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of Cyprus

INTERDEPARTMENTAL POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME IN
BYZANTINE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY AND
DEPARTMENT OF BYZANTINE AND MODERN GREEK STUDIES

**IMPERIAL ACCESSION CEREMONIES AND POLITICAL
IDEOLOGY IN THE LATE BYZANTINE PALAIOLOGAN COURT
(1261–1357)**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DISSERTATION

Paraskevi Sykopetritou

2019



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A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Cyprus in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Philosophy

Paraskevi Sykopetritou

May 2019

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Validation Page

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Declaration of Doctoral Candidate

The present doctoral dissertation was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Cyprus. It is a product of original work of my own, unless otherwise mentioned through references, notes, or any other statements.

Paraskevi Sykopetritou

Abstract in Greek

Τις τελευταίες δεκαετίες, οι μεσαιωνολόγοι απέδειξαν ότι οι τελετουργικές πράξεις διαδραμάτισαν βασικό ρόλο στην πολιτική ιδεολογία των προνεωτερικών κοινωνιών και με τις μελέτες τους έδωσαν ώθηση για περαιτέρω έρευνα. Στο κοινωνικοπολιτικό πλαίσιο της βυζαντινής κοινωνίας, αυτοκρατορικές τελετές, όπως για παράδειγμα στέψεις, πανηγυρικές πομπές και γάμοι, αναδείκνυαν την ιδιαίτερη φύση της αυτοκρατορικής κυριαρχίας και ήταν εκφραστές διάφορων πτυχών της πολιτικής ιδεολογίας της αυτοκρατορικής αυλής. Από την οπτική αυτή, οι τελετές της αυλής των Παλαιολόγων μπορούν να ιδωθούν ως συμβολικές πράξεις που αποσκοπούσαν στην προώθηση της αυτοκρατορικής πολιτικής σκέψης κατά την ύστερη Βυζαντινή περίοδο. Μέσα σε αυτό το ερευνητικό κλίμα, η διδακτορική μου διατριβή εξετάζει τις τελετές ανάδειξης των Παλαιολόγων ως μέσο έκφρασης της ιεραρχικής τάξης και των ιδεολογικών αξιώσεων της αυτοκρατορικής αυλής της Κωνσταντινούπολης με ιδιαίτερη έμφαση στην περίοδο 1261–1357.

Ο στόχος της παρούσας μελέτης δεν είναι μόνο να συμβάλει στην ακαδημαϊκή έρευνα που αφορά στις Βυζαντινές αυτοκρατορικές τελετές, αλλά και να διαμορφώσει μια καινούργια αντίληψη για την πολιτική ιδεολογία των Παλαιολόγων μέσα από μια νέα ανάγνωση και ερμηνεία των σχετικών ιστοριογραφικών πηγών της περιόδου. Ως θεωρητικό και μεθοδολογικό υπόβαθρο χρησιμοποιούνται σχετικά πρόσφατες ανθρωπολογικές και κοινωνιολογικές μελέτες που καταπιάνονται με το τελετουργικό στις δυτικές μεσαιωνικές κοινωνίες, ενώ ταυτόχρονα λαμβάνεται υπόψη η αφηγηματική δομή των ιστοριογραφικών κειμένων σε σχέση με τις προθέσεις του εκάστοτε Βυζαντινού ιστοριογράφου. Συγκεκριμένα, η προσέγγισή μου δια φωτίζει παραμελημένες έως τώρα θεματικές πτυχές της αυτοκρατορικής διαδοχής, των τελετουργικών τρόπων επίλυσης των ενδο-δυναστικών συγκρούσεων, καθώς επίσης και των συμβολικών προβολών της αυτοκρατορικής εξουσίας και δύναμης μέσα από τα έργα των υστεροβυζαντινών συγγραφέων Γεώργιου Ακροπολίτη, Γεώργιου Παχυμέρη, Νικηφόρου Γρηγορά, και Ιωάννη Στ' Καντακουζηνού.

Όσον αφορά στο θέμα της διατριβής, τα τελετουργικά στοιχεία που συνδέονται με την ανάδειξη των Παλαιολόγων στον αυτοκρατορικό θρόνο αναλύονται ως μέσο δημόσιας μεταβίβασης εξουσίας και νομιμοποίησης των πολιτικών δικαιωμάτων της δυναστείας σε σχέση με την κληρονομική διαδοχή. Ορισμένα τελετουργικά που τελούνταν πριν από το 1261 ή συνέχισαν να τελούνται μετά το 1354, λόγω χάρη η ανύψωση σε ασπίδα, ο όρκος πίστης και το εκκλησιαστικό χρίσμα, εξετάζονται εδώ με βάση τις ιστοριογραφικές

αφηγήσεις της υπό συζήτηση εποχής για να υπογραμμίσουν νέες τάσεις και αντιλήψεις ως προς το συμβολισμό και την ιδεολογική τους σημασία. Τέλος, στο πλαίσιο ανάλυσης των εμφύλιων πολέμων, επιχειρείται μια επισκόπηση της διπλωματικής δραστηριότητας και της τελετουργικής συμπεριφοράς των Παλαιολόγων αυτοκρατόρων που συνδέεται με το χειρισμό των ενδο-δυναστικών συγκρούσεων. Παράλληλα, αξιολογείται η αποτελεσματικότητα των πρεσβειών και των προκαθορισμένων συμφωνιών για τη θέσπιση συμμαχιών. Εν γένει, τα νέα πορίσματα συμβάλλουν στην κατανόηση ευρέως ανεξερεύνητων λειτουργικών πτυχών των τελετουργικών ανάδειξης των Παλαιολόγων αυτοκρατόρων και των ιδεολογικών τους προεκτάσεων.

Abstract in English

Over the past decades, medievalists have demonstrated that ceremonies played a key role in the political culture of pre-modern societies and their studies have provided the impetus for further research. In the sociopolitical framework of Byzantine society, imperial ceremonies such as *coronations*, *processions*, and weddings enacted the elevated nature of imperial rule and manifested different aspects of the imperial court's political ideology. In this respect, Palaiologan court ceremonies can be examined as symbolic acts that conveyed and promoted the late Byzantine imperial political thought. Within this research framework, my dissertation explores the Palaiologan imperial accession ceremonies as a symbolic expression of hierarchical order and ideological claims of the imperial court of Constantinople in the period 1261–1357.

The aim of the present study is not only to contribute to scholarly research with reference to late Byzantine imperial ceremonies, but also to provide a fresh insight into the Palaiologan political ideology through a re-reading of the relevant historiographical sources. The new methodological approach that I apply closely follows the adjacent disciplines of anthropology and sociology with regard to the ceremonies of Western medieval societies, while at the same time it takes into consideration the narrative structure of historiographical texts in relation to the Byzantine authorial intentions. In particular, my approach sheds new light to hitherto neglected thematic aspects of imperial accession, intra-dynastic conflict resolution, and symbolic projection of status and power, focusing on late Byzantine historiographical narratives, namely the works of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John VI Kantakouzenos.

As regards the topic of this dissertation, the ceremonial elements connected with the accession of the Palaiologans to the imperial throne are analyzed as a vehicle for publicly transferring power and legitimizing the rights of the dynastic succession. A number of rituals that were performed before 1261 or continued to be performed after 1354 such as the *shield-raising*, the *oath-taking* and the *anointing* ceremony are examined to show new trends and conceptions depicted in the Late Byzantine historiographical narratives. Finally, to offer an overview of the Palaiologans' diplomatic activity and ritual behavior concerning the handling of intra-dynastic conflicts, some chapters also focus on the efficiency of embassies and pre-arranged agreements in establishing alliances during the years of the civil wars. Overall, the new findings contribute to the understanding of widely unexplored functional aspects of the Palaiologan imperial accession ceremonies and their ideological ramifications.

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Paraskevi Sykopezitritou

Dedication

To my parents

Maro and Stavros

Paraskevi Sykopezitritou

Table of Contents

Validation Page.....	i
Declaration of Doctoral Candidate	ii
Abstract in Greek	iii
Abstract in English.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Dedication.....	ix
Table of Contents.....	x
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I.	15
Planning a Successful Usurpation and Founding a New Dynasty: The Case of Michael VIII Palaiologos.....	15
The Nicaean <i>Election</i> Procedure and the Foundation of the Palaiologan Dynasty	15
The <i>Shield-raising Proclamation</i> Ceremony of Michael VIII Palaiologos at Magnesia	19
Michael VIII Palaiologos’ <i>Coronations</i> and <i>Processions</i> in Nicaea and Constantinople	29
Chapter II.	46
Andronikos II Palaiologos: The Story of a Co-Emperor, His Status, and His Insignia.....	46
Andronikos II Palaiologos and the Byzantine–Hungarian Marriage Alliance	46
The <i>Coronation</i> Ceremony of Co-Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and his wife Anna of Hungary by Michael VIII Palaiologos	50
Andronikos II Palaiologos’ “Extraordinary Privileges” and <i>Insignia</i>	51
The Ideological and Political Significance of <i>Oath Taking</i> During Andronikos II Palaiologos’ <i>Coronation</i> Ceremony as Co-Emperor	58
The Death of Michael VIII Palaiologos and Andronikos II Palaiologos’ <i>Coronation</i> as Emperor	60
Chapter III.....	69

Michael IX Palaiologos and the “Conspicuous Ceremonies” for the Establishment of Co-Emperorship in the Early Palaiologan Court	69
The Palaiologan <i>Shield-raising Proclamation</i> Ceremony of the Co-Emperor.....	75
The Act of Crowning the Co-Emperor and its Ideological Significance for the Early Palaiologoi	79
The <i>Anointing</i> Ceremony as Part of the Late Byzantine Accession Rituals.....	83
The Political and Ideological Aftermath of Michael IX Palaiologos’ <i>Coronation</i> as Co-Emperor	91
Chapter IV.....	98
Andronikos III Palaiologos: The Rise of a Co-Emperor and the Fall of an Emperor in the Imperial Court of the Early Palaiologoi.....	98
Andronikos III Palaiologos and His Status as Co-Emperor	98
Negotiating Peace and Dynastic Succession	100
<i>Oath-taking</i> Ceremonies and Imperial Succession: Continuities and Changes in the Time of Andronikos III Palaiologos.....	113
The Coronation Ceremony of Andronikos III Palaiologos: A Note on the Sources	120
Andronikos III Palaiologos’ Coronation Ceremony of 1325: New Elements Documented by John VI Kantakouzenos	124
The End of the Civil War and the Dethronement of Andronikos II Palaiologos.....	135
Chapter V.....	141
The Rise of John VI Kantakouzenos to Power: Desperate Times Call for Desperate (Ceremonial) Measures.....	141
The Unconventional Proclamation of John VI Kantakouzenos in 1341	142
The Patriarchal Coronations and Anointments of John VI Kantakouzenos	152
Chapter VI.....	159
John V Palaiologos’ Accession to the Throne: The Beginning and End of the Civil War and the Political Antagonism between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi	159
The <i>Oath-taking</i> Agreements of 1347 and 1354 and the Status of John V Palaiologos in Relation to that of John VI Kantakouzenos	164

The End of the Civil War and the Predominance of John V Palaiologos.....	170
Synopsis.....	178
The Imperial Accession Ceremonies and the Late Byzantine Historians.....	178
Some Functional and Ideological Aspects of the Palaiologan Accession Ceremonies .	180
Continuities and Changes in the Late Byzantine Accession Ceremonies and Political Thought.....	186
Epilogue.....	191
Bibliography.....	192
Primary Sources.....	192
Secondary Works.....	195

Introduction

The recapture of Constantinople by the Byzantines on July 25, 1261, was an event of immense ideological significance that had a direct impact on the imperial political thought of the late Byzantine period (ca. 1261–1453). The most recent and systematic research on imperial ideology in Byzantium that covers the years between 1204 and 1330 was published in 2007 by Dimiter Angelov.¹ The sources used for this study were mainly theoretical texts on imperial rulership, such as panegyrics and other rhetorical pieces, which include both political and theological thought.² As a result, the emphasis was placed on imperial propaganda and court rhetoric. However, rhetoric is only one aspect of Byzantine political ideology. My research aims to investigate not rhetoric but the ceremonies of the Palaiologan court, mainly based on the evidence of late Byzantine historiographical texts, such as the works of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John VI Kantakouzenos. In particular, the present study constitutes an attempt to examine the Palaiologan imperial ceremonies as a symbolic language of hierarchical order and ideological claims, with a special focus on the period 1261–1357.

Over the past decades, medievalists have demonstrated that ceremonies played a key role in the political culture of pre-modern societies and set the impetus for further studies.³ A reasonable starting point in order to review the previous research and to better understand the theoretical framework related to this subject is the school of Percy Ernst Schramm, who just before World War II embarked on a comprehensive analysis of royal and imperial rituals of the Holy Roman Empire.⁴ Contemporary research acknowledges that his studies “opened new directions in the understanding of royal self-representation and ideology”⁵. The idea that a social unit creates or “forms” itself through self-presentation in ritual became influential through Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz and a generation of Anglo-American medievalists. In his famous monograph on *The King’s Two Bodies*, Kantorowicz

¹ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*.

² Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 7–8 and 15–25.

³ For a very comprehensive overview of the theoretical approaches to and studies on the western and eastern medieval ritual world, see Beihammer, “Comparative Approaches”, 1–33 and especially 1–14.

⁴ See Schramm, *Herrschaftszeichen und Staatssymbolik*.

⁵ Althoff, Fried and Geary, *Medieval Concepts*, 4 (Introduction).

demonstrates how the emperor was self-projected – and eventually acknowledged – as the authority in which both religious and civic ideological traditions were merged.⁶ This “performative” aspect of non-verbal and symbolic communication was highly influential for a younger generation of scholars. For example, the Austrian medievalist Heinrich Fichtenau, investigating the mentalities and the social orders (*Lebensordnungen*) of the tenth century, highlighted the function of symbols and ritual acts as hierarchical landmarks (*Rangordnungen*).⁷ Finally, the prominent French medievalist Jean-Claude Schmitt researching *La Raison des gestes dans l’Occident médiéval* proceeded to a systematic analysis of medieval gestures and their social use as a means of communication.⁸ In brief, over the last century medievalists and representatives of other contiguous disciplines have made much progress towards analyzing the ways of symbolic communication. Indicatively, Marco Mostert, in a collaborative contribution on *New Approaches to Medieval Communication*, which was published in 1999, listed more than 1500 publications on the subject and stressed the importance of oral, written, and, most interestingly, of “non-verbal communication” in interpreting medieval social conventions.⁹

In comparison to western medieval studies much less work has been done on Byzantium. To begin with, two famous studies of Andreas Alföldi – the first about the “design” of the monarchical ceremony at the Roman imperial court, and the second about the costume and regalia of the Roman Emperor – demonstrated that the development of ceremonies, including the imperial costume and regalia, is juxtaposed to the development of the imperial Roman court ideology.¹⁰ Another fundamental step towards this direction constitutes the study of Otto Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell*, which – as the title suggests – deals with the imperial ideal (*Kaiseridee*) of the Byzantine emperor and the ways in which this idea is represented through court ceremonies.¹¹ In this monograph, different ceremonial practices such as the *acclamations*, the performance of prostration (*proskynesis*) in front of the emperor, the participation of the

⁶ Kantorowicz, *King’s Two Bodies*.

⁷ Fichtenau, *Lebensordnungen*.

⁸ Schmitt, *Raison des gestes*.

⁹ Mostert, *Medieval Communication*, 193–318. For bibliographical references on “ritual” and “political ritual and ceremony”, see especially 225–228.

¹⁰ I am referring to Alföldi, “Ausgestaltung”, 3–118 (repr. in eadem, *Die monarchische Repräsentation*, 1–118); and Alföldi, “Insignen”, 1–171 (repr. in eadem, *Die monarchische Repräsentation*, 119–276), respectively. Both studies were largely based on numismatic evidence.

¹¹ Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*.

emperor in ecclesiastical rituals and other “standardized” practices determined by customary law and traditions, are diachronically examined. An additional example is Michael McCormick’s study entitled *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*, which describes the evolution of the Late Roman imperial *triumph* up to the Middle Byzantine period.¹² The author demonstrates how these distinct celebrations of imperial victories were favored by the political behavior of the Roman Empire and, thus, later adopted for ideological reasons by the Byzantines and various western kingdoms. Moreover, Gilbert Dagron’s book, *Empereur et prêtre: étude sur le “césaropapisme” byzantine*, illustrates the religious aspects of the imperial office in Byzantium through the use of a specific symbolic language and related actions.¹³ Finally, many studies have been written on the two famous compilations concerning ceremonies, feasts, and public manifestations of the Constantinopolitan imperial court. The first is the tenth-century treatise *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae* attributed to Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus,¹⁴ and the second one is an anonymous fourteenth-century work entitled *De Officiis*, the author of which is usually called Pseudo-Kodinos and can perhaps be identified with the imperial officer George Kodinos.¹⁵

An overall examination of previous studies dealing with the Byzantine court ceremonies suggests that the subject has only partly been investigated and in many aspects remains an open field of research. First of all, in spite of the strong interest in the relation between court ceremonies and Byzantine imperial ideology, the functional aspects of imperial ceremonies in the context of Byzantine political life are still widely unexplored. In addition, the emphasis of previous studies was mainly placed on the formation, the establishment and the evolution of those ceremonies which, on the one hand, connected Byzantium with its late antique and Roman past and, on the other hand, highlighted the Christianization of the imperial office in the so-called “Eastern Roman Empire”. Thus, researchers focused mainly on the imperial rituals of the early and middle Byzantine periods and only partly on those of the late Byzantine period. Moreover, among the studies concerning the two famous “ceremonial compilations”, most authors focus on the tenth-century *De Cerimoniis*, partly for the reasons

¹² McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.

¹³ Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*.

¹⁴ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske; For the English translation, see Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*. See also Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, ed. Vogt, with a text edition and French translation in parts.

¹⁵ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux. For an English translation and commentary, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*.

mentioned above and partly because of the “imperial status” of the author or patron of the treatise. Notably, Pseudo-Kodinos’ work largely represents the ritual practices of the fourteenth century and, therefore, is a valuable tool for scholars interested in the further development of Byzantine court ceremonies from the tenth century onwards. Finally, new methodological approaches should be employed in the investigation of Byzantine imperial ceremonies. Court rituals served multiple functions within Byzantine society and, hence, due to their complex role and nature can be better analyzed with the use of interdisciplinary approaches and methodological tools.

Over the past years, there has been an increasing interest in the study of imperial ceremonies. Not only was the tenth-century treatise of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De Cerimoniis*, translated in English for the first time, but also Pseudo-Kodinos’ treatise, *De Officiis*, dated in the fourteenth-century was recently translated and commentated by Ruth Macrides, Joe A. Munitiz and Dimitar Angelov.¹⁶ In addition, an international conference held at the University of Cyprus in 2010 was dedicated to “Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in the Medieval Mediterranean”. The organizers were interested in applying “comparative approaches to the investigation of ceremonies and rituals as symbolic languages of royalty and rulership in Byzantium, Islam, and Latin Europe with a special focus on the Medieval Mediterranean”.¹⁷ The conference proceedings have also recently been published and set the impetus for further studies on the topic.¹⁸ With my dissertation, I wish to contribute to the increasing scholarly interest concerning imperial ceremonies, in particular to the accession ceremonies of the late Byzantine period.

The new approach which I am going to apply in my thesis lies in a combination of hitherto neglected thematic aspects with a particular emphasis on late Byzantine historiographical narratives. As regards the topic, I am primarily focusing on the widely unexplored functional aspects of imperial accession ceremonies and their ideological ramifications. Undoubtedly, ceremonies as processes share many characteristics with

¹⁶ For the English translation of *De Cerimoniis* by Anne Moffatt and Maxeme Tall based on the Reiske edition (Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske), see Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*. Here is to be noted that a new edition with commentary is being prepared by Gilbert Dagron, Bernard Flusin and John Haldon. For this information cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 360, footnote 9. For Pseudo-Kodinos’ English translation and commentary, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*.

¹⁷ See the general introduction on the conference’s programme.

¹⁸ Beihammer, Constantinou, and Parani, eds., *Court Ceremonies*.

theatrical performances.¹⁹ They were carried out by persons who enacted different roles – like theatrical ones – before an audience that gathered at a specific place for a limited temporal duration.²⁰ Wolfgang Braungart defines ceremonies as symbolic actions that are aesthetically contoured and agreed upon shared values and beliefs within a specific social, political and ecclesiastical context.²¹ In the context of this study, the term “imperial ceremonies” encompasses a set of repetitive behaviors and symbolic actions that are performed publicly in order to celebrate specific imperial occasions. In the sociopolitical framework of Byzantine society, imperial ceremonies such as *coronations*, *processions*, *oath-takings*, betrothals, weddings and funerals enact “the elevated nature of imperial rule”.²² As Otto Treitinger observed, there is a clear link between ceremonies and political behavior.²³ Thus, each time imperial ceremonies were performed, they manifested different aspects of the imperial courts’ political thought.²⁴ In this respect, in the present study, Palaiologan accession ceremonies are examined as symbolic acts that conveyed and promoted the imperial political thought and ideology during the period 1261-1357.

The chosen time span, roughly between the years 1261 and 1357, encompasses events and developments of the highest significance for the character and persistence of the late Byzantine state, from both a political and an ideological point of view. As Dimiter Angelov has already observed, the political thinking during the early fourteenth century presents “a mixed picture of continuity and change”²⁵. This development was mainly a result of the

¹⁹ Turner, *The Ritual Process*. Cf. also Bell, *Ritual*, 159.

²⁰ For an overview of the development of the term ‘performance’, its meaning and use, see Velten, “Performativität”, 217–242.

²¹ Braungart, *Ritual und Literatur*, 63: „Allgemein halte ich es also für sinnvoll, auch aus Gründen der begrifflichen Abgrenzung, Rituale als die mehr oder weniger stark institutionalisierte und geregelte (soziale, politische, religiöse) Praxis zu bestimmen, in der sich eine soziale Gruppe (bzw. der einzelne als Mitglied einer sozialen Gruppe oder Gesellschaft) über gemeinsame Werte und Überzeugungen verständigt bzw. sich ihrer versichert“. On ritual theory and practice, see also Bell, *Ritual Theory*.

²² See Rapp, “Death at the Byzantine Court”, 273–274. C. Rapp emphasizes that the performance of imperial ceremonies enact “the elevated nature of imperial rule that transcends historical circumstance”. In particular, Claudia Rapp remarks that “ceremonies represent the „vollzogene und vollziehende Transzendierung” of imperial power”, a view which Otto Treitinger first expressed. See also Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 153. Cf. also the list of imperial ceremonies in *ODB*, I, 401, s. v. “ceremony (κατάστασις; τάξις)”; see also the indicative list in Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, 5. The specific ceremonies that will be examined in the present study are listed in the chapters’ description that follows.

²³ For this idea, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, especially 1–6. Otto Treitinger also pointed out that every emperor was well aware of ceremonies’ practical and political significance. See Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 3: „Selbst die allermeisten Kaiser standen unter dem Eindruck dieser Zeremonien, erkannten die in dieser Sinndarstellung liegende Erhöhung ihrer Stellung und waren sich der praktisch-politischen Bedeutung für die Festigung eines einheitlichen Reichsgedankens bewusst“.

²⁴ Byzantine political thought is defined by Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 14 as “the body of different, sometimes conflicting, ideas about imperial power and the functioning of imperial government”.

²⁵ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 417.

political realities in which the empire found itself after 1261. On July 25, 1261, Constantinople – until 1204 the uncontested center of the Byzantine Empire – was recaptured from the Franks and Venetians by a small force of Nicaean troops under Alexios Strategopoulos, who thus managed to restore the city to Byzantine rule. A few months later, Emperor Michael VIII entered the newly re-conquered capital with ritual solemnity. Michael VIII had managed to undermine the legal heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, and to establish his own dynasty. The Palaiologan dynasty reigned for almost two centuries and is the most long-lasting dynasty in Byzantine history. However, the dynasty's stability and, at the same time, the stability of the entire state was threatened by a two-phase civil war (1321–1357). The first phase (1321–1328) was a conflict between Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and his grandson Andronikos III Palaiologos. The second phase (1341–1357) was a conflict between John VI Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos, or rather between John VI Kantakouzenos and a regency council consisting of Anna of Savoy the mother of the young John V, Alexios Apokaukos and the patriarch John XIV Kalekas.²⁶ Finally, the “legal” heir to the throne, John V, removed and tonsured his opponent and usurper, John Kantakouzenos, in 1354. Incidentally, 1354 is the year in which the Ottoman Turks managed to establish themselves in a city very near Constantinople, on the European coast of the Hellespont, Gallipolis, which had recently been deserted due to an earthquake. The Ottoman Turks took advantage of a previous alliance they had made with John Kantakouzenos during the civil war in order to provide him help and support against his opponents. Notably, Donald M. Nicol comments that “the year 1354 may be taken to mark the point of no return for the Byzantine Empire”²⁷, since almost 100 years later Constantinople fell into the hands of the Ottoman Turks and the Byzantine Empire was put to an end. A few years later, in 1357, the political antagonism between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi reached its final closure with an *oath-taking* ceremony at Epibatai which marked the end of the civil war and ensured the predominance of John V. The events that marked the years between 1261 and 1357, and especially the two-phase civil war, led to the full disintegration of the already weakened state, which was territorially fragmented and had, by default, reduced economic possibilities.

²⁶ It should be noted that if these controversies remained on a personal level, then the protagonists might have managed to handle and resolve the conflict easily. However, already from the beginning, the intra-dynastic disputes involved different social, ecclesiastical and political groups, which were not willing to abandon their claims for power and authority. This made the conciliation efforts even more difficult. For this idea see Mavrommatis, *Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 58. Leonidas Mavrommatis expressed this opinion mainly regarding the controversy of the elder Andronikos II with his grandson Andronikos III. Nevertheless, the same applies in the case of John VI Kantakouzenos and the regency for John V Palaiologos.

²⁷ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 265.

In addition, the two-phase civil war caused further military distress and gave the opportunity for outsiders to intervene with the empire's inner affairs. Most importantly, however, the deep conflicts within the dynasty provoked social upheaval, which was simultaneously intertwined with the ecclesiastical and theological debates of the period.²⁸ Inevitably, this vast variety of political developments in the late Byzantine period deeply affected the political practice and ideology of the state.²⁹ This makes the examination of court ceremonies and the analysis of the symbolic meaning they include particularly complex. Thus, limiting my research to the years 1261 through 1357 allows me to address a relatively wide range of topics in detail, with emphasis on the continuities and changes that characterize the imperial accession ceremonies and political thought.

Given the above-mentioned observations, the chronological restriction of this study does not only serve practical purposes, but it is also methodologically necessary for a diachronic analysis of the functional aspects of the imperial ceremonies and their ideological implications. A number of rituals that were performed before 1261 or continued to be performed after 1357 are selectively examined in order to draw diachronic conclusions showing new trends, changes, new interpretations, as well as some new features introduced by the narratives. For example, emphasis is placed on the ceremonies and the political ideology of the imperial court of Nicaea (1204–1261), which immediately preceded the Palaiologan court. Evaluating the continuities and changes between forms of non-verbal communication and ritual patterns of the Laskarid and the Palaiologan period clarifies issues concerning the legitimization of the newly established dynasty of Michael VIII after his usurpation of the throne by eliminating the legitimate heir of the Laskarids. Moreover, the examination of “noteworthy” ritual features that present an evolution through time is not limited to the late Byzantine period but is investigated throughout the Byzantine millennium. A case in point is the *shield-raising* ceremony that took place during accession procedures. It is understood that the variation of certain acts related to the *shield-raising* ceremony indicates that this procedure was slightly modified in comparison to the old tradition. The characteristic difference is that the emperor is presented sitting on the shield while he is

²⁸ For a general assessment of the essence of the late Byzantine civil wars and their destructive consequences, see Ostrogorsky, *History*, 499–533. For further reading, see for example: Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*; Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army*; Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*; Nicol, *Church and Society*; Nicol, *The Last Centuries*.

²⁹ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, especially 417–423; Mavrommatis, *Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*; Ahrweiler, *Η Πολιτική Ιδεολογία*, 137–147.

proclaimed, and not standing upright as was customary in the past. More interestingly, the whole procedure described in the late Byzantine narratives conveys an entirely different notion compared to the one projected by the Byzantine historians of the tenth and eleventh centuries, who connected shield raising mainly with usurpations. This constitutes a notable example of how court ceremonies can reflect the changing realities of their time and provide considerable insights about late Byzantine political thought.

Regarding the methodological approach, the present study attempts to combine techniques and methods from various disciplines. Perhaps, the most important innovation lies in the adoption of methodological models that were relatively recently introduced into western medieval studies, but have not yet been adequately acknowledged or employed by Byzantinists. Namely, I am referring to the studies of Gerd Althoff and Philippe Buc.³⁰ On the one hand, Gerd Althoff examined the socio-political functions of ceremonies in the Germanic kingdom, drawing examples from the Ottonians and the Hohenstaufen dynasties (tenth to twelfth centuries). Althoff's results were influenced by the adjacent disciplines of anthropology and sociology. In his opinion, gestures and symbols were employed not only in displaying authority and power (*Kommunikation*), but also in handling conflicts and disputes (*Konfliktführung*) in pre-modern societies. As a result, ceremonies were used as a means of symbolic communication to facilitate the smooth function of medieval social structures.

On the other hand, Philippe Buc questioned many of Althoffs' assumptions, underlining the "dangers" inherent in the investigation of rituals by scholars who accept the data provided by medieval narratives as historical facts. According to Philippe Buc, there is a danger to arrive at misleading conclusions if scholarly approaches to ceremonies are merely based on anthropological methods, without taking into account the authorial intentions of texts. Therefore, he suggested examining "the typology of narrative style in relation to authorial aims"³¹. The first attempts to interpret the Byzantine texts within this framework demonstrated that they fulfilled "various functions within their cultural context of production"³². In this regard, the attempt to understand the mixture of messages within

³⁰ Althoff, *Spielregeln*; Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*.

³¹ Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual*, 4, footnote 9. Cf. Buc, "Ritual and Interpretation", 183–210.

³² Cf. Agapitos, "Literary Criticism", 77–85; for this comment, see especially 77.

these texts constitutes an effort to understand the particularity of the Byzantine culture as a whole, of which ceremonies were an integral part.

To give a recent example, in his article on diplomatic contacts between Arabs and Byzantines during the tenth and eleventh centuries, Alexander D. Beihammer observed that in Byzantium, just as in western medieval societies, official embassies made use of specific words, acts and symbols.³³ Introducing the above-mentioned results and methods of western medieval studies to a Byzantine context, Alexander D. Beihammer examined the verbal and the non-verbal means of communication between the two political entities as symbolic languages of hierarchical order and ideological claims. It is in this respect that his approach determines the one employed in the present study: imperial ceremonies – including words but also gestures and behaviors – are analyzed as means of symbolic communication between the emperor and his court, subjects and diplomatic counterparts.

The analysis of the Palaiologan accession ceremonies, namely the *proclamation*, the *acclamation*, the *shield-raising*, the *anointing*, and the *coronation*, are discussed in six main chapters:

Chapter 1 briefly presents the accession of Michael VIII Palaiologos to the throne and the ceremonies he used to lay the foundation of his new dynasty. The transfer of power from the Laskarids in Nicaea to the Palaiologans in Constantinople is traced through the practice of certain accession rituals, mainly the ceremonial *election* procedure, the *shield-raising proclamation*, and the imperial *coronation* through the hand of the patriarch. Moreover, Michael VIII's formal election as regent and his *post-coronation procession* during his first public appearance in Nicaea in 1258 are analyzed as symbolic acts that projected his political and ideological precedence over the underage heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris. This analysis allows us to explore some of the main accession ceremonies of the imperial court of Nicaea, and especially the well-established patriarchal coronation, in order to evaluate the historical and ideological basis for the foundation of the Palaiologan dynasty. When examined in the light of the historiographical sources, the set of rituals that eventually led to the establishment of this new dynasty are shown to be closely connected with the efforts of George Akropolites and his patron Michael VIII to legitimize the latter's claims after his usurpation against the legal heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris.

³³ Beihammer, "Die Kraft der Zeichen", 159–189.

Chapter 2 follows the accession story of Michael VIII's son, the co-emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos, and deals with the ceremonial elements surrounding the further establishment of the Palaiologan dynasty. The status and the imperial *insignia* of the newly appointed co-emperor are examined in connection with another ceremony, namely his marriage to Anna of Hungary. Their contextualization within the complex political and ideological circumstances under which Co-Emperor Andronikos II came to power allows us to draw conclusions about the function of such *insignia* as symbolic markers of authority and the projection of hierarchical power both within and outside of the imperial court during the early years of the Palaiologan dynasty. In the same chapter, Michael VIII's death rituals that were arranged by Andronikos II are analyzed to reveal the social and political ambience in which the young co-emperor claimed his rights to the imperial throne.

Chapter 3 evaluates Michael IX Palaiologos' elevation to co-emperor (βασιλεύς) as a triumph of Michael VIII's dynastic policy in which the grandfather (Michael VIII), the son (Andronikos II), and the grandson (Michael IX) shared the throne in this hierarchical order. It also examines a specific number of ceremonies that were employed for the establishment of co-emperorship in the early Palaiologan court and especially the *anointing* ceremony that now acquired a new meaning: to defend the hereditary right to ascend the throne. Among other things, the chapter highlights the increasingly influential role of the patriarch not only in the act of *anointing* but also in the act of crowning the Palaiologan co-emperors. Furthermore, the prominent role of the imperial dignitaries and office-holders in the accession of Michael IX is compared with their role in the accession of Michael VIII in order to comprehend their significant involvement in the political life of the early Palaiologan court, both in Nicaea and in Constantinople.

Chapter 4 focuses on the rise of Michael IX' son, Andronikos III, to power and suggests a re-reading of the well-known passage from John Kantakouzenos' historiographical text describing Andronikos III's *coronation* ceremony in 1325.³⁴ Moreover, it deals with the *oath-taking* ceremonies, a less investigated aspect of the Palaiologan accession procedure, which also played a significant role in the outbreak of intra-dynastic conflict between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. In this chapter, rituals concerning the handling and solving of intra-dynastic conflicts are also explored, with

³⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.8–204.3. This passage is well-known because of its striking similarities with the *coronation* ceremony described by Pseudo-Kodinos in terms of vocabulary and content. For example, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 31–36.

special emphasis on the identity, gender, and status of the intermediaries chosen to negotiate not only peace but also the right of Andronikos III to dynastic succession. Finally, the dethronement of the senior emperor, Andronikos II, reveals the ability of the *acclamations* to provide or deny legitimacy and grant hierarchical status within the imperial court of the Palaiologoi. Also, Emperor Andronikos II's ritualized passage from imperial to monastic status is interpreted as the final step towards the re-instatement of Andronikos III's right to rule.

Chapter 5 also deals with a conflict: not an internal one between members of the same dynasty, but a conflict between an aristocrat from outside (John Kantakouzenos) and the already established, dynastic imperial regime. The 'unconventional' *proclamation* of John Kantakouzenos in 1341 and his multiple patriarchal *coronations* and *anointments* are not only contextualized in the social, political, and ideological framework of the second civil war of 1341–1354 but are also placed within the greater context of the struggle for political power between the Byzantines and the Serbs.

Finally, chapter 6 analyzes the gradual accession of John V Palaiologos, the underage heir to the throne, as well as the political role of his mother, Empress Anna of Savoy, as his regent. It also outlines the role of *oath-taking* ceremonies in the various attempts of John V and his main political opponent, John Kantakouzenos, to resolve their differences and to re-define their status during the years of the second civil war up to its final closure in 1357. This final chapter touches on various ritualized forms of mediating and negotiating, especially diplomatic arrangements, receptions of embassies, negotiations for weddings and pre-arranged alliances between the two throne-claimant families of the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi.

A close study of these ceremonies provides further information on late Byzantine political thought since the chosen examples are connected to multiple spheres of imperial life: the public, the private, the secular and the sacred.

The Palaiologan court culture and accession ceremonies are analyzed through the point of view of the contemporary Byzantine historians. Therefore, in what follows, I will present some basic characteristics of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John Kantakouzenos, focusing primarily on the evidence of rituals and ceremonies in their work. George Akropolites' *History* is the main source for the years 1204

to 1261.³⁵ The *Megas Logothetes* in the imperial court of Nicaea, George Akropolites, was an eyewitness to most of the events that he relates and, hence, ceremonies play a significant role in his *History*. The text was written with hindsight after 1261. As a result, the detailed descriptions of ceremonies are employed by the author in order to legitimate Michael VIII's accession to the imperial throne. Largely, they serve the purposes of imperial propaganda after Michael VIII's *coup d'état*. George Pachymeres, being both a civil and an ecclesiastical official, shows a great interest in ceremonies as well. In his *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* dealing with the events in the years 1261-1308,³⁶ the author employs ceremonies in order to ascribe more accuracy to his account. George Pachymeres provides elaborate descriptions of court ceremonies, with special emphasis on the performativity and the imperial *insignia*.

Contrary to George Akropolites and George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras makes available only a small number of descriptions associated with court ceremonies. The majority of such reports in the *Roman History*³⁷ are deliberately abbreviated in comparison to the other three narrative sources. Nikephoros Gregoras has a keen interest in political developments and diplomacy but does not focus so much on court life. He places emphasis on different aspects as he has a very strong theological agenda. Nonetheless, Nikephoros Gregoras' *Roman History* is essential to the present study because it deals with the years 1204 to 1359. This means that it supplements and continues the work of George Pachymeres and thus becomes indispensable for the years after 1307 when George Pachymeres' history stops. In fact, *Roman History* is the basic source dealing with the events before 1320, when the following history, the one of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos, starts. Nikephoros Gregoras' historiographical work is also to be read parallel and in conjunction with that of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos. The two authors complement each other with regard to the information and the ideological nuances that they project. During the civil war of 1321–1328, Nicephorus Gregoras was at first partisan of the senior Emperor Andronikos II, but later he became a supporter of the young Andronikos III, who was a close friend of John Kantakouzenos. Moreover, during the conflict between John Kantakouzenos and John V

³⁵ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 3–189 (*Historiam*). For the English translation and commentary, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*. About the author and his work, see, for example, Hunger, *Literatur*, 444–447 and Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοί*, IV, 32–45, with further bibliography.

³⁶ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent (text edition with French translation and commentary). About the author and his work, see, for example, Hunger, *Literatur*, 447–453 and Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοί*, IV, 60–82, with further bibliography.

³⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen. For the German translation and commentary, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*. About the author and his work, see, for example, Hunger, *Literatur*, 453–465 and Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοί*, IV, 140–166, with further bibliography.

(1341–1347), although at the beginning Nikephoros Gregoras joined the camp of John Kantakouzenos, he soon became more involved in the socio-theological controversies of the period and turned against John Kantakouzenos, who was a supporter of the opposite party.³⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras' preference for theological matters often results in the omission or abbreviation of descriptions of imperial ceremonies. My research indicates that frequently Nikephoros Gregoras uses accession rituals to voice the author's disappointment towards imperial rulers or to foreshadow political upheaval. Contrary to Nikephoros Gregoras, John Kantakouzenos uses a plethora of detailed descriptions of ceremonies. As I elaborate in my thesis, ceremonies played a key role in John Kantakouzenos' *Histories*³⁹: ceremonies enhance the author's intentions to write a political "apologia", not only for himself, but also for his predecessor, Emperor Andronikos III. In this respect, the choice of the above-mentioned sources is dependent on the following three aspects: firstly, on the frequency and the variety of descriptions of court ceremonies in each text; secondly, on the historical, political and ideological framework to which they belonged; and finally on the functional and symbolic connotations attributed to these ceremonies by the late Byzantine authors.

Regarding the analysis of the Palaiologan court ceremonies, the most challenging task is to isolate the motives and processes that govern the articulation of Palaiologan historiographical texts. The main difficulty derives from the fact that Byzantine texts are closely connected to the concepts of "authority" and "mimesis", two concepts that do not apply to modern texts. This is primarily because "medieval texts were mostly written under the 'authority' of a patron (a ruler, a bishop, a learned friend, even a saint) and in 'imitation' of mostly older models"⁴⁰. The above peculiarity imposes the use of a variety of sources in order to draw more broad conclusions on the subject. Therefore, while the primary interest lies in historical texts, official documents, and artifacts that present alternative voices, accounts, and interpretations of imperial ceremonies will be examined as well. Evidently, Byzantine imperial documents add to our understanding of the prosopography and economy

³⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras was a leading member of the so-called anti-Palamite party and even devoted two of the 37 books of his *Roman History* to defending his beliefs against the doctrine of Gregory Palamas and Hesychasm. On Nikephoros Gregoras' involvement with this theological controversy, see *ODB*, II, 874–875, s. v. "Gregoras, Nikephoros". For Gregory Palamas, see *ODB*, III, 1560, s. v. "Palamas, Gregory". On Hesychasm, a theological dispute in the Byzantine Empire during the fourteenth century about deification and the union of the soul with God through contemplation, which soon developed political and social implications; see, for example, *ODB*, II, 923–924, s. v. "Hesychasm", with further bibliography.

³⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen. For the German translation and commentary, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*. About the author and his work, see, for example, Hunger, *Literatur*, 465–476 and Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί*, IV, 187–212, with further bibliography.

⁴⁰ Agapitos, "Literary Criticism", 77–78.

of their time, and they can also be viewed as significant historical sources.⁴¹ Archival documents often refer to events that are not elsewhere attested and may provide insights into the ideology that is reflected in them. In their multi-volume publication of summaries of imperial documents (*Regesten*), Franz Dölger and Peter Wirth gather information on various documents related to both administrative issues and diplomatic contacts.⁴² A comparative examination of such documents can verify the evidence given by the historical accounts and complement our knowledge on specific ceremonial events or activities. Supplementary information about the ideological and political context of imperial ceremonies offers the archaeological evidence and, in particular, the forms of self-representation found in miniatures, frescos, coins, and seals.⁴³ Finally, clothing and lighting are considered essential elements of ritual performance and, therefore, are also explored so as to provide an informed perspective on this issue.⁴⁴

In conclusion, the present study constitutes the first systematic attempt to investigate the widely unexplored practical aspects of imperial accession ceremonies in the framework of late Byzantine political life and, in particular, based on the evidence of late Byzantine historiographical texts, to examine the Palaiologan court rituals as symbolic languages of self-representation projecting hierarchical order and ideological claims. My thesis includes interdisciplinary, comparative approaches and brings together specific methodologies for the study of imperial ceremonies and the political ideology of the Palaiologan court. As a whole, the present study endeavors to contribute to the increasing scholarly interest with reference to imperial ceremonies, and in particular, those of the late Byzantine period through re-reading of the relevant sources.

⁴¹ On state of research on Byzantine diplomacies up to 2006, see Beihammer, “Byzantinische Diplomatie”, 173–187.

⁴² For the imperial documents of the period under consideration, see *Regesten*, eds. Dölger and Wirth, especially vols. 3–5.

⁴³ For example, a recent collection of papers on the late Byzantine art and culture is to be found in Brooks, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*, which was published in conjunction with the homonymous exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2004. See also Evans, *Byzantium: Faith and Power*. An interesting perspective on the late Byzantine art and diplomacy is offered by Hilsdale, *Byzantine Art and Diplomacy*. On the artistic culture of the late Byzantine elite through the evidence of epigrams displayed on Byzantine artifacts and buildings, see Drpić, *Epigram*. About the coins of the late Byzantine period, see Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, vol. 5. For the most recent catalogue of Palaiologan imperial seals, see Nesbitt and Morrisson, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals*, vol. 6; especially for the seals after the Palaiologan restoration, see 194–200.

⁴⁴ For example, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*; Parani, “Cultural Identity and Dress”, 95–135; Parani and Bouras, *Lighting in Early Byzantium*.

Chapter I.

Planning a Successful Usurpation and Founding a New Dynasty: The Case of Michael VIII Palaiologos

After the emperor of Nicaea Theodore II Laskaris (r. 1254–1258) died in August 1258, Michael VIII Palaiologos (r. 1258–1282) skillfully managed to assume the imperial title by undermining the underage heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris (r. August 1258). Michael VIII had to face the stigma of usurpation and, therefore, he aspired to use the means and the ends of imperial propaganda to legitimize his authority and proclaim himself as a capable, God-chosen ruler. The imperial propaganda and ideology during the early stages of Michael VIII's rise to power can be traced through the examination and analysis of the ceremonies connected with his accession to the imperial throne. In the following, I will use the information provided by George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, and Nikephoros Gregoras to discuss the multifaceted functional and ideological aspects of Michael VIII's imperial accession ceremonies. Special attention is given to his ceremonial *election* as regent, his *shield-raising proclamation* and his two *coronations* by the hand of the patriarch.

The Nicaean *Election* Procedure and the Foundation of the Palaiologan Dynasty

Soon after the death of Theodore II Laskaris the Mouzalon brothers, namely the legally assigned guardians of the underage heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, were gruesomely assassinated.⁴⁵ George Pachymeres insinuates that Michael VIII was among the main instigators of the assassination, something that, if it were indeed true, George Akropolites would never dare to suggest while narrating the events that led to his patron's climb to power.⁴⁶ The first official ceremonial act that let Michael VIII increase his political influence and, consequently, assume power in the state of Nicaea was his *election* as the new regent of the underage John IV Laskaris. For the appointment of Michael VIII, two assemblies were

⁴⁵ On the assassination of the Mouzalon brothers through the eyes of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 154.10–156.18; Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 79.11–89.26; and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 65.9–66.11. For the events and a commentary on the sources, see Gardner, *Lascarids*, 232–236 and Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 340.

⁴⁶ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 81.4–89.26. The sources also refer to the involvement of the army in the assassination of the Mouzalon brothers and it seems that Michael VIII was actually in charge of the foreigners in the army. See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 340.

convened in Magnesia and are attested by all the main Byzantine historians of the period, George Akropolites, Nikephoros Gregoras, and George Pachymeres.⁴⁷ Although George Pachymeres was an eyewitness to many of the events that he describes and George Akropolites was absent from Asia Minor, there are many other reasons why their narratives about the ceremonial procedure for the *election* of Michael VIII differ.⁴⁸ In my view, a lot has to do with George Akropolites' intention to project the idea of Michael VIII as an ideal ruler and, above all, to justify his rise to power. For example, while George Pachymeres attests to the claimant's lengthy preparations for the throne by buying support or silencing the opposition, George Akropolites presents Michael VIII as a generous leader and a 'reluctant emperor'.⁴⁹ Actually, as Ruth Macrides has already pointed out, George Akropolites is the only author among the three who presents Michael VIII as a reluctant emperor, who had to be convinced against his will to become the new regent and supervisor of political matters.⁵⁰ The Byzantine author also omits to mention that Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos was not present during the first assembly that appointed Michael VIII as the guardian of John IV Laskaris and promoted him to the office of *mezas doux*, something that George Pachymeres attests to in great detail.⁵¹ Merging the decisions of the two assemblies into one and avoiding referring to the absence and initial hesitation of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos to accept Michael VIII as the new regent was a clever literary construction of George Akropolites. This allowed the author to project the idea of a smooth transition and to ascribe legitimacy and prestige to the final decision of the electoral board. In the historiographical work of George Akropolites, Michael VIII is shown as a ruler chosen to rule by divine providence in accordance with the guidelines of the epideictic rhetoric.⁵² More importantly, however, he is introduced as an ideal emperor selected by popular consent.

⁴⁷ See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 156.19–159.7; Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 91.17–97.9 and I, 129.1–135.20; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 64.15–65.8 and I, 66.11–71.9. To be more precise, George Akropolites omits the first assembly which met at Magnesia in August 1258. See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344.

⁴⁸ For this comment cf. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 345.

⁴⁹ Cf. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 75.

⁵⁰ See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 345 and 346, note 11. George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.22–26 and 159.20–21.

⁵¹ Cf. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 345, note 1. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 95.14–97.20 and especially I, 95.14–19. For Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos, see *ODB*, I, 187 and *PLP* 1694: *Ἀυτορραϊανὸς Ἀρσένιος* (Autoreianos Arsenios), with further bibliography.

⁵² About the image of Michael VIII in the historiographical work of George Akropolites, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 61–64. For the long tradition of the epideictic rhetoric, see Menander, eds. Russell and Wilson, especially 'Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν', 76–224. On the idea that the new emperor ascends the throne by divine providence, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 34–43 and cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 16–21, 23. About the idea of the God-chosen emperor in the years of Theodore I Laskaris, see Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*,

According to George Akropolites, the most prominent men of the Roman people (Ῥωμαϊκοῦ πλήθους), those in office and the army, together with the ecclesiastical authorities deliberated over whether Michael VIII was the most suitable candidate to assume the regency of the underage John IV Laskaris and take over the reins of the state.⁵³ However, as the author maintains, “it was necessary that questions be put to the people [λαόν], so that they might have from them proof of their wish”.⁵⁴ George Akropolites describes this ideal ritual process of Michael VIII’s *election* and classifies the electoral board of the population (λαόν) based on their race (γένος, ethnicity) and rank (τάξις).⁵⁵ The Roman inhabitants of Nicaea were asked first and everyone, unanimously “as if with one voice” (ἀπαξάπαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ὡς ἕξ ἐνὸς στόματος), chose Michael VIII to be the political caretaker of the state and their ruler.⁵⁶

The second part of the electoral procedure included an inquiry in relation to the view of the Latins on Michael VIII. George Akropolites stresses that they did not need much time to give an answer and they replied with no hesitation that they also wished Michael VIII to become the leader of all.⁵⁷ Interestingly, as Ruth Macrides observes, Michael VIII – being then *megas kontostablos* – had under his command in the army a significant number of

296–340. For the evolution of this idea during the Palaiologan period and its association with the theological and socio-political disputes, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 384–392.

⁵³ See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 156.19–157.2: (156) Οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ῥωμαϊκοῦ πλήθους οἱ τε τῶν ἐν τέλει καὶ οἱ τῶν στρατιωτικῶν ταγμάτων, σὺν τοῖς καὶ οἱ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καταλόγου – συμπαρῆν γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης καὶ τῶν ἐπιφανεστέρων ἀρχιερέων τινές – σκέψιν ἐπεποιήντο περὶ τῶν κοινῶν πραγμάτων, τίς ἂν εἴη ἄξιος (157) τὴν τούτων οἰκονομίαν λαβεῖν καὶ κρειτόνως τῶν ἄλλων διευθετήσασθαι; and George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.5–8: Οὕτω μὲν οὖν τῶν πραγμάτων δυσχερῶς εἶχεν ἢ τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀρχή, ἐζήτουν δὲ ἄρα οἱ προύχοντες τὸν καλῶς αὐτῶν προστησόμενον. ζυμπάντων δὲ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ πρὸς τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαῖλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] ἀφεώρων, οὗ πολλάκις ὁ λόγος ἀπεμνημόνευσεν. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 343 and 344, respectively.

⁵⁴ See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.9–11: ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔδει καὶ ἐρωτήσεις γενέσθαι πρὸς τὸν λαόν, ἵνα σχοῖεν σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀπόπειραν τῆς βουλήσεως καὶ γνοῖεν ἐκάστου πρὸς ὃν ἔχει οὗτος ροπήν. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344.

⁵⁵ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.9–12, and especially I, 158.11–12: αἱ πεύσεις κατὰ γένη καὶ κατὰ τάξεις ἐγένοντο. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344. It should be noted that Aikaterini Christophilopoulou thinks that, in this context, the word ‘λαός’ (see I, 158.9; cf. the text in the footnote immediately above) should probably be translated as ‘army’. See Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 181. About the army as part of the Nicaean population in the work of George Akropolites, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 97–99.

⁵⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.12–15: καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἠρωτοῦντο Ῥωμαῖοι, καὶ ἀπαξάπαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ὡς ἕξ ἐνὸς στόματος τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαῖλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] ἐθέλειν εἶναι ἔλεγον τῶν πραγμάτων κηδεμόνα καὶ φροντιστήν, καὶ ὡς οἰκεῖον δεσπότην ἔχειν αὐτόν. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344.

⁵⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.15–18: καὶ τὸ Λατινικὸν δὲ φῶλον ἐρωτηθὲν οὐ πολλῆς ἐδεθήθη τῆς ἀποκρίσεως, ἀλλ’ εὐθὺς τὸν Κομνηνὸν Μιχαῖλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] ἐζήτουν καὶ οὗτοι ἀρχηγὸν ἀπάντων τελεῖν. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344.

Latins.⁵⁸ Knowing this piece of information, George Akropolites' comment about the rushed response of the Latins becomes more thought-provoking. On the one hand, it might be perceived as if their decision was made exclusively because of the superior-subordinate relationship they had with Michael VIII. On the other hand, it might be indicative of the fact that the Latins witnessed at first hand Michael VIII's leadership capabilities and considered him truly as the ideal leader. Whichever is the case, George Akropolites probably aimed to imply the latter and reinforces this idea by adding to the electoral population the Cumans (Scythians) as well.

In the text, the ethnic groups of Latins and Cumans are treated as separate and distinct contingents in the army.⁵⁹ Cumans – or 'Scythians' as George Akropolites consistently calls them – were a nomadic Eurasian people who lived north of the Danube, and in 1241 a great number of them were reportedly settled in Thrace and Asia Minor under the reign of John III Vatatzes.⁶⁰ Based on George Akropolites' *History*, Cumans (Σκυθικὸν γένος) affirmed that no one other than Michael VIII would be better for this task.⁶¹ Having said that, the author takes the opportunity to express his positive disposition towards Michael VIII and to praise such a prudent decision by the Cumans, who replied "not in a barbarian tongue, but in Greek and intelligibly".⁶² George Akropolites' choice of words here is interesting since we know from his text that this distinct ethnic group, whose members were treated as a separate unit in the army, had been Hellenized by 1258.⁶³ At this crucial political moment, they are presented as an integral part of the Nicaean decision-making population, who replied in Greek and in a way that complied with the general feeling of Roman citizens about Michael VIII being the ideal candidate to govern the state.

⁵⁸ See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 346, note 9. Cf. also Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 98: "The Latins continued to play a large role in the armies of the Nicaean emperors. In 1253 and in 1258 they were asked to give their opinion on Michael Palaiologos". See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 99.3–6 and I 158.15–18.

⁵⁹ See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 98.

⁶⁰ Macrides, *George Akropolites*, p. 135, note 8 and p. 217, note 5. For the seminomadic tribes of Cumans, see *ODB*, I, 563–564, s. v. "Cumans".

⁶¹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.18–21: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ Σκυθικὸν ἤροντο γένος, οὐ βαρβαρικῶς ἀπεκρίνοντο ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἑλληνικῶς τε καὶ συνετῶς, καὶ οὐ κρείττονα ἄλλον εἰδέναι δυσχυρίζοντο εἰς τὸ ἄρχειν ἀπάντων τοῦ Κομνηνοῦ Μιχαήλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos]. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344. The author uses the word 'ethnos' (γένος, race) to refer to both pagan and Christian people, namely the Bulgarians, Tatars, Latins, Cumans, Turcomans, Albanians, and Romans. For this observation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, p. 106, note 3 and cf. also p. 53.

⁶² George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.19–20: οὐ βαρβαρικῶς ἀπεκρίνοντο ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἑλληνικῶς τε καὶ συνετῶς. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 344.

⁶³ See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 65.14–66.12 and cf. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 98; 217, note 5; and 346 note 10.

In terms of political ideology, the description of George Akropolites and his hierarchical distinction of the electors according to their rank and ethnicity are unique of their kind.⁶⁴ It seems that it was not only the civil and ecclesiastical elite of Nicaea but also the army starting with the Romans - Byzantines, then the Latins, and finally the Cumans, who had a critical political influence during that period in Nicaea owing to the military role they were expected to play in the recapture of Constantinople. Through his description, George Akropolites underlined their political significance as a robust institutional factor in the installation of the usurper Michael VIII and his dynasty. At the same time, he managed to portray Michael VIII as a capable and beloved ruler in the eyes of his readers, since he appears to have enjoyed the approval of the majority of the electoral board.

The Shield-raising Proclamation Ceremony of Michael VIII Palaiologos at Magnesia

The *proclamation* of Michael VIII as emperor followed soon after his elevation to the rank of a *despot*.⁶⁵ The *proclamation* ceremony took place at Magnesia. The sources agree that during the ceremony, high-ranking officials placed Michael VIII on a shield and raised him with *acclamations*. George Akropolites states that Michael VIII was placed on a shield by the best of those in office (*τῶν ἐν τέλει*) and the army (*τῶν στρατιωτῶν*).⁶⁶ George Pachymeres, however, only refers to the presence of the magnates (*μεγιστᾶνες*) in the ceremony.⁶⁷ Interestingly, George Pachymeres' *History* is the only source attesting the involvement of members of the church in the ceremony, namely of high priests (*ἀρχιερέων*).⁶⁸ Furthermore, Nikephoros Gregoras refers to the participation of the most eminent citizens, both in status (office) and in origin (*οἱ δόξη καὶ γένει προὔχοντες*).⁶⁹ Contrary to George Akropolites, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras do not refer

⁶⁴ Cf. George Pachymeres, who does not provide any equivalent hierarchical classification of the electoral population: Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 95.21 (ἡ κοινὴ βουλή κατανατᾶ).

⁶⁵ Michael VIII received the title of *despotes* in September 1258. For the dating of Michael VIII's promotion to the rank of *despot*, see Failler, "Chronologie I", 27–30. For the title of *despot* see in *ODB*, I, 614, s. v. "despotes"; and cf. Guiland, "Le Despote", 52–89 (repr. in eadem, *Recherches*, II, 1–24). See also Dölger, *Schatzkammern*, I (*Textband*) and especially the chapter 'Die Despotenurkunde', 76–89, with an introduction (76–82) and the relevant documents (82–83, no. 28; 83–84, no. 29; 84–86, no. 30; 86–87, no. 31; and 87–89, no. 32). For changes in the hierarchy of the imperial court in the state of Nicaea and the title of 'despot', see Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 63–65. On the promotion of a despot in the late Byzantine period, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 274.2–275.5. See also Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 245 and 247 (English translation), and 429–432 (commentary).

⁶⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.13–14.

⁶⁷ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.15.

⁶⁸ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.14.

⁶⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78.3.

to the participation of the army during the *proclamation* ceremony as one would probably expect, because the *shield-raising* ceremony has military origins – unless the different terms for the imperial elite (*μεγιστᾶνες* or *οἱ δόζη καὶ γένει προὔχοντες*) have a different meaning or describe the same group of people.⁷⁰

Indeed, *shield-raising* is a military ceremony reflecting an old Germanic custom first associated with Byzantium in A.D. 361, when western Roman troops raised Flavius Claudius Julianus, better known as Julian the Apostate, on a shield and proclaimed him emperor.⁷¹ While this ceremony was initially attached to usurpations, it gradually gained general acceptance and regularly featured in the official accession ceremony until the beginning of the seventh century. From this point onwards *shield-raising* is mentioned only sporadically in the sources.⁷² In the following paragraphs, we will explore the ideological motives that influenced the *shield-raising* ceremony's popularity during the thirteenth century, and the reasons why it continued to be popular until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.⁷³ The first explicit testimony concerning *shield-raising* during the thirteenth century is to be found in George Akropolites' *History* in a passage describing Theodore II Laskaris' *proclamation* in 1254 at Nymphaion. According to George Akropolites, after the death of Theodore II's father, John III Doukas Vatatzes (1221-1254), Theodore II was seated on the shield, as is the custom, and acclaimed by all as emperor (*αὐτοκράτωρ*).⁷⁴

The use of the *shield-raising* ceremony under the Laskarids in Nicaea is marked by a distinct change in the way of its performance: the emperor is presented sitting on the shield while he is acclaimed, and not standing upright as was customary in the past. For example, George Akropolites employs the verb *καθεσθεις* to describe the way of placing Theodore II Laskaris on the shield.⁷⁵ Interestingly, this “morphological” change in the ceremony's performance seems to have been employed by Michael VIII as well. For example, both

⁷⁰ Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 22; Cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 24.

⁷¹ Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 21–22; Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 4–5. For the *shield-raising* ceremony both as a historical phenomenon and as subject of artistic representation, see Teitler, “Raising on a shield”, 501–521; Walter, “Raising on a Shield”, 133–175.

⁷² For this reason, some scholars argue that the ceremony fell into disuse. For a recent study on the *shield-raising* ceremony and a fresh look on its use during the middle Byzantine period see Heher, “In den Schuhen des Kaisers”, 93–103.

⁷³ Christopher Walter notes that in the century in which the Byzantine empire was to collapse, Symeon of Thessaloniki (who died in 1429) spoke in his work *De sacro templo* about the raising on the shield as an event still current in his time. See Walter, “Raising on a Shield”, 161.

⁷⁴ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 105.18–22.

⁷⁵ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 105.20.

George Akropolites and Nikephoros Gregoras employ the verb *καθίσαντες*⁷⁶ to describe the act of placing Michael VIII on a shield, or rather, to describe the act of making him sit on the shield. Similarly, George Pachymeres employs the verb *ἐνιζάνει*, which is to be interpreted here as “sit on”.⁷⁷ Although one could argue that the verb *καθίζω* or *ἐνιζάνω* can be interpreted as either “to make sit down, to seat” or “to sit”,⁷⁸ in the above examples, they seem more likely to carry the meaning of “caused him to sit down” rather than just placing him on the shield. It seems, then, that from 1254 onwards there was a slight change in the way that the ceremony was performed. To my knowledge, so far, no attempt has been made to connect the “morphological” change in the ceremony’s enactment during Theodore II Laskaris’ proclamation in 1254 with the imperial ideology of this period. Additionally, no effort has been made to explain why the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty and his successors continued to recognize its importance for the establishment of the imperial candidate. To better understand the possible ideological manifestations behind the symbolic act of acclaiming the imperial candidate while being seated on the shield rather than standing on it, we need to delve further into the sociopolitical framework of the thirteenth century.

The reasons why George Akropolites chose to record the *shield-raising* ceremony as one of the central acts that took place both during the installation of Theodore II Laskaris and Michael VIII should be traced to changes in the structure of the imperial court and the ideology of the society.⁷⁹ After 1204 the participation of the aristocratic families and the army in the rituals of imperial accession continued to be – as previously – an essential element of legitimization. The post-1204 aristocracy, however, became much more military in its character and nature than the political elite of the Komnenian and Angeloi period owing to various factors, such as the constant conflicts with Latins and other rivals as well as the shrinking of the administrative apparatus.⁸⁰ Parallel to the decisive shift in the ideology and character of the ruling aristocratic groups, imperial virtues and ideals were also transformed and, as has been observed, there was a stronger emphasis on military aspects due to the

⁷⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.14; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78.2.

⁷⁷ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.13.

⁷⁸ For the various interpretations of the verb “καθίζω”, see *LSJ*; cf. also “καθιζάνω” in *LSJ* and *LBG*. For the verb “ἐνιζάνω”, see *LSJ*.

⁷⁹ For a brief overview of the radical changes in the Byzantine political scenery after 1204, see Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 19–24.

⁸⁰ About the military organization during the period of exile in Nicaea, see Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 182–201. On the accession ceremonies in the imperial courts of the Komnenoi and the Angeloi through the eyes of the Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates, see Beihammer, “Comnenian Imperial Succession”, 159–202. Military aristocracy continued to have an important socio-political role also after 1261. On the Late Byzantine society, see Matschke and Tinnfeld, *Die Gesellschaft*.

dangerous political situation after 1204. In response to the loss of the Byzantine capital of Constantinople to the Latin Crusaders in 1204, the emperors in Nicaea “innovated by cultivating an ideology of militarism and expansionism”.⁸¹ According to the account of George Akropolites, the Laskarid emperors chose to lead the troops themselves and were often triumphant.⁸² The orations devoted to the Nicaean emperors also echo the prowess of the Nicaean emperors in battle. Already, in Niketas Choniates’ panegyrics, Theodore I Laskaris, the founder of the Laskarid dynasty, is praised for being a good leader and having instilled a fighting spirit again among the Byzantines after the loss of Constantinople.⁸³ Additionally, the eleventh-century tendency to emphasize the military virtues of the emperor in the literary genre ‘mirror for princes’ continued until the late Byzantine period and aimed to outline the military principles of imperial conduct and provide advice for young rulers.⁸⁴ However, the description of the emperor’s military virtues in the thirteenth and fourteenth-century imperial propaganda was far more extensive.⁸⁵ Often, orators addressed the emperor’s soldierly qualities to express the wish that the Nicaean ruler would lead his chosen people back to the promised land, Constantinople.⁸⁶ Dimitar Angelov confirms the gradual militarization of the imperial image and writes about the inclusion of the idea of the emperor’s military supremacy in both the Nicaean and Palaiologan courts.⁸⁷ Overall, the ideological and social developments that followed the fall of Constantinople increased the need to underline the role of the Byzantine emperor as a capable leader of a rapidly militarized, high-ranking elite that had political claims. Thus, the military origins of the shield-raising ceremony served the ideological agenda of the exiled government in Nicaea perfectly by promoting the idea of the reconquest of the lost capital by its ruling emperors.

Nevertheless, the *shield-raising proclamation* was not linked only to the military skills and status of the emperor. Ideologically, the custom was also associated with the imperial ideas (*Kaiserideen*) of the “sun-emperor” and “sacral emperor”, ideas that have

⁸¹ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 418.

⁸² Three indicative examples are: George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.19–21; I, 34.17–35.4; and I, 107.10.

⁸³ Niketas Choniates, *Orationes*, ed. Van Dieten, Logos XIV, 133.11–31; See also Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 101.

⁸⁴ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 195.

⁸⁵ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 82 and footnote 21 on the same page, with various examples.

⁸⁶ See, for example, Niketas Choniates, *Orationes*, ed. Van Dieten, Logos XIV, 146.17–147.19. Cf. Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 29; and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 99. On the emperor’s military virtues as one of the main features highlighted in the epideictic oratory, see Menander, eds. Russell and Wilson, especially the chapter «Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν», 76–224. Cf. also the comments in Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 82.

⁸⁷ See especially Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 82–85 and 90–93.

their origins in the Hellenistic and Late Antique periods, and were further developed throughout the whole Byzantine period.⁸⁸ The concept of the sun-emperor correlates with the idea of a ruler whose impartial generosity extends towards all the citizens regardless of the social class to which they belong. The image of the imperial candidate being raised on a shield aimed to highlight his symbolic resemblance to the daily sunrise that generously spreads its warmth everywhere and on everyone.⁸⁹ In the Christianized *Imperium Romanum*, the Byzantine emperor was believed to be appointed by divine ordination and was seen as an imitator of God, while his earthly empire should reflect God's heavenly kingdom.⁹⁰ The fact that the *shield-raising* ceremony may also reflect the imperial idea that the Byzantine emperor receives his authority from God can be drawn from the religious iconography of the ninth century, which began associating the motif in question with the God-chosen biblical kings David and Solomon.⁹¹ Interestingly, the rhetoric of the panegyric speeches in the exiled court of Nicaea often compares the Laskarid emperors with David, the 'chosen king' in the Old Testament. Ever since the reign of the Emperor Herakleios (r. 610–641), the Davidic language and imagery became part of the repertoire of imperial ideology in Byzantium.⁹² Both David and Herakleios were divinely chosen to rule; they won their wars, recaptured the sacred objects central to the spiritual life of their people (the Ark and the Cross respectively) – and re-installed them in Jerusalem.⁹³ Following this long-established ideological tradition, Theodore I Laskaris is habitually presented as a new David.⁹⁴ In this uncertain political milieu, the Nicaean imperial propaganda exploited the association of Theodore I Laskaris with David, by declaring that the founder of the state of Nicaea and his successors were the only God-chosen, and thus, legitimate emperors.

Iconographically, there are no surviving depictions of late Byzantine emperors raised on a shield. In fact, we usually have various miniatures in psalters portraying the Old

⁸⁸ Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 90–91.

⁸⁹ See Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 80–81. Walter, "Raising on a Shield", 163–164. About the "sun-emperor" idea and symbolism, see in *ODB*, III, 1888, s. v. "shield-raising".

⁹⁰ Cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 7–8 and Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 191. Additionally, see about the idea of the 'God-chosen ruler' as a mechanism to reinforce the political position of the Byzantine emperor and some recent thoughts on the matter: Kaldelis, *The Byzantine Republic*, 165–198.

⁹¹ Walter, "Raising on a Shield", 143–145, 149–150, 153–154, 166–172. Teitler, "Raising on a shield", 509–510.

⁹² Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 114.

⁹³ On this topic, see for example, Spain Alexander, "Heraclius", 217–237; Kaegi, *Heraclius*, 114, 198–199.

⁹⁴ Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 324–325. About the literary techniques that allowed the Byzantine authors to draw comparisons between the Byzantine and the Old Testament emperors, see Rapp, "Old Testament Models", 175–197.

