

**An Annotated Translation of John Kantakouzenos'
Histories, Book III, Chapters 1-30**

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Brian Steven McLaughlin, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed:

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Abstract

The present thesis aims to elucidate the relatively neglected Book III of Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos' *Histories* by offering an English translation of, and commentary on, the first 30 of its 100 chapters. The translation of such an important text is intended to provide a convenient resource for other scholars studying fourteenth-century Byzantium and to highlight the significance of this section of the *Histories*.

The thesis is divided into two Parts (I-II). Part I comprises the Introduction in five Sections (1-5). Section 1 briefly describes the manuscript tradition and previous translations, and then explains the aims, scope and approach of the thesis and the principles adopted regarding translation and transliteration. Section 2 provides a brief overview of the author's life and times before summarising and reviewing the previous scholarly literature concerning the *Histories*. Section 3 outlines the content and structure of the complete text. Section 4 discusses Kantakouzēnos' historiographical method, concentrating on the sources of the *Histories*, his handling of chronology and his literary approach. Section 5 analyses Kantakouzēnos' portrayal of the major protagonists, including himself, in the translated chapters, examining how he wished the outbreak of the 1341-1347 civil war to be understood and how he assigned responsibility for the conflict.

Part II of the thesis comprises an English translation of Kantakouzēnos' *Histories*, Book III, Chapters 1-30, with an accompanying Commentary, which is presented in the form of endnotes. The Commentary elucidates the text and the translation, placing the passages under consideration in the wider context of the *Histories*.

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Any translator of Kantakouzēnos will at some point find that they are in the dark, but the German translation of Fatouros and Krischer has on numerous occasions provided illumination for deciphering the intent behind the most obscure phrases. Furthermore, I gladly acknowledge the family of the late Donald M. Nicol for preserving his papers and allowing his former student, Ruth Macrides, access to his summarised translation of the *Histories*. This text, despite often compressing entire chapters into a few words, was of great help in initially navigating Kantakouzēnos' vast oeuvre.

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Part I: Introduction

1.1. Manuscript tradition, editions and previous translations

The complete text of the *Histories* is preserved in seven manuscripts.¹ Among them *Seragliensis gr. 28* (S), *Laurentianus IX, 9* (L), *Bononiensis 2212* (B), and *Parisinus Coislinianus 144* (P) belong to the 14th century, while *Mutinensis 224-225*, *Monacensis 106* and *Matritensis gr. 4712* are dateable to the 16th century. The first group of manuscripts was produced during Kantakouzēnos' lifetime and possibly under his supervision. It is probable that all four originated from the same scriptorium.² The completion of *Laurentianus IX* is dated by a colophon to 7 December 1369. The 16th-century manuscripts derive from the earlier four. A small fragment of the text is preserved in another 16th-century manuscript, *Ottobonianus gr. 75*.³

A Latin translation of *Monacensis 106*, by Jacob Pontanus, was published in 1603.⁴ The first edition of the text was prepared from *Parisinus Coislinianus 144* by an unnamed editor for the *Byzantinae historiae scriptores varii*, or Paris Corpus, and published in 1645, with Latin notes by Jacob Gretser and Pontanus' translation. This edition was subsequently used as the basis for Louis Cousin's literary and somewhat abridged French translation which was published in 1685.⁵ Edward Gibbon went out of his way to denounce 'palpable and essential errors' in Cousin's rather hurried

¹ So far the fullest description of the MSS is Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 7-31.

² This is convincingly argued on the basis of palaeographical evidence by Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 27-30, and accepted by Schönauer, 'Italian Journey', 1.

³ MSS *Matritensis gr. 4712* and *Ottobonianus gr. 75* were unknown to Miller. See Schönauer, 'Italian Journey', for the relationship between the earlier and later MSS.

⁴ On the early editions and translations, see Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 32-5.

⁵ This work, not mentioned by Miller, is most easily viewed on the website of the late Philippe Remacle, <<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/historiens/cantacuzene/histoire.htm>>, last accessed 26 March 2012.

translation, concluding 'Put not your trust in translations!'⁶ In 1729 the Paris text was reprinted in Venice, with changes to the punctuation and a small number of corrections, once again accompanied by Pontanus' translation and Gretser's notes. In 1828-32, Ludwig Schopen re-edited the text for the *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae* (CSHB), or Bonn Corpus. Although the first volume, encompassing *Histories*, Books I-II, was simply a corrected edition of the Paris Corpus, the subsequent two volumes, encompassing Books III and IV, respectively, include some corrections and variant readings from *Monacensis* 106. Once more, Pontanus' Latin translation was published with the edition. The superior Bonn edition was ignored by Migne in his later *Patrologiae Graeca* edition, which relied upon the Venice edition. The *Histories*, with Potanus' translation, comprises volumes 153 and 154 of this corpus, published in Paris in 1866.

During the 20th century, the first third of both Books I and IV were re-edited, using all four of the 14th-century manuscripts, and translated into English, respectively by Robert Trone, in 1979, and Timothy S. Miller, in 1975; both scholars also provided historical commentaries. Georgios Fatouros and Tilman Krischer, relying upon the Bonn edition, published a German translation of Book I in 1982 and of Book II in 1986. Subsequent to the commencement of the present thesis, the same scholars published their translation of Book III, in 2011. The first volume is preceded by a short introduction detailing the author's career and literary works and all three volumes are accompanied by detailed notes which demonstrate particular interest in linguistic issues but are sometimes rather traditional in terms of historical analysis. The notes to the third book become distinctly less detailed

⁶ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* III, 775, n. 24.

as the volume proceeds, most probably as a consequence of the scale of the task, as the authors hint in their foreword.⁷

A new French translation of the entire *Histories* was recently discovered among the unpublished papers of the eminent Byzantinist Rodolphe Guiland (d. 1981). A project to publish this translation with a new commentary began in October 2012, and was apparently completed in August 2016, although publication of the final text is still awaited at time of writing.⁸ Finally, a new edition and study of all the known manuscripts, as mentioned above, is under preparation by Sonja Schönauer and is expected to be published in the *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* (CFHB) in 2018.⁹ The present thesis is a contribution to the continued study of the *Histories* and its remarkable author.

⁷ FK III, vii.

⁸ Further details at <<http://www.jeanvi.fr/>>, last accessed 14 September 2017.

⁹ S. Schönauer, personal communication, 19 March 2016.

1.2. Aims, scope and approach of the thesis

The present thesis aims to elucidate the relatively neglected third book of Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos' *Histories* by offering an English translation of, and commentary on, the first 30 of its 100 chapters; the entire book is too lengthy to fit within the constraints of a doctoral dissertation. The thesis relies upon Ludwig Schopen's CSHB (Bonn) edition, as the new CFHB edition by Sonja Schönauer currently remains under preparation.

The section of the *Histories* under consideration has been chosen for its importance within the work as a whole. Kantakouzēnos relates the period between the death of Andronikos III and his own acclamation as emperor – roughly five months, June to October 1341 – in no less than 27 chapters, or 162 pages, in the Bonn edition. This is by far his greatest expenditure of effort on any comparable chronological interval and demonstrates his intense concern for explaining the outbreak of the ruinous 1341-7 civil war. These explanations are most frequently expressed through speeches, which historians have tended to relegate to a level of lesser importance than the search for historical 'facts'. However, they form an integral part of his work and, by examining speeches and narrative together, it is hoped that Kantakouzēnos' purpose in composing the *Histories* may be better understood. The Introduction therefore considers, in addition to Kantakouzēnos' literary form and historiographical methods, how Kantakouzēnos wished the conflict to be understood and how he assigns responsibility between the protagonists.

The Translation very closely follows the Greek, attempting even to replicate Kantakouzēnos' sentence structure where this does not produce unreadable English. One reason for this approach is to facilitate understanding of the Greek text; translation is not an exact science and any historian working seriously with translated texts will have some recourse to

the original. Another goal of such close translation is to minimise unnecessary distortion of Kantakouzēnos' tone and meaning, with the intention of enabling readers to assess Kantakouzēnos' claims for themselves. Sometimes the text is studiously vague and the author's language or meaning is ambiguous; the translation generally preserves this, with clarification provided where necessary in the commentary. Obscure paraphrases and the frequent repetition of certain words and phrases are retained; the opportunity to consciously 'improve' or vary Kantakouzēnos' vocabulary is declined. An unfortunate trait of Kantakouzēnos' style is a marked preference for referring to individuals by pronouns rather than by name; owing to this, even allowing for the greater flexibility of Greek over English pronouns, passages can be often difficult to follow. Names are therefore added, where deemed necessary, within square brackets as a convenience to the reader. Words in angle brackets lack direct equivalents in the Greek but clearly implied by it. Kantakouzēnos also often employs an unusual technique of beginning to relate speeches indirectly before switching abruptly into direct speech. This quirk has been preserved in the translation but double quotes have been added at the points where these transitions seem most natural; such punctuation is frequently absent from the edition.

The Commentary is primarily historical rather than philological; for the latter aspects, the reader is referred to the thorough notes of Fatouros and Krischer, and to the forthcoming CFHB edition. This commentary is therefore intended, first, to situate the peoples, individuals, institutions, places and events mentioned in the text in their historical context, drawing upon a wide range of scholarship. The focus is heavily weighted towards political considerations, reflecting the primacy of political concerns in the *Histories*. Second, the notes endeavour to place the passages under consideration in the context of the whole *Histories*. The *Histories* is a complete

literary work of considerable length and remarkable homogeneity; Kantakouzēnos clearly intended it to be read in sequence and often refers to matters he mentioned previously or simply assumes readers' knowledge of them. Furthermore, his presentation of people and events would necessarily have been influenced by subsequent developments and attitudes contemporary to the time of composition.

1.3. Transliteration and referencing

Passages in the *Histories* (= Kant.) are identified by reference to the volume number, page number, and often line number, in the Bonn edition. The present translation comprises Kant. II, 11.1-190.22. In the translation itself the corresponding page number in the edition is indicated within obliques (e.g., /12/). Commentary entries are numbered sequentially within each chapter and referred to in the form 'Ch.1:11' (i.e., Chapter 1, note 11).

The transliteration scheme adopted (see Appendix II) aims at orthographic rather than phonological precision. However, as vowel length is indicated, the reader may reproduce contemporary pronunciation, which is generally accepted as having been close to Modern Greek. Greek names are transliterated, not Anglicised, e.g., 'Geōrgios' rather than 'George'. Non-Greek names are also transliterated, for all that Kantakouzēnos sometimes struggles to render them into Greek, with a more commonly academically accepted form provided in the commentary. The only exceptions are for names of persons in classical Antiquity, where the English forms are so well established that transliterating them would only cause confusion, e.g., 'Constantine the Great' rather than 'Kōnstantinos the Great'. Toponyms observe a similar principle but rather more exceptions are made for names familiar in English, e.g., 'Thessaly' not 'Thessalia'. Ethnonyms are translated to their established English forms but are otherwise unchanged, e.g., 'Persai' are 'Persians', not 'Turks'. 'Rhōmaioi' is likewise translated as 'Romans' throughout; following Kantakouzēnos' usage, 'Byzantines' indicates the inhabitants of Constantinople only. Court titles are generally provided in italicised transliteration, e.g., *parakoimōmenos*. The only routine exceptions to this are for the two titles which occur constantly throughout the text: 'Grand Domestic' for *meγas domestikos* and 'Emperor' for *basileus*. Occasionally other terms are transliterated rather than translated when English substitutes

might have misleading connotations, e.g., *oikeios*. Katakouzēnos' usual term for his anonymous enemies, *sykophantai*, is translated as 'sycophants' but is primarily intended in its Greek meaning as 'false accusers'.

2.1. Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos and his *Histories*

Iōannēs Angelos Komnēnos Palaiologos Kantakouzēnos was one of the leading personalities of the Byzantine world in the fourteenth century.¹⁰ As soldier, statesman and later emperor, he played a prominent role in the brief recovery and subsequent catastrophic collapse of the Empire of the Romans. As emperor and theologian, he exercised a decisive influence on the greatest Orthodox theological controversy of his time and, as historian, he produced one of the longest historiographical works in Greek, central to the study of his age.

Kantakouzēnos was born around 1295. His father, who is not securely identified, died young, possibly even before his son was born. Kantakouzēnos inherited the names of Angelos and Palaiologos from his mother, and was occasionally addressed as Komnēnos too.¹¹ His early life is largely unknown but he seems to have been intimate with Andronikos Palaiologos, later Andronikos III (r. 1328-1341), from an early age.¹² Andronikos was disinherited by his imperial grandfather, Andronikos II (r. 1282-1328), in October 1320, which soon caused him to openly revolt.¹³

At this time, Kantakouzēnos held the rank *meḡas papias*¹⁴ although, in the *Histories*, he refers to himself anachronistically as *meḡas domestikos*. He was in charge of a military force stationed at Gallipoli and had previously been part of Michaēl IX's entourage at Adrianople.¹⁵ Kantakouzēnos was, from the outset of the revolt, one of the young Andronikos' leading

¹⁰ The following summary relies largely upon Nicol, *Family*, 35-103, no. 22. See also *PLP* 10973; FK I, 1-14. Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, is useful but less careful than the earlier work.

¹¹ Nicol, *Family*, 35-6. For Kantakouzēnos' father, see Nicol, *Family*, 27-30, no. 20. For his mother, Ch.9:18.

¹² Kant. I, 19.12-21; Greg. I, 301.15-17.

¹³ For Andronikos II, see Laiou, *Andronicus II*; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 93-147; *PLP* 21436. For Andronikos III, see Ch.1:2.

¹⁴ Greg. I, 301.7-9.

¹⁵ Kant. I, 24.15-23, 38.6-8.

partisans. The struggle between grandfather and grandson was protracted, with short bouts of open warfare separated by periods of truce and varying levels of co-operation between the rival emperors. Ultimately, Andronikos II was deposed in 1328. By then Kantakouzēnos had been promoted to *megas domestikos*, or Grand Domestic, and was one of the most important figures in Andronikos III's court.¹⁶

After the extensive territorial losses of Andronikos II's reign, Andronikos III oversaw a period of stabilisation and even advancement in the political fortunes of the Empire. In the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos makes great play of Andronikos' military ventures and his own prominent role in them. Although Andronikos was forced to accept the loss of the remaining imperial territories in northern Anatolia, and encountered mixed success against the rival Balkan states of Serbia and Bulgaria, he re-asserted direct control over the wealthy Aegean islands of Chios and Lesbos, forced migrant Albanian tribes to recognise his authority, and finally annexed Thessaly and Epiros, both largely independent of Constantinople since the Fourth Crusade. On the whole, Andronikos appears to have avoided financially overstressing himself, defeated rebellions quickly, and made sincere efforts to reform the judicial system. The security of the Empire was strengthened as a result of his military successes and his fortification efforts; despite the chronic vulnerability of its long frontiers, there was no immediate existential threat or intimation of internal collapse.

Andronikos III's sudden death in June 1341 created a political vacuum; his heir, Iōannēs V Palaiologos, was still a child. Kantakouzēnos quickly secured control of the government, effectively exercising imperial power. However, he underestimated the determination and ability of his political opponents. When they moved against him in October of the same

¹⁶ See further Ch.1:9.

year, he was essentially unprepared despite being in command of a sizeable army. His political countermove, declaring himself both *basileus* and also protector of Iōannēs V, mainly provoked hostility and his military efforts soon foundered.¹⁷ By mid-1342 his party controlled almost no territory besides the city of Didymoteichon, most of his army had deserted, and he enjoyed little open support among the aristocracy or common people; he was on the verge of total defeat. Following an appeal to the Serbian king, he obtained sufficient military aid to remain in contention but had no prospect of victory until he secured the support of the powerful Turkish ruler, Umur of Aydin. Subsequently, Kantakouzēnos would secure the backing of a number of Turkish warlords, most significantly the Ottoman ruler Orhan, to whom he married his daughter Theodōra. These Turkish forces allowed him to conduct a grinding war of attrition and economic devastation in Thrace until elements of the regency government finally contrived to open the gates of Constantinople to him in February 1347. Kantakouzēnos' dependence on largely foreign military forces to achieve victory highlighted the difficulties he would face as emperor, both from a lack of domestic political support and material resources.

The Empire had been devastated by the war and was further depopulated by the ensuing great plague epidemic, now popularly known as the Black Death. Furthermore, neighbouring powers, particularly Serbia, had conquered substantial territories during the conflict; the Empire was reduced to Thrace and a few enclaves scattered around the Aegean. Kantakouzēnos attempted to accommodate the ambitions of his adult sons, Matthaios and Manouēl, as well as Iōannēs Palaiologos, to whom he married his daughter Helenē, by providing them all with portions of the diminished imperial territory to administer. This was strikingly unsuccessful; Palaiologos became

¹⁷ These events are encompassed by the present translation.

the focus for popular opposition to Kantakouzēnos' rule, while many of his own partisans, viewing Kantakouzēnos' conciliation of Palaiologos as a betrayal of their sacrifices during the war, sided with his eldest son, Matthaios. These tensions became increasingly irreconcilable as his reign progressed. Although Kantakouzēnos avoided further serious territorial losses, his lack of resources necessitated continued reliance on increasingly powerful and increasingly uncontrollable Ottoman allies. The ongoing political turmoil prevented Kantakouzēnos' diminished military power from being concentrated against external dangers; as a result, he achieved no better than exhausting stalemates in his conflicts with the Serbs, Turks and Genoese. In 1352 civil war erupted openly again and, in December 1354, Iōannēs V finally forced his father-in-law to abdicate. Kantakouzēnos assumed the monastic habit under the name Iōasaph.¹⁸ Whether one accepts his claim that he had already decided to abdicate and become a monk before his son-in-law's revolt or not, he was clearly dispirited by the strife and his inability to arrest the Empire's dire decline.¹⁹ Iōannēs V recognised the dangers of taking vengeance on his deposed rival who was, after all, his father-in-law. He accepted Kantakouzēnos' assistance in finally convincing Matthaios, in December 1357, to surrender his own claims to rule.

Thereafter, Kantakouzēnos enjoyed not only an unusual degree of autonomy for an ex-emperor but also a position of unusual respect and influence for a monk. A competent theologian, his settlement of the Palamite controversy, in two councils held in 1351, endured and he remained an active protector of Palamism against its critics. Iōannēs V seems to have

¹⁸ This took place on 10 December 1354. For the circumstances of Kantakouzēnos' abdication, see Nicol, 'Abdication'.

¹⁹ E.g., Kant. III, 308.17-19: ἀπαγορεύσας τὸ μὴ ἂν ποτε δυνήσασθαι Ῥωμαίους ὀρθὰ φρονήσῃν καὶ λυσitteλοῦντα ἑαυτοῖς, ('he despaired that the Romans would ever have the ability to understand what was right and beneficial for themselves'). For the circumstances of his abdication, see Nicol, 'Abdication'. Kantakouzēnos' reign is summarised in Nicol, *Family*, 64-86; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 209-250.

surrendered much of his management of ecclesiastical affairs to his father-in-law, assigning him the task of negotiating with the papal legate, Paul, over the issue of Church union in 1367. The latter apparently compared him to a spit: when he moved, others would necessarily turn with him.²⁰ Kantakouzēnos exercised a lasting influence over Church affairs and his prestige and unquestioned Orthodoxy were probably a major factor in preventing renewed schism when Iōannēs V made his personal conversion to Roman Catholicism.²¹

Kantakouzēnos, as the monk Iōasaph, had retired first to the Mangana in Constantinople and later to the Charsianitēs Monastery.²² He also spent intervals in the Peloponnese, which was still ruled by his sons. In 1379-1381, the aged monk was held hostage in Galata as part of the conflict between Iōannēs V and his grandson, Andronikos IV (r. 1376-1379). Following his release, he retreated to Mistra in the Peloponnese. He died there on 15 June 1383.²³ A number of his works written during his monastic life survive: refutations and condemnations of anti-Palamites, Jews, and Muslims; a treatise on the light of Tabor, and the work for which he is best known, his *Histories*, completed at some point between October 1364 and December 1369.²⁴ The latter have an obvious apologetic intent, seeking to justify the author's participation in – or precipitation of – the numerous civil wars, defend his record as ruler, and distance himself from his former Turkish allies who had by then conquered most of Thrace.

²⁰ Meyendorff, 'Concile Oecuménique', 174.174-175: σουβλίω καὶ γὰρ ἔοικας ἐν ᾧ πάντες ὡσπερ κρέα ἀνήρτηνται, καὶ ὅθεν ἂν σὺ κινηθεῖς, κάκεινοι σὺν σοὶ στρέφονται.

²¹ On the significance of Kantakouzēnos' activities after abdication, see Maksimović, 'Political Role'; Meyendorff, 'Concile Oecuménique', 149-152 (Meyendorff's commentary); idem, 'Religious Problems'.

²² Nicol, *Family*, 94; Nicol, 'Abdication', 279-281.

²³ *CBB* I, 69-70, no. 7/24.

²⁴ For a list of surviving works see FK I, 12-14; Nicol, *Family*, 99-100. A few of these have subsequently been edited; see Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 188. The *Histories* must date to the interval between the last mentioned event and the colophon of MS *Laurentianus* IX; see below, Section 3.1.

The *Histories*, despite its unavoidable partiality, is one of the most important sources for the history of the Byzantine world, comprising the southern Balkans and the Aegean seaboard, in the early and mid-fourteenth century. As such, it has been widely employed by scholars. However, the first major monograph study of the *Histories*, and of Kantakouzēnos himself, was that of Valentin Parisot in 1845.²⁵ This remained the only dedicated work until Donald Nicol's prosopographical study of the Kantakouzēnoi in 1968, which was dominated by an extended biography of the family's most famous son, naturally relying heavily upon his *Histories*.²⁶ Günter Weiss' study, published the following year, concentrated not on biography or historiography but rather sociological analysis, particularly of Kantakouzēnos' clientele following or *gefolgschaft*.²⁷ In 1980, Alexander Kazhdan published an innovative lexical analysis of the *Histories*, which, among other observations, made a strong case that Kantakouzēnos' choice of vocabulary betrayed somewhat less elevated concerns, particularly a concern for money and gain, than are apparent at the semantic level.²⁸ Although only a journal article, Kazhdan's piece remains the most wide-ranging and original literary analysis of the *Histories*. In 1996, Nicol returned to examination of Kantakouzēnos by publishing a dedicated study of his life. While not wholly uncritical, Nicol largely accepted Kantakouzēnos' testimony, judging him to be 'a great and much-maligned and misunderstood man'.²⁹ Yet the *Histories* are an apologia and not a confession; Kantakouzēnos does not admit to personal misjudgements and mistakes, and consistently portrays the negative consequences of his own actions as regrettable but unavoidable responses to situations created by his

²⁵ Parisot, *Cantacuzène*.

²⁶ Nicol, *Family*.

²⁷ Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*.

²⁸ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', esp. 294-7.

²⁹ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 2.

opponents' malice and greed. Many scholars understandably have found Kantakouzēnos' smoothed testimony, and absolute denial of his own faults or self-interest, provocative. Correspondingly, they have been rather less sympathetic than Nicol, viewing Kantakouzēnos as essentially self-seeking, insincere and manipulative of both his contemporaries and his readers.³⁰

Ultimately, close, critical readings of the *Histories* can be used to support either positive or negative characterisations of Kantakouzēnos, although scholars favouring a critical view tend to implicitly privilege the testimony of Nikēphoros Grēgoras' contemporary *Roman History* over Kantakouzēnos' own. This can be equally problematic as Grēgoras was certainly no less opinionated and his assessment of Kantakouzēnos changes from being extremely favourable, before and during the 1341-1347 civil war, to deeply hostile when their theological differences became apparent during Kantakouzēnos' reign. However, despite Kantakouzēnos' obvious ability and lack of personal vindictiveness, it is undeniable that his political legacy was divisive and destructive. In short, there is no path to a positivist, 'correct', understanding of Kantakouzēnos and he will remain a controversial figure, as he so clearly was during his lifetime.

³⁰ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* III, 768, expresses this view with elegant sarcasm. Many scholars, including Parisot, have found Kantakouzēnos' self-justifications impossible to accept; Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 185, goes so far as to call him a 'dämonischer... Schurke' ('demonic villain'); her chief arguments against Kantakouzēnos are outlined at 176-193. De Vries-van der Velden, *L'Elite Byzantine*, 115, sarcastically stresses her patience in the face of Kantakouzēnos' 'mémoires tout à fait mensongères' ('entirely false memoirs') and 'trouble mental'. A more recent, and considerably more nuanced, examination with a similar perspective is Tinnefeld, 'Power Politics'.

3.1. Content and structure

The main body of the *Histories* is prefaced by an exchange of letters between Neilos and ‘Christodoulos’, Kantakouzēnos’ *nom de plume*.³¹ Neilos first bemoans popular ignorance regarding the wars between Andronikos II and Andronikos III and implores Christodoulos to reveal the truth of what happened during this conflict and afterwards. Christodoulos accedes to Neilos’ request, states his determination to tell only the truth, and proceeds to briefly outline the succession of the Palaiologoi emperors before beginning the first chapter of his narrative proper. Book I, comprising 59 chapters in the Bonn edition, commences with the premature death of Michaēl IX Palaiologos, on 12 October 1320.³² It concludes with the entrance of the victorious younger emperor into Constantinople on 24 May 1328.³³ Book II (40 chapters) follows on by relating Andronikos III’s reign, ending with his death on 15 June 1341.³⁴ At the start of Book III (100 chapters), Christodoulos states that he has fulfilled his ‘initial purpose’³⁵ by relating the conflict between the Andronikoi, and the subsequent reign of the younger emperor, and goes on to explain that the cataclysm that followed the latter’s death necessitates that he continue to narrate the ensuing civil war.³⁶ Book III concludes with Kantakouzēnos’ entry into the Blachernai Palace on 8 February 1347.³⁷ The beginning of Book IV (50 chapters) states that the account will continue by relating the reign of the Emperor Iōannēs

³¹ Kant. I, 7-12 (trans. Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 105-110). The letters are most probably Kantakouzēnos’ exclusive composition but Neilos (*PLP* 20015) has been conjectured to be either Neilos Kabasilas (*PLP* 10102) or the monastic name of his nephew Nikolaos (*PLP* 30539). See FK I, 208-9, n. 1; Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 213-4.

³² Kant. I, 12.13-22; for the date, I, 13.20-14.4. For Michaēl, see Ch.14:19.

³³ Kant. I, 306.6-11 states the date, known from a number of chronicles, incorrectly as 19 May. This has been explained as a copyist’s error; see FK I, 311, n. 443.

³⁴ Kant. I, 560.14-18.

³⁵ Kant. II, 12.2-3: *πρόθεσις ... ἐξαρχῆς*.

³⁶ Kant. II, 11.1-12.18.

³⁷ Kant. II, 614.23-615.3.

Kantakouzēnos and the discord with Iōannēs V Palaiologos.³⁸ The latter goal demands the narrative continue beyond Kantakouzēnos' abdication in 1354, until the resolution of the rivalry between his eldest son, Matthaios, and Iōannēs V, his son-in-law. The narrative remains detailed until Matthaios' capture in 1356, and is then followed, in the final chapters of the *Histories*, by a few scattered events relating to the apparent reconciliation of the Kantakouzēnoi and Palaiologoi. The final event related is the reinstatement of the Patriarch Philotheos on 8 October 1364, symbolically ending the divisions within the Church which were created by Matthaios' acclamation as emperor in 1353.³⁹ In the following peroration the author once again addresses Neilos and states that his task, which he defines as expounding the civil wars, is complete.⁴⁰

Kantakouzēnos thus explicitly takes the civil conflicts over the rule of the Roman Empire as his overall theme and justification for writing. Within this theme, he seeks to justify and explain his own actions and ultimately transfer blame for the Empire's catastrophes onto others. He provides very little information from outside the chronological boundaries of the events he is concerned with, chiefly the years 1320-1356. While Kantakouzēnos' selection of material favours matters in which he was personally involved, it is strongly subordinated to his declared theme; the *Histories* cleaves closely to its stated purpose of narrating the period of the civil wars.⁴¹ Such thematic unity is rarely found in earlier Byzantine historiography, which is usually

³⁸ Kant. III, 8.1-10 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 147).

³⁹ For Philotheos, see *PLP* 11917. For the date (not given by Kantakouzēnos), see *CBB* I, 94, no. 9/17. Philotheos had been appointed by Kantakouzēnos when the Patriarch Kallistos abandoned his post, having refused to crown Matthaios Kantakouzēnos at the expense of Iōannēs V. Following his father-in-law's abdication, Iōannēs deposed Philotheos and reinstated Kallistos. Iōannēs V's acceptance of Philotheos' return after Kallistos' death precluded any further schism over the legitimate Patriarch.

⁴⁰ Kant. III, 363.24-365.8. For translation, see Appendix I.

⁴¹ The strong thematic structure of the *Histories* is highlighted by Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 324-27. Kantakouzēnos' corresponding lack of interest in the affairs of other countries is noted by Laiou, 'Italy', 82-3.

concerned with relating a continuous chronological span, generally segmented into imperial reigns, without any clear endpoint other than the author's interest or endurance.⁴² Grēgoras' historical work exemplifies this approach; it follows a broadly annalistic structure and political events are freely interspersed with monstrous births, astronomical observations, geographic and moralistic digressions.⁴³ In contrast, when Kantakouzēnos offers the reader a rare digression 'for the sake of amusement',⁴⁴ concerning the prophetic powers of Hilariōn, metropolitan of Didymoteichon, the interlude serves to impress on the reader the holiness and credibility of Hilariōn, all of whose subsequent pronouncements are politically supportive of Kantakouzēnos.⁴⁵ Similarly, Kantakouzēnos' detailed accounts of court ceremonies have made the *Histories* one of the major sources for Palaiologan ceremonial but his interest in ceremony always serves his political concerns: descriptions of such events as the coronations of Andronikos III, himself, and his son have clear legitimising goals.⁴⁶ Even when his motive is not so apparent, ceremonies are integrated into the narrative and always illustrate his broader themes: Andronikos II shows bad faith by accepting his grandson's ceremonial homage before turning against him;⁴⁷ Andronikos III breaks protocol to show, despite their differences, his reverence for his grandfather;⁴⁸ the Grand Domestic Kantakouzēnos refuses to participate in ceremony which would cast him as emperor.⁴⁹

⁴² Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 324. Kazhdan surprisingly overlooks the *Alexias*, with its clearly stated biographical focus, as an exception to this general rule.

⁴³ Guiland, *Grēgoras*, 242-4; Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 325.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 171.23-4: ῥαστώνης χάρις δηγήσομαι.

⁴⁵ See Ch.27.11.

⁴⁶ Kant. I, 196.8-204.3; III, 29.12-30.23, 269.7-14. See also Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 3-5; Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 472.

⁴⁷ Kant. I, 76.16-24.

⁴⁸ Kant. I, 167.17-168.6

⁴⁹ Kant. I, 78.20-79.8.

Book II, which relates the reign of Andronikos III, provides an apparent reprieve from civil war, but it is necessary both to continue a coherent narrative and to present the foundations for Kantakouzēnos' subsequent claims on sovereignty in the 1341-7 conflict. He does not in fact attempt to provide a comprehensive account of Andronikos III's reign; for instance much of the final Turkish conquest of Bithynia is concealed behind Kantakouzēnos' account of the battle of Pelekanos, where he was present and Andronikos was injured.⁵⁰ This is not to imply Kantakouzēnos was attempting simply to play down the loss of Asia Minor, the notable failure of Andronikos III's reign; he does not hide that the battle was a defeat and the loss of the region would have been known to all. Rather, Kantakouzēnos is primarily concerned with demonstrating his close relationship to Andronikos III, shown by such joint campaigns, and with accentuating his own endeavours on behalf of – to take a frequently-used phrase – 'the common good'.⁵¹ Events in which Kantakouzēnos played no part and which do not contribute to his persuasive goals are simply omitted. On first glance, then, while the *Histories* may appear to be a traditional history of imperial reigns, highlighting significant political, military and diplomatic events, it is actually quite selective. The effect of this selectivity is to advance the author's arguments and emphasise his own importance: we do not hear of initiatives taken by Andronikos in which Kantakouzēnos was not directly involved. Throughout the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos never strays far from his central concerns.

⁵⁰ For instance Nikaia, the Laskarid capital, is never mentioned by Kantakouzēnos at all, although its loss attracted the attention of numerous contemporaries, see *CBB* II, 238; *Greg.* I, 458.12-14. For the battle of Pelekanos, see *Kant.* I, 341-363; *Ch.*9:13. The eventual capture of Nikomēdia, which Pelekanos was fought to protect, goes unmarked.

⁵¹ Usually some form of τὸ κοινῆ λυσιτελοῦν.

4.1. Sources

4.1.1. Autopsy

The principal source for the *Histories* is undoubtedly its author's own recollections. Kantakouzēnos mentions very few events pre-dating his starting point of October 1320. While he very briefly summarises the succession of emperors from Theodōros I Laskaris to Michaēl IX Palaiologos, and follows this with a few details of Michaēl's life, these details could easily be considered general knowledge.⁵² Thereafter Kantakouzēnos holds a central role in most events he describes.

Kantakouzēnos makes forthright claims for the value of his testimony, contrasting it with other, less reliable, sources. In the letter of 'Christodoulos' to Neilos that precedes the very first chapter, he states:

*Moreover, I have not heard these things by hearsay from older men or by attending to rumours and myths, which hold nothing sound, [and] by which many historians happen to be led astray from the truth. Rather, being myself present at all times and so knowing the actual truth about everything – if indeed anyone can – I will thus compose my narrative about these matters having placed the truth above all else and honoured it over every other responsibility.*⁵³

Similar statements, emphasising that he, unlike others, had a uniquely privileged viewpoint and does not need to rely on hearsay, are repeated at greater length at the opening of Book III.⁵⁴ Furthermore, although he avoids directly stating that he was one of the protagonists, in order not to shatter his persona as Christodoulos, he affirms that he was privy to secret information that others could not know:

⁵² Kant. I, 11-13 (trans. Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 109-111).

⁵³ Kant. I, 10.11-18: ἔτι δὲ οὐδ' ἀκοῇ ταῦτα πρὸς τῶν παλαιότερων παρελιφῶς ἢ φήμαις προσέχων καὶ μύθοις ὑγιᾶς οὐδὲν ἔχουσιν, ἐξ ὧν συμβέβηκε τοῖς πολλοῖς τῶν συγγραφέων ἀποπλανηθῆναι τῆς ἀληθείας, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἐφ' ἅπασιν παρῶν καὶ ὡς ἔνεστι μάλιστα τὰ ληθῆ περὶ πάντων εἶπερ τις εἰδῶς, οὕτω δὴ ποιήσομαι τὴν περὶ αὐτῶν διήγησιν, τὴν ἀλήθειαν προστησάμενος καὶ πάσης ἄλλης αἰτίας αὐτὴν προτιμήσας.

⁵⁴ Kant. II, 12.18-13.15.

*It is natural that I am ignorant of nothing, not only of what was done but also of the confidential plans, stratagems and plots and, in short, of everything, both the conspicuous deeds and the secret preparations.*⁵⁵

The accounts of others – who could not be as well informed as he – are thus dismissed. This disdain is expressed even more clearly at the beginning of Book III:

*For all others, if indeed there are certain persons who wrote about this war, know nothing clear about what happened; either they were entirely absent from these events, or they accepted whatever they heard – whatever the common mob spreads about or certain others have reported – and they passed such things on to later generations, caring nothing for the truth.*⁵⁶

While he shares with Thucydides this disdain for (unidentified) alternative narratives, the emphasis on autopsy is Kantakouzēnos' own.⁵⁷ It is worth emphasising that while Kantakouzēnos was strongly impressed by Thucydides stylistically, as discussed below, he does not attempt to imitate the ancient writer's historical methodology.

Kantakouzēnos claims to write without being influenced by hatred or friendship.⁵⁸ While this does not need to be accepted at face value, his portrayals of individuals are surprisingly reserved, even bland; Kantakouzēnos is indeed sparing with words of praise or blame. Grēgoras heaps praise on Kantakouzēnos' supporters such as Tarchaneiōtēs or his wife, Eirēnē, whereas Kantakouzēnos himself is more laconic regarding their virtues.⁵⁹ Conversely he often recognises the merits of those who betray him,

⁵⁵ Kant. II, 13.12-15: εἰκὸς μὴ τῶν πραττομένων μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ βουλευμάτων ἀπορόρητων καὶ δόλων καὶ ἐπιβουλῶν καὶ ὅλων πάντων καὶ τῶν πραττομένων φανερώς καὶ τῶν ἀφανῶς κατασκευαζομένων ἀγνοεῖν μηδέν.

⁵⁶ Kant. II, 12.19-13.2: οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι πάντες, εἰ δὴ τινες εἶεν οἱ συγγραψάμενοι περὶ τοῦδε τοῦ πολέμου, ἢ παντάπασιν ἀπόντες τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅσα ἢ ὄχλος ὁ δημώδης διεθρύλλει ἢ τινες ἕτεροι ἀπήγγελλον, οὐδὲν σαφὲς εἰδότες περὶ τῶν γινομένων, οἷα παρεδέξαντο ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, τοιαῦτα καὶ τοῖς μετέπειτα ἐξέδωκαν μηδὲν φροντίσαντες τῆς ἀληθείας. One of these 'others' was certainly Grēgoras; see Section 4.1.2., below.

⁵⁷ Thuc. 1.20-22.

⁵⁸ Kant. I, 10.8-10; III, 364.7-8.

⁵⁹ See Ch.10:57 for Tarchaneiōtēs; Ch.27:4 for Eirēnē.

such as Chrelja and Batatzēs.⁶⁰ On the surface, Kantakouzēnos usually allows individuals' actions to speak for themselves, without authorial comment. The major exception to this is his portrayal of Apokaukos who, consequently, is the strongest presence in Book III of the *Histories*, besides the author himself.

Little is known about the circumstances of the composition of the *Histories*, but its homogeneity suggests that it was written continuously rather than in intervals. Neilos' letter to Christodoulos implies that his retirement from public affairs had taken place some time ago.⁶¹ Although Book III begins with a second proem, this sets the stage for a change in theme and pace rather than demonstrating that there were two distinct phases of composition.⁶² Therefore, assuming a continuous composition and the previously mentioned *terminus ante quem* of 1369, the *Histories* would have been drafted during the 1360s. Consequently, Kantakouzēnos may at times have been recalling events that took place over 40 years earlier. Accordingly his statements regarding time and numbers are often vague; phrases such as 'shortly after'⁶³ and 'not a few' are very common.⁶⁴ On the

⁶⁰ See Ch.11:15 for Chrelja; Ch.29:1 for Batatzēs.

⁶¹ Kant. I, 8.10-12.

⁶² Angelou, 'Word and Deed', 70-72, argues that Book I may have been written when Andronikos II was still alive. The idea is interesting but the arguments presented are not convincing. Angelou gives great weight to the idea that Book III's proem can be read as explaining an extension of the *Histories* beyond their original scope but he ignores the fact that the opening letters of Book I are addressed to Kantakouzēnos in his monastic, post-abdication, persona, long after Andronikos' death. However, it remains a possibility that these letters were composed long after the first book was initially completed. Angelou hypothesises further that Kantakouzēnos' lack of rancour towards Andronikos II may indicate that the old emperor was still alive at time of writing. This is unpersuasive: Kantakouzēnos avoids or moderates criticism of the imperial family throughout the *Histories*, consistent with his claims to be upholding the legitimacy of the Palaiologoi after 1341. Finally, Angelou argues that Apokaukos is portrayed positively, or at least neutrally, in Books I-II, suggesting that he had not yet betrayed Kantakouzēnos. This overlooks Kantakouzēnos' early allegation that Apokaukos was the source of Syrgiannēs' proposal to murder Andronikos II (Kant. I, 43.5-12), which Kantakouzēnos strongly denounces for its 'cruelty and inhumanity' (Kant. I, 43.14: ὀμότητος καὶ ἀπανθρωπίας).

⁶³ ὀλίγω ὕστερον: Kant. II, 78.19, 83.19, 184.7, 188.1.

basis of the occasional precision of certain statements, such as dates and numbers, Hunger suggested that Kantakouzēnos kept some form of diary.⁶⁵ Conversely, Kazhdan argued that the frequency of round numbers and certain figures such as 300 indicates that such precision is usually for literary effect and intended to convey an air of truthful authenticity rather than being evidence of historical accuracy.⁶⁶ It is noticeable that whenever Grēgoras provides numbers for the same incident, they nearly always conflict.⁶⁷ Even in regard to dates, there are occasionally surprising errors: Andronikos III victoriously entered Constantinople on 24 May 1328, not 19 May,⁶⁸ and Kantakouzēnos mis-dates his own second coronation.⁶⁹ If indeed Kantakouzēnos kept some sort of personal record, he presumably did not always update it in a timely fashion. The inescapable impression is that he often wrote from memory and that, in any case, his argumentative goals were foremost; literary impact takes much greater precedence than historical precision. Kantakouzēnos was neither chronicler nor archivist.

4.1.2. Grēgoras

As Kantakouzēnos limited his account to the events of his own life, there was little need for him to use the accounts of other historians. The obvious possible exception was the *Roman History* of the renowned scholar

⁶⁴ οὐκ ὀλίγους: Kant. II, 58.16, 59.16, 132.5, 180.11, 181.8.

⁶⁵ Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 469.

⁶⁶ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 307-308.

⁶⁷ E.g., Kant. I, 477.1-2, mentions 84 ships, Greg. I, 524.23, says 20; Kant. II, 138.7-8, mentions 42 fugitives, Greg. II, 608.19, has over 60; Kant. II, 187.16-24, has Angelos command 1,000 cavalry, Greg. II, 621.5, gives 80. This is not to imply that Grēgoras' numbers are necessarily more accurate.

⁶⁸ Kant. I, 306.6-11. The correct date is recorded by Greg. I, 427.10-11, corroborated by two short chronicles. Schreiner (*CBB* II, 234) plausibly argues that Kantakouzēnos took his own preceding statement that the conflict had lasted seven years and a month too literally; therefore, as it began on 19 April 1321, he calculated that it must have ended on 19 May 1328. The mistake once again suggests that it is unlikely Book I was composed shortly after the events it describes.

⁶⁹ See Ch.27:8.

Nikēphoros Grēgoras, which relates events from 1204 until 1359 and thus overlaps with Kantakouzēnos' own work.⁷⁰ For events which took place in his own lifetime, Grēgoras' account is far more immediate than Kantakouzēnos'. Indeed, it is probable that composition of the *Histories* commenced only after Grēgoras' death, which occurred no later than 1361. Grēgoras is therefore an obvious potential source for the *Histories*, but the personal relationship of the two authors must first be considered.

Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras had been friends but their relationship was irrevocably soured by their theological differences, which developed during Kantakouzēnos' reign. This development is reflected in Grēgoras' work, which eulogises Kantakouzēnos in its early books but turns to increasingly bitter criticism following his installation in Constantinople as emperor.⁷¹ For his part, Kantakouzēnos mentions Grēgoras only in relation to a witticism he made at court in the 1320s and his opposition to Palamas in the council of May-June 1351.⁷² Kantakouzēnos' account of the latter incident then continues into a lengthy denunciation of Grēgoras' subsequent refusal to accept the outcome of the council, and his continued attacks on Church doctrine and Kantakouzēnos himself.⁷³ In particular, he accuses Grēgoras, having failed to win the theological arguments, of resorting to attacking him politically to blacken his name and discredit the council:

Since he could not defeat the Emperor through his own arguments, he took the war of the Palaiologan emperors against each other as the subject of his work; and, partly through ignorance of events, partly through love of distorting the truth and telling lies contrary to all authority, as if writing

⁷⁰ For Grēgoras, see *PLP* 4443; Guiland, *Grégoras*; Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 453-465; Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, 1-62. The section of Grēgoras' history which corresponds to the present translation is *Greg.* II, 571-628 (trans. Van Dieten, *Gregoras* III, 37-73).

⁷¹ For specific examples, see Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 292-293.

⁷² *Kant.* I, 55.6-13; III, 168.20-2.

⁷³ *Kant.* III, 171.15-185.14. For detailed, if somewhat uncritical, treatment of this section, see Dräseke, 'Urteil'.

*fiction, he then also continued, according to sequence, to the war roused against the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, as <witnessed> by us.*⁷⁴

Kantakouzēnos probably had Grēgoras in mind when, in the opening pages of Book III, he condemned unreliable informants who did not have first-hand knowledge of the events of the civil war. Owing to this bitterness, it is perhaps unlikely that Kantakouzēnos had a copy of his rival's work kept to hand when writing the *Histories*, or that he consciously borrowed anything from Grēgoras' work, even regarding the period when they were still friends. In any case, Kantakouzēnos would naturally have felt little need to cross-check accounts of incidents which he had witnessed and Grēgoras had not. Even for events where Grēgoras may be expected to have been better informed, such as those taking place in Constantinople during the civil war, there is no clear indication that Kantakouzēnos used Grēgoras as a source. For example, Kantakouzēnos' detailed account of the imprisonment and death of his mother names his probable informant, Theodōra Palaiologina.⁷⁵ Grēgoras, relating the same incident, is more concerned with prophetic dreams Theodōra Kantakouzēnē herself is said to have experienced than with the circumstances of her death.⁷⁶ While the outlines of their accounts are often broadly comparable, at least concerning the outbreak of the civil war, there are frequently significant differences in matters of detail and the structure of their narratives.⁷⁷ Where other corroborating sources are lacking, these differences are often irreconcilable.

Kantakouzēnos makes it clear that he became aware of Grēgoras' historical narrative following his own abdication but preceding the other's

⁷⁴ Kant. III, 173.1-7: βασιλέως δὲ ἐπεὶ μὴ αὐτοπροσώπως εἶχε καταφέρεισθαι, τῶν τε Παλαιολόγων βασιλέων πρὸς ἀλλήλους πόλεμον ἐνστησάμενος ὑπόθεσιν τοῦ λόγου, καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀγνοίᾳ τῶν πραγμάτων, τὰ δ' εὐνοίᾳ τὴν ἀλήθειαν παραφθείρας, καὶ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν ὡσπερ ἐν πλάσματι καταψευσάμενος, ἔπειτα καὶ καθ' εἰρμὸν ἐπὶ τὸν ἐφ' ἡμῶν πρὸς Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν βασιλέα πόλεμον κεκινημένον προΐων.

⁷⁵ Kant. II, 219.22-222.14. For Theodōra, see Ch.2:18.

⁷⁶ Greg. II, 617.1-620.4.

⁷⁷ E.g., Guiland, *Grēgoras*, 251-3; also see comments on numbers above, Section 4.1.1.

death.⁷⁸ Therefore he was familiar with Grēgoras' historical compositions, in whole or part, before he began to write the *Histories*. However the only occasion where Kantakouzēnos openly acknowledges Grēgoras' work and makes any direct attempt to refute it is the aforementioned extended denunciation in Book IV. He furthermore explains that when Grēgoras' writings first came into his hands, he had them read before a gathering of notables to 'make known the lies and absurdities he had written'.⁷⁹ This may account for the fact that, throughout the rest of the narrative, the *Histories* makes no overt attempt to acknowledge or rebut specific criticisms by Grēgoras; Kantakouzēnos had already discredited Grēgoras, at least to his own satisfaction, and rather than compose a detailed line-by-line refutation, he instead chose to produce an entire alternative, 'correct', narrative.

4.1.3. Informants

Despite emphasising his importance as an eyewitness, Kantakouzēnos often describes scenes at which he was not present. These fall into two main categories. The first is narrative reports of events happening elsewhere, such as the Albanian raids, or Apokaukos' flight to Epibatai.⁸⁰ As there is usually no reason to doubt that the incident in question took place, Kantakouzēnos does not break the flow of his narrative to explain his apparent omniscience or identify the informant. More rarely, as in the case of the arrest of his supporters in 1341, he explicitly identifies his source, stating that fugitives from Constantinople told him what happened, thereby emphasising the momentous or controversial nature of the report – in this case, so controversial that Kantakouzēnos states that he initially refused to believe it.⁸¹ As another example he explicitly states, following a particularly bitter

⁷⁸ Kant. III, 185.8-11.

⁷⁹ Kant. III, 183.18-19: ψευδῆ καὶ ἀπίθανα συγγεγραφέναι ἀπεδείκνυεν ἐκεῖνον.

⁸⁰ Kant. II, 15, 71.

⁸¹ Kant. II, 139.

episode where Iōannēs V attempted to seize power from Kantakouzēnos and his son Matthaios, that he later compared accounts with Iōannēs.⁸²

The second, more dubious, category comprises reported conversations between individuals which typically allow the participants to reveal their motivations and justify their decisions. Speeches of such a type, often presented in direct speech as if the speakers' words were recorded verbatim, are of course one of Thucydides' most controversial legacies to historiography, debated from antiquity until the present day.⁸³ Although Kantakouzēnos offers no comment on his own frequent use of this device, the obvious question is to what extent Kantakouzēnos, *pace* Thucydides, kept 'as closely as possible to the overall sense of what was actually said'.⁸⁴ Such speeches are particularly abundant in the present translation but Kantakouzēnos liberally applies the technique elsewhere, for example to the conversation between Chrelja and Stefan Dečanski, where the latter explains his decision not to attack Andronikos III.⁸⁵ In this case, Kantakouzēnos plausibly had opportunity to find out about this incident, following Chrelja's entrance into imperial service a number of years later. In contrast, the sequence of speeches in Chapters 17-19 of the present translation portray the formation of a conspiracy against Kantakouzēnos; they can be assumed to have taken place in secrecy and the common interlocutor, Alexios Apokaukos, was killed before Kantakouzēnos had opportunity to interrogate him. In one case, that of Apokaukos and Gabalas, it is possible that both parties died before Kantakouzēnos' victory, which would suggest that he lacked even a theoretical opportunity to learn what they discussed unless

⁸² Kant. III, 268.16-269.6.

⁸³ For an overview, see Walbank, 'Speeches'.

⁸⁴ Thuc. 1.22.1: ἐγγύτατα τῆς ξυμπάσης γνώμης τῶν ἀληθῶς λεχθέντων.

⁸⁵ Kant. I, 278-284. For Chrelja, see Ch.11:15; for Dečanski, Ch.2:16.

they had subsequently confided in third parties.⁸⁶ Such conversations run contrary to Kantakouzēnos' claim to authority as an eye-witness. The issue of how he might have acquired some of these apparent insights is addressed only in Book IV's peroration: he explicitly states that he questioned his surviving opponents during his reign, naming in particular the brothers of Alexios Apokaukos, Iōannēs and Nikēphoros, as his sources.⁸⁷ The reader is left to assume that they would have been privy to their brother's secrets and naturally were only too willing to seek favour by sharing them with the victorious emperor. Any questions about the likely unreliability of such informants, eager to minimise their own responsibility for the conflict, are not addressed.

The conversations depicted in Chapters 17-19 are absolutely central to Kantakouzēnos' attribution of responsibility for the outbreak of the civil war to a conspiracy formed by a uniquely deceptive and evil man, Apokaukos. This section of the narrative is dramatically compelling and often psychologically convincing. However, given how easily the doubts and uncertainties of some conspirators are overcome, it is not always very persuasive in its historical context. Moreover, all the speeches neatly accord with Kantakouzēnos' overall argumentative goal of shifting chief responsibility for the war on to Apokaukos alone. It is clear that they were imaginatively reconstructed to the benefit of the author.

4.1.4. Documents

Kantakouzēnos draws upon documents, mostly letters and diplomatic communications, throughout the *Histories*.⁸⁸ The purported contents are often summarised or paraphrased, probably from memory. As an example, the

⁸⁶ Kant. II, 118-120. Gabalas' death is unrecorded but he is not attested after the war, see Ch.19:4.

⁸⁷ See Appendix I. For Iōannēs, see *PLP* 1186; for Nikēphoros, *PLP* 1192.

⁸⁸ For a list, see Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 305-7.

letter sent by the Latin lords of the Peloponnese in 1341 is presented as if addressing Kantakouzēnos in the second person.⁸⁹ However the text is not stylistically distinct from the surrounding narrative, the content is vague, and Kantakouzēnos himself suggests it is in fact paraphrased.⁹⁰

In other instances, the text of communications does appear to have been copied from originals. A well-known example is the letter received from the Mamluk sultan in 1349, which Kantakouzēnos claims to reproduce.⁹¹ It opens with an extremely flattering salutation which, with reference to Mamluk chancery manuals, has been convincingly demonstrated to be genuine; the letter bears at least a strong resemblance to an original communication and the entire text may well be an accurate reproduction.⁹² Kantakouzēnos' motive for including such a complimentary missive from a distant and powerful monarch is easy to understand.

More questionable are two letters of 1347 by Bartholomew of Rome, a Latin emissary in Constantinople, one to the Pope and the other to the Dauphin of Vienne, which again Kantakouzēnos claims to be reproducing.⁹³ The style once more appears distinct from the rest of the *Histories*, incorporating frequent Scriptural quotations and references. However the letters present obvious difficulties: the originals would have been written in Latin, they should not have passed through Kantakouzēnos' hands, and the content is encomiastic. It is probable, if indeed these letters are derived from Latin originals, that the original translator or Kantakouzēnos himself modified them, rendering them as eulogies rather than diplomatic

⁸⁹ Kant. II, 75.14-76.10. See also Ch.11:4.

⁹⁰ Kant. II, 76.10-11: τὰ μὲν οὖν γράμματα ἰδίᾳ τε ἐκάστῳ καὶ πᾶσιν ὁμοῦ τοιάδε ἦν.

⁹¹ Kant. III, 94.1-2: ἔπεμπε δὲ καὶ πρὸς βασιλέα γράμματα οὕτως ἔχοντα ἐν λέξει. For the text of this letter, see Kant. III, 94.2-99.9 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 227-31).

⁹² Korobeinikov, 'Diplomatic Correspondence', 61-4; Canard, 'Lettre', esp. 45-52; Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 381-7.

⁹³ Kant. III, 13.6-7: ἂς ὥσπερ εἶχον προσεθήκαμεν τῇ διηγῆσει. For the text of these letters, see III, 13.8-20.5 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 152-7).

communications. At the very least, some level of ideological translation has evidently occurred as a Latin churchman would not have designated Kantakouzēnos as ‘Emperor and Autokratōr of the Romans’ in a communication to the Pope.⁹⁴ These letters have not yet been intensively studied but if they are fabrications by Kantakouzēnos, he made deliberate efforts to differentiate them from his narrative.⁹⁵ It is of course also possible that the victorious emperor bribed or intimidated Bartholomew to produce a positive report to forestall possible Latin moves against him, which would have been prudent in the circumstances.

Another example, of an official document rather than correspondence, is the chrysobull which Kantakouzēnos granted to Iōannēs Angelos in 1342.⁹⁶ Kantakouzēnos states he has reproduced this text⁹⁷ and it employs noticeably different terminology to elsewhere in the *Histories*, for example referring to the area entrusted to Angelos as ‘Blachia’, which Kantakouzēnos otherwise classicises as ‘Thessalia’.⁹⁸ Hunger’s study of the passage found that it resembled other chrysobulls known to have been issued by Kantakouzēnos⁹⁹ but persuasively argued that Kantakouzēnos elaborated the chrysobull when adding it to his memoirs, interpolating his familiar themes of friendship for Andronikos III, his loyalty to Empress Anna and Iōannēs V, and denigrating Apokaukos as the cause of the conflict.¹⁰⁰ Thus Kantakouzēnos appears not to have been above amending material to conform with his dominant rhetorical purposes even when he claimed to be simply reproducing it.

⁹⁴ Kant. III, 15.8.9: βασιλέως καὶ αὐτοκράτορος Ῥωμαίων.

⁹⁵ Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 254, suspects they are fabricated by Kantakouzēnos owing to mistakes in the text, although an error by a translator is equally possible.

⁹⁶ Kant. II, 312.15-322.15.

⁹⁷ Kant. II, 312.15: ἐπὶ λέξεως εἶχεν οὕτως.

⁹⁸ Kant. II, 320.3, 320.20, 321.7, 321.21, 321.23, 321.24, 322.8.

⁹⁹ Hunger, ‘Chrysobullos Logos’, 107-8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 110ff.

It appears, therefore, that Kantakouzēnos made some efforts to consult surviving informants, and a variety of documents, to supplement his own recollections in the process of writing his *Histories*. At least some of the documents he claims to have copied appear to be genuine, in part or whole. However these efforts do not constitute part of any systematic historical methodology and there is nothing to suggest Kantakouzēnos engaged in comprehensive archival research. Rather he sought, naturally enough considering his circumstances, not to discover an 'objective' truth but to buttress a truth he believed he already understood.

4.2. Chronology

The *Histories* does not adopt any kind of formal schema to indicate when events took place. Absolute dates are provided very rarely, apparently to emphasise the significance of an incident, although events which are unarguably significant are often undated. In the present translation, Kantakouzēnos provides only the date he finally left Constantinople before the war began and the month in which the war broke out, omitting even the date of his own acclamation.¹⁰¹ Such lack of concern for explicit dating is not unusual in Byzantine classicising histories, and Kantakouzēnos usually indicates the passage of time by relative statements. These can take two main forms: specific statements such as ‘on the following day’, ‘for twelve days’, or ‘for six years’; and vague statements such as ‘shortly before’, or ‘not long after’.¹⁰² The latter type may be very variable indeed regarding the length of time indicated, with ‘shortly before’ indicating around four years in one case¹⁰³ and ‘after a little time had passed’ indicating a period which may be a few months or as long as two years.¹⁰⁴ Often Kantakouzēnos mentions the passage of seasons, naturally of great importance for military campaigning, using phrases such as ‘during the winter’, or ‘at the beginning of spring’, which aid in building a chronology but he does not do so consistently in the manner of Thucydides.¹⁰⁵ This lack of clear chronological signposts can lead the casual reader astray and dates generally have to be calculated from the

¹⁰¹ Kant. II, 104.2-3, 137.1-2.

¹⁰² Kant. II, 52.4 (εις την ύστεραίαν), 188.7-8 (δυοκαίδεκα... ήμέραις), 111.7 (ἐπ’ ἔτεσιν ἕξ ἡδῆ), 64.13 (ὀλίγω πρότερον), 76.17 (οὐ μετὰ πολὺ).

¹⁰³ Kant. II, 93.1-2 (ὀλίγω πρότερον); see Ch.14:20.

¹⁰⁴ Kant. I, 495.4: Ὀλίγου δὲ παρελθόντος χρόνου. The phrase in question links Andronikos’ return from the Lesbos campaign, at the start of winter 1335, to the incidents which provide the *casus belli* for the Epiros campaign which took place in either 1337 or 1338. See Ch.11:6 for the dating of the latter. Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 251-2, highlights Kant. I, 13.11-12, where ὀλίγον τινα χρόνον indicates four years and I, 13.14-15, where χρόνον τινα συχόν indicates eight years.

¹⁰⁵ Kant. II, 186.17-18 (τοῦ χειμῶνος); I, 458.17 (ἡρι ἀρχομένῳ).

summation of such relative markers, unless corroborated by another source. The looser statements simply mark transitions between narrative episodes rather than offering any measurable indication of time passing. The reader moreover has to assume that the *Histories* preserves events in their correct order. This is not always the case though; a lengthy section in Book II was apparently placed out of sequence during the original compilation of the text, and was only fully identified through close analysis by Loenertz.¹⁰⁶

While the chronology generally advances sequentially with the narrative, Kantakouzēnos frequently refers to episodes he has already related and occasionally foreshadows later events. Remarkably, he uses an extended narrative flashback sequence to summarise Apokaukos' career and relationship with his benefactor, Kantakouzēnos.¹⁰⁷ This links a number of incidents previously described – including Apokaukos' initial defection to Andronikos III, Andronikos' first serious illness in 1330, and Apokaukos' naval venture in 1340/41 – all of which Kantakouzēnos proceeds to elaborate further, demonstrating their relevance to the matter at hand. For example, although Andronikos III's illness was previously recounted in considerable detail,¹⁰⁸ the flashback focuses on the hostility of the Empress Xenē towards Kantakouzēnos, in order to present Apokaukos as an instigator of Xenē's enmity and adds previously unmentioned details, such as Glabas' involvement in the affair.¹⁰⁹ Kantakouzēnos' sophisticated use of this uncommon technique, combined with the dearth of clear chronological markers, can confuse unwary scholars: it has occasionally been assumed that Glabas' mission to Xenē took place in 1341.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ The affected passages are Book II, chapters 22-28, discussed in Loenertz, 'Ordre et désordre'.

¹⁰⁷ Kant. II, 88.17-102.14. Kantakouzēnos also uses flashback elsewhere, e.g., Kant. I, 26.14-32.4.

¹⁰⁸ Kant. I, 391.7-411.19.

¹⁰⁹ Kant. II, 91.3-95.10.

¹¹⁰ E.g., *PLP* 91682. See also Ch.14:16.

Kantakouzēnos, furthermore, sometimes discusses events preceding the position they would ‘correctly’ occupy if the *Histories* maintained strict chronological order. This is particularly notable in his treatment of the religious controversies which gathered in force during the 1341-1347 civil war. Andronikos III’s last major act as emperor was to oversee the Church council of 10 June 1341 which condemned Barlaam of Calabria.¹¹¹ Following this, but before relating Andronikos’ death, Kantakouzēnos explains that a second council took place ‘not much later’ which condemned the monk Akindynos.¹¹² This council met in either July or August and was presided over by Kantakouzēnos in place of the deceased emperor, a fact that he omits.¹¹³ Had the *Histories* followed strict chronological order, the second council would have formed part of Kantakouzēnos’ account of his activities in Constantinople following Andronikos’ demise and therefore contributed to the impression that he was already effectively acting as emperor. By adding the second council as a brief narrative addendum to the first, Kantakouzēnos effectively depoliticises it. This appears to have been his intention; he returns to the doctrinal controversy only shortly before the end of Book III, summarising the persecution of Palamas and his adherents by Akindynos and the Patriarch, which took place throughout the war, in order to explain Kalekas’ deposition from office.¹¹⁴ Kantakouzēnos does not omit the turmoil in the Church during the civil war, but he deliberately separates

¹¹¹ Kant. I, 543-555.21. On the councils of 1341, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 42-62; Akindynos, *Letters*, xvi-xxii (Hero’s Introduction).

¹¹² Kant. I, 556.3-557.9.

¹¹³ The council has long been dated to August, e.g., Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 57-60; Nicol, *Family*, 43. This was revised by Loenertz, ‘Chronique’, 61, to July and accepted by Schreiner (CBB II, 231), Darrouzès (*Regestes*, 2212-2214) and Hero (*Akindynos, Letters*, xviii, n. 58). However Fatouros and Krischer strongly argue that the evidence is circumstantial and observe that none of contemporary sources concerned with the council definitively support one month over the other: FK II, 263, n. 404.

¹¹⁴ Kant. II, 602.9-607.2.

it from the secular political and military struggle by recounting it outside chronological sequence.

The confident handling of selected matters outside their chronological order, as well as the numerous cross-references to earlier and later parts of the narrative, strongly suggest that the *Histories* was conceived as a single unified work, probably drafted over a relatively short period of time and subjected to careful revision. In contrast to Grēgoras' work, the selection and organisation of material for the *Histories* clearly serves argumentative rather than annalistic goals.¹¹⁵ Kantakouzēnos was evidently greatly concerned with composing consistent explanations for who made things happen and why, but had limited interest in relating precisely when.

¹¹⁵ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 325, perhaps plays down the generally sequential organisation of the narrative too much by claiming the *Histories* 'est une oeuvre strictement organisée par le sujet'.

4.3. Literary aspects

4.3.1. Authorial persona

After his abdication, Kantakouzēnos continued to style himself, at least in official correspondence, as both emperor and monk.¹¹⁶ In the *Histories*, he superficially discards both identities and adopts the pseudonym of ‘Christodoulos’, an identity he also employed in his theological treatises.¹¹⁷ It is as Christodoulos that he makes all authorial interventions in the narrative. Other than the statements which he makes when beginning a new book or finishing the entire work, as discussed above, his first-person interventions are nearly always limited to functional statements intended to guide the reader and clarify the narrative structure. Readers are reminded of matters already related with statements such as, ‘as we have said’,¹¹⁸ ‘just as was previously narrated by us’,¹¹⁹ or slightly more specifically, ‘we briefly mentioned this at the very beginning of our history’.¹²⁰ Less frequently, he also indicates topics that ‘we will mention later’.¹²¹ Christodoulos usually maintains a neutral tone befitting his avowed character as an impartial narrator, leaving overt denunciations to direct or reported speech. This contrasts strongly with Grēgoras’ frequent judgemental narrative interventions. However there are some rare exceptions where Christodoulos openly takes sides, for instance when introducing the lengthy digression on Apokaukos’ career, ‘so that the generosity of [Kantakouzēnos]... as well as

¹¹⁶ See Darrouzès, ‘Lettre inédite’, 21, for the signature preserved in *Vatopedi* 434: Ἰωάννης ἐν Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ πιστὸς βασιλεὺς καὶ αὐτοκράτωρ Ῥωμαίων ὁ Καντακουζηνός, ὁ διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μοναχικοῦ σχήματος μετονομασθεὶς Ἰωάσαφ μοναχός. See also Nicol, *Family*, 88-9.

¹¹⁷ Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 215.

¹¹⁸ Kant. II, 77.5: ἔφημεν; Kant. II, 99.6, 102.14, 161.19-20: ὥσπερ ἔφημεν.

¹¹⁹ Kant. II, 98.19-20: ὥσπερ δὴ καὶ πρότερον ἰστόρηται ἡμῖν.

¹²⁰ Kant. II, 90.6-7: ὧν καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἀρχὰς τῆς ἱστορίας μάλιστα ἐπεμνήσθημεν συντόμως.

¹²¹ Kant. II, 173.13-14: ὡς ὕστερον ἐπιμνησόμεθα.

the ingratitude of the *parakoimōmenos* and the perversity of his ways may become clear to us.¹²² This statement conforms to Christodoulos' central argument, as stated in his conclusion, that the miseries of the Romans were caused by 'the schemes and villainies of the *megas doux* [Apokaukos]',¹²³ but it is very unusual for him to express his opinions so openly in his narrative voice.¹²⁴ In general, Kantakouzēnos' judgements are expressed most clearly through the speeches of himself and others, or more subtly through reported actions – for example, a person shown repeatedly acting in a treacherous and underhand way is clearly a bad person – but not through direct narratorial commentary.

There were established precedents for works written about oneself 'as if by another person', although generally limited to adopting the third-person; for instance, it is plain in Patriarch Grēgorios II's autobiography that the anonymous other was simply a polite invention.¹²⁵ Kantakouzēnos was however writing explicitly in the historical tradition, where, from the eleventh century onwards, direct, first-person authorial intervention had become an accepted element.¹²⁶ Despite this, Kantakouzēnos decided to present his work as Christodoulos, a decision that can be explained by the unprecedented degree to which the author was an active participant in the events he narrates. While a number of previous historians, including Psellos, Chōniatēs and Akropolitēs, were occasionally directly involved in the events they describe, all of them – even Psellos (if only formally) – remained

¹²² Kant. II, 88.21-89.1: ἴν' ἐκ τῶν διηγημάτων κατάδηλος γένηται ἡμῖν ἢ τε τούτου πρὸς τὰς εὐεργεσίας φιλοτιμία [...], καὶ ἡ παρακοιμωμένου πρὸς τὰ καλὰ ἀχαριστία καὶ τῶν τρόπων ἡ σκαιότης.

¹²³ Kant. III, 364.21-2: ταῖς μεγάλου δουκὸς ἀπατηθέντες μηχαναῖς καὶ πανουργίαις. See Appendix I.

¹²⁴ The other major exception is his tirade against Grēgoras, mentioned above, Section 4.1.2.

¹²⁵ Geōrgios Kyprios, *Autobiography*, 20. His narrative is introduced as περὶ τοῦ καθ' ἑαυτὸν βίου ὡς ἀπ' ἄλλου προσώπου.

¹²⁶ Macrides, 'Historian in the History', *passim*; Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen*, 317-8.

secondary to the emperors; imperial reigns provide the framework of their narratives. Kantakouzēnos shared this narrative structure but faced the unprecedented historiographical challenge, and conflict of interest, of *being* one of the emperors.¹²⁷ But if the author is not to be the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, Christodoulos is forced to explain how he knows so much. Thus he explains that he was present as a privileged witness throughout the events of the *Histories* yet, it is implied, was not actively involved in them.¹²⁸ This makes Christodoulos something more than a simple penname but he remains less than a realised character, which would introduce an overt fiction into the account.

It should not be supposed that Kantakouzēnos actually expected his persona to be accepted at face value, although he is remarkably consistent in maintaining it. Knowledge of the author's true identity overshadows any reading of the *Histories*; in fact it is his status as the central character that lends authority to his account and interest to his judgements. Kantakouzēnos' use of the humble persona of, literally, 'a servant of Christ' was not therefore intended to hide his identity but rather to advance his claim to Christian humility and, furthermore, to distance his imperial persona from his narrative. This enabled him to adopt a detached, unemotional, Thucydidean narrative voice, lulling the reader into accepting the account whereas a first-person narration would constantly invite the reader to challenge it.¹²⁹ If he had written openly as the ex-emperor Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos, his repeated claims of impartiality would have seemed unconvincing. Moreover, writing as an emperor would invite comparison and conflict with the reigning emperor, his son-in-law, risking re-opening

¹²⁷ Imperial authors were of course not unprecedented, but imperial authors self-consciously writing history were.

¹²⁸ Kant. II, 12.18-13.15.

¹²⁹ Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 469-470, draws the obvious comparison with Caesar, although the use of a named persona goes further than Caesar.

the very wounds Kantakouzēnos sought to heal. Although Kantakouzēnos had by then become the monk Iōasaph, and was thus theoretically beyond worldly concerns, Iōasaph was publicly inseparable from the ex-emperor, as evinced by his signature. Thus ‘Christodoulos’ became a necessary pretence, affording the author a depersonalised mask and allowing him to steer the narrative away from simple autobiography and the settling of scores, permitting a claim to impartiality. Indeed, the mask allowed him to neatly sidestep any discussion of his own bias, in contrast to the pained disavowals Anna Komnēnē periodically felt obliged to include in her own work.¹³⁰ In the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos frequently calls upon God as his witness¹³¹ and his choice of pseudonym is surely a deliberate reminder of this, that a true servant of Christ serves also the Truth.

4.3.2. Genre

Kantakouzēnos was, as he declared, writing history. He self-consciously placed his work within the Greek historiographical tradition, not least through his imitation of Thucydides, and indeed it undoubtedly belongs there. However it is now generally considered an apologetic political memoir, not unreasonably given Kantakouzēnos’ reliance on autopsy. Despite this his sources, as outlined above, are somewhat more varied and, it will be argued, his concerns are somewhat wider than a narrow interpretation of this term may suggest. Ultimately any attempt to define the *Histories* exclusively as either history or memoir is not particularly fruitful; it contains elements of both.¹³²

A more interesting question, given the centrality of the author in the narrative and the heavy reliance on autopsy, is whether the *Histories* is a

¹³⁰ See Macrides, ‘Historian in the History’, 218-220.

¹³¹ E.g., Kant. II, 25.15-16, 54.23, 85.18, 140.23-24, 147.4-5, 173.21-23.

¹³² As also argued by Angelou, ‘Duplicity’, 263-4.

disguised autobiography. Autobiography in the recognised modern sense was not a feature of medieval Greek literature, which lacked any term for it.¹³³ Despite this, a good deal of autobiographical writing was in fact produced, within the framework of texts which held a notionally different purpose, such as monastic *typika*, hagiographies, and indeed histories.¹³⁴ Although Kantakouzēnos speaks almost continuously about himself, it is notable that he omits a great deal which he might reasonably have been expected to include if his intention was only to relate and glorify his own life.¹³⁵ He does not offer a complete account of even his own public career, which clearly began some years before the opening events of Book I but is referred to only vaguely. There is almost no information regarding his father and his lineage which, given Kantakouzēnos' aristocratic background, is surprising.¹³⁶ Following his abdication, the focus of Kantakouzēnos' narrative turns to the activities of other members of his family, in particular his son Matthaïos, until the strife with Iōannēs V is resolved.¹³⁷ Therefore, although Kantakouzēnos' work exhibits strong autobiographical characteristics, it speaks to somewhat wider concerns than the life of its main protagonist exclusively. Insofar as Kantakouzēnos states his purpose, it is to relate the civil wars rather than his own career. The use of an authorial persona is not simply a framing technique, or false modesty, alone but facilitates an external examination of Kantakouzēnos' public life as opposed

¹³³ Hinterberger, 'Autobiography and Hagiography', 139-141.

¹³⁴ For an overview, see A. Kazhdan, 'Autobiography', *ODB* I, 234; Angold, 'Autobiographical Impulse'; Hinterberger, 'Autobiography and Hagiography'; Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 165-170; Irmscher, 'Autobiographien'. The most extensive study is Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen*; for Kantakouzēnos, see esp. 316-331.

¹³⁵ This is not to deny that Kantakouzēnos ascribes a wide range of virtues to himself, see Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 288-92; Hunger, *Hochsprachliche*, 470. Tinnefeld, 'Power Politics', 411, not unfairly observes that there are "'auto-hagiographical" tendencies throughout the whole work.'

¹³⁶ This is noted by Angold, 'Autobiographical Impulse', 254-5, but his attempt to argue that this omission actually strengthens the autobiographical nature of the *Histories* is rather strained.

¹³⁷ Kant. III, 309-363.

to his private or interior life. Kantakouzēnos is not interested in creating a complete portrait of himself as a person but a selective portrait of himself as a public political actor. The *Histories* presents a completely sympathetic platform for its hero but it does so from an emphatically exterior perspective.

This perspective helps mask the extent to which the portrait is an idealised one. Despite the apparently detached narratorial voice, the presentation of events is frequently dramatic and Kantakouzēnos sketches characters and scenes with skill and surprising vividness: the bickering of the senate; the soldiers harassing the Patriarch being silenced with a look by the Grand Domestic; the Empress relentlessly surrounded by liars until her loyalty to Kantakouzēnos falters.¹³⁸ Although Kantakouzēnos' dramatic tendencies had occasionally been acknowledged in passing,¹³⁹ Kazhdan viewed drama as central to Kantakouzēnos' approach; his seminal analysis argued that the *Histories* presented its protagonist as a tragic hero, whose flaw was his trusting and forgiving nature, and invented a new 'poetry of heroic defeat'.¹⁴⁰ While the literary and apologetic aspects of the *Histories* do not completely overwhelm its historiographical aspect, not least because the narrative continues beyond the fall of its hero, Kantakouzēnos certainly employed techniques perhaps more readily expected in fiction. Going beyond such familiar historiographical elements as imagined speeches, his protagonists – not least himself – consistently fulfil the dramatic roles assigned to them.¹⁴¹ Beneath the oft-praised 'simplicity' of Kantakouzēnos' language, the *Histories* is not a simple work and defies simple categorisation.

¹³⁸ Kant. II, 20.13-22.4, 83.19-85.6, 125.11-136.13.

¹³⁹ E.g., Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 287: 'Bref la poésie de la défaite héroïque a été, dans la littérature byzantine, inventée par Cantacuzène'.

¹⁴¹ Regarding these, see below, Section 5.1.

4.3.3. Classicism

The *Histories* is written in classicising high-style, appropriate to a literary history written by an educated writer for an educated audience.¹⁴² Kantakouzēnos routinely utilises periodic structure (principally in speeches), the infinitive, the perfect, Attic spellings,¹⁴³ and occasionally the dual.¹⁴⁴ He employs archaic ethnonyms, such as Persians, Mysians and Triballi, and classicising but imprecise toponyms, such as Akarnania and Lydia.¹⁴⁵ He rhetorically refers, on a number of occasions, to an underworld which is clearly the classical Hades rather than the Christian Hell.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, appropriately for an author strongly concerned with ruinous internecine conflict, Kantakouzēnos adopted Thucydides as his stylistic paradigm for the *Histories*, following the established literary practice of *mimesis*, or imitation.¹⁴⁷ Although he does not mention his model by name, the abundance of speeches – and their frequently convoluted syntax – calls Thucydides to mind, even though Kantakouzēnos' speeches, typically explanatory or apologetic rather than analytical, are used in an only superficially similar way. Furthermore, he directly borrows phrases from the Athenian author; his descriptions of civil strife and, later, the outbreak of plague recall the famous descriptions of the *stasis* on Kerkyra and the plague in Athens respectively.¹⁴⁸ Although classicising writers have been suspected of twisting their observations to match classical exemplars, leading to Mango's

¹⁴² On Byzantine high style, see Bartusis, 'Archaizing'; Hunger, 'Mimesis' (esp. 30-31 for common linguistic features); Ševčenko, 'Levels of Style' (esp. 291).

¹⁴³ E.g., φυλλάττω and θάλαττα (although θάλασσα is far more common).

¹⁴⁴ E.g. Kant. II, 172.6: ἐπὶ τῶ χειρὶ δεξασθαι.

¹⁴⁵ See Ch.11:6, Ch.9:7, respectively.

¹⁴⁶ E.g., Kant. II, 111.8, 152.6, 153.23.

¹⁴⁷ For this technique, see Hunger, 'Mimesis'; for Kantakouzēnos' application of it, Hunger, 'Beobachtungen'.

¹⁴⁸ Kant. II, 177.6-178.11 (*stasis*); Kant. III, 49.15-53.1 (plague). FK III, 447, n. 268-n. 275 detail the similarities between the two *stasis* descriptions. For additional examples, see Hunger, 'Beobachtungen'.

memorable characterisation of their literary works as a ‘distorting mirror’,¹⁴⁹ detailed studies have convincingly demonstrated that Kantakouzēnos very skilfully adapted Thucydides’ prose to fit contemporary realities, rather than vice-versa.¹⁵⁰ If the *Histories* is a distortion of the events it reports, it is not chiefly because of an inflexible classicism on the part of its author.

Kantakouzēnos is however quite austere in his classicism, especially when compared with the ostentatious displays of learning affected by the other fourteenth century historiographers, Pachymerēs and Grēgoras. Kantakouzēnos quotes ancient literature very sparingly and indicates the source even more rarely.¹⁵¹ He does not Atticise the names of the months, as Pachymerēs does. When dealing with places he knows well, he generally prefers contemporary names over classical equivalents: unlike Grēgoras, Kantakouzēnos does not employ Adrianople’s ancient name of Orestias, Peirinthos is only once preferred over Hērakleia, and he uses non-classical, apparently even informal, toponyms such as the Thracian Chalkidikē.¹⁵² References to classical or mythical figures are few and far between, with none appearing in the present translation.¹⁵³ While antiquity is occasionally acknowledged,¹⁵⁴ Kantakouzēnos rarely seizes opportunities to overtly display his learning, with the notable exception of his mimesis of the *stasis*. Kantakouzēnos’ classicism is inconsistent and, as Kazhdan observed, largely

¹⁴⁹ Mango, ‘Mirror’.

¹⁵⁰ See Hunger, ‘Beobachtungen’ and, more generally, Reinsch, ‘Adaptations’, esp. 775-6. Miller, ‘Plague’, explicitly and persuasively defends Kantakouzēnos against Mango’s hypothesis, but goes too far in attributing a more general concern for ‘exactness’ to the *Histories*; see Miller, ‘Plague’, 394.

¹⁵¹ E.g., Euripides is the ‘certain person’ quoted at Kant. I, 24.23; Homer is acknowledged at Kant. I, 18.7-8.

¹⁵² Peirinthos: Kant. II, 175.18; Ch.28:2. Chalkidikē: Kant. II, 161.13-14; Ch.26:3. He does once refer to Adrianople as τὴν ἐν Ὀδρυσοῖς ἐπώνυμον Ἀδριανῶ πόλιν, ‘the city among the Odrysoi named after Adrian’ (Kant. I, 35.9-10). His few references to the Odrysiens appear in Books I and II.

¹⁵³ For a non-exhaustive list of references throughout the *Histories*, see Kazhdan, ‘L’Histoire de Cantacuzène’, 309.

¹⁵⁴ E.g., an ‘Iliad of evils’, Kant. II, 165.21; the practice of raising battlefield trophies, Kant. II, 159.10-12.

incidental and does not constitute a deliberate literary instrument.¹⁵⁵ In fact, compared to his lexiphanic contemporaries, Kantakouzēnos' vocabulary is restricted and often repetitious. He makes little apparent effort to find synonyms but seems, conversely, to embrace repetition. An example is his fondness for the word *λυσιτελεῖν* and its derivatives:¹⁵⁶ in one passage, some form of the word is employed four times within the space of eight lines.¹⁵⁷ When compared to the delight in diverse and obscure vocabulary more typical of Byzantine literature, it is indeed possible to view Kantakouzēnos' vocabulary as impoverished.¹⁵⁸

This literary restraint, however, has proven far more to the taste of modern readers than the elaborate shows of erudition more commonly encountered in Byzantine historiography.¹⁵⁹ Parisot praised Kantakouzēnos' style, finding it even reminiscent of Cicero; Kazhdan described the *Histories* as a literary monument, and Treadgold suggested it was perhaps the only literary masterpiece of the Palaiologan era.¹⁶⁰ Matters of taste aside, why Kantakouzēnos chose to write in such a style is an interesting question. Although the prime of his life was taken up by political and military demands and he therefore had rather less opportunity to polish his literary

¹⁵⁵ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 309.

¹⁵⁶ FK III, 444, n. 235, observes that he has a 'particular weakness' for the word. Its extensive use is catalogued by Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 328-329.

¹⁵⁷ Kant. II, 18.2-12: ὁ μέγας δὲ δομέστικος οὐκ ἀνίη βιαζόμενος, ἀλλ' ἐδεῖτο τῶν μὲν τοιούτων λόγων ἀποσχέσθαι, αὐτῷ δὲ πείθεσθαι, ὡς **λυσιτελοῦντα** καὶ δίκαια βουλευομένῳ. καὶ ἔπεισέ γε βιασάμενος, οὐδ' οὕτω μὲν πεπεισμένον, ὡς **λυσιτελεῖ** τὰ πραττόμενα εἶη, ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐξαρχῆς ἐχόμενον γνώμης, διὰ δὲ τὸ δοκεῖν ἐκείνῳ **λυσιτελεῖν** καὶ ἄκοντα πεπεισμένον. καὶ τὸν πατριάρχην μετακαλεσάμενος καὶ ὅσοι τῶν ἀρχιερέων ἐν Βυζαντίῳ τότε παρῆσαν, καὶ ὅσα ἦν εἰκὸς διαλεχθεῖς περὶ τοῦ πράγματος καὶ τὴν γνώμην φανερὰν ποιήσας, ὡς αὐτῷ μὲν οὔτε ἀναγκαῖον, οὔτε **λυσιτελεῖς** δοκεῖ τὸ πρᾶγμα.

¹⁵⁸ As argued by Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 313-16.

¹⁵⁹ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 280-84, reviews the many scholars, from Parisot onwards, who have praised the 'simplicity' of Kantakouzēnos' style, noting that most scholarly praise is essentially negative: an *absence* of rhetoric, redundancy and complexity.

¹⁶⁰ Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 6; Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 327; Treadgold, *Byzantine State*, 830.

style than Grēgoras, for instance, Kantakouzēnos' subtle reworking of Thucydides suggests a deep understanding of ancient literary style and his occasional references to other classical works serve as a reminder that he could have, if he chose, written in a more decorative manner than he actually adopted.

It is improbable that Kantakouzēnos intended to appeal to a wider potential audience; there is nothing demotic about his style or any evidence that the *Histories* circulated widely. The four manuscripts of the *Histories* predating the fall of the Empire appear to have been copied under Kantakouzēnos' personal supervision and Doukas, the only subsequent historian who relates the civil wars in any detail, clearly relied on alternative – albeit largely sympathetic – sources.¹⁶¹ Most likely is that Kantakouzēnos sought, through a lack of pretension and wordplay, to produce a tone of simple veracity and honesty, in keeping with the humble persona of Christodoulos. By declining to draw excessive attention to his words in themselves, he directs the reader towards engagement with their meaning. Deliberate contrast with Grēgoras also seems probable; by seeking to impress through unadorned arguments rather than literary élan, Kantakouzēnos avoided any endeavour to out-classicise his rival, which would have been bound to fail. Furthermore, a simpler style was in keeping with Kantakouzēnos' position as a leading defender of the Palamites. Palamas himself, although once a pupil of Theodōros Metochitēs, had rejected taking his 'profane' studies to the highest level in favour of his monastic vocation and was sharply critical of classical philosophy.¹⁶² Overly-abundant Atticism, so typical of Palamas' determined opponent, Grēgoras, would have sat somewhat uncomfortably with Kantakouzēnos' monastic status and his own determined Palamism. By demonstrating history could be

¹⁶¹ Doukas, *History*, V-IX (ed. Grecu, 41-63; trans. Magoulias, 63-75).

¹⁶² Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 28-31, 128-131.

written in a learned but unelaborate style, he aligned it more closely with the plainer style favoured by monastic authors.

5.1. Portrayal and interpretation of main protagonists

One of the most distinctive features of the *Histories* is the number and density of speeches, made by diverse individuals. These are particularly abundant in the present translation. Through these speeches, Kantakouzēnos often seeks to explain others' behaviours and motivations, and, crucially, to justify his own actions. This technique is central to Kantakouzēnos' approach; he usually avoids making direct judgements on people and events in his narratorial voice. It is also subtle and sophisticated; Kantakouzēnos deliberately records criticisms and insults against himself without providing direct rebuttal, and does not always hide his failures. Conversely, his enemies often condemn themselves, for example through the baseness of their insults or by swearing sacred oaths then proceeding to break them. Kantakouzēnos thus clearly shows their vulgarity, unfaithfulness and impiety without necessarily needing to say so explicitly. The words and deeds of individuals together thus amount to consistent depictions of character, playing an understated but important role in shaping readers' attitudes to the individuals concerned.

This approach is, within the context of medieval literature, extremely unusual.¹⁶³ Kantakouzēnos displays great skill in sustaining his reserve throughout such a lengthy and personal work. He moreover demonstrates considerable psychological insight and explains conflict as the result of the clashing interests of individuals who are themselves frequently acting on the basis of incomplete or misleading information. The often repetitious statements of central characters should be considered not as poor narrative style but as deliberate attempts to emphasise key arguments and control the reader's assessments of the individuals concerned.

¹⁶³ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 303-5, discusses the uniqueness of his approach within the Byzantine historiographical tradition.

In contemporary terms, Kantakouzēnos' work might be more usefully considered 'spin' – an intentionally selective picture of events interpreted in a favourable way to advance the interests of the narrator – rather than outright fabrication and deliberate misinformation. Unfortunately the competing, pro-regency, narrative for the 1341-7 civil war is largely lost to us and cannot be reliably reconstructed from the accounts of its opponents; the only other extensive surviving narrative, that of Grēgoras, is strongly sympathetic towards Kantakouzēnos, at least until his victory. Therefore, as the evidence to determine to what extent Kantakouzēnos' interpretation is 'correct' is frequently lacking, it is often more instructive to analyse what Kantakouzēnos wanted readers to believe and how he attempted to persuade them rather than accepting or dismissing specific statements according to their relation to a largely unknowable objective truth.

The four principal characters in Book III of the *Histories* are the Empress Anna, the Patriarch Kalekas, Alexios Apokaukos and Kantakouzēnos himself. The interplay of these four individuals is fundamental to the explanation offered for the outbreak of war and assignment of blame, therefore the messages Kantakouzēnos intended to convey will be considered in some detail for each. The following discussions do not pretend to be exhaustive and focus upon Kantakouzēnos' principal concerns in the translated chapters, namely responsibility for the outbreak of war and the legitimacy, or illegitimacy, of the main claimants to the rule of the Empire. However, these concerns must be examined within the context of the entire of the *Histories* and considerable reference is necessarily made to passages outside the present translation.

5.1.1. Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos

A central objective of the *Histories* is to exculpate its author, and main protagonist, for the outbreak of a conflict which, as he correctly observes, ‘overturned and ruined nearly everything’.¹⁶⁴ This is particularly the case for the early chapters of Book III, which relate the outbreak of the war. Kantakouzēnos’ main preoccupation is to establish his own legitimacy as regent for Iōannēs Palaiologos and, concomitantly, to show that there were no other legitimate claimants. The legitimacy of the Empress herself as sovereign is never questioned but nor is it ever questioned that she was unable to rule in her own right. Kantakouzēnos’ conception of the imperial office seems to have rested strongly on the assumption that the emperor was also a soldier and led his armies, where possible, in person.¹⁶⁵ Women and, for that matter, churchmen were thus incapable of fulfilling the role adequately.¹⁶⁶ The reason that Kantakouzēnos works so hard to demonstrate his legitimacy in the *Histories* is of course the awkward reality that Andronikos did not explicitly designate him as regent or successor. If he had, Kantakouzēnos would undoubtedly have said so. Instead, the closest he gets is Andronikos’ purported last words, in a speech given by the Empress, where Andronikos exhorts her not to dismiss him.¹⁶⁷ Faced with this difficulty, Kantakouzēnos argues, in effect, that it was so obvious that

¹⁶⁴ Kant. II, 12.7: ὅς ὀλίγου δεῖν πάντα ἀνατέτραφε καὶ διέφθαρκε.

¹⁶⁵ Kantakouzēnos’ account of both Andronikos III’s and his own reign are dominated by military actions led or commanded by the emperor. Regarding the importance he attributed to martial virtue, see further Kyriakidis, ‘Warfare and Propaganda’.

¹⁶⁶ Kant. II, 470.17-23, states that of the regency, only Apokaukos has any capacity to defend the cities of Macedonia: Iōannēs V is too young and his mother cannot on account of ‘feminine weakness’ (γυναικεῖαν ἀσθένειαν). Kant. II, 47.20-48.11, scorns the *sykophantai* as cowards who avoid the battlefield and compares them to women. On the importance of martial values among the aristocracy generally, see Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 257-60.

¹⁶⁷ Kant. II, 35.19-36.3. Greg. II, 614.21-615.2, however, implies that Kantakouzēnos did actually claim to have been willed the regency and guardianship of Iōannēs V by Andronikos. Grēgoras often goes further in his defence of Kantakouzēnos in this period than Kantakouzēnos himself does, but whatever the truth, it is clear there was no unambiguous evidence to support such a claim.

Andronikos intended him to act as regent that he did not actually need to say so. This line of reasoning rests on three main arguments: first, that Kantakouzēnos and Andronikos were uniquely close friends and trusted each other completely, above all others; second, that Kantakouzēnos had in effect exercised imperial power during Andronikos' reign, and that Andronikos had often pressed Kantakouzēnos to become co-emperor; and third, that Andronikos had previously appointed him regent when facing death in 1329/1330.¹⁶⁸

Kantakouzēnos' friendship with Andronikos is a constant theme throughout the previous books of the *Histories*, and, on occasion, the two men discuss the strength of their relationship at length.¹⁶⁹ Kantakouzēnos wishes that he had died in Andronikos' place;¹⁷⁰ the Empress recognises the strength of their friendship, which has endured since childhood,¹⁷¹ and even that it took precedence over Andronikos' relationship with her.¹⁷² They were so close and Andronikos trusted him so deeply that it was 'as if he was another of himself'.¹⁷³ Their friendship is comparable with those of legend,¹⁷⁴ it is so strong that it is a model for all other friendships.¹⁷⁵ It is a kind of spiritual brotherhood which allows Kantakouzēnos, after being acclaimed emperor, to present himself precisely as being Andronikos' brother.¹⁷⁶

This intense friendship naturally extended into a partnership in matters of government. Kantakouzēnos repeatedly states that Andronikos

¹⁶⁸ The theme of their friendship and its role in legitimising Kantakouzēnos' position has been widely noted, e.g., Hinterberger, *Autobiographische Traditionen*, 325-9; Tinnefeld, 'Power Politics', 401-2.

¹⁶⁹ Kant. I, 329.16-332.19, 363.11-366.7.

¹⁷⁰ Kant. II, 25.15-19.

¹⁷¹ E.g., Kant. II, 27.13-15, 32.22-33.13, 45.16-20.

¹⁷² Kant. II, 33.11-13: καὶ βασιλέως δὲ ἦν ἀκούειν πολλὰ πολλάκις φθεγγομένου, ὡς καὶ φιλότατων καὶ γυναικῶς καὶ συμπάντων, ὡς εἰπεῖν, χρημάτων τὴν εἰς σὲ φιλίαν προηγοῖτο.

¹⁷³ Kant. II, 28.22: ὡσπερ ἄλλος ὢν αὐτός.

¹⁷⁴ Kant. I, 365.8-11.

¹⁷⁵ Kant. II, 33.3-10.

¹⁷⁶ Kant. II, 167.6-12.

urged him to put on the imperial insignia and be declared co-emperor.¹⁷⁷ Although he continually refuses the offer, apparently from modesty, he informs the reader that he nevertheless exercised most of the imperial prerogatives, with Andronikos' encouragement, in private:

The entire administration of public affairs was subject to him and he signed the Emperor's pragmata with red markings no less than the Emperor himself, and those produced by him held the same and equal force as those of the Emperor, and all else that was the Emperor's business was also permitted to him. For he slept on the Emperor's mattress, if ever on campaign his own baggage carriers were not present, and he was allowed on the Emperor's bed, which even the Emperor's son was not, unless he had been permitted. He lay on it unhindered in the Emperor's presence or absence alike, he used the imperial slippers more fearlessly than his own whenever he passed a night with the Emperor, and he did everything in an imperial manner.¹⁷⁸

This remarkable passage, and the other claims that Andronikos wished to elevate him as co-emperor, rather undercut Kantakouzēnos' apparently modest demurrals of these offers: he wants the reader to know that he had no ambitions in this respect but also that he was effectively already an emperor. Although the truth of the situation cannot be reconstructed, Grēgoras echoes the idea that Andronikos wanted to make Kantakouzēnos co-emperor.¹⁷⁹ However it must be noted that these debates appear in the *Histories* mainly before Andronikos actually had a son. If such

¹⁷⁷ E.g., Kant. I, 365.1-370.9; II, 39.23-40.2, 94.5-9. On the various scholarly interpretations of these offers, see FK II, 183, n. 74a.

¹⁷⁸ Kant. I, 369.12-23: ἢ τε γὰρ διοίκησις τῶν πραγμάτων πᾶσα ὑπ' αὐτῷ ἦν, καὶ τὰ βασιλέως προστάγματα οὐχ ἦττον ἢ αὐτὸς βασιλεὺς ἐρυθραῖς ὑπεσημαίνετο ὑπογραφαῖς, καὶ ἃ ἐξεφέρετο παρ' ἑαυτοῦ, τὴν ἴσην καὶ ὁμοίαν δύναμιν τοῖς βασιλέως εἶχεν, καὶ τὰλλα ὅσα βασιλέως ἔργα ἦν, καὶ αὐτῷ ἐξῆν. στρώμασί τε γὰρ ἐφύπνωτε βασιλέως, εἴ ποτε στρατευομένῳ συνέβαινε τοῖς αὐτοῦ σκευοφόροις μὴ παρεῖναι, καὶ τῇ βασιλέως κλίνῃ, ἢ μὴδὲ υἷῳ καὶ βασιλεῖ, εἰ μὴ ἐπιτραπέη, ἔξεστιν, αὐτὸς ἀνεκλίνετο ἀκωλύτως ὁμοίως τε ἀπόντος καὶ παρόντος βασιλέως, ἐμβάσι τε ἐχρητο ταῖς βασιλικαῖς ἀδεέστερον ἢ ταῖς ἰδίαις, ὅποτε συνδιανυκτερεύσειε βασιλεῖ, καὶ πάντα ἔπραττε βασιλικῶς.

