

Alkmeni Stavridou-Zafraka

Byzantine Culture in Late Mediaeval Greek States*

On April 13, 1204 Constantinople, the richest and most populous city of the world, the “pride of the Universe”, the Queen of Cities, was conquered and plundered by the Latins of the Fourth Crusade. The diversion of the Crusade and the sack of Constantinople were due not only to the interests of the West but to the disintegration of the Byzantine Empire, the separatist movements and dynastic conflicts. The Byzantine Empire was dismembered and split into Latin and Greek States. Byzantine territories were allotted by the Treaty of *Partitio Romaniae* to the leaders of the Crusade and the Venetians. Baldwin of Flanders was elected Emperor of Romania and was crowned in the church of St. Sophia on 16 May. A Venetian Patriarch was also appointed. Thus the Latin Empire of Constantinople was established. Boniface of Montferrat demanded the second city of the Empire, Thessalonike, with the title of King¹.

Many refugees especially from the upper classes, the elite, fled from the City before or after the tragic events, and found refuge in Asia Minor or in continental Greece. Three Greek independent states were founded by relatives of the imperial families of Komneni and Angeli: The Empire of Trebizond on the Black Sea, the Empire of Nicaea in Bithynia and the State of Epiros². With military campaigns and diplomatic

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¹. A. Carile, *Per una storia dell'impero latino di Costantinopoli (1204-1261)*, Bologna 1972, p. 15-19, 73-75. – K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol. I: *The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* [Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society vol. 114], Philadelphia 1976, p. 3-16. Various aspects of the Fourth Crusade have been studied in *Urbs Capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences / La IVe Croisade et ses conséquences*, ed. Angeliki Laiou [Réalités Byzantines 10], Paris 2005 (hereafter: *Urbs Capta*).

². D. M. Nicol, The Fourth Crusade and the Greek and Latin Empires, 1204-1261, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV: *The Byzantine Empire*, pt. I: *Byzantium and its Neighbours*, ed. J. M. Hussey, Cambridge 1966, p. 275-330.

moves, their rulers achieved to consolidate their power, extend their territories and claim the imperial power. Their main goal being the recapture of Constantinople and the ascension to the genuine throne of the Queen of Cities, turned them into rivals. Their relations underwent many phases and in the course of time they were led to hostility and open conflict. The outline of events may be followed in the extant narrations of Nicetas Choniates, an eyewitness of the sack of Constantinople³, and George Akropolites⁴. We depend on their historical narrations, but also on all kinds of sources, histories, rhetoric, epistolography, imperial charters and documents, coins and seals, hagiographical sources and monuments, which help us reconstruct the period.

The Emperor Alexius III Angelos had fled from Constantinople in Thrace in July 1203 together with the treasury. His son-in-law Theodore Laskaris, who had been honoured with the title of *despot*, fled from the conquered City to Bithynia, where his family found refuge in Nicaea, even though he was initially rejected. The withdrawal of the Latin forces from Asia Minor and their defeat at the battle of Adrianople by the Bulgarian tsar Kalojan on April 14, 1205, gave the opportunity to Theodore Laskaris to suppress his Greek rivals in Asia Minor and come to terms with the Sultanate of Iconium. In 1206 he was proclaimed and in 1208 he was crowned emperor, most probably in the church of St. Sophia in Nicaea by the new Patriarch Michael IV Autoreianos. Thus, Nicaea, a city only 60 miles away from Constantinople, became the seat of the Byzantine political and ecclesiastical authorities, of the Emperor and the Patriarch. Theodore signed as Emperor of the Romans, he minted his own coinage, and he was hailed by the Greek rhetoric as the saviour and deliverer of the Romans. Although Alexius III was still the legitimate emperor, Theodore by his investment of the imperial title claimed to be the sole heir of Byzantine emperors and the continuator of the Byzantine imperial idea. He surpassed all his Greek rivals in Asia Minor, and he became a symbol of unity, the person who could bring “*one fold under one shepherd*”. “*God gave us the Empire as the monarchical institution, in the likeness of his own government, thus setting aside for all time the*

³ *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten, vol. I-II [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae XI/1-2], Berolini - Novi Eboraci 1975.

⁴ *Georgii Acropolitae Opera*, ed. A. Heisenberg, vol. I: *Historia, breviarum historiae, Theodori Scutariotae additamenta*, Lipsiae 1903, re-edited with some corrections by P. Wirth, Stuttgart 1978. – Ruth J. Macrides, *George Akropolites: The History. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*, Oxford - New York 2007 (hereafter: R. J. Macrides [ed.], *George Akropolites*).

disorder that results from polyarchy”, the Patriarch wrote to him in 1208⁵.

Just before the fall of Constantinople David and Alexios Komnenos, grandsons of the Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos, fled from Constantinople and with the military assistance of their aunt, the Georgian Queen Tamar, established themselves at Trebizond on the southern coast of the Black Sea. Being the only male descendants of the Komneni family they claimed to be the true heirs of the imperial title. David, a competent general, soon became master of the cities across the Pontic shore, but he was defeated by Theodore Laskaris on his way to Nikomedeia. After his death in 1212 his brother Alexios ruled as sole emperor at Trebizond. The empire of the Grand Komneni lasted until 1461, when they succumbed to the Ottoman Turks⁶.