Testament king David performing this accession ceremony rather than an actual Byzantine emperor.⁹⁵ The only representations of actual Byzantine imperial candidates acclaimed while being raised standing on a shield are to be found in the illuminated manuscript MS Graecus Vitr. 26-2 of the National Library of Spain in Madrid. The so-called *Skylitzes Matritensis* manuscript was probably produced in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and to be more precise at the court of King Roger II (1095–1154), after 1144.⁹⁶ It contains the *Synopsis Historiarum* written by the eleventh-century Byzantine historian John Skylitzes.⁹⁷ The text deals with the history of the Byzantine emperors from 811 to 1057, namely from Michael I Rangabe (r. 811–813) to Isaac I Komnenos (r. 1057–1059). Statistically, of the total of 574 miniatures, only eleven are connected to the Byzantine imperial proclamation and coronation, and two of them are relevant to the iconographic motif of the *shield-raising* ceremony.⁹⁸ The two miniatures illustrate the accession of two different middle Byzantine imperial usurpers, Michael I Rangabe and Leon Tornikes, who were proclaimed emperors in the ninth and eleventh centuries, respectively.⁹⁹

The first of the two miniatures (fol. 10v) depicts the coronation of Emperor Michael I Rangabe. The emperor is being acclaimed by a large number of court officials while standing on a large shield decorated with a pseudo-Kufic script and receiving the crown from a figure who – although dressed in imperial garments – is probably the patriarch.¹⁰⁰ It is noteworthy, however, that even if the person standing on the shield is Emperor Michael I Rangabe, the text of John Skylitzes does not refer to the performance of such a ceremony by the aforementioned imperial claimant.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Walter, “Raising on a Shield”, 133–175.

⁹⁶ On the dating of *Skylitzes Matritensis* and the relevant discussion, see, for example, Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 15–19 and Boeck, *Imagining the Byzantine Past*, 1–16 and 51–86.

⁹⁷ About the edition of the text and its modern translations, see John Skylitzes, ed. Thurn.

⁹⁸ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 1.

⁹⁹ On Emperor Michael I Rangabe (r. 811–813), see *ODB*, II, 1362. On Leo Tornikes (r. 1016–1047), see *ODB*, III, 2097–2098, with further bibliography and Cheynet, *Pouvoir*, 59–61, no. 65.

¹⁰⁰ About the description of the miniature, as well as reflections on the depicted figures, see Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 43–46, with further bibliography. This miniature is quite problematic especially concerning the identification of the illustrated characters. For the above-mentioned interpretation, see Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 44. Other scholars have suggested that the two men depicted are Michael I Rangabe and the succeeding emperor, Leo V the Armenian. Cf. Walter, “Raising on a Shield”, 138–139; Grabar and Manusakas, *L’illustration*, 25. At this point, it should be mentioned that the round shape of the shield also reminds of the opus sectile panel in Hagia Sophia, the so-called “Omphalos,” on which emperors would stand when entering the church for ceremonial purposes. About the “Omphalos”, see Bogdanović, *The Framing of Sacred Space*, 235–241.

¹⁰¹ John Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, 5.60–74.

The second miniature that portrays the same iconography is associated with the imperial promulgation of Leon Tornikes (fol. 230r). Leon Tornikes wears the imperial garment of “*loros*” and receives acclamations while standing on a shield.¹⁰² In scenes representing the raising of a ruler on a shield, the Byzantines chose to depict the *loros-costume* as “the most appropriate garment for the representation of the concepts of majesty, triumph, and divinely sanctioned kingship”¹⁰³. Similarly to the case of Michael I Rangabes, the text of John Skylitzes contains no reference to the performance of the *shield-raising* ceremony during the accession of Leon Tornikes. On the contrary, Michael Psellos, who was a contemporary to the events, recorded the details of the ritual succession of Leon Tornikes in 1047, including his raising on a shield.¹⁰⁴ For this reason, Vasiliki Tsamakda argues that this particular miniature is probably a copy of a miniature from a lost, illustrated manuscript of Michael Psellos’ *Chronographia*.¹⁰⁵ In any case, both of the surviving miniatures depict the emperors standing and not sitting on the shield during the ceremonial. Remarkably, both of the claimants to the throne were usurpers who came to power with the support of the army and were striving to consolidate their position. The fact that the *shield-raising* ceremonial is used in the historical imagination of contemporary and later observers as part of their accession ceremonies is not only an indication that the particular ritual element was still in use, but also that it still carried a considerable ideological and constitutional significance during those centuries. The usurpers of the middle Byzantine period would not have chosen to employ any ritual element that would undermine their attempt to legitimize their claims. The same idea applies to Michael VIII Palaiologos.

Even though the *shield-raising* ceremony must have played a strategic role in the endorsement of the imperial accessions during the middle Byzantine period, contemporary Byzantine historians chose to refer to this ritualized act only in connection with usurpers who took power with the help of their troops and wished to invest their claims with further legitimacy. During the accession of Theodore II Laskaris in 1254, the performance of the

¹⁰² Walter, “Raising on a Shield”, 138–139. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, pp. 41–44 and fig. 3; and pp. 254–255 and fig. 544.

¹⁰³ For this observation, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 37. On the imperial garment of ‘loros’ (λόρος), see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 18–27.

¹⁰⁴ Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. Reinsch, I, p. 152, VI.104.3–5: καὶ ὅποσα δὴ αὐτοῖς ὁ καιρὸς ἐδίδου ἐπὶ τῇ ἀναρρήσει πλασάμενοι, διαπρεπεῖ ἐσθῆτι κοσμήσαντες, αἴρουσιν ἐπ’ ἄσπίδος. For the German translation, see Reinsch and Reinsch-Werner, eds., *Michael Psellos*, 429. On Leon Tornikes’ accession, see also Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 114 and footnote 6.

¹⁰⁵ See Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 254–255, and footnotes 4–5, respectively. For opposing views, see Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 255, footnote 1.

shield-raising proclamation acquires a different usage and ideological meaning compared with before. Contrary to the Byzantine historians of the eleventh century, George Akropolites links the ceremonial with the succession of a genuinely legitimate claimant to the throne. The aim is to prepare the reader for the use of the same ritual by Michael VIII, who is portrayed in the text as the ideal ruler who came to power legitimately following the example and the accession ceremonies of his Nicaean imperial predecessors.

At the same time, George Akropolites declares that the custom echoed an old Byzantine tradition (ἔθος).¹⁰⁶ In reality, however, the dynastic heir, Theodore II Laskaris, stages an innovative *shield-raising* performance during which he does not stand, but sits on the shield. In this way, the Byzantine historian implies this custom's use either by Theodore I Laskaris or by the Constantinopolitan emperors before 1204, something that actually cannot be confirmed by the sources. A plausible explanation for why George Akropolites insists that the *shield-raising* ceremony of 1254 reflected an old Byzantine custom is the fact that the political situation of the period did not encourage ceremonial innovations. Neither the 'exiled' imperial court of Nicaea nor the newly established court of the Palaiologoi wished to be accused of deviating from the old Constantinopolitan ceremonial traditions, although it seems that, in reality, they had introduced a substantial "morphological" alteration with regard to *shield-raising*.

The motives behind the introduction of this "morphological" variation during the performance of the *shield-raising* ceremony and the question of whether it carried a special ideological meaning remain a puzzle. Recent studies that dealt with the accession of Theodore II Laskaris or with the *shield-raising* ceremony itself were not focused on giving a plausible explanation for its "morphological" alteration.¹⁰⁷ Christopher Walter excluded the possibility of an immediate influence by the accession rituals of the Latin emperors of Constantinople, and in particular by those of Baldwin I, as many scholars believed in the past.¹⁰⁸ In any case, it is almost certain that the change became established in Nicaea during the thirteenth century and in fact, the mention of this ceremonial in the vernacular novel *Tale*

¹⁰⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 105.20–21.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Heher, "In den Schuhen des Kaisers", 93–103; Pavlović, "Theodore II Laskaris", 587–607; Teitler, "Raising on a shield", 501–521; Mantas, "Die Schilderhebung", 537–582.

¹⁰⁸ See: Walter, "Raising on a Shield", 160 and 95. For the misconception that Baldwin I was elevated on a shield, see Hendrickx, *Οι πολιτικοί και στρατιωτικοί θεσμοί*, 117–121 and esp. see 118. On Emperor Baldwin I, see *ODB*, I, 247–248, s. v. "Baldwin of Flandres", with further bibliography. See: Walter, "Raising on a Shield", 160 and footnote 95.

of *Livistros and Rodamne*, led its editor, Panagiotis A. Agapitos, to conclude that it was produced in Nicaea in the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁰⁹

Visually, the image of a ruler being acclaimed while sitting alludes to another miniature from the *Skylitzes Matritensis*, namely, the one that depicts the accession of the Bulgarian ruler Peter Deleanos (fol. 251r).¹¹⁰ John Skylitzes' text attests that Peter Deleanos was a slave in the Byzantine empire, but he soon escaped from Constantinople to Bulgaria and by making convincing – although unfounded – claims about his origins he managed in 1040 A.D. to have himself proclaimed emperor of Bulgaria.¹¹¹ Thought-provoking is the fact that even though John Skylitzes provides no further details on the acts accompanying Peter Deleanos' proclamation in the corresponding miniature, the Bulgarians are portrayed to lift Peter Deleanos in the air while he is seated on their hands and not standing or sitting on a shield (fol. 251r). Remarkably, Michael Psellos' *Chronographia* suggests that the ceremony performed for the acclamation of Peter Deleanos included his elevation on a shield, a detail which strengthens Vasiliki Tsamakda's argument that this and a few other miniatures were copied from a lost, illustrated manuscript of Michael Psellos' *Chronographia*.¹¹² If indeed the event occurred in the way Michael Psellos narrates it, and if the Bulgarians had indeed raised Peter Deleanos on a shield – perhaps imitating the contemporary Byzantine imperial ceremonial – then it is quite tempting to assume that the miniature artist deliberately omitted the shield because Peter Deleanos was not a legitimate Byzantine emperor.¹¹³ In such a case, perhaps the illustrator wished to emphasize the ideological and institutional difference between the Bulgarian Tsar (τσάρος, 'βασιλιάς') and the proper Byzantine emperor because – in the eyes of the Byzantines – the first was subordinate to and hierarchically lower in status than the latter. Despite the depiction in the illuminated manuscript of *Skylitzes Matritensis* that shows Bulgarian officials raising Peter Deleanos seated on their hands and despite the intense diplomatic contacts between Nicaea and Bulgaria in the thirteenth century, there is no substantial evidence about the actual practice of the 'seated' *shield-*

¹⁰⁹ For the edition of the most ancient of the three surviving versions of the Byzantine novel *Livistros and Rodamne*, see Agapitos, *Αφήγησις*. On this argument, see Agapitos, "Χρονική Ακολουθία", 97–134 and especially 111, 131–132.

¹¹⁰ Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 240–241 and fig. 509. On Peter Deleanos, see *ODB*, I, 601, s. v. "Deljan Peter", with further bibliography.

¹¹¹ John Skylitzes, ed. Thurn, 409.87–414.26. About the proclamation of Peter Deleanos as Tsar of the Bulgarians, see Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 130–132.

¹¹² Michael Psellos, *Chronographia*, ed. Reinsch, I, pp. 70–77, IV.39.1–50.10, and especially p.71, IV.40.18–19. See also Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 240–241, 254–255. On other possible explanations on why some of the miniatures deviate from John Skylitzes text, see Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 261–266.

¹¹³ For this idea cf. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chronicle*, 240.

raising ceremony by the Bulgarian rulers of the period.¹¹⁴ Thus, we have no indication of any Bulgarian influence on the development of this new trend in the Byzantine ceremonial.

A more reasonable explanation to the “morphological” adjustment of the *shield-raising* ritual during its enactment by Theodore II Laskaris and later by Michael VIII emerges from different visual and ideological influences from within Byzantium. The image of the emperor being raised on a shield while sitting recalls and perhaps refers to a religious iconographic theme very familiar to the Byzantines, namely the ‘Ascension of Christ’. In this iconographic type, Christ is presented sitting in an almond-shaped sphere (*mandorla*), which signifies heaven and divine splendor. In his relevant study on this topic, Nikolaos Gkioles argues that the depiction of the Christ while seated, usually surrounded by an almond-shaped aureole of light, intended to glorify and to exalt Christ.¹¹⁵ Although he does not exclude a possible influence of this iconography on the imperial etiquette, he does not connect it to the *shield-raising* ceremonial that is relevant to the current research. It is noticeable that the motif depicting Christ being carried up in heaven by angels became especially popular from the thirteenth century onwards. Unfortunately, no iconographic evidence has survived from Nicaea, but it has from Trebizond, on the vault of the bema of the church of Hagia Sophia, which was built and decorated under the imperial patronage of Manuel I Grand Komnenos (1238–1263).¹¹⁶ While there are still many questions that remain unanswered concerning the ‘morphological’ change of its performance, what can be said with certainty that the raising of the emperor while being seated on the shield implies his proximity to the divine sphere, and it echoes centuries-old association of the Byzantine emperor with Christ.

The above-examined ‘morphological’ variant of the *shield-raising* ceremony, which is initially attested in connection with the Laskarids, was subsequently adopted by the succeeding Palaiologan dynasty as an affirmation of their political claims. Michael VIII chose to employ the *shield-raising* ceremony during his *proclamation*, for two main ideological reasons. On the one hand, the *shield-raising* ceremony was commonly recognized by the general public, whose approval the usurper of the throne sought. On the

¹¹⁴ On the Byzantine-Bulgarian relations during the thirteenth century, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 48.15–49.5 and I, 50.9–52.9. Cf. Macrides, George Akropolites, 90–92. Emperor Theodore II Laskaris even married Helena (Elena) Asenina of Bulgaria, daughter of Ivan Asen II of Bulgaria in 1235.

¹¹⁵ Gkioles, *Ανάληψις*, 285.

¹¹⁶ About a drawing of the Ascension at Hagia Sophia in Trebizond and a relevant commentary on the ideological significance of the church’s iconographic programme, see: Eastmond, *Art and Identity*, 97–116, and especially 109, Ill. no.81.

other hand, the employment of the ceremony highlighted the connections of Michael VIII's new dynasty with that of the Laskarids. In this way, Michael VIII not only affirmed his dynasty by connecting it with the preceding one, but he also promoted the idea that he followed all the "legitimate" procedures. Overall, the employment of the *shield-raising* ceremony by the Palaiologan court is closely connected to the dynasty's political and ideological agenda for legitimization.

From this perspective, George Akropolites skillfully links the ceremonies of the Palaiologan court with already established ceremonies of former imperial courts. It is remarkable to observe how the author's alignment with the usurper, Michael VIII, is mirrored through his work. In his *History*, George Akropolites declares that the *shield-raising* ceremony reflected an old Byzantine tradition and that everything executed was as customary, *ὡς ἔθος*.¹¹⁷ Even though the *shield-raising* ceremony of 1254 was slightly modified in comparison with the old tradition, the declaration of George Akropolites, *ὡς ἔθος*, served well the intentions of the author and the plans of his "patron", Michael VIII. In particular, George Akropolites wishes to attribute legitimacy to Theodore II Laskaris' succession and, as a consequence, to legitimize Michael VIII's succession. In other words, the claim that everything was performed as "customary" allowed George Akropolites, first, to emphasize the Laskarids' unbreakable connections to the Constantinopolitan emperors, and, second, to link the Palaiologans to both the Laskarids and the Constantinopolitan emperors. Thus, through the writings of George Akropolites, Michael VIII's political and ideological goals of legitimizing the transfer of power to his new dynasty were served successfully.

Michael VIII Palaiologos' Coronations and Processions in Nicaea and Constantinople

Another ceremony connected with the transfer of power to Michael VIII, which also has ideological implications, is the *coronation* ceremony. In what follows, Michael VIII's two *coronations* in Nicaea and Constantinople will be analyzed within the context of the long-established imperial coronation rituals of the Nicaean state. The aim is twofold: first, to appreciate better the ceremony's political and ideological significance throughout George Akropolites' entire historiographical work; second, to investigate the intangible cultural transfer of this specific Constantinopolitan ritual practice, first to Nicaea after the sack of the

¹¹⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 105.20–21.

Byzantine capital in 1204, and then back to Constantinople after its re-capture by the Byzantines in 1261. This overview will underline the mixed picture of continuity and change observed in the accession ritual patterns of the coronation ceremony and its ideological ramifications from the early thirteenth century to the rise of Michael VIII to power. In addition, this chapter will explore Michael VIII's *post-coronation procession* during his first public appearance in Nicaea in 1258 as a symbolic gesture with ideological associations that projected his political and ideological precedence over the underage heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris. On the whole, both the patriarchal *coronation* and the *post-coronation procession* will broaden our understanding about the political thought of the imperial court in exile, the ideological fundamentals of the Laskarid dynasty and the background of the succeeding dynasty of the Palaiologoi.

The act of receiving the imperial crown by the hand of the patriarch was one of the main ceremonial occasions that Emperor Michael VIII's predecessors staged in the state of Nicaea, aspiring to create an ideological advantage over their political opponents. After the sack of Constantinople in 1204 by the Latin Crusaders, two Byzantine successor states were founded by the aristocracy of the capital: the so-called 'state of Nicaea', and the 'state of Epirus'.¹¹⁸ Both of these states, alongside a third one, the so-called 'Empire of Trebizond', began a political and ideological rivalry by claiming the privilege of being the only legitimate successor of the Byzantine tradition and state.¹¹⁹ Throughout the whole sequence of George Akropolites' account of the events that led to the establishment of the state of Nicaea and its first ruler, Theodore I Laskaris, two ceremonial events capture the readers' attention: the patriarchal *elections* and the imperial *coronation* performed by the newly elected patriarch.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ The first monograph on the consolidation of the state of Nicaea was published in 1889. See Meliarakes, *Ιστορία*. For more the most recent work on the military and political challenges the founder Theodore I Laskaris had to face, see, for example, Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*. See also Gardner, *Lascarids* and Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*. On using the term 'state of Nicaea' instead of 'empire of Nicaea', Matthew Kinloch held a paper during the International Mediaeval Congress in Leeds 2017 entitled "Byzantine Narratives of 'Reconquest': 13th-Century and Modern Historiographies" (Speech, University of Leeds, 3 July 2017). About the so-called state of Epirus, see, among other works, Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*.

¹¹⁹ For the establishment of the state of Trebizond, the history of the city in the 13th century and its contacts with the West, see Vasiliev, "The Foundation", 3-37; Bryer and Winfield, *Byzantine Monuments*, I, 352-355; and Karpov, *Impero di Trebisonda*. On the ideological aspects of the political controversy between the states of Nicaea and Epirus, see Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ήπειρος*. About the ecclesiastical dimensions of this political controversy cf. Karpozelos, *Ecclesiastical Controversy* and Giarenis, "Πτυχές της ιδεολογικής αντιπαράθεσης", 99-122.

¹²⁰ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.5-18.

According to George Akropolites, Theodore I Laskaris fled from Constantinople and arrived with his wife and daughters at Nicaea, claiming to be the only legitimate successor to the imperial throne.¹²¹ He based his claims on both his title of a despot and his kinship with the immediately preceding family of the Angeloi through his marriage to Anna Komnene Angelina, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos.¹²² However, he was not immediately accepted as ruler by the inhabitants of the region of Nicaea.¹²³ Their attitude reflects the broader political and social antagonism that already existed from the late twelfth century between Constantinople and the provinces, and particularly the claims of Asia Minor to gain autonomy from the central government.¹²⁴ It also reveals the hesitation of the locals to choose a ruler and interfere in a political controversy given the complicated political situation that existed throughout the Byzantine Empire because of the loss of Constantinople to the Latins.¹²⁵ By 1205, Nicaea was gradually transformed as a place of assembly of distinguished laymen and churchmen, and it soon became the center of Theodore I Laskaris' activities.¹²⁶ At that point in time, eminent secular men and esteemed

¹²¹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 10.10–11.4.

¹²² About Emperor Theodore I Laskaris, see *ODB*, III, 2039–2040, with further bibliography and Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*. On Emperor Alexios III Angelos, see *ODB*, I, 64–65 and Barzos, *Γενεαλογία*, II, 726–801 (Ἀλέξιος Ἄγγελος no. 180) where can also be found scattered information about his daughter Anna Komnene Angelina (Ἄννα no. 261). The title of “despot”, probably derived from the old Roman title “dominus” and began to be used as an official title of the Byzantine imperial court in the years of Manuel I Komnenos (1118–1180), who provided in 1163 this title to his son-in-law, Bela III Alexios III (future king of Hungary, c. 1148–1196; r. from 1172; *ODB*, I, 278), considering him as his future heir. For the ranking of this title in the highest hierarchical order immediately after the Byzantine emperor under the reign of Komnenoi (twelfth century), see Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, especially 63–65 and cf. *ODB*, I, 614, s. v. “despotes”, with further bibliography. Noticeably, although Theodore I Laskaris held the title of despot, this did not guarantee him the right for succession. For a surviving seal of Theodore I Laskaris, which bears the title of despot, see Zacos and Veglery, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I.3, 1570–1571, no. 2753.

¹²³ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 10.10–11.4 and especially I, 10.14–10.23: [...] ὁ μὲν οὖν Λάσκαρις Θεόδωρος [Theodore I Laskaris] [...] ἀπελθὼν [...] μετὰ τῆς σφετέρας γυναικὸς καὶ τῶν τέκνων [...] καὶ περὶ τὴν Νίκαιαν πόλιν γενόμενος παρεκάλει τοὺς Νικαεῖς ἔσω τοῦτον τῆς πόλεως δέξασθαι καὶ ὡς κυρίῳ προσανέχειν αὐτῷ. οἱ δὲ οὐκ ἐδέχοντο. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 117–118.

¹²⁴ About the twelfth-century society and its fragile relationship with the main Byzantine government, see, for example, Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, 1–13. In addition, on some centripetal and centrifugal tendencies from the eleventh until the thirteenth century, see Kazhdan, “Τάσεις”, 91–110. For some of the inner political challenges that the Laskarids had to face due to their relationship with the local aristocracy, see Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 60–73 and 97–98. Concerning the difficulties that Theodoros I Laskaris had to face in his effort to become recognized by the local population of Nicaea, see Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 117–131, Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 81–86 and Gardner, *Lascarids*, 52–71.

¹²⁵ Cf. Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 117 and Angold, *A Byzantine Government in Exile*, 97–98.

¹²⁶ According to George Akropolites when the Latins gained possession of Constantinople, they gave its inhabitants permission to either remain in the city and live under their control or to leave the city and go unhindered wherever they wished. Most of those who left were “the notables” (ὄσοι τῶν περιφανεστέρων ἐτύγγανων) and they settled in Nicaea. See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 10.10–14 and 11.6–8. Cf. also Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 120, note 2.

churchmen in Nicaea resolved “that the despot Theodore [be] called emperor”.¹²⁷ Beyond this piece of information, no further details are provided concerning the proclamation ceremony that took place and the elevation of despot Theodore I Laskaris to the imperial office. However, George Akropolites places a lot of emphasis on the fact that Theodore I Laskaris was crowned by the newly elected patriarch, Michael IV Autoreianos.¹²⁸

Soon after he received the imperial title, Theodore I Laskaris invited the former patriarch of Constantinople, Patriarch John X Kamateros (1198–1206), to establish his patriarchal seat in the capital of the newly formed state.¹²⁹ The author underlines Theodore I Laskaris’ efforts to elect a new patriarch at Nicaea and his persistence with the cause even after his first choice, namely Patriarch John X Kamateros, declined the invitation and put his resignation in writing.¹³⁰ Ilias Giarenis, interested in the establishment and consolidation of the so-called Empire of Nicaea, agrees with other modern scholars that John X Kamateros’ resignation is perhaps to be interpreted as a resignation from the offered position in Nicaea and not entirely from his patriarchal seat.¹³¹ The argument is based on the fact that a new patriarch of Nicaea was elected only after the death of John X Kamateros.¹³² Additionally, we may assume that Theodore I Laskaris, who wanted everything to be performed legitimately, chose to wait and not to proceed further with an immediate *election* of a new patriarch because of the unstable political status quo. After the sack of Constantinople by the Latins, Patriarch John X Kamateros took refuge in Didymoteichon. His refusal to accept Theodore I Laskaris’ invitation is to be attributed not only to his advanced age and his difficulty in traveling, but also to his familial bonds with Empress Euphrosyne Doukaina Kamatera, wife of the Byzantine emperor Alexios III Angelos, who never ceased to claim the title of the only legitimate emperor of the Byzantine imperial throne.¹³³ In any case, after

¹²⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.6–9: ἐπει συνδρομὴ γέγονε κατὰ Νίκαιαν ἀπὸ περιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν καὶ τῶν λογάδων τῆς ἐκκλησίας, σκέψις τούτοις ἐγένετο ὅπως βασιλεὺς φημισθεὶς ὁ δεσπότης Θεόδωρος. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 119.

¹²⁸ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.5–18. For further comments and relevant bibliography, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 120–121, note 4.

¹²⁹ About Patriarch John X Kamateros, see *ODB*, II, 1054–1055.

¹³⁰ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.13–15. Cf. Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 2, no. 1671. On the resignation letter of Patriarch John X Kamateros see, for example, Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 120, note 3, with further bibliography; Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 238–240; and Wirth, “Frage”, 239–252.

¹³¹ Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 239 and footnote 36.

¹³² Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 239 and footnote 36.

¹³³ John X Kamateros was openly one of the supporters of Alexios III Angelos, who, at that point, continued officially to hold the title of the ‘Byzantine emperor’. Cf. Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 239–240 and Wirth, “Frage”,

the death of Patriarch John X Kamateros, Theodore I Laskaris was able to put his plans into action and proceed to the reconstitution of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate in ‘exile’.¹³⁴ This achievement was of immense ideological significance for the so-called state of Nicaea and its founder Theodore I Laskaris, who, among other things, wished to be portrayed as a protector of the Church. In fact, it seems that he also bore the title of ‘epistemonarches’, indicating someone with deep piety and knowledge of the dogmas.¹³⁵ The new patriarch, Michael IV Autoreianos is extolled by George Akropolites as a ‘learned man’, acquainted with both the Christian and the pagan literature.¹³⁶ Eventually, Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos crowned Theodore I Laskaris with the imperial diadem in 1208.¹³⁷ This ceremonial act enabled the founder of the Nicaean state and dynasty to raise his position above any of his political rivals and establish him as the only claimant to the imperial throne, who was actually crowned by the hand of the patriarch.¹³⁸

George Akropolites uses the description of the ceremonial accession of the later Laskarid emperors, John III Doukas Vatatzes and Theodore II Laskaris, as a literary device to legitimize their successions.¹³⁹ Moreover, he writes these descriptions to validate the accession of Michael VIII to the throne and to justify his necessity for staging a patriarchal coronation. John III Doukas Vatatzes (1221–1254), coming from an important aristocratic family, married the daughter of Theodore I Laskaris, Eirene Laskarina, but he never received the title of ‘despot’ that would probably make him a potential imperial candidate.¹⁴⁰ The

especially 250–252. On Empress Euphrosyne Doukaina Kamatera see *ODB*, II, 749, with further bibliography and Polemis, *The Doukai*, 131.

¹³⁴ Angold, *Church and Society*, 518–519: “The immediate aim now became the gathering in of orthodox communities under the authority and protection of the emperor and patriarch, even if in exile at Nicaea”. On dating issues concerning the elevation of Michael IV Autoreianos to the patriarchal throne, see Laurent, “La chronologie”, 129–133.

¹³⁵ On this idea, see Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 243 and footnote 50, with further bibliography. The title of ‘epistemonarches’ is associated mainly with the political ideology of the Komnenoi. Because of its significance it was also employed later by Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos. For the title and its uses, see, for example, Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 252–255 and 261–266.

¹³⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.16–17: Μιχαήλ ὁ Αὐτωρειανός, λόγιος τυγχάνων καὶ πάσης γραφῆς ἔμπειρος τῆς τε ἡμετέρας καὶ θύραθεν. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 119; cf. also her comment on pp. 120–121, note 4. Ruth Macrides observes that George Akropolites has the tendency to comment on the education of every patriarch at Nicaea. See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 47–49. For Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos, see *ODB*, II, 1365.

¹³⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.17–18: ὃς [Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos] καὶ τὸν δεσπότην Θεόδωρον [Theodore I Laskaris] τῷ βασιλείας διαδήματι ταινιοῖ. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 119. Concerning the dating, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 83.

¹³⁸ For this idea cf. Giarenis, *Συγκρότηση*, 323.

¹³⁹ About John III Doukas Vatatzes, see *ODB*, II, 1047–1048; and about Theodore II Laskaris, see *ODB*, III, 2040–2041, with further bibliography.

¹⁴⁰ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 11.16–22. On John III Doukas Vatatzes’ titles and marriage to Eirene Laskarina, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 150, note 4. John III Vatatzes came from an

exact circumstances in which John III Doukas Vatatzes succeeded Theodore I Laskaris are not known. Nonetheless, it is quite striking that the only ceremonial act mentioned by George Akropolites is that of his crowning by the then patriarch Manuel I Sarantenos (or Charitopoulos).¹⁴¹ Notably, no other contemporary or later source provides additional details about the accession of John III Doukas Vatatzes. George Akropolites associates the imperial succession with the patriarchal one and delves further into the ecclesiastical matters.¹⁴² The author also gives special attention to the *election* of the succeeding patriarch, namely Arsenios Autoreianos.¹⁴³ As Ruth Macrides, observes: “The election of Arsenios to the patriarchal throne in 1254 receives more attention than Akropolites usually gives to patriarchal succession” and this “may also have to do with the severe consequences of Arsenios’ patriarchate for Michael’s reign”.¹⁴⁴ In the text, Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos’ succession is linked with the elevation of Theodore II Laskaris to the throne soon after the death of his father, John III Doukas Vatatzes.¹⁴⁵ Having already being acclaimed by all as an emperor (αὐτοκράτωρ) through a shield-raising proclamation, Theodore II Laskaris thought that “it was first necessary that a patriarch be put forward, so that he might carry out the coronation of the emperor in the holy precinct”.¹⁴⁶ In my opinion, this symbolic gesture had a significant ideological impact on the image that George Akropolites strove to create in his narrative for both Theodore II Laskaris and Michael VIII. The appointment of the new

important noble family (known since the eleventh century), which was associated with the Komnenian dynasty and held high positions in the military and administrative apparatus of the Byzantine Empire. Further details on the history of the family can be found in *ODB*, III, 2154–2155, s. v. “Vatatzes (Βατάτζης fem. Βατατζίνα)”, with further bibliography, and in Amantos, “Ἡ οἰκογένεια Βατάτζη”, 174–178. About Eirene or Irene Komnene Laskarina (Ἐιρήνη Κομνηνὴ Λασκαρίνα), daughter of Theodore I Laskaris and wife of John III Doukas Vatatzes, and her portrayal in the *History* of George Akropolites, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 57, 148 and 150.

¹⁴¹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 32.12–14: Καθὼς γοῦν εἰρήκειν, μετὰ τὴν τελευταίαν αὐτοῦ [Theodore I Laskaris] ἐπιλαμβάνεται τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν σκήπτρων Ἰωάννης ὁ Δούκας [John III Doukas Vatatzes] ὁ γαμβρὸς αὐτοῦ [Theodore I Laskaris], στεφθεὶς παρὰ τοῦ πατριάρχου Μανουήλ [Manuel I Sarantenos (or Charitopoulos)]. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 159. About Patriarch Manuel I Sarantenos (or Charitopoulos or Karantenos), see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 161, note 6, with further bibliography.

¹⁴² The fact that no other sources provide further information about the ceremonial coronation of John III Doukas Vatatzes is already being commented by both Ruth Macrides and Aikaterini Christophilopoulou. See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 160 and Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 176.

¹⁴³ George Akropolites devotes an extended section to the *election* of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos in his narrative: George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 106.04–107.13 and especially 107.3–13.

¹⁴⁴ See Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 278. For some further interesting thoughts on the topic, see also Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 47–49.

¹⁴⁵ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 104.19–107.13.

¹⁴⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 106.6–8: ἔδει δὲ πρῶτον πατριάρχην προβληθῆναι, ἵν’ ἐπὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ [Theodore II Laskaris] τὴν στεφθορίαν ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τελεσιουργήσῃ τεμένει. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 277.

patriarch was the first official act of Emperor Theodore II Laskaris. The newly proclaimed emperor followed the steps of his grandfather and founder of the dynasty, Theodore I Laskaris, by appointing a candidate who was willing to provide him with his blessing.¹⁴⁷ In the same fashion, the last emperor of Nicaea, Michael VIII, would have the privilege and honor to be crowned by the legally appointed patriarch of the state. Thus, George Akropolites' narrative made sure to project Michael VIII as a leader who is respectful of the long-established Constantinopolitan and Nicaean ritual traditions – especially the ones connected with the imperial accession – and not as an illegitimate usurper of the throne.

Based on the evidence of the narrative sources, the *coronation* of Michael VIII took place at Nicaea “a very short time” after his *proclamation*.¹⁴⁸ According to George Akropolites, Michael VIII “was crowned with the imperial diadem by the patriarch Arsenios”.¹⁴⁹ George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras agree with George Akropolites that Michael VIII was crowned by the hand of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos.¹⁵⁰ However, George Pachymeres gives more details. He attests that armed soldiers were present at the ceremony, ready to interfere in case of any protestations or objections to Michael VIII's *coronation*.¹⁵¹ Nikephoros Gregoras also stresses that Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos performed the ceremony under duress.¹⁵² Furthermore, Nikephoros Gregoras clarifies that Michael VIII was only to have imperial authority (*αὐτοκρατορικὴν ἀρχήν*) until John IV Laskaris reached a certain age and could rule on his own.¹⁵³ In fact, according to Nikephoros Gregoras, written oaths were signed to ensure the safety of the child and his right to the throne.¹⁵⁴ Finally, concerning the *coronation* ceremony, it is noteworthy that George Pachymeres is the only source that attests the *coronation* of Michael VIII's wife, as well.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁷ The other candidate was Nikephoros Blemmydes, who was not keen to be patriarch. See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 106.04–107.3 and the commentary in Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 280, notes 10–12. For Nikephoros Blemmydes, see *ODB*, I, 296, s. v. “Blemmydes, Nikephoros” and *PLP* 2897: Βλεμμύδης Νικηφόρος (Blemmydes Nikephoros), with further bibliography.

¹⁴⁸ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.13–14; Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137–147; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78–79.

¹⁴⁹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.17–18.

¹⁵⁰ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 143–147; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78.11–79.5.

¹⁵¹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 145.12–21.

¹⁵² Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78.4–79.11.

¹⁵³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 79.5–79.10.

¹⁵⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 79.10–11.

¹⁵⁵ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 141.19–22 and 145.27–28. For Theodora Palaiologina, see *PLP* 21380: Παλαιολογίνα, Θεοδώρα Δούκαινα Κομνηνή (Palaiologina Theodora Dukaina Komnene), with further bibliography. See also Talbot, “Empress Theodora Palaiologina”, 295–303.

Even though George Pachymeres gives no details concerning the *coronation* of the empress, the fourteenth-century ceremonial book of Pseudo-Kodinos attests that in general the empress was crowned by her husband after his *coronation*.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, it is highly likely that Emperor Michael VIII was the one who crowned his wife.

The main symbolic gesture which manifested Michael VIII's predominance over the 'legal' heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, is the performance of the *coronation* ceremony through the patriarch, and to be more precise, the ceremonial placing of the crown on the claimant's head by the hand of the patriarch. It is noteworthy that George Akropolites emphasizes the necessity of this ritual. He writes: "But, as it was necessary that he [Michael VIII] also be crowned with the imperial diadem, he went to the capital of Bithynia, Nicaea, where he was crowned with the imperial diadem by the patriarch Arsenios".¹⁵⁷ In George Akropolites' text, Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos appears to be selected as a compliant tool of the emperor to perform the *coronation*, which, according to the text, "was necessary" (ἔδει).¹⁵⁸ Actually, it was not "necessary" for Michael VIII to be crowned in order to assume his imperial office; nor was the consent or the confirmation of the patriarch "necessary". The ecclesiastical coronation is a practice that is testified as part of the official accession rituals of the emperor since the fifth century.¹⁵⁹ However, it is generally known that throughout Byzantium's long history, only the Senate, the people and the army had constitutional roles.¹⁶⁰ Bearing this in mind, why did George Akropolites make such a statement?

To answer this question, it is important to remember that, at some point, Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos had become the center of opposition against Emperor Michael VIII

¹⁵⁶ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 260.9–262.21, especially 261.11–28. On aspects of the Palaiologan imperial household based on gender, see Schrijver, "The Court of Women", 219–236.

¹⁵⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.15–18: ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔδει καὶ βασιλικῶ διαδήματι τοῦτον στεφθῆναι, ἐπὶ τὴν προκαθημένην πόλιν τῶν Βιθυνῶν ἀφίκετο Νίκαιαν, ἔνθα παρὰ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἀρσενίου τὸ βασιλικὸν ἐταινιώθη διάδημα; For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 346.

¹⁵⁸ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.15.

¹⁵⁹ While Byzantinist Otto Treitinger considers Emperor Leo II as the first emperor who was crowned by a patriarch in 474 A.D. (Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 10), Aikaterini Christophilopoulou argues that the contribution of the patriarch to the crowning of Leo II was limited only to the reading of blessings before the ceremonial placement of the crown, an act which the emperor performed himself (Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέγμις*, 36). About Emperor Leo II, see *ODB*, II, 1207–1208, s. v. "Leo II, 'the Little' (ὁ μικρός)"; and about Emperor Anastasios I, see *ODB*, I, 86–87, s. v. "Anastasios I". In any case, the safest date for the appearance of this ceremonial element in the imperial coronation is 491 A.D., when the coronation of Emperor Anastasios I took place. In fact, this is the first safe testimony that the patriarch placed himself the crown on the head of the appointed emperor. Regarding the coronation of Anastasios I along with some thoughts and commentary on the events, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέγμις*, 41–42 and 227.

¹⁶⁰ For the constitutional role of the Senate, the people and the army, see Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 19–24 and especially 24.

supporting the young John's rights to the throne. Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos went as far as excommunicating him, an act that eventually led to an ecclesiastical controversy with sociopolitical dimensions, the so-called "Arsenite schism".¹⁶¹ George Akropolites, who wrote while in office in the reign of Michael VIII, aims to construct a picture of the ideal ruler, defending Michael VIII and legitimizing his acts. Thus, George Akropolites outlines the patriarch's presence in Michael VIII's *coronation* in order to give the impression to readers that all the legal, ceremonial procedures were followed. Moreover, it seems that, although ecclesiastical *coronation* was never a legitimizing factor, in the case of Michael VIII it actually had a distinct political significance: it was a "necessity" that was employed for ideological reasons and in order to offer the founder of the new dynasty a clear advantage over his political rival, John IV Laskaris.

Regarding Michael VIII's *coronation* ceremony in Nicaea, the report of George Pachymeres is quite detailed and complements the accounts of George Akropolites and Nikephoros Gregoras. George Pachymeres is the only author who records the event of a *post-coronation* imperial parade that was staged and performed by Michael VIII. This neglected aspect of Michael VIII's rise to power can shed light on how gestures and symbols were employed to project hierarchy and power in the court of Nicaea and later on in the court of the Palaiologoi in Constantinople. Initially, George Pachymeres informs the reader about the conventions of an imperial *procession*: John IV Laskaris was expected to receive the imperial crown, be acclaimed and eventually lead first the triumphal *procession* followed by Michael VIII and his wife, who would be crowned and proceed second.¹⁶² A few paragraphs below, George Pachymeres provides a different description from the one expected, in order to hint at Michael VIII's deliberate deviation from the official ceremonial, and thus, his rebellion against the young John IV Laskaris. According to the Byzantine historian, after the *coronation* ceremony, the imperial couple (Michael VIII and Theodora Palaiologina) proceeded to the palace, along with John IV.¹⁶³ During the *procession*, Michael VIII and his wife were leading in front, while John IV was following. Moreover, George Pachymeres is the only source that reveals that John IV was never provided with an imperial crown. Instead, he was given a "headband" (*κεκρυφάλω*) adorned with precious stones and pearls.¹⁶⁴ It is

¹⁶¹ See Nicol, *Church and Society*, 6–9. For a recent article on the Arsenite schism, see Tinnefeld, "Das Schisma", 143–166, with further bibliography.

¹⁶² Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 141.17–22.

¹⁶³ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 145, 27–8 and 147, 1–2.

¹⁶⁴ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 146.1–2: ἐν μόνῳ κεκρυφάλῳ ἡμιτυμβίῳ, λίθοις καὶ μαργάροις κεκοσμημένῳ. For the French translation, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 146:

noteworthy that by the mid-fourteenth century, when Pseudo-Kodinos writes, the crown must have lost the significance that it once held.¹⁶⁵ However, during the time of George Pachymeres, it seems that the crown still functioned as a potent symbol of the imperial office and power. Therefore, the fact that John IV only wore an adorned headband does not go unnoticed by George Pachymeres. The author takes the opportunity to comment that John IV was too young to realize what was going on and that in reality, no one was paying attention.¹⁶⁶ However, George Pachymeres and the other participants did pay attention and were evidently able to appreciate the ideological implications of this imperial *insignia*.

Michael VIII's *post-coronation procession* in Nicaea in 1258 is a vivid example of how symbols and gestures were employed to project hierarchy and power within the late Byzantine imperial court. To be more precise, the symbolic image of Michael VIII and his wife, both with proper crowns, proceeding ahead of John IV Laskaris who followed with only an adorned headband, endeavored to state and affirm the hierarchy within the empire of Nicaea. At that time, Michael VIII was the most powerful man in Nicaea, and he took advantage of a highly visible *procession* to make a political statement. Furthermore, the account of the event can be seen as an example of how authors used such descriptions not only to enrich their narrative but also to make a personal statement on the politics of their time. For instance, George Pachymeres presented himself as overwhelmed by the injustice Michael VIII committed against the young John IV Laskaris. His final comment: "Justice would be brought to them eventually, as we came to know"¹⁶⁷, reveals perhaps not only his own discomfort but also the discomfort of his peers. Most importantly, however, he actually implies that the lawful imperial order was violated and that the procession was the result of an illegitimate procedure. Michael VIII had already taken an oath not only to respect John IV Laskaris' life but also to protect his rights to the throne.¹⁶⁸ Thus, George Pachymeres is critical of Michael VIII and signals out his perjury and duplicity. In this context, it also becomes apparent that Michael VIII managed to fully exploit the symbolism and the ideological connotations of both the *post-coronation procession* and the imperial crown in

un voile en forme de bandeau et orne de pierres précieuses et de perles. See also Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 146, footnote 1. In *LSJ κεκρύφαλος* designates a "hair-net".

¹⁶⁵ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.26–29.

¹⁶⁶ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 147.2–3.

¹⁶⁷ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 147.3–4: "Ἐμελλε δ' αὐτοῦς πάντως ἡ Δίκη ἐς τὸ μετέπειτα μετελθεῖν, ὡς ἐγνώκαμεν.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 37.7–11 and 39.8–25.

order to demonstrate, beyond all doubt, his political and ideological precedence over John IV Laskaris, the ‘legal’ – but underage – heir to the throne.

A different *procession* that was staged by Michael VIII and had different ideological aspirations took place a few years later when he entered Constantinople for the first time on August 15, 1261. After the city’s recapture by the Nicaean troops under the leadership of Alexios Strategopoulos, Michael VIII arranged his adventus to be performed in ceremonial solemnity so that he would be formally welcomed into Constantinople. The date chosen for the entry into the newly recaptured capital was the Feast day that commemorated the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, to whom he wished to give thanks for this great military achievement. According to George Akropolites, as Michael VIII was approaching the city, “it occurred to him to make the entrance into the city of Constantine in a manner more reverential to God than imperial”.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, the *procession* was to be carried out accordingly. Special thanksgiving hymns were written by George Akropolites and were performed in front of Michael VIII and his entourage by the Metropolitan of Kyzikos, George Kleidas.¹⁷⁰ The Metropolitan George Kleidas climbed up to one of the towers of the Golden Gate, which was situated at the south end of the land walls of Constantinople and was usually used for imperial triumphs.¹⁷¹ Having with him the icon of Theotokos Hodegetria, he recited before the crowd the thirteen prayers that George Akropolites had composed.¹⁷² After this ritualized performance and all prayers were concluded, it was time for Michael VIII to continue with the ritual *procession*.

To make a strong visual statement Michael VIII decided to dismount his horse while entering the Golden Gate and let the icon of the Virgin Mary precede him. Michael VIII was

¹⁶⁹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 186.7–9: [Michael VIII Palaiologos] κατὰ νοὺν ἐπήει θεοπρεπεστέραν μᾶλλον ἢ βασιλικωτέραν τὴν εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου ποιήσασθαι πάροδον. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 381.

¹⁷⁰ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 186.19–28: κατὰ νοὺν ἐπήει θεοπρεπεστέραν μᾶλλον ἢ βασιλικωτέραν τὴν εἰς τὴν Κωνσταντίνου ποιήσασθαι πάροδον; For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 381. For the oaths written by George Akropolites, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 186.19–28. About their performance on August 15, 1261, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.4–25. On the metropolitan of Kyzikos, George Kleidas, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 385 note 3 and *PLP* 11779: Κλειδᾶς Γεώργιος (Kleidas Georgios), with further bibliography. The event is also attested by George Pachymeres. See Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 217.18–20.

¹⁷¹ About Golden Gate, see *ODB*, III, 858–859, s. v. “Golden Gate (Χρυσαὶ Πύλαι, Χρυσεία Πύλη)” and Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 297–300, s. v. “Porta Aurea”, with further bibliography.

¹⁷² George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.14–16. On the icon of Theotokos Hodegetria and the homonym monastery in this context, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 385, note 5. About the thirteenth prayers written by George Akropolites, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 186.25–28 and also cf. Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 382–383, note 4 and Macrides, “The New Constantine”, 36–37.

not the first emperor to dismount his horse during a triumphal *procession*. In 971, John I Tzimiskes (r. 969–976) performed a triumph to celebrate his victory over the Rus and the Bulgarians.¹⁷³ Wishing to emphasize the role of the Virgin Mary as protector and to attribute his success to her, John I Tzimiskes decided to place the icon of the Virgin Mary on the chariot, while he went on foot demonstrating his humility and submission to God.¹⁷⁴ Parallels can also be drawn between this triumph and that of John II Komnenos (r. 1118 to 1143), in 1133 after the capture of Kastamon.¹⁷⁵ During the *procession* ceremony, the icon of the Virgin Mary was placed on the imperial chariot in a conspicuous place to be seen by all, while the emperor himself chose to walk on foot. Thus, within the framework of the political ideology of all three emperors, namely John I Tzimiskes, John II Komnenos, and Michael VIII, we can trace the central role attributed to the Theotokos.¹⁷⁶ In this manner, Michael VIII's triumphal *procession*, while entering Constantinople for the first time in 1261, allowed the founder of the dynasty to allude once more to his unbreakable connections with the Constantinopolitan Emperors who ruled before him.

In the eyes of the contemporaries, Michael VIII's gesture was probably well perceived, because it intended to propagate the message of a ruler respectful to God. Contrary to the post-coronation *procession* performed in Nicaea, Michael VIII wished to turn the attention to the icon instead of to himself. Not only did he follow the icon, but he did so on foot “in a manner more reverential to God than imperial” – to use George Akropolites' words.¹⁷⁷ During this triumphal entry, the emphasis was not placed on the emperor and his victorious general, but on the Mother of God. Michael VIII wanted to enter the city, not as a military leader and conqueror, but as a ruler who was humble and grateful for the God-given victory that he and his subjects were granted. Elsewhere in his text, George

¹⁷³ About John I Tzimiskes, see *ODB*, II, 1045, s. v. “John I Tzimiskes (Τζιμισκής)”, with further bibliography.

¹⁷⁴ See Papageorgiou, “Political Ideology”, 43.

¹⁷⁵ On John II Komnenos and his reign, see Bucossi and Suarez, eds., *John II Komnenos*, with further bibliography. About the triumph of 1133, see Magdalino, “The Triumph of 1133”, 53–70. Cf. Papageorgiou, “Political Ideology”, 42–43.

¹⁷⁶ The Theotokos was presented as one of the main supports of John II Komnenos' political ideology. For this idea, see, for example, Papageorgiou, “Political Ideology”, 37–52 especially 41–43.

¹⁷⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.26–27: θεοπρεπῶς μᾶλλον ἢ βασιλικῶς τὴν τῆς Χρυσείας πύλιν ἐισῆλθεν ὁ βασιλεύς [Michael VIII Palaiologos]; and George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.28: πεζὸς γὰρ ἐβάδιζε. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 384. Michael VIII must have had in mind other imperial models for the performance of this ceremony. Cf. Puech, “La refondation”, 358–359. In addition, some interesting views on the secular-imperial and Christian-religious adventus tradition in Late Antiquity can be found in MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony*, 62–89. About the evolution of the Late Roman imperial triumph up to the Middle Byzantine period, see McCormick, *Eternal Victory*.

Akropolites stressed that the city of Constantine became again subject to the emperor of the Romans by the providence of God, in a just and fitting way.¹⁷⁸ This fact is also highlighted by a dialogue that George Akropolites constructs between Michael VIII and his sister Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina.¹⁷⁹ On the one hand, Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina suggests that “Christ has conferred Constantinople” upon her brother, and on the other hand, Michael VIII admits that God “is able quickly to grant to whomever he wishes that which is almost impossible”.¹⁸⁰ Overall, the imperial propaganda promoted vigorously the idea that Michael VIII enjoyed godly approval. During this part of the *procession*, Michael VIII let the crowd watch him following the road that the Mother of God had opened for him, literally and metaphorically.

Interestingly, although the ceremony alluded greatly to a solemn, ecclesiastical *procession*, it displayed the power of the imperial office. It is often overlooked that any public parade, let alone an imperial *procession* of such scale and solemnity, could be organized only under the sponsorship of a powerful ruler. George Akropolites writes that Michael VIII had already prepared the ground for his entry to the city and that he carefully deliberated the way the *procession* should have been performed. Initially, he decided that the thanksgiving prayers should be said on behalf of not only the emperor but also of the clergy, the city, and its whole population. Afterward, Michael VIII asked first Nikephoros Blemmydes and then George Akropolites to compose the prayers in an appropriate and quick manner.¹⁸¹ Finally, he invested in the repopulation and restoration of the city and repaired a significant number of its buildings and churches.¹⁸² Our knowledge of his restoration activity derives from writings during and after his time, yet we have no idea of the length of time involved. Both the encomiasts (Manuel Holobolos and Gregory of Cyprus) and historians (George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras) imply that “all the work of restoration was

¹⁷⁸ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 183.17–20.

¹⁷⁹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 183.24–184.21. On Eirene (or Irene), sister of Michael VIII, who later received the name Eulogia when she became a nun, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 380, 2 note and Nicol, *The Byzantine Family*, 11–15, no. 13 (“John Komnenos Kantakouzenos Angelos” – Husband of Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina).

¹⁸⁰ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 184.13: ὁ γὰρ Χριστὸς ἀπεχαρίσατό σοι [Michael VIII Palaiologos] τὴν Κωνσταντινούπολιν; and George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 184.19–21: τὸ δὲ ῥᾶω ταῦτα εἶναι θεῶ καὶ αὐτὸς ξυνομολογῶ, καὶ θάπτον ἂν τὰ μικροῦ καὶ ἀδύνατα τοῖς οἷς βούλοιο παρασχεῖν καθέστηκε δυνατός. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 380. About George Akropolites’ approach on the topic of the divine providence, in general, and on the ascription of victory to divine intervention, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 54–55.

¹⁸¹ About Michael VIII’s preparatory actions, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 186.5–28.

¹⁸² Concerning the repopulation and restoration of Constantinople by Michael VIII, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 88.12–16. For the repairs to Hagia Sophia, see Pachymèrès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233.8–15. On the activities that Michael VIII undertook towards this goal see also Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 122–125 and Talbot, “Restoration”, 243–261.

accomplished in a sudden intense burst of activity in the first few months after Michael VIII's entry into the city".¹⁸³ Thus, it is not accidental that he eventually assumed the title of the "new Constantine" and advertised himself as a second founder of Constantinople.¹⁸⁴

In order to project even more his imperial authority and status, Michael VIII left the icon of the Virgin at the Stoudios monastery and then continued the *procession* on horseback.¹⁸⁵ In his full glory, he arrived at the holy church of Hagia Sophia, gave his due thanks to God again, and was received with enthusiasm by the crowd.¹⁸⁶ According to George Akropolites, "there was no one who was not jumping for joy and exulting".¹⁸⁷ The author uses similar language to describe everyone's reaction after Michael VIII's coronation ceremony in Nicaea.¹⁸⁸ In my view, this is not accidental, as the reader is urged to connect the two events. The politically most influential man of the state in Nicaea was now presented as being recognized and welcomed as the ideal ruler and patron of Constantinople. Again, this shows how the author uses rituals in order to project Michael VIII's political agenda. It does not reflect the overall atmosphere in the city, since, as we know, there was also a lot of opposition.

Two important persons were absent from this particular celebration. They were the rightful heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, who was left in Asia Minor, and Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos, who, according to George Akropolites, was ill-disposed towards Michael VIII and, at the time, was detained at Skoutari on the Asian side.¹⁸⁹ The relationship between Michael VIII and Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos was stormy. George Pachymeres explains that the reason for their disagreement was Michael VIII's disregard for the young John IV Laskaris' imperial rights, and adds that their dispute even resulted in Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos' refusal to perform his patriarchal duties for a certain period of time.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ See Macrides, "The New Constantine", 15.

¹⁸⁴ On Michael VIII as "new Constantine", see Macrides, "The New Constantine", 13–41. Patriarch Germanos III (1265–1266) is believed to be the first person to refer to Michael VIII as "new Constantine". See Macrides, "The New Constantine", especially 19–25.

¹⁸⁵ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.29–188.1.

¹⁸⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 188.1–7.

¹⁸⁷ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 188.5–6: οὐδεις γὰρ ἦν ὁ μὴ σκιρτῶν τε καὶ ἀγαλλόμενος καὶ μικροῦ. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 384.

¹⁸⁸ About this observation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 386, note 12. On George Akropolites' text, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 161.22–23: οὕτως ἅπαντες ἐπεγάννυντο καὶ ἐσκίρτων ὑφ' ἡδονῆς. For the English translation, see Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 351.

¹⁸⁹ On John IV Laskaris, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 80.14–17. On Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 187.6–10. See also the Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 385, note 2.

¹⁹⁰ Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 159.6–21. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 80.11–20.

However, eventually Michael VIII prevailed upon Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos and convinced him to return to his office and the new patriarchal seat in Constantinople.¹⁹¹ Enjoying the support of the patriarch was necessary for Michael VIII, who wished to project the idea of a smooth accession to the imperial throne and a catholic acceptance by all, and especially by the church, which would have been able to provide additional sanction to his claims.

For the above-mentioned ideological reasons, Michael VIII proceeded to the performance of a second *coronation*, this time in recaptured Constantinople. The second *coronation* was again performed by Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos and took place sometime at the beginning of autumn,¹⁹² definitely before December 25, 1261.¹⁹³ The only source that refers explicitly to the event is George Pachymeres' *History*. George Pachymeres relates that, as soon as Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos came to Constantinople, he performed the second *coronation* in the newly renovated church of Hagia Sophia.¹⁹⁴ Michael VIII's second *coronation* signaled the reconstitution of the Patriarchate in Constantinople and reflected the solemnity of Michael VIII in the inhabitants of the restored city. The reason why George Pachymeres mentions this symbolic event is probably because of his special interest and involvement in both ecclesiastical and political affairs. George Pachymeres held both the ecclesiastical title of *protekdikos* and the imperial title of *dikeophylax* designating a judge.¹⁹⁵ On the other hand, George Akropolites was deeply concerned with the task of legitimizing the acts of the founder of Palaiologan dynasty. Most likely, George Akropolites omits discussing his patron's second *coronation* as it contradicts the idea of his relatively unproblematic accession to power.

Furthermore, during Michael VIII's second *coronation*, the name of the rightful heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, was not commemorated at all. Instead, according to George

¹⁹¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 88.16–23.

¹⁹² Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233–234, footnote 5.

¹⁹³ Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 387–388, note 5. Macrides, “The New Constantine”, 17.

¹⁹⁴ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233.1–28 and especially 233.23–25.

¹⁹⁵ See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 23.3–8: Γεώργιος Κωνσταντινουπολίτης [George Pachymeres] μὲν τὸ ἀνέκαθεν, ἐν Νικαίᾳ δὲ καὶ γεννηθεὶς καὶ τραφεὶς, ἐν Κωνσταντίνῳ δὲ καταστάς αὐθις, ὅτε Θεοῦ νεύματι ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίους αὐτὴ ἐγένετο, ἔτη γεγωνὸς εἴκοσιν ἐνὸς δέοντος τηλικάδε, καὶ κλήρω δοθεὶς θείῳ καὶ ἀξιώμασιν ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς διαπρέψας καὶ ἕως καὶ ἐς πρωτεκδικίου φθάσας τιμὴν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐν ἀνακτόρων εἰς δικαιοφύλακα τιμηθεὶς, τάδε ξυνέγραψεν. On the civil and ecclesiastical offices that George Pachymeres held cf. also Lampakes, *Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης*, 21–38. For the ecclesiastical institution of *protekdikos* (*πρωτέκδικος*), see *ODB*, III, 1742–1743; *Darrouzès, Recherches*, 323–332. For the title *dikeophylax* (*δικαιοφύλαξ*), which was conferred by imperial appointment, see *ODB*, I, 624; *Darrouzès, Recherches*, 109–111.

Pachymeres, Caesar Alexios Strategopoulos' name was mentioned at the ceremony as a token of appreciation for his immense military accomplishment, namely the re-capture of Constantinople.¹⁹⁶ The omission of John IV's name must have triggered mixed emotions in everyone who was present at the event, as George Pachymeres implies.¹⁹⁷ Equally surprising must have been the unexpected addition of the heroic Caesar's name to the celebratory acclamations. The deliberate verbal reference to Alexios Strategopoulos was anticipated to connect Michael VIII with the victorious general and, ultimately, to attribute to the twice crowned emperor the recovery of Constantinople. Probably for the same reason, Michael VIII ordered Alexios Strategopoulos' name to be commemorated along with own for one year throughout the empire.¹⁹⁸ Thus, for the purposes of imperial propaganda, Michael VIII exploited successfully both the liberation of Constantinople from the Latin army and the re-settlement of the imperial court back in its old capital. The association of the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty with those unique achievements entered the official ceremonial during Michael VIII's second *coronation* and kept being recalled and extolled at every opportunity.

In conclusion, it is clear that both ecclesiastical *coronations* of Michael VIII, the first in Nicaea and the second in Constantinople, were used to assert his political power and to enhance his status as the only emperor crowned by the hand of the patriarch. The "official spokesman" of Michael VIII, George Akropolites, attempts to ascribe legitimacy to Michael VIII's claims to the throne and to project the image of a smooth accession. However, George Pachymeres' and Nikephoros Gregoras' narratives reveal that, actually, Michael VIII disregarded the rights of young John IV Laskaris and did everything he could to undermine his underage opponent. Obviously, Michael VIII employed the accession ceremonies of *shield-raising proclamation* and *coronation* – and even the *post-coronation procession* during his first public appearance in Nicaea – to project his dominant position over John IV and to legitimate his claims to imperial authority and power. The use of the *shield-raising* ceremony and the claim that everything was performed as "customary" (ὡς ἔθος) alluded to the Laskarids' unbreakable connections with the Constantinopolitan Emperors and ultimately created a link for the Palaiologan to both the Laskarids and the Constantinopolitan Emperors. Michael VIII's usurpation was successful. He had even succeeded in presenting himself as the divinely chosen emperor, who managed to restore the imperial court and the

¹⁹⁶ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233.23–28.

¹⁹⁷ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233.26–27: μνήμη δ' οὐκ ἦν τὸ σύνολον Ἰωάννου, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον καὶ τῷ καίσαρι Ἀλεξίῳ προσεπεφιλοτίμητο.

¹⁹⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 89.10–13.

patriarchate to their old capital. In the same way, Michael VIII employed the “symbolic language” of ceremonies to assure his succession and lay the foundation of his new dynasty. On his side, he had George Akropolites, who like Michael VIII himself, strove to justify his patron’s actions. At certain instances, George Pachymeres’ account of events differs from that of George Akropolites in the sense that the latter provides new information and details on ceremonial events that reveal the skillful ways Michael VIII took power by disregarding the rights of young John IV Laskaris. It is therefore important to distinguish between the authors’ narrative strategies and their use of rituals from the factual level of rituals in late Byzantine political life. Thus, the ceremonies connected to the imperial accession of Michael VIII’s son, Andronikos II Palaiologos (co-emperor in 1272, r. 1282–1328), which is the subject of the next chapter, can be fruitfully analyzed in conjunction with this complex ideological and political game of power and hierarchy.

Chapter II.

Andronikos II Palaiologos: The Story of a Co-Emperor, His Status, and His Insignia

Andronikos II Palaiologos' rise to power was gradual and carefully planned.¹⁹⁹ First, he ruled as co-emperor with his father, Michael VIII, and then, as sole emperor after Michael VIII's death, in 1282. Compared to the detailed information about the accession ceremonies of Michael VIII, the information concerning the accession of his son, Andronikos II, is considerably less and the special ceremonies that were performed to signal his change of status from co-emperor to emperor are not known.²⁰⁰ However, the two authors who relate Andronikos II's rise to power, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras, provide interesting background information on the acts carried out by Michael VIII to facilitate the dynastic succession and strengthen the political position of the Palaiologan family. Therefore, in this chapter, the coronation ceremony of Andronikos II is analyzed in connection to the diplomatic negotiations that led to his marriage to Anna of Hungary and the imperial *insignia* that the newly appointed co-emperor received from his father. Additionally, along with the accumulation of power in the hands of the co-emperor, the *oath-taking* ceremony is examined as another mechanism employed by the Palaiologoi to promote the institution of co-emperorship. However, despite the dynastic efforts to increase the power in the hands of the co-emperor, it became mandatory to impose some restrictions on the privileges of Andronikos II, and, as I will argue, this course of action was chosen to preserve a hierarchical balance within the imperial court and to secure the senior emperor's supremacy.

Andronikos II Palaiologos and the Byzantine–Hungarian Marriage Alliance

The senior emperor, Michael VIII, fully exploited the symbolic and the ideological associations of the accession ceremonies not only to legitimize his own succession, but also that of his son, Andronikos II. In fact, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras

¹⁹⁹ About Andronikos II Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21436: Παλαιολόγος, Ἀνδρόνικος Β΄. Δούκας Ἄγγελος Κομνηνός (Palaiologos Andronikos II. Dukas Angelos Komnenos), with further bibliography. On networking strategies at the court of Andronikos II, see Gaul, "All the Emperor's Men", 245–270.

²⁰⁰ For this observation cf. also Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέμμις*, 186.

underscore Michael VIII's role and actions before, during and after the ceremonies that promoted his son to the status of co-emperor.²⁰¹ The relevant passages suggest that Andronikos II's *coronation* ceremony as co-emperor was closely connected to another ceremony, namely to his marriage to Anna of Hungary.²⁰² In fact, George Pachymeres' account of Andronikos II's *coronation* is placed into a general chapter dealing with the quest for the "proper wife"²⁰³ and the dispatch of qualified ambassadors.²⁰⁴ My analysis below aims to highlight Michael VIII's political and ideological agenda, as well as the multifaceted political milieu of Andronikos II's rise to the throne.

Michael VIII first negotiated with Alfonso X of Castile, who wanted his daughter to marry Andronikos II, and, in this way, to include Byzantium in his system of alliances against Charles I of Anjou.²⁰⁵ Charles I of Anjou was one of Byzantium's most dangerous opponents at this time since his political plan was to gain control of the Balkans.²⁰⁶ Alfonso X of Castile also felt threatened by the increasing territorial and political power of Charles I of Anjou. Their rivalry escalated after Pope Gregory X refused to recognize him as emperor because this would undermine the position of Charles I of Anjou in Tuscany, where the

²⁰¹ See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.15–23 and 415.1–9; and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.7–23.

²⁰² Regarding the date of Andronikos II's marriage to Anna of Hungary, see Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 58, no. 1982. Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.15–16. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.7–10. There is some confusion in the sources and in the secondary bibliography concerning the date of the marriage and its connection with Andronikos II's *coronation* (8 November 1272). Most probably the marriage took place in the late summer of 1272 (before September 1). For the discussion about this matter, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27–28, footnote 56. See also Failler, "Chronologie II", 184–186 and especially 185, footnote 17; Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 412–413, footnotes 5 and 6. There is a theory that the famous *Vatican Epithalamion*, cod. gr. 1851, with illustrations and a poem written for the marriage of a princess, refers to Anna of Hungary's marriage to Andronikos II. However, the identification of the persons involved and dating of the manuscript are still debatable. See, for example, Canart, *Cod. Vat. Graeci* I, 324–325; Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 210–230, Strzygowski, "Das Epithalamion", 546–567; Jeffreys, "The Vernacular εἰσιτήριον", 101–115; Papademetriou, "Ἐπιθαλάμιος", 452–460; Hilsdale, "Constructing a Byzantine Augusta", 458–483; Hennessy, "A child bride", 115–150 and more recently Hennessy, "The Vatican Epithalamion", 177–183.

²⁰³ "Proper wife" is the term that George Pachymeres employs. See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.15–16: καὶ ἔδει συναρμόττειν αὐτὸν τῇ πρεπούσῃ συζύγῳ.

²⁰⁴ Indicatively, the title of the chapter in George Pachymeres' *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* is: Ὅπως ἀποστέλλεται εἰς Παιονίαν μετὰ τοῦ μεγάλου δουκὸς τοῦ Λάσκαρι ὁ προπατριαρχεύσας Γερμανὸς κάκειθεν ἤγαγε νύμφην τῷ τοῦ βασιλέως υἱῷ καὶ ὅπως ἐστέφθησαν. See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.11–13.

²⁰⁵ In the relevant passage of George Pachymeres' *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* the name of Alfonso X of Castile is not mentioned: Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.11–19. Cf. the comment of A. Failler in Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 410–411, footnote 4. However, Deno John Geanakoplos convincingly argues that Michael VIII negotiated with Alfonso X of Castile. See Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 252–254 and especially 252, footnote 92. See also Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27: Apparently, the initiative came from Alfonso X who "wanted to give his other daughter to the son of Paleologos, the Emperor of the Greeks".

²⁰⁶ Regarding Charles I of Anjou's attempts to penetrate diplomatically and militarily into the Balkans between 1270 and 1273, see Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 232–235.

Angevin prince was doing excellent work in keeping the peace.²⁰⁷ According to George Pachymeres, the negotiations between Alfonso X of Castile and Michael VIII failed due to difficulties in exchanging embassies through hostile territories possessed by Charles I of Anjou.²⁰⁸ However, as Deno John Geanakoplos observes, the reason why the Byzantine-Castilian royal marriage failed to materialize may have been Michael VIII's realization that Alfonso X of Castile would oppose Charles I of Anjou's expansion plans whether a marital connection with Byzantium existed or not, and thus a marriage alliance with the King of Hungary would prove more valuable.²⁰⁹ Moreover, Castile was less strategically situated than Hungary with respect to Byzantium, while Hungary was one of the most dangerous political powers to the north of the Byzantine Empire. In 1269, Charles I of Anjou had already concluded a marriage alliance with Bela IV of Hungary that secured aid against mutual enemies "outside the faith of the [Catholic] church", and this was considered a significant threat to Byzantium.²¹⁰ For all these reasons, Michael VIII decided to negotiate with the son of Bela IV, King Stephen V of Hungary, and tried to promote Andronikos II's marriage to the daughter of King Stephen V, Anna of Hungary.²¹¹

The success of the Byzantine–Hungarian negotiations may be perhaps ascribed to the well-planned embassy that Michael VIII sent to King Stephen V's court. George Pachymeres reveals that among the most eminent members of the embassy were the former patriarch Germanos III and Michael Laskaris.²¹² Michael VIII's choice of ambassadors was very appropriate, because, for example, Michael Laskaris was the brother of Theodore I Laskaris

²⁰⁷ Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou*, 136. On the rivalry and the political developments in the West, see, for example, Kiesewetter, *Die Anfänge der Regierung Karls II. von Anjou*, 43–75.

²⁰⁸ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.16–19. For Charles I of Anjou, see *PLP* 11232: Κάρολος I. (Karulos I.), with further bibliography. See also Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411, footnote 5.

²⁰⁹ See Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 252–254.

²¹⁰ See Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 216–217 and especially footnotes 98 and 99; Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27 and especially footnote 55.

²¹¹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.24–26. See also Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 233; King Stephen (or Stephan) V was the elder son of King Béla IV of Hungary and Maria Laskarina, a daughter of the Emperor Theodore I Laskaris of Nicaea. For Maria Laskarina, see *PLP* 16893 Μαρία (Maria), with further bibliography. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 412, footnotes 1 and 2. Anna of Hungary (or Παλαιολογίνα Άννα - Palaiologina Anna – *PLP* 21348) was the daughter of King Stephen V, son of Béla IV. Wrongly, Franz Dölger states that Anna of Hungary was the daughter of King Béla IV: see Dölger, *Paraspora*, 174–175. In fact, Anna was his granddaughter. The same mistake is repeated in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 250, note 195.

²¹² Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.11–13 and 413. 7–11. Cf. Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 58, no. 1982. Regarding the embassy and the ambassadors, see Failler, "Chronologie II", 184–189. For the former patriarch Germanos III see also Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 412, footnote 3. For Michael Laskaris (Tzamantouros), see the footnote below.

and the bride, Anna, was the great-granddaughter of Theodore I Laskaris.²¹³ The relatively strong family ties and the blood connections between Michael Laskaris and Anna of Hungary certainly had a considerable impact on the positive outcome of the embassy, which was sealed with the marriage of Andronikos II to Anna of Hungary.

