Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 83, line 1; 145, lines 1-2; 36, line 21: καλεῖται δ’ οὗτος σουλτάνος τῇ περσικῇ διαλέκτῳ.

The importance of “the Persians” in The explanation might reflect the Byzantine understanding of the “Persification” of the Seljuk Turks during the reign of Alp Arslān and the development of their state apparatus under Nizam al-Mulk. In the least, the complex naming system of Michael Attaleiates reflects Byzantine understanding of Great Seljuks' state the power of which Byzantine literati began to recognize after the battle of Manzikert Peacock, *The Empire of the Great Seljuks*, 66-68.

¹³⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 127, line 2.

¹⁴⁰On the importance of the singular /plural see the first subchapter in the chapter on collective images.

inhabitants of Persia) and the Saracens (the Arabs).¹⁴¹ According to the *Synopsis Historion*, Tangrolipex, the ruler of the Turks, appropriated the title of the “king of kings” which was initially Persian.

Both Attaleiates and Skylitzes did not need to identify the ‘Persians’, but they paid attention to how to identify the Turks. Chronologically, the first author to create the Byzantine “identification” of the Turks was Michael Attaleiates. In his *History* dating back to 1081, he labeled the Turks of Tughril Beg as “Hephthalite Huns”.

In the same years [reign of Constantine Monomachos] the Nephthalite Huns, the neighbors of the Persians who are separated from them by Ganges river that is four and half miles wide, traversed it in the narrowest place where their leader [Tughril Beg] showed them the way.¹⁴² That man, who had previously been a captive and came from humble and servile origins, became the lord of Persia after the death of the current ruler”¹⁴³

The label that Attaleiates had used for the Seljuk Turks (“the Nephthalite Huns”) and the context of the eleventh century hints at the extra-textual sources of his inspiration. Attaleiates’ source was probably not Procopius of Caesarea. More likely, it was the military treatise *Strategikon* of Pseudo-Maurice.¹⁴⁴ The Byzantine literati of the eleventh century demonstrated a certain interest in the *Strategikon*: three (out of four) surviving manuscripts (Vaticanus gr. 1164, Neapolitanus gr. 284, Parisinus gr. 2442) were written in the eleventh century, while another manuscript (Laurentianus 55, 4) was in the imperial library from the tenth century onwards.¹⁴⁵

The search for the combination of “Huns” and “Turks” in the *Strategikon* produced some

¹⁴¹ Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 442-445.

¹⁴²In this phrase Tughril Beg looks almost like a “stranger king” described by Margaret Mullett in the introductory piece to “The Strangers to Themselves”. M. Mullett, “The Other in Byzantium,” in *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. D.C. Smyth (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 7.

¹⁴³Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 35, lines 18-25 (tr. Krallis-Kaldellis, 77): Κατὰ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους Οὐννοὶ Νεφθαλίται, Περσῶν ὄμοροι, οὓς τῆς Περσίδος ὁ Γάγγης ἀποτεριχίζει ποταμός, τέσσαρσι πρὸς τῷ ἡμίσει μιλίοις τὸ εὖρος ἀποτεινόμενος, ἐν τοῖς στενωτέροις αὐτοῦ διαβήμασι διαπεραιωθέντες τὸν ποταμόν, ἡγεμόνος αὐτοῖς ἀνεώξαντος τὴν ὁδόν, ὃς προειλημμένος καὶ ταπεινῇ τύχῃ συμπεπορισμένος καὶ δουλικῇ, μετὰ τελευτὴν τοῦ κρατοῦντος δεσπότης τῆς Περσικῆς γέγονεν ἐγκρατής.

¹⁴⁴ Alexander Beihammer made a note about the possible influence of *Strategikon* in his early article, but did not describe it in detail. See Beihammer, “Die Ethnogenese,” 599.

¹⁴⁵G.Dennis, “Handschriften und Ausgaben,” in *Das Strategikon des Maurikios*, (Wien: Verlag Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 18-21.

results. The eleventh chapter of the *Strategikon* was a manual on how to fight the armed pastoralists from the Great Steppes. The prolix title of the chapter “How it is appropriate to overcome the Scythians, the Avars and the Turks, and other nations who follow the Hunnic way of life” stands for itself.¹⁴⁶ According to Pseudo-Maurice, the Turks of the sixth century were from similar (but not identical) to the Scythians and the Huns simultaneously, and according to Michael Attaleiates, the Turks were the new Huns. In his *Historia* Attaleiates described the Seljuk renegade Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos (introduced as a *strategos* of the Huns). Attaleiates also described Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos as an ugly man – but contrary to previous scholarship this ugliness is not the ultimate result of his family ties, but the result of his treacherous behavior.¹⁴⁷

The second indirect evidence for the influence of the *Strategikon* on Attaleiates lies in the organization of his material. In his *Historia*, Attaleiates put the description of the Turks’ invasion next to the description of the invasion of the Pechenegs in 1049.¹⁴⁸ He consequently introduced the Pechenegs and the Hephthalites-Turks in the chapter which describes the events during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042-1055). Interestingly, the sequence finds a direct analogy in the *Strategikon*. In the chapter “On Ambushes,” the author of the *Strategikon* tells the story of the Goths, who crossed the river Danube in the reign of the emperor Decius (r. 249-251) and calls them “the Scythian nation.”¹⁴⁹ Immediately afterwards he narrates the story of the shah Peroz, who was captured by the Ephtalite Huns (*sic*) during his military expedition in the lands neighboring Persia. His destiny is similar to the one of Romanos IV Diogenes, one of the protagonists of the *Historia*.

The similarities between the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and the *Strategikon* of Pseudo-Maurice are hardly coincidental. It seems likely, that Attaleiates classified the Turks according to some pre-existing data, which allowed him to identify the Great Seljuks as the Hephthalite Huns. Michael Attaleiates was not alone to have identified the Great Seljuks in this

¹⁴⁶*Das Strategikon Des Maurikius*, ed. J. Dennis (Wien: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 360, lines 86-87: Πῶς δεῖ Σκύθαις ἀρμόζεσθαι, τουτέστιν Ἀβάροις καὶ Τούρκοις καὶ λοιποῖς ὁμοδαίτοις αὐτῶν Οὐννικοῖς ἔθνεσιν? Noted by Beihammer, „Die Ethnogenese,” 600.

¹⁴⁷For the discussion of Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos see Chapter VII. 2 “Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos.”

¹⁴⁸Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 34, lines 25-26.

¹⁴⁹*Das Strategikon Des Maurikius*, 197, line 19.

way. The second author who produced a similar identification of the Turks was John Skylitzes. He wrote his *Synopsis* in the 1080s and probably used the available data from the earlier sources.

At the beginning of his detailed story about the origins of the Turks, Skylitzes described the first advance of the Turks in his description of Constantine Monomachos's reign.

The nation (*ethnos*) of the Turks are of Hunnic kin (*genos*), who are living north of the Caucasian Mountains, populous and autonomous, and never enslaved by any nation.¹⁵⁰

The first part of the statement describes the Turks' association with a larger group, the second the space they inhabit. Its second part is the so-called "starting location" of the tribe which lived "north of the Caucasian mountains." The intra-textual "northernness" unites the Turks with the Rus', and alludes to their common origin. Space is an essential component in Skylitzes's identification of the new group; he employed the same method in his description of the Pechenegs. In the third part of his statement Skylitzes called the Turks "populous and autonomous." Again, the characteristic of the Seljuk Turks has an intra-textual analogy in the description of the Pechenegs which Skylitzes introduced several pages later.¹⁵¹ While no direct connection with the *Strategikon* can be traced, the description of the Turkish invasion in Mesopotamia and Armenia, which followed the phrase quoted above, hinted at the possibility of some military memoir behind the text.

Like in Attaleiates, the term "kin" (*genos*) in Skylitzes does not comprise a general category. In classical Greek literature as well as in the New Testament, the term was never used in relation to the barbarians. It rather suggested family relations inside a community, be this the Hellenes of Herodotus or the Chosen People of the New Testament.¹⁵² The term acquired "ethnic" meaning only in the middle Byzantine period.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, 442, lines 87-90: τὸ τῶν Τούρκων ἔθνος γένος μὲν ἐστὶν Οὐννικόν, οἰκεῖ δὲ τὰ προσάρκτια τῶν Καυκασίων ὀρῶν πολυάνθρωπόν τε ὄν καὶ αὐτόνομον καὶ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἔθνους ποτὲ δουλωθέν. (tr. Wortley.)

¹⁵¹John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, 455, lines 36-39; lines 34.

¹⁵²Page, *Being Byzantine*, 41-42.

¹⁵³The label is present in Kekaumenos see Kekaumenos, *Consilia et Narrationes*, ed. Litavrin, (Saint-Petersburg:Aleteia, 2003) Council 75, 284, line 15.

The data here collected allows to raise the question of “the totality” of the *genos*-*ethnos* identification system in the Byzantine rhetoric. As was shown, *genos* was a category absent from Michael Attaleiates’ identification formulae. It can also be found in the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes, who used it only for the Slavs, Pechenegs, and the Turks.

What united *genos* and *ethnos* into a coherent system is precisely their connection with the topos barbarity.¹⁵⁴ All barbarians were equal, but the barbarians from the Scythian-Hunnic space were more barbaric than others. In the imperial discourse of Late Antiquity as well as the middle-Byzantine period, “a Scythian” was a synonym of “a barbarian.”¹⁵⁵

The presence of *genos* and *ethnos* in the works of Skylitzes and Attaleiates demonstrate that both terms were categories of othering that allowed the Byzantines to highlight the difference between “us” and “them” in the eleventh century.¹⁵⁶ In Michael Attaleiates, the Seljuk Turks (under the disguise of the “Ephthalite Huns”) are the nation who are punishing the Byzantines for their sins. For Michael Attaleiates, they are *not* ultimate barbarians as they follow the divine law – so? Attaleiates does not ascribe them to their *genos* or *ethnos*.¹⁵⁷ Attaleiates reserved the word *genos* for the negatively colored description of the anonymous Seljuk defector, Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, John Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion* portrayed the Turks as the powerful enemy of Byzantium, who crushed the Eastern borders of the empire – and he provided his readers with all the necessary details about them. Skylitzes’ description of the Turkic threat demonstrates his expertise in the Turks that could be of some use to his patron Alexios I Komnenos in the 1090s.

What unites Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes is precisely the identification of the

¹⁵⁴ Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 122-123.

¹⁵⁵ The link between the “Scythian” and the “barbarian” proved to be problematic when the Byzantines decided to construct a new identity for their allies and trade partners from the Rus’ principalities, who were traditionally called “Ros.” To “raise” them in the hierarchy and to separate them from the “Scythians”(Pechenegs), the Byzantine *literati* labelled them “Tauroscythians”.

¹⁵⁶ On “Othering” see *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, ed. B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 188-190.

¹⁵⁷ For the importance of the law in the characteristic of the Others see Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 120-121.

¹⁵⁸Cf. Page, *Being Byzantine*, 42.

Turks in their narratives. Both history-writers sought to explain to their early Komnenian audience(s) the story behind the imperial demise of the eleventh century. This would help their audience identify the new enemy and domesticate this new nation that had come to the Eastern Mediterranean. Hence the “identification formulae.” At the same time, another group of Byzantine literati preferred different definition of the Turks, whom they called “Hagarenes”. This alone suggests another semantic change.

c. Turks as Hagarenes in the Byzantine ecclesiastical rhetoric of the eleventh century

The Great Seljuks gained some credit among the later historians for their religious tolerance. The Great Seljuk rulers found some *modus vivendi* with the leaders of the Christian communities in Antioch. However, the contacts on the elite level did not prevent many troubles caused by raiding parties. Even if superficially Muslim, these raiders were perceived with a certain degree of religious hostility towards the Orthodox communities of Asia Minor, who had to migrate further west. One of those communities was the group of former officer Christodoulos, who first settled at mount Papikion in Asia Minor, but later had to move to mount Patmos. His testament is the first evidence for the Byzantine attention to the “spiritual” side of the Byzantine collapse in Asia Minor.

Christodoulos also described in great detail the troubles which the monks had to face in their ultimate refuge, the island of Patmos. According to Christodoulos, the island was “raided by the Hagarenes, corsairs, and the Turks.”¹⁵⁹ For Christodoulos, “the Hagarenes” include “the Turks” and “the corsairs.” Basing our hypothesis on the extant evidence, one can date the semantic change for the lexeme Hagarenes (from “people of the Caliphate” to “invading Turks”) to the end of the eleventh century. Christodoulos was the first literatus who applied the broader concept of the ‘Hagarenes’ to the Turks.

A similar reference can be found in the anonymous epigram written on the margins of the

¹⁵⁹ Christodoulos of Pathmos, *Testamentum*, ed. Mikloschich-Müller, section 2, line 92-94: διὰ δὲ τὸ εἶναι τοῖτοι οὗ τον νησίον ἢ Πάτμος, ἄοικον, κουρσεύομενον παρὰ τε τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν, τῶν κουρσαρίων καὶ τῶν Τούρκων καὶ παρὰ πάντων αἰχμαλωτίζεσθαι.

Athonite convoluted manuscript of the Old and New Testaments (*Megistes Lauras* A 23). The author of the epigram asked Theotokos to give the emperor a victory over “those of Hagar.” The current dating of the manuscript is between 1000 and 1100, while the stylistic features of the dodecasyllable poem and the phrases suggest the second half of the eleventh century.¹⁶⁰ Finally, in another source (the *Narration of the Letter Exchange between Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and Patriarch Nikolaos*) that describes the events of the eleventh century, the twelfth-century Athonite author ascribes to Alexios I Komnenos the same words about the descendants of Hagar who went to Damalis but were later removed by the Lord.¹⁶¹

If the prototype of the text existed in the eleventh century, then “the descendants of Hagar” was the label which Byzantine monks and panegyrists used to label the Seljuk raiders, thus comparing them to the Arabs of the past. It seems likely that the term could have meant “the Muslims” in general. The same holds true for another text of the twelfth century, namely the *Historical Material* of Nikephoros Bryennios. There, Bryennios employed the term “Hagarenes” describe the “religious identity” of the Turks.

For Bryennios, “those of Hagar” are the warriors of the Caliphate, while “the Hagarenes” is the actual name of the foreign group that constituted part of the “Arab” army which fought the Seljuks.¹⁶² One character of the *Historical Material* even used the term in direct speech. The character was a eunuch, who was running away from the Turks of Sulaiman ibn Qutlamish in 1080 and asked the Byzantine general Michael Palaiologos for asylum.¹⁶³ The eunuch called the Turks “Hagarenes.” It is possible to hypothesize that Bryennios reproduced in his work the original naming of the Turks as employed in the court speak of the late 1070s.

Ten years later, the Latin version of the label “those of Hagar” was present in many

¹⁶⁰ “Ο τοῦ πατρὸς σύμμορφος ἀτρεκῆς Λόγος,” in S. Efstratyadis, Ἀγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα,” *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 1 (1917): 52-53, quoted in *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams*, ed. F. Bernard, no. 1301 <http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/bibliography/view/id/1301/> (Last Accessed 26/01/2016).

¹⁶¹ See anonymous *Narration of Letter Exchange*, 177, lines 27-31.

¹⁶² Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, 7, line 14.

¹⁶³ Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, 37, line 11: Ἐλέησόν με καὶ μὴ ταῖς Ἀγαρηνῶν χερσὶ παραδοθῆναι ἐάσης με.

letters which Alexios I Komnenos allegedly sent to the West.¹⁶⁴ The repetitive mentions of the “barbarity” of the Turks in the chronicles of the First Crusade, as well as the explicit mention of the idolatry which they supposedly practiced in their temples, might also have been a hint at the Byzantine roots of the Crusader ideas about Islam. The “Saracens” in the chronicles of the First Crusade are not very far from the “godless Turks” of the Byzantine rhetoric.¹⁶⁵

The Byzantine lexicon for the Seljuk Turks, which appeared in the eleventh century included multiple names for the Turks, that different authors used in different contexts. One can note the absence of the strict and unified system of naming. Currently, there is no chance to find out who was began to use the term “Persians” for the Great Seljuks. The reasons for the change are unknown, but it is possible that the main criteria were geographical and political. The Turks were “Persians” because they came from Persia, crushed the Byzantine power in the East and pretended to be Persians in their culture. The same holds true for the term “Turks.” Based on the evidence of Michael Attaleiates and the early use of the term by Nikon of Black Mountain, one can suggest that this collective label changed semantically in the military milieu first. The Byzantine ecclesiastical literati altered the meaning of “Hagarenes” from the Arabs to the “Turks” in order to describe the religious identity of the raiders, who had invaded Asia Minor after Manzikert. The reason for the change lies in the identity of the Seljuk raiders, or in their self-identification.

By the end of the eleventh century the Byzantines had developed a lexicon of the three terms which conveyed different messages about the Turks. This lexicon allowed the literati to combine different collective labels to express different meanings. Michael Attaleiates and Michael Psellos used the label “Persians” differently. While Psellos incorporated it into his panegyrics, Attaleiates used it to describe the just sultans of the “Persians” and criticize Byzantium. At the same time, the anonymous author of the Athonite epigram used the term “descendants of Hagar” in order to highlight the religious “otherness” of the invading raiders. The co-existence of the all three terms – Persians, Turks and Hagarenes – continued in the

¹⁶⁴ H. Hagenmayer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 19-21.

¹⁶⁵ See in detail Theophylact of Ohrid. *Lettres et Discourse*, 416, lines 25-30.

twelfth century, when they all passed through another semantic change under the auspices of Komnenian court literati.

2. The “Persification” of the Turks. Semantic change of the twelfth century

After twenty years of war, the First Crusade gave Alexios I Komnenos some respite to reform his empire. The Emperor used the first decade of the new twelfth century to update the tax system, to enhance control over civil and military hierarchy and to stabilize the state. The emperor’s interest in internal affairs partially explains the absence of the Great Seljuks and Turks of Asia Minor in Byzantine rhetoric of the 1100-1120s.

a. The Turks of Asia, the Persians of Iran: Anna Komnene and many names for various Turks

Only a few panegyrics were composed during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos, and only some of those mentioned the Turks. A notable exception is the work of Theophylact of Ohrid in 1088. In his *Speech of 1088*, Theophylact described the sultan of the Great Seljuks”), who supposedly toasted the health of the emperor during his feasts.¹⁶⁶ The naming pattern suggests similarity with Skylitzes (the sultan in the *Panegyric* is holding power over territory, not over a nation). The label “Turks” is absent in the *Speech of 1088*.¹⁶⁷ It is possible to suggest that Theophylact might have reflected upon the actual title of the sultan of the Great Seljuks, that the Byzantines could know from a diplomatic correspondence. In his inscription on the wall of Aleppo (1089), Malikshāh stylized himself as “master of the Arabs and the Persians.”¹⁶⁸

The sultan of the Persians was not the only Turk mentioned in the panegyric of

¹⁶⁶ Gautier, “*Le discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie à l’autocrator Alexis I^{er} Comnène* (6 janvier 1088),” *REB* 20 (1962): 93-131, esp. 122, line 3 ; cf. M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, 136-137; Gautier, *ibid.*, 111, line 9; Frankopan, “When the Advice Meets Criticism”, 85-88; Margaret Mullett, “The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1996), 388.

¹⁶⁷ M. Mullett, “The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos,” 364-365.

¹⁶⁸ *RCEA*, vol. 7, 240.

Theophylact. The Byzantine literatus also mentioned the Turks of Bithynia, whom Alexios included into the Byzantine court hierarchy and converted to Christianity. These new converts were rebels against the Great Seljuks. Theophylact preferred to avoid any collective name for the group by saying that they were living in the East. According to Theophylact, those Bithynian Turks were different from the Persians.

After Theophylact, there was a long absence of any Turks from Byzantine rhetoric until the 1130s. There are three valid explanations for this. First, as Magdalino argued, Alexios I Komnenos was not exactly a benevolent patron of rhetoric.¹⁶⁹ Alexios carried out some spectacular cultural repressions and preferred to be a patron of church literature.¹⁷⁰ Secondly, Alexios had not achieved any significant success against the Turks until the end of his reign. Third, Alexian rhetoric probably existed but did not survive to the present day.¹⁷¹ It seems likely that the last victory of Alexios I Komnenos over Shāhanshāh of Ikonion (1116) and the following triumph produced some rhetorical by-products, no longer extant.¹⁷² What survived is the corpus of ecclesiastical rhetoric, but the ecclesiastical writers under Alexios I were much more interested in domestic affairs than in the construction of new labels for the Turks in Asia Minor.

The only text which contains any information is the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Anna Komnene wrote the *Alexiad* in the 1150s, but probably used some earlier material. In the *Alexiad*, Anna reconstructed a complex system of names that might have been in use during her father's reign. According to Anna, the Turks had a hierarchy of power with the "great sultan" of Persia at the top, followed by the lesser sultan in Asia Minor. Anna also labeled the Seljuk *amīrs*

¹⁶⁹ Floris Bernard compared Alexios with Basil II the Bulgarlayer who was not a great patron of rhetoric. See F. Bernard, *Writing and Reading Byzantine Secular Poetry 1025 1081*, 299-301.

¹⁷⁰ P. Magdalino, "Digenes Akritis and the Byzantine Literature: The Twelfth-Century Background to Grottaferrata Version," *Digenis Akritis: New Approaches to Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, ed. R. Beaton (Ashgate: Variorum, 1993), 12.

¹⁷¹ M. Mullett, "The Imperial Vocabulary," 372-377; Armstrong, "Alexios I Komnenos, Holy Men and Monasteries," in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1996), 219-231.

¹⁷² We have works of rhetorics for many others Komnenian triumphs, so it is logical to suppose, that the triumph of 1116 stimulated rhetorical production of some sort.

“satraps.” She also narrated the story of how the sultans of Ikonion claimed the title of the sultan. Like Theophylact of Ohrid and John Skylitzes, Anna Komnene never labeled the Bithynian Turks or any other Turks of Asia Minor as “Persians.” She also used the unique term “Muslims.”¹⁷³

The articulation of the difference between the “Persians” (the Great Seljuks) and the “Turks” (the Turks of Asia Minor) can also be found in the letter of Stephen of Blois to his wife in 1097: Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish was called *princeps Turcorum*, the prince of the Turks.¹⁷⁴ It seems logical to suppose, that the crusading count borrowed the collective label for the new enemy from his local informants, these being the Byzantines.¹⁷⁵ The presence of the same system of naming (the “Persians” for the Great Seljuks, the “Turks” for the sultanate of Nicaea and Ikonion) in the works of Theophylact of Ohrid, Anna Komnene and the letter of Stephen of Blois per se suggests that the Byzantine literati in the age of Alexios I probably differentiated the “sultan of Persia” (the Great Seljuks) from the Turks of Asia Minor. The re-labeling of the Turks of Asia Minor took place in the reign of Alexios’ son, John II Komnenos (r. 1118-1143).

b. Persification of Anatolia. The semantic change of the label “Persians” in the age of John II Komnenos

The reign of Alexios I left a long-lasting impact on the Byzantine rhetoric. After his death the anonymous author wrote a treatise, which we know as “Muses.” Its anonymous author labels the eastern enemies of the empire “Persians.”¹⁷⁶ If Margaret Mullett is correct and the text was composed soon after Alexios I’s death, then the “Muses” were the first narrative which identified

¹⁷³ It seems that the term “Mosoulmanoi” as a definition of the community of the Muslim believers came into Byzantine discourse after the First Crusade Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 413, line 37.

¹⁷⁴ See Hagenmeyer, *Die Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 139, line 7.

¹⁷⁵ Both John France and Peter Frankopan suggest that the relations between the Crusaders and the Byzantines were not that hard to avoid the transmission of stereotypes. At the same time, Tolan and Harris speculate about the impermeable border between Byzantium and the “West.” J. France, *Victory in the East*, 112-121, Frankopan, *The First Crusade*, 124-138; See J. Tolan, *Saracens*, 133-134; Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 60-61.

¹⁷⁶ *Die Musen* in P. Maas, “Die Musen des Kaisers Alexios I.,” *BZ* 22 (1912): 356, line 290; P. Magdalino, *The Empire*, Margaret Mullett, “The Imperial Vocabulary of Alexios I Komnenos” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast University Press, 1996), 388.

the “eastern enemies of the empire” as “Persians” without differentiating them from the “Turks.” All other works of rhetoric which were composed between 1118 and 1128 contained no mention of the Turks.¹⁷⁷

The reason for the absence of the Turks in the rhetoric under John II may lie in the peace between Byzantium and the sultanate of Ikonion in the 1120s. After the short conflict in the Maeander valley in 1119, the Byzantine Empire and the sultanate avoided any large-scale conflict for a long period of time. The Syrian chronicler, Bar Hebraeus, wrote that in the year 1124, John II assisted Sultan Mas‘ūd of Ikonion in keeping his throne against the attacks of his brother Ar‘ab and the Danishmendids.¹⁷⁸ Byzantium was in friendly relations with Mas‘ūd. With a few exceptions, both sides maintained the uneasy piece until the death of John II.

The main enemies of John II were the Danishmendids of Paphlagonia. When describing the struggle with the Danishmendids, the court poets of John II implemented another semantic change in their panegyrics, both in prose and in poetry. They changed the collective label “Persians” from the Great Seljuks to the Turks of Asia Minor. The first surviving evidence for the use of the label “Persians” for the Turks of Asia Minor belongs to Michael Italikos. The context for the new collective labels can be found in the funerary speech, in prose, commemorating the son of Alexios I Komnenos and brother of John II, Andronikos Komnenos. In this oration, Italikos described in detail the last campaign of Alexios I against the Turks of Asia Minor and his attack against sultan of Ikonion.”¹⁷⁹

Oh those golden days when the great emperor Alexios joined the battle against the Persians. ... The *sebastokrator* Andronikos whom we mourn today, was fighting together with his father. Suddenly falling upon the king of the Persians (because that one did not expect him), he robbed the tent of the king

¹⁷⁷ The is true for the earliest surviving courtly poem of Theodore Prodromos In the poem of 1122, Theodore Prodromos spoke only about the western enemies of the militant emperor, but did not say a single word about the victories of Alexios in the East. See Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, 180-181.

¹⁷⁸ See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, tr. Wallis-Budge, 52. I will describe the episode in greater detail in my chapter on “Those who cross the border.”

¹⁷⁹ P. Gautier, *Michael Italikos, Letters et Discourse*, (Paris: Institut Français d'Etudes Byzantines 1972), 84, line 20.

and after killing many, returned victorious. As the accomplishment of the war,
The Persian, who was previously proud and source of trouble, now unlucky,
made himself servant of the Emperor of Romans.¹⁸⁰

The campaign in question is the one of 1116. It was against the sultan Shāhanshāh of Ikonion (r. 1102-1116).¹⁸¹ One can explain the “persification” of this sultan by two reasons. First, Michael Italikos used the term to highlight the noble deeds of Alexios and his son Andronikos. Secondly, the reason might lie in the self-identification of the Turks.

By 1130 the Byzantines knew about the claims of the sultans of Ikonion to the throne of the Great Seljuks. Between 1086 and 1134, two Seljuk sultans from Asia Minor – Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish and Kılıç Arslan I – died while fighting for the throne of the Great Seljuks.¹⁸² More importantly, the dynasty of the Great Seljuks in Isfahan fell into decline. After the death of Muhammad Tapar in 1118, his throne was contested by many relatives. Byzantine knew about those claims. In his historical work, John Zonaras explicitly pointed to the connection between the sultans of Ikonion and the family of the Great Seljuks.¹⁸³

The constant claims of the Ikonian sultans might have stimulated the Byzantine literati to rename the sultans as the “kings of Persia” and their subjects the “Persians.” If we are to believe

¹⁸⁰ The last phrase might be inspired by the homily of Basil the Great. Michael Italikos, “Monody for Andronikos Komnenos,” 84, line 20-p. 85, line 3 (translation mine): Ὡ τῶν χρυσῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκεῖνον, ὅταν μάχην συνεκρότει μετὰ Περσῶν ὁ μέγας αὐτοκράτωρ Ἀλέξιος, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐπήεσαν, ὁδὲ ἀντεπήρχετο· συνῆν δὲ καὶ ὁ σεβαστοκράτωρ Ἀνδρόνικος ὃν πενθοῦμεν νυνὶ καὶ συνεστράτευε τῷ πατρί... καὶ ἐπισπεσὼν τῷ βασιλεῖ τῶν Περσῶν ἀθρόον καὶ ὥς περὲκεῖνος οὐκ ἤλπισε, τὴν τε σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν ἐξήρπασε, καὶ πολὺν φόνον ἐξεργασάμενος, ὑπέστρεφε νικηφόρος. Εἷς οὗτος τὸν πόλεμον πάντα κατεργασάμενος, καὶ τὸν Πέρσιν ἐκεῖνον, τὸν πρότερον μὲν ἀλαζόνα τε καὶ βαρύν, τότε δὲ ἀτυχῆ, τοῦ Ῥωμαίων βασιλέως οἰκέτην ἐποίει. Cf. Basil of Caesaria, *Homilia*, in S. Y. Rudberg, *L’homélie de Basile de Césarée sur le mot “observe-toi toi-même,”* (Stockholm: Almqvist&Wiksell, 1962), 34, line 24.

¹⁸¹ Anna Komnene described the same campaign in the XV book of the *Alexiad*. She also paid special attention to the role of Andronikos Komnenos in the campaign, calling him “my most-beloved brother”. See Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 476, line 86-93; J. Howard-Johnston, “Anna Komnene and *The Alexiad*,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 260-302. For the other opinion on the matter R. Macrides, “The pen and the sword: who wrote the *Alexiad*?” in *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. T. Gouma-Peterson (New York-London: Garland, 2000), 63-81.

¹⁸² Vryonis, *Decline*, 115; Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey*, 9, 12; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 27, 38.

¹⁸³ John Zonaras, *Epitome Historion*, 758, line 6-8: ὁ δὲ Ἰγνού σατράπης, ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ γένους τοῦ σουλτανικοῦ καταγόμενος καὶ σουλτάν ὑπὸ τῶν οἰκείων ὀνομαζόμενος.

Claude Cahen, the Arab chroniclers of the twelfth century transferred the meaning of “Rum” from the Byzantine Empire to the Turkic polities of Anatolia.¹⁸⁴ Thus, both Byzantine and Arabic literati assigned the existing ethnic and cultural labels from the well-known spatial-cultural entity (the Persians, the Roman empire) to the Seljuk conglomerates of Asia Minor. It is possible to suggest, that claims of the Ikonian sultans for the throne of the Great Seljuks allowed their re-labelling as “Persians.” In both cases, re-naming was a way *both* to fix the shifting identity of the Seljuk migrants and to incorporate their new identity in the Komnenian panegyrics.

This new pattern of naming found its way into court rhetoric during the lengthy war with the Danishmendids. Theodore Prodromos wrote the first two poems that labeled the Turks of Asia Minor as Persians only in 1134.¹⁸⁵ In one of these poems, the city of Kastamon is compared to Troy, while the Persians are likened to the Trojans. In *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, Theodore Prodromos casts a wider net of associations. Like Psellos some sixty years before, Prodromos invoked the images of Herodotus and the Holy Scripture to describe the situation in Anatolia and the actions of the new Persians.¹⁸⁶ At the same time Prodromos never excessively glorifies them and rarely compares them to the Persians of the Achaemenid empire.¹⁸⁷ Interestingly, Prodromos also avoids the comparison of John II Komnenos with Alexander the Great. Theodore Prodromos employed the collective label, “Persians,” in relation to the Turks of Asia Minor in the many poems which he dedicated to John II Komnenos and his son Manuel I (r. 1143-1180). He developed the image in his later poems of the 1140s. In another poem, he introduced into the discourse an important notion – the title of “Chief-Persian” (*persarches*).¹⁸⁸ Prodromos used the label “Persians” even in the poem dedicated to the birth of Alexios, the son of the *sebastokratorissa* Eirene, and in his epigrams, thus introducing the terms not only to military panegyrics, but also the works written for more peaceful purposes such as the birth of a

¹⁸⁴ Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 13-14.

¹⁸⁵ Theodore Prodromos, poem III, 191; Elizabeth Jeffreys, “Preface” in *Four Byzantine Novels*, ed. E. Jeffreys (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 4-5.

¹⁸⁶ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, 205, line 51; 204, lines 101-105.

¹⁸⁷ Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, 216, line 71.

¹⁸⁸ Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. Hörandner, 273, line 51.

new member to the imperial family.¹⁸⁹

These analogies gained importance in the panegyrics which described the campaign of John II in Cilicia and Upper Syria (1137).¹⁹⁰ The expedition inspired two panegyrics of Theodore Prodromos and Nikephoros Basilakes. It is important to note, that for the first time in the twelfth century the panegyrics written for the same event use the term “Persians” to describe the Seljuk politics of Asia Minor. Prodromos described his conquests in Homeric and Biblical terms, also mentioning Julius Caesar and his fight against King Pharnacus.¹⁹¹ The poet positioned John II Komnenos as the new Alexander the Great. Nikephoros Basilakes followed the trend and compared the “bad Persians” of Syria with the Achaemenid rulers of the past, and the “good Persians” with King Porus of India, who expressed his loyalty to Alexander.¹⁹² As one can see, the comparison between Alexander and John II is present only in panegyrics, which describe his expeditions into the “Far East” of the shrinking Byzantine space, to Cilicia and Syria.

Basilakes applied the label “Persians” to the Turks of Asia Minor, the Achaemenid and Sassanid enemies of the past, as well as the Zangids of Syria. In his lengthy exhortation, Basilakes used “Persians” as the general label for the eastern enemies of Byzantium, thus broadening the meaning of the term. The reaction of the “main Persian” at the Byzantine court, the *megas domestikos* John Axouch, to any of these panegyrics did not survive, but the total absence of “Persians” from the panegyrics points to the fact that this was not Axouch’s label of choice.¹⁹³ Moreover, when Nikephoros Basilakes wrote a panegyric addressed to John Axouch, he did not include there the word “Persian,” either as a personalized adjective or a collective

¹⁸⁹ Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. Hörandner, 205,409.

¹⁹⁰ For the Armenian background of this expedition see G. Dedeyan, *Les Arméniens*, 599-601.

¹⁹¹ It is an attractive think that The mention is connected with the John Komnenos’ entry to Antioch, where he was probably known under his Latin title, *Caesar*. Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. Hörandner, 258, lines 181-182.

¹⁹² Nikephoros Basilakes, *Nicephori Basilacae Orationes et Epistolae*, ed. A. Garzya (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984), 48-74. One wonders whether this explicit comparison was present in discourse on the Seljuk Turks before Basilakes. As I will argue in the chapter on “Space and Place,” the first position of the Turks in the Byzantine universe was described in Alexandrian terms. Nikephoros Basilakes, *Encomium John*, ed. Garzya, 54, lines 14-15: Καὶ σὲ τὸν ἐμὸν εἶχεν Ἀλέξανδρον ἢ κατὰ Περσῶν τῶν ἀλλοτέρων ἐξέλασις.

¹⁹³ About *megas domestikos* John Axouch see subchapter 5 in chapter VII.

label.¹⁹⁴ Subsequently the death of John II stimulated at least four writers (Nicholas Kallikles, Theodore Prodromos, Nikephoros Basilakes) to produce works celebrating his exploits against the “Persians.”

In his *Material for History* Nikephoros Bryennios, who was a contemporary of Prodromos and Kallikles, carefully differentiated the Turks in Asia Minor from the Persians of historical Persia.¹⁹⁵ In other words, the educated general (who wrote a family history) stuck to the old meanings of those ethnicons present in the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes and that were relevant to the period that he described (1071-1081).

The semantic change (“Persians” as the Great Seljuks > “Persians” as Turks of Asia Minor) occurred in court panegyrics, both poetry and prose. At the same time, the historian Nikephoros Bryennios used the names of the Turks which correlated to the time of his writing. The example of Bryennios and Anna Komnene shows that the authors of histories used a different naming strategy. While court poets and rhetors used label “Persians”, the authors of histories did not have any obligations to follow the pattern. One can note the same trend in the reign of John II Komnenos’ son, Manuel I Komnenos.

c. New Turks and Old Persians: Byzantine names for the Turks in the age of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)

The court literati of Manuel I Komnenos inherited the system of the collective labels from their predecessors. In general, they labeled the Turks of Asia Minor as “Persians.” The lack of a complete edition of Manganeios Prodromos does not allow us to reach a valid conclusion for the complete corpus of his panegyric poetry, but it is likely that Manganeios “inherited” the label from his predecessor Theodore Prodromos. The main connections between the Persians of the past and the Persians of the present were valid for Constantine Manasses, who composed his

¹⁹⁴ Michael Italikos, “Letter to the *megas domestikos*,” in Michel Italikos. *Lettres et Discourse*, ed. P. Gautier (Paris: Institut français des études byzantines, 1972), 222-224; Nikephoros Basilakes, “Orationes ad Ioannem Axuchum,” in *Nicephori Basilacae Orationes et Epistolae*, ed. A. Garzya (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984), 83-91.

¹⁹⁵ L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans*, 65.

Breviarum Chronikon in the 1140s.¹⁹⁶ Manasses followed the principle of Nikephoros Basilakes and Michael Psellos, labeling the Achaemenids, the Sassanids and the Parthians “Persians” and connecting the Great Seljuks with their noble predecessors.¹⁹⁷ Manasses’ characteristic of the Great Seljuks is ambiguous. On the one hand, Manasses described the conflict between Byzantium and the sultanate of the Great Seljuks as yet another war between the Romans and the Persians (“Bitter war broke out from all sides / Between the Romans and the Persians; a terrible noise aroused”¹⁹⁸). On the other hand, Manasses did not associate the ruler of the Seljuk Turks (“thrice-barbarian”) with the noble Persians of the past.¹⁹⁹ The complex image of the Great Seljuks (who are Persians as a collective, but whose sultan is “thrice-barbarian”) may reflect the Byzantine understanding of the difference between the Persians as a historical entity and the separate Seljuk rulers, who were not Persian in their origin.²⁰⁰ It is important to keep in mind, that Manasses did not aim to create a purely historical work, but an entertaining narrative that supposedly helped his patron to orient herself in the historicizing society of Komnenoi.²⁰¹

Many panegyrists of Manuel I Komnenos, whom Paul Magdalino labeled as “guardians of Orthodoxy” used the system of naming developed by Prodhomos and other panegyrists of John II in the works which were clearly far away from *basilikoi logoi*.²⁰² The astrological treatise that John Kamateros composed for Manuel Komnenos labeled the Turks “Persians.”²⁰³ The same holds true for the *Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos* by John Kinnamos.²⁰⁴ In his

¹⁹⁶ Odysseus Lampsidis, “Προλογος,” in *Constantine Manassis Breviarum Chronicum*, XVIII.

¹⁹⁷ Elizabeth Jeffreys, “The sebastokratorissa Eirene as a patron,” in *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. L. Theis (Berlin: Böhlau Verlag, 2013), 177-194.

¹⁹⁸ Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike*, ed. Lampsidis, 349, verses 6452-6453: βαρὺς μὲν ἑκατέρωθεν πόλεμος ἀνερράγη / μέσον Ῥωμαίων καὶ Περσῶν, ἄγριος θροῦς ἀνέβη.

¹⁹⁹ Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike*, 352, verse 695.

²⁰⁰ Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation*, 60-68.

²⁰¹ Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike*, 352, line 6615-6620.

²⁰² Magdalino, *The Empire*, 316-343.

²⁰³ John Kamateros, “On the comets,” in John Kamateros, *Eisagoge astronomias: ein Kompendium griechischer Astronomie und Astrologie, Meteorologie und Ethnographie in politischen Versen*, ed. L. Weigl (Berlin: Teubner, 1908), 110, line 3304-3305.

²⁰⁴ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, 208, line 22- 209, line 2: οὐδὲ τοὺς ὅσοι ὑπὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ μὲν κεῖνται παλάμην, κλέμμασι δὲ διαζῆν ἐπίστανται, οὓς δὴ Τουρκομάνους ἔθος καλεῖν ἔστιν, ἀτιμωρήτους ἔαν ὁποιοῦν τι ἐς Ῥωμαίων ἡμαρτηκότας τὴν γῆν.

panegyricizing history of the two rulers, Kinnamos (with one notable exception) labeled the Turks as “Persians.” The panegyric character of Kinnamos’ narrative allows one to raise questions about the genre of the *Deeds*. Should one count his work among histories or rather among panegyric biographies?

While the collective label “Persians” employed in panegyrics, astrological treatises and versified histories, the term “Turks” employed in the works of Michael Glykas, who used it in relation to the Seljuk Turks in the eleventh century.²⁰⁵ One cannot suggest the same for the “religious” label “Hagarenes” that appeared in the sources dealing with the Byzantine-Seljuk conflict of the 1170s, which culminated in the battle of Myriokephalon and ended only with the death of Manuel Komnenos in 1180.

At the very same time in the 1170s, the panegyrist of Manuel I Komnenos and prominent court orator, Eustathios, composed a series of orations in which he praised the efforts of Manuel I against those of Hagar.²⁰⁶ He mentioned the term sixteen times. In his orations, Eustathios used the term to label the eastern enemies of Manuel I who are very explicitly the Seljuk Turks of Ikonion. Eustathios portrays them as the “sacred enemy” of Byzantium. However, this is hardly any evidence of the activation of anti-Muslim sentiments in the court rhetoric during the last decade of Manuel’s reign. If we believe Niketas Choniates, Eustathios of Thessaloniki had a personal sentiment against Muslims and could have used the panegyrics to promote the ideas of the sacralized wars against the Hagarenes.²⁰⁷ In the two Epiphany orations which Eustathios delivered to Manuel I Komnenos in 1174 and 1176 he used the terms “those of Hagar” and “those of Ishmael” to denote the Turks.²⁰⁸

Like “Turks,” the label “Hagarenes” is present in the church rhetoric of the 1170s. In the

²⁰⁵ Michael Glykas, *The Annals*, ed. M. Weber (Bonn, Weber: 1896), 605, line 2.

²⁰⁶ Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *The Epiphany Oration to 1176*, in Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Opera Minora*, ed. Wirth (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 202-229, tr. A. Stone, *Eustathios of Thessaloniki: Secular Orations* (Brisbane: Center for Early Christian Studies, 2013), 67-113.

²⁰⁷ I will address the presence of Eustathios in *Historia* in the chapter on “Seljuk beliefs.” Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, book VI, 216-271. See Chapter V.5 “The Beliefs of Turks in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates.”

²⁰⁸ See Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Opera Minora*, ed. Wirth, 205, 216; A. Beihammer, “Religious Antagonism,” 16-17.

anonymous epigram that was supposedly written on the walls of the reconstructed fortress of Dorylaion (1175), the Byzantine emperor is called the enemy of the “Ishmaelites” and of “those of Hagar.” At the same time, Byzantine literati used different terms in the letters aimed at foreign audience. The letter that Manuel I Komnenos sent to the Henry II of England in 1176 presented the Turks of Ikonion (and not the whole community of Hagarenes) as the enemies of the Lord..²⁰⁹

In the *Letter*, Manuel (or his Latin chancellor) used the whole variety of Byzantine names for the Turks to describe the new situation in Anatolia. Manuel declared the campaign of 1176 a battle against the Persians, the enemies of the Lord.²¹⁰ While these Persians are an organized body of enemies, the Turks live on a certain territory that lies between Byzantium and “the Persian parts” and act independently from the main army.²¹¹ Written in good Latin, the *Letter of Manuel* represents a unique example when all three Byzantine collective labels for the Seljuk Turks are used together in one document.

This rare example of Byzantine imperial epistolography demonstrates another important semantic change. In the eleventh century, the term “Turks” defined the raiders from the East. In the twelfth century, the term defined the pastoralists of Asia Minor, the raiders of the borderland who lived between the Byzantine fortresses and the centers of the sultanate of Ikonion. Thus, in the reign of Manuel I, the Byzantine literati moved the sticker “Turks” from the Great Seljuks to the Turks of Asia Minor. From the 1130s onwards, the Persia of the Byzantine panegyrics was on the Anatolian plateau, while the Turks lived in the upper part of the Meander valley. The transfer of the labels was a constitutive part of the shrinking of the Byzantine space, that I will discuss in detail in chapter III.

d. The stabilization of naming patterns. Niketas Choniates and the many names for the Turks of Asia Minor in his *Historia*

The “final point” of Komnenian rhetoric about the Turks is the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates. A

²⁰⁹ F. Spingou, “A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175”, *Byzantine Symmeikta* 11 (2011): 163, line 25.

²¹⁰ See Chapter V.4 “Holy War? Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric of the 1160s and the 1170s.”

²¹¹ *Letter of Manuel Komnenos*, 103, line 1.

bureaucrat and theologian, Choniates composed both panegyrics and histories. His *Historia* is, in many ways, a summary of the Komnenian discourse about the Turks.

The *Historia* of Niketas Choniates, follows the system of labeling present in the letter to Henry II by Manuel I. Choniates assigned the label “Turks” to the border raiders and Seljuk cavalry in the Byzantine-Seljuk confrontation.²¹² The “Persians” are members of the ruling elite of the sultanate of Ikonion. When Choniates used the term “Persian” in the singular, it either describes an abstract Seljuk Turk(as in the speech of the crusading king) or denotes a member of the Seljuk elite, nobleman or the sultan. In the scene of Isaak Komnenos’ defection to the Turks (1136), Choniates says: “Shortly afterwards he denounced the Christian faith and married the daughter of the Ikonian Persian.”²¹³ Ikonian Persian is a synonym for the Seljuk sultan, Mas’ūd of Ikonion, in the same way as Persian king in the monody of Michael Italikos denoted Shāhanshāh of Ikonion.²¹⁴

At the same time, Mas’ūd of Ikonion is explicitly called “the sultan of the Turks.” Choniates used the same title to describe the son of Mas’ūd, Kılıç Arslan II. in the panegyrics of 1161, Kılıç Arslan II is labeled as “the master of the Persians.”²¹⁵ The difference might be again explained by the fact, that Choniates used the term “Turks” to describe the community of the Turks of Asia Minor, very much like Skylitzes some hundred years before him used it to describe the Great Seljuks.

The third collective label which Choniates uses is the “Hagarenes.” In the tradition of his teacher Eustathios of Thessaloniki, Choniates incorporated the label in his lengthy exhortation

²¹² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 120, line 16.

²¹³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 36, line 14-15: ὁδ’ αὐτὸς μικρῷ ὕστερον καὶ τὰ Χριστιανῶν ἐξομοσάμενος ὄργια τὴν τοῦ Ἰκονιέως Πέρσου θυγατέρα ἐγήματο.

²¹⁴ As Walter Pohl puts it, the label does not denote ethnicity but is a code that aims at contextualizing the present moment in a wider time scale. W. Pohl, “Telling the Difference: Signs of Ethnic Identity,” in *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities*, 300-800, ed. W. Pohl, H. Reimitz (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 67-68.

²¹⁵ See Euthimios Tornikes, “Logos Enkomiasitikos”, in *Noctes Petropolitanae, Collection of The Byzantine Texts that date back to the twelfth Century*, Where does this book title come from? The English sounds off! ed. Papadopoulou-Kerameus (St.-Petersburg: Kirshman, 1913), 106, line 10.

about the loss of Asia Minor to the Turks.²¹⁶ When Niketas introduced into the text the lament over the loss of Anatolia, he spoke about “the descendants of the slave woman Hagar.” The descendants are the Seljuk Turks of Ikonion. However, this is the only place when Choniates applied the label. For the rest of his *Historia*, the term “Hagarenes” denotes mostly Muslims from Syria and Palestine and not the Turks. As the chapter V will demonstrate, Choniates directs his antagonism against the Muslims as a community and not against the Turks per se. The explains why the label “Hagarenes” has a limited role in his image of the Turks.

3. Conclusion. Semantic Changes and Imperial Politics

The chapter suggests that the Byzantines constructed the lexical field for the Seljuk Turks and Turks of Asia Minor from the old lexemes, each of which passed through two semantic change to encompass new meanings. The three lexemes (the Turks, the Persians, those of Hagar) were powerful instruments of identity construction which the small community of Byzantine literati used to describe the Seljuk Turks. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the three lexemes (Turks, Persians, Hagarenes) changed their meanings twice new meaning during two semantic changes. First semantic change happened in the eleventh century, while the second semantic change happened in the 1120s.²¹⁷

First, The Byzantine literati of the eleventh century changed the meaning of the collective label “Turks.” Formerly, it denoted Hungarians, but in the eleventh century it denoted the Great Seljuks. After the first semantic change the collective labels “Turks” had two meanings. First, it was a general name for the imagined unity of the Turkic-speaking nomadic groups and their subjects, the migrating Great Seljuks. Secondly, the term “Turk” was a *terminus technicus* for the aggressive raiders at the border. After the second semantic change, the Byzantine literati applied the labels to the Anatolian pastoralists loosely associated with the Sultanate of Ikonion in the twelfth century. The term rarely appeared in the court rhetoric of the Komnenoi with a

²¹⁶ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 117, line 86.

²¹⁷ Contrary to the argument of previous scholars, the Byzantine literati did not use these labels as “ideal types”, but as the signifiers for the clusters of meaning, that literati could combine to reach their aims. Cf. Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity*, 115.

notable exception of letters (Manuel I Komnenos' *Letter* to Henry II) and treatises (the peace treaty between Byzantium and Turks in 1161, in Kinnamos's *Deeds*).

Secondly during the period in question, the Byzantine literati altered the meaning of the label "Persians." During the first semantic change, the eleventh-century literati altered the meaning of the term and applied it to the elite of the sultanate of the Great Seljuks.²¹⁸ Michael Psellos used the collective label in his panegyrics and works of hagiography to denote one of the components in the Great Seljuk State of the 1050s. During the reign of John Komnenos, court literati initiated the second semantic change. They began styling the Turks of Asia Minor as "Persians." This second semantic change had several purposes. First, the identification provided the ground for the praise of John II Komnenos. It was probably easier to praise the emperor for the victories over the Persians than for the victories over petty chieftains of pastoralist clans. Secondly, the Byzantines had the right to call the sultans of Ikonion "Persians," because since 1118 the throne of the Great Seljuks was contested and vacant. The sultan of Ikonion, as descendants of Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish, could pretend on it.²¹⁹

The Komnenian literati also altered the meaning of the collective label "Hagarenes." As a result of the semantic change in the eleventh century, the term "Hagarenes" denoted the Great Seljuks in the texts of the Byzantine literati. The Byzantine literati from the monastic milieu implemented change of the meaning (from Hagarenes as subjects of the Abbasid Caliphate => Hagarenes as Turks of Asia Minor) in the 1080s.²²⁰ During the second semantic change, the court literati of John II Komnenos applied this collective label to the Turks of Asia Minor. In the ecclesiastical rhetoric and quite often in panegyrics, the Turks were Hagarenes the religious

²¹⁸ One can hardly say that the label "Persians" was used exclusively to denote "oriental despots." See Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 115.

²¹⁹ As Songul Mecit and Dimitry Korobeinikov argued, sultans of Ikonion claimed the title and grandeur of the Great Seljuks. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 32-52; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 58-61; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and Turks*, 99-103.

²²⁰ The constant references to the "godless barbarians" in the letters that the Byzantine literati and officials allegedly sent to the West were not the specially designed rhetorical devices, but the literary norm of the time. When the modern scholars literally repeat the labels in the Byzantine rhetoric of the Alexian era to label the Turks, they demonstrate not the "cowardly designs of the Byzantines", but the effectiveness of the Alexian rhetoric in capturing the postmodern audience. See T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, 19.

Other that threatened the empire from the East.

The semantic changes and the collective labels depended on the authors who were part of the system (s) of patronage that stimulated them to produce the rhetoric about the Turks. In the eleventh century the Byzantine literati working for the court of Constantine IX Doukas, Nikephoros III Botaneiates introduced many names for the Seljuk Turks (Huns, Parthians, Turks, Medes), that coexisted in a discourse. In the twelfth century, the state patronage of Komnenoi changed the situation and stabilized the system of the collective labels that Byzantines used to describe the Turks. One can connect this “stabilization” with the emergence of the propaganda machine of Komnenoi.

The resurgence of the imperial patronage stimulated the literati to alter the meanings of old collective labels (Turks, Persians, Hagarenes) to complement their new patrons at the imperial court. The stable imperial patronage in the age of John II and Manuel led to the stabilization of the system of naming and to the formation of the stable system of naming, that existed well into Palaiologan era and that Rustam Shukurov described in his book.²²¹ Thus the political fluctuations of the twelfth century influenced the community of literati and, indirectly, the Byzantine system of collective labels for the Seljuk Turks. It also influenced the Byzantine perception of space and place of the Turks that is the subject of next chapter.

²²¹ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 11-42

Chapter III. Space of Seljuks, Place of Seljuks

The history of Byzantine views on the Seljuk Turks is a history of how the Byzantines imagined the Turks. The following section is a story about an entity that we call the Seljuk Turks (and whom Byzantine labeled the Huns, the Turks, and the Persians). They came from the outside of the Byzantine *oikoumene* to occupy a particular space in it and to remain in this place well until the end of the twelfth century. The "spatial parameter" of the group is important enough to study as a separate aspect of the projected identity of the Turks.²²² Space, as Hartog explained in his *Mirror of Herodotus*, was one of the primary instruments of the hierarchization of the ancient ethnography.²²³ In other words, space is one of the components of the status of the group.²²⁴ For the ancient Scythians of Herodotus their place was *eremia*, the desert.²²⁵ What was the place of the Turks in the Byzantine imagination and how did it change through the twelfth century?

While the structure of the physical space in the Byzantine Empire was the subjects of the detailed investigations by Scott Redford, Clive Foss and the team of *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, the imagined space or the perceived landscape remained the virgin field for a long time.²²⁶ Recently, the works of Catia Galatariotou and Dimitri Korobeinikov addressed some aspects of the topic.²²⁷ Even more recently Paul Magdalino, Dimiter Angelov and other authors of the

²²² Rustam Shukurov recognized the importance of the spatial factor in the "identity" of the Turks. See Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 17-19.

²²³ Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 13.

²²⁴ Greg Woolf, "Ethnography and Gods in Tacitus' Germania" in *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, ed. E. Almagor, J. Skinner (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 146.

²²⁵ Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 12.

²²⁶ *Byzantium als Raum*, ed. K. Belke, *TIB* 9 (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000); S. Redford, *Seljuk Gardens and Pavilions of Alanya, Turkey* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000); C. Foss, "Late Antique and Byzantine Ankara," *DOP* 31 (1977): 29-87.

²²⁷ C. Galatariotou, "Open Space/Closed Space: The Perceived Worlds of Kekaumenos and Digenes Akritis," in *Alexios I Komnenos. Papers on the Second Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium*, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smyth (Belfast, Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1989), 303-328; D. Korobeinikov, "The Byzantine-Seljuk Border in Time of Troubles: Laodicea in 1174-1204," in *Byzantium, 1180-1204: The Sad Quarter of a Century*, ed. A. Simpson (Athens: Institute of Historical Research, 2015), 49-81.

volume on the imperial geographies in Byzantine made an attempt to address the issue of the imperial space in the comparative perspective.²²⁸ Most recently, Rustam Shukurov in his seminal monograph described the importance of the spatial aspect of the image of the Turks.²²⁹ This image is inevitably tied with the another question, namely the problem of the Byzantine attitude towards the lost space. Vryonis formulated it as the problem of “Lost Anatolia.”²³⁰

The relative scarcity of the secondary literature allows one to apply new methods to the Byzantine texts about space and place. The key inspiration for this chapter came from the field of postcolonial studies with its recurrent topics of “imperial gaze” and control through mapping.²³¹ While the applicability of the postcolonial theory to Byzantine history remains questionable, the comparison of the Byzantine imperial space with the spaces of later empires can bring promising results. In combination with the narratology and cultural geography, the “gaze” theory helps to provide a new reading for Byzantine texts that reveals previously hidden discussions about the integration of the Turkic space into Byzantium.

The Byzantine rhetoric operated in the Byzantine space. The center of the world and the “starting point” was Constantinople.²³² The capital of the empire was the border of a sort that separated the provinces of the West (or Europe) and East (or Asia).²³³ The axis East-West was more significant for the Byzantines than the other one (north and south): divisions of the army were drawn between these two directions. It is also interesting to note that at least in the eleventh

²²⁸ *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. S. Bazzaz, Y. Batsaki, D. Angelov (Harvard: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 24-25.

²²⁹ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 17-26.

²³⁰ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 410-412; See also M. Whittow, “How the East Was Lost: Eleventh-Century Background to Komnenian Reconquista,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1196), 55-67.

²³¹ For imperial gaze see M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1992), 15-23.

²³² Jerusalem was also significant and probably played some role on the medieval European maps of the period. However, I do not know about any Byzantine literary work of the period, in which Jerusalem was the center and “zero points” for authors. Middle-Byzantine rhetoric is Constantinopolitan-centered.

²³³ See R. Shukurov, “Appropriation of Orient;” D. Angelov, “Asia and Europe Commonly Called East and West”: Constantinople and Geographical Imagination in Byzantium,” in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. S. Bazzaz, Y. Batsaki, D. Angelov (Washington: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 45-49.

century the eastern part of the empire had a general name (Asia) while the western one had many different names.²³⁴ In the twelfth century, the authors preferred to speak of the "eastern cities" and "eastern provinces" that were part of "Asia" or historical regions in Asia.²³⁵

The barbarian land was separated from these cities and provinces by the border (ὄρος). This boundary line (even if imaginary) is present in many texts. It was often the subject of diplomatic negotiations, but usually was following some natural border, in most cases -- a river.²³⁶ Besides "border", there was an idea about the "domain of the Romans" or the "land of the Romans".²³⁷ Both concepts will appear in this chapter, but the focus will be on the place and space of the Seljuk Turks and the imagined landscape that the Byzantine *literati* created for the Turks in their works.

The Byzantine world view was based on the surviving tradition of classical knowledge. It seems likely, that Strabo and Ptolemy were available to Komnenian audience were probably read in the Komnenian era.²³⁸ No manuscripts of Ptolemy dating back to the twelfth century survive, but the importance of this writer for the thirteenth century strongly suggests that the *literati* read it in the Komnenian Constantinople.²³⁹ According to Shukurov, the ancient theory of climates also found some way in the curriculum of the Komnenian *literati*.²⁴⁰ There is not much

²³⁴ One can safely conclude here than in the case of Byzantium the division between East and West has justification in the rhetoric of the era.

²³⁵ Historians tend to be more exact in their localization, why poets speak in more general terms. Michael Attaleiates described the expedition of Romanos Diogenes to Manzikert as the movement to the East and through the province of Anatolic (and not Anatolia). Anna Komnene mentioned "Cappadocia and all Asia." Some years before it, Theodore Prodromos described the Turks as "wild beasts from the East." See Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 112, lines 14-15; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 188, lines 44-45; Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamonō* line 191.

²³⁶ Anna Komnene stated that her father made peace with the Turkomans of Nicaea over river Drakontos. The peace was fixed in a written document. See Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, Ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, III.11, 116, lines 95-97.

²³⁷ The studies of *oros* and the "land of Romans" remains a desideratum. Anthony Kaldellis is working towards a book that will address the notion of the "border."

²³⁸ The framework for one of the most important "geographical narratives" -- the so-called "story of the Origin of Seljuk Turks" -- is obviously Strabonian.

²³⁹ See *History of Cartography*, vol. I (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 267-269.

²⁴⁰ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 21-23. It seems possible, that twelfth-century Byzantine could borrow some concepts of theory of climates from Strabo. See Glacken, *Traces on Rhodian Shore*, 99.

information about practical application of the geographical knowledge.²⁴¹ On the one hand, no twelfth-century Byzantine maps are extant.²⁴² On the other hand, there are fewer than five references to a “map” or a similar document in the twelfth-century corpus of rhetoric. Anna Komnene reported that her father sometimes developed special stratagems for his generals. However, even in this scene Anna's focus on the ability of her father raises the question about its uniqueness.²⁴³

The primary aim of this chapter is to investigate the changing place of the Turks in the imagined space of the Byzantine literati. My key terms here are “space” and “place”. By “space” I understand the Byzantine perception of the physical movements of the Seljuk Turks. The place is the part of the imagined geography which authors attributed to the Seljuks (both physically and morally).²⁴⁴ I investigate the devices that the Byzantine literati used when they constructed the spatial aspect of the image of the Seljuk Turks. The secondary aim is to develop the language for the description of imagined space and to check whether accepted scholarly notions of “reconquista” and “counterattack” had some analogs in the Byzantine rhetoric.²⁴⁵

The chapter will analyze seven sources placed in the chronological order. First, the chapter will present two very different perceptions of the Seljuk migration by Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes, and then dwell upon the construction of the Komnenian space in

²⁴¹ The absence of maps does not mean that the Byzantine did not know their roads. The detailed descriptions of Anna Komnene demonstrate that the Byzantine generals oriented themselves extremely well in the complex terrain of Eastern Anatolia and could solve complex logistical problems. While the movement through the space was not easy, the proper planning allowed Byzantine emperors to transfer masses of people through the imperial space. For the examples see Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, book XV, 465-470.

²⁴² Borodin and Gukova deduce that one twelfth-century T-O map from Oxford can be “connected with Byzantium”, but this is only a hypothesis. See [Oleg Borodin, Svetlana Gukova] Олег Бородин, Светлана Гукова. *История географической мысли в Византии* [History of geographical thought in Byzantium] (Saint Petersburg: Aletheia, 2000), 115.

²⁴³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 226.

²⁴⁴ Concepts of space and place are a subject of ongoing discussion in modern geography. See I. Agnew, . *Place and Politics in Modern Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); D. B. Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

²⁴⁵ See M. Whittow, “How the East was Lost? Byzantine Background to the Komnenian Reconquista,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth (Belfast, Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 55-68; Vryonis, *The Decline*, 114.

the poems of Theodore Prodromos and the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. In the final part of the chapter, I will analyze the remission of the Byzantine claims to the Turcicized (and Persianized) space of Asia Minor. Last but not least, I will study the recognition of Asia Minor as both place and space of the Turks in *History* of Niketas Choniates. The study on space will constitute the background for the discussion of the Byzantine representation of Turkic authority present in chapter IV.

1. Seljuk Migration in the works of Attaleiates and Skylitzes

Michael Psellos did not describe the space and place of the Seljuk Turks. Instead he labeled their ruler as the ruler of people (sultan of Kourtians) and not as the ruler of territory. After the establishment of the diplomatic connections in the 1050s the Byzantines probably knew where the Seljuk rulers lived. Unfortunately, none of the the surviving sources contains information about the Seljuk migration. The earliest Byzantine descriptions of the Seljuk migrations date back to the eleventh century – these are the descriptions of Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes.

a. The spatial shock. Migration of the Turks in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates²⁴⁶

According to Michael Attaleiates, “the Nephthalite Huns, the neighbors of the Persians” crossed the river Ganges at the narrow point and conquered Persia in the reign of Constantine IX Monomachos.²⁴⁷ No other known eleventh-century Byzantine text mentioned the principal river of the (imagined) India and gave precise wideness of it.²⁴⁸ The land of the Turks is simply absent from Attaleiates’ story: it lies in the blind zone, and Michael Attaleiates is not much interested in it.²⁴⁹ He dedicated much more attention to the Byzantine provinces that the Seljuk Turks invade, and I will analyze his description later in the narrative. It is the first text of the eleventh century

²⁴⁶The first author to use the term “spatial shock” for the Turks was Paul Magdalino. See Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos*, 48.

²⁴⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakos, 35, lines 19-20.

²⁴⁸ Note the absence of commentary in the edition Krallis and Kaldellis.

²⁴⁹For the definition of the “blind zone” see subchapter on definitions in chapter I.

that describes the land at the end of the *oecumene* with a certain degree of interest.²⁵⁰ There might be some practical knowledge behind this interest. Michael Attaleiates participated in Romanos IV Diogenes' expeditions in the East.²⁵¹ Along with Nikephoros Bryennios, Attaleiates is one of the few authors among the Byzantine literati who described the movement of his characters in detail.

According to the *Historia*, the Nephthalite Huns crossed the river Ganges and started to dominate Persia. From there they widened their raids and invaded Iberia.²⁵² Later on, in the reign of Theodora, the Turks (who according to Michael Attaleiates, were a part of the Persians engaged in the active robbery) conquered Iberia, besieged the city of Manzikert and invaded Melitene. At this point, as Attaleiates noted, they suddenly crossed river Euphrates and began their raids not against Armenia, but against the Byzantine land itself. The Seljuk raids (ἐπιδρομή) allowed the newcomers to plunder one Byzantine provinces one after another.²⁵³ In doing so, the author compares the Seljuks either with animals (beasts, wolves) or with the destructive power of nature (water waves). The expansion of the Turks is a natural phenomenon, and as every natural phenomenon, it is divinely ordained.²⁵⁴

Actions of Romanos Diogenes, the ill-fated hero of Michael Attaleiates, cannot prevent these raids. Attaleiates pointed to the mobility of the emperor who in his pursuit of the Turks crossed the border of the enemy principality of Aleppo. According to Attaleiates, the Turks turned this region into their a grazing field.²⁵⁵ Thus the Huns of Attaleiates exploit the captured land for the economic and military purposes. The topos of "grazing field" is also a weapon of *Kaiserpolitik* aimed at Byzantine emperors who could not secure their domains for the better

²⁵⁰ All the previous descriptions of the Far East hardly get it farther than Syria. See Beihammer, "Die Kraft Der Zeichen: Symbolische Kommunikation in Der Byzantinisch-Arabischen Diplomatie Des 10. Und 11. Jahrhunderts," *JÖB* 54 (2004): 168-170.

²⁵¹ On one occasion, he nearly died in the mountains. On another, he scarcely managed to survive during the panic after the battle of Manzikert. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 131-132.

²⁵² Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 33, line 30.

²⁵³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 62, line 16.

²⁵⁴ For the "theological" component in Attaleiates' perception of Seljuk migration see subchapter 1 in chapter V.1

²⁵⁵ This phrase may be a combination of *topos* and reflection of some reality, which Attaleiates could observe during his expedition with Romanos. Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 91, lines 7-14.

purposes.

In the later part of his *Historia* Attaleiates focused his attention on the region that we call Anatolia. The Turks not only transformed the Byzantine space into a “grazing field,” but also consciously desacralized the landscape that consisted of “holy places”, *loca sancta* in Magdalino’s terminology.²⁵⁶ The Turks of Attaleiates (and not the noble Persians) plundered shrines, be it the temple of St. Basil in Caesarea or the church of Archangel Michael in Chonae. In his *Historia* Attaleiates transformed Anatolia from a sacred and imperial space into desecrated no man’s land. The combination of desecration of churches with the rapid movement from the North is reminiscent of the popular *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*,²⁵⁷ I label this phenomenon as “latent apocalypticism” and will describe it in detail in my chapter on the Seljuk beliefs. In the description of the battle of Manzikert Attaleiates described the Turks as the master of the battlefield. They are able to surround and route disoriented Byzantine army. According to Attaleiates, the Turks controlled the landscape by staying in the hills which proved to be the right strategy.²⁵⁸

The battle also changed the focus of the author to current events in Constantinople that he observed with his own eyes. Attaleiates returned his gaze to Asia only in the description of the rebellion of Nikephoros Botaneiates. Attaleiates portrayed Nikephoros III Botaneiates (1078-1081) as a just ruler and the master of the Turks.²⁵⁹ According to Attaleiates (who enjoyed the patronage of Nikephoros III) the city of Chrysopolis became the camp of the Turks. The last phrase is hardly a compliment to Nikephoros III Botaneiates, and no amount of praise could

²⁵⁶ P. Magdalino, “Constantine VII and Historical Geography of the Empire,” in *Imperial Geographies in Byzantine and Ottoman Space*, ed. S. Bazzaz, Y. Batsaki, D. Angelov (Harvard: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 24-25.

²⁵⁷ I will investigate the subject further in chapter V, “Seljuk Beliefs”. See *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. B. Garstad, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 40, lines 8-10.

²⁵⁸ The master of the Persians, the anonymous sultan with his generosity in peace-making reminds one of Alexander the Great during his meeting with king Porus of India. The absence of the textual parallels does not allow one to make the definitive conclusions. The interest of Attaleiates towards India is present in many places in the text. The α -version of the *Alexander Romance* was available to him in the eleventh-century Constantinople. See C. Jouanno, *Naissance et Métamorphoses du Roman d’ Alexandre. Domaine Grec* (Paris: CNRS, 2002), 13-15.

²⁵⁹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakakis, 213.

silence the Turkish drums.²⁶⁰ The presence of the enemy in Chrysopolis is yet another demonstration of the imperial weakness caused by the many sins of the Byzantines that Attaleiates castigated earlier. Thus, the coming of space-devourers is the punishment for the Byzantine sins, to be more precise – for the blinding of Romanos IV Diogenes that Attaleiates narrated in detail.

To conclude, the Huns, the Persians and the Turks in Attaleiates do not have any space. The Turks are the barbarians from India, who crush everything on their way, with their sultan following them at a distance. The Turks turn Anatolia into grazing land for the horses, despoil churches and plunder military camps. The Turks are not producers of space, but the devourers of Byzantine universe, who are leaving behind the blind zone, the desert. Despite many positive notes and the sympathy of Attaleiates towards the "Persian" sultan of Manzikert, the Turks are, in the words of Michel de Certeau, "never here". "What is foreign," – wrote the Jesuit – "is the one that escapes place."²⁶¹ The Turks of Attaleiates are foreign.

Attaleiates used these foreigners and their successes as a literary device. The expansion of the Turks is proportional to the moral decline of the Byzantines. The Turks in the *Historia* move from the end of the world (India) to the very center of the world (Chrysopolis) punishing the Byzantines for their sins and weaknesses. For Attaleiates, the "loss of Anatolia" is a logical consequence of the Byzantine sins.²⁶² Besides some apocalyptic notes and Alexandrian hints, military judge Michael Attaleiates had no solution for this spatial shock that he and his colleagues suffered at the end of the eleventh century. The first person to introduce some solution was John Skylitzes.

b. Mapping the Migration. Migration of the Turks in the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes

²⁶⁰D. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, 169.

²⁶¹M. de Certeau, "Montaigne "of Cannibals". The Savage "I," in *Heterologies, Discourse on the Other*, 70.

²⁶² This is very much different from the later historian quotes by Vryonis who experience nostalgia about the land lost time ago. See Vryonis, *The Decline*, 410-412.

John Skylitzes began his story about the Seljuk Turks with a short summary of the political history in the region that one call the “Byzantine Far East,” namely Eastern Iran, Afghanistan and the shore of Caspian sea.²⁶³ The question of Skylitzes’ source for this passage remains . According to Jonathan Shepard, the Skylitzes might have borrowed his data on the Turks from the lost source that he attributes to one of the members of the Kekaumenoi family. According to Skylitzes, the Turks lived north of Caucasus mountains, were many-numbered and autonomous.²⁶⁴ The Roman writer Aelius Herodias (and Stephanus of Byzantium after him) used the very same definition for the Scythians, who lived north of the Caucasus and Black Sea.²⁶⁵ This placement is a part of the “formula of otherness” coined by Skylitzes that I have analyzed in chapter 2 on “Collective Labels.”

Within the next part of the text after the introduction of the Turks, Skylitzes (or his source) established the time frame for the migration of the Turks. According to the *Synopsis Historion* after the breakaway of Sasanian power, the Saracens took power over Asia and "not a small part of Europe". When "the Saracens" became divided among themselves, a certain “Muhammad son of Imbrail” was chieftain of Persia in the reign of Emperor Basil (II the Bulgar-Slayer 987-1023). Under the guise of "Muhammad son of Imbrail", Skylitzes introduced

²⁶³ Alexander Beihammer connected the localization with Gog and Magog, who are present in the Syriac version of the story, which explicitly portrayed the Turks as the people of the Apocalypse. I think that this conclusion requires some extra ground. First, John Skylitzes used "the Caucasus" in the standard description that left apocalypse out of the context. Secondly, the very character of Skylitzes' work implies certain distance from the intertextuality that is present in all the versions of "Gog and Magog" stories. The Pseudo-Methodius prophesy, in turn, mentioned the "unclean nations" and some gates of the North with mountains but did not contain any reference to Caucasus. Finally, the connection between Alexander the Great, unclean nation and the Caucasus appeared first in the λ -version of “The Romance of Alexander” that goes back to the later era. In other words, the connection between Skylitzes' story on the one hand and Gog and Magog on the other needs further proof. See A. Beihammer, “Strategies for Identification and Distinction,” 502; *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, VIII, 22-24; C. Jouanno, *Naissance et Métamorphoses du Roman d’ Alexandre. Domaine Grec* (Paris: CNRS, 2002), 307-309.

²⁶⁴ The motive of “autonomy” for the northern people like Scythians is present in many climatic theories of the classical era, e.g. this one of Hippocrates. Unfortunately, a brief mention of Skylitzes does not allow one to establish the sources of his views on the northern pastoralists. See C. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 86-87.

²⁶⁵ Aelius Herodianus, *De Prosodia Catholica*, ed. A. Lentz (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965), 75, line 2.

Muhammad of Ghazni (971-1030).²⁶⁶ Muhammad of Ghazni did indeed create a realm of his own in the Central Asia in the 1030s, seized power over Media and waged wars against those of India and Babylonia. He asked “the ruler of Tourkia” to provide him with mercenaries and allowed them to move into Persia across the fortified bridge.

The "ruler of Tourkia" sent a group of mercenaries with a certain Tangrolipex Moukalet at the helm. Tangrolipex Moukalet is a Byzantine rendering of the founder of Seljuk polity Toghril Beg ben Mikail (r. 1037-1063). "Tourkia" as a space remains enigmatic. there is no description of any road or city there, and speaking in the terms of Francois Hartog, it is *atopos* – “the unreferenced one”.²⁶⁷ This “atopia”, is in Herodotus a quality of the Scythians, who live in the country without any roads or other orientation points.²⁶⁸ The only spatial reference in the story is the fortified bridge over river Arax that separates Tourkia from Persia.

The description of the bridge is a notable feature in Skylitzes' story. Byzantine tradition mentions the deck over the river Arax before. Herodotus narrates that Persian king Cyrus built up a bridge over the very same river Arax with towers on it.²⁶⁹ Later on another great king of Persia, Darius waged war against the Scythians during which he built a bridge over the Bosphorus Cymmericus.²⁷⁰ However, the absence of any direct parallel between the text of Herodotus and the text of Skylitzes does not allow one to make any conclusion about the immediate connection of the episode with Herodotus. It is safer to speak about the idea of the fortified border between the two present in the discourse. After the crossing of the bridge, Turks with Tangrolipex participated in the war of Mahomet against the Indians, but then rebelled and ran away to the "desert of Carbonitis". In the wilderness, they made their encampment and successfully attacked the army of Saracens sent by Mohammed. Mohammed mobilized the elephants (sic!), the

²⁶⁶ For the overview of this entity see C.E. Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994-1040* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963); A. C.S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 20-72.

²⁶⁷Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 58-59.

²⁶⁸Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 57. Anthony Kaldellis noted the same phenomenon in his analysis of the image of the Pechenegs. See Kaldellis, *Ethnography*, 124.

²⁶⁹ Herodotus, *History*, ed. Godley, vol. I, 205.

²⁷⁰Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 60.

Deilimites, and proceeded to encounter the Turks at the place called Aspacha. After falling from a horse, Mohammed died, and Tangrolipex became the master of Persia.

The factoids mentioned by Skylitzes form a narrative similar to a modern rendering of the Seljuk-Ghaznavid relations.²⁷¹ The decisive battle between the Seljuk Turks and the Ghaznavids took place at Dandanaqan (on the eastern border of modern Iran) in 1040, and it allowed the Turkic clans led by Toghril Beg to capture Khorasan, e.g. the “Media” and “Persia” of Skylitzes.²⁷² The story of Skylitzes looks like the narration of some actual events in the Byzantine spatial framework. The names that Skylitzes used has analogues in the another space, that of another text, *Tabula Peutingeriana*.²⁷³

According to the dominant hypothesis, the map itself is a “Roman production” and the product of the propaganda.²⁷⁴ As Richard Talbert noted, the map itself does not contain any Christian features and makes extensive use of the non-Roman data.²⁷⁵ It may or may not have hung on the walls in one of the Late Roman *aulae*, but some variant of the map was still available around 1200, just one hundred years after Skylitzes finished his *Synopsis*. To make things more complicated, Emily Alby (who does not agree with Talbert on the dating) says that in the fifteenth century a map of a similar type with Greek symbols on it was sent to Padua.²⁷⁶

On the Peutinger map the river Arax is located in the upright corner of the map and separates the land connected with Persia from the region inhabited by different Scythian tribes. The main city of this area is Antioch (of Asia), which is identical with the oasis of Merv/Marv that was the center of the Seljuk sultanate from the earlier era.²⁷⁷ From Antioch, the road leads to Media through the land of the Khwarazmians, while on the other side of Arax there are no road..

²⁷¹ Peacock, *Early Seljuq History*, 78-81.

²⁷² Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 38-40.

²⁷³ Magdalino, “Constantine VII and Historical Geography of Empire,” 25.

²⁷⁴ Tom Elliott, “Constructing digital edition for the Peutinger,” in *Cartography in Antiquity and Middle Ages*, ed. R. Talbert, W. Unger (Boston: Brill, 2010), 101.

²⁷⁵ Richard Talbert, *Rome’s World: The Peutinger Map Reconsidered* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), 135.

²⁷⁶ Emily Alby, “Rethinking the Peutinger map,” in *Cartography in Antiquity and Middle Ages*, 118.

²⁷⁷ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 39

The main river in this (south-right) part of the map is Gangros (mentioned by Michael Attaleiates as a starting point of the Turks).

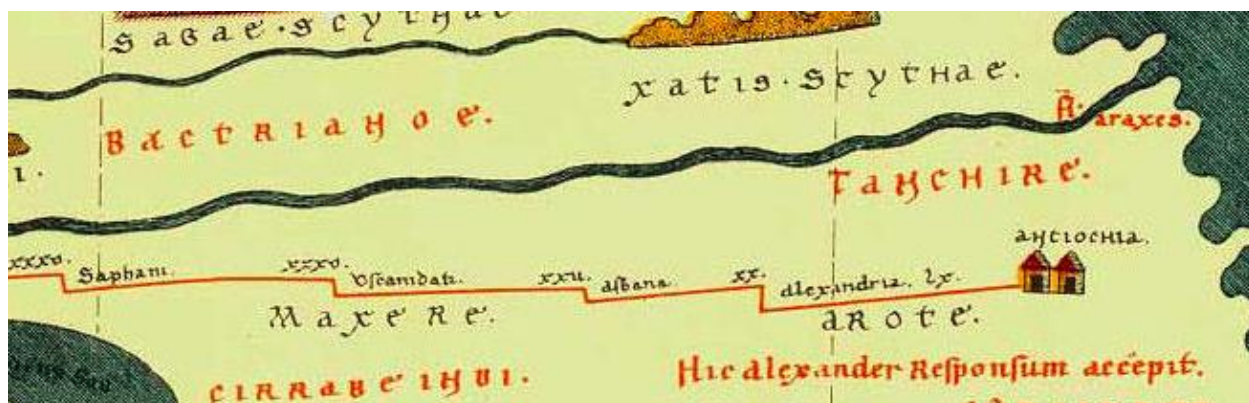


Figure 1. North-Eastern Corner of the Peutinger Map.²⁷⁸

Below the road that joins Antioch-Marv with the rest of Persia, there is the inscription “Cirraeisti” that refers to the people there, but it looks suspiciously similar to the desert of Karbonitis mentioned by Skylitzes. One of the “stops” on the road between Antioch-Merv and the Caspian Sea is named “Saphani.” The Latin toponyms of the Peutinger map look like the Greek toponym “Aspacha” written with majuscule letters. The place of the actual battle between the Seljuks and Ghaznavids lies half-way between the Caspian Sea and the oasis of Marv which corresponds to the position of “Saphani” post in Peutinger.