In continental Greece resistance against the Franks was carried out by the ruler of Nauplion Leo Sgouros, who marched to Thessaly and by his marriage to the third daughter of Alexios III, the emperor bestowed over him the title of *despot*, showing his resentment to Theodore

⁵. N. Oikonomidès, Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôrianos, *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* 25 (1967) 113-145, p. 118.37-38. Cf. Alkmeni Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ήπειρος τον 13ο αιώνα. Ιδεολογική αντιπαράθεση στην προσπάθειά τους να ανακτήσουν την αυτοκρατορία* [Εταιρεία Βυζαντινών Ερευνών 7], Thessalonike 1990, p. 100-101 (hereafter: A. Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ήπειρος*). For the State of Nicaea, see A. Meliarakes, *Ίστορία τοῦ Βασιλείου τῆς Νικαίας καὶ τοῦ Δεσποτάτου τῆς Ἡπείρου (1204-1261)*, Athens 1898 (repr. 1994). – Alice Gardner, *The Lascarids of Nicaea. The Story of an Empire in Exile*, London 1912. – M. Angold, *Byzantine Government in Exile. Government and Society under the Lascarids of Nicaea (1204-1261)*, Oxford 1975. – I. Giarenis, *Η συγκρότηση και η εδραίωση της αυτοκρατορίας της Νίκαιας. Ο αυτοκράτορας Θεόδωρος Α΄ Κομνηνός Λάσκαρις* [Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών, Ινστιτούτο Βυζαντινών Ερευνών, Μονογραφίες 12], Athens 2008. – D. Angelov, Byzantine Ideological Reactions to the Latin Conquest of Constantinople, in *Urbs Capta*, p. 293-310.

⁶. For the State of Trebizond, see J. Ph. Fallmerayer, *Geschichte des Kaisertums von Trapezunt*, München 1827. – S. P. Karpov, *L'impero di Trebizonda, Venezia, Genova e Roma (1204-1461): rapporti politici, diplomatici e commerciali*, trans. Eleonora Zambelli, ed. Virginia Cappelletti - F. Tagliarini, Roma 1986. – Idem, *Srednevekovyj Pont (Medieval Pont)*, New York 2001. – Idem, *Istorija Trapezundskoj imperii (History of the Empire of Trebizond)*, St. Petersburg 2007, p. 624; review by D. Angelov, *Speculum* 83 (2008) 715-716. – A. Savvides, *Οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί της Τραπεζούντας και του Πόντου. Ιστορική επισκόπηση της βυζαντινής αυτοκρατορίας του μικρασιατικού Ελληνισμού (1204-1461)*, Athens 2009² (hereafter: A. Savvides, *Οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί*). – A. Savvides - St. Lampakes, *Γενική Βιβλιογραφία περί του Βυζαντινού Πόντου και του Κράτους των Μεγάλων Κομνηνών της Τραπεζούντας*, Athens 1992 and eadem, Πρώτο συμπλήρωμα στη “Γενική βιβλιογραφία περί του Βυζαντινού Πόντου και του κράτους των Μεγάλων Κομνηνών της Τραπεζούντος”, *Αρχαίον Πόντου* 45 (1994) and the following volumes.

Lascaris for trying to persuade the cities of Asia Minor to accept him as *basileus* instead of his father-in-law (*ὡς βασιλεὺς ἀντὶ τοῦ πενθεροῦ αὐτοῦ*) and for his proclamation⁷. A cousin of Alexios III, Michael Comnenos Doukas, also participated in the resistance against the Franks in the Peloponnese after he had left the service of Boniface of Montferat, and set himself as an autonomous ruler at Arta. By diplomatic negotiations and treaties with the Latin Emperor and the Venetians he strengthened his position and he gained *de jure* the recognition of his realm. Very soon he broke the agreements and he drove away the Venetians from Dyrrachion and Corfu, while he captured Larissa in Thessaly and other strongholds. After his assassination in 1214/5 his half-brother Theodore Doukas, a most ambitious and competent ruler, captured cities from the Bulgarians and the Franks, and after a long siege he obtained Thessalonike late in 1224, putting an end to the Lombard Kingdom⁸. In late 1225/6 he was proclaimed and in 1227, probably at the Day of Pentecost, he was crowned Emperor of the Romans in Thessalonike, most probably in the cathedral of St. Sophia, by the archbishop of Achrida Demetrios Chomatenos⁹.

Much has been written by eminent scholars about the history, the political ideology, the administration and economic organization, the ecclesiastical policy, the social structure, of these states. This paper focuses on Byzantine culture and learning in the States of Epiros, Nicaea and Trebizond, and the last small Byzantine state in Peloponnese, Mystras.

⁷. Photeine Th. Vlachopoulou, *Λέων Σγουρός. Ο βίος και η πολιτεία του Βυζαντινού άρχοντα της βορειοανατολικής Πελοποννήσου στις αρχές του 13^{ου} αιώνα*, Athens 2003.

⁸. J. Longnon, La reprise de Salonique par les Grecs en 1224, in *Actes du VI^e Congrès International d'Études Byzantines* (Paris, 27 juillet - 2 août 1948), vol. I, Paris 1950, p. 141-146. - B. Sinogowitz, Zur Eroberung Thessalonikes im Herbst 1224, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 45 (1952) 28.