The Byzantino–Hungarian marriage alliance was a successful diplomatic move for four main reasons. Firstly, it allowed Michael VIII to prevent the danger of imminent cooperation between King Stephen V and Charles I of Anjou and to counteract the menace of further empowerment of the Angevin power. Secondly, this diplomatic alliance allowed Michael VIII to improve his position in the Balkans.²¹⁴ It is common knowledge that Michael VIII’s most troublesome neighbors in the Balkans were Bulgaria, Serbia, and Hungary. Therefore, the Byzantine–Hungarian alliance was an enormous diplomatic success because it guaranteed the coalition with, at least, one of the troublesome neighbors to the north.²¹⁵ Thirdly, this marital union provided further legitimacy for the Palaiologan dynasty through a matrimonial link with a descendant of the Laskarids, since the mother of Stephen V was a daughter of Theodore I Laskaris.²¹⁶ Finally, and most importantly, because of Byzantium’s good relations with Hungary and this new blood kinship, Michael VIII managed to avert a possible union between Hungary and rival members of the Laskarid party that was threatening his position as emperor.²¹⁷ Such a threat is suggested by George Pachymeres’ mention of the Laskarid blood in the Hungarian royal family.²¹⁸ Overall, the Byzantine–Hungarian pact proved to be very fruitful in promoting the Palaiologan dynasty’s political and ideological interests. Thus, Michael VIII’s domestic policy to achieve internal stability and to establish a new dynasty was successfully combined with his foreign policy aiming to secure Byzantium’s allies in the politically unstable area of the Balkans.

²¹³ For Michael Laskaris (Tzamantouros), see *PLP* 14554: Λάσκαρις, Μιχαήλ Τζαμάντουρος (Laskaris, Michael Tzamanturos), with further bibliography. See also Failler, “Chronologie II”, 185–186 and especially 185, footnote 19. Cf. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 90 footnote 2 and II, 412, footnote 4.

²¹⁴ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27.

²¹⁵ The others were the Serbs. See Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27: “To the north of the empire, the two most dangerous powers were Hungary and Serbia”.

²¹⁶ Cf. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27. Michael VIII and his wife Theodora Palaiologina (*PLP* 21380) had already family ties with the Laskarids. See Failler, “Pachymeriana quaedam”, 187–190, and the relevant family diagram, 191.

²¹⁷ A comprehensive list of attempted usurpations under the early Palaiologoi can be found in Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 120–121, table 3: “Attempted usurpations in Nicaea and under the early Palaiologoi”.

²¹⁸ For this idea, see Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 233. See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 411.24–26: Ἐπεὶ ταῦτα, ἔγνω πρὸς Παίονας [Hungarians] τὴν πρεσβείαν στείλαι· ὁ γὰρ ῥήξ ἐκείνων [King Stephen V of Hungary] υἱὸς ἦν Ῥωμογενῆς, ἐκ μητρὸς [Maria Laskarina] τῷ ῥήγι γεννηθείς, τῆς τοῦ παλαιοῦ Λάσκαρι [Theodore I Laskaris of Nicaea] θυγατρὸς.

The Coronation Ceremony of Co-Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos and his wife Anna of Hungary by Michael VIII Palaiologos

According to Pachymeres, on the day of Andronikos II's ceremonial *coronation*, Michael VIII crowned Andronikos II and his wife, Anna of Hungary, along with the contribution of the Patriarch Joseph I.²¹⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras agrees with George Pachymeres that both Andronikos II and his wife, Anna, were crowned during the ceremony by Michael VIII. However, contrary to George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras omits to mention the involvement of the patriarch.²²⁰ The testimony of George Pachymeres, who emphasizes that both the emperor and the patriarch performed the crowning, coincides with the information provided by the ceremonial handbook of Pseudo-Kodinos. According to Pseudo-Kodinos, typically, the emperor and the patriarch performed the crowning together and only in the case of the absence of the former, the patriarch performed the *coronation* alone.²²¹

On the contrary, concerning the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos II's wife, Anna, the information that George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras provide differs from Pseudo-Kodinos' guidelines. Through Pseudo-Kodinos' testimony, it becomes evident that the newly crowned co-emperor was expected to crown his wife.²²² However, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras briefly summarize the events in one sentence saying, more or less, that it was Emperor Michael VIII the one who crowned both Anna and Andronikos II. This probably can be attributed to the nature of the narrative sources, which are not usually interested in providing detailed information about ceremonies and, thus, tend

²¹⁹ See Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.15–18: Καὶ αὐθις τοῦ ἐπιόντος ἔτους, μηνὸς μουνυχιῶνος ὀγδόη, βασιλικῶς αὐτοὺς [Andronikos II Palaiologos and his wife Anne of Hungary, daughter of the king Stephen V of Hungary] σὺν τῷ πατριαρχοῦντι [Joseph I] ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] ταινιοῖ καὶ οἱ ὡς βασιλεῖ τὰ τῆς θεραπείας πρὸς τὸ μεγαλειότερον ἀποτάττει. Anna of Hungary (co-empress 1272–1281) was the first wife of Andronikos II. She died in 1281, before her husband became senior emperor in 1282. For Anna of Hungary, see *PLP* 21348: Παλαιολογίνα Ἄννα (Palaiologina Anna), with further bibliography. See also Failler – Laurent (eds.), Georges Pachymérès, II, 412–413, footnotes 2 and 6; Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 250–251, note 195.

²²⁰ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.7–10: Συχνὸς ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐρρήη χρόνος καὶ ἄγεται ὁ βασιλεὺς [Michael VIII Palaiologos] τῷ υἱῷ Ἀνδρονίκῳ γυναῖκα Ἄνναν τὴν ἐκ Παιόνων [Andronikos II Palaiologos and his wife Anne of Hungary] καὶ ἅμα τῷ βασιλικῷ καταστέφει συμβόλῳ. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 119.

²²¹ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.9–16: Εἰ οὖν, ὡς προείπομεν, πάρεστιν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς τε καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης λαβόντες τὸ στέμμα ἐπιτιθέασι τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως, καὶ ἐκφωνεῖ ὁ πατριάρχης τὸ «ἄξιος». Εἰ δ' οὐκ ἔστι πατὴρ αὐτοῦ, ποιεῖ τούτο μόνος ὁ πατριάρχης.

²²² Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 261.11–16: Κατερχόμενος οὖν τοῦ ἄμβωνος ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς λαμβάνει ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ πατριάρχου χειρὸς τὸ στέμμα εὐλογηθὲν πρότερον παρ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐπιτίθησι τῇ κεφαλῇ τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναικός [...]. See also Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 262.6–12: Καὶ οὕτω μὲν στεφόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς στέφει καὶ τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτοῦ γυναῖκα· εἰ δὲ συμβῆ προεστεμμένον εἶναι τὸν βασιλέα, στέφεται ἢ βασιλεὺς παρὰ τοῦ ἰδίου ἀνδρὸς καὶ βασιλέως ὁμοίως, ὅταν ἀγαγόμενος αὐτὴν εἰς γυναῖκα ἐπιτελῆ τὴν ἐπιγάμιον τελετὴν.

to abbreviate events. In any case, if indeed it was Michael VIII who performed the *coronation* of Andronikos II and Anna, this symbolic action has great ideological significance because it illustrates Michael VIII's great political power and reveals his imposing role during the ceremony. However, it is interesting to examine Michael VIII's actions, not only before and during but also after the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos II in conjunction with the young co-emperor's privileges and position in the early Palaiologan court.

Andronikos II Palaiologos' "Extraordinary Privileges" and *Insignia*

Both internal and external political insecurity after 1261 led Michael VIII to introduce innovations with regard to the *insignia* of the co-emperor and bestow "extraordinary privileges" upon his son, Andronikos II.²²³ Indeed, among other things, Andronikos II was allowed to have under his service a certain number of individual court offices.²²⁴ In addition, he was allowed to hold along with his father a gold-plated scepter during sermons, and finally he was permitted to issue imperial documents and sign them with red ink.²²⁵ A relevant *prostagma* concerning the status of Andronikos II as co-emperor was issued by Michael VIII in 1272.²²⁶ The *prostagma* is transmitted in codex Monacensis gr. 442 which contains one of the manuscripts (manuscript A) that preserves George Pachymeres' *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι*.²²⁷ George Pachymeres chooses to focus only on the above three privileges of Andronikos II because they were considered extreme and were eventually revoked by Michael VIII after further reflection.²²⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras chooses to mention only the right of Andronikos II to issue red-ink-signed *prostigmata*, without making any reference to the future restrictions imposed by the senior emperor.²²⁹ Modern scholars have over-

²²³ For the characterization of Andronikos II's privileges as "extraordinary", see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27–28, footnote 56.

²²⁴ See Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 38.22–39.2 and Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.18–21.

²²⁵ On the privilege to hold a gold-plated scepter, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.21–23 and II, 415.1. On the permission to issue imperial documents and sign them with red ink, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.3–6 and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.20–23.

²²⁶ *Prostagma* is an imperial document transmitting administrative orders, granting privileges, legislating, attesting an oath taken by the emperor (*horkomotikon prostagma*), appointing individuals to administrative positions and granting honorific titles. For *prostagma* (*πρόσταγμα*), see *ODB*, III, 1740. About the relevant *prostagma*, see Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 60–61, no. 1994; Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 33–41 (for the text, see especially 37–41).

²²⁷ Concerning codex Monacensis gr. 442, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, xxiii–xxxi and especially xxv–xxvi.

²²⁸ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.18–23 and 415.1–6.

²²⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.20–23.

emphasized Andronikos II's privileges, stating, for example, that Andronikos II received privileges that had "never before [been] granted to a junior emperor".²³⁰ In the following paragraphs, emphasis will be placed on the restrictions that were imposed retrospectively on the status and the symbols of authority of Andronikos II, an aspect so far less explored. The aim is to examine the reasons for co-emperor Andronikos II's hierarchical upgrading, his exclusive prerogatives as symbolic markers of his authority and the ideological framework that led to their gradual restriction.

The act of conferring "extraordinary privileges" on his son, Andronikos II, offered a drastic solution to the issue of dynastic succession, and it also gave Michael VIII the opportunity to respond vigorously to the external political challenges that the early Palaiologan dynasty had to face. The efforts of Michael VIII to establish a dynasty ran into resistance from supporters of the young John IV Laskaris. For example, George Pachymeres refers to the violent pro-Laskarid rebellion of citizens in the villages of Trikokkia and Zygos in 1262 because they felt the need to fight for the rights of John IV Laskaris after his blinding by Michael VIII.²³¹ Moreover, it seems that Michael VIII was trying to secure the dynastic succession against the ambitions of other members of his family. George Pachymeres explicitly states that Michael VIII was afraid of a conspiracy organized by both of his brothers, John Doukas Palaiologos (*PLP* 21487) and Constantine Palaiologos (*PLP* 21498).²³² The author also explains that Michael VIII was especially concerned about his brother John Doukas, who at the time was a *despot* and demonstrated extreme zeal in fighting and gained popularity because of his acts of charity and benevolence, which of course were

²³⁰ See Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 233. Cf. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27–28, footnote 56: "Andronikos II received extraordinary privileges on his coronation".

²³¹ On Michael VIII blinding of John IV Laskaris, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 257.16–275.21. On the event and the fact that George Akropolites strategically chooses to remain silent, see Gardner, *Lascarids*, 233–234 and 260–261; cf. also Macrides, *George Akropolites*, 71–75. For the rebellions in Trikokkia and Zygos in 1262, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 259.23–267.23; Cf. Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 258, footnote 3. As Dimiter Angelov explains, the rebellions in Asia Minor and the alienation of the Anatolian population from Constantinople after Michael VIII's usurpation was sparked by the political oath that all Nicaean subjects sworn in December 1258 to both the underage child-emperor John IV and to Michael VIII who was about to be proclaimed co-emperor. For his analysis, based also on George Pachymeres' point of view on the Nicaean oath, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 329. A list of attempted usurpations can be found in Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 120–121, table 3: "Attempted usurpations in Nicaea and under the early Palaiologoi".

²³² Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.11–12. Regarding the high-ranking dignities of Michael VIII's brothers, indicatively, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 152, footnote 3 and II, 415, footnote 4. About John Doukas Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21487: Παλαιολόγος, Ἰωάννης Κομνηνὸς Δούκας Ἄγγελος (Palaiologos Ioannes Komnenos Dukas Angelos), with further bibliography. Also, see the footnote below. About Constantine Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21498: Παλαιολόγος, Κωνσταντῖνος Δούκας Ἄγγελος Κομνηνός (Palaiologos, Konstantinos Dukas Angelos Komnenos), with further bibliography. Moreover, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137, footnote 5; and 152, footnote 3.

considered good qualities in prospective rulers.²³³ Obviously, John Doukas had managed to build up a strong network of supporters from among the broader imperial elite. Thus, the senior emperor Michael VIII hoped to secure Andronikos II's succession against his brother's ambitions by introducing innovations to the institution of co-emperorship and enhancing the *insignia* of the young heir to the throne.

Michael VIII wished to advertise Andronikos II's exceptional prerogatives not only to the Byzantines who contested the new regime – especially to the supporters of his brother, the Despot John, and the rebellious members of the Laskarid party – but also to the Hungarian King Stephen V. In my view, it is not accidental that Andronikos II became the recipient of these unique entitlements immediately following his *coronation* as co-emperor and his simultaneous marriage to Anna of Hungary.²³⁴ The novel imperial prerogatives that Andronikos II received along with the title of co-emperor were a tangible guarantee that he would most certainly inherit the Byzantine imperial throne after his father. In this perspective, Andronikos II's unusual privileges and imperial insignia were imposed by the overall unstable political situation as an attempt to further legitimize and establish the new dynasty of the Palaiologans. The Palaiologan court sent a dual political message to Stephen V: that Andronikos II was the rightful heir to the Byzantine throne and that the Hungarian king should lay aside any claims he might have had to the imperial throne. As a father-in-law of the future Byzantine Emperor, Stephen V could now draw prestige and power from his newly acquired kinship with the family of Palaiologoi and was expected to support his son-in-law and the dynasty's efforts to face internal and external political adversities, especially the Angevin threat.

Andronikos II's *insignia* constituted strong visual representations of power and, thus, were used to regulate the hierarchical balance of power within the Byzantine imperial court. In my view, the young co-emperor's privileges determined the fragile balances of power not simply between Andronikos II and Despot John or other family members by excluding them

²³³ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.11–14: [Michael VIII Palaiologos] εἶχε γὰρ εἰς ὑποψίαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἔτι, καὶ μᾶλλον τὸν δεσπότην Ἰωάννην [John Doukas Palaiologos], πολὺν τὸ θερμὸν παρ' ἐκείνῳ βλέπων εἰς μάχας καὶ τὴν παρὰ πάντων πρὸς ἐκεῖνον διὰ τὸ εὐεργετικὸν καὶ πρὸς τὰς δόσεις πρόχειρον τοῖς αἰτοῦσιν ἀγαθοθέλειαν. About John Doukas, see the footnote above and also: Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 152, footnote 3; II, 415, footnote 4; II, and 417, footnote 3. Moreover, cf. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 27–28, footnote 56. Regarding the last years of John Doukas, see Magdalino, “John Palaiologos”, 143–149, with further bibliography.

²³⁴ See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.15–23 and 415.1–6.

from imperial power, but they especially aimed to set the boundaries of Andronikos II's and Michael VIII's authority and to define the relationship between them.

Referring to the status of Andronikos II, George Pachymeres attests that three offices were established to serve the new co-emperor, each with its own individual official: Libadios as “pinkernes”, Bryennios as “epi tes trapezes” and finally Tzamlakon from Christoupolis as “tatas” of the court.²³⁵ In the relevant *prostagma* of 1272 only the “epi tis trapezis” is cited, probably because the other officials were mentioned in the first two pages of the document, which are missing.²³⁶ The offices of “pinkernes” and “tatas”, as well as the names of these offices' holders, are only attested by George Pachymeres.²³⁷ As it can be drawn from the book of Pseudo-Kodinos, George Pachymeres refers to these offices according to their hierarchical order within the court, with “pinkernes” being in the highest place among the three offices. Scholars are not sure what exactly the duties of “tatas” were,²³⁸ but it can be said with certainty that the offices of “pinkernes” and “epi tes trapezes” were firmly connected with court matters and in particular with ceremonies connected to the court banquets. On the one hand, “pinkernes”, the cup-bearer, was a post held originally by a palace eunuch and, later, under the Komnenoi by some bearded men and even by the emperor's relatives. After the thirteenth century, “pinkernes” became a high honorific title and the office's importance grew significantly.²³⁹ On the other hand, the post of “epi tes trapezes”, also usually held by a eunuch, was associated with imperial banquets and the introduction of the guests. The holder of this office together with “pinkernes”, waited on the emperor and delivered dishes from the emperors' table to the guests.²⁴⁰

The fact that two out of the three offices were certainly connected to banquets reveals the important role of the banquet-ceremonies for the court ceremonial of the Palaiologan period, and especially for Andronikos II, who would now have to meet more often with court

²³⁵ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.18–21: Τάττει δὲ τούτω καὶ τρία τῶν ὀφφικίων ἰδίως ὡς ἀναγκαῖα· καὶ τὸν μὲν Λιβαδάριον πικέρηνην ἀποκαθίστησι, τὸν δε γε Βρυέννιον ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης τιμᾶ καὶ τρίτον τὸν ἐκ Χριστουπόλεως Τζαμπλάκωνα τατᾶν τῆς αὐλῆς αὐτοῦ ἐγκαθίστησιν.

²³⁶ Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 38.25. About the two pages that are missing from the beginning of the manuscript, see Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 33 and 47–49.

²³⁷ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413, footnote 7.

²³⁸ For *tatas* (τατᾶς), see Guiland, “Tatas”, 149–151 and especially 149–151 (repr. in eadem, *Titres*, XXIV: 147–152 and especially 149–151); *ODB*, III, 2013–2014; Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 48–49.

²³⁹ For *pinkernes* ((ἐ)πικέρηνης, see Guiland, “L'Échanson”, 179–214 and especially 188–214 (repr. in eadem, *Recherches*, I, 237–265 and especially 242–250); *ODB*, III, 1679.

²⁴⁰ For *epi tes trapezes* (ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης), see Guiland, “Le Maître d'hôtel de l'empereur”, 179–214 and especially 179–187 (repr. in eadem, *Recherches*, I, 237–265 and especially 237–241); *ODB*, I, 722–723, with further bibliography.

officials and aristocrats or even foreign ambassadors. Although one might think that Andronikos II could somehow act independently from his father by having these officials at his disposal, this is not the case. Considering the role of these high-ranking officials and their proximity to the imperial family, it is no coincidence that Michael VIII decided to assign them to serve Andronikos II. The holders of these offices must have been worthy of Emperor Michael VIII's trust and, presumably, advanced his interests by reporting to him any suspicious acts of Andronikos II, who was considered capable of usurpation. This hypothesis is supported through the evaluation of further precautionary measures that Michael VIII implemented in order to restrict Andronikos II's "extraordinary privileges".

George Pachymeres also attests that, at least at first, the young co-emperor was permitted to hold along with his father a gold-plated imperial scepter during the chanting of hymns in the liturgy.²⁴¹ However, the Byzantine historian claims that Andronikos II was seen publicly holding the gold-plated imperial scepter along with his father on only one or two occasions.²⁴² Michael VIII revoked his first decision and wished that he were the only one holding the imperial scepter because "the imperial authority was one and, therefore, the imperial scepter, symbol of the imperial authority, should be one".²⁴³ The scepter as part of the Byzantine imperial costume has a long-standing tradition. Initially, it was an attribute of the Roman consuls but by the early Byzantine period it had already been adopted by the Byzantine emperors and transformed into one of the imperial *insignia*.²⁴⁴ At the time of Constantine I the Great (r. 306–370), the Roman scepter surmounted by an eagle was soon replaced by a square panel, the so-called *labarum*, which iconographically alluded to

²⁴¹ See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.21–23: Ἡὐτρέπιστο μέντοι τούτω καὶ βακτηρία βασιλικὴ χρυσοῦ ὑπόζυλος, ἐς ὃ κρατεῖν ταύτην ἐπὶ τῶν θείων ὕμνων, ὡς ἔθος, σὺν τῷ πατρὶ [Michael VIII Palaiologos]. Καὶ ἐπράχθη καὶ τότε, ἅπαξ ἢ (415) καὶ δεύτερον ἢ καὶ πλέον ἡμῶν ἰδόντων κρατοῦντα. About the scepter as part of the official imperial costume and as one of the imperial *insignia*, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 31–33.

²⁴² See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 413.23 and 415.1: (413) Καὶ ἐπράχθη καὶ τότε, ἅπαξ ἢ (415) καὶ δεύτερον ἢ καὶ πλέον ἡμῶν ἰδόντων κρατοῦντα.

²⁴³ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.1–3: Ἐπειτα δόξαν τῷ βασιλεῖ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] – μίαν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ἀρχὴν, βακτηρία δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς σύμβολον, χρῆναι δὲ καὶ ταύτην μίαν εἶναι – , διὰ ταῦτα ἠθέτητο τοῦτο. In the late Byzantine period, the idea that the imperial authority is one and undivided appealed even when three members of the Palaiologan family were in power: for example, Andronikos II, Michael IX and Andronikos III. At some point, it seems that Andronikos II and Michael IX were sharing the status and privileges of the Byzantine emperor, while Andronikos III had the status of the co-emperor; yet the imperial ideology projected the idea of unity and concord between the emperors in relation to their decisions. See Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 186–188. Cf. the comments of Mavrommatis, *Οἱ πρότεροι Παλαιολόγοι*, 44, in connection to their signatures on imperial documents (*prostagmata*).

²⁴⁴ About the scepter as part of the imperial costume, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 31–33, with further bibliography.

military victory and triumph over the enemy.²⁴⁵ The cross-topped scepter became a standard during the Middle and Late Byzantine period.²⁴⁶ According to Pseudo-Kodinos, carrying the cross-topped scepter was a way for the emperor to show his faith in Christ.²⁴⁷ It seems that in portraits of Late Byzantine emperors the scepter was usually surmounted by a cross, while the *labarum* often appeared only on coins and seals.²⁴⁸ To my knowledge, Andronikos II's seals portrayed the young co-emperor holding a *labarum*-scepter along with his father, and at least one occasion he appears holding a cruciform scepter in his right hand.²⁴⁹ Concerning the coins of Michael VIII and Andronikos II, there are a few examples of both of them holding a cross-scepter or a patriarchal cross and at least on one occasion they are holding a trifurcated scepter.²⁵⁰ In any case, the right of Andronikos II to hold the imperial scepter during specific public occasions aimed to accentuate the importance of the institution of co-emperorship. By showing off the imperial scepter publicly, Andronikos II could celebrate his triumphal victory over political opponents and claimants to the imperial throne as well as the fact that he was the most important man in the empire after Michael VIII. However, through George Pachymeres' text, it becomes evident that at some point after 1272 the scepter was perceived as an explicit symbol of the imperial office itself. Therefore, it was imperative for Michael VIII to determine who was going to appear publicly with this symbol of imperial authority and hierarchy. In this context, the restriction of Andronikos II's right to hold the imperial scepter aimed to preserve Michael VIII's status at the top of the imperial court's hierarchy.

In addition to the above two prerogatives that were invested in Andronikos II, both George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras confirm that Michael VIII allowed his son to issue imperial documents.²⁵¹ According to George Pachymeres, again, there is a restriction: "[T]he exception of affixing the menologema, as is the custom of the emperors – but to write exactly, with red letters in his own hand, 'Andronikos by the grace of Christ emperor of the

²⁴⁵ On *labarum*, its use and symbolism, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 32–33.

²⁴⁶ About the scepter as part of the imperial costume, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 31–33, with further bibliography.

²⁴⁷ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 201.4–7.

²⁴⁸ See Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 32–33.

²⁴⁹ For the seals of Andronikos II, see Zacos and Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, pp.116–119, nos. 123–124. See especially the seal no. 123bis pp. 117–118 and the commentary.

²⁵⁰ For these coins, see Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, part 2, plate 13, coins nos 202–219.

²⁵¹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.3–6. Also, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.20–23.

Romans”²⁵² Andronikos II could not use the *menologima* (οὐ μηνολογεῖν), namely a specific form of subscription and signature on imperial orders, in which the emperor instead of using his name signs by the month and *indiction*, a symbol of imperial eternity.²⁵³ This indicates that Andronikos II was allowed to issue *chrysoboulla*, which the emperor signed in his name, but not *prostagmata* or *horismoi*, which were signed with the imperial *menologema*.²⁵⁴ In addition, George Pachymeres asserts that the young co-emperor had to sign with red ink as “Ἀνδρόνικος Χριστοῦ χάριτι βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων”, which indicates a deviation from the standard imperial formula known to be: “ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων”.²⁵⁵ It is noteworthy that Michael VIII signed as βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων, while Andronikos II signed only as βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων.²⁵⁶ The only surviving document that carries the signature of Andronikos II as “βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων” while being co-emperor to his father is a letter addressed to Pope John XXI (1215–1277) in 1277.²⁵⁷ The formula “Χριστοῦ χάριτι βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων” in Andronikos II’s signature stresses the Byzantine view on the divine origin of the Christian *basileia* and that the young co-emperor was God’s election and enjoyed his grace. To our knowledge so far, no Byzantine documents carry the above formula. Nonetheless, it is indicative of how Michael VIII wished for his son to be viewed by their subjects and fellow foreign rulers. The God-chosen co-emperor’s privilege to issue and sign *chrysoboulla* with red ink aimed to hierarchically upgrade his status within the imperial court and the state’s officials, but also among a broader range of recipients outside the imperial court. However, the restriction of μηνολογεῖν and the use of formula that was unconventional

²⁵² Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.3–6: Ἐδόθη δὲ καὶ προστάσσειν καὶ ὑπογράφειν βασιλικῶς, πλὴν οὐ μηνολογεῖν, ὡς ἔθος τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν, ἀλλὰ διεξοδικῶς γράφειν δι’ ἐρυθρῶν οικεία χειρὶ Ἀνδρόνικος Χριστοῦ χάριτι βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων. For the English translation, see Gaul, “Writing”, 257, who emphasizes on ‘the importance of individual handwriting’. Also, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.20–23: ἐπέτρεψε δ’ αὐτῷ ὁ πατήρ καὶ δι’ ἐρυθρῶν ὑπογράφειν γραμμάτων προστάγματα, οὐ μέντοι μῆνα καὶ ἴνδικτον, ἀλλὰ, Ἀνδρόνικος Χριστοῦ χάριτι βασιλεὺς Ῥωμαίων. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 119.

²⁵³ On the imperial *menologema*, see Kresten, “Menologema”, 3–52 and especially 4, footnote 3. On the *prostagma* of 1272 issued by Michael VIII and Andronikos II’s rights regarding subscribing and signing imperial orders, see Müller, “Δι’ ἐρυθρῶν γραμμάτων”, 193–199.

²⁵⁴ See Dölger and Karayannopoulos, *Byzantinische Urkundenlehre*, 109–112 (for the imperial *prostagmata* and *horismoi*) and 117–125 (for the *chrysobulloi logoi*); cf. Karayannopoulos, *Βυζαντινὴ Διπλωματικὴ*, 222–226 and 233–245, respectively. See also Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 414, footnote 1.

²⁵⁵ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.5–6. On the formulation, initial use and ideological significance of the imperial formula, see Chrysos, “The Title Βασιλεὺς”, 29–75.

²⁵⁶ Regarding the status of Andronikos II, see the comments of Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 187–188.

²⁵⁷ See Failler, “La proclamation impériale”, 248; Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 76–77, no. 2073. For the most recent edition of the original letter of co-emperor Andronikos II in Greek, see Pieralli, *Corrispondenza diplomatica*, II, 484–522, especially 492–502.

by imperial standards in Andronikos II's signature reflected Michael VIII's higher position as the sole βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων.

To sum up, these privileges and restrictions imposed on Andronikos II by Michael VIII are closely connected to the projection of hierarchical power inside and outside the imperial court. On the one hand, Andronikos II was granted the right to enjoy the services of three high-ranking imperial officials during banquet-ceremonies, to be seen publicly holding along with his father a gold-plated imperial scepter during the liturgy, and finally to issue imperial documents and sign them with red ink. Of course, these privileges significantly elevated the young co-emperor's status among the other officials of the imperial court. On the one hand, Andronikos' privileges were subject to certain restrictions and Michael VIII ended up monitoring through trusted officials any suspicious moves made by his son that might threaten the imperial office. Retrospectively, Michael VIII managed to restrict the above 'extraordinary privileges' of Andronikos II in order to correct misunderstandings about who ranked higher among the state's rulers. Only Michael VIII was allowed to include the imperial scepter as part of his imperial costume and to be seen publicly this symbol of imperial triumph, faith and eternity. Only the senior emperor was allowed to issue and sign chrysoboulla with red ink and project the timelessness of the imperial office with the use of *menologima*. In this light, the senior emperor, Michael VIII succeeded in both accentuating the importance of the institution of co-emperorship and upgrading his son Andronikos II hierarchically and, at the same time, in preserving his own status at the top of the imperial court's hierarchy.

The Ideological and Political Significance of *Oath Taking* During Andronikos II Palaiologos' Coronation Ceremony as Co-Emperor

Regarding the early Palaiologan ideology, an important political act that took place during Andronikos II's coronation ceremony as co-emperor is the oath taking. According to George Pachymeres, Andronikos II made written oaths before God and church that he would not attempt to conspire against his father Michael VIII and that he would be loyal to him.²⁵⁸ In addition, a special document, a *tomos*, was issued by the clergy (ἀρχιερεῖς) in order to ensure the rights of the co-emperor (and the emperor) by excommunicating those who would plan

²⁵⁸ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.6–8: Οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα οἱ ὄρκοι καὶ βασιλέα, μετὰ τὴν εἰς Θεὸν καὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐγγράφως ἀσφάλειαν, ὡς μὴ ἐπιβουλεύοι, ἀλλ' ὑποτάττοιο, καὶ λίαν ἀσφαλεῖς προέβαινον. Cf. Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 76, nos. 2070 and 2071.

a revolt.²⁵⁹ This is a further indication of Michael VIII's fear of an upcoming usurpation led, or at least supported, by his son. Nikephoros Gregoras agrees with George Pachymeres that Andronikos II swore to respect his father's reign and life. However, contrary to George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras adds that Andronikos II swore to respect and protect the privileges of the church.²⁶⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras' focus on Andronikos II's oath to the church reflects the sentiment of the majority of Byzantines at that time, who hoped that the young co-emperor would take steps to resolve the estrangement between church and state that was caused by various socio-religious debates, such as the Arsenite schism. Furthermore, Nikephoros Gregoras was a close friend of Andronikos II and, unlike George Pachymeres, he writes retrospectively, knowing all the steps Andronikos II took after his father's death to restore peace in the empire with regard to the ecclesiastical controversies. In this sense, Andronikos II had fulfilled the oath he took as co-emperor. Finally, both George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras refer to the loyalty oaths made by the people and the church towards Andronikos II and his father.²⁶¹ The vows aimed not only to secure the power of the senior emperor, Michael VIII, and to project his hierarchical position above his son, but also to establish dynastic succession with an oath addressed to both Michael VIII and Andronikos II.²⁶² Moreover, oaths could be used as a means of preventing turbulences

²⁵⁹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.10–11: Ἐτομογράφουν δὲ καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς, ὑπ' ἀφορισμὸν ποιοῦντες τὸν ὃς καὶ ἐπανασταίῃ τῷ βασιλεῖ. For the lost document, see *Les registres*, ed. Laurent, 189–190, no. 1395 (part of the series *Les registres*, eds. Grumel, Laurent and Darrouzès). Regarding the word *tomos* (τόμος), Albert Failler explains that it originally indicated just a dogmatic decree. However, in George Pachymeres' *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι*, although *tomos* had a dogmatic or canonical content, it usually regulated affairs that concerned both the Church and the state by involving the concurrent action of the two powers. See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 364–365, footnote 4. Moreover, for *tomos*, see Darrouzès, *Le registre synodal*, 278–280. Likewise, Andronikos II requested from the Church to issue similar reassurances for his son Michael IX, when he crowned him co-emperor in 1294. See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 223.2–4 and 223.6–11.

²⁶⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.10–12: εἶτα αὐτὸς μὲν Ἀνδρόνικος [Andronikos II Palaiologos] ὄμνυσι τῷ πατρὶ [Michael VIII Palaiologos], πρῶτον μὲν σέβειν τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκλησίαν ὀρθῶς καὶ τὰ ταύτης πρόνομα περιέπειν καθ' ἅπαντα τρόπον καὶ ἀλώβητα συντηρεῖν. Interestingly, Nikephoros Gregoras choose to place Andronikos II's oath to the church before the oaths to his father and emperor Michael VIII. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.13–14: δεῦτερον δὲ, τὴν αὐτοῦ δὴ τοῦ πατρὸς ζωὴν καὶ βασιλείαν [Michael VIII Palaiologos] διαφυλάττειν ὅση δύναμις ἀνεπιβούλευτον μέχρι τελευτῆς αὐτῆς. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 119.

²⁶¹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.8–9: ἐφ' οἷς οἱ τοῦ λαοῦ πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄρκοι καὶ οἱ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐγίνοντο; and cf. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.10–11; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 109.14–20: καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἅπαν τὸ Ῥωμαίων ὄμνυε γένος τῷ νέῳ βασιλεῖ Ἀνδρονίκῳ τὰ εἰθισμένα τοῖς βασιλευσίν. ὃ γε μὴν πατριάρχης καὶ πᾶν τὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἄθροισμα γράμμασι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν ἐγγαράξαντες ὄρκους τοῖς ἱεροῖς ἐνθεύεκασι κώδιξιν, ἀνεπιβούλευτον αὐτῷ διατηρήσειν τὴν βασιλείαν ὁμολογοῦντες, αὐτοῖ τε καὶ οἱ ἐφεξῆς τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας διαδεχόμενοι. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 119.

²⁶² About the functions of oaths in Byzantium, see *ODB*, III, 1509, s. v. “oath (ὄρκος)”, with further bibliography. About oaths and *oath-taking* in Medieval societies, see for example: Althoff, *Verwandte, Freunde und Getreue*, and especially 134–144 and 139.

and usurpations, although this is not always the case.²⁶³ The oaths of loyalty to the senior emperor and the junior co-emperor aimed to sustain the smooth function of the Byzantine state during these early stages of the establishment of the Palaiologan dynasty.

The *oath-taking* and the written reassurances that emperors required from their subjects are not a novelty of the Palaiologan court.²⁶⁴ However, it can be said that during the late Byzantine period it had probably acquired an increasing role among the accession ceremonies and due to the increased significance of the institution of co-emperorship. In the unstable political framework of the early years of the establishment of the Palaiologan period and in the absence of any written legislation that could legitimate the transition of the imperial office from father to son, oaths became an indispensable part of the Palaiologan succession ceremonies. As a result, even though *oath-taking* never became an official part of the whole succession procedure, its performance is often mentioned in the late Byzantine narrative sources, as will be further examined in the following chapters.

The Death of Michael VIII Palaiologos and Andronikos II Palaiologos' Coronation as Emperor

The previous paragraphs analyzed Andronikos II's status as co-emperor and the ideological implications of his privileges and symbols of authority. Concerning the change of Andronikos II's position from co-emperor to emperor, the historiographical sources do not give enough information. With certainty, his hierarchical status changed after the death of Michael VIII, on December 11, 1282.²⁶⁵ Both George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras narrate in detail the events that led to the death of Michael VIII and the end of his reign.²⁶⁶ It seems that Michael VIII felt compelled to undertake personally the expedition against the rebellious John I Doukas of Thessaly, also known as John the Bastard.²⁶⁷ The sources attest

²⁶³ A case in point is Michael VIII's oath to John IV Laskaris. Michael VIII made an oath to respect John IV's life, as well as his rights to the throne. Cf. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 37.7–11 and 39.8–25. See also Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 39, footnote 4. However, he plotted a conspiracy against John IV and deprived him the right to reclaim the imperial throne by blinding him.

²⁶⁴ See Laiou, "The Emperor's Word", 347–362 (repr. in eadem, *Women, Family and Society*, no. VIII). Cf. Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité", 106–142 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI).

²⁶⁵ For comments on the dating of the *coronation* and the title of Andronikos II, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 18, footnote 2; Failler, "La proclamation impériale", 247–251; Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή. Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 186.

²⁶⁶ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler, and Laurent, II, 661.24–667.16; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 150.1–155.15.

²⁶⁷ About John I Doukas of Thessaly, see PLP 208: Ἄγγελος, Ἰωάννης I. Δούκας Κομνηνός (Angelos, Ioannes I. Dukas Komnenos), with further bibliography.

that by the time he reached the village of Pachomios in Thrace, he could no longer ride his horse and was forced to stay in bed because of exhaustion from his severe illness.²⁶⁸ According to George Pachymeres, the night before Michael VIII died Andronikos II arranged for a priest to visit his chamber and perform all the necessary rites.²⁶⁹ In what follows, Michael VIII's death, as well as the ceremonies that were arranged right before and soon after his death by Andronikos II, are analyzed to reveal the social and political background in which the young co-emperor claimed his rights to the imperial throne.

George Pachymeres underscores the fact that Andronikos II was near his dying father and arranged all the necessary ceremonies.²⁷⁰ The member of the clergy that Andronikos II's summoned, dressed in the appropriate garments, appeared unexpectedly to Michael VIII, who was unaware of the seriousness of his health condition and of the fact that he was about to die. The priest explained that he had prayed for his soul and brought him the sacramental gifts of the Eucharist, namely the blessed bread and wine of the Holy Communion.²⁷¹ As soon as Michael VIII understood what was happening, he gathered all his strength and sat on the bed and asked to receive the so-called "belt".²⁷² Apparently, this belt was part of the monastic dress, usually made out of silk, and was often seen as a symbol of temperance and purity.²⁷³ Albert Failler explains that, since the end of iconoclasm, emperors but also nobles and other lay people adopted the practice of taking the monastic habit before dying as a sign of a second baptism.²⁷⁴ In addition to receiving the monastic belt and the symbolic re-baptism, George Pachymeres adds that Michael VIII examined in detail and recited the Creed (τὸ ἅγιον διέξεισι σύμβολον) and uttered a final prayer before receiving Holy Communion.²⁷⁵ Practically, this series of symbolic gestures should be seen as a final confession or statement of Michael VIII's faith in Orthodox Christian beliefs.

²⁶⁸ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 663.17–665.14; Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 150.1–20.

²⁶⁹ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 665.15–666.7.

²⁷⁰ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 665.20–23.

²⁷¹ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 665.23–33.

²⁷² Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 665.30–34. George Pachymeres' uses an interesting choice of words to describe Michael VIII's reaction to the situation: [...] ἄμα συνῆκε τὸ δράμα [...], that is to say 'as soon as he [Michael VIII Palaiologos] realized the drama'. Here, the word drama could have a dual meaning: a 'tragical event' and/or an 'action represented on the stage'.

²⁷³ About the belt as part of the Byzantine costume, its functions, and symbolism, see *ODB*, I, 280, s. v. "Belt (ζώνη), Lat. (cingulum)", with further bibliography. On the belt as a liturgical vestment, see Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung*, 101–117.

²⁷⁴ See the comment in Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 666, footnote 1.

²⁷⁵ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 665.34 and 667.1–3. About the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, see *ODB*, I, 545, s. v. "Creed (σύμβολον)", with further bibliography.

The rituals that took place were of great importance for the dying senior emperor since his domestic and foreign policy had received negative criticism, not only from the church body but also from the general public. To understand better the ideological significance of Michael VIII's ritual preparation for dying, we need to remind ourselves of the turbulent political context throughout his reign. At the beginning of his career, Michael VIII was excommunicated by Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos as a result of blinding John IV Laskaris and of taking over the imperial throne even though as regent he had sworn to defend the young prince's rights. The successors of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos attempted to improve the public image of Michael VIII. Patriarch Germanos III emphasized the positive aspects of his patron-emperor and even ascribed to the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty the epithet "the new Constantine", while Patriarch Joseph I granted Michael VIII absolution from patriarchal excommunication.²⁷⁶ These actions, however, caused more problems since a significant part of the clergy remained loyal to the deposed Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos and created the so-called "Arsenite" party, namely, a strong ecclesiastical and socio-political opposition against Michael VIII.²⁷⁷

An additional substantial ecclesiastical and political disagreement occurred when Michael VIII signed the union of the Catholic and the Greek Orthodox churches at the second council of Lyons in 1274 and demanded that the Greek Church recognize the primacy of the pope.²⁷⁸ Michael VIII was forced to seek the support of the pope to eliminate the Angevin danger.²⁷⁹ The emperor committed to the ecclesiastical union hoping that the pope's help would protect Byzantium against Charles I of Anjou, who – as we have already seen – wished to conquer Constantinople. However, the Greek Church and the majority of the populace harbored feelings of resentment against the Latins after 1204. They refused to accept a religious union with Rome, despite the apparent fate that awaited the empire if its subjects rejected consensus. The then patriarch, Joseph I, refused to recognize the union and resigned. The new patriarch, John XI Bekkos, although initially opposed to the idea, later

²⁷⁶ On the significance of Patriarch Germanos III short patriarchate (1265–1266) and the fact that he is believed to be the first person to refer to Michael VIII Palaiologos as "new Constantine", see Macrides, "The New Constantine", 13–41, and especially 19–25. About the fact that Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos' excommunication of Michael VIII was not formally lifted until the patriarchate of Joseph (1266–1275), see Macrides, "The New Constantine", 22, footnote 52, with further bibliography.

²⁷⁷ On the Arsenite schism, see, for example, Nicol, *Church and Society*, 6–9; Gounarides, *Το κίνημα των Αρσενιατών*; Tinnefeld, "Das Schisma", 143–166, with further bibliography.

²⁷⁸ On a brief overview of the events connected with the Council of Lyons of 1274 and its aftermath, see, for example, Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 258–304. See also Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 120–181.

²⁷⁹ On the political situation after the death of Theodore II Laskaris and Michael VIII's attempts to approach the Latin popes, see Gill, *Byzantium and the Papacy*, 120–181.

accepted it, fueling further ideological disputes as a result of his decision.²⁸⁰ Even members of the imperial family were torn apart. Michael VIII's sister, Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina, who has been a firm supporter of her brother's ambitions at the beginning of his political career, turned out to be a chief anti-unionist leader. Together with her daughter Maria, Tsarina of the Bulgars, she even conceived the idea of an alliance between the Bulgars and the Mamluks of Egypt against Michael VIII.²⁸¹

It is in this context that the above-mentioned pre-death rites marking Michael VIII's passing should be re-examined and evaluated. Michael VIII's pre-death rituals were designed not only to provide him relief from suffering and absolution for his sins but also to prepare his soul for the hereafter. The dying emperor was able to reaffirm his faith in God and to receive the appropriate prayers and the sacramental Eucharist as a dowry for the afterlife. Moreover, he was given the opportunity to adopt the monastic habit on his deathbed in the hope of salvation.²⁸² Noticeably, these rituals were devised and performed to serve the purposes of imperial propaganda. Michael VIII, in his last moments, wished to present himself as an Orthodox emperor to secure the court's loyalty towards his son and successor, Andronikos II. Byzantium was no longer facing the Angevin threat, as Charles I of Anjou was currently involved in putting down a revolt in Sicily.²⁸³ Therefore, Andronikos II's most demanding task would be to fight for the state's internal stability.²⁸⁴ Indeed, the young ruler was concerned about the restoration of orthodoxy and the empire's ecclesiastical unity and, soon after his father's death, he repudiated the union of the churches that Michael VIII had signed. In this context, the rituals of the dying monarch mentioned above aimed to contribute to the improvement of the public image of Michael VIII and, at the same time, of Andronikos II, who would establish his rule immediately after his father's death.

According to George Pachymeres, Andronikos II also took care of the post mortem rituals for his father. He made sure that not only Michael VIII's household members (οἰκεῖοι) but also the auxiliary troops of Tatars honored the senior emperor with their tears.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁰ Concerening Concerning John XI Bekkos (or Beccos), his theological view, and direct involvement to the ecclesiological context of East-West relations, see Papadakis, "The Byzantines and the Rise of the Papacy", 19–42; and Kolbaba, "Repercussions of the Second Council of Lyon", 43–68.

²⁸¹ See Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 274.

²⁸² About the death rites and their symbolic meaning in Byzantium, see *ODB*, I, 593–594, s. v. "Death (θάνατος)", with further bibliography.

²⁸³ Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 33. On the 'Sicilian Vespers' rebellion, see, for example, Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 335–367.

²⁸⁴ Cf. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 30.

²⁸⁵ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 667.3–4.

Elaborate mourning rituals were an integral part of the Byzantine court ceremonies as the ceremonial treatises of *De Cerimoniis* and Pseudo-Kodinos attest. *De Cerimoniis* devotes a separate chapter to the imperial funerals, while Pseudo-Kodinos focuses on the imperial mourning attire without giving the protocol for a funeral service.²⁸⁶ Whether staged or sincere, tears enabled the mourning men to express both their grief and sorrow for the loss, and also their respects to the dead emperor and his body.²⁸⁷ It is thus tempting to draw parallels with the ritual lament that was performed for Emperor Constantine I the Great, who was the role model of Michael VIII, the so-called “new Constantine”. In a relevant article, Claudia Rapp comments that “[w]e see here the soldiers in Constantine’s immediate entourage acting as if they were part of the emperor’s household. They took the role usually assigned to women: they were present at his deathbed and performed the ritual lament”.²⁸⁸ However, unlike the dead body of Constantine I, which was placed in a golden coffin draped in purple and taken to Constantinople to be buried in a well-chosen mausoleum, Michael VIII’s corpse was deprived of any funerary or memorial rituals.²⁸⁹ The heir to the imperial throne, Andronikos II, undertook the responsibility to carry and protect his father’s body. For safety reasons, he ordered Michael VIII’s body to be carefully carried over-night to the Nea Mone near Raideustos.²⁹⁰ Deno John Geanakoplos, following the interpretation of Nikephoros Gregoras, suggests that Andronikos II, “[m]ore orthodox than pious”, was “fearful lest his father’s body be mutilated by wild beasts or desecrated by Latins or fanatical anti-unionist Greeks”.²⁹¹ On the other hand, depriving Michael VIII of funerary rituals, as we will see below, had far more greater implications, since this was a striking deviation from the established practice. The young co-emperor was aware of the precarious situation regarding his father’s reputation and the strong opposition against him. He was mostly afraid of the negative reaction of the Arsenites, who had the power to carry with them many members of the clergy and the capital’s populace.²⁹² Therefore, Andronikos II made

²⁸⁶ See Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske, I, 275.15–276.24 and Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 284.1–285.11.

²⁸⁷ On the topic of death at the Byzantine court, see Rapp, “Death at the Byzantine Court”, 267–286. For an overview of the rituals surrounding death in Byzantium in general, see Conostas, “Death and Dying”, 124–145 and Koukoules, “Βυζαντινῶν νεκρικὰ ἔθιμα”, 3–80.

²⁸⁸ Rapp, “Death at the Byzantine Court”, 269.

²⁸⁹ About Constantine I the Great’s post-mortem rituals, see Rapp, “Death at the Byzantine Court”, 268–272, and especially here on p. 270.

²⁹⁰ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 667.4–6.

²⁹¹ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 153.2–14; Cf. and Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 370.

²⁹² Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 34. Moreover, Angeliki Laiou correctly suggests that the Arsenites drew their power from this very opposition to the dynasty.

concessions to the other side and tried to appease them by keeping his father's body away from Constantinople, for fear of violent outbursts that could undermine yet further the legitimacy of the dynasty.

Despite the efforts of Andronikos II to pay respect to his dead father the former emperor, Michael VIII's political actions regarding John IV Laskaris and the union of the two churches left a negative imprint on a substantial proportion of the empire's populace, namely the pro-Laskarid party in Asia Minor and Constantinople, as well as on the continually increasing number of the zealous anti-unionist Greek clergy.²⁹³ Michael VIII's body was eventually taken to the monastery of Christ the Savior in Selymbria but never received a proper imperial funeral and burial in the capital. The emperor's corpse remained in the monastery of Christ the Savior and – as Philotheos, the metropolitan of Selymbria, attests in his encomium devoted to the local patron saint, Agathonikos – it was left there “to be seen lying all bloated (ὄγκούμενον)”.²⁹⁴ The absence of post-mortem rituals and the fact that Michael VIII's body underwent the process of bloating, which is the typical second stage of human decomposition, were retrospectively attributed to his “heterodoxy” and to the fact that Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos had excommunicated him.²⁹⁵ This is a good example of how narratives pick up the theme of a distorted ritual and give their own interpretation. Ironically, unlike Michael VIII, Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos was acclaimed posthumously as a saint, and his relics were translated from Prokonessos (where he in exile) to Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople in 1284.²⁹⁶ George Pachymeres describes in detail the celebratory occasion of the reception of Arsenios Autoreianos' relics by Emperor Andronikos II, Patriarch Gregory of Cyprus and members of the senate and clergy.²⁹⁷ The relic was placed in a coffin in front of the altar of Hagia Sophia and was honored with hymns and panegyrics.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, it was stipulated that the coffin would remain accessible and

²⁹³ Cf. Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 370.

²⁹⁴ For the English translation of the relevant passage with further commentary, see Magdalino, “Byzantine Churches of Selymbria”, 309–318, and especially 314–315.

²⁹⁵ See Magdalino, “Byzantine Churches of Selymbria”, 315: “[...] because his heterodoxy was so far gone; and also, indeed, because of the excommunication which the most holy Patriarch Arsenios pronounced against him for having deceitfully usurped power from the son of Theodore Laskaris”. For the Greek text, which was copied directly from the manuscript, see: Magdalino, “Byzantine Churches of Selymbria”, 315, footnote 46.

²⁹⁶ See Macrides, “Saints and Sainthood”, 73–79.

²⁹⁷ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 95.22–99.8. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 167.6–21.

²⁹⁸ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 97.14–30. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 167.15–17.

be opened every third day of the week, so that Arsenios Autoreianos' relics could continue to be venerated by those visiting the church.²⁹⁹ On the other hand, Michael VIII's body would not only be kept away from Constantinople, but – as I will show below – the deceased emperor would also be condemned for his errors posthumously.

The case study of Michael VIII's *damnatio memoriae* can be better understood if examined through the lens of Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz's concept of the "king's two bodies". This concept suggests that the emperors had two "bodies": a biological and a mortal one (body natural) and an invulnerable and immortal one (body politic).³⁰⁰ Michael VIII's "physical body" did not receive any of the habitual honors after death and neither did his "political body", which functioned as a symbol of his imperial majesty and the divine right to rule eternally. Thus, symbolically, the denial of any of the customary post-mortem ceremonies could be interpreted as a post-mortem punishment and dethronement of Michael VIII because of his attitude towards John IV and the issue of the union of the Churches. This thought is also supported by the fact that future generations judged that Michael VIII's name should be omitted from the so-called "Synodikon of Orthodoxy" of 1439, which contained the names of all Byzantine emperors.³⁰¹

The death of Michael VIII and the various ceremonial acts that were staged before and immediately after the event prepared the smooth transition of power to the hands of his son and co-emperor Andronikos II, who became incontestably the sole sovereign of the state. To denote the change of status of Andronikos II and express his rise to the imperial throne after the death of his father and senior emperor, the Byzantine historians George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras use general topos-phrases. For instance, George Pachymeres writes simply that Andronikos II was "crowned emperor"³⁰², while Nikephoros Gregoras

²⁹⁹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 97.30–31.

³⁰⁰ About this idea, see Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*. Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz's concept of the king's two bodies can also be applied to the study of the body of saints in Byzantine hagiographical texts, as a recent study has shown. See Constantinou, "The Saint's Two Bodies", 285–320.

³⁰¹ Guillard, "Le Synodicon", 97, no. 327. About the image of Michael VIII in the historical works of the Palaiologan period, see Nikolić and Pavlović, "The Image of Michael VIII", 143–181, with an English abstract pp. 180–181.

³⁰² Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 19.3–5: Οὕτω μὲν τοῦ βασιλέως Μιχαὴλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] μεταλλάξαντος ὁ ἐξ ἐκείνου Ἀνδρόνικος [Andronikos II Palaiologos] αὐτόθεν τὸ κράτος ἔχων, τετανωμένος εἰς βασιλέα, ἐπειλήφθαι καὶ μόνος τῶν πραγμάτων κατηναγκάζετο. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 158.1–3: Ἐπεὶ δὲ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Ἀνδρόνικον [Andronikos II Palaiologos] ἡ τοῦ κράτους καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν σκήπτρων μετέβη διαδοχῇ, καὶ πολλὸς πολλαχόθεν τὰ πράγματα θόρυβος συνεκύκα. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 144.

indicates that he received the “royal scepters”.³⁰³ One of the main reasons why Byzantine authors choose to emphasize Andronikos II’s status as co-emperor rather than giving a detailed description of the ceremonies connected to his proclamation and coronation as emperor might be the fact that he already enjoyed many of the imperial prerogatives during his co-emperorship. The extraordinary privileges that were given to Andronikos II as co-emperor constituted a novelty, which made an immediate impression on the Byzantine historians of the time, who were especially interested in this new and unusual element of accession that contributed to the consolidation of the dynasty. Another unique element connected to the imperial succession of the newly established dynasty were the efforts of Andronikos II to gain redemption for his father’s sins through various (pre-)mortuary and mourning rituals. Despite Andronikos II’s hard work, the image of a posthumous punishment and dethronement of Michael VIII has prevailed in the mostly anti-unionist tradition. However, this is a later interpretation of events, which has nothing to do with the original intentions of Andronikos II, who – as we have seen – certainly did not want to dethrone his father.

To summarize, Andronikos II Palaiologos’ coronation as co-emperor is better evaluated when examined within the challenging political and ideological circumstances under which he came to power. Undoubtedly, Andronikos II’s coronation as co-emperor laid the foundations for the establishment of the Palaiologan dynasty as such, after the reconquest of Constantinople. His coronation ceremony was closely connected to two other symbolic actions: his marriage, and the *oath-taking* performance. These two publicly presented events aimed to project Andronikos II’s new status as co-emperor and make the Byzantine-Hungarian alliance generally known. Through his marriage to Anna of Hungary, a descendant of Laskarids, the dynastic succession was secured and, most importantly, the Palaiologan dynasty acquired further legitimization. The privileges and the symbols of authority bestowed upon Andronikos II after his coronation are indicative of his significant position within the court. The *insignia* he obtained, such as the imperial scepter and the use of red ink to sign the imperial documents, were more than a symbol of authority and power. Within the newly established Palaiologan dynasty, they functioned as ideological markers

³⁰³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 158.1–3: Ἐπεὶ δὲ πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Ἀνδρόνικον [Andronikos II Palaiologos] ἡ τοῦ κράτους καὶ τῶν βασιλικῶν σκήπτρων μετέβη διαδοχῇ, καὶ πολὺς πολλαχόθεν τὰ πράγματα θόρυβος συνεκύκα. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 144.

of administrative hierarchy and political supremacy. Although the privileges that Andronikos II acquired are indeed “extraordinary”, certain restrictions allowed Michael VIII to project himself at the top of the court hierarchy as the senior emperor. *Oath-taking* assisted the projection of this hierarchical balance and, at least in theory, guaranteed the dynastic succession. The dynastic succession was further established with the proclamation of Andronikos II’s son, Michael IX Palaiologos, as a second co-emperor in 1281, a ceremony that was also planned by Michael VIII.³⁰⁴ This topic will be treated extensively in the next chapter.

³⁰⁴ For Michael IX Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21529: Παλαιολόγος, Μιχαήλ (ΙΧ.) Δούκας Ἄγγελος Κομνηνός (Palaiologos, Michael IX. Dukas Angelos Komnenos). Cf. Papadopoulos, *Genealogie*, 36–37, no. 59.

Chapter III.

Michael IX Palaiologos and the “Conspicuous Ceremonies” for the Establishment of Co-Emperorship in the Early Palaiologan Court

Co-emperorship is an important institution, which laid the foundations to the establishment of the Palaiologan dynasty as such, after 1261. The previous chapter focused on the ideological implications of the status and the *insignia* of Andronikos II as co-emperor to his father Michael VIII. This chapter aims to highlight further ideological aspects of the institution of co-emperorship in the early Palaiologan court, mainly based on the evidence of the “bright and conspicuous ceremonies”³⁰⁵ that were arranged for the installation of Michael IX to the office of co-emperor, as well. These ceremonies, which have not hitherto been subjected to a close examination, will be contextualized into the political and ideological framework of the newly established dynasty of the Palaiologoi and analyzed as symbolic vehicles for publicizing the transfer of power and legitimizing the rights of the dynastic succession.

Michael IX Palaiologos was the elder son of Andronikos II and Anna of Hungary.³⁰⁶ His grandfather and founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, Michael VIII, had acclaimed him co-emperor (βασιλεύς) in 1281. Without mentioning any specific ceremonies, both George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras indicate that Michael VIII elevated his grandsons, Michael IX as co-emperor (βασιλεύς) and his brother Constantine Palaiologos (*PLP* 21499) as a despot (δεσπότης), respectively.³⁰⁷ However, George Pachymeres is the only source that

³⁰⁵ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.10–11: *μετὰ λαμπρῶν καὶ περιφανῶν τῶν τελετῶν στέφει μὲν βασιλεὺς [Andronikos II Palaiologos] τὸν υἱόν [Michael IX Palaiologos].*

³⁰⁶ For Michael IX Palaiologos (*PLP* 21529), see Kozanecka-Kozakiewicz, “Michael IX Palaiologos”, 200–220 and especially Gickler, *Kaiser Michael IX. Palaiologos*, with further bibliography.

³⁰⁷ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 99.26–31: Ὁ μέντοι γε βασιλεὺς [Andronikos II Palaiologos] υἱοὺς ἔχων ἐξ Ἄννης τῆς ἐξ Οὐγγρων δύο, Μιχαὴλ τε καὶ Κωνσταντῖνον [Michael IX Palaiologos and Constantine Palaiologos], τὸν μὲν βασιλικῶς ἀνῆγε καὶ ὡς τῆς βασιλείας διάδοχον ἐθεράπευε, τὸν δὲ Κωνσταντῖνον εἰς δεσπότην ἔτρεφε. τῷ μέντοι γε Μιχαὴλ καὶ ὁ πάππος αὐτοῦ Μιχαὴλ τῆς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν καταστάσεως ἦρχε, καὶ ὡς βασιλέα παρεῖχε κηρύττεσθαι ὡς οὐ μικρὰν παραψηχὴν τῷ πατρὶ διὰ τὸν τῆς δεσποίνης ἀλύοντι θάνατον. As regards the status of Michael IX and his brother Constantine Palaiologos, see also Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 167.22–24: προετεθνήκει γὰρ ἡ ἐξ Οὐγγρίας ἐλθοῦσα προτέρα τούτου γυνὴ [Anna of Hungary] ἐπὶ δυσὶ, τῷ τε βασιλεῖ Μιχαὴλ καὶ Κωνσταντίνῳ τῷ δεσπότη. For the German translation, see Van Dielen, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 149. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 234.7–9: ἔφθημεν γὰρ εἰρηκότες, ὡς ἐξ ἐκείνης [Anna of Hungary] μὲν γεγέννηκε παῖδας δύο, τὸν τε βασιλέα Μιχαὴλ [Michael IX Palaiologos] καὶ Κωνσταντῖνον τὸν δεσπότην [Constantine Palaiologos]. For the German translation, see Van Dielen, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 184. About despot Constantine Palaiologos, brother of Michael IX Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21499: *Παλαιολόγος, Κωνσταντῖνος Δούκας Κομνηνός* (Palaiologos Konstantinos Dukas Komnenos), with further bibliography; cf. Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent,

suggests that Michael VIII arranged the elevation of Michael IX as co-emperor (βασιλεύς) in order to console his son Andronikos II for the death of his wife, Anna of Hungary; this allows us to date the elevation very close to 1281.³⁰⁸ Michael IX was born on April 17, 1278, on Easter Day.³⁰⁹ This means that on the date of his promotion to the office of co-emperor in 1281, Michael IX was only three years old and could not have a tangible role in the decision-making or the state government. The action itself was rather exceptional in terms of political ideology. Already, the birth of Michael IX on the day of Easter and, to be more precise, at exactly the time when the priest was chanting the *Paschal troparion* (Χριστός ἀνέστη), was employed by the dynastic propaganda and interpreted as a divine sign announcing better days for the Empire.³¹⁰ Thus, the installation of Michael IX as co-emperor (βασιλεύς) is to be understood as a step to further strengthen the dynasty in which the grandfather, the son, and the grandson respectively were sharing the throne in this hierarchical order.

Regarding the status of Michael IX after the death of Michael VIII, on December 11, 1282, neither George Pachymeres nor Nikephoros Gregoras provide any information. The next indication of the change of status of Michael IX is attested in connection with his *coronation* as co-emperor to his father, Emperor Andronikos II. The *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor took place on May 21, 1294.³¹¹ By then, Michael IX had already reached the age of sixteen, evidently an age of political adulthood according to the text of George Pachymeres, and the decision regarding official bestowal of the title of co-emperor with a publicly displayed *coronation* seemed the most reasonable choice.³¹²

III, 98, footnote 29; and 202, footnote 6. Regarding his title as despot, see also Guiland, “Le Despote”, 60–61 (repr. in eadem, *Recherches*, II, 5–6).

³⁰⁸ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 99.28–31: τῷ μέντοι γε Μιχαήλ [Michael IX Palaiologos] καὶ ὁ πάππος αὐτοῦ Μιχαήλ [Michael VIII Palaiologos] τῆς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν καταστάσεως ἤρχε, καὶ ὡς βασιλεῖα παρεῖχε κηρύττεσθαι ὡς οὐ μικρὰν παραψυχὴν τῷ πατρὶ [Andronikos II Palaiologos] διὰ τὸν τῆς δεσποίνης [Anna of Hungary] ἀλύοντι θάνατον.

³⁰⁹ For the date of birth of Michael IX, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 218, footnote 2; Failler, “Sur un passage mutilé”, 63; Perentidis, “L’empereur né le jour de Pâques”, 257 and footnote 12. Interestingly, the birth of Michael IX on the day of Easter and in fact exactly when the priest was chanting the *Paschal troparion* or *Christos anesti* (Χριστός ἀνέστη) was employed by the dynastic propaganda and interpreted as a divine sign announcing better days for the empire. Cf. Perentidis, “L’empereur né le jour de Pâques”, 254–255.

³¹⁰ Cf. Perentidis, “L’empereur né le jour de Pâques”, 254–255.

³¹¹ For the date of the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.7–10. Moreover, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 218, footnote 3; Verpeaux, “Notes chronologiques”, 170–173 and cf. the comments of Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 50, footnote 71.

³¹² Michael IX Palaiologos was born in 1278 and therefore by the time of his *coronation* in 1294 he has reached the age of sixteen. For the date of birth of Michael IX, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 218, footnote 2. George Pachymeres presents the age of Michael IX as a legitimate reason for Andronikos II

According to George Pachymeres this date was intentionally selected by Andronikos II because it was the commemoration day of Constantine I, “the first Christian Emperor, who granted freedom of religion to the Christians”.³¹³ Evidently, Andronikos II – and consequently the imperial court – aimed to establish an ideological connection between Michael IX and Constantine I. In this context, Andronikos II chose to project Michael IX’s allegiance to Christianity and present him as a leading figure who shared the same religious beliefs and values as his subjects, just as Constantine the Great did. Undoubtedly, Emperor Constantine I set the model of emperors that was followed by nearly all Byzantine emperors.³¹⁴ Already, Michael VIII, the grandfather of Michael IX and founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, had assumed the title of the “new Constantine” as part of his official title, but for different reasons: like Constantine I, he acted as a benefactor and granted funds for the restoration of the capital.³¹⁵ As a result, by alluding to the idea that they shared the same natural qualities, spiritual merits and imperial virtues as their emperor-model, Michael VIII and Michael IX underscored the unbroken continuity of the empire. Ultimately, their connection with the past justified the claim to exercise power in the present.

to start initiating his son’s *coronation* as co-emperor: Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.2–6: Ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀντίπαις ἦν ὁ υἱὸς Μιχαὴλ ἤδη τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τὸν ἔφηβον ἤλαυνεν, οὐκ ἀπεικὸς ἤγειτο οὐδ’ ἀπρεπὲς ἄλλως μὴ βασιλικῶς ταινιοῦν, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τόσην πληροφορίαν ἐπὶ τῷ ταινιώσοντι κεκτημένος. Thus, it seems to me that, in this context, the age of sixteen was considered not only the age of reaching puberty, but also the age of political adulthood. Regarding the age of political adulthood in Byzantium, a subject which requires further investigation, see also the considerations of Ioannis E. Karayannopoulos and Aikaterini Christophilopoulou: Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 44 and footnote 193; Christophilopoulou, “Ἡ Ἀντιβασιλεία”, 1–4, with further bibliography and examples, especially from earlier periods of the Byzantine history.

³¹³ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.6–11: καιρὸν δ’ ἠγησάμενος πρέποντα ἡμέραν τῆς μνήμης τοῦ πρώτου ἐν Χριστιανοῖς βασιλέως, μάλλον δὲ καὶ σφίσι τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἄρξαντος Κωνσταντίνου, ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ τὰ τῆς στεφηφορίας τῷ υἱῷ ἀπεπλήρου. καὶ εἰκοστῇ πρώτῃ Πυαντιῶνος μηνὸς κατὰ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίας νεῶν.

³¹⁴ For the establishment of Constantine I as an imitative “exemplum” through the *Life of Constantine*, a hybrid of history, biography, and panegyric that was written by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (260–339), see Rapp, “Old Testament Models”, 182–184 and cf. Rapp, “Comparison”, 292–297. Claudia Rapp in her paper on “Old Testament Models”, explains that there are two modes to establish a relationship of an emperor with imitative models: “exemplum” and “typology”. See Rapp, “Old Testament Models”, 175–197. In Roman political thought, the “exemplum” was used as a vehicle to express ideals of imitation. This means that an emperor is expected to imitate a preceding emperor or a leading figure who served as a positive model of leadership for example the Macedonian King Alexander the Great or first the Roman Emperor Augustus. Moreover, she demonstrates that in the same mode, the Byzantine emperor can himself become a model for subsequent generations who would then be called for instance a ‘new Constantine’. In Christian context, on the other hand, “typology” connects the present with the biblical past of the Old Testament. Finally, according to the paper, “typos” asserts that someone extends an established pattern of Biblical times to the present and re-enacts it, thus becoming, a “new David” or a “new Moses” during his time.

³¹⁵ For the portrayal of Michael VIII as “new Constantine”, see for instance: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 44 and Macrides, “The New Constantine”, 13–41. For the restoration of Constantinople by Michael VIII, see Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 122–125 and Talbot, “Restoration”, 243–261.

Moreover, by drawing parallels with Emperor Constantine I, the dynastic propaganda had managed to promote the idea of a renovation of the empire effectively under the rule of Palaiologoi, an idea which was also linked to the date and the time of birth of Michael IX, as we have already seen above. Maximos Planoudes, a distinguished scholar during the time of the Palaiologoi, wrote an oration for the occasion of Michael IX's *coronation* as co-emperor to Andronikos II, entitled *Basilikos*. This occasion gave Maximos Planoudes the opportunity to relate Constantine I to Michael VIII, the “new Constantine” and grandfather of the newly crowned Michael IX.³¹⁶ Planoudes also links Michael IX to Andronikos II. Antonia Giannouli has observed that, as he goes through the traditional topics of the imperial panegyric, “he produces a comparison (*synkrisis*) between Michael IX and his father, presenting the former as the latter's equal, and thus supporting him as the legitimate successor to the throne”.³¹⁷ Moreover, in roughly 30 lines out of approximately 1,497, Planoudes elaborates on the legality of Michael IX's recent coronation ceremony during which the anointing-ceremony and the act of crowning by the emperor-father and the patriarch were held according to the Byzantine “laws” (*kata nomous*) and were also recognized and welcomed by the foreigners (ambassadors of the Galloi) who were present.³¹⁸ Planoudes' conception of legitimacy and the succession idea, as well as his version of events are corroborated by the Byzantine historian George Pachymeres, who writes at a later date.

George Pachymeres' account is the only source that describes in detail the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor to his father, Andronikos II.³¹⁹ According to George

³¹⁶ For example, Maximos Planoudes writes in his *Basilikos*: τὴν ἐτήσιον τοῦ πολιστοῦ μνήμην, τὴν ἐπάνυμον ἐκείνου πόλιν, ἣς ἐντὸς οὐχ ἦττον ἐκοσμήθης ὑπὸ τοῦ στέφους ἢ αὐτὸς τοῦτο ἐκόσμησας, ὅτι σοι πάππος ὃς νέος ἐχρημάτισε Κωνσταντῖνος (see Maximos Planoudes, *Basilikos*, ed., Kourouzes, 433.20–24; repr. in Westerink, *Texts and Studies*, 157.22–24). This passage belongs to the additions Stavros I. Kourouzes made in 1973 to the first edition of Maximos Planoudes' *Basilikos* published by Leendert Gerrit Westerink between 1966–1968. See Maximos Planoudes, *Basilikos*, ed., Kourouzes, 426–434; repr. in Westerink, *Texts and Studies*, 150–158. For recent reflections on the date of the performance of the oration, see Giannouli, “Coronation Speeches”, especially 207–212. Antonia Giannouli convincingly has shown that it is unlikely to be placed earlier than May 25th. For a short commentary on the relevant passage regarding Constantine I and Michael VIII, see Giannouli, “Coronation Speeches”, 206 and footnotes 12 and 13.