The presence of three matches (river Arax, Saphani – Aspaha, Cirraeisti – Carbonitis) between the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes and *Tabula Peutingeriana* points to some similarities between the map of the *oikumene* imagined by Skylitzes and the Peutinger map.. Most probably, Skylitzes, Attaleiates and the author of the Peutinger shared the same world view that presented the *oecumene* as a lengthy papyrus. In this system of coordinates, Central Asia was not far from India and was very close to the Caucasus. In this framework, the land on the other shore of Amu-Darya-Arax belonged to the Scythians, be they the Huns or Masagetae of Herodotus, and was perceived as the end of the world or as the end of the suitable climate. In his

²⁷⁸ The Peutinger Map is available under Creative Commons License at <http://www.cambridge.org/us/talbert/talbertdatabase/TPPlace2732.html>.

work Skylitzes defined the migration of the Turks in the terms of Mediterranean-centric world view, where Constantinople is in the middle of the universe, and India and Bactria are on the deep periphery. The question remains, why did Skylitzes decide to use this imagined map for his *Synopsis Historion*?

The answer lies in Skylitzes' motivation to describe the the Turks and the Pechenegs. As Bill Ashcroft, Gerry Griffiths and Helen Tiffin stated in their book, the mapping "is the symbolic process of mastery and control".²⁷⁹ With his mapping, John Skylitzes attempted to regain symbolical control over the Seljuk migration. His action in some way is similar to the actions of modern think tanks that provide the expertise for presidents and governments to understand the problems of the present moment. While Michael Attaleiates suggested an emotional explanation, John Skylitzes in his *Synopsis Historion* provided the spatial framework for the Seljuk migration. He transformed the migration of the Seljuk Turks into "manipulable page," part of the established knowledge to be read and appreciated.²⁸⁰

The second question is the question of audience. If Talbert is correct, the Peutinger map was produced for a palace and used in a palace. Can one suppose that there was something similar in the Great Palace of Constantinople? There is no definite evidence for that again, but despite many rebuilding in the tenth century, the Great Palace was probably the place where one could search and find some world map.

If this hypothesis is correct, it can point to the intended audience of the *Synopsis Historion*. "The story of the Origins of the Turks" does not contain many topoi (and no ethnic stereotypes), but many toponyms and many military descriptions. The potential reader was probably interested in geography and military history, had some knowledge of the river Araxes and the position of India. It is possible to hypothesize, that Skylitzes' story about space and place of the Turks aimed at the circle of elite around Alexios I Komnenos. The Byzantine emperor demonstrated some interest in the East and commissioned from Symeon Seth a translation of the

²⁷⁹B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths, H. Tiffin, *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, 38-39.

²⁸⁰M. De Certeau, "Writing the Sea" in *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, 144-145.

Arabo-Indian book of tales *Stephanites and Ichnilatis*.²⁸¹ His relative and co-plotter caesar John Doukas ordered a copy of *De Administrando Imperio*, a treatise that described a foreign nation in a way similar to John Skylitzes description of the Turks.²⁸² Besides general interest, Alexios I Komnenos from the 1080s and well up to 1110s had problematic relationships both with the Great Seljuks and the Seljuk Turks of Asia Minor that would require some background information on the subject.²⁸³

Thus the narrative of John Skylitzes is a Byzantine attempt to map the migration of the Seljuk Turks. It positions the Turks in the imagined space of the Byzantine literati. The story of Skylitzes' is also a claim for the imaginary control over their motions and ultimately, a transformed way of controlling them in the situation, when Byzantium lost half of the space to the Turks. Skylitzes also summarized the available data about the Turks for his readers, who likely had to deal with the invasion in a very practical way. Some forty years after Skylitzes, Alexios' son-in-law Nikephoros Bryennios integrated the story of the origin of the Turks into his *Historical Material*.²⁸⁴ Bryennios claimed to tell the family history of Alexios I Komnenos and to do so he introduced the spatial framework of Skylitzes into the discourse that was dominated by another imagined landscape. One of the architects of this landscape was the court poet of John II Komnenos, Theodore Prodromos.

2. New Space of the Turks: Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos

The reforms of Alexios I Komnenos changed several aspects of the Byzantine state but did not affect the imagined space of Byzantium. There is no evidence about any significant “map-construction” of the empire in the age of Alexios I Komnenos. The main work which was usually used to reconstruct the Alexian picture – *Musae* – is now dated to the reign of John II

²⁸¹See *Stephanites und Ichnelates* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1962).

²⁸²P. Magdalino, “Constantine VII and Historical Geography of Empire,” 31. See also G. Dagron, “Quelques remarques sur le cérémonial des fêtes profanes dans le De cerimoniis,” *Mélanges Cécile Morisson*, *Travaux et Mémoires* 16 (2010): 237-244.

²⁸³Vryonis, *The Decline*, 114; Cahen, *Formation*, 7-8.

²⁸⁴Nikephoros Bryennios, *Material for History*, 88-89.

Komnenos.²⁸⁵

During the reign of John II court *literati* re-formulated the Byzantine vision of the world and adapted it to the new demands of the imperial politics.²⁸⁶ The expeditions of John II Komnenos against the Turks of Asia Minor and the Pechenegs restored the Byzantine circle of “friendly” partner states that included the Kingdom of Hungary, Georgia and the Principality of Vladimir, not to mention the Crusader states and the Holy Roman empire.²⁸⁷ In architecture, the new monastery of Pantokrator in Constantinople with its gradual expansion was an embodiment of the new empire. The architects constructed Pantokrator on an ancient platform as the expanding buildings, that was significantly larger than their earlier analogs.²⁸⁸ The zodiacal mosaic on the floor of the Pantokrator monastery symbolized the restored circle of the empire while the canon laws and state reforms of the Alexios I Komnenos held the elements of the ring in their place.²⁸⁹ Together with the architects, the imperial *literati* contributed to the construction of the new empire. The literary production of the new imperial space was a business of the poets, and the leading poet of John II's court was Theodore Prodromos.²⁹⁰

a. Control them, integrate them. Persia in the Poems of Theodore Prodromos

Among the surviving *Historical Poems* of Theodore Prodromos, several describe the expeditions of John Komnenos against the Turkic amīrs of the former Byzantine Paphlagonia.

²⁸⁵For redating of the *Musae* see M. Mullett, “Whose Muses? Two advice poems attributed to Alexios I Komnenos,” in *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine: le texte en tant que message immédiat. Actes du colloque International* (Paris: EHESS, 2012), 195-220.

²⁸⁶For the imperial idea of the previous era see Magdalino, “Constantine VII and Geography of Empire,” 37.

²⁸⁷Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel Komnenos*, 35-41. See the forthcoming articles of Max Law on the Anti-Cuman alliance of Komnenoi. M. Law, “Multilateral Cooperation in Black Sea Region in the Late Eleventh and Early twelfth Century: The Case for an Alliance Between Byzantium, Kiev and Georgia,” in *Cross-Cultural Exchanges*, ed. P. Lang (Leiden : Brill, 2016), 19-35. I thank dr. Law for providing me early draft of the article and preliminary reference.

²⁸⁸See P. Magdalino, “The Foundation of Pantokrator Monastery in the Urban Setting,” in *The Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople*, ed. S. Kotzabassi, (Berlin: DeGruyter, 2013), 33-57.

²⁸⁹See P. Magdalino, “Innovations in Government,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth, (Belfast: Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 146-167.

²⁹⁰For the discussion of production of space as the establishment of the new order see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 356-357.

Among those, poems III, IV, and V form a uniform cycle.²⁹¹ Poem number IV in the edition of Hörandner described the capture of Kastamon in 1133.²⁹² This fortress in Paphlagonia became the scene of an intense fight between Byzantium and the Turkic amīrs allied to the emirate of the Danishmendids.²⁹³ Prodrornos composed two panegyrics in 300 lines of political verse after one of the two captures of Kastamon. One of the panegyrics described the siege of the city (poem 3) while the other positioned Kastamon in the universe of the Komnenian conquest. According to the name of the poem, it was a declamation of the Constantinopolitan fractions, which was pronounced (or meant to be pronounced) on the day when John Komnenos entered the city after his victory.²⁹⁴ The second poem of interest is poem 18 that is dedicated to the fortress of Lopadion. In the following sections I will analyze the imagined landscapes of this poem and the role it plays in the new ideology of Komnenos.

The *Poem on the Capture of Kastamon* operates on three levels of the symbolic space. The first "level" of imagined geography is the standard of the cities and rivers (locative), the second level operates on the scale of region or country, the third level is the one of universe, *oikoumene*. At the "locative level", Prodrornos stated that John Komnenos, emperor of the Romans "captured the great city and took the power of many castles...so that phalanxes of Romans crossed Halys on foot".²⁹⁵ The crossing is an analog to Joshua passing through the river Jordan to return his nation to the Holy Land.²⁹⁶ Thus, the Byzantine expedition is the mimesis of the Old Testament conquest – and the very wording is a claim for the divinely ordained domination of Space.

²⁹¹ See Magdalino, "The Triumph of 1133," 59-60.

²⁹² Songul Mecit in her book tried to downplay the importance of the Danishmendides and made unsubstantiated claims about power of Mas'ūd of Ikonion in this period. For the Kastamon campaign see Vryonis, *The Decline*, 119 ; Cahen, *Formation*, 20; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 43-44.

²⁹³ For the historical context see Vryonis, *The Decline*, 118-119; Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey*, 18-19.

²⁹⁴ Magdalino perceives Poem to the Capture of Kastamon as the scenario for triumphal procession. See Magdalino, "The Triumph of 1133," 57-58.

²⁹⁵ "Crossing of Halys" here is not merely a biblical parallel, but a reflection of a real phenomenon. In twelfth-century Anatolia, some rivers were crossable at certain times, in winter or summer.

²⁹⁶ For details see R. Shliakhtin, "Master of Kastamon, Emperor of Eternity: John II Komnenos as Border-maker and Border-breaker in the Poem to the Capture of Kastamon by Theodore Prodrornos," in *Constantinople and the Cities*, ed. N. Matheou, T. Lorenzo (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 124-135.

The fortress of Kastamon stands on a high rock: the poet stated that it was "unvisited by birds, unreachable for projectiles". The choice of the verb does not suppose any reconquest: the verb "ἀλίσκομαι" means to capture, albeit with some negative connotations for the object of capture. However, Kastamon is not only an object, it is also a subject in itself. Kastamon (feminine in Greek) is not only a spoil of war but is also a promiscuous woman as well.

Oh you the city of Kastamon, you are again the city of Romans
 You were a traveler for a long time, Runner for ages
 How did you survive the separation from Rome
 The enemy mingled with you, you had intercourse with barbarians.

It is interesting to note that Prodromos here explained the story of the city in biblical terms duly incorporating into the Middle-Byzantine poetry the sexual connotations of the original. John Komnenos returned this unreachable fortress to the Romans. In the tradition of previous Middle-Byzantine panegyrists (Theodosius the Deacon), Prodromos compared him with the militant kings of the Bible.²⁹⁷ The second object of conquest, equally problematic, is the "land of the East," namely the country in which Kastamon lies.²⁹⁸

The "Land of East" acts here as an imagined person. It rebelled against the Emperor, then "resettled" itself to the land of the enemy, but John Komnenos recaptured it, robbed it and subdued it anew. The whole story is again written with the help of the biblical quotes with obvious sexual connotations: when the "land of the East" was away from Byzantium it had "evil spirits" as its husbands.²⁹⁹ It lay behind the river Halys that John miraculously crossed on foot. This miraculous crossing is not only the reverse of the Seljuk Turks crossing the rivers in Attaleiates and Skylitzes. According to Herodotus when the Lydian king Croesus (595 BC-546

²⁹⁷ Magdalino pointed to the connection of the Poem to the Capture of Kastamon with the tenth-century poetry. For the earlier analogues see L. Andriollo, Il "De Creta capta" di Teodosio Diacono fra epos storico ed encomio imperiale," *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 47 (2011), 31-56; Magdalino, "Triumph of 1133," 56. For the question of audience of Theodosius the Deacon see M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry from Pisides to Geometres*, 58.

²⁹⁸ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of the Kastamon*, lines 135-146.

²⁹⁹ For the sexual connotations of spatial conquest in late Seljuk rhetoric see Redford, "Rape of Anatolia," 108.

BC) crossed the river Halys, he ruined his kingdom. When John Komnenos crossed the river, he destroyed the empire of Persia.³⁰⁰ By using this Herodotian allusion, Prodromos also recognized that the borders of Persia was the Halys, and the land beyond the river belonged to the enemy – and the name of this place was “Persia”.³⁰¹

As I have stated above, the fundamental notion of Byzantine system of spatial coordinates was "East" that was subdivided into separate historical regions, which had different names. The comparison between Croesus and John allows me to note that “Persia” of poem 4 is not only Anatolia but something like “ancient Persia” – the mighty empire that legitimately held power over the Asia for a long while.³⁰² This label ascribed to the Seljuks the status of ancient Persians and reminded the readers about the Romans of the old days. John Komnenos successfully moved into the enemy land, took out cities and made Persia his hunting-ground. The conquest of the “Persia” is not in his program. Instead, John Komnenos in the *Poem* turned some of his former enemies, the Persians, into the “guard-dogs” of the state.

Here “Persia” is part of the “East”. It is interesting to note that Prodromos rarely used the term "Asia" which seems to be popular in the eleventh century. Instead, he employed the term "East" or the “land of the rising sun.” The land beyond the Halys is the “land of the East”, the Persians are the “robbers of the East”. In the system of coordinates coined by Prodromos, the East has priority over the West.³⁰³ The Emperor is coming from the East (Kastamon) down to Constantinople.³⁰⁴ However, his power extends much further. Prodromos stated that all the

³⁰⁰Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of the Kastamon* 145-155.

³⁰¹Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of the Kastamon* 145-150 see also Theodore Prodromos, “On the Capture of Kastamon,” lines 107–108: φοβοῦ μοι, πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον, μὴ πάθῃς τὰ Περσίδος οἱ πίνοντες τοῦ Τίγρητος, οἱ πίνοντες τοῦ Νείλου .

³⁰² According to Shukurov, the Byzantine considered Eastern Anatolia to be the part of Persia. In the twelfth century this was not the case – Kastamon, in northern Anatolia was a part of Persia. Thus the reasons for Persification of this space lie not in the sphere of physical geography, but in the sphere of the Byzantine ideas about the Seljuk authority. The chapter V will address this question. See Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 40.

³⁰³ Prodromos mentioned the people of the West in the very end of the story to make a nice rounding for his story at this “regional” level. “The multitude of Celts make *proskynesis* in front of you and the children of Arabia” – stated Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed Hörandner, 225-227.

³⁰⁴ It is interesting to note here that "Persia" seems to be a high-land. As I have already mentioned, the

people should tremble before the emperor, including “the western Ethiopians, the eastern Ethiopians, those from the northern climate and those from the southern one”.³⁰⁵ Thus, all space under the sun is a sphere of influence for John Komnenos.

At this level of the narrative, Theodore Prodromos defined the ideal place for the Persians, who are enemies of the Roman emperor-sun. He recommended to the Persians to “run further than Gadira, to swim further than Ultima Thule” – one should read both places as the “borders of nowhere”.³⁰⁶ The Ultima Thule of ancient maps is Orkney island and Gadeira is present-day Gibraltar, both the “dead ends” of the Ancient world. In the next line, the poet recommended the Turks to go beyond the limits of geography and to hide in Tartaros – there (in the absence of the sun) Persians can hide from the omnipotent emperor. Thus, the Turks of Asia Minor in the poetry of Theodore Prodromos have two options – either to subdue their cities and become the “guard dogs” of the state, or to resist John Komnenos, face the consequences and leave Anatolia. The Turks who are ready to serve the emperor will have to live under the imperial control that Theodore Prodromos described in his *Poem on the visit to Lopadion*.

The poem on the visit to Lopadion outlines a winter expedition of John Komnenos to his newly-built fortress in Lopadion (modern Ulubad).³⁰⁷ Situated in the controlling location on the shore of the Rhyndacus river and next to a lake, the castle supervised communication in the Rhyndacus valley.³⁰⁸ John Komnenos fortified the castle and turned it into an impressive multifunctional fortress that was used to gather the troops before the expeditions into the enemy

City of Kastamon is famous for its height, the war between the “Persians” and the Byzantines was in the mountains. One can suppose that Prodromos probably put high places (mountains) at the very border of his imagined map. This association between barbarians and mountains is very old and probably goes back to Antiquity.

³⁰⁵Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, 105-110. Mention of two types of Ethiopians allows one to search for their location. I think that they are divided by the Nile, which is referred to some lines above. If I am correct, then Prodromos probably reproduced here an ancient picture of the world, in which the border between Asia and Europe passes through the line Tanais-Bosphorus-Nile. See F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, 12-19.

³⁰⁶ Prodromos used Gadeira and Thule as the ultimate limits of the inhabited world in his other poems, including the one, that dates back to the 1120s.. Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, 49, line 148.

³⁰⁷This was not the first “winter visit” of John II Komnenos, who regularly spent winter in the valleys of Asia Minor. See John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, 21-22.10

³⁰⁸Birkenmeier, *The Development of the Komnenian Army*, 176-177.

territory.³⁰⁹ Very much like in the seventh century, the key to success lied in the military fortifications.³¹⁰ Like many other Komnenian fortifications, the fortress of Lopadion supervised the landscape rather than controlled the ways of communication in the region.³¹¹ It was a visible sign of the imperial presence -- and Theodore Prodromos duly described this sign in his poem.

The poem represents a unique example of the ideal vision of imperial spatial politics in Anatolia. It is even more so, because, according to his claims, Theodore Prodromos traveled to Lopadion in person. The form of the poem is the address to emperor John. The leader of the Turks mentioned in the poem is probably Mohammed ibn Danishmendid, but the absence of a name in the text makes any hypothesis problematic. In the poem Prodromos constructed an ideal landscape of Anatolia, an ideal space created by the perfect emperor John II Komnenos.

The first dodecasyllable of the poem positioned John II as the master of the Anatolian landscape, both political and physical. According to Prodromos, the emperor in Constantinople can effectively fight the satraps of the (unnamed) Persian. What follows is the comparison of the emperor of the Romans ("high scepter") to the "Persian plane."³¹² In the next block of the poem Prodromos consequently compared the movement of the Emperor with his "frantic" opponent, "the dog of Ismael."³¹³ The poet pointed to the fact that the emperor is superior to his "Persian" opponent both in his local roots (that goes down to Isaak Komnenos mentioned explicitly in line 14) and in the movements over the contested space.

Prodromos omitted the process of the fight over space and soon passed to the result of John Komnenos' actions against the Turks in Lopadion. These actions transformed the land of the Persians into the normalized imperial area in the past. The key feature of this space is the trafficability.

³⁰⁹ See the relevant subchapter in the forthcoming dissertation of Maximilian Law.

³¹⁰ Haldon, *Empire that Would not Die*, 145.

³¹¹ For the similar examples see S. Redford, *Seljuk Gardens and Pavilions of Alanya, Turkey* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), 16-19.

³¹² Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Visit of Lopadion*, 303, line 13, 22.

³¹³ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Visit of Lopadion*, 303, line 25: Ἄφρον Περσάρχα βάρβαρε, κύον Ἰσμαηλίτα.

You saw oh emperor the savory power of your might
 You saw that the fright of the barbarians came down
 And you see how great [you] rosed the courage of the Romans
 Where there was place of the Persians and their divisions
 In which no Roman ever travelled without fear
 Nor a brave general, nor a solid hoplite
 Now without any fear, without any fright, without the smallest cowardice
 The aged men go and little babies
 And women and virgins and among the others
 And Prodromos, the thrice-slave of your imperial majesty
 And thrice-feared not to travel further than Byzantium
 Now he can know the cities and the territories/villages.³¹⁴

According to the poem, the land of Persians before John's action was dangerous for all genders and ages of the Byzantine society, from the top (brave general) to the outsider (old man, babies, and women).³¹⁵ However, after the actions of the emperor, the Romans gained a possibility to move in the normalized, organized and "dominated space".³¹⁶ The mechanism of domination here is the imperial gaze from the fortress of Lopadion. Cultural anthropology for a long time pointed to the importance of perspective while gender and postcolonial critics develop the notion of gaze. Rosie Harman demonstrated the possibility to apply this concept to the sources of the classical era.³¹⁷

³¹⁴Prodromos, *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion*, 304, lines 37-49:

Ἴδε σου πόσον, βασιλεῦ, τὸ κράτος τῆς ἰσχύος·
 ἴδε σου πόσος ὕπεστιν ὁ φόβος τοῖς βαρβάροις·
 ἴδε πηλίκον ἔνεστι τὸ θάρσος τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις·
 τῶν γὰρ Περσῶν τὸ σκῆνωμα καὶ τὴν ἐκείνων χώραν, (40)
 εἰς ἣν οὐχ ὥδευσεν ποτὲ Ῥωμαῖος δίχα φόβου,
 οὐδὲ στρατάρχης ἰσχυρὸς οὐδὲ στερὸς ὀπλίτης,
 Ταύτην ἀφόβως, ἀδεῶς, δίχατινὸς δειλίας
 Καὶ πέμπελοι τριγέροντες ὁ δεύουσικαὶ βρέφη
 καὶ γύναια καὶ νήπια καὶ τὸ τῶν ἄλλων μεῖζον (45)
 Καὶ Πρόδρομος ὁ τρίδουλος τοῦ σεβαστοῦ σου κράτους
 Καὶ τρίδειλος ὑπὲρλαγὼν μηδ' ἔξω Βυζαντίδος
 Ἄλλην ποτὲ τῶν πόλεων ἢ τῶν χωρῶν γνωρίσας.

³¹⁵For the otherness and liminality of the old man in Byzantium see M. Mullett, "The 'Other' in Byzantium," in *Strangers to Themselves. The Byzantine Outsider*, ed. M. Mullett, D. Smyth, 7-9.

³¹⁶Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 369.

³¹⁷R. Harman, "Looking at the Other: Visual Meditation and Greek Identity in Xenophon's *Anabasis*," in *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, ed. E. Almagor, J. Skinner (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 79-97.

It seems that this approach is suitable for the poem of Prodromos as well. The reason for this is the imperative form of the verb "eidon" (ἴδε) that the poet repeated three times at the beginning of his poem. It is possible to hypothesize that Prodromos suggested that his imperial reader should see the space and comprehend it before it was normalized and after it. The imperative is a usual form in the many poems of Theodore Prodromos. The poet uses it to attract the attention of his readers to the important details. However, only in his poems dedicated to Lopadion and Kastamon he repeated it several times and stressed the verbs of gaze and comprehension. Thus, the verb that the classical poets used to focus the attention of their audience acquires the new meaning, that of imperial gaze.

In his poem, Prodromos invited the audience and the emperor to visualize the success of the change it introduced into the landscape. This gaze is not "the imperial gaze" that implies calculation and distance, but something very close to it.³¹⁸ This act of "gazing" raises the question about the point of view. From where did John looked upon the land of his victories? It seems plausible that the place could be the fortress of Lopadion, the building of which John Komnenos supervised in person and near which he built his winter quarters. One could read this poem during one of the feasts to the emperor standing on the hill of Lopadion and observing the landscape around it, or to the emperor of Constantinople who is invited to imagine it. The presence of the Turks in the warm valley of Rhyndacus hints at winter as the possible time for the performance – at this period of the year the Turks were probably saving their flocks in the river valley from the extreme colds on the Anatolian plateau.³¹⁹

The imperial gaze also allows Prodromos to travel in Anatolian landscape. The poet gets somewhere close to the eighteenth-century French expedition of La Condamine described by Mary Pratt. The poet is also the explorer and his exploration confirms the imperial control over

³¹⁸For the inquisitive and calculating gaze of the modern era and the conflict between the gaze of the scholar and the local power see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 15-23.

³¹⁹For the similar hypothesis about the poem written after the refortification of Dorylaion see F. Spingou, "Refortification of Dorylaion," 139-140; for the weather in the region see I. G. Telelis, "Medieval Warm Period and the Beginning of the Little Ice Age in the Eastern Mediterranean. An Approach of Physical and Anthropogenic Evidence," in *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, 7 (Vienna, Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 2000), 232-233.

the land. It is far-fetched to call it "Byzantine pre-colonialism", but the eye as the instrument of power is there, and Prodrornos points to it explicitly with the re-iteration of the verb: "You saw...you saw...you saw..." While the repetitive verb is a usual feature of the Byzantine poetry, the presence of this verb in this particular poem and in this particular instances hints at the possibility of another reading, that implies the Byzantine form of the "imperial gaze," spatial control over the reconquered land.

.According to poem, Roman control is beneficial to the different groups of the Anatolian population. According to Prodrornos, the spatial politics of John Komnenos brought forward some results, which allowed "the sheep walk together with the wolves."³²⁰ Very much like in the Poem on the Capture of Kastamon, this space is not free from the Turks. They are there, but they inhabit the space together with the Byzantine emperor, subjects of Constantinople and not the enemies. Thus, the ideal landscape of Anatolia in this poem does not imply the destruction or removal of the Turks.

The key feature of this landscape is not the unity of "wolf and sheep," but the road, which (as Hartog noted in the *Mirror of Herodotus*) is an instrument of civilization and control.

You settle the unhoused; you march through the impassable
You built roads in the inaccessible places; you stretch forward the ways.³²¹

With this line in the final part of the poem Prodrornos pointed to the most important achievement of John in the Lopadion story. The emperor made the region accessible both to the military men and *hoi polloi* he mentioned above. The penultimate line, with the settling of the unhoused, may point to the re-cultivation of the Anatolian soil, but the priority here is on the road-building. Besides a spiritual meaning, the road-building in the *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion* may have the physical phenomenon behind it. John Komnenos gained fame for the use of siege engines. The timely use of these sophisticated engines demanded good roads.³²² Very

³²⁰Theodore Prodrornos, *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion*, 305, line 84.

³²¹Theodore Prodrornos, *Poem on the Visit to Lopadion*, 306, lines 92-94.

³²²See J. Birkenmeyer, *The Development of the Komnenian Army*, 98 ;For the extensive analysis of the surviving Roman roads see F. Hild, *Das Byzantinische Strassensystem in Kappadokien*, (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977). The absence of a proper map of Bithynian

much like in the times of the wars with Abbasid Caliphate in Anatolia, the success of the Byzantines depended on logistics.³²³

The focus of the *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion* is on the transformation of the "Asian" scenery from the wild land of the Persians to a landscape of controlled communication. In this landscape the sheep (Byzantines/Romans) live next to the wolves (Turks/Persians) under the imperial monitoring post that emperor of the Romans established Lopadion. In both poems Prodromos wished the emperor the new conquests, either in the form of the river-crossing or in the form of victories. The same notion of the co-existence (but not mixture or symbiosis) is present in the poem attributed to another author of the Komnenian age, Stephen Physopalamites.³²⁴

None of these conquests is essentially anti-Persian. The "Persians" are enemies in space, but Prodromos in his poems suggested to turn them into Romans and pacify them. At the same time Prodromos praised John II for the defense of his subjects. Some of the topoi of Prodromos outlived Komnenian Byzantium – at the end of the thirteenth century Theodore Metochites praised Andronikos Komnenos for his repair of the fortresses and defense of the Greeks (but not Romans) against the Turks.³²⁵ None of the poems of Prodromos contains the idea of "total war" or "total reconquest" that Romans waged against the Persians. Thus, one can hardly call the imagined space of the "East" the object of Komnenian Reconquista.

b. Imagined geography of Turks in the *Alexiad* by Anna Komnene

Anna Komnene demonstrated considerable interest to the space of the Byzantine empire. She knew well provinces and places she had never been to. One can ascribe such awareness to the vast erudition of the well-educated princes and to the expertise of her literati friends, some of

roads both in Hilds' monograph and in TIB does not allow one to make conclusions about the exact roads that John could reconstruct in Lopadion. According to Galina Fingarova, several bridge structures in the region of Ulubad and Susurluk that may be the result of the Komnenian re-construction of the place. Fingarova's study on the Byzantine bridges is forthcoming in 2017.

³²³ See Haldon, *The Empire that Would Not Die*, 143-145 Same holds true for the Trebizond Empire, see Bryer, "Greeks and Türkmens," 118-119.

³²⁴ I discuss the re-attribution of the poem in the Appendix 2.

³²⁵ See Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought*, 102.

whom demonstrated interest in the classical works of geography.³²⁶ Very much like in Historical Material, the main narrative of the *Alexiad* is the narrative about the space. The protagonist, Alexios I Komnenos, acts in the universe centered in Constantinople. Anna Komnene herself stated that her father hit barbarians with two hands, created circle of the empire and established borders at “sea of Adrian and Tigris and Euphrates”.³²⁷

Thus the *Alexiad* is a narrative about the spatial restoration of Byzantium, from Constantinople and to the river of Tigris..³²⁸ In this subchapter I will focus on four aspects of the “space of the Turks” in the *Alexiad*: their initial position, Anna’s ideas about the organization of the Seljuk space, the ideal Anatolia of Anna Komnene and last, but not the least, on the ultimate spatial solution of the Seljuk question that Anna Komnene suggested for her audience.

At the very beginning of the story, these borders are quite close to Constantinople. Already in 1078 young Alexios Komnenos knew that “constant raids of Turks destroy the lands of the empire towards the rise of the sun.”³²⁹ According to the *Alexiad*, the raids of the Turks reached the Bosphorus and inhabitants of Constantinople could see the Turkish horses from the walls of the city.³³⁰ Born in 1087, Anna Komnene could hardly see the Turks on the other side of the Bosphorus in 1082 – and the information about the horses comes from another source.

The story about the Seljuk horses reveals the persistent consequences of the spatial shock that the Byzantines experienced at the end of the eleventh century. In 1081, Michael Attaleiates

³²⁶For the circle of Anna Komnene see Robert Browning, "A new source on the Byzantine-Hungarian relation in the twelfth century, the inaugural lecture of Michael of Anchialos," *Balkan Studies* 2(1961): 175-189.

³²⁷The Tigris and the Euphrates are the rivers mentioned in the panegyrics written for John Komnenos. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 193, lines 16-21; See R. Shliakhtin, "John Komnenos as Border-Maker and Border-Breaker."

³²⁸The recent book of Penelope Buckley as well as the forthcoming book of Leonora Neville focus on the relations and balances that Alexios I Komnenos of the *Alexiad* established with the West. Despite their obvious importance as the enemies of Alexios in the East, the Turks are absent from the story. See P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 115.

³²⁹Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 109, line 20.

³³⁰One can, of course, ask, who were these Turks. They could easily be hired allies of Byzantium or members of the entourage of some Byzantine noble at the time (e.g. Nikephoros Melissenos). Interestingly, Anna Komnene does not mention “Seljuk camp” which was de-facto established in Chalcedon in the reign of Nikephoros Botaneiates. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 116.

was evidently uneasy about the Turks present at Damalis.³³¹ The anonymous Athonite author of the twelfth century also mentioned the "sons of Hagar" at Damalis, on the other side of the Bosphorus.³³² What is experience in the eleventh century, is a traumatic memory in the twelfth. However, the *Alexiad* is the narrative about the recovery from trauma. In the beginning of the narrative, the "Turks at Damalis" are in the wrong place, and Alexios I Komnenos has to return them to their place proper.

Alexios I Komnenos began his war against the Turks of Sulaiman immediately after his accession to the throne. In 1083 the emperor "after expelling all the Turks from Bosphorus and other places...forced them to make peace and established for them a border over river Drakont".³³³ Here Anna Komnene followed Byzantine tradition, according to which border with the Seljuks is usually a water object. Thus in the very beginning of her text, Anna Komnene recognized that Turks are a group with which Byzantium can have a definite border, *oros*.

The border is necessary because the Turks of Asia Minor in the *Alexiad* are never alone. They are the part of a greater space of the "Persians" with the main springboard in the distant East. For Michael Attaleiates and Nikephoros Bryennios, this land was "Persia," the center of the Seljuk power. Anna Komnene constructed her Turkic space as a multi-centered one and differentiated between the Great Seljuks ("Persia") with their great sultan, and the Turks of Asia Minor, who occupy the Byzantine towns of the East. From the very beginning of the *Alexiad*, the Turks of Anna Komnene received their support from "higher lands" of the East or from "Persia".³³⁴ Anna provided the rationale behind the constant raids of the Turks, namely the inherent aggressiveness of the barbarians. Instead, Anna stated that sultan of "Persia" and his relatives also govern the lands of Syria. She called "brother of sultan Tutush" as the "Lord of Jerusalem, all Mesopotamia and all the land up to Baghdad."³³⁵ Thus "Persia" of the *Alexiad* is different from the historical Persia. It is closer to the realm of the Great Seljuks than to the

³³¹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 213-214.

³³² See *Narration of Letter Exchange*, 137, lines 25-30.

³³³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch ,116, lines 90-95: καὶ ὅρον αὐτοῦ ἱστὸν καλούμενον Δράκοντα ποταμὸν δεδωκὼς μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν ὅλως αὐτοῦ μήτε ποτε πρὸς τὰ ὅρια Βιθυνῶν ἐξορμᾶν ἐπεισεν.

³³⁴ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch ,13, lines 58-59.

³³⁵ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch , 187, lines 85-88.

empire of Achaemenids and in this sense is different from Persia of Theodore Prodromos. In the poems of Prodromos, “Persia” includes Anatolia, while in the *Alexiad* it does not.³³⁶

Anna Komnene also pointed to the fragility and fragmentation of the Great Seljuks. Since book VI of the *Alexiad*, the sultans disappear from the pages of Anna Komnene's *opus magnum*. Instead, she spoke about the "sultan of Baghdad" and the sultan of Khorasan and (to make things worse) mentioned the embassy from the sultan of Persia to Alexios circa 1100.³³⁷ This makes Anna Komnene the first person in the Byzantine literary tradition who not only differentiated between the Turks of Asia Minor and the Great Seljuks but described in some detail the spatial collapse of the Great Seljuks. In the later part of her narrative, Anna replaces "Persia" with mysterious Khorasan, the hotbed of the (Seljuk) Turks in the East. It is present in the text, but it is “out there”, in the Far East of the space in the *Alexiad*.³³⁸ It is the springboard for the new invasion that is always looming in the eastern part of the imagined *oecumene* of the *Alexiad*.

Anna Komnene described the empire of her father as the one that is always under some attack – and this mental map, besides being similar to the modern paradigm of the “besieged fortress”, is very opposite to the expanding empire present in the panegyrics of Theodore Prodromos. While the space of Prodromos is the space of endless imperial expansion and victories, the imagined landscape of Anna Komnene is the landscape of defense, where the empire and the borders are always under the attack from the Turks.³³⁹ In some way, this reminds of the contrast between "the open space" of the twelfth century and "the closed space" of the eleventh century that Catia Galatariotou traced in *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos and *Digenis*

³³⁶ Rustam Shukurov says that Byzantines considered Eastern Anatolia to be the part of Persia. For Anna Komnene (and for Choniates, analyzed below) this is hardly the case. Cf. Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 40.

³³⁷ Shepard, “Father or Scorpion,” 94.

³³⁸ In many relations, this image of “Khurasan” coincides with the one present in the chronicles of the First Crusade. I suspect that these many images (as many other traditional beliefs) were borrowed by the participants of the First Crusade during their pass through Constantinople in 1097. See [S.Louchitskaya] С. Лучицкая; *Образ Другого. Мусульмане в хрониках крестовых походов* (The Image of the Other. Muslims in the Chronicles of the Crusades) (Saint Petersburg: Aleteia, 2001), 59.

³³⁹ This explains why Alexios, according to Penelope Buckley, always wants peace. See P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 257.

Akrites.³⁴⁰ In the works of Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos this area becomes another argument in the discussion of the spatial strategy of Byzantine empire, offensive or defensive.

According to the *Alexiad*, the key to Byzantine success in Asia Minor lied in its slow progress. When around 1090 the Byzantine forces in Bithynia captured the mountain city of Pimainos, local satrap Elchanes converted to Christianity and entered Byzantine service. While Theophylact of Ohrid in his panegyric pointed to the religious importance of the conversion, Anna Komnene indicated the spatial importance of the fact.³⁴¹ According to the *Alexiad*, re-incorporation of the lost lands into the Empire was possible only with the Christianization of the Turks.

The success of these campaigns is, again, measured regarding cities: they are nodes of power in Asia Minor. Curiously, Anna Komnene never mentioned that Alexios Komnenos lost any significant town in Asia Minor during the campaign against the Seljuk Turks. The *Alexiad* is the story of the spatial success and not the story of the structural failure. Many problematic moments (such as recapture of Philomelion by the Turks or the loss of Nicaea) are missing from the laudatory narrative of Anna Komnene, or reported post factum.³⁴² Same holds true for the borders established by the treaties: Anna Komnene never commented on the fact that Byzantine armies went on offense and broke the borders that the treaties established.

In other cases, Alexios Komnenos *constructed* border with the Turks. In one peculiar case, Alexios used the moat that was allegedly dug up by the emperor Anastasios to block the Turks crossing Sangarios valley and invading Bithynia. As Penelope Buckley put it, moat is one of the many Alexios' works of reconstruction and renewal.³⁴³

After much investigation he was told by some persons that Anastasius Dikouros

³⁴⁰C. Galatariotou, "Open space vs. Closed space in Kekaumenos and *Digenis Akritis*," 302-329.

³⁴¹P. Gautier, "Discours de Theophylacte de Bulgarie," *REB* 20 (1962): 103-104; Peter Frankopan, "Where Advice Meets Criticism in Eleventh Century Byzantium: Theophylact of Ohrid, John the Oxite and Their (Re)Presentations to the Emperor," *Al-Masāq*, 20:1 (2008): 71-88.

³⁴²For the background information on this particular case see P. Frankopan, "The Fall of Nicaea and the towns of western Asia Minor to the Turks in the later 11th Century: the curious case of Nikephoros Melissenos," *Byzantion* 76 (2009): 131-153.

³⁴³Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 193.

had indeed superintended its digging. What his purpose had been they could not say. To Alexius anyhow it seemed clear that Anastasius wanted to divert water from the lake into this artificial gully. Once he had been led to the same idea he... built an extremely strong fort there, completely secure and proof against all assaults, not only because of the water, but also because of the height and thickness of its walls – for which reason it was called the Iron Tower.³⁴⁴

Alexios Komnenos did not have a river to make it a border with the Seljuk Turks. Instead of it, he *created* a river from an old moat and fortified the crossing point, thus creating the landscape of controlled communication in the disputed region.

From the military point of view this seems to be a reasonable action: in the Middle Ages river-crossings were the landscapers of defense.³⁴⁵ However, the episode is interesting not only from the military point of view. Alexios Komnenos follows his great predecessor, emperor Anastasios. The whole episode is also interesting because it narrates the construction of the fortified bridge. According to Skylitzes, the ruler of Persia Mohammed used fortified bridge over river Euphrates to control the communication between Persia and land of the Turks. In his wish to build bridge and control communication, Alexios is using the same strategy as the rulers of Persia from the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes.

If my reading is correct, then one can speak about re-building of the symbolic border, which previously separated Seljuk Turks from the "civilized world."³⁴⁶ Anna described the

³⁴⁴ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 296, lines 70-80 (tr. Frankopan-Sewter, 565) : μανθάνει παρά τινων, ὡς ἄρα τῆς τοιαύτης διώρυχος Ἀναστάσιος ὁ Δίκουρος ἐπεστάτησε. Τί μὲν βουλόμενος, οὐκ εἶχον λέγειν· ἐφαίνετο δ' οὖν τῷ βασιλεῖ Ἀλεξίῳ, ὡς δὴ ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ ἐκεῖνος ἐβούλετο ἀπὸ τῆς λίμνης ὕδωρ μετοχετεύειν. Πρὸς τοιαύτην τοίνυν ἐνθύμησιν ἀναχθεὶς ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ Ἀλέξιος τὴν τε τάφρον εἰς βάθος ἱκανώτατον διορύσσειν ἐκέλευε...ἀνιστᾷ φρούριον ἐρυμνότατον...ᾧθεν καὶ τὴν σιδηρᾶν ἀπηνέγκατο κλῆσιν. In the previous episode of *Alexiad* Byzantine forces defeated the Cumans in the place, called Iron Gorge. Thus, the "Iron" location is associated with the successful defense. See Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 295.

³⁴⁵ See Kerry Cathers, "Marking of the land and Early Medieval Warfare in the British Isles" in *Fields of Battle. Terrain and military history*, ed. Peter Boyle, Matthew Bennett (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 14.

³⁴⁶ In a way, this is a construction of "symbolic landscape for battle". On the notion of "symbolic landscape" see Peter Boyle, Matthew Bennett, "Terrain in military history: an Introduction" in *Fields of Battle. Terrain and military history* ed. Peter Boyle, Matthew Bennett (Dougherty: Kluwer Academic

process of building in great detail. Alexios is reported to pay lump sums of money to "soldiers, servants, natives, and foreigners alike." While it would be too far-fetched to call the building of the Iron Fortress "a cooperative project," it is definitively an exemplary case of the defensive landscape construction in the imagined space of Byzantine Anatolia. If there was no border, then Alexios I Komnenos of the *Alexiad* build one. The construction of the border next to the ancient moat is the ultimate answer that Anna Komnene offers for the spatial shock of the Turks at Damalis. According to the *Alexiad*, the fortress blocked the crossing of the river and effectively separated the Turks from the Byzantines. Alexios' aim in this scene was to construct the border, and he stopped this activity only after the news of the First Crusade.³⁴⁷

The coming of the Crusaders was for Anna Komnene in some way similar to the migration of the Turks. Both migrations are described in the same terms and represent a threat to the empire. Anna Komnene downplayed the significance of the Crusade in the Byzantine conquest of Anatolia.³⁴⁸ In some way, she portrayed the return of the imperial power into the Meander Valley as a logical consequence of Alexios' previous politic of border building and not as a result of the First Crusade (which it probably was). She also highlighted the importance of Anatolia in the imperial politics during the description of the siege of Antioch. Alexios I Komnenos did not help the Crusaders because he was busy defending Asia Minor against the Turks and expected a new army from the mysterious land of Khorasan.

The last books of the *Alexiad* described the campaigns of Alexios against the Turks. Very much like *Poem on the visit of Lopadion* by Theodore Prodromos the book described the landscape of a southern Bithynia and Olympus mountain, as well as the actions of the Byzantine forces in central Anatolia, including mountain gorges. The second part of the book XIV looks

Publishers, 2002), 3.

³⁴⁷Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 194.

³⁴⁸The role of the Crusades in the re-establishment of the Byzantine power in the Western Anatolia is a subject of active discussion. Speros Vryonis and Claude Cahen from their respective positions assigned the Crusade the significant role in the restoration of the Byzantine power in the region. Same holds true for John France. On the other hand, Peter Frankopan and Soul Mecit ignored the problem in toto; that does not improve the credibility of their narratives. Vryonis, *The Decline*, 116-117. Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 12-13; J. France, *Victory in the East*, 300; Frankopan, *The First Crusade*, 175-186; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 26-38.

very much like a list of military maneuvers planned with a very detailed map in mind. The imagined space of the Turks in the book XIV is in the mountains – they “go down” the hill with their leaders, one of whom has the name of Mohammed.³⁴⁹

The Turks of the *Alexiad* feel safe and sound in the space of the Byzantine Anatolia, devastating it with the shocking freedom. Only the emperor can catch them in the mount valley next to Olympus. After the battle in the mountain pass, some Turks hid in the bush, and Alexios drove them out of the bush forest with the flames.³⁵⁰ The other negative character of the *Alexiad* whom Alexios burned with fire was the heretical leader, Neilos. Thus “the burning of the Turks” is a legal method of cleansing in the dangerous land of the spiritual enemies of the emperor, be they the Manicheans or “the Ishmaelites.” Combined with the next passage that praised Alexios as a unique crisis-manager, the story looks like Anna's ideal procedure of extinguishment of the Turks. The cleansing happens in the vicinity of real Lopadion-Ulubad– and one may hypothesize that the whole description may be Anna's argument against the controlled co-existence of the Byzantines and the Turks, suggested in the *Poem to the Visit of Lopadion* of Theodore Prodromos.

The strongest argument against the integration of the Turks is the book XV of the *Alexiad*. According to Anna Komnene, in 1116 the Byzantine emperor organized a significant expedition against the sultanate of Ikonion. Penelope Buckley rightly compared the last expedition of Alexios as the mimesis of the Moses' return to the Holy Land.³⁵¹ The Old Testament motives make it similar to the poems of Theodore Prodromos who also wrote about Asia Minor as the Holy Land.³⁵²

This particular expedition of 1116 deserves separate analysis that I hope to pursue in a separate article. The purported object of Alexios' expedition was also the aim of another

³⁴⁹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 497, line 5: ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲντὰ κατὰ τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ Καρμεῖ κατελθόντας βαρβάρους.

³⁵⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 497, lines 94-100.

³⁵¹ Buckley, *The Alexiad*, 266-267.

³⁵² See the analysis of “Poem on the Capture of Kastamon” in this chapter.

Byzantine raid that Manuel Komnenos made in 1146 against the sultan Mas'ūd of Ikonion.³⁵³ Anna Komnene caused her Alexios make a real raid against the enemy using the new military order he invented. The Byzantine forces invaded the Roman territory using their superior knowledge of the landscape.³⁵⁴ The land that belongs to the Turks is hardly visible – it consists of the roads and bridges, with some little towns on the way. This landscape of the imperial expansion reminds of the rivers and cities of *Tabula Peutingeriana*. One can even hypothesize that the Byzantine generals of the twelfth century used not the maps, but itineraries, that allowed them to compose the narratives of the kind. Very much like in the *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion*, Anna Komnene presented the "Turkic part" of Anatolia in the *Alexiad* is a desert with occasional villages and cities.³⁵⁵ Needless to say, all the Anatolian inhabitants mentioned in the book XV are Byzantines and Christians with not a Turk living around.³⁵⁶

After the expedition of 1116 had finished in Philomelion, Alexios gathered the local Christian inhabitants and started his slow march back. Sultan of Ikonion Shāhanshāh (1109-1116) attacked Alexios on the way. The attack happened in the deserted and hilly area next to the lake of the Forty Martyrs close to the present-day Afyon-Karahisar. According to the *Alexiad*, Alexios was victorious and at the end of the hard march made peace with sultan Shāhanshāh., Anna made Alexios pronounce the speech that defined the ideal place of the Turks into the model *oecumene* of the *Alexiad*:

“If you are willing,’ he said, ‘to yield to the authority of Rome and to put an end to your raids on the Christians, you will enjoy favours and honour, living in freedom for the rest of your lives on lands set aside for you. I refer to the lands where you used to dwell before Romanus Diogenes. It would be wise, therefore, to choose peace rather than war, to refrain from

³⁵³See Magdalino, *The Empire*, 42; Birkenmeyer, *The Development of the Komnenian Army*, 104-106.

³⁵⁴The utilization of the Anatolian landscape in book XV allowed James Howard-Johnston to doubt the authenticity of Anna's description. See J. Howard-Johnston, “Anna Komnene and the *Alexiad*,” in *Alexios I Komnenos I*, ed. M. Mullett and D. Smyth (Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, Belfast: 1996), 260- 302.

³⁵⁵Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 267-268.

³⁵⁶Buckley named them the as “the fugitives”. This word choice does not correspond to the actual text of the *Alexiad*, where Anna Komnene explicitly labeled some of the resettled people as the “prisoners,” Buckley, *The Alexiad*, *ibid*, Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 481, lines 80-83.

crossing the frontiers of the Empire and to be content with your own territories. The advice I give is in your interests and if you listen to it you will never be sorry; in fact, you will receive liberal gifts. On the other hand, if you reject it, you can be sure of this: I will exterminate your kin.³⁵⁷

The speech of the emperor suggested two options for the Turks and their space. The first option is the migration back to the “countries assigned to them” before Manzikert. The second option is to remain at the same place, trouble boundaries of the Romans and face death. The options for the Turks and the space of the Turks look suspiciously similar to the ones presented in the poem *On the capture of the Kastamon* by Theodore Prodromos.³⁵⁸ The difference lies in the spatial coordinates and in the ultimate spatial solution. In the imagined space of Prodromos, the pacified “Persians” are allowed to remain in the ‘East’. In the imagined space of Anna Komnene, the pacified Turks should return to their place of origin in the Byzantine Far East, in the neverland. Over and above, Anna Komnene is the only Byzantine writer of the eleventh-twelfth century who suggested the ultimate solution to the spatial shock of the Turkic invasion. She suggested that her father was one step from reversing back the migration of the Seljuk Turks – and only negligence of his successors resulted in its failure. Later in the narrative, Anna Komnene again (for the third time) in the final part of the book reminded the reader about Manzikert and spatial shock of Damalis. As a result of Romanos Diogenes’ actions some people died and other were carried off to Persia, states Anna Komnene. If one is to believe *Alexiad*, her father was the only person who had a war in Asia beside John Tzimiskes and Basil II the Bulgar-Slayer.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 478, lines 84-93, (tr. Frankopan -Sewter. 844-845): Εἰ μὲν τῇ βασιλείᾳ Ῥωμαίων ὑπέικειν βούλεσθε καὶ τὰς κατὰ τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἐκδρομὰς ἀνακόψαι, χαρίτων μὲν καὶ τιμῆς ἀπολαύσετε καὶ ἀνέτως ἐν ταῖς ἀποτεταγμέναις ὑμῖν χώραις τοῦ λοιποῦ βιώσεσθε, οὗ τὸ πρότερον τὰς διατριβὰς εἶχετε πρὸ τοῦ Ῥωμανὸν τὸν Διογένην τὰς ἡνίας τῆς βασιλείας περιζώσασθαι καὶ τὴν ἥτταν ἐκείνην ἡττηθῆναι μετὰ τοῦ σουλτάνου συνάξαντα δυστυχῶς τὴν μάχην καὶ ἀλῶναι παρ’ αὐτοῦ. Χρὴ οὖν τὴν εἰρήνην ἐλέσθαι τῆς μάχης καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ τὴν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχὴν ὀρίων ἀπέχεσθαι τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀρκουμένοις. Καὶ εἴ μου πεισθῆτε τοῖς λόγοις συμβουλευομένου τὰ λῶνα, μεταμεληθήσεσθε οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλῶν δωρημάτων ἐπιτεύξεσθε. Εἰ δὲ μή, ἐμὲ ἴστε ὀλοθρευτὴν τοῦ γένους ὑμῶν ἔσεσθαι.

³⁵⁸ See the Analysis of the *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* above.

³⁵⁹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 493, lines 94-9.

Here Anna Komnene portrayed Alexios as a fighter for the oppressed Christianity in Asia, but her Asia is of a different scale than Asia of Skylitzes and Attaleiates. Very much like “Persia” of Theodore Prodromos, it began in two days' march from Constantinople. The focus here is on Alexios, who is portrayed as the defender of the Christians. According to Anna Komnene, Alexios was mobile and conscious in his spatial actions and did not have the far-fetched plans for the expedition in the East, but aimed to restore the spatial unity of the Empire. At the same time, this restoration, at least in the quote does not imply total reconquest of Asia – Alexios just “dared to spare a foot” in this part of the world.

Anna Komnene portrayed Alexios I Komnenos as an heir to the military emperors of the past and as a better predecessor to John and Manuel. She supported the principles of the Komnenian spatial politics in the East and West, but her poetic syntax was but different from Theodore Prodromos in her opinion on methods. While Prodromos praised John Komnenos for transforming the Turks into the “guard-dogs of the community,” Anna Komnene suggested burning the Turks out of the bush and (ideally) removing them from the imperial space. While Prodromos recognized the presence of the Turks in the region, Anna Komnene still considered them illegal invaders from “Persia” who had to be removed from the Anatolian space that they occupy. Their ideal place is in Khorasan, in the lands where they lived before Romanos Diogenes.

On the more general level, Anna Komnene projected the defensive strategy of the space management with the focus on the slow expansion rather than on the long-lasting and expensive expeditions to the foreign countries. Alexios of the *Alexiad* is rejecting the very idea to leave his empire to the glory of Syria and Palestine. Very much like another source that claimed the Alexian heritage, the *Musae*, Anna Komnene's work projected a rather defensive vision of the political and spatial future of the Empire.³⁶⁰ According to the *Alexiad*, the emperor should focus on fortresses, borders, the expulsion of the Turks. The imperial space was open to the subordinate foreigners, was close to the far-fetched expansion and was always on defense.

After the active discussion of the space of the Turks in the Byzantine rhetoric of the

³⁶⁰See, J. Shepard, “Father or Scorpion,” 91.

1150s, the topic disappeared from the discourse of the period under consideration. The reason for this lies in the change of the particular focus of the imperial politics. After the peace of 1161 with Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion, Manuel I Komnenos switched his attention to the external politics in Cilicia, Upper Syria and Palestine. In the *Speech of 1161*, Euthymios Malakes briefly mentioned the safe passage of emperor Manuel through "Persia" and compared the Turks with the people of Gergeisia from Matthew 8:32, pointing to their liminal status.³⁶¹ The panegyrist described Persia as the land of the safe passage for the Byzantine army on the way back from Upper Syria, but this place is not a hostile desert or a hunting-ground. It is liminal, but passable – and in some way, prose lines of Malakes complemented the passages about passability of Asia Minor in the *Poem to the Visit of Lopadion* by Theodore Prodromos.

The peace of 1161 (very much like the fragile peace of the 1120s) led to the second disappearance of the Turks from the Byzantine rhetoric. In the epigram for the icon of Theotokos preserved in Codex Marcianus Graecus 427 composed *circa* 1157, the Persians are no longer listed among the enemies.³⁶² This situation reminds one about the text where the Turks and Persians are literally absent, namely Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*.

3. The Ideal Borderland? Imagined Space in Grottaferrata *Digenis Akritis*

In his poems Theodore Prodromos constructed the imagined space of "Asia" that was conquered by the victorious emperor John II Komnenos. This picture has direct analogues in the Byzantine epic, namely in the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*. As I argued above, *Digenis Akritis* is a multi-layered epic that was based on the poetry of the Byzantine-Arab confrontation of the ninth-tenth century. It is hard to establish which layers of the epic go back to this age, but even if they do, the space in *Digenis* looks very similar to the one found in the "Anatolian" poems of Theodore Prodromos. Below, I will focus my attention on the similarities

³⁶¹Euthymios Malakes, *Panegyric to Peace of Constantinople 1161*, 181, lines 17-27.

³⁶²See F.Spigou, "From Constantinople with Love: Private Devotion and Politics in the Holy Land and Other "Outer Places," unpublished paper presented at the Byzantine Studies Conference in 2015 (New York, 2015).

between *Digenis* and panegyric poetry, both in the historical detail and “structural oppositions”.³⁶³ It seems logical to start with these oppositions that constitute the backbone of the Grottaferrata story.

The first structural similarity is the repetitive topic of the military confrontation in the complex landscape. Very much like Prodhomos, the author of *Digenis Akritis Grottaferrata* is very much interested in the roads and forts that form the basic grid of orientation. The language that describes these fortifications does not belong to the twelfth century, but some basic terms (like *kleisoura*) were used by Anna Komnene and other authors who had the ancient examples in mind.³⁶⁴ Other similarity is the focus of Grottaferrata on the mobility, roads and movements. Very much like on the Poem to Visit to Lopadion, the focus of the *Digenis Akritis* lies in the road, *odos*. The roads connect the land of the Romans (named Romania) with Syria.³⁶⁵ The land in the liminal land, that is reserved for the robbers and for the hunt. While the direct textual parallels are absent, the description of the hunt in the *Digenis Akritis* reminds one about emperor-hunter from poems of Theodore Prodhomos. It is important to keep in mind, that according both to Kinnamos and Choniates, John II Komnenos died during one of the hunts in Cilicia. Finally, all the border stories of *Digenis Akritis* happen around the river. In some cases, the river is the only coordinate that is actually present in place.

The actions of the protagonists also remind one about the rituals described in the “Anatolian” poems of Theodore Prodhomos.. There is not a single description of actual conquest that Emir or *Digenis* performed in the narrative. The protagonists do brave deeds, but they do not conquer territories. This makes them very similar to the *laudandi* of the Komnenian panegyrics of the 1130s and the 1170s. When John Kinnamos in 1183 compared Manuel I Komnenos with *Digenis Akritis* he pointed to the personal and “honor”- oriented motivated of these feats of valor.³⁶⁶

³⁶³See C. Galatariotou, “Structural Oppositions in Grottaferrata *Digenis Akritis*,” 21-68

³⁶⁴*Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 8, line 90.

³⁶⁵*Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 24, line 2.

³⁶⁶See P. Magdalino, “Honour among Romaioi: the framework of social values in the world of *Digenis Akritis* and *Kekaumenos*”. *BMGS* 13 (1989): 183–218.

Finally, some direct analogues with the Komnenian external politics should be mentioned in addition to those that Magdalino found in his article. From the very first page, the context of the protagonist's exploits is essentially Anatolian. The protagonist is said to have conquered "Amorion and Ikonion." The reference to Ikonion might have some connection with the actual political agenda of the Byzantine state. In the age of Alexios and in the first decade of John's reign, the Byzantine army launched sustained campaigns in the Meander valley and Paphlagonia. The Byzantine armies passed through central Anatolia and eastern Phrygia in the late 1130s. John II Komnenos died after his campaign against the forts of Lake Pousgousa in 1138. His son, Manuel I besieged Ikonion in the 1145. Thus, the single phrase of Digenis about Amorion and Ikonion suits well into the agenda of the Byzantine external politics of the late 1130s and the 1140s. Another phrase mentions the deeds of emperor of Digenis on Euphrates – the river which the Byzantine armies crossed several times in the 1130s and the 1140s.³⁶⁷

Another reference to the 1140s and the 1150s is an elephant in the China shop, namely the absence of the Turks per se in *Digenis Akritis* Grottaferrata. They are present only in the side references. The key antagonists are wild beasts, brigands and Arabs, that try to kill the protagonist on his way. The very absence of the Turks both in the landscape and in the narrative reminds one about the speech that Anna Komnene put into the mouth of her father in the *Alexiad*. This speech suggested the Turks to die or to re-settle from Asia Minor. The collective author of the *Digenis Akritis* performed "the expulsion" of the Turks on a different level: he simply ignored them and send them to the "blind zone" of his narrative. In the ideal Anatolia of *Digenis Akritis*, there are no Turks.

To sum up, the imagined space of Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* contained many common elements with the imagined space of the Komnenian panegyric. Leaving aside the question of primogeniture, one can safely say that Digenis and panegyrics of Prodromos and later era use the same framework of the imagined geography and shared cultural values. The historical elements, and especially focus on Ikonion point not to the 1130s, but to the 1140s and the 1150s, when Manuel I Komnenos waged long wars against the growing sultanate of Kılıç

³⁶⁷*Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 126, line 1006.

Arslan. The absence of the Turks in Digenis reflects an ideal version of the Anatolian landscape as seen from Constantinople- the ideal that was never there. In thirty years after the first and the last Byzantine siege of Ikonion (1145) the Byzantine domination in the central Asia Minor, imagined and real, finished once and for all.

4. Space and Place of the Turks in Late Komnenian Era

At the end of the 1160s, the Byzantine Empire was at the apex of symbolic power in the Eastern Mediterranean. Manuel Komnenos pretended to be the true Roman Emperor of the time. He conducted successful wars with Hungary and participated in a Crusader expedition against Egypt in 1171.³⁶⁸ He lent help to the Pope in his stand against Frederick Barbarossa and organized negotiations with the Armenian Church about a possible union.³⁶⁹ At the same time, the Byzantine affairs in Asia Minor suffered from the absence of imperial micro-management. Sultan Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion created the network of alliances that allowed him to subdue some of the Danishmendid polities in Paphlagonia by the 1170.³⁷⁰ The Danishmendids applied to Constantinople and Manuel had to return his attention to the landscape of Asia Minor. The resultant Byzantine campaigns finished with the defeat of Myriokephalon (1176) and the stabilization of the Byzantine-Seljuk border. The Byzantine literati reflected these challenges in the different works of rhetoric, in poetry and in prose.

a. Failure to control the landscape: *Poem* and *Letter* from the 1170s

The activation of the Byzantine politics in Asia Minor in the 1170s provoked the new wave of Byzantine building activity. The court literati of Manuel I Komnenos described these buildings in their panegyrics. As demonstrated above, the very ideas of the borderland as the new land under Byzantine control was present both in the panegyrics of Theodore Prodromos and in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. One can note the interest in the similar problems in the *Poem on*

³⁶⁸For the expedition against Egypt see Magdalino, *The Empire*, 92-96.

³⁶⁹For the brief survey see A.F. Stone, "Nerses IV "The Gracious," Manuel I Komnenos, the Patriarch Michael III Anchialos, and negotiations for church union between Byzantium and the Armenian Church, 1165-1173," *JÖB* 55 (2005): 191-208.

³⁷⁰Vryonis, *The Decline*, 122-123, Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 30-31; The whole episode is absent from the narrative of Songul Mecit. See Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 61-62.

the Refortification of Dorylaion and the *Letter of Manuel Komnenos*. Despite the different audiences of the sources, both works of rhetoric are addressing similar problems that I will analyze below. The first source, the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion*, was written in 1173 after the restoration of the eponymous fortress.³⁷¹ The fortress was a part of Manuel's program to re-fortify principal valleys and roads in the Byzantine Asia Minor. According to Foteigni Spingou, the poem was probably read at the ceremony in front of the reconstructed city before the emperor left to restore another fortress of Soublaion.³⁷²

The anonymous author began the poem with a naturalistic comparison. The city of Dorylaion was an offspring of "Roman platen" that was torn off by the wild wind and, as the captive girl, brought to follow "Persian customs."³⁷³ Thus, the center of the imagined and contested space is the city that is similar to a tree or a human. This comparison is the popular topos in the other poetical works of the age. Theodore Prodromos spoke about the "Roman platen" in the poem about another re-constructed city, Lopadion, while in his *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* he mentioned that the city, feminine in Greek, was "mingling with the enemy."³⁷⁴ Here the city was carried away by force; that reminds one of the closing passage of the *Alexiad*, which mentions the Byzantine girls accrued away into Persian slavery.

The Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion described the city as an integral part of the Byzantine tree and Byzantine family with Manuel Komnenos at the helm. The Turks of poem duly turned their back, freed the plain of Dorylaion and hid in the mountain glens. The *topos* of the Turks hiding in the mountains (as well as hunter-emperor) reminds both of Alexios I Komnenos (who fought the Turks in the mountain gorges of Olympus) and of John II Komnenos

³⁷¹For the reconstruction of Dorylaion see the old article of Paul Wirth and a more recent summary of the promising MA Thesis of Roberto de Luigi. P. Wirth. "Kaiser Manuel I. Komnenos und die Ostgrenze. Rückeroberung und Wiederaufbau des Festung Dorylaion," *Byzantion* 55 (1973): 21-29; R. DeLuigi, *Winter in the Land of Rum*, 86-89.

³⁷²Spingou, "Refortification of Dorylaion," 140.

³⁷³The "customs" mentioned here are marriage rites. The Poem on Dorylaion provides an example for the overquoted passages in the *Deeds* of John Kinnamos and the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates that also mentions the "customs" of the Turks. *Poem on Dorylaion*, line 8 : ἡθεα περσικά; John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 22, lines 16-17. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 37, line 91: ἐπὶ τῇ δούμασιν αὐτῶν ἐν πλείοσι προσεσχέκασιν.

³⁷⁴Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, 204, line 115.

(from whom the Turks were hiding in the “mountain glens”).³⁷⁵ The reunification of the city of Constantinople again has some parallels in the Prodroimian poetry. Thus, the author of the *Poem of Dorylaion* constructed his landscape of re-conquest using the motives present in the earlier examples, especially in the *Poem on the Capture of Kastamon* and the *Poem on the Visit of Lopadion* by Theodore Prodromos. The *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* is a rare example of mimesis in the landscape construction, which binds together the time of John and Manuel Komnenos and presents Anatolia as a “homogenized realm.”³⁷⁶ The unifying motives are the renovation of old fortress, the deliverance of city from trouble and the imperial hunt against the Turks. The *mimesis* projects stability to the audience of the Komnenian poetry and planned balance in the troubling times of the growing instability in the region.

The differences between the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* and the *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* reveal the changes in the Byzantine literary and political agenda in Anatolia. First, the comparison of Manuel I Komnenos to Gideon is a rare thing—the only person to use it was John IV Oxeite, Patriarch of Antioch.³⁷⁷ The comparison hints at the defensive context; that might answer the circumstance of the day. The second difference is the presence of the economic motives. While the *Alexiad* and the panegyrics of Prodromos rarely mention the quality of the land, *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* describes the Turks as the drones who are oppressing the hive of the green valley. Thus, the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* is the first piece of the Byzantine rhetoric that points to the possible exploitation of the new domains.³⁷⁸ On the other hand, the author did not develop this motive further. Together with the hint of the further expansion, it has a modest place in the poem. It hints at some topics that were *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* actual and present in the Byzantine discourse before the battle of Myriokephalon, that in many ways defined the forms of the Byzantine

³⁷⁵*Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion*, line 32: οὐκέτ’ ἐπιτροχόωντες ἐς ἄγkea μακρὰ δύσαντο compare with Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, line 191: ὑπόδουτε τὰς φάραγγας, ὑπόδουτε τὰς νάπας.

³⁷⁶For the mimesis as the instrument of homogenization of the [imagined] landscape see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 376-377.

³⁷⁷John VI Oxeite, “First [Critical] Oration to Alexios I Komnenos,” ed. Gautier, 25, line 14.

³⁷⁸Cf. Spingou, *Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion*, 141.

landscape-building after 1176.

According to Choniates, in the aftermath of Manzikert, Manuel I Komnenos sent to Constantinople several letters that reflected his changing attitudes towards those events. The *Letter* itself is written in Latin and preserved in the chronicle of Roger of Hoveden.³⁷⁹ Here the landscape is a setting for the *Letter* that aims to explain the situation to the Latin outsider. In some sense, this is an "export version" of the literary landscape, with the "import text" present in many panegyrics and the *Poem on Dorylaion*.

The *Letter* informed the Western audience that Manuel Komnenos undertook an expedition against "all Persia" to defend the interests of Christianity. According to the *Letter*, "the Persians" were not only enemies of the Lord, but dominated "the regions of Christians." However, the expedition did not go well. According to the *Letter*, an illness (*fluxus ventris*) affected the Byzantine army when they were passing through the friendly regions. After the disease, the Byzantine column entered "the parts of the Turks" (sic!) where the Turks attacked it.³⁸⁰ Finally, the Byzantine army entered a long defile, which "was called by the Persians Cyblicimani" where it was attacked by the Persians, who "came from the inner regions of the Persia."³⁸¹ In the following description of the battle, Manuel survived the sandstorm and hardly reached his camp *deo juvante*. After some consideration, Manuel Komnenos signed the peace treaty under his flags. After the peace procedure, Manuel went back to "his land," praying to the Lord for help.³⁸²

Several motives of the *Letter* and some factoids mentioned in the Latin text are similar to the ones found in the Byzantine panegyrics. "Persia" and "Christian lands" of the *Letter* remind one of the concepts of Turkic spatial unity in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Same holds true for the distinction between the Turks and the Persians. The Persia is the totality of the land of the

³⁷⁹The typology suggested by Sinclair allows one to qualify it as a "military dispatch." See K.J. Sinclair, "War Writing in the Middle-Byzantine Historiography," Ph.D. Thesis defended at the University of Birmingham (Birmingham: 2012), 152-154.

³⁸⁰*Letter of Manuel*, 102, line 12: *finis Turcorum*.

³⁸¹*Letter of Manuel*, 103, line 7: *ad inferioribus partibus Persidis*.

³⁸²*Letter of Manuel*, 104, line 27-8: *in regionem suam regreditur*.

Turks, while the Turk inhabit borderlands. The difference between “the regions of the Turks” and the imagined Persia implies that early Byzantine differentiation between the noble Persians and the more barbaric-like Turks is now transferred to Asia Minor. The *Letter* recognized the localization of the Turks and the Persians in the former Byzantine space. One of the two place-names mentioned in the text is labeled as “Persian”: Cyblicimani.³⁸³ The real masters of this Anatolian landscape are the Turks, who are freely roaming their “ends” and act as the independent players in the scene.

The imagined scene of *Letter* is in striking contrast with the *Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion* and the Prodromian panegyrics that it imitates. The landscape of the *Letter* is not under, but out of the imperial control. The protagonist of the *Letter* did not build roads but traveled forth in the land of danger. This land does not have a Byzantine name. The narrative of travel reminds one not of Byzantine poetry, but of the description of Odo of Deuil, who outlined (in Latin) the ultimate failure of the Second Crusade.³⁸⁴ In the final part of the *Letter*, the emperor stated that he managed to reach some mastery of space and sign the peace “under his flags,” but the stability of this achievement remains problematic.³⁸⁵ At the very end, the protagonist had to return not with the trumpets of victory, but with a load of guilt on his shoulders. In the touch of rhetoric familiar to the reader of the *Alexiad*, the author of the *Letter* lamented the death he left behind in the Anatolian soil.

As a result, the *Letter* is an active deconstruction of the literary landscape of Anatolia present in the *Poem on Dorylaion*. It described Anatolia as the anti-space, the mirror world ruled by the hostile forces of the Turks and the Persians where only the divine help keep the protagonist from the imminent danger. The author described the space, where imperial domination failed both on the physical and symbolical level, and where the names themselves are not Byzantine, but Persian. The question about the formulas that were present in the alleged

³⁸³The word is not Persian, but Turkish. According to Michael Hendy, Cyblicimani means “the valley of the Gut.” See M. F. Hendy, *Byzantine Monetary Politics*, 108.

³⁸⁴Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed., tr. W.G. Berry, (New York: Norton, 1965), 115-117.

³⁸⁵*Letter of Manuel*, 104, line 26: *sub vexiliis nostris*.

Greek prototype of the *Letter* remains open, and I can not see how it could ever be solved. The information in the later sources allows one to hypothesize that the bulletins of Manuel sent to the audience in Constantinople touched upon similar topics and also described the battle as a spatial shock.

. The contrast between the *Letter* and the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* is striking. The early death of the protagonist of these two works of rhetoric – emperor Manuel Komnenos – soon stimulated the need to produce the third work that would bridge the gap between two imagined landscapes, the landscape of the imperial domination and the scene of defeat.

b. New Masters: Space and place of the Turks in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates.

Niketas Choniates was a man who came from the Byzantine borderland. His hometown, Chonae was under the power of Turkish amīrs for a short period between the 1080s and 1098. By the time of Niketas' birth the town situated on the busy road in the Meander Valley was one of the centers of the Byzantine border zone on the peninsula.³⁸⁶ Niketas' godfather was the local bishop and confidant of emperor Manuel I Komnenos. While Niketas left to have his education in Constantinople, at least some members of his family remained in Chonae.³⁸⁷ His uncle and namesake, a deacon in the local church, participated in the failed raid of the Byzantine cavalry and local volunteers against the pastoralists of Meander Valley in 1179.³⁸⁸ All these details explain the attention and the emotional subjectivity of Niketas' description of the landscape of border zone.

While usually omitted from the analysis of the *Historia*, the landscape has a significant role from the very beginning of the narrative.³⁸⁹ Niketas is eager to point to the locations that are

³⁸⁶For the particular state of the frontier region see D. Korobeynikov, "The Byzantine-Seljuk Border in the Times of Troubles: Laodikeia in 1174-1204," 49-60.

³⁸⁷Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 13-14.

³⁸⁸Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 253, line 15.

³⁸⁹Among many articles in *Niketas Choniates: The Historian and a Writer* only one deals to some extent with the space of medieval Constantinople. See A. Simpson, "Constantinople in The *Historia* of Niketas

associated with the certain people and events. After the death of Alexios in 1118, Anna Komnene planned her plot in the circus of Philopation, John Komnenos occupied the imperial palace, while his confidant, John Axouch "the Persian" was captured in Nicaea by Bohemond. The localization of people and events supports the main argument of Choniates' narrative. For misogynic Choniates, the failure of Anna's plot in a circus is, of course, a comedy, while the blockade of John Komnenos in the Great Palace demonstrated his persistence to the control of the symbolic center of the Empire.

In *Historia*, different emperors perceive the space in a different way. According to Choniates, John II demonstrated certain persistence in his fight for the controlling positions in Anatolian landscapes. During the siege of Kastamon, John ordered to raise the siege weaponry to the hills surrounding the fortress, thus allowing the weapon-masters to see (and subdue) the houses inside the city. Here, again, one can note the return of the imperial gaze into the Byzantine Anatolia, where the mechanisms of power (siege engines) are above, and the Persian city (Kastamon) is below.³⁹⁰ To highlight the idea of the spatial control exercised by John II, Choniates included in the list of the conquered fortresses "the Pike of the Falcons".³⁹¹ Besides the presence of the birds associated with the imperial power, the name of the fortress also implies the idea of control from above. According to the *History*, John Komnenos struggled for the supervision of the peaks and control locations in Anatolia as well as for the domination of Syria and Palestine.³⁹² Very much like Kinnamos, Choniates pointed to the uncertain climate in Paphlagonia and the difficulties that John had to overcome during his heroic campaign against the Danishmendids.³⁹³

Choniates finished this story of John with yet another mention of a dominant point in the landscape. According to the *History*, John II Komnenos dreamed about "going to the very

Choniates," in *Niketas Choniates: A The Historian and A Writer*, ed. A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis (Genève: Pomme d'Or, 2009), 185-209.

³⁹⁰Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 39, line 13.

³⁹¹Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 20, lines 83-85.

³⁹²Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 25-26.

³⁹³Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 34-36.

Palestine” and “up to the mount of the Lord” to defend it from the enemies surrounding it.³⁹⁴ Choniates puts this formula of the armed pilgrimage not in the mouth of Western knights or lords, but in the mouth of John Komnenos on his deathbed.³⁹⁵ Through his description of John II’s reign, Choniates projected his support for the Byzantine domination in the landscape, both physical (Kastamon) and spiritual (the mount of the Lord). The combination of the two reminds one of the *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* by Theodore Prodromos.

According to Choniates, the landscape politics of Manuel Komnenos was not so successful. Choniates began the description of his reign with the deconstruction of several topoi present in the space-constructing panegyrics of the previous era. During the return of Manuel from Palestine, his relatives Andronikos Komnenos and Theodore Daseot organized the hunt in the territory of the Persians but fell into their hands.³⁹⁶ Besides being a common motif, hunt in the land of the Persians has the textual parallels: the “imperial hunts” present both in the *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* of Theodore Prodromos and in the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion*.³⁹⁷

Choniates also downplayed the expedition of Manuel against Ikonion that Kinnamos portrayed in such great detail.³⁹⁸ In *The Deeds* of Kinnamos, Manuel confronted the Turks in their landscape, used the landscape to gain the strategic benefit and won the battle, while in the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates Manuel first was injured, then blocked at Ikonion and had to

³⁹⁴Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 39, line 13; Cf. John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, I.10, 26, lines 5-16; See the imagery of Holy Land in the poetry written after the death of John II Komnenos. See Nicholas Kallikles, *Poem on the Tomb of John Komnenos* in Nicholas Kallikles, *Carmi*, ed. R. Maisano, 114, line 49.

³⁹⁵For the positive treatment of John II Komnenos see A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis, “Introduction” in *Niketas Choniates: A The Historian and A Writer*, ed. S. Efthymiadis, A. Simpson (Genève: Pomme d’Or, 2011), 38-39. Cf. I. Stouratis, “Jihad and Crusade: Byzantine Positions Towards the Notions of Holy War,” *Byzantine Simmeikta* (2011)32-35.

³⁹⁶Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 55.

³⁹⁷For the topos of imperial hunt see Angeliki Papageorgiou, “οἱ δὲ λύκοι ὡς Πέρσαι: The image of the “Turks” in the reign of John II Komnenos (1118-1143),” *Byzantinoslavica* 1-2 (2011): 149-161; *The Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion*, line 34: δορκαλίδες τρομέουσai θῆρα βριαροπάλαμνον·

³⁹⁸See the previous section on the landscape construction in John Kinnamos John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, 47-50.

retreat in haste.³⁹⁹ While Kinnamos constructed the siege of Ikonion (1145) as the apex of the successful raid against the enemy capital, Choniates described it as a failure. Manuel of *Historia* did not manage to control the mountains and defiles around Ikonion and had to retreat with significant losses.

In the following part of *Historia*, Manuel managed to use the squabbles among the Turks of Asia Minor to manipulate them into the peace of 1161, restored the fortresses of Dorylaion and Soublaion and defended *theme* of Neokastrai to raise extra money there in the form of the taxes. Manuel also gained credit for his fast expeditions that forced the Turks to relieve sieges of the “Roman” cities like Claudiopoli in 1179.⁴⁰⁰ His willingness to help receives praise from Choniates, who treats it favorably.

On the other hand, Manuel was not John and could barely control any landscape. He could hardly put the limits to Kılıç Arslan, who like a swollen torrent came down from the hills. Very much like in the Attaleiates, the “natural” metaphor demonstrated the normalcy of the raids, as well as the inability of Manuel to stop them with landscape management.⁴⁰¹ His bravery could not compensate for the absence of the practical skills, namely road-making and road-finding very much like his occasional fortress-building could not compensate for constant involvement in the expensive expeditions to the foreign lands.⁴⁰² The ultimate result of this failure was the battle at Myriokephalon.⁴⁰³ Manuel brought his army to the defile next to Ikonion where sultan Kılıç Arslan crushed it with full force. According to Choniates, at this time, Manuel was manipulated by his evil young advisors.⁴⁰⁴ Thus, both expeditions of Manuel against Ikonion in *Historia* failed because of his inability to stand against the manipulation. In the first case, the manipulator

³⁹⁹. The economic expansion in Asia Minor needs further proofs, but the specific data about the grain export hints at the growth of the agrarian activity in the regions A. Harvey, *Economic Expansion in the Byzantine Empire, 900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 159-161.

⁴⁰⁰P. Wirth “Die Chronologie der Schlacht um Claudiopoli in Lichte bisher unbeachteter Quellen,” *BZ* 50 (1957): 68-74.

⁴⁰¹Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 129, lines 73-87

⁴⁰²P. Magdalino, *The Empire*, 9.

⁴⁰³Magdalino noted that Choniates did not see this expedition as over-ambitious, Magdalino, *The Empire*, 10.

⁴⁰⁴Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 139, lines 31-37.

is a daughter of a Byzantine defector, in the second instance – young people with jewelry around their necks.