⁹. For the proclamation, see Alkmeni Stavridou-Zafraka, Συμβολή στο ζήτημα της αναγόρευσης του Θεόδωρου Δούκα, in *Αφιέρωμα στον Εμμανουήλ Κριαρά*, Thessalonike 1988, p. 37-62. For the date of coronation in 1225, see Eleni Vei-Seferli, Ο χρόνος στέψεως του Θεόδωρου Δούκα ως προσδιορίζεται ἐξ ἀνεκδότων γραμμιάτων Ιωάννου τοῦ Ἀποκαύκου, *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbücher* 21 (1971-76) 272-279. - A. Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ἡπειρος* 70-73. - Eadem, Η χρονολόγηση επιστολών και εγγράφων του Ιωάννη Απόκαυκου, *Εγνατία* 4 (1993-1994) 143-168. - Eadem, The Empire of Thessaloniki (1224-1242). Political Ideology and Reality, *Βυζαντιακά* 19 (1999) 211-222. - Eadem, The Political Ideology of the State of Epiros, in *Urbs Capta*, p. 311-323. - G. Prinzing, Das Kaisertum im Staat von Epeiros. Propagierung, Stabilisierung und Verfall, in *Πρακτικά Διεθνούς Συμποσίου για το Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου* (Άρτα, 27-31 Μαΐου 1990), ed. E. Chrysos, Athens 1992 (hereafter: *Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου*), σ. 17-30. - Fr. Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki (1224-1242)*, Thessalonike 1996, p. 126.

The State of Epiros reached its peak by the conquests of its rulers Michael and Theodore Doukas at the expense of Franks, Venetians and Bulgarians and extended from Naupaktos in the South to Dyrrhachion in the North and from the Ionian and the Adriatic Seas to the Evros River. The disastrous defeat of Theodore Doukas by the tsar Ivan Asen II and his imprisonment in 1230 diminished the aspirations of Theodore to the imperial throne of Constantinople. In 1246 Thessalonike became part of the Nicaean Empire, while Theodore's nephew Michael II Doukas from Arta continued the wars against the emperors of Nicaea and the Palaiologi even after 1261, when Constantinople was recovered¹⁰.

Epiros in the west of the Balkan Peninsula was exposed to the hostility and the cultural impact of the West and was isolated from the other Greek provinces by the Pindos range. After the sack of Constantinople many officials who served in the administration probably remained there, while it is recorded that many others, members of the senate, high-ranking officials and intellectuals fled to Epiros and ran the administration and military affairs under the command of its rulers. Refugees were also permitted by Michael I to settle in the castle of Ioannina¹¹. The administrative center was Arta at the bank of the Arachthos River until 1224, when Thessalonike was recaptured and Theodore Doukas and the senate moved there. Three eminent personalities played a most significant role in the ecclesiastical and political affairs: John Apokaukos, metropolitan of Naupaktos, Demetrios Chomatenos, archbishop of Achrida, and George Bardanes, metropolitan of Corfou. They became the champions of Theodore's political and ecclesiastical policy, defending his right to the anointment and coronation and to the election of new prelates in vacant sees without the consent of the Patriarch. The same ecclesiastical policy was followed by Trebizond as well. The independent ecclesiastical policy of the rulers of Epiros and Trebizond challenged the Patriarch's jurisdiction to their lands. Although the Empire of Nicaea was restricted in the Eastern territories, the jurisdiction of the Patriarch extended to all

¹⁰ D. M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, Oxford 1957, p 47-185. – Idem, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267-1479. A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1984. – A. Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ηπειρος* 60-88.

¹¹ D. M. Nicol, Refugees, Mixed Population and Local Patriotism in Epiros and Western Macedonia after the Fourth Crusade, in *XV^e Congrès International d'Études Byzantines, Rapports et co-rapports*, vol. I/2, Athens 1976, p. 3-33, and especially 20-21 for the settlement of refugees in Ioannina with the relevant sources and literature (= idem, *Studies in Late Byzantine History and Prosopography* [Variorum Reprints], London 1986, Art. IV). – M. S. Kordoses, *Τα Βυζαντινά Γιάννενα. Κάστρο (Πόλη) – Ξώκαστρο – Κοινωνία – Διοίκηση – Οικονομία*, Athens 2003, p. 68-74 (a reprint from *Ιστοριογεωγραφικά* 9 [2002]).

the territories of the old empire, and there was a tendency to expand the boundaries of the State of Nicaea to coincide with those of the Patriarch's authority¹².

The metropolitan of Naupaktos, John Apokaukos (1199/1200-1232), was the senior in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Epiros, a prolific writer and a distinguished scholar and theologian. He was a nephew of the historian Constantine Manasses, who had been metropolitan of Naupaktos from about 1175 to 1187. He had studied in Constantinople together with the later Patriarch Manuel Sarantenos and other eminent prelates and scholars. It was the last quarter of the twelfth century, when studies of ancient Greek writers flourished and scholars "atticized", e.g. Eustathios of Thessalonike, Michael Choniates, Euthymios Tornikes, Basileios Pediadites and others. Apokaukos had served as a patriarchal scribe (υπογραφεύς), a post that he left when he was elected to the see of Naupaktos. His correspondence with the metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates, Demetrios Chomatenos, George Bardanes, Theodore Doukas and his wife, with officials of administration and clergy and the decisions of the ecclesiastical court of his metropolis provide plenty of information about the political, ecclesiastical, military and social affairs in Epiros¹³.