³¹⁷ Giannouli, “Coronation Speeches”, 208–209.

³¹⁸ For this idea, see Giannouli, “Coronation Speeches”, 209–211.

³¹⁹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.2–21 and 221.1–16, with parallel translation in French: (219) Στεφφορία τοῦ βασιλέως Μιχαήλ [Michael IX Palaiologos]. Ἐπεὶ δ' ἀντίπαις ἦν ὁ υἱὸς Μιχαήλ ἤδη τῷ βασιλεῖ [Andronikos II Palaiologos] καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ τὸν ἔφηβον ἤλαυνεν, οὐκ ἀπεικὸς ἠγεῖτο οὐδ' ἀπρεπὲς ἄλλως μὴ βασιλικῶς ταινιοῦν, καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τόσην πληροφορίαν ἐπὶ τῷ ταινιῶσonti κεκτημένος. ὅθεν καὶ ἐξαρτῶνται μὲν τὰ ἐπὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ χρεῖα προσήκοντα ἀποχρώντως λίαν καὶ φιλοτίμως· καιρὸν δ' ἠγησάμενος πρέποντα ἡμέραν τῆς μνήμης τοῦ πρώτου ἐν Χριστιανοῖς βασιλέως, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ σφίσι τῆς ἐλευθερίας ἄρξαντος Κωνσταντίνου, ἐν ταύτῃ καὶ τὰ τῆς στεφφορίας τῷ υἱῷ ἀπεπλήρου. καὶ εἰκοστῇ πρώτῃ Πυαντιῶνος μηνὸς κατὰ τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίας νεῶν, συναχθέντων ἀπάντων, ὅσον ἦν τῶν ἐν τέλει καὶ ἄλλως καὶ ὑπηρετικῶν βασιλείων, ὅσον τῆς πολιτείας καὶ ὅσον τῶν στρατιωτικῶν δυνάμεων, οὐδ' αὐτῶν ἀπόντων τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν Ἰταλῶν, ἔτι δὲ τῶν ὅσοι κατὰ χρεῖαν πρεσβείας ἐπεδήμουν τῇ Κωνσταντίνου, καὶ αὐτῶν

Pachymeres, the night preceding the *coronation* everyone gathered in Hagia Sophia, where clergymen and monks performed a night liturgy with sumptuous lighting in the presence of the emperor, who was standing in the upper gallery and was listening to the hymns. Among the participants were those in office and others in the service of the emperor, namely the state and military officials. Moreover, George Pachymeres points out that the Italians who lived in Constantinople and even the members of an embassy who visited the city of Constantinople in order to negotiate the wedding of Michael IX and Catherine of Courtenay were present at the ceremony.³²⁰ At dawn, everyone gathered in the *Augustaion*, an enclosed open space that served as a courtyard of restricted access, situated south of Hagia Sophia.³²¹ Michael IX was up on the *triklinos* called the *Thomaites*, which faced the *Augustaion*.³²² There, he was raised on a shield while being seated by those in office and he was acclaimed (*καὶ ἀνευφημοῦσι τρανότερον*). In order to give people in the *Augustaion* below an

δὴ τῶν τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ Αἰκατερίνῃ [Catherine of Courtenay] κῆδος μεσιτευόντων – οἱ δ' ἦσαν οἱ ἀμφὶ τὸν Συρπέρον λεγόμενον –, τὸ μὲν ἱερατικὸν πᾶν καὶ μοναχικὸν ἀφ' ἑσπέρας παννύχιον ὑπὸ δαυιλέσι φωσὶν ἀπετέλουν τὴν ὑμνωδίαν, ἄνωθεν τοῦ βασιλέως ἱσταμένου καὶ ἀκροωμένου τῶν ὕμνων. ὑπ' αὐγὰς δὲ συναχθέντων, καὶ τὴν τοῦ Αὐγουστεῶνος αὐλαίαν πληροῦντων ἐς τόσον ὥστε καὶ εἰς μίαν ἀρμογὴν καὶ συνέχειαν ζύμπαντας ξυνεπτύχθαι ζῶον φαινομένους ἔν, εἰς πλάτος ἐνδιδὸν ἀλλόκοτόν τι καὶ (221) ξένον, μυρίαὶς χρώμενον γλώσσαις, τούτων οὖν ἀπάντων συναθροισθέντων, περιαιρεθέντων δὲ καὶ τῶν τοῦ τρικλίνου Μάκρωνος δρυφάκτων διόλου, ὡς καθαρὸς παρὰ πάντων θεῶτο ὁ εὐφημούμενος, ἐπ' ἀσπίδος τε τὸν νέον οἱ ἐν τέλει καθιζάνουσι καὶ μετέωρον αἶρουσι καὶ ἀνευφημοῦσι τρανότερον. εἶτα καὶ τὴν ἱερὰν λειτουργίαν τελοῦντες ἅμα μὲν αὐτὸς πατριάρχης [John XII Kosmas, PLP 92161] ἅμα δ' ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ τοῦ βήματος πάντες, ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ τῶν τελομένων καὶ τῷ υἱῷ κατὰ τὸ εἶκος συναφασίουν τὰ πρέποντα τῷ πατρί τε καὶ βασιλεῖ. καὶ δὴ τελεσθέντων ἐκείνων ἄνεισι μὲν ἐπ' ἄμβωνος ὁ κρατῶν, ἄνεισι δὲ καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης, συνάνεισι δὲ σφίσι καὶ ὁ εἰς βασιλείαν μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς χρῆσθόμενος, καὶ μετὰ λαμπρῶν καὶ περιφανῶν τῶν τελετῶν στέφει μὲν βασιλεὺς τὸν υἱόν, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τοῦ στέφους καὶ τοῦ ἱεράρχου, χρίει δ' ὁ ἱεράρχης τῷ θεῷ μύρω τὸν τῆς βασιλείας συμμετασχόντα. καὶ παιᾶνες ἐντεῦθεν καὶ εὐφημῖαι καὶ πᾶν χαριστήριον. ῥιπτοῦνται δὲ περιερχομένων τῶν βασιλέων καὶ οἱ συνήθεις ἀπόδεσμοι. καὶ τότε μὲν τὸ μέγα παλάτιον μετὰ περιφανοῦς τῆς δορυφορίας αὐτοῦς ὑποδέχεται. For comments on Michael IX's *coronation*, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέμμις*, 185–188; Gickler, *Kaiser Michael IX. Palaiologos*, 74–80.

³²⁰ According to George Pachymeres the Italian embassy was led by *Συρπέρος* (Syrpéros): Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.14–16. Syrpéros (or Sir Petros) has been variously identified with Pierre de L' Isle or Pierre de Surie. See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219, footnote 4; *PLP* 27229 (Petrus de Insula; Pierre de l'Isle); Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 51 and footnote 74; *Chronique de Morée*, ed. Longnon, 280 and 280–281, footnote 1. For a more detailed analysis of the negotiations of the diplomatic wedding between Michael IX and Catherine of Courtenay (*PLP* 444: *Αἰκατερίνα Ι.*), see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 49–54.

³²¹ About *Augustaion* courtyard, see *ODB*, I, 232, s. v. “Augustaion”; Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 59–62, with a ground-plan reconstruction of the area based on the evidence of Byzantine sources on p. 61. For the same ground plan, see also Janin, “Le palais patriarchal”, 151; Mango, *The Brazen House*, 42–47; Guiland, “L'Augoustéon”, 40–54 (first published in Greek: Guiland, “Ο Αὐγουστεῶν”, 153–112); Cf. Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*, especially 14–19. Interestingly, George Pachymeres has written a rhetorical description (*Ἐκφρασις*) of *Augustaion*: George Pachymeres, “Ἐκφρασις τοῦ Αὐγουστεῶνος”, ed. Walz, I, 578–583. See also Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 248–249, with further bibliography.

³²² About *Thomaites* (*triklinos*), see Guiland, “Le Thomaïtes”, 27–40 (repr. in eadem, *Études de topographie*, II, 14–27); Janin, “Le palais patriarchal”, 146–148. Cf. Mango, *The Brazen House*, especially 52–53; Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*, especially 26–27; Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 179 and 435, with further bibliography. For a ground-plan reconstruction of the area based on the evidence of Byzantine sources, see Janin, “Le palais patriarchal”, 151 (also available in Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 61).

unimpeded view of the raising in the air of the new emperor, the balustrades from the long gallery of the *Thomaites*, called *Makron* were removed.³²³ Then, the patriarch himself, the bishops and the clergy (*οἱ τοῦ βήματος πάντες*) performed a Divine Liturgy (*ιερά λειτουργία*). According to the text, during the entire ceremonial procedure, the son was honored, as it was reasonable, with all the appropriate rituals that were addressed likewise to the emperor and father. After this, George Pachymeres explains that first the emperor (*ὁ κρατῶν*), then the patriarch and, finally, the one who was going to be anointed as co-emperor along with his father – that is Michael IX – climbed on an ambo. With bright and conspicuous ceremonies, the emperor crowned the son, together with the patriarch (*ιεράρχης*),³²⁴ and the patriarch anointed with chrism (*θείω μύρω*) the one who was going to be co-emperor (*τὸν τῆς βασιλείας συμμετασχόντα*). Finally, after the singing of paeans, the *acclamations* and the thanksgiving (*χαριστήριον*), customary purses with coins (*ἀπόδεσμοι*) were thrown while the emperors led a *procession* towards the Great Palace, where they were welcomed along with their escort.³²⁵

The narrative representation of the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor is delivered under the separate title of “*Στεφροφορία τοῦ βασιλέως Μιχαήλ*” and is quite detailed.³²⁶ The length of the narrative, as well as the details included by the author, reveal his interest in the distinctive components of the ceremonies arranged for the installation of Michael IX as co-emperor. It is also indicative of the great emphasis the Palaiologan dynasty placed on the projection of Michael IX as the legitimate successor and heir to the imperial throne. The account reveals most of the different stages, which are

³²³ About the *Makron*, see Guiland, “Le Thomaïtès”, 27–29 [repr. in eadem, *Topographie*, II, 14–15]; Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 383; Mango, *The Brazen House*, 95 and footnote 104.

³²⁴ At this point, George Pachymeres employs the term *ιεράρχης* in order to denote the patriarch. For the use of this term in *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι*, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 38, footnote 2.

³²⁵ The Great Palace was the imperial palace of Constantinople and remained the actual residence of the emperors until the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), who moved his court to the Blachernai palace. After 1261, Blachernai palace was the permanent residence of Palaiologoi, while the Great Palace was used less frequently, mostly for ceremonial purposes. For the Great Palace, see Ebersolt, *Le Grand Palais*; Janin, *Constantinople byzantine*, 106–122; *ODB*, II, 869–870, s. v. “Great Palace (Μέγα παλάτιον)”; Müller-Wiener, *Bildlexikon*, 229–237, with further bibliography. The tenth-century treatise *De Cerimoniis* provides the names of various buildings and places in the Great Palace and, thereby, contributes to a reconstruction of its interiors and surroundings. See, for example, Featherstone, “The Great Palace”, 46–61. For the description of the Great Palace as an instrument of ideological manipulation of the Macedonian dynasty, based on the text of *De Cerimoniis*, see Featherstone, “Der Große Palast”, 19–38. Regarding the difficulties of visualizing and mapping the Great Palace from textual and archaeological data at our disposal, see Bardill, “Visualizing the Great Palace”, 5–45. For the use of the Blachernai Palace from the eleventh century on, see Macrides, “The citadel”, 277–304. For the Blachernai Palace as “ceremonial palace” in Pseudo-Kodinos, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 367–378.

³²⁶ In particular, the embedded narrative of the ceremonial act reaches approximately the number of 35 lines: Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.2–21 and 221.1–16.

usually included in the ceremonial procedure of the late Byzantine imperial accession: the *proclamation* and the shield raising, the *acclamations*, the *anointing* with chrism and the *coronation*.³²⁷ Therefore, in the following, I will focus on the ideological ramifications of each of the ceremonial acts that were carried out. This will shed new light on complex aspects of the late Byzantine institution of co-emperorship.

The Palaiologan *Shield-raising Proclamation Ceremony of the Co-Emperor*

The *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor took place in the *Augustaion*, the large square courtyard in front of Hagia Sophia and the imperial palace. The restricted character of this enclosed open space indicates on the one hand that it was used only for special occasions and, on the other, that a limited number of people were able to access it. George Pachymeres gives an interesting description of the audience that was gathered in the courtyard of Augustaion in order to witness the *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony of Michael IX, characterizing it as an “animal”, strange in form and loud.³²⁸ The removal of the balustrades from the gallery where Michael IX was standing allowed the participants to view the spectacle more easily. As a result, not only the state and military officials but also some foreigners, such as members of the Latin embassy for the potential wedding of Michael IX and Catherine of Courtenay, witnessed the symbolic messages of the Palaiologan propaganda expressed through the *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony of the young co-emperor.³²⁹ However, selected participants had a more active role during the accession ceremonies of the young co-emperor Michael IX. In the following, I will focus on those officials who were the main protagonists and took part in the legitimization of his *shield-raising proclamation*.

The example of Michael IX verifies that, similarly to the case of a senior-emperor, the *proclamation* of a young co-emperor also included a *shield-raising* ceremony during

³²⁷ Regarding the stages of the late Byzantine imperial accession ceremony, see also the detailed description found in the fourteenth-century compilation of Pseudo-Kodinos: Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 252–273. For various comments on the imperial *coronation* in the text of Pseudo-Kodinos, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 414–429.

³²⁸ See Georges Pachymèrès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.19–21 and 221.1–5: (219) ὑπ’ αὐγὰς δὲ συναχθέντων, καὶ τὴν τοῦ Αὐγουστεῶνος αὐλαίαν πληροῦντων ἐς τόσον ὥστε καὶ εἰς μίαν ἀρμογὴν καὶ συνέχειαν ζῦμπαντας ξυνεπτύχθαι ζῶον φαινομένους ἐν, εἰς πλάτος ἐνδιδὸν ἀλλόκοτόν τι καὶ (221) ξένον, μυρίαὶς χρώμενον γλώσσαις, τούτων οὖν ἀπάντων συναθροισθέντων, περιαιρεθέντων δὲ καὶ τῶν τοῦ τρικλίνου Μάκρωνος δρυφάκτων διόλου, ὡς καθαρὸς παρὰ πάντων θεῶτο ὁ εὐφημούμενος, ἐπ’ ἀσπίδος τε τὸν νέον οἱ ἐν τέλει καθιζάνουσι καὶ μετέωρον αἶρουσι καὶ ἀνευφημοῦσι τρανότερον.

³²⁹ Georges Pachymèrès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.14–16.

which the candidate was raised on a shield while being seated.³³⁰ Below, I will discuss who raised the shield of Michael IX and, in the light of a detailed analysis of the imperial ceremony, I will trace the relocation of political power from the hands of the military officials to the high civil officials – often members of the Palaiologan family – after 1261. It is important for modern historians to recognize the distinction between military officials and civil officials because the Byzantines themselves made the distinction in their texts. According to the text of George Pachymeres, “those in office” (*οἱ ἐν τέλει*), probably high-ranking aristocrats, took an active role in the ceremony by raising the shield and acclaiming the young Michael IX. Interestingly, in order to denote those imperial officials George Pachymeres employs the same expression as George Akropolites did for the account of Michael VIII’s accession, *οἱ ἐν τέλει*.³³¹ In the passage where George Pachymeres describes the *shield-raising* ceremony related to the accession of Michael VIII the protagonists are not “those in office” (*οἱ ἐν τέλει*), but the magnates (*μεγιστᾶνες*) and the high priests (*ἀρχιερεῖς*).³³² Although the office-holders are not included in this passage, it is probable that some of the magnates that George Pachymeres mentions were holders of an office in the imperial court of Nicaea. This assumption is strengthened by the testimony of George Akropolites, who claims that both those in office and military service raised Michael VIII on a shield.³³³ The office-holders continued to have the privilege of participating in the imperial accession ceremony of the *shield-raising proclamation* not only during the early years of the reign of the Palaiologoi but throughout the whole Palaiologan period.

The text of Pseudo-Kodinos explains that, if the emperor – and father of the one who was being proclaimed – was alive, the most exalted dignitaries, whether they hold an office or not, namely the despots, *sebastokratores* [and caesars], usually held the side and the back parts of the shield; otherwise, the highest in ranking and the noblest among the court title

³³⁰ For the *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony of the young co-emperor Michael IX, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.3–5: ἐπ’ ἀσπίδος τε τὸν νέον οἱ ἐν τέλει καθιζάνουσι καὶ μετέωρον αἶρουσι καὶ ἀνευφημοῦσι τρανότερον. In this context, the verb *καθιζάνουσι* implies that Michael IX was placed on a shield and elevated while being seated. The *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony of the emperor while being seated is attested at least from 1254 onwards, when Theodore II Laskaris succeeded his father. See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 105.18–22: καθεσθεις ἐπ’ ἀσπίδος ὡς ἔθος καὶ ὑπὸ πάντων φημισθεις αὐτοκράτωρ, τοῦ Νυμφαίου ἀπάρας ἐπὶ τὴν Φιλαδέλφειαν ἀφίκετο.

³³¹ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.13.

³³² Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.14–16: καὶ χερσὶν ἔνθεν μὲν ἀρχιερέων, ἔνθεν δὲ μεγιστάνων ἀρθεῖς, ἀνακτορικοῖς παιάνοις καὶ κρότοις παρὰ πάντων ἐμεγαλύνετό τε καὶ ἐφημίζετο.

³³³ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.13–15: καὶ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλικῆς ἀσπίδος οἱ τῶν ἐν τέλει καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι τῶν στρατευμάτων κρεῖττους ὄντες καθίσαντες βασιλικῶς ἐπεφήμισαν.

holders took their place.³³⁴ In case there was no senior emperor, the most honored of the dignitaries or court title holders took his place by holding the front part of the shield together with the patriarch, while again the best and the most venerable office-holders held the back part of the shield.³³⁵ Thus, in Pseudo-Kodinos' ceremonial handbook, both the leading dignitaries, namely the despots (δεσπότες), Sebastokratores (σεβαστοκράτορες) and caesars (καίσαρες), as well as the holders of lower high-ranking court titles played a substantial part in the *shield-raising proclamation* of not only the emperor but also of the co-emperor. At this point, it should be noted that despots, Sebastokratores, and caesars were usually the emperor's male relatives by blood or marriage and that their proximity to the emperor was expressed both in the ceremonial protocol and their attire.³³⁶ Already from the start of his reign, Michael VIII surrounded himself mostly with his relatives in the fear that other powerful aristocratic families would seize the throne. Being part of this tradition, Michael IX came to power enjoying the support of relatives and drew legitimacy from them. In this sense, Pseudo-Kodinos', George Pachymeres' and Planoudes' ideas on a legitimate succession and its main protagonists coincide.

Based on Pseudo-Kodinos' text the three most illustrious dignitaries were the despot, the Sebastokrator and the Caesar, while any holders of lower court titles were designated as archontes (ἄρχοντες).³³⁷ In its narrow understanding, the archon was the holder of an office (offikion, ὀφφίκιον) rather than a dignity (axioma, ἀξίωμα).³³⁸ However, it seems that during the late Byzantine period, an ὀφφίκιον was no longer necessarily an office with specific responsibility as Pseudo-Kodinos suggests in one of his chapters.³³⁹ Indeed, the sharp distinction between the office-holders and the title-holders or dignitaries in the court hierarchy, which existed during the earlier Byzantine periods, has become more dubious

³³⁴ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.1–10: Κατέχουσι δὲ τὰ μὲν ἔμπροσθεν τῆς ἀσπίδος αὐτός τε ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ ἀναγορευομένου, ἄνπερ ζῶν ἦ, καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης, τὰ δ' ἐκ πλαγίων καὶ ὀπισθεν οἱ ἐν ἀξιώμασιν ὑπερέχοντες, ἡγουν δεσπότες, σεβαστοκράτορες, [καίσαρες], ἂν ᾧσιν, εἰ δὲ μὴ, οἱ κρείττονες καὶ εὐγενέστεροι τῶν ἀρχόντων. For the English translation, cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 217.

³³⁵ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.10–14: Εἰ δ' οὐκ ἔστι πατήρ, τὰ μὲν τῆς ἀσπίδος ἔμπροσθεν ὁ ἐντιμότερος τῶν ἀξιοματικῶν ἢ τῶν ἀρχόντων μετὰ τοῦ πατριάρχου, τὰ δὲ γε ὀπισθεν οὐς εἵπομεν. For an English translation, cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 217.

³³⁶ See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 294–301.

³³⁷ Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.1–14. See also the commentary in Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 292–293. For a list of the late Byzantine dignitaries and office holders and their hierarchy within the Palaiologian court, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 296.

³³⁸ See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 294.

³³⁹ For this idea, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 295. See also chapter three in Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 167.1–6: Περὶ τῆς ὑπηρεσίας ἐκάστου τῶν ὀφφικίων. Ὁ δεσπότης μὲν, ὁ σεβαστοκράτωρ καὶ ὁ καίσαρ οὐδεμίαν ὑπηρεσίαν ἔχουσιν, ἂν μὴ ταχθῶσιν εἰς ἡγεμονίαν.

during the late Byzantine period.³⁴⁰ In any case, this suggests that those in office – οἱ ἐν τέλει, to employ the term of George Akropolites and George Pachymeres or οἱ ἐν ἀξιωμασίν and ἄρχοντες, to employ the term of Pseudo-Kodinos – had an active role during the *proclamation* ceremony of the accession rituals of the Palaiologoi.

The prominent role of the imperial dignitaries and office-holders in the accession ceremony of both Michael VIII and Michael IX suggests their significant involvement in the political life during the early years of the Palaiologoi, both in Nicaea and in Constantinople. In the political life of Nicaea, however, the members of the military aristocracy seem to have had a more prominent role, perhaps due to the new social and political realities in which the empire found itself after 1204. The Laskarid emperors had no other choice than to cultivate political ideology based on territorial re-conquest and expansion.³⁴¹ Therefore, popularity of the military ceremony of the *shield-raising proclamation* in Nicaea was not accidental.³⁴² Inevitably, after the re-conquest of Constantinople from the Latins, the Palaiologan emperors gradually abandoned the ideology of militarism, which had been cultivated in an innovative way by the Laskarids.³⁴³ The main difference between the *shield-raising proclamations* of Michael VIII and Michael IX is that the first came to power mainly with the support and involvement of military officials, while the latter ascended the throne through the support of the most high-ranking holders of office or court title, who were also members of his family.³⁴⁴

It seems that in contrast to the Laskarids of Nicaea, the Palaiologoi placed less ideological weight on the military aristocracy, something that is also obvious through the performance of imperial ceremonies. A case in point is the fact that although, according to

³⁴⁰ Cf. *ODB*, I, 623, s. v. “Dignities and Titles (ἀξίαι διὰ βραβείων)” and *ODB*, III, 1513, s. v. “Offices (ἀξίαι διὰ λόγου, also ὀφφίκια, ἀρχαί, ζῶναι)”, with further bibliography on this topic. On the court hierarchy based on the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos Protospatharios preserved in the tenth-century *De Cerimoniis*, see Philotheos, *Kletorologion*. About the court hierarchy under the Palaiologoi, see Verpeaux, “Hiérarchie”, 421–437, especially 426–430, and more recently in Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 291–301, and especially 295–301.

³⁴¹ Cf. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 418.

³⁴² Regarding the military origins of the *shield-raising* ceremony, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 22; Cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 24.

³⁴³ Cf. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 418: “The Laskarid emperors of Nicaea abandoned traditional marks of the Byzantine imperial majesty in response to the catastrophe of the fall of Constantinople. They innovated by cultivating an ideology of expansionism and militarism which rested mainly on Old Testament ideas”.

³⁴⁴ The involvement of military officials in the *shield-raising proclamation* of Michael VIII, as attested by George Akropolites, should not be ignored even though the equivalent testimonies of George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras do not refer to the active participation of the army during the ceremony. See George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.13–15; Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.14–16 and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 78.1–3.

George Pachymeres' account, military officials were present in the *shield-raising* ceremony of Michael IX there is no indication that they had an active role during the process, as it might perhaps have been expected. The conclusion that evidently presents itself from the above analysis is that, indeed, the civil office holders managed to form a more vigorous part of the political life of the Palaiologan dynasty. In fact, by the time that Pseudo-Kodinos wrote his treatise on the imperial ceremonial, the most high-ranking court title holders apparently took over completely the role of military aristocracy in the *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony.

The Act of Crowning the Co-Emperor and its Ideological Significance for the Early Palaiologoi

The act of crowning Michael IX is to be seen as an initiation ceremony that introduced the young co-emperor into the closed circle of the imperial court. Moreover, this act was employed in order to inform all those who were present about the new hierarchical order at court. The ceremonial placing of the crown upon the young co-emperor's head is attested to not only by George Pachymeres, but also by Nikephoros Gregoras.³⁴⁵ According to the description of George Pachymeres, the crown was placed upon the head of Michael IX by the emperor and the patriarch.³⁴⁶ In addition, George Pachymeres reveals that during the entire ceremonial procedure and especially during the liturgy, the son (and co-emperor) was honored with all the appropriate rituals that were addressed likewise to his father, the emperor.³⁴⁷ This means that the ceremonies concerning the accession of an emperor were very similar to those concerning the accession of a co-emperor, while the main difference between the two ceremonies lay in the protagonists. The crowning of the emperor was customarily performed by the hand of the patriarch, while the crowning of the co-emperor was usually performed by the emperor along with the contribution of the patriarch. The emperor who was crowned by the patriarch had the main advantage that his authority was confirmed by the church's collaboration and thus, was able to project once more the idea

³⁴⁵ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.11–12 and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 193.12–13.

³⁴⁶ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.11–12: στέφει μὲν βασιλεὺς τὸν υἱόν, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τοῦ στέφους καὶ τοῦ ἱεράρχου.

³⁴⁷ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.5–8.

that he has a God-chosen emperor.³⁴⁸ Therefore, in the case of Michael IX, the crowning by both the emperor and the patriarch projected a very specific political message. Through their actions, the senior-emperor and the patriarch, as the main representatives of the imperial and the ecclesiastical authorities, bestowed upon Michael IX the right to rule.

At the same time, the act of crowning the young Co-emperor Michael IX by both the emperor and the patriarch aimed to highlight the boundaries of the hierarchical governance mode. This symbolic act projected the higher status of Emperor Andronikos II in comparison to that of the young co-emperor, who although he held the title of the co-emperor did not share the same hierarchical status as his father. Noticeably, during the entire ceremonial procedure, the focus is placed on the emperor rather than on the co-emperor, as would have been perhaps expected. For example, when George Pachymeres refers to the events that took place in Hagia Sophia the night preceding the *coronation*, he points out that the emperor had a central position standing in the upper gallery and was listening to the hymns.³⁴⁹ Moreover, George Pachymeres writes that first the emperor, Andronikos II (*ὁ κρατῶν*), then the patriarch and, finally, Michael IX climbed on the ambo where the act of crowning and *anointing* were going to take place.³⁵⁰ The hierarchical climbing on the ambo allowed the senior emperor to demonstrate his authority and majesty. This performance also functioned as a visual reminder to those present that Andronikos II was the head of state and at the top of the hierarchy.

Contrary to the detailed account of George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras provides no information regarding the ceremonial procedure and he simply states the fact that Michael IX was crowned.³⁵¹ The description of Nikephoros Gregoras is indicative not only of the author's limited interest in imperial ceremonies but also of his keen interest in ecclesiastical matters. For Nikephoros Gregoras, the most exciting part of Michael IX's *coronation* ceremony as co-emperor was the fact that it was performed by the then Patriarch John XII Kosmas (1294–1303).³⁵² Emphasis is given to Ioannes XII and his place of origin,

³⁴⁸ There is an ample bibliography touching upon various aspects of this topic. See, for example: Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*; Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*; Angold, *Church and Society*; Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*.

³⁴⁹ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.18.

³⁵⁰ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.8–10.

³⁵¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 193.12–13.

³⁵² Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 193.12–13: οὗτος καὶ τῷ τοῦ βασιλέως υἱῷ Μιχαὴλ τὸ βασιλικὸν περιτίθησι στέφος. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 163. On John XII Kosmas, see *PLP* 92161 (Ἰωάννης XII), with further bibliography.

family status, education, and career as a monk.³⁵³ Moreover, Nikephoros Gregoras describes how Patriarch John XII Kosmas replaced Patriarch Athanasios I (1289–1293, 1303–1309) to the patriarchal throne through imperial decision and the vote of the Holy Synod.³⁵⁴ Finally, the author writes that Patriarch Ioannes XII Kosmas, among other things, also crowned Michael IX. This brief reference to the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX as co-emperor and the focus on the role of the patriarch in the act of crowning has to do with the intrinsic logic of the narrative, as well as with the fact that Nikephoros Gregoras belonged to Church circles and was more involved in ecclesiastical matters. Nikephoros Gregoras underlines the role of the patriarch in the ceremony and does not mention the contribution of the emperor at all, unlike George Pachymeres who refers to both authorities.³⁵⁵ In my view, the author in this specific passage implicitly intended to highlight the role of the Church in the installation of the co-emperor and suggest that the approval of the patriarch (and, therefore, the Church) was the most important, if not the only, legitimizing factor in Michael IX's authority. This is one of Nikephoros Gregoras' implicit indications of the increasing involvement of the patriarch in political matters after 1261, a topic which is discussed below.

In comparison to previous periods of Byzantine history, the role of the patriarch during the act of crowning the co-emperor seems to be more enhanced under the Palaiologoi. For example, the tenth-century treatise *De Cerimoniis* clearly indicates that firstly, the patriarch crowns with his own hands the emperor (τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα) and then, the emperor alone crowns the co-emperor (τὸν νεοχειροτόνητον βασιλέα).³⁵⁶ Indeed, according to the established tradition, it was the senior emperor who usually crowned his descendant and designated successor.³⁵⁷ However, a shift in the political ideology regarding the role of the patriarch during the *coronation* ceremony of the emperor and the co-emperor is observed under the Laskarids and under the Palaiologoi, respectively. As we have already seen, the

³⁵³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 193.3–9.

³⁵⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 193.9–10: οὗτος γνώμη βασιλικῆ καὶ ψήφῳ τῆς ἱερατικῆς συνόδου τὸν πατριαρχικὸν διαδέχεται θρόνον. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 163. About Patriarch Athanasios I, see *PLP* 415 (Ἀθανάσιος I.), with further bibliography. See also Patriarch Athanasios I, Correspondence, ed. Talbot, xvi–xxviii, for a detailed account of his life; and Talbot, “Patriarch Athanasios”, 11–28, where further bibliography is to be found.

³⁵⁵ Perhaps this has partially to do with George Pachymeres' involvement in both ecclesiastical and political matters being, both *protekdikos* (ecclesiastical title) and *dikeophylax* (imperial title: judge). See Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 23.3–8.

³⁵⁶ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske, I, 194.11–14: καὶ πρῶτον μὲν ἰδίαις χερσὶ στέφει ὁ πατριάρχης τὸν μέγαν βασιλέα, εἶτα ἐπιδίδωσι τῷ μεγάλῳ βασιλεῖ τὸ στέμμα, καὶ στέφει ὁ βασιλεὺς τὸν νεοχειροτόνητον βασιλέα. For the English translation, see Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, I, 194. Cf. also Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, ed. Vogt, II, 3.11–14.

³⁵⁷ On this matter, see also Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 76.

Laskarid emperors, who wanted to gain additional support for their claims due to the turbulent political situation after 1204, favored the act of imperial crowning by the hand of the patriarch. For example, the crowning of the founder of the Nicaean dynasty, Theodore I Laskaris, by the hand of Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos (1206–1212) constituted a symbolic act of moral support for Theodore I, something that increased the prestige of the newly crowned emperor and facilitated the enforcement of his authority.³⁵⁸

Because of its increased ideological significance, the act of crowning the emperor by the hand of the patriarch was also employed by the Palaiologoi.³⁵⁹ Skillfully, the Palaiologan emperors extended the act's political and ideological ramifications also to the crowning of the co-emperor. Not only in the *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* of George Pachymeres, but also in the fourteenth-century compilation of Pseudo-Kodinos about the court ceremonial, is it indicated that during the *coronation* ceremony of the co-emperor, if the emperor is present, both he and the patriarch place the crown on the head of the new co-emperor (βασιλεύς).³⁶⁰ Moreover, the text of Pseudo-Kodinos points out that during the *coronation* of the co-emperor (βασιλεύς), if the father (πατήρ) – namely the emperor – is absent, then the patriarch himself performs alone the placing of the crown.³⁶¹ At this point, it should be noted that the crowning of the emperor, and consequently of the co-emperor, by the hand of the patriarch was never a legitimizing factor for either of the two offices. As Otto Treitinger observed, whenever the patriarch was involved in the imperial *coronation*, he acted as one of the most eminent “Roman citizens” rather than as the representative of the Church.³⁶² The approval of the Church was never a constitutional component of the imperial accession as was the support of the civil and military aristocracy.³⁶³ Nonetheless, the introduction of the new custom regarding the performance of the crowning of the co-emperor also by the patriarch, instead of the emperor alone, as was the case during earlier periods of Byzantine history, can

³⁵⁸ Cf. Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 173.

³⁵⁹ Cf. the relevant chapter of the present study which discusses in detail the mentality of Michael VIII and his predecessors concerning the imperial coronations through the eyes of the Byzantine historian George Akropolites.

³⁶⁰ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.11–12: στέφει μὲν βασιλεὺς τὸν υἱόν, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τοῦ στέφους καὶ τοῦ ἱεράρχου. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.9–13: Εἰ οὖν, ὡς προείπομεν, πάρεστιν ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πατήρ αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς τε καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης λαβόντες τὸ στέμμα ἐπιτιθέασι τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως. For the English translation, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 223.

³⁶¹ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.14–16.

³⁶² Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 30.

³⁶³ Actually, the imperial accession was legitimized only upon the approval of the Senate (especially during the early Byzantine period), the army and the people, jointly or individually. See Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 31. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτικὴ Θεωρία*, 23–24.

be viewed as a consequence of the enhancement of Church as an institution within the empire, especially during the early years of Andronikos II's and Michael IX's reign. At the time of Andronikos III, a sincere effort was made to settle the great ecclesiastical disputes that had arisen relating to the Arsenite schism and the Union of Lyon during the reign of Michael VIII. During his father's lifetime, Andronikos II had embraced the Union. However soon after his death, Andronikos II dissociated himself from his father's religious policy and took drastic steps to reverse it. The repudiation of the union of the churches was virtually the first action he took as sole ruler in December 1282, while by the 1310s he had also managed to put an end to the dispute between the Church and the party of the Arsenites.³⁶⁴ At the same time, in 1312, Andronikos II decided to increase the privileges of the Church by placing under the direct jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople the monasteries of Athos, which, since the eleventh century, had been under the authority of the emperor.³⁶⁵ The progressive enhancement of the Church's role as an institution within late Byzantine political life is mirrored in the accession rituals of Michael IX. It is reflected not merely in the crowning of the young co-emperor, an act which was performed by both the patriarch and senior-emperor, but also through the act of anointing, which was administered exclusively by the patriarch, as we examine immediately below.

The Anointing Ceremony as Part of the Late Byzantine Accession Rituals

A very particular ceremonial act that took place during the *coronation* of Co-emperor Michael IX, which perhaps also implies the increasingly influential role of the Church in the late Byzantine society, is the *anointing* by the patriarch.³⁶⁶ George Pachymeres is the one who provides information about this ceremony, and his testimony is the first explicit report

³⁶⁴ About Andronikos II's religious policy, see, for example, Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 32–37.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 106 and Nicol, *Church and Society*, 19.

³⁶⁶ According to the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* "anointing" is "a ritual rubbing with blessed oil or chrism" employed not only for inauguration rites like baptism, but also in order to mark the accession to political power for example during a *coronation* ceremony. On the other hand, "unction" is a "sacrament of the anointing of the sick for healing and for forgiveness of sin". About "anointing", see *ODB*, I, 107, s. v. "anointing (χρίσμα)"; about "unction", see *ODB*, III, 2142, s. v. "unction (ἐνχαίλαιον, ἅγιον ἔλαιον)". Thus, regarding the terminology employed in the context of the present study, the term "anointing" seems more appropriate rather than the term "unction". For the idea that the act of imperial anointing could be connected to the continuously increasing influence of the Church in Byzantine political life when it finally acquired a substantial and not just metaphorical meaning in the sources, see Dagron, "Caractère sacerdotal", 177: "Oint du Seigneur", le souverain byzantine ne l'est donc pas matériellement, mais l'est - si l'on peut dire - réellement, et c'est seulement lorsque le patriarche interviendra avec une huile préparée par ses soins que l'onction impériale, paradoxalement, deviendra matérielle mais métaphorique ; elle ne sera plus un don direct de l'Esprit, mais une cérémonie symbolique organisée et contrôlée par l'Église". Cf. Angold, *Church and Society*, 547: "Anointing with chrism was the ceremonial expression of the church's support for the imperial office, or to put it another way, of the emperor's need for the church's approval".

of its performance during the Palaiologan period.³⁶⁷ In fact, this testimony is the first unambiguous reference to the *anointing* ceremony as part of the accession rituals made within a Byzantine historiographical text. In the following, I will attempt to highlight the ideological connotations that the act of *anointing* carried and examine the ceremony's special political concepts within the context of its performance during Michael IX's installation to power.

The political concepts and ideas that the *anointing* ceremony conveys are closely connected with its obscure historical origin and its sacral nature. The origins of the *anointing* ceremony are still debated among modern scholars due to the difficulty of distinguishing whether earlier references in the sources are metaphorical or literal.³⁶⁸ For example, some historians propose that *anointing* had been introduced as part of the Byzantine *coronation* ceremony already by the ninth century, while others suggest that *anointing* was a ceremony, which had been introduced after 1204 at Nicaea in imitation of the ceremony performed by the Latins at Constantinople.³⁶⁹ A possibly more convincing assumption is that *anointing* was added to the *coronation* ceremony earlier than 1204 and most probably was introduced by the Komenian emperors during the twelfth century.³⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the most substantial evidence for the actual performance of the *anointing* ceremony, already before the mid-

³⁶⁷ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.12–13: χρίει δ' ὁ ιεράρχης τῷ θεῷ μύρω τὸν τῆς βασιλείας συµμετασχόντα.

³⁶⁸ For a brief overview of the secondary bibliography dealing with the issue of the date at which the anointing ceremony began to be performed during the Byzantine *coronation* ceremonies, see Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 273, footnote 121. See also the footnote immediately below.

³⁶⁹ Especially regarding the ninth and the twelfth centuries as two of the periods that have been proposed for the introduction of imperial anointing before the thirteenth century, see Giarenis, “Πτυχές της ιδεολογικής αντιπαράθεσης”, 100 and Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 195, for a brief summary of the so far argumentation and for further bibliography. For the idea that imperial anointing was introduced in imitation of the Latin imperial ceremonial, see Ostrogorsky, “Zur Kaisersalbung”, 246–256, especially 255 and cf. Jugie, *Theologia dogmatica*, III, 151–162, especially 152.

³⁷⁰ See Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), especially 38 and 50. Cf. also Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 195 and footnote 76: Ruth Macrides underlines the fact that Niketas Choniates employs the verb “*χρίω*” in connection with the inauguration of Manuel, Isaac II, Alexios III, Nicholas Kanavos, and Baldwin and Henry, the first two Latin emperors of Constantinople”. Moreover, Michael Angold suggests that by the time of Alexios III Angelos (r. 1195–1203) anointing was included on a more regular basis into the imperial ceremonial: Angold, *Church and Society*, 544. According to Niketas Choniates, Alexios III Angelos (r. 1195–1203) “entered the celebrated Great Church of the Wisdom of God so that according to the custom he might be anointed and invested with the *insignia* of sovereignty”, during his accession in 1195: Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, I, 457.14–15: Εἰσελθὼν δὲ τὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ Σοφίας περίπυστον καὶ μέγιστον τέμενος, ὅπως κατὰ τὸ ἔθιμον ἐς βασιλέα χρῖσθῃ καὶ περιβαλεῖται τὰ τοῦ κράτους σύμβολα. For the translation in English, see Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium*, 251. Although Frank Edward Brightman and Donald MacGillivray Nicol agree on the possibility that anointing could have been added to the *coronation* ceremony before 1204, they do not exclude that it could nonetheless have been added through Latin influence. See Brightman, “Byzantine Imperial Coronations”, 383–385 and Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 50–51.

thirteenth century, is provided through the correspondence of Germanos II, patriarch of Nicaea, and Demetrios Chomatenos, archbishop of Orchid.³⁷¹ The letters they exchanged regarding the unction of Theodoros I Angelos Komnenos Dukas, ruler of the Despotate of Epirus, during his *coronation* ceremony as emperor at Thessaloniki sometime after its recaptured from the Latins in 1224, testify that both Germanos II and Demetrios Chomatenos take the performance of *anointing* for granted.

Interestingly, however, although Patriarch Germanos II and Archbishop Chomatenos agree upon the legitimacy and the customary performance of the *anointing* of the new emperor, they both question the nature of the substance employed in *anointing* the emperor and they argue whether *myron* (chrism) blessed by the patriarch or consecrated *oil* blessed by any priest was more appropriate for the occasion.³⁷² In one of his letters, Chomatenos explains the difference between the two substances.³⁷³ Myron (μύρον, Chomatenos 376.186), namely chrism, was a mixture of oil and aromatic ingredients (τὸ μύρον [...] τὸ σκευαστὸν καὶ ἐκ πολλῶν μυριπνόων συντεθειμένον εἰδῶν (Chomatenos 376.186–187), while oil (ἔλαιον, Chomatenos 376.177) was a “simple blessed liquid” (τὸ ἀπλοῦν, ὃ μόναις εὐχαῖς ἀπαρτίζεται, Chomatenos 376.189–190).³⁷⁴ Patriarch Germanos II considered the oil used by Archbishop Chomatenos to anoint Theodoros Komnenos Dukas as of lower quality like that abstracted from a wild olive tree (ἔλαιον [...] ὁποῖον τὸ ἐξ ἀγριελαίου).³⁷⁵ The underlying reason for their dispute was the fact that Patriarch Germanos II seems to have claimed to be the only one equipped to produce and use myron (chrism) to anoint the sole legitimate Byzantine emperor – in this case, Theodore I Laskaris of Nicaea. Thus, *anointing* played a major role in the ideological controversy between the states of Nicaea and Epirus regarding the title of the legitimate successor of the Byzantine imperial tradition after the loss of Constantinople to the Latins.³⁷⁶ Chomatenos explicitly points out that: “It is not even

³⁷¹ About Patriarch Germanos II, see *ODB*, II, 847, s. v. “Germanos II”; about Archbishop Chomatenos see *ODB*, I, 426–427, s. v. “Chomatenos, Demetrios”, with further bibliography.

³⁷² Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 43–46 and especially 44; Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 188. While in Byzantium only the head of the emperor was anointed with chrism, in the western *coronation* ceremony usually the body of the emperor was anointed with chrism and his head with oil: Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 49. In the West although both oil and chrism could be used, the use of oil was more common. See Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 45–46 and footnotes 28 and 29.

³⁷³ Demetrios Chomatianos, *Ponemata Diafora*, ed. Prinzing, no. 114, 370.1–378.266.

³⁷⁴ About the definition of μύρον and ἔλαιον in the letter of Archbishop Chomatenos cf. also Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 188. On μύρον as oil with perfume, see Caseau, “Parfum”, 150, footnote 37.

³⁷⁵ Prinzing “Die ‚Antigraphe‘”, 34.24–26, especially 34.25.

³⁷⁶ For further discussion on this topic, see, for example, the studies of Giarenis, “Πτυχές της ιδεολογικής αντιπαράθεσης”, 99–122 and Stavridou-Zafra, *Νίκαια και Ηπειρος*, 160–186.

part of the prevailing custom to anoint with *myron* him who is called upon to be proclaimed emperor, but with oil blessed by holy incantations”.³⁷⁷ The phrase “prevailing custom” could have a double meaning, denoting that *anointing* with *oil* was an old Constantinopolitan practice or that it was a prevailing custom inside and out of the Byzantine world during that time, when Chomatenos was writing.³⁷⁸ In any case, based on Chomatenos’ argument, the innovation was not in the act of *anointing* itself, but in the substance with which it was performed.³⁷⁹ Chomatenos brings forward the question of the kind of liquid used during the ceremony to claim that he also had the right to produce the “legitimate” substance for an imperial anointing and, by extension, to justify the claims of his patron Theodoros Komnenos Dukas of Epirus and to question the authority of the Constantinopolitan patriarch-in-exile. If we accept the words of Chomatenos as true, from the thirteenth century onwards, *myron* (chrism) – and not *oil* – was used for the imperial *coronations* of the emperors and the co-emperors.³⁸⁰ Apparently, the performance – or perhaps the revival of the performance – of the *anointing* ceremony in the thirteenth century seems to be accompanied by a change in the material employed during the enactment of this ritual act.³⁸¹ The outcome of the dispute was to escalate the rivalry between the rulers (and the ecclesiastical authorities) of Nicaea and Epirus, which was not solved until 1242 when John VIII Vatatzes, Theodore I Laskaris’ son, forced Theodoros Komnenos Dukas to settle for the title of “despot” instead of “emperor”.³⁸² At the same time, the authority and status of the Nicaean patriarch of Constantinople was anew recognized, along with his right to crown and anoint the only legitimate emperor with *myron* (chrism) that he had previously produced, and gave extra consecration with his blessing, a claim that was questioned in the case of Patriarch Germanos II. Michael IX may or may not have been the first imperial candidate to have been anointed by the patriarch with *myron* (chrism); however, as noted above, Michael IX’s example of *anointing* is the first explicit and unambiguous attestation of the ceremony’s performance

³⁷⁷ Demetrios Chomatianos, *Ponemata Diafora*, ed. Prinzing, no. 114, 376.175–177: οὐδὲ τοῦ ἐπικρατοῦντος ἔθους ἐστὶ μύρω χρίεσθαι τὸν εἰς τὴν βασιλείον ἀνάρρησιν προκαλούμενον, ἐλαίω δὲ ἱεροῖς ἀγιαζομένῳ ἐπάσμασι. For the English translation, see Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 190.

³⁷⁸ Cf. Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 191 and footnotes 37–40, who gives examples of *coronation* ceremonies connected to the anointing with oil, which were performed outside the Byzantine world from 1204 onwards.

³⁷⁹ Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 45 and 49.

³⁸⁰ Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 46–49, gathers and briefly examines the *coronation* ceremonies from the late thirteenth to fifteenth centuries during which the use of *myron* was employed.

³⁸¹ Regarding the substance employed and the different opinions whether or not a change in the substance was innovatively employed, see Macrides, “Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?”, 189; Nicol, “Kaisersalbung” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. I), 45; Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 211–212.

³⁸² George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 67.16–24.

found in a Byzantine historiographical text. George Pachymeres states that the patriarch anointed the new co-emperor with chrism (θείω μύρω).³⁸³ Within this historical background, the substance employed for the *coronation* of Michael IX and its proper use by the patriarch himself are important, exactly because they link the ceremony to a practice already established as legitimate practice in the years of Theodore I Laskaris, if not earlier. George Pachymeres recognizes the strong connection of tradition and legitimacy and, therefore, he points out that everything was performed according to custom (κατὰ τὸ εἶκός)³⁸⁴, the *anointing* ceremony included.

By the time of Michael IX's installation to the throne, George Pachymeres and his peers considered the use of the chrism which was blessed by the patriarch (θείω μύρω) as the only legitimate substance for the performance of the *anointing* ceremony, although the act of *anointing* itself was perhaps still undergoing formation and had not yet found its final form, as witnessed by Pseudo-Kodinos.³⁸⁵ The reason for this hypothesis may be supported through a close examination of George Pachymeres' account. To be more precise, according to his text, the *anointing* of Co-emperor Michael IX was performed by the patriarch (ἱεράρχης) after the *coronation* ceremony.³⁸⁶ However, the fourteenth-century ceremonial protocol of Pseudo-Kodinos reveals that the act of *anointing* usually took place before the *coronation*, contrary to the order that George Pachymeres employed in his description.³⁸⁷ Interestingly, Maximos Planoudes, a contemporary of George Pachymeres, first refers to the chrism and then to the coronation, like Pseudo-Kodinos. However, Planoudes does not clarify who performed the acts of *crowning* or *anointing* and attributes both gestures to the initiative of the emperor for the sake of brevity.³⁸⁸ In this way, Planoudes highlights Emperor Andronikos II's contribution to the accession of Michael IX. On the other hand, despite the "reverse" order in the description of the two events, George Pachymeres is very careful in ascribing the *crowning* to both the emperor and the patriarch, but the *anointing* only to the

³⁸³ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.12–13.

³⁸⁴ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 6–8.

³⁸⁵ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.19–29 and 259.1–22.

³⁸⁶ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.10–13.

³⁸⁷ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.19–29 and 259.1–22. For this observation, see also Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 220, footnote 8.

³⁸⁸ Maximos Planoudes, Basilikos, ed., Westerink, *Texts and Studies*, 142.1181–1182: [ὁ πατήρ σε καὶ βασιλεὺς...] τῷ κατὰ νόμους χρίσματι χρίει καὶ στέφει τῷ στέφει.

latter.³⁸⁹ Although it has been suggested that “the unobtrusiveness of the act of *anointing*, compared to the act of crowning” is perhaps the reason why George Pachymeres reversed “the true (sic) order of the acts”,³⁹⁰ one cannot help but wonder whether there is another explanation for this phenomenally random occurrence connected to the acts’ ideological significance. I do not suggest that we should take George Pachymeres’ description for granted, but so far, the analysis of imperial ceremonies within the historiographical text of George Pachymeres demonstrates that the author provides elaborate descriptions of court ceremonies and employs them in order to ascribe more accuracy to his account. Thus, if the act of *anointing* were “unobtrusive”, George Pachymeres would probably have not even bothered to mention it. Instead, he does refer to it in detail and, as I will demonstrate below, he implies a new, special ideological meaning within the framework of Michael IX’s *coronation* as co-emperor.

To date, the most prominent views that have been expressed regarding the ideological significance of the *anointing* ceremony are connected to its ramifications under the Komnenoi – if indeed these earlier references are to be taken as literal and not metaphorical – and the Laskarids. However, little has been written about the ceremony’s ideological significance under the Palaiologans. Most of these ideas are gathered by Michael Angold, in his study on *Church and Society under the Comneni*.³⁹¹ In brief, according to the research so far and Michael Angold’s opinion on the Byzantine sources, the *anointing* ceremony could supply “some extra sanction for imperial authority” when the circumstances demanded it.³⁹² More specifically, they could justify a usurpation, provide “an outward sign of divine confirmation of an emperor’s assumption of office”, give “a spiritual dimension to imperial claims to legitimacy”, or even become “an avowal of the spiritual responsibilities of a Byzantine emperor”.³⁹³ These views probably stand in connection with the ceremonial context in which they have been studied. However, none of them corresponds perfectly to the case of the *anointing* of Michael IX as co-emperor to his father Andronikos II.

³⁸⁹ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.11–13: στέφει μὲν βασιλεὺς τὸν υἱόν, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τοῦ στέφους καὶ τοῦ ἱεράρχου, χρίει δ’ ὁ ἱεράρχης τῷ θεῷ μύρω τὸν τῆς βασιλείας συμμετασχόντα.

³⁹⁰ See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 425.

³⁹¹ Angold, *Church and Society*, 542–547.

³⁹² See Angold, *Church and Society*, 543.

³⁹³ See Angold, *Church and Society*, 542–547, especially 543–544.

In order to interpret the political and ideological implications of the *anointing* of Michael IX, it is crucial to outline the ideological ramifications of the ceremony during the thirteenth century. As we have already seen, *anointing* played a major role in further fueling the politico-ideological controversy between Nicaea and Epirus. The Byzantines of the imperial state of Nicaea, being in exile, drew parallelisms between them and the people of Israel, as well as between the Byzantine emperor and King David, who was the chosen of God.³⁹⁴ Notably, the earliest surviving Christian iconographical representation of *anointing* is found on one of the so-called “David plates”, discovered in Cyprus and dated to the reign of the Emperor Herakleios (r. 610–641).³⁹⁵ We have no depictions of a Byzantine emperor being anointed and no evidence that such representations ever existed.³⁹⁶ Therefore, as we will see below, such symbolic depictions of David’s *anointing*, which are directly or indirectly relevant to the actual practice of the rite, reveal its ideological significance in post-1204 Byzantium.

Christopher Walter, who studied the significance of *anointing* in Byzantine iconography, suggests, on the one hand that the first scene of David’s *anointing* draws associations “not with the *coronation* of a Byzantine emperor but rather with the chrism which a neophyte received on the occasion of his baptism”³⁹⁷. On the other hand, he maintains that *anointing* has entered into Byzantine iconography “not as an adaptation of imperial imagery but as a distinctly Christian theme of initiation”³⁹⁸. According to Christopher Walter’s convincing argumentation, the first Byzantine association of the *anointing* ceremony with the accession to the imperial throne is to be found on a miniature in a Psalter in Vatican. graec. 752, f. 82 dated to 1059.³⁹⁹ The artist of the miniature deliberately intends to represent the *anointing* of David as a rite connected with his accession to power, by combining the ceremony of *anointing* with that of the elevation on a shield and

³⁹⁴ See Angold, *Church and Society*, 544. Through an elaborate study of the imperial panegyric speeches dedicated to the emperors of Nicaea, it can be statistically proven that King David was the main biblical figure with which the emperors of Nicaea were parallelized: Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 86–90, table 2: “Comparative figures in imperial panegyrics”.

³⁹⁵ For the significance of the anointing ceremony in Byzantine iconography, see Walter, “The Significance of Unction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 53–73. Regarding the ideological significance of the “David Plates” for the Byzantine imperial ideology in general, and especially during the reign of Herakleios, see Spain Alexander, “Heraclius”, 217–237.

³⁹⁶ Walter, “The Significance of Unction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 53.

³⁹⁷ Walter, “The Significance of Unction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 58.

³⁹⁸ Walter, “The Significance of Unction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 58.

³⁹⁹ Walter, “The Significance of Unction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 63, 66 and 69.

by dressing David in imperial clothes.⁴⁰⁰ Finally, the relevant iconography from the thirteenth century, when it is certain that the rite was already in use, suggests that unction was introduced as a means of legitimizing or strengthening a claim to rule.⁴⁰¹

The above-mentioned observations demonstrate that the act of *anointing* in Byzantium gradually became closely connected to the biblical figure of David and to what it represented. In the imperial ideology of Byzantium, the Old Testament King David represented the prototype of “divinely appointed rulership proved by military might”.⁴⁰² The state of Nicaea, aiming to strengthen its position over the other two splinter states of Trebizond and Epirus, favored the idea that the Laskarid emperors were divinely appointed rulers and thus, the only legitimate heirs and carriers of the Constantinopolitan imperial tradition after 1204. The notion of the God-chosen emperor served perfectly the imperial propaganda of the Palaiologoi, who had to defend themselves against the stigma of usurpation against the Laskarids. Indeed the biblical figure of David with its associations of the divine transferal of kingship offered itself as an ideal model for an emperor like Michael VIII who had gained the throne through usurpation.⁴⁰³ However, in my opinion, the *coronation* of Michael IX as co-emperor to his father Andronikos II marks a turning point in the political ideology of the Palaiologoi, and therefore, the *anointing* ceremony and any associations with the divine appointment of authority should be examined through a different light.

Michael IX was the grandson of the founder of the dynasty, Michael VIII, and thus the idea of the God-elected emperor had to be re-defined to serve the purposes of the Palaiologan political ideology. The rhetoric of the imperial court could no longer emphasize the idea of the divine transferal of kingship, which was connected to the rise of Michael VIII, because he – and this idea – opposed the hereditary kingship of the rightful heir to the throne, namely John IV Laskaris. Now, with the accession of Michael IX, the dynasty had reached a point where the inherited right of succession to the throne had to be re-invented and

⁴⁰⁰ Walter, “The Significance of Uction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 63–65.

⁴⁰¹ Walter, “The Significance of Uction” (repr. in eadem, *Studies*, no. XIII), 66–73.

⁴⁰² Regarding the employment of Old Testament models for emperors in Byzantium, see Rapp, “Old Testament Models”, 175–197, and especially 196.

⁴⁰³ In his compositions of imperial panegyrics, the intellectual Manuel Holobolos has parallelized Michael VIII with David at least five times, while Gregory of Cyprus in his oration on Michael VIII, delivered sometime in the period 1270–1272, employed David as a comparative model three times. For the above statistics, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 86–90, table 2: “Comparative figures in imperial panegyrics”. For Manuel Holobolos and Gregory of Cyprus as authors of imperial panegyrics in praise of Michael VIII, see Angelov, *Imperial Ideology*, 67–71.

ideologically justified. In this perspective, *anointing* acquires a very different meaning than before. Rather than emphasizing the divinely appointed rulership, in the case of Michael IX *anointing* must have been employed by the Palaiologoi to establish the young co-emperor's hereditary right to ascend the throne and evidently, to strengthen the foundations of the newly established dynasty, which was still questioned by many. The detailed account of George Pachymeres indicates that Andronikos II Palaiologos had carefully planned his son's *coronation* as co-emperor so that it reflected the current political ideology of the Palaiologan court.

The account of George Pachymeres is of special interest within the political and ideological framework of the newly established Palaiologan dynasty, if one takes into consideration that this is the first unambiguous testimony in a historiographical work which reports the *anointing* ceremony as part of the accession ritual, while providing details regarding the context of its performance.⁴⁰⁴ Indeed, *anointing* could well have been an old ceremony, but it is only now, during this transitional period, which is characterized by political instability, that a Byzantine historian felt the need to include it in his description of the accession rituals. The act of *anointing* Co-emperor Michael IX Palaiologos, which, similarly to the act of his crowning, was performed by the patriarch, possibly reveals the constantly increasing role of the Church as an institution, a process that had evidently started during the years of "exile", when Theodore I Laskaris strove to ascribe additional sanction to his claims through the support of the Church and the patriarch. Regardless of the exact point of its performance – before or after the crowning – the *anointing* ceremony was familiar to the spectators, who accepted its legitimacy and recognized its significant ideological implications. The sacral character and the significant ideological connotations that the *anointing* ceremony conveyed facilitated its employment and gradually strengthened its position among the accession rituals of the late Byzantine court.

The Political and Ideological Aftermath of Michael IX Palaiologos' *Coronation* as Co-Emperor

The "conspicuous ceremonies" that Andronikos II arranged for the *coronation* ceremony of his son Michael IX Palaiologos are closely connected with the "conspicuous" political and

⁴⁰⁴ According to George Pachymeres, the anointing of Co-emperor Michael IX was performed by the patriarch (*ιεράρχης*) after the *coronation* ceremony and then followed the customary singing of paeans (*παιᾶνες*), the acclamations (*εὐφημῖαι*) and the thanksgiving (*χαριστήριον*): Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.11–14.

ideological significance of the appointment of the young co-emperor as a successor of the throne. Through the *coronation* of Michael IX, the institution of co-emperorship was further consolidated within the Palaiologan dynasty. Already with the *coronation* of Andronikos II as co-emperor to his father Michael VIII in 1271 and the issue of the relevant *prostagma* in 1272, specific privileges were granted to the co-emperor and for the first time, he was permitted a relatively independent and somewhat active participation in the imperial governance.⁴⁰⁵ Moreover, as we have seen, at a younger age, Michael IX was proclaimed as a second co-emperor, along with this father Andronikos II, to the senior emperor Michael VIII. Apparently, the institution of co-emperorship became an integral part of the imperial political agenda and hence, was promoted consciously by the Palaiologan dynasty. In the following paragraphs, I will argue that Andronikos II employed imperial ceremonies as a means to express the hierarchical balance within the Palaiologan court, after the installation of Michael IX as co-emperor, and that George Pachymeres, through his detailed descriptions of those ceremonies in his historiographical work, becomes the official exponent of the official imperial ideology. The focus is placed on Michael IX's first official ceremonial act as co-emperor, namely his stepbrother's crowning as a despot, and its political and ideological significance.

Regarding the establishment of the co-emperorship and the exercise of power, it is tempting to assume that Michael IX, after his *coronation* as co-emperor, enjoyed the same status as his father and was indeed recognized as an equal co-emperor; however, this was not the case. In his description of the events of the year 1305, George Pachymeres states that Andronikos II ruled for twenty-three years and Michael IX for twelve years.⁴⁰⁶ This means that the author considered Andronikos II as emperor only after 1282, when he succeeded his father Michael VIII, and Michael IX as early as his *coronation* as co-emperor in 1294.⁴⁰⁷ Like George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras also counts the years of imperial rulership of Andronikos II from the day that Michael VIII died, saying that Andronikos II had ruled

⁴⁰⁵ For the *prostagma*, see Heisenberg, *Palaiologenzeit*, 33–41. See also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 60–61, no. 1994.

⁴⁰⁶ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, IV, 615.3–4: Ἦδη μὲν οὖν τοῖν βασιλείων ἀμφοῖν, τῷ μὲν εἰκοστὸν καὶ τρίτον, τῷ δὲ δωδέκατον, αὐτοκρατοροῦσι ξυνέβαιεν ἐξανύεσθαι. See also the comment in Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, IV, 614, footnote 1. Cf. Failler, “La proclamation impériale”, 247–248.

⁴⁰⁷ Failler, “La proclamation impériale”, 247–248.

for fifty years when he died in 1332.⁴⁰⁸ Consequently, the Byzantines accepted that Andronikos II became emperor only when he was proclaimed senior emperor. Like his father Andronikos II during his reign as co-emperor to Michael VIII, Co-emperor Michael IX actively participated in the imperial governance and enjoyed a relatively high status within the Palaiologan imperial court. According to George Pachymeres, the first official act of Michael IX as co-emperor took place as early as the next day of his *coronation*, when he, along with his father Andronikos II, was allowed to crown his stepbrother John Palaiologos (*PLP* 21475) as a despot.⁴⁰⁹

From an ideological point of view, the imperial ceremonies that were staged for the appointment of Michael IX as co-emperor and his stepbrother John Palaiologos' crowning as despot reflect the superior position and status of the senior emperor Andronikos II. Only he had the legitimate right and authority to promote and crown his sons Michael IX as co-emperor and John as a despot, respectively. In both cases, the role of the patriarch and Michael IX was just auxiliary to that of Andronikos II and, therefore, George Pachymeres carefully chooses to employ the same vocabulary (*συνεπιλαμβανομένου*) and constructs sentences of similar structure when he describes the two ceremonial events.⁴¹⁰ The above examples illustrate the way in which evidently George Pachymeres becomes an exponent of the official imperial ideology and employs in his historiographical work the imperial ceremonies as manifestations of the delicate hierarchical balance after 1294. It is interesting that, while referring to the young co-emperor's participation in the crowning ceremony of John, George Pachymeres ascribes to Michael IX – for the first and last time within his narrative – the title *βασιλεύς και αυτοκράτωρ Ρωμαίων*, a title that was traditionally

⁴⁰⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 472.15–18: Τέταρτον μὲν δὴ καὶ ἑβδομηκοστὸν ἔτος ἀπὸ γενέσεως αὐτῷ τελευτῶντι ἠνύετο, πεντηκοστὸν δ' ἀφ' οὗ τὰ σκῆπτρα τῆς αυτοκρατορίας ἐδέξατο. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 246. Cf. Failler, “La proclamation impériale”, 248.

⁴⁰⁹ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.21–24: [Andronikos II Palaiologos] Καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἀγαγὼν Ἰωάννην [John Palaiologos, *PLP* 21475], ὃν ἐκ τῆς Εἰρήνης [Irene-Yolande of Montferrat, *PLP* 21361] ἔσχε νέον ἔτι τελοῦντα, εἰς δεσπότην προβάλλεται, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τῆς δεσποτικῆς στεφάνης καὶ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως καὶ αυτοκράτορος [Michael IX Palaiologos]. For the full description of John Palaiologos' *coronation* ceremony as despot, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.17–25 and 223.1–4. For the description of the imperial ceremony regarding the promotion of despots in general during the Palaiologan period, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 274.1–30 and 275.1–24. For the various information that George Pachymeres provides in his *Συγγραφικαὶ Ἱστορίαι* regarding the prerogatives and the *insignia* of the despot, see Failler, “Les insignes”, 171–186.

⁴¹⁰ For the *coronation* of Michael IX as co-emperor, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.10–12: καὶ μετὰ λαμπρῶν καὶ περιφανῶν τῶν τελετῶν στέφει μὲν βασιλεύς τὸν υἱόν, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τοῦ στέφους καὶ τοῦ ἱεράρχου [John XII Kosmas]. For the *coronation* of John Palaiologos as despot, see Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.21–24: καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἀγαγὼν Ἰωάννην, ὃν ἐκ τῆς Εἰρήνης ἔσχε νέον ἔτι τελοῦντα, εἰς δεσπότην προβάλλεται, συνεπιλαμβανομένου τῆς δεσποτικῆς στεφάνης τοῦ ἀρτιστεφοῦς βασιλέως καὶ αυτοκράτορος [Michael IX Palaiologos].

employed only by the emperor.⁴¹¹ The fact that the ceremonial treatise of Pseudo-Kodinos indicates that the emperor right after his *coronation* organized and carried out promotions of court dignitaries could lead to the misinterpretation that the promotion of John to the office of despot served those purposes.⁴¹² The rare privilege that was bestowed on Michael IX, namely to crown his stepbrother despot, is indicative of the constantly increasing power that was granted to the co-emperor.

The empowerment of the institution of co-emperorship and the accumulation of power in the hands of Co-emperor Michael IX was probably imposed by matters of inner and external political insecurity. The promotion of John was rather performed in order to exclude any future aspirations to the throne. It has already been suggested that the decision for Michael IX's *coronation* as co-emperor was connected to the rebellion of Andronikos II's brother Constantine Palaiologos (*PLP* 21492), who was suspected of coveting the throne, convicted and eventually imprisoned in March 1293.⁴¹³ Another possible explanation proposed for the designation of Michael IX's *coronation* date is that it was related to the diplomatic negotiations for his marriage to Catherine of Courtenay, the Latin heiress to the title of emperor of Constantinople.⁴¹⁴ In fact, interestingly enough, George Pachymeres underlines the presence of foreign diplomats to the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX; they were visiting Constantinople under the leadership of Syrpéros in order to negotiate the wedding of the young co-emperor and Catherine.⁴¹⁵ For the Palaiologans, it was imperative

⁴¹¹ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.24.

⁴¹² Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 252–273 (*Περὶ στεφηφορίας βασιλέως*) and 274–275 (*Περὶ προβλήσεως δεσπότης*). Cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 429: “Pseudo-Kodinos gives protocols for the promotions of the dignitaries, despot, Sebastokrator and Caesar, directly after his description of the imperial *coronation*. The order of his presentation of the protocols follows actual procedure at court”.

⁴¹³ See Ferjančić, “Savladarstvo u doba Paleologa”, 326–327. Cf. Kozanecka-Kozakiewicz, “Michael IX Palaiologos”, 201. About Constantine Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21492 (*Παλαιολόγος Κωνσταντῖνος [πορφυρογέννητος]*), with further bibliography. Cf. Papadopoulos, *Genealogie*, 23, no. 37, who places the imprisonment of Constantine Palaiologos in 1291. For the events that led to his imprisonment, see Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 171–183. Contrary to George Pachymeres, who maintains a relatively neutral attitude towards Constantine Palaiologos, Nikephoros Gregoras is a supporter of Constantine Palaiologos and accepts his innocence. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 186.17–191.2.

⁴¹⁴ See Kozanecka-Kozakiewicz, “Michael IX Palaiologos”, 201. For an overview of the various diplomatic negotiations aimed at finding the most suitable wife for Michael IX Palaiologos, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 48–56.

⁴¹⁵ See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.14–16. For a synopsis of the negotiations regarding the marriage between Michael IX Palaiologos and Catherine of Courtenay, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 49–54. The first exchange of ambassadors took place in 1290, while another exchange occurred in 1294, to which the ambassadors had the opportunity to attend the *coronation* ceremony of the young Michael IX Palaiologos as co-emperor. Noteworthy is the fact that during the first exchange of 1290, George Pachymeres also participated and played a certain role in the negotiations: Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 171.19–25. For the role of George Pachymeres in the negotiations of 1290, see also Lampakis, *Γεώργιος Παχυμέρης*, 27–28.

that any claims to the Byzantine throne on the part of the West were eliminated. Therefore, in terms of transfer of power, the further institutionalization of co-emperorship with the *coronation* of Co-emperor Michael IX reflects the need of the dynasty for political stability. Andronikos II's aim to bring the western claims about Constantinople back into his family and thereby to legitimize his position in western eyes had failed.⁴¹⁶ However, Andronikos II did succeed in presenting the newly crowned and anointed co-emperor as capable and ready to take on the responsibilities imposed by his office and those of the sole emperor in the future.