¹⁷⁹ Greg. II, 578.5-9. Tinnefeld, 'Power Politics', 402, is however correct to observe that Grēgoras' source was quite possibly Kantakouzēnos himself.

an offer was ever made, it was probably in the context of the insecurity of Andronikos' early years in power and his lack of an heir. In this case, Kantakouzēnos' presentation of it is wilfully anachronistic. Despite this, the notion of a strong friendship between Kantakouzēnos and Andronikos cannot be simply dismissed as self-constructed. In a letter composed during Andronikos' lifetime, Grēgoras used remarkably similar imagery, depicting Kantakouzēnos as striving with the Emperor for virtue, as did Patroclus with Achilles or Antigonos with Alexander.¹⁸⁰ In a 1332 treaty with Venice, Andronikos names him the 'much-beloved relative of my majesty, the *megas domestikos*, *kyr* Iōannēs Palaiologos Kantakouzēnos'.¹⁸¹ Their exact blood relationship is uncertain, and it was not so strong that either Kantakouzēnos himself or his partisans openly identified him as Palaiologos, but it was clearly a mark of favour that Andronikos accepted him as such. Similarly, the office of *megas domestikos* was given special privileges while Kantakouzēnos occupied it.¹⁸² More open to question is whether their friendship was quite as all-consuming as Kantakouzēnos presents it and whether it changed over time. Kantakouzēnos portrays it as constant, as intense at the moment of Andronikos' death as it is at the start of the *Histories*. However he mentions at least two occasions when Andronikos was displeased with Kantakouzēnos promoting individuals he saw as unworthy, Syrgiannēs and Apokaukos.¹⁸³ The latter incident, the only time Kantakouzēnos shows the Emperor as openly angry with him, occurred within the last year of Andronikos' life. It is possible that they were not on such intimate terms when Andronikos died as they had been formerly.

¹⁸⁰ Grēgoras, *Letters*, 209.1-4 (ep. 84).

¹⁸¹ MM III, 111.2-3: τοῦ περιποθήτο γαμβροῦ τῆς βασιλείας μου, τοῦ μεγάλου δομεστίκου, κυροῦ Ἰωάννου Παλαιολόγου τοῦ Καντακουζηνοῦ.

¹⁸² See Ch.1:9.

¹⁸³ Kant. I, 411.23-412.3, 541.2-13.

The incident of Kantakouzēnos' appointment as regent during Andronikos' near fatal illness of 1329/30 was clearly a public event.¹⁸⁴ Kantakouzēnos re-tells the episode again while relating Apokaukos' career, ensuring it remains fresh in the reader's mind.¹⁸⁵ Andronikos was seriously ill and he, and all those around him, believed that he was dying. His decisions at that time were therefore an attractive template for Kantakouzēnos regarding Andronikos' putative intentions in 1341. Andronikos, in what he expected to be his final speech, explicitly appoints Kantakouzēnos 'leader and protector instead of me'.¹⁸⁶ In the oaths that are subsequently sworn by those present, which are identified as those oaths of loyalty usually following an emperor's death,¹⁸⁷ the arrangement is set out in detail:

*The Empress Anna, having supreme authority and command over public affairs, acquiesced to keep her faith pure and unadulterated and to be completely persuaded by the Grand Domestic and not to contradict whatever was ordered by him. So the oaths were made in this manner, sworn by everyone in turn. And he administered public affairs as seemed best to him.*¹⁸⁸

After the oaths are sworn, Kantakouzēnos refuses the imperial insignia which the senate and army attempt to push upon him.¹⁸⁹ Although Andronikos recovers shortly after, and Kantakouzēnos returns peaceably to his former station, Kantakouzēnos apparently assumed that exactly the same

¹⁸⁴ Kant. I, 391.7-411.19. For the date, see Ch.14:12.

¹⁸⁵ Kant. II, 91.3-95.10.

¹⁸⁶ Kant. I, 393.22-24: ἔπειτα δὲ ἡγεμόνα καὶ προστάτην ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τὸν μέγαν δομέστικον ἀφήμι ὑμῖν.

¹⁸⁷ Kant. I, 395.24-396.2: ὄρκους προσέταξε γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ ἐπικρατήσαν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἔθος ἐπὶ τῇ βασιλείῳς τελευτῇ.

¹⁸⁸ Kant. I, 396.2-8: στέργειν Ἄνναν τὴν βασιλίδα, κυρίαν καὶ δεσπόζουσαν τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ τὴν πίστιν αὐτῇ καθαρὰν καὶ ἄδολον τηρεῖν· πείθεσθαι δὲ πάντα καὶ μεγάλῳ δομεστικῳ καὶ τὰ κελευόμενα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ μηδὲν ἀντιλέγοντας ποιεῖν. οὕτω μὲν οὖν ἐγένοντο οἱ ὄρκοι, πάντων ὁμνυόντων ἐφεξῆς. αὐτὸς δὲ τὰ πράγματα διώκει ἢ αὐτῷ ἄριστα ἐδόκει.

¹⁸⁹ Kant. I, 396.9-14.

arrangement should take force in 1341 as it did in 1330. He similarly suggests that he has no wish, nor any need, to take up the imperial office on the second occasion either. Nor did he see any need for another to share authority with him: just as there was no need for Xenē in 1329/30,¹⁹⁰ there was no role for the Patriarch in 1341.

Kantakouzēnos deliberately ignores any differences between the two situations. In 1341, there was no possibility that Andronikos would make a miraculous recovery and, sooner rather than later, the status of the *de facto* ruler would have to be recognised formally; higher ranking members of the imperial family could hardly accept being commanded by a *meγas domestikos*. Another crucial difference was that, as mentioned above, in 1330 Andronikos did not yet have a son. By passing power to Kantakouzēnos, Andronikos would protect his loyal followers from reprisals by his grandfather's party after his death. They would have been anxious to press such a measure upon him. He may also have wished, after so many years of bitter rivalry, to prevent his grandfather or any of his other possible successors, such as his uncles Kōnstantinos or Dēmētrios Palaiologos, taking power.¹⁹¹ Indeed, Kantakouzēnos rapidly moved against possible rivals, although he presents himself as forestalling their deaths at the hands of more junior but more fearful followers of Andronikos III.¹⁹² However, after the birth of Iōannēs V, there was no question regarding the identity of his successor and Andronikos may well have thought placing imperial power in the hands of even a close friend was to risk creating a temptation too great to be resisted. He did, after all, have the example of his own great-grandfather, Michaēl VIII, who usurped and blinded his ward, Iōannēs IV Laskaris, in 1261. It is

¹⁹⁰ Kant. II, 91.15-95.10.

¹⁹¹ Kōnstantinos (*PLP* 21499) had been Andronikos II's intended heir if he had successfully disinherited Andronikos III. For Dēmētrios' attempted coup in 1335, see Ch.17:6.

¹⁹² Kant. I, 396.15-399.20. Kantakouzēnos took measures to secure Kōnstantinos, despite him being already tonsured and under guard in Didymoteichon, see Kant. II, 396.15-399.4.

therefore likely that his lack of formal provision for Kantakouzēnos reflected a commitment to retaining power within his family; sovereignty would reside with his wife until his son was of sufficient age to inherit it and she would have to decide how best to accommodate Kantakouzēnos.

The number of Kantakouzēnos' arguments is, in itself, a sign that he lacked any indisputable claim. He therefore doubles-down and continually mentions diverse qualities which indicate his suitability for controlling public affairs, which complement his general portrayal of his own virtue.¹⁹³ He spends freely of his own money to support the state,¹⁹⁴ implicitly contrasting with the familiar pattern of functionaries enriching themselves at state expense, as do Patrikiōtēs and Apokaukos.¹⁹⁵ He successfully leads the army against the foes gathering after Andronikos' death, while Apokaukos fails to play his part.¹⁹⁶ His firm resolve is enough to deter the Albanians from revolt and the Bulgarians from war. He is honestly concerned for the wellbeing of the Emperor's children, protecting them from harm and suggesting Iōannēs be crowned.¹⁹⁷ If he had any evil intentions, he had ample opportunity to indulge them when the imperial family were in his power during the days after Andronikos' death, but he sought only to protect them.¹⁹⁸

The issue of legitimacy is so crucial to Kantakouzēnos not because of any abstract argument over whether he sought to usurp Iōannēs V's rights but because, if he was acting justly, it was not he who bore the guilt for starting the utterly ruinous civil war. This, he tells us would be 'worse than

¹⁹³ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 288-91, outlines Kantakouzēnos' conformity to traditional imperial virtues, such as benevolence, wisdom and concern for justice.

¹⁹⁴ E.g., Kant. II, 44.12-13, 65.21-24, 68.1-5, 83.10, 146.20.

¹⁹⁵ See Ch.8:3 and Ch.9:3, respectively.

¹⁹⁶ Kant. II, 69.3-70.17, 77.4-14.

¹⁹⁷ Kant. II, 14.9-17, 64.8-10.

¹⁹⁸ Kant. II, 40.2-10, 147.7-17.

any death'.¹⁹⁹ He had no desire to rule over the unwilling.²⁰⁰ He certainly had no desire to be emperor, as he had not when urged by Andronikos during his own reign.²⁰¹ He was fully prepared to lay aside his position and enter a monastery, if he had not been begged to remain.²⁰² He would have willingly resigned his commands and stood trial as long as he was sure it would be fair.²⁰³ Even if this could not be guaranteed, he would face death in an unfair trial rather than provoke civil war.²⁰⁴ However this resolution would have spelled ruin for his followers as well; they explain that they would fight on their own account even if he sacrificed himself, collaborating if necessary with the Bulgarians or Serbians.²⁰⁵ War would come even if he refused to lead them, they explain, so his determination to avoid responsibility and to refuse to lead them is selfish.²⁰⁶ The decision to avoid war, consequently, lay not with Kantakouzēnos but with his opponents, the *sykophantai*.²⁰⁷ With deliberate, self-serving, and wicked calculation, they chose war. And they would not cease to choose it until they were eventually forced to desist.

Whether Kantakouzēnos specifically sought to make himself emperor is impossible to know. He is emphatic that he had no desire for the imperial office and presents his declaration as *basileus* as an action forced upon him by the attacks of his enemies. This argument cannot be dismissed out of hand. Although Kantakouzēnos' undeclared regency would certainly have had to be formalised in some way if it was to endure, he was surely aware that simply taking the crown without any thought for Iōannēs V's rights would

¹⁹⁹ Kant. II, 24.22-3: παντὸς οἰόμενος θανάτου ἐπαχθέστερον τὴν αἰτίαν τῶν δεινῶν παρασχεῖν αὐτός.

²⁰⁰ Kant. II, 24.17-18: οὐ γὰρ ἠβούλετο ἀκουσίῳ ἀρχεῖν.

²⁰¹ Kant. II, 39.23-40.2.

²⁰² Kant. II, 25.10ff.

²⁰³ Kant. II, 50.11-14, 140.7-13.

²⁰⁴ Kant. II, 151.19-152.2.

²⁰⁵ Kant. II, 153.13-154.8.

²⁰⁶ Kant. II, 153.13-156.16.

²⁰⁷ Kant. II, 160.5-20.

cause extreme difficulties. It would have provoked enormous ecclesiastical and popular opposition, let alone the hostility of the Palaiologoi and other factions of the aristocracy. Consequently, when forced by circumstance to declare himself *basileus*, he attempted to portray himself as protector of the legitimate emperor (Iōannēs V) and empress (Anna), giving them precedence as senior emperors.²⁰⁸ This policy was maintained far too long to be dismissed as a simple piece of cynical opportunism, particularly once the popular revolts against him in 1341/2 revealed that it had no effect on his public image.²⁰⁹ Whether Kantakouzēnos originally intended to become *basileus* or not, it is obvious that he was not planning to make such a declaration in October 1341. As he argues himself, it would have been foolish to leave much of his wealth in Constantinople if he had been planning to start a war against the Empress.²¹⁰ Indeed, if he had wanted to launch a coup, it would have been far more sensible to do so by first bringing his forces into the capital rather than arranging to be acclaimed at Didymoteichon. Although Kantakouzēnos' contention that he was only persuaded to declare himself by his followers is a cliché, it is believable, albeit not verifiable.²¹¹ His supporters in Didymoteichon were aware that the government in Constantinople had already attacked and arrested many of Kantakouzēnos' relatives and *oikeioi*.²¹² If he had negotiated with the regency, or even – as he claims to have been willing to do – simply backed down to avoid civil strife, he would probably have had to enter a monastery. The future prospects of his relatives and his close *oikeioi* would thus have been blighted, and many would have faced loss of status, confiscation of property, and possibly

²⁰⁸ Kant. II, 166.11-14. On this aspect of Kantakouzēnos' self-legitimation generally, see Dölger, 'Legitimist'.

²⁰⁹ Regarding these uprisings, see Chapter 28 and Ch.22:5. Kantakouzēnos explicitly states that the rioters claimed to be acting against him in favour of Iōannēs V.

²¹⁰ Kant. II, 148.9-149.3.

²¹¹ Kant. II, 158.4-160.2.

²¹² See Chapter 22. For the concept of *oikeioi*, see Ch.5:1.

worse. They were unwilling to surrender without a fight and, by proclaiming their patron *basileus*, they raised the stakes: they agreed to fight for Kantakouzēnos but, in exchange, he – as emperor – could hardly offer, or expect to be offered, a trial or a compromise peace any longer. For there to be peace, the Empress would at least have had to accept him as co-emperor, thereby formalising his political ascendancy and guaranteeing the current and future prosperity of his partisans.

Despite the effort Kantakouzēnos expends on his self-portrait in the *Histories*, it fails to convince and not simply because it is suspiciously flawless. In pursuing his legitimising goals so strongly, Kantakouzēnos makes some awkward narrative compromises. The humble persona he constructs is undermined by the assertiveness with which he takes control of government immediately after Andronikos' death. It is impossible to escape the impression that he thought he deserved to rule; his sense of entitlement is apparent however he clothes it in the garb of public service and concern for the imperial family. Even if Kantakouzēnos was a reluctant *emperor*, he does not appear to have been a reluctant regent at all. By so seamlessly 'taking care of affairs as usual'²¹³ after Andronikos' death, he comes close to implying that the Emperor was simply an adornment to his own government in the first place. His offer to resign, even as he tells it, appears as a strategy to force the Empress to give him a free hand.²¹⁴ Kantakouzēnos' acknowledgement of himself as 'the first' and awareness of his political strength²¹⁵ may reflect a Thucydidean realism and lend force to his identification of envy as the prime motivation of his enemies,²¹⁶ but it also creates the impression that he was overconfident and prone to underestimating his opponents, thereby undermining his self-presentation as

²¹³ Kant. II, 14.17-18: συνήθως ἐπεμελεῖτο τῶν πραγμάτων.

²¹⁴ See particularly his closing speech to the Empress, Kant. II, 39.9-45.2.

²¹⁵ E.g., Kant. II, 25.7-9, 109.4-6, 170.10-15.

²¹⁶ Kant. II, 12.11-14.

a prudent leader. Yet Kantakouzēnos attempts to twist even this in his favour through suggesting that, by challenging him, his enemies demonstrated their own foolishness in failing to understand his strength.²¹⁷ However, having denigrated their abilities so greatly in order to demonstrate their unworthiness to lead, he is forced to explain how they were so able to successfully outmanoeuvre him. But to this question, Kantakouzēnos had prepared an elegant answer, which is that they employed one tool not available to him: lies.

²¹⁷ Kant. II, 43.5-14.

5.1.2. Alexios Apokaukos

In the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos clearly depicts himself as the hero and Alexios Apokaukos as the villain.²¹⁸ In his account of the outbreak of the civil war, Kantakouzēnos unambiguously portrays Apokaukos as the prime mover behind the disastrous conflict. At the conclusion of the entire *Histories*, the 'the schemes and villainies of the *meḡas doux*' are once again on the author's mind.²¹⁹ Superficially, Apokaukos may appear an unlikely choice for the part of chief adversary; although present throughout the first two books of the *Histories*, he is mentioned infrequently and he died in mid-1345, roughly twenty months before the end of the civil war. However, the 1341-7 civil war is the dominant conflict in the *Histories* and Kantakouzēnos was determined to demonstrate that blame for it did not lie with him but elsewhere. None of Kantakouzēnos' other opponents are condemned in such an overt fashion or treated with so little sympathy. There is a noticeable edge to Kantakouzēnos' condemnations of Apokaukos, which is largely absent from his criticisms of other enemies.²²⁰ Syrgiannēs and Iōannēs Batatzēs switched their loyalties more readily and frequently than Apokaukos but are never condemned with such vehemence, despite the severe dangers they posed to Kantakouzēnos at various times.²²¹ Whatever the truth of the relationship between the two men, or the degree of Apokaukos' responsibility for the conflict, Kantakouzēnos' sense of betrayal appears genuine.

The Apokaukos of the *Histories* is, as Kazhdan observed, virtually an anti-Kantakouzēnos, mirroring the hero's virtues with their corresponding

²¹⁸ For the details of Apokaukos life, see Ch.9:3.

²¹⁹ Kant. III, 364.21-22: ταῖς μεḡάλου δουκὸς ἀπατηθέντες μηχαναῖς καὶ πανουργίαις. See also Appendix I.

²²⁰ The most obvious other exception is Grēgoras, who is also condemned as a liar. See above, Section 4.1.2.

²²¹ For Syrgiannēs and Batatzēs, see, respectively, Ch.14:9 and Ch.29:1.

vices.²²² Kantakouzēnos' birth is noble, Apokaukos' is common; Kantakouzēnos is motivated by honour and concern for the common good, Apokaukos pursues power from greed and self-aggrandisement; Kantakouzēnos spends freely, Apokaukos hoards money; Kantakouzēnos is magnanimous, Apokaukos is ungrateful; Kantakouzēnos is truthful, Apokaukos is perfidious. Apokaukos' lies are his strongest weapons, for through these he builds the conspiracy which turns the Empress against Kantakouzēnos, and initiates the tragedy of the war. At every opportunity, Apokaukos is shown to be sly and deceptive. He swears oaths freely but it is clear that he has no regard for their worth and breaks them just as freely.²²³ He happily uses religious oaths and sacred objects to add weight to his lies, lacking any fear of God.²²⁴ As he lectures the Patriarch, the most important thing is to win and lies are simply another means of achieving this.²²⁵ Yet, those he corrupts come to regret it; by the end of the war, many of his erstwhile supporters have in turn been betrayed and imprisoned by Apokaukos.²²⁶

Although Kantakouzēnos himself is repeatedly deceived by his enemy, who uses his own honest trust and magnanimity against him, he is never corrupted by him. That so many otherwise respected individuals, such as the Empress, are persuaded by him is not so much a sign of their weakness as of Apokaukos' diabolic cunning. In Chapters 17-19, where he forges the conspiracy against Kantakouzēnos, Apokaukos displays

²²² Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 317.

²²³ E.g., Kant. II, 119.22-23: παρακοιμώμενος δὲ τοῖς εἰωθόσιν ὄρκοις ἢ ταῖς ἐπιρκίαις μᾶλλον ἐχρηῖτο ('The *parakoimōmenos* proclaimed his usual oaths, or rather perjuries').

²²⁴ E.g., Kant. II, 96.10-17, 108.21-22, 120.9-10, 122.5-6, 124.23-125.1.

²²⁵ Kant. II, 109.20-110.1.

²²⁶ Of the seven conspirators Kantakouzēnos identifies by name as Apokaukos' recruits in Chapters 17-19, Andronikos Asanēs (Ch.14:4), Kōnstantinos Asanēs (Ch.19:1), Iōannēs Gabalas (Ch.19:4), and Geōrgios Choumnos (Ch.2:24) are all arrested during the course of the war, seemingly on Apokaukos' orders. The Patriarch is imprisoned just before the end of the war by Anna and the fate of Artōtos is unknown. Only Isaakios Asanēs prospers.

exceptional understanding of human psychology, playing on the vanities and insecurities of his interlocutors, offering the temptations of future rewards – power, high office, marriage alliances – while implanting fears regarding Kantakouzēnos’ intentions, which he heightens either through outright lies or subtle reinterpretation of words and actions already familiar to the reader.²²⁷ It is a performance worthy of a Shakespearean villain; an Iago. No wonder that Kantakouzēnos’ followers in Didymoteichon compare Apokaukos to Satan himself, The Prince of Lies.²²⁸ The fight against a man of such unusual depravity was therefore a righteous duty and required a man of unusual virtue. This lends the *Histories*, as Kazhdan argued, an almost universal or cosmic aspect.²²⁹ Although the *Histories* is a work that generally shuns prophecy, it is perhaps no wonder that the saintly archbishop of Didymoteichon prophetically warns Kantakouzēnos against Apokaukos.²³⁰ Of the many adversaries Kantakouzēnos faces in the *Histories*, Apokaukos is the only one whom the author clearly suggests is motivated not simply by self-interest but by conscious evil.²³¹

²²⁷ For instance, Apokaukos suggests to Choumnos that Kantakouzēnos seeks revenge for Choumnos’ verbal attack on him before the senate (Kant. II, 120.17-121.7). As Kantakouzēnos quotes Choumnos’ attack twice and offers to resign over the incident, Apokaukos’ allegation that it was playing on his mind seems extremely persuasive. It is left to Choumnos himself to express surprise that Kantakouzēnos would ever be so petty, before Apokaukos finally convinces him (Kant. II, 121.7-17). Similarly, Apokaukos exploits the Patriarch’s fear of Palamas, which is probably ahistorical but would have seemed plausible to any 14th century reader of the *Histories*, see below, Section 5.1.3.

²²⁸ In the course of a short but decidedly unflattering letter to Apokaukos, they state that his father is the devil (Kant. II, 278.18: τῷ σῶ πατρὶ τῷ διαβόλῳ), compare his rebellion against his benefactor to that of Satan against God (Kant. II, 279.19-20: ὡσπερ ὁ Σατὰν κατὰ Θεοῦ), and that like Satan he attacks the best while ignoring the worst (Kant. II, 280.5: ὡσπερ ὁ Σατανᾶς τοῖς μάλιστα Θεῷ προσωκειωμένοις [...]). Satan is named nowhere else in the *Histories*.

²²⁹ Kazhdan, ‘L’Histoire de Cantacuzène’, 287-8, 319.

²³⁰ Kant. II, 170.1-171.14.

²³¹ Greg. II, 577.16-20, similarly mourns that if Apokaukos had used his gifts for truth and justice, he would have been famous among the Romans but ‘he was not a good man’ (ἀνθρῶπος δ’οὐκ ἀγαθός). He also claims that Apokaukos had often thought to murder Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos in order to place his own candidate on the throne (Greg. II, 577.5-11). How Grēgoras might know this is never explained.

This evil would engender the civil war as, when he left Constantinople in September, all Kantakouzēnos' political differences with the Empress and Patriarch had been settled decisively in his favour, at least according to his own account.²³² Apokaukos was confined in his fortress, Epibatai, following an outrageous plot to kidnap Iōannēs V.²³³ On his way to Didymoteichon, Kantakouzēnos forgave Apokaukos for his latest misadventure, in exchange for pledges of good behaviour, and sent him back to Constantinople.²³⁴ Apokaukos then proceeded to overturn Kantakouzēnos' settlement and, within a few days, had persuaded the Empress to open hostilities with Kantakouzēnos.²³⁵ The civil war therefore grew out of a tragic mistake committed by Kantakouzēnos, a consequence of his generous and trusting nature.

Although Kantakouzēnos' decision to leave Apokaukos at large seems foolhardy even to a casual reader of the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos explains that he had long been Apokaukos' patron. Apokaukos first entered Andronikos III's service through Kantakouzēnos' recommendation, which he made as a favour to Apokaukos' then-patron, Syrgiannēs.²³⁶ It later transpires that Apokaukos was in danger of being prosecuted by Andronikos II for fraud.²³⁷ By 1328, after the final triumph of Andronikos III over his grandfather, the entirety of Andronikos' administration and finances had become concentrated in Kantakouzēnos' hands. Seeking to divest himself of some of this burden, he obtained Andronikos' permission

²³² Grēgoras also overtly assigns primary responsibility for the civil war to Apokaukos. However he portrays the Empress and Patriarch as being much more receptive to Apokaukos' scheming than Kantakouzēnos does, therefore effectively diluting Apokaukos' responsibility to an extent.

²³³ If Kantakouzēnos' description of this plot has any basis in fact, it was probably greatly distorted. See Ch.10:7.

²³⁴ Kant. II, 104.14-105.4.

²³⁵ These events are the subject of Chapters 17-22.

²³⁶ Kant. I, 25.3-10. It is never explained why Syrgiannēs, then high in Andronikos' favour, felt unable to recommend Apokaukos himself.

²³⁷ Kant. I, 118.2-7.

to delegate to a subordinate; Kantakouzēnos selected Apokaukos for the role, but the latter still had to refer important decisions to Kantakouzēnos or Andronikos.²³⁸ During Andronikos' severe illness of 1329/30, Apokaukos disgraced himself by supporting the claims of the Empress Xenē against Kantakouzēnos, but was soon restored to favour after a show of repentance.²³⁹ In 1340, Apokaukos approached Kantakouzēnos with a scheme to raise a fleet to check Turkish piracy; Kantakouzēnos persuaded the Emperor to support the plan, despite the latter deriding Apokaukos' martial ability and warning Kantakouzēnos of his dishonesty. Although Apokaukos met with some success, his efforts to take all the credit for himself infuriated the Emperor, who dismissed him from public office.²⁴⁰ Yet, immediately after Andronikos' death, Kantakouzēnos appointed Apokaukos *mesazōn*. However, Apokaukos soon overreached himself by demanding control of the treasury and Kantakouzēnos dismissed him.²⁴¹ Despite this, shortly later, another show of repentance, and the Patriarch's intervention, secured him command of the fleet once again.²⁴² Apparently unable to help himself, Apokaukos launched the plot which resulted in his hurried retreat to Epibatai. Despite the Empress' instinctive distrust of Apokaukos – who had, after all, just been exposed as planning to kidnap her son – Kantakouzēnos persuades her to release him without punishment with a vague but insistent proposal that they 'make use of him, for whatever might seem expedient'.²⁴³

²³⁸ Kant. I, 337.21-339.16. Apokaukos was appointed to supervise the imperial administration and finances, see Ch.14:11. Kantakouzēnos initially states simply that Andronikos consented to the appointment, in contrast to his later recap of events where he relates that Andronikos was extremely reluctant (Kant. II, 90.11-91.1).

²³⁹ Kant. II, 92.7-98.19. Kantakouzēnos does not mention Apokaukos at all in his initial account of Andronikos' illness.

²⁴⁰ For the entire episode, see Kant. I, 535.1-541.13 and Ch.15:2.

²⁴¹ Kant. II, 99.9-101.20.

²⁴² Kant. II, 102.8-13.

²⁴³ Kant. II, 88.10-11: πάλιν χρῆσθαι, ὅπη ἂν δοκῆ συμφέρειν.

The only way to understand this cycle of betrayal and forgiveness in a manner that is compatible with Kantakouzēnos' virtue is to assume, first, that Apokaukos was indeed extremely competent – and thus useful to the common good – when he actually set his mind to his duties and, second, that Kantakouzēnos was basically naïve and allowed his noble magnanimity and his belief in Christian forgiveness to be exploited. This approach was adopted by Nicol, who concluded that Kantakouzēnos was a poor judge of character.²⁴⁴ Kantakouzēnos himself elevates his shortcoming to a tragic flaw; the destruction of the civil war was a consequence of his trust and kindness when applied to man of wicked ruthlessness. He repeatedly contrasts his generosity with Apokaukos' ingratitude.²⁴⁵ In a society where patron-client relationships were extremely important, such ingratitude was itself an outrageous violation of social norms and an indication of low moral character. However, Kantakouzēnos can hardly have emphasised his patronage of Apokaukos so much only to demonstrate the latter's base conduct: simple ingratitude pales into insignificance alongside his impieties, oath-breaking, calumnies, let alone the atrocities attributed to his stirring up of the *demos* during the war. It could therefore be suggested, less charitably to Kantakouzēnos, that he cynically supported Apokaukos, despite his unruly behaviour, because Apokaukos was in reality Kantakouzēnos' most effective agent and, following Andronikos III's death, he had particular need for him. Both Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras state that Apokaukos urged Kantakouzēnos to declare himself *basileus* after the Emperor died.²⁴⁶ The difficulty with this interpretation is that, if the main reason for Kantakouzēnos' apparent indulgence of Apokaukos was to further his own ambitions, it would have been more logical for Kantakouzēnos to attempt to

²⁴⁴ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 169-70.

²⁴⁵ This is the main theme of Chapters 14 and 15, which summarise Apokaukos' career and his ingratitude.

²⁴⁶ Kant. I, 557.21-559.11; Greg. II, 578.5-15.

distance himself from Apokaukos in the *Histories* than to insist on his sponsorship of him.

It is possible, however, to interpret their relationship in a different light by examining Apokaukos' career again. Apokaukos was one of the earliest adherents of Andronikos III, joining his circle as he planned his revolt against his grandfather. Kantakouzēnos asserts that Apokaukos was outside Andronikos' inner council, but admits that Apokaukos – uniquely for one outside the core group – was important enough to know all Andronikos' plans.²⁴⁷ In contrast, Grēgoras placed Apokaukos on the same level as Kantakouzēnos and Synadēnos from the outset.²⁴⁸ Apokaukos served Andronikos loyally throughout his struggle for the throne, and was trusted with important missions such as securing Selymbria or attempting to subvert Thessalonike.²⁴⁹ His loyalty contrasts with the treachery of Syrgiannēs, originally the most prominent of Andronikos' supporters, whom Kantakouzēnos tends to characterise as impulsive and wayward rather than actively evil. During Andronikos III's reign, Apokaukos was, as Andronikos' *mesazōn*, effectively in charge of the day-to-day business of government and held control of the treasury as well. Although he was allegedly closely supervised in these offices by Kantakouzēnos, it is hard to see how this could have been the case in practice; Kantakouzēnos' repeated absences on campaign with Andronikos III would often have left Apokaukos to rely on his own initiative. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that Andronikos would have wanted a particularly trustworthy individual in such a post, as he knew he would frequently be absent. Moreover, Andronikos appears to have avoided any full-blown financial crises and, as his reign progressed, money seems to have been increasingly available, since he was apparently able to

²⁴⁷ Kant. I, 61.22-62.1.

²⁴⁸ Greg. I, 301.5-12.

²⁴⁹ Kant. I, 258.21-259.2, 268.2-16.

invest large sums in fortifications and fleet construction.²⁵⁰ Apokaukos must have held significant responsibility for this. Finally, Andronikos permitted Apokaukos to take full military command of a new fleet despite his lack of aristocratic pedigree or experience. Arguably, therefore, Apokaukos was one of the most important figures in the imperial government and indeed a treaty signed by Andronikos III identifies him as the Emperor's *oikeios*, with his name following Kantakouzēnos' in the list of witnesses.²⁵¹ Accordingly, it can be assumed that Apokaukos would have expected a leading role in any regency government. In fact, his lack of an aristocratic pedigree may have made his (re-)appointment as chief minister extremely attractive to the Empress; it was unlikely that a *novus homo* could ever secure consent of the leading families to place himself on the throne, in contrast to the domineering figure of Kantakouzēnos.

When Apokaukos is considered in this light, the overwrought portrayal of the relationship between Kantakouzēnos and Apokaukos in the *Histories* can be explained as a comprehensive attempt to demolish any notion that Apokaukos possessed any autonomous right to be involved in government. Kantakouzēnos therefore emphasises that the imperial family had nothing but scorn for Apokaukos. Andronikos II calls Apokaukos 'an insignificant man from an insignificant family, who was hardly yesterday a treacherous undersecretary of the public taxes.'²⁵² Andronikos III defends his employment of Apokaukos as simply one of his lowest servants (φαυλοτάτοις τῶν οἰκετῶν) and makes clear that he uses him only to gratify

²⁵⁰ Kant. I, 540.5-6 (100,000 *hyperpyra* for the fleet); I, 541.16-542.23, for the building or rebuilding of Arkadioupolis, Gynaikokastron, Sidērokastron, Amphipolis, Peritheōrion, and Dipotamos.

²⁵¹ MM III, 111.3-5: τοῦ οἰκείου τῆ βασιλεία μου, παρακοιμωμένου κυροῦ Ἀλεξίου τοῦ Ἀποκαύκου.

²⁵² Kant. I, 117.24-118.1: Ἀπόκαυχον, ἄσημον μὲν ὄντα καὶ ἐξ ἀσήμων, καὶ οὐπω χθὲς καὶ πρώην τοῖς τῶν δημοσίων φόρων πράκταις ὑπογραμματεύοντα. Since all of Andronikos III's followers have in fact betrayed Andronikos II, Apokaukos is apparently singled out largely because of his low social origins.

Kantakouzēnos.²⁵³ The latter thereafter often shields Apokaukos from punishment by Andronikos III,²⁵⁴ who makes his suspicion of Apokaukos' naval proposal clear and warns Kantakouzēnos 'I am no less your enemy than he is your friend'.²⁵⁵ The Empress Anna regards Apokaukos as 'a man full of villainy and treachery' and points out his numerous betrayals of Kantakouzēnos.²⁵⁶ Kantakouzēnos, therefore, not only emphatically inserts himself at every step of Apokaukos' career, but he also shows himself to be protecting his protégé against the justified disdain and perceptive scepticism of the Palaiologoi. As Kantakouzēnos generally seeks to present himself as being in harmony with the Palaiologoi, his determination to disregard their many warnings for the sake of a man he apparently regards with contempt strikes a jarring note.

It therefore appears probable that Kantakouzēnos systematically exaggerated the depth of his patronage of Apokaukos and sought to quash any idea that Apokaukos was an independent participant in Andronikos III's inner circle, let alone one who remained allied with him from the outset of his struggle for power until the end of his reign. This is not to imply that Apokaukos had any form of strong personal relationship or friendship with Andronikos – there is no indication that he did – or that he was in any way of greater importance than Kantakouzēnos, since his lower ranking in the court hierarchy suggests otherwise. However, if Apokaukos was a prominent servant of Andronikos III in his own right, then he did not necessarily have a lesser claim to advise the Empress after Andronikos' death than Kantakouzēnos did. Kantakouzēnos, by emphasising Apokaukos' dependence on his benefactor, even to the extent of making himself appear

²⁵³ Kant. I, 118.24-119.6.

²⁵⁴ Kant. II, 90.21-91.1.

²⁵⁵ Kant. I, 538.15-16: οὐδὲν γὰρ ἤττον ἐγὼ σοι πολέμιος, ἢ ἐκεῖνος φίλος.

²⁵⁶ Kant. II, 88.16-17: ἀνθρωπον πανουργίας καὶ ἐπιβουλῆς μεστόν.

foolish, renders Apokaukos not a peer competitor but an errant servant.²⁵⁷ He is depicted not as the *oikeios* of Andronikos III but rather of Kantakouzēnos himself. Even the encouragement that Apokaukos gives to Kantakouzēnos to seize the throne after Andronikos' demise reinforces this notion: it is the advice of a henchman to his master; he will rise in importance only if his master does. Kantakouzēnos, of course, rebuffs the suggestion fiercely. The emphasis on Apokaukos' lowly origins serves a similar purpose, emphasising that his upbringing is not that of the ruling class but the servile classes.²⁵⁸ However it is difficult to believe that Andronikos, who had a great deal to fear from plots to remove him, would have placed such power – including the administration of his treasury – into the hands of one he did not trust simply to indulge his friend Kantakouzēnos. Moreover, the Empress' reconciliation with Apokaukos is never explained. She is persuaded to turn upon Kantakouzēnos by other members of the conspiracy whom Apokaukos has corrupted. Yet the moment they succeed, she immediately allows Apokaukos to be placed in charge of Constantinople and the efforts to round up Kantakouzēnos' partisans, despite having allegedly attempted to kidnap her son a few weeks before.²⁵⁹ By the time that Kantakouzēnos is able to send emissaries to her, she is already deferring to Apokaukos and largely under his spell.²⁶⁰ The speed and thoroughness of this change suggests that she was not perhaps as initially hostile to Apokaukos as Kantakouzēnos relates.

In many ways, Kantakouzēnos' attribution of responsibility for the civil war to Apokaukos was, to borrow two frequently occurring concepts from the *Histories*, not only necessary (*ἀνάγκη*) but advantageous

²⁵⁷ Kantakouzēnos follows a similar approach, albeit to a lesser degree, in his portrayal of the Patriarch, see below, Section 5.1.3.

²⁵⁸ Kantakouzēnos does not in fact disparage lowly social origins as a matter of course, but does so selectively depending on his attitude to the individual concerned, see Ch.14:2.

²⁵⁹ Kant. II, 136.22-137.1.

²⁶⁰ Kant. II, 143.15-17.

(Λυσitteλής). The other leading personalities of the regency government were the Empress Anna and the Patriarch Kalekas. Holding either of them strongly responsible for the conflict was politically difficult, for reasons explained in the following sections. Apokaukos, on the other hand, did not spring from a powerful aristocratic clan who may have wished to defend his memory. His surviving relatives owed their continued prosperity to Kantakouzēnos' decision to avoid reprisals after the war. Moreover, Apokaukos had died while the war was at its peak. He was never forced to come to terms with Kantakouzēnos, unlike other leading opponents such as Andronikos Asanēs, and therefore Kantakouzēnos had no need to reconcile with him or his memory. This is not to deny that Kantakouzēnos genuinely believed Apokaukos was to blame for the war. Indeed, if Apokaukos was in fact a legitimate rival, contrary to Kantakouzēnos' portrayal, it is just as likely that he was responsible for mobilising the opposition to Kantakouzēnos. Alexios Apokaukos may have been a sociopathic personality, or simply an unusually able representative of a governing class which was marked by a strongly competitive and self-serving ethos. However, for the victors and vanquished to stand any chance of reconciliation after such a long and bitter conflict, recrimination had to be minimised and an acceptable explanation found for the tragedy. Apokaukos was not only dead and largely friendless, but had been undoubtedly a leading protagonist. He offered a mutually convenient scapegoat and, in death, played a unifying role that he had never achieved in life. However Kantakouzēnos goes further than simply blaming Apokaukos for the war. By destroying his credibility as an independent political actor, Kantakouzēnos defends his own assumption of the regency before the war by suggesting there were no other legitimate candidates. Neither the Empress nor the Patriarch could fulfil the full duties of the imperial office, particularly its military responsibilities. However, there was no insurmountable

impediment to Apokaukos acting as regent. Kantakouzēnos therefore emphasises Apokaukos' low birth and paints his story in the blackest terms.

Whatever the true circumstances of his life were, Apokaukos was defeated. Although the adage that history is written by the winners may be questioned, it is certainly true of the *Histories*.

5.1.3. The Patriarch Kalekas

The Patriarch was the lynchpin of opposition to Kantakouzēnos; in both Grēgoras' and Kantakouzēnos' accounts, it is he who first openly opposes the Grand Domestic's assumption of power.²⁶¹ Ultimately he was also the most obdurate of Kantakouzēnos' opponents and never reconciled with Kantakouzēnos after his victory. Following his deposition, he continued to insist his removal was unjust but refused to testify before the synod. His continued plotting was apparently only ended by his death.²⁶² Kalekas' stubbornness seems to have rested on a conviction that his political stance was justified by a responsibility to safeguard Andronikos' children. Insofar as Kantakouzēnos concedes that the Patriarch had any responsibility for Andronikos' children, he implies this responsibility was pastoral, not political: he calls him φύλαξ (protector/guardian), not ἐπίτροπος (regent).²⁶³ Even this was too much for him and later in the war he states disapprovingly that the Patriarch 'proclaimed himself father and guardian of the young emperor'.²⁶⁴

Kantakouzēnos explains that the presumed basis for this guardianship was the responsibility the Patriarch had been given to excommunicate anyone threatening the children's safety if their father died before they were of age.²⁶⁵ The resolution was, of course, passed at Kantakouzēnos' request and he explicitly states that he was considering a situation where both Andronikos and he himself had fallen in battle, i.e., it was only if Kantakouzēnos had also died that the Patriarch should be

²⁶¹ Kant. II, 16.17f; Greg. II, 579.3f. For Kalekas' life and circumstances of his appointment as Patriarch, see Ch.1:16.

²⁶² Kant. III, 20.20-25.3.

²⁶³ Kant. II, 18.19: οἷα δὴ τῶν βασιλέως παίδων φύλαξ. It is not completely clear whether Kantakouzēnos acknowledges that the Patriarch was actually guardian in a limited sense or simply that he thought himself to be such. See also Ch.2:6.

²⁶⁴ Kant. II, 421.2-3: ἐαυτὸν πατέρα καὶ κηδεμόνα τοῦ νέου βασιλέως ἀνακηρύξας.

²⁶⁵ Kant. II, 16.17-18.23.

assumed to be guardian and that the children required the protection of the Church.²⁶⁶ As Andronikos resisted the excommunication resolution and was only ‘unwillingly persuaded’,²⁶⁷ it follows that he could not have been keen to empower the Patriarch. However it seems that Kantakouzēnos somewhat obfuscated the basis of Kalekas’ claims: Grēgoras states that the Patriarch brandished a document issued by Andronikos which formally appointed him regent and guardian of the imperial family during Syrgiannēs’ revolt.²⁶⁸ Kantakouzēnos’ purported response to this claim, in Grēgoras’ account, is however the same as he gives in the *Histories*, or even more direct: it related to the specific situation in which both he and Andronikos were absent on campaign against Syrgiannēs and risked not coming back.²⁶⁹ Kantakouzēnos otherwise held exclusive responsibility for the state and the greatest concern for Andronikos’ children. Kalekas’ opposition to Kantakouzēnos’ claim was informed by the obvious, disturbing, precedent of the last imperial minority, when Iōannēs Laskaris was usurped and blinded by Michaēl Palaiologos. He saw himself in the role of the earlier Patriarch Arsenios, who had sought to protect Laskaris, but was determined not to fail as his predecessor had.²⁷⁰

Kantakouzēnos did not believe that the Patriarch held a legitimate claim to lead the government, particularly as it unavoidably conflicted with his own. The need to de-legitimise Kalekas explains Kantakouzēnos’ emphasis on his own role in the Patriarch’s election, even though the negotiations he describes show him securing Kalekas’ selection – against the

²⁶⁶ Kant. II, 17.8-9: καὶ οὐδὲν εἶναι τῶν ἀδυνάτων, εἰ καὶ ἀμφοτέροις αὐτοῖς συμβαίη περὶ μίαν μάχην πεσεῖν.

²⁶⁷ Kant. II, 18.8: ἄκοντα πεπεισμένον.

²⁶⁸ Greg. II, 579.3-10. For Syrgiannēs, see Ch.14:9.

²⁶⁹ Greg. II, 582.20-583.15.

²⁷⁰ Greg. II, 579.13-22, 759.7-9. Kantakouzēnos himself avoids mentioning how Michaēl Palaiologos obtained power, simply remarking ‘the Empire passed to Michaēl Palaiologos’ (ἐπὶ Μιχαήλ τὸν Παλαιολόγον ἢ βασιλεία μετέβη): Kant. I, 11.8-9. For the Patriarch Arsenios Autōreianos, see *PLP* 1694. For a recent bibliography of the schism, see Shawcross, ‘Palaiologan Usurpation’, 208, n. 29.

evident wishes of the synod – by sophistry, trickery and political pressure rather than his usual appeals to reason or morality.²⁷¹ Kantakouzēnos risks showing himself behaving in a less than elevated manner not simply to present himself as Kalekas’ benefactor, in order to demonstrate the latter’s subsequent ingratitude, but – most importantly – to portray Kalekas as his own choice instead of the Emperor’s and therefore lower in the ladder of potential successors. However Kantakouzēnos could not have bullied the synod into accepting Kalekas if the bishops had not known that Andronikos III wished his election. Nor is it likely that an emperor in a dangerous political position – as Andronikos certainly was in early 1334, during Syrgiannēs’ revolt – simply delegated the choice of Patriarch, to whom he intended to trust his family, to Kantakouzēnos. Within the *Histories* there is little hint of this, though; after Andronikos’ death, Kantakouzēnos shows Kalekas as eventually acquiescing to his rule before he leaves Constantinople in September 1341. The Patriarch’s determined hostility after this point is explained as growing from his fear, encouraged by Apokaukos, that he would be deposed in favour of Grēgorios Palamas.²⁷² The allegation that Kantakouzēnos wished to depose Kalekas in favour of Palamas is almost certainly a deliberate but plausible-sounding anachronism to obscure Kalekas’ deeper reasons for opposing Kantakouzēnos. Grēgoras – a determined enemy of Palamas – has Kalekas justify himself exclusively in terms of his own ambitions and desire to protect Iōannēs V.²⁷³ Assuming Kantakouzēnos had been declared *basileus* with Kalekas’ acceptance, he would have paid a steep political price to force the Patriarch from office simply for the sake of promoting a friend, which makes the accusation seem highly improbable. Certainly Kalekas would have feared for his position, in

²⁷¹ Kant. I, 431.20-435.20. Notably, he admits ‘he thought how to beguile assent from them’: ὄρετο ὑποκλέψειν τὴν πειθῶ αὐτοῖς (Kant. I, 433.17).

²⁷² Kant. II, 107.4-9, 438.20-23, 456.11-15, 602.13-15. For Palamas, see Ch.17:1.

²⁷³ Greg. II, 579.3-22, 758.12-760.19.

the case of an eventual Kantakouzēnist victory, once the war had started, but there is no clear evidence that he was hostile to Palamas before the war.²⁷⁴ Indeed, he had just overseen two councils which condemned opponents of Palamas. However, Kalekas' hounding of Palamas during the war would have made the allegation seem superficially plausible and repeating it provided an unambiguously selfish motive for Kalekas as well as reminding the reader he had persecuted a monk who would soon be accepted as a saint.

Despite Kantakouzēnos' dismissal of the Patriarch's claims, it was clear that if the Patriarch was acting beyond the authority of his office, then so was the Grand Domestic. Neither man possessed an unambiguous mandate from the deceased emperor. Therefore Kantakouzēnos undermines Kalekas' legitimacy further by casting doubt on both his holiness and his character. Kantakouzēnos' personal attacks on Kalekas are subtle but manifold. Following his usual method, he never judges Kalekas directly through his role as narrator. Instead, he builds up a picture of Kalekas as a self-important man of questionable judgement, who is inconsistent and easily swayed. Where Kantakouzēnos mentions Kalekas either neutrally or positively, it is when he performs his 'correct' role of governing the Church, not the state.²⁷⁵ He has only faint praise for Kalekas' abilities, which are spoken of only in relation to his priestly office: he is 'suitable' (ἔχειν εὐφρωῶς), 'competent' (ικανός), and 'fitting' (ἀρμόζων).²⁷⁶ So while Kantakouzēnos is aware that Kalekas is scheming with courtiers, he seemingly regards his efforts as posing little serious threat, adding the slightly absurd image of the Patriarch returning home only under the cover of darkness.²⁷⁷ The Patriarch's attempted intervention in foreign policy is

²⁷⁴ Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 58-9, 64-6.

²⁷⁵ E.g., during the councils of 1341 (Kant. I, 550.8-557.9) and the memorial service for Andronikos III (Kant. II, 16.6-9).

²⁷⁶ Kant. I, 432.4, 433.5.

²⁷⁷ Kant. II, 18.23-19.7.

openly derided by Kantakouzēnos, causing Kalekas to immediately reverse his position.²⁷⁸ His assertion of higher ceremonial status than Kantakouzēnos – to which he was actually entitled – leads to outcry and public humiliation.²⁷⁹ He swears to uphold Kantakouzēnos’ rights – with the implication that he has accepted his political subordination to Kantakouzēnos.²⁸⁰ The oaths are not openly described as perjuries, as is often the case with Apokaukos’ scheming. Thus it is implied Kalekas intended to follow his oaths when he swore them but was easily convinced by Apokaukos, through appeals to his personal insecurity and self-interest, to disregard his own most solemn undertakings.²⁸¹ Even then, his attempt to traduce Kantakouzēnos before the Empress nearly ends in disaster for his cause and he has to be saved by the intervention of Andronikos Asanēs.²⁸² When challenged to hold a fair trial by Kantakouzēnos’ ambassadors, he cannot think of an objection and remains silent, leaving Apokaukos to destroy the proposal.²⁸³ After the coronation of Iōannēs V, Kalekas begins to sign documents in blue ink and has a new hat made from gold instead of white material, thereby imitating the *skaranikon* of high courtiers, an innovation which makes his vanity and ambition clear but undermines the dignity of his office.²⁸⁴ After the war he first agrees to stand trial before the synod, as if to make a principled defence of his actions, but then simply fails

²⁷⁸ Kant. II, 22.6-24.12.

²⁷⁹ Kant. II, 84.6-85.13.

²⁸⁰ Kant. II, 51.14-52.3, 67.9-18.

²⁸¹ Kant. II, 106.11f. It may be noted that, in contrast, Grēgoras describes the Patriarch as unrelentingly hostile from the start and portrays him as knowingly deceiving Kantakouzēnos.

²⁸² Kant. II, 131.9-133.20.

²⁸³ Kant. II, 142.11-143.15.

²⁸⁴ Kant. II, 218.13-21. For identification with the *skaranikon*, Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 335-6. The ink was blue (ἡεράνεος) not red, contrary to Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 60. Greg. II, 697.6-11, confirms the Patriarch’s change in dress and ink, adding that he wore red shoes.

to appear or offer any explanation.²⁸⁵ Even his death is a result of his worldly vanity: 'Being unable to bear so great a change (for the reversal took him from the height of good fortune to the complete opposite), first he fell ill, then he took leave of his senses'.²⁸⁶ The portrayal is certainly unflattering, but not overtly abusive. Compared to Apokaukos, the relative lack of condemnation reserved for Kalekas' character and motives suggests Kantakouzēnos simply held him in contempt; his reported actions suggest that such contempt was well deserved.

Kalekas' religious devotion, unquestioned during Andronikos' reign, is subjected to similar assault as it withers in the face of his earthly ambitions. He cynically speaks of God's providence while convincing the Empress to start a war.²⁸⁷ He swears grave and holy oaths to uphold Kantakouzēnos' rights, yet knowingly disregards them.²⁸⁸ He allows a monk, sent as a peace emissary, to be maltreated.²⁸⁹ The members of an independent monastic delegation from Mount Athos are bribed, imprisoned or dismissed.²⁹⁰ He excommunicates Kantakouzēnos and his followers for political reasons;²⁹¹ Kantakouzēnos explains in detail that this is contrary to canon law.²⁹² Kantakouzēnos draws a clear moral contrast between his own desire for peace and the Patriarch's rejection of any discussion of it; he warns

²⁸⁵ Kant. III, 23.1-24.2.

²⁸⁶ Kant. III, 24.18-21: τσαύτην μεταβολήν οὐκ ἐνεγκών, (ἐκ γὰρ ἄκρας εὐτυχίας εἰς τοῦναντίον ἅπαν ἢ μεταβολή ἐκεῖνω περιέστη,) πρῶτα μὲν ἐνόσησεν, ἔπειτα ἐξέστη καὶ τῶν φρενῶν.

²⁸⁷ Kant. II, 131.13-132.1, 133.12-20.

²⁸⁸ Kant. II, 51.14-52.3, 67.9-18. Grēgoras confirms that he swore oaths to Kantakouzēnos, adding that 'he swore not just the oath appropriate to priests but also that accustomed to public officials. He offered the greatest and most fearful curses alike against himself on these matters': οὐ μόνον ἱερεῦσι προσήκοντα ὁμώμοκεν ὄρκον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὅς δημοσίοις ἀνδράσιν εἰθίσται· καὶ ἀράς ἐπὶ τούτοις προὔτεινε καθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὰς μεγίστας ὁμοῦ καὶ φρικώδεις (Greg. II, 600.5-8).

²⁸⁹ Kant. II, 143.10-13.

²⁹⁰ Kant. II, 208.23-213.19.

²⁹¹ Kant. II, 190.7-13.

²⁹² Kant. II, 463.13-466.6.

that God will judge him for the spilling of blood if he stays silent.²⁹³ After the war, he reproaches Kalekas for this above all, telling him his greatest fault was that ‘he had no compassion for those being destroyed’.²⁹⁴ Moreover, the Patriarch relentlessly persecutes Palamas and brings strife to the Church, simply from fear for his own position. He even ordains Akindynos – a condemned heretic – despite being prohibited from doing so by the Empress.²⁹⁵ It is this that finally brings his deserved downfall: the Empress calls a synod which deposes Kalekas.²⁹⁶

This contemptuous characterisation of the Patriarch further diminishes any notion that Kalekas had any legitimate or unselfish concern for Iōannēs V’s rights. Kantakouzēnos insinuates that Kalekas had deliberately misunderstood his responsibilities and that his true motivation for opposing Kantakouzēnos was unseemly personal ambition. Kantakouzēnos could have emphasised Kalekas’ complicity with the offences the regency committed against his family and followers but Kalekas’ blustering ineffectiveness is a deliberate contrast to Apokaukos’ potency: affording much agency to Kalekas would undermine that of Apokaukos. Instead the primary responsibility is assigned to a single mastermind, a single betraying Judas; it is Apokaukos who persuades the Patriarch to forget his oaths and Apokaukos’ ruthlessness which sets the tenor for the regency’s actions. This is a simpler message and more dramatically satisfying than a villainous diarchy. It was also much more politically expedient. Kalekas had been, after all, Patriarch of Constantinople and head of the Church. If his elevation had been in any way irregular, it was because of Kantakouzēnos’ own part so he was not easily able to suggest Kalekas was inherently unsuitable for the role. While it is difficult to know

²⁹³ Kant. II, 200.17-21.

²⁹⁴ Kant. III, 21.14-15: οἶκτον οὐδένα τῶν ἀπολλυμένων ἐποιεῖτο.

²⁹⁵ Kant. II, 602.12-604.2.

²⁹⁶ Kant. II, 604.2-22, 606.15-19.

whether Kalekas retained any affection within the priesthood by the time the *Histories* was published, he had not been immediately abandoned by the entire hierarchy after Kantakouzēnos' victory. For example, the official patriarchal record of the synodal *tomos* of 1347, which confirmed Kalekas' deposition and condemned his attacks on Palamas and his part in the civil war, was selectively defaced by an unknown supporter to delete all mentions of his removal.²⁹⁷ Kantakouzēnos mentions, but does not name, three bishops who were supporters of Kalekas and opposed his exile.²⁹⁸ His deposition did not mean that all the bishops necessarily now supported either Palamas or Kantakouzēnos.²⁹⁹ Some may have come to regret Kalekas' fall. Although, after the Council of 1351, Palamas' theology was accepted in its entirety as wholly Orthodox and Palamas himself would soon be canonised after his death, limited intellectual opposition to his theology persisted, witnessed by the excommunication of Prochoros Kydōnēs in 1368.³⁰⁰ Even when the *Histories* was published, it is highly unlikely that Kantakouzēnos wished to risk reigniting and re-politicising dispute within the Church by strongly attacking the Patriarchate's role in the civil war; time would ensure the victory of Kantakouzēnos' ecclesiastical policy without crude settling of scores with Kalekas.

Consequently, Kantakouzēnos is scrupulously careful, in the *Histories* and earlier, to follow the judgement of Anna's synod and insist that the reason for Kalekas' deposition was his doctrinal offences.³⁰¹ Kantakouzēnos even pretends that, had Kalekas not already been expelled, he would have

²⁹⁷ Dennis, 'Deposition', esp. 52-3.

²⁹⁸ Kant. III, 24.14-15.

²⁹⁹ Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 87-9.

³⁰⁰ *PLP* 13383. For the continuation of opposition in general, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 100-101; Ryder, *Kydones*, 226-8.

³⁰¹ Although Kantakouzēnos' *prostagma* of March 1341 acknowledges the turmoil in society as well as the Church, he speaks only of Kalekas' offences in terms of his support for Akindynos and hostility to Palamas and confirms his deposition by the synod; see Rigo, 'Prostagma', esp. 757-9.

allowed him to remain in office as long as he had defended himself against distorting Orthodoxy.³⁰² The synod of 2 February 1347 – composed of bishops loyal to the regency, not to Kantakouzēnos – saved Kantakouzēnos from having to remove the Patriarch for overtly political reasons, which could have allowed Kalekas to position himself as a second Arsenios, having endeavoured to protect a young emperor against an usurper, and therefore to risk creating a schism. Alternatively, it saved Kantakouzēnos from sponsoring Kalekas' dismissal for doctrinal reasons, which would have unavoidably strengthened the identification of Palamism with Kantakouzēnism, undoubtedly retarding or endangering Palamism's acceptance. Kantakouzēnos acknowledges his good fortune in being saved from putting the Patriarch on trial himself, knowing that he would be seen as revenging himself upon Kalekas.³⁰³ Ultimately, Church unity would be more effectively protected by minimising the intrusion of politics and attempting to preserve the debate over Palamism as a theological matter, where the relevant arguments had been officially already settled by the time the *Histories* was published. Grēgoras' vehement attacks on Kantakouzēnos and Palamas in his own history were a reaction to his own total defeat. Kantakouzēnos' distortions in his portrait of Kalekas were considered a price worth paying to safeguard his most lasting achievement, his settlement of the Church.

³⁰² Kant. III, 22.2-9.

³⁰³ Kant. II, 606.19-23.

5.1.4. The Empress Anna

A central element of Kantakouzēnos' self-legitimation was that he was upholding the rights of his deceased friend's wife and heirs. Consistent with Kantakouzēnos' designation of the deceased Andronikos III as his brother, he referred to Anna as his sister both before and after his abdication.³⁰⁴ The inescapable reality that Andronikos' wife was the declared leader of the party opposed to him throughout such a bitter civil war presented severe difficulties to maintaining and justifying this ideal, both during the war and in the *Histories*. Kantakouzēnos resolved this apparent contradiction by utilising the familiar topos of the 'good monarch surrounded by evil advisors'.³⁰⁵ In other words, the Empress had been maliciously misled and misinformed by his enemies, who were themselves motivated by envy. Accordingly, Kantakouzēnos' enemies at court are collectively styled *oi sykophantai*, 'the false accusers'. It is her ears into which they pour their accusations. In the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos is not only consistent in maintaining this image of the innocent Empress who is manipulated by the men around her, but he employs considerable skill in his attempt to render this image convincing.

Kantakouzēnos does not conceal some initial tensions in their relationship. After Andronikos' death, the Patriarch works tirelessly to position himself as the Empress' main advisor while Kantakouzēnos is

³⁰⁴ E.g., Rigo, 'Prostagma', 757.22-3: ἐρασμιώτατην ἀδελφήν τῆς βασιλείας μου; Darrouzès, 'Lettre inédite', 16.6-7: ἡ ἀδελφή τῆς βασιλείας μου κυρὰ Ἄννα ἡ Παλαιολογίνα. For a summary of Anna's life, see Ch.1:5.

³⁰⁵ It is worth noting that Grēgoras does not afford her similar consideration and his portrayal of her may be more accurately described as 'the bad monarch surrounded by evil advisors', although he still places initiative for the war with Apokaukos and the Patriarch. Greg. II, 702.12-703.4, for example, characterises her as uneducated and self-indulgent, commenting in the midst of the war that she behaved 'as if such a great catastrophe took place beyond the Pillars of Hercules' (καθάπερ ἔξω στηλῶν Ἡρακλείων τῆς τοσαύτης ἀπωλείας καθισταμένης).

absorbed in the pressing matters of actually governing.³⁰⁶ Accordingly, when the diplomatic crisis with Bulgaria erupts, Anna allows Kalekas a privileged role in the assembly called to discuss the government's response, much to Kantakouzēnos' chagrin. Moreover, when Kantakouzēnos is openly insulted by a junior senator in front of the assembly, no reprimand is forthcoming.³⁰⁷ When he threatens to resign over the issue, however, she reacts immediately. She is 'distressed and astounded',³⁰⁸ and explains her tolerance of the insult by claiming she simply did not hear it.³⁰⁹ She prevails on him to stay in office, calling upon him to remember his friendship with Andronikos and to have pity upon a widow and her orphans.³¹⁰ Most strikingly, it is only in her speech that we hear of her husband's final words, warning her that Kantakouzēnos' dismissal would destroy the Romans.³¹¹ She argues that it is his duty 'just as when the Emperor was alive, to take control of public affairs in accordance with the Emperor's own commands'.³¹² She says that she needs to be freed of such worries to fully mourn her husband.³¹³ Thus her initial independence concludes with her tearfully begging him to remain.

The implication is that the Empress' previous apparent ambivalence about allowing Kantakouzēnos a free rein in public affairs was due to her inexperience, the emotional turmoil of her husband's death, and the ambitions of the Patriarch. The latter is now forced into acquiescence through Anna's acceptance of Kantakouzēnos' continued dominance of government. Harmony reigns thereafter, until Kantakouzēnos departs Constantinople in September. He now sketches an idealised relationship

³⁰⁶ Kant. II, 18.18-19.12.

³⁰⁷ Kant. II, 20.10-21.8.

³⁰⁸ Kant. II, 27.9: ἡνιάτο μὲν ἐπὶ τοῖς λεγομένοις, ἐξεπέπληκτο δὲ.

³⁰⁹ Kant. II, 27.17-18: ἐγὼ δὲ μήτ' ἀκηκοέναι τοῦ ἀνθρώπου λέγοντος ὁμολογῶ.

³¹⁰ Kant. II, 32.19-21, 34.12-35.1.

³¹¹ Kant. II, 35.19-36.3.

³¹² Kant. II, 35.15-16: τοῖς πράγμασιν, ὥσπερ καὶ ζῶντος βασιλέως, ἐφεστάναι, ἐξ αὐτῶν γοῦν τῶν βασιλέως λόγων.

³¹³ Kant. II, 36.8-14.

between the two. It is undeniably one of tutelage: he governs wisely in her name, affording her all appropriate honour and explaining his decisions for her *ex post facto* approval.³¹⁴ He upholds her authority through the device of encouraging her to publicly reproach his rowdy partisans but not to actually punish them.³¹⁵ The incident demonstrates not only the level of their cooperation but also the degree of her subordination to Kantakouzēnos. It is not suggested that he actually consults the Empress or seeks her permission before making decisions; they are not ruling together but rather power has simply been delegated to him. This is most obviously displayed when Apokaukos attempts to appeal over Kantakouzēnos' head, pointing out that court titles are bestowed on her authority, not on that of the Grand Domestic.³¹⁶ Kantakouzēnos, observing propriety, remains silent: to do otherwise would be to openly usurp imperial prerogatives. The Empress responds that Apokaukos was granted his titles by Kantakouzēnos, who informed her afterwards and who 'persuaded me [Anna] to consent to his decision'.³¹⁷ Kantakouzēnos reports only a single request which Anna denies him and it is unarguably her own right: to crown her son, Iōannēs. This refusal eventually damages Kantakouzēnos, though he explains that later he discovered that it was Apokaukos who swayed her.³¹⁸ Apart from this, Kantakouzēnos essentially exercises the imperial office *de facto* while acknowledging Anna holding it *de jure*. He seems – not unsurprisingly – to be content with this situation but depicts her as being content with it as well. This ideal relationship is, not by coincidence, essentially the same as that which existed during Andronikos' illness of 1330. There was no reason in

³¹⁴ Kant. II, 83.2-18.

³¹⁵ Kant. II, 85.24-86.6.

³¹⁶ Kant. II, 99.23-100.8.

³¹⁷ Kant. II, 101.6-7: ἔπεισε καμὲ στεργεῖν τὰ ἐψηφισμένα.

³¹⁸ Kant. II, 64.8-65.16.

Kantakouzēnos' mind that this arrangement, which had been apparently harmonious at that time, should not suffice eleven years later.

In 1341, however, there was no explicit mandate from Andronikos. Moreover, Anna had much more political experience and, unlike the earlier occasion, she was now sole empress and the mother of the imperial heir. She had fewer reasons to accept political tutelage and almost certainly viewed the sons of any all-powerful regent as potential competitors to her own, not unwisely given the precedent of Michaēl Palaiologos' rise to power. Kantakouzēnos represented an established family with ties to the imperial line and two of his sons were already old enough to hold military commands. Dispersal of power among a wide circle of courtiers would have suited her more readily. Kantakouzēnos shows no sign that he acknowledged or even recognised these concerns, in fact – by way of his threat to retire – he reacts strongly against her efforts to consult more widely and bluntly warns her that this could lead to war.³¹⁹ It is in this context that Anna's offer to marry Iōannēs to one of Kantakouzēnos' daughters can be understood.³²⁰ By tying their two families together, she could accommodate the predominance of Kantakouzēnos while ensuring that he had a strong reason to safeguard the succession. His failure to immediately consent would have been profoundly worrying to her.

Following Kantakouzēnos' departure from Constantinople, the situation changes rapidly. The whole episode of Apokaukos' construction of the conspiracy and the conspirators' subsequent efforts to turn the Empress against Kantakouzēnos is one of the most detailed and dramatic episodes in the *Histories*, occupying the entire of Chapters 17-21. Kantakouzēnos is concerned to show that Anna, unlike the Patriarch and the other named conspirators, did not change her mind easily. She is worn down only by a

³¹⁹ Kant. II, 40.23-45.2.

³²⁰ Kant. II, 104.3-14. Regarding this proposal, see also Ch.16:10.

continual procession of *sykophantai*. On the first day, two separate approaches by conspirators provoke her to anger when they slander Kantakouzēnos.³²¹ On the following day, the initial group is dismissed with a warning that she might inform the Grand Domestic of their words.³²² Finally, Apokaukos sends to her the Patriarch and Kantakouzēnos' own father-in-law, Andronikos Asanēs. She hears the Patriarch out but is shocked by his speech.³²³ Ultimately, it is Asanēs who saves the conspirators: his argument that Kantakouzēnos wishes to kill Anna and her children, combined with his willingness to sacrifice his own daughter for the sake of the imperial family, cause her resolve to crumble. Even then, Anna is still unable to believe their accusations can be altogether true and bursts into tears.³²⁴ Asanēs' most persuasive argument is Kantakouzēnos' failure to accept the marriage proposal. In some ways it is surprising that Kantakouzēnos reports the offer at all, in view of his calamitous handling of it. However, by doing so he seeks to repudiate the alternative tradition, recorded by Grēgoras – namely, that he sought the marriage and was rebuffed³²⁵ – and additionally seeks to demonstrate that the Empress was, at that moment, still well disposed to him. Immediately after the war he 'corrected' his error by marrying Helenē to Iōannēs.

Although Anna clearly turned against Kantakouzēnos and sanctioned the attacks on his supporters, he continually minimises her responsibility and endeavours to show that her personal wish was for a negotiated peace. Shortly after the war begins, she addresses her female attendants and bewails that she has been deceived, hoping that the war can be ended by the

³²¹ Kant. II, 125.16-126.14.

³²² Kant. II, 127.2-7.

³²³ Kant. II, 129.11-16.

³²⁴ Kant. II, 135.12-136.12.

³²⁵ See Ch.16:10.

marriage of Iōannēs and Helenē.³²⁶ However, one of her ladies informs Apokaukos of her words and the Patriarch makes her swear an oath, on pain of excommunication, that she will not make peace without the consent of her ‘protectors’, who have much to lose from peace.³²⁷ Soon afterwards, Anna is convinced by the peace mission from Mount Athos, but then feels constrained by the oaths she has been deceived into swearing.³²⁸ She tries on her own account to persuade her ministers to make peace, but they arrange for a succession of spies to attest that they have overheard Kantakouzēnos boasting of the punishments he will inflict on his enemies when he wins.³²⁹ When some regency loyalists bridle at Kantakouzēnos’ suggestion that the Empress is controlled by her *archons*, he tests their assertions by sending an emissary with orders to deliver a message to her alone. When the messenger is beaten and denied private audience, he concludes finally that peace is impossible.³³⁰ Anna is his only hope for reason to prevail.

In other matters, Kantakouzēnos similarly excuses Anna from participation in the worst outrages of the regency government. She is angered by Apokaukos’ mistreatment of ambassadors.³³¹ Although she ordered the arrest of Kantakouzēnos’ mother, she swears oaths that she knew nothing of the abuse which led to Theodōra’s death.³³² The Empress was unaware of Apokaukos’ attempts to violate the sanctity of confession in order to gain intelligence from imprisoned Kantakouzēnists.³³³ Similarly, she was kept misinformed regarding the doctrinal turmoil which the Patriarch stirred up within the Church but acted immediately when some bishops told

³²⁶ Kant. II, 202.20-203.16.

³²⁷ Kant. II, 203.18-208.8.

³²⁸ Kant. II, 211.2-10.

³²⁹ Kant. II, 224.1-21.

³³⁰ Kant. II, 472.9-473.2, 473.16-474.14.

³³¹ Kant. II, 142.8-11.

³³² Kant. II, 223.5-8.

³³³ Kant. II, 300.11-14.

her the truth.³³⁴ The picture is consistent, and a Franciscan envoy from Constantinople explains that ‘she was in no way responsible for the war, but the Patriarch and the others who advise her do not allow her to make peace, convincing her that [...] you will immediately kill her and her children.’³³⁵

While Anna’s hostility to Kantakouzēnos becomes more determined until – at the end of the war – she is still willing to fight on, even though Apokaukos is long dead, she remains an innocent. Her moral failing, despite the terrible consequences, is ultimately forgivable. This is because, in Kantakouzēnos’ view, her weakness and her essential morality have the same source: her femininity. He tells the reader, in a speech which foreshadows her deception by the conspirators, that the female mind is irresolute. He fears that this ‘weakness of female nature’³³⁶ will leave her vulnerable to persuasion by the *sykophantai*. This is not to say that some women, such as his mother, cannot transcend their gender but in doing so, they are wholly remarkable.³³⁷ The Empress is not one of these extraordinary women and she confesses her own ‘feminine weakness’.³³⁸ However, her lack of resolution is clearly anticipated and therefore excusable, unlike the determined hostility of her male ministers. Far greater blame is placed on the Patriarch, who swore to protect the Empress from accusations against Kantakouzēnos but instead abetted them.³³⁹ Just as the Empress reigns well when under Kantakouzēnos’ beneficent guidance before the war, subsequently she rules badly when under the malign surveillance and

³³⁴ Kant. II, 604.2-13.

³³⁵ Kant. II, 525.12-15: ὡς οὐδαμῶς αἰτία τοῦ πολέμου εἶη, ἀλλὰ πατριάρχης καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι, οἱ ταύτην βουλομένην οὐκ ἔῶσι χωρεῖν πρὸς τὴν εἰρήνην, πείθοντες, ὡς, τῷ τρόπῳ περιέση, ἐκείνην τε ἀποκτενεῖς αὐτίκα καὶ τὰ τέκνα.

³³⁶ Kant. II, 47.20-21: τὴν ἀσθένειαν τῆς γυναικειᾶς φύσεως εἰδόντα, ὡς εὐμετάβλητος διὰ δειλίαν. Greg. II, 603.24-604.2, similarly remarks that ‘feminine simplicity’ (γυναικειᾶν ἀπλότητα) made her easy to deceive, although he does not seek to excuse her.

³³⁷ For Theodōra Kantakouzēnē, see Ch.9:18.

³³⁸ Kant. II, 36.17-18: γυναικειᾶν ἀσθένειαν.

³³⁹ Kant. II, 199.23f.

control of Apokaukos and Kalekas. Even then, her disposition reveals her essential goodness: the conspirators are forced to go to extreme lengths to persuade her to abandon Kantakouzēnos in the first place, and even after this she remains in favour of peace for a long time. Alone of the regency party, she is unaware of the true reason for the war: their greed and envy of Kantakouzēnos. Instead she opposes Kantakouzēnos not because of her vices but because her great virtue – the fierce concern of a mother for the protection of her children – has been twisted by lies. If she had not been misled into believing there was danger where in fact there was none, her motives would be praiseworthy. It is this conviction that explains her refusal to surrender even when her palace is finally besieged by Kantakouzēnos’ soldiers. When Kantakouzēnos victoriously entered the palace, ‘he found the Empress standing with her children before the icon of the Mother of God Hodēgētria’.³⁴⁰ The symbolism was clear and Kantakouzēnos immediately prostrated himself before the icon.³⁴¹ His acceptance of the Palaiologan succession and of her maternal imperative towards safeguarding it, despite its perversion by the *sykophantai*, is the basis for their reconciliation. After the scales are removed from Anna’s eyes, their relationship is again harmonious. So thorough is their reconciliation that Kantakouzēnos sends Anna to Thessalonike in 1351 to persuade her son to abandon his alliance with Stefan Dušan which threatens the loss of the city and a new civil war. She first reproaches him for leaving Iōannēs V there at all, against her advice,³⁴² but then sails to Thessalonike as requested and persuades her headstrong son ‘to honour his parents [i.e., Kantakouzēnos and herself] and to obey them in every way’, just as would be expected from a good mother.³⁴³

³⁴⁰ Kant. III, 8.11-13: βασιλίδα μὲν μετὰ τῶν τέκνων πρὸς τὴν τῆς θεομήτορος εἰκόνα τῆς Ὁδηγητρίας εὔρην ἰσταμένην.

³⁴¹ Kant. III, 8.15-16.

³⁴² Kant. III, 206.21-207.4.

³⁴³ Kant. III, 207.22-208.1: ἔπειθεν [...] τιμᾶν γονέας καὶ πάντα ὑπέικειν.

Even before the war, Kantakouzēnos depicts Anna as opposed to his forgiveness of Apokaukos and already willing to offer the eventual post-war settlement by betrothing her son. On these two issues, it is apparent that the disastrous misjudgement belonged to Kantakouzēnos, not Anna. Kantakouzēnos never confesses his errors but he does record them and by allowing her to identify his mistakes, he extends his forgiveness for his own faults to hers too. As already mentioned, Anna's tragic flaw is her femininity but this is ultimately a laudable weakness: she fell victim to the plotters' lies not because of stereotypical female vices such as vanity or inconsistency but because of a powerful female virtue, the intense concern of a mother to protect her children. Once convinced they face deadly peril, she is resolute and determined.

The civil war, as presented by Kantakouzēnos, is a tragedy and its two opposed principals are fundamentally tragic characters because both fight from noble motives for the same legitimate goal, to protect the young emperor. It therefore took the actions of a truly evil and perverse figure to bring them into conflict. The *Histories* is generally recognised as an apologia for its author. Much less acknowledged is the extent that it is an apologia for Anna Palaiologina. Kantakouzēnos' forgiving portrayal of her, despite the injuries they had dealt each other, is in many ways unsurprising: she was mother of the reigning emperor and, when the composition of the *Histories* began, it was likely that she was still living and ruling in Thessalonike. Any denunciation of her would have pointlessly stirred up bitterness and would have made both his wartime claim to be upholding her rights and his respectful treatment of her thereafter seem absurd. Moreover, they now had shared grandchildren. Perhaps also, in their private thoughts, they had similar cause to reflect on how they had misjudged each other and the terrible costs which their errors had incurred. After war, there is peace.

Part II: Translation and Commentary

Chapter 1

/11/ What concerns then the Palaiologoi emperors¹ – both their struggle for power against each other and what the younger accomplished by himself during his rule, after the elder was deposed from power, /12/ by waging war against the barbarians and governing his own people – ends at this point and our initial purpose has reached its fulfilment, having reported everything with accuracy and with truth as it happened.

Since after the death of Andronikos the younger² the bitterest war of the Romans against each other ever in memory erupted, which overturned and ruined nearly everything, and proved that the prosperity and greatness of the Roman Empire had reached its weakest point – just as if a shadow of its former self – I considered it necessary to set forth what happened during this war as well, not only in order that those hereafter should know envy is the cause of such great evils – utterly destroying not only those envied but also the enviers, just as rust destroys the iron it is begotten from – but also that you, who are present now, may be able to know the truth of these matters and not be led astray by the rumours coming from abroad into believing that which is not, nor pay heed to the babblers from each of the factions, whether flattering themselves or slandering their opponents.

It is important to pay careful and not cursory attention to me. For all others, if indeed there are certain persons who wrote about this war, know nothing clear about what happened; either they were entirely absent from these events, or they accepted whatever they heard – whatever the common mob spreads about or certain others have reported – /13/ and they passed such things on to later generations, caring nothing for the truth. Or else, even if they campaigned with either of the two emperors – but doubtlessly not

participating in their counsels – they were neither confidants in the more confidential matters, nor were they otherwise present at every action, since the war was continuous and long – for it lasted five years.³ In my case, however, no one could hold me responsible for any such thing. For being present myself with the authors of the actions, I know these things on my own account; I have accurate knowledge of these events, related by those involved, because I endured the many and continuous changes throughout the entire course of the war. As a result, it is natural that I am ignorant of nothing, not only of what was done but also of the confidential plans, stratagems and plots and, in short, of everything, both the conspicuous deeds and the secret preparations. Indeed, as I have said from the beginning,⁴ I will value nothing above the truth but I will report the events as they took place, except I will deliberately omit in some cases certain matters which, should they be said, would cause reproach or offence to certain people. For it does not please me to speak ill of certain persons, even if this is common knowledge. If ever I disclose something in the course of my narrative which is not as the public believes, it is not necessary to be surprised. For if I do not avoid the chatter of the common folk, I will write what is untrue, but if I report matters as they are, /14/ I will bid farewell to the opinions of the many, as these are erroneous.

So, following the death of the young Emperor Andronikos, his wife, the Empress Anna,⁵ remained for three days in the Monastery of Hodēgōn.⁶ Subsequently, arriving in the palace, she mourned for nine days, while everyone was attending her in the palace every day; not only the senators⁷ and the military officers but also all the Byzantines⁸ who were lamenting the departed Emperor, in their thoughts and publicly.

From the day the Emperor died the Grand Domestic⁹ did not withdraw from the palace¹⁰ at all but, having five hundred of his own and imperial <soldiers>,¹¹ he appointed them as a guard for the palace as he was

making all effort and haste to blunt the impulses of possible rebels. After the ninth day, once the customary services for the dead were performed, he discharged the majority of the guard from the palace, appointing a small number, as many as were customary before. He went home, taking care of affairs as was usual: he advised through letters those appointed as governors of the provinces and the cities to stay calm and by no means to rebel, as in this way they would deservedly receive both the benefits of their goodness and the rewards of being in the Emperor's favour, and conversely – if any were to attempt rebellion – they would pay the penalty. Also he ordered those entrusted with the collection of the public taxes not to act corruptly concerning the money for, no less than /15/ when the Emperor was alive, they would be held to account for this. And in this way, sending letters to each – over five hundred in the greater part of thirty days – he established good order and ready obedience in all the territory subject to the Romans, so that it seemed nothing unusual had happened, but it was as if the Emperor was still alive and presiding over affairs. For nothing new, either great or small, was set in motion, except only the Albanians¹² dwelling throughout Thessaly¹³ who, having heard of the Emperor's death, ravaged the cities there and seized a small amount of booty. Learning of this, the Grand Domestic swiftly sent messengers to the Albanians, telling them either to return the plunder and not to rebel any longer or, if they would not obey, to expect him to treat them as enemies. And they, cowering before the threat, not only restored the booty to those they had wronged, but also promised to keep quiet henceforth, if only they could receive pardon for their wrongdoings. But these matters happened a little later.

After the Grand Domestic returned to his home from the palace, heralds went to the cities and towns around Byzantium¹⁴ at his orders, summoning all clergy to the city of Constantine on a stipulated day, in order to perform the services for the deceased Emperor. Such a large number of

priests assembled, that the church of the Wisdom of God,¹⁵ although the largest in size among all under the sun, seemed smaller than needed, because it was filled entirely by the multitude of priests. When /16/ the day appointed for the services was at hand, they performed without clamour and in such an orderly manner that the participants seemed to be few and easy to count. For no indistinct noise was heard, of the sort the multitude love to make, but an extraordinary musical concord and harmony, all of them singing holy hymns in succession. This was not only surprising but also the spectacle gave pleasure, seeing so many of the clergy together with the hierarchs, adorned with their sacred vestments and performing one rite, marshalled under one leader, the Patriarch.¹⁶ On account of the abundance of candles and the other extravagances of preparation it surpassed those celebrations which were praised in the past. The expenses of this and the wages of the priests, granted to each with particular generosity according to his rank, were provided by the Grand Domestic from his own resources.

Chapter 2

So the service happened in such a way. He had control of the administration just as before, holding no one in suspicion about anything. For the Patriarch, however, it was not satisfactory to remain with things as they were before but he considered it necessary to cling on to the governance of public affairs as belonging to him for a particular reason. When the Emperor was still alive, not a little time before his death, the Grand Domestic used to advise him to persuade the Patriarch to threaten a penalty and separation from the Church of the faithful [excommunication] if anyone, /17/ after the Emperor's death, might plot against his children¹ and unjustly take the Empire away from them. Attempting to persuade the Emperor, he used to assert that in such a case they would be doing nothing wrong and would have accomplished nothing unreasonable, but would also render no little benefit to the children through this, if something of this kind did happen to them. For it is unknown to anyone when the end, death, will come; especially to those always involved in battles and dangers. And it was not impossible that both of them [Andronikos and Kantakouzēnos] could happen to fall on account of a single battle.² If this occurred, it would follow that the children are left wholly unprotected, being neither able to defend themselves because of their youth, nor having anyone else as a genuine and honest champion.

The Emperor was not easily persuaded, being of a gentle mind and thinking it proper for the hand of the Almighty to hold the hopes for his children's safety than to look towards the feeble assistance which comes from human invention, being aware that such contrivances by the emperors before them had been of no benefit.³ He said that either God, reaching out His protecting hand from on high, or the power of those friendly to us could prevail over our opponents, preventing the attacks of those wishing to do

harm. Oaths, censures, and all similar such things would cause no alarm to those who deliberately choose to take advantage. For this reason they should refrain from any such action, as not only would it be of no benefit to us, but also /18/ would be able to cause no significant harm to others, just as additional punishment is due for theft even to those separated from God.

The Grand Domestic would not give up pressing the issue, but he asked him [the Emperor] to desist from such arguments and to be persuaded by him, as he was providing useful and just counsel. And indeed, having pressed hard, he [Kantakouzēnos] persuaded him, not that he [the Emperor] was fully convinced, as he would not concede that the arrangements might be useful, but kept hold of the opinion he had from the beginning, yet he was unwillingly persuaded because this seemed useful to him [Kantakouzēnos]. And having summoned the Patriarch and as many of the archpriests as were present in Byzantion at that time,⁴ and having debated as much as was reasonable about the matter, he expressed his opinion openly, namely that the proposal seemed neither necessary nor useful (for it would not hinder the attacks of the plotters). But so that he would not seem to be persuaded by only his own reasoning but also to concede to other people advising him and be persuaded by them and trust them, he ordered an excommunication to be pronounced against those who would unjustly attack his children after his death. So the Patriarch did as the Emperor ordered.⁵

Because of these things then, after the Emperor's death, the Patriarch deemed it necessary, since he was evidently protector of the Emperor's children⁶ and especially because the Emperor's son, the Emperor Iōannēs,⁷ was still a little child, engaging at that time in boyish pursuits (for he was nine years old),⁸ to lay his hands on public affairs and assist in preserving the Empire for the young emperor. Nevertheless he took hold of them while attempting to escape notice as much as possible and he was establishing himself little by little in /19/ power, for he was afraid of openly opposing the

Grand Domestic. And he was doing other things which were not pleasing to him [Kantakouzēnos], even organising a faction among the senators and persuading them with many promises to join him, as he would procure them the greatest benefits if the command of public affairs fell to him. He continuously busied himself in the palace, retiring home only in the middle of the night. From this, the Grand Domestic guessed the Patriarch's intention and, moreover, certain of those who shared his [the Patriarch's] secrets were reporting the cause of these events to him. He was annoyed, as was natural, and these goings-on caused him anger. Despite this, he bore it in silence, keeping watch over wherever the plan would turn out for him.

Meanwhile something else also happened, which took hold of the Grand Domestic's heart to no little degree.⁹ For the Emperor¹⁰ of the Mysians,¹¹ Alexandros,¹² sent an embassy to the Empress and the Romans, demanding the fugitive Sismanos,¹³ son of the previous ruler of the Mysians, Michaēl,¹⁴ who was living with them and who was born to him [Michaēl] by [Anna] the sister¹⁵ of Stephanos,¹⁶ ruler of the Triballi,¹⁷ who herself ruled the Mysians after his death. Prior to this, while he [Michaēl] was still alive, she was divorced by him and he married the sister of the young Emperor Andronikos [Theodōra].¹⁸ After a short while, having being conspired against by her most powerful dynasts, she [Anna] was again driven from power. She took Iōannēs¹⁹ – the other of their [Anna's and Michaēl's] sons – and returned to her brother, the Kralēs,²⁰ while Sismanos, /20/ the remaining son, went to the Scyths²¹ as an exile. Indeed after spending no little time among them, he later willingly came to the Romans after the Emperor's death. Alexandros then demanded this man, through those he sent, because he was his greatest enemy. He said there were two options: either hand over Sismanos to be put to death, or to prepare for war, as it was not possible for him to be a friend and ally to the Romans while his greatest enemy was supported by them. He also sent the oaths which were sworn to him by the

Emperor Andronikos to make peace.²² So the embassy of Alexandros took this course.

It was necessary for the senate, meeting together with the Empress, to deliberate if they must hand over the deserter or wage war against the Mysians on his behalf. So they assembled in the palace.²³ The Grand Domestic was also present among them, together with the Patriarch. When this decision was put before the assembly, all the others kept quiet, turning their eyes towards the Grand Domestic and whatever he would advise concerning the matter set before them.

Geōrgios Choumnos,²⁴ the *epi tēs trapezēs*,²⁵ spoke ignorantly and insolently, before anyone could utter anything, "It has been written 'if ever something is revealed to the last, let the first be silent.'²⁶ Therefore, if it is possible that one who is considered among the last of us has something better to say, concerning the matters on which we are now deliberating, it is necessary for the first to accept it."

Truly, the Grand Domestic was immediately disturbed by this speech, exasperated by the audacity /21/ and effrontery of the man. Yet he bore it in silence, thinking that the Empress or the Patriarch (for this man had already appointed himself over the council) would angrily expel Choumnos from the council-chamber or rebuke his inappropriate idle speech with words. As nothing of what was needed was said by either of them, he was yet more disturbed, as the speech constituted clear evidence of disorder and anarchy, if it was possible to give offence to all great men without fear.

However, Dēmētrios Tornikēs²⁷ could not bear this outrage. "What then?" he said, "Is it necessary to make the Empire of the Romans a democracy, so that anyone at all is allowed to give advice and to say whatever he may fancy, concerning greater and lesser matters, and to impose upon those who are better the necessity to accept decisions by votes? And what manner of absurdity would be lacking in such extremism?"

As they had already begun to quarrel with each other about these matters, the Empress halted proceedings, ordering them to refrain from such untimely arguments and to discuss what was necessary. The Grand Domestic feigned a stomach pain, which struck him by churning his innards, and he kept silent as he was not able to speak because of the pain. They [the senators] were in disorderly uproar, each preferring the solution that occurred to him. For some said it was necessary to protect Sismanos, who had become a suppliant of the Empire of the Romans, and not to betray him, even if it was necessary to endure some difficulties for his sake. Others would rather preserve the country and their own property and not /22/ throw themselves into manifest danger for the sake of a barbarian fugitive. And with other similar views, they argued against each other and filled the palace with shouting, all wanting to put forward opinions and proposals for the sake of the common good. As the rivalry continued further and there were conflicting opinions, the Patriarch, as though he had devised something great and marvellous, said, "It seems to me Sismanos has taken refuge in the church of the Wisdom of God.²⁸ Since it has been revered as an asylum by all of those who have ruled over the Romans, this allows us to give a legitimate excuse to Alexandros' ambassadors, because it is not permitted to drag away a suppliant of God and hand him over to be slaughtered; this sacrilege is considered by the Romans, of the present day and ancient times, the most impious of all."

Certainly, many of those present marvelled at this counsel as the best and most intelligent, strong enough to send away Alexandros' ambassadors empty-handed, even themselves immediately understanding the necessity of the matter. As the Grand Domestic made no sound, the Empress first criticised the untimeliness of his affliction, which occurred at such a crucial moment and when she had need of his advice. Then she said to him that, if the counsel of the Patriarch seemed correct to him, just as clearly as it also

seemed good to the others and to her, he could nod his assent of what they had said and put an end to the council. If another way seemed better and /23/ more profitable to him, although she would dissolve the assembly at the current time on account of his illness, when he had recovered they would again deliberate concerning these matters.²⁹

After a short pause he said, “You appear to me not to have reached a decision concerning the matters about which you have deliberated. For at this moment the question is not about legitimate justifications but whether it is necessary to fulfil the demands of Alexandros, or whether to make war on him. But, having neglected the matters you were appointed to deliberate on, you discuss what is lawful and just among the Romans, as if someone was forcing Alexandros to obey the laws of the Romans. Perhaps he [Alexandros] might say, ‘These laws apply not to me but to the Romans: for me there is one law, to seek my own advantage in every possible way. As for you, though it is possible to conceal Sismanos in holy sanctuaries, you certainly cannot hide the cities and towns in such places as well, nor herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and the other wealth of the fields, from which it is possible for me to take compensation for this injustice.’ Therefore the need is to deliberate on these matters, not on legitimate excuses. But now I must find some fault with myself also, because your arguments in these matters have in some way or another persuaded me as well. For it was said at the beginning and ratified by everyone – since no-one said anything against it – that if ever something is revealed to the last, the first is to keep silent. If, then, one is not numbered among the last, /24/ but rather among the first and, it seems, especially those leading the senate in these matters, and as it was approved as advantageous by you all, it befits even myself to agree and to meddle no further in state affairs.”

With the Empress above all urging him on and attracted to his arguments, <he added,> “Although these words were few, I did not say them willingly.”

The Patriarch, immediately discharging himself from responsibility in respect to such matters, said, “But I am first and I myself agree the proposal is not what is being asked about. For Alexandros will not be concerned about fine words and answers of such a kind but about whatever he proposed at the beginning, and if he is able to bring it to accomplishment. For this reason I say we should not take counsel about excuses but about this.”

At once, all the rest approved the same idea. When the Grand Domestic stood, the others also rose at the same time, and the assembly was dissolved. The Grand Domestic, observing the Patriarch’s earlier desire for control of public affairs, did not wish to stop the attempt by force; for he did not wish to rule over the unwilling, but much rather over those wanting and knowing the benefit of his rule. Above all, fearing this would provide a pretext for strife and civil war, by which it seemed probable that the rule of the Romans would be destroyed, and thinking his responsibility for allowing such horrors would be worse than any death (for which reason, while the Emperor was still /25/ alive, he did not want to become emperor, although he was invited a great many times), he thought to lay aside his former authority and to live the remainder of his life in retirement considering, just as I have said, anything whatsoever more tolerable than himself being responsible for instigating the ruin of the Romans. When, during the assembly, Choumnos had wilfully and presumptuously argued against him (for it was considered that the speech alluded to him in particular; at that time he was considered as – and was – first among all of the Romans), nobody had censured him, nor did they complain of his inappropriate boldness. Because he considered this proceeding as the start of civil strife, he hastened to resign his office sooner than he had wished.

Chapter 3

So then, the day after the assembly, when he and the Patriarch were present in the palace, he used him [the Patriarch] as a messenger to the Empress and disclosed these matters to her through him, namely that if the choice had really been set before him by God (may He be a witness that what was said was true) when the Emperor was alive, he [Kantakouzēnos] would have chosen his own death instead of his [Andronikos']; he would have preferred – by every reckoning and with all eagerness and willingness – to die for the sake of his life. “Since He who weighs out the measure of life and death to each was resolved on this course [i.e., that Andronikos should die], while it is fitting to give thanks to Him for His wise arrangement towards us, every man should consider whatever may be appropriate and advantageous to himself. And having carefully considered these matters concerning myself, /26/ it seems to me that I must withdraw from public affairs, to spend the remainder of my life in retirement, in whatever manner I am able, living by myself.¹ So this is my judgement; now I make it clear to you also.”

When the Patriarch inquired about the reason which prompted him to say such things to the Empress, he said that even previously he had turned over such considerations in his mind and thought it necessary to have done with public affairs. “What convinced me to reveal my plan so soon, was nothing other than, during the assembly on the day before, Choumnos’ inappropriate and unheard of outspokenness and his ‘if ever something is revealed to the last, let the first be silent’. Neither the Empress nor yourself were vexed at his impudence, nor was he punished for his mindless drivelling, but you passed over what he said in silence, just as if he was saying nothing unusual.”

And the Patriarch said, “If there is some other reason that has led to words of this sort, you yourself would know. But if, having been provoked

only because of this man, bearing anger towards me as well as the Empress, you have decided to give up the administration of public affairs, then you act neither justly nor befittingly to yourself. For I insist that I did not hear these words and it is right that I expect to be believed by you. I think that the Empress will also say the same as me. For neither could she bear it in silence, if she had happened to hear these words and thought them to be addressed to you. And for this reason /27/ I beg you to withdraw your words to the Empress; they will be a not insignificant increase to our troubles.”

He [Kantakouzēnos] did not give up, but he urged [the Patriarch] to report now, asserting that the speech alone had created the problem, although perhaps something else lay buried in his heart. Immediately, therefore, the Patriarch did what he had been urged to do and he reported to the Empress all that the Grand Domestic had discussed with him. Having received these words – which were without hope and beyond expectation – into her hearing, she was distressed by what had been said and astounded at what the Grand Domestic believed, at these things that he had taken to heart and said to her.

However, having recovered herself, she declared to him [via the Patriarch] that such words as these were entirely unbecoming of him, neither were they worthy of his intelligence, or of his friendship with the Emperor, “which even from childhood until this very day you have preserved with one another, honest and pure. Therefore I am not persuaded that because of one man’s madness you have been led into such great anger and distress. I confess I neither heard this man speaking, nor, if I had happened to be informed of it, would it be useful to punish the speaker. For you yourself have no less power than I to punish and grant forgiveness to those giving offence, as you may wish. So if you are exasperated because of those words alone, it is more appropriate for him to receive punishment from yourself than from me. If there is something else that you want, /28/ which is

unknown to me until now, then speak boldly, as there will be no difficulty on my part – whatever it may be that you desire – unless it is completely impossible.” In such a way the Empress replied to the words of the Grand Domestic.

He said [to the Patriarch] that he [the Patriarch] had completely failed to understand the meaning of his words and that the Empress was very far from understanding what was happening. “In order that you yourself know that I deliberate in a just way, and explain it to the Empress, listen to what I consider concerning these matters. The friendship the Emperor and myself towards each other was unsurpassed from childhood; you, naturally, may be ignorant of this, and the Empress was living in her homeland. However, throughout the war against his grandfather the emperor, at the outset and at the end, while everyone else was submitting to the constantly changing circumstances, and all were ranged against him [Andronikos III], he was driven close to the uttermost desperation. I willingly fought along with him, not sparing my body, or my money, or anything else of mine, but at the most pressing times when one needs true friends, I was everything to him and left nothing necessary undone. After he came to power over public affairs, I was collaborating closely with him and assisting in toils and dangers for his sake against so many external enemies – I speak of both Hellenes² and barbarians – and against the plotters within, just as if I were another of him /29/ (for I permit myself to speak thus of the administration of affairs, as I myself was undertaking every labour, making his rule painless and effortless for him). All the Romans may know this and would bear witness for me since the facts speak loudly and clearly for themselves. The Empress especially, above all others, was taught clearly not only by the facts but by the Emperor himself, about our harmony with one other, which entirely surpassed, it seems to me, the friendships celebrated both by those in the past and the present. In addition to this, not only did we happen to benefit each other, but we also

lived our lives^a until the present day most honourably. Therefore it is absurd, when formerly there was never any pretext at all given for dishonour by myself, now to do willingly things deserving abuse and blame. For if – having ignored such kinds^b of evils entering into public affairs – I bring disgrace to myself, and am the cause of dangers and ruin to the rest of the Romans, I will be unable justly to beg forgiveness before myself as judge. If, knowing this, as I clearly understand [the situation] already, I am rendered soft by fear of appearing to resign power in dangerous times, I deserve not only reproach but even the ultimate penalty [death], because, despite knowing this beforehand, I willingly tolerate being viewed as craven and do not do what I know is necessary for the times and the situation.