Demetrios Chomatenos had studied also in Constantinople. It is obvious that he had brought with him his library, especially law books, to Achrida, where he served as a *chartophylax* until 1217, when he was elected archbishop of Achrida by the ecclesiastical synod of Epiros. His 152 documents, letters, synodal acts and judicial *decisions* prove that he was a competent canonist and they are a good source for the history, the provincial life, the customs and morals in a vast area¹⁴.

George Bardanes was born in Athens. He was a student of the learned metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates, with whom he corresponded even when the latter left Athens and lived in self-exile on the

¹². A. D. Karpozilos, *The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros (1217-1233)* [Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και Μελέται 7], Thessalonike 1973. – A. Stavridou-Zafraka, *Νίκαια και Ήπειρος* 146-153.

¹³. On Apokaukos, see M. Wellnhofer, *Johannes Apokaukos, Metropolit von Naupaktos in Aetolien (c. 1155-1233). Sein Leben und seine Stellung im Despotate von Epiros unter Michael Dukas und Theodoros Komnenos*, Freising 1913. – P. K. Polakes, *Ιωάννης Απόκαυκος Μητροπολίτης Ναυπάκτου. Σελίδες ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας τοῦ βυζαντινοῦ κράτους κατὰ τὸν Π' αἰῶνα*, Jerusalem 1923. – K. Lampropoulos, *Ιωάννης Απόκαυκος. Συμβολή στην ἔρευνα του βίου και του συγγραφικῶς ἔργου του*, Athens 1988.

¹⁴. For the career of Demetrios Chomatenos and a new edition of his written work see *Demetrii Chomateni Ponemata diaphora*, ed. G. Prinzing [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae XXXVIII], Berolini - Novi Eboraci 2002.

island of Keos. He was called “Atticos”, because of his origin and his elaborate style of writing. He was ordained bishop of Corfu in 1219 after the wish of Theodore Doukas, because of his knowledge and ability to defend the policy of the state and to follow a strict Orthodox policy towards the West¹⁵.

We are not well informed about education in Epiros, except of some casual references by Apokaukos, e.g. for a school of sacred scriptures in Vonitsa, where Demetrios Eugeniotis, brother of the local bishop Nikolaos, taught. Apokaukos complained about illiterate prelates and clergy. He himself as well as Michael Choniates and other prelates complained that they lived among barbarians, among people who did not understand their elaborate atticized homilies. A number of epigrams and inscriptions painted or carved in various churches and other monuments, even on seals, imply the existence of a circle of intellectuals in Epiros. Some in verses, as the inscription on a tower of Dyrrachion, were perhaps written by John Apokaukos¹⁶. The three above-mentioned scholars did not have learned successors. Even the Life of the saintly empress Theodora, the consort of Michael II, was written by a monk, Iob Melias Iasites, who came in exile to Arta from Constantinople in about 1275, because of his anti-unionist feelings¹⁷. Researchers have widely investigated the existence of manuscripts commissioned or copied in Epiros in the thirteenth

¹⁵. For George Bardanes, see J. Hoeck - R.-J. Loenertz, *Nikolaos-Nektarios von Otranto, Abt von Casole. Beiträge zur Geschichte der ost-westlichen Beziehungen unter Innozenz III. und Friedrich II.* [Studia Patristica et Byzantina 11], Ettal 1965. – Ekaterini Galoni, *Γεώργιος Βαρδάνης. Συμβολή στη μελέτη του βίου, του έργου και της εποχής του* [Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και Μελέται 46], Thessalonike 2008.

¹⁶. B. Katsaros, *Λόγια στοιχεία στην επιγραφική του «Δεσποτάτου». Λόγιοι διανοούμενοι κατά τον 13ο αι. στην Ήπειρο με βάση τις έμμετρες επιγραφές του χώρου*, in *Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου*, p. 517-544. – Sophia Kalopissi-Verti, *Dedicatory Inscriptions and Donor Portraits in Thirteenth-Century Churches of Greece* [Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Denkschriften 226 – Tabula Imperii Byzantini Bd. 5], Wien 1992. – C. N. Constantinides, *Από την πνευματική ζωή του κράτους της Ηπείρου (1204 - ca. 1340)*, in *Μεσαιωνική Ήπειρος. Πρακτικά Επιστημονικού Συμποσίου* (Ιωάννινα 17-19 Σεπτεμβρίου 1999), ed. C. N. Constantinides, Ioannina 2001, p. 231-256 (hereafter: C. N. Constantinides, *Πνευματική ζωή*), with an English summary, p. 255-256: *Education and Learning in the State of Epiros (1204 - ca. 1340)*. – B. Katsaros, *Πνευματικός βίος και πολιτισμός της βυζαντινής Άρτας*, in *Η Βυζαντινή Άρτα και η Περιοχή της. Πρακτικά Β' Διεθνούς Αρχαιολογικού και Ιστορικού Συνεδρίου* (Άρτα 12-14 Απριλίου 2002), ed. Eustratia Sygellou, Athens 2007 (hereafter: *Η Βυζαντινή Άρτα*), p. 25-40.

¹⁷. For Iob Melias, see L. I. Vranoussis, *Χρονικά της Μεσαιωνικής και Τουρκοκρατούμενης Ηπείρου. Εκδόσεις και χειρόγραφα*, Ioannina 1962, p. 49-54. – *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Palaiologenzeit*, vol. IV, Wien 1980, no. 7959.

and fourteenth centuries in various libraries; they were mostly of religious or liturgical content¹⁸.