In light of the above, a further reason that could have encouraged Andronikos II to crown Michael IX as co-emperor might have been the ambition of Irene-Yolande of Montferrat, the second wife of Andronikos II, to include her children into the imperial governance.⁴¹⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras complains that Irene-Yolande wished for each of her children to rule the Roman cities and villages not in accordance to the monarchical way, as had been the custom among the Romans from the beginning, but sharing them out in the Latin way.⁴¹⁸ John Palaiologos was the eldest son of Andronikos II and Irene-Yolande.⁴¹⁹ However, Michael IX was the eldest son of Andronikos II and his first wife, Anna of Hungary. Thus, the decision of Andronikos II to crown first Michael IX as co-emperor and then John as a despot, allowing Michael IX to undertake an active role in the ceremony, was probably imposed by the ambition of Irene-Yolande to bypass the hierarchy and promote John to the Byzantine throne instead. This hypothesis is perhaps reinforced by the fact that within the narrative of George Pachymeres both *coronation* ceremonies seem to be closely connected. On the one hand, the description of John's promotion to the office of the despot

⁴¹⁶ See Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 56.

⁴¹⁷ For Irene-Yolande of Montferrat, see *PLP* 21361: *Παλαιολογίνα, Ειρήνη Κομνηνή Δούκαινα* (Palaiologina, Eirene Komnene Dukaina), with further bibliography; Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady*, 48–58; *ODB*, II, 1010; and Constantinidi-Bibikou, “Yolande de Montferrat”, 425–442. Regarding the marriage of Irene-Yolande and Andronikos II, its political background and ideological significance in the Palaiologan matrimonial policy, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 44–48 and Diehl, *Figures byzantines*, II, 226–245. For an interesting perspective on the way Irene-Yolande and other Palaiologan empresses are portrayed in the late Byzantine historiographical works and for a commentary on the marital policy of the Palaiologoi, see Melichar, “Female Incompetence”, 61–74.

⁴¹⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 233.14–237.2, esp: 233.18–234.1: τὸ δὲ καινότερον, ὅτι οὐ μοναρχίας τρόπον κατὰ τὴν ἐπικρατήσασαν Ῥωμαίους ἀρχῆθεν συνήθειαν, ἀλλὰ τρόπον Λατινικὸν διανεμαμένους τὰς Ῥωμαίων πόλεις καὶ χώρας ἄρχειν κατὰ μέρη τῶν υἱῶν ἕκαστον, ὡς οἰκείου κλήρου καὶ κτήματος τοῦ λαχόντος, ἐκ πατρῶν μὲν ἐς αὐτοὺς κατὰ τὸν ἐπικρατήσαντα νόμον ταῖς περιουσίας καὶ κτήσεσι τῶν βαναύσων ἀνθρώπων κατιόντος. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 184. For the English translation of this passage, cf. also: Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 48.

⁴¹⁹ For John Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21475: *Παλαιολόγος Ἰωάννης* (Palaiologos Ioannes), with further bibliography.

comes immediately after the description of Michael IX's *coronation* as co-emperor. On the other hand, the chapter that follows the promotion of John refers to the request of Andronikos II for the issuance of an ecclesiastical *tomos* promulgated by the patriarch and a local synod, by which the Church would excommunicate whoever dared to challenge the authority of the emperor and his son and successor, Michael IX.⁴²⁰ Therefore, the *coronation* of Michael IX and bestowment of the exceptional privilege to crown his stepbrother as a despot show that Andronikos II saw the institution of co-emperorship not only as a means to guarantee the dynastic succession, but also to prevent prospective usurpers of the throne or others who wished to violate the court hierarchy in any way. Although Andronikos II continued the tradition that his father Michael VIII had initiated by crowning his son co-emperor and took steps to reinforce this institution, there were different concepts of imperial monarchy represented by Andronikos II and Irene-Yolande respectively. Thus, when his wife Irene-Yolande strove to convince her husband to partition the empire into fiefs for her sons, Andronikos II he emphatically refused saying that "it was impossible for him to disrupt the imperial political system, which has been hallowed and confirmed by the passage of many years".⁴²¹

To conclude, the ceremonies and the political ideology connected with the accession of Michael IX reflect a carefully planned set of gestures and actions undertaken by the early Palaiologoi to establish their new dynasty. The promotion of Michael IX to the throne had already started as early as the date of his birth, which coincided with Easter and was

⁴²⁰ As George Pachymeres explains, Emperor Andronikos II demanded from the Church to give the young Co-emperor Michael IX what was also given to him at the request of his father Michael VIII, namely a *tomos*. See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 223.2–4: Ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐζητεῖτο πρὸς βασιλείως [Andronikos II Palaiologos] παρὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας δοθῆναι καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ νέῳ στεφθέντι [Michael IX Palaiologos] ὅσον δὴ καὶ αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς [Michael VIII Palaiologos] ζητήσαντος πέπρακτο. Then, George Pachymeres delves further with the issue of excommunicating whoever would dare to violate the imperial constitution (τὴν βασιλείαν). See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 223.6–11: τὸ γὰρ ἐξ αὐτῆς τόμον γενέσθαι, καὶ δι' ὑπογραφῶν συνήθων ἀσφαλισθῆναι οἱ τὴν βασιλείαν, καὶ τῷ κατεξαναστησομένῳ δῆθεν, εἴ ποῦ τις καὶ εἴη, εὐθύνας ἀφορισμῶν ἀλύτων καὶ ἀρῶν ἐπιτίθεσθαι, εαυτῷ μὲν γεγονὸς παρὰ τῶν τότε ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἠπίστατο καὶ ἐδείκνυ, ἡξίου δὲ καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ταῦτα παρ' αὐτῶν γίνεσθαι ὡς οὐ καινόν τι καὶ ξένον, ὡς ἔλεγεν, ἐχούσης τῆς ἀξιώσεως. The demand of Andronikos II met resistance from the Patriarch John XII Kosmas and some bishops; this instead resulted in the issue of a *novella* (*νεαρά*) against simony among the clergy. See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 223.5–34 and 225.1–23 including the French translation and commentary. See also Les registes, ed. Laurent, 351, no. 1563; cf. Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 19–20, no. 2159. For the *tomos* that Michael VIII requested to be issued by the Church and the *oaths* that were taken in order to secure succession rights of Andronikos II, see Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, II, 415.10–11.

⁴²¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 234.23–235.2: τοῦ δὲ βασιλέως ἀδύνατον εἶναι λέγοντος παραλύειν τὰ διὰ πολλῶν ἤδη τῶν χρόνων κυρωθέντα τε καὶ βεβαιωθέντα βασιλικά νόμματα. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 185. For the English translation of this passage, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 48.

effortlessly employed by imperial propaganda as a sign that announced better days for the Empire. Moreover, his grandfather Michael VIII proclaimed him as co-emperor at the age of three and his father Andronikos II crowned him as co-emperor at the age of sixteen. The above actions indicate that the internal policy of the early Palaiologoi aimed at strengthening the dynasty. This policy inevitably led to innovations, such as enforcing the institution of co-emperor and increasing his privileges. Nonetheless, the imperial authority traditionally belonged only to one person and could not be partitioned. Therefore, the senior emperor, Andronikos II at every opportunity during the accession ceremonies of his son Michael IX as co-emperor, demonstrated his sovereignty and projected his rightful position within the court. In any case, the long-term and systematic efforts of Michael VIII and Andronikos II to promote the idea of a legitimate dynastic succession on behalf of Michael IX were not fruitful and their hopes for better days were scattered when Michael IX died unexpectedly on October 12, 1320.⁴²² If indeed Michael IX lived long enough to succeed his father Andronikos II to the throne, then the plans of the Palaiologoi for a smooth succession would probably have succeeded. On the contrary, soon after Michael IX's death, the stability that the early Palaiologoi so desperately tried to achieve was shaken and the first civil war started, between Andronikos II and Andronikos III.

⁴²² For the death of Michael IX, see Lascaratos and Manduvalos, "Cases of Stroke", 5–10, where the authors describe the fatal illnesses of Michael IX, who may have died of a stroke. On the methodological dangers of applying retrospective diagnosis, namely of using the diagnostic terminology of our times to interpret historical case reports, see, for example, Mitchell, "Retrospective Diagnosis", 81–88. On aspects of retrospective diagnosis through descriptions of diseases found in historiographical texts, see Leven, "Retrospective Diagnosis", 369–386.

Chapter IV.

Andronikos III Palaiologos: The Rise of a Co-Emperor and the Fall of an Emperor in the Imperial Court of the Early Palaiologoi

Andronikos III Palaiologos and His Status as Co-Emperor

Andronikos III Palaiologos was the son of Michael IX and Rita-Maria-Xene of Armenia.⁴²³ At a young age, Andronikos III was proclaimed second co-emperor alongside his father, Michael IX, who was also co-emperor, and his grandfather, Andronikos II, who was the senior emperor.⁴²⁴ Byzantine historiographical sources refer neither to the exact date of Andronikos III's installation as co-emperor nor to the ceremonies that took place during that day. Therefore, different suggestions have been made in regard to the year of Andronikos III's installation to the office of co-emperor.⁴²⁵ The hitherto earliest, well-documented

⁴²³ About Andronikos III Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21437: *Παλαιολόγος, Ανδρόνικος ΙΙΙ. Δούκας Άγγελος Κομνηνός* (Palaiologos, Andronikos III. Dukas Angelos Komnenos), with further bibliography. On Andronikos II and the events that marked the years between 1321 and 1341, see Bosch, *Andronikos III. Palaiologos*. About Rita-Maria-Xene of Armenia, mother of Andronikos III, see *PLP* 21394: *Παλαιολογίνα, Μαρία Δούκαινα* (Palaiologina, Maria Dukaina), with further bibliography. For the Byzantine embassy consisting of John Glykys and the young Theodore Metochites sent to Armenia in 1294 and for her wedding with Michael IX in 1295, see Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins*, 55–56 and footnotes 89–91, with further bibliography.

⁴²⁴ Narrative sources do not provide solid information about the exact date of birth of Andronikos III nor about the year of his proclamation as second co-emperor. Cf. Bosch, *Andronikos III. Palaiologos*, 7 and footnote 1, with further bibliography; *PLP* 21437; Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 299, note 472; Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 112–117, note 26 and especially pages 112–113. Concerning the date of Andronikos III's birth, the two most prominent dates, 1296 and 1297, are revealed mainly by the notes from the *Codex Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 99 f. 35β* (Lampros, “Ενθυμήσεων”, 409) and from the *Short Chronicle of 1352* (Loenertz, “La chronique brève de 1352”, 333, with commentary on pp. 348–349; first edited by B. T. Gorjanov, *Neizdannyi*, 282; for the most recent edition, German translation and commentary, see Schreiner, *Kleinchroniken*, I, Chronikon 8/11a, p. 76; II, p. 28 and III, pp. 215–216). I am personally inclined towards 1296 rather than 1297, because the legal age of political adulthood in Byzantium was sixteen. According to the *Short Chronicle of 1352* the date of birth of Andronikos III was March 25th. Interestingly, a donation document connected to the monastery of Kutlumus issued in February 1313 indicates that Andronikos III was already officially elevated to the office of co-emperor (βασιλεύς). See Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumus*, I (*Texte*), 50–53, no. 8. If we accept the above information as true, it appears that the year 1297 as a year of Andronikos III's birth does not match the legitimate criteria of political-adulthood, because only in March would the young Andronikos have reached the age of sixteen and not earlier. Therefore, combining the information that we have so far in our disposal from the *Codex Vindobonensis Hist. gr. 99*, the *Short Chronicle of 1352* and the above-mentioned donation document, I suppose it is relatively tempting to assume that the day of birth of Andronikos III was March 25, 1296. For the previous, long discussion regarding the date of birth and the day and year of Andronikos III's proclamation as co-emperor, see a brief summary in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 112–117, note 26, and in the footnote immediately below.

⁴²⁵ In his *History*, John IV Kantakouzenos provides his readers with a speech by Andronikos III, who states that his father, Michael IX, proclaimed him co-emperor soon after his birth. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 111.16–20: τὴν Ῥωμαίων δὲ ἡγεμονίαν καὶ ἅμα μὲν τῷ προελθεῖν εἰς φῶς ὁ πατὴρ παρέσχετο καὶ βασιλεύς, βασιλέα χειροτονήσας· καὶ νῦν δὲ ἀσφαλῶς ἐστὶν ἔχειν, πρὸς οὐδένα ἕτερον, ἢ ἐμὲ ἐκ διαδοχῆς πάντως ἐλευσομένην. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 83.

indication about his status is found in an official donation document dated February 1313, in which Andronikos III's name and his title as co-emperor (βασιλεύς) are mentioned along with the names and titles of the senior emperor, Andronikos II, and the co-emperor, Michael IX.⁴²⁶ This document not only provides a relatively safe chronological terminus regarding the year in which Andronikos III received the title of co-emperor, but also an indication about his hierarchical status within the imperial court next to that of his father and grandfather.

Regarding the status of the young co-emperor Andronikos III, the accounts of Nikephoros Gregoras and John IV Kantakouzenos become more descriptive only after the death of Michael IX in 1320. The death of the first in hierarchy co-emperor Michael IX caused a power vacuum and confusion regarding the status of the young Andronikos III, who was the second in hierarchy co-emperor. From this point onwards, narrative sources emphasize the political acts connected to the swift change of Andronikos III's status. Interestingly enough, the only ceremony attested by both of these narrative sources regarding the official installation of Andronikos III as co-emperor alongside his grandfather, Emperor Andronikos II, is *oath-taking*. The grandfather and senior emperor Andronikos II requested that the court officials renew their oaths, yet he placed a restriction. According to Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos, court officials and provincial governors should swear an oath only to the emperor Andronikos II and to whomever he chose as his successor.⁴²⁷ The

For the date of Andronikos III's birth, see the footnote above. For a brief summary of discussions made regarding the year of Andronikos III's installation to the office of the co-emperor, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, II, 112–117, note 26. As noted in the above footnote, the earliest official indication about Andronikos III's status as co-emperor (βασιλεύς) is provided by a donation document connected to the monastery of Kutlumus, dated on February of 1313. Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumus*, I (*Texte*), 50–53, no. 8; especially for the dating of the document, see Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumus*, I (*Texte*), 52, no. 8, line 38: “Μηνὶ Φεβρ(ουαρίῳ) ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) ια΄, ἔτεις ω κ α”.

⁴²⁶ Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumus*, I (*Texte*), 51, no. 8, lines 3–5: ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας τῶν εὐσεβεστάτων καὶ ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐστ[εμμ]ένων βασιλέων ἡμῶν Ἀνδρονίκου μεγάλου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτορος Ῥωμαίων Κομνηνοῦ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου καὶ Εἰρήνης τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης ἀγούστης, Μιχαὴλ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτορος Ῥωμαίων Κομνηνοῦ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς εὐσεβεστάτης ἀγούστης, Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου βασιλέως Κομνηνοῦ τοῦ Παλαιολόγου. It is notable that in this document, the first in hierarchy co-emperor Michael IX shares the same title as his father and senior emperor, Andronikos II (namely βασιλεύς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων), although, as a rule, the co-emperor carries simply the title βασιλεύς. This is perhaps an indication of Michael IX's enhanced privileges and administrative duties, which, by now, must have been closer to those of his father, Emperor Andronikos II, rather than to those of his teenage son, co-emperor Andronikos III. Another exception to this rule regarding the title of co-emperors in official documents is provided by a letter addressed to Pope John XXI (1215–1277) in 1277, which carries the signature of Andronikos II. At that time, Andronikos II was co-emperor to his father Michael VIII, yet he identifies himself as “βασιλεύς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων” and not simply as “βασιλεύς”. See Failler, “La proclamation impériale”, 248; Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, III, 76–77, no. 2073; Pieralli, *Corrispondenza diplomatica*, II, 484–522, especially 492–502.

⁴²⁷ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 295.14–19; John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 17.8–13.

omission of the name of Andronikos III from the oath automatically revoked the succession rights of the young co-emperor up to that point and called his status within the imperial court into question.

Negotiating Peace and Dynastic Succession

Ever since the senior emperor Andronikos II denied his grandson's succession rights to the throne, Andronikos III took a series of actions to renegotiate his status. Eventually, accused of conspiracy against his grandfather, he fled from the capital and made his way to Thrace. In 1321, the young Andronikos III started planning to march his army towards Constantinople. To avoid escalating the crisis and an armed conflict between the two parties, the senior emperor Andronikos II initiated a series of negotiations in the summer of 1321.⁴²⁸ Even though the most obvious aim of the diplomatic missions was to negotiate peace, a closer reading of the historiographical sources also reveals that they simultaneously aimed to negotiate the right of the young co-emperor to the imperial throne. Byzantine diplomacy and imperial negotiation ceremonies are often connected with the means and ends that emperors used to establish external alliances and to foster good relations with various foreign political counterparts.⁴²⁹ The ideology and ceremonies relevant to the negotiations between the senior emperor and the young co-emperor during the turbulent years of the civil wars are far less examined aspects of the diplomatic activity of the late Byzantine court. Therefore, the negotiations of 1321 analyzed below reveal unknown elements of the ritualized behavior concerning the handling and solving of intra-dynastic conflicts, with particular emphasis on the identity and role of the intermediaries chosen each time by Andronikos II or Andronikos III.

The embassy sent to Andronikos III in 1321, as described by Nikephoros Gregoras, consisted mainly of the metropolitan of Philadelphia, Theoleptos, and Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina.⁴³⁰ The mediators were chosen both because of their status as well as their association with the imperial opponents. Metropolitan Theoleptos was a close collaborator and supporter of the senior emperor, Andronikos II. Although the founder of the dynasty, Michael VIII, imprisoned Theoleptos owing to his strong opposition against the union of the

⁴²⁸ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.4–321.19; John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 93.5–119.7.

⁴²⁹ Cf. Oikonomides, "Byzantine Diplomacy", 73–107.

⁴³⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.4–321.19.

Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches that was decided during the council of Lyons, Andronikos II released him and made him metropolitan of Philadelphia.⁴³¹ Theoleptos was a leading personality, and he successfully defended his city against a Turkish attack around 1300.⁴³² It was probably his loyalty and charismatic personality that led Andronikos II to choose this church official to take part in the diplomatic mission in the summer of 1321. Nikephoros Gregoras explains that the metropolitan was the leader of the diplomatic negotiations which took place near Selymbria, as he was an awe-inspiring man with manifold virtues and profound wisdom.⁴³³

While on his diplomatic mission, Metropolitan Theoleptos was accompanied by the nun and Grand Domestikissa Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina.⁴³⁴ At that time Syrgiannes, one of the closest collaborators of Andronikos III, was leading a large number of soldiers against Constantinople.⁴³⁵ The fact that Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina might have been the mother of Syrgiannes, as Nikephoros Gregoras suggests, was a good enough reason for Andronikos II to choose her for this particular negotiation initiative.⁴³⁶ She managed to convince Syrgiannes to stop the march towards the capital. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, Syrgiannes changed his mind, not only out of shame and respect for the Metropolitan of Philadelphia but also because of the invocations of his mother.⁴³⁷ Eventually, Syrgiannes went back to Orestiada, where Andronikos III was camping with a great number of soldiers, to make the necessary arrangements for the arrival of the two

⁴³¹ For Theoleptos, metropolitan of Philadelphia, see *PLP* 7509: Θεόληπτος (Theoleptos), with further bibliography. See also *ODB*, III, 2056–2057, s. v. “Theoleptos (Θεόληπτος)”.

⁴³² See also *ODB*, III, 2056–2057, and especially 2057, s. v. “Theoleptos (Θεόληπτος)”.

⁴³³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.8–11.

⁴³⁴ For Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, see *PLP* 21368: Παλαιολογίνα, Εὐγενία Κομνηνή (Palaiologina, Eugenia Komnene), with further bibliography.

⁴³⁵ For Syrgiannes, see *PLP* 27167: Συργιάννης Παλαιολόγος Φιλανθρωπηνός Κομνηνός (Syrgiannes Palaiologos Philanthropenos Komnenos), with further bibliography. See also *ODB*, III, 1997, s. v. “Syrgiannes (Συργιάννης)”.

⁴³⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.11–13. On Syrgiannes and (his mother) Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, see for example, Binon, “A propos d’un prostagma”, *BZ* 38.1 (1938), pp. 133–155 and 38.2 (1938), pp. 377–407. There are still ongoing discussions among scholars on whether Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina is indeed to be identified with the mother of Syrgiannes. For a brief overview of these discussions, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 117–126, note 27; Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 217–218, note 29; and I, 245, note 137, with further bibliography.

⁴³⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.19–22: ὁ γε μὴν Συργιάννης [Syrgiannes] αἰδεσθεῖς μὲν καὶ τὴν τοῦ Φιλαδελφείας [Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia] παρουσίαν, κατακλασθεῖς δὲ πῶς καὶ ταῖς τῆς μητρὸς [sic: Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina] ἰκεσίαις, ἐπάνεισι πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα διατρίβοντα περὶ τὴν Ὀρεστιάδα. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 42.

ambassadors. When the envoys of Andronikos II arrived, the parties managed to negotiate a peaceful compromise.⁴³⁸

In the description of the embassy, Nikephoros Gregoras focuses on the qualities and familial bonds of the ambassadors chosen by Andronikos II to handle this difficult mission. Owing to the seriousness of the situation, the senior emperor decided to dispatch ambassadors who were more likely to be received with honor and respect, such as a high-ranking ecclesiastical official and a woman, probably Syrgiannes' mother who had a personal relationship with the negotiators. If indeed Andronikos II felt the need to negotiate first with the chief of the army, Syrgiannes, and only afterward with his grandson, Andronikos III, then this is revealing of the power that the military aristocracy had at the time. This gesture is also indicative of the senior emperor's mindset, who wished to prevent the siege of the capital immediately and then attempt to defuse the escalation of the crisis through further diplomacy. In any case, Andronikos II's decision reveals the formal practice that the two emissaries had to follow in order increase the chances of a positive outcome of their mission. Moreover, the text implies that the ambassadors were instructed to strategically deploy emotional behavior to change the negative perception of the opponent.⁴³⁹ This kind of approach is perhaps associated with the fact that the two rivals, Andronikos II and Andronikos III, were connected by close kinship bonds and the fact that this particular mission was responding to domestic rather than foreign demands.

John Kantakouzenos' description of the diplomatic activities of 1321 is quite lengthy and detailed in comparison with that by Nikephoros Gregoras.⁴⁴⁰ So far, the research has only dealt with the issue of the truthfulness and validity of the events, as well as with the identification of the persons involved, owing to the contradictory information that Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos provide.⁴⁴¹ For example, there is still a debate as to whether Andronikos II sent one, two, or more embassies to Andronikos III, whether the delegates negotiated first with the leader of the army heading to Constantinople,

⁴³⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.21–321.19.

⁴³⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.8–13: ἤρχε δὲ τῆς πρεσβείας ὁ Φιλαδελφείας Θεόληπτος [Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia], ἀνὴρ οὐ μόνον ἀρεταῖς παντοίαις κοσμούμενος καὶ πᾶσαν αἰδᾷ τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσι προπέμπων, ἀλλὰ καὶ βαθεῖαν αὐλακα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος. ἀπεστάλη δὲ καὶ ἡ τοῦ Συργιάννη μήτηρ [sic: Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina], δυσωπήσουσα τὸν υἱὸν [sic] μάλιστα πάντων καὶ πείσουσα μὴ ὁμόσε χωρεῖν ἐς τὰ τεῖχη τῆς βασιλευούσης. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 41. Cf. also Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.19–22.

⁴⁴⁰ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 93.5–119.7.

⁴⁴¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.4–321.19; John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 93.5–119.7.

Syrgiannes, before meeting Andronikos III, and whether one of the ambassadors, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, is indeed identified as the mother of Syrgiannes, as Nikephoros Gregoras suggests.⁴⁴² In the following paragraphs, however, the focus will be both on the status of the protagonists involved and on the hitherto neglected ceremonial steps that took place to facilitate these delicate negotiating procedures. John Kantakouzenos' account sheds new light on the ideology and rituals that the Palaiologans employed to negotiate peace and imperial accession during the early years of civil wars.

Noticeably, the diplomatic mission of 1321, which is described by Nikephoros Gregoras as a one-phase delegation, appears in John Kantakouzenos' text as a two-phase delegation.⁴⁴³ According to the text of John Kantakouzenos, the initial stage of the peace negotiations took place in Adrianople (not in Selymbria or Orestiada) and included the reception of the metropolitan of Philadelphia, Theoleptos, and the *prokathimenos tou koitonos*, Michael Kallikrenites, but not of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina.⁴⁴⁴ Andronikos II encouraged the mediators to ask his grandson to send his terms in writing, and he promised in advance to fulfill them all.⁴⁴⁵ Thus, although he held the title of senior emperor, Andronikos II dispatched the envoys from an inferior bargaining position and was ready to yield to any of Andronikos III's demands. The problematic negotiating position became even more obvious when the two men arrived outside Adrianople, where the young co-emperor was inspecting his troops, and his soldiers surrounded the two men and threatened to kill them with their swords.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴² For a summary of the so far research on the topic and the various arguments presented, see Van Dielen, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 144–151, note 70; and Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 241–243, note 123.

⁴⁴³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.10–113.18. Cf. Mavrommatis, *Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 62, footnote 29.

⁴⁴⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.10–97.3. About this embassy that Andronikos II sent to his grandson Andronikos III, see Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 85, no. 2453. For Michael Kallikrenites, see *PLP* 10371: Καλλικρηνίτης Μιχαήλ (Kallikrenites Michael), with further bibliography. See also Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 241, note 122. On the 'prokathemenoi' in the late Byzantine Constantinople, see Matschke, *Das spätbyzantinische Konstantinopel*, 47–49. The title of 'prokathemenos tou koitonos', namely the one who – according to Pseudo-Kodinos – 'takes care of the imperial chamber and is in charge of the chamberlains', is first attested in the Palaiologan period and it might be related to the thirteenth-century office of 'epi tou koitonos'. For the text of Pseudo-Kodinos, see

Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 186.13–17. For the English translation, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 111. About the imperial bedchamber (koiton) and the officials connected to it, see *ODB*, II, 1137, s. v. "Koiton (κοιτών), Lat. (Cubiculum)".

⁴⁴⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.15–17.

⁴⁴⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.17–23.

The formal procedure was about to start with the performance of *proskynesis* and the announcement of the reason for the emissaries' legation.⁴⁴⁷ However, Andronikos III's soldiers kept threatening Metropolitan Theoleptos and Michael Kallikrenites.⁴⁴⁸ The text suggests that prostration was probably an official gesture usually preceding this kind of ritual diplomatic exchanges and discourses. Of course, Byzantines had different forms of *proskynesis*, which was by no means confined to the imperial court ceremonial. Certain forms included kissing the emperor's breast, hands, or feet, depending on the office and status of the native or foreign delegates.⁴⁴⁹ From the text of John Kantakouzenos, it is not clear if the expected physical act was a full prostration, genuflection, a bow or a simple greeting complying with the relevant gestures of the Byzantine hierarchical order. What is clear, though, is the symbolism behind the gesture of *proskynesis*. A rare occasion when the ceremonial book of Pseudo-Kodinos explains the significance of a ceremonial gesture is when it refers to the prostration the empress performs before her husband immediately after he crowns her.⁴⁵⁰ Pseudo-Kodinos regards the gesture as a way of confessing both that "she is subordinate to him and that she has been subjected to him".⁴⁵¹ Thus, the gesture of prostration was usually perceived as an act of submission and docility. Likewise, the context of John Kantakouzenos' account of the delegation of 1321 does allow the reader to interpret the anticipated *proskynesis* of Metropolitan Theoleptos and Michael Kallikrenites as an act of subordination to Andronikos III. Moreover, one should keep in mind that the metropolitan and the protostrator took responsibility for negotiating the end of the civil war as ambassadors and representatives of Andronikos II, who was ready to accept any terms of co-emperor Andronikos III.⁴⁵² Hence, from an ideological point of view, the ceremony of prostration acquired strong political overtones in the framework of the civil war. Visually, the act of *proskynesis* would show to those present the respect the emissaries had towards Andronikos III, who ranked hierarchically higher than them. Most importantly, however, in

⁴⁴⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.20–21: [Theoleptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia, and Michael Kallikrenites] προσήεσαν ὡς προσκυνήσοντες καὶ τὰ τῆς πρεσβείας ἀπαγγελοῦντες. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 71–72.

⁴⁴⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.21–23.

⁴⁴⁹ On the ceremony of *proskynesis* and its various forms and symbolism in Byzantium, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 84–94. Also, see *ODB*, III, 1738–1739, s. v. "Proskynesis (προσκύνησις), Lat. (adoratio)", with further bibliography.

⁴⁵⁰ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 261.21–28.

⁴⁵¹ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 261.26–28: ὡσπερ ὁμολογοῦσα διὰ τῆς προσκυνήσεως ὑπ' αὐτὸν εἶναι καὶ ὑποτετάχθαι αὐτῷ. For the English translation, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 225.

⁴⁵² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.13–17.

their capacity as delegates and representatives of Andronikos II, the two men were expected to express with this symbolic gesture their recognition of Andronikos III's position as co-emperor, something that the grandfather had previously denied.

According to John Kantakouzenos' highly constructed narrative, the death threat made by Andronikos III's troops against the senior emperor's envoys allegedly forced the two men to improvise and act based on their instincts. Filled with fear and thinking that he was about to die, Michael Kallikrenites immediately dismounted his horse and grasped the leg of the co-emperor with both hands.⁴⁵³ The metropolitan of Philadelphia, on the other hand, stood by undaunted and said to Michael Kallikrenites that death was inevitable for everyone and that it was an honor and a blessing to die while negotiating for peace.⁴⁵⁴ Metropolitan Theoleptos also called on the Grand Domestikos John Kantakouzenos, Syrgiannes and the protostrator who surrounded him to protect him and pointed out that whatever happened, it was God's will.⁴⁵⁵ The self-composure and wise words of Metropolitan Theoleptos made everyone admire the greatness of his soul and his fearlessness towards death.⁴⁵⁶ When the crowd's noise and whispers faded away, Co-emperor Andronikos III received the ambassadors privately and listened to his grandfather's message.⁴⁵⁷ John Kantakouzenos concludes his description of the delegation by revealing the reply of Andronikos III, who expressed the wish to regain the senior emperor's trust and paternal grace (πατρικὴν εὐμένειαν), although the troops' disobedience prohibited any peace compromise.⁴⁵⁸

The actions and the words of the two delegates reflect late Byzantine political thought during the years of the civil war concerning the purposes of domestic negotiation. Mediators were chosen for their high status, appealing personalities, and persuasive skills. Beyond

⁴⁵³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 94.23–95.2: ὁ μὲν οὖν Καλλικρηνίτης [Michael Kallikrenites] τῷ δέει κατασεισθεὶς τὴν ψυχὴν, τοῦ ἵππου τε ἀπεπήδησε, καὶ ἀμφοτέραις περισχῶν τὸν βασιλέως πόδα [Andronikos III], ἵστατο περιδείης, ὅσον οὐπω νομίζων ἀποθανεῖσθαι. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 72.

⁴⁵⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 95.2–10.

⁴⁵⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 95.10–15. On the imperial office of 'protostrator', see *ODB*, III, 1748–1749, s. v. "Protostrator (πρωτοστράτωρ)", with further bibliography. In the Palaiologan period, the duties of protostrator became more significant; he had ceremonial responsibilities and commanded the troops. About the functions of protostrator as described in Pseudo-Kodinos' handbook of ceremonies, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 168.1–173.29. Also see, Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 73, footnote 118, with further bibliography.

⁴⁵⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 95.15–17.

⁴⁵⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 95.17–20.

⁴⁵⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 95.21–96.16.

delivering the desired message accurately to the receiver, they were expected to demonstrate initiative in responding independently to complex diplomatic challenges during their mission. Michael Kallikrenites, being a court official and an experienced negotiator, chose to dismount his horse and grasp Andronikos III's leg with both hands as the official court etiquette probably commanded. On the other hand, Metropolitan Theoleptos, as a man of God and being more of a spiritual personality rather than a mediator, decided to remain calm in the face of death and declare that it would be an honor to die during a peacekeeping mission. This combination of secular and spiritual behavior of the two men during the diplomatic discussions with the young co-emperor complemented each other perfectly. Both reactions seem to have had a significant impact on the positive outcome of the delegation. However, Metropolitan Theoleptos' choice of words must have had the most significant effect on the recipient of the embassy, Andronikos III, as well as on the troops standing by. This episode is an example of how verbal and non-verbal means of communication were used by members of the Byzantine aristocracy to cope with complex internal political crises.

The negotiations took an unexpected turn when Andronikos III consulted his closest collaborators and his entire army, including both high-ranking officers and soldiers, before taking any action.⁴⁵⁹ Andronikos III appears to have been ready to make peace with his grandfather. However, after lengthy discussions with his most trusted advisors and the entire military force, he caved in to their wishes and decided to reject the peace proposal from the Constantinopolitan emperor.⁴⁶⁰ Ideologically, Andronikos III's actions do not reflect a democratic and collective decision-making tactic. They are instead revealing of the troops' rebellious behavior and the war-related commitments that the young co-emperor made to them.⁴⁶¹ As Andronikos III had failed to convince the soldiers not to march against Constantinople, he and the Grand Domestikos John Kantakouzenos decided to alert the elder Andronikos II about the precarious situation he was about to face.⁴⁶²

The diplomatic delegation that Andronikos III sent to his grandfather presents a unique opportunity to examine an undisclosed mission dispatched under very peculiar political circumstances. The young co-emperor took the decision privately, along with his

⁴⁵⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 97.4–6: Ὁ νέος δὲ βασιλεὺς [Andronikos III Palaiologos] εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν τοὺς ἐν τέλει πάντας καὶ τοὺς τῶν ταγμάτων ἡγεμόνας συγκαλεσάμενος, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν στρατιάν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 73.

⁴⁶⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 97.3–107.3.

⁴⁶¹ For this idea cf. Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 61–62.

⁴⁶² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.3–108.11.

grand domestikos, John Kantakouzenos.⁴⁶³ According to the latter's testimony, the diplomatic mission was planned and executed in secrecy. Andronikos III dictated the letter to John Kantakouzenos, who carefully took notes (τὰ γράμματα ἐγχαράττοντος).⁴⁶⁴ If this had become known among the soldiers, it would have caused a great deal of commotion, and it would make them feel as if their leaders had betrayed them.⁴⁶⁵ Andronikos III entrusted the letter addressed to his grandfather to one of the most reliable servants of John Kantakouzenos, who successfully traveled to Constantinople for the purpose of this delicate diplomatic operation.⁴⁶⁶ The embassy is of interest because it is only attested by John Kantakouzenos, who appears to have been an eye-witness to the events, and it reveals the late Byzantine political thought prevailing during this time. The delegation was dispatched from a dominant negotiating position, yet it portrays the weakness of the young co-emperor in controlling his disobedient army. The grandson confided to his grandfather that he would even pretend to be sick to delay the march of the impatient troops against the city's walls.⁴⁶⁷ This secret mission becomes relevant to the study as it instructs the senior emperor not only to take the necessary measures to protect his life and the city of Constantinople from the imminent arrival of Andronikos III's army but also to step down from the imperial office. Thus, the content of the letter conveys the ongoing discussion between Andronikos II and Andronikos III about the right of the latter to the imperial throne. Finally, this delegation introduces the idea of the senior emperor's involuntary resignation, a political act which would eventually occur a few years later.

The immediate response of Andronikos II was to send a new delegation to his grandson, to praise him for his concern and his good intentions, and to request more time to prepare his entry into a monastery.⁴⁶⁸ Based on the account of John Kantakouzenos, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, and not Metropolitan Theoleptos, led the embassy, as the text of Nikephoros Gregoras suggests.⁴⁶⁹ This delegation is considered to be the second phase of

⁴⁶³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.5–12.

⁴⁶⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.11–12.

⁴⁶⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.8–10.

⁴⁶⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 108.9–11. On the servant of John Kantakouzenos, see Weiss, *Joannes Kantakouzenos*, 147. About the letter Co-emperor Andronikos III sent to his grandfather, Emperor Andronikos II, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.11–108.11; and Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 124, no. 2653.

⁴⁶⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 107.21–23.

⁴⁶⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 109.5–113.18; especially I, 109.5–23. About the involvement of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina in this embassy, see Melichar, "Imperial Women as Emissaries", 117.

⁴⁶⁹ About the (new) delegation of Andronikos II to Andronikos III, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 109.5–113.18; and cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.4–321.19.

the diplomatic mission of 1321. Scholars have suggested that Nikephoros Gregoras compressed the two diplomatic missions, namely the one with Metropolitan Theoleptos and the other with Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, into one, probably for brevity.⁴⁷⁰ According to John Kantakouzenos, the diplomatic meeting took place at the Melanas River, right outside Constantinople, and the main protagonists were Co-emperor Andronikos III and Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina.⁴⁷¹ The young Andronikos III confirmed that he would do everything so that nothing terrible would happen to his grandfather and advised the mediator not to discuss the content of their discussion with anyone apart from the Grand Domestikos John Kantakouzenos.⁴⁷² Again, at this point, the reader is reminded that the negotiations for the resignation of the senior emperor Andronikos II and the succession of Andronikos III were carried out in secrecy. Ideologically, it was crucial that the young Andronikos III's right to rule was recognized by all and especially by his grandfather, who had tried to revoke it.

Before dispatching Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina back to his grandfather, Andronikos III had to inform his troops and secure their final confirmation that they also agreed on the terms of the peace negotiations. However, this time he followed a different approach, to minimize the possibility of rebellion and the unwanted rejection of the idea of peace by his soldiers. Andronikos III gathered a smaller council consisting of all the high-ranking officials (ἐν τέλει) and only the leaders of the army so that he could discuss and negotiate with them more effectively the terms that would end the civil war.⁴⁷³ Taking this different approach was a necessary step that would ensure a more favorable outcome. Among other things, the speech John Kantakouzenos puts - through his writings - into Andronikos III's mouth, confirms once more the Palaiologan idea of a young prince's dynastic right to imperial succession and elucidates the mechanisms of dynastic perpetuation.⁴⁷⁴ Andronikos III reveals that the right to rule was transferred to him immediately upon his birth.⁴⁷⁵ He also claims that he never saw his grandfather as an enemy

⁴⁷⁰ See Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 241–243, note 123; and Mavrommatis, *Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 62, footnote 29.

⁴⁷¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 119.5–10.

⁴⁷² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 109.24–110.5.

⁴⁷³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 110.5–7: ἐκκλησίαν δὲ κελεύσας γενέσθαι, καὶ τῶν ἐν τέλει πάντων καὶ τῶν λογάδων τῆς στρατιᾶς εἰς ἓν γενομένων, παρελθὼν εἰς μέσους, ἔλεξε τοιάδε. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 82.

⁴⁷⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 111.15–22.

⁴⁷⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 111.16–18.

or conspired to kill him or remove him from the throne.⁴⁷⁶ The words of the young co-emperor guide the reader to the realization that the civil war was the most drastic and violent means Andronikos III could have used in his attempt to renegotiate his hereditary right to dynastic succession. The gathered officials, the leaders of the army, and eventually also the troops supported Andronikos III's decision to reach a peace agreement with his grandfather.⁴⁷⁷ Thus, the negotiation process could now be performed officially, openly, and not in secrecy.

Andronikos III sent Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina back to Constantinople along with the terms of the peace treaty and his oaths written in two separate documents signed in red ink.⁴⁷⁸ Andronikos II welcomed the embassy and the contents of the treaty's provisions. However, he was displeased concerning the involvement in the mission of Alexios Apokaukos, who was a close collaborator of Andronikos III but of humble origin.⁴⁷⁹ Andronikos II's displeasure during this diplomatic meeting is again exclusively attested by John Kantakouzenos.⁴⁸⁰ According to the text, if the senior emperor agreed with everything written, he should carry into effect the provisions of the treaty by signing the two documents and making vows that he would adhere to its terms. A trusted man from the entourage of the young co-emperor should then return the documents to Andronikos III's camp and confirm the validity of Andronikos II's oaths.⁴⁸¹ The Grand Domestikos John Kantakouzenos – after Syrgiannes' recommendation – appointed Alexios Apokaukos to accompany Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina back to the capital and to serve as witness of the relevant oath procedure.⁴⁸² The issue that seems to have bothered Emperor Andronikos II was the fact that Andronikos III chose Alexios Apokaukos instead of selecting a nobleman or a blood relative from those who belonged to his circle. Alexios Apokaukos was a low-ranking officer without any aristocratic or noble roots, who had also proved to be untrustworthy during his time as

⁴⁷⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 111.20–22.

⁴⁷⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 113.15–18.

⁴⁷⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 113.19–21. About the active role of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina during this new diplomatic mission, see also Melichar, "Imperial Women as Emissaries", 117–118. On the peace treaty of 1321 and its terms, see especially Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 321.1–10 and John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 113.19–116.6. Cf. Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 125–126, no. 2660.

⁴⁷⁹ For Alexios Apokaukos, see *PLP* 1180: Ἀπόκαυκος Ἀλέξιος (Apokaukos Alexios), with further bibliography.

⁴⁸⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 115.23–118.16.

⁴⁸¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 116.6–8.

⁴⁸² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 116.8–10. On oath-taking procedures and role of ambassadors, see: Drocourt, *Diplomatie sur le Bosphore*, 304–309.

a tax collector by causing the state and Andronikos II many problems.⁴⁸³ Indeed, Alexios Apokaukos was a social upstart who had risen to a higher social rank and economic status but was not widely accepted by other individuals of the upper class. Scholars have already pointed out that both Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos make derogatory remarks about Alexios Apokaukos because of his humble origins.⁴⁸⁴ Alexios Apokaukos seems to have been a discredited person. However, we should also keep in mind that he was John Kantakouzenos' close friend who turned into an archenemy as he betrayed his trust many times, especially during the second phase of the civil war, as we will see below.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, the author was certainly interested in further discrediting him. From an ideological point of view, Andronikos III's choice of representative was seen as a gesture of disrespect towards his grandfather and senior emperor, and this could have been a serious enough reason for Andronikos II to reject the terms of the peace. However, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina calmly explained to the senior emperor Andronikos III that his grandson had shown signs of great respect for him, and assured him that the presence of Alexios Apokaukos should not be perceived negatively.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, again, the mediation of ambassador Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina was critical and helped shift things to a favorable outcome.

Based on John Kantakouzenos' narrative, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina appears to be the ideal ambassador for the negotiations of 1321. Unlike the first embassy involving the metropolitan of Philadelphia, Theoleptos, and the *prokathimenos tou koitonos*, Michael Kallikrenites, the embassy of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina was not connected with any violent outburst. Not only did she take her assigned role very seriously by managing to gain the trust of Andronikos III, but also she acted very wisely by consulting Andronikos II on how to react to his grandson's diplomatic mission and choice of emissaries. Additionally, as opposed to Alexios Apokaukos, her status and noble origins were never disputed and her efforts as a female negotiator were recognized and respected by both parties. Recent research has demonstrated that Andronikos II was the first Palaiologan ruler to recognize the advantages of using noblewomen who were related closely to the imperial family as his

⁴⁸³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 117.18–118.12.

⁴⁸⁴ See Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 246, note 146, with further bibliography.

⁴⁸⁵ On Alexios Apokaukos' involvement in the events of the second phase of the civil war and his assassination on June 11, 1345, see Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 46–74.

⁴⁸⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 118.12–16.

legates.⁴⁸⁷ John Kantakouzenos' text emphasizes Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina's familial connection with the imperial family, while there is no mention of any possible kinship with Syrgiannes.⁴⁸⁸ She was the cousin of Emperor Andronikos II and the great-aunt of the young co-emperor Andronikos III.⁴⁸⁹ Already from the beginning, John Kantakouzenos introduces her to his readers as "the Grand Domestikissa Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, a nun, daughter of a sister [Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina] of the founder of the Palaiologoi, Michael VIII Palaiologos".⁴⁹⁰ Her ancestry and blood ties with the imperial family, but most importantly her high social status as grand domestikissa, were precisely the reasons why she was chosen to be the principal mediator for this embassy. The thoughtful introduction of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina within John Kantakouzenos' narrative prepares the ground for the inclusion of the suspenseful episode recounting Alexios Apokaukos' delegation.

Things get even more interesting when Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina participates in yet another diplomatic mission, which further elucidates her role as a chief ambassador, entrusted and appointed by both the senior and the young co-emperor. This time, her task was to conclude the negotiations by receiving Andronikos III's final vows that would reinforce the stipulations of the treaty set out by the two parties.⁴⁹¹ Two imperial officials, Protasekretis Leon Bardales and Michael Kallikrenites, accompanied Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina on her final diplomatic journey.⁴⁹² As discussed above, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina was not only selected by Andronikos II as the ideal emissary but also by Andronikos III. During her last meeting with the young co-emperor, Andronikos III, she revealed to him his grandfather's initial disappointment about Alexios Apokaukos' inclusion

⁴⁸⁷ For this idea, see Melichar, "Imperial Women as Emissaries", 116. Andronikos II systematically chose female mediators for the diplomatic missions he dispatched. See a list of his embassies in Melichar, "Imperial Women as Emissaries", 106.

⁴⁸⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras is the one who suggests that Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina was the mother of Syrgiannes. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 320.11–13. See Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, II, 117–126, note 27; and cf. Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 217–218, note 29, with further bibliography.

⁴⁸⁹ About the discussions on Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina's identity and family bonds, see, for example, Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 245, note 136; and cf. I, 217–218, note 29, with further bibliography.

⁴⁹⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 109.7–9: ἐνταῦθα δὴ ἀφικνεῖται πρὸς τὸν νέον βασιλέα Εὐγενία μοναχὴ Παλαιολογίνα [Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina], ἡ βασιλέως ἀδελφῆς [Eirene-Eulogia Palaiologina] Μιχαήλ, τοῦ πρώτου τῶν Παλαιολόγων [Michael VIII Palaiologos], παῖς, μεγάλη δομestίκισσα. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 81. The English translation is my own.

⁴⁹¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 116.20–24.

⁴⁹² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 118.16–18. For Protasekretis Leon Bardales, see *PLP* 2183: Βαρδαλῆς Λέων (Bardales Leon), with further bibliography. See also Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 246–247, note 147.

in the embassy. Andronikos III then affirmed that she, his great-aunt, was sent as ambassador (πρέσβυς); not Alexios Apokaukos, who was instead sent merely as a letter carrier (γραμματοκομιστής).⁴⁹³ This statement underscores the ambassadorial role of Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina even more and validates, beyond any doubt, her right to act as such upon imperial request. Interestingly, when John Kantakouzenos became emperor, he also followed the same policy as his imperial predecessors and, at times, he selected female intermediaries for the diplomatic missions he initiated.⁴⁹⁴ Thus, inevitably, the Palaiologan trend to have women lead an embassy is recorded and endorsed through the historiographical writings of the late Byzantine period. A case in point is indeed Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, who as a noblewoman and a member of the imperial family was chosen to conduct a significant number of negotiations in 1321. Both Byzantine historians of the period – and especially John Kantakouzenos – felt obliged to record her invaluable contribution to the restoration of peace and eventually the legitimization of Andronikos III's imperial succession.

To summarize, from an ideological point of view, the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III offers a unique opportunity to explore the negotiation strategies especially aiming at or resulting in the accession of a Palaiologan prince to the imperial throne. The diplomatic missions of 1321 may have brought peace only temporarily, but they managed to set the basis for negotiating the accession rights of the young co-emperor Andronikos III that would eventually be put in effect with his coronation in 1325. In the summer of 1321, Andronikos II recognized Andronikos III's military superiority and knew that he had to make extra efforts to win over not only his grandson but also his disobedient, warlike army. Nikephoros Gregoras suggests that during these ambassadorial missions the mediators purposefully used emotion to shift the negative perception of the opponent and to achieve a positive outcome. Kinship bonds also played a significant role in gaining the political rivals' sympathy, while the noble lineage and high secular or ecclesiastical status of the emissaries was intended to inspire respect and trust. Through John Kantakouzenos' narrative, it appears as if the gender of the ambassador did not make a significant difference in the negotiation process. However, what made the most impact was the aristocratic

⁴⁹³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 118.24–119.3: Ἀπόκαυχος [Alexios Apokaukos] δὲ οὐχ ὡς πρέσβις, οὐδὲ τῆς εἰρήνης βεβαιωτής, (ταῦτα γὰρ τῇ ἐμῇ θείᾳ [Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina] προσήκεν,) ἀλλ' ὡς γραμματοκομιστής ἀπεστάλη μόνον. ἴσμεν δ', ὅτι καὶ μεγάλων ἔνεκα καὶ ἀναγκαιοτάτων πέμποντές τι γράμματα, καὶ τοῖς φαυλοτάτοις τῶν οἰκετῶν χρώμεθα πρὸς μετακομιδὴν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 87.

⁴⁹⁴ See Melichar, "Imperial Women as Emissaries", 107.

provenance and status of the envoy. The negotiations of 1321 seem to have included secret diplomatic missions that were carried out privately among at least four participants as well as public discussions staged in front of a greater audience, such as high- and low-ranking military officers. As we have seen, the verbal and non-verbal communication between the two imperial rivals and their mediating representatives is very particular. The reason for this particularity is the fact that ambassadorial discussions were inevitably intertwined with Andronikos III's demand to regain access to his hereditary right to rule, namely a "right" that was both revoked and granted again through various *oath-taking* ceremonies.

***Oath-taking* Ceremonies and Imperial Succession: Continuities and Changes in the Time of Andronikos III Palaiologos**

The *oath-taking* ceremony was already a common practice in the time of the Roman Empire when the military officers and soldiers took an oath swearing obedience to the supreme leader of the army, namely the emperor.⁴⁹⁵ In the Christianized Byzantine Empire, oaths were used to strengthen the subjects' loyalty to the emperor and even to prevent possible usurpation.⁴⁹⁶ Upon his accession to the throne, the new emperor could request an oath from the dignitaries, the clergy or the subjects of the empire.⁴⁹⁷ Regarding the oaths requested by the emperor from his subjects, the pivotal study by Nicolas George Svoronos on the constitutional significance of oaths in the Byzantine Empire revealed that it is only during the Komnenian period that this custom started to appear in a continuous manner although there are quite early examples of such oaths.⁴⁹⁸ The twelfth-century Byzantine historian Niketas Choniates writes that during the *coronation* ceremony of Manuel I Komnenos in

⁴⁹⁵ Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité", 106 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI).

⁴⁹⁶ Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité", 106–107 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI). For example, in the tenth century *De Cerimoniis* it is attested that the practice of *oath-taking* applied for the proclamation of Emperor Leo I (457–474) after the death of Marcian (450–457) in 457 so that a possible usurpation against him would be prevented. See Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske, I, 416.4–7: δεῖ δὲ εἰδέναι, ὅτι ὄρκον οἱ ἄρχοντες τοῦ παλατίου παρέχουσιν, ὡς οὐκ ἐπιβουλεύουσιν αὐτῷ ἢ τῇ πολιτείᾳ, καὶ τὸ περὶ τούτου ὄρκοσκοπικὸν φυλάττεται παρὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ. For the English translation, see Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, I, 416: "Now it is necessary to know that the archons of the Palace offer an oath not to plot against him or the state, and the text of the oath concerning this is kept by the emperor".

⁴⁹⁷ Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité" (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI), provides various examples of oaths given by the dignitaries (pages 106–109), the clergy (pages 113–116) or the subjects of the empire (pages 109–113), dated throughout the entire Byzantine era. A recent work stressing the importance of written oaths of fidelity in Byzantium is: Laiou, "The Emperor's Word", 347–362 (repr. in eadem, *Women, Family and Society*, no. VIII).

⁴⁹⁸ Svoronos, "Le serment de fidélité", 109–110 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI): "(page 109) Jusqu'à l'époque des Comnènes, les sources ne présentent pas comme une institution établie et continue le serment de fidélité à l'empereur par tous les sujets de l'empire. [...] (page 110) C'est à l'époque des Comnènes que le serment de fidélité prêté par tous les sujets se présente d'une façon continue".

1143 an oath of allegiance (πίστεως) was introduced as part of the official ceremonial for the first time on the initiative of *Megas Domestikos* John Axouch, “whose intention was to dissolve and dissipate the attempts at disturbance and rebellion by the ambitious”.⁴⁹⁹ Over the next centuries, the *oath-taking* ceremony continued to be a significant part of the imperial accession ceremonies for the Angeloi, the Laskarid and the Palaiologan emperors.⁵⁰⁰ The following paragraphs will focus on some changes with regard to the performance, the ideological significance and the political function of the *oath-taking* ceremony connected not to the emperor but rather to the co-emperor, aspects that have not hitherto been discussed or contextualized in the framework of Andronikos II’s succession.

With the aim to perpetuate the dynasty, the *oath-taking* ceremony became an integral part of the Palaiologan accession rituals of not only the emperor but also of the co-emperor along with the institution of co-emperorship. Interestingly, John Kantakouzenos explains that this was a custom started during the reign of Michael VIII and that “never before [had] the child of the emperor received oaths or any imperial *insignia* if his father did not depart life”.⁵⁰¹ Nicolas George Svoronos pointed out a number of instances where the name of the son of the emperor was also included in oath formulas dated before the Palaiologan emperors and as a result, he concluded that John Kantakouzenos is mistaken in his claims.⁵⁰² However,

⁴⁹⁹ Niketas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. Van Dieten, 46.49–56: ἐφεξῆς δὲ καὶ τῶν θείων προτεθέντων λογίων, ἐπ’ αὐτῶν ἐμπεδοῦνται τῷ Μανουὴλ τὰ τῆς εὐνοίας καὶ πίστεως πρὸς παντός. ἦν δὲ ὁ τῶν δρωμένων τούτων εἰσηγητὴς τε ἅμα καὶ τελετάρχης ὁ μέγας δομέστικος, ἐκλύσαι διανοούμενος ἐντεῦθεν καὶ διαχαλάσαι τοῦ μετεωρισμοῦ καὶ τῆς τάσεως τὰς τῶν φιλάρχων ἐφέσεις καὶ τὰς τῶν πλείστων ἀμβλύναι συνδρομὰς πρὸς ἐνίουσ τῶν πρὸς γένους τῷ βασιλεῖ, οἱ τὴν πρεσβυγένειαν ὡς μέγα τι καὶ αἰδέσιμον προβαλλόμενοι καὶ τὸ κῆδος μεγεθύνοντες τὸ βασιλεῖον ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἄρχειν ὡς ἀξιοτέροις ἀπένεμον. For the English translation, see Magoulias, *O City of Byzantium*, 26–27: “(p. 26) Thereupon, when the Holy Scriptures had been brought forth, everyone (p. 27) confirmed on them his goodwill and loyalty to Manuel. The initiator and celebrant of these ceremonies was the grand domestic, whose intention was to dissolve and dissipate the attempts at disturbance and rebellion by the ambitious and to blunt the assistance given by a good many to several of the emperor’s kin”. For *megas domestikos* John Axouch, see Guiland, “Le grand domestique”, 407–408. On Manuel I Komnenos (r. 1143–1180) and his reign under the Komnenian dynasty, see Magdalino, *Manuel I Komnenos*, with further bibliography. For the succession of Manuel I Komnenos, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 159–161. About the Komnenian imperial succession, including the succession of Manuel I Komnenos through the eyes of Niketas Choniates, see Beihammer, “Comnenian Imperial Succession”, 159–202.

⁵⁰⁰ Nicolas George Svoronos gathers various examples of oaths that were sworn to an emperor by his subjects upon his succession to the throne: Svoronos, “Le serment de fidélité”, 109–113 and 116–124 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI). Especially for the oaths under the Angeloi, the Laskarids and the Palaiologoi, see Svoronos, “Le serment de fidélité”, 111–113 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI). About the use of oaths in the Palaiologan period, see also Rochette, “Serment sous les Paléologues”, 157–167.

⁵⁰¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 17.2–8, and especially 17.4–7. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 21.

⁵⁰² See Svoronos, “Le serment de fidélité”, 112 (repr. in eadem, *Études*, no. VI). Nicolas George Svoronos provides a significant number of cases in which the senior emperor included the name of his son in the oath formula (pages 109–110 and 117–124). The oldest example dates back to Leo IV (r. 775–780), who demanded from the Senate, the army and the people to swear an oath of loyalty to his son Constantine VI when he was

taking a closer look at the text of John VI Kantakouzenos, one might notice that the author refers to the oaths that were sworn to Andronikos II and his wife, then to Michael IX and his wife and thirdly, to Andronikos III, the son of Michael IX and grandson of Andronikos II.⁵⁰³ John Kantakouzenos provides a detailed description of the Palaiologan oaths' content, which included the names of the senior emperor and co-emperors, and also their wives where applicable, and manages to mirror the hierarchical balance that the Palaiologan court aimed to establish.⁵⁰⁴ In this regard, the statement of John Kantakouzenos is true. Prior to the reign of Michael VIII, the institution of co-emperorship had never before been so strong by including two family members as co-emperors, who shared imperial status and a number of royal privileges with the senior emperor. Nor, to my knowledge, was an oath given to the grandson of the senior emperor before the time of Michael VIII. Thus, it becomes clear that swearing an oath to a line of family members of up to three generations was an innovative legal act of allegiance and loyalty, which involved ritual aspects and was employed as a means to empower the Palaiologan household and, along with the institution of co-emperorship, to facilitate dynastic succession.

Another remarkable innovation connected to the succession of the co-emperor and the *oath-taking* ceremony as part of his *proclamation* ceremony has to do with the time of its performance. As seen above, John Kantakouzenos suggests that the co-emperor earlier received the oath and imperial prerogatives only after the death of his father.⁵⁰⁵ A change in the political culture and ceremonial protocol is also recorded by Nikephoros Gregoras, who underlines in his account that the succeeding son of the emperor was not to be proclaimed by his father while he was still alive, but rather by the mutual concession of the army, the dignitaries and the nobles after the death of his father.⁵⁰⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras makes this

proclaimed co-emperor in 776 (page 109). See Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, ed. De Boor, I, 449.16–25 and 450.6–13. On Leo IV's preparations for the proclamation and coronation of his son Constantine VI as co-emperor, see also Christophoroulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 81–82.

⁵⁰³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 16.17–22 and 17.1–2.

⁵⁰⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 16.17–22 and 17.1–2. It seems to me that the content of the oath bears striking similarities to the above-examined donation document connected to the monastery of Kutlumus that cites hierarchically the name and title of Andronikos II and his wife, Michael IX and his wife, and finally, the name and title of co-emperor Andronikos III. See Lemerle, *Actes de Kutlumus*, I (*Texte*), 51, no. 8, lines 3–5.

⁵⁰⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 17.4–8.

⁵⁰⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 53.2–5: *παρὰ δὲ τοῦ πατρὸς [John III Ducas Vatatzes] ἔτι ζῶντος οὐκ ἀνηγόρευτο βασιλεὺς [Theodore II Laskaris], ἀνηγορεύετο ἤδη θανόντος ἐκείνου κοινῇ συνδρομῇ τοῦ τε στρατοῦ παντὸς καὶ ὁπόσοι τῶν ἐνδόξων ἦσαν καὶ εὐγενῶν.* For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, I, 89. For the English translation of this passage, see Pavlović, “Theodore II Laskaris”, 601.

statement while referring to the *proclamation* of Theodore II Laskaris, yet further on the author elaborates on the reasons why young princes should not be proclaimed as co-emperors while their father is still alive, emphasizing the instability of youth (τὸ τῆς νεότητος ἄστατον) and their zeal to seize power.⁵⁰⁷ Andronikos III fits this profile perfectly and is described later on by Nikephoros Gregoras as a rebellious adolescent, impatient to rule parts of the empire independently, even before the death of his father, Michael IX.⁵⁰⁸ In any case, both Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos agree that allowing multiple co-emperors to enjoy imperial privileges and to receive oaths of fidelity upon their *proclamation* while the senior emperor was still alive are two novelties that were established under the Palaiologoi.

Surprisingly, even though *oath-taking* to more than one co-emperor was an innovation introduced by the founder of the dynasty Michael VIII, the custom was rapidly integrated into imperial accession ceremonies. By the time of Andronikos III, *oath-taking* had even become a legitimizing mechanism of the co-emperor's accession to the throne. This novelty allowed Andronikos II as the senior emperor to employ *oath-taking* as a means to revoke the succession rights of his grandson Andronikos III and exclude him from the imperial power. The new ideological function of the *oath-taking* ceremony to provide or deny legitimacy – and not solely to reinforce the subjects' loyalty or to prevent rebellion against the already legitimate emperor – caused confusion not only among the people, but also within the administrative apparatus, something that is vividly portrayed in the accounts of Nikephoros Gregoras and John IV Kantakouzenos. Nikephoros Gregoras explains that Andronikos II's demand for an oath to him and to whomever he would choose as successor was too general and vague (τοῦτο λεχθὲν ἀορίστως) and this caused confusion and discomfort to everyone, but most importantly to Andronikos II.⁵⁰⁹ Moreover, John IV Kantakouzenos points out that even some court officials, such as the *parakoimomenos* Andronikos Kantakouzenos, refused to take the new oath that did not include the name of

⁵⁰⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 53.1–11, 54.1–24 and 55.1. For the English translation of this passage, see Pavlović, “Theodore II Laskaris”, 601–602.

⁵⁰⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 284.1–23 and 285.1–12, especially 285.5–10: ἐπεὶ δ' ἀδύνατον ἔβλεπεν εἶναι τοῦτο ζῶντος τοῦ πάππου καὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐνταυθοῖ καθημένου, πρὸς ἑτέρας ἐσκόπει χωρῶν ἐπικρατείας· καὶ νῦν μὲν Ἀρμενίαν ἀνειροπόλει ἅτ' ἐκ μητρὸς αὐτῷ προσήκουσαν, νῦν δὲ Πελοπόννησον, νῦν δὲ Λέσβον καὶ Λήμνον καὶ ὅσα τὸ πολὺ τοῦ Αἰγαίου πληροῦσιν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν εἰς ἀκοὰς ἦει λάθρα νῦν μὲν τοῦ πατρὸς, νῦν δὲ τοῦ πάππου. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, II, 22.

⁵⁰⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 295.19–21, especially 295.19. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, II, 28. See also Nikephoros Gregoras' text further below: I, 296.6–8: [Andronikos II Palaiologos] ἔβλεπε γὰρ ἤδη καὶ τὸν βασιλέα τὸν ἔγγονον [Andronikos III Palaiologos] σχεδιάζοντα τῆς φυγῆς τὴν μελέτην διὰ τὴν ἀοριστίαν τοῦ ζητηθέντος παρὰ τῶν ὑπηκόων ὄρκου. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, II, 28.

Andronikos III, as was previously the case.⁵¹⁰ Ultimately, Byzantine historians put forward the idea that engaging the *oath-taking* ceremony as a means to amend the succession rights of the young co-emperor marked the beginning of a seven-year conflict (1321–1328) between Emperor Andronikos II and his grandson Andronikos III, known as the first phase of the civil war (1321–1354).⁵¹¹

More than echoing the reactions of the Byzantines towards innovations pertaining to the imperial accession ceremony of *oath-taking*, Byzantine historians employed this new custom to enrich their narratives, while making personal statements about succession procedures and dynastic rights. Interestingly, although Nikephoros Gregoras' descriptions associated with court ceremonies are usually limited and sparing compared to those of other contemporary Byzantine historians, *oath-taking* is one of the legally binding rituals that obviously captured the interest of the author. He connects the *oath-taking* ceremony with the institution of co-emperorship and, as we have seen above, in different parts of his narrative he seizes the opportunity to express his objection to the Palaiologan custom of proclaiming young princes co-emperors.⁵¹² In Nikephoros Gregoras' view, the tradition that prevailed under the Laskarid emperors not to proclaim their sons co-emperors was preferable, precisely because it did not nurture their premature imperial ambitions.⁵¹³ The Byzantine historian successfully manages to criticize this aspect of Palaiologan succession practice by developing detailed psychological portraits of the protagonists and their reactions to the *oath-taking* ceremony.⁵¹⁴ Thus, Nikephoros Gregoras leads the reader towards understanding the climate of political upheaval and its beginnings.

Similarly, John Kantakouzenos prepares the reader not only concerning the subsequent events that would lead to the civil war between Andronikos III and his grandfather, but also to the civil war between himself and the regency council defending the succession rights of underage John V Palaiologos, son of Andronikos III. The emphasis

⁵¹⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 17.16–22 and 18.1. The *parakoimomenos* Andronikos Kantakouzenos was a relative of John IV Kantakouzenos. For *parakoimomenos* Andronikos Kantakouzenos, see *PLP* 10955: Καντακουζηνός Ανδρόνικος (Kantakouzenos Andronikos); and Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 216, note 28, with more details and further bibliography.

⁵¹¹ See especially Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 295.6–14 and John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 17.8–16 and 18.4–10.

⁵¹² I am mostly referring to the following passages from Nikephoros Gregoras' *Roman History* that have already been discussed above: Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 53.1–11, 54.1–24 and 55.1; 284.1–23 and 285.1–12; and 295.19–21.

⁵¹³ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 53.1–11, 54.1–24 and 55.1 where Nikephoros Gregoras' view is revealed. For this idea, cf. also: Pavlović, "Theodore II Laskaris", 601–603.

⁵¹⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 295.11–21 and 296.1–8.

placed on the imperial right of the senior emperor to choose his heir and the role of oath-taking in the rise to power fit perfectly into the author's intentions to tell the story of Andronikos III in a way that legitimizes his actions as well. Indeed, as the French Byzantinist Gilbert Dagron has argued, dynastic succession was for the Byzantines "a blessing granted by God to an emperor whose religious and political legitimacy was so strong that it assured him not only a long personal reign, but an extension of his *basileia* to descendants who received and sought to preserve it".⁵¹⁵ John Kantakouzenos strives to project dynastic succession as a natural right of the descendants, a right that he will be called to defend on behalf of Andronikos III's heir to the throne, John V. However, by pinpointing the origins of the *oath-taking* ceremony practiced by the emperor's descendants to the time of Michael VIII, founder of the Palaiologan dynasty,⁵¹⁶ John Kantakouzenos verifies unwittingly – or perhaps intentionally – that the custom was a stratagem of power and that the logic of dynastic succession was foreign to the political culture of the empire. In this way, John Kantakouzenos could easily, later on, claim the right to rule, not because he was an emperors' descendant or choice, but because he was the choice of God's providence, a tradition dating back to the foundation of the Byzantine Empire itself. This is another example of how authors retrospectively employed imperial succession ceremonies in order to propagate their political views and promote their own agendas.

The *oath-taking* ceremony was destined to play a significant role both in the outbreak of the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III, as well as in the various attempts to resolve the issue. In April of 1321, mutual oaths were sworn by the two men in an effort to defuse the escalating crisis between them. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, Andronikos II swore to leave as his successor none other than his grandson and co-emperor (ἐγγόνου καὶ βασιλέως) Andronikos III, while Andronikos III swore never to plan or perform anything against the life or the emperorship (τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας) of his grandfather and the reigning senior emperor.⁵¹⁷ Already Aikaterini Christophilopoulou has pointed out that, although previously the term βασιλεία (rulership) was used, in this specific case the term

⁵¹⁵ Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 23.

⁵¹⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 16.17–22 and 17.1–4.

⁵¹⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 313.12–18: καὶ διελύθη μετ' εἰρήνης ὁ σύλλογος, ὁμομοκότων ἀλλήλοις ἀμφοτέρων τῶν βασιλέων· τοῦ μὲν, μηδένα τῶν πάντων τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας διάδοχον καταλείπειν πλὴν αὐτοῦ Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ ἐγγόνου καὶ βασιλέως· τοῦ δ' αὖ ἐγγόνου, μηδὲν μῆτε κατὰ τῆς αὐτοκρατορίας τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ πάππου, μῆτε κατὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ ζωῆς μῆτε βουλευσασθαι, μῆτε μὴν διαπράξασθαι πώποτε. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 37–38 and note 56 on pages 136–139. For the oath of Andronikos III to his grandfather, cf. also: John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 74.14–18.

αὐτοκρατορία (emperorship) is preferred.⁵¹⁸ Indeed, the choice of the word emperorship (αὐτοκρατορία) by Nikephoros Gregoras for the present occasion is not accidental. In my opinion, this intriguing use of vocabulary is intertwined with the frequently changing political situation of the period, and it reflects the need of the author to articulate somehow the distinction between the superior authority of the senior emperor and the inferior jurisdiction of the co-emperor. The content of the oaths reveals how skillfully the Palaiologan court engaged language as a powerful tool for promoting a specific political thought and hierarchical order, especially in periods of internal crisis. In any case, the mutual oaths were able, though temporarily, to restore the status of Andronikos III as co-emperor next to his grandfather, who recognized his grandson as the only rightful successor of the throne. However, despite the protagonists' good intentions, the peace agreement of 1321 did not last long, and the two parties had to renew their vows in writing during the summer of 1322.⁵¹⁹ The written oaths aimed to end the civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III once and for all. The senior emperor conceded to his grandson's rule over the entire Empire, agreed to pay the salaries of Andronikos III's army and allowed the young co-emperors' mercenaries to keep any individual grants of property that his grandson had allocated to them.⁵²⁰ Finally, he approved that Andronikos III and his wife would receive an annual income of thirty-six thousand hyperpyra.⁵²¹ Beyond the territorial and financial facets, the mutual oaths were designed to restore the trust between Andronikos III and Andronikos II, while the legally binding documents ensured that the peace negotiations would result in a successful outcome.