In the apex of the battle, comrades-in-arms of Manuel (probably invented by Choniates) reproached the Byzantine emperor for his bad landscape-management.⁴⁰⁵ To highlight the failure of Manuel, Choniates used in his description of the battle a quote from the Psalms that referred directly to the situation of Exodus.⁴⁰⁶ Contrary to usual references to this situation, the quote placed the Byzantine army with the army of Egypt, and Manuel with the Pharaoh of the Bible, while in the poems of Theodore Prodromos and the *Alexiad* compared John II and Alexios I respectively with Moses, who leads his flock through the enemy land with the help of the Lord. In the scene of the battle at Myriokephalon, Choniates turned this paradigm upside down and transformed the Byzantines into the Egyptians. Thus, the defile of Myriokephalon is an anti-space to the Sangarios valley of Prodromic poetry in the same way as the victories of John Komnenos are the antithesis of the battle at Myriokephalon.

The “anti-landscape” of Anatolia is a recurrent topic in the *Historia*. The cities and regions of “Asia” are Roman but belong to the Persians. This prayer is the last text that projects some hope for the Byzantine revival in Anatolia, even if this recovery is limited to some cities and districts and not to the “Asia” as a whole.⁴⁰⁷ At the same time, the Niketas Prayer has a unique place in the twelfth-century rhetoric. It embodies both nostalgia and personal trauma, that Vryonis noted in the later works of Metochites.⁴⁰⁸ Writing in the very end of the twelfth century, Choniates realized and recognized the loss of Anatolia and cried over it in the Biblical (and not classical) terms.

The problem is that the Christians of the *Historia* have nobody to help them. Occasional raids of Manuel could relieve the city from the siege but were not equal to the meticulous space

⁴⁰⁵Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 187, lines 10-12.

⁴⁰⁶Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 193, line 87; Exodus 10:21.

⁴⁰⁷The message looks like the reference to the *Alexiad* when Anna Komnene credited Alexios for helping Christians in “Asian cities.” See subchapter on the space and place of the Turks in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene.

⁴⁰⁸Vryonis, *The Decline*, 413.

politics of his father.

The Persians are the masters of the East in Choniates' narrative, while the border Turks help the latter to establish their power. At the end of *Historia* the Turks repeated the deed of the Turks in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and robbed Chonae.⁴⁰⁹ This is the rare example of the Byzantine church mentioned in the narrative. The Persians navigate both roads and the countryside. In another reversal of the Byzantine *topos*, the Turks wander into a Byzantine territory as if "they were some sheep" with their tents and flocks. In the *Poem to the visit to Lopadion*, Prodromos described the Romans as sheep wandering in the region, while Choniates applied this label to the Turks who wander around. In *Historia*, the Persian sultan takes over the place of the Byzantine emperor as the master of the Anatolian landscape who controls rivers and roads from his capital at Ikonion.

Choniates was the first Byzantine writer to describe Ikonion as the enemy capital if not as another planet. In the *Historia* Choniates portrayed it like a city in its own right, with the palace, city center, the walls and the gardens surrounding it. In some way, the city of the Persians is anti-Constantinople inhabited by the Muslim ruler. For Choniates, just as for Anna Komnene before him, the combination of space and religion in the former Byzantine provinces of Asia Minor was a literary device to convey the message about "people in distress". Anna Komnene used this word to glorify her father while Niketas mobilized it to criticize Constantinople and point to the possible competitors for the Anatolian space.

If Constantinople fails to defend the Christians, they either have to defend themselves or to find another protector for their space. In *Historia*, Choniates proposed several candidates for the roles of the new protectors who could check the spatial domination of Persians and Turks. First, those are the Crusaders of the Second and Third Crusades, more precisely the Germans (*Alamanni*).⁴¹⁰ The native of Chonae, Niketas Choniates perceived the Crusaders as possible saviors of the Christians of Asia Minor from the Turks, or as the shifters of the power balance to the Christian side.

⁴⁰⁹Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 400.

⁴¹⁰For the positive attitude towards the Crusaders see P. Magdalino, *The Empire*, 13.

When the Crusaders passed, the position of spatial “redeemer” of the Christians remained vacant. Choniates did not present Theodore Laskaris in this quality until the very last part of the *Historia*. On the other hand, in the final version of his text Choniates focused his attention on the competence of the sultan of the Persians, Kay Khusraw. The son of a Christian woman, he humanized the conquests in the twelfth century and re-settled Byzantine captives in the region of Philomelion. In the last version of the *Historia*, Choniates stated that due to the favorable tax regime the Romans left their countries and moved to the “barbarian lands” meaning here the sultanate of Ikonion. Comparing Kay Khusraw with Alexios III Angelos, Choniates portrayed him as a better master of the landscape.⁴¹¹

To conclude, Niketas Choniates was the first Byzantine author to recognize the eastern part of the Roman Empire as the space of the “Turks” and “Persians”. The latter move freely in the countryside, cities, hills, and roads. Their sway is unlawful because Anatolia is still a “Holy land”, but at the same time the Byzantine demise is divinely ordained. According to the *History*, the Byzantine emperors lost spatial control over the cities and provinces in “Asia” due to the multitude of their sins and their bad decision-making. They left the Christians of Asia without their support. The space of the “Redeemer” is absent. To fill this void, Choniates transferred the symbolic power to control the landscape first to the Crusaders (the Germans) who twice paved their way through the territories of the Turks and secondly, to sultan Kay Khusraw of Ikonion, the son of a Christian lady who allowed the Christians to resettle in his organized space. The “provinces” that were Roman became Persian, and this allows me to move on to my conclusions.

5. Conclusions. The Shrinking of Space

The series of the imagined landscapes analyzed in this chapter have two essential features. First, the space plays an important role in Byzantine rhetoric of all genres. In the

⁴¹¹During the incursion into Meander Valley circa 1097, Kay Khusraw captured prisoners and led them to the sultanate of Ikonion through the narrow mountain passes full of snow. To protect his prisoners from cold, Kay Khusraw in person chopped the wood and used it to make fire and warm his prisoners Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 493-494. About Kay Khusraw see VII.6.

absence of the modern measurement instruments, the ultimate success or failure of the emperors is measured in the cities captured, roads constructed and victories achieved. The actual fort-building involved many participants from "the silent majority" to local *dunatai*, but none of them made it into panegyrics.

Secondly, all the analyzed texts aim at court audience that could realize the importance of the (imagined) landscape in the imperial politics. The knowledge of space was especially important for the historians, who used to gain extra credibility. When Choniates deconstructed rhetorical topoi of Byzantine spatial control over Asia, he balanced his ironic description with the precise toponyms that demonstrated his awareness of the details. In the twelfth century the educated Byzantines still knew the ancient names of Anatolia, while in the later centuries they gradually lost this skill.⁴¹²

The works of many literati formed the discourse that allows one to make certain conclusions about the dynamic of the imagined landscapes. Speaking in the terms of Catia Galatariotou, the Byzantine spatial appropriation of the Turks was a combination of "open" and "closed" space politics. The first reaction to the invasion was the apocalyptic panic of Michael Attaleiates and John Skylitzes' attempt to chart down the Turks in the spatial framework of late antique geography. It seems possible that the order of spatial descriptions in the *Historia* of Attaleiates could be inspired by the reading of Pseudo-Methodius while the "default location" of the Turks in Skylitzes might have something to do with *Romance of Alexander*, but the absence of direct textual parallels make further discussion problematic. The imagined space of the eleventh-century literati was "closed."

During the reign of John II Komnenos, the Byzantine literati "opened" the lost space for the imperial expansion. They formed the arsenal of topoi to describe the borderland. Theodore Prodromos transformed the lost Roman provinces of the "East" into the "Holy Land" and "Persia" to be reconquered by John-Joshua and Manuel-Alexander. Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos agreed on the necessity to control the Anatolian roads but voiced different opinions about the integration of the Turks, who inhabited the landscape. While Prodromos

⁴¹² Vryonis, *The Decline*, 415.

praised the alliance of the Turks as the “guard-dogs of the state” under the imperial gaze of hillfort, Anna Komnene opted for very selective integration, Christianization, border control and total expulsion of the illegal Turks from Asia, to their place of origin in Central Asia. To secure this her father was building fortresses on river-crossings, very much like the Persian ruler of the *Synopsis Historion* guarded the towered bridge over the River Arax.

The Iberian analogies (reconquista) of modernizing terms (counter-attack) are not the best terms to describe the Byzantine strategy imagined in the Byzantine sources. Both terms describe notions that are alien to the imagined landscapes of the twelfth-century rhetoric. On contrary, the learned men of Constantinople did not imagine their emperors to be “conquerors” of “Asia,” but the “redeemers.” John II as Moses at the same time secured the hill forts and built the roads in the wilderness. What is strange is that the Byzantine emperors did not care about the “spiritual side” of the landscape and did not build churches. According to the surviving court rhetoric and historical narratives, the Komnenoi invested in roads and hillforts, that allowed them to pass safely through the Asia Minor. At the same time they did not aim to annihilate or enslave the Turks who lived in the landscape. Panegyrics of Prodhomos turned Asia into the wilderness of *Digenis Akritis*, a hunting park where the Turks played the role of epic beasts.⁴¹³

In the good Roman tradition, the Komnenian landscape was “the series of transactions between the writer and the reader with the exclusion of the subject.”⁴¹⁴ In the *Grottaferrata Digenis Akritis* the ideal landscape did not include the Turks, because ideally they should not be there. The twelfth-century version of the epic barely mentioned Persians – and this is hardly a coincidence. Yet at the same time, the author of *Digenis* and Theodore Prodhomos constructed a new landscape, a landscape of imperial expansion, which was, in Galatariotou terminology “an open space.”

An attempt to neglect the Turks did not work well. The 1170s saw a drastic change in the Byzantine politics of Asia Minor. *The Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion* (1175) was the

⁴¹³ For the earlier analogues see L. Andriollo, Il “De Creta capta” di Teodosio Diacono fra epos storico ed encomio imperiale, *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neellenici* 47 (2011), 31-56.

⁴¹⁴ G. Woolf, “Ethnography and Gods in Tacitus’ Germania” in *Ancient Ethnography: New Approaches*, ed. E. Almagor, J. Skinner (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 131-152.

mimesis of the Prodronian landscape construction, which still used the old *topos* of the imperial hunt but pointed to the new elements in the imperial agenda, namely to the economic exploitation that did not stimulate the sharing of the space between the Byzantines and the Turks. In the letters that followed the battle at Myriokephalon (1176), Manuel Komnenos recognized his inability to master the space of Asia Minor divided between the Persians and the Turks. Very much like the collective label “Persians” was the standard term for the Seljuks of Ikonion, the geographic label “Persia” in court rhetoric became the standard term for the part of Asia Minor under the Seljuk rule..⁴¹⁵

The failure at Myriokephalon (1176) led to the formation of “new closed space” in the imagined landscape of Komnenian rhetoric. Byzantine fortresses and the former Byzantine cities under control of the Seljuk potentates. The native of Chonae Niketas Choniates deconstructed the Komnenian language of the Constantinopolitan domination in his *Historia*. According to Choniates, only John Komnenos hold some control over the Roman space divided between the Turks and the Persians. Manuel Komnenos struggled for Anatolian space with the Turks and Saracens, but failed. In the very end of History, Niketas Choniates described sultan Kay Khusraw of Ikonion as the master of the Anatolian hinterland, who attracted sympathies of the inhabitants of Meander valley. Choniates was the only Byzantine writer to contemplate about the loss of Anatolia. The contemplation became an important motive in the Palaiologan rhetoric, that also operated around “closed space”.⁴¹⁶

To sum up, the land of Turks was a dangerous place to travel. A good illustration for it is the passage the *Life of St. Cyril Phileotes*. According to the *Life*, Alexios I Komnenos came to the saint asking whether he should start another expedition against the Turks. “When the Lord will enhance your thinking, you will depart at the right time, and the Lord will make your way straight in front of you,” – answered the saint.⁴¹⁷ This phrase from the mid-twelfth century *vita* demonstrates the difficulties that the Byzantine emperors experienced while planning their

⁴¹⁵ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 40-41.

⁴¹⁶ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 410-412.

⁴¹⁷ Nikolas Kataskepenos, *La vie de Saint Cyrille le Philéote moine byzantin*, ed. É. Sargologos (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1964), 51, lines 10-12.

expeditions against the Turks. The rulers of Constantinople struggled to control the space and place of the Turks, but did not achieve much success in their limits offences. Simultaneously, the landscape of controlled communication that Komnenian emperors created in Bythinia and Meander valley stood against the Turks well into the fourteenth century.. At the same time, the stabilization of the borders did not prevent the decline of the imagined space.

The rhetorical *oikoumene* shrank. At the end of the eleventh century, the eastern borders of the imagined universe were at Arax and India while at the end of the twelfth, they were at the Meander. The space on the other side of the border did not exist for the Byzantines. Educated people from Constantinople turned a blind eye on the new construction of the sultans of Ikonion, be it the mosque of Aksaray or the caravan-saray on the way between Aksaray and Ikonion.⁴¹⁸ At the same time the Byzantine literati described in details the masters of Aksaray and Ikonion, satraps and sultans of Asia Minor. They are the object of the next chapter.



⁴¹⁸See O. Pancaroğlu, “Aksaray”, In: *EI III*. Accessed at http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/aksaray-COM_23747?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=Aksaray (Last Accessed 15.07.2016).

CHAPTER IV. The Persian Authority

“So much about the Sultans” wrote Anna Komnene in the end of the story about the struggle for power in the sultanate of the Great Seljuk after the death of sultan Malikshāh I (1082- 1092).⁴¹⁹ Daughter of Alexios I Komnenos informed her readers that the great sultan [Malikshāh I of the Great Seljuks] was killed by the bloodthirsty Hasii [Assassins] sent by his brother Tutush.”⁴²⁰ On the arrival they found him drunk “so they approached him, and drawing their swords from under their arm, in one moment dismembered the weak man,” wrote Anna Komnene in book VI of the *Alexiad*.⁴²¹

What matters is precisely the interest which Anna Komnene demonstrated in the figures of authority among the Great Seljuks some fifty years later after the death of Malikshāh I.⁴²² She was not the only author of the Eastern Mediterranean to demonstrate such interest. The Great Seljuks introduced to the Mediterranean world the new system of power, that was based not on the sacral power of caliph, but on the institute of sultanate.⁴²³ The first sultan to be was probably Mahmoud of Ghazna mentioned by John Skylitzes. To enjoy the same status Tughril Beg of the Great Seljuks organized the procedure that provided the legal ground for the new status.⁴²⁴ According to Peacock, Tughril Beg organized his state in accordance with the Persianized customs, balancing the power between the military leaders, *amīrs* and the educated literati

⁴¹⁹ For the detailed overview of the Malikshāh’s reign see the monograph of A. C. S. Peacock. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 197, line 58; A. C. S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 58-65.

⁴²⁰ Anna Komnene is partly right. Ismaili played the important role in the Seljuk states of the Near East and fought the Great Seljuks with notable persistence. On the economic basis of this movement see a short case study of David Durand-Guedy. David Durand- Guedy, “An Emblematic Family of Seljuq Iran: The Khujanids of Isfahan,” in *The Seljuqs: Politics, Society and Culture*, ed. C. Lange and S. Mecit, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 194-196; Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 87-89

⁴²¹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, Ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 196, lines 10-16.

⁴²² For the detailed discussion on deaths of Malikshāh and Nizam al-Mulk see G.E.Tetley, *The Ghaznavids and The Seljuq Turks: Poetry as a Source for Iranian History* (London:Routledge, 2009), 123-125.

⁴²³ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 124-135.

⁴²⁴ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 164-165.

headed by vizier. The eventual success of the Great Seljuks secured the export of this system to the “western territories” of sultanate. After the death of grandson of Tughril Beg, sultan Malikshāh (that was described above), the sultanate of the Great Seljuks fell into many domains, that were ruled by the individual princes. When the prince was not of age, he was under the control of the experienced military commander, named *atābak* or atabeg.⁴²⁵ Both institutions were new both to the Eastern Mediterranean and to the Byzantium and did not have many analogues in the traditions of the caliphate. The Turks of Asia Minor, who claimed the throne of the Great Seljuks, preserved the institutional framework of the Great Seljuks.⁴²⁶ This, in a sense, forced the Byzantine literati of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to coin the new terms to describe the institutions.

This subchapter deals with the sultan of the *Alexiad* as well as with many other figures of authority among the Seljuk Turks, the many sultans that Anna mentioned in her biased and colorful story. The Modern English word “authority” (coming from Latin *auctoritas*) seems appropriate, because it denotes “the right or ability to control”.⁴²⁷ To express the relations of submission and control, the Byzantine literati used the verb “ἄρχω” with many different prefixes and many other verbs as well.⁴²⁸ To define the Seljuk figures of power they also employed the terms from the works of the Classical and Early Byzantine authors. These figures of authority were mostly rulers of different level, starting from top (“the great sultan”) and to the bottom (φύλαρχος, the tribal chief).⁴²⁹ It is important to note that the system of power amongst the “real” Seljuk Turks was complex and multi-polar, whether the Byzantines liked it or not.⁴³⁰ Their collective leadership took many different forms during the period in question and was evolving

⁴²⁵ See A. Levanioni, “Atabeg” in *EI III*.

http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/atabak-atabeg-COM_23689?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=atabak

Last Accessed 30.05.2016.

⁴²⁶ Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 100-103.

⁴²⁷ *The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 74.

⁴²⁸ The term was used both for the control of the people and for the control of the territory.

⁴²⁹ Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 33.

⁴³⁰ For the recent assessment of the problem see A.C. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation*, 47-72.

in parallel with the evolving Byzantine discourse on the Seljuk Turks. This discourse in turn did not depend solely on the changes in the Seljuk leadership, but reflected them in a way that suited this or that author.

This chapter will investigate and list many different names that the Byzantine literati invented, concocted and constructed for the Seljuk Turks. Some 70 years ago Gyula Moravcsik made the first contribution to the study of the authority among the Seljuks with his *Byzantinoturcica*. He compiled the list of all the terms that Byzantine authors used to denote the figures of the authority among the Seljuk Turks and deciphered some of them. In the 1970s Speros Vryonis Jr simply ignored the image of the Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine imagination in his book, using the twelfth-century sources at face value.⁴³¹ In her article on the perception of nomads in Byzantium Helene Ahrweiler addressed the problem of “nomadic barbarity” but ignored the problem of “barbarian authority”.⁴³² Same is true for the modern scholars who usually pass the topic without a single reference.

The situation changed with the late introduction of the “linguistic turn” to the Byzantine Studies. In his book on the *Byzantine republic* Anthony Kaldellis argued that Byzantine naming of the Turks in the twelfth century (“the Persians”) contained in itself the Byzantine perception of the Seljuk authority. According to Kaldellis, the Byzantine *literati* of the twelfth century perceived the Seljuk Turks as “oriental despots” and projected on them the views borrowed from Herodotus.⁴³³ Rustam Shukurov more recently argued that the names and titles depended much on the imagined geography that classified the people to the north-east of Persia as the Huns.⁴³⁴ He also stated that long before the Seljuk Turks the Byzantines imagined the people of the Caspian Steppes as the Northern “barbarians” and close relatives of the Scythians. Finally,

⁴³¹ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 25-31.

⁴³² H. Ahrweiler, “Byzantine concept of the foreigner: The case of Nomads” in *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, ed. H. Ahrweiler and A. Laiou (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1-15.

⁴³³ Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 115.

⁴³⁴ Rustam Shukurov, “The Byzantine classification of the Turks: Archaization or Academic Traditionalism” in *ΦΙΛΟΠΛΑΤΩΝ. Festschrift Für Arne Effenberger zum 70. Geburtstag* (Mainz: Verlag des Römisch-Germanisch Zentralmuseums, 2012), 273-296.

Alexander Beihammer stated that the Byzantine perception of the Seljuk Turks was influenced by the Byzantine perception of the Arabs.⁴³⁵

In this chapter I will investigate how the Byzantine literati of the Komnenian age had used these models as well as other available data from the works of their predecessors to discuss the authority of the Seljuk Turks. Like the previous chapter on “Space and Place” of the Turks, this one will be organized in chronological order. It will start the investigation from Psellos, continue to the study on the image of authority in the works of Michael Attaleiates, John Skylitzes and other eleventh-century sources, speculate on the absence of the Seljuk authority in the Byzantine poetry of the Alexian era, and trace the re-birth (or re-construction) of the imagined Seljuk authority in the works of Anna and Prodhomos. The chapter will end with the analysis of the image of Seljuk authority in works of John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates. In the end, the chapter will analyze an important *topos* (the drunk Persians) and finally make the small note about the presence of Persian women in the Byzantine rhetoric. As chapter 2 argued, the first person to describe the authority of the Persians was Michael Psellos.

1. Enter the sultan: How Byzantine Literati Defined the Ruler of the Turks

Michael Psellos participated in the Byzantine-Seljuk dialog as a diplomat. In a letter to the sultan of Great Seljuks Malikshāh I (1072-1092) he wrote a short confession of the Christian Faith.⁴³⁶ According to the title, Psellos prepared this confession as a letter Byzantine officials, probably speaking on behalf of the emperor, calls the sultan “his most-beloved son”.⁴³⁷ This short letter links the rhetorical exercise of Psellos with the Byzantine tradition of “spiritual adoption” of foreign rulers by the emperors. This tradition will play certain role in the twelfth

⁴³⁵ Alexander Beihammer, “Orthodoxy and Religious Antagonism,” 4-25.

⁴³⁶ Helene Antoniadis-Bibicou, “Un aspect des Relations Byzantino-Turques in 1073-1074,” in *Actes du XIIe Congrès des études byzantines*, vol. 2 (Belgrade: 1964), 15-25.

⁴³⁷ For spiritual family in the tenth and the eleventh centuries see Franz Dölger, “Die Bulgarenherrscher als geistlicher Son des byzantinische Kaisers,” in *Recueil dédié à la mémoire du prof. Peter Nikov* (Sofia: 1940), 224-225; Magdalino, *The Empire*, 52-54.

century.

In *Chronographia* (all in the year 1078) Psellos disclosed some information on Seljuk figures of power. As far as we can judge, it was Michael Psellos who introduced to Byzantine rhetoric term “sultan”.⁴³⁸ In 1061 a prominent general and the commander of the army of the East Isaak Komnenos marched to Constantinople and captured the throne. Psellos was one of the negotiators between the previous emperor and new pretender. Describing the reign of Isaak in 1078, Psellos wrote about “Parthian sultan” who did not cause any trouble in the short period between 1057 and 1059.⁴³⁹

According to all commentators, Psellos wrote about the sultan of the Great Seljuks, who at that time was Tughril Beg (1037-1063).⁴⁴⁰ There is no definition of the new title.⁴⁴¹ This “sultan” is not the sultan “of Turks” or “of Persians”, but is a ruler of the certain land, namely Parthia.⁴⁴² The next phrase helps because it speaks about a “man holding power in Egypt”. This man became afraid of Isaak Komnenos and sent him letters “bewailing in flattering”.

Psellos used the image of “sultan” to highlight certain positive moments in the short reign

⁴³⁸ Arabic term “sultan” (سلطان *Sulṭān*) initially was not a title but an abstract noun meaning “power” and “strength”. According to the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., authors used this term already in the epoch of the late Abbasid caliphate. After the decline of the caliphate the term achieved a different meaning and started to denote a Muslim ruler who accepted religious supremacy of Caliph but was more or less independent in all other actions. Predecessors of Turks in Asia Minor, the Ghaznavids, used the term so the Great Seljuks inherited it from them.

⁴³⁹ Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, 237, lines 6-10: ὁ δὲ γε Πάρθος σουλτάν, ὃς δὴ κινήσαι πάντα τετόλμηκε, μικροῦ δεῖν τοῖς ἀναποδισμοῖς χρώμενος καὶ μηδαμοῦ στηρίζων, μηδὲ τινα ἐπέχων σταθμὸν, ὕπανγός τε τὸ παραδοξότα τον ἐγγέγονει καὶ οὐδενὶ τῶν πάντων ἐδείκνυτο.

⁴⁴⁰ Tughril Beg received the title of “sultan” (ruler) from caliph of Baghdad four years before Isaak Komnenos marched to Constantinople. Unfortunately it is not possible to say whether Byzantines called him sultan in 1050s – *Chronographia* was composed some 20 years later. See Cahen, *Formation*, 5.

⁴⁴¹ First appearance of the term noted by Moravcsik. See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 286-287.

⁴⁴² It is not clear whether Psellos introduced the term here to say that the Seljuks are powerful or to say that they are simply barbarians from the East. Some century before Psellos Constantine Porphyrogenitus used it widely to define the state of Arshakids and called the ruler of this land “king”. Psellos knew about the rich ancient connotations of this word – but used it in the two poems in the lists of barbarian peoples of the East together with “the Persians, the Arabs, the Skythians, the Medes”. See Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Excerpta historica iussu imp. Constantini Porphyrogeniti confecta*, vol. 2: excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis, ed. T. Büttner-Wobst and A.G. Roos, vol.2 (Berlin:Weibner, 1910), 393, line 9; Michael Psellos, *Michaelis Pselli poemata*, ed. D. Westerlink (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1992): 67, line 294.

of Isaak Komnenos.⁴⁴³ External policy was successful, because aggressive neighbors were afraid of the empire. Thus from the very beginning the “Parthian sultan” is a part of the panegyric construction. At the same time Psellos completely ignores the military failure of the empire in the East. In 1057 the real “sultan of Parthia” Toghril Beg was conquering land of the Near East, while his subordinates plundered Byzantine cities of Eastern Asia Minor.⁴⁴⁴

Second mention of the term sultan is a part of a certain rhetorical device. In the part of *Chronographia* that dates back to 1071 Psellos noted that there was the only one who realized the danger of the sultan “of Pertians and Courtians.”⁴⁴⁵ Psellos explained the term: sultan equals king. Secondly, sultan is not king of the land, but king of the people: Persians and Kourtians. The term “Persians” immediately sends the reader to the classical context. The background of “Kourtians” is more problematic. Only Skylitzes and Leo the Wise used this *ethnikon* once and I doubt that it had any special meaning for Psellos' audience. In my opinion one should read the title either as a translation of the real title of the Seljuk sultan in diplomatic documents or as the “king of Persians and another nation of the East”.⁴⁴⁶

The key to Psellos' description (as in previous case) lies in the *Chronographia* itself. The title of the Seljuk ruler – the “king of Persians and Kourtians” – is similar to the “emperor of the Romans” who at that time was Romanos Diogenes.⁴⁴⁷ Later in the very same phrase, Psellos concocted background for the comparison of the two rulers: he stated that sultan gathered an army. This was exactly the problem that Romanos Diogenes tried to solve in 1071.⁴⁴⁸ He wanted to gather all-thematic armies but did not manage to do so. Psellos reported the result of the meeting of two warlike rulers in the field some paragraphs later. As one can expect, this result is

⁴⁴³ For other positive overtones in Psellos' description of Isaak see Anthony Littlewood, “Imagery in Chronographia of Michael Psellos” in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. C. Barber and D. Jenkins (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 32-33.

⁴⁴⁴ Vryonis, *Decline*, 87-88; Cahen, *Formation*, 5-6.

⁴⁴⁵ Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, , 270, line 12-5.

⁴⁴⁶ The Kurds as the ethnic entity were subordinates of the Ghaznavids and had played an important role in the establishment of the Great Seljuks in Eastern Iran. See G.E. Tetley, *The Ghaznavids and The Seljuq Turks: Poetry as a Source for Iranian History*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 181.

⁴⁴⁷ For Psellos' image of Romanos see Dimitry Krallis, “Attaleiates as the reader of Psellos,” in *Reading Michael Psellos*, ed. C. Barber and D. Jenkins (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 167-193.

⁴⁴⁸ See Vryonis, *The Decline*, 55.

completely opposite to the previous case of interaction between the emperor and the sultan. During the reign of Isaak Komnenos the sultan stopped his incursions, while during the reign of Romanos Diogenes the sultan (who is never mentioned by name) destroyed Byzantine army and captured the emperor.

There is one link that connects the few phrases in the *Chronographia* and poetry with the rhetoric on the other side of the story, namely with the titles which the sultans of the Great Seljuks used in their official inscriptions. From the 1060s onwards, these titles did include an “ethnic component.” The inscriptions of Alp Arslān which he installed in the conquered fortress in the Eastern Asia Minor labelled him explicitly as “the sultan of the Arabs and the Persians.”⁴⁴⁹ The title was probably present in the official documents that the sultan of the Great Seljuks sent to Constantinople. Thanks to the preserving text, we know that Psellos was at least once charged with the composition of answer to the letter sent by the sultan of the Great Seljuks.⁴⁵⁰ This allows one to hypothesize that he had access to the diplomatic documents in translation and used his partial and biased readings to concoct the titles for the sultans he used in his main work. This allows one to read Psellos’ labeling of the sultans as the combination of classicizing influence and some factors which could be connected with the message exchange between Constantinople and the moving capital of the Great Seljuks.

Michael Psellos had used two images of two different sultans to pursue his aims. The image of the sultan in the *Chronographia* tells one more about Psellos and his likes and dislikes of Isaak Komnenos and Romanos Diogenes than about the actual sultans. Yet in the *Chronographia* Psellos spelled out this title. His probable pupil Michael Attaleiates made a different explanation some ten years after Psellos finished his work.

The anonymous “sultan” of *Historia* is the key antagonist of Michael Attaleiates.⁴⁵¹ Attaleiates did not provide any specification at that point and did not name this character. In my

⁴⁴⁹ *RHEA*, vol. 7, 264-265.

⁴⁵⁰ Hélène Antoniadis-Bibicou, “Un aspect des Relations Byzantino-Turques in 1073-1074,” in *Actes du XIIe Congrès des études byzantines*, vol. 2 (Belgrade: 1964), 15-25.

⁴⁵¹ Attaleiates used this term both for Tughril Beg (1038-1063) and his son Alp-Arslan (1063-1072)

opinion, the absence of name is deliberate.⁴⁵² Attaleiates in his picture of a disaster depicted a generalized image of a foreign ruler. This is something like the Lesser Prince or Mongol Khan in Tarkovsky's "Andrey Rublev": these two characters do not have names because they mostly resemble masks.

The first description is not very favorable to the sultan. According to Attaleiates, the sultan was a chieftain of servile background and became the master of Persia when he crossed the river.⁴⁵³ His subordinates were the "Nephthalite Huns, neighbors of the Persians". As I argued above, the probably comes from Strategikon of Maurice. The *Strategikon* does not say much about the enemy ruler.

Next piece of narrative is even more impersonal than before. "Chieftain" disappears and for a while anonymous "them" win over Byzantine villages, estates and communities. According to Attaleiates this all happened because of Monomachos' greed (πλεονεξία): the emperor disbanded soldiers guarding this region.⁴⁵⁴ After a fierce battle the "Huns" capture Liparites alive and bring him to "ethnarch (who) is called in Persian language sultan".⁴⁵⁵ As is the case with Psellos, Michael Attaleiates explained the new term to the reader with the help of other, more familiar words. Psellos equaled the sultan to the king (σουλτάν, ὁ τῶν Περσῶν ἢ Κούρτων βασιλεὺς), while Attaleiates equaled the same title to "ethnarch" (τὸν ἐθνάρχην αὐτῶν... καλεῖται δ' οὗτος σουλτάνος τῇ Περσικῇ διαλέκτῳ).

In the story of Liparites the sultan appeared in a positive light. He let Liparites go procuring him with many gifts and honors. Byzantine emperor had to compete with the sultan and "adorned Liparites with "public honors and presents". This small scene plays a substantial role in the *Kaiserkritik* pointed against the Byzantine emperor.⁴⁵⁶ Constantine Monomachos

⁴⁵² For the absence of name as Michael Attaleiates' method of *damnatio memoriae* see Krallis, "Attaleiates as the reader of Psellos"

⁴⁵³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 35, lines 19-30.

⁴⁵⁴ Attaleiates uses here word "πολιτεία" in a meaning of "polity", "group of settlements" which I translate as "community".

⁴⁵⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 36, lines 20-21: "καὶ πρὸς τὸν ἐθνάρχην αὐτῶν... καλεῖται δ' οὗτος σουλτάνος τῇ Περσικῇ διαλέκτῳ."

⁴⁵⁶ See. F. Tinnefeld, *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik*, 136-143.

demonstrated “πλεονεξία” while his opponent gave away presents and honors “freely” forcing Monomachos to compete with him. The story of Liparites is *prolepsis* for the one of the high points of the narrative, namely to the battle of Manzikert, where one will see again the reasons for competitiveness between the two rulers, the sultan and the emperor.

In the following chapter of *Historia* the sultan acts as a military manager. He is “leading the irresistible army” or “dispatching a contingent”, but not managing provinces or appointing governors.⁴⁵⁷ In the next episode dealing with the figures of authority Michael Attaleiates described the betrayal of an anonymous Seljuk leader, “the supreme general of Huns”.⁴⁵⁸ As we know from later sources, this was Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos.⁴⁵⁹

In the scene of Manzikert Attaleiates introduced the sultan to his reader again, stating that he was the “chief of the Persians, whom they call sultan in their language”.⁴⁶⁰ This is the repetition of the first definition, and I suspect there either a failure of proper editing (Attaleiates wrote two pieces of *Historia* separately and forgot to cancel the repetitive definition), or a conscious reference to the earlier story. In the very scene of the battle Attaleiates described sultan as a successful military manager. In the battle with Liparites (see above) sultan was absent and his role was rather passive. According to Attaleiates, sultan played a significant role at Mantzikert and (with a help of an anonymous Turk) ordered an attack which resulted in the capture of Romanos IV Diogenes. In the following description of the Turkish camp Attaleiates portrayed the enemies in a positive way, starting with double negations that reminds one of the apophatic theology.⁴⁶¹

To support his opinion, Michael Attaleiates inserted into the description of Manzikert

⁴⁵⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 79, line 17, 82, line 21.

⁴⁵⁸ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 110, line 11: ἡ στρατάρχης τῶν Οὐννων.

⁴⁵⁹ For Erisgen see A.C.S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 54-55; A. Peacock, “Nomadic politics and the foundation of the Seljuk Rule in Anatolia” in *Nomad Aristocrats in the World of Empires*, ed. J. Paul (Wisbaden: Doktor Ludwig Reichart Verlag, 2013), 66-68.

⁴⁶⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 115, lines 16-18: ὁ τῶν Περσῶν ἀρχηγὸς (σουλτάνον οἶδε τοῦτον ἢ ἐκεῖνων καλεῖν φωνή).

⁴⁶¹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 126, line 5 – 127, line 4.

another portion *Kaiserkritik* against Romanos Diogenes.⁴⁶² Michael Attaleiates formulated his critical thoughts in the form of the dialog that happened between Romanos and “sultan” after the capture.⁴⁶³ The Byzantine writer tells how captured imperial soldiers recognized Romanos. Attaleiates completely omitted the scene of *proskynesis* of the emperor in front of the sultan, which is reported by many other sources.⁴⁶⁴ Attaleiates also highlighted friendliness of the anonymous sultan, who consoles his prisoner with the following words

Do not fear o emperor that you will suffer bodily punishment. You will instead be honoured in a manner worthy of your high station. For a man would be foolish if he did not fear that sudden change of fortune would reverse the situation.⁴⁶⁵

After the dialog, Romanos and the sultan sat on equal chairs and “shared the same honors”. Thus, Attaleiates put a sign of equality between the sultan and the emperor: the sultan is the “emperor” of Seljuk Turks. This symbolic equality proved to be very influential in the Byzantine rhetoric of the period. Following Psellos and Attaleiates, the literati of the eleventh and twelfth centuries searched for a “single ruler” of the Seljuk Turks whom they adapted to the rhetorical standards of the day. Only some fifty years after Attaleiates Theodore Prodromos and Anna Komnene introduced into the rhetoric the Byzantine rendering of the “shared authority” among the Seljuk Turks that reflected the actual state of affairs among the many Turkic conglomerates of Asia Minor.⁴⁶⁶

According to Attaleiates, the sultan “unintentionally carried out divine law due to his natural good disposition”, both being the essential features of an ideal emperor. Thus Attaleiates

⁴⁶² This *Kaiserkritik* might be connected with the conflicting loyalties of Attaleiates that Dimitri Krallis had analyzed in his work. See. Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates and the Politics of Imperial Decline*, 36-38

⁴⁶³ I think that Attaleiates was not present at Seljuk camp near Manzikert but had an informant among closest servants of Romanos who accompanied him in captivity, and was present at many ceremonies there.

⁴⁶⁴ See C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol*, 29-33.

⁴⁶⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 127, lines 10-14 (tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 299): μη δέδιθι” ἔφη, “ὦ βασιλεῦ, ἄλλ’ εὐέλπεις ἔσο πρὸ πάντων, ὥς οὐδενὶ προσομιλήσεις κινδύνῳ σωματικῷ, τιμηθήσῃ δ’ ἀξίως τῆς τοῦ κράτους ὑπεροχῆς. ἄφρων γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ μὴ τὰς ἀπροόπτους τοὺς ὑπεροχῆς. ἄφρων γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ μὴ τὰς ἀπροόπτους τύχας ἐξ ἀντεπιφορᾶς εὐλαβούμενος.

⁴⁶⁶ Holmes formulated this problem as the “multiplicity of leaders”. See C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 539.

introduced a theological perspective to the narrative.⁴⁶⁷ According to *Historia*, the sultan is a weapon of the Lord because God shows no partiality for individuals. To support his thesis, the Byzantine writer introduces another dialog between the emperor and the sultan:

In one of their talks the sultan asked the emperor: “What you would do if you yourself would have me in your hands?” Without any flattery the other one [Romanos Diogenes - RS] answered him: “I would subject your body to many tortures”. The Sultan answered “But I won’t imitate your severity and harshness.”⁴⁶⁸

In this invented dialog there is a motif of competition between the sultan and the emperor. As in the scene of Liparites, the sultan is the winner. Here Attaleiates provides Diogenes with a positive characteristic, but it does not compensate for his faults. Through the mouth of the sultan loyal Attaleiates stated that his ruler was “severe” and “harsh”.

After eight days of communication the sultan and emperor made treaty, agreed to the marriage of their children and parted after a handshake.⁴⁶⁹ The aim of this invention is not only in *Kaiserkritik* but also in criticism against the Byzantine society and elite. The sultan held himself better than Doukai and their anonymous subordinates who captured Romanos Diogenes and blinded him a year after the battle. Later in *Historia* Attaleiates described this blinding and mentioned that the sultan “made Romanos sit on the same throne, applying to him words of consolation, proving to be humane and revealing such depth of prudence”.⁴⁷⁰ The elusive equality here is the weapon of *Kaiserkritik*, that was “personal” aimed this time against Michael VII Doukas.⁴⁷¹ The image of the noble sultan is a weapon of *Kaiserkritik* and a mirror to the

⁴⁶⁷ The Muslim subjects of Alp Arslān noted his piety. This was likely to be propagandistic, but the presence of the notion both in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and in the Seljuk Chronicles is interesting here. See Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 55-56.

⁴⁶⁸ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 128, lines 4-8 (tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 301) καὶ γὰρ ἔν τινι συλλόγῳ διερωτήσαντος τοῦ σουλτάνου τὸν βασιλέα “τί ἂν ἔδρασας εἰ οὕτως ἔσχεας αὐτὸς ἐμὲ ὑποχείριον;” ἀνυποκρίτως καὶ ἀθωπεύτως ἐκεῖνος ἀπήγγειλεν “ὅτι πολλαῖς ταῖς πληγαῖς κατεδαπάνησά σου τὸ σῶμα γίνωσκε.” ὁ δὲ “ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ” φησὶν “οὐ μιμήσομαί σου τὸ αὐστηρὸν καὶ ἀπότομον.

⁴⁶⁹ This puts forwards a question about proportion of pure literary invention and some reality behind the episode: I thank professor Ruth Macrides who helped me to formulate it.

⁴⁷⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 127, lines 14-17: μὴ παρὰ μέρος καθίσας αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ σύνθρονον ἐν εὐθύτῃ τῆς ἐκκρίτου τάξεως καὶ ὁμόδοξον κατὰ τὴν τιμὴν ποιησάμενος.

⁴⁷¹ Krallis, *Michael Attaleiates*, 93.

many imperfect Byzantine rulers of *Historia*.

The image of sultan of authority in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates played the integral role in the development of Byzantine rhetoric on this matter. Attaleiates was the first writer to articulate the difference between the simple “Turks” as an entity of raiders and the powerful “Huns”.⁴⁷² Michael Attaleiates constructed the chain of the successive prolepses (Battle with Liparites – Manzikert – Blinding of Romanos Diogenes) that ultimately proved the moral failure of Byzantine state in general and Doukai in particular.

“The sultan” is the key element in every single link of this chain. He is not the “enemy leader”, but an exemplary good barbarian and the providential weapon of the Lord. Attaleiates uses this character three times to criticize first the greed of Constantine Monomachos, then the harshness of Romanos Diogenes, and finally the cruelty of Doukai. In *Historia* sultan as a ruler looks similar to the Byzantine emperor. His relatives and subordinates plot against him. In the final panegyric part of the book, Michael Attaleiates mentioned another group of Seljuk notables – sons of Qutalmish, “who were contending for the power of the sultan”.⁴⁷³ Thus, one could contend for the position of the sultan. The word choice here is important: Byzantine author portrayed Seljuk power structure as an analogue to the structure of Byzantine aristocracy, where the key term in this age is *genos*.⁴⁷⁴ Another person who was interested in the Seljuk *genos* was a contemporary of Attaleiates, John Skylitzes.

Skylitzes introduced the Seljuk Turks to his reader in the description of the reign of Constantine Monomachos. According to *Synopsis*, they lived next to Caucasian mountains and are “many in number and independent”.⁴⁷⁵ Mohammed, leader of Arabic fraction, sent an embassy to an anonymous “leader of Tourkia” (ἄρχόν), who sent to Persia auxiliary troops with

⁴⁷² If we are to believe A.C.S. Peacock, the Arab chroniclers of the age made the same differentiation between “organized” Turks (Turkmen) and “disorganized” Turks (Ghuzz), labelling with ethically connotated terms. See Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: A New Interpretation*, 54-55.

⁴⁷³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 130, lines 20-23.

⁴⁷⁴ For the importance of *genos* as a social and family structure see Magdalino, “Honor among the Romaioi.”

⁴⁷⁵ I searched for other cases, when this author used this term but did not find any connections with νομος. This means “independent”. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 442, lines 89-90.

Tangrolipex Moukalet as their chieftain (ἀρχηγός).⁴⁷⁶ Tangrolipeks Moukalet is Rukn al-Dunya wa al-Din Abu Talib Muhammad Ṭughril Beg bin Mik'ail.⁴⁷⁷ Breaking the tradition of Attaleiates and Psellos, John Skylitzes (or his source) did not leave the sultan anonymous and gave him the name based on the rough reading of Arabic/Persian original.⁴⁷⁸

According to Skylitzes, Tangrolipex fought with Mohammed, Tangrolipex crossed river with the fortified bridge gathered the army from fugitives in the desert of Karbonitis and ultimately and defeated his former employer in the place called Aspacha.⁴⁷⁹ After the victory, Tangrolipex “proclaimed himself king of Persia”.⁴⁸⁰

Later Tangrolipex opened border of Persia to the Turks who “became lords of Persia, calling him sultan, so king of kings and pantokrator”. This combination is unique and there is a need to explain it. The real Ṭughril Beg had the title of *malik al-muluk* that one can translate as the “king of kings”.⁴⁸¹ Similarly to the personal name, the title used by Skylitzes might be the Byzantine rendering of the original title that made even more sense to the Skylitzes readers, because (as it was mentioned above) the current “sultan” in the 1190s was Malikshāh, who stylized himself as “Kings of Arabs and Persians” and was effectively, Persian, for the Byzantines. To complicate things further, the whole procedure of sultan-making looks suspiciously similar to the Byzantine ceremony of the imperial proclamation.⁴⁸²

With this description Skylitzes had raised the status of Tangrolipex and made him equal

⁴⁷⁶ Note that this is *archon* of the country not the ruler of people. John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 443, lines 7-11.

⁴⁷⁷ See relevant article in *EI* II; Catherine Holmes notes that Skylitzes tends to emphasize the family names and the pedigree of his characters. See Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire*, 189.

⁴⁷⁸ Taking into account that all the consonants are the same but the vowels are different it is reasonable to propose that the intermediary language was Arabic. See Alexander Beihammer, “Strategies of Identification and Distinction in the Byzantine Discourse on the Seljuk Turks,” 501-503.

⁴⁷⁹ According to O. Apanovich, the Aspaha might be the Byzantine rendering of Isfahan. The Seljuk Turks under Ṭughril Beg had fought their battles against the Ghaznavids in the semi-deserts of Transoxiana. For the analysis of one of those battles near Nisa (which may or may not be the source of Karbonitis) see A.C.S. Peacock, *The Early Seljuk History: A New Interpretation*, 75-78.

⁴⁸⁰ John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 445, lines 62-63: καὶ ὁ Ταγγρολίπηξ ὑπὸ πάντων ἀναγορεύεται βασιλεὺς τῆς Περσίδος.

⁴⁸¹ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 41.

⁴⁸² For the importance of proclamation see Kaldellis, *Byzantine Republic*, 136.

to the Byzantine emperors. In a few lines Skylitzes depicted the rise of Tangrolipex from the lesser military commander to the supreme ruler: the chieftain -> the king -> the king of kings. The real Toghril Beg also gradually ascended himself raised from the rank of amir to the rank of the sultan.⁴⁸³ Biography of Tangrolipex in *Synopsis* looks suspiciously familiar (at least in some points) to the biography of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118).⁴⁸⁴ Both started their career as military commanders, both achieved significant victory over enemies, and then reached the highest rank in hierarchy.⁴⁸⁵ One can hypothesize that the double name of the Seljuk leader is the analogue of Byzantine clan label. Skylitzes stopped to call Tangrolipex Moukalet by his personal name after the latter became sultan. Skylitzes had used the similar pattern of naming for the Byzantine emperors.⁴⁸⁶ Another reason may be connected with the audience of Skylitzes. He used the data from his sources (if Shepard is correct, the source was Armenian), not to criticize the current ruler, but to explain to the courtiers of Alexios or Alexios himself, the origins of the Seljuk power and the might of the sultanate.

Besides explanations, John Skylitzes was the first Byzantine literatus who provided his readers with rather detailed information about the clan systems of the Seljuk Turks. Aside from the sultan Skylitzes mentioned “his nephew Asan, who is called Deaf” and his “brother in-law Abramios Alem”.⁴⁸⁷ Before Skylitzes nobody mentioned a Turk bearing the Biblical (if not Christian) names. Appointment of generals according to the family relations with the emperor looks very Komnenian.⁴⁸⁸ Another detail in the Seljuk narrative of *Synopsis* may point to the time of the writing. The Seljuk rebel general (ἀρχηγός) Koutlumousios (Sulaiman ibn

⁴⁸³ For this see Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 164-165.

⁴⁸⁴ For still relevant summary of his biography see K. Barzos, *Genealogia ton Komnenon*, vol. 1 (Thessalonica 1984), 83-118.

⁴⁸⁵ According to Beihammer, Skylitzes portrayed him as “despotic”. See Beihammer, “Orthodoxy and Religious Anthagonism”, 4.

⁴⁸⁶ During the rule of Constantine Monomachos John Skylitzes called him “Monomachos” only twice, calling him in all other cases “the emperor”.

⁴⁸⁷ John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 449, line 82.

καὶ δὴ λαὸν ἐπὶλεκτον συστησάμενος ἔκ τε Τούρκων καὶ Καβείρων καὶ Διλιμνιτῶν περὶ, καὶ Ἀβραμῖω Ἀλεῖμ τῷ ἑτεροθαλεῖ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ παραδοὺς ταύτας, κατὰ Ῥωμαίων ἐκπέμπει; G.E. Tetley, *The Ghaznavids and The Seljuk Turks*, 17-42

⁴⁸⁸ See P. Frankopan, “Kinship and Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium”, *English Historical Review* 495 (2007): 1-34; L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans*, 13-29.

Qutalmish) made the successful raid against the Byzantine provinces, rebelled against the sultan and captured a city “in the lands of Khwarazmians”.⁴⁸⁹ This behavior looks very similar to the behavior of many Byzantine nobles of the eleventh century, who started their usurpations attempts with the “organized” acclamations in the notable cities.⁴⁹⁰ One of the descendants of this Seljuk potentate, Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish was the key player in the Byzantine Asia Minor in 1080-s. Skylitzes, in his turn demonstrated, that father of Sulaiman also had been a rebel - and a serious threat to Byzantium.

To sum up, the description of sultan and his relatives in the *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes has two aims. First, it provides information. The author consciously avoids any classical references and allusions and tries to provide his audience with the data about the structure of authority in the new world power of Asia. Secondly, the medium is the message. The Skylitzes' choice of factoids allowed him to construct very specific structure of the Great Seljuk authority that reminds one about the Komnenian state with the young emperor-pretender at helm generals serving as relatives and the vicious rebels lurking in the borderlands. The Skylitzes' description is favorable to the Great Seljuks and hostile to the Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish and his followers.⁴⁹¹

One can note the same two trends in the two other descriptions, that of Psellos and Attaleiates. All three writers struggled to combine some actual information with the message for their readers. Michael Psellos avoided the term “sultan” at all, preferring to call the ruler of the Great Seljuks by the evasive title of “king.” The battle of Manzikert changed the balance of power and the “sultan” (albeit anonymous) invaded the Byzantine rhetoric to stay there for good. Michael Attaleiates used this loan-word (labeled as “Persian”) to contrast the anonymous just ruler of the Persians with the treacherous Romans. Finally, John Skylitzes provided the courtiers

⁴⁸⁹“Real” Qutalmish made his bid for power immediately after the death of Tughril Beg. Interestingly enough, one of his power bases was indeed in the regions next to Khwarazm. See Peacock, *Early Seljuq History*, 69.

⁴⁹⁰ On the role of the cities see J.C. Cheynet, *Poivoir et Contestationions*, 404-413.

⁴⁹¹ It is seductive to read the narrative of Skylitzes as the written justification for the alliance between Byzantium and the Turks but the problematic dating of Skylitzes makes this hypothesis weaker than it looks at the beginning.

of Alexios I Komnenos with the background information of the term, pointed to its Persianized roots and positioned “sultan” as the Eastern analogue of the Byzantine emperor with Persian provenance. By the end of the eleventh century, the term, new both to Byzantine literati and their Muslim counterparts, was duly borrowed by the think tanks of Constantinople and received the noble provenance of the Persians. Next generations of the literati described in the multitude of their work the system of power, that depended on the sultan. The twelfth century-rhetoric saw many sultans and even more sultans’ men

2. Introduction of the satraps in the poems of Theodore Prodromos

The Alexian rhetoric does not provide many images of the Seljuk authority. The most precise author of the period is Theophylact of Ohrid who in *Speech of 1088* wrote about “the one holding power of the Persians” and about another group of the Turks who were incorporated into the Byzantine senate.⁴⁹² The first mention speaks about the distant ruler, who knows about the Byzantine emperor by his ears and mentions him during the toast-making.⁴⁹³ The “one holding power of the Persians” is far away and does not exercise much power. At the same time, different group of the Turks are present at the Byzantine court. Theophylact credits Alexios for the conversion of the Turks into the members of the Byzantine senate and their baptism. Thus, one can speak about two group of the Turks in the *Speech of 1088* – the master of the Persia far away and the Turks nearby. Very much like in Skylitzes, one can identify the master of Persia with sultan Malik Shah of the Great Seljuks (r. 1072-1092) and the subordinate Turks with amīrs of Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish, who, after the death of the latter captured Byzantine cities in Bithynia and later had to submit to the Byzantines.⁴⁹⁴ Thanks to Skylitzes, one can note that the term “Persians” and the notion of “sultan” was associated with the Great Seljuks.

What happens in the years that separate the *Speech of 1088* and the age of John Komnenos is precisely the disappearance of the image of the “Seljuk” power from the Byzantine sources.

⁴⁹² Theophylact of Ohrid, *Speech of 1088*, 111, line 6.

⁴⁹³ The special subchapter of this chapter will discuss the wine-making in greater detail.

⁴⁹⁴ For for Bithynian Turks see Beihammer, “Defection Across the Border,” 648.

From the vague, problematic and unequivocal evidence of the Crusader chronicles, one can guess that the participants of the First Crusade had some hazy idea about the difference between the Turks of Asia Minor and the Great Seljuks. Two epistles, sent by Bohemond and Anselm to Europe from the walls of Antioch in 1097, mentioned “kingdom of Persia” and “Corboran, Prince of Persia”.⁴⁹⁵ One can hypothesize that the Crusaders borrowed the idea of the “Persian” affiliation from the Byzantines, who were their guides in the First Crusade. At the same time, they could also borrow it from the Armenians.

The changes in the rhetoric took place during the reign of Alexios. Writing in 1134, panegyrist Michael Italikos explicitly called sultan Melikshah of Ikonion (r. 1107-1116) the “king of the Persians.”⁴⁹⁶ The term used may suggest certain equality between the Byzantine emperor and the “Persian,” the old concept of two kings of the world that was hinted at in *Synopsis Historion* of John Skylitzes, introduced obviously for the panegyric reasons. Very much like in the Attaleiates’ description of Manzikert, this equality between the “emperor of the Romans” and “the king of the Persians” is illusive, because at the end of the episode Alexios I Komnenos made the “king of the Persians” his *oiketes*, member of the household.⁴⁹⁷ Later panegyrists of John II Komnenos and Manuel I Komnenos toyed with the same notion of incorporation of the Turks into Byzantine ranks.⁴⁹⁸

Whatever the reasons, the persianization of the Turkic authority in the age of Alexios lacked the scale that it achieved in the reign of his son John II Komnenos (1118-1143). Prodhomos inserted several images of the Seljuk figures of authority in the “Historical poems” that are dated from 1130s to 1140s.⁴⁹⁹ In these poems the Turks of Asia Minor are no longer Turks. They are Persians and only Persians. In contrast with Skylitzes and Attaleiates (and

⁴⁹⁵ H. Hagenemyer, *Kreuzfahrerbriefe*, 154, 159, line 15: *Corboran, princeps militae regis Persarum*

⁴⁹⁶ Michael Italikos, *Monody to Andronikos Komnenos*, 84, line 26: βασιλεί τῶν Περσῶν.

⁴⁹⁷ Michael Italikos, *Monody to Andronikos Komnenos*, 85.

⁴⁹⁸ See Theodore Prodhomos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, 305, line 384.

⁴⁹⁹ The title “Historical Poems” is modern and was given by the editor of the text. I use it to separate this corpus of similar panegyric poems from other works of the same author.

following Theophylact of Ohrid) Theodore Prodromos did not use the word “sultan” at all.⁵⁰⁰

In one of the first poems which described the troubled campaigns of John II Komnenos against the Danishmendides, Prodromos introduces a new word and calls the main antagonist Amīr Ghazi Dānishmendid (r. 1106-1138), Περσάρχης, the master of the Turks.⁵⁰¹ Among the known Byzantine literati, Prodromos was the first one to introduce it into high rhetoric.⁵⁰² He described him in the following verse: Now see, oh Persarch, the barbarian, the dog of Ismael//The power of the great Komnenian lordship!⁵⁰³

From the formal point of view Prodromos was correct: Danishmendids were not sultans. Their main leader Amīr Ghazi received the dignity of *malik* (roughly translated as “king”) from the sultan of the Great Seljuks Sanjar and the caliph of Baghdad around 1130. The *malik* was, again, the new title even in the Seljuk hierarchy of rulers and Prodromos coined for this ruler the new term.⁵⁰⁴ The epithet “dog of Ismael” may point to the connection of the Danishmendids with the religious authority of Baghdad or simply be another method of “othering”.⁵⁰⁵ This is yet another device to glorify John Komnenos who is righteous both in faith and deed. The equality or superiority of the Seljuk power over Byzantium is unthinkable. When Prodromos spelled out the name of the enemy once, he combined it with the one of the most derogatory adjectives in the Komnenian rhetoric, ἄθλιος.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁰ The only sultan in Asia Minor at the time of Prodromos’ interest was Mas‘ūd of Ikonion (1119-1145) who was under influence of Danishmendids and tried to maneuver between *malik* and emperor. Seen Cahen, *Formation*, 18-20.

⁵⁰¹ The article of Wolfram Hörandner on the “image of the Other” in poems mentions the Turks but does not analyze the image of the Seljuk authority. See W. Hörandner, “Das Bild des Anderen: Lateiner und Barbaren in der Sicht der byzantinischen Hofpoesie,” *BS* 54.1, (1993):162-169.

⁵⁰² Constantine Manasses and Theodore Doukas Laskaris later followed the example of Prodromos and used the term extensively.

⁵⁰³ Theodore Prodromos, Poem VI, ed. Hörandner, 311, lines 6-14:

Ἴδε Περσάρχα βάρβαρε, κύον Ἰσμαηλίτα,
τὸ κράτος τῆς Κομνηνικῆς μεγάλης ἐξουσίας.

⁵⁰⁴ Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. II, 254.

⁵⁰⁵ See N. Oikonomides, “Les Danishmendids entre Byzance, Baghdad et le sultanat d’Iconium,” *Revue Numismatique* 6 (1983): 179-207.

⁵⁰⁶ Anna Komnene used the same term later to depict Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks. Theodore Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*, ed. W. Hörandner, Poem IXX, 311, line 29.

Beside “Persarchs”, there are other figures of Seljuk power. First is “satrap”.⁵⁰⁷ According to Prodromos, satrap is a subject of the Persian king, who rules over some city or area. In the poem Prodromos mentioned Xerxes, the Persian king and it looks possible, that “satraps” of the twelfth century are their subordinates. In the poem VI Prodromos makes a list of captured satraps participating in the triumph of John II in Constantinople:

You see, oh Roman city your newest slaves
Observe them that you could not count,
See important satraps and chosen among them
You see Toghril from Amaseia and besides others
Alpiharos [Alp Qara] from Gangras, Amīr Prahimos
Eleldos [Al Dawla], Elpegkos [Ali Beg], Chuk and Inal;
Together with these one you should calculate many of others:
Kallinoglanhs, Aitougenos [Alp Tougril], Ausararis, - myriads.⁵⁰⁸

The slavery of satraps here is a triumphal metaphor.⁵⁰⁹ On the one hand, it may mean military capture, on the other hand in the Komnenian age slavery meant the submission and incorporation of the “satraps” in to Byzantium. The idea of “counting” also implies control, but control over the people, and not over territory (see the subchapter on “Imperial Gaze”). The personal submission of the “satraps” to the victorious emperor is more important than the submission of their territories.

⁵⁰⁷ He hinted at it in the same poem when he compared victorious John Komnenos with king Craesos who also had crossed Halys, but was defeated.

⁵⁰⁸ For the detailed analysis of this name list see the forthcoming article of Dimitri Korobeynikov. Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, 230, 229-235:

Ἴδε σου, πόλις Ῥωμαῖς, τοὺς νεωνήτους δούλους,
καὶ τὸ μὲν πλῆθος ἔασον, οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀριθμεῖται,
τοὺς δὲ σατράπας μάλιστα καὶ τοὺς ἐκκρίτους ὄρα
· ὄρα τὸν Ἀμασειανὸν πρὸ τῶν λοιπῶν Τογκρίλην,
τὸν ἀπὸ Γάγγρας Ἀλφαροῦς, τὸν ἀμην Πραχίμην,
τὸν Ἑλελδῆν, τὸν Ἑλπεγκοῦς, τὸν Τζυκῆν, τὸν Ἰνάλην.
ἔχεις πρὸς τούτοις ἀριθμεῖν καὶ τινὰς ἄλλους πλείους,
Καλλινογλῆν, Αἰτουγδῆν, Αὐσάραριν, μυρίου.

⁵⁰⁹ Magdalino thinks that these were not actual satraps, but people in the costumes of satraps. I tend to think, that the text does not provide sufficient evidence for this interpretation. The twelfth-century Byzantine paraded actual prisoners of war in their triumphs. See Magdalino, “The Triumph of 1133,” 57.

What was the source of Prodromos for this wonderful panoply of the ancient terms? The logical answer is Herodotus, whose work Prodromos referred to in his poem. However, the situation is slightly more complex. Contrary to the primary hypothesis of this dissertation and *opinio communis*, Herodotus in his *Musae* did not use the word “satrap”. Very much like Prodromos, Herodotus called the enemy leaders by the individual names and not by their “offices” or titles. It seems likely, that the term comes not from the Classics, but from the Old Testament, where it is used precisely to describe the Achaemenid Empire.⁵¹⁰ Another possible source of inspiration is the Greek version of the romance of Alexander that was well-known and available in the Komnenian Constantinople.⁵¹¹ Another source of inspiration could be Procopius. It seems plausible, that Prodromos used all this sources and constructed the new term, to define the petty Turkic ruler of the town of Asia Minor, the “ruler of area” in the Bible and the victim of the imperial hunt.

As I argued above, it is plausible, that the Byzantines used the “Persianized” terminology to describe the Turks from the age of Alexios onwards, but Theodore Prodromos was the first one who applied it to the Seljuk Turks. The question is open whether the satrap is actually a synonym for the “Persian” and “Persarchs”, or a position of authority that does not need “sultan” above it. The absence of this word in *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* allows me to read it as a synonym for supreme ruler of the very specific group of the Turks, e.g. one of the Danishmendids. The sultan is absent in Prodromos simply because the panegyrist does not need him. If the emperor wages his war against the Danishmendides (whose ruler carried official title of *malik* and did not claim the throne of the Great Seljuks), then Theodore Prodromos positioned him as the victor over “arch-Persian” and not the as the victor over the sultan. As the chapter II argues, another reason for the absence of the sultan might be the uneasy peace between Constantinople and Ikonion and alliance of the two capitals against the growing power of the Danishmendids.

To sum up, one can say that in his poetry Theodore Prodromos formulated a new and

⁵¹⁰ See for example Dan. 6:22.

⁵¹¹ C. Juanno, *Naissance et metamorphoses*, 14.

original system of naming for the power figures of the Seljuk Turks. I argue that this was not “poetic” invention but a careful choice of correct terms. This choice allowed Prodhomos to translate the new reality of the Byzantine-Seljuk military conflict in the terms of the imperial panegyric, while the Biblical roots of the term and the connection with the book of Daniel made it understandable to the *oi polloi* of Constantinople who were the target audience of the *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*. In a creative way, Theodore Prodhomos turned *malik* Amīr Gazi Danishmendid into “Persarches” and his subordinates – into “satraps”. This re-labeling allowed Prodhomos to put his patron John Komnenos on the superior ground as the “Auson”, that is Roman. In their wars with Persia, Rome always won.⁵¹²

In his poetry, Prodhomos developed a new language to describe the Seljuk Turks of Asia Minor.⁵¹³ This language became popular – and not only because, as Magdalino puts it once, Prodhomos was the chosen poet of the court.⁵¹⁴ Theodore Prodhomos introduced the very same terms not only in his panegyrics, but in his other works. In *Κατομνομαχία*, the parody to the classical Greek Drama, there is an archsatrap of the mice, Piece-of-Bread-Thief (Κολλικοκλόπος).⁵¹⁵ Being a multi-faceted author, Prodhomos managed to implant his words into many registers of the language. This allowed him to become the main poet of his time and the discourse-monger with whom other writers had to compete and argue. Two of these writers are Nikephoros Bryennios and Anna Komnene.

3. Invention of atabeg and Turkic authority in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene

The “Turkic” narrative of the *Alexiad* begins with the story of Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos and

⁵¹² According to all available sources the Byzantines were not always victorious. Their campaigns against the Danishmendids in Paphlagonia in 1130s were bloody and hardly successful. For the complex analysis of these campaigns see the forthcoming dissertation of Maximilian Law and the relevant chapter in John Birkenmeyer’s work on the Komnenian army. Birkenmeyer, *The Development of the Komnenian army*, 85-100.

⁵¹³ Interestingly enough, the problematic mirror of princes supposedly composed for John Komnenos bears the same name. See Paul Maas, “Die Musen des Kaisers Alexios I,” 348-359.

⁵¹⁴ P. Magdalino, in personal communication, 22 January 2015.

⁵¹⁵ H. Hunger, *Der byzantinische Katz-Mäuse-Krieg* (Vienna, Cologne, Graz: Böhlau, 1968): 290.

Manzikert. As it was argued above, Anna Komnene probably used the sources that were contemporary with her father. The system of labeling points to the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth, while the work of Anna itself finishes with the final campaign of Alexios in book XV.⁵¹⁶ Thus, one can read the *Alexiad* as the compendium of pre-twelfth century information that was tailored (and systematized) to the twelfth-century needs.

This is applicable to the Turks, and even more to their political authority. With rare persistence Anna Komnene identified the rulers of the Great Seljuks and the Turks of Asia Minor, explained their titles and relations with each other. This makes her evidence very valuable. According to the index of Kambylis and Reinsch, Anna Komnene had used the term “sultan” 77 times. She introduced the sultan in the scene of negotiations between young Alexios Komnenos and the Seljuk leader Toutach and one indeed can suspect that in the time of Manuel Komnenos the Byzantines knew who the sultan is. From book VI onwards there are two sultans in the *Alexiad* – “the sultan of Persia” [of the Great Seljuks] and the “sultan” as a title for a regional ruler of the conquered Asia Minor.

a. Many Sultans of the *Alexiad*

The “sultan of Persia” is superior to the “sultan” per se. Anna Komnene highlighted it by employing the epithet μέγας “great”, that makes the Great Seljuk ruler an analogue to the Achaemenid ruler.⁵¹⁷ This sultan [Malikshāh I of the Great Seljuks] remains anonymous. The Brother of the sultan, Tutush, holds power over the Turks of Jerusalem and Mesopotamia, Aleppo.⁵¹⁸ This family power reminds one of the tight connection between Isaac and Alexios Komnenoi, who held power together and fought against the rebels in the first years of Alexios’ reign.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁶ For the literary analysis of the last campaign see P. Magdalino, “The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the Mid-twelfth Century in the ‘Alexiad’,” *Anna Komnene and Her Times* (New York–London: Garland, 2000), 15–43; J. Howard-Johnston, “Anna Komnene and the Alexiad,” in M. Mullett and D. Smyth (eds.), *Alexios I Komnenos* (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996) 260–302.

⁵¹⁷ Herodotus, *Muses*, Book I, 188, line 4: Κύρος βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας.

⁵¹⁸ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 188, lines 87–88.

⁵¹⁹ See P. Frankopan, “Kinship and Distribution of Power in Komnenian Byzantium”,

In *Alexiad*, the “great sultan” lives somewhere in the East and fights against the rebellious warlords of Asia Minor. His power is so immense that a single letter is enough to force the Seljuk leaders to abandon the Byzantine towns.⁵²⁰ He struggled for power over Asia Minor against the followers of Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish and finally conquered them. Last of them Abu’l-Qasim, *amīr* of Nicaea, employed “fourteen mules loaded with gold” to gain his favor, but achieved nothing and was killed.⁵²¹

According to the *Alexiad*, the “great sultan” was a diplomatic partner of the Byzantine emperor. He demanded from Alexios Komnenos his daughter as a bride for the sultan's young son. Alexios avoided the marriage, but had to send an embassy of Basil Kourtikios in return.⁵²² This embassy found the sultan dead. As Anna Komnene narrated, he was killed by professional assassins sent by his brother Tutush. In the end Anna had called the sultan ἄθλιος – this is exactly the same term that Prodhomos used to describe one of the Seljuk leaders.⁵²³

Later on Anna once mentioned the “Sultan of Khorasan” who sent an army against Alexios, which prevented him from helping the Crusaders in Syria.⁵²⁴ I doubt that the “sultan of Khorasan” is equal to “the great sultan”. Khorasan is a part of Persia, so with this title Anna may have hinted at the partial power of the successor of Malikshāh – Barkiqrak (r. 1098-1115). This sultan controlled only the eastern part of his fathers’ domain and one of the centers of his power was indeed in Khorasan.⁵²⁵

According to *The Alexiad*, the first man among the Seljuk Turks of Asia Minor who received the “dignity” (ἀξία) of sultan was the famous Seljuk rebel Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish.⁵²⁶ The term used is the very same word which Anna Komnene used to describe the promotion of Byzantine

⁵²⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, VI. 9, 186-187. For the list of supposedly “Seljuk cities” of Asia Minor during this period see Vryonis, *Decline*, 115-116; Frankopan, “The fall of Nicaea,” 153-184.

⁵²¹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 195.

⁵²² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 195, lines 79-95.

⁵²³ Theodore Prodhomos, *Carmina Historica*, XV, 272, line 20.

⁵²⁴ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 338, lines 33-38.

⁵²⁵ G.E. Tetley, *The Ghaznavids and The Seljuq Turks*, 128-131; Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 76-79.

⁵²⁶ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 87, lines 75-80.

officials and generals to the new ranks of court hierarchy.⁵²⁷ Later Anna states that the eldest of Sulaiman's sons “was made a sultan”.⁵²⁸ The verb used is *προχειρίζω*, that Sewter and Lyubarskiy translated as “elected”. Anna used this verb rather with the meaning “to assign a post, or dignity”.⁵²⁹ Thus, the sultan is rather “appointed”, than “elected”. The question of agency remains open: one can only suggest that the imagined actor in this case is the great sultan.⁵³⁰ Another reading is that Anna Komnene perceives the proclamation of sultan as a proclamation of the Byzantine emperor: in this case the sultan was proclaimed by his subordinates. What matters is that according to the Islamic Law the sultans of Asia Minor were illegal rulers who did not have support from the Great Seljuks and Baghdad.⁵³¹ With the legal language Anna Komnene tried to legalize Anatolian sultans and raise their status. Another method of legalization is the context. In book VI Anna Komnene described the promotion of Kılıç Arslan I into the sultan of Nicaea immediately after the death of the “great sultan” Malikshāh. She did it with two reasons in mind. First, Alexios was at least for a long period of time in friendly relations with this ruler. In other words, naming of Anna Komnene might reflect the Byzantine recognition of the high status of the sultans of Ikonion, who were their allies at least in the 1110s. Secondly, the “promotion” of sultan of Ikonion was an effective way to highlight the successes of Alexios, who in 1116 defeated the next sultan of Ikonion, Shāhanshāh. Thus, the change of the titles is the result of some actual data or document and the intentions of the panegyricizing author.

According to Anna Komnene, Anatolian sultans do not have the unique center, but

⁵²⁷ See for example Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 148, lines 25-26.

⁵²⁸ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 197, lines 50-51.

⁵²⁹ See, for example, the appointment of Hadrian Komnenos, Alexios brother, as *δουξ*. *The Alexiad*, 197, lines 50-51

⁵³⁰ If this is correct, then Anna Komnene imagined Seljuk sultans of Asia Minor as subordinates of the “Great sultan”.

⁵³¹ The scholars do not agree about the person of the Turks of Asia Minor who received the investiture from the caliph of Baghdad. According to Oikonomides it was Amīr Gazi Danishmendid, who received the investiture from the caliph in the 1140s. Andrew Peacock argued that it was sultan Mas‘ūd of Ikonion. See N. Oikonomides, “Les Danishmendids entre Byzance, Baghdad et le sultanat d’Iconium”; A.C.S. Peacock, “Aḥmad of Niğde's "al-Walad al-Shafīq" and the Seljuk Past”, *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004): 102.

wander from place to place.⁵³² Their residence is a special object – σουλτανίκιον “which we call in our language an imperial palace”.⁵³³ Lyubarski interpreted it as a “tent”, but a “moving residence of sultan” would be a more accurate rendition. Anna noted that at one time it was in Nicaea, another in Ikonion. To describe this space of Turkic power, Anna coined a new word that would be both similar and the different from the palace of the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople (βασίλειον).

I have two explanations for this novelty. First, Anna likely wanted to highlight the difference between Byzantium and the Turks of Anatolia by highlighting the difference in palace structures. Secondly, Anna probably introduced into her text the actual term that the Turks used to denote the palace-like structures. The sultans of the Anatolian Turks and their subjects were practicing nomadism, and (in full accordance with the tradition of the Great Seljuks) they may have had a red tent, which was the symbol of their authority.⁵³⁴ According to the *Alexiad*, the sultans also had courtiers. To denote those courtiers, Anna Komnene did not use any Byzantine analogy, but called councilors, bodyguards and servants of the sultan “those near him”. According to the *Alexiad*, the Byzantines knew well about the events at the court of the sultans. Ritual mockery performed at the court of Shāhanshāh of Ikonion in 1116 was the pretext for Alexios to wage the last war against Seljuks.⁵³⁵

The Anatolian sultans of the *Alexiad* are aggressive. They start wars with Byzantium and/or other Christian states. They usually direct it with the help of their subordinates or allies (satraps, archsatraps), or participate in the campaigns themselves. They are able to change the

⁵³² In the same time Anna mentions some sultans- without -city, e.g. σουλταν Τανισμαν (=Danishmend). Thus the power of the sultan is not connected with the territory, but rather with the person of the ruler. Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch., 331, lines 96-97. About him see C. Cahen, *Formation*, 11-13 ; Vryonis, *Decline*, 115; G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. II, 252.

⁵³³ Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, 114, lines 41-42. Search in TLG does not produce any result before *The Alexiad* and one result after *The Alexiad* (Chronicle of Leontios of Mochera). J. Lyubarskiy, [Anna Komnene. *The Alexiad*] *Анна Комнина. Алексиада*, f. 136; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, II, 289.

⁵³⁴ For the red tent of the Great Seljuks see Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 168-169.

⁵³⁵ Ritual mockery was a part of medieval war ritual. See, for example, the mockery of Manuel I by the Hungarians under the walls of Zeugminon. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 133-134. For the context of this event see F. Makk, *The Arpads and the Comneni. Political Relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12th century* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989), 89-92.

course of the battle.⁵³⁶ In general, the role of the Anatolian sultans expands towards the end of *Alexiad*.

After the disappearance of the “great sultan” different Anatolian leaders occupy his place. In book XV Alexios won his final battle against sultan Shāhanshāh of Ikonion and forced him to perform the humiliating ritual of *proskynesis* in front of his amīrs. This position of absolute submission is the final point of the “Seljuk narrative” of Anna Komnene. The following ride of sultan and emperor next to one another reminds one of the fake equality of Manzikert which accompanied the recognition of the defeat.

To sum up, Anna Komnene spoke about two different types of sultans in the *Alexiad*. One of them is the “great sultan”. He is nameless, lives somewhere in the Far East but maintains order in Asia Minor, fights rebels, and communicates with Alexios I Komnenos. He is similar to the “sultan of Huns” in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates. The “sultans” of Asia Minor are of a different kind. They are enemies of Alexios Komnenos and key antagonists of an emperor in the Asian part of the narrative. To increase their importance (and to raise the status of her father) Anna Komnene inserted their personal names in her narrative and “assigned” to the sultans the palace called “sultanikion” (which may or may not be the real tent of the Anatolian sultans). The sultans of the *Alexiad* rule over their subordinates -- the satraps and the archsatraps.

b. The entrance of the atabeg. The introduction of Seljuk Title in Byzantine Rhetoric

Anna Komnene created her *Alexiad* in the same age when Theodore Prodromos wrote his panegyrics about John's victories over the Persians. At the same time, Anna's terminology may date back to the previous era, namely to the Alexian rhetoric. Resultantly, it is hard to establish whether some term comes from the age of Alexios or is the fruit of Anna's creativity. The

⁵³⁶ Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, 6, 476. One can safely associate this retinue with the slave bodyguards of Eastern rulers of the twelfth century known as Gulyams. S. Vryonis, “Seljuk Gulyams and Ottoman Devshirmes,” *Der Islam* 16 (1965), 226-227; A.S. Matveev, “Военное дело арабов в X-XI вв. [The Military Tradition of Arabs in the tenth and eleventh centuries],” in Nicephorus Phocas, *Стратегика* [Strategikon]], ed. V. Nefedkin (St. Petersburg, 2005), 243-244.

coming book of Leonora Neville address the problem, I think that the first hypothesis is more plausible.

In the *Alexiad*, Anna Komnene used the word archsatrap. This word defines the person who is in charge of the domain when the sultan is away, his second-in-command. When Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish made his bid for the throne of the Great Seljuks, Abu'l-Qasim remained his domain as an archsatrap of Nicaea.⁵³⁷ This title also implied certain military skills: archsatrap Monolykos “surpassed all the Turks of Asia in age, experience, and valor”.⁵³⁸ This power is personal rather than inherited: there is not a single mention of its passing from father to son.

Very much like other titles, this one is not the invention of Anna or her predecessors. The archsatrap is the Byzantine rendering of the Seljuk title of atabeg.⁵³⁹ The title was used first to describe the protector of the sultan Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks (1073-1092) and become popular after his reign. The question remains, from where did Anna take the term. Nevertheless, it is clear that the semantic field of the term is wider than the one defined by Moravcsik, who defined atabeg as a “military leader.”⁵⁴⁰

In my opinion, the context here again is rather religious than laic. Anna Komnene labeled the heretical monk Basileos in book XV as an “archsatrap of Satanael”.⁵⁴¹ Thus, the term “archsatrap” in The *Alexiad* denotes a prominent person, who is second to the main enemy of the empire, be it the Seljuk sultan or Satan. The hypothesis about “religious” version of the origins of the term finds support in the poetry of Theodore Prodromos, one of whose epigrams describes the “archsatrap” as arch-enemy of archangel Michael, second in command in Hell.⁵⁴² This is

⁵³⁷ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 188, line 29.

⁵³⁸ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 477, line 71-72.

⁵³⁹ See Levanoni, Amalia, “Atābak (Atabeg)”, in: *EI III*,. Consulted online on 28 July 2016

⁵⁴⁰ Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. II, 77.

⁵⁴¹ The demonization of enemy is not new to Byzantine literature. Theodosius the Deacon used it in his description of the capture of Crete. Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, 486, line 66: τοῦ Σαταναήλ ἀρχισατράπης Βασίλειος. Andriollo, “Il “De Creta capta” di Teodosio Diacono,” 47-49.

⁵⁴² Prodromos mentioned him in the dedicatory poem for the *kuklos* with an image of Christ and three archangels that was donated to the Pantokrator monastery. Theodore Prodromos, *Carmina Historica*, ed. W. Hörandner Poem 34, 374, line 3-5:

βάρβαρος οὐκοῦν ποῖος ἀρχισατράπης
ἢ τίς στρατάρχης ὑπέροφρος αὐθάδης
ἀντιπαλαμῆσαιτο τῷ μυριάθλῳ;

even more plausible, if one takes into account the religiously colored labels which the Alexian literati applied to the Seljuk Turks (analyzed in the chapter III above) and the apocalyptic motives of the Alexian literature (analyzed in chapter VI).

c. Amīrs and Satraps of the *Alexiad*

Anna had used different terms for the lesser Seljuk nobles. One of them is amīr (a traditional Byzantine spelling of the Arabic أمير, “general, chieftain”).⁵⁴³ Anna first used this label to denote Sulaiman bin Qutalmish, The term is associated with the Arab leaders of the past. In the Grottaferata version of *Digenis Akritis* Amīr is the father of the protagonist and the head of a frontier tribe.⁵⁴⁴ Anna Komnene used this term in a similar way: in *the Alexiad*, “amīr” means independent or rebellious leader of the Seljuk Turks. Anna Komnene attached this term mostly to Sulaiman and his follower Abu’l-Quasim.⁵⁴⁵ At the end of *the Alexiad* Anna mentioned “Amīr Mohammed” who betrayed sultan Shāhanshāh of Ikonion. Thus the term “amīr” implies some independence if not treason.