Many archaeologists have studied the monuments of the so-called Despotate of Epiros. Few monuments date to the first third of the thirteenth century. It was during the reign of Michael II (1230-1268) and Nicephoros I (1267/8-1296) that although the state diminished in size, it flourished in art. According to Professor P. Vocotopoulos “*In the sphere of architecture a local school developed in Epiros in the thirteenth century, the roots of which lay in the Helladic school and in the local tradition, and which received influences from Macedonia and Constantinople and from the West. Its principal monuments survive at Arta and in the wider area ... Church building in the Despotate is characterized by a diversity of types and by the innovative solutions that were implemented in some of the monuments*”¹⁹. The most imposing building is the Panagia Paregoretissa at Arta with marvelous mosaics; it was built by Nicephoros I after 1290. Much of its sculptural decoration reflects Italian art²⁰.

Many thirteenth-century wall-paintings survive in Epiros, e.g. in Kato Panagia and St. Theodora at Arta, in St. Demetrios of Katsouris. The late thirteenth-century wall paintings that were discovered in 1975 in the narthex of the katholikon of the Blacherna Monastery are of particular iconographical interest. The Litany of the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria, which was performed in Constantinople every Tuesday, is depicted on the southwest arcade. It is a *unicum* in byzantine art. According to Myrtali Acheimastou-Potamianou who has been studying the monument for many years, the three ladies on the left may be identified with the *basilissa* Anna Palaiologina, the wife of Nicephoros I, her mother Eirene-Eulogia, sister of Michael VIII Palaiologos, and her other daughter, Theodora Raoulaina. They met each other in Constantinople

¹⁸. A. Turyn, *Dated Greek Manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in the Libraries of Great Britain* [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 17], Washington, D.C. 1980, p. 8 and 16. – D. R. Reinsch, *Ηπειρωτικά χειρόγραφα – μερικές παρατηρήσεις και σκέψεις*, in *Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου*, p. 545-550. – C. N. Constantinides, *Πνευματική ζωή* 244-249.

¹⁹. P. L. Vocotopoulos, *Η τέχνη στην Ήπειρο τον 13^ο αιώνα / Art in Epiros in the Thirteenth Century*, in *Η Βυζαντινή Τέχνη μετά την Τέταρτη Σταυροφορία. Η Τέταρτη Σταυροφορία και οι επιπτώσεις της / Byzantine Art in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences. International Congress* (Athens, 9-12 March 2004), ed. P. L. Vocotopoulos, Athens 2007, p. 57-62, esp. 57.

²⁰. A. K. Orlandos, *Η Παρηγορήτισσα τῆς Ἄρτης*, Athens 1963. See also D. D. Triantaphyllooulos, *Μνημεία του «δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου» στην Άρτα: η μέχρι σήμερα έρευνά τους – Προβλήματα για το παρόν και το μέλλον τους*, in *Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου*, p. 505-516.

after the death of Michael Palaiologos in 1282 and the renounce of the Synod of Lyon²¹.

Two fine pieces of gold embroidery have been ascribed to Epirot embroidery workshops. A silk *endyte* of St. Marc's in Venice with a representation of the archangels Michael and Gabriel, and a purple silk shroud (*ποδέα*) of the National History Museum in Sofia which comes from Achrida. The shroud is embroidered with gold and some silver wires and light blue silk threads. It depicts the Virgin Blachernitissa with a medallion of Christ Emmanuel on her chest. It is surrounded by a yellow silk stripe with a gold embroidered inscription, probably written by John Apokaukos, in which the royal couple, Theodore and Maria Doukas, is mentioned expressing their devotion to the Holy Virgin²².

Compared to the scarce source material available to us from Epiros, the Empire of Nicaea provides us with a fuller and continuous account of the period: Historiography, autobiographies, the cartulary of Lembiotissa Monastery, rhetoric, epistolography, inscriptions, coins and seals etc.

One of the main tasks of Theodore I Laskaris in Nicaea was the organization of the state and the re-establishment of the institutions. He relied on high officials and intellectuals, lay and ecclesiastical, who found refuge in Nicaea. One of them was Nicetas Choniates, a former grand logothete, who came to Nicaea in 1206 and soon became the official orator of the court. His History is the chief source for the events during the reign of the last Comneni and Angeli and the spoliation of Constantinople²³. Nikolaos Mesarites, a deacon of Hagia Sophia, who remained in Constantinople and together with his brother participated in the negotiations with the Latin authorities, in order to defend the religious rights of the Orthodox people and clergy of Constantinople, was the go-between for the Greek people of Constantinople and Theodore Laskaris, asking for the latter's coronation. Later he became metropolitan of Ephesos and exarch of all Asia. His writings reveal the political and ecclesiastical situation in Constantinople during the Latin

²¹. Myrtili Acheimastou-Potamianou, Η ζωγραφική της Άρτας στο 13^ο αιώνα και η μονή της Βλαχέρνας, in *Δεσποτάτο της Ηπείρου*, p. 179-203. - Eadem, *Η Βλαχέρνα της Άρτας. Τοιχογραφίες* [Βιβλιοθήκη της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας αρ. 264], Athens 2009, p. 81-87 (Greek text), 133-135 (English summary).