“Because of this, I determined /30/ to free myself from these dangers and from dishonour. And indeed it would not be possible to provide any assistance to the Empress or to the Emperor’s children in consequence of such disgrace and dangers. This consideration, surely, will be no of little consolation [to me]. So that I might not seem to shun toils and dangers on behalf of the Emperor’s children, then for now – in these times of peace and when there is no war, or any expectation of troubles – let the Patriarch and senate together with the Empress guide the state: good and honour will be the fruit of this. Yet if ever a war happens to break out, with danger menacing the children of the Emperor, then immediately I will willingly put myself into danger, and either I will help to restore the state to them or I will fall fighting for them. Thus, if I prevail, the toils and the risks to me would result in the enjoyment of public affairs for you and for you to enjoy them in full, with no cause for trouble.

“That is the chief point of my words, as it is not advisable to hold control of affairs just as before. I can also make what I say quite clear by my

^a II, 29.11: βιβιωκένας amended to βεβιωκένας.

^b II, 29.14: οἱ amended to οἶων (following P).

deeds: having risen from my accustomed seat, I will sit down on a different one, so that the Empress and all of you will know that there is now no obstacle for you to establish someone else, whoever you may wish, over state affairs." Having spoken thus, he changed place just as if he were surrendering his authority to another by his deed.

Having seen and heard all of this, the Patriarch said, "Your speech is harsh /31/ and very able to touch the heart of the Empress."

"You speak the truth," he [Kantakouzēnos] said, "and nothing of this sort must be said or done. But now, although above all else I wish to say to her many words of consolation and relief from the many sufferings which have come to the Empress because of the death of the Emperor, I am driven by such great necessity to do completely the opposite, for two reasons. For either I am constrained to be completely idle or to rule badly, insofar as it is not befitting. Therefore, either I do nothing – and the Empress may acquiesce, thinking the state will be administered as it was yesterday and the day before by me – leading to total ruin, or, alternatively, I rule badly and not in accordance with what is needed, leading the same way again to destruction. Besides, I would deserve punishment for my incompetence not only from others but from myself. Consequently, on both accounts it is advantageous that these things become known to the Empress, even if they must cause her trouble and distress. For it is better that, having learned about these circumstances, you and the others deliberate as to what is necessary for the state rather than being ignorant for a while longer and then to become angry, not only because of these matters, but also because of the harm that will come about."

Chapter 4

So the Patriarch reported everything to the Empress. She heard what would never have crossed her mind, nor was she convinced by what the other was saying. At first, because of her distress, she was /32/ unable to respond; then, having silently spilt many tears from her eyes for long enough, she said, "It would be easier to persuade a mountain it was able to move, than to change the mind of the Grand Domestic in a short time. Since it is just now that I have heard about these matters concerning him, I could not have reflected upon them at any point; I am at a loss for an appropriate reply. However, because these things closely touch my heart, I will make a beginning to my defence. Therefore I say to him: 'Just now, having roused my mind as if from either a deep torpor or sleep, you have brought me into awareness of the troubles surrounding me. For before, indeed even though I obviously knew the Emperor was dead, despite this, when you came to me, it seemed that he too, just as was his habit, came in with you and departed with you, and I almost thought he spoke when you spoke to me, and I considered the troubles that befell and surrounded me somehow bearable. Now, just as if a curtain has been raised, everything within is revealed: thus, having deprived us of our hopes by which we were deceived, you have prepared me to look upon matters as they are and to think of my children bereft of their father, of myself in widowhood and afflicted by its evils.

"But what might anyone say or even think about you? Perhaps you forget your close partnership and /33/ that remarkable friendship the Emperor bore towards you which, by reason of its magnitude, the masses could not believe? But I cannot think it would be possible, even if you greatly wanted this. For I think if someone wanted to understand absolute friendship between men, then he would want to look to an example from which it would be possible for himself and others to recognise its power; he

would overlook you two alone, as having surpassed even the limits of friendship, you sought out those that remained – whatever they might be – to be the first to test them. You were not only such firm friends but also established the very model of friendship hereafter. And this I was able to see not only from your behaviour, but also to hear the Emperor saying many, many times, that his friendship towards you took precedence over his most beloved ones and his wife and the whole of his property, so to say.

“Or indeed, is it not possible to say, in the most slandering manner, that you have forgotten the friendship of the Emperor, because you remember even the Emperor’s children ungratefully, repaying him after his death in the very opposite way than is appropriate?^a But this is not you, just as the first <proposition> was not either. Furthermore your words to me, which you let flow on every occasion while the Emperor was alive, are not of equal worth to your current opinions. For of course you have not forgotten that you were confident that, when the moment demanded, you would steel yourself to stand firm, fully prepared for many struggles and dangers and even death, if it is possible to say this, to be of assistance to myself and my children. /34/ This time is now at hand; if it is acceptable to you to be judged on the basis of your actions, it is for you to say. Yet I am not aware of anything that would cause me to take offence at you, but from the moment I arrived in the imperial residence I lacked nothing that I was provided by my brother the Count¹ [of Savoy], neither goodwill nor honour. Rather there was more by far, inasmuch as his death did me no harm nor did benefit attend me while he was alive, as we lived so far apart; but while living you could bestow the greatest benefits on me and the affairs of the Romans, and no less ruin them by dying.

^a II, 33.16: ἐναντίας ἢ προσῆκεν amended to ἐναντίας ἢ προσῆκεν (following Fatouros, ‘Textkritische’, 192).

“Although I could add much and prove through these arguments that what you have decided is neither beneficial nor just, I will say this alone, leaving aside all the rest: if someone passing along a road happened to meet a woman of noble birth, acquainted with widowhood and the troubles that arise from this, clinging on to her orphaned children and having nobody as a protector and because of these circumstances fearing many dangers, and she asked [this person] to take pity on their misfortunes and to champion her and her children – putting forward nothing else as a good reason other than her nobility and her undeserved misfortune – is it not necessary for you and any man at all like you, having no other concerns, to provide as much care as you are able to for the woman and to consider labours for her sake worthwhile, for the purpose of your own glory /35/ and righteousness? Therefore, if this alone would be sufficient inducement, what convincing excuse can you offer if, with this same inducement and many other stronger ones at hand, you appear unmerciful?

“For this reason, I ask you to leave aside your plan and not to forsake me and my young children because of a trivial pretext, just as if a helmsman were to abandon his ship in the middle of the sea. But either you have first reflected on these matters, and believe in your untimely plan which is filled with countless evils, or you were persuaded by someone else’s advice. That person is not one of your friends but is to be considered most hostile towards your glory and honour, while plotting against us in respect to our own safety and, I will add, against all the interests of the Romans in common. If I cannot see what I ought to do by myself – since there is no other certain salvation for everyone than for you, just as when the Emperor was alive, to take control of public affairs in accordance with the Emperor’s own arguments, which he made many times to me concerning you, especially shortly before his death – then it is necessary to understand what will be beneficial. For, resting <his head> on my knees, in your presence, he said, ‘The time of my death has

arrived. You must see to it once I have departed that you do not, having been deceived by certain thoughts or by the arguments of some people, dismiss this man and favour someone else. For if this happens, /36/ nothing remains thereafter for you and the children and the entire Empire of the Romans other than to be destroyed; pay heed to him, you should consider what is best for yourself and for public affairs.² If then I have been instructed in such a way by the Emperor and I perceive matters similarly for myself, what reason could there be for you to be persuaded and me to willingly accept what you have resolved, unfairly and contrary to what ought to be done? Therefore if you recognise how great the absurdity of this matter is from what I have said, refrain from deciding and saying such things. By taking hold of affairs, just as you are accustomed, you will do whatever is of benefit to the Romans in common, assisted by the hand [of God] from above, permitting me some quiet to lament and mourn my misfortunes (for this alone would be my consolation and abatement of my suffering), and you will do what is both correct and advantageous, as well as befitting to yourself.

“If, having rejected and set aside everything, you become one alone by holding firm to your decisions, bidding farewell to all, I will make clear to you what I will do. Laying aside all shame and feminine weakness and turning away from thoughts of discretion under the magnitude of these evils, going to the middle of the City and standing myself on a platform, so that my voice is able to reach into the midst of everyone, I will cry out very loudly and shrilly, ‘Romans! Indeed all Hellenes and barbarians as well! You know well that everything is destroyed and /37/ ruined and that there is no gratitude for friendship among men, and there is no concern for truth and righteousness: uprightness has vanished from the considerations of men and in short everything that is good, if it is that the Grand Domestic, just as if having emerged from a contrary wind as the worst opponent of himself, and forgetting the Emperor’s friendship, has neglected the truth and

righteousness and the ambition for all that is good which becomes him; he thought to live the remainder of his life in idleness, although I and my children need much solicitude at the current moment, he departed and abandoned us as if we are a useless burden, as if he did not recognise us, if indeed once he perceived our appearance or heard report of matters concerning us.' Having thus exposed the unfriendliness, instability and uncertainty of your judgement, if ever this happens, I will even gladly die, having received from you justice enough for me. I ask you again, in regard to all this, not to trouble me but to put aside these words of yours and to do what is necessary, holding control over affairs just as you have from the beginning."

Chapter 5

The Empress replied in such a way from her deeply grieving and distressed heart. The Grand Domestic felt ashamed of himself, as she had spoken fairly as well as appropriately, and he had no argument against such a clear demonstration of the truth. He said nothing to the Patriarch but, taking him along, they went to the Empress. /38/ As soon as she saw them she was overcome by distress, she shed tears and lamented until she had had enough. Her tears offered clear evidence of the pain she felt inside. When she had finished, the Grand Domestic began speaking with her in this fashion: "It is the habit of good men, whenever anybody uses them as mediators, either to their friends and *oikeioi*¹ – if ever they were at odds about some matter with them – or even to their worst enemies, to veil in silence and pass over the severity of their replies, particularly those which have the power to end peace and provoke the listener to anger. Conversely, regarding those words which are kind and gentle and sufficient for reconciliation, he should report no less than what he heard and add some of his own. On the other hand, just as the wicked choose the means of bringing men into conflict with each other, they also report in addition those words which cause anger, while those fitting for reconciliation and agreement they keep silent. At the present moment, having used the Patriarch as a messenger for my words and in turn having learned through him about the response made by you, I fear that he said these things gently and kindly, wishing to relieve and calm my heart, which is swelling up and burning with pain. But he did not preserve my words to you unaltered and, furthermore, he did not in turn report to me exactly the response which he obtained from you. But having /39/ said other things instead, he would now reconcile us for the moment but a little later he would make our disagreement greater and more severe. Because of this then, if such things were really said by you, I must

understand them accurately, so I may know how it is necessary to shape the remainder of my words." And having related everything which the Patriarch had told him, he asked her if this was the way she had spoken.

Once she agreed that everything which had taken place was correct and truthful, he said, "Therefore if I appear to put forward what follows harshly and thoughtlessly, I ask that you do not accuse me of vulgarity or stubbornness and audacity in my behaviour, but if anybody believes my words are disorderly, take into account beside this the force of circumstances, and forgive me since I am compelled by this. I consider that anybody at all who intends to observe well the character of a man and the manner of the passions he holds in his heart, neither pays heed to those superficial things said about him, nor examines him by himself in those situations in which he is not able to bring what he has recommended into action, but at a time when it is most possible for him to use his abilities. For if, at that time, he appeared to be doing nothing of this sort, that is, if someone thought this of him, then he might perhaps choose to turn to a life of leisure hereafter. Accordingly I will speak freely concerning myself, as I did not previously desire to change my present rank for that of emperor, although /40/ I was invited many, many times by the Emperor of blessed memory, when he was still alive, nor do I desire it now. For if such ridiculous desires had happened to seize me, what obstacle was there when the Emperor died? Having taken his children, I put the palace under guard with them secured inside and, of all those outside, some were well-disposed to me, while others cowered before my power and did not dare to complain – <what obstacle was there> to me bringing to light the lurking evil, or to fulfil the desire in the almost total absence of anyone who could prevent me? Yet now, not only do I appear not to be doing such a thing, or even wanting to, but entirely the opposite. For having maintained the Emperor's children and you in complete safety until the ninth day from the Emperor's death,

after this time I withdrew the guard, which I had established myself, from the palace. Having set another guard, as many as I myself judged sufficient to prevent the attacks of probable conspirators, I then returned home, taking care of affairs just as when the Emperor was alive – advising everyone, providing counsel, scaring off threats – not at all to rebel, but to keep pure and honest my goodwill and service to you, and similarly to your children, and it is obvious that I would impose punishment on rebels and undertake war on your behalf.

“So why would someone say that at the time when I had the power, I did not want to <revolt>, /41/ yet now I <supposedly> want to, without having the same power to do so? But if I contend that I am no less powerful than I was at that time, then you would agree with me; therefore neither before nor now did I refrain from wicked acts from a lack of power but evidently from a lack of desire, and from thinking such a change to be one of the very worst things. So if I was visibly planning nothing of this sort, neither then nor now, and yet was able to accomplish it easily, it is appropriate to have confidence in me about the future and not to attend to the sycophants and the many fabrications they produce against me. For they will slander me not concerning some slight and contemptible matters but they will present fears for your life, or otherwise that you will not live well and fittingly but instead shamefully, meanly and subserviently, which itself is a reason for pain not at all secondary to death for those accustomed to rule. That there are many who are naturally of such a [slanderous] disposition, it is possible for us not to guess, but to know very clearly. For when the Emperor himself was master of public affairs, he was not subject to any scrutiny of his actions by anyone; he was able, if ever he wished, to willingly favour certain men, while equally he could neglect others. For now no such behaviour will be possible for anyone but I will order all men /42/ to do their duty towards all with reason and diligence, not only because of

concern for you – so that the authority which I have received is not lessened but so I can return it even greater and more improved, when the moment calls – but also for the sake of my honour and reputation and that which is greater and more fearful to me than all of these concerns: the subsequent examination of my actions and the accounts which I will have to render before the fearsome judgement [of God], concerning whether affairs have been administered well or badly. Such proceedings, as is quite clear, would not be tolerable to those accustomed to neglect and to misappropriate public property and to increase their own property by corruption, so they will naturally act to put the person who imposed this constraint on them out of the way quickly. This would otherwise be impossible for them unless, having first fabricated many lies and false accusations, they make us fight each other. The extent of absurdity our affairs will be driven to if such a thing happens, you yourself, being an intelligent woman, can understand, but I will explain to you even more clearly. For either it is necessary to condemn me to death contrary to all right thought, a deed which would have arisen from calumny and slander; I am a man who, on fair examination, was not only friendly to the Emperor and to those of you related to him² for a very long time, but who also administered the affairs of the Romans honestly and selflessly; who, if by some chance came to be wasting his life among the barbarians far from the land of the Romans, you would be justly be worthy of many reproaches and accusations if you did not order him with all /43/ haste to be brought back and recalled, so that you can employ him in an appropriate way. Or, if I do not willingly choose death, but I wish to think myself worthy of care and do not want to abandon my safety to their [the sycophants'] whims, it is necessary for me to abandon you and save myself. When this happens, because most of the Romans follow me, there will be savage civil war and uprisings in the cities and destruction of myriads of fortunes and the total dissolution, so to say, of the Roman Empire; I think

that absolutely anyone cannot be ignorant of this, anyone who has even a shred of sense. For this, He who will judge all the living and the dead,³ will inflict punishment on both of us before that dread court, as we will be responsible for all of this, or rather it will be you alone for not understanding what ought to be done on your own account, and for not wanting to learn what is being explained by me. For I myself am confident, placing my hand beside that from above [i.e., of God], that I will in no way go beyond what is needed, and there is no-one who will persuade me to provide him with a pretext for war.^a Therefore, if you have thus persuaded yourself never to think badly of me, but also to consider that everything I do or think is for the sake of you and the emperor your son [Iōannēs V]; not only will you not be persuaded to believe the slandering sycophants and their common hatred, as they never speak the truth, but you will not lend an ear to their false accusations in the first place. /44/ It is just, for yourself and for me alike, that you deliberate on what is advantageous to the affairs of the Romans in common, and that I am persuaded to take charge of the administration of public affairs. If you are unable to look into your heart about these matters and have doubts about me, why is it necessary to offer the government to them [the sycophants] as well as me? Since they are not persuaded by my advice as to what is best, permit me my choice to stay quietly at home in retirement from public life, while you, together with the Patriarch and the others, who are many and good, do what is beneficial to the Romans in common. For I am not so stupid or so far out of my mind so as to throw myself into manifest danger and, while intending to do this, to be contributing not only my own money for the common benefit of the Romans but, if there will be a need (and certainly there will often be a need), not even sparing my life itself and to demand no other reward than toils, and dangers,

^a Π, 43.16-17: οὐδ' ἔστιν ὃ με πείσει, amended to οὐδ' ἔστιν ὅς με πείσει.

and so many expenses. Rather, <I demand> first, to be kept free from these evils [i.e., the plots of the sycophants] and, second, the glory and honour of the good deeds, regarding which <merely> not to be defeated is the preference not of the most brilliant and respected, but of those who live meanly and dishonourably and no better than the masses. So according to my consideration, it seems such matters are to the benefit of myself personally and each and all of us alike. It is appropriate that you reflect on these matters both together with the others and in private, /45/ to choose whichever may be most beneficial. May God grant that you choose the better one.”⁴

Chapter 6

After the Grand Domestic had recounted these matters to the Empress with frankness and without concealing anything, she praised his words as they were spoken not bitterly or harshly, just as he had said at the beginning, but they possessed the truth, righteousness and frankness appropriate to a true friend. Therefore, concerning both before and now alike, she agreed that he seemed, above all others, most clearly able to protect the Empire of the Romans by himself, if he was willing. Regarding what he had asked, she trusted that he had the power to uphold not only what he had asked but also much more. And if all men would join together in speaking against him, they did not have the power to make him hostile but he would preserve his friendship untouched and inviolate, if for no other reason than having remembered the words of the Emperor, who often said regarding him [Kantakouzēnos], that if he [the Emperor] saw that man [Kantakouzēnos] advancing against him with a sword drawn to kill him, he would not even then be able to hate him but would preserve the same goodwill for him and, having accomplished this, even his friendship.¹ She said that while employing such a teacher who so greatly exceeded her intelligence and experience of state affairs, she would attempt to value him and cherish him to an equal degree. And she encouraged him not to suspect anything ignoble concerning her but to be /46/ firmly convinced, as there was nothing so powerful that it would be able to overturn her reasoning and make her think badly of him.

Following this, the Grand Domestic thought the agreement of the Empress was sufficient proof that there was nothing preventing him from choosing, if he wished, to be perceived as wicked but most importantly he was able to freely choose what was good and just. Then, having thanked the Empress for her exemplary goodness and affection towards him, he took up

the argument again, saying that because of this certainly neither she nor the Patriarch should suspect that the words said by him were devious, so that by having provided an amnesty for him in advance, if someone spoke the truth about him and showed he was acting criminally, then they should not have an opportunity to put the charge and accusation against him. For this was not what his words meant, rather that if certain people accused him of such crimes at just any time, such accusations would refute themselves as they are calumnies and slanders; they should make no argument against these but hate the liars. "Yet if these are plausible to such an extent as to cause uncertainty, if there is a need to believe or to entirely disbelieve them, do not immediately convict me by default when I am away, but summon me to court and, if I am convicted of injustice, I will not beg any pardon from the assigned punishment for my crime."

The Empress brushed aside his talk about justice and, if something happened, such thoughts about him would be furthest from her mind, that they would even need court cases against /47/ him. He said he would not be content unless she was also persuaded by him about this, on account of the others rather than her, as, by means of all this, their tongues would be stopped and they would not get any pretext from this for wickedness and slander. Since she was dismissive and was not willing to be persuaded, he prevailed upon her, saying a great deal, as it was a matter of absolute necessity. Although she was unwilling, as she was determined such investigations were not required, she was finally persuaded for his sake.

Following these discussions, he was pleased and put aside all doubts about her reasoning; he said he would be delighted to take over the government from her immediately, if what had been said would also be made secure by oaths. And oaths were at once made by both of them in the presence of the Patriarch.² Since there was no longer anything lacking regarding their reconciliation, the Empress remained at home, while the

Grand Domestic, now holding complete authority securely, left together with the Patriarch. And they went to the church of the Great Martyr Dēmētrios which was built inside the palace,³ and the Grand Domestic conversed with the Patriarch for a long time. For he [Kantakouzēnos] said, “I am fully convinced that the Empress has such intentions as she expressed in her words. But I am once again not a little troubled, knowing the weakness of female nature – since it is so easily changed because of timidity – and fear that, as I may always be compelled to serve abroad for long periods because of wars against the neighbouring barbarians, the sycophants idling at home may persuade her /48/ to change her mind at some point, which we may observe corresponds also with men who do not dare to enter battle because of their cowardice. For although they are reproached and insulted by their *oikeioi* and endure every sort of complaint, as they are not ready for battle, they often boast and puff themselves up and give oaths that they will never turn their faces from their enemies but resist them courageously. Yet whenever they see them draw close and they hear the trumpet signalling the engagement, such men do not wait any longer for the marshalling of the ranks but they shamefully and ignobly flee, caring little for their oaths and their previous bragging. I hear a Persian proverb speaks very correctly and wisely concerning the nature of women. For they say that even if the head of a woman reaches as high as the clouds, she would be fixed to the earth no less than before; signifying by this statement, I think, that even if a woman attained the highest degree of wisdom and magnanimity and courage, she is a woman no less than before, subject to feminine nature and passions.⁴

“Recalling all of this worries me and causes great turmoil in my heart from fear that, should the Empress be afflicted by something in her female nature, not only I but all the Romans will have to deal with many troubles and fall into extreme dangers. Because of this then, I remind you of the many good things accrued by you from me, and which you have probably not

forgotten, as you came into this glory and honour by means of my resources and friendship and diligence, not /49/ only having been selected for the imperial clergy, out of deep obscurity, and being thought worthy of great solicitude not just from my own resources but also the imperial <treasury> and when the opportunity came,^a remember that it was me who first persuaded the Emperor to raise you to the patriarchal throne but also, brushing aside the unanimous opinion of all the archpriests, used great eagerness and effort towards them so as to convince them to entrust this exalted and contested See to you, and finally when you were at risk concerning this and intended to withdraw, only I helped you escape from your misfortunes.⁵

“I have recounted these matters just now not to reproach you with having provided these favours (for such a thing would not be welcome to me even if they were greater and more numerous) but so that I may demonstrate, since I was disposed in a friendly manner towards you from the beginning, and have provided many proofs of my affection towards you, that it is fair that you, given the circumstances, can now show gratitude to one who has previously been observed to be your friend without expecting anything in return, and duly repay his earlier kindnesses. Yet it is not only because of these considerations but because you are the common spiritual father: you owe as much care to me as you do to each of your flock, or rather you owe me many times more or nearly the whole of it, inasmuch as everyone experiences their share of the benefit or harm that is visited upon me.⁶

“It is this which I ask of you: that whenever I am constrained to engage in campaigns abroad (for it is not becoming for me, /50/ nor useful to you all, to sit quietly here while overlooking the enemies who plunder our

^a II, 49.3: οὐ omitted before καλοῦντος (following P).

fields and besiege our cities and enslave those who happen to live there), give no space to the sycophants and traitors and public enemies by staying at the Empress' side at all times, since they are able to contrive calumnies against me and to dedicate themselves, as if they were counselling her correctly and beneficially, to convincing her to consider me an enemy who is plotting against her rule. Instead, standing up for justice on my behalf, put an end to their schemes and render their deceptions and tricks unavailing, by persuading the Empress of nothing else other than not to condemn me in my absence but, having summoned me to trial and provided an opportunity for a defence, for me either to dismiss the accusations, if I am able, or to punish the crime, if I am convicted of perjury. For this great effort and zeal you will receive rewards not only from God – as one who has endeavoured for the sake of peace and public security, and for justice – but also I will look upon you with great favour and all reasonable men will praise you for acting as the champion and protector of souls, who has shown by these deeds that he is a disciple of the Peacemaker and resembles Him in this respect, in so far as one can, having removed every pretext for civil war.” The Grand Domestic talked to the Patriarch in such a way. /51/

He [the Patriarch] agreed with him that the favours of which he spoke were greater than all others and that he was his benefactor, and he was obliged to him, and he [Kantakouzēnos] should be confident about the future. He suggested that there would be no difficulties for him [Kantakouzēnos], at least so far as he [the Patriarch] was concerned, but, if such a thing happened, he would attend to it with great diligence and goodwill for him [Kantakouzēnos], doing nothing less than he [Kantakouzēnos] would for his own sake if he were present there, holding out until things turned out justly for him.

Since the Patriarch had willingly promised these things, the Grand Domestic then said that nothing remained other than to make these promises

secure and unambiguous in a form of which he could be certain, so that there was no doubt at all hereafter but that he would be perfectly convinced, no less than if he were present, that there would be no power to the sycophants' slanders.

He [the Patriarch] at once stood up from his seat and said, "Blessed be God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is eternal, because I will deceive you neither now nor later, but I will make every thought and effort for the sake of your rights and I will overlook nothing, at least as far as it concerns me, not any thought or word or deed, so that no harm at all comes to you from calumny and slander." In addition to this, having recited the *Trisagion*⁷ hymn and having said one of the holy prayers over the Grand Domestic's head – praying for much glory and peace for him and streams of other good things – since the time was already almost nearing late afternoon, the Patriarch departed for home, while the Grand /52/ Domestic took hold of affairs eagerly, secure by now in his hopes about the future and suspecting nothing sinister.

Chapter 7

On the following day, he ordered Alexandros' ambassadors to come to the palace and report concerning the matters they had come about. They arrived, holding the oaths the Emperor had made to Alexandros for peace, and demanded that Sismanos be handed over to them, as he was an enemy to their own emperor [Alexandros], or to take back the oaths, as there would no longer be peace. For it was neither right nor tolerable to them to be firm and steadfast friends and allies to the Romans, while they were violating the treaty by welcoming their greatest enemies among them. So the ambassadors spoke in this fashion, filled with self-importance and presumption and thinking the Romans would not argue but would immediately hand over Sismanos, for fear of war being waged against them.

The Empress had ordered the Grand Domestic to negotiate with them and to respond regarding their demands. He first censured them, as their arrival was unbecoming given what they wanted to achieve, "For your emperor, being a friend and the father of the son-in-law of the deceased emperor of the Romans, should not wage war against his children and attempt to dissolve the treaties for reasons that are unjust. But if he [Alexandros] had any earlier pretext for disagreement with him, he should abandon this now and observe the treaty more firmly than before /53/ and be an ally of the Emperor's children against their enemies, if there are any, especially at this very time when they stand in need of support from their friends. Yet he seems to follow the impulse of the many, who pay court to the powerful while they live, but are friends not so much to them than to opportunity and their power. Whenever they [the powerful] die, the reasons for friendship are dissolved in the same way; they [the flatterers] are easily carried away into hatred of those who had previously seemed to be their friends, disregarding them because of their powerlessness."

Then, in response to their demand, he made a defence as follows, as it is not customary for the emperors of the Romans to betray to their enemies those who have taken refuge with them: "Since, from the times of Constantine the Great until the Roman emperors of the present age – who are greater and more notable than the kings or dynasts of each of the nations – many neighbouring rulers, having happened upon misfortune and been deposed from their authority, have become suppliants, some begging to be restored to their own authority, and others to obtain some care and security. And they [the emperors] succoured them all in their misfortunes, since they are saviours of all in common and protectors of those suffering hard fortune. To some they restored their authority, returning them with a mighty helping hand, while to others they showed great kindnesses and made them forget their homelands by the extravagance of their gifts; they persuaded them to stay with them for life, [the fugitives] considered their service beside the emperor much better and more wonderful than the rule of /54/ their own people.

"So now, in the same way, Sismanos has also become a suppliant of the Empire of the Romans, not begging to return to his own country, but to enjoy some comfort as he has fallen upon hard times and been banished from his kingdom. Your emperor Alexandros, so it seems, considers the affairs of the Romans to have been utterly crippled by the death of the Emperor and that there is no-one to take hold of the regency, demanding his [Sismanos'] dispatch with great insolence, expecting his order to be carried out without question. But the situation is the opposite of what you yourselves thought. For while the Emperor was still alive he punished those wishing to do wrong, making use of us [the Romans], and now, since he has left his mortal life, having being appointed by the emperor his son, we will defend ourselves on our own behalf if someone attacks us, and we will keep our country safe from harm, and we will eagerly make war upon you for the

sake of honour, as has befitted the Romans from the most ancient times. For this, the arrival of the fugitive here with us, is no triviality and neither is it an inconsequential subject held in contempt by us whether, on the orders of yourselves or others, to hand him over to be put to death.

“Therefore, having put aside the absurdity of what you seek, if you wish to keep the peace and to abide by the treaties and the oaths which you agreed with the Emperor, we will endeavour not to disturb the existing situation. But should you begin war first, we choose God as witness of the offence, that /55/ you perjure yourselves by breaking the treaty, and we will teach you not to get ideas above your station. Having established Sismanos in Bidēnē¹ with triremes² via the Istros [Danube] and kindled civil war among you (for you yourselves surely know that many of the Mysians will side with him on account of their old friendship and their common kinship), either we will depose Alexandros from power altogether or, failing that, we will cause him damage beyond measure. If this does not seem to be the case, as the allied force which rises up is less than is required, then I myself, having at the same time the Roman army and Sismanos, will march against you and I will fight you most readily, not only for having broken the treaty with me, but also to help the one who has been wronged [i.e., Sismanos], and in addition they [the Mysians] will rise in revolt against yourselves as some of those currently devoted to Alexandros would happily free themselves and desert to Sismanos – which I think will certainly not be to your advantage. There is also a different kind of war, by which your property will be ruined by us and it is possible to preserve our own [property]; I do not conceal this so you will understand that responsibility for certain pernicious events during the war is not ours but yours alone.

“For the most powerful of the Asian satraps,³ Amour, the son of Aitinē⁴ – of whom you could not fail to have heard report – having learned of the death of the Emperor and, considering that he could easily despoil the

Romans because their defender was no more, having filled two hundred and fifty ships,⁵ he made /56/ all haste to ruin our country. When I was informed that there would be an invasion by the Persians, I sent an embassy to him, as he is counted among the greatest of my friends. I urged him to turn back and to abandon the venture, as he would be marching against no-one other than myself. He accepted the embassy and at once turned back in the middle of his journey. But now, having sent an embassy back here to me, he asked me not to overlook the army which had been assembled by him in vain but, if someone was waging a war against us, to make use of it so the army could profit from the enemy's spoils and he would not be spending so much money without reason but he would benefit just the same, by spending for the sake of a friend.⁶

“It is not necessary to doubt these words, thinking them to be fabricated for the sake of bombast and hollow boasting. For, beyond the fact that pretences and lies are not easy for us, it is possible for you yourselves to investigate and discover that it is true. Therefore, thinking that peace is much better and more profitable to us both, I welcome it and advise you to maintain it. For this reason, I do not give up on the maintenance [of peace] towards you just now, but, having returned as quickly as possible to the one who sent you, announce that he must never expect Sismanos to be handed over. If, because of this, it seems to him that he must go to war against us, you will be able to return within twenty days to declare war. In the meantime, I am prepared to delay the ambassador of Amour here, so that if war /57/ is declared, I will by letters permit his arrival here. In any case, it is easy for you to foresee that he must come here more eagerly than before he turned back from his campaign, having been persuaded by my words. If you carelessly miss the deadline, it will no longer be safe for me to be at rest, so I will ready what is needed for war from my own resources, and I will lead our fully-prepared Persian allies here, and you would not wish for what

comes after. It will be easier to settle the war with me now, not only because of the money spent on the preparation for war – which will necessarily be recovered from your own country – but also because it is necessary that the barbarians who will come as an allied force will not return to their home with empty hands but having gathered booty from their enemy's country. For these reasons it is absolutely necessary for you to make haste on your journey and, once your emperor has learned about our intentions, to report back as quickly as possible what he thinks fit." So such are the things he said.

The ambassadors of Alexandros, as if forgetting their former bluster and arrogant talk in response to these speeches, changed; they became suppliants, pleading to be given a later deadline. For they declared they would show all haste on their journey, but their emperor might be spending time on the furthest borders of his realm; there would not be sufficient days, they would need more than it seemed to accomplish their journey. And since it seemed that their demand /58/ was fair, they were granted thirty days, in which they must return, either confirming the peace and the treaties, or to declare war.

So Alexandros' ambassadors, having received these answers from the Grand Domestic, returned home. The Empress and the entire senate admired his sagacity and were most thankful because they had feared them [the ambassadors] on the previous day and had not provided even a superficial defence to them, but he had thus instilled such fears that they were bowed by perplexity on every side, so that they asked about the deadline without care for anything else. But enough on these matters.

Chapter 8

The Grand Domestic ordered the soldiers throughout the cities, via letters, to prepare themselves, as, if necessary, he would go to war against the Mysians. Seeing that many, not only of the military register but also not a few others,¹ were neglecting everything regarding their military service and depriving the public of their benefit, on the pretext that the payments which had been granted to each of them by the Emperor were incomplete, he considered from what source he could deliver them from their pressing difficulties, supplying the shortfall in the *pronoia*² provided by the Emperor to each of them, and whether he could provide to each according to need, having proclaimed that all ought to contribute something to the common good.

So while he was thinking about these matters to himself, /59/ Patrikiōtēs³ came forward, who had been occupied with the taxation registers for a very long time and possessed great experience in such matters. He said that he had heard that he [Kantakouzēnos] wanted to equip everyone for their military service without delay, making up the amount outstanding from their appointed incomes from the public money, or even increasing them. Such matters as these could not be managed better than by he [Patrikiōtēs], as even he himself [Kantakouzēnos] would know, nor indeed was there anyone else at all with greater experience. Although he had not been summoned but had approached him first, requesting to be entrusted with the tax survey, it would not be fair to be suspicious.⁴ For it was not from a desire for profit that he put forward such proposals, but rather his wish to contribute to the common good, making effort in every way to render the Empire of the Romans greater and more glorious. He tried to provide clear proof of this not by words but by deeds. For having been involved in such matters for not a few years already, he was able to gather

quite a lot of money, although while trying very hard to profit neither by force, nor by every means possible.⁵ Later this would not allow him to find peace, but many considerations stirred in his heart; that he should not bury <his money>, but spend it upon doing good works for some men, as through this he would be able to cleanse himself of the stain of his sin. So now he determined to found a monastery for those men who devote themselves absolutely to God, /60/ and through the beneficence to them he would beg the divinity for mercy for himself, by using those who have particular power as mediators in these matters to effect this [i.e., the monks]. Then presently he thought to spend his money on the beggarly poor.

“Nevertheless, either the former or the latter may not be able to use the money as they ought to,⁶ or other men will furnish themselves with it by theft and injustice and become corrupted. Since you alone are appointed over public affairs and I perceived your purpose, as if you intend for the sake of the common good to give up not only money but even your life, if such a thing is needed, and knowing already that your character is noble, I realise it is necessary to entrust the money to you, as it will be spent not only well, but also sensibly and honestly, for the benefit of the Romans in common, since it was also gathered from them. For these reasons, then, I have come, to hand over everything for whatever purpose that might be useful to you.

“Therefore it is possible for everyone to admit this is clear proof that I will not profit from the survey, although I have come begging to be appointed to this task. For having what I have already acquired, it is possible to take no further trouble for such matters, but I desire to show myself of use to you and able to contribute greatly towards the restoration of the ancient prosperity of the Romans, because this causes great and constant concern to you.”

He [Kantakouzēnos] approved of these words happily. Concerning the money, he said he [Patrikiōtēs] should know of his great gratitude to him, not only for providing these contributions for the sake of the common good, /61/ but also for entrusting their administration to him, having been rightly convinced that they would be spent justly too. For to be appointed to any public office without increasing one's property, but to let go of great sums which one possessed, as much as one clung to previously, and to be seen as putting oneself altogether above money, is not just difficult but nearly impossible. But for one who has obtained this wealth already, and without suspecting any danger will come from this, then to choose deliberately to lay aside that which he gathered wrongly, is not <the action> of common men, but of those wanting to be saved and who believe absolutely that they will give accounts of their entire lives after passing away.

“Although it is better not to sin in the first place, nor to besmirch the soul with many stains, if this then happens it is the starting point of a second innocence, namely not just to cease from evil deeds, but also as compensation to display the works of good. For these reasons, therefore, I commend you for your change and for taking no other path than to wish to contribute the money for the sake of the common good. Because you were not summoned but first came forward yourself, asking to equalise the means of living of the soldiers from public money, I refrain from criticising you to any extent, since previously I was beginning to do the same from my own resources. Now instead you have convinced me, because of your experience of these matters, to entrust this service to you and to think that you will administer these matters better and more correctly. For /62/ he who promises a lot and he who promises nothing will not take the same care about the fulfilment of their promises. So, I grant the administration of such matters to you. And it is appropriate for you to consider that you do not pursue some

small and contemptible matter, of such a type which provides great benefit to the public even when not managed well, or equally does not cause harm if done carelessly and wickedly. For what the judge is to civic affairs, the fiscal assessor⁷ can be to public property. For as one provides good order to the cities, justly regulating them and compelling obedience to the laws, then the other, if he wishes to do what is just and beneficial for the common good, will take from some if they profit more than is fair, and will give to those who have less, thus preparing them all readily for their military service, preserving discipline and the greatest obedience to their generals. Therefore, as he [the assessor] has been entrusted with great undertakings and contributions of the highest importance to the government of the whole [state], it is therefore necessary to obey and demonstrate fitting care and commitment towards these tasks.”

He [Kantakouzēnos] spoke to him in such a way, making his response regarding what he [Patrikiōtēs] had requested. Then he inquired how great the sum of money might be. When the other replied that there was 100,000 in gold,⁸ and goods and vessels made from gold and silver, worth 40,000 in gold, and declared that he held all these ready to be handed over right now, he [Kantakouzēnos] summoned one of his servants /63/ and said “Then go and hand over these things to this man.”

As he [Patrikiōtēs] went to carry out the order without any hesitation, before he left, the Grand Domestic commanded him to turn back. Though he praised him for his eagerness, he ordered him to keep the money safe, as currently there was no need of it. But if ever his [Kantakouzēnos’] private resources were spent and he was in need of this money, only then would he take it – when this wealth surpassed his own – and spend it, wherever it might seem the expenditure provided the greatest advantage to the public. But he [Patrikiōtēs] refused the guardianship of the money, declaring that it

was not pleasing to him to retain possession of it further. However, having been commanded, he necessarily obeyed.

After this, the Grand Domestic, summoning one by one those of the senate, and the others distinguished by their high birth, and then the soldiers, inquired after the sum of the *pronoia* granted to each by the Emperor, and if they now possessed less than had been assigned. When each replied, stating however much he held, he ordered Patrikiōtēs to replenish the entitlements of which they had been deprived and to add besides this a bonus, however much that seemed good to him, in proportion to the rank of each man. To those who held incomes from the Emperor without any loss, he similarly commanded that they were to be given others in addition to those they held. And in a full sixty days⁹ from the beginning of the redistribution, to those holding less [than their allocation] he bestowed the shortfall together with an additional bonus, and the bonus also accrued to those lacking nothing. And /64/ when all considered that their incomes were satisfactory,¹⁰ they expressed their deep gratitude to the Grand Domestic and were ready to fight against the enemies of the Romans in any land whatsoever. And polishing their arms, they prepared themselves and procured horses, more numerous and better than before.¹¹ In short, they even seemed exasperated that they were not immediately led out to repel their enemies.

Chapter 9

After these matters had been successfully managed by him, he advised the Empress to anoint her son, the Emperor Iōannēs, with holy *myron*¹ and to adorn his head with a crown. And he persuaded her to deliberate carefully on these suggestions. But some of those related by blood to the Emperor were advising her that it was not right for the son to celebrate when his father the Emperor had died shortly before (the *parakoimōmenos*² Apokaukos³ suggested they say this; as became clear from what happened later, he was preparing the strife that took place and did not want the Empress to secure faithful pledges of goodwill towards her and her son from the Grand Domestic).⁴ The Empress delayed the task to a later date, blaming the complaint by certain people who, having heard this, might accuse her, declaring that it was not a fitting time for this event, celebrating and performing the greatest royal festival at a time when it was necessary to mourn and lament.

But he [Kantakouzēnos] said their objections were entirely devoid of sense and nor /65/ did they consider this: the proclamation of children by many of the emperors had taken place as they were dying; nobody criticised their inappropriate timing but all – just as was right – considered it particularly fitting in such times, not because of luxury and pleasure, but to allow the masses no pretext at all for civil strife and disorder, for all would already be completely obedient since they would be subject to an emperor and they would pay the penalty for their madness if they attempted to revolt. He advised her to be glad to have done with the arguments of those men, while they should proceed with the deed, as it would be useful and just at the same time.⁵

She said it was not necessary to busy herself about it but to let it be for now, because of the opinions of the masses, and to do it a little later, at a time

when it might be possible to escape their censure. The Grand Domestic said nothing against the Empress' objection, but he was vexed that she would not be persuaded for the better by him, but by others advising her unhelpfully. So in such a way, this [the coronation] was prevented.

A little later it was reported that Sarchanēs,⁶ the satrap of Lydia,⁷ and Giaxēs⁸ were preparing to cross over into Thrace,⁹ plundering the Romans from ships. The Grand Domestic was not negligent but at once called for triremes, as many as he deemed sufficient, to be fully equipped for war against the barbarians.¹⁰ As for the expense of the triremes, he ordered the treasurers to provide part from the public treasury,¹¹ and he provided part from his private resources. When the triremes were manned, he appointed /66/ the *parakoimōmenos* Apokaukos as their commander, and, having issued as many commands as were necessary and ordered him to take care of the rest of the venture, he himself sent an embassy to Orchanēs,¹² the satrap of eastern Bithynia,¹³ asking for peace. For it seemed necessary to him, when he was intending to campaign to the west, not to leave a war in the Romans' rear. When the peace with that man was concluded, he prepared his expedition. For already the army around Didymoteichon¹⁴ and the city of Adrian¹⁵ was gathering, as he had ordered.

On the day he intended to set out from Byzantion, being alone, he took the Patriarch aside in private and went to the church of the martyr Dēmētrios *myroblytes* in the palace. "You are not ignorant," he said, "of the discussions that took place between me and the Empress. For not only were you present beside both of us while we were speaking, but also you were the one who conveyed what was said by each of us in private before that.¹⁶ It would be in no way remarkable or unreasonable, if, after that, it occurred to the Empress to speak about me for a certain reason; perhaps she is imagining that something great will be achieved by me and, as regards my current deeds, that these matters will not turn out according to her hopes; perhaps a

certain regret about what is happening has come into her mind. If, therefore, just as I said, she has been treated in a disagreeable way concerning some part of what is happening, and she is no longer willing to be content with what was proposed, I ask her to speak openly and not to veil <her words> with respect. For just as before, I am just as ready as ever to excuse myself from government. If, however, she has resolved to be content until fulfilment of what was decided, and /67/ to keep the oaths which she swore, then I myself will not neglect to do anything, in so far as it may benefit her and her children, and the Romans in common."

The Patriarch censured the unfitness of his words, as such were not befitting to him, either to say that he had these in mind or to speak them: for the Empress considered nothing of this sort about him, "but she thought that the Emperor [Andronikos III] was alive and that the Empire of the Romans was governed in the same way as under him, having remembered your words, which you recounted in full to her, at the time when you made the agreement."

"It is necessary therefore," the Grand Domestic said, "to be convinced thus concerning her, just as you assert. Concerning yourself, whatever is it possible to think? Will you abide by the agreements – by the oaths, rather – which you made towards me?"

He immediately stood up once more and said, "Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Because I stand by the very thing I said both now and before, and I will neglect none of your rights, but I will stand my ground with all my strength, not only as one repaying his benefactor through good works but also as one concerned for his spiritual son."

The Grand Domestic, having given many thanks to him for this and having bid farewell, left the Patriarch behind and went to the Empress. When she saw him at once she declared her great gratitude to him, because what he had previously promised in words, was now shown to be true by

his deeds; he was toiling by night /68/ and day for the common good, sparing neither his body nor his money (for the Grand Domestic was not only spending a great deal of money from his private resources on the expense of the triremes, but also on many other matters, which were intended to benefit all in common, as he was spending very generously and liberally after the Emperor's death). She advised him not to do so as it would not be sufficient for the tasks for long, but to take care of himself and to be sparing of his money, by making use of public money.

And he said he would rather enjoy labours benefiting society than to be like others who turn to relaxations and pleasures. The expenditure of his money was not a loss but to be considered more agreeable than any profit, so long as he may see, with the help of God, the Roman Empire raised towards greatness and prevailing over all enemies. It was to be hoped that after a short time, if no particular hindrance occurred, it would be of such great help to the Romans that seeing this she [the Empress] would give thanks to God, who has a hand in everything good. For it was not some small matter he intended to prepare during the winter since, as soon as it was spring, he would show that many peoples who were previously insolent to the Romans would acknowledge they were tributaries and servants of the emperor of the Romans.

Having said much else of this sort in addition, all that he intended to do – and he knew the Empress listened with pleasure – and having bid his final farewells, he departed from Byzantium together with the army and many of the nobility.¹⁷ He left his mother¹⁸ /69/ there, as she would offer great consolation to the Empress concerning her misfortunes.

Chapter 10

When he came to Didymoteichon, he started doing everything necessary to make the senators and the army living among the cities of Thrace do their military service for these campaigns without excuses, just as the Byzantines had also done already. And he achieved this within a few days. Then, having been told that Alexandros, the emperor of the Mysians, had encamped with his army at Stilbnos¹ – a city subject to the Mysians founded on the borders of his empire and the Roman Empire – he [Kantakouzēnos] knew that he ought to send an embassy to him [Alexandros]. And, having sent it, he made it known that he was waiting in Adrianople and wished to know if his choice was war, or peace. For the deadline, which he had presented to his [Alexandros'] ambassadors when they were in Byzantion, had already passed.

Alexandros saw that the Romans were not cowering, as he had supposed, but were ready to defend themselves against those choosing to act unjustly and neither the threats relayed through his ambassadors, nor his preparations for war had the power to persuade them to act according to his judgement. Thinking it unprofitable to go to war, he came to terms. And having renewed the previous treaty and oaths again, Alexandros withdrew to his palace in Tirnobos^a.²

The Grand Domestic advanced to Chersonesos³ with the army, having heard that Persian infantry forces were about /70/ to invade the Chersonesos, having arrived from Pergamon,⁴ of which Giaxēs was satrap. At the same time as the Romans arrived in Chersonesos, the Persian army was also present. A battle resulted, and the Persians were not nearly strong enough to withstand the Romans but, defeated by their might, some fell during the

^a II, 69.22: Τρίνοβον amended to Τίρνοβον (as at I, 175.15).

battle, while others were captured. Those who were able to escape, having embarked on their ships, sailed for home. Not many days later a second army also crossed over from the same country, to avenge the previous defeat. The Romans, having engaged them, defeated them and killed the majority. Since Giaxēs had been struck twice in succession and lost a large and valiant army, having despaired of making war on the Romans, he proceeded to make peace. And the Grand Domestic established a peace treaty with him. When he had swept aside the menace expected from the Persians, having returned once again to Didymoteichon, he prepared for the expedition in the west and reorganised the army, which he intended to accompany him.⁵

While he was accomplishing these things, the *parakoimōmenos* Apokaukos, his heart set on revolutionary acts and endeavouring in every possible way to transfer control of public affairs to himself, considered that – since he had been appointed general of the fleet against the Persians, and had an abundance of naval power – he should put the young Emperor Iōannēs into one of the triremes, while his mother the Empress was unaware, /71/ and carry him to the tower called Epibatai⁶ close to Byzantion, which had been built by him previously and was extremely strong, having tall and strong walls. Guarding the emperor in that place, with the aid of his relatives and his closest *oikeioi*, he would establish a treaty with the Empress, so that he and his relatives and his other accomplices could enjoy the foremost honours among the Romans and become lords of estates and cities, whichever might seem good to them, and lack no cause for prosperity. The emperor was not merely to be ransomed from the fortress but, just as if being detained as a hostage, was to take one of his daughters in marriage. So he intended to do these things and was already starting to realise them. But one of his accomplices reported to the Empress; after this a guard was posted around the emperor forthwith. He [Apokaukos] realised that he had been

found out and left in flight to Epibatai, escaping from the danger arising from these actions, just as was natural.⁷

When the Grand Domestic learned of these happenings, although he was preparing for the campaign, he nevertheless sent Manouël Tarchaneiōtēs – also called Kourtikēs⁸ – with a few soldiers. He ordered him to encamp outside Epibatai to keep watch, until he could come himself. Having also sent <a messenger> to Apokaukos, he [Kantakouzēnos] inquired if the rumours about him were true. He [Apokaukos] said that he had been falsely accused but, fearing lest he would first be destroyed by slander before close examination revealed the truth, he had locked himself in his fortress to provide security insofar as it was in his power. /72/ He advised him [Kantakouzēnos] to take from him [Apokaukos] the example of how unexpectedly affairs can change. For previously he had spoken to him, suggesting such a thing and, if he had not persuaded him then, despite advising him of what was most advantageous, then even now he advised him [Kantakouzēnos] to do no less, having proof from these events of the usefulness of what he had said, namely that having selected the most suitable one of the strongholds placed under his control (and there were many), which has the best situation by land and sea, to make it very strong by further preparations, so that if something unexpected happened, he would have a retreat and a refuge from dangers.⁹ It was necessary to believe him now, even if he had not before, since he [Apokaukos] was well-disposed towards him, and not to disdain his advice. For right now, insofar as he was concerned, and although the things being said against him were lies, there was no other cause for his salvation than the tower into which he fled, escaping the danger. And if the things that were said happened to be true, either he could engage in the enterprise or, having being discovered, be saved from death. So Apokaukos advised him in such a way.

The Grand Domestic, having sent to him again, said that as concerned what was being said against him [Apokaukos] in particular, he also wanted it not to be true, exactly as he himself insisted. For in this way he would demonstrate himself to be well-disposed to the emperor and the sycophants likewise would prove that was exactly what they were. If perhaps he had been deceived by empty hopes, /73/ as has happened to many people, having turned away from what was proper, and had intended something neither possible nor appropriate to him, it was not necessary because of these matters to choose to wage war against the emperor [Iōannēs V], placing his confidence in walls, from which he will gain nothing more. But having blamed himself for the preceding events, because he was advised badly, from now on he should improve himself and defend the proper order and beg to obtain forgiveness for his sins. For it is better not to sin in the first place but, if it does happen, it is second best for such a person, keeping away from further wrongdoing, to correct himself. Since such a thing had not yet come about and he [Kantakouzēnos], whom he [Apokaukos] was accustomed to call his doctor, held many medicines, each countering its corresponding^a disease, the cure of his injuries will be easy, at least if he [Apokaukos] wants. For indeed the *parakoimōmenos*, in addition to other ways he greeted the Grand Domestic, was also accustomed to call him his doctor, because he had often rescued him [Apokaukos] from many of the dangers surrounding him and had cured his grievances.¹⁰

As regards the advice, which he [Apokaukos] gave him concerning the preparation of a fortress for himself, so that it would be a refuge against the vicissitudes of events, he [Kantakouzēnos] thanked him for his earnestness and goodwill concerning his welfare, yet he did not greatly desire to secure himself through such means. But he would be pleased to

^a II, 73.12: κατ' ἄλληλα amended to κατάλληλα (following FK III, 427, n. 85).

converse with those in Hades from that day /74/ on which he trusted his safety to timbers, stones and calculations which have no value, having neglected – after the hope that comes from the hand [of God] above – the security which comes from friends and from their hearts, as if they were citadels protected by the most steadfast guard, that is friendship. For the foremost happiness and ultimate good for men is to converse with God and to be entirely devoted to Him throughout the ascent through purity towards Him, as he himself [Apokaukos] knew. Second, after that, is intimacy with firm and faithful friends, in the first place those few who exceed the many in intelligence, next, after them, to enjoy also goodwill from the multitude, because all are attentive to those who are of excellent character. And this is thought to be not only the most impregnable of all towers, but also more valuable than money and glory and every honour and higher than kingship itself, in terms of happiness. For this reason he was not persuaded by such things as he [Apokaukos] advised, but he preferred this way to preserve his own security, from the beginning until the end, “and just as certainly as you do by means of watchtowers and fortresses.”¹¹

Thus the *parakoimōmenos* Apokaukos was kept under watch in this manner, confined in Epibatai.

Chapter 11

While the Grand Domestic was spending time in Didymoteichon, busying himself with the preparation of the army, ambassadors from the Peloponnese¹ came to him, the Bishop of Koronē² and Sidēros Dziouan,³ having been despatched by the leaders of the /75/ cities which were subject to the Latins. The embassy's proposal was: to place under the emperor all of the cities which they held, while they would remain as governors, but to assign to the emperor all the public taxes which they gave to their prince, and to display all respect and servitude beside, and to have a commander from the emperor, under whom they would voluntarily be subjected.⁴ So such was the embassy from the Latins of the Peloponnese.

They had also sent a letter to the Grand Domestic, which is set forth as follows: all of them, as if on a prearranged signal, when the Emperor was still alive, had resolved to come over to him – having revolted against their prince – and they were already in the attempt of doing what they had decided. When they learned of the Emperor's death, despairing of the attempt, they were quiet again.

'But Paganos Depistogia,⁵ a close associate and friend to ourselves, arrived from Byzantion a short while before, and having reported that complete control of public affairs and political supremacy had been achieved by you, all of us assembled again to confirm what we had previously decided – not only because of the nobility of your character and your ability to defend us, should anybody attack, but also because for a long time now, even though we have not yet met, we were friendly and well-disposed to you. For when you were campaigning with the Emperor in Akarnania,⁶ you yourself came to speak with those among us who had arrived in

Thōmokastron,⁷ according to our alliance with Nikēphoros the son of the *despotēs*.⁸ You convinced them to become friends instead of /76/ enemies and, from that time on, they have always maintained a favourable disposition towards you and they, recounting many remarkable things concerning you, persuaded us to acquire the same and equal goodwill towards you, by which we have now been convinced to make this current embassy. So the ambassadors who come before you will put forth our request. Should the Empress and yourself accept this, there is no further hindrance for us to be subject to the Empire of the Romans, just as we promised, only if you yourself will come to us, receiving our cities and their government, administering them in whatever way seems best to you.'

So the letter, from each one personally and all of them in common, stated such things. Having received this, the Grand Domestic was utterly delighted and treated the ambassadors very generously and honourably. And he conveyed his great gratitude to those who had sent them for their goodwill to him and he promised to fulfil the other things, all those they had requested, and to come to them as soon as it was spring. For at this time it would not be easy to transport the army for such an expedition abroad; it would be winter not long after (for the season then was autumn). He presented to them Iakōbos Broulas,⁹ who was one of his closest *oikeioi*, as surety of what had been said, for him to stay with them over the winter, demonstrating his [Kantakouzēnos'] favour towards them, that already he provided for them as for his own people. At the same time, if any disaffection also still remained amongst those in the Peloponnese, he [Broulas] would bring them over through his own efforts, so that there

would be no difficulty when he [Kantakouzēnos] came there but he would lead everyone over to /77/ the emperor. Having generously rewarded the ambassadors and those who had sent them with gifts, he dispatched Broulas together with them, having also promised to come in person at the right time.

Having equipped the triremes in Byzantion, those armed against the attack of the Persians, as we have mentioned, the *parakoimōmenos* – who had been appointed their commander – having then become disaffected with the Empress, ran away to Epibatai. The Grand Domestic, having sent to the *epi tou stratou*¹⁰ Senachēreim,¹¹ now appointed him. He, sailing off at once, broke up the Persian army, astounding them with the speed of his preparations. And, having greatly damaged the territory of Sarchanēs and seized one of his coastal towns by storm, he reduced them to slavery.¹² Having done everything else that a good general must, he returned to the city of Constantine.

After the death of the Emperor, the *prōtostratōr*¹³ Synadēnos,¹⁴ governor of Thessalonike; Chrelēs;¹⁵ Kōnstantinos Palaiologos, the uncle of the Emperor;¹⁶ the *pinkernēs*¹⁷ Iōannēs Angelos, cousin of the Grand Domestic;¹⁸ the *meḡas papias*¹⁹ TzAMPLAKŌN;²⁰ and all those who were in office as governors of cities in the west, negotiated with each other and came to an agreement. While the majority stayed behind, administering their offices, they sent the *pinkernēs* Angelos, Kōnstantinos Palaiologos and TzAMPLAKŌN to the Grand Domestic, to set forth the opinions they all held in common.

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While still on their way, having sent a herald ahead of them, they made it clear in a letter to the Grand Domestic that he was to change none of the established arrangements concerning himself, or do anything, whether these resolutions seemed better or worse, if they were not also present themselves. In any case they would be there in no time. It was right to be

persuaded by them, not only because they ranked among his foremost friends, but also since they came from others who were likewise. Once they arrived he might do those things which he thought to be of benefit to all in common.

When they were near Didymoteichon, again sending another <herald>, they made their arrival known and they urged him to go out to meet them. To him their demand seemed foolish. For it is not proper to force one to honour those coming to petition him but for those arriving to decide who is judged worthy of honour. Examining the matter by himself, because this expected absurdity seemed just that, it came to him that they were not demanding such things for the sake of their honour, but so that if he met them, they, dismounting from their horses, would render him the greatest [i.e., imperial] honours. Thus, having understood this matter, he stayed at home.

Since he did not enable them to bring their plan into action, they kept an eye out for an opportunity shortly afterwards and when they met with him out riding, having dismounted from their horses, they performed *proskynesis*.²¹ Next, joining him in his home, they did not enter the courtyard with him on their horses, according to their previous custom, but leaving them outside, they ran alongside him on foot. He was exasperated beyond measure with each one of them. Then, having come around to himself, he accused them /79/ of innovation and advised them not to do such things but to maintain their previous customs. If they would not be persuaded, he angrily threatened to expel them. When he needed to mount his horse again, he ordered it to be brought outside the gate. Then, as he was in the courtyard, he proceeded to the gate on foot. They, who had caused this innovation, observed it, and fearing his threat, maintained their previous customs; neither they nor anybody either thought or dared to do anything novel.²²

Chapter 12

At about the same time the Kralēs Stephanos,¹ ruler of the Triballi, dissolved his treaty with the Emperor when he learnt he had died. He overran Macedonia,² although bypassing Thessalonike,³ and, plundering all other parts, he came as far as the so-called 'Village of the Cretans'.⁴ Thereafter he retired, having not gained much booty before the livestock and the people could be shut up in the cities and the fortresses, because his approach had been betrayed.

When these events were reported to the Grand Domestic, having called an assembly, he consulted with those holding office and the commanders of the army concerning whatever it was necessary to do in response to the assault of the Triballi. So each of them advised whatever seemed to be of advantage regarding the current situation. To the Grand Domestic, a swift response to the Kralēs – so that either they would persuade him to choose peace or they would go to war because of his audacity – seemed necessary. /80/ Yet it seemed to be much more pressing and more beneficial to make preparations for the expedition to the Peloponnese once it was spring and not to throw away this opportunity, which offered a foundation for great achievements.⁵

“For if, with the help of God, it comes to pass that the Latins living in the Peloponnese join us,” he said, “then through necessity the Catalans living in Attica and Boiotia⁶ will come over to us, either willingly or by force. When this happens, and from the Peloponnese continuously as far as Byzantion has come under the sovereignty of the Romans, just as in former times, it is possible to see that it will be no great labour to demand satisfaction from the Triballi as well as the other neighbouring barbarians for their hubris, which they have directed against us for so long now. Therefore, as great hopes have shown themselves from that quarter, it is appropriate to

act in this way so this opportunity does not escape us. For this reason, I believe it is correct for us to return to Byzantium right now, for we need a naval force suitable for the Peloponnese, which must be prepared during the winter.

“Therefore, if, having neglected these matters at the present time, we turn to the west, believing that we will return quickly after restoring matters there, my fear is that we become entangled by wars and certain other necessities and, having being unable to prepare ourselves, we lose the chance of success while returning. If, however, we were in Byzantium now, first we would appoint naval commanders and a general, who would take charge of fitting the ships and selecting the sailors and hoplites⁷ who will embark. /81/ Then we would examine financial matters, from whatever source it would be possible to obtain what is needed for the preparation of the fleet. In addition to this, it is also necessary to appoint administrators of the public revenues, lest, having been gathered in a disorderly and haphazard manner, some scandal arises regarding the public money, which is increased by no small amount, not by raising the customary taxes, but from some different means and innovations. Whenever these matters happen to receive the appropriate care and attention, I intend to send an embassy to the ruler of the Triballi, both to investigate how great his strength is and, at the same time, if he is ready for reconciliation, make progress towards a truce. For I believe it is not presently to our advantage to willingly choose war, when there is a possibility to maintain peace with the neighbouring peoples.

“I, after spending a few days in Byzantium, will gather the army’s mercenary force and the strongest of those holding incomes from villages, and I will march to the west during winter,⁸ thus joining with the western army, while permitting the others to spend time at home and to prepare themselves for the campaign at the start of spring. And, having despoiled the Albanians who graze their herds around Pogonianē⁹ and Libisda,¹⁰ imposing

a just punishment for their injustice (for of course you know that, while the Emperor was alive and after his death, they greatly afflicted many of the cities of Akarnania and /82/ Balagrita¹¹ with their daily raiding and plundering), I will attempt, if I am able – and I think I am – to celebrate the festival of Christ's birthday in Byzantion, not only on account of the army, so that it will not remain in foreign parts in winter, but also so that the coronation of the young emperor may be performed. For it seems good to us that it should be so.

“The moment spring starts, the triremes and the whole army having been prepared for the voyage, we will attack the Peloponnese simultaneously from land and sea. For, if we subjugate them, it will be no little gain to the Romans. A secondary purpose of the expedition is to scout out the harbours and rivers of Ionia¹² in which the Persians anchor their ships and to burn them with fire – for it has been thus agreed by Alēserē,¹³ the satrap of Kotyaeion¹⁴ and myself, that he would come to help from the mainland with an army of both infantry and cavalry. Having been delivered from the damage and worry which they cause, we will proceed towards the struggle lying before us, having settled all domestic affairs well.”

Such was the counsel of the Grand Domestic and, since the others approved and applauded his advice, they immediately chose ambassadors to the ruler of the Triballi. They, having attended him and talked about peace, persuaded him to be reconciled and they established treaties just as they were before.¹⁵

The Grand Domestic commanded the army to muster, while he went to Byzantion. When he drew near, the senators present in Byzantion came out to meet him; /83/ dismounting from their horses, they welcomed him. He rebuked them as it was improper for them to do this.¹⁶ Then, having gone to the palace, he greeted the Empress and offered consoling words; she was distressed not only by her misfortunes but also she was being tended for a

bodily illness. And he described all that he had achieved since going to Didymoteichon, and what he had promised to the ambassadors from the Peloponnese, and what sorts of things he intended to do about them and about other matters. He encouraged her to expect great things and to have confidence in him as, for the sake of benefit to her and her children and the Romans in common, he would spare neither body nor money but would show every effort and enthusiasm. For now it was not easy to demonstrate the increase in the army and the public income through words, but when spring arrived, if he was still in this life, words would not be needed as proof: the benefit would become clear from their deeds. Then, having imparted those matters for which he had come, she approved his plan, since it also seemed profitable to her; he took charge of the work and was managing everything as it had been planned.

Chapter 13

Shortly after that, during a day in the palace when he was discussing public affairs with the Empress and they were deliberating together concerning what it was necessary to do, noise from a crowd outside was heard, mingled with shouting around the palace. When the Empress asked him what this might be, he said that he knew nothing for certain but supposed /84/ that this clamour arose from some people arguing with each other about a trial.¹ Later, he also affirmed that he had supposed nothing else in the beginning, for he knew nothing about what was happening. Then, as the commotion became much louder and carried on longer, having considered it might be a rebellion, he rose to his feet and went out, to learn the cause of what was happening.

He saw the courtyard of the palace was full of men, who were not only of the military register but also youths distinguished by their noble lineage, and the Patriarch was standing in the middle of them and contending strongly against those who were quarrelling with him. The cause of their argument was that they thought the Grand Domestic rightfully deserved to have greater honour and should not have to enter the courtyard of the palace on foot just like the masses² – he, who now not only held control over the whole of public affairs but also, when the Emperor was alive, was ruling beside him and had often been called upon by him [Andronikos III] to share the imperial office. They were holding the Patriarch responsible for these matters, because he completely disregarded them and would not advise the Empress of what was appropriate. These things, then, were said by them. They did not all hold the same opinions: one of them held goodwill towards him [Kantakouzēnos], he was earnest and spoke equally sincerely, while others courted opportunity and the Grand Domestic's power; there were also those who were annoyed about the

arguments and would gladly have prevented them, if it was possible. Nevertheless, they pretended to agree with the others from fear, thinking that he [Kantakouzēnos] was aware and /85/ had prepared secretly to have these things said. The Patriarch was opposing their arguments and saying it was not necessary for them to raise a disorderly uproar, but rather to obey the decisions of the Empress and Grand Domestic.³

Although they were engaged in this quarrel, once he [Kantakouzēnos] made his presence known, they stopped. As if growing angry, he said nothing to the others, but he censured the Patriarch, because by paying attention to the words of ignorant men, he had stirred up a war of words with them and provoked uproar. He advised him to go home and not to argue with them now, as on the following day he would talk with him [the Patriarch] about what these men had said. He escorted him as far as his horse, deferring to him because of the reprimand he had dealt him. He had never done this before but was overturning his customary practice in the imperial dwellings.⁴ Returning to the Empress again, the Grand Domestic explained the cause of the uproar, and how, having reprimanded the Patriarch for his untimely contentiousness, because he took heed of the unsound words of foolish men, he had advised him to return home. He called upon God as his witness and asserted that he knew nothing about what they had said, but that it was stirred up by the foolish stubbornness of certain uneducated people.

While the Empress commended his suppression of the uproar, the Grand Domestic said, "I advised him [the Patriarch] to depart, without adding anything to what had been said, knowing this was a way to easily terminate the controversy that had arisen, particularly as it concerned me. But to you, I advise that you do not suffer this audacity to go /86/ unpunished but, having summoned <those responsible>, to chastise them with words for their impertinent language. I would advise you to make plain

the full measure of your anger towards them, if I did not intend to depart from here, taking the greater part of them with me. On this account, after upbraiding them sufficiently, grant them pardon, blaming the necessity of their march.”

Having been convinced by him, the Empress summoned the men and chided their lack of discipline: “While having been brought up in the laws of the emperors and lived with them from childhood, you are disposed no better than uncivilised barbarians, making lawless uproar about everything that occurs to you. For you must consider how far you have now plunged into folly. First you openly gainsay the emperors in their palace; second, you have argued with the Patriarch, who is spiritual father of all in common and is worthy of the greatest respect and honour, far more than your physical parents. And third, because you supposedly made these arguments for the sake of the Grand Domestic, proclaiming through them – so far as you are concerned – that he needs help from you in the fulfilment of his goal, if there is something he needs from us. That this is nothing other than utterly absurd, you may judge yourselves. For not only now, when authority over everything has come to him, but also while the Emperor was alive, this man [Kantakouzēnos] came forward for you all, /87/ in those matters where you wanted something from the Emperor, but none of you came forward for him. Therefore, from the past and from the present, it is necessary for you to understand that he does not need help from yourselves. For there is nothing at all which he wants, either for himself or for others, that he is not also able to accomplish. If this is so, and nobody will deny it, there is no need for you to create uproar and cause trouble in vain. Because of this you do not deserve kindness but punishment by him. And I demanded the chastisement appropriate for your insolence, until he begged me, pleading on your behalf that you must instead prepare for the campaign, on which, then, I think it is appropriate for you proceed gladly, not bemoaning your lot. Because of this,

then, I grant pardon for your misdeeds. I exhort you to be well-disciplined hereafter and never to interfere in the affairs of those greater than you but to submit to those for whom the proper management of such matters is permitted, and to support them if ever something causes them to stumble.”

The Empress reasoned with them in such a way, reproving them because of the tumult. They expressed their gratitude for her kindness and lenience, and the Grand Domestic did so even more than all the others, then they withdrew. Having been left alone once again, the Grand Domestic, together with the Empress, deliberated about matters of necessity.

Chapter 14

Having happened upon the subject of the *parakoimōmenos* Apokaukos, and considering in what manner it would be necessary to deal with him, the Empress said that /88/ she demanded no other penalty for his scandalous acts than that to which he had condemned himself: to sit idle at home, without leaving or being able to administer any part of public affairs.

And he [Kantakouzēnos] said that he believed exemplary justice was appropriate for his recklessness. However, to leave behind anything requiring correction was against his judgement when he would be departing to foreign parts with the expedition to the west. On account of this he had established treaties with the neighbouring Persians and Alexandros, the emperor of the Mysians, so that, when he left, she [the Empress] would not be disturbed by troublesome wars. And because of this it was appropriate to consider the *parakoimōmenos* worthy^a of pardon, to make use of him again, in whatever way might seem expedient.

But she shook her head, pointing out his [Apokaukos'] ill-will on many occasions, not only against herself and her children but also against him. Above all, a short while before, that man had behaved towards him arrogantly and harshly in her presence.¹ She asked, "If he was most clearly proved to be plotting against us both, why is it necessary to so confidently leave him behind, a man full of villainy and treachery, when you are away?"

It is worthwhile to remember what was said by Apokaukos to the Grand Domestic in the presence of the Empress, and still older frauds which he had committed against the Grand Domestic, who had done him great kindnesses, so that the generosity of this man [Kantakouzēnos] in his benefactions, and his willingness to pardon those sinning against him – as

^a II, 88.10: ἀξιώσαντας amended to ἀξιώσαντα (following P).

well as the ingratitude of the *parakoimōmenos* towards these good deeds /89/ and the perversity of his ways – may become clear to us from these accounts.

So this man, the *parakoimōmenos*, originated from Bithynia and was of obscure descent from commoners.² At first he was under-secretary to a number of those who collect the public revenues for a little pay,³ then he was employed by the Emperor's uncle, Andronikos Asanēs.⁴ Then, deserting him, he approached Stratēgos,⁵ the Domestic of the Western Themes,⁶ at that time overseeing the public salt revenues.⁷ Appearing naturally clever and eager in service, he [Apokaukos] was trusted with money by him, for him to go to the emperor (this was Andronikos the first [Palaiologos]) so he could persuade him to entrust the organisation of the salt-works to Stratēgos for the following year too. But, presenting the money to the emperor as if it were his own and promising that he would bring in to the imperial treasury double the amount offered by Stratēgos, he persuaded the emperor to prefer him and to grant him control of the salt-works. And thus, having deposed that man [Stratēgos] from office with his own money, he [Apokaukos] was by now illustrious and foremost among tax collectors.

Soon, since he owed a great deal of money to the public treasury,⁸ he was expecting to be imprisoned and reformed not to commit such crimes. He thought about revolt against the emperor, for there was no other way to escape the ills he would suffer. Perceiving from the state of affairs that the young Emperor Andronikos was necessarily <soon> going to be at odds with his grandfather, he begged Syrgiannēs,⁹ who was one of his closest friends, to bring him before the young Emperor. /90/ And he [Syrgiannēs] (for the war between the emperors was already being set in motion) asked the Grand Domestic to take Apokaukos on: not only was he naturally gifted at gathering the public taxes, but also he had plenty of money, which he saw would be useful to them in the war; we also mentioned this briefly at the very beginning of our history.¹⁰ Having being introduced to the young

Emperor through him [Kantakouzēnos], since the war between the emperors was breaking out, he immediately revolted against the older emperor in favour of the younger, fleeing the suspected danger because of the money he owed rather than from goodwill. He was made treasurer of the imperial money by the Grand Domestic.

When Victory looked upon the young Emperor and the rule of the Romans was completely subject to him, he [Apokaukos] was appointed to be the mediator of public affairs,¹¹ again by him [Kantakouzēnos], almost without the Emperor's approval, for he did not judge the office to be suitable for him [Apokaukos]. Except it was not the entire public administration that was turned over to him, but all of the more necessary matters were referred to the Grand Domestic; he [Apokaukos] had the meaner duties, from which no harm to the common interest could be expected, whether managed well or badly. However he was flattered by many people. Meanwhile, he was at odds with the Emperor on many occasions because of his love of deceit and, when he was about to be given punishment, he was delivered from the Emperor's anger by the Grand Domestic's /91/ entreaties.

Having risen out of deep obscurity into such a conspicuous position, he [Apokaukos] looked carefully to see if he was able to repay his benefactor in the most contrary way. For when the young Emperor Andronikos suffered from that violent illness and came near to death,¹² he left the sovereignty to his wife the Empress, who had not yet become the mother of his child but was pregnant.¹³ To the Grand Domestic, he left the administration of public affairs and the obedience of all, and nobody was to contradict him in any matter at all. Just as was the custom when emperors are dying, he wished to secure from his subjects goodwill and firm fidelity towards those he was leaving behind; having set forth oaths he ordered everyone to ratify their allegiance through these. The oaths committed the Romans to each maintain their honest allegiance to the Empress Anna, and the child borne by her, and

their obedience to the Grand Domestic. The Empress Xenē,¹⁴ the Emperor's mother, was not mentioned at all: the Emperor had decided this was necessary since it was not possible for two, especially two women, to govern one realm.¹⁵ At the time she certainly found this hard to bear, as did certain of those who had sympathy for her, although she was not neglected or ignored by the Grand Domestic. For, since he suspected the matter was able to cause upset to the empress [Xenē], he hastily sent Glabas¹⁶ the *megas dioikētēs*¹⁷ to her, along with a cross of precious stones to vouch for the trustworthiness of his words. He [Kantakouzēnos] explained that the /92/ Emperor's illness was severe, and he beseeched God not to suffer them to be deprived of such an emperor. If perhaps a certain one of the expected outcomes happened [i.e., death], [God] having dispensed in this way the measure <of life> wholly justly and beneficially, she should not suspect any unpleasantness would arise from the change in public affairs, as he was no less favourably disposed towards her than if he had been born from her himself.

While she was thus roused to anger, those formerly consumed by envy of the Grand Domestic's fame were at that time even more inflamed by this passion, having observed clearly that he had become master of public affairs. Among them were numbered the *parakoimōmenos* Apokaukos and many others, Syrgiannēs being the ringleader in this affair.¹⁸ Realising that the empress' anger might be of the greatest assistance to them in overcoming the Grand Domestic and ending his rule, many went to the empress [Xenē]. Since the Emperor was recovering and would be delivered from his illness, they pretended to be aggrieved on her behalf and accused the Grand Domestic of great ingratitude because, when the Emperor was dying, if he [Kantakouzēnos] had been reasonably minded, he needed to preserve the authority for both the empresses and especially for her [Xenē], because the Empire of the Romans belonged to her on account both of her son and her

marriage to the emperor [Michaēl IX].¹⁹ Having little concern for this and for what was lawful and proper, he had drawn all authority to himself, /93/ having added the Empress Anna to the oaths just as a cover for treachery. She – who had arrived from foreign parts only shortly before²⁰ and had few among the Romans willing to risk themselves on her behalf – would readily hand over the sovereignty to him. They advised [Xenē] not to overlook what was happening but to destroy his [Kantakouzēnos'] power with great haste and zeal, instructing her son the Emperor that he had treacherous and criminal intentions concerning his rule while he was dying, and now he would persuade all the Romans of nothing less than to support him, with the result that he [Andronikos] would be emperor only in name, devoid of power over events, while that man would be emperor in practice. It was appropriate for him to consider these matters so they did not lead to ruin, but to check the attack beforehand, demolishing his [Kantakouzēnos'] great pretension and rendering him contemptible.

So the empress rushed from her home [in Thessalonike] in great haste – having been inflamed by her own anger and more fully by these men – to the defence <of her son> against the Grand Domestic, if she was able. Having gone to her son the Emperor, she accused the Grand Domestic of acting as emperor, and she advised him to guard himself against that man, who feigned goodwill, but would act treacherously if ever there was opportunity.

The Emperor made a lengthy argument in response to the empress, his mother, in defence of the Grand Domestic, proving that those accusing him of such things were sycophants and liars. As he wished to make clear by his deeds that he believed these things to be fabrication, he saw to it that, rather /94/ than his former kindness, he gave greater influence to the Grand Domestic and paid him even more punctilious attention, which caused his mother the empress to be even more irritated. So in this way the Emperor sent the sycophants packing. Having told him [Kantakouzēnos] everything

concerning why the empress had come, he advised him once again to assume the imperial garments, if for no other reason than because it was the opinion of many people anyway, so that their suspicions would be revealed to be true, and he would be freed from many annoyances.

He was very grateful to the Emperor for his benevolence towards him and for his nobility. But he did not wish to change his dress for that of an emperor, not for any other reason than because of the sycophants themselves, so that he would receive justice from them for their villainy through this, by revealing them as sycophants^a through their deeds. He said that he knew, even before the empress [Xenē] arrived, that she was coming concerning these matters. For some of those aware of her secrets – concerning what had happened just now – came in advance of her arrival and they made known to the Grand Domestic the organisers of the plot. They advised him to bring her into conflict with her son the Emperor, anticipating her attack, and to throw the Emperor's heart into confusion by invented arguments, so that she would have no power to accomplish whatever she might be planning. He had dismissed them angrily, as they were behaving no better than enemies towards him and in these matters were wearing the mask of friends. /95/ For such things were not befitting to him, but completely the opposite: if some dispute occurred between the Emperor and his mother, he would do everything and make every effort which might cause them to be reconciled. For this is the mark of true friendship; what they advised were the ways of a hated enemy, corrupt and unworthy. He was not paying court to the power of the Emperor, pretending affection, but chose to be a true and firm friend to the Emperor, from his earliest life until now and, trusting in God, for ever. So the intrigue against the Grand Domestic was broken up in this way.

^a II, 94.13: συκυφάντας amended to συκοφάντας.

Chapter 15

The conspirators had seen by this time that nothing terrible had happened to him [Kantakouzēnos] in consequence of their plot but instead that their depravity had been recognised, and they were dreading that they would suffer something terrible because of this. While most tried to reconcile the Grand Domestic with themselves in various ways – although he made no move to avenge himself – the *parakoimōmenos*, conscious of his previous obscurity and his present glory, into which he had been thrust by him [Kantakouzēnos], and that he had not been disposed to be grateful, or fair, but had already clearly proved himself one of his greatest enemies, feared that, having angered him, he would be reduced to his former fortune. He decided not to use mediators and intercessors, as few or none would be capable enough, but to entreaty for himself, compensating for his villainy by showing he had changed.

And in writing, /96/ stating frankly the kindnesses shown towards him by the Grand Domestic since the beginning, then also setting forth his former conspiracies against him, and then becoming his own prosecutor and agreeing to pay the most extreme penalties, he thereafter begged for forgiveness. He promised to show himself worthy of his benevolence – if he had not before, then he would do so now at least – and to observe, for all time, not only goodwill and remembrance of the benefactions shown towards him, but also to observe the commands issued by him [Kantakouzēnos] with all willingness and urgency, demonstrating clear and pure obedience in everything. He offered firm guarantees in addition to his words; not just unusual and terrible oaths, fearful to hear, but, moreover, at the same time as the most holy body of Jesus the Saviour who is the Saviour of all mankind was being celebrated.¹ He shamefully pleaded by the suffering of the unscathable one on our behalf, and by the three days in the

tomb, and by the resurrection from the dead, for himself to be granted pardon by that man [Kantakouzēnos] and for him not to demand punishment for his folly; as many deeds by the Saviour were for the sake of insolent men, so should it be in regard to him.

Next, he watched for an opportune moment. When the sacred liturgy was drawing to an end in the house of the Grand Domestic and he himself was there, having been especially nearby during the procession of the divine and life-giving body of our Saviour the Logos, he gave him [Kantakouzēnos] his written petition. He also said, by word of mouth, that he would produce as witnesses of what he had written the very same awe-inspiring body /97/ of Christ, as was just then being administered, and the angels proceeding unseen and accompanying the priests, visible and manifest to us, celebrating the office together with them [i.e., during holy communion]. While the Grand Domestic was holding the writings in his hands and waiting for the end of the service, the *parakoimōmenos* again came close. In order to convince him, he asked him to read what he held now so that, not only because of the oaths but also from reading it at that same time [as the service], what was written would be more fearful and more trustworthy.

Since he was persuaded, he read <the petition>. He said nothing at that time but later, after the end <of the service>, he received the *parakoimōmenos* alone. “While struggling with your initial misfortune,” he said, “you were raised into your current success and prominence by me. While all the Romans may observe this with me, you may be more able to believe what is true and fair concerning yourself coming from me than from all of those bearing witness with me. Certainly, I have sufficient evidence of your beginnings from others and particularly from you. I was intending greater and more wonderful benefactions for you than these, and I shared this intention with myself and with Him who knows clearly the thoughts and stirrings of each man’s soul, that is, God. And you have remembered

nothing regarding the many occasions on which you were treated well by me, nor that you were shown so many kindnesses, and that not once were you treated badly. But like an unbroken chain, the succession of favours from me has been maintained until now, /98/ yet, having attached yourself to others who made war on me because of baseless malice, without injuring me, at least the worst evils you devised <for me> have come upon you all.

“So what is it necessary for me to do and even to think about these matters, other than to attempt to harm you in any way I may be able? And if I had applied myself to these matters, what would have remained, other than for you to bewail your previous good fortune, with <only> sudden dishonour and poverty remaining from great power? So, on the one hand, this would be a matter of the greatest ease to me – and you can judge for yourself how worthy you are to benefit from scheming of such a kind and greater. On the other hand, being conscious that I myself stand in need of great forgiveness from God – I sin every day, not in such numbers or to such an extent as yourself but more often and more dreadfully – and, furthermore, trusting your oaths, I grant pardon and amnesty for your plot. You will take care to expunge your previous works by your future good deeds.” So then the *parakoimōmenos* again confirmed what he had written with further words and oaths. He enjoyed the support of the Grand Domestic again, surpassing many in fame, even those of illustrious family.

Sometime later, and just as was previously narrated by us,² he [Apokaukos] was appointed commander of the fleet facing the Persians by the Emperor who was then still alive. The Grand Domestic had begged for this from the Emperor many times, that he would be entrusted with the office, although [the Emperor] /99/ thought that employment in these matters was not fitting for him. The *epi tōn anamnēseōn*³ Spanopoulos⁴ and Iōannēs Melitēniōtēs⁵ were appointed to the office of mediator of public business,⁶ and Geōrgios Pepagōmenos⁷ and Nikolaos Melitēniōtēs⁸ as treasurers of the

public money. But when he [Apokaukos] was minded to treachery concerning the imperial letters and the money, just as we have said, the Emperor, hating his corruption, immediately dismissed him from command, which he had enjoyed only for a short time, and he spent an appropriate period without being entrusted with any public office.

When the Emperor died, having begged the Grand Domestic many times and, furthermore, having turned from his private affairs to do him [Kantakouzēnos] favour, he [Apokaukos] was entrusted the office of *mesazōn*, but not yet with the keeping of the imperial money, although he was certain to receive this also in a little while, as the Grand Domestic later confirmed. But having seen one of the offices come to him immediately and easily at his demand, but not yet the other, it did not occur to him to be grateful for what he had been granted but instead to retaliate, thinking himself to have been unjustly deprived. Believing the Empress had commanded the Grand Domestic to entrust both the offices to him – although the favour to him would remove the other [office] from those holding it – he perceived it was necessary to strike openly. And, having approached the Empress while he [Kantakouzēnos] was present and conversing with her, he said, “I believe that not only the office which has now been granted to me, but all of them, as many as the Romans command, are bestowed on everyone not by the Grand Domestic but by you. /100/ On which account, I also think it is befitting for you to know my gratitude for your kindnesses. So, if indeed this is true, just as I think it is, then – contrary to this – having been appointed to hold both offices by you, which I also controlled when the Emperor was alive, he [Kantakouzēnos] bestowed one, robbing me of the other. I ask you to command him to restore the other too, or rather for it to be bestowed by you, even while he is present, so that I may give the proper appreciation for this kindness especially to you.”

The Grand Domestic did not utter a sound. The Empress, having observed his [Apokaukos'] great ingratitude, said, "A great cause to wonder has occurred to me, the cause of which is these arguments you have advanced, which I cannot comprehend. For, if you thought that the Grand Domestic does not possess the same power which he held previously or some difference has arisen between me and him, you must recognise that you have behaved presumptuously and rashly; you are very much mistaken in your concern. But if you know he has shed none of his power and goodwill towards me, then you have come forward from wickedness, not stupidity. But I would say, on my part, that these are words of madness. I know, when the Emperor was alive, you were entrusted with the office of *mesazōn* and of imperial treasurer. Except at that time, as anyone could have told you, the Emperor did not do this readily, but conceded it because of this man's wish. On this account he [Kantakouzēnos] was often greatly reproached by him [the Emperor], /101/ who was carried away by anger against you, as you were doing nothing more useful than befitted his expectations. After having been appointed as admiral, you were dismissed from office again, and neither while the Emperor was alive nor after his death were you appointed to any office by me. Now this man, having being previously petitioned, has entrusted you with office, as you have said, then reported it to me later, and he persuaded me to consent to his decision. On this account, it is appropriate to be thankful for his kindness and not to speak so rashly." So the Empress spoke out in this way against the *parakoimōmenos*.

Chapter 16

The Grand Domestic himself also could not bear his [Apokaukos'] arrogance. He said, "Such a long period of time should have been your teacher that your existing good fortune was produced by me. Since you wished to do wrong willingly – when it was necessary to express great gratitude, you chose to say the very opposite – I will take away the office which I have already given to you, and from this day public affairs will not be a concern to you." So he spoke in this way.

Apokaukos enquired of the Empress if she also approved of what had been said. When she said she agreed with his words, the Grand Domestic, having forbidden every office to him hereafter, stood up and attended to the management of other business.

All those present in the palace, having become aware of the *parakoimōmenos'* argument with the Grand Domestic and that he was excluded from every office on account of his [Kantakouzēnos'] anger, remarked upon his [Apokaukos'] great arrogance and /102/ madness. While he was leaving the palace, although many were previously accustomed to follow and to serve him because of his rank, at that time nobody dared to approach him, but he departed while attended by just one of his servants, called Spalokotos by name.¹ So, for these reasons, Apokaukos openly caused offence to the Grand Domestic and, having being driven out by his anger, he sat at home for many days, suffering from either true or feigned despondency. Then, once more becoming a suppliant to many of the Grand Domestic's friends, and especially to the Patriarch, he persuaded him [Kantakouzēnos] through them to let go of his anger and, having made many promises and great oaths on his own account, convinced him that he would no longer put his hand to similar deeds. And after not very long he was given command of preparing the triremes against the Persians. After a

short interval, forgetting these promises, he plotted against the young Emperor Iōannēs, just as we have said.²

The Empress reminded the Grand Domestic of these matters at that time, as the *parakoimōmenos* had plainly demonstrated his ingratitude towards him on many occasions. Because of this she was not persuaded to give him pardon, but to let him be confined in Epibatai, as if he was let out to go free, he would not be idle again but would set his hand to some new <scheme>.

But he [Kantakouzēnos], having provided the Empress with many arguments on his [Apokaukos'] behalf, finally persuaded her to grant the pardon, but not to allow him to stay for any time in Byzantion.³ Instead, having come from Epibatai and made *proskynesis* to her, /103/ on the next day he was then to return to the same place. After she had considered these matters, oaths to grant him amnesty for his wicked deeds were then sworn in private by the Empress, the Grand Domestic, and the Patriarch. The oaths by the Empress and Patriarch were carried to Epibatai by Phōkas⁴ and Dexios⁵ and, thirdly, Ampar,⁶ and those from the Grand Domestic by Dēmētrios Kasandrēnos.⁷ The *parakoimōmenos*, having seen these men, listened to the statements which they made to him. He declared that there were neither oaths nor any words that would convince him but he would take care of himself; he would arrange his affairs however seemed best to him. Therefore they returned having achieved nothing in this way.⁸

The Grand Domestic, since he was hurrying to leave Byzantion because of public business, having taken the Patriarch aside on his own again, reminded him once more of his previous words and the oaths he had made to him. He asked him to show by his deeds that he was disposed exactly as he had promised eagerly in his words, and that he would not overlook him [Kantakouzēnos] being slandered by sycophants. The Patriarch once more offered the same words and promises, and told him to be

confident, as no less than if he were present himself, he would stand firm for justice on his behalf. Having bid farewell to each other, they parted. The Grand Domestic lectured all the others, especially those who had a short while before been arguing with the Patriarch on behalf of him [Kantakouzēnos] entering the palace on horseback, for a long time about good discipline and /104/ ready obedience to the Empress, and finally promised that if any attempted revolt, he would not set him free unpunished. He departed from Byzantium on the eighth day before the end of September.⁹

Before he left Byzantium, he went again to the palace, so he could bid farewell to the Empress. Although she urged the Grand Domestic to betroth his daughter to the young Emperor Iōannēs, he put it off until his return from the west, on the pretence that these were pressing matters and did not permit him to spend time on such business, but in truth he remembered the words of his friends, which they had sent, preventing him from doing anything on his own behalf, whether it appeared good or bad, before he could talk with them alone. Cherishing his friendship with them and having resolved himself to do nothing before putting the decision to his friends, he postponed making the arrangements concerning his daughter's marriage at that time.¹⁰

As a secondary goal of his journey, he went by Epibatai and the reconciliation of the *parakoimōmenos* towards the Empress was accomplished by him. For when he came near to the fortress, the *parakoimōmenos* emerged, greeted him and justified himself concerning his rejection of the oaths: it was not because evil would be carried out by him, but so that he could show by his actions themselves that he did not need oaths from him [Kantakouzēnos], but he would rather take assurance from his plain-spoken words than the written oaths of others. Because he now understood that he could place himself most willingly into his [Kantakouzēnos'] hands that for this reason,

he was not asking for oaths or for anything else. The Grand Domestic, having thanked him in regard to these sentiments towards himself and having conversed enough, /105/ left him at his dwelling, as he [Apokaukos] would come to him on the next day. And he [Kantakouzēnos] went on to Selymbria.¹¹ And on the following day when the *parakoimōmenos* came, he was sent to Byzantion so, having made *proskynesis* to the Empress, he would return again to him [Kantakouzēnos]. He, having gone to Didymoteichon, prepared for the campaign in the west.

The *parakoimōmenos*, while in Byzantion, first did *proskynesis* to the Empress and asked for her pardon, in reference to those matters in which he seemed to have given offence. Then, having gone to the mother of the Grand Domestic, who was in Byzantion at that time to give consolation to the Empress,¹² he first expressed great gratitude to the Grand Domestic, not only for his benefactions, which he had provided to him from the very beginning until then, but also for his magnanimity and affection, which he had shown to him not once but often, and on the last occasion just now, when he had out of folly caused offence. Then he promised that there was nothing that could persuade him or force him to demonstrate any ingratitude and wrongdoing concerning him [Kantakouzēnos], but he would obey him completely, since not only he alone, but also his entire family had goodwill and obedience for him, through all time, and would maintain complete servitude just as to a master. He was ready at that moment to provide oaths as guarantee of what he had said, particularly those considered to be the most resolute and terrible.

She [Theodōra] said to him, “It is not now necessary that I add to the list of benefactions which have come to you from the Grand Domestic since the beginning until now, because /106/ of his generosity regarding giving pardon to those who sin against him and the things that have come to him in exchange from your ungrateful mind, since you have previously witnessed

all this. There is no need for oaths now, but rather the oaths must be confirmed by deeds. For trust follows not from words but rather from deeds. For this reason it is befitting for you to demonstrate your goodwill towards him by deeds and not demonstrate it by words, which are inferior to deeds.”

And he, having promised^a to make his goodwill towards him clear in every way, not only by words but also by deeds, departed from there and went to the Patriarch.

^a Π, 106.9: ἐπαγγειλάμενυς amended to ἐπαγγειλάμενος.

Chapter 17

Having greeted him [the Patriarch] and conversed concerning some other matters, he [Apokaukos] then said, "You yourself may know of the Grand Domestic's favour towards me, as you closely follow these matters from your elevated position. A short while ago, having given offence to him through my thoughtlessness, I was close to being ruined, if you had not implored him; you persuaded him not only to put aside his anger towards me, but also to give me an occasion for glory, the command of the fleet against the Persians. For this reason, I acknowledge it is right to owe you not only a reward for saving me but also great gratitude for this honour and I will give counsel and act to your advantage with every attention and eagerness, so that these actions will bring the same harm and the same benefit to me and to you alike. If, therefore, /107/ I owe you my goodwill and my honest and pure friendship for many reasons, it would not be considered just, nor would it otherwise be advantageous to me, to conceal the most dreadful things which have been reported to me about you, just as someone else might, whether better or worse disposed, if he had little or no concern for you."

When the Patriarch asked whatever it was he might have heard about him, he said that he had not heard, but knew most certainly, that the Grand Domestic wanted, not before long, "to depose you from your throne and to elevate Palamas,¹ who is one of his true friends and most diligent towards him."

Although the Patriarch asked him again and again from whom he could gain a clear understanding of this matter, and, if it was just as he maintained, from whom he would be allowed to learn the cause, he [Apokaukos] begged him not be curious. For he did not dare to venture upon these secrets. This single thing had utterly convinced him as, if his soul

had not suffered greatly, from his concerns for him from possessing such accurate intelligence, he would not have come to report it. As the Patriarch was still incredulous and could not accept the Grand Domestic's sudden change, he [Apokaukos] confirmed by oaths that what he had said was not false but completely true. He advised him [the Patriarch] not to hesitate, but to make plans as quickly as possible; by doing this it was possible to escape from the danger. "For he [Kantakouzēnos] does not easily change his mind regarding what he has decided, as you would know even better than me."

The Patriarch, having been thrown into great confusion by this, and being above all convinced by the oaths that nothing of what he had said could be fabricated, asked /108/ him to give counsel of whatever he should do against so great a torrent of troubles. The *parakoimōmenos*, still wishing to lead the Patriarch further into his net, said, "And while I owe you much gratitude for your previous kindnesses, it is right not only to readily offer advice which I consider best and advantageous, but also to willingly give up money and servants and my relatives and my soul itself – if such a thing can be said! – for your sake. As I could not expect to advise you to attempt actions which hold great risk while standing aside from the dangers myself, I want you to make a partnership with me, and with my family and closest friends, by betrothing one of my daughters to your son,² so that you may know clearly that I do not simply want to be one of those with a friendly relationship towards you, but one of those joining with you in the joyful achievement of prosperity and, equally, in perishing alongside you."

Since what he said was pleasing to the Patriarch, he was fully persuaded that the *parakoimōmenos* was working eagerly in his interests. Having discussed the marriage proposal a little (for there was no disagreement, with Apokaukos readily promising he would prepare everything), and fixed the arrangements concerning the wedding, then ratified the matter according to the custom of the Romans through

<exchanging> *enkolpia*,³ the *parakoimōmenos* having also given frightful oaths in addition to this, they then turned to their deliberation.