A loyal amīr is called a “satrap”. Different forms of the word σατράπης appear in the *Alexiad* just over 20 times. Anna pointed to the equality of the two terms in the text. “The Turks call ‘amīr’ the one whom the Persians call ‘satrap’”.⁵⁴⁶ Was there a mixture of two vocabularies or misunderstanding in the discourse or Anna simply wanted to join the loosing ends?

In the *Alexiad*, there is not problem to distinguish between the two term. There is a difference: the satraps are loyal, while amīrs are not. As Anna Komnene proves, even Alexios I Komnenos has his satraps.⁵⁴⁷ According to *The Alexiad*, a satrap is the Seljuk ruler who has a

⁵⁴³ Floor, Willem, “Amīr al-umarā’”, in:

I III. (<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3>). Last Accessed: 06.07.2016

⁵⁴⁴ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 5, lines 30-35.

⁵⁴⁵ In the case of Sulaiman this looks practically like a name. Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, 195, lines 95-99: Καὶ γὰρ ὁ αὐτάδελφος αὐτοῦ Τουτούσης μετὰ τὸ ἀνελεῖν τὸν ἀμῆρ Σολυμάν καὶ τὸν ἴδιον γαμβρὸν ἐξ Ἀρραβίας κατ’ αὐτοῦ στρατεύσαντα τυφθεῖς καὶ τὸν σουλτάν μεμαθηκῶς εἰς εἰρηνικὰς σπονδὰς μετὰ τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ἤδη ἐπείγεσθαι πρὸς τὸν τάδελοφου φόνον ἀπέβλεψε.

⁵⁴⁶ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 220-221: “ὄν ἡ συνήθεια μὲν τῶν Περσῶν σατράπην ἀποκαλεῖ, οἱ δὲ νῦν τὰ Περσῶν φρονούντες Τοῦρκοι ἀμῆραν ὀνομάζουσι

⁵⁴⁷ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 220-221.

considerable body of warriors under his command (such as satraps of Cappadocia), as described in book XV. Under the command of the sultan satraps usually fulfill personal orders in groups.⁵⁴⁸

However, the relations between sultans and satraps are not always easy. Anna mentioned at least one conflict between a satrap and a sultan, which finished only with the dethronement of the sultan in question, namely Shāhanshāh.⁵⁴⁹ To sum up, the satraps (are rather direct subordinates of the sultans, while archsatraps can act independently. Anna did not clarify relations between the two, but in the scene of the final victory at Poybotes drew the group portrait of the Seljuk elite. This portrait included sultan, atabeg and the satraps. According to *Alexiad*, Alexios I Komnenos subjugated all the Seljuk potentates – with a single important potentate missing in this scene. This potentate was *malik* Dānişmend.

d. Missing Dānişmend

In the time of Anna Komnene the Byzantine emperors struggled in Asia Minor not only with the sultans, but also with the amīrs from the family of Danishmend. The first Byzantine source to describe the “power of Danishmendids” is a letter by Theophylact of Ohrid to one of his pupils, Gregory of Taron, who was waging war against the first ruler of the conglomerate.⁵⁵⁰ In this letter, Theophylact described *malik* Dānişmend as someone who is gathering tributes from the cities of Pontos and Lesser Armenia. According to Theophylact, the Byzantines vigorously opposed the Seljuk ruler, but, again, There is no mention of his relations to other rulers of Asia Minor or Near East.

⁵⁴⁸ According to Anna Komnene, a group of “chosen satraps” usually acts as a collective executor. “The satraps” were present at the suicide of Sulaiman bin Qutalmish after the battle with his enemy Tutush. “Chosen satraps” kill Amīr Abu’l-Quasim on his way from the court of the “great sultan”. Finally, a “prominent” satrap named Elegmos strangled former sultan Shāhanshāh of Ikonion in 1016 when the latter tried to make his bid for power, The *Alexiad*, VI. 9, 187, line 98; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 195, line 74: κατ’ αὐτοῦ ἀποσταλεῖσι διακοσίοις ἐκκρίτοις σατράπαις· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ ἐκείνου τῆς Νικαίας ἐξέλευσις τοῦτον διέλαθεν. οἱ καὶ κατασχόντες αὐτὸν καὶ βρόχον ἐκ νευρᾶς ἐπικλώσαντες τῷ τραχήλῳ τοῦτου περιβαλόντες ἀπέπνιξαν; Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 480, lines 75-76.

⁵⁴⁹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 479.

⁵⁵⁰ Theophylact of Ochrid, *Letters*, ed. Gautier, 81, lines 13-14: Ὅτε γὰρ Τανεσμὰν φορολογεῖν εἰωθὼς τὰς τε ἄλλας περὶ τὸν Πόντον ἐλληνίδας πόλεις ἐντὸς.

Anna Komnene introduced “the Danishmendids” in her story without any mention of their origins. She simply states that a certain “sultan Tanisman” together with another Seljuk leader, Chasan, tried to oppose the warriors of the First Crusade with 80 thousand soldiers. The number is unrealistic, but the very role of Dānişmend as the master of a mighty army is interesting to note.⁵⁵¹ The word “sultan” should not give a false impression: according to the *Alexiad*, there were many sultans in Asia Minor. In the given context, the word means an “independent local ruler”. One can say something similar about Anna’s reference to the Seljuk ruler of Palestine, whom she calls Atabek.⁵⁵²

On the one hand, one can suspect that Anna consciously avoided any mention of the Danishmendids, because at the time of her writing (1140-1150s) John Prodromos praised John Komnenos for his victories over the Danishmendids. Anna’s aim was not to speak about John’s victories, but rather to attract the attention of the reader to the deeds of her father. On the other hand, there is a logic in this missing. As Penelope Buckley noted, Anna Komnene was focused on the events connected with Alexios and not on the world history in general. Alexios I Komnenos did not fight against Dānişmend - and Anna did not need him in *Alexiad*.

e. The Princess and the Turks: conclusions

Anna Komnene is the first and the last Byzantine author of the first half of the twelfth century, who systematized the Seljuk authority and introduced the terms of of satraps and archsatrapsto the Byzantine reader.

There are two sultans of the Seljuk Turks. One of them is the anonymous “great sultan” of Persia who is a powerful (albeit distant) partner of Alexios. The other is Sulaiman ibn Kutlumish and later his successors Kılıç Arslan I and Shāhanshāh. Anna Komnene described these Anatolian sultans (whom the Persian chroniclers perceived as petty chieftains) with great pomp. She mentioned their pseudo-palace (*sultanikion*), their courtiers and officers. In some way

⁵⁵¹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 335;

⁵⁵² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 344, line 91. The case of Chiaoush demonstrates that sometimes Anna could make a mistake and use a title as a personal name. Choniates also used it as a name twice. See Choniates, *Historia*, John I, 31, line 15; 192, line 48; about the term see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, II, 77.

Anna inflated these figures to raise the status of her father who was ultimately victorious over them.

The “Seljuk narrative” of Anna Komnene reminds in some points of the panegyrics of Theodore Prodromos. She highlighted the victories over the Seljuk Turks and tried to downplay the defeats. At the same time Anna Komnene is in polemics with Prodromos. The main enemy of John Komnenos, *malik* Dānişmend is totally absent from the *Alexiad*. In my opinion, Anna Komnene did not want to support the panegyrics to her brother. This did not prevent Anna from borrowing some terms for the depictions of Seljuk chieftains from the panegyrics of Prodromos. At the same time she introduced into the Byzantine discourse on the Seljuk power the old word “amīr” to represent independent or rebellious ruler of Byzantine-Seljuk borderland. The panegyrists who worked for Anna’s nephew and emperor, Alexios I Komnenos, preferred different images and different terms

4. Xerxes and Darius. Role Models for the sultans in the Komnenian panegyric

Alicia Walker noted that Alexandrian rhetoric was used in the age of Komnenoi to describe the Eastern “conquest”.⁵⁵³ One can accept this statement with several important reservations. Very much like references to Herodotus, the references to Alexander were very situational. Byzantine literati mobilized the Alexandrian paradigm during the imperial expeditions to Syria and Palestine as well as during the peace of 1161. All these expeditions did not finish in the territorial gains. The image of Alexander was connected with the imperial triumph and the imperial power. This subchapter will describe the very specific way in which Komnenian literati used the Alexandrian motives and the models for the Turks.

In his panegyric to John II Komnenos, Nikephoros Basilakes introduced the Alexandrian topic in the very beginning of his story. The rhetor inserted the “Persians” in his poem first as Cyrus, then as Darius and Xerxes, and, finally, positioned John II as Alexander, who defeats them. He compared the expedition of John II to Syria with the journey of the king of Macedonia.

⁵⁵³ A. Walker, *Emperor and the World*, 123-124.

“ We have again another attack of Alexander against the Persians,” – wrote Basilakes.⁵⁵⁴

Some lines later, Basilakes said that John II is actually more than “the Macedonian” and the rest of the great leaders, mentioning in one list Ptolemy Lagos, Demetrios Poliorketes and finally, Scipio. Thus, John II Komnenos is the most prominent military leader among the other the military leaders.⁵⁵⁵ In the field battle (supposedly near Aleppo) John II was more effective than Alexander, because he forced the Persian to search for security behind the fortress walls. Finally, Basilakes praised John II Komnenos because he received unique presents from the Persians. According to Basilakes, these diplomatic presents included a “table” that was probably made in the Persian style, and a cross that was made of stone.⁵⁵⁶ Finally, Basilakes mentioned directly the source of his allusions – the “Romance of Alexander” by Pseudo-Callisthenes that existed in Byzantium since the eleventh century.⁵⁵⁷

The Alexander of Basilakes is a military leader, more raider than a conqueror. The author never mentioned a single enemy leader by name or gave a hint at the possible political affiliation. John II Komnenos is a new Alexander, who organized his wars more effectively because he was wise and received rich presents from the anonymous “king of kings”.⁵⁵⁸ The limited space that Basilakes dedicated to the description of the Persian table reminds one of the occasional references to the distant “Eastern Other” at Darmstadt box analyzed by Alicia Walker.⁵⁵⁹ According to Basilakes, John is Alexander, but there is no “Darius” to stand against him. The same scenery is present on some twelfth-century Byzantine silverware that depicts the flight of the Alexander, but does not depict Darius.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁴ Nikephoros Basilakes, *Logos to 1138*, ed. Garzya, 54, line 11.

⁵⁵⁵ Nikephoros Basilakes, *Logos to 1138*, ed. Garzya, 55, line 32.

⁵⁵⁶ Nikephoros Basilakes, *Logos to 1138*, ed. Garzya, 68, lines 25-35

⁵⁵⁷ Nikephoros Basilakes, *Logos to 1138*, ed. Garzya, 68, 32.

⁵⁵⁸ At this time this was probably sultan Sanjar of the Great Seljuks. See Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 330.

⁵⁵⁹ A. Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 110-116.

⁵⁶⁰ According to the recent study, the Byzantines used the image of Alexander in the dishes and plates produced under Seljuk influence. Some of these dishes were used for import and export in the Great Steppes. For the recent find in Northern Siberia (sic!) see [B.I. Marshak] Б.И. Маршак, “Блюдо с полетом Александра Македонского [Dish with a scene of Alexander the Great Flight],” in *The Acts of*

Nikephoros Basilakes was not the only rhetorician who praised the exploits of John II Komnenos in Cilicia in “Alexandrian” terms. The image of Alexander the Great is present in the panegyric of Michael Italikos which was written on the same occasion. Italikos chose a different line of argumentation. In style of Menander, he compared John Komnenos to Alexander the Great and Alexios I Komnenos to Philip of Macedon. The second point for comparison is the actions of John II Komnenos at the was of Aleppo. He imitated the interaction between Alexander and king Poros, and turned the “archsatrap of the city into his vassal”.⁵⁶¹ The final point for comparison is again the spoils of war which John received at Aleppo, namely the cross with precious stones. In this sense, said Italikos, John II Komnenos was superior to Alexander the Great who took gold.⁵⁶²

As one can see, the image of Alexander is a positive one. Alexander is a military hero who conducted expeditions into a faraway land. The space of the panegyric shrinks – the “India” where king Poros lived is now in Persia. Persia, as one can expect, is in Asia Minor. The panegyrist of the next generation, Euthymios Malakes described another “Alexander” and another “Persia” in his panegyrics to Manuel Komnenos. One of those panegyrics dates back to the year 1161.

In the year 1161, sultan Kılıç Arslan II arrived in the city of Constantinople to express his submission to emperor Manuel I Komnenos. According to the Panegyric, he was not the sultan, but “a descendant of Darius more sagacious than Darius.”⁵⁶³ Following the tradition of Michael Italikos, Euthymios Malakes pointed to the wisdom of Manuel and compared the sultan to the “queen of the South” who came to listen to “the wisdom of Solomon”.⁵⁶⁴ One can read in this comparison both exotisation and effemenisation.

Alexander the Great — The unique monument of medieval toreutics found in the village Muzhi of Yamal-Nenetz Autonomic district: Proceedings of the Colloquium held by the Saint-Petersburg Society for Byzantine and Slavic Studies, September 10–12th, 1998, ed. by C.C. Aksentiev, B.I. Marshak (Saint-Petersburg: Byzantinorossica, 2003), 1-42.

⁵⁶¹ Michael Italikos, *Letters et Discourse*, ed. Gautier, 264, lines 4-5.

⁵⁶² Michael Italikos, *Letters et Discourse*, ed. Gautier, 264, line 10.

⁵⁶³ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 166, line 6 : σοῦ μὲν ὁ σὸς ἀπόγονος συνετώτερος

⁵⁶⁴ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 167, line 4.

In exchange for his submission, emperor Manuel was ready to give him presents, “list him among the relatives of his house”, and considered him as his son. In the next passage, the panegyrist compared the sultan to king Poros of India.⁵⁶⁵ Some pages later Euthymios Malakes reminded the “descendant of Darius” about the fate of his predecessor who died being defeated: “You give up your power voluntarily to none other than Manuel, the magnificent emperor of all.”⁵⁶⁶

In the symbolical way, this phrase of panegyric is the ultimate end of the Turkic power of Asia Minor. Kılıç Arslan II is both Poros and Darius, the defeated king of Persia and the ruler of India, who received his domain back from the hands of the young victor from the West. The most interesting aspect here is the negligence to space. While the actual ceremony probably took place in the .⁵⁶⁷ It is also hard to say how the rhetoric worked together with the intricate protocol of the Peace of 1161 reconstructed by Magdalino and Beihammer. In the reverse of Prodroimian “imperial gaze” it invites the conquered sultan to see the physical and intellectual power of Byzantium.⁵⁶⁸

Very much like his father, Manuel Komnenos of panegyric is the master of space and time, the victorious Alexander, while sultan Kılıç Arslan is his subject. What is interesting is precisely the identification of Kılıç Arslan II with Darius. While the Persians of the 1130s did not claim the supreme position in the sultanate of the Great Seljuks, Kılıç Arslan II in his inscriptions claimed the heritage of the Persians, labeling himself as “sultan of the Arabs and the Persians.”⁵⁶⁹ His inscription in Konya is the exact copy of the title of Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks. Secondly, the Persian version of the *Romance of Alexander* was a popular read in the Persianized culture of the Great Seljuk and could reach the court of Kılıç Arslan II at Konya.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁵ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 167.

⁵⁶⁶ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus 169, lines 23-25.

⁵⁶⁷ As I will analyze in the subchapter of chapter VII, this all makes the perfect background for the Darmstadt Box analysis by Alicia Walker.

⁵⁶⁸ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 169, lines 5-7: εἶδες.... εἶδες... εἶδες.

⁵⁶⁹ *RCEA*, vol. 8, 12.

⁵⁷⁰ H. Manteghi, “Alexander the Great in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi,” in *The Alexander Romance in*

Thus the image of Alexander allowed three Komnenian authors, Michael Italikos, Nikephoros Basilakes and Euthymios Malakes to confirm the promoted image of the imperial victory over the enemies. Once again, the image that the Byzantine literati choose to use in their own panegyric lay at the intersection of Alexander Romance and a self-representation of the Seljuk claimant. Very much like the silver dish from Hermitage collection, it includes the stylized image of the “Other” that carries some resemblance with the Seljuks self-representations⁵⁷¹ In some way, the Komnenian panegyric was aimed not only at the audience inside Constantinople, but at the audience outside it. It would be good to know whether the Byzantine *literati* who composed their panegyrics in 1139 and in 1161 respectively recognized that the conquests of the historical Alexander did not last long.

5. The Legitimate Authority. Sultans in the Late Komnenian Rhetoric

Ten years after “the descendant of Darius” Kılıç Arslan II handed over his power to Manuel I Komnenos and received it back from him as the new king Poros of India, the Byzantine Empire and the sultanate of Ikonion on the other began a new war for the domains of the weakened family of the Danishmendids in Paphlagonia (1170-1180). As the historical event, the war had many reasons and probably was caused by the growing confrontation of the Byzantine and “Ikonion” communities over the pasture grounds and river valleys in the dry climate of Asia Minor as well as for the suzerainty over strategically important cities of Asia Minor.⁵⁷² This war and the following decline of the Byzantine military might in Asia Minor stimulated two different court literati to produce two different works of rhetoric. These literati were Eustathius of Thessaloniki and Niketas Choniates and their works of rhetoric were the *Oration to Epiphany of*

Persian and the East, ed. R. Stoneman, K. Erickson, I. Netton (Eelde: Barkhuis Publications, 2012) 161-174.

⁵⁷¹ B. Marshak, “Dish with a Scene of Alexander the Great Flight,” 26-27.

⁵⁷² For the dry climate of Anatolia see Xoplaki, E., et al., *The Medieval Climate Anomaly and Byzantium: A review of the evidence on climatic fluctuations, economic performance and societal change*, *Quaternary Science Reviews* (2015): 19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2015.10.004> Last Accessed 30.04.2016

1176 and *History* respectively.

a. Steppe Legend for the Persians? Stories from the Turkic in the rhetoric of Eustathios of Thessaloniki

In the 1170s, Manuel I Komnenos began the border war to bring Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion to the state of *oiketes*. In the middle of this conflict, a leading Byzantine *literatus* of the time Eustathios Katafloron (later known as Eustathios of Thessaloniki) produced an *Oration on Epiphany of 1174*. The oration, being long and complex, was edited by Wirth and translated by Andrew F. Stone. Beihammer and Stone himself analyzed this oration in some detail.⁵⁷³ This part of the thesis will look into a rare episode in this chapter, namely the legend about the origins of the Turks and the interpretation of the legend by Eustathios of Thessaloniki.

According to Eustathios, a certain chieftain of the Persians (sic!) was rich and had many children. Before his death he summoned his children:

He commanded that arrows be brought the same number as the children, and ordered them, after giving the arrows to them, to break them one by one and his children did this. Then he gathered and bound together the same number of different arrows in the thick bundle which he gave to them and the children found the bundle unbreakable. And the father interpreted the symbol, declaring that if divided separately, they would be broken apart with no effort, but bound together as one they would remain unbreakable.⁵⁷⁴

The translator and commentator of the text Andrew Stone noted that the fable of the old man and sons in the Classical culture goes down to Aesop. I think that another reading in this case is possible, through the listing of the similar episodes in other cases. The two cases to compare are the Bulgars and the Mongols.

The first legend to analyze is the one that deals with the Bulgars. According to the chronicle of

⁵⁷³ A. Beihammer, "Religious Antagonism," 5-7; A. Stone, "Stemming the Turkish Tide: Eustathios of Thessaloniki on the Seljuk Turks," *BS* 62 (2004): 125-143.

⁵⁷⁴ Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Oration to Epiphany of 1174*, 283, lines 58-65 (tr. Stone, 53-55): ὁ δὲ κελεύει ἀτράκτους βελῶν κομισθῆναι εἰς ἀριθμὸν ἴσον ἀναβαίνοντα τοῖς παισὶ καὶ τοῦτοις διαδοῦς καθ' ἓνα θραύειν ἐκέλευε, καὶ ταχὺ ἐποιοῦν οἱ παῖδες οὕτω· εἶτα καὶ εἰς παχὺ ἀγαγὼν καὶ συνδήσας ἕτερα βέλη τοσαῦτα τὸν ἀριθμὸν ἐπεδίδου ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς, καὶ ὁ δεσμός ἦλθε διὰ τῶν παίδων ἀκαταπόνητος καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐπήγαγε τῷ συμβόλῳ τὴν λύσιν ἐπειπών, ὥς οὕτω καὶ αὐτοὶ καθ' ἓνα μὲν ἐσχοινισμένοι ἀπόνως ῥαγήσονται, εἰς ἓν δὲ συμπλακέντες διαμενοῦσιν ἄρρηκτοι.

patriarch Nikephoros, khan Koubrat performed the stick-gathering with his five sons before his death circa 650. As Golden noted, the ritual did not help much, because immediately after his death the union fell into the coalition of the pastoralist groups.⁵⁷⁵ The second case comes from different time and space, namely from a so-called “Secret History of Mongols”, a Chinese text that describes the origins of Chingishan in the following way

[Mother Alan Quo] gave an arrow-shaft to each of them and said, ‘Break it!’ One by one they immediately broke the single arrow-shafts and threw them away. Then she tied five arrow-shafts into a bundle and gave it to them saying, ‘Break it!’ The five sons each took the five bound arrow-shafts in turn, but they were unable to break them.⁵⁷⁶

The distance that separates the fourteenth-century China from the twelfth-century Byzantium is significance, but not impassable, especially for the stories of pastoralist authority. Without claiming to establish the ultimate truth, it is possible to hypothesize that Eustathios of Thessaloniki incorporated in his text some knowledge about the mythical origin of the Turks that the Turks themselves told to the Byzantines. In this piece Eustathios is well aware of the steppe roots of the “Persians,” who have nothing to do with the Persia of old days, but are pastoralists with their own myths. Very much like the Byzantine literati of the eleventh century could borrow *ethnikon* “Persians” from the title of the Great Seljuks, Eustathios takes the story from the pastoralist narrative.

In the following paragraph that reminds one of *Strategikon* of Kekaumenos, Eustathios advised his emperor to be careful and not to allow the Persians to keep their arrows together in a bundle. “They are unable to achieve what they desire and remain standing apart, easy to bend and not only they reach the agreement, but the chase has been set firmly among them, the discord among themselves,” – wrote Eustathios, probably commenting on the Danishmendid-Ikonion divide of the 1170s. However, the continuation of the paragraph suggests that the speaker and his audience are not very sure of the results of the “discord.” Eustathios of Thessaloniki advised

⁵⁷⁵ P. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic People* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), 245.

⁵⁷⁶ *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, tr. I. de Rachewitz (The Australian National University, 2015), 4.

Manuel to continue his action in the old *divide et impera* style. “The illustrious master urges fellow-slaves of the rebellious slave to instill wisdom into the ill-thinking”, told Eustathios to his emperor, reminding him about *his* slaves among those of Hagar.⁵⁷⁷ He also pointed to the danger of unification of the Turks under one head of the Hydra. The latter head is probably Kılıç Arslān II sultan of Ikonion.

The advice of Eustathios demonstrates several important moment. First, the author knew enough of the Turkic material to integrate it into his official oration and use it to convey the message for the audience of fellow literati and courtiers. Secondly, by an “organic” comparison bishop in a sense justified the presence of the Turks in Anatolia. Last, but not least important feature of this episode is the demonstration of the new style of speaking about the Turks that combined the terminology of old panegyrics with some sense of *Realpolitik* present in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. The similar sentiment is present in the work of his student, Niketas Choniates.

b. The Sultans and Satraps in the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates

Niketas Choniates wrote the first version of his History in the Byzantium of Alexios III Angelos and finished his narrative in the Empire of Nicaea. His vision of the Turkic authority in many ways summarized the development of the projected identity of Turkic power in Byzantine rhetoric.

Choniates introduced the term “sultan” in book III of his narrative. For him Mas‘ūd of Ikonion is “the one who holds power over the others”. He preferred to call Mas‘ūd of Ikonion the “ruler of Ikonion”.⁵⁷⁸ This change of the status (from “ruler” to “sultan”) could be the reflection of the contemporary realities. In the reign of Mas‘ūd (r. 1118-1142) the conglomerate of Ikonion was subordinate to the Danishmendids, who were the leading power in Anatolia until 1148.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁷ The “slave” here is the word-play. In the twelfth-century Byzantium, “the slave” (δουλος) was the normative labeling for the persons loyal to Komnenian household.

⁵⁷⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 53, line 50.

⁵⁷⁹ In the time of the finishing of *Historia* (1204-1210s) the sultanate of Ikonion was the only state of Asia Minor with a sultan at it’s head. Niketas’ audience probably knew well about it. See Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 47-52 ; Vryonis, *The Decline*, 132-133.

Mas'ūd of Ikonion, in his turn, was de-facto an ally of Byzantium. Euthymios Malakes in his *Panegyric of 1161* said that Mas'ūd approached John II Komnenos “in slavery fashion”.⁵⁸⁰ This ruler also used the imitations of the Byzantine coins.⁵⁸¹ There are many ways to interpret this imitation. First, it can be a claim for the power over the conquered space. Secondly, the imitation of coins might be the sign of acceptance of the symbolic power of Byzantium over the newly-formed sultanate.

Choniates described in detail how to become a sultan. According to *Historia* Mas'ūd of Ikonion had many wives and many sons. That allowed him to divide his land among his relatives, giving the title of the sultan to his son, Kılıç Arslan II.⁵⁸² On the one hand, the statement demonstrates the lust of the sultan and his sexual “othering,” on the other his ability to manage the multitude of his sons. Thus, one of the ways to become a sultan was to inherit the throne from the father. Another way was a coup. In *Historia*, son of Kılıç Arslan II Kopattinos (Kutb-ed-Din) removed his father from the throne for a short period of time.⁵⁸³ Later in the 1190s another son of Kılıç Arslan II Rukn-ed-Din removed his brother Kay Khusraw from power.⁵⁸⁴ To define the removal Choniates used the verb ἐκσφαιρίζω “to push out like in a game”. This is a verb with negative connotations. Niketas Choniates used it for his description of one of the plots during the reign of Andronikos Komnenos. The very term implies instability and vagueness of power in the land of the Persians, the same at which the teacher of Niketas, Eustathios of Thessaloniki hinted at in his *Oration to Epiphany of 1174*.

The primary function of sultan in Choniates is military. He wages war and makes

⁵⁸⁰ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 168, line 3.

⁵⁸¹ See G. Parlar. *Anadolu Selcuklu Sikkelerinde Yazı Disi Figuratif Ogeler* (Ankara: Kultur Bakanligi, 2001), 22

⁵⁸² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 116, lines 66-79.

⁵⁸³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 420, line 26 : “οὕτω γὰρ αὐτὸν καθήρηκε τῆς ἀρχῆς ὁ ἐκείνου παῖς Κοττατῖνος”. As far as I understand, this is the only mention of this plot by Choniates and by Byzantine historians in general. This is interesting, because in one line Niketas summarized the important crisis in the sultanate of Ikonion that was caused by the resettlement of the new pastoralist groups from upper Euphrates to Anatolia. See Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 38-46.

⁵⁸⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 522, lines 5-7: Ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἔφθη καθαρῶς εἰσιὼν τὸ Ἰκόνιον, καὶ τοῦ Ῥουκνατίνου κατ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπιόντος τῆς τε ἀρχῆς ἐκσφαιρίζεται καὶ φυγὰς εἰς Ἀρμενίαν παρὰ Λεβούνη γίνεται

expeditions against the Romans, he hold cities (which, as Choniates duly noted, were former Roman) and makes provocations on the border. Residence of sultan is in the city of Ikonion: Choniates neither described his tent, nor the rooms of his palace. When sultan is in trouble, he goes to hide from the advancing enemy forces in Koloneia which Choniates also called Taksaras.⁵⁸⁵ Mas'ūd went there in 1146, Kılıç Arslan – in 1191. Yet the center of the sultan's power is in Ikonion. Sometime sultans visited Constantinople and begged for help: Choniates mentioned visits of Kılıç -Arslan II in 1161 and his son Kay Khusraw in 1198.⁵⁸⁶

The sultan exercised “full control” over his subjects in two ways. The first one is sending emissaries with the direct orders. In 1178, the sultan sent his officer to gather an army and bring him “sea water and shore sand”.⁵⁸⁷ In the end of the twelfth century sultans (like the Byzantine rulers) used the letters of authority. According to Choniates, Pseudo-Alexios received from Kılıç Arslan II a written order, *mousourios*, which allowed him to recruit Turks for the actions against Isaac II Angelos.⁵⁸⁸

The “sultanship” of *Historia* is a lesser analogue of Byzantine imperial power: one can inherit it, or capture by plot from a relative. Another common feature is dynastical nature of both entities. Descendants of Mas'ūd inherit the title of sultan very much like the rank of the emperor belonged to Komnenoi-Angeloi in Byzantium. Thus, according to Choniates the Turks had their own *genos*, albeit a strange one. The title is not inherited by one person, but by several brothers who receive some part of the main domain. One can easily associate this description with the main thesis of Choniates about many of the Komnenoi, who destroyed the Roman Empire by their endless plots. On the contrary, sultan Kay Khusraw of Ikonion at the very end of *History*

⁵⁸⁵ Korobeinikov demonstrated, that this toponyms in Choniates is probably Byzantinized version of the Seljuk name of the town, which was identical with the modern Turkish name, Aksaray. See Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and Turks*, 13.

⁵⁸⁶ I will analyze these cases in subchapter dedicated to diplomacy.

⁵⁸⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 192, lines 15-16. φείσασθαι μηδαμῇ μηδεμιᾶς ἐπισκήψας ἀποκομίσαι τε αὐτῷ ὕδωρ θαλάττιον καὶ κώπην καὶ ψάμαθον. This is a unique mention of such symbol ic trophies. I tend to interpret is as something, which Choniates himself considered Turkish phrase. For the campaign see Andrew F. Stone, “Dorylaion Revisited. Manuel I Komnenos and the Refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion in 1175”, *REB* 63 (2003): 183-199.

⁵⁸⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 421, lines 66: ὁ φασιν οἱ Τοῦρκοι μουσούριον. This is a unique case, when Niketas reproduced foreign name of the document in his text.

managed to unite his land under one hand and organize the new state, which Choniates grudgingly accepted.⁵⁸⁹ Despite the constant reference of Choniates to the unjust power of the Persians, at the end he recognized Kay Khusraw as the just ruler of Anatolia.

Niketas Choniates twice mentioned different officials of the Seljuk court. First of them is *atapakos*, atabeg is a man-in-charge of Seljuk raid against cities of Meander valley in 1177.⁵⁹⁰ Beside him there are no courtiers whom one can know by the name. When Hasan ibn Gabras approached Manuel Komnenos at the field of Myriokephalon, Choniates labeled him as “most honored among his men”.⁵⁹¹ Hasan ibn Gabras was *atabeg* in 1176.

Choniates also used the term “satrap” for the lesser figures of authority, e.g. five times for one specific group of the Seljuk Turks, namely for the sons of Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion.⁵⁹² In Niketas Choniates’ *History* the word “satrap” as applied to the Seljuk Turks of Asia Minor means “son of a sultan, master of a certain territory with a center in one city, who theoretically can become a sultan later”. The only notable exception is Stefan Nemanja and his lands.⁵⁹³ This exception is even more important, because Choniates used the term to denote the ruler from the western periphery of the empire and not from Anatolia. In the case of Nemanja, the term denotes localized ruler who is a subject of Constantinople. There are two other terms, which Choniates occasionally used to denote the elite of conglomerate – “toparchos” (toparch) and “amyros” (amīr). However, the historian usually used these terms for the description of other Turkic group, namely the Danishmendids.

⁵⁸⁹ See subchapter 5 “The Return of Noble Barbarian,” in Chapter VII “Seljuk Kaleidoscope.”

⁵⁹⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 192, lines 11-13: Ὁ δέ γε Πέρσης μοῖραν ἀπόλεκτον τῆς ὅλης αὐτοῦ στρατιᾶς ἀποδιελών καὶ στρατηγὸν αὐτῇ τὸν ἀτάπακαν ἐπιστήσας πέμπει. Van Dieten is probably correct when he interpreted this as a title, not as a personal name.

⁵⁹¹ For the importance of Gabras in this episode see Stephanos Efthymiadis, Alicia Simpson “Introduction” in *Niketas Choniates, A Historian and A Writer*, 40.

⁵⁹² One can even suspect that Niketas here incorporated some different source with a different vocabulary into his narrative. This is even more plausible if we take into account the internal contradictions in Choniates’ story.

⁵⁹³ I think that this is a rare case of “persianisation” of a Serbian leader in the Byzantine literary discourse. One can read it either as a negatively connotated label or as a arbitrary naming, which reflected the *scale* of Stefan’s power and (more importantly) his dependence upon the emperor of Byzantium.. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 158, line 26.

Niketas Choniates had called the Danishmendids the “Persarmenians”, thus establishing the connection between the conglomerate and a certain historical area.⁵⁹⁴ According to Cosmas Indicopleus, this area lies in the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.⁵⁹⁵ John Skylitzes mentioned this term in the context of Seljuk incursions at the end of the eleventh century. Choniates used it as the name of a dynasty: he mentions “[Amīr Ghazi] Dānišmend the Persarmenian”.⁵⁹⁶ Later on he explained that the dynasty takes its name from the region: the heir of Amīr Ghazi Muhammad has power over “Iberia and a portion of Mesopotamia”.⁵⁹⁷ Choniates also provided a background for the mythical origins of the dynasty. According to *History*, Muhammad derived himself from the Danishmendids, who in turn derived themselves from the Arsacids.⁵⁹⁸ Thus, one can again speak about ruling family of the Danishmendids.

Choniates demonstrated that this family was weak from the very early years. The leader of the Danishmendids, Yaghoubasan is not a proper ruler – according to Choniates, he is not a sultan or a satrap, but the “toparch”. The toparch was the master of a small, and what is more importantly, fixed domain on the border between the Empire and the outer world. Thus, a Danishmendid ruler is just one of many, a master of a small land on the border. The term itself places toparch in the eleventh century, when Kekaumenos used this label to denote the petty rulers next to the Byzantine border. The term is another way to convey the message about the decline of the Danishmendides as well as about their dependence from Byzantium.⁵⁹⁹

In his *History* Choniates highlighted the contrast between the long history of *genos* of the Danishmendids and the decline under the pressure from sultan of Ikonion Kılıç Arslan II. This decline (expressed through the contrast between the heroic past and the shady present) is another mirror for the Komnenoi. He also noted the decline of the Seljuk rulers in Syria and Palestine,

⁵⁹⁴ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 41.

⁵⁹⁵ Cosmas Indicopleus, *Topographia Christiana*, ed. Wolska-Konut, 2.32.2

⁵⁹⁶ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 17, line 7.

⁵⁹⁷ There are actually two dynasties which carry the same name. One is Parthian, another is Armenian. The latter suits perfectly with the definition of Cosmas Indicopleus: Persarmenia is indeed a part of Mesopotamia.

⁵⁹⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 34, lines 92-98.

⁵⁹⁹ See Oikonomides, “Les Danishmendides,” 195-205.

calling them after 1179 “the Saracens”. Niketas used this collective label to denote the Muslim population of Syria and Palestine, and the title of the “amīr of Egypt” for their leader, whose name remains unknown.⁶⁰⁰ He probably knew about the fall of Jerusalem – and decided not to introduce this episode into the narrative.⁶⁰¹

Main aim of Niketas’ narrative was to demonstrate the slow decline of the Roman Empire.⁶⁰² Thus, the Seljuk conglomerates, be it the Danishmendids or the Turks of Ikonion, were all mirrors to Byzantium. As the mirrors in the hall of mirrors, all these images reflected different features of the declining Byzantine state, with the first signs of the decline appearing in the early years of Manuel and later stages- at the age of Angeloi. In the critical narrative of Choniates, the “Persian” system of power mirrors Byzantium and enhances the criticism of Choniates against the Komnenoi.

Both Eustathios of Thessaloniki and Niketas Choniates perceived the Turks as the main trouble of their days. According to Eustathios the Turks are similar to the rooted tree, that has a safe connection with Anatolian soil and that Byzantine emperors had to cut. According to Choniates, the Turks are worse than a tree - they are also *divine punishment*. In his famous prayer for Anatolia Niketas asks the Lord to remove the Seljuk Turks.”⁶⁰³ Choniates portrayed the sultans as the able rulers who are able to fight their competitors, “toparchs of the Danishmendids.” According to History, the internal divides and discords among the Persians make them weak in the moment of interregnum, but all in all they are more effective masters of Anatolia than Angeloi. The terms that Choniates used to describe the authority represent the vocabulary, that the whole panoply of Komnenian authors used to describe the Turks.

For Niketas Choniates the Persian sultans and satraps were effective masters of the former Roman cities and colonies. Their victory in the long perspective is a punishment for the

⁶⁰⁰ One can wonder, whether this absence of name which everybody knew is a type of *damnation memoriae*? There is at least one similar case in the Byzantine literary discourse, namely the suspicious absence of the name of Alp Arslān in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates.

⁶⁰¹ See Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 55.

⁶⁰² See A. Kaldellis, “Paradox, Reversal and the Meaning of History”, in *Niketas Choniates: Historian and a Writer*, ed. S. Efthymiadis, A. Simpson (Genève: Pomme d'Or, 2009), 75-94.

⁶⁰³ Choniates Niketas, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 116, line 25-117, line 17.

degradation of the Roman Empire, the decline of which Niketas described in his work.⁶⁰⁴ Thus, both Niketas and his teacher agree that the Turks has a certain sanction to stay on the Anatolian soil and they came for good.

6. The Power of Wine. Drinking Persians in the Komnenian Rhetoric

The association of foreign others with excessive drinking was a well-known phenomenon in the Classical and post-Classical Antiquity. In the Classical rhetoric wine-drinking could be the sign of civilization as well as the sign of barbarity. Greek writers of the classical age despised the Scythians for their wine-drinking and Romans were afraid that the barbarians wet-mothers would pass their habit of wine-drinking to their children.⁶⁰⁵ In the sixth century, George of Pisides criticized the defeated shah Chosroes in the Christian term for his excessive wine-drinking.⁶⁰⁶ Another important ruler, Darius the Persian of Alexander Romance, was famous for his drinking.⁶⁰⁷ Thus, the wine-drinking as another instrument to project the distance between “Romans” and the others, in this case Persians.

The twelfth century saw the resurgence of this instrument of othering in the Byzantine rhetoric. The first to use it was Theophylact of Ohrid.⁶⁰⁸ In his *Speech of 1088* he described “the one holding power of Persians” who mentioned the name of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos during his drinking-rounds and drinks his health.⁶⁰⁹ The context is positive one. The

⁶⁰⁴ Niketas’ position seems to be similar to that of Anna Komnene. The only difference is that Anna Komnene formulated her view when the Byzantines -- at least theoretically -- were able to expel the Seljuk Turks from some cities in Asia Minor. Niketas Choniates wrote in a different age where Byzantine-Seljuk military frontier stabilized and he could only pray for the delivery of the towns and cities. If one can speak about the Byzantine Reconquista at all, then Anna Komnene was its herald and Niketas Choniates wrote a lament over its end. This allows me to pass to the Conclusions for this chapter. For the topic of degradation in Choniates see A. Kaldellis, “Paradox, Reversal and the Meaning of History” in *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and A Writer*, 102.

⁶⁰⁵ B. Isaak, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 81

⁶⁰⁶ V. Hioureas, “ὁ κρατῶν Περσοκράτης ὁ πυρσολάτρης ἐξοφώθη Χοσρόης.”: The Portrayal of Chosroes II in George Pisides’ *Herakleias*,” *Sasanika Graduate Papers* 3 (2014): 9

⁶⁰⁷ Pseudo-Callisthenes, *Historia Alexandri Magni. Recensio Vetusta*, ed. Kroll, 83.

⁶⁰⁸ The absence of drinking in the descriptions of Manzikert is notable. See Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 125-127.

⁶⁰⁹ Theophylact of Ohrid, *Panegyric to 1088*, ed. Gautier, 111, lines 5, 6



Figure 2. Panel with enthroned ruler and courtiers. Note the wine cup in the hand of the ruler and a jug in the hand of courtier on his right. Second half of 12 century. Seljuk Iran. Philadelphia Museum of Art.⁶¹⁰

The wine-drinking of the Seljuk sultans was not invention of Theophylact, but has some confirmation in the sources. I suggest to read this description as a reference to some contemporary information about the regularly performed banquets at the court of the Great Seljuks as the one depicted on the stucco panel above.⁶¹¹ Theophylact puts this ritual of wine-drinking has ambiguous context of the importance and anxiety at the same time, which probably reflected the problematic relations between Alexios I Komnenos and his Seljuk counterpart Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks in 1086.

Theophylact is not the only author to describe the wine-drinking of the great sultan. Anna

⁶¹⁰ See detailed description in *Court and Cosmos. Great Age of Seljuks*, ed. S. Canby., D. Beyazit, M. Ruggiadi, and A. C. S. Peacock. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2016) no. 16,76-77, fig. 40 (detail).

⁶¹¹ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 158-159. For the pre-Islamic motives of wine-drinking at the Iranian courts see A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, "The Wine Birds of Iran from Pre-Achaemenid to Islamic Times," *Bulletin of Asia Institute* 9 (1995): 41-97.

Komnene in the *Alexiad* described how the very same sultan Malikshāh of the Great Seljuks was killed by the assassins during one of his parties.⁶¹² In the beginning of this chapter I quoted the scene of the death of Malikshāh in the *Alexiad*. This scene describes the drinking session in the palace of the Great Seljuks. It demonstrated the Byzantine perception of the Seljuk court ritual. The Byzantine literati perceived it not as the private party, but as the court ceremony in the form of the banquet, which it probably was. Unfortunately, Anna did not describe the scene in the full detail, but conveyed the meaning of the procedure. Thus, by the twelfth century Byzantine literati had some idea about the wine-drinking as the ritual thing in the palace of the Seljuk sultan, the ritual party which has some analogues in the Byzantine etiquette.

At other occasion, Anna Komnene also provided the information about another person who was involved in the ritual. This person is *pinkernos*. The Byzantine army captured one during the battle at Philomelion. According to the *Alexiad*, this man was the only one, who went with the sultan of Ikonion to the top of the hill, where he was attacked by the Byzantine mercenaries. Anna Komnene described the “one who pours the wine” as the important man in the imagined hierarchy of the Turks.⁶¹³ In the empire of the Great Seljuks, person in charge of the wine-house of the sultan was indeed a very important person in the palace.⁶¹⁴ Same is true for Byzantium, where *pincernus* was a honorary title usually granted to the most important relatives of the emperor.⁶¹⁵ In other words, the position of cup-bearer was important both in Byzantium and in the sultanate of the Great Seljuks.

The next generation of the Byzantine literati inherited these ideas. When John Kinnamos in the 1170s described the first battle at Myriokephalon, he noted that during this battle the Byzantine soldiers killed certain Farkousas (Faruq- shah?) whose position was analogous to the old Roman *pinkernos* and Byzantine cup-bearer who had the high position at the Komnenian court.⁶¹⁶ Thus, besides conveying the message of drinking, the title of Kinnamos helps to

⁶¹² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 195-196.

⁶¹³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 476, lines 17-18.

⁶¹⁴ Peacock, *Great Seljuk Empire*, 174-176.

⁶¹⁵ *ODB*, “Pincernus,” vol. 2, 1679.

⁶¹⁶ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 56, lines 10-11.

imagine the authorities of Ikonion as analogous to the Byzantines of some kind. While both Byzantine emperors and sultans had their cup-bearers, the ritual of wine-drinking is attested exclusively for the Persians. None of the Byzantine literati writing about the peace of 1161 mentioned the drinking sessions of the sultan and the emperor. The wine-drinking is the exclusive feature of the Great Seljuk and Ikonian courts.

The wine-drinking as the divide line is present in the final scene of the Byzantine rhetoric of the period which described the wine-drinking of the Turks, namely in the story of the rebellion of John Komnenos the Fat. The latter sat on the floor of the “Persian hall” of the Great Palace, named Mouchroutes “gulping his drink quickly, courting the favor with the Persians painted on the chamber and drinking to them.”⁶¹⁷ Walker is probably right, when she states, that the description of Mesarites appeals to the general Muslim princely style and to the rituals supposedly present at the court of Kılıç Arslan II, but she ignored the existence of “Persian” wine-drinkers in the Byzantine discourse. The short list of wine-drinkers quoted above in the combination with the analysis of “Persians” in the chapter II allows the different reading of the scene.⁶¹⁸

In the context of the twelfth-century Byzantine discourse, the lexeme “Persians” conveys the message about the high social status.⁶¹⁹ The correct reading of the label in accordance with the semantic shift of the twelfth century paves the way for the new interpretation. John Komnenos the Fat, the descendant of *sebastos* John Axouch the Fat behaves himself like his status fellows, the “Persian” courtiers depicted on the walls. Coming from the family of *sebastos* John Komnenos the Fat was unsuitable for the rule, not because he was Turk, but because he was member of Persian elite and observed Persian customs that the Byzantines considered inferior, that were essentially inferior to the Byzantines. The very name of the hall where John the Fat spend his last minutes was an oriental borrowing. If Shukurov is right in his interpretation, the

⁶¹⁷ A. Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 148-149.

⁶¹⁸ Nikolaos Mesarites, *Die Palastrevolution des Johannes Komnenos*, ed. A. Heisenberg, (Würzburg: Stürtz, 1907), 45, lines 14-15: ἀναρροφόντα πυκνά καί τοις ἐγγεγρα ἐνοῖς τῷ δόῳ Πέρσαις χαρίζο ἐνον τε καί τούτοις προπίνοντα,

⁶¹⁹ Shukurov traced the same phenomenon in the Byzantine rhetoric of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. See Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 41.

Byzantine *mouhcroutes* is “jug for wine.”⁶²⁰ The *ekphrasis* of Mesarites confirmed the visual condemnation of John the Fat and positioned the excessive wine-drinking as an essential feature of the hostile, Persian elite. While the members of the elite could cross the border which separated the Romans and the Persians, some procedures and ritual belonged to the one side, and not to the other. The wine-drinking was essentially Persian – and together with angels and strange ceiling constituted background for the ultimate failure of the Persian-related pretender to the Byzantine throne.

7. The Absent Women

. While the Byzantine women are very visible in sources, the Seljuk women (not the Byzantine brides in Byzantine-Seljuk marriages) are in the blind zone of the Byzantine rhetoric.⁶²¹ They remain there from the very beginning of the period well until the end. The eleventh-century sources did not describe a single Seljuk woman, the twelfth-century sources are hardly better. The Byzantine rhetoric is much more careful to the marriages between the Byzantine and the Turks (that I will analyze in the chapter VI of the dissertation) than to the Seljuk women per se. It looks like the power of the Persians is the business of Persian men and not of the Persian women.

Comparison of this silence in the library of rhetoric with the data about the women participation in the Seljuk courts of later age produces interesting results. According to Andrew Peacock, the women played an important role in the court of the Great Sultans from the eleventh century.⁶²² The studies of the Scott Redford demonstrate, that the same is true for the thirteenth century.⁶²³ Even after the brief glance, one can compare the power of the chief wives of Great Seljuks with the power of the Byzantine ladies of the eleventh century, the most famous example being Anna Dalassena and the empress Maria of Alania.⁶²⁴ Why did Byzantine sources fail to

⁶²⁰ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 319.

⁶²¹ B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025-1204: Power, Patronage, Ideology* (Edinburgh: Pearson, 1999), 20-21.

⁶²² Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 178-181.

⁶²³ S. Redford, “The Rape of Anatolia,” 107-117.

⁶²⁴ See relevant subchapter of Barbara Hill’s book.

note the role of the Seljuk women in the power structure of the Great Seljuks and the Turks of Asia Minor?

The answer may lie in the specific Byzantine idea of gender. According to forthcoming book of Leonora Neville, the Byzantine culture did not allow women to occupy the place of man as the head of the state.⁶²⁵ While the princesses and empresses could rule the households from behind the throne, this was not the norm, but the awkward nonsense.⁶²⁶ Neville interpretation coincides well with the ideal woman present in Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*. According to the collective author, an ideal woman should sit at home, support her husband and the children and forgive her husband when he is entertaining other ladies in the borderlands. The image of the woman who is acting as the man, is possible only in the land on the other side of the border, “Syria” of *Digenis* where Mother of Emir rules her Araba flocks, but, after the conversion occupies her place in the hierarchy. In other words, the Byzantine norm does not include women in power. If the woman is in active power, then something is definitely wrong.

The few Seljuk woman present in the Byzantine rhetoric support this important story. They are all present in two sources that date back to the second half of the twelfth century, namely in *Deeds* of Kinnamos and *Historia* of Niketas Choniates. It worth to analyze the passages to see how two Byzantine authors with their different agendas present the Seljuk women in power.

According to the chronology, the first sources that explicitly describe Seljuk women are the *Deeds of John and Manuel Komnenos* by John Kinnamos. Kinnamos narrated, that during his expedition against Ikonion (1146), Manuel Komnenos laid a brief siege of Ikonion. During the siege, the Byzantine soldier excavated the surrounding graves in the search of gold. Manuel did not allow his troops to excavate the graves of the Mas‘ūd mother and sent the polite letter to the sultans’ wife.⁶²⁷ According to Kinnamos, the wife of the sultan was ready to send to Manuel two

⁶²⁵ L. Neville, “Lamentation, History, and Female Authorship in Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 53.1, (2013): 192– 218.

⁶²⁶ One can find similar sentiments in Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium*, 190-191.

⁶²⁷ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 46, lines 51-53.

hundred oxen to avoid the pillage of the suburbs, but did not send it, because the Byzantine army destroyed the surroundings of the city. This did not prevent her from accepting the letter with the excuses from the young emperor.

Kinnamos introduced the story of his letter exchange in the description of siege of Ikonion which is generally compliment to Manuel I Komnenos. The sultan's wife here has an ambiguous position. On the one hand, she acts as an independent power-broker who receives letters and has at her disposal considerable material resources. In some way, the anonymous "sultan's wife" is Kinnamos analogue of Mother of Emir in *Digenis*, who is also writing letter and managing households. The question remains, who was this wife and what Kinnamos knew about it. If the wife in question is the mother of Kılıç Arslān II of Ikonion, then the whole story may have a different reading. According to Nazarenko, the mother of Kılıç Arslan was not the local princess, but the Christian woman of status from the family of Russian prince, Yaroslav the Wise.⁶²⁸ If this is correct (and if the Byzantine knew about it), then the letter exchange between "wife of sultan" and Manuel I Komnenos is logical. The Christian wife of the sultan is confessionally closer to the Byzantine emperor, than to her husband, the rebellious sultan. The letter exchange becomes possible precisely because of the liminal status of the sultan's wife in the *Deeds* by Kinnamos.

The political liminality of the wife of Mas'ūd is even more possible, if one incorporates into analysis another lady of the Ikonian court, namely the daughter of Mas'ūd of Ikonion present in *History* of Niketas Choniates. Niketas Choniates reported, that during the Byzantine expedition against Ikonion a certain lady read to the emperor from the walls of the Seljuk capital the "convincing justification" for the actions of her father, sultan Mas'ūd of Ikonion.⁶²⁹ In some way, the daughter of the sultan performed the male function and presented the arguments to

⁶²⁸ Nazarenko, Aleksander.] Назаренко А.В. "Правнучка Ярослава Мудрого – мать иконийского султана Килидж-Арслана II" (Greatgranddaughter of Jaroslav the Wise – mother of sultan of Ikonion Kılıç Arslan II). In *Florilegium. Сборник трудов к 60-летию Б.Н. Флоры* (Florilegium. Issued on the 60th anniversary of B. N. Florya), ed. A. Turilov, 255-264. Moscow: Языки русской культуры, 2004.

⁶²⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 53, lines 50-51; Magoulias translates it as "persuasive defense" see *City of Byzantium*, 53.

justify the actions of her father, the sultan, who ran away. First, the daughter of the sultan in this episode is semi-Byzantine, because, as Choniates informed his readers, she married the son of Byzantine defector Isaakios Komnenos. Being “Byzantinized” through marriage, she acquired the right of speech in Choniates eyes. In my opinion, the speech was effective. According to *History*, after the speech Manuel left the city and returned back to his own land.

The short episode has the different aim from the letter exchange present in the *Deeds*. The key actor here is not the liminal daughter, but Manuel Komnenos who listened to her speech and lifted the siege of the enemy capital. According to *Historia*, the Seljuk princess was not the only woman to manipulate Manuel. The young emperor was “ungovernable” in his sexual desire and had sex with many women, including his female relatives.⁶³⁰ The paragraph about the elopement of young emperor in *Historia* follows the story of the failed sieges of Ikonion and the “convincing justification” provided by the Seljuk princess.

Both paragraphs describe Manuel from the negative side, as the passionate person who is easily manipulated into trouble. The anxiety of Choniates completes well the description of John Kinnamos, who argued that Manuel I Komnenos in his expedition to Ikonion hoped to demonstrate his skills to the courtiers of his new “Latin” wife and brought the army close to failure.⁶³¹ Both Kinnamos and Choniates described Manuel Komnenos in 1146 as a manipulable youth who wished to demonstrate his “male” status even with the risk to his life. Choniates introduced the Seljuk princess into his story to highlight the manipulability of the young emperor.

Thus, the only Seljuk women present in the Byzantine sources are two female characters which had implicit or explicit connections with Byzantium. This connection made them visible for the Byzantine literati, John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates writing in the second half of the twelfth century and gave them voice. While Kinnamos used the whole episode to highlight the noble qualities of Manuel, Niketas Choniates turned it into the scene of *Kaiserkritik*. The semi-

⁶³⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 54, lines 70-71.

⁶³¹ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 47.

Seljuk women of power in both scenes are hardly more than the literary devices.

On the other hand, Kinnamos' reference to the multitude of oxen and independent decision making of Mas'ūd's wife has many analogues in the thirteenth century.⁶³² The presence of the oxen and other material assets is actually the sign of "otherness," the barbarity and difference. Very much like with "Persian drinking" analyzed above, it is the sign of the separation, that Kinnamos introduced into his *Deeds*. The Byzantine women found monasteries and sponsored works of literati are not supposed to manage oxen. This is equally true for the Ikonian princess in *History* of Choniates. The rhetoric of the princess, however persuasive it was, is the literary device, that the Byzantine male literatus used to describe the weakness of the emperor. With this misogynic statement in mind, one can pass to the conclusions of this lengthy chapter.

8. Conclusion

As I demonstrated above, one can hardly speak of the presence of any single stereotyped image of the "Persian" figures of authority. Nevertheless, there are some important points and moments which resonate in all the sources.

First, the Byzantine literati did not construct the authority of the Persians at a glance. Starting from the 1080s, they gathered and interpreted information about the Seljuk authority. The military defeats at Manzikert (1071) and Myriokephalon (1076) stimulated the data-gathering. This led to the emergence of the complex image of the Seljuk authority in Byzantine rhetoric. By the end of the twelfth century, the learned people around the throne could reconstruct well with the complex relations of cultural brokers and powerful ladies at the court of Ikonion.

The first figure of Seljuk authority in Byzantine rhetoric was the sultan. In the eleventh century (and especially after Manzikert) the sultan of the Great Seljuks was considered to be

⁶³² See comparable examples in S. Redford, "Rape of Anatolia," 112-114.

equal to the Byzantine emperor and became a legitimate partner for negotiations.⁶³³ John Skylitzes (or more probably his source) portrayed the dynasty of the Great Seljuks in terms similar to the contemporary descriptions of the Komnenoi. The assistant of Alexios I Komnenos also tried to translate the meaning of the term “sultan” for his audience with Achaemenid simile, equating Tughril Beg to the Sassanian king of the old days. In some sense, this renaming allowed Byzantines to explain their military losses to the Great Seljuks.

In the twelfth century, the Byzantines had to familiarize themselves with the lesser potentates of the Turks, begs and atabegs. To describe these petty leaders, Komnenian literati introduced the Persianized terminology that suited the purposes of the court propaganda. The Byzantine literati realized the illusion of this renaming.⁶³⁴ However, the Byzantine literati did not find proper words for all the institutions of the Great Seljuks and (very much like Crusader) had to improvise on the spot. Prodromos had to introduce “Persarches” for *malik* Amīr Ghazi Dānişmend, while Anna Komnene used the term archsatrap to denote the *atabeg*. Each of the new terms was the part of the propaganda machine that glorified the renovated Roman Empire of Komnenoi.

The propaganda machine glorified the imperial victories over the Persians, representing sultan and his subordinates as Darius and his Persians, while the Byzantine emperor occupied the place of victorious Alexander the Great. The Byzantine literati lauded the victory of masculine Romans over effeminate, excotised Persians, who drank too much wine. At the same time the paradigm of emperor-Alexander the Great and sultan Darius which Michael Italikos, Nikephoros Basilakes and Euthymios Malakes inserted in their panegyrics to John II and Manuel I Komnenos may have appealed to the elite of Ikonion, who knew well about the Alexander-romance and who could benefit from playing the roles of the satraps in the Byzantine

⁶³³ This complements well to the argument of Alicia Walker about the imagined equality of the emperor of Byzantium in the eleventh century. According to Walker, sultan of the Great Seljuks Tughril Beg that the latter expressed through the gifts Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 80-81.

⁶³⁴ Writing in the 1150s, Anna Komnene had to explain to her audience that Seljuk amīr is “satrap.” Of

performance.⁶³⁵

The Byzantine representations of Seljuk power include many elements which could appeal both to the Byzantines and the Turks. The perception of the Anatolian sultans changed much with time. In the eleventh century none of their leaders was considered equal to Byzantine emperors. They were portrayed as persons of lower ranks. In the second half of the twelfth century one can note the rise of the sultan of Ikonion. In the *Speech of 1161* Euthymios Malakes labelled him as the new Darius. Finally, in the works of Niketas Choniates they occupy the place of the great sultans of *Alexiad*, acting as the key antagonists of Byzantine emperors. Thus, the image of the Persian authority in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates reflected the decline of Komnenoi and the ultimate victory of the Persians.

Thus, the image of the Seljuk authority in the sources depended on the political balance in Anatolia. In the time of inter-Byzantine troubles (the 1080s, the 1190s) the authors (Niketas Choniates and Michael Attaleiates respectively) tended to compare the ruling Byzantine emperor with his Seljuk counterpart, using the figure of sultan for *Kaiserkririk*. Both Choniates and Attaleiates used literary devices and motives inherited from Procopius of Caesarea (who described the ideal Huns and criticized the Roman Empire through the mouth of the Persian ambassadors).

To conclude, the Byzantine literati demonstrated considerable interest towards the figures of authority among the Great Seljuks and Turks of Asia Minor alike. This interest appeared in the Kinnamos description of the powerful sultan's wife, owner of of and sheep as well as in the Anna's description of the murder of Malikshāh I quoted in the beginning of this chapter. At the same time, the interest of the Byzantine literati towards the Seljuk authority was a concrete that they used to re-create the boundary which separated the Romans and the Turks. Another boundary line lied in the sphere of religion, which is the subject of the next chapter.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁵ The positioning of Kılıç Arslan II as descendant of Darius of Persia also could remind the Turkic audience about the family connections between the sultans of Ikonion and Great Seljuks.

⁶³⁶ It seems possible that Crusaders during the first Crusade borrowed some of the the Byzantine terms

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Chapter V. The Seljuk Beliefs

In the eleventh and during the first half of the twelfth centuries, Anatolia (much like Dihistan) was the borderland of the Seljuk world.⁶³⁷ In the 1960s, Xavier de Planhol noted that to be an observant Muslim one has to have a mosque, which the Turks of the twelfth century supposedly lacked.⁶³⁸ Some years later, the author of the seminal study *De-Hellenisation of Asia Minor* Speros Vryonis Jr argued that the nomads who appeared in Asia Minor were effectively Muslim.⁶³⁹ According to Vryonis, the nomads had contributed to the de-hellenization of Anatolian countryside and to the decline of Byzantium Vryonis imagined Islam (before Seljuks and after the Seljuks) to be an aggressive military force.⁶⁴⁰ His opponent Claude Cahen argued that the key factor in islamization were the institutions of the organized Islam and the state institution of the sultanate of the Great Seljuks.⁶⁴¹

Both Cahen and Vryonis did not focus their studies on the twelfth century and, resultantly, projected on it their concept of islamization of Anatolia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. More recently, some works on the coexistence of Christians and Muslims in the early Ottoman state described the many institutions of Anatolian Islam as well as the later conversions in the region.⁶⁴² More recently, Byzantinists and specialists on the medieval Middle East contributes to the discussion of discuss the religious situation in the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Anatolia, but hardly in the twelfth.⁶⁴³ Resultantly, the connection between

⁶³⁷ Peacock, *Early Seljuq History*, 144-149.

⁶³⁸ Xavier de Planhol, "Geographical Setting of the Muslim World", in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. P. M. Holt, A.K.S. Lambton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 446.

⁶³⁹ This position is currently embraced and supported by the modern Turkish state. Speros Vryonis Jr., "The Nomadization and Islamization in Asia Minor", *DOP* 29 (1975) 41-75, esp. 41-50. See also, A. Beihammer, "Religious Antagonism," 5-7; A. Stone, "Stemming the Turkish Tide: Eustathios of Thessaloniki on the Seljuk Turks," *BS* 62 (2004): 125-143.

⁶⁴⁰ Vryonis, *The Decline*, 422.

⁶⁴¹ C. Cahen, *La Turquie Pre-Ottoman*, 208-210.

⁶⁴² T. Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁶⁴³ See for instance, *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, B. de Nicola and S.N. Yildiz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015); Balivet, Michèle. "Entre Byzance et Konya: l'intercirculation des

“islamization” and “nomadization” remains the dominant framework in our interpretations of the history of the region.

The progress in the study of material culture is in striking contrast with the study of the literary sources. Few publications address the question of Anatolian Islam as it is attested in the scarce Byzantine sources.⁶⁴⁴ In his article on the image of Islam, Alexander Beihammer focused primarily on conversions from Christianity to Islam and political implications of those conversions.⁶⁴⁵ Most recently, Rustam Shukurov described the Byzantine views of Seljuk Islam in the subchapter of his monograph. According to Shukurov, the Byzantines perceived Islam as the variant of paganism and associated it with barbarity.⁶⁴⁶

The present chapter represents an attempt to reconstruct the Byzantine views of the Turks as the religious Other portrayed in Byzantine rhetoric, studying evidence produced in the timespan from the battle at Manzikert up to the beginning of the thirteenth century. The aim of the chapter is to study the connections between sources of different genre (poetry, epistles, rhymed panegyrics, encomia, histories) and to pinpoint key elements that the Byzantine *literati* used to construct the religious otherness of the Turks. The chapter will also check the existing concept of “islamization” of Anatolia and “paganisation” of Seljuk Islam against the eleventh- and twelfth-century Byzantine sources.

The first part of the chapter analyzes the religious identification of the Turks in the eleventh-century Byzantine rhetoric and continue with the analysis of the religious labels for the Turks in Komnenian rhetoric. I will also discuss the so-called howling of the Turks in the Byzantine and Latin sources and the Byzantine reading of this phenomenon. The final part of the chapter deals with the Byzantine polemics against Islam in the second half of the twelfth century. Stories about conversion are absent from this chapter. They are discussed in Chapter VI that focused on the cases of border-crossing. There I also examine several twelfth-century canon law

idées et des hommes au temps des Seldjoukides.” In M. Balivet, *Mélanges Byzantines, Seldjoukides et Ottomans*. (Istanbul: Isis, 2005), 31-42.

⁶⁴⁴ Anthony Kaldellis argued that the Byzantines were “ultimately indifferent” interested in the religion of the Other, including Islam. See Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 136.

⁶⁴⁵ Beihammer, “Christian Views of Islam in Early Seljuq Anatolia,” 51-56.

⁶⁴⁶ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 53-55.

commentaries which mention the religion of the Turks.

Before analysing how Turks feature in the framework of Byzantine apocalypticism, it is necessary to define the word “religion.” I use in it. The *Oxford Dictionary of Social Sciences* (2002) reproduces Emile Durkheim's classical definition of religion as “simultaneously a social institution, consisting of a system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, and a moral community”.⁶⁴⁷ The absence of precise information makes any study of the Seljuk religion in the Durkheimian sense problematic. The very word “religion” is problematic. It is absent from the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. *Lexikon des Mittelalters* translates it with the German “Glaube” and.⁶⁴⁸

The Byzantines did not use the term “religion” in modern sense. For them, there was only one *faith* – the Constantinopolitan Orthodoxy – and all others were more or less wrong.⁶⁴⁹ The Byzantine rhetors did not know about the division of religious and secular that hardly existed in Byzantium.⁶⁵⁰ The second reason for my choice of the term “religion” lies in the modern connotations. The term “religion” suggests a complex and developed professional organization which was not present in the Seljuk polities of Anatolia until the end of the twelfth century.

For the sake of clarity, I define the object of this chapter as a study of the Seljuk beliefs which I understand as the manifestations of the Seljuk attitudes towards the supernatural, as presented in Byzantine sources. The aim of this chapter is not to establish the degree of Islamization of the Anatolian Turks, but to see how the Byzantines perceived the beliefs of their pastoralist neighbors.

⁶⁴⁷ See “Religion” in *Dictionary of Social Sciences*, ed. C. Calhoun (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) available at <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780195123715.001.0001/acref-9780195123715-e-1432?rskey=Ecp0DQ&result=1432> (Last Accessed 09.28.2015)

⁶⁴⁸ *LMA*, VII, 690.

⁶⁴⁹ For the sake of simplification, one can imagine Byzantine classification of beliefs as an axis with the Constantinopolitan Christianity on the one side, absence of any God on the other and some meddling θρησκεία/ in between. Byzantine writers pin images of the Seljuk characters in different places on this axis. What matters here is the presence of these “pins” in the works of lower linguistic register, as for instance the monastic acts from Asia Minor and one of the versions of the Byzantine epic *Digenis Akritis*.

⁶⁵⁰ Angold, *Church and Society*, 15.

1. Gog and Magog. Turks in Byzantines Apocalypticism?

The first writer of the eleventh century to express an opinion on the beliefs of the Seljuk Turks was Michael Attaleiates. Attaleiates was the first to inscribe the Turks into the Christian religious picture in the traditional role of a “weapon of the Lord.” According to Attaleiates, the God-obeying anonymous sultan [Alp-Arslan] was the “weapon of the Lord”, while on the collective level the ‘weapon of the Lord’ were his subordinates, the Turks and the Huns.

In his description of the battle of Manzikert (1071), Attaleiates introduced a theological explanation for the Seljuk victory. According to Attaleiates, the Turks (this label has negative connotations) “were ascribing the whole thing [i.e., capturing the Byzantine emperor] to [sic!] God”.⁶⁵¹ Attaleiates continues by relating two conversations between the sultan i.e., Alp Arslān, and the captured emperor Romanos Diogenes.⁶⁵² In a remark inserted between the two conversations Michael Attaleiates praised the Seljuk sultan ([Alp Arslān of the Great Seljuks]) for being righteous towards the captured emperor:

The God’s will (κρίσις) was shown here to be just and infallible... for he [the sultan] consciously carried out the divine law due to his good natural disposition.⁶⁵³

In this episode, Attaleiates described the ruler of the Seljuk Turks, the anonymous sultan, as someone who had knowledge of Christian Law without being a Christian. The vocabulary is interesting because Attaleiates, being a military judge (*krites*), presents the battle as the Lord’s judgment (*krisis*). As the first subchapter (“The enter of the sultan”) of Chapter IV argues, the sultan performed the role of the “good barbarian” who is better than the emperor Romanos

⁶⁵¹ For the eleventh-century connotations for the term “Turks” see Subchapter I of chapter I, “The Collective labels.”

⁶⁵² I analyse both dialogs in detail in Chapter VI, “Seljuk Kaleidoscope”, subchapter “The Victor of Manzikert”.

⁶⁵³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakakis 127, line 23-127, line.1 (tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 301): ὁπότε καὶ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ κρίσις μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων κἀν ταῦθα δικαία καὶ ἀρρεπῆς κατεφάνη, οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἄλλοι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ ἀλώθεις βασιλεὺς, ἄξιονεῖναι νικᾶν αὐτὸν ἀπεφήνατο, εἰ νόμον μὴ ἔχων ἀγαπᾶντοὺς ἐχθροὺς, ἀνεπαισθήτως ποιεῖτον θεῖον νόμον ἐκ φυσικῆς καὶ ἀγαθῆς διαθέσεως.

Diogenes and much better than the Doukai who later persecuted and blinded defeated Romanos. For Michael Attaleiates, the Christianization of the anonymous Seljuk sultan is part of the *Kaiserkritik* construction and not a statement concerning the actual religious beliefs of the Seljuk Turks.⁶⁵⁴

Shortly before the battle of Manzikert, the Turks desolated Asia Minor and demonstrated their hostility against many holy places, including the famous shrine of Basil in Caesarea. According to Attaleiates, the Turks destroyed and defiled the church.⁶⁵⁵ Attaleiates labeled the Turks as barbarians, but did not say a single word about their beliefs. He also narrated in detail the story of the Seljuk sack of the famous shrine of Archangel Michael in Chonae, which, in all likelihood, took place in 1070.⁶⁵⁶ “They had filled that place with slaughter and filth,” wrote Attaleiates, noting that the slaughter and the death of many fugitives in the shrine was a manifestation of divine wrath. This time, he connected the sacrilege with the “the Hun army”, or in other words, with the Great Seljuk, portraying them as the weapon of the divine wrath against the Byzantines.

Attaleiates pointed again to the Turks as the instrument of divine Justice in his description of the rebellion of Nikephoros Botaneiates (1078).⁶⁵⁷ According to *Historia*, the Turks of Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish joined the rebel at Nicaea and recognized Nikephoros as the supreme ruler. They assisted Botaneiates in routing the royal troops mobilized by the ruling emperor Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078) and followed him to Constantinople. Their arrival was announced by a strange omen, a river of fire, that came from the East by air, crossed the Bosphorus and besieged the city, coming up to the palace of Blachernae.⁶⁵⁸ According to Attaleiates, this river of fire was a positive omen which announced the coming of Nikephoros Botaneiates. The Turks, as Attaleiates noted, stopped at the city of Chalcedon.⁶⁵⁹

The combination of the details of the church desecration, the celestial fire coming from

⁶⁵⁴ Ignored by Tinnefeld. See, Tinnefeld, *Kaiserkritik*, 138-145.

⁶⁵⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 74.

⁶⁵⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 109, lines 13-18:

⁶⁵⁷ For outdated (but still only existing) summary see Chalandon, *Essai sur le règne*, 33-34.

⁶⁵⁸ Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 186, lines 5-7.

⁶⁵⁹ Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 213, lines 5-7.

Bithynia and the enemy who puts up his tent so that it can be seen from Constantinople is hardly coincidental. The same elements are present in the text known as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.⁶⁶⁰ According to the extant Greek version of Pseudo-Methodius, the barbarians from the East were destined to conquer Persia, Armenia and Cappadocia because of the sins of the Christians.⁶⁶¹ Their coming to Bithynia will be “like the fire devouring everyone” and the “first of them will pitch the tent” before Constantinople.⁶⁶² Finally, the *Apocalypse* (very much like later Michael Attaleiates) mentioned the Persians and the Turks.⁶⁶³

The Turks of the *Apocalypse* came from the east through Persia, Armenia and Cappadocia, plundered churches and finally came to Constantinople with the river of fire preceding them on the way. On the other hand, Michael Attaleiates did not include in his *Historia* any references to the text of the *Apocalypse* and did not quote the text itself. When describing the Turks at Chalcedon, Attaleiates used the verb (κατασκηνόω) that looks suspiciously similar to the terms Pseudo-Methodius used to describe the enemy who will stand at the the gates of Byzantium before the Apocalypse (στήσει ὁ πρῶτος αὐτῶν τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ κατέναντί σου Βύζα). However, this might be just a coincidence. The reasons the two texts single out as invoking divine punishment are also different. In the *Historia*, the barbarians punish the Byzantines for the sins of their emperors, namely for cruelty and greed, while in the *Apocalypse* the particular sins are promiscuity and same-sex relations.⁶⁶⁴

Michael Attaleiates was not the only one to hint at the providential role of the Turks. The association of the Turks with the so-called unclean nations was nothing new to the Eastern Mediterranean of the eleventh century. In the tradition of Islam, the Turkish advance from the Central Asia to the Syria and Palestine was associated with the Apocalypse from the seventh

⁶⁶⁰The earliest manuscript of the Greek version dates back to the thirteenth century. See *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius: die ältestengriechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen*, ed. W. Aerts. G.A.A. Kortekaas, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium. Subsidia*, vol. 97 (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 68. (henceforward *Apocalypse*).

⁶⁶¹*Apocalypse*, ed. W. Aerts, 143-144

⁶⁶²*Apocalypse*, ed. W. Aerts, 144, line 2.

⁶⁶³*Apocalypse*, *ibid.*, line 6.

⁶⁶⁴ See *Apocalypse*, ed. W. Aerts, 162.

century onwards.⁶⁶⁵ In the eleventh century, several notable members of the non-Chalcedonian churches of the time, primarily the Syrians and the Armenians, explicitly labeled the eleventh-century Turks the people of the Apocalypse.⁶⁶⁶ In eleventh-century Western Europe, the *Apocalypse* and the connected legend of the last Emperor seem to have been a popular reading.⁶⁶⁷ It is likely that the text circulated also in eleventh-century Byzantium, but the absence of manuscripts and explicit references to the text makes any further discussion speculation as to the presence of Pseudo-Methodius in Attaleiates' library problematic.⁶⁶⁸

To conclude, the judge and courtier Michael Attaleiates described the incursions of the Seljuk Turks against some Christian shrines in Asia and inscribed them in the religious worldview of eleventh-century Byzantium. For Attaleiates, the Turks are barbarians, who pillage and burn the shrines as revenge for the sins of the Byzantines. Their leader, the sultan, is fulfilling the Christian law. Michael Attaleiates was the first one to describe the Turks as the weapon of God's wrath. Some messages of the *Historia* point to the fact that Attaleiates might have wished to focus the attention of his readers on the moments evoking the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* in order to amplify his message about the desperate position of Byzantium. In other words, both the "lawfulness" of the Turks and their apocalyptic features attributed to their image are part of the literary construction that aims to explain the reasons for the loss of Asia and express anxiety about the future of the Roman Empire.⁶⁶⁹

Michael Attaleiates was not the only Byzantine to experience anxiety and apocalyptic inspiration in the eleventh-century Constantinople. According to John Zonaras, another eye-

⁶⁶⁵ E. van Donzel, A. Schmidt, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 75-76.

⁶⁶⁶ A. Beihammer, "Die Ethnogenese" 595; M. Dickens, *Medieval Syriac Historians on the Turks*. MA Thesis defended at the University of Cambridge, (Cambridge, UK: 2004), 29-32; Z. Pogossian, "The Last Emperor or the Last Armenian King? Some Considerations on Armenian Apocalyptic Literature from the Cilician Period," in *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition: A Comparative Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 459-471.

⁶⁶⁷ J. Rubenstein, *Armies of Heaven: The First Crusade and the Quest for Apocalypse*, (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 27-29.

⁶⁶⁸ W. Aertz, G. Kortekaas, "Einleitung," in *Apocalypse*, 17-19.

⁶⁶⁹ The original text of Pseudo-Methodius also expressed anxiety about the geopolitical pressure. See B. Garstad, "Introduction" in *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, ed. B. Garstad (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), xiii; A. Beihammer, "Orthodoxy and Religious Antagonism," 5.

witness of the Seljuk conquest, demonstrated a keen interest to apocalypsis. In the poem written after the death of Alexios, his personal doctor Nicholas Kallikles mentioned the fresco of the Last Judgement that Alexios ordered to put up on the wall of the Great Palace. According to John Zonaras, towards the end of his life, Alexios I Komnenos hoped to go to Jerusalem and to put his diadem at the Holy Sepulchre.⁶⁷⁰ John Zonaras blamed the monks for this strange gesture of the dying emperor, while Anna Komnene left it without a comment. The wish of Alexios has a direct analogue in Pseudo-Methodius. According to this prophecy, the Last Emperor coming from Constantinople should leave his diadem in the Holy Sepulchre.

To sum up, one can hardly speak about any apocalyptic wave in the eleventh-century Byzantium. Few quotes provided above allow one to hypothesize about the presence of the apocalyptic motives in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates, and post-mortem evidence about Alexios I Komnenos. If this paradigm is correct (and the Byzantine literati expected apocalypse to come soon), then the Turks with their just ruler are people of Apocalypse. At the same time, different group of literati in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries described the Turks as the “Hagarenes,” the followers of the Arabs of the Caliphate.⁶⁷¹

2. The Godless Descendants of Hagar in the long age of Alexios I Komnenos

Michael Attaleiates was present at the battle of Manzikert (1071). Some ten years earlier, the monastic communities of Byzantine Syria were suffering from the continuous warfare between different nomadic groups, local notables, and the remnants of Byzantine border forces. One of the leaders of this monastic community was Nikon of the Black Mountain, a former Byzantine military man and founder of a monastery near Antioch. He was one of the first (and not the last) among Byzantine clergymen to describe the Seljuk Turks and the providential role they play in

⁶⁷⁰ John Zonaras, *Epitome Historion*, ed. L. Dindorfius 761, lines 8-13: διάδημα αὐτὸν

⁶⁷¹ This makes a big difference from Pseudo-Methodius, who called the enemies from the East as “Ishmaelites”, See B. Garstad, “Introduction,” in *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, 7-9.

the history of Christianity. Interestingly, his point was close to the one made by Attaleiates.⁶⁷² In a letter addressed to his brother and monk, Nikon perceived the Seljuk Turks as a temptation: “The temptation comes against the humans because they do not observe the laws of the Lord”.⁶⁷³ For Nikon, the Turks were a temporary temptation. As a consolation, his brother (an experienced monk) reminded him about the obeisance to the divine law.

This situation started to develop at the end of the eleventh century. John of Oxeites, titular patriarch of Antioch, inserted it in his critical oration against Alexios I Komnenos delivered in 1092.⁶⁷⁴ According to John, at the time of writing of his work “the nation of wild and most godless Turks” oppressed Byzantium together with other nations, namely the Franks and the Cumans.⁶⁷⁵ Oxeites did not use the combination of two negative epithets for the Franks or the Cumans, but reserved it for the Turks, enhancing his critical pathos with the alliteration. The imperial reply to John’s oration was swift and the titular patriarch of Antioch was sent to his see, which in 1092 was the contested zone between different groups of the Seljuk Turks, local emirs and a hot spot.⁶⁷⁶

The reference to the “wild and godless” nation is also repeated by the anonymous author of the founding charter of St. John’s monastery on the island of Patmos. The founder of the monastery, Christodoulos (fl. circa 1100), experienced many troubles with “the godless Turks.”

The hand of the Persians, the ferocity of the Turks that wiped out the whole of the east and devastated it cruelly. The lawless nation, destroyer of towns and countryside alike attacked that land too, bringing the same destruction upon its

⁶⁷² For the monk Nikon, see R. Allison, “Black Mountain: Regulations of Nikon of Black Mountain” in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders Typica and Testaments*, ed. John Thomas and Angela Hero (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000), 377-383.