²². Eleni Vlachopoulou-Karabina, Η χρυσοκέντητη ποδέα του Θεοδώρου Κομνηνού-Δούκα α' τέταρτο 13^{ου} αι. - Εθνικό Μουσείο Ιστορίας Σόφιας, in *Η Βυζαντινή Άρτα*, p. 229-240.

²³. As in note 3. See also *Nicetae Choniatae Orationes et Epistulae*, ed. J.-L. van Dieten [Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae III], Berolini - Novi Eboraci 1972.

occupation and the State of Nicaea²⁴. Theodore Eirenikos, a former *epi tou kanikleiou* (in 1198) and *hypatos ton philosophon*, was elected Patriarch in 1214²⁵.

Undoubtedly, the greatest scholar of his time was Nicephoros Blemmydes. He was born in Constantinople in 1197, and fled with his parents to Prusa in 1204. In 1208 he moved to Nicaea, where he was taught Homer and other Greek poets, the Rhetoric of Hermogenes and Logic. According to his Autobiography, he spent some time in the imperial court, where he took a kind of education together with other boys of the elite. He was not satisfied, so he crossed many times the border to meet a certain scholar Prodrimos, a hermit in the area of the Skamandros River, in Troad, which was under the Latin rule. There he was taught arithmetic, geometry, physics, syllogistic and astronomy. He was 26 years old, when he returned to Nicaea in 1223. The new Emperor John Batatzes (1222-1254) showed a special interest in higher education. He was present in Blemmydes' oral examination by the *hypatos ton philosophon* Demetrios Karykes and he was impressed of his knowledge. Although Blemmydes was offered a service in the court, he preferred to join the Church. He was ordained a priest in the cathedral of St. John at Ephesos and then he became a monk. He participated successfully in the negotiations with the representatives of the Pope at Nicaea and Nymphaion, where was the palace of Batatzes, in 1234. In 1233 on his way to Jerusalem, which had been liberated by Friedrich II Hohenstaufen in 1227/8, together with other scholars he stopped at Rhodes, where he was hosted by the local independent governor Leo Gabalas. They visited a monastery famous for its rich library. Later on Blemmydes was asked by the emperor to visit and select books from provinces of the old empire. He spent a year (1238/9) on Mount Athos, in Macedonia, Thessaly and Epiros and selected many books²⁶. In one of his letters to the Despot of

²⁴. A. Heisenberg (ed.), *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte des lateinischen Kaisertums und der Kirchenunion I, II, III*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse 1922-1923* (= idem, *Quellen und Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Geschichte* [Variorum Reprints], London 1973, II.I, II.II, II.III).

²⁵. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Θεόδωρος Ειρηνικός, πατριάρχης οίκουμηνικός ἐν Νικαίᾳ, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10 (1901) 182-192. – C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education in Byzantium in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (1204 - ca. 1310)*, Nicosia 1982, p. 6 and 115 (hereafter: C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education*).

²⁶. *Nicephori Blemmydae autobiographia sive curriculum vitae necnon epistula universalior*, ed. J. A. Munitiz [Corpus Christianorum, series graeca 13], Turnhout 1984. Cf. C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education* 7-9, 12, 15. – M. Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081-1261*, Cambridge 1995, p. 540-541, 554-560.

Epiros Michael II and his consort he expressed his thanks²⁷. The same time the Patriarch Germanos II visited Epiros.

John Batatzes entrusted the education of his son and heir Theodore to the best scholars of the day: Nicephoros Blemmydes and George Akropolites.

In 1233 at the age of 16 George Akropolites came to Nicaea. He was born in Constantinople in 1217, and he was sent to Nicaea for higher education. His teachers were Theodore Hexapterygos and Nicephoros Blemmydes, chosen and payed by the emperor. In 1236 together with four other students he went to Ephesos, where Blemmydes taught in his monastery of St. Gregory the Wonderworker. Later on he undertook the teaching of Prince Theodore, which was interrupted in 1246, when Akropolites accompanied the Emperor John Batatzes on his three-month campaign in Thrace and Macedonia. The course of Theodore's study though was kept alive by correspondence with Akropolites, as it was before with Blemmydes, and by the good library available in the palace. He was taught Logic and Philosophy, as is documented by Theodore's 39 letters to Akropolites, which the latter collected and with a verse preface presented them to Theodore; also by the *encomium* to Acropolites which Theodore wrote in response²⁸.

The flourishing of letters in Nicaea was attributed by Theodore Skoutariotes to the Emperor Theodore II Laskaris (1254-1259). He rebuilt the church of St. Tryphon in Nicaea and established state schools. His classical education and his admiration for the ancient Greek world is revealed in his *encomium* to Nicaea. He regarded himself and his people as descendants of the ancient *Hellenes*. He referred to Asia Minor and his state as *Hellenikon* and *Hellas*. He compared Nicaea with the golden age of Athens because of philosophy and secular learning, finding her though superior because of the Christian Faith²⁹.

Many monasteries flourished in the State of Nicaea and many manuscripts, most of religious content, have survived. Mounts Galesion and Latros were the major monastic centers of Asia Minor. The Monastery of Theotokos on the Lembos island near Smyrna was rebuilt in 1228. Its cartulary with documents dated from 1192 to 1294 is of

²⁷. J. B. Bury, Inedita Nicephori Blemmydae, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6.3 (1897) 526-537.