Overall, it seems that the *oath-taking* ceremony served various functions within the late Byzantine court of the Palaiologoi and had an enormous impact on the succession rituals of Andronikos II and Andronikos III. The early Palaiologoi developed the *oath-taking* practice in order to empower their household and to facilitate dynastic succession. It is in this context that oaths were used to provide or deny legitimacy. Oaths underlined the right of the senior emperor not only to choose his successor or co-ruler but also to secure the position of their sons and even grandsons in the hierarchical ladder of the imperial court.

⁵¹⁸ Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 189.

⁵¹⁹ John Kantakouzenos writes that the peace negotiations took place at Epibatai (John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 166.16), while Nikephoros Gregoras indicates that they took place at Rhegion (Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 358.24). See also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 93, no. 2479.

⁵²⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 167.2–10.

⁵²¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 167.10–12.

The peace agreements of 1321 and 1322 intended to maintain the peace among the senior Andronikos II and the junior Andronikos III and, eventually, led to the coronation of the latter.

The Coronation Ceremony of Andronikos III Palaiologos: A Note on the Sources

The *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III took place on February 2, 1325.⁵²² Both Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos provide information regarding the event.⁵²³ Although, as we have seen, Nikephoros Gregoras shows genuine interest in the *oath-taking* ceremony with regards to Andronikos III's *proclamation*, in this part of his account, he does not provide any information regarding the young co-emperor's *coronation*. Instead, the author focuses on recounting an unfortunate event that occurred while the two emperors (τοῖν δυοῖν βασιλεύοιιν), Andronikos II and Andronikos III, were heading to Hagia Sophia for the *coronation* ceremony.⁵²⁴ According to Nikephoros Gregoras, the elder emperor (γηραιὸν βασιλέα) Andronikos II fell, together with his horse, which had slipped in a puddle caused by the rain. As I will demonstrate below, this twist in the story, whether it actually occurred or not, is employed within the text as foreshadowing for the upcoming fall of the emperor and the rise of the co-emperor Andronikos III to the imperial throne.

If the story of Nikephoros Gregoras is based on an actual event, the incident that it recounts could be a description of a *procession* on horseback towards Hagia Sophia prior to the *coronation* ceremony, something that to my knowledge is not attested elsewhere as part

⁵²² For the dating of the *coronation* ceremony, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.14–15: Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἔλθων ὁ βασιλεὺς [Andronikos III Palaiologos] εἰς Βυζάντιον ἐστέφθη φεβρουαρίου ἡμέρᾳ δευτέρᾳ τῆς ὀγδόης ἰνδικτιῶνος. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 72; Cf. also comment 155, p. 178. For an English translation, see Gaul, “Purple Stockings”, 83, footnote 58. Regarding the dating, see also John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.8–11: Κατὰ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς καιροὺς, δευτέρα ἰσταμένου Φεβρουαρίου τῆς αὐτῆς ὀγδόης ἰνδικτιῶνος, ὁ νέος βασιλεὺς [Andronikos III Palaiologos] παρὰ τοῦ πάππου καὶ βασιλέως [Andronikos II Palaiologos] ἐν τῷ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ Σοφίας ἐστέφθη ναῶ, Ἡσαΐου πατριαρχοῦντος; and I, 204.1–3: ἡ δὲ γέγονεν ὁμοία καὶ ἐπ’ Ἀνδρονίκῳ τῷ νέῳ βασιλεῖ, Φεβρουαρίου ἰσταμένου τῆς ὀγδόης ἰνδικτιῶνος. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 137 (and comment 236, pp. 270–272), as well as p. 142.

⁵²³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.14–20. John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.8–204.3.

⁵²⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.15–20: συνέβη δ’ ἀπερχομένοιιν τοῖν δυοῖν βασιλείοιιν ἐς τὸ μέγα τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ Σοφίας τέμενος τῆς στεφανορίας ἔνεκα πεσεῖν τὸν γηραιὸν βασιλέα ζὺν γε τῷ ἵππῳ ὀλισθήσαντι εἰς τελματώδη λίμνην τινὰ κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἐξ ὀμβρίων ὑδάτων συστάσαν· καὶ ἔδοξε τὸ τοιοῦτον σύμπτωμα τοῖς συνετωτέροις οὐκ ἀγαθὸς ὄρνις εἶναι τῷ πεπτωκότι. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 72. For an English translation, see Gaul, “Purple Stockings”, 83, footnote 58: “It happened that when both emperors approached the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom so as to perform the *coronation*, the old emperor fell together with his horse that slipped on the muddy ground, which persisted along the road from rainfall. Perceptive men did not consider such an incident a good sign for the one who had fallen”.

of Late Byzantine accession rituals.⁵²⁵ Rather, it is more likely that Nikephoros Gregoras is referring to an accident that might have occurred only after the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III – if it indeed took place at all. Another detail supports this argument: Nikephoros Gregoras chooses to use vocabulary that illustrates the equal status of both the grandfather and the grandson, something that could be valid only after Andronikos III’s *coronation* as co-emperor, such as τοῖν δυοῖν βασιλεύοιιν, and even though in reality one of the two, Andronikos II, would have been of higher status.⁵²⁶ In addition, based on John Kantakouzenos’ account of events and on Pseudo-Kodinos’ description of Late Byzantine imperial ceremonial, such *processions* on horseback were usually performed after the *coronation* ceremony and were obviously employed to project imperial majesty since the rest of the court officials were headed to the palace on foot and not on a horseback.⁵²⁷ Admittedly, *processions*, in general, were often employed to project imperial power and hierarchical supremacy.⁵²⁸ Based on the detailed description of John Kantakouzenos, prior to the *procession* and as soon as Andronikos III, newly crowned and anointed with chrism, came out of Hagia Sophia coins as largesse (*epikombia*) in purses (*apodesmoi*) were thrown to the crowd.⁵²⁹ This ceremonial action may have been employed in order to publicly extoll the new co-emperor’s generosity and *philanthropy*, one of the significant cardinal virtues of the Byzantine Emperor, as well. Thus, in the case of Andronikos III, the distribution of coins to the crowd and the court officials that were present, and especially the *procession* on horseback, whether it occurred right before or after the *coronation* ceremony, were symbolic actions staged to publicize the co-emperors’ accession to the throne.

More interestingly, Nikephoros Gregoras’ story of Andronikos II’s bizarre fall from the horse becomes a tool to express political thought especially during those times of

⁵²⁵ Notably, John VI Kantakouzenos refers neither to the event nor to the incident that took place on that day.

⁵²⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.16.

⁵²⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 202.13–15. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 269.19–25.

⁵²⁸ For example, the procession occurred after the *coronation* of Emperor Michael VIII in Nicaea, during which Michael VIII and his wife lead, while John VI Laskaris followed; this symbolic gesture communicated Michael VIII’s political precedence over the underage heir to the throne, John IV: Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 145.27–28 and 147.1: (145) Ἐπει γοῦν τὰ τῆς βασιλείου τελετῆς ἦνυσται καὶ ἔδει χωρεῖν τοὺς στεφθέντας [Michael VIII Palaiologos, his wife Theodora Palaiologina and John VI Laskaris] πρὸς τὰ ἀνάκτορα, προηγούντο μὲν οἱ τὸ στέφος δεξάμενοι, (147) μεθείπετο δὲ τὸ παιδίον [John IV].

⁵²⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 203.3–25. For “apodesmoi” and “apokombia”, see Hendy, *Coinage*, 301–321. On the “epikombia”, namely linen purses (apodesmoi), each of which enclosed three gold pieces, three silver, and three copper as mentioned by John VI Kantakouzenos and which were made specifically for the *coronation* ceremony, see Hendy, *Coinage*, 309. Interestingly, Pseudo-Kodinos claims that the “epikombia” were thrown not only after the *coronation*, but also before the ceremony began, and in fact right before the *shield-raising* proclamation: Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 254.26–29 and 255.1–19, as well as 271.1–24.

instability. Of the entire ceremonial procedure that took place during the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III, Nikephoros Gregoras chooses to record a failed horseback *procession*, which notably is not recorded elsewhere, perhaps wishing to foreshadow the upcoming dethronement of Andronikos II. Nikephoros Gregoras, a supporter of the elder Andronikos II, argues that to those who were wiser in such matters this incident seemed like a bad omen, foreseeing his fall from the throne.⁵³⁰ In the narrative of Nikephoros Gregoras, a ceremonial event such as the horse-riding *procession* of an emperor that should have been a symbol of status and power is instead inverted and ultimately serves as a pretext for expressing the author's political thoughts concerning the events of his time.

Contrary to Nikephoros Gregoras, John Kantakouzenos provides an incredibly detailed report of the *coronation* ceremony that evidently took place in 1325. In fact, John Kantakouzenos' story is unique in comparison to the descriptions of Palaiologan *coronation* ceremonies examined so far because of the extensive information it provides. The meticulously described *coronation* ceremony recorded by John Kantakouzenos has often been the subject of discussion, primarily due to its striking similarities with the *coronation* ceremony described by Pseudo-Kodinos in terms of vocabulary and content.⁵³¹ In the following paragraphs, I will not delve further with such comparisons, but rather suggest a re-reading of this passage by placing emphasis on the role of such a comprehensive description in the narrative of John Kantakouzenos and the ideological aspirations that it encapsulates in the text of the *Histories*.

To begin with, it should be noted that in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos the passage containing the description of Andronikos III's *coronation* ceremony as co-emperor is in fact too general.⁵³² However, the report becomes specific at the beginning and the end

⁵³⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.19–20: καὶ ἔδοξε τὸ τοιοῦτον σύμπτωμα τοῖς συνετωτέροις οὐκ ἀγαθὸς ὄρνις εἶναι τῷ πεπτωκότι. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 72. Horses played a large role in the life of the emperor and in the Palaiologan court in general. On horse etiquette, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 387–391.

⁵³¹ For some general deliberations on the topic, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 31–36; Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 220–222; Heisenberg, *Aus der Geschichte*, 89. More recently, on the overlaps or agreements of John VI Kantakouzenos' *History* with Pseudo-Kodinos' regarding the mention of a number of ceremonial practices, including *coronation* protocol, see Gaul, "Purple Stockings", 73–85, especially 82–85; Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 4–6, and especially 5, 15 and 428. A less studied topic is the similarities between George Pachymeres and Pseudo-Kodinos concerning the description of the *coronation* rituals. On such similarities, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 428, footnote 202. Observations on the description of the *coronation* ceremony of the co-emperor as recorded through the perspective of George Pachymeres and Pseudo-Kodinos can be found in the relevant chapter of the present study, which discusses the accession of Michael IX to the throne.

⁵³² For this observation cf. also Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 428: "Instead of a personal description of Andronikos III's *coronation* Kantakouzenos presents an account that is a blank formula

of this passage.⁵³³ In the beginning, the author defines the date and the protagonists of the ceremony, explaining that Andronikos III (ὁ νέος βασιλεύς) was crowned in the church of Hagia Sophia by his grandfather the emperor (παρὰ τοῦ πάππου καὶ βασιλέως), during the Patriarchate of Isaias.⁵³⁴ Then, John Kantakouzenos writes that “this imperial ceremony is performed in the following way”, and continues with his very detailed account of the ceremonial events.⁵³⁵ At the end of his exposition, again John Kantakouzenos uses a transitional sentence and states that “this was the ceremony performed upon the *coronation* of emperors”.⁵³⁶ He finally concludes with a cyclical return to the date and the name of the leading protagonist of the ceremony, Andronikos III, affirming that everything was executed in the same way.⁵³⁷ The comment of John Kantakouzenos that the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III was performed in the “same manner” (ἡ δὴ γέγονεν ὁμοία) suggests that everything was executed “as customary”. Thus, it can be concluded that the author organized his text in this way not only for coherence and clarity but also for legitimacy. Clearly, John Kantakouzenos aimed to project the idea that Andronikos III’s *coronation* ceremony was aligned and consistent with what was customarily performed in such cases.

John Kantakouzenos incorporated a lengthy and general description of the imperial *coronation* ceremony in a way that would best fit his authorial purposes and political objectives. On the one hand, ceremonies play a key role in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos, who, having been an eyewitness and protagonist to most of the events he relates, is extremely interested in court rituals. The majority of imperial ceremonies were incorporated to serve the author’s ideological agenda to write a political “*apologia*” not only

with no specifics, no locations for any of the events of the *coronation* day, neither the name of the place for the raising on the shield, nor the church of *coronation*, nor the identity of the palace”.

⁵³³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.8–11 and 204.1–3. During these two instances, John VI Kantakouzenos refers to the main protagonists of the imperial ceremony (the senior emperor Andronikos II, the co-emperor Andronikos III and the Patriarch Isaias), sets the setting (the church of Hagia Sophia) and the date of the performance of Andronikos III’s *coronation* as co-emperor to his grandfather.

⁵³⁴ See also the footnote immediately above. For Patriarch Isaias (or Isaiah) of Constantinople (1323–1334), see *PLP* 6743: *Ἡσαΐας* (Hesaias), with further bibliography.

⁵³⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.11–12: ἡ τοιαύτη δὲ βασιλικὴ τελετὴ τοῦτον γίνεται τὸν τρόπον (This imperial ceremony [= the *coronation*] is performed in the following manner). The English translation is my own. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 137.

⁵³⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 203.25–204.1: τοιαύτη μὲν ἢ ἐπὶ τοῖς βασιλεῦσι στεφομένοις γινομένη τελετὴ (This ceremony [= the *coronation*] is usually performed upon the *coronation* of emperors). The English translation is my own. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 142.

⁵³⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 204.1–3: ἡ δὴ γέγονεν ὁμοία καὶ ἐπ’ Ἀνδρονίκῳ τῷ νέῳ βασιλεῖ, Φεβρουαρίου ἱσταμένου τῆς ὀγδόης ἰνδικτιῶνος. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 142.

for his friend and predecessor, Emperor Andronikos III, but also for himself.⁵³⁸ The *coronation* ceremony of 1325 is the first of many that are described in the *Histories*, and its extensive length may be justified in terms of legitimacy and practicality. Reading *Histories* in its entirety may lead to the hypothesis that John Kantakouzenos purposely isolated the description of an exemplarily performed *coronation* ceremony while relating the events of Andronikos III's *coronation* in order to avoid any repetitions later on in his narrative. In this way, the narrative would describe only once something that would happen repeatedly.⁵³⁹ On the other hand, within the framework of the civil war, the turbulent elevation of Andronikos III to the throne left no room for mistakes or deviations from the customary, legitimate and proper use of the ceremonial with regard to his *coronation* as co-emperor. For this reason, John Kantakouzenos presents an exemplary performance of ritual acts that were expected to take place and insists that they actually did take place accordingly during Andronikos III's *coronation*.

Andronikos III Palaiologos' Coronation Ceremony of 1325: New Elements Documented by John VI Kantakouzenos

Evidently, not all ceremonies mentioned in the lengthy and general description of John VI Kantakouzenos actually took place during Andronikos III's *coronation* in 1325, and this becomes especially obvious when the author presents alternatives to ritual actions.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Cf. the opinion of Niels Gaul, who argues that “[b]y linking the last legitimate emperor, the younger Andronikos, explicitly with an ἔθος, a custom, older and greater than any man, Kantakouzenos could at least hope to place himself silently in that tradition, very much in the same manner as he styled himself a member of the Palaiologan family clan: by giving a detailed, yet ‘open’ (‘blank’) account of the ceremony the listeners/readers of his *History* would naturally have to assume that his *coronation* was performed in the same manner, which, in turn, would reassert his imperial authority”. See Gaul, “Purple Stockings”, 84. Nonetheless, Ruth Macrides, Joseph A. Munitiz, and Dimiter Angelov point out that John VI Kantakouzenos’ “interest in custom and tradition goes beyond his need to certify his legitimacy, and extends to ceremonial performances that do not involve him or members of his family”. They also argue that “Kantakouzenos displays his knowledge of procedure, the customs and traditions of the imperial office, and a strong attachment to executing them to the letter”. See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 3 and 4, respectively.

⁵³⁹ This is what modern scholars, influenced by the French literary theorist Gérard Genette, would call “iterative narrative”. For the aspect of repetition in narrative and the term “iterative” as used by Genette, see Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 113–160. Cf. also Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 11: “Repetition, a common form of frequency, has emerged as the central technique in certain avant-garde novels, and what Genette calls the iterative, in which the narrative tells once that something happened frequently, turns out to have a variety of important functions”.

⁵⁴⁰ A case in point is when John VI Kantakouzenos offers alternatives to the *coronation* of the empress. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.23–24 and 199.1–14: (198) εἰ μὲν οὖν συμβῆ μὴ κατ’ ἐκείνον τὸν καιρὸν ἔχειν γυναῖκα τὸν βασιλέα, εὐθὺς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀναβάθραν ἀνίων, (199) ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καθίζει πάλιν· εἰ δ’ ἔχει, τότε καὶ αὐτὴν ἀνάγκη στεφθῆναι πᾶσα. [...] εἰ δὲ συμβῆ προεστεμμένον εἶναι τὸν βασιλέα, ἐπὶ τῆς τῶν γάμων τελετῆς ὁ βασιλεὺς τὴν ἰδίαν ὡσαύτως στέφει γυναῖκα. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 139. At that time, Andronikos III had no wife. His first wife, Irene Adelheid

However, it is interesting to examine which ceremonial elements from John Kantakouzenos' general description of the *coronation* procedure could have taken place in the case of Andronikos III. Following the storyline of John Kantakouzenos, emphasis will be given on new ceremonial details that are documented for the first time as part of the Palaiologan accession rituals, as well as on new ideological perceptions of already well documented and executed accession ceremonies.

Like his father the co-emperor Michael IX before him, Andronikos III went through the following three main stages of the *coronation* ceremony: the *shield-raising proclamation*; the *coronation*; and the *anointing* ceremony.⁵⁴¹ According to John Kantakouzenos, everyone should be present on that important day, namely the dignitaries (ἐν ἀξιώμασι), those in office (ἐν τέλει) and the army (τὴν στρατιάν), the patriarch and all the people of the city.⁵⁴² The presence of the above-mentioned authority figures and individuals during Andronikos III's *coronation* was of prime importance, not only because many questioned the right of the young co-emperor to succeed his grandfather due to the civil war, but also because these figures were expected to play a crucial role in the legitimization of the procedure. Notably, it seems that by the time of Andronikos III's *coronation*, the *anointing* ceremony had become one of the main highlights of the ceremonial process. Right from the beginning, instead of using the phrase "when the day of the *coronation* arrives", as one might expect, John Kantakouzenos explains that when the appointed day arrives on which the co-emperor should be anointed with chrism (θεῖω μύρω) everyone should be present.⁵⁴³ Moreover, immediately below he refers to the future co-emperor as "the one who was going to be anointed" (τοῦ μέλλοντος χρισθήσεσθαι βασιλέως), a phrase that was already employed by George Pachymeres to allude to Michael

of Brunswick, had already died in 1324. For Irene Adelheid of Brunswick, see *PLP* 21356: *Παλαιολογίνα Εἰρήνη* (Palaiologina Eirene), with further bibliography.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. the *coronation* ceremony of Michael IX described by George Pachymeres (Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 219.2–21 and 221.1–16) and the *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III described by John VI Kantakouzenos (John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.8–11 and 204.1–3).

⁵⁴² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.12–17: τῆς προθεσμίας ἐνστάσης, καθ' ἣν ἤδη τέτακται τῷ θεῖω μύρω χρίειν τὸν βασιλέα, τοὺς ἐν ἀξιώμασι πάντας καὶ τοὺς ἐν τέλει καὶ τὴν στρατιάν, οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν τῶν ἱερῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς νέας ταυτησὶ Ῥώμης οἰάκων ἐπειλημμένον, ἔτι δὲ καὶ πανδημεὶ τὴν πόλιν τοῖς βασιλείοις ἅμα ἕω πάντας παρεῖναι δεῖ. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 137. Concerning the political ideology of the period it is also interesting to observe that John VI Kantakouzenos refers to Constantinople as 'new Rome' (νέα Ῥώμη) and the patriarch is identified as the one who leads the holy helm of the church in this new Rome.

⁵⁴³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.12–13 and 17: τῆς προθεσμίας ἐνστάσης, καθ' ἣν ἤδη τέτακται τῷ θεῖω μύρω χρίειν τὸν βασιλέα [...] πάντας παρεῖναι δεῖ. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 137.

IX who was crowned in 1294.⁵⁴⁴ Thus, it seems to me that almost 30 years later not only did the ceremony of *anointing* become an integral part of the accession rituals, but in a way, it almost became synonymous with the *coronation* ceremony.

The first ceremony described by John Kantakouzenos as part of the whole *coronation* process is the *shield-raising* ceremony. Based on the text of *Histories*, “the one who was going to be anointed” – in this context Andronikos III – is presented sitting on the shield while he is acclaimed. This information is perhaps expected because the *shield-raising* ceremony was uninterruptedly performed since Theodore II Laskaris’ *proclamation* in 1254 with the emperor sitting on the shield and not standing upright as was customary in the earlier periods of Byzantine history. From this point of view, Andronikos III was indeed aligned with the customarily performed acts, something that the author insists upon. However, several novelties are introduced – or at least recorded for the first time in a late Byzantine historiographical narrative – with regard to those holding the shield. John Kantakouzenos writes that the emperor and father of the candidate, as well as the patriarch, both held the front part of the shield and that the dignitaries, namely the despots and the sebastokratores, usually held the back part of the shield.⁵⁴⁵ If there was no despot or sebastokrator, then the most venerable of the senatorial rank held the back part of the shield.⁵⁴⁶ The *shield-raising* ceremonies of the Palaiologan court examined in the previous chapters have outlined the gradual absence of the military aristocracy and the constantly increasing presence of high-ranking dignitaries and office-holders in the ceremony. John Kantakouzenos’ testimony confirms once more the above observations, although one would tend to expect a resurgence of the role of the military aristocracy due to its active involvement in the civil war over the previous four years.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.17–18. Cf. Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.9–11: [Michael IX Palaiologos] ὁ εἰς βασιλείαν μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς [Andronikos II Palaiologos] χρῆσθηςόμενος.

⁵⁴⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.17–24 and 197.1–2: (196) περὶ δὲ δευτέραν ὥραν μάλιστα τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας, τοῦ μέλλοντος χρῆσθηςεσθαι βασιλέως ἐπὶ ἀσπίδος καθεσθέντος, ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ πατὴρ τοῦ ἀναγορευομένου, εἶγε περίεστι, καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης τῶν ἐμπροσθίων μερῶν ἐπιλαμβανόμενοι τῆς ἀσπίδος, τῶν δ’ ἐπιλοίπων οἱ ἐν ἀξιώμασιν ὑπερέχοντες δεσπότης τε καὶ σεβαστοκράτορες, εἴπερ εἰσὶν, ἢ οἱ ἐπιφανέστατοι μάλιστα τῶν συγκλητικῶν, καὶ μετεωρίσαντες ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα αὐτὸν ἅμα τῇ ἀσπίδι, (197) τοῖς πλήθεσιν ἐπιδεικνύουσι τὸν βασιλέα πάντοθεν περιῖσταμένοις. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 137–138.

⁵⁴⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.21–24; Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.5–10. On the so-called *synkletika offikia* (senatorial offices) in the late Byzantine Palaiologian court, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 296–297.

⁵⁴⁷ Regarding the *shield-raising* ceremony and its military origins, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 22–25 and especially p. 22, footnote 59; Cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 24. As Byzantinist Leonidas Mavrommatis points out, the involvement of the army in the politics of the late Palaiologan period was

Interestingly, it seems that during Andronikos III's *shield-raising* ceremony both the emperor and the patriarch undertook new tasks or at least tasks that are not attested elsewhere in any other late Byzantine historical accounts. As we have seen, they both held the front part of the shield as opposed to the dignitaries or the members of senatorial rank who held the back part of the shield, and this apparently implemented so that a certain hierarchical order would be projected. Admittedly, the involvement of members of the church, namely of high priests (ἀρχιερέων), in the *shield-raising* ceremony is already attested for Michael VIII's *proclamation* in 1258 by the description of George Pachymeres.⁵⁴⁸ However, 1325 is the first time that the patriarch himself was so actively involved in this ceremony and in his role he was almost as active as the emperor. From an ideological point of view, the presence of both authoritative figures in the *shield-raising* ceremony of Andronikos III is an act of immense significance. On the one hand, Emperor Andronikos II's gesture signaled not just his acceptance and official recognition of Andronikos III as his successor, but also his political supremacy. As senior emperor, Andronikos II had the power to appoint and assign Andronikos III as co-emperor. On the other hand, the atypical presence of the patriarch in the ceremony may be explained by the atypical circumstances in which Andronikos III was raised to his office. At this point, it is important to remember that the patriarch did not act as a representative of the Church, but as one of the most eminent "Roman citizens" and that his involvement in any of the succession ceremonies was not a legitimizing factor, but it could perhaps provide further sanction to the candidate's claims.⁵⁴⁹ Having in mind the controversial background of Andronikos III's rise to power and the political instability caused by the civil war, it is not so difficult to imagine why such a measure was taken in this case. Whether or not the contributions of the emperor and the patriarch were specially introduced for the needs of Andronikos III's *shield-raising* ceremony, one cannot be absolutely sure because the account of John Kantakouzenos is too general and describes all actions as customary. Nonetheless, it is John Kantakouzenos' *Histories* that attests this custom for the first time as part of the Palaiologan *shield-raising* procedure and deliberately employed to describe Andronikos III's accession. In any case, the ideological ramifications behind the presence of the emperor and the patriarch in the *shield-raising* ceremony and

inevitable, especially because Andronikos III was dependent on military forces and he always consulted them on his every move while the civil war was raging. See Mavrommatis, *Πρότοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 61–62.

⁵⁴⁸ Georges Pachymères, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 137.14–16: καὶ χερσὶν ἔνθεν μὲν ἀρχιερέων, ἔνθεν δὲ μεγιστάνων ἀρθεῖς, ἀνακτορικοῖς παιάνοις καὶ κρότοις παρὰ πάντων ἐμεγαλύνετό τε καὶ ἐφημίζετο.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 30–31 and cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 23–24.

behind the symbolic act of both holding the front part of the shield must have contributed to the inclusion of this custom as part of standard late Byzantine accession rituals in the time of Pseudo-Kodinos.⁵⁵⁰

The second ceremony that John Kantakouzenos meticulously describes in connection with the whole *coronation* process is the *anointing* ceremony. The focus shifts to an internal space, particularly to Hagia Sophia, where the actual *coronation* ceremony of Andronikos III takes place.⁵⁵¹ John Kantakouzenos' description of the *anointing* ceremony complements that of George Pachymeres.⁵⁵² Interestingly, the text attests that the co-emperor (νέος βασιλέας) enters a small wooden chamber, specially constructed for this occasion and decorated with red veils, where he is dressed in a purple garment (πορφύρα) and a diadem (διάδημα), which had already been blessed by the patriarch.⁵⁵³ Then, the Divine Liturgy (θεία μυσταγωγία) is performed.⁵⁵⁴ By this time, both the emperor and the co-emperor are seated on their golden thrones, which are higher than usual, having four or even five steps,

⁵⁵⁰ On the inclusion of this custom as part of the Palaiologan accession rituals based on the evidence of Pseudo-Kodinos' compilation of late Byzantine ceremonies, see Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.1–14.

⁵⁵¹ Concerning this shift in the setting within John VI Kantakouzenos' narrative, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.2–3: ἐπευφημησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν, καταθέντες ἄγουσιν εἰς τὸν ναὸν, ἔνθα δεῖ τὴν τελετὴν γενέσθαι. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Andronikos III's *coronation* ceremony took place in Hagia Sophia. For this information, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 373.16–17.

⁵⁵² Cf. the description of Michael IX's *coronation* in Hagia Sophia by George Pachymeres (Pachymeres Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.5–14) with the equivalent description of Andronikos III in the same church by John VI Kantakouzenos (John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.3–202.15).

⁵⁵³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.3–8: οἰκίσκου δ' ἐν αὐτῷ ξυλίνου τῆς τοιαύτης ἕνεκα χρείας προκατεσκευασμένου, τὸν νέον εἰσάγουσι βασιλέα, καὶ τὴν πορφύραν καὶ τὸ διάδημα ἐνδιδύσκουσι, πρότερον τῶν ἀρχιερέων εὐλογοῦντων αὐτά. ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς κεφαλῆς οὐ νενομισμένον περιτίθεται τι, ἀλλ' ἢ στέφανος, ἢ ὄ,τι ἂν ἄλλο δοκῇ. τούτων δὲ γινομένων, ἡ θεία τελεῖται μυσταγωγία. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Concerning the small wooden chamber (οἰκίσκου ξυλίνου), its function and its location in the church, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219, footnote 626, with further bibliography. Here, the term "purple garment" is employed for rendering the term "πορφύρα" which John VI Kantakouzenos uses to describe the garment that the co-emperor wore in Hagia Sophia right before the anointing ceremony. In his description Pseudo-Kodinos' uses "σάκκος" instead of "πορφύρα". See Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.25. On the imperial *sakkos* (black tunic), see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 22–24. For the use of *sakkos* in Pseudo-Kodinos, cf. Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219, footnote 627. Moreover, Maria Parani clarifies that in this context the term "diadema" signifies a belt rather than a head-dress. See Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 22–23. About the term "diadema" in Pseudo-Kodinos, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219, footnote 627; and 137, footnote 353.

⁵⁵⁴ Interestingly, instead of the more common word λειτουργία (liturgy), John VI Kantakouzenos chooses to use the word μυσταγωγία, which may also convey the meaning of "initiation into the mysteries". See Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, s. v. "λειτουργία": worship and s. v. "μυσταγωγία": initiation into mysteries. Cf. *LSJ*, s. v. "μυσταγωγία". It is also interesting to observe that these ceremonies performed in Hagia Sophia signified a "rite of passage" for Andronikos III, who by the end of the ceremony would be a coronated co-emperor next to his grandfather Andronikos II. For the anthropological term "rite of passage" (originally in French "rite de passage"), first coined by the ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep, see Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*.

waiting for the patriarch to call them up to the ambo.⁵⁵⁵ The patriarch mounts the ambo first escorted by the most conspicuous church-officials (τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀρχόντων οἱ ἐπιφανέστεροι). He then dismisses his escort and invites the emperor and the co-emperor, who rise from their thrones and approach the ambo. The crowd, as John Kantakouzenos points out, remains in deep silence and completely still.⁵⁵⁶ Interestingly, here, the physical mobility of the protagonists in Hagia Sophia is juxtaposed with the immobility of the audience that silently observes the ceremonial procedure.⁵⁵⁷ On the ambo, the patriarch chants blessing-prayers addressed to both the emperor and the co-emperor (τῶν βασιλέων), some of which were sung quietly so that only he could hear them and some loudly so that everyone would hear in order to propitiate the Divine on behalf of him who was going to be anointed.⁵⁵⁸ The candidate removes whatever he is wearing on his head, and the same applies to everyone present in the Hagia Sophia.⁵⁵⁹ The patriarch anoints the head of the co-emperor with holy chrism (θεῖω μύρω) forming the sign of the cross and exclaiming loudly:

⁵⁵⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.9–16: ἐχόμενα δὲ τοῦ εἰρημένου οἰκίσκου καὶ ἀναβάθρα ἐκ ζύλων προκατασκευάζεται καὶ αὐτή, καὶ περιελοῦσιν αὐτὴν πάντοθεν πέπλοις Σηρικοῖς ἐρυθροῖς· ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν βασιλέων τίθενται θρόνοι χρυσοῖ οὐ κατὰ τοὺς εἰωθότας, ἀλλ’ ἐπηρμένοι μάλιστα τῷ ὕψει, τέτταρας ἢ καὶ πέντε ἔχοντες ἀναβασμοὺς, ἐφ’ οὓς, ἐξιόντες τοῦ οἰκίσκου, ἀναβαίνοντες καθίζουσιν οἱ βασιλεῖς, ἦν γε μὴ εἶς, ἀλλὰ πλείους ᾧσι. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 257.2–16. Ruth Macrides notes that these thrones were apparently not the same as those in the imperial palace, which were lower and had fewer steps. See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 219, footnote 630. On the thrones were also seated the wives of the emperor and the co-emperor, if applicable. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.17–18. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 257.16–25.

⁵⁵⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.18–198.2: (197) πρὸ δὲ τῆς τοῦ τρισαγίου θείας ὑμνολογίας ἄνεισιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἄμβωνα ὁ πατριάρχης τῶν ἀδύτων ἐξιὼν. συναέρχονται δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀρχόντων οἱ ἐπιφανέστεροι, τὰς ἱεράς καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνδεδυμένοι στολάς· οὓς ἀποστέλλων προσκαλεῖται τοὺς βασιλεῖς. οἱ δ’ εὐθὺς ἐξανιστάμενοι τῶν θρόνων, ἐπὶ (198) τὸν ἄμβωνα χωροῦσι. σιωπῇ δὲ βαθεῖα καὶ ἀταραξία τὸ πλῆθος κατέχει πᾶν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138.

⁵⁵⁷ Cf. also the relevant descriptions of George Pachymeres and of Pseudo-Kodinos concerning the ceremonial movements of the Patriarch, the emperor and the co-emperor in the church during the *coronation* ceremony. See Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.8–10; and Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 257.26–258.8.

⁵⁵⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.2–5: ὁ δὲ πατριάρχης τὰς ἐπὶ κρίσει τῶν βασιλέων συντεθειμένας δίεισιν εὐχὰς, τὰς μὲν ἡσυχῆ καθ’ ἑαυτὸν, ἔστι δ’ ἅς καὶ εἰς ἐπήκοον πάντων, καὶ τῶν χρησιμομένων ἐξιλάσκειται τὸ θεῖον. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Cf. also: Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.9–14. For further commentary and bibliography on the blessing prayers, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 221, footnotes 635 and 637.

⁵⁵⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.5–198.8: μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ ὁ μέλλον χρησθήσεσθαι βασιλεὺς τὸ ἐπικείμενον, ὅ,τι ἂν ἦ, τῇ κεφαλῇ ἀφαιρεῖ. νενομίσται δ’ αὐτίκα πάντας, ὅσοι πάρεισιν ἐντὸς τοῦ ναοῦ, γυμναῖς καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐστάναι κεφαλαῖς. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.15–19. Interestingly, Ruth Macrides points out that wearing hats in the church was a common practice established in Byzantium, while it was not at all established in the West. See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 221, footnote 638. About headgear in Pseudo-Kodinos, see also Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 323–336. On the Late Byzantine aristocratic “head-dresses”, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 66–71.

“Holy”.⁵⁶⁰ Following the example of the patriarch, all those on the ambo acclaimed the one anointed holy three times, and the crowd did likewise.⁵⁶¹

With regard to the ideological ramifications of the *anointing* ceremony, like in the case of Michael IX, the custom must have been employed to establish the young co-emperor Andronikos III’s hereditary right to ascend the throne. However, the *anointing* ceremony performed during Andronikos III’s *coronation* differs from the one performed in 1294 for his father Michael IX in many ways. George Pachymeres’ description of Michael IX’s *anointing* ceremony focused on the emperor, who is portrayed as preceding hierarchically by receiving all the appropriate rituals during the liturgy or by climbing on the ambo first, before his son the co-emperor.⁵⁶² In fact, Andronikos II climbed on the ambo first, then the patriarch and finally Michael IX.⁵⁶³ Quite the opposite, John Kantakouzenos’ detailed exposition of the ritual procedures leading up to Andronikos III’s *anointing* avoids emphasizing the elevated hierarchical status of the senior emperor. The author points out that both the emperor and the co-emperor were seated on their high, golden thrones waiting for the patriarch to call them up to the ambo, they were both blessed with prayers, and they were both invited to rise from their thrones and approach the ambo at the same time.⁵⁶⁴ Contrary to the actions of the senior emperor, which remain unknown and uncommented by John Kantakouzenos, the movements and gestures of the young co-emperor are brought into the spotlight. Andronikos III entered a small wooden chamber and wore the appropriate

⁵⁶⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.8–10: ὁ πατριάρχης δὲ τῷ θείῳ μύρῳ σταυροειδῶς χρίει τὴν βασιλέως κεφαλὴν, ἐπιλέγων μεγάλη φωνῆ· ἅγιος. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.19–23. It is notable that the acclamation “holy” (ἅγιος) is used after the completion of the ceremonial act of anointing, while after the completion of *coronation* it is “worthy” (ἄξιος). See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.16–18. This may also allude to the so-called blessing prayer of “Trisagion” (thrice-holy hymn). On the Trisagion hymn, see Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 221, footnotes 635 and 637; 223 and footnote 641; and cf. 177, footnote 495.

⁵⁶¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.10–13: διαδεχόμενοι δὲ οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄμβωνος ἰστάμενοι τὴν φωνὴν, ἐκ τρίτου καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν· ἅγιος, ἐφεξῆς δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τὸ αὐτὸ ἐπιφωνοῦσι τοςαντάκις. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.23–29. Ruth Macrides’ comment concerning this specific passage in Pseudo-Kodinos that “when the emperor is crowned the people shout loudly ‘holy’ three times also in the protocol of the *Book of Ceremonies*” is misleading. See Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 223, footnote 642. In fact, as I will underline below, a slight modification occurs in the vocabulary of the late Byzantine acclamations: Based on the evidence of both John VI Kantakouzenos and Pseudo-Kodinos, during the Palaiologan period when the emperor is crowned the people actually exclaim aloud “worthy” three times, and not “holy”.

⁵⁶² Pachymeres Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.5–10.

⁵⁶³ Georges Pachymérés, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.8–10: ἄνεισι μὲν ἐπ’ ἄμβωνος ὁ κρατῶν, ἄνεισι δὲ καὶ ὁ πατριάρχης, συνάνεισι δὲ σφίσι καὶ ὁ εἰς βασιλείαν μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς χρῆσθησόμενος.

⁵⁶⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.11–198.2.

purple garment, mounted an elevated throne next to his father that was in a prominent position viewed by the attendants, then on the ambo after the blessing-prayers he removed his headgear, received the holy chrism by the hand of the patriarch and finally, was acclaimed holy by all. Thus, with regard to the ideological aspect, the account of John Kantakouzenos rightfully highlights the acts of the real protagonist of the ceremony, namely of the co-emperor and not the senior emperor as was the case a few years back when Michael IX's elevation to the office of co-emperorship took place.

Clearly, John Kantakouzenos relates in detail the events right before Andronikos III's *anointment* not only to enhance the impression of a realistic depiction of the events but also to serve his objective of telling the story of his friend and future emperor Andronikos III. In order to fully appreciate the reasoning behind the authors' decision to draw the attention to the co-emperor, one must keep in mind the turbulent political background of the period, in general, and specifically Andronikos III's rise to power. Beyond the various attempts of Andronikos II and Andronikos III to defuse the escalating crisis and even the mutual oaths of April 1321 that smilingly restored the status of Andronikos III as co-emperor next to his grandfather, the civil war between them continued. Soon afterward, in June of 1321, a peace treaty was signed between the two parties, which arranged the partition of the imperial territories into two separate pieces that would be ruled, each one separately, by the grandfather and the grandson.⁵⁶⁵ Interestingly, John Kantakouzenos attests that the oaths regarding the peace treaty were included in two separate "books", that is, two separate documents (έν δυσι βιβλίαις έγγεγραμμένους), which were both signed in red ink (ύπογραφαῖς τῆς οικείας χειρὸς ἐρυθραῖς).⁵⁶⁶ As Leonidas Mavrommatis points out, a new political reality was formed with the unity of the Byzantine Empire being divided not only territorially, but also administratively.⁵⁶⁷ Admittedly, Andronikos II would lead matters of foreign policy and still be on the top of the court's hierarchy, yet Andronikos III's status was higher than that of any previously crowned or uncrowned co-emperor.⁵⁶⁸ In his description

⁵⁶⁵ On the terms of the peace treaty, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 321.1–10 and John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 113.19–116.6. See also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 125–126, no. 2660 and IV, 126, no. 2661. Cf. the critical comments of Leonidas Mavrommatis about the provisions of the treaty. See Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 62–63.

⁵⁶⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 115.24–116.1 and 116.5.

⁵⁶⁷ Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 63.

⁵⁶⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 321.1–10: τὸν δὲ γηραιὸν [Andronikos II Palaiologos], τὴν τε Κωνσταντινούπολιν καὶ τὰς ἐπέκεινα τῆς Χριστουπόλεως λοιπὰς Μακεδονικὰς χώρας καὶ πόλεις· καὶ πρὸς τούτοις δέχεσθαι τε καὶ διοικονομεῖν καὶ τὰς πρὸς τῶν κυκλούντων ἔθνων πρεσβείας. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 42.

of the clauses of the treaty, John Kantakouzenos omits the fact that Andronikos II would lead matters of foreign policy, perhaps because he felt that this term undermined the prestige of Andronikos III.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, it is in this context that the young co-emperor's acts, and John Kantakouzenos' writings, should be understood. The emphasis that John Kantakouzenos places on Andronikos III's actions and gestures during the *anointing* ceremony of 1325 might reflect the young co-emperor's enhanced position compared to that of any former Palaiologan co-emperor. At the same time, the uncommented actions of the senior emperor Andronikos II could be revealing of his damaged imperial status and his weakened position after the events of the civil war up to that date.

Another characteristic that distinguishes the *anointing* ceremony performed during Andronikos III's *coronation* from that at Michael IX's *coronation*, or at least another set of actions outlined by John Kantakouzenos and not by George Pachymeres, are the actions of the patriarch.⁵⁷⁰ The patriarch mounts first the ambo, invites the emperor and the co-emperor to do the same, then performs the blessing-prayers and finally, the act of *anointing*.⁵⁷¹ The narrative outlines that the patriarch is the one charged with the responsibility to "propitiate the Divine on behalf of the one who was going to be anointed",⁵⁷² to acclaim him "holy"⁵⁷³ and generally to propagate the notion of the imperial candidate's sacral prestige. Perhaps, the privilege to provide extra sanction to the claims of the co-emperor is indeed bestowed exclusively upon the patriarch because of his office. However, the account of John Kantakouzenos points to the fact that the patriarch acted namely as one of the most prestigious Byzantine citizens rather than as a representative of the church as an institution.⁵⁷⁴ This impression is strengthened through the patriarch's new active involvement in the secular *shield-raising* ceremony, during which emphasis is placed on his role as the most prominent of the empire's citizens and the fact that he holds the most venerable of the empire's offices.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁶⁹ For this observation, see Mavrommatis, *Οι Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 62.

⁵⁷⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.18–198.23; Cf. Pachymeres Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 221.5–14.

⁵⁷¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.18–198.10.

⁵⁷² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.2–5, especially 197.4–5. The translation is my own.

⁵⁷³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 197.8–10, especially 197.10.

⁵⁷⁴ Concerning the role of the patriarch as one of the most prestigious Byzantine citizens, see Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 30–31. Cf. Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 23–24.

⁵⁷⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 196.17–197.2, especially 196.19–24. Cf. also the later description by Pseudo-Kodinos: Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 256.1–14.

Moreover, the *anointing* ceremony with largely religious and sacral character concludes with the patriarch acclaiming the co-emperor “holy” (ἅγιος).⁵⁷⁶ Once more, the patriarch here is presented as the first among the citizens who would recognize the imperial candidate as “holy” and at the same time the leading example that the crowd follows, as a result also repeating three times “holy” with a loud voice. Thus, the actions of the patriarch as outlined by John Kantakouzenos serve a dual ideological purpose within the narrative. Firstly, they allow the reader to appreciate the decisive role of the patriarch in providing further sanction to the imperial candidate’s claims especially during this time of political instability caused by the civil war. Secondly, the patriarch’s actions function as a reminder of his place within the empire, not as an autonomous leader of the church that suddenly acquired new prestige through the performance of imperial accession ceremonies, but rather as the most esteemed member of Byzantine society and the most prestigious officer of the imperial court, who promoted its ideology.

The third and final ceremony that John Kantakouzenos references to with regard to the *coronation* process as a whole is the act of crowning the co-emperor. According to John Kantakouzenos, the crown was brought in a *procession* from the innermost sanctum of the church (τῶν ἀδύτων) by the deacons wearing their holy attire to the ambo, where both the emperor and the patriarch performed the *coronation*.⁵⁷⁷ From a political perspective, and similar to the case of his father Michael IX’s *coronation*, the symbolic act of placing the crown on Andronikos III’s head must have aimed to promote the idea that the young co-emperor was the ideal successor for the position of imperial office, enjoying the support of both the emperor and the patriarch. Concerning the *coronation* process and the vocabulary of the Palaiologan *acclamations*, John Kantakouzenos’ detailed account adds the new information that at the end of the crowning the patriarch acclaimed the newly-crowned co-emperor “worthy” (ἄξιος).⁵⁷⁸ In the descriptions of the ceremonial by John Kantakouzenos and by Pseudo-Kodinos, the people, following the example of the patriarch and those on the

⁵⁷⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.8–11.

⁵⁷⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.13–18: μετὰ τοῦτο τῶν ἀδύτων ἐντὸς παρὰ διακόνων τὰς ἱεράς ἐνδεδυμένων στολὰς κατεχόμενον τὸ στέμμα, (οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς ἱεράς, ὡς τινές φασι, τραπέζης κείται,) ἄγουσιν ἐπὶ τὸν ἄμβωνα. καὶ εἶγε πάρεστι προεστεμμένος βασιλεὺς, ἅμα τῷ πατριάρχῃ τὸ στέμμα λαβόντες, ἐπιτιθέασι τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 138–139. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.1–13.

⁵⁷⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.16–18: καὶ εἶγε πάρεστι προεστεμμένος βασιλεὺς, ἅμα τῷ πατριάρχῃ τὸ στέμμα λαβόντες, ἐπιτιθέασι τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως, καὶ ἐκφωνεῖ ὁ πατριάρχης· ἄξιος. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 138–139. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.9–14.

ambo, acclaim three times “holy” only the newly anointed and not the newly crowned imperial candidate.⁵⁷⁹ Contrary to this late Byzantine practice of acclaiming the newly crowned “worthy”, in middle Byzantine period, as attested by the tenth-century ceremonial treatise *De Cerimoniis Aulae Byzantinae* attributed to Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, the emperor was acclaimed “holy”.⁵⁸⁰ Probably, the inclusion of the *anointing* ceremony as part of the official late Byzantine accession ceremonial was responsible for the attention that the *acclamations* “holy” and “worthy” received. This becomes even clearer if one considers that the performance of each *acclamation* occurs only after the end of particular ceremonial parts of the *coronation*.

Even more interestingly, just like in the case of the *anointing* ceremony, after the *coronation*, those on the ambo and the crowd repeated uttering the attribute “worthy” three times in sequence, following the example of the patriarch.⁵⁸¹ Again here, the patriarch’s gestures and words reveal the multifold messages regarding his role in the imperial accession ceremonies, as analyzed above. In addition, especially for Andronikos III, the symbolic acts of receiving the crown from both his grandfather Emperor Andronikos II and the patriarch as well as being acclaimed as the “worthy” successor candidate by all was a confirmation of his efforts to be accepted as the only candidate to succeed his grandfather to the throne. These ritual elements of the *coronation* ceremony integrated into John Kantakouzenos’ *History* also contributed to the author’s aspirations to promote through his writings the idea that the civil conflict had ended. Emperor Andronikos II had finally recognized his grandson’s hereditary right to imperial power, but most importantly everyone, including the patriarch and the crowd, considered him worthy to rule. Thus, after the end of this first phase of the civil war, John Kantakouzenos uses this detailed description of the *coronation*

⁵⁷⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.8–13: ὁ πατριάρχης δὲ τῷ θεῷ μύρω σταυροειδῶς χρίει τὴν βασιλέως κεφαλὴν, ἐπιλέγων μεγάλη φωνῆ· ἅγιος. διαδεχόμενοι δὲ οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄμβωνος ιστάμενοι τὴν φωνὴν, ἐκ τρίτου καὶ αὐτοὶ λέγουσιν· ἅγιος. ἐφεξῆς δὲ καὶ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος τὸ αὐτὸ ἐπιφωνοῦσι τοσαυτάκις. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 138. See also Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.19–29.

⁵⁸⁰ Constantine Porphyrogenetos, ed. Reiske, I, 193.1–6: Καὶ πάλιν ποιεῖ εὐχὴν ἐπὶ τοῦ στέμματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ πληρώσας, λαμβάνει αὐτὸς ὁ πατριάρχης τὸ στέμμα, καὶ τίθησιν αὐτὸ εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ δεσπότη, καὶ εὐθέως ἀνακράζει ὁ λαός· «Ἄγιος, Ἄγιος, Ἄγιος. Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις Θεῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη.» Τρίτον. Εἶτα· «Ὁ δεῖνα μεγάλου βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτορος πολλὰ τὰ ἔτη» καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. For the English translation, see Moffatt and Tall, *Constantine Porphyrogenetos*, I, 193. Cf. also Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, ed. Vogt, II, 3.11–14, with a parallel translation in French.

⁵⁸¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.18–20: διαδεχόμενοι δὲ οἱ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἄμβωνος, ἐκ τρίτου λέγουσιν αὐτοὶ τε καὶ πᾶν τὸ πλῆθος ὃν τρόπον ἐπὶ τοῦ μύρου. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 139. See also Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.16–22.

ceremony to manufacture the impression of a smooth succession for his friend and the future emperor, Andronikos III.

The End of the Civil War and the Dethronement of Andronikos II Palaiologos

The civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III did not end until 1328, when Andronikos III managed to undermine his grandfather's imperial status and gradually to remove him from the office altogether by 1329. Apparently, the impression of a smooth succession that John Kantakouzenos strove to project on behalf of Andronikos III could not be achieved unless he deliberately omitted from his account some of the events that staged the final act of his friend's rise to power as a sole emperor. Combining the equally biased information provided by Nikephoros Gregoras, who on the contrary was a strong supporter of the elder Andronikos II, the modern historian can make some interesting observations regarding the ceremonial of dethroning the senior emperor. The dethronement of Emperor Andronikos II is manifested in three symbolic gestures and stages. First, the acceptance of Andronikos III as emperor and not merely as co-emperor; second, the confinement of Andronikos II to the palace and later to a monastery; and finally, the senior emperor's written declaration that he officially resigns from any future claims to the imperial office. The fact that Andronikos III received the imperial office while his grandfather was still alive marked a new era for the Palaiologan court, which for the first time after 1261 faced inconsistency with regard to the traditional rules of dynastic succession.

The acceptance of Andronikos III's authority and new status as emperor – and not simply as co-emperor next to his grandfather the senior emperor – marked the first step towards the dethronement of Andronikos II. Both Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos refer to the *acclamations* that the co-emperor Andronikos III received by the army upon his entrance into the city on May 22, 1328.⁵⁸² The military aristocracy marked

⁵⁸² See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 422.3–8: τούτων οὕτως ἐχόντων πολλὸς ἠκούσθη θόρυβος ἔξω περὶ τὰ βασιλεία καὶ τὰς βασιλείους πύλας, τὴν τοῦ νέου βασιλέως [Andronikos III Palaiologos] περιηχῶν εἰσοδόν, καὶ κρότος ὄπλων μάλα πολὺς· ἦσαν γὰρ οἱ συνεισελθόντες τῷ βασιλεῖ στρατιῶται πλείους ὀκτακοσίων· καὶ ἅμα πανταχόθεν εὐφημία καὶ γλῶσσαι τὸν νέον ἀνακηρύττουσαι βασιλέα. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 97. See also John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 304.8–13: ὡς δὲ ἤκουσαν οἱ κάτωθεν, ὅτι αὐτῶν τε ὁ στρατηγὸς ἐάλω καὶ ὁ νέος βασιλεὺς [Andronikos III Palaiologos] ἐντὸς εἶη τειχῶν, μεταβαλόντες εὐθὺς εὐφήμουν τε τὸν νέον βασιλέα καὶ ἔτοιμοι ἦσαν συναίρεσθαι τὰ δυνατά. καὶ κατὰ τὸ ἐπίλοιπον τοῦ τείχους ἠρέμα ἤδη διὰ πάντων ἦει ἢ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως εὐφημία. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 206. For the dating and a detailed description of Andronikos III's capture of and entrance into Constantinople, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 300.5–304.18. Especially on the date, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 300.9–13 and the commentary in Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 308–309, note 432. Concerning the events leading up to Andronikos III's entrance to the capital, cf. also: Nikephoros

one of the three paragons that seem to have recognized and provided legitimacy to Andronikos III, who finally received an enhanced status over and above of that of his grandfather, Andronikos II. The second recognition that Andronikos III received was from Emperor Andronikos II himself. Based on the account of John Kantakouzenos, when the two rulers met Andronikos III greeted his grandfather the emperor respectfully by prostrating before him, as he used to.⁵⁸³ According to the more detailed description of Nikephoros Gregoras about the meeting, the senior emperor welcomed the young co-emperor Andronikos III and, through a speech performed by a mediator, begged him to spare his life.⁵⁸⁴ In his speech to Andronikos III, as recorded by Nikephoros Gregoras, Andronikos II is said to have employed an interesting phrase in his opening line: “Because God has taken from me today the empire (το βασίλειον), my son, and gave you the scepter (σκῆπτρον σοὶ τοῦτ’ ἐχαρίσατο), I ask from you only one favor instead of many [...]”.⁵⁸⁵ Thus, with these words, the third and perhaps most crucial party that recognized Andronikos II’s right to rule is revealed, namely the divine authority. God himself is presented as justifying and legitimizing Andronikos III’s actions by allowing the dethronement of the senior emperor Andronikos II.

In terms of political ideology, Nikephoros Gregoras portrays Andronikos II as admitting that the imperial office was no longer in his hands and that God himself had taken the office from him and offered it to Andronikos III. Although based upon the old political belief that the imperial office is granted to the Byzantine emperor by divine providence, this idea underlines, in fact, a new political concept within the imperial court of the Palaiologoi. Up to this point, the Palaiologoi had based their reign on dynastic succession. Nonetheless, contrary to the rules of dynastic succession, Andronikos III is presented by Nikephoros Gregoras already at that time to be the ideal candidate chosen by God to rule, despite and beyond his dynastic right to do so following the death of his grandfather the senior emperor.

Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 419.1–422.9. On the dating, see also Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 427.10–11 and the commentaries from: Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 215–216, note 237 and Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 300, note 254. About the events, see also the commentary of Costas P. Kyrris in Kyrris, “Continuity and Differentiation”, 289–300.

⁵⁸³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 304.18–20: καὶ πρὸς τὰ βασίλεια ἐλθὼν ὁ νέος βασιλεὺς [Andronikos III Palaiologos], τὸν βασιλέα καὶ πάππον [Andronikos II Palaiologos] προσεκύνησεν, ὥσπερ ἦν ἔθος αὐτῷ, [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, I, 206.

⁵⁸⁴ Although a mediator performed the speech, Nikephoros Gregoras presents the speech as if the emperor himself addressed it personally to his grandson using first-person narrative. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 423.13–424.16.

⁵⁸⁵ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 423.15–18: ἐπειδὴ τήμερον ὁ θεὸς ἀφελὼν ἐμοῦ τὸ βασίλειον, υἱέ μου, σκῆπτρον σοὶ τοῦτ’ ἐχαρίσατο, μίαν ταύτην αἰτῶ παρὰ σοῦ χάριν ἀντὶ πολλῶν [...]. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIa, 98.

Another particular phrase that was chosen by Nikephoros Gregoras in order to highlight Andronikos III's status as a God-chosen candidate has to do with the reception of the imperial scepter from God himself. Recalling the importance that the imperial scepter had acquired during the time of Michael VIII, who revoked the original privilege of the young Andronikos II to hold it during public appearances due to its symbolizing the one and undivided imperial rule, the choice of words by Nikephoros Gregoras must not be accidental.⁵⁸⁶ We are not in a position to say whether such a ceremony took place that day, namely if Andronikos II resigned his imperial regalia or if he symbolically surrendered the imperial scepter to Andronikos III. However, Nikephoros Gregoras' choice of words reveals, even indirectly, the ultimate authority upon which Andronikos III based his claims for legitimization: God himself.

A second indication that manifests the debasement of Emperor Andronikos II and the gradual concentration of power into the hands of Andronikos III is the confinement of the elder Andronikos first to the palace and later to a monastery, combined with the restriction of his political influence. Undoubtedly, since Andronikos III managed to enter Constantinople, he already had the necessary military support and power to prevail over his grandfather and impose his authority. Nonetheless, it is not until a bit later, on May 24, 1328, that probably the first ceremonial step was taken towards the official dethronement of Andronikos II.⁵⁸⁷ According to Nikephoros Gregoras' account of events, Andronikos III ordered his grandfather to give up his imperial *insignia* and to remain in the imperial chambers without partaking in any political activities.⁵⁸⁸ Although Andronikos II was from that moment onwards confined to the imperial palace and deprived of any political power or influence, he was allowed to receive an annual income. This alludes to the action that Andronikos II took in connection with the then young co-emperor Andronikos III during the

⁵⁸⁶ Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, III, 411.21–23 and 415.1–3: (413) Ἡὐτρέπιστο μέντοι τούτω καὶ βακτηρία βασιλικὴ χρυσοῦ ὑπόξυλος, ἐς ὃ κρατεῖν ταύτην ἐπὶ τῶν θεῶν ὕμνων, ὡς ἔθος, σὺν τῷ πατρὶ. Καὶ ἐπράχθη καὶ τόδε, ἅπαξ ἢ (415) καὶ δεύτερον ἢ καὶ πλέον ἡμῶν ἰδόντων κρατοῦντα. Ἐπειτα δόξαν τῷ βασιλεῖ – μίαν γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ἀρχήν, βακτηρία δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς σύμβολον, χρῆναι δὲ καὶ ταύτην μίαν εἶναι –, διὰ ταῦτα ἠθέτητο τοῦτο.

⁵⁸⁷ On the dating, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 427.10–11: Ἦν μέντοι τετάρτη καὶ εἰκοστὴ τοῦ μαῖου μηνός ἢ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη τῆς ἐνδεκάτης ἰνδικτιῶνος, ἐν ἣ ταῦτα πάντα τετέλεσται. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 221. See also the commentary in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 300, note 254.

⁵⁸⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 428.15–17: ὅθεν μετὰ πλεῖστα σκέμματα κεκύρωται, περικεῖσθαι μὲν τὸν πάππον [Andronikos II Palaiologos] τὰ βασιλικά σύμβολα, καθῆσθαι δ' ἐν τοῖς τῶν βασιλείων θαλάμοις ἀπρόϊτόν τε καὶ ἀπρακτόν. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 221.

civil war, also by allowing him to enjoy an annual income.⁵⁸⁹ It seems that the restriction or the total deprivation of an opponent's political power by paying him to remain at the imperial court where all his moves would be controlled became an established strategy during the reign of the early Palaiologoi, who cultivated strong familial and dynastic bonds. This is an unusual “punishment” for a defeated emperor or a former usurper to the throne.⁵⁹⁰

John Kantakouzenos puts forward a different perspective and places emphasis on the strong bond that the young Andronikos III had with his grandfather, despite all that had happened. Contrary to Nikephoros Gregoras, he points out that Andronikos III allowed his grandfather to live in the palace and to receive visitors, from whom it was possible to receive gestures of high respects (ἀκωλύτως προσκυνεῖν αὐτόν), and that he allowed him to have a say in public affairs by often consulting him on political matters.⁵⁹¹ From an ideological point of view, it makes sense that at the beginning of his reign Andronikos III would have taken advantage of his blood bond with the senior emperor and intentionally projected the impression of close relations and proximity with Andronikos II so that he could strengthen his position even among the supporters of the elder Andronikos. Later on, in January 1330, the removal of Andronikos II from the palace became final when he was forced to become a monk.⁵⁹² According to Nikephoros Gregoras, Andronikos II was lucky to be given a choice to become a monk, since the other options were either slaughter (σφαγήν), inexorable exile (ἐξορίαν ἀπαραμύθητον), or forced imprisonment (βιαίαν ἀπαγωγήν).⁵⁹³ Allowing the defeated opponent, whether usurper or emperor, to live in a monastery was a sign of philanthropy on behalf of the victorious opponent and was preferred rather than any other measure of removal from power. In fact, Dominik Heher has successfully argued that the involuntary imprisonment of the opponent in a monastery is a “symbolic death”

⁵⁸⁹ Concerning the demand of co-emperor Andronikos III during the peace negotiations at Epibatai in 1322 to receive an annual income for himself and for his wife, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 167.10–12: [...] καὶ τῆς ἰδίας οἰκίας ἔνεκα καὶ βασιλίδος τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναικὸς παρὰ τοῦ βασιλικοῦ ταμείου ἐξακισχιλίου ἐπὶ τρισμυρίοις χορηγεῖσθαι χρυσοῦς. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, I, 119; Cf. also Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 67. About the annual income of Andronikos II while in confinement at the palace, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 428.17–20. John VI Kantakouzenos also attests to the annual income that Andronikos II received. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 311.14–18.

⁵⁹⁰ Byzantinist Dominik Heher, in his recently completed dissertation on the performative aspect of usurpations in the middle Byzantine period, has devoted a chapter to the symbolic acts connected with a defeated emperor or a defeated usurper. See Heher, “In den Schuhen des Kaisers”, 139–242 and 243–296, respectively.

⁵⁹¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 311.21–312.5. Cf. also Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, Iib, 301–302, note 258.

⁵⁹² For the date on which Andronikos II received the monastic cloth, cf. Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, II, 163, note 1.

⁵⁹³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 441.14–19.

(symbolische Tötung), mainly because unlike other means of political elimination of the opponent this ritualized act of forced initiation into the monastic life was connected with both a physical and a mental transformation.⁵⁹⁴ Three ritualized actions were arranged to seal Andronikos II's passage from imperial to monastic status: They cut off his hair, dressed him in a monastic habit and gave him the name Antonios.⁵⁹⁵ Theoretically, in becoming a monk, Andronikos II would not have the right to reign, and thus, Andronikos III would be left undisturbed to rule as sole emperor. However, not everyone was willing to accept the new status quo. Nikephoros Gregoras refers to some monks who decided to commemorate first monk Antonios (i.e., Andronikos II) and then Emperor Andronikos III, an act of substantial meaning considering that at the time Andronikos III was severely ill and he was likely to die.⁵⁹⁶ This is another example of the dynamic role that *acclamations* played in the acknowledgment of the emperor and in defining hierarchical status within the imperial court. Apparently, the confinement of Andronikos II to a monastery and restricting his political influence may have contributed to his dethronement, but this measure did not actually grant Andronikos III the uncontested right to rule as sole emperor.

The final step that completed the transition of power from Andronikos II to Andronikos III was formalized with a written declaration on behalf of the elder Andronikos, now monk Antonios, that he would not reclaim the imperial office. John Kantakouzenos chooses to be silent about the event and the aggressive procedure followed in order to force the senior emperor Andronikos II to sign his abdication. It has been suggested that Andronikos III was not in agreement with the threatening method used by Theodore Synadenos, one of his most prominent supporters at the time, and this is the reason that John Kantakouzenos maintained silence about this incident.⁵⁹⁷ Based on the narrative of Nikephoros Gregoras, an embassy was sent to Andronikos II and under duress demanded that he officially resign from any future claims to the throne.⁵⁹⁸ In particular, the written oath included three restrictive clauses, namely that Andronikos II would never again claim the

⁵⁹⁴ Heher, "In den Schuhen des Kaisers", 200–208, especially 200.

⁵⁹⁵ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 442.4–6: ἀλλ' ἵνα μὴ διατρίβωμεν, ἄκοντος ἐκόντος, εἰπεῖν, τὴν τε κόμην κείρουσι τούτου καὶ τὸ μοναχικὸν σχῆμα περιτιθέασι καὶ ἐς Ἀντώνιον τοῦνομα μεταφέρουσι. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 229.

⁵⁹⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 446.3–11. Andronikos III's health condition was widely known and the commemoration of his name was made for an uncertain future. Eventually, Andronikos III fell into coma and died, probably of malaria, in 1341. See Lascaratos and Marketos, "The Fatal Disease", 106–109.

⁵⁹⁷ See Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 223, note 293. For Theodore Synadenos, see *PLP* 27120: *Συναδηνός, Θεόδωρος Δούκας Παλαιολόγος Κομνηνός* (Synadenos, Theodoros Dukas Palaiologos Komnenos), with further bibliography.

⁵⁹⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 446.12–21.

imperial office (βασιλείον κράτος), refuse the imperial throne even if it was offered to him and finally, that he would not promote anyone else to this position.⁵⁹⁹ This legal document is unique not only because of its content as an official resignation from the imperial office that highlights once more the significance that written oaths have acquired during the early Palaiologan period but also because of its dual character, both public and private. At the beginning of the document (προταγή) Andronikos II signed with the red-ink-cross of a public figure, while towards the end of the document, he signed with the black-ink-cross of a private individual, probably because he was partly blind and was led by the hand while signing.⁶⁰⁰ Compared to the role of the oaths connected with the imperial accession, which were employed to reinforce the subjects' loyalty, to prevent rebellion against the already legitimate emperor or even to provide or deny legitimacy to the co-emperor, the written oath taken by Andronikos II reveals its explicit function as a formal resignation from the imperial office. At the same time, the change in color reflects Andronikos II's status changing in the course of reading and signing the document. The written oath of Andronikos II with both red and black ink was inevitably a public declaration of his new identity as a monk and the transition of political status from imperial ruler to an ordinary citizen of the Byzantine Empire with no claims whatsoever to the throne. With this last measure, the dethronement of Andronikos II was finalized. The first phase of the civil war ended, but another one was bound to break out. This time the aristocrat John Kantakouzenos and the son of Andronikos III, John V, or rather a regency council consisting of Anna of Savoy, the mother of the minor John V, Alexios Apokaukos and the patriarch John XVI Kalekas, would attempt to seize imperial power.

⁵⁹⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 446.12–15: καὶ πέμψας ὄρκον ἀπήτησεν ἔγγραφον ἐξ αὐτοῦ διαβεβαιούμενον, μηδέποτε μήτε ζητῆσαι βασιλείον κράτος, μήτε μὴν διδόμενον δέξασθαι, μήτ' ἄλλον τινὰ προβαλέσθαι. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 232.

⁶⁰⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 446.18–21: καὶ ἐπεὶ τυφλὸν εἶναι τοῦτον εἰρήκειμεν, ὑφ' ἑτέρου λοιπὸν τὴν χεῖρα χειραγωγούμενος ἄνω μὲν ἐρυθρὸν προῦθηκε τὸν τοῦ θεοῦ σταυροῦ τύπον, κάτω δὲ μέλανα· καὶ οὕτω συνεχωρήθη τὸ ζῆν. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 232 and cf. the commentary on page 323, note 293, with further bibliography on this written waiver of all imperial rights. Concerning Andronikos II's renunciation of the throne and the document of 1330, see Voordeckers, "À propos de la renonciation au trône", 185–188. Leonidas Mavrommatis also comments on the special character of this document. See Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 77–78. About the private Byzantine documents and the important function of the cross-signature in these legal texts, see Dölger, *Schatzkammern*, I (*Textband*), 283–286.

Chapter V.

The Rise of John VI Kantakouzenos to Power: Desperate Times Call for Desperate (Ceremonial) Measures

John Kantakouzenos, the only Byzantine emperor to narrate the events of his own career, admits that upon the death of Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos (in June 1341) the worst civil war that the Romans had ever known broke out.⁶⁰¹ The other historian who provides information about the events of this civil war is Nikephoros Gregoras, whose account deals with the years 1204 to 1359.⁶⁰² Nikephoros Gregoras had experienced the two phases of the civil war and was initially a supporter of John Kantakouzenos. However, he got involved into the theological and social aspects of the civil war, and by 1347 he became a leading member of the so-called anti-Palamite party, turning thus against John Kantakouzenos who openly defended the doctrine of Gregorios Palamas on Hesychasm.⁶⁰³ In contrast to John Kantakouzenos who wrote retrospectively as a political “apologia” for his actions, Nikephoros Gregoras began to write his work in the decade between 1340 and 1350, while the political events were happening.⁶⁰⁴ Therefore, his views and authorial aims gradually changed as reflected in his account of the civil war events as we will see below. Whether the “worst” or not, the war for political power between John Kantakouzenos and John V Palaiologos, the son and heir-presumptive of the deceased Emperor Andronikos III, or rather – at least until 1347 between – John Kantakouzenos and the members of a regency council consisting of Anna of Savoy, Alexios Apokaukos and Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, had a deep impact on the political ideology of the state. As we have seen, during the first phase of the war, namely between Emperor Andronikos II and his grandson Andronikos III (1321–1328), the conflict started as a “family dispute” where the two claimants were Palaioiogoi,

⁶⁰¹ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 12.4–9. For John VI Kantakouzenos, see *PLP* 10973: Καντακουζηνός, Ἰωάννης VI. Ἄγγελος Κομνηνός Παλαιολόγος (Kantakouzenos, Ioannes VI. Angelos Komnenos Palaiologos), with further bibliography. According to John VI Kantakouzenos, the reason behind the outbreak of the civil war was the emotion of envy (phthonos) felt by his opponents. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 12.3–17. On relevant commentary, see Hinterberger, *Phthonos*, 318–321, especially 318–319.

⁶⁰² For comparisons between John VI Kantakouzenos and Nikephoros Gregoras as historians, see Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 4–29 and Guiland, *Essai*, 228–257.