The *parakoimōmenos* advised that they should not /109/ hasten to wage war openly against the Grand Domestic, relying on their own power. “Since it is not because our party alone is not sufficient when matched against him, but that it would still not be if we secured the support of many other such men. For his strength among the Romans is not only clear to us but it is not unknown even to barbarians living far away. He has been the strongest of all among us for a long time already, and everyone attends to him punctiliously; some have obtained many favours from him, and are expecting still more, while others grovel before his power. Because of these concerns I do not think it will be to our advantage to oppose him openly. For in addition to not being strong enough to achieve what we have decided, we may also destroy ourselves. But there is also somebody who could provide us with the necessary power, balancing ours against his. This power cannot be found from any other quarter, unless we can by some means turn the Empress against him. When this comes to pass, we will easily stand against him since many would join with us, fighting on behalf of the young emperor. By whatever means this may be arranged, your marvellous sagacity will most certainly discover, and I will advise you myself too.

“Do not wonder if, while resisting a strong enemy, we also use lies. For he who attempts to destroy an enemy, ought not to consider this – whether to use lies or truth – but to look towards one thing only, to become stronger than the one they are fighting, /110/ and to dismiss everything else. Accordingly, once you have approached the Empress (and you will be suited for the purpose of persuasion from earlier, when you displayed kindness and attentiveness towards her after the Emperor’s death, and by seeming to be concerned on her behalf now), you must accuse him; so far as he is not under suspicion, he is already openly making the Empire his own and

intends soon to kill her and her son. If she demands proof of what you have said, persuade her not to inquire closely into such matters. For death will overtake her before such proofs are to come, unless she saves herself and her children by keeping apart from him. Because of these reasons, I expect, she will be struck down by fear and will entrust the war against him to us. Having accomplished this, nothing else remains than for that evil man to perish evilly; you will – in addition to escaping the impending danger – also govern the affairs of the Romans, being undoubtedly the most worthy of all. For this reason I ask you to be persuaded by my advice and not to shrink back from this matter; it will be arranged easily as I advise you. If you hesitate before the danger, I will voice no criticism; you can guess the fortune which presently awaits you.” So with these words he convinced the Patriarch to pay attention to him and to start a war against the Grand Domestic.

Thereafter he contrived to persuade each of the others, who were distinguished from the masses by fame or family, /111/ excelling in stringing together lies and calumnies. And having gone first to Andronikos Asanēs, who was the father-in-law of the Grand Domestic – for which reason he thought to persuade him above all others – he set to work. For, a short time before, this man Asanēs, having gone to his son-in-law, asked him not to ignore him; he thought his life intolerable because his sons Iōannēs⁴ and Manouēl⁵ had been shut in prison by the Emperor [Andronikos III] for six years already, to suffer the most terrible things and were no better off than if they had been living in Hades.⁶ But, as he was going away to the west, since it is necessary to pass through Bēra⁷ where they were held, he could release them from the prison and, taking them along with himself, use them in the campaign. None of those he led were too dishonourable to employ in battles and military service.

The Grand Domestic said this plan was not acceptable to him. For they were not the sons of ordinary men, nor were they condemned for some minor matter; so if they were to be freed by him, there must be no pretext offered for disorder against the Empress. But it was first necessary for them to receive her pardon, then, having procured it, to be released from prison. "Now if we ourselves do this, without her first permitting it, it is reasonable to consider that she and the sycophants will be provided not with just any old pretext; they [the sycophants] will insinuate that we have already taken away all of her power and oppose her authority, and decide the most important matters without deeming her worthy even of any explanation. /112/ I think such things will certainly not be beneficial to me, in the first place, or to them [the prisoners]. So it is necessary for them to endure a little time longer besides the years they have been imprisoned, although it will be distressing for them, until – God permitting – I return from the campaign. Then, having implored the Empress myself on their behalf and, if necessary, pledged guarantees as well, I will arrange for them to leave prison and I will attempt to restore them to their former prosperity. Currently, while the army is already being prepared for the march, I do not have leisure to spend time on these matters, <instead> needing the time for preparation. But although these matters are urgent, I will attend upon them while passing by, just as on many previous occasions. I will not only console them because of their imprisonment and grant them needed solicitude, but I will also fill them with better hopes, faithfully promising freedom from their chains. And this will make the meantime more bearable to them than the period of a single day was previously." So he [Asanēs] was pleased with these promises and acknowledged the many favours on their behalf.

Chapter 18

The *parakoimōmenos* had learned of these things – he was very good at inquiring after matters of this kind – and approached Asanēs. First he acknowledged his former service, and encouraged him to believe that the good fortune in which he was currently established would not cause him to forget his former poverty, but that he simply thought of himself as one of his [Asanēs'] servants, willingly giving the goodwill which is appropriate to a good master from a slave /113/ when the moment calls for it. And he would do everything for his sake and that of his children, even if it was necessary to undergo the deepest misfortunes. Because of this he came before him now very readily; he believed that he could offer advice which would be to the advantage of both him and his children, and at the same time he explained that if there was anything needed for this matter, then he would most willingly fight alongside him, with money and servants and all that he possessed. For his [Asanēs'] children had for a long time already been kept under guard by an unjust and jealous decision of the Emperor, and he [Apokaukos] was greatly distressed, not only for their suffering from injustice and imprisonment, “But also because of my long-standing goodwill, which I owe to them and to you, their father; but having no way to help, I had to accept their punishment. Yet at the present time, seeing that the most suitable moment for freedom from their chains was arriving, I have come to advise you not to throw it away.”

“Yet I have heard,” he said, “when I arrived from Selymbria, that although having pleaded many times on their behalf with your son-in-law, the Grand Domestic, you achieved nothing else. But he has gone away, having lied and raised empty hopes that he will release them from prison, if he returns from the west. If it has escaped your notice that this is a deception, I am very surprised! For, when the Emperor was alive, he [Kantakouzēnos]

was not unable to deliver his wife's brothers from their ills, if he had at least chosen to act in a way that was civilised and becoming to him; he was no less powerful than /114/ an emperor. And right now, just as you yourself are not ignorant, he may be able to accomplish not only such things but also much greater, holding power unaccountably and being the absolute master of public affairs.¹ But even then, he convinced the Emperor himself that the prisoners should be fettered, and he disparaged their courage and intelligence, dreading lest he was surpassed in fame by them. And now he intends nothing less than to hold them in chains for his whole life. I do not say this because I am guessing but because I have precise knowledge. For you know that I have enjoyed many favours from him and have shared in his secrets; I now hold these in contempt because of my goodwill for you. I know accurately everything about him, for which reason it is not necessary to doubt me, but to think it over quickly, so long as there is opportunity not only to deliver your sons from their troubles, but also to secure for yourself the rule of the Romans, which most fittingly belongs to you above all.

“This is impossible in any other way, unless he is first removed from control of public affairs. This is again not otherwise possible unless you yourself make the Empress hostile to him, by denouncing him for intending to seize the Empire and kill her and her children. You would be most deserving of her trust, not only because you clearly know the deliberations of your son-in-law, but because you also seem to disdain Nature herself for the sake of your goodwill towards her /115/ and her son the emperor. And yet someone might say that his dismissal and ruin does not afford you genuine and unadulterated pleasure, since certainly your daughter would share in his misfortune. And insofar as there is this conflict, it is possible to consider these matters by placing them side by side. For they are not the same: on this side your sons live as if buried alive, which is beyond what they deserved to be punished for, and they live badly, and in want and

oppression, and your entire family is carried off by him as if slaves, and you suffer nothing better because of your compassion towards all of them. <On the other side>, for one unfortunate daughter, all these troubles can be cast off, and you are able to make not only your family and *oikeioi*, but also your other friends, splendid and illustrious, having transferred the entire rule of the Romans from him to you. For whom, once that man has fallen or been removed from authority, is it more just to be in control of affairs than for you, who stands out significantly amidst all the Romans, not only on account of your courage and experience of wars, but also of your glorious lineage and intelligence and everything else? I will eagerly fight with you against everyone, holding the rank of a servant, and submit most willingly to everything you command. Certainly, having entered the ring against such a strong competitor, there is no need to be exact concerning truth and lies but it is proper to have in view one thing only, his /116/ defeat. Consider nothing else, if you intend to make something worthwhile of your intelligence and ability as a general. We observe too that the most prudent generals are not always using straight talk and encountering their enemies among the front ranks, but it is the case that they use guile and treachery and certain contrivances, especially whenever they must engage certain fearsome and most formidable enemies. And nobody reproaches their deceit, but instead all admire how intelligence is more able to succeed than might.”

Chapter 19

Having spoken to him thus, and made guarantees through oaths, he [Apokaukos] persuaded him [Asanēs] that he would now fight most willingly alongside him and, once he was established in authority, he [Apokaukos] would fulfil the role of a servant. Having left him to deliberate alone on how he might quickly succeed, he moved on to his [Asanēs'] brothers Kōnstantinos¹ and Isaakios,² the *megas doux*.³ And to begin with he lamented their undeserved misfortunes and appeared to sympathise. Then he reproached them for their voluntary servitude and for frivolously and sluggishly passing their lives in respect to their freedom. And they should not do this now at least, when the moment fortunately offered them deliverance from their period of subjection to the Grand Domestic; it was appropriate for noble and free men to give this some thought. Although when the Emperor was alive, as he favoured him [Kantakouzēnos] with great influence /117/ and made him no less powerful than himself, one had to acquiesce out of necessity. But now what prevented them, having made a show of zeal on behalf of the Emperor's son, from advising the Empress – it was fitting for them to be trusted because of their nobility and their family connection – to dismiss him and annul his authority, because he is intending to seize the sovereignty and kill her and those dearest to her, and to tyrannise the Romans?

“For doubtless the rule of certain cities and the administration of taxes are dangled before you by him, just as if they were bait, so that he might hold the greater part, just as if he is master, commanding and oppressing all, greater and lesser alike, thereby satisfying you in exchange for the deprivation of your liberty. For something so obvious cannot have escaped your notice; that, if he falls or is removed from authority, it will be possible for you to do whatever you choose without fear, having become either the

foremost or directly after the foremost of the Romans. There is no need to shrink back from considering this venture because you will speak lies and calumnies. For if not even a single lie was ever yet spoken by you until now, this would be an excuse. But if all of us are alike for the most part, and happen to forswear and to lie for the sake of a trifling profit or even none, why should we now fear that which we have dared many times, hesitating to obtain not something insignificant but the rule of the Romans? If you decide not to trust me, although I offer the best advice, /118/ it is at least fitting to trust your brother, who is older and knows better than you how to properly make use of changes and innovations in affairs. I think the dismissal of the Grand Domestic is also greatly desired by him [Andronikos Asanēs], who cannot bear the pretensions of his [Kantakouzēnos'] rule and that on his account everybody is treated as if they were slaves.

“Therefore I advise you to do what I consider to be to your advantage. If you yourselves chose to attempt something for the sake of your own glory and a life of renown, it is necessary not to neglect the opportunity, otherwise, having let it pass by, we acquire nothing because of doubt. For while he [Kantakouzēnos] is absent, achieving everything will be easy, but if he returns from the expedition, I advise you not to dare to grumble, else there will be nothing preventing him noticing you, wherever on earth you live. And I will provide strong assurances, not simply through words but also by oaths, to give myself over completely to the struggles <ahead>, contributing money and arms and servants and, after his downfall, to do everything that is commanded by you, and to play my part as a subject for my entire life and never being ungrateful towards you for anything.”

Having spoken thus, he added oaths as security of what he had said, and, since he had persuaded those men to act as he had counselled them, he went to Iōannēs Gabalas,⁴ the *meḡas droungarios*,⁵ who had just returned from an embassy to the Kralēs, for which he had been chosen by the Grand /119/

Domestic. He asked him if he had heard something concerning himself. When he [Gabalas] replied, "nothing," [Apokaukos] said, "But I have come to you as a messenger of bad tidings. For the Grand Domestic, having changed from his former goodwill towards you, is filled with great bitterness. And it is clear he will not hold back, unless he receives satisfaction from you for your betrayal of him. For I have heard him pouring much abuse on you, calling you a babbler and loose-tongued and mostly speaking lies, and that you are a corrupter and a traitor of the common good. For having been chosen by him as ambassador to the ruler of the Triballi, you carried out your embassy dishonestly, having taken bribes, and utterly betrayed the interests of Romans; you looked after their [the Serbs'] affairs and swore oaths to them; when staying amongst us, you were a friend to them, with all your strength betraying our secrets to them. Because of these things, he does not bear to count you wholly among the Romans, but believes you on the side of the Triballi."

Gabalas was astounded by this; he called upon God as a witness that it would never occur to him to say such things, and he could not wholly believe that the Grand Domestic, having thoughtlessly trusted certain calumnies and slanders in this way, would condemn him in his absence and be so uncharacteristically angry. For the passage of many years up to this time, during which he had managed the Romans' affairs, did not bear witness to him [Kantakouzēnos] having this sort of bad and fickle character.

The *parakoimōmenos* proclaimed his usual oaths, or rather perjuries, and persuaded him that there could be no element of fabrication in what he had said /120/ but that everything was true. He disclosed little by little that he had already organised a league, which was not ignoble, for the purpose of his [Kantakouzēnos'] overthrow, to which party he [Gabalas] needed to dedicate himself, and contribute, if he cared at all for the preservation of his household and himself. And he [Gabalas] knew he must put himself into his

[Apokaukos'] hands, without concealing anything, to be filled with courage. For the sake of assurance and greater confidence regarding what he had said, and knowing most clearly that he [Gabalas] would be much more eager on his behalf and take trouble for him, he [Apokaukos] pledged his daughter (for he [Gabalas] had previously lost his wife) and he gave oaths concerning this and an *enkolpion* as security, because it was something holy.

Now that he had brought that man over to his side, he [Apokaukos] went to the *megas stratopedarchēs*⁶ Choumnos, who was one of his friends and besides they were related through his [Apokaukos'] wife's family. For the one who had first been joined to him, the daughter of Disypatos,⁷ one of those counted among the clergy of the Wisdom of God [Hagia Sophia], had died. He then married Choumnos' niece,⁸ being by now illustrious and not unworthy for those of noble birth. So, having friendly relations with him because of these matters, he approached him and reminded him of what he had said to the Grand Domestic, when they had been deliberating about the son of Michaēl the Mysian king [i.e., Sismanos], and if it would be necessary to give him up as demanded by Alexandros: 'if ever something is revealed to the last, let the first be silent.' "These words," he said, "the Grand Domestic always remembers and carries them around as if they were an arrow in his heart, /121/ searching for an opportunity to suitably repay you for the insult. This [opportunity] is nothing other than his return from the west. For I have heard him talking in this fashion. Having concerned myself to the highest degree with your affairs – and the danger was not concerning a trifling matter but about your very life – I came to report such things as I have heard and, if you wish, will guide you to the path of salvation."

And he [Choumnos] was thrown into immoderate confusion regarding his words. He said he was amazed if the Grand Domestic had so suddenly changed from his habitual nobility, that instead of tolerant and kind, he appeared so merciless, angry, and vindictive towards those who

had given offence and ready to avenge himself. “For no previous time has witnessed such a thing in his character. While many have given offence to him, and deeply too, he has never yet appeared to retaliate harshly; he was moderately agitated towards me because of my speech, and shortly after he thus put aside his anger, as he did not think to say anything.”

Apokaukos said, “If you replied in such a manner out of suspicion of my words, since you are testing me, and fear giving offence to him [Kantakouzēnos] again, I will make a different argument. But if you are thinking that this is truthfully how things stand, you have to understand that you are ignorant of everything. For he is not as he appears – civilised and kindly and spiteful to no man, just as you say – but for a long time everyone has served the great power which surrounds him and, until now, no-one has dared not only to speak against him but even to look him straight in the face. /122/ For this reason, he dealt moderately with all those bowing down before him and who were completely enslaved. You are now the first who has dared to speak against him publicly; he is no longer so ready to conceal his malice, but because of you, he will begin for the first time to punish those who wrong him.” Immediately he swore the most terrible oaths that everything, all that he had said, was true and that unless he [Choumnos] attempted to save himself in the^a single fastest way, nothing hindered the destruction of him and all his family.

And he, just as was natural, was in mortal fear about this. He asked him [Apokaukos] to explain the route through which it would be possible to escape the terrors which awaited him. And he said that it was not difficult and that he [Choumnos] could distinguish what was necessary in the present circumstances, being not one of the ignorant masses, but one who in political experience and intelligence contended among the foremost of the Romans.

^a II, 122.7: τῷ amended to τῶ (following P).

But he would also advise him, of such measures as he thought would be advantageous but particularly regarding those without which it would be impossible to be saved. He thought that nothing else would avail him [Choumnos] and the others than, by waging war on him [Kantakouzēnos], to attempt with all their strength to destroy his power.

“This will be easy, if having approached the Empress and having feigned kindness towards her and her son the emperor, you convinced her to consider that man an enemy and a plotter against her rule, saying that you are firmly convinced of such things about him and that you cannot bear the injustice, but /123/ would rather choose to lead yourself and your children, if necessary, to die for their sakes [the Empress and her son] while fighting against him, than instead to watch as they are unjustly deprived of their rule, or even while they are put to death. Having been easily convinced by fear at these words, just as is natural, she will break with him and entrust the war against him to us. When this happens, there is no obstacle, not only to deliverance from the anticipated disasters, but also to make the war against him the means for good fortune. It is unnecessary to consider that the pronouncements against him are not true. For the struggle that now lies before us does not concern truth and falsehood but whether to live gloriously, having destroyed his pride, or, if he should still rule over affairs, to die like those held captive by their fears. Because of this, one must use every scheme and must moreover consider every form of war, rather than talking about trivialities which cause no harm at all, whether these things are one way or the other.” So he persuaded that man [Choumnos] with these words.

And already the conspiracy had reached fruition. But having that very thing [that it was a conspiracy] in mind, it seemed necessary to bring in some of the closest of the Empress’ household, since the Empress might perhaps suspect the others had maliciously devised these schemes between them,

through fear or envy, but she would suspect no such thing from her closest *oikeioi*.

Zampea,⁹ who had followed the Empress from Savoy, had a son who was called Artōtos.¹⁰ Because of his courage in battle and other reasons, he had enjoyed great favour from the Emperor when he was still alive /124/ and, after his death, this man and his mother were treated with respect by the Empress. Having encountered this man, <Apokaukos said> if he would like to know something concerning himself, he would learn it. When he [Artōtos] said nothing, he [Apokaukos] said, “But I have heard with my own ears the Grand Domestic often accusing you and your mother and deriding the great simplicity of the Romans, for the reason that it is necessary to employ natives in public office, and while there are many men and women who are also suitable, they use Artōtos and his mother. He does not know why they endure foreigners – and of no better status than commoners – as attendants to the Empress. But so long as the Emperor was still alive and when everything around him was governed according to his authority, nothing was said to contradict him. ‘But now,’ <the Grand Domestic said>, ‘the rule of public affairs has fallen to me; I will not overlook the public treasury of the Romans being squandered by people of such a sort, as if they were drones, but having placed them in a trireme after my return, I will dismiss them back to their own land.’ In addition to this, he accused you of cowardice and unmanliness in battle. But I was weighed down by such a great injustice, knowing you to be of greater worth than those Romans beside you, and I am willing to give my daughter in marriage to you and will do anything for your sake, not only because of our previous friendship, but also because of our kinship.”

And at once he added oaths to what he had said and presented an *enkolpion* /125/ as full assurance of his words. As he had a pact with the Latin, he advised him to report what he had said to his mother, to persuade her,

and to employ every effort and diligence to make the Empress hostile to the Grand Domestic, and he added all the rest, which he had said to the others.

And such was the situation contrived by him on the fourth day after his arrival in Byzantion. And when, one by one, they were convinced by what he had said, he, reporting again to each of them in turn, brought those holding the same intention about the war together. He encouraged them to deliberate in common regarding however it might seem best to start the war.

Chapter 20

And when they went to the Patriarch, it seemed necessary to announce to the Empress what they had planned not as a crowd but approaching her a few at a time so that they would not arouse any suspicion, but would rather astound her, conversing continually about these matters, and better persuade her to consider what was said by so many in like manner to be true. So they thought that the *megas doux* [Isaakios] Asanēs and his brother Kōnstantinos should make their attempt on the Empress first. Therefore, coming before her, and having discussed many points concerning their goodwill towards her and the emperor her son, they then said they knew that the Grand Domestic wanted to acquire the Empire for himself and that he was intending to bring his design into action very soon. It seemed to them that this was one of the most terrible things indeed and it was needful not to conceal it but to make the plot known, /126/ so that having learned of it, she could take counsel on the necessary course of action for herself and her children. For the danger to them [the Empress and her children] did not concern minor matters, but whether to live well, holding the Empire as a rightful paternal inheritance, or to die ingloriously, having been plotted against by that man, who had acquired such power from his control of affairs.

The Empress was suspicious of this, not only did she not commend what they had said, but she also seemed annoyed because of it. She advised them to desist from these calumnies as nobody, whatever they might say, would be able to cause a rift between her and the Grand Domestic, for she was convinced by the clear truth, just as was appropriate concerning him.

When they returned empty-handed, Artōtos was sent in, along with his mother. And they, having made reports of a similar nature, were

dismissed angrily, and the Empress did not suffer to hear the whole of their stories.

On the next day Choumnos, along with his son and also his son-in-law Manouēl Kantakouzēnos Stratēgopoulos,¹ and Gabalas, similarly approached the Empress, as having learned just now of a rebellion, they brought tidings in haste. They advised her not to be remiss, but to rouse herself to her defence, and that they would contribute with money and arms for war. For having been brought up in goodwill and loyalty to the emperor, they could not bear to see the excesses of ambitious men, but were very willing even to give up their own lives than to ignore such proceedings.

The Empress, having thanked them for their enthusiasm and /127/ said that she was persuaded clearly, that if such a thing happened, they would be willing to wage war on her behalf by all means. She then advised them to refrain from such words against the Grand Domestic, as they were nothing other than fiction and calumny, for she was fully aware of his affection for her and the emperor her son, "lest after his return, becoming thoroughly aware of the accusations made by you against him, he might justifiably be aggrieved with you for having said such things."

So the Empress, in consequence of arguments they had made, altered her original opinion in no respect, but she believed they were complete fabrications which had been concocted in the minds of each of them. When these men assembled with the others they all reported the various answers the Empress had given. All of them felt no little fear and thought themselves already enveloped by the utmost misfortunes, unless they could devise a more effective plan than they had discussed. The *parakoimōmenos* advised them to hesitate no longer. For it was not possible to conceal what they had said about the Grand Domestic in silence, since many were now aware. And as this had become apparent to him, it was possible for each of them to understand the extremity of the danger. On this account, he advised them to

refrain from despairing about the enterprise but, having put aside all other matters, to concentrate on this one alone: how they might overcome their greatest enemy, or – secondly – how they might not suffer utter ruin by his hand. At this point, it seemed that both the Patriarch and Andronikos Asanēs, the Grand Domestic’s father-in-law, were the last hope,² and, /128/ through them, they [the conspirators] would try to knock down the arguments of the Empress, since they were more worthy for the purpose of persuasion than all the others. The Patriarch, honoured for his great holy office in addition to his seeming goodwill towards her, would never be suspected of telling lies. The other [Asanēs] would not be expected to plunge into such a pit of despair, unless he was truthfully aware of such a plan by his son-in-law, or willingly to choose the ruin of his daughter by lying to such an extent.

When they had decided between themselves, they went to the palace as agreed. The Patriarch addressed the Empress first, saying, “All the Romans may know, and you above all, of the Grand Domestic’s favour and diligence for me from the very beginning, and that I was advanced from poor fortune and deep obscurity into this glory and splendour by him, for which I rightly owe him much gratitude. Consequently, so long as I saw him using sincere and just reasoning and observing kindness and honest fidelity towards you and your children, and spotless in his conduct towards the emperors, I also considered it necessary to devote myself to him as being the most genuine of my friends, and with nothing less than a father’s love, I chose to do what I hoped would bring benefit to his honour.

“When I was informed of what many others were saying, and then heard the same for myself, that /129/ he intended, and had already started to perform, unjust and violent acts, unfairly repaying the Emperor’s great affection and his advancement into a position of great honour by depriving

his children not only of sovereignty but of life itself,^a I was sickened by his intention, which is extremely cruel and lacks nothing in its utter ingratitude! And I knew I must consider him not one of my friends as before, but one of my greatest enemies. Believing that not even you are ignorant of these grave emergencies, I have come bringing this message so that, having considered the present circumstances, you may preserve not only yourself and your children but your entire authority, which is also endangered.”

The Empress, just as if thunderstruck, said that she had heard his words, and thought that with such words even the originator of evil himself [the Devil] would never be able to attempt to persuade her that the Grand Domestic was a wicked man plotting against her and the Emperor’s children and giving thanks for their wonderful friendship in such a way!

The Patriarch replied that he had also thought the same at first regarding what was being said about him [Kantakouzēnos] and had not believed those speaking, although they numbered not twice or four times as many but even many times more than those who had come forward to speak with her. Then, having given serious attention to and taken careful heed of his [Kantakouzēnos’] actions, he learned the error of his opinion. And he demanded that she also should be convinced and not delay in this manner, concerning an issue of such severe danger, /130/ but should already consider the safety of herself and her children.

The Empress reminded him of the oaths which they [Kantakouzēnos and herself] had made to one another in his presence barely yesterday or the day before, “In which,” she said, “other things were promised to the Grand Domestic, as we know, and – above everything else – that if something was alleged by someone, we are not to condemn him *in absentia* like this but after having summoned him to trial and afforded him opportunity to defend

^a II, 129.4: τῆς omitted before ζωῆς (following P).

himself. If, on the one hand, he is convicted of wrongdoing and perjury, demand the severest punishments; on the other, if nothing of what has been said is accepted as true, the accusations against him should be dismissed and the sycophants will be shown to be the very same thing as they are, sycophants. At the present moment, I see nobody among the many faithless and perjuring accusers who would dare to oppose him before a court, in order to prove his wrongdoing. But indeed even now there is not a single person who has explicitly alleged that he was seen doing evil and is a traitor to me, so that I also can perceive from these words if what is being said is calumny or if it holds some truth. But everyone, just as if by prior agreement, condemns his seizure of the Empire without adding anything more. Certainly it is not right, nor otherwise honourable, for me to be persuaded by the rumours of the masses – they contain nothing definite as regards proving the truth – and to initiate civil war against him. For he is not a common man, so it will not be easy to /131/ overcome him. But it is at the present time clear from what has been said that no action should be taken against him, but having carefully examined everything and having established a careful inquiry into the matter, while he is away in the west, he will be summoned to trial immediately after his return and, having been granted opportunity for his defence, either he will be convicted – having been revealed as a perjurer – or acquitted of the charges, if he has been doing nothing of what he is suspected.” The Empress, thinking at once both justly and expediently, replied in such a way.

Chapter 21

The Patriarch, having heard about proofs and a trial, was conscious of the great calumny by himself and the others and realised the danger, great as it was to them, along with the well-deserved disgrace for calumny which would result. He was distressed beyond measure and for the greater part was dying from fear. Yet not at all putting aside his tendency to wickedness, as if pitying the Empress' loss of sense, he said, "If God on high also takes a part in these matters, everything is smoothly and well run, and is tirelessly brought to a successful conclusion; but if He willingly abandons them to perdition, it is entirely the opposite, full of difficulty and disorder. And, although surrounded by the most extreme dangers because of my own goodwill towards you and your children, I do not regard my own misfortune, including removal from my throne and being imprisoned, with such great fear as I do your own lot; they intend not only to undertake your removal from the rule of the Romans but also at the same time, lawlessly and dishonourably, to rob you of life itself. /132/ And you are a cause of great astonishment to me, if now, while he [Kantakouzēnos] is absent from Byzantium and very vulnerable because he knows nothing of what is happening here, you tremble in this way at the thought of war against him; after so long a period of time, in which it will be possible for him to be ignorant of nothing of what has been said – since not a few currently dawdling here [the palace] would happily give up even their souls for his sake – and to prepare himself for everything, as may seem best to him, you <cannot> hope to overcome him easily. For it is not as you imagine and he affects a dignified appearance while deceiving us; he will not return to Byzantium in this manner, leaving behind his friends and the large entourage that surrounds him, so you can treat him however you please. But knowing that he is suspected, he will persuade not only many of the nobility, by

promises and presents of great value, but also he will render the entire army obedient to him, having corrupted it with money. While holding great power around himself, he will easily destroy not only us, who choose to make war on him because of our goodwill towards you, but also you and your children, since there would be nobody to help; this is the way he will think to behave to benefit himself, having said a long-delayed farewell to all those proud boasts and tricks and dissimulations. I do not know how you do not see these things yourself and do not want to provide safety for yourself and your children from the means available, but instead dream of legal proceedings and calumny /133/ and cross-examination and are not willing to consider this very thing, that you may be destroyed before it comes to this.

“So, as I was saying beforehand, I remember not only the favours of the Emperor, from whom I enjoyed many and great kindnesses, but also those of yourself, and besides being compelled by the laws themselves as well as justice, I have a natural need to help all those who suffer unjustly in any way to the extent of my abilities. <Therefore> I have abandoned my friendship with him, since he is planning unjust and illegal acts, although often having occasion for goodwill towards him, and I am advising you of what is to your advantage, having cast the dice, as they say, and – having chosen to be with you – either to live, having prevailed, or, if the opposite fortune is experienced, to die. But by a more divine fortune, there is also a man present who could never choose to speak falsely of one living in wedlock with his daughter, and he can advise you of what is necessary not only because of his intelligence and his experience of matters of state, which he has gathered in the long prime of his life, but also because of his goodwill towards the Emperor and his children, and his honest and pure fidelity. It is worthy to listen and to be persuaded by what he recommends; that advice which he wishes to impart is not unjust, nor is it misleading.”

Asanēs, just like those who stand by waiting at athletic events, so as to contend with the victors, had prepared his words well. He said, “Nobody, doubtlessly, is ignorant of the close kinship and fatherly affection which I hold for the Grand Domestic, who lives together with my dearest /134/ daughter. For this reason I believe it is not appropriate for me to deny what is acknowledged by all. So it is abundantly clear that he, having accomplished what he intends, will be emperor and my daughter will live with him as empress. I will be the father of emperors and, sharing the sovereignty with them, I will also come into greatness and glory and wealth and splendour. But this brilliance and majesty, which might satisfy anyone else’s appetite for glory, appears to me greatly inferior to my present state. For having grown up from the earliest age with pure goodwill and loyalty towards the emperors, I would rather wish to suffer evil with them than, having sided with traitors, to enjoy the foremost honours and gifts among those men. So, as regards what may have been said about the Grand Domestic by the Patriarch and my own brothers and the others, I know that it is all true, and it is fitting for you to doubt them in no way but to trust me as I am versed in every detail. If it seems to you that what has been said as proof is weak, at least allow one thing to fully persuade you of the outrageous intentions the man has concerning you and your children. For before he left here, although you were compelling him to join his daughter with your son – and emperor! – in the partnership of marriage, he was not willing but he put off the matter until his return from the west. For he was ashamed,^a after such great proofs of the favour shown towards him /135/ by you, to be known as your worst enemy and as one who would deprive the one joined in marriage to his daughter shortly before not only of his diadem but of his life. For it is not possible that any man of sound mind could say

^a II, 134.22: ἡσχύνετο amended to ἡσχύνετο.

that he ever thought to take a more prominent or wonderful groom to his daughter. For this reason, you must not neglect your own safety but do everything with urgency, by which it might be possible to prevail over his plotting. I, and as many of the most distinguished men as are currently in Byzantium, will readily sacrifice not only our money and bodies and servants but also our very lives, if necessary, for the sake of your and your children's interests."

Chapter 22

The Empress was overwhelmed following these words, as if her soul was grieving, and since she could neither disbelieve what had been said by many so worthy of trust, nor believe that they had omitted any possible exaggeration of the evil, she let many tears fall from her eyes, until she had had enough. Then as if recovering from her despondency, she said, "I still hold fast to my earlier thinking, and I am unable to accept that the allegations against the Grand Domestic are true. For I call upon God – who comprehends everything even before it happens – as my witness that I never thought him inclined to be any more neglectful of me than of his own mother, or of a true sister, or to have cared any less for the Emperor's children than the Emperor himself, /136/ if he were still alive; I would be considering not only the friendship he and the Emperor had for each other insignificant and unfaithful, but also that of ourselves towards him. But since he [Kantakouzēnos] is not led to such senseless thoughts for any other reason than God is permitting the destruction of the Romans by civil war, and thus he intends injustice and violence, then God, overseeing everything from on high, will judge his plot and grant just punishment for his deeds. And I entrust myself and my children to you, with <the help of> God, in order that everything you plan and do on our behalf is overseen by Him as a witness, so that the same way as you are disposed to me and my children, He is also disposed towards you.' Thus she spoke, tearfully, without realising into what evils she had been brought by calumny and slander.

They [the conspirators] were filled with pleasure and were unable to restrain themselves; as quickly as possible they rushed out and reported everything to the others who shared in the conspiracy, knowing they must no longer hesitate, but advance together to war, so that no event might hinder their plans. Immediately the Grand Domestic's mother and his son

Andronikos¹ and the wife² of Matthaïos,³ the eldest of his sons, who were in Byzantion, were placed under house arrest and surrounded by guards. Having appointed Apokaukos the *parakoimōmenos* as governor of Byzantion, they ordered the war to be set in motion, in whatever way /137/ seemed best to him. So the war started at the beginning of October.⁴ Apokaukos, aware that all the aforementioned men would not bear to be led by him, decided that he must rouse the common people⁵ to war, not only because they are swept along unthinkingly to anything whatsoever for even a little gain, but also because they would easily submit to his commands. And first he surrounded himself with some paupers and babblers, who were ready to commit the most desperate acts because of their poverty. Next, having thrown the people into turmoil through use of these men and having incited a great mob, he went to the house of the Grand Domestic, and ordered them to plunder his possessions and to ransack his house. But these men, who knew nothing of his plans and still quailed at the Grand Domestic's power, advanced as far as the courtyard then stopped, at a loss as to which way to turn. When the Grand Domestic's mother, from high in the house, inquired after the possible reason for their arrival, they sensibly and wisely said they did not know whatever cause had called them there. Having now realised this, they would withdraw, without venturing to attempt anything. So, after the Grand Domestic's mother thanked them for their respect for her, they retreated from there and dispersed to their homes.

Since the people's movement had not ended according to their intentions, the Patriarch and his conspirators turned to those who were friendly towards the Grand /138/ Domestic and, laying hold of some of them on that same day, placed them under guard and plundered their property. The rest, seeing that they themselves were within a hair's breadth of danger already, and fearing that they would also be overcome if they grappled with these myriads of evils (for immediately a sentence of utter destruction was

publicly pronounced against the friends of the Grand Domestic), went outside Byzantium's walls, breaking through the so-called postern of the Porphyrogennētos.⁶ There were forty-two in total,⁷ led by Apelmene⁸ in this matter, who was one of the closest *oikeioi* of the Grand Domestic. Since they had escaped from their expected sufferings, he considered it necessary to make an embassy to the Empress, on one hand defending their venture, as they had not been made bold by malice but by fear of danger, and, on the other hand, begging her that they could return to their homes, if she granted them pardon. For they feared that, although forced to these actions by necessity, they would be held responsible as rebels even by the Grand Domestic on account of what they had dared to do. After he [Apelmene] had considered these matters, they selected Nikēphoros Kantakouzēnos, who was a cousin of the Grand Domestic,⁹ and Gabalas,¹⁰ who had not yet shown himself openly as an enemy of the Grand Domestic, but still seemed to be numbered among his friends, and sent them to the Empress.

When they arrived, Gabalas, sharing with them such secrets as he knew, openly accused the runaways of treachery and, accusing the Grand Domestic just the same as the others, seemed sufficiently credible to the /139/ Empress. Having openly sided himself with the Patriarch and the others, he neglected nothing in playing his part in the actions being taken against the Grand Domestic. And for this reason, he received the rank of *prōtosebastos*, and a short time later also that of *meγas logothetēs*, the reward for his goodwill towards the Empress. Nikēphoros Kantakouzēnos was shut in prison.

Chapter 23

However when those fugitives heard that one of the ambassadors had been imprisoned while Gabalas had openly joined the Grand Domestic's enemies, despairing of their own return, they went to Didymoteichon to the Grand Domestic and reported everything about what had happened and the war being initiated against him. He did not want to believe them because of the absurdity of the things they reported. Instead he thought they had fled after giving some offence to the Empress and, fearing the danger, were pleading on their own behalf, slandering the Empress in this way. For she could never have undergone such a change in such a short time. Because of this, he intended to send the fugitives back to Byzantium once more, even against their will, as, if they had given some offence to the Empress, they would suffer their deserved punishment. Having now prepared the campaign to the west, he intended to engage in the task forthwith.

When, after one or two days, many people arrived from Byzantium and reported the same thing as the fugitives, he decided he must wait a little while and send an embassy to the Empress concerning what was happening. /140/ And having selected the *hēgoumenos* of the Gaura Monastery,¹ a man who sought virtue and had suitable experience in political matters, and Sgouropoulos,² one of his own *oikeioi*, who was wise and able to report what was said by either of two parties of envoys precisely, he sent them to the Empress in Byzantium. And, first, he [Kantakouzēnos] guaranteed with oaths that he knew nothing of the accusations against him. Then, he asked that the oaths made shortly before by them towards each other, in the presence of the Patriarch,³ should not be utterly forgotten and that he should not be condemned in his absence, as she had been persuaded solely by sycophants, but she should summon him to trial and scrutinise the accusations. For he was prepared to face any accuser before a court. He gave a deadline to the

ambassadors he dispatched, of as many days as he thought would be sufficient for the Empress, following careful consideration, to give her justification for the present situation so that, if she chose to do what was both beneficial and just, she would convene a court and demand proof of what had been said; he would accept their verdict, whatever that might be, without making trouble, so that the anticipated flame of internecine war would die away. If she acted unfairly and was not willing to do the right thing – either she would not hold an enquiry or exceeded the allotted time, delaying them after the aforementioned deadline – having called upon God himself as a witness of the injustice, /141/ he would do what he thought most advantageous to him and those with him. But before then he would change nothing of the established order of things, even if he saw everything being turned upside down. So the ambassadors, having been ordered to negotiate in this way, departed from Didymoteichon.

When they came to Selymbria, men from the *parakoimōmenos'* household happened upon them and seized their horses and their other baggage, then held them under guard. When these outrageous acts against the ambassadors were reported to those in Didymoteichon, all the others were disconcerted beyond measure and believed it was unbearable to be treated with contempt by such lowly men without any pretext.

The Grand Domestic exhorted them not to be fainthearted. For while he thought these matters would not lead anywhere good but would be the pretext of great troubles, it was nevertheless necessary to abide by the decisions made by they themselves, and to take no extreme measures before the deadline arrived. For it is not good to act to the contrary of what they had already decided. "If something unexpected has happened to our ambassadors, it is no wonder. For to the daring *parakoimōmenos* and his servants it is not acceptable that all such matters are inviolable. It is certainly unfair to infer that the Empress, to whom we sent the embassy, is

responsible for the mindless and arrogant outrages of others. Besides if she, doing what she ought to, deliberates about everything profitably and puts an end to the expected war, then it is appropriate to overlook these events as if they had not happened. But if – and may it not come to this – /142/ these things lead to a greater outrage, then immediately greater matters will be set before us for consideration, not such minor matters as these. Therefore, for both reasons, it is necessary to think lightly of what has happened and not to become excited as if concerning vital matters.” Having spoken in this fashion, he stopped the disturbance. All prayed that the present troubles would turn out for the good, just as he had suggested, and not as they were forced to assume from what had taken place. So they thus restrained their uproar.

When the Empress learned what was done to the ambassadors, she became angry and ordered that they be brought to her, having restored their plundered possessions to them. When they were brought, while the Patriarch and the remaining senators were also present, they put the terms of the embassy to the Empress and none of those worthies advanced a complaint about anything but they thought it right for all to negotiate. The ambassadors asked the Empress and the Patriarch not to hesitate concerning such important matters but to make amends quickly. The correct thing was to summon the Grand Domestic, in writing, to a tribunal. They <swore> themselves by their honour to death, if he did not present himself at once when he received the written orders.

So all the others fell silent. Apokaukos feared that the Empress might decide to hold a trial, since she perceived the request to be just, and, in addition to gaining nothing from his plots, he might even be deprived of her protection. He realised it was necessary to use his insolence /143/ in time, as through it he would be able to upset and frustrate these discussions about peace. And immediately standing up amidst the council and signalling for

silence with his hand, before delivering any preamble or reason why he had started in such a fashion, he launched into a string of insults against the Grand Domestic, calling him a common enemy and disloyal to the emperors, and a perjurer and a liar for the most part, and finally he concluded with a shameful and servile rebuke. Having many around him who were similarly wanton and were prepared to eagerly spread any kind of impudence, he urged them to sport with the ambassadors. And arrogantly laying hands on the monk, they cried out 'This is the Patriarch of Katakouzēnos!', calling him a mocker of Christ and a hypocrite and similar things which were even worse. Having likewise insulted and abused Sgouropoulos many times, next they placed them both under guard, in the house in which they had been received, so they were unable to leave. The Empress, either because she also was not displeased with what they were doing, or because she was already unable to check the attacks of these agitators, bore it in silence. Those in charge of matters set a stronger guard over the Grand Domestic's mother, who was kept in her house along with her grandson Andronikos, and watched them more closely.

Since war was already burning brightly in Byzantium, it seemed necessary to attempt to secure the support of the other cities, greater and lesser. /144/ So imperial letters were written to them all, ordering the Grand Domestic to be regarded as an enemy and that no city should accept him staying there but make war with their full strength and destroy him. As these things were also reported to the Grand Domestic and some of the letters were conveyed to him as manifest proof of what they were saying, he was now thoroughly alarmed, and it disturbed the hearts of him and those with him too. However in no way did they attempt to revolt, but waited for the deadline, believing it wrong to venture to do anything before it.

When it arrived, none of the ambassadors were present and, because they were closely guarded, they were unable to make what had happened to

them clear either by letters or even by words. All the senators who were present in Didymoteichon, and the leaders of the army, together approached the Grand Domestic, advising him to hesitate no longer; since they were by now deprived of every excuse, they had to discover through careful consideration how he might provide for his own security and theirs. They seemed to him to be giving beneficial advice. For while the Empress and those around her did what they considered to be advantageous to them, he thought it was not appropriate for them to be quietly inactive. Yet, still thinking there would surely be some change and a settlement to the war, he encouraged his associates not to be fainthearted, nor to provide a pretext for war.

Chapter 24

A few days later a servant of the Empress, named Tzyrakēs,¹ came to him from Byzantion, /145/ carrying a letter which ordered him to desist from all state business, to remain at home and not to leave the gate of Didymoteichon until she could decide whatever might seem best to do about him. She said the reason for her commands would not be revealed at the present time but would become clear to him and everyone else a little later. Other letters were written before this one, dictated by the *parakoimōmenos*, filled with bitterness and insolence and sarcasm, which the Empress had prevented being sent, only just persuading the bearers.²

When he [Kantakouzēnos] read it out to the assembly, all the others were shocked by the absurdity of what had been written. They exhorted him to declare war immediately and not to lose the opportunity of destroying these men, through which it would be possible to save themselves. The Grand Domestic, seeing that matters had already reached the point of greatest danger, and thinking to delay no longer, now applied himself to deciding whatever he and they must do about these events.

And first he spoke to those sitting in council, in such a way: "Fellow soldiers, the present circumstances have now reached a point of great difficulty and disorder and they are likely to worsen yet further, as it is possible for all of us alike to guess. If I was unknown, having either just come from some foreign land or been living among you in no better state than the ordinary people, there would perhaps be some reason to recount before you the nature of my habits and /146/ character. But since from the first flowering of manhood until now, I have been not only a statesman amongst you but I have also been administering the realm of the Romans second only to the Emperor, from the time he assumed it; because of this I was compelled, for better or worse, to try to give of myself to all: you

yourselves may know my character no less than I know myself. Therefore I will not speak any further about my previous life, proving to you that I myself have governed correctly and justly; you know all our circumstances well.

“So, while the Emperor was alive, he granted me great weight in public affairs and trusted me to manage all the most important matters no less than he himself. And I rendered him goodwill and diligence in equal measure, omitting nothing, just as it is appropriate for one who is regarded with such affection. When he [Andronikos], as decided by He who governs everything, departed from the world of men, I considered nothing else appropriate to myself than to exhibit the clearest evidence of my goodwill towards him through my solicitude towards his children and the Empress his wife. And neglecting none of my duties, I persevered after his death until now, but also without sparing my body and money and all of my actions and plans, in order to assist in preserving the realm for them.

“Truly, it cannot be that I governed correctly and justly until now, /147/ then, having become puffed up by the circumstances, I now intend to secure the rule of the Romans for myself, changing my present rank for that of emperor. For, concerning the past, events themselves may bear witness with me; regarding what will happen, I offer not only God as witness of our deliberations but also it is possible to produce clear proof of what is likely to happen from what has happened in the past. For if I covet such things, of the sort the sycophants allege, what prevented me when the Emperor was dying? I had his children, I had placed the palace under guard, and after three days the Empress arrived, all the money was there at my disposal, so that I could use it however I wanted; what prevented me from killing them, from possessing the Empire without toil and sweat, when there was nobody still remaining who would dare to stand against me?

“Not only was I seen to be intending nothing of this sort, but also on the ninth day from the death of the Emperor, having established complete security, I withdrew the guard from there and established myself at home. I attended to public affairs just as before; I made no innovations and did not manage affairs for my own benefit. For these reasons one could not reasonably think I was attempting to transfer the sovereignty to myself. For I retained as governors of the provinces and the cities those who were so before the Emperor’s death, and I took every trouble for the army, not so that they [the soldiers] would favour me, but instead /148/ so that they would be useful to the common good. Moreover, having also concluded treaties with the neighbouring barbarians, there is nobody at all who could claim that I preferred some private interest of my own should prevail over what was beneficial to the public. But I made peace with some, benefiting the commonwealth, and I was preparing to make war on others on their [the public’s] behalf, without suspecting danger from those close to me.

“From all this, one may plainly see that I have governed honestly and genuinely on behalf of the Emperor’s children. For if I had intended to do such things as my accusers falsely allege, if nothing else, it would be necessary at least to gather together the wealth which is dispersed across the entire Empire of the Romans – which is not easily counted, as you know – and it would be most useful to me in the war. But right now it is possible to see not only an abundance of herds and crops, which one might perhaps think would produce some difficulty and suspicion while they are being gathered, but also there is much gold and silver dispersed everywhere. And yet I passed over the most amazing thing, as indeed I am saying something amazing. For not only did I not collect the distributed riches, but also spent unsparingly for public needs that which I had, and the part I held in my hands I willingly left behind in Byzantion. In any case, a few days ago, when there happened to be a need in the palace, over two hundred silver vessels of

no little value were provided from my own house. Following the occasion, those appointed to safeguard them [the vessels] /149/ asked to recover them; I believed it was not necessary, saying that there would be no difference if they were retained in the palace treasury or in my own house. Furthermore many islands and cities, both major and minor, were held by me, some of which I built up myself from the expenditure of my own resources, others I had as a gift from the Emperor; there was not a single one I occupied with a garrison, nor did I expect any in *pronoia*, in order to possess them securely.³ And I could not be accused by anyone of either having done or intended anything in all this which would be of benefit to my own purposes. For surely even they will not accuse me of this: that through slothfulness and inexperience of warfare, I did not lead when necessary.

“I will attempt to make a clear demonstration of the truth, not only from my behaviour in these matters but also from the testimony of all the Romans, not only those of you gathered with me now, but also those in Byzantion and living in any other land. For while there are many, both greater and lesser alike, who are similarly very well disposed to me above all others, and while some are related by blood, and others are joined to me by unbreakable bonds of friendship over many years and have provided great proof of their affection for me in many ways, not one of you present, nor anyone who may be living anywhere else, would be able to prove that he knew something of the accusations against me. And yet anyone at all, even one with but a small share of wits, could say that I am not able to attempt such things alone. At least /150/ there would be a need also for an army to assist in the enterprise and for the truest friends, and much preparation, because of which it would be impossible, if not for the masses but at least for those close associates, not to guess the intention behind what was going on. If anybody has anything with which they can convict me of such an undertaking, let him come here and prove it. But they would not be able to

do so. For I would yield to many men of both past and present in courage and intelligence and experience of wars, but to nobody in matters of righteousness and truth; it is for the sake of these that I now speak so openly and confidently.

“If, both because of what I myself have been working on and because of your presence with me the whole time, I appear not to be suspected of, or actually doing, any of the things of which I am accused, then no one could justly blame me for being inappropriately led to anger in regard to these matters. For the Empress – who has known from the start that my character is not corrupt, and of that unrivalled and most remarkable friendship between myself and the Emperor, and of my great diligence and efforts for her and her children after his death – ought not to trust men who are sycophants and corrupt, but turn, rightly and justly, to me who governs for her sake. Since some malignant demon, of those searching for <our> ruin, did not allow her to believe what is true and fair regarding me, but persuaded her to believe me hostile instead of a friend, an enemy instead of an ally, and /151/ disaffected instead of the most loyal of all, I judged – trusting in myself – that it was necessary to do nothing in the present circumstances. Yet, using you as advisors, I will readily allow myself to be persuaded of whatever you might decide. But certainly I myself should first say what I think is expedient in the present situation. It is your concern either to decide if what I say seems advantageous, or for each to bring forward their own opinion of what will resolve the present situation and the even more difficult circumstances expected, preserving us and the entire hegemony of the Romans. I consider nothing to bring greater benefit and safety to all than, having gone to the Empress, to willingly entrust myself to her, so that she holds all authority to decide whatever she wishes about me. And if, preferring to do what is just, she convenes a court and allows opportunity for defence, I will take courage in God, who is the protector of truth and rejoices in this name,⁴ to refute

everything with great ease, as they are lies and calumnies. If this happens, having resigned every office and removed every pretext for calumny and envy, I will stay at home, having nothing to do with public affairs, even if all men attempt to force or persuade me otherwise. If, however, she makes no mention of what is just, nor of what is appropriate, but having succumbed utterly to calumnies, condemns me *in absentia* even to the worst punishment, I will bear everything gladly, believing it is better by far to choose even a convict's collar and prison /152/ and confiscation of property, and even something more awful than these, than to provide a pretext for civil war. For who among you all knows so well as I the evils that will quite clearly arise from this war? I would not provide any reason whatsoever, but I would rather prefer to be among those in Hades, ignorant of what is going on, than among the living to see this brought about by others. Therefore it is this which seems, at least to me, to benefit all the Romans in common. If it is possible for you to discover anything more beneficial than this, just as I have said, I will allow myself to be persuaded. For it is better, if I am wrong somehow, to become convinced of this by the majority than to accomplish great things by only believing in my own intelligence."

Chapter 25

So the Grand Domestic spoke in such a fashion. The most prominent of those who were present from the senate and the army said, as if using one tongue and mind, "Even before these innovations were dared and civil war had a beginning, each of us deliberated much and many times concerning these matters, not only in private to himself but also all together, as these are matters of necessity and we consider them of great concern, perhaps to the very life of each of us. Therefore it will not be necessary to examine the right course of action at the present moment, as we have spent a long time already thinking about these matters to find a solution. You, not least by the remarks you related to us /153/ just now, enabled us to understand whatever will be necessary and useful to all alike and to advise others. For the evils which arise from a civil war, which cause you to shudder and which you have said are most terrible, also cause us to shudder likewise and we believe every effort and all readiness must be used so that we do not fall into these sorts of evils. And we all consider the one kindling this most terrible war and plotting against everyone is our common enemy, and is the one who is able to make peace. If he willingly neglects this, he is a traitor to society, a slanderer and envier, who is destroying the underlying security of the state.

"Accordingly, we may consider, assuming these things are accomplished – those which you have spoken about – whether the war is ended or rather takes its beginning from these actions. For if you, just as you contend, surrender yourself to justice, either you will retire from public affairs, escaping from the sycophants while loathing their great ingratitude and ungraciousness regarding all that is good, or having been condemned *in absentia*, you will suffer an irreparable injury. Do you think we have come to such a state of madness, or think us so very submissive and servile and unworthy of the glory of your earlier life, so as to serve Apokaukos as slaves,

doing everything that is ordered by that man, who is no better than one of the masses? Indeed each of us would think it is more appropriate to sink quickly into darkness and to be together with those who are in Hades /154/ than to endure such a thing. But at once some of us will openly wage war, with all available strength, from the cities we rule and by each raising an army of his own; of the others, some will offer themselves and their cities to Alexandros, the emperor of the Mysians, others we will put into the hands of Stephanos who rules over the Triballi, believing it much better to have barbarian men as lords than to serve those who were despised by us until yesterday or the day before. Therefore it will come about for these reasons that the war will not only be of ourselves against each other, with everyone plundering and carrying off each other's possessions and doing so no less than external enemies, if not even more, inasmuch as we know each other's possessions more accurately, ruining Roman affairs. But it will also cause the complete destruction of the Roman Empire; not only will many cities and armies be lost but also great revenues, from which our enemies will grow stronger and, even if previously they were evenly balanced against us, the result will be that the affairs of the Romans are weakened. So there is a risk that everything could be destroyed, and the admired and renowned Empire of the Romans will be enslaved by the Mysians or indeed other, even worse, barbarians. Those within the Empire would be revolting and destroying each other as much as possible, while external enemies would press upon us and make use of time as their strongest ally.

“Having then all this in mind, and dreading the expected calamities, we will say nothing new and we will not advise you; /155/ the Emperor himself thought a certain thing to be of benefit to all and, when he was alive, he compelled it to be done, and when he was dying he recommended and urged it in his final commands. It is this: you must put on the imperial garb and lay hold of affairs more powerfully, as only when you do this will you

be able to put an end to the anticipated misfortunes.¹ For it is not only we, all those who are present here right now, but also if there is any man of renown and ability to do great deeds living elsewhere, he would not be displeased about what is happening but he would also consider that day, on which it will be possible to end the civil strife, to be one of celebration. And all of us will proclaim you emperor most readily, being accustomed to be led by you, not just at this time but for all time before this, and give honour and goodwill, as is appropriate to an emperor, or to one who is very nearly one.

“The instigators of this war, because they thought they would win easily if they announced their hostility to the emperor [Kantakouzēnos], upon seeing their affairs being reversed and not progressing according to their plan, while blaming many things for their thoughtlessness, will necessarily proceed to make peace, if indeed they have even a little concern for the safety of the whole [Empire] and they understand they should not busy themselves with causing outrage and ruin to both their own and the entire of public affairs. If, therefore, between us here together with you and those who are your enemies, there appears to be no other salvation for everyone then it seems better, having been persuaded by us, /156/ to do that which is of benefit to the public, just as you have promised from the outset, rather than to be persuaded by their arguments; from these there can be no benefit: either you will be destroyed by the sycophants or choose to pass life in bitter retirement from public affairs. Indeed, on the contrary, there will be civil strife, anarchy, plundering of property, countless murders, slavery, uprisings in the cities and the extreme and most fearful of evils that one can have in mind – slavery to the barbarians – since they will attempt to enslave us by using their participation in our war against each other. So what appears to be of benefit to we ourselves and to everyone else has been stated. It is possible for you, by choosing one or the other, either to prevent the expected misfortunes, or, [by standing trial] to be perceived by the Romans

as willingly appearing to be the ultimate cause of such great evils because of the ingratitude of certain people, giving no concern at all for others while contriving benefit for yourself, if indeed it is possible to call this beneficial.”² The leaders of the senate and the commanders of the army replied to the Grand Domestic in such a way.

He, seeing their demand was just, realised they had laid out true and reasonable arguments, and because of this he could not contradict such a clear exposition of the truth. Nevertheless, hesitating greatly regarding the change and shrinking back, as he knew plainly that changes of this sort were usually the cause of evils, /157/ he withdrew into himself, directing his thoughts as to how he would reply, and deep silence filled the *theatron*, with everyone poised in suspense to hear what he would say. Having scarcely shaken the swirling doubts from his thoughts, he said, “My previous arguments concerning what we must do are not altered in essence nor overturned; I still hold them, and I myself would choose not only to be robbed of my property, but would if necessary suffer desperate maladies of the body, rather than provide a pretext for civil war. For you know of the hatred which I have had, since my early youth, for the seizure of another man’s goods or for rejoicing in murders and robbery and the ruin of men. Yet I would be ashamed, not only in front of barbarians or Hellenes who have heard of the friendship of myself and the Emperor for one another, but even before the sun or any other lifeless thing, if I now appeared as the enemy of his children after his death. For not only, if it were possible, would I have chosen with pleasure my death for the sake of his life but also I call upon the eye that oversees all [God] as my witness, that after his death I intended only what was the very best and most beneficial for his wife and children, and to do everything and to place myself in every danger so that they would be free of all difficulties and the affairs of the Romans would be raised to great glory and good fortune, while remaining in my present office.

“At this moment, and no less following the war which has been proclaimed by them /158/ for no reason and contrary, I might say, to any thought of justice, I have chosen to patiently endure the very worst acts for the sake of not giving the impression to the masses that I initiated a war against the Empress for the purpose of gaining power. Since the calamities expected from withdrawing from state affairs are greater and more terrible <than the alternative>, I am unwilling to do this, and I would clearly be deserting you in the face of danger. I understand it is appropriate for me to be persuaded as you have advised, not because of any desire for glory (for I currently enjoy the greatest satisfaction also in my present office) nor because of money (for that which I have presently is nearly greater in quantity; I give it freely it to those wanting to steal it), rather it is for the sake of all of you and the common salvation of the Romans that I prefer the great and numerous dangers that are to be expected instead of security in the present moment. And those things which, to me, seemed most beneficial – not from foolishness, or idleness, but from wishing to provide no pretext for war – I now willingly give them up, turning myself to what you expect will be of help to you, just as I have said.

“Since I choose to do this not because of personal advantage but for the benefit of yourselves and the public, it would certainly not be just, or pious besides, for all of you alike to encourage me to do this and to indicate there is no other path to safety than this one, but then a short while later, if matters have not turned out as you planned, to desert one by one, /159/ procuring some imaginary safety for yourselves, while abandoning me alone in the face of dangers which I entered into for the sake of all of you, when I could have saved myself without risk. Certainly this would not only be damaging to me but also to you. For it is not possible for the helmsman to save the ship if the sailors abandon cooperation in favour of strife; no hope of safety would remain for the sailors, the ship would be lost. Instead all

must have the same resolution and demonstrate equal perseverance in trials, thus accomplishing great things. For none of the ancients raised a trophy at the expense of their enemies while being idle and lazy and slothful, but endured every labour and appeared undaunted in their trials. If what is taking place is not acceptable to someone and he does not want to risk everything, patiently staying here because of his goodwill to me, but he thinks rather it is necessary to save his home than to be raised up by empty hopes, I leave these matters in his hands; having employed free speech and disclosed their opinion, they must go back home – by no means suspecting any unfriendliness because of this but even enjoying equal favour from me if they live somewhere else for a while. If after such consideration and amnesty someone shows their wickedness, having escaped in order to plunder and ruin the masses, let him know that he will not be let off without the proper punishment, but he will teach the others to be wise and not to deceive in such ways.³ /160/

“So, for the preservation of yourselves and the others, I have chosen to do exactly what you have advised. I call upon you, for the glory of yourselves and your ancestors, to demonstrate fitting courage and to strongly resist our enemies, who attack us unjustly and first began the war. They dare to attack me, contrary to God’s wholly just dispensation; accordingly, before long, the depravity of those who have started war unjustly, as well as your prudence and your preference for justice, will be manifest. Yet it seems to me that in addition to the first embassy, despite it being maltreated unjustly and unreasonably, we should send a second to those who have now chosen to make war against us, so that we will be greater than them in our magnanimity, just as we are in all other respects, as not only did they begin the war, but it has clearly already been inflamed by them, although they were asked about peace many times. Perhaps they did not accept our embassy because they were thinking at first that we would be

overcome easily. Now, seeing that matters have not turned out according to their judgement, they may take somewhat better and wiser counsel and may spare us from many efforts and the others from the horrors expected from war.”

Chapter 26

The Grand Domestic spoke in such a way. All those present applauded these words and gave thanks to God that they were able to persuade him to become emperor. For they imagined that, having become so, he would resolve all their difficulties. Having departed from there, /161/ they reported what had been decided to the others, and they held a general celebration and rejoiced together with each other. The Grand Domestic ordered the imperial regalia to be prepared by those appointed for this purpose. And on the following day oaths were taken; all swore to be loyal to the Grand Domestic alone and to observe honest and pure faith towards him.

Before this war began, since he had been preparing to campaign in the west, he had sent his army's mercenaries forward and they had advanced as far as Macedonia. Furthermore, many excellent soldiers, those who were settled in Morrha¹ and the cities of Rhodopē² which were subject to the Romans, under the command of the general Matthaios Kantakouzēnos, the Grand Domestic's oldest son, were also encamped around the Chalkidikē in Thrace³ along with their general. Having been thus commanded by his father, they awaited his arrival. He immediately summoned them by letters to Didymoteichon, so they would be present at his proclamation, and, without hesitating, they were present. And since the brothers of his wife, Iōannēs and Manouēl, the sons of Andronikos Asanēs, were still secured by fetters in Bēra, a fortress in Thrace, just as we have said, he sent their sister, along with a military force.⁴ She released them from prison and ordered them to be led to him in Didymoteichon, after occupying the tower with a garrison and appointing as commander one of those well-disposed towards /162/ them [Kantakouzēnos' faction].

He was busy for a time in the preparation of the imperial insignia, when he thought not to hesitate and not to neglect an opportunity, as the eager warmongers in Byzantium would not hold back from any scheme, and so he himself wrote to all the cities throughout Thrace and Macedonia to turn them towards him, as he had by this time become Emperor of the Romans and able to do good to those submitting to him and, on the contrary, if they took up arms against him, to harm them. In private, he was winning over the leading men of the cities and the soldiers close to each of them with letters, reminding them of previous favours which he had done for them and therefore, if they showed their goodwill now and chose to do what he ordered, they would enjoy greater and more remarkable good fortune. He signed the documents with red letters, just as is the custom for emperors. With the letters he also sent guards, selected from the hoplites and light-armoured bowmen, to those cities which he knew could easily be held by garrisons.

So when these letters were delivered to each recipient, some received them eagerly and promised to do everything he commanded; others were displeased, thinking that his actions were a revolt against the emperor [Iōannēs V]. Even so, bowing down before the power of the future emperor [Kantakouzēnos], they received the letters, having been persuaded by those holding great power among them, choosing to do as he ordered. It was clear right from the outset that they would be rebels, if they could seize an opportunity. Among those who were convinced from the start /163/ to choose the side of the Emperor Palaiologos, some, having arrested the couriers, sent them as prisoners to Byzantium along with the letters, first stripping them of all they had. Others, who thought fit to act more moderately, rejected the letters and they prepared for war as, if it came, they would defend themselves.

When many of the letters were carried to Byzantium, those around the Patriarch, of the sort who had previously accused the Grand Domestic of intending to take the throne before the Empress, rejoiced and were filled by all sorts of pleasure. Exhibiting the letters, they said, "We were not bad judges of what was going to happen, but we reckoned well in our judgement, and he acts well with these deeds, proving outright that what we have been saying is true." They jeered many blasphemies about him without restraint, and did not hold back from anything that was shameful in their insolence. And since the Empress was now persuaded that the Grand Domestic had openly become her enemy, she sent a few of these letters to his mother, who was under guard in her house, denouncing her son for such things as he had done.

She [Theodōra] said these words did not concern her. For she [the Empress] should have earlier disclosed the accusations to her, when they accused her son. For then nothing of what was now happening would have occurred but she would have gained everything that was best from her son [Kantakouzēnos], for herself and her children and moreover all the Romans. /164/ For she knew his mind most clearly, that it inclined towards doing that which is kind rather than wicked. At that point she was under a close guard, by which she was kept under surveillance by them, without any charges being brought. Also there had been the outrage against his ambassadors, who came for the sake of peace and asked that he should be called to trial, so that if he were convicted as a perjurer he would accept the death sentence. "So why should he offer any justification for what he has been doing under imperial authority, as you say, whether indeed these are his letters or not?"

Concerning the letters, therefore, she [Theodōra] said there was nothing to answer; but she would give the best advice, as it seemed to her, if indeed they were willing to be persuaded. And it is this: "Do not disregard my son, and do not despise him as incapable of great things. For not only the

Romans but also those barbarians living far away from the Romans are not ignorant of his power and intelligence and experience. So send ambassadors to him as quickly as possible, who will negotiate peace. He will not hesitate in so far as he must repair what has been done in words and deeds, if anything has come to pass, even matters which seem insoluble. If you yourselves decide otherwise, then it will be your concern to settle your private and public affairs well." So the Grand Domestic's mother responded in such a way to the accusations.

The men sent by the Empress, having been commanded to do so, cast her [Theodōra] out of her house and led her into the palace, and they incarcerated her in a house built by /165/ Emperor Andronikos the first [Andronikos II], using it instead as a prison. They confiscated the greater part of her property, which was substantial, except for any silver, gold, precious stones and pearls which she, anticipating this, had removed secretly beforehand. But there was property beyond counting in provisions – freshly-harvested wheat and barley and other produce – not only in her house near the palace, but also there were other granaries holding many times more produce than this near the Gorgoepēkoos Monastery.⁵ Those who supported the war and were entrusted to administer public affairs carried off everything heedlessly, not for any public benefit, but gratified themselves and others.

After this, by tracking down the friends and associates of the Grand Domestic, they found a great amount of money. Some of this was betrayed by the keepers themselves in the hope of sparing part of the money, inasmuch as it was being handed over to those who did not know how much there was in the beginning; others were forced to disclose <everything> through compulsion and torments and every form of torture. Furthermore, many who had nothing from him [Kantakouzēnos] were also under suspicion; they endured these cruelties simply because of intimacy with him.

So such things took place in Byzantion and an Iliad of evils⁶ enveloped the friends of the Grand Domestic.

Chapter 27

Once the imperial garments had been prepared in Didymoteichon and the appointed day for the proclamation of the new emperor arrived,¹ all those staying /166/ in Didymoteichon at that time were present at his house; not only those of good birth and related to the Emperor by blood, but also the rest of the senators² and the army. Having previously donned the imperial garb, the new emperor then, in view of all, adorned his feet with the red boots; one was fitted by the closest of his blood relatives and the other by those who were foremost in nobility and most splendid among the Latin mercenaries. Taking in his own hands the imperial *pilos*,³ which was lying on the ground before the icon of the immaculate Mother of God, he placed it on his head. At once those accustomed to chant such things began the acclamations of the emperors. And first the Empress Anna was acclaimed and, after her, her son the Emperor Iōannēs, and third the Emperor Iōannēs Kantakouzēnos with the Empress Eirēnē.⁴ They made the commemoration of the emperors and empresses in the same manner as the holy services, and similarly of the Patriarch Iōannēs.

After the acclamation the Emperor [Kantakouzēnos], mounted on his steed, and all the others, as many as there were, following on horseback, went to the church named after the Great Martyr Geōrgios Palaiokastritēs,⁵ and he rendered *proskynesis*,⁶ and he conferred the dignity of knighthood on certain men of the Latin army, doing everything that was customary for them.⁷ Having returned from there to the palace, he feasted splendidly together with his wife the Empress, in the presence of all according to the established customs for emperors.⁸ /167/ The brothers of the Empress, Iōannēs and Manouēl, and the cousin of the Emperor, Iōannēs Angelos, served them during the banquet. So the new emperors, wearing magnificent golden apparel, celebrated that day and those taking part with them from

the senate and the army left nothing undone that could possibly cheer the day of celebration. On the next day, having stripped off their golden garments, they [Kantakouzēnos and Eirēnē] cloaked themselves in white apparel, a sign that the emperors were mourning.⁹ The Emperor explained the reason for the change to those present: on the day before, because of the celebration, he had been clothed in that magnificent apparel but now that day had passed by, it was necessary to mourn again the death of his brother who was also emperor [Andronikos III].

And it is worthwhile to remember certain things which the crowd are accustomed to take as signs in relation to the proclamations of emperors, thinking there is some infallible evidence of the future success or failure of the emperors proclaimed, as if there is need to consider that such things are managed by divine providence rather than happening as fortune may have it, since God's providence concerning human affairs lies in secrecy and is manifest only to those who are pure in thought and are judged worthy of such gifts by God. For on the day of the proclamation when it was necessary for the new emperor to put on the imperial garment, it happened that the inner part was rather tighter than needed, so that it was unable to cover the body, although greatly /168/ stretched, while the outer part was completely the opposite, being far looser than needed, yet both were sewn by a tailor who had made many well-fitted <garments> on previous occasions. On account of this a certain one of the Emperor's closest friends who was present stated plainly that while the early part of the Emperor's reign would certainly be a strain and give great difficulty to the Emperor, just as the garment now squeezed his body, the later part was measured more generously than required and would allow great relaxation. The same day, while the divine liturgy was performed, it happened that the very passage of the Evangelist was read in which our saviour and the king of the ages Jesus Christ was talking with his own disciples concerning what would happen to

them. "If they persecute me," he said, "they will also persecute you; if they give heed to my word, they will also give heed to yours."¹⁰ Those present, noting this, said that the petty men and corrupters and sycophants and those who cared nothing for Christ's commandments of salvation would persecute the Emperor and show their great madness against him, just as the Jews had persecuted Christ their benefactor with great zeal. And they would prevail against him [Kantakouzēnos] for a while, just as those men [the Jews] had also imagined they did by slaying their redeemer. Later those who were good and virtuous and worthy of Christ's commandments heeded His words, just as they will heed the word of the Emperor and will do everything commanded by him. /169/ Such are the things the masses ascribed to these words, which later turned out very closely to their interpretation.

The Emperor himself, though, had great faith in the Archbishop of Didymoteichon¹¹ and respected him as a superior, as he had been proven in many ways previously to have no small share of divine grace. The same day after the proclamation, he sent to him explaining what had happened, that he had done what was reckoned to be beneficial by common opinion, and he asked him to make prayers to God on his behalf, so that the good and pleasing will of God would be fulfilled for him. For this was his custom, to ask such a thing from those he respected, to make prayers to God on behalf.

He [the Archbishop] said that it was not good to send tidings after the event. For when he [Kantakouzēnos] needed something, God permitting, he should have asked beforehand, since it was possible. Now nothing remained other than to ask God for the wellbeing of the community and of himself. To be Emperor of the Romans, as he too knew, is something decided by God. Besides, the lips swell from having eaten an unripe fig. He implied by this parable that many dangers and trials would first befall him [Kantakouzēnos]. Wishing as it were to reveal from where and from whom

the dangers would come, he [the Archbishop] reminded him of a vision of what would happen, which he was deemed worthy to see when the Emperor Andronikos was alive.

And the new emperor explained this [to those present]: /170/ when the Emperor [Andronikos] was still alive, and he was still content with the fortune of a private citizen, this very Archbishop had made an exhortation to him denouncing Apokaukos – whom he named thus, without his title – <instructing him> not to make too much of it, but to be on guard against the man, as he would be responsible for a great insult. And when he [Kantakouzēnos] said that he appeared to be jesting – as what kind of an insult could an egg offer to a stone? – the Archbishop said that arrogance is a great evil, particularly in those who have otherwise attained perfect virtue and reached the highest level of earthly fortune. And he [Kantakouzēnos] said that these comments did not proceed from arrogance but from understanding his own great power and the other's weakness; unless one may blame a wolf for venturing to consider itself stronger than a sheep, and the lion for thinking itself to differ greatly from the deer in strength. Yet he asked that he [the Archbishop] make his vision clear to him, as he would certainly trust whatever was said, because although Nature is created by God to be unchanging, human affairs turn out otherwise and undergo great change.

Having been asked many times, to persuade him to describe the things he had seen, he [the Archbishop] said, "Once, while I was praying and meditating with myself alone and God, I seemed to see you standing before me. Suddenly Apokaukos attacked with excessive rage, and was pushing with such great force that he nearly succeeded in /171/ throwing you down. Nevertheless, although forced back by his charge on to one knee, by bracing your other foot and your left hand firmly on the ground, you resisted his pushing. And that man, although labouring greatly, was able to do nothing

more. You, having risen up from your fall, took up a cudgel and swung it down many times on his head; unable to withstand the blows, he collapsed to the ground. Following on, you severed his head from his body with a knife. So that was my vision," he said. "Considering to myself whatever this signifies, I think he will start a war against you which will bring many and great dangers. But, following these dangers, God will grant you victory. For this reason you must not be remiss but guard yourself against that man." So the Emperor related such matters concerning the Archbishop.

Those present, having also heard the parable about the fig, <thought> it confirmed what had been signified by <Christ's> sayings and the ill-fitting garments. For they paid attention to his [the Archbishop's] words as if they were prophetic when he related something about the future, not only because he had correctly foretold what would happen many times before, but also because he had accomplished something miraculous, which is possible for God alone and those favoured by Him on account of their purity and elevated way of life. In regard to this, there is also another such incident, which I will narrate for the sake of amusement.

A certain one of the eminent citizens of Didymoteichon was suspicious, not without cause, that his marriage-vows had been violated by someone, /172/ and he was not mistaken in his reasoning, for they had been violated. Being unable to bear keeping his suspicion silent because of jealousy, he asked his wife for assurances, which would be sufficient to persuade him that what he suspected was not true or, otherwise, he threatened to do terrible things, on account of her wantonness towards their wedding-vows. The assurances were for her to receive a hot iron in her hands.¹² For otherwise he was not able to believe her. The woman, well aware that admitting what she had done would be a terrible thing (for the penalty for this offence towards her husband was death)¹³ and also thinking that to lay hold of the iron would clearly prove her crime, was thus being

driven to the utmost perplexity from both sides. She knew she must take refuge with the great Archbishop. Having gone to him and explained everything, she begged him to support her and not to ignore her, who had fallen into the worst evils because of her foolishness, but to persuade her husband to desist with the trial, teaching him, for her sake, that she could have done nothing of what he suspected. And he [the Archbishop], inquiring if some repentance regarding her licentiousness had entered into her mind and if she would promise to be prudent for the rest of her life, saw many streams of tears pouring forth. Since she insisted that she would never dare to do such things again, but also asked to be punished for her sins, he first lectured her for a long time concerning temperance and how she must not commit such a crime against her husband, then commanded her to lay hold of the iron, just as her husband demanded, and to brave the heat. And she, returning to her husband, /173/ asked him to proceed with the trial. He – for he could not bear to rid himself of his jealousy about his wife unless there was some unambiguous <proof> – took her alone inside a certain church sanctuary and prepared the iron, as much as was possible, by heating it in a fire then, gripping it with fire-tongs, he placed it in the hands of his wife. And he ordered her to walk three times around the holy *skimpous*.¹⁴ When it came to pass that she was holding it without suffering, as she was not exposed to the heat at all, the man wondered at the power of the truth and, having abandoned his suspicion about his wife, he ordered the iron to be placed on the *skimpous*. When it was laid there, it burned through the *skimpous* owing to its great heat and it fell to the ground.

In such ways was this man [the Archbishop] deemed worthy of grace and he accomplished many more marvellous things, as we will mention later at an appropriate moment.¹⁵

Chapter 28

The Emperor Kantakouzēnos, on the day after his proclamation, having gathered an assembly from the army and the senators who were present, said, “Romans, although I have related to you many times before my goodwill, care, and concern towards the Empress and her son the emperor, I am never, even until the present moment, satisfied without always relating these matters. Because of this I now call upon He who knows all clearly even before it happens [God] as witness of what is said, as I am not aware, at least in my own mind, of having turned away from correct reasoning /174/ but I have taken every care and effort not only for the betterment of the Romans, but also to preserve authority for the Empress and her son and to allow nobody, at least as far as it is in my power, to do wrong. It was also necessary for her, through paying attention to these matters, to consider what is true and fair about me and not to condemn me *in absentia*, having been convinced by men who are sycophants. Since she, having ignored the truth, preferred the lie and, although I have done nothing wrong and have provided absolutely no pretext for war, she decided I was an enemy and proclaimed to all the cities that I should not be received but fought with all strength. We did what seemed beneficial to you and to me in the present circumstances, having been driven together by necessity. Certainly I am very grateful to you because of your enthusiasm and goodwill for me. I believe it is right, demonstrating the same and equal solicitude for you, to advise and to command what I think would be of benefit to each of you. For it would not be friendly if, because of pursuing some private interest of my own, I neglected the safety of others. Accordingly, for those of you who have homes and children and wives and the other means of life in cities which have not submitted to us, or in unwalled towns, it is not necessary to abandon your homes while persevering here because of loyalty

towards us. For it is absurd for friendship towards me to be perceived as the cause of great misfortunes to you. For all those men, who are rash revolutionaries beyond all moderation, will not restrain themselves from any crime. /175/ But departing to your homes, you will retain the same favour for us and, when the time comes, you will show this.”

Then he ordered the treasurers to give money to the mercenaries if some of their pay was owed, and he added a bonus. As for the others, those who held incomes from villages, having distributed sufficient gold to them as well, he sent them to their homes. They gave much and great gratitude for this kindness and so they promised to show themselves worthy of his benefaction, whenever they found opportunity. He retained around him all those who were without wives and children; if anybody else volunteered, he also stayed behind.

After this he picked out sixteen regiments from the available army and, having appointed as generals the *pinkernēs* Iōannēs [Angelos] and Manouēl Asanēs, the brother of his wife, he ordered them to march upon Byzantion and, having camped around the Melas River,¹ to confine the army of Byzantion <in the city> so that they could not advance against the cities which had sided with him. Meanwhile he was preparing the remaining soldiers so, having passed through Peirinthos² and Selymbria and won them over (for they were in two minds and had not sided clearly with either of the emperors), he would go as far as Byzantion, making a trial of the walls together with the generals, the *pinkernēs* and Asanēs, if he was able to join them.

When the letters of the Emperor Kantakouzēnos arrived in Adrianople, /176/ just as they had in the other cities too, urging them to recognise him, who had already become emperor, the *dynatoi*³ among the citizens received them readily and ordered the letters to be read out before an assembly. But the common people were not pleased and were clearly

going to revolt; some of them openly spoke against him. The *dynatoi* drove them away in anger, using not only insults but also the lash. They endured the wanton violence of the *dynatoi* at this time, fearing them as they were numerous, and there were not yet demagogues who would provoke them to anger.

When night fell a certain man named Branos, who was one of the common people, labouring with his spade and his hands and from which he provided a meagre living, and two other associates, called Mougdoughēs and Phrangopoulos,⁴ went round the houses of the commoners during the night and persuaded them not to be complacent but to rise up against the *dynatoi*, as not only would they be freed from their arrogance but they would also plunder their property. And having organised a substantial popular force, they set upon the *dynatoi* and seized all of them, except for a few who, noticing the plot, escaped the danger by hiding themselves away. Having locked them [the *dynatoi*] in the towers of the city and set a guard, since by that time it was day, they went *en masse* to the houses of those they had captured, plundered their possessions then tore down their houses, not only stripping off the woodwork but, in their frenzy, even tearing down the walls as far as /177/ their foundations. And there was no awful deed whatsoever that was not dared against those who sided with the Emperor Kantakouzēnos. And while many, because of private disagreements, exploited the popular movement, others, who had money owed to them, were accused of Kantakouzēnism by those who seized them. Thus terrible civil strife was kindled from the outset.

What took place among them at the beginning seemed even more brutal when, later, the entire Roman world also turned to far greater cruelty and savagery. Everywhere the common people considered it their duty to acclaim the Emperor [Iōannēs V] Palaiologos as their lord, while the better people⁵ either sincerely favoured the Emperor Kantakouzēnos or were

attacked by the poor and those wanting to revolt for the same reason without any evidence. The attacks came easily against those who had money, which the poor sought to plunder, and against those who had not wished to join the others in similarly unruly behaviour. And the common people held great hatred towards their betters, who had previously treated them as they liked when there was peace, and hoped besides to plunder their properties, which were many. They were ready to revolt even with the slightest pretext and dared the most terrible deeds. The agitators were mostly from among the very poorest and were robbers and thieves and, being compelled by their poverty, they did not hold back from any insufferable deed. They incited the common people to do the same, /178/ while pretending goodwill for the Emperor Palaiologos. For this reason they called themselves the most loyal.

Later, it was just as if some malignant and terrible disease was spreading across the entire dominion of the Romans, and it provoked many who had previously seemed moderate and reasonable to similar violence. For in peace and the absence of wars, cities and individuals have better dispositions and are little tempted by shameful and mean actions, because they have not fallen into the constraints of necessity. War, stealing away daily prosperity,^a is a violent teacher and what was previously regarded as unconscionable comes to pass.

So all the cities in common revolted against their betters and those elsewhere, who were lagging behind, on learning of what was done before, displayed greater excesses and advanced even to massacres. The irrational rage of these savages was considered courage, and insensibility to kin and lack of feeling was considered steadfast loyalty to the emperor. The man embittered against the Emperor Kantakouzēnos and producing shameful and harsh insults against him was thought loyal, while the man of sound

^a II, 178.9: ἀπορίαν amended to εὐπορίαν (following FK III, 447, n. 270).

mind, in control of his tongue and maintaining a respectable character was immediately viewed with suspicion. Similarly, plotting and lies and fabricating false accusations produced a reputation for intelligence. And betrayal of the closest relations was pursued as if it were something noble with a decent name. Thus every /179/ form of wickedness was exhibited in the cities at that time because of the sedition and there was nothing whatsoever that the more decent people did not endure. For the aristocracy was ruined at once, either being accused of previous goodwill to the Emperor Kantakouzēnos or because they did not immediately make war on him, while the middle class citizens were ruined either because they did not join in with the revolutionaries or by envy of their superiority. And human nature, always accustomed to act contrary to the laws, then showed itself quite powerless against anger which, when not restrained by the rulers, is stronger than justice, overwhelming the laws on this account, and an enemy of the Almighty, if it were possible for it to prevail.

Chapter 29

Nevertheless, the people in Adrianople escorted their *dynatoi* prisoners to Byzantium, fearing that the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, who was staying nearby, would march in full force against them and they would not be able^a to resist because nearly all of the soldiers they needed were either prisoners or otherwise did not dare to peep out of their houses, in which they were hiding. Furthermore, they were not expecting any help to arrive for them from Byzantium, for they knew that the army of the Emperor Kantakouzēnos was encamped there. So they sent an embassy to the emperor of the Mysians, asking him to help them as quickly as possible.

Alexandros, just as was natural, came to Adrianople without hesitating, not only because of the revolt but also thinking that, if he could bribe /180/ the rulers of the city with money, he could easily persuade them to go over to him. In fact, he accomplished none of his goals. For the leaders of the city said they were calling for an ally, not a master. But his arrival damaged the Emperor Kantakouzēnos no less, as it was believed by all to have happened on the Empress' behalf. For the^b army had been sent by him [Kantakouzēnos] to the River Melas and its generals, considering it disadvantageous to risk danger there while their emperor was being besieged by the Mysians, broke camp <to join him>. Some of the senators and not a few of the soldiers deserted the generals during the retreat, escaping to Byzantium. And among them was Iōannēs Batatzēs,¹ leading the unit called 'Achyraītōn'.²

The cities of Thrace and Macedonia which were obedient to the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, upon learning that the invasion of the Mysians might be in opposition to the Emperor [Kantakouzēnos], collectively

^a II, 179.15: οἰοίτε amended to οἰοί τε (following P).

^b II, 180.6: ἦτε amended to ἦ, τε (following S, pers. comm. Sonja Schönauer).

revolted in favour of the Empress, except for a very few. And having arrested their rulers and the *dynatoi* among the citizens, they sent them to Byzantion in chains. The cities in Rhodopē were doing the same and so their war was jointly against the Emperor Kantakouzēnos and the *dynatoi* among them. For the body of citizens was split almost in two, and the few were acting in the interests of the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, while the people, led by the agitators and the poor, chose the Empress instead. Everywhere the masses /181/ were stronger, destroying the *dynatoi*, and terrible confusion and disorder gripped the cities.

When Alexandros, the emperor of the Mysians, was not able to occupy the city of Adrian, he departed and took up a position near Didymoteichon, although he did not yet cross the Hebros.³ Having picked out no small force from his own army, he sent them out plundering the cities across Thrace. So it happened that the army retiring from Byzantion, with the *pinkernēs* Angelos, chanced to meet no small number of them and, being stronger, killed them in a battle. Similarly a Persian army, which had been carried over to plunder among the coastal villages of Thrace, having by chance encountered the surviving Mysians, killed or captured alive many of them. The remnant returned to their home camp, not only having gained nothing but also having lost many of their own.

Alexandros, although he had previously been contemptuously disposed towards the Emperor Kantakouzēnos – because he thought he [Kantakouzēnos] would hardly be able to stand against him – having heard, in addition to the blows struck from both sides by the Romans and the Persians, that the Emperor was well established in Didymoteichon with a large and good quality army, feared for those remaining alive, lest his boldness might not turn out well for him. And, having sent an embassy, he negotiated for peace.

Among those who were close to the Emperor, those who were young and more aggressive advised him not to accept peace but rather urged him /182/ to battle. But he was not persuaded, thinking the war would bring them no benefit at all. "For if our struggle was against the Mysians alone," he said, "this boldness might have a reason. But now it is necessary for us to consider not so much them [the Mysians] than how we will defend ourselves against the Byzantines. For, if we defeat the Mysians, it will determine nothing more than how we drive them away; it is necessary to do this very thing to them, whether they are defeated or not. If we ourselves are defeated, it will be just as if we were deliberately acting as generals for our enemies against ourselves. So what would be more pleasant and beneficial to them, than to do to ourselves by thoughtlessness what they consider worthy of prayer? Besides, since Alexandros can produce no legitimate reason for war against us, we would be wrong if we were unwilling to be reconciled. For he did not come to make war against us but, having come for another reason, he harmed us unintentionally. And therefore, because there is no benefit to us from war and no just pretext to be had, one must rather choose peace."⁴

Having spoken in such a way, he summoned the [Mysian] ambassadors to him and negotiated about treaties. And since they were ready to be reconciled, having given gifts to them, he sent them back to their camp. Then, having sent an embassy to Alexandros, he also confirmed the treaty. Although the emperors also wished to meet with each other to make their friendship more secure, this was prevented by the hard winter which had arrived. Because /183/ the Mysian army was unable to endure this in tents, they withdrew to their own country, some of the soldiers and their horses having been killed by the cold.

After this the Emperor Kantakouzēnos once more sent a peace embassy to the Empress. He asked her not to attempt similar or even worse acts because of her previous bad advice but – having understood from what

was happening that the war would bring no benefit but that the affairs of the Romans would be utterly destroyed – to choose peace. For, although he was able to defend himself through appropriate measures, he too greatly hoped to put aside war for the sake of the common good. Dēmētrios Sgouropoulos, who had previously participated in an embassy, and Iōannēs Pothos,⁵ from the household of the *pinkernēs* Angelos, were together appointed as ambassadors. Yet the Empress' officials in Byzantium made no response to the embassy. Having insulted one of the ambassadors a little while, they placed him under guard. Meanwhile, having tormented Sgouropoulos with many blows and having shaved his beard and head, they paraded him through the public marketplace. Then, having restrained him with manacles, they shut him in prison. The difference in the punishment was made for anyone who was among the Emperor's *oikeioi*, for whom it was necessary to exhibit utter bitterness and to neglect no extremity of insult. They believed that through them, they also dishonoured him [Kantakouzēnos] and at the same time would provoke him to seek revenge, laying aside his thoughts about peace. /184/ For they feared that if the Empress chose peace too, they would be destroyed, having been recognised as completely responsible for the present evils. They planned, having released Pothos from prison after a short time, to send him to the *pinkernēs*, promising many and wonderful things if he would desert the Emperor and choose to make war on him alongside them instead. For this reason they dealt with him [Pothos] somewhat more kindly.

Shortly later, they also arrested Syralēs⁶ while he was crossing over to Chios⁷ at the command of the Emperor [Kantakouzēnos] and, because he was one of his closest *oikeioi*, they brought him to Byzantium; having shaved off his hair and beard, and mounted him upon a donkey, facing towards its backside, they forced him to hold the donkey's tail to make it even more humiliating. And they led him in triumph in this way.

Chapter 30

When all the cities throughout Thrace except for Pamphilon¹ and Koprinos² and a certain fortress near Didymoteichon called Emphythion³ – which the Emperor [Kantakouzēnos] had built from its foundations many years before – had revolted in favour of the Empress, as if on an agreed signal the properties of the Emperor scattered in nearly all [the cities] were plundered (these had in fact convinced people everywhere to become hostile to him, since they saw not a little profit from war), as were the properties of those who were his followers, either truthfully or just suspected for some reason.

At all events, it is not possible to state very precisely the total sum of money looted from the Emperor and his mother by these acts of the Empress' party /185/ in Byzantion and all the other cities, and the sum was not known accurately to the owners themselves, because of its very magnitude. Many herds of cattle and oxen to the number of five thousand in pasture; yoke-pairs used for ploughing, one thousand; mares in pasture, two thousand five hundred; camels, two hundred; mules, three hundred; donkeys, five hundred; herds of swine, numbering fifty thousand pigs, and sheep, seventy thousand.⁴ And there was an unbelievable quantity of agricultural produce, altogether beyond counting. Although robbed of everything in a short time, he uttered nothing vulgar or miserly; he grieved only that it was squandered on nothing useful for the common good. For he maintained that he had intended that everything should be spent for the benefit of the Romans.

In Byzantion, Andronikos Asanēs, the Emperor's father-in-law, was appointed general for their campaign and, having undertaken the war against his son-in-law, rousing himself from there, he went round the cities throughout Thrace, all of which welcomed him eagerly and were

contributing to the war to the extent of their ability. The Emperor Kantakouzēnos had a large and good army but it was impractical to take the field because of the season; the army would have no refuge from the rains and snow, since all [the cities] had already become hostile. For this reason, when there was fair weather, /186/ they ravaged the nearby cities and treated them harshly, while the army from Byzantium slunk into the cities and had no power to oppose them. But when they were forced to withdraw by the winter, the Byzantines, regaining their courage again, put pressure on the cities which they considered hostile. And while the entire countryside was laid waste as if by enemies, <the inhabitants> migrated to the cities and there was nothing dreadful which they did not suffer, and the entire of inhabited Thrace was rendered a Scythian desert before long and the might of the Romans was squandered and destroyed by itself.

Of course, the barbarians were not negligent but, knowing that the Roman army was divided and at odds with itself, crossed over from Asia with cavalry and infantry. They caused the greatest destruction with nobody to oppose them, and in a short time the entire coast was rendered empty of people; everyone was enslaved except those living in the cities and fortresses. Later, after those areas were laid waste, they advanced inland. However the Romans continued marching against each other this way during the winter and causing damage to the full extent of their strength. But the army from Byzantium never dared to attack Didymoteichon, as the Emperor was there. However those who were settled in Tzernomianou,⁵ a certain fortress not far from Didymoteichon caused no little harm through their pillaging. For nearly all night without pause, they were lurking around the walls and /187/ robbing those they happened to encounter. They escaped detection not only because of their small numbers but also because of their experience; they were very well practiced in banditry. But the soldiers in Didymoteichon laid an ambush when, contrary to their habit in robbery,

more than the usual number of intruders came back; rising from their ambush, they killed quite a few of them.

The Emperor Kantakouzēnos intended that at the start of spring he would march on Byzantium and attempt to win it over to himself, if it was possible. All the same, during the winter, he was sending secretly to those ruling in Adrianople and negotiating with them. He convinced them to hand over the city. And they agreed on a day, during which he needed to approach, while bringing the entire army and pretending to march against other cities in Thrace, as if to besiege them, so that the attack against Adrianople would not be revealed by any of those who had chosen the Empress' party. He camped along the Hebros so he could cross over the next day. Having sent to his cousin, the *pinkernēs*, who was at that time garrisoning Pamphilon with one thousand soldiers, and the acropolis with other hoplites and one hundred light archers, he ordered him to come to him, leaving the garrison on the acropolis and three hundred of the army's cavalry, in order to watch the lower city, while bringing the rest.⁶ He also made the reason for which he called him clear.

Supposing the existing garrison on the acropolis to be sufficient for holding the city alone, he [Angelos] hastened to the Emperor bringing all the cavalry. The same night the north wind blew more keenly; on the next day /188/ the river began to freeze and shortly later it seemed covered in ice. But the surface was not hard enough to support the cavalry crossing over to him, nor <weak enough> to allow for the river crossing by means of the usual light boats. But while it appeared quite solid, it was too weak to hold the horses. On this account, there was great perplexity regarding the crossing. So the Emperor camped there for twelve days, waiting in case any opportunity to cross the Hebros arose.⁷ Meanwhile six hundred soldiers, arriving in Adrianople from Byzantium, prevented his attack.

In Pamphilon, since the *pinkernēs* had departed, taking the army, those who had previously feared to rebel corrupted some of the garrison with money. They persuaded them to treacherously empty the vessels they guarded, in which their water and wine and any other drinkable fluid were stored, for it was not possible to draw water from a spring. So when they heard the plot was accomplished, the entire city in common rose up in war against the garrison of the acropolis. And forcing them in this way to capitulate within days, being greatly distressed by thirst, they were brought to terms. Having tied up their leaders, of whom there were three, they sent them and the garrison to the Empress. Those in Byzantion, having dishonoured them and shown every form of insolence, put them in prison.⁸

Similarly, they also demonstrated great ingratitude to the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, sparing no insult. /189/ They proceeded to such absurdity, that whenever the young Emperor Iōannēs emerged from the palace for his leisure (for certainly there was no part of public business that could be managed by him owing to his very immature age; he was nine years old when his father died), some were sent before him by those controlling public affairs to provoke the people, both men and women, to pour out great abuse against Emperor Kantakouzēnos – even the most vile – while the young emperor was passing by. And they did this as if they were presenting a pleasant gift to the young emperor. Their aim in these outrages was nothing less than that the people would also be thrown into greater fear that, if the Emperor prevailed, he would harshly avenge himself for their insults. And this turned out according to their aim, for the more all the people were fired up, the more they feared this. And for this reason they were irreconcilable to him, instead they were raving because of their cowardly expectation of revenge. Besides, they [the conspirators] offered to all the suggestion that unless he was completely weakened and destroyed, they could not despise him in this way. Certainly the abuse was practiced by them no less for this

reason also: so that when he heard about it, he would give up on peace, thinking contrary to his inclination that such insults were brought about by the Empress. For it appeared to them that the war was not so terrible as the danger they considered peace would bring. On this account they contrived and plotted everything, so that it would not come about. /190/ However they did not ignobly abuse him before the Empress in this way (for she bore anger against these disgusting acts) but they poured out only the very worst insults and condemned his great moral perversity and wicked ways, that having enjoyed such great benefits from the Emperor [Andronikos] and so much affection, he [Kantakouzēnos] appeared on the contrary to be utterly thankless and wicked concerning his children. And so they were completely unrestrained in their speech.

And the Patriarch, giving little or no thought for ecclesiastical law, placed the Emperor himself – who had given no pretext for war, but had asked often and many times to be reconciled – as well as anyone who had dealings with him, under excommunication because he was <allegedly> seen as <intending> evil towards the Empress. The Emperor Kantakouzēnos not only showed himself to be doing completely the opposite but also convinced those with him <to do the same>. For he observed all honours due not only to the Empress, whenever it was necessary to commemorate her, but he also called the others by their official titles rather than by their names. Of course he used those [titles] granted to each by the Emperor Andronikos, since he [Kantakouzēnos] rejected the many which were bestowed later as contrary to justice.⁹ And when one of his followers, in his presence, shamefully insulted the *parakoimōmenos* and a certain other one of those in Byzantium, he ordered him to be beaten, saying that such things were appropriate for women who were prostitutes, not for men who did battle.