⁶⁷³ Виктор Бенешевич [Viktor Beneshevich], “Тактикон Никона Черногорца,” [Taktikon of St. Nikon of Black Mountain], in *Записки Историко-Филологического Факультета Петроградского Университета* [Notices of the Department of History and Philology of Saint-Petersburg University], vol. 6 (Saint-Petersburg: Saint-Petersburg University Press, 1917), 10.:

⁶⁷⁴ About a case of *Kaiserkritik* against Alexios, see Margaret Mullett, “The imperial vocabulary of Alexios Komnenos,” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. M. Mullett, Dyon T. Smithe, 359-398.

⁶⁷⁵ Tiziano Creazzo, *Joannis Oxeitae oratio de monasteries laicis on tradendis* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’ alto medioevo, 2004) XVIII, 266; P. Magdalino, “Aspect of the Twelfth-Century Byzantine *Kaiserkritik*,” 332.

⁶⁷⁶ See Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 68-75.

inhabitants. Because the multitude of our sins daily increased the successes of the Hagarenes, they did not leave us untroubled in that mountain either, where we had taken refuge. For there was not a hole hidden from the godless [beasts].⁶⁷⁷

Christodoulos identified the Turks and the analogy with the Hagarenes, the warriors of the Abbasid Caliphate.⁶⁷⁸ The tone of the spatial description and the totality of the godless enemy present in it reminds one of the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* which used the same language. Christodoulos explicitly connected the Turks with the Hagarenes, the Arabs of the past, whose day are gone.

Another document that comes from a similar context and probably from a similar date, a poetic epigram preserved on the margins of Athonite manuscript, also wished emperor a victory against “those from the root of Hagar.”⁶⁷⁹ Finally, in the mid-twelfth century Athonite text called *Narration of Letter Exchange between Alexios and Patriarch Nikolaos*, the anonymous author made Alexios I Komnenos speak about the Lord that delivered the empire from the Hagarenes who occupied Damalis.⁶⁸⁰ One may interpret it as the types of addresses emperor used in the communication with his subjects not in the mid-twelfth century, but at the earlier age, There is

⁶⁷⁷ Note the difference between “the Persians” and “the Turks” that is present in the non-ecclesiastical sources of the era. Christodoulos, *Typicon of Monastery of St. John*, in, *Acta et diplomata monasteriorum et ecclesiarum orientis*, ed. F. Miklosich and J. Muller, vol. V (Vienna: 1890), 61, line 34-62, line 4: τὴν περσικὴν δεξιὰν καὶ τὴν τῶν Τούρκων ὁμότητα, ἢ τὴν ἐφ’ ἃς πᾶσαν ἐξηφάνισε καὶ χαλεπῶς ἐδήλωσε. Τὸ ἄνομον ἔθνος τὸ διολέσαν πόλεις καὶ χώρας, τοῦτο καὶ κατ’ ἐκείνης τῆς χώρας τὸν ἴσον ὄλεθρον ἐπιφέρων τοῖς ἐν οἰκοῦσιν ἡμῶν, καὶ τὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτιῶν πλήθος ἐπαυξάνον ὁδοῦσαι ἡμέραι τὴν τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν εὐημερίαν οὐδὲ τὴν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ὄρει φυγαδεῖαν ἡμῖν εἶσεν ἂν ἐν ὀχλήτῳ· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τρυμαλιά τις διέλαθε τοὺς ἀθέους. I adapted the translation with minor corrections from *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents*, Vol. 5, (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Library, 2000), 264.

Available at

<http://www.doaks.org/resources/publications/doaks-online-publications/byzantine-monastic-foundation-documents/typ033.pdf>. [last accessed at 15.05.2016]

⁶⁷⁸ The “Hagarenes” was a usual label for the subordinates of the Abbasid Caliphate. See e.g. Andriollo, “Il de “Creta Capta” di Teodosio Diacono,” 46-47.

⁶⁷⁹ Anonymous, “Ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς σύμμορφος ἀτρεκὴς Λόγος,” in S. Efstratyadis, “Ἀγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα,” *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 1(1917):52-53 quoted in *Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams*, ed. F. Bernard, 1301 (<http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/bibliography/view/id/1301/> Last Accessed 26.01.2016); for three earlier examples of rhymed epigrams in the Byzantine manuscripts see Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry From Pisides to Geometres*, 202-206.

⁶⁸⁰ Anonymous, *Narration of Epistle Exchange*, 177, lines 27-30.

also a chance that the Byzantine literati positioned the Turks as the “those of Hagar” in the many letters that they send to Europe in the wake of the First Crusade, but this question needs further consideration.⁶⁸¹

In the second half of the Alexios’ reign (1097-1118) the Byzantine ecclesiastical literati begin using a more aggressive rhetoric to castigate their religious opponents. A good example is one of the letters bishop Theophylact of Ohrid sent to his friend and pupil, Gregory Taronites-Gabras. He was a disciple of Theophylact, waged a successful campaign against the Danishmendids in Paphlagonia, and later had very problematic relations with Alexios Komnenos.⁶⁸² The letter dates back to 1092 when Gregory attacked amīr Danishmend in the region of Trebizond.⁶⁸³

In the complex letters, the bishop wishes that his disciple fights the Turks in the spiritual armor of a Christian warrior. According to the eloquent bishop, his disciple, friend and should fight them bravely:

I wish that they [the Turks] will be weakened, and they will fall off from their slanders, and *you will follow them closely; you will seize them*⁶⁸⁴ moreover, you would press them, so with your palm, you will pursue as a mud those, who love the hand of godless Mohammed.⁶⁸⁵

The letter includes several quotes from book of the Psalms.⁶⁸⁶ Two quotes come from Psalm 18 that speaks of king David, who was saved from Saul on the day of the battle. The main

⁶⁸¹ For the recent mention of “Byzantine Epistles” in the context of the First Crusade, see Asbridge, *The First Crusade: a New History* 20 and J. Rubinstein, *Armies of Heaven*, 9-10. Both treat Byzantium through a colonial perspective. For a different approach see Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 48-49.

⁶⁸² On him see A. Bryer, “A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades, c. 979 – c. 1653,” *University of Birmingham Historical Journal* 12 (1972): 164-187.

⁶⁸³ For the other letters sent by Theophylact to Asia Minor see M. Mullett, “1098 and all that: Theophylact bishop of Semnea and the Alexian reconquest of Anatolia” *Peritia* 10 (1996): 237-252; M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, 235.

⁶⁸⁴ Ps. 17:38.

⁶⁸⁵ Theophylact of Ohrid, *Lettres*, ed. Gautier, (Thessaloniki: 1986) Vol. I, 416, lines 25-30: αὐτοὶ ἀσθενήσαιεν καὶ τῶν διαβολιῶν αὐτῶν ἐκπέσοιεν καὶ καταδιώξοις αὐτοὺς καὶ καταλάβοις καὶ ἐκθλίψαις καὶ ὡς πηλὸν πλατειῶν λεάναις τοὺς τὴν πλατεῖαν τοῦ ἀθέου Μωάμετ στέρξαντας.. Translation is mine For a detailed commentary, see Mullett, *Theophylact of Ohrid*, 324-325. For the earlier analogue see K. Förstel, „Schriften zum Islam,“ *Corpus Islamo-Christianum (CISC). Series Graeca* 5 (2000), 70.44:

⁶⁸⁶ The third quote is absent in Gautier’s edition.

theme of this psalm relates to the Lord as the defender of the faithful.⁶⁸⁷ Inserting in his letter three phrases from Psalm, Theophylact constructed his letter around the text of the Old Testament.

If one follows the quotes, that Gregory Gabras is king David, while the Turks are his enemies, who are searching for his soul. To strengthen his message, Theophylact had raised the enemies' status. The Turks are not only godless, but they are also the enemies of David from the Psalms and the enemies of Lord of Hosts. Theophylact says plainly that the Turks are the enemies of the Lord, and the followers of the "godless Muhammad." It seems possible that Theophylact could borrow two of these epithet of the prophet from the another work of Byzantine rhetoric directed against Islam, namely from *Life of Forty-Two Martyrs of Amorion* by Euodios. Thus one can speak about the mobilization of Old Testament for the needs of the Byzantine general, or at least for the needs of Theophylact who wants to support his friend in the day of the battle.

The "God of Mohammad" from the Letter of Theophylact is present in the another monument of Komnenian rhetoric, the theological treatise *Panoplia Dogmatika*,⁶⁸⁸ included a chapter directed against the Muslims. It contained an extensive passage aimed against fake god of Mohammad, the one mentioned by Theophylact of Ohrid in the letter to his student and friend Gregory Taronites-Gabras.⁶⁸⁹ The author of *Panoplia*, Euthymios Zegabenos did not mention the Turks, but the very presence of the extensive chapter aimed at Hagarenes allows one to connect it with the new threat, political and spiritual, that the Byzantine ecclesiastical literati, laic and ecclesiastical alike, had to confront in the beginning of the twelfth century. In the mid-twelfth century, Anna Komnene introduced in her *Alexiad* a short phrase that summarized the religious othering of the Turks.

⁶⁸⁷ For the special role of the Psalms in the Byzantine personal piety, see G. Parpulov, "Psalms and Personal Piety in Byzantium," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010), 81-85.

⁶⁸⁸ For the recent discussion of this text see H. Kusabu, *Comnenian Orthodoxy and Byzantine Heresiology in the twelfth-Century: A Study of the Panoplia Dogmatica of Euthymios Zegabenos*. Ph.D. Thesis defended at the University of Chicago (Chicago, 2013)

⁶⁸⁹ H. Cusabu, *Comnenian Orthodoxy*, 176-189.

Ishmaelites, the kin of those who are the slaves of Eros and Dionysos. more than slaves of the vices of Aphrodite. Hence they reverence and worship Astarte and Ashtaroth, and in their land the figure of the moon and the golden image of Chobar are considered of major importance.⁶⁹⁰

Anna Komnene (very much like Zegabenos before her) mobilized the previous Byzantine tradition that depicted the Muslims both as heretics and idolaters.⁶⁹¹ In the reign of John and Manuel Komnenoi, this tradition coexisted with other ways of speaking about the religious identity of the Turks.

After the death of Alexios (1118), the attitude of the Byzantine literati towards the Turks altered. It is interesting to note that from the second decade of the twelfth century onwards the Byzantine literati downplayed the religious identity of the Turks and focused on their political and spatial identity. In the reign of John II Komnenos the label “Hagarenes” was rarely present in the sources. At the same time modern scholars found in the Komnenian rhetoric some new elements that they connect with the religious identity of the Turks. Both Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos pointed to the special connections of the Turks with the wolves.

3. Howling on the Hills. Turks and wolves in Komnenian Rhetoric

In the early years of John Komnenos, the descendants of Hagar disappeared from the few extant literary works. The association between the Turks and Islam was present in the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*.⁶⁹² Nikephoros Bryennios in the *Historical Material* is also silent about the religion of the Turks.⁶⁹³ All in all, the religious component is less visible than in the Alexian era. The two notable exceptions are the panegyric poems of Theodore Prodromos and

⁶⁹⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 298, lines 43-53 (tr. Frankopan-Sewter, 569): Τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ γένος Διονύσω τε ὑπέκει καὶ Ἑρῶτι ...καὶ τριδούλον τῶν τῆς Ἀφροδίτης κακῶν. Ἐνθεν τοι καὶ τὴν Ἀστάρτην αὐτοὶ καὶ τὴν Ἀσταρῶθ προσκυνοῦσι καὶ σέβονται καὶ τοῦ ἄστρου τὸν τύπον περὶ πλείονος τίθενται καὶ τὴν χρυσὴν παρ' ἐκείνοις Χοβάρ.

⁶⁹¹ For Early Byzantine polemics against Islam see John Meyendorff, “Byzantine Views of Islam,” *DOP* 18 (1964), 113–32; K. Vergeer, “Greek Translations of the Qur’ān in Christian Polemics (9th century A.D.)” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141, No. 1 (1991), 52-68;

⁶⁹² For the difference between the two version please see description of *Digenis Akritis* in Chapter I.4.i.

⁶⁹³ Neville wrote about the “absence of any deep-seated political, cultural and national reasons” in the Bryennios’ image of the Turks. See L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans*, 82.

the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene.

Both Theodore Prodromos and Anna Komnene construct their respective images of the Turks using the concepts of the previous era. For Theodore Prodromos, the Turks of Asia Minor are Hagarenes and Ishmaelites. Prodromos used the religious otherness and legitimize the military campaigns of emperor John II, against the Turks and to highlight the low status of his enemies. The “dog of Ismael” is a typical example of such a label. Anna Komnene, in turn, portrayed her father Alexios I Komnenos as the defender of the Christians against the “the Hagarenes” and “the Ishmaelites”. Thus, both Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos pointed to the religious otherness of the Turks to glorify Alexios I Komnenos and John II Komnenos respectively.

The presence of the hostile “Ishmaelites” is not the only thing that unites the lengthy narrative of Anna Komnene and the poems of Prodromos. The second element is the presence of wolves. Recently, Angeliki Papageorgiou has analyzed the “Turks” represented as “wolves” in the Byzantine literature of the epoch of John Komnenos.⁶⁹⁴ She prefers to read this comparison both as a reflection of some hypothetical spiritual practice related with the wolf as a totem animal and as the Byzantine reflection of Seljuk islam.⁶⁹⁵ According to Papageorgiou, the Byzantine writers use “wolves” because of the similarity between these animals and aggressive raiders. Another reason might be the mysterious wolf-cult that allegedly existed among the Turks. The following subchapter argues that the howling is not only the instrument of othering and description of wolf-cult (if there was any), but the reflection of some actual phenomenon, that many Byzantine soldiers observed during the military conflicts with the Turks.

First of all, the howling barbarians are present in Byzantine rhetoric long before Prodromos. The Scythians (Pechenegs) of the eleventh century are howling like wolves in the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates. According to the eyewitness account of the First Crusade by

⁶⁹⁴ Angeliki Papageorgiou, “οἱ δὲ λύκοι ὡς Πέρσαι: The image of the “Turks” in the reign of John II Komnenos (1118-1143)”, *BS* 1-2 (2011): 149-161; Papageorgiou states that in poem XIX Prodromos attributed to the river Lykos the “usual characteristics of the Turks.” This is questionable. Prodromos in poem XIX used some of the epithets in question like “παμφάγος” to describe the beasts of prey, but never used them for the Turks.

⁶⁹⁵ Angeliki Papageorgiou, “οἱ δὲ λύκοι ὡς Πέρσαι,” 152.

Fulcher of Chartres, during the battle at Dorylaion (1097) the Turks of the sultan of Ikonion Kılıç Arslan I (r. 1092-1107) did howl like wolves.⁶⁹⁶ One can propose that there is a concrete phenomenon behind it, some event that took place at the battlefield.

One of the most vivid description of the howling Turks is a part of the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Below, I analyze a sentence, in which Anna described the slow retreat of the Byzantine army from the fortress of Philomelion.⁶⁹⁷ According to Anna, the army slowly marched back under the flanking attacks of the Seljuk troops of atabeg Monolykos.⁶⁹⁸

All through that day the enemy attacked, but made no progress, unable to disrupt the Roman forces in part or as a whole. In the end they ran off again to the hill-tops having achieved nothing. They lit numerous watch-fires. Throughout the night they were howling like wolves; occasionally they jeered at the Romans, for there were some half-breeds among them who spoke Greek. When day broke Monolykos persisted with his plan.⁶⁹⁹

Anna Komnene introduced her howling Turks in a military context. According to the *Alexiad*, the constant attack of the Turks did not bring any results. The Turks went to spend a night on a hilltop and from the safety of the hills, bilingual people cursed the Byzantines in their language.⁷⁰⁰ The practice of cursing the enemy was widespread in the twelfth century. The Seljuks used it against the Byzantines and Crusader while the Normans and the Hungarians used

⁶⁹⁶ Fulcher of Chartres, *The Expedition to Jerusalem*, ed. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 2013) 194, line 6.

⁶⁹⁷ For the short analysis of this campaign see P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 255-257.

⁶⁹⁸ Kaldellis in his translation called him "Manalough." I stick to the Byzantine version of the name, because I am not sure that "Manalough" is correct reconstruction of the Turkic name. See *Alexiad*, tr. Frankopan-Sewter,

⁶⁹⁹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 474, lines 64 - 75, line 71 (translation Frankopan-Sewter, 898): δι' ὅλης οὖν τῆς ἡμέρας προσβάλλοντες τῷ ῥωμαϊκῷ στρατεύματι καὶ μηδὲν ἡνυκότες μήθ' ὅλως μή τε ἐκ μέρους διασπάσαι τὸ ῥωμαϊκὸν σύν ταγμα δυνηθέντες, αὐθις πρὸς τὰς ἀκρολοφίας ἀνέτρεχον ἄπρακτοι, καὶ πυρσοὺς τηνικαῦτα πλείονας ἀνάψαντες δι' ὅλης νυκτὸς ὠρύοντο καθάπερ λύκοι, ἔστι δ' οὐκ αἱ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους ἀπέσκωπτον· ἥσαν γὰρ καί τινες ἐν αὐτοῖς μιζοβάρβαροι ἐλληνίζοντες. ἀγαζούσης δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας τὰ αὐτὰ μηχανώμενος ὁ Μονόλυκος τοῖς Τούρκοις ἐπέταττε ποιεῖν.

⁷⁰⁰ The word μιζοβάρβαρος demands separate investigation. According to the available data, this term was rare in the twelfth-century rhetoric. In the *Alexiad* it denotes not the people who are children of barbarians, but the one who could converse in more than one language. See Chapter VI.5

it against the Byzantine army.⁷⁰¹ What is interesting in this situation is precisely the the cry of wolves.⁷⁰²

First, Anna, of course, could have borrowed this phrase and image from Prodhomos. She used the image present in several panegyrics to embellish her military narrative and to glorify her father. At the same time, the presence of the howling in the narratives that describe the battle customs of the Western Turks allows one to hypothesize that Anna did not introduce here another topos, but instead described some actual event. To provide the comparative example, I will introduce here the story about the twelfth-century conflict that happened in the steppes between the Byzantine domains in Crimea and the principalities of Rus'.⁷⁰³

Rus' chronicles wrote extensively about many conflicts involving Cuman participation. In one of them, the *Hypatian Codex*, there is information about the involvement of a Cuman group under the famous chief (khan) Bonyak [Khan Maniak of Byzantine sources] in the internecine war in Kievan Rus around 1100.⁷⁰⁴ In this war, the Cumans supported the enemies of the Kievan prince Svyatopolk, who, in turn, was allied with the king of Hungary Ladislaus. The Cumans of Bonyak met with the Hungarian army near the city of Peremishl in modern-day western Ukraine.⁷⁰⁵ In the night before the battle, the khan "moved away from the army and begin to howl like a wolf."⁷⁰⁶

Upon his return after howling, Bonyak said to his Rus' allies that they will win over the

⁷⁰¹ The Seljuks were using threats as a kind of psychological weapon during the battle of Myriokephalon. See Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 193-194.

⁷⁰² Anna does not say that the Turks performed it, but taking into account that half-barbarians were cursing the Byzantines in Greek, one can safely say that it was not semi-barbarians who were howling. Thus, one can safely suppose that it was the Turks.

⁷⁰³ In Book XV of the *Alexiad*, Anna gives an example of a defection of a certain "Scythian" (read "Pecheneg") to the Seljuks. See Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, Ed. Kambylis-Rheinsch, XV.6, 476, lin 33-35.

⁷⁰⁴ On Bonyak-Maniak, see И.О. Князький [I.O. Knyazkiy]. *Византия и кочевники южнорусских степей* [Byzantium and the Nomads of the Southern-Russian Steppes] (Saint-Petersburg: Aleteia, 2003), 96-97.

⁷⁰⁵ See С.А. Плетнева [S.A. Pletneva], "Хан Боняк и его время [Khan Bonyak and his time]," in *Проблемы Археологии* [Archaeological Matters? Problems of Archaeology], vol. II (Leningrad: Nauka, 1974), 174-180.

⁷⁰⁶ See "Hypatian Chronicle" in *Полное Собрание Русских Летописей* [Full Collection of Russian Chronicles], (Saint-Petersburg: Nauka, 1964), year 1093, 245: бонякъ вѣха в рати и поча выти вольчьски. The translation from Old Church Slavonic is mine.

Hungarians on the next day. This prediction proved to be correct and the Hungarians were routed and defeated. Svetlana Pletneva interpreted this description in the Russian chronicle as evidence of the magic power of Bonyak.⁷⁰⁷ Interestingly enough, the military leader of the Turks in the *Alexiad* has a strange wolf-related name. Anna narrated that the leader of the Turks was amīr Monolykos (whose name in Greek means close to “lone wolf”). Anna referred to him as an experienced and clever man. This leader organized an attack against the Byzantines at night and performed an important role in the following peace treaty. If one compares the episode in *Alexiad* with the one present in Hypatian codex, Monolykos is a Byzantine analogue to the Bonyak-Maniak

This comparison allows one to suggest a possible interpretation of the wolf-howling scene of the *Alexiad* as a reflection of the actual ritual performed by the Turkic tribesmen in the night before the battle. Same holds true for the Fulcher of Chartres and probably Theodore Prodromos. Thus, one should speak not of a topos, but about actual phenomenon recorder in many sources. This phenomenon is not a mysterious wolf-ritual, but a special battle-cry that the Western Turks used in battles, both in Black Sea region and Anatolia. In Byzantine sources, the Turks were “wolves” not only because of their general hostility and not because of their Islam but because some of them used the howling as the battle-cry in their wars against the Crusaders, the Byzantines and the Rus.

The architects of the Komnenian discourse were interested in the figures of authority in the Seljuk Turks much more than they were interested in their religion. Islam is present in their work in the form of the labels, while ethnographic information on Seljuk animism is not present at all.⁷⁰⁸ This does not mean that the Byzantine literati of the Alexian era did not have a basic idea concerning the religion of the “other”. The Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* proves it well.

⁷⁰⁷ See Pletneva, *ibid.* Notably, Khazanov in his seminal study says nothing about the “sacralization” of nomadic *chieftdom*. See Khazanov, *Nomads*, 164-174.

⁷⁰⁸ Michael Jeffreys in private conversation said that in one later poem of Manganeios Prodromos the poet mentioned the “fire-priests of the Persians”.

4. Islam in the Grottaferrata version of Digenis Akritis

The Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* is a complex narrative fixed in written form in the fourteenth century. According to the current scholarly consensus, some linguistic layers and the factoids of the narrative date back to the time when Anna Komnene and Theodore Prodromos were writing their works.⁷⁰⁹ Several references to the twelfth- allow one to date the text to the 1130s and the 1140s. While the Turks play a decorative role in this text, one of the protagonists is called Amīr.⁷¹⁰ In the twelfth-century Byzantine rhetoric, this term was used exclusively for the Seljuk Turks.⁷¹¹ Based on this, one can reconstruct the image of Islam in the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* that the audience of the epic probably projected on the Turks.⁷¹²

The author introduced Islam in the first part of the epic. It is the religion of Emir, the father of the protagonist. The anonymous author described him with the traditional method of Komnenian *psychosomatogramma*: he is “well-born and charming”.⁷¹³ This is in contrast with “the Hagarenes and the Ishmaelites, ravening like dogs”, whom the narrator mentions just a few lines earlier.⁷¹⁴

According to the first book of *Digenis*, Emir was a prominent leader in Muslim Syria. He raided Anatolia and abducted the Daughter of the General. The mother of the girl called her four sons, officers at Byzantine army, to save her daughter. The Four Brothers (they all anonymous

⁷⁰⁹ P. Magdalino, “Digenis Akritis and the Byzantine Literature: The twelfth Century Context to Grottaferrata Version,” in *Digenis Akritis: New Approach to the Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, ed. D. Beaton, R. Ricks (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 1-15.

⁷¹⁰ Emir in Jeffreys’ translation.

⁷¹¹ E. Jeffreys, *Digenis Akritis. The Grottaferrata and Escorial versions* [Cambridge Medieval Classics 7 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4, line 45; for the twelfth-century allusions see Chapter III. 5, “The Ideal Borderland. Imagined Space of Grottaferrata *Digenis Akritas*.”

⁷¹² The image of Islam in the Grottaferrata version was used in the lengthy discussion on the “primary version” of the text by whom?. More recently Rustam Shukurov addressed the problem. See Catia Galatariotou, “The Primacy of Escorial Digenes Akritis: An Open and Shut Case?” in *Digenes Akritis: New Approaches to Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, ed. R. Beaton, D. Rocks (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), 38-39; R. Shukurov, “The Appropriation of the Orient,” 171-172.

⁷¹³ This all looks opposite to the description of another defector Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos. *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 4, lines 30-35.

⁷¹⁴ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 4, lines 28-29:

Ἀγαρηνοῖς τε καὶ τοῖς Ἰσμηλίταις,
Σκύθοις βαρβάροις τοῖς λυσσῶσιν ὡς κύνες.

besides one) pursue Emir, fight his army and defeat him. After the military defeat, Emir announced that he is in love with the Daughter of the General and decided to convert to Christianity. Four Brothers with their sister and Emir travel to Byzantium. Emir converted to Christianity, married the Daughter of the General and begot Digenis Akritis, the double-born. In the second Book of the song mother of Digenis, prominent lady in Syria, tried to re-convert her son to Islam, but failed. In the Book II Digenis travelled back to Syria, persuaded his mother to convert to Christianity and returned to Byzantium with her.

In Digenis, the narrator introduced Islam as a system in the series of dialogs and letters between Emir, his mother and his new Christian relatives. The description of Islam starts with a dialogue between five brothers and Emir when they ask him

Emir, oh servant of the Lord, the first man of Syria
May you come in Panormos, may you see the mosque
May you do obeisance to the hanging rock
And be deemed worthy to kiss the Prophet's tomb
And hear the dedicated prayer.⁷¹⁵

Πάνορμος is the Ancient Greek name for the Persian Gulf, that was one of the southern limits of the known world.⁷¹⁶ The “hanging Rock” is likely to refer to Kaaba and the mosque is the Mecca mosque. The “sacred prayer” might be a Byzantine rendering of the *rakat*, the Islamic standard prayer that visitors to Mecca perform in the mosque in the close vicinity of Kaaba. This is the only description of Kaaba in the whole corpus of twelfth-century Byzantine rhetoric and one can note that this description is a positive one.

In four lines, the narrator of *Digenis Akritis* described *hadj*, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca

⁷¹⁵ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 8, lines 100-105:

Ἀμῖρᾶ, δοῦλε τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ πρῶτε τῆς Συρίας,
νὰ φθάσῃς τὴν Πάνορμον, ἴδῃς τὸ μασιγιδίον,
νὰ προσκυνήσῃς, ἄμῖρᾶ, τὸν κρεμάμενον λίθον,
καὶ ἀξιωθῇς ἀσπάσασθαι τὸ μνῆμα τοῦ Προφήτου,
νὰ ἀκούσῃς καὶ τῆς προσευχῆς τῆς καθιερωμένης.

⁷¹⁶ See *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 75; C. Galatariotou, “The Primacy of the Escorial Digenes Akritis,” 39.

and Medina, in a rather positive way.⁷¹⁷ There is a holy place, there is a veneration of a holy tomb, obeisance to the sacred object (a cross or a hanging rock) and a prayer. Later in the narrative the Five Brothers wish to Emir not only to be in Mecca but to “make obeisance in Baghdad.”⁷¹⁸ It is not clear whether the author means a place of worship or a place of power, or both.

The figure of the prophet (venerated in Mecca) plays a significant role in the image of Islam portrayed in *Digenis Akritis*. Emir and his relatives venerate Muhammad. In his conversations with the Five Brothers, Emir recollects his childhood and narrates that he was raised by the Arabs to love Muhammad. Later in the narrative Mother of Emir, Muslims have their own commandments and Emir’s father was surrounded by Byzantines, but did not become traitor.⁷¹⁹

According to the author of *Digenis Akritis*, the people of Islam not only have their prophet, commandments and the holy place but also their relics. They, too, are present in the text of the same dialogue between Emir and his mother:

Don’t we have the towel of Naaman
Who was the emperor over the Assyrians?
And because of the plentitude of his truth was able to do miracles?⁷²⁰

To describe an Islamic relic the author used the same term that Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus used to describe the *mandylion* brought to Constantinople. The narrator of *Digenis Akritis* made the mother of Emir receive the towel of Naaman from the Assyrians. Assyria was not far from Antioch, where the legendary *mandylion* of Abgar was kept before

⁷¹⁷ Reference to this four lines. I understand that you are referring to the text in footnote 100, but technically it consists of 5 lines, so one has to make the leap of thought and understand that not only you mean the preceding text, but also not the entire passage as the first line does not refer to the pilgrimage. This is an unnecessary exercise and if you are a bit more precise in your wording the reader does not need to perform it.

⁷¹⁸ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 18, line 275.

⁷¹⁹ *Digenis Akritis*, 28, ed. Jeffreys, lines 66-67, 70-71.

⁷²⁰ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 53, lines 153-156

Οὐ παρ’ ἡμῖν τοῦ Νεεμὰν ὑπάρχει τὸ μανδύλιν
ὃς βασιλεὺς ἐγένετο μετὰ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων
καὶ διὰ πλῆθος ἀρετῶν θαυμάτων ἠξιώθη

Constantine brought it to Constantinople.⁷²¹ Thus, the towel of Naaman comes from a region, supposedly rich with many Christian relics known in Komnenian Constantinople. Both Christianity and Islam take their relics from the same historical space.

Thus, the Islam of *Digenis Akritis* has holy places, the prophet and relics. The stepping out of Islam and leads to many consequences. The mother of Emir calls her son παραβάτης—a traitor and transgressor—, a term used for Judas in all the Gospels.⁷²² This traitor, as the mother informs her son, is cursed in every mosque. The ritual of cursing “in every mosque” resembles very much the Byzantine *anathema*, the church condemnation, which was pronounced on the First Sunday of the Great Lent in all the churches of the Empire.⁷²³ The mother states that if Emir does not recant, she and her kin will be killed by their fellow Muslims. The imagined community of Islam is strictly guarding its boundaries, punishing transgressors and killing outcasts. Another interesting detail in this message is how Emir’s mother describes a certain Byzantine girl. She calls her χανζυρίσσα, a “pig-eater,” and this puts forward the question of the difference in dietary restrictions among Muslims and non-Muslims.⁷²⁴ Thus, Mother of Emir reminds her son about another boundary that exists between the two communities, the boundary of the diet

To sum up, the Islam in *Digenis Akritis* plays major role in the definition of the antagonist-turned-into-protagonist, Emir. The author of *Digenis* depicted Islam not as the another version of paganism, but as a religion in the Durkheimian sense. This religion has its founder (the Prophet), its sacred center (Mecca), its commandments, relics (the towel of king Naaman),

⁷²¹ For the summary of these relics’ history, see Glenn A. Peers, “Mask, Marriage and the Byzantine Mandylion: Classical Inventions of the Tenth Century,” *Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies*, 8 (2006): 13-16.

⁷²² In the context of the New Testament and the Pauline Epistles, this word goes together with the noun “Law”, “transgressor of the Law” *Exegetische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. H. Balz und G. Schneider, vol.3, (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kolhammer, 1983), 31-315. Can you give us concrete examples from the NT and the Pauline epistles for the relation between the two words?

⁷²³ Anathema was the Byzantine punishment for the people who changed their religion. John Kinnamos mentioned that the future emperor Andronikos Komnenos was under anathema for his participation in the Seljuk incursions against Byzantium. See John Kinnamos, *Epitome*, ed. Meineke, VI.1, 251, line 6.

⁷²⁴ The author of the *Digenis Akritis* was aware of the derogatory meaning of the pork-eating in Islam. The definition of the people of another faith through their eating practices was important in the discourse of Islam in Ottoman Anatolia. See T.Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 5-7; E. Dursteler, “Infidel Food: Food and Identity in Early Ottoman Travel Literature,” *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 39 (2012): 143-160.

and punishment for the renegades. The author of the Grottaferrata version created a detailed and vivid picture of Islam. At the same time, the author of *Digenis* always highlights the difference between Christianity and Islam. In the books I and II, the author speaks about the importance of Trinity and Christ at length. Both Emir and his mother make the confession of Christian faith after their conversion, thus pointing to the boundary, that separates Christian faith from those of Ishmaelites.⁷²⁵ The Islam is inferior to Christianity and is never equal to it.

Simultaneously, the author of Grottaferrata introduced into the poem several invectives against the Hagarenes, which remind of the Alexian rhetoric. One can observe some respect, if not interest, towards Islam. The question is whether the literati projected this image to the Seljuk amīrs or the Turks *en masse*. According to Paul Magdalino, the favorable image could be partly inspired by the shifting loyalties of the Greek magnates in Asia Minor in the first half of the twelfth century.⁷²⁶ Whatever the reason, the presence of this image in the rhetoric of the Komnenian era demonstrates that the Byzantine literati knew about Islam more than they enclosed in their panegyrics.

5. Holy War? Turks as the enemies of the Lord in the 1170s

The peace of Constantinople between Manuel Komnenos and Kılıç Arslan II (1161)⁷²⁷ did not stimulate Byzantine literati to focus on the religious identity of the Turks. In the *Panegyric of 1161*, Euthymios Malakes omitted any hint to the religious otherness of the Turks. Instead, he portrayed the Turks (whom he labelled as “the Persians”) under the guise of the people from Hargeisa, who were part of the Chosen nation but rejected the teaching of Christ.⁷²⁸ In another passage in the lengthy oration, Malakes compared the Persians who performed *proskynesis* in

⁷²⁵ E.g. Mother of Emir confessed her belief in “Triunite God.” See *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, Book III, 58, line 230.

⁷²⁶ See P. Magdalino, “Digenis Akritis and Byzantine literature: the twelfth-century background to Grottaferrata version,” in *Digenes Akrites: New Approaches to Byzantine Heroic Poetry*, ed. R. Beaton, D. Ricks (Ashgate: Variorum, 1993), 1-15.

⁷²⁷ For the available data see works of Cahen and Mecit. For the image of this sultan in Byzantine literature see Chapter VII. 4 “Public Enemy. Kılıç Arslan II in Kinnamos and Choniates”. Cahen, *Formation*, 21-33 ; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 27-39.

⁷²⁸ Euthymios Malakes, *Panegyric to Peace of 1161*, 170, line 11.

front of Manuel with the three Magi, “those Persians that paid their obeisance to Christ.”⁷²⁹ The thing that unites the two components present in the broad tapestry of the *basilikos logos* written by Malakes is exactly the liminality of the Turks. Later on between 1161 and 1170 There is hardly a single mention of the religious otherness of the Turks.

The situation changed drastically in 1170 when the decline of the Danishmendids and the growth of the sultanate of Ikonion caused several conflicts between Manuel I Komnenos and Kilic Arslan II. The key events are the refortification of Dorylaion (1175) and the battle of Myriokephalon (1176).⁷³⁰ The present subchapter analyzes the sources produced during this period of frontier warfare. In the past twenty years, the texts in question were discussed in those works of Paul Magdalino and Evangelos Chrysos that focused on the possibility of a Byzantine Crusade.⁷³¹ Andrew Stone and Alexander Beihammer contributed to the discussion with articles which discussed the rhetoric of Eustathios of Thessaloniki.⁷³² The present subchapter aims to revise the arguments of previous scholars and to put the debate about “Byzantine Crusade” in the wider context of the Byzantine writing about the Turks as Hagarenes.

In chronological order, the first text I study in the present chapter is the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion*.⁷³³ The poem described the actions of Manuel I Komnenos against the Turks in the valley of Dorylaion (1175) and the rebuilding of the fortress that allowed

⁷²⁹ Euthymios Malakes, *Panegyric to Peace of 1161*, 170, line 11.

⁷³⁰ For Dorylaion see the article of Andrew Stone and Paul Wirth, for Myriokephalon – article of Lilie and short description of Magdalino. P. Wirth, “Kaiser Manuel I, Komnenos und die Ostgrenze: Rückerobertung und Wiederaufbau der Festung Dorylaion,” *BZ* 55 (1962): 9-21; A.F. Stone, ‘Dorylaion Revisited: Manuel I Komnenos and the refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion in 1175’,” *REB*, 61 (2003) 183-199; R.-J. Lilie, “Die Schlacht von Myriokephalon (1176): Auswirkungen auf das byzantinische Reich im ausgehenden 12. Jahrhundert,” *REB*, 35 (1977): 257-75; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*, 95-98.

⁷³¹ For the key arguments in this polemics see P. Magdalino, *The Empire*, 95; A. Stone, “Dorylaion Revisited: Manuel I Komnenos and the Refortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion in 1175,” *REB* 61 (2003), 183-99; E. Chrysos, “1176- A Byzantine Crusade?,” in *Byzantine War Ideology Between Roman Concept and Christian Religion* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2012), 81-87.

⁷³² See A. Beihammer, “Religious Antagonism,” 15-18; A. F. Stone, “Panegyric as the Historical Source: Case of Eustathius,” *JOB* 75 (2001): 225-258.

⁷³³ None of the participants in the discussion mentioned above included the poem in his analysis. In turn, Foteini Spingou, who edited the text, did not reproduce the debate in full in her article. See F. Spingou, “A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175”, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011): 137-168.

Byzantines to control the pastoralists in this valley. The author of the poem described the collective antagonist of the poem as Persians. The author mentions that “neither Hagar, nor Ismael” venerated Christ.⁷³⁴ However, the anonymous author never called the antagonists, the Persians as Hagarenes. Thus, the hostility towards Islam is present in the margins. The Byzantine emperor of the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion* is fighting for God, but against barbarians and not against an enemy with a different religious background.

The situation is much more complicated with two other sources, namely an oration by Euthymios Malakes and a Lenten homily of Eustathios of Thessaloniki that were both delivered in the first half of 1176. Euthymios Malakes was a prominent orator at the peak of his career, while the other was the titular Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor and was probably seeking promotion at the imperial court.⁷³⁵ Malakes’ oration addresses the same event, which is mentioned in the *Poem on the Refortification*, but described it in the different language.

To glorify the victory over the Turks, Malakes used the language of the *Iliad* and the Old Testament. The author expresses his opinion on the “religion” of the Turks in the language of the Old Testament, namely, the Turks are compared with Goliath, Sodom and Gomorrah. They are also Gadarene pigs, “those who had to run from the face of the Lord.”⁷³⁶ Very much like in the *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates, the Turks of Euthymios Malakes are plundering cities and desecrating churches.⁷³⁷ Malakes s compared the Lord of Psalm 90 and the Turks, namely, “those who hate him and run from his face.” All in all, this looks like a traditional Byzantine description of the just war, but hardly a crusade.⁷³⁸

Sometime after the composition of Malakes’ encomium, the bishop of Myra Eustathios of Thessaloniki composed the Homily on the Lent of 1176. In the *Homily*, he mentioned “those of Ishmael and Hagar”, but the “Hagarism” of the Turks is again not the main focus of the

⁷³⁴ *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion*, lines 22-24: οὐκοῦν οὐκ ἐπιήνδανε, παμβασιλῆι δὲ Χριστῷ // φραζάμενος, τὸν γ’ οὐκ Ἄγαρ οὐκ Ἰσμαὴλ θεοκλυτεῖ

⁷³⁵ Angold, *Church and Society*, 179-201.

⁷³⁶ See K. Bonis, “Εὐθυμίου τοῦ Μαλάκη μητροπολίτου Νέων Πατρῶν (Υπάτης) Δύο ἐγκωμαστικοὶ λόγοι, “ 529, lines 34-35; 540, line 31.

⁷³⁷ Euthymios Malakes, *ibid.* 539, line 39 – 540, line 3.

⁷³⁸ Chrysos, “1176- A Byzantine Crusade?” 85.

panegyrist.⁷³⁹ Same holds true for the other oration that Eustathios probably delivered on Epiphany in 1176, several months before the decisive battle at Myriokephalon.⁷⁴⁰ This work contains a more explicit polemical.⁷⁴¹ They are the enemies of the Lord and barbarians at the same time. In both cases the religious identity is hardly the focus of the *Homily* which focuses on emperor Manuel and his expedition which might reach Jerusalem.

Most of the *topoi* used by Eustathios are not new, but come from previous works of Byzantine rhetoric. The “enemies of the Lord” are present in the letter of Theophylact of Ohrid to Gregory Taronites Gabras, while the combination of “Ishmaelites” and “those of Hagar” is present both in the panegyrics of Theodore Prodromos and in the *Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion*. When Alexander Beihammer stated that Eustathios introduced in his poem “a religious antagonism with all Muslim world,” he was not entirely correct.⁷⁴² Some degree of religious antagonism can indeed be detected in the text, but the context of Eustathios’ orations implied a more restricted meaning. The Ishmaelites who are looking to the sea are the Turks of Asia Minor.

The final source in the sequence of poems and orations containing references to the religion of the Turks is the *Letter of Manuel Komnenos to Henry Plantagenet* which dates to November 1176. In the *Letter*, the author provides a detailed description of the Myriokephalon campaign. The *Letter* introduced Manuel’s pious zeal as one of the motives which led him to the expedition against the Turks. One can hardly call it a crusade. As argued above, the *Letter* presented the campaign as a plan for territorial expansion rather than a crusade. The author of the *Letter* labeled the Turks as the enemies of the Lord only once, in the very beginning of the text, and never mentioned it again. The label is unique because it has analogs both in the Byzantine discourse on Islam and the contemporary Latin sources.⁷⁴³

To conclude, the sources of the 1170s produced hardly any evidence for a Byzantine

⁷³⁹ Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Opera Minora*, ed. Wirth, 17, line 25.

⁷⁴⁰ Stone, “Dorylaion Revisited,” 118. Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Opera Minora*, ed. Wirth, 202-228.

⁷⁴¹ Noted by Beihammer. See Beihammer, “Religious Antagonism,” 15.

⁷⁴² Beihammer, “Religious Antagonism,” 18.

⁷⁴³ Rosalind Hill, *Gesta Francorum. The Deeds of the Franks and Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 14, line 32: *inimici Dei*.

Crusade or a holy war. The existing polyphony of voices present in many sources allows one to speak about the re emerging notion of a sanctified military conflict in Byzantine Anatolia in the context of the frontier war between two polities. In the 1170s the vocabulary of religious otherness was based on the *topoi* present in the works of previous authors, namely Theodore Prodromos and ecclesiastical literati of the eleventh century.

The need for a propaganda of this kind declined after the battle of Myriokephalon (1176). After the battle, Eustathios of Thessaloniki continued to portray the last action of Manuel against the infidels as the just war. Simultaneously, he began the search for a scapegoat for the Komnenian failures, ascribing them to the imperial laziness and to the union between the Islamized Turks and the Persians.⁷⁴⁴ His follower and disciple, Niketas Choniates, who, several years after Eustathios, included in his *Historia* some opinions on Islam that in some sense summarized the Byzantine discourse on the religion of the Turks.

6. The Beliefs of the Turks in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates

Niketas Choniates lived through a turbulent era of Asia Minor that saw the decline of imperial politics, the growth of the sultanate of Ikonion in the 1180s, the partition of the sultanate in the 1190s and the Third Crusade (1189), the Fall of Constantinople (1204), and the establishment of the empire of Nicaea. In Niketas' lifetime, the sultans of Ikonion invested into the spread of Islam in Anatolia. The first minaret was built in the reign of Kılıç Arslan II.⁷⁴⁵ His son Kay Khusraw I built a palace in Ikonion and re fortified the cities of Asia Minor.⁷⁴⁶ The growing symbolical power of the sultanate led to another era of Byzantine anxiety that found its way into Niketas Choniates' *Historia*. Alicia Simpson noted that Choniates enhanced the religious difference between the Byzantines and the Turks.⁷⁴⁷ Leaving aside the story of the Byzantine

⁷⁴⁴ Stone, "Stemming the Turkish tide," 130.

⁷⁴⁵ For the first minaret in Aksaray-Coloneia, see O. Pancaroğlu, "House of Mengucek in Divrigi," 56.

⁷⁴⁶ S. Redford, "Mamālik and Mamālīk: Anatolian Seljuk Citadels and their Decorative and Inscriptional Programs," in *Cities and Citadels in Turkey: From the Iron Age to the Seljuks*, ed. S. Redford, N. Irgun (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 305-346.

⁷⁴⁷ A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 324.

conversions until the last chapter of the thesis, this present subchapter establishes the image of Islam present in the Choniates' *Historia*. The present section focuses on four passages dealing with a speech ascribed to the Crusader King, the "Lament for Anatolia", and, last but not the least, *Holosphyros* debate.⁷⁴⁸

The main protagonist of this episode is an anonymous king, who is passing through Anatolia during the Second Crusade together with the host of a Christian warriors.⁷⁴⁹ The absence of his name is significant. In the *Historia*, Niketas usually uses anonymous narrators to voice his own position.

According to *Historia*, the Crusaders confronted the Turks at the crossing of the river Meander.⁷⁵⁰ Before the battle, the anonymous western king behaved as if he were a Byzantine general.⁷⁵¹ He rallied his troops and pronounced a well-designed speech in Attic Greek, a speech that was hardly possible in the reality of the Second Crusade.⁷⁵² the imagined western king described the Seljuks in the following words:

Separated from us by the other bank of the river are *barbarians, the enemies of the cross of Christ*, whom we wanted for a long time to fight against and in whose blood we wanted to be washed... If it comes to your mind, *all the drunken tricks*

⁷⁴⁸ The debate focuses on the episode when emperor Manuel I Komnenos wished to cancel one of the definitions of God of Mohammad (Holosphyros, "metal-round-sphered") from the Byzantine thomos that converts from Islam had to read during their baptism. The focus of the debate is not on the text of Choniates per se, but on the origins and translation history of the term. For the summary of debate see C. Simelidis, "The Byzantine Understanding of the Qur'anic Term al-Ṣamad and the Greek Translation of the Qur'an," *Speculum* 86.4 (2011): 887-913

⁷⁴⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, Manuel II, 67.

⁷⁵⁰ Niketas finished his description of the Second Crusade immediately after this successful battle. Subsequent events, such as the disastrous battle at Mount Cadmus, are consciously omitted by the author.

⁷⁵¹ For a brief analysis of the whole episode, see Beihammer, "Religious Orthodoxy," 19-20.

⁷⁵² The Crusader kings, Louis VII and Konrad did not speak Greek and did not pronounce any speech at the Meander crossing. The absence of the name also hints that the character in question is not real. Finally, Choniates labeled the king as "German" – and emperor Konrad (who was not a king) never crossed Meander. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 68, lines 73-74 (tr. Magoulas, 70): ὅτι δὲ καὶ οἷός ἐνμετα ἱχμῖπτῳ πορθμῳ τοῦ τῷ ἀποδυστάμενοι ἡμῶν βάρβαροι ἐχθροὶ εἰσι τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ μνήμη δέ τις ὑμᾶς ὑπείσέρχεται ἃ καθ' ὥραν οἱ ἀπερίτμητοι οὗτοι τὴν καρδίαν... γνώτωσαν ἀληθῶς οἱ ἀλλόφυλοιώς, ὅσον Χριστὸς ὁ καθηγητὴς ἡμῶν καὶ διδάσκαλος ὑπέρεκται προφήτου λαοπλάνου καὶ μυοῦντόςσφας τὰ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἄγαρ τοίνυντῆς δουλίδος ἐκποδῶνοί ἐλεύθεροι ποιησώμεθα καὶ ὡς λίθους προσκόμματος τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐξάρωμεν τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἀπόβλητα, τοσοῦτον καὶ ἡμεῖς αὐτῶν κατὰ πάνθ' ὑπερφέρομεν.

will be played by those uncircumcised in their hearts... Let the foreigners know in truth that in the same way as our teacher and guide Christ is superior to their false prophet and initiator in worthless things, so we are greater than all of them... As a free men, let us remove those of the slave-women of Hagar as *the stones lying on the road to Christ*.⁷⁵³

As Ioannis Stouraitis pointed out, this speech reflects Choniates' understanding of the Crusade.⁷⁵⁴ In this invented speech, Choniates created a vivid image of the Turks (without calling them Turks) and used an Old Testament rhetoric as the source for the quotes.⁷⁵⁵ Niketas Choniates had used many labels from the *Acts of the Apostles* and the Pauline Epistles. The phrase about the Enemies of Christ instance, comes from the *Epistle to the Philippians*.⁷⁵⁶ The uncircumcised in their heart are present in the book of Jeremiah, Leviticus and in the Acts of the Apostles.

Choniates also compared the Turks with the stones lying on the road. These stones are present in Isaiah 8:14 and in the *Epistle to the Romans* where they signify spiritual dangers on the path of the chosen people.⁷⁵⁷ In other words, the Turks are the troubles that await the Crusades on the way. According to the *History*, the participants of the Second Crusade were people who had the zeal to reach the Holy Land, while the Byzantine overlords of Asia Minor allied themselves with the hostile forces. Thus, in an indirect way, the very negative characteristic of the Turks amplifies the positive image of the Crusaders that, in turn, contrasts with the negative image of the Byzantines.

The characterization of the Turks through interpolated texts continues in Book II dedicated to the reign of Manuel, in which Niketas introduced a unique text which I call A

⁷⁵³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 68-69.

⁷⁵⁴ I. Stouraitis, "Jihad and Crusade: Byzantine positions Towards Holy War", *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011): 35-36.

⁷⁵⁵ On the general use of the Old Testament in Choniates, see Stephanos Efthymiadis, "Greek and Biblical Exempla in the Service of the Artful Writer," in *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and A Writer*, ed. A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis (Geneva: Pomme d'Or, 2009), 101-121.

⁷⁵⁶ See *Epistula Pauli ad Philippenses*, 3:18:2.

⁷⁵⁷ For the meaning of this idiom in the New Testament and on the association with the sin and trouble in the way of spiritual perfection, see *Exegetische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. H. Balz und G. Schneider, vol. 3, (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kolhammer, 1983), 417-418.

Prayer for Anatolia.⁷⁵⁸ It is an invocation in the form of a long monolog. ("I"). To the best of my knowledge, there are only two such prayers in *History*, that is, one in Book III and another in Book VII. The another prayer in Book VII is short and concern the Seljuks.⁷⁵⁹ The *Prayer for Anatolia* in Book III, on the contrary, is detailed and long:

How long, oh Lord, wilt thou overlook your inheritance which lies exposed to the payment of tribute and long-lasting looting and change⁷⁶⁰ of leadership by dim and unwise people who are far separated from pious teaching of yours and from your faith?.... *Repay our wicked neighbors sevenfold the evils they have inflicted on thine inheritance*, restore to us, through brave deeds, and the cities and provinces which the foreigners have taken from us.⁷⁶¹

The motives of this inserted text remind of the Byzantine rhetoric of the 1170s. The inheritance is a direct quote from Psalm 78, but also from Euthymios Malakes.⁷⁶² It is also present in the work of Eustathios of Thessaloniki, who was Niketas' teacher. The only exact quote is the one from Psalm 78 that presents the Seljuk Turks as the "wicked neighbors".⁷⁶³ The Turks are foreigners who must be (ideally) removed and who Choniates (with the help of the intervention of the narrator in the text) called God to inflict his revenge upon through a quote from Psalm 93.⁷⁶⁴

Thus in the *Prayer for Anatolia*, Niketas Choniates reiterated his position on the Seljuk Turks. He repeated (word by word) the labels from the *Speech of the Crusader king* and added a

⁷⁵⁸ Alexander Beihammer calls it "Prayer". See Beihammer, "Defection Across the Border," 604; Beihammer, "Orthodoxy and Religious antagonism," 2.

⁷⁵⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 209, lines 54-58.

⁷⁶⁰ The word used here (κίνησις) is usually employed in the Byzantine sources of the early Komnenian era to denote the motion of the nomads. See for example John Zonaras, *Epitome*, ed. Büttner-Wobst, XVIII, 742, line 9.

⁷⁶¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 116, line 25-117, line 17(tr. Magoulias, 66-67): Ἀλλ' ἕως τίνος τὸν οἰκεῖον παρόψει κληρον, Κύριε, εἰς ἀπαγωγὴν ἐκκείμενον καὶ προνομὴν μακραίωνα καὶ κίνησιν κεφαλῆς λαῶν μωρῶν καὶ οὐχί σοφῶν καὶ πόρρωθεν ἀπεσχοινομένων τῆς εὐσεβοῦς περισέδοξης καὶ πίστεως; ... ἀπόδοστος πονηροῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν εἰς τὸ ἐπταπλάσιον ὅσα ἐπονηρεύσαντο κατὰ τῆς κληρονομίας σου· καὶ πόλεις καὶ χώρας ἐπανασώσας ἡμῖν ἐν ἀνδρείᾳ, ἃς ἀφείλοντο οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι.

⁷⁶² Euthymios Malakes, *Encomium to Refortification of Dorylaion*, 540, lines 12-13.

⁷⁶³ Ps. 78:13 ἀπόδος τοῖς γείτοσιν ἡμῶν ἑπτα πλάσινα εἰς τὸν κόλπον αὐτῶν τὸν ὀνειδισμόν αὐτῶν, ὃν ὀνειδίσαν σε, κύριε.

⁷⁶⁴ This direct involvement in the form of emotional speech is reminiscent of the invectives against the Byzantine emperor that Michael Attaleiates introduced in his *Historia*. Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 117, lines 84-85 and Ps. 93:3; A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 324.

new label with the quote from Psalm 78.

Both the *Speech of the Crusader King* and the *Prayer for Anatolia* are different in their approach to the Seljuk Islam in comparison to another part of the same narrative, namely to so-called “Holosphyros debate” that focused on the definition of the Lord of Muhammad that the person who abdicated Christianity in favor of Islam had to pronounce in public. In the introductory sentence, Niketas stated with irony that emperors liked to introduced the new dogmas and persecuted those who disagree with them.⁷⁶⁵ The emperor in question is Manuel Komnenos and the debate in question is the so-called “Holosphyros debate” that took place when Manuel tried to simplify the conversion from Islam to Christianity for the Seljuk Turks (the 1170s).⁷⁶⁶

The key character of the *Historia* in this episode is Choniates’ teacher Eustathios of Thessaloniki, who, in the 1170s, pointed to the religious Otherness of the Turks. His motivation was the conversion of the Turks who started to cross to the Byzantine side during the reign of Manuel Komnenos.⁷⁶⁷ Manuel wrote a theological definition and put it before the synod. The synod met the definition with staunch resistance.⁷⁶⁸ One of the opponents was the bishop Eustathios of Thessaloniki. The two sides of the conflict started negotiations which resulted in a compromise version of the decision. This version replaced the old curse of Muhammad’s God by the curse of Muhammad’s teaching and the teachings of his followers.⁷⁶⁹

In his description, Niketas first introduced the invective against the Prophet through the

⁷⁶⁵ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 210, lines 68-71: Πρὸς δὲ τοῖς εἰρημένοις κάκεῖνα δοτέον τῇ ἱστορίᾳ. τοῖς πλείοσι βασιλεῦσι Ῥωμαίων οὐκ ἀνεκτόν ἐστιν ὅλως ἄρχειν μόνον καὶ χρυσοφορεῖν καὶ χρᾶσθαι τοῖς κοινοῖς ὡς ἰδίοις, οὐδὲ μὴν ὡς δούλοις τοῖς ἐλευθέροις προσφέρεσθαι, ἀλλ’ εἰ μὴ καὶ σοφοὶ δοκοῖεν καὶ θεοεἰκελοι τὴν μορφήν καὶ ἥρωες τὴν ἰσχὺν καὶ ὡς Σολομῶν θεόσοφοι καὶ δογματισταὶ θεϊότατοι καὶ κανόνες τῶν κανόνων εὐθέστεροι καὶ ἀπλῶς θείων καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων πραγμάτων ἀπροσφαλεῖς γνώμονες, δεινὰ οἶονται πάσχειν.

⁷⁶⁶ For a summarizing account, see C. Simelidis, “The Byzantine Understanding of the Qur’anic Term al-ṣamad and the Greek Translations of the Qur’an.” *Speculum* 86 (2011): 887-913.

⁷⁶⁷ They were many in number. The synod in Constantinople in 1169 had to discuss the case of the “Hagarenes” that were baptized in childhood in order to avoid the demons and asked permission to join the Orthodox Church. See *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarchate de Constantinople*. Vol. I. Ed. V. Grumel (Paris: Social assumptionistae chalcedonenses, 1947), 132-133.

⁷⁶⁸ See Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium Under the Comneni*, 112-113.

⁷⁶⁹ *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarchate de Constantinople*. Vol. I. Ed. V. Grumel (Paris: Socii assumptionistae chalcedonenses, 1947), 171.

collective voice of the anonymous bishops and then through the figure of Eustathios of Thessaloniki. According to Niketas, the bishops called Muḥammad “empty and demon-swollen.”⁷⁷⁰ Later on, Niketas stated that the emperor made a decree, in which he supported the nonsense (μωρολογία) of Muḥammad.” “I cannot call it theology,” wrote Niketas immediately afterwards, distancing himself from the decision of the emperor.⁷⁷¹ This intervention highlights the position of the author who was against Manuel’s decree. Further on Niketas puts into the mouth of Eustathios of Thessaloniki a direct accusation against Islam:

My brain would be stamped down by feet of carriers, and I would not be good enough for this robe – he carried over his shoulders a mantle – if I would hold as a true god the pederast, and camel-leader and leader and teacher of all abominable deeds.⁷⁷²

The offensive speech resulted in open conflict between Eustathios of Thessaloniki and Manuel I Komnenos. At the end the bishops reconciled the staunch metropolitan with the emperor. Eustathios asked for pardon and received it.⁷⁷³ This did not prevent Niketas from using the episode in his *Historia* as a double-edged weapon against Manuel (who tried to deconstruct the border between the two confessions) and against Islam. The authoritative figure of Eustathios pronounced that the god of Muhammad is a “pederast, camel-leader and leader of abominable deeds.” This description portrayed Islam as sexually decadent, liminal in space and with a poor public morale. In the *Prayer for Anatolia*, Niketas called the Seljuks “the uncircumcised in their heart”, while in the scene of Holosphyros debate Eustathios mentioned the sexual deviations of the god of Muhammad and that the emperor Manuel Komnenos defended this nonsense. This reversal is an example of ἀντίταξις, namely, the emperor, who is supposed to defend the Orthodoxy, is defending Islam.⁷⁷⁴ With his argument, Niketas not only blamed Islam but also

⁷⁷⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 214, line 4: τῷ λήρῳ καὶ δαιμονῷ δει Μωάμετ.

⁷⁷¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, , 214, line 10.

⁷⁷² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, , 215, line 16 - 217 line 1(tr. Magoulis, 122): ἐσοίμην ἂν“ ἔφη „καταπεπατημένον ταῖς πτέρναις φορῶν τὸν ἐγκέφαλον καὶ τοῦ σχήματος τούτου παράπαν ἀνάξιος,“ τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν ὤμων δείξας μανδύαν, „εἰ θεὸν ἡγοίμην ἀληθινὸν τὸν παιδεραστὴν καὶ καμηλώδη καὶ πάσης πράξεως μυσαρᾶς ὑφηγητὴν καὶ διδάσκαλον.

⁷⁷³ Eustathios never mentioned a conflict with Manuel in his letters or other writings.

⁷⁷⁴ For the “antitactical” character of Choniates’ work, see Anthony Kaldellis, “Paradox, Reversal and Meaning of *History*,” in *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer*, ed. A. Simpson, S. Efthymiadis

reinforced his *Kaiserkritik*.⁷⁷⁵ What Manuel does in the “Holosphyros episode” is hybris, violation of one’s established borders. Combined with many other things, this hybris contributed to the fall of the Komnenoi, the establishment of the Angeloi, and ultimately to the fall of the Byzantine empire in 1204.

Niketas Choniates was a man who came to Constantinople from Byzantine Anatolia. His attitude towards the Turks, in general, is negative: one can compare it with the bias of Anna Komnene. For Choniates, the theologian, the fundamental problem of the Seljuk Turks is their belief. He identified the Turks with the Muslims and for him to be Muslim was wrong. Choniates never pronounced his judgments on the Seljuk belief from the position of the narrator of *Historia*. Instead, he introduced deeply negative characteristics for the Turks and their prophet through intermediaries. In the first case, in the *Speech of the Crusader King* Choniates constructed his character’s image using “stock elements” from the Old and New Testament. The combination of different components allowed him to describe the Seljuk Turks as enemies of the Cross who are doomed to die soon, stumbling stones on the way of the Christian army, and people with uncircumcised hearts. Interestingly enough, the latter epithet puts the Seljuk Turks inside the Israel and not outside of it. It also can be a distant echo of the Byzantine perception of Islam as an Arian heresy.⁷⁷⁶ Choniates’ method of image construction is reminiscent of the one used by Theophylact of Ohrid.

The second time Niketas pronounced his opinion on the Seljuk beliefs in particular and on Islam in general in the “Holosphyros” episode. The fake prophet Muḥammad, who is in the center of Niketas’ critique of Islam, is an object of blames and curses. Through the positively defined character of Niketas’ teacher, Eustathios of Thessaloniki, the author voiced the most striking accusations against the prophet. According to Niketas, the prophet Mohammed is sexually problematic, spatially distanced, exoticized, and a morally subversive person.⁷⁷⁷

(Genève: Pomme d’Or, 2007), 798-81.

⁷⁷⁵ On *Kaiserkritik*, see P. Magdalino, “Aspects of Eleventh-Century Byzantine Kaiserkritik,” *Speculum* 58 (1983): 326-346; A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 325.

⁷⁷⁶ The notion was present in the *Panoplia Dogmatike* of Euthymios Zegabenos. See A. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 36.

⁷⁷⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 215 -217.

Strangely enough, all these epithets are absent from the *Prayer for Anatolia* that Choniates incorporated in Book III of the *Historia*. Despite the fact that this narrative is woven from the book of Psalms, the characterization of the Seljuk Turks is not that strikingly negative. They are wicked neighbors, heathens and scions of Hagar, but hardly more than that. Why did Niketas avoid his anti-Muslim rhetoric in the later parts of his *Historia*?

The reason may lie in Niketas' humble position at the end of his life. As Korobeynikov demonstrated, after the battle of Antioch-on-Meander and the death of sultan Kay Khusraw I, Theodore Laskaris established uneasy, but very friendly relationships with the sultanate of Ikonion that effectively ended the Byzantine-Seljuk military confrontation and changed the power balance in Asia Minor.⁷⁷⁸ The sultans of Ikonion in the thirteenth century were devoted Muslims and one can hypothesize that Niketas did not want any trouble with the powerful dynasts who controlled his hometown.

Before moving to Nicaea, Niketas had authored *Dogmatike Panoplia*,⁷⁷⁹ a theological treatise that defined Islam as a heresy. The work, which is analogous to *Panoplia Dogmatike* of Euthymios Zegabenos, was composed by Niketas at the behest of an anonymous friend. The treatise explicitly blamed the Muslims for being heretics. Soon after the completion of the treatise, Niketas moved to Nicaea where the new claimant to the throne of the Eastern part of the Empire, Theodore Laskaris, made an alliance with Kay Khusraw of Ikonion.⁷⁸⁰ In the new realm of Laskaris, the expression of an anti-Muslim sentiment could be problematic for a person looking for a position at the court.⁷⁸¹ With a short exception of 1112-1113, Theodore Laskaris was in the relations of cautious peace with Kay Khusraw of Ikonion. In this situation, Niketas probably did not dare to criticize the allies' religion very openly. To avoid it, Niketas put the most negative labels in the *Historis* in the mouth of the Crusader King and his old teacher, both having had dubious reputations.⁷⁸²

With his biblical allusions and complex and original attacks against Islam, Niketas

⁷⁷⁸ D. Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 141-143.

⁷⁷⁹ The work remains unedited in Cod. Par.Gr. 1234. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 37-50.

⁷⁸⁰ Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 134-137.

⁷⁸¹ Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 22.

⁷⁸² On Eustathius' harshness, see Angold, *Church and Society*, 172-175.

Choniates produced the most complicated and most vivid image of Seljuk Islam in the Byzantine discourse of the twelfth century. One should never forget that Choniates had lived long enough to see his native city of Chonae fall in the hands of the Turks.⁷⁸³ This explains the passion with which Niketas still expressed his cautious remarks against Islam.

7. Conclusions

The first general observation the present chapter makes is that the Byzantines imagined the Turks to constitute “a moral community” and believed that they had their own beliefs. The beliefs of the Turks were referred to as the religion of “the descendants of Hagar”, later labelled as “the foul teachings of the Persians”. Contrary to the opinion of Vryonis, the Byzantine literati did not imagine Islam as the ever-attacking hostile threat. As the chapter revealed, their attitude was different.

The Byzantine literati identified religion of the Turks when the latter came to the Bosphorus in the eleventh century. In his *Historia*, Michael Attaleiates constructed the ambiguous religious identity of the Seljuk Turks. While their sultan was a just ruler the Turks as a collective entity were perceived as desacrators and space-devourers. It is plausible that Michael Attaleiates introduced apocalyptic notes into his description of the arrival of the Turks.

The latent apocalypticism existed in the discourse together with a less emotional approach towards Islam. The spatial shock from the coming of the Turks provoked Christodoulos of Patmos to compare the Turks with “those of Hagar,” another version of the Arabs. The term became the standard label for the Turks in the church rhetoric of the Alexian era. It also became the most important instrument of the religious othering. The labelling made the Turks more familiar to the Byzantine audience and defined their positions among the Byzantine heretics. The letter of Theophylact of Ohrid demonstrates, that the Byzantines projected to the Turks the critic of Mahomed that was present in the polemical works of the times. An educated literata, Anna Komnene introduced in her *Alexiad* a single phrase that depicted Muslims people as idolators

⁷⁸³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, *Events After Constantinople*, 638.65-69; Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 140-145.

and fornicators.

The twelfth-century version of *Digenis Akritis* described Islam as a religion in Durkheimian sense. According to Digenis, Islam has relics, centers of power and holy laws to observe. The author of Digenis pointed to the difference between Christianity and Islam, but still recognizes the presence of Islam as the powerful factor in everyday life and to just as “heresy.” However, the author of Digenis never speaks about the idolatry of the Muslims. The twelfth-century Byzantines (with the exception of Anna Komnene) did not depict Muslims as pagans. For Byzantine literati, the Muslims were heretics.

The growth of the Byzantine-Seljuk military confrontation in the second half of the twelfth century inspired the articulation of the religious identity of the Turks in the works of contemporary literati. Very much like in Medieval West, the literati of Byzantium tried to control intellectually the Islam that their emperors could not defeat.⁷⁸⁴ The war between Byzantium and the sultanate of Ikonion in the 1170s generated another wave of rhetoric that mentioned the descendants of Hagar. While the sources composed at the court mentioned the “Persian” religion *passim*, the homilies of bishop Eustathius and the encomium of Euthymios Malakes problematized the beliefs of the Turks. To construct the image of the religious Other both authors used the book of Psalms and *topoi* coined in the previous era of Byzantine rhetoric. After the death of Eustathios, his former student Niketas Choniates expressed his disdain towards the Turkic Islam in his *Historia*. Niketas was careful to put negative features of Islam into the mouths of his non-Byzantine characters. One might connect it with the uncertain status of Niketas after the fall of Constantinople. The dogmatist sought his fortunes in Nicaea, the ruler of which, Theodore Laskaris, was friendly with the Turks.

Speaking in more general terms, one can represent the Byzantine discourse on the Seljuk Beliefs as a continuum stretching between two positions. On the one hand, the Byzantines perceived the Turks as the nation of the apocalypse and another version of the “descendants of Hagar.” The sources that described in detail the religious “otherness” of the Turks were produced by the Byzantine clergymen or the people associated with the Church. Interestingly, the twelfth-

⁷⁸⁴ See Toner, *Homer's Turks*, 55.

century sources never equal the “foul teaching of Persians” with paganism (Shukurov) and rarely focus their attention exclusively on conversions (Beihammer). While Byzantines did not focus their attention on the religious side of the identity of the Turks, they mentioned it too often to be ignored.

The references to the religious Otherness grew in number during the military conflicts with the Turks. The first problematization of Islam happened in the 1090s to the spatial shock due to the Seljuk conquest of Anatolia. The second problematization of Islam happened in the second half of the twelfth century. One can connect it with the conflict between Byzantium and the growing sultanate of Ikonion over the in the Meander valley and Paphlagonia. The conflict reached its apex in the battle of Myriokephalon (1176) and finished only with the partial disbandment of the sultanate of Ikonion in 1185.

What is missing from the sources is any “ethnological” interest in the Seljuk beliefs. The Turks constituted a threat, but it was “analogous” to the Arabs and did not offer an intellectual challenge. The “religious” labeling of the Turks that Byzantine literati developed as the reaction to the challenge of the Seljuk invasion may have had some role in the letters that Byzantine literati sent to the west and consequently, in the First Crusade.⁷⁸⁵ Immediately after the First Crusade, the literati of the kingdom of Jerusalem grudgingly used the “Greek” sources to gain some knowledge about the religion of their enemies.⁷⁸⁶ In this way, the Byzantine ideas about the Islam of the Turks (even if imagined) proved to be more influential than the Byzantine ideas about the beliefs attributed to the Turks, in which Byzantine literati were in effect not interested.

⁷⁸⁵ For the possible interlocutor, see J. Shepard, “How St. James the Persian’s Head was brought to Cormery, A Relic Collector in the Time of the First Crusade,” in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie. Beiträge zur Byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. L. M. Hoffmann and A. Monchizadeh (Wiesbaden: 2005), 287-335.

⁷⁸⁶ Tolan, *Saracens*, 138-139.

CHAPTER VI. Those Who Cross The Border

For a long time historians of Medieval Anatolia focused on the coexistence of Greeks and Turks in Asia Minor. With the introduction by Paul Wittek and Speros Vryonis of the concept of “holy war” to Anatolian studies, scholars began to focus specifically on the “religious antagonism” between Byzantium and the Turks.⁷⁸⁷ The revision of this paradigm by the following generation of scholars paved the way for another model of interpretation of Anatolian history, one that was based on the idea of a friendly coexistence between Christians and Muslims in twelfth-century Asia Minor.⁷⁸⁸ The Ottomanists writing about this period also tend to stretch the combination of the “coexistence” and internecine warfare to the earlier era.⁷⁸⁹

This chapter focuses on aspects that fell outside of the scope of the “binary paradigm” developed by Vryonis and Wittek, namely, on the evidence of boundary-crossing between the two described communities that are attested in the Byzantine rhetoric of the Komnenian era. The first subchapter begins with a discussion of the imagined space that was thought to separate the Byzantines and the Turks in the Byzantines’ minds and presents the categories of characters that crossed this divide in Byzantine texts. The second subchapter summarizes existing research on people with shifting loyalties and focuses on one particular aspect of defecting across the border: change of clothing. The third subchapter analyzes the evidence of conversion from Christianity to Islam and vice versa, and the Byzantines’ attitude towards conversion. The chapter also

⁷⁸⁷This did not allow them to trace elements of the more balanced approach to Islam evidenced in the twelfth-century rhetoric of Euthymios Malakes and the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akrititis*. For a “positively connotated” images of Islam, see Chapter V.3, “Islam in Grottaferrata Version of *Digenis Akrititis*”.

⁷⁸⁸ S. Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 168. T. Uyvar, “Question of Byzantine Painters at Seljuq court,” in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, B. de Nicola, S.N. Yildiz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 216. The most recent article that discusses the climate of Asia Minor labels the relations between the Byzantines and the Turks in the Meander Valley as “symbiotic”. J. Preiser-Kapeller, “A Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean: New Results and Theories on the Interplay Between the climate and the societies in the Byzantium and the Middle East”, *JÖB* 65(2015): 19-10 C. Cahen, *Formation of Turkey*, 123.

⁷⁸⁹ R. Lindner, *Nomads, and the Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, 4-5.

discusses marriages and extramarital sex between the Byzantines and the Turks. The chapter ends with a description of two families of cultural mediators – the Gabrades and the Axouchoi. These families utilized their ability to cross back and forth the border between Ikonion and Constantinople, but finally fell into decline when the Byzantine and Turks adapted to each other.

This final subchapter was inspired by earlier studies, though such studies on this topic are very few, coming mostly from fields that are far from studies in Byzantine rhetoric. Pamela Armstrong analyzed the border groups of the Turks in the Lycian valleys.⁷⁹⁰ Alexander Beihammer investigated the most famous category, the political runaways, providing a useful list of case studies, while Dimitry Korobeynikov is the only one who combined the case studies with an investigation of the different perceptions of the Anatolian borderland in Latin and Byzantine sources.⁷⁹¹ The second (and rather limited) group of cases that I will use extensively in this analysis are the works which describe situations on other borders, such as the "Ottoman-Christian" frontier, the linguistic border and medieval travellers in Europe.⁷⁹² These studies go beyond the perimeter of Byzantine studies, integrating it into the wider context. A good example of such a study is an article by Catherine Delano-Smyth on the milieus of mobility in Medieval Europe. Interestingly enough, these are milieus of mobility and their categories of medieval border-crossers had their analogues in Byzantium.

1. The Space of the Border in the Byzantine rhetoric

This subchapter will describe the categories of border-crossers, the borderland's topos and the spaces of contact and communication, as imagined and defined by the Byzantine literati in their works. The first category to be analysed here are the border-crossers. Catherine Delano-Smith in her study on mobility in Medieval and Early Modern Europe identified several

⁷⁹⁰ P. Armstrong "Seljuqs before the Seljuqs: Nomads and Frontiers inside Byzantium." In *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, ed. Antony Eastmond (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001), 277-286

⁷⁹¹ See A. Beihammer, "Deflection Across the Border," 648-651; D. Korobeynikov, "The Byzantine-Seljuk Border at the Times of Trouble: Laodikeia in 1174-1204."

⁷⁹² C. Delano-Smyth, "Milieus of Mobility: Itineraries, Route Maps and Road Maps," in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, ed. J.R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 16-69; M. Gallego, "The Languages of the Medieval Iberia and their religious dimensions," *Medieval Encounters* 9.1 (2003), 108-139.

categories of border-crossers. These were kings, princes and knights, professional messengers in the service of ecclesiastical and laid administrations, traders, monks, soldiers and, finally, independent travellers.⁷⁹³ While the last category included "tourists" during the Early Modern era and therefore can hardly be applied to the imagined characters traveling in the imagined landscape of twelfth-century Anatolia, the other categories are present in Byzantine writing. The principal travellers and border-crossers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were rulers, emperors, and sultans. While Psellos in *Chronographia* was uncertain about the movement, the ideal emperor of the twelfth century had to move far and quickly.⁷⁹⁴ As Chapter 2 demonstrated, border-crossing was a notable feature of the Komnenian emperors in the twelfth century.⁷⁹⁵ The same holds true for the image of the ideal sultan in the Byzantine rhetoric. Both Kay Khusraw in Niketas Choniates' text and Alp Arslān in Michael Attaleiates' work travel and move around a lot, crossing many boundaries and borders.⁷⁹⁶

The second category, that of princes and knights, is also reflected in Byzantine rhetoric. Byzantine nobles of the Komnenian era were active travellers. They moved in order to perform their governmental and military duties, they took part in the embassies and last, but not the least, they changed sides in the military conflicts. Alexander Beihammer listed more than 20 defected twelfth-century Byzantine nobles and demonstrated that defection in the Byzantine-Seljuk zone usually implied undercover travel to the enemy capital.⁷⁹⁷

The situation with church administrators is different. There is no evidence that a single Komnenian bishop was an ambassador to the Turks, but there is some evidence that certain bishops preferred not to travel into the problematic regions of the eastern borderland.⁷⁹⁸ In general there is little data regarding travelling bishops from the Seljuk side of the borderlands.

⁷⁹³ Delano-Smith, "Milieus of Mobility," 21-25.

⁷⁹⁴ The description of Michael Doukas in Psellos' *Chronographia* positioned him as a "stable" ruler.

⁷⁹⁵ See R. Shliakhtin, "Master of Kastamon, Emperor of Eternity. Ioannes Komnenos as Border-Maker and Border-Breaker in Theodore Prodromos 'On the Advance to Kastamon.'" In *From Constantinople to the Frontier. The City and the Cities*, ed. N. Matheou (Leiden: Brill, 2015) 425-434.

⁷⁹⁶ For the travels of Kay Khusraw and Alp Arslān see subchapters of Chapter VI "Seljuk Kaleidoscope"

⁷⁹⁷ Beihammer, "Defection Across the Border", 649-650.

⁷⁹⁸ Angold, *Church, and Society in Byzantium*, 179.

The Christian communities in Seljuk territories are in the blind zone of the Byzantine rhetoric, together with their leaders. Same is true for the pilgrimages from Constantinople to the shrine of St. Basil in Caesarea and vice versa.

The situation with traders is slightly better. They are absent from the Byzantine literary production of the Komnenian period and only appear in the sources that date back to the second half of the twelfth century.⁷⁹⁹ Niketas Choniates mentioned the arrest of Greek and Persian” travellers in Ikonion by Isaak Angelos during his conflict with Kay Khusraw of Ikonion in the 1190s.⁸⁰⁰ One can hypothesize that the importance of trade between Byzantium and Ikonion was significant enough to use it as an economic leverage in the political conflict.⁸⁰¹ It is also interesting that Choniates provides the first articulated mention of trans-Anatolian trade in the second half of the twelfth century. At the end of this period the Seljuk sultan Kay Khusraw I sponsored the existing trade routes and constructed networks of caravan-sarays that became a notable feature of the Anatolian landscape during the Seljuk era. The Byzantine sources do not note them.

The soldiers, crossed the border often on both sides. It seems likely that they crossed imaginary boundaries every time there was a war, and in some periods (1080s, 1120s, 1170s) the Byzantines and the Turks waged war on a yearly basis. The unique situation in Anatolia also created the single group of Turkic pastoralists and Byzantine settlers, being migrants who crossed the border, as attested in Byzantine sources, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not. It seems likely that pastoralists crossed through the borderlands often and crossed the imagined boundaries more often than it is mentioned in the sources. The Byzantines mentioned them only

⁷⁹⁹ The travellers from Ikonion to Constantinople are ignored in the modern scholarship. See C. Rapp, "Medieval Cosmopolis: Constantinople and its Foreign Inhabitants," in *Alexanders' Revenge: Hellenistic Culture Through the Centuries*, ed. J. M. Asgeirsson, N. van Deusen (Reykjavik: University of Iceland Press, 2002), 153-171.

⁸⁰⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 494-495.

⁸⁰¹ The question of the scale of this trade remains open. In the twelfth century the trans-Mediterranean trade was still in the domain of Syrians or "Saracens" of the Byzantine sources, at least in Constantinople. See G.D. Anderson, "Islamic Spaces in Medieval Constantinople: Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E." *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009): 98-102.

in moments of full-scale warfare, namely in the 1080s, 1130s and 1170s..⁸⁰²

The last category of "professional" border-crossers in twelfth-century Byzantine rhetoric are the Crusaders. The motives of their relocation remain the subject of constant debate, but their mobility was not perceived positively by the Byzantine literati. Anna Komnene famously did not believe in their proclaimed cause, John Zonaras called their movement a chaotic "commotion," while Manganeios Prodromos labelled them as "wild beast from the West."⁸⁰³ At the same time Niketas Choniates praised these border-crossers as the true defenders of Christianity. In his *History* Choniates reconstructed his version of the Crusader agenda and believed in the "spatial" goal of the Crusaders in Jerusalem.⁸⁰⁴ At the same time, Niketas is the exception: the general attitude of the Byzantine literati to the movements of the armed "pilgrims" through Byzantine-Turkic borderlands remained negative.