²⁸. R. J. Macrides (ed.), *George Akropolites 7-9*. Theodore composed an *encomium* for Akropolites: *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris opuscula rhetorica*, ed. A. Tartaglia, Monachii - Lipsiae 2000, p. 95-108 (hereafter: *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris*). Cf. C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education* 15-18.

²⁹. *Theodorus II Ducas Lascaris* 67-84. Cf. C. N. Constantinides, *Higher Education* 19-20.

great importance for the study of administration, economic organization and social structure of the state. Also the monasteries of Theotokos on the mountain Galesion (Alman dag) near Ephesos and those of Kelibara and Stylos on Latros were very important³⁰.

The State of Trebizond consisted territorially of a long strip of coast on the Black Sea, protected in the South by the barrier of the Pontic Mountain. After the sack of Sinope by the Seljuk Sultan of Iconium in 1214 a Turkish wedge separated the State of Trebizond from the Byzantines of Nicaea³¹.

The city of Trebizond consisted of three connected but distinct enclosures, the Lower City, the Middle and the Citadel, where the ruins of the Emperor's palace can still be seen on the hill. The walls run down to the sea shore on either side. In the center of the Middle City stands the church of Theotokos Chrysokephalos, a triple-aisled basilica which has undergone many structural alterations. It was the metropolis, where the Great Komneni were crowned and buried. The church of the patron's saint Saint Eugenios, a martyr of the late third century, still stands. The best preserved church is the monastery church of St. Sophia, two miles to the west of the city walls; it dates from the thirteenth century³².

A chronicle written by Michael Panaretos in the fifteenth century covers in simple style the major political and ecclesiastical events of the Empire between the years 1204 and 1426³³.

The emperors of Trebizond, who styled themselves as Grand Komneni, were patrons of letters and art. One of the most famous scholars was Gregory Chioniades (1240/50-1320), who was born in Constantinople, where he studied medicine. He was ordained priest by 1295 and lived for a short time in Tabriz of Persia (1295/6), where he learned the Persian language and studied astronomy. When he returned to Trebizond, he translated Persian astronomical works into Greek. His pupil George Chrysokokkes (1335/50-1365), of Constantinopolitan origin, wrote treatises on astronomy, medicine and geography. He had also

³⁰. Sophia Kotzambasi, *Βυζαντινά Χειρόγραφα από τα Μοναστήρια της Μικράς Ασίας*, Athens 2004.

³¹. See D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, London 1972, p. 426 (hereafter: D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries*).

³². D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries* 427-429. For churches and monasteries in the city of Trebizond see A. Bryer - D. Winfield, *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontos* [Dumbarton Oaks Studies 20], Washington, D.C. 1985, p. 179-236 (hereafter: A. Bryer - D. Winfield, *Byzantine Monuments*).

³³. *Μιχαήλ τοῦ Παναρέτου Περί τῶν Μεγάλων Κομνηνῶν*, ed. O. Lampsides, Athens 1958. See also A. Savvides, *Οἱ Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί* 161-164 (with literature).

studied mathematics and astronomy under the scholar Manuel of Trebizond. A renowned scholar and a high-ranking official was Constantine Loukites (second half of the 13th century – 1340), who taught mathematics and astronomy at the schools of St. Eugenios and St. Sophia³⁴.

Two *encomia* of the city of Trebizond were composed. One by John Eugenikos in 1450 (*Τῆ Τραπεζουντιῶν πόλει ἐγκωμιαστικὴ ἔκφρασις*), by which he praises the city for the many churches and monasteries, the beauty of its forests, its inhabitants and the economical prosperity³⁵. The second was composed by the renowned scholar Bessarion, who was born in Trebizond (1399/1400-1472). He praised Trebizond as the commercial center built on crossroads, and the architectural style of the palace. Bessarion was a pupil of the metropolitan of Trebizond Dositheos, whom he followed in Constantinople, where he studied rhetoric under Manuel Chrysokokkes. In 1427 as a deacon he studied philosophy and mathematics under George Gemistos-Plethon, at Mystras. In 1437 he was ordained bishop of Nicaea and participated in the Synod of Ferrara-Florence in 1438/39, where he supported the union of the Churches and the subordination of the Orthodox Church to the Church of Rome. He was ordained cardinal of the Roman Church in 1440. Before his death he offered his library to Venice. Among his books and manuscripts was the Chronicle of Michael Panaretos, which Fallmerayer found by 1820 and gave him the impetus to study the history of Pontos³⁶.

A great part of the wealth of the Empire of Trebizond was centered in the monasteries, which controlled the largest estates. The three great monasteries of Soumela, Vazelon and Peristera (Peristereota) were endowed by the emperors³⁷. Alexius III Komnenos and his wife Theodora were the founders of the Monastery of St. Dionysios on Mount Athos.

A microcosm of Byzantine Constantinople though was Mystras built on Mount Taygetos near Sparta in Moreas (Peloponnese), especially in the early fifteenth century, when Manuel II Palaiologos patronized its development, particularly after his son Theodore II had been enthroned as *despot* in 1408. The churches of Mystras, St. Demetrius, the

³⁴. Cf. D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries* 429-430. – A. Savvides, *Οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί* 164-167, 160-161.

³⁵. D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries* 42. – A. Savvides, *Οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί* 155-156.

³⁶. L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist und Staatsmann*, vol. I-III, Paderborn 1923-1942. – H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich*, München 1959 (repr. 1977), p. 767-769. – J. Monfasani, *Byzantine Scholars in Renaissance Italy. Cardinal Bessarion and Other Émigrés*, Aldershot 1995.