Commentary on Chapter 1

1: The ‘Palaiologoi emperors’ are Andronikos II Palaiologos (r. 1282-1328)¹ and his grandson Andronikos III Palaiologos (r. 1328-1341). Andronikos III’s revolt against his grandfather is the subject of Book I of the *Histories* and his reign is the subject of Book II.

2: Andronikos III Doukas Angelos Komnēnos Palaiologos, Emperor of the Romans 1328-1341 (*PLP* 21437).² Andronikos was the oldest son of Michaēl IX Palaiologos and Rita/Maria of Armenia, born on 25 March 1296 or 1297.³ He had been proclaimed co-emperor, in common with his father and grandfather, but tension between Andronikos II and his putative heir escalated rapidly after the death of Michaēl IX in October 1320. Following his son’s death, the old emperor asked governors to renew their oath of allegiance, previously sworn to all three emperors, to himself alone.⁴ The young Andronikos unsurprisingly saw this as signalling an intention to remove him from the succession in favour of his uncle Kōnstantinos and began to plan revolt. Kantakouzēnos is notably quiet on the reason for this change, stating only that a supernatural power must have influenced the old

¹ *PLP* 21436. For his reign, see Laiou, *Andronicus II*, passim, and Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 93-140.

² For a summary of his reign, see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 167-182. The major monograph remains Bosch, *Andronikos III*.

³ For Andronikos’ parents, see Ch.14:19 and Ch.14:14, respectively. His birth is recorded only by *CBB* I, 76, no. 8/11a. The stated year is 1297 (‘C,ωε’) but Schreiner amended it to 1296 on the basis of Greg. I, 474.11-12, which states Andronikos was 36 when his grandfather died in February 1332 (see *CBB* II, 215-6). Greg. I, 560.4-5, correspondingly states that Andronikos III was around 45 when he died, which again suggests he was born in 1296. Papadopulos, *Palaiologen*, 43, and Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 7, also accept 1296. However, both the *PLP* and *FK* I, 218, n. 32, prefer the chronicler over Grēgoras. Furthermore, Kantakouzēnos writes that Andronikos was aged 27 in November 1324 (*Kant.* I, 193.22-194.12), which points to the year 1297. Grēgoras is probably in error in this case.

⁴ *Kant.* I, 16.8-18.9.

man.⁵ However, Andronikos was tired of his grandson's apparently dissolute behaviour, which culminated in the death of his younger brother, the *despotēs* Manouēl, at the hands of Andronikos III's bodyguards in a case of mistaken identity.⁶ Grief from the incident was generally considered to have contributed to Michaēl IX's death shortly after.⁷ The resulting struggle continued for over seven years but comprised only three relatively short periods of violence: April-June 1321, winter 1321-July 1322, and October 1327-May 1328, separated by two compromise agreements, sworn at Rhēgion and Epibatai.⁸ During the longest period of harmony, Andronikos was formally crowned emperor on 2 February 1326.⁹ Following his final victory in 1328, Andronikos III deposed his grandfather, although he treated the old man and his partisans mildly.¹⁰ His conciliation of his defeated opponents may have been rooted in personal benevolence or political necessity, or both, but it certainly created a model for later conflicts, including Kantakouzēnos' conciliation of his own opponents. Of course, the apparent success of his usurpation also set a precedent for the intra-familial strife that continued throughout the rest of the Palaiologan era.

Andronikos III can be considered the last emperor to govern a relatively centralised and viable state, despite the disruption to the administrative system resulting from the struggle with his grandfather. Apparently wary of increasing separatism, he showed unusual concern to tour his territories, often holding court outside Constantinople,¹¹ and he minimised the scope for successful military revolts by leading his armies in

⁵ Kant. I, 14.8-15.

⁶ Greg. I, 285.12-286.3. For Manouēl, see *PLP* 21511.

⁷ For other causes of the revolt, see Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 284-8.

⁸ The period is the subject of the entire first book of the *Histories*. For a summary, see Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 9-52; Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 284-99; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 151-62.

⁹ *CBB* I, 77, 8/15; Kant. I, 196.8-204.3; Greg. I, 373.14-20.

¹⁰ Kant. I, 311.2-316.21.

¹¹ Kant. I, 473.5-6, states that he spent an entire year at Didymoteichon at one point.

person. Owing to the manner of his rise to power, his position was insecure and he seems to have been justly suspicious of disaffected elements of the aristocracy gathering around potential challengers or even restoring his grandfather. He evidently faced substantial threats during his illness of 1329/30, Syrgiannēs' revolt in 1334, and the attempted coup – with Genoese backing – by his uncle, *despotēs* Dēmētrios Palaiologos in 1335.¹² Thereafter he seems to have reigned unchallenged. Despite the loss of some territory to Serbia and the remnants of Bithynia to the Turks, Andronikos successfully asserted authority over Chios (1329), Thessaly (1333, 1338), Lesbos (1335) and Epiros (1338-40).¹³ His victories brought him considerable prestige and there are no contemporary indications that the Empire was on the verge of collapse. Security from incursions was elusive but the Empire suffered nothing on the scale of the ravages of the Catalans. By the end of his reign, Andronikos was able to spend substantial sums on fortification projects and to consider the re-establishment of a standing fleet.¹⁴ He seems to have suffered from fragile health: besides his near-fatal illness in 1329/30, he was ill in summer 1324,¹⁵ suffered from an illness which 'distressed his interior parts' before his campaign to suppress the Epirote revolt in 1340, and fell sick again during the subsequent siege of Arta.¹⁶ He died following another brief illness on Friday 15 June 1341.¹⁷

Although Andronikos was arguably one of the most successful Palaiologan emperors, he tends to be overshadowed in modern scholarship by the disasters of his grandfather's reign and the destructive civil war

¹² For these incidents, see Ch.14:12, Ch.14:9, Ch.17:6, respectively.

¹³ See Ch.29:7, Ch.1:13, Ch.11:6, respectively.

¹⁴ Kant. I, 540-542.

¹⁵ Kant. I, 194.1-4.

¹⁶ Kant. I, 525.10-16: ἐκεκάρκωτο τὰ σπλάγχνα.

¹⁷ Kant. I, 560.14-18; Greg. I, 560.2-3 (both agree on the date, although Kantakouzēnos says in the evening and Grēgoras says morning); *CBB* I, 64, no. 7/8. Other short chronicles provide a variety of dates, sometimes wildly mistaken; see *CBB* II, 250-251.

following his own demise.¹⁸ This is partly a result of the contemporary record; Kantakouzēnos is more concerned with his own role in Andronikos' reign and the latter emerges from the *Histories* as a brave but characterless leader, whose main distinguishing feature is his love for Kantakouzēnos. Grēgoras, in contrast, is unable to conceal his dislike; he supported Andronikos II during the first civil war and idolised his tutor, Theodōros Metochitēs, whom Andronikos III ruined and exiled.¹⁹ He draws a contradictory portrait of Andronikos, at once approachable, frivolous and irresponsible, yet also headstrong and secretive.²⁰ As Grēgoras was happy to attribute achievements during Andronikos' reign to others, he contributes to an impression that Kantakouzēnos was the *eminence grise*. While it is impossible to establish the reality of the situation, both historians had strong motives for propagating such an impression.

3: The war can be considered to have formally started with Kantakouzēnos' acclamation as emperor on 26 October 1341 and ended with his reconciliation with the Empress on 8 February 1347.²¹

4: Kantakouzēnos refers to the letters between Neilos and 'Christodoulos' which open the first volume of the *Histories*, where the author similarly emphasises his love of truth, the value of his eyewitness testimony, and his disregard of hearsay and rumour.²²

¹⁸ Bosch, *Andronikos III*, esp. 194-5, makes a very positive assessment of Andronikos and believes Kantakouzēnos in particular distorted the historical record in obsessive pursuit of his own *Machtgier*'/lust for power'.

¹⁹ For Metochitēs, see *PLP* 17982.

²⁰ *Greg. I*, 565.13-568.17.

²¹ For the date of Kantakouzēnos' acclamation, *Ch.27:1*. For the date of reconciliation, *Kant. II*, 614.23-615.3. *CBB I*, 84, no. 8/47, alternatively states 7 February.

²² *Kant. I*, 10.7-20; Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 108 (translation), 223-4 (commentary).

5: Anna Palaiologina, Empress of the Romans 1326-c.1365 (PLP 21347).²³ She was born Jeanne/Giovanna of Savoy, probably in 1306.²⁴ Andronikos III's first wife, Adelheid/Eirēnē of Brunswick, died prematurely on 16 August 1324, without any surviving children.²⁵ Andronikos II, then co-ruling with his grandson, took the initiative in negotiating his remarriage. Kantakouzēnos shows some pleasure in narrating that ambassadors for the French king also sought Anna's hand but were spurned in favour of the alliance with Andronikos.²⁶ Anna arrived in Constantinople, with a large number of attendants, in February 1326 and married Andronikos in October, the original plans having been delayed by her falling ill.²⁷ She appears to have learnt Greek rapidly and to have been closely trusted by her husband. When Andronikos was sick and expected to die in 1330, he entrusted sovereignty to his pregnant wife, although the business of government was given to Kantakouzēnos.²⁸ In 1335, while campaigning in the Aegean, he seems to have left authority in Anna's hands. She is credited with suppressing a serious conspiracy, with the assistance of Kantakouzēnos' mother, Theodōra.²⁹ Although Anna had embraced Orthodoxy, western hopes that she could convert her husband or bring up her children in the Roman Catholic faith meant that she was involved in diplomatic correspondence with the Papacy.³⁰

Following the death of Andronikos III, Anna was the only crowned holder of *basileia*, or sovereignty, in the Empire. Her exact constitutional

²³ Muratore, *Principessa Sabauda*, provides a long but romanticised study of her life. Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, 82-95, is concise and distinctly unsympathetic. Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', is detailed and even-handed but not concerned with post-1347.

²⁴ Muratore, *Principessa Sabauda*, 227.

²⁵ Kant. I, 193.20-24; PLP 21356.

²⁶ Kant. I, 195.10-196.7.

²⁷ For the arrangement of her marriage and subsequent festivities, see Kant. I, 194.9-196.7, 204.4-206.1.

²⁸ Kant. I, 393-4; Greg. I, 439-440.

²⁹ For this incident, see Ch.17:6.

³⁰ Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 93-4.

status has attracted considerable attention; coins depict her alongside her son, but in the position of honour, and surviving lead seals style her *autokratōrissa*, but many documents are signed in the name of her son alone.³¹ However it was clear that even a politically astute woman could not simply step into the shoes vacated by Andronikos III, an emperor who had campaigned continually and whose government tended towards being peripatetic. Her ministers, consequently, seemed to have enjoyed substantial autonomy but her control over government strengthened as time went on, particularly after Apokaukos' death. By the end of the war Anna possessed sufficient authority to depose the Patriarch.³² She showed considerable, albeit ultimately extremely damaging, resourcefulness in her determination to resist Kantakouzēnos, attempting overtures to various Balkan, Latin and Turkish powers. Famously, Anna pledged the jewels from the imperial crown to Venice for 30,000 ducats in 1343, which were never redeemed. Kantakouzēnos only vaguely refers to imperial treasures having been sold off, but the transaction is well attested in Latin sources.³³ Even when her impending defeat was clearly unavoidable, Anna refused to come to terms and held out in the Blachernai palace for five days after Kantakouzēnos entered Constantinople. Only when his soldiers prepared to storm the building was she forced to surrender.³⁴ As part of the settlement of the war, Kantakouzēnos continued to honour her as Empress and left her and her son Iōannēs V in the imperial apartments while he moved into inferior accommodation.³⁵ However, she probably had much of her remaining wealth confiscated³⁶ and was removed from government. This changed after

³¹ Dölger, 'Kaisertum'; Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 101-4.

³² See Ch.1:16.

³³ Kant. II, 471.13-14; Hetherington, 'Jewels'; Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 109-110.

³⁴ Kant. II, 607-15. Kantakouzēnos entered Constantinople on 3 February but did not enter the palace until 8 February.

³⁵ Greg. II, 783.24-784.10.

³⁶ Greg. II, 790.7-9.

Kantakouzēnos' overly-optimistic decision to leave the eighteen year old Iōannēs V in Thessalonike around the end of 1350.³⁷ The young emperor soon began to conspire with Stefan Dušan and Kantakouzēnos sent Anna in mid-1351 to restrain her son and prevent a new civil war. She succeeded and, following their brief joint government of the city, her son soon departed to take up a different appanage.³⁸ Anna remained ruler of Thessalonike until her death. She appears to have been well regarded locally and, although effectively independent from Constantinople, her relations with Kantakouzēnos, and subsequently her son, appear to have been harmonious. She died in Thessalonike, probably in 1365, having become a nun some time before.³⁹ She is commemorated in the Synodikon of Orthodoxy as the nun Anastasia, who piously protected the doctrines of the Church against Barlaam and Grēgorios Akindynos.⁴⁰

6: Andronikos had gone to the Hodēgōn Monastery to rest immediately following the synod condemning Barlaam, which took place in Hagia Sophia on 10 June 1341.⁴¹ He died in the monastery five days later and was buried there.⁴² The Hodēgōn was located east of Hagia Sophia, near the sea walls. From at least the twelfth century it was home to the famous icon of the Virgin Hodēgētria, attributed to St. Luke, which was carried in procession each Tuesday.⁴³ In February 1347 Anna moved the icon to the

³⁷ Kant. III, 159.19-160.19.

³⁸ Kant. III, 200-9. For this incident and her subsequent residence in Thessalonike, see Nicol and Bendall, 'Numismatic evidence', 87-93; Loenertz, 'Chronologie de Cabasilas', 216-226; Malamut, 'Pouvoir et influence', 71-3.

³⁹ Dating of her death relies on a single letter by Kydōnēs, see Kydōnēs, *Letters*, I.ii, 369-371, ep. 61 (German trans. and commentary).

⁴⁰ Gouillard, 'Synodikon of Orthodoxy', 100-103. For discussion of her Orthodoxy in relation to claims that she remained Catholic, see Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, 93-5.

⁴¹ Kant. I, 557.10-560.18. For the synod, Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 54-6.

⁴² *CBB* I, 81, no. 8/32.

⁴³ A.-M. Talbot, 'Hodegon Monastery', *ODB II*, 939; N.P. Ševčenko, 'Virgin Hodegetria', *ODB III*, 2172; Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, 199-207.

palace temporarily to assist in her appeal for mercy to the victorious Kantakouzēnos.⁴⁴ Its importance made it a major attraction for pilgrims and several Russian descriptions survive from the Palaiologan period.⁴⁵

7: The honorific ‘Senator’ (συγκλητικός), is not precisely defined during this era. For Kantakouzēnos, it appears to indicate a social class comprising the courtiers, including all holders of court titles, and those of the leading noble families, but not the provincial notables. Men of this class monopolised the senior administrative and military commands, although considerable differences of wealth and status existed between them. The existence of any institutionalised senatorial class and senatorial assembly can be discounted.⁴⁶

8: ‘Byzantines’ (Βυζάντιοι) are the native inhabitants of Constantinople, which continued to be known also by its ancient name, Byzantion.

9: The title *megas domestikos* dates from at least the eleventh century.⁴⁷ The holder was in theory the senior military commander of the empire, second only to the emperor, and entitled to an equal, one fifth, share of the booty taken by the army.⁴⁸ He also held significant ceremonial duties, attested by Pseudo-Kodinos and Michaēl VIII’s *prostagma* of 1272, such as holding the imperial sword and serving at the emperor’s table.⁴⁹ However, as is often the case in the Palaiologan era, there was not always an exact

⁴⁴ Kant. III, 8.11-16.

⁴⁵ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 362-366.

⁴⁶ Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 53-71, esp. 61-64. See also Ch.2:23.

⁴⁷ On the history of the office, see Guiland, *Institutions I*, 405-425.

⁴⁸ Ps-Kod., 205-209; Kant. I, 498.8-13; Kyriakidis, ‘Megas Domestikos’, 248.

⁴⁹ Ps-Kod., 119, 159-167; Heisenberg, ‘Palaiologenzeit’, 37.6-13; Kyriakidis, ‘Megas Domestikos’, 249.

correspondence between function and title; major campaigns were sometimes led by others and certain *megaloi domestikoi* never campaigned.⁵⁰ Kyriakidis justly notes that Kantakouzēnos' power is a consequence of his position as Andronikos III's closest associate rather than a function of his office.⁵¹ Kantakouzēnos does not describe any significant action where he fought in Andronikos III's absence nor does he refer to a *megas domestikos* during his own reign. The exact date of Kantakouzēnos' own appointment is unknown but Pseudo-Kodinos states that he was appointed by both the Andronikoi, so sometime after the treaty of Rhēgion which concluded the first phase of their struggle and possibly after Andronikos III's coronation in February 1325.⁵² In the process, they raised his rank to equal that of *panhypersebastos*. When Andronikos II finally abdicated, his grandson raised Kantakouzēnos' precedence once again, placing the *megas domestikos* fourth, inferior only to *despotēs*, *sebastokratōr*, and *kaisar*, and thus above many members of the imperial family.⁵³ This action, and the general importance of the *megas domestikos* throughout Pseudo-Kodinos' text has led to suggestions that Kantakouzēnos had direct input into drafting the ceremonial handbook.⁵⁴ However, there are significant objections to this and the text is likely to have been a product of Iōannēs V's sole reign.⁵⁵ In any case, later *megaloi domestikoi* did not enjoy such privilege.

There is evidence that, on occasion, more than one *megas domestikos* held the title at once.⁵⁶ Michaēl VIII granted it to William of Villehardouin in

⁵⁰ Bartusis, *Army*, 241; Kyriakidis, 'Megas Domestikos', 254-5.

⁵¹ Kyriakidis, 'Megas Domestikos', 242.

⁵² Ps-Kod., 27, 51; Nicol, *Family*, 36-7. Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 10, n. 50, suggests 1322-25; the earlier date represents the beginning of the uneasy co-rule of the Andronikoi following the peace of Epibatai.

⁵³ Ps-Kod., 27-28. On the manipulation of court precedence for political reasons, see Ch.30:9; Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 280-9.

⁵⁴ E.g., Gaul, 'Purple Stockings', 73-85.

⁵⁵ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 1-10, 15-18; Kyriakidis, 'Megas Domestikos', 247-9.

⁵⁶ Kyriakidis, 'Megas Domestikos', 253-254.

1261, when Alexios Philēs was already *megas domestikos*, although this was clearly intended as an honorific.⁵⁷ It is possible that Kantakouzēnos' term in the office overlapped with that of Stephanos Chrelja, who is also attested as *megas domestikos*. However this seems incompatible with the exceptional re-ordering of the court hierarchy in favour of the *megas domestikos* which was implemented explicitly to honour Kantakouzēnos; it is quite possible that Chrelja was honoured by Kantakouzēnos after his acclamation as *basileus*.⁵⁸ A *megas domestikos* Alexios Rhaoul is mentioned in two documents dated to either 1337 or 1355.⁵⁹ Despite the editor's insistence on the earlier date,⁶⁰ it seems unlikely that Rhaoul, who is not mentioned in the histories of the period, was sharing the office with Kantakouzēnos, so the latter date appears more probable.⁶¹

10: Only the Blachernai palace complex in the north-west of the city was in active use as an imperial residence in the Palaiologan era. The older Great Palace, which Kantakouzēnos distinguishes as the 'Palace of Constantine the Great',⁶² received occasional ceremonial use but generally seems to have been allowed to decay.⁶³ The Blachernai complex is not well documented or excavated; the main sources consist of accounts of court ceremonies.⁶⁴ At its heart was a single tall block containing the imperial apartments, an audience chamber and a church, facing a large courtyard which housed a chapel, among other structures. There also appears to have been an outer courtyard, probably containing many of the service buildings

⁵⁷ For Philēs, *PLP* 29809.

⁵⁸ For the sources, see Ch.11:15.

⁵⁹ *PLP* 24111; Bénou, *Saint-Jean-Prodrome*, 205-206, 420-421.

⁶⁰ Bénou, *Saint-Jean-Prodrome*, 5-6 (Bénou's introduction).

⁶¹ This reasoning is also followed by Mavrommatis, 'Alexis Raoul', 159.

⁶² *Kant. II*, 537.23.

⁶³ C. Mango, 'The Great Palace', *ODB II*, 869-70; Ps-Kod., 237.

⁶⁴ However, see the recent area survey in Dark and Özgümüş, *Constantinople*, 66-82.

necessary for the functions of both government and palace.⁶⁵ The complex, which bordered upon the land walls of the city to its west, was fortified in its own right: even after Kantakouzēnos' entry into Constantinople in 1347, the Empress continued to defend the palace for several days until she was persuaded to surrender.⁶⁶ Probably only a portion of its total extent was in active use in the fourteenth century, a decline which the civil war must have accelerated.⁶⁷ Grēgoras relates that Kantakouzēnos, following his victory, left Anna and Iōannēs V in possession of the imperial apartments and occupied inferior quarters, which he describes as 'ruins'.⁶⁸

11: Kantakouzēnos has previously indicated that the guard of 500 was composed of 'the most trustworthy of his own servants' and 'axe-wielding Varangians, as many as there were'.⁶⁹ Blöndal identifies this as the final explicit narrative reference to the famous Varangian guard,⁷⁰ though there are a number of fleeting references to Varangians in written sources until the fifteenth century.⁷¹ A number of different palace guard units are known but the Varangians remain the best attested.⁷² They are not mentioned as a battlefield force in the Palaiologan era but continued to serve in ceremonial and guard roles.⁷³ Apart from this incident, Kantakouzēnos records their

⁶⁵ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 367-78 surveys the available evidence. For further detail, particularly regarding the relationship between the two palace complexes, see Macrides, 'Citadel' and Magdalino, 'Pseudo-Kodinos' Constantinople', 1-6.

⁶⁶ Kant. II, 611ff; Macrides, 'Citadel', 297.

⁶⁷ Magdalino, 'Pseudo-Kodinos' Constantinople', 5-6.

⁶⁸ Greg. II, 783.24-784.10.

⁶⁹ Kant. I, 560.10-12: τῶν οἰκετῶν τοὺς πιστοτάτους τῶν ἰδίων περὶ πεντακοσίους τὸν ἀριθμὸν καταλιπὼν, καὶ τοὺς τοὺς πελέκεις ἔχοντας βαράγγους ὅσοι ἦσαν.

⁷⁰ Blöndal and Benediktz, *Varangians*, 175. This volume is the standard study of the Varangian guard but concentrates on the pre-1204 era.

⁷¹ Bartusis, *Army*, 273-6.

⁷² For these units, and the Varangians during this era, see Bartusis, *Army*, 271-286.

⁷³ For ceremonial roles, see summary in Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 97, n. 199. Note, however, that Kantakouzēnos writes that it is usual for Varangians to hold the keys to a city when the emperor is present, not, as stated, when he is absent.

presence at Andronikos III's coronation and as guarding his residence on campaign when he took possession of Nea Phōkaia.⁷⁴

12: The historical origins of the Albanians are obscure; Greek texts only start to mention them in the eleventh century.⁷⁵ Those migrating into Roman controlled lands were largely pastoral; their arrival was not welcomed by the settled population, not least owing to their tendency to engage in banditry. They were a volatile element in the politics of the region in the 13th-15th centuries, courted and feared by those seeking dominance of the region.⁷⁶ In 1333, the leading Albanian clans in Thessaly, whom Kantakouzēnos identifies as the Malakasioi, Bouioi and Mesaritai, had submitted to Andronikos III.⁷⁷ Winnifrith suggests that these 'Albanians' were probably ethnically Vlachs rather than Albanians, pointing out the similarity between the names given for their chieftains and Thessalian Vlach villages existing in some cases to the present day.⁷⁸ This hypothesis is supported by Kantakouzēnos' chrysobull of 1342, which refers to Thessaly as Βλαχία throughout.⁷⁹ In 1338, Andronikos III deployed Turkish infantry from Aydin against Albanians who had raided Balagrita (Berat), Kanina and other towns in the north-west. The Turks defeated the Albanians and enslaved many, while the Roman troops helped themselves to prodigious quantities of livestock.⁸⁰ The rebels in Thessaly, whether Albanians or Vlachs, either considered Andronikos' death freed them from their submission or, assuming that the government would be in chaos, simply took the

⁷⁴ Kant. I, 200.11-12, 389.14-16.

⁷⁵ O. Pritsak, 'Albanians', *ODB* I, 52-3; Attaleiatēs, *History*, 542-3. For origins of the name, see Pollo and Puto, *Albania*, 37-40.

⁷⁶ For the political role of the Albanians in the area, see Magdalino, 'Thessaly and Epirus', 102-4; Nicol, *Despotate*, passim.

⁷⁷ Kant. I, 474; Nicol, *Despotate*, 104.

⁷⁸ Winnifrith, *Vlachs*, 120-1.

⁷⁹ E.g. Kant. II, 320.3. For this document, see Hunger, 'Chrysobullos Logos'.

⁸⁰ Kant. I, 495-499; Nicol, *Despotate*, 108-110.

opportunity to raid. The harshness of the punitive action taken in 1338 clearly made a lasting impression, if they withdrew at the threat of a repeat.

13: Thessaly had a complicated political history following 1204. Control was continually contested between its own leading men, Constantinople, Epiros, and various Latin lordships, particularly the Duchy of Athens.⁸¹ Andronikos III took advantage of the death of the local dynast Stephanos Gabriēlopoulos⁸² in 1333 to return the region, except the Catalan-held districts south of Neopatras, to direct imperial control.⁸³ Kantakouzēnos makes surprisingly little of such a major success, in contrast to his lengthy account of the later annexation of Epiros. This is probably because he played only a small part in the proceedings and, moreover, the initiative was taken by the then governor of Thessalonike, Michaēl Monomachos, who subsequently sided with the regency at the outbreak of the civil war.⁸⁴ Monomachos was appointed governor of Thessaly after its acquisition but in 1342 moved his forces north to Serres to oppose Kantakouzēnos.⁸⁵ During Monomachos' absence, but after Kantakouzēnos had secured Serbian support, a Thessalian delegation requested Kantakouzēnos to rule over them.⁸⁶ He instead appointed Iōannēs Angelos, who ruled the area largely independently until his death in 1348.⁸⁷ Thessaly soon thereafter fell to the Serbs, although Kantakouzēnos only mentions this conquest some time after the event.⁸⁸ Kantakouzēnos' dreams of re-conquest had no realistic chance

⁸¹ For Thessaly generally, see Koder and Hild, *Hellas*. For the post-1204 period particularly, see Magdalino, 'Thessaly and Epirus'; Nicol, *Despotate* (s.v. Thessaly).

⁸² *PLP* 3435.

⁸³ Kant. I, 473.12-474.19; Nicol, *Despotate*, 102-4.

⁸⁴ *PLP* 19306. For his decision to oppose Kantakouzēnos, see Kant. II, 191.16-18.

⁸⁵ Kant. II, 228.18-21.

⁸⁶ Kant. II, 309.20ff. For this and the following events, see Nicol, *Despotate*, 125-130.

⁸⁷ For Angelos, see Ch.11:18.

⁸⁸ Kant. III, 113.23-4, 147.14-16; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 35; Nicol, *Despotate*, 129.

during his reign. However his son-in-law Nikēphoros briefly ruled the area again from 1356.⁸⁹

14: Kantakouzēnos generally refers to the capital as Byzantion, or simply *polis*, 'the City'. *Kōnstantinoupolis* is employed rarely, and not at all in the present translation, but 'city of Constantine' is used somewhat more frequently. Information on the condition of Constantinople or the size of its population in the early fourteenth century is scant.⁹⁰ However an estimate of around 100,000 residents does not seem implausible.⁹¹ The civil war, followed by the arrival of the Black Death in 1347 and the progressive Turkish conquest of its hinterland from the 1350s unsurprisingly caused rapid demographic and economic decline. Accounts from the fifteenth century correspondingly describe a declining city scattered with crumbling monuments; Tafur's reflection that '[the emperor's Palace] is in such state that both it and the city show well the evils which the people have suffered and still endure' is indicative.⁹² However such later observations have tended to overshadow the pre-civil war evidence of a more positive picture. Andronikos II's reign saw a great deal of restoration and construction.⁹³ The account of Ibn Battuta, who claims to have visited Constantinople during the reign of Andronikos III, while rather confused and clearly exaggerated, records an apparently wealthy and impressive metropolis.⁹⁴ Somewhat earlier, probably in the early 1310s, Theodōros Metochitēs produced an

⁸⁹ For Nikēphoros, see Ch.11:8.

⁹⁰ Constantinople's history is largely inseparable from that of its empire. For a brief summary, see Külzer, *Ostthracien*, 461-70. For an introduction to the surviving monuments, Freely and Çakmak, *Istanbul*; in more detail, Janin, *Constantinople byzantine* and *DOP* 54 (2000); for the fourteenth century in particular, Magdalino, 'Pseudo-Kodinos' Constantinople'. For a recent archaeological survey, and bibliography, see Dark and Özgümüş, *Constantinople*.

⁹¹ Matschke, 'Urban Economy', 465.

⁹² Tafur, *Travels*, 145.

⁹³ Matschke, 'Builders and Building', 315-6.

⁹⁴ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 504-514.

extended oration, the *Byzantios*, praising the city and particularly its commercial prosperity. Although essentially an encomium, the *Byzantios* must have had some basis in contemporary reality to be accepted as anything other than wishful thinking; it reflects Constantinople's continuing commercial vitality even as it recovered from the disastrous rampages of the Catalans.⁹⁵ During the civil war, the capital was the stronghold of the regency and the war ceased only when Kantakouzēnos managed to enter the city. It is worth noting that, for Kantakouzēnos, Byzantium is distinct from Galata, which he views as essentially an independent settlement, occupied by 'Genoese colonists'.⁹⁶ This is unsurprising in view of the unsuccessful wars he fought against them in 1348-9 and 1351-2.⁹⁷

15: Kantakouzēnos sometimes refers to the cathedral of Hagia Sophia simply as 'the Wisdom of God'.⁹⁸ During the war, an earthquake caused a partial collapse of the cathedral, on 14 May 1346. Reconstruction and redecoration were initiated by Anna but continued throughout Kantakouzēnos' reign into the sole reign of Iōannēs V.⁹⁹ Grēgoras denounces Kantakouzēnos at length for allegedly giving money gifted by Russians for its repair to pay off Orhan.¹⁰⁰ The most detailed descriptions of the cathedral during Kantakouzēnos' lifetime are provided by Russian pilgrims.¹⁰¹

16: Iōannēs XIV Kalekas, Patriarch of Constantinople 1334-1347 (*PLP* 10288). Iōannēs Kalekas had lived much of his life in relative obscurity; he

⁹⁵ See Voudouri, 'Byzantios', esp. 113-129.

⁹⁶ Kant. I, 476.18: τοῖς κατὰ Γαλατᾶν ἀποίκους οὖσι Γεννουϊτῶν.

⁹⁷ Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 221-7, 235-7.

⁹⁸ E.g., Kant. II, 120.14-15: τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφίας.

⁹⁹ Kant. III, 29.18-30.15 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 166-7). Several short chronicles record the date and the repairs; see *CBB* II, 265-7. In detail, see Teteriatnikov, 'Mosaic Program'.

¹⁰⁰ Greg. III, 198.18-200.22.

¹⁰¹ Majeska, *Russian Travelers*, 198-236 (translation with commentary). For an introduction to the vast modern bibliography, see Mark and Çakmak, *Hagia Sophia*.

was probably born around 1283, as Grēgoras comments that he was almost 65 when he died.¹⁰² He was married and had fathered a son and a daughter; after the death of Andronikos III, the former was betrothed to a daughter of Alexios Apokaukos¹⁰³ and the latter married a son of Iōannēs Batatzēs.¹⁰⁴ He was a priest of undistinguished family from Apros in Thrace who had been enrolled among Kantakouzēnos' *oikeioi* and subsequently passed by his recommendation into the palace clergy.¹⁰⁵ Although both historians give the impression that he was promoted to Patriarch soon after the death of Patriarch Ēsaias, the patriarchal throne appears to have been vacant for almost two years, a delay which remains unexplained.¹⁰⁶ Kalekas was finally appointed in February 1334.¹⁰⁷ Kantakouzēnos states that he advised Andronikos III to appoint Kalekas as he 'seemed by nature very suited for the holy ministry'.¹⁰⁸ Grēgoras praised his memory, clever tongue and knowledge of canon and civil law, if not his secular education.¹⁰⁹ Kantakouzēnos omits Grēgoras' claim that Kalekas was chosen from the outset, 'to be regent and guardian' of the Empress and children, and that they were entrusted to him in a ceremony in Hagia Sophia 'if something unexpected happened to public affairs'.¹¹⁰ The fundamentally political nature

¹⁰² Greg. II, 813.14-15.

¹⁰³ Kant. II, 108.8-21.

¹⁰⁴ For Batatzēs, see Ch.29:1.

¹⁰⁵ Kant. I, 432.2-10; Greg. I, 496.17-18.

¹⁰⁶ Ēsaias died in May 1332; see *CBB* I, 79, no. 8/26c, and Schreiner's commentary, *CBB* II, 242.

¹⁰⁷ *CBB* I, 80, no. 8/28. The sequence of Kantakouzēnos' narrative implies earlier but this is part of the 'disordered' section, see Loenertz, 'Ordre et désordre', esp. 230. Greg. I, 496, places the appointment just before Andronikos' campaign against Syrgiannēs in 1334, which agrees with the chronicle.

¹⁰⁸ Kant. I, 432.3-4: *περὶ δὲ τὴν ἱερατικὴν λειτουργίαν μάλιστα δοκοῦντα ἔχειν εὐφυῶς.*

¹⁰⁹ Greg. II, 813.18-814.9.

¹¹⁰ Greg. II, 496.18-23: *ὅτι δὴ καὶ ὑπὸ Θεῶν μάρτυρι παραδίδωσι φέρων ἐπὶ μέσου τοῦ μεγίστου νεῶ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ Σοφίας τὴν τε σύζυγον δέσποιναν καὶ τὰ τέκνα, ἐπίτροπον ἅμα καὶ φύλακα τοῦτον εἶναι μετὰ γε Θεὸν παρακελευσάμενος ἐπ' αὐτοῖς, εἴ τί που τῶν ἀδοκίτων τοῖς κοινοῖς ἐπισυμβαίη πράγμασι.* This act took place in the context of Syrgiannēs' revolt, which was especially threatening owing to his alliance with Serbia (see Ch.14:9). Note that the suggestion of Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 121, that Kalekas was given the

of Kalekas' appointment is however confirmed by Kantakouzēnos' narration of how he tricked and pressured the synod in order to secure Kalekas' election, despite its opposition to selecting a married priest.¹¹¹ Kantakouzēnos next mentions him during the two Church councils of 1341, in which he naturally played a leading role.¹¹² Following Andronikos III's death, Kalekas clearly believed that he had a legitimate claim and a duty to act as regent, which set him on a collision course with Kantakouzēnos. During the war, he played a leading role in the regency government; Kantakouzēnos says the Empress favoured him as 'archon of the archons' and Grēgoras that he was her most trusted advisor.¹¹³ However, his efforts to isolate or remove Kantakouzēnos' partisans and sympathisers from influential positions in the Church rapidly led him into confrontation with the prominent theologian and monk Grēgorios Palamas.¹¹⁴ The Patriarch's increasingly divisive efforts to diminish the influence of Palamas and his followers, including arrests and imprisonment, produced uproar with which neither Apokaukos nor the Empress were comfortable.¹¹⁵ This was not least because overt hostility to Palamas came close to overturning the last official act of Andronikos III, the June 1341 Church council which had condemned Barlaam for heresy and acquitted Palamas. Anna took an increasing interest in the debate and vehemently opposed Kalekas' attempts to raise the leading anti-Palamite monk Akindynos to the episcopate in November 1344.¹¹⁶

governorship of Constantinople, was convincingly refuted by Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion*, 151-2, n. 121. Nor is there a clear textual basis for Nicol's assertion that Kalekas assumed the same role as regent during Andronikos' 1340 campaign in Epiros, although it may perhaps be inferred from the beginning of Chapter 2; see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 187, and Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 47. Nicol, *Family*, 45, does not make such a claim when discussing the same incident.

¹¹¹ Kant. I, 431.20-435.20.

¹¹² Kant. I, 550.8-557.9.

¹¹³ Kant. II, 602.12: ἀρχόντα ἀρχόντων εἶναι; Greg. II, 780.6-10.

¹¹⁴ For Palamas, see Ch.17:1.

¹¹⁵ For Kalekas' struggle to control the Church, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 64-77.

¹¹⁶ Akindynos, *Letters*, xxvi-xxviii (Hero's introduction).

Kalekas ignored her objections but, as their relationship soured, she later seized the chance offered by complaints against him to hold an investigation into his conduct.¹¹⁷ This culminated in Anna placing Kalekas under house-arrest and assembling a synod of bishops on 2 February 1347.¹¹⁸ It declared him deposed for elevating Akindynos, persecuting Palamas and acting contrary to the 1341 Councils.¹¹⁹ Kantakouzēnos entered Constantinople later the same night and shortly afterwards offered Kalekas opportunity to refute the allegations against him before the synod. He repeatedly refused to appear, leading to the renewed confirmation of his deposition in the *tomos* of late February 1347, which recapitulated his offences throughout the war and recorded his condemnation.¹²⁰ Even after this, he continued to conspire and Kantakouzēnos, apparently at the request of the bishops, banished him to Didymoteichon.¹²¹ Within months he was returned to Constantinople, where he was confined in the palace – according to Grēgoras because he was suspected of fermenting unrest at Didymoteichon, according to Kantakouzēnos because he needed medical attention.¹²² Kalekas died of an illness soon after, on 29 December 1347.¹²³

¹¹⁷ Kant. II, 604.2-22; Akindynos, *Letters*, xxx-xxxi; Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 78-9.

¹¹⁸ CBB I, 84, no. 8/46a; 681, no. 113/3. His confinement to his palace apartments is reported by Greg. II, 781.18-19.

¹¹⁹ Meyendorff, 'Tome Synodal', esp. lines 355-387.

¹²⁰ For all of Kantakouzēnos' dealings with Kalekas after the war, see Kant. III, 20.20-28.4 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 158-164). Miller's commentary, esp. 256-261, surveys the various sources for the final year of Kalekas' life. For the text of the *tomos*, see Meyendorff, 'Tome Synodal' and for Kantakouzēnos' official support of the synod's decision, which also mentions Kalekas' failure to testify in his defence, see Rigo, 'Prostagma'.

¹²¹ Kant. III, 24.14-18.

¹²² Greg. II, 813.10-14; Kant. III, 24.22-25.3.

¹²³ CBB I, 106, no 11/3.

Commentary on Chapter 2

1: Kantakouzēnos refers to Andronikos' sons, Iōannēs (b. 1332) and Michaēl (b. 1337), whom he placed under his protection in the palace immediately after their father's death.¹

2: Kantakouzēnos here explicitly indicates that the measures apply if *both* he and Andronikos were to die; implicitly he assumes that he is the natural defender of the Emperor's sons in event of the latter's death, which Andronikos does not challenge. Therefore the Patriarch should not be involved unless Kantakouzēnos was also off the political stage. Kantakouzēnos shows himself as the instigator of this act to demonstrate his concern for defending the legitimate succession.

3: Andronikos probably refers to the excommunication incurred by his own great-grandfather, Michaēl VIII Palaiologos, who broke a similar oath administered by the Patriarch Arsenios for the protection of Iōannēs IV Laskaris. Michaēl gradually usurped the young emperor's prerogatives and finally had him blinded on Christmas Day 1261.² Similarly, Andronikos and his followers had been excommunicated for revolt against his grandfather, which Kantakouzēnos admits was ineffective.³ Ironically, Kantakouzēnos himself would be excommunicated under the measures he proposed here, although he then protests bitterly that it was uncanonical.⁴

¹ Kant. I, 560.6-14; Greg. II, 576.18-577.4. For Iōannēs, see Ch.2:7. For Michaēl, of whom little is known, *PLP* 21521.

² Angold, *Government in Exile*, 80-93; Shawcross, 'Palaiologan Usurpation', esp. 205-7.

³ Kant. I, 94.3-11.

⁴ Kant. II, 190.7-11. The Church did indeed sometimes oppose imperial requests for 'political' excommunications, see Angelov, *Ideology*, 397-8; Svrnos, 'Serment de fidélité', 114-6.

4: There were often a large number of bishops and metropolitans in Constantinople, especially following the Turkish invasions of Asia Minor. The Patriarch Athanasios I (r. 1289-1293, 1303-1311) saw them as a source of intrigue and opposition to his authority, famously complaining to Andronikos II that they should be sent back to their sees.⁵

5: The date of this pronouncement is uncertain. Darrouzès suggests that it was made towards the end of May 1341, between Andronikos' return from suppressing the revolt in Epiros and his death.⁶ Parisot favoured early 1340, before the western campaign.⁷ This date, or even an earlier year, seems more probable; Kantakouzēnos' argument regarding the possibility of death in combat would be more appropriate if a campaign was being planned. Moreover, Darrouzès' reservations rest on the phrase οὐκ ὀλίγω χρόνῳ πρὸ τῆς τελευτῆς⁸ and, as discussed in the Introduction, Kantakouzēnos' chronological statements are often very vague.⁹ It is possible that this is a distorted account of Andronikos' delegation of responsibility to protect the imperial family before his 1334 campaign against Syrgiannēs.¹⁰

6: Kantakouzēnos here appears to acknowledge that the Patriarch possessed some formal responsibility for the protection of Andronikos' children after his death. It is possible the phrase οἶα δὴ τῶν βασιλέως παίδων φύλαξ is meant sarcastically but more likely that the Patriarch had some form of pastoral responsibility for their upbringing and protection, as implied by the preceding discussion of excommunications. Kantakouzēnos clearly disapproves of Kalekas' attempt to expand this into a more general

⁵ Athanasios, *Correspondence*, 56-7, ep. 25.

⁶ *Regestes*, 162-3, no. 2208.

⁷ Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 139.

⁸ Kant. II, 16.21.

⁹ See above, Section 4.2.

¹⁰ See Ch.1:16.

political role; *phylax* (protector/guardian) is much more general than *epitropos* (governor/regent), which Kantakouzēnos uses to denote legal or political responsibility.

7: Iōannēs V Palaiologos, Emperor of the Romans 1341-1391 (*PLP* 21485).¹¹ Iōannēs was born on 18 June 1332 and thus nine years old when his father died, and only fifteen when the civil war ended.¹² He had probably already been acclaimed as *basileus*¹³ but was eventually crowned on 19 November 1341, probably as a hasty response to Kantakouzēnos' proclamation on 26 October.¹⁴ While both parties in the civil war claimed to support Iōannēs' rights – and issued documents in his name – he is rarely mentioned in person, although Apokaukos seems to have made an abortive attempt to take him on campaign before Iōannēs fell ill and had to return to the capital.¹⁵ As part of the eventual peace settlement, Kantakouzēnos married his daughter Helenē to Iōannēs, in May 1347,¹⁶ and agreed that he would hold authority as senior emperor for ten years before handing control over to his new son-in-law.¹⁷ However Iōannēs was intensely, and not unreasonably, suspicious of Matthaïos Kantakouzēnos' ambitions to succeed his father and rapidly became a focus for political discontent against Kantakouzēnos. His repeated struggles against both Matthaïos and his father are a major theme of Book IV of the *Histories* and led to his own temporary deposition in 1353 and subsequently to Kantakouzēnos' abdication in 1354.

¹¹ Papadopulos, *Palaiologen*, 46-47, no. 73.

¹² Greg. I 482.1-3; *CBB* II, 242. Greg. II, 791.20-21, errs in stating he was sixteen.

¹³ See Ch.9:5.

¹⁴ Kant. II, 218.2f.; Greg. II, 616.7-16. For the date, Greg. II, 616.11-12; *CBB* II, 253-4. For the address of the Patriarch on either the coronation or the following public acclamation on 24 December (Greg. II, 616.16-617.6), see Joannou, 'Unedierte Rede'.

¹⁵ Kant. II, 432.20-23. Kantakouzēnos probably mentions this incident to show he did not take the field against Iōannēs V in person.

¹⁶ Kant. III, 29.15-18. The exact day is uncertain, see Schreiner's commentary, *CBB* II, 271.

¹⁷ Kant. II, 614.14-20; III, 9.13-14.

By 1356 he had finally put paid to Matthaios' ambitions too.¹⁸ Iōannēs' own reign would however be no more successful than his predecessor's. To halt the rapid Turkish advance in Europe, Iōannēs made repeated but only marginally successful attempts to solicit western aid. These led to his personal conversion to Roman Catholicism in October 1369. His ultimate lack of success led to formal submission to the Ottomans and contributed to his temporary usurpation by his eldest son Andronikos IV (1376-1379) and grandson Iōannēs VII (1390). Iōannēs V died in February 1391.¹⁹

The portrayal of the young emperor in the *Histories* presented a dilemma for Kantakouzēnos, who maintained throughout the war that he supported Iōannēs' right to eventually succeed to the throne. At the time of composition, Iōannēs was the ruling emperor and Kantakouzēnos' own son-in-law. However, Iōannēs had also routinely broken agreements and his continual revolts against the tutelage of his father-in-law severely undermined the latter part of Kantakouzēnos' reign. Whatever his true feelings, Kantakouzēnos remains largely complimentary towards Iōannēs and attempts to explain away the more bitter insults as the actions of subordinates or the result of misunderstandings.²⁰ While the struggle with the regency is always a 'war' (*polemos*), the conflict with Iōannēs is characterised as a 'disagreement' or 'quarrel' (*diaphora*).²¹ However he does not always conceal his frustration with the younger man's behaviour or policies and may have dared some back-handed compliments.²²

¹⁸ For his conflicts with Matthaios, see Ch.22:3.

¹⁹ CBB II, 345. For his reign, see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 253-295. The main monograph on his reign remains Halecki, *Empereur*.

²⁰ E.g., Kant. III, 268.16-269.6.

²¹ E.g., Kant. III, 8.9, 364.6.

²² E.g., Kant. III, 9.17-19: οὐ μόνον γὰρ εἶδος ἄξιον ἐπεδείκνυτο τυραννίδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς ἀνδρίαν καὶ σύνεσιν οὐκ ἀγεννεῖς ὑπέφαινεν ἐλπίδας ('For not only did he display an appearance worthy of a ruler, but also in regard to his courage and intelligence he gave no cause for ignoble expectations'). The tone is positive but the choice of *τυραννίδος* is odd, given that Kantakouzēnos uses it only in its negative sense elsewhere.

8: From Antiquity a child was considered to be someone under the age of fourteen, which marked the onset of puberty and the opportunity to be legally married (although in fact the law recognised girls as reaching marriageable age at twelve). Following legal tradition, the law maintained that full adulthood, for both genders, began at twenty-five. Below this age children remained under paternal authority unless they set up an independent household or were formally emancipated.²³ The reality was more blurred, as actions such as marrying, taking monastic vows or joining the military effectively ended childhood.²⁴ However, the legal definition may have informed Kantakouzēnos' peace settlement with Iōannēs V in 1347, when the latter was fifteen: 'they would respect each other with the goodwill appropriate both to a father and a son; the younger would submit to the older in all matters and allow him control for ten years on account of his youth.'²⁵ Kantakouzēnos was effectively claiming not just *de facto* but also *de jure* guardianship over Iōannēs, by virtue of the marriage of the junior emperor to his daughter.

9: The diplomatic crisis with Bulgaria is known only from Kantakouzēnos. The struggles for the Bulgarian throne which led to this incident were detailed in Book II, hence his lack of explanation here.²⁶

10: Kantakouzēnos consistently refers to the ruler of the Bulgarians as *basileus*, a title which he otherwise reserves for the Roman monarch. It is therefore translated as 'emperor' throughout, in contrast to scholarly

²³ Prinzing, 'Childhood', esp. 16-23.

²⁴ J. Herrin, A. Kazhdan and A. Cutler, 'Childhood', *ODB* I, 420-21.

²⁵ Kant. II, 614.16-19: ἀλλήλοις εὐνοεῖν τὴν προσήκουσαν εὐνοίαν πατράσι καὶ παισὶ πρὸς ἑκατέρου· ὑπεῖκειν δὲ τὸν νέον τῷ πρεσβυτέρῳ κατὰ πάντα καὶ τοῦ πράττειν αὐτῷ παραχωρεῖν ἐπὶ δέκα ἔτεσι διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν.

²⁶ Kant. I, 430.16-21, 458.17-459.4.

custom.²⁷ Nicol's assertion that Bulgarian monarchs in the *Histories* 'had to be content to be known as the Tsars of the Mysians' is baseless.²⁸ Page has observed that, in 1,400 uses of the word *basileus*, Kantakouzēnos refers to Roman rulers 98% of the time, with most of the remaining instances applying to the Bulgarian ruler.²⁹ Kantakouzēnos in one instance even refers to himself and Alexander together as 'the emperors'.³⁰ He seems simply to have ignored any claims by successive Bulgarian rulers to exercise sovereignty over the Romans.³¹ Yet the more powerful Serbian ruler is always designated as *kralēs*, emphatically denying legitimacy to Dušan's proclamation of himself as *basileus* of the Romans and Serbs in late 1345.³² While Grēgoras accorded the title *basileus* to the sovereigns of Constantinople and Trebizond, he generally avoided its application to Bulgarians and Serbs. Page found the difference between the two historians 'hard to explain'.³³ The difference was also noted by Djurić who believed Kantakouzēnos followed diplomatic niceties but held an 'unfavourable and ironic attitude' to using the title.³⁴ This assertion, however, cannot be clearly substantiated by reference to the text. The most likely explanation is found not in political theory, but in Kantakouzēnos' marriage into the Asanēs

²⁷ Fatouros and Krischer always translate *basileus*, in relation to Bulgarian monarchs, as 'König' or 'Zar', Cousin employed 'roi' rather than 'empereur', and Pontanus 'rex' instead of 'imperator'.

²⁸ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 164. It may be observed that the supposed unique application of the title of *basileus* is upheld more consistently by modern historians than by the Romans themselves.

²⁹ Page, *Being Byzantine*, 156. However Kantakouzēnos does use βασιλεύς in its general sense as 'king' on occasion, e.g., Kant. II, 53.13-14: μείζοσι καὶ περιφανεστέροις τῶν παρ' ἑκάστοις ἔθνεσι βασιλεῦσιν ἢ δυνάσταις οὔσι.

³⁰ Kant. II, 182.21-22: βουλομένων δὲ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ ἀλλήλοις συνελθεῖν.

³¹ Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 28-9.

³² Kant. II, 552.1-2; Greg. II, 747.1-2; also see Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 28-30. Dušan actually signed himself βασιλεὺς Ῥωμανίας rather than Ῥωμαίων in his Greek documents but his intent to supplant the Roman emperor was undisguised; see Oikonomides, 'Emperor of the Romania'.

³³ Page, *Being Byzantine*, 156. Grēgoras does however employ the title on occasion, e.g., Greg. II, 596.15: Ἀλεξάνδρου, τοῦ τῶν Μυσῶν βασιλέως.

³⁴ Djurić, 'Titles', 36.

dynasty, which supplied many of the monarchs of the Second Bulgarian Empire. His intention is therefore more likely to be subtle self-aggrandisement rather than deliberate validation of the equal status of Bulgarian rulers. There is an emperor of the Romans (*basileus tōn Rhōmaiōn*) and emperor of the Mysians (*basileus tōn Mysōn*); Kantakouzēnos ignores any ideological ramifications in favour of reminding the reader that he is related to monarchs, through both his own descent from the Palaiologoi and through his wife, thereby buttressing his own claim on the imperial office and flattering the Asanai, many of whom were his partisans. Kantakouzēnos later has Apokaukos tell Andronikos Asanēs that his lineage qualifies him to rule.³⁵

11: ‘Mysians’ is the standard classicising term for Bulgarians. Despite close cultural ties and occasional long periods of peace, Roman-Bulgarian relations were generally characterised by mistrust and opportunism; political instability in one state posed strong temptations to the other. The Bulgarian state was not as formidable as it had been in the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade as, for roughly a century following 1242, the Tatars on its north-eastern border often intervened in its affairs, sometimes with the encouragement of Constantinople.³⁶ Michael VIII and Andronikos II attempted to keep friendly candidates on the Bulgarian throne and to annex choice territories, with occasional success. In 1305, Tsar Teodor Svetoslav took advantage of the Catalan crisis to seize territory in northern Thrace. He accepted peace in 1308 in exchange for recognition of his conquests and the hand of Michaēl IX’s oldest daughter, Theodōra, then aged only twelve.³⁷

³⁵ Kant. II, 115.14-19

³⁶ Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 69-98. For the Tatars, see also Ch.2:21. For a general, if imprecise, narrative history of Bulgaria, see Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 170-184, 195-199, 224-230, 268-274. Also see Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 53-77.

³⁷ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 170-1. For Svetoslav, see *PLP* 27251; for Theodōra, see Ch.2:18.

Svetoslav died in 1322 and was succeeded by his son, Georgij II Terter, who had previously seized Philippopolis during the early phase of the war between the Andronikoi.³⁸ Terter, probably encouraged by his earlier success, launched another attack; Andronikos III, then temporarily at peace with his grandfather, responded by defeating him.³⁹ Terter then died childless, having reigned only months, and a number of cities, probably with large Greek-speaking populations, revolted in favour of the Romans. Andronikos took advantage by invading while sending a Bulgarian exile to seize the throne. To repel this onslaught, in 1323 Bulgarian nobles elected Michael Šišman as Tsar, who counter-attacked and reclaimed the lost ground, apart from the city of Philippopolis. Peace was eventually agreed, on condition of Michael putting aside his Serbian wife, Anna-Neda, and marrying Svetoslav's widow, Theodōra.⁴⁰ Andronikos III tried to carry their alliance further through an agreement against his grandfather on 13 May 1327⁴¹ but was confounded when Michael double-crossed him the following year and sent assistance to Andronikos II. Michael was eventually persuaded to withdraw, ensuring Andronikos III's final victory over his grandfather.⁴² In June 1328, Michael launched another incursion, which was soon checked and led to a new peace.⁴³ Michael, on bad terms with Dečanski after having renounced marriage to his sister, then recruited Andronikos for a joint attack against their mutual competitor, Serbia. While Andronikos attacked northwards from Macedonia, Michael struck west from Bulgaria. However

³⁸ Kant. I, 169.20-170.14; for Georgij, see *PLP* 27586.

³⁹ Kant. I, 170.15-171.7.

⁴⁰ Kant. I, 172-187. Katakouzēnos does not provide a date for the marriage and there is considerable debate concerning this, with suggestions varying between 1323 and 1326. For details, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras II*, 190-192, n. 191.

⁴¹ Kant. I, 207.20f. Katakouzēnos plays down the significance of this meeting; Greg. I, 390.8-392.6, is explicit that they made an alliance against Andronikos II, as is the chronicle which records the date, *CBB I*, 78, no. 8/18.

⁴² Kant. I, 288.2-17, 294.14-300.5.

⁴³ Kant. I, 323.6-329.2, 340.18-341.4.

his army was completely overwhelmed when it was confronted by Dečanski at Velbužd, in July 1330.⁴⁴ The battle led to Michael's death and Dečanski, although refraining from any territorial annexations, insisted on the restoration of Michael's first wife and their eldest son to the throne. Andronikos III took the deposition and banishment of Theodōra as a *casus belli* and seized extensive territories from Bulgaria in late 1330.⁴⁵

12: Ivan Alexander Asanēs/Stracimir (PLP 91374).⁴⁶ Ivan Alexander was the son of the Bulgarian noble Stracimir and a nephew of Michael III Šišman, and rose to power in early 1331 through the support of leading courtiers, who deposed Ivan Šišman and his mother in Alexander's favour.⁴⁷ He restored relations with Serbia by marrying his sister Helena to the new Kral, Dušan.⁴⁸ Shortly after his accession, Alexander embarked on a campaign which succeeded in re-taking the territories seized by Andronikos III the previous year. Andronikos' counter-attack ended in defeat at Rhōsokastron on 18 July 1331, where Kantakouzēnos depicts Alexander as behaving treacherously by attacking after having agreed a peace treaty.⁴⁹ A new treaty was then agreed, and Andronikos was forced to accept a marriage alliance between Alexander's heir, Michael, and one of his daughters, although it was only concluded some years later.⁵⁰ Roman-Bulgarian relations thereafter remained irenic until Andronikos' death.

⁴⁴ Kant. I, 428.4-431.14; Greg. I, 454.7-456.7.

⁴⁵ Kant. I, 430.15-431.20.

⁴⁶ For his Asenid heritage, see Božilov, 'Asen'. He is also named Asanēs in patriarchal records, e.g., *Register* II, 544.

⁴⁷ Kant. I, 458.17-459.4; Greg. I, 457.16-458.12.

⁴⁸ Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 3.

⁴⁹ Kant. I, 464.12-470.13; Greg. I, 483.21-488.20; Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 130-31; for summary of the agreements, *Kaiserurkunden* IV, 147, no. 2776-2779.

⁵⁰ Kant. I, 508.16-509.8; Greg. I, 546.16-21. Exactly when this wedding took place is uncertain as Grēgoras implies 1339 and Kantakouzēnos 1337 or 1338. Moreover, Kantakouzēnos consistently calls the bride Maria while Greg. III, 557.20-23, calls her Eirēnē. It is possible she was renamed on subsequent remarriage. For both issues, see FK II, 192, n. 105 and 239, n. 305, and esp. Kydōnēs, *Letters*, I.2, 560-562, n. 6 (Tinnefeld's commentary).

During the civil war, both parties vied for Bulgarian support. Alexander's first intervention, prompted by regency loyalists in Adrianople, gained him nothing but intimidated Kantakouzēnos' sympathisers in northern Thrace into abandoning his cause.⁵¹ In 1342, Eirēnē Kantakouzēnē asked Ivan to break the regency's siege of Didymoteichon, promising rewards on her husband's return from Serbia or possession of the city if he died. As Kantakouzēnos observes, this gave Alexander good reason to actively prevent his return and Alexander effectively joined the siege before being chased off by Umur of Aydin.⁵² The regency secured Alexander's formal support in 1344, in exchange for transferring nine cities and their garrisons to him, including Philippopolis. However, he refused to attack Kantakouzēnos until his Turkish allies left Thrace.⁵³ Although Alexander subsequently invaded Morrha, he retreated when Kantakouzēnos attacked and signed a truce.⁵⁴ However, Alexander's gains during the war encouraged him to consistently present himself thereafter as tsar 'of the Bulgarians and Greeks'.⁵⁵ Despite the apparent cultural and economic flourishing of Alexander's reign, Bulgaria was militarily weak and suffered badly from Turkish raids. As the Turks had to cross Thrace or sail via the Bosphorus, Alexander suspected Kantakouzēnos either encouraged them or did very little to prevent them, despite his protests.⁵⁶ Kantakouzēnos attributes Alexander's military support for Iōannēs V in 1352 to this suspicion, although Bulgarian forces retreated without fighting when confronted by an Ottoman army.⁵⁷ Kantakouzēnos asked Alexander to subsidise naval forces

⁵¹ See Chapter 29.

⁵² Kant. II, 337.4-344.10.

⁵³ Kant. II, 406.12-407.13.

⁵⁴ Kant. II, 420.18-21, 426.20-427.21.

⁵⁵ Djurić, 'Titles', 32-33; Obolensky, *Commonwealth*, 245-247; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 29.

⁵⁶ Kant. II, 530.14-20; III, 162.13-163.9.

⁵⁷ Kant. III, 246.24-250.4.

to patrol the Hellespont but, after initial enthusiasm, he refused. Kantakouzēnos proclaimed that Alexander would regret his decision and that the Turks would ruin his affairs.⁵⁸ Kantakouzēnos is otherwise surprisingly respectful of Alexander in the *Histories*, despite their frequent clashes. Even the failure of the naval venture is attributed to the interference of Dušan. As Alexander did not die until 1371, it may be that Kantakouzēnos continued to see him as a possible ally to the Empire and was wary of any overt criticisms reaching his ears.

13: Šišman (PLP 25403). A son of Michael III Šišman by his first wife, Anna. Confusion over the identity of this son has been compounded by Kantakouzēnos identifying him only by surname. Many scholars identify the fugitive as Ivan Stefan Šišman,⁵⁹ Michael III Šišman's heir and who was briefly in power after his death, under the supervision of his mother Anna. However no evidence is provided to support this identification and Kantakouzēnos states that Ivan/Iōannēs returned to Serbia with his mother, while 'Sismanos' went to the 'Scyths' (Tatars) before later travelling to Constantinople.⁶⁰ Furthermore, a 'Despot Michael, son of Tsar Michael' is known from an Old Church Slavonic inscription on a painting in the church of Donja Kamenica, now in Serbia. This has been convincingly interpreted as referring to a homonymous son of Michael III Šišman, who may have ruled in nearby Vidin or simply possessed the title by virtue of being the son of a Bulgarian *basileus*.⁶¹ As Kantakouzēnos implies that there were only two

⁵⁸ Kant. III, 163.9-166.2.

⁵⁹ For example, Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 293; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 11; Laurent, 'L'assaut avorté', 156; Lemerle, *Aydin*, 136, n. 2.

⁶⁰ Kant. II, 19.23-20.1: ἡ μὲν τὸν ἕτερον ἔχουσα τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωάννην, πρὸς Κράλην ἐπανῆκε τὸν ἀδελφόν, Σίσμανος δὲ ὁ λοιπὸς τῶν παιδῶν, εἰς Σκύθας ὤχετο φυγὰς.

⁶¹ Kiel, 'Donja Kamenica'. For Vidin and its links to the Šišman family, see Ch.7:1.

sons,⁶² certain scholars have accepted that this Michael Šišman is Kantakouzēnos' 'Sismanos'.⁶³ Others have assumed that 'Sismanos' is a third, otherwise unknown, son.⁶⁴ This apparently rests on the assumption that the Michael attested at Donja Kamenica must have been ruling Vidin in this period, as the city's status is otherwise unknown. On the basis of Kantakouzēnos' testimony that Tsar Šišman had only two sons with his first wife and his own threat to send 'Sismanos' to Vidin,⁶⁵ it appears that the most likely identification of 'Sismanos' is in fact the younger Michael Šišman and that Vidin was under the control of Ivan Alexander. The reasons for Šišman's move to Constantinople at this time are unknown but it is possibly connected to Özbek Khan's death in the same year.⁶⁶ If Šišman had ever sought to win the Golden Horde's support to gain the Bulgarian throne, aid had clearly not been forthcoming. Özbek's successor may have withdrawn protection, forcing the fugitive to flee again. Whatever Šišman's intentions were, he is not attested again and his fate can only be guessed at. It is unlikely Ivan Alexander felt seriously threatened; the request for his extradition was probably an attempt to test the Empire's strength after Andronikos' death.

14: Michael III Šišman, Tsar of Bulgaria 1323-1330 (*PLP* 91377).⁶⁷ Michael had succeeded his father as ruler of Vidin; Kantakouzēnos states he was of Bulgarian and Cuman descent but incorrectly identifies his father as

⁶² Kant. I, 19.23-20.1: ἡ μὲν τὸν ἔτερον ἔχουσα τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωάννην, πρὸς Κράλην ἐπανῆκε τὸν ἀδελφὸν, Σίσμανος δὲ ὁ λοιπὸς τῶν παιδῶν.

⁶³ E.g., Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 81-2; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 188.

⁶⁴ E.g., *PLP* 25403; FK III, 415-6, n. 17.

⁶⁵ Kant. II, 55.2-6; see Chapter 7.

⁶⁶ Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 133.

⁶⁷ His political career is outlined above, Ch.2:11.

Stracimir, who was actually father of Ivan Alexander.⁶⁸ Following his defeat at Velbužd, he was captured and died of his wounds four days later.⁶⁹

15: Anna-Neda, Tsarina of Bulgaria 1330-1331. A daughter of the Kral Stefan Uroš II Milutin⁷⁰ and sister of Stefan Dečanski. She married Michael Šišman while he was still ruling Vidin.⁷¹ Michael divorced her, in favour of Theodōra, shortly after becoming Tsar but following his death she was restored to the throne at Dečanski's command, probably in late July or August 1330.⁷² Despite her eldest son, Ivan Stefan, being crowned as Tsar, Kantakouzēnos regards her as the true ruler of Bulgaria; she seems to have acted as regent. She fled after being deposed by a conspiracy of Bulgarian nobles early in the following year.⁷³ The turmoil of Dečanski's usurpation in Serbia at that time precluded Serbian intervention in her favour. She is not mentioned again after her flight.

16: Stefan Uroš III Dečanski, Kral of Serbia 1321-1331 (*PLP* 21181).⁷⁴ Dečanski had himself been previously been exiled to Constantinople following an unsuccessful rebellion against his father.⁷⁵ The early years of his reign were taken up with civil war against his brother and cousin.⁷⁶ His second wife was a daughter of Iōannēs Palaiologos, a nephew of Andronikos

⁶⁸ Kant. I, 175.12-14.

⁶⁹ Greg. I, 456.2-5. Kant. I, 430.2-4, is characteristically less precise and states that he survived only a short while after being captured. Some Serbian sources record he died on the battlefield, see FK II, 202, n. 146; Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 179.

⁷⁰ *PLP* 21184.

⁷¹ Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 107. Anna is not named in the Greek sources but is known from Serbian texts.

⁷² Kant. I, 430.15-21; Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 239-40.

⁷³ Kant. I, 458.17-21.

⁷⁴ The most detailed source on his life is the laudatory biography by the anonymous continuer of Danilo II, see Hafner, *Serbisches Mittelalter*, 205-258.

⁷⁵ The dates are not securely known but 1314-21 are most commonly accepted; see Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 161, n. 5.

⁷⁶ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 262-5.

II, who sought Dečanski's support for creating a separate domain carved out of Roman Macedonia, a project cut short by Palaiologos' death.⁷⁷ Dečanski also intervened, albeit with little effect, in the last phase of the first civil war in favour of Andronikos II, before finally deciding not to take sides.⁷⁸ He did however use the opportunity provided by the conflict to make some territorial gains, including the city of Prosek in 1328.⁷⁹ Later, he attempted to take Ochrid, but was repulsed by Andronikos III.⁸⁰ Kantakouzēnos subsequently justified Andronikos' decision to side with Michael Šišman against Dečanski as an 'opportunity to take satisfaction from the Triballi who had wronged the Romans'.⁸¹ Although Dečanski's crushing victory at Velbužd put an end to any Bulgarian threat to Serbia for good, it brought him little joy; he was deposed shortly after by a conspiracy of nobles and his eldest son from his first marriage, Stefan Dušan. Dečanski was imprisoned, and then murdered.⁸²

17: The Triballi are the Serbs.⁸³ Serbia was recognised as an independent kingdom by the papacy in 1217; although predominantly Orthodox, there were significant Latin communities and influence in the north and west. The arrival of the Tatars in the 1240s devastated its powerful neighbours, Hungary and Bulgaria, and afforded the Serbian state greater independence. Although the transfer of power was often protracted and violent, the Serbian kingdom gradually expanded, greatly assisted by the

⁷⁷ *PLP* 21479. For the plot, Kant. I, 209f; Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 39-41.

⁷⁸ Kant. I, 278-284. Also see the involvement of Chrelja, Ch.11:15.

⁷⁹ Kant. I, 285.10-11.

⁸⁰ Kant. I, 427.18-428.3.

⁸¹ Kant. I, 428.10-11: καιρὸν εἶναι δίκας παρὰ Τριβαλῶν λαβεῖν ὧν ἠδίκησαν Ῥωμαίους.

⁸² *Greg. I*, 456.7-457.11. For the Serbian sources, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras II*, 327, n. 318. For Dušan, see Ch.12:1.

⁸³ For Serbia in this period, see Ćirković, *Serbs*, 34-76; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 217-224, 255-275, 286-292, 296-307, 309-312; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*; Βυζάντιο καὶ Σερβία.

intensification of silver mining in its territory, allowing the crown to pay for significant numbers of foreign mercenaries to supplement or confront its own belligerent aristocracy.⁸⁴ Regular Serbian incursions into Macedonia while Andronikos II was preoccupied with other borders led him to consent to the scandalous marriage of his five year-old daughter Simōnis to Kral Milutin in 1299 and the concession of extensive western territories.⁸⁵ Milutin ended hostilities and subsequently provided some assistance against the Catalans and their Turkish allies.⁸⁶ Somewhat later, Milutin lent 2,000 Cuman soldiers to Andronikos, although he was eager for their return by 1321.⁸⁷ Despite such occasional cooperation, the Serbian crown remained a tempting – and welcoming – source of patronage for Roman defectors; Kantakouzēnos admits freely that he and Andronikos III sought Milutin's aid before revolting against Andronikos II, even though their agreement was never activated.⁸⁸ Similarly, loyalists of Andronikos II who fled from Andronikos III's advances in the west went to Dečanski and attempted to persuade him to side with them. After he declined to intervene, they took possession of various fortresses in Macedonia, some of which he subsequently took over.⁸⁹ Syrgiannēs and later Kantakouzēnos himself would receive Serbian soldiers to pursue their own goals.⁹⁰ Serbia would be the most obvious immediate beneficiary of the 1341-7 civil war but its gains should be seen as part of an established policy of exploiting political differences in the Empire rather than an indication of overwhelming economic or military strength.

⁸⁴ Kantakouzēnos repeatedly reports German mercenaries in Serbian service: Kant. I, 429.17 (300 knights); II, 354.13-15; III, 120.16-17.

⁸⁵ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 93-100; Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 222-3. For Milutin, *PLP* 21184.

⁸⁶ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 221-2, 232-3; Oikonomides, 'Serbs in Asia Minor'.

⁸⁷ Kant. I, 35.17-36.1.

⁸⁸ Kant. I, 36.1-37.3. In any case, Milutin died soon after.

⁸⁹ Kant. I, 274.23-285.23.

⁹⁰ See Ch.14:9 and Ch.12:1.

18: Theodōra Palaiologina, Tsarina of Bulgaria 1308-1330 (*PLP* 21379).⁹¹ Oldest daughter of Michaēl IX and elder sister of Andronikos III. She was married in 1308, aged twelve, to the Bulgarian Tsar, Svetoslav. She remained in Bulgaria after the death of her first husband but after the death of her second, Michael, she was exiled with her children and returned to Constantinople in 1330.⁹² She then became the nun Theodosia; in this role she attended to Kantakouzēnos' mother after her imprisonment. Following the latter's death in January 1342, Theodosia denounced the cruelty and inhumanity of her imprisonment to the Empress.⁹³ She is not attested thereafter.

19: Ivan Stefan, Tsar of Bulgaria 1330-1331 (*PLP* 8762). The oldest son of Michael III Šišman and Anna-Neda. He occupied the throne briefly, apparently under his mother's authority, before fleeing to Serbia with her. Little else is known about him for certain. He and his father are commemorated in the Bulgarian additions to the Synodikon of Orthodoxy.⁹⁴

20: 'Kral' is Serbian for 'king'. Kantakouzēnos also occasionally refers to Serbian rulers as *archōn* or *despotēs*.⁹⁵ In contrast to his treatment of Bulgarian monarchs,⁹⁶ Kantakouzēnos avoids the title *basileus*, refusing to legitimise the rule of Serbian monarchs over former Roman territory.

⁹¹ Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 45, no. 71, is rendered obsolete by Dölger, 'Theodora', but note that he mistakes Andronikos III's mother, Rita-Maria, for Kantakouzēnos' mother, Theodōra, at 229-30.

⁹² Kant. I, 430.18-19; Greg. I, 457.18-19, claims she only just escaped with her life.

⁹³ Kant. II, 222.14-223.5. See also Ch.9:18.

⁹⁴ Petkov, *Voices*, 256; Gouillard, 'Synodikon of Orthodoxy'.

⁹⁵ E.g., Kant. I, 35.17; II, 240.13-14.

⁹⁶ See above, Ch.2:10.

21: The ‘Scyths’ are the Tatars of the Golden Horde.⁹⁷ The Khans had intervened in contests for the Bulgarian throne on previous occasions, as Bulgaria was usually a tributary.⁹⁸ It was therefore logical for Šišman to seek their support against Ivan Alexander, although clearly he was unsuccessful. Kantakouzēnos asserts that ‘the Scythians from Hyperborea are almost countless in number and they are the strongest of all nations’.⁹⁹ While this appears to be a classicising topos, the Tatars were indeed able to mobilise much larger forces than any of the Balkan powers, who remained justly wary of them. The Tatars first entered the Balkans in 1242, ravaging Bulgaria and forcing it into some form of submission. Their relations with Michaēl VIII changed from initial hostility to close alliance sealed by diplomatic marriage.¹⁰⁰ By the fourteenth century, relations had cooled; Kantakouzēnos states that they raided Bulgaria and as far as Adrianople in 1320, and then, in the following year, overran most of Thrace although causing little damage. In 1324, an army he implausibly estimates at 120,000 invaded and comprehensively plundered Thrace for 40 days. Following engagements led by Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos, they eventually retreated. He records but denies the rumour that the Tatars were summoned by Andronikos II to weaken his grandson.¹⁰¹ Units of Tatars regularly appear as allies in Bulgarian armies, and were instrumental in Ivan Alexander’s victory over Andronikos III at Rhōsokastron.¹⁰² Andronikos attempted to maintain good relations with the Golden Horde and apparently married an illegitimate

⁹⁷ For an outline of Tatar political entanglements in the Balkans, although marred by minor inaccuracies in regards to the Greek sources, see Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 69-133.

⁹⁸ Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 79-84, 86-96.

⁹⁹ Kant. I, 188.2-4: τὸ δὲ ἐξ Ὑπερβορέων Σκυθικὸν πλήθει τε ἀναρίθμητον σχεδὸν ὄν καὶ δυνατώτατον τῶν ἑκασταχοῦ ἔθνων.

¹⁰⁰ Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 69-85. Kant. II, 188.6-19 alludes to the success of the diplomatic approach without naming individuals.

¹⁰¹ Kant. I, 188.19-193.17. Although other Greek sources are silent, the extent of destruction was remarked on in Italy: see Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 291.

¹⁰² E.g., Kant. I, 294, 323, 459.

daughter to Özbek Khan.¹⁰³ Despite this, Grēgoras reports a major incursion reached the Hellespont in 1337, plundering Thrace for 50 days and taking (a wildly exaggerated) 300,000 prisoners.¹⁰⁴ The cause of the attack was a failure to pay tribute: ‘the Romans neglected to send the customary gifts to the chief of the Scyths and the nobles around him’.¹⁰⁵ A letter by Akindynos reveals that a Tatar conquest was planned in 1341.¹⁰⁶ The invasion was averted by a diplomatic mission headed by Dēmētrios Kydōnēs’ father, sent before Andronikos’ death.¹⁰⁷ The success of this mission may however have been overstated as a final incursion into Thrace occurred in 1342, although it apparently achieved little as the land was already laid to waste and, with the exception of one town, the population took refuge within fortifications.¹⁰⁸ It is unknown if either of the warring parties called for Tatar intervention but it may simply be that the demands of the civil war would have again halted tribute payments. After this attack, the Tatars appear not to have directly intervened in Roman affairs again and, as emperor, Kantakouzēnos records no dealings with them.

22: Ivan Alexander was reminding the Romans of the peace treaty agreed following the Battle of Rhōsokastron, presumably by sending a copy of the agreement and the guarantee sworn to support it.¹⁰⁹ Oaths were an accepted way for foreign states to guarantee their agreements and were often

¹⁰³ The existence of an unnamed imperial bride is attested by Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 488, who gives her the Turkish name Bayalūn, and by Akindynos, *Letters*, 57, ep. 12. For demonstration that she was an illegitimate daughter of Andronikos III, see Laurent, ‘L’assaut avorté’, 147-8.

¹⁰⁴ Greg. I, 535.11-536.8; Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 131-2. Kantakouzēnos is silent concerning this event.

¹⁰⁵ Greg. I, 536.3-4: Ῥωμαῖοι πέμπειν ἡμέλησαν τὰ εἰθισμένα δῶρα τῷ τε τῶν Σκυθῶν ἡγεμόνι καὶ τοῖς περὶ αὐτὸν εὐγενέσι.

¹⁰⁶ Akindynos, *Letters*, 56-61, ep. 12.

¹⁰⁷ Loenertz, ‘Notes’, 162-6. Regarding Kydōnēs senior (*PLP* 13874) and his mission, see Saint-Guillain, ‘Manouël Kydônès’; Laurent, ‘L’assaut avorté’.

¹⁰⁸ Kant. II, 302.13-305.1. Surprisingly this incursion goes unmentioned by Grēgoras.

¹⁰⁹ See above, Ch.2:12.

regarded by contemporaries as more powerful than the treaty itself.¹¹⁰ Although imperial ideology had previously dictated that emperors did not bind themselves with oaths, this prohibition began to crumble in the thirteenth century¹¹¹ and it became common practice; Kantakouzēnos explicitly states that oaths were exchanged by Alexander and Andronikos III at Rhōsokastron, 'according to custom'.¹¹²

23: It is unclear whether such an assembly of senators was entirely *ad hoc* or an established, if irregular, practice. There is no systematic survey of representative and consultative bodies in the Palaiologan era¹¹³ and the issue is complicated by lack of evidence and imprecise terminology; Kantakouzēnos himself refers to this gathering as the *synklētos*, *boulē*, and *bouleutērion*.¹¹⁴ While a gathering of this size was an unusual event, arising from the political vacuum created by Andronikos' death, emperors certainly sought the advice of occasional consultative councils or assemblies.¹¹⁵ Despite this, there is a lack of evidence of any formalised institutions until possibly the fifteenth century.¹¹⁶ While Andronikos II seems to have governed with the assistance of some form of privy council,¹¹⁷ he was publicly criticised in a political tract by one of his sons, Theodōros Palaiologos, Marquis of Montferrat, for over-reliance upon a single chief minister, Theodōros Metochites.¹¹⁸ He urged the establishment of

¹¹⁰ Laiou, 'Foreigner and Stranger', 88-91.

¹¹¹ Angelov, *Ideology*, 41.

¹¹² Kant. I, 469.15-16: καὶ ὄρκους ἐποιήσαντο ἐπ' αὐταῖς οἱ βασιλεῖς κατὰ τὸ ἔθος.

¹¹³ Tsirpanlis, 'Parliaments', usefully catalogues the literary references to political gatherings during 1081-1351, however Tsirpanlis' analysis is tendentious and marred by misunderstandings; his account of this incident contains a number of errors.

¹¹⁴ Kant. II, 20.10-11, 22.24, 24.2-3.

¹¹⁵ See Kyritses, 'Imperial Council'.

¹¹⁶ Kiousopoulou, *Emperor or Manager*, 86-7.

¹¹⁷ Angelov, *Ideology*, 291-2.

¹¹⁸ Shawcross, 'Counsel', esp. 90-101; for Theodōros Palaiologos, *PLP* 21465; Laiou, 'Theodore Palaeologus'.

representative assemblies.¹¹⁹ Andronikos III similarly appears to have relied upon a relatively small inner circle, of which Kantakouzēnos was indisputably part, although Grēgoras claimed Andronikos was secretive, trusted only his own counsel, and did not take advice from others.¹²⁰ Both Grēgoras and Theodōros probably exaggerated the isolation of the respective emperors but the fact that they could be criticised in such a way demonstrates that there was no regulated consultative institution.

The assembly in 1341 was almost certainly called on Anna's initiative, although Kantakouzēnos avoids acknowledging this; the ambassadors reported to her and it would have been prudent to seek consensus before making any response that could potentially lead to war. Kantakouzēnos' disapproval of the entire incident is apparent: he portrays the assembly as disorderly, a tool exploited by his enemies, in particular the Patriarch, and an affront to the social order. Moreover it is apparent he did not think anyone other than himself had much useful advice to offer. However he often mentions his own consultations with military commanders and supporters, so his disdain relates to the specific circumstances of this assembly rather than the principle of consultation or even collective decision-making. Shortly after his victory in 1347, Kantakouzēnos called a much larger popular assembly, albeit not to seek advice but to solicit voluntary contributions to the fisc.¹²¹ Lacking a single figure with the political strength to fill the role of *basileus*, the regency government appears to have relied unusually heavily on some form of imperial council during the war.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Shawcross, 'Counsel', 98-101.

¹²⁰ Greg. I, 565.15-19.

¹²¹ Kant. III, 33.10-40.21; Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 171-8 (translation), 289-291 (commentary).

¹²² Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 59.

24: Geōrgios Choumnos (PLP 30945).¹²³ A son of Nikēphoros Choumnos, Andronikos II's long-time *mesazōn*.¹²⁴ He was later persuaded by Apokaukos, who was in any case married to his niece, to join the conspiracy against Kantakouzēnos.¹²⁵ In return he received the high title *megas stratopedarchēs*, which was ranked 10th in the list of precedence, at Iōannēs V's coronation in November 1341.¹²⁶ However, following efforts to persuade the Empress to make peace, he was placed under house-arrest by Apokaukos at the end of 1342.¹²⁷ It seems probable that he was later obliged to become the monk Gerasimos, either by Apokaukos or, as an anti-Palamite, following Kantakouzēnos' victory.¹²⁸ His sister, Eirēnē, the nun Eulogia, was a leading anti-Palamite and provided political and financial support to Akindynos during the war.¹²⁹

25: *Epi tēs trapezēs* ranks 21st in Pseudo-Kodinos' list of precedence, very clearly below *megas domestikos*, hence Kantakouzēnos' outrage at him speaking first.¹³⁰ There were a number of ceremonial duties associated with the office, principally serving at the imperial table, as the title indicates.¹³¹

26: Cf. 1 Corinthians 14:30. These words are also a direct quotation from the letters of Theodōros Stouditēs.¹³² They apparently made a deep impression on Kantakouzēnos, who refers to them on a number of

¹²³ See also Verpeaux, 'Famille Choumnos', 261-2, no. 18.

¹²⁴ PLP 30961.

¹²⁵ See Chapter 19.

¹²⁶ Kant. II, 218.

¹²⁷ Kant. II, 325, 336.

¹²⁸ Verpeaux, 'Famille Choumnos', 262.

¹²⁹ Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 83-4. For Eulogia, see PLP 30936.

¹³⁰ Ps-Kod., 29.

¹³¹ Ps-Kod., 151-165, 241. See also Guiland, *Institutions I*, 237-241.

¹³² Theodōros Stouditēs, *Epistulae I*, 33-4, ep. 5.

occasions.¹³³ As he explicitly states, Kantakouzēnos considered himself the ‘first man’ of the Empire at this time, so the attack on his authority is clear.¹³⁴ A relatively junior courtier such as Choumnos would not have mounted such an open attack unless he had support, presumably from the Patriarch’s party; Kantakouzēnos alleges as much in the following chapter.¹³⁵

27: Dēmētrios Tornikios Palaiologos (*PLP* 29124).¹³⁶ Tornikios and Tornikēs are alternative spellings.¹³⁷ Dēmētrios, a nephew of Andronikos II and an uncle of Andronikos III, was probably quite elderly by this time.¹³⁸ Although Kantakouzēnos does not mention his title, he is attested as *meγas droungarios tēs viglas* repeatedly from 1324 onwards, including as one of the co-witnesses of a chrysobull along with Kantakouzēnos.¹³⁹ The title was of middling importance; Pseudo-Kodinos ranks it 24th and reports that the holder is responsible for organising the watch when the army makes camp, under the supervision of the Grand Domestic.¹⁴⁰ Dēmētrios’ subsequent fate is unknown.

28: There was a traditional right to seek asylum within a church for those fearing imprisonment or physical harm, reflected by legislation from the fourth century onwards.¹⁴¹ The practice remained until the end of the Empire, although it was not always respected and fugitives were occasionally dragged from churches by force. This is particularly notable in claims to asylum arising from political rather than criminal issues: Michaēl

¹³³ Kant. II, 23.21-2, 26.10-11, 120.20-1.

¹³⁴ Kant. II, 25.7-9.

¹³⁵ Kant. II, 26.7-14.

¹³⁶ See also Schmalzbauer, ‘Tornikioi’, 124-5; Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 5, no. 3.

¹³⁷ A. Kazhdan, ‘Tornikios’, *ODB* III, 2096-7.

¹³⁸ FK III, 417, n. 23.

¹³⁹ MM III, 111.

¹⁴⁰ Ps-Kod., 207.

¹⁴¹ Macrides, ‘Asylum’, esp. 510.

VII Doukas was heavily criticised for removing a critic from Hagia Sophia in 1078¹⁴² and Chōniatēs records a number of cases, including the *kaisarissa* Maria who met threats of eviction with force and led an armed revolt from within the cathedral precincts.¹⁴³ These incidents make the Patriarch's claim that asylum had always been respected somewhat absurd, which is surely Kantakouzēnos' intention here. The rights of asylum seekers in Hagia Sophia, as long as they did not live in the church itself, were re-affirmed in a March 1343 *prostagma* of Iōannēs V¹⁴⁴ but Kantakouzēnos claims that his supporters who had claimed asylum there, apparently including Grēgorios Palamas, were arrested and imprisoned by the Patriarch just before Easter of the same year.¹⁴⁵

29: Kantakouzēnos' rather passive-aggressive behaviour compels the Empress to directly request his opinion, re-asserting his importance before the senate but also alleviating suspicion that she backed Choumnos' attack. Thus he implies that the Patriarch, who emerged as the leading speaker, sponsored the outburst.

¹⁴² Attaleiatēs, *History*, 473.

¹⁴³ Chōniatēs, *History*, 232.32-241.87 (trans. Magoulias, 131-6).

¹⁴⁴ *Register* II, 308-310, no. 141.

¹⁴⁵ Kant. II, 300.14-20; Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 69-70.

Commentary on Chapter 3

1: For a man of Kantakouzēnos political stature, *apragmosynē*, retirement or ‘freedom from worldly affairs’, in the prime of life would have meant entering a monastery, not least to prevent his enemies suspecting that he intended to return.

2: The coupling of barbarians and Hellenes to indicate ‘all enemies’ is familiar from Thucydides.¹ However, Kantakouzēnos steadfastly maintains a Roman/*Rhōmaios* identity throughout the *Histories*, abstaining from a strengthening trend for intellectuals, from the twelfth century onwards, to identify themselves and their compatriots as Hellenes, or even (very rarely) as *Graikoi*.² Kantakouzēnos’ theological works similarly retain the distinction, traditional to the genre, between Christians and Hellenes, the latter being pre-Christian thinkers or pagans.³ Therefore his present designation of Hellenes as both external and hostile appears significant.⁴ Hellenes are most probably those who are ethnically and culturally Roman, in contrast to *barbaroi*, but actively rejected the emperor’s rule and were therefore rebels, just as ancient pagans rejecting the Christian revelation were *Hellēnes* and not *Rhōmaioi*. Kantakouzēnos almost certainly had in mind Andronikos’ autochthonous adversaries in Hellas/Greece itself, notably the states of Epiros and Thessaly.⁵ He exhibits what could be termed Roman nationalism; he regards it as proper that ethnic *Rhōmaioi* should wish to be part of the

¹ Thuc. 2.36.4: βάρβαρον ἢ Ἑλληνα πολέμιον.

² Angelov, *Ideology*, 95-98; Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 373-388; Runciman, *Byzantine Renaissance*, 17-22.

³ E.g., Kantakouzēnos, *Refutationes* I, 8.29-30: τὴν τῶν Ἑλλήνων σοφίαν μωρῶν; Kantakouzēnos, *Contra Mahometem*, col. 545: οἱ μὲν εἰδωλόλατροι Ἑλληνες.

⁴ Kant. II, 28.20-21: ὅσα τε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξωθεν πολεμίους, καὶ Ἑλληνας λέγω καὶ βαρβάρους.

⁵ When identifying these opponents specifically, Kantakouzēnos refers to them by their localities, not collectively or culturally, e.g. Kant. I, 504.11-12: Ἀκαρῶσι καὶ Θετταλοῖς.

basileia tōn Rhōmaiōn, while not applying the name to those who reject imperial rule and place themselves outside the national community.⁶

⁶ For discussion and further examples of this, see Page, *Being Byzantine*, 163-169. For Byzantium as a Roman 'nation-state', see Kaldellis, *Hellenism*, 74-111. Joannou, 'Unedierte Rede', 40, notes that Patriarch Kalekas' patriotic appeals to the Roman nation/race (τὸ Ῥωμαίων γένος), on the occasion of Iōannēs V's coronation, indicate contemporary identification of a *Volksgemeinschaft* ('national community').

Commentary on Chapter 4

1: Edouard (1284-1329), Count of Savoy 1323-29. He was Anna's half-brother, born of the first wife of their father Amadeo V (r. 1285-1323), while her mother was his second wife, Maria of Brabant.¹ Anna married during his reign in 1326. Edouard died without sons and was succeeded by his younger brother, Aymon (r. 1329-43).² Savoy was a small Alpine county, which derived its importance from its control of many of the western passes through the Alps.³ Andronikos II's main considerations in arranging his grandson's marriage to Anna were probably to improve diplomatic links to the Latin world in general, but also to secure Savoy's friendship with the neighbouring marquisate of Montferrat, ruled by Andronikos II's son Theodōros.⁴ Theodōros would later, in 1330, marry his only daughter to Count Aymon.⁵

2: These conveniently prophetic words are the only ones that Kantakouzēnos has Andronikos provide regarding his own role after the Emperor's death. He does not record any speeches during his brief account of Andronikos' final illness.⁶ Whatever Andronikos' actual words were, it is clear that he did not explicitly pass control of the government to Kantakouzēnos.

¹ FK I, 269-70, n. 258; Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 87.

² Cox, *Green Count*, 11-12, 378-9.

³ For Savoy's history in the fourteenth century, see Cox, *Green Count*, esp. 17-32.

⁴ *PLP* 21465; Laiou, 'Theodore Palaeologus'. For the political considerations behind this marriage, Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 302-5.

⁵ Cox, *Green Count*, 12-13.

⁶ Kant. I, 557.10f.

Commentary on Chapter 5

1: *Oikeioi* were trusted members of the entourages (i.e., ‘households’) of the powerful, who lacked close kinship ties and voluntarily owed some form of service and obedience, possibly confirmed by oath.¹ In documents, Palaiologan emperors referred to most high office-holders who were not relatives as *oikeioi*.² There are similarities with the western concept of vassalage but, given the absence of formalised legal definitions, the institution appears closer to the ancient Roman patron-client relationship.³ *Oikeioi* are largely documented as imperial clients, and have generally been discussed as such, but Kantakouzēnos clearly regards trusted followers of prominent individuals as *oikeioi*.⁴ He occasionally distinguishes some as *oikeiotatōn*, usually translated as ‘closest *oikeioi*’.⁵ He also tends to identify his own agents as *oikeioi* but those of others, particularly Apokaukos, more frequently as *oiketai*, simply ‘servants’. This term may sometimes have included *oikeioi* but certainly also designated followers who were hirelings.⁶

2: Kantakouzēnos here speaks to τοῖς ἐκείνῳ προσήκουσιν ὑμῖν, i.e., the imperial family, although he begins by addressing the Empress alone. He once again vaguely refers to opposition among the Palaiologoi at the start of Chapter 9.⁷ In the present situation, it is conceivable that Anna was flanked by other family members in the audience chamber but perhaps as likely that

¹ Verpeaux, ‘*Oikeioi*’; Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 23-5; Angelov, *Ideology*, 224-6. On the composition of this group, Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 16-20.

² Verpeaux, ‘*Oikeioi*’, 94-7.

³ For comparison with western institutions, Verpeaux, ‘*Oikeioi*’, 93-4; Angelov, *Ideology*, 225-6.

⁴ As recognised by Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 143-4; Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 17. Verpeaux and Maksimović view *oikeioi* as exclusively imperial functionaries.

⁵ E.g., Kant. II, 71.3, 138.8-9.

⁶ Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 282-3.

⁷ Kant. II, 64.11-12: τῶν δὲ καθ’ αἶμα προσηκόντων βασιλεῖ τινων.

the author, in the passion of his self-justification, addresses his contemporary critics.

3: Cf. Nicene Creed and 2 Timothy 4:1.

4: Much of Kantakouzēnos' speech is a justification of his behaviour after Andronikos' death, to defend himself against allegations that he was seeking to become emperor. Nobody, within the narrative of the *Histories*, has yet made such an allegation. Although it is almost certain such accusations were made at the time, it represents an unusual break in the consistency of the narrative of the *Histories* and, at times, the author seems to have had his contemporary readership at the forefront of his mind. Within the speech, the historical character of the Grand Domestic displays unusual foreknowledge, warning that his opponents will say that he threatens the Empress' life, that they will try to corrupt her with lies, that believing them will lead to civil war, uprisings in the cities, and the destruction of the Empire. Although he comes close to presenting the forthcoming civil war as a simple choice in the hands of the Empress, in the following chapter he shows her making the *right* choice, i.e., to accept his role in government. This is consistent with his portrayal of the Empress as an unwilling facilitator of the war. It does, however, suggest that he was ultimately prepared to hold her responsible if faced with the alternative of admitting guilt himself.

Grēgoras reports a speech which is similar in many respects – although with more learned name-dropping and without such blood-curdling warnings of civil war – and which also concludes with the exchange of oaths.⁸ Insofar as either account bears resemblance to dialogue that actually took place in 1341, they imply that the Empress was paying heed to

⁸ Greg. II, 591.25-595.16.

a wider circle of courtiers, somewhat at odds with her dramatic pleas to the Grand Domestic in the previous chapter of the *Histories*. Kantakouzēnos' offer to resign is therefore best understood to mean 'back me or sack me' rather than an offer to step aside for the sake of political harmony. The identity of these courtiers is suppressed; the only members of the original anti-Kantakouzēnos/*sykophantai* party (i.e., before Apokaukos constructs his conspiracy) identified in the *Histories* are the Patriarch and Choumnos. Grēgoras names only Apokaukos and the Patriarch. It is likely that certain individuals were sufficiently prominent, or sufficiently closely related to either the Emperor or Kantakouzēnos himself, to cause embarrassment for both parties.

Commentary on Chapter 6

1: In the *Histories*, Andronikos is indeed fond of expressing his affection for someone by stating that he would not defend himself even if that person were to attack him with a sword.¹

2: Oaths were widely used in the Palaiologan era for securing political allegiances, and oath-taking is presented as an accepted practice.² Oaths are taken to secure agreements between rulers,³ formal oaths of fidelity administered *en masse* to prevent subversion or show loyalty,⁴ oaths are given as guarantees of truth,⁵ and – as here – oaths are exchanged to seal political agreements. Kantakouzēnos demonstrates that his enemies break their most solemn undertakings and, in particular, paints Apokaukos as a regular perjurer who makes and breaks even the most holy oaths without compunction.⁶ However, the practice of swearing oaths was not uncontroversial, and some ecclesiastic critics found any form of oath offensive, owing to its prohibition in Matthew 5:34-37.⁷ Within the *Histories*, no reservations are expressed by the Patriarch, but Kantakouzēnos is later criticised for his use of sworn statements by some of his opponents who claim that he never used them before declaring himself *basileus* and therefore that his sudden adoption of them indicated he was behaving unfaithfully.⁸ Kantakouzēnos defended oaths (in this case, unilateral rather than reciprocal

¹ Kant. I, 48.13-24 (regarding his grandfather), 330.5-9, 364.7-12 (both regarding Kantakouzēnos).

² See Svronos, 'Serment de fidélité'; Rochette, 'Serment'; Angelov, *Ideology*, 326-44.

³ See Ch.2:22, also Kant. II, 69.21.

⁴ E.g., during Andronikos III's illness, Kant. II, 91.9-15; before Kantakouzēnos' acclamation as emperor, Kant. II, 161.4-6.