As I noted above, the categories of travellers in Byzantine rhetoric are very similar to the one present in the rhetoric of Medieval Europe. It is important to discuss here the evolution of the idea of borderlands in the Byzantine rhetoric. From the mid-eleventh century and up to the middle of the twelfth century, the Byzantine sources project the image of the shifting "no-man's-land", which stretched between the imperial bases and the cities conquered by the Turks. John Skylitzes postulated the Turks started their way from the deserted borderland, Michael Attaleiates described in detail the desolation of Byzantinized Armenia, Christodoulos complained about the destructive raids of the Turks against the monasteries of Cappadocia, and Theodore Prodromos described Bithynia as a wilderness.⁸⁰⁵

The question of how wild was the imagined wilderness remains open to debate.

⁸⁰² For the "Seljuk deluge" see subchapter I in Chapter V "Seljuk Beliefs".

⁸⁰³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 297-298. M. Jeffreys, E. Jeffreys, The "Wild Beast from the West": Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade," in *The Crusades From the Perspective of the Byzantine World*, ed. A. Laiou. R.p. Mottahedeh (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 102-116.

⁸⁰⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 69-71.

⁸⁰⁵ John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, ed. Thurn, 443-444 ;Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis 114-115 Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the visit of Lopadion*, line 40. Alexander Beihammer noted this in his early article but did not investigate the question in detail. See Beihammer, "Die Ethnogenese," 599-600.

Nikephoros Bryennios recorded the presence of peasants and Byzantine nobles in Eastern Anatolia after the battle of Manzikert.⁸⁰⁶ Some fifty years later Niketas Choniates depicted the Meander valley as a region inhabited by both Byzantines and Turks, despite the many conflicts between them. When Anna Komnene described the expedition of her father Alexios I to Philomelion, she depicted him as Moses leading his people through the desert and noted that her father managed to bring some Christian population out of this rugged terrain.⁸⁰⁷ To sum up, the Byzantine description of the Eastern borderland was a combination of first-hand experience, abstract literary topoi and data from the imperial reports. One can talk about the formation of the chronotope of Byzantine-Seljuk borderland in the Komnenian rhetoric – and this chronotope has an analogue in the late Seljuk epic genre.⁸⁰⁸

Bridges are a repetitive element in the chronotope of the border-zone. Very much like in Medieval French rhetoric, a bridge connecting two sides of a river in many cases served as a border.⁸⁰⁹ The classical tradition contains many instances of bridges that work as landmarks on borders between different regions, e.g. the Peutinger Map.⁸¹⁰ The bridge (γέφυρα) as a place to cross the border can be found in Byzantine rhetoric, be it an imagined bridge over the river Arax or some real structure that was actually constructed on the ground.⁸¹¹ Some bridges attracted several authors' attention, for example, the Zompus bridge over the Sangarios. One can note that in all these sources bridges act as a landmark, as a spatial marker of a certain character's actions. *Caesar* John Doukas in Michael Attaleiates' *Historia* marched as far as "the Zompus bridge that separated the province of Anatolians from the province of Cappadocians."⁸¹² In some sense the bridges and the rivers form the grid for the imagined universe of the Byzantine literati, who had to reschedule their maps after the Seljuk invasion and fall of Byzantine Anatolia.

⁸⁰⁶ Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, 259-261.

⁸⁰⁷ G. Buckley, *The Alexiad*, 266-267.

⁸⁰⁸ See *Battal-Name*, tr. Yorgos, 107-108.

⁸⁰⁹ See D. Powell, "French and Norman Frontiers in Central Middle Ages," in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*, ed. D. Power, N. Staden (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999) p. 110.

⁸¹⁰ A. Talbert, *Rome's world*, 104.

⁸¹¹ See "iron bridge" on the Byzantine-Arabian border. A. Eger, *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*, 56-57.

⁸¹² Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 143, lines 1-8.

The Modern postcolonial theory sought to interpret bridges in the Medieval discourse as instruments of control and spatial power.⁸¹³ However, the same cannot be said of bridges in the Byzantine rhetoric. The sources that talk about expansion hardly mention bridges at all. The notion of a bridge is absent in the works of Theodore Prodromos, John Kinnamos and in the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*. In all these works of rhetoric, bridges fall into the blind zone of the narrator.

The only exception among Byzantine authors is Niketas Choniates. In his description of the Second Crusade, the imagined king of Germans crossed the Meander without any bridge.⁸¹⁴ On the other hand, when Niketas Choniates described the successful ambush of Byzantine general John Vatatzes against the raid of the Seljuk *atabeg* in 1177, he stated that Vatatzes organized his troops around the bridge that the enemy had to cross on their way back to the Seljuk land.⁸¹⁵ These two examples from the end of the twelfth century allow one to decipher the significance of bridges in the spatial rhetoric of the Byzantine literati. Contrary to the Early Modern era, a bridge is not a rhetorical device to convey expansion, but a place of defence and part of the landscape of defence. The Byzantine literati mention bridges when they describe Byzantine defeats in wars. Even in the description of offensive campaigns, bridges appear in the context that one can label as “defensive.” When Anna Komnene described the last expedition of her father against the Turks in 1116, she mentioned the Zompus bridge in the context of the raid that Bardas Burtzes conducted to repeal the threat from the Turks.⁸¹⁶ Alexios I Komnenos build a bridge over the Sangarios next to the lake Vaanes because he wanted to defend the imperial domains against the Turks, and not to attack them. When the exemplary emperor of the Byzantine rhetoric attacks his enemies, he ignores bridges and attacks through water with miraculous aid from above. Thus, a bridge in Byzantine rhetoric is not a place of meeting of the Byzantines and Turks, but a place of defence.

⁸¹³ During the colonization of Early Modern Ireland bridges were explicitly present in the English rhetoric of the time as tools of “civilization” and military control. J.P. Montario, *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland*, (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 256.

⁸¹⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 68, line 59.

⁸¹⁵ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, line 35: μετά τήν παλαιάν γεφυραν.

⁸¹⁶ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 471, line 66.

Other places-in-between these two are rarely mentioned in the sources. The followers of the “coexistence” theory often mention the much-debated case of lake Pousgousa.⁸¹⁷ This lake is located 70 kilometers to the west of modern Konya, in the territory that in the twelfth century served as the borderland. The lake was home to the community of people who lived on its islands. According to Kinnamos and Choniates, at the end of his reign John Komnenos undertook a campaign that aimed to seize control of the lake’s shores. According to Kinnamos, the inhabitants of those islands used their ancient fortresses and could travel into Ikonion in one day. This information may seem unrealistic, but information from a contemporary Sicilian source supports this data.⁸¹⁸ According to Kinnamos, the Romans on the islands decided not to accept Byzantine supremacy and took up arms against the emperor.⁸¹⁹ John Komnenos had to construct rafts and install his famous engines of war to destroy their fortifications. According to the *Deeds*, a storm on the lake destroyed the rafts; many good soldiers perished and at the end John achieved his aim with heavy losses.

This short episode in Kinnamos and Choniates paved the way for many interpretations. Modern scholarship tends to perceive the Romans of lake Pousgousa as the precursors of the “friendly collaboration” during the late sultanate of Ikonion.⁸²⁰ Very much like with bridges, a more detailed analysis of the texts demonstrates how problematic it is to accept Byzantine data at face. To repeat Lefebvre again, “the difference endures on the margins” of the imagined space. Both John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates stress the political allegiance of the different groups that lived in a spatial margin in Anatolia, i.e. on the borderlands. In other words, Byzantine writers did not perceive the islands on the lake as a “shared space” of any kind..⁸²¹

⁸¹⁷ N. Asutay-Effenberger, “Byzantinische (griechische) Künstler und ihre Auftraggeber im seldschukischen Anatolien”, *Knotenpunkt Byzanz: Wissensformen und Kulturelle Wechselbeziehungen*, ed. A. Speer, P. Steinkrüger, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012), 816-818.

⁸¹⁸ Abu Abdallah Muhammad Al-Idrisi, *Geographie*, trad. A. Jaubert, vol. II (Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1840) 4e section de V Climat, 310.

⁸¹⁹ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 22, lines 15-17

⁸²⁰ N. Asutay-Effenberger, “Byzantinische (griechische) Künstler und ihre Auftraggeber im seldschukischen Anatolien”), 818.

⁸²¹ The description of the islands in TIB 04 contains information from narrative sources, but hardly any archaeological data on this region. A survey of the local sources of official information reveals the

In the text of Kinnamos, the Pusgusa story occupies a very small place between the description of his brief activity next to Sozopolis and his move against Antioch, where he ultimately died. Kinnamos described this campaign as an episode that happened *in passim*, literally on the emperor's way between these two cities. This episode is in many ways ambiguous. First of all, the whole setting is strange, because the emperor had to have dealt with the lake from the mainland. Secondly, the text stated that the inhabitants of the islands "mixed up" with the Persians who were spatially close to the lake Pousgousa. Kinnamos underlines the spatial factor by stating that the Romans on the islands could travel to Ikonion in one day's time.⁸²² John Komnenos is said in *the Deeds* to have taken this liminal space under control, thus suppressing the only communities that in the Byzantine imagination were seen as Greeks loyal to the Turks. According to Kinnamos, the aim of the emperor was to fortify the border and not to leave liminal zones on its margins.

Several years after Kinnamos, Niketas Choniates reported that the inhabitants of the islands were not only Romans, but also Christians. According to Choniates, the islands' inhabitants "mixed" with the Ikonian Turks and not only developed a powerful friendship with them, but had commercial dealing with them as well.⁸²³ These commercial ties, wrote Choniates, were so powerful that the inhabitants of the islands valued them more than "kindred (*genos*) and faith." Emperor John II in Choniates' text first threatened to resettle the inhabitants to Persia, but then attacked the islands, killing many people in the process.

The mention of kinship reminds one about the Byzantine identification of the Turks produced during the eleventh-twelfth centuries.⁸²⁴ However, the key term of Choniates' phrase is "mixing people" (ἐπιμειγνόμενοι). This term has definite sexual connotations in the *Historia* of

existence of some Byzantine fortifications on the so-called "Chechen Island" in the middle of the lake. The absence of any archaeological report makes any further comparison problematic. See "Pusguse Limne," in *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 4. Galatien und Lycaonien*, ed. K. Belke (Vienna, 1984) p. 218;

⁸²² This is hardly possible. The distance from the lake to Ikonion is around 70 km. Even the best horse could hardly cover this distance in one day time.

⁸²³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 37, lines 91-95.

⁸²⁴ See Chapter II.1 "The Construction of the Turks.Semantic Change of the Eleventh Century"

Niketas Choniates.⁸²⁵ The whole phrase also has analogues in the later speeches of Choniates, where the derivatives of the same verbs are used to describe "the mixture with nations" which is definitely presented as negative.⁸²⁶ In other words, the mixture that Choniates refers to might be the description of marriages between Christians and the Turks of Ikonion. Another meaning might have to do with political unions: Theodore Prodromos used a similar verb to describe the political union between Kastamon and the Persians.⁸²⁷

The key to the interpretation, again, lies in the context of the *Historia*. Several lines before the story of lake Pousgousa, Choniates introduced the lengthy story of the defection of Isaak Komnenos, son of John Komnenos and father of Andronikos I Komnenos. Isaak was unsatisfied with his position in the imperial court. During the campaign of John II against the Danishmendids (1138), the Turks surrounded the Byzantines at their winter camps. During the harsh winter, many horses died and John II Komnenos demanded from less experienced riders to hand their horses to the more experienced ones. John II ordered his brother to pass his horse to a Latin cavalryman.⁸²⁸ The former refused, rode off on his horse to the Turks and surrendered himself to the enemy. After his defection, Isaak left the Christian faith and married the daughter of an "Ikonian Persian" [Mas'ūd I of Ikonion]. By putting two episodes one next to another, Choniates demonstrate the similarity between the runaway prince Isaak and the inhabitants of lake Pousgousa. Both get involved into the marriages with the foreigners.

To sum up, Niketas presented in one short passage two cases of border-crossing: one personal and one collective, using a reference of sexual union to connect the two. What ties the two is the negative connotation of border-crossing. Choniates transformed the rather neutral story of border-warfare in Kinnamos' text into a narrative that describes and explains the crossings of the spatial border, namely wrath (Isaakios Komnenos), greed (people of the Pousgousa islands) and the desire to "mix" with the other, be they noble Persians or less noble Turks. According to Choniates, this tradition of defection united the population of lake Pousgousa and

⁸²⁵ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 54, line 10; 310, line 3.

⁸²⁶ Niketas Choniates, *Orations* 15, ed. Van Dieten, 159, lines 34-38.

⁸²⁷ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, line 115.

⁸²⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 36, lines 55-60.

Isaak Komnenos. In Choniates' *Historia* both defections (collective and individual) are transgressions that should be punished. In this story the lake (with the sea that protects the transgressors) is the counter-space of Komnenian Byzantium and of Komnenian spatial politics in Asia.⁸²⁹

The emperor John II Komnenos decided to eliminate this space, however he succeeded only with heavy losses. One can also hypothesize that Choniates' description of the community at lake Pousgousa and the defection of Isaak Komnenos are stylized as predictions of the future dire events that led to the loss of Asia Minor, but this hypothesis needs further elaboration. Both Kinnamos and Choniates demonstrate negative attitude towards the lake Pousgousa. This very attitude makes any use of these descriptions in support of the syncretism argument extremely problematic.

Thus, references to both bridges and lakes of Asia Minor do not function as places of meeting. So where do the Byzantines and the Turks meet each other in the Byzantine rhetoric? The place of contact is in the special locations where the borders did not work. In the Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there are two imagined places that work as landscapes of active communication. The first place is the battlefield and military camp before or (more usually) after the battle. A paradigmatic example is Attaleiates' description of the battle of Manzikert with the famous dialogue between the sultan and the defeated emperor Romanos Diogenes after the fight.⁸³⁰ The dialogues at the battlefield are usually treaty-bound. One can find them in the sources that present themselves as "histories" rather than in panegyric poetry. Alexios I Komnenos of the *Alexiad* conversed with the defeated sultan Shāhanshāh on the "plane" of Polybotes between Augostopolis and Akroinos.⁸³¹ In the *Deeds* of John Kinnamos, Manuel Komnenos stopped the first battle of Myriokephalon (1146) with the help of a messenger.⁸³² When he was still on contested land, Manuel marshalled his army and asked one of the Seljuk scouts, who were observing him from a close distance, to approach the Byzantine

⁸²⁹ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 381.

⁸³⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 128-129.

⁸³¹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 478, line 73: κατὰ την πεδιάδα.

⁸³² John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 58-59.

line. The emperor gave him a plate of armour and asked him to deliver the message to the defeated sultan of Ikonion. Finally, Choniates made Manuel Komnenos partake in a lengthy dialogue with the ambassador of Kılıç Arslan II, Hiyas ed-Din ibn Gabras, after the second battle of Myriokephalon (1176).⁸³³

Another place of communication lay in the very centre of the Byzantine universe – in Constantinople. To describe Constantinople as a place of communication between the Byzantines and the Turks, I suggest the term heterotopia introduced by Michel Foucault. According to the philosopher, *heterotopia* has several essential characteristics. *Heterotopia* is accessible only at certain moments, it has clearly defined functions, it evolves with time and it juxtaposes several incompatible sites. Additionally, heterotopias are connected with the repetitive structure of time and assume a system of opening and closing, which makes them open and penetrable. Finally, heterotopias perform the function of "to all places that remain."⁸³⁴

With all the vagueness of Foucault's formula taken into account, Constantinople is essentially the *heterotopia* in the imagined space of twelfth century Byzantium. First, it is accessible during moments of submission and imperial triumphs. All Turks in Byzantine rhetoric, starting from Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos and finishing with Kay Khusraw of Niketas Choniates come to Constantinople as petitioners.⁸³⁵ Very much like diplomats, they are under the imperial protection and control while they are in the city.⁸³⁶ Secondly, the function of Constantinople for the Turks changed over time. In the *Speech of 1088* Theophylact of Ohrid positioned Constantinople as the place of baptism, Anna Komnene depicted it as the place of Turkic entertainment, while Niketas Choniates pointed to the fact that for Kay Khusraw of Ikonion Constantinople was the city of his failure.⁸³⁷ Constantinople juxtaposes several places, including the Palace, the Hippodrome, the market and other structures that the Turks had to

⁸³³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 189.

⁸³⁴ M. Foucault, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," 46-49.

⁸³⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakakis, 110, lines 24-30; Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 521-522.

⁸³⁶ For the traditional monitoring of the diplomats see E. Nechaeva, *Embassies-Negotiations-Gifts*, 45.

⁸³⁷ Theophylact of Ohrid, *The Speech of 1088*, 114, lines 1-7; Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 521-522.

visit.⁸³⁸ When they are in Constantinople, the Turks participated in triumphal processions and games, and launched to entertain one of the amīrs. The conquered Turks visited the City regularly, and all these aspects made Constantinople a *heterotopia*, a place of contact.⁸³⁹

What is not possible on the border becomes possible at the centre of the Empire. In the very heart of the city, in the Great Palace, Manuel Komnenos built the pavilion of Mochroutes, stylized in the "Persian" fashion.⁸⁴⁰ While art historians still debate about who the builders were, Nikolaos Mesarites explicitly labelled the hall in question as "Persian". Interior space was the embodiment of the Komnenian claims of power over the East, which complemented the intricate ritual of submission that Manuel I Komnenos used to demonstrate his grandeur in front of Kılıç Arslan II in 1161.⁸⁴¹ That year the sultan came to submit himself to Manuel I Komnenos, recognizing the suzerainty of the Byzantine emperor and stayed in the designated space of the palace, probably the Mouchroutes hall. In some sense this was the emperors' own Persia, a stylized space adjacent to the Chrysotriklinos and the halls of Justinian.

The Byzantine literati were eager to map the processions and procedures that marked the presence of the Turks in the city. The Turks came to the Senate, passed in a triumphal procession and observed games in the Hippodrome. These visits usually marked the end of a military conflict and demonstrated the many powers of the emperor."⁸⁴²

These demonstrations cease to appear in rhetoric texts with the decline of the Byzantine power in Asia Minor. Niketas Choniates, writing in the 1180s, parodied many motifs of the early panegyric descriptions of the Turks inside the city of Constantinople. His narration regarding the conclusion of peace in 1161 between Manuel and Kılıç Arslan is a story of failed communication

⁸³⁸ For the location of Constantinople as a place of feasting see D. Korobeinikov "A sultan in Constantinople: the feasts of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw I," 94-96.

⁸³⁹ It is also important to keep in mind "the blind zones" not mentioned in the sources but where the Turks had reasons to be present, like the famous mosque of Constantinople and the markets where the traders from Ikonion could trade their wares. The mosque was the object of active attention for the Seljuk sultans. See G.D. Anderson, "Islamic Spaces in Medieval Constantinople: Tenth to Thirteenth Centuries C.E." *Medieval Encounters* 15 (2009), 94-104.

⁸⁴⁰ A. Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 175-176.

⁸⁴¹ D. Korobeinikov, "A sultan in Constantinople," 94; Magdalino, *The Empire*, 99.

⁸⁴² Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, 164-165.

between the two rulers. According to Choniates, Manuel had the vain hope of subduing the Turks by way of diplomacy. To demonstrate his futile hopes, Niketas introduced into his narrative the story of the Saracen who tried to fly over the hippodrome but failed and the story of the Constantinopolitan silversmiths who met the sultan with the sound of their anvils. While the perceived Constantinople of Theophylact of Ohrid and Anna Komnene is a Constantinople of the triumph and subjugation of the Turks, the Constantinople of Choniates is one of the failed triumph over their enemy. Niketas Choniates transformed heterotopia into dystopia, predicting the dire events of the future.⁸⁴³ At the same time, Choniates in his narrative “lowered” the image of the city, stripping it off its grandeur and making it less powerful. In the later part of his *History*, he explicitly called Ikonion the “metropolis” of the sultanate, thus supporting the status of the Turkic city as a rival to Constantinople. It is not surprising that the last “Turkic” episode in the *History* positions Ikonion as the new centre of Anatolia, if not the new Constantinople. During the later centuries, generals and merchants still travelled between these two cities, but the stories of their travels lay outside of the scope of this thesis.

To sum up, during the twelfth century the Byzantine literati perceived both Byzantine and Persian figures as very mobile. The crossing of the imagined border (*horos*) was part of their duties. The epic of Digenis Akritis depicted the protagonist as one who crosses the border many times and hunts the ground of the Byzantine domains. In the late twelfth century both Kinnamos and Choniates praised John II Komnenos, who, like Akritis, died while hunting in no man's land.⁸⁴⁴ The images of the hunter and the dragon-slayer became popular in Thirteenth-century Anatolia.⁸⁴⁵ Thus, the *topos* of imperial mobility outlived Komnenian poetry by a couple of centuries. Three centuries after the death of John Komnenos, the Ottoman chronicler Asikpasazade portrayed young Osman, the founder of the Ottoman state, as a hunter in the

⁸⁴³ This was the position of Alexander Kazhdan who reconstructed the life of twelfth-century Constantinople based exclusively on Choniates' description. See A. Kazhdan [А.Каждан] *Два дня из жизни Константинополя* [Two days in the life of the city of Constantinople] (Saint-Petersburg: Aletheia, 2002).

⁸⁴⁴ See C. Galatariotou, “Structural Oppositions in Grottaferrata Digenis Akritis,” *BMGS* 11 (1987), 38-40.

⁸⁴⁵ Oya Pancaroğlu, “The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer: Forging the Paths of Image and Identity in Medieval Anatolia,” in *Gesta* 18.2 (2004), 154-156.

Bithynian borderland.⁸⁴⁶

The Byzantine sources do not provide much information on the "compromise" communities living in the borderlands. The few existing descriptions are heavily biased. A good case-in-point is the Greek-Ikonian community of lake Pousgousa. While John Kinnamos portrays them as people spatially connected to Ikonion, Niketas Choniates portrayed this group as the trespassers of human laws. According to Kinnamos and Choniates, a good emperor should ideally destroy these "hybrid" communities which live on the border and "mix" with the enemies. "Good" contacts with the people from the "other side" took place either on the battlefield, before or after the battle, or in the *heterotopia* of Constantinople, where Turks were expected to demonstrate obeisance and participate in imperial processions. Thus, the right contact was possible only under imperial control.

The people outside of imperial control were defectors and traitors. The people who decided to change their living domain and cross the boundary between the Byzantine state and the Seljuk state were numerous and the next subchapter analyses part of the defection ritual, namely, the change of clothing.

2. The New Defector's Clothes. One Aspect of Political Border-Crossing

The question of Byzantine defectors to the Turks and Turkic defectors to the Byzantines received considerable attention from Byzantinists and from specialists in the history of the Middle East as well. Most recently Alexander Beihammer wrote an analytical study where he meticulously listed and analyzed the concept of defection.⁸⁴⁷ Beihammer formulated four categories of defectors, namely: Turkish warlords and potentates, Christian frontier lords, Komnenian aristocrats, and local rebels. He further analyzed most instances of Byzantine-Seljuk

⁸⁴⁶ R. Lindner, *Nomads, and Ottomans in the Medieval Anatolia*, 4-5.

⁸⁴⁷ Alexander Beihammer, "Defection across the Border of Islam and Christianity: Apostasy and Cross-Cultural Interaction in Byzantine-Seljuk Relations" in *Speculum* 86 (2011), 597-614.

defectors and composed a detailed list of all the persons that changed sides during the history of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations between the 1040s and 1264.⁸⁴⁸ Meanwhile Dimitry Korobeinikov conducted a case study of the reception in Komnenian Constantinople of sultans of Ikonion, focusing on the visit of Kay Khusraw of Ikonion in 1203.⁸⁴⁹ He reconstructed the reception of the Seljuk potentate in Constantinople organized by Alexios III Angelos in a year before the success of the Fourth Crusade. Finally, Rustam Shukurov described in his monograph another complex case of defection, those of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāwus II in the thirteenth century.⁸⁵⁰

The “robes of honour” were tools of investiture in many cultures of the Medieval world and Byzantium, and the sultanate of the Great Seljuks was no exception.⁸⁵¹ According to the surviving sources, the sultan of the Great Seljuks Tughril Beg sent to the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos a wonderful robe with the seal of Solomon sewn into it.⁸⁵² The Byzantine investitures of the eleventh century also included robes of honour. Unfortunately, no scholar studied the procedures of robbing in the twelfth century Byzantium. Resultantly, some scholars questioned the very existence of the clothing rituals in Byzantine palace.⁸⁵³

The Byzantine literati understood the importance of the robes of honour during the period of Manzikert. From the protocol outlined in *De Ceremoniis*, one can infer that the early Seljuk defectors had received new robes as a sign of their rank. In 1071 Romanos Diogenes bestowed upon Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos the title of *proedros*. The acceptance of this defector in Byzantine service implied a gift in the form of a decorated cloak.⁸⁵⁴ Based on this one can hypothesize that the Seljuk renegade received a present of this kind

Clothes also constituted a crucial part of the Seljuk court rituals. According to Michael

⁸⁴⁸ A. Beihammer, “Defection across the Border,” 645-649.

⁸⁴⁹ D. Korobeinikov, “A sultan in Constantinople: the Feasts of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw I,” 93-114.

⁸⁵⁰ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 105-120.

⁸⁵¹ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 310; For the case studies on the importance of robes in previous era see *Robes of Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. Stewart Gordon (New York: Palgrave, 2001), esp. 137-146.

⁸⁵² Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 96-100.

⁸⁵³ Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 260-261.

⁸⁵⁴ See “Proedros as Civic Dignity,” in *ODB*, 1727.

Attaleiates, after the battle of Manzikert, the Turks took from Roman Diogenes his clothes and invested him in the clothes of a poor soldier.⁸⁵⁵ After concluding peace with the sultan Alp Arslān the defeated Byzantine emperor Romanos Diogenes received different clothes which he had to change when he later entered the land of the Romans.⁸⁵⁶ Attaleiates described these clothes with the term reserved for the court-dress (stola) and labelled them as "Turkic", which implies the emperor's lower status after the battle. Thus, the clothes of the "Other" are part of the ritual humiliation of the emperor. While the Arabic source narrates the same thing, Attaleiates used this "change of clothes" to demonstrate the humiliation of Romanos Diogenes and his readiness to fight for power after the defeat. The "Turkic" clothes became the symbol of his defeat, which he then overcame by returning to Theodosiopolis and removing these clothes.⁸⁵⁷

The next mention of clothes is more ambiguous and problematic. In the *Speech of 1088* Theophylact of Ohrid talks about the introduction of Bithynian Turks into the Byzantine senate and their baptism. He praised the emperor for his symbolic donation of the "clothes of eternal life" to the new converts.⁸⁵⁸ As Gautier noted, the quote came from the Psalms, but in the context of senate mentioned several lines before, one can read this as evidence of a literal donation of imperial clothes to the new converts. Anna Komnene recounted that her father accepted the amīr of Nicaea Abu'l-Quasim as a Byzantine sebastos.⁸⁵⁹ One can suppose that this promotion implied the investiture of special clothes, but the absence of any concrete data in the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene prevents one from making any further conclusions.

The most detailed recorded episode of an investiture with the presentation of ceremonial clothes is the famous peace-making scene between the sultan of Ikonion Shāhanshāh and Alexios I Komnenos on the Polybotes plane in 1116. Anna Komnene described the following day's events minute by minute.⁸⁶⁰ According to her account, the concluding peace procedures started with the ritual of *proskynesis* performed by the Seljuk amīrs in front of the emperor. Sultan

⁸⁵⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 127, line 5: ἀμπεχόνη.

⁸⁵⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 128, lines 21,;στολή, line 25: σκευή.

⁸⁵⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 128, lines 21-27.

⁸⁵⁸ Theophylact of Ohrid, *Speech of 1088*, 114, block 11, line 4: δεικνύει καὶ τῆς ἀφθαρσίας ἱμάτων.

⁸⁵⁹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 192, line 69.

⁸⁶⁰ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 478, lines 74-81:

Shāhanshāh had tried to complete the *proskynesis* several times, but Alexios had prevented him from doing so. The young sultan, however, nonetheless managed to grasp the leg of the emperor in a gesture of obedience. Alexios then ordered the sultan to mount one of his best Byzantine horses and immediately placed his emperor's cloak on the shoulders of the Shāhanshāh.⁸⁶¹

The term Anna used for “cloak” has a rather specific meaning, namely, it represents a piece of clothing associated with the barbarian people or a clothing prepared for barbarians. In book X of the *Alexiad*, Alexios I Komnenos used the same “clothes” to change the opinion of Bohemond during the First Crusade.⁸⁶² Taking into account the symmetry of the Turks and the Normans in the *Alexiad*, this is hardly a coincidence.⁸⁶³ The whole book XV is a symbolic reversal of the battle at Manzikert and the humiliation of Romanos Diogenes that followed afterwards. As Attaleiates reported, this humiliation implied the changing of clothes. When Anna Komnene described “the dressing” of Shāhanshāh by Alexios, she reversed Manzikert.

Michael Italikos reported that at the end of the meeting Alexios I Komnenos made Shāhanshāh an *oiketes*, a servant of the Komnenian household.⁸⁶⁴ In the twelfth century this position was usually considered a court rank, but one can hardly name this a proper rank in this instance. At the same time, the kiss on the leg was part of the Seljuk ritual that demonstrated the Turkic princeling recognition of Alexios as the sovereign in the Seljuk manner that also included *proskynesis*.⁸⁶⁵

The next ruler of Ikonion sultan Mas'ūd remained "uncloaked" in the Byzantine sources. In his Panegyric of the peace of 1161 Euthymios Malakes mentioned that sultan Mas'ūd approached John Komnenos in a "slavery manner." This phrase appears to record a demonstration of submission, but there is no reference to a cloak being involved in this encounter. At the same time, during the reign of Mas'ūd an enlarged cloak appeared on the seal of another “Persian”: on the seal of a sebastos of “Persian” origin, the *megas domestikos* John

⁸⁶¹ A. Beihammer, “Defection Across the Border,” 613-614.

⁸⁶² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 319, line 72.

⁸⁶³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 476-477.

⁸⁶⁴ Michael Italikos, *Monody to Andronikos Komnenos*, 85, line 2.

⁸⁶⁵ Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 162-163.

Axouch.⁸⁶⁶ The seal depicts St. Demetrios, who appears rather anachronistic and strange due to the enlarged embroidered cloak that the saint holds in his right hand. According to the interpretation of Jonathan Shea, it is the most visible identity sign of the seal. It also reminds one of the detailed descriptions of the "Roman" costume of another Muslim convert, namely Emir, father of Digenis Akritis. When he returned to the Roman land, he changed his clothes into a "surcoat of purple silk with a triple white border."⁸⁶⁷ According to the common consensus, the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* was composed during the first half of the twelfth century.

During the reign of Manuel Komnenos clothes appear as an instrument of investiture. Kinnamos reported that the emperor once presented a piece of clothing to a Persian spy who was asked to bring Manuel's message to Mas'ūd of Ikonion.⁸⁶⁸ On the other hand, the description of clothes as an object of investiture is absent from the descriptions of the peace agreement of 1161. When Kılıç Arslan II was in Constantinople he received particular clothes in a very similar manner to Bohemond, namely as part of a bigger gift of imperial *richesse*.

The reaction of Kılıç Arslan II in the *History* of Niketas Choniates is suspiciously similar to the one of Bohemond in the *Alexiad*.⁸⁶⁹ One can suppose that the two "barbaric" leaders participated in the same ritual, described by the Byzantine sources. Alicia Simpson considered this ritual to be a mere topos, but the evidence of Anna Komnene, Michael Italikos, John Kinnamos and Choniates demonstrate, that it is safer to speak about the some actual ritual that involved presents of clothes.⁸⁷⁰

Another interesting instance to the de-clothing of a Turks can be found in the Darmstadt box analyzed by Alicia Walker.⁸⁷¹ If the box dates to the twelfth century and is connected to

⁸⁶⁶There are three seals of this kind *DO Seals Catalogue*. Volume 3 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1998) no. 99.8.

⁸⁶⁷*Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 58, lines 256-258.

⁸⁶⁸John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 59, line 5.

⁸⁶⁹Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 319, lines 75-80; Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 121, lines 5-10.

⁸⁷⁰Cf. Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 260-261.

⁸⁷¹Walker was very close to making the comparison with 1161, but probably did not have access to Papadopoulos-Kerameus. Walker, *Emperor and the World*, 140-143.

Manuel, then the naked figure depicted on the box is a Seljuk ruler, probably Kılıç Arslan II. This is all the more possible, because the *Panegyric of 1161* by Malakes revolves around the figures of Darius and Alexander.⁸⁷²



Figure 3. Side Panel of a Casket with murder of Darius (?). After Walker, *Emperor and the World*, 111.

The box depicts the “Eastern” ruler naked and attacked by several figures with swords. One can interpret this as the attacks of the Turkic amīrs on Kılıç Arslan that were orchestrated by Manuel I Komnenos. At the same time, the figure of Alexander in the Byzantine imperial dress on a chariot reminds one of either the triumphal entrances of the emperor into a city.

The last appearance of a cloak as a symbolic part of investiture is recorded in 1176 during the battle of Myriokephalon. After the fight the ambassador of sultan Kılıç Arslan Hasan ibn Gabras arrived at Byzantine camp. The ambassador came to Manuel, bowed, and gave him ritual presents, which consisted of a unique horse and a long double-edged sword.⁸⁷³ In the process,

⁸⁷²See Chapter IV.4, “Xerxes and Darius as Role Models for the Sultans.”

⁸⁷³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 189, lines 50-57: ὁφθῆναι δὲ τῷ βασιλεῖ μέλλων Γαβρᾶς βαθεῖαν καὶ βαρβαρικὴν ἀπονέμει προσκύνησιν καὶ ἅμα ἵππον προσάγει δῶρον ἐκ τοῦ σουλτὰν Νισαῖον ἀργυροχάλινον ἐκ τῶν φατιζομένων εἰς πομπὰς καὶ περιμήκη ἀμφήκη μάχαιραν καὶ λόγον κινεῖ περὶ σπονδῶν, διομαλίσας πρότερον λόγοις ἀπαλοῖς τὴν ἐπὶ τοῖς συμβάσιν ὑπεμφαινομένην ἀχθηδόνα τοῦ

Gabras commented on one fragment of Manuel's attire, namely on the golden robe that the emperor wore under his plate. Gabras noted that this is a bad colour for the battle day. According to Choniates, the emperor smiled, took off his dress and presented it to Gabras as a return present.⁸⁷⁴ The present from Manuel to Gabras is hardly part of a ceremony of investiture, but rather a confirmation of the peace treaty and a reward for the good joke.

The joke of Hasan ibn Gabras concludes the discussion of a cloak as a ceremonial object in the Byzantine-Turkic relations described in Komnenian rhetoric. Very much like collective terminology, cloak, or more correctly "robe of honour", evolved to have many meanings. The robe of honour was a symbol of status and a sign of integration into the Byzantine symbolical system. Both the defeated sultan Shāhanshāh and the defeated emperor Romanos Diogenes had to put on Byzantine clothes to enter Byzantium. For outsiders in Byzantium, like Emir of *Digenis Akritis*, the proper cloak was the confirmation of their high status. The emperor's cloak played the role of a signature in his letters. In other words, a cloak in Byzantine rhetoric is the absent bridge, a common denominator, and a shared value, which both the Byzantines and the Turks could understand. Another category of the objects with shared value included works with jewelry with specific ornaments.⁸⁷⁵

In some ways the fate of Byzantine Anatolia was sealed when Niketas Choniates through the mouth of Hasan ibn Gabras joked about the unsuitable clothes of Manuel on the day of Myriokephalon. The wrong clothes that the emperor wore on the battlefield and which he afterwards presented as a gift were yet another sign of the perceived Byzantine demise expressed in the Byzantine rhetoric of the twelfth century. The same authors attested the conversion of

βασιλέως καὶ καταστείλας τὸ τοῦ πάθους φλεγμαῖνον, οἷά τισιν ἐπάσματος, οἷς πρὸς τὸ οὗς ἐκείνῳ ὑπεπιθύρισε ῥήμασι.

⁸⁷⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 189, lines 60-63: αὐτὸς δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰρημένοις βραχὺ καὶ βεβιασμένον μειδιάσας τὴν ἐπιθωράκιον στολὴν ἀποδὺς ἐκείνῳ δίδωσι πορφύρα καὶ χρυσῷ διηνητισμένην.

⁸⁷⁵ For the good case study on the elite object see the article of Robert Nelson. Basing his study on linguistic criterion, Rustam Shukurov made an interesting observation about the presence of less elaborate objects of Turkish origin. R. Nelson, "Letters and Language/Ornament and Identity in Byzantium and Islam," in *The Experience of Islamic Art on the Margins of Islam*, ed. Irene A. Biermann, (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2005), 61-88; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 315-324.

some Christians in Anatolia to Islam and voiced their anxiety about this fact. The conversions from Christianity to Islam and from Islam to Christianity are the subject of the next subchapter.

3. Islamization or Christianization? Conversions in the Byzantine narratives

The question of the conversion of the Byzantine population of Asia Minor has troubled scholars for a long period of time. The main contributor to this topic has been Speros Vryonis. While his main monograph did not present a united opinion on the chronology of the islamization of Asia Minor, his later article introduced the concepts of “nomadization” and “islamization” of Byzantine Asia Minor.⁸⁷⁶ While these terms are present in the heading of the title of his work, the definition of both terms are absent in the text itself.

One may conclude that “islamization” is another word for “conversion.” Vryonis explains the conversion of this territory as a consequence of “individual conversions” and the institutional conversions that happened from the twelfth to the Fifteenth centuries. To describe the reconstructed realities, Vryonis used an emotionally charged language, talking about the “catastrophic decline” of the Orthodox church from the twelfth century. He also wrote about the moral prestige of Islam among the Byzantine population of Asia Minor.⁸⁷⁷ The article of Vryonis proved to be influential and has defined the thinking of many modern scholars up to the present day.⁸⁷⁸

Due to the popularity Vryonis' article enjoyed both among Byzantinists and Ottomanists, the background check of his core notions against the data in the written rhetoric remains a desideratum.⁸⁷⁹ This subchapter aims to investigate the process of "islamization" in Asia Minor on the material of the Byzantine rhetoric texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It will consist of two parts. The first part will study the often neglected moments in the history of

⁸⁷⁶ Vryonis, “Nomadization and Islamization,” *DOP* 29 (1975), 41-71.

⁸⁷⁷ Vryonis, “Nomadization and Islamization,” 59-61.

⁸⁷⁸ Beihammer, “Christian Views on Orthodoxy,” 54; Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 2.

⁸⁷⁹ For the recent complementary references to Vryonis see Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 59-61.

conversion of Turks into the Christian faith recorded in Byzantine rhetoric, while the second will analyze the rare descriptions of the Byzantine conversions to Islam in the rhetoric of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. To some degree the subchapter will consciously avoid the works of other scholars who dealt with the later periods.⁸⁸⁰ The aim is to study the conversions in general, but first it will focus on the conversion not of the Byzantines, but the conversion of the Turks to Christianity

a. Seljuks converted? Evidence, description, reaction.

For the first fifty years of the Byzantine-Seljuk relation, Byzantine authors provide very limited data on the conversion of the Seljuk Turks to Christianity. Some early Seljuk runaways could well have been baptized. The brother-in-law of the Seljuk sultan Alp-Arslan I Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos (1070-1079) with his Byzantine nickname and court title of *proedros*, appears to be a possible candidate for baptism.⁸⁸¹ None of the Byzantine writers said anything about his religious affiliation. For Michael Attaleiates the shifting allegiances of Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos were more important than his religion.⁸⁸²

The second conversion took place in the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. Fortunately, there is a panegyric preserved that describes this in some detail. The logos was composed by Theophylact of Ohrid around the year 1088. Theophylact describes the integration of the Bithynian Turks into the Byzantine community. In this process, baptism followed the procedure of being introduced into the Senate. The panegyric explicitly mentions the washing of Turks with the “water of salvation” after their promotion into the Senate.⁸⁸³ One can hypothesize that the whole episode of baptism and the sequence of events was not thought up by Theophylact, but

⁸⁸⁰ O. Pancaroğlu, “House of Mengüjek in Divrigi: Construction of the Dynastic Identity in the Late twelfth Century,” in *The Seljuqs of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East* (London: Tauris, 2013), 25-68; Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*, 35-38.

⁸⁸¹ For Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos see the relevant subchapter in the fourth chapter of this thesis. For the general description of Erisgen see Brand, “Turkish Element in Byzantium,” 2.

⁸⁸² In his monograph on Byzantine Ethnography Kaldellis asked the question about the extent, to which barbarian could become “really” Christian. In his turn, Shukurov argued that the Byzantines could integrate the Turks well. See Kaldellis, *Ethnography*, 126-139; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 249-251.

⁸⁸³ Theophylact of Ohrid, *Speech of 1088*, 114, block 11, segments 2-6: ταῖς πηγαῖς τοῦ σωτηρίου, see Gautier, comments at 102-103.

was actually part of the ritual. Taking into account that Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos passed through the procedure of "notification," one can suppose that he and other earlier defectors to Byzantium went through baptism. However, in the absence of any other data from other sources, this remains a hypothesis.

The panegyric of Theophylact is the only contemporary source that describes in detail the conversion of Turks to Christianity at the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries. The sources produced during John's reign are suspiciously silent on the matter of conversion. The transformation of "wolves" into "guard-dogs" described by Theodore Prodromos may have included conversions, but it is made difficult to assert in the context of the poem. Same holds true for the panegyrics that describe John's expedition to Cilicia.

The only source that clearly attests to the conversion of the Islamic "Other" is *Digenis Akritis*.⁸⁸⁴ Firstly, two songs in the epic tell the story of the Muslim Emir, who after serious deliberation and a romantic story becomes a Christian together with his immediate retinue in the very beginning of book II.⁸⁸⁵

Verily they celebrated the wedding
And administered baptism for their son-in-law
The universal joy grew and grew.⁸⁸⁶

Very much like in the Speech of 1088, the civic procedure of the wedding precedes the baptism. The focus of the narrative is on the member of the elite, namely Emir.⁸⁸⁷ He converted to Christianity with his group of soldiers. In the next book Emir decides to convert his mother to Christianity and bring her to the land of the Romans. The move over the spatial border implies conversion. The conversion is made after lengthy arguments and an exchange of letters; this reminds one of the Byzantine polemical works against Islam. Emir and his mother describe the

⁸⁸⁴ For a detailed description of the dating of *Digenis*, please consult the Introduction to the thesis

⁸⁸⁵ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 25-26, lines 2-44.

⁸⁸⁶ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 26, lines 40-43.

⁸⁸⁷ The retinue men greet Emir with Christian benediction. See *Digenis Akritis*, Book III, 46.

new religion by reciting the Creed.⁸⁸⁸ Finally, the mother decided to join the Christian faith and chose her son (sic!) as her godfather.⁸⁸⁹

Finally, the author of *Digenis* describes the conversion of a different kind, which occurred later in the narrative, in Song Five. In this part of the story the narrator describes the abduction and rape of a Syrian girl by the son of a Byzantine general, named Romaiogenes. The latter abducted the girl from her fathers' house baptized and seduced her in the borderlands. Later on, Romaiogenes ran away, leaving the Syrian girl with Digenis Akritas. The protagonist of the Byzantine epic raped the Syrian girl, but because of her baptism he decided to return with her to Romania. He found Romaiogenes and forced him to marry the abducted lady. In this story baptism plays a pivotal part.⁸⁹⁰ The conversions in all three cases are the result of love, primarily an erotic one. Thus, in the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*, the border between the two faiths is not easy to surpass and one needs to apply the additional force of love to cross it. There is also a more practical explanation: according to *Digenis* one should have sex with a person of the same faith and if necessary even convert the partner.

The narratives of conversion present in *Digenis* and written by Theophylact share several traits with the *Alexiad* of Anna Komnene. Anna Komnene is a treasure trove of Byzantine stories of conversion.⁸⁹¹ She provides descriptions for both individual and group conversion of Turkic officials. In the year 1089 Anna states that an official of the sultanate of Great Seljuks Chaoush came to Byzantium as an ambassador from his sultan Malikshāh. Malikshāh offered Alexios in exchange of marrying his eldest daughter (=Anna Komnene herself) that he would hand over to the emperor several Byzantine cities in Asia Minor that were captured by border Seljuks. According to Anna, Alexios I Komnenos decided to win over this man through a religious method. He became *doux* of Anchialos and received baptism.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸⁸ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 28, lines 54-56.

⁸⁸⁹ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 364, lines 330-333.

⁸⁹⁰ The consensual sex in the borderlands and the rape of the Syrian girl are to be discussed in the later relevant subchapter of this chapter.

⁸⁹¹ Noted by A. Beihammer, "Defection Across the Border," 613-614.

⁸⁹² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 188, lines 17-21.

One can see how Alexios carefully used baptism in his diplomacy to secure the loyalty of new allies. According to the *Alexiad*, at the end of the eleventh century the emperor converted larger groups of Bithynian Turks. In 1095 their local leader Ilhan decided to subordinate himself and all his clan to the emperor. According to Anna, he received countless privileges, and obtained the greatest of all, namely, holy baptism.⁸⁹³

Anna Komnene is eager to describe the protocol of conversion that her father used at his court. Again, baptism does not precede the privileges, but follows them, thus supporting the new status and new loyalty. For Anna Komnene baptism itself is slightly more important than the defection of Chaush. After this story of conversion (which is similar to the story of Emir from Digenis Akritis and the Panegyric of Theophylact of Ohrid), Anna explains in detail, why her father was eager to provide the Seljuks with spiritual privileges:

He was an excellent teacher of our doctrine, with an apostle's faith and message, eager to convert to Christ not only the nomad Scyths, but also the whole of Persia and all the barbarians who dwell in Egypt or Libya and worship Mahomet with mystic rites.⁸⁹⁴

According to Anna, the reason for the mass baptism of Ilhan is not only Realpolitik, but also the missionary zeal of Alexios I Komnenos. The desire to convert the Turks is a constitutive part of the providential mission that Anna reserved for her father in the *Alexiad*. Her reference to the high priest of all piety remind the reader of the Old Testament. Alexios is the second Moses, "the best emperor that ever ruled the world" and the one who converted the pagans.⁸⁹⁵ The "conversion" zeal of Alexios in the *Alexiad* is another side of his objective to fight the Bogomils. Anna portrayed her father as the missionary and enemy of heretics, something that is more

⁸⁹³ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 198, lines 3-7; C. Brand, "Turkish element in Byzantium," 4; Balivet, "Entre Byzance et Konya," 51.

⁸⁹⁴ Note the juxtaposition of "Scythians" and "Persians". Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 199, lines 11-17 (tr. Frankopan-Sewter, 388): Διδασκαλικώτατός τε γὰρ ἦν τοῦ ἡμετέρου δόγματος καὶ ἀποστολικὸς τὴν προαίρεσιν καὶ τὸν λόγον καὶ εἴσω τῆς ἡμετέρας πίστεως ποιῆσαι βουλόμενος οὐ μόνον τοὺς νομάδας τουτουσὶ Σκύθας, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν Περσίδα πᾶσαν καὶ ὅποσοι τὴν Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὴν Λιβύην νέμονται βάρβαροι καὶ ταῖς τοῦ Μωάμεθ τελεταῖς ὀργιάζουσιν.

⁸⁹⁵ Penelope Buckley identified the presence of Old Testament references in the text, but did not focus on them in her book. The presence of Old Testament quotes in the text, duly traced by Kambylis and Reinsch, needs further research. See P. Buckley, *The Alexiad of Anna Komnene*, 270-277.

characteristic of hagiographies of saints than found in the traditional image of the emperor in Middle Byzantine panegyrics

The conversion of Ilhan is one of the few detailed description of mass conversion found in twelfth-century sources. In the reigns of John and Manuel Komnenos, the authors of *basilikoi logoi* and court poetry did not mention any conversions of the Turks, focusing instead on the political allegiance of the border princes and pastoral groups. The same holds true for the most important Byzantine-Turkic ceremony of Manuel's reign, i.e. the peace of 1161. The eyewitness of the ceremony and author of the contemporary panegyric, Euthymios Malakes does not state the religious status of Kılıç Arslan II. At one point Malakes mentions that the Magi were Persians, but this does not imply the baptism of the sultan.⁸⁹⁶ The two later sources of John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates underline explicitly the establishment of the "father-son" relationship between Manuel and Kılıç Arslan, but do not mention the conversion of the sultan. If this is correct, then Kılıç Arslan II is probably the first Seljuk ruler who secured his allegiance to the Byzantine emperor without having to convert to Christianity.

According to Theodore Balsamon, in the year of 1169 a group of the "Hagarenes" came to the Synod of the Church and asked to confirm their baptism.⁸⁹⁷ Shukurov labels the applicants as the "local Muslims".⁸⁹⁸ The Hagarenes claimed that they did not need baptism, because their mothers baptised them during their childhood. The Synod investigated this issue and found that the Christian mothers performed the baptism to keep their children from evil spirits. Members of the Synod considered this baptism null and void and decided that the petitioners should receive baptism properly.

The ambiguous characteristic of the *Syntagma* allowed scholars to hypothesize about some "Turks" who asked Synod about the opinion on double baptism. However, this is not the case. Very much like all other Byzantine sources, *Syntagma* usually speaks about the members of the elite. Taking into account that the group of Hagarenes in question managed to present a case

⁸⁹⁶ Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161*, 170, line 12.

⁸⁹⁷ *ST*, vol. 2, 499; *Les Regestes des Actes du Patriarchate de Constantinople*. Vol. I. Ed. V. Grumel. (Paris: Socio assumptionistae chalcedonenses, 1947), 133.

⁸⁹⁸ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 59-60.

before the synod, one can suspect that these were not pastoralists from the hills. The date provides a good reference point in the search for these “Hagarenes.” In 1168, the sultanate of Ikonion began its encroachment against the Danishmendid domains in the northern Anatolia.⁸⁹⁹ Kılıç Arslan II captured Ankara and exiled the Danishmendid ruler of the city. Some of the Danishmendides appealed to Manuel and entered into Byzantine service to appear on the Byzantine side in the conflicts of the 1170s. Thus, one can suspect that Muslims of 1169, like the Bithynian amīrs before them, were the members of the Seljuk (Danishmendide) elite who received the Byzantine ranks and had to be baptized accordingly. Being a mere hypothesis, the connection of the canon law commentary with the political history allows one to explain the sudden appeal of the Hagarenes to the Synod in Constantinople in 1169 and provides sensible background for the next conversion story, namely the “Holosfuros” debate.

Some years later, Manuel Komnenos himself decided to ease the conversion and to alter the procedure that demanded the converts from Islam to curse the Lord of Mohammed.⁹⁰⁰ Consequently, it is possible to say that in the 1170s the problem of the conversion of the Turks was supervised by the church of Constantinople. The century of Turkish conversions and the actualization of this problem in the 1170s led to the institutional clarification regarding the procedure of conversion.

By the 1170s the Byzantine literati did not take any firm stand on the question of the Turks conversion. Anna Komnene and Theophylact of Ohrid praised Alexios I Komnenos for his conversion policy, but all other authors simply ignored the topic. At the end of the twelfth century, the Byzantine attitude towards the conversion of the Turks became more nuanced, as is particularly noticeable in the text of Niketas Choniates. In the narrative of the *Historia*, Choniates expressed his view on the conversion of the Turks, first in the description of the “Holosfuros” debate and secondly in his description of the individual cases of conversion.

⁸⁹⁹ Songul Mecit introduced in her narrative the data from the late Ottoman sources, but also introduced some estimates and hypothesis that seems strange for the era of postmodern scholarship. She perceived actions of the sultan of Ikonion as “pragmatic” and motivated by “inter-Muslim” struggle. Vryonis, *The Decline*, 122 ; Cahen, *Formation*, 27; Mecit, *the Rum Seljuqs*, 60-62.

⁹⁰⁰ The primary source for the events is *Historia* of Niketas Choniates. It will be analyzed later in this chapter. See *Les Regestes*, 171.

The “Holosfuros” debate allowed Choniates to voice his arguments against the “stupidity of Muhammad.” As I argued in chapter 3, Choniates used the figure of Eustathios of Thessaloniki to voice his attitude towards Islam. Additionally, Niketas also attacked the very idea of Manuel Komnenos to ease for the Turks the conversion rites. Thus, the narrative of Choniates is about stabilizing the external borders of the Orthodox Church (the Hagarenes must recite the “God of Muhammad”) and the internal borders (the Church should defend itself against the emperor). Writing at the end of the twelfth century, Niketas supported the idea of a “closed space” of the Christian church and expressed his growing anxiety about the Christian community in the era of many conversions.

At the same time, Choniates accepted the existence of Turkic converts in the Byzantine army. A notable example is the converted Turk Poupakas, who exemplified the miracles of bravery. During the storm on the Corcyra fortress in the early days of Manuel Komnenos’ reign, Poupakas volunteered to be the first to climb the wall: “Making the sign of the cross over himself, he started climbing,” – wrote Niketas Choniates.⁹⁰¹ Thus, the baptized Turk acted more bravely than the Byzantine soldiers of Manuel’s guard. A person with the same name was also a loyal servant of Andronikos I Komnenos. Even under punishment, Poupakas the Turks (and Poupakas the Christian) did not shift his loyalty – and Niketas gave credit to the convert for this.⁹⁰²

In his *Historia* Choniates unfavorably contrasted the converted Turk Poupakas with his contemporary, and possibly employer, Andronikos I Komnenos. Andronikos was born in a Christian family, but later went over to the Turks and was anathematized after his raids against Byzantium.⁹⁰³ Later on he pretended that he had been an apostle of Christ during his wanderings in the land of the barbarians.⁹⁰⁴ This becomes problematic. Kinnamos mentioned that during one of his voyages Andronikos was under anathema. The anathematized Andronikos, who pretended to convert the pagans, is a parody of the *topos* familiar to the

⁹⁰¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 84, lines 1-3.

⁹⁰² For the description of Poupakas see C.M. Brand, “Turkish Element in Byzantium,” 7-9.

⁹⁰³ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 251, line 6.

⁹⁰⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 364, line 69.

readers of the Komnenian panegyrics. In some way Andronikos with his fake conversions is in ultimate opposition to the Alexios I Komnenos of the *Alexiad*, who did truly convert some Turks. In yet another reversal of the traditional model, Choniates in his *History* juxtaposed the converted Turk and his patron – the pseudo-converter Andronikos I Komnenos.

Therefore, at the end of the twelfth century, Choniates spoke favourably about the individual converts from Islam, but protested against the ease of the conversion rites for the benefit of Muslims. For Choniates the conversion of the Turks is not a supreme aim, even at the level of imperial rhetoric. In some sense, the *History* is a recognition of the Byzantine failure to convert newcomers. At the same time, Choniates' work is highly biased and should not be used at a face value. Very much like all other writers, Niketas has a "blind zone" in his conversion story, as seen in the story of Kay Khusraw I. This sultan was not only the son of a Christian, but also the god-son of the Byzantine emperor Alexios III Angelos – but Choniates omitted these facts.

As Dimitri Korobeynikov argued, the conversion of the sultan took place in the year 1203, when Kay Khusraw I was exiled to Constantinople.⁹⁰⁵ To seal the alliance with him, Alexios III Angelos married the exiled Seljuk prince to one of his female relatives.⁹⁰⁶ Korobeynikov argued that the baptism and marriage were secretly organized in the city in 1203. At the time Niketas Choniates was one of the leading figures of the Byzantine politics and could have known about the wedding and the baptism of the sultan.⁹⁰⁷ However, Niketas had his reasons not to mention the baptism in all the versions of his *History*.

I would suggest that the reason for Niketas' omission might lie in the negative image of Alexios III Angelos the *Histori* sought to present. In the version written soon after the fall of the city and in the version (a)uctoris, Alexios III is depicted as an incompetent ruler, who gets the most blame for the fall of Constantinople in 1204. The introduction of the conversion

⁹⁰⁵ D. Korobeynikov, "A Sultan in Constantinople," 102-106; Cf. R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity," 117.

⁹⁰⁶ Conversion as the prerequisite to marriage reminds one of the conversion of the Syrian girl in *Digenis Akritis*. See the subchapter on marriages of this chapter.

⁹⁰⁷ Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 21-22.

of Kay Khusraw in this story might alter the image of Alexios III for the better. The second reason might lie in the figure of Kay Khusraw himself. After 1204 Kay Khusraw became a powerful sultan of Ikonion, the legitimate Muslim ruler of Anatolia, who had friendly relations with the empire-in-exile of Nicaea. After some wandering, Choniates found refuge in Nicaea.⁹⁰⁸ Writing about the secret baptism of the sultan by Alexios III Angelos could have created for him extra problems at the Nicean court, which was generally benevolent towards its Seljuk allies.⁹⁰⁹

The absence of the conversion of Kay Khusraw in the *History* signifies two things. In the first place, it demonstrates the presence of blind zones in Byzantine rhetorical texts and the limits of our knowledge. Secondly, even the limited available data demonstrates that the successful conversion stories are concentrated in the sources of the eleventh century and are linked with the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. The situation with conversions from Christianity to Islam is the opposite.

b. Seljuks converting? Evidence, description, reaction

Michael Attaleiates, John Skylitzes, Skylitzes Continuatus and Zonaras remain silent on the question of conversions (not to mention on the "Holy War" of the Seljuks against the Byzantines). To the best of my knowledge, in all sources written before 1120 there is not a single mention of anyone converting to Islam. The court poems of Theodore Prodromos also do not contain information about the conversion of Byzantines to Islam. In the poem dedicated to the capture of Kastamon, one would expect at some point that "the mingling" of the city with the enemies of New Rome would include conversions, but Prodromos does not give any pointers to this possibility, leaving just possible readings.⁹¹⁰

The first source in which one can find some mention of this phenomenon is Anna Komnene's work. In the *Alexiad* Anna narrated the story of Philaretos Brahamios, the *doux* of

⁹⁰⁸ For the sequence of Christian wives see R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity," 116.

⁹⁰⁹ Simpson called Niketas' dealing with Alexios in b-version "cautious." Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 73.

⁹¹⁰ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon*, lines 111-120. Note that the term used here for the submission of the city to Byzantium is the same as the term used by John Kinnamos for the subjection of the city to the empire. See John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 15, lines 12-22.

Antioch.⁹¹¹ He was a general under Romanos Diogenes, but during the Byzantine civil war his city came to be surrounded by the Turks. According to Anna, Philaretos Brahamios wanted to save his domains at any cost, and so he decided “to join the Turks and circumcise as it was their custom.”⁹¹² The son of Philaretos tried to divert his father from this “enterprise of a madman”, but he did not succeed and went to beg help from the notorious Suleiman ibn Kutlumish in Nicaea. As a result, Suleiman captured Antioch: Anna does not inform her reader whether Philaretos was circumcised or not.

The individual conversion to Islam is presented as a possibility, but a strange thing, a politically motivated “enterprise of a madman”. One can also trace a connection between Islam and the awkward practice of circumcision, usually associated by the Byzantines with the Jews. Circumcision makes Philaretos the most liminal figure, both due to his *genos* (Armenian) in the body (circumcision) and space (east to Antioch). It is important to keep in mind that Philaretos was an enemy of emperor Alexios. Hence Anna had reasons to make puns against him in her work.⁹¹³

The pronouncement of Balsamon regarding the “foul teaching” was the product of the 1170s when many Byzantines became prisoners of war. John Kinnamos, who wrote in the 1170s, demonstrated limited interest towards conversion, not delving in detail into this topic. According to Kinnamos, the inhabitants of lake Pousgousa were spatial rather than religious allies of the Turks. Besides lake Pousgousa, John Kinnamos mentions that the Byzantines killed a Gabras. “His family came from Romania, but he was raised in Persia and luckily received satrapia... The Romans killed him and brought his head and right hand to the camp,” wrote Kinnamos.⁹¹⁴ In this passage Kinnamos omitted what the first name of Gabras was.⁹¹⁵ In *Deeds*, all the Gabrades who

⁹¹¹ For the analysis of the same story that includes Syriac sources see A. Beihammer, “Christian Views on Islam,” 61-63.

⁹¹² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 186, lines 72-73: ἐσκέψατο προσελθεῖν τοῖς Τούρκοις καὶ περιτμηθῆναι, ὡς ἔθος αὐτοῖς.

⁹¹³ For him see G. Dedeyan, *Les Armeniens*, 65-75.

⁹¹⁴ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 56, lines 11-13.

⁹¹⁵ Another argument for the Islamic faith of this Gabrades is that no Christian governors are known in the Seljuk confederations in Asia Minor in the twelfth century. If one wanted to be a governor he needed to

fought for Byzantium have personal names. I would suggest that the absence of a first name is an indication of the different religious affiliation of the “Ikonian” Gabras. Thus, the absence of the Christian name becomes indicative of a conversion to Islam and *damnatio memoriae*. When the person becomes a hostile Muslim, he loses his name.⁹¹⁶

A theologian and orator, Niketas Choniates did not demonstrate a particular interest in conversions from Christianity to Islam. He reported that John Komnenos, son of Isaak Komnenos and nephew of John II Komnenos, changed his faith.⁹¹⁷ To denote the renunciation of the Christian faith, Choniates used the verb ἐξόμνῃμι, which has the connotation of leaving something good for something bad.⁹¹⁸ Simultaneously, Choniates did not blame John Komnenos for his renunciation of the Christian religion. The inhabitants of lake Pousgusa received more critique for their disloyalty than Isaak Komnenos, whose image precedes and foretells the evil deeds of his relative Andronikos.

Choniates did not problematize the question of conversions in the part of the *History* that deals with Islam. The *Prayer for Anatolia* analyzed above does not contain a single reference to the conversion to Islam of the Byzantine population in the Seljuk Anatolia of the twelfth century.⁹¹⁹ The same applies to the description of the theological debate between Manuel Komnenos and the Byzantine bishops. However, in the later part of the Choniates' work, there is one episode which deals with the conversion of a small group of Christians to Islam and has common traits with the story of the “Persian captivity” retold by Theodore Balsamon. According to Choniates, during the war against the Bulgarian rebels Alexios III Angelos used the Turks as his allies and their actions provoked some discontent among the Christians present.⁹²⁰ Choniates narrates, that during campaign in Bulgaria, “Persian” allies if Alexios III Angelos asked him to

be a Muslim.

⁹¹⁶ For the earlier cases of Byzantine *damnatio memoriae* see V. Vachkova, “La méthode byzantine de la *damnatio memoriae*,” in *Memory and Oblivion in Byzantium*, eds. A. Milanova, V. Vachkova, Tsv. Stepanov, (Sofia, 2011), 164-173.

⁹¹⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 36, line 15.

⁹¹⁸ Kazhdan, *Concordance to Niketas Choniates History*. (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1994), vol 1, entry R57, “Extraneousness”.

⁹¹⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 117-118.

⁹²⁰ For the war itself see Stephenson, *Byzantine Balkan Frontier*, 275-300.

share with him the Bulgarian prisoners. Some Orthodox people in the retinue of the emperor asked him not to give the prisoners to the Persians, because the Persians may force them to change their faith. Alexios declined this proposal.⁹²¹

The well-armed Turks ("Persians" usually referring to the better-armed soldiers), as Byzantine allies, captured prisoners of war.⁹²² These prisoners were to go back to the Seljuk lands (in this case – Ankyra) and there they were subjected to forced conversion. Alexios III Angelos refused to hand over the Blakh prisoners to his Christian soldiers and was immediately punished by the Lord. According to Choniates, the emperor lost this campaign and had to return to Constantinople. What is important here is, again, the manuscript tradition. The whole passage between (1) and (1) in my quotation was absent in the first version of the *History*, which Choniates finished circa 1204. The author added this passage later, in the version (a)uctoris.⁹²³ As many other additions, the pious anxiety about the possible conversion of the Blakhs is yet another device of *Kaiserkritik* aimed against Alexios III Angelos.⁹²⁴ The emperor does not demonstrate his philanthropy towards the prisoners of war, rather exposed them to the dangers of the other religion. Choniates was not the only one who noted this danger. Another Byzantine literatus to note this was Theodore Balsamon.

A contemporary of Choniates, Balsamon perceived the "Persian" captivity as a place of voluntary or nonvoluntary conversion. In his commentary to the 42nd Canon of the Holy Apostles, Theodore Balsamon, mentioned the particular case of when a person who had been in "Persian" captivity and listened to the "moronic teachings" of the Persians and ate with them,

⁹²¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 504, lines 72-83.

⁹²² Most probably the Turks being Byzantine allies had the right to keep their share of the "human" booty and bring it home. This information is absent from the monograph of Birkenmeyer, who is the only scholar to dedicate some attention to mercenaries in the time of war. See J. Birkenmeyer, *The Development of the Komnenian Army*, 160-164. For the analogues in the Seljuk Iran see David Durand-Guedy. "Goodbye to Turkmens? Military Role of Nomads in Iran after the Saljuq Conquest," in *Nomad Military Power in Iran and Adjacent Areas in the Islamic Period*, ed. K. Franz, W. Holzwarth. (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2015), 107-135.

⁹²³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 504, sub 75-82.

⁹²⁴ Korobeynikov, *Byzantium and Turks*, 123.

that he should be rebaptized upon his return to the Byzantine empire.⁹²⁵ Even listening to the “moronic teachings” is dangerous from the point of view of canon law. According to Balsamon, the prisoner of war who was exposed to this preaching is no longer completely Christian and should be re-baptized in order to be able to enter the body of the Orthodox Church. Islam is a foul teaching attributed to the Persians, namely to the elite of the Turks.⁹²⁶ The epithet employed is exactly the same that Choniates had used in his pronouncement on Islam.

Taking into account that both Balsamon and Choniates were specialists in canon law, one can hypothesize that the “foul teaching” was one of the technical terms that the Byzantine literati used to denote Islam in Byzantine chancellery. Another interesting thing in this definition is the association of Islam with a foul odour, which is also present in the description of the Hagarenes, who wanted to convert to Christianity. According to Balsamon (who described the same story of the converted Turks in his commentary), the Hagarene parents baptized their kids precisely to avoid this bad smell.⁹²⁷

The discussion of the passages from Choniates and Balsamon allows one to return to Vryonis' thesis about the early islamization of Anatolia. Vryonis stated that the “nomadization” of Anatolia proceeded hand-in-hand with the “islamization” of Anatolia. According to the Byzantine sources, this is hardly the case. In the first place, the conversion itself was rarely put forward as an issue.⁹²⁸ This fact forced Vryonis to project the data from later Byzantine sources to the earlier period.

Secondly, conversions (at least in rhetoric) went both ways. Byzantine sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries mention several cases of Christianisation of the Turks through their baptism and incorporation into the Byzantine service. The Byzantine literati focused on the integration of these foreigners into the Byzantine state much more than they focused on

⁹²⁵ The food as a symbol of another religion is an interesting phenomenon. For the significance of food in the Ottoman texts see E. Durtstetler, “Infidel Food and Identity in Early Ottoman Travelogues,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 39 (2012): 143-160.

⁹²⁶ *ST*, vol 2, canon 62, 43: μυσαρὸς δίδαγμα

⁹²⁷ *ST*, vol 2, 43.

⁹²⁸ One can note similar things in the medieval rhetoric of Christian kingdoms at Iberian Peninsula. C. Valenzuela, “The Faith of Saracens,” *Millennium* 10 (1) 2013: 310-315.

their religion, but the panegyric of Theophylact of Ohrid proved that the two went together quite well. The Seljuk and Ikonion defectors passed through baptism soon after their incorporation into the high echelons of Byzantine society, and this tradition, established in the eleventh century, had a long continuation in the age of the Palaiologoi.⁹²⁹ At the same time, it is hard to judge whether the baptism was “the first step” of the Seljuk who crossed the border.⁹³⁰

To sum up, the Byzantine literati mentioned the conversion of the Turks when they wrote about the members of the elite. The many conversions to Christianity present in *Digenis Akritis* followed this trend. The second thing to note is the silence of the Byzantine sources concerning the massive conversions to Islam. Only sources that date back to the second half of the twelfth century demonstrate some limited anxiety about the propagation of Islam. This corresponds well with the establishment of the united sultanate of Ikonion that sponsored the strategy of developing an Islamic infrastructure in Anatolia.⁹³¹

Both Theodore Balsamon and Niketas Choniates warn their readers about the dangers of voluntary or nonvoluntary conversion that may happen while in the “Persian captivity,” where the prisoners had to eat the food with the infidels and listen to their “foul teachings”. At the same time, Niketas Choniates perceived the individual conversions to Islam among the members of the Byzantine elite as something slightly negative, but not abnormal. He did not consider this to be a massive phenomenon or to be the greatest threat to the Byzantine Empire of the time.

The collected data allows one to conclude that the Byzantine sources that addressed the question of conversion did not produce enough evidence for a discussion of the “Islamization” of Asia Minor during the twelfth century. On the one hand, the Byzantine literati did mention the threat of Islam in their rhetoric and included the description of Islam in the summaries of their theses. Thanks to naming and labelling, Islam was never absent

⁹²⁹ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 239-244.

⁹³⁰ Cf. Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 223.

⁹³¹ Cahen, *Formation*, 158-178.

from the Byzantine discourse on the Turks. The educated Byzantine reader could find the information about Islam in Constantinople.⁹³²

On the other hand, Byzantine literati did not produce separate hagiography to defend the borders of the Christian community.⁹³³ The suspected advance of Islam in Anatolia did not produce the immediate flow of new martyrs or the influx of new manuscripts dedicated to the martyrs of earlier periods. To the best of my knowledge, only one manuscript of the twelfth century contains the *vita* of the 42 Martyrs of Amorion together with the *vitae* of some military saints. This situation is very different from the situation seen from the Thirteenth century onwards, when the Empire of Trebizond produced and sponsored the cult of St. Theodore Gabras.⁹³⁴

The Byzantine rhetoric provides limited evidence for the conversion to Islam in twelfth-century Anatolia. This does not mean that conversions did not take place. However, the discussion of this issue on a new level will demand a synthesized study that will combine the limited data from the literary sources with archaeological and architectural data, as well as the data from non-Byzantine and not-Ikonion sources. The resulting synthesis will allow one to reveal the importance of previously neglected factors, e.g. the building activity of the Ikonian sultans in the twelfth century.⁹³⁵ The discussion of the "Islamization" on a new post-Vryonion level should take into account the reverse trend, namely the Christianization of the Anatolian Turks in the eleventh century. This wider framework will allow scholars to reconstruct the situation *in situ* with more precision than the older concepts of the "catastrophic decline of Christianity" and "apostatic nobles" allowed. The old stereotypes are also present in the studies on other topics, such as in the history of the Byzantine-Seljuk marriages.

⁹³² Cf Tolan, *Saracens*, 103-104

⁹³³ On the "defensive" neo-martyrs of the borderland see C. Valenzuela, "The Faith of the Saracens," 324-328.

⁹³⁴ Bryer, "Gabrades: The Byzantine Family," 180-181.

⁹³⁵ See O. Pancaroğlu, "The House of Mengüjek in Divrigi: Constructions of Dynastic Identity in the Late twelfth-Century."

4. Byzantine opinions on Byzantine-Turkic marriages.

The topic of the "Turkic rape" of Anatolia is another popular cliché to describe the Seljuks. In his recent article Scott Redford demonstrated how even the most modern scholars can fall into the old axiom. He deconstructed the cliché using the Seljuk sources of the Thirteenth century.⁹³⁶ Another problem is the projection of the scholarly concept of "harem Christianity" from the age of the Ottomans to the earlier period.⁹³⁷ The study of "harem Christianity" focuses on the life and power of the women in the harems of Muslim rulers. Both concepts negate the existing evidence showing the female agency that existed both in Byzantium and in the land of the Turks.⁹³⁸ They also explicitly or implicitly, speak about Byzantine women who are married by Turkish or Muslim men.⁹³⁹

The present subchapter aims to check the cliché of the "Eastern rape" against the evidence found in Byzantine rhetoric.⁹⁴⁰ It analyzes the marriages and liaisons between Byzantine men and Seljuk women, then the Byzantine attitudes towards the marriages and liaisons between Seljuk men and Byzantine women, and finally discusses the presence of "those in between", *miksobarbaroi*, in the Byzantine sources. Additionally, the subchapter investigates the connection between marriage/liaison and conversion. It also compares the Byzantine perceptions of sexual relations with the Crusader perceptions of the Turks and their views on interconfessional marriages on the Iberian Peninsula.⁹⁴¹

The first writer to leave some evidence of a possible Byzantine-Turkic marriage was

⁹³⁶ Scott Redford, "The Rape of Anatolia," in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, B. de Nikola, S.N. Yildiz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 107-117.

⁹³⁷ Cf. R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity: the Byzantine Identity of the Seljuk Princes," in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, S.N. Yildiz (New York: Tauris, 2013), 116-117.

⁹³⁸ See B. Hill, *Imperial Woman in Byzantium*, 141.

⁹³⁹ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 57-58.

⁹⁴⁰ As it usually happens, the very term "Turks" is absent from the "Index" part of Barbara Hill's book on the subject see Hill, *Imperial Woman in Byzantium*, 240-245.

⁹⁴¹ S. Barton, "Marriage across frontiers: sexual mixing, authority, and identity in medieval Iberia," *Journal of Iberian Studies* 3.1 (2011), 1-25.

Michael Attaleiates. According to Attaleiates, after the battle of Manzikert sultan Alp Arslān of the Great Seljuks and emperor Romanos Diogenes negotiated “the marriage of their children”.⁹⁴² To describe the situation, Attaleiates introduced the term (*kedos*) with neutral, if not positive connotations.⁹⁴³ According to the *History*, the sultan and the emperor reached an agreement about the wedding after beginning the peace talks and before the final handshake of Romanos and Alp Arslān that marked the end of the negotiation process. The handshake possibly reflects not only the actual accord (the Byzantine and the Turks shook hands to secure an agreement), but also the establishment of more intimate relations between Romanos Diogenes and Alp Arslān.

The “union of the children” does not specify the gender of the person in question, but the available data suggests that Attaleiates wrote about the Seljuk princess (the unnamed daughter of Alp Arslān) and the Byzantine prince Constantine Diogenes. Both sides evidently considered the marriage acceptable. The Seljuk sultans and the Byzantine nobles adopted the practice of marry off their daughters to the local rulers.⁹⁴⁴ Some five years before Manzikert a member of the Byzantine aristocracy Constantine Doukas married the Georgian princess Maria of Alania, therefore the marriage of Constantine Diogenes to the noble lady from the sultanate of the Great Seljuks would not create many problems.⁹⁴⁵ The question remains why Michael Attaleiates did not pronounce the names of the bride and groom. The reason behind this omission might lie in the later marriage of Constantine Diogenes to Theodora Komnene, after which Constantine Diogenes soon fell under the walls of Antioch fighting under command of his new relatives. Some rumours blamed the Komnenoi for his death. Writing his *Historia* in 1081, Michael Attaleiates might not have wanted to speak about the failed marriage of the young Diogenes.

One can also note a certain anxiety about the post-Manzikert treaty in the *Historical*

⁹⁴² Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 128, line 10-15: σπονδὰς ποιησάμεν οἱ καὶ συνθήκας εἰρηνικὰς, εἶτα καὶ κῆδος ἐπὶ τοῖς ἰδίοις παισὶ συστησάμενοι.

⁹⁴³ When Nikephoros Botaneiates entered the capital as the victor in 1081, he organized the marriages for the daughters in Doukai family “to the leading senators.” Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 234, lines 1-4.

⁹⁴⁴ The Peacocks’ description of the Seljuks’ marriage practices reminds one of similar practices in the Komnenian household. A.C.S. Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 179.

⁹⁴⁵ Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium*, 114-115.

Material of Nikephoros Bryennios. In an inserted speech Bryennios pointed out that Romanos Diogenes did his best during the negotiations and reached a honourable result. Bryennios highlighted that Romanos made a treaty which “was not shameful for the Romans”.⁹⁴⁶ While the phrase of Bryennios is a reflection of the later Byzantine debate concerning Manzikert, it can also refer to the problematic marriage.

Apart from Anna Komnene and Nikephoros Bryennios, no mid-twelfth century Byzantine source reports marriages between Byzantines and Turks in detail, in a good or in a bad way. The panegyrics to Manuel exploit the image of Alexander the Great, but never compare Manuel’s wife with the Persian wife of Alexander. The only notable exception is (as usual) *Digenis Akritis*, which very clearly describes the abduction of a “Muslim” girl and her premarital sex in the borderland.⁹⁴⁷ The explicitness of the story was so vivid that it forced the first editor of the text to omit some lines. This makes it even more interesting object for a short analysis.

According to the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*, the protagonist confessed to a “Cappadocian” that at the age of fifteenth he travelled in the frontier zone that separated “Romania” from “Syria.” In this zone he met an anonymous Syrian girl (all female characters in *Digenis*, apart from *virago* Massimo, remain anonymous) who was the daughter of the “amīr above all others”. She fell in love with the son of the Roman general (conveniently called Romaiogenes), who happened to be a prisoner at her fathers' house.⁹⁴⁸ After many conversations, the two decided to elope taking some of the wealth gained by the Syrian girl's family. They escaped the pursuit and stopped by a spring at the borderland. When the couple crossed the “third milestone,” they stopped at some spring in deserted area. There Romaiogenes baptized the Syrian girl and they:

⁹⁴⁶ Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, ed. P. Gautier, 121, lines 15-25: οὐκ ἀναξίας ῥωμαίων

⁹⁴⁷ As far as I know, the only person who analyzed it was Catia Galatariotou. She focused on the “shame” of the girl and her liminality. C. Galatariotou, “Structural Oppositions in Grottaferrata *Digenis Akritis*,” *BMGS* 11 (1987): 56-58.

⁹⁴⁸ The similarity in the spelling of Romaiogenes and the organizer of the failed marriage treaty Romanos Diogenes is a pure coincidence.

Rested there in three days and three nights
Involved in passionate and indulgent love-making.⁹⁴⁹

The first sexual experience of the Syrian girl was consensual. After the three days had passed, Romaiogenes took his horse and the gold and left the Syrian girl to die in the borderland. According to the Grottaferrata version, Digenis Akritis decided to help the girl and bring her home. After he defeated the local Arabs, the Syrian girl then declared that she is a Christian, because Romaiogenes performed the rites of Holy Baptism with her before having sex.⁹⁵⁰

Thus, sexual conversion and the conversion to Christianity go together. More than that – in *Digenis* the conversion triggers the protagonist's lust. Very soon after the girl declared her baptism, Digenes Akritis took her off the horse and raped her on the side of the road.

Moreover, then I did what I wanted
Even if the girl resisted the act vigorously
Calling to witnesses God and her parents' souls.⁹⁵¹

The narrator of *Digenis* goes on at length to declare the “impurity” of the process and the dangers of rape for the Christian soul. At the same time, the narrative absolves the protagonist, blaming the devil who inflamed Digenis with desire. To correct his mistakes, Digenis found Romaiogenes and forced him to marry his victim. Afterwards, Digenis returned to his household and told his wife about this event; she displayed no sign of protest.