³⁷. See A. Bryer - D. Winfield, *Byzantine Monuments* 284-285 (Soumela), 289-294 (Vazelon), 271-272 (Peristereota).

Brontocheion and Afentiko, Peribleptos and Pantanassa of the fourteenth century are variations of the Byzantine style and techniques; their frescoes are among the most striking examples of the art of the Palaiologan period.

Writers and philosophers congregated at Mystras: Isidore, later bishop of Kiev, Bessarion, later bishop of Nicaea, George Scholarios, who was to become the first Patriarch under the Turkish rule. Councilor of the young despot, the philosopher George Gemistos-Plethon, encouraged Manuel to take a series of measures for the reform of administration and economy, for the defense of Moreas against the Turks. “*The realities*” though according to D. Nicol, “*were very different from the romantic ideas of Plethon*”. The Despotate came to its end in May 1460³⁸.

In conclusion, the three Greek states that were established after the Fourth Crusade followed their own devices. They kept alive the Byzantine tradition in learning and art; they transmitted the Byzantine Culture and received the impact of the West as well as from other peoples, whether they were enemies or allies.

³⁸. Cf. D. M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries* 358-365, 425. – D. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec du Morée*, vol. I: *Histoire politique*, Paris 1932 and vol. II: *Vie et institutions*, Athens 1953. For more updated bibliography see A. Tantsis, Παλαιολόγοι και Καντακουζηνοί ως χορηγοί εκκλησιών στον Μυστρά, in the present volume, p. 257-290.

Ο Βυζαντινός πολιτισμός στα ύστερα Ελληνικά Μεσαιωνικά Κράτη

Η μελέτη εστιάζει στον πολιτισμό και την παιδεία στα ελληνικά κράτη που δημιουργήθηκαν μετά την άλωση της Κωνσταντινούπολης από τους Φράγκους της Δ΄ Σταυροφορίας το 1204, της Ηπείρου, της Νίκαιας, της Τραπεζούντας και το τελευταίο μικρό κρατίδιο του Μυστρά.

Τα έγγραφα και οι αποφάσεις των εκκλησιαστικών δικαστηρίων των λογίων ιεραρχών Ιωάννη Απόκαυκου και Δημητρίου Χωματηνού παρέχουν πληροφορίες για την πολιτική ιδεολογία, την Εκκλησία, τον στρατό και την κοινωνία του κράτους της Ηπείρου, σποραδικές όμως αναφορές για την παιδεία. Επιγράμματα, επιγραφές σε ναούς και άλλα μνημεία, έμμετρες επιγραφές σε σφραγίδες μαρτυρούν την παρουσία διανοουμένων στην Ήπειρο. Χειρόγραφα από την Ήπειρο κυρίως λειτουργικού περιεχομένου έχουν βρεθεί σε Βιβλιοθήκες του εξωτερικού. «Σχολή» αρχιτεκτονικής με επιρροές από τη Μακεδονία, την Κωνσταντινούπολη και τη Δύση μαρτυρεί η Παναγία Παρηγορήτισσα της Άρτας. Οι τοιχογραφίες της Κάτω Παναγιάς, της Αγίας Θεοδώρας Άρτης, του Αγίου Δημητρίου του Κατσούρη, του νάρθηκα της Μονής της Βλαχέρνας, η χρυσοκέντητη «ενδυτή» του Αγίου Μάρκου Βενετίας και η χρυσοκέντητη ποδέα του Θεόδωρου Δούκα και της συζύγου του από την Αχρίδα (σήμερα στο Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο της Σόφιας), αποτελούν πολύτιμα δείγματα της συνέχειας του βυζαντινού πολιτισμού.

Αντίθετα στη Νίκαια, στην «αυτοκρατορία εν εξορία», η ιστοριογραφία, αυτοβιογραφίες, ρητορικά κείμενα, επιστολογραφία, επιγραφές, μοναστικά κέντρα, η διάσωση κωδίκων και η οργάνωση βιβλιοθηκών, η προσέλκυση λογίων μαρτυρούν την προστασία των πολιτιστικών αγαθών από τον αυτοκράτορα και τη διαφύλαξη της ελληνικής γλώσσας και παιδείας, με κορύφωση τη βασιλεία του Θεόδωρου Β΄ Λάσκαρη, όταν η Νίκαια αναδείχθηκε όχι μόνον η «κιβωτός» της βασιλείας αλλά και «Νέαι Αθήναι».

Στη μακρινή Τραπεζούντα οι Μεγάλοι Κομνηνοί αναδείχθηκαν προστάτες των γραμμάτων και των τεχνών. Σπουδαία θρησκευτικά και πολιτιστικά κέντρα αναδείχθηκαν οι μονές Σουμελά, Βαζελώνος και Περιστερεώτα. Πολυμαθείς λόγιοι όπως ο Γρηγόριος Χιονιάδης και ο Γεώργιος Χρυσοκόκης διέπρεψαν στην ιατρική, τη γεωγραφία, την αστρονομία, επίσης ο Κωνσταντίνος Λουκίτης, ο Βησσαρίων, που έφθασε και στον Μυστρά, στον κύκλο του τελευταίου λογίου του Βυζαντίου, του Γεωργίου Πλήθωνα Γεμιστού.