⁵ E.g., Kant. II, 107.17-19, 116.11-12.

⁶ A consistent theme of Chapters 15-19.

⁷ Angelov, *Ideology*, 318, n. 28.

⁸ Kant. II, 229.9-21.

oaths) both with biblical precedents and by stating that oaths are made ‘either because the swearers are not sufficiently credible, or because those receiving them are otherwise of mean character, or because the magnitude of what is promised is impossible to believe without oaths.’⁹ He makes it clear that his critics must belong to the second group.

Although Palaiologan emperors did, very occasionally, swear oaths towards their subjects,¹⁰ Kantakouzēnos’ insistence on reciprocal oaths between himself and the Empress is aggressive, and a sign of tension between them. It seems probable that he agreed to uphold the sovereignty of Anna and her son, in return for delegation of all administrative authority and assurances not to give heed to his enemies. By administering the oath, the Patriarch was effectively made complicit in the agreement, restricting his own political ambitions. Although Kantakouzēnos would effectively be acting as regent, the agreement seems not to have made any change to his official public status. This gave it a temporary character which failed to halt the political manoeuvres of his enemies, or those of his supporters pushing him to assume the imperial office, as is clear from the following chapters.

3: Saint Dēmētrios ‘myrrh-streamer’ is considered the patron saint of Thessalonike, which houses his relics. While Thessalonike still remains the main pilgrimage site for his cult, he was revered throughout the Empire and beyond. His epithet derived from the reputed ability of his relics to miraculously produce streams of scented oil (myrrh).¹¹ The Palaiologoi

⁹ Kant. II, 230.7-10: ἡ διὰ τὸ μὴ τοὺς ὀμνύοντας ἀξιόχρεως πρὸς πίστιν εἶναι γίνεσθαι, ἢ διὰ τὸ τοὺς δεχομένους ἢ φαύλους τοὺς τρόπους εἶναι, ἢ διὰ μέγεθος τῶν ἐπαγγελλομένων ἀδυνάτως ἔχειν πείθεσθαι ὄρκων χωρὶς.

¹⁰ Kant. I, 83.9-118, explicitly cites the precedent of oaths given to Michaēl Palaiologos by Iōannēs III Batatzēs, although he mistakes the latter for his son, Theodōros II Laskaris (see Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 320). See also Rochette, ‘Serment’, 162-4; Angelov, *Ideology*, 344, n. 120.

¹¹ A. Kazhdan and N.P. Ševčenko, ‘Demetrios of Thessalonike’, *ODB I*, 605-6. For the importance of St Dēmētrios’ cult in this period, particularly in relation to Thessalonike, Russell, *St Demetrius*, esp. 9-28.

regarded the saint as the particular patron of their family. Michaël VIII Palaiologos founded the monastery of St Dēmētrios-Kellibara in Constantinople in 1282, in part to replace a church to Dēmētrios built by his ancestor Geōrgios Palaiologos which had been destroyed. In his *typikon*, he described the saint as ‘my great defender’ and stated that he ‘appears to have been the ancestral patron of the house of the Palaiologoi.’¹² This monastery was evidently located near the sea walls to the south of the city, so it cannot be identified with the palace church referred to by Kantakouzēnos.¹³ It however remains quite possible that Michaël VIII added a church dedicated to his patron during his refurbishment of the Blachernai complex following his conquest of the city. The palace church frequently referred to by Pseudo-Kodinos may be that of Saint Dēmētrios, or the Komnēnian foundation dedicated to Saint Thekla, or indeed neither of these.¹⁴ Kantakouzēnos reports that Andronikos III had particular affection for the saint from childhood, honouring him above all others ‘as if he were his lover’.¹⁵ While Dēmētrios’ image generally appeared on coins produced at Thessalonike’s mint, Andronikos III also appears to have included it on some of his Constantinopolitan issues as well.¹⁶ Kantakouzēnos was acclaimed on Saint Dēmētrios’ day and the few surviving coins issued by Kantakouzēnos during the period 1352-1354, when he was in open conflict with Iōannēs V, show the emperor facing not his now-deposed colleague but Saint Dēmētrios.¹⁷ Matthaios Kantakouzēnos, who never ruled Thessalonike, also

¹² Dennis, ‘Kellibara’, 1246-7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1238-9.

¹⁴ Magdalino, ‘Pseudo-Kodinos’ Constantinople’, 4. FK III, 419, n. 42, assumes the church is located in the Great Palace, which is surely incorrect.

¹⁵ Kant. I, 270: ἦν γὰρ ἐξ ἡλικίας πρώτης τιμὴν αὐτῷ καὶ πίστιν πλείω ἢ κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους μάρτυρας παρέχων καὶ ὡσπερ ἐραστής αὐτοῦ ὦν.

¹⁶ E.g., Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 308 and Plate 89, no. 1426.

¹⁷ Bendall and Donald, *Coinage*, 148-151. The identification of these figures is unambiguous owing to the inscriptions KTKZ and ΔMT. For Kantakouzēnos’ acclamation, see Ch.27:1.

seems to have adopted the image of Dēmētrios on his few surviving coins, demonstrating both the widespread popularity of the saint and that association with him had become a factor in imperial legitimation.¹⁸

4: The origin of this proverb is unknown, although Kantakouzēnos certainly had direct relationships with Turks and spoke Turkish to some degree.¹⁹ Despite the apparent complacent misogyny, there was a long tradition of female involvement in imperial politics and Kantakouzēnos himself frequently trusted his mother and his wife to safeguard his political interests.²⁰ His intention here is to offer a conventional explanation for the Empress' later hostility to him – the inescapable 'natural' weakness of her gender, which his enemies are able to exploit – rather than attributing it to her own character or to deliberate hostility.

5: Kantakouzēnos reminds the reader of his earlier account of Kalekas' election and his central role in it.²¹ Kantakouzēnos' expectation of assistance for help which he earlier provided freely (προίξ) should be understood in the context of the importance of patron-client relationships, often identified as friendship (φίλος).

6: In other words, as Kantakouzēnos controls the state, his victories or failures affect the lives of all.

¹⁸ Morrisson, 'Coinage and Money', fig. 50.

¹⁹ Kant. III, 66.6: ἐκέλευεν... Περισσιτὶ.

²⁰ See Ch.9:18 and Ch.27:4, respectively. On the importance of female involvement in politics generally, see Herrin, 'Women'; for the Palaiologan era specifically, Malamut, 'L'impératrice', esp. 655-6. Thessalonike was also repeatedly governed by widowed or estranged empresses; see Malamut, 'Pouvoir et influence'.

²¹ Kant. I, 431.20-435.20.

7: The *Trisagion*, or 'thrice-holy' hymn, originated in the 4th century and by the 6th century had become part of the Eucharist service.²²

²² R.F. Taft, 'Trisagion', *ODB* III, 2121.

Commentary on Chapter 7

1: Vidin, on the Danube, was one of the major towns of Bulgaria and is described in an anonymous contemporary scribal note as a 'great and populous city'.¹ It lay not only a considerable distance overland from Roman borders at that time but is also over 500km from the mouth of the Danube, so Kantakouzēnos was not threatening simply to raid an easily accessible coastal town. Vidin, with Hungarian support, was frequently independent of the government in Tŭrnovo. The Šišman family came to dominate it in 1290, thereafter ruling as Despots; the Mamluk historian Baybars refers to the surrounding area as 'Šišman's country'.² Subsequently there were in effect two separate Bulgarian states most of the time, one governed from Tŭrnovo and the other from Vidin.³ The principality had been Michael III Šišman's powerbase for his rise to the Bulgarian throne and his ascension united the two territories at least until his death.⁴ In 1341 it is not entirely clear whether Vidin was under the direct control of Ivan Alexander, although Kantakouzēnos' plan to send 'Sismanos' to Vidin to spark a civil war indicates that it was probably not governed by the Šišman dynasty at the time.⁵ It is however likely that the Šišman family retained considerable support in the city, so Kantakouzēnos' threat was plausible and menacing.⁶ In the late 1340s Vidin apparently became an appanage controlled by one of Ivan Alexander's sons, and grew increasingly independent after the two men fell out.⁷

¹ Petkov, *Voices*, 471.

² Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 97, 107-8. For consideration of the territorial extent of the principality of Vidin, including areas north of the Danube, see Božilov, 'Vidin'.

³ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 273-4.

⁴ When narrating Michael's rise to power, Kant. I, 175.11-12, notes that he is ruler of Vidin: τὸν τῆς Βιδύνης ἄρχοντα Μιχαήλ.

⁵ For 'Sismanos', see Ch.2:13.

⁶ FK I, 264, n. 228; FK III, 421, n. 54.

⁷ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 273; Petkov, *Voices*, 470-1, 513-4.

2: A 'trireme' is any large oared vessel armed as a warship.⁸ Kantakouzēnos does on occasion mention smaller vessels which he designates monoremes and biremes.⁹

3: Kantakouzēnos adopts the standard classicising practice of styling the Turks as 'Persians' and correspondingly employs the ancient Persian title 'satrap' to indicate the various Turkish lords. These rulers are more correctly known as either *beys* (Turkish) or emirs (Arabic), and their principalities as *beyliks* or emirates. Their states were recent creations, founded on the territory of the older Seljuk state and more recently conquered Roman possessions. Western Anatolia had begun to come under serious Turkish pressure towards the end of Michaēl VIII's reign. Despite Andronikos II's repeated attempts to repel the Turks, the situation deteriorated rapidly and, by 1328, Roman rule was reduced to enclaves in Bithynia and the isolated cities of Phōkaia and Philadelphia.¹⁰ The political situation in Asia Minor remained extremely fluid as many small emirates were founded and then subsequently absorbed into more powerful groupings. This is vividly illustrated by Ibn Battuta's journey through western Asia Minor in the early 1330s; nearly every town he visits is subject to a different 'Sultan'.¹¹ The emirates established in coastal areas became the Empire's maritime neighbours. Most of these launched seaborne raids, often in cooperation with each other, which created a state of chronic insecurity for all the Christian

⁸ The *Souda* defines triremes as πλοῖα πολεμικά, corresponding with Kantakouzēnos' usage: D. Whitehead (trans.), 'Τριήρεις', *Suda On Line* <<http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/tau/977>>, 19 May 2011, last accessed 02 September 2014.

⁹ E.g., Kant. I, 477.3.

¹⁰ The chief sources on the advance of the Turks are Pachymerēs and, to a lesser degree, Grēgoras. However, data are confused and fragmentary, reflecting the nature of the conquest itself; see Vryonis, *Decline*, 249-58. For Andronikos II's campaigns, see Laiou, *Andronicus II*, passim. For Bithynia, see Ch.9:13.

¹¹ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 425-460.

communities on the coasts and islands of the Aegean.¹² All would eventually be absorbed into the Ottoman state during the fifteenth century.

There has been considerable scholarly debate concerning the importance of Islam in explaining the aggression of these emirates, partly owing to the characterisation of the constant warfare as *jihad* (holy war), waged by *gazis* (holy warriors) in contemporary or near-contemporary Turkish sources.¹³ Some scholars have carried this idea to the point of caricature, portraying the Turks as motivated almost exclusively by fanatical religion,¹⁴ ignoring the conflicts of the emirs with one another and the willingness of many to cooperate with Christians in pursuit of short-term goals.¹⁵ In the *Histories*, Kantakouzēnos tends to treat the Islamic Turkish states much as he does Latin or Orthodox Christian states: as opportunistic enemies or possible allies. However he designates the Turks as ‘barbarians’ much more regularly than others and frequently feels compelled to make a pained defence of his employment of them.¹⁶ In particular, he relates that Apokaukos first employed allied Turks in Macedonia in spring 1343 and, consequently, that he warned his enemies that he would have to do the same in response.¹⁷ After the civil war, Kantakouzēnos describes his unsuccessful negotiations with the papacy to facilitate a large-scale crusade against the

¹² For an overview, see Inalcik, ‘Turcoman Maritime Principalities’; in detail, Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*.

¹³ Perhaps the most significant example is the *Düstūr-nāme*; see Ch.7:4. The so-called ‘gazi thesis’ was originally proposed in Paul Wittek’s work in the 1930s. For the difficulties associated with some of this evidence, see Imber, ‘Osman Gazi’, esp. 72-4. For a critical examination which largely accepts the centrality of religion, see Zachariadou, ‘Holy War’.

¹⁴ E.g., Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 141-7.

¹⁵ E.g., the Catalan Grand Company had repeatedly joined forces with Turks at various times, see Ch.12:6.

¹⁶ E.g., Kant. II, 461, 506.21-507.21, 608; III, 37.16-38.1, 53.18-54.2.

¹⁷ Kant. II, 357.19f, 381.14-383.12. Their presence is confirmed by Greg. II, 658.22-659.13. The credibility of Kantakouzēnos’ assertion, that the regency first employed Turkish troops, rests implicitly upon his depiction of Umur deciding to relieve Didymoteichon entirely on his own initiative in winter 1342/3. Although it is possible Kantakouzēnos had not personally communicated with Umur (see Ch.7:6), it is inescapable that the first direct Turkish intervention in the war was on his side.

Turks.¹⁸ Popular hostility to the Turks was inflamed by their enthusiasm for plundering and, most critically, slaving; both Christians and Muslims saw the religion of the victim as sufficient justification for taking slaves.¹⁹ Kantakouzēnos acknowledged that the prospect of slavery was one of the ‘most fearful evils’ to emerge from the war.²⁰ His inability to prevent his erstwhile Turkish allies compensating themselves for providing their assistance by taking slaves would have contributed significantly to his unpopularity during his reign.

4: Umur Aydınoğlu, Emir of Smyrna 1334-1348 (PLP 21059).²¹ Aydin was in fact Umur’s grandfather and founder of the eponymous emirate of Aydin. Its creation is obscure but most of the towns fell into Turkish hands between 1307 and 1326, while Umur himself took the port of Smyrna from the Genoese in 1329. Aydin’s son Mehmet divided his emirate between his sons, with his oldest son Hizir in possession of Ephesos and his second son, Umur, being given Smyrna. On Mehmet’s death in 1334, Umur inherited his overall authority as emir.²² Umur was an extremely aggressive freebooter and rapidly became widely renowned and feared for his deeds. His formidable pirate fleet enabled Aydin to raid or extract tribute from all of the Christian states in the Aegean, including Venetian and imperial possessions.

¹⁸ Kant. III, 53.13-62.21 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus* 188-197; see also Miller’s commentary, 308-321).

¹⁹ See further Ch.11:12.

²⁰ Kant. II, 156.7-8: τὸ κακῶν ἔσχατον καὶ φοβερώτατον τοῖς γε νοῦν ἔχουσιν, ἢ ὑπὸ βαρβάροις δουλεία.

²¹ The major source on Umur’s life is the *Düstürnâme* by Enveri, an epic poem glorifying the deeds of various Muslim heroes and dynasties, concluding with the Ottomans. However, just under a third is concerned with Umur alone. Although composed in the fifteenth century, Enveri relied on earlier authors: see Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 27-38 (Mélïkoff-Sayar’s introduction); Lemerle, *Aydin*, 7-13. It is worth noting that the poet displays quite detailed knowledge of the 1341-7 civil war and is generally sympathetic to Umur’s ally ‘Domestikos’, i.e., Kantakouzēnos For a general history of the emirate of Aydin, see Foss, *Ephesus*, 141-67. The most detailed study (up to 1353) remains Lemerle, *Aydin*.

²² Foss, *Ephesus*, 144-6; Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 39-40 (Mélïkoff-Sayar’s introduction); Lemerle, *Aydin*, 19-62.

Indeed, Umur first appears in the *Histories* leading a substantial raid into Thrace in 1331. However, when he is confronted by a force led by Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos, he retreats without serious conflict.²³ He is mentioned thereafter largely in the context of his relationship with Kantakouzēnos, which is considered below (Ch.7:6). However Aydin raided imperial territories regularly, at least until 1335, and menaced the city of Philadelphia, which was by then an isolated Roman enclave in Anatolia.²⁴

Umur's piracy caused significant damage to Latin interests and Venice responded by organising two serious crusading ventures against the Turks. The first was the 'Sancta Unio' of 1334, which launched attacks on many of the maritime emirates and won a substantial naval victory over a Turkish fleet at Adramyttion. Although the majority of the defeated fleet belonged to Karasi, Umur seems to have sustained significant, although far from irreparable, losses.²⁵ By 1341, he was able to raid as far away as Crete, and Aydin was acknowledged as the strongest of all the Turkish principalities.²⁶ This ascendancy provoked the second crusading venture, the Crusade of Smyrna, which struck at the heart of Umur's power in October 1344, seizing the harbour of Smyrna and its associated fortifications.²⁷ Although Umur's counterattacks prevented the crusaders from extending their gains, the loss of the port significantly restricted his ability to launch maritime expeditions. Umur was killed in April 1348 while attempting to

²³ Kant. I, 470.14-473.5.

²⁴ Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 37-8.

²⁵ For this alliance and its activities, see Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 21-40. For Karasi, see Ch.9:8.

²⁶ Greg. II, 597.11-19; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 41-2.

²⁷ For the Crusade, see Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 41-62; Carr, 'Crusade of Smyrna'; Lemerle, *Aydin*, 180-203. The development and activity of the western alliances against Aydin are described in detail in Carr, *Motivations and Response*, 127-234. The attack is noted by Kant. II, 529.14-20.

recapture the port; it would remain in Latin hands until 1402.²⁸ The emirate of Aydin declined in importance after Umur's death and was finally absorbed by the Ottomans in 1425.

5: Although a suspiciously round number, many Greek and Latin sources attribute fleets of such magnitude to the Aegean emirates, particularly Aydin, although there was considerable variation in the size and type of such vessels.²⁹ Enveri tells of a fleet of 350 vessels, possibly for the same expedition.³⁰ However Turkish fleets generally proved unable to match quite small numbers of Latin or Roman war galleys: in 1320, ten galleys from Genoa and Rhodes defeated eighty Turkish vessels, and the battle of Adramyttion in 1334 saw forty crusader galleys defeat a fleet of more than two hundred Turkish boats.³¹ Umur possessed only a few vessels considered as being proper war galleys³² and Kantakouzēnos comments that, at sea, the Turks were generally 'cowardly because of inexperience and easy to defeat in all circumstances'.³³

6: Grēgoras confirms that the personal intervention of Kantakouzēnos averted an attack by Umur, which he views as a major achievement and emphasises Umur's personal respect for Kantakouzēnos.³⁴ Umur and Kantakouzēnos appear to have first met in 1335, although Kantakouzēnos claims to have established a friendly relationship with Umur, via an

²⁸ For Umur's death, see Greg. II, 834.3-835.21; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 54; Lemerle, *Aydin*, 227-9.

²⁹ Inalcik, 'Turcoman Maritime Principalities', 205.

³⁰ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 89, verse 1218.

³¹ Zachariadou, 'Holy War', 215-6; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 32-3.

³² Inalcik, 'Turcoman Maritime Principalities', 207-8.

³³ Kant. I, 539.12-13: ἐν ναυμαχίαις δὲ ἀτολμοτάτους δι' ἀπειρίαν καὶ ῥαδίου τῶ προοσυχόντι παντὶ ἠττᾶσθαι.

³⁴ Greg. II, 598.12-21.

exchange of letters, at an earlier date.³⁵ Kantakouzēnos spent four days feasting with Umur at Klazomenai and negotiated a significant agreement. Umur apparently agreed to remit the tribute paid by Philadelphia and provide 30 ships to assist with Andronikos III's ongoing siege of Nea Phōkaia, then in Genoese hands.³⁶ It also appears that Umur ceased his raids on imperial territory.³⁷ While Kantakouzēnos pretends that Umur agreed out of simple goodwill and was rewarded with 'gifts', Enveri states that Andronikos offered 100,000 *hyperpyra* but Umur rejected it in favour of an annual tribute, apparently for undisturbed possession of Chios. As far as Enveri was concerned, this was an act of submission; according to Islamic law, the payment of regular tribute for a territory made it part of the Dar al-Islam.³⁸ However, the relationship seems to have strengthened into an alliance and Umur provided Turkish infantry to crush Albanian resistance in 1338.³⁹

The true proof of Umur's friendship with Kantakouzēnos came in the civil war. In winter 1342/3 Umur led an army up the Hebros to break the siege of Didymoteichon by the regency and the Bulgarians.⁴⁰ Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras both portray his intervention as sudden and unexpected, but Enveri states that an embassy led by a certain 'Esen' arrived from Kantakouzēnos to implore Umur's aid.⁴¹ It seems likely, as suggested by Lemerle, that – since Kantakouzēnos was at the time in Serbia – the embassy was sent directly by the defenders of Didymoteichon and that the emissary was Manouēl Asanēs.⁴² While the Greek sources portray him as helping

³⁵ Kant. I, 482.14-17.

³⁶ Kant. I, 482.12-483.18.

³⁷ Kant. II, 398.3-6; Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 84, verse 1066.

³⁸ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 84-5, verses 1033-1084; Inalcik, 'Turcoman Maritime Principalities', 192-3. For Chios, see Ch.29:7.

³⁹ See Ch.1:12.

⁴⁰ Kant. II, 344.6-348.12; Greg. II, 648.4-652.10.

⁴¹ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 94, verse 1335f.

⁴² Lemerle, *Aydın*, 162-3. For Manouēl, see Ch.17:5.

Kantakouzēnos out of a submissive sense of friendship, Enveri reverses the situation, portraying Kantakouzēnos as a suppliant, and raises the possibility that he may have offered Philadelphia to Umur.⁴³ In any case, Umur returned with a large force at Kantakouzēnos' request in spring 1343, transforming Kantakouzēnos' military situation. He was finally able to force his way back from Macedonia into Thrace and began systematically to force the cities into submission.⁴⁴ Although Umur swung the war into Kantakouzēnos' favour, the Crusade of Smyrna in October 1344 seriously limited his ability to assist Kantakouzēnos. While Umur managed to return to Thrace by passing through the territory of other emirs in 1345,⁴⁵ Kantakouzēnos increasingly had to turn to other allies, notably the Ottomans, to achieve victory.

Grēgoras portrays Umur and Kantakouzēnos as genuinely dedicated to each other, comparing the pair to Orestes and Pylades, and is surprisingly complimentary to Umur, stating 'this barbarian was not barbaric but civilised and possessed an altogether Hellenic education.'⁴⁶ Enveri describes Kantakouzēnos as Umur's *kardesh*, or blood-brother.⁴⁷ Kantakouzēnos happily supports the idea that Umur was devoted to him almost as a 'spiritual slave'⁴⁸ but understandably does not record strong reciprocal sentiments towards Umur. However he concedes that Umur was an ally and friend, that he sought and accepted Umur's advice,⁴⁹ and admits that he

⁴³ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 93, verses 1329-1330. It is presented as a slander by Apokaukos, although the proposal seems logical.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 383-411.

⁴⁵ Kant. II, 529.14ff.

⁴⁶ Greg. II, 649.13-15: οὐ βάρβαρον ὁ βάρβαρος εἶχε τὸν τρόπον, ἀλλ' ἡμερον καὶ παιδείας Ἑλληνικῆς τὸ παράπαν ἐχόμενον.

⁴⁷ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 106, verses 1772-3, as discussed by Bryer, 'Byzantine-Ottoman marriage', 490-491.

⁴⁸ Kant. II, 413.1-414.19.

⁴⁹ Kant. II, 546.20ff.

asked for Umur's approval for marrying Theodōra to Orhan.⁵⁰ Although Kantakouzēnos himself does not mention Umur's passing, Grēgoras claims that he was grieved by the death of 'a great friend who had maintained goodwill to him throughout his life'.⁵¹ Umur's assistance was undoubtedly central to Kantakouzēnos' eventual victory in the civil war, although it came at a terrible price to the inhabitants of the regions he conquered. A short chronicle which briefly recounts Umur's aid to Kantakouzēnos comments that 'he destroyed the whole of Macedonia, such ruin as had never yet occurred.'⁵²

⁵⁰ Kant. II, 586.8-587.8. See also Bryer, 'Byzantine-Ottoman marriage', 490-491; Ch.9.12.

⁵¹ Greg. II, 835.11-12: φίλου μεγίστην αὐτῷ διὰ βίου τηρήσαντος εὐνοίαν.

⁵² CBB I, 83, no. 41: ἔφθειραν δὲ τὴν Μακεδονίαν ὅλην, οἷα φθορὰ οὐκ ἐγένετο πώποτε. The chronicler refers to western Thrace as 'Macedonia', see Ch.9:9.

Commentary on Chapter 8

1: It is unclear who exactly these ‘others’ (ἄλλων) are. It may indicate non-pronoiar soldiers who received cash payments from the state, such as foreign mercenaries.¹

2: Grants of *pronoia* were state incomes, which might be composed of fiscal rights, rents, and labour services, re-assigned to the benefit of grantees, most commonly awarded on condition of military service.² Soldiers maintained by this method, often termed ‘pronoiar’ in modern scholarship, were usually natives and, in the *Histories*, generally seem to be equipped as heavy cavalry. Although Kantakouzēnos’ exact use of the word πρόνοια is sometimes ambiguous, he most often employs it in its non-technical sense, as ‘providence’, ‘care’, or ‘solicitude’, in accordance with his general avoidance of technical terminology.³ However, in the episode described in the present chapter it is obvious that he refers to *pronoia* in its technical sense. Kantakouzēnos usually designates pronoiar as those ‘holding incomes from villages’.⁴

3: Theodōros Patrikiōtēs (*PLP* 22077). A wealthy *apographeus*, or fiscal assessor, and literary patron. Perhaps surprisingly he seems not to have held

¹ For the various classifications of contemporary soldiers, see Bartusis, *Army*, 137-305; Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 75-135.

² The most recent, and most comprehensive, survey is Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*. There is an immense scholarly literature concerning *pronoia*, with much discussion concentrating on similarities or differences with the Western European fief; see Kazhdan, ‘Pronoia’. For concise consideration of the significant differences with Western feudalism, see Bartusis, *Army*, 182-184.

³ Regarding Kantakouzēnos’ usage of πρόνοια, see Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 14-18, 324-325.

⁴ Kant. II, 81.15-16, 175.5-6: τῶν ἐκ χωρίων τὰς προσόδους ἔχόντων. See also Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 324-9.

a court title.⁵ Pachymerēs complained that Michaēl VIII transferred the duties of fiscal surveyors from high office holders to ‘men of no account’, which seems to be borne out here.⁶ Manouēl Philēs dedicated numerous verses to him and he was the recipient of many letters from Michaēl Gabras.⁷ The author Alexios Makrembolitēs was employed by him, seemingly during this period, and addressed a speech to him.⁸ Patrikiōtēs was an active *apographeus* under Andronikos II but during the first civil war he apparently retired to a monastery, perhaps to escape taking a position in the conflict.⁹ He does not seem to have been tonsured and it is unclear when he returned to his profession. While relating the attacks of the *demos* upon his partisans and the rich in late 1342, Kantakouzēnos states that they tortured Patrikiōtēs and ‘having suspended him by cords, left him to die’.¹⁰

4: Patrikiōtēs is offering to carry out a fiscal reassessment, or *exisōsis* (‘equalisation’). This process is described by Kantakouzēnos later in the chapter. Such fiscal surveys provided tax officials with numerous opportunities for corruption, hence why Patrikiōtēs’ offer might have aroused suspicion.

5: In other words, Patrikiōtēs is confessing to acquiring wealth corruptly but, in his defence, without the worst abuses, such as outright extortion, of which others were presumably guilty.

⁵ He is addressed respectfully as *pansebastos sebastos* but this is not a court title. See Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 22, n. 45. For *apographeis*, *ibid.*, 186-217.

⁶ Pach. I, 293.4-7. There continued to be high ranking *apographeis* though, although their rank may be a result of exploiting their success in fiscal matters rather than being the cause of their appointment; an example is Iōannēs Batatzēs, see Ch.29:1.

⁷ For analysis of the letters, Gabras, *Letters I*, 63.

⁸ Makrembolitēs, ‘Dialogue’, 190 (Ševčenko’s commentary).

⁹ FK III, 423, n. 63.

¹⁰ Kant. II, 298.13-14: ἐναποθανεῖν ἐᾶσαι καλλωδίοις ἐξηρητημένον.

6: Presumably, Patrikiōtēs means the poor would be free to spend the money on immoral purposes, and thus the charity would, at least from his point of view, be wasted.

7: *Exisōtēs*, or 'fiscal assessor', is synonymous with *apographeus*.¹¹ Kantakouzēnos describes, in idealised terms, a central duty of *apographeis*, the *exisōsis*: to survey *pronoia* holdings, establish their value, and remove revenues from those who have unlawfully acquired more than their allocation and re-allocate them to those who have less than assigned, or to allow the establishment of additional *pronoiai*. Each soldier should ideally possess sufficient income to support himself and provide effective service, according to their status.¹² *Apographeis* held quasi-judicial powers to resolve land disputes and, as Patrikiōtēs' career demonstrates, there were considerable opportunities for dishonest enrichment in the performance of such a duty, whether through taking bribes or fraudulently reassigning property; there is even evidence of an *apographeus* illegally imposing his own taxes.¹³

8: The currency can be assumed to be *hyperpyra*. 100,000 is an enormous sum for an individual, and a stark indication of the scale of corruption at the time. In comparison, the entire state revenue for 1321 amounted to one million *hyperpyra*.¹⁴ In 1340, Andronikos provided 100,000 *hyperpyra* for the outfitting and maintenance of a fleet,¹⁵ and the annual

¹¹ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 186-7, n. 5.

¹² For a discussion of fiscal reassessments, and this incident in particular, see Bartusis, *Army*, 177-8; Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 324-5, 415-6; Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 204-6.

¹³ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 213-5, 226.

¹⁴ Greg. I, 317.18-20.

¹⁵ Kant. I, 540.5-6; see also Ch.15:2. Following Hendy, *Studies*, 162-3, this sum could support perhaps ten or as many as twenty war galleys for a year, depending on how inflation and currency debasement is calculated.

household expenses of Andronikos III in 1322, as junior co-emperor, were 36,000 *hyperpyra*.¹⁶ Patrikiōtēs' offer thus appears sufficient to finance a military expedition in its own right. There is no compelling evidence that Kantakouzēnos is exaggerating significantly; it is implied that the embezzled profits were gathered throughout Patrikiōtēs' entire career and presumably represented the liquidation of much of his property.¹⁷

9: The sixty day duration of the *exisōsis* causes some problems with Kantakouzēnos' chronology. In the previous chapter, he gave the Bulgarian ambassadors thirty days to make peace or declare war. As they do not make peace, at the end of the following chapter Kantakouzēnos leads the army into Thrace to confront Ivan Alexander.¹⁸ The sixty days apparently pass in between setting the deadline and military mobilisation, which seems rather leisurely in the circumstances. However, there is no obvious reason that Kantakouzēnos could not have campaigned with some portion of the army before the entire bureaucratic process was completed; many soldiers would already have received their payments and others would know that their incomes would shortly be increasing.¹⁹ Moreover, Kantakouzēnos appears to have a particular weakness for multiples of thirty and these intervals should perhaps not be taken as absolutely reliable.²⁰

¹⁶ Kant. I, 167.10-12; Hendy, *Studies*, 205. See also Bartusis, 'Cost of Warfare', esp. 81-2.

¹⁷ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 198, argues it is an unbelievable sum when compared to Grēgoras' figure for the customs revenue of 1348 (30,000 *hyperpyra*). Although the total may be exaggerated, the comparison both assumes post-war revenues closely resemble pre-war figures and that customs duties were a major element of state income. The former assumption is unlikely and there is insufficient evidence of the second.

¹⁸ For the dating of this campaign, see Ch.9:17.

¹⁹ Fatouros' and Krischer's suggested chronology may be correct but it seems unnecessary to treat the sixty days as inviolable: FK III, 424, n. 67 and 425, n. 75.

²⁰ As observed by Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 307.

10: The description of this incident, where *pronoia* incomes are distributed to the soldiers, is somewhat at odds with Kantakouzēnos' earlier statement that Patrikiōtēs' wealth was held as cash. Although a cash donative is being paid as a bonus, it is unclear how Patrikiōtēs endowed the recurring *pronoia* entitlements given to the soldiers who had lost their former income. Either they were provided by transferring revenues from other holders who had acquired them illegally, or Patrikiōtēs provided new incomes by purchasing revenue-generating properties from their current holders. There is no evidence that a Grand Domestic would normally have been involved in an *exisōsis*, or determining military incomes without reference to the emperor. Kantakouzēnos' action would have been politically provocative and easily construed as an attempt to secure the loyalty of the army to himself personally; he acknowledges this later by placing such an allegation into the Patriarch's mouth.²¹ Grēgoras also states that the army were loyal to Kantakouzēnos because he shared their hardships on campaign and provided them with wealth.²²

11: Most soldiers were expected to supply their own equipment so, by increasing military incomes, Kantakouzēnos allowed them to improve their armament. The number of mounts a soldier owned appeared to be an indicator of his status and effectiveness; Pseudo-Kodinos mentions that there had previously been soldiers called *monokaballoi* (soldiers with one mount), *dikaballoi* (two mounts), and *trikaballoi* (three mounts).²³

²¹ Kant. II, 132.14-15: στρατιὰν ἅπασαν αὐτῷ προσέχειν παρασκευάσει χρήμασι διαφθείρας ('he will render the entire army obedient to him, having corrupted it with money').

²² Greg. I, 586.8-12.

²³ Ps-Kod., 113. See also Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 88-90.

Commentary on Chapter 9

1: *Myron* is holy chrism, traditionally prepared by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch would draw a cross in *myron* on the emperor's head as part of the coronation ritual.¹ Anointment with *myron* is securely attested from the coronation of Michaël IX onwards, and was probably established practice for all the Palaiologoi emperors.² There is disagreement regarding whether the custom of physical, rather than metaphorical, anointment originated following 1204 or before.³ In either case, the new literary emphasis on anointment was probably a response to the importance it was accorded in Latin practice.⁴

2: *Parakoimōmenos* was a high-ranking court title, originally designating the eunuch guarding the imperial bedchamber.⁵ It was frequently held by non-eunuchs as time went on and in the thirteenth century it appears to have been divided into two roles: that of a bodyguard, *parakoimōmenos tou koitōnos*, and that of the keeper of the state seal, the *parakoimōmenos tēs sphendonēs*.⁶ Apokaukos occupied the latter position, which Pseudo-Kodinos ranked sixteenth.⁷ The *sphendonē* in this case was a ring for marking wax seals.⁸

¹ Ps-Kod., 221.

² Nicol, 'Kaiserabung'.

³ For after 1204, see Angelov, *Ideology*, 387-92; for 12th century or earlier, Shawcross, 'Conquest Legitimized', 187-8.

⁴ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 424-5.

⁵ Guiland, *Institutions I*, 202-215.

⁶ Ps-Kod., 87-9; Guiland, *Institutions I*, 208.

⁷ Ps-Kod., 456.

⁸ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 87, n. 159.

3: Alexios Apokaukos (*PLP* 1180).⁹ Apokaukos' birth date is unknown but is often assumed to be 1280.¹⁰ The major sources for his life are the extremely hostile accounts of Grēgoras and Kantakouzēnos. Apokaukos' career is recounted in detail in Chapters 14 and 15. He was from an 'obscure' Bithynian family; Grēgoras goes so far as to say that he 'grew up in poverty' but this cannot be taken to mean that his family were literally paupers, since they were clearly able to secure him a good education.¹¹ His intelligence was acknowledged even by his enemies. Grēgoras states 'while he was not of very distinguished birth, he was a man of profound wisdom, and was inventive and clever at devising schemes'.¹² Kantakouzēnos admits that Apokaukos possessed 'a profound mind and was able to take advantage of opportunities and circumstances'.¹³ His ability, allied with obvious ambition, allowed him to rise quickly through the fiscal administration and become extremely wealthy. He had achieved the office of *domestikos tōn dysikōn thematōn* and received charge of the imperial salt monopoly before he joined Andronikos III's conspiracy against his grandfather.¹⁴ He was rewarded with the title of *parakoimōmenos*, probably following the Treaty of Rhēgion in June 1321, which ended the first phase of the civil war.¹⁵ Apokaukos held the title

⁹ For his life see Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion*, 133-146; Guiland, 'Apokaukos' (somewhat outdated); Apokaukos may sometimes have used the name Doukas; see Polemis, *Doukai*, 101.

¹⁰ Guiland, 'Apokaukos', 523. This was followed by Matschke, who demonstrates that his career probably began before 1310; see Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion*, 149, n. 73. Therefore, although 1280 is quite possible, he may well have been younger.

¹¹ Greg. II, 577.20-21: πενία συντεθραμμένος. Regarding Apokaukos' social origins, see Ch.14:2.

¹² Greg. I, 301.12-14: οὗτος μὲν οὖν οὐ πάνυ τῶν εὐγενῶν ἦν, βαθυγνώμων δὲ ἀνὴρ καὶ εὐμήχανος καὶ δόλους συνθεῖναι δεινός. He also expresses similar sentiments, albeit in a more hostile tone, somewhat later; see Greg. II, 577.11-18.

¹³ Kant. I, 25.7-8: βαθείας ὄντα φρενός καὶ δυνάμενον καιροῖς καὶ πράγμασι χρῆσθαι.

¹⁴ Greg. I, 301.11-12. Regarding this title, see Ch.14:6.

¹⁵ Kant. I, 116.8, names him *parakoimōmenos* before this but is probably a slip. Andronikos II would have had to confirm the title either at Rhēgion or Epibatai (in 1322), see Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 339.

thereafter until promoted to *megas dux* at Iōannēs V's coronation in 1341.¹⁶ During Andronikos III's sole reign, Apokaukos apparently enjoyed great responsibility for the imperial finances and administration, although Kantakouzēnos attempts to downplay this.¹⁷ It may have been his financial and commercial interests which led to his increasing interest in naval power. In 1340 he resigned many of his responsibilities to gain command of a fleet, probably intended as a new standing navy, proving himself an able commander against the Turks.¹⁸ His apparent concern for maritime defence was popular in the capital and he seems to have developed strong support among the sailors and commercial classes in Constantinople.¹⁹ When Kantakouzēnos had effectively isolated Constantinople from its hinterland in 1345, Apokaukos thought to transform the city to a largely maritime economy.²⁰ However this must be seen as an adaptation to circumstance rather than a long-held goal.

Despite Kantakouzēnos' scorn for Apokaukos' martial abilities,²¹ he proved himself to be a wily strategist during the civil war and effectively hounded Kantakouzēnos into taking refuge in Serbia in 1342. However, as the conflict slowly swung into Kantakouzēnos' favour, Apokaukos unsurprisingly came under political pressure and in summer 1344, following the death of his son-in-law Andronikos Palaiologos,²² he appears to have come under serious pressure to make peace, particularly from Iōannēs Gabalas.²³ Apokaukos saw off the threat but Kantakouzēnos claims he had to

¹⁶ Kant. II, 218.9-10.

¹⁷ See Ch.14:11.

¹⁸ See Ch.15:2.

¹⁹ Matschke, 'Flotte', summarises and analyses Apokaukos' naval activities.

²⁰ Kant. II, 536.14-537.10.

²¹ Kant. I, 539.4-9; II, 364.9ff.

²² *PLP* 21433. Kantakouzēnos claims that Apokaukos planned to depose Iōannēs V and place Andronikos on the throne, see Kant. II, 323.23-324.21.

²³ For this incident, see Ch.19:4.

govern 'not so monarchically as before but somewhat more moderately.'²⁴ Apokaukos generally seems to have taken rapid and harsh action against perceived opponents and, ironically, this proved to be his undoing. In June 1345, while inspecting the construction of an extension to the prison he had established in the Great Palace, Apokaukos was overwhelmed and beaten to death by the inmates, many of whom were Kantakouzēnos' partisans.²⁵ They apparently displayed his body on the walls in expectation of a popular uprising. None came and Apokaukos' supporters, particularly sailors, stormed the building the next day, killing nearly everyone.²⁶ Although Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras portray him as the regency's evil mastermind, his death was not the clear turning point that might be expected from this characterisation. Order was rapidly restored in Constantinople and the Empress quickly appointed Isaakios Asanēs to take his place in government.²⁷

4: Grēgoras also states Kantakouzēnos wished for Iōannēs V to be crowned shortly after Andronikos' death but he places responsibility for preventing it with the Patriarch, not Apokaukos.²⁸ Kantakouzēnos later suggests that the coronation was to be put back until Christmas.²⁹

5: The Palaiologoi generally proclaimed their chosen heir as co-emperor at an early stage to secure their peaceful succession. A formal proclamation of a co-emperor preceded any coronation, often by a long interval; Andronikos II was crowned in 1272 but appears to have held the

²⁴ Kant. II, 444.3-4: οὐ μὴν, ὥσπερ πρότερον, μοναρχικῶς, ἀλλὰ μετριώτερόν πως.

²⁵ The event is noted by three chronicles. Although there is some variation regarding the exact date, 11 June is generally accepted; see *CBB* II, 263.

²⁶ Kant. II, 542.6-545.22; Greg. II, 729.1ff.; Doukas, *History*, V.4-5 (trans. Magoulias, 65-6).

²⁷ For Isaakios, see Ch.19:2.

²⁸ Greg. II, 616.13-16.

²⁹ Kant. II, 82.2-5.

imperial title since at least 1265/6.³⁰ Although the practice strengthened the dynasty by minimising uncertainty about succession, it was not without critics.³¹ Grēgoras, thinking of Andronikos III, warned that it encouraged designated heirs to revolt rather than waiting for the death of the emperor.³² While there is no direct literary evidence that Iōannēs V was proclaimed *basileus* in his father's lifetime, Kantakouzēnos consistently refers to Iōannēs V as *basileus* even before his coronation in November 1341. In comparison, he refers to himself consistently as *meḡas domestikos* before his own proclamation and only as *basileus* thereafter. This is inconclusive though, as Kantakouzēnos wrote during Iōannēs V's sole reign and he is not always precise in reflecting changes in individuals' honours. However, both Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras record that Iōannēs was heralded as *basileus* during Kantakouzēnos' acclamation in October 1341, which anticipated Iōannēs' coronation.³³ Moreover, a Genoese document of September 1341 refers to Iōannēs as *Iohannes Dei gratia imperator Romeorum*.³⁴ His imperial status is also suggested by numismatic evidence; Nicol and Bendall demonstrated that the 'type 11' coins of the 'Salonica hoard', which depict a large and a small emperor, most probably represent Andronikos III and the young Iōannēs V, again suggesting Iōannēs was formally proclaimed before 1341.³⁵ The coins cannot represent Iōannēs V and Iōannēs VI, as had been

³⁰ Macrides, 'New Constantine', 37.

³¹ Although the hereditary principle was predominant, political thought allowed for non-hereditary succession; see Angelov, *Ideology*, 116-133.

³² Greg. I, 53-5; Angelov, *Ideology*, 218-282.

³³ Kant. II, 166.11-13; Greg. II, 611.21-2.

³⁴ Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 102.

³⁵ Nicol and Bendall, 'Numismatic evidence', 95-6. For Nicol's earlier view that Iōannēs V was not proclaimed, see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 185-6 (this apparently escaped revision from the 1972 edition). For further supporting arguments, see Protonotarios, 'Monnayage'. Although Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 293, dismisses the idea that Iōannēs V was acclaimed in his father's lifetime, without supporting arguments, he also identifies a silver *basilicon* and copper *trachy* as portraying Andronikos III and a smaller Iōannēs V, which he attributes to the regency (299 and Plate 83, no. 1322; 309 and Plate 92, no. 1474). However, all other coins struck by the regency government portray Anna (always with Iōannēs, and sometimes also

thought, since they were struck in Thessalonike, which Kantakouzēnos did not control until 1351, and all post-war coinage depicts the co-emperors the same size.³⁶ While Grierson suggests the coins portray Andronikos III posthumously alongside his son, such a representation would be highly unusual, although there were precedents in the eleventh century and before.³⁷ Shea's recent survey of the hoard accepts Grierson's identification, but acknowledges that the type concerned could equally well be attributed to Andronikos III's reign.³⁸ Therefore it seems that the indirect testimony of Kantakouzēnos, Grēgoras, and the coinage point to Iōannēs V having been proclaimed before 1341. Consequently, his coronation would have had limited effect on his own status beyond reducing suspicion regarding Kantakouzēnos' intentions towards him, which is surely why he protests that he sought it. However, as suggested by Malamut, Iōannēs' coronation would have diminished the status of the Empress to an extent and this may have been a reason for her lack of enthusiasm at that time.³⁹

6: Sarukhan, Emir of Sarukhan (*PLP* 24922).⁴⁰ Kantakouzēnos first mentions Sarukhan when Andronikos III made a treaty with him during the expedition to secure Phōkaia in 1329.⁴¹ In 1335, he provided infantry and naval forces to assist in the sieges of Phōkaia and Mytilene, which had been occupied by a Genoese adventurer; a son of Sarukhan, Süleyman, and a

Andronikos); see Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 299-300, and Plate 83, nos. 1323-1325; Plate 81, no. 1295; Bendall and Donald, *Coinage*, 132-8. It would seem unlikely that regency issues would omit Anna, the actual sovereign; Grierson may conceivably have been influenced by Nicol's original assertion that Iōannēs was not proclaimed and constructed his analysis accordingly.

³⁶ For coins depicting Iōannēs VI and Iōannēs V together, see Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, 293-4, and Plate 81, no. 1296; 299-300 and Plate 83, nos. 1326-1327; 309 and Plate 89, no. 1427; 312-3 and Plate 94, nos. 1500-1502; Bendall and Donald, *Coinage*, 138-147.

³⁷ Protonotarios, 'Monnayage', 83-4.

³⁸ Shea, 'Salonica Hoard', 308, n. 41.

³⁹ Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 101-4.

⁴⁰ See also E.A. Zachariadou, 'Sarukhan', in *EI*, IX, 69.

⁴¹ Kant I, 388.11-16.

number of other leading Turks had been taken hostage by the Genoese in Phōkaia and only freed by the Emperor following a lengthy siege.⁴² During the civil war, Sarukhan took an ambivalent line; he obstructed Kantakouzēnos' ally Umur (whose naval power had been crippled by the crusade of 1344) from crossing to Thrace until Umur capitulated to him in a territorial dispute. He then allowed Süleyman to accompany Umur and aid Kantakouzēnos.⁴³ Süleyman subsequently died of an illness, causing Umur to retreat to placate his father.⁴⁴ Near the end of the conflict, Sarukhan was induced to send soldiers to help the regency, although they then came to an agreement with Kantakouzēnos, through Umur's assistance, and indulged in freelance plundering instead.⁴⁵ Sarukhan died some point after 1348, when he was last mentioned, in a Genoese document.⁴⁶

Andronikos' treaties with Sarukhan probably provided for the security of Phōkaia in return for tribute but most likely did not, or could not, prevent all raiding. Lemerle suggests that the Turkish emirs viewed their treaties as being with the emperor in person and were thus voided by Andronikos' death. While this may be correct, it is probable that Apokaukos' naval victory off Chios in early 1341 was over Sarukhan's fleet, and therefore that agreements had already broken down or were very limited in scope.⁴⁷

7: The eponymous emirate of Sarukhan mapped only partially onto the ancient region of Lydia, defined as lying in western Asia Minor, roughly between the Hermos and Maeander rivers.⁴⁸ Doukas characterises it more precisely as stretching from Pergamon (belonging to Sarukhan's northern

⁴² For the entire incident, see Kant. I, 476-494; for date *CBB* I, 80, no. 8/29.

⁴³ Kant. II, 529.14-530.8.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 550.17-551.17.

⁴⁵ Kant. II, 591.8-596.24.

⁴⁶ E.A. Zachariadou, 'Sarukhan', *EI*, IX, 69.

⁴⁷ Lemerle, *Aydin*, 148, n. 2; Kant. I, 540.23-541.2; Ch.15:2.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Classical Dictionary*, 507-8.

neighbour, Karasi) to Magnesia.⁴⁹ Although Sarukhan's capital was Magnesia on the Hermos, the southern part of the region, encompassing Smyrna and Ephesos, was controlled by Aydin. Mount Sipylos, situated between the two cities, may have marked the border. Although fertile and prosperous, the area is poorly documented but its fortresses mostly seem to have fallen into Turkish hands during the early fourteenth century.⁵⁰ Magnesia itself had been extremely wealthy and one of the major centres of Laskarid rule, but it fell to Sarukhan in 1313.⁵¹ Phōkaia and New Phōkaia, at this time under imperial control, lay within this region.⁵² Despite occasional conflicts with its neighbours, the emirate survived until 1390, when it was annexed by the Ottomans.⁵³

8: Yakhshi Khan, Emir of Karasi (*PLP* 4171).⁵⁴ Karasi, named after its largely unknown founder, encompassed the north-west corner of Asia Minor; Grēgoras stated that its territory stretched 'from Lydia and Aeolis as far as Mysia on the Hellespont'.⁵⁵ The emirate's origin is obscure but it appears to have been established during the chaos following the Catalan Company's withdrawal from Anatolia in August 1304.⁵⁶ After Karasi's death, the territory appears to have been split between his sons, Yakhshi, whose name means 'excellent' and who held sway around Pergamon, and his brother Demir, who ruled Balikesir and whom Ibn Battuta described as a

⁴⁹ Doukas, *History* II, 3 (ed. Greco, 33.27-8).

⁵⁰ Foss, 'Lydia'.

⁵¹ For Magnesia, see Foss, 'Lydia', 306-9.

⁵² Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 448, mentions the 'strongly fortified town' paid tribute to Sarukhan.

⁵³ E.A. Zachariadou, 'Sarukhan', *EI*, IX, 69.

⁵⁴ See also Cl. Cahen, 'Karasi', *EI* IV, 627-8.

⁵⁵ Greg. I, 214.20-21: τὰ δ' ἀπὸ Λυδίας καὶ Αἰολίδος ἄχρη Μυσίας τῆς πρὸς τῷ Ἑλλησπόντῳ.

⁵⁶ Zachariadou, 'Karasi', 226. For this event, see Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 136-7.

‘worthless person’.⁵⁷ The emirate was well-positioned for launching raids across the straits into Thrace and possessed a formidable fleet. However it suffered a severe setback in 1334 when crusading forces destroyed much of its fleet at the Battle of Adramyttion⁵⁸ but by 1337, Grēgoras relates that they were able to bring both horses and men across the straits to raid Thrace.⁵⁹ Yakhshi himself disappears from the sources after this event; an emir Süleyman, identified by Kantakouzēnos as satrap of Karasi was courted by the regency during the war but later offered his services to Kantakouzēnos.⁶⁰ Kantakouzēnos later relates that the ‘satrap of Lydia’ allied with the treacherous Iōannēs Batatzēs; however Grēgoras reports that Batatzēs’ ally was called Süleyman and held sway around the Troad, thus clearly being the same emir of Karasi.⁶¹ Enveri also confirms that a Süleyman was the son of Karasi (and thus Yakhshi’s brother).⁶² Zachariadou plausibly suggests that Batatzēs’ death at his allies’ hands is evidence for a wider rivalry between Karasi and the Ottomans, which soon led to the latter’s conquest of the emirate, sometime between 1346 and 1348.⁶³

9: Thrace was the agricultural and fiscal hinterland of Constantinople and essentially the remaining heartland of the Empire.⁶⁴ Kantakouzēnos speaks of Thrace as a geographic region rather than a formal administrative

⁵⁷ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 449.

⁵⁸ Lemerle, *Aydin*, 96; Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 32; Carr, *Motivations and Response*, 151-3.

⁵⁹ Greg. I, 538.10-14.

⁶⁰ Kant. II, 476.12-18, 507.14-18. This identification is confused though as he names him satrap of Phrygia, which corresponds to Germiyan rather than Karasi.

⁶¹ Kant. II, 553.17-18. Greg. II, 741.21-22. For Batatzēs see Ch.29:1. It seems most likely Kantakouzēnos has erred on this point, see Lemerle, *Aydin*, 204, n. 1.

⁶² Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 123, verse 2295.

⁶³ Zachariadou, ‘Karasi’, 232-4.

⁶⁴ On the region generally, see Külzer, *Ostthrakien*; Soustal, *Thrakien*. For areas west of the Hebros, see Asdracha, *Rhodopes*.

area; indeed, there was no province of Thrace in the Palaiologan period.⁶⁵ For Kantakouzēnos, the area is defined by the sea to the east and south, the Bulgarian border to the north, and the Rhodope Mountains to the west. The boundary on the south coast is the city of Christoupolis (modern Kavala), which he places in Thrace itself.⁶⁶ From Christoupolis to the Adriatic are the ‘Macedonian and western provinces’.⁶⁷ Classical writers considered the Nestos to be the western boundary of Thrace, so Kantakouzēnos adopts a very expansive definition.⁶⁸ While Grēgoras uses the name in a similar manner to Kantakouzēnos, earlier historians such as Akropolitēs and Chōniatēs, as well as contemporary chroniclers, identify much of geographic Thrace as ‘Macedonia’.⁶⁹ This situation arose from the creation of a *theme* of Macedonia, with its capital in Adrianople, around the start of the 9th century.⁷⁰ Kantakouzēnos’ usage arises from his visualisation of Thrace and Macedonia as two separate geographic zones, with the fortifications of Christoupolis forming a strangle-point between them; at this point the mountains reach almost to the sea and the gap remaining was blocked by the town and a wall built by Andronikos II.⁷¹ As Kantakouzēnos’ Thrace possesses an extensive coastline, the immediate target of the Turkish attack is unclear. However the Turks ultimately take the shortest, safest, route by crossing over to the Chersonese.⁷²

⁶⁵ Palaiologan administrative units were generally small and centred on cities, see Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 48-53.

⁶⁶ Kant. I, 35.16-17: τὴν ἐν Θράκῃ Χριστοῦ πόλιν.

⁶⁷ Kant. I, 115.17-19: τῶν ἀπὸ Χριστουπόλεως Μακεδονικῶν τε καὶ ἐσπερίων ἐπαρχιῶν ἄχρις Ἐπιδάμνου καὶ Δαλματίας, τῶν ἄκρων ὄρων τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἡγεμονίας.

⁶⁸ Strabo, 7a.1.33.

⁶⁹ E.g., CBB I, 81, no. 8/33, states Kantakouzēnos travelled into ‘Macedonia’ to reach Didymoteichon.

⁷⁰ Andriotes, ‘Macedonia’, 146-7; Daperglos, ‘Theme of Macedonia’.

⁷¹ Greg. I, 246.2-6, who also comments on its role blocking passage between Thrace and Macedonia.

⁷² See Ch.10:3.

10: It is clear that the state did not possess a standing naval force of any significance.⁷³ Facing financial crisis, Andronikos II disbanded the navy early in his reign, a decision criticised by contemporaries and historians alike.⁷⁴ Piracy became endemic in the Aegean and Turkish raiding parties were fought on land, despite their weakness in naval combat.⁷⁵ Although Kantakouzēnos relates substantial naval actions, such as the campaigns against Lesbos in 1335 and against Turkish pirates in 1341, he always mentions the outfitting of a fleet beforehand.⁷⁶ As in the present case, the costs involved were not always met by the imperial treasury alone but with private contributions by prominent aristocrats.⁷⁷ So while there appear to have been vessels and crew that could be called up at short notice when sufficient funds were made available, possibly engaged in trade when not in service, there was insufficient money and political commitment to keep a standing navy ready and patrolling at all times. It is possible that Apokaukos' initiative in constructing a fleet in early 1341 was a serious attempt to re-establish a regular navy but his dismissal from command appears to have led to its disbandment, as Kantakouzēnos apparently needed to muster it afresh.⁷⁸ The insecurity of employment offered to sailors and marines made them a very volatile political group, who strongly backed Apokaukos during the civil war.⁷⁹ Although Apokaukos was apparently mocked for squandering resources on a fleet during the conflict, it was critical in keeping Thessalonike out of Kantakouzēnos' hands, as he

⁷³ For an overview, see Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer*, 374-388. However there are some confusions in chronology and analysis is overshadowed by (understandably) unfavourable comparisons with earlier eras.

⁷⁴ Pach. III, 81.19-83.19; Greg. I, 174.10-175.3; Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer*, 374-9; for an estimate of the costs involved, Hendy, *Studies*, 161-4.

⁷⁵ Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer*, 377-8. On Turkish weakness at sea, Ch.7:5.

⁷⁶ Kant. I, 477.1-7, 540.3-8.

⁷⁷ E.g., for the 1329 Chios campaign, Kant. I, 381.20-22.

⁷⁸ For Apokaukos' fleet, see Ch.15:2.

⁷⁹ Kant. I, 24.19-23, comments on the disorder of the sailors at Kallioupolis in 1321. For detailed analysis, see Matschke, 'Flotte'.

grudgingly admits.⁸⁰ On the other hand, the fleet appears to have posed no serious obstacle to the passage of Kantakouzēnos' Turkish allies to and from Europe.

11: When referring to a treasury, Kantakouzēnos sometimes writes *dēmosios* or *dēmosia*, 'public treasury' and, less frequently, *basilika* or *basilikon tamieion*, 'imperial treasury'.⁸¹ Two separate treasuries are known to have existed in the Empire of Nikaia⁸² but their precise functions are unclear, as is whether they continued to exist in the Palaiologan period. Miller argued strongly that there were two distinct treasuries: the *dēmosia* for state taxes (which he identifies with the *bestiarion* mentioned by other writers)⁸³ and the *basilikon tamieion* for other sources of revenue, notably income from imperial estates, thus maintaining the ancient Roman division between public money and the private property of the ruler.⁸⁴ Miller argued that Kantakouzēnos, well versed in the detailed workings of the state, employed the terms in a deliberate and technically accurate manner. In particular, he points to a passage where Kantakouzēnos refers to drawing funds from both in the same sentence.⁸⁵ While Miller, in an addendum to his article, admitted that contemporary writers certainly did use the terms interchangeably at times, he continued to believe Kantakouzēnos, with his precise knowledge of

⁸⁰ Kant. II, 225.8-19.

⁸¹ E.g., δημόσια: Kant. II, 65.21-2, 89.17; βασιλικόν ταμειῖον: Kant. II, 89.13-14.

⁸² Pach. I, 97.21-26 for the treasury at Astritzion; the main treasury was in Magnesia: Pach. I, 101.20-25.

⁸³ E.g., Ps-Kod., 111.

⁸⁴ See Miller, 'Basilika and Demosia'. Miller views the *demosion* as the actual taxes (see 173) but the word can apply to the fisc itself (see Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 219, n. 126).

⁸⁵ Kant. III, 80.12-16: Καὶ ἀπεδείκνυτο, καὶ τῶν τὰ χρήματα παρασχομένων συνομολογούντων, μὴ πλέον εἰσπεπραῶχθαι πέντε μυριάδων, ἃ ἀνάλωτο πρὸς τοῦ στόλου τὴν παρασκευὴν, καὶ ἕτερα οὐκ ὀλίγα πλείω τούτων ἐκ τῶν **δημοσίων** καὶ **βασιλικῶν**.

government, was using them correctly.⁸⁶ Angold, on the other hand, acknowledged the existence of two Laskarid treasuries but considered the *bestiarion* to have been the 'sole central treasury' of the Nikaian Empire and the treasury at Astritzion to have been 'a subsidiary treasury'.⁸⁷ Hendy also saw the Astritzion treasury as a secondary, regional treasury.⁸⁸ Bartusis and Maksimović, in their studies of administrative and financial documents, treat the terms as interchangeable.⁸⁹ Angelov, without reference to Miller, also noticed the variation in the terms used for treasuries, but, citing a great number of examples, concluded the two terms were interchangeable and did not indicate the existence of separate institutions.⁹⁰ Kantakouzēnos, consistent with his classicising style, demonstrates little interest in administrative details and is imprecise on many matters. Each of Kantakouzēnos' references to treasuries can accept a generalised, rhetorical reading as easily as a specific, technical one: even Miller's example mentioned above could be read as not referring to two distinct administrative/financial institutions but simply as a reference to having spent the income from both taxation and his own estates (or stored resources), which were, in 1349, 'imperial'. This is consistent with Kantakouzēnos' frequent reminders that he spent private resources on matters of public benefit. In conclusion, given the prevalence of confusion and lack of corroboration elsewhere, the weight of evidence appears to be against Miller's argument.

12: Orhan, Emir of Bithynia 1326-1362 (*PLP* 21133). Orhan was a son of Osman, who gave his name to the Ottoman dynasty. The origins of the

⁸⁶ Miller, 'Basilika and Demosia', 191. His argument is accepted by FK II, 174, n. 37a and FK III, 433, n. 125.

⁸⁷ Angold, *Government in Exile*, 204-5.

⁸⁸ Hendy, *Studies*, 443.

⁸⁹ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*; Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*.

⁹⁰ Angelov, *Ideology*, 255, 269.

Ottomans are shrouded by scant contemporary sources and the subsequent mythologising of fifteenth-century Turkish writers.⁹¹ Orhan was certainly emir by the time he captured Prousa in 1326 but he had succeeded Osman perhaps up to two years earlier.⁹² Kantakouzēnos first mentions Orhan, during Andronikos III's campaign in Mesothynia, as the 'satrap of the Persians there'.⁹³ The campaign ended with Andronikos' defeat at the Battle of Pelekanos in June 1329, which marked the last serious attempt to halt the Turkish advance in Anatolia.⁹⁴ Although Orhan thereafter slowly overcame the few remaining Roman cities in Bithynia,⁹⁵ he appears not to have acquired a fleet of any significance and the only sizeable recorded Ottoman attack on Thrace, in 1337 or 1338, led to most of Orhan's men being killed or captured.⁹⁶ However, the civil war transformed the fortunes of the Ottomans. Both sides sought Orhan's assistance; Kantakouzēnos claims that the regency was first to approach him.⁹⁷ Although it was Kantakouzēnos who gained his assistance, it initially appears to have been relatively limited.⁹⁸ However, after the crusader attack on Smyrna in October 1344 limited Umur's ability to support Kantakouzēnos, he became desperate to acquire an ally of similar power. Consequently, Kantakouzēnos married his daughter Theodōra to Orhan. This first marriage of a legitimate imperial princess to an already-married Muslim ruler, shortly after Kantakouzēnos' coronation in May 1346,

⁹¹ On the difficulties posed by the early Ottoman narrative sources, see Imber, 'Osman Gazi'; for an attempt to make sense of the available evidence, Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Ottomans'.

⁹² See Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Ottomans', 372-3. The fall of Prousa is dated by a number of chronicles, see *CBB* II, 231-2.

⁹³ Kant. I, 342.15-16: Ὁρχάνης δὲ ὁ τῶν αὐτόθι Περσῶν σατράπης.

⁹⁴ Kant. I, 341.5-363.8; Greg. I, 433.9-436.15; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 169-170; Kyriakidis, 'Pelekanos-Philokrene'.

⁹⁵ See below, Ch.9:13.

⁹⁶ Kant. I, 505.8-508.16; Greg. I, 538.4-542.2.

⁹⁷ Kant. II, 498.11-16.

⁹⁸ Kant. II, 498.22-499.3.

would have been scandalous.⁹⁹ Kantakouzēnos is clearly defensive, claiming his daughter was a beacon for Christianity in the Ottoman lands.¹⁰⁰ It is quite probable that Orhan saw the betrothal as an acceptance of vassalage by Kantakouzēnos.¹⁰¹ However, Orhan's followers gave Kantakouzēnos a formidable advantage, as Grēgoras notes,¹⁰² and must have formed the bulk of the force that saw him to victory in 1347. Kantakouzēnos' dependence on his new son-in-law ensured that one of his earliest acts as emperor was to meet with Orhan and his sons in spring 1347.¹⁰³ Kantakouzēnos repeatedly requested Ottoman auxiliaries throughout his reign but, as he was unable to reliably control them, they often proved of dubious benefit and their depredations undoubtedly undermined his legitimacy.¹⁰⁴ Orhan even sided with the Genoese against Kantakouzēnos and his Venetian allies in 1352.¹⁰⁵ The earthquake of the night of 1/2 March 1354 enabled Orhan's son Süleyman to occupy Kallioupolis; Kantakouzēnos' efforts to bribe the Ottomans to leave were ineffectual, although he places the responsibility for his failure on Süleyman rather than his father.¹⁰⁶ Although, shortly after, Kantakouzēnos lost power to Iōannēs V, the new emperor's policy of confrontation with the Ottomans was equally unsuccessful and they began a systematic conquest of Thrace. Orhan himself died in March 1362, probably from plague.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ Kant. II, 585.18-589.11; Greg. II, 762.18-763.15; Bryer, 'Byzantine-Ottoman marriage'; for Theodōra, Nicol, *Family*, 134-5, no. 29.

¹⁰⁰ Kant. II, 588.17-589.11.

¹⁰¹ Bryer, 'Byzantine-Ottoman marriage', 485-7.

¹⁰² Greg. II, 763.14-15: ἦν ἐντεῦθεν φοβερός τις καὶ ἄμαχος Καντακουζηνός ('thereafter, Kantakouzēnos was someone fearsome and unconquerable').

¹⁰³ Kant. III, 28.5-24 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 165).

¹⁰⁴ Kant. III, 32 (in 1348), 111-116 (in 1350), 243-250 (in 1352), 323-328 (1356, summoned by Matthaios in his conflict against Iōannēs V).

¹⁰⁵ Kant. III, 228.12f.

¹⁰⁶ Kant. III, 276.17-281.18. For the date, *CBB* II, 283-4.

¹⁰⁷ *CBB* I, 66, no. 7/15; I, 561, no. 72a/4; II, 290-1 (Schreiner's commentary).

The *Histories* reflects Kantakouzēnos' understandable discomfort regarding Orhan, who emerges as a rather distant and shady figure; there is no hint of any personal warmth in their relationship, in contrast to Kantakouzēnos' relationship with Umur of Aydin. Kantakouzēnos and Orhan communicate mainly through emissaries and Orhan was not even present for the ceremonies of his marriage to Theodōra; instead, after the festivities at Selymbria, she was escorted to him in Anatolia. The only occasion on which Kantakouzēnos admits that he met Orhan in person is at the celebration in spring 1347. The Ottoman conquest of Thrace, which would have been in full flow while the *Histories* were being composed, is not directly mentioned.

13: Bithynia is the north-west region of Anatolia bordering the Propontis, facing Constantinople.¹⁰⁸ The area was critical to the security of the capital but had been under attack by Turks since the end of the thirteenth century, accelerating after the Battle of Bapheus in 1302.¹⁰⁹ Its final loss to the Ottomans was the greatest failure of Andronikos III's reign. His resolution to repel the Ottomans by force appears to have crumbled after his defeat at Pelekanos in 1329.¹¹⁰ Nikaia fell in March 1331¹¹¹ and in 1333 Andronikos began to pay 12,000 hyperpyra annually as tribute for the remaining territory, including Nikomēdia, the last remaining city.¹¹² This agreement apparently broke down as the city was starved into submission by Orhan, probably while Andronikos was absent in the west in 1337 or 1338; Grēgoras

¹⁰⁸ For Bithynia, see Geyer and Lefort, *Bithynie*. Janin, 'Bithynie', although somewhat outdated, is still a useful historical summary.

¹⁰⁹ For the early progress of the Ottoman conquest, see Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Ottomans', 364-73.

¹¹⁰ As mentioned above, Ch.9:12.

¹¹¹ Recorded by a number of chronicles, see *CBB* II, 238.

¹¹² *CBB* I, 79, no. 8/24.

records that Turkish raids on Thrace increased afterwards.¹¹³ Unsurprisingly, in light of his later alliances with Orhan, Kantakouzēnos does not note the fall of either Nikaia or Nikomēdia, or Andronikos' agreement to pay tribute. In any case, the Ottoman emirate was not a stable entity at this time and its borders would not have corresponded exactly to those of the province of Bithynia.¹¹⁴

14: Didymoteichon (modern Didymoteicho) lies on the Erythros River, close to its confluence with the Hebros.¹¹⁵ A rocky outcrop rises commandingly above the surrounding low hills and plains, providing a natural site for its heavily fortified acropolis, of which substantial ruins remain. Numerous stores, cisterns and dwellings are carved into the soft rock, further increasing its resilience to siege.¹¹⁶ The city's name, first attested in the sixth century, probably refers to 'twin castles', the other being the closely neighbouring settlement of Plōtinopolis, abandoned probably in the ninth century.¹¹⁷ In the early thirteenth century, Villehardouin described it as 'one of the strongest castles in Romania as well as one of the richest'.¹¹⁸ However, following the slighting of its walls by Kalojan, he regarded it as

¹¹³ Greg. I, 545.15-21. The chronologies of Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras are not entirely reconcilable during these years. See FK II, 236-7, n. 295, for 1337; Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.ii, 359-361, n. 451, for 1338.

¹¹⁴ Beldiceanu-Steinherr, 'Ottomans', 353-4.

¹¹⁵ For the city and its monuments, see Giannopoulos, *Didymoteichon*; Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 87-144; Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 130-7; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 240-44.

¹¹⁶ Greg. I, 357.9-12, mentions rainwater cisterns. Additionally, many chambers are indented to receive *pithoi* and other containers, see Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 99-102. A few inhabited dwellings, at least partially cut into the rock, still remain (pers. obs., 2013).

¹¹⁷ Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 88-89; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 240. There is however some evidence of an outer wall on the north side although not around the entire circuit: Giannopoulos, *Didymoteichon*, 95-102.

¹¹⁸ Villehardouin, *Conquête de Constantinople*, 282 (trans. Smith, 76).

‘pointless to try to rebuild them’.¹¹⁹ In this case, there must have been significant reconstruction during the Laskarid and Palaiologan periods.¹²⁰ While imperial officials and the garrison would have resided in the acropolis, there were also substantial unwalled suburbs. In late 1341, Kantakouzēnos had a ditch dug to protect them, although these areas were subsequently were devastated by the inhabitants of the upper city following a failed popular revolt.¹²¹ Didymoteichon is more prominent during the early fourteenth century than at any other period in its history, and Kantakouzēnos mentions it more frequently than any other author.¹²² The city became a *de facto* capital for Andronikos III during the first civil war, along with Adrianople, and remained a favoured retreat thereafter; Iōannēs V was born there in June 1332.¹²³ A clear factor for its increase in importance relative to Adrianople was its convenient location for campaigns to the west as well as the north. It became the great fortress of Kantakouzēnos’ faction in the second civil war; he states that Apokaukos despaired of taking it, ‘realising it was impregnable because of its very strong walls and the high spirits and courage of those who held them.’¹²⁴ The Kantakouzēnoi probably had significant ties in the locality; Kantakouzēnos’ construction of the nearby fortress of Empythion suggests local landholdings and Theodōra Kantakouzēnē had twice been deputised as governor by Andronikos III during the first civil war.¹²⁵ However a state of siege during Kantakouzēnos’

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 449 (trans. Smith, 121). Curiously, Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 132, states its fortifications and location ‘rendait la ville inexpugnable’ before noting this conquest of the city.

¹²⁰ The fortifications were being actively maintained as late as the 1350s, as is clear from the monogram of Tarchaneiōtēs on the walls, see Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 95, 98; Ch.10:8.

¹²¹ Kant. II, 287.23-289.23.

¹²² Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 131-2.

¹²³ Greg. I, 482.1-3.

¹²⁴ Kant. II, 302.2-3: διὰ τε καρτερότητα τειχῶν καὶ εὐψυχίαν καὶ τόλμαν τῶν ἐχόντων ἀνάλωτον νομίζων.

¹²⁵ For Theodōra, Ch.9:18; for Empythion, Ch.30:3.

absence in 1342-3 forced his partisans to subsist by raiding the surrounding area, doubtlessly causing corresponding damage to his popularity.¹²⁶ Accordingly, if somewhat ironically, the city and its populace strongly supported Iōannēs V during his 1352-3 war against Matthaios Kantakouzēnos.¹²⁷ The circumstances of its final fall are obscure but it was under Ottoman control by 1361.

15: Adrianople is modern Edirne.¹²⁸ Kantakouzēnos uses both the forms Ἀδριανοῦ and Ἀδριανούπολις.¹²⁹ Grēgoras generally prefers Orestias, its ancient name before it was refounded by Hadrian. Adrianople was the 'greatest and most important of the cities of Thrace.'¹³⁰ Lying about 230km from Constantinople, on the River Tunca, very close to the confluence of the Arda and Hebros, the city's importance was always ensured by its position on the chief route between Constantinople and central Europe, as well as west to Philippopolis. The Hebros was navigable as far as Adrianople, providing a direct route to the Aegean.¹³¹ It did not occupy a naturally strong site like Didymoteichon but its walls, following their ancient plan, enclosed a greater area; Kantakouzēnos comments that it was 'large and populous'.¹³² The defences were very effective for, although in the path of Bulgarian, Tatar and Catalan incursions, the city was not taken by force in the Palaiologan period until the eventual Ottoman conquest. Villehardouin relates that the crusaders abandoned their determined siege of 1205 because 'the city was

¹²⁶ Kant. II, 349.12-20.

¹²⁷ For the whole incident, see Kant. III, 238-53.

¹²⁸ See also Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 137-48; Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 161-78; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 161-7.

¹²⁹ Translated as 'the city of Adrian' and 'Adrianople', respectively.

¹³⁰ Kant. II, 405.11-12: μάλιστα τῶν ἐν τῇ Θράκῃ πόλεων μείζω καὶ ἀναγκαιοτέρων οὔσαν.

¹³¹ Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 140-1.

¹³² Kant. I, 23.21: μεγάλην οὔσαν καὶ πολυάνθρωπον.

very strong and very well defended'.¹³³ These factors naturally influenced Andronikos III in choosing the city as his destination in 1321 when he fled from Constantinople, beginning the first civil war.¹³⁴ Unsurprisingly Adrianople was also an immediate goal for Kantakouzēnos during the second civil war. However the *demos* revolted in favour of the regency, an uprising that he treats as a model for the other popular revolts against him.¹³⁵ In early 1345, partisans within the city, allied with the appointed governor (a son of Alexios Apokaukos), tried and failed to hand the city over to him.¹³⁶ Within a few months though, with virtually the rest of Thrace in Kantakouzēnos' hands, the city and its surrounding fortresses decided to come over.¹³⁷ Kantakouzēnos was subsequently crowned in Adrianople on 21 May 1346.¹³⁸ The city later formed part of Matthaïos' appanage but another popular revolt in favour of Iōannēs V left him stranded in the acropolis, until rescued by forces from Constantinople.¹³⁹ After Matthaïos had been forced to abdicate, Adrianople apparently remained under Constantinople's authority until taken by the Ottomans around 1369.

16: See Chapters 3-6.

17: The date of Kantakouzēnos' departure is unclear. An anonymous short chronicle places it in July.¹⁴⁰ However, Grēgoras states that it took place

¹³³ Villehardouin, *Conquête de Constantinople*, 396 (trans. Smith, 106). Chōniatēs, *History*, 622-624 (trans. Magoulias, 340-2), provides a more detailed account.

¹³⁴ Kant. I, 89-90.

¹³⁵ Kant. II, 175.22-179.11.

¹³⁶ Kant. II, 484.10-487.19.

¹³⁷ Kant. II, 525.21-526.1.

¹³⁸ Kant. II, 564-568; II, 564.16-18, for the date.

¹³⁹ Kant. II, 242ff.

¹⁴⁰ *CBB* I, 81, no. 8/33.

'after the rising of Arcturus', generally accepted as 26/27 August.¹⁴¹ While Fatouros and Krischer recognise that Grēgoras could simply be borrowing the phrase from Thucydides,¹⁴² they lean towards this date owing to Kantakouzēnos' earlier statement that his reorganisation of the army took sixty days.¹⁴³ If Kantakouzēnos fully completed the process before taking the field, as he implies, July would be impossible (since Andronikos died in mid-June) and late August seems more compelling. However, Loenertz dismissed Grēgoras' account in favour of the chronicle, although without any compelling reason and without acknowledging Kantakouzēnos' 'sixty days'.¹⁴⁴ Kantakouzēnos relates that, following his departure, he travelled to Didymoteichon, gathered an army, made peace with Ivan Alexander, marched to the Chersonese, fought two battles over an interval of days with the Turks, returned to Didymoteichon and dealt with various embassies before returning to Constantinople at some point during September, before finally leaving again in late September.¹⁴⁵ For Grēgoras' dating to be absolutely accurate, all of this would have had to be achieved within thirty days at the very longest. Therefore, while a July departure may be too early, the end of August seems too late. Van Dieten questioned the traditional 26/27 August date and suggested Grēgoras meant mid-August.¹⁴⁶ This would fit roughly with Kantakouzēnos' sixty days and his subsequent activities in Thrace.

¹⁴¹ Greg. II, 596.13: Μετὰ μέντοι τὰς τοῦ Ἀρκτούρου ἐπιτολάς; FK III, 425, n. 75; CBB II, 251.

¹⁴² Thuc. 2.78.2.

¹⁴³ FK III, 424, n. 67; 425, n. 75. For similar reasons, 26 August is accepted by Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 167, n. 4; 171, n. 4. However, also see above, Ch.8:9.

¹⁴⁴ Loenertz, 'Chronique', 61. Followed by Nicol, *Family*, 45-6 and Schreiner, CBB II, 251.

¹⁴⁵ See below, Ch.16:9.

¹⁴⁶ Van Dieten, *Gregoras III*, 235-236.

18: Theodōra Palaiologina Angelina Kantakouzēnē (*PLP* 10942).¹⁴⁷ Although Theodōra is described as aunt of Andronikos III,¹⁴⁸ her parentage, and thus her (and her son's) exact relationship to the Palaiologos family, is unclear.¹⁴⁹ She was widowed by 1294 and never remarried, and Iōannēs seems to have been her only child. It is probable that he was born after his father's death and thus she was solely responsible for his upbringing.¹⁵⁰ Her son states she was 'experienced in management of political matters, and of greater judgement than the lot accorded to a feminine nature.'¹⁵¹ Grēgoras similarly spoke highly of her dignity, intelligence, ingenuity and knowledge of state affairs.¹⁵² She was indeed no stranger to political affairs, helping to finance Andronikos III's revolt and taking joint command of Didymoteichon in 1321 and 1327.¹⁵³ She also took the lead in suppressing the attempted putsch of 1335, during the absence of Andronikos and her son on campaign.¹⁵⁴ It is highly likely that Theodōra was tasked with looking after her son's political position when he left the capital. She was thus naturally the first target of his enemies when they began to move against him and was placed under house-arrest in October 1341.¹⁵⁵ She later suffered

¹⁴⁷ See also Nicol, *Family*, 30-33, no. 21; Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 16-17, no. 25, is superseded by Nicol. Lemerle's commentary on her life is also useful although perpetuates the error that she had a second son; see *Actes de Kutlumus*, 82-87, no. 18, esp. 84-85.

¹⁴⁸ Kant. I, 125.16-17, 260.4-5. She also signed herself as θεία τοῦ ... βασιλέως, see *Actes de Kutlumus*, 87, line 87. Malamut, 'Jeanne-Anne', 92, n. 34, suggests that she was called Andronikos' aunt owing to her son's designation of himself as Andronikos' brother. As Kantakouzēnos only called himself Andronikos' brother following his own acclamation, this cannot be true.

¹⁴⁹ Nicol, *Family*, 30-31, summarises the main suggestions and their weaknesses. Nicol, 'Family Addenda', 313, later described Papadopoulos' tentative theory as 'wildly conjectural'. Owing to lack of evidence, Nicol offers no suggestion of his own.

¹⁵⁰ For dating the death of her husband, see Nicol, *Family*, 27-30, no. 20.

¹⁵¹ Kant. I, 125.18-20: πρὸς διοίκησιν ἔμπειρος πολιτικῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ φρονήσεως ἐρῶμενεστέρας ἢ κατὰ φύσιν γυναικείαν τυχοῦσα.

¹⁵² Greg. I, 530.11-14; II, 619.5-8.

¹⁵³ Kant. I, 125.15-22, 138.4-20, 260.3-5.

¹⁵⁴ On this incident, see Ch.17:6. Her political role is also discussed by Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 13-14.

¹⁵⁵ Kant. II, 136.18-22.

imprisonment and confiscation,¹⁵⁶ before being maltreated, allegedly on Apokaukos' orders.¹⁵⁷ She died of disease and neglect on 6 January 1342, one of the few dates provided by Kantakouzēnos.¹⁵⁸ Grēgoras later spitefully attributed her demise to her son's support of Palamas.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Kant. II, 164.21-165.12.

¹⁵⁷ Her sufferings are narrated at some length: Kant. II, 219.22-222.14; Greg. II, 617.1-620.4.

¹⁵⁸ Kant. II, 222.11-14.

¹⁵⁹ Greg. II, 886.17-19.

Commentary on Chapter 10

1: Stilbnos is modern Sliven, in central Bulgaria. It lies in the southern foothills of the Balkan Mountains and controlled two passes across the range.¹ While few traces of the medieval town survive, there are the remnants of a number of fortresses in the neighbourhood.² Its position and fortifications made it a convenient mustering point for Bulgarian expeditions into Roman Thrace, a role it was to serve again during the civil war.³ The regions between Sliven and Adrianople were frequently contested between the two states.⁴ It seems to have marked, in Kantakouzēnos' mind, the edge of unquestionably Bulgarian territory; following the death of Georgij II Terter in 1322, he states that all the towns 'from Mesēmbria as far as Stilbnos' briefly revolted in favour of the Romans.⁵

2: Tŭrnovo, the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire, modern Veliko Tarnovo. The city lies in the northern foothills of the Balkan mountains, on the river Yantra. Extensive ruins of the fortified royal palace complex remain, spectacularly situated on rock terraces of the hill of Tsarevets. Nikētas Chōniatēs called it 'the best fortified and most excellent of all the cities along the Haimos'.⁶ It possessed an estimated population of 15,000-20,000 during the fourteenth century and was a centre of artistic production with a lively economy, which appears to have reached its peak during Ivan Alexander's reign.⁷ A contemporary Bulgarian translation of Kōnstantinos Manassēs' chronicle referred to Tŭrnovo as the 'new

¹ FK I, 263, n. 220.

² Soustal, *Thrakien*, 462-4.

³ Kant. II, 420.18-20.

⁴ See Ch.2:11. The most recent conflicts, 1328-1333, are summarised in Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*, 128-131.

⁵ Kant. I, 172.9: ἀπὸ Μεσημβρίας ἄχρι Στίλβνου.

⁶ Chōniatēs, *History*, 470.75-76 (trans. Magoulias, 258).

⁷ Dochev, 'Tŭrnovo'. For the art and architecture of Tŭrnovo, see Bossilkov, *Turnovo*.

Tsarigrad'; on the basis of this, Obolensky claimed that Bulgarian imperial ideology viewed Tŭrnovo as the successor to Rome and head of the Orthodox *oikoumenē*, implicitly denying Constantinople's claims.⁸ However, on the basis of a single somewhat ambiguous note, it is difficult to definitively accept that this ideology was widely accepted or promoted in the Bulgarian court. The contemporary pride invested in this striking capital city is however unarguable.

3: The Thracian Chersonese, i.e., the Gallipoli peninsula. It was generally a fertile area, known since Antiquity for its olives and grain.⁹ Following the abandonment of coastal Asia Minor, the narrowness of the Hellespont (about 1.2km at its narrowest) made the area very vulnerable to raids from the opposite shore. Andronikos III was injured in a surprise encounter with 70 Turks here in 1326,¹⁰ and small Turkish raids were probably very frequent. Its chief city, Kallioupolis, would famously become the gateway for Ottoman conquests in Europe in 1354.¹¹ The ease of ferrying people and horses across the Hellespont without seagoing boats made it a favoured point for transit between the two continents. Kantakouzēnos narrates the exploits of a group of 3,100 Turks during the civil war who, having lost their ships to a Latin fleet, agreed to fight for him if he would allow them to return to Anatolia via the Chersonese.¹² Similarly, following his loss of the port of Smyrna, Umur adopted this route to reach Thrace.¹³

⁸ Obolensky, *Commonwealth*, 246. For a recent translation of the whole passage, see Petkov, *Voices*, 451.

⁹ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 311-313.

¹⁰ Greg. I, 384.3-13. Kant. I, 206-207, confirms the skirmish although the exact location is unclear.

¹¹ Kant. III, 278-9.

¹² Kant. II, 423-5.

¹³ Kant. II, 529.14-530.1.

4: Pergamon (modern Bergama) was the capital of Yakhshi's domain. In the 1330s, Ibn Battuta described it as 'a city in ruins, with a great and formidable fortress on top of a hill.'¹⁴ It is not entirely clear if the ruins he referred to were the ancient city or recent damage inflicted by its conquerors but the former seems likely as the medieval city largely clung to the hill, while the remains of the ancient lower city were numerous and visible.¹⁵ Pergamon was no longer a major settlement, but it had been substantially re-fortified against Turkish attacks by Manouēl I Komnēnos as part of his Neokastra development.¹⁶ The city was inland; Kantakouzēnos presumably means that the army originated from there rather than having embarked there.

5: Kantakouzēnos mentions his preparations for a western campaign several times but only in Chapter 12 does he explain that it is directed against the rebel Albanians mentioned in Chapter 1.

6: Epibatai, modern Bigados/Selimpaşa, was a small coastal settlement about 10km east of Selymbria, easily accessible from the sea or the Via Egnatia.¹⁷ Kantakouzēnos mentions that it was still unfortified in July 1322, when the Andronikoi signed their second peace treaty there.¹⁸ The fortress was Apokaukos' private possession, well-stocked against siege, and also served as a treasury.¹⁹ In conjunction with his patronage of Selymbria, Apokaukos clearly had strong ties with the region.²⁰ After his death in June

¹⁴ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, 448-9.

¹⁵ Foss, 'Twenty Cities', 479-481.

¹⁶ Chōniatēs, *History*, 150 (trans. Magoulias, 85); Foss and Winfield, *Byzantine Fortifications*, 147.

¹⁷ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 350-2. For the Via Egnatia, see Oikonomides, 'Via Egnatia'; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 136-8; Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 25-30.

¹⁸ Kant. I, 166.16-17.

¹⁹ Kant. II, 495.20-22; Greg. II, 602.23-603.3.

²⁰ See Ch.16:11.

1345, Apokaukos' widow fled to Epibatai with all that remained of his fortune.²¹ As Kantakouzēnos was in possession of Selymbria by that time, it seems likely he had decided that laying siege to the fortress was not worth the cost. Epibatai appears in the narrative for the last time as the site where Matthaios is finally persuaded to lay aside his imperial claims and make peace with Iōannēs V.²² A so-called 'tower of Apokaukos' still survived in the area in 1878.²³

7: Apokaukos' flight is dated by an anonymous chronicler to 28 August 1341; the same chronicle also recounts that Kantakouzēnos was recalled to the capital by Anna to deal with the matter, arriving during September.²⁴ Kantakouzēnos' return is confirmed by Grēgoras, although he is vague about the reasons for Apokaukos' escape, stating only that his habitual scheming had been discovered.²⁵ The plot, as described by Kantakouzēnos, seems utterly implausible. Not only does it lack subtlety but a forced marriage is hardly likely to have been recognised upon Iōannēs regaining his freedom. Moreover, it seems extremely improbable that Anna would have forgiven and subsequently trusted Apokaukos as readily as she did if there had been any substance to such a scheme. Although it is possible that the plot was simply a rumour originated by a rival to discredit Apokaukos, a more likely explanation is offered by fears for Anna's health at this time. Kantakouzēnos mentions somewhat later, following his return to the capital, that she was ill.²⁶ Grēgoras goes further, stating that it was primarily her illness, followed by Apokaukos' flight and concern about the Patriarch, which caused Kantakouzēnos to abandon his campaign and

²¹ Kant. II, 549.19-22.

²² Kant. III, 345-357.

²³ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 352.

²⁴ *CBB* I, 81, no. 8/34; Loenertz, 'Chronique', 61.

²⁵ Greg. II, 599.12-14.

²⁶ Kant. II, 83.3-5.

return.²⁷ It seems likely that Anna's sudden, albeit brief, illness was serious enough to cause panic: if she was also to die, seizure of Iōannēs could be justified as a measure to ensure his safety against other factions (just as Kantakouzēnos himself claimed, when surrounding the palace with his men immediately after Andronikos' death), and custodianship of the young emperor would allow his new guardian to present himself as regent. Apokaukos may well have been planning to seize the initiative, in event of Anna's death, while Kantakouzēnos was absent.

8: Manouēl Kourtikēs Tarchaneiōtēs (*PLP* 27503). A loyal supporter of Kantakouzēnos, belonging to a long-established military family.²⁸ He was prominent among the defenders of Didymoteichon, and was selected for the dangerous mission of locating Kantakouzēnos when he fled to Serbia.²⁹ He is finally seen fighting alongside Kantakouzēnos against the renegade Momčilo.³⁰ Grēgoras speaks of him as 'Manouēl Tarchaneiōtēs, who is related by blood to the Emperor and was a man of heroism'³¹ and praises him at length. However his precise familial relationship with Kantakouzēnos is unknown³² and he is unattested thereafter; the *prōtostratōr* and fleet commander Kōnstantinos Tarchaneiōtēs,³³ who appears frequently in Book IV, has occasionally been confused for Manouēl.³⁴ The Tarchaneiōtēs monograms still visible on the walls of Didymoteichon are attributed to

²⁷ Greg. II, 599.11-17.

²⁸ A. Kazhdan, 'Tarchaneiotes', *ODB* III, 2011-12.

²⁹ Kant. II, 195, 322-3.

³⁰ Kant. II, 430.

³¹ Greg. II, 652.13-15: Μανουήλ ὁ Ταρχανειώτης, ὃς δὴ καθ' αἷμα προσήκων τῷ βασιλεῖ καὶ ἡρωϊκός τις ἦν ὁ ἀνὴρ.

³² For known connections of the Tarchaneiōtai to the Kantakouzēnoi, see Nicol, *Family*, 139-140; Nicol, 'Family Addenda', 311.

³³ *PLP* 27494. Kantakouzēnos usually refers to him only as 'Tarchaneiōtēs' but confirms his identity on two occasions: Kant. III, 72.6-7, 221.5.

³⁴ E.g., Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 39, n. 257; FK III, 427, n. 83.

Kōnstantinos' governorship there in 1352.³⁵ Manouēl clearly did not identify himself with the name Kourtikēs often, and Kantakouzēnos does not use it hereafter, but he probably intended to distinguish him from a previously mentioned nephew also called Manouēl Tarchaneiōtēs, who died in battle against the Turks.³⁶

9: It is not clear from the phrase 'placed under his control' (τῶν ὑπ' αὐτῷ τελούντων) whether Kantakouzēnos indicates fortresses belonging to him personally, or placed under his command temporarily by the Emperor. However, a number of clearly private aristocratic fortresses are mentioned by Kantakouzēnos. Besides Epibatai, Apokaukos apparently had another refuge, the tower of Mangana in Constantinople, which he acquired in Andronikos III's reign and 'equipped and made extremely strong in the years of the civil war.'³⁷ Iōannēs Batatzēs possessed the fortress of Tēristasis 'which he had previously fortified at his own expense when the Emperor Andronikos was alive.'³⁸ Finally, and somewhat ironically given the scorn he pours on the idea, Kantakouzēnos' castle of Empythion fulfilled a similar function.³⁹ It appears that Andronikos could not easily prohibit such private fortresses or else he tolerated them as a contribution to public security that did not incur public expense.⁴⁰ While private fortifications for protecting estates against small raiding parties were quite common,⁴¹ these large aristocratic fortresses were constructed to endure determined military action and prolonged siege. Matschke considers such fortifications a trend among

³⁵ Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 95, 98.

³⁶ Kant. I, 361.22-362.3; *PLP* 27500.

³⁷ Kant. II, 438.7-9: ἐν δὲ τοῖς τοῦ ἐμφυλίου πολέμου χρόνοις ἐπισκευάσας καὶ ὀχυρώτατον ἀπεργασάμενος.

³⁸ Kant. II, 475.6-7: ὁ πρότερον αὐτὸς ἔτι βασιλέως Ἀνδρονίκου περιόντος οἰκείους ἀναλώμασιν ἐτείχισεν.

³⁹ See Ch.30:3.

⁴⁰ Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 161-3, favours the latter view.

⁴¹ Smyrlis, 'Estate fortifications'; Bogdanović, 'Tower'.

Palaiologan aristocrats, to safeguard their influence and wealth by leaving turbulent cities in favour of strongholds nearby.⁴² However Kantakouzēnos' account suggests they were intended rather as temporary refuges from dangerous developments in court politics than as secure residences designed to control a localised powerbase. Grēgoras seems to agree, deploring Apokaukos' fortifications as evidence of wicked intentions from the outset.⁴³ Apokaukos later offers similar advice (somewhat disingenuously) to Iōannēs Gabalas.⁴⁴

10: There is probably a deliberate irony in this choice of address as Apokaukos had a great interest in medicine, while Kantakouzēnos is not noted for any. Iōannēs Aktouarios, chief physician to Andronikos II, dedicated his *Method of Medicine* to Apokaukos, probably in 1329 or 1330.⁴⁵ The well-known deluxe MS of Hippocrates (Par. gr. 2144) was either commissioned by Apokaukos himself or was intended as a gift by friends. It contains portraits of Hippocrates and Apokaukos, with accompanying dedicatory verses in which they flatter each other's intellectual and medical talents.⁴⁶ Production of the volume began during the civil war, as it refers to Apokaukos' office as *megas doux*, but the work remains incomplete, probably owing to his death.⁴⁷

⁴² Matschke, 'Urban Economy', 465-6.

⁴³ Greg. II, 585.10-586.3.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 495.18-496.4. For Gabalas, see Ch.19:4.

⁴⁵ J. Scarborough and A.M. Talbot, 'John Aktouarios', *ODB* II, 1056; *PLP* 6489; Munitz, 'Apokaukos and Hippocrates', 275.

⁴⁶ For this MS, see Munitz, 'Apokaukos and Hippocrates'; Spatharakis, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 148-151.

⁴⁷ Munitz, *op. cit.*, 267-280.

11: Grēgoras reports a surprisingly similar exchange between the two men.⁴⁸ That men are of greater value than buildings is an ancient literary trope.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Greg. II, 600.15-602.4.

⁴⁹ FK III, 428, n. 86.

Commentary on Chapter 11

1: Rule of the Peloponnese was divided between Romans, Franks and Venetians. The Frankish Principality of Achaia was established by Geoffrey de Villehardouin in 1205 and rapidly expanded across the entire peninsula. Venice acquired the enclaves of Koronē and Methonē in June 1209, which became important outposts and ports for the Republic, frequently mentioned in Venetian documents.¹ Venetian possession of them was largely uncontested until the Ottoman conquest. However, following the Battle of Pelagonia in 1259, Villehardouin's son and successor, William, was captured and forced to concede several fortresses to Michaēl VIII, including Monembasia and Mistra.² Over the following decades frequent conflict saw the Roman governors at Mistra slowly gain territory at the Franks' expense.³ Kantakouzēnos' otherwise unknown father served as one of Andronikos II's governors⁴ as did Andronikos Asanēs.⁵ Neither Kantakouzēnos nor Grēgoras mention the Peloponnese during their accounts of the civil war; the province apparently remained loyal to Constantinople but played no active role in the conflict. Kantakouzēnos later alludes to rising disorder in the peninsula during the war, mentioning Latin and Turkish raids as well as continual local feuds, leading to his appointment of his second son Manouēl as

¹ Lock, *Franks*, 154-5.

² For the establishment of the imperial province, see Geanakoplos, *Michael Palaeologus*, 154-160.

³ For these events, see Lock, *Franks*, 73-86. For the Frankish states in Greece generally, *ibid.*, 68-134. The standard account for the imperial territories remains Zakythenos, *Morée*. Runciman, *Mistra*, 15-85, provides a narrative from the Latin to the Turkish conquests.