The story of *Digenis Akritis* demonstrated the approach to marriages and the inter-gender relations differently to the one presented in literary sources. It is a narrative of spatial, religious and sexual context, where penetration is the ultimate colonization. Book V of the

⁹⁴⁹ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 140, lines 110-115:

καὶ τρεῖς ἀναπανσάμενοι ἡμέρας τε καὶ νύκτας
ἐρωτικᾶς μεταβολᾶς τελοῦντες ἀκορέστως,

⁹⁵⁰ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 146, lines 225-227:

⁹⁵¹ *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 146, lines 246-250

καὶ γεγόνασιν ἅπαντα ὅσα ἤθελον ἔργα
εἰ καὶ πολλὰ ἀνθίστατο ἡ κόρη πρὸς τό ἔργον
εἰς θεὸν καθορκίζουσα καὶ εἰς ψυχᾶς γονέων

Grottaferrata *Digenis Akritis* also provides a rare example of the eroticization of the Muslim Other that has many analogues in the late Western tradition.⁹⁵² Comparable stories of sexual border-crossing and return are well attested in medieval Iberia.⁹⁵³

Some version of the text was in circulation in the twelfth century and may have influenced the perception of the Byzantine-Turkic marriages among the Byzantine elite. The notion of sexualisation was also there. In her debated book Alicia Walker wrote that the Byzantines had different attitudes towards rape and perceived it as part of love.⁹⁵⁴ Heracles raped many women on his way and he was hardly blamed for it. In contrast with Heracles, Digenis Akritis recognizes his culpability for the rape of the girl. He further helps her on her way and finds her a husband.

Another important aspect of this issue is the statuses of the rapist and his victim. The trouble-starter of this story is the son of a *strategos*, the victim is the daughter of the Syrian Muslim leader, while Digenis is himself the son of Emir and of a Byzantine general's daughter. In the world of Digenis Akritis even rape in the borderlands is influenced by class and rank, and the religious conversion to the right side. Remarkably, the late Turkic motives of the *Danishmend-name* carry the same motives.⁹⁵⁵ One can even talk about the combination of conversion and sexual initiation as the rite of passage in both Byzantine and Seljuk-Ottoman epic tales.

The language of erotic mysteries found in *Digenis Akrites* is not a new thing particular of the twelfth-century Byzantine rhetoric, which produced four highly eroticized novels. Despite the constant critique of powerful literati like Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates, eroticism was present in the life of the Byzantine imperial court. Manuel I Komnenos gained fame for his extramarital affairs. Same holds true for his relative and later emperor Andronikos I Komnenos. John Kinnamos in his *Deeds* reported that Andronikos seduced the

⁹⁵² Toner, *Homer's Turks*, 60-61.

⁹⁵³ Bartos, "Marriage Across the Frontiers," 15-16.

⁹⁵⁴ Walker, *The Emperor and the World*, 135.

⁹⁵⁵ Irene Melikoff, *Danishmendname: La Geste de Melik Danishmend*, (Paris: Librairie Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1960), 214-221.

widowed queen of Jerusalem Theodora Komnene and went off with her to the "land of the Saracens".⁹⁵⁶ After this, he made raids against the land of Romans and was excommunicated by the Church. While the motives are different (the Syrian girl of *Digenis* had *agape* towards the Romaiogenes, while Andronikos had only sexual desire, *eros*), the result is effectively the same. Both Andronikos and the Syrian girl crossed the religious border and remained with their new partner on the other side of the political and religious divide.

Another example is the description of Isaak Komnenos in the *History* of Niketas Choniates. According to Niketas (who wrote about these events some half a century later), Isaak Komnenos defected to the Turks during the battle of Neocaesarea. It is important to keep in mind that for Choniates the change of allegiance and the new marriage did not lead to a change in social status. Several pages later Choniates talks about Isaak's daughter-in-law, who delivered a formal speech in Greek to Manuel from the walls of Ikonion during his campaign of 1147.⁹⁵⁷

The Ikonian princess from the *Historia* of Niketas Choniates is the last border-crosser in Komnenian rhetoric. What happened when the relations worked the other way round, and a Byzantine princess had to go to the Turkish court? The first piece of evidence comes from Anna Komnene. In book VI of the *Alexiad*, Anna Komnene narrated how Alexios I Komnenos fought the local amīrs and one day received an embassy from the Persian sultan [Malikshāh I of the Great Seljuks] who proposed to Alexios I a marriage alliance. From the text of the letter that Anna included in the *Alexiad*, one can guess that this alliance was both similar and different to the one proposed to Romanos IV Diogenes.

If therefore it is your wish that that Asia, together with Antioch, should be subject to you, send me your daughter as wife for the eldest of my sons. Because of the forces which I will send you, no one will resist you from now on.⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵⁶ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 250, line 17.

⁹⁵⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 53, lines 46-50.

⁹⁵⁸ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 194, lines 50-55 (tr. Frankopan-Sewter, 379-380): εἰ γοῦν βούλει καὶ τὸν Ἀπελχασήμ τῶν αὐτόθιμερῶν ἀπελαθῆναι καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν καὶ αὐτὴν δὴ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν ὑπὸ τὴν σὴν γενέσθαι χεῖρα, ἀποστείλόν μοι τὴν σὴν θυγατέρα εἰς νύμφην ἐμὴν τῷ

The text quoted above is the *only* letter of a Seljuk sultan recorded in the Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh and the first half of the twelfth centuries in general. Within the *Alexiad* Anna reproduced some letters in her text, but none of them pretend to accurately repeat the *message* from the Seljuk sultan to Alexios. This passage introduces the theme of Anna as the unlucky wife and supports her position as the "true heir" of Alexios, having knowledge of the most intimate proposals that the Great Sultan made to her father.

What is significant here is the reaction of the imagined Alexios of the *Alexiad*. Some lines after the letter, Anna makes her father speak about the proposal of Malikshāh. Alexios says that the inter-confessional marriage was inspired by devil. This is a very negative characteristic—other daemon-inspired people in the *Alexiad* are the heretics led by Basil the Bogomil. Thus, the proposal of an inter-confessional marriage is wrong, almost a sacrilege.

This opinion is in striking contrast with the Byzantine *Realpolitik* of the time. Anna Komnene composed her work in the empire of John and Manuel Komnenos. In this empire, the Komnenian brides were an additional instrument of imperial politics. John and Manuel were married to foreign princesses (Irene-Piroska of Hungary and Berta of Sulzbach respectively) and promoted similar marriages among the Byzantine elite. The Komnenian emperors also used their children and grandchildren to enhance alliances within the Byzantine court. John Komnenos married the daughter of his son Alexios, Eudokia Komnene, to the son of his Persian servant and *megas domestikos* John Axouch.⁹⁵⁹ The latter was explicitly called "the Persian" in later sources. With one letter Anna Komnene expressed both her disdain towards foreign marriages in general and hinted at her negative attitude towards the wedding of a Byzantine princess to a "Turk," however Byzantinized he might be. The Alexios Komnenos in this story is made to be a weapon against his imperial descendants.

Anna Komnene had all the reasons to worry about her possible marriage to the Seljuk prince, because the ultimate result would lead to her conversion and excommunication. Three Byzantine canon law commentators of the twelfth century, John Zonaras, Theodore Balsamon

πρωτοτόκῳ τῶν ἐμῶν υἱῶν, καὶ τοῦ λοιποῦ οὐδέν σοι σκῶλον ἔσεται.

⁹⁵⁹Barzos, *The Genealogy*, vol. 1, 279-280.

and Niketas Aristenos agreed that the person who married an infidel or gave his daughter to an Hagaren should be excommunicated.⁹⁶⁰ Thus, if a Christian prince marries a Turkic princess, or a Turkic prince marries a Christian noblewoman, they should be anathemized out of the Church. However, this was not always the case.

On the one hand, the Byzantine canonists sought to protect the integrity of the Christian community by prohibiting marriages with foreigners, while on the other they had to recognize the existence of complex cases in the countries under "Hagarene" control. The best example is that of sultan Kay Khusraw of Ikonion. Niketas Choniates in his *History* mentioned that the mother of sultan Kay Khusraw was a Christian. Did she break the canon law when she married Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion and did she stop being a Christian? Same holds true for the mother of Kılıç Arslan , who was probably an Orthodox Christian of Russian origin.⁹⁶¹ Did she convert to Islam or was she allowed to remain a Christian in Ikonion? One cannot know for certain.

At the same time, the same canon laws of the twelfth century stimulated conversion. If a wife or a husband converted to Christianity, their spouse could remain in the state of non-believer for a while. One wonders whether this state included the Hagarenes or was it aimed at the few remaining pagans, namely the Turkic-speaking pastoralists of Patzinaks and the Cumans.⁹⁶² The specific mention of the Hagarenes by Theodore Balsamon shows that this was probably the case.⁹⁶³

The Byzantine literati, church canonists and laic chroniclers alike, always highlighted the political allegiance of husband and wife in Byzantine-Seljuk marriages. Were there any specific groups that could claim a double heritage of the Turks and of the Romans? The

⁹⁶⁰ST, vol II , 472-473.

⁹⁶¹ Nazarenko, Aleksander.] Назаренко А.В. "Правнучка Ярослава Мудрого – мать иконийского султана Килидж-Арслана II" (Granddaughter of Yaroslav the Wise – mother of sultan of Ikonion Kılıç Arslan II), in *Florilegium. Сборник трудов к 60-летию Б.Н. Флори*(Florilegium. Issued on the 60th anniversary of B. N. Florya), ed. A. Turilov (Moscow: Languages of Russian culture), 255-264.

⁹⁶² The contemporary Rus' labelling of the Cumans ("поганые", heathens) may be a hint at their implied "paganism". See A. Uspensky [А. Успенский][*Русские имена половецких князей*] *Russian Names of Cuman Princes* (Moscow: Polimedia, 2013), 1-50.

⁹⁶³ST, vol. II , 473, lines 13-15.

paradigmatic example is again *Digenis Akritis*. However, this kind of people did not form an individual group in Byzantine rhetoric. The Digenoi are absent from the Byzantine sources – but at the same time they are present in the descriptions of the First Crusade. Fulcher of Chartres mentioned in his chronicle of the First Crusade the *Tourkoupouloi* – a military division of the Byzantine army created by Alexios I Komnenos.⁹⁶⁴ One modern scholar with an obvious taste for orientalism called them “half-Greek, half-Turkish stock”.⁹⁶⁵ However, the Byzantine sources do not mention this group of people. Anna Komnene mentioned the unit of the *Archonotopouloi* included the sons of deceased officers, but omitted to note the existence of *Tourkoupouloi*.⁹⁶⁶ Taking into account the presence of the Archontopouloi, it is possible to conclude that Alexios I Komnenos created at his court the division of the *Tourkoupouloi* which consisted of people gathered in the land that was reintegrated into Byzantium after the first successes of Alexios in Asia Minor.⁹⁶⁷ However, without a single proof of this in the original source, this conclusion remains hypothetical and demonstrates again the limits of the information presented in Byzantine rhetorical texts.

To conclude, the Byzantine rhetoric contains information about three marriage strategies in the Byzantine-Seljuk relations. Following Julian Pitt-Rivers, I will call these strategies aggressive, defensive and consensual. The aggressive strategy implies the incorporation of foreign brides into the society in question. This strategy is present in the Byzantine rhetoric all though the first half of the twelfth century. Michael Attaleiates, Skylitzes Continuatus and Nikephoros Bryennios described the Byzantine-Seljuk marriage treaty after the battle of Manzikert as something positive. This happened because the treaty implied the import of the foreign princess into Byzantium, and not the export of one. In the Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis* the Syrian Girl is a much valued sexual partner, suitable for both a short fling and a longer marriage. The paradigm of *Digenis* reverses the cliché that existed in secondary literature which positioned the “Greek woman” as the weak partner and the “Muslim man” as the

⁹⁶⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer, 188, line 7.

⁹⁶⁵ T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History*, 129.

⁹⁶⁶ Birkenmeyer, *The Development of the Komnenian Army*, 75-76.

⁹⁶⁷ For the Turkic warriors in the service of Palaiologoi see Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 240-241;

victorious sexual conqueror.⁹⁶⁸ The twelfth-century Byzantine rhetoric depicted not a rapist Turk, but a rapist Christian who affirms his victory over the Other by rape in the borderlands. In this combination, the Byzantine discourse of the early Komnenian era produced the image of the aggressive marriage policy as described by Julian Pitt-Rivers in his old, but still valuable book on the Eastern Mediterranean.

On the other hand, the defensive marriage policy took place from very early on. While absent in the court poetry and *basilikoi logoi*, it was present in the other works of rhetoric. There is a possibility that the division into the Tourkoupouloi at the court of Alexios I Angelos was initiated by the sons of mixed marriages between Byzantines and Turks. The Byzantine canonists left extensive commentaries regarding marriage between the two groups. The canon law of twelfth-century Byzantium strictly prohibited marriages with heretics, and the Muslims were clearly the group in question. In the higher social strata, the Byzantine princess Anna Komnene actively protested the marriages of Byzantine princesses to Turks, calling it through the mouth of her father a "demons-inspired" union. With reservations, one can call this marriage strategy "defensive" and community-confirming.

However, the defensive canonical texts probably gave way to the reality of the times. The same canon laws that prohibited marriages to Muslims, narrated about Orthodox mothers of the Hagarenes who served in Byzantium and pretended to be Christian. It seems likely that "consensual" marriage politics arrived at the end of the twelfth century when the Byzantine-Seljuk border was stabilized. A good example is sultan Kay Khusraw whose mother was reportedly a Christian and this caused no protests with Niketas Choniates. One can call this advent popular in the Thirteenth century and it was analysed by Scott Redford in the article mentioned at the beginning of this discussion.⁹⁶⁹

Very much like the old beliefs of the Iberian historiographers concerning the *Reconquista*, the "rape of Anatolia" is the product of the modern era and it is not a useful

⁹⁶⁸ Cf. R. Shukurov, "Harem Christianity," 116-117.

⁹⁶⁹ Redford, "The Rape of Anatolia," 109-115.

category for the analysis of the complex situation of the borderlands.⁹⁷⁰ Nothing demonstrates this complexity better than the history of two families that used their liminal status between the Byzantines and the Turks to accumulate their symbolic and material capital. These families were the Axouchoi and the Gabrades, and they are the subject of the last subchapter of this part of the thesis.

5. Dynasties of Cultural Brokers: the Axouchoi and the Gabrades

The Byzantine literati of the Komnenian era did not focus their works of rhetoric on the “groups that are in-between”. The only exception to this are the two families that performed the functions of intermediaries between Constantinople and Ikonion: the Gabrades and the Axouchai. In the twelfth century these families were present on both sides of the divide. To describe these two families I use the term “cultural broker.” According to Helmold Remnitz, “a cultural broker is a simultaneous member of two or more interacting networks who provides nodes for the community’ communication with the outside world”.⁹⁷¹ As Remnitz noted, a cultural broker not only crosses the boundaries between communities and networks, but also supports the very presence of the boundary by his brokerage. I think that with some reservation one can apply this term to the situation of twelfth-century Anatolia. The first family is that of John Axouch the Persian⁹⁷² and the second one is the family of vizier Hasan ibn Gabras.⁹⁷³

a. The Persian confidant of the Byzantine Emperor. John Axouch and his family in the service of Byzantium (1097-1203)

The appearance of John Axouch in Byzantium raised many questions for modern scholars. The only information available comes from Kinnamos and Choniates, who were

⁹⁷⁰ Barton, “Marriage Across the Frontiers,” 5.

⁹⁷¹ Remnitz, “The Historian as a Cultural Broker in Late and Post-Roman World,” 45.

⁹⁷² For the best available summary of his biography see Michael Italikos, *Lettres et Discourse*, ed. Gautier, 41-44; Brand, “Turkish Element,” 4-6; Balivet, “Entre Byzance et Konya,” 53-54. Note the absence of Axouch in Beihammer, “Deflection Across the Border.”

⁹⁷³ For the overview of the Gabrades family see Bryer, “A Byzantine Family: The Gabrades,” 164-187; Beihammer, “Deflection Across the Border,” 650-651; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and Turks*, 48-49, 87; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 81.

writing some 70 years after his arrival to Constantinople. According to Kinnamos and Choniates, John Axouch was captured during the Crusader siege of Nicaea (1097) and was presented to Alexios I Komnenos as a part of the booty.⁹⁷⁴

Both Kinnamos and Choniates wrote about the “Persian” origins of the captive. The label permitted modern scholars to label him overtly as a Turk and describe his followers as ones of Turkish descent.⁹⁷⁵ This translation is misleading. Both Choniates and Kinnamos used the label “Persians” to denote people of high rank. The Nicene captive was not simply a Turk, but probably had some connections with the elite of eleventh-century Nicaea, if not direct ties to the family of the Ikonian sultans (this is what “Persian” meant in time of Kinnamos and Choniates).

The high status of the captive contributed to his success at the Byzantine court. The young captive (if not hostage) grew up together with Alexios’ son John, who at the time of the siege was around 10 years old. Axouch’s Christian name suggests that he was baptized early on in his stay, probably soon after his capture and during his introduction into the palace hierarchy.⁹⁷⁶

John Axouch was instrumental in securing the throne of the Empire for John in 1118. Soon afterwards, John Komnenos entrusted him with the siege operations against the Turks of the Meander valley and sometime between 1119 and 1130 promoted him to the rank of commander-in-chief of all Komnenian armies, i.e. the “domestic of East and West.”

His seal is preserved in three versions, as published in the Dumbarton Oaks catalogue, where it is depicted with the image of St. Demetrios on the obverse side and an inscription of his title on the other side.

⁹⁷⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 9, lines 23-27.

⁹⁷⁵ Brand, “Turkish Element” 3-4; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 245.

⁹⁷⁶ For the baptism of the Turks see the relevant subchapter of this chapter.



Figure 4. Seal of John Axouch. Obverse. Bust of St. Demetrios, holding a spear over his right shoulder and a shield in his left hand.

The obverse image is also noteworthy. John decided to depict the bust of St. Demetrios with a spear on his right shoulder. According to Jonathan Shea, the standards of this depiction point to the second half of the eleventh century, rather than to the Komnenian time. His opinion contradicts that of Piotr Grotowski, who argued that St. Demetrios became popular during the *Alexiad* era, being the patron saint of the new dynasty which he helped fight against the Pechenegs.⁹⁷⁷ According to Jonathan Shea, what appears to be a shield in the left hand of the saint is not a kite shield, but actually a cloak with a dotted border, a rare thing to find on Byzantine seals. The embroidered cloak with a visible border can be found on the twelfth-

⁹⁷⁷ P. Grotowski, *Arms, and Armours of the Warrior Saints: Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography* (843-1261) (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 115-116. Jonathan Shea in a personal consultation, 13 April 2016.

century icon of the saint in the church of Anargyroi at Kastoria.⁹⁷⁸ The saint himself is associated with Thessaloniki, the second city of the Empire and a popular place of refuge for foreign princes.⁹⁷⁹ To conclude, there is nothing specifically “Seljuk” or “Turkic” in this seal. On the contrary, the seal highlights the Byzantine and Komnenian self-identification of the bearer.



Figure 5. Reverse of the Seal of John Axouch.⁹⁸⁰ Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection

The Greek inscription on the reverse reads: “Ἰωάννης σεβαστὸς καὶ μέγας δομέστικος πάσης Ἀνατολῆς καὶ Δύσεως.”⁹⁸¹ One can note the absence of a family name; which is a rare thing for the period in question. Instead, John *domestikos* decided to put on a seal his office with his full titles, which highlighted his authority over the two sides of the Empire, East and West.

⁹⁷⁸ P. Grotowski, *Arms, and Armour*, 264.

⁹⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁰ The image belongs to Dumbarton Oaks Library and Collection. Original is available at: <http://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1955.1.2423> (Last Accessed 06.07.2016)

⁹⁸¹ *DO Seals* 3, no. 99.8.

At the same time the seal carries one element which hints at the “foreignness” of John Axouch. The key element to the correct interpretation of the seal-bearer’s identity may lie in his title of *sebastos*. Alexios I Komnenos bestowed a similar title upon amīr Abu'l-Quasim of Nicaea when the latter stayed in Constantinople ca. 1086. As Beihammer argued, the title was accessible to prominent foreigners in the Byzantine court.⁹⁸² The title found on the seal in combination with the information of Choniates allows one to conclude that the child brought to Alexios from Nicaea was not the son of a rank-and-file person. It seems likely that he was a member of the elite, if not a hostage and guarantor of the loyalty of the mixed population of Nicaea, which for a long a time fought against Alexios I Komnenos.⁹⁸³

At the same time, John Axouch the “Persian” did not consider himself to be a Persian (or did not have this nickname during his lifetime). Nikephoros Basilakes in the encomium to the *megas domestikos* dated to 1139 called him “kyr John”.⁹⁸⁴ The panegyric Basilakes consciously avoided a single mention of the term “Persian,” instead praised him for his exploits in the war against the Cumans.⁹⁸⁵ The same holds true for Michael Italikos, who wrote a letter to the *megas domestikos* and praised his deeds in Upper Syria (1139) without a single mention of the term “Persians.”⁹⁸⁶ In other words, both literati preferred not to use the term that later became the standard moniker for the person in question.

The question remains of what functions did John Axouch, the cultural broker, play in the Byzantine-Seljuk relations. If one reads “Persian” as an indication of Seljuk relatives, then one would expect John Axouch to play an instrumental role in the politics of John II Komnenos in Anatolia. There is no direct evidence that John Axouch played this role, however, the long and peaceful coexistence of John II Komnenos and Mas’ud (1119-1132) may be one of the results of

⁹⁸² A. Beihammer, “Defection Across the Border,” 613.

⁹⁸³ The use of “guarantors” was a common practice of Alexios. One of the members of the Gabrades family was effectively a hostage in Constantinople, while his father confronted Malik Dānişmend “on ground.”

⁹⁸⁴ Nikephoros Basilakes, “In Ioannem Axuchum,” in *Nikephoros Basilakae, Orationes et Epistolae*, ed. Garzya, 84-91.

⁹⁸⁵ While John Axouch depicted St. Demetrios at his seal, Alexios I Komnenos mobilized St. Demetrios to help him in his war against other invaders, the Pechenegs.

⁹⁸⁶ Michael Italikos, *Lettres et Discourse*, ed. Gautier, 222-223.

Axouch's contribution. John Axouch also participated in the main expeditions of John II against the Arabs of Syria and the Cumans, but apart from 1119 there is no evidence of his participation in the campaign against the Turks. Axouch may be connected with another unique phenomenon of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations, namely that of founding of the monastery of Koutlomousiou on mount Athos (*date ante quem* 1150).⁹⁸⁷ As one can read in many foundation charters, the foundation was an expensive business affordable only to the most prominent members of court hierarchy. The foundation of the monastery at mount Athos demanded significant resources, political and material. It is possible that Christia *mezas domestikos* John Axouch sponsored the foundation and the construction of the monastery in the prestigious grounds and named it after his (legendary) forefather, Sulaiman ibn Qutalmish

John Axouch, later branded as “the Persian”, was left to play an instrumental in the imperial court after the passing of the throne from John II Komnenos to his son Manuel I Komnenos (1143). According to Choniates, the son of John Axouch, Alexios Axouch not only married the granddaughter of John Komnenos, but also maintained the post of *epi tou kanikleiou* during the reign of Manuel.⁹⁸⁸ He held this post until he fell out of favour. According to John Kinnamos, Manuel dismissed him from the court after the Alexios demonstrated his over-loyalty to John Komnenos and also because of the murals inside his house which depicted the victories of the “Persian” sultan Kılıç Arslan II.⁹⁸⁹ Choniates stated that an interpreter for the Latins falsely accused Axouch of treason. As a result, the emperor ordered the tonsure of John Axouch in one of the Bulgarian monasteries.⁹⁹⁰ One can read the whole episode as a competition between two cultural brokers, the “Latins” and the “Turkics.” At that time “the Latins” won and John Axouch lost.

The fall of Axouch was caused by the openly demonstrated “Persian” components of his identity. This draws a connection with a work of poetry – the epigram composed by Theodore Prodromos. The epigram described St. George, one of the Byzantine military saints. The poem

⁹⁸⁷ See *ODB*, vol. 2, 1158.

⁹⁸⁸ For Alexios son of John see Barzos, *The Genealogy*, 279-280.

⁹⁸⁹ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 279-280.

⁹⁹⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 143-144.

positions the saint as the "offspring of the Anatolian soil," who was "Persian" by birth and at the same time had a "Cappadocian" mother. Taking into account that the Prodromic epigrams were accessible only to the upper echelon of the Komnenian elite, one should search in this group for the person who would be proud to put forward a "Persian" identity and for whom this poem would have been written.

The dedication of the poem to the "Anatolian" Saint George can also be linked to the epigram of Nicholas Kallikles which deals with the statue of the same saint in the newly-built Pantokrator monastery.⁹⁹¹ The image of saint George can also be found in the so-called 'Byzantine' art of the Thirteenth-century sultanate of Ikonion.⁹⁹² Alexios Axouch answers all criteria for being identified as the targeted audience: he is the son of *megas domestikos* John Axouch (a Persian father), Eudokia Komnene (a Byzantine mother) and he is reported to have had some interest in "Turkish" cultural elements. Thus it is plausible that Alexios Axouch was the addressee, if not a patron, of the Prodromic epigram that talks about the "Anatolian mother" and "Persian father" of the Anatolian saint.

After the career of Alexios Axouch came to an end, members of his clan disappeared from the works of rhetoric until the very end of the twelfth century. The final point in the long line of the Axouch family is the rebellion of John Komnenos the Fat (1203), who was the grandson of Alexios Axouch and the great-grandson of John Axouch *megas domestikos*.⁹⁹³ As Michael Angold demonstrated in his recent article, the rebellion was badly prepared which explains its failure.⁹⁹⁴ The failed coup took place in the year before the fall of the capital to the Fourth Crusade and incited Niketas Choniates, Euthymios Tornikes and Nikolaos Mesarites to describe the foiled attempt in their panegyrics

⁹⁹¹ Considering that the monastery had strong eleventh-century associations, one might think that the epigram is connected with other events than the ascension of Axouchoi. See Nicholas Kallikles, "To the image of St. George," in *Nicholas Kallikles, Carmi*, ed. R. Maisano (Naples: Bibliopolis), 80.

⁹⁹² For St. George in the thirteenth-century Seljuk Anatolia see T. Uyar, "Thirteenth-century 'Byzantine' Art in Cappadocia," 220-225; Oya Pancaroğlu, "The Itinerant Dragon-Slayer: Forging the Paths of Image and Identity in Medieval Anatolia," *Gesta* 18.2 (2004): 154-156.

⁹⁹³ Walter, *The Emperor and the World*, 54.

⁹⁹⁴ Angold, "The Anatomy of the Failed Coup," 123-129.

Each of the literati pointed to the "foreign" roots of the failed rebel. Niketas Choniates in his oration to Alexios III Angelos reminded to the emperor that the pretender was an ugly traitor, "lawfully belonging to the race of Ismael."⁹⁹⁵ In his turn, Euthymios Tornikes labelled the rebel as the "ungrateful seed of Ishmael" and pointed to his big belly.⁹⁹⁶ In Mesarites' text, John Komnenos the Fat finished his plot in the "Persian" hall of the palace, called Mouchroutes. Very much like Choniates, Mesarites pointed to the progenitor (*pappos*) of John the Fat, who was also a Persian.⁹⁹⁷ The progenitor-in-question was John Axouch, *megas domestikos* of East and West during the reign of John II Komnenos, and he was the one who ordered one of his relatives, a fellow-Persian, to create this hall. In this "space of the Persians" John the Fat drank his last cups of wine, looking at his "fellow Persians" and at the angels painted on the walls.

The armed enemies of John the Fat caught him in the hall, dragged him out and killed him in the corridors of the Great Palace. This was the end of the main line of the Axouch family. In the changing conditions of the thirteenth century, the Byzantine emperors did not have a need in cultural brokers with their Ikonian connections. Some ten years before the plot of John the Fat, the sultans of Ikonion decided to decapitate the clan of their own of cultural brokers, the Gabrades.

b. A Byzantine vizier of the Seljuk sultan: Hasan ibn Gabras and his family in the service of the sultans of Ikonion

The first famous representative of the Anatolian Gabrades was Theodore, *doux* of Trebizond (fl. 1080-1090), who was killed in the fight with Dānişmend and proclaimed a neo-martyr one century later.⁹⁹⁸ Alexios I Komnenos allowed the son of Theodore Gabras, Gregory, to marry the daughter of one of the Komnenoi.⁹⁹⁹ Gregory remained in Constantinople as a

⁹⁹⁵ Niketas Choniates, *Oration 10*, ed. Van Dieten, 105, line 21.

⁹⁹⁶ Angold, "The Anatomy of the Failed Coup," 132.

⁹⁹⁷ See Mesarites, *Palastrevolution*, 45, line 11.

⁹⁹⁸ Bryer called him "the father of Trapezuntine separatism." See Bryer, "Gabrades," 170.

⁹⁹⁹ For her see Barzos, *The Genealogy*, 198-199.

honourable guest (or hostage) and received a good education from Theophylact of Ohrid.¹⁰⁰⁰ In the first decade of the twelfth century Gregory Gabras defeated Dānişmend himself and forced him to free some of the Crusader captives. After this victory Gregory received the title of dux of Trebizond, but raised rebellion on the way there and turned to his former enemy for help. The Constantinopolitan agents in Trebizond captured the rebellious general on the way from the Turks to his hometown and brought him to Constantinople. There he was freed but again tried to raise a rebellion against the emperor. After this revolt Gabras was placed under home arrest in Philippopolis.¹⁰⁰¹

His relative (another son of Theodore) Constantine Gabras defended Philadelphia in the Meander Valley against the Seljuks in 1115.¹⁰⁰² In 1116 Constantine Gabras participated in the expedition of Alexios Komnenos against the Turks of Ikonion, where he was a commander of the Byzantine rear guard. In the 1130s Gabras followed the way of his relatives and also became a rebel.¹⁰⁰³ Niketas Choniates states that “Constantine Gabras made a tyranny in Trebizond”. He was alive in the 1160s and acted as an intermediary between sultan Kılıç Arslan II and Manuel Komnenos.¹⁰⁰⁴ Both Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates recorded the Christian name of this Gabras, and so one can suppose that he remained a Christian.

The third generation of the Gabras family sought to make their careers in both Ikonion and Constantinople. In 1146, the Byzantine guards slew one of the Gabrades in the defile of Myriocephalon. Kinnamos notes that during this battle the Byzantine cavalymen slew Gabras and cut his head and right hand.¹⁰⁰⁵ It is the first case where we have a Gabras waging war on the side of the Seljuks. He was an enemy of the emperor – so much that his hand and head were cut off to prove his death.

The absence of his name marks the difference between the "Seljuk" Gabras and his

¹⁰⁰⁰ Margaret Mullett, “The Madness of Genre,” *DOP* 46 (1992), 235-243.

¹⁰⁰¹ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 255-266.

¹⁰⁰² Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 435, line 38.

¹⁰⁰³ See Barzos, *Genealogy*, vol. 1, 240-241.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 121, line 25.

¹⁰⁰⁵ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 56, lines 11-13.

Byzantine counterpart, general Michael Gabras. Michael Gabras was a military commander, but not a very successful one: twice he ran away from the battlefield. Finally, in 1071 Manuel sent this man to the Danishmendids as an ally, but Gabras did not achieve anything there and returned to Constantinople in disgrace. Manuel ordered Gabras "to invent a punishment for himself."¹⁰⁰⁶

The Byzantine sources, namely the *Deeds* of John and Manuel Komnenos and the *History* of Niketas Choniates do not say anything about his life afterwards. However, one problematic source of the later era reports that "Michael" was the ambassador of the Byzantine emperor in the dire situation of Myriokephalon.¹⁰⁰⁷ It seems plausible that this person was Michael Gabras, who had previous experience in dealing with the Turks.

The ambassador of the Seljuk side was another Gabras, whom the sources name as Hasan ibn Gabras.¹⁰⁰⁸ In the Byzantine sources he is named as the "most famous of enemy satraps." The Muslim sources are more detailed and label him as the vizier of Kılıç Arslan II on the day of the battle. He was instrumental in securing peace with Manuel Komnenos and made the famous joke about the wrong colour of the imperial dress on the day of the battle.

However, after the fight, Kılıç Arslan II dismissed him and promoted another person into his position. If one is to believe Niketas Choniates, at about that time Hasan ibn Gabras tried to negotiate his reconversion into Orthodoxy that Choniates reported later in his chronicle.¹⁰⁰⁹ This attempt to reconvert led to the Holosphyros debate, which Choniates described in great detail in his *History*.

Due to unknown reasons, the conversion to Christianity failed. Gabras returned to the court of Ikonion and served Kılıç Arslan II as a vizier well until the first "resignation" of Kılıç Arslan in 1189.¹⁰¹⁰ Afterwards, he became the key player in the intrigues between the many sons of the sultan. During one of those conspiracies, he was killed by the "Turkomans" who paraded

¹⁰⁰⁶ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 255-256.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 63

¹⁰⁰⁸ Konstantinos Barzas planned to include the biography of the Gabrades in the later volumes of his *Genealogy*, but never managed to complete his plan. See. K. Barzas, *The Genealogy*, vol. 1, 729.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 213, sub54.

¹⁰¹⁰ Cahen, *Formation*, 38-40.

his intestines on their spears around Sebasteia during the Feast of the Cross.¹⁰¹¹

The surviving seal of Gabras presents him as an independent ruler. The Arabic inscription defines him as “the sultan Ikhtiyar al-Din al-Ḥasan ibn Ghafraṣ”.¹⁰¹²



Figure 6. Seal of Hasan ibn Gabras. *DO Seals* 5 no. 114.1 Obverse. Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection.

According to Dimitri Korobeynikov, the title “sultan” does not disclose the ex-convert and ex-vizier’s pretences to the throne of the sultanate, but rather portrayed him as an independent ruler. The same seal illustrates an image with obvious Byzantine connotations and reminiscent of the coins of John II Komnenos.¹⁰¹³ What is unique in this case is the attribution of the seal to a person who had operated as a professional mediator between Constantinople and Ikonion

¹⁰¹¹ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography*, 330-331.

¹⁰¹² *DO Seals*, vol. 5, 149–50.

¹⁰¹³ The idea itself of using a Byzantine image as an ambidexter seal is hardly new to twelfth-century Anatolia. N. Oikonomidès, “Les Danishmendides entre Byzance, Bagdad et le Sultanat d’ Ikonion.” *Revue Numismatique*, ser. 6, 25 (1983): 190-205.



Figure 7. Seal of Hasan ibn Gabras. Reverse. *DO Seals* 5 no. 114.1. Courtesy of DO Library and Collection

The career of the Axouchai and the Gabrades began in the eleventh century. Both families capitalized on the conquest of Anatolia and on the new cultural boundary between Byzantium and the Turkic state. The power of the Gabrades and the Axouch exercised at the peak of their careers depended on their ability to trade their talents on both sides of the spatial and cultural divide. Hence, the high status of both families dependent on the formation of borderlands. The Gabrades and the Axouchai played an instrumental role in the governance of the state and in the embassies that were directed outside its borders. At the same time, the Gabradai and the Axouchoi competed for their role with different cultural brokers.¹⁰¹⁴ Thus, one can speak about a certain competition between the “Latin” and “non-Latin” cultural brokers in the empire of the Komnenoi and less conclusively in the sultanate of Ikonion.

The Gabrades and Axouchai actively assisted their sovereigns in their comprehension of the new balance of powers in Anatolia after the First Crusade. After the stabilization of the border zone, both the Gabrades and the Axouchoi had to make their final choice in the conflict of

¹⁰¹⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 86.

the opposing forces. Both families fell victim to the change in the political balance of Asia Minor in the twelfth century, which allowed the internal enemies of the Gabrades and Axouchoi to diminish their influence. Last members of the dynasties – John Komnenos the Fat in Constantinople, and Hasan ibn Gabras in Sebasteia – were killed after their alleged aims to the throne of Ikonion and Constantinople respectively. The next generation of Anatolian rulers did not need cultural brokers. In their time, the Axouchai and the Gabrades secured the mutual understanding between Constantinople and Ikonion, an understanding without which the Nicaean-Ikonian symbiosis of the Thirteenth century would not have been possible at all.

6. Conclusions

Speros Vryonis and his predecessors introduced the concept of the Byzantine-Seljuk divide as a methodological framework for the investigation of the history of Medieval Anatolia. What “the founding fathers” did not recognize was the flexibility and permeability of the confessional and cultural divide. The Byzantine rhetoric of the twelfth century testifies to this divide and (if one can judge something by late attested epic) the attitude on the other side of the border was reportedly similar.¹⁰¹⁵

To reiterate, the Byzantine-Seljuk divide is present in the Byzantine rhetoric from the eleventh century onwards. In Byzantine rhetorical texts, there were no “neutral territories” that lied between Byzantium and the state of the Great Seljuks in the eleventh century or lands of the Turkish *amīrs* in the twelfth century. Very much like during the era of Byzantine-Arab relation, space was perceived as a combination of roads and cities.¹⁰¹⁶ In between them lay the desert (in the eleventh century) or a river or else a mountain gorge (in the twelfth century). This imagined border was at the same time permeable. The figures portrayed in Byzantine rhetoric, the Byzantines and the Turks alike, crossed it very often. With notable exceptions, the categories of the travellers are very similar to the ones present in the rhetoric of Latin West.

¹⁰¹⁵ For the example of border-crossing in Seljuk Epic see classical analysis of *Dede Korkut* by Bryer and usually neglected lines of Battal-Name. It is interesting that both Battal-Name and Dede Korkut describe the “borderland” as the forested region. See Bryer, “Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic. Exception,” 121-131, *Battalname*, 107-108.

¹⁰¹⁶ Asa Eger, *The Islamic-Byzantine Frontier*, 10-11, Haldon, *Empire That Would Not Die*, 135-136.

At the same time, the search for the group that the Byzantine authors imagined to exist between the "Romans" and the "Turks" does not produce many results. From Michael Attaleiates to Theodore Prodromos, the Byzantine literati did not mention a specific group that would have been both "Roman" and "Turk"/ "Persian." In the poem of Theodore Prodromos, the poem's protagonist emperor John II transformed the "wolves" (hostile Persians) of the borderland into "guard-dogs of the state".¹⁰¹⁷ There is no place for a middle state between the two. The Grottaferrata version of *Digenis Akritis*. When Emir of *Digenis* converted to Christianity, his family and clan converted with him with no people left in the middle.¹⁰¹⁸ It is one or the other.

The same "flexible" but persistent divide existed in the religious sphere. The Byzantines knew about the difference between Christianity and Islam and described this divide by pointing (again) to its permeability. Byzantine sources from Attaleiates to Anna Komnene and Niketas Choniates mention the opposite phenomenon, namely the Christianization of the Turks. In the second half of the twelfth century, Byzantine literati began to exhibit an anxiety regarding the possible conversion of the Byzantines to the "foul teaching of the Persians," but none of the sources consider these conversions to be made in mass numbers. Only in the second half of the twelfth century, Byzantine canonists sought to define the borders of the religious community.¹⁰¹⁹ To sum up, Byzantine sources do not provide evidence for a wide-ranging islamization. If "Islamization" existed at all, it remained in the lower stratas of the Anatolian society or happened in the later period. It seems likely, that the process of islamization (as Anthony Bryer hinted at his article) was going with different speed in different regions.¹⁰²⁰

The Byzantine literati demonstrated a variety of opinions concerning the question of the Byzantine-Seljuk and, later, Byzantine-Turkic marriages. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries,

¹⁰¹⁷ Theodore Prodromos, *Poem on the Capture of Kastamon*, line 170: "Ὁ βασιλεὺ τρισαριστεῦ Αὐσόνων αὐτοκράτορ . τοὺς λυμεῶνας καὶ φθορεῖς τῆς πολιτείας λύκους κύνας δεικνύεις φύλακας αὐτῆς τῆς πολιτείας.

¹⁰¹⁸ See *Digenis Akritis*, ed. Jeffreys, 64, lines 360-364.

¹⁰¹⁹ This situation is similar with the one that Toner observed in the West. According to this scholar, the catholic literati of the Western Europe sought to control the Islam on the intellectual level in the times, when it represented the political threat. See Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 54-55.

¹⁰²⁰ Bryer, "Greeks and Türkmens: The Pontic. Exception," 121-131.

none of the literati argued against possible marriages between Seljuk princesses and Byzantine princes. In the textually constructed Byzantine gender, the Byzantine man could master the "Other woman" and even rape her, like Digenis Akritis of the Grottaferrata version raped the Syrian girl. The erotization and sexualization of the "Eastern woman" in Byzantine epic coincided with the Byzantine expansion to Syrian and with the resurfacing of the love romances in Byzantine culture. At the same time, the second half of the twelfth century saw a growing number of marriages between Byzantine princesses and men from the Seljuk household. Following the political trend, the Byzantine rhetoric of the second half of the twelfth century accepted the existence of negotiated marriages between the Byzantines and the Turks. While some forced marriages and forced conversions may have taken place, the Byzantine rhetoric does not provide evidence for the cliché of "the Rape of Anatolia."

The last group of people to mention in this work are the professional cultural brokers who lived the borderlands. In a certain way the stories of both the Gabrades and the Axouchoi demonstrate the complexity of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations in twelfth-century Anatolia. The two families played leading roles in the formation of the sultanate of Ikonion and of the Empire of the Komnenoi. Being loyal to their new sovereigns, they worked as intermediaries during times of war and peace. The Byzantine literati (or at least one educated literatus) recognized the importance of these people. The Byzantine sources acknowledged that the Byzantine-Seljuk divide and Byzantine-Seljuk *lingua franca*, was created not only by the literati and the *ulema*, but also by the middlemen among the aristocracy who contributed to the prestige of their clans in Ikonion and Constantinople. After the fall of Gabradai and Axouchai, their function passed to the next generation of cultural brokers who were direct relatives of the sultans of Ikonion (e.g. Maurozomoi).¹⁰²¹ The latter contributed to the development of Byzantine-Seljuk relations in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The two dynasties of cultural brokers are the closest thing to a friendly coexistence, as imagined by modern scholars. The educated people of Byzantium recognized their existence and

¹⁰²¹ Brand, "Turkish Element," 23-25; Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and Turks*, 68-69; Balivet, "Entre Byzance et Konya," 70.

ignored many other brokers, who most probably partook in the everyday life of the borderlands. The presence of the Turks in Constantinople also influenced the individual images of the Turks present in Byzantine rhetoric. They are the subject of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER VII. Seljuk Kaleidoscope. Individual Images of the Turks

The individual images constitute the integrative part. These characteristics create an image. Roland Barthes provided good example of such a characteristic on the material of “Julius Caesar” by Joseph Mankiewicz (1953). The French philosopher noted that all Romans in this enactment of Shakespeare’s tragedy are sweating: their sweat is a symbol of “deep thought” and their worry about the Roman republic. The only person who is not sweating is Caesar himself: he is doomed to death and has no need for such a human feature as sweating.¹⁰²²

The first aim of this chapter is to find out if there was such a thing as a “mass characteristic” of Seljuk Turks like sweating in the work of Mankiewicz.¹⁰²³ The presence of “mass image” in Byzantine rhetorical discourse was recently addressed by Anthony Kaldellis, but not in the framework of the projected identity of the Turks.¹⁰²⁴ The second aim is to trace down some important “Caesars” among Seljuk characters of Byzantine rhetoric and define their place in the discourse as well as the function that they carry in the construction of the projected identity of the Turks.¹⁰²⁵ This task seems to be different *from* the one performed by Roland Barthes in his short critical essays: to continue the comparison, I have not one film, but many films for the comparison. The third aim of the chapter is to trace down changes in the “collective image” and “individual images” in the Komnenian era and to investigate their relation during this era .

I will address these three questions consequently in the subchapters of this chapter. The

¹⁰²² Roland Barthes, “The Romans in Films” in *Mythologies*, tr. Annette Lavers (New York, 1972), 26.

¹⁰²³ This chapter focuses on “basic actions” and “moral qualities”, which Byzantine writers ascribed to Seljuk Turks. I placed similar material on their religion and military organization in the relevant chapters.

¹⁰²⁴ “Modern scholarship assumed that Byzantine had coherent group identities, which was not always the case”. Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 107.

¹⁰²⁵ I chose for my analysis characters, which are present in two or three literary works. The only exception is Kay Khusraw of Ikonion, hero of *Historia* of Niketas Choniates. I chose him, because the author consciously altered his image in the two versions of the same narrative.

first part of the chapter will deal with collective image the second will describe the evolution of Alp Arslān of the Great Seljuks in Byzantine rhetoric. The third will deconstruct the image of the Empire' first Seljuk Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos (act. Sec. half of the twelfth century), while the fourth one will narrate on many faces of the loyal servant Poupakas. Two final subchapters will deal with the images of two sultans of Ikonion Kılıç Arslan II (1156-1192) and Kay Khusraw I (r. 1192-1196, 1205-1211). The final subchapter will analyze all images together, thus creating some simile of the Seljuk kaleidoscope present in the Byzantine sources of the time.

1. The sultan of Manzikert. Alp Arslān in Attaleiates and Manasses

Alp Arslān was not the first sultan known to Byzantines. First was Tangrolipex, main leader of the Turks in the Byzantine “story of the origin of the Seljuk Turks”.¹⁰²⁶ As I will prove below, the image of his successor Alp Arslān became more important for Byzantines.¹⁰²⁷ In this subchapter, I will analyze two of the many images of the sultan in Byzantine rhetoric – one created by Michael Attaleiates and another by Constantine Manasses.

a. Alp Arslān in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates

As many other Seljuks, Alp Arslān in Attaleiates' work is nameless. He is simply “the sultan”, the head of the Seljuk force, institution much more than a person. This absence of a name creates problem with dating. When Attaleiates is describing Seljuk raids against Armenia in 1160s he speaks about some “sultan, that is a name of their chieftain”.¹⁰²⁸

In some sense, Alp Arslān of *Historia* is like Alexios Komnenos in the final part of this

¹⁰²⁶ For the full version of the story see John Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historion*, 442-447. See analysis in A. Beihammer, “Die Ethnogenese,” 601-603.

¹⁰²⁷ For historical Alp Arslān see Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 52-58; A. Mallett, “Alp Arslān”, in *EI III* Last Accessed at: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/alp-arслан-COM_24882?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-3&s.q=Alp+Arslan (Last Accessed 28.07.2016) See also Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 70.

¹⁰²⁸ It's interesting to note, that in the “Story of the Origin of the Seljuk Turks” Attaleiates already informed his reader about the meaning of the word “sultan”. Here he either repeats himself, or makes “real” introduction of the term in his narrative. In this case “Story of the Origin of the Turks” is probably a copy-paste of some source, which has some information common with Skyliyzes. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 36, line 21 : καλεῖται δ' οὗτος σουλτάνος τῇ περσικῇ διαλέκτῳ.

work. He is lurking in the background and he is always in motion. The power of the sultan is evident, but the author never mentions his direct orders to his subordinates.¹⁰²⁹ Sultan as a real authority appears on the scene of *Historia* prior the description of Manzikert just a few times. In one place, Attaleiates explains the term “sultan” and states that it is a “ruler” of the Turks.¹⁰³⁰ This ruler sends an embassy to Romanos Diogenes before the battle, asking for peace, but does not receive a positive answer.¹⁰³¹ This peaceful embassy marks the difference between the image of the “sultan” and images of Scythian rulers in Attaleiates: they are much more warlike and rarely think about peace.

Attaleiates introduces definitive image only in the scene of Manzikert, preceding it with a compliment towards the Turks.¹⁰³² Attaleiates described, how the captured Romanos, covered by humble soldier’s clothes, was brought to the sultan. What follows is a dialog between the emperor and the sultan, in which Attaleiates portrayed the anonymous Seljuk ruler in a positive way

“Do not fear – he said – oh emperor, but have a good hope for everything, because you will not bother about the danger of the body. But praise as powerful the one which is superior in power, for stupid is the one who does not take care about unpredictable destiny”¹⁰³³

In *Historia* (and in the Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh century) Turkish characters *never speak*. Attaleiates not only made the sultan speak, but explained why he needed it in the

¹⁰²⁹ I wonder, whether one can read this absence of the description of mechanisms of sultan’s power as a demonstration of Attaleiates’ knowledge about network of power in the sultanate of the Great Seljuks (which was weak and nomad-like) or rather as a *topos* about barbarians-nomads who do not have power in a proper sense.

¹⁰³⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, 33, lines 19-21(tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 76): Οὐννοι Νεφθαλῖται, Περσῶν ὁμοιοὶ ἡγεμόνος αὐτοῖς ἀνέωξαντος τὴν ὁδὸν ὃς προειλημμένος καὶ ταπεινῇ τύχῃ συμπεπορισμένος καὶ δουλικῇ.

¹⁰³¹ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 123.

¹⁰³² Here and in the following chapter translations are from Kaldellis and Krallis, with my minor adaptation. Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 126, line 5 – 127, line 4.

¹⁰³³ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 126, lines 7-13 (tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 299): “Μὴ δέδιθι, ἔφη, ὃ βασιλεῦ, ἀλλ’ εὐελπίς ἔσο πρὸ πάντων, ὥς οὐδενὶ προσομιλήσεις κινδύνῳ σωματικῷ, τιμηθήσῃ δ’ ἀξίως τῆς τοῦ κράτους ὑπεροχῆς, ἄφρων γὰρ ἐκεῖνος ὁ μὴ τὰς ἀπροόπτους τύχας ἐξ ἀντεπιφορᾶς εὐλαβούμενος.”

second dialog between the sultan and the emperor.¹⁰³⁴

And he [emperor] proclaimed his victory deserved, without having a law about love for the enemies, without knowing the law of God from his nature and a good disposition. And in one of these communications sultan said to the emperor. “If you was installed, where you had me as prisoner?”. He answered “After depleting you with many strikes, you would give your soul”. He answered “But, as I said, I do not imitate you in roughness and toughness”.¹⁰³⁵

Michael Attaleiates was a military judge in the service of Romanos Diogenes.¹⁰³⁶ Attaleiates criticized Byzantines for not obeying different types of law, including the holy one.¹⁰³⁷ The Turks, in opposite, follow the Law without knowing it. The Sultan of Turks acted as a head of the forces of retribution: even Romanos Diogenes accepts and recognized it. While Diogenes was harsh, sultan of Attaleiates demonstrated *philanthropia*, a desired feature of a “good” Byzantine emperor.¹⁰³⁸ This is a probably a pin against Byzantines, who captured and blinded Romanos in a year after the battle.¹⁰³⁹ Thus, the whole scene with the sultan after the Manzikert is not only *Kaiserkritik* pointed against Romanos Diogenes but *Civilizationkritik* pointed against Byzantines and a mirror for their vices. Michael Attaleiates underlined this function of mirror in the embedded text – exhortation dedicated to the fall of Romanos Diogenes.¹⁰⁴⁰

¹⁰³⁴ A rare case of the philosophical dialog in eleventh-century Byzantine history writing. Psellos (at least in *Chronographia*) did not like the dialogs much.

¹⁰³⁵ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 128, lines 5-8 ((tr. Kaldellis-Krallis, 301) : Καὶ γὰρ ἔν τινι συλλόγῳ διερωτήσαντος τοῦ σουλτάνου τὸν βασιλέα τί ἂν ἔδρασας εἰ οὕτως ἔσχες αὐτὸς ἐμὲ ὑποχείριον; ἀνυποκρίτως καὶ ἀθωπεύτως ἐκεῖνος ἀπήγγειλεν ὅτι “Πολλαῖς ταῖς πληγαῖς κατεδαπάνησά σου τὸ σῶμα γίνωσκε. ” Ὁ δέ· Ἀλλ’ ἐγώ, φησιν, οὐ μὴ σομαί σου τὸ αὐστηρὸν καὶ ἀπότομον.

¹⁰³⁶ For image of Romanos in Attaleiates see detailed analysis of Krallis, *History as Politics in Eleventh-century Byzantium*, 161-167.

¹⁰³⁷ See for example episode with Russeil de Bailleul. He is depicted as just and merciful, while Byzantines (who attack his camp on holiday) are law-breakers.

¹⁰³⁸ About importance of this concept for Attaleiates see Krallis, *History as Politics in Eleventh-century Byzantium*, 212.

¹⁰³⁹ Another “side reason” for the whole “Post-Manzikert” scene is the question, who is to blame for the battle. Attaleiates states, that the reasons were betrayal of Doukai and divine providence, while Michael Psellos puts all the blame on Romanos Diogenes. See Krallis, *History as Politics in Eleventh-century Byzantium*, 161-170.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 136, lines 7-14.

To sum up, the image of “the sultan” in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates is not a simple one. This character has two primary functions in the narrative: exemplary and retributive. Attaleiates introduces this character to humiliate the defeated Romanos Diogenes and to pronounce several phrases to the emperor. In the first of this phrases sultan speaks about “unpredictable destiny”, which can ruin the best laid plans, in the second he demonstrates his *philanthropia* in direct comparison with Romanos Diogenes. Besides it, the author, through the mouth of Romanos, calls the sultan humble. From the beginning until the very end he remained nameless and faceless: Attaleiates did not produce any portrait of this sultan. Another important thing is a dialog between Romanos and Alp Arslān which is a rare thing in Byzantine discourse of the era.¹⁰⁴¹ With this dialog, Michael Attaleiates constructed the first image of a good Turkish ruler in the Byzantine literary discourse. The Seljuks were good because they had a benevolent ruler who was following (at least partly) the Supreme Law and as a result was successful. Other Byzantine writers liked this story and included it into their narratives.

b. “Thrice-barbarian”: Alp Arslān in *Breviarum Chronicum* of Constantine Manasses

Breviarum Chronikon of Manasses is completely different from the previous sources which mentioned Alp Arslān I under this or that name. The main difference is the audience: Manasses created his versed world history for a single reader, Princess Irene, the wife of Andronikos Komnenos. According to the latest studies, she could have been a Norman princess in the Byzantine court. Mannasses *Chronikon* was in this sense a preparatory work, which would make easier the process of acceptance of Byzantine culture and history for a foreigner.¹⁰⁴² The battle of Manzikert occupies around 50 lines in the last part of the chronicle. Sultan is one of the

¹⁰⁴¹ On the role of the educative dialog written in the slightly later era see M. Mullett, “Literary Biography and Historical Genre in the *Life of st. Cyril Phileotes*,” in *Les vies des saints à Byzance : genre littéraire ou biographie historique ?* (Paris, 2004) 393-394.

¹⁰⁴² His work was not unique: princess Agnes of France was “inculcated” in the Byzantine culture with the help of an illustrated book, which survived well until the present. Agnes was a child, princess Irene was not and for her Manasses wrote an adapted poetic text, which would help her to understand her new “home culture” better Hillsdale Cecily, “Constructing Byzantine “augusta”: A Greek Book for a French Bride,” *The Art Bulletin*, 87/3 (2005): 458-473.

main actors:

The chief of the barbarians who captured
 The emperor, then tamed his barbarian soul besides wishing
 Barbarian took pity on unlucky ruler
 He, thrice-barbarian, put shame on Romans
 Those who betrayed emperor in battle
 And made him a foreigner in his own land
 He looked after him as if he was a kinsman
 And cared for him, as if he was a brother
 He made peace, he reconciled with him
 And after they established a treaty
 [Barbarian] sent him to the ruling [city]¹⁰⁴³

Manasses did not name the sultan. He is simply “chief of barbarians”. In other respect Manasses in general continued the Byzantine tradition of praising Alp Arslān. The author underlined the sultan’s benevolence and says that he took pity (βλέπει φιλανθρωπότερον) on Romanos. However, There is a point in which Manasses did not continue the previous tradition. All previous authors, including Attaleiates, set Alp Arslān *against* Romanos Diogenes. In contrary, Manasses stated that sultan was to Romanos *better* than people of his own kin, e.g. Doukai, whom Manasses very explicitly blamed for the failure and betrayal. The sultan, with all his barbarity, becomes an example of good behaviour in comparison with treacherous Byzantines. “Chief of barbarians” again acts as mirror – this time not for Diogenes, but for treacherous Byzantine nobles. This is strange and innovative, because the notion of personal fidelity did not exist in the Byzantine rhetoric of twelfth century. If Constantine Manasses was writing his “textbook” for a Norman princess, for whom “personal fidelity” was probably important, the changing of “guilty persons” from emperor to his “vassals” seems possible. Thus,

¹⁰⁴³ Constantine Manasses, *Breviarium Chronicum*, ed. O. Lampsidis, 351, line 6490- 352:

ὁ βάρβαρος ὁ φύλαρχος ἐκεῖνος ὁ ζωγρήσας (6490)
 τὴν βαρβαρόθυμον ψυχὴν ἀέλπτως ἡμεροῦται,
 βλέπει φιλανθρωπότερον περὶ τὸν βασιλέα·
 οἰκτεῖρει γὰρ καὶ βάρβαρος ἄνακτα δυσπραγοῦντα.
 ἐλέγχει τοὺς ταῦτογενεῖς τῷ βασιλεῖ προδότας
 Ῥωμαίους ὁ τριβάρβαρος, ἀλλόφυλος συμφύλους· (6495)
 γίνεται προμηθέστερος αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν οἰκείων
 καὶ κηδεμονικώτερος αὐτῶν τῶν ὁμογνίων·
 σπένδεται, καταλλάττεται, σύμμαχον νέμει χεῖρα,
 ἀνακτησόμενον αὐτῷ πέμπει τὴν κρατορίαν.

Manasses turned Byzantine story about divine punishment into the different story about the “bad vassals”. The later one was probably more familiar for the main patron and reader.

The image of Alp Arslān, victor of Manzikert, was a first image of Seljuk ruler in Byzantine rhetoric. Michael Attaleiates, who was in person present on the battlefield in 1070 described him in his work. The enemy leader in *Historia* was a tool of both comparison and retribution: the sultan was more just than Romanos Diogenes (dialog 2) and was the embodiment of a divine punishment sent to the Byzantine Empire. Michael Attaleiates was not only the creator of Alp Arslān, but his censor as well. Roland Barthes would probably call him a “myth founder”.¹⁰⁴⁴

Constantine Manasses in his poetical history completely rejected the “retributive” element and changed the object of comparison. He juxtaposed his image to the images of Byzantine nobles. The retributive myth finally turned into a myth of comparison and example – and was used as a literary elaboration of a book for a foreign princess at Byzantine court.

The common denominator is the image of Manzikert. For Byzantines, this battle was a colossal trauma, which was probably in the twelfth century even more important than the battles at Yarmuk or the deeds of Crusaders in Palestine. All the writers, who mentioned Alp Arslān, wanted to explain this traumatic event. They invented a positive sultan for one common aim: to show that Byzantines were bad and that the Turks’ victory was ordained by the Lord. Byzantine literary men needed to show that the enemy was superior both in force and on moral grounds. They invented “the good sultan” – the first (and probably the last) Turk in Byzantine literary discourse with whom emperor *was speaking* like with an equal.

There were other Turks, with whom emperors did not speak in this way. My next case study is about one of them, a certain Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos.

2. Defector and Servant: Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos in Attaleiates and

¹⁰⁴⁴ R. Barthes, “Myth Today” in ...part 2, “Form and Meaning”, 277.

Bryennios.

On a cold winter morning in 1070, members of the senate of Romanos IV Diogenes gathered in the Chrysotriklinos of the Great Palace to meet a certain young man. This was probably a certain Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos, brother-in-law of the sultan of the Great Seljuks, Alp Arslān.¹⁰⁴⁵ The aim of this subchapter is to investigate the evolution of his image in Byzantine sources, mainly in the works of Michael Attaleiates and Nikephoros Bryennios.

a. Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos: Image in Michael Attaleiates

In the work of Michael Attaleiates, Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos remains anonymous. He appeared for the first time as an opponent of young Manuel Komnenos (the elder brother of Alexios I Komnenos). Romanos Diogenes gave Manuel Komnenos the title of *protoproedros* and sent him against the Turks who ravaged Eastern Asia Minor. Attaleiates noted the talent of Manuel Komnenos, who both mustered his troops and paid them on time (in eleventh-century Byzantium a rare talent). Manuel Komnenos proceeded to Sebasteia, where he met “the multitude of Turks”.¹⁰⁴⁶ “The enemies” (all in plural) played against the Byzantines the stratagem of fake retreat. In the furious battle (Attaleiates underlines its ferocity twice), they destroyed the Byzantine army and captured Manuel Komnenos. After some time Manuel unexpectedly returned to Constantinople with his former captor as an ally. Attaleiates stated, that the young potentate was a rebel to his own household and that sultan of Persia was against him.¹⁰⁴⁷ Romanos Diogenes introduced this person to the Roman senate. However, the senators did not like him

He looked young, but was of small stature like a pigmy, with Scythian eyes and unpleasant, because this kin [i.e., the Turks] inherited from Scythians their bad temper and ugliness¹⁰⁴⁸

¹⁰⁴⁵ About him see Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 54-55 ; Cahen, *Formation*, 8; Brand, “Turkish Element,” 2-3; Beihammer, “Deflection Across the Border,” 608-609. See also Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 349.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 108, lines 14-18.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 110, lines 12-19.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis, 110 , lines 27-30 (translation mine): νέος μὲν γὰρ ἦν ὁ φανείς, πυγμαῖος δὲ τὴν ἡλικίαν σχεδόν, τὴν ὄψιν Σκύθης καὶ ἄχαρις, ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο τὸ γένος ἐκ Σκυθῶν

This is a rare example of the physical portrait of a Seljuk Turk in the Byzantine rhetoric.¹⁰⁴⁹ The reason for this vivid portrait lies in his way of life: he is a defector, a person who changed sides during the warfare. For Attaleiates this is a crime: as a military judge, he took an oath of allegiance from military groups in Byzantine army and he strictly opposed those who break it.¹⁰⁵⁰

In *Historia* Attaleiates could not denounce this crime openly, because Erisgen later helped Attaleiates' patron Nikephoros Botaneiates to seize the throne.¹⁰⁵¹ Instead, Attaleiates introduced to the reader the description of his face. He used *psychosomatogramma* to demonstrate how a serious crime (treason) corresponds with special traits of appearance. Thus, the Byzantine military judge was able to denounce the person he did not like without making an open statement against the person, who was loyal both to Nikephoros III Botaneiates and the clan of Komnenoi, whom Attaleiates supported in the last years of his life.

b. Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos: Image in Nikephoros Bryennios

Nikephoros Bryennios was writing his family chronicle some 40 years after Attaleiates. His sources remain vague. In some cases he used Skylitzes as a source of the stories, but in general his narrative is rather independent. According to Bryennios, Manuel Komnenos and Chrysoskoulos met in battle, the Byzantine army was routed and Manuel captured together with his *gambroi*. In captivity, Manuel, in a dialogue, convinced Chrysoskoulos to come with him to Constantinople.¹⁰⁵² Bryennios did not introduce direct speech of his character but rather retold the exchange between the two through indirect speech. In Bryennios' story, Manuel captured Chrysoskoulos with the power of words.

The Turkish leader accompanied Manuel Komnenos on the spring campaign against the

καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων κακοηθείας καὶ δυσμορφίας κατάγεται.

¹⁰⁴⁹ On middle-Byzantine Psychosomatogramma see L. Neville, *Heroes and Romans in the twelfth-century Byzantium*, 272.

¹⁰⁵⁰ See J. Haldon, "The *Krites* tou Stratopedou: a new office for a new situation?," *Travaux et mémoires* 14 (Paris, 2002): 279-86.

¹⁰⁵¹ See Krallis, *History as Politics in the Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, 91-93

¹⁰⁵² Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, ed. Gautier, 100-101.

Turks. The Byzantine general died not far from Constantinople and Anna Dalassene mourned over him. Bryennios states that the Turk was close to following him (Ὁ δὲ Χρυσόσκουλος μικροῦ δεῖν καὶ συναπῆλθεν αὐτῷ), but did not die.¹⁰⁵³

Bryennios mentioned Chrysoskoulos again in 1078 during the rebellion of Nikephoros Botaneiates against the Doukai. According to Bryennios, the rebellious Nikephoros Botaneiates joined forces with warriors from the eastern *themata* and Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos. When pretender Nikephoros Botaneiates advanced to Nicaea he found himself surrounded by Turks loyal to Michael Doukas. It was Chrysoskoulos who negotiated with them: “he persuaded them to take money and return. Thus he allowed them [the army of Botaneiates] to pass to Nicaea”.¹⁰⁵⁴ This negotiation/interaction is the last one about which we know. Bryennios remained silent about him for the rest of this unfinished work.

The two surviving glimpses at the same Seljuk chieftain differ considerably from each other. Michael Attaleiates described Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos as barbaric traitor with Scythian eyes. Attaleiates introduced Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos in the narrative for two reasons. First, Attaleiates, a military judge, wanted to denounce the military defector. Secondly, Attaleiates used the whole scene to demonstrate how the Komnenoi could deal with the Turks.

For Nikephoros Bryennios, the narrative function of Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos was completely different. He gave him a Byzantine name or nickname (“golden beard”). Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos was able to defeat the Byzantines and acted with some reason. When his friend Manuel Komnenos died, Chrysoskoulos nearly died with him: one can read it as an excessive emotion of barbarian, but this is still an emotion.¹⁰⁵⁵ Finally, Chrysoskoulos demonstrated his ability not only to be a pawn in the games of others but his ability to take matters into his own hands – it was his intervention that saved the rebellion of Nikephoros Botaneiates from failure

¹⁰⁵³ In this small, but tense episode Bryennios states that the elder brother of Alexios was revered by insiders (emperor) and outsiders (Chrysoskoulos). Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, 103, lines 11-12.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Nikephoros Bryennios, *Historical Material*, ed. Gautier, 241, line 24.

¹⁰⁵⁵ M. Hinterberger, “Emotions in Byzantium,” in *A Companion to Byzantium*, ed. Liz James, (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.; Malden, MA, 2010), 123-134.

near Nicaea. In many ways, Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos of the *Historical Material* reminds one about other good Turk of Komnenian rhetoric, namely Poupakas.

3. Loyal Turk Poupakas the Persian in Kinnamos and Choniates

Information about representatives of the upper level of Seljuk elite is abundantly present in Byzantine sources. Information about characters with more modest social standings is more limited. One of these exceptions is Poupakas the Persian servant. A character with this name is present both in the work of John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates.¹⁰⁵⁶

The social status of this person raises many questions. Kinnamos introduces him in the scene of the first battle at Myriocephalon (1146) as a warrior, “Persian by family”.¹⁰⁵⁷ In 1164s Poupakas helped Andronikos Komnenos in his escape to Rus and was punished for it: Choniates stated that this Poupakas was the same who stormed Kerkyra with Manuel Komnenos.¹⁰⁵⁸ The question, whether Kinnamos and Choniates mentioned one and same person, is open.¹⁰⁵⁹ I do not intend to solve it here. My project is about image of Poupakas, not about the reconstruction of his biography (or their biographies).

a. Poupakas in The *Deeds* of John Kinnamos

The key episode for the image of Poupakas in *The Deeds* is the battle scene of 1146. In that year the Byzantine army of Manuel Komnenos made a successful raid against the Seljuks of Ikonion. Byzantines started their return by the old Roman road. In the defile of Cyblicimani (alias Myriocephalon) near the modern village Kiziloren 70 km east to Ikonion, Ikonians and Danishmendids attacked Byzantines and two armies clashed in the First Battle at Myriocephalon (1146).

Kinnamos depicted the bravery of Manuel Komnenos against the Seljuks and the actions

¹⁰⁵⁶ Noted by Moravcsik. See Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 256-257.

¹⁰⁵⁷ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 48, line 2.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 130, line 25.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Brand, “Turkish Element in Byzantium”, 7-8.

of his friends and comrades-in-arms. One of them is Poupakas, who is said to be “of Persian origin”. Kinnamos’ Poupakas demonstrates considerable military skills. He helped the young emperor to lure the enemy into an ambush and performed other deeds of valor. He gave to the emperor an important piece of advice about his behavior:

Poupakas, wanted to oppose that and, said. “Leave the excess,” – he said – “Leave the excess, oh Emperor. But look into what evils we could get. Think about your own safety.”¹⁰⁶⁰

This is a rare case, when Seljuk character in Byzantine rhetoric is speaking: another example is Alp Arslān in *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates. Some lines later Kinnamos himself commented on the exceeding bravery of Manuel Komnenos and comparing him with Alexander the Great.”¹⁰⁶¹

The comparison of Manuel Komnenos with Alexander the Great and his famous pride (τόλμᾶ) is a hidden form of *Kaiserkritik*.¹⁰⁶² Manuel Komnenos was famous for his battle-zeal and even Kinnamos recognizes this negative feature of his character, albeit indirectly. Kinnamos wrote the *Deeds* between 1180 and 1183, when Manuel I Komnenos was dead and the failures of his ambitious foreign policy created many troubles for the empire. One of the biggest failure was the defeat at the Byzantine army in the Second battle at Myriokephalon (1176) that led to the weakening of Empire in Asia Minor.¹⁰⁶³ This battle partially explains, why Kinnamos decided to describe in great detail the first battle of Myriokephalon (1146) in which Manuel was victorious against the Turks. As I argued above, the *Deeds* are not as laudatory as they look from the first glance. Kinnamos praised Manuel and John, but recognized their failure to control the Persians and demonstrated that Manuel could not manage his army in the Anatolian space. Same holds true for his description of First Myriokephalon (1146). On the one hand, Kinnamos praised Manuel for his deeds, on the other hand he criticized him for being excessive in his quest for

¹⁰⁶⁰ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 50, lines 19-21 (tr. Brand, 47): ἀλλ’ ὁ Πουπάκης τὸν ἀντίον ἥπερ αὐτὸς ἐβούλετο προσφερόμενος “μέθες τὸ λίαν” ἔλεγε, “μέθες ὧ δέσποτα. οὐχ ὁρᾷς οἱ κακῶν γενοίμεθα; μνήσαι δὴ σωτηρίας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ.

¹⁰⁶¹ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 51, line 19-52, line 6.

¹⁰⁶² John Kinnamos is one of the few writers who used comparison of Alexander the Great. It seems that Byzantines tried to avoid it.

¹⁰⁶³ The only manuscript ends *exactly* before the description of battle of Myriokephalon.

glory. Poupakas, the brave Persian, is a vocalizer of the author's position. The mask of the brave Turk allows Kinnamos to voice some criticism and stay in the frame of panegyric.

The second appearance of Poupakas in the work of Kinnamos is momentary and strange. Kinnamos introduces a certain Poupakas as an ambassador of amīr Suleiman in 1160s. According to Kinnamos, Poupakas recognized Manuel and, after dismounting from his horse, addressed him "in a slavish fashion".¹⁰⁶⁴ The presence of this scene in the Deeds stimulated Charles Michael Brand to raise doubts about the presence of two different Poupakas in the text of Kinnamos: one at First Myriokephalon (1146) and the second at the raid of 1160. I think, that Kinnamos speaks about one and the same person. First, he stated that second Poupakas knew Manuel, and secondly Kinnamos never pronounced that this is different Poupakas. It seems logical to conclude, that the author of the Deeds described one and the same Turk in the episodes that date back to the 1140s and the 1160s. Thus, Poupakas is the member of the Persian elite, cultural broker, and a vocalizer for *Kaiserkritik*. Strangely enough, Niketas Choniates (who knew and used Kinnamos' work) used a character with the same name for similar purposes.

b. Poupakas in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates

Choniates stated that as a bodyguard of *megas domestikos* John Axouch Poupakas was the first one who climbed up the walls of the Kerkyra fortress during the Byzantine siege of the island in 1149.¹⁰⁶⁵ Choniates says nothing about origins of Poupakas, but if Brand in his reconstruction is right, than probably the very use of the name suggests a Muslim background and the reader could easily identify it as a name of the barbarian from the East.

However, Poupakas of Choniates is not totally Muslim. Before starting his heroic deed, he crossed himself over his body: as a result, he is the only one who reaches the wall and safely returns back after the siege-ladder falls.¹⁰⁶⁶ His deed was a "shock" or "miracle" (ἐκπληξίς) not

¹⁰⁶⁴ John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 196, line 17. Verb used for address (προσλάλέω) does not imply much of a

¹⁰⁶⁵ This factoid is in accordance with information of Kinnamos. Author of the The Deeds states, that in the battle of Myriokephalon Poupakas appeared together with his probable "boss" John Axouch. Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 83-84.

¹⁰⁶⁶ In the chapter dedicated to the religion of Seljuk Turks I stated, that the crossing of the body does not

only for Byzantines and Manuel Komnenos, but even Sicilians.¹⁰⁶⁷ Thus, in this first episode Choniates depicted Poupakas as a military hero. This is a rather rare thing, Choniates in general does not tend to define “pure heroes”, especially if they are Seljuk by origin.

The next episode also carries positive connotations. In 1165 Andronikos escaped prison and found Poupakas in Anchialos. Poupakas provided him with money and guides to Galitza. Andronikos was caught by Vlachs and had to pass through another adventure before getting safely to the lands of Rus'. Choniates specially states, that Andronikos did it “without saver...or friend...or bodyguard”. One can suppose that Poupakas (who helped Andronikos in Anchialos) probably combined all these functions in one person. Brand is probably right, when he states that by 1169 Poupakas was one of Andronikos’ “retainers”.¹⁰⁶⁸ The service which Poupakas rendered Andronikos did not pass unnoticed. Poupakas was arrested and persecuted for it. That’s how Choniates describes the procedure of public persecution:

The emperor arrested Poupakes and had him publicly scourged until the many blows of the lash lacerated his back and shoulders. Afterwards, the herald, leading him about with a rope around his neck, cried the following: "Whosoever harbors the emperor's enemy and sends him on his way with provisions will be flogged and paraded about in the same way." Poupakes looked intently ...and responded: "Let my shame be before every man who so wishes for not having betrayed my benefactor who came to me, for not having dismissed him harshly, but instead attending rightly to his needs and sending him rejoicing on his way."¹⁰⁶⁹

Choniates made his Turkish character speak. The verb used for betrayal – “καταπροδίδωμι”—is a specific one. Choniates used it many times, but at least in several occasions in connection with two “traitors par excellence” – Kılıç Arslan II and Andronikos

make one a Christian. Poupakas probably remained Muslim, because both Kinnamos and Choniates mention him only under Muslim name.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 84, line 35.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Brand, “Turkish Element in Byzantium,” 8.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 132 (tr. Magoulas, 75): Τὸν δὲ Πουπάκην ὁ βασιλεὺς συλλαβὼν ἔξανε πολλὰς διὰ λώρων δημοσίᾳ κατὰ τε τοῦ νότου καὶ τῶν ὤμων. μετὰ δὲ προάγων αὐτὸν ὁ κῆρυξ ἐκ τοῦ τραχήλου σχοινόδετον ἐπέβόα οὕτως τρανότερον „ὅστις τὸν ἐχθρὸν τοῦ βασιλέως προσιόντα οἱ εἰσοικίζεται καὶ δίδους ἐφόδια ἐκπέμπει, οὕτω καὶ μαστίζεται καὶ πομπεύεται.“ ὁ δὲ πρὸς τοὺς συνιόντας ἀτενὲς ὁρῶν διακεχυμένῳ προσώπῳ „αὕτη μοι αἰσχὺνη πρὸς τοῦ βουλομένου ἦτω παντός“, ἐπεφθέγγετο „μὴ ἐπιστάντα τὸν εὐεργέτην καταπροδόντι ἢ ἐμβριθῶς ἀποπεμψαμένῳ, ἀλλ’ ὥς ἐξῆν τεθεραπευκότι καὶ προεκπέμψαντι χαίροντα.

Komnenos. Thus, in some strange sense, Poupakas of Choniates is in opposition towards his master: Andronikos is a morally bad man, while Poupakas is his opposite. While Andronikos is pseudo-Christian, who commits many sins, his Seljuk servant provides the reader with a rare example of personal loyalty

To sum up, Poupakas in Choniates' interpretation was a military hero, who demonstrated high moral qualities towards his "benefactor" Andronikos Komnenos and was punished for it. Besides it, Poupakas, as one can judge by his name, is a Seljuk Turk. Why does Choniates (who rarely depicts such "positive" characters) demonstrate a kind of "sympathy" towards this Turk?

It is possible to hypothesize that the reason might lie in the context. According to Alicia Simpson, Choniates probably finished book IV of *Historia* in the late 1190s.¹⁰⁷⁰ The empire was slowly falling apart. In this situation, Niketas Choniates decided to use the Turk to show that even Turks (who are not among his favorite heroes) can be truthful servants, while Byzantines are always full of betrayal. Later on, the same thoughts probably led Choniates to the "idealization" or "amplification" in the depiction of another "Good Seljuk" – Kay Khusraw of Ikonion.¹⁰⁷¹

Poupakas is a rare character, who received good press both from John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates. Two writers depicted him as a great warrior and used this character to vocalize their *Kaisekritik*. Yet directions of their critical arrows are different: John Kinnamos used Poupakas to criticize battle zeal of Manuel Komnenos, while Niketas Choniates used this character to criticize people, who do bad things to their benefactors.¹⁰⁷² The image of Poupakas is in deep contrast with the image of the master of the Turks – Kılıç Arslan II.

4. Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion in Kinnamos and Choniates

Two main historical narratives of the second half of the twelfth century – *The Deeds of*

¹⁰⁷⁰ Alicia Simpson, "Before and after 1204", 199.

¹⁰⁷¹ See relevant subchapter of this chapter.

¹⁰⁷² To call the topic of Choniates "fidelity" would be a mistake, because Byzantines probably did not have such a term.

John Kinnamos and *Historia* of Niketas Choniates – at least for some time had the same main antagonist. This antagonist is sultan Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion (r. 1156-1192).¹⁰⁷³ The name of this person is spelled differently. He is Κλιτζιεσθλάν in Kinnamos, and Κλιτζασθλάν in Choniates.¹⁰⁷⁴ The difference between Kılıç Arslan of Choniates and Kılıç Arslan of Kinnamos is not only in the name. In the following subchapter I will investigate the difference between the images of the same person found in two different historical narratives. I will also try to answer the question of whether the image of Kılıç Arslan (Choniates) is connected with Kılıç Arslan (Kinnamos) and whether one can trace some connection between them.¹⁰⁷⁵

a. Kılıç Arslan : the version of John Kinnamos

John Kinnamos introduced this character to the reader in the very beginning of book V. Before the description of Kılıç Arslan, Kinnamos describes the peace which Manuel Komnenos made with a Serbian potentate Desa Urošević, the arch-zupan of Dendra. Desa promised to Manuel to be loyal to him, submitted himself to Byzantium and was granted many privileges and presents. This submission is the context for the appearance of Seljuk sultan in the narrative of Kinnamos. the sultan came to Constantinople “as a military deserter” (αὐτόμολος), asking the emperor for the good outcome of his deeds”.¹⁰⁷⁶ The author in a rather unique intervention says that the visit of Kılıç Arslan was a thing “unique...and as far as I know previously unknown to Romans”.¹⁰⁷⁷ He stated that Kılıç Arslan, “ruling over such land and master of such many

¹⁰⁷³ For him see Cahen, *Formation*, 21-32 ; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 54-79; for special relations with Manuel Komnenos see Magdalino, *The Empire*, 95-100; Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 161.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 122, line 15; John Kinnamos, *The Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 205, line 22.