⁶⁰³ On theological dispute of Hesychasm and its political and social implications, see *ODB*, II, 923–924, s. v. “Hesychasm”, with further bibliography.

⁶⁰⁴ On Nikephoros Gregoras’ active involvement in the dispute and the way this affected his writings, see Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί*, IV, 167–179; *ODB*, II, 874–875, s. v. “Gregoras, Nikephoros”.

who shared the same imperial bloodline, being descendants of Michael VIII. Naturally, soon afterward, many members of other aristocratic families got involved. However, the second phase of the civil war (1341–1357) differed from the first one between Andronikos II and Andronikos III as it did not begin as a power battle between members of the same dynasty, but as a conflict between an aristocrat of a different descent (John Kantakouzenos) and the well-established imperial family. Now, more than ever, imperial ceremonies of accession were employed by the two opposing sides, by John Kantakouzenos and his supporters on the one hand, and by John V and his supporters on the other hand, in order to express hierarchical precedence and to grant or deny legitimacy based on their performance. Thus, this chapter explores the ability of court rituals to evolve, change and adapt when desperate times called for desperate (ceremonial) measures.

The Unconventional Proclamation of John VI Kantakouzenos in 1341

After the death of his friend and emperor, Andronikos III, John VI Kantakouzenos, who then held the office of the Grand Domestic, declared himself responsible for both the maintenance of law and order, as well as protecting the rights of the underage heir-presumptive John V.⁶⁰⁵ He claimed to have written over five hundred letters in thirty days to all the governors of the province and officials of the court, ordering them to continue with their duties, as if Emperor Andronikos III were still alive.⁶⁰⁶ He also advised the widow of Andronikos III, Empress Anna of Savoy, to make the necessary arrangements for the crowning of her son John V.⁶⁰⁷ However, Empress Anna preferred Patriarch John XIV Kalekas to act as regent for the young heir to the throne and as protector of the interests of the imperial family.⁶⁰⁸ The empress started questioning John Kantakouzenos' intentions after malicious accusations made mainly by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas and Alexios Apokaukos, a former friend and

⁶⁰⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos' *History* had a "brotherly" relationship with Andronikos III. On the social practice and ritual of brother-making in Byzantium, see Rapp, *Brother-Making*. Especially for this particular case of imperial brother-making, see Rapp, *Brother-Making*, 229.

John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 14–15. Cf. Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 46. John VI Kantakouzenos (r. 1347–54), who after the death of Andronikos III in 1341, claimed that theirs had been a close relation of "brotherhood"

⁶⁰⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 14–15.

⁶⁰⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–10. For Empress Anna of Savoy, see *PLP* 21347: Παλαιολογίνα Άννα (Palaiologina Anna), with further bibliography. See also Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady*, 83–95 and especially 83, footnote 1 for further bibliography; Diehl, *Figures byzantines*, II, 245–270. On Nikephoros Gregoras' critique of Empress Anna of Savoy and her decisions during the civil war, see Melichar, "Female Incompetence", 66–67.

⁶⁰⁸ For Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, see *PLP* 10288: Καλέκας Ἰωάννης XIV (Kalekas Ioannes XIV), with further bibliography.

beneficiary of John Kantakouzenos.⁶⁰⁹ As Leonidas Mavrommatis observes, the group did not have a specific ideological or political agenda at that point, but each wished to remove John Kantakouzenos from the regency for their own reasons: power, money, authority, and personal ambitions.⁶¹⁰ In John Kantakouzenos' account, Empress Anna's authority and sovereignty, which derive from her status as Andronikos III's widow and mother of the heir-presumptive, John V, are never questioned. John Kantakouzenos' self-legitimation was based on the idea that he aimed to protect the rights of his deceased friend's wife and son. Therefore, Empress Anna is presented in a positive way, except for the fact that she got manipulated by bad advisors to turn against him.⁶¹¹ However, Nikephoros Gregoras feels that Empress Anna's personal ambition for power was also one of the reasons that led to the outbreak of the civil war.⁶¹² The sources agree that Patriarch John Kalekas thought himself the guardian of the young John V and strove to position himself as the empress' chief advisor. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, the patriarch might have seen himself as a second Arsenios Autoreianos and would not let John Kantakouzenos repeat what Michael VIII did to John IV Laskaris.⁶¹³ Among the members of the regency council that was formed against John Kantakouzenos, Alexios Apokaukos was the prime mover behind the conflict, according to John Kantakouzenos and Nikephoros Gregoras. Like John Kantakouzenos, Apokaukos had served Andronikos III and was trusted with significant missions. Yet, if he was ever to secure the consent of the leading families to place himself on the throne, he needed to eliminate John Kantakouzenos from this competition for power.⁶¹⁴ Therefore, while John Kantakouzenos was absent from Constantinople, at an urgent military expedition in Thrace, an upheaval led by Alexios Apokaukos led to the formation of a new regency council, consisting of Anna of Savoy, the mother of the young John V, Alexios Apokaukos and the patriarch John XIV Kalekas. Empress Anna declared John Kantakouzenos an enemy of the state, stripped him of titles and wealth, and ordered him to stay at Didymoteichon

⁶⁰⁹ For Alexios Apokaukos, see *PLP* 1180: Ἀπόκαυκος Ἀλέξιος (Apokaukos Alexios), with further bibliography. On Apokaukos' conspiracy, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 106.11–135.11.

⁶¹⁰ Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 88–89. For a thorough portrayal and interpretation of the intentions of civil war's main protagonists, see McLaughlin, "An Annotated Translation", 52–94.

⁶¹¹ For example, John Kantakouzenos reports that despite his strong encouragements to Empress Anna to crown her son, she refused to do so not because of her own ill-disposed intentions but because of Apokaukos' persuasiveness. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–65.16.

⁶¹² Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 671.6–672.6. See also Melichar, "Female Incompetence", 66–67.

⁶¹³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 579.13–22 and 759.5–9. Cf. McLaughlin, "An Annotated Translation", 78.

⁶¹⁴ For this idea, see McLaughlin, "An Annotated Translation", 72.

where his army was stationed.⁶¹⁵ In response, after his failed attempts at negotiation, John Kantakouzenos proclaimed himself co-emperor (βασιλεύς) on October 26, 1341, the feast day of Saint Demetrius.⁶¹⁶ Didymoteichon had a special ideological significance for John Kantakouzenos as it had become the *de facto* capital for Andronikos III during the first civil war, it was the city where John V was born and, most importantly, it was strategically situated, offering the ideal location for campaigns both in the north and in the west.⁶¹⁷

Both Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos provide information regarding the ceremonial of John Kantakouzenos' investiture at Didymoteichon, with the description of John Kantakouzenos being the more detailed of the two.⁶¹⁸ The account of the whole ceremonial procedure not only focuses on the actions of the protagonists and the hierarchical order they performed, but also on the various imperial *insignia* and clothing involved. Imperial clothing and red shoes were purposefully chosen and specially arranged for this occasion. In fact, the *proclamation* ceremony that took place at Didymoteichon was well planned. John Kantakouzenos admits this himself: setting the timeframe for the day of the ceremony, he writes that everyone gathered at his house as soon as the imperial clothes were prepared and on the day that had been previously appointed for the *proclamation* of the new co-emperor.⁶¹⁹ Those present were his blood relatives, among them probably relatives who were high-ranking officials, as well as some senators and members of the military aristocracy who happened to be in Didymoteichon.⁶²⁰ A significant number of Latin military mercenaries were also among them.⁶²¹ In John Kantakouzenos' text, the role of the

⁶¹⁵ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 163.6–165.22 and cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 608.3–609.7. See also Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 53–55.

⁶¹⁶ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 611.18–20: Ἡμέρα δ' ἦν, καθ' ἣν [John VI Kantakouzenos] τὰ τῆς βασιλείας περιεζώσατο σύμβολα, ἐν ἣ τὰ τῆς μνήμης ἤγετο Δημητρίου τοῦ θεοῦ μάρτυρος. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 63. See also John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.23–25. Cf. Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέμμις*, 193.

⁶¹⁷ About the importance of the city of Didymoteichon for John Kantakouzenos, see McLaughlin, “An Annotated Translation”, 328–330.

⁶¹⁸ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 611.18–612.5 and II, 625.3–4. John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.23–166.24.

⁶¹⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.23–25: Ἐν Διδυμοτείχῳ δὲ ἐπεὶ τὰ βασιλικά ἐνδύματα παρεσκευασμένα ἦν, ἢ τε προθεσμία τῆς τοῦ νέου βασιλέως ἦκει ἀναρρήσεως, πάντες μὲν παρήσαν ἐκείνου [John VI Kantakouzenos] τῇ οἰκίᾳ. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103.

⁶²⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.25–166.3: (165) πάντες μὲν παρήσαν ἐκείνου τῇ οἰκίᾳ, ὅσοι (166) διέτριβον ἐν Διδυμοτείχῳ τότε. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103.

⁶²¹ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.7–8: [...] τὸν δὲ λοιπὸν ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα φερομένων ἐπ' εὐγενείᾳ καὶ λαμπρότητι μισθοφόρων Λατίνων [...]. Moreover, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.20–21: [...] καὶ τισὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῆς Λατινικῆς στρατιᾶς τὴν καβαλαρίων παρεῖχε τιμὴν [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103.

bystanders is outlined in considerable detail. They were the ones who, in reality, would be in a position to confirm the veracity of his writings and the fact that everything was performed in a legitimate manner.

Initially, John Kantakouzenos wore the imperial garment (ἔσθητα βασιλικὴν) and then, before the eyes of those present, he allowed red shoes (ἐρυθραῖς κρηπίσι) to be placed on his feet.⁶²² Both the *insignia* of the red footwear and the symbolic manner with which each shoe was placed on John Kantakouzenos' foot must have formed a strong visual spectacle for the bystanders. The reader of John Kantakouzenos' *Histories* is informed that one red shoe was placed by his very close blood relatives, and the other by the most noble and prestigious military mercenaries of Latin origin.⁶²³ Mark C. Bartusis recognizes the significant role of Latin soldiers in the thirteenth-century army and their transformation from paid mercenaries to pronoiars, namely holders of land and its tax revenues.⁶²⁴ He also supports that changes occurred in the composition of the late Byzantine army. He writes that “[d]uring the civil wars Latins again appeared as mercenaries in Byzantium, though this may be due to the fact that the forces involved were so small that the Byzantine historians, principally Kantakouzenos, were more apt to notice and report the presence of small groups of Latins”.⁶²⁵ In my view, we should also keep in mind the important role of Latin military mercenaries in the Nicaean election process of Michael VIII. According to George Akropolites, the Latins were asked second – after the Byzantines and before the Cumans (Scythians) – whom should lead the political affairs of the state.⁶²⁶ In 1341, Latins might indeed have been a small group in military circles, yet John Kantakouzenos' choice to include them in the ceremony is justified by the fact that they were considerably noble and prestigious. Over the previous fifteen years, John Kantakouzenos had held the office of Grand Domestic, and in his capacity as the commander-in-chief he had built strong bonds of

⁶²² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.3–8: ὁ νέος δὲ βασιλεὺς [John VI Kantakouzenos] πρότερον ἔσθητα βασιλικὴν ἐνδύς, ἔπειτα ὑπ' ὄψεσι ταῖς ἀπάντων ταῖς ἐρυθραῖς κρηπίσι τοὺς πόδας κατεκόσμη, τὸν ἕτερον μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγχιστα καθ' αἶμα προσηκόντων ὑποδύμενος, τὸν δὲ λοιπὸν ὑπὸ τῶν τὰ πρῶτα φερομένων ἐπ' εὐγενείᾳ καὶ λαμπρότητι μισθοφόρων Λατίνων. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 103. On the imperial costume, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 11–27. Concerning the use of red footwear by the emperor, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 30–31. About the red-purple color as one of the imperial *insignia*, see *ODB*, III, 1759–1760, s. v. “Purple (πορφύρα, ἀλουργίς, βλάττα, ὀξύς)”; and Treiting, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 24–25 and 58–62.

⁶²³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.3–8.

⁶²⁴ Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army*, 28–29. For the fiscal term of *pronoia*, see *ODB*, III, 1733–1734, s. v. “Pronoia (πρόνοια)”.

⁶²⁵ See Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army*, 86.

⁶²⁶ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 158.15–18.

trust with his soldiers, even with the minority group of the Latins. This might have been the reason why the ceremony was performed by John Kantakouzenos' closest relatives, who were probably high-ranking officers, and the most illustrious Latin military officials who belonged to John Kantakouzenos' immediate and most trusted entourage. It was on them that he based his power and ideological claims. Thus, it can be concluded that in John Kantakouzenos' text the ritual act of "wearing red shoes" becomes a robust ideological symbol and encapsulates both his political ambitions and his attempts to invest them with legitimacy.

Finally, John Kantakouzenos had to wear a special headwear to complete his external transformation into a newly proclaimed co-emperor.⁶²⁷ On this occasion, a βασιλικός πῖλος, namely a closed crown or hat, perhaps even made of felt, rather than the usual imperial crown (βασιλικό στέμμα) was chosen.⁶²⁸ In Byzantium, crowns were an integral part of the imperial costume and were worn in recognition of imperial status.⁶²⁹ The fact that John Kantakouzenos decided to use the expression βασιλικός πῖλος instead of βασιλικό στέμμα is not accidental. Elsewhere in the text, Emperor Andronikos III outlines the importance of these two *insignia* while trying to convince John Kantakouzenos to accept them and become his successor.⁶³⁰ Thus, for John Kantakouzenos and his peers, both the red footwear and the headwear of πῖλος functioned as strong visual symbols of the imperial majesty and power (βασιλείας σύμβολα).⁶³¹ Interestingly, the word πῖλος in connection with imperial accession is also used in the case of the accession of John Kantakouzenos' son, Matthew Kantakouzenos.⁶³² Actually, in the relevant passage describing Matthew Kantakouzenos'

⁶²⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.8–10: [John VI Kantakouzenos] τὸν δὲ βασιλικὸν πῖλον πρὸ τῆς ἀχράντου καὶ θεομήτορος τῆς εἰκόνας κείμενον ἐπ' ἐδάφους, αὐτοχειρίᾳ λαβὼν αὐτὸς ἐπέθηκε τῇ κεφαλῇ. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103.

⁶²⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.8. According to the *LSJ* lexicon the word πῖλος (πῖλος, -ου, ὁ) could define anything made of felt and especially a close-fitting cap.

⁶²⁹ On the imperial crown as part of the imperial costume, see Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, 27–30. For the Late Byzantine crown, see especially 29–30. Cf. also the drawings of Middle and Late Byzantine male imperial crowns in Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images*, plate 31.

⁶³⁰ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 391.7–392.24.

⁶³¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 392. 5–6: αὐτὸν δὲ ὑπ' ὀφθαλμοῖς ὅσοι πάρεσι Ῥωμαίων ὑποδήμασι τε βασιλικοῖς καὶ πῖλω τῷ ἐμῷ, ἃ δοκεῖ βασιλείας σύμβολα εἶναι, κοσμηθῆναι ἐπ' ἐμοῦ [Andronikos III Palaiologos]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, II, 54.

⁶³² In his *Histories* John VI Kantakouzenos uses the word πῖλος only five times in total: John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 168.2; I 392.6; II, 166.8; II, 257.2; III, 269.11. Concerning the word πῖλος in connection with the imperial accession of Matthew Kantakouzenos, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 269.7–14, especially 11–12: Τότε δὲ ἐπεὶ ἐπενήφιζεν ὁ βασιλεὺς [John VI Kantakouzenos] τὴν ἀνάρρησιν Ματθαίου τοῦ υἱοῦ [Matthew Kantakouzenos], μετὰ τινος τῆς διαλέξεως ἡμέρας, πάντων παρόντων ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις, ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως ἀνηγόρευτο υἱός, καὶ τοῖς τε ποσὶν ὑπέδου κρηπίδας ἐρυθρὰς καὶ πῖλον ἐπέθετο τῇ κεφαλῇ λίθω τε κεκοσμημένον καὶ μαργάραις, ὥσπερ ἔθος βασιλεῦσι, καὶ πρὸς τε τὰς εὐφημίας συνηριθμεῖτο τοῖς βασιλεῦσι καὶ ἐν ταῖς γιγνομέναις μνήμαις τῶν βασιλέων πρὸς τοῖς ἱεροῖς. For Matthew Kantakouzenos,

accession, John Kantakouzenos declares the use of an imperial *πίλος* again and provides a detailed description of its decoration with precious stones and pearls.⁶³³ In both cases – during the *proclamation* of John Kantakouzenos and his son Matthew Kantakouzenos – any mention of the imperial crown was avoided. Perhaps during the *proclamation* of 1341, the imperial *πίλος* was chosen due to financial difficulties or even ideological reasons, in order to promote the honest intentions John Kantakouzenos had towards John V and the loyalty he felt for the Palaiologan dynasty. In fact, as will be discussed further below, John Kantakouzenos’ intentions were also eloquently expressed through the *acclamations* ceremony during which he chose to mention the names of both Empress Anna of Savoy and John V before his own.

John Kantakouzenos’ *coronation* ceremony was also unconventional for another reason. Under other circumstances, the contribution of the patriarch would be necessary, as he was expected to perform the imperial crowning.⁶³⁴ However, in this instance, Patriarch John XIV Kalekas was in Constantinople and was a supporter of the opposing party of Empress Anna and her underage son John V. Therefore, John Kantakouzenos crowned himself on his own. He solemnly took the imperial headwear (*βασιλικός πίλος*), which was positioned on the ground in front of the icon of the Virgin Mary, and placed it on his head.⁶³⁵ The fact that this symbol of authority was taken from the ground instead of from a table or any other surface perhaps alluded to the imperial virtue of humility that any potential Byzantine emperor, including John Kantakouzenos, was supposed to possess.⁶³⁶ Piety was obviously another essential element that must have been underscored during this occasion. By placing the imperial *πίλος* before the icon of the Virgin Mary, the self-proclaimed John

son of John VI Kantakouzenos, see *PLP* 10983: Καντακουζηνός, Ματθαῖος Ἀσάνης (Kantakouzenos, Matthaios Asanes), with further bibliography. On Matthew Kantakouzenos’ accession, see also Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 195–197.

⁶³³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 269.11–12: [Matthew Kantakouzenos] *πίλον ἐπέθετο τῇ κεφαλῇ λίθῳ τε κεκοσμημένον καὶ μαργάραις, ὥσπερ ἔθος βασιλεῦσι.*

⁶³⁴ Both the late Byzantine ceremonial protocol of Pseudo-Kodinos and the account of the *coronation* of Andronikos III in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos refer to the contribution of the patriarch in the performance of the imperial *coronation*: Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.9–14 and John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 198.16–18. In addition, George-Christos Soulis points out that: “Imperial *coronation* was unthinkable without the participation of the Patriarch in fourteenth-century Byzantium”. See Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium*, 31.

⁶³⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.8–10.

⁶³⁶ Interestingly, the personification of the virtue of humility is also depicted on the so-called “Monomachos Crown”. The crown depicts Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, his wife Zoe, her sister Theodora, two dancers and two allegorical figures: the virtue of Sincerity and the virtue of Humility. See Bárány-Oberschall, *Konstantinos Monomachos*, 60–78.

Kantakouzenos was able to express his gratitude to the Mother of God, who allowed him the honor of being acclaimed.

Based on the text of John Kantakouzenos, as was customary, those usually responsible for singing the *acclamations* began praising the emperors.⁶³⁷ First, the empress (ἡ βασιλίς) Anna of Savoy was acclaimed and then her son, the (co)emperor (ὁ βασιλεύς) John V, and finally the (co)emperor (ὁ βασιλεύς) John Kantakouzenos and his wife, the (co-)empress (ἡ βασιλίς) Eirene Kantakouzene.⁶³⁸ Surprisingly, the memory of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas was also honored in a manner similar to how the memory of the emperors was performed.⁶³⁹ One might have expected that John Kantakouzenos would omit the names of his political opponents. The fact that during the ceremony the names of Anna of Savoy and her son John V were mentioned first in the *acclamation* ritual is an indication of John Kantakouzenos' projected intentions. He wished to promote the idea that he respected the empress Anna of Savoy and the young emperor-to-be John V. We are not in a place to judge whether his intentions were honest. It is, however, interesting to observe both the role that the *acclamations* played in his apologetic account and his declared intention to remain a faithful officer of the legal holders of the throne despite his subversion. After the *acclamations*, John Kantakouzenos went to the church of Saint George Palaiokastritis on horseback in order to pay his respects to God and perform a prostration.⁶⁴⁰ Others who were also on a horse, probably high-ranking officials, followed his example.⁶⁴¹ Just like the symbolic act of self-crowning with the imperial *πῖλος* lying before the icon of the Virgin Mary, the *procession* to the church in order to pay obeisance and give thanks was a symbolic propagandistic gesture. It was a way to express a central concept of the imperial ideology, namely that the imperial office has its origins in God and the divine sphere. In terms of

⁶³⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.10–11.

⁶³⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.10–14: αὐτίκα δὲ οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα ἄδειν εἰθισμένοι τῆς τῶν βασιλέων ἤρχον εὐφημίας. καὶ πρῶτα μὲν ἡ βασιλίς Ἄννα [Empress Anna of Savoy] εὐφημεῖτο καὶ μετ' ἐκείνην ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωάννης ὁ βασιλεὺς [John V Palaiologos], τρίτος δὲ ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς Ἰωάννης [John VI Kantakouzenos] ὁ βασιλεὺς ἅμα Εἰρήνη τῇ βασιλίδι [Eirene Kantakouzene, wife of John VI Kantakouzenos]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 103. For Eirene Kantakouzene, see *PLP* 10935: Καντακουζηνὴ Εἰρήνη (Kantakouzene Eirene), with further bibliography.

⁶³⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.14–16: τὸν αὐτὸν δὲ τρόπον καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἱεροτελεστίας τὴν τῶν βασιλέων μνήμην ἐποιοῦντο, ὁμοίως καὶ πατριάρχου Ἰωάννου [Patriarch John XIV Kalekas]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 103.

⁶⁴⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.16–20: μετὰ δὲ τὴν εὐφημίαν ἔφιππος γενόμενος ὁ βασιλεὺς, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων ἐπομένων ἐφ' ἵπποις ὅσοι ἦσαν, πρὸς τὸν ναὸν τε τοῦ μεγαλομάρτυρος ἐγένετο Γεωργίου τοῦ Παλαιοκαστρίτου προσαγορευομένου, καὶ τὴν προσκύνησιν ἀπεδίδου [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 103.

⁶⁴¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.17–18.

political ideology, John Kantakouzenos probably wished to send a message to the bystanders and his readers that everything had taken place according to divine will and that he enjoyed divine support.

In order to conclude the whole ceremony, the newly proclaimed John Kantakouzenos honored some of the Latins who belonged to the equestrian military aristocracy according to custom, probably by awarding them gold coins, and then returned to his imperial residence.⁶⁴² There, together with his wife, he hosted a festive banquet for everyone, as was considered rightful and appropriate for the occasion.⁶⁴³ Although the text is at pains to emphasize that the entire ceremonial procedure was legitimate and customarily performed, in truth John Kantakouzenos' *proclamation* was unique in every way.⁶⁴⁴ The whole sequence of ceremonial acts indicates that John Kantakouzenos modified traditional practices and tried to include new messages. The *coronation* was not performed in a church, but rather in the privacy of his residence in Didymoteichon.⁶⁴⁵ He crowned himself with a βασιλικός πῖλος, rather than receiving a proper imperial crown (βασιλικό στέμμα) from the hand of the patriarch.⁶⁴⁶ Nonetheless, all the imperial *insignia*, gestures, and ceremonial acts were performed and invested with such symbolic meaning actually to strengthen John Kantakouzenos' claims of being the legitimately proclaimed co-emperor. In fact, his actions strove to demonstrate that he did not attempt to usurp the throne but to take control of the situation and protect the rights of the underage heir, Emperor John V, according to the wishes of his deceased friend and former emperor Andronikos III, father of John V.⁶⁴⁷ As seen above, the description of John Kantakouzenos' elevation to power adds to our knowledge about the symbolism and ideological ramifications of all three fundamental actions that took place during his *proclamation*: wearing of red shoes, self-crowning with the imperial

⁶⁴² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.20–22: [...] καί τισι τοῖς ἐκ τῆς Λατινικῆς στρατιᾶς τὴν καβαλαρίων παρεῖχε τιμὴν, πάντα ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τὰ εἰθισμένα πράττων. ἐκεῖθεν δὲ εἰς τὰ βασιλεία ἐπανελθὼν [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103. The imperial accession protocol as described by Pseudo-Kodinos reveals that at this point of the ritual, the emperor was expected to distribute coins to his army, court title holders, and their sons (but not to the people), so that they "rejoice together with him, both eating and drinking at imperial expense". See Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 271.1–28 and 272.1–3, especially 271.14–24. See also Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, p. 239, and footnote 701, as well as p. 393.

⁶⁴³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.22–24: ἐκεῖθεν δὲ εἰς τὰ βασιλεία ἐπανελθὼν, ἅμα βασιλίδι τῇ γαμετῇ λαμπρῶς εἰσιτῆτο, πάντων παρισταμένων κατὰ τὰ νενομισμένα βασιλεῦσιν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 103.

⁶⁴⁴ Cf. John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.20–22 and 24: πάντα ἐπ' αὐτοῖς τὰ εἰθισμένα πράττων and κατὰ τὰ νενομισμένα βασιλεῦσιν.

⁶⁴⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.23–25.

⁶⁴⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.8–10.

⁶⁴⁷ For this idea cf., also, Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 56.

headwear of βασιλικός πῦλος, and the intentional attributing of *acclamations* towards his political opponents. This case is particularly interesting since such actions are not normally mentioned with regard to the accession of the Palaiologan co-emperors (βασιλεῖς) who belonged to the imperial family.

In contrast to the account of John Kantakouzenos, Nikephoros Gregoras mentions only two of the symbolic acts that took place on that special day. Namely, the *acclamations* pronounced in a carefully chosen order, first, to honor Anna of Savoy and the young John V, and then John VI Kantakouzenos and his wife; and the fact that John Kantakouzenos donned red shoes.⁶⁴⁸ This part of Nikephoros Gregoras' account, which belongs to the twelfth book of his *Roman History*, is estimated to have been written between 1349 and 1351 when the loyalties of Nikephoros Gregoras had changed and thus he openly turned against John Kantakouzenos due to his views on Gregory Palamas and the Hesychast controversy as we have seen above.⁶⁴⁹ According to Nikephoros Gregoras, *acclamations* could have provided the opportunity for the newly proclaimed John Kantakouzenos to project a higher status by shouting his name first or even to disregard his political opponents by not referring to them at all. However, this was not his intention. Nikephoros Gregoras explains that John Kantakouzenos stated (ἔλεγεν) that he chose this particular order for the performance of the *acclamations* in honor of his deceased friend and the former emperor Andronikos III, thereby publicizing once more his initial intention to protect the rights of the legitimate heir to the throne.⁶⁵⁰ In this manner, the author makes it clear that these statements were made by John Kantakouzenos and thereby dissociate himself from their content. It is here implied that John Kantakouzenos' statements and his seeming subordination to the principles of the dynastic

⁶⁴⁸ About the acclamations, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 611.18–612.5 and especially 611.20–22: προστάττει δ' ἀναγορεύεσθαι τελευταῖον τοῦτον ὁμοῦ τῇ συζύγῳ βασιλικῶς, μετὰ γε τὴν τῆς βασιλίδος Ἄννης εὐφημίαν καὶ τοῦ ταύτης υἱοῦ βασιλέως Ἰωάννου. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 63. About the red shoes, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 625.3–4: ἄρτι δὲ Καντακουζηνοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐν Διδυμοτείρῳ τὰ ἐρυθρὰ ὑποδησαμένου πέδιλα [...]. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 63.

⁶⁴⁹ About the composition of Nikephoros Gregoras' twelfth book of *Roman History*, see Karpozelos, *Βυζαντινοὶ ἱστορικοί*, IV, 146–148.

⁶⁵⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 611.22–612.5: (611) ἐμέμνητο γὰρ αἰεὶ τῆς τοῦ θανόντος βασιλέως φιλίας, καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου περὶ τῆς βασι- (612) λείας συνθηκῶν ἐκλαθέσθαι οὐ μάλα ἐβούλετο· ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκείνον τοὺς ἐκείνου προὔτιθει. πύργον γὰρ ἔλεγεν ἑαυτὸν πρὸς ἐκείνου τοῦ βασιλέως ὠκοδομηθεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν τῆς τοῦ παιδὸς βασιλείας· παρὰ τοσοῦτον οὖν εἶναι τῷ παιδί τὰ τῆς ἀσφαλείας ἀκίνδυνά τε καὶ βεβαιότερα, παρόσον αὐτὸν ἰσχυρότερον. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 63.

order were tactics that would assist him in concealing his intention to strengthen his position and gradually take over full power.⁶⁵¹

Moreover, a few paragraphs later Nikephoros Gregoras briefly points out that John Kantakouzenos wore red shoes during his *proclamation* in Didymoteichon. The phrase alone “he wore the red shoes” is not just a general expression employed by Nikephoros Gregoras to summarize the whole ceremonial procedure that took place in Didymoteichon. Knowing the details surrounding the actual ceremony from the narrative of John Kantakouzenos⁶⁵² provides a whole new perspective on why Nikephoros Gregoras might have chosen to isolate this specific ceremonial act. In John Kantakouzenos’ text, the way “red shoe wearing” was performed was very explicit and full of symbolism in the sense that it was conducted by his close entourage, the noble men and Latin mercenaries upon whom he based his power and ideological claims.⁶⁵³ While it may be true that John Kantakouzenos skillfully projects the act of “wearing red shoes” as a strong symbol of his political aspirations, this might not be the case in the text of Nikephoros Gregoras. Although he does not state it so clearly, perhaps Nikephoros Gregoras consciously uses the image of “wearing red shoes” to project the idea that John Kantakouzenos’ act was in fact illegitimate. Nikephoros Gregoras is not the only Byzantine historian who deliberately employs this ceremonial act to stigmatize the ceremony performed by a usurper. As a rule, in the historiographic work of George Akropolites, who wrote a generation before, the act of wearing red shoes is the action of coup d’état.⁶⁵⁴ Furthermore, although red shoes carried great significance in the late Byzantine protocol, the act of shoe wearing was not typical at all with regard to the imperial succession rituals of proclamation, and, in fact, this element is not recorded as part of the procedure in the handbook of Pseudo-Kodinos. At the time Nikephoros Gregoras was writing this part of his account, his relationship with John Kantakouzenos became more distant. Hence, it is essential to underline Nikephoros Gregoras’ decision to refer to the hierarchical performance of acclamations and the use of red shoes as imperial insignia while describing John Kantakouzenos’ rise to power. The author’s descriptions of the ceremonial acts, although sparing, express the author’s views on the legitimacy of these acts and criticize current political events.

⁶⁵¹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 612.4–5. For this idea, cf. Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 265 note 93.

⁶⁵² Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 625.3–4.

⁶⁵³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.3–8.

⁶⁵⁴ George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 33.14–34.13, as well as I, 61.4–9.

The Patriarchal Coronations and Anointments of John VI Kantakouzenos

John Kantakouzenos considered the *coronation* ceremony very important with respect to the legitimization of his rule, and therefore, he placed great emphasis on it in his text. Although John Kantakouzenos had a less official coronation ceremony, and under those political circumstances had to crown himself during his proclamation in Didymoteichon on October 26, 1341,⁶⁵⁵ soon after gaining the upper hand in the civil war, he planned a second coronation ceremony that was more appropriate for an emperor.⁶⁵⁶ By 1346, his position was much stronger than in 1341. After his proclamation in Didymoteichon, apart from the opposition of the regency council in Constantinople, John Kantakouzenos had to face the resistance of the anti-Palamite party members in different cities of the empire. The theological controversy of hesychasm had evolved into a social and political struggle for the throne. The patriarch John Kalekas and Alexios Apokaukos had condemned the teachings of Palamas, while John Kantakouzenos and his party supported the hesychasts. Basically, they kept supporting the decision taken at a council that Andronikos III had convoked right before his death in 1341, which provided Palamas with a clear victory.⁶⁵⁷ While John Kantakouzenos was supported by the aristocracy, the regency relied mostly on the support of the dissatisfied lower classes both in Constantinople and gradually in the majority of the cities of Thrace and Macedonia. In 1342, a group of citizens in Thessaloniki, the so-called Zealots, supporters of the regency in Constantinople, rallied and turned against all members of the aristocracy and the city's governor appointed by Kantakouzenos, establishing an independent government.⁶⁵⁸ John Kantakouzenos, who was soon deprived of most of his military support, turned to Serbia for assistance. Although the Serbs had aided John Kantakouzenos in a series of attacks in several Macedonian towns, they switched sides and allied with the regency in Constantinople.⁶⁵⁹ In 1345, John Kantakouzenos was forced to ally with Orhan, the emir of Bithynia and leader of the Osmanlis. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, their coalition was strengthened in 1346 when Orhan, being passionately in love with Theodora Kantakouzene, the second daughter of John Kantakouzenos, convinced her

⁶⁵⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 166.8–10.

⁶⁵⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.10–11: Ἐδόκει δὲ ἤδη καὶ τὸν τῶν βασιλείων τρόπον στέφεισθαι [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 376. For the new *coronation* ceremony, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.10–22.

⁶⁵⁷ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 90–91.

⁶⁵⁸ About the Zealots' revolt in Thessaloniki, see, for example, the recent work of Congourdeau and Chrysostalis, *Les Zélotes*, with further bibliography.

⁶⁵⁹ See Mavrommatis, *Οἱ Πρώτοι Παλαιολόγοι*, 104–114; Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 195–198.

father into letting him marry her, thus becoming his most significant ally.⁶⁶⁰ More and more had been joining John Kantakouzenos' side. In the meantime, Alexios Apokaukos, a pivotal member to the regency that opposed John Kantakouzenos, murdered while visiting a prison with political prisoners whom he had earlier arrested.⁶⁶¹ Undoubtedly, by the spring of 1346 John Kantakouzenos' position was considerably strengthened yet he was still unable to enter the capital. Instead, he chose to be crowned in Adrianople, a city not very far from Constantinople, whose defense had proven to be very effective.⁶⁶²

John Kantakouzenos chose the date of the ceremony carefully, mandating the preparation of the crowns and all other necessities for that day in advance.⁶⁶³ Eventually, on May 21, 1346, during the grand feast day celebration of Saint Constantine and his mother Saint Helena, he was crowned by Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem in Adrianople, who at that time happened to be in Adrianople, unable to return to his patriarchal seat in Jerusalem due to a jurisdictional conflict.⁶⁶⁴ After being officially crowned by the patriarch, John Kantakouzenos crowned his wife, as was customary, and all other customs were performed

⁶⁶⁰ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III 762.18–763.15. About the wedding, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 585.18–589.11. For Theodora Kantakouzene, see Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 134–135, no. 29; and *PLP* 10940: Καντακουζηνή Θεοδώρα (Kantakouzene Theodora), with further bibliography. On the (“Byzantine”) part of the wedding ceremony that took place in the early summer of 1346 at Selymbria, see Bryer, “Greek Historians on the Turks”, 471–486; and more recently Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*, 220–223.

⁶⁶¹ On Alexios Apokaukos' assassination, see the commentary by Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 46–74.

⁶⁶² About Adrianople (modern Edirne) as presented in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos, see McLaughlin, “An Annotated Translation”, 330–331.

⁶⁶³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.12–14: και χρυσοχόοις ἐπιτρέψας στέμματα κατασκευάζειν, και τᾶλλα ὅσα ἐπιτήδεια πρὸς τὴν τελετὴν, ἐπεὶ πάντα ἦσαν ἤδη παρεσκευασμένα [...]. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 376.

⁶⁶⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.15–18: [...] ἐστέρητο [John VI Kantakouzenos] ὑπὸ Λαζάρου τοῦ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πατριάρχου [Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem] κατὰ μῆνα Μάιον, ἡνίκα και Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ μεγάλου και Ἑλένης τῆς μητρὸς τῶν ἰσαποστόλων βασιλέων ἡ μνήμη γίνεται. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 376. For Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem, see *ODB*, II, 1198, s. v. “Lazaros”; and *PLP* 14350: Λάζαρος (Lazaros), with further bibliography. See also Wirth, “Der Patriarchat”, 319–323. The event is also attested by Nikephoros Gregoras: Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 762.13–15: βασιλικὴν περιτίθησι τῇ κεφαλῇ ταινίαν, κατὰ τὸ πάλαι κερρατηκὸς τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν ἔθος, τῇ τοιαύτῃ πανηγύρει διακονησαμένου τοῦ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πατριάρχου. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 154. See also Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 354–355, notes 408 and 409.

as usual.⁶⁶⁵ Gold and silver coins were distributed, and several days of celebration with drinking and feasting were arranged.⁶⁶⁶

Further on in his text John Kantakouzenos also mentions that during the *coronation* ceremony performed by Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem the rite of *anointing* took place.⁶⁶⁷ From the whole sequence of the story, the reader may infer that, while the first time the opposition might have stressed the fact that he crowned himself, after John Kantakouzenos' second *coronation* the debate then probably shifted to whether the *anointing* ceremony was performed legitimately. On February 1347, just before John Kantakouzenos entered Constantinople victoriously, Patriarch John XIV Kalekas was deposed by Empress Anna of Savoy and condemned by the synod; Isidore I was chosen as his replacement.⁶⁶⁸ A few months later, John Kantakouzenos carefully planned his *coronation* for a third time, so that he could not be accused of any violation of long-established traditions concerning the *anointment* with the Holy Chrism.⁶⁶⁹ That *coronation* was performed in the church of Blachernae in Constantinople by Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople in May 1347.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.18–20: ἔστειλε δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς [John VI Kantakouzenos] κατὰ τὸ ἔθος Εἰρήνην βασιλίδα τὴν γαμετὴν [Eirene Kantakouzene, wife of John VI Kantakouzenos], καὶ πάντα ὅσα εἶωθεν ἐτελεῖτο ὅσον μάλιστα ἐξῆν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 376.

⁶⁶⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 564.20–22: ἀπόδεσμοὶ τε γὰρ ἐρρίπτοντο ἀργύρου καὶ χρυσοῦ, καὶ πότοι καὶ φιλοτησίαι ἐπὶ πλείστας ἡμέρας ἐτελοῦντο. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 376.

⁶⁶⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.9–12.

⁶⁶⁸ For Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople, see *PLP* 3140: Βούχειρ Ἰσίδωρος I. or Ἡσίδωρος (Bucheir Isidoros I.), with further bibliography.

⁶⁶⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.5–6: καὶ πάντα ἐτελεῖτο τὰ νενομισμένα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, οὐδενὸς παραλειφθέντος; and John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.9–14: καίτοιγε αὐτὸς [John VI Kantakouzenos] ἐν Ἀδριανουπόλει ὑπὸ Λαζάρου τοῦ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων πατριάρχου [Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem] πρότερον ἐστέφθη καὶ ἀπέχρησεν ἂν ἢ τοῦ ἁγίου μύρου χρίσις ἐκεῖνη παρ' εὐφρονοῦσιν. ἵνα δὲ μηδεμία εἴη πρόφασις τοῖς ὑβρισταῖς, ὡς ἄρα μὴ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῶν βασιλέων ἔθος ἔσπετο, καὶ τὸ δεῦτερον αὐθις ἐτελεῖτο. Nikephoros Gregoras suggests that John VI Kantakouzenos had to undergo another *coronation* ceremony because the Palamists or Palamites (Παλαμίτες), the theological supporters of Gregory Palamas' doctrine on Hesihams and political opponents of John VI Kantakouzenos consider his previous *coronation* (ἀναγόρευσις) at Didymoteichon to be unconventional. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 787.12–15: Καντακουζηνὸς [John VI Kantakouzenos] δ' Ἰσιδώρω [Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople] τῆς βασιλείας τὸ δεῦτερον. ἢ γὰρ ἐν Διδυμοτείχῳ πρὶν ἀναγόρευσις τὸ τέλειον ἔχειν ἦκιστα ἐδόκει τοῖς Παλαμίταις. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 170. See also Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 378, note 482. In any case, John VI Kantakouzenos and Nikephoros Gregoras regard this as the second time that John VI Kantakouzenos was crowned and not the third. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.14 and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 787.12–14. Indeed, this is the second time John VI Kantakouzenos was been crowned by a patriarch. However, if we count his self-*coronation* at Didymoteichon on October 26, 1341, this is actually the third time that a crown was placed on his head.

⁶⁷⁰ For the *coronation* ceremony, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.1–14; and Nikephoros Gregoras, who actually provides further details about the event: Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 787.11–789.8. According to John VI Kantakouzenos, the *coronation* ceremony was performed on May 13, 1347. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.1–3: τρίτη δὲ ἐπὶ δέκα Μαΐου ἱσταμένου ἡρος τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ

Donald M. Nicol points out that the event which took place a year earlier in Adrianople “had no doubt been legal in the eyes of God and of those of his supporters who had witnessed it. But tradition held that the Emperor of the Romans should be crowned in his city of Constantinople by the Patriarch of that city”⁶⁷¹.

The multiple performances of the *coronation* and the *anointing* ceremonies became necessary due to the political situation that the second civil war had created, as well as the consequent ideological antagonism between the two opposing political parties. In this context, the act of *anointing* must have been employed by John Kantakouzenos to propagate the legitimization of his *coronation* and *anointment* as the only God-chosen and crowned emperor. This particular aspect of the *anointing* ceremony reminds us of the ideological significance that the act of *anointing* once had during the reigns of the Laskarids and the early Palaiologans, right up to the elevation of Michael IX to power.⁶⁷² As we have already seen, the *anointing* ceremony during Michael IX’s accession was employed by the Palaiologoi to establish the young co-emperor’s hereditary right to ascend the throne, while up to that point the ceremony was usually employed to emphasize the divinely appointed rulership, especially by the founder of the dynasty, Michael VIII. For John Kantakouzenos, it was imperative to focus not on the hereditary right of John V to rule but rather on his own right to become emperor according to divine providence.

Regarding political ideology, John Kantakouzenos had much to gain by demonstrating that now he also had the support of the Patriarch of Constantinople, an advantage that only his opponent John V had formerly enjoyed. More interesting in terms of imperial propaganda is the fact that, up to that point, John V was the only one who had been properly crowned by the Patriarch of Constantinople in Hagia Sophia.⁶⁷³ However, the

τῆς θεομήτορος τεμένει τῶν Βλαχερνῶν βασιλεὺς ὁ Καντακουζηνός [John VI Kantakouzenos] ὑπὸ Ἰσιδώρου τοῦ πατριάρχου [Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople] ἐστέρθη αὐθις. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, the *coronation* ceremony was performed on May 21, 1347. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 788.10–13: τούτων δ’ οὕτω τετελεσμένων, περὶ δεκάτην ὥραν πού τῆς πρώτης καὶ εἰκοστῆς τοῦ μαΐου ἵππων εὐθὺς ἐπιβάντες, ὡς εἶχον, μετὰ τῶν βασιλικῶν ἐνδυμάτων ἐκείνων ἦκον ἐς τὸ παλάτιον. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 170. For the problematic dating of this coronation ceremony, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 378–380, note 487. Jan Louis Van Dieten argues that the *coronation* ceremony must have taken place on Sunday, May 20, 1347.

⁶⁷¹ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 87.

⁶⁷² Concerning the elevation of Michael IX see the relevant chapter of the present study.

⁶⁷³ For the *coronation* of John V in the church of Hagia Sophia by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, on November, 19 1347, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.7–16; John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.3–21, especially 218.3–6; Cf. Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 190. On the date of John V’s *coronation*, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.11–13 and Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 267, note 103.

ceremonial performance of this third *coronation* and the official *anointment* by the Patriarch of Constantinople allowed John Kantakouzenos to reaffirm his position and even surpass politically (and ideologically) his political rival John V Palaiologos. John V had been, after all, crowned by the former Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, an official who subsequently was not only deposed but also excommunicated.⁶⁷⁴ Finally, John Kantakouzenos' multiple *coronations* strongly alluded to the *coronations* of the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, Michael VIII, who also chose to celebrate his accession to the throne twice, once in Nicaea, in 1258, and once in Constantinople after Byzantines reconquer the city from the Latin Empire in 1261.⁶⁷⁵ This was an auspicious choice namely because each of the *coronations* had to do with important changes and turning points in John Kantakouzenos' elevation to the imperial throne. They marked his victories in internal conflicts and, finally, the control of Constantinople. Ultimately, they symbolize his successful penetration into a well-established tradition of hereditary imperial accession among the Palaiologoi.

Placing the multiple *coronations* of John Kantakouzenos within the greater context of struggle for political power between the Byzantines and the Serbs, the ceremonies can be seen as symbolic gestures performed not only for internal but also for external reception, that is within Byzantium and beyond. Already in the autumn of 1345, following his victorious capture of the city of Serres, which practically opened the road to the conquest of Thessaloniki, the King of Serbia, Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, began calling himself "Emperor of the Serbs and the Greeks".⁶⁷⁶ By the spring of 1346, he convoked a great assembly that raised the autocephalous Serbian Archbishopric to the status of Serbian Patriarchate, and elected Joanikije II (Joanikij) as the first Serbian Patriarch.⁶⁷⁷ He required the new archbishop of Peć, Joanikije II, to perform a solemn *coronation* in order to legitimate to his claims. Undoubtedly, the assumption of the imperial title and the performance of the *coronation* ceremony brought the rivalry between the two political entities to a head. There were now three claimants to the title of the "Emperor of the Romans": Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, John Kantakouzenos and John V.⁶⁷⁸ Therefore, repeating the imperial *coronation* and the

⁶⁷⁴ On the deposition of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, see Dennis, "The Deposition", 51–55.

⁶⁷⁵ About the first *coronation* of Michael VIII in Nicaea, see George Akropolites, eds. Heisenberg and Wirth, I, 159.17–18. Regarding his second *coronation* in Constantinople, see Georges Pachymérès, eds. Failler and Laurent, I, 233.1–28 and especially 233.23–25.

⁶⁷⁶ Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium*, 26–30, especially 30; cf. also 177 note 168. Cf. Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 74–75. For the King of Serbia Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, see *PLP* 21182: Οὔρησις Στέφανος IV. (Uresis, Stephanos IV. or Stefan IV. Dusan), with further bibliography.

⁶⁷⁷ Soulis, *The Serbs and Byzantium*, 31–32.

⁶⁷⁸ Cf. Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 75.

anointing ceremony was imperative for John Kantakouzenos, and it had to be conducted precisely as dictated by custom, leaving no room for any doubts or misinterpretations.

John Kantakouzenos' choice to receive the crown and the chrism again, this time from the Patriarch of Constantinople, must have had a two-pronged aim: on the one hand to provide legitimacy and sanction his office, and on the other hand to publicize the harmonic collaboration between the Byzantine emperor with the Constantinopolitan patriarch, a relationship that had suffered a serious blow because of the civil war. Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople also profited through this arrangement, as it assisted him in re-establishing and advertising the superiority of the Patriarch of Constantinople over the other patriarchs. The Patriarch of Constantinople could again claim that he alone had the privilege to crown and to anoint the sole legitimate "Emperor of the Romans", rather than any of the other patriarchs.⁶⁷⁹

On the whole, reaffirming the political influence and jurisdiction of the patriarch and the Byzantine emperor, as well as the struggle to convey the image of a stable domestic front against any external political enemies, became vitally important during the years of the civil war. Thus, the two patriarchal *coronations* of John Kantakouzenos, including both the crowning and *anointment* rituals through the hand of the Patriarch of Constantinople, can be better understood within this broader context of political instability. The accession ceremonies connected to John Kantakouzenos' rise to power can be interpreted as symbolic vehicles projecting the legitimacy and supremacy not only on behalf of the claimant to the throne, John Kantakouzenos, but also of Patriarch Isidore I over their many political rivals.

Another aspect revealed from the above analysis is the importance of the imperial accession ceremonies for the court cultures of the high Middle Ages in the Mediterranean and the Balkan regions. The late Byzantine court ceremonial was in some way 'on the move'. It not only moved and adjusted based on the needs of legitimacy, stabilization, and projection of hierarchical order and power within Byzantium, but it also influenced the court culture of neighboring political entities of the period, such as the Kingdom of Serbia. The late Byzantine court ceremonies were imitated by foreign rulers, but most importantly by Byzantine aspiring imperial candidates who emulated the publicly performed accession

⁶⁷⁹ Cf. also the ecclesiastical controversy between the rival states of Nicaea and Epirus and the debate between Germanos II, patriarch of Nicaea, and Demetrios Chomatenos, archbishop of Ohrid regarding the exclusive privilege to anoint the sole legitimate Byzantine emperor. See Macrides, "Bad Historian or Good Lawyer?", 187–196, with further bibliography.

spectacles of the capital while being on the move. The proclamation and investiture of John Kantakouzenos at Didymoteichon in 1341, as well as his coronation and anointing by Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem in Adrianople in 1346 failed in providing him the full acceptance and recognition by the public. At that point in time and in terms of the late Byzantine political thought, especially after the re-conquest of Constantinople from the Latin Empire in 1261, the place where the imperial accession ceremonies were performed was as important as the ritual steps executed following long-established traditions. Indeed, late Byzantine court ceremonies could and were performed on the move and outside the Byzantine capital, but when performed in Constantinople they were endowed with further legitimacy and respectability. Ultimately, all the roads led the “wandering” late Byzantine court ceremonial back to the heart of the Byzantine Empire: Constantinople.

Chapter VI.

John V Palaiologos' Accession to the Throne: The Beginning and End of the Civil War and the Political Antagonism between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi

John V Palaiologos – born on June 18, 1332 – was nearly ten years old when his father, Andronikos III Palaiologos, died on June 15, 1341.⁶⁸⁰ Naturally, due to his age at that time, he would not be able to claim the imperial throne, and surely he was not the first underage son of a deceased emperor to be left under the supervision of a regent or regency council. However, the study of John V's rise to power can provide interesting insights not only into the ceremonies employed to secure the accession of an underage heir of the imperial family, but also into the conflict resolution and reconciliation ceremonies that were employed alongside the accession or resignation ceremonies performed during the civil war, between the years 1341–1354, and its final closure in 1357. Beyond the importance of the *coronation* and the *anointing* ceremony through the patriarch, the importance of *oath-taking* ceremonies will be stressed, as they served not only as a means to handle conflict and maintain the peace, but also to alter or re-affirm the status of already crowned imperial claimants.

The Premature *Coronation* of John V Palaiologos as Emperor-To-Be in 1341

The status of the underage heir to the throne, John V Palaiologos, right after the death of his father Emperor Andronikos III Palaiologos is debatable, and one cannot be sure if he was acclaimed co-emperor by Andronikos III or even if he inherited the title automatically upon the death of his father. John Kantakouzenos refers to John V as emperor (βασιλεύς) at least three times before the date of his actual *coronation*, on November 19, 1341.⁶⁸¹ As Aikaterini Christophilopoulou explains this might be an expression of John Kantakouzenos' loyalty to the Palaiologoi family and to the underage John V, or a form of retrospective recognition of

⁶⁸⁰ On the date of Andronikos III's death, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 560.14–18; and also the comment in Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, II, 266–267, note 414. On the date of the birth of John V and the ceremonial games that took place to celebrate the event, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 482.1–10; and also the comments in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, IIb, 335–336, note 366; and 336, notes 367–369. For John V Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21485: Παλαιολόγος, Ἰωάννης V. [Κομνηνός] (Palaiologos Ioannes V. Komnenos), with further bibliography. About John V Palaiologos and his time, see also Radić and Ferjančić, *Vreme Jovana V Paleologa*.

⁶⁸¹ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 18.20; II, 64.9; II, 166.12–13.

John V's status during the time that the *Histories* were written.⁶⁸² Her main assessment, however, is that it is more likely that John V had already been acclaimed co-emperor while his father was still alive, similarly to the previous members of the dynasty.⁶⁸³ In any case, the obvious statement one can make is that John V, whether already officially acclaimed or not, was up to that point not yet crowned (co)-emperor. If he was, then perhaps performing new oaths and pledging devotion to John V (even though he was a minor) would probably have sufficed. On the contrary, John Kantakouzenos points out – not once, but twice – that the first ceremonial step needed to be taken was the *coronation* of John V.⁶⁸⁴

The *coronation* of John V took place on November 19, 1341, and it seems that it was an immediate reaction to the *proclamation* of John Kantakouzenos at Didymoteichon performed almost a month earlier on October 26, 1341.⁶⁸⁵ The ceremony was performed by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas in the presence of Empress Anna of Savoy and high-ranking officials and members of the Senate, following the standard ceremonial procedure, which is also described in the ceremonial protocol of Pseudo-Kodinos.⁶⁸⁶ Typically, if the father of the young John V, Andronikos III, had been alive, he would have performed the *coronation* himself, along with the assistance of the patriarch who would also perform the act of *anointing*; however, given that the senior emperor had passed away, the patriarch performed the *coronation* alone.⁶⁸⁷ Interestingly, John Kantakouzenos, whether consciously or unconsciously, reveals the primary role that the mother of John V, Empress Anna, was expected to play during the ceremonial procedures now that her husband was dead. She was advised by John Kantakouzenos to anoint her son as emperor (βασιλέα) with the holy chrism (μύρω τῷ ἁγίῳ) and to place a crown on his head.⁶⁸⁸ It has been argued that, during this

⁶⁸² Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 190. Cf. Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 415, note 15.

⁶⁸³ Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 191.

⁶⁸⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–10 and II, 82.1–5.

⁶⁸⁵ For the day of John VI Kantakouzenos' proclamation, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 611.18–20. See also John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 165.23–25 and cf. Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 193.

⁶⁸⁶ Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.9–16.

⁶⁸⁷ Pseudo-Kodinos points out that in the case of the absence of the candidate's father, the patriarch himself performs the *coronation* alone. See Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 259.14–16.

⁶⁸⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–10: Ἐπεὶ δὲ ταῦτα αὐτῷ διώκητο καλῶς, συνεβούλευε [John VI Kantakouzenos] τῇ βασιλίδι [Empress Anna of Savoy], τὸν υἱὸν βασιλέα τὸν Ἰωάννην [John V Palaiologos] χρίειν τε μύρω τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ στέφει τὴν κεφαλὴν κατακοσμεῖν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 34. Aikaterini Christophilopoulou places this event after the middle of July and definitely before the end of August of 1341. See Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 190. Notably, John VI Kantakouzenos places the performance of the anointing ceremony first and the

transitional period between the death of her husband and the *coronation* of her son, Empress Anna must have actually functioned as a true empress and not just as a regent on behalf of her son John V.⁶⁸⁹ Whatever the role of Empress Anna might have been or was expected to be during the *coronation* ceremony, the decisions concerning her son and the heir to the throne were certainly not made by her alone, but rather by a common vote of a special council. Based on John Kantakouzenos' text, the *coronation* resulted from a joint vote (ψηφω) of Empress Anna, the Senate which consisted mainly of imperial officials (τῆς συγκλήτου πλὴν ὀλίγων ἀξιωματῶν), and, most probably, the patriarch John XIV Kalekas.⁶⁹⁰ In addition, contrary to the earlier passage in the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos which implied the contribution of the empress to the ceremony, the actual act of crowning John V was performed by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas.⁶⁹¹

Both Byzantine historians, Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos, lay great emphasis on the ceremonial act of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas to place the crown on John V's head; yet their focus on the two protagonists differs.⁶⁹² On the one hand, Nikephoros Gregoras puts forward the Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, who, according to the text,

coronation ceremony second and this sequence corresponds to the actual sequence of events. Cf. Pseudo-Kodinos, ed. Verpeaux, 258.19–23 and 259.9–16.

⁶⁸⁹ For the convincing arguments of Aikaterini Christophilopoulou, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέγη*, 190–192. I may dare to add that Empress Anna of Savoy must have maintained her predominance over John V, at least until 1347, when she and her son signed an oath agreement that redefined the status of John V in relation to that of John VI Kantakouzenos. In John VI Kantakouzenos' narrative, her name is mentioned as it was written first, followed by that of her son. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.20–24: τοιοῦτοι μὲν οἱ ὄρκοι ἐγγένηντο, καὶ αὐτός τε ὤμνηεν ὁ βασιλεὺς [John VI Kantakouzenos] καὶ ἡ βασίλισ Ἄννα [Empress Anna of Savoy] μετὰ βασιλέως τοῦ υἱοῦ [John V Palaiologos], ὥστε παραβήσεσθαι μηδέποτε. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 410. In my opinion, this can perhaps be interpreted as a sign of her hierarchical predominance over her underage son, although he was by then crowned as emperor. In fact, John V must have actually been crowned “emperor-to-be”, until he reached the age of political adulthood.

⁶⁹⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.3–8, especially 218.4–5 and 7–8.

⁶⁹¹ For the expected contribution of Empress Anna of Savoy, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–10. Concerning the actual *coronation* performed by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.3–6.

⁶⁹² For Nikephoros Gregoras' account of events, see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.7–13: Ὁ γε μὴν πατριάρχης [Patriarch John XIV Kalekas] μείζονα τὴν δικαίωσιν τῆς βασιλικῆς ἐπιτροπῆς μηχανώμενος ἑαυτῷ ἔστειπε διὰ πάσης σπουδῆς Ἰωάννην [John V Palaiologos] τὸν παῖδα τοῦ βασιλέως [Andronikos III Palaiologos], οὐ περιμείνας, διὰ τὸ λίχνον τῆς ἐφέσεως, οὐθ' ἡλικίαν αὐτοῦ, οὐτ' ἐπίσημον ἡμέραν τινὰ τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ. ἐνάτη γὰρ ἐπὶ δέκα ἔτυχεν οὕσα τοῦ νοεμβρίου, ἐν ἧ τὸ βασιλικὸν αὐτῷ περιτέθεικε στέφος, ἀξυμβολός τις φάσαι καὶ μάλα ἀνέορτος, τό γε ἦκον εἰς αὐτήν. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 66. For John VI Kantakouzenos' account of events, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.3–8: Ἐν Βυζαντίῳ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἰωάννης [John V Palaiologos] ὁ τοῦ Ἀνδρονίκου βασιλέως [Andronikos III Palaiologos] παῖς ψήφω βασιλίδος [Empress Anna of Savoy] τε καὶ τῆς συγκλήτου στέφει τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου τοῦ πατριάρχου [Patriarch John XIV Kalekas] κατακοσμεῖται. ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ δὲ καὶ τῶν τῆς συγκλήτου πλὴν ὀλίγων ἀξιωματῶν πάντες ἔτυχον, ὡς ἂν ἕκαστος παρὰ βασιλίδος [Empress Anna of Savoy] καὶ πατριάρχου [Patriarch John XIV Kalekas] καὶ τῆς βουλῆς ἄξιος ἐκρίθη. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakuzenos*, III, 137.

performed the *coronation* in a hurry to justify the imperial guardianship without waiting for John V to reach the age of political adulthood⁶⁹³ or for a central feast of the year.⁶⁹⁴ The fact that the *coronation* was not performed on a feast day is stressed two times by Nikephoros Gregoras and both times the verbs chosen to describe the event are in active voice and emphasize the central role of the patriarch, who coronated (ἔστειψε) John V and placed a crown on his head (περιτέθεικε στέφος).⁶⁹⁵ On the other hand, John Kantakouzenos employs passive verbs to describe the actions of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, thus casting the underage heir to the throne as the protagonist of the ceremony. To be more precise, John Kantakouzenos poetically writes that John V had his head adorned with a crown by the patriarch (στέφει τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου τοῦ πατριάρχου κατακοσμεῖται).⁶⁹⁶ The Byzantine historians' choice to describe the same ceremonial action and yet to outline the role of the patriarch differently reflects their authorial agendas, which are – in this case – not necessarily opposite. Nikephoros Gregoras seems to insist on the decisions and actions of the patriarch exactly because he wishes to stress their negative effect on the events leading up to the civil war. In fact, a few sentences later the author tauntingly writes that the patriarch executed everything that John Kantakouzenos had already wanted to do immediately after the death of Emperor Andronikos III, but he (the patriarch) had until then insidiously and very cunningly prevented.⁶⁹⁷ In the same way, John Kantakouzenos also wished to undermine the role of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, and this is probably the reason why he focuses on the young heir to the throne while describing his *coronation*. Interestingly, however, John Kantakouzenos focuses mainly on the persons and not as much on the actions

⁶⁹³ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.10. About the age of political adulthood in Byzantium, see Karayannopoulos, *Πολιτική Θεωρία*, 44 and footnote 193; Christophilopoulou, “Ἡ Ἀντιβασιλεία”, 1–4.

⁶⁹⁴ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.10–11. On the day of John V Palaiologos' *coronation* (November 19, 1341), see Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.11; and also the comment in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 269, note 103. The performance of the *coronation* ceremony on the occasion of a solemn feast day was considered an important element of the whole procedure. See the examples from the early Palaiologan period in Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 211, footnote 600; as well as some earlier examples in Dagron, *Emperor and Priest*, 76, footnote 92.

⁶⁹⁵ See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.8–9: ἔστειψε διὰ πάσης σπουδῆς Ἰωάννην [John V Palaiologos] τὸν παῖδα τοῦ βασιλέως [Andronikos III Palaiologos]; and also Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.12: τὸ βασιλικὸν αὐτῷ περιτέθεικε στέφος. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 66.

⁶⁹⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.5–6.

⁶⁹⁷ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.13–16: καίτοι τοῦτο ἐβούλετο μὲν περιφανέστερον ὁ Καντακουζηνός [John VI Kantakouzenos] καταστήσαι μετὰ τὸν τοῦ βασιλέως [Andronikos III Palaiologos] θάνατον εὐθύς· ἐκώλυε δ' αὐτὸς [Patriarch John XIV Kalekas] ἐπιβούλως καὶ μάλα σὺν δόλῳ. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 66.

performed, something that also served his own propagandistic agenda, as I will demonstrate below.

Of all the ceremonial acts that must have taken place during the entire *coronation* process of John V, John Kantakouzenos recorded only the act of crowning through the patriarch.⁶⁹⁸ The same applies to the report of Nikephoros Gregoras.⁶⁹⁹ However, John Kantakouzenos has mentioned in a different part of his account the need for John V not only to be crowned but to be anointed with the holy chrism as well.⁷⁰⁰ The two ceremonial elements on which John Kantakouzenos places emphasis, namely the *anointing* and the *coronation*, had significant ideological connotations. Both would later become a point of reference for John Kantakouzenos' accession, since, as we have seen, he felt the need to be crowned and anointed with chrism more than once in order to eliminate any accusation of deviating from the customary tradition.⁷⁰¹ Thus, by only referring to the act of crowning while describing the *coronation* ceremony of John V and by then focusing on Patriarch John XIV Kalekas and the enhanced privileges he acquired immediately thereafter,⁷⁰² John Kantakouzenos succeeds in undermining – at least literarily – the *coronation* ceremony of his political opponent. In other words, brevity here becomes a literary device with which John Kantakouzenos possibly attempted to deflect his readers' attention away from John V's *anointing* and *coronation* by the hand of the patriarch. These were the two main legitimizing 'ceremonial' advantages that only John V enjoyed and which John Kantakouzenos repeatedly strove to outweigh by repeating the ceremonial more than once.

Contrary to John Kantakouzenos who felt the need to repeat the *coronation* ceremony many times until all elements were performed in such a way that no one could accuse him

⁶⁹⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 218.5–6.

⁶⁹⁹ Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.8–9 and II, 616.12. In addition, cf. the testimony of other sources: Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 190, footnote 4.

⁷⁰⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–10.

⁷⁰¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.9–14.

⁷⁰² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 218.13–21. The enhanced privileges of Patriarch John XIV Kalekas are also mentioned by Nikephoros Gregoras, but at a different point in his narrative. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 697.1–701.10, especially II, 697.1–11. Immediately after John V's *coronation*, Nikephoros Gregoras focuses on the *prokypsis* ceremonies performed on the eve of Christmas (December 24, 1341) and on the eve of the feast of Epiphany (January 5, 1341). See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 616.16–617.6 and II, 617.22–618.9. This imperial ceremony was usually employed not for the accession of the emperor, but rather for his glorification. On these two occasions, however, the ceremony resulted being a vituperative outburst against John VI Kantakouzenos and his family. Cf. also the comments in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 269, note 104; and 269–267, footnote 105. For the ceremony of *prokypsis*, see for example: Treitinger, *Kaiser- und Reichsidee*, 112–123, and especially 112–119; and, more recently, Macrides, Munitiz and Angelov, eds., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 401–411, with further bibliography.

of deviating from long-established traditions, John V was only crowned once.⁷⁰³ The sources refer only to the *coronation* performed by Patriarch John XIV Kalekas, and there is no indication of its having been repeated when John V reached the age of political adulthood in 1348 or when he eventually became the uncontested sole emperor in 1354. After the *coronation* of 1341, the underage yet dynastic heir to the throne, John V, was recognized as the legitimate crowned emperor-to-be by all – and even by John Kantakouzenos who later on negotiated with him and his mother, as we will see below. From this point onwards, whenever the status of John V needed to be altered or re-affirmed during the years of the civil war *oath-taking* was employed. In fact, in the following paragraphs, it is worth examining two main *oath-taking* ceremonies that had become an essential tool for the power play dynamics between John Kantakouzenos and John V and their supporters' concomitant struggles for political power.

The *Oath-taking* Agreements of 1347 and 1354 and the Status of John V Palaiologos in Relation to that of John VI Kantakouzenos

A significant date which temporarily ended the civil war and redefined the status of both John V and John VI Kantakouzenos was February 8, 1347.⁷⁰⁴ John Kantakouzenos had managed to enter Constantinople with his troops after five years of absence and – according to his narrative – on that day, following negotiations, the ambassadors of Empress Anna of Savoy and her son had written the text of their oaths.⁷⁰⁵ The written oaths included that John Kantakouzenos would neither punish his opponents nor the confidants of the empress in the palace or harm them in any way, but should give them amnesty for all their deeds.⁷⁰⁶ On the other hand, Empress Anna and her son, the emperor-to-be (βασιλεύς), were not to harbor any resentment against the men who had joined John Kantakouzenos during the civil war,

⁷⁰³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.5–6: καὶ πάντα ἐτελεῖτο τὰ νενομισμένα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ, οὐδενὸς παραλειφθέντος. See also John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.12–14: ἵνα δὲ μηδεμία εἴη πρόφασις τοῖς ὑβρισταῖς, ὡς ἄρα μὴ ἐν Βυζαντίῳ κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῶν βασιλέων ἔθος ἔστεπτο, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον αὐθις ἐτελεῖτο.

⁷⁰⁴ On this day, John VI Kantakouzenos and Empress Anna of Savoy along with her son, John V, agreed upon written oaths to end the civil war and John VI Kantakouzenos was welcomed into the imperial palace. See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.5–615.3. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 779.18–780.6 and III, 166.9–14. For the written oaths, see also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, V, 14, no. 2915.

⁷⁰⁵ For a summary of the events leading up to the agreement, see Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 79–81.

⁷⁰⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.5–9: ἔπειτα ἐκέλευε [John VI Kantakouzenos] τοὺς πρὸς βασιλίδα [Empress Anna of Savoy] καὶ βασιλέα τὸν υἱὸν [John V Palaiologos] γράφειν ὄρκους. καὶ ἐγράφοντο ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὥστε μὴτ' αὐτὸν [John VI Kantakouzenos] ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς λελοπηκότας καὶ συνόντας ἐν βασιλείῳ βασιλίδι τότε, μῆτε ζημιοῦν μηδὲν, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν ἀμνηστίαν παρέχεσθαι τῶν πεπραγμένων. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 410.

nor to take any malicious act against them.⁷⁰⁷ Both sides should settle their mutual hostility peacefully, and all should maintain the property that had belonged to them from the beginning.

Most importantly, however, regarding the status of the two men, it was agreed that John Kantakouzenos and John V would both ‘co-reign’ (συμβασιλεύειν). Nevertheless, there was a special clause in the treaty. They should treat each other with mutual respect and affection proper to a father and a son, and as a result, the young John V should yield in every way to the elder John Kantakouzenos, surrendering his rights to the throne for ten years until he would officially partake in the government of the state.⁷⁰⁸ According to John Kantakouzenos’ text, the oaths were signed by himself as well as Empress Anna and her underage son.⁷⁰⁹ As I will demonstrate below, the written agreement between the two factions succeeded in redefining the status of each person individually, as well as their status in relation to one another.

In my view, the importance of the *oath-taking* agreement of 1347 to the political ideology of the early Palaiologan period has been neglected and needs to be re-examined in the light of the civil war. This *oath-taking* agreement and its provisions are quite remarkable because they strive to follow an already well-established late Byzantine institution: the institution of co-emperorship. Up to this point, it was very common for the Palaiologoi to share the imperial office and power between them in a generally accepted, hierarchical order according to which the senior emperor, the elder father or grandfather would reign along with a younger co-emperor, his son or grandson, for a certain period of time. Nevertheless,

⁷⁰⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.9–12: μήτε βασιλίδα [Empress Anna of Savoy] καὶ βασιλέα τὸν υἱὸν [John V Palaiologos] τοῖς ἐκείνω συμπράξασι κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον μνησικακεῖν, μηδ’ ἐπιχειρεῖν βλάπτειν, μήτε τέχνη, μήτε μηχανῇ μηδεμιᾶ. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 410.