⁴ All that is known for sure about Kantakouzēnos' father comes from the *Histories*: Kant. I, 85.2-13. Zakythenos, *Morée* I, 68-70, suggested he was governor 1308-1316. Nicol, *Family*, 28-9, argues strongly against this, in favour of 1286-1294. As he died in the Peloponnese, the earlier dates seem more convincing and his premature death would explain Kantakouzēnos' lack of siblings.

⁵ For Asanēs, see Ch.14:4.

governor in 1349.⁶ The province remained under Manouēl's control until his death in 1380 and Mistra became a refuge for his family, with his elder brother Matthaios and Kantakouzēnos himself also ending their days there.

2: Bishop Israel of Koronē, on the south-western tip of the Peloponnese.⁷ He was bishop 1338-1341 and is known to posterity chiefly for this mission.⁸ Although he would have been a Venetian, there is no hint of official Venetian involvement in the plot.

3: Jean Sydera/Juan Sidēros (*PLP* 25311). Now only attested by Kantakouzēnos but he was mentioned in the lost Angevin archives studied by Hopf.⁹ Hopf suggests that Sidēros was a *gasmoule* (i.e., of Greek and Frankish parents). His lands in Skorta, given to his father by William II Villehardouin, had been confiscated so he had cause for dissatisfaction.¹⁰ Ντζιουὰν is Kantakouzēnos' rendering of 'Juan', which may indicate Catalan heritage.

4: The offer appears to be to substitute the emperor (or, in the interregnum, Kantakouzēnos) for their own liege, Catherine de Valois. The Latin lords would thus have retained their status and estates but paid their fiscal and military obligations to the emperor. In return they presumably expected an end to Roman raids and protection against external threats. Catherine had been resident in the Morea between October 1338 and June

⁶ Kant. III, 85.3-14 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 218-9); for the date, *CBB* I, 243, no. 33/7. For Manouēl, see *PLP* 10981; Nicol, *Family*, 122-128, no. 25.

⁷ Hopf, *Griechenlands*, 434.

⁸ Bon, *Morée*, 243, n. 3.

⁹ Hopf surveyed most of the Angevin registers and makes detailed references to them. As they were destroyed in 1943, his work has attained the status of a quasi-primary source. See Lock, *Franks*, 26.

¹⁰ Hopf, *Griechenlands*, 433; FK III, 429, n. 89.

1341, so she had clearly made a poor impression on a substantial fraction of the local barons.¹¹ The scheme would probably have provoked a military response from Catherine and loyalist barons; certainly Kantakouzēnos' speech in the following chapter anticipates that some military action would be necessary.¹² His reception of such an embassy of course signified that foreign states regarded him as *de facto* emperor, an implication he does not comment on, and would naturally have been provocative to his domestic opponents. Unsurprisingly, given its conspiratorial nature, there is no record of this embassy in the Latin sources.¹³ However there is evidence of discontent among the barons¹⁴ and Grēgoras alludes to the conspiracy when he mentions Kantakouzēnos' receipt of secret correspondence promising obedience from various groups, including the 'Latins of the Peloponnese'.¹⁵ Therefore there can be little doubt that this embassy took place; the Empire's acquisition of Thessaly and Epiros put it in a more threatening position, while the negotiated nature of the settlement in Epiros, referred to in the letter, probably reassured the barons that they would have little to fear in terms of losing their own rights.

5: Pagano di Pistoia (*PLP* 20760). He is otherwise unattested.

6: Akarnania is a region of west-central Greece, considered in Antiquity to be between the Ionian Sea and the Achelous River, bordering on the Ambracian Gulf to the north.¹⁶ Kantakouzēnos uses the name loosely to

¹¹ Lock, *Franks*, 130.

¹² Kant. II, 82.6-10.

¹³ Hopf, *Griechenlands*, 434-5, cites only Kantakouzēnos when narrating this incident.

¹⁴ Zakythenos, *Morée* I, 76.

¹⁵ Greg. II, 596.3-5: Ἦκον δ' αὐτῷ καὶ γράμματα λάθρα πολλὰ πολλαχόθεν, ἕκ τε Ἀκαρνάνων καὶ Τριβαλλῶν ἕκ τε Θετταλῶν καὶ Πελοποννησίων Λατίνων, τὴν σφῶν ὑποταγὴν ὑπισχνούμενα.

¹⁶ Strabo, 10.2.1.

indicate the entire territory of the Epirote state, or ‘Despotate of Epiros’, of which Akarnania proper was only a small part.¹⁷ Trone suggested this was because Epiros was considered to be a non-Greek, ‘barbarian’ region during Antiquity.¹⁸ However Kantakouzēnos does once make the distinction between Epiros and Akarnania; his usage probably reflects that the capital Arta was in the south, albeit slightly further north than classical Akarnania.¹⁹ Grēgoras, as is often the case, tends to be more specific in his classicism, distinguishing between Akarnania and Aitōlia.²⁰ The Epirote state was founded by Michaēl Komnēnos Doukas in 1205 and had long resisted the restoration of rule from Constantinople, but the death of its ruler, *despotēs* Giovanni Orsini,²¹ when his heir Nikēphoros was underage, gave Andronikos III a chance to impose his authority.²² There seems to have been an imperial party in Epiros, as well as determined opposition. Andronikos intimidated Epiros into submission in 1338,²³ but a revolt the following year rallied around the figurehead of the young Nikēphoros,²⁴ aided by Catherine de Valois, Angevin ruler of Naples and titular Latin Empress of

¹⁷ E.g., the *despotēs* Thōmas is described as ‘ruler of Akarnania’, Kant. I, 13.6-7: ἄρχοντι τῆς Ἀκαρνανίας. ‘Despotate’ was not a contemporary Greek term for the state; see Nicol, *Despotate*, 2-3.

¹⁸ Trone, *Kantakouzenos*, 250.

¹⁹ Kant. II, 239.18-19: Ἀκαρνανίαν καὶ Ἡπειρόν.

²⁰ E.g., Greg. I, 550.8-9. For these regions, see Soustal and Koder, *Nikopolis*.

²¹ For Orsini, see *PLP* 207; Polemis, *Doukai*, 98-9, no. 56. The year of his death is not firmly established and has been placed in 1335 (Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 135), 1335/6 (Polemis, *Doukai*, 99), 1336 (Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 32) and 1336/7 (*PLP* 21345; Nicol, *Despotate*, 107). Of these, 1335 appears unlikely. For a review of the contradictory evidence, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.ii, 377-8, n. 475.

²² For the history of Epiros, see Nicol, *Despotate*; for the period covered by Kantakouzēnos, *ibid.*, 107-138.

²³ Dating Andronikos’ campaign to the west is difficult owing to the vagueness and incompatibility of Kantakouzēnos’ and Grēgoras’ chronologies. It has been dated to 1337 by many scholars (e.g. Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 136; Lemerle, *Aydın*, 111; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 180), but arguments for spring 1338, relying on a short chronicle, seem more persuasive and have been adopted here: see Loenertz, ‘Chronique’, 56-58; *CBB* I, 80, no. 8/30; II, 248-9 (Schreiner’s commentary); Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.ii, 359-361, n. 451 and 380-381, n. 481; Nicol, *Despotate*, 110, n. 8. However these arguments are rejected by FK II, 232, n. 272. Without further evidence, the matter cannot be settled conclusively.

²⁴ For Nikēphoros, see below, Ch.11:8.

Constantinople. It was owing to her overlordship of Achaia that Latin soldiers from the Peloponnese were involved in the campaign. The main centres of the revolt were Arta, Rogoi and Thōmokastron; Nikēphoros was established in the latter with Catherine's help. Following limited military action in 1339-40, Kantakouzēnos personally negotiated the surrender of all three locations.²⁵ From the current passage, it appears he impressed the Frankish soldiers as much as he did the native leaders of the revolt. Kantakouzēnos was understandably proud of his achievement, narrating it at some length.²⁶ The annexation of Epiros was a notable triumph; Kantakouzēnos emphasises that Michael VIII's attempted conquest had failed and cost him an army, while his great-grandson had managed the feat with little violence.²⁷ During the civil war, Kantakouzēnos expected Epiros, along with Thessaly, to back him owing to the connections he had established during his presence there.²⁸ After failing to take Thessalonike, he planned to take refuge in the west to build his strength but was thwarted by swollen rivers and opportunistic Serbian incursions, forcing him to turn to Dušan instead.²⁹ The province apparently remained neutral into 1343 but was eventually taken over by Iōannēs Angelos, Kantakouzēnos' governor in Thessaly.³⁰ It is not clear exactly when Dušan overran Epiros, although his invasion was complete by 1348.³¹ The conquest was apparently brutal and caused widespread starvation.³² Kantakouzēnos expressed his desire to

²⁵ Kant. I, 499-504, 509-534; Nicol, *Despotate*, 110-122; Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 135-8.

²⁶ Kant. I, 509-534, for the entire campaign; Kant. I, 527.1-534.5, for the Thōmokastron negotiations. Grēgoras was also fulsome in his praise: see Greg. 553.19-554.8 and Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.ii, 393, n. 510.

²⁷ Kant. II, 504.8-16.

²⁸ Kant. II, 239.10-12.

²⁹ Kant. II, 239-253; Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 64.

³⁰ Greg. II, 657.17-658.12; Nicol, *Despotate*, 127.

³¹ Nicol, *Despotate*, 129-130.

³² Kant. III, 147.14-23.

regain the region, although had no serious prospect of actually doing so.³³ Dušan's death, which presented such an opportunity, occurred after Kantakouzēnos' abdication.

7: Thōmokastron was a fortress lying on the west coast of Greece, north of the Ambracian Gulf, apparently built by *despotēs* Thōmas before his death in 1318.³⁴ It has been identified with Riniasa, of which remains can still be found, located on a towering outcrop west of modern Riza.³⁵ Thōmokastron could be easily supported by sea: Kantakouzēnos relates that when Andronikos III attacked in 1340, 'it easily withstood the siege, since the Romans only besieged it from the land.'³⁶ However Kantakouzēnos eventually negotiated its surrender and then garrisoned it to prevent further Tarantine interference.³⁷ Although it is occasionally mentioned in later sources, it is known principally in connection with this incident.³⁸

8: Nikēphoros II Doukas Angelos (*PLP* 222).³⁹ He was Giovanni Orsini's son and heir to Epiros. Following the death of his father, his mother Anna apparently proposed that he be married to a daughter of Kantakouzēnos in order to improve relations with Constantinople and forestall imperial interference.⁴⁰ At this time, Kantakouzēnos reports that he was not yet aged seven.⁴¹ Andronikos III, however, decided to annex Epiros

³³ Kant. III, 113.21-114.2.

³⁴ *PLP* 197.

³⁵ Soustal and Koder, *Nikopolis*, 250-1.

³⁶ Kant. I, 511.18-20: διέφερε ῥαδίως τὴν πολιορκίαν, ἅτε ἐξ ἠπειροῦ τῶν Ῥωμαίων μόνον πολιορκούντων.

³⁷ Kant. I, 525.23-534.12; summarised in Nicol, *Despotate*, 120-121.

³⁸ See Soustal and Koder, *Nikopolis*, 251.

³⁹ See also Polemis, *Doukai*, 99-100, no. 57.

⁴⁰ Kant. I, 500.23-501.5. For Anna, *PLP* 21345; Papadopulos, *Palaiologen*, 31-2, no. 51.

⁴¹ Kant. I, 500.2-3. This accords with his statement that Nikēphoros was too young to fight in the civil war. Although Greg. I, 545.23, states he was fourteen in 1339/1340, it may be assumed that Kantakouzēnos was better informed about his son-in-law. Polemis' contention

and had Nikēphoros betrothed to Kantakouzēnos' oldest daughter, Maria.⁴² Nikēphoros, as the legitimate heir, was subsequently spirited away by an anti-imperial faction who then used him as a figurehead in their revolt the following year. Following the revolt's collapse in 1340, Andronikos granted Nikēphoros the high dignity of *panhypersebastos*.⁴³ He played no active part in the civil war, being too young to campaign, and remained in Didymoteichon with Maria.⁴⁴ It is likely that his marriage into Kantakouzēnos' family was a factor in the apparent loyalty of Epiros to Kantakouzēnos during the civil war. Kantakouzēnos' appointment of Iōannēs Angelos as governor of Thessaly in 1342 made provision for the future appointment of 'my beloved relative lord Nikēphoros Doukas' to rule neighbouring Epiros.⁴⁵ Although the Serbian invasion made this impossible, it is a rare insight into Kantakouzēnos' intentions in case of victory. Shortly after Kantakouzēnos entered Constantinople he promoted Nikēphoros to *despotēs*, placing him on a par with his son Manouēl.⁴⁶ He was given the towns of the Hellespont and increasingly trusted with military responsibilities by his father-in-law, remaining loyal to him in the struggles with Iōannēs V.⁴⁷ At some point he was entrusted with the city of Ainos but, after Kantakouzēnos' abdication, he surrendered it to Iōannēs V.⁴⁸ In early 1356 he took advantage of the anarchy following Dušan's death to seize Thessaly and Epiros. He ruled successfully

that he was born in 1328/9, adopted by the *PLP*, is mistaken because he misdates Andronikos' first expedition to Epiros to 1335/6 (Polemis, *Doukai*, 99, n. 3), during which Kant. I, 500.3, states Nikēphoros was not yet aged seven (οὐπω ἔτη ἑπτὰ γεγεννημένου). As this expedition took place in 1337 or, more probably, 1338 (see Ch.11:6, above), this would suggest Nikēphoros was born in 1330/1.

⁴² Kant. I, 503.5-6. For Maria, see *PLP* 16885; Nicol, *Family*, 130-133, no. 27.

⁴³ Kant. I, 534.13-15.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 195.5-8.

⁴⁵ Kant. II, 321.14-16: ὁ περιπόθητος γαμβρὸς αὐτῆς κύριος Νικηφόρος ὁ δούκας. His designation as γαμβρὸς infers that his marriage had taken place by this time although he must have been rather young.

⁴⁶ Kant. III, 33.2-4.

⁴⁷ Kant. III, 65, 211, 287, 294.

⁴⁸ Kant. III, 310.10-16.

for a time but divorced his wife to marry the sister of Dušan's widow. Although he repented of this act, which seems to have lost him popular support as well as Kantakouzēnos' sympathy, he was killed soon afterwards, in 1359, while attempting to suppress an Albanian revolt.⁴⁹

9: Iakōbos Broulas (*PLP* 3231). An *oikeios* of Kantakouzēnos, known only from the *Histories*. The outbreak of war ruined any plan to reintegrate Achaia; Broulas, having returned from the Peloponnese, is next seen participating in a peace embassy to Constantinople in 1343.⁵⁰ Apokaukos had him mutilated, publicly exhibited, and then incarcerated in the prison he had built in the abandoned section of the Great Palace. He was killed there in the massacre of prisoners that followed Apokaukos' death in June 1345.⁵¹

10: The *epi tou stratou* formally held responsibility for siting camps for campaigning armies.⁵² Kantakouzēnos seems to have increased the title's precedence, possibly to reward Senachēreim's presumed loyalty to him during the war.⁵³

11: Senachēreim (*PLP* 25138). This military commander is otherwise unattested. As Sarukhan had already been defeated, his action appears to be a punitive raid.

12: Kantakouzēnos claims that only non-Christians could be enslaved: 'The Romans do not enslave people. For it is not permitted to them, unless they are of the barbarians who do not put faith in the dispensation of Christ

⁴⁹ Kant. III, 314-19; Nicol, *Despotate*, 134-6.

⁵⁰ Kant. II, 395.

⁵¹ Kant. II, 398.21-24, 399.15-20.

⁵² Ps-Kod., 205; see also Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 154-155.

⁵³ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 287.

our Saviour.⁵⁴ Certainly, Muslims were enslaved when the opportunity arose: Maximos Planoudēs claimed that Alexios Philanthrōpenos' conspicuously successful campaign in Asia Minor during 1295 had caused the price of a Turkish slave in Anatolia to fall below that of a sheep.⁵⁵ Slaves are however rarely mentioned explicitly in the Palaiologan period; *doulos* referred to any person rendering service to another and could indicate state officials of high social status.⁵⁶ Despite his objection to enslaving Christian captives, there was little that could be done to prevent enslavement of Christians by allies: Kantakouzēnos confesses that his Turkish allies from Aydin enslaved the inhabitants of Thracian villages which refused to submit to him during his campaign in 1343.⁵⁷ Moreover, Latin merchants showed few reservations in dealing with Orthodox slaves and there was a highly developed market, centred on Venetian-occupied Crete which dealt nearly entirely in Orthodox Greeks.⁵⁸ Andronikos III had sent the monk Barlaam of Calabria as an emissary to the Pope in 1339, to whom he proposed that 'all Greeks who have been sold by Latins, wherever they are, should be freed' and that those buying or selling them in future should be excommunicated.⁵⁹ This suggestion was not followed.

13: *Prōtostratōr* ranked 8th in the court hierarchy.⁶⁰ The holder was the chief of the emperor's mounted attendants and the Grand Domestic's second

⁵⁴ Kant. I, 497.13-15: Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ ἀνθρώπους μὲν οὐκ ἐξηνδραποδίζοντο. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔξεστιν αὐτοῖς, εἰ μὴ ἀπὸ βαρβάρων εἶεν τῶν τῆ σωτήρος Χριστοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν οἰκονομία μὴ πεπιστευκότων. Also see Kyriakidis, 'Booty', 169-170.

⁵⁵ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 81-2; Planoudēs, *Epistulae*, 182-4, ep. 120: καὶ νῦν οὕτως ἐστὶν εὐωνον Περσικὸν ἀνδράποδον ἐν Ἀσία, ὡς οὐδὲν ἂν τῶν ὁμοίων ἂν εἴποι τις πρόβατον.

⁵⁶ Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 15-16.

⁵⁷ Kant. II, 404.12-16.

⁵⁸ Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 160-3.

⁵⁹ Gill, *Papacy*, 196-9 (Gill's translation, 198).

⁶⁰ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 455. For detailed history of the office, Guillard, *Institutions I*, 478-497.

in command, deputising for the latter in ceremonial roles when necessary.⁶¹ On the battlefield, he was supposed to advance in protection of the army's mounted scouts,⁶² although in practice a *prōtostratōr* could equally be found in other roles such as commanding fleets.⁶³

14: Theodōros Doukas Palaiologos Komnēnos Synadēnos (*PLP* 27120).⁶⁴ His mother was a niece of Michaēl VIII and Kantakouzēnos consequently refers to him as an uncle of Andronikos III.⁶⁵ Synadēnos is prominent in Book I of the *Histories*; he, along with Kantakouzēnos and Syrgiannēs, were the initial supporters for Andronikos' revolt and formed his inner circle. Kantakouzēnos praises his abilities and claims they were close friends.⁶⁶ In 1320 Synadēnos was governor of Prilep and, after joining Andronikos, he seems to have been tasked with a series of the most critical governorships: 'all Thrace' in 1327 while Andronikos campaigned elsewhere; Constantinople in 1328, immediately after Andronikos' victory; Mesēmbria when it was in danger of falling to the Bulgarians in 1331; Epiros after its annexation in 1338 and finally Thessalonike, arguably the most important single governorship, by 1341.⁶⁷ He stumbled only in Epiros when a revolt took him by surprise, and was imprisoned until Andronikos and Kantakouzēnos arrived with an army.⁶⁸ After Andronikos III's death, Synadēnos was apparently sympathetic towards Kantakouzēnos' claims to authority, but not unconditionally. He undoubtedly expected consultation

⁶¹ Ps-Kod., 73-75.

⁶² Ps-Kod., 83.

⁶³ E.g. Kōnstantinos Tarchaneiōtēs, see Ch.10:8. For differences between Pseudo-Kodinos and actual practice, Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 149-50.

⁶⁴ See also Hannich and Schmalzbauer, 'Synadenoī', 136-7, no. 24; Polemis, *Doukai*, 180-1, no. 196.

⁶⁵ Kant. I, 37.15-18, 468.22-3.

⁶⁶ Kant. I, 38.5-11.

⁶⁷ Kant. I, 259.20, 312.9-10, 459.11-13, 504.1-2.

⁶⁸ Kant. I, 509.17-18, 512.6-12.

and concessions before giving his approval, and Kantakouzēnos undoubtedly needed his support. He therefore disapproved of Kantakouzēnos' hasty acclamation in October 1341 and, mindful of growing local opposition and fearing for the safety of his family in regency-held Constantinople, only reluctantly offered to open the gates of Thessalonike.⁶⁹ However, before Kantakouzēnos could reach the city, Synadēnos and his loyalists were expelled from the city by the Zealots.⁷⁰ He rather begrudgingly joined Kantakouzēnos' army for a time but defected to Apokaukos in summer 1342 upon receiving offer of an amnesty.⁷¹ He was promoted to *prōtobestiarios* shortly after but subsequently fell out of favour: by 1344 he was under house-arrest and Kantakouzēnos relates that he thereafter died 'poor and dishonoured'.⁷² He is portrayed, alongside his wife Eudokia, in MS Lincoln College gr. 35, f. 8r.⁷³ His daughter Anna was married to Manouēl Asanēs, who supported Kantakouzēnos throughout the war.⁷⁴ He must be distinguished from the Synadēnos frequently used as a messenger between Apokaukos and Kantakouzēnos during the civil war.⁷⁵

15: Stefanos Chrelja (*PLP* 30989).⁷⁶ Kantakouzēnos describes him as 'well practiced in generalship and the sort of man who knew how to help friends and, especially, to harm enemies'.⁷⁷ He was a Serbian noble and first appears in 1327 as the commander of Serbian allies sent to help Andronikos II in the first civil war, although he declined to meet Andronikos III in

⁶⁹ Kant. II, 191.18-24, 193.6-12, 233.8-22; Greg. II, 632-635.

⁷⁰ For the Zealots, see Ch.12:3.

⁷¹ Kant. II, 233-244; *CBB* I, 82, no. 8/38.

⁷² Kant. II, 491.24-492.8: πένης καὶ ἄτιμος.

⁷³ Spatharakis, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 195.

⁷⁴ See Ch.17:5.

⁷⁵ *PLP* 27101. FK III, 284, misidentifies him as Theodōros, although the associated footnote refers to the correct man.

⁷⁶ See also Bartusis, 'Chrelja'.

⁷⁷ Kant. II, 233.5-7: περὶ στρατηγίας κάλλιστα ἐξησκημένος καὶ οἷος τοὺς τε φίλους ὠφελεῖν καὶ τοὺς πολεμίους βλάπτειν μάλιστα εἰδέναι.

battle.⁷⁸ Kantakouzēnos portrays him as subsequently discouraging Kral Dečanski from taking any further action against Andronikos III.⁷⁹ Although Chrelja was granted authority over substantial territory previously taken from the Empire, he later defected to Andronikos III, bringing over a force of 1,000 soldiers and three cities.⁸⁰ This must have happened between 1336 and June 1341, most probably during Stefan Dušan's illness in early 1340. Kantakouzēnos claims to have been the intermediary who arranged this defection.⁸¹ Chrelja's motive may have been simple opportunism; during these years the Empire was prospering and may have endangered his small Macedonian domain. In winter 1341/2, Chrelja contacted Kantakouzēnos at Didymoteichon and advised him to move west so that he could help.⁸² However he soon declared that he required possession of the city of Melnik before he could join Kantakouzēnos.⁸³ The latter quickly took over the city and the pair met and agreed to cooperate.⁸⁴ However Chrelja seems to have kept his options open as he is next seen, in mid-1342, in the company of Apokaukos.⁸⁵ Despite this, he featured prominently in Kantakouzēnos' negotiations with Dušan; the latter demanded that Chrelja return to his authority. Kantakouzēnos apparently refused but Chrelja, abandoning Kantakouzēnos and Apokaukos, petitioned Dušan for his return and offered Melnik to obtain his goodwill.⁸⁶ He did not enjoy it long: he died in

⁷⁸ Kant. I, 261-6.

⁷⁹ Kant. I, 280.10-281.19. For Dečanski, see Ch.2:16.

⁸⁰ Kant. II, 193.12-17. For the probable identities of these cities, see Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 213. Greg. II, 626, names Stroumitza, which had been lost via Syrgiannēs' revolt but Bartusis argues persuasively that Grēgoras exaggerated the area Chrelja controlled.

⁸¹ Kant. II, 193.20-21. For dates, see Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 203.

⁸² Kant. II, 193.21-23.

⁸³ Kant. II, 227-8.

⁸⁴ Kant. II, 232.3-233.8.

⁸⁵ *CBB* I, 82, no. 8/38; Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 204-5.

⁸⁶ Kant. II, 273-6. These negotiations are summarised in Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 15-18; Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 205-6.

December 1342, as a monk, while visiting the Rila monastery, presumably of a sudden illness.⁸⁷ His lands were quickly occupied by Dušan.⁸⁸

Neither Kantakouzēnos nor Grēgoras provide a court title for Chrelja, although such an important defector would doubtless have been honoured. The Serbian crown recognised him as *prōtosebastos*⁸⁹ and three Greek sources give him the higher rank of *meġas domestikos*.⁹⁰ Thus it may be possible that he held the title, but not the function, simultaneously with Kantakouzēnos. However the evidence is inconclusive: the imperial privilege issued in favour of Chrelja is incomplete and the date and identity of the issuing emperor is uncertain.⁹¹ It seems more likely that Kantakouzēnos granted Chrelja the office of *meġas domestikos*, vacant following his own acclamation in October 1341, to secure his support.⁹²

16: Kōnstantinos Palaiologos (*PLP* 21495). He was the son of *despotēs* Michaēl Koutrulēs and Anna Palaiologina, a daughter of Michael VIII. Andronikos II therefore calls him a nephew while Kantakouzēnos, more loosely, calls him an uncle of Andronikos III.⁹³ A document of 1324 also describes him as an uncle and gives his title as *meġas papias*.⁹⁴ While he had previously acted as an agent of Andronikos II against his grandson,⁹⁵ he appears as a supporter of Kantakouzēnos in the present passage. However, when Kōnstantinos was sent forward into Macedonia at the start of

⁸⁷ Known from his gravestone; see Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 206.

⁸⁸ Kant. II, 328.6-8.

⁸⁹ *Actes de Chilander, Slaves*, 458-61, no. 27 (dated 1336).

⁹⁰ *Actes de Chilander, Grecs*, 275-6, no. 131 (undated); 303-5, no. 144 (dated 1355); *CBB* I, 82, no. 8/38 (dated 1342).

⁹¹ *Actes de Chilander, Grecs*, 275. The editor attributes the document to Andronikos III but offers no evidence.

⁹² Bartusis, 'Chrelja', 215, concludes that Chrelja acquired the title between 1330 and 1342. For arguments against Kantakouzēnos and Chrelja simultaneously occupying the office, see Ch.1:9.

⁹³ Kant. II, 535.9.

⁹⁴ *MM* III, 104.24.

⁹⁵ Kant. I, 130.2.

campaigning in 1342, he promptly defected to Guy de Lusignan in Serres.⁹⁶ Kantakouzēnos attributes this either to fear of losing his property, because he lived in Serres, or calculation that the popular revolts meant Kantakouzēnos' cause was already lost.⁹⁷ Malatras observes that Kōnstantinos' defection was also consistent with his membership of the imperial family, nearly all of whom rallied behind the regency.⁹⁸ Kōnstantinos became the governor of Serres after Lusignan's departure and is described as a close friend of Apokaukos by the end of the same year; his son Andronikos, a prominent regency general, was married to a daughter of Apokaukos.⁹⁹ Kantakouzēnos reports a secret plot by Apokaukos to proclaim Andronikos as *basileus*, with Kōnstantinos' knowledge, although he leaves some doubt about Apokaukos' actual intentions.¹⁰⁰ In any case, the plot came to nothing. Eventually, in 1345, Kōnstantinos was compelled to request Kantakouzēnos' help to break the Serbian siege of Serres.¹⁰¹ His fate thereafter is unknown. He must be distinguished from the *prōtosebastos* Kōnstantinos Palaiologos, another partisan of Kantakouzēnos, but who was captured by Apokaukos while on a diplomatic mission and then imprisoned.¹⁰²

17: The *pinkernēs* was the imperial cupbearer, who waited on the emperor while he dined.¹⁰³ Such access to the emperor made it a senior title, which Pseudo-Kodinos ranked 14th.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁶ Kantakouzēnos styles him Συργής, he was governor of Serres and a determined opponent; see *PLP* 92566.

⁹⁷ Kant. II, 196.3-9.

⁹⁸ Malatras, *Social Structure*, 267.

⁹⁹ Kant. II, 329.2-5. For Andronikos Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21433.

¹⁰⁰ Kant. II, 323.23-324.21.

¹⁰¹ Kant. II, 535.

¹⁰² Kant. II, 256. Little else is known about him, see *PLP* 21494. The two individuals are conflated by Papadopulos, *Palaiologoi*, 30, no. 48.

¹⁰³ Ps-Kod., 157.

¹⁰⁴ Ps-Kod., 29. On the earlier history of this office, see Guiland, *Institutions II*, 242-4.

18: Iōannēs Angelos (PLP 91038). One of Kantakouzēnos' most trusted and effective followers. While ἀνεψιός could mean either cousin or nephew,¹⁰⁵ Grēgoras describes him as Kantakouzēnos' πρωτεξάδελφος, or first cousin, while Kantakouzēnos at one point refers to him as θεῖος, 'uncle', to one of his sons, so cousin appears to be the correct interpretation.¹⁰⁶ Although of the same generation as Kantakouzēnos, he was clearly somewhat younger; he is first mentioned as governor of Kastoria in 1328; Kantakouzēnos comments that Angelos 'is closely related to me by blood and owed great goodwill and obedience to me, having brought him up and taught him the arts of war'.¹⁰⁷ Grēgoras similarly praises him as 'a man skilful in the arts of war',¹⁰⁸ and he was trusted with senior commands, including leading the left division at the Battle of Pelekanos.¹⁰⁹ After arriving at Didymoteichon, he stayed with Kantakouzēnos and took a prominent role in Kantakouzēnos' acclamation.¹¹⁰ The following March he accompanied Kantakouzēnos as a commander on his campaign to the west.¹¹¹ When the cities of Thessaly offered to submit to Kantakouzēnos, later the same year, he issued a chrysobull appointing Angelos as their *kephalē* or governor.¹¹² The chrysobull essentially delegated him complete autonomy, with only an obligation to provide military aid when requested; it is effectively a model for the appanages which would become the dominant governing structure

¹⁰⁵ On the imprecision of the terminology for family relationships, including this case, see Nicol, 'Prosopography', 84-5.

¹⁰⁶ Greg. II, 628.7-8; Kant. III, 31.16-17. See also Nicol, *Family*, 147-8, no. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Kant. I, 274.2-4: ὁ Ἄγγελος ὃς ἐμοί τε ἔγγιστα προσήκει κατὰ γένος καὶ πολλὴν ἐμοὶ τὴν εὐνοίαν καὶ τὴν εὐπειθειαν ὀφείλει, ἐκθροψαμένῳ τε αὐτὸν καὶ τὰ πολέμια διδάξαντι.

¹⁰⁸ Greg. I, 657.15: ἀνὴρ δεινὸς τὰ πολέμια.

¹⁰⁹ Kant. I, 349.25-350.1. Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos led the other divisions.

¹¹⁰ Kant. II, 167.2-3.

¹¹¹ Kant. II, 195.20-196.3.

¹¹² Kant. II, 309.20-312.14.

after the civil war.¹¹³ At the time, this was the only significant territory pledging allegiance to Kantakouzēnos. Angelos was subsequently summoned for a single campaign¹¹⁴ but otherwise apparently remained in his domain, governing it with considerable success and taking over Epiros.¹¹⁵ He seems to have died from the Black Death, easing Dušan's conquest of the area, which was complete by the end of 1348.¹¹⁶ Although his kinship with Kantakouzēnos appears to make him a natural partisan, his father-in-law was the *prōtobestiarios* Andronikos Palaiologos so Angelos could perhaps equally have joined the regency camp.¹¹⁷ The civil war created deep divisions in the aristocracy and it is worth noting that Kantakouzēnos had few 'natural' supporters outside his immediate household.

19: *Megas papias* was a court title without any specific function, ranked between 20th and 24th in the various surviving lists of precedence.¹¹⁸ Kantakouzēnos held the title before his promotion to Grand Domestic.¹¹⁹

20: Arsenios TzAMPLAKŌN (*PLP* 27752).¹²⁰ Arsenios is only known by his monastic name. The TzAMPLAKŌNES were major landowners in Macedonia; they seem originally to have been a Bulgarian magnate family who were elevated to the court aristocracy by Iōannēs III Batatzēs in

¹¹³ Kant. II, 312.15-322.15. On this chrysobull, see Hunger, 'Chrysobullos Logos'; Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 135-6. The term 'appanage' has become established for such quasi-independent territories although this does not imply they were identical to, or inspired by, French feudal practice, see Barker, 'Appanages', esp. 116-122; Kyritsēs, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 387-91.

¹¹⁴ Kant. II, 355.11f.

¹¹⁵ Greg. II, 657-8.

¹¹⁶ Nicol, *Despotate*, 130. Kant. III, 147.21-23, accuses Dušan of taking advantage of Angelos' death.

¹¹⁷ Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 36. For Andronikos Palaiologos, see *PLP* 21435.

¹¹⁸ Ps-Kod., 93 and n. 183; for the ranking see 456-7.

¹¹⁹ Greg. I, 301.7-9. Kantakouzēnos himself never mentions his possession of this title.

¹²⁰ Owing to a number of documentary survivals, the TzAMPLAKŌNES are relatively well known; see Theocharides, 'Οἱ Τζαμπλάκωνες', esp. 164-169; Estangüi Gómez, 'TzAMPLAKŌNES', esp. 290-293.

exchange for their submission when he conquered the region.¹²¹ Arsenios' father, Alexios, had been a strong supporter of Andronikos II in the first civil war but changed sides in 1327, gaining himself promotion to *megas papias*.¹²² After Alexios' death, Arsenios was awarded the same title, which he held from 1333. He enjoys some prominence earlier in the *Histories* as Syrgiannēs' accuser.¹²³ He remained loyal to Kantakouzēnos throughout the war, unlike his brother Dēmētrios, who declared for the regency.¹²⁴ In 1342 Arsenios was sent as an emissary to Stefan Dušan, but was captured and handed over to Apokaukos. The latter confiscated his property and subjected him to public humiliation then imprisoned him for the rest of the war.¹²⁵ He survived his ordeal and next appears as co-governor of Didymoteichon in 1352, where he is somewhat mistrustful of Iōannēs V.¹²⁶ Kantakouzēnos' naval commander, the *megas dux* TzAMPLAKŌN, was another brother, Asōmatianos.¹²⁷ Arsenios retired to Vatopedi monastery shortly after Kantakouzēnos' abdication and died at some point before August 1362.

21: The exact form of this *proskynesis* cannot be established. The term embraced a number of different gestures for honouring its recipient, from a simple bowing of the head to full prostration, depending upon the occasion and the difference in ranks between the giver and recipient.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Estangüi Gómez, 'TzAMPLAKŌNES', 278-80.

¹²² *PLP* 27748; Estangüi Gómez, 'TzAMPLAKŌNES', 287-90; Theocharides, 'Οἱ Τζαμπλάκωνες', 160-4.

¹²³ *Kant.* I, 437-441, 446-449.

¹²⁴ *PLP* 27755. Dēmētrios, along with Kōnstantinos Palaiologos (above), eventually sought Kantakouzēnos' help against the Serbs.

¹²⁵ *Kant.* II, 256.4-257.9. Matschke, 'Flotte', 196-7, plausibly suggests that, as a prominent local magnate, he was singled out for public humiliation to embolden popular support for the regency party.

¹²⁶ *Kant.* III, 237.9-19.

¹²⁷ *Kant.* III, 74-77; *PLP* 22753.

¹²⁸ For further discussion, see Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 386-7.

22: Besides the emperor, only the highest ranks of the imperial family (*despotēs, Sebastokratōr, kaisar*) could enter or leave the palace courtyard on horseback.¹²⁹ As a mark of honour, this privilege was also extended to the Patriarch.¹³⁰ Others accompanying them would dismount at a designated spot outside and enter on foot. Within the courtyard there were also particular locations for the various permitted ranks to dismount and it can be inferred that the emperor would ride further into the courtyard than the others. This protocol would be maintained even when the emperor was away from the palace, with the space around the emperor reconfigured to reproduce the same orders of precedence. Thus Kantakouzēnos' allies here attempt to re-enact the rituals associated with the courtyard of the imperial palace in the courtyard of his own house in Didymoteichon, placing him in the role of emperor. When the emperor mounted his horse, senior courtiers would handle it and hold the stirrup. Realising what his friends are intending, Kantakouzēnos orders his horse to be taken outside and then walks to the gate himself, as the Grand Domestic would have been expected to do at the palace.

¹²⁹ For the following protocols associated with mounting and dismounting in the palace, see Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 389-91.

¹³⁰ Ps-Kod., 257.

Commentary on Chapter 12

1: Stefan Uroš IV Dušan, Kral of Serbia 1331-1355 (*PLP* 21182).¹ Dušan was born around 1308. He spent some of his formative years with his father, Dečanski, as an exile in Constantinople, but later headed the noble faction which overthrew him.² He married Ivan Alexander's sister, Helena, on Easter Day 1332;³ his friendly relations with Bulgaria made him particularly dangerous to the Empire as he was able to concentrate his attention on continuing the gradual Serbian advance into Macedonia. Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos seem to have met Dušan in 1333, for obscure reasons, and Kantakouzēnos claims that they established a 'strong friendship' (φιλία ἰσχυρὰ).⁴ However Dušan provided opportunistic support to Syrgiannēs the following year, making some gains in the subsequent peace treaty and even compelling Andronikos III to provide an auxiliary force to aid his fight against Hungary.⁵ The peace subsequently seems to have held until Andronikos' death, at which point Dušan clearly considered it expired. Although his opportunistic invasion in 1341 did not come to much, Kantakouzēnos would soon provide him with much greater opportunities.

After the desertion of most of his army in summer 1342, Kantakouzēnos was forced to seek refuge with Dušan. He was content enough to offer Kantakouzēnos military assistance but he expected to be rewarded. While Dušan apparently requested all cities west of Christoupolis, or at least those west of Thessalonike,⁶ Kantakouzēnos protests that he offered only friendship to Dušan in exchange for his assistance, although he

¹ The most comprehensive single volume study of his life, particularly regarding his dealings with Kantakouzēnos, is Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*.

² See Ch.2:16.

³ Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 3.

⁴ Kant. I, 474.20-475.25. For the date, see Loenertz, 'Ordre et désordre', 229.

⁵ Kant. I, 457.21-458.15; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 6-8.

⁶ Kant. II, 264.11-14.

was grudgingly forced to concede Melnik. The apparent lack of any meaningful concessions makes the terms Kantakouzēnos describes impossible to believe.⁷ He also claims the regency offered Dušan all of Macedonia except Thessalonike in exchange for disposing of him.⁸ In any case, the soldiers provided by Dušan were soon stricken by an epidemic, forcing Kantakouzēnos to return to him again. A second expedition was foiled by desertions; Kantakouzēnos returned to Serbia over the winter of 1342/3. Supplied with German mercenaries by Dušan for a third attempt, Kantakouzēnos finally began to make progress in early 1343.⁹ However, Dušan, who had been busy conquering cities under the pretext of helping Kantakouzēnos, soon turned on him openly. Once Kantakouzēnos' main operations moved east into Thrace, Dušan made rapid conquests. By the end of the war, he had overrun all of Macedonia except Thessaloniki, Epiros and Thessaly. In late 1345, on the basis of his conquests, he added the imperial title to his own as emperor of the 'Serbs and Romania'.¹⁰ Although Kantakouzēnos complained bitterly, and launched wars against Serbia in 1348 and 1350, he was unable to force Dušan to relinquish his gains. However, Dušan's attempts to exploit Iōannēs V's hostility to Kantakouzēnos were similarly unfruitful. The Empress Anna foiled his intrigues to gain Thessalonike in 1351 and, in the following year, a Serbian army allied to Iōannēs V was smashed by Kantakouzēnos' Ottoman allies in Thrace.¹¹ Dušan died suddenly, in unknown circumstances, on 20 December 1355.¹² His empire began to fragment almost immediately, causing

⁷ Kant. II, 271-276; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 15-18. Greg. II, 656, claims that conquered cities were allowed a free choice between the two states without the other party interfering.

⁸ Kant. II, 306.10ff.

⁹ Nicol, *Family*, 52-5; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 19-26.

¹⁰ See Ch.2:10.

¹¹ Kant. III, 200-9, 247.2-249.22.

¹² *CBB* I, 379, n. 53/2; 623, n. 91/1.

Kantakouzēnos to wearily observe that the Romans were then too weakened by continuous civil wars to take advantage of the situation.¹³

2: Kantakouzēnos' Macedonia bordered to the north on the Rhodopes, north-west on Serbia, to the south-west on Epiros and Thessaly and to the east on Thrace, with Christoupolis marking the dividing line.¹⁴ Along with Thrace, it formed the heartland of the Empire. While not as agriculturally rich as Thrace, Macedonia seems to have been well populated, although the fragmentary evidence indicates there may have been a demographic decline in the early fourteenth century, probably owing to the regular raids and invasions.¹⁵ The region had been under constant pressure from Serbian magnates throughout the Palaiologan period and significant cities had been ceded during the reigns of the Andronikoi.¹⁶ Before his assassination, Syrgiannēs' had 'promised to make subject to the Triballi the land of the Romans in Macedonia'.¹⁷ Following Syrgiannēs' death, Andronikos III remained concerned about the defences of the area and invested in a series of fortifications to protect Thessalonike and Serres.¹⁸ When the civil war began, most of the cities in the region revolted against Kantakouzēnos.¹⁹ His subsequent alliance with Stefan Dušan brought Serbian forces into the area once more. While the main theatre of the civil war was Thrace, the region became a battleground between the regency, Dušan, and Kantakouzēnos. By the war's end, the Serbs had overrun all of Macedonia except for

¹³ Kant. III, 314.12-315.13.

¹⁴ See Ch.9:9.

¹⁵ Laiou, 'Agrarian Economy', 312-7.

¹⁶ The clearest narrative of these advances is Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 1-10. For the general history of Macedonia, see Sakellariou, *Macedonia*, esp. 306-351.

¹⁷ Greg. I, 490.8-9: ὑπισχνουμένῳ ποιήσειν ὑπήκοον Τριβαλλοῖς τὴν ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ χώραν Ρωμαίων.

¹⁸ Kant. I, 541.23-542.10.

¹⁹ Kant. II, 180.14-17; see Chapter 29.

Thessalonike and its immediate hinterland.²⁰ Kantakouzēnos attempted to reconquer some of these cities in his campaign of 1350 but, despite some impressive initial success, these were soon lost once he returned to Constantinople.²¹

3: Thessalonike was, as Kantakouzēnos remarks, the second city of the Empire.²² Its population during this period has been estimated at 25-40,000 people,²³ and it possessed considerable commercial and intellectual vitality.²⁴ Like Constantinople, the city still occupied the extensive area defined by its ancient walls, which were frequently repaired – including by Andronikos III – and strengthened, through the addition of the acropolis and the Heptapyrgion fortress, during the medieval period.²⁵ These defences, second only to Constantinople's, rendered it effectively unassailable to the Serbs even at the height of their military strength and even more so to the combatants in the civil war, who lacked the resources to sustain long sieges and generally relied on negotiation, economic attrition, or trickery to take cities.²⁶ Kantakouzēnos mentions the city frequently; the main land and sea routes to the west ran by it and it was the obvious base for campaigning in Macedonia and Greece. The city twice revolted in favour of Andronikos III,

²⁰ The course of the war in Macedonia is summarised in Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 19-27.

²¹ Kant. III, 118-162; Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 42-7.

²² Kant. II, 573.5-6: Θεσσαλονίκη, μετὰ τὴν μεγάλην παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις πρώτην πόλιν. For an introduction to Thessalonike during this period, see Barker, 'Byzantine Thessalonike'. Tafrafi, *Thessalonique*, also remains of some use despite its age. For physical situation and numerous surviving monuments, see Bakirtzis, 'Late Byzantine Thessalonike'; Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou and Tourta, *Byzantine Thessaloniki*; more generally, see Hassiotis, *Thessaloniki*.

²³ Bakirtzis, 'Late Byzantine Thessalonike', 61.

²⁴ Matschke, 'Urban Economy'; Tinnefeld, 'Intellectuals in Thessalonike'.

²⁵ Kourkoutidou-Nikolaidou and Tourta, *Byzantine Thessaloniki*, 15-26. See also Bakirtzis, 'Late Byzantine Thessalonike', 39-47; for the acropolis and fortress, and the socio-political relation of the acropolis to the main body of the city, *ibid.*, 43-7.

²⁶ Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 182-3.

during both phases of the first civil war.²⁷ This may have been a further expression of its tendency towards separatism from the capital, which Kantakouzēnos would experience to his cost.²⁸ In spring 1342 Synadēnos, Thessalonike's governor, offered Kantakouzēnos possession of the city.²⁹ However, internal opposition to this policy spectacularly manifested itself as a popular uprising, led by a group known as the Zealots, which drove Synadēnos and his followers out of the city.³⁰ The Zealots were rapidly reinforced by the regency and they, along with regency governors on the acropolis, would remain in control of the city for the rest of the war. Little is known for certain about the motivations and composition of the Zealots, and that entirely from the pens of their critics, Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras foremost among them.³¹ They claimed allegiance to Iōannēs V and were deeply hostile to Kantakouzēnos, even after his victory in 1347. While their power relied upon certain popular elements such as the city's sailors, simple class-based analyses are inadequate since elements of the lower aristocracy and imperial bureaucracy were among the Zealot leaders.³² Kantakouzēnos claims the Zealots held the real power; the city's governor Iōannēs Apokaukos, son of Alexios Apokaukos, attempted to break them in 1345/6, ultimately by negotiating to hand the city over to Kantakouzēnos. He was

²⁷ Kant. I, 149.3-150.24, 267.4-272.22.

²⁸ On the city's repeated episodes of complete or semi-independence from Constantinople from the thirteenth century onwards, see Barker, 'Byzantine Thessalonike'. In the fourteenth century, it became the refuge for a number of strong-willed empresses; see Malamut, 'Pouvoir et influence'.

²⁹ Kant. II, 213.21-214.2.

³⁰ Kant. II, 233.9-235.10.

³¹ Ševčenko summarised, and invalidated, much older scholarship on the Zealots: see Ševčenko, 'Anti-Zealot Discourse'; Ševčenko, 'Postscript'. For more recent scholarship, see Congourdeau, *Zélotes*.

³² Malatras, 'Social Aspects', 110-112.

killed for his efforts.³³ The Zealot leaders finally lost popular support in 1349 and Emperor Kantakouzēnos reclaimed the city in 1350.³⁴

4: Kantakouzēnos relates that the ‘Village (χωρίον) of the Cretans’ lay somewhere between Thessalonike and Rentina (almost at the opposite coast of the Chalkidikē peninsula), close to Lake Volvē, probably located near the Via Egnatia. He mentions it is ‘so-called because an army from Crete, having left their island for some reason, settled there’.³⁵ Bartusis reasonably suggests that these soldiers were the Cretan veterans of Alexios Philanthrōpenos’ army, transferred from their original holdings around Anaia and Ephesos when Asia Minor was slipping from imperial control.³⁶

5: The following speech presents a manifesto for imperial renewal, which Kantakouzēnos reminds his reader was possible, had his enemies not warred against him. The scheme is ambitious, but not unbelievable. The offer of submission by the Franks of Achaia was a sign that the Empire had gained considerable prestige from incorporating the territories of Thessaly and Epiros without trampling on local interests.³⁷ Although the abandonment of Anatolia meant the absolute increase in the Empire’s territory was relatively modest, reduction in the number of competing polities may have offered, in itself, significant benefits to its longer term security had the civil war not instead accelerated fragmentation.³⁸

³³ Kant. II, 568.14-582.3. For Iōannēs Apokaukos, *PLP* 1187.

³⁴ Kant. III, 104-5, 108-113, 117-8.

³⁵ Kant. I, 455, 8-10: ἐστρατοπέδευσεν ἐν χωρίῳ τινὶ τῶν Κρητῶν προσαγορευομένῳ, ὅτι στρατιὰ ἐκ Κρήτης αὐτὸ κατόικουν δι’ αἰτίαν τινὰ ἐκ τῆς νήσου ἀναστάντες.

³⁶ Bartusis, *Army*, 74.

³⁷ For the annexation of Epiros and Thessaly, see Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 178-182. For Epiros specifically, see Nicol, *Despotate*, 107-122. See also Ch.1:13 and Ch.11:6.

³⁸ On the dangers posed by an environment of extreme political fragmentation, see Laiou, ‘Neighboring Powers’.

6: The Catalan Duchy of Athens bordered the Empire's recently acquired territory in Thessaly, with the boundary a little north of Neopatras.³⁹ Although the Duchy was formerly a Frankish state established after the Fourth Crusade, the mercenaries of the Catalan Grand Company, assisted by Turks recruited from Anatolia, defeated Duke Gautier de Brienne in March 1311 and took possession of his principality.⁴⁰ In view of Kantakouzēnos' role in the eventual settlement of Turks in the Balkans, it is interesting to note that the Company invited its Turkish allies to settle in the Duchy, although the offer was declined at that time.⁴¹ The Catalan Company had originally been hired, for an exorbitant price, by Andronikos II to fight the Turks. He soon found he could neither afford nor control them and tensions turned to open war, with the Company ravaging imperial territories during 1305-9, perhaps the greatest disaster of Andronikos' reign.⁴² Having exhausted ready sources of plunder in the Empire, the Company subsequently entered Brienne's service for a short period before he also found himself fatally unable to control them. Once securely in possession of the Duchy, the Catalans continued to expand aggressively and engage in piracy, sometimes allied with the Turks of Menteshe and Aydin, until forced to desist largely owing to Venetian pressure.⁴³ By 1341 they were without allies and were themselves subjected to Turkish raiding, particularly by Aydin. Kantakouzēnos' assessment that, following any annexation of the Peloponnese, the Catalans would have been forced to submit to the Empire appears reasonable, had the civil war not destroyed his plans. The Empire would have surrounded the Duchy and possessed far greater resources.

³⁹ Kant. II, 322.1-3; Nicol, *Despotate*, 101. For the history of the Catalan Duchy, which endured until 1388, see Setton, *Catalan Domination*; Lock, *Franks*, 112-127.

⁴⁰ For the establishment of Catalan rule, see Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 145-149; Setton, *Catalan Domination*, 6-15; Lock, *Franks*, 104-107.

⁴¹ Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 150.

⁴² Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 128-139; Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 131-229.

⁴³ See Zachariadou, 'Catalans'.

Furthermore, Grēgoras claims the Catalans were weak, the offspring of the original soldiers having given themselves over to luxury and drunkenness.⁴⁴

7: Hoplites are heavily-armed infantrymen. Bartusis observes that Kantakouzēnos seems also to apply the term to dismounted cavalry and is particularly fond of it, as here, when troops are being transported by ship.⁴⁵ The latter usage is likely a conscious echo of Thucydides.

8: Campaigning in winter was, for sound logistical reasons, unusual. However the Albanians practiced transhumance and were therefore easier to attack when they moved from the peaks to the valley floors, seeking protection from the elements. Kantakouzēnos explained, in an earlier encounter, 'They feared lest, with winter coming, they would be destroyed by the Romans, seeing that they lived not in cities but spent their time in mountains and inaccessible places, retiring from them in winter because of the cold and snow, which falls like something beyond belief in their hills; they believed they would be vulnerable to attack.'⁴⁶ The Albanians of Epiros whom Kantakouzēnos is proposing to campaign against here are presumably distinct from the rebellious groups previously mentioned, who were located in Thessaly.⁴⁷

9: Pogonianē lay near the source of the river Drinos, close to the modern Greece-Albania border.⁴⁸ This was very much in the path of

⁴⁴ Greg. II, 657.10-11.

⁴⁵ Bartusis, *Army*, 258.

⁴⁶ Kant. I, 474.14-19: Ἐδεδοίκεσαν γὰρ μὴ, χειμῶνος ἐπελθόντος, διαφθαρώσιν ὑπὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων, ἅτε πόλιν οἰκοῦντες οὐδεμίαν, ἀλλ' ὄρεσιν ἐνδιατρίβοντες καὶ χωρίοις δυσπροσόδοις, ὧν ἀναχωροῦντες τοῦ χειμῶνος διὰ τὸ κρύος καὶ τὴν χιόνα, ἄπιστόν τινα ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἐκείνοις νιφομένην, εὐεπιχείρητοι ἔσεσθαι ἐδόκουν.

⁴⁷ See Ch.1:13.

⁴⁸ Soustal and Koder, *Nikopolis*, 240.

Albanian migration during this era. The town was promoted to an archbishopric in the fourteenth century, probably by Andronikos III, although the archdiocesan seat was likely at Depalitsa (modern Molyvdoskepastos) to the north-east.⁴⁹ Modern Pōgōnianē is a later settlement but lays within much the same region.

10: The town of Libisda is described as a *theme* in a problematic, possibly forged, fourteenth-century document.⁵⁰ It has not been securely located, although it probably lay near modern Asproklēsi, in Thesprotia. The name is of Slavic origin.⁵¹ Both Pogonianē and Libisda were positioned between Berat and the more southern cities, placing these regions within reach of the Albanian raiders.

11: Balagrita is Berat in Albania, then more usually known in Greek as Bellegrada (Βελλεργράδα).⁵² Kantakouzēnos' spelling, Βαλάγριτα, is sufficiently eccentric that some scholars have believed that he was referring to a separate town in the region of Mount Tomor/Berat.⁵³ However the city in question must be Berat: the apparent importance of 'Balagrita' in Kantakouzēnos' text does not accord with an otherwise unrecorded settlement; furthermore, it once appears in the intermediate form Βαλαργράδα.⁵⁴ The city possessed a very strong fortress, substantial ruins of which still exist, located on a steep rocky hill above the river Osumi, near Mount Tomor; Grēgoras states that 'the citadel of Bellegrada is so lofty, so to

⁴⁹ Nicol, *Despotate*, 238.

⁵⁰ Nicol, *Despotate*, 220.

⁵¹ FK III, 431, n. 106. See also Soustal and Koder, *Nikopolis*, 197-8.

⁵² For a summary of its history, see Ducellier, *Albanie*, 20-21. In detail, Baçe, et al., *Berat*.

⁵³ E.g., Nicol, *Despotate*, 108, n. 5; Ducellier, *Albanie*, 349-50.

⁵⁴ Kant. I, 214.20-21: Βαλαργράδων. It is always plural. The identification of Balagrita as Berat is also made by FK III, 431, n. 107, and Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 180 (in contrast to Nicol, *Despotate*, 108).

say, as to be above the clouds'.⁵⁵ Berat had been captured by Michaël VIII's forces in 1274 and thereafter was the centre of an administrative district.⁵⁶ The region around the city suffered from persistent raiding by the local Albanian population and Kantakouzēnos' address to the reader is a reminder of the previous attacks. These resulted in Andronikos III's punitive campaign of 1338, which he waged with Turkish assistance while basing himself in Berat.⁵⁷ It also implies that the Albanians in this area had reacted to Andronikos' death in a similar manner to those in Thessaly.⁵⁸ Berat fell under Serbian possession, along with most of Albania, by summer 1343.⁵⁹

12: Ionia is an area of the western coast of Asia Minor, defined in Antiquity as roughly between Phōkaia and Milētos.⁶⁰ Kantakouzēnos was using the term more loosely as much of this region belonged to the allied territory of Aydin. The intended target was most probably Sarukhan, which held sway in the region of Ionia north of Smyrna, following the attacks previously related in Chapters 9 and 10.

13: Mehmed Bey Germiyanoglu, Emir of Germiyan (*PLP* 651).⁶¹ The name used by Kantakouzēnos is derived from Karim al-Din Ali Shir, the dynasty's founder; Germiyan was the name of the tribe and later the principality. According to Grēgoras, the emirate occupied most of the region of ancient Phrygia, as far as Philadelphia, but lacked access to the sea.⁶²

⁵⁵ Greg. I, 73.10-11: τὸ τῶν Βελλεργράδων ὑψηλὸν τε καὶ, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ὑπερνέφελον φρούριον. For the fortress, see Baçe, et al., *Berat*, 32-45.

⁵⁶ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 64-5.

⁵⁷ Kant. I, 495.4-499.6.

⁵⁸ See Ch.1:13.

⁵⁹ Soulis, *Serbs and Byzantium*, 19; Nicol, *Despotate*, 128.

⁶⁰ Smith, *Classical Dictionary*, 446.

⁶¹ See also Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* II, 62-3. Note that the *PLP* errs in asserting that Germiyan was allying with Kantakouzēnos for an attack on the Ionian Islands.

⁶² Greg. I, 214.15.

Germiyan was formerly the suzerain of Aydin, Karasi and Sarukhan, and remained hostile to them, so it appears Kantakouzēnos was attempting to ally with him against the latter state.⁶³ Although Germiyan was prosperous under Mehmed's rule, its power was rapidly overshadowed by the Ottomans and it would eventually be annexed by them in 1429.⁶⁴

14: Kotyaeion (modern Kütahya) was a city located on a major road junction in Phrygia, with an extensive and unusually strong fortress. The fortress possessed a double wall and substantial remains can still be seen.⁶⁵ The exact date of its occupation by the Seljuks is unclear but was most probably in the 1180s, following Manouēl I Komnēnos' death.⁶⁶ The Germiyanids appear to have declared independence of the Seljuk sultan in about 1300 and made Kotyaeion the capital of their state. Contemporary Muslim travellers praised the city's wealth and the strength of its fortifications.⁶⁷ Both city and fortress appear to have expanded substantially during the Germiyanid period.⁶⁸

15: The embassy was led by Iōannēs Gabalas, as becomes clear in Chapter 19.⁶⁹

16: Kantakouzēnos once again rebukes others for according him imperial prerogatives. Grēgoras states that, by the time Kantakouzēnos

⁶³ See further Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade*, 29, n. 105.

⁶⁴ For the short but eventful history of this state, see I. Mélikoff, 'Germiyan-Oghullari', *EI* II, 989-990; Foss, *Kütahya*, 14-15.

⁶⁵ For Kotyaeion, see Belke and Mersich, *Phrygien*, 312-16; for the fortress in detail, see Foss, *Kütahya*.

⁶⁶ Belke and Mersich, *Phrygien*, 313.

⁶⁷ Foss, *Kütahya*, 14.

⁶⁸ Foss, *Kütahya*, 84-85.

⁶⁹ Kant. II, 118.21-119.1.

finally left the city in September, the senators accepted his authority and 'all cowered in fear and obeyed him as if an emperor.'⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Greg. II, 604.19-20: πάντας γὰρ ὑπεπτηχέναι τῷ δέει, καὶ ὑπέικειν ἴσα τούτῳ καὶ βασιλεῖ.

Commentary on Chapter 13

1: The presence of litigants is evidence that a law court operated in the Blachernai palace. Although it was presumably a higher court, nothing else is known about it.

2: There was strict protocol associated with entering the palace courtyard on horseback.¹ While Kantakouzēnos repeatedly claims to have been almost a colleague in the imperial office with Andronikos III,² the latter apparently preserved ceremonial distance between them as he did not extend to Kantakouzēnos the privilege of riding into the courtyard. However, it was permitted to Patriarchs. Although, in the present passage, the Patriarch appears on foot when the fracas occurs, having presumably dismounted at his allocated position within the courtyard, it appears that Kantakouzēnos' partisans took his entrance on horseback as a provocation, given that he was in open competition with Kantakouzēnos for control of the government.

3: Grēgoras also reports a military protest in favour of Kantakouzēnos but places it as a response to Kantakouzēnos' offer to resign (Chapter 3) and before his first campaign in Thrace.³ The disturbance is however calmed by Kantakouzēnos' intervention, as it is here.

4: Kantakouzēnos overturns protocol by escorting the Patriarch to his horse, an expression of deference that would not have been expected of a Grand Domestic. He portrays this as a rebuke to his partisans and a

¹ As discussed above, Ch.11:22.

² E.g., Kant. II, 94.4-8, 113.21-114.1, 150.10-14. Also see the Introduction, Section 5.1.1.

³ Greg. II, 586.4-598.1.

conciliatory gesture to the Patriarch although, by removing the Patriarch from the palace, it also functioned as a demonstration of dominance.

Commentary on Chapter 14

1: Apokaukos' insult of Kantakouzēnos is related in the following chapter.¹ The extended narrative flashback which follows, describing Apokaukos' career, ends only in Chapter 16.

2: Although the Apokaukoi were not members of the high nobility, they are earlier attested in state service; Iōannēs Apokaukos was metropolitan of Naupaktos in the early thirteenth century and another individual of the same name is referred to as *sebastopanhypertatos* in a treaty issued by Michaēl VIII.² The lineage, therefore, appears to have been respectable, if not notable. While Apokaukos' personal circumstances are otherwise unknown, his parents were clearly able to provide him with a good education. Philotheos of Selymbria, writing somewhat later, in fact praised Apokaukos' distinguished birth, albeit in the context of lauding Apokaukos' patronage of a local saint.³ Kantakouzēnos' disdain for Apokaukos' origins was, rather more ironically, shared by Grēgoras who states Apokaukos was 'hardly of noble birth' and 'descended from an obscure family'.⁴ However these comments should be seen in the context of both writers' dislike of Apokaukos. The Palaiologan era still enabled able, educated, individuals to improve their social status⁵ and Kantakouzēnos elsewhere praises the military commander Manouēl Tagaris while noting his humble origins.⁶ He also does not mention Iōannēs Batatzēs' background,

¹ Kant. II, 99.19–101.9.

² See Magdalino, 'Snobbery', esp. 61–3. The *sebastopanhypertatos* (not a court title) Iōannēs Apokaukos (PLP 1188) is known only from MM III, 96.

³ Magdalino, 'Churches of Selymbria', 311–313 (text, translation and commentary).

⁴ Greg. I, 301.12–13: οὐ πάνυ τῶν εὐγενῶν ἦν; Greg. II, 577.20: γένους γὰρ τῶν ἀδόξων ὑπάρχων.

⁵ Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 54–60; Malatras, *Social Structure*, 126–7, 331–2.

⁶ Kant. I, 91.1–9.

which Grēgoras considered to be obscure.⁷ Apokaukos' second wife came from the well-established clan of the Choumnoi, who clearly did not consider him beneath their dignity; Kantakouzēnos admits that Apokaukos' rising social status meant that he was 'not unworthy' to those of noble birth.⁸

3: Apokaukos' career is later summarised again, where it is revealed that his first employer was a tax collector called Makrēnos⁹ and then an otherwise unidentified *archōn* named Nikolaos. His third employer is then identified as Stratēgos.¹⁰ Unless it is assumed that Nikolaos was an agent of Andronikos Asanēs, the two accounts of Apokaukos' career are not entirely compatible. Matschke resolves this by suggesting that Apokaukos temporarily left Stratēgos' service then returned to it again when Asanēs departed to govern the Peloponnese but the evidence is only circumstantial.¹¹

4: Andronikos Palaiologos Komnēnos Asanēs (*PLP* 1489). Andronikos was the second son of Eirēnē Palaiologina (a daughter of Michaēl VIII) and Tsar Ivan III of Bulgaria (r. 1279-1280).¹² He was thus Andronikos III's first cousin, once removed, and the nephew of Andronikos II, as well as Kantakouzēnos' father-in-law.¹³ His title is unknown.¹⁴ Andronikos had been a successful governor in the Peloponnese during 1316-1321, winning significant victories over the Latins.¹⁵ Both Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras

⁷ Greg. II, 741.6-7.

⁸ Kant. II, 120.10-17.

⁹ Probably Kōnstantinos Makrēnos, see *PLP* 16365.

¹⁰ Kant. II, 279.1-5.

¹¹ Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion*, 149, n. 73.

¹² *PLP* 21359; *PLP* 1501.

¹³ Trapp, 'Asanen', esp. 163-4, 171; Božilov, 'Asen', 142-3. Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 28, no. 46, is superseded by Trapp. For Kantakouzēnos' wife, Eirēnē Asanina Kantakouzēnē, see Ch.27:4.

¹⁴ Guiland, *Institutions* I, 227, apparently misunderstanding Grēgoras, makes him *prōtobestiarios*. See also Trapp, 'Asanen', 163.

¹⁵ Zakythenos, *Morée* I, 70-3.

regard him as skilled military commander.¹⁶ However he felt his achievements were not sufficiently recognised and seems to have backed the wrong side in the first civil war.¹⁷ He is mentioned only fleetingly during Andronikos III's reign and does not appear to have held a significant position.¹⁸ It is probable, therefore, that he was tempted into joining the regency out of frustration with his career; he played a critical role in the initial conspiracy against Kantakouzēnos.¹⁹ In winter 1341 Asanēs was given command of the campaign in Thrace against his son-in-law but by early 1344 he was in prison.²⁰ The reason for his arrest is unknown but he may have favoured a negotiated settlement to the war; following Kantakouzēnos' entry to Constantinople, Anna released him to act as a peace emissary, alongside Palamas.²¹ Kantakouzēnos claims to only have chided him gently for instigating the war and, by 1351, trusted him to keep an eye on Iōannēs V in Thessalonike. However he was soon tricked by Iōannēs' partisans into fleeing to Constantinople.²² His death is unrecorded.

5: Geōrgios Stratēgos (*PLP* 26902). In some scholarly literature he is misnamed as Stephanos.²³ Kantakouzēnos re-tells his story again later, in stronger terms.²⁴ Stratēgos is mentioned in a number of documents, still holding the same title, the latest of which is dated to 1330.²⁵

¹⁶ Kant. II, 115.16-17; Greg. I, 131.3-4.

¹⁷ Greg. I, 362-363.

¹⁸ Kant. I, 367.20-21, 471.15.

¹⁹ See Chapters 17-21.

²⁰ Kant. II, 421.10-12.

²¹ Kant. II, 613.1-6.

²² Kant. II, 613.21-614.1; III, 160.17-19, 202-204.

²³ *Kaiserurkunden* IV, 58, no. 2338, appears to be the source of this error, repeated by, e.g., FK III, 433, n. 122, and Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 26. The document discussed in *Kaiserurkunden* is clearly addressed Γεώργιε Στρατηγέ: see Guillou, *Saint-Jean-Prodrome*, 47.

²⁴ Kant. II, 279.4-10.

²⁵ *Register* I, 569-578, no. 101.

6: *Domestikos tōn dysikōn thematōn*, or ‘domestic of the western themes’, was a low ranking court title first attested under the Palaiologoi,²⁶ concerned with fiscal affairs including tax collection.²⁷

7: The sale of salt was a valuable state monopoly. Unless alienated by privileges, salt pans and mines were state owned. The Genoese and Venetians were forbidden from unloading or selling Black Sea salt in Constantinople and Pera, and the Venetians were prohibited from buying or selling salt throughout the entire Empire.²⁸ The management of the production and sale was apparently farmed out, i.e., in exchange for a specified sum provided to the emperor, the officeholder could retain any additional income gathered beyond the agreed amount. While this theoretically guaranteed revenue and shifted the risks of revenue shortfalls onto the tax farmers, it also gave them an incentive to overcharge, causing economic damage and popular resentment. However, there are also numerous documented cases of tax farmers who were ruined by their failure to collect the contracted sum.²⁹

8: Apokaukos owed money to the treasury as a result of his promise to double the salt revenues. Kantakouzēnos relates that Andronikos II was outraged that Apokaukos appropriated the revenues but he fled when he was discovered; Grēgoras notes Apokaukos’ possession of the salt monopoly but does not mention any embezzlement.³⁰

²⁶ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 302.

²⁷ Ps-Kod., 115 and n. 264; Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 220-222.

²⁸ A. Laiou, ‘Salt’, *ODB III*, 1832-3. For the operation of the salt monopoly, see Maniatis, ‘Salt Monopoly’ (sometimes rather speculative given the available evidence); Matschke, ‘Salzmonopol’.

²⁹ Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 201.

³⁰ Kant. I, 118.4-7; Greg. I, 301.10-12.

9: Syrgiannēs Palaiologos Philanthrōpenos Komnēnos (*PLP* 27167).³¹ Syrgiannēs was descended from Sytzigan, a Cuman noble who entered imperial service in the 1240s, baptised as Syrgiannēs.³² Kantakouzēnos describes the younger Syrgiannēs' mother as his own aunt; it is possible she was Eugenia Palaiologina, a niece of Michaēl VIII.³³ Kantakouzēnos and Syrgiannēs were trained in arms together and were clearly friends.³⁴ Syrgiannēs is first recorded as an aggressive governor of Berat in around 1315, but was arrested and briefly imprisoned in Constantinople, on suspicion of sedition, before being given governorship of Thrace in 1320.³⁵ Shortly after, he took a leading role in Andronikos III's revolt against his grandfather; Kantakouzēnos portrays him as the first to incite Andronikos to revolt. Grēgoras gives a similar account, although he claims Syrgiannēs was originally entrusted with the task of keeping Andronikos III under surveillance.³⁶ His ruthlessness is demonstrated by his suggestion that the safest course of action would be to murder Andronikos II, although Kantakouzēnos typically, if unconvincingly, claims the suggestion originated with Apokaukos.³⁷ Following the first peace agreement between the Andronikoi, he seems to have felt insufficiently rewarded, despite having been promoted from *pinkernēs* to *meγas dux*, and defected to Andronikos II in August 1321, emboldening the old emperor to restart the conflict.³⁸ The renewed war barely lasted a year and left Syrgiannēs in the service of the weakened party of Andronikos II. Shortly afterwards he was accused of

³¹ The most detailed study of his life, if outdated in some details, is Binon, 'Prostagma inédit', esp. 138-146 and 377-387.

³² Kant. I, 18.11-16; *PLP* 27233.

³³ Kant. I, 333.23; Nicol, *Family*, 24-5, no. 17; *PLP* 21368. The evidence for Syrgiannēs' parentage is inconclusive; see Van Dieten, *Gregoras* II, 117-23, n. 27, and, criticising Van Dieten, FK I, 217-8, n. 29.

³⁴ Kant. I, 334.5-10.

³⁵ Greg. I, 296.19-299.2; Nicol, *Despotate*, 77-9, 83-6, 89, 91.

³⁶ Kant. I, 18.10f.; Greg. I, 299.2-301.4.

³⁷ Kant. I, 42.16-43.12.

³⁸ Kant. I, 119.16-123.21; Greg. I, 351.15ff.

plotting to murder the elder emperor and to replace him on the throne, for which he was sentenced to loss of property and indefinite imprisonment in chains; Grēgoras adds that he was denounced by Andronikos Asanēs.³⁹ Syrgiannēs remained in prison until Andronikos III's final victory over his grandfather, shortly after which Kantakouzēnos successfully petitioned to release him.⁴⁰ During Andronikos' serious illness of winter 1329/1330, Kantakouzēnos appointed Syrgiannēs as the chief military commander in the west, apparently displeasing Andronikos who nevertheless left him in place.⁴¹ However, Syrgiannēs was soon accused by Arsenios TzAMPLAKŌN of building a treasonous conspiracy.⁴² In late 1333, unable to disprove the allegations, he fled, eventually making his way to the court of Stefan Dušan. From there, he led a Serbian army back into the Empire. Using his knowledge of the region and local contacts, he made rapid progress and soon threatened Thessalonike. Andronikos III immediately marched against him but also sent Sphrantzēs Palaiologos ahead, who posed as a defector to win Syrgiannēs' confidence before assassinating him.⁴³ He was killed on 23 August 1334 and was buried with honours by Dušan.⁴⁴

Kantakouzēnos had kinship and friendship ties with Syrgiannēs and portrays himself as being instrumental in returning him to favour under Andronikos III. Yet, despite the obvious parallels of Syrgiannēs' tumultuous life with the career of Apokaukos and an even greater willingness to resort to violence in pursuit of his own ambition, Syrgiannēs is never openly

³⁹ Kant. I, 171.7-172.6; Greg. I, 362.11-364.2.

⁴⁰ Kant. I, 329.3-335.15; Greg. I, 432.22-433.3.

⁴¹ Kant. I, 411.23-412.20.

⁴² Kant. I, 436.10-446.18; Greg. I, 488.24-490.10; for TzAMPLAKŌN, see Ch.11:20. Greg. I, 440.5-441.2, states that this conspiracy was supported by the empress-mother Xenē; see Ch.14:14.

⁴³ Kant. I, 448.6-457.24; Greg. I, 495.12-501.11. Grēgoras emphasises how seriously the revolt was taken by Andronikos. For Sphrantzēs, see *PLP* 27282.

⁴⁴ Kant. I, 457.14-18; *CBB* I, 351, no. 49/1. For the reconstruction of the chronology and sequence of events generally, which is confused in Kantakouzēnos' text, see Loenertz, 'Ordre et désordre', 230-231.

condemned by Kantakouzēnos. He offers no explanation for Syrgiannēs' actions, perhaps indicating there is truth in Grēgoras' assertion that Syrgiannēs felt slighted by Andronikos III's partiality to Kantakouzēnos over himself.⁴⁵ It is probable that Kantakouzēnos was rather more implicated in Syrgiannēs' falls from grace than he admits.⁴⁶ Grēgoras ultimately judged that Syrgiannēs was most responsible for the first civil war and 'the original root of all the successive tumults.'⁴⁷

10: Apokaukos is first mentioned near the beginning of Book I of the *Histories* when, following Syrgiannēs' repeated requests, Kantakouzēnos recommends him to Andronikos III.⁴⁸

11: The phrase τὸ μεσάζειν τοῖς πράγμασι indicates the office of *mesazōn*, literally 'mediator'.⁴⁹ It was not an official dignity and held no rank in the lists of precedence but was rather a function, indicating the individual appointed to supervise the imperial chancery, which prepared imperial orders and correspondence, and who acted as intermediary between petitioners and the emperor.⁵⁰ The *mesazōn* thus held great control over access to the emperor, with corresponding opportunities for influence and self-enrichment, and was often the emperor's 'chief minister' – as was certainly the case for Theodōros Metochitēs under Andronikos II. Kantakouzēnos states that his *mesazōn*, Dēmētrios Kydōnēs, lived in the palace as 'there was need for the *mesazōn* to be with the emperor always,

⁴⁵ Greg. I, 351.16-20.

⁴⁶ For extended analysis of the differing account of Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras, see Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 351-4.

⁴⁷ Greg. I, 498.21-2: ἡ ἀρχέγονος ῥίζα πάντων τῶν ἐφεξῆς θορύβων.

⁴⁸ Kant. I, 25.3-10.

⁴⁹ Kantakouzēnos does use the term μεσάζων on other occasions, e.g., Kant. II, 223.20-21; III, 285.8. On the variety of these circumlocutions, see Loenertz, 'Chancelier impérial', 283.

⁵⁰ Ps-Kod., 85. Also see Loenertz, 'Chancelier impérial'; Verpeaux, 'Mesazon'; Beck, 'Ministerpräsident'; Oikonomides, 'Chancellerie', 168-70.

night and day'.⁵¹ Doukas, in the following century, identified the office with the Turkish *vezir*.⁵² However, the *mesazōn* need not be the emperor's chief minister, as is apparent from the appointment of two relatively unknown men to the office, related in the next chapter.⁵³ Dual occupancy of the office is attested during Laskarid rule and became the norm in the fifteenth century.⁵⁴

Kantakouzēnos himself appears to have previously acted as *mesazōn* to Andronikos III during the first civil war, when he held extensive administrative responsibilities 'and in particular for the imperial correspondence', i.e., the chancery.⁵⁵ In 1328, he claims Andronikos allowed him to appoint another to take responsibility for the treasury, tax collection, and the imperial correspondence, as long as the appointee was closely supervised, with Kantakouzēnos holding ultimate responsibility.⁵⁶ Apokaukos was duly appointed, and it is this incident that Kantakouzēnos alludes to in the present passage, although he does not previously mention any imperial disapproval. Kantakouzēnos of course wishes to demonstrate that he remained Andronikos' chief minister while Apokaukos was concerned only with mundane matters. Given how frequently Kantakouzēnos was away campaigning with Andronikos, it is unlikely that Apokaukos would have been very closely supervised, and Andronikos would have known this.

⁵¹ Kant. III, 285.7-9: τοῖς πράγμασι μεσάζων ἀνάγκην εἶχεν ἀεὶ συνεῖναι βασιλεῖ νύκτωρ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν.

⁵² Doukas, *History*, XXII.10 (ed. Greco, 165.12-13).

⁵³ Kant. II, 99.1-3. For arguments that the *mesazōn* was not always the leading minister, see Loenertz, 'Chancelier impérial'.

⁵⁴ Angold, *Government in Exile*, 160; Kiousoyopoulou, *Emperor or Manager*, 85-6; Verpeaux, 'Mesazon', 285-90.

⁵⁵ Kant. I, 337.24: δὴ καὶ τοῖς βασιλικοῖς γράμμασιν.

⁵⁶ Kant. II, 337.21-339.16. Nicol, *Family*, 37, n. 5, does not accept Kantakouzēnos was Andronikos' *mesazōn*. However it is the clear implication of considering the present passage and Kant. I, 337-9, together; see also Loenertz, 'Chancelier impérial', 281-2.

12: Andronikos III's first serious illness occurred in late 1329/early 1330; Kantakouzēnos relates the entire incident at length.⁵⁷ The date is known from a short chronicle which records Andronikos II became the monk Antōnios in January 1330.⁵⁸ Kantakouzēnos states that the old emperor took the decision owing to fears for his own safety should his grandson die.⁵⁹ While Andronikos was incapacitated, he formally gave Kantakouzēnos control of the government as 'leader and protector' or more succinctly, 'regent'.⁶⁰ Sovereignty was given to Anna and her then unborn child, if male, was to be emperor.⁶¹

13: In Kantakouzēnos' earlier account of this incident, he identifies the child as one of the couple's daughters, Maria.⁶² It is worth noting that Kantakouzēnos' statement, in the earlier passage, that Maria later married the heir of Ivan Alexander is not reconcilable with Grēgoras, calling the identities and ages of Andronikos' daughters into question.⁶³ However, in the present passage the point he wishes to impress is that Andronikos did not yet have any male heirs.

14: Maria Doukaina Palaiologina, Empress of the Romans 1295-1333 (*PLP* 21394). Born Rita of Armenia, she was sister of King Het'um II of Lesser

⁵⁷ Kant. I, 391-411. Also see Greg. I, 439.12-442.15.

⁵⁸ *CBB* I, 29, no. 8/22.

⁵⁹ Kant. I, 399.11-20.

⁶⁰ Kant. I, 393.22-24: δὲ ἡγεμόνα καὶ προστάτην ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τὸν μέγαν δομέστικον ἀφίημι ὑμῖν; Greg. I, 440.4: ἐπίτροπον δ' εἶναι τὸν Καντακουζηνὸν τὸν μέγαν δομέστικον.

⁶¹ Kant. I, 396.2-6; Greg. I, 439.25-440.3.

⁶² Kant. I, 394.1-4.

⁶³ Greg. III, 557.20-23, calls her Eirēnē. Kantakouzēnos' and Grēgoras' chronologies for the marriage also conflict, creating uncertainty about the ages of the imperial daughters. Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, 84, simply assumes Kantakouzēnos was mistaken. However there has been a great deal of inconclusive debate on the issue, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.2, 388-390, n. 497; FK II, 192, n. 105 and 239, n. 305; Kydōnēs, *Letters*, I.2, 560-562, n. 6 (Tinnefeld's commentary).

Armenia. On her marriage to Michaēl IX Palaiologos in January 1295, she was crowned and took the name Maria.⁶⁴ Following his death on 21 October 1320, she became the nun Xenē.⁶⁵ She thereafter mostly resided in Thessalonike, establishing a semi-formal court around her, retaining the title of empress despite her monastic status.⁶⁶ She became the senior empress following the death of Andronikos II's wife, Eirēnē of Montferrat, in 1317.⁶⁷ This primacy would have been taken by Anna after her arrival in 1326. Kantakouzēnos portrays Xenē as an innocent pawn in the struggles between the Andronikoi,⁶⁸ but she seems to have become increasingly alienated from her son following the conflict, and Andronikos' refusal to share authority with her during his illness strongly contributed to her disaffection. In a calculated affront to her son, she adopted Syrgiannēs during his governorship of Thessalonike, an act which Grēgoras states was due also to hostility to Kantakouzēnos and his mother.⁶⁹ Xenē died in mid-summer 1333.⁷⁰

15: Kantakouzēnos tells this story in considerably more detail in Book II. Andronikos is asked twice what arrangements he has made concerning Xenē and both times replies "none". After being asked a third time, he explains that two, especially two women, cannot govern public affairs.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Verpeaux, 'Notes chronologiques', 173.

⁶⁵ Recorded by a number of chroniclers, see *CBB* II, 227.

⁶⁶ See Malamut, 'Pouvoir et influence', esp. 69-71.

⁶⁷ Multiple empresses was not an unusual situation, see Herrin, 'Empresses', and for the high status of empress-mothers, Malamut, 'L'impératrice', 651-2.

⁶⁸ Kant. I, 150, 166, 260.

⁶⁹ Greg. I, 440.5-441.2. Kant. I, 335.3-15, does not however mention the adoption and portrays her as hostile to Syrgiannēs. On this discrepancy, see FK II, 172-3, n. 34.

⁷⁰ Kant. I, 473.10-12; Greg. I, 490.11-495.11 (including his consolatory oration to Andronikos III). For the dating of her death, see Loenertz, 'Ordre et désordre', 229.

⁷¹ Kant. I, 395.17-24.

Grēgoras also confirms that Andronikos' testament made no mention of Xenē or his grandfather.⁷²

16: Glabas (*PLP* 91682). He was one of the original four *katholikoi kritai* (often termed 'Supreme Judges of the Romans'), appointed by Andronikos III in 1329. Following a bribery scandal, the judges were tried in Hagia Sophia in the presence of the Emperor and Patriarch, seemingly during 1337. Glabas and two of his colleagues were subsequently deposed and banished from the capital.⁷³ He was a correspondent of Grēgoras who, however, does not name him in his history.⁷⁴ Fatouros and Krischer plausibly suggest he is the (untitled) Michaēl Glabas addressed in Michaēl Gabras' letters.⁷⁵ Although the present passage clearly relates to Andronikos' first serious illness in 1330, it has frequently been read out of context and interpreted as referring to events in 1341, during Andronikos' final illness. It therefore cannot be taken as evidence that Glabas had been restored to favour by 1341.⁷⁶ He must have been forgiven at some point though, probably by the regency: he is last mentioned as a party to a judgement in favour of Docheiariou Monastery in 1344, where his titles are given as *logothetēs tōn oikeiakōn* (a promotion from his previous rank) and once again as *katholikos kritēs*.⁷⁷ His prominence in Thessalonike at this date indicates he was not a partisan of Kantakouzēnos and that the *PLP*'s suggestion that he may be

⁷² Greg. I, 440.5-8.

⁷³ On the institution and the scandal, see Lemerle, 'Juge général'; Lemerle, 'Documents et problèmes'. For the trial, see also *Regestes*, 135-6, no. 2177.

⁷⁴ Grēgoras, *Letters*, 112-113, ep. 90, 91.

⁷⁵ FK III, 434, n. 128; Gabras, *Letters* II, ep. 353, 366, 385 and 407.

⁷⁶ *PLP* 91682 states he was sent to Xenē in 1341, overlooking the fact that she died a number of years previously. Others also assume he had been recalled, e.g., Lemerle, 'Juge général', 309.

⁷⁷ *Actes de Docheiariou*, 170, no. 23.

identifiable with the *skouterios* Geōrgios Glabas, a commander in Didymoteichon later mentioned by Kantakouzēnos, is unsustainable.⁷⁸

17: *Megas dioikētēs* was a low dignity, ranked 55th by Pseudo-Kodinos, who lists no function, although *dioikētai* were historically fiscal officials.⁷⁹ Presumably Glabas was chosen for his mission on account of his personal qualities or relationship to the old empress, rather than on account of his rank.

18: Although Kantakouzēnos has shown Xenē in a bad light, he characteristically tempers his criticism of a member of the imperial family by attributing her hostility to the malign influence of others, including, of course, Apokaukos.

19: Michaēl IX Doukas Angelos Komnēnos Palaiologos (*PLP* 21529).⁸⁰ He was Andronikos II's eldest son and was proclaimed co-emperor with his father in 1281, aged three. His father first sought to marry him to the titular heir of the Latin Empire, Catherine of Courtenay, but eventually had to settle for Maria/Xenē instead.⁸¹ He was finally crowned probably on 21 May 1294 and thereafter he appears to have participated actively in public affairs, particularly in military matters.⁸² Michaēl was apparently a brave and determined general, albeit largely unsuccessful.⁸³ He died in Thessalonike on 12 October 1320, eight days after the accidental slaying of his younger son

⁷⁸ Kant. II, 195, 401, 426; for Geōrgios see *PLP* 93348.

⁷⁹ Ps-Kod., 109; Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 217-8, n. 122.

⁸⁰ See also Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 36-7, no. 59; Polemis, *Doukai*, 159-160, no. 145. Kozanecka-Kozakiewicz, 'Michael IX', provides a reasonable survey of his life, albeit marred by excessively speculative analysis.

⁸¹ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 48-56.

⁸² Verpeaux, 'Notes chronologiques', 170-3.

⁸³ Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 90, 145-8, 158-67, 232.

Manouēl by associates of Andronikos III. Both Grēgoras and Kantakouzēnos attribute his death, at least in part, to grief at the loss of his son, although Kantakouzēnos unsurprisingly omits all mention of Andronikos' role in the scandal.⁸⁴

20: Anna had arrived in Constantinople in February 1326.⁸⁵ As these events must have taken place when Andronikos was recovering in early 1330, Kantakouzēnos rather exaggerates how recent her arrival was.

⁸⁴ Kant. I, 13.16-14.4; Greg. I, 286.6-12. Kantakouzēnos provides the date, which is confirmed by a number of short chronicles: *CBB* II, 227.

⁸⁵ See Ch.1:5.

Commentary on Chapter 15

1: As suggested by Fatouros and Krischer, this is an indication that Apokaukos approached Kantakouzēnos during Holy Week after Andronikos III's recovery from his illness, so presumably April 1330.¹

2: Kantakouzēnos previously narrated that Apokaukos approached him, in winter 1340/1, for permission to assemble a fleet for defence against the Turks. He apparently requested the governorship and revenues of Constantinople and the islands, to which he would add his own resources, to pay the costs of the ships and crews. Kantakouzēnos lobbied Andronikos until he reluctantly gave permission and provided 100,000 *hyperpyra* towards expenses. Apokaukos took command of the new fleet, surrendering his other offices, and achieved a victory over nine Turkish ships off Chios in early 1341. This action won Apokaukos great acclaim in Constantinople but he had previously suppressed any knowledge of the Emperor's involvement in order to claim sole credit for himself. When Andronikos discovered this, he was furious at both Kantakouzēnos and Apokaukos.²

3: *Epi tōn anamnēseōn* was a low ranking court title which held no specific function. Pseudo-Kodinos explains that it originally designated the official who recorded which individuals distinguished themselves on campaign and elsewhere, so that the emperor could reward them appropriately.³

¹ FK III, 434, n. 135.

² For the full story, see Kant. I, 535.1-541.13. See also *Kaiserurkunden* IV, 163, no. 2842; Matschke, 'Flotte'.

³ Ps-Kod., 31, 111.

4: Spanopoulos (*PLP* 26456). Nothing else is known for sure about him. It is possible that he is the *prōtobestiariētēs* Geōrgios Spanopoulos, whom Kantakouzēnos later sent as an emissary to the Pope in 1347.⁴ If this is the case, he can be assumed to have remained loyal to Kantakouzēnos throughout the war as *prōtobestiariētēs* represents a considerable promotion from *epi tōn anamnēseōn*.

5: Iōannēs Melitēniōtēs (*PLP* 17853). He appears earlier in the *Histories* as a confidant of Andronikos II during Andronikos III's trial.⁵ He is probably the addressee of a single letter by Michaēl Gabras (requesting grain) but otherwise nothing else is securely known concerning him.⁶ He may be the same individual as the *epi tou kanikleiou* Iōannēs Gabras Melitēniōtēs, who is equally poorly documented.⁷

6: The phrase τὴν ὑπερησῖαν τοῦ μεσάζειν τοῖς δημοσίοις is another circumlocution for the office of *mesazōn*. Interestingly, Kantakouzēnos states two men replaced Apokaukos as *mesazōn*, apparently forgetting that he himself was supposed to be overseeing him.⁸ Perhaps Kantakouzēnos remained as overseer or perhaps Andronikos, in his fury, replaced both Kantakouzēnos and Apokaukos. It is of course open to question how real Kantakouzēnos' supervision actually was.

7: Geōrgios Pepagōmenos (*PLP* 22358).⁹ He is previously mentioned as an ambassador from Andronikos III to his grandfather during their

⁴ Kant. III, 53.13-15.

⁵ Kant. I, 71.15-72.5.

⁶ Gabras, *Letters* II, 244-5, ep. 142.

⁷ *PLP* 17854; Bryer, et al., 'Gabrades', 42, adds nothing further.

⁸ See Ch.14:11.

⁹ For the Pepagōmenoi, see Schreiner, 'Pepagomenoi'; for Geōrgios, 158-9.

conflict¹⁰ and a document of November 1334 refers to him as an *oikeios* of the Emperor Andronikos III.¹¹ During the 1341-7 war he apparently sided with the regency as he is next mentioned as an unsuccessful ambassador to Kantakouzēnos in 1344.¹² He may be the same person as the eunuch *meḡas ekklesiarchēs* Geōrgios Pepagōmenos (*PLP* 22357). His subsequent fate is unknown.

8: Nikolaos Melitēniōtēs (*PLP* 17861). He is otherwise unattested. The kinship relationship between him and the aforementioned Iōannēs is unknown.

¹⁰ Kant. I, 297.

¹¹ MM I, 568-9.

¹² Kant. II, 444. The *PLP* errs in placing this embassy in 1343; it comes after the failed siege of Didymoteichon/Emphythion which *CBB* I, 83, no. 8/42-8/43, dates to May-August 1344.

Commentary on Chapter 16

1: Spalokotos (*PLP* 26447). He is otherwise unattested. Fatouros and Krischer suggest it is a nickname, playing on ἀλλόκοτος ('odd').¹

2: Apokaukos' alleged plot against Iōannēs was narrated in Chapter 10.² The summary of Apokaukos' previous misdeeds, which began in Chapter 14, also ends at this point.³

3: Having recited Apokaukos' misdeeds at such length, Kantakouzēnos is noticeably unforthcoming regarding the arguments he used to persuade the Empress, or why she accepted them, particularly in light of his alleged plot against her son. Grēgoras claims that many of Kantakouzēnos' followers urged him to arrest Apokaukos and take him with him to Didymoteichon.⁴ Kantakouzēnos suggests that he intended Apokaukos to be pardoned but to remain under house-arrest until some unspecified future point, but apparently took no measures to enforce this.

4: Phōkas (*PLP* 30216). He is otherwise unattested.

5: Theodōros Dexios (*PLP* 5194).⁵ A friend of Grēgoras, who praises him for his reason and virtue.⁶ Dexios was a prominent anti-Palamite and participated in the councils of 1341 and 1351.⁷ He is not recorded as having held office and by 1351 was certainly a monk, in which role he oversaw Grēgoras' own tonsure. Several of his theological writings survive, including

¹ FK III, 436, n. 144.

² Kant. II, 70.17-71.14; see also Ch.10:7.

³ I.e., Kant. II, 88.17-102.14.

⁴ Greg. II, 604.23-605.1.

⁵ On his life, see Dexios, *Opera omnia*, esp. LX-LXIX (Polemis' introduction).

⁶ Greg. II, 894.1-5.

⁷ Kant. III, 168.20-24. For his role in these councils, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 58, 93-4.

a lengthy invective against Kantakouzēnos' conduct during the council of 1351, which condemned the anti-Palamites.⁸

6: Iōannēs Ampar (*PLP* 800). Nothing else is known of his activities until after the civil war, although it can be assumed he remained in Constantinople for its duration. He was a clergyman and scholar; he signed the pro-Palamite *tomos* of 1351 in his capacity as *megas chartophylax* and *hypatos tōn philosophōn*.⁹ He was deposed in 1355 for allowing marriages forbidden by the canons.¹⁰

7: Dēmētrios Kasandrēnos (*PLP* 11315). He appears once more later when he is sent, in early 1342, with the *megas chartouarios* Laskaris, on an embassy to Guy de Lusignan, governor of Serres, whose daughter was betrothed to Kantakouzēnos' second son, Manouēl. Lusignan, however, was an active partisan for the regency and both emissaries were imprisoned.¹¹ Kasandrēnos survived imprisonment and remained loyal to the Kantakouzēnoi after the war, travelling to the Peloponnese with Matthaïos. He died in Mistra as the monk Daniēl, after April 1362.¹²

8: Grēgoras does not mention the emissaries sent to Apokaukos at all but alleges that the Patriarch wrote to Apokaukos at Epibatai and continued to plot with him. In his account, it is the Patriarch who persuades the Empress to recall Apokaukos.¹³

⁸ Dexios, *Opera Omnia*, 3-63.

⁹ *PG*, vol. 151, col. 763 (where he signs as Ἰεμπαρις).

¹⁰ Darrouzès, *Regestes*, 311-313, no. 2375.

¹¹ For the entire incident, see Kant. II, 191.24-193.3.

¹² Zakythenos, *Morée* II, 321.

¹³ Greg. II, 603.17-604.10; Darrouzès, *Regestes*, 171, no. 2215.

9: The phrase ὀγδόη φθίνοντος Σεπτεμβρίου has been understood to indicate either 23¹⁴ or 28 September 1341.¹⁵ The former assumes Kantakouzēnos followed Attic dating conventions, as seems likely.¹⁶ The chronicle of 1352 places Kantakouzēnos' departure to Didymoteichon in October, along with his visit to Epibatai en route and the subsequent tumult that arises in Constantinople.¹⁷ The chronicler's confused grouping of the whole series of events in October may perhaps support the later date although Loenertz suggests the chronicler confused the date of Kantakouzēnos' departure with that of his arrival in Didymoteichon.¹⁸ Kantakouzēnos clearly recorded the date because of its personal significance: he was not to enter the capital again until the night of 2/3 February 1347.¹⁹

10: The marriage of Helenē Kantakouzēnē to Iōannēs V was agreed as part of the peace at the end of the civil war, yet Kantakouzēnos' statement that the Empress proposed such a match before the war has attracted surprisingly little comment other than by Parisot, who appeared unsure what to make of it.²⁰ Grēgoras, conversely, relates that it was Kantakouzēnos who requested Iōannēs V be betrothed to one of his daughters, claiming that Andronikos had wished it.²¹ Although, in Grēgoras' account, his request is not explicitly refused, it is not accepted and it becomes forgotten among the disputes which follow. Later, Doukas presented Kantakouzēnos as

¹⁴ Loenertz, 'Chronique', 62; Nicol, *Family*, 46.

¹⁵ I.e. 'the eighth day of the ending month': Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 172; CBB III, 252.

¹⁶ FK III, 435-6, n. 151. This would make the 27/28 August date for Kantakouzēnos' previous expedition more unlikely (see Ch.9:17). For explanation of the various dating conventions, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras* III, 247.

¹⁷ CBB I, 81, no. 8/35.

¹⁸ Loenertz, 'Chronique', 62.

¹⁹ CBB I, 84, no. 8/46b, 681, no. 113/3; Greg. II, 775.1. Kantakouzēnos does not give the date of his return but his account tallies with the others.

²⁰ Parisot, *Cantacuzène*, 170. Nicol, *Family*, 47, notes the offer without comment but Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 52, apparently follows Grēgoras instead.