¹⁰⁷⁵ On the connection between Choniates and Kinnamos see the old (but not totally obsolete) chain of articles by Kazhdan and Ljubarskiy. Article of Stephanos Efthymiadis is a good case study. [A. Kazhdan] А.Каждан. *Никита Хониати его время*(Nicetas Choniates and his time) (Saint Petersburg: Dimitriy Bulanin, 2005) (hereafter: Kazhdan, *Nicetas Choniates*); J. Ljubarskiy, “Мануил I глазами Киннама и Хониата.” (Manuel I as viewed by Kinnamos and Choniates), *VV* 64(2005): 99-110 (hereafter: Ljubarskiy, “Manuel I”); Stephanos Efthymiadis, “Niketas Choniates and John Kinnamos: the poisoning of Stephen IV of Hungary”, *BZ* 101 (2008): 21-28.

¹⁰⁷⁶ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 204, line 22-205, line 2.

¹⁰⁷⁷ This is not the first visit of sultan to Constantinople. In 1132 sultan’s brother Arab came to the city. John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 205, lines 3-4.

nations....came to the emperor in the clothes of his servant”.¹⁰⁷⁸

The last word (οικέτης) seems to be extremely important. Becoming the member of the imperial household was in twelfth-century Byzantium equal to the submission to the state– and was usually associated with reception of new clothes.¹⁰⁷⁹ Michael Italikos labeled the uncle of Kılıç Arslan, *Shāhanshāh* of Ikonion as *oiketes* of Alexios I Komnenos. Euthymios Malakes mentioned that father of Kılıç Arslan, sultan Mas‘ūd approached John II Komnenos in the slavery fashion.¹⁰⁸⁰ Kinnamos from the very beginning depicted Kılıç Arslan not as an independent ruler, but as someone who begs for help from the emperor.

“Kılıç Arslan was all a wonder”, -- stated the writer. What follows is a rather short and compressed description of Byzantine diplomatic protocol.¹⁰⁸¹ The emperor, states Kinnamos, wanted to make a triumph, but patriarch Kosmas protested against it, stating that “impious” (ἄσεβής) should not go in procession together with the icons. It is not very clear whether Kinnamos agreed in this definition with the patriarch Kosmas: he is neutral and does not comment on the term.¹⁰⁸² What follows is the famous earthquake of 1161 with a short *prolepsis* about the battle of Myriocephalon.

Kinnamos interpreted this earthquake as a direct omen for the battle of Myriocephalon, in which he probably was a participant.¹⁰⁸³ After this *prolepsis*, Kinnamos described the promises of sultan to the emperor in great detail: Kılıç Arslan swore not to be friends with Manuel’s enemies, to give allied forces for the Byzantine army, to punish Turkomans who are making

¹⁰⁷⁸ John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 205, lines 4-5: τηλικαύτης ἡγεμονεύοντα γῆς καὶ το σού των κυριεύοντα ἔθνων βασιλεῖ Ῥωμαίων ἐν οἰκέτου παρεστάναι σχήματι.

¹⁰⁷⁹ See the subchapter “The changing of clothes” in the chapter of “Those Who Cross the Border.”

¹⁰⁸⁰ Euthymios Malakes, *Panegyric to Peace of 1161*, 168, line 3.

¹⁰⁸¹ Quarter of the palace in question was probably Mochroutes, “islamicized” pavilion in the Great palace. John Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 206, lines 6-11; See Subchapter “The Other spaces”, in Chapter 6 “Those Who Cross the Border.”

¹⁰⁸² Kinnamos used the same adjective only once and also in the description of church affairs. I think that this is a direct borrowing either from some church document or simply from the church discourse. Another explanation is that Kinnamos wanted church-related characters of his book to speak in pathetic and high language – and that’s why he used here this rare word.

¹⁰⁸³ Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 206-207.

raids against Byzantium. Nobles of Kılıç Arslan (μεγιστάνων ὅσοι αὐτῷ εἶποντο) also gave oaths to keep the promises of their sultan. Thus, description of the peace of 1161 is parallel with the description of the peace with the Serbian zupan. In both cases, Kinnamos introduced the images in his text to demonstrate the effectiveness of imperial propaganda and state.

John Kinnamos continued his description to show the misuse of power by Kılıç Arslan . Not only he did not fulfil his old promises but “he considered himself to be above all humans and was never managing his wishes”.¹⁰⁸⁴ In the narrative of Kinnamos this is a negatively connotated phrase which he used only once in the description of young dux of Cilicia, Constantine Kolomanos, who failed his mission.¹⁰⁸⁵ Both Kolomanos and Kılıç Arslan are the foreigners, who do not succeed in the space of the Deeds at this stage.

Kinnamos introduced Kılıç Arslan II once again in the description that survives in the very last folios of the manuscript, namely the description of the Byzantine-Seljuk relations between the Second Battle at Myriokephalon (1176). According to Kinnamos, Manuel (and not the sultan of Ikonion) was the initiator of the campaign. In the *Deeds*, Manuel rebuilt fortresses and sent generals to occupy several towns including Ankyra. Kılıç Arslan tries to counteract Manuel: he made a successful intrigue to take Ankyra and other towns to his side (albeit he is never called successful). The reason of Byzantine failures is not Kılıç Arslan and his actions: these are Byzantine general and allies, Michael Gabras and Shāhanshāh Danishmendid , who fail every operation they try to make. Again, this story is not about Kılıç Arslan, but about Manuel and his generals.

Who is Kılıç Arslan II for John Kinnamos? He is an impious barbarian, an unlucky ruler in the 1160s. He is the one who begs for help from mighty Manuel Komnenos and immediately used it for his own gains. Kinnamos altered his image in the 1170s. According to the *Deeds* at this time, the sultan threatened the Byzantine domains and surrounded Paphlagonia with

¹⁰⁸⁴ Kinnamos, *Deeds*, ed. Meineke, 206, lines 6-11.

¹⁰⁸⁵ The same topic, albeit in different wording, is present in the description of the first battle at Myriokephalon (1146). In both cases Kinnamos criticises “boldness” of the young men who recklessly move into fight.

intrigues, that allowed the Turks to capture Ancyra. Thus, the power of Kilic Arslan in the Deeds is growing, while the power of Manuel Komnenos is shrinking. The slow evolution of image of Kılıç Arslan II from the humble petitioner of the 1160s to the capable strategist of the 1170s constitutes the part of the main plot of the Deeds. One can hypothesize that Choniates used the change in the image of the sultan of Ikonion to prepare his reader of the 1180s to the depiction of Myriokephalon (that is missing from the extant manuscript). One can find completely different portrait of Kılıç Arslan II in the work of Niketas Choniates.

b. Kılıç Arslan : Version of Niketas Choniates

In the narrative of Choniates, Kılıç Arslan appears first time in the situation of 1161. In Kinnamos' narrative, the "Seljuk episode" follows a similar "Serbian episode": in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates the story about Byzantine-Seljuk relation is abruptly broken by a rare and direct intervention of the author. After a few sentences about father of Kılıç Arslan, sultan Mas'ūd Choniates introduces into his narrative a text, which I call "Cry for Anatolia". This is a *threnos* about the fall of the Byzantine provinces to the Seljuk hand introduced through the mouth of embedded narrator: one can call it an "embedded text".¹⁰⁸⁶

Kılıç Arslan appeared in the text immediately afterwards. This character of Choniates' *History* shares his first significant characteristic with his enemy Yağibasan, the leader of the Danishmendid conglomerate in the 1160s. Choniates labelled Yağibasan and Kılıç Arslan "foreigners and impious" and states, that Manuel Komnenos wanted two Seljuk leaders to fight each other.¹⁰⁸⁷ The word "impious" seems to be crucial. In his narrative it is used generally for bad (or very bad) characters. "Impious" is Isaac of Cyprus, who in turn was worse than Andronikos Komnenos, "impious" are unclear people who are robbing Constantinople after the capture of the city – the Latins, "bad Latins" of Choniates.¹⁰⁸⁸ Thus, from the very introduction of the character in *History*, Kılıç Arslan is labeled as "impious", bad.

¹⁰⁸⁶ For embedded text see Bal, *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 64. Choniates himself underlined the distance between the rest of the narrative and separated "Cry" by a special final sentence.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 118, line 3.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 291 line 36; 582, line 12.

What follows is a description of a failed attempt of Manuel Komnenos to subdue Kılıç Arslan into the stable peace with Byzantium in 1161. The story is roughly similar to the one in *The Deeds* of John Kinnamos. Kılıç Arslan begs for peace, Manuel wants to make a triumph but fails, Manuel entertains Kılıç Arslan at Hippodrome and receives him in a palace, Manuel gives to Kılıç Arslan reach presents, Kılıç Arslan makes promises but does not keep them.

The description of Choniates is different from the one of Kinnamos. Kinnamos underlined the temporal success of Manuel, while Choniates (writing in 1180s) from the very beginning hinted at the final failure of the pompous ceremonies. In the middle of the narrative about the reception of Kılıç Arslan Choniates all of a sudden introduces a story about certain Saracen from the court of Kılıç Arslan who decided to fly from one of the towers of Hippodrome, but fell on the ground. The whole story not only slows down the tempo of the narrative and entertains the reader, but provides some hint to the future problems of Byzantine-Seljuk relation. I think, that the episode with the Saracen is parallel with the bigger episode of negotiations between Manuel and Kılıç Arslan. Both Manuel and Saracen had their hopes but failed – one laid dead on the sand of hippodrome, while another was defeated later in Asia Minor.

The next important scene for the image of Kılıç Arslan is the scene in the palace. Manuel presented him with the silver and golden dishes and demonstrates an abundance of riches. Choniates says that sultan “went out of himself...being blinded by the desire of gain.”¹⁰⁸⁹ In this context Choniates used the term (κέρδος) suggests not a simple “wish for money”, but a desire with an obvious negative connotation. Scythians (read “Cumans”) and Latins in the later parts of *History* demonstrate readiness for κέρδος all the time.¹⁰⁹⁰ Thus, description of the greed here is another instrument for the othering of barbarian. As Alicia Simpson duly noted, Anna Komnene

¹⁰⁸⁹ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 121, line 13. ὁ δὲ ἤσθητε καὶ ἐξέστητῃ ἀπο μαγαλίας τῶν χρημάτων, τυφλῶτ τὸν πρὸς κέρδος.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Choniates demonstrates, that “bad greed” can be not only external, but internal as well: eunuch Thomas, killer and unlucky diplomat was famous for it. Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, 11, line 27; Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, 500, line 27; Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, 550, line 21. For Thomas See Efthymiadis “Poisoning of Geza of Hungary,” *BZ* 101 (2008): 21-28.

used exactly the same term to describe the awe of Bohemond.¹⁰⁹¹ Simpson suggests to read the whole scene as Choniates' phantasy that he used to highlight the virility of the barbarians. This is hardly the case here. In this scene, Choniates described sultan of Ikonion not as a brave and noble barbarian, but as a greedy barbarian. As I argued in the chapter VI, the whole scene is probably not a reproduction of the Alexiad, but a description of ritual that aimed to impress the barbarians. Both Choniates and Anna Komnene described it to strengthen their argument about the greed of Bohemond and Kılıç Arslan. thus in one sentence Niketas Choniates demonstrates that Kılıç Arslan was not a simple barbarian, but the dangerous barbarian who likes Byzantine gold.

The next paragraph dedicated to Kılıç Arslan appears in the very end of the description of meeting in Constantinople. According to Choniates, the sultan of the Turks was "maimed in the vital parts of his body."¹⁰⁹² He was limping and travelled in a special carriage, but this did not prevent him from making incursions against all his neighbors. Sultan obtained a mighty dominion and attacked Roman lands like a "swollen torrent" or "serpent."

In the narrative pause Choniates used the literary device known as *psychosomatogramma* – the description of a body of a literary character which corresponds to his "psychological" features.¹⁰⁹³ According to the traditional psychosomatogramma, tall and powerful man must be strong and valiant. Choniates turned this device upside down: he demonstrated that Kılıç Arslan despite his obvious physical disability is a very successful person. In some sense it is *antipsychosomatogramma* and it corresponds well with the other notions of *History* which is, as Anthony Kaldellis noted, the history of turning of "order" (reign of John Komnenos) into the "anti-order" (fall of Constantinople).¹⁰⁹⁴ Description of Kılıç Arslan's body (a very rare case in Byzantine literature) thus is another mark of the beginning of the end of Komnenian Byzantium,

¹⁰⁹¹ Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 261.

¹⁰⁹² Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 122, line 15-123, line 2

¹⁰⁹³ For narrative pause see Bal, *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 107

¹⁰⁹⁴ See Anthony Kaldellis, "Paradox, Reversal and Meaning of History in Niketas Choniates' *Historia*" in *Niketas Choniates: historian and a writer*, ed. S. Efthymiadis, A. Simpson (Genève: Pomme d'Or, 2009), 79-81.

which Choniates described at the events in 1161.¹⁰⁹⁵ Another omen is the “presence” of Andronikos Komnenos who invented a mockery name for the sultan: as I mentioned above Choniates joined these two by many common characteristics.

Elements of *psychosomatogramma* taken separately can also give some hint about the meaning which Choniates could put into this description. “Gulf of the sea” (κόλπος θαλάττιος) is a unique epithet used by Choniates only for Kılıç Arslan : one can suppose, that it conveys a negative meaning rather than a positive one.¹⁰⁹⁶ Other epithets provide more ground for comparison and analysis. “Swollen torrent” in *Historia* also has negative connotations: Choniates uses this term for the river Melas, which killed participants of the Second Crusade in the spring of 1149 or for the Latins, who were threatening the reign of Manuel like a swollen river.¹⁰⁹⁷ General connotations of the term are dark and bad. Next comparison – with the serpent – also does not convey any positive meaning: in one of the cases Choniates used this epithet for Andronikos Komnenos.¹⁰⁹⁸ Thus Kılıç Arslan is compared with external “bad people” (Latins) and internal “bad people” (Andronikos) in the space of one phrase.

In the episode of 1161 Niketas Choniates constructed an antagonist for the main protagonist of this part of the narrative – Manuel Komnenos. In the very beginning of the book VI of *Historia* which deals primarily with the battle of Myriokephalon Choniates again reminded the audience about difference between his protagonist and his antagonist. The two rulers differed from one another in this way: the sultan appeared always to be deliberate and to exercise forethought, reflecting carefully on his actions and cautiously winding up the skein of battle through his commanders (no one ever saw him standing in the front line of a phalanx or sharing

¹⁰⁹⁵ Actually, it is the second portrait of the Seljuk Turk in Byzantine literary discourse of the period. First one was created by Attaleiates in his *Historia*. There he described an anonymous Seljuk prince, whom Bryennios later called Chrysoskoulos (see the relevant subchapter of this chapter). It is worth to note, that both Byzantine writers described appearance of Seljuk potentates without great sympathy.

¹⁰⁹⁶ twelfth-century Byzantine writers did not like the sea very much. One can hardly find any *ekphrasis* dedicated to the sea-travel or sea-fare. Sea and it's waters were perceived rather as a space of threat and danger. Good example is a dream of Manuel Komnenos before the battle of Myriokephalon reported by Choniates. In this dream emperor was crossing the Bosphorus on a ship, when the ship suddenly sank and he hardly got to the shore. Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, 191, lines 20-24.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 65, line 1, 203, line 16.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 338, line 13.

in his soldiers' toil); the emperor, on the other hand, was courageous by nature, reckless in battle, and daring in the deeds worked by his hand.¹⁰⁹⁹

This description is “balancing” the introduction of Kılıç Arslan in the earlier part of *Historia*. Niketas Choniates described Myriokephalon as a catastrophe ordained by Lord, whose decisions are not known to humans. For Choniates, it was clear that Myriokephalon was destined to happen--this is emphasized by abundant Biblical quotations which connect the battle with episodes of Holy History.¹¹⁰⁰

The Turks of Asia Minor act as a weapon of the Lord, while Kılıç Arslan acted as their commander. However, he is totally absent from the scene (acting in a total accordance with Choniates characteristics from the background). Only once Choniates indirectly compared him with Absalom who raised an army against his father David. In some sense, Kılıç Arslan of Choniates in the scene of the battle of Myriokephalon acted similarly to the Kılıç Arslan of Kinnamos in the scene of 1161: both appear mainly to underline success or failure of protagonist, Manuel Komnenos. The real appearance of a sultan happens after the battle, when he acts as a capable leader. He appoints heads of raider armies and provoked havoc at the border.

To sum up, image of Kılıç Arslan plays an important, albeit limited role in the episode of Myriokephalon. This character is present in the beginning of the story but is literally absent from the main drama of the book VI. Kılıç Arslan is in some sense a substitute for the real Antagonist - Lord of Hosts, who punished Manuel Komnenos for his sins. The Seljuk leader is a part of “providential narrative” of *History*, albeit with some reservations: Choniates noted his strategic talent and ability to manage troops. In general, image of Kılıç Arslan at Myriokephalon looks suspiciously similar to the image of Alp Arslan at Manzikert (with which Niketas Choniates was probably familiar, in this or that way).

After the book VI Choniates “excluded” Kılıç Arslan from *Historia* for a long time. He appeared in one line in the book dedicated to the first rule of Isaak Komnenos. Choniates stated

¹⁰⁹⁹ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 179, lines 10-15.

¹¹⁰⁰ Kazhdan, “Nicetas Choniates in Byzantine literature,” 312.

that by the moment of Andronikos' death Kılıç Arslan was seventy and was an old man.¹¹⁰¹ This comparison is interesting: Andronikos Komnenos on the moment of his death was also old, but this was a different state. According to Choniates, Kılıç Arslan had “good old age”, while Andronikos was a kind of “dirty old man”. Thus, Choniates added positively connotated characteristics to the image of Kılıç Arslan and collided his with another antagonist – Andronikos Komnenos. The last characteristic of the sultan is introduced in the description of the reign of Alexios Angelos: Choniates stated that Kılıç Arslan “had very many sons”.¹¹⁰² This characteristic is reminiscent of the one, with which Choniates introduced Kılıç Arslan into the narrative and connects Kılıç Arslan with his many children with the image of his father Mas'ūd. In the further narrative he demonstrated, that these many sons brought state of Ikonion to failure.

The image of Kılıç Arslan in *Historia* is very complex. On the one hand, the sultan of Ikonion is an impious, greedy barbarian, who is acting as a dragon and a swollen torrent. His bad qualities are in connection with his outlook: Choniates depicted Kılıç Arslan as maimed man who had to use carriage to move. On the other hand, Kılıç Arslan of *Historia* is a careful and clever military leader – and as a divine instrument to punish Manuel Komnenos for his sins. Later on he is described as “old man” of Ikonion – and this characteristic again collides him with Andronikos Komnenos.

This image is tightly connected with the other images of *Historia*. First, Kılıç Arslan is a mirror image of Manuel Komnenos: Manuel is tall and brave, Kılıç Arslan is disabled and not brave, but lucky. This luck helps Kılıç Arslan. The topic of luck (as well as the topic of old age) connects Kılıç Arslan with Manuel's enemy Andronikos Komnenos. For Andronikos Komnenos Kılıç Arslan is also a mirror: they are both old, but in a different way. The key term is εὐγηρία, good old age of Kılıç Arslan : in the case of Andronikos old age is rather bad. Thus, two emperors from *Historia* are “mirrored” in Kılıç Arslan II. Choniates (who depicted Kılıç Arslan as a “bad” barbarian) demonstrates, that Seljuk sultan had the qualities which Byzantines lacked: good planning (*promêtheia*) in the case of Manuel and good old age (*eugêria*) in the case of

¹¹⁰¹ Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 367, line 19.

¹¹⁰² Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 520, line 74.

Andronikos.

Kılıç Arslan of Choniates and Kılıç Arslan of Kinnamos have some common traits. Both are barbarians, leaders of Persians who represent a threat and a challenge to the empire. The barbarity of the two characters is underlined by their inability to restrain emotions. Both Kinnamos and Choniates followed the paradigm of Komnenian ideology in which “enemies of the West” were juxtaposed to the “enemies of the East”.

The framework of ideology is the only thing which binds together characters of Kinnamos and Choniates. Kinnamos depicted Kılıç Arslan as one of the many enemies, whom Manuel Komnenos managed to defeat and win over of his sides, albeit with some setbacks. He compared him with the idealized (and anonymous) “Crusader King” Niketas Choniates (who was probably writing in late 1190s) painted different picture. For him, Kılıç Arslan was one of the main antagonists of Byzantine history: some of his characteristics (old age, disability) tie him to other antagonists in *Historia* – to Andronikos Komnenos and Enrico Dandolo. In other words, there is no evolution of the image. Kinnamos and Choniates constructed two different images of the same sultan. All what unites the two characters from the *Deeds* and the *Historia* is common rules of ideology, and rhetoric, the *topos* of barbarian greed and the name of the character: but even the spelling of the name is different.

5. Kay Khusraw I of Ikonion in different version of Niketas Choniates' History

Which was he? Mere imitation,

An empty phantom, or a joke

Alexander Pushkin. Eugene Onegin. VII.36

Niketas Choniates produced several version of his “main work”, the *History*. First draft of *History* (so-called (b)revior) created before 1204 differs in many details from the second version

(created immediately after 1204) and the third version, so-called (a)uctoris.¹¹⁰³ Main differences between versions (a) and (b) are analyzed by Alicia Simpson in an article and in a more recent book.¹¹⁰⁴ She notes, that (b)revior is more flattering towards Alexios Angelos, while (a)uctoris is more critical towards him and towards some Byzantine officials who supposedly did not help Niketas Choniates when he was in Nicaea.

Images of many characters in the last books of *Historia* are also altered. The images of the Turks are not an exception. The aim of the following subchapter is to trace the change of one image of Kay Khusraw I sultan of Ikonion (r. 1192–6, 1205–11) between versions (b) and (a) in *History* of Niketas Choniates.¹¹⁰⁵ Sultan Kay Khusraw I was son of Kılıç Arslan II of Ikonion. He was one of 13 sons of the sultan and could hope to receive some domain from his father. After the voluntary abdication of his Kılıç Arslan II in the 1190s, Kay Khusraw took over the central part of the fragmented sultanate, but lost the throne to his brother. After many wanderings in Byzantium and Cilician Armenia, Kay Khusraw attracted to his side powerful dynasties of Byzantine border lords of Maurozomoi and retuned the throne in 1205. In six years of his rule he united the sultanate, enlarged his domains. In 1211, Kay Khusraw fell in battle with his relative and emperor-in-exile Theodore Laskaris, - so Choniates probably finished the last version of *History* after the death of this sultan

a. Kay Khusraw of Ikonion: version (b)revior

Kay Khusraw appears in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates for the first time in the episode, which deals with the rebellion of Theodor Mankaphas in the Meander valley. Niketas says that

¹¹⁰³ Alicia Simpson, "Before and after 1204: the Versions of Niketas Choniates' *Historia*," *DOP* 60 (2006): 189-223.

¹¹⁰⁴ According to Simpson, alterations of "1204-versions" are rather insignificant. Main changes are between (a) and (b). I checked this point on the pieces of text with which I worked and I side myself with this opinion of a respected scholar.

¹¹⁰⁵ For the historical Kay Khusraw see Vryonis, *The Decline*, 128-130; Cahen, *Formation*, 47-48 ; Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs*, 79-84; Korobeynikov, "A Sultan in Constantinople: the Feasts of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusraw I," in *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12:19): Food and Wine in Byzantium*, ed. L. Brubaker, K. Linardou (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 93-108; see Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, vol. 2, 112-113.

Mankaphas moved to the sultan of Ikonion “whose name was Kay Khusraw”¹¹⁰⁶. This created a rather confusing situation: last time, when Niketas wrote about Ikonion and Turks, sultan was not Kay Khusraw, but Kılıç Arslan II. Later on in the narrative Niketas explained the situation: he stated that Kay Khusraw inherited his power from his father and became a sultan.¹¹⁰⁷ The very entrance of personage into the narrative is important: author marked it disruption in the internal chronology of *Historia*, an achrony.¹¹⁰⁸

Kay Khusraw did not allow Mankaphas to take Seljuk allies against Byzantium but “he allowed to those of the Turks who were greedy and hoped with their bow and quiver to take over some robbing from Romans to join him”. The term used for robbing (ληστεία) immediately suggests negative connotation – and is usually used for the “general characteristic of Turks”.

Isaac Angelos sent to Ikonion embassies and gifts. Kay Khusraw after many embassies and presents arrests Mankaphas and turns him to Constantinople. Anonymous brothers of Kay Khusraw oppose this decision: they want to make a rebellion against him, because he gave out Mankaphas to his enemy Isaac Angelos.¹¹⁰⁹ Kay Khusraw manages to calm them down by the “good-looking explanation” (εὐπρόσωπον τιθεὶς τὴν ἀπόκρισιν): he pretended to return the wanderer to his home. This is an irony: Mankaphas is not a “wanderer” (πλάνηταῶντα), but an evil man (άνόσιος). This is a good example of Byzantine irony, which Kazhdan and Ljubarskiy both liked. The diplomatic abilities of Kay Khusraw remind the reader about his father Kilic-Arslan who was also a master of diplomacy.

Kay Khusraw appears in *History* for a second time in the context of reign of Alexios III Angelos. His appearance is preceded by an summary of the reign of that emperor: “His way of life was again and again relaxed, and there was all time exaggerated pride”¹¹¹⁰ noted Choniates at the end of this phrase.

¹¹⁰⁶ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 400, line 11.

¹¹⁰⁷ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 401, line 4.

¹¹⁰⁸ For a definition of achrony see Bal, *Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 97.

¹¹⁰⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 401, lines 1-15.

¹¹¹⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 493. Lines 4-7: βίος χαλαρός καὶ ἐξημβλυμένον. αἰ φρόνημα

The pretext for the war looks strange, if not ironic.¹¹¹¹ Kay Khusraw captured two horses that sultan of Egypt (Saladin) sends to Alexios Angelos as a present. Alexios is enraged and captures all Ikonian merchants in Byzantium. Choniates continued the description of the war in an ironic mode: Kay Khusraw entered the Meander valley, but “some event prevented the barbarian from the tough robbery....not made by the human care, but if by some self-moving way or event prepared by the God”.¹¹¹² The event looks suspicious: Kay Khusraw mistook the wedding-trumpets in Antiocheia-on-Meandres for war-horns and turned his army back. Later Alexios III tries to gather an army against the Turks but without big success: in the narrative the war finished without any conclusion.

The whole episode looks like a complex parody on Byzantine-Seljuk wars in the reign of John and Manuel Komnenos. In this parody “reluctant” Alexios Angelos played role of Manuel Komnenos, while Kay Khusraw played role of his father Kılıç Arslan II. The inconclusive result in some sense equals two incompetent rulers: one is not able to gather an army, while the other runs away from wedding trumpets. Image of Kay Khusraw is not negative, but degraded in comparison with the image of his father. At the same time the episode underlined his greed and wish for robbery.

Next appearance of Kay Khusraw in the narrative is connected with the depiction of Byzantine decline. In the time of Alexios III Angelos, stated Choniates, women started to act like men. Empress Euphrosyne was the one who was an adept of magic and used statues in Constantinople to get some idea about the future. Choniates inserts a story of Kay Khusraw in Constantinople immediately after this description, introducing it with a short and vivid phrase: “Close to that time Kay Khusraw the satrap of Ikonion came to the emperor, having kurbasia over his head and covered with the cloth embroidered with gold”.¹¹¹³

The cloth is embroidered with gold, the phrase of Choniates is embroidered with meanings and allusions. At first, Kay Khusraw is no more a sultan. He is a satrap, one of the many in the Seljuk

¹¹¹¹ This episode can be an allusion to the battle of Myriokephalon, after which sultan presented to Manuel Komnenos battle-horse with silver bridle.

¹¹¹² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 494, lines 95-97

¹¹¹³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 520, lines 66-67.

domains.¹¹¹⁴ κυρβασία, *kurbasia* is the word Herodotus uses for the special hat with a sharp end. “Asian barbarians” (read Persians) together with Scythians and Saks used it with trousers.¹¹¹⁵ Byzantine dictionary of the tenth century states that is a form of tiara, e.g. the crown.¹¹¹⁶ Thus one word carries connotations of general barbarism, Persianism, Scythianism and royal power – and Choniates used it for the “Persian” prince. The *kurbasia* is the important element of the exoticism, that had clear associations with the East.¹¹¹⁷

Second element of his clothes seems to be simpler. It is ceremonial garment, embroidered with gold (στολὴν διηνητισμένην χρυσῷ). Choniates spoke about “cloth embroidered with gold” only in one case – during the battle of Myriokephalon. In the description of this battle, Choniates stated that Emperor Manuel Komnenos wore similar garment (στολὴν χρυσῷ διηνητισμένην) on the day of the battle and presented it to Hasan ibn Gabras during the piece procedure after the battle.¹¹¹⁸ This can be just a coincidence – but I interpret it rather as a conscious play on words and first *analepsis*, which Niketas Choniates used to connect situation between Kay Khusraw and Alexios Angelos with the situation between Manuel Komnenos and Kılıç Arslan II.

Choniates underlined this connection in the next lines, in which he mentioned Kılıç Arslan of Ikonion, who “had several wars with emperor Manuel and was crowned for victories during these wars”.¹¹¹⁹ Byzantine official described complex relations between the Seljuk princes finishing them with the note about the hatred of Roukrations (Rukn ed-Din, see above) towards Kay Khusraw . After this description Niketas again states that Kay Khusraw followed the example of his father and ran to Constantinople for help. “And being received in a good way he returned to Ikonion”, - states Choniates. Kay Khusraw did not manage to capture the throne of sultanate, run to Leo of Armenia and then back to Constantinople. Second reception seems to be much colder than the first one. According to Choniates, Kay Khusraw settled his relations with

¹¹¹⁴ For term “satrap” in Choniates see relevant subchapter in the chapter about power.

¹¹¹⁵ Herodotus, *Historia*, ed. Godley, 52, line 9; 378, line 18.

¹¹¹⁶ See Souda Lexicon for κυρβασία, “Entry Kappa 4721,” in *Souda Online Lexicon*, <http://www.stoa.org/> (Last Accessed 28.07.2015).

¹¹¹⁷ For the associations between “Byzantium and the East” see the important examples collected together with Alicia Walker. A. Walker, *Emperor and the World*, 83-107.

¹¹¹⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 189, line 62.

¹¹¹⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 520, lines 73-74.

the emperor and lived among the Romans “without any great reverence which he deserved by his family.”¹¹²⁰

Thus Choniates presented Kay Khusraw as a thief (horses of Isaak Angelos), mediocre warrior (case of Antioch-on-Meander), barbarian potentate who lost his throne (entrance in Constantinople), both Scythian and Persian (*kurbasia*). Description of his war with Alexios Angelos look rather ridiculous in comparison to the wars between Manuel Komnenos and Kılıç Arslan . In a sense Kay Khusraw of Niketas Choniates is both a son of his father Kılıç Arslan II and his unlucky imitator, a parody. His image is not that negative as his fathers’ or as image of Alexios Angelos: in the last phrase of (b)revior Choniates states that Kay Khusraw was living in a humble way, thus giving him chance for a future rise.

b. Kay Khusraw of Ikonion: version (a)uctoris

In version (a)uctoris Choniates changed the image of Kay Khusraw significantly. in the scene of war he added details about the theft of horses which Saladin sent to Alexios III Angelos: one of the horses damaged its leg, and Kay Khusraw wrote a special letter to the emperor, trying to calm him down and finish the event peacefully. “He put forward good-looking pretext” (εὐπρόσωπον οὕτως ἡγόρευετὸν ἀπόλογον), -- notes Choniates at this point.¹¹²¹ The word used for characteristics of the action of Kay Khusraw is exactly the same word, which Choniates used for the description of the discussion of Kay Khusraw with his brothers, when the latter handed Theodor Mankaphas over to Byzantines. I do not think that this is a mere coincidence: Niketas makes εὐπρόσωπιαa constant characteristic of Kay Khusraw, who uses this ability of his both with his family members and with Byzantines. In the version (a)uctoris Alexios III did not want to show “generosity” (μεγᾶλοψυχία). Choniates compared Alexios III with a hammering oak, who produces a lot of loud noise by his leaves but stays on place. “He moved the sword from the scabbard against himself”, -- states the historian. Thus, the sense of parody which is present in

¹¹²⁰ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 522, lines 20-25.

¹¹²¹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 493, lines 74-75.

(b)revior is underlined by the comparison with a tree and in the same time diminished with less humoristic metaphor of sword and scabbard.

The next alteration of (a)uctoris version is even more important. Choniates expands his narrative in the part, which deals with the Seljuk raid against Meander valley. He states, that the “barbarian” (e.g. Kay Khusraw) took over all the inhabitants of Karia and deserted many cities. There were five thousand prisoners: this is a rare case when Niketas gives numbers, thus underlining his good knowledge about the events. What follows is a scene, which does not have any analogues in Byzantine rhetoric of the twelfth century. According to Choniates, Seljuk sultan behaves with Byzantine prisoners in the way in which no Seljuk sultan of Byzantine literature behaved before him. Not only he allowed them to be gathered according to their family and folk, but also helped them to survive the hard winter. Choniates narrates that sultan Kay Khusraw took a tree and brought it to the camp of the prisoners so that they could make a fire. He also ordered other Persians who accompanied him to follow the lead.¹¹²²

After this demonstration of Seljuk “humanism”, Kay Khusraw of version (a)uctoris allotted to prisoners big pieces of land, significant amount of bread and special portion of seeds. He also declared that if Alexios III will make peace with him, all the prisoners will be free to go to the Roman land. In the case of the absence of the peace they will be free from taxes for five years. According to Choniates, this “benevolent news” (φιλόανθρωπον τό δε διάγγελμα) were in a sharp contrast with Byzantine situation of the time. They allowed sultan to acquire many new subjects.¹¹²³ If one is to believe Choniates, Byzantine were leaving their own land in cities and were settling in the lands of barbarians. In the later part of *Historia*, that described the events after the Fall of Constantinople, Choniates did not narrate similar episodes. While Kay Khusraw I was an active player on the political scene of the 1210s, Choniates put all the blame for the post-1204 plunder in Byzantine lands to different Byzantine rebels, including here members of Maurozomoi clan.¹¹²⁴

¹¹²² Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 494, lines 95-55

¹¹²³ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 495, lines 40-45.

¹¹²⁴ Simpson, *Niketas Choniates*, 62-64.

Choniates altered image of Kay Khusraw significantly with the help of this episode . Before this episode he was a bad barbarian, son of his father and even a parody of him. In version (a)uctoris Choniates made him as a good ruler who cares for his own subjects with his own hands and produces “benevolent” laws, which allow them to leave freely without any tax-collector on their backs. Choniates dressed Kay Khusraw as a “good barbarian” whose good laws and personal physical action remind the reader about Manuel Komnenos.¹¹²⁵ Thus, Kay Khusraw enters the pantheon of “good rulers” of Choniates. However, in the text Kay Khusraw remained “a barbarian.” Why does he need to underline the barbarity of the person who acts not like a barbarian? To answer this question one need to investigate the changes which Niketas Choniates introduced in his narrative in the part describing the visit of Kay Khusraw to Constantinople.

They are small in size, but no less important. First one deals with the religious and social identity of Kay Khusraw . Choniates adds that another potentate Rukratinos hated Kay Khusraw not only because the latter was the sultan in Ikonion but because he was “Christian by mother”.¹¹²⁶ Rukratinos demanded from Kay Khusraw abdication from power. “So much that barbarian was boasting and full of pride, being in the glory higher than clouds, as a deadly venom spreading around his deadly influence”, - noted Choniates on Roukratinos. Christianity of Kay Khusraw makes him “less barbarian” then he is.¹¹²⁷

The next addition is not an addition, but a significant alteration of the previous text. In the version (b)revior Niketas stated that Alexios III Angelos helped Kay Khusraw . In version (a)uctoris situation is reverse. “Kay Khusraw was supported very little”, -- stated Choniates – “and in mind without having the more insufficient thing, and returned home without receiving help to stand against his brother”.¹¹²⁸ Choniates adds some lines to describe the visit of Kay

¹¹²⁵ I was not able to find any direct textual evidence on the linguistic level, but the very issue of physical work for his subjects seems to me similar to the description of Manuel’s action during the siege of Claudiopolis in the end of 1170s. Manuel was sleeping on the earth under rain, Kay Khusraw was cutting trees in the cold. See Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 197-198.

¹¹²⁶ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 521, line 89.

¹¹²⁷ This in a sense justifies thesis of Kaldellis about rhetorical background of Byzantines’ attitude towards converted people. See Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Anitquity*, 57-72.

¹¹²⁸ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 521-522.

Khusraw to the ruler of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, Leo I (r. 1150-1219): according to Choniates, Leo treated exiled Seljuk ruler with honour. “For human love not only relatives and co-believers when they are in bad situation but even the foreigners, unknown persons and even to former enemies when they come and ask for benevolence,” – says Choniates.¹¹²⁹ At the end the Armenian ruler proved to be a better host than Alexios III Angelos.

Episode of Kay Khusraw visit to Constantinople in (a)uctoris is significantly altered. Kay Khusraw is no more “barbarian”, but a “Christian by mother”. Choniates transfers “the barbarian” status to his brother Rukratinos. In the same time, his status in Constantinople is changed. Choniates states that Kay Khusraw did not receive help from Alexios Angelos, but received at least some help from his former enemy Leon of Armenia. Thus, the man who created “benevolent news” (see Meander episode) received in his turn benevolence from the enemy in a hard moment.¹¹³⁰

To sum up, the Choniates of version (a) is much more favorable to Kay Khusraw than the Choniates of version (b). He remains a robber, a diplomat and an unlucky warrior, but is generous to his captives and is a Christian by mother. His image is widened, his qualities are amplified. Question remains the same: why does Choniates all of a sudden need to create a positive image of the Seljuk sultan?

The important thing is not only parody to his father Kılıç Arslan, but imitator of his father’s opponent Manuel Komnenos in his good deeds, both a robber and a humble son of the Christian woman. Niketas Choniates like operator of a magic lamp, put in front of his reader a different picture and brought forward different agendas and connections of Kay Khusraw. In version (b) Kay Khusraw is unlucky son of his father Kılıç Arslan II, a parody to his father, who is later humbled and exiled by his brother. There’s hardly anything positive about him in this

¹¹²⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 522, lines 14-19.

¹¹³⁰ (A)uctoris version of *Historia* adds two more factoids to the image of Kay Khusraw. First, Choniates informs his readers, that some time after 1204 Kay Khusraw married the daughter of Theodor Maurozomes and captured the throne of sultanate once again. Maurozomes used “Turks” in his attempt to become an emperor. Secondly, in 1207 Kay Khusraw tried to capture Attalia, but was repealed with the help of the kingdom of Cyprus.

version of *Historia*: for Choniates Kay Khusraw is just another Persian.

In version (a)uctoris Kay Khusraw is different. He is not just another Turk, but another ruler, who is able to be good with Byzantine prisoners. His actions on taxes are called “benevolent”: this is a rare compliment from Choniates. Kay Khusraw of (a)uctoris is not only a son of his father, but a son of his mother, who was a Christian. This makes him a person who receives obvious sympathy from Choniates in the moment of his exile.

Why did Choniates need to change the image so much? Answer lies in the analysis of pieces that were changed. In her article and book Alicia Simpson stated that Choniates introduced to the (a) considerable amount of *Kaiserkritik* directed against Alexios Angelos. Niketas Choniates “amplified” Kay Khusraw image *only* in the episodes connected with Alexios III. In other words, Choniates raised Kay Khusraw to the status of a “good barbarian” only to prove that Byzantine ruler, Alexios III Angelos was bad.

6. Conclusion. Function of Seljuks

The individual characters play the important role in the projected identity of the Turks in the Komnenian rhetoric. For Byzantine writers the Seljuk Turks are barbarians, but of special types. They move very fast and they are aggressive people. However, they are not half-animals like the Pechenegs or the Cumans. They can occasionally be good and they are able to make war in a special way. Byzantine writers compared them with the beast of prey which can be both hunters and hunted. According to François Hartog, this combination (hunted hunter) is characteristic of Scythians in Herodotus.¹¹³¹

The “Persification” of Seljuk Turks in the court rhetoric in the age of John Komnenos did not change their image that much. One can hardly find any “moral characteristic” or some basic action that connects Persians of Herodotus with Persians in Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Their “Persification” is more about their status as “Enemy of the East” and probably with their own self-representation, than with any moral quality. Some Byzantine writers (like Theodore Prodromos) tried to connect some characteristics of old Persians with the Seljuk

¹¹³¹ Hartog, *Mirror of Herodotus*, 40-44.

Turks, but they are exceptional. In Byzantine eyes, “Persification” of Seljuks did not made them better people.

Basic actions of Turks and Persians – fast movement and robbery – are basic actions not only of Turks but of Pechenegs and Cumans. Byzantine authors called these nations “Skythians”. What differs Turks and Persians from Scythians is their providential role. In one place Michael Attaleiates denoted Seljuks by the phrase which one can translate as “Deux ex Machina”. The Seljuk Turks in group appear on the scene of two grand narratives – *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates and *Historia* of Niketas Choniates- to punish emperors for their sins. This “messengers” in *Histories* obtain some positive qualities.

There are some trends in the development of collective and personal images in the Byzantine rhetoric of the era. First is the slow growth of the quality and quantity of information on the Seljuk Turks with the passing of time. Main features of collective image of Turks and first personal images were formulated in the end of the eleventh century. After Persification of the Turks in the panegyrics of the twelfth-century, the Byzantine literati re-invented the individual images of the Seljuks in the rhetoric of late Komnenoi and Angeloi. While the individual images are rarely present in poetry, they are abundant in prose. Two prominent writers in the second half of the twelfth century – John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates – used Turkish character (good servant Poupakas) to vocalize their *Kaiserkritik*. Choniates also demonstrated in his works that the Seljuks are able to do some good deeds. Thus, in the end of the twelfth century the Seljuk Turks became “internalized Others” of Byzantine literary discourse.

Second trend is connected with the importance of some events for the formation of images. I think, that the most important event is Manzikert (1076) – a traumatic event not only for Michael Attaleiates, but also for many Byzantine historians who later wrote about it. Manzikert in a sense defined Byzantine attitudes towards the Turks and their leaders. Incorporation of Seljuk Turks in the Byzantine army and society allowed authors to produce detailed images of Poupakas and Chrysoskoulos. Byzantine-Seljuk warfare in Anatolia gave material for images of Seljuk sultans in the works of Niketas Choniates and John Kinnamos – but shadow of Manzikert still lied over all Byzantine rhetoric, which touched this subject.

Aims of different authors influenced their Seljuk characters. Authors of laudatory narratives (e.g. Theodore Prodromos) tend to prefer “collective image” of the Turks to the individual images. In the same time authors, who criticize Byzantine government (Michael Attaleiates and Niketas Choniates) tend to use “individual characters” of Seljuks to vocalize their critic against emperors and demonstrate Byzantine vices. The Byzantine literati voiced their protests more actively in the time of troubles. In this sense, anonymous “sultan of the Persians” from *Historia* of Michael Attaleiates is similar to sultan Kay Khusraw of Ikonion in *Historia* of Niketas Choniates. Both characters act as mirrors to their Byzantine counterparts, Romanos IV Diogenes and Alexios III Angelos. Two “good sultans” demonstrate the single qualities that their Constantinopolitan counterparts lack so much, namely *philanthropia*, compassion to the humans and the ability to adapt the harsh laws to the needs of the day. In the times of troubles, Byzantine literati also demonstrate will to construct the negative characters of the Seljuk leaders. While Michael Attaleiates used *psychosomatogramma* to castigate turncoat Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos, Niketas Choniates used the same device to demonstrate the treachery of Kilic Arslan II of Ikonion, who broke many treaties he made with emperor Manuel.

Did the Byzantine image of the individual Turks affected the rhetoric of the Crusaders about Islam? It seems hardly so. The sources of the First Crusade hardly know anything about the “good sultan” Alp Arslān.¹¹³² The image of Saladin, lurking at the background of Niketas Choniates *Historia* may be the nearest Crusader analogue of the “good sultans” in the Byzantine rhetoric, but there is no evidence for any Byzantine influence.¹¹³³ The reason here lies in the educational reference. The understating of the “positive sultans” demanded certain knowledge of Byzantine culture which the leaders of the First Crusade did not want associate themselves with. This allows me to pass to more general conclusion

¹¹³² See Hagenmeyer, *Kreuzfahrerbriefe*, 144.

¹¹³³ Tolan, *Saracens*, 135-171.

CHAPTER VIII. Conclusions

The present dissertation demonstrates that the Byzantine projected identity of the Turks was a complex discursive construct that Byzantine literati used to further their social aims. These conclusions summarize the construct and chronology of the Turks' identity formation (1), results of the study of particular aspects of this identity (2), and evaluates the contribution of this dissertation to different areas of Byzantine studies (3).

1. Identity of the Turks: Emergence, Localization, Legitimization

The main conclusion of the dissertation concerns the identity of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric. The dissertation argues that this identity is not a product of any unified and consistent “scientific method” but rather the creation of individual literati who constructed the identity of the Turks in their works, often in order to reach their own aims. The projected identity of the Turks was situational, versatile and depended on the political agenda of the day.

The study allows us to formulate three chronological phases in the formation of the projected identity of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric. The first phase sees this projected identity emerging (1040-1097). In this period, Byzantine literati used military treatises, diplomatic sources and prophecies to describe the sultanate of the Great Seljuk and explain it to their audience. They constructed the image of barbaric Turks – transferred from the Magyars, who had previously been known as such – with a noble sultan of the Persians at the helm. At the end of this first stage, Byzantine sources began positioning the Turks as “the descendants of Hagar,” thus connecting them with the Arab foe of the past. Three labels helped Byzantine literati to describe

The second phase that I label the localization of the Turks, encompasses the span of time from 1097 to 1176. In this period, Byzantium waged long and inconclusive wars with the Turkic polities in Asia Minor. A group of court literati in the service of John II Komnenos (r. 1118-1146) re-identified the Turks of Asia Minor as “Persians” and transferred to them the terms

previously used to describe the Great Seljuks.

The learned men and women around the throne integrated the Turks in the discourse of the Komnenian propaganda, that developed in the 1130s. The new identification allowed the literati to depict the wars of John in Asia Minor in epic terms as a contest of the Ausonians (Romans) against the Persians (Turks). On their side, emperor and other patrons sponsored new works of court rhetoric, that glorified the victories of John II and Manuel over the Persians. The new court culture and system of patronage influenced the constructed identity of the Turks.

The change of the political balance in Asia Minor (in the 1160s) and the consequent rise of the sultanate of Ikonion (1170s) presented a new challenge to the Byzantine empire. The battle of Myriokephalon (1176) significantly reduced the scope of Byzantine actions in Asia Minor. This stimulated Byzantine *literati* to change their tone. Even panegyrists like John Kinnamos grudgingly recognized the Persians as the legitimate masters of Anatolia, while Niketas Choniates praised the sultan of Ikonion Kay Khusraw and portrayed him as a better ruler than Alexios III Angelos. I suggest calling this last period the legitimization of the Turks.

The three stages – emergence, localization, legitimization – demonstrate that the identity of the Turks was not based upon a single model but changed according to the politics of the day. The same is true for particular aspects of the identity of the Turks.

2. The Aspects of Identity

Collective labels constituted an important part of the identity of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric. This dissertation suggests that this identity was based on a system of three (not two) collective labels, which can be conveniently named the Turkic triad: Turks, Persians, and those of Hagar. One key question of this dissertation lay in the deciphering of those terms.

In his monograph on the “Byzantine Ethnography” Anthony Kaldellis argues, that the collective labels in Byzantine rhetoric represent some “ideal types” (Persians as Oriental Despots).¹¹³⁴ Rustam Shukurov, in his recent monograph, presented the various collective labels

¹¹³⁴ Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 115.

the Byzantines used for the Turks as the components of a unified two-level “scientific system.”¹¹³⁵ He also postulated that the Byzantine literati could interchangeably use one term for the other.¹¹³⁶ In other words, the different collective labels were more or less synonyms.

The dissertation suggests to read the three collective labels not as elements of a coherent and immovable system but as the separate building blocks, that Byzantine literati combined to convey their messages about certain aspects of the described group. In Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, one label was used primarily to define the elite and figures of authority (“Persians”), the second term served to define pastoralists and raiders (“Turks”), while the third term was employed to define the Turks as a part of the community of Islam (“those of Hagar” or “Hagarenes”). The combination of the terms allowed Byzantine literati to send a coded message to their audience (John Axouch was a Persian – therefore he was not a simple Turk, but a member of the elite).¹¹³⁷ Combining these collective labels differently allowed the Byzantine literati to produce nuanced images that suited the changing agenda of the day, just as a gifted pianist combines seven notes of different octaves into a symphony or potpourri.

With time passing, literati took old terms and ascribed to them a set of new meanings. This allowed Michael Attaleiates to describe the Turks as “descendants of Huns” (according to their origin), “Persians” (according to the political status of their state) and “Turks.” In the twelfth century, court literati of the Komnenoi transferred the same labels to the Turks of Asia Minor. After this semantic change, the triad remained stable until the fall of Constantinople in 1204 and probably even beyond, until 1453.

The literati of the Komnenian era used terms and labels borrowed from Herodotus, the Old Testament, military treatises and polemics against Islam, but chose them in a very particular way that always shows some interaction with the self-identification of the Turks. Very much like the images of the Darmstadt box discussed by Alicia Walker have their analogues in the imagery repertoire of medieval Iran, many images of the Seljuk authority in Byzantine rhetoric had direct

¹¹³⁵ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 43

¹¹³⁶ Note the absence of “Hagarenes” in Shukurov’s identification of the Turks. Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 36-41.

¹¹³⁷ Brand labeled him as a “Turk.” See Brand, “Turkish Element,” 5-6.

analogues in the court rhetoric and courtly art of the Great Seljuks.¹¹³⁸ The “Persification” of the Turks in Byzantine rhetoric may reflect the Persianized titles and customs of the Seljuk elite, e.g. the *topos* of drinking Turks finds direct analogues in the rituals of the Great Seljuk court.¹¹³⁹

The image of the space and place of the Turks was a constitutive element of the projected identity. John Skylitzes (or his source) constructed the story about the migration of the Turks in the spatial framework of the *Tabula Peutingeriana*. This dissertation claims that Komnenian literati never actually described a systematic reconquest of Asia Minor. In his poems, Theodore Prodromos highlighted the importance of hill-top forts, which allowed the Byzantine emperors to keep pastoralist Turks under the imperial gaze, as well as the importance of roads that facilitated fast and determined movement. After the military losses of the 1170s, the Byzantine literati changed their perspective and perceived the “Persians” as the legitimate masters of the Anatolian landscape; they did no longer hope to reclaim it for the Byzantine empire.

The same holds true for the “Islamization” of the Christian population, which is literally absent from Byzantine sources. In contrast with previous scholarship, my dissertation posits that Byzantine literati articulated the religious difference of the Turks and spoke negatively about Islam.¹¹⁴⁰ However, they did not perceive the Islam of the Turks as an intellectual challenge. Only at the end of the twelfth century, Niketas Choniates began to express anxiety about the possible forced conversion of Christians to Islam. On a more popular level, Byzantine authors did not produce new *vitae* of neo-martyrs, as was done by Spanish-Iberian authors or Palaiologan writers of the later era.¹¹⁴¹

In all aspects of the projected identity, Byzantine authors constructed an imagined border

¹¹³⁸ Walker, *Emperor and the World*, 125-132.

¹¹³⁹ For the drinking Seljuks Peacock, *The Great Seljuk Empire*, 132-134. For more detailed analysis see Chapter IV, “Seljuk Authority,” Subchapter 6 “Drinking Persians.”

¹¹⁴⁰ Shukurov downplayed the religious identity of the Turks while Kaldellis avoided discussion on the matter. Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 136; Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 53.

¹¹⁴¹ For forced conversion of Christians in the late Byzantine era see e.g. B. Bayri, “The Martyrdom of Niketas the Younger: Case of Forced Conversion Under the Seljuk Sultan Mas’ud II or Reflection of Byzantine Policy Under Andronikos II?” in *Change in the Byzantine World in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*, ed. A. Ödekan, E. Akyürek, N. Necipoğlu (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2010), 28-33; Valenzuela, “The Faith of Saracens,” 324-328.

between the two communities. In the spatial sense, the borderlands were permeable, and many travellers crossed them on their way. Groups of Byzantine travellers are in many ways similar to the ones Catherine Delano-Smyth described for medieval Europe.¹¹⁴² As Alexander Beihammer proved in a recent article, defections across the border took place in both directions.¹¹⁴³ The dissertation confirms his conclusion and argues that Byzantine literati registered many cases of defection but did not perceive it as a major problem for the Byzantine-Seljuk relations.

The dissertation established that Byzantine authors saw conversion from Islam to Christianity or from Christianity to Islam as a usual phenomenon. In their descriptions, Byzantine sources focused mainly on “elite” cases, while the situation on the ground remains obscure. The same hold true for marriages among the elite. Contrary to the emerging modern *topos* of “lustful Turks,” Byzantine epic *Digenis Akritis* depicts the Byzantine man as a rapist.

The existence of borderlands, imagined and real, stimulated the emergence of cultural brokers. The dissertation applies this term to two clans, the Gabrades and Axouch, who established themselves at the courts of Ikonion and Constantinople as cultural intermediaries who helped both emperors and sultans to negotiate matters with their counterparts on the other side of the border. The change in the power balance in the last quarter of the twelfth century led to the fall of both clans.

While the rhetorical images of cultural brokers are nearly three-dimensional, the images of individual Turks remain mostly black-and-white. The victor of Manzikert, “sultan” [Alp Arslān] was depicted as a generous and noble enemy, the lawful ruler of a migrating nation. On the contrary, the defector Erisgen-Chrysoskoulos was depicted as a deformed savage.¹¹⁴⁴ From the very beginning till the very end, the Persian and Turkic characters of Byzantine rhetoric either supported the idea of imperial dominance or pointed to Byzantine vices, or performed these two roles at the same time. A pertinent illustration of this latter point is the image of Kay

¹¹⁴² C. Delano-Smyth, “Milieus of Mobility: Itineraries, Route Maps and Road Maps,” in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, ed. J.R. Akerman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 16-69.

¹¹⁴³ Beihammer, “Defection Across the Border,” 648-651.

¹¹⁴⁴ Michael Attaleiates, *Historia*, ed. Tsolakis 110, lines 25-31; see subchapter 2 of Chapter VII, “Seljuk Kaleidoscope.”

Khusraw in Niketas Choniates' *Historia*. In the first version of the text Choniates depicted him as an unlucky barbarian, while in the second version, revised in view of the events of 1204, he is the legitimate and semi-ideal ruler of Anatolia.

All this said, it is important to define the “blind zone” in Byzantine rhetoric of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Byzantine authors rarely speak about the “lost” population of Asia Minor, namely about Christian subjects of the Turks. With a few exceptions, the same is true for ecclesiastical structures in Asia Minor.¹¹⁴⁵ However, this may be partly due to the fact that the information about the everyday life of the borderlands and of the lower strata of rural and pastoralist societies of Asia Minor is rarely present in the sources.

3. Contribution and Perspective

First, this dissertation contributes to the *methodology* of Byzantine studies. The dissertation proves that the application of the philological concept of semantic change provides valuable results in the analysis of the Byzantine “Other.” It also proves that one can cautiously use the terms of the theory of space (Foucault, Lefebvre) to describe imagined spaces in Byzantine rhetoric. The careful application of some postcolonial notions like “imperial gaze” yields promising results. The dissertation added new methodological instruments to the arsenal of Byzantine studies aiming to make its subject more understandable to scholars from other disciplines and to the general public. The same method of analysis can be productively applied to other Others of Byzantine rhetoric, e.g. the Cumans or Latins.¹¹⁴⁶

Secondly, the dissertation clarifies a number of problems in the *history* of Komnenian Byzantium. The rise of John Axouch to the position of *megas domestikos* at the court of John II Komnenos reveals a familiar logic if one takes into account that John Axouch was not a Turk but a “Persian.” This label implies that Axouch came from a noble family, either from the elite of the

¹¹⁴⁵When the uncle of Niketas Choniates, a deacon from Chonae, captured a sheep in his raid against the Turks, he knew where to steal it and where to sell it: Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, 197.

¹¹⁴⁶For Cumans see S. Kozlov, “More than Enemies The Descriptions of the Nomads in the Byzantine Literature in the Epoch of First Pecheneg Incursion,” in *Rule and Violence: On the Cultural History of Violence. From Late Antiquity to the Confessional Age*, ed. C. Dietl, T. Knapper (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 83-101.

sultanate of Nicaea or even from the very clan of Qutalmish. The association of Axouch not with “Turks” but with the Seljuk elite alters our understanding of the Komnenian elite and system of governance, which absorbed talented foreigners of high social standing. Equally, the rare articulations of the superior position of sultan Mas‘ūd of Ikonion (r. 1116-1156) hints at the subordinate status of Mas‘ūd to John II Komnenos and Manuel Komnenos. In turn, this status explains the fragile peace between Byzantium and the sultanate of Ikonion in the 1120s and deconstructs the notion of “total war” between Byzantium and the Turks of Asia Minor present in many works of Vryonis.¹¹⁴⁷ These results demonstrate the potential that the study of collective labels can bring to other sub-fields of Byzantine history, namely the history of Byzantine-Arab and Byzantine-Ottoman relations in the later age.¹¹⁴⁸

Third, the dissertation contributes to the history of Byzantine literature. It draws up a chronological scale that can be a helpful tool to date the works of Komnenian rhetoric (see the resultant, so far hypothetical re-dating of the *Alphabetical Poem* by Stephanos Physopalamites). The presence of multiple names to designate the Turks allows one to see how the Byzantines perceived the various genres at their disposal. The dissertation argues that panegyrists of Komnenian era tended to use one label (Persians), while history writers used many. Another finding specifically pertains to historiography – the fact that twelfth-century historians tended to use collective labels that they borrowed from their sources rather than the labels that were in use at the moment when a historian undertook and completed his work. It seems likely that the collective labels in Anna Komnene’s *Alexiad* reflect the labels that were used in her sources, that originated from the rule of her father, Alexios. These findings demonstrate how the analysis the “image of the Other” can contribute to the studies of Byzantine literature and enhance the understanding of history-writing.

The last remaining question is the question of audience. To whom Byzantine literati of the

¹¹⁴⁷ Vryonis described twelfth-century Anatolia as the land of everlasting military conflict. See Vryonis, *Decline*, 110-113.

¹¹⁴⁸ The Byzantine-Arab relations seem to be a promising field for studies of the image of the Other. In his recent book, John Haldon, *The Empire that Would not Die*, 120-159, esp. 143-147, investigated the identity of the border population and came close to the image of the Arabs.

Komnenian era managed to project the constructed identity of the Turks? The dissertation provides three answers for this question. The most obvious answer are the Byzantines themselves. The educated elite of Byzantium that survived the Fall of Constantinople in 1204. In the end of the twelfth century, the Byzantine literati stabilized the discourse about the Turks, forming a system of lexemes that Rustam Shukurov found in his investigation on the image of the Turks in the age of Palaiologoi.¹¹⁴⁹

The second “target audience” were the Turks themselves. After the Byzantine demise, the new masters of Anatolia from the sultanate of Ikonion employed Byzantine models in their propaganda aimed at both sides, using seals, coins and inscriptions on the walls of fortresses.¹¹⁵⁰ Like the Komnenoi before them, sultans of Ikonion invested in building activity and were patrons of art. The Byzantine culture (including here court culture) contributed to the stable and peaceful relations between Nicean Empire and Sultanate of Ikonion.

The dissertation also argues that the Byzantine image of the Turks influenced the way they were represented in Latin chronicles and letters from the era of the First Crusade.¹¹⁵¹ When the Crusaders arrived at the Bosphorus, the Byzantines informed them about on current political situation in Asia Minor, contributing to the image of Islam in the chronicles of the First Crusade and even in contemporary western documentation.¹¹⁵² The charter of Clementia of Burgundy (c. 1078-1133) in 1097 explicitly labels the oppressors of the Christian in the East Persians, the Byzantine *terminus technicus* for the sultanate of the Great Seljuks.¹¹⁵³ The First Crusade stimulated the interest towards Islam, which was satisfied by Greek interlocutors in Jerusalem

¹¹⁴⁹ Shukurov, *Byzantine Turks*, 11-42.

¹¹⁵⁰ For the exemplary (and the only) case of interpretation of coins see Oikonomides, “Les Danishmendides.”

¹¹⁵¹ Several specialists in Crusader Studies have recognized the possibility of Byzantine influence but never discussed it in detail. See Luchitskaya, *Image of the Other*, 146.

¹¹⁵² Stephen of Blois knew the difference between the Turks and Persians. The author of *Gesta Francorum* calls the master of Niceae “Suleiman, prince of the Turks.” *Gesta Francorum*, 49. Hagenmeyer, *Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 139, line 22; see also Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, 2, line 27.

¹¹⁵³ See Hagenmeyer, *Kreuzzugsbriefe*, 142, line 3: *contra perfidium Persarum*.

and elsewhere.¹¹⁵⁴ The connections, this dissertation revealed, between Latin chronicles and Byzantine rhetoric pave the way for the study of the Byzantine influence in the “western” image of the Turks that affected the Renaissance image of the “Eastern Other” and late Orientalism.¹¹⁵⁵ The study on the Byzantine influence on the Renaissance image of the Turks might become a topic for a new study. This study might use some methodologies that were successfully applied to Byzantine sources in this dissertation.

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¹¹⁵⁴ Tolan, *Saracens*, 136-137.

¹¹⁵⁵ See Toner, *Homer's Turk*, 56-59.

Appendix I. Timeline of the Byzantine-Turkic Relations

- 1020s – First raid of the Turks against Byzantine Armenia
- 1040 – ʿTughril Beg received from caliph of Baghdad status of sultan
- 1049 – The First Embassy of ʿTughril to Constantine IX Monomachos
- 1067 – The Turks break through fords of Euphrates and rob Caesaria
- 1069-1070 – Syrian campaigns of Romanos IV Diogenes
- 1071 – Manzikert. Alp Arslān is victorious over Romanos IV Diogenes
- 1072 – Death of Alp Arslān. After the short struggle, Malikshāh becomes the sultan
- 1071-1073- Civil war in “East” and migration of Balkan-Kuhiyan pastoralists to Anatolia
- 1075-1078 – Civil war in Anatolia
- 1078-1081- Reign of Nikephros Botaneiates. Balkan-Kuhiyan pastoralists migrate to Bythinia
- 1081-1118 – Reign of Alexios I Komnenos in Byzantium
- 1083 – Alexios I Komnenos establishes river Drakont in Bythinia as border between him and Sulaiman
- 1081-1085 – Norman Wars of Alexios
- 1086 – Death of Sulaiman in Syria. Embassy of Malik Shah to Alexios. Marriage Proposal.
- 1086 – 1089 Alexios I fights for Niceae with Abu’l-Quasim and for islands of Kos and Chios with Tzachas. Both are formally Byzantine subjects (*sebastos* and *proedros*). Two more pastoralist groups migrate to Anatolia
- 1090s – the successes of Malik Danishmand
- 1092 – death of Malikshāh and the decline of the Great Seljuks. Sons of Sulaiman establish sultanate in Niceae
- 1096-97- The First Crusade. Byzantines reconquer cities in Meander valley and advance in Bithynia
- 1116 – Last campaign of Alexios I Komnenos in Anatolia. Shāhanshāh of Ikonion recognized sovereignty of Alexios
- 1118-1143 – reign of John II Komnenos

- 1116-1156 – reign of Mas‘ūd in Ikonion
- 1130-1139 – conflict between Byzantium and the Danishmendides for Paphlagonia
- 1137 – first expedition of John II Komnenos to Syria and Palestine
- circa 1140 – reconstruction of Lopadion
- 1143 – the expedition of John Komnenos against Lake Pousgousa
- 1143- 1180 – reign of Manuel I Komnenos in Constantinople
- 1146 – expedition of Manuel I Komnenos against Ikonion. First Battle at Myriokephalon
- 1147 – the Second Crusade in Asia Minor. Battle at the fords of Meander. Battle at Mount Cadmus
- 1156-1192 – Reign of Kılıç Arslan II in Ikonion
- 1158 – Expedition of Manuel I Komnenos against Antioch
- 1159 – 1161 – War between Byzantium and Ikonion
- 1161 – Peace of Constantinople
- 1160-1170 – Italian Wars of Manuel
- 1169 – Byzantine-Jerusalem expedition against Egypt
- the 1160s – the demise of the Danishmendides
- 1170- 1174 – Conflict between Byzantium and Ikonion for Danishmendid Heritage. Re-fortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion
- 1176 – Second battle at Myriokephalon. The end of the Byzantine expansion in Asia Minor
- 1178- The defeat of the atabeg of Ikonion at the Meander bridge
- 1180 – death of Manuel
- 1180-1183 – reign of Alexios II Komnenos
- 1183-1185 – the reign of Andronikos and rebellion of Eastern cities.
- 1185 – Norman Invasion and the Capture of Thessaloniki
- 1185 -1195 – reign of Isaak I Angelos in Byzantium
- 1186 - Kılıç Arslan II separated his domain among the twelve sons.
- 1190 – The Third Crusade
- 1192-1196 –first reign of Kay Khusraw in Ikonion

1195-1203 – reign of Alexios III Angelos in Byzantium

1196 – 1205 – reign of Sulaiman II in Ikonion

1204 – The Fourth Crusade

1211 – Battle of Antioch-on-Meander and the death of Kay Khusraw in Ikonion

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Appendix 2. “Alphabetical Poem” by Stephanos Physopalamites

In 1910, Carl Welz published a critical edition of three poems by Theodore Prodromos and two poems that he attributed to certain Stephen Physopalamites.¹¹⁵⁶ Welz dated one of the latter works to the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081-1118). Since 1910, this attribution has remained unchallenged. In the end of the last century, Margaret Mullett agreed with Welz’ interpretation and included the poem in her analysis of Alexian rhetoric.¹¹⁵⁷ This appendix examines manuscript, contents, *topoi* of the poem and suggests to re-attribute the poem to the age of John II Komnenos (r. 1118-1146) and his son and co-emperor Alexios (henceforward Alexios the Co-Emperor).

1. The Manuscript

The Manuscript in question (Strasbourg, Ms.1.901) is one of the seven manuscripts kept in the University library in Strasbourg. According to the catalogue of the National Library of France, the manuscript contains works of John Chrysostomos as well as poems of Constantine Manasses and Theodore Prodromos.¹¹⁵⁸ All but two folios are written in the thirteenth-century minuscule handwriting, while two last folios (246r, 246v) are written in a later fifteenth-century hand.¹¹⁵⁹ Two last folios contain two poems dedicated to a certain emperor Alexios. The author of the second poem identifies himself as Stephen Physopalamites. There is no external information about the author beyond these two poems.¹¹⁶⁰

¹¹⁵⁶ Carl Welz, “Analecta Byzantina. Carmina Inedita Theodori Prodromi et Stephani Physopalamitae.” Doctoral Dissertation. Leipzig: Robert Noske, 1910: 54-55. For translation see M.J. McGann, “Alphabetikon for Alexios” in *Alexios I Komnenos*, ed. Mullett, p. I; Poet is not mentioned in M. Lauxtermann, *Byzantine Poetry*, 308.

¹¹⁵⁷ M. Mullett, “Imperial Vocabulary,” 372-373.

¹¹⁵⁸ For Chupan-Tzachas see Brand, “Turkish Element,” 2-3; Vryonis, *The Decline*, 115. For the reasons unknown, Claude Cahen omitted the whole episode. Cahen, *The Formation*, 9 -15.

¹¹⁵⁹ I thank Divna Manolova for providing the second opinion on handwriting

¹¹⁶⁰ The name is absent in Kazhdan’s list of noble families of Byzantium and in *Prosopographische*

2. The Contents: Campaigns Against the Turks

The two poems describe the exploits of a certain emperor Alexios against the enemies of the Byzantine Empire. In the first poem, these enemies are “tribe of the Persians” (sic!), while in the second text, the enemies are identified as “the Latins.” The absence of any toponyms or dates in the poems makes their dating problematic. Welz suggested that the first poem narrates the struggle of Alexios I Komnenos against Turkic potentate Tzachas of Smyrna.¹¹⁶¹ The identification is based on the fact that the author of the poem labelled the enemies of the protagonist as the “foreign-speaking tribe of the Persians.”¹¹⁶² However, this identification seems dubious. First, none of the known *literati* of the Alexian era ever labelled the Turks of Asia Minor as “Persians.” Secondly, Anna Komnene never calls Tzachas “the Persian.”

According to the *Alexiad*, Tzachas positioned himself as *protonobelissimos* loyal to Nikephoros III Botaneiates and, technically, he was a Byzantine rebel.¹¹⁶³ Another contradiction lies in the explicit mention of “enslavement” of the Persian tribe. First, amīr of Smyrna never was a slave to Alexios I Komnenos. According to the *Alexiad*, Tzachas died during a lunch with his son-in-law, sultan of Nicaea Kılıç Arslan I.¹¹⁶⁴ The latter stabbed him in the stomach at the behest of Alexios I Komnenos. Secondly, Alexios I Komnenos himself never “built trophies” against Tzachas, but acted against him by means of diplomacy. Thus, the Welz’ identification of the Persians from Poem 1 with Amir Chupan-Tzachas is problematic.

3. Lexical analysis

Margaret Mullett argued that the terms used in the poems of Stephen Physopalamites have analogues in Alexian rhetoric. However, there is another group of contemporary sources that contain words, phrases and, more importantly, *topoi* identical to those used by Physopalamites. These are the poems by Theodore Prodromos. This holds true for the first poem of the Welz’s edition. The first line of Stephen Physopalamites’ poem about the “tribe of

Lexicon des Byzantinischen Zeit. See Kazhdan, *Sotsialnyi Sostav*, 1-3

¹¹⁶¹ Welz, *Analecta*, 53-54

¹¹⁶² Stephen Physopalamites, Poem 1, line 21.

¹¹⁶³ Anna Komnene, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, *Alexiad*, 225, lines 73-74.

¹¹⁶⁴ Anna Komnene, *Alexiad*, ed. Kambylis-Reinsch, 265, lines 39-40.

Persians” labels the *laudandus* as the “lamp full of light.” This *topos* (the emperor as a source of light) has a direct analogue in the first poem of Theodore Prodromos.¹¹⁶⁵ This poem describes the coronation of co-emperor Alexios son of John II in 1120, and the image of lamp plays a pivotal role in the first dodecasyllable. The editor noted that the comparison of the emperor with a wall (line 5) is also present in the poem of Prodromos.¹¹⁶⁶ King David is mentioned in the both poems twice; as well as the final close is similar wishing the *laudandus* to rule for the long years to come.

Stephen Physopalamites, Poem I	Theodore Prodromos, Poem I
Φωτολαμπτήρ, φωσφόρε (line 1)	αἴγλη φωτός μεγάλου (line 1)
φωστῆρ τῆς οἰκουμένης (line 7)	Δύο λαμπροί φωστῆρες (line 6)
Ψάλλειν ἡμῶν σὺν τῷ Δαυίδ (line 24)	ὁ Δαυίδ ᾄδει μετὰ κιθάρας (line 56)

All three comparisons are familiar to any reader of Middle-Byzantine panegyrics. However, none of the earlier texts features this combination of *topoi* in a poetical panegyric before the twelfth century – and this allows us again to raise the question of the chronology of the poem.

4. Key to Interpretation: Purple-Born

Stephen Physopalamites calls his *laudandus* “the purple-born light.” In Byzantine rhetoric of the twelfth century, the “purple-born” implies somebody who comes from the family of the ruling emperor. The search for the term in the TLG corpus leads, again, to the poems of Theodore Prodromos.

The poem also mentions the heritage of the *laudandus*. The discourse of heritage and

¹¹⁶⁵ Theodore Prodromos, “Στίχοι εἰς τὴν στηφοφορίαν Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ,” in *Historische Gedichte*, 177-181.

¹¹⁶⁶ Welz, *Analecta*, 51, sub 5.

“purple-born” does not quite suit Alexios I Komnenos. He was not purple-born and did not inherit the throne, but captured it from Nikephoros III Botaneiates. Remarkably, no other surviving poem of the Alexian era labels him as porphyrogennetos?

5. Interpretation: Other Alexios?

Alexios I Komnenos could hardly be the *laudandus* of Stephen Physopalamites. What other person named Alexios could suit the role? According to the poem, one should look for the son of the ruling emperor who was involved personally in the campaigns against the Turks and the Latins. A possible candidate is Alexios II Komnenos (1170-1173). He was “purple-born,” but did not leave Constantinople to fight the Turks. Alexios III Angelos also did not campaign in Asia Minor. The only remaining option is the addressee of the Prodronian poem of the 1120s, the son co-emperor of John II Komnenos, Alexios. Alexios campaigned against the Turks with his father, participated in his expeditions against the Latins of Antioch and died in the late 1130s. He was probably born at Porphyra, took part in military actions and probably had an education that was proper to understand the complex panegyric. In this case, one can read *Alphabetical Poem* as a description of one of his campaigns.

The question remains, why the poem is absent from other Prodronian collections. The reason might lie in the problematic political status of the poem. After the ascension of Manuel (1148), copyists would not be interested in a panegyric dedicated to dead Alexios the Co-Emperor. However, in the fifteenth century the owner of Strasbourg, Ms.1.901 considered the work of Stephen Physopalamites good enough to put it next to three poems of Theodore Prodromos.

To conclude, I think that so-called “Alphabetical Poem” by Stephen Physopalamites does not belong to the eleventh century. It is a piece of the twelfth-century poetry that was composed by a person acquainted with the works of Theodore Prodromos. It is possible to hypothesize that the emperor mentioned in the poem is not Alexios I Komnenos, but Alexios the Co-Emperor who died before he could ascend the throne. If this is correct, then Stephen Physopalamites is not a predecessor of Theodore Prodromos, but his contemporary who was able to play with the *topoi*

of his poems.

Ἀνάκτων πάντων καύχημα, φωτολαμπτήρ, φωσφόρε,
 Βασιλευόντων πέφυκας τερπνότης, ὥραιότης,
 Γάννυται πᾶσα γὰρ <ῆ> γῇ τοῖς κατορθώμασί σου,
 Δαυὶδ γοῦν τὸν προτότατον ἐξομοιοῦν σε θέμις,
 5 Ἐλπίς ἡμῶν μετὰ θεόν, κραταίωμα καὶ τεῖχος,
 Ζάλης ἐξαίρων συνεχῶς τοὺς ὑπὸ χεῖρα πάντας,
 Ἥλιε φαινότατε, φωστήρ τῆς οἰκουμένης,
 Θάλλων ἀεὶ ταῖς ἀρεταῖς, ἐπεντροφῶν ἐν πάσαις,
 Ἰθύνων τὰ στρατόπεδα Χριστοῦ τῇ θείᾳ κλήσει,
 10 Καταπατῶν συνέτριψας τὰ στίφη τῶν βαρβάρων,
 Λεάντας τὰ φρονήματα τῆς Ἀγαθῆς τῶν ἐκγόνων,
 Μετάρσιος γεγένησο τούτους ἐξαφανίσας,
 Νίκης δὲ στήσας τρόπαιον ὡς τρισαριστεργάτης.
 Ξένους εἰργάσω τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἐκ τῆς αὐτῶν πατρίδος,
 15 Οἱ καὶ δουλεύειν ἤχθησαν τῷ κράτει σου τῷ θείῳ,
 Προὖν παραπιζόσαντες τὴν σὴν κληρονομίαν,
 Ῥήμασί τε καὶ πράγμασι καὶ τρόποις μαιφόνους.
 Σὺ δέ, κρατάρχα μέγιστε, Κομνηνανγῆς φωσφόρε,
 Τὸ βασιλέων καύχημα, στυλὲ τῆς εὐσεβείας,
 20 Ὑπαγαγὼν τῇ σπάθῃ σου καὶ τόξῳ τῷ φοικῶδει
 Φυλὴν Περσῶν ἀτίθασσον βαρβάρων ἀλλογλώσσων,
 Χαίρων ὑπὸ τὴν ζεύγλῃ σου τοῦ θειοτάτου κράτους,
 Ψάλλειν ἡμῶν σὺν τῷ Δαυὶδ παρασκευάζεις πάντας,
 Ὡ βασιλεῦ Ἀλέξιε, ζῆθι πολλοὺς εἰς χρόνους,
 25 [σκέπων ἡμῶν, περικρατῶν, ἀμφέπων, περιθάλλων,
 καθυπανοίγων δαυιλῇ τὴν πρὸς ἡμῶν σου χεῖρα].

8 ἐπεντρέφων cod. | 13 τρισαρ. στήσας cod. | 20 φοικῶδει cod.

... καὶ τῷ τεῖχος, cf. Proc

Figure 7. Poem I of Stephen Physopalamites. After Welz, *Alphabetical Poem*, 54-55.

Appendix 3. Abbreviations of Some Works of Byzantine Rhetoric

Euthymios Malakes, *Speech of 1161* – Malakes, Euthymios. “Panegyric of 1161.” In *Noctes Petropolitanae, Collection of The Byzantine Texts that Date back to the twelfth Century*. Ed. O. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 162-187. St.-Petersburg: Kirshmann, 1913.

Letter of Manuel I Komnenos to Henry II Plantagenet - Roger of Howeden. *Chronika*. Ed. W. Stubbs, 102-104. Vol. 2. London: Longman, 1868.

Michael Italikos, *Monody to Andronikos Komnenos* – Michael Italikos, *Lettres et Discours*. Ed. P. Gautier, 81-88. Paris: Institut Français d'Études Byzantines, 1972.

Narration of Letter Exchange Between Emperor Alexios I Komnenos and Patriarch Nikolas – “Διήγησις μερική τῶν ἐπιστολῶν Ἀλεξίου βασιλέως (1081—1118) καὶ Νικολάου Πατριάρχου.” In *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte der Athosklöster : Grösstentheils zum ersten Male*. Ed. Philipp Meyer, 163-185. Leipzig: Hinrich, 1894.

Poem to the Refortification of Dorylaion - Spingou, Foteigni. “A Poem on the Refortification of Dorylaion in 1175”, *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21 (2011): 137-168.

Stephen Physopalamites, *Alphabetical Poem* - Carl Welz, "Analecta Byzantina. Carmina Inedita Theodori Prodromi et Stephani Physopalamitae." Doctoral Dissertation. Leipzig: Robert Noske, 1910: 54-55.

Theophylact of Ohrid, *Speech of 1088* - Gautier, Paul. “*Le discours de Théophylacte de Bulgarie à l'autocrator Alexis Ier Gommène (6 janvier 1088)*”, *REB* 20 (1962): 93-131.

Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Capture of Kastamon* – “Εἰς τὴν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀλώσει τῆς κασταμόνου ἐπινίκιον πρόοδον τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος κυροῦ ἰωάννου τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ δεκάστιχα πολιτικά τοῖς δήμοις.” Theodor Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*. Ed. W. Hörandner, 201-209.

Vienna: Verlag des Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974

Theodore Prodromos, *Poem to the Visit of Lopadion* – “Τῷ βασιλεῖ μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐξέλευσιν ἐν τῷ Λωπαδίῳ διάγοντι.” In Theodor Prodromos, *Historische Gedichte*. Ed. W. Hörandner, 303-306 . Vienna: Verlag des Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1974.

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Anonymous “Ο τοῦ πατρὸς σύμμορφος ἀτρεκῆς Λόγος ” in S. Efstratyadis, Ἀγιορειτικῶν κωδίκων σημειώματα.” *Γρηγόριος ὁ Παλαμᾶς* 1(1917): 52-53.

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