⁷⁰⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.14–20: συμβασιλεύειν δὲ ἀμφοτέρους βασιλέα τε τὸν Καντακουζηνὸν [John VI Kantakouzenos] καὶ τὸν Παλαιολόγον Ἰωάννην τὸν νέον βασιλέα [John V Palaiologos] · καὶ ἀλλήλοις εὐνοεῖν τὴν προσήκουσαν εὐνοίαν πατράσι καὶ παισὶ πρὸς ἑκατέρους · ὑπέκειν δὲ τὸν νέον [John V Palaiologos] τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ [John VI Kantakouzenos] κατὰ πάντα καὶ τοῦ πράττειν αὐτῷ παραχωρεῖν ἐπὶ δέκα ἔτεσι διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν · μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς συμμετέχειν. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 410. Cf. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 166.9–14: τὰ δ’ ἦν ὅτι φρικώδεις ἡμῖν παρεσχηκῶς δημοσίᾳ πνεύσαντας ὄρκους εἶναι τε πατῆρ [John VI Kantakouzenos] ἔμοι [John V Palaiologos] καὶ συμβασιλεύειν ἄχρις ἂν ἐς τὸν εἰκοστὸν ἐξ ἐφήβων ἴδη με παραγγέλλοντα χρόνον, μηδενὸς τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ τῇ βασιλείᾳ τολμήσαντος ὅπως ἐπιτίθεσθαι, ὃ δ’ οὐκ εἰς μακρὰν ἐπέβαινε τάναντία, λήρον ἅπαντας ἡγησάμενος ὄρκους ἐκείνους. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 138.

⁷⁰⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.20–23: τοιοῦτοι μὲν οἱ ὄρκοι ἐγγένηντο, καὶ αὐτὸς τε ὤμνυεν ὁ βασιλεὺς [John VI Kantakouzenos] καὶ ἡ βασίλισ Ἄννα [Empress Anna of Savoy] μετὰ βασιλέως τοῦ υἱοῦ [John V Palaiologos], ὥστε παραβήσεσθαι μηδέποτε. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 410.

this novelty of the Palaiologoi to divide Byzantine imperial sovereignty was deep-rooted and implemented only among members of the dynastic family. It is probably safe to assume that any further change to this tradition would be reluctantly accepted and questioned by the majority, especially within this turbulent climate of the civil war. Probably the terms proposed by John Kantakouzenos were able to prevail because they did not deviate significantly from the co-emperorship tradition that had been already firmly institutionalized by the Palaiologoi. The agreement was carefully drafted not only to prevent escalation of the conflict and guarantee the safety of the involved parties, but also to define the status of John Kantakouzenos and the young John V. According to the oath, their relationship was now bound by the artificial family bond of father and a son and the consequential hierarchical order this bond created within the imperial court based on the rules of the Palaiologan institution of co-emperorship.⁷¹⁰ For now, this did not presuppose John V's marriage to John Kantakouzenos' daughter. However, things soon would change.

The artificial family bond between John Kantakouzenos and John V created by the written-oath agreement would become real in a way only a few months later. In May 1347, a new family bond would indeed connect the two men and the two families of the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi.⁷¹¹ John V became the son-in-law of John Kantakouzenos, by marrying his daughter Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene) in the church of Blachernae.⁷¹² Conveniently, a few days earlier, John Kantakouzenos was crowned and anointed for a final time as emperor in the same church by Patriarch Isidore I of

⁷¹⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 614.16–17: *καὶ ἀλλήλοις εὐνοεῖν τὴν προσήκουσαν εὐνοίαν πατράσι καὶ παισὶ πρὸς ἑκατέρους*. For the German translation, see Fatouros and Krisher, *Johannes Kantakouzenos*, III, 410. See also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, V, 14, no. 2915.

⁷¹¹ According to John VI Kantakouzenos, the marriage ceremony was performed eight days after his *coronation* in the church of Blachernae (sic: May 13, 1347) on the feast day of Saints Constantine and Helen, on May 21, 1347: John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.15–18: *ὀγδόη δὲ ἡμέρα ἀπ' ἐκείνης κατὰ τὴν Κωνσταντίνου καὶ Ἑλένης μνήμην τῶν μεγάλων βασιλέων καὶ οἱ τοῦ νέου βασιλέως [John V Palaiologos] ἐτελοῦντο γάμοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τεμένει τῆς θεομήτορος τῶν Βλαχερνῶν*. According to Nikephoros Gregoras, the marriage ceremony was performed seven days after John VI Kantakouzenos' *coronation*: Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 791.16–21: *Ἐβδόμη γὰρ μετὰ τὴν ἀναγόρευσιν καὶ σταφροφορίαν ἐκείνην ἡμέρα παρῆν· καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς ἐν Βλαχέρναις εἶχε θεῖος ναὸς μετὰ τοῦ βήματος καὶ τῶν δίφρων ἐκείνων τοὺς τε βασιλέας ὁμοῦ καὶ τὰς βασιλίδας· καὶ τὰ νόμιμα τῆς τῶν νέων βασιλέων προετελεῖτο συζυγίας, Ἰωάννου [John V Palaiologos] φημί καὶ Ἑλένης [Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene)], τοῦ μὲν ἑξκαιδεκαέτους ὄντος, τῆς δὲ δυοῖν ὑποβεβηκυίας ἐτῶν ἐκείνου*. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 172. The dating of John VI Kantakouzenos' *coronation* at Blachernae church is problematic and the same applies for the dating of John V's wedding with Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene). Jan Louis Van Dieten summarizes the available facts and argues that the date of the marriage ceremony must have been May 27, 1347. See Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, III, 378–380, note 487.

⁷¹² For Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene), see *PLP* 21365: Παλαιολογίνα Ἑλένη (Palaiologina Helene), with further bibliography.

Constantinople.⁷¹³ The marriage of John V and Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene) confirmed and strengthened the family ties between the two men and their rival families. The ceremony itself functioned as a means to advertise their good relations and aimed to preserve long-term peace within the Byzantine Empire. The ceremonial marriage of John Kantakouzenos' daughter with the young heir and crowned emperor-to-be, John V, allowed John Kantakouzenos to legitimize his claims to participate in the governance of the empire and to re-affirm his status through a strong familial bond with the dynasty of the Palaiologoi.

However, the agreements of 1347 had failed to provide positive results regarding the relations between John V and John Kantakouzenos, because, as we will see below, other members of the imperial family got involved in the conflict and also various social and political circumstances arose, forcing John Kantakouzenos to resign in 1354. In return for the support he gave to his father during his struggle with John V, Matthew Kantakouzenos was given part of Thrace, with its headquarters at Didymoteichon, as an appanage in 1347.⁷¹⁴ John V became discontented with the arrangement and the limited share of power that he was allocated and sought an alliance with Serbia. The Serbs, seeking to strengthen their influence over Byzantine issues, also offered to assist the Venetians to gain control of Galata. Disputes over the control of the Hellespont, the Bosphorus and the markets of Constantinople and the Black Sea prompted the outbreak of a war between the two trading communities of the Republic of Genoa and the Republic of Venice, which both had quarters in Constantinople and were fighting for more trade privileges.⁷¹⁵ On February 1352, when a sea battle broke out between the two maritime powers and the Venetians offered to subsidize the young John V in the war against his father-in-law by providing him financial support in return for which they were to receive the island of Tenedos and, thus, control of the entrance to the Hellespont.⁷¹⁶ Because John Kantakouzenos got himself involved in the Genoese-Venetian war, he persuaded Empress Anna to lead an embassy to the Serbian court to avoid their coalition with both John V and the Venetians. She was successful, and a possible Serbian attack and a new civil war between John Kantakouzenos and her son were averted.⁷¹⁷

⁷¹³ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 29.1–14 and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, II, 787.11–789.8. Cf. Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Αναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 194–195.

⁷¹⁴ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 231. About Matthew Kantakouzenos, see *PLP* 10983: Καντακουζηνός, Ματθαῖος Ἀσάνης (Kantakouzenos, Matthaios Asanes), with further bibliography. Also, see Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 108–122, no. 24.

⁷¹⁵ Nicol, *Byzantium and Venice*, 274–278. Cf. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 237.

⁷¹⁶ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 237.

⁷¹⁷ For the diplomatic activities of Empress Anna to the Serbian camp, see Melichar, “Imperial Women as Emissaries”, 112–114.

As a result, a new partition of territories was agreed: John V was allocated Didymoteichon, which up to that point had belonged to Matthew, while Matthew was given the appanage of the city of Adrianople.⁷¹⁸ However, soon after, John V attacked Matthew's regions. A revolt at the city of Adrianople in favor of John V left Matthew stranded in the citadel until forces from Constantinople came to his rescue.⁷¹⁹ Although John V had the support of the Serbs and the Bulgars, John Kantakouzenos asked for the help of emir Orhan, allowing the Turks to plunder and terrorize the nearby cities in order to restore Matthew's territorial rights.⁷²⁰ During the campaigns of 1352, Orhan's army occupied a number of places in the Thracian region, among them the fortress of Tzympe near Kallipoli, which controlled the passage over the Hellespont from Asia to Europe. It should be noted here that on March 2, 1354, the area of Thrace was struck by an earthquake and Kallipoli fell into the hands of Orhan and his son, Souleiman, who refused John Kantakouzenos' financial offer to return it to the Byzantines.⁷²¹ The capture of the city would give the Osmanlis the opportunity to conquer new territories, henceforth on European soil. The rivalry between John V and Matthew forced John Kantakouzenos to consider seriously the strong encouragement of members of the aristocracy to crown Matthew as co-emperor. Naturally, in order to retrospectively justify his actions, also on this occasion, John Kantakouzenos is presented as being reluctant to accept their pressing demands. Eventually, he did arrange Matthew's proclamation and coronation as a co-emperor.⁷²² He also ordered that the name of John V would be omitted from the acclamations, but not the names of Empress Anna and John V's son, Andronikos IV.⁷²³ As Donald M. Nicol observes, "[t]he lines of succession through the Cantacuzene family now seemed to be established for generations to come. Matthew was about 30 years old and had two sons of his own. The fact that Andronikos Palaiologos, the infant son of John V, was still counted among the Emperors was no anomaly, for Andronikos was the

⁷¹⁸ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 238.

⁷¹⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 242.22–246.4.

⁷²⁰ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 238.

⁷²¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 276.17–281.18; Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 241–242. For the earthquake cf. also Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 220.19–222.9; 504–509.

⁷²² On the imperial proclamation and coronation of Matthew Kantakouzenos (and that of his wife Eirene Palaiologina, *PLP* 21357), see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 269.7–270.12 and 275.20–276.1; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 188.9–189.2 and 204.10–21; Christophilopoulou, *Εκλογή, Αναγόρευσις και Στέφανος*, 195–197. Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 82.

⁷²³ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 269.16–21. Aikaterini Christophilopoulou argues that Andronikos IV already held the title of βασιλεύς (co-emperor) before the end of 1353. See Christophilopoulou, *Εκλογή, Αναγόρευσις και Στέφανος*, 197–198. For Andronikos IV Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21438: Παλαιολόγος, Ανδρόνικος IV. [Κομνηνός] (Palaiologos, Andronikos IV. Komnenos), with further bibliography.

child of Helena Cantacuzene and so a grandson of the Emperor John VI”.⁷²⁴ In the summer of 1354, when John Kantakouzenos sailed over to Tenedos in the hope of settling his differences with John V, who was residing there at the time, he realized once more the popularity that his son-in-law had gained. The people and the soldiers on the island were so hostile that they prevented John Kantakouzenos’ ships from anchoring there.⁷²⁵

The status of both men, John V and John Kantakouzenos, was re-defined once more in 1354, the year that came to mark the official end of the civil war. As the text of John Kantakouzenos attests, new oaths were performed, and a written agreement was signed on the third day after John V’s entrance into Constantinople, that is on December 1, 1354, and after John V had sent a capable ambassador to John Kantakouzenos.⁷²⁶ The ambassador was a certain Angelos, who held the office of Epi tou Kanikleiou (ἐπὶ τοῦ Κανικλείου).⁷²⁷ According to the account, Angelos was chosen as the most suitable mediator (πρὸς τε πρεσβείας ὄντα ἐπιτηδειότατον) not only because of his prudence (σύνεσιν) and his excellent education and cultivation (παιδείαν), but also because he was in good graces with Emperor John Kantakouzenos, and he enjoyed his favor (παρὰ βασιλεῖ τῷ Καντακουζηνῷ πολλῆς τῆς εὐμενείας ἀπολαύοντα).⁷²⁸

The oaths between John V and John Kantakouzenos guaranteed that both would be able to retain their imperial titles and grant amnesty to each other and their opponents.⁷²⁹ Emperor John Kantakouzenos would bestow onto the young Emperor John V the precedence and primacy regarding all things (τῶν πρωτείων ἐν πᾶσι), and in return, John V would show the same respect and obedience as before.⁷³⁰ The money left from the annual tax revenues after taking care of the expenses of the army, the fleet, and the administration would be

⁷²⁴ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 240.

⁷²⁵ See John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 236.7–237.22; Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 236.7–237.22. Cf. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 242–243; Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 83 and footnote 121.

⁷²⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.10–12: τρίτη δὲ ἡμέρα βασιλεὺς ὁ νέος [John V Palaiologos] τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ Κανικλείου Ἄγγελον πρὸς βασιλέα [John VI Kantakouzenos] πέμψας πρεσβευτήν. Cf. Gregoras III 243.9–12. About the political events leading up to the oath-agreement of 1354, see Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 127–129.

⁷²⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.10–14. On “Angelos Epi tou Kanikleiou”, who was identified by Jan Louis Van Dieten with Angelos Manuel – “Agathangelos”, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 10–31, and 412.

⁷²⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.10–14.

⁷²⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.14–15: διελέγετο περὶ συμβάσεων, ὥστε ἀμφοτέρους μένειν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ὄρκους θεμένους πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀμνηστίας τῶν διαφορῶν.

⁷³⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.20–24: καὶ ἐγένοντο οἱ ὄρκοι ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὥστε βασιλέα μὲν τὸν Καντακουζηνὸν καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν νέον βασιλέα ἄρχειν τῶν πραγμάτων, παραχωρεῖν δὲ τὸν νέον [John V Palaiologos] τῶν πρωτείων ἐν πᾶσι τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ [John VI Kantakouzenos] καὶ πᾶσαν αἰδῶ καὶ εὐπείθειαν, ὡσπερ καὶ πρότερον, αὐτῷ παρέχεσθαι.

equally divided among both emperors and their households.⁷³¹ Of course, a general amnesty would be granted to everyone involved, and their property and income should remain intact.⁷³² Furthermore, John Kantakouzenos had to hand over to John V a fortress at the Golden Gate which he himself had renovated and fortified.⁷³³ The most interesting part of the oath agreement, however, was the fact that the son of John Kantakouzenos, Matthew Kantakouzenos, who had earlier been proclaimed and crowned co-emperor before this oath, was allowed to keep his title (βασιλεύς) and remain independent for life, having possession of Adrianople and ruling over the cities subject to the empire in the Rhodope mountains area.⁷³⁴ On the other hand, John V promised never to provoke a revolt against Matthew Kantakouzenos in these areas.⁷³⁵ The oaths of 1354, though sworn in the absence of the Co-emperor Matthew Kantakouzenos, allowed John V to reclaim his dynastic right to the imperial throne and updated his status in relation to that of his political opponents. Now, John V, though younger, had acquired the status of a “senior” emperor, preceding the elder emperor John Kantakouzenos and Co-emperor Matthew Kantakouzenos hierarchically. This was the first step leading up to the end of the long-lasting civil war and John V’s uncontested sole sovereignty over the Byzantine Empire.

The End of the Civil War and the Predominance of John V Palaiologos

The civil war between John Kantakouzenos and John V ended in a similar fashion as the civil war between Andronikos III and Andronikos II had: both Andronikos II and John Kantakouzenos were – one way or another – forced to abandon their political careers and live a monastic life.⁷³⁶ On December 10, 1354, John Kantakouzenos resigned from the

⁷³¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 291.24–292.6: (291) τῶν δὲ ἐκ τῶν δημοσίων φόρων εἰσπραττομένων χρημάτων ἐτησίως, (292) ὅσων μὲν ἂν δέοντο πρὸς τε τὸ μισθοφορικὸν τῆς στρατιᾶς καὶ τῶν τριηρέων παρασκευῆν καὶ τὰς δεούσας ἐτέρας δημοσίας διοικήσεις, ὑπὸ τῶν πρυτάνεων, ὡσπερ ἔθος, ταῦτα ἀναλίσκεσθαι· ἃ δ’ ἂν ὑπολίποιο ἐπέκεινα τῆς χρείας, ταῦτα συμμαρίζεσθαι τοὺς βασιλέας τῶν πρὸς τὰς οἰκίας ἔνεκα ἀναλωμάτων ἐπίσης ἐκατέρου.

⁷³² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 292.10–16, especially 14–16: ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν ἀμνηστίαν παρέχειν τῶν τετολμημένων καὶ μήτε προσόδων, μήτε τῶν τιμῶν ἀποστερεῖν, ἃς ἔχουσι.

⁷³³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 292.21–293.17.

⁷³⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 292.16–20: Ματθαῖον δὲ βασιλέα τὸν Καντακουζηνὸν [Matthew Kantakouzenos] μένοντα ἐπὶ τοῦ σχήματος, τὴν Ἀδριανοῦ κατέχειν καὶ τὰς κατὰ τὴν Ῥοδόπην τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ὑπηκόους πόλεις, διὰ βίου αὐτόνομον ὄντα καὶ ἀνεύθυνον κεκτημένον τὴν ἀρχὴν. On Matthew Kantakouzenos’ proclamation and coronation as co-emperor, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέμμις*, 195–197.

⁷³⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 292.20–21: καὶ βασιλέα τὸν νέον Ἰωάννην [John V Palaiologos] πόλεμον μηδέποτε πρὸς ἐκεῖνον [Matthew Kantakouzenos] περὶ τῶν ἐνδεδομένων πόλεων κινεῖν.

⁷³⁶ For the case of Andronikos II, see Gregoras 442.3–6. For the case of John VI Kantakouzenos, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 307.4–7; and Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 243.12–244. 3. Notably, while John VI Kantakouzenos stresses the fact that he was voluntarily and willingly withdrawn from the

imperial office and from any future claims to the throne by becoming a monk.⁷³⁷ The resignation ceremony included laying aside the imperial *insignia*, dressing with the monastic habit and changing his name from John to Joasaph.⁷³⁸ His wife, Empress Eirene Kantakouzene, did the same.⁷³⁹ Like her husband, she renounced the imperial office, dressed in the monastic habit and received the monastic name, Eugenia.⁷⁴⁰ Finally, John Kantakouzenos left the palace and retired to the monastery of Saint George of Mangana, while his wife joined the convent of Kyra Martha in Constantinople.⁷⁴¹ The ritual process described by John Kantakouzenos consists of three main steps.⁷⁴² First, the imperial couple had to resign from the imperial office and give up any future claims to their titles. Second, they had to assume new monastic identities by replacing the imperial clothes and *insignia* with the monastic habit and names. As a third step, they had to move physically from the imperial palace each to a different monastic establishment where they would lead their new lives. In practice, John Kantakouzenos' transition from imperial to monastic status simultaneously signaled the transition of imperial authority almost exclusively to John V and the dynasty of the Palaiologoi.

The final step that completed the total transition of imperial authority to John V was accomplished with another ceremonial resignation from any claims to the throne: that of Co-

imperial office, Nikephoros Gregoras suggests the opposite. He writes that John VI Kantakouzenos was forced to resign his office and that he secretly abandoned the palace during the night in his attempt to reach safety in a monastery. Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, III, 243.12–20: διὸ καὶ σύγχυσις τε καὶ θόρυβος ἠγείρετο σφόδρα ἄσημος κατὰ τὸ συνεχές πρὸς Βυζαντίων κατὰ πρόσωπόν τε καὶ ἀναιδῶς λοιδοροῦν τῶν αὐτῶν Καντακουζηνὸν καὶ ἐπιτηδόντων αὐτῶ, καὶ ἐν ἐπαγγελίαις ὄντων κατὰ τῆς αὐτοῦ σφαγῆς τὰ ἴδια βάπτειν ξίφη, εἰ μὴ τὴν ταχίστην πρὸς τὸ μοναδικὸν τὴν βασιλείον ἀμείψῃ στολήν. ἔνθεν τοι καὶ μετ' οὐ πολλὰς τὰς ἡμέρας ἐξήει τοῦ παλατίου, τὸ μοναδικὸν ἠμφιεσμένος σχῆμα, ζύν γε τῇ ὁμοζύγῳ νυκτός, αὐτὸς μὲν Ἰώασαφ μετονομασθεῖς. For the German translation, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 186. Cf. also the comments in Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 387–397, note 416; and 397, note 417.

⁷³⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 307.4–7. For the dating and a description of the events prior to John V Kantakouzenos' abdication, see, for example, Failler, "Note sur la chronologie", 293–302; Failler, "Nouvelle note sur la chronologie", 119–124; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 129–133; Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 381–397, notes 412–416.

⁷³⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 307.4–7: καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑστεραίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς βασιλείοις τὰ βασιλικά ἀποθέμενος παράσημα, σχῆμα ὑπέδου μοναχῶν, Ἰώασαφ ἀντὶ Ἰωάννου μετακληθεῖς.

⁷³⁹ For Empress Eirene Kantakouzene, see *PLP* 10935: Καντακουζηνὴ Εἰρήνη (Kantakouzene Eirene), with further bibliography. See also Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady*, 71–81 (Eirene Asenina Cantacuzene).

⁷⁴⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 307.7–9: τῆς αὐτῆς δὲ ὥρας καὶ ἡ βασιλις Εἰρήνη, τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ αὐτὴ ἀπειταμένη, τὸ μοναχῶν ὑπέδου σχῆμα, Εὐγενία μετακληθεῖσα.

⁷⁴¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 307.9–12: μετὰ τοῦτο δὲ βασιλεὺς μὲν ὁ Καντακουζηνὸς εἰς τὴν Μαγκάνων ἀπεχώρει μονὴν, ὡσπερ παρεσκεύαστο καὶ πρότερον, Εὐγενία δὲ ἡ βασιλις εἰς τὴν τῆς Μάρθας προσαγορευομένην, ἐκ πατρός κλήρου διαφέρουσαν Καντακουζηνῶ τῶ βασιλεῖ. Cf. also Nikephoros Gregoras' version of events. He gives the impression that the imperial couple first left the palace and only then changed their clothes and *insignia*. For comments on this issue, see Van Dieten, *Nikephoros Gregoras*, V, 397, note 417.

⁷⁴² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 306.12–307.4–13.

emperor Matthew Kantakouzenos. Based on the written agreement between John Kantakouzenos and John V that was sealed by oath on December 1, 1354, Matthew Kantakouzenos was permitted to keep his title as co-emperor and his apanage at Adrianople where he would rule independently.⁷⁴³ John V asked John Kantakouzenos to stay in the capital and not to retire to Mount Athos as he had planned, because he was still uncertain of the intentions of Matthew. Therefore, John Kantakouzenos moved from the monastery of Mangana to a smaller monastery, that of Nea Peribleptos.⁷⁴⁴ Eventually, it was John V who went after Matthew in the spring of 1355, accusing him of planning usurpation.⁷⁴⁵ Their military conflicts led to further negotiations. The two men agreed to sign an agreement that would allow them both to retain their imperial titles, but Matthew was to relinquish his Thracian domain. He was to rule over the Greek cities in the Peloponnese, and his brother Manuel, who had been governor of the Morea since 1349, was to rule the island of Lemnos instead.⁷⁴⁶ This agreement was never realized because Matthew was informed of a plot to murder him on his voyage over to Lemnos.⁷⁴⁷ Therefore, Matthew Kantakouzenos attempted to advance against Constantinople and claim his right to rule the whole empire.⁷⁴⁸ By 1356, Matthew had the additional support of Serbian commanders and Orhan's Turkish soldiers.⁷⁴⁹ Nevertheless, soon, the Serbians and the Turks fell to fighting among themselves, and Matthew, who was also abandoned by his Greek troops, was taken captive by Vojihna, the Serbian commander of the city of Drama.⁷⁵⁰ In the end, Matthew was offered to John V on payment of a huge ransom and was shipped to custody on the island of Lesbos.⁷⁵¹ While

⁷⁴³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 292.16–20.

⁷⁴⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 308.19–309.11. The monastery of Nea Peribleptos, devoted to the Virgin Mary, is also known by the name of its founder Charsianites, who was a former friend and supporter of John Kantakouzenos. See also Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 248; Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 93–95 and 115. For Charsianites, see *PLP* 30685: Χαρσιανίτης Ἰωάννης (Charsianites Ioannes), with further bibliography.

⁷⁴⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 309.22–310.7. Cf. Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 115.

⁷⁴⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 310.7–312.15. Cf. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 249; Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 115.

⁷⁴⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 313.17–314.6. See also Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 115–116.

⁷⁴⁸ On Matthew Kantakouzenos' political life and involvement in the civil war, see Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 108–122, no. 24. For his final attempt to gain the control of Constantinople, see also Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 135–138, with further bibliography.

⁷⁴⁹ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 136.

⁷⁵⁰ Nicol, *The Last Centuries*, 249. For Vojihna (or Vojichna), see *PLP* 2942 Βοϊχνας (Boichnas), with further bibliography.

⁷⁵¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 330.12–335.9. Cf. Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 116–117; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 136–137.

Matthew was in prison on Lesbos, a plot emerged in Constantinople.⁷⁵² The plan was to seize the palace with the wife and children of John V and then hold them to ransom for the release of Matthew.⁷⁵³ The leader, Zeianos, was an Italian of the Kantakouzenos household, who tried to implicate Matthew's mother, the ex-Empress Eirene Kantakouzene (now the nun Eugenia).⁷⁵⁴ It was she who revealed the plot to John V through her husband.⁷⁵⁵ John Kantakouzenos explained to John V that Matthew had got carried away owing to bad advisors and asked him to show clemency so that the fight between Matthew and John V could finally come to an end.⁷⁵⁶ Matthew would now be held prisoner at Epibatai on the Sea of Marmora, where Alexios Apokaukos had once had his castle, and John V would meet him there to discuss how they were going to settle the matter.⁷⁵⁷

In 1357, while in custody at Epibatai, Matthew ended up re-negotiating his status. At first unwilling to renounce his title and live as a private citizen (ἐν ιδιώτου σχήματι τελεῖν), he was finally convinced by his father, John Kantakouzenos, to resign.⁷⁵⁸ John Kantakouzenos functioned as a mediator between his son and his son-in-law, John V. The family bond that he shared with the interested parties facilitated the discussions, and he skillfully managed to reason with his son, Matthew Kantakouzenos, and persuade him to abandon his title and imperial claims. John Kantakouzenos then went to Constantinople (Βυζάντιον) and announced to John V Palaiologos Matthew Kantakouzenos' consent to renounce his title and to recognize his superiority.⁷⁵⁹ To seal the agreement written oaths were prepared ensuring that Matthew Kantakouzenos would resign from the imperial office (βασιλεύειν) altogether, including all the imperial actions and garments (πράξεις καὶ

⁷⁵² For a description of the whole episode, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 340.23–347.4. Cf. Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 117.

⁷⁵³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 342.2–15.

⁷⁵⁴ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 341.6–20. For Zeianos, see *PLP* 6515 Ζειανός (Zeianos), with further bibliography.

⁷⁵⁵ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 340.23–345.20. Cf. Nicol, *The Family of Kantakouzenos*, 117.

⁷⁵⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 336.5–340.23. Compare this with the case of Empress Anna who is also presented in a positive way, except for the fact that she got carried away by manipulating advisors who made her make bad political decisions. See, for example, John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, II, 64.8–65.16.

⁷⁵⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 345.21–347.4.

⁷⁵⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 356.3–7: Ματθαῖος δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς [Matthew Kantakouzenos] „δυσχερὲς μὲν“ εἶπε „καὶ οὐ πάνυ ῥάδιον τὸν χθὲς καὶ πρόωγν προσκυνοῦμενον ὡς βασιλεῖα ὑπὸ πάντων νῦν ἐν ιδιώτου σχήματι τελεῖν καὶ τῶν πολλῶν ὀλίγα διαφέρειν ἢ οὐδὲν, καὶ μᾶλλον ἂν αὐτὸς εἰλόμην διὰ βίου δεσποτήριον οἰκεῖν, ἢ τοιαύτην παροινίαν ὑπομένειν. [...]“.

⁷⁵⁹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 356.17–20: Καντακουζηνὸς δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς εἰς Βυζάντιον ἐπανελθὼν, ἐπεὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἀπήγγελλε τῷ νέῳ βασιλεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν ἀπειπάμενον, τῶν ἄλλων πάντων καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπεριδὼν, ἐκέλευε τοὺς ὄρκους γίνεσθαι.

στολαῖς).⁷⁶⁰ Being the brother-in-law of the emperor John V, Matthew Kantakouzenos would enjoy the proper form of address (προσρήσει) first, being positioned right after the Emperor John V and his son, the young co-emperor Andronikos IV, and he would hierarchically rank above the rest of the children of the emperor (τῶν ἄλλων παίδων βασιλέως προέχειν).⁷⁶¹ In return, Matthew Kantakouzenos would never again revolt or organize a coup d'état against them and would remain grateful to the kindness (εὐεργεσία) of Emperor John V.⁷⁶² The provisions of the agreement described by John Kantakouzenos focus on the permanent resignation of Matthew Kantakouzenos from any imperial claims and his acquisition of a new political status with certain restrictions regarding authorization and administrative activities, public appearances and the reception of honorary *acclamations*. Matthew Kantakouzenos' new status was defined in relation to the enhanced status of Emperor John V, who would be now the sole, uncontested emperor and rule with his son Andronikos IV Palaiologos, the chosen dynastic heir to the throne.

The official resignation ceremony of Matthew Kantakouzenos, bound by this written-oath-agreement, was held at Epibatai, where the relevant parties and their wives gathered.⁷⁶³ Epibatai, easily accessible from the sea or the Via Egnatia, was near Selymbria and a day's trip from Constantinople.⁷⁶⁴ Besides its strategic geographic location, as we have seen, the place had played an important role in the meetings for negotiating and signing agreements related to the first civil war. It was there, that – according to John Kantakouzenos – in 1322, Andronikos II and Andronikos III had signed their final peace treaty, which led to the

⁷⁶⁰ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 356.20–22: καὶ ἐγένοντο ἐπὶ τούτοις, ὥστε Ματθαῖον [Matthew Kantakouzenos] τὸν γυναικὸς [Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene)] ἀδελφόν, παντάπασι ἀποθέμενον τὸ βασιλεύειν, ὥσπερ ἐν πράξεσι καὶ στολαῖς.

⁷⁶¹ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 356.22–357.3: οὕτω δὴ κἀν ταῖς προσρήσεσι, τὰς μετὰ βασιλέα τιμὰς καρποῦσθαι πρώτας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων παίδων βασιλέως προέχειν, πλὴν Ἀνδρονίκου τοῦ νέου βασιλέως [Andronikos IV Palaiologos, *PLP* 21438], καὶ πᾶσαν εὐνοίαν τηρήσειν [Matthew Kantakouzenos] πρὸς αὐτούς. On Andronikos IV's status as βασιλεύς (co-emperor) and the date of his proclamation already in 1353, see Christophilopoulou, *Ἐκλογή, Ἀναγόρευσις καὶ Στέψις*, 197–198.

⁷⁶² John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.3–4: ὄπλα δὲ μηδέποτε κινήσειν περὶ τῆς ἡγεμονίας πρὸς αὐτούς, μηδ' ἀμνήμονα φανεῖσθαι τῆς εὐεργεσίας.

⁷⁶³ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.4–6: ἔπειτα ἐν Ἐπιβάταις βασιλέων τε ὁμοῦ καὶ βασιλίδων [John V Palaiologos and Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene); John VI Kantakouzenos and Eirene Kantakouzene; and possibly Andronikos IV Palaiologos] ἐν ταύτῳ γεγενημένων. Interestingly, here, John VI Kantakouzenos still refers to himself as βασιλεύς (emperor), although he had already renounced his rights to the throne and he was at that time living as a monk. Nikephoros Gregoras does not refer to this event. His story breaks off just before Matthew's transfer to Epibatai.

⁷⁶⁴ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 350–352.

coronation of the latter in 1325.⁷⁶⁵ Likewise, the meeting at Epibatai of 1357 would bring an end to the civil war between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi. John V and Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene), and John Kantakouzenos and Eirene Kantakouzene, as well as possibly Andronikos IV, would function as witnesses to the *oath-taking* resignation ceremony along with Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople, Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem and some high-ranking priests, the quorum of the senators and a few other priests dressed in their holy attire.⁷⁶⁶ After everyone had gathered Matthew Kantakouzenos' swore the oaths, and his wife Eirene Palaiologina consented that committing to the oath for a lifetime and not violating them in any way was the reasonable and fair thing to do.⁷⁶⁷ In addition to the oaths Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople pronounced the excommunication to anyone who would dare to violate any of the oath-clauses.⁷⁶⁸ The presence of Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople in this ritualized resignation ceremony carries significant ideological connotations. A few years earlier, Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople had refused to crown Matthew Kantakouzenos as co-emperor to his father John Kantakouzenos, and as a result, he had been deposed.⁷⁶⁹ Upon his deposition, Kallistos went to Mount Athos, but after John Kantakouzenos' resignation and abdication, Kallistos returned to Constantinople and to his former office as patriarch. Perhaps we can assume that Kallistos' return to his former office can be interpreted as a symbolic gesture promoted by John V which aimed to restore the order also in the ecclesiastical administration now that the civil war seemed to be reaching an end. In any case, the active involvement of Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople in the *oath-taking* ceremony that finalized the resignation of Matthew

⁷⁶⁵ According to Nikephoros Gregoras, the peace negotiations took place at Rhegion. See Nikephoros Gregoras, ed. Schopen, I, 358.24. On John Kantakouzenos' account, see John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, I, 166.16. See also Regesten, eds. Dölger and Wirth, IV, 93, no. 2479.

⁷⁶⁶ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.4–9: ἔπειτα ἐν Ἐπιβάταις βασιλέων τε ὁμοῦ καὶ βασιλίδων ἐν ταῦτῳ γεγενημένων, Καλλίστου τε τοῦ πατριάρχου [Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople] καὶ Λαζάρου τοῦ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων [Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem] καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀρχιερέων, ὅσοι τότε παρόντες ἔτυχον ἐν Βυζαντίῳ, καὶ συγκλητικῶν ὁμοῦ τοι πάντων, τὰς ἱεράς στολὰς ἐνδεδυμένων τῶν ἀρχιερέων. Concerning the presence and the role of Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople in the ceremony, see a few lines later in the text of *Histories*: John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.12–14. For Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople, see *PLP* 10478: Κάλλιστος Ι. (Kallistos I.), with further bibliography.

⁷⁶⁷ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.9–12: Ματθαῖος [Matthew Kantakouzenos] ὁ τοῦ βασιλέως [John VI Kantakouzenos] ὤμνυεν υἱὸς τοὺς ὄρκους, συνουσίας καὶ τῆς γυναικὸς [Eirene Palaiologina], ἧ μὴν τηρήσειν βεβαίους διὰ βίου καὶ μηδέποτε μηδένα παραβήσεσθαι ἐκόντα εἶναι. For Eirene Palaiologina, see *PLP* 21357: Παλαιολογίνα Εἰρήνη (Palaiologina Eirene), with further bibliography.

⁷⁶⁸ John VI Kantakouzenos, ed. Schopen, III, 357.12–15: ἐπὶ τούτοις δὲ καὶ Κάλλιστος ὁ πατριάρχης [Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople] ἐπεῖπεν ἀφορισμὸν, εἰ μὴ τοῖς ὁμοιοσμένοις ἀκριβῶς ἐμμένειε.

⁷⁶⁹ On the deposition of Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople as a result of his refusal to perform the *coronation* of Matthew Kantakouzenos, see Charanis, “Imperial Coronation”, 37–44 and Failler, “La déposition”, 5–163.

Kantakouzenos from any future claims to the imperial throne publicized his return and affirmed the significant role he was expected to play in the political affairs of the empire.

To conclude, the ceremony marked the ultimate transition of imperial power to John V and the Palaiologan dynasty. Therefore, the presence of the former and current emperors and their wives was crucial for its legitimization. Equally important was the attendance of the Senate – probably consisting of the most notable state officials and illustrious aristocrats. The participation of the clergy, including Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople, Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem and other high-ranking ecclesiastical officials, aimed to sanctify even more this unique ritual. Altogether, the presence of the above-mentioned witnesses in the whole procedure was significant at both a practical and an institutional level. On the one hand, they confirmed the validity of the *oath-taking* process, and on the other hand, they ascribed a more official character to Matthew Kantakouzenos' resignation. The ceremony at Epibatai and the written oaths towards the end of 1357 indeed marked the end of the civil war and served not only as a means to dissolve the conflict and rivalry between two throne-claimant families, but most importantly to re-affirm the status and the predominance of John V Palaiologos.

With regard to the end of the civil war, Nikephoros Gregoras, and especially John Kantakouzenos, laid great emphasis on the *oath-taking* ceremonial and the ways it was expected to assist in the alteration or re-affirmation of the status of the already-crowned imperial claimants. As we have seen, contrary to John Kantakouzenos, who went through several *coronations*, John V was crowned only once (in 1347), and his status as an emperor was recognized with the oath-taking agreements of 1354 and 1357. The resignation of John Kantakouzenos and his son Matthew from imperial office was again sealed with oaths. By the time John Kantakouzenos came to write his memoirs after his abdication, he had attempted to justify his actions by emphasizing his initial reservations about accepting and retaining the imperial title, or even crowning his son Matthew as co-emperor. He also insisted on blaming corrupt advisors and agents for the bad decisions Empress Anna had made. The same excuse was also used for his son Matthew to apologize for the trouble he caused during his attempts to claim more power after 1354. John Kantakouzenos could not turn against his own son, who he himself had promoted; nor could he speak out against his best friends' widow and the mother of the heir-presumptive to the throne, whose rights he wished to protect. It is worth noting that Nikephoros Gregoras did not share John Kantakouzenos' reservations and, as noted above, his portrayal of Empress Anna is not so

positive. However, like John Kantakouzenos, he attributes the responsibility for the outbreak of the civil war primarily to Alexios Apokaukos. Moreover, Nikephoros Gregoras placed great emphasis on Patriarch Kalekas' act of crowning John V in November of 1341 and commented negatively on the fact that it was performed in a hurry to justify the imperial guardianship. The author is consistent in using the imperial ceremonies to direct criticism against Byzantine claimants to power, whether they were ecclesiastical or political figures. Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos were friends, but they had eventually grown apart because of their theological differences, which developed during the latter's reign. This development is reflected in the events recounted by Nikephoros Gregoras. When John Kantakouzenos resigned from imperial office – voluntarily, according to his text – Nikephoros Gregoras was eager to reveal that his former friend was forced to abandon the palace in secrecy and flee to a monastery. In the last parts of his account, Nikephoros Gregoras focuses mostly on church affairs, and he is not so interested in imperial rituals. It is John Kantakouzenos who undertakes to provide a detailed description of Matthew's resignation ceremony at Epibatai, which was sealed with written oaths in 1357. This ceremony marked the end of the civil war between the Palaiologoi and the Kantakouzenoi.

Synopsis

The Imperial Accession Ceremonies and the Late Byzantine Historians

The study of late Byzantine accession ceremonies through the late Byzantine historiographical narratives of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John Kantakouzenos contributes to our knowledge of the political ideology of the early Palaiologan court and the way in which Byzantine historians of that time perceived it. Each of the authors had a different experience with the court ceremonies and, therefore, their emphasis on the accession rituals varies. George Akropolites worked in the service of the imperial court of the Laskarids in Nicaea and later on at the imperial court of the Palaiologoi in Constantinople. He mainly records ceremonial events relating to imperial accession to which he was an eyewitness in order to ensure that his narrative provides an solid legitimizing link between the Laskarid and the Palaiologoi. A case in point is the emphasis placed on the *shield-raising proclamation*, which the author uses to claim that all aspects of the accession ceremony of Theodore II Laskaris in 1254 at Nymphaion were performed as was “customary” (ὡς ἔθος). This allowed George Akropolites to underscore the Laskarids’ unbreakable connections with the Constantinopolitan emperors and, ultimately, to link the Palaiologans to both the Laskarids and the Constantinopolitan emperors. In addition, George Akropolites also outlines the presence of Patriarch Arsenios Autoreianos in both *coronations* of Michael VIII – first in Nicaea and then in Constantinople – so that he could to give his readers the impression that all the legitimate procedures had been followed. The authors’ choice is interesting especially if one considers that the same patriarch eventually became a strong supporter of the young John IV Laskaris and even excommunicated Michael VIII because of his actions against the legitimate heir to the throne. In this way, accession ceremonies become a valuable tool for George Akropolites and his “patron” Michael VIII.

Beyond illustrating their alignment with the imperial regime, often Byzantine historians include descriptions of ceremonial events in their narratives to show their opposition to or to criticize political events of their time. For example, both George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras use imperial *processions* to express their dissatisfaction with such events or to foreshadow future political turmoil. For instance, George Pachymeres describes the *post-coronation procession* of Michael VIII and provides

details that are not attested elsewhere, not only to describe Michael VIII's attempts to project his political and ideological precedence over John IV Laskaris, but also to voice his complaint about the injustice meted out to the "legal", underage heir to the throne. Similarly, Nikephoros Gregoras, who usually relays only a small number of descriptions associated with court ceremonies, shows great interest in the *procession* of Andronikos II and Andronikos III heading to the Hagia Sophia for Andronikos III's *coronation* ceremony in 1325. The accidental fall of the senior emperor, Andronikos II, together with his horse, whether it actually happened or not, is employed by the author to foreshadow the upcoming conflict between grandfather and grandson as well as the subsequent abdication of the elder Andronikos (II) from the imperial throne. In both cases, George Pachymeres and Nikephoros Gregoras use vocabulary that allows them to connect with their peers and readers while making a political critique.

A very particular perspective on the late Byzantine accession ceremonies is offered by John Kantakouzenos, the only Byzantine emperor known to have recorded the events of his own career. In his *Histories*, the descriptions of ceremonies are more detailed than in other historiographical texts since not only did the author perform in and experience these events first hand, but also because they contribute significantly to his attempt to write a political apologia for his predecessor, Emperor Andronikos III, and most importantly a political apologia for himself. For example, the author's first description of a *coronation* ceremony is of Andronikos III's *coronation* in 1325, and it is purposefully constructed to be more detailed and extensive than any other description of this kind in the *Histories*. This elaborate account allows the author to avoid any repetitions further on in his narrative and to inform his readers of the conventions of an imperial *coronation* ceremony, including all the specific ritualized acts that it should contain. Within the framework of the turbulent civil war and the controversies over the throne, first between Andronikos II and Andronikos III and then between John Kantakouzenos and John V, less room was left for mistakes or deviations from the customary ceremonial traditions. Each claimant wanted to legitimate his position through the proper enactment of the accession rituals. Thus, in John Kantakouzenos' narrative, the *coronation* ceremony is projected as a fundamental part of the imperial accession. Weight is given to the act of crowning, namely the act of placing the crown on the head of the imperial candidate, a symbolic gesture which was usually performed with the contribution of the patriarch. The reader is informed that John Kantakouzenos was crowned a total of three times. Initially, John Kantakouzenos crowned himself at Didymoteichon on

October 26, 1341. He then underwent two ecclesiastical *coronations*: the first through Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem in Adrianople on May 21, 1346, and the second through Patriarch Isidore I of Constantinople at the church of Blachernae in May 1347. The support of the Constantinopolitan patriarch was an advantage that up to then only his political opponent, John V, had enjoyed. Thus, in comparison to other late Byzantine historiographical texts, the *Histories* of John Kantakouzenos use accession ceremonies not simply to legitimize the claims of a preceding emperor to a new or to emphasize the hierarchical predominance of an emperor over his political opponent. John Kantakouzenos' *Histories* employ the succession rituals to tell the apologetic story of a former emperor in the way that he wishes future generations to remember it.

Some Functional and Ideological Aspects of the Palaiologan Accession Ceremonies

Observing the role accession ceremonies play in the narratives of late Byzantine historians may also lead to more general conclusions concerning some of their functional aspects and ideological ramifications within the Palaiologan court. First of all, accession ceremonies were employed to legitimize the claims of a person or a dynasty. For example, during his *proclamation* ceremony, Michael VIII chose to present himself sitting on the shield while being acclaimed, and not standing upright. By that time this particular gesture was commonly recognized by the general public, whose approval Michael VIII sought. Another symbolic action performed to ensure the legitimacy of Michael VIII was the patriarchs' ceremonial placing of the crown on his head. Although an ecclesiastical *coronation* was never a legitimizing factor throughout Byzantium's long history, in the case of Michael VIII it carried a distinct ideological significance: it was orchestrated to demonstrate an advantage over the underage heir to the throne, John IV Laskaris, and over any other potential political rivals. In fact, the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty proceeded to undergo a second *coronation*, this time in the recaptured city of Constantinople and in the newly renovated church of Hagia Sophia in order to legitimize his claims. Notably, the same strategy was followed by another aspiring usurper to the throne, John Kantakouzenos, who also chose to undergo more than one *crowning* in order to legitimize his claims and in a vain attempt to establish a new dynasty.

Moreover, accession ceremonies and imperial insignia were employed as a means to project hierarchical status, power, and predominance into an already established regime. For example, the "extraordinary privileges" Michael VIII bestowed upon his son, Andronikos

II, such as allowing him to hold a gold-plated scepter during the sermons or to issue imperial documents and sign them with red ink, were clearly employed to enhance the young co-emperor's status within the newly established dynasty of the Palaiologoi. At the same time, however, the restrictions imposed concerning these privileges soon afterward by Michael VIII were necessary to regulate the hierarchical balance of power within the Byzantine imperial court. A major limitation, which was, of course, applied retrospectively, referred to the imperial scepter and to the fact that only the senior emperor should be seen publicly to hold it since it was an explicit symbol of imperial authority and the imperial authority rests in one person. The narrative of George Pachymeres indicates that, although the early Palaiologoi strongly promoted the institution of co-emperorship, a partition of imperial authority was not considered to be an option at this point. Thus, the projection of even a modicum hierarchical distinction between the senior emperor and the co-emperor was imperative to keep up appearances and to avoid confusion among the people. Another example of a robust visual projection of power and hierarchical predominance within the Palaiologan court can be seen in the various descriptions of the *crowning* of the co-emperors. While describing Michael IX's *coronation*, George Pachymeres underlines the gestures and actions of Andronikos II rather than those of his son, which is contrary to what one might have expected. First, the senior emperor, Andronikos II, then the patriarch and, finally, Michael IX, in this exact order, mounted the ambo where the act of *crowning* and *anointing* took place. A different perspective is offered by John Kantakouzenos when he recounts the accession of his friend and predecessor, Emperor Andronikos III. During the *coronation* of Andronikos III as co-emperor to his grandfather and emperor Andronikos II, the actions of the senior emperor remain uncommented, and they are unknown to the reader, while the movements and gestures of the young co-emperor are described in detailed and brought into the spotlight. These are only a few examples of how ceremonies and imperial insignia were employed by the late Byzantine emperors and historians to project the ideological claims and the hierarchical structure of the early Palaiologan court.

Accession ceremonies were also combined with wedding ceremonies that allowed the ruling family to strengthen its position either inside or outside of the imperial court, or even inside and outside of the Byzantine world in times of political crisis. In particular, the marriage between Andronikos II and Anna of Hungary, a ceremony that was closely connected with the *coronation* of Andronikos II as co-emperor to his father Michael VIII, was beneficial to the newly founded dynasty for various reasons. On the one hand, it allowed

Byzantium to secure its position in the politically unstable area of the Balkans and to prevent Charles I of Anjou's aggressive plans for expansion. On the other hand, it also allowed the Palaiologoi to connect their bloodline with that of the Laskarids – since Anna of Hungary was the granddaughter of Theodore I Laskaris of Nicaea – and thus, to avoid any possible riots by fanatic supporters of the Laskarid party. The success and the positive outcome of the embassy are attributed to the excellent choice of ambassadors, who were selected because of their prestigious offices and their distant kinship relationship with the bride. The policy of pre-arranged weddings was also popular during the unstable years of political conflict between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi. The marriage of John V and Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene), daughter of John Kantakouzenos, in May 1347 turned out to be very beneficial for the two rival families. This marriage alliance, which aimed to establish long-term peace within the Byzantine Empire, gave the senior emperor, John Kantakouzenos, a legal family bond with the Palaiologan dynasty, upon which he could legitimize his claims to imperial governance. Overall, marriage alliances were often combined with the accession rituals of the late Byzantine period as a means to strengthen alliances and to create familial ties between political parties, for whom good relationships and coalition were vital for the maintenance of the existing political status-quo.

Another way to strengthen the emperor's position and to minimize the danger of potential revolts was the implementation of *oath taking*. Especially during the years of civil war, between both Andronikos II and Andronikos III and John Kantakouzenos and John V, written oaths were signed to settle political conflicts and to de-escalate the crisis. In most cases, this kind of oath included, among other things, clauses that would guarantee not only the peaceful settlement of the dispute but also the physical and financial security of the involved parties. For example, the *oath-taking* agreement of June 1321 between Andronikos II and Andronikos III regulated the partition of imperial territories into two separate realms to be ruled separately by each party. The oath agreement of February 1347 between John V and John Kantakouzenos specifically indicated that all would retain the properties they held before the beginning of the civil war and any mutual hostility would end peacefully. Again, the role of mediators and ambassadors was central to a successful outcome.

In the same way that the diplomatic abilities of ambassadors sent out of Byzantium played a crucial role in the negotiations, the charismatic personalities and erudite knowledge of the ambassadors sent to individuals inside Byzantium were equally important. For example, in 1354, John V chose to send as an ambassador to John Kantakouzenos a certain

Angelos epi tou Kanikleiou who was prudent, cultivated, well-educated and most importantly on good terms with Emperor John Kantakouzenos. Often, kinship bonds between the two negotiating parts played a significant role in the success of domestic, diplomatic missions. The aristocratic provenance and the status of the envoys, as well as the use of emotional language and persuasion, could also have a high impact on the positive outcome of a legation. The *oath-taking* agreement of 1321 was the byproduct of long negotiations between Andronikos II and Andronikos III during that summer. Noticeably, a noblewoman and a member of the royal family, Eugenia Komnene Palaiologina, was able to contribute in her own way – even temporarily – to the restoration of peace and the recognition of the young co-emperor's dynastic succession rights.

Negotiations usually concluded with the ceremonial signing of written oaths between the two rival parties, which would guarantee amnesty to each other and their supporters. Interestingly, the oaths that were signed in the midst of civil wars placed particular emphasis on the imperial succession and the hierarchical position of the two political opponents within the Palaiologan court. Usually, one of the two rivals was forced to either accept a disgraceful, ordinate role to the other or to resign from any claims to the throne and (optionally) withdraw to a monastery and become a monk. A case in point is the written oath signed by Andronikos II in 1329, both in red and in black ink, signaling the senior emperor's formal resignation from the imperial office and at the same time the transition of his status from that of a public figure to a private individual living as a monk. Overall, the aim was that *oath-taking* would serve a stabilizing function in late Byzantine society. It seems that such written oaths were used as a measure not only to resolve inner or outer dynastic disputes but also to prevent them. For this reason, often written vows went hand in hand with the imperial accession and were performed to reinforce loyalty to the ruling emperor and to prevent any potential rebellions that could jeopardize his office or his position in the hierarchy of the imperial court.

Accession ceremonies, however, did not always have a positive effect on the political life of the late Byzantine Empire. Rather than legitimizing the claims of a person or a dynasty, or contributing to political stability and long-term peace by defusing tensions, accession ceremonies often caused political turbulence and the outbreak of civil wars when they were used as a means to deny legitimacy or to revoke the rights of a “rightful” heir to the throne. An indicative example can be seen in connection with the ascent of Andronikos III to the throne. At first, during Andronikos III's *proclamation* as co-emperor who was

second in the hierarchy, after his grandfather, Andronikos II (who was the senior emperor), and his father, Michael IX (a co-emperor who was first in the hierarchical order), an *oath-taking* ceremony was performed that included all three names of the dynasty's ruling members. Immediately following the death of Michael IX, however, Andronikos II demanded that everyone swear an oath solely to him and to any other person he chose as his successor. In this context, the exclusion of Andronikos III's name from the *oath-taking* ceremony signaled his exclusion from imperial power. The revocation of Andronikos III's succession rights caused confusion and discomfort among the members of the imperial court and led to a seven-year civil conflict (1321–1328). Another ceremonial element that could provide legitimacy but was sometimes adopted to bring about the opposite result was the *acclamations*. For instance, the late Byzantine historians Nikephoros Gregoras and John Kantakouzenos refer to the *acclamations* that co-emperor Andronikos III received from the army upon his victorious entry into Constantinople in May 1328. The military aristocracy's support of Andronikos III simultaneously marked its opposition to Andronikos II and facilitated the transition of power from the senior emperor to the young co-emperor. Hence, this is an excellent example of how *acclamations* were employed to amend the status of the legal holder of the imperial office and, ultimately, to lead to his dethronement.

In addition, *oath taking* and *acclamations* played a significant role in the ending of the civil war between the Palaiologoi and the Kantakouzenoi. Again, both of these ceremonial components were used by the Palaiologoi as a means to alter the original status of their political opponents and to remove them – non-violently – from the high-ranking positions they once held in the imperial court. The *oath-taking* agreement of 1357 at Epibatai ensured that the son of the already-resigned emperor John Kantakouzenos, Matthew Kantakouzenos, would abandon any claims he had to the imperial office. At the same time, this written agreement redefined the status of the new senior emperor, John V, who would now be the sole and uncontested ruler and would reign along with his son, Andronikos IV. Interestingly, the clauses in the oath agreements also encompassed a restriction with regard to Matthew Kantakouzenos and the honorary *acclamations* he was now allowed to receive due to his new status. Matthew Kantakouzenos would hierarchically rank above all the children of emperor John V, but below Andronikos IV, the elder son of John V and the only legitimate successor to the throne after his father's death. In brief, these are just a few examples of how the Palaiologoi used accession ceremonies as a means to withhold access to the imperial government or to diminish the status of their political opponents. Indeed,

although accession ceremonies were primarily employed for reasons of legitimization or to ensure internal stability within the early Palaiologan court, at times, they could produce to quite the opposite result.

Along with their capacity to kindle political turmoil or to reject legitimization and imperial power, accession ceremonies could also negatively affect the public's opinion of a claimant's hierarchical position in the imperial court of the Palaiologan or could be enacted to publicize a claimant's dethronement from the imperial office. Certainly, the founder of the Palaiologan dynasty, Michael VIII, was able to successfully exploit the ideological connotations of the accession ceremonies and the symbolism of specific imperial insignia to alter John IV Laskaris' public image by taking advantage of their first public appearance after their joint *coronation* ceremony in Nicaea. Their high visible *post-coronation procession* was carefully staged so that everyone could witness Michael VIII and his wife leading at the front with their proper crowns, while John IV Laskaris, the rightful heir to the throne, followed with just an adorned headband. This was contrary to the ceremonial etiquette and the public's expectations as we know them from George Pachymeres' account. In this way, Michael VIII succeeded in undermining his underage political opponent John IV Laskaris and lowering his hierarchical status, while raising his own. An even stronger action that could be taken was the removal of the imperial insignia altogether as a symbolic gesture accompanying imperial dethronement. When John Kantakouzenos renounced his imperial title in December 1354 and became a monk, he gave up not only his imperial *insignia* but also his imperial attire. His wife, Empress Eirene Kantakouzene, followed his example and wore the monastic habit. Similarly, a few years prior, Andronikos II's abdication from the imperial office was linked to both a physical and a mental transformation. More interesting, however, is the revocation of the imperial privilege to sign in red ink at the end of any official document. Andronikos II, being partially blind, was tricked into surrendering this imperial prerogative while signing his resignation. The result – to place a cross in red ink at the beginning of the document and a cross in black ink at the end of the document – was a strong visual representation of Andronikos II's transformation of status in the larger process of dethronement. Overall, such non-verbal elements and symbolic communication patterns within the imperial accession or deposition ceremonies reveal a great deal about the mechanisms that the Palaiologoi used to advertise their political opponents' lower hierarchical positions or removal from the imperial court.

Continuities and Changes in the Late Byzantine Accession Ceremonies and Political Thought

The study of the late Byzantine accession ceremonies contributes to a better understanding of the political thought cultivated upon the recapture of Constantinople in 1261 and the simultaneous attempts of the Palaiologoi to establish their dynasty. As we have seen, accession ceremonies and their proper execution without any deviations from established tradition constitute an idea that is frequently projected in the historiographical works of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John Kantakouzenos and that served various ideological purposes. However, the present study has revealed that imperial accession ceremonies were far from static and that they kept evolving and adjusting to serve the purposes of Palaiologan propaganda. In fact, changes occurred not only in the morphological performance of the accession ceremonies but also in the ideological associations that they projected. Moreover, continuities and changes are observed in relation to the role of the protagonists, the active participants and the bystander witnesses of the late Byzantine accession ceremonies, accordingly reflecting the political realities of their time.

A ceremony that is attested for the first time in connection with the court of Nicaea and which continued to be performed at the court of the Palaiologoi is the *shield-raising proclamation*, whereby the emperor is acclaimed while sitting on the shield, and not standing upright as seems to have been customary in the past. The Palaiologan emperors used the ceremony with this particular morphological element to outline their alignment with the preceding Laskarid dynasty. For the same reason, George Akropolites, the historian of both the Laskarids and the Palaiologoi, portrayed this type of *shield-raising proclamation* as a long-lasting, already-established ceremonial tradition – probably alluding to its use by the Constantinopolitan emperors before 1204 – although there are no known previous descriptions of emperors being acclaimed while sitting on a shield. Furthermore, interestingly, the ideological and legitimizing connotations of this ceremony seem to have changed over time. When *shield raising* was first performed in the fourth century by Julian the Apostate it was initially linked to the act of usurpation. However, the custom soon gained general acceptance and appeared regularly in sources describing the ceremonial procedures of official accession up to the beginning of the seventh century. From that point onwards, *shield raising* was mentioned only sporadically in the sources, usually to legitimize usurpations, until it was again linked to a legal imperial accession, that of Theodore II Laskaris in 1254. Henceforth it became a steady ceremonial feature in legitimizing the

accession of the late Byzantine emperors. *Shield raising*, a ceremony with military origins, probably became popular among the Laskarid emperors under the enhanced influence of the military aristocracy. The Laskarids cultivated an ideology of military expansionism and favored the political influence of army officers due to the role they were expected to play in the re-conquest of Constantinople. George Akropolites indicates that those occupying the highest offices in the administration and the army were the ones who placed Michael VIII on a shield and acclaimed him. During the Palaiologan period, the performance of the *shield-raising proclamation* becomes even more elaborate and carries particular significance for the protagonists involved. Gradually, the Palaiologoi abandoned the ideology of militarism which had been cultivated by the Laskarids, and this led to the enhancement of the constitutional role of the dignitaries and the high-ranking office-holders. Over time, in addition to the highest in rank office-holders who held the back part of the shield, the most exalted of the dignitaries or court title holders, together with the patriarch, were assigned to carry the front part of the shield during the imperial *proclamation*. In the case of a co-emperor's *proclamation*, the senior emperor would take the place of the most esteemed of the dignitaries (ἐν ἀξιώμασιν ὑπερέχοντες) or court title holders (ἄρχοντες) in holding the front part of the shield together with the patriarch. The first testimony in the late Byzantine historiographical sources about the enactment of these "new" ceremonial roles by the senior emperor and the patriarch is found in John V Kantakouzenos' *Histories* as part of the description of Andronikos III's *shield raising* in 1325. Bearing in mind the unstable political state of affairs that led Andronikos III to power, the symbolic gesture of these two figures of authority holding the front part of the young Andronikos III's shield may have been performed to secure the legitimacy of his claims and even perhaps to provide further sanctioning of his title. The involvement of members of the church, namely of high-ranking priests (ἀρχιερέων), in the *shield-raising* ceremony is attested for the first time during the late Byzantine period by George Pachymeres already in relation to the *proclamation* in 1258 of Michael VIII, who also needed to ascribe further sanction to his claims. Perhaps this can be considered a transitional stage and one that eventually led to the active participation of the most venerable of the ecclesiastical office holders in the *shield-raising* ceremony of 1325, namely of the Constantinopolitan patriarch himself. In any case, the particular ideological implications behind the involvement of both the emperor and the patriarch in the *shield-raising proclamation* ceremony positively contributed to the establishment and the perpetuity of these new roles, at least since the time of Andronikos III and throughout the entire Palaiologan period.

Another ceremony that showed new trends and ideological perspectives is the *anointing* ceremony. Whether its origins can be traced back to the Laskarid or the Komenian emperors, or even to the earlier Constantinopolitan emperors, it is undeniable that under the early Palaiologoi the *anointing* ceremony became an integral part of the imperial accession rituals. As a result it started appearing regularly in the historiographical narratives of the period to describe the installation of both the emperor and the co-emperor. In thirteenth-century Nicaea, the main substance used for performing the *anointing* ceremony was chrisim (*myron*), and the same substance continued to be used by the Palaiologoi. A novelty in the ideological ramifications of the *anointing* ceremony appeared for the first time during Michael IX's *coronation* as co-emperor to his father, Andronikos II, in 1294. Rather than being strongly connected with the divine transfer of kingship, as was the case for the Laskarids – and perhaps even for Michael VIII, who came to power through usurpation – the *anointing* ceremony in the case of Michael IX seems to have been associated with the idea of hereditary kingship. It was evidently employed to sanctify not only the young co-emperor's succession but also the institution of co-emperorship within the newly established dynasty. Over time, a shift occurs in the focus of the late Byzantine historians with regard to the protagonists and their gestures during the performance of the *anointing* ceremony, probably in an attempt to portray the radically changing realities of their times, which were being affected by various political upheavals. For example, George Pachymeres' account of Michael IX's *anointing* ceremony in 1294 focuses on the senior emperor, Andronikos II, who – based on the account – received all the appropriate rituals during the liturgy and climbed the ambo first before his son the co-emperor. At that time, the senior emperor, Andronikos II, held power and was able to demonstrate his superior status over his co-emperor son. In contrast, a few years later, John Kantakouzenos' account of the *anointing* ceremony of his friend and predecessor, Andronikos III – while ostensibly appearing to focus equally on both the emperor and the co-emperor – actually overall provides more details about the actions of the young Andronikos III. In comparison to the narration of George Pachymeres, the description given by John Kantakouzenos, and later by Pseudo-Kodinos, challenges the status of the senior emperor and brings in the spotlight the young co-emperor's movements and gestures. It is important to remember that the *anointing* ceremony of 1325 was performed in the midst of civil war between Andronikos II and Andronikos III. Thus, the fact that John Kantakouzenos places emphasis on Andronikos III's actions and gestures might reflect the damaged imperial image of the senior emperor, Andronikos II. At the same time, it probably mirrors the enhanced power of the young co-emperor in relation

to that of any preceding Palaiologan co-emperors, especially after the peace treaties of June 1321 and 1322, which guaranteed him independent rule over certain territories of the empire. In any case, such descriptions, although clearly filtered through the eyes of the late Byzantine authors undoubtedly reflect the constantly changing realities of the Palaiologan period. The patriarch performed the act of anointing, and the aim was probably to provide further sanction to imperial claims, especially in times of political instability. In his capacity as the most esteemed member of Byzantine society and of the ecclesiastical and imperial apparatus, the patriarch of Constantinople promoted Palaiologan political thought by *anointing* the imperial candidate and being the first to acclaim him “worthy” (ἄξιος) and “holy” (ἅγιος). In the years of John V and John Kantakouzenos, the use of holy chrism as the substance and the performance of the act of *anointing* by the patriarch of Constantinople, and not through any other orthodox patriarch, were two ceremonial elements that became crucial to the legitimization of the ceremony. These ceremonial prerequisites were enough reasons to force John Kantakouzenos to repeat the ceremony twice so that he would not be accused of deviating from traditions. The act of *anointing* was employed by the Palaiologoi to reinforce the institution of co-emperorship and to defend the young co-emperors’ hereditary right to rule. Nevertheless, in the context of the civil war between the Kantakouzenoi and the Palaiologoi *anointing* must have been mainly employed by John Kantakouzenos because of its ideological attachment to the notion of a God-chosen emperor that better fitted his profile. This is another example suggesting that the accession ceremonies and their ideological connotations were flexible and adjustable in terms of serving the various purposes of imperial propaganda. Overall, the *anointing* ceremony encompassed a mixture of old and new trends and ideological perspectives. Its sacral character and significant political ramifications were the main reasons why *anointing* was allowed to gain a central place in the accession rituals of the late Byzantine period.

A third ceremonial element whose presence in the Palaiologan accession rituals increased over time is the *oath taking*. The practice of *oath-taking* already existed during the time of the Roman empire, and it continued to be in use during the Christianized Byzantine empire, allowing the subjects to declare their loyalty to the Byzantine emperor. Thus, the primary purpose of oaths was to regulate the relations between the emperor and his subjects. Although the *oath-taking* ceremony never became an official part of the imperial accession procedure, the Palaiologan emperors extended its use regarding the accession of the co-emperor with the aim of perpetuating the dynasty. From the years of Michael VIII onwards,

it was established that an oath was given to a line of family members of up to three generations, including also the grandson of the senior emperor. As in the case of the *acclamations*, the sequence of the names mentioned during the *oath-taking* ceremony corresponded with the hierarchical place each person held or was expected to hold in the imperial court. The oath might have included, for example, the name of the senior emperor, which was placed first, followed by that or those of the co-emperor(s), as well as those of their wives, if applicable. Under the Palaiologoi, two novel aspects seem to have been employed with regard to the content and the performance of the oaths: the possibility that multiple co-emperors might enjoy imperial privileges and the advantage of receiving oaths of fidelity while the senior emperor was still alive and not only after his death. In this context, the *oath-taking* ceremony functioned as a mechanism that allowed the Palaiologoi to strengthen their position and at the same time to minimize the danger of possible usurpation. The evidence from historiographical narratives suggests that by the time of Andronikos III some circles even considered *oath-taking* as a legitimizing mechanism in the co-emperor's accession to the throne. This concept allowed the senior emperor, Andronikos II, to employ *oath-taking* as a means to revoke the succession rights of his grandson, Andronikos III. However, the exclusion of the young co-emperor from imperial power – rather than preventing a possible political upheaval – led to the outbreak of a seven-year civil conflict between the two men. During these years, *oath taking* became an essential part of the ritual behavior concerning the handling of the intra-dynastic strife. More interestingly, during the turbulent years of the civil war between John V and John Kantakouzenos, an additional use of *oath-taking* ceremonies is revealed. Namely, written oaths were employed to alter or to re-affirm the status of the already-crowned imperial claimants, which served mainly a practical purpose: to avoid repeating ceremonies that had already been performed in the past. On such occasions, as well as in cases when *oath taking* was associated with the resignation of an imperial candidate in terms of his rights to the throne, the presence of eyewitnesses became even more critical. For example, in Matthew Kantakouzenos' resignation ceremony at Epibatai, in which written oaths were involved, many authoritative individuals were present as witnesses to this event. Namely the emperor John V, and his wife, Helene Palaiologina (Kantakouzene); Matthew's father and former emperor, John Kantakouzenos, and his wife, Eirene Kantakouzene; possibly Andronikos IV; Patriarch Kallistos I of Constantinople; Patriarch Lazarus of Jerusalem; some high-ranking priests; the quorum of the senators; and a few other priests dressed in their holy attire. Overall, the expansion of the ceremony's use for different purposes and in various contexts, as well as the emphasis placed

on the witnesses by the late Byzantine historians suggests that this hitherto neglected imperial ritual was indeed an essential part of the entire imperial accession procedure. Finally, the novelties observed concerning the content and the performance of the *oath-taking* ceremonies also reveal the ceremony's growing role as a stratagem of power among the early Palaiologan emperors.

Epilogue

To conclude, the present study has dealt with some of the widely unexplored functional aspects of the Palaiologan imperial accession ceremonies based on the written evidence of George Akropolites, George Pachymeres, Nikephoros Gregoras, and John Kantakouzenos. These late Byzantine historians belonged to the political and ecclesiastical apparatus they attempt either to justify or to criticize through their writings and were active participants – or sometimes unique eyewitnesses – in the ritual events that they relate. Hence, their testimony is invaluable. However, while investigating the accession rituals of the Palaiologan court, the modern scholar must bear in mind both the typology of the historiographical writing style and the intentions of the authors in relation to the cultural and historical context of production. The employment of interdisciplinary methods in the investigation of the late Byzantine court rituals permits the analysis of the accession ceremonies as an active and continually evolving part of the late Byzantine Palaiologan court and its political thought. The chosen examples of ceremonies that were examined in the present study are understood as a symbolic means of communication. Accession ceremonies shed light on multiple aspects of the Palaiologan imperial life, such as the public, the private, the secular and the sacral, and reveal implicit hierarchical structures and ideological claims. Thus, it is hoped that this study contributes to the ongoing scholarly efforts to understand the particularity of Byzantine culture as a whole, of which the Palaiologan accession ceremonies were an integral part.

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