²¹ Greg. II, 580.11-14.

requesting the marriage but being spurned.²² It is impossible to reconcile these accounts. Although Kantakouzēnos would certainly have had reasons to distort the record, his subsequent actions make his version of the story more probable. If he had requested the marriage and been rebuffed, it would have been clear that his leading role was far from accepted and, consequently, that leaving Constantinople without taking more careful precautions to protect his position would have been foolhardy. If the Empress feared Kantakouzēnos' power and intentions, the marriage proposal would have been a logical step to ensure he had an interest in her son's survival and eventual succession, formalising his role as *basileopater*, 'father of the emperor'. Conversely, his procrastination over the matter would have been an ominous sign. Kantakouzēnos recognises this by later making his response central to Andronikos Asanēs' argument which persuades Anna to turn against him.²³ However it is believable that, in his overconfidence, he feared the consequences of announcing the betrothal without having consulted the western governors – who apparently warned him against such a move explicitly²⁴ – more than he feared whatever the Empress might do. If the governors had felt he was ignoring their interests, they could readily have sought Serbian aid to revolt against him.

11: Selymbria, which appears as both Σηλυβρία and Σηλυμβρία, is modern Silivri. It lay on the Via Egnatia and the Propontis coast, about 55km west of Constantinople, controlling the approach to the capital. Like Byzantion it was originally a colony of Megara although founded earlier, between 700 and 660 BC.²⁵ It seems to have been strongly fortified; Chōniatēs, who fled there after the conquest of Constantinople, commented

²² Doukas, *History*, V.2 (ed. Greco, 41.21-43.4; trans. Magoulias, 64).

²³ Kant. II, 134.19-135.5.

²⁴ Kant. II, 78.1-4.

²⁵ For Selymbria's long history, see Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 635-643.

on the strength of its situation and walls.²⁶ Michaēl VIII Palaiologos, who was widely detested at the time of his death, was laid to rest in a monastery here; his body was never moved to the capital.²⁷ Kantakouzēnos mentions the town very frequently. In Book I it features as a base and prize during the civil wars between the Andronikoi, for example marking the eastern boundary of the appanage temporarily conceded to Andronikos III in 1321.²⁸ Apokaukos was appointed governor of the town in late 1327.²⁹ He clearly became a major patron of it and was commemorated as founder of at least one church there.³⁰ During the second civil war, Kantakouzēnos seized Selymbria in late 1344 or early 1345.³¹ Grēgoras mentions that 'he constructed a very strong tower to secure the acropolis.'³² A later counterattack by the regency was defeated by one of Kantakouzēnos' commanders.³³ From here, he exerted pressure on the capital, and he was stationed at Selymbria when the final offer to betray Constantinople to him arrived.³⁴ Kantakouzēnos also celebrated the marriage of his daughter Theodōra to Orhan here.³⁵ The city remained part of the Empire until its end.

²⁶ Chōniatēs, *History*, 631.96-98 (trans. Magoulias, 346). For a study of the walls, see Dirimtekin, 'Selymbria'. Note, however, that Dirimtekin misapplies Kantakouzēnos' comments concerning Epibatai's lack of fortification in the 1320s to Selymbria (Kant. I, 166.16-17); his resulting assumption that the walls were built by Kantakouzēnos is incorrect.

²⁷ Magdalino, 'Churches of Selymbria', 314-315; Greg. I, 159.21-22.

²⁸ Kant. I, 115.12-19.

²⁹ Kant. I, 258.22-24.

³⁰ Eyice, 'Église de Sélymbria'. For the possibility of multiple endowments: Magdalino, 'Churches of Selymbria', esp. 313-314.

³¹ Kant. II, 518.16-17.

³² Greg. II, 762.10: πύργον εἰς ἀκροπόλεως ἀσφάλειαν ᾠκοδομήσατο πάνυ τοι ὄχυρόν.

³³ Kant. II, 585.3-6.

³⁴ Kant. II, 598.19-602.8.

³⁵ Kant. II, 587.16-588.16.

12: As previously mentioned in Chapter 9.³⁶ It can be inferred from this visit that Theodōra Kantakouzēnē was minding her son's interests in the capital while he was away.

³⁶ Kant. II, 68.23-69.2.

Commentary on Chapter 17

1: Grēgorios Palamas (*PLP* 21546).¹ Palamas was of a similar age to Kantakouzēnos and Andronikos III; his father had been the latter's tutor. He was raised at the imperial court after his father's death and would likely have been destined for office had he not taken the habit along with his siblings and mother.² Owing to his education and connections, he emerged as a leading theologian when he began to write in the mid-1330s and rapidly became the foremost opponent of Barlaam of Calabria's attacks on the monastic practice of hesychasm.³ The hesychasm controversy escalated to such a level that Andronikos III agreed to call a council in Constantinople to settle the matter; it met in June 1341 and resulted in the condemnation of Barlaam.⁴ However Andronikos died days later and a series of theological objections to Palamas' formulations were subsequently raised by the monk Akindynos.⁵ Another council was called to decide on this new challenge, presided over by Kantakouzēnos.⁶ Although Akindynos' consequent condemnation was initially accepted by the Patriarch Kalekas, Palamas' passive approval of Kantakouzēnos and support for peace negotiations during the war ensured that, owing to his immense prestige, Kalekas saw him as a threat.⁷ Palamas was imprisoned in 1343 and Kalekas gave a free

¹ There is a vast bibliography concerning Palamas and his theology. The most authoritative introduction to both aspects remains Meyendorff, *Palamas* (itself a revised but redacted translation of Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas*). Philotheos, *Logos*, although an encomium, is the major source on his life. For a review of the sources, see Stiernon, 'Bulletin'.

² Kant. I, 545.8-13, 545.23-546.2; Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 28-32.

³ Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 39-40.

⁴ Kant. I, 550.8-555.21.

⁵ *PLP* 495; Akindynos, *Letters*, ix-xxxiii (Hero's introduction).

⁶ Kant. I, 556.3-557.9.

⁷ Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 64-67. Joannou, 'Unedierte Rede', 41, protests that Meyendorff denigrates Kalekas' skills as a theologian and suggests that Kalekas made a principled objection to Palamas; Stiernon, 'Bulletin', 254, is sceptical of Joannou's revisionism.

hand to his theological opponents, led by Akindynos.⁸ It was only following Kalekas' deposition on 2 February 1347 that the Empress finally released Palamas, sending him as a peace emissary to Kantakouzēnos after he had entered Constantinople. Kantakouzēnos praised him for his adherence to the truth despite persecution.⁹ Akindynos and Kalekas were excommunicated, Palamite doctrine was now reaffirmed and a synodal *tomos* issued to this effect.¹⁰ However, opposition to Palamas' theology had become firmer during the war; instead of withering away, it was taken over by Nikēphoros Grēgoras. Kantakouzēnos called a final synod in May-July 1351, which once again upheld Palamas.¹¹ Grēgoras was condemned as a heretic, marking the irrevocable breach between him and Kantakouzēnos. Palamas himself, contrary to some expectations, was not made Patriarch in 1347 but was instead appointed Metropolitan of Thessalonike. However the Zealots, still in charge of the city, refused to allow such a close associate of Kantakouzēnos entry and he instead retreated to Lemnos.¹² He finally took up his see in 1350. In early 1354, Palamas was asked by Iōannēs V to mediate with Kantakouzēnos regarding their ongoing conflict. On the way to Constantinople, he was captured by the Ottomans and held for a year until ransomed. He eventually returned to Thessalonike and died of an illness there on 14 November, in 1357 or 1359.¹³ He was canonised in 1368.

The politicisation of the dispute over Palamas' theology has led to scholarly attempts to identify Kantakouzēnos' party as Palamite and the regency as anti-Palamite, even characterising Kantakouzēnos as representing

⁸ Kant. II, 602.9-604.22; Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 69-78; Akindynos, *Letters*, xxii-xxx. See also Ch.1:16.

⁹ Kant. II, 613.1-614.5.

¹⁰ Meyendorff, 'Tome Synodal'.

¹¹ Kant. III, 166.2-171.14; Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 94-101.

¹² Kant. III, 104.5-105.12.

¹³ Philotheos, *Logos*, 564.1-2, places his death twelve and a half years after his appointment as archbishop (i.e., 1359), at odds with several chronicles; see *CBB* II, 288-9.

the interests of the great landowning monasteries in opposition to a regency 'popular' party.¹⁴ While the dispute undoubtedly acquired political overtones, it is not amenable to such reductive reasoning; hesychasm tended towards asceticism rather than concern for monastic property and there were opponents and supporters of Palamas in both parties. For example, Apokaukos and the Empress made efforts to defend Palamas against the Patriarch, Grēgoras was a closet Kantakouzēnist during the war, and Dēmētrios Kydōnēs, Kantakouzēnos' later *mesazōn*, was an anti-Palamite.¹⁵

2: As previously mentioned, unusually for a Patriarch, Kalekas had two children.¹⁶ The identities of the betrothed couple are otherwise unknown, as is whether the marriage ever took place.

3: *Enkolpia* are pendants displaying Christian imagery, sometimes containing relics, worn around the neck and resting on the chest.¹⁷ Being highly intimate devotional objects, they were used to seal solemn agreements, particularly of marriage.¹⁸ Apokaukos later gives further *enkolpia* as tokens of good faith, although without receiving reciprocal gifts.¹⁹ By highlighting the *enkolpia*, Kantakouzēnos emphasises Apokaukos' readiness to blaspheme in furthering his schemes.

4: Iōannēs Asanēs (PLP 91373). For his imprisonment, see below. The brothers were released following the start of hostilities and were thereafter

¹⁴ Originally suggested by Tafrali, *Thessalonique*, 203.

¹⁵ For further examples, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 80-85. For more recent criticism of this idea, see Malatras, *Social Structure*, 256-259.

¹⁶ See Ch.1:16.

¹⁷ S.D. Campbell and A. Cutler, 'Enkolpion', *ODB* I, 700. There is not yet a definitive study of *enkolpia* but see Pitarakis, *Croix-Reliquaires*.

¹⁸ Koukoules, *Βυζαντινῶν βίος* III, 370; IV, 80.

¹⁹ Kant. II, 120.6-10, 124.22-125.1.

among Kantakouzēnos' closest supporters. When Kantakouzēnos left Didymoteichon in early 1342, he took Iōannēs with him and left Manouēl in overall command of the city's defence.²⁰ As a loyal ally, Kantakouzēnos gave Iōannēs key commands: Melnik in 1342, Morrha in 1343, and the left division in the battle against the outlaw army of Momčilo in 1345.²¹ Following Kantakouzēnos' victory in 1347, both brothers were honoured as *sebastokratōres*, ranking below only Kantakouzēnos' sons and Iōannēs V.²² Shortly afterwards, Iōannēs married a daughter of Alexios Apokaukos, widowed during the war.²³ Grēgoras portrays him as the leader of Kantakouzēnos' discontented veterans who persuaded Matthaïos Kantakouzēnos to revolt against his father in 1347.²⁴ Yet, following Iōannēs VI's abdication, he sided with Iōannēs V against Matthaïos and was made governor of Peritheōrion.²⁵ It is possible that Iōannēs and Manouēl are the Asanēs brothers satirised in an anonymous pamphlet for their persecution of a certain *pinkernēs* who, if Hunger's identification is correct, was Syrgiannēs.²⁶ Iōannēs' opportunism and his many changes of allegiance during his political career are not unusual among the fourteenth century aristocracy.

5: Manouēl Komnēnos Rhaoul Asanēs (*PLP* 1506).²⁷ He held the high title of *meġas primmikērios* and, before his imprisonment, appears to have

²⁰ Kant. II, 195.16f.

²¹ Kant. II, 232.6-7, 404.11-12, 532.20-22.

²² Kant. III, 33.9-10; Greg. II, 797.2-6; Ps-Kod., 44.4-7, 249.5-8.

²³ Greg. II, 797.6-10. Concerning this marriage, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras* III, 383-4, n. 511.

²⁴ Greg. II, 798.18f. Kantakouzēnos omits the identities of the conspirators but mentions they were relatives of his wife: Kant. III, 49.12-13. See also Ch.22:3.

²⁵ Kant. III, 314.8-11. Kantakouzēnos refers to him as *despotēs* at this point although it is unclear when he was granted the title; possibly it was bestowed by Matthaïos as was the case for his brother.

²⁶ Hunger, 'Pamphlet'.

²⁷ See also Fassoulakis, *Raoul-Ral(l)es*, 73-5, no. 61; Asdracha, 'Rhodopes au XIV^e siècle', 193.

commanded the emperor's military escort.²⁸ As well as being Kantakouzēnos' brother-in-law, he was cousin to Andronikos III and married to Synadēnos' daughter, Anna.²⁹ While he was imprisoned, Kantakouzēnos acted as ward to their young son Andronikos, who rather surprisingly accompanied Kantakouzēnos west in 1342 rather than remaining at Didymoteichon with his father. When his situation seemed bleak, Kantakouzēnos later entrusted the child to Synadēnos.³⁰ Manouēl was in overall command of the defence of Didymoteichon during the critical early years of the war and, in 1344, Kantakouzēnos appointed him governor of Bizyē out of consideration for his connection to the Synadēnoi, who were the local magnates.³¹ He retained the city thereafter, and provided loyal service throughout Kantakouzēnos' reign, having been promoted to *despotēs* before the 1351 war with Genoa.³² He is finally attested as an ally of Matthaios Kantakouzēnos during his last campaign against Iōannēs V in 1356.³³ He and his wife are portrayed on MS Lincoln College gr. 35 f. 5r.³⁴

6: The Asanai brothers were imprisoned for treason. While Andronikos III and Kantakouzēnos were campaigning against Lesbos and Phōkaia in 1335,³⁵ certain of the aristocracy attempted an uprising, with Genoese support. Kantakouzēnos makes little of this incident and does not name any of the conspirators, although he admits they wished to destroy the

²⁸ Kant. I, 353.2-3, 466.19-21; Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 84-5.

²⁹ Kant. I, 125.9-12. For Anna, *PLP* 1524; for Synadēnos, Ch.11:14.

³⁰ Kant. II, 248.21-249.14; for Andronikos, *PLP* 91369.

³¹ Kant. II, 195.16-17, 491.17-24.

³² Kant. III, 196, 211.

³³ Kant. III, 320. Greg. III, 510.16-19 states that Manouēl was invested as *despotēs* by Matthaios, rather than by his father.

³⁴ Spatharakis, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, 196-7.

³⁵ Owing to conflicting evidence, this campaign may be dated to 1335 or 1336, see Van Dieten, *Gregoras*, II.ii, 358-366, n. 451. However, Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras give the impression there was a rapid response to the Genoese seizure of Lesbos, so 1335 is most probable.

Emperor.³⁶ Grēgoras is more forthcoming, claiming that the conspirators intended to murder the Empress and the infant Iōannēs V, and implies that their ultimate goal was to place *despotēs* Dēmētrios Palaiologos, the youngest son of Andronikos II, on the throne.³⁷ The scheme was however uncovered and thwarted by Theodōra Kantakouzēnē and the Empress.³⁸ The Emperor staged a public trial following his return, during which he mercifully forgave all participants except ‘the sons of Asanēs who were imprisoned humanely and without shackles’.³⁹ Harsh punishments of aristocrats were unusual, so Andronikos Asanēs (or indeed, Kantakouzēnos) may be exaggerating his sons’ sufferings; he probably felt they were unfairly scapegoated while Dēmētrios went free, although their guilt is not questioned. The gravity of their plot and their close relationship to Kantakouzēnos explains why he refuses to release them without first obtaining the Empress’ consent.

7: Bēra is modern Pherai (or Feres) in southern Thrace. The town lies on a hill overlooking fertile plains close to the west bank of the Hebros river, about 25km inland, forming a crossroads with the Via Egnatia and the north-south land route following the river.⁴⁰ The settlement developed around the Kosmosōteira Monastery, established in 1152 by Isaakios Kōmnenos, of which the katholikon remains standing today.⁴¹ It had an eventful history, and Emperor Isaakios Angelos was blinded there in 1195.⁴² Kantakouzēnos mentions that Michael III Šišman raided Thrace ‘as far as Bēra’ in 1323 and that a Turkish force plundered the surrounding area in 1329 before being

³⁶ Kant. I, 481.18-482.6.

³⁷ Greg. I, 530.1-17, 531.10-534.6. For Dēmētrios, *PLP* 21456.

³⁸ Greg. I, 530.8-17; Kant. I, 483.23-484.2. For Theodōra, see Ch.9:18.

³⁹ Greg. I, 534.3: τοὺς τοῦ Ἀσαν υἱοὺς ἐν ἀδέσμῳ καὶ φιλανθρώπῳ κατεῖχεν εἰρκτῆ.

⁴⁰ Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 128.

⁴¹ Soustal, *Thrakien*, 200-201; Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 124-130. On the monastery and its remains, Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 48-85; Ševčenko, ‘Kosmosoteira’.

⁴² Chōniatēs, *History*, 452 (trans. Magoulias, 248).

defeated by Andronikos III.⁴³ Although Kantakouzēnos took control of Bēra shortly before his acclamation,⁴⁴ he soon lost possession of this fortress; the garrison and *archōn* were overcome by a trick and sent to Constantinople in chains.⁴⁵ It was subsequently his first target in his conspicuously unsuccessful campaign of March 1342 but his efforts were thwarted by Iōannēs Batatzēs.⁴⁶ The Asanēs brothers were presumably imprisoned in the fortified monastery complex. Kantakouzēnos indicates that it was still functioning as a monastery, as well as a fortress, in 1342.⁴⁷ By early 1355, however, he states it was still a very strong fortress but no longer inhabited by monks.⁴⁸

⁴³ Kant. I, 179.14-15, 390.

⁴⁴ Kant. II, 161.20-162.1.

⁴⁵ Kant. II, 196.23-197.1.

⁴⁶ Kant. II, 196.9-197.9.

⁴⁷ Kant. II, 196.16-17.

⁴⁸ Kant. III, 310.17-19.

Commentary on Chapter 18

1: 'Absolute master' is *autokratōr*; Kantakouzēnos here employs the word in its general sense, as he does elsewhere, rather than as an imperial title.¹ Apokaukos implies that Kantakouzēnos aimed for control of the government without making himself *basileus*, thereby freeing himself from the customary limitations of the imperial office, such as the need to exhibit justice or philanthropy.²

¹ E.g., Kant. I, 189.8; II, 421.14: στρατηγὸς αὐτοκράτωρ (supreme commander of a military force).

² See Angelov, *Ideology*, 134-155.

Commentary on Chapter 19

1: Kōnstantinos Palaiologos Asanēs (*PLP* 1504). During the first civil war, he was a partisan of Andronikos II, in which role he was captured in March 1328 after his army was routed by Synadēnos.¹ Although he sided with the regency, Kōnstantinos was placed under house-arrest in 1342,² along with his unnamed son, for sympathising with Geōrgios Choumnos' proposal to make peace with Kantakouzēnos.³ Any title he held is unrecorded. He is not attested again after 1342, so may have died during the course of his captivity.

2: Isaakios Palaiologos Asanēs (*PLP* 1494). Kantakouzēnos does not mention him earlier, so his sympathies in the first civil war are unknown. He was promoted to *panhypersebastos* following Iōannēs V's coronation, making him one of the most senior of the regency's partisans.⁴ Kantakouzēnos alleges that he later tried and failed to bribe Süleyman Karasi to ally with the regency.⁵ The Empress entrusted him with Apokaukos' administrative responsibilities immediately following the latter's death, in which capacity he neglected to release Kantakouzēnos' imprisoned partisans, who had killed Apokaukos, before they were massacred in revenge. Kantakouzēnos claims Isaakios was too busy and forgot to free them, an excuse so unlikely that it is presumably an attempt to preserve Isaakios' reputation.⁶ Isaakios was clearly instrumental in restoring the situation in Constantinople, and is mentioned as one of the main figures leading regency resistance before

¹ Kant. I, 285.23-286.9. The date is indicated by Greg. I, 415.

² He was still in favour in March, when he witnessed an agreement with Venice; see MM III, 114.

³ Kant. II, 336.7-14.

⁴ Kant. II, 218.8-9; *CBB* I, 82, no. 8/36.

⁵ Kant. II, 507.15-18.

⁶ Kant. II, 544.11-17.

Kantakouzēnos' final victory.⁷ He was allowed to retain his title but Kantakouzēnos may have demoted its rank in the court hierarchy to slight him.⁸ He died before October 1351.⁹

3: The *megas doux* was theoretically in charge of the navy.¹⁰ It was one of the highest honours available: before the order of precedence was changed to the benefit of the *megas domestikos*, the title ranked 6th; even thereafter it fell only one place.¹¹ The Catalan Muntaner, whose commander Roger de Flor was appointed to the office, believed the office gave lordship of the islands and coasts as well.¹² In practice, actual operational responsibility for fleets was often entrusted to others; notably Apokaukos successfully commanded a fleet as *parakoimōmenos* in 1341 and there is no surviving evidence that Isaakios Asanēs ever commanded ships.¹³ Apokaukos commanded the fleet after his promotion to *megas doux* in November 1341 but the primary intention would have been to honour his commitment to the regency.

4: Iōannēs Gabalas (PLP 93286). Gabalas' selection for the diplomatic mission to Serbia, and his subsequent temporary flight from the city with Kantakouzēnos' supporters,¹⁴ suggests that he was one of Kantakouzēnos' *oikeioi*. If so, his treachery was rewarded: he was promoted to *prōtosebastos*, following Iōannēs V's coronation in November.¹⁵ Grēgoras states Gabalas

⁷ Kant. II, 559.17-19.

⁸ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 288.

⁹ *Register III*, no. 184, at 70.59-62.

¹⁰ Ps-Kod., 71-3. For the history of the office, see Guillard, *Institutions I*, 542-551. On the navy, Ch.9:10.

¹¹ Ps-Kod., 455. See also Ch.1:9.

¹² Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 40.

¹³ For Apokaukos' naval victory, Kant. I, 540.23-541.2; Ch.15:2. In the 13th century the *megas doux* rarely commanded the fleet, see Kyriakidis, 'Megas Domestikos', 254.

¹⁴ See Chapter 22.

¹⁵ Kant. II, 218.12-13.

had a naturally persuasive tongue¹⁶ and he soon became an influential figure within the regency as *mesazōn* to the Empress and ‘co-ruler’ (συνάρχων) with Apokaukos.¹⁷ Later he was given the rank of *meγas logothetēs*.¹⁸ Apokaukos seems to have left the civil administration in his hands while away from the city.¹⁹ However in 1344 Gabalas seemingly turned against the destructive futility of the war and was the leader of a peace party in Constantinople. Apokaukos went to great lengths to quash this movement and bought Gabalas off by once more promising the hand of his daughter (his failure to honour the previous pledge is not commented on).²⁰ The marriage never took place, however, as the two men fell out later in the same year; Gabalas fled to Hagia Sophia and then underwent tonsure. He was subsequently imprisoned after attempting to flee from the Pammakaristos Monastery and is not attested again.²¹ Kantakouzēnos remarks that he contributed greatly to the war against him. Loenertz plausibly suggests that he died in the massacre of prisoners following Apokaukos’ death.²² Gabalas has been identified with Iōannēs Palaiologos Rhaoul (*PLP* 24126), an uncle of Iōannēs V, who is also attested as both *prōtosebastos* and *meγas logothetēs* during the war.²³ This identification is however not conclusively demonstrable and rests partly on the assumption that dual occupancy of offices was very unusual.²⁴

¹⁶ Greg. II, 696.22-24.

¹⁷ Kant. II, 223.19-21.

¹⁸ Kant. II, 441.14; Loenertz, ‘Chancelier impérial’, 284-5.

¹⁹ Greg. II, 702.3-4.

²⁰ Kant. II, 437-442; Greg. II, 696-701.

²¹ Kant. II, 493-498, tells a long and darkly comical tale of his downfall, reflecting his bitterness towards him. Greg. II, 726, offers briefer confirmation.

²² Loenertz, ‘Lettres de Acindyne’, 128.

²³ For the original suggestion, Loenertz, ‘Lettres de Acindyne’, 129.

²⁴ See Loenertz, ‘Chancelier impérial’, 285; Kyritsēs, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 36-37. The identification is doubted by Lappa-Zizikas, ‘Chrysobulle inconnu’, 261-2, followed by the *PLP*. Fassoulakis, *Raoul-Ral(l)es*, 46-48, no. 31, remains undecided. For examples of dual occupancy, see Ch.14:11.

5: Gabalas was *megas droungarios tēs stolou*.²⁵ This title was ranked 32nd by Pseudo-Kodinos, who mentions that the holder stood in the same relationship to the *megas doux* as the *megas droungarios tēs viglas* did to the *megas domestikos*.²⁶ As the *droungarios tēs viglas* was responsible for establishing a watch on military camps, he presumably meant that the holder assisted the *megas doux* in naval matters.²⁷ There is no record of Gabalas' involvement in naval affairs; it is likely the title was honorific.

6: This is a slip by Kantakouzēnos, as he states Choumnos was given the dignity of *megas stratopedarchēs* later, at the celebration of Iōannēs V's coronation.²⁸ Choumnos would still have been *epi tēs trapezēs* at this point.

7: Disypatos (*PLP* 5526). He is probably Leōn Disypatos (*PLP* 5539), known by his signature on the patriarchal circular of December 1357 but otherwise unattested.²⁹ The names of Apokaukos' wives and the dates of their marriages are also undocumented.

8: Ἀνεψιᾶ could indicate niece or cousin. Her name and identity are otherwise unknown.

9: Isabella de la Rochette (*PLP* 6446). Kantakouzēnos states that she arrived with Anna and stayed on with her sons (of whom only Artōtos is known) after Anna's marriage to Andronikos in October 1326. Kantakouzēnos relates that 'the Empress Anna came from Savoy to Byzantion bringing a large royal retinue of men as well as women. For she

²⁵ The *megas droungarios tēs viglas* was Dēmētrios Tornikios Palaiologos; see Ch.2:27.

²⁶ Ps-Kod., 97.

²⁷ Ps-Kod., 207.

²⁸ Kant. II, 218.10.

²⁹ MM I, 375; Darrouzès, *Regestes*, 332-3, no. 2402.

brought from there many of those called knights and squires by the Latins and other nobles amongst them'.³⁰ Among the ladies he claims Isabella 'excelled the others in wisdom and was clearly fitted to live in the imperial palace because of her education and other qualities'.³¹ It can be assumed she was a close confidante of Anna and that she remained Catholic.³² Isabella stayed with Anna until after the war, when she returned to the west. She apparently gave a favourable report of Kantakouzēnos' clemency to the Pope, who praised his reconciliation with his defeated enemies.³³

10: Artōtos (*PLP* 1447). He is otherwise unattested. Muratore calls him Edoardo but then recognises the Greek is probably a rendering of Artaud.³⁴ His father is unknown.

³⁰ Kant. I, 204.5-9: ἐκ τῆς Σαβωΐας εἰς Βυζάντιον ἦκεν Ἄννα ἡ βασιλῆς, πολλὴν ἐπαγομένη καὶ βασιλικὴν θεραπείαν ἔκ τε ἀνδρῶν ὁμοίως καὶ γυναικῶν. ἔκ τε γὰρ τῶν παρὰ Λατίνους καβαλαρίων καὶ σκουερῶν λεγομένων ἤγε πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν ἄλλως παρ' αὐτοῖς εὐπατριδῶν.

³¹ Kant. I, 205.6-8: φρονήσει τε ὑπερέχουσα τὰς ἄλλας, καὶ βασιλικοῖς οἴκοις διὰ τε παιδείαν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἐπιτηδειότητα πρέπουσα ἐνδιατρίβειν.

³² For Pope Clement VI's correspondence with her in 1343, see Lemerle, *Aydin*, 184, n. 3.

³³ Kant. III, 54-5 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 189-90).

³⁴ Muratore, *Principessa Sabauda*, 345 and 346, n. 1.

Commentary on Chapter 20

1: Manouēl Kantakouzēnos Stratēgopoulos (*PLP* 10982).¹ Manouēl appears to have sided with his wife's family, the Choumnoi, in the civil war. If he is the same Manouēl Kantakouzēnos as mentioned later in the *Histories*, as an emissary in 1352 from Kantakouzēnos to Iōannēs V,² then he was a nephew of Kantakouzēnos and possibly the son of Nikēphoros Kantakouzēnos.³ A nobleman named Manouēl Kantakouzēnos is mentioned in a short chronicle dated to 1362/3 and may well be the same man.⁴

2: The actual expression here rendered as 'the last hope' is 'as if someone had dropped a sheet anchor', i.e., an attempt to escape ruin at the last moment.⁵

¹ Nicol, *Family*, 146.

² Kant. III, 251.

³ See Ch.22:9.

⁴ Wirth, 'Manuel Kantakuzenos Strategopulos'.

⁵ Kant. II, 127.24: ὡσπερ ἄγκυράν τινα καθεῖναι ἰεράν. On this expression, see FK III, 441, n. 187.

Commentary on Chapter 22

1: Andronikos Kantakouzēnos (*PLP* 10954).¹ Andronikos was the youngest of Kantakouzēnos' and Eirēnē's three sons, born 1334. He was transferred from house arrest to imprisonment in 1342 and died in the first outbreak of plague in summer 1347, shortly after the war ended.² His father paid him a short but poignant tribute.³

2: Eirēnē Palaiologina Kantakouzēnē (*PLP* 21357).⁴ She was a daughter of the *despotēs* Dēmētrios Palaiologos, the youngest son of Andronikos II, and remained in detention throughout the war. She married Matthaïos only in the winter of 1340/41.⁵ Her husband crowned her as empress at his own coronation⁶ in February 1354, and she presumably laid down this title at his abdication. They had two sons and three daughters together but little is recorded regarding her independently of her husband.

3: Matthaïos Asanēs Kantakouzēnos (*PLP* 10983).⁷ Matthaïos' date of birth is uncertain but was probably around 1325: Kantakouzēnos states that he was 'not yet beyond adolescence' at the start of the war.⁸ However he already had command of an army detachment and was absent from Constantinople on campaign.⁹ Matthaïos and his younger brother, Manouēl,

¹ Nicol, *Family*, 129, no. 26.

² Kant. III, 49.15-16. For the date of this outbreak, see Nicol, *Family*, 129, n. 3.

³ Kant. III, 52.19-53.1.

⁴ Papadopoulos, *Palaiologen*, 41, no. 64; Nicol, *Family*, 108-122, no. 24 (with husband).

⁵ Kant. I, 534.19-24. For the date see Nicol, *Family*, 108, n. 2. Fatouros and Krischer's contention that it took place in 1339 (FK I, 295, n. 361) is corrected by FK II, 248-9, n. 350.

⁶ Kant. III, 276.1.

⁷ Nicol, *Family*, 108-122, no. 24. His political career is traced in Asdracha, 'Rhodopes au XIV^e siècle', 199-201; see also Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 46-52.

⁸ Kant. II, 359.7: μήπω τὴν μειρακικὴν ὑπερβάντες ἡλικίαν. See also Nicol, *Family*, 108, n. 1.

⁹ Kant. II, 161.9-17.

accompanied their father west following his acclamation.¹⁰ Matthaios is not mentioned often during the war but, owing to his father's need for trusted commanders, he was given the governorship of the Thracian Chalkidikē following its acquisition in 1343 and, subsequently, command of an army in Thrace.¹¹ However their relationship was inevitably strained by Kantakouzēnos' stated intention to protect the succession of Iōannēs V; as the oldest son of the ruling emperor, Matthaios not unsurprisingly expected to be the imperial heir and Iōannēs V naturally suspected his ambition. Some of Kantakouzēnos' supporters, disaffected by his perhaps excessive efforts to reconcile his opponents, attempted to push him to proclaim Matthaios at his own coronation in 1346.¹² After the war, Matthaios was accorded a nameless rank above *despotēs* but below emperor,¹³ but, believing himself slighted, he subsequently seized Didymoteichon and Adrianople to rule as an appanage in late 1347. His mother, Eirēnē, negotiated a reconciliation but he effectively got his appanage.¹⁴ Matthaios seems to have been satisfied with this arrangement, and continued to support his father, until the latter upset the settlement by creating an appanage for Iōannēs V in 1351, intended to prevent him turning to Stefan Dušan.¹⁵ This new appanage was to include certain territories transferred from Matthaios. Open war between Matthaios and Iōannēs soon ensued; Kantakouzēnos sided with his son, bringing Turks to oppose Iōannēs V's Serbian allies, and in early 1353 Iōannēs was banished to Tenedos.¹⁶ Iōannēs subsequently attempted to force his way back into Constantinople, forcing Kantakouzēnos to acknowledge political reality and

¹⁰ Kant. II, 232.21-3. Kantakouzēnos later praises the intelligence and martial virtues of his sons: Kant. II, 359.5-17.

¹¹ Kant. II, 415.11-14, 582.4-13. For the Chalkidikē, see Ch.26:3.

¹² Kant. II, 565.7-568.13.

¹³ Kant. III, 33.4-9. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 287, suggests Matthaios was permitted to wear elements of imperial garb not usually allowed to a *despotēs*.

¹⁴ Kant. III, 47.1-49.15; Greg. II, 798.18-819.15 (in much greater detail).

¹⁵ Kant. III, 200.16-209.2.

¹⁶ Kant. III, 238-253. Grēgoras implicates Iōannēs Asanēs in this revolt, see Ch.17:4.

proclaim Matthaios as emperor, probably in April 1353.¹⁷ His coronation eventually followed in February 1354.¹⁸ Such a move might have been successful in the first flush of victory in 1347, but it now led only to renewed conflict, ultimately resulting in Kantakouzēnos' own abdication. The abdication settlement left Matthaios with his appanage, which Iōannēs V did not tolerate for long. After repeated bouts of warfare, Matthaios was captured in spring 1356 and ransomed by his rival. Kantakouzēnos writes gratefully concerning Iōannēs' refusal to blind Matthaios¹⁹ and, after a period in prison, he was convinced to finally abandon his claims and retire to the Peloponnese, where he ruled following the death of his younger brother in 1380, and died shortly before his father in 1383.²⁰

4: The *Monacensis* and *Laurentianus* manuscripts read ὀγδόη ἀρχομένου, i.e., 8th October.

5: Δῆμος is usually translated as 'common people' or simply 'the people'. The word does not denote a precisely or consistently identifiable social group, in general or within the *Histories*, although it always indicates urban, not rural, dwellers.²¹ Usually, as in the present passage, Kantakouzēnos refers to people of lower social status in the context of their involvement in politics, distinguishing them from the social elite, usually identified as *archons* or *dynatoi*. He generally considers clergy and soldiers²² to be distinct from the *demos* and sometimes distinguishes wealthier groups

¹⁷ Kant. III, 255-268; Greg. III, 187.19-189.2; CBB II, 282-3.

¹⁸ Kant. III, 270-276; Greg. III, 204.10-22; for the date, see Nicol, *Family*, 114, n. 16.

¹⁹ Kant. III, 336.5-340.22.

²⁰ Nicol, *Family*, 117-120. For the date, see CBB I, 69-70, no. 7/24, and Schreiner's commentary, II, 325-6.

²¹ For a survey of its use in the sources in this period, see Kontogiannopoulou, 'ΔΗΜΟΣ'. See also Malatras, *Social Structure*, 53-6.

²² E.g., Kant. III, 34.7-10.

as *mesoi tōn politōn* ('middle-class').²³ However *demos* can simply indicate the entire population of a town.²⁴ Numerous incidents of popular urban unrest are mentioned in the *Histories*; the uprising of the Zealots in Thessalonike and the revolt in Adrianople are particularly well-known examples.²⁵ There were undoubtedly extreme economic inequalities in Palaiologan society, vividly dramatised by Kantakouzēnos' contemporary, Alexios Makrembolitēs,²⁶ and the plight of the poor is acknowledged by Kantakouzēnos himself, although accepted as a simple fact of life. He also recognises that the desperation of the poor made them susceptible to manipulation for political purposes, particularly if provided with opportunity or encouragement to enrich themselves from others' property, as occurs in the present passage.²⁷

However, Kantakouzēnos presents other popular attacks on his followers as being more spontaneously initiated by the elements within the *demos* itself, and these have attracted serious socio-economic analysis by scholars. Such analytical approaches have often considered Kantakouzēnos to be the representative of an aristocratic class dominated by large 'feudal' landowners, in opposition to the more populist regency which, through the agency of Apokaukos in particular, sought support from the lower orders, and is sometimes considered to be aligned with the interests of a 'bourgeois' class of low-born bureaucrats, entrepreneurs and merchants.²⁸ However, this

²³ Kant. II, 179.5, 334.10.

²⁴ Kant. III, 278.12 (the inhabitants of Kallioupolis), as noted by Malatras, *Social Structure*, 53.

²⁵ Regarding the Zealots, see Ch.12:3; for the revolt in Adrianople, see Chapter 28. For a recent survey of fourteenth-century revolts and the problems posed by the evidence, see Kyritses, 'Revolts'.

²⁶ Makrembolitēs, 'Dialogue'.

²⁷ See also Kant. II, 177.13-178.1.

²⁸ E.g., Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine State*, 514-6; Nicol, *Last Centuries*, 191-5. The most detailed and rigorous analysis along these lines is Matschke, *Fortschritt und Reaktion*. See also the brief historiographical surveys in Kyritses, 'Revolts', 266-8; Malatras, 'Social Aspects', 99-101.

analysis has obscured the lack of evidence for any clear class-based political programme by the regency or the popular movements and the regency's apparent support among the majority of the aristocracy.²⁹ Consequently, although the war undoubtedly heightened and exploited social tensions, it is more easily understood as a confrontation between two rival, often fluid, groups within the ruling elite, and their associated patronage networks. Moreover, the emotional power of dynastic loyalty and popular sympathy for the young Iōannēs V should not be dismissed; just as popular expressions of loyalty to the Laskarids had been a feature of early resistance to the Palaiologoi,³⁰ Kantakouzēnos' opponents among the *demos* justify themselves as defenders of the young Iōannēs V.³¹ Popular sentiment appears to have remained in favour of Iōannēs V throughout Kantakouzēnos' reign and he admits, in 1353, that 'the *demos*, not only in Byzantium but also the other cities, bore particular favour for the young emperor.'³² Conversely, there appear to have been no expressions of popular support for Iōannēs V in western provinces; Kantakouzēnos states that Thessaly and Epiros, which had long resisted the imposition of Palaiologan rule, supported him and awaited his arrival.³³

6: The 'gate of the Porphyrogennētos' is also mentioned in regard to this incident by the chronicle of 1352.³⁴ It is not securely identified but is

²⁹ Malatras, 'Social Aspects' (a revision of Malatras, *Social Structure*, 241-290), makes sustained and persuasive refutation of the class-based interpretations of the war. The class interpretation is also criticised by Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 358-387, and Maksimović, 'Regency of Apocaucus', 187-8.

³⁰ Shawcross, 'Palaiologan Usurpation', esp. 209-211, 216-217.

³¹ Kant. II, 177.9-178.2.

³² Kant. III, 255.9-11: ἦσαν γὰρ οὐ Βυζαντίου μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πόλεων οἱ δῆμοι μάλιστα πρὸς τὸν νέον βασιλέα εὖνως ἔχοντες.

³³ Kant. II, 239.10-12.

³⁴ CBB I, 81, no. 8/35: πύργων τοῦ Πορφυρογεννήτου.

often associated with the building generally identified as the Palace of the Porphyrogennitos in Istanbul.³⁵

7: Grēgoras numbers the fugitives over sixty but tells a similar tale.³⁶

8: Apelmene (*PLP* 1151). He is known only from the *Histories*. He was of humble origins; his education was sponsored by Kantakouzēnos who recognised his potential and arranged for him to be given an education in oratory and military matters.³⁷ When Kantakouzēnos' cause seemed in imminent danger of defeat in 1342, Apelmene defected to Apokaukos.³⁸ Kantakouzēnos' bitter reproaches are testament to the trust he had invested in his protégé. His subsequent career is unknown. Kantakouzēnos later mentions an individual named Apelmene being captured by his enemies but it seems highly unlikely it was the same man.³⁹

9: Nikēphoros Kantakouzēnos (*PLP* 10986).⁴⁰ Nikēphoros was a first cousin of Kantakouzēnos.⁴¹ He presumably remained in prison for the duration of the war. Afterwards he was awarded the title *sebastokratōr* and remained loyal to his family, assisting Matthaïos against Iōannēs V in 1352 and 1355 (latterly also as governor of Adrianople).⁴² He was possibly the father of Manouēl Kantakouzēnos Stratēgopoulos.⁴³

³⁵ *CBB* II, 253, n. 39.

³⁶ *Greg.* II, 608.19.

³⁷ *Kant.* II, 247. See also Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 30, 147.

³⁸ *Kant.* II, 247-8.

³⁹ *Kant.* II, 432.

⁴⁰ See also Nicol, *Family*, 141-3, no. 34.

⁴¹ He had sometimes been mistakenly considered a brother of Kantakouzēnos, which was disproven by Nicol, *Family*, 142, n. 15-16.

⁴² *Kant.* III, 242-243, 310.

⁴³ Suggested by Nicol, *Family*, 146. For Manouēl, see Ch.20:1.

10: Fatouros and Krischer identify the Gabalas of this and the next chapter as Manouēl Gabalas, later Metropolitan of Ephesus. However, he is clearly the abovementioned Iōannēs Gabalas, who had simply avoided publicising his new loyalty to Apokaukos' faction.⁴⁴ Although Kantakouzēnos identifies him henceforth only by title, Grēgoras confirms that this is Iōannēs.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ FK III, 442, n. 203; *PLP* 3309. For Iōannēs Gabalas, see Ch.19:4.

⁴⁵ Greg. II, 696.22, 701.19.

Commentary on Chapter 23

1: The Gaura Monastery, presumably in the environs of Didymoteichon, and its *hēgoumenos* are otherwise unknown.¹ It may have been endowed by a member of the Gabras family and/or have been dedicated to Saint Theodōros Gabras.²

2: Dēmētrios Sgouropoulos (*PLP* 25015). His first name is known from Chapter 29, where he heads another luckless embassy. He is otherwise unattested.³

3: For these oaths, see Chapter 6.⁴

¹ FK III, 442, n. 204.

² For Theodōros, see Bryer, 'Gabrades', 175, no. 3.

³ FK III, 442, n. 205, incorrectly identifies him as Stephanos Sgouropoulos (*PLP* 25034), who was active in Trebizond.

⁴ Kant. II, 47.8-12.

Commentary on Chapter 24

1: Tzyrakēs (PLP 28154). Apparently one of Anna's *oikeioi*; he later reappears, 'pitying the great misfortune of the Romans',¹ as the organiser of the conspiracy which allows Kantakouzēnos to re-enter Constantinople, ending the war.² Tzyrakēs is briefly mentioned in the anti-Palamite *tomos* of July 1347, which reveals little more than that he had a daughter.³ He is otherwise unattested. Moravcsik suggests he may have been of Turkish origins, his name a rendering of Čıraq.⁴ However several other individuals with this name are known, so any direct Turkish descent probably belongs to previous generations.⁵

2: Even in such small matters, Kantakouzēnos takes the opportunity to present Apokaukos as the true villain and the Empress as a moderating influence or reluctant participant.

3: Kantakouzēnos' precise meaning is unclear but he appears to refer to territories that he possessed as private property and others he held as 'gifts' from Andronikos III, possibly by appointment as their governor/*kephalē*.⁶ He apparently invested his own resources in improving (probably fortifying) these territories,⁷ possibly without receiving their (full) fiscal income, and apparently without any guarantee of their continued possession, as the office of *kephalē* could theoretically be re-allocated by the Emperor. If Kantakouzēnos had been granted these territories as *pronoia*, he

¹ Kant. II, 598.22-3: τὴν τοσαύτην Ῥωμαίων οἰκτείρων κακοπραγίαν.

² Kant. II, 598-600.

³ PG vol. 150, col. 881. On the *tomos*, see Meyendorff, *Palamas*, 89; *Regestes*, 227-8, no. 2281.

⁴ Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica* II, 315.

⁵ PLP 28155-28159.

⁶ For this office, see Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 117-66.

⁷ One of which appears to have been the town of Polystylon (ancient Abdēra): Kant. II, 226.16-22; Greg. II, 626.10-11.

would have received their full fiscal income for life, in addition to any other benefit he obtained.

4: For God being truth, cf. John 14:6.

Commentary on Chapter 25

1: Andronikos' previously stated last words fall far short of urging Kantakouzēnos to become emperor.¹ Regarding the political relationship between Kantakouzēnos and Andronikos, see above, Section 5.1.1.

2: While the speech of Kantakouzēnos' supporters is clearly self-serving and written with hindsight, most of his *oikeioi* and partisans would undoubtedly have favoured his acclamation.² The attacks on his supporters and their property in the capital made it clear that they had little to gain and much to lose if the other faction triumphed. Their threat to wage war even without his approval is not far-fetched; the competitive politics of the Balkans gave many opportunities for soldiers and landowners to seek the protection and gifts of other rulers: Syrgiannēs and Chrelja offer two examples.³

3: Kantakouzēnos recognises that elements of the army did not support him; by inviting them to leave at the outset, he was undoubtedly hoping to minimise disaffection and desertions later. He also appears to suggest that those who take advantage of his offer to depart in search of plunder will suffer exemplary punishment.

¹ Kant. II, 35.19-36.3.

² Kantakouzēnos has already stated that his young partisans among the army officers and nobility, who had offended the Patriarch and Empress, were accompanying him to Didymoteichon (see Chapter 13).

³ For Syrgiannēs, Ch.14:9; for Chrelja, Ch.11:15.

Commentary on Chapter 26

1: Morrha was the contemporary name for a province surrounding the lower and middle Arda valley in the central Rhodopes, to the west of Adrianople.¹ The Arda joins the Hebros just above Adrianople. The region was known as Achridos in earlier centuries. Asdracha provides a gazetteer of the settlements in this region, which were generally small.² Only the most important, albeit outlying, town of Tzernomianou is mentioned by Kantakouzēnos in the present translation.³ It is likely that Morrha's inhabitants were experienced in warfare owing to its status as a border region; in 1323/4 Andronikos III chased a Tatar raiding force from this area.⁴ It suffered heavily in the civil war; after being secured relatively quickly by Kantakouzēnos in 1343, the Bulgarians attempted to seize it but were forced out.⁵ Later Apokaukos ravaged the area, burning many of the villages.⁶

2: Rhodopē is the mountainous district delimited roughly by the Hebros in the north and east, the Nestos in the west, and the narrow Aegean coastal plain in the south.⁷ Settlements within this region tended to be small and the larger cities at its fringes, such as Didymoteichon and Philippopolis, are mentioned as separate entities by Kantakouzēnos. It is impossible to be certain of the precise extent of Roman, Serbian, or Bulgarian authority in this era but the majority must have been under Roman control in 1341, as Philippopolis, on the upper Hebros, had been captured by Andronikos III's

¹ Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 10; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 368-9.

² Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 148-154. Kant. II, 404.7-8, refers to them as *πολίχνια* (small towns).

³ See Ch.30:5.

⁴ Kant. I, 191.10-193.10.

⁵ Kant. II, 404.7-10, 426.20-427.21.

⁶ Kant. II, 436.16-21.

⁷ See Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, passim; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 427-8. Asdracha, 'Rhodopes au XIV^e siècle' offers a tighter administrative and political focus, particularly for the civil wars.

general Bryennios in 1323.⁸ Rhodopē is a geographical rather than an administrative identity and Kantakouzēnos refers to the provinces Stenimachos and Tzepainē, as well as Morrha, being parts of it.⁹ He clearly distinguishes the region from Thrace and Macedonia.¹⁰ Kantakouzēnos campaigned in the area with Umur during 1343¹¹ and it was later briefly assigned to Matthaios Kantakouzēnos as an appanage under the short-lived agreement with Iōannēs V which attended his father's abdication.¹²

3: The 'Chalkidikē in Thrace' is an area that is referred to repeatedly by Kantakouzēnos, often simply as 'Chalkidikē'.¹³ It appears to be synonymous with the old *theme* of Boleron,¹⁴ a name still used by Grēgoras.¹⁵ The region is defined by Lemerle as the part of Thrace between the sea and the mountains (the Rhodopes), of which Xantheia (modern Xanthi) and Koumoutzēna (modern Komotini) were the principal towns besides Gratianoupolis.¹⁶ Kantakouzēnos describes the latter as the 'metropolis of the Chalkidikē'.¹⁷ Matthaios remained strongly associated with the area, later being given command of it during the civil war and seemingly remaining as its governor until it was later transferred to Iōannēs V as part of his appanage.¹⁸

⁸ Kant. I, 178.15-179.1.

⁹ Kant. I, 135.19-20: τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ῥοδόπην ἐπαρχιῶν Στενιμάχου καὶ Τζεπαίνης πόλεων; Kant. II, 404.24-5.

¹⁰ Kant. II, 180.14-20.

¹¹ Kant. II, 404-5.

¹² Kant. III, 292.16-21.

¹³ E.g., Kant. I, 437.16-17 (τὴν Χαλκιδικὴν τῆς Θράκης); II, 422.6, 427.7, 433.8 (Χαλκιδική).

¹⁴ Soustal, *Thrakien*, 214; Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 259.

¹⁵ Greg. III, 564.10. The designation of this region as the Chalkidikē is not encountered in literary sources other than Kantakouzēnos.

¹⁶ Lemerle, *Aydin*, 170, n. 6.

¹⁷ Kant. II, 422.9: μητρόπολιν οὖσαν τῆς Χαλκιδικῆς.

¹⁸ Kant. II, 427.5-7; Kant. III, 208.14-18.

4: The imprisonment of the brothers was related in Chapter 17.¹⁹ Fatouros and Krischer believe their liberator to have been an unnamed and otherwise unknown sister of Kantakouzēnos' wife rather than Eirēnē herself (i.e., understanding τὴν ἀδελφήν here as Kantakouzēnos' sister-in-law).²⁰ However, Grēgoras confirms that it was Eirēnē herself who went to them 'with all haste, and providing firm guarantees to her brothers on her own account, returned as quickly as possible'.²¹ As Kantakouzēnos had conspicuously failed to secure the brothers' release before this date, the mission probably required Eirēnē's diplomacy to persuade them to be become dedicated partisans of Kantakouzēnos, rather than siding with their father and uncles, a possibility which Grēgoras alludes to.²² However, Grēgoras mistakenly places their prison in Abdera rather than Bēra, and their release after Kantakouzēnos' acclamation,²³ while Kantakouzēnos states they were present at the festivities.²⁴

5: The monastery of the Theotokos Gorgoepēkoos ('swift-hearing') was founded by Andronikos II's *mesazōn*, Nikēphoros Choumnos, in the late thirteenth century. Laurent located it on the south side of the city, towards the Propontis, in the Vlanga district.²⁵ It was presumably a reasonably well-

¹⁹ Kant. II, 111-2.

²⁰ FK III, 445, n. 243.

²¹ Greg. II, 625.23-626.1: ἀπάση δραμοῦσα σπουδῆ, καὶ δι' ἑαυτῆς αὐτὴ βεβαίως παρασχομένη τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς τὰς ἐγγύας, τάχιστα ἐπανῆκε.

²² Greg. II, 625.4-7.

²³ Greg. II, 624.23-625.4.

²⁴ Kant. II, 167.1-3. Kantakouzēnos may reasonably be assumed to have been better informed on these details and his account is generally preferred over Grēgoras': see Van Dieten, *Gregoras III*, 274, n. 126; Fassoulakis, *Raoul-Ral(l)es*, 74; *PLP* 1506. Fatouros and Krischer surprisingly accept Grēgoras' implied date of 1342 without commenting Kantakouzēnos' conflicting testimony: FK III, 438, n. 162.

²⁵ Laurent, 'Théotokos Gorgoépikoos'. Laurent's designation of this region as the Heptaskalon, however, is no longer accepted: see Magdalino, 'Maritime Neighborhoods', 221.

known landmark when Kantakouzēnos was writing. The large quantities of agricultural produce may have been intended for sale on the export market.²⁶

6: This proverbial expression indicates a multitude of misfortunes.²⁷

²⁶ Matschke, 'Commerce', 801.

²⁷ Kant. II, 165.21: κακῶν Ἰλιάς. See D. Whitehead (trans.), 'Ἰλιάς κακῶν', *Suda On Line*, <<http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/iota/314>>, 18 October 2004, last accessed 21 October 2014.

Commentary on Chapter 27

1: The date of Kantakouzēnos' acclamation is recorded as 26 October 1341. This is confirmed by Grēgoras, who states it took place on the feast of St. Dēmētrios.¹

2: The presence of senators is cited by Asdracha as evidence for the existence of a municipal senate which represented local interests in Didymoteichon.² Weiss considers the possibility of a local senate but speculates that Kantakouzēnos may instead have been emphasising his acclamation by the traditional triad of Senate, People and Army.³ The role of 'the people' seems to be rather downplayed here though. Although some form of municipal council may have existed, as it possibly did in Thessalonike,⁴ it seems that Kantakouzēnos is simply referring to the members of the imperial court serving with the army, whom he has previously mentioned.⁵

3: The word *pilos* is a generic term for a hat worn at court. By the fourteenth century, hats had become one of the main insignia of court hierarchy.⁶ Although the exact form of the imperial *pilos* is unknown, it is not a crown. When Kantakouzēnos' son Matthaïos was proclaimed in 1353, he placed on his head a *pilos* 'decorated with pearls and gems, just as is the custom for emperors'.⁷

¹ CBB I, 82, no. 8/35; Greg. II, 661.18-20.

² Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 134.

³ Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 40.

⁴ Maksimović, *Provincial Administration*, 252-6. In contrast, Kyritsēs, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 63, dismisses all provincial senates as a 'persisting historiographical fiction'. For Kyritsēs' interpretation of local assemblies, see Kyritsēs, 'Revolts', 270-272.

⁵ Kant. II, 69.5.

⁶ Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 323-4.

⁷ Kant. III, 269.11-12: λίθῳ τε κεκοσμημένον καὶ μαργάραις, ὡσπερ ἔθος βασιλεῦσι.

4: Eirēnē Asanina Kantakouzēnē, Empress of the Romans 1341-1354 (*PLP* 10935).⁸ She was a daughter of Andronikos Asanēs and thus granddaughter of Bulgarian Emperor Ivan III Asanēs. Her birth date is unknown, but she married before 1320; Nicol suggests 1318.⁹ Kantakouzēnos rarely mentions her before the civil war but her acclamation as Empress thrust her into the centre of events. When her husband departed on campaign, in March 1342, he was accompanied by both his adult sons as well as her brother Iōannēs Asanēs; she was left to secure Didymoteichon along with her remaining brother Manouēl.¹⁰ In this role she secured the loyalty of the forces in Didymoteichon in the face of Kantakouzēnos' early reversals,¹¹ attempted to secure Bulgarian support – an effort which nevertheless backfired – and negotiated with Umur of Aydin who arrived to offer assistance in winter 1342/3.¹² Kantakouzēnos crowned her as Empress on 21 May 1346 and again, following his victory, on 21 May 1347.¹³ Thereafter she continued to act as his deputy when he was away from Constantinople, organising the defence of the city against the Genoese in 1348 and against Iōannēs V and his partisans in 1353.¹⁴ She was also involved in efforts to reconcile her son Matthaios with her son-in-law Iōannēs V, with mixed success.¹⁵ After her abdication, she took the monastic name of Eugenia on 11 December 1354.¹⁶ She subsequently spent time in both Constantinople and the Peloponnese; the date of her death is unknown but occurred between

⁸ See also Nicol, *Family*, 104-108, no. 23; Nicol, *Byzantine Lady*, 71-81.

⁹ Nicol, *Family*, 104.

¹⁰ Kant. II, 195.4-196.3.

¹¹ Kant. II, 281-7.

¹² Kant. II, 336.17-346.

¹³ Kant. II, 564.10-20; Kant. III, 29.1-7; Greg. II, 787.9-788.15.

¹⁴ Greg. II, 845.9ff.; Kant. III, 255.5-22.

¹⁵ Kant. III, 48.16-49.15, 238.22-241.19.

¹⁶ Failler, 'Chronologie', 123.

1363 and 1379.¹⁷ Given that Kantakouzēnos makes no mention of it, it probably took place after he completed the *Histories*. Kantakouzēnos praised her for ‘demonstrating greater spirit than is accorded to women’ and for her intelligence.¹⁸ He clearly relied upon female members of his *oikos* as loyal guardians of his political interests, despite his avowal of traditional attitudes regarding the incapacity of women for politics.¹⁹ Grēgoras, who considered her a potential ally against her husband’s Palamism, also praised her generously.²⁰

5: The church of Geōrgios Palaiokastritēs is no longer extant but a nineteenth century Armenian church dedicated to Hagios Geōrgios stands on what is probably the same site, within the walled acropolis of Didymoteichon.²¹

6: The emperor would perform *proskynēsis* only before holy objects and persons.²² It is not known what form it took in this case but Kantakouzēnos probably venerated and kissed the icon of the saint.

7: The origins of the term *kavallarioi* are described by Bartusis.²³ He suggests the phrase ‘doing everything that was customary for them’ (πάντα ἐπ’ αὐτοῖς τὰ εἰθισμένα πράττων) indicates that Kantakouzēnos gave these new knights *pronoia* grants.²⁴ This seems plausible, given the bond between

¹⁷ Nicol, *Family*, 107.

¹⁸ Kant. II, 336.20: μείζον ἐπιδειξαμένη ἢ κατὰ γυναικεῖον φρόνημα; Kant. III, 49.5-7.

¹⁹ See Ch.6:4.

²⁰ Greg. II, 625.10-18, 692.21-693.16.

²¹ Giannopoulos, *Didymoteichon*, 160, n. 277; Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 142. For possible origins of the name, see FK II, 446, n. 252.

²² Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 386.

²³ See Bartusis, ‘Kavallarioi’.

²⁴ Bartusis, ‘Kavallarioi’, 344-5; Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 325-6. Concerning *pronoia*, see Ch.8:2.

knighthood and landholding. Nicol's assertion that 'the Latin troops then conferred on John the western order of knighthood' is not supported by the Greek text.²⁵

8: Pseudo-Kodinos provides a protocol for an imperial coronation but not an acclamation, as is being described here; Kantakouzēnos' coronation followed at Adrianople on 21 May 1346 and was repeated at Constantinople on 21 May 1347.²⁶ Pseudo-Kodinos' description of the coronation protocol includes that the imperial couple feast after the ceremony while the court title holders stand by and the most distinguished serve them at the table.²⁷ In this context it would have been Angelos' duty as *pinkernēs*, the imperial cup-bearer, to serve them.²⁸ A similar banquet appears to be taking place here.

9: Pseudo-Kodinos confirms that emperors wore white garments as a sign of mourning, although he reserves them for 'when an emperor's father or mother or wife dies, or a son or grandson'; the colour he prescribes for mourning a brother is yellow.²⁹ However, Kantakouzēnos must have been following a known tradition for his gesture to have meaning but it remains unknown how well established this practice was. Kantakouzēnos apparently continued to wear white until he entered Constantinople again, justifying this by reference to the death of his friend Andronikos, followed by the death

²⁵ Nicol, *Reluctant Emperor*, 56.

²⁶ Kant. II, 564.10-22; Kant. III, 29.1-14. Kantakouzēnos incorrectly records the date as 13 May for the latter; see Greg. II, 788.10-13; *CBB* I, 85, no. 8/48b. Kantakouzēnos must be mistaken since the new Patriarch, who crowned him, was appointed only on 17 May: see *CBB* II, 270-1; Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 269.

²⁷ Ps-Kod., 237-9.

²⁸ Ps-Kod., 157.

²⁹ See Ps-Kod., 263 (trans. Macrides). See *ibid.*, n. 769, for the conflicting evidence on how well established this practice actually was.

of his own mother, and finally the inappropriateness of spending money on lavish garments while his own supporters were in want.³⁰

10: Cf. John 15:20.

11: Hilariōn, Metropolitan of Didymoteichon (*PLP* 8169). Kantakouzēnos elsewhere refers to him as ἀρχιερέύς (translated as 'Archbishop') and μετροπολίτης (Metropolitan) interchangeably. Kantakouzēnos was likely partly responsible for his appointment, which may have taken place as late as 1341.³¹ Kantakouzēnos was greatly impressed by the Metropolitan's prophetic powers, attested also by Philotheos of Selymbria, and mentions his (invariably correct) predictions on a number of occasions.³² In an autograph marginal note to a MS of his *Antirrhetika* against Prochoros Kydōnēs, Kantakouzēnos wrote that Hilariōn was one of the three saints he had witnessed in his lifetime.³³ Despite chiding Kantakouzēnos here, Hilariōn clearly remained favourably disposed, staying in Didymoteichon throughout the war until he died, apparently of natural causes, in mid-1344.³⁴ He did not prevent Kantakouzēnos conscripting the local clergy into digging a defensive ditch around the suburbs, although he

³⁰ Greg. II, 612.5-17.

³¹ Nicol, 'Hilarion', 193-4. The evidence offered for the date is inconclusive, however.

³² Kant. II, 289.7-289.2, 340.1-341.9, 343.1-344.4, 401.20-402.8. Regarding Philotheos' biography of Hilariōn, see Nicol, 'Hilarion', 191-199.

³³ Meyendorff, *Grégoire Palamas*, 34, n. 33 (not reproduced in the English edition). The other two were the Patriarch Athanasios and an otherwise unknown Gabriēl, archimandrite of the Pantokrator Monastery in Didymoteichon. The *Antirrhetika* was composed in 1368/9; see Nicol, *Family*, 99.

³⁴ Kant. II, 426. Kantakouzēnos mentions Hilariōn's death shortly after the crusader victory over the Turks at Longos (Kant. II, 422-3), which can be dated from Latin sources to 13 May 1344 (see Carr, *Motivations and Response*, 192). Nicol, 'Hilarion', 199, also supports 1344. The *PLP* and *Regestes*, 152, no. 2196, offer no evidence for placing his demise in 1343. The *PLP* also misdates the tenure of his successor, Theolēptos (*PLP* 7506), as running concurrently from 1341.

typically offered a prophetic comment that it would never be needed.³⁵ Furthermore Hilariōn apparently wrote to the *prōtostratōr* Andronikos Palaiologos and to Apokaukos himself at different times, advising them not to resist Kantakouzēnos as God had determined he would ultimately be victorious.³⁶

12: The ordeal by hot iron, here suggested by the anonymous husband, is not identified as a Byzantine legal practice before 1204, although a number of cases are documented after this date.³⁷ Ordeal was generally employed in cases where the truth could not otherwise be determined owing to lack of evidence. Macrides suggests that the practice may have pre-dated Latin influence, but this is not securely established.³⁸ Although this incident does not take place in a formal judicial context, Kantakouzēnos offers no comment on any foreign origin of the ordeal, or upon its obvious lack of reliability, in marked contrast to Akropolitēs who famously condemned it as a barbarian practice.³⁹

13: Kantakouzēnos' assertion that the adulterous woman faced death is surprising. Historically, adulterers had faced harsh punishment under Roman law: both men and women probably faced a death sentence under the laws of Constantine and, under Justinian, the penalty was death until 556, when only the male had to be executed and the female confined to a monastery.⁴⁰ However, subsequent emperors tended to reduce the use of capital punishment on philanthropic grounds and both Blastarēs' 1335

³⁵ Kant. II, 289.9-23.

³⁶ Kant. II, 305, 341-2.

³⁷ For a recent summary and review of the literature, see Macrides, 'Trial by Ordeal'.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 43-6.

³⁹ Akropolitēs, *History* (trans. Macrides), 260-263; *ibid.*, 267, n. 28, for commentary on origins of the practice.

⁴⁰ Arjava, *Women and Law*, 193-202.

compilation of canon and civil law, the *Syntagma*, and Harmenopoulos' 1345 handbook of civil law, the *Procheiron tōn Nomōn* (better known as the *Hexabiblos*), detail only non-lethal punishments, such as nose-slitting, tonsure and loss of property.⁴¹ Most cases of adultery would never have reached court and private vengeance probably remained common, but Kantakouzēnos does not appear to suggest that the context was extra-judicial. So either he relates customary judicial practice, as opposed to legal theory, or deliberately exaggerates the dangers faced by the woman to heighten the sanctity of Hilariōn, whose miracle saves the woman from death. Kantakouzēnos' approval of Hilariōn's intervention does not contravene imperial notions of justice, as non-observance of harsh laws, in the name of philanthropy, was considered a virtue in emperors.⁴²

14: In an ecclesiastical context, the *skimpous* is a portable bishop's seat, similar to an ancient curule chair.⁴³ Although the development of the fixed *synthronon* made it obsolete in larger Orthodox churches, it remained in use in smaller churches. Kantakouzēnos earlier mentions a *skimpous* (although not described as 'holy') provided for Andronikos III's use when receiving judgement from his grandfather so similar portable seats may have been regular court furniture.⁴⁴

15: For these further miraculous prophecies, see Ch.27:11, above.

⁴¹ *Syntagma*, 374-379; *Hexabiblos*, VI, ii, 14-17; ii, 23-25 (trans. Freshfield, 23-26).

⁴² Angelov, *Ideology*, 140-143.

⁴³ The author is indebted to the Right Revd. Archimandrite Dr Hieronymos Nikolopoulos for this information (pers. comm.). The *Souda* simply defines it as a bed or cot: W. Hutton (trans.), 'Σκίμπος', *Suda On Line*, <<http://www.stoa.org/sol-entries/sigma/607>>, 21 February 2014, last accessed 31 December 2014.

⁴⁴ Kant. I, 65.3, 67.4-5.

Commentary on Chapter 28

1: The Melas (Black) River is the modern Karasu. The river took its name from the dark, fertile earth it cuts through before emptying into a lagoon (Athyra Kolpos/Büyükçekmece Gölü) approximately 30km west of Constantinople. Forces stationed in this region could intercept military movements from Constantinople into Thrace. The river was not considered to be an obstacle in summer but was prone to sudden flooding in winter, most spectacularly in 1147 when it caused significant damage to Conrad III's crusading army.¹ The river is mentioned a number of times throughout the *Histories*.² Kinnamos stated that the area provided good pasture, corresponding with Kantakouzēnos' account of herds of horses being reared near the river in 1321;³ naturally it would have been an attractive bivouac for cavalry. The other Melas River in Thrace, known from antiquity, drains into the Gulf of Saros at the west side of the Gallipoli peninsula, therefore also west of Selymbria, so cannot be the one referred to here.⁴

2: Peirinthos (or Perinthos), today Marmara Ereğlisi, is elsewhere always called Hērakleia, the name it was given when refounded in the late third century.⁵ Grēgoras prefers the older name but notes that they are interchangeable.⁶ Hērakleia lay on the north coast of the Propontis on the Via Egnatia, about 90km west of Constantinople and roughly 35km west of Selymbria. Following this proposed coastal route would therefore bring Kantakouzēnos' force to meet up with the army on the Melas and, having

¹ Chōniatēs, *History*, 64.56-65.93 (trans. Magoulias, 37-38); Kinnamos, *History*, 73.18-74.10 (trans. Brand, 63).

² See Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 527-8.

³ Kinnamos, *History*, 73.20-21; Kant. I, 90.10-12.

⁴ For this river, Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 528.

⁵ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 399; for the town's history, *ibid.*, 398-408.

⁶ Greg. III, 78.14-15: τὴν Πείρινον τὴν καὶ Ἡράκλειαν καλουμένην.

thus secured its rear, permit an advance on the capital. Kantakouzēnos, acknowledging Hērakleia's strategic location on the main western approach to Constantinople, mentions it frequently. In the first civil war it was held by Syrgiannēs and briefly besieged by Andronikos III.⁷ Following the uprisings in the Thracian cities, it clearly declared for the regency and Kantakouzēnos later mentions it as a mustering point for regency forces.⁸ Iōannēs V fell ill there, while accompanying Apokaukos' army, and had to return to the capital.⁹ It was subsequently the site of an abortive peace negotiation between Kantakouzēnos and Apokaukos.¹⁰ It is unknown when the city defected to Kantakouzēnos, but was probably in his hands by the time he took Selymbria in 1344/5. Hērakleia cannot have been taken by storm because Kantakouzēnos states, when the Genoese plundered it in 1351, that it was wealthy as it had not been captured since the time of Andronikos II, referring to the Catalan sack of 1305.¹¹ It is a demonstration of the Empire's insecurity in the fourteenth century, that a city could be considered wealthy if it had not been sacked in the previous 46 years.

3: *Dynatoi*, literally 'the powerful' and translated elsewhere as 'leading men', broadly refers to the upper class in the provincial cities, embracing the wealthiest local landholders and members of the local administration. The latter are occasionally distinguished as *archons*, 'rulers',¹² although the distinction is generally artificial.¹³ The high aristocracy tended to live in

⁷ Kant. I, 126, 133.

⁸ Kant. II, 421, 433, 479.

⁹ Kant. II, 432.20-23. Kantakouzēnos probably mentions this incident to show he never took the field against Iōannēs V in person.

¹⁰ Kant. II, 479-482.

¹¹ Kant. III, 212.3-7; Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 76.

¹² E.g., Kant. II, 180.17-18: τοὺς τε ἄρχοντας αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν πολιτῶν συλλαμβάνοντες τοὺς δυνατοὺς.

¹³ See Angold, 'Archons and Dynasts', esp. 237. For extended examination of these groups, and the difficulties of terminology, see Malatras, *Social Structure*, 47-9, 56-79.

Constantinople, unless holding office as provincial governors. Kantakouzēnos generally refers to members of the imperial aristocracy as εὐγενεῖς ('nobles' or 'well-born') when talking about those related to the leading families – particularly to the imperial family – and συγκλητικοί ('senators') for court title holders, who were often, but not necessarily, from the leading families. However, the high aristocracy can also be referred to as *archons*. Any formal definition of the aristocracy is elusive; in contrast to the situation in parts of Western Europe, there was no legally defined noble caste.¹⁴

4: Branos (*PLP* 3186), Mougdoughēs (*PLP* 19414) and Phrangopoulos (*PLP* 30086). These individuals are known only from the *Histories*. Kantakouzēnos probably exaggerates Branos' lowly status as he was subsequently appointed *phylax* of Adrianople by Anna, in which role he foiled another attempt to hand over the city to Kantakouzēnos.¹⁵ Subsequently, all three were still alive and apparently at liberty in 1345, after Adrianople finally transferred its allegiance. Phrangopoulos subsequently joined the train of Kantakouzēnos' army where, somewhat ironically, he was rewarded by Kantakouzēnos for foiling an attempt to poison him.¹⁶

5: *Aristoi*, as discussed above (Ch.28:3), is not Kantakouzēnos' usual term for the upper classes although it is employed frequently in the context of civic unrest to indicate Kantakouzēnos' supporters. It is likely that he was partly influenced by his use of Thucydides in his descriptions of the revolts¹⁷ but also deliberately sought to make a moral distinction: his supporters were

¹⁴ Laiou, 'Aristocracy', esp. 131-3. In detail, see Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*. For an overview of recent scholarship on the Palaiologan aristocracy, see Stathakopoulos, 'Expansion and retraction'.

¹⁵ Kant. II, 485-6.

¹⁶ Kant. II, 557-9.

¹⁷ See the Introduction, Section 4.3.3.

the 'best' people, not only in terms of wealth but virtue, while his enemies relied upon the poor, the vulgar, and the criminal. Grēgoras even more explicitly divides the general population into wise and foolish, rich and poor, educated and ignorant, moderate and seditious, and states 'All the best aligned themselves to him [Kantakouzēnos], while all the worst went to those in Byzantion.'¹⁸ In fact, it is reasonably clear from analysis of individuals named by Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras that most of the aristocracy rapidly fell in behind the regency.¹⁹ However the idea that the 'best' supported Kantakouzēnos has been remarkably successful as a piece of propaganda, leading to widespread acceptance by scholars that Kantakouzēnos represented an aristocratic party.²⁰

¹⁸ Greg. II, 613.10-614.1, esp. 613.16-17: καὶ τὰ μὲν βελτίω πάντα πρὸς ἐκεῖνον μετερῶν ἡκότα τὰ δὲ χείρω πάντα πρὸς τοὺς ἐν Βυζαντίῳ.

¹⁹ Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 365-9; Malatras, 'Social Aspects', 101-108.

²⁰ As discussed in Ch.22:5.

Commentary on Chapter 29

1: Iōannēs Batatzēs (*PLP* 2518).¹ At this time, he held the rank of *prōtokynēgos*.² Kantakouzēnos calls him ‘a worthy man of reason, not only in his intelligence but also in his experience and daring concerning battles.’³ Grēgoras criticises his low birth and states that he became rich from his office as an *apographeus*.⁴ Like Apokaukos and Kantakouzēnos, he had used his considerable wealth to build himself a private fortress.⁵ His desertion clearly suggests that, following Kantakouzēnos’ initial setbacks, many thought his cause was doomed. Batatzēs returned to the field the following spring as a military leader for the regency, in which role he apparently offered to negotiate peace with Kantakouzēnos, although the effort came to nothing.⁶ By October 1342, Batatzēs had been promoted to *meγas chartoularios*,⁷ although Kantakouzēnos continues to style him *prōtokynēgos*.⁸ He had strong links with the inner circle of the regency, having married a son to the Patriarch’s daughter and a daughter to one of Apokaukos’ sons.⁹ In mid-1344 he nevertheless changed sides again, bringing a number of cities and the support of his family with him; Kantakouzēnos rewarded him with the title

¹ The *PLP* entry includes a number of mistakes, including confusion with an unrelated Batatzēs mentioned by Kant. II, 282, 285.

² *Actes de Docheiariou*, 148-158, no. 20 (dated April 1341).

³ Kant. II, 554.9-11: ἦν γὰρ λόγου ἄξιος ὁ ἀνήρ, οὐ συνέσει μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμπειρία καὶ τόλμη τῇ κατὰ τὰς μάχας.

⁴ Greg. II, 741.6-8. For an example of his activities in this role see the *praktikon* issued by him, Bartusis, *Land and Privilege*, 620-23. For *apographeis*, see Ch.8:7.

⁵ See Ch.10:9.

⁶ Kant. II, 197-9, 213.19-21.

⁷ Guillou, *Saint-Jean-Prodrome*, 118-9, no. 36. If the dating is correct, the emperor who issued the document must have been Iōannēs V, despite Guillou’s uncertainty, as Kantakouzēnos would not at this time have described Batatzēs as οἰκειοῦ τῆς βασιλείας μου.

⁸ Kant. II, 475.2-3.

⁹ Kant. II, 475.22-24. It is likely Kantakouzēnos would have mentioned if either or both of these marriages pre-dated the war, so they probably followed his defection.

megas stratopedarchēs and gifts to his relatives.¹⁰ While Kantakouzēnos, who was achieving military dominance by this time, presents him as an ideological convert, Grēgoras relates that Batatzēs fell out with Apokaukos when, having purchased the governorship of Thessalonike from the Empress, he was removed from the post in favour of Apokaukos' son, Iōannēs.¹¹ In the meantime Batatzēs had acquired Turkish allies of his own, by marrying another daughter to Süleyman Karasi.¹² After some service to Kantakouzēnos, he was tempted into betraying him again in late 1345. Grēgoras places the initiative for this with the Empress, Kantakouzēnos with Batatzēs himself.¹³ In either case it was clear he intended to occupy the role left vacant by Alexios Apokaukos' demise. Kantakouzēnos took this threat extremely seriously as Batatzēs' alliance with Karasi potentially counterbalanced his own with the Ottomans. However Batatzēs was murdered by his allies before any battle took place; Kantakouzēnos attributes this to divine favour and Turkish respect for him, Grēgoras to the Turks' disappointment that Kantakouzēnos' scorched earth tactics had left them nothing to plunder.¹⁴ His career is a monument to the fragility of political loyalties among the aristocracy.

2: This military unit is not otherwise attested. Bartusis plausibly suggests that the name was attached to a company of soldiers originating

¹⁰ Kant. II, 475-6. Much of the literature (including *PLP*) dates Batatzēs' appointment as *megas stratopedarchēs* to 1343. However Kantakouzēnos relates his return among the events of 1344.

¹¹ Greg. II, 741.9-19.

¹² Greg. II, 741.19-23. For Karasi and the identification of Süleyman, see Ch.9:8. Kantakouzēnos does not mention the marriage, probably because he does not wish to highlight the uncertain benefits of such agreements, in light of his own alliance to Orhan and of Batatzēs' subsequent fate.

¹³ Greg. II, 742.5-6: γράμματα ἐφοίτα συχνὰ πρὸς τῆς βασιλίδος Ἄννης αὐτῶ; Kant. II, 552.15-16: πέμψας πρὸς βασιλίδα διελέγετο περὶ συμβάσεων.

¹⁴ Kant. II, 553-6; Greg. II, 742.14-743.6. For an analysis of the great significance and consequences of this conflict from a Turkish perspective, see Zachariadou, 'Karasi', 231-4.

from Achyraous in Anatolia, which was occupied by the Turks at some point following 1304.¹⁵ Therefore it is possible these men were the sons of the original Achyraïtai. Officials with the surname Achyraïtēs are attested in the 1320s and 1350s in Zichnai in Macedonia so they may have settled around this area.¹⁶ The nature of such named companies of native soldiers, whether mercenary or *pronoïar*, is not known.¹⁷

3: The River Hebros (today, the Evros or Meriç) was more generally known by its Slavic name, the Maritza, which is used by Pachymerēs and occasionally by Akropolitēs.¹⁸ Kantakouzēnos and Grēgoras both prefer the classical designation. Its source lies in the Rila Mountains in Bulgaria and it terminates in the Ainos delta; at 472km it is the longest river that flows entirely within the Balkans.¹⁹ By the point it entered the Empire, it was sizeable enough to form an obstacle to east-west travel and also to be navigable by larger boats at least as far as Adrianople, thus constituting an important north-south route within Thrace.²⁰ There were some bridges, and ferries across the river at multiple points, but a crossing could pose a major difficulty in adverse weather conditions.

4: Kantakouzēnos' rather feeble arguments regarding legitimacy attempt to justify his pragmatic decision to ignore the Bulgarian provocation, owing to the weakness of his political and military position. He probably also wanted to leave open the possibility of an alliance; Grēgoras states that letters from Kantakouzēnos to both Ivan Alexander and Stefan Dušan were

¹⁵ Bartusis, *Army*, 203.

¹⁶ *PLP* 1719, 1720.

¹⁷ Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 110-111.

¹⁸ E.g., Pach. IV, 615.12; Akropolitēs, *History* I, 51.18.

¹⁹ Soustal, *Thrakien*, 347-8.

²⁰ Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 45-7; Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 9-15.

intercepted by regency loyalists during the winter.²¹ Grēgoras' testimony undermines the impression Kantakouzēnos generally fosters, that he only involved foreigners in the conflict reluctantly, after the regency had first taken the initiative.

5: Iōannēs Pothos (*PLP* 23447). Little else is known about him other than he was later in the service of *despotēs* Manouēl Kantakouzēnos in 1352, when Dēmētrios Kydōnēs wrote to him.²²

6: Syralēs (*PLP* 27160). He is not otherwise attested. Kantakouzēnos probably sent him to secure Chios, and its wealth, for his cause.

7: The island of Chios prospered from its monopoly on the production of mastic and involvement in the trade in alum, mined around the cities of New and Old Phōkaia on the nearby mainland.²³ This wealth made the island a strongly contested prize in the fourteenth century and Kantakouzēnos shows great concern for it. Chios had come to be ruled by the Genoese Zaccaria family, who were previously granted the lordship of Phōkaia by Michaēl VIII, probably between mid-1305 and 1307 and definitely by 1309.²⁴ Kantakouzēnos claims that it was taken by force and that Andronikos II subsequently recognised the seizure by a periodically renewed treaty in order to retain nominal sovereignty.²⁵ The Zaccaria prospered through their control of the island, striking their own coins and

²¹ Greg. II, 616.2-6.

²² Kydōnēs, *Letters* I, 227-230, ep. 34.

²³ Koder, *Aigaion*, 143-150; Laiou, *Andronicus II*, 152-3.

²⁴ The surviving sources are unclear and occasionally contradictory, for details see Carr, 'Zaccaria', 118-9, n. 18. The most thorough study of the entire Genoese occupation of Chios, despite occasional mistakes in understanding the Greek sources, is Argenti, *Chios*.

²⁵ Kant. I, 370.10-21.

maintaining substantial forces to defend it against the Turks;²⁶ Kantakouzēnos states its annual tax revenues amounted to 120,000 gold.²⁷ In 1329, Kantakouzēnos' mother was approached by Leōn Kalothetos, a Chiote notable and *oikeios* of the Kantakouzēnoi, who urged an imperial expedition to displace the Zaccaria.²⁸ Equally importantly, Benedetto II Zaccaria, who had been forced from power by his younger brother Martino, appealed to Andronikos III.²⁹ Andronikos and Kantakouzēnos seized the opportunity by launching a naval expedition which quickly forced Martino's surrender.³⁰ Benedetto, although offered appointment as its governor, felt slighted at the restoration of imperial sovereignty and, shortly afterwards, tried to take possession of Chios with a fleet from Genoa but was defeated.³¹ During the civil war, Apokaukos ensured Chios' loyalty to the regency by driving out Kalothetos.³² However a Genoese expedition took advantage of the conflict to seize the island in 1346, eventually overcoming local resistance. The Empress was outraged although she could do little to prevent it.³³ After Kantakouzēnos' victory, he negotiated with Genoa and won some concessions including a promise of eventual withdrawal by 1357; however those actually holding the island never assented to the agreement. A rebellion by Tzybos, a local notable, succeeded in returning Old Phōkaia to imperial control in 1349 but he was killed during his invasion of the island.³⁴ Chios remained under Genoese rule until the mid-16th century.

²⁶ Carr, 'Zaccaria', esp. 127-8.

²⁷ Kant. I, 371.23-24, 380.1-3.

²⁸ Kant. I, 371.12-372.20; for Kalothetos, *PLP* 10617; Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 37.

²⁹ Kant. I, 374.23-375.7.

³⁰ Kant. I, 375-379; Greg. I, 438.7-439.10; Argenti, *Chios I*, 60-68; Bosch, *Andronikos III*, 112-118.

³¹ Kant. I, 379-388, 390.15-391.6.

³² Kant. III, 84.16-20.

³³ Kant. II, 583.8-584.12. See also Carr, 'Crusade of Smyrna', 242-5; Argenti, *Chios I*, 94-103.

³⁴ Kant. III, 81.9-85.2 (trans. Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 214-18); Argenti, *Chios I*, 117-123, but also Miller, *Cantacuzenus*, 358-361 (Miller's commentary).

Commentary on Chapter 30

1: Pamphilon (modern Uzunköprü) lay about 17km south-east of Didymoteichon. It is often mentioned in passing in narrative sources but little detail is provided; its importance paled beside Adrianople and Didymoteichon.¹ Grēgoras refers to it as both a small town and a city.² Kantakouzēnos goes on to recount that it possessed a fortified acropolis although the rolling terrain of the area provides no particularly strong natural sites. The town's loyalty was ensured only by the presence of a large garrison. Although it was soon lost, neither Kantakouzēnos nor Grēgoras mention further conflict over it or its eventual recapture.

2: Koprinos is otherwise unattested.³ It was clearly not a major settlement and may have defected shortly afterwards; Kantakouzēnos states that by spring the Thracian towns 'had all revolted in favour of the Empress, except the fortress of Empythion'.⁴ Modern Kyprinos, to the north-west, seems too distant to be the same location.

3: Empythion's impressive remains stand on a bluff above the Hebros, bordered by the modern village of Pythio (also Grēgoras' name for the fortress), about 10km north-east of Didymoteichon.⁵ Grēgoras, contrary to Kantakouzēnos, suggests that there was a pre-existing fortress, writing that 'having become ruined, the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, restoring it greatly by

¹ For a summary of its history, see Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 560-562.

² Greg. II, 621.3: τὸ Παμφίλου πολίχνιον. Greg. II, 805.7: Πάμφιλον ἐγγέγονει τὴν πόλιν.

³ Külzer, *Ostthrakien*, 470, has little to add, being derived from this passage.

⁴ Kant. II, 195.18-19: πρὸς βασιλίδα συναπέστησαν, πλὴν τοῦ Ἐμπυθίου φρουρίου.

⁵ For this fortress generally, see Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 144-154; Hetherington, 'Pythion'; Soustal, *Thrakien*, 419-420.

great expenditure of money, fortified it'.⁶ However no trace of a previous building has yet been found and dendrochronological analysis indicates the earliest current construction was around 1330-1331.⁷ Kantakouzēnos states 'the fortress was extremely strong owing to the construction of its walls',⁸ which for the largest tower are nearly 2.5 metres thick.⁹ Sections of the curtain wall survive, incorporated into the structures of the modern village. The north tower incorporates stone machicolations, usually a hallmark of western European architecture, making the fortress 'unique among Byzantine fortifications and at the cutting edge of military technology in the fourteenth century'.¹⁰ Hetherington could not find any strategic rationale in the position of the fortress position relative to Didymoteichon.¹¹ However it is notable that it is well situated to shield the city from attacks directed from Constantinople; it may have been conceived during the first civil war or as a response to it. Grēgoras states that Kantakouzēnos placed his treasury there and it is likely it was located within his own estates.¹² Thus it seems to have been intended to serve a more private than public purpose.¹³ Emphythion remained loyal throughout the war and survived two attempted sieges by Apokaukos; the first, in 1342, was foiled by a Tatar raid while the longer siege of 1344 failed to overcome its defences.¹⁴ The fortress eventually fell into Ottoman hands around 1359.

⁶ Greg. II, 708.14-16: γεγονὸς ἐρείπιον, ἐκ πολλοῦ Καντακουζηνὸς ἀνειληφῶς ὁ βασιλεὺς πολλαῖς χρημάτων δαπάναις ὠχύρωσε.

⁷ Hetherington, 'Pythion', 308. Some parts were constructed slightly later, perhaps following its capture by the Ottomans in 1359; see Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 144-154.

⁸ Kant. II, 433.16-17: ἦν γὰρ καρτερώτατον τὸ φρούριον ἐκ τῶν τειχῶν τῆς κατασκευῆς.

⁹ Korres, 'Pythion Castle', 276.

¹⁰ Ousterhout and Bakirtzis, *Monuments*, 151.

¹¹ Hetherington, 'Pythion', 312.

¹² Greg. II, 708.17-18.

¹³ See above, Ch.10:9.

¹⁴ Kant. II, 302, 433-5.

4: This famous passage is often cited as an example of the extreme concentrations of private wealth during this period. Even among the aristocracy, Kantakouzēnos was undoubtedly an unusually rich man; his apparent lack of siblings meant that he had not been obliged to divide his patrimony as would be usual under a system of partitive inheritance.¹⁵ Weiss calculates, from the little comparative data available, that these holdings represented perhaps 100km² of land and roughly 1,900 able-bodied men, a total which does not seem unreasonable.¹⁶ Although Kantakouzēnos' enumeration of his losses is accompanied by a characteristic disclaimer that they did not distress him, Kazhdan demonstrated that Kantakouzēnos' vocabulary reveals a constant preoccupation with wealth;¹⁷ his pretended disinterest is somewhat undercut by giving specific figures in the first place.

5: Tzernomianou lay roughly 29km west-north-west of Adrianople, at a ford on the Hebros River.¹⁸ Kantakouzēnos mentions the town a number of times, most notably for an alliance between Andronikos III and Michael III Šišman concluded there in 1327.¹⁹ At 52km as the crow flies from Didymoteichon, it is further than Kantakouzēnos' οὐ πρόϋϋω implies. The distance suggests the raiders were mounted and, given that the town finally declared for Kantakouzēnos only when Adrianople defected to him in 1345,²⁰ the marauders were probably the loyalist garrison of the fortress. In any case, the distinction between soldiers and brigands was not always very pronounced.²¹

¹⁵ On inheritance practices, see Kyritses, *Byzantine Aristocracy*, 184-192.

¹⁶ Weiss, *Kantakuzenos*, 21-2.

¹⁷ Kazhdan, 'L'Histoire de Cantacuzène', 294-7.

¹⁸ Soustal, *Thrakien*, 489. See also Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 149.

¹⁹ Kant. I, 191, 208.

²⁰ Kant. II, 526.

²¹ Bartusis, 'Brigandage', passim.

6: Grēgoras states that Angelos was accompanied by eighty cavalry. His account of this episode is rather different: Kantakouzēnos' path is barred by the river being whipped up into a torrent rather than freezing. When Kantakouzēnos retreated, the river calmed and then raged again when he returned, demonstrating that God's will was against Kantakouzēnos' enterprise.²² Grēgoras' story oddly echoes Kantakouzēnos' later account of his inability to cross the Axios (River Vardar) in 1342 because of deluge; eventually he turned back, accepting it as a sign of God's will, which causes him to reflect on the dire consequences of his failure to cross the Hebros too.²³

7: The exact situation being described is slightly unclear but Kantakouzēnos appears to have been concerned with unifying his own and Angelos' forces, since Didymoteichon is located on the west bank of the Hebros and Pamphilon on the east bank.²⁴ In any case, he appears not to have contemplated dismounting the soldiers to facilitate their crossing over, whether from military or social concerns,²⁵ or simply fear of losing the horses. While it was clearly unusual for the river to freeze during winter, it was not unprecedented: the army of Henry of Flanders marched across the ice near Kypsela (somewhat downstream of Kantakouzēnos' location) in 1208/9.²⁶ Enveri states that Umur was unable to travel by ship in the winter of 1342/3 because of ice on the Hebros;²⁷ Kantakouzēnos does not mention

²² Greg. II, 620.21-622.1.

²³ Kant. II, 242.13-243.9. For his comparison with the Hebros incident, see 243.2-7.

²⁴ Kant. II, 188.3, speaks of the cavalry ἐπ' αὐτὸν περαιομένους, apparently indicating himself.

²⁵ On the low prestige of infantry, see Kyriakidis, *Warfare*, 216-7.

²⁶ De Valenciennes, *Histoire*, 58, n. 566.

²⁷ Enveri, *Düstürnâme*, 95-6, verses 1395-1400.

any ice but records that Umur's troops travelled by foot from the mouth of the river.²⁸

While Soustal describes the freezing of the Hebros as being frequent, he does not substantiate this; Asdracha argues that it is the very rarity of these events that leads to their prominence in the sources.²⁹ Kantakouzēnos' lack of preparedness similarly implies freezing was an infrequent event, as do his previous comments regarding the harshness of the winter. Grēgoras similarly reports that the weather was unusually bad.³⁰ The hard winters which both report are possibly an indication of regional climatic change, the beginning of the so-called 'Little Ice Age'.³¹

8: One of Pamphilon's *archons*, Michaēl Bryennios (*PLP* 3262), is subsequently mentioned as having being severely beaten in prison before escaping to re-join Kantakouzēnos, then later falling in battle while shielding his emperor.³²

9: Kantakouzēnos refers to the promotion of the conspirators which took place at Iōannēs V's coronation on 19 November 1341.³³ The needs of the two competing parties to reward their supporters resulted in the appointment of two rival court hierarchies and the consequent denial of appointments made by the other party. Furthermore, instead of receiving a new title, individuals could be rewarded by raising the precedence of their existing title, as the Andronikoi had done for Kantakouzēnos.³⁴ Seven other

²⁸ Kant. II, 345.

²⁹ Soustal, *Thrakien*, 348; Asdracha, *Rhodopes*, 22.

³⁰ Greg. II, 615.23-616.2.

³¹ For an introduction to climate in Byzantine sources and its relation to other climatic evidence, see Telelis, 'Climatic Fluctuations', esp. 188-9 for the 'Little Ice Age' and the tendency of authors only to record extreme events.

³² Kant. II, 343.3-344.3.

³³ Kant. II, 218.

³⁴ See Ch.1:9.

court precedence lists of the fourteenth century have survived which, among other differences, all place *megas domestikos* in 7th rank, in contrast to 4th in Pseudo-Kodinos. It appears that Pseudo-Kodinos' list is a partisan document, reflecting the order of precedence as revised after Kantakouzēnos' victory. Kantakouzēnos apparently left his opponents in possession of their titles, if awarded by Andronikos III, but adjusted the titles' precedence to demote regency loyalists and promote his own supporters.³⁵ The regency itself presumably followed a precedence list dating from before Kantakouzēnos' promotion, placing the *megas doux*, Apokaukos, above the *megas domestikos*. Despite Kantakouzēnos' statement that he rejected the new titles awarded to his enemies, his narrative soon employs them. In the case of Apokaukos, Kantakouzēnos henceforth calls him *parakoimōmenos* and *megas doux* interchangeably.³⁶

³⁵ For further discussion, see Macrides, et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos*, 280-289.

³⁶ E.g., Kant. II, 281.22 (*megas doux*); II, 282.20 (*parakoimōmenos*).

Appendix I: Conclusion of the *Histories*

The final peroration of the *Histories* (Kant. III, 363.24-365.8):

So these are the things /364/ that happened to the Romans, in our own times in years past; at the time when the war of the emperors Andronikos [the younger and elder] against each other began, and later that which was ignited between the Empress Anna and the Emperor Kantakouzēnos and then the conclusion of these, including the young Emperor Iōannēs' quarrel with Matthaios, the brother of his wife, and the Emperor, his father-in-law, it is as has been related. And nothing of what we have said has either from favour or hatred departed from the truth, but we have inquired precisely into what happened, on one hand from those who were present, involved in these matters at the time and participants in these events, on the other hand from those who heard these deeds first-hand from them.

If this history encompasses any person in particular who planned in secret to begin war against the Emperor Kantakouzēnos, it is no wonder. For the majority of them, even after he came to possess complete power, were still alive and benefited from much solicitude by him; they told him everything accurately, marvelling at his generosity and endurance of their terrible deeds, pitying themselves because not only had they produced so many misfortunes for the Romans but also because they had enjoyed many great and wonderful benefactions from him, both before and after. Because of this, having being deceived by the schemes and villainies of the *meGas doux*, they were seen as culpable for producing many difficulties and were utterly ungrateful. Above all, the brothers of the *meGas doux*, Iōannēs and Nikēphoros, /365/ related those of his secrets about which they knew more than the others.

So your command, dear Neilos, is accomplished to the best of our ability, and it is possible for you – reading through what has been written, and examining the lives and actions and the character of men in general – to praise the magnanimity of some and their love of good deeds in all, or most, things and to despise the villainy of others, as they have been responsible for many evils, not only to others but also to themselves.

Appendix II: Transliteration Scheme

Where Greek words are transliterated, the following scheme has been adopted:

α, ᾶ, ᾷ	a, a, ha
Β	b
γ, γγ, γκ, γξ	g, ng, nk, nx
Δ	d
ε, ἒ, ἓ	e, e, he
ζ	z
η, ἦ, ἧ	ē, ē, hē
θ	th
ι, ἰ, ἱ	i, i, hi
κ	k
λ	l
μ, μπ-	m, b
ν, ντ-	n, d
ξ	x
ο, ὀ, ὁ	o, o, ho
π	p
ρ, ῥ	r, rh
σ, ς	s
τα	t
υ, ὕ	y, hy (u in diphthongs)
φ	ph
χ	ch
ψ	ps
ω, ὦ, ῶ	ō, ō, hō

Bibliography

Common abbreviations

<i>AM</i>	<i>Al-Masāq</i>
<i>BF</i>	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen</i>
<i>BMGS</i>	<i>Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies</i>
<i>BS</i>	<i>Byzantinoslavica</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CFHB</i>	<i>Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>CSHB</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae</i>
<i>DOP</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
<i>JÖB</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik</i>
<i>OCP</i>	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
<i>REB</i>	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
<i>RESEE</i>	<i>Revue des études sud-est européennes</i>
<i>TM</i>	<i>Travaux et Mémoires</i>
<i>ZRVI</i>	<i>Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta</i